From the Syrian Land to the States of Syria and Lebanon

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The collection of articles presented in this volume is the result of the third conference on Bilad al-Sham held in Erlangen, Germany. The first and second conference and their subsequent publications focussed on the common and the specific of the modern historical experience and on the administrative, economic and physical integration and fragmentation of the region, respectively. The present volume investigates the change of identities and loyalties and the emergence of modern political ideologies in the region of Bilad al-Sham by putting these developments into the historical context of changing regional and global power relations, the establishment of colonial and post-colonial states and the emergence of new social classes. It shows the complexity and fluidity of local, religious, national and political identities and affiliations.

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FROM THE SYRIAN LAND TO THE STATES OF SYRIA AND LEBANON

edited by

Thomas Philipp

and

Christoph Schumann

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Introduction

The planned volume concentrates on the history of the Syrian Land (*Bilād al-Shām*) in the period between the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces in 1841 and the establishment of the independent territorial-states in the late 1940s. The term *Bilād al-Shām*, translated as "Geographic Syria" or "the Syrian Land," describes the region limited in the north by the Taurus Mountains, bordering in the east on the Syrian Desert, stretching to Aqaba and the Sinai in the south, and opening in the west to the Mediterranean. The region does not constitute one political entity and did not do so under Ottoman rule. At the same time, however, it always constituted a geographical region distinct from Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Egypt. But beyond this geographical situation, as will be argued in the beginning of this volume, a historical awareness of people within this region can be observed, which hints at the fact that the region was culturally, socially and historically more integrated in itself than related to neighboring regions – and was considered as such from without.

The successor states to the Ottoman Empire in the region – i.e. Lebanon, Syria, Palestine/Israel, and Jordan – are the subject of a huge literature of scholarly research. Typically, research has treated each state as a completely independent social, political, and economic entity, defined by its territorial borders. More general studies deal mainly with the military and political conflict situations between two or several of these states. The unspoken premise of this approach is that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Mandatory system constitute such a rupture with the past that the latter need not be researched unduly. If it is dealt with at all, then only by way of restricting research to the territorial limits of now existing states. There can be no doubt, of course, that the new political and territorial order introduced after World War I is the most decisive event, determining later developments. Nevertheless, the hypothesis of this volume is that many developments and trends, the results of which we see today, find their roots in the early modern period of this region when territorial borders were not yet cutting the region apart. Many of these cultural, societal, and economic changes concerned the region as a whole. They created differentiations between different areas, but these were not identical with the later territorial political divisions introduced by the imperialist powers. Until today various social, religious, and ideological identities exist which on the one hand cross political borders and on the other hand differentiate various groups from each other within today's territorial states.

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Since the early modern period of this region we can observe a continuous and multifaceted process of redefining loyalties, identities, and legitimizing ideologies. In addition to familiar patterns, which recognized the sovereignty of the Ottoman state, membership in a clan, tribe, city, and/or religion, new forms of political and societal identity developed, such as nation, citizenship, and class. The focus of this volume will be on the manifestation of these new identities and ideologies as a means of tracing the historical changes of the region during the late Ottoman period and their impact on the post-Ottoman developments in the region.

The aims of our historical approach are several: (a) This volume presents a comprehensive survey of the history of that period as an integrated region, avoiding thereby the pitfalls of the typical historical perspective starting out with the existence of one of the several contemporary states in the region, searching only for its own antecedents and the historical legitimacy of existence. (b) Contrary to this, we try to use the development of different identities and ideologies which were common to the whole area to demonstrate why the subsequent territorial divisions of the region did not fit easily but created new problems and, in fact, continue constitute issues of enormous complexity fraught with tension. (c) Finally, the included contributions reflect the present state of the art of the scholarship concerning this history. While pursuing this aim we consider it not so much our task to establish one "orthodox" interpretation of this history, but rather to give an impression of the considerable scholarly progress that has been made over the last fifteen years in this field – which was heretofore very much neglected as a "period of decay" – and to demonstrate the variety of approaches to a theme that proves to be very complex and devoid of explanations. This, we believe, can be best achieved by providing a general historical survey through articles by a variety of specialized scholars.

The century preceding the period dealt with here was a time of extreme weakness of the Ottoman imperial center, during which power centers in the provincial periphery flourished. European economic expansion began to penetrate the region, and the first signs of Europe's new political power and military were seen with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. The impact of modern Europe upon the Syrian Land was first felt in an indirect, albeit massive and comprehensive form, when Egypt, itself in the thralls of a process of radical reforms and transformations, occupied the region in the 1830s. Only direct European intervention restored the region to the direct control of the Ottoman government.

Contrary to the commonly held cliché of the disintegrating empire which had become the "Eastern Question", the Ottoman Empire entered upon a path of vigorous reform of the judiciary, the military and the administration in an attempt to strengthen the center and to reassert its power over the periphery. After 1840 the government in Istanbul tried to apply the same reforms that it was adopting for the heartland of the empire to the Syrian provinces. From building codes and sanitary measures to the establishment of provincial councils and secular schools, every aspect of life was touched by these ef-

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forts. The Syrian population, especially in the urban centers, was by no means merely the passive object of these efforts, but participated actively in them, and for a long period identified with the Ottoman Empire, both politically and culturally. At the same time, society in the Syrian Land was also exposed to various direct forms of European presence, such as the regular steamship traffic, the missionaries and their educational institutions, and the entrepreneurs introducing new means of production and searching for new markets.

The rise of new social classes, the closer-than-ever integration – not only with the imperial center, but also with Europe – through new technologies, the introduction of new ideologies and world-views all caused the reinterpretation of old loyalties and the development of new identities, political programs, and institutions. Many of these developments, though occurring simultaneously, were contradictory or even exclusionary of each other, though always very fluid and not yet cast in permanent molds. A forceful and lasting change of paradigm occurred only with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the introduction of the Mandatory system in the region of the Syrian Land. All further development of identities, loyalties, and political programs had to deal with and react to the administrative framework and the political boundaries imposed by the Mandatory power. This led in the 1920s and 1930s to the crystallization of Arab as well as Syrian and Lebanese identities and ideologies.

The heritage of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire remained the primary political frame of reference for the development of the Syrian Land. In spite of all political, social, and economic change, political legitimacy remained imaginable only as related to the imperial center. In this context Philipp and Zachs show that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries strong local formations and identities developed without, however, questioning the ultimate authority of the central government. Toward the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries the power of the imperial centers once again became even more strongly felt in a variety of aspects. Weber and Hanssen argue this case with the example of urban planning and architecture in the provincial capitals of the Syrian Land. Rogan demonstrates that students in the new secular state schools, though aware of their different ethnic, regional, and religious origins, joined in a common identity as Ottoman citizens which remained dominant until the end of World War I.

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Religion and the change of culture

The important role of religion in the transformation and reinterpretation of identities is emphasized by Winter, Gelvin, Weismann, and Landis. Winter analyses the pragmatic way in which the Ottomans dealt with Islamic sects such as the Alawites. Suspected of heresy, they were never persecuted for this reason alone; on occasions they could even play a very positive role, such as resisting the advances of the Egyptian forces in the 1830s. The importance of religion as a means for political change is emphasized by Weismann and Gelvin. The various religious movements not only reflected the political trends of social reforms, state formation, and national identity; they actively promoted them within the general public.

Society and state building

The construction of society and state and the relation between both depended not only on large, overarching ideologies and world-views. Wild traces the acceptance of the fact and even the legitimacy of the border between Syria and Lebanon, once perceived as a colonial artifact. Al-Qattan uses the example of a decisive event, World War I, which touched all layers of society and its collective commemoration creating for the formation of a common national identity, while Hanna discusses the general phenomenon of receding traditional attachments and identities.

The Special Case of Lebanon

With the end of the Egyptian occupation and the collapse of the ruling dynasty of the Shihabs, the Ottomans for the first time were faced with the task of administrating the Mount Lebanon region directly. Makdisi and Reinkowski point out various ambivalent strategies, from a powerful urge to suppress unrest and establish control to the perceived necessity of conced regional autonomy. In particular, the ways of dealing with the recent experience of communal violence differed radically between local population and central government. In this sense, according to Hakim, the Ottoman Empire remained the decisive political frame of reference for the Lebanese political elite right until the beginning of World War I.

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From anti-colonial resistance to radical nationalism in Syria

In spite of bitter military resistance against the French occupation it took several years before the general national paradigm established itself. As the contributions of Lawson, Méouchy, and Provence show, it took several years before religious, local, and ethnic traditions and identities were integrated into one national independence movement. With the rise of a distinct class of intellectuals during the 1930s resistance was radicalized, and led to the formulation of comprehensive nationalist ideologies. Kasmieh, Elamir, and Schumann argue that the League of National Action, the Ba'th Party and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party were the carriers of these ideologies.

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THE LEGACY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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Identities and loyalties in Bilād al-Shām at the beginning of the early modern period

Thomas Philipp

Ever since the Muslim conquest, Bilād al-Shām was known as a distinct and important region, yet it never constituted an integrated legal or political entity on its own. Typically it was either part, or even center, of a larger political entity or else it dissolved into a number of principalities, city-states, etc. This fluidity of political organization in the region, and accompanying the ambivalence of identities were at the beginning of the early modern period still very much characteristic of this region.

In attempting to analyze the development and trends of cultural identies and political loyalties in the region during the earlier modern period I shall address in particular two aspects. First, I shall draw a rough sketch of the evolution and integration of what I will call "locally integrated regions" – that is to say, subregions within Bilād al-Shām which show greater economic political and societal integration within themselves than with neighboring areas. This concerns the beginning of the modern period during the eighteenth century and describes developments until 1831 when they were rudely disrupted by centralizing policies – first of the Egyptian conquerors, then by the returning Ottomans.

In the second part, I shall shift from a political and economic analysis of that particular historical period to a literary and semantic analysis of the changing terminology used by the chroniclers and historians for the region during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The aim is to uncover the meaning of these changes in terms of identity. This implied not only changes in a territorial identity but, as we shall see, also a shift in cultural identity.

When discussing identities and loyalties which go beyond the immediate family, clan, city quarter, or village relations, the issue of religious affiliation comes immediately to mind when we look at Bilād al-Shām in the early modern period. Sometimes religious communities were so-called compact minorities[1] which could be identified with regions, such as was the case with the Druze, the Alawites, the Maronites, and the Metualis.

[1] Albert Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay*, London 1954, 308.

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Others, especially the Greek Orthodox, and their schismatic brethren the Greek Catholics, were spread more or less all over Bilād al-Shām. There is abundant testimony that everybody had a clear sense of belonging to one community or another. Though in itself important, here the focus shall be directed to how such groups perceived regions, the territorial space in which they moved.

Most often, but not always, a group's perception of its own identity coincided with that of the surrounding society. Interest in one's own community became, in fact, a major motive to chronicle its history. I have argued elsewhere[2] that this was an indication of a new sense of identity and the beginning of a different world-view in the second half of the eighteenth century. Not all chroniclers went to the exclusionist extreme of Mīkhā'īl Burayk and Aḥmad al-Budayrī,[3] who both chronicled the history of Damascus in the eighteenth century; the latter almost never mentions the Christian population of the city, while from Burayk's chronicle alone one could not guess that, apart from the governor of Damascus any Muslims lived in city. More typical was the realization that it was impossible for a historian to write the history of their own community or even religious order without reporting about regional developments as well.

A sense for the particularity of regions, their integration within themselves rather than with the rest of Bilād al-Shām or even within *wilāyat al-Shām* is evident from all chronicles. In recent historiography of the Ottoman Empire this phenomenon has become a topos and actually an analytical tool. Doumani, discussing Nablus and its hinterland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries points out:

> As a single unit, Nablus and its hinterland constituted a discrete unit known for centuries as Jabal Nablus. Scores of roughly similar regions filled the vast and multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire and surrounding each of its few large international trading cities like a sea around an island...these discrete units were located at one and the same time at the material core and the political periphery of the Ottoman world.[4]

He calls Jabal Nablus a "social space"[5] and lists further examples such as Jabal Lubnān, Jabal ʿĀmil, Jabal al-Durūz (by which he means the later one, i.e. the Ḥawrān), Jabal Khalīl, etc. One could add others such as Aleppo or Damascus and the surrounding Ghūṭa and, in the eighteenth century, Acre and its hinterland. To call them "social spaces" is for a start certainly not wrong because social interaction within them seems to

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2 "Class, Community, and Arab Historiography in the Early Nineteenth Century," *IJMES* 16 (1984), 161-175.

3 Aḥmad al-Budayrī al-Khallāq, *Ḥawādith Dimashq al-yawmiyya 1741-1762*, Cairo 1959, 2nd ed., Damascus 1997, ed. Aḥmad Ghassān ʿAbd al-Karīm. Mikhā'īl Burayk, *Tārīkh al-Shām,* Ḥārīṣa 1930.

4 Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus 1700-1900*, Los Angeles 1995, 2. D. Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World 1550-1650*, Seattle 1990, 93 speaks for an earlier period already of "natural economic centers, such as Izmir, [able] to develop without the constraints of a highly centralized administration."

5 Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 20.

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have been much stronger than that between them. These "spaces" were, however, much more than social spaces; they also displayed a certain economic integration and, during the period discussed here, a certain measure of political autonomy. One of their essential attributes is the existence of a recognizable elite relating directly to this region.

These "locally integrated regions" differed greatly from each other in the ways and degree to which they were integrated. Most such integrated regions seem to have formed around particular cities: Nablus, Hebron, Acre, Damascus, etc.: an agricultural region linked to an urban productive and commercial center. But other integrated regions seem to have formed without the benefit of a particular urban center: Jabal al-Shūf, later Jabal Lubnān, Jabal ʿĀmil, al-Jibāl al-ʿAlawiyya. These latter seem typically inhabitated by compact minorities where religious or even ethnic relations play a major integrative role. The political and economic weight of these integrated regions might differ greatly: compare, for instance, Jabal ʿĀmil and al-Shūf, or Jabal Khalīl and Jabal Nablus, or the latter with Acre and its realm. In addition, their relative positions changed over time, borders shifted and indeed, such integrated regions could form themselves anew or totally disappear – as did Acre and its realm, and also Jabal ʿĀmil. Such shifts were especially noticeable in the early modern period when the weakness of the imperial center and the linkage of some regions as primary producers to the European economy created new local centers of power and redirected many trade routes.

All the preceding observations about geographical and communal identities do not yet answer the all-important question of whether they had any political meaning, that is to say, did political loyalties grow from such identities, which could be mobilized for political action? Officially the whole region belonged to the Ottoman Empire and was administratively divided into the provinces of Sidon, Damascus, Tripoli, and Aleppo. The ability of the Ottoman central government to enforce its will in the provincial periphery was exceedingly weak during the early modern period. In some, especially financial, ways these regions were indeed administratively integrated. Taxes, insofar as they were paid at all, did go to the respective seat of provincial government. The governors performed certain imperial functions and defended provincial interests. Most important was the tax collection and, in the case of Damascus, the management and protection of the annual pilgrimage. This meant, though, that the governor of Damascus had to make annual "rounds," i.e. a military expedition in his own province, in order to collect the contributions for financing the pilgrimage. Border quarrels – for instance between the governors of Sidon and Damascus over possession of grain-producing lands and villages in the Biqāʿ Valley – were a regular issue. Toward the end of the eighteenth century and in the beginning of the nineteenth we observe repeatedly a personal union of the governorship of Sidon and Damascus, despite the continuing administrative distinction between the two. But the hold of the Ottoman governors on their provinces remained tenuous and had to be renegotiated at all times. Even for military strength the governors could not rely on imperial troops but had to try to mobilize local allies. The

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provinces, though recognizable administrative entities, were weak structures and did not necessarily coincide with the centers of political or economic power. Here the concept of "locally integrated regions" seems more helpful than that of the administrative provinces if one wants to grasp the social, economic, and political reality of Bilād al-Shām during the period. In the following I would like to take a closer look at their shifting shapes, development and disappearance in the southern part of Bilād al-Shām, basically the region covered administratively by the provinces of Sidon and Damascus.

As the shape and borders of locally integrated regions were always fluid and shifting there is space for some argument over their number and form at any given time. But I would suggest that around 1730 the following integrated regions can be distinguished in the southern part of Bilād al-Shām: (a) Damascus and its immediate surrounding, constituting the largest urban center. It was the seat of the official local government and its most important economic activity was the long-distance trade between Aleppo and the Hejaz and, to a lesser degree, with Egypt. (b) Jabal Nablus, consisting of the city Nablus and the villages in the mountain. Jerusalem was most often controlled by a *mutasallim* appointed by the governor of Damascus but coming from Nablus. Similarly, the influence of the latter city was extended to the port of Jaffa. Manufacture of and trade in olive-oil products and grain was its main economic activity. (c) Jabal Khalīl, a minor agriculturally based region around Hebron. (d) Bilād Bishāra and (e) al-Shūf. Both were agricultural regions without urban centers, settled by compact minorities.

Possibly one could also mention Jerusalem as an urban "region," unique because of its history and religious meaning but neither economically nor politically important. The city of Sidon, seat of the provincial government, barely had a hold on the Galilee, but its two major parts, the Metuali Bishāra and the Druze Shūf, constituted themselves into locally integrated regions where the governor of Sidon was left with the function of providing legitimacy to local strongmen.

During the course of the eighteenth century a new locally integrated region developed, which I shall call "Acre and its realm." Originally it grew at the seam between the province of Damascus and that of Sidon or, more precisely, in the vicinity of Tiberias between the area controlled by Nablus and that by the Druze. Eventually the region expanded westwards: Acre became its urban center, took over the province of Sidon, and the coast from Jaffa to Tripoli was annexed. In the process the integrated region of Bilād Bishāra (Jabal ʿĀmil) all but disappeared. By the time the Egyptians occupied Bilād al-Shām, in 1831, Acre and its realm had been already reduced to a shadow of its former self. Ibrāhīm Pasha wiped it permanently off the political and economic landscape of Bilād al-Shām.

What provided the social and political coherence of these locally integrated regions, and if so, how much coherence existed in fact? The answer to that question is almost as varied as the number of regions. Rather than trying to summarize the local history of

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each region I would like to point only to some salient points to demonstrate the diversity of options for constructing this coherence, and also its limits.

Damascus was the most important urban center with a well structured and stratified society which had an important merchant class and a highly respected group of *ʿulamāʾ*, both often coming from the same distinguished families. In the eighteenth century some families, such as the al-ʿAẓms, were able to add political power to their position. Although there was always some immigration into the city, the patterns of urban society were firmly established and sanctioned by tradition. The ʿAẓm family's long hold on power reflected itself amongst other things in a construction boom in Damascus:

> The ʿAẓms generated a new sense of identity and pride and reinforced a style of life which was to be held as typically Damascene. From a purely material point of view the city ... also acquired a legacy of monumental stone constructions reminiscent of the city's earlier Islamic and medieval grandeur ... Thus ʿAẓm rule in Damascus ... succeeded in awakening, supporting and protecting the interests and position of a particular urban elite."[6]

Authors such as Aḥmad al-Budayrī and Mīkhāʾīl Burayk clearly indentified as Damascenes and reflect the role of the ʿAẓms in creating this identity.[7] It is true that there were different factions within the cities with different economic interests and that the tensions between the *aghawāt* of the Maydān in the south and those of the northern city could be disruptive and destructive, as Schatkowski Schilcher has portrayed in her book. The governors and the troops in the citadel were important and often had an impact on the life of the Damascenes, but even a governor as brutal as Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār could not impose his will upon Damascus at random. Resistance by members of the important families could lead to his dismissal, and for the running of the local affairs – especially financial matters – local administrators, often minority members, had to be relied on anyway. Most noticeably absent in this picture was the military dimension. The ʿAẓms collaborated with the imperial *qapi-qul* troops and, in their function as governors, could possibly mobilize them[8] and forge alliances with Druze, Maghrebi, and Kurdish elements or, simply, with military entrepreneurs in the region. These endeavors, however, were frequently not successful, but left to its own devices the city was never able to defend itself at all. Planned sieges fizzled out before they began, because the city would simply open its gates, as was the case with Abū 'l-Dhahab in 1771.

The next largest traditionally integrated region, Jabal Nablus, projected a very different image. Together with the northern fortification Ṣānūr, the city of Nablus was almost unconquerable. The important families of Nablus could mobilize the peasants of their

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6 Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Stuttgart 1985, 35.

7 For instance Burayk, *Tārīkh al-Shām*, 73-74, when he describes, at the end of his account of the reign of Asʿad Pasha al-ʿAẓm, how his rule had been the happiest for Christians and how they integrated fully into the city's life.

8 Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 111.

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villages to help with the defense of the city. When Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar in the spring of 1772 tried, with the backing of ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr, to take Nablus, he failed. But the political coherence of this region was not quite as firm as it appeared. Basically the city was divided into two camps, the *aghawāt* and the *beys*, led by the al-Nimr and Ṭūqān clans respectively. The situation became further complicated with the rise of the al-Jarrār clan during the eighteenth century with its base in the fortress of Ṣānūr. As Doumani summarizes: "there were political divisions and rivalries within Jabal Nablus. Power was shared by a number of territorial based rural and urban families, each of which controlled a section of the hinterland and was capable of mobilizing a peasant militia."[9] It is important to add that each of them also controlled sections of the city itself. Even during the defense against Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar the tasks were divided: the Ṭūqān clan took over the defense of the western part of the city, the Nimr clan the eastern part.[10] This division was consolidated by the possession, and occasional capture, of fortifications within the city by the respective parties. These fortifications, Qaṣr Amīr Yūsuf and Qaṣr Junayd being the most important, provided control over the neighboring quarters and city gates, the latter determining the flow of people and merchandise in and out of the city.[11] In addition, the Jarrār clan had its own fortifications outside the city to the north – a key for the defense of the city. Though the elites shared common economic interests and cooperated partially in politics, the integrated region of Jabal Nablus does not reflect the typical city-rural hinterland dichotomy. Rather, a situation developed in which, thanks to the dominant role of a few clans, certain parts of the hinterland and certain sections of the city were more integrated with each other than with other parts of the hinterland or section of the city respectively.

The third integrated region with a city at its center, Acre and its hinterland, differed sharply from the two earlier examples. There was no political and social coherence in the social stratification of urban society or the established authority of some dominant clans. In fact, by the second half of the eighteenth century all inhabitants of the city, after Aleppo and Damacus the largest in Bilād al-Shām, were first-generation immigrants. Coherence was provided by a new economic logic: cultivation of cotton and its export overseas. It was Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar who recognized the profitability of this proposition and united the agricultural Galilee with the port of Acre. The subsequent economic boom prevented popular dissent and provided al-ʿUmar with the means to pay for a standing army of Maghrebis to defend his realm against outside incursions. Later, when the economic benefits began to dwindle, integration of the region was imposed by a standing army using ruthless repression. It was the coherence of the Mamluk household established in Acre by al-Jazzār and continued under Sulaymān Pasha and, indeed, the

9 Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 19.

10 Iḥsān al-Nimr, *Tārīkh Jabal Nābulus wa'l-Balqā'*, 3 vols., Nablus 1975, I, 183.

11 Ibid., 251 ff.

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simultaneous weakness of the social fabric of urban society in Acre that kept the region integrated and made it for a while the economic and political center of all of Bilād al-Shām. But as soon as economic conditions changed in a basic manner this region, integrated only by a strong political elite, dissolved, never to be reconstituted again.

Bilād Bishāra and al-Shūf were two locally integrated regions which had much in common: They were not organized by and around urban centers, but the Metualis and the Druze respectively possessed a distinctive sectarian identity recognized by themselves as well as by the outside perception of them. They were socially organized under dominant clans in feudal-like structures, though differing greatly from European medieval feudalism in that the peasants could be mobilized as warriors at any given time. In size and population number the two regions differed greatly from each other. The smaller Metuali-inhabitated Bilād Bishāra was eventually destroyed as an integrated region by the drastic military measures of al-Jazzār. The question of coherence poses itself again, especially with regard to the Druze region, the Shūf. If one looks at the history of the Druze in the early modern period, one discovers an endless struggle for power and the amirship. For this purpose different Druze factions were readily prepared to ally themselves with outside forces, such as the governor of Damascus, or Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar and later al-Jazzār, in order to defeat other Druze factions. Incessant civil war between Druze factions included the destruction of villages and the systematic extirpation of orchards. This situation was so common that the question arises whether there was in fact a political meaning to being Druze. Although recognized as a sectarian identity and, indeed, as a token of ethnicity, it certainly was not a political program.[12] The only recognizable consensus among Druze during this period was that the amir should be a member of the Shihāb clan and that he had to be confirmed by the governor of Sidon in order to gain legitimacy. Occasionally, but by no means always, being Druze could also mean presenting a common front against outside intruders into the Shūf.

The purpose of this rapid and rather sketchy characterization of different locally integrated regions during the early modern period is only meant to point out the variety of inner structure, coherence, and form these regions could have, of the fluidity of their shape and the process of disappearance of some and crystallization of new regions: Acre and its realm came and went, Bilād Bishāra disappeared while the Shūf and Jabal Lubnān would come into its own only in the following period and Beirut and its surroundings rose as a new integrated region.

As was mentioned earlier, the early modern period in Bilād al-Shām coincided with a disastrous weakness of the imperial center. Indeed, some of the regions only obtained their profile because of this weakness. The relatively great autonomy these regions enjoyed did not, however, only derive from weakness at the center. The regions themselves were rather weak in their cohesion and their military strength, sufficiently strong

[12] See Birgit Schaebler, *Aufstände im Drusenbergland*, Gotha 1996, 29-40, for a discussion of this issue.

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to resist outside interference but too weak to impose themselves on their neighbors. That Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar and his successors could afford to maintain a standing army of several thousand somehow disciplined troops was highly untypical and only possible thanks to the high profits of cash-crop exports. But in spite of this military establishment Acre could not impose its will militarily on Nablus, the Druze region, or Damascus. Rather, the continued renegotiation of a balance of political power – which, in addition to military threats or actions included issues of legitimacy and political access in Istanbul – was necessary.

The issue of legitimacy leads us back to the general question how Bilād al-Shām was constituted during the early modern period. Are we dealing with a patchwork of locally integrated regions operating as statelets, heedless of the Ottoman Empire because of its known weakness? I believe the answer is an emphatic no, and the issue of the legitimacy of political power illustrates this best. It was mentioned above that each Druze usurper of the amirship needed the consent of and appointment by the governor of Sidon to legitimize his position; a necessity for which the usurper was willing to pay considerable sums. In the same way local strongmen and dominant clans needed confirmation of their position by Istanbul to provide a measure of stability to their positions. Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar insistently tried to become a *mutasallim* for the governor of Sidon, and later he attempted to obtain the governorship from Istanbul. He always tried to depict himself as a loyal servant of the sultan, as did Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār – even when he outrageously disobeyed the orders of the central government. The latter spent considerable amounts of money to ensure his annual reappointment as governor of Sidon. Appointed several times simultaneously as governor of Damascus, he always surrendered this position when asked to do so. The same holds true for the al-ʿAẓms who had a real power base in Damascus. They obediently surrendered their position as governors whenever ordered to do so. This did not mean that they did not try their utmost to influence decisions in Istanbul by bribes, presents, and promises of revenues. Perhaps the most extreme case was Haim Farhi's successful attempt to obtain the governorship of Sidon for his protégé ʿAbdallāh Pasha, a teenager at this point.

This insistence on official appointments and the sanctioning of positions of power by Istanbul is not to be explained by the possible military or economic threat from Istanbul – this did not exist; rather, it seems that the view of an Ottoman-ruled realm of Islam was deeply ingrained in local political thinking. The role of the Ottoman sultan as the source of all authority and legitimacy was unchallenged in spite of the evident organizational and military weakness of the empire. An alternative basis for political legitimacy was unimaginable. Perhaps the only ones to make an indirect step in this direction were the Greek Orthodox communities in Aleppo and Damascus when they challenged the authority of the Greek Patriarch in Istanbul and tried to establish legitimacy for their autonomy by putting themselves under the symbolic authority of the Pope, thus turning Catholic. But this move had no political impact upon others, and certainly not on the

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Muslim population. Seeking legitimacy from Istanbul was not just a cynical manipulation of symbols, but reflected at least to some degree a strongly felt Ottoman-Islamic world-view, as can be seen in the discussion among the troops of Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar about the propriety of resisting and fight the imperial troops sent to Acre by ship; another example is the hesitation of the Egyptian Mamluks to attack the governor of Damascus, as he was returning from the pilgrimage. Issues of conscience do seem to have played a role here.

In other words, Bilād al-Shām might have been a patchwork quilt of locally integrated regions, each with its own elites, and each independent from the other, but it all was politically still firmly embedded in the general frame of reference of the legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire. This situation was changed radically with the Egyptian invasion of Syria in 1831. For the first time all of Bilād al-Shām, with the partial but significant exception of Jabal Lubnān, was integrated into one administrative unit. Since political centralization had been his policy concerning Egypt, Muḥammad ʿAlī tried now to apply the same principle to Bilād al-Shām. The occupation also raised for the first time the question whether the Ottoman Empire still was a relevant frame of reference; a question which the Ottoman government tried vigorously to answer in the affirmative after the reconquest of Bilād al-Shām by its forces. The subsequent Tanzimat reforms succeeded in binding the whole region closer to the imperial center, but at the same time the local awareness of Bilād al-Shām as a distinct and integrated unit – now increasingly called Syria – grew.

The Arab-Muslim conquerors from the Hejaz called the settled region abutting the Mediterranean to the northwest of the great Arabian desert "al-Shām". With a certain sense of geographic symmetry they named the settled region in the south of the Arabian peninsula Yemen. Originally the two terms meant "left" and "right," respectively, but acquired the connotation "north" and "south" – which coincided with left and right, and with the countries thus named when standing in Mecca facing the rising sun.

From the inception of Islamic history Bilād al-Shām was perceived as a region of special importance and sanctity to Islam. But it has been argued[13] that originally this perception was limited to a few sites within the region, with Jerusalem being at the center of religious attention. Only in the aftermath of the Crusades and the struggle against the Mongols did the region obtain a new and intensified Islamic meaning. Frenkel attributes these changes especially to the building policy of Sultan Baybars who created a great number of commemorative and holy places all over Bilād al-Shām. It was not only contemporary feats in the struggle against the unbelievers that were commemorated here, but also early saints and warriors of Islam. Their supposed burial places became holy places and shrines were built over them. An even deeper historical layer was activated by often linking such places to koranic/biblical stories. At the same time, holy

[13] Y. Frenkel, "Baybars and the Sacred Geography of Bilād al-Shām: A Chapter in the Islamization of Syria's Landscape," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001), 153-170.

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sites previously associated only with biblical figures were now often also identified with Islamic figures and thus incorporated into an Islamic interpretation of the region. Thus ʿAyn Jālūt was not only the place were Baybars defeated the Mongols but also the battle ground between David and Goliath.[14] An Islamic meaning was given to a biblical site while the koranic/biblical perspective enhanced the importance of the contemporary Islamic events. By promoting religious architecture at various sites, identifying them with contemporary or early Islamic events, and by adding a koranic/biblical perspective to them Baybars succeeded in demonstrating his religious devotion and in enhancing his own political legitimacy. The overall result of this policy was the definite "Islamization of Syria's landscape,"[15] and the term "Bilād al-Shām" became firmly associated with the Islamic and the koranic/biblical history of the region.

In the second half of the eighteenth century Bilād al-Shām did not exist as a political or administrative entity. It was divided into the administrative provinces of Aleppo, Damascus, Tripoli, and Sidon and a sancaḳ of Jerusalem, all reporting directly to Istanbul. Nevertheless, the Ottomans also had an informal sense that these administrative units constituted a distinct entity, different from the provinces of Iraq or Egypt. Possibly there was a sense of different functions for these regions. While the Iraqi provinces were border provinces that had previously formed a buffer against the Safavids, and Egypt played its traditional role as bread basket for the empire, Bilād al-Shām was economically important for its international trade and politically decisive as the starting point of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

From the Egyptian there was definitely an entity called Bilād al-Shām. In the eighteenth century al-Jabartī identified people from Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Damascus, Hebron, and Khān Yūnus as *shāmī*.[16] Even Shaykh al-ʿArīshī, originating from al-ʿArīsh in the Sinai, was considered *shāmī* and was supported in some dispute by the *shāmī* students in al-Azhar because of their "nationality," *li-jinsiyyatihim*.[17] More frequent than the regional epithet "al-Shāmī" in a name were epithets of cities:, "al-Ṭarābulusī", "al-Nābulusī", "al-Safadī", "al-Ṣaydāwī", "al-Qudsī", "al-Yāfāwī" etc. Noticeably lacking are subregional epithets. There are no "Lubnānī", "Filasṭīnī", "Jabal ʿĀmilī", "Jalīlī", etc. The epithet "al-Shāmī" is often used together with that for a city or alternately with it. Unfortunately, al-Jabartī never provides us with a definition of who is to be considered *shāmī*. This much, however seems certain: (a) *Shāmīs* originated from the region stretching from Aleppo to al-ʿArīsh, bordering the Mediterranean and the Syrian Desert. (b) They were called *shāmī* regardless of whether they were Christians or Muslims.

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14 Ibid., 157.

15 Ibid., 156.

16 Thomas Philipp and Guido Schwald, *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī's History of Egypt: A Guide*, Stuttgart 1994, 41, 56, 165, 174, 184; T. Philipp and M. Perlmann ed. and transl., *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī's History of Egypt*, Stuttgart 1994, III, 289.

17 Ibid., II, 54.

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During the same period in Bilād al-Shām itself the geographical sense of a space that constituted a unit did not seem quite as clear. The term "al-Shām" itself could mean one of three things: the city of Damascus; the administrative province with Damascus as the seat of its governor; and a larger geographical region not further defined. There is evidence that the term "Bilād al-Shām" in its larger regional meaning had some relevance in the discussions of *'ulamā'* from the region, concerning the application of Islamic law. This is not to suggest that there was an attempt to define the region in any legal manner, rather, it was used as a geographical category in which the original conditions and application of Islamic law might differ from those of other regions such as Egypt, Iraq, or Anatolia. Interestingly, even when learned men would argue from the specific local conditions in Ramla or Damascus they would refer to Bilād al-Shām as the frame of reference for specificity of their customs.[18]

During the eighteenth century and especially towards its end we can discover an increased interest in local history in Bilād al-Shām. It is useful to trace the terms that these histories used and the meaning they gave them: *al-Shām, Birr al-Shām, Bilād al-Shām*, and *Sūriyya* or *Sūriyā,* together with other terms used to designate smaller regions within the larger entity. Many of these histories or chronicles, written in the second half of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century, were first edited and published in the 1920s and 1930s, during the Mandatory period, Qusṭanṭīn Bāshā and ʿĪsā Iskandar Maʿlūf being the most prolific editors. Some texts were only published in the 1980s and 1990s, and others were at that time reedited.[19] Titles such as *Tārīkh al-Shām* or *Tārīkh ḥawādith al-Shām wa-Lubnān* abound. But quickly it becomes clear that these are later titles added by editors and not to be found on the manuscripts. The chronicle by Mīkhā'īl Burayk (concluded in 1782), for instance, was edited by Qusṭanṭīn Bāshā with the title *Tārīkh al-Shām*. The author himself, appearantly provided no title to his manuscript but spoke in the first lines about his desire to write about the Damascene people and the struggle between the clergy and the Greek Orthodox Patriarch. The chronicle of Rufā'īl Karāma, covering the years 1745-1800, has no particular title but the author stated as his aim to write about the order to which he belonged and about the Greek

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[18] See Kenneth Cuno, "Was the Land of Ottoman Syria Miri or Milk?" *Studia Islamica* 81 (1995), 121-152.

[19] Many of these have been reedited in the 1980s and 1990s: Ibrāhīm al-ʿAwra, *Tārīkh wilāyat Sulaymān Bāshā al-ʿĀdil*, Sidon 1936, ed. Qusṭanṭīn Bāshā, who also added the subtitle *Yashtamilu ʿalā tārīkh Filasṭīn wa-Lubnān wa-mudunihi wa-bilād al-ʿAlawiyyīn wa'l-Shām*, 2nd ed., Beirut 1989, ed. Anṭūn Bishāra Qayqīnū; Mīkhā'īl Burayk, *Tārīkh al-Shām,* the editor of this work, Qusṭanṭīn Bāshā, added the subtitle *Yataḍammanu tārīkh al-Shām wa-Filasṭīn wa-Lubnān*. Mīkhā'īl al-Dimashqī's *Tārīkh Ḥawādith al-Shām wa-Lubnān* was first published by Louis Maʿlūf over several issues of *al-Mashriq,* vol. 15 (1912). It was reedited by Aḥmad Ghassān Sabānū in Beirut 1982. *Al-Durr al-marṣūf fī tārīkh al-Shūf* of Ḥanānyā Munayyir (d. after 1826) was first published by Ignatius Sarkīs in *al-Mashriq*, vols. 48-51 (1954-1957). A recently (1994?) edited book by this title in the series *Maṣādir al-tārīkh al-Lubnānī* which even refers to the publication in *al-Mashriq* is certainly not *al-Durr*, but an unrevised copy of the edition of Munayyir's history of the Shuwayrī order. This latter edition was prepared in 1955 by Ignatius Abū Khalīfa and Anṭūnyus Shiblī al-Shuwayrī and added as an appendix to their edition of Ḥaydar Aḥmad Shihāb's *Tārīkh al-Jazzār*.

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Catholic community. The title under which the text was edited in the 1990's "*Ḥawādith Lubnān wa-Sūriyya*" is, of course, an anachronism, the term *Sūriyya* being not at all in use in the eighteenth century. A similar fate happened to the chronicle of al-Rukaynī which leads up to the year 1785.[20] We do not know what he called his chronicle if, indeed, he fave it a title. But we know that the title provided by the editor in the 1990s is anachronistic: *Jabal ʿĀmil fī qarn 1163-1247*. Rukaynī himself never used this term, but rather the term "Bilād Bishāra." When in the 1920s Muḥammad Jābir Āl Ṣafā wrote his *Tārīkh Jabal ʿĀmil* he explained that only after 1841 was this term reintroduced for the region. Somewhat selfconsciously he insisted that the term had no political meaning, the ultimate purpose of his book being to demonstrate that the Shiʿa of the region were always an integral part of the Arab nation and had fought the Ottomans ever since their conquest.[21] But even Mīkhā'īl Mishāqa, who wrote in 1873, still used the term "Bilād Bishāra" exclusively.

Most of these authors had a very definite interest in local or regional history, yet it took over a generation before this emphasis was reflected in the titles of their works. Al-Munayyir, who wrote his history of the Shūf sometime between 1806 and 1816, probably was the first to use geographical terminology in his title, albeit in a still very traditional way: *al-Durr al-marṣūf fī tārīkh al-Shūf*. Mīkhā'īl al-Dimashqī had organized his history in two parts and an appendix. The first part dealt with the history of Damascus and the province of al-Shām, the second dealt with Mount Lebanon and the coastal regions, especially Acre. He concluded his manuscript in 1843 and called it *Tārīkh ḥawādith jarat bi'l-Shām wa-sawāḥil Birr al-Shām wa'l-Jabal*. The uncertainties of the terms disappeared when Louis Maʿlūf edited the text in 1912 under the title *Tārīkh ḥawādith al-Shām wa-Lubnān*, a title which was kept also in the new edition seventy years later. Ḥaydar Aḥmad Shihāb's work, written 1835 with the rather vague title *al-Ghurar al-ḥisān fī akhbār abnāʾ al-zamān*, was published in 1933 under the title *Lubnān fī ʿahd al-umarāʾ al-Shihābiyyīn*.[22]

In 1859 Shidyāq published his book *Kitāb akhbār al-aʿyān fī Jabal Lubnān* [23] and began it with a section on "Lebanon and its borders." By this time the regional theme is firmly acknowledged and reflected in the title. But even a dozen years later Mishāqa,

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[20] Rufā'īl Karāma *Ḥawādith Lubnān wa-Sūriyya*, Beirut 199(?), ed. Bāsīlūs Qattān; Ḥaydar Riḍā al-Rukaynī's *Jabal ʿĀmil fī qurūn 1749-1832*, Beirut 1996 was edited by Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ. Rukaynī lived 1711-1784, but his son continued the chronicle until 1832.

[21] Muḥammad Jābir Āl Ṣafā, *Tārīkh Jabal ʿĀmil*, Beirut 1981, 206. Not surprisingly the editor of this second edition, Taqī al-Dīn al-Ṣulḥ, emphasized the relevance of this history during the Lebanese civil war.

[22] Ḥaydar Aḥmad Shihāb, *Lubnān fī ʿahd al-umarāʾ al-Shihābiyyīn*, 3 vols., Beirut 1933, ed. by Asʿad Rustum and Fu'ād Ifrām al-Bustānī, republished Junyeh 1983. Not having included the first volume of the original, which dealt with Islamic history in general, the publisher's choice of title reflects accurately the theme of the other three volumes.

[23] Ṭannūs al-Shidyāq, *Kitāb akhbār al-aʿyān fī Jabal Lubnān*, 2 vols., Beirut 1970, ed. by Fu'ād Ifrām al-Bustānī.

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who definitely wrote regional history, preferred to title his book in a conventional manner *Muntakhabāt min al-jawāb ʿalā ʾqtirāḥāt al-aḥbāb.* The first edition in 1908 replaced that title with one using the term "Lubnān" and the new term "Sūriyya", which had come to replace "Bilād al-Shām". The second edition in 1955 reverted to the original title and the recent English translation again reflects the regional perspective of the book in an otherwise rather unfortunate title.[24] Though most of the histories and chronicles we are mentioning here definitely have a territorial perspective, this is reflected in their titles only by the middle of the nineteenth century. Later editors were inclined to use the terminology of their own time, rather than that of the period dealt with in the books.

The texts themselves use, of course, names for regions, and it is possible to trace some definite developments of meaning and usage in these texts which might help us to understand the crystallization of some regional identities. The term "al-Shām" is naturally of greatest interest. Mīkhāʾīl Burayk made it clear that he wanted to record the events of Damascus, and in his usage "al-Shām" is almost always a synonym for Damascus, often even in the form *madīnat Dimashq al-Shām.* Twice he refered to it as an administrative unit and province when he spoke of *wazīr al-Shām.* Once, to make clear that he referred not only to the city, *al-Shām,* he added *wa-jamīʿ Bilād al-ʿArab.* He considered a severe earthquake in 1759 to be a sign of God's wrath *ʿalā jamīʿ Bilād al-ʿArabiyya wa-Bilād al-Shām.*[25]

Burayk's contemporary al-Rukaynī similarily used "al-Shām" as a synonym for Damascus, though the term "Dimashq" appears once. The focus of his chronicle is the region which he called exclusively Bilād Bishāra and the Shiʿi community that lived there. By extension he was also interested in the neighboring region of Jabal al-Durūz, Acre and its realm, and Damascus.

The third chronicler, Rufāʾīl Karāma, almost always spoke of Damascus. Occasionally he used the term "al-Shām", especially, when he refered to the administrative unit and the *bāshā al-Shām.* Only once did he refer to al-Shām in a general geographic sense when he spoke about the earthquake of 1759 and the damage it did in *al-Shām wa-nawāḥīhā,* as did Burayk. He did, though, speak of Lubnān, short for Jabal Lubnān, which he used together with the epithet al-Lubnānī.[26] Even though Karāma never said so explicitly, his interest was geographically focused on all of Bilād al-Shām. His interest in the Greek Catholic community and its monastic orders forced him to report about

[24] A rather selective first edition of his manuscript appeared in 1908 under the title *Kitāb mashhad al-aʿyān bi-ḥawādith Sūriyā wa-Lubnān,* Cairo 1908, ed. Mulḥim Khalīl ʿAbdū and Andrāūs Ḥannā Shakhāshīrī. A second edition appeared in Beirut in 1955 under the original title *Muntakhabāt min al-jawāb ʿalā ʾqtirāḥ al-aḥbāb.* The editors, Asʿad Rustum and Ṣubḥī Abū Shuqrā, left out such sections as they believed to be inflammatory with regard to intercommunal relations in Lebanon. The English translation of the whole text appeared 1988: Mīkhāyil Mishāqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder. The History of Lebanon in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century,* trans. W.M. Thackston, Albany 1988.

[25] Burayk, *Tārīkh al-Shām,* 39, 62, 79.

[26] Karāma, *Hawādith,* 22, 42.

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Damascus as well as Aleppo, Acre as well as Homs and Hama – an aspect which is also expressed in the work of the last of this first group of chroniclers and historians.

Ḥanānyā Munayyir, like Burayk and Karāma, was a man of the clergy. He wrote two works, an untitled history of the Shuwayrī order and the above-mentioned *al-Durr al-marṣūf fī tārīkh al-Shūf*. As was the case with Karāma, Munayyir's first motive was to write a history of his order. Not surprisingly this narrative was closely related to the region of Mount Lebanon. But it also becomes evident that his interest concerned really all of Bilād al-Shām, as the Greek Catholic community and with it the interests of his order were scattered in cities such as Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Zahle, Acre, etc. This concern with the larger region, however, was not yet reflected in his terminology. For him *al-Shām* referred either to the *vilāyet* or was used synonymously with Damascus. It obtained a wider meaning only once, when he talked of the "[al-Shuwayrī] Order in Egypt and *al-Shām.*" In the second[27] work it was his intention to write a history of the Shūf which he wove closely around the rule of the Shihābī amirs. Surrounding regions, especially Acre and its realm and Damascus, but also Egypt and Istanbul, were touched upon as they became relevant. He referred frequently to "Dimashq al-Shām", or to "al-Shām" meaning either the city or the *vilāyet*, but he used also the term *wilāyat Dimashq*.

In a somewhat transitional position we find Ḥaydar Aḥmad Shihāb and Ibrāhīm al-ʿAwra. Shihāb, who belonged to the princely Druze family of the same name, wrote his first work, *Tārīkh akhbār Aḥmad al-Jazzār*,[28] somewhere between 1806 and 1826. The narrative is focused on al-Jazzār, the ruler in Acre 1776-1804, but it was not an inside story about the ruler; rather, it is written very much from the point of view of Mount Lebanon and al-Jazzār's impact on the Druze emirate. Actually it is a history of the *vilāyet* of Sidon during the period to which Acre, Bilād Bishāra, and the Druze region belonged. Relations with Damascus play a prominent role in this narrative and the term "al-Shām" refers either to the city, together with the name Dimashq, or to the *vilāyet* as a whole. The terms "Lubnān", "Jabal Lubnān" are completely absent while he referred frequently to Jabal al-Durūz. In his second work, written during the Egyptian occupation in 1835, Shihāb decided to give, as his later editors recognized correctly, a full history of Mount Lebanon during the period of the Shihābī amirs. The narrative leads up to 1832, and he possibly planned to continue it. Even though Shihāb's own title does not yet reflect this regional interest, the terms Lubnān, Jabal Lubnān, Diyār Lubnān and Jabal al-Durūz appear frequently in the text.[29] "Al-Shām" again is used to denote either

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27 In *al-Durr*... he refers to his history of the Shuwayrī order, see *al-Mashriq* 50 (1956), 102.

28 Ḥaydar Aḥmad Shihāb, *Tārīkh Aḥmad Bāshā al-Jazzār*, ed. Ignatius Shiblī and Ignatius ʿAbduh Khalīfa, Beirut 1954.

29 In 1821 Amir Bashīr II succeeded in obtaining the tax farm of the northern part and the whole mountain range came under the control of the Druze amir. Since then the name Jabal Lubnān and, finally, simply Lubnān have been applied to the whole region: Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*, London 1988, 67.

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the city or the *vilāyet*. But here, too, the term was widened to describe a more general region. Shihāb, for instance had Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar ask ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr of Egypt to help him in Birr al-Shām.[30] The translation of a letter by Sidney Smith to Bashīr II refered to *aqṭār al-ʿarabiyya wa'l-shāmiyya wa'l-diyār al-miṣriyya* as belonging to the Ottoman sultan.[31] Later Muḥammad ʿAlī sends his troops to *Birr al-Shām*, *sawāḥil Birr al-Shām* and *ʿArab bustān* (*sic*). His son Ibrāhīm Pasha signed as Commander in Chief of *sawāḥil Birr al-Ṣhām wa-bilād al-ʿArab* or of *ʿArab Istān* (*sic*).[32]

We find a similar terminology in Mīkhā'īl al-Dimashqī's chronicle. The epithet he gave himself showed his preference for calling Damascus "Dimashq." "Al-Shām" referred regularly to the administrative province distinguished by terminology and by the organization of his materials from "al-Jabal" and "al-Sāḥil" by which he meant the Druze region and Acre and its realm, respectively. But when he talked about the Egyptian rule he mentioned Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha appointing Muḥammad Sharīf as ruler over *al-Shām* and *ḥukumdār* of *ʿArab bustān* (*sic*). A little later in the text he noted that Muḥammad ʿAlī and Ibrāhīm Pasha eventually withdrew their control from "Bilād Sūriyā", the earliest time, to my knowledge, that this term was used.[33]

Ibrāhīm al-ʿAwra wrote a history of Sulaymān Pasha, the successor to al-Jazzār as governor of Sidon, in the early 1850s. He, too, used the term "al-Shām" mainly to denote the city of Damascus; in addition he used less frequently, the term "Dimashq." "Al-Shām" also stood for the *vilāyet* administrative unit. But he differentiated this very clearly from al-Shām in a wider sense when he wrote, for instance, that the Wahhābīs intended to conquer the *vilāyet* of al-Shām and then the rest of Birr al-Shām.[34] He spoke of Sulaymān Pasha as being in possession not only of the *vilāyet* of Acre (*sic*) but also the other *vilāyets* of *barriyyat al-Shām*.[35] He also differentiated Birr al-Shām from the region north thereof, Birr al-Turk.[36] Elsewhere he spoke of the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox in al-Shām, which in the context meant the Arab-speaking Greek Orthodox of the whole region. Only once in his text did the expression "Bilād Sūriyā" slip in. It appears as part of the title of the British consul "in Beirut and Syria".[37]

To conclude these observations on the development of geographical terminology, I would like to look at two authors writing during the Tanzimat period. Shidyāq published his book on Lebanon in 1859 with a clear reference to the geographical frame of his work: *The Book on the Information on the Notable Classes in Mount Lebanon*. Not only

30 Shihāb *Lubnān*, I, 79.

31 Ibid., II, 401.

32 Ibid., III, 828, 830, 870.

33 Al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh Ḥawādith*, 1982, 81, 82.

34 Al-ʿAwra, *Tārīkh wilāyat Sulaymān Bāshā*, 108.

35 Ibid., 137.

36 Ibid., 349.

37 Ibid., 363.

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did he freely use the expressions "Lebanon" or "Mount Lebanon" but the term "Syria" also appeared frequently. "Al-Shām" appears only in conjunction with the terms *aqṭār, diyār*, or "Bilād al-Shām." Damascus was only referred to as Dimashq and even the administrative province was now called *wilāyat Dimashq*.

Mishāqa's memoirs and history of the region were written in 1873, when the Egyptian occupation was in the past and even the civil war in Mount Lebanon and the massacre in Damascus were receding into memory. It was a generation since Bilād al-Shām had become object of international relations and a target of major reform programs by the Ottoman government. A newer geographical terminology can be found in Mishāqa's work. In the connection with *wālī* or *vilāyet,* al-Shām still could mean the traditional Ottoman administrative unit. But it no longer stood for Damascus. Birr al-Shām, Bilād al-Shām and simply al-Shām were used as synonyms for Sūriyā. Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār fled to Syria or Bilād al-Shām;[38] the emigrants from Birr al-Shām in Egypt in 1799 wanted to return *ilā bilādihim*;[39] the Egyptians moved against Birr al-Shām in 1831[40] and appointed a *ḥukmdār* for Birr al-Shām from Aleppo to Ghaza; the Egyptian government controls Syria; Ibrāhīm Pasha announced his victory over *al-Bilād al-Shāmiyya wa-Bilād al-Turk*;[41] the Greek Catholic monks served the community in Egypt and in Bilād al-Shām. Lebanon was separate but part of the rest of Birr al-Shām, in fact, it was the poorest part of Bilād al-Shām and many of its inhabitants worked, as Mishāqa observed, "in the cities of Egypt or *Sūriyā*" as servants.[42] The term Sūriyya is as frequently used as al-Shām, Lebanon as frequently as al-Jabal. For the first time we also read the geographical epithet al-Lubnānī.

The last few examples discussed also show a further development: the increasing use of the term "Sūriyya" instead of "Bilād al-Shām." This term, used by the Romans for this region, was clearly reintroduced by European authors. A rapid survey of titles of travel literature shows that up to the middle of the eighteenth century travelers usually referred to the "Levant," the "Holy Land," the "Orient," or Jerusalem as the destination of their travels. In the second half of the eighteenth century a noticeable shift occurred, and from then on "Syria" or "Syria and the Holy Land" became the standard terms to describe the region. It is certainly not accidental that some of the earliest use by Syrian authors of the term *Sūriyā* or *Sūriyya* in Arabic occurs in connection with the translation of the title of a British consul and with the European-induced withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Syria.[43] The use of the term "Birr Sūriyā" as interchangeable with "Bilād al-

38 Mishāqa, *Muntakhabāt*, 5.

39 Ibid., 20.

40 Ibid., 110.

41 Ibid., 120, 140, 119.

42 Ibid., 1, 143, 153.

43 See above.

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Shām" was introduced by the Egyptian occupation army.[44] Especially after the civil war of 1860 the term became widely spread, and in 1865 was used officially to designate a province, *wilāyat Sūriyya.*

Charif Kiwan has shown how the term "Syria," long identified in Europe with a Christian, pre-Islamic period, shifted in its meaning during the time of the Enlightenment to mean the Roman period. Volney elevated the differentiating terminology between "Bilād al-Shām" and "Syria" to an ideological issue in which the former term signified an barbaric age and the latter one of civilization.[45] If Syria was to be part of a modern civilization, it could do so only by reference to its Roman past.

The first intensive encounter Syria had with the modern Europe occurred with the Egyptian occupation and the international crisis this created. The European powers were intensely engaged in this crisis, referring to the whole region persistently as Syria. It is likely that the Egyptians, because of their continuous contacts with Europe over this crisis, adopted the usage of the term "Syria." But the use of the term increased after the withdrawal of the Egyptians, and acquired its own ideological meaning for some Syrians as well as for the Ottoman government. Especially after the intercommunal clashes in Lebanon during the 1840s and the war in 1860 the concept of Syria stood for a new secular society, bridging the abyss of religious strife and leading eventually to a modern, secular nation. It was the intellectuals of the *Nahḍa*, the Bustānīs and the Khūrīs,[46] who promoted this concept. During this period local historiography also begins to make use of the term "Sūriyya": in 1874 Ilyās Maṭar published a history called *al-ʿUqūd al-durriyya fī tārīkh al-mamlaka al-Sūriyya*, followed seven years later by Jurjī Yannī's *Tārīkh Sūriyya*, which deals with Syria as a territorial entity throughout history, with a strong emphasis on the Phoenicians and the kingdom of Palmyra and hardly mentioning the Mamluk and Ottoman rule.[47]

But the Ottomans also shared in this discourse, albeit without the intention of promoting any local nationalism. With the Tanzimat and more intensively since the intercommunal war in Syria 1860, Ottoman rule in Syria tried to present itself in a new light as representative of "civilization" vis-à-vis "barbarity," of "modernity" vis-à-vis "tradition." In other words, it adopted some of the European concepts for the legitimization of imperialist domination. When it established a province called Syria in 1865 the new

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44 Charif Kiwan, "Les Traductions d'une dénomination nationale: la Syrie," in *Construction des nationalités et immigration dans la France contemporaine*, ed. E. Guichard, C. Kiwan, O. Leguillou, N. Manitakis, Paris 1997, 109.

45 Ibid., 106.

46 For the role of Khalīl al-Khūrī see the chapter by Fruma Zachs in this volume and for Buṭrus al-Bustānī see Ussama Makdisi.

47 For a discussion of these two works see Y. Choueiri, "Two Histories of Syria and the Demise of Syrian Patriotism," *MES* 23 (1987), 496-511.

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name was programmatic, reflecting the Ottoman claim of leading this region into the modern age, to progress and civilization.

During the eighteenth century we observe a number of "locally integrated regions" existing in Bilād al-Shām – a condition that changes (but not in a unilinear fashion) only after 1831 with the coming of the Egyptian conquest. But from the end of the eighteenth century until the end of the empire we can observe in the historiographical literature an increasing preoccupation with the region as a whole – and as one integrated region or one that should be integrated. We also can trace a shift from the use of the term "Bilād al-Shām" to "Sūriyya" or "Syria" in its English version. The shift symbolized the transition from a region divided into a number of "locally integrated regions," albeit embedded in the political framework of the Ottoman Empire, into a region which, on the one hand, was firmly reattached to the imperial center but, on the other hand, was also much more strongly integrated within itself and came to be recognized as a cultural, political entity in its own right. The new designation of the region by its name in antiquity, "Syria," also came to be symbol and program for a society deliberately and self-consciously entering the modern age.

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Building a cultural identity:

the case of Khalīl al-Khūrī

Fruma Zachs

In the second half of the nineteenth century, as a result of both local and external influences, a Christian middle class in Beirut began to promote ideas of "Syrian" identity.[1] As noted by Hisham Sharabi, this group tended to see itself as a "bourgeoisie."[2] In fact it included mixture of merchants and intelligentsia.[3] The development of their ideas was influenced by several factors, the most prominent among them being Western penetration, both economic and political, activities of the American Presbyterian missionaries[4] and implementation of the Ottoman restoration in the form of the Tanzimat. These forces influenced the region of Syria by bringing about economic transformations that in turn led to changes in the social structure, particularly in the status of Arab Christians

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1 The terms "Syrian identity" and "Syrian patriotism" are used here to refer to the initial phase – cultural identity or self-identity – that is a prerequisite for national identity. Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities – Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed., London 1991, esp. 17-50. I have chosen the term "Syrian identity" since the identification was mainly a Christian one. Khūrī was one of a group of local Christian Arab intellectuals who in the nineteenth century linked their identity to the region of "Syria" (geographically including the three Ottoman provinces of Aleppo, Sidon, and Damascus that in the nineteenth century covered more or less the same area as today's Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel and Palestine).

2 "The Christian intellectuals, who were most strongly oriented toward European culture and values, tended to see themselves in terms and values and ideals of the European bourgeoisie." Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years, 1875-1914*, Baltimore, London 1970, 2.

3 The special link between merchants and intellectuals and the development of new ideas in Syria is extensively discussed in my doctoral dissertation "From Communal to Territorial Identity: The Emergence of 'the Concept of Syria' 1831-1881" (in Hebrew), Ph.D. dissertation, University of Haifa 1997. As will be mentioned below, such a link existed between Khalīl al-Khūrī and his financier Mīkhā'īl Mudawwar. This chapter, however, focuses mainly on the intelligentsia.

4 For further details see Fruma Zachs, "Toward a Proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria? Revisiting the American Presbyterian Missionaries in the Nineteenth-Century Levant". Forthcoming in *Die Welt des Islams*.

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and especially in Beirut. As a result, a new sort of awareness arose among the latter – Syrian identity.

Until now, historians have considered Buṭrus al-Bustānī to be the most prominent figure representing this group by promoting this idea and contributing to its development.[5] Their analysis is based mainly on his famous lecture, *Khuṭba fī ādāb al-ʿArab*, delivered in Beirut in 1859, which is perceived as promoting the *Nahḍa* – the revival of the Arab language and culture. Although Bustānī does not make use of the term "Syria" in his lecture, he does does indentify the region with its Arab language and culture. Nevertheless, in this lecture there is as yet no clear call for Syrian patriotism. That development became evident when civil war erupted in Mount Lebanon and in Damascus in 1860, which served as a milestone in the history of Syria in general and for Bustānī in particular. From that year he promoted his solution to the problems of the region – Syrian patriotism. It was to be a non-sectarian, cultural identity and would, he believed, bring tranquility to the region and enable all sects to live eventually in harmony.

This chapter will try to shed additional light on the roots of Syrian identity and on the parameters that it included, by focusing on another representative of this middle class – Khalīl al-Khūrī. Although Khūrī did not attract as much attention as Bustānī, his contribution to Syrian identity is, as we shall see, eminently worthy of note. This chapter will offer details of Khūrī's life and ideas, and will show his unique contribution to the emergence of a Syrian patriotism through his construction of a cultural identity for the region of Syria and its population. Cultural identities are about, as Stuart Hall elaborates,

> questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not "who we are" or "where we came from", so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation. They relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself. [6]

Khalīl al-Khūrī (1836-1907)

Khalīl al-Khūrī was born in 1836 in the village of Shuwayfat, Mount Lebanon, to a Greek Orthodox family. Five years after the end of Egyptian rule in Syria, his family moved to Beirut and Khūrī was educated in schools (elementary and secondary) belonging to the Orthodox community of the city. There he gained his knowledge of literary Arabic from such teachers as Naṣīf al-Yāzijī and later learned Turkish and French as

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5 For example, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, London 1962, 99-102.

6 Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London 1996, 4. For further reading on this topic, see E. Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, Cambridge 1997, 1-14.

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well. In his late teens he earned his living working for a merchant firm while also writing poetry and prose.[7] In time, as a Christian intellectual, he drew close to the American missionaries and served as a teacher in their school in ʿAbey.[8] At that time Beirut was developing as an economic center for the region of Syria and at the same time as an important center of modern education and culture. It was inhabited by diplomats, merchants and missionaries from the West, and was an important point of exchange for goods and knowledge between the West and the hinterland of the region of Syria.[9] By the mid-nineteenth century the majority of the city's population were Christians who had the skills to benefit from these developments and were thus able to advance both economically and socially. This atmosphere created a demand for Arabic newspapers in the city, which for the young Khūrī proved highly fortuitous. By the 1850s he was already known as a poet. His knowledge of French and Ottoman Turkish, and his familiarity with Western culture as well as his personal traits, drew people to him. In 1858, after the issue of the Haṭṭ-ı Hümayun decree, Khūrī took advantage of the favorable circumstances and became the first local Arab to publish an Arabic newspaper in Beirut. He also set up a printing press, The Syrian Press, with which to print it.[10] This weekly newspaper was given the title *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*[11] and was financially supported by Mīkhāʾīl Mudawwar,[12] a rich Greek Catholic merchant living in Beirut, who understood the need for such a newspaper to meet the requirements of the growing merchant community in the city.

The late 1850s were a time of severe tension between Maronites, affiliated with France, and Druze, affiliated with Great Britain. The Sublime Porte's representatives in the region thus considered a person of the Orthodox faith to be an advisably neutral choice for editor of Beirut's newspaper and subsequently decided to approve the paper's publication. Such a person, the Ottomans believed, would be able to depict events in

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7 Khalīl al-Khūrī, *al-ʿAṣr al-jadīd*, Beirut 1863; Khalīl al-Khūrī, *al-Samīr al-amīn*, Beirut 1867. Khūrī was described as "the poet of the *Dawla* [*al-ʿUthmāniyya*]" and as "the founder of the new poetry," in an anonymous article about him: "Khalīl al- Khūrī", *al-Hilāl*, 16 (1907), 420.

8 Houghton Library (H.L.), Harvard University, Boston, Series A.B.C.: 16.8.1, vol. 8, part 1, records of the Abeih Seminary, 1848-1878.

9 For additional details see Leila T. Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut*, London 1983, 44-53; Mahmoud Haddad, "The City, the Coast, the Mountain, and the Hinterland: Beirut's Commercial and Political Rivalries in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," in *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler, Stuttgart 1998, 129-153.

10 Other newspapers did exist in the region at the time but none represented a challenge to *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*. For example, the government's Arabic newspaper in Egypt, founded by Muḥammad ʿAlī in 1828, was official in nature and of little interest to the public; *Mirʾāt al-Aḥwāl*, a private newspaper published by Rizq Allāh Ḥassūn in Istanbul, appeared for only a single year (1855); and various other papers were published in the Ottoman Turkish, which few people in Syria could read.

11 At first Khūrī chose the name *al-Fajr al-munīr* (The Rising Dawn) but later changed his mind.

12 See: *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 1 (January 1858), 5 (February 1858).

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Syria and Lebanon objectively. This was one of the conditions that enabled Khūrī to publish his newspaper over a span of fifty years (1858-1911), bringing out almost 3,000 issues.[13] The publication was successful and had acquired 400 regular subscribers within three months of its first appearance. This was a relatively high number, given that the largest part of its circulation was via retail vendors.[14] The content of *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār* was varied and resembled that of most major European newspapers. It dealt with regional news, especially the commercial and economic aspects of Beirut, but also with life in the Arab provinces. It reported foreign news from around the world, together with thoughtful comments on foreign political developments. It published official Ottoman announcements, advertised the appearance of new books, translated novels, and included other announcements and reviews. The paper was both secular and "modern" in its approach and downplayed religious differences, appealing to its readers to "progress" in a Western manner.

Simultaneous with his position as editor, Khūrī was appointed after 1860 to several posts by the Ottoman administration.[15] After the events in Mount Lebanon and Damascus, he became the translator for the Ottoman foreign minister Fu'ād Pasha, who was sent by the Porte to restore tranquility to the region. From this time on Fu'ād became Khūrī's patron. He appreciated Khūrī's talents and became interested in how his newspaper depicted the interests of the Ottoman government.[16] Consequently, the newspaper began to receive a subsidy and was now able to appear twice a week.[17] At the age of 24 Khūrī began to play a certain political role. In 1861, after the creation of the *mutaṣarri-*

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13 Filīb dī Ṭarāzī, *Tārīkh al-ṣiḥāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, 4 vols., Beirut 1913, I, 55-56. In contrast, Agathangel Efimovich Krymskii wrote that the newspaper was published only until 1907. See *Istoria Novoi Arabskoi Literaturyi, XIX – Nachalo XX Beka* (History of New Arab Literature, from the Nineteenth to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century), Moscow 1971, 481. I would like to thank Ms. Olga Borymchuck for translating this text from Russian. Unfortunately, only the first ten years (1858-1868) are available in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. I could not locate later issues either in the U.K. or in the U.S., nor, as far as I know, are they extant in Beirut. Accordingly, this chapter is based on only the first ten years of the newspaper's existence. These years, however, are of special value since this was the time of the Tanzimat under Fu'ād Pasha and ʿAlī Pasha, a period that allowed Khūrī to express some of his ideas relatively freely, thus making it possible to evaluate his ideas and also those of other Christian Arab intellectuals. This situation was to change in the 1870s under the severe censorship of Abdülhamid II, and these strictures are evident in Bustānī's *al-Jinān* at the time (a newspaper published in Beirut in the years 1870-1886). It is reasonable to assume that Khūrī too was limited in expressing his thoughts during those years.

14 In 1859, with the increase in its circulation, the price of the newspaper was lowered and it came to be known, both by foreigners and by the local population, as the "Journal of Syria," as Khūrī himself mentioned. See: Krymskii, *Istoria Novoi*, 487; *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 54 (January 1859); 98 (June 1859), A. Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History*, New York 1995, 31-33.

15 Iskandar ʿĪsā al-Maʿlūf, "Khalīl al-Khūrī al-Lubnānī," *al-Muqtaṭaf*, 33 (1908), 993, 34 (1909), 12-14.

16 Khūrī wrote a *dīwān* glorifying his patron, Fu'ād Pasha. See Khalīl al-Khūrī, *al-Nashāʾid al-fuʾādiyya*, Beirut 1863.

17 Five years later the subsidy ceased, but the newspaper was by now financially viable. Krymskii, *Istoria Novoi*, 503.

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fiyya of Mount Lebanon *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār* became its semi-official mouthpiece.[18] Likewise, when the *vilāyet* of Syria was formed in 1865, this journal became its official organ. In 1870 Khūrī was appointed an inspector of the non-Muslim schools and also became responsible for monitoring libraries in the *vilāyet* of Syria. In the 1870s and 1880s he served as state censor in Beirut. In 1880 the *vālī* put him in charge of the *vilāyet*'s foreign contacts. Both the Ottomans and the West awarded him medals.

Khūrī engaged in a variety of literary activities, as well. He took part in Beirut's various cultural societies, among them al-Jamʿiyya al-ʿIlmiyya al-Sūriyya operating between 1858 and 1860; and he actively supported other Arabic newspapers when they began to take their first steps. He thus became one of the leading figures of the Arabic *Nahḍa* and a prominent persona among the new young generation of journalists in Beirut.[19] Examples of those whom he influenced include Yūsuf Shalfūn, a trainee who later launched the publishing house al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿUmūmiyya; and Khalīl Sarkīs who became publisher of the newspaper *Lisān al-Ḥāl* after having taken his first steps in journalism under Khūrī's tutelage.[20]

Four circles of identity: the new circle – Syrian identity

Khalīl al-Khūrī's contribution was not only in the field of journalism. He understood the role of the newspaper as not only to disseminate news but also to educate and spread new ideas. In this way, as we shall see, he also contributed to the construction of a Syrian identity. Like many intellectuals of his time, Khūrī combined in himself more than one identity. In fact, he interwove four circles of identity: the Eastern (*sharq*), the Ottoman, the Arab, and the new circle that he began to promote – the Syrian. His awareness of these various identities is evident as early as 1859 in the way he described his publication: "dorned by the crown of Syrian glory, set upon the pillars of Arab heroism, and dwelling in eastern bravery."[21] Khūrī saw no contradiction in the circles; he emphasized them in his writing and used them according to the circumstances. A perusal of his newspaper reveals that in the years 1858-1860 he wrote on Arabism, Syrianism, Ottomanism, and 'Easterness' (*sharqiyya*). After the 1860 civil war and until 1861, meaning

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18 Al-Maʿlūf, "Khalīl al-Khūrī ," 34 (1909), 13-14.

19 For further details on Khūrī see Krymskii, *Istoria Novoi*, 480-505; Lūwīs Shaykhū, *Tārīkh al-adab al-ʿarabiyya fī ʾl-rubʿ al-awwal min al-qarn al-ʿishrīn*, Beirut 1926, 28-29; Yūsuf Asʿad Dāghir, *Maṣādir al-dirāsa al-adabiyya*, 2 vols., Sidon 1950, II, 344-347; ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifīn*, 15 vols., Damascus 1907, IV, 116; Jurjī Zaydān, *Tarājim mashāhir al-sharq fī ʾl-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar*, 2 vols., Cairo 1922, II, 121-125; Yūsuf Ilyān Sarkīs, *Muʿjam al-maṭbūʿāt al-ʿarabiyya waʾl-muʿarraba*, 2 vols., Cairo 1929, II, 745-746.

20 Sarkīs, *Muʿjam al-maṭbūʿāt*, II, 1020, 1140; *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 265 (April 1865), 498 (March 1866).

21 *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 104 (December 1859).

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to emphasize secular aspects, he especially dwelt on Syrianism, but from time to time also mentioned Arabism. However, from 1865 onwards he focused mainly on Arabism. These changes in emphasis illustrate the flexibility of his circles.

For Khūrī, the Eastern and Ottoman circles were his global identities, while the Arab and Syrian circles served as his local identities, or what Dawn called "smaller *waṭan*."[22] The East symbolized for him that which was the opposite of the West. He felt it to be his duty, as he emphasized in his newspaper, to encourage the people to acquire an education and become acquainted with modern science. He explained to his readers the need for "civilization" (*tamaddun*), not simply as a copy of the West but rather as the civilization of the East evolving vis-à-vis the West. He believed that the East had served in the past as a source of influence for the West, and now had to strive to rekindle its magnificent past.[23] His attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historical past was carried further in Khūrī's claim that this role was intended for the people of Syria, which he described as *kawkab al-sharq* (the star of the east).[24] At the same time, Khūrī believed that such "progress" could happen only under Ottoman rule – his second circle of identity. Like Bustānī, he often repeated his belief that only in this "new era" (*al-ʿaṣr al-jadīd*) – i.e. the era in which the Tanzimat reforms and the principle of *Osmanlılık*[25] were being applied under Fu'ād Pasha and ʿAlī Pasha – could these changes be achieved,[26] since the Ottoman Empire was acting towards this same goal. He imagined the empire as a big *waṭan* divided into smaller *waṭan*s, one of which was Syria. Thus he construed his own local identity as belonging to a particular community (or territory) within the framework of a multi-religious empire, or a multi-national entity.

Within this framework it was possible for Khūrī to develop his local identity, Syrian, in conjunction with his Arab cultural identity. His writing from 1858 on helps to reveal the nature of his Syrian identity – is what he imagined the shape of "Syria" to be. Khūrī conceived of it as a territorial identity covering approximately the three Ottoman provinces of Aleppo, Sidon, and Damascus. He saw the region of Syria with clearly defined boundaries, and in 1866 he described them in his newspaper as follows: "Syria lies between the river Euphrates to the east and the Mediterranean to the west, between the Arabian Peninsula to the south and Anatolia to the north."[27] He also emphasized these

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22 C.E. Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism," in: *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, Reeva S. Simon, New York, Oxford 1991, 7-8.

23 This attitude is evident especially in his poem "The Wonders of the Times" ("*Muʾjizāt al-ʿaṣr*"). Khūrī, *al-ʿAṣr al-jadīd*, 28-31.

24 *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 1 (January 1858).

25 According to this principle, all the inhabitants of the empire were regarded as Ottoman citizens; it emphasized the link between the individual and the territory in which he lived and not, as previously conceived, with the community to which he belonged.

26 Ibid., 59 (February 1859).

27 Ibid., 408 (May 1866).

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geographical boundaries in the book he published in 1860, *Kharābāt Sūriyya*[28] (Ruins of Syria) which was the first book in the region written in Arabic by a Syrian and bearing the name "Syria" in its title. Here it is important to emphasize that the region was locally known as Bilād al-Shām. Hence, the semiotic meaning of Khūrī's shift from this term, with its Muslim connotation,[29] to "Syria," a Western term predating Islam, is significant. It encapsulates, as we shall see, an affinity to a defined territory, along with a selective non-Muslim past and thus a new identity, with which Khūrī chose to identify.

The book's main aims, according to its author, were to give a detailed description of archaeological sites "from the north and down the length of the map of Syria" (i.e. Greater Syria)[30] but also to impress on the reader the contrast between Syria's magnificent past and its present, in order to imbue the reader with a will to act on its behalf. For example, Khūrī wrote:

> Without doubt, anyone visiting these places [in the Syrian region] encounters nothing but emptiness. Where are the temples of Baalbek and Jerusalem? Where is the Tyrian purple? Where are the workshops of Sidon? Where are the academies of Beirut? ... All is long gone. Her grandeur is laid low, her sanctuaries ruined, the doors shut. ... The land is emptied of dwellers, they [the people] compare ancient Syria with new Syria and wonder, where were the first patriarchs, and where are we today?[31]

In fact, Khūrī's archeological interests served his purpose.[32] Some of the sites described by him no longer existed and yet he dwelt on the pre-Islamic era of the cities, focusing on their Roman, Greek, or especially Phoenician past. Khūrī made extensive use of inventing a glorious non-Muslim heritage for a country with a defined territory and name – Syria. In this he also attempted to shape a collective memory among his readers. The ruins were defined not as Roman or Greek, but as Syrian. The territory was not named Bilād al-Shām, as was customary at the time, but Syria. He chose to construct an imagined Syria, investing this construct with pre-Islamic features in order to create a heritage bridging Muslim-Christian differences. This non-sectarian attitude was evident also in his newspaper, as in an article he published describing Syria as *al-waṭan li-awwal al-jins al-basharī* (land of the first human race), claiming that it has the best water and greatest beauty.[33] Once again we see that Khūrī opted for a non-sectarian

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28 Khalīl al-Khūrī, *Kharābāt Sūriyya*, Beirut 1860. The book is based on a lecture delivered by Khūrī before *al-ʿUmda al-adabiyya li-ishhār al-kutub al-ʿarabiyya* on March 15, 1859.

29 "Shām" meaning "left," which, when facing sunrise in the Hejaz, coincides with "north" as Yemen, i.e. "right," does with south.

30 Khūrī, *Kharābāt Sūriyya*, 7. In style, Khūrī's book is akin to the diaries of Western travelers. It resembles a geographical-archaeological lexicon intended for tourists (or anyone else interested in the Syrian region).

31 Ibid., 5. Also see *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 13 (April 1858).

32 For further details see Sian Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity – Constructing Identities in the Past and Present*, London 1997, introduction, 1-13.

33 *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 143 (January 1861), 164 (April 1861). Khūrī also began publishing chapters from his book *Kharābāt Sūriyya* in his own paper. See: *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 161 (May 1861), 163 (May 1861).

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identity and spoke of enhancing the common parameters of the society. Accordingly, in his writing he presented the Arab language and culture as being at the center of the Syrian identity, as for Khūrī no clear contradiction existed between being "Syrian" and having an Arab cultural identity.

The term "Arab" is problematic. The concept of "the Arab nation" (*al-umma al-ʿarabiyya*) in its modern sense – embracing both Muslims and Christians – apparently made its first appearance in print in Khūrī's paper and only later in other Christian intellectuals' writing. Khūrī's writing contained, therefore, apparently for the first time in local journalism, a modern, secular, linguistic perception of Arab culture and language as part of a cultural identity. This new view stood in opposition to the religious perception that had prevailed in the first centuries following the rise of Islam and connected the Arab language and culture solely with Islam and with Muslims. In this context, a Christian could not be identified as an Arab (only a Muslim could). Thus, Khūrī's identity included the circles he wanted to belong to and the parameters he needed in order to become a part of the society in which he lived. A part of a minority, this is perhaps the way he wanted to be seen by the rest of his society. Hence, and by contrast, the new perception of Arabism, as expressed by Khūrī in his newspaper, was secular; it referred to the cultural identity of the region's inhabitants and thus included both Muslims and Christians.[34] And indeed, Khūrī called on the people to study and revive their own Arab language and culture, and in this way "to restore their honor."[35] His call for the *Nahḍa* was not a goal in itself but mainly a means for creating a common denominator for the Syrian population. Khūrī's plea was not merely theoretical; he also put it into practice. In his newspaper he urged the public to purchase Arabic books, and he himself included in his newspaper excerpts from works of Arabic literature and poetry and Arab history.[36] Some featured Arab literary figures, such as al-Mutanabbī, whose poetry evokes the excitement and heroism of Arab life in the past and includes a great number of Arabic proverbs, and the Sufi poet ʿUmar ibn al-Fāriḍ, who is also known as "Sultan of lovers."[37] In addition to the common cultural treasures of the past, which he hoped to revitalize, Khūrī tried also to provide the people with a shared goal in the present – *ḥubb al-waṭan* (love of the homeland).

Even prior to the civil war of 1860, Khūrī began to use his newspaper to preach tolerance, unity, and the avoidance of conflict, fully aware of the foremost social predicament of the region – internal dissension. During and after the civil war he increased his

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34 *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 5 (June 1858).

35 Ibid., 440 (January 1867).

36 For example, Iskandar Abkāriyūs's book – *Rawḍat al-adab fī ṭabaqāt shuʿarāʾ al-ʿarab*; Aḥmad al-Shidyāq's book *Kitāb sirr al-layl fī ʾl-qalb wa-ʾl-ibdāl*; and Naṣīf Yāzijī's book *Faḍl al-iʿrāb*. *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, in 32 (August 1858), 286 (October 1863), 497 (March 1866).

37 *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, 32 (August 1858), 114 (March 1860), 293 (November 1863); 497 (March 1866).

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calls for unity.[38] Khūrī aspired to see the inhabitants of the land as having a shared identity, despite their religious origins and beliefs. True to these aspirations, his newspaper avoided religious topics and emphasized, from its first issue, its dedication to "serving the mother-land" (*khidmat al-waṭan*).[39] As to how this patriotism might be developed, he provided a solution. He urged his readers to see themselves as belonging to a single family, the Syrian society, and to one homeland, the Syrian homeland. Khūrī simplified the Western notion of patriotism by appealing to the people in a language that spoke to their hearts. He called on them to treat one another with courtesy and tolerance and to create "a public brotherhood and civic love" (*maḥabba ahliyya*).[40] He warned them against division, communal hatred, and sectarian zealotry, which he considered destructive of society. He stressed that personal good stemmed from such "civic love" and from "patriotic brotherhood" (*ulfa waṭaniyya*).[41] In this sense, Khūrī was, to my knowledge, the first intellectual to appeal to the Muslims and Christians of the region using terms such as *al-jumhūr al-sūrī, al-umma al-sūriyya, maʿshar al-sūriyyīn, ashkhās sūriyyīn*, and also *al-fakhr al-sūrī*.[42] Moreover, he emphasized that Syrian patriotism would establish itself if education were made available to all sectors of the society, and he called for the education of women, too.[43] He was aware of the power and influence of journalism, and as the first newspaper editor in Beirut was perhaps also the first intellectual to explain in writing to a relatively wide public such terms as "patriotism" (*ḥubb al-waṭan*), since he perceived himself as a "missionary" in this cause. Trying to explain these concepts to his readers he wrote:

> It is clear [to you] that the first thing, in addition to God's commandment of the welfare and the good of the people, of development and ascent up the ladder of human perfection, is love of the homeland. By love of the homeland we do not mean that a man love the city in which he was born or the gardens around his house or the public alleys and roads; because in this love, which concerns material things, both the stranger and the native can participate, the meaning being the love for one's countrymen as Naṣīf al-Yāzijī expressed in his poem:

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38 Ibid., 29 (July 1858).

39 Ibid., 1 (January 1858). The newspaper included articles by Muslim writers such as Ibrāhīm al-Aḥdab and the poet Maḥmūd Ḥamza of Damascus: ibid., 375 (June 1865). Khūrī tried to show that his newspaper was intended for the entire population, both Christians and Muslims; he therefore printed both the Christian and Muslim dates on each issue. In fact, the paper was once described as "the organ of civility, science, commerce and history." The words "religion" and "politics" were notably absent.

40 Ibid., 125 (May 1860), 165 (June 1861).

41 Ibid., 29 (July 1858).

42 Ibid., 24 (June 1858), 29 (July 1858), 104 (December 1859).

43 Ibid., 42 (October 1858), 77 (June 1859). Khūrī's calls for increased education usually referred to the Muslim population, since he believed that the Christians had a sufficient number of schools: ibid., 386 (December 1865), 440 (January 1867).

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[We] love the children of the land and what exists on it,
and feel so good even with the fearful predator.
we do not vaunt love of the canopy,
but love of those under the cover [the curtain].[44]

Khūrī, then, seems to have absorbed from the West the essence of patriotism but at the same time managed to introduce the concept to his audience in their own words and with their own associations.[45] As an arbitrator of sorts, he transformed new Western ideas into a local interpretation that would best suit his own society and times.

It may seem surprising that Khūrī printed these ideas with Ottoman approval. His newspaper served as the voice of the Ottoman government, and its officials, to say the least, did not object to his ideas. For example, when Qabūlī Efendi (who was in charge of foreign relations and the advisor to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry) visited the Syrian region, he complimented Khūrī for preaching to his countrymen that they were in fact "one people, one *waṭan*, and that it was their duty to love one another."[46] This attitude can be possibly be explained by the Porte's fear of increased Western influence. The events in Mount Lebanon and in Damascus, in particular, may have eased its grip of censorship. The Porte allowed the local elite to express its ideas under Ottoman supervision, preferring, for example, to have Khūrī talk about a local identity within the larger *waṭan* – the empire – rather than see the region with its large Christian population fall under European influence. As long as Christians, such as Khūrī, wanted to remain under the Porte's rule, their ideas were welcomed. Moreover, these were times of reform and Fu'ād Pasha, who knew Khūrī personally, allowed him relative freedom of expression. As a loyal subject, Khūrī knew his limits and did not carry matters to excess. In fact, his ideas were similar to those, that Fu'ād and 'Alī Pasha tried to implement during the Tanzimat period, ideas such as the *Osmanlılık*, which promoted an affinity with one's state. So Ottoman policy not only bestowed legitimacy on Khūrī and other intellectuals but also facilitated and encouraged their activities, as long as it was cultural and not political. Neither Bustānī nor Khūrī wanted to disconnect the region from the Porte. They just aimed to redefine their identity under this umbrella and according to the spirit of the Tanzimat.

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44 Ibid., 31 (August 1858).

45 For example, the term *ḥubb al-waṭan* is taken from the fuller phrase *ḥubb al-waṭan min al-īmān,* which is attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad.

46 Ibid., 218 (April 1862).

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Sources of influence

It may seem somewhat intriguing that the young Khalīl al-Khūrī, just 22 years old at the time of establishing his paper, came up with the idea of Syrian patriotism prior to 1860. This chapter offers two explanations, the first being the intellectual atmosphere in Beirut at the time. Khūrī was part of a group of intellectuals active in the city's cultural societies, authoring books and discussing cultural issues with a patriotic point of view. These societies were particularly interested in a revival of the Arab culture and also in Syria as an entity and a unity. Two of these societies are particularly worthy of mention. The first, al-Jamʿiyya al-Sūriyya li-Iktisāb al-ʿUlūm waʾl-Funūn, operating in the years 1847-1852, included among its members Buṭrus al-Bustānī, who selected eighteen of its numerous lectures and published them as a book in 1852.[47] What emerges most clearly from this collection is that as early as 1852 a group of local Christians had begun to conceive of "Syria" as a single geographically unified region with its own socio-cultural characteristics and a shared history and economy.[48] We can assume that Khūrī, who knew Bustānī and was active in Beirut's cultural life, was acquainted with this collection and its ideas and was possibly influenced by it. Some of his ideas, such as Syria's Phoenician past, can be traced back to this collection. A second society, al-Jamʿiyya al-Sūriyya, operated between the years 1858 and 1860[49] and included Khūrī among its members. Here again he met with similar ideas.

In addition, two other individuals warrant mentioning as having a possible influence on Khūrī. The first, Mīkhāʾīl Mudawwar, was the financier of his newspaper and an active member of the first of the above-mentioned societies. His lecture "On the Origin and Development of Trade" in Syria mentioned the region's pre-Islamic roots and its magnificent past. In it Mudawwar emphasized that the success of the Phoenician cities lay in their highly developed culture and their economic significance as bridges between the West and Syria's hinterland, suggesting that a revival of Syria's former glory depended on enhancing its cultural features and expanding trade through its ports. Of course, Mudawwar, being a merchant, also saw the economic potential in it.[50] Here may lie one explanation for Mudawwar's decision to back Khūrī's newspaper and the ideas it represented. Whatever the case may be, Mudawwar's additional reasons for supporting Khūrī in particular and the interaction between merchants and intelligentsia in nineteenth-century Beirut in general warrants further investigation. A second possible influence was Gregory Wortabet, an Armenian with a close relationship with the American missionaries. In 1856, two years prior to the appearance of *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, Wortabet

47 Buṭrus al-Bustānī, *Aʿmāl al-Jamʿiyya al-Sūriyya*, Beirut 1852.

48 For further details see Fruma Zachs, "Toward a Proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria?"

49 The society re-established itself in 1868.

50 Bustānī, *Aʿmāl al-Jamʿiyya al-Sūriyya*, 43-50.

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published a book (in two volumes) entitled *Syria and the Syrians*. This work, which treated Syria as a geographical entity, albeit with an obvious Christian emphasis, seems a likely source for some of Khūrī's ideas regarding Syria.

An additional influence could be Khūrī's lifelong affiliation with the Greek Orthodox community. He was educated in Orthodox schools and lived among that community. His views regarding Syria may thus have been affected by the structure of the Greek Orthodox patriarchy in the region of Syria: Its Patriarch was based in Damascus, and it controlled the regions known today as Syria and Lebanon. This, coupled with the fact that the Greek Orthodox community was spread throughout the region, may have brought its members to see the region as a whole and to feel internally affiliated to it.[51] It comes as no surprise, then, that most nineteenth-century authors who chose Syria as their main topic were of the Greek Orthodox faith, among them Khalīl al-Khūrī.[52] The structure of their patriarchy might thus have served as a basis for developing a notion of one large geographical entity, the feeling of belonging to it and the desire to see it advance.

An opposite case was that of the Maronites, who were greatly influenced by the French and hence treated by the Ottomans with some suspicion. Furthermore, toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, their external affiliation increased when they became subject to the control of the Pope in Rome. Last but not least, the Maronites, based mainly in the Mount Lebanon, had a more localized view of the region, eventually contributing to the emergence of a Lebanese identity.

Conclusion

It would be misleading to relate the rise and development of the Syrian identity only to Buṭrus al-Bustānī and the events of 1860. It was a process that had evidently begun even prior to 1860 and had developed over a long period; and yet the events of 1860 served as a catalyst that further promoted the concept. It developed among a stratum of Christian intelligentsia in Beirut that included Khalīl al-Khūrī. He believed that a sense of Syrian identity could emerge from a reform that would arise from within the society but would have to be implemented under the sponsorship of the Ottoman government. His ambitions were cultural, not political. He did not aim to win Syrian independence but aspired as a Christian to define his identity and his cultural consciousness within the larger framework of a Muslim empire.

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[51] Its Patriarch maintained a good relationship with the Porte and even cooperated with it in opposing the Catholics and their Pope. Perhaps this can contribute to the fact that the members of this faith saw Syria as a single region, but as an integral part of the empire.

[52] Other examples are Jurjī Yannī, who wrote a book entitled *Tārīkh Sūriyya* in 1881, and Ilyās Maṭar, who wrote *al-ʿUqūd al-durriyya fī 'l-mamlaka al-Sūriyya* in 1874.

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A brief comparison with Buṭrus al-Bustānī, one of his obvious sources of influence, casts further light on Khūrī's unique contribution. Even in 1858, prior to the events of 1860, while Bustānī was still focusing mainly on Arab cultural identity, Khūrī became the first to launch publicly the notion of a Syrian *waṭaniyya* – i.e. Syrian patriotism – through his newspaper. In other words, Khūrī was the first to transform the idea of Syrian patriotism into a real possibility and to create the notion of "an imagined community of Syrians." In this sense, his press constituted an important tool for the crystallization and propagation of the Syrian idea.

In addition, Khūrī gave further meaning to the construct of "Syria" by publishing a book about its archeology, a first of its kind, which helped to define a "Syrian" cultural identity, since, in the words of Hall "identities are about questions of using the resources of history." By defining the ruins as "Syrian," Khūrī made extensive use of inventing a glorious non-Muslim heritage for a country with a defined territory and name – Syria.

Khalīl al-Khūrī seems to have been somewhat overlooked by historians. Why did Khūrī, an intellectual who managed to publish a newspaper over a span of more then fifty years, even through the reign of Abdülhamid II, not gain as much attention as Bustānī? Two explanations seem perhaps most plausible: accessibility of sources and timing. In the 1850s Khūrī became famous among the young generation of intellectuals in Beirut, especially the journalists; but in the 1860s, as he became increasingly identified with the Ottomans, his name was mentioned less. Bustānī, on the other hand, was closer to the American Presbyterian missionaries and thus also to the West. Possibly this explains why it is possible to find considerable archival material on Bustānī, especially in Western sources such as the missionaries' archives and in local archives, whereas material relating to Khūrī is limited, as far as I know, to some occasional mentions in the Ottoman archives and in Arab literature. Since a large part of the research on Arab intellectual history has relied on the West's archives, scholars tend to be less familiar with Khūrī than with Bustānī. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that even though the Syrian identity was partly developed under the Western influence in the region, it was the local Arab Christians who gave it not only its final shape and content but perhaps also served as some of its first heralds.

A second explanation for Khūrī's relative anonymity is the matter of his timing. He promoted Syrian patriotism at a time of relatively tranquility, whereas Bustānī began to promote similar ideas at a moment in history at which the region was caught up in local upheavals and conflict between sects and became a focus of international interest. The contribution of Bustānī to the emergence of the Syrian identity is undeniable, but one must bear in mind that he was not the main force driving towards this goal; important figures, Khūrī among them, helped shape this identity.

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Reshaping Damascus: social change and patterns of architecture in late Ottoman times[1]

Stefan Weber

Cities are heterogeneous structures of social organization. Thousands of men and women carry out their daily lives within this complex urban system and leave their mark on the city's appearance. Cities are an expression of the collective action of their inhabitants, corresponding to cultural traditions, given urban and natural environments, people's understanding of urban space, historical developments, and concepts of cultural identity. Cultural changes, often accompanied by shifts in individual and collective identities, can be observed where human action takes place: in public and private architecture as well as in the general urban fabric. Urban centers are shaped by conventions and organization of a society in the same way that houses are influenced by individual tastes and the requirements of organization of private life. In this sense the physical appearance of cities provide a rich source for the study of urban culture – especially in

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[1] I would like to thank Steven MacPhillips for his patient help with the English text and Jens Hanssen and especially Marianne Boqvist for their critical reading.

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The Syrian National Archives (Markaz al-Wathā'iq al-Tārīkhiyya) will be abbreviated as MWT, S for *sijill* and W for *wathīqa*. The Public Record Office in London as PRO (FO = Foreign Office) and the Politisches Archiv of the Auswärtiges Amt in Bonn as AA. The yearbook of the Ottoman Province of Syria (Sūriyye Vilāyetini Sālnāmesi) will be abbreviated *Sālnāme* volume (year *hijrī* / year *mīlādī*) page.

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times of cultural change. This is also true for the interpretation of collective and individual identities.

Four hundred years of Ottoman rule (1516-1918) have left a distinctive imprint on the urban centers of Syria. Ottoman concepts of architecture have had a tangible influence on the institutions of Syria's cities. The capital of the Ottoman province of Syria (*eyālet Shām-e Sharīf/wilāyat Sūriyya*), Damascus, was significantly modified by the construction of public buildings and houses, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The aim of this chapter is to analyze some of the changing aspects of urban layout and architecture and try to understand wether they are manifestations of cultural change and identity.

Building modern Ottoman Damascus

Following the Tanzimat and the efforts of centralization and modernization during the course of the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the city of Damascus, like many other Ottoman cities, witnessed far-reaching changes in its urban texture.[2] The return of Ottoman central power through its enlarged facilities of administration, transportation (new streets, steam boats, and later railways), and communication (telegraph) connected the town to a new international network and had an overwhelming impact on Damascus. The urban texture of the city changed rapidly during the decades after the provincial reforms of 1864 right to the end of Ottoman rule in Damascus in 1918. The city itself became the object of extensive town planning carried out by a completely new administrative body.[3] A new water system, electric streetlights and tramways were installed throughout the city between 1906 and 1907. Many streets in the old town, *intra* and *extra muros*, were enlarged and various new

[2] See, for the urban development of Damascus at that time, D. Sack, "The Historic Fabric of Damascus and its Changes in the 19th and at the Beginning of the 20th Century," in *The Syrian Land, Processes of Integration and Fragmentation in Bilād al-Shām from the 18th to the 20th Century*, ed. T. Philipp and B. Schaebler, Stuttgart 1998, 185-202; D. Sack, *Damaskus, Entwicklung und Strukturen einer orientalisch-islamischen Stadt*, Mainz 1989, 38 ff.; S. Weber, "Ottoman Damascus of the Nineteenth Century: Artistic and Urban Development as an Expression of Changing Times," in *Art Turc/Turkish Art, Tenth International Congress of Turkish Art; Genève–Geneva 17-23 September 1995*, Geneva 1999, 731-740.

[3] For the new administrative system which introduced administrative councils (*majlis/majālis*) on many levels of urban organization and which had very strong integrative powers, see ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz M. ʿAwwāḍ, *al-Idāra al-ʿuthmāniyya fī wilāyat Sūriyya 1864-1914*, Cairo 1969, 61 ff.; Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922*, Princeton 1980; Carter V. Findley, "The Evolution of the System of Provincial Administration as viewed from the Centre," *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, ed. David Kushner, Jerusalem, Leiden 1986, 5 ff.; Moshe Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine 1840-1861. The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society*, Oxford 1968, 31 f.; Mahmud Yazbak, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period, 1864-1914: A Muslim Town in Transition*, Leiden 1998, 28 ff.

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streets were built throughout the city. Due to an enormous demographic growth, new urban areas were settled and whole new quarters of the city founded (e.g. Muhājirīn, ʿAfīf, ʿArnūs, Shuhadāʾ, Ḥijāz, Barāmka and Qaṣṣāʿ: see fig. 1).

With the laying out of Marja Square a new public center was founded close to the first Ottoman *sarāy* of the sixteenth-century Darwīshiyya Street (see fig. 2). Numerous administrative buildings, (such as the municipality building, two *sarays*, police headquarters, law court etc.), hotels, and modern transport facilities (railway stations and tramway headquarters) were built.[4] Public places such as parks, coffee houses, and theaters were located there and provided a space for growing public life and discussion.

The new Ottoman society

Within the Damascene elites this adoption of new principles of shaping public and private architecture was accompanied and represented by titles, fashion, and higher education; the best known example of this new fashion was the *ṭarbūsh* (fez) which replaced the turban. Images of Damascene street scenes at the beginning of the twentieth century indicate that throughout different social classes the *ṭarbūsh* had become the most prominent headwear. Other elements of clothing changed as well, and became a sign of a new style of living. Moreover, titles like Bey (Bik), Efendi, and Pasha were lavishly granted. Damascus society was changing, not least because of education reforms and new print media. In the last five decades of Ottoman rule, more then seventy schools were founded in the city – expanding the intellectual horizons of their pupils by new curricula. Newspapers, magazines, and the increasing number of printed books played an important role in an intellectual innovation. The middle- and upper-class career paths, characterized by academic, military, and civil service, are evidence of a vivid and unprecedented exchange between Damascus and Istanbul. Ottoman state schools, military and administrative institutions, and new transport and communication links between the two cities facilitated the increasing exchange that developed between the center of the empire and one of its most important provincial capitals. Even before the new law of citizenship in 1869 people in the empire were no longer Ottoman subjects (*reʿāya/raʿāyā*) but Ottoman citizens (*tebaʿa/tabaʿ*): People from Damascus who had profited from the new system or worked in the enlarged administration, and Syrian graduates from the Mülkiye in particular, became protagonists of modernization within

[4] See, for the Marja Square, S. Weber, "Der Marǧa-Platz in Damaskus – Die Entstehung eines modernen Stadtzentrums unter den Osmanen als Ausdruck strukturellen Wandels (1808-1918)" *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 10 (1998), 291-344, Taf. 77-88; and a summary in Weber, "Ottoman Damascus," 732 ff.

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Ottoman society.[5] Dressed as modern Ottomans they introduced patterns of a new style of living and of urban organization to the provinces of the empire.

The continuously growing Ottoman character of the townscape had started with the modernization of the urban fabric of Damascus. But who built modern Ottoman Damascus? What ideas influenced and motivated the owners of the buildings? Was it only the Ottoman administration that was modernizing the city, or were private individuals and groups of people belonging to other social classes involved as well? The example of the *sūq* will help us to answer these questions.

The modernization of a traditional urban institution: the late Ottoman *sūq* (bazaar)

The *sūq*, the commercial center of the city, is a good example of how urban institutions changed. The building activities in the *sūq* districts, *intra* and *extra muros*, were particularly impressive. Nearly everything was rebuilt and, unlike bazaars in other towns of the empire, several bazaars in Damascus conserve their late Ottoman structure. Starting in the west at Marja Square, new or renovated bazaars connected the new city center with the old markets at Taḥt al-Qal'a. In this quarter huge new *sūq*s were built to the south and west of the citadel and led from there to the Umayyad Mosque and its surrounding markets (see fig. 3). In addition, the traditional Ottoman bazaar area to the south and southwest of the Umayyad Mosque was heavily restructured. *Sūqs* such as al-Ḥamīdiyya, al-Khayyāṭīn, al-Buzūriyya and Sūq Midḥat Bāshā were widened, and wide shopping streets now connected the old city center to the new one in the west of the city.[6]

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5 See, for the new social and intellectual elite, Corinne Lee Blake, *Training Arab-Ottoman Bureaucrats: Syrian Graduates of the Mülkiye Mektebi 1890-20*, Princeton 1991. See further David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform. Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria*, New York, Oxford 1990; Caesar E. Farah, "Reformed Ottomanism and Social Change," in: *La Vie sociale dans les provinces arabes à l'époque ottomane*, ed. A. Temimi, Zaghouan 1988, 139-149; Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*, New York 1996.

6 See, for the *sūq* of Damascus, Nu'mān Qasāṭilī, *al-Rawḍa al-ghannā fī Dimashq al-Fayḥā'*, Beirut [1879] 1982, 100 ff.; Nāṣir al-Rabbāṭ, "Muqaddima li-dirāsat taṭawwur al-sūq fī madīnat Dimashq min al-qarn al-sābi' ḥattā l-qarn al-tāsi' 'ashar mīlādī," *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes* 38-39 (1988-1989), 75-104; 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rīḥāwī, "Khānāt madīnat Dimashq," *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes* 25 (1975), 47-82; G. Saba and K. Salzwedel, "Typologie der Chane in der Altstadt von Damaskus," Ph.D. thesis, Hamburg 1981; Sack, *Damaskus*, 33, map 11; Mohamad Scharabi, "Der Sūq von Damaskus und zwei traditionelle Handelsanlagen: Khān Jaqmaq und Khān Sulaimān Pāshā," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 1 (1983), 285-305; Qutayba al-Shihābī, *Aswāq Dimashq al-qadīma*, Damascus 1990; Stefan Weber, "The Transformation of an Arab-Ottoman Institution: The Sūq (Bazaar) of Damascus from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century," in *Seven Centuries of Ottoman Architecture. "A Supra-National Heritage,"* ed. N. Akın, A. Batur and S. Batur, Istanbul 2000, 244-253; Fouad Yahia, "Inventaire archéologique des cara-

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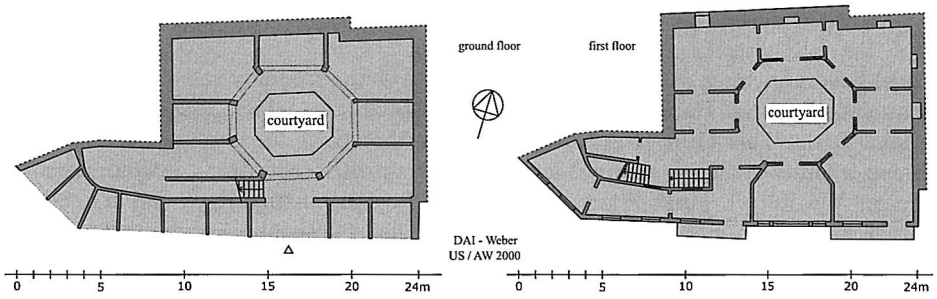
The layout of the modernized *sūqs*

The new *sūqs* looked quite different from their predecessors. With their modern design – their regular *façades à la mode* on two floors, large shops with glassed showcases, stylish barrel-vaulted metal roofing, and their new construction materials such as steel beams – they corresponded more to the modern arcades than to the image of the old narrow, dark bazaars. The Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya is a good example of this new style of commercial building (see figs. 4, 5). In this almost straight bazaar street, nearly 450m long, the 8.70m to 9.90m distance between the two rows of shops is much wider than in a conventional *sūq*. The structure of the façades is regular for hundreds of meters. The shops are much more spacious than before, when they were not meant to be entered – the customer was served by the shopkeeper while standing outside. Now the window displays and showcases of glass tempted the client to come in. Several shops had a second-floor storeroom while others were open on two floors. The traditional, mainly plain or gabled wooden roofing was replaced by huge barrel-vaulted wooden constructions in the 1870s and 1880s. Later, after a devastating fire in 1912, these were succeeded, by order of the governor Nāẓim Pasha, by the barrel-vaulted metal roofing that we know today (see fig. 5).[7]



Plan 1: Wakālat al-ʿAshshā, ground plan, ground floor and first floor

vansérails de Damas," Ph.D. thesis, Aix-en-Provence n. d.; Fu'ād Yaḥyā, "Jard atharī li-khānāt Dimashq," *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes*, 31 (1981), 67-106.

7 PRO (FO 618-3/April 30, 1912). Compare, for the new roofing as well Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Wulāt Dimashq fī ʾl-ʿahd al-ʿuthmānī*, Damascus 1949, 94, fn. 3; Qutayba al-Shihābī, *Dimashq, tārīkh wa-ṣuwar*, Damascus 1990, 146; Aḥmad Waṣfī Zakariyyā, *al-Rīf al-sūrī*, 2 vols., Damascus 1957, II, 345.

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It was not only the bazaar streets themselves that were changed. The organization of the whole commercial district altered as well. No new baths (*khāns*) were built. Instead, a type of *wakāla* appeared for the first time, which was different in function to the *khāns*. Changes in transportation, especially the introduction of steamboats and trains, meant that huge storage capacities were no longer needed. The little storage rooms of the shops in the second story of the modern *sūqs* provided sufficient space. The new style hotels at Marja Square, some of them with commercial and storage units, such as the building of Aḥmad ʿIzzat Pasha al-ʿĀbid (1851-1924), drew the former clients of the *khāns* for overnight stays.[8] Consequently the *wakālas* from the turn of the century do not have the function of depots or of hotels. They were built specifically as shopping malls, and have very small courtyards, modern façades, and glass-fronted shops (see plan 1).

But who built the new commercial buildings? Who changed the shape, function, and style of *sūqs* and *khāns* in order to correspond to shifts in the trade systems and new tastes? Who modernized the commercial center of the city? In my survey of more then fifty *sūqs*, *khāns*, and *wakālas* built or rebuilt in this period, I could find no traces of building activity by foreigners. All these buildings (except banks) were erected by Ottoman governors, administrative councils, or local individuals. In the following pages I will provide some examples to demonstrate who was involved and how these changes happened.

The municipality and the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya

Some governors, such as Midḥat Pasha (1878-80) were especially active in remaking the commercial center. He built the long and widened *sūq*, which bears his name, Sūq Midḥat Pasha. This 470m-long bazaar street was directly to the north of the old Straight Street, a street-piercing measure designed to align this central axis of the street (the ancient Via Recta). Furthermore, he enlarged the Sūq al-Buzūriyya and framed both bazaar streets with modern façades. Some of the shop furnishings of the late nineteenth century are still there, and provide an image of the original *sūq*. On the other hand, the new institution of the municipality (*al-majlis al-baladī*) played an important role in creating the modern texture of the city. The municipality was introduced in Damascus following the provincial reforms of 1864. This modern urban institution, consisting of elected members of the public, was responsible among others things for urban planning, based largely on new principles. Owing to Ottoman yearbooks (*sālnāme*) we are well

[8] See Scharabi, "Sūq von Damaskus," 289, fn. 23; al-Shihābī, *Dimashq*, 60 f.; Weber, "Marǧa-Platz," no. 31. See, for Aḥmad ʿIzzat Pasha al-ʿĀbid Weber, "Zeugnisse," 48 ff.

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informed as to who was elected to this council.[9] Unlike in Istanbul, Alexandria, or Jerusalem, the municipality of Damascus was not controlled directly or indirectly by foreign interests or non-Ottomans.[10] By law only an Ottoman subject of at least 30 years, who was not employed in a foreign institution, had full civil rights, and only a citizen who paid a yearly tax of at least 100 *ghirsh* on his property had the right to put himself forward as a candidate for the municipal elections.[11] The *sālnāmes* indicate that the 142 persons who were elected members of the municipality between 1871 and 1900 originated from about a hundred different Damascus families. It appears that no foreigner sat on the council during this time. This is an important consideration for the modernization of Damascus' urban structures such as the *sūq*.

The enormous and famous Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya, for example, was erected due to this publicly elected council of urban notables. Its eastern part was started in 1301/1883-1884 and was finished in 1304/1886 or 1889 when it was first covered by a barrel-vaulted wooden roof and connected the narrow Sūq al-Jadīd with the Sūq al-Miskiyya next to the Umayyad Mosque. It was cut through a former residential quarter as a street-piercing measure. The Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya and other new commercial buildings – such as *wakālas* or smaller *sūqs* branching off the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya – were erected on house plots. The new bazaar street was a very significant urban project, because now the old city center of the Umayyad Mosque in the east was connected with the *sūqs* of the new city center at Marja Square in the west. It was not only members of the municipality who seem to have been involved in the planning process of the *sūq*, but members of other families as well.

The Mardam Beks, one of the most important families of the time, erected several modern-style commercial buildings close to the citadel.[12] Among them are the Sūq al-

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9 The Ottoman yearbooks for the province of Damascus exist in 32 volumes between the years 1285/1868-1869 and 1318/1900-1901. It lists among many other things some undertakings of this council and its members.

10 Compare Ruth Kark, "The Jerusalem Municipality at the End of Ottoman Rule," *Asian and African Studies* 14 (1980), 120 ff.; M. Reimer, "Urban Regulation and Planning Agencies in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Alexandria and Istanbul," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* (1996), 1-27; Steven T. Rosenthal, *The Politics of Dependency. Urban Reform in Istanbul*, Westport 1980, 101 ff.; S. T. Rosenthal, "Minorities and Municipal Reform in Istanbul, 1850-1870," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. B. Braude and B. Lewis, Princeton 1982, 369-385.

11 In the *al-Shām* newspaper, 74 (Rajab 27, 1315/1897). Every male Ottoman subject of at least 25 years, with impunity and all rights, and who paid a yearly tax of at least 50 *ghirsh* on his property had the right to vote. See also Kark, "The Jerusalem Municipality," 123; PRO (FO 618-3 / April 6.4.1903). For every polling a special council was set up to control the elections. Compare *al-Shām*, 73 (Rajab 21, 1315/1897).

12 See, for the Mardam Bek family, Muḥammad Āl Taqī 'l-Dīn al-Ḥusnī, *Kitāb muntakhabāt al-tawārīkh li-Dimashq*, ed. Kamāl al-Ṣalībī, 3 vols, Beirut 1979, II, 891 f.; Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism. The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920*, Cambridge 1983, 41; Khalīl Mardam Bek, *Kitāb waqf al-wazīr Lālā Muṣṭafā Bāshā wa-yalīhi kitāb waqf Fāṭima Khātūn*, Damascus 1925; Tamīm Ma'mūn Mardam Bek, *Tarājim āl Mardam Bek fī khamsat qurūn, 906-1419 h./1500-1998*, Damascus 1998, I, 2 ff.; Muḥammad Jamīl al-Shaṭṭī, *A'yān Dimashq fī 'l-qarn al-thālith 'ashar wa-niṣf al-qarn al-rābi' 'ashar*, Da-

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Būrṣ/Sūq al-ʿAṣrūniyya al-Jadīd and Sūq Mardam Bek/al-Ṭaḥḥān on the northern side of the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya and two *wakālas* on the southern side. It is interesting to note that private houses and a graden had previously stood where the Mardam Bek buildings were located. A court record of 1286/1869 mentions two houses of Muḥammad Mardam Bek and his son, ʿUthmān Mardam Bek and a garden of the Kīlānī *waqf* rented by the Mardam Bek family, exactly in this location.[13] This is why the plots of the eastern Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya are not as regular as one might expect from such new-drawn planning. The edges of the commercial buildings most probably recall those of the houses and the garden (see fig. 4). The brothers ʿAlī (1225/1810-1305/1887) and ʿUthmān Mardam Bek (1235/1819-1820 - 1304/1886-1887) were two of the most important figures at that time and were among other members of the highest administrative council of the province, the *majlis al-idāra*.

It seems that the Mardam Beks were involved in the planning of the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya in cooperation with the municipality. Certainly they could expect high profits from commercial buildings here in the largest *sūq* of Damascus, which became even more prominent in 1894. In that year the western part of the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya – first known as the Sūq al-Jadīd – was opened to the public. To allow the construction of this new *sūq*, the older Sūq al-Jadīd, which ran parallel to the southern side of the citadel, was torn down and the moat in between was filled. Here, unlike in the eastern Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya, it then became possible to lay out the plots of land for the shops in a regular manner. In this way the impressive *sūq*, which was named after Sultan Abdülhamid II, was completed before the turn of the century on Damascene initiative.

The Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya had an enormous impact on the city and its new layout, recalling contemporary arcades, and became the model for other *sūqs*. Possibly the longest shopping arcade in the world at the turn of the century, it is an impressive example of the successful modification of a classical urban institution in the light of modernity.[14] This change in design and redefinition of commercial buildings must have been a conscious effort. The famous journalist Khalīl Sarkīs (1258/1842-1333/1915) wrote proudly in 1898 comparing to contemporary buildings in Europe: "The *sūqs* of Damascus are so

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mascus 1994, 316, 326; Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics. Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Stuttgart 1985, 104 f., 211; Weber, "Zeugnisse," 53 ff.

13 MWT (MSh) S598/W154 (1286/1869).

14 The 450m-long Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya is noticeably longer then any arcade in Europe. The famous Galleria Vittorio Emanuelle II in Milan (1865-1877) amounts to a total length of 301.72m (longitudinal axis 196.62m, transversal axis 105.10m). The Passage du Caire in Paris (1799), the largest one in the city, consists of three branches that run up to a total length of 370m. The Passage Brady in London (1828) had a total length of 216m. For these arcades and others, see J.F. Geist, *Passagen: ein Bautyp des 19. Jahrhundert*, München 1969, 228 f., 261, 284.

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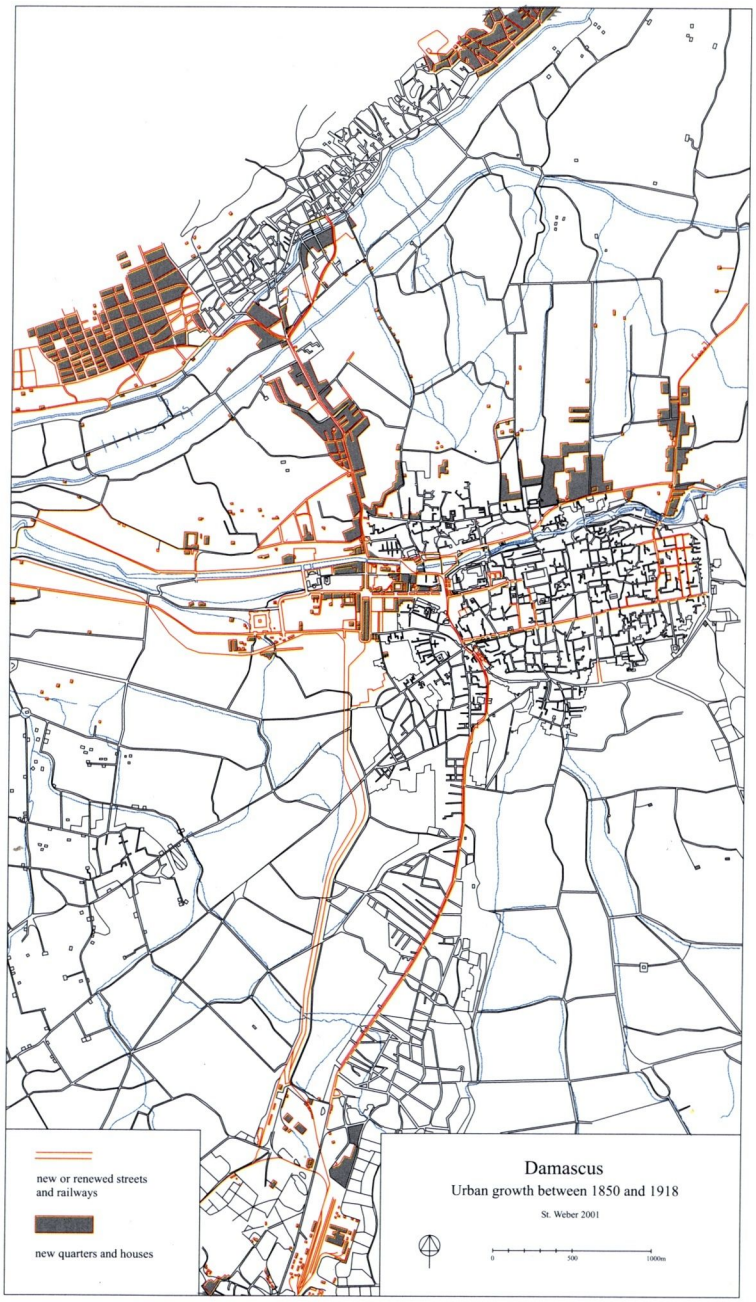

Fig. 1: Urban growth between 1850 and 1918

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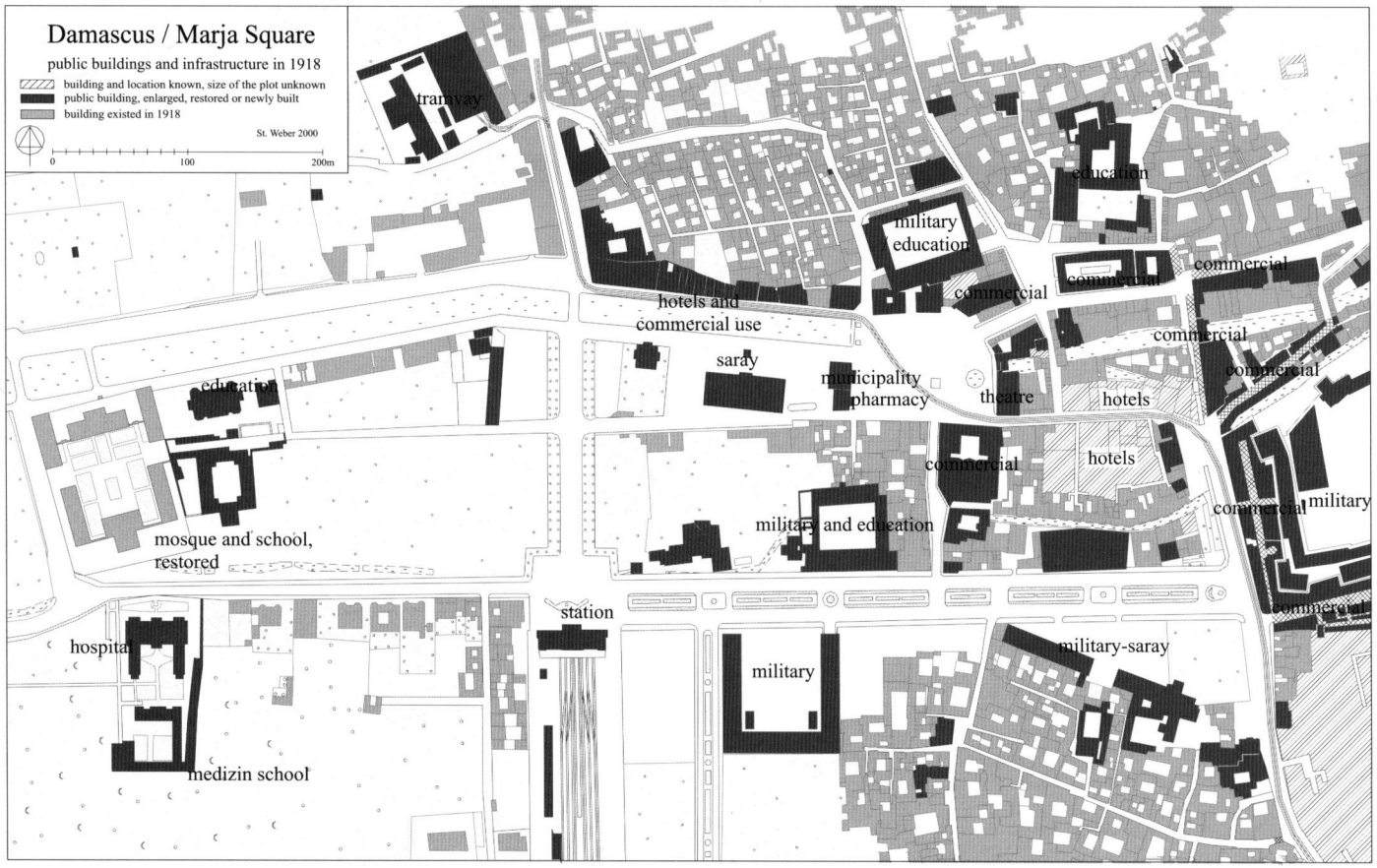

Fig. 2: Public buildings and infrastructure at the Marja Square 1918

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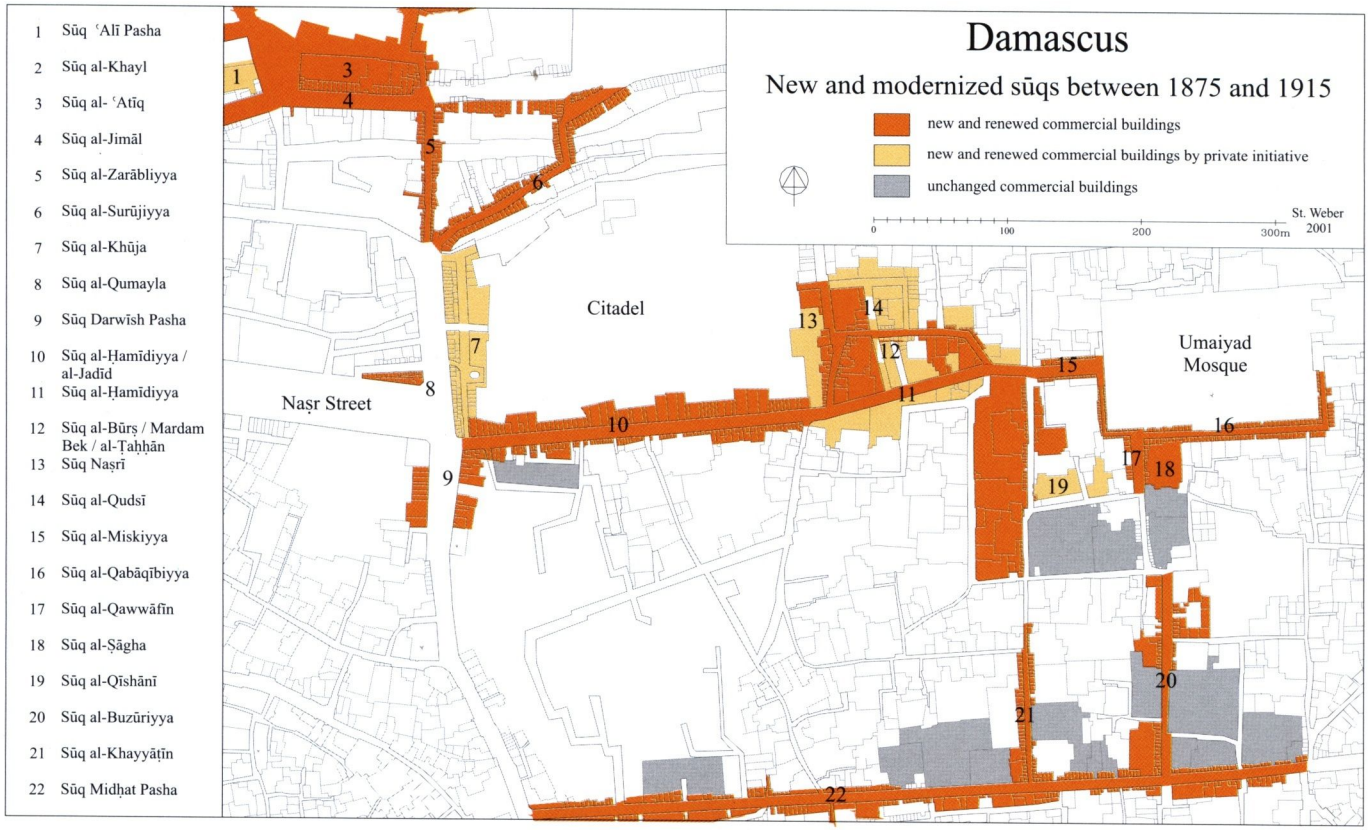

Fig. 3: New and modernized *sūqs* between 1875 and 1915

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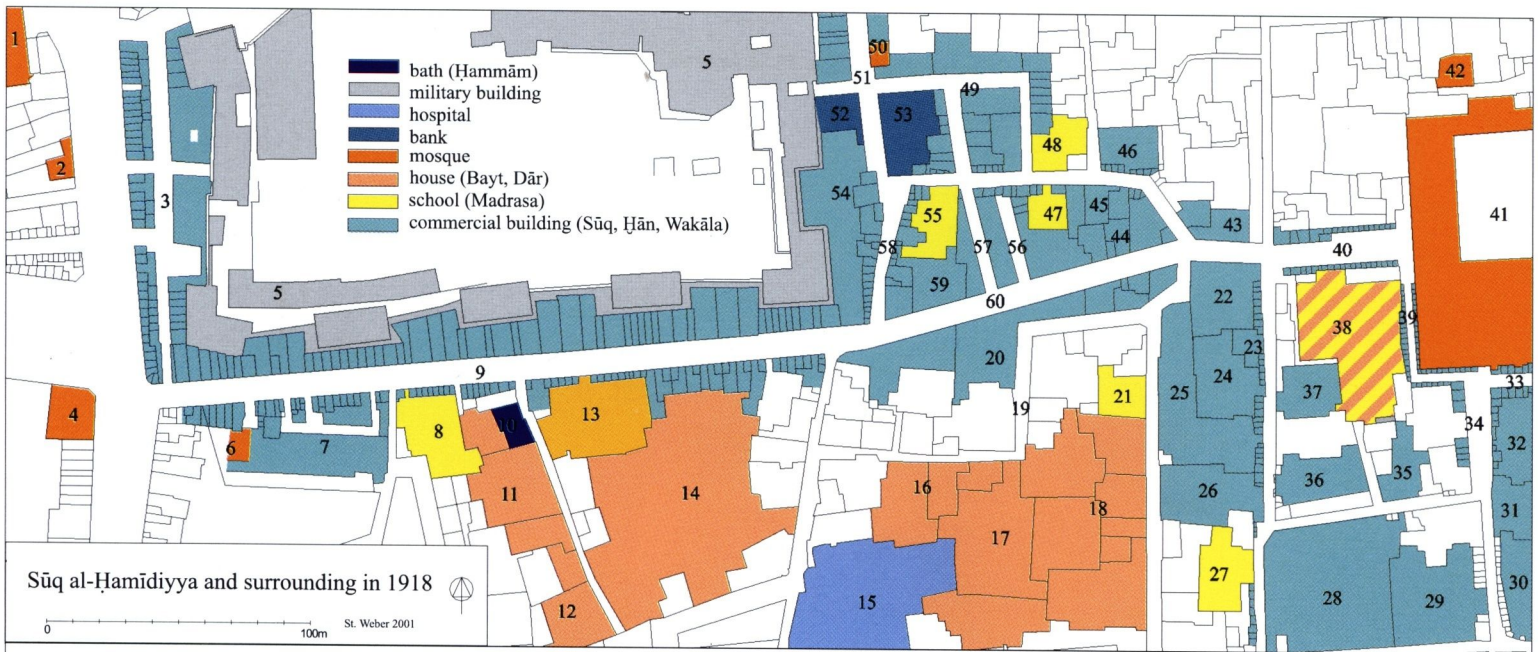

1	Sanjaqdār-Mosque	11	Bayt Muḥammad Pasha al-ʿAẓm	21	Madrasat Sulaymān Bāšā al-ʿAẓm	31	Ṣān al-Safarjalānī	41	Umaiyad Mosque	51	main gate of the citadel / Bāb al-Qalʿa
2	Nāʿūra-Mosque	12	Bayt Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Qudsī (1878)	22	Khān al-Murādiyya	32	Sūq al-Ṣāgha	42	Turbat Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn	52	German Palestine Bank
3	Sūq al-Khūja	13	Takiyya al-Aḥmadiyya	23	Khān ash-Shaykh Qaṭanā al-Ṣaghīr	33	Sūq al-Qabāqībiyya	43	Wakālat al-ʿAshshā	53	Ottoman Bank
4	Sīdī-Khalīl-Mosque	14	Bayt Ḥikmat Pasha Mardam Bek	24	Khān ash-Shaykh Qaṭanā al-Kabīr	34	Sūq al-Qawwāfīn	44	Wakālat Zind al-Ḥadīd	54	Sūq Naṣrī
5	Citadel	15	Bīmāristān al-Nūrī	25	Bedesten of Murād Pasha	35	Wakālat	45	shop with Turbat Qāḍī ʿAṣrūn	55	Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya
6	Abū Harīra-Mosque	16	Bayt Aḥmad Mukhtār Mardam Bek	26	Khān al-Zaʿfaranjiyya	36	Sūq al-Qīshānī	46	Wakālat al-Murādī	56	Sūq Mardam Bek / al-Ṭaḥḥān
7	Sūq al-Arwām	17	Bayt ʿAbd al-Qādir Mardam Bek	27	Madrasa al-Ḥijāziyya	37	Khān al-Ḥaramayn	47	Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Nūriyya	57	Sūq al-Būrṣ / al-ʿAṣrūniyya al-Jadīd
8	Madrasa al-Qajmāsiyya	18	Waqf Sulaymān Pasha al-ʿAẓm	28	Khān al-Ḥarīr	38	Bayt ash-Shaykh Qaṭanā	48	Madrasat al-ʿAṣrūniyya	58	Sūq al-ʿAṣrūniyya
9	Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya / al-Jadīd	19	alley al-Fakhr al-Rāzī / al-Māristān	29	Khān al-Tutun	39	Sūq	49	Sūq al-Qudsī	59	Wakāla
10	Ḥammām al-Bāshā	20	trade building Mardam Bek / al-Qudsī	30	Khān al-Ṣadrānī	40	Sūq al-Miskiyya	50	Khandaq-Mosque	60	Sūq al-Ḥamīdīya

Fig. 4: Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya and surroundings

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Fig. 5: Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya (collection Lemke)



Fig. 6: Sūq ʿAlī Pasha (collection Weber)

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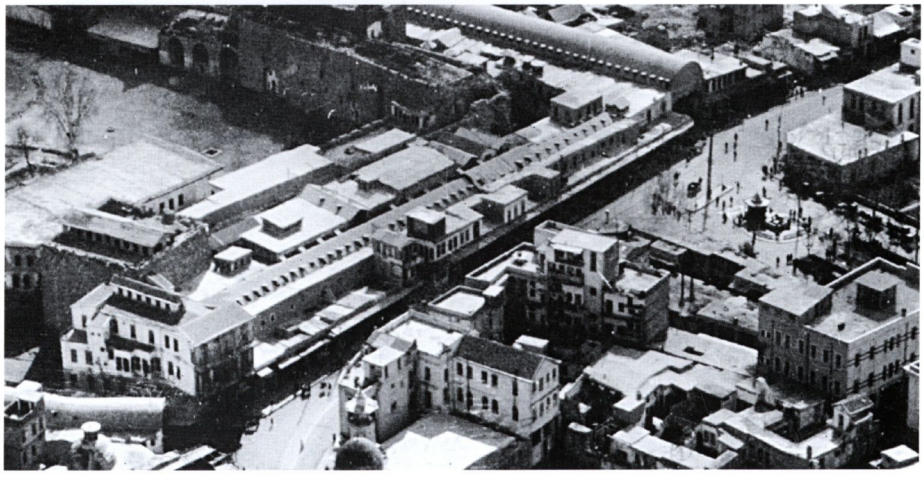
Fig. 7: Sūq al-Qīshānī

Fig. 8: Sūq al-Khūja
(source: IFAPO)



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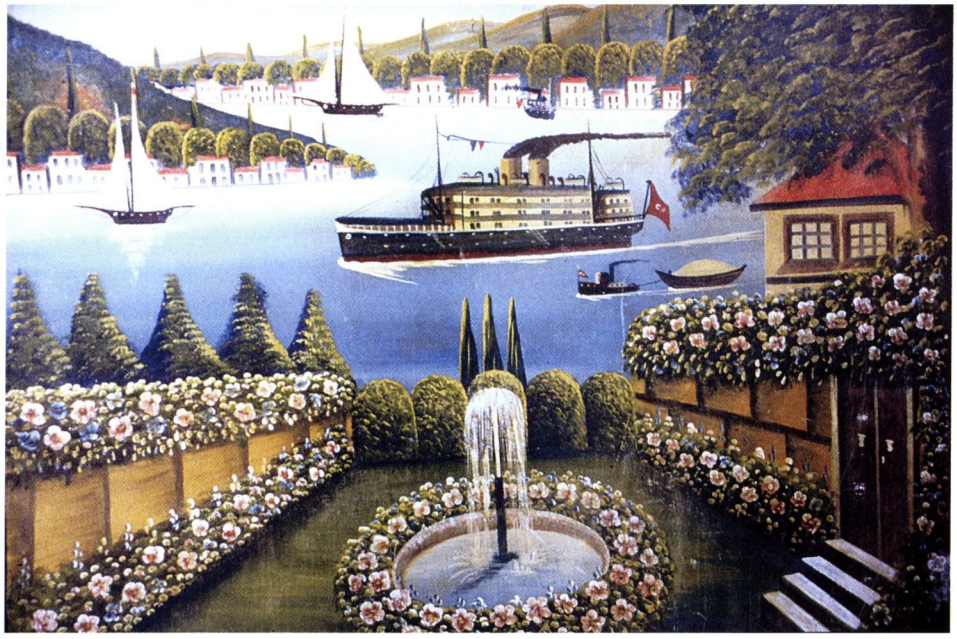

Fig. 9: Ottoman flagged steamboat and the Bosphorous in Bayt al-Qabbānī (~ upper middle class)

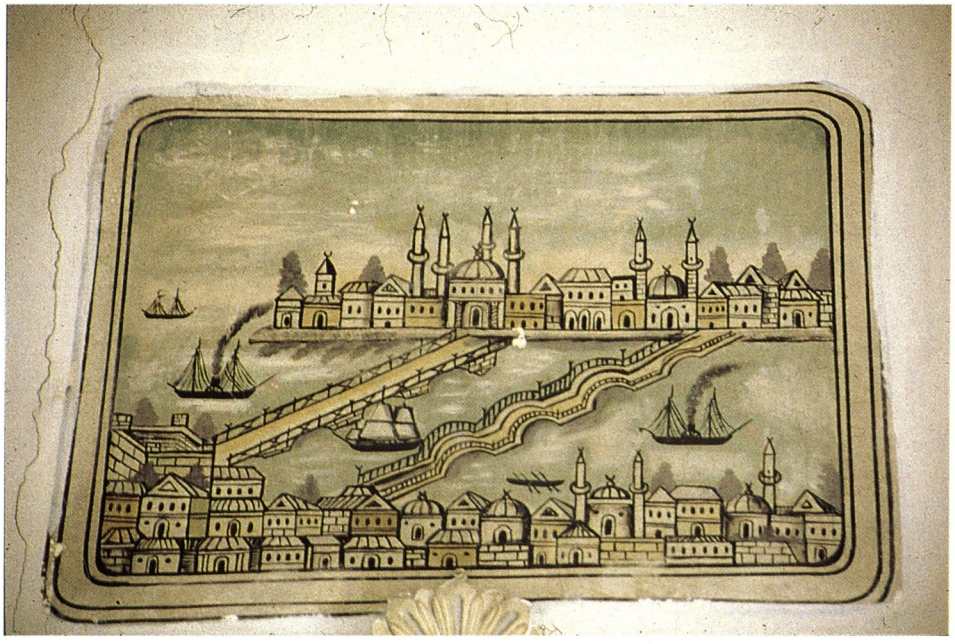

Fig. 10: Image of Istanbul in Bayt Dayrī / Murtaḍā (~ lower middle class)

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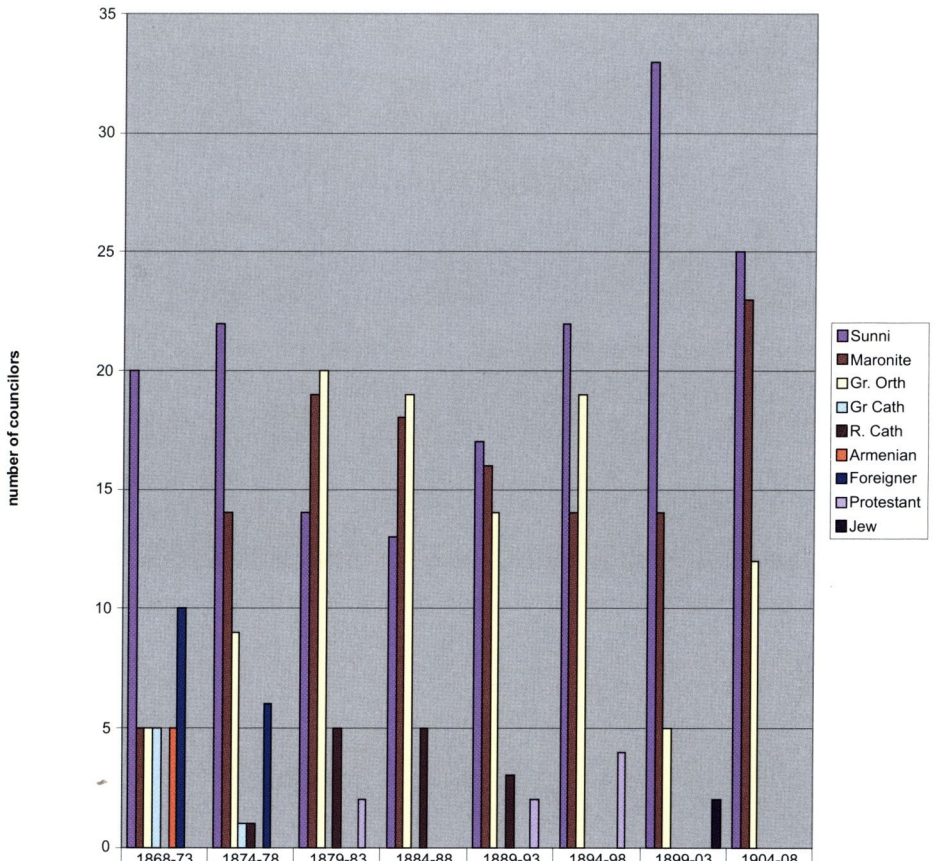

	1868-73	1874-78	1879-83	1884-88	1889-93	1894-98	1899-03	1904-08
Sunni	20	22	14	13	17	22	33	25
Maronite	5	14	19	18	16	14	14	23
Gr. Orth	5	9	20	19	14	19	5	12
Gr Cath	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
R. Cath	0	1	5	5	3	0	0	0
Armenian	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foreigner	10	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protestant	0	0	2	0	2	4	0	0
Jew	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

Fig. 11: Municipality of Beirut

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famous for their dimensions and beauty, that some high European politicians claimed, that their like does not exist in their countries."[15]

The first modern *sūq*: the *sūq* of ʿAlī Pasha

During the 1880s and 1890s the municipality also remodeled other *sūqs*, such as the Sūq al-Surūjiyya, the Sūq al-Khayl, and the Sūq al-ʿAtīq.[16] Others, such as the *sūqs* al-Khūja, al-Qīshānī, ʿAlī Pasha, or al-Qudsī, have their origins in private initiative only. The very first bazaar of a new type was built by ʿAlī Pasha. Previously destroyed, the building measured 50m in length and it is known from some rare historical photographs (see fig. 6) and from its original donation document (*waqfiyya*). Concerning the *waqfiyya*, the Sūq ʿAlī Pasha was endowed in 1292/1875 by Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad al-Mūrahlī as *waqf ahlī*.[17] Like the later Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya, the Sūq ʿAlī Pasha had an important urban function in connecting the Marja Square with the square of Sūq al-Khayl and brought the new town center within the commercial life of the city.

The *waqfiyya* gives us a detailed picture of what the *sūq* looked like. It was the first in Damascus to have elaborate façades on two stories, framing a wide and rectangular street with large shops. This layout then became standard for all *sūqs* that were built in the following decades. Most probably these *sūqs* were inspired by the new European-style arcades that were introduced in Istanbul around 1870 and matched the traditional Ottoman commercial buildings (*sūq, arasta, bedesten, çarşı*) perfectly.[18]

In Damascus a local Ottoman official initiated the first shopping street with a modern layout. ʿAlī Pasha al-Mūrahlī (d. before 1881) held one of the most prestigious positions in the administration as trustee for the gifts to Mecca and Medina during the pilgrimage

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15 K. Sarkīs, *al-Shām qabl miʾat ʿām. Riḥlat al-Imbirāṭūr Ghilīyūm al-Thānī, imbirāṭūr Almāniyā waqarīnatihi ilā Filasṭīn wa-Sūriyya, ʿām 1316 h./1898 m.*, [1898], cited after an edition by Ḥasan al-Samāḥī Suwayrān, Damascus 1997, 114.

16 The Sūq al-ʿAtīq burned partially down in 1265/1849. See Asʿad al-Usṭuwānī, *al-Shaykh Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Usṭuwānī: Mashāhid wa-aḥdāth dimashqiyya fī muntaṣaf al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar, 1256-1277 h, 1840-1861m.*, Damascus 1994, 146. The horse market (Sūq al-Khayl) was moved outside the town in 1893-1894 and both Sūqs (al-Khayl, al-ʿAtīq) widely changed. See, for these changes *Sālnāme* [21](1306/1888-1889) 146, [22](1307-1308/1890-1891) 155, [25](1310-1311/1893-1894) 261 f. See for these *sūqs* Weber, "Marğa-Platz," nos. 36, 37, 39.

17 See for this *sūq* MWT (MSh) S670/W106 (1252/1875) [*waqfiyya*], S731/W155 (1298/1881), S1038/W128 (1314/1896); Weber, "Marğa -Platz," no. 35.

18 The most famous of the arcades in Istanbul (Beyoğlu/Pera) are presumably the Çiçek Pasajı (Cité de Pera, 1876) or the Avrupa Pasajı (Aynalı Pasajı, 1871-1872). One should note here that the European arcades were of course strongly inspired by the bazaar streets. See for the origin of European arcades, Geist, *Passagen*, 40 ff.

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(*ṣurra amīnī al-ḥajj*).[19] Court records throughout the nineteenth century prove that the Mūrahlīs, who had been known in Damascus since the sixteenth century, lived in the city quarter of al-Qanawāt.[20]

Different patterns can be distinguished in the modernizing of the bazaars of Damascus, reflecting the circumstances of ownership and building plot. The impressive Sūq al-Qudsī consists of three streets in an F-shape with a total length of approximately 120m that includes the Ottoman Bank.[21] For this building the Qudsīs – as did the Mardam Beks in the case of the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya some decades earlier – probably changed the parcel of their dwelling into a commercial used plot in 1912.[22] During the process of reconstruction shortly after the big fire of 1912, which had destroyed many buildings between the Sūq al-ʿAṣrūniyya and Bāb al-Barīd, the Qudsīs and other individuals such as a certain Mr. al-ʿAshshā and al-Murādī undertook the erection of *wakālas*.[23] The attraction of the new bazaar district around the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya must have been enormous.

Changing a *waqf*: the Sūq al-Qīshānī

Other buildings apart from houses were converted to commercial use. The Ḥammām al-Qīshānī (981/1573-1574), which belonged to the *waqf* of the famous governor Darwīsh Pasha (d. 987/1579), provides a good example of functional changes. Court records give

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19 MWT (MSh) S670/W106 (1252/1875) [*waqfiyya*], S731/W155 (1298/1881). For Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha al-Mūrahlī and his function as *ṣurra amīnī*, see also Randi Deguilhem, "Naissance et mort du waqf damascain de Ḥafīẓa Khānum al-Mūrahlī (1880-1951)," in *Le waqf dans l'éspace islamique outil de pouvoir socio-politique*, ed. R. Deguilhem, Damascus 1995, 207 ff.

20 MWT (MSh) S250/W234 (1217/1802), S636/W276 (1289/1872), S731/W155 (1298/1881), S1038/W128 (1314/1896). For the Mùrahlīs, wee al-Ḥusnī, *Muntakhabāt al-tawārīkh*, II, 870; Weber, "Zeugnisse," 154 f. and Deguilhem in her article on the *waqf* of the wife of ʿAlī Pasha, Ḥafīẓa Khānūm al-Mūrahlī: Deguilhem, "Naissance et mort," 205 ff. In 1298/1881 she endowed several shops in the Sūq al-Arwām, Sūq al-Nisān, Sūq al-Jadīd (later al-Ḥamīdiyya), in Bāb al-Barīd and in Darwīshiyya Street. See MWT (MSh) S737/W245 (1298/1881) and Deguilhem, "Naissance et mort," 209, 214.

21 The Ottoman Bank was erected in 1313/1895 and enlarged shortly after 1908. See Banque Impériale Ottoman (Istanbul), Comité de direction (CDPV) 13, 16 février 1906; 14, PV 30 sep 1907; 14, 22 oct 1907; 14, 18 août 1908; 14, 12 oct 1908; 15, 27 jan 1908; PRO (FO 618-3/ 30.4.1912); Weber, "Zeugnisse," 181 ff., catalogue no. 49.

22 A court record mentions a house at the Sūq Bāb al-Qalʿa, which is the same spot, and neighboring real estates that were bought by Saʿīd al-Qudsī from his uncle Muḥyī 'l-Dīn al-Qudsī in 1296/1878. See MWT (MSh) S724/W184 (1296/1878). Maps and panorama photographs before 1912 show only houses at this place.

23 The British consul reports that the fire started on April 26, 1912 in the Khān al-Murādī and destroyed the area between Bāb al-Barīd and Sūq al-ʿAṣrūniyya comprising 370 shops, 4 khāns, 40 houses, 3 money changers' offices, and 1 mosque: PRO (FO 618-3/ April 30, 1912), (FO 618-3/ Oct. 2, 1912).

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information about how the tenants of this *waqf*, Ḥāfiẓ Efendi al-Kharbūtlī and Shafīqa Khānum al-Arḍrūmī, developed the idea of changing the public bath, out of service since 1905, into a *sūq* (see fig. 7). Backed by a legal certificate (*fatwā*) of Muftī Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Qaṭanā they argued that in order to pay the rent to the *waqf* administration and to pursue the interests (*maṣlaḥa*) of the *waqf* the function of the building needed to be changed. Following this, a council of experts was set up by the *waqf* administration, consisting of the two carpenters Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Tawwām and Saʿīd ibn Kamāl Aṣfar and the architect Khawāja Ḥabīb al-Miʿmārī ibn Luṭfī Qarwashān who studied the case in 1324/1906. They confirmed the bad condition of the building and recommended it be changed into a *sūq*. After the case was decided positively and a request for ratification (*berât/barāʿa*) sent to Istanbul, the Ḥammām al-Qīshānī was rebuilt in a fashionable modern style as the Sūq al-Qīshānī and opened to the public twelve months later.[24]

Copying the Sūq al-Hamīdiyya: the *sūq* of Rāghib al-Khūja

Most of the *sūq*s *intra muros* were only enlarged and remodeled. Patrons had few opportunities to acquire appropriate plots of land for new buildings, and as a result they often had to change the function of structures instead, as seen in the case of the residences of the Mardam Beks, Qudsīs, and that of the Sūq al-Qīshānī. The direct surroundings of the citadel with its non-functioning, partially filled moats provided an exceptional opportunity, as mentioned above, with the municipality taking the initiative to enlarge and rebuild the Sūq al-Jadīd, transforming it into the western part of the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya. Here, next to the citadel, private individuals were active too. The Sūq Naṣrī was erected above filled-in eastern moat around 1910, most probably through the initiative of a certain Bashīr Naṣrī.

The impressive 140m-long Sūq al-Khūja already occupied the western moat (see fig. 8).[25] This *sūq* was built in two stages by Rāghib al-Khūja and his partner Bishāra Efendi Aṣfar on the model of the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya. The southern main building (the Sūq al-Khūja al-Barrānī) was started in 1313/1895-1896. The northern part (the Sūq al-Khūja

[24] See, for this legal case, MWT (MSh) S1275/W144 (1323/1906), S1275/W133 (1324/1906). For further information on the *sūq* MWT (MSh) S1378/W51 (1327/1909); al-Munajjid, *Wulāt Dimashq*, 6, fn. 1; Sack, *Damaskus*, No. 4.32; Akram al-ʿUlabī, *Khiṭaṭ Dimashq: dirāsa tārikhiyya shāmila*, Damascus 1989, 461, 530; Karl Wulzinger and Carl Watzinger, *Damaskus, die islamische Stadt*, Berlin 1924, E/4-6.

[25] This corresponds to the dimensions of the 153m-long Friedrichstraßenpassage (1908-1909) and 128.75m-long Kaisergalerie (1871-1873) in Berlin and the total original length of 157.50m of the Passage in The Hague (1883-1885). See Geist, *Passagen*, 133, 143 f., 173, 176.

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al-Juwwānī) was completed in 1323/1905.[26] Its Damascene owner, Rāghib ibn Rāshid ibn Muḥammad al-Khūja, worked in the military administration (*al-dā'ira al-ʿaskariyya al-sulṭāniyya*). Like ʿAlī Pashaal-Mūrahlī (Sūq ʿAlī Pasha) he lived in the city quarter of al-Qanawāt. His house, which we found with the help of court records, was by 1883 mentioned by al-Qāyyātī as one of the most lavishly decorated residences in the town.[27]

In his enterprises he could most probably count on the help of his brother Maḥmūd Efendi al-Khūja, who was president of the municipality when the *sūq* was erected (1316/1898-1899 and 1317/1899-1900).[28] Rāghib al-Khūja's partner, Bishāra Aṣfar, had also established close contacts with the local administration. He worked as dragoman for the German consul and merchant Ernst Lütticke (1843-1904) and after his death even acted as administrator for the German imperial consulate. During his many years in German service (from 1877 to 1910) he became well known to the decision makers of the city.[29] It is likely that Rāghib al-Khūja was only able to gain access to the attractive building plots next to the citadel and to carry out this enormous building project due to his own position and those of his brother and his partner.

Private initiative: schools and other public buildings

It is interesting to note how many of these modern *sūq*s were constructed through individual initiative. Some, but not all, of those elected as local members of the Ottoman councils became active in urban construction. Other buildings for public use, such as hotels, restaurants, cafés, and mosques were erected through the private initiative of

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[26] The history of this building, which was demolished in 1403/1982-1983, can be reconstructed due to court records and historical photographs. See MWT (MSh) S1232/W3 (1320/1902), S1378/W83 (1327/1909). For further information see al-Ḥusnī, *Muntakhabāt al-tawārīkh*, I, 278; Sack, *Damaskus*, 41, 58, 5.14; Scharabi, "Sūq von Damaskus," 287, Tab. 64b; al-Shihābī, *Aswāq Dimashq*, 213, 219 f; al-ʿUlabī, *Khiṭaṭ Dimashq*, 462; Weber, "Marǧa-Platz," no. 38; Weber, "Zeugnisse," 166 ff., catalogue no. 208.

[27] MWT (MSh) S820/W2 (1303/1885), S1014/W106 (1311/1894); M.ʿA. al-Qāyyātī, *Nafḥat al-bashām fī riḥlat al-Shām*, Beirut 1981, 127. See, for Rāghib al-Khūja, al-Ḥusnī, *Muntakhabāt al-tawārīkh*, II, 907 f.; MWT S819/W24 (1303/1885), S1008/W78 (1311/1894), S1017/W157, 190 (1312/1894); al-Qayātī, *Nafḥat al-bashām*, 127.

[28] Maḥmūd was elected into the Damascene municipality in 1315/1898 by 572 votes and in 1327/1909 by 508 votes. See, for Maḥmūd Efendi al-Khūja, al-Ḥusnī, *Muntakhabāt al-tawārīkh*, II, 907 f.; *al-Muqtabas*, 68 (17. Ṣafar 1327/1909); al-Qāyyātī, *Nafḥat al-bashām*, 127; *Sālnāme* [30](1316/1898-1899) 125, [31](1317/1899-1900) 124; *al-Shām*, 85 (24. Shawwāl 1315/1898).

[29] Bishāra Aṣfar was decorated several times with German medals and represented the German consul and the vice-consul of Austria-Hungary if he was absent. See, for Bishāra Aṣfar, AA (R141505, Aug. 5, 1890), (R141505, Aug. 2, 1894 to Aug. 14, 1894), (R141505, Dec. 8, 1898), (R141505, May 12, 1899-Oct. 10, 1899), (R141505, April 21, 1901-April 2, 1902), (R141505; Feb. 8, 1904-March 22, 1904), (R141506, Aug. 1, 1908-Nov. 24, 1908), (R141506, April 6, 1910). *Sālnāme* [17](1302/1884-1885) 98, [18](1303/1885-1886) 83, [19](1304/1886-1887) 72. For Lütticke see: Weber "Zeugnisse," 66 ff.

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ordinary Damascene citizens. Private schools in particular bear witness of the Damascenes desire to reform and modernize their city and society.

Schools are of major importance to social and intellectual change, and are catalysts of modernization. Many schools were founded by missionaries (at least 12) or local Christian communities, with or without foreign aid (at least 13). Other educational institutions were founded by the state (at least 15), which increased the number of its schools especially in the period of Abdülhamid. The missionary school al-Madrasa al-ʿAzariyya of the Sœurs de Charité in Bāb Tūmā and the first government secondary school, Maktab ʿAnbar, were of particular importance.[30] Both establishments played a distinctive role in the creation of a new intellectual elite.

In addition to the many missionary and state schools one has to mention the semi-governmental society of the Jamʿiyya Khayriyya li-Inshāʾ al-Madāris (at least 15 schools) and the many private schools (*madāris ahliyya*, at least 15).[31] The latter were mainly founded by religious scholars who did not consider educational reform to be fast enough and opened schools with new curricula in private houses or ruined *waqf* buildings. This movement is a very interesting demonstration of the local will to reform. The most prominent of these *madāris ahliyya* was the Madrasa al-ʿUthmāniyya, founded by the Shaykh Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb (1873-1954) in 1329/1911 in the Dār al-Qurʾān waʾl-Ḥadīth al-Tankiziyya (728/1327).[32] Important persons of the Damascene *Nahḍa* such as ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Inkilīzī (1878-1916) or ʿĀrif al-Shihābī (1889-1916) were teaching here. Thus the modernization of urban institutions carried out by local individuals was not limited to the *sūqs*. This, of course, gives us no information on individual or collective

30 For the role of schools in late Ottoman Damascus society compare fn. 5 and, among others, Aḥmad Ḥilmī al-ʿAllāf, *Dimashq fī maṭlaʿ al-qarn al-ʿishrīn*, Damascus 1976, 196 f.; ʿAwwāḍ, *al-Idāra al-ʿuthmāniyya*, 254 ff.; Iskandar Lūqā, *al-Ḥaraka al-adabiyya fī Dimashq 1800-1918*, Damascus 1976, 44 ff.; Qaṣāṭilī, *al-Rawḍa al-ghannā*, 119 f.; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Sāmī Bek, *Qawl al-ḥaqq fī Bayrūt wa-Dimashq*, Beirut 1981, 101 f.; Weber, "Zeugnisse," 134 ff. On the Maktab ʿAnbar various articles and books have been published: see Farīd Juḥā, "Maktab ʿAnbar," *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes* 35 (1985), 389-403; Maṭrīʿ al-Murābiṭ, *al-Nūr waʾl-nār fī Maktab ʿAnbar*, Damascus 1991; Randi Deguilhem-Schoem, "Idées françaises et enseignement ottoman: l'école secondaire Maktab ʿAnbar à Damas," *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 52/53 (1989), 199-206; Ẓāfir al-Qāsimī, *Maktab ʿAnbar, Ṣuwar wa-dhikrayāt min ḥayātinā al-thaqāfiyya waʾl-siyāsiyya waʾl-ijtimāʿiyya*, Beirut 1964. Also compare Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, *Mudhakkirāt al-Bārūdī, sittūna sana tatakallam*, 2 vols., Beirut and Damascus 1951-1952, I, 30 ff.

31 For the Jamʿiyya Khayriyya li-Inshāʾ al-Madāris see al-ʿAllāf, *Maṭlaʿ al-qarn*, 180 f.; ʿAdnān al-Khaṭīb, *al-Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī, Rāʾid al-nahḍa al-ʿilmiyya fī Bilād al-Shām*, Cairo 1971, 105 ff.; Khālid Muʿādh, "Madāris Dimashq qābl al-ʿaṣr al-ʿuthmānī," in *Dimashq: Dirāsāt tārīkhiyya wa-athariyya*, ed. Mudīriyya lil-Āthār waʾl-Matāḥif, Damascus 1980, 119 f.; Qaṣāṭilī, *al-Rawḍa al-ghannā*, 119 f.; Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 199; Weber, "Zeugnisse," 136. And for the *madāris ahliyya*: al-ʿAllāf, *Maṭlaʿ al-qarn*, 196 f., 200 f.; ʿAwwāḍ, *al-Idāra al-ʿuthmāniyya*, 263 ff.; al-Bārūdī, *Mudhakkirāt*, I, 21 f.; Lūqā , *al-Ḥaraka al-adabiyya*, 47 f.; Weber, "Zeugnisse," 137 ff.

32 See, for Shaykh Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb, al-Ḥusnī, *Muntakhabāt al-tawārīkh*, II, 913; Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām: Qāmūs tarājim li-ashhar al-rijāl waʾl-nisāʾ min al-ʿarab waʾ l-mustaʿribīn waʾl-mustashriqīn*, 8 vols., 14th ed., Beirut 1999, VII, 13.

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identities, but it emphasises the fact that Damascene society, or at least part of it, shared actively or even initiated the reorganization of this Middle Eastern society and its urban structures in the late Ottoman period.

The role of foreigners in reshaping Damascus

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the number of foreigners residing in the city was small, unlike Beirut or Istanbul. John Bowring remarked in 1840 that "the European costume is scarcely ever seen; and, with few exemptions, I believe the Frank settlers have adopted the Syrian dress."[33] Some establishments were opened by non-Damascenes, for example a certain Ottoman-Greek (?) called Khawāja Dīmitrī al-Lūkāndajī ibn al-Khawāja Jūrjī ibn Dīmitrī Izmīr, whose family owned the first hotel in Damascus and a modern café at Marja Square.[34] Except for the missionary institutions one can find only a very few building of foreign origin such as the German Palestine Bank, which opened a branch in the Sūq al-ʿAṣrūniyya next to the citadel in 1910, but the director of the bank, Timotheus Wurst, only lived in Damascus for a few years.[35]

Following the Tanzimat and the provincial reforms of 1864 foreign influence still remained limited. The British consul mentioned in 1870 that after the riots of 1860 only 20 foreigners were living in the town. At the same time 4,000 foreigners were permanently living in Beirut.[36] Qasāṭilī records in 1879 around 350 and Sāmī Bek in 1890 around 400 non-Ottoman subjects in Damascus.[37] A lot of them must have been protégés of consulates and individuals from the Balkans, Persia or North Africa. According to the Kölnische Zeitung the German community was in 1912 the largest among those of the Europeans and counted some 40 individuals.[38] In 1912 Hichens stressed what he saw as the non-foreign character of the town:

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33 John Bowring, *Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria*, London 1840, repr. New York 1973, 92.

34 This person is mentioned in MWT (MSH) S1275/W126 (1323/1905). for the two buildings, see Weber, "Marǧa-Platz," nos. 22, 46.

35 See, for the bank, AA (R141506, Oct. 25, 1909), (R141506, May 22, 1912); Karl Baedeker, *Palestine et Syrie: Manuel du Voyageur*, 4th ed., Leipzig 1912, 295 (map p. 300); PRO (FO 618-3 / 4.4.1910); Weber, "Zeugnisse," 179 ff.; Wulzinger and Watzinger, *Islamischen Stadt*, E/3-2.

Wurst, born 1874 in Jaffa, held as well the post of the Dutch vice-consul and in 1913 became German consul for a short time. After the death of Ernst Lütticke, Wurst was the only German in Damascus for several years. In 1914 he left Damascus to become the director of the German Palestine Bank in Baghdad. See AA (R141505, May 31, 1905), (R141505, Dec. 18, 1905), (R141506, 11.11.1906 until April 10, 1907), (R141506, March 17, 12); (R141505, Jan. 14, 1914), (R141506, June 2, 1914).

36 Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 68, fn. 37.

37 Qasāṭilī, *al-Rawḍa al-ghannā*, 8 talks about "Afranj wa-Yūnān." Sāmī Bek, *al-Qawl al-ḥaqq*, 61 f. lists Europeans separately from Persians, Kurds, and people from the Maghreb.

38 *Kölnische Zeitung*, 619, (June 1, 1912).

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> ...still thoroughly Oriental. Cairo has become horribly official and cosmopolitan; Algiers and Tunis are very French; Jerusalem is the home of religious sects; Beirut contains numbers of Italians, Maltese, Greeks, and Americans: but the fez prevails in the streets and bazaars of Damascus, where once, during a four-hour walk through the principal quarters, I did not meet one man who was not an Eastern or see one house which looked European. Even the trams ... scarcely interfere with the Eastern atmosphere.[39]

At the beginning of the twentieth century some foreign experts, such as P. Apéry, were employed by the authorities. Apéry was the highest municipal engineer at the turn of the century.[40] But the number of these experts remained limited until at least World War I. A modern Ottoman Damascus developed with little direct foreign influence and is therefore an important case study for investigating the change of a society and its urban organization in the period of reform. But how many people were involved in this process and how much self-awareness did the people of Damascus have when remodeling their city? Another urban architectural feature that may help us here is the private house, built more or less entirely by private initiative.

The new lifestyle

This reorganization of an entire Arab metropolis, its urban fabric, its architecture and a large part of its social organization is clearly visible in this most private aspect of urban architecture. Houses were extensively build or reconstructed during this time.[41] Certainly a new era calls for a new style and the continuous building activities allowed the integration of new ideas. During this enormous reshaping of the city it was possible to rebuild in the latest fashion and to adopt new techniques of construction and decoration.

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39 Robert Hichens, *The Holy Land*, London 1913, 53, 79.

40 See for example *Sālnāme* [31](1317/1899-1900) 125. The engineers of the municipality were mainly of Arab-Ottoman origin. Only a very few non-Arab names are given, such as Wāsīlyādīs Efendi as second engineer. See *Jarīdat al-Shām*, 93 (27. Dhū l-Ḥijja 1315/1898); *Sālnāme* [29](1315/1897-1898) 99, [31](1317/1899-1900) 98. And a certain Monseigneur Barsisū was a member of the offices of engineers of the municipality. See *Sālnāme* [13] (1298/1880-1881) 84. During World War I Jamāl Pasha employed some foreign experts such as Max Zürcher, Karl Wulzinger, Theodor Wiegand, Mr. Mühlens, Mr. Salz, Mr. Wilbuschewitsch and Mr. Ströckle. The architect Fernando de Aranda (1878-1969), who lived his entire life in Syria and Turkey and who was of Spanish origin, drew the plans for some important buildings. See, for de Aranda, Eugenio García Gascón, "El arquitecto español Fernando de Aranda (1878-1969) en Damasco," *Awrāq Estudios sobre el Mundo arabe e islámico contemporáneo,* 9 (1988), 67-100. For all the names mentioned here Weber, "Zeugnisse," 88 f.

41 See, for the changes of houses in late Ottoman Damascus so far, S. Weber, "Images of Imagined Worlds, Self-image and Worldview in Late Ottoman Wall Paintings," in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. J. Hanssen, T. Philipp and S. Weber, Beiruter Texte und Studien vol. 88, Beirut 2002. More than three-quarters of the roughly 600 houses investigated during my survey were substantially rebuilt or were entirely new in this period. This corresponds to official numbers.

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There is much to say about the layout and decoration of houses, which underwent significant changes and became closer to Istanbul models than ever before. With the central-hall house an entirely new house type was imported into Damascus from the Ottoman centre.[42]

The depiction of "star and crescent" became widespread. In many houses belonging to Muslim, Christian, or Jewish merchants, scholars, officials, and others, one can find this Ottoman emblem in architectural decoration. The same holds true for military armory and the sultanic emblem (*ṭughrā*). This phenomenon is not seen before the Tanzimat period, nor were any official rules issued concerning the decoration of houses. Yet there was apparently a common idea of how an Ottoman citizen of that time would build his home. An investigation of the architectural decoration helps to reconstruct some aspects of this notion. Wall paintings in particular are very informative.[43] The most frequently painted motifs are imaginary views of the Bosporus or of the capital itself. All over Damascus one finds imagined images of the Bosporus. The sheer number of pictures provides evidence that the Bosporus was a motif with a very special meaning.

The "sweet waters of Asia," the area around the Güzelsu and Küçüksu rivers next to the Bosporus, became for European travelers in the nineteenth century a byword for the Ottoman high life. In Ottoman literature life on the Bosporus was often celebrated. The images in the wall paintings give an idea of the place and a certain feeling of a time that everybody can recognize and connect to. It represents a way of life, probably adopted by most citizens of Damascus who had wall paintings in their houses. This might explain

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42 See, for the central-hall house in Damascus, Weber, "Marǧa-Platz," 317 ff., Weber, "Ottoman Damascus," 733 ff.; Weber, "Zeugnisse," 255 ff., 298 ff. In the last years the central-hall (*sofa*) house or *konak*-style house *sofa* was discussed widely especially by the Groupe de Recherche sur l'Architecture au Levant, a network by e-mail started by May and Michael Davie (URBAMA Tours). See so far: Hakki Sedad Eldem, *Türk evi osmanlı dönemi, Turkish Houses Ottoman Period*, 3 vols., Istanbul 1984-1987, I, A 33 ff.; Zeynep Merey Enlil, "Residential Building Traditions and the Urban Culture of Istanbul in the nineteenth Century," in *Seven Centuries of Ottoman Architecture*, ed. N. Akın, A. Batur, and S. Batur, Istanbul 2000, 306-315; A.R. Fuchs and M. Meyer-Brodnitz, "The Emergence of the Central Hall House type in the Context of Nineteenth Century Palestine," in *Dwellings, Settlements and Tradition. Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. J.-P. Bourdier and N. Alsayyad, New York 1989, 403-423; Reha Günay, *Türk Ev Geleneği ve Safranbolu Evleri*, Istanbul 1998, 59 f.; Anne Mollenhauer, "The Central Hall House. Regional Community and Local Specificities: A Comparison between Beirut and al-Salṭ," in *The Empire in the City:* ed. J. Hanssen, T. Philipp and S. Weber; Alp Sunalp, "The Development of the Central Sofa-Hall Typology in the Nineteenth Century Galata and Pera Apartment Buildings," in *Seven Centuries of Ottoman Architecture*, ed. N. Akın, A. Batur, and S. Batur, Istanbul 2000, 324-328; Filiz Yenişehirlioğlu, "L'architecture domestique ottomane: évolution historique et étude de deux exemples situes a Istanbul," in *L'Habitat traditionnel dans les pays musulmans autour de la Méditerranée*, ed. Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, III, Cairo 1990, vol 3, 703, figs.11a und 11b.

43 For the most important publications on Ottoman wall paintings, see Rüçhan Arık, *Batılılaşma Dönemi Tasvir Sanatı*, Ankara 1976; Inci Kuyulu, "Anatolian Wall Paintings and Cultural Traditions," *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies*, 3 (2000), no. 2,1-27; Claire Paget, *Murs et plafonds peints, Liban XIXe siècle*, Beirut 1998; Günsel Renda, *Batılılaşma Döneminde Türk Resim Sanatı, 1700-1850*, Ankara 1977; Weber, "Images of Imagined Worlds."

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why one finds the same view of the capital in nearly all wall paintings in Damascus in such a limited period of time (*c.*1820-1915). Moreover, the Bosporus is always depicted crowded with ships – and from the 1830s onwards with steamboats. Damascus is not a harbor town, thus ships were not a part of everyday life. The hundreds of ships featured in wall paintings in Damascus are nearly always flagged with the Ottoman banner, as are the military buildings beside the water (see fig. 9). There are many imaginary mosques always easy to distinguish as being Ottoman.

From these paintings one can suppose that many people in Damascus did not have any particular problems in connecting symbols of Ottoman identity to their homes. Arab nationalism, at that time still restricted to a small part of the intellectual elite, did not yet find an expression in the material culture of the city. All other aspects of Damascene interior decoration point in the same direction of an Ottoman identity. A new style of decoration, usually featuring motifs with the star and crescent, was common in nearly all houses of that period. Modernization mainly reached Damascus via Istanbul, which orientated the "modern Damascene mind" in that direction. The Ottoman capital was the main source of inspiration and symbols of modernization, like the steamboats in the Bosporus, flying the Ottoman flag.

Architectural decoration also gave evidence of an awareness of a new time, parallel to the time people in Istanbul or Europe were living and acting in. For example, one can find wall paintings in Damascus depicting events that happened in Europe, which is a creation of simultaneity and is a direct connection between the local realm and the world 'outside.'

Conclusion

When examining the material culture of Damascus at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries one can state that the often-mentioned stagnation, or even decline, in urban societies under late Ottoman rule does not hold for Damascus, one of the classical cities of the Islamic world. The modern *sūq* and many other institutions in Damascus were not only the product of high-ranking Ottoman officials in Istanbul seeking to impose their desire for modernization on a reactionary and alien local society, nor were they initiated by a detached community of foreign missionaries and merchants. It is often said how important foreign influence was to the process of reshaping Middle Eastern cities such as Beirut, Cairo, Alexandria, Izmir, or Istanbul in the nineteenth century. This is certainly true, but not for the whole picture. The role of local urban societies in this process is generally underestimated. Damascus provides an example of how the modernization of an entire classical Islamic urban center was carried out by the Ottoman administration, and especially by the citizens of this town.

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Regarding the buildings themselves, one can discern two main tendencies. On the one hand, traditional urban building types (such as the *khāns* and *sūqs*) were adapted to the new time. The new *sūqs*, for example the Sūq al-Ḥamīdiyya, were an outcome of an effort by people from Damascus to modernize their city and commercial buildings, such as the Wakālat al-ʿAshshā, and testifies that this is not only a question of taste. On the other hand, architectural decoration and comments to these buildings give us an idea of how the inhabitants of Damascus perceived themselves at that time. Obviously, many people in Damascus found access to the modern world through their identity as citizens of the Ottoman Empire. It seems that many people in Damascus considered themselves an integral part of the Ottoman Empire and the modern world. One reason for this was most probably that it could provide a specific role or a particular position in the modern world, which was drawing closer. Direct contacts and travels, personal anecdotes, books, postcards, newspapers, new curricula in schools all gave an idea of the world outside Damascus and the Ottoman Empire. One can observe a clear tendency towards a modern Ottoman character of town and society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on many different levels (clothing, housing, public life, administrative and urban organization, training, etc.). Many people in Damascus displayed symbols of Ottoman identity in their private architecture and dress. The initiative in reshaping modern Ottoman institutions (except administrative buildings) – as seen in houses, schools, and commercial buildings – came from local individuals and administrative councils rather than governors. Modern public spaces were created, such as the new *sūqs* or the new town center of the Marja Square with its parks, coffeehouses, and theaters (mainly initiated by the municipality or private individuals). Most Damascenes rebuilt their houses along the same modernizing Ottoman lines. Modernism and Ottomanism were closely connected. Ottoman symbols were deliberately displayed in houses all over the town and combined with diverse symbols of the modern world: steam-boats, factories, railways, and, later on, aeroplanes. Even in the intimacy of their homes, in their salons and vestibules, Damascenes displayed themselves as Ottoman citizens of the modern world.

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From social status to intellectual activity: some prosopographical observations on the municipal council in Beirut, 1868-1908

Jens Hanssen

Introduction

The two principal purposes of this chapter are to open up Beirut's early municipal history to the growing body of comparative literature on municipalities in the Mediterranean region and, against this background, to examine the transformation of the politics of notables in late Ottoman Beirut. It introduces this urban institution as vested with "amphibious" qualities where attempts to regulate a distinctly urban experience of modernity in an expanding city were played out between imperial and local domains of authority. The creation of the municipality of Beirut was part of a wider imperial trend whereby the management of urban space became an important vehicle to project convincingly to the provincial subjects and European powers alike the image of a modern Ottoman state.

This chapter relies on a prosopographical study of 100 urban notables of Beirut. They represent the complete statistical breakdown of individuals who were members of Beirut's municipality between 1868 and 1908 drawn from Ottoman provincial yearbooks – *sālnāme*s – and Beirut newspapers. At base prosopography – or collective biography – is a quantitative method to measure underlying social structures and changes, to excavate the roots of political action, and to establish correlations between ideas and practices of social groups and social reality. But the historical sources available to conduct such research invariably make prosopography a study of power elites. It requires a large sample, a relatively wide time span, a uniform set of questions, and a finite group of

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people to substantiate the resulting patterns.[1] Against these considerations, the municipal council of Beirut between its first election in 1867/8 and the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 presents an ideal framework for a prosopographical analysis of local elites and urban notables during the later period of the Ottoman Tanzimat reforms. Changes in imperial government as well as in Beirut's administrative status after the city became a provincial capital in 1888 naturally affected municipal politics. But for the purposes of this short chapter, continuities will be prioritized over historical ruptures.

The Ottoman municipal laws

On October 5, 1877 the Ottoman Parliament ratified a new empire-wide municipal law, making the *belediye qanūnu* the overriding legal reference for the provincial urban populations. The domains of urban planning, market control, health, public morality, and public welfare were specified as exclusive municipal competences.[2] Taken together they provided a powerful mandate for the local municipalities to intervene in the practices of daily life in Ottoman towns and cities.

Ottoman provincial reformers had identified the city as an important site of imperial intervention as early as 1864. The provincial law of that year proclaimed that "each village shall have a municipality."[3] While this text was more a declaration of intent than a systematic legal-normative framework, the revised 1867 provincial law fine-tuned the workings of the provincial municipalities in a detailed fashion. Most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, the new law stipulated that regular elections be held for a representative urban council.

"Le règlement organique du nouveau cercle municipal de Beyrouth a été presque entièrement copié sur celui de Pera."[4] Thus begins the first assessment of the newly created municipal council in Beirut in 1868. Its two authors, George Laurella and Edmond de Perthuis, occupied municipal posts until the 1877 law restricted membership of the council to Ottoman subjects. The report of these two European businessmen – the former Austrian, the latter French – was full of praise for their local colleagues on the council, which was composed of enlightened and highly spirited men, who encapsulated all that was good for the city and country in this new institution which represented a new

1 See Lawrence Stone, "Prosopography," *Daedalus* 100:2 (1971), 46-79; or Dankwart Rustow, "The Study of Elites" (review article), *World Politics* 18 (1966), 690-717.

2 See George Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, Oxford 1906/7, I, 69 ff.

3 Quoted in Ilber Ortayli, *Tanzimatan Sonra Mahalli Idaresi (1840-1878)*, Ankara 1974, 166.

4 M.A.E., Nantes, *Consulat Beyouth, carton 332*, Beirut, May 26, 1868.

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step on the road to reform and progress. They expended time and effort to ensure its success.[5]

The first municipality in the Ottoman Empire – the pilot project of Istanbul's Sixth District Pera-Galata – was indeed a model on which subsequent provincial municipalities were based. Laurella's and de Perthuis' report only echoed the way Ottoman bureaucrats in the capital viewed the mission of the 1856 model institution.[6]

Significantly, in provincial municipalities as in Beirut, a number of urban social groups did not appear on the municipal council during the 40-year period studied: Muslim and Christian clerics, Maronite and Druze *muqāṭa'jis* – mountain overlords – members of the military establishment and foreign nationals (after 1877) were all conspicuously absent. The municipal council of Beirut was the preserve of secular, urban elite families who, within a few generations of their arrivals turned their social status into intellectual activity. In many cases this transformation took place through affiliation with Ottoman state positions and in all cases as municipal members they were involved in the practical organization of the physical change of the city as a whole. In the case of Beirut, the transformation of wider socioeconomic structures of the Ottoman Empire favored landowning merchants who were coopted into the political system and who emerged as its prime representatives.

The application of the Ottoman Land Law

The restoration of Ottoman order in Syria after the cataclysmic civil wars in 1860 came at a huge fiscal price. In order to finance the sum of indemnities to Christian victims, Fu'ād Pasha was forced to raise special taxes from the province of Damascus and the port of Beirut in the range of 6.5 million piasters.[7] This raised protest from Beirutis as it was felt that none of the money was earmarked for the city of Beirut. The desperate need for revenue in post-war Beirut encouraged Fu'ād Pasha to apply the imperial Land Law of 1858 vigorously to the city. The arduous task of resettling and rehousing in the Mountain had given Fu'ād Pasha first-hand experience of the necessity of a centralized land administration. Moreover, Beirut's annual tax income of merely 150,000 to 160,000 piasters "ha[d] become incompatible with modern progress."[8] In the context of Ottoman imperialism, "closing the gap with modernity" meant first devising a fiscal

5 Ibid.

6 Steve Rosenthal, *The Politics of Dependency: Urban Reform in Istanbul*, Westport 1980.

7 Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War. Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, London 1994, 169; Max Gross, "Ottoman Rule in the Province of Damascus, 1860-1909," Ph.D. thesis, Georgetown University 1979, 49.

8 M.A.E., Nantes, *Consulat Beyrouth, carton 340*, February 2, 1868.

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structure that would establish better knowledge and tighter control over Beirut's property relations for the benefit of effective surplus extraction and distribution of fiscal resources. Second, it meant more reliable planning of urban rehabilitation (*inʿāsh al-madīna*).[9]

Prior to the Tanzimat, the provincial governors usually decided on and initiated public works projects. Towns lacked budgetary autonomy.[10] At the same time, "particularly in port towns urban dwellers...were spared many types of taxes, paying instead the traditional market dues (*iḥtisāb resmi*) and customs duties imposed on goods imported and exported from the Empire."[11] While the Gülhane Rescript of 1839 formally introduced individual taxation through *virgu* (or *per capita* tax), the 1858 Land Law's novelty was that urban property and buildings (owned or rented) became subject to taxation in their own right (as opposed to earlier modes that merely taxed the goods produced on or in them). In order to overcome the post-war financial crisis in Beirut, the special envoy Fu'ād Pasha ordered the registration and evaluation of all property in and around Beirut in accordance with the new imperial Land Law.[12]

The urgency of property administration was second only to the issue of indemnities.[13] On the basis of Fu'ād Pasha's imperial property survey, which according to a notice in *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*[14] was "nearly completed" by October 1861, Beirut's annual municipal revenue for subsequent years more than quadrupled to 750,000 piasters.[15] Taxes on state land were raised in early 1861. Fu'ād Pasha had negotiated a 7% tax on property possessions (which rose to around 8.5% by the end of the decade) with the municipality on the condition that 150,000 piasters be reinvested into Beirut's urban "rehabilitation" per year.[16]

The local application of the land reform in 1861 also allowed the development of a property market outside the city center which for centuries had been too dangerous as a place of permanent settlement. Around a few strongly fortified outposts (e.g. Burj al-Kashshāf, Burj al-Barājna, Burj Abū Ḥaydar most of the extramural land was legally considered *ārazī emiriye*, or state land, often held as hereditary tax farms by Druze and Maronite *muqāṭaʿjis* – or rural overlords – of the adjacent mountain districts. Construction on these fields, groves, and wild orchards had been discouraged by extant Ottoman

9 "Urban rehabilitation" was a central term in the Beirut journal *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār* after 1860.

10 Antoine Abdel Nour, *Introduction à l'histoire urbaine de la Syrie ottomane (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, Beirut 1982, 188.

11 Stanford Shaw, "The Nineteenth Century Ottoman Tax Reforms and Revenue System," *IJMES* 6 (1975), 421.

12 The Ottoman Land Law was translated by F. Ongley, *The Ottoman Land Code*, London 1892.

13 *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, (Obtober 15, 1860).

14 October 17, 1861.

15 M.A.E., Nantes, *Consulat Beyrouth*, *carton 340*, Beirut, February 10, 1868.

16 *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, (March 7, 1861).

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law even though early settlement of urban notables on the outskirts of the city proper was tolerated by local Ottoman governors prior to the new land law.

The application of the Ottoman Land Law in Beirut formalized – and arguably accelerated – the process of extramural urbanization, as the legal framework provided security and exchangeablity of title. For the aspiring merchant-notables of Beirut, the summer heat and winter floods in the city center were an inconvenience and a health hazard they could well afford to do without. With time, legal protection and the facilitation of extramural residence turned the large plots of land into smaller parcels as more wealthy families purchased and populated land in the outskirts. At the same time, the exodus of affluent families actually increased the intramural demographic density as the large courtyard houses left behind were rented out to multiple immigrant families:

> The old city, with its narrow, tortuous streets, and native workshops, serves now as the residence of the poorer classes and as the business place of the merchants during the day. The new town which lies scattered around, with its modern built houses, carriage roads, and gardens, its churches, colleges, schools and hotels, has little or nothing of the oriental in its composition.[17]

The application of the Ottoman Land Code to Beirut not only facilitated the commercial exchange and use of extra- and intramural land but also reformulated the definitions of property relations vis-à-vis the changing nature of state power.[18] Municipal practices of cadastral registration and property surveys (*'ilm wa-khabr*) signaled new modes of abstract conceptions of urban space in the Ottoman Empire.[19] In the pervasive restructurings of late nineteenth-century Beirut, the municipal councilors played a pivotal role as decision makers backed by an imperial and a local mandate.

Some observations on the members of the municipal council, 1868-1908

Membership on the municipal council may not have yielded much in the way of direct pecuniary reward but financial hardship was hardly an incentive to be elected. Voting was restricted to male residents above 25 years of age who paid a minimum of 50 piasters of (unspecified) tax and held no criminal record. Candidates for municipal office had to be 30 years of age, Ottoman residents in Beirut of at least ten years standing, fluent in Ottoman Turkish, and hold no criminal record or employment in foreign institutions. Their eligibility also hinged on payment of a property tax of at

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17 Baldwin Hay, US consul-general at Beirut, quoted in Eyüp Özveren, "The Making and Unmaking of an Ottoman Port-City: Beirut in the Nineteenth Century," Ph.D. thesis, Binghampton University 1990, 172.

18 Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge 1999, 82 ff.

19 See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford [1974] 1991.

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least 100 piasters, the equivalent of about £ 1 per month.[20] In other words, only notables whose residence was worth at least 50,000 piasters were eligible candidates. Clearly, the number of eligible candidates was limited, as this was not a system of universal suffrage but of conservation of elite power. The American missionary Henry Jessup estimated that 461 Christians of various denominations and 263 (Sunni) Muslims were eligible to stand for the 1880 municipal elections.[21] In a city whose population was nearing the 100,000 mark this was less than 0.5% of all inhabitants.

The council members maintained autonomous sources of income. Definitionally closer to Weber's notion of *Honoratioren* (local dignitaries) than Hourani's use of Weber's "patriciate",[22] the Beirut's municipal members were "individuals whose economic situation allowed them to be publicly active ... and whose social esteem and respect among the people they are to represent evokes sufficient integrity to be trusted with authority ... . They have the means to live *for* politics without living *from* it."[23]

In the Ottoman law of 1867, belonging to "the class of notables of the city" was a vague but specifically stated requirement. The head of the consular corps in Beirut at the time of the first municipal elections was struggling with the same questions that have haunted scholars for decades: "The character of 'notable' is not defined. Who determines it? What is the quality that distinguishes him? What is the demarcation line between a notable and a non-notable? Maybe the wealth of 50,000 piasters?"[24] Wealth was a necessary but not a sufficient criterion to be a representative and eligible member of "the class of notables of the city." In other words, at least in terms of state recognition of one's status as a notable, factors other than wealth were crucial for a bid to represent the interests of the city as a whole.

Excavating the municipal council members' sources of social status and geographical background leads to the question of the transformative effect of their position – in particular on the physical and social fabric of the city. Despite the relative wealth of data accumulated thus far, we cannot treat geographical, confessional, or occupational similarities among councilors as automatic indicators of common social identities or political agendas, as Linda Schatkowski Schilcher's estate model of Damascus society

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20 Young, *Droit ottoman*, 73 f. In the early French Mandate period, this financial criterion as well as the ten-year residency requirement were dropped in the new municipal regulation of March 10, 1922. See W. Ritsher, *Municipal Government*, Beirut 1934, 6.

21 Henry Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, New York 1910, II, 466.

22 Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," in *Beginnings of Modernisation in the Middle East*, ed. W. Polk and R. Chambers, London and Chicago 1968, 45.

23 Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, [1921], 5th ed., Tübingen 1980, 170.

24 M.A.E., Nantes *Consulat Beyrouth, carton 332*, Beirut, July 8, 1868: "Rapport de M Frederico Taque, consul d'Espagne, au corps consulaire de Beyrouth concernant l'Organisation d'un Conseil Municipal dans cette ville."

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suggests.[25] Alliances, even within given families, often change from one generation to the next, as Ernest Dawn has long shown in his *From Ottomanism to Arabism*.[26] Nevertheless, the high degree of genealogical continuity (grandfather, father, brother, son) on the municipal council is matched by an equally high degree of councilors' membership in the highly influential political lobby groups and literary organizations. These observations allow us to infer that certain Beiruti families held a distinct "corporate" identification with the city through the municipality which was reproduced over generations.

The impact of the municipal council on the urban development of Beirut was considerable. It negotiated the terms of infrastructural investment companies, reimbursed the residents affected by demolition schemes, and decided on street-piercing and widening measures.[27] In particular, the Bayhum family stood out for its near-permanent presence on the municipal council. In the second half of the nineteenth century, its members were the leading notables in the Sunni community and beyond. The Ottoman reforms offered the Bayhums a kind of "neo-hereditary" claim to the management of urban affairs. But despite financial constraints and the elite character of the municipal council, I would argue that the day-to-day operations of this urban institution did prevent the excesses of physical and social bifurcation so common in colonial cities in the Mediterranean and elsewhere.

The councilors of the Beirut municipality shared a measure of Mediterranean cosmopolitanism with wealthy inhabitants of other trading centres in the Levant, often through marriage, business ties, and exchange of ideas.[28] But although many of the merchant council members spent much of their time abroad, in Istanbul, Egypt or Europe, they remained registered in Beirut during their absence so as to be eligible upon return. Naturally they had to be "in residence" during their term of office (*muwaṭṭan* as opposed to the status of *muqīm*). Moreover the municipal councilors' public and intellectual involvement in everyday activities – political, but also social and, above all, cultural – is a measure of their rootedness in – and identification with – the city of Beirut.

In general, we can extrapolate from the biographies of 100 municipal council members that sociopolitical allegiances appeared to be organized around clusters of families linked by marriage and inheritance, neighborhood and professional ties. The biographies compiled for these members allow us to establish personal and family information about a cross-section of Beirut society who despite their different lives,

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25 Linda Schatkowski-Schilcher, *Families in Politics. Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Century*, Wiesbaden 1985.

26 Ernest Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, Urbana 1973.

27 See Jens Hanssen, "The Effect of Ottoman Rule on fin de siècle Beirut, 1888-1914," D.Phil. thesis, 2001 Oxford University.

28 Robert Ilbert, "Alexandrie, Cosmopolite?" in *Villes ottomanes à la fin de l'empire*, ed. P. Dumont and F. Géorgeon, Paris 1992, 171-185.

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affiliations, and agendas shared a desire for municipal power and a class-defined access to the municipal council.

In forty years of municipal councils, 40 Sunnis (26 families), 28 Greek Orthodox (15 families), 23 Maronites (19 families), three Roman Catholics (2 foreigners before the 1877 law abolished foreign membership), 2 Greek Catholics (1 family), 2 Protestants, 1 Armenian Catholic, and 1 Jew ruled over Beirut's municipal affairs. The ratio largely represents the city's confessional distribution, with a slight overrepresentation of Sunnis. What is interesting in the relationship between individual and family prominence is the high concentration of family clusters among the Sunnis and the Greek Orthodox. Maronite council members, by comparison, were largely individuals, with the exception, perhaps, of Milḥim (1877-1888) and Wadīʿ Fayyāḍ (1903-1908), Bishāra (1878-1883, 1888-1895) and Yūsuf Hānī (1898, 1907-1908), and Josephe (1868-1877) and Philippe Thābit (1897-1898).

Of the 100 municipal biographies studied, at least 17 members (and first-degree relatives: father, brother or son) were involved in the Beirut Reform Committee of 1912-1913. This short-lived political organization demanded a greater degree of decentralization from the Ottoman government and was instrumental in organizing the Arab Congress in Paris in 1913.[29] During the grand vizierate of Kāmil Pasha (1911-1913), who was a former governor of Beirut and personal friend of many Beiruti notables, calls for decentralization were on the increase. In two articles in *Ittiḥād-i Osmani* in December 1912, the long-serving municipal members Aḥmad Mukhtār Bayhum and Salīm ʿAlī Salām publicly called for greater autonomy for the province of Beirut, in particular in *waqf*, fiscal, and municipal administration.[30] After the Unionist coup d'état in Istanbul in early 1913, the municipal council dissolved itself as a mark of protest against the new government in Istanbul and the new governor general's decision to close down the Beirut Reform Committee.

Only "merchants and migrants"? Rooting an itinerant population

Since Leila Fawaz's landmark study on *Merchant and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut*, the cooperation between foreign and local entrepreneurs has been regarded as the linchpin of social change in Beirut. Although "European merchants had been amongst the first beneficiaries of Beirut's economic expansion" Fawaz concedes that "an increasing number of factories were in local hands." Local entrepreneurs, she argues, "were

29 Fawāz Saʿadūn, *al-Ḥaraka al-iṣlāḥiyya fī Bayrūt fī awākhir al-ʿaṣr al-ʿuthmānī*, Beirut 1994.

30 M.A.E., Nantes, *Correspondance avec les Echelles, 1912*, Beirut, June 19, 1913 and Beirut February 8, 1913 respectively. See also M.A.E., Nantes, *Consulat Beyrouth, carton 361, 1904-1914*, April 19, 1913.

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often the 'agents of change'... [who] filled that role by first of all securing Western consular protection."[31]

It is clear that, in the context of an ever-increasing volume of Mediterranean trade, local merchants with foreign-language abilities served as intermediaries between European wholesalers and the local retailers, in part also because of their growing money-lending capabilities at the expense of traditional landowning elites. However, by focusing almost exclusively on the upward mobility of Beirut's new social group of merchants-cum-dragomans and local consular *protégés* as agents of change, Fawaz denies the role of those individuals and groups who actually affected the urban fabric and structure of Beirut and identified the municipal interests of the city as their own.

Fawaz convincingly demonstrates how nineteenth-century Beirut consisted in the main of immigrants from the surrounding mountains and Damascus. Indeed, the geographical origins of the municipal councilors have confirmed this trend. Almost one quarter of all members had ancestors who had moved to Beirut from towns and villages in Mount Lebanon. Yet in absolute numbers, the great number of councilors who did not hail from the Mountain but who arrived from both neighboring and distant towns and cities is equally striking. From the 1820s, at least a dozen families who featured prominently on the municipal council were there as a result of inter-urban migration from declining port cities such as Acre and Sidon to the commercial magnet Beirut. The Naqqāshes, the Qabbānīs, the Ṣabbāghs, the Yārids, and the Tuwaynīs had been close associates of Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar or of Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār and his successors in Acre before moving north.

Families followed the shifting geographies of political power and economic opportunity. Ancestors or grandparents of other council members had also previously settled in the Ḥawrān (13 members), Tripoli (8), the Biqāʿ (3), Aleppo (5), Albania (1), Anatolia (7), Abkhazia/Caucasus (2), Maghreb (14), Istanbul (3), Egypt (6), the Hejaz (3), Greece (4), and, of course, Damascus (9).

The demographic and particularly the political growth of the city of Beirut was exceptional. The speed with which the community of migrants became rooted and with which these families came to assume public authority is even more remarkable. Of the 100 municipal members, 41% had been associated with petitioning for the creation of Beirut as a provincial capital in 1865, either personally or via their immediate, paternal relatives – brothers, fathers, or grandfathers. The municipality formed the nucleus in the long struggle for the political capitalization of Beirut that came to fruition in 1888.[32] Identification with Beirut and promotion of the city's interest vis-à-vis Damascus and other coastal cities were two sides of the same coin. Both positions promised to launch and/or perpetuate their political position in the city and the empire.

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31 Leila Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut*, Cambridge, Mass. 1983, 85.

32 On this subject, see Hanssen, "*Fin de Siècle* Beirut."

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Economically speaking, the *gros* of the members were merchants, bankers, or real-estate owners. The Bayhums were easily the most active family force on the municipal council. Out of eight municipal presidents between 1860 and 1908, two were Bayhums – Muḥyī 'l-Dīn and Muḥammad.[33] The Egyptian traveler Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Jawād al-Qayāṭī's description of the Bayhums' wealth as consisting of "lofty villas (*quṣūr*) and houses (*buyūt*), vast properties and plots of land, caravansarays (*khānāt*) and shops (*khanāwāt*)" is both exceptional and typical of other member families.[34] The leading families on the council possessed regional networks – in the case of the Bayhums, the Daʿūqs and the Ghandūrs – and international trading networks – such as the Greek Orthodox Sursuqs or the Ṭrāds, for example. Others owned banking houses – such as the Maronites Jabbūr Ṭabīb (municipal councilor [hereafter mc.] 1882-1891) or Albert Bassūl (mc. 1905-1908). Significantly, a few members were concessionaires and executive members of international investment companies, for example Bishāra Ṣabbāgh (mc. 1877-1878, 1881) and Ḥasan Bayhum (mc. 1898). Several members were also active in Beirut's chamber of commerce. The vast majority of council members were general traders in Beirut. Often merchant members benefited privately after their terms in public office expired. Al-Qayāṭī noticed on his visit to Beirut in 1882 that "Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Bayhum, formerly a municipal president, has now expanded his textile business basking in great wealth and affluence."[35]

A small but significant number of councilors were what I would consider career bureaucrats in the Ottoman administration. These bureaucrats did not necessarily depend financially on the Ottoman administration – Ottoman salaries were a fraction of what successful merchants would earn. Nevertheless, working for *al-dawla*, the Ottoman state, endowed individuals with social status and – potentially – local transformative power. ʿAbd al-Ghānī Efendi, the father of ʿUmar Ramaḍān (mc. 1898), reportedly had ten notable sons, most of them in the Ottoman civil service, according to al-Qayāṭī in the 1880s. Amīn Agha Ramaḍān had been in the Egyptian urban council for Beirut under Ibrāhīm Pasha in the 1830s, while his son ʿUmar Agha became member of the advisory council in the province of Syria a generation later. ʿĀrif Bey Ramaḍān was a clerk in the grand vizier's office and Munīr Bey was a long-serving municipal inspector in Beirut. As the only municipal member with a direct family background in the military estate, ʿUmar Ramaḍān constituted a noteworthy exception to the general professional profile of the municipal council. But with all of Beirut's notables active in municipal politics, his family's sources of social status were multiple. His father ʿAbd al-Ghānī signed the 1865 petition for the creation of the province of Beirut as a *sayyid*, designating a family

[33] The other presidents were, in chronological order, Aḥmad Pasha ʿAbāsa, Ibrāhīm Bey Fakhrī, Muḥyī 'l-Dīn Ḥamāda, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Qabbānī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Bayḍūn and ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Dānā.

[34] Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Jawād al-Qayāṭī, *Nafaḥat al-bashām fī riḥlat al-Shām*, [1882], Cairo 1319h/1901, 27 f.

[35] Ibid.

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with an authoritative – if not necessarily traceable – lineage to the prophet Muḥammad. Other Beiruti career bureaucrats also owed their status to religious backgrounds, although they were humbler ones. In many cases, careers in the burgeoning Ottoman bureaucracy catalyzed social status into social action and – in the case of the Beirut Reform Committee of 1913 – political action. The high concentration of municipal councilors on provincial education councils and departments of justice is a pertinent indicator of the trend to use state positions to gain positions of power and to influence the running of the city.

The Russian resident Kremski observed in 1896 that "the Ṭrāds are in ascendancy, while the elder family members care only about trade, the younger ones are keen to get education." But the transition from merchant to literary elite often came via employment in Ottoman state institutions. The cousin of Jirjī (mc. 1882-1886) and Ḥabīb Ṭrād (mc. 1878-1879, 1892-1895), the journalist Najīb Ibrāhīm Ṭrād, moved to Alexandria where he worked for *al-Ahrām*, owned by the fellow Beiruti émigrés Bishāra Pasha and Salīm Bey Taqlā. He became editor of *al-Taqaddum* and *al-Ṣaffā* in Beirut and founded *al-Raqīb* and *al-Bashīr* in Alexandria. Other members of the family worked on various councils and in a number of provincial government departments.

Over four generations, the Yārids "metamorphosed" from advisors in al-Jazzār's Acre, to merchants in Beirut, to officials in the Ottoman municipality (1894-1895, 1903-1904) and bureaucracy, and finally – in the fourth generation – to journalistic activity in Cairo. The municipal president in the 1900s, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Qabbānī, combined all these stages in his own lifetime. Educated at al-Bustānī's Madrasa al-Waṭaniyya, al-Qabbānī became a popular official in various departments of the provincial administration before his Hamidian proclivities caused a temporary setback during the Young Turk era. Parallel to his bureaucratic career, al-Qabbānī co-founded modern schools and arts associations, wrote text-books, and published newspapers.

The council members' privileged status generally preceded their election while a successful candidacy promised to turn social status into urban impact. The municipality perpetuated their own vision for Beirut of "public good" and "public interest." The municipal system allowed them to shape Beirut as "their" space while it excluded or marginalized others from that spatial vision – the Druze community, the guilds, menial and industrial labourers, coffeehouse patrons, and women.[36] The families of the council members held considerable urban *waqf* properties and/or were owners of large *wakāla*s, streets, and entire *sūq*s. They also started to invest their fortunes in land outside the city of Beirut. However, a consistent difference between landowner and merchant in the politics of the council members cannot be discerned from the prosopographical data

[36] Jens Hanssen, "Public Morality and Marginality in *fin de siècle* Beirut," in *Outside In: On the Margins of the Modern Middle East*, ed. Eugene Rogan, London 2001.

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available.[37] It appears that the boundaries between different modes of wealth accumulation were too blurred to be significant in the politics of Beirut's municipal council, particularly since land could be bought freely on the market after the application of the Land Law to Beirut. More significant was the tendency among municipal council members to cultivate the new residential quarters of Beirut by founding schools, hospitals, mosques, churches, printing houses, and benevolent organizations.

One unexpected discovery accruing from the profiles of municipal councilors is the significant overlap of Beirut's literary elites and council members. Three council members had been personally involved in Beirut's first "Oriental Society" between 1847 and 1852 (and seven close relatives). Fourteen municipal councilors were also members of al-Jamʿiyya al-ʿIlmiyya al-Sūriyya, 1867-1868. In its twelve meetings between January 15, 1868 and May 25, 1869, the Syrian Scientific Society discussed Syrian and Arab history and geography, grammar, the nature of human society, progress and civilization, human rights, Greek philosophy, and good governance. The Jamʿiyyat al-Funūn (from 1875) of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Qabbānī, ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Barbīr, and Saʿad Ḥamāda was a Muslim shareholding society that cooperated with the Jamʿiyyat al-Maqāṣid al-Khayriyya (from 1878) to promote modern schools for Muslim boys and girls.[38] Finally, eight original Maqāṣid members were – or became after its dissolution in 1880/81– municipal councilors.

Likewise, the link between Beirut journalists and the council members is striking.[39] Over a dozen families were owners, editors, publishers, and correspondents of local newspapers such as *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār, Thamarāt al-Funūn*, *Lisān al-Ḥāl*, *al-Jinān*, and *al-Maḥabba*. Moreover, brothers and paternal relatives of Beirut's municipal members were influential in Istanbul and Egypt's press. Councilors' articles in *Ittihad-i Osmani* and in Fāris al-Shidyāq's *al-Jawāʾib* in Istanbul, or *al-Nakhla*, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, and *al-Ahrām* in Cairo speak of an incipient network of intellectuals around the eastern Mediterranean. Editorials in Cairo frequently treated the urban condition of Beirut critically. In Beirut and connected cities, articles on the duties of modern municipal government invoked subtle campaign tactics by journalists with political ambitions. In the absence of foreigners, compared to the municipalities of Alexandria and Istanbul, it was this second generation of literary elites, born into the Ottoman age of reforms, who used the mu-

37 Many studies of the social history of Bilād al-Shām rest on this dichotomy. See, for example, Philip Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus, 1860-1920*, Cambridge 1983.

38 Hashim Nashabi, "Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qader al-Qabbani and Thamarāt al-Funūn," in *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, ed. M. Buhairy Beirut 1981, 84-91; Donald Cioeta, "Islamic Benevolent Societies and Public Education in Syria, 1875-1882," *Islamic Quarterly* 26 (1982), 40-55.

39 Intellectuals and literati were not comparable to their counterparts in Europe who, to make a living, "held minor posts in public offices." See Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern, Erinnerungen eines Europäers* [1944], Frankfurt 1998, 160. In nineteenth-century Beirut, journalism was rarely a means of subsistence. Most journalists had other means of income, either through family endowments (al-Qabbānī), or involvement in fathers', brothers', or cousins' businesses (the Ṭrāds or Thābits, for example).

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nicipality to translate their social ideas and urban concepts into practical application: through the municipality's implementation of urban planning and regulations, the construction of public utilities, or personal funding of parks and local schools.

Like many municipal council members, Ibrāhīm Bey al-Aswad (mc. 1900-1901) learnt Ottoman Turkish at Buṭrus al-Bustānī's Madrasa al-Waṭaniyya. He started his career in the Ottoman administration of Mount Lebanon before he opened the Lubnān printing press in 1891. Later he became the editor of the journal *Lubnān*, the author of the directories *Dalīl Lubnān*, and published the influential history book *Tanwīr al-azḥān fī tārīkh Lubnān* in 1925. Other council members had been celebrated poets in the Arab world prior to their election, such as Ottoman parliamentarian Ḥusayn Bayhum (mc. 1879-1880). Some went on to become notable authors after their term of office, such as his son Aḥmad Mukhtār Bayhum (mc. 1905-1906). In 1886, Waṭaniyya graduate ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Dānā (mc. 1898, 1905-1908) established the Bayrūt printing press in Sūq Sursuq where he and his brothers published the official Ottoman *Bayrut Gazetesi* of which Ṭāhā Naṣūlī (mc. 1890-1891) later became editor-in-chief. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Dānā was awarded imperial medals for his Arabic translation of Ahmet Cevdet Pasha's famous historical opus *Tārīh Devlet-i Osmāni* in 1891.

Nakhla and Mīkhāʾīl Mudawwar, whose council memberships alternated between 1868 and 1875, funded and co-edited the newspaper *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār* – among many other literary activities – while Rizq Allah Khaḍrā (mc. 1884-1885) was the owner of Beirut's al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿUmūmiyya and the author of a hagiography on St. Marun (1881). By far the most influential literary member of the Beirut municipality was Salīm al-Bustānī (mc. 1878-1880). A polymath like his father, Salīm made his widely read editorials in *al-Jinān* powerful tools for shaping public opinion. Elsewhere I have argued that three of his editorials on Beirut's urban conditions not only reflected but also shaped social change.[40] He was arguably the most important local sociopolitical thinker in Beirut in the 1870s and the 1880s, treating such topics as human rights, the ʿUrābī revolt in Egypt, the Franco-Prussian war, religion, education, and the Spirit of the Age. An innovative novelist, Salīm al-Bustānī introduced digressions into pressing contemporary issues, such as social fragmentation, religious zealotry, and the insufficient provisions of schools in the country into his fiction. A topic for further research in this respect would be how his practical experience as municipal councilor affected his writing and how his writings affected his input into urban politics.

[40] Hanssen, "*Fin de Siècle* Beirut."

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Conclusion

Far from being a closed-door institution, much less a world unto itself, the municipality was a channel through which urban notables consolidated their control over the affairs of the city and the province and through which literary elites had the opportunity to influence the urban administration of their city. Frequent publishing of long lists of private donations for educational and urban improvement projects not only informed the public of the rerouting of traffic in their expanding city, but also contributed quite consciously to enhancing the status of those urban notables involved in such munificence. Municipal council members were active in raising funds for projects of public works, such as schools and hospitals, and port and railway construction, safe in the knowledge that their names and exact financial contributions would be published on the pages of Beirut's press.

The institution of the municipality formalized and perpetuated the dominance of a stratum of urban society that emerged coterminously with – and crucially maintained – the regional ascendancy of Beirut in the nineteenth century. The same individuals and often family clusters who struggled in petitions or in editorials for the creation of a provincial capital in Beirut reappear on the municipal council. This is neither natural nor a coincidence. From the point of view of the Ottoman government, the municipality and other local and provincial forms of participation incorporated a preexisting socioeconomic elite into the political and cultural orbits of the state. From the point of view of the local and provincial notables, participation in the Ottoman institutions and the reform project solidified their informal social ascendancy in a new formalized political realm.

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Municipal members' Families' known previous places of settlement*

Place	municipal members (by families)	Individual total
Mt Lebanon	3, 8, 26-9, 38-9, 40, 42, 47, 51-2, 56, 69, 74, 78-81, 86, 88, 99	23
Sayda, Acre	1, 38, 59, 60, 63-4, 66, 73, 86, 92-7, 100	16
Aleppo	3, 70, 73, 78, 83	5
Damascus	8-10, 12, 35-6, 41, 61	8
Biqa'a	8, 69, 88	3
Hawran	6, 8, 58, 62, 88-91, 92-7	13
Tripoli	27-9, 38, 43, 58, 69, 88	8
al-`Aqura	38, 58, 69, 73, 86, 99	6
Egypt	1, 12, 46, 66, 84-5	6
Hijaz	12, 36, 66	3
Maghreb	4, 5, 16-22, 32-4, 43, 49	14
Istanbul	49, 66-7	3
Greece	13, 27-9	4
Albania	1	1
Anatolia	11, 36, 65-6, 70, 72, 79	7
Caucasus	1, 37	2
Europe	55, 71	2
Not known	2, 7, 15, 23-5, 53-4, 75-6	10

* Multiple entries

Known professions of municipal members, their immediate and extended family*

Profession	personal	1. degree family: father, brother, son	extended paternal family	Total
Merchant	3, 6, 8, 9, 19, 21-3, 31-4, 36, 38-9, 40-1, 43, 47, 49, 50, 52, 54, 56, 59, 61, 65, 67-8, 71, 76, 82-4, 92, 100	7, 16, 31-2, 39, 43, 47, 56, 60-1, 82, 86	12, 14-6, 27-31, 35-6, 42-3, 47, 51, 53, 63-5, 72-3, 75-6, 78, 88-91, 96-7	36/ 12/ 29/ **77**
Banker	7, 41, 54, 83, 89	58	13, 16, 30, 74, 79-81, 88-91	5/ 1/ 11/ **17**
Landowner, real estate business	9, 13, 15-6, 36, 41, 43, 47-8, 57-8, 69, 82, 88, 92	13, 16, 43, 82	12-3, 16, 43, 88-91	15/ 4/ 8/ **27**
Ott. Career bureaucrat	1, 4, 8, 11, 31, 72	46, 72		6/ 2/ **8**

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Dragoman	26, 54, 63, 86	26, 28, 35, 41, 50, 52, 86	13, 35, 73, 86, 88-91	4/7/8/ **19**
Journalist, publisher, teacher	8, 17, 21, 26, 31, 41-2, 57, 63, 67, 75, 95, 97	17, 26, 56, 65, 73, 89-91	22, 50, 63, 66, 73, 89-91, 96, 98-9	14/ 7/ 11/ **32**
Doctor, lawyer	56, 82	56	12, 63, 58	
Religious dignitary	42, 65	12, 82	4, 5, 12, 49, 72, 76	2/2/6/ **10**
Engineer	37, 87	69	63	2/1/1/ **4**
not known	2, 10, 25, 30, 35, 51, 53, 60, 62, 64, 66, 74, 77-8, 80, 88			

Known positions in the Ottoman administration

	personal	**1. degree family: father, brother, son**	**extended paternal family**	**total**
In Beirut (1878-1914)				
Provincial Council	3, 16, 17, 19, 31, 36, 44, 66-7, 88-9, 91	61, 77, 79	39, 49, 79-81	12/ 3/ 5/ **20**
Provincial Justice Department	3, 13-4, 19, 25, 36, 49, 53, 67, 69, 77, 80	79, 82, 96	39, 43, 68, 88-91, 98	12/ 3/ 8/ **23**
Provincial Education Department	8, 9, 16, 18, 19, 31, 67, 85	18	11, 31, 88-91	8/1/6/ **15**
Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Court	11, 18, 19, 29, 31, 36, 44, 83, 85, 91	46, 79, 83	12, 15, 42, 88-91	10/ 3/ 7/ **20**
Agriculture Bank/Dpt.	3, 45, 85	31	74, 82	3/1/2/ **5**
Egyptian Urban Council of Beirut, 1831-40		4, 17, 27, 46, 72	12, 59, 16, 18-22, 28-9	4/10/ **14**
In the Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon	8		92-5	1/0/3/ **4**
Ottoman Parliament	11, 17	21	16, 18-20, 79-81	2/1/9/ **12**

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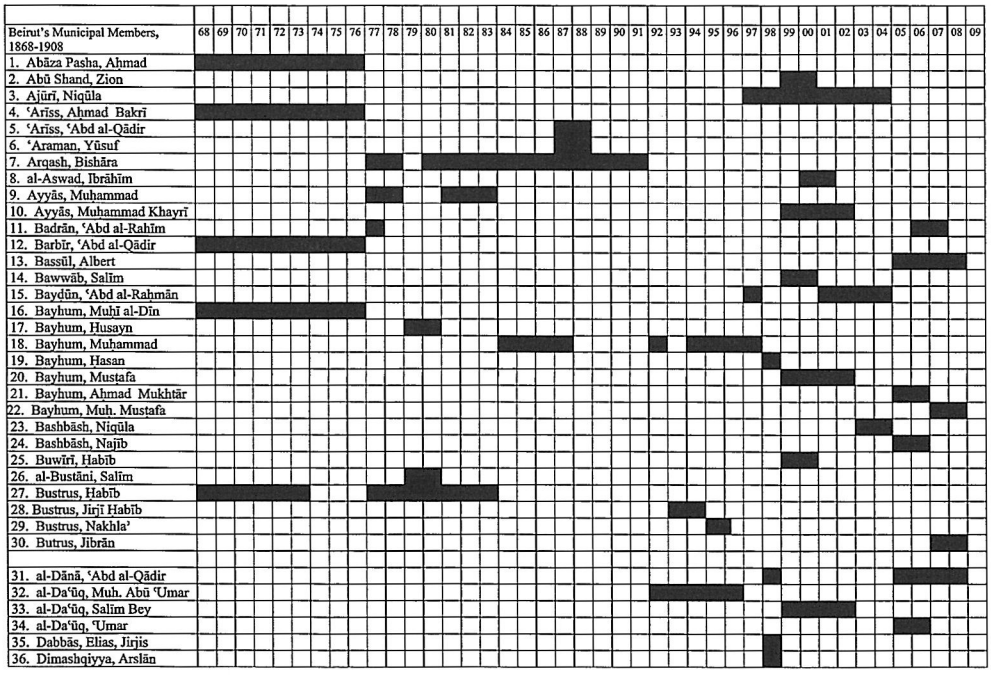
Membership in cultural societies and political organisations by Beirut's municipal members

	personal	**1. degree family: father, brother, son**	**extended paternal family**	**total**
Beirut Oriental Society, 1847-52	52, 56-7	6, 26, 56-7	59, 86-7	3/4/3/ **10**
Petitioners for the creation of the province of Beirut, 1865	5, 8, 12, 17, 18, 41, 49, 57, 58	12, 17-8, 32, 34, 46, 54, 56, 86-7, 89-1	12, 15, 20-1, 28-9, 35, 43, 54 63-4, 72, 74, 79, 86-7, 89-91	9/ 13/ 19/ **41**
Syrian Scientific Society, 1867-9	1, 7, 11, 16-8, 26-7, 31, 37, 41, 49, 52, 66	21, 26, 56-7, 79, 86	19-20, 22, 26	14/ 6/ 4/ **24**
Islamic Benevolent Society, *al-Maqasid*, 1878-80, 1908	17, 19, 31, 36, 64-5, 67, 85, 100	21, 46	1, 12, 16, 18-20, 22, 66, 72	9/ 2/ 9/ **20**
Beirut Reform Committee, 1913	13-4, 21, 30, 40-2, 46, 48, 60, 67, 75, 93	7, 43, 47, 82	31, 49, 63-4, 66, 68, 72-4, 82, 86-1, 92-5, 100	13/ 4/ 21/ **38**

Beirut's Municipal Members



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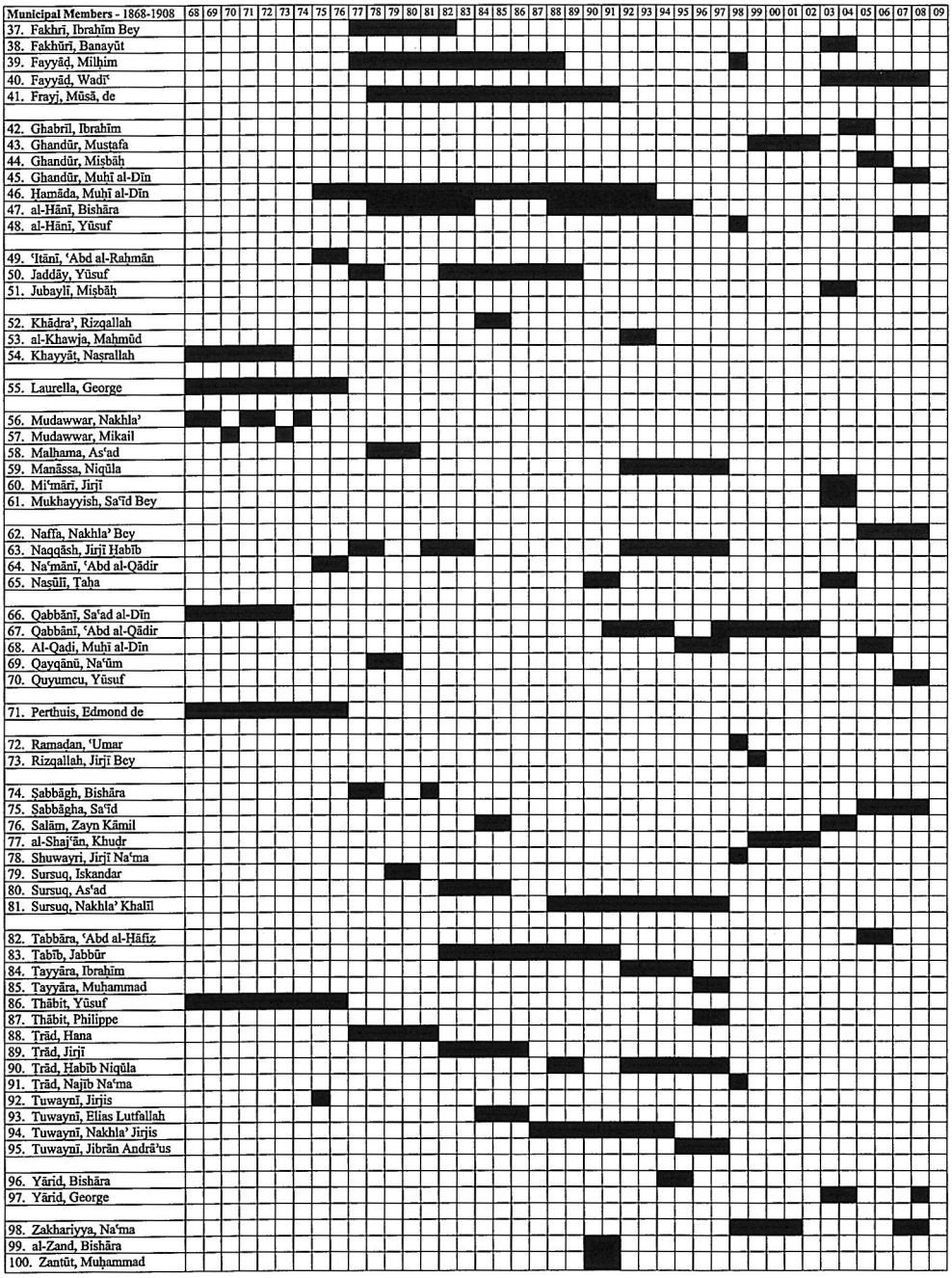

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The political significance of an Ottoman education:

Maktab ʿAnbar revisited

Eugene L. Rogan

The connection between education and ideology has been assessed by nearly all scholars of early Arab nationalism. Beginning with George Antonius, the debate has an illustrious genealogy.[1] Given the European roots of nationalism as a nineteenth-century political phenomenon, it was natural for scholars to look for lines of transmission of Western-inspired ideologies to Ottoman society. The opening of European-sponsored schools as an extension of the missionary enterprise and the impetus this gave the Ottoman authorities to expand the state school network in the second half of the nineteenth century combined to lend education particular importance in this line of analysis. Ottoman and missionary schools provided a multidisciplinary education modeled upon European curricula. Both types of schools combined the arts and sciences with a heavy dose of religious study. And both types of schools introduced a new type of teacher in addition to the *shaykh* who taught in *kuttāb* and mosque schools. The teacher-as-ideologue emerges in the nineteenth century as one of the standard-bearers of proto-nationalist ideas – along with other petty professionals, such as pharmacists and journalists. Ottomanism and Arabism are generally accepted to have been the most influential proto-nationalist ideologies in the pre-World War I period.

There is no doubt that Europe was an influential role model for both education and ideology in the late Ottoman Empire. However, Europe's role was probably greater in setting an example of state education as a tool for shaping civic identity and allegiance than as a seedbed of nationalism. In the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848, most European states were as wary of the dangers of nationalism as were the Ottomans, and saw in a national school curriculum an ideal instrument for fostering allegiance to state-

[1] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, London 1938, repr. 1945, 60, 92-95; Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, London 1962, 284-285; C. Ernest Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, Urbana 1973, 160-163, 177; Philip Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus, 1860-1920*, Cambridge 1983, 50-51, 70-71; David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Latte Ottoman Syria*, New York 1990, 95-99; Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, Berkeley 1997, 24, 76, 91-92.

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sanctioned ideologies. In the second half of the nineteenth century, European and American states expanded the state school network, often encroaching on the independence of private, religious schools. Michael Mann's arguments about the expansion of state education in the United States, Britain, France, and Germany would apply to the Ottoman experience as well:

> Those depending most on education – teachers and state careerists above all, then other professionals, then private sector careerists – became most loyal to the secular centralizing state, identifying most strongly with the emerging nation-state. But as the states were themselves polymorphous and middle-class persons also had local-regional and religious community identities, emerging ideological citizenships and nationalisms varied.[2]

The education system in France provides the best example of the state's willful shaping of the education system to promote 'a uniform national culture' which placed a high premium on national or patriotic values. "The single most important contribution of French education to bourgeois society was probably its role in fostering the idea of national unity through its assiduous cultivation of patriotic values and of a particular conception of French nationhood."[3]

These trends took legal form in France with the passage of the law of March 28, 1882 which made education free, compulsory, and secular. The displacement of religious education necessitated a replacement to preserve the moral order, and special texts were commissioned in moral and civic instruction. "These works called on instructors, recent graduates of teaching academies, to develop in each child a sense of his civic responsibility."[4] In France, Republican elites placed great importance on pedagogy, from training school teachers to setting school curricula, especially in history and civic instruction. Yves Déloye expands on Weber to define the modern state in terms of its control over the "formation of civic and national identity," in which schooling played the dominant part. "The essential goal of moral and civic education, which was given priority in primary school curricula by Republican elites, appears clearly: to encourage and strengthen a sentiment of civic loyalty and engagement towards the nation state."[5]

Scholars have argued that Ottoman state schools served to develop civic allegiance to Ottoman and Arab identities alike.[6] Damascus provides striking examples of both

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2 Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power,* II: *The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914*, Cambridge 1993, 575; on France specifically 580; on Germany specifically 586-587.

3 Andy Green, *Education and State Formation: The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA*, Basingstoke 1990, 160-161.

4 Yves Déloye, *Ecole et citoyenneté: L'individualisme républicain de Jules Ferry à Vichy*, Paris 1994, 14.

5 Ibid., 24-25.

6 Corinne Blake, "Training Arab-Ottoman Bureaucrats: Syrian Graduates of the Mülkiye Mektebi, 1890-1920," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University 1991; Randi Deguilhem, "State Civil Education in Late Ottoman Damascus: A Unifying or a Separating Force?" in *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler, Stuttgart 1998, 221-250.

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tendencies. On the one hand, its political elites embraced Ottomanism enthusiastically in the Hamidian era (1876-1909): Turkish trappings were a definite asset, opening up a wider range of opportunities in government and rendering individuals and families more cosmopolitan in the eyes of their peers.[7] The elites by adopting the Turkish language and manners, set an example which members of lower social strata were, in time, to follow. The opening of state schools in Damascus in the 1880s and 1890s made an Ottoman education more accessible to those who could not contemplate sending their children to Istanbul (as had the elites in the 1860s through 1880s). These trends were not universally applauded. In 1910-1912, the Damascene journalist Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī blasted the Ottoman schools and his fellow townsmen who enrolled their sons in these schools alike for putting ambition before Arabism.[8]

A sea-change is said to have occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century, as implied by Kurd ʿAlī's criticisms. The same schools that had Ottomanized the youth of Damascus in the nineteenth century are said to have produced Arabists in the twentieth. This change was attributed to the Turkification policies of the Young Turks, who were accused of anti-Arab biases.[9] An opposing view holds that the Young Turks did not really change the laws of the Hamidian period on language and instruction. Indeed, some have argued that Arab Damascene schoolboys had already begun to develop hostility to their Turkish classmates in the late Hamidian period:

> While Syrian youths eagerly seized the opportunity to master Turkish and thereby enhance their prospects for a career in the Ottoman bureaucracy, they resented the preponderance of Turks at school. Students divided into cliques along ethnic lines between Turks and Arabs, the former being children of government workers. In 1904, ethnic rivalry grew more tense and fights broke out between Turkish and Arab students.[10]

The school at the center of these discussions was the advanced secondary school of Damascus, formally designated the Damascus Civil Preparatory School (Shām Mekteb-i Idādiye-yi Mülkiye), but known locally as the Maktab ʿAnbar. Maktab ʿAnbar was an elite, seven-year high school – one of nineteen opened in the empire between 1884 and 1890. In the Syrian provinces, similar schools were opened in Beirut (1887), Aleppo (1890), Jerusalem, and Tripoli.[11] However, Maktab ʿAnbar achieved particular distinction for the many Arabists who graduated from the school. Shukrī al-ʿAsalī,

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7 Khoury, *Urban Notables*, 50.

8 C. Ernest Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeva S. Simon, New York 1991, 21.

9 M. Şükrü Hanioğlu has reinforced this point in "The Young Turks and the Arabs before the Revolution of 1908," in *Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeva S. Simon, New York 1991, 31-49.

10 David Commins, "Religious Reformers and Arabists in Damascus, 1885-1914," *IJMES* 18 (1986), 410-411; and *Islamic Reform*, 95.

11 Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi*, Ankara 1991, 125.

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ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Inkilīzī, Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Salīm al-Jazāʾirī, and Fakhrī al-Bārūdī were among its better-known Ottoman-era alumni, all of whom Dawn lists among the members of the pre-1914 Arab movement.[12]

While many early Arabists attended Maktab ʿAnbar, only one of them has left a detailed account of his school years. Fakhrī al-Bārūdī gave an extensive description of his school years in his 1951 memoirs.[13] Though an invaluable source on the school, al-Bārūdī's account is given too much weight in terms of establishing a connection between an Ottoman education and the emergence of Arabism. Major claims are made on the basis of this one source concerning the role of the education experience in shaping social and political attitudes, and of the growing antagonism between students of Arab and Turkish origins. Al-Bārūdī's account is used to represent the views of a group of older students who were influenced by the religious reformer Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī. The "senior circle" of Salafīs and Arabists was largely composed of the first students admitted to the Maktab ʿAnbar, who graduated in the mid-1890s. The "junior circle" consisted of a later generation of students who graduated in about 1906. Though al-Bārūdī was younger than the members of Shaykh Ṭāhir's "junior circle," his account is used to show how the junior circle's "experiences at Maktab Anbar contributed to their ideological formation."[14] In this way, a single narrative has been used to express the views of a group to which the author did not belong, who themselves represented a distinct minority in the school, to draw a link between education and Arabism, thereby skewing our understanding of the relative appeal of Ottomanism and Arabism in the pre-war period.

Given the importance attached to the ʿAnbar School, and the paucity of detailed contemporary sources on graduates' experiences, the discovery of an unpublished memoir of one of the school's first alumni stands to make a valuable contribution to these debates.[15] The fact that Ṣāliḥ al-Tall was a classmate of many of those who were attached to Shaykh Ṭāhir's "senior circle" lends particular importance to his account. In his memoirs, al-Tall described his ʿAnbar School experiences from admission through graduation. What emerges from his account is the role the school played in shaping an elite bound by a common school experience, rather than any particular ideology. From the frock-coat, trousers, and fez of their uniforms to the new habits of eating and sleeping communally, the ʿAnbar School imparted a distinct socialization to its students of diverse backgrounds. The subjects students were taught and the new languages they learned gave ʿAnbar graduates a culture and patois all their own, in which Arabic was

12 Dawn, *Ottomanism to Arabism*, 174-175.

13 Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, *Mudhakkirāt al-Bārūdī*, I, Beirut 1951 (hereafter al-Bārūdī Memoirs).

14 Commins, "Religious Reformers," 410.

15 "Mudhakkirāt Ṣāliḥ al-Tall," (hereafter al-Tall Memoirs), unpublished manuscript in the keeping of Mr. Mulḥim al-Tall, Amman, Jordan. I am very grateful to Mr al-Tall for allowing me to consult this valuable source.

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mixed with Turkish, Persian, and French – a cosmopolitanism which would have made them incomprehensible to all but others educated in the Ottoman system.[16] What is more, reading al-Tall's memoirs against al-Bārūdī's account, one is struck by the similarities rather than the contrasts in their experiences and descriptions. No significant change in the culture of the school is apparent between its first and second decades. On the basis of these two accounts I would argue that, rather than a birthplace of Arabism, Maktab ʿAnbar was a powerful tool in forging a common Ottoman identity for Arabs and Turks alike in the last decades of the Hamidian era.

This study draws on the only two memoirs currently available that treat at length the experience of study at Maktab ʿAnbar in the Ottoman era.[17] Comparative biography and prosopography have come to be standard tools for the study of education and ideology.[18] So small a sample of sources precludes hard and fast conclusions. Despite these limitations, we have much to learn from the similarities and differences in narratives of two contemporaries for what they have to tell us of how a distinctive school experience shaped their political and world-views. The very differences in their political orientations underlines "the necessity of rethinking many of the prevailing assumptions that schools 'produced' cadres of like-minded, secular graduates whose uniformity therefore made possible many of the foregone conclusions about the collectivity of the post-Ottoman period."[19]

The memoirs of Ṣāliḥ al-Tall

Ṣāliḥ Muṣṭafā Yūsuf al-Tall was born into a relatively prominent peasant family in Irbid in 1872.[20] At the time, Irbid was a small village which served as the administrative centre of

16 I made a similar argument for the Hamidian tribal school system in "Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes," *IJMES* 28 (1996), 83-107.

17 Many more school memoirs by Maktab ʿAnbar alumni dating to the Mandate period survive. See Ẓāfir al-Qāsimī, *Maktab ʿAnbar: Ṣuwar wa-dhikrayāt min ḥayātinā al-thaqāfiyya wa'l-siyāsiyya wa'l-ijtimāʿiyya*, Beirut 1964; and Muṭīʿ al-Murābiṭ, *al-Nūr wa'l-nār fī Maktab ʿAnbar: al-tajhīz wa-dār al-muʿallimīn*, Damascus 1991.

18 See, for example, Corinne Blake's study of Syrian graduates of the Civil Service Academy in Istanbul, "Training Arab-Ottoman Bureaucrats," a prosopography based on the lives of fifty graduates; my own essay on the Istanbul Tribal School, "Aşiret Mektebi," compares the careers of twenty graduates; see also Ben Fortna, "Education and Autobiography at the End of the Ottoman Empire," *Die Welt des Islams* 41, 1 (2001), 1-31, which compares seven Turkish autobiographies. For the post-Ottoman period see Christoph Schumann, "The Generation of Broad Expectations: Nationalism, Education, and Autobiography in Syria and Lebanon, 1930-1958," *Die Welt des Islams* 41, 2 (2001), 174-205.

19 Fortna, "Education and Autobiography."

20 While al-Tall claimed to have been born around 1860, his ʿAnbar School diploma, which he copied out longhand, gave his year of birth as 1872.

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ʿAjlūn, the southernmost district of the Ḥawrān in Ottoman times, and now a city in northern Jordan. Ṣāliḥ's offspring would achieve great prominence in modern Jordan. His son, Muṣṭafā Wahbī al-Tall, nicknamed ʿArār, is celebrated as Jordan's national poet and his grandson, Waṣfī al-Tall, became Prime Minister of Jordan until his assassination in Cairo in 1971. Ṣāliḥ never achieved particular distinction in his own career, serving for the most part as a mid-level bureaucrat. He wrote his memoirs "in the form of a letter" to his grandson Mulḥim al-Tall, copied into one of Mulḥim's school notebooks, and dated October 1951. The memoirs are in fact a series of random anecdotes, personal experiences, details of family history, and marginal facts dating for the most part to the late Ottoman period. Perhaps because his grandson was a schoolboy at the time, Sāliḥ wrote at greater length about his own schooling than on any other subject.

Ṣāliḥ's father, Yūsuf al-Tall, was illiterate, but was impressed by the way education permitted social mobility in the Ottoman system. Ṣāliḥ wrote of his father: "He would associate with government employees and see that one was the son of a blacksmith, another the son of an artisan, and another the son of a peasant. Until then he had believed that government employment was only available to sons of the wealthy and notables."[21] Yūsuf sent his son to the Koran school run by the village *shaykh* in Irbid, which was the only school available at the time. He then petitioned the governor in Damascus to open a state primary school in Irbid to serve the district. In due course the governor approved the opening of a primary school and dispatched two teachers to Irbid. The school was opened in the western mosque of Irbid. At first, attendance was low, reflecting public concern that registration of children in the state's schools would lead to their conscription.

> When the women [of the village] heard that the pupils' names were registered in the state's books, a group of them went to my father to berate him. I remember one old woman [who] accused him of bringing ruin to the region and [claiming] that the school would become a military school from which the state would take their sons for the army. He answered her: "You and your neighbours do not enter your sons in the state's school. I do." [22]

While Ṣāliḥ does not give the year he entered the primary school, he noted that he was a student in the primary school in 1881-1882, when the school was visited by the provincial governor (*vālī*) of Damascus. In due course, Ṣāliḥ al-Tall completed his primary education in Irbid, and was awarded the state primary school diploma in arithmetic, calligraphy, Arabic readings, and the principles of Turkish and Persian.

He passed from primary school directly into state employment. "After I received this certificate," al-Tall wrote, "the teacher took me to the district governor Ḥusayn Bey and told him to give me any job to serve as an incentive to the residents to send their sons

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21 Al-Tall Memoirs, 183.

22 Ibid., 184.

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for an education."[23] He was posted as a scribe to the teams sent to count sheep for tax collection in 1883 at a monthly salary of 500 piasters. Ṣāliḥ's beautiful handwriting led to jobs in the scribal service and in the local Islamic court. He first heard of the new preparatory school in Damascus when the *vālī* visited Irbid in 1881-1882.

> The *wālī* asked me several questions about my studies and my answers fully satisfied him. The *wālī* told the teacher that the government had established a preparatory (*iʿdādī*) school in Damascus which admitted students to study and sleep and eat in the school at the government's expense. The *wālī* spoke with me to see if I would agree to go to Damascus and enter the *iʿdādī* school, and I said I would. He ordered his aide to write down my name, along with my father's name, my age etc.[24]

Al-Tall's dates are probably off by seven or eight years. According to Ottoman provincial yearbooks, the Damascus *iʿdādī* school admitted its first students in 1889.[25] More significant is the interest the *vālī* showed in recruiting rural Syrians for the state school system – an interest which can best be explained in terms of government attempts to use the school system to extend its influence and to foster allegiance to Ottomanism.

Although Ṣāliḥ was invited to study in Damascus, he chose to continue working, and put his earnings to work through loans and futures contracts on agricultural harvests. The son of the *qāʾim-maqām*, Ibrāhīm Bey, on the other hand, did take the opportunity and enrolled in the Damascus preparatory school. When he returned to Irbid on school holidays, Ṣāliḥ wrote, "he rebuked me each day for my failure to go to Damascus and enroll in the school. He filled me with longing to go, and praised the beauty of the school and the preciousness of its uniforms and of its food, so that it was my heart's desire to go."[26] Ṣāliḥ then asked his employers in the court to provide him with letters of introduction both for work in the court system and to attend the preparatory school. Keeping his options open for work or study, Ṣāliḥ then set off for Damascus.

In Damascus, Ṣāliḥ took his professional letter of introduction to the public prosecutor of Damascus in Sūq Sārūjā, whom he found in conversation

> with a group discussing the beauty of the [ʿAnbar] school and of its teaching and its food and its clothing which was given to the students. After presenting him with the reference concerning my appointment I mentioned to him that I had a *maḍbaṭa* for entry to the *iʿdādī* school, which he took and read. He advised me to enter the school, saying that he had three boys in the school at that time.[27]

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23 Ibid., 185.

24 Ibid.

25 *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi* 1305 (1889/90). Most historians claim that Maktab ʿAnbar was opened in 1893.

26 Al-Tall Memoirs, 186.

27 Ibid.

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Ṣāliḥ next called on the assistant principal of the ʿAnbar School, who accompanied him to the school for his admissions interview.[28] Ṣāliḥ wrote of his first impression of the peaceful courtyard with swaying cypress trees and aspiring students in their city clothes. Al-Tall apparently cut quite a figure, the young peasant from the frontier village in his red boots, baggy trousers, headdress, and long hair falling in thick braids to his chest. "Some of the students stared and laughed at me." A moment later he heard his name called and was ushered into a large room with rich furnishings and mirrors for his interview, which determined that he had in fact received the prerequisite elementary education.

> A group was seated in the salon. I drew close to them, and one of them said to me "*tebeşir al*" ["Take a piece of chalk"]. As I did not understand what *tebeşir* meant, he spoke to me in Arabic, saying "this white thing," which I took. He made me write in Arabic and Turkish, and do some arithmetic – subtraction, addition and division. He asked me some words in Persian, which I answered. He asked my name, which I said was Ṣāliḥ; and then he asked what the grammatical form of my name was in Arabic, and I said an active participle, which satisfied him. He said "*çık*," which means "leave," so I went out. Another who was waiting was called from under the tree, who went in and came out and was followed by another and another until it was nearly noon. One of the officials came out and said: "Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAjlūnī number 178 and so-and-so number..." They were the ones accepted into the school for free.[29]

Ṣāliḥ al-Tall was now a student of the prestigious ʿAnbar School. He was advised to cut off his braids to accommodate his tarbush, the distinctive headgear which marked him and his classmates as Ottoman effendis.[30]

The ʿAnbar School

According to Ottoman provincial yearbooks, the Damascus Mekteb-i Idadiye-yi Mülkiye was established in 1305 *Māli* (1889-1890) with two classes: preparatory, for those students with inadequate primary training, and the normal first year. The school admitted boys of between 12 and 18 years of age.[31] Twenty years old when he enrolled, Ṣāliḥ al-Tall would have been among the oldest in the school. Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, on the

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28 For comparisons to admissions procedures in other Ottoman schools cf. Fortna, "Education and Autobiography."

29 Al-Tall Memoirs, 187.

30 Compare with the account of Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm (b. 1928), who on entering school "took off the village clothes and put on the new Western clothes" and "became 'effendiyya,'" cited by Schumann in "The Generation of Broad Expectations."

31 Randi Deguilhem-Schoem, "Idées françaises et enseignement ottoman: L'école secondaire Maktab ʿAnbar à Damas," *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 52/53 (1989), 201.

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other hand, was 14 when he was admitted, and thus conformed to the norm. The school expanded by one class each year in its first seven years, reaching the full preparatory curriculum of seven grades by 1895/96.[32] When Ṣāliḥ al-Tall entered in 1892, the school held only four classes, and admitted 31 in his year (the *sālnāme* for 1308 reported only 29 admitted to the first class that year). According to al-Bārūdī, who entered the school in 1901, as many as 150 to 200 students were admitted to each entering class. Where the provincial yearbook showed a total of 268 students at the ʿAnbar School in 1898/99, al-Bārūdī gave the student body in his years as ranging from 550 to 600. Few made it through the full seven years of study. Al-Bārūdī claimed there were only 16 in his graduating class. This rigor only enhanced the school's reputation and the prestige attached to the prized secondary school diploma. As al-Bārūdī wrote: "People looked on the holder of an *iʿdādī* diploma the way people of the present generation respect the holder of a doctorate."[33]

The school curriculum was a fusion of the humanities, sciences, and Islamic sciences. From the preparatory level, students were trained in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and French: grammar, reading, writing, and calligraphy. Basic math led to solid and plane geometry, technical drawing, accounting, algebra, and trigonometry. Ottoman history and geography in the second year was followed in subsequent years by world history and geography. After classes in the doctrines of Islam in the preparatory year, students appear not to have been taught the Islamic sciences in the first three grades, though Islam was a regular part of the curriculum in the last four years of school. In the final year, candidates were introduced to the more abstract disciplines of moral and natural philosophy.[34] Though neither al-Tall nor al-Bārūdī specified the language of instruction, it would appear that nearly all instruction was given in Turkish. Every time al-Tall cited a conversation with a school official he quoted them first in Turkish and then provided an Arabic translation, which would suggest a Turcophone environment. Al-Bārūdī claimed that all of his teachers but two were Turks – and that one of the two Damascene instructors taught Turkish! It was, all in all, a modern Ottoman education designed to train cadres for government service and to foster allegiance to the Ottoman state.

When al-Tall entered the ʿAnbar School, students faced examinations at the end of their second year and final exams at the end of the fourth, leading to a diploma of secondary education. By al-Bārūdī's time, the school exams were at the end of the fifth and

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32 The following analysis of the class size and school curriculum draws on the undergraduate dissertation by Rachel Marion Scott, "Education and Arabism in Damascus at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," Oxford University 1998, which was subsequently published under the same title in *Islamic Culture* 72 (1998), 17-64. Ms Scott drew on the following provincial yearbooks: *Suriye Vilayeti Salnamesi* 1305 (1889/90), 1306 (1890/91), 1307 (1891/92), 1308 (1892/93), 1309 (1893/94), 1310 (1894/95), 1311 (1895/96), 1314/15 (1898/99).

33 Al-Bārūdī Memoirs, 32.

34 Al-Bārūdī listed an extensive curriculum of Islamic sciences in the final two years, as well as the full curriculum of other classes: ibid., 30-31.

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seventh years. A diploma from the *iʿdādī* school was a ticket to higher education in the great tertiary institutions in Istanbul – the Civil (Mülkiye) and Military (Ḥarbiye) Academies, the Medical School, and other such prestigious faculties. Unlike many of their classmates, neither al-Tall nor al-Bārūdī followed the road from Damascus to Istanbul.

ʿAnbar schooldays

> I entered the school and received the books and dressed in the suit and began to sleep and eat in the school. They gave each student four pairs of socks, western shoes and cotton shirts, two suits, one for summer and one for winter in fine black flannel, and towels and shirts and underclothes. The food which they presented to boarding students was sumptuous. Each student was fed three types of food, each type in its own plate – meat, meat and vegetables or rice, a half loaf of bread, and abundant mixed stewed fruits. On Thursdays and Mondays each student was given sweets after the meal – *kunāfa* or *baqlāwa* or the like.[35]

Judging by his description of the ʿAnbar School, Ṣāliḥ al-Tall had never had it so good. His fascination with the food in the school recurs throughout his account – in the admonitions of his fellow classmate from Irbid who preceded him to the school, to the conversation in the public prosecutor's home in Sūq Sārūjā. He wrote at length on how difficult it was to go home to Irbid to a diet that consisted of grains, pulses, and vegetables smothered in clarified butter (*samna baladiyya*).[36]

His school years were also filled with adventures unlike any he had experienced in the Ḥawrānī countryside. In his first year the school was forced to close due to an outbreak of cholera. Sent home to Irbid, Ṣāliḥ was detained in a quarantine between Damascus and Irbid at Khān Dalnūn (1893). He witnessed the terrible fire in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. And, like Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, he helped put out a fire in the school itself.[37]

For both men, their school years were also marked by lasting friendships. "When I was in school," al-Tall wrote, "I had no comrade or companions except bright students of praiseworthy morals."[38] His "dearest friend and comrade" would become a Damascene prosecutor in the court of appeals (ʿAbd al-Jalīl Badrān). Other friends included a villager from the Biqāʿ valley whose son, like Ṣāliḥ's, went on to become a poet (Shāfīʿ

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35 Al-Tall Memoirs, 188.

36 Ibid., 189. It is interesting to contrast al-Tall's enthusiasm with the Turkish memoirs studied by Fortna that "frequently present school life as unflattering in comparison to the home atmosphere": "Education and Autobiography."

37 Al-Tall Memoirs, 193; al-Bārūdī Memoirs, 52-53.

38 Al-Tall Memoirs, 192.

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Abū Rīsha), and a townsman from Hama (Muḥammad al-Sankarī). He also was friendly with a number of the Lebanese Shihābī amirs – Sharīf, ʿIzz al-Dīn, and ʿAbd al-Majīd. His view of friendship reflected his view of the school which, he claimed, "refined morals and was most concerned with wholesomeness, religion and prayer."[39]

Fakhrī al-Bārūdī claimed among his friends some of the cleverest in his class – Saʿīd Maḥāsin, Ḥasan Farḥāt, Nasīb al-Nābulusī, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Rushaydat al-ʿAjlūnī (the latter, like Ṣāliḥ, from the ʿAjlūn district), all of whom competed for the top marks in his class. Fakhrī himself never scored high marks, though he noted with pride that he never had to repeat a year either. Aside from his clever classmates, it seems that Fakhrī chose his friends less for "praiseworthy morals" than for their sense of devilry. By his own admission, Fakhrī was one of the "little devils" (*ʿifrīt*) of the school, and was more concerned with having a good time than earning good grades. He claims to have begun his "devilry" after six months acquaintance with the school, and that he never got a weekend home for the rest of his schooldays as he was always grounded for misbehavior.

While Fakhrī manifested a respectable fear of his schoolmasters, his teachers and principals – who were in all of his anecdotes Turks – come across in a very sympathetic light, even when meting out discipline. Thus, when Nasīb al-Bakrī, one of the Damascene boys, slapped a peasant classmate without provocation, the principal convened an assembly which managed to shame Bakrī for his cruelty while keeping a light enough tone such that by the end of the assembly all of the students were reduced to laughter.[40] On another occasion, when Fakhrī and nine of his classmates were grounded for misbehavior (*masjūn*, lit. "imprisoned"), their ringleader, Nasīb al-Kīlānī, persuaded one of the school's servants to pick lemons for the boys in their confinement. They were caught by one of the more terrifying deputy principals, who snuck up the stairs to catch the students in the act. He got so close to Kīlānī, who was directing the servant in the courtyard below towards the largest fruit, that his long mustaches brushed the boy's neck, frightening him so that he shouted in fear and fell backwards with the deputy principal to the base of the stairs. Instead of punishing the boy, the deputy principal dusted them both off and laughingly "amnestied" the grounded boys, giving each a lemon seed as a reminder not to repeat their "crime." According to al-Bārūdī, the jubilant students spilled out of the school "wishing victory for the sultan."[41] His memoirs preserve the image of a very carefree environment in which learning and fun were combined.

Ṣāliḥ al-Tall and Fakhrī al-Bārūdī shared one vice – both were smokers. And, as in many schools since, the lavatories became the smokers' lounge in spite of strict prohibitions. As Ṣāliḥ wrote:

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39 Ibid.

40 Al-Bārūdī Memoirs, 37.

41 Ibid., 38.

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> I used to smoke in school, and those of us students who smoked posted one of our numbers at the entrance of the lavatories to alert us, to avoid detection by the headmaster. I remember once I was smoking when I overheard the deputy principal Maẓhar Bey say to someone standing beside the lavatories "Open your mouth and exhale" – to detect smoke on his breath. When I heard this there was nothing more I could do than take water from the lavatory basin and rinse my mouth over and over. I threw the box of tobacco down the toilets and went out. Though the deputy principal was still there he never asked to check my breath and I greatly regretted throwing away my pack of tobacco.[42]

The same exercise was followed by al-Bārūdī and his fellow smokers ten years later, who renamed the lavatories *al-muḥashshish-hane*.[43] Both Fakhrī al-Bārūdī and Ṣāliḥ al-Tall portray their ʿAnbar schooldays as a time of learning and companionship. Both wrote with pride of the position they enjoyed in society as students of the prestigious school. Yet both encountered factionalism and confrontations, which were equally part of the ʿAnbar School experiences.

Factionalism

Ṣāliḥ al-Tall did not distinguish between Arabs and Turks in his memoirs. His experience of factionalism came about through a scandal which rocked the school and divided the student body and the local government in Damascus so deeply that the matter was only resolved through the intervention of Sultan Abdülhamid II himself.

Whatever his views on smoking, Ṣāliḥ clearly objected to drinking. The Koranic proscription against drinking alcohol was observed more rigorously by Damascene Muslims than by Ottoman Turks, who, in the course of the nineteenth century, had come to associate drinking favorably with modernity.[44] We are left to assume on this flimsy basis that those Ṣāliḥ denounced for drinking were Turks.

Ṣāliḥ mentions two instances in which members of the staff were dismissed for drinking. A deputy principal was denounced by one of the monitors who smelled *ʿaraq* on his breath. The deputy principal's successor, Şukrī Bey, also drank.

> One evening after coming out from the evening prayers, while the students were strolling in the school courtyard under the trees, I looked through the window of the office of the school's clerk when Şukrī Bey entered, took a flask from his breast pocket and drank from it. He then drank water, rinsed his mouth and spat down the sewer drain. A moment after he left I went to the drain and smelled *ʿaraq*. So I walked in on Şukrī Bey and said to him:

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42 Al-Tall Memoirs, 192-93.

43 Al-Bārūdī Memoirs, 43-44.

44 See the essay by François Georgeon, "Ottomans and Drinkers: The Consumption of Wine and Alcohol in Istanbul in the Nineteenth Century," in *Outside In: On the Margins of the Modern Middle East*, ed. Eugene L. Rogan, London 2001.

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> "You just drank *ʿaraq* when you went into the office." He asked if anyone else saw him and I said no. The next morning he gave me a commendation of distinction "for excellent morals" for keeping my silence.[45]

The next evening, Şukrī Bey was seen by a number of students kissing one of their classmates, who was "handsome with a broad face and robust body." Shukrī al-ʿAsalī and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Inkilizī were among those who drafted a complaint to the principal calling for Şukri Bey's dismissal.[46]

The principal was convinced of the charges and addressed the complaint to the provincial director of education (*mudīr al-maʿārif*). The director of education took the matter badly, telling the principal that he should defend his deputy against the charges. The principal went over his superior's head and pressed his complaint with the provincial governor (*vālī*). The gravity of the situation split the provincial government and the school alike into two factions, some taking the principal's side, others taking the side of the director of education in defending the deputy principal, Şukrī Bey. The governor convened a commission of inquiry, composed of the notables of Damascus and government employees, who interviewed a number of students and staff. This first commission proved inconclusive, prompting the principal to take his complaint to the central government in Istanbul, to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Interior.

An imperial commission was appointed by the central government in Istanbul and sent to Damascus to investigate the charges.

> It began its inquiry by summoning students and asked for clarifications from them. That day I feigned illness and went to the dispensary. While I was sitting there drinking the milk which they had brought me the director of education came in and sat next to me and began to ask me what information I had. I said nothing. He said to me: When the Commission of Inquiry asks you about your previous testimony, tell them "The principal of the school told me what to say and I didn't see anything with respect to Şukrī Efendi." He promised to admit my brother ʿAlī Niyāzī to the school on scholarship, and to have me appointed to the provincial government (*mudīr nāḥiya*) when I took my diploma at the end of the year.

When in fact Ṣāliḥ was called before the commission, he told all – how he had caught Şukrī Bey drinking and how the director of education had tried to gain his silence. "The Director of Education turned yellow as I spoke in a way obvious to those present, and I heard the members of the Commission say 'Şehadetiniz doğrudur,' meaning 'your testimony is true.'

These proceedings had proved poisonous to student relations, as the student body divided into two clear factions behind the principal and his deputy, Şukrī Bey. "After the commission completed its investigation," wrote al-Tall, "the hatred increased between

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45 Al-Tall Memoirs, 193.

46 The details that follow are from ibid., 193-97.

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the two parties of students. All of the members of the other party told me that I would be expelled from school the next day." The tension built over the two weeks that the commission deliberated. When the commission reached its decision, the school was called to assembly by bugle.

> The teachers and students went out to the courtyard and lined up, the teachers and instructors in front, the students behind them and the servants behind them. The principal of the school came, followed by the clerk carrying a platter covered with a green cloth, which he handed to the principal, who raised the cloth and withdrew a document which he kissed and placed to his forehead. He then handed the document to the clerk and said: "Read to the assembly the contents of the Imperial Decree (*irāde*)." It called for the expulsion of Şukrī Bey from the school in shame and contempt and banned him from the profession; and the demotion of the director of education and his transfer to another province, and the expulsion of a number of students who had taken the director of education's side. At this point our faces lit up with joy and the party that strayed from truth was shamed and humiliated.

Al-Tall gave no further conclusions to his story. It may well have been the case that the factions in this instance broke down along national lines. After all, it seems probable that the deputy principal, Şukrī Bey, was a Turk, given that he drank alcohol. All of the students Ṣāliḥ al-Tall named as signatories to the original petition against Şukrī Bey were Arab (in addition to al-ʿAsalī and al-Inkilīzī he named the local governor's son from Irbid, Ibrāhīm Bey). However, the students' cause was taken up by the principal who was himself most probably a Turk, and the clear conclusion which the reader draws from al-Tall's account is his belief in the justice of the sultan and the central government in Istanbul. The reverence shown for the sultan's edict, as played out in the ceremonial attached to reading the *irāde*, reinforced this sense of attachment to an Ottomanist identity.

Arabs versus Turks

In his memoirs, Fakhrī al-Bārūdī made clear reference to national tensions between students. These passages have been cited by a number of scholars to argue for a rise of Arabism and growing hostility to the Ottoman state at this time. And with good reason: al-Bārūdī entitles his brief chapter on the subject "The awakening of the spirit of Arabism."[47] After four centuries of Ottoman rule, al-Bārūdī wrote,

> it was only natural that something of an alienation should arise between the sons of the ruler and the sons of the ruled. For the Turks in those days were the sons of the lady, while we were the sons of the servant girl. Not one of us dared raise our head before the teachers

[47] Al-Bārūdī Memoirs, 54-56.

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and administrators, all of whom were Turks, so much had fear of Ottoman rule filled our hearts.[48]

Seen in context, though, there is little in the rest of his memoirs to support this assertion of fear – certainly not in the career of "devilry" which Fakhrī had pursued, nor in his stories of the good humor and fairness of the school's administrators which make up the rest of his school memoirs.

Al-Bārūdī claimed that the spirit of Arabism was beginning to take hold in the early 1900s, inspired by national awareness among other segments of Ottoman society – Turks, Kurds, and Albanians – who began to pick quarrels with the Arab students. "We responded to them in kind," he wrote defiantly. Turkish students formed a gang called the Dağlar Cemiyeti (lit. "Mountains Society"), headed by an Albanian named Badr al-Dīn al-Sibāhī, who went about bullying other students. The Arab students formed their own gangs. In time, al-Bārūdī wrote, the antagonisms grew more serious and spilled out of the school. When he was in his third year, the fights between the different school gangs and their allies outside school grew serious enough to force the police to intervene (c. 1904). "In this way, the antagonism between us and them grew each year until the Ottoman Revolution in 1908."[49] Al-Bārūdī claimed that his own hatred for Dīn al-Sibāhī, head of the Dağlar Cemiyeti, reached such an extent that they agreed to meet secretly outside the school to fight it out, just the two of them. They met in an alley and fought until both were bloodied. People from the quarter separated the boys, each swearing at the other in his own language. One of the assistant principals appeared on the scene and lectured the two boys on good manners. "He would not let us go our separate ways until we made peace and kissed each other. We then walked together as if nothing had happened between us."[50]

The story is worth citing at length if only because it is so devoid of political significance. Schoolboy gangs and fights were part of school experiences across the empire. In Istanbul in 1895, for example, a similar fracas occurred in the Tribal School. The Beşiktaş police had to be called in to quell a fight that broke out when "a small disagreement between four Kurdish and six Arab students resulted in an exchange of blows with stones, shoes and fists," which drew in students and outsiders.[51] Yet there was no sense of these fights taking on "national" significance. It seems only natural in a multiethnic empire that student gangs should have divided along national lines, if for no other reason than that students were more likely to swear at one another "each in his own

48 Ibid., 54.

49 Ibid., 55-56.

50 Ibid., 56.

51 Rogan, quoting an official Ottoman report in "Aşiret Mektebi," 95.

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language."[52] In al-Bārūdī's memoirs, the fights were schoolboy adventures, told with more than a little braggadocio.

Al-Bārūdī went on to speak of his political awakening in his last years at Maktab ʿAnbar (1905-1906). He began to read Egyptian newspapers that had been banned by the Ottoman authorities. Copies of *al-Muqaṭṭam, al-Ahrām*, and *al-Muʿayyad* were circulated in great secrecy among a small group of ʿAnbar students (the two he named were Muḥyī 'l-Dīn al-Khaṭīb and ʿUthmān Mardam Bek). While no doubt these papers broadened the schoolboys' horizons, none of them could be characterized as particularly Arabist or nationalist in tone. *Al-Muqaṭṭam* was owned by two Lebanese and generally supported Lord Cromer's policies in Egypt. In Aḥmad Amīn's words, "*al-Muqaṭṭam* opposed the nationalist movement, and I didn't share its views." *Al-Ahrām* was fairly apolitical, also published by Syrians. *Al-Muʿayyad* was a conservative paper noted "for its Islamic colouring".[53] The truly nationalist Egyptian paper of the time was Muṣṭafā Kāmil's *al-Liwāʾ*, of which al-Bārūdī made no mention.

If Fakhrī al-Bārūdī was schooled in proto-nationalist thought, it was in the salon of Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī rather than in the ʿAnbar School. Al-Bārūdī wrote of his interest in the meetings held in Damascus by graduates of the tertiary institutions of Istanbul – primarily the law school, medical school, and civil service school. "These young progressives spoke of Europe and its progress and science, on the resurgence of nations, and complained of the injustice of the government and the tyranny of Sultan Abdülhamid."[54] These were the "senior circle" identified by Commins: Shukrī al-ʿAsalī, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Inkilīzī, Salīm al-Jazāʾirī, Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, and Dr. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Shahbandar. Shaykh Ṭāhir "was their *shaykh* and our *shaykh*," al-Bārūdī wrote. "In this ocean, my eyes were opened to the world, and I obtained my knowledge of nationalism and freedom from these men."[55]

The real question is whether this interest in nationalist issues was at the expense of al-Bārūdī's attachment to Ottomanism. Which was the more influential school? Maktab ʿAnbar? Or the salons of Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī?

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52 Randi Deguilhem has argued for Islamic cohesion over ethnic division among the student body of Maktab ʿAnbar – "a forum where unireligious but multiethnic groups formed unifying bonds": "State Civil Education," 250.

53 Aḥmad Amīn, *Ḥayātī*, Beirut 1971, 111-112.

54 Al-Bārūdī Memoirs, 57.

55 Ibid., 58-59.

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Conclusion

The Young Turk Revolution occurred in al-Bārūdī's seventh year, and heralded an end to many of the injustices that preoccupied the salons of Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī. Upon graduation, Fakhrī wanted to proceed to higher studies in Istanbul with the rest of his classmates. In fact, half of the 16 who took the secondary diploma went on to further study in Istanbul: four to the medical faculty, three to the law school and one to the Mülkiye.[56] Al-Bārūdī's father agreed to send him to study in Istanbul once the political situation there had settled after the revolution. In the event, he never did get to Istanbul, but went on to study in the officers' training academy in Damascus before heading to Paris in 1911 to study agriculture. While in Paris he met many of the proto-nationalists who formed the Young Arab (al-Fatāt) society. He did not complete his studies in Paris and appears not to have followed al-Fatāt into Arabism, for with the outbreak of World War I he volunteered and was commissioned a first lieutenant in the Ottoman army. He was captured by the British in the battle of Beersheba in 1917 and was recruited to Fayṣal's Arab Army from the prisoner-of-war camp – from which point his Arabist career should be dated. Up until that point, whatever his interest in Arab proto-nationalism, he clearly saw his interests and future linked to the Ottoman world – through his wish to study in Istanbul, to his officer training, and ultimate volunteering for military service at the outbreak of war.

As for Ṣāliḥ al-Tall, he went on to a less brilliant career than al-Bārūdī. After graduating from Maktab ʿAnbar, Ṣāliḥ was appointed as a primary school teacher in the Transjordanian towns of Maʿān and Irbid, served for a spell as *mudīr nāḥiya* in one of the counties of the ʿAjlūn district, and entered the service of the provincial courts as a public prosecutor on salaries which ranged from 250 to 500 piasters per month. On the outbreak of war, Ṣāliḥ was charged with forming a local volunteer force into a sort of home guard for the ʿAjlūn district, and served as a grain market clerk to oversee the unpopular business of wartime requisitioning.

My argument, in comparing the experiences of these two men, is that so long as there was an Ottoman Empire, both acted as Ottoman loyalists. Their loyalties were closely linked to the education they received at the Maktab ʿAnbar. Both treated their admission to and their graduation from the school as accomplishments in which they took real pride. From the perspective of the 1890s and early 1900s, these were young men who, thanks to their schooling, faced promising careers in the Ottoman state and high social standing. More than a matter of ambition, both men thrived in the ʿAnbar School. They made important friendships, learned respect and admiration for their

[56] Ibid., 81.

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Turkish schoolmasters, and by their own accounts had the time of their lives with their pranks, games, adventures, and even their fights.[57]

The experience of study in a prestigious state school and the camaraderie which this engendered drew young Syrians into a broader network of loyalties based on personal ties to individuals and institutions that were Ottoman, and through these connections they were themselves transformed into Ottomans – or, in Corinne Blake's apt phrase, "Ottomans of the Arab persuasion."[58] They were not the same people when they went home. They had a new humor, a new language, a new world-view. They liked to pepper their conversation with bits of French and Turkish and Persian. And the only people who could follow such conversations, understand the innuendos, and catch the foreign language puns, were fellow students of the 'Anbar School or any of the higher schools in the Ottoman Empire. One can imagine that graduates of this system would feel more at home with other products of the system than with members of their primary community – town quarter or village, perhaps even than with family members. If so, then the school system was very important indeed in engendering a new sense of community which might well have endured, had the Ottoman Empire but survived.

[57] Reeva Simon has argued that "attendance at distinctive secondary schools" in the late Ottoman era "was the most influential experience for many who later achieved political power in the Middle East" in terms of their shared schooling, experiences, and friendships: *Iraq between the Two World Wars: The Creation and Implementation of a Nationalist Ideology*, New York 1986, 16.

[58] Corinne Blake wrote in similar terms of Syrian graduates of the Mülkiye: "They became 'Ottomans' – part of a culturally defined group that dominated the upper levels of the empire's administrative and military structure": "Training Arab-Ottoman Bureaucrats," 240.

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RELIGION AND THE CHANGE OF CULTURE

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The Nuṣayrīs before the Tanzimat

in the eyes of Ottoman provincial administrators,

1804-1834[1]

Stefan H. Winter

Introduction: knowledge of Nuṣayrism

> After touring western Syria in 1896, the Egyptian scholar Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Jawād al-Qayāṭī summed up his account of the region's cultural diversity with "Praise be to God on High that He has preserved our Egypt from the multiplicity of these faiths and sects and these *madhhab*s and cults, whose adherents commingle in the lands of Syria with the Muslim element, to the point of bringing turmoil upon it and sowing corruption and disorder."[2]

Al-Qayāṭī's attitude would hardly be noteworthy except for the fact that he did travel extensively in the southern Lebanon and around Latakia, but was still content simply to rely on his Beiruti interlocutors for his confused and derogatory characterization of the Imāmī, Ismāʿīlī, and Nuṣayrī[3] Shiʿite groupings found in Syria. Indeed, this combination of nescience, disinterest, and disgust seems to have been universal among the ruling and learned classes of the nineteenth-century Near East. Even as towering a reformist statesman and intellectual as Ahmet Cevdet Pasha would not hide his uninformed dis-

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1 For their help during my research, I am indebted to Stephan Procházka, the Başbakanlık archive staff, and Ülkü Altındağ.

2 Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Jawād al-Qayāṭī, *Nafaḥāt al-basḥām fī riḥlat al-Shām*, Cairo 1319h/1901, 37.

3 While the names "ʿAlawī" or "Alevi" are now to be preferred to the pejorative "Nuṣayrī", I follow the convention of a number of contemporary Syrian writers in retaining the latter term when discussing the community in a pre-twentieth-century historical context. For further discussion, see also Muḥammad Aḥmad ʿAlī, *al-ʿAlawiyyūn fi ʾl-tārīkh. Ḥaqāʾiq wa-abāṭīl*, Beirut 1997, 259-261.

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dain for the Nuṣayrīs in his works on contemporary Ottoman history.[4] "Learned" investigation remained the prerogative of European travelers and orientalists, over whom the "secret sects" had exercised a veritable fascination at least since Volney, culminating in Jacques Weulersse's Mandate-era studies which sought to prove the irreconcilability of Nuṣayrī and Arab identities. But how did the actual Ottoman administration perceive and comprehend a group such as the Nuṣayrīs, which constituted the largest non-orthodox population element in the *eyālet*s of Adana, Aleppo, Tripoli, and Damascus?

This chapter addresses the sort of knowledge about Nuṣayrī creed made available to the Sublime Porte in the early nineteenth century. The Tanzimat reform program, which was inaugurated in 1839, is widely regarded as a revolution in Ottoman state ideology and administrative practice, attended, among many other changes, by the ideal transformation of the *reʿāyā* or subject classes into equal citizens of a modern nation-state. However, the beginnings of an Ottoman scholarly interest in the Nuṣayrī creed must be dated to the Hamidian period. Selim Deringil has demonstrated how the construction of an Ottoman national identity under Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1908) became predicated on the reaffirmation of Sunni orthodoxy and his own role as caliph. The Yıldız Palace archives, as Deringil and İlber Ortaylı have noted separately, bear testimony to the great effort made to undercut foreign Protestant missionaries and convert heterodox populations such as the Nuṣayrīs to official Ḥanafī Islam.[5] At the same time, the Nuṣayrī sect also begins to find a place in the ethnography of the empire. Among the first late-Ottoman historians to write on the sect was İzmirli İsmail Hakkı (d. 1946), whose large collection of Islamica included a copy of Süleymān Efendi al-Adanī's famous exposition of the Nuṣayrī faith. In a short, untitled, and undated treatise written in Ottoman Turkish and duplicated by stencil, Hakkı briefly lists the articles of Nuṣayrī belief but makes little reference to the community's geographical and social situation.[6] Similarly, Sami Bey's pioneering Ottoman encyclopedia *Ḳamusü'l-Alam* contains an entry on the Nuṣayrīs as a Shiʿite sect centered around Latakia.[7] Only the creation of the secular republic, and specifically the annexation of the Alexandretta district in 1939, gives rise

4 İlber Ortaylı, "Groupes hétérodoxes et l'administration ottomane," in *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East: Collected Papers of the International Symposium "Alevism in Turkey and Comparable Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East in the Past and Present," Berlin 14-17. April 1995*, ed. Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi, Leiden 1997, 209-210.

5 Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909,* London and New York 1998, 83-84.

6 Pamphlet registered under "Nasiriyye, Dürziyye, Şeyhiyye, Babiyye, Vehhabiyye," Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İzmirli İsmail Hakkı No. 3738.

7 Sami Bey, *Ḳamusü'l-Alam*, Istanbul 1889-1896, VI, 4583.

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to a "scientific" Turkish literature on Nuṣayrī society, which seeks to prove its anthropologically, sociogeographically and historically Turkish character.[8]

Much of the work of reform entailed, in Selim Deringil's words, the "fine tuning" of the population, the Nuṣayrīs included. "Fine tuning involved the meticulous inculcation, indoctrination, enticing, frightening, flattering, forbidding, permitting, punishing or rewarding – all in precise doses... Not necessarily humane or anodine, it can involve brute force and bloodshed, but only as a last resort."[9] But did this nuance of control and the foucauldian knowledge of its subject that it presupposes originate only in 1839? In this chapter, we propose to return to the first third of the nineteenth century – before Protestant missionaries set out to win the souls of the local highland population[10] – and examine how the Nuṣayrīs were presented to the Sublime Porte in provincial diplomatic despatches on the very eve of the Tanzimat.

The dozen or so disparate documents at our disposal cover a generation (1803-1834) marked by Syria's tentative return to a more distinctly Ottoman form of rule, between the end in 1804 of the nearly independent reign of Cezzar Aḥmed Pasha and the Egyptian invasion in 1831. They are classified for the most part in the Hatt-ı Hümayun collection of the Başbakanlık archives in Istanbul, with some exceptions being noted. Further diplomatic correspondences dealing with the Nuṣayrīs may doubtless be found, and many more must be presumed lost. The selection presented here can make no claim to being complete, nor even to providing a significant complement to the nineteenth-century narrative sources as far as the presentation of historical events is concerned. In particular, it must be pointed out that this sample concerns only reports sent to, and not orders issued from, Istanbul.[11] Only when the complete body of pertinent Ottoman chancery documents, foreign (especially French) consular reports,[12] travel itineraries, and ʿAlawī narrative and prosopographical sources (many still in manuscript form) have been assembled, will it be possible to begin a history of the Nuṣayrīs in the modern period.

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8 Hasan Reşit Tankut, *Nusayriler ve Nusayrilik Hakkında*, Ankara 1938, 64 pp.; Cemal Alagöz, "Coğrafya gözüyle Hatay," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 2 (1943-1944), 203-216; Ahmet Faik Türkmen, *Mufassal Hatay Tarihi*, 1937, 644 pp.

9 Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 10.

10 American Protestants first distributed Bibles among the Nuṣayrīs in 1830 and 1831, and though they talked repeatedly of opening a mission house in the province of Latakia to further their work, these plans were only realized long after the Egyptian occupation. See *The Missionary Herald. Reports from Ottoman Syria 1819-1870*, ed. Kamal Salibi and Yusuf K. Khoury, Amman 1995, II, 292, 316, 318, 438, III, *passim*.

11 The *Mühimme Defterleri* 235-237 and 240-241 were also searched for references to the Nuṣayrīs, with no result.

12 See Antoine Hokayem, *Les provinces arabes de l'empire ottoman aux archives du ministère des Affaires Etrangères de France, 1753-1918*, Beirut 1988, *passim*.

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Contemporary ʿAlawī writers especially in Turkey have remarked on the continuing lack of sociohistorical (rather than heresiographical) studies on the Nuṣayrī creed.[13] While the present contribution can provide little more than a contextualized inventory of pre-Tanzimat archival sources citing the Nuṣayrīs,[14] it is hoped that a thematic presentation of some of their forms and contents may at least demonstrate the range of cognitive positions and executive responses that the central and provincial Ottoman administrations could adopt toward the heterodox sects of northwest Syria.

The Nuṣayrīs as political scapegoats

Ottoman government in the Syrian provinces remained indirect in the early decades of the nineteenth century, with the Sublime Porte generally retaining strong, semi-autonomous pashas over several years, such as Süleymān and ʿAbdallāh in Sidon, Muṣṭafā Barbir in Tripoli, or the last of the ʿAẓm household in Damascus. This mode of rule is reflected in the registers of extraordinary mandates issued by Istanbul (*mühimme defterleri*), where the previously detailed directives on provincial administration have given way in this period to the communication of vague general policy guidelines. Essentially local concerns such as relations between the various Syrian confessional communities had little place in the diplomatic correspondence with the imperial capital. The real business of provincial politics consisted in Ottoman notables competing amongst themselves, often violently, for top posts such as the governorship of Damascus.

Sometimes Nuṣayrī or other clans became embroiled in such battles and their involvement was reported with polemic intent to Istanbul. An example of this is a note sent to the grand vezir by Cezzar Aḥmed Pasha, short enough to quote in full, in which he depicts a recent supposed "police action" against Druze, Shi'ites, and Nuṣayrīs as a defense of imperial honor and interest:

> [Vezir's note to the sultan, added at top of page:] Note from Your servant Cezzar Paşa. The command is Your majesty's, He who orders.
>
> My exalted brother,
>
> The Abdullah Paşa situation was inquired about. A while ago, he brought together the Druze, Kızılbaş and Nusayri factions, attacked the fortress of Tripoli and besieged its people. The townsmen came [to me] and sought refuge, saying "Honour belongs to the

[13] Ömer Uluçay, *Arap Aleviliği: Nusayrilik*, Adana 1996, 4-8; Mahmut Reyhani, *Gölgesiz Işıklar*, 4 vols., Istanbul 1994-1999, II: *Tarihte Aleviler*, 95.

[14] For a treatment of the Nuṣayrīs in the early Tanzimat period drawing on Ottoman archival documents, see Sabahattin Samur, "Suriye Vilâyeti'nin İdâri ve Sosyal Yapısı (1840-1908)," Ph. D. Thesis, Ankara University 1988, 146-151.

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padişah. Save our honour from these different sects." A number of soldiers were dispatched and, with God's help, they [the insurgents] were repulsed from Tripoli.

9 Cemazi'ül-ahir 1218 [September 26, 1803].[15]

In fact the local narrative histories add some nuance to what Cezzar (i. e. "the butcher") euphemistically terms the "ʿAbdallāh situation". ʿAbdallāh Pasha al-ʿAẓm had been (re)appointed governor of Damascus in 1214/1799 precisely to contain the insatiable territorial ambitions of Cezzar Aḥmed Pasha, governor of Sidon. In 1803, Cezzar was even declared *maghdūb al-dawla* or "object of the State's wrath," giving ʿAbdallāh occasion to attack Tripoli, whose intendant (*mütesellim/mutasallim*), Muṣṭafā Agha Barbir, had just gone to Acre (Cezzar's capital) to place himself and the province of Tripoli under the latter's suzerainty.[16]

Cezzar, never famous for his pro-minority stance, had every interest in branding his long-standing rival ʿAbdallāh Pasha al-ʿAẓm as a friend of execrable Shiʿite sects. Just to cover all bases, he at the same time also denounced ʿAbdallāh to the Sublime Porte as a supporter of the Wahhābīs, the puritanical Bedouin Sunni sect that had seized control of the Hejaz.[17] Either way, his propaganda proved effective. Far from being heroically "repulsed from Tripoli," ʿAbdallāh had to abandon the siege midway when he was dismissed as governor of Damascus – replaced by Cezzar.

Cezzar's note is the only source to mention in passing the participation of Nuṣayrīs in the 1803 siege of Tripoli. A document referring to a similar battle between Syrian governors in 1822 reports Nuṣayrī involvement more explicitly. In that year, another ʿAbdallāh Pasha, this one the energetic new Ottoman governor of Sidon, made a bid to extend his power by attacking Darwīsh Muḥammad Pasha of Damascus. His forces were led by Amir Bashīr al-Shihābī, the powerful Christian tax farmer of the Lebanese mountains, and included the Druze warlord Bashīr Junbulāṭ, while other Druze such as the ʿImād clan sided with Darwīsh Pasha. According to the records used by Dick Douwes in his recent book, a Hama court even condemned ʿAbdallāh to death for allying with the heterodox sects.[18] The crushing defeat of the Damascene army near the suburb of al-Mazza on May 27, 1822 so alarmed the Sublime Porte that the governor of Aleppo was dispatched to intervene on Darwīsh Pasha's behalf.[19]

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15 HH 3784i.

16 Cf. Ḥaydar Aḥmad al-Shihābī, *Lubnān fī ʿahd al-umarāʾ al-Shihābiyyīn*, Beirut 1969, 368-369; Mikhāʾīl al-Dimashqī [anon.], *Ḥawādith al-Shām 1782-1841*, ed. Aḥmad Ghassān Sabbānū, [Damascus?] 1981, 22-24; Ighnātīyus Ṭannūs al-Khūrī, *Muṣṭafā Agha Barbir. Ḥākim Ayālat Ṭarābulus wa-Jabala wa-Lādhiqiyyat al-ʿArab (1767-1834)*, 2nd imprint, Tripoli 1985, 75-80.

17 Al-Shihābī, *Lubnān*, 405.

18 Dick Douwes, *The Ottomans in Syria. A History of Justice and Oppression*, London, 2000, 153.

19 Mīkhāʾīl Mishāqa, *Mashhad al-aʿyān bi-ḥawādith Sūriyā wa-Lubnān*, ed. Mulḥim Khalīl ʿAbduh and Andrāwūs Ḥannā Shākhāshīrī, Cairo 1908, 80-85; Ṭannūs al-Shidyāq, *Akhbār al-aʿyān fī Jabal Lubnān*,

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Darwīsh, meanwhile, had more innovative ideas for repulsing ʿAbdallāh's forces, as he outlines in a report to Istanbul dated 29 June 1822. Pointing out that "the Druze, Nuṣayrī and Kızılbaş factions have united with ʿAbdallāh Pasha, and since subduing them through warfare is futile," Darwīsh proposes to "spare neither money nor presents" and pay off his enemy's allies. For "already when Amīr Bashīr came to Damascus with ʿAbdallāh Pasha's army and thirty or forty thousand Druze from the Druze Mountain were attacking noble Damascus from all four sides, Shaykh ʿAlī ʿImād had in that time been gained for our side and the people of the said mountain were [split into] two groups." Now even Amīr Bashīr and Shaykh Bashīr appeared to be ready to compromise, though "because such ruse and artifice has been observable on their part until now, it was impossible to be disposed or trusting toward them." Nevertheless, Darwīsh promises his sovereign "not to falter in any way, in undertaking to gain and conciliate little by little both the aforesaid faction as well as the Kızılbaş and Nuṣayrī factions."[20]

Darwīsh discreetly overstated the importance of "conciliating little by little" the Shiites ("Kızılbaş" in Ottoman parlance), for the Shiite Ḥarfūsh amirs of the Biqāʿ had been firmly on his side in the first place.[21] His letter is unique in its dispassionate appraisal of their and the Nuṣayrīs'potential as allies. Moreover, it bears notice that the document carries at its head an autograph comment by Sultan Maḥmūd to his vezir taking account of its content. He cautions against trusting Bashīr but supports Darwīsh Pasha's efforts in conciliating the opposing factions; a rare example of unspoken but official indulgence toward the Nuṣayrīs.

This indulgence is all the more noteworthy in light of how the Nuṣayrīs (and Druze) are portrayed in another message received in Istanbul only shortly thereafter. The undated document, which links them to the Greek nationalist revolt begun in March 1821, is the transcript of an oral report made by an envoy of Meḥmed ʿAlī Pasha, governor of Egypt. The Sublime Porte was earnestly seeking the intervention of Egypt's puissant navy against the Greek insurgents; Meḥmed ʿAlī's asking price (beyond the governorship of Morea and Crete already promised to him) was a hand in settling the affairs of Syria, including a royal pardon for that same rebel governor of Sidon, ʿAbdallāh. This was absolutely necessary, according to the Egyptian envoy, because "all investigations" had revealed that:

> In order to achieve the evil and contemptuous deeds which the sinister Greek nation connivingly forces upon the people of Islam, and – through the advocacy of its corrupt thought – to make comply with their principle of collusion and unity the Druze and Nuṣayrī sects, who have no share in the ornament of Islam and who are perhaps worse than enemy infidels, the abominable nation has not failed to correspond and communicate

Beirut 1970, 147-148, 417-426; Michel Chebli, *Une Histoire du Liban à l'époque des emirs (1635-1841)*, Beirut 1984, 223-233.

20 HH 20647.

21 Al-Shihābī, *Lubnān*, 714.

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with the accursed sects, in the aim of bringing about in the end the requisite friendship and unity between them.[22]

The grand vezir reiterated the Egyptian allegation of the Nuṣayrīs' complicity with the Greeks in a long memorandum to the sultan in which he discusses the relative merits of executing or reappointing the governor of Sidon.[23] The same charge is also repeated, though without any further elaboration, in Ahmet Cevdet's *History*.[24] The stabilization of Syria was doubtless of concern, and Ottoman authorities had been vexed by the Druze and Nuṣayrī mountaineers' contacts with foreign seapowers – especially their doubly illegal grain-for-muskets trade – since the sixteenth century. Yet it is hardly believable that the Druze and Nuṣayrīs would lend any effective support to the Greek insurrection, certainly not enough to warrant the Syrian policy advocated by Muḥammad ʿAlī. Again we see the specter of Nuṣayrī fractiousness invoked with a view to political persuasion, and again it proved to be not ineffective. Muḥammad ʿAlī got his way (as usual) and ʿAbdallāh Pasha was amnestied in the spring of 1823.

The Nuṣayrīs as loyal citizens

The Sublime Porte was ever wary of its own subjects' loyalty but does not seem to have been excessively concerned by the Nuṣayrīs through the remainder of the Greek rebellion. In July 1828, two months after Russia had declared war on the Ottoman Empire and sent its Mediterranean fleet to support the Greeks, orders were sent to Aleppo to verify the state of preparedness of the harbors Suwaydiyya and Kasab in the *sancaḳ* of Antioch. The fact that "the people of most of the villages around the said harbors are Nuṣayrīs" is only brought to the Porte's attention by the governor of Aleppo in his reply three weeks later; in view of which he asks leave to lead a company of additional men in order to ensure that information "on both their [the Nuṣayrīs] and the harbors' disposition" would be gathered.[25]

In fact, the Nuṣayrī populace of the coastlands north from Suwaydiyya (today Samandağı) and the Cilician plain (the Çukurova) is almost never acknowledged in this period, either in Ottoman administrative documentation or in the Arabic chronicles. Nuṣayrī emigration into the Çukurova in the province of Adana seems only to have started in the early nineteenth century, the product both of religious discrimination in

22 HH 20671a.

23 HH 20671.

24 Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarihi-i Cevdet*, 2nd imprint, Istanbul 1891/92, XII, 74.

25 HH 17679.

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Syria and greater economic opportunity in the north.[26] However, both the regional capital of Antioch and towns such as Bayās (today Yakacık) and Suwaydiyya, at whose famous shrine tens of thousands of ʿAlawīs still converge every July 13-14, had been Nuṣayrī population centers for much longer. As townsmen and settled agriculturalists, these Nuṣayrīs did not attract official attention as a *ṭā'ifa*, or separate faction, like their mountain-dwelling cousins further south, who were wont to supplement their more meager pastoral subsistence with banditry. In the Antioch district, a critical communications link between the Ottoman Empire's central lands and its North Syrian breadbasket, brigandage specifically involving Turkomans and Kurds from the highland interior had been a serious problem throughout the eighteenth century. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Küçükalioğulları attacked caravans from their base in the Amanus mountains (Gavurdağı) so frequently that wealthier travelers as a matter of course took boats from the Nuṣayrī-inhabited coast to reach Tarsus in Anatolia in safety.[27]

However, even true Nuṣayrī "factions" from the mountains further south (the "Ansarie" range) could, under certain circumstances, appear as the most loyal of Ottoman subjects. Such circumstances were given by the Egyptian occupation of Syria between 1831 and 1841. After brutally transforming Egypt into a model of industrial and military reforms along modern European lines, Muḥammad ʿAlī turned his sights on Syria. His son Ibrāhīm Pasha, having driven the Ottoman armies all the way up to Kütahya (February 1833), introduced similar statist measures during his eight-year administration of Syria, including the building of public schools and libraries, the systematic exploitation of strategic lumber, cotton, and other primary resources, and universal military conscription. The shock of sudden integration into Egypt's economy and jurisdiction was felt especially in the port cities and coastal highlands of Syria, and disarmament and conscription were fiercely resisted by the tribal/feudal clans of the mountains in particular. A massive revolt by the Druze, which ignited the Shūf and the Ḥawrān in 1838 (and which benefited from clandestine British arms shipments) contributed to destabilizing Egyptian rule in Syria.[28]

The first sectarian revolt against the Egyptians was, however, that of the Nuṣayrīs. In October 1834, as various Arabic chronicles report, a Nuṣayrī commando raided an Egyptian army column near Latakia, then proceeded to attack government buildings and

[26] Victor Langlois, "Religion et doctrine des Noussariés," *Revue de l'Orient III* 3 (1865), 435; Muḥammad Amīn Ghālib al-Ṭawīl, *Tārīkh al-ʿAlawiyyīn*, 3rd ed., Beirut 1979, 442-452.

[27] Ali Bey (Domingo Badia y Leblich), *Travels of Ali Bey in Morocco, Tripoli, Cyprus, Egypt, Arabia, Syria and Turkey between the Years 1803 and 1807*, London 1816, II, 302; on the Küçükalioğulları, see Andrew Gould, "Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia," *IJMES* 7 (1976), 485-506.

[28] On the Egyptian occupation of Syria from the Ottoman perspective, see Sebahattin Samur, *İbrahim Paşa Yönetimi Altında Suriye*, Kayseri 1995; Muhammed Kutluoglu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841). The Expansionist Policy of Mehmed Ali Pasha in Syria and Asia Minor and the Reaction of the Sublime Porte*, Istanbul 1998.

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warehouses in the city itself. The Egyptians immediately sent a vast force into the mountains (led by the son of Amir Bashīr al-Shihābī, Muḥammad ʿAlī's ally in Syria), which torched hundreds of Nuṣayrī villages in the following days. Despite scoring several tactical victories against the Egyptian troops, the Nuṣayrīs were soon forced to submit and disarm in order to save their crops and homes.[29]

A remarkable letter, sent to the Porte a few weeks later, paints an entirely more optimistic picture of the Nuṣayrī revolt. The document is unsigned and could conceivably have been written by one of the Ottoman spies sent into Egyptian-held territory in order to instigate and observe just such sectarian uprisings. On the other hand, its exaggeration of the Nuṣayrīs' success – the claim that they destroyed the strategically important bridge at Jisr al-Shughūr is unsubstantiated in the narrative sources – suggests that the author was essentially advocating local interests. He notes that "all the people of Aleppo and Antep" are tired of the occupation and long for a vezirial military campaign to liberate them. The time is ripe, for "one Druze district (*semt*) and all the Nuṣayrīs have united. The Egyptian side is being defeated because the Nuṣayrīs are very numerous, and they are powerful… They declare openly that they will rise up collectively when you set out."[30]

The entire Nuṣayrī confessional community did not, of course, adopt a single, clear-cut attitude toward Egyptian and Ottoman sovereignties; in particular, Nuṣayrīs of the coastal regions welcomed the Egyptian state's social and technical innovations and especially its promise of religious equality.[31] The more traditional feudal solidarity groups of the highlands, on the other hand, saw their autonomy threatened through these very measures, which thus translated into a paradoxical fidelity toward the weaker suzerainty of the pre-Tanzimat empire. By the time this document was composed (December 5, 1834) the Nuṣayrī bands were already no longer in a position to aid an imperial campaign which, though fervently anticipated by parts of the Syrian population, in fact never materialized. Syria was restored to the empire thanks to British intervention in 1840, and the continuing discrimination against the Nuṣayrī highlanders suggests that the Ottoman government never recognized its debt of loyalty.

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29 Shidyāq, *Akhbār al-aʿyān*, 452-453; anonymous, *Ḥurūb Ibrāhīm Bāshā al-Miṣrī fī Sūriyā wa'l-Anāḍūl*, ed. Asad Rustum, Heliopolis n.d. [1927], I, 46-50; Süleymān Abū ʿIzz al-Dīn, *Ibrāhīm Bāshā fī Sūriyā*, Beirut 1929, 184-188; Asad Rustum, *Bashīr bayna al-Sulṭān wa'l-ʿAzīz*, Beirut 1956-1957, 128-129.

30 HH 22354c.

31 Stefan Winter, "La Révolte alaouite de 1834 contre l'occupation égyptienne: perceptions alaouites et lecture ottomane," *Oriente Moderno* 79-3 (1999), 60-71.

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The Nuṣayrīs as a social problem

Aside from the cases where Nuṣayrī groups resisted the Egyptian occupiers or participated in battles as far away as al-Mazza, relations between the Nuṣayrīs and the Ottoman authorities were remarkably routine. The tax-collectorship (*muhassıllık*) of Latakia was divided into sixteen rural tax districts (*semt*), of which nine were recognized locally as belonging to the Nuṣayrīs.[32] A Nuṣayrī notable (*muḳaddem*) would be responsible for collecting the annual fiscal tax (*mīrī*) from his district and submitting it to the tax collector of Latakia. This tax collector, an Ottoman-appointed official, was generally an intendant (*mütesellim*) governing Latakia on behalf of the gouverneur of Tripoli. Since the eighteenth century, the governors of Tripoli and Sidon provinces were frequently subordinate to one another and/or to the governor of Damascus, for instance when a regional dynasty such as the ʿAẓms held down all three posts. When the Nuṣayrīs fell into arrears in their payment of the *mīrī* tax (whether because the amount demanded was impossibly high or because their own *muḳaddem*s thought they could get away without paying it), they would thus be subject to military reprisals by any combination of imperial, superregional Syrian, Tripolitan, or Latakian forces. The native retainer armies of the local *mütesellim*s had the most regular contact with – and greatest religious hatred for – the Nuṣayrī sect. The devastations wrought on the Nuṣayrī fields and villages ensured, in turn, that their payment of the *mīrī* would again be in arrears in the following years.

More far-sighted Ottoman administrators recognized this vicious circle and sometimes tried to remedy it. Our first document above dealt with the Nuṣayrīs in ʿAbdallāh Pasha al-ʿAẓm's unsuccessful 1803 attempt to invest Tripoli. Five years later, another ʿAẓm governor of Damascus, Kunj Yūsuf Pasha, again attempted to dislodge its recalcitrant *mütesellim*, Muṣṭafā Agha Barbir.[33] This time, however, the attack on Tripoli was preceded by a massive punitive expedition against the Nuṣayrīs of the region. Kunj Yūsuf had come to power at a difficult time, with Syria increasingly destabilized by the fundamentalist Wahhābī tide, and he has been much reproved in Lebanese historiography for his concessions to Sunni orthodox feeling.[34] Yet the summer 1808 campaign had very much to do with reestablishing order and very little to do with imposing religious conformity, inasmuch as Nuṣayrīs of the paramount Raslān family had just killed the Ismāʿīlī Shiʿite amir of Maṣyāf along with 300 of his followers and had taken over his castle.[35] Kunj Yūsuf did then coerce the defeated Nuṣayrīs to feign conversion to Sunni

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32 Félix Dupont, "Mémoire sur les moeurs et les céremonies religieuses des Nesserié," *Journal Asiatique* 5 (1824), 138.

33 Al-Khūrī, *Muṣṭafā Barbir*, 105-109; al-Shihābī, *Lubnān*, 534-535.

34 Chebli, *Histoire*, 190-191; Henri Lammens, *La Syrie. Précis historique*, Beirut 1921, II, 136.

35 "Maṣyād" [*sic*], *EI*^{2}.

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Islam in order to ransom their captives, but as the Egyptian historian al-Jabartī notes, he "accepted their words at face value, pardoned them and left them in their homeland."[36]

Moreover, in a long and not easily intelligible letter to the Sublime Porte dated February 9, 1809, Kunj Yūsuf blames that "good-for-nothing" Muṣṭafā Barbir for the insubordination of the Nuṣayrīs which he had just been forced to quell:

> He gave cause and occasion to the mutually protective Nuṣayrī gangs to rise up collectively, with his instigation, and raise the banner of fomenting nefarious rebellion, and they plundered and seized the villages and castle of Maṣyāf, the lands of Hama, and the *kazas* of Latakia. Of the lands and castles which they took into their clutches, seven well-known royal castles were [then] regained and rid and removed and cleaned from their hands, in war and violence and with drawn sword.[37]

It is not necessary to accept these words at face value, for Kunj Yūsuf's personal hostility toward Muṣṭafā Barbir was well known and he was at pains to justify his siege of Tripoli to the Sublime Porte, all the more so because it was failing again. The French consul at Tripoli even suggested that Yūsuf's reconquest of Maṣyāf might have been "fixed" with the Nuṣayrīs beforehand, so as to put pressure on Barbir and his supporters in Tripoli.[38] But in a repeat of history, Barbir once more appealed to the strong ruler of Sidon – now Süleymān Pasha – to intercede for him, and returned to rule Tripoli when Süleymān was promoted governor of Damascus – replacing Kunj Yūsuf – in 1810.

Yet the above report, even if not entirely objective, does reflect an important truth: From the 1803 siege of Tripoli to the 1834 anti-Egyptian campaign, almost all major Nuṣayrī insurrections pivoted on Muṣṭafā Barbir personally. A lower-class Sunni native of Latakia and one-time Janissary *agha*, Muṣṭafā first seized power in Tripoli in 1800. He ruled it with an iron fist (albeit with interruptions) until 1833, in every way a worthy heir of his first patron and idol, Cezzar Aḥmed Pasha.

It is ironic that he should have sought the patronage of Süleymān Pasha "the Just," who made the conciliation of the estranged Shiʿite sects a cornerstone of his recovery policy for post-Cezzar Sidon.[39] Indeed, Süleymān does not seem much to have liked Barbir and once flatly refused to help him put down an Ismāʿīlī revolt at Qadmūs, saying, to paraphrase his personal biographer's quotation in Syrian dialect, "I don't wanna risk my neck for the sake of Barbir and his bravado."[40] Nevertheless Süleymān needed

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[36] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, *Ajā'ib al-āthār fī 'l-tarājim wa'l-akhbār*, trans. and ed. Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann, Stuttgart 1994, IV, 377.

[37] Topkapı Saray Archives, Istanbul: E. 2465.

[38] Guys to Champagny, June 19, 1808, in *Documents diplomatiques et consulaires relatifs à l'histoire du Liban*, ed. Adel Ismail, Beirut 1975, IV, 150.

[39] See Thomas Philipp, "Social Structure and Political Power in Acre in the *18th* Century," in *The Syrian Land in the 18th and 19th Century. The Common and the Specific in the Historical Experience*, ed. T. Philipp, Stuttgart 1992, 103-104.

[40] Ibrāhīm al-ʿAwra, *Tārīkh wilāyat Sulaymān Bāshā al-ʿĀdil 1804-1819*, Beirut 1989, 289.

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dependable allies such as Barbir, and on occasion had to rely on him to keep fractious Nuṣayrī bands in check.[41]

Barbir's main nemesis was Ṣaqr al-Maḥfūẓ, the lord of Sāfītā castle. Long the most independent and powerful Nuṣayrī *shaykhs* of the region, Maḥfūẓ's ancestors are cited as troublemakers in Ottoman chancery documents as far back as the late seventeenth century.[42] During Cezzar's reign of terror, Ṣaqr occasionally hid Shihābī amirs fleeing his persecution.[43] Not to be outdone by Cezzar, Barbir pursued Ṣaqr mercilessly when the *mīrī* was not paid to his satisfaction, such as in 1806-1807, as well as the Nuṣayrīs of Marqab and Qardāḥa in 1226/1811-1812.[44]

Süleymān Pasha makes specific reference to this last campaign in a report on Barbir's bloody, five-month assault on the Nuṣayrīs in 1816. The expedition had been ordered by Istanbul after the French colonel Vincent Boutin, a "great friend" of the adventuress and freelance political agent Lady Hester Stanhope, was murdered during an inspection tour of the castles in the coastal mountains.[45] There can be no question of the violence Süleymān himself intended toward the Nuṣayrīs, as evidenced by the distasteful practice of taking the heads of fallen Nuṣayrīs as trophies, for which he now sought (and received) the praise of both the grand vezir and Sultan Maḥmūd.

Nevertheless, the letter, one of the longest extant Ottoman documents dealing exclusively with Nuṣayrīs, in addition to providing numerous new details on the campaign, also suggests in its tone that Süleymān genuinely hoped to reform and integrate rather than persecute the Nuṣayrī community. He recalls that after the tax-collectorship of Latakia was placed under his jurisdiction (in 1225/1810), "some of the aforesaid brigands agreed to forswear their thievery and pay the *mīrī* on time, and committed themselves to become *reʿāyā* [Ottoman subjects]." Within a year, however, renewed trouble had required him to send "a massive army... to twist some ears and teach a lesson, so that they would no longer oppress and injure Muslims and wayfarers." Now, four years later, the inhabitants of several tax fiefs in the southern district had supposedly stocked

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41 In a lengthy report on the 1818 Qadmūs uprising, Süleymān states that the Nuṣayrīs were now in fact helping the Ismāʿīlīs. See HH 24282.

42 *Mühimme Defteri* 102.61.275.

43 Shidyāq, *Akhbār*, 346, 372. In the latter case (in early 1800, but note that Shidyāq's dates are frequentlly inaccurate) his assistance was requested by ʿAbdallāh Pasha al-ʿAẓm, the Damascene governor accused by Cezzar of allying with Nuṣayrīs in HH 3784i.

44 Ibid., 386; al-Shihābī, *Lubnān*, 501-502, 573. Al-ʿAwra, *Tārīkh wilāyat Sulaymān*, 205-206, apparently discusses the second campaign under the date 1228/1813, which cannot be correct as Süleymān had been temporarily relieved of his functions then; c.f. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, ed. Nuri Akbayar and Seyit Ali Kahraman, Istanbul 1996, 1545. On the campaigns, see also Hāshim ʿUthmān, *Tārīkh al-ʿAlawiyyīn. Waqāʾiʿ wa-aḥdāth*, Beirut 1997, 39-47. On other notables of Sāfītā, see Georges Jabbour, "Safita et son environnement au XIXe siècle," *Histoire économique et sociale de l'empire ottoman et de la Turquie (1326-1960)*, ed. Daniel Panzac, Paris 1995, 605-617.

45 Al-Shihābī, *Lubnān*, 630; al-Khūrī, *Muṣṭafā Barbir*, 150-156.

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weapons and resumed "their former brigandage and vice." Since "it was to be expected that exhibiting patience and forbearance toward their brigandage and rebellion, which these heretics thus commit with impudence and presumption, would cause it to spread to the other vermin of villainous thievery," a massive army comprising both Barbir Muṣṭafā's men and imperial forces was sent against the Nuṣayrīs. Süleymān's letter, dated August 3, 1816, was accompanied by the severed heads of 38 fallen Nuṣayrī fighters which, in the offensive expression of the grand vezir, were to be "bowled... into the dust of admonition in front of the Sublime Porte."[46]

As could be expected, violence did not solve the problem. Three months later, Süleymān sent another letter (along with 11 more heads), reporting that in spite of the recent campaign, the Nuṣayrīs had again taken to banditry and the imperial forces had had to fight numerous additional battles against them. It was probably inevitable that the fall would bring more bloodshed – Süleymān's second letter is dated October 5, 1816- after the imperial forces had devastated crops and gardens throughout the late summer and the Nuṣayrīs of the region faced a winter of starvation. It is thus noteworthy that Süleymān insists they have been "put into order" conclusively this time, and hence, "there no longer remaining any need for warfare, it was necessary to propitiate the imperial forces and return them [home]."[47] At the conclusion of these campaigns, according to Süleymān's biographer, the Nuṣayrīs of Sāfītā pledged their fidelity to the governor and promised to convert to Sunni Islam and build a mosque, if Ṣaqr al-Maḥfūẓ and Shaykh Dandash were released from captivity. Süleymān accepted their plea, ordering Barbir to permit the construction of a mosque in Sāfītā and to send *'ulamā'* from Tripoli in order to instruct them in the true faith.[48]

In any event, another letter of congratulation was drawn up at the Porte, as follows from an exchange of notes between the vezir and Sultan Maḥmūd in mid-October. Süleymān's decision to end the campaign is passed over in silence.[49] In the final analysis, Süleymān, Kunj Yūsuf, and other Osmanlıs sent to govern Damascus and Sidon in such a difficult time as the early nineteenth century will hardly be recalled as stalwart friends of the Nuṣayrīs. Caught between the Ottoman Empire's inability to parry the thrusts of military and economic penetration from without and the dissolution of Ottoman provincial society into religious revivalism or regional independentism from within, some governors of Syria recognized the need both to control and integrate the native populations better, irrespective of their confessional denomination. First, they needed to confront not only the socioreligious bigotry of the local authorities, but also the tribal anarchism of the Nuṣayrīs themselves, which together had militated against their enfranchisement for so long.

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46 HH 24372.

47 HH 24295.

48 Al-'Awra, *Tārīkh wilāyat Sulaymān*, 268-269.

49 HH 24295.

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Just to finish the story, Muṣṭafā Barbir turned traitor against the Ottoman cause when Ibrāhīm Pasha invaded Syria in 1831, and continued to govern Tripoli under Egyptian sovereignty. On April 1, 1832 Ṣaqr's son Dāhir al-Maḥfūẓ and his men flanked an Ottoman army in a desperate joint effort to dislodge Barbir from Tripoli. The attempt failed and Dāhir, the last autonomous Nuṣayrī ruler of Sāfītā, died of his injuries.[50] Muṣṭafā Agha Barbir, surely one of the more unsavory figures of modern Syrian history, was dismissed and died peacefully at home in April 1835.[51]

Nuṣayrīs as state functionaries

Even before the Tanzimat, we do also find individual Nuṣayrīs serving as Ottoman bureaucrats and sometimes attaining high office. One may cite the family of Muṣṭafā Efendi al-Ṭarṭūsī, a Nuṣayrī scholar whose father had come to Syria from Egypt and worked as a government tobacco agent. Muṣṭafā Efendi died in al-Bila near Ṭarṭūs in 1824/25, after his sons had moved to Istanbul where they served in the government bureaucracy. His grandson Yāsīn ibn ʿAlī Efendi (d. 1883/84), according to a recent ʿAlawī biographer, worked in foreign affairs at the highest level.[52]

Ḳara Meḥmed Pasha enjoyed a brilliant Ottoman military career and was doubtless the most prominent Nuṣayrī of the nineteenth century. Originally recruited into the imperial army, this native of Antioch served as chief of the palace doorkeepers, master-general of the imperial artillery, and *agha* of the sipahi division before being dispatched to Rumelia as a government inspector.[53] His success was a source of considerable pride back home. Muḥammad Amīn Ghālib al-Ṭawīl credits him with carrying out the bombing of the Janissary barracks in 1826 (but in fact he was no longer master-general of the artillery at this point) and with inspiring numerous Nuṣayrīs to migrate to Bursa and Istanbul to seek their fortune also.[54]

It was in the naval forces that Ḳara Meḥmed rendered the most eminent service. In June 1821 he was appointed *sancaḳ* governor of Biga and warden of the Bosporus in the rank of full vezir, the first and only Nuṣayrī ever to achieve that distinction. He was soon promoted commander of the Mediterranean forces with the task of directing marine landing operations, and in the summer of 1822, grand admiral (*kapudan-ı derya*) of the Ottoman navy. After he failed to defend the Morean port of Nauplion against the Greek

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50 Al-Shihābī, *Lubnān*, 840-3. Shaykh Darwīsh al-Maḥfūẓ, nephew of Dāhir, was nevertheless confirmed as tax farmer of Sāfītā in his stead shortly thereafter.

51 Al-Khūrī, *Muṣṭafā Barbir*, 268-269.

52 Dīb ʿAlī Ḥasan, *Aʿlām min al-madhhab al-Jaʿfarī "al-ʿAlawī"*, Beirut 1997-2000, I, 102-103.

53 Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, 1058-1059.

54 Al-Ṭawīl, *Tārīkh al-ʿAlawiyyīn*, 443.

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rebels,[55] Sultan Maḥmūd, judging him nevertheless as "illustrious and capable from among my great vezirs, and experienced, hard-working and decorated from among my splendid ministers, in every way deserving of favour and worthy of benevolence," made him governor of the rich province of Ankara and Çankırı.[56]

In the *Sicill-i Osmani* Ḳara Meḥmed is described indifferently as a Nuṣayrī and as being "foresighted." He seems to have owed his career in some measure to an advantageous marriage to the daughter of the former grand vezir Halīl Ḥamīd Pasha (1782-1785). This pedigree most likely also helped their son, Maḥmūd Bey (d. 1841), land a post as deputy secretary at the Sublime Porte.[57] And patronage politics may well have been in play when Ḳara Meḥmed Pasha was suddenly dismissed in November 1823 and "banished" to the island of Limnos. In any event his crime cannot have been too serious, for he was soon thereafter made warden (*muḥāfiẓ*) of Limnos, a post which he held until his death in 1828/29. Ḳara Meḥmed lies buried in Istanbul's elite Eyüp cemetery.

Last, one may recall another Meḥmed Pasha, a native of Latakia, whose career as an Osmanlı ended on a decidedly more tragic note. Trained in the 27th division of the Janissary corps, Meḥmed worked his way up to kethüda and was finally promoted to agha of the Janissaries in the fall of 1811. He was retired not long thereafter and went back to Syria on a pension, but resumed active duty with the rank of beylerbeyi some years later and was finally appointed governor of Tripoli in 1823/24. Almost immediately, however, he was accused of tyranny and denounced as a Nuṣayrī by the Sunni populace, and consequently killed in Latakia along with several members of his family. An enraged grand vezir sent orders to raze the quarter where the murder had taken place.58

Conclusion

The murder of the Nuṣayrī gouverneur Meḥmed Pasha in Latakia brings us back full circle to al-Qayātī and the traditionalists' aversion to western Syria's "multiplicity of these faiths and sects and these *madhhab*s and cults." Clearly, the local Sunni Arab disdain for the Nuṣayrīs – grounded in religious texts, bred on patrimonial rivalries, and given free rein by petty tyrants such as Muṣṭafā Barbir – did not inform and could be violently at odds with the agenda of Ottoman provincial government.

From the point of view of classical religious ideology, the Nuṣayrī sect has of course always been regarded as an Islamic heresy, which, combined with the impoverished Syrian mountaineers' propensity for social banditry, exposed the entire Nuṣayrī com-

[55] See *Tarih-i Cevdet*, XI, 184, vol. 12, 18, 43, 60, 64.

[56] Milli Kütüphane: Ankara Şeriye Sicilleri 222:247, dated 23 Rebiü'l-evvel, 1236.

[57] Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, 909.

[58] Ibid., 1036; Hāshim 'Uthmān, *Tārīkh al-Lādhiqiyya 637-1946*, Damascus 1996, 68-69.

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munity to official campaigns of persecution throughout the Mamluk and Ottoman eras. Only in the Tanzimat and especially Hamidian periods did the Sublime Porte begin to perceive the Nuṣayrīs not just as a faction to be chastised but also as citizens to be educated and as wayward believers to be reconfigured.

From what little evidence we have been able to present, it would nevertheless appear that Ottoman administrators with actual experience in Syria displayed greater flexibility toward the Nuṣayrīs than either local prejudice or official discourse might suggest. Even before the Tanzimat, provincial despatches portray the Nuṣayrī *ṭā'ifa* as rebels and conspirators, but also as allies and subjects. This pragmatism is paralleled in the larger bureaucratic apparatus, where individuals could be promoted to the highest rank without regard to their sectarian derivation.

This is not to minimize the significance of 1839, nor to exaggerate the enfranchisement of non-orthodox Muslim sects following the introduction of more liberal personal statute laws, which affected mainly the Christian subjects of the empire. Still, nineteenth century reform was not merely a series of reactions to Western imperialist pressure but was itself a lengthy, homegrown "process of identity and ideology." The Ottoman social thought that resulted in the Tanzimat was the culmination of a long administrative and bureaucratic experience in socially heterogeneous provinces such as Sidon and Tripoli. The efforts spent by professionals such as Süleymān, Darwīsh Muḥammad, or Kunj Yūsuf to control and integrate, to punish and promote the Nuṣayrīs on a modest, regional level ultimately flowed into this wider Ottoman process.

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Sufi reformist diffusion and the rise of Arabism in late Ottoman Syria

Itzchak Weismann

At the turn of the twentieth century the urban centers of Syria became an important source for both the national ideology of Arabism[1] and the religious tendency of the Salafiyya.[2] The two trends were closely related from the outset, sharing an aversion to the increasingly centralized and autocratic Ottoman government, on the one hand, and a critical attitude toward traditional forms of religion, on the other. Their pioneers were religious reformists such as Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī of Damascus,[3] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī of Aleppo,[4] Rashīd Riḍā of Tripoli,[5] and ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Zahrāwī of Homs,[6] who by stressing the Arab provenance of the forefathers (*al-salaf*) laid the Islamic foundations for a separate Arab identity within the empire. Not averse to Western innovation

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1 Zeine N. Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism,* Beirut 1966; C. Ernest Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism*, Urbana 1973; Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920*, Cambridge 1983.

2 David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria*, New York 1990; Antonino Pellitteri, *Il Riformismo Musulmano in Siria* (1870-1920), Naples 1987.

3 Commins, *Islamic Reform* 89-95; Joseph H. Escovitz, " 'He was the Muḥammad 'Abduh of Syria'. A Study of Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī and his influence," *IJMES* 18 (1986), 293-310; Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Bānī, *Tanwīr al-baṣā'ir bi-sīrat al-shaykh Ṭāhir*, Damascus 1920; Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, *Kunūz al-ajdād*, Damascus 1984, 5-16.

4 Khaldun S. Husry, *Three Reformers: A Study in Modern Arab Political Thought*, Beirut 1966, 55-112; ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād, *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī*, Cairo 1959; Sāmī al-Dahhān, *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī*, Cairo 1980; Jamīl Bārūt, *Ḥarakat al-tanwīr al-ʿarabiyya fī 'l-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar*, Damascus 1994, 107-147.

5 Albert H. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*, Cambridge 1983, 299-306; Eliezer Tauber, "Rashid Rida as Pan Arabist before World War I," *The Muslim World* 79 (1989), 102-112; Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *al-Manār wa'l-Azhar*, Cairo 1352/1933; Shakīb Arslān, *Rashīd Riḍā aw ikhā' arbaʿīn sana*, Cairo 1937.

6 Ahmed Tarabein, "Abd al-Hamid Zahrawi: The Career and Thought of an Arab Nationalist," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muammad Muslih, and Reeva S. Simon, New York 1991, 97-119; Jawdat al-Rikābī and Sulṭān Jamīl, *al-Irth al-fikrī lil-muṣliḥ al-ijtimāʿī, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Zahrāwī*, Damascus 1963.

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as such, the reformists were ready to embrace the ideal of the nation as a means of mobilizing the people against the oppressive regime. The parallel appropriation of Western-type rationalism allowed them to distance themselves from the proponents of latter-day Muslim tradition who chose to profess unbounded loyalty to the government. The most vital component of this tradition in late Ottoman Syria, and indeed in the entire Muslim world of the pre-modern era, was Sufism.

Yet to understand the religious nature and political function of latter-day Sufism, one must go beyond the viewpoint of its modern detractors. Far from being a monolithic phenomenon, Sufism produced within itself a reformist strand, which had two main characteristics. One, a strict adherence to the precepts of the sharīʿa, kept Sufi reformism within the confines of orthodox Islam. The other, active involvement in political and social affairs, determined its evolution within the broader historical context. Thus in periods of political stability and social prosperity, generally conceived as deriving from following the sharīʿa, the reformist tendency could be less pronounced. But in times of crisis it was mostly Sufi reformist movements which, as leaders of the civil society, took it upon themselves to adapt the sharīʿa to the needs of the time and guide the rulers along the straight path.[7] Such orthodox orientation and sociopolitical activism was increasingly discernible among the various Sufi reformist movements working in the Syrian lands from the late eighteenth century, in response to the perceptible decline in the authority of the Ottoman central government. Most prominent among them were the Khalwatiyya and Naqshbandiyya orders, along with the theosophical school of the Akbariyya, the school of al-Shaykh al-Akbar, Muḥyī 'l-Dīn ibn ʿArabī.

The activities of the Khalwatiyya and the Naqshbandiyya, as well as the formulations of the Akbariyya, therefore, precipitated, and were a reflection of, the course of Ottoman modernization in general, and its impact on the Syrian provinces in particular, during this final century and a half of their existence. Though far from linear, modernization was determined by the combination of two major processes: reassertion of the state's central authority, which began to take shape in the early nineteenth century, and European economic and cultural penetration gaining momentum from the mid-century onwards.[8] It was as a result of this double challenge that new identities were formulated in Syria within the ideological trends of the Salafiyya and of Arabism at the turn of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, despite its aversion to the alleged submissiveness and irrationalism of contemporary Islam, in its attentiveness to the afflictions of the time, and in its *sharīʿa*-based endeavor to remedy them the Salafiyya remained indebted to the Sufi reformist movements that had preceded it. Focusing on the three major cities of

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7 See my *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus*, Leiden 2001, 1-2.

8 For general surveys on the late Ottoman history see Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London, 1961; Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, Montreal 1964; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 2 vols., Cambridge 1977, vol. II.

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Damascus, Aleppo, and Tripoli, this chapter endeavors to examine whether the geographical patterns of diffusion of these movements also had an influence on the rise of Arabism.

Our point of departure in the investigation of the Sufi reformist movements of late Ottoman Syria is the 1780s, when a group of Khalwatī *shaykhs* established themselves in the major cities of the country. This new drive was part of a revival movement within the Khalwatiyya order inaugurated half a century earlier under the leadership of Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī (1687-1749) and Yūsuf b. Sālim al-Ḥifnī (d. 1767).[9] Bakrī was a native of Damascus who after receiving authorization as a spiritual guide in that order traveled widely to spread it in the Syrian provinces. His major success, however, was in Egypt, where he was invited to settle in 1737 by Ḥifnī, his erstwhile disciple and the actual organizer of his branch in the Khalwatiyya. Ḥifnī's efforts enabled Bakrī to swiftly acquire a large following to his peculiar path, a combination of exclusive affiliation to the *ṭarīqa*, which increased the fidelity of his disciples, with an intensive form of *dhikr*, which enhanced its popularity. Both were ultimately derived from the teaching of Ibn ʿArabī and were fortified by Bakrī's emphasis on strict adherence to the *sharīʿa*. The immense success of the Khalwatiyya-Bakriyya at that time in Egypt reflected the deteriorating situation of the country in the wake of the Great Insurrection of 1711, which marked the upsurge of Mamluk power at the expense of the Ottoman central government.[10] For almost a century, until Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha subjected all Sufi orders to state control,[11] the Khalwatī *shaykhs*, who also dominated al-Azhar, presented themselves as spokesmen of the oppressed population before its rulers.

The Khalwatiyya-Bakriyya spread to the Syrian cities after similar circumstances came to prevail in them following the collapse of the Ottoman-sponsored ʿAẓm rule in al-Shām,[12] and the parallel intensification of the factional struggle between the Janissaries and the *ashrāf* in Aleppo.[13] The wide diffusion of the order was facilitated by a long tradition of studying at al-Azhar, by trade, and by family connections. In Tripoli, where links with Egypt were particularly tight, it was ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Rāfiʿī (d. 1815) who headed the new trend. "Hoisting the banner of *ʿilm*", as the epithet he bequeathed to his descendants indicates, Rāfiʿī hailed from a prominent Sufi Rifāʿī family in the

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9 On the Khalwatiyya in general see B.G. Martin, "A Short History of the Khalwati Order of Dervishes," in *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie, Berkeley 1966, 275-305; J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, Oxford 1971, 74-78. On the Bakriyya see also Gideon Weigert and Nehemia Levtzion, "Renewal and Reform of the Khalwatiyya in Egypt (Eighteenth Century)," paper presented to the 24th Annual Meeting of MESA, San Antonio 1990.

10 Peter M. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent 1516-1922*, London 1966, 85-101.

11 Frederick de Jong, *Turuk and Turuk-linked Institutions in Nineteenth-Century Egypt: A Historical Study in Organizational Dimensions of Islamic Mysticism*, Leiden 1978, 7-23.

12 Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Stuttgart 1985, 31-38.

13 Herbert L. Bodman Jr., *Political Factions in Aleppo 1760-1826*, Chapel Hill 1963.

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city. Acquiring his high education at al-Azhar, "he took the path from" – i.e. he was initiated by – Maḥmūd al-Kurdī, the foremost *khalīfa* of Ḥifnī in Cairo. Rāfiʿī returned to Tripoli following his *shaykh's* death in 1781, where he taught in the Manṣūrī central mosque and guided disciples on the path. Concomitantly Rāfiʿī became engaged in the caravan trade of the city and, loyal to the Bakrī political tradition, he also gained influence with local governors.[14] The Rāfiʿīs remained a leading reformist family in Tripoli to the end of the Ottoman Empire and beyond.

In Aleppo, which also kept significant links with Egypt, the Khalwatiyya was propagated by another deputy of Maḥmūd al-Kurdī, Ibrāhīm al-Hilālī (1742-1822). A scion of a Sufi Qādirī family from a nearby village rather than from the city itself, Hilālī studied at al-Azhar for 19 years before returning to settle in Aleppo in 1783. Here his vast knowledge was soon recognized, and he became head of the family lodge in the southern Jallūm quarter, where he combined religious teaching with spiritual guidance. Rather stereotypically Hilālī is depicted in the biographical dictionaries as avoiding the company of rulers, who nonetheless sought his advice.[15] On the other hand, his name is mentioned among the *ʿulamāʾ* who in 1819 led a local insurrection against an oppressive governor.[16] Though less prominent than the Rāfiʿīs in Tripoli, the Hilālī *zāwiya* remained a leading reformist center in Aleppo into the twentieth century.[17]

As a major center of learning in its own right, Damascus was less amenable than Tripoli or Aleppo to influences from Egypt. Here the Khalwatī message was propagated mainly by an outsider, ʿUmar al-Yāfī (1759-1817), and ultimately failed to strike deep roots. A native of Jaffa, Yāfī took the path in Gaza from Kamāl al-Dīn, Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī's son. He first arrived in Damascus in 1784, two years after his *shaykh's* death, but then left to spread the order in other parts of Syria and in the Hejaz, possibly because of opposition he encountered from the local *ʿulamāʾ*. Yāfī, who proved himself a prolific writer in Sufi matters and a gifted poet, later returned to Damascus to establish a

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14 ʿAbdallāh Nawfal, *Tarājim ʿulamāʾ wa-udabāʾ Ṭarābulus al-fayḥāʾ*, Tripoli 1982, 40-44; Muḥammad Rashīd al-Rāfiʿī, *Tarjamat ḥayāt al-maghfūr lahu... al-shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Rāfiʿī al-Fārūqī al-Ḥanafī shaykh al-sāda al-ḥanafiyya wa-muftī al-diyār al-miṣriyya*, Cairo 1323/1906, 5-11, 22; Samīḥ Wajīh al-Zayn, *Tārīkh Ṭarābulus qadīman wa-ḥadīthan*, Beirut 1969, 496.

15 Muḥammad Rāghib al-Tabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalāʾ bi-tārīkh Ḥalab al-shahbāʾ*, 2nd ed., 7 vols., Damascus 1408/1988, VII, 221-226; Kāmil al-Ghazzī, *Nahr al-dhahab fī tārīkh Ḥalab*, 2nd ed., 3 vols., Aleppo 1412/1991, II, 56-57.

16 Būlus Arūtīn, *Ahamm ḥawādith Ḥalab fī ʾl-niṣf al-awwal min al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar*, Cairo n.d., 40.

17 It is depicted as still very active and the most popular order in Aleppo in the 1920s by Ghazzī, *Nahr al-dhahab*, I, 155, II, 57. See also the biographical notes on Ibrāhīm al-Hilālī, the leader of the family from 1871 to 1919, in Ṭabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VII, 548-550; Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām – qāmūs tarājim li-ashhar al-rijāl waʾl-nisāʾ min al-ʿArab waʾl-mustaʿribīn waʾl-mustashriqīn*, 10 vols., 2nd ed., Cairo 1954-1959, VIII, 129; as well as the biographies of the sons of the Ṭabbakh and Ḥajjār families who were strongly connected with the *zāwiya* in Ṭabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VII, 316-318, 398-401, 434, 545-548, and Zakī Muḥammad Mujāhid, *al-Aʿlām al-sharqiyya fī ʾl-miʾa al-rābiʿ ʿashar al-hijriyya*, 4 vols., Cairo 1368-1369/1949-1950, III, 108-109.

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circle of disciples in the Umayyad mosque. He too is depicted as influential among the rulers, though he tended to address the central government rather than its local representatives.[18] Yet despite the unified source of inspiration, the activity of the Khalwatiyya-Bakriyya in late eighteenth-century geographical Syria remained highly fragmentary. Unable to transcend the administrative divisions, the *shaykhs* of the order concentrated their efforts each in his own city, rather than joining hands in a countrywide movement of reform.

The continuing degeneration in the condition of law and order in the Syrian provinces after the turn of the century, which culminated in a series of local uprisings against the governors around the 1820s,[19] brought about a parallel strengthening in the Sufi reformist tendency. Consequently, in the following period of Ottoman restoration the reformists were eager to lend their support to the government in its effort to reimpose its authority, first in the center by Sultan Maḥmūd II and then, in the wake of the evacuation of the Egyptian army, in Syria itself under Sultan Abdülmecid.[20] In Tripoli and Aleppo the intensified reformist activity was led by a new generation of men of religion within the tradition of the Khalwatiyya-Bakriyya. They took inspiration from the preeminent *shaykh* of the order in Egypt in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī (1761-1825). Ṣāwī, like his predecessors, combined spiritual guidance with a teaching position at al-Azhar. Living the last part of his life under the rule of Muḥammad ʿAlī, he sought to adapt the Khalwatī political tradition to the new realities of a strong central government. Accordingly, he acted discreetly, showing fidelity to the Pasha himself while seeking to protect the population against the oppression of those holding positions of command in his state.[21]

The most active center of the Khalwatiyya in geographical Syria in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was still Tripoli. Here two prominent deputies of Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī closely cooperated: Maḥmūd al-Rāfiʿī (d. 1848), son of ʿAbd al-Qādir, and Muḥammad al-Jisr (1792-1845), who hailed from another local notable family with Rifāʿī affiliations. Though trained as *ʿulamāʾ*, both were ecstatic in their path, gaining the epithets *Abū ʾl-Anwār* and *Abū ʾl-Aḥwāl*, the possessors of mystical lights and states, respectively. After returning from Egypt around 1825, Rāfiʿī and Jisr spread the *ṭarīqa* along the Syrian coast, in ʿAkkār and in the holy places in Palestine, acquiring a vast

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18 Muḥammad Muṭīʿ al-Ḥāfiẓ and Nizār Abāza, *ʿUlamāʾ Dimashq wa-aʿyānuhā fī ʾl-qarn al-thālith ʿashar al-hijrī*, 2 vols., Damascus 1991, I, 254-258.

19 Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 40-43; Zayn, *Tārīkh Ṭarābulus*, 240-247; Ṭabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, III, 308-318.

20 On Syria under Sultan Abdülmecid see especially Moshe Maʿoz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861*, Oxford 1968.

21 On Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī see Gilbert Delanoue, *Moralists et politiques musulmans dans l'Egypt du XIXème siècle (1798-1882)*, 2 vols., Cairo 1982, I, 188-246.

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number of disciples in many cities, especially Jaffa, Beirut, and Sidon.[22] Their work was complemented by that of Muḥammad Rashīd al-Mīqātī (1783-1865), who acquired numerous disciples in Tripoli itself. Mīqātī, as his name indicates, belonged to a family that had held the post of timing (*tawqīt*) in the central mosque. Unlike his colleagues, he set out to Egypt at a relatively late age specifically to receive Ṣāwī's guidance. This led him to another master, under whom Mīqātī completed the path in 1822.[23] As the mostly anecdotal biographies of these three major Khalwatī *shaykhs* of Tripoli imply, they maintained good realtions with the Ottoman governors of the city, both before the Egyptian occupation and after evacuation. On the other hand, coming from well-to-do families, they were able to shun official posts and pensions and thus keep their independence. They were unable to exert any influence on Ibrāhīm Pasha and, after being implicated in a revolt against him in 1834, Rāfiʿī and Jisr fled their city. Only the more circumspect Mīqātī was allowed to stay behind. A quarter of a century later, during the civil strife of 1860, the aging Mīqātī again showed his prudence in checking the mob from attacking Christians.[24]

Less fortunate than Tripoli, Aleppo was largely devastated in the first quarter of the nineteenth century both by its prolonged factional strife and by natural calamities. The local deputy of Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī in the Khalwatiyya, Aḥmad al-Tirmānīnī (1793-1876), was therefore obliged to concentrate in his work on reviving religious learning rather than on spreading the order. Tirmānīnī, like Ibrāhīm al-Hilālī in the previous generation, hailed from a religious family in the Aleppine countryside. His elder brother, Muḥammad (1784-1834), studied at al-Azhar and then settled in Aleppo, where he dedicated himself to teaching in the Umayyad mosque and to delivering legal opinions (*iftāʾ*) in the local Shāfiʿī school.[25] Aḥmad, who returned to Aleppo in 1827 and succeeded his brother in his religious functions under the harsh Egyptian regime, differed from him mainly in his strong ascetic disposition. He particularly avoided the company of governors and officials, though, as so often in the biographical compilations, they are said to have approached him for blessing. Earning his livelihood, like the Hilālīs, from trade, he moreover kept his freedom to use the popular lessons he gave in the Umayyad mosque to reprimand those in authority for oppressing the population, as well as the *ʿulamāʾ*, the merchants, and the poor for their negligence, fraud, and idleness.[26]

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[22] Ḥusayn al-Jisr, *Nuzhat al-fikr fī manāqib al-shaykh Muḥammad al-Jisr*, Beirut 1888; Muḥammad Aḥmad Darnīqa, *al-Ṭuruq al-ṣūfiyya wa-mashāʾikhuhā fī Ṭarābulus*, Tripoli 1984, 243-245, 264-267; Nawfal, *Tarājim ʿulamāʾ*, 44-47; Zayn, *Tārīkh Ṭarābulus*, 476, 496-497; Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām*, VII, 321-322.

[23] Muḥammad Rushdī al-Mīqātī, *al-Āthār al-ḥamīd fī manāqib al-shaykh Rashīd*, Tripoli 1341/1923; Darnīqa, *al-Ṭuruq al-ṣūfiyya*, 255-259; Nawfal, *Tarājim ʿulamāʾ*, 55-58; Rāfiʿī, *al-Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir*, 12-14.

[24] Jisr, *Nuzhat al-fikr*, 71-73, 79-80, 83-89, 136-139, 232-237; Mīqātī, *al-Āthār*, 55-61, 83-87.

[25] Ṭabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VII, 234-242; Nawfal, *Tarājim ʿulamāʾ*, 30-31; Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, VII, 349-350.

[26] Ṭabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VII, 349-361; Qusṭāqī al-Ḥimṣī, *Udabāʾ Ḥalab dhāwū al-athar fī ʾl-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar*, Aleppo 1925, 32-33; Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, I, 148.

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The most important development in the Sufi reformist activity at this period, however, was the introduction of a reinvigorated branch of the Naqshbandiyya order in Damascus. The founder of this branch, Khālid al-Shahrizūrī (1776-1827), was an Iraqi Kurd who traveled as far as Delhi to tread the path under the chief master of the most orthodox and activist Naqshbandī sub-order, the Mujaddidiyya.[27] Founded in India at the beginning of the seventeenth century, this sub-order encouraged its shaykhs to seek influence with the Mughal rulers to safeguard the Muslim character of the country in the face of Hindu numerical superiority. Their work acquired additional importance in the next century, after the empire began to disintegrate rapidly, Delhi falling into the hands of the British in 1803, seven years before Khālid arrived there.[28] He returned home a year later as a Naqshbandī master imbued with a strong sense of mission, dedicated to preventing a similar fate from overtaking the Ottoman Empire. Introducing two major innovations in the path he received – a concentrated form of *dhikr* and a rapid ordination of disciples – Shaykh Khālid was able to create an efficient organization, and through it to exert great influence not only in the Arab provinces in which he worked but even in the highest echelons in Istanbul. Khālidī deputies supported Maḥmūd II in his move against the Janissaries in 1826, the last obstacle to the restoration of the sultan's absolute rule, and stood behind the promulgation of the Gülhane Rescript by the young Abdülmecid in 1839, the founding document of the Tanzimat reforms.[29]

Encountering growing difficulties in his work in Iraq, Shaykh Khālid decided to move to Damascus in 1823, where he brought about a considerable religious awakening among both *'ulamā'* and common people. Khālid's most faithful adherents in the city were young men of religion hailing from local merchant families whose fortunes were severely affected by the deteriorating law and order situation. They included the founders of the major reformist families of late Ottoman Damascus such as Ibn ʿĀbidīn, the foremost Ḥanafī jurist of the time,[30] Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī, the leading Ḥanbalī scholar in the city,[31] and Ḥasan al-Bīṭār, the *shaykh's* representative in the southern quarter of the

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27 On the Naqshbandiyya in general see Hamid Algar, "A Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order," in *Naqshbandis*, ed. Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone, Istanbul and Paris 1990, 3-44; Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 62-64, 92-96. On Shaykh Khālid see Albert H. Hourani, "Sufism and Modern Islam: Mawlana Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order," in: A.H. Hourani *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, London 1981, 75-89; Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century,"*Die Welt des Islams*, 22 (1982), 1-36.

28 Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, New Delhi 1983, II, 174-263.

29 Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript," *Die Welt des Islams*, 34 (1994), 173-203.

30 Muḥammad Muṭīʿ al-Ḥāfiẓ, *Faqīh al-ḥanafiyya Muḥammad Amīn ʿĀbidīn: ḥayātuhu wa-āthāruhu*, Damascus and Beirut 1994.

31 Muḥammad Jamīl al-Shaṭṭī, *Mukhtaṣar ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, Damascus 1339/1920, 157-159; idem, *Rawḍ al-bashar fī aʿyān Dimashq fī 'l-qarn al-thālith ʿashar*, Damascus 1365/1946, 64-65.

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Mīdān.[32] Khālid, however, refrained from appointing his Damascene disciples as deputies, preferring instead to employ his companions from Iraq, and subsequently also a local adherent from the provincial town of Hama, Muḥammad al-Khānī (1798-1862). Basing himself in the southern Murādiyya mosque, Khānī remained the only Khālidī shaykh in Damascus after his master's death and throughout the period of Egyptian rule. He regarded himself as head of the entire order, though as an outsider his base in the city remained always precarious, most of his deputies being foreigners. After the Ottoman restoration Khānī was obliged to share authority with Khālid's brother, who settled in Damascus under the new sultan's patronage.[33]

In the four years he spent in Syria, until his untimely death in a plague in 1827, Shaykh Khālid's activity remained focused on Damascus. The disciples he attracted from other parts of the country were mainly students of religion who had come to study here rather than in Cairo. It is not clear whether Khālid appointed any of them as his deputy. The most successful among these adherents was Aḥmad al-Ṭiẓkilī (1781-1867), who acquired a considerable following among the *ʿulamāʾ* of Homs.[34] To his *silsila* belonged Muḥammad al-Ḥāmid, the leading *ʿālim* of post-independence Hama, and Saʿīd Ḥawwā, the foremost ideologue of the Muslim Brethren under Asad.[35] Shaykh Khālid's principal adherent in Aleppo, Aḥmad al-Ḥajjār (1776-1861), was initially a disciple of Ibrāhīm al-Hilālī, who had brought the Khalwatiyya to the city in the previous generation. Returning to Aleppo in the 1830s at the request of its inhabitants, Ḥajjār followed his senior colleague, Aḥmad al-Tirmānīnī, in dedicating his energies to the revival of religious studies rather than to the *ṭarīqa*. Faithful to the Naqshbandī heritage, he differed from Tirmānīnī in seeking influence with the rulers and in his efforts to restore abandoned mosques and schools.[36] Khālid's principal disciple in Tripoli, Aḥmad al-Urwādī (d. 1858), though a respected *ʿālim*, was unable to spread the order in this predominantly Khalwatī city. A native of the small offshore island of Urwād, his base of

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32 ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-bashar fī tārīkh al-qarn al-thālith ʿashar*, 3 vols., Damascus 1380-1383/1961-1963, II, 463-475; Muḥammad Adīb Taqī al-Dīn Ḥiṣnī, *Muntakhabāt al-tawārīkh li-Dimashq*, 2nd ed. 3 vols., Beirut 1399/1979, II, 651.

33 Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Khānī, *al-Bahja al-saniyya fī ādāb al-ṭarīqa al-ʿāliyya al-khālidiyya al-naqshbandiyya*, Cairo 1303/1885, 1-2; ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Khānī, *al-Ḥadāʾiq al-wardiyya fī ḥaqāʾiq ajillaʾ al-naqshbandiyya*, Cairo 1308/1890, 262-272; Asʿad al-Ṣāhib, *al-Fuyūḍāt al-khālidiyya waʾl-manāqib al-ṣāḥibiyya;* on the margins of *Nūr al-hidāya waʾl-ʿirfān fī sirr al-rābiṭa waʾl-tawajjuh wa-khatm al-Khwajagan*, Cairo 1311/1893.

34 Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-bashar*, I, 197; ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Ṭahmāz, *al-ʿAllāma al-mujāhid al-shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥāmid*, Damascus and Beirut 1971, 206.

35 See my "Saʿīd Ḥawwā: The Making of a Radical Muslim Thinker in Modern Syria," *MES*, 29 (1993), 607-611.

36 Ṭabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VII, 295-299, III, 352; Aḥmad Taymūr, *Aʿlām al-fikr al-Islāmī fī ʾl-ʿaṣr al-ḥadīth*, Cairo 1967, 228-233, Ghazzī, *Nahr al-dhahab*, II, 117, III, 286.

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power, like that of Khānī in Damascus, was always precarious.[37] Thus, in religio-geographical terms, the result of Khālid's work in Syria was to further divide the country into two main Sufi reformist spheres; one, the Naqshbandī, was centered in Damascus and its provincial towns of Hama and Homs, and the other, Khalwatī, radiated from Tripoli along the coast and into Palestine, and was also predominant in Aleppo. On the other hand, the expanded work of both the Naqshbandiyya and the Khalwatiyya in the Syrian lands during the early Tanzimat period reflected, and was facilitated by, the growing control of the provincial urban centers over their peripheries.

The 1850s marked another major shift in the history of the late Ottoman Empire, with the turn of its government, now in the hands of the Sublime Porte, to the path of Westernization,[38] and with the integration of its economy into the European-dominated world market.[39] In Syria, this double challenge brought about a parallel shift in the focus of the Sufi reformist tendency, from the practical framework of the orders to theoretical formulations within the Akbarī theosophical tradition. The inspiration again came from outside, through the agency of Amīr ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī (1807-1883), the leader of the Muslim resistance to the French occupation of Algeria.[40] During his five years of captivity in France following his defeat in 1847, ʿAbd al-Qādir witnessed at first hand the achievements of Western science, but also went through a grave spiritual crisis which led him to the teaching of Ibn ʿArabī. He consequently dedicated the rest of his life to the mission of redefining the relationship between mysticism and rationalism, in an effort to maintain the viability of Islam in the modern world. Through an experiential interpretation of Ibn ʿArabī's teaching, ʿAbd al-Qādir called upon Muslims to appropriate the rationalist-scientific approach of the West to their worldly affairs and to adopt a tolerant attitude toward non-Muslims, particularly Christians, the leaders of the modern experience.[41]

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37 Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān al-Urwādī, "al-ʿIqd al-farīd fī ʿuluw al-asānīd," MS., Princeton University Library, Yahuda Collection, 821, Garrett Collection, 793h, 1268/1851; Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Baghdādī, *al-Ḥadīqa al-nadiyya fī ādāb al-ṭarīqa al-naqshbandiyya wa'l-bahja al-khālidiyya*. On the margin of ʿUthmān al-Wā'ilī al-Najdī, *Aṣfā al-mawārid min silsāl aḥwāl al-imām Khālid*, Cairo 1313/1895, 77; Muḥammad al-Rakhāwī, *al-Anwār al-qudsiyya fī manāqib al-sāda al-Naqshbandiyya*, Cairo 1344/1925, 263-264; Mīqātī, 31, 89; ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī, *Fihris al-fahāris wa'l-athbāt*, 3 vols., 6th ed., Beirut 1982-1986, I, 125.

38 See especially Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire: 1856-1876*, Princeton 1963.

39 Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914*, New York and London 1993, 83-99.

40 Of the immense literature on the life of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī most useful are Philippe d'Estailleur-Chanteraine, *L'Emir magnanime Abd-El-Kader le croyant*, Paris 1959; Raphael Danziger, *Abd al-Qadir and the Algerian Resistance to the French and Internal Consolidation*, New York and London 1977; and the biography written by his son, Muḥammad al-Jazā'irī, *Tuḥfat al-zā'ir fī tārīkh al-Jazā'ir wa'l-amīr ʿAbd al-Qādir*, Beirut 1384/1964.

41 Weismann, *Taste of Modernity*, 155-192. See also Michel Chodkiewicz, *Emir Abd el-Kader: Ecrits spirituels*, Paris 1982.

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ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī chose Damascus as his place of exile after his release, not least because Ibn ʿArabī's tomb was located there. Arriving in 1855, he soon formed around him an elite circle of disciples, which consisted of sons of Shaykh Khālid's most devoted adherents in the previous generation, as well as of the heads of the Algerian community belonging to the North African Raḥmānī branch of the Khalwatiyya-Bakriyya order.[42] While the Algerian followers of ʿAbd al-Qādir continued to regard him as their political and religious leader, his Damascene disciples joined him out of disappointment with the religious leadership of the city, which had diverted the Naqshbandī-inspired reforms of the early Tanzimat period to its own advantage. Prominent among the local disciples were ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār (1837-1916) in the Mīdān,[43] and Muḥammad al-Khānī the Younger (1831-1898) in the Murādiyya mosque.[44] ʿAbd al-Qādir advised this religious vanguard to concentrate on its spiritual mission rather than criticize the non-*sharīʿa* basis of the Tanzimat reforms. On the other hand, he encouraged his disciples to ally with the emerging layer of Muslim entrepreneurs who were engaged, in cooperation with the Christians whom they defended during the 1860 riots, in the export of Syrian grain to the West.[45] ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār was later to become the founder of the Salafī trend in Damascus. Among his Algerian colleagues were Aḥmad al-Jazāʾirī,[46] ʿAbd al-Qādir's young brother, and Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī, whose father had been affiliated with the Raḥmāniyya.[47]

As in the case of Shaykh Khālid before him, and despite the much longer period he spent in the country, nearly three decades, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī made little effort to propagate his teaching outside Damascus. Nevertheless, reformist *ʿulamāʾ* from other cities of geographical Syria, which in 1864 was for the first time administratively united under this name, were attracted to his views, those among them who studied in Damascus actually joining his circle. This was particularly conspicuous in the coastal cities. Thus in Tripoli ʿAbd al-Qādir's sympathizers included ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Rāfiʿī (1816-1890), the leader of the third generation of this illustrious Khalwatī family and

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42 On the Raḥmāniyya order see Ahmad Nadir, "Les Ordres religieux et la conquête française," *Revue Algeriérienne des Sciences Juridiques* 9 (1972), 822-825; Julia A. Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800-1904)*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1994, 39-91.

43 Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-bashar*, I, 9-20 (written by the editor, Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bīṭār); ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Fāsī, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh al-musammā riyāḍ al-janna aw al-mudhish al-muṭrib*, 2 vols., Rabat 1350/1931, II, 69-70; Adham al-Jundī, *Aʿlām al-adab waʾl-fann*, 2 vols., Damascus 1954-1958, I, 220-222.

44 Khānī, *al-Ḥadāʾiq al-wardiyya*, 276-290; Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, "Taʿṭīr al-mashamm fī maʾāthir Dimashq al-Shām," MS. in possession of the author 1901, 22-24.

45 Weismann, *Taste of Modernity*, 193-195.

46 Muḥammad Muṭīʿ al-Ḥāfiẓ and Nizār Abāza, *Tārīkh ʿulamāʾ Dimashq fī ʾl-qarn al-rābiʿ ʿashar al-hijrī*, 3 vols., Damascus 1986-1991, I, 96-97; Qāsimī, "Taʿṭīr al-mashamm," 65-71.

47 ʿAdnān Khaṭīb, *al-Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī rāʾid al-nahḍa al-ʿilmiyya fī Bilād al-Shām wa-aʿlām min khirrījī madrasatihi*, Cairo 1971, 91-92.

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the principal deputy of Muḥammad Rashīd al-Mīqātī.[48] Rāfiʿī was later appointed to Zaydī Yemen, where he became acquainted with the works of Ibn Taymiyya, the forerunner of the Salafiyya, and was probably the first *ʿālim* to teach his works systematically in Syria.[49] Even closer to ʿAbd al-Qādir was Muṣṭafā al-Maghribī (1828-1886), who was attracted to the amir's circle while studying in Damascus. Officiating as *qāḍī* in various Syrian cities, he was honored upon his return to Tripoli in 1878 with a seat on the administrative council, but soon thereafter felt compelled to adopt an oppositional stance towards the government.[50] Muṣṭafā was the father of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Maghribī, a prominent Salafī and close friend of Rashīd Riḍā, who after the Ottoman demise dedicated himself to the regeneration of the Arabic language.[51] From Tripoli ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's teaching was carried to Beirut, the new commercial capital of the Syrian province, by Ibrāhīm al-Aḥdab (1826-1891), a student of ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Rāfiʿī who moved there to become part of the local cultural renaissance (*Nahḍa*). A gifted author and poet, Aḥdab was appointed to the educational council of the city in addition to his work as editor of the first Muslim paper in Syria, *Thamarāt al-Funūn*.[52] Further south, ʿAbd al-Qādir had close relations with Ḥasan al-Dajjānī, a student of Muḥammad al-Jisr and head of a leading Khalwatī family in Jaffa.[53]

There is no evidence in our sources for any direct influence of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's Akbarī teaching in Aleppo, which remained the capital of its own separate province. Here the young generation of men of religion gathered around another outsider and Sufi reformist, Ḥusayn al-Bālī of Gaza (1819-1855), a Naqshbandī adept and *littérateur* whose views nevertheless largely corresponded to those of ʿAbd al-Qādir.[54]

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48 See his compilation and extension of his *shaykh's* sayings in ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Rāfiʿī, *Tarṣīʿ al-jawāhir al-makkiyya fī tazkiyat al-akhlāq al-murḍiyya*, Cairo 1884.

49 Jazā'irī, *Tuḥfat al-zā'ir*, 623; *al-Manār* 21, 3 (1919), 157-160, 30, 1 (1929), 66-68; Nawfal, *Tarājim ʿulamā'*, 83-87; Jundī, *Aʿlām al-adab*, II, 301-302; Yūsuf Aliān Sarkīs, *Muʿjam al-maṭbūʿāt al-ʿarabiyya wa'l-muʿarraba*, 2 vols., Cairo 1342-1347/1923-1929, II, 923-924; Zayn, *Tārīkh Ṭarābulus*, 493-495.

50 Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, *Tārīkh ʿulamā' Dimashq*, III, 27-30; Sāmī Dahhān, *Qudamā' wa-muʿāṣirūn*, Cairo 1961, 273; Zayn, 573-574.

51 On him see especially Muḥammad Asʿad Ṭalas, *Muḥāḍarāt ʿan al-shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Maghribī*, Cairo 1958.

52 Zaynab al-Qārūṭ, *al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Aḥdab: ḥayātuhu wa-mu'allafātuhu*, Tripoli 1981; Jurjī Zaydān, *Tarājim mashāhir al-sharq fī 'l-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar*, 2 vols., Cairo 1910-1911, I, 151; Yūsuf Asʿad Dāghir, *Maṣādir al-dirāsa al-adabiyya*, Beirut n.d., 84-87; Jazā'irī, *Tuḥfat al-zā'ir*, 873-875; Zayn, *Tārīkh Ṭarābulus*, 458-460; Nawfal, 122-124; Jundī, *Aʿlām al-adab*, II, vol. 2, 328-329; Sarkīs, *Muʿjam*, 366-369.

53 Jazā'irī, *Tuḥfat al-zā'ir*, 600, 618; Jisr, *Nuzhat al-fikr*, 59-60, 161.

54 Our principal source of information on Ḥusayn al-Ghazzī, Ṭabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalā'*, VII, 281-285, states that he was content with a short note since his son, Kāmil al-Ghazzī, was writing a full biography. Ghazzī's biographical dictionary, however, which constituted the fourth volume of his encyclopedia of Aleppo, is lost. For further details see also Gabriel Rabbath, "Notice sur la vie et les travaux du Sheikh Kamel el-Ghazzy," *Revue Archéologique Syrienne*, 3 (1933), 1-2; Ghazzī, *Nahr al-dhahab*, I, 469, II, 285; Ḥimṣī, *Udabā' Ḥalab*, 5-6; Dahhān, 224-225.

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Imbibing his reformist zeal during his studies at al-Azhar, Bālī encountered animosity in his hometown and was forced to leave for Tripoli. From here he was invited in 1848 by some leading Aleppine merchants to settle among them. Ghazzī, as he henceforward became known, spent the last six years of his life in Aleppo, a period that saw the anti-Christian riots of 1850, of which he disapproved.[55] In this short period he attracted a large number of students and, like ʿAbd al-Qādir, an elect group of young reformist *ʿulamāʾ*. Among his prominent adherents was Aḥmad al-Kawākibī (1829-1882), father of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and the link of the entire group to the Hilālī Khalwatī *zāwiya*.[56] Thus, geographically speaking, Amir ʿAbd al-Qādir's teaching, though directed at the reformist elite, extended the religious influence of Damascus to Tripoli and other cities included during the late Tanzimat period within the newly established province of Syria. This and the apparent lack of connection between ʿAbd al-Qādir and Ḥusayn al-Ghazzī, his counterpart in Aleppo, once again demonstrated the co-relation between, and dependence of, Sufi reformist patterns of diffusion and politico-administrative realities.

It was under the Hamidian regime of the 1880s that reformist men of religion in the Syrian cities began to distance themselves from Sufism toward the Salafī ideas. Restoring power to the palace, Abdülhamid II, while accelerating the pace of modernization in his empire, established an autocratic rule through the combined strategies of administrative centralization under his own person and religious populism.[57] The Young Turks used basically the same measures in establishing their authoritarian military regime after the revolution of 1908.[58] Faithful to the legacy of their predecessors, the emerging Salafīs continued to approve Ottoman state reforms in accordance with the Khalwatī and Naqshbandī teachings, as well as the growing application of Western-type rationalism as prescribed by the Akbarī theosophy. Yet they could not accept the harnessing to the regime of popular Sufi *shaykhs*, and conservative *ʿulamāʾ* in general, who lent religious sanction to the autocracy of sultan and, following him, that of the Young Turk. The reformists, meanewhile sought to carve for themselves a new autonomous space vis-à-vis the state by reimagining the model of the pious forefathers, *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, as based on a consensual form of government and a rational type of religious deliberation (*ijtihād*).

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55 Ghazzī, *Nahr al-dhahab*, III, 287-288. For an analysis of the riots in Aleppo see Maʿoz, *Tootman* Reform, 101-107.

56 Ṭabbākh, *Iʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VII, 375-377; Dahhān, 14-15.

57 Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922*, Princeton 1980; Stanford J. Shaw, "Sultan Abdülhamid II: Last Man of the Tanzimat", in *Tanzimat'in 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu (Bildiriler)*, Ankara 1991, 179-197, ed. Isin Durouz and Gonol Buyuklinanli; Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Sultan Abdulhamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda al-Sayyadi," *MES*, 15 (1979), 131-153.

58 Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-1914*, Oxford 1969; Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1997, 141-143.

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The rise of Arabism in the last years of Abdülhamid II's rule and, more emphatically, under that of the Young Turks, marked the growing awareness among graduates of the modernized Ottoman school system of the ethnic aspect of state centralization. Taking the Salafī notion of the exemplary forefathers a step further, the Arabists consequently set out to forge, in pursuance of European models, their distinct nation on the basis of a common culture, language, and history. These educated youths' preference of a larger Arab identity over the local sense of patriotism that had been developed in Syria in the previous period of the late Tanzimat[59] certainly reflected solidarity with comrades in the other Arab provinces of the empire who shared their plight. It may also have signified the failure of the mostly Christian notion of a Syrian fatherland to take among the Muslim population. But, the adoption of Arabism in late Ottoman Syria also seems to have been a perpetuation of the geographically determined patterns of diffusion that we have discerned among the Sufi reformist movements of the preceding generations. Faced with the dismantling of the Syrian province by Sultan Abdülhamid during the 1880s,[60] the new educated elite in the various cities of the country proved determined to follow their religious antecedents in seeking inspiration and support from outside, rather than transcend the re-imposed inner administrative divisions and join forces among themselves. The search for an external focus of national identity became marked during World War I, when the Arab cause was entrusted to the Sharīf Ḥusayn of Mecca. It continued to characterize the Syrian political scene throughout the French Mandate period, when the nationalist parties' loyalties were divided between Transjordan and Iraq, and culminated after independence in the rash union with Egypt in 1958. Paradoxically, it was only under the rule of the pan-Arab Baath Party that Syria felt sufficiently unified to cautiously assert a national identity all for itself.

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59 See the contribution of Fruma Zachs in this volume.

60 Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Establishment and Dismantling of the Province of Syria," in *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani*, ed. John Spangolo, Reading 1992, 8-26.

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Post hoc ergo propter hoc?

Reassessing the lineages of nationalism

in Bilād al-Shām

James L. Gelvin

Muḥammad Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb was born in Damascus in 1873. His father was a merchant from Homs who died when his son was seven, and his mother the descendant of a family of merchants and *qabaḍāyāt* (quarter toughs). While he was a youth, al-Qaṣṣāb adopted his mother's maiden name and followed in his maternal ancestors' footsteps, becoming a *qabaḍāy* in Ḥayy al-ʿUqayba, before devoting himself to religious studies in the neighborhood mosque. When he was twenty-five and had exhausted the instructional resources available to him in his quarter, al-Qaṣṣāb journeyed to Egypt where he studied at al-Azhar with, among others, the renowned Salafī scholar Muḥammad ʿAbduh. Upon his return to Damascus, he established a household and founded a school which was later named al-Madrasa al-Kāmiliyya in his honor. He administered the school while teaching boys the rules of *ṣarf* (grammatical inflection), often with the assistance of a stiff cane. In or about 1913, Muḥammad Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb joined the secret society al-Fatāt.

This is the essence of what is known with a fair amount of certainty about the life of al-Qaṣṣāb up to the time of his engagement in politics. Much more, of course, is known of his subsequent public life: his missions for al-Fatāt, undertaken after the outbreak of World War I; his wartime flirtation and disenchantment with Sharīf Ḥusayn and the Arab Revolt, and his subsequent involvement in Syrian *emigré* politics in Egypt; his belated return to Syria after the war and his pivotal role in founding and directing the popular-based Higher National Committee and the committees of national defense during the Fayṣalī interregnum; his exile from Syria after the Battle of Maysalūn, his work on behalf of Ibn Suʿūd and Wahhabism during this period, and his on-again, off-again collaboration with his alter ego, ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Qassām, while temporarily residing in Haifa; his pardon by the French Mandatory regime, his return to Syria, and his leader-

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ship of the conservative Association of Religious Scholars (Jamʿiyyat ʿUlamāʾ al-Dīn). Biographers also note that toward the end of his life al-Qaṣṣāb abandoned public activity and secluded himself in his Damascus home until his death in 1954.

A historian seeking the roots of al-Qaṣṣāb's convictions would thus have a difficult time, for two reasons: not only is our knowledge about al-Qaṣṣāb's early life and activities schematic, his political and religious beliefs present the chronicler with what can only be described as a moving target: an early member of al-Fatāt who abandoned the organization's elitism and penchant for behind-the-scenes manipulation for mass politics; an *ʿālim* who consorted, at various points in his career, with modernists, conservatives, and Wahhābīs, until, toward the end of his life, he waived participation in organized political and religious movements altogether. It is thus strange that when the issue of al-Qaṣṣāb (like that of al-Qassām) is broached among historians of the Arab Middle East, the single most common explanation given for his nationalist activities is found in the training he received at the hands of Muḥammad ʿAbduh.[1]

Or is it so strange? Since the publication of C. Ernest Dawn's *From Ottomanism to Arabism: The Origin of an Ideology* in 1973, historians have held to an uneasy consensus about the intellectual origins of "Arab nationalism."[2] The thesis put forward by Dawn and adopted by his numerous epigones draws a direct line between the Salafiyya and Arab nationalism. According to the thesis, the Salafī founders such as ʿAbduh, perhaps motivated by the need to defend an "injured self-view," as Dawn suggests a bit psychologistically, sought to overcome what they viewed as the debilitating legacy of tradition by reaching an accommodation with Western ideas and technical capabilities within the context of a reformed Islam. To this end, these "reformists" bypassed the "tainted" fruits of centuries of religious scholarship that had brought on decline, embraced the first Islamic cohort *(al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ)* as a source of emulation, and revivified the practice of *ijtihād* – the application of reason to accommodate Islam to changing circumstances. Since the first cohort had been Arab, and since foundational Islamic texts were written in Arabic, it was but a small step from Salafiyya to "Arabism," the doctrine that Arab ethnic and/or linguistic ties might serve not only as a source of pride but as the wellspring for cultural revival. Finally, according to the thesis, Arab nationalists took the Arabist argument one step further by politicizing their work and demanding the right of the "Arab nation" to live an independent political existence.

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1 For the biography of al-Qaṣṣāb, see James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire*, Berkeley 1998, 91-96; Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Ṣāliḥ al-Farfūr, *Aʿlām Dimashq fī ʾl-qarn al-rābiʿ ʿashar al-hijrī*, n.p. 1987, 294.

2 The essay, originally found in C.E. Dawn's *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism*, Urbana 1973, 122-147, was reprinted in *The Modern Middle East*, eds. Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury, and Mary C. Wilson, Berkeley 1993, 375-394. The pagination of the subsequent citation in this chapter (in footnote 5) corresponds to the latter book.

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If anything, the passage of time seems only to have deepened Dawn's own commitment to this thesis,[3] and recent accounts dealing with the formative years of Arab nationalism treat his framework, if not his particulars, as manifest.[4] Little wonder, then, that al-Qaṣṣāb would be made the intellectual heir of ʿAbduh and a champion of what is commonly assumed to have been the only organized nationalist game in town, whatever his stated positions and organizational affiliations may have been over time. But however appealing the simplicity of the Salafiyya-to-Arabism-to-Arab-nationalism thesis, and however limited the goals it sets out for itself (which are, after all, merely to explain the intellectual origins of Arab nationalism), the thesis nevertheless suffers from three inherent flaws which diminish its historical credibility.

First, by locating the source of ideological change within the self-enclosed debates held among a small circle of cultural producers, the thesis reaffirms an approach to intellectual history that is unabashedly idealist. This idealism imparts a timelessness to the account, severing the intellectual history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from the dramatic social and economic transformation affecting the Arab Middle East during this period. It thus leads the proponents of the thesis to view (Arab) nationalism as either "just another element of Frankish civilization which appeared to be useful to Muslims"[5] or a logical next stage of ideological development after Salafiyya and Arabism. This blinds them to the fact that far from demonstrating ideological continuity, the articulation of nationalist doctrine is actually symptomatic of a historical disjuncture. Consequently, while providing an explanation for the origins of the "Arab" in Arab nationalism – an explanation that, given the protean and circumstantial nature of national identities, lacks both consequence and historicity[6] – proponents of the thesis have felt little if any need to account for either the emergence of 'nationalism' in the Arab Middle East to begin with or the rapidity with which nationalism as a framework for

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3 See Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, Reeva S. Simon , New York 1991, 3-30.

4 See, for example, Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, Berkeley 1997.

5 Dawn, "From Ottomanism," 377

6 In contrast to those who would chart an uninterrupted evolutionary path for the doctrine of Arab nationalism, James Jankowski cites the story of Gamal ʿAbd al-Nāṣir's first encounter with Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī and his theories of Arab nationalism. Contrary to idealist assumptions, ʿAbd al-Nāṣir did not derive his pan-Arabism from the ruminations of earlier nationalist theoreticians. He had heard of al-Ḥuṣrī, but had remained unimpressed with his teachings – that is, until the Baghdad Pact and the Suez crisis. For ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, it appears, pan-Arabism was an obvious solution to the immediate challenges he faced – challenges which pitted all "Arabs" against the renewed imperialist threat emanating from the "West." James Jankowski, "Arab Nationalism in 'Nasserism' and Egyptian State Policy, 1952-1958," in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, ed. James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, New York 1997, 152-153. See also Eberhard Kienle, "Arab Unity Schemes Revisited: Interest, Identity, and Policy in Syria and Egypt," *IJMES* 27 (1995), 53-71, on this same subject.

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constituting a political community was appropriated by those who stood outside the narrow circle of cultural producers.

The second flaw with the Salafiyya-to-Arabism-to-Arab-nationalism thesis derives from its focus on a singular ideological trajectory rooted in Arabic linguistic or Arab ethnic solidarity. By conflating the emergence of nationalism in the Arab Middle East with the emergence of Arab nationalism in the region, proponents of the thesis have come to privilege Arab nationalism over so-called local nationalisms (territorial nationalisms) as well as other expressions of nationalism present in the region, and, in spite of the coincidence of their formulation and the widespread support those nationalisms often received, view the latter as adjunctive and even deviant aberrations born of the frustration of Arab nationalist aspirations.

This privileging of one form of nationalism over another not only runs counter to the historical evidence, as recent scholarship has demonstrated,[7] it replicates the nationalist narrative both structurally and thematically and thus reduces historians of nationalism to nationalist historians. Furthermore, the cavalier approach to and the predisposition against local nationalisms has imparted a certain linguistic confusion and terminological inflation to Arab nationalism, as local nationalisms are transformed into "Arab nationalism in..." and Arab nationalism is transformed into "pan-Arab nationalism."[8]

The final problem with the Salafiyya-to-Arabism-to-Arab-nationalism thesis is the manner in which it overstates the significance of the Salafī project and ignores the less emphasized but probably more broadly influential reinterpretations of Islam that were undertaken by non- and anti-Salafīs, including those religious scholars whom historians have commonly labeled "conservatives." By offering the conceptual groundwork upon which nationalism is constructed within the framework of an ostensibly uninterrupted religious tradition, these reinterpretations helped catalyze the advent of a variety of nationalist ideologies in the Arab Middle East which differed in both form and content from what has been taken to be the archetypal model of nationalism. Furthermore, the formulation of these reinterpretations demonstrates the widespread impact of social and economic change and government intervention on late Ottoman culture, fundamentally transforming our understanding of the roots of nationalism in the region and dethroning the Salafīs and their intellectual descendants from their central role in that narrative. Thus, whereas historians of nationalism have commonly assumed that the Salafī synthesis of the universal/modern and particularist/traditional launched a process

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7 See, for example, Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 150-168.

8 Thus, for example, Philip S. Khoury's magisterial study, *Syria and the French Mandate*, Princeton 1987, is subtitled *The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945* although it hardly touches on "Arab nationalism," and Eliezer Tauber calls the first two volumes in his trilogy *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* and *The Arab Movements in World War I*, London 1993. This title is all the more incongruous given that the central thesis of Tauber's trilogy is that there were four, not one, evolutionary paths followed by nationalism in the Arab Middle East: "Arabism," "Syrianism," "Lebanonism," and "Iraqism."

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that culminated in Arab nationalism, it is in fact the case that Salafiyya represents but one manifestation of a process of nationalization which was already well under way and which produced a variety of contesting and mutually defining nationalist formulations.

This brings us back to the question of the origins of Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb's nationalism, or the nationalism of his close collaborator in the Higher National Committee, ʿĪd al-Ḥalabī, who later followed al-Qaṣṣāb into the Association of Religious Scholars, or that of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Khaṭīb, a member of the administrative committee of the Higher National Committee and second president of the Syrian National Congress whose opposition to Salafiyya was so strong that, during the period leading up to World War I, he denounced the Salafī scholar Rashīd Riḍā as a Wahhābī agent, or that of countless others who neither studied with Salafī scholars, hailed from an explicitly "modernist" tradition, nor even indirectly derived the principles of their nationalism from the Salafī synthesis. Rather, each was heir to an alternative if parallel intellectual path which was rooted in the same economic, political, and social processes that gave rise to Salafiyya. It is this alternative path and its ramifications for the study of nationalism in the Arab Middle East that are the subjects of the remainder of this chapter.

In March 1911, the Damascene journal *al-Ḥaqāʾiq* published an article entitled "al-Waṭan waʾl-waṭaniyya" – a title that might ordinarily be translated into English "The Fatherland and Patriotism," had the author's intention not been to display the ambiguity of the words themselves. "How often do books repeat these two words," the article begins.

> What they hope to convey is that it is necessary for each individual to love his *waṭan* and to exert every effort for its advancement. But they do not address the meaning of the word *waṭan*; rather, they take it for granted. Thus, while people attempt to do their duty by working for what they imagine to be the advancement of the *waṭan*, they are doing little more than contributing to the construction of a Tower of Babel.[9]

The problem troubling the author of the article is not only that the intellectuals who use the term *waṭan* take its meaning for granted. They also fail to distinguish among its varying connotations – the place of one's birth and marriage (*waṭan aṣlī*), the place of one's permanent residence (*waṭan al-iqāma*), the place of one's temporary sojourn (*waṭan sakanī*). Moreover, their association of the *waṭan* with "perceptible things" – a piece of land or the house of one's birth – substitutes in the mind's eye mere attributes for the ideal. This, according to the author, renders the bonds of *waṭaniyya* not only weak and transient, but trivial as well. If meaning is to be found for *waṭan*, the author asserts, it must reside in the world of imagination, not of phenomena. Furthermore, if that meaning is to be of more than academic interest to those outside the "West" – if, in other words, the political form denoted by the word is to be pertinent for the "East" –

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9 *Al-Ḥaqāʾiq* 1:8 (2 Ādhār 1911), 281-284.

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then it must have the capacity to evoke feelings of attachment and interconnectedness from those imbued with an "Eastern" imagination.

To instill vitality and meaning to the bond of *waṭaniyya*, the author proposes three intersecting referents for the term *waṭan* and locates a true *waṭaniyya* in the devotion and set of obligations exacted by each. For the author, the ultimate claim for devotion resides in what he calls the *waṭan* of Muslims:

> Your first duty is to strive to advance this community (*jamīʿa*) and its authority by offering all individuals in it beneficence and assistance, by feeling their grief and participating in their joy, by offering them guidance, by strengthening the bonds of affection and unity among them, and by not differentiating among them on the basis of ethnicity or nationality. This is because Islamic law treats them as equals without distinguishing between the Turk, Arab, Kurd, Albanian, Persian, or Indian...

The second *waṭan* that the author cites is the Ottoman *waṭan*, the territorial seat of the caliphate and protector of Muslims everywhere. According to the author, the survival of the empire can only be ensured by its continued progress (*taraqqin*), and its progress requires the loyalty and enterprise of both its inhabitants and the wider Islamic community. Finally, the author identifies a "*waṭan* of humanity" and enjoins his readers to embrace its universally accepted standards for conduct (truth, faith, justice, etc.) and to shun behavior that, by implication, all "civilized" men would consider reprobate.

As a contribution to political theory, the confused and confusing "al-Waṭan wa'l-waṭaniyya" is, at best, of limited value. While the author did advance the idea of the *waṭan* as an imagined community decades before Benedict Anderson's formulation became somewhat of a cliché, he never really provided a definition for the word or described the characteristics that distinguish this particular form of imagined community from analogous collectivities commonly denoted by words like *umma*, *dawla*, *qawm*, *bilād*, *jamīʿa*, and even *ʿumrān* and *ḥaḍāra*, in contemporaneous texts.[10] Nor does he attempt either to harmonize the three disparate forms of *waṭan* he identifies or to resolve the problem of multiple allegiances that his tripartite classificatory scheme engenders. But whatever the deficiencies of his argument, it would be unfair and anachronistic to fault the author for his lack of sophistication or for his failure to grasp principles of social science that have long since become obvious, for the question with which he was struggling – how to reconcile the seemingly contradictory ideological imperatives imposed by a world of nation-states – was still novel and open-ended enough for the author and much of his cohort to engender speculation, in spite of the not entirely inefficacious attempts of the Ottoman government and even other authors writing in *al-Ḥaqāʾiq* to push it to resolution.

Unfortunately, the question troubling the author and others like him simultaneously demanded and frustrated resolution, for while they well understood that the political

[10] In all fairness, criticisms of a similar sort have been lodged against Anderson's work as well.

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reconstruction necessary for the survival of the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic community would only be effective if it followed the stipulations enjoined by a world in which nation-states predominated, they found the Western model of *waṭan* both inappropriate and distasteful:

> [There] are those who fill the *umma* with the spirit of ethnic chauvinism (*al-ʿaṣabiyya al-jinsiyya*) and the haughtiness of nationalism (*al-qawmiyya*). They are either ignorant of, or ignore, what the Prophet said about the call to chauvinism. The nationalities question today is the greatest problem confronting the *umma*. If this problem continues to fester, it will bring about the greatest calamity of them all: the division of the Muslim community and the breakup of the Ottoman state. This call has facilitated the activities of the imperialists in the country.[11]

Overall, then, that which makes "al-Waṭan wa'l-waṭaniyya" significant is not the intellectual synthesis realized by the author; rather, it is the fact that the author felt compelled to try his hand at such a synthesis, and to do so on the pages of *al-Ḥaqā'iq*.

The journal *al-Ḥaqā'iq* was founded in Damascus in 1910 by ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Iskandarānī, a religious scholar and scion of the Alexandretta branch of the notable Kaylānī family, a family closely identified with the *Qadariyya* Sufi order which had received imperial patronage during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II.[12] Most of those who wrote for the journal during the three years of its publication were *ʿulamā'*, and a number of them had received religious and legal training with notable anti-Salafī scholars such as Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasānī, Maḥmūd al-ʿAṭṭār, and ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Dāghistānī.[13] Like al-Iskandarānī, those who wrote for the journal thought of themselves as the vanguard of a distinct category within Damascene society to which they attached the title *mutadayyin* (i.e., the pious). As this epithet suggests, the *mutadayyinūn* were united by a common commitment to defend that which they perceived to be "tradition" and "traditional values." Since it acted as prolocutor for this group, *al-Ḥaqā'iq* championed both, all the while railing against "false reformers" whose propensity for introducing *bidʿa* into the Ottoman Empire was corrupting its moral integrity and undermining its strength. Thus, amidst the steady diet of articles on *tawḥīd* and other doctrinal matters, *al-Ḥaqā'iq* provided its readers with more timely fare as well, including series condemning such "unislamic" practices as unveiling and the trend toward the mixing of men and women in public places, the introduction of European-style theatrical performances into Syria, the opening of a dance hall in Damascus, the suggestion made by the

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11 Ibid. 2:1 (27 Ḥazirān 1911), 8.

12 Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, Families in Politics: *Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Stuttgart 1985, 195-196. For further details about *al-Ḥaqā'iq*, see James L. Gelvin, " 'Pious' Ulama, 'Overly-Europeanized' Falsifiers, and the Debate about the 'Woman Question' in Early Twentieth-Century Damascus," forthcoming.

13 I have found biographical data for twenty authors of signed articles in Farfūr, *Aʿlām*; Muḥammad Mutiʿ al-Ḥāfiẓ and Nizār ʿAbāza, *Tārīkh ʿulamā' Dimashq fī 'l-qarn al-rābiʿ ʿashar al-hijrī*, Damascus 1986.

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newspaper *al-Muqtabas* that the government accept and regulate – not take steps to eradicate – prostitution, and Arabist proposals to revise or simplify the Arabic language, the language of the Koran, which the *mutadayyinūn* regarded as, at best, misguided.

By campaigning against these "abominations," the *mutadayyin* writers for *al-Ḥaqā'iq* staked out positions that placed them at odds with two groups of adversaries. First and foremost were the Westernizing intellectuals, the so-called *mutafarnijūn* (i.e., the "overly Europeanized") who, according *mutadayyin* polemics, "view reform as following the Westerners [indiscriminately] ... in clothing and unveiling and in other things that are harmful" and against whom the *mutadayyinūn* aimed unrelenting and especially harsh invective. Working alongside the *mutafarnijūn* were their "gullible" and "impudent" allies, the Salafīs, whose "claim that religion is incomplete and it is their job to complete it" also placed them in the category of "false reformers."[14] Like the *mutafarnijūn*, the Salafis were, in effect, acting as fifth columnists by abetting that which the *mutadayyinūn* claimed was a Western plot to enervate Islam and destroy the last bastion of its defense, the Ottoman Empire; unlike the *mutafarnijūn*, however, who were "the source of evil and the spring of corruption," the misguided Salafīs acted more as dupes of the enemies of Islam than as active co-conspirators.[15]

The caricatures the *mutadayyinūn* drew of the *mutafarnijūn* and the Salafīs, while exaggerated and devoid of nuance, were essential for *mutadayyin* self-definition, for they provided an essential foil against which the *mutadayyinūn* counterposed themselves. But the fact that the *mutadayyinūn* derived self-definition from contrasting themselves to their modernist rivals whom they held responsible for the imperial setbacks of the previous half century also points to the novelty of this grouping. In fact, for all their talk of adhering to religious convention, it was the Hamidian period, with its caliphal reassertion, officially sanctioned pan-Islamist ideology, defensive developmentalism, and imperial patronage of religious scholars that provided the true touchstone for the *mutadayyinūn*, just as it was the uncertainty attached to the Second Constitutional Period that induced the *mutadayyinūn* to coalesce as a group in the first place.

This should not be surprising, considering the combination of release and apprehension that accompanied the Second Constitutional Period. In the wake of the constitutional restoration of 1908, the failure of the 1909 Muhammadan Union countercoup, and the deposition of Abdülhamid II, imperial power appeared to rest uneasily in the hands of the Young Turk revolutionaries. Roused by the ambiguous pronouncements and activities of the constitutionalist government, which seemed anything but sure-footed and ideologically consistent, and emboldened by the (temporary) suspension of Hamidian-era surveillance activities and censorship regulations, a number of often loosely structured associations and groupings representing a variety of ideological currents competed

[14] *Al-Ḥaqā'iq* 1:12 (28 Ḥazirān 1911), 474, 2:1 (27 Ḥazirān 1911), 8.

[15] Ibid. 2:6 (Muḥarram 1330), 212-213, 2:1 (27 Ḥazirān 1911), 8.

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for influence in the urban centers of the empire. The fact that political and cultural elites not only vied to influence policy makers directly but chose to enlist the newly created and mobilized "public" in these efforts is a testament to the political sea-change that enveloped the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. The proliferation of newspapers and journals published in Damascus – 41 daily newspapers and 7 journals published from 1908 to the end of 1916, up from 3 daily newspapers and 2 journals published during the last three decades of the previous century – represented but one front in this campaign to win over public opinion.[16] By entering the lists as they did against their Salafī and *mutafarnij* opponents, the so-called "traditionalists" associated with *al-Ḥaqā'iq* were acting in a manner that was anything but traditional.

It was not only their participation in activities in the public sphere that marked the *mutadayyinūn* as non-traditional, however. The beliefs that underpinned and validated their activities contrasted sharply with both their self-conception and the public image they projected as upholders of tradition. These beliefs also placed them closer to their ideological opponents than most *mutadayyinūn* would have been willing to admit. Take, for example, the following defense of the tradition of veiling that appeared on the pages of *al-Ḥaqā'iq*. The underlying logic of this defense – that different times call for different interpretations of the law – would not have appeared unfamiliar to the average Salafī and, indeed, enabled the *mutadayyinūn* to wrap themselves within a cloak of constancy, all the while proving themselves to be quite adaptable to change:

> We have argued that religion is far from being inflexible. If we were to assume that religion had not legislated the veil, that in olden times women were not told to veil, and that women were virtuous on their own and obeyed the rules of religion, even this is no argument against things remaining as they are, nor does it deny our right to legislate according to our present needs. This is especially true in an age in which honor and religion have been abused and there is pride only in following animal desires and European customs. The greatest evidence of the wisdom of Muḥammad and his ability to legislate according to need is that you see him legislating against something on certain occasions, then allowing it at other times. The wisdom in this is that social relations will be protected by setting rules dictated by levels of culture, civilization, and the degree to which they have been corrupted.[17]

Perhaps of more direct significance for those seeking to trace the roots of nationalism in the Arab Middle East is the fact that the assumptions that sustained *mutadayyin* polemics were also assumptions requisite for the nationalist enterprise. As alluded to above, the nationalist ideological synthesis was premised both on a presuppositional belief in the universal/modern and the particularist/traditional and on the conviction that the two could be embodied within a single social unit. In other words, as Tom Nairn has so

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16 Iskandar Lūqā, *al-Ḥaraka al-adabiyya fī Dimashq, 1800-1918*, Damascus 1976, 158-159.

17 *Al-Ḥaqā'iq* 2:8 (Rabīʿ al-awwal 1330), 299-300.

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eloquently put it,[18] nationalism is Janus-faced: on the one hand, nationalist movements embrace Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment rationalism and its progressive and universalist pretensions; on the other hand, nationalist movements represent themselves as the heirs to an ancient and distinctive national history which not only justifies nation's right to a sovereign existence but which establishes each nation's contribution to modernity as unique. Nationalisms are thus built upon an ideological substructure, the elements of which include assumptions about the inevitability of and necessity for progress (which endows the nationalist movement with the role of national steward and the nationalist project with its developmental logic), the existence of universally applicable norms of "civilization" (which provide both generalized and seemingly self-evident guidelines for social evolution and the yardstick by which that evolution might be measured), and the division of the world into distinct and essential cultural units.

As evinced by a close reading of the aforementioned "al-Waṭan wa'l-waṭaniyya," all these assumptions can be found in the writings of the *mutadayyinūn* who contributed to *al-Ḥaqā'iq*. Indeed, they were cardinal tropes whose insistent presence in the journal should dispel any doubts about their centrality to the *mutadayyin* world-view. Moreover, lest it be thought that the only ingredient lacking from the *mutadayyin* synthesis that differentiated it from "conventional" nationalist ideologies was the embodiment of these assumptions within a bounded territorial space, it is important to note that this embodiment did, in fact, occur in *mutadayyin* writings. This "territorialization" not only occurred implicitly (i.e. the notion of the Ottoman *waṭan* proposed by the author of "al-Waṭan wa'l-waṭaniyya") but explicitly as well in a host of articles which, for example, delivered paeans to Anatolia with its unspoiled peasants, rebuked the Yemenis for their secessionist rebellion, and whipped up patriotic fervor in support of the defense of Tripolitania against Italian invaders. It also occurred in the following lines from a "useful" and "significant" poem purportedly written by a "Palestinian bedouin" which had originally appeared in the newspaper *al-Waṭan* before its republication in *al-Ḥaqā'iq*:

> O sleepy Arab nation (*umma*), wake up! All nations have surpassed you.
>
> I see foreigners depleting our [Ottoman] nation (*dawla*) while all its inhabitants remain relaxed and smiling.
>
> They seize our land for themselves to declare their greatness in it and to control it. But our land, which has been watered throughout all the ages with our blood, can never be sold as long as blood still pumps in our veins.[19]

But while all the aforementioned assumptions permeated *mutadayyin* writings, the practical inferences the *mutadayyinūn* drew from them contrasted sharply with those drawn by, for example, the Westernizing intellectuals who are commonly portrayed as nation-

[18] See Tom Nairn, "The Modern Janus," *New Left Review* 94 (1975), 3-29.

[19] *Al-Ḥaqā'iq* 1:4 (3 Tishrīn al-thānī 1910), 147-148. See also ibid. 2:2 (Ramaḍān 1329), 45-54, 1:11 (30 Ayyār 1911), 418-425, 2:6 (Muḥarram 1330), 215, 2:8 (Rabīʿ al-awwal 1330), 306-311.

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alist pioneers and who likewise regarded the assumptions with tacit acceptance. In contrast to the Westernizing intellectuals, who, when it came to Western cultural exports, appear to have been far less discriminating, the *mutadayyinūn* preached progress through moral virtue and the strict observance of what they identified as traditional practices. In other words, for the *mutadayyinūn*, the "Islamic nation" or "the East," like any other collectivity in the modern world, could only progress if it maintained and cultivated – not merely paid lip-service to – practices derived from the religion, customs, and mores that gave it definition in the first place.[20] An article entitled "Truth and the Place of Religion in Progress," published in *al-Ḥaqā'iq*, sums up their argument as follows:

> The happiness of every *umma* is based upon its return to the foundations of the proper religion, accepting its judgments, and ensuring that all receive guidance. This might be accomplished by exhorting the people to purify their hearts, rectify their morals, stand up to adversity, and learn to speak with a unanimous voice...
>
> If an adherence to the foundations of religion generates the power of unity and complete harmony for the *umma* and if it restores moral virtue to the *umma*, widens the circle of culture, and enables it to progress to the highest degree of civilization, then we cannot but hasten to that which is the means to our success and the means to recover our glory, and we cannot but shun that which sweeps us away to the abyss of degeneration.[21]

Ironically, by burdening Islam with the tasks of mobilizing the "power of unity," widening "the circle of culture," and encouraging "progress to the highest degree of civilization," and by placing Islam on equal footing with the customs and morals that distinguished their community ("the progress demanded of the *umma* can only be achieved by preserving religious mores and beneficial national [*qawmiyya*] customs"[22]), the *mutadayyinūn* put their imprimatur on a rendering of Islam that was no less a radical reinterpretation than that suggested by the Salafīs they opposed: in addition to whatever spiritual dimension it held for believers, the *mutadayyinūn* treated Islam as a cultural marker that distinguished the "East" from the "West."

To this end, the *mutadayyinūn* built upon the efforts of several generations and a broad cross-section of cultural producers who had worked to refine the vocabulary and clarify the concepts from which the *mutadayyinūn* drew. In other words, constructs like "East," "West," and "civilization" (in the sense meant by Enlightenment writers, as opposed to writers who took their cue from Ibn Khaldūn[23]) and specific

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20 Ibid. 1:3 (4 Tishrīn al-awwal 1910), 86, 109-110, 1:9 (1 Nīsān 1911), 299-300.

21 Ibid. 1:8 (2 Ādhār 1911), 299-300.

22 Ibid. 2:9 (Rabīʿ al-thānī 1330), 357.

23 Although use of the word "civilization" in the former sense can be found in the works of Rifāʿī Bey al-Ṭahṭāwī (see, for example, *Manāhij al-albāb al-miṣriyya fī mabāhij al-adab al-ʿaṣriyya*, Cairo 1869 and *Takhlīṣ al-ibrīz fī talkhīṣ Bārīz*, Cairo 1834), an interesting attempt to meld the two meanings of the word and thus reformulate the concept of civilization can be found in *al-Ḥaqā'iq* 2:2 (Ramaḍān 1329), 45.

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signifiers denoting those constructs were, in the main, readily available to the *mutadayyinūn*. In addition, in contrast to their historical reputation for insularity, contributors to *al-Ḥaqā'iq* included a number of religious scholars who drew from and cited the works of Proudhon, Comte, Fourier, and a variety of other Western social scientists as well as those who not only were well acquainted with contemporaneous intellectual currents in Cairo, Istanbul, and Baghdad, but who engaged representatives of those currents in public debate from afar.[24]

While any attempt to trace direct intellectual influences on the *mutadayyinūn* would thus be a daunting and perhaps fruitless – task, there can be no doubt that the activities of the Ottoman government under Sultan Abdülhamid II was a major factor behind the *mutadayyin* reconstruction of Islam as a constitutive principle of *waṭaniyya*, just as it was for the *mutadayyin* engagement with the problem of *waṭaniyya* in general. Not only did an Islamic *Osmanlılık* replace the 'civic' *Osmanlılık* of the Tanzimat reformers as official state ideology during the sultan's reign, the state also undertook efforts to promote a state-sanctioned religious orthodoxy and engage in mythopoeia which traced the continuities of Ottoman/Islamic history by combining equal measures of Islamic, folkloric, and Ottoman dynastic elements. It was in the spirit of these efforts that the semiofficial newspaper of the Ottoman government, *La Turquie,* declared: "Islam is not only a religion, it is a nationality."[25]

The Ottoman government's attempt to promulgate a totalizing and homogenizing ideology was an indispensable complement to the more tangible policies of defensive developmentalism promoted by the imperial government – policies which ran the gamut from sponsoring infrastructural development such as the construction of railroads and telegraph lines to deploying technical advisors to assist farmers and constructing a network of schools. But it was not merely the blind adaptation of the trappings of civilization that impelled the Ottoman government to append ideological reinforcement to more directly technical pursuits; to view it as such would reduce ideology to just another shiny bauble imported from the West which dazzled the natives. Instead, the impulse

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[24] For citations of Western scholarship, see, inter alia, *al-Ḥaqā'iq* 1:6 (20 Kanūn al-awwal 1911), 216-230. Cultural producers in the late nineteenth/early twentieth-century Arab Middle East shared a close-knit community which facilitated the interchange of ideas. In August 1910, the Baghdādī scholar Jamīl Ṣidqī al-Zahāwī published two articles in the Cairo newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad*. One month later, the first of several rejoinders was published in Damascus in *al-Ḥaqā'iq*. See Gelvin, " 'Pious' Ulama."

[25] Kemal H. Karpat, "The Mass Media: Turkey," in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow, Princeton 1964, 265; Selim Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1909)", *IJMES* 23 (1991), 348-349; B. Abu-Manneh, "Sultan Abdulhamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda al-Sayyadi," *MES* 2 (May 1979), 131-153; Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, New York 1973, 275; Selim Deringil, "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35 (1993), 5-6.

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that lay behind the dissemination of an official ideology was rooted in the same processes responsible for the historical disjuncture alluded to earlier.

Ottoman attempts to strengthen and rationalize central control were sparked by conscious emulation of the European model of the nation-state, which Ottoman statesmen and politically involved intellectuals understood to provide a far more efficient foundation for imperial power, and by the exigencies exacted by a world system of nation-states, which imposed conditions governing the internal logic of every polity it incorporated. This logic was unlike the logic underpinning polities that antedated the appearance of the nation-state.[26] The world system of nation-states was a world in which individual societies were conceived of as essential and autonomous entities with their own collective interest. It was a world in which the state assumed the responsibility to promote that collective interest by using its enhanced capabilities to organize, regularize, and advance its citizenry for that end. It was a world in which a broad swath of the citizenry had to internalize the notion of collective interest so that it would direct its activities toward the realization of that interest. It was a world in which manifest nationalist formulations ("official nationalisms," etc.) were used to represent the new sociopolitical configuration. These manifest nationalist formulations provided the ideological glue necessary for processes of social and political reconstruction because they simultaneously served representative and prescriptive functions without which such reconstruction could not have taken place: they represented – and thus established – the integrated social unit with a collective interest; at the same time, they functioned as guideposts that steered both the government and the citizenry toward their corporate responsibilities.

This is not to diminish the importance of the material foundations upon which social and political reconstruction depended – the spread of market relations, the introduction of new technologies, etc. These material foundations did enable new concepts of social space, an increased standardization of cultural norms, and the potential for the displacement of vertical relationships of power by horizontal relationships. Thus, the materialist explanation for the emergence of nationalism addresses some of the problems of the idealist approach – it is historical, it can account for the wide diffusion of isomorphic ideological formulations among everyone affected by the identical processes, it understands the emergence of nationalism to be the result of a historical disjuncture rather than just the result of innovation in the world of ideas. But a purely materialist approach, like the idealist approach, is teleological inasmuch as it does not present a necessary linkage between these material phenomena and specific intellectual products. Furthermore, while the aforementioned material foundations made nationalism feasible, they hardly made nationalism necessary. That, of course, was a function of the nation-states

[26] For the differences in structure and capabilities (i.e. efficacy, regularity, and breadth of state activity) separating the nation-state from the so-called "Enlightened Absolutist State," for example, see Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London 1980, 1-42, 49-51, 403-405.

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system which set the parameters for the polities they simultaneously integrated and transformed.

Cultural producers in urban centers throughout the empire were, of course, subject to and cognizant of the same pressures as state planners. As explained on the pages of *al-Ḥaqā'iq*:

> It is appropriate for us to examine a bit the influence of contemporary civilization on the characteristics of nations... We say that civilization exists in a nation only if that nation strives for the material and spiritual causes of happiness...As for now, civilization is on the verge of spreading throughout all areas of the earth. In the main, there is no way a nation can disappear or decay. Every contemporary state has prepared completely for the continuation of its rights and for the preservation of its existence by recasting its social structures. This makes them fortunate, for it endows them with an abundance of spiritual and material progress.
>
> There is thus among nations a great equity in terms of civilization, with the exception of some Eastern states that are still absorbed in a period of languor. There are pacts among civilized nations which guarantee to all of them their continued rights. This is because the rights of states are not built except on a foundation that "dominion is to the victor." It is power, therefore, which preserves the right of a nation against whomever seeks to violate it and which preserves its existence among other nations.[27]

Cultural producers responded to international pressures, to the new social and economic landscape wrought by those pressures and by state ventures, to models provided by contemporaneous states, from the Second Empire of France to Bulgaria, and to the express ideological initiatives launched by the state by articulating a variety of fundamentally analogous ideological formulations which betrayed the same imperatives as those that guided state action. And as John Breuilly reminds us, insofar as any of these formulations had practical implications for reconstructing a political community in a world of nation-states, they might be considered nationalist.[28] The widespread approbation express nationalist ideologies such as these garnered within a few short years thus attests to the extent to which the new social/political configuration was diffused and accepted during the late Ottoman era.

Accordingly, the categorization of the ideology promoted by the *mutadayyinūn* on the pages *al-Ḥaqā'iq* as nationalist in the sense specified directly above does not rest merely on the correspondence of the assumptions which informed their writings with those implicit in conventional nationalist ideologies; rather, it rests on the fact that those assumptions were used to support practical efforts for imperial reconstruction along the

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27 *Al-Ḥaqā'iq* 2:2 (Ramaḍān 1329), 45.

28 John Breuilly defines nationalism as "an appropriate form of political behaviour in the context of the modern state and the modern state form" and nationalist ideology as "a conceptual map which enables people to relate their particular material and moral interests to [this] broader terrain of action:" *Nationalism and the State*, Chicago 1994, 1 and 13.

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lines dictated by contemporaneous political realities, albeit reconstruction within the confines of a preexisting domain. Implicitly accusing the constitutionalist movement of undercutting the very Islamic foundation upon which such reconstruction depended,[29] the *mutadayyinūn* called upon right-thinking *ʿulamāʾ* to end their traditional aloofness from politics and to guide the formation of associations (or, in one case, "one big party [*ḥizb*]" comprising "the greatest of the *ʿulamāʾ* and notables, traders, and agriculturalists"[30]) that would assume responsibility for a host of activities usually shouldered by states, from assuring public morality and constructing schools to stimulating and directing economic development and raising revenues for the modernization and expansion of the Ottoman fleet to make it "equivalent in power to those of the advanced nations to protect us from the evils of the enemy."[31] In sum, the *mutadayyin* sponsors charged these associations with continuing what they regarded nostalgically as the Hamidian project in the face of an ever-present imperialist threat and treason and backsliding at home.

This brings us back, one final time, to the problem with which this chapter began. The evidence linking the Muḥammad Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb of the Higher National Committee and the popular committees with which it was associated with the project of the *mutadayyinūn* is manifold: al-Qaṣṣāb hailed from the same social stratum as *ʿulamāʾ* associated with *al-Ḥaqāʾiq* and, conversely, *ʿulamāʾ* who hailed from the same stratum that had spawned the *mutadayyinūn* (and even some *ʿulamāʾ* affiliated with *al-Ḥaqāʾiq* itself) spearheaded the formation of the various popular committees; the structure and activities of those committees replicated the structure and activities of the associations proposed by the *mutadayyinūn*; and even many of the distinctive tropes employed in speeches, articles, and leaflets disseminated by the popular committees can be found suggestively on the pages of *al-Ḥaqāʾiq*.[32]

But to focus on this direct connection should not blind the reader to the broader argument of this chapter – namely, the argument that the milieu that engendered and defined the *mutadayyinūn*, along with the Salafīs and Westernizing intellectuals against whom they railed, was the selfsame milieu as the one that engendered and defined Muḥammad Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb, his supporters, and his adversaries. All recognized the urgency for Ottoman renewal, all had been habituated to a world of nation-states and to a form of governmentality to which nationalism as a socially constitutive ideology was germane, and all had been armed with the terminological and conceptual instruments provided by state planners and a variety of earlier and contemporaneous cultural producers independent of the state. While the various cultural artifacts they appropriated as

29 *Al-Ḥaqāʾiq* 2:9 (Rabīʿ al-thānī 1330), 356.

30 Ibid. 2:8 (Rabīʿ al-awwal 1330), 289.

31 Ibid. 1:4 (3 Tishrīn al-thānī 1910), 128, 2:2 (Ramaḍān 1329), 75, 2:4 (Dhū al-qaʿda 1329), 133-134, 2:7 (Safar 1330), 246, 273-274, 2:9 (Rabīʿ al-thānī 1330), 356, 359-360.

32 See Gelvin, "'Pious' Ulama."

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national signifiers – language, ethnicity, Islam, or the distinctive historical trajectories of their would-be "national" units – may have differed, and while the support these signifiers and the "nations" they aspired to represent waxed and waned depending upon factors extrinsic to the ideological formulations themselves – the adversaries against whom they were arrayed, diplomatic necessities, resources available to them and their supporters, etc. – these particular nationalist formulations were merely adjunctive to the epochal shift implicit in the emergence of nationalism in the region to begin with – a shift which induced the articulation of a multitude of nationalist formulations. Thus it is that the lineages of nationalism in the region, Arab or otherwise, run through, not to, any number of such formulations and their precursors.

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SOCIETY AND STATE BUILDING

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East of Lebanon: colonial borders?

Stefan Wild

Many - possibly most - political borders in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have been created by European powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Usually, these borders mainly served the interest of one or more European nations. The nation-state as such is intimately linked to the concept of national borders. Small wonder that pre-national borders, demarcation lines of administrative units, spheres of tribal predominance etc. rarely correspond to borders of nation-states. This is particularly true for the borders of the Arab successor - states of the Ottoman Empire such as Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon; it is true for the borders of the state of Israel, and it is also true for the borders of the member states of the Arab League, which were never under Ottoman rule, such as Morocco or Mauretania.[1] The Arab League, while theoretically aspiring to abolish inter-Arab borders as remnants of colonial rule, in fact sanctioned these very borders in the Covenant of the League of the Arab States. In article 2 the object of the League was defined in these terms: "to strengthen the ties between the participant states, to coordinate their political programmes in such a way as to effect real collaboration between them." But this aim was immediately counterbalanced by promising "to preserve their independence and sovereignty."[2] The tension between a pan-Arab ideal and the reality of a number of separate Arab nation-states has never been resolved. Decolonization was partly achieved, but in establishing nation-states, the new ruling classes followed a political pattern established by the colonial powers. The "Arab revolt" was a turning point in the history of Arab nationalism and, at the same time, a British anti-Ottoman stratagem to weaken the Ottoman Empire. While local forces played their parts, the process of establishing national borders was never submitted to anything like a public vote. As in the rest of the world, the drawing of political borders usually has little to do with democ-

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1 Cf. G. Biger, *The Encylopedia of International Boundaries,* Facts on File, New York 1995 passim and art. "Takḥṭīṭ al-ḥudūd", in: *EI*, 2nd. ed., Leiden 2000, X, 126-28: "Most of today's political boundaries, even those in Islamic regions, have been created by European nations." For the special case of Transjordan see Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*, Cambridge 1999, xiii: "Ottoman provincial boundaries little corresponded to those of the twentieth-century successor states."

2 Muhammad Khalil, *The Arab States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record*, 2 vols, vol. II: *International Affairs*, Beirut 1962, 57.

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racy. In other words, the majority of the people most directly concerned by these borders were never properly consulted. Lebanon as a small Arab state (or "nation") shares this fate. Its borders with Syria and Israel have been established in a process which basically was started during World War I with secret negotiations between European powers such as the Sykes - Picot Agreement of 1916, or unilateral declarations of an imperialist power such as the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

What I propose to do in this chapter is to read the early national history or, more precisely, the national histories of "Lebanon" and "Syria" as the history of the line that developed into their common border.[3] In emphasizing the border as a main factor in the creation of a national community I follow Benedict Anderson's inspiring study *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.[4] I will look at this border mainly from the Lebanese side. Both Lebanese borders indicate a state of irregularity. That there existed and still exists an anomalous situation between Lebanon and Syria is clear from the well-known fact that for more than fifty years Lebanon has had no diplomatic relations with Syria. Lebanon's border with its southernmost neighbor, Israel, also constitutes an anomaly. Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, Lebanon has had no diplomatic relations with it. So one is forced to conclude that Lebanon in some sense has at present no universally recognized borders at all. This does, of course, not imply that the legitimacy – or illegitimacy – of both borders is of the same quality. However, to distinguish, we have no choice but to compare.

The Lebanese official position vis-à-vis its borders seems to contradict the thesis that each of the two frontiers of Lebanon is considered in some sense illegitimate or provisional either by the Lebanese or by Syrians: "Lebanon does not consider that it has any territorial dispute with any other country that is subject to discussion or negotiation. The boundaries of Lebanon are fixed and recognised internationally and Lebanon retains its right to absolute sovereignty and independence."[5] The fact is, however, that Syria never reconciled itself completely to the existence of a separate Lebanese entity, and that the Israeli army has overrun the Israeli - Lebanese border and occupied Lebanese territory time and again - whenever it has deemed this in its national interest.

Lack of diplomatic relations between countries with a shared border often hinges around a political dispute in which one side or both sides withhold. completely or in part, recognition of that border. The historical reasons for this state of affairs in Lebanon were in no way identical or symmetrical as far as its southern and eastern borders or

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3 For the importance of borders to the construction of identity and culture, and for different kinds of borders cf. Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*, Oxford and New York 1999.

4 London 1983.

5 Quoted according to Kirsten E. Schulze, "Rolle und Perspektiven des Libanon in der Region," in *Wege aus dem Labyrinth? Friedenssuche in Nahost. Stationen, Akteure, Probleme des nahöstlichen Friedensprozesses*, ed. Margret Johannsen and Claudia Schmidt, Baden-Baden 1997, 194.

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rather, demarcation lines are concerned. Syria withheld complete recognition of its Lebanese border because it did not, and does not, accept what it considered to be a colonial partition. The euphemism for this lack of recognition was the term "special relations." Lebanon withheld recognition of the Lebanese - Israeli demarcation line or border because it did not, and does not, recognize the state of Israel, but considered it an illegitimate colonial implantation. It is fair to say that there was, and still is at times an intensive Arab pressure on Lebanon not to seek any separate Lebanese solution with Israel. It is equally fair to say that there is also fierce pressure inside Lebanon in the same direction. Many Lebanese Maronites, however, would have eagerly sought a formal recognition of its Syrian border and of its legitimacy by Syria, and would have liked to seal this agreement by a mutual exchange of ambassadors. But Syria did not accept such a step. Israel would have been more than happy to recognize the Israeli - Lebanese demarcation line as a legitimate border and to establish full diplomatic relations, but Lebanon refused. The result, in any case, seemed analogous: there was, and is, no Syrian embassy in Tel Aviv or Beirut, there is no Lebanese embassy in Tel Aviv or Damascus, and there is certainly no Israeli embassy in Beirut or Damascus. Lebanon was always more affected than Syria by this situation. Small Lebanon and its inhabitants have no other border than the Syro-Lebanese border and the Israeli - Lebanese demarcation line. And the general rule is: the smaller a country, the more important its borders. For Syria, on the other hand, there were always other borders competing in importance with the Syro-Lebanese frontier: the borders with Turkey, Iraq, and Jordan.[6] In the following, I will concentrate on the Syro-Lebanese border and refer to the Israeli-Lebanese demarcation line only when developments affecting these two borders seem interrelated.

From 1920 onward, Lebanon and Syria had a border problem, which for the Lebanese side coincided with a problem of national identity and legitimacy. This problem remains unsolved. After 1948 and after the establishment of the state of Israel, the demarcation line between Lebanon and Israel became even more of a problem for Lebanon and in a different sense for Israel. Since then, the only "innocent" border of Lebanon was and is the coastal line of the Mediterranean Sea. Full Lebanese sovereignty existed for most of the time only here – and even here not all of the time.

This chapter will concentrate on what I feel are some lesser - known aspects of the border problem between Syria and Lebanon: after some remarks on the Maronite idea of Lebanon, I will discuss the role of Lebanon in the correspondence between MacMahon and the Sharīf of Mecca and subsequent developments. And I will end with some remarks on the role of the Syrian border in the so-called Lebanese civil war between 1975 and 1989.

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[6] It may be mentioned in passing that a respectable handbook for the Near and Middle East even discovered a common border between Syria and Saudi Arabia: Thomas Koszinowski, "Syrien," in *Der Nahe und der Mittlere Osten: Politik, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft, Geschichte, Kultur,* ed. Udo Steinbach & Rüdiger Robert, 2 vols, vol. II: *Länderanalysen*, Leverkusen 1987, 385.

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The historiographers' battle

Ahmad Beydoun may have written one of the most interesting and at the same time one of the least - quoted studies on the history of Lebanon, *Identité confessionelle et temps social chez les historiens libanais contemporains*.[7] An explanation for the fact that the book has hardly been discussed may be that it was written between 1978 and 1981, i.e. entirely during the Lebanese civil war. It appeared in Beirut in what was considered one of the worst years of this war. After the war had come to an end in 1989, the book was already five years old. At the time that the book was written, for many insiders and outsiders the notion of "Lebanon" did not seem to make much sense anymore. The book's first sentence, the question "Le Liban éxiste-t-il?", is a classic opening for any historical investigation of a national history, but possibly for Lebanon more decisive than for many other countries; except, perhaps, for Syria. Take the first and altogether enigmatic sentence of Albert Hourani's early study *Syria and Lebanon*,[8] "Even were there no Syrian people a Syrian problem would still exist." The "problem" seems to be – although Hourani does not mention the word – the lack of "natural" Syrian borders which defined a "Syrian" territory. The ambiguity of the concept "Lebanon" is easily equaled by the ambiguity of the term "Syria."[9]

The introductory question of Ahmad Beydoun's book, "Does Lebanon exist?", does not only mirrors the actual situation of Lebanon at the time of its writing. Beydoun asks the question as a question of Lebanese historiography.[10] For Beydoun, Kamal Salibi's standard work *A Modern History of Lebanon*[11] is first and foremost the work of a Christian which even in its title reflects a questionable Maronite state ideology. Beydoun argues that this ideology has to be counterbalanced by other views which flatly deny that the "state of Lebanon" has any history at all. For most Lebanese Sunnis, the creation of Greater Lebanon was an amputation of Syria. For many Shi'ite historians the annexation

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7 Publications de l'Université Libanaise, Section des études philosophiques et sociales 15, Beirut 1984.

8 *A Political Essay*, Oxford 1968, 6.

9 Cf. Itamar Rabinovich, "Syria and the Syrian Land: The Nineteenth Century Roots of Twentieth Century Developments," in *The Syrian Land in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: The Common and the Specific in the Historical Experience, ed.* Thomas Philipp, Berliner Islamstudien, 5, Stuttgart 1992, 43-68; and Thomas Philipp, "Identities and loyalties in Bilād al-Shām at the beginning of the early modern eriod", in this volume (chapter 1).

10 Cf. M. Y. Choueiry, *Arab History and the Nation State*, London 1989; Axel Havemann, "Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung im Libanon. Kamal Salibi und die nationale Identität," *Die Welt des Islams* 28 (1988), 225-243. A comparative in-depth study for Ottoman, Syrian, and Lebanese historiography in the manner of Maurus Reinkowski's study *Filastin, Filistin und Eretz Israel. Die späte osmanische Herrschaft über Palästina in der arabischen, türkischen und israelischen Historiographie*, Berlin 1995 would be rewarding.

11 London 1965.

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of the mainly Shi'ite region of Jabal ʿĀmil to Greater Lebanon meant that "one mountain (i.e. Jabal Lubnān or Mount Lebanon) devoured another mountain (i.e. Jabal ʿĀmil)."[12] When a Shi'ite historian in 1930 described the borders of Jabal ʿĀmil, he did not bind himself to any notion of "South Lebanon," but he included Djezzin (which had belonged to Mt. Lebanon), Ba'albak, and the al-Hula area, which had been annexed to Palestine.[13]

The Ottoman legacy and the Maronites

It all starts in the Ottoman Empire and in the age of the European powers and their competition for the legacy of the "Sick Man of Europe." The massacres of 1860 were for many Christians, certainly the Maronites, "the *terminus a quo* from which all political thinking starts", as Albert Hourani once wrote.[14] On October 5, 1860, after the massacres had been stopped, the representatives of France, Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia met in Beirut under the auspices of the Ottoman grand vezir Fu'ād Pasha in order to settle the "question of Syria and of Mount Lebanon". The *Règlement et protocole relatifs à la réorganisation du Mont Liban*, which was signed after intensive infighting between the European Powers[15] on June 9, 1861, and its annex, known as the *Règlement organique*, specified a unique status for "Lebanon" in the Ottoman Empire: "The Lebanon [i.e. Mount. Lebanon: S.W.] will be administered by a Christian governor appointed by the Sublime Porte and responsible directly to it." This step was basically an acknowledgment of a special political role for the Christian *millets*, particularly for the Maronites, in this area. The governor was to be "a Christian chosen from outside Lebanon by the Ottoman government and approved by the powers." The borders of "Mount Lebanon" excluded Beirut, Saida, Tripoli, and the Biqāʿ Valley. This ensured that only areas with a clear Christian majority of something like 75 percent were included. Whatever later claims said, the boundaries of this new entity were never unambiguously fixed. Roughly, the districts of Tripoli and ʿAkkār lay to the north of it; east of it were the *sancaḳs* of Ba'albak, Biqāʿ, and Marj'uyūn (which were part of the vilāyet of Damascus), in its south lay the disctrict of Sidon. The eastern border of the *sancaḳ* (or *mutaṣarrifiyya)* of Mount Lebanon was, therefore shared with the vilāyet of Syria/Damascus.[16] The *Règlement Organique* recognized the vital role of the link with

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12 Beydoun, *Identité*, 75, fn. 67.

13 Ibid., 42.

14 Quoted by Meir Zamir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon*, London 1985, 5.

15 John P. Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861-1914*, London 1977, 38ff.

16 Dominique Chevallier, *La société du Mont Liban à l'époque de la révolution industrielle en Europe*, Paris 1971, Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth 91 and the map on p. vii.

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Damascus by stipulating the establishment of a military fort on the road between Beirut and Damascus to "ensure the security of communications."[17]

The line that divided Mount Lebanon from the vilāyet of Damascus was of only relative importance, as were most other borderlines between two Ottoman provinces or subprovinces. For a multi-national state like the Ottoman Empire these lines divided administrative units only. This was at least, how the Sublime Porte saw it. For the Ottoman government, Mount Lebanon was still essentially an Ottoman province even if the *Règlement* allowed for European intervention under certain circumstances. The Ottomans proved their point when "in accordance with Ottoman tradition, the special *Mutaṣarrifiyya* was brought into existence with a public reading of the sultan's firman. This took place on July 18, 1861 in the picturesque pine grove on the outskirts of Beirut [now *Les Pins* is very much in the center of Beirut!: S.W.] ... In the version of the document read out, no mention whatsoever was made of the Powers and their priviledged position."[18]

This Ottoman view of the status of the new Ottoman province was, however, not shared by most Christians: certainly not by the Maronites. In Mount Lebanon, "most Lebanese Christians did not even regard themselves as Ottoman citizens anymore."[19] The Christian subjects/citizens of the *mutaṣarrifiyya* have, therefore, been rightly called the "first Lebanese." For them, what was an old administrative delineation came to signify a boundary separating two different identities. Seen in retrospect, the *Règlement* gave all the inhabitants of the *mutaṣarrifiyya* for more than fifty years (up to 1915, when the Young Turks ruled for three years) an acceptable amount of autonomy and some prosperity. On the other hand, it did open a Pandora's Box: the question of borders. The dimensions at stake at the time may seem small today: for the year 1865, the population of the whole of Mount Lebanon was given as about 265,000; the *sancaḳ* covered an area of about 4,000 square kilometers. That does not sound much, but we must remember that Mount Lebanon was at the time the most densely populated area in all of "Syria."[20]

The Maronites, headed by the Maronite clergy, were revisionists from the start. They "noted that the Mutasarrifiya covered only a part of the area formerly known as the *Imārah*" and claimed the "whole territory from the crest of the Anti-Lebanon to the Sea."[21] In fact, however, the terms "Cebel Lübnan," "Jabal Lubnān," "Mont Liban," and "Mount Lebanon" had been fluid terms throughout history, with only vaguely defined borders. For one of the foremost Maronite historians, Iṣṭifān al-Duwayhī (1630-1704),

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17 Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon* 46.

18 Ibid.

19 Zamir, *Formation*, 9-10. For a detailed analysis see Carol Hakim, "Shifting identities and representations of the nation among the Maronite secular elite in the late Ottoman period" (chapter 14 in this volume).

20 Zamir, *Formation*, 14 and 226, fn. 23.

21 Ibid., 13; cf. Salibi, *Modern History*, xiii.

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Jabal Lubnān was only "northern Lebanon," i.e. restricted to the northernmost districts of Bsharreh, Batrūn, and Jubayl.[22]

The Maronite claim to a wider interpretation of "Jabal Lubnān" and therefore a claim to a larger territory was nevertheless presented as "historical." It was also presented as one of geographical expediency. The geographical limits of *Jabal Lubnān* according to the Maronite reading were to be: the Nahr al-Kabīr in the north, the crest of the Anti-Lebanon in the east, the Litani river in the south, and the Mediterranean in the west,[23] i.e. two tiny rivers, a rugged mountainous area, and the sea. And there was, very early, a third argument, an economic one. Dāwūd Pasha, the first governor of Mount Lebanon, had already used it to argue for what he called Mount Lebanon's "return [! S.W.] to its historical and natural boundaries." Geography and history had to be buttressed by economic necessity. Geography points to and asks for "natural" borders, history wants something which was "always, eternally – or at least for some time – 'ours'," the demand for *Lebensraum* is presented as a question of communal or national survival, of life or death. This is a well - known triadic formula for conflicts about national borders which have shaped national conflicts in Europe and elsewhere until today. Nothing in these imagined coordinates is, of course, only imagined. Let us look just at the economic angle. At that time (1861), Mount Lebanon had no seaport to speak of – Beirut was not part of Jabal Lubnān, Mount Lebanon was short of arable land, and had a rapid population growth and a massive emigration problem. But it is fascinating to see how each argument was malleable: Beirut did not have a Christian majority, so it should not have been incorporated into predominantly Christian Mount Lebanon. But Beirut was important as a seaport, so could still be claimed in the name of economic survival for Christian Mount Lebanon. By this time, however, there were already dissenting Maronite voices which opted for a smaller Lebanon with a more stable Christian majority.

Būlus Nujaym (1880-1931), under the French pseudonym "M. Jouplain," wrote a book entitled *La question du Liban* (published – where else? – in Paris in 1908).[24] He may have been the first to pose the question in the language of international politics of his time, i.e. in national terms: "Syria, he proclaimed, formed a distinct historical entity; it had been, and would always be the link between different civilizations, Mediterranean and Semitic. But inside Syria, Lebanon had a special place: there had been a Lebanese nation (*une nation Libanaise*) since the beginning of history."[25] Lebanon was, as it were,

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22 Salibi, *Modern History*, xii; Albert Hourani, "Lebanon: Historians and the Formation of a National Image," in: Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, London 1981, 124-141 and 149ff.

23 Zamir, *Formation*, 13.

24 M. Jouplain (Būlus Nujaym), *La question du Liban: étude d'histoire diplomatique et de droit international* [Paris 1908], 2nd ed., Jounieh 1961.

25 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939*, 2nd ed., London 1983, 275.

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a nation inside a nation. The "small but ancient nation"[26] later became a powerful Christian-Lebanese nationalist myth which reprojected a claim of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into Phoenician times. In 1908, Būlus Nujaym saw Lebanon as the vanguard of a future Syrian nation. But after 1919, he was one of the first, if not the first, who demanded that the "state of Greater Lebanon" (l'état du Grand Liban) be considered a Lebanese nation with an independent political existence, national sovereignty, and extended borders.[27]

The Hashemite View

In the McMahon - Ḥusayn correspondence, whatever diplomatic importance we attach to it, border questions were of vital importance. In the very first missive ("First note" dated Ramaḍān 2, 1322 = July 14, 1915) of Sharīf Ḥusayn to Sir Henry McMahon the question of political borders was raised. The letter outlines the area of "Arab countries" which the Sharīf, claiming to speak for the "entire Arab nation," hoped to rule with British assistance. The Sharīf demanded the following:

> Great Britain recognizes the independence of the Arab countries which are bounded: on the north, by the line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37 N. and thence along the line Birejik - Urfa - Mardin - Midiat - Jazirat (ibn ʿUmar) - Amadia to the Persian frontier; on the east, by the Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf; on the south, by the Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden whose status will remain as at present); on the west, by the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin.[28]

In this correspondence, Lebanon is never mentioned by name, although it is implicitly included in the area of the "Arab countries" – the border of those Arab countries to the west being the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. And, of course, Lebanon was of equal implicit prominence in the remonstration of McMahon's "Second note," when he stated: "The districts of Mersin and Alexandretta, and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, cannot be said to be purely Arab, and must on that account be excepted from the proposed delimitation" (letter dated Oct. 24, 1915). [29] This is one of the best-known sentences of the correspondence and was dealt with in all its ambiguities by Elie Kedourie[30] – especially with regard to the problematic

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[26] Marwan R. Buheiry, "Bulus Nujaym and the Grand Liban Ideal 1908-1919," in Marwan R. Buheiry, *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, Beirut 1981, 70.

[27] Ibid., 79.

[28] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement*, London 1938, 414.

[29] Ibid., 419f.

[30] Elie Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: The McMahon - Husayn Correspondence and its Interpretations. 1914-1939*, Cambridge 1976, 97 ff.

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notion of "district." According to Kedourie, the English word "district" was probably meant by the Oriental Secretary Ronald Storrs, who was responsible for the Arabic translations, to be vaguely synonymous with "territory" or "town." The choice of the Arabo-Turkish word *wilāya/vilāyet* with its precise administrative meaning caused considerable trouble later. Mersin, Homs, and Hama were not and had never been *vilāyets*. And a border as a geographical line to be drawn between "purely Arab districts" and "not purely Arab districts" was "a nonsense."[31] A point sometimes overlooked is that we apparently do not possess any authentic Arabic version of the translated English letters in the Ḥusayn-McMahon correspondence. Moreover, the Arabic versions of the original Arabic letters as published by Amīn Saʿīd[32] seem to be Arabic re-translations of the existing English versions, not the Arabic originals.[33] McMahon knew, of course, that "both Lebanon and Palestine were excluded from his promise to the Sharīf, first because they were not within the territory of the four towns, and second because they were in an area, where, as he told the Sharīf, Britain could not make promises,without detriment to the interests of her ally, France."[34]

The Sharīf immediately gave up on "the districts of Mersin and Adana." But:

> As for the vilayets of Aleppo and Bairut and their western maritime coasts, these are purely Arab provinces in which the Moslem is indistinguishable from the Christian, for they are both the descendants of one forefather. And we Moslems intend, in those provinces, to follow the precepts laid down by the Commander of the Faithful, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (God have mercy upon him!), and the caliphs who came after him when he enjoined upon the Moslems to treat the Christians on a footing with themselves, saying: they are to enjoy the same rights and bear the same obligations as ourselves. They will have, moreover, their denominational privileges, as far as the public interest allows. (Sharīf Ḥusayn's "Third note," dated Nov. 5, 1915)[35]

This letter was, of course, not meant to reassure a diffident Christian readership, which would hardly have been happy with a promise of *dhimmī* status under the well - known *shurūṭ ʿumariyya* – and even those only "as far as the public interest allowed." The whole correspondence was, after all, confidential. However, the "*vilayet* of Beirut" is mentioned here for the first time in the correspondence. It also crops up in McMahon's reply: "As for the two vilayets of Aleppo and Bairut, the Government of Great Britain have fully understood your statement in that respect and noted it with the greatest care. But as the interests of their ally France are involved in those two provinces, the question calls for careful consideration" (McMahon's "Third note," dated Dec. 13, 1915).[36]

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31 Ibid., 103.

32 Amīn Saʿīd, *al-Thawra al ʿarabiyya al-kubrā*, 3 vols., Cairo n.d. [1934].

33 Cf. Kedourie, *Anglo-Arab Labyrinth*, 239.

34 Ibid., 106.

35 Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, 421.

36 Ibid., 423.

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The Sharīf accepted this for the time being, but stressed: "We shall deem it our duty, at the earliest opportunity after the conclusion of the War, to claim from you Bairut and its coastal regions which we will overlook for the moment on account of France" (Sharīf Ḥusayn's "Fourth note," dated Jan. 1, 1916).[37]

France and Great Britain

Not much later, however, regardless of what the Hashemites claimed or intended to claim, [38] the Sykes-Picot Agreement was concluded between Britain and France. Syria and Lebanon were to be part of an "area A" which was to be under French influence.[39] In 1919 the General Syrian Congress presented the following counter-demand regarding the frontiers of "Syria" to the King-Crane Commission:

> We ask absolutely complete political independence for Syria within these boundaries: the Taurus System in the North; Rafah and a line running from al-Jauf to the South of the Syrian and the Hedjazian line to Akaba on the south; the Euphrates and Khabur rivers and a line extending east of Abu Kamal to the east of Al-Jauf on the east; and the Mediterranean on the west.[40]

And more specifically: "We ask that there should be no separation of the southern part of Syria, known as Palestine, nor of the littoral Western zone, which includes Lebanon, from the Syrian country. We desire that the unity of the country should be guaranteed against partition under whatever circumstances."[41] In the resolution adopted by the General Syrian Congress in Damascus in March 1920, a special provision for Lebanon was made: "these districts (muqāṭaʿāt) shall be governed according to the system of decentralized administration, with due regard to the national aspirations of the Lebanese regarding the administration of the districts of Lebanon within the boundaries known before the general War and on condition that [Lebanon] shall remain beyond any foreign influence."[42]

Immediately after the end of the war, Lebanon and the coastal area ("West Zone") came under direct French control and occupation, while "the rest of Syria" ("a Southern and an Eastern Zone") came under King Fayṣal's administration. "The history of Modern Lebanon may be said to have begun in 1918 with the French occupation."[43]

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37 Ibid., 425.

38 Cf. Meir Zamir, "Faysal and the Lebanese Question, 1918-1920," *MES* 27 (1991), 404-426.

39 Heinrich Kaesewieter, *Syrien und Libanon als A-Mandate*, Frankfurt/a.M. 1935.

40 Khalil, *Arab States*, vol II, 3.

41 Ibid., II , 4.

42 Ibid., II, 6f.

43 Zamir, *Formation*, 42; cf. also Salibi, *Modern History*, 162.

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In 1920 in San Remo the joint Mandate "for Syria and Lebanon" was offered to France. When Fayṣal arrived with the British in Damascus, he and his advisors saw the Franco-Maronite claim for an independent Lebanese state under French protection "not as a legitimate national aspiration but as a plot to deny the Arabs their independence."[44] This is a view which is still shared by many, both inside and outside Lebanon. After Fayṣal's defeat at Maysalūn, the Republic of Greater Lebanon, an independent state under a French Mandate, was proclaimed (August 1920). The borders of Greater Lebanon (Grand Liban, Lubnān al-Kubrā) now included, beside what had been the *mutaṣarrifiyya*, Beirut, Tripoli, the areas of Sidon and Tyre, and the Biqāʿ valley. Lebanon's gain was Syria's loss. The League of Nations had declared: "The Principal Allied Powers have agreed, that the territory of Syria and Lebanon which formerly belonged to the Turkish Empire shall, within such boundaries as may be fixed by the said Powers be entrusted to a Mandatory."[45] giving considerable leeway to France and the Maronites to precisely delineate these borders. The exact demarcation of the borders within the mentioned area sometimes reflects the will to include as many non-Muslim villages as possible. Beirut and Tripoli were to be included, but not necessarily every Muslim village. When in 1926 the name of this new entity was changed to "Lebanese Republic" (al-Jumhūriyya al-Lubnāniyya), it was under complete French tutelage, "a condition symbolized in the Constitution by its designation of the Lebanese national flag as the French tricolor with the Lebanese cedar superimposed, and of French as a second official language of the Republic."[46]

The complicated history of how this decision was taken cannot be repeated here. Meir Zamir has done much to unravel the course of events. His conclusion is: "The events which led up to the September proclamation leave little doubt that the final decision on borders was prompted more by Maronite demands than by French interests."[47] It was not the first time in colonial history that a colonial power enforced a political decision which seemed more in the interest of its colonial client than to its own immediate advantage. The Syro-Lebanese border was, therefore, not only a border drawn and enforced by a colonial power; it was a border which corresponded to the wishes of a part of the Lebanese population while ignoring those of another part of the same population. This would have been true for any other conceivable border between Lebanon and Syria, as well as for a non-border. It seems to me that this border is a good example of the complicated interrelation between growing nationalism, on the one hand, and decolonization, on the other.

What did the new borders of Lebanon, which did not in the first place serve French interests, mean? Paradoxically, territorial triumph carried the seeds of future political

44 Zamir, *Formation*, 59.

45 Ibid.

46 Salibi, *Modern History*, 168.

47 Zamir, *Formation*, 97.

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failure. Demographically the denominational structure of Lebanon changed abruptly. "The Christians had comprised 80% of the population of the *Sanjaq*, but were now only 51% in Greater Lebanon according to the 1932 census. Even this small statistical majority was attained only by including registered emigrants, who were mainly Christians, and Armenians who settled in Lebanon after the War."[48] As more Christians than Muslims continued to emigrate and Muslims had a higher birthrate, the Christian majority almost immediately became a Christian minority. There were some Lebanese Christians who saw that "Lebanon had to choose between two alternatives: to remain independent with no links to Syria, in which case its territory had to be reduced, or to retain its enlarged borders, in which case it would have to co-operate with the rest of Syria and renounce its role of *foyer chrétien*."[49] George Samneh became convinced in 1921 that the only solution was to reduce Lebanon "to the limits of a Christian homeland."[50] In other words, Samneh opted for a reduction of the Lebanese territory and consequently for new borders which were to be roughly the same as those of Mount Lebanon. Some French politicians agreed: "although 'geographical,' the borders demanded by the Lebanese in 1860 and later were exaggerated."[51]

This reductionist option has crept up time and again – up to the recent past. In the 1958 civil war, the area under the control of the Lebanese government before the US intervention turned out to largely correspond to the area of Mount Lebanon before 1920. During the civil war between 1975 and 1989, Fu'ād I. Bustānī, a prominent Maronite thinker, declared: "The only possible solution is internationalization of the Lebanese question, return to the formula of the old Lebanon (*la formule du vieux Liban*): independence and neutrality guaranteed by the power of the United Nations."[52] "Vieux Liban" meant the area and the borders of "Petit Liban" or Mount Lebanon. The role that France had played for Petit Liban was now to be played by the UN.

After the World War I, there had been different French plans to cut up Syria into "autonomous states," two of these creations being established along religious lines - an Alawite and a Druze region. But they did not last long. There was no unanimity in France as to what position Greater Lebanon should have in a Syrian federation. From this time on, a border between Greater Lebanon and Syria meant for the Lebanese Christians, especially the Maronites, "independence," and this word primarily meant independence and separation from Syria.[53] Dependence on France, on the other hand, was considered by the Maronites as something to be proud of. It has often been stressed that

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48 Ibid., 98.

49 Ibid., 113.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., 114.

52 Theodor Hanf, *Koexistenz im Krieg: Staatszerfall und Entstehen einer Nation im Libanon*, Baden-Baden 1990, 176, fn. 251.

53 Zamir, *Formation*, 111.

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the deep - rooted Maronite belief in these "historical and natural borders" was something "almost mystical." Greater Lebanon was indeed something like a divinely promised land, promised mainly to the Maronites and possibly to the Greek Catholics. There was a shift in emphasis in this founding myth, when the Maronite church and other Christian groups called Greater Lebanon not only "a home for the Christians dwelling therein" but also "a refuge for the Christians in neighbouring Moslem countries in case they should be compelled to flee from the persecution of their neighbours."[54] Parallels with the Zionist project of a "national home" for the Jews in Palestine cannot be overlooked and were, of course, intentional.

For the Syrians and for most of the Muslim majority in Greater Lebanon, above all for the Sunnis, the border separating Greater Lebanon from Syria embodied separatism and nothing but a *fait colonial.* In 1936, a Lebanese "Congress of the littoral area and the four cazas" issued a proclamation which embodied a different version of history and which started with the solemn words: "We, the sons of the cazas and the towns which have been torn away from our mother, Syria ..."[55]

Lebanese and Syrian constitutions

When General Catroux, Commander of the Free French Forces in the Middle East, declared the end of the Mandatory regime in 1941 and proclaimed the "inhabitants of Syria and Lebanon" free and independent,[56] he was careful to speak of Syria *and* Lebanon, and promised: "You will be able to form yourselves into separate states or unite into a single state." When the Sunni prime minister of Lebanon, Riyāḍ al-Ṣulḥ, delivered an opening speech in the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies which was to become a pillar of the unwritten "Lebanese National Pact" (October 1943), he said: "The Lebanon desired by our brothers in the Arab countries differs in no way from the Lebanon desired by her proud and patriotic sons."[57] In this, al-Ṣulḥ was hardly completely candid. But he did speak for a growing minority of Lebanese Sunnis, who had decided to break away from the idea that Lebanon was nothing but a province of Greater Syria.[58] When he pointedly thanked the Egyptian government for its recognition of Lebanon as an independent state, the fact that Syria still withheld this recognition was clear to the House. As we know,

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54 The Maronite bishop and patriarchal vicar ʿAbdallāh Khūrī, quoted ibid.,124.

55 Beydoun, *Identité*, 34.

56 Khalil, *Arab States*, I, 100f.

57 Ibid., I, 108.

58 Raghid al-Solh, "The Attitude of the Arab Nationalists toward Greater Lebanon during the 1930s," in *Lebanon, A History of Conflict and Consensus*, ed. Nadim Shehadi and Dana Haffar Mills, London 1988, 149-55.

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Syria has never gone further than implicitly accepting independent Lebanon by joining the Arab League. The founding document of the Arab League, the Alexandria protocol of 1944, was also signed by Syria. It contained a special paragraph, emphasizing "their respect [i.e. that of the member states of the Arab League: S.W.] of the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon."[59] The Covenant of the League of Arab States later stated in article VIII: "Each state participant in the League shall respect the existing régime obtaining in the other League States, regarding it as a (fundamental) right of those states, and pledges itself not to undertake any action tending to alter that régime."

The Lebanese constitution of 1926, as amended in 1947, stated in article 1:

> Its frontiers are those which form its present boundaries: North – from the mouth of al-Kabir river along a line which follows the course of this river to a point of its junction with Wādi Khālid, its tributary, at the Abīsh, Faysan, to the height of the two villages Brina and Matrība; this line height of Jisr el-Qamar. East – the summit line separating Wādi Khālid from al-Asi river (Orontes) and crossing the villages of Mu`aysara, Harb´ana, Hayt, follows the Northern boundaries of the Qada of Baalbeck in a northwesterly and southeasterly direction, thence along the eastern boundaries of the Qadas of Baalbeck, Biqa, Hasbaya, and Rashaya. South – the southern boundaries of the Qadas of Sur (Tyre) and Marji`yun. West – the Mediterranean Sea.[60]

Neither the constitution of Syria of September 1950 nor its successor document of July 1953 has anything to say about Syrian borders. But the records of the Arab League abound in acrimonious notes exchanged between Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan on the question of Arab unity and on a possible merger of some kind affecting Lebanon.[61]

The different boundaries between the different Syrias and Lebanons showed at different times different degrees of penetrability. Under the French Mandate, both were governed by the same high commissioner, who resided in Beirut. The two countries had a common currency until 1948 and a customs union until 1950. There were constant and consistently unsuccessful attempts between 1950 and 1968 – most of them not completely sincere – to form an economic union. An agreement concluded in 1953 permitted the exchange of industrial and agricultural products between the two countries. Whenever one of them was displeased with the other, it adopted economic measures against the other, provoking retaliation in kind. Usually, however, it seems that Lebanon had more to fear from Syrian pressure than vice versa.

When in February 1958 the "United Arab Republic" (UAR) was founded, this new entity consisted of Egypt, called the "Southern Region," and of Syria, called the "Northern Region." The UAR consisted, therefore, of two unconnected areas. The traditional borders of former Egypt and former Syria remained the same. However, one border was

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59 Khalil, *Arab States*, I, 55.

60 Ibid., I, 112.

61 Ibid., II, 21ff.

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moving: the Syro-Lebanese border. In March 1958, Yemen, under a Zaidī imām, joined the UAR and formed the shortlived "United Arab States." From that time on, Syrian pressure on the border of Lebanon mounted. Large sectors of the Lebanese Sunni establishment, dissatisfied with what they still felt was Lebanese separatism, had looked to ʿAbd al-Nāṣirʾs Egypt for support for their political position since the Egyptian *coup d'état* in 1952. Now, Muslim demonstrators in Beirut and elsewhere called for the inclusion of Lebanon into the UAR.[62] This would have meant in the first place the abolition or at least a change in the status of the Syro-Lebanese border. From May 1958 onward, this border virtually ceased to exist, in the sense that the Lebanese government lost most of its control over it. And, as has been pointed out before, the area still under the control of the Lebanese government in 1958 turned out to correspond largely to the area of Mount Lebanon before 1920. The Lebanese government bypassed the Arab League, took the issue directly to the Security Council of the United Nations and on May 22, 1958, accused the UAR of "intervention ... in the affairs of Lebanon ... and ... of a violent radio and press campaign ... calling for ... the overthrow of the established authorities in Lebanon."[63] American troops landed under the terms of an Eisenhower pact and Lebanon did not join the short-lived Syro-Egyptian union. The border remained – by the grace of the United States.

The Palestinian factor

After 1967, a new factor emerged in Lebanon: the Palestinian armed presence. The history of Lebanon after 1967, after the June war and after the rise of Palestinian guerrilla activity, could be written as the history of the control or lack of control of its own borders by the Lebanese government. There are already at least three different versions of the history of this period, a Lebanese one, a Palestinian one, and an Israeli one – all of them predictably biased. In 1968, for the first time the "number of Palestinian armed elements in the mountainous area of Arkoub increased their activity against Israel, Israeli retaliation intensified and the area was less and less under Lebanese control until it was called 'Fatah-country' ".[64] This situation in South Lebanon also affected Lebanon's eastern border. That became apparent in the "Cairo agreement" of 1969 which granted the Palestinian organisations the right to station armed units in the refugee camps and obliged the Lebanese authorities to tolerate and facilitate the transport of arms and supplies via the Syro-Lebanese borders. Although the agreement stipulated Lebanese overall authority, the Lebanese authorities had in fact lost sovereignty in many ways and

62 Salibi, *Modern History*, 201.

63 Khalil, *Arab States*, II, 190f.

64 Hanf, *Koexistenz*, 215.

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over much of Lebanese territory: the PLO had more rights in Lebanon than in any other Arab country, the Israeli-Lebanese demarcation line had indirectly become an Israeli-Syro/Palestinian line and the Syro-Lebanese border was a border for most Lebanese but no longer for Syrian-backed guerrillas such as the PLA under Syrian command or for other Syrian militias.

In the second Lebanese civil war, the borders of Mount Lebanon emerged again: "The Christian strongholds were in the north and in the centre of the mountains, the Muslim strongholds were in the periphery, mainly in the areas added to Mount Lebanon."[65] There were, of course, numerous "allogene population islands;"[66] there were the Palestinian camps; and there was the special case of Beirut, which made borders and fighting around these borders and subsequent "ethnic cleansing" ubiquitous. In 1978, even the Christian-held area split into a northern region and a southern region when the Katā'ib militias and the militias controlled by Sulaymān Franjiyya were drawn into a bloody vendetta-like conflict and split the Lebanese Front. When it seemed possible that the ethnic-confessional fighting of the civil war might divide Lebanon definitely along denominational lines, and when the ghost of a Christian Mount Lebanon re-emerged, Syria intervened militarily for the first time. This happened soon after the beginning of the civil war (December 1975). The border problem came up simultaneously. The Syrian minister of foreign affairs, ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām, stated in January 1976 that Syria would not tolerate a partition of Lebanon. Should partition be attempted, all of Lebanon would "fall back" to Syria, because historically Lebanon had always been part of it.[67] The former Syrian president, Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad, repeatedly said that he considered Lebanon an "integral part of Syria." Bashīr Jumayyil supported the idea of a federal Lebanese state, in which one of the substates should be a Christian secular state. In 1978, the idea of a purely Christian Petit Liban was taken up again by the Holy Spirit University in Kaslīk; but for Bashīr Jumayyil the idea of a purely Maronite state was for economic reasons unfeasible.

Perspectives

We all remember how it continued: both the eastern and southern borders of Lebanon ceased to exist; the Israeli armed forces massively intervened and the Israeli army moved into Beirut. The Ṣabra and Shatīla massacres under the eyes of the Israeli military gave a new dimension to the fighting. The face of Lebanon exploded in continually changing "fronts" and "demarcation lines," and the names of tiny Lebanese villages

65 Ibid., 253.

66 Ibid., quotes Pierre Rondot, *Les institutions politiques du Liban*, Paris 1947.

67 Ibid., 274.

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made their way to the front pages of the world press, because they delineated a battle-line, a provisional border for a day or two. In Beirut there was a so-called Green Line which for a long time separated "East Beirut" from "West Beirut." And after Ṭā'if and the end of this civil war, Lebanon became something like a Syrian protectorate with a Syro-Lebanese border still existing, but for the Syrians more in theory than in practice. Syria was careful not to annex Lebanon, but Lebanese sovereignty ceased to exist to a large extent. In South Lebanon, Israel had unilaterally installed a "security zone" which, in fact, shifted the old armistice line to the north and completely demolished Lebanese sovereignty in this area. The Israelis left this area only in summer 2000.

Syria, at the time of writing, does not seem to have plans to annex Lebanon. It wanted to control in Lebanon armed action against Israel, as long as the Israeli "security belt" existed in South Lebanon. After the retreat of the Israeli army, Syria still retains a measure of control over the Lebanese Ḥizb Allāh. On the other hand, Syria does not want a radicalized Lebanon, which might draw Syria into a war with Israel. It does not tolerate any partition of Lebanon along religious lines, because a Maronite mini-state might become an Israeli ally, and because such a partition might encourage separatist and confessionalist tendencies within Syria itself.

In this protectorate-like status, the Syro-Lebanese border still works in some respects. Passports are controlled and visas checked. There are even customs controls. Also, books which cannot be bought in Damascus are readily available in Beirut and can easily cross the border. On the other hand, Syria does not seem ready to accept full Lebanese political sovereignty, especially in questions affecting Syrian security. And Syria's understanding of what affects its security is extremely wide and flexible. In this way, Lebanon will for some time to come remain a Syrian semi-protectorate with the Syro-Lebanese border as a precariously ambiguous line.[68]

Conclusion

Is there anything between Damascus and the Mediterranean that deserves to be called a nation? I think we might agree that a Lebanese nation with an Eastern border dividing Syria from Lebanon is as much an imagined community as a Syrian nation with a Lebanese province inside its national borders. Possibly, the last Lebanese civil war has at least shown that there is nothing and never was anything inherently progressive or humanist or democratic about either imagined community or about either cut of the borderline.

[68] Volker Perthes, *Der Libanon nach dem Bürgerkrieg: Von Ta'if zum gesellschaftlichen Konsens?*, Ebenhausen 1993.

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Is there a conclusion? I think, yes. Whatever is left today of the Syro-Lebanese border, whatever function it may serve now or in the future, nothing can be meaningfully explained anymore just by pointing to the fact that this border was once drawn by colonial powers. The fact is historically true, but it is today almost irrelevant. After all, practically all borders between nations in the Near East have been drawn by colonial powers and are, therefore, illegitimate. One might argue that there are different degrees of illegitimacy. However, illegitimacy and legitimacy are moral or legal concepts, subject to historical developments. It seems to be extremely difficult to argue nowadays on moral or legal grounds for or against an independent Lebanese nation or for or against some sort of a Lebanese unity with Syria. Does it really matter? It matters only insofar as the welfare of the Lebanese people and of the inhabitants of Lebanon is concerned. In this sense, I think, at least for the tiny line on our globe which is still the Syro-Lebanese border, we may have passed beyond colonialism.

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Safarbarlik: Ottoman Syria and the Great War

Najwa al-Qattan

The Ottoman Empire's decision in 1914 to enter the Great War on the side of the Central Powers had dire consequences for the inhabitants of Syria. Not only were Syrian men drafted into the Ottoman army, Syrian civilians suffered a famine that eventually took the lives of hundreds of thousands.[1] Ottoman participation in the war and the horrific conditions of its military and civilian fronts have cast a long shadow on subsequent regional society. Alongside the postwar peace settlements, but by no means always congruent with them, Syrian collective memory of the war has had an enduring effect on the construction of identity in the region. In Ottoman Syria the war brought social disruption of immense magnitude. For most, the wages of war involved much in addition to absent lovers, husbands, or sons. The region endured universal conscription and a confluence of factors – including forced exile, a far-reaching requisitioning of food and labor animals, an extended allied blockade, a succession of unusually harsh winters, periodic locust attacks, and severe epidemics – that collectively resulted in widespread suffering and death. Over the course of the twentieth century, a large number of Syrian men and women and their descendants (Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian) committed their remembrances of the war to paper. They wrote a variety of texts – newspaper and magazine articles, histories, textbooks, memoirs, poems, popular poetry (*zajal*), plays, and novels. In the early 1960s, *Safarbarlik*, a popular motion picture on the war, opened in Beirut, and as recently as the 1990s, several Syrian works of fiction set in the war have made their appearance. Although few of these works are on a literary par with more recent English - language war novels,[2] their publication is in itself evidence of the enduring memory of the war in official as well as popular culture. Whereas a comprehensive and much-needed analysis of this cultural production is beyond the scope of this chapter, I wish to suggest a possible approach to the material and in outline to trace a number of salient patterns. I will approach the material by focusing on the term *sefer-*

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1 For accounts of the Great War in Syria, see L. Schatkowski Schilcher, "The Famine of 1915 - 1918 in Greater Syria," in *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani*, ed. John P. Spagnolo, Oxford 1992, 229-58 and Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*, New York 2000, 16-38.

2 For example Pat Barker, *Another World*, New York 2000.

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berlik, which is invariably invoked in the context of the war, and which has taken on a wide range of connotations for contemporaneous Syrians and their descendants.

Originally an Ottoman Turkish term, *seferberlik* was part of official state discourse referring to wartime mobilization either during the second Balkan war or World War I which followed it.[3] Announcements calling for mobilization were posted in public areas in Ottoman towns and distributed to local leaders, and the word *seferberlik* was prominently printed on top. Following such announcements, conscription would begin. The names of "eligible" young men were sent to city councils, drummers and criers announced the draft in city quarters, and Ottoman officials collected the men and promptly dispatched them to the front.[4]

The second meaning of *seferberlik* develops directly from the first and refers to its experiential dimension: In the popular mind *seferberlik* invoked bounty hunters (rather than agents of a bureaucratized state) who roamed city streets hoping to "catch" young men. They carried ropes with them to encircle, tie up, and carry off boys and men on the run.[5]

The third meaning of *seferberlik* appropriates the notion of forced movement from the official military original[6] and applies it to civilian movement, by giving the term an Arab meaning "traveling" (*safar)* by "land" (*barr).*[7] Thus *safarbarlik* is not only an instance of Arabized vocalization, but also an example of what linguists call a "Hobson-Jobson" – a transformative linguistic process in which usage appears to be a coincidental conflation of Arabization with an actual historical experience – civilian travel in a time of official mobilization.[8]

Civilian migration took place during World War I because of famine or political exile. In the first instance, it involved movement away from coastal cities or Mount Leba-

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3 Khālid al-ʿAẓm, *Mudhakkirāt Khālid al-ʿAẓm*, 3 vols., Beirut 1973, I, 75.

4 Because of its need for wartime cash, the Ottoman state accepted "*badal*," which enabled most wealthy young men to evade conscription and invited widespread corruption. In addition, desertion was a perennial problem. See, for example, Aḥmad Ḥilmī al-ʿAllāf, *Dimashq fī maṭlaʿ al-qarn al-ʿishrīn*, ed. ʿAlī Jamīl Nuʿaysa, Damascus 1976, 79-82 and Muḥammad Jumʿa, *al-Ṭāhūn: Mudhakkirāt*, Damascus 1993, 24.

5 In Nadya al-Ghazzī's *Shirwāl Barhum: Ayyām min safarbarlik*, Damascus 1993, 61, for example, a footnote makes the claim that it is "common knowledge" that Syrian young men were captured by nets like fish. See also ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Rawwās Qalʿajī, *ʿUrs ḥalabī wa-ḥikāyāt min safarbarlik,* Damascus 1984, 143 and Mamdūḥ ʿUdwān, *Safarbarlik al-ghul: Jamāl Bāshā al-saffāḥ*, Damascus 1996, 119.

6 *Seferberlik* is a noun which combines the Persian term *seferber* ("prepared for war") with the Ottoman suffix-*lik,* and refers to "mobilization."

7 According to Shiam Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, trans. Andrea Rugh, Austin 1994, 166, "literally translated, this phrase means 'travel by land' but the phrase as it stands is the way older Syrians refer to the Balkan War." In al-Ghazzi, *safarbarlik* is a "long long journey on foot, to the Suez and Yemen, to Anatolia," *Shirwāt Barhum* (56).

8 *Hobson-Jobson* is "the expression now applied to English words or phrases that have arisen by way of garbled adoption from a foreign language (*Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 16th ed., s.v. "Hobson-Jobson").

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non towards the food-producing areas of the interior. In the second instance, it referred to the forced relocation of several thousand Syrians to Anatolia and elsewhere.[9] In other words, *safarbarlik* came to mean wartime dislocation and homelessness for conscripts as well as their families.

Fourth, *safarbarlik* is also the Great War:

> My father fought in more than one war. He fought in the Bulgar War, the Shanq Qala War, and the Safar Birlik War, the first Arab revolutionary War fought in the Hijaz. He fought as an officer in the Turkish army high on snow-covered Turkish mountains.[10]

In fact, it appears that as early as 1920, *safarbarlik* had become both a reference for the Great War and an available symbolic currency on the local linguistic market. In a dispatch reporting on the hunger in Aleppo in May 1920, an informant told Gertrude Bell, "Kān al-safarbalik aḥsan bi-kithīr" ("the *safarbarlik* was much better").[11] One hesitates to imagine worse than a war so steeped in horror: conscripts so deprived they want nothing from the British troops but their food and clothing; soldiers robbing enemy corpses; men so hungry they slice the flesh of live camels and leave them writhing in the desert sands.[12]

Syrian collective memory often conflated the Great War with other Ottoman wars. At times, the word is associated with wars against the historic enemy – Russia – and is used to evoke snow and death. According to one Syrian historian, when in 1908 the Committee of Union and Progress initiated the process of controlling the tribes and of registering people, the region became rife with rumors that the state intended to conscript its men and send them to fight in remote locations such as Rumelia, Anatolia, the snows of Erzurum, or the Caucasus mountains, where they would die from starvation and cold or in the prisoner camps of Siberia.[13] At other times, the term explicitly denotes the second Balkan war, the war in Yemen – "the public cemetery for Ottoman soldiers",[14] the Suez campaign, (*ḥarb al-turʿa*),[15] or combines the Balkan war and World War I into a single historic episode, evoking a continuous seven-year cataclysm:

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9 For a particularly haunting account of forced exile, see Aḥmad al-Jundī, *Lahw al-ayyām: mudhakkirāt. Sanawāt al-mutʿa wa' l-ṭarab wa' l-thaqāfa*, London 1991.

10 Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 104, 166. In his memoirs, al-ʿAẓm included the following from a wartime Turkish-language school song: "We are obliterating the enemy in Shanq Qalʿa and Gallipoli" *Mudhakkirāt,* (I, 65). In the preface to her novel, al-Ghazzī writes that her story is set in "the days of *safarbarlik*, the days of the First World War" (*Shirwāl Barhum*, 9).

11 FO 371/5076/E8007. Note by Miss G.L. Bell - May 22, 1920.

12 Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 186.

13 Munīr al-Rayyis, *al-Kitāb al-dhahabī lil-thawrāt al-waṭaniyya fī 'l-mashriq al-ʿarabī: al-thawra al-sūriyya al-kubrā*, Beirut, 1969, 26.

14 Al-ʿAllāf, *Dimashq,* 82. Al-ʿAllāf includes a detailed documentation of Ottoman recruitment policies and of extensive corruption (79-82).

15 We are the safarbarlik soldiers
Leaving our families and homes

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> We were left to starve in the streets ... Children died in alleyways. Some died, some were orphaned and some were abandoned. There was no order whatsoever in the country ... The situation stayed like that until the British came and chased out the Germans and the Turks in the sixth or seventh year of the war.[16]

The fifth meaning, or rather cluster of meanings, is derived from but more abstract than the meanings mentioned above. *Safarbarlik* is cast as tragedy, referring not only to the Great War, but to war in general, to wars from which nobody ever returns and, most poignantly, to sites from which no one comes home.[17] Yet in its most focused form, *safarbarlik* is also the sultan's war, a war that (as described in a contemporary play) "has nothing to do with us...our young men prefer to mutilate themselves rather than serve."[18] Interestingly, although the accounts diverge in their attitudes to Ottoman rule and in their assessments of the Committee of Union and Progress' decision to participate in the war, there appears to be a general consensus among Syrian writers that Ottoman wartime policies in Syria were destructive and depraved. At the same time, concern with the larger political and military realities is markedly absent. The war simply represents the historical background to unremitting Ottoman oppression. In other words, the Great War, as the *safarbarlik*, was first and foremost a very local civilian catastrophe, a war at home.

In this respect, the prototypical "bad Turk" was Jamāl Pasha, head of the Ottoman Fourth Army based in Damascus. Jamāl Pasha was nicknamed Jamāl Pasha "*al-saffāḥ*" – "the murderer." According to one author, "my father often talked about the Great War and its horrors. Each time his conversation turned to Jamāl Pasha, "that dog, that *saffāḥ*."[19] Tergeman recalls her mother say: "By God, we were yearning for a crust of bread and we suffered a lot from Turkish rule. Never in my life will I forget how Jamal Pasha, the murderer, hung the rebels in Marje Square while all the people cried for them."[20] According to popular legend, Jamāl Pasha terrorized Damascenes through rigged courts-martial and the scaffolds from which "swing our heroes." But in addition to being the

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To die on our march to the turʿa war.
(ʿUdwān, Safarbarlik, 160)

16 Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 198. On the other hand, according to one pro-Ottoman account, the horrors of the war began only after the Ottoman victory at Gallipoli, when the government, drunk with success, allowed Jamāl Pasha policies that not only oppressed the Arabs, but proved to be shortsightedly harmful to imperial politics (al-Amīr Shakīb Arslān, *Sīra dhātiyya*, Beirut 1969, 154-160, 185). On a related point of periodization, see Schatkowski Schilcher, " Famine," 231.

17 According to Tergeman, "in colloquial usage it means also 'to go off and never come back again' which is what happened to many young men who were conscripted into the Ottoman armies" (*Daughter of Damascus*, 166). In ʿUdwān's play, the Ottoman army is called the "army of death: he who joins is missing and he who returns is born again" (*Safarbalik*, 291).

18 Qalʿajī, ʿUrs ḥalabī, 39. Also see, al-Ghazzī, *Shirwāl Barhum*, 65.

19 Jumʿa, *al-Ṭāhūn*, 24, 26.

20 Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 96.

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hangman of the few, Jamāl Pasha was the agent of starvation for many.[21] Even Najāt Qassāb's rather sympathetic account of him dwells on Jamāl Pasha's callous reaction, when on an inspection tour, he was confronted with dragooned workers who had been reduced to eating carrot tops.[22] In other accounts, Jamāl Pasha's callousness has become legendary, combining images of the "bad Turk" with mythologized deprivation and transgression. A Lebanese man recounts that when Jamāl Pasha found himself accosted by children bemoaning their hunger, he responded: "This is not genuine hunger. Genuine hunger is when mothers devour their young."[23]

Finally, it should come as no surprise that *safarbarlik*'s associations with hunger and death became synonymous with misery and trouble in general. Uncoupled from history, *safarbarlik* became a resonant metaphor in cautionary tales. Just as an older American generation continues to admonish baby-boomers with tales of the Great Depression, the author Hanna Mina recalles how villagers used the *safarbarlik* to situate emotionally the effects of the Great Depression on Syrian village life in the 1930s:

> This is y o u r Safar Barr was an idea that cropped up in people's minds, for moths finished off the scant provisions and famine broke out like the plague. People sold some of their belongings; some sold all; others took loans; some ate weeds and begged. By the end of autumn there were no more weeds, loans or handouts for beggars.[24]

Safarbarlik churns with intense hunger. One author suggests that Syrians have sanctified bread ever since the Great War. "They call it the 'Safarbarlik war' " – a war that the author himself did not experience, but about which he had heard from an older generation.[25]

The sanctification of bread has its counter-point in despoliation and sacrilege: mothers rummaging in waste for orange and watermelon peels,[26] families feasting on the

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21 For a different view, see Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman: 1913-1919*, New York 1922.

22 Najāt Qassāb Ḥasan, *Ḥadīth dimashqī: 1884-1983 (Mudhakkirāt)*, Damascus 1988, I, 261.

23 Nicholas Z. Ajay, Jr., "Mount Lebanon and the Wilayah of Beirut, 1914-1918: The War Years," Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 1973, appendix, 11. This also appears in fictional form in ʿUdwān, *Safarbarlik*, 249-250.

24 Hanna Mina, *Fragments of Memory: A Story of a Syrian Family*, trans. Olive Kenny and Lorne Kenny, Austin 1993, 81. Along those lines, Schatkowski Schilcher writes that "so strong was the impact of the famine on the historic lore of subsequent generations" that foreign administrators were very sensitive during World War II. "For their part, Arab nationalists felt first chastened then embittered by [this]" ("Famine," 233).

25 ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUṭarī, *Iʿtirāfāt shāmī ʿatīq: sīra dhātiyya wa-ṣuwar dimashqiyya*, Damascus 1998, 64. According to Schilcher, in Lebanon, "the term *seferberlik* (mobilization) has become synonymous with the World War I famine" (n. #15, 231).

26 A writer for the newspaper *al-Kawkab* concluded a review of *The Fall of a Young Girl* and *Famine in Syria*, a two-part play put on show by the Committee for the Advancement of Arab Drama in Palestine, by declaring: "History will remember the rinds of watermelon and their influence on people of the twentieth century, a century of civility and knowledge and light" (October 8, 1918). In al-Ghazzī's *Shirwāl Barhum*,

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flesh of rats, dead animals, or cooked blood, and ugliest of all, children picking seed from animal dung.[27] For the more fortunate and less hungry there were other (perhaps equally undignified) transgressions. In his memoirs, Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Jazāʾirī remarks, with unself conscious snobbery, that in the summer of 1918, starving Beirutis were reduced to eating Lupine (*turmus*), which they normally would have scorned.[28] Even Ottoman soldiers were swallowed up by the horrors visited upon the civilians, two of whom would later recall watching Turkish soldiers crawling on their bellies devouring grass.[29]

For Hanna Mina *safarbarlik* invokes transgression. His memory of hunger in rural Syria of the 1930s invokes *safarbarlik* with horror:

> When locusts ravaged our village and people began raiding the granaries in desperation, I overheard my father telling my mother: "What are they supposed to do during the famine? Bide their time...people will eat each other when winter comes. They aren't to be blamed. During the Safar Barrlik, mothers ate their children. They became like cats and ate their children."[30]

Children play a central role in evoking the horrors of war: "In Lebanon a great number of homeless skeleton-like children roamed the streets in search of food," writes al-ʿAẓm.[31] According to one Lebanese woman, "one thing I do remember very well during the long four years, you couldn't get a smile on the face of a child."[32] Another morbidly insists that the war was a time during which mothers grabbed food out of their babies' mouths; "as a matter of fact," he adds, "I still have the skulls of three children who were eaten."[33] In a contemporary play, the *safarbar* is a time when parents sold the corpses of their children for food, and in his 1986 pictorial history of Beirut, Fouad Debas devotes a whole page to "the very worst aspects of the Turkish streak of cruelty," the careful and methodical starvation of Beirut. A photograph of starving and dead children is reproduced.[34]

95, "people fight over lemon and orange rinds, children pick watermelon rind from the mud, even the locusts go hungry."

27 Ajay, "Mount Lebanon", appendix, 18, 41, 50, 90. Also see al-Ghazzī, *Shirwāl Barhum*, 109-110 and al-Qalʿajī, ʿUrs ḥalabī, 165.

28 Al-Amīr Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Jazāʾirī, *Mudhakkirāt ʿan al-qaḍāya al-ʿarabiyya waʾl-ʿālam al-islāmī*, Algiers 1968, 142. This assertion also appears in al-Ghazzī, *Shirwāl Barhum*, 60.

29 Ajay, "Mount Lebanon," appendix, 41, 47, 102.

30 Mina, *Fragments of Memory*, 173.

31 Al-ʿAẓm, *Mudhakkirāt*, 76.

32 Ajay, "Mount Lebanon," appendix, 75.

33 Ibid., 60.

34 Fouad Debas, *Beirut, our Memory: A Guided Tour Illustrated with Postcards from the Collection of Fouad Debas*, Beirut 1986, 229.

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A variety of epidemics - typhus, cholera, typhoid, and malaria - also decimated the wartime population. Here too, disease takes on an apocalyptic dimension. According to Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, the casualty rate among local men sent to serve on remote fronts (as a disciplinary measure and to forestall desertion) was so high that the term "army" became synonymous with "cholera."[35] "Yes, there was much disease during the war," observes an older Lebanese woman. "Where did it come from? From the Turks, who else? They brought it with them."[36]

Cannibalism and pestilence are not the only manifestations of a violently disrupted social order. The *safarbarlik* is also a time when mosques were desecrated and crime rates rose. The chaos is often gendered and sometimes sectarian. It is a time when girls sold their bodies for a loaf bread,[37] parents gave their daughters away like commodities - even "married them off to *ʿarab al-bādiya*" (Bedouins of the desert).[38] This is also a time of sectarian tension: in Tripoli Christians were made to walk on that part of the road reserved for animals while the higher and cleaner sidewalks were reserved for Muslims.[39]

This rich, but far from comprehensive, material raises a number of issues that I tentatively analyze below. Extensive research is needed before they may be justly explored. First, and most obviously, it is apparent that war was as disruptive to the social life of language as it was to other aspects of collective life. There was, however, a creativity to this disruption, inasmuch as the turmoil of war forced both the rapid generation of new symbols and the investment of old ones with new meanings appropriate for aberrant circumstances. *Safarbarlik* was a child of war, a term that was almost immediately orphaned and acquired a new set of social pedigrees.[40] Indeed, the transmutation of *safarbarlik* under the impact of violence and war is neither surprising nor unique. In light both of the growing body of theoretical investigation into the social life of language and studies focused on wartime experience, the crowding of meaning in *safarbarlik* follows a path familiar to those who attend to the intersection of language and social violence.

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35 Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, *Mudhakkirāt al-Barūdī: sittūn sana tatakallam*, 2 vols., Damascus 1952, I, 97.

36 Ajay, "Mount Lebanon," 37, 83.

37 As in *The Fall of a Young Girl* and *Famine in Syria*.

38 Al-Rayyis, *al-Kitāb al-dhahabī*, 52.

39 Ajay, "Mount Lebanon," 60, 13. In the early nineteenth century the *dhimmī*s of Damascus were periodically subjected to the socially discriminatory practice of *ṭārūq*. The *ṭārūq* literally refers to a slightly depressed channel that runs along the middle of a street - a gutter of sorts intended for animals - to which, on occasion, *dhimmī*s were confined in order to make way for Muslims (ʿAbdallah Ḥannā, *Ḥarakat al-ʿāmma al-dimashqiyya fī 'l-qarnayn al-thāmin wa'l-tāsiʿ ʿashar*, Beirut 1985, 251, 272). For a sustained discussion of the ways in which the Great War exacerbated social cleavages across class, sectarian, and gender faults, see Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*.

40 In other words, this is an example of M.M. Bakhtin's "word-with-a-sideways-glance," in "The Discourse of the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin 1992, xxi.

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Paul Fussell has already demonstrated how the English language obtained a new vocabulary both French and trench in origin in the wake of the Great War.[41] Likewise, *safarbarlik* read as "to go away and never come back" echoes the way in which "tomorrow morning" came to mean "never" in Primo Levi's heartbreakingly casual comment in *Survival in Auschwitz*.

The second issue involves the term *safarbarlik* and the significance of its transformations. From a term with an apparently simple and concrete meaning, *safarbarlik* dissolves into a series of diffuse and overlapping associations. This was a process in which an official call for military conscription and mobilization, one behind which stood the power of the state, became appropriated by targeted communities for whom *safarbarlik* refered to a complex range of historical experiences. In other words, *safarbarlik* was transformed from an official directive to a variety of experiences involving hunger, flight, dislocation, and death, subjective encounters with the brutalizing war now collectively expressed and rendered. Because this linguistic history involved acts of communal translation and appropriation, *safarbarlik* articulates, to borrow from Alon Confino, the connection between representation and social experience.[42]

Safarbarlik gives expression to a collective danger across the battle-line of history at the turn of the twentieth century. A determined endurance in the face of victimization at the hands of impersonal forces (military and governmental, natural as well as catastrophic) defines this collectivity. In other words, the appropriation of *safarbarlik* acknowledges the burden of collective deprivation, and also subverts it by conjuring up collective images of endurance and resistance in time. Let me illustrate by quoting the haunting words of a (fictional) blinded Damascene veteran of the Great War:

> What is there to say? The war seeped into our lives, into our past, present, and future. What did we gain? The English won and the Germans lost; the Sharif won and the Ottomans lost. But what did we gain, we who fought without knowing why we were fighting? The war took away all we had.[43]

The notion of an enduring community – a community which lasts as it struggles in time – is conveyed in the words of another Syrian author who finds significance in his grandfather's last words: "The Turks are gone... and here are the French taking their place," a sentiment echoed in the memoirs of the Syrian poet and novelist Salmā al-Ḥaffār al-Kuzbārī, whose invective is decidedly focused on the French, but who nevertheless holds the Ottomans accountable.[44] Shakīb Arslān, on the other hand, reaches further

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41 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Oxford 1975.

42 Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *American Historical Review* 102 (December 1997), 1386.

43 Qalʿajī, *ʿUrs ḥalabī*, 185.

44 Jumʿa, *al-Ṭāhūn*, 28; Salmā al-Ḥaffār al-Kuzbārī, *ʿAnbar wa-ramad. The First Stage: 1922-1925*, Beirut 1970, 11.

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back in communal time and compares the British to the crusaders.[45] Striking a particularly black note, the chorus in a contemporary Syrian play bewails the catastrophic and simultaneous destructiveness of Jamāl Pasha's policies, allied aggression, Zionist ambition, and treachery at home.[46]

Historical suffering, however, and this the third point, often becomes the occasion for hope, for declarations such as "our city which has endured so much will never die."[47] Or, as Tergeman's mother remarks: We saw some very black days then that we never want to live through again. God spared Damascus and its people. The British, the Germans, the Turks and the French...they all left, and God alone now guards Damascus.[48]

In light of this persistent optimism, it is perhaps not surprising to note the ubiquity of the wedding trope in this material. I shall cite two examples. In her novel *Shirwāl Barhūm: Ayyām min safarbarlik*, Nadya al-Ghazzī's protagonist, Maryam, is a young woman who, on the eve of the Great War, gets engaged to Barhūm, a soldier who never returns to wear the *shirwāl* (peasant trousers) she embroiders for him. This is the story of the wedding that never was, of a war that reduced young women to spinsterhood or loveless marriages, of a dream that was cut down by history and war – but one never forgotten. This is, in other words, both a woman's story and the story of her people.[49] Maryam is not only a young bride, but a poor and ignorant peasant girl, "nobody of any importance,"[50] who, nevertheless, is "instructed" on a long menu of Ottoman misdeeds as she sits out the war. The pedagogical bend of the fiction is mirrored in the author's introduction, where claims are made that the fiction is based on a true story, that the embroidered trousers – a token of love and desire - are on display for all to see at the ʿAẓm Museum, and that extensive research had been undertaken. The novel is dedicated "to all who had died of hunger."[51]

Similarly, Tergeman recalls in no less pedagogical a strain: "Why do you think all our days are weddings? From the time we were conscious of our surroundings we heard the sound of bullets in our ears....But in 1945, Damascus celebrated the greatest wedding of all when the French evacuated and the happy charming bride [was] Damascus."[52] Collective memory of the war has also yielded to the postwar segmentation of the region

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45 Arslān, *Sīra dhātiyya*, 236.

46 ʿUdwān, *Safarbarlik*, 353. In the Palestinian film, *Galilee Wedding*, there is a humorous scene in which an ancient Palestinian man sits under a tree at a distance from the wedding commotion and mutters to himself: "First came the Turks, then the English, and now the Jews." He had been witness to one wave of foreign occupation after another - an old man at his grandson's wedding.

47 Qalʿajī, *ʿUrs ḥalabī*, 189, 192.

48 Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 199.

49 Al-Ghazzī, *Shirwāl Barhum*, 136.

50 Ibid., 14-16.

51 Ibid., 9-11.

52 Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 97.

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along national and frequently sectarian lines, a segmentation that doubtlessly nurtured the fragmentation and contestation of memory itself. Almost immediately since the end of the Great War, the community that had suffered and endured has acquired a variety of rightful and sometimes mutually exclusive claimants. *Safarbarlik*, collectively remembered, has become a site of competing and contesting communal identities - claimed by many as a watershed if not a crucible in the history of the collective. The iconography of the martyrs is most compelling in this site. The martyrs - resisters, traitors, and deserters all stand in the national pantheon, their scaffolds now cradles in which the infant community rocks.[53]

Whereas many Syrian writers would agree that "those martyred at the hands of Jamāl Pasha al-Saffāḥ mark the beginning of revolutions that will not end until complete Arab independence,"[54] martyrdom is also claimed by the memories of a self-consciously Christian Lebanese community according to which Jamāl Pasha's policies were animated by anti-Christian bigotry. "The Turks used to say: 'If we open your hearts, we will see France there,'" reports a Lebanese man.[55] Jamāl Pasha not only requisitioned grain and animals, but church bells as well.[56]

The material so far reviewed suggests that *safarbarlik* came to be conflated with a variety of subsequent violent experiences, some of which resulted in forgetting rather than remembering. It remains to be seen, for example, the extent to which the Palestinian *safarbarlik* has been conflated with or banished to oblivion by 1948 or the degree to which the *safarbarlik* of Lebanese memory is energized or defined by the still-raw wounds inflicted by mid-nineteenth-century violence.

This brings me to the last point I want to make. In more recent times, *safarbarlik* appears to have been appropriated by a nationalist discourse as a result of which both the perpetrators and the appropriators of the *safarbarlik* experience have been redefined and more concretely identified. The Turk of old looks Israeli. A play published in Damascus in 1996 – *Safarbarlik*, by Mamdūḥ ʿUdwān features a Greek chorus committed to "awaken this oppressor [Jamāl Pasha] in the grave and in national memory, in the hope that this memory will uproot all oppression." In this tedious catalogue of Ottoman, British, French, and Zionist crimes, Jamāl Pasha stands out particularly as a facilitator of Zionism, a proverbial *karagöz* (puppet).[57]

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[53] In the winter of 1919, plays with titles such as *Jamal Pasha the Tyrant and the Martyrs of the Arab Community* and *The Tyranny of Jamal Pasha* were widely put on show in Palestine (*al-Kawkab*, October 11, 1919).

[54] Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 287; al-Rayyis, *al-Kitāb al-dhahabī*, 9, 11. In fact, according to Eugene L. Rogan, this appropriation of anti-government activity also involved at least one incident predating the Great War, as happened with 1910 revolt in Karak (*Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*, Cambridge 1990, 214-217.)

[55] Ajay, "Mount Lebanon," appendix, 21, 18.

[56] Ibid., 11.

[57] ʿUdwān, *Safarbarlik*, 13, 334, 273.

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The last example I want to cite, *ʿUrs ḥalabī*, employs the wedding trope and casts *safarbarlik* in a distinctly late twentieth-century light. The play, which is subtitled *The Engagement, the Wedding, the Sorrows,* is a part of Damascene theatrical trilogy published by ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Qalʿajī in the 1980s. It is the story of war-torn Aleppo and of young lovers separated by *safarbarlik*. Among the characters is a regular feature of old Syrian towns, the story-teller of the coffee house (*ḥakawātī*). This character, who appears once in each of the acts, recites the following in his last appearance:

> When the pagan Roman army was defeated at the hands of the Muslims, the Roman king sent for Yahuda, king of the Jews. Yahuda promptly came to the rescue at the head of a ferocious army of 10,000 men. He informed the Roman king that he was fed up with those Arabs who fight among themselves. "They have taken my land; but I will occupy their land, dispossess their people, use their kings as my agents, and erect the Great State of Israel from the Euphrates to the Nile."[58]

This is the new time of sorrow, the *safarbarlik* of the nationalist discourse.

In Syria the Great War is remembered as a local war, a war most violently fought at home, as removed from the assassination at Sarajevo as it was from the Marne and Verdun. Students of collective memory have since Halbwachs explored various aspects of remembering (and forgetting) and of identity.

In the process, scholarly historical narratives and their traditional, fictional, and commemorative variations (precursors and off-shoots, alike), have been studied, compared, and deconstructed.[59] It is hoped that this chapter will be a contribution to this rich and growing field.

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[58] Qalʿajī, *ʿUrs ḥalabī*, 143.

[59] Of particular note are Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de memoire*, 7 vols., Paris 1984-1992; Yosef Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, New York 1982; Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, Chicago 1995.

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From urban notables to "noble Arabs": shifting discourses in the emergence of nationalism in the Arab East, 1910-1916[1]

Birgit Schaebler

"Soon Syria will be full of preachers of the religion of Arab independence ... Deliverance is coming from the desert ...what is underway now in the Hijaz is the beginning of a blessing for all the Arab lands." This strange text, evoking religion, Arab independence, and the desert specifically the Hejaz expected to bring "deliverance" and "blessing" to "all the Arab lands," is a passage of ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUraysī's last testament, laid down some time in 1915, only months before he lost his life at the gallows on May 6, 1916.[2] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUraysī at the time was a long-standing activist in the secret society al-Fatāt, then based in Damascus. His activities had included making contact with the officer Yasīn al-Hāshimī of the secret society al-ʿAhd. These men were at the core of the plan for an Arab revolt against the Ottomans. They sent messengers to Ibn Suʿūd of al-Najd, informing him that nationalist circles were ready to rise up for Arab independence, and asked Ibn Suʿūd to take upon himself the leadership of their revolt. When Ibn Suʿūd declined, they drafted a message to the Sharīf Ḥusayn of Mecca.[3] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUraysī had spent the years 1912/13 in Paris, and was among the organizers of the Arab Congress. He had also been editor of the Beirut newspaper *al-Mufīd*.[4]

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1 Some of the findings presented in this chapter have been published in my "Von 'wilden Barbaren' zur 'Blüte der Zivilisation': Zur Transformation eines Konzeptes und zur Neubewertung des frühen arabischen Nationalismus," in *Aneignung und Selbstbehauptung. Antworten auf die europäische Expansion*, ed. Dietmar Rothermund, Munich 1999, 85-110. I wish to thank Abdallah Hanna in Damascus and Samir Seikaly in Beirut for first drawing my attention to *al-Muqtabas*' coverage of the events of 1910/1911.

2 Asʿad Dāghir, *Thawrat al-ʿArab*, Cairo 1916, 116.

3 Eliezer Tauber, *The Arab Movements in World War I*, London 1993, 60, 61; Rashid Khalidi, " ʿAbd al-Ghani al-ʿUraisi and al-Mufid: The Press and Arab Nationalism before 1914," in *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, ed. Marwan R. Buheiry, Beirut 1981, 43, fn. 15.

4 See Khalidi, " ʿAbd al-Ghani al-ʿUraisi".

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Several questions need to be raised here. First, what does the peculiar mix of images in al-ʿUraysī's last testament signify? Placing his hope in the desert, expecting "preachers of the religion of Arab independence" to bring "deliverance" and "blessing" from the desert to "all the Arab lands"[5] does this not sound as if he is evoking the power of the Arab tribes of the first centuries of Islam, who so successfully spread the message of Islam, only now it is the message of Arab independence that they are carrying? Or does he picture the nomads Ibn Khaldūn had been analyzing, the storm from the desert, sweeping away the decadent urban dynasties? If so, does this *imaginaire*[6] have any significance for the project of nationalism in the Arab East? Or is it simply the haunted imagination of a young revolutionary on the run?

ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUraysī had indeed escaped to the desert several times. If Aḥmad al-Qadrī's account is correct, then the administrative committee of al-Fatāt had, in July 1915, feared for the safety of al-ʿUraysī and a few others and had sent them on a secret escape route, which led from the Druze village al-Jaramāna on the outskirts of Damascus to the Druze village al-Khalkhala at the edge of the Lajāʾ and Jabal al-Durūz, where the local *shaykh* supplied the fugitives with Bedouin clothes and from whence they continued through Jabal al-Durūz down south.[7] They embarked on a train to the Hejaz, but their Bedouin cover was blown at a railway station, where they were arrested and brought to Aley.

This brings me to the second issue I wish to raise. Any historian of the frontier lands of Bilād al-Shām (and there are not many) knows of the strained relations between the inhabitants of the cities and the villages, on the one hand, and the desert and steppe dwellers, on the other, despite commercial contacts and symbiotic modes of production. There was a legacy of distrust, outright fear, and even loathing that separated the cities and villages from the desert on multiple levels.

First, for the *ʿulamāʾ* since Ibn Taymiyya, the Arabs of the desert were more or less pagans. Ibn Taymiyya spoke of the *jāhiliyya* of the tribes, and held their social practices of revenge and raiding (*ghazw*) in contempt.[8] Ottoman administrators viewed nomadic tribes as wild, uncivilized, and unlawful. For them the only good Bedouin was a settled Bedouin. The *vālī* of the Hejaz declared in 1895 that the Bedouins, who "still live in a state of nomadism and savagery," had to be civilized by making them obey the laws of

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5 The Arabic words used are "mubashshirīn bidīn al-istiqlāl al-ʿarabī," "al-faraj yaʾtī min al-bādiya," and "barakāt."

6 My use of the term *imaginaire* has been influenced by what Cornelius Castoriadis established as *L'institution imaginaire de la société,* arguing in a complex way that society (and the nation) create imaginary visions of themselves: Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, Cambridge 1998.

7 Aḥmad Qadrī, *Mudhakkirāt ʿan al-thawra al-ʿarabiyya al-kubrā*, 2nd ed., Damascus 1993 41, 42.

8 H. Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taki-d-Din Ahmad b. Taimiya*, Cairo 1939, 44.

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the *sharīʿa*. They had to be settled and sent to Ottoman schools.[9] Ottomanism was an urban culture that involved a civilizing mission toward tribal people, as I have argued elsewhere.[10] Townspeople feared the Bedouins because of their highway robberies, which did not even respect the *ḥajj* caravan. The eighteenth-century traveler al-Bakrī describes how one Friday he and his fellow travelers had to break camp without saying their prayers for "fear of the *ahl al-bādiya* who don't know any fear."[11] He uses the term *ahl al-bādiya,* together with *ʿarab,* with negative connotations throughout his whole text. But no tribal group was as hated and feared in Damascus in the years between 1880 and 1910 as the Druzes at the fringe of the *bādiya*. In 1896, for example, panic was breaking out in Damascus over rumors that Druze warriors were approaching the city gates, prompting the *vālī* to arm the citizenry to stand guard outside the city.[12] The villages at the fringe of the desert, finally, had to pay *khuwwa,* protection fees, to the Arab tribes and still had to fear for their fields and harvests in times of drought. Jibrail S. Jabbur, in his *The Bedouins and the Desert*, describes his childhood experience, growing up in a village of late Ottoman Syria, at a time when a cry like "The Arabs are coming!" had only one meaning – a raid by desert Arabs. "Hence I grew up," he wrote, "fearing these Bedouins, loathing the desert, and hating its people, as did most of the boys of the village. Every one of them used to hear his mother try to frighten him by saying, 'Tomorrow I'm going to sell you to the Arabs...'."[13] Given this legacy, how do we explain, then, that urban nationalists like ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUraysī placed their hopes in the desert, took refuge with Druzes and Hejazis to escape the Ottoman authorities, and turned to Ibn Suʿūd of al-Najd and Sharīf Ḥusayn of Mecca to deliver them from Ottoman rule?[14]

What clearly needs to be explained, then, is a twofold dimension of early nationalism in the Arab East,[15] as expressed in al-ʿUraysī's last testament, which I call the

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9 Selim Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)," *IJMES* 23 (1991), 347.

10 See my "Civilizing Others: Global Modernity and the Local Boundaries (French/German, Ottoman, and Arab) of Savagery", in: Birgit Schaebler, Leif Stenberg, *Globalization and the Muslim World. Culture, Religion and Modernity*, Syracuse University Press, New York 2004.

11 I am grateful to Ralf Elger for letting me have this part of al-Bakrī's ms "al-khamra al-ḥissiyya fi 'l-riḥla al-qudsiyya." On al-Bakrī see Ralf Elger, "Die Netzwerke des Literaten und Sufis Mustafa al-Bakri (1099/1688-1162/1749) im Vorderen Orient", in *Die islamische Welt als Netzwerk*, ed. Roman Loimeier, Würzburg 2000.

12 MAEP, Guillois to Hanotaux, July 19, 1896; for more on the "Druze question" in Damascus in the 1880s and 1890s see my *Aufstände im Drusenbergland. Ethnizität und Integration einer ländlichen Gesellschaft Syriens vom Osmanischen Reich bis zur staatlichen Unabhängigkeit,* Gotha 1996, 181f.

13 Jibrail S. Jabbur, *The Bedouins and the Desert*, trans. Lawrence Conrad, New York 1995, 3.

14 Sharīf Ḥusayn had been approached in 1911 by the urban notable from Basra Ṭālib al-Nasīb.

15 I concur with James Gelvin's critique of the term "Arab nationalism" in that it tends to devalue other, more local expressions of nationalism in the Arab East. Yet, instead of dismissing the *salafiyya-nahḍa* connection, I suggest that it needs further investigation, in the sense of a "culture of nationalism."

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integration of the "Arabs of the desert," on both the cultural and on social planes, into the expanding space, both discursive and social, of the nation. My argument is that a changing discourse,[16] intertwined with very real and dramatic events of cultural contact, and a changing perception of tribal people from the perspective of the urban nationalists, laid the groundwork for the urban-tribal alliance of the Arab revolt,[17] and, later, the Syrian Revolt, and included the desert areas into the nation, however ill defined. I argue that, beginning with al-Kawākibī's *Umm al-Qurā*, a book that was widely read in clandestine urban clubs and circles, the Bedouins of the Arabian desert were reinterpreted and transformed in a radically new way, and imbued with a potential to salvage the future of the Arab Muslim East. Between 1910 and 1916, urban nationalists appropriated the topos of the noble Arabs of the desert in order to further their political ends. The newspaper *al-Muqtabas*, and the writings of the circle around its editor, Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, as well as those of ʿAbd al Ghanī al-ʿUraysī, reflect this discursive shift. These years were a critical juncture in the history of the Arab East, when a change in discourse could be made politically potent.

It is very important here to point out that the desert is a gradational space, both in reality and even more so in the imaginary vision of it, with boundaries which are moving back and forth. In this sense it includes the *ṣaḥrā'*, sand-desert, and the *bādiya*, steppe, as well as its fringes and fortified gateways, like the Jabal al-Durūz.[18] The *imaginaire* of the desert is inseparable from that of its dwellers. And here also since it is the imaginary vision of them that interests us the real differences between nomads, semi-nomads, and settled people who adopted many Bedouin traits, like the Druzes, are secondary. In the urban *imaginaire* of the desert and its noble Arabs, they are all made to fit a certain image, as we shall see.

At this point a brief look at the scholarship of early nationalism in the Arab East seems to be in order. In my view, it has been most powerfully influenced by the "urban notables paradigm." This paradigm was originally conceived by Ira Lapidus and Albert Hourani as a tool to study power relations in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman

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16 The concept of discourse is commonly associated with the writings of Michel Foucault, who himself used the term on three different levels, namely as "domaine général de tous les énoncés, groupe individualisable d'énoncés, pratique réglée rendant compte d'un certain nombre d'énoncés": M. Foucault, *Archéologie du savoir*, Paris 1969, 20. Following Foucault, I use the term "discourse" in the sense of a framework of statements being formed by individuals or groups in specific and changing situations in order to create social or cultural patterns, which in turn in a dialectical way impact and shape situations and events.

17 The fact that the Arab revolt was later planned and carried out mostly by the British-Hashemite alliance is a different story. I am not concerned here with the revolt as it happened, but with a pre-history from the perspective of the urban nationalists that has been left largely unearthed, precisely because it was overshadowed by later events.

18 This view is expressed in Martha Mundy et al. (eds.), *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, Cambridge 2000. Lawrence I. Conrad and Jibrail Jabbur also use the word "desert" explicitly to mean both the sand-desert, *al-ṣaḥrā'*, and the steppe, *al-bādiya*; their *Bedouins and the Desert* includes the Druzes.

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Empire.[19] C.E. Dawn was the first to systematically apply it to the study of nationalism, concentrating on the urban notables as the element most essential in the political and ideological shift from "Ottomanism to Arabism." He explained nationalism in a large measure as a product of factionalism *within* the landowning bureaucratic class, as an intra-Arab elite conflict.[20] When Philip Khoury summed up critical scholarship on the question of the notables' role in early Arab nationalism in an auto-critique of the paradigm as applied in his own work on urban notables and Arab nationalism, he emphasized Rashid Khalidi's point that the focus on the notables overlooked the important role of the "new intelligentsia," the younger, less well-established and considerably more radical men of the liberal professions, such as ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUraysī, and the group around Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī on whom I will concentrate.[21] The urban notables paradigm also left out the important group of religious reformers and their relations with the Arabists in Damascus,[22] the so-called mob and the question of nationalism as a mass phenomenon,[23] and the standpoint of the imperial capital, Istanbul.[24] Despite a suggestion in the debate to reconsider the rise of Arab nationalism by distinguishing between cultural, social, and political concerns, the emphasis remained strongly on the latter two.[25] This is, in fact, what most of the studies cited here have in common: They concentrate heavily on the social and political dimensions and tend to treat nationalism, even in its nascent stage, as a political ideology. This is not to say that the cultural dimension is unpolitical. On the contrary.

Indeed, scholarship on nationalism in Europe and in other parts of the non-Western world has shown that, with nationalism, there are dynamics at work that are missed in histories in which the story of nationalism begins with the contest for political power. We all know by now that nationalism is, above all, an "imagined community," where some do the imagining and others are imagined.[26] The Subaltern Studies Group has made it their *raison d'être* to get those to speak who habitually were left out, as subjects,

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19 Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages,* Cambridge 1967; Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers, Chicago 1968.

20 C.E. Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism*, Urbana 1973.

21 Philip S. Khoury, "The Urban Notables Paradigm Revisited," *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Mediterranée* 55-56 (1990), 1-2.

22 David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria,* Oxford 1990.

23 James Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire*, Berkeley 1998.

24 Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, Berkeley 1997.

25 Mahmoud Haddad, "The Rise of Arab Nationalism Reconsidered," *IJMES* 26 (1994), 201. James Gelvin's work is an exception, though, in that he is concerned with discourses of the nation.

26 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism,* London 1991.

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in both colonial and elitist national historiography. Their findings have established that nationalism is, above all, a contested domain. Prasenjit Duara calls it "the site where different representations of the nation contest and negotiate with each other."[27] How does anti-colonial nationalism differ? Partha Chatterjee finds that the difference lies in the way colonial societies shape their "inner domain" while dealing with the West, which is rather painfully experienced as superior in the material domain. If one had to study the West carefully and learn what was possible to utilize within one's own culture, then it was all the more necessary to preserve as "pure" what was constructed as the "inner spiritual domain" of a nation's culture.[28] Thinking about the notions of "purity" and "purification" in Muslim societies, Ernest Gellner made the important observation that "the two processes, 'purification' or radicalization of religion and nationalism [*sic!*] are often intertwined, to a degree that it is hard to say which one is 'merely' the external form of the other."[29] In the cultural dimension of nationalism, finally, where emotions are important, nature and landscape play an important role as visual fabrics of the nation. The *imaginaire* of majestic landscapes and the people associated with them can be made into the distilled essence of what the proponents of the nation wish it to be.[30]

In the Arab East, the discourses that can be identified as attempts to shape a "pure inner domain" of Arab-Muslim culture were those of the *Nahḍa* and *salafiyya,* starting in the middle of the nineteenth century. One terrain where they meet is the imagined space of the desert, the Arabian Peninsula, precisely because it represents the notion of "purity." I will attempt to show in the following that these discourses construct a vision of the ideal member of the Arab and Islamic community by imagining him as a "pure Arab" and/or *ghāzī*-warrior of a pure or purified Islam.

The *imaginaire* of the noble Arab of the desert

While the Arab East mostly feared and loathed the desert, its fascination for Westerners trying to escape the confines of their own society and class is well known. Representing Middle Easterners as Arab *shaykhs* was and still is a favorite orientalist motif, and the desert continues to inspire travelogues that uncritically feature the full repertoire of the

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27 Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*, Chicago 1995, 8.

28 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments,* Princeton 1993, 6; also his *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World. A Derivative Discourse?* Minneapolis 1986.

29 Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society*, Cambridge 1981, 59.

30 See Simon Shama's formidable *Landscape and Memory*, New York 1996; and Danny Trom, "Natur und nationale Identität," in *Nation und Emotion*, ed. E. Francois, H. Sigrist and J. Vogel, Göttingen 1995.

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topos of the desert and the noble Arab.[31] An exceptional example, however, is the Blunts, a British couple who were fascinated by the desert, and especially the Najd. Their travels in the desert inspired Wilfrid Blunt to write the first systematic treatise on the demand for an Arab caliphate (and his wife, Lady Anne, to compose a travel book, *Pilgrimage to al-Najd*). Wilfrid Blunt believed that the regeneration of Islam could be achieved only through the Bedouins of Arabia, not the townsmen. The latter were in his eyes "a multitude of mixed origin, descended from such pilgrims as from every quarter of the globe have visited the holy places, and have remained to marry and die in them." The Bedouins, however, were

> a pure race of a peculiarly noble type; and unchanged in any essential feature of their life from what they were in the days of Mohammed. They are warlike, unquiet, Bedouins, camel-riders (for they have no horses), and armed with matchlocks; and they are proud of their independence and tenacious of their rights.[32]

Blunt was the first to derive from the concept of the purity and nobility of the Arabian Bedouins the idea of the return of the caliphate to the Arabs. It was especially Ibn Rashīd's al-Najd, whose "ancient system of free government existing for so many centuries in the heart of that wonderful peninsula, [that] was to confirm [him] in the enthusiastic love and admiration [he] already entertained for the Arabian race."[33] The extent to which Blunt was taking up ideas that were discussed in intellectual circles in Cairo at the time is still unclear. Given the long history of hostility and distrust between Islamic urbanites and the desert Bedouins, there may be some logic in the fact that they were first elaborated in writing by a conservative European romantic.

It was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī (1849-1903) from Aleppo who made such ideas popular.[34] In his book *Umm al-Qurā* he undertook a celebration of the Arab tribes and the Arabian Peninsula previously unheard of in Arab political literature. He was the first Arab Muslim writer to radically redefine the Bedouin tribes of the Arabian desert. The Arabian Peninsula, halfway between the Far East and North Africa, and harboring the holy sites of Islam, was represented by Kawākibī as a special, almost sacred landscape. Due to its poverty and geographical remoteness, it had preserved the purity of both Islam and the Arab blood. Here was a truly Arabian Islam, free from modern corruptions.

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31 See, for example, the numerous books of Michael Asher, most notoriously *The Last of the Bedu. In Search of the Myth*, London 1996. He describes the ʿAnaza as "perhaps the most authentic and most aristocratic Bedouin tribe of all": ibid, 15.

32 Wilfrid S. Blunt, *The Future of Islam*, London 1882, 101-102.

33 Quoted from Albert Hourani, *Europe and the Middle East*, London 1980, 93, see also *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, Cambridge 1991, 120, 94.

34 Sylvia Haim's question in her article in 1955 of how much al-Kawākibī owed to Blunt, "his European source," is in the tradition of the history of ideas. My point is that both authors took up and shaped ideas that were floating around in the discussions within reformist circles of their times, even if in varying degrees (Blunt seems to have done it less, al-Kawākibī more), which makes them both part of the discourse. Sylvia Haim, "Blunt and al-Kawakibi," *Oriente Moderno*, 35, 3 (1955), 132.

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He saw the Arab tribes as being free from the moral decay and passivity that went along with despotism. They possessed the attributes of pride, independence, and *esprit de corps*. The center of gravity, he famously demanded, should move back to Arabia. The caliphate should be in the hands of an Arab descended from the Prophet.[35]

The framework of the book is remarkable as well. Its subtitle is *The Protocol of the Discussions and Decisions of the Islamic Revival Congress in Mecca* 1316 (1898/1899). This fictitious conference of twenty-three dignitaries was convened in order to discuss the state of the Islamic world and its future. The president of this secret society was a Meccan, yet it is remarkable that al-Kawākibī gave a special place to the deputy of al-Najd, to whom he allotted more space and better arguments, making him represent the notions of "pure Islam" and the "free Arab tribes."[36] This is remarkable because the Wahhābīs of the Najd were traditionally held in contempt by urban *ʿulamāʾ*. At the beginning of the century, a heated exchange had occurred between a Suʿūdī ruler and Wahhābīs scholars, on the one hand, and the Ottoman *vālī* and Damascene *ʿulamāʾ*, on the other. The Suʿūdī/Wahhābī party had called upon the Ottoman/*ʿulamāʾ* party to embrace the puritan outlook of the Wahhābiyya. The Ottoman/*ʿulamāʾ* party in turn ridiculed the Wahhābīs as "Arabs of the desert, followers of a false prophet and a tribe ignorant of Islam's principles."[37] Subsequently, the Najd and its Wahhābīs acquired a subversive anti-Ottoman quality. Since in the view of al-Kawākibī it was the "despotism" of the Ottomans that had caused the deplorable state of the *umma*, the defence of the Najd and its Wahhābīs makes, indeed, sense. And, of course, the Najd at the time was one of the very few independent and un-colonialized places in the Muslim world.

At the closing session of the fictional congress, al-Kawākibī made the members of the society add a declaration of twenty-six points (the first seven explicitly addressing the Arab Peninsula), which listed all the reasons (discussed above) as to why they pinned their hopes for the future of the Muslim world on the Arabian Bedouins. To give his imaginary secret society some additional flair, al-Kawākibī even printed the code for the society's cipher. The book was put on the index of forbidden books as soon as it appeared in Cairo, and became widely known when Rashīd Riḍā printed it in sequels in *al-Manār* in 1902/1903.

Rashīd Riḍā himself represented the Arabian Peninsula in a similar way as a remote and pure place, removed from despotism and corruption. Since they had been isolated from the surrounding civilizations, the Arabs of the Arabian desert had a stronger free will and more independence in thought and spirit than the peoples around them. For

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35 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī, *Umm al-Qurā wa-huwa ḍabṭ muſāwaḍāt wa-muqarrarāt muʾtamar al-nahḍa al-islāmiyya al-munʿaqid fī Makka al-mukarrama sanat 1316*, Beirut and Aleppo 1991.

36 Making a different argument, Reinhard Schulze also notes the special role of the Najdī. Reinhard Schulze, *A Modern History of the Islamic World*, London 2000, 24.

37 Commins, 23; Aziz al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities*, London 1993, chapter 6.

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him, too, therefore, they were uncorrupted by despotism.[38] In a booklet destined for children, he explained that the reason why Islam was sent to the Arabs of the Peninsula in the first place was precisely because they were mentally and spiritually independent; their characteristics were courage, physical strength, virility, honor, all in a time, when the rulers of the other peoples were completely corrupted by luxury, and these peoples themselves weakened by slavery and serfdom.[39]

While it was entirely new to make a political argument for the future of the Islamic *umma* based on the romantic notion of the nobility of the desert Arabs, literary representations of the desert and the tribes abounded. The *muʿallaqāt*, the seven odes out of the considerable volume of poetry transmitted from the desert bards of the sixth century, collected in writing by Arab scholars of the eighth, were rediscovered by the authors of the *Nahḍa* in the nineteenth century. The *imaginaire* of the Arab tribes of the desert inspired authors like Buṭrus al-Bustānī, who was probably the first to write with pride about the notion of pure Arab blood.[40] In his dictionary *Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ*, the Arabic term which has acquired the meaning of nationalism, *qawmiyya*, is derived from the word *qawm*, which was a Bedouin word describing the unit to which a Bedouin belonged, and to which he owed allegiance, especially in times of war. The term can be translated as *clan*. The men of a *qawm* owed each other assistance in a *ghazw*, for example.[41] The Arab nation in the beginning was largely conceived of as a nation of kinship ties, which is one reason why authors like Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī would look to another such nation, the German nation and its romanticist theorists, for inspiration.[42]

The classic authority on the desert was of course Ibn Khaldūn. In his cyclical view of history the desert supplies fresh blood for new dynasties once the old ones have gone soft in the cities. He represents the Bedouins as wild and potentially destructive elements, whose taming would need a higher cause, namely religion. But their *esprit de corps*, their *ʿaṣabiyya*, their physical strength, personal prowess and courage, and their

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38 Al-Manār, *Islamic Reform* 3, April 1, 1900, "Iʿādat majd al-islām," 74-75, quoted in Mahmoud Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rereading Rashid Rida's Ideas on the Caliphate," *JAOS*, 17, 2 (1997), 259. The topos of the purity of the Peninsula lingers on. Ali Shariati, *On the Sociology of Islam,* Berkely 198?, writes in 1968: "At the time of the appearance of the prophet of Islam, all the civilizations in existence were gathered around the Arabian Peninsula. But the peculiar geographical location of the peninsula decreed that just as none of the vapors that arose over the oceans ever reached the peninsula so too not a trace of the surrounding civilizations ever penetrated it." See Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism," fn. 52.

39 Rashīd Riḍā, *Khulāṣat al-sīra al-muḥammadiyya wa-ḥaqīqat al-daʿwah al-islāmiyya*, 2nd ed., Cairo 1346 (1927), 5-8.

40 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 101.

41 Sylvia G. Haim, "Islam and the Theory of Arab Nationalism," *Die Welt des Islams*, 4, 2-3 (1955), 141. Sylvia Haim sees *qawmiyya* as a word that defines the position of a man in relation to the other members of his group, rather than in relation to his place of birth or of residence and thus stresses the aspect of commitment. A *qawm* is, however, a group into which members are born.

42 Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State*, New York 1997.

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vitality make them in his theory into a reservoir of vast new energies, capable of ousting decadent urban dynasties. Ibn Khaldūn may have had a wider audience in Western academic circles than in the Middle East. Yet he had been rediscovered by the Ottomans early on, and was held in high esteem by the bureaucracy in the nineteenth century.[43] The *Muqaddima* had been published in Cairo in 1858, and so in literate circles Ibn Khaldūn was known. Of course he did not write about the Arabs of the Arabian and Syrian deserts, but his concept of *badāwa*, Bedouindom, could easily be projected onto them. It was *Umm al-Qurā* that excited nationalists more, but the *Muqaddima* is clearly part of the discourse.

In the crucial period for early Arab nationalist identity formation, the years between 1910 and 1916, Arab intellectuals appropriated the topos of the noble Arabs of the desert. The earlier processes of self-acculturation in the face of Europe were now politicized, generating a discourse that would become politically potent. On February 12, 1910, for example, the play *ʿAntar* by Shukri Ghanem premiered at the Odeon theater in Paris. Here ʿAntar, wrote Khairallah Khairallah at the time, "the poet errant, is no longer the amorous paladin of the desert sands, but, in the novel conception of M. Ghanem the grand champion of Arab unity."[44] To be sure, the ʿAntar myth had for long been a popular topic for the *ḥakawātīs*, the story-tellers in the coffee-houses, where the young men of the pen spent a lot of their time. The "noble knights" of pre- and early Islamic Arab heritage had also been celebrated in the writings of Jurjī Zaydān. Yet it was at this specific time in history, between 1910 and 1916, that the popular folklore of the noble Arab became a means of political agitation. Khairallah himself took up the topos of the noble Arab in order to give a remarkable geographical (and nationalist) description of Syria, in a book published in 1912:

> Syria is surrounded by a human wall, compact and floating... Everything has developed, but these populations, incorrigible nomads, have remained, under their patriarchal tunicae, what they were fourteen centuries ago, when a man of genius organized them and launched them onto the world. Living a life of freedom and deprivations, they regard with sovereign disdain all that is not part of this life of independence. Some of these ancient virtues are still with them: simplicity, pride, honor, and a certain majesty, even in their rags. But these are the Arabs. All of this is not at all true for the Kurds, Turcomans, Tcherkesses, Yezidies, Nawars, Isma'ilis, likewise indomitable and incorrigible populations... The Arab alone, as downtrodden as he is, still possesses a rest of the moral and intellectual qualities that render him suited for a proper civilization. But, it will take a long-

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[43] Cornell Fleischer, "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and 'Ibn Khaldunianism' in Sixteenth Century Ottoman Letters," in *Ibn Khaldun and Islamic Ideology*, ed. Bruce B. Lawrence, Leiden 1984. Hammer-Purgstall, who traveled and studied the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was surprised at about the extent to which Ibn Khaldun was known within the Ottoman bureaucracy. Tibi, *Arab Nationalism,* 285, fn. 100.

[44] Khairallah T. Khairallah, *Le Problème du Levant*, Paris 1919, 45.

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term effort before these savage creatures whose instinct only leads them to destroy will be tamed.[45]

Hiding in Khairallah's text, especially in the last sentence, may well be the *Muqaddima*: In Ibn Khaldūn's vision the nomads needed a higher goal, namely religion, to be tamed. Now it is Arab nationalism that will "tame" them.[46] If this point has to remain speculative, it is, however, certain that Khairallah was fascinated by *Umm al-Qurā*, so much so that he took al-Kawākibī's imaginary secret society at face value.[47]

But the topos of the nobility of desert Arabs was not confined to emigrant circles in Paris. When the German orientalist Martin Hartmann visited Damascus in 1913, he recorded a conversation with the *vālī*, ʿĀrif Bey, "of Arab origin but totally turkified," who insisted, not exactly to the liking of his German visitor, on singing the praises of the Bedouins: these were noble, excellent people, still unspoilt by civilization. Hartmann confined himself, in his own words, to remarking that there were quite a lot of crafty fellows among them as well. He knew these topics, he said; the praises of *bedewijet*, Bedouindom, were a favorite essay topic in the schools, and a sheer inexhaustible source of conversation for the educated on social occasions.[48] Damascene schoolchildren, and educated Damascenes would think of the *ahl al-bādiya* whose raids had made the Damascene traveler al-Bakrī miss his Friday prayer, when they discussed *badāwa* or *bedewijet*. For the Turkish Ottomans, this was a change in attitude. Fifty years earlier, *bedewijet* was seen as sheer barbarity in Ottoman literary magazines in Istanbul, which praised technical progress as civilization.[49]

Was it the unspoilt energy of the "sons of the desert," then, that ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUraysī, who had spent 1912 and 1913 in emigrant circles in Paris, had in mind when he wrote his testament? Had it been al-Kawākibī's imaginary secret society and its Najdī member that had inspired the real one to turn to the Najd and Ibn Suʿūd first, to lead a revolt? And how had the urban nationalists come to make political contact with the desert in the first place? It was one thing to read and speculate about noble Arabs of the desert; it was quite another, especially for sophisticated urbanites, to entrust personal safety and "deliverance" from Ottoman rule to them. We shall have to look to the microhistory of Damascus from 1908 until 1912 to answer this last question. Damascus, a city surrounded by desert, is indeed a good test case for my argument.

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45 Khairallah T. Khairallah, *La Syrie*, Paris 1912, 15.

46 On the city - desert aspect of Ibn Khaldūn see Hermann Ley, "Societé bedouine et societé citadine dans l'oeuvre d'Ibn Khaldun," in *Actes du Colloque International sur Ibn Khaldun*, Alger, 21-26, June 1978, 115-31.

47 Khairallah, *Le Problème*, 26.

48 Martin Hartmann, *Reisebriefe aus Syrien*, Berlin 1914, 19, 20.

49 See my "Civilizing Others."

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The discursive shift in Damascus

In Damascus, by 1908, young reformist-minded men had been active in discussion circles and clandestine clubs for around two decades. There had been a discussion circle (*ḥalqa*) around Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, a major protagonist of the Salafiyya movement. The second generation of this *ḥalqa* included Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, Shukrī al-ʿAsalī, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Inklīzī, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar.[50] Another circle developed around Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, who was about ten years younger than these men, and who organized a clandestine reading club at the secondary school Maktab ʿAnbar. The activities of these circles consisted in reading and discussing books and journals that were smuggled into the country. Muḥibb al-Dīn explicitly mentioned *Umm al-Qurā*, which fascinated him and which he gave his friends to read.[51] It is easy to imagine how a forbidden book like this (and others) must have enjoyed cult status in the milieu in which these activists lived and moved. The rebellious life history of al-Kawākibī, too, must have had its fascination. Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī met al-Kawākibī in person, in Cairo in 1901, and was fascinated by his fiery rhetoric.[52]

In December 1906, Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb founded the clandestine Jamʿiyyat al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabiyya, the society of the Arab revival, in Istanbul, and the next summer moved its headquarters, still clandestinely, to Damascus. The Jamʿiyyat al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabiyya was the first effective organization of the emergent national movement, the nucleus for the secret societies al-ʿAhd, al-Fatāt, and al-Qaḥtāniyya.[53] It provided the social and intellectual space where Salafī and *Nahḍa*[54] thought and activism met. After the Young Turk revolution in 1908, the Jamʿiyya went public with a celebration at the Café al-Quwwatlī, where, among others, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar gave a public speech in support of the revolution.[55]

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50 The second generation of al-Jazā'irī's senior circle also included Salīm al-Jazā'irī, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Zahrāwī, and Fāris al-Khūrī. Rainer Hermann, *Kulturkrise und konservative Erneuerung: Muhammad Kurd ʿAli (1876-1953) und das geistige Leben in Damaskus zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt 1990, 31.

51 Eliezer Tauber, *The Emergence of the Arab Movements*, London 1993, 45, Commins, *Islamic Reform,* 93f. Hermann, *Kulturkrise,* 99.

52 Hermann, *Kulturkrise*, 57.

53 Ibid., 101; Tauber, *Emergence,* 47.

54 The term *Nahḍa*, as N. Tomiche notes, has mostly been used by literary scholars writing about the Lebanese Christian authors, rather than by historians. Asʿad Dāghir, however, explicitly speaks of *rijāl al-nahḍa*, or *fātiḥat al-nahḍa*, when describing the activities of the secret societies and the Arab revolt. N. Tomiche, "*Nahḍa,*" in *EI*, 2nd ed.

55 The events between 1908 and 1914 in Damascus, the *ḥamla ḥawrāniyya*, the telegram and the newspaper campaigns, have important implications for the break between Young Arabs and Young Turks at the end of empire, which for reasons of space will be discussed elsewhere.

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The mouthpiece of the Jamʿiyyat al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabiyya was Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī's newspaper and journal *al-Muqtabas*.[56] The journal (circulation 1,000 a month) was founded in 1906 in Cairo and moved to Damascus two years later. Its mission was to reform Arab society. The daily *al-Muqtabas* started in December 1908 and had a circulation of 2000 a day. Its subtitle was: *Political, Economical and Societal Newspaper. Al-Muqtabas* was also a forum for open letters, and anonymous letters, and its editor's office was a hangout for the reformist *Nahḍa* intelligentsia: ʿĀdil Arslān, Shukrī al-ʿAsalī, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Inklīzī, and later Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar met there and wrote articles for *al-Muqtabas* in its early years. When the German orientalist Martin Hartmann visited Kurd ʿAlī's editorial office in 1913, he met some of these men, and was impressed by a certain Fāyiz Bey, of whom, he said, "nobody would expect that his brother was an Arab shaykh of the Lajā'." Fāyiz Bey was Fāyiz al-Ghuṣayn, member of al-Fatāt.[57]

In December 1908, with the burgeoning of the press, the *Nahḍa* movement had a breakthrough in Damascus and the other cities of Bilād al-Shām. This is not to say that Arabist reformism was the only tendency at the time. Some papers were close to government opinion, while others were mouthpiece for the conservatives. But for all those who had been socialized in clandestine discussion circles and Arab clubs, and influenced by Salafiyya and *Nahḍa* thought, now was the time when they could make their ideas of a reformed society public as never before. So with all the lofty notions of the nobility of the Arab race as embodied in Arab desert dwellers, the purity of Islam on the Arabian Peninsula, and the special role it should play in the future, how did the reform discourse on the pages of *al-Muqtabas* treat the real desert and its inhabitants? As can be expected, it was treated very differently, at least at the beginning. Damascenes were also more involved with the *bādiya* right outside their city gates, and the gateway to the desert in the south, the Jabal al-Durūz. Indeed, the Druzes will be a case in point.

What is fascinating about the years between 1908 and 1912 is the way in which the people of the desert, especially the Druzes, who had been looked upon as pagan, heretic, unlawful, rebellious, and barbarous by the Ottoman administration and the city dwellers, were drawn into the emerging public sphere. In a discursive shift that largely reproduced the discursive shift on the Arabs of the desert that we have discussed so far, they were turned from outlaws of Ottoman order into victims of Ottoman injustice and from there into Arab heroes, embodying all the true virtues of the Arab race and nation, all within the space of roughly four years.

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[56] Hermann, *Kulturkrise,* 108.

[57] Hartmann, *Reisebriefe aus Syrien*, 14; Fāyiz al-Ghuṣayn, *Mudhakkirātī ʿan al-thawra al-ʿarabiyya,* Damascus 1939,and *Man huwa fī Sūriyya*, Damascus 1949, 565.

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The Syrian desert was, indeed, an ideal object for a reform discourse. The Druzes, the *bādiya* tribes, and the Karakīs[58] shared many of the features of the great Bedouin tribes of the desert, except that the Druzes and Karakīs were not peripatetic. Their political and social life, however, was organized according to practices that were handed down over the generations as *ʿurf*, tribal law. The Druzes of the Ḥawrān, especially, had made themselves masters not only of their highland stronghold, but also of neighboring villages of the plain, on which they levied the *khuwwa*, protection fees, just as the great tribes of the steppe did. It was especially the practices of the *khuwwa* and the blood feud that ran counter to the law, and that appeared to the urban reformers in the era of the "light of the constitution" as "barbaric."

Even in the very first issues of the daily *al-Muqtabas* in 1908, the desert, the Ḥawrān, and the Druze Mountain were minutely covered, primarily in terms of the conflict between the Druzes and their neighbors, the Ḥawrānīs, Sunni peasants of the plain, who were also tribal people and basically shared the same customs. But the Ḥawrānis were better integrated into the fiscal and administrative structure of the empire, while the Druzes had managed to keep their autonomy, which also meant that they paid considerably less in taxes. The Ḥawrān peasants were thus represented in the press as good, i.e. peaceful and tax-paying citizens, while the Druzes, the Karakīs and the Bedouins of the desert were lumped together and represented as evil malefactors. On April 5, 1909, a long article entitled "The Ḥawrān and Parliament," signed "Ḥawrān: a patriot" appeared on the first page of *al-Muqtabas*. This was the first time that a comprehensive reform program was drawn up, "to put an end to the barbaric deeds of Druzes and wandering Arabs."[59] In another article, this time signed "a patriot and critic," the tone is almost imploring: The misdeeds of the "lawless barbarians," the Arabs of the desert, writes the patriot and critic, like the tribes of the Arab Ṣardiyya from al-Karak, and the Druzes, who kill, steal, and spread fear and terror, can no longer be tolerated. On April 12, 1909 *al-Muqtabas* reported that the deputy for the Ḥawrān had submitted a reform program in parliament in Istanbul, in which he demanded special troops to protect his constituency from the Druzes, and the Ṣardiyya Arabs of the desert, and a number of other tribes that grazed and watered their herds in the Ḥawrān where they did not possess any right of access to land or water. He also demanded protection from the *khuwwa* that was levied on the villages by Druzes and Arabs. This first phase then, not surprisingly, represents the desert as it had mostly been represented by city dwellers: as an outlawed space, that now needed reform. It is important to note here that in all the writings about the Druzes and in general, there were very few religious overtones. The language used to describe the Druzes, however, reflected the three decades of estrangement and bitterness between Druzes and Damascenes. Throughout the article the Druzes referred to as *ashqiyāʾ al-*

[58] On the Karakīs and Ottoman policies towards them see Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire. Transjordan 1850-1921,* Cambridge 1999.

[59] *Al-Muqtabas*, no. 91, April 5, 1909.

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Durūz, Druze criminals, and their other epithets were *ʿuṣāh* (insubordinate), *ʿutāh* (fierce, arrogant), and *ṭughāh* (tyrants).

In 1910, after a series of common lawless acts like the ones described above, the Young Turks sent a punitive campaign down into the Ḥawrān and on to al-Karak to set an example. This was the *ḥamla al-ḥawrāniyya* under the command of Sāmī Pasha al-Farūqī, who had been selected for the job because he was of Arab descent. Sāmī Pasha arrived in Damascus with thirty battalions, the most modern army the city had ever seen. Within six weeks, in October 1910, the punitive campaign subjugated the Ḥawrān. The Druzes were disarmed and their Martini rifles triumphantly displayed in a camel caravan in the streets of Damascus. After this show of strength, Sāmī Pasha marched on to al-Karak, where the Karakīs had destroyed in nine days of insurrection most of the Ottoman part of their town. In both cases the deeper causes for revolt were the attempts of the government to introduce reform in the form of a census and land registration, as well as recruitment into the army, general disarmament, and regular law courts. The crux of the matter was a struggle for social control between the state and the local elites, with the *shaykhs* defending the old tribal order of things, because their power rested on this order.[60]

After Sāmī Pasha's *ḥamla ḥawrāniyya* had subjected the Ḥawrān and al-Karak, military tribunals were set up in the Ḥawrān and about 150 Druzes and Karakīs were sentenced to prison, forced labor, or death. The lists of names and sentences of the Druzes were published in February in *al-Muqtabas*, which also published the death verdicts verbatim. But what sent true shock waves through the desert (and the whole province) were the minute descriptions of the hangings that took place in Damascus. On February 19, 1911, for example, under the headline "Death Penalty," the paper reported as follows:

> At eight o'clock yesterday evening, the Police Chief and Nūrī Bey went with the officers of the *ḥamla* and the *shaykh al-ʿaql* Aḥmad al-Ḥajarī to the barracks of Maydān, where the felons were held and their coins and money were taken from them ...
>
> At nine o'clock, the soldiers and a few policemen marched onto the Square of Unity and at ten o'clock the prisoners were brought there by streetcar. The first to come forward was Yaḥyā ʿĀmir and the death decree was read to him. The *qā'im-maqām* Ḥalīm Bey ... ordered the *shaykh al-ʿaql* to ask him about his final testament. He said, "I want the state to look with a forgiving and merciful eye upon my family." Then he was blindfolded. He was led to the gallows and gave up the ghost without another word.[61]

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60 For an elaboration on this argument see my "State(s) Power and the Druzes: Integration and the Struggle for Social Control (1838-1949)," in: *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation in Bilad al-Sham from the 18th to the 20th Century,* ed. Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler, Wiesbaden 1998, 331-365. For the case of the Karakīs see Rogan, *Frontiers*, 184-217.

61 *Al-Muqtabas*, no. 616, February 19, 1911.

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Almost identical reports appeared on March 1 and March 17, 1911, describing in detail the condemnation and execution of more Druze *shaykhs*, all on account of mounting armed resistance against the state.

The description is not very credible. The reports of the French consul at the time are much more dramatic. He reported in great detail on the first hangings of Yaḥyā and Mazyad ʿĀmir and Dhūqān al-Aṭrash, the father of future Druze hero Sulṭān. According to his account, Yaḥyā ʿĀmir, a young *shaykh* of the second most important family of the Druzes, accused the commander of the *ḥamla ḥawrāniyya* of having betrayed him and the others: they had come to him in good faith, since he had guaranteed them free passage if they declared their submission, and now they were dying for having trusted him. Some stories described how, in a Herculean manner, the condemned man had torn the hangman's rope, and charged towards Sāmī Pasha, whom he denounced as "a shame for the Arabs and a worthy servant of that loathsome race of Turks who had made him commander." In an even more dramatic turn he was reported to have jumped into the river Baradā, and soldiers had to arrest him one more time before he could be hanged. The consul reported that he had heard spectators severely criticize Sāmī Pasha for not pardoning the man after his rope broke, and that public opinion had it that the "proud Druzes" should not have been hung at all.[62] Damascene notables opined that if the government saw fit to continue setting an example, the hangings should not take place in Damascus, where they were accompanied by intense outbreaks of emotion, but in Jabal Al-Durūz itself.

Al-Muqtabas firmly justified the verdicts, under the heading "The just punishment." For 35 years Damascus had not seen a gallows, the article read. In the era of Sultan Abdülhamid murder had been as easy as drinking a glass of water; but now there was a vigilant government, and notorious criminals and murderers had better watch out. On March 1 another description of hangings appeared in *al-Muqtabas*. Here, wrote Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī himself, one could witness Ottoman justice in its most glorious manifestation. However on March 17 another report of two further hangings was printed. This time the strong words were missing and the last words of the "dead men walking" were given in a more authentic way:

> My son, spoke one of the men in his last minutes, has been taken away by the troops. And I beg that he be sent home to my family because I have a second son who is sick and he must care for him. I have a testament at a friend's house in a neighboring village [and he gave the names of the man and the village], but let my family be in the trust of Sāmī Pasha and the state.

Al-Muqtabas ended the article with the words: "And the spectators as well as we ourselves were touched to see the ignorance of the sons of the fatherland, who are driven into ruin and death by their actions." Here the position of the editors is not clearly dis-

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62 MAE, Paris, Turquie N.S., Piat to Cruppi, 9, March 1911.

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cernible. There is strong evidence that Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī and his brother Aḥmad were at the beginning really convinced of the justice of the verdicts. The authorities also had a close eye on the coverage in this matter. But the way this last report is worded sends a clear message. Formally correct and without a word of direct criticism, it still aims at generating concern in its readers. The message, again, is: the lawless rogues are in fact poor ignorant people who are driven to death by their ignorance. In essence they are innocent and victims of the political system. The newspaper then largely discontinued covering the Druzes and the consequences of the campaign.

This was a clear shift in tone and opinion. Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī himself had written an article on the Druzes in which he had represented them as utterly lawless and savage. They inhabited one of the richest landscapes in Syria, he wrote in 1910, but their love for war, plunder, and slaughter had turned this region into an anarchic and desolate place.[63] In his memoirs he explained his change of heart:

> The Farūqī expedition proceeded to discipline the Arabs and the Druzes, and order was restored after some of the ringleaders were sent to the gallows. Cities and villages were humbled. Al-Farūqī rose in public esteem and his name terrified both the Bedouins and the settled folks. It was not long before the general and I quarrelled. I turned away from him and he did everything to pacify me, but without success. The newspaper ceased to sing his praises and there was no longer any mention of the expedition and of Jabal Druze. What turned me, and also my friend Shukrī Bey al-ʿAsalī, against him, was the belief that al-Farūqī had been unjust to some of the Druze chiefs.[64]

Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī obviously changed his mind, not only the editorial line of his paper. His admission of having been wrong (an unusual step for him), invokes the topos of nobility: "And I berated myself [he wrote] for having been so enthusiastic about the punishment of the Druzes. I had angered the people, including my friends, and many honorable folk who were manly, generous and virtuous [*sic!*]."[65] In fact, Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī and Shukrī al-ʿAsalī, together with the group of intellectuals whom we have already met in the office of *al-Muqtabas*, took up the cause of the tribal rebels and launched a campaign for amnesty for those languishing in the prisons.[66] The petition that the Druzes themselves composed, sealed by over a hundred *shaykhs*, pleaded ignorance. They were ignorant, they wrote in December 1911, and their situation was like that of the Arabs of the desert. If the previous government had shown them the ways of knowledge, then the circumstances that had driven them into a state of ruin would never have

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63 *Al-Muqtabas*, 5 (1910), no.1, „Jabal al-Durūz wa-fitnatuhum."

64 Kurd ʿAlī, *Mudhakkirāt*, Damascus 1948, 4 vols, I, 81. This part is among the selections of the memoirs translated by Khalil Tota, Washington 1954.

65 Kurd ʿAlī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 82.

66 The amnesty petition telegrams are located in file BBA, DH-SYS 60/3 in the *bashbakanlık arşivi*. I wish to thank Eugene Rogan for letting me have some of these telegrams.

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accured.[67] The Druzes threw in their lot with that of the desert Arabs. They had defined themselves as "tribes" and guardians of the desert frontier throughout the century. Ironically, the Damascenes (especially the landowners), who had perceived and feared the Druzes as part of the desert, changed their tone, and, after the military campaign had disarmed the Druzes, asked who would now protect their lands from the great tribes of the desert. The desert clearly has shifting boundaries. In fact, in 1910, before the campaign, when there had been unrest all along the desert frontier from the Iraq to the Jabal al-Durūz and Karak to Hejaz and Yemen, the cities had been bustling with rumors of a great attack from the desert. Consuls reported even then that such an attack was, indeed, the hope of the nationalists, who reckoned that a revolt in the east would be the beginning of the end for the empire.[68]

When in the winter of 1912 still no reaction was forthcoming from the government, Shukrī al-ʿAsalī and Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī took action. They launched a campaign of telegrams and open letters, demanding amnesty for those in prison. The first telegram was signed by Shukrī al-ʿAsalī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Inklīzī, Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī himself, and other newspaper editors, as Fahmī al-Ghazī for *al-Barada*, Tawfīq al-Ḥalabī for *al-Rāwī*, and a certain Ḥasan for *al-Ḥaqīqa*.[69] The next one was signed by Shukrī al-ʿAsalī, ʿAbd al Wahhāb al-Inklīzī and Fāyiz Ghuṣayn, but also Nasīb al-Aṭrash of the Druzes, Rashīd al-Dukhī of the Wuld ʿAlī, Fawāz al-Fāyiz of the Banī Ṣakhr, and Fāyiz al-Fayyāḍ from the Lajāʾ. Fāyiz Ghuṣayn, as we have heard, was himself of Lajāʾ *bedu* stock and would two years later be emissary to Nūrī al-Shaʿlān, the most powerful tribal leader of the Syrian desert, asking him to join a revolt. The assembled signatures mean that political meetings and talks must have taken place between urban intelligentsia and the Druzes and other *shaykhs* of the desert, and this in turn means that in December 1912, a political alliance was formed between the Druzes and Arabs from the desert and the urban nationalists that would bear fruit in the following years, when al-Fatāt would not only look for a supreme leader of their revolt, but also sought to enlist Druze and other tribal leaders of the *bādiya*.[70] Those previously seen as lawless rogues had in the name of Arabism been

67 BBA, DH-SYS 60/3, December 17, 1911. My thanks to Hakan Karateke who helped me decipher the telegrams.

68 MAE, Paris, Turquie, Jerusalem, Gueraud to Pichon, December 23, 1910.

69 BBA, DH-SYS 60/3, December 15, 1912.

70 BBA, DH-SYS 60/3, December 22, 1912. On the basis of the telegrams, Eugene Rogan even suggests that this was "the first time in modern history" that "Damascenes and tribesmen were joined in a common political cause": Rogan, *Frontiers*, 213. Writing about events in al-Karak, Rogan sees "fear and loathing" as the Damascene Arabists' primary relation to the desert people, yet claims that the Karak revolt "expanded the political imagination of the Arabists": Ibid., 216. According to my findings, it is the Druzes who loom quite large in their writings, not the Karakīs. More importantly, my point is that all the real tribal people, Druzes, Karakīs and desert tribes, were brought into an earlier *imaginaire*, and transformed into noble Arabs.

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redefined as victims of an unjust government and noble Arab brethren in the struggle against Ottoman-Turkish oppression.

It seems as if for the Arabist activists in Damascus the desert now indeed acquired the subversive quality that the Najd had enjoyed earlier. When Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī received notice that the police were about to arrest him, in 1912, he, too, fled to the desert and, disguised as a Bedouin, traveled in the caravan of a Najdī for two weeks through the Golan and Palestine. On this journey he learned to respect the "hard and frugal life of the Bedouins," and added his voice to those who admired their "uncorrupted morals."[71] Indeed, all those who had at that time come into contact with the tribal people of the desert seemed to be deeply impressed by them.

ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUraysī, who moved to Damascus in 1914 and hid for a while in Jabal Al-Durūz who had been active in Paris in 1912/1913 and whose newspaper *al-Mufīd* had justified the hangings in 1911, was probably the man who at the time put the shift in sentiment most clearly into words. He appealed to the nation of his imagination "not to become divided" by treating Druzes as a sect, and Arabs of the desert as pagans, for "all are Arabs, of the Arabs and for the Arabs."[72] And he recommended (to the nation) the Arabs of the desert as saviors:

> I am addressing this letter to you from the desert [he wrote in his last testament], from among the encampments of your brothers, the dark-skinned Arabs on whom we depend so greatly to salvage the country and bring to fall the throne of despotism, tyranny and injustice and all things immoral and reprehensible.[73]

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar is a central figure, since he built on his early contacts with the Druzes and struck another urban - tribal alliance with them in the great revolt of 1925. In a lecture entitled "In the encampments of the Arabs," he explained, later on, to an urban audience in Egypt what he had learned about the Bedouins. His lecture takes up the whole repertoire of the noble Arab, and indeed takes it back to the Salafī/*Nahḍa* position of al-Kawākibī and others. His studies in the religion of the Bedouins had led him to believe, said Shahbandar that the Wahhābiyya was a new reformist religious call among the tribes of the Bedouins, a movement of spiritual reform that insisted on applying its beliefs, as in shared possessions, instead of only confessing them. He justified the Wahhābīs and their raids on the grounds that they punished those who insulted the pure

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71 Hermann, *Kulturkrise*, 117; Kurd ʿAlī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 88-98.

72 Dāghir, *Thawrat al-ʿArab*, 115.

73 Ibid.: al-ʿUraysī in fact uses the word "black" Arabs. He might have pictured ʿAntar, the black knight of the desert, or he might just have been referring to sunburnt skin. Richard Hartmann reports, based on Jamāl Pasha as a source, that it was Nūrī al-Shaʿlān who gave ʿUraysī up to the Ottoman authorities. Nūrī al-Shaʿlān, however, was himself held prisoner in Damascus for two years. The story lines are very unclear, and, in any event, not important for my argument. It is "imagined nobility" I am concerned with, not actual traits. R. Hartmann, "Arabische politische Gesellschaften bis 1914" in *Beiträge zur Arabistik, Semitistik und Islamwissenschaft*, ed. R. Hartmann, H. Scheel, Leipzig 1944, 452.

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Islam of the forefathers, and that they died as martyrs. In the desert, he claimed, the spirit of self-reliance and chivalry can grow. And the Bedouins were examples of "courage" and "honor."[74]

The main timeframe of his talk were the years between 1908 and 1916. He told his audience the story of an old man from the Banī Ḥasan in the Lajā', whom he asked to name the ruling sultan in 1914, and who answered that it was Sāmī Pasha al-Farūqī, who had certainly left his mark on the desert. He met the old man while on his way to pay a welcome-home visit to Druze *shaykh* Yaḥyā al-Aṭrash, whom the Druzes had ransomed from Sāmī Pasha's gallows, and who had just returned from exile.[75] His opening tale took his audience back to the year 1908. In a story entitled "the [uncorrupted] clarity of the Bedouins" (*ṣarāḥat al-badw*) he told about his very first encounter with one, namely Shaykh Fawāz from the Banī Ṣakhr. It is a morality tale. The local committee of Union and Progress (CUP) branch, so the story goes, had invited the *shaykh* in order to enlist his support. He was brought before the central committee, blindfolded, and asked to swear on his sword and on the Koran that he would not "make a difference between the Ottoman elements ('races')." He swore the oath, so Shahbandar's story continues, only to tear off his blindfold, look the assembled party strongmen in the eye, and tell them that "by God he could not do this." He could only swear the oath the Bedouin way, meaning that in his oath he and the CUP "were bound in trust and treason, the way his ancestors in the *jāhiliyya* had done." And this meant, so Shahbandar, that he kept his part of the oath when the CUP betrayed his brothers and cousins. Shahbandar's lesson is that this Bedouin clarity was preferable to the smooth ways of the educated; but the reference is, clearly, to the hangings of 1911, when the CUP hanged Druzes and Karakīs, and the Arab revolt of 1916, when "their brothers and cousins" took their revenge. Shaykh Fawāz, not surprisingly, was also among those who had signed one of the petition telegrams in 1912.

Shahbandar's text reflects what I have called the discourse on the desert and its noble Arabs in a wonderful way. He follows the Salafiyya line of defending the Wahhābīs. He included the Jabal Al-Durūz and the Lajā' in the desert. He argued that the Bedouins, like the old man from the Banī Ḥasan or Shaykh Fawāz, precisely because of their simplicity, could be imagined and used fighting either for a purified Islam or an Arab nation, a "religious mission" or a "new nationalism," in Shahbandar's own words.[76] His tales give us some insight into how the Arabist activists were, indeed, perceiving the people of the desert. Or, in other words, he brought the imaginary noble Arabs of the desert together with real tribal people, and made Shaykh Fawāz and the Druzes the explicit link to the events between 1910 and 1916.

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74 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar, *al-Maqālāt*, ed. Muḥammad Kāmil al-Khaṭīb, Damascus 1993, 402, 397, 398.

75 Ibid., 394, 395.

76 Ibid., 395.

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Conclusion

The *imaginaire* of the noble Arabs of the desert served different purposes for different agents. For the earlier Salafiyya and *Nahḍa* writers, it could be made to represent a purified and invigorated Islamic *umma* and/or an Arab nation. Under the onslaught of European material culture, the figure of the noble Arab and warrior for Islam embodied the notion of a pure, uncorrupted, inner domain. The desert especially, of course, the Arabian Peninsula embodied a remote, pure space, removed from what was perceived as the corruption and despotism of the cities, and, historically, the greater civilizations around it. As such it had preserved the purity of race and religion of the Arabs. The *imaginaire* of the desert and the noble Arab and *ghazī* provided the cultural capital,[77] the imaginary reservoir of energy and vitality that was needed to rejuvenate a people and a culture that suffered, in the words of the reformers, from stagnation and decay, from imperialist Western threats and from a controlling Ottoman government. The recourse to the figure of a "wild man" or "noble savage" in one's own past in times of cultural crisis is, indeed, well known from other national histories.[78] In the Arab Muslim East, this figure necessarily was also imbued with religious significance.

Between the years 1910 and 1916, the *imaginaire* of the nobility of Arabhood and the salvaging potential of Arab tribes was taken up by a section of the urban intelligentsia to further the cause of Arab independence. This *imaginaire* had been introduced by al-Kawākibī at the turn of the century. But it was between 1910 and 1916 that the yearning for authenticity and purity that had inspired the earlier processes of self-acculturation of the Salafiyya and *Nahḍa* was politicized. The discourse on the desert and its noble Arabs fell on fertile ground for those Arab activists who were preparing to make their final break with the Ottoman Empire. Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar, and ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-ʿUraysī were the most outspoken members of the urban intelligentsia, expressing the discursive shift to the nobility of desert warriors clearly, with Shahbandar being the most analytical writer. They either wrote during or about the years between 1910 and 1916. In 1913, so we are told, even the *vālī* of Damascus was eager to discuss the nobility of the uncorrupted Bedouins, and in emigrant circles in Paris in 1910 the noble knight ʿAntar was remade into a champion of Arab independence. The discourse in *al-Muqtabas* between 1908 and 1912 has allowed us to follow the discursive shift in great detail. Our concentration on Syrians and Syrian exiles does not mean that nationalists elsewhere were not influenced by the topos of the noble Arab. Even if

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77 In the sense in which Bourdieu uses the term for agents to occupy a certain space in the political field: Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power,* Cambridge 1991, 172f.

78 This is, indeed, not a singular case. The role of Tacitus' *Germania* in German cultural history also provides a powerful example for this phenomenon. For an elaboration of these points see my "Civilizing Others:"

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further research is necessary here, Ralph Coury's analysis of ʿAẓm Pasha strongly suggests that certain Egyptian nationalists were thinking along similar lines.[79] And nationalists in Jerusalem, as we were told by the French consul in 1910, were bidding on a great Bedouin revolt to bring down Ottoman rule.

In Damascus, the hangings and imprisonments of 1911 gave the urban intelligentsia a chance to convert the condemned men into victims of despotism and injustice, and to make common cause with the tribal people of the desert. The Druzes, again, are a case in point: They had been, in the eyes of the Damascenes, bloodthirsty savages who could throw the city into a state of hysteria. They had been loathed and hated from the 1890s onwards like no other tribal group of the desert. Now they came to be seen as "manly, virtuous and honorable folks" (Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī), proving al-Kawākibī's ideas about tribal Arabs right. And if the Druzes could be transformed into noble Arabs, with whom one could do patriotic business, and whose martial potential could be used against the Ottomans, then this had to be all the more true with regard to the other tribal people of the desert.

It was the Najd that occupied a special place in the discourse on the desert. Throughout the nineteenth century, praise of the Najd implied criticism of the Ottomans, and the Najd became a symbol of subversion. Al-Kawākibī not only integrated the Najd and its Wahhābīs into the invigorated Islamic *umma*, he even gave it a special place. It is not entirely surprising, then, that the *Nahḍa* activists in the secret societies made Ibn Suʿūd of the Najd their first choice to lead their revolt against the Ottomans. Sharīf Ḥusayn of Mecca was of course a sophisticated urbanite, and, moreover, from a family with close ties to the Ottomans. Nevertheless, the *sharīf's* men, the fighting power from the desert, were clearly not. And with the *sharīf*, the Arabists could (and did) highlight his noble Arab lineage, and his role as guardian of the holy cities, which fit the *imaginaire*.

For the Arabist officers such as Yasīn al-Hāshimī it was, then, more the military advantage of the remoteness of the Arabian desert from Ottoman power and less its other qualities deriving from remoteness that made the independent Najd and the Hejaz attractive. Asʿad Dāghir lists, for example, the impassibility of the terrain, and the facility with which communication lines to Syria could be cut. For the officers it was also less the nobility, and more the sheer manpower and military strength that the tribal people embodied that gave them their potential.

The discourse on the desert is an elite discourse, and it is within a part of the elite that the transformation of lawless rogues into noble Arabs takes place. Most people would continue to fear the people of the desert such as the landowning Damascenes, who

[79] ʿAẓm Pasha, first secretary-general of the Arab League, formed an Arab identity that included idealization of Bedouin traits. While this process, according to Coury, started in his childhood, it was strongly reinforced during ʿAẓm's contact with the Senussi in the Libyan desert in their struggle against the Italians. Ralph M. Coury, *The Making of an Egyptian Arab Nationalist: The Early Years of Azzam Pasha, 1893-1936*, Reading 1998, esp. 175.

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changed their tune towards the Druzes, but continued to fear the desert Arabs. After the Arab army took Damascus in 1918, instead of being honored as victorious heroes, the Hejazis in particular "were subjected to public derision and called Bedouins as a sign of contempt."[80] Some intellectuals such as Rashīd Riḍā, would also give accounts that challenged the *imaginaire* they had helped establish.[81] But, again, my point is that in the crucial years between 1910 and 1916, an important part of the Syrian Arabist elite appropriated and used the *imaginaire* to further their political ends. And the topos of the nobility of desert Arabs itself, of course, still exists.

The desert does not house any archives, and the tribal people themselves have largely remained faceless and speechless. One is reminded of the famous question of Gayatri Spivak, who asked whether the subaltern can speak.[82] At this point questions of subjecthood and agency of the barbarous/noble Arabs need to be raised. The first hangings in Damascus, unlike the famous hangings of the nationalists of 1916, were soon forgotten in the history of Bilād al-Shām, or even Damascus. The Druze leader Sulṭān al-Aṭrash, who lost his father to the gallows in 1911, would commemorate the victims as the first martyrs of the cause of Arab independence. He also reported on the fact that nationalists took up the matter and that it "helped them in their emerging movement."[83] Siham Tergeman's father, the soldier on the other side of the trench, spoke of himself as a veteran of the "Balkan War, the Druze Mountain war and the Karak fighting."[84] Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, in *Khiṭaṭ al-Shām,* would record the story of the *ḥamla ḥawrāniyya*. But more official histories of Syria do not mention the rebellious people of the desert in 1910/1911. Their great moment in history would come with the Arab revolt, but here historians have concentrated on the Hashemites and their alliance with the British. It is indeed more as objects of an elite discourse that desert Arabs and Druzes enter the modern history of the nation in the Arab East.

Yet there is agency, too. The best example of how to transform old tribal qualities into new national ones, and to secure the group a place in the nation, whether Arab or Syrian, is probably the Druzes. After playing their part in the Arab revolt by converting their mountain into a transit station to the desert and the Arab army for Ottoman deserters, they would form the backbone of yet another urban - tribal alliance in the Syrian revolt of 1925. At that time they would finally be admitted into the ranks of Arab-

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80 Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 147, 148.

81 In *al-Manār* 16, 1331 (1912), Riḍā wrote that the harsh life of the desert was conducive to weak faith, even hereticism.

82 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, Urbana 1988.

83 Sulṭān al-Aṭrash, "Mudhakkirāt," *Majallat Bayrūt al-masāʾī*, December 1975, first and second sequel, 23, 24.

84 Siham Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, English version and introduction by Andrea Rugh, Austin 1994, 176.

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Muslim nobility. Defining them as such was none other than Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, writing from Cairo: "Genealogies got entangled," he said,

> origins got lost and blood was mixed in most areas of Bilād al-Shām, yet in Ḥawrān and in some places in Lebanon there remained a group preserving its classical Arabic, wielded together through its ʿaṣabiyya, and in whom Qaysiyya and Yamaniyya survive until this very day, and this Arabic and Islamic group are the Druzes.[85]

This quotation, once more, shows how powerful the discourse is and how entangled the imaginations of religious and national purity are in the Middle East. Despite their status as a heterodox sect, the Druzes are here represented as pure Arabs and, implicitly, good Muslims, as a reward for their heroic resistance against the French.

This brings me to my last point. The "Arab," at least in early "Arab nationalism" then is mainly a cultural signifier. And it is as a culture more than an ideology that nationalism in the Arab East needs to be studied at this point. The *imaginaire* was also used by Zionists, who tended to represent the Bedouins of Palestine as noble ancestors.[86] At the same time they preferred not to see villages and settled lands, or to represent the peasants living there as lazy and inefficient, while Zionism would make "the desert bloom." Yet, as this example also shows, it is important that historians tackle these discourses, and examine nationalism as a culture.

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[85] Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, "Introduction," in Karīm Thābit, *al-Durūz, al-thawra al-sūriyya al-kubrā, wa-sīrat Sulṭān Bāshā al-Aṭrash*, Cairo 1925, 1. See also my "Coming to Terms with Failed Revolutions: Historiography in Syria, France and Germany," *Middle Eastern Studies* 1 (1999), 17-44.

[86] "The Bedouin are the purest Arabs, because they haven't mixed with foreigners; they therefore embody the type closest to that of the ancient Semitic population"; see Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape*, Berkeley 2000, 59.

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The birth pangs of rising modernity in Syria

Abdallah Hanna

Sectarian society interlaced with a tribal order crystallized in Syria during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. It persisted in various forms until the developments of the nineteenth century brought about a renaissance – albeit hesitatingly – in a number of aspects of social life. With the decay of the Ottoman state occurred a transition from one Muslim society and an order of sects (*millets*) into a number of national societies according to the European bourgeois understanding of nationalism, mixed with Ibn Khaldūn's concept of *ʿaṣabiyya*. This, however, did not constitute an abrupt and complete change. Previous ideologies did not disappear, especially at the level of popular education, literature and behavior.

At the beginning of the French Mandate different ideologies coexisted and struggled with each other in Syria. The stages of transformation can be roughly divided into the following periods:

– A pre-capitalist period until the mid-nineteenth century when sectarian and tribal loyalties ruled absolute.

– A period of the partial spread of capitalism and the destabilization of the existing social structures.

– A period of nationalist reaction to imperialist penetration beginning in the early twentieth century; development of a national identity mixed with religious sentiments or reacting to them.

– The crystallization of a patriotic and national identity in the independent Syrian Arab Republic during the middle of the twentieth century. The moving power behind this development was the national bourgeoisie, the educated middle class and the large masses of the workers and peasants.

– A crisis of patriotic and nationalist identity at the end of the twentieth century, accompanied by a return of sectarian and tribal sentiments in various segments of society.

This chapter will focus on an analysis of the third and fourth stages of this process, during which secularism reached a certain dominance.

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Abdallah Hanna

Syria on the way to a growing national consciousness during the time of the Mandate

In spite of the manifold sectarian and tribal sentiments and loyalties which pervaded Syrian society and had a profound impact on daily life, secular and nationalist ideologies began to sprout during the last period of the Ottoman Empire. With the final collapse of the empire these ideologies began to prevail over older traditional identities and became dominant in mid-century. The force of the Arab national movement became evident with the establishment of an Arab nation-state in Syria (1918-1920). It was the result of the Arab rebellion in the Hejaz (1916) and of a number of pre-war Arab associations and secret organizations in Syria. The constitution, promulgated in March 1920, declared Syria a civil (*madanī*) parliamentarian monarchy with its capital in Damascus. The only concession to religion was that the monarch had to be a Muslim. When Damascus was occupied by the French forces only a few months later, armed national resistence began, which was to last until 1927. This fight was characterized by a growing nationalist spirit, fostering loyalty to the Arab nation and the Syrian motherland. The national struggle (*niḍāl*) against the foreign occupier, however, also mingled with the notion of religious holy war (*jihād*) against the unbeliever. In addition, tribal loyalties continued to play a role: some clans would join in the resistance only because rival clans were supporting the French. This weakness in the national consciousness was closely linked to the hesitant development of the bourgeoisie and the weakening of trade, the absence of industry, and the regression of the crafts. Nevertheless, the intensity of the struggle against the colonizer and the political activities and intellectual debates of Arab nationalists contributed to the growth of the national consciousness and the implanting of nationalist sentiments in the popular masses, who were just then making the shift from Muslim community to Arab nation.

At the end of the national struggle, a new national commercial bourgeoisie emerged, which in part was to become an industrial bourgeoisie, trying to dominate the national movement. The interests of this bourgeoisie clashed with those of the Mandatory government, which tried to enable French monopoly capital to control the Syrian economy (and exploit it). This bourgeoisie, hoping for the establishment of a unified common market, demanded the unity of Bilād al-Shām, which had been divided by the Mandatory powers. In the course of time this class worked out an accommodation with the Mandatory authorities. However, there was also an activist element of students, teachers, and other professionals who did not share the ideas of the nationalist bourgeoisie and insisted on continuing to fight for national independence.

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The dreams of the Syrian bourgeoisie for an Asian-Arab common market

Before World War I three major commercial centers existed in Bilād al-Shām: Aleppo, Beirut, and Damascus. In all three the bourgeoisie tried after the war to cope with the new circumstances and defend their own commercial interests.

In Damascus a merchant-artisan bourgeoisie had developed whose interest it was to market agricultural produce and artisans' wares. The members of this bourgeoisie founded the Reform Society in 1913. Here merchants, enlightened men of religion and the new intelligentsia met; the latter consisted mainly of the sons of merchants. The two newspapers *al-Muqtabas* in Damascus and *al-Karmil* in Haifa best expressed the ideas and positions of this bourgeoisie which grew in the late Ottoman Empire. It was this bourgeoisie, interested in marketing the local agriculture and craft production, that supported – with telegraphs, manifests, and meetings – the Arab Congress held in Paris in 1913. It also stood behind the national Arab government (1918-1920) and followed a twofold policy during the time of the Mandate: opposition to the customs policies of the French, on the one hand, and compromise with the French authorities to realize its commercial interests and national independence, on the other. At the same time their pan-Arab identity was already visible during the Mandate period.

Aleppo thrived on trade with Anatolia and Iraq. Until the introduction in 1911 of the railway linking it with Hama, Homs, Rayyāq, and Beirut it had few commercial interests in the south of Bilād al-Shām. The support for the Ottoman reform movement and the demand for decentralization of the empire remained weak, in complete contrast to the situation in Damascus and Beirut. The assertion that "there are elements [in Aleppo] which claim that reform was contrary to religion"[1] obscured the real reasons, i.e. that trade in Aleppo could not gain from the loosening of Ottoman unity.

In Beirut, with its new harbor and its heavy trade with Europe, a compradore bourgeoisie flourished. It had repeatedly challenged the predominance of Damascus but also needed collaboration with its commercial bourgeoisie. At the same time, European trade interests were equally represented in Beirut.

During the Mandatory period some general trends began to unite the interests of the bourgeoisie in all three cities. In the articulation of interest and the proposal of economic programs it was usually the chambers of commerce and their publications that took the lead. One of the first demands was to establish a local industry – especially in the textile sector – and to organize the financial instruments and companies necessary for the financing of such local industrialization.[2] Concomitant with this demand went the attempt to promote local products on the market. This was often done with an appeal to

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1 *Al-Muqtabas*, April 18 and May 17, 1913.

2 *Al-Majalla al-Shahriyya li-Ghurfat Tijārat Dimashq*, Nīsān 26, Tammūz 7, Āb 3, 1992.

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patriotism.[3] A further step in this direction was the call for the abolition of all customs barriers within Bilād al-Shām and the levy of protective customs tariffs on competing products from Europe.[4] It was even suggested that the Hejaz railway should be repaired with the financial support of the Syrian government, on the assumption that these expenses would be quickly recovered by trade.[5] In other words, the demand for an Arab common market including the Arab Peninsula, Bilād al-Shām and Iraq was articulated here.

Political parties and nationalism

An important symbol of the rebellion and the national struggle was the physician ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar, who had founded the People's Party in 1925. He represented the antithesis to sectarianism and tribalism and contributed greatly to a clear-cut national consciousness. His party defined the following national goals:

- national souvereignty;
- Syrian territorial unity (*waḥdat al-bilād al-sūriyya*) in its natural borders (i. e. presently Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel/Palestine);
- guarantee of personal freedom;
- development of the country towards a democratic, civil, and social policy;
- protection of local industries and strengthening of the economic output;
- unification of the education system and teaching in the country.

All these were programmatic steps toward a civil society and the strengthening of the unity of Syria. The People's Party was the first organizational manifestation of the ideology of the Damascene bourgeoisie since the French occupation.

The National Bloc, after the suppression of the Syrian Revolt (1927), gathered around itself large popular masses who all detested the Sykes-Picot Agreement, protested at the division of Syria into petty states, and objected to French domination and the role of the French advisors: in keeping with its bourgeois-feudalist background, it included Muslims and Christians alike. Its slogans were "The religion for God, the fatherland for all" and "Long live patriotism, Islam, and Christianity."

The first article of the constitution of the National Bloc stated as its goal liberating the Syrian Land separated from the Ottoman Empire from all foreign rule and leading it toward full independence and complete sovereignty and bringing together all separated parts under one government, with Lebanon preserving a right of self-determination within its old borders (i.e. the borders of the Mutaṣarrifiyya 1861-1914). Concerning

3 Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, *Tārīkh yatakallam*, Damascus 1960, 49; *Al-Majalla al-Shahriyya li-Ghurfat Tijārat Dimashq*, Tammūz, Āb, Aylūl 1929.

4 Ibid.

5 *Mudhakkirāt majlis al-nuwwāb*, Damascus 1938, 396.

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Arab unity the same constitution stated somewhat cautiously as a goal the "joining of all efforts and actual activities in the other Arab regions (*aqṭār*) to safeguard unity between these regions so that this effort does not block the realization of goals necessary in each region."

The ʿUṣbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī (the League of National Action) was founded in Qarnāyil in August 1933 by a group of young educated men who had just returned from concluding their studies in Europe. They were much more radical in their political goals which they formulated very simply as

- complete Arab independence and sovereignty;
- comprehensive Arab unity.

The second in particular constituted a decisive departure from the National Bloc's lukewarm support of unity. The League argued that national unity of the Arabs was manifested through a unity of history, tradition, language, goals, and geographic conditions. It denied the existence of "any confessional, racial, or linguistic minority." The League was also keenly interested in social and economic aspects of the Arab nation: the creation of national industries, a common Arab market, and the nationalization of all foreign companies were some of their demands.

A Syrian Communist Party had been founded in Beirut 1924. This was the result of the spontaneous organization of workers – independent from employers – such as the labor union of the tobacco workers in Bikfāya and the textile workers in Damascus as well as an attempt by some leftist wing populist intellectuals to adopt socialist ideas without cutting off their roots in bourgeois revolutionary thinking. In a paper published in 1933[6] the Communist Party called for the rule of the Arab peasant and worker, and insisted on the class struggle. It conceded greater legitimacy to the existing Arab states and asked only for a voluntary federation of these states. In strong contrast to the ʿUṣba it also recognized the ethnic pluralism of Syria advocating fraternity between all races and ethnic groups rather than insisting, as the ʿUṣba did, on the monopoly of Arab nationalism.

A nationalist Arab group within the Communist Party, headed by Salīm Khayyāta, was invited to a conference in Zahle in 1934 following the lead of the conference in Qarnāyil a year earlier. The conference represented a group of Syro-Lebanese intellectuals who, though influenced by Marxist thought, shifted the emphasis considerably toward a nationalist tendency. The Arab fatherland was now declared to cover all Arabic speaking regions in Africa and Asia. The goal became the unification of this Arab nation in one independent (secular) state. All ethnic or sectarian particularism was to be absorbed into the Arab nation, though tribal and clan loyalty was not directly attacked. A strict separation of state and religion was to be implemented.[7] No decision was made as

6 *Internationale Presse Korrespondenz* 1935, vol. 1, 23.

7 See Muḥammad Kāmil al-Khaṭīb, *Warda lil-mukhtalifa*, Damascus 2000, 13ff.

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to whether the class struggle or the national struggle had priority, but secular nationalism was the dominant theme. The conference decided to publish a journal, called *al-Ṭalīʿa*. Between 1935 and 1939 it represented the progressive intellectual elements and adopted a Marxist understanding of the interest of the working people.

Michel ʿAflaq and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Bīṭār eventually founded the Baʿth Party. They had both studied in France, where they had been influenced by the thought of Nietzsche, Fichte, and Hegel. They worked with others in editing the Communist-leaning journal *al-Ṭalīʿa* because of their experience in France with the Communist Party which had supported national movements in the colonies. After 1941, however, ʿAflaq began to develop the idea of an eternal Arab mission and to use the term of *baʿth* (rebirth). He tried to fight confessionalism by reinterpreting Muḥammad as the founder of the Arab nation rather than just a prophet for Muslims and thus to enable Christian and Muslim Arabs to participate equally in the patriotic cause. He declared the cause of Syria to be a part of the cause of the pan-Arab nation. The confluence of his grouping with members of the League and with Akram al-Ḥawrānī's group added a dimension of social justice to the nationalist program of ʿAflaq and Bīṭār.

The declared aim was ultimately always pan-Arab unity, but all practical activities referred to Syria in its Mandatory borders. Only the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, founded by Anṭun Saʿāda, publicly declared its aim of the establishment of a Syrian nation-state in deliberate distinction from any Arab nationalism. But he, too, pursued a radical secularism.

The Syrian government at the dawn of independence, 1943-1958

The French Mandatory regime had laid the foundation for the structure of the state by establishing a civil code after the French model, abolishing the agricultural *awqāf,* issuing a labour law, and promulgatingr egulations for the nationalization of the utilities, railways, etc., which had belonged to foreign companies. In 1949 the constitutional assembly formulated a constitution after heated debates and genuine participation by the popular masses.

Its first article proclaimed Syria a sovereign Arab, democratic, representative republic. Its territory was indivisible and its people were part of the Arab nation. The third article proclaimed Islam the religion of the president and the Islamic law the major source for legislation. Freedom of faith was to be guaranteed and the state was to respect all the monotheistic religions. Personal law was to remain under the jurisdiction of the various confessions.

In spite of military coups, the stage was set for parliamentary rule between 1954 and 1958. It was a period of democracy and freedom whith the characteristics of a civil

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society, and freedom of association for political parties, the guilds, and labor unions. Some of its distinguishing characteristics were:

- the development of an industrial bourgeoisie with a national orientation which fought against the domination of the world capitalist forces in Syria and against the feudal order in the agricultural sector;
- the rise of the petite bourgeoisie in the cities and the countryside, ready to liberate itself from control by the upper classes;
- the development of a working class by the end of the 1950s;
- the weakening of the feudal order through the successes of a peasant movement.

Essential for the successful development toward a civil society was the emancipation of the labor union movement, including not only traditional guild members but also the workers in the new industrial plants. The latter especially were willing to fight for the recognition of the independence of their unions. By collaboration with Communists and Baʿthists they were able to bring the general association union of all labor unions under their control in the elections of 1957.

This shift in favor of the progressive social forces was decisively effected during the phase of a representative parliament in Syria from 1954 until 1958. The parliament had been elected in complete freedom, and included various often contradictory social forces. This was the phase in which democracy and freedom flourished and the signs of civil society – freedom of parties, labor unions, and the individual – made their appearance. During this stage tribal and sectarian loyalty faded and patriotic and national loyalties took their place. The development of civil society and a rationalist worldview reached a pinnacle during this phase. The sudden and unpredictable union with Egypt in 1958 and the introduction of Egyptian control over the political scene in Syria put an abrupt end to these developments toward a civil society.

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THE CASE OF LEBANON

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Rethinking American missionaries and nineteenth-century historiography of the Middle East

Ussama Makdisi

One of the methodological pitfalls awaiting historians of the nineteenth-century Middle East is the tendency to study the region in isolation from the West. By this I mean that an important aspect of the nineteenth century was the interaction between West and East that produced new currents of cultural, economic, and political thought simultaneously, if unevenly, in the East and in the West. Almost all historians have acknowledged the impact of Western powers on the Orient – through formal colonialism or more informal modes of hegemony. Yet they have always assumed the West to be a stable category that acted on a modernizing East. This has been particularly the case in the study of American missionaries to the Levant. Historians of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions – the largest U.S.-based missionary organization of the nineteenth century – have assumed, for example, that American Board missionaries introduced liberalism and modernity into the Ottoman Empire, China, and India as if such concepts and realities were self-evident in the United States. They have written the story of the nineteenth-century missionary encounter in terms of the East's rejection of or adaptation to these supposedly "American" ideas and frameworks.

I would like to challenge this way of understanding the history of the nineteenth-century missionary encounters in the Middle East. Rather than assume modernity to be uncomplicatedly Western or American, and something which flows fully formed from West to East, this chapter examines how a Syrian writer and educator, Buṭrus al-Bustānī, struggled with ideas of freedom, secularism, tolerance, and equality – all crucial underpinnings of a definition of liberal modernity – in the context of the American missionary encounter with the Ottoman Empire. I want to suggest that while his ideas about modernity were indeed profoundly shaped by his interaction with American missionaries, Bustānī did not merely reproduce an "American" discourse of modernity. Rather, he

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sought to reconcile a specifically Protestant missionary discourse of individual freedom and salvation with an Arab and Ottoman history of scientific and cultural achievement and religious coexistence. By tracing his ideas about culture and civilization between 1849 and 1860, and by highlighting facets of the nineteenth-century history of the United States from which the missionaries emerged, I will show how Bustānī's final vision of modernity as secular and multi-religious marked a significant rupture with a far narrower American missionary perspective that equated modernity with American evangelism and with the extirpation of all other religious and cultural forms.

There is perhaps no better encapsulation of the "missionary-centric" historiography than in the writing of James Field, whose *America and the Mediterranean World* is regarded as a classic of U.S. diplomatic history. Field declared unequivocally:

> For those who had eyes to see, the mission provided a continuous demonstration of the American approach to life on earth, as well as the everlasting. However hard to measure accurately, the effect upon this audience of novel concepts of the dignity of labor, the status of women, the values of literacy, the virtues of honesty, and the importance of technology, should not be underestimated.
>
> Most important, perhaps, of all the American contributions was one implicit in the belief that progress towards the millennium could be acceptably accomplished by the use of human means. This was the idea of change. In a static society, where the community was governed by tradition and the individual saved not by his own effort but by the intercession of his priests, the idea that change was possible ... had revolutionary implications.[1]

Such an assertion about the virtues of American history that distinguish it from the "static" societies of the East does more than obscure local dimension and active contributions of local intellectuals to debates about modernity. It utterly ignores the complexity of the nineteenth-century U.S. history that American scholars before and after Field have acknowledged. William Appleman Williams,[2] Reginald Horsman,[3] Eric Foner,[4] and more recently Rogers Smith have systematically deconstructed the liberal historiography of the United States by pointing out how racial and economic inequalities were not simply tangential to, but structural in, U.S. society. Rather than write heroic histories in the mold of Field, these revisionist scholars have suggested that the American commitment to liberalism cannot be understood separately from what Smith refers to as inegalitarian "ascriptive Americanism."[5] For example, he links the democratization of citizenship among white males in Jacksonian America to campaigns to expel Cherokee

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1 James Field, *America and the Mediterranean World 1776-1882*, Princeton 1969, 186.

2 Paul M. Buhle and Edward Rice-Maximin, *William Appleman Williams: The Tragedy of Empire*, New York 1995.

3 Reginald Horseman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*, Cambridge MA 1981.

4 Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, New York 1988.

5 Rogers M. Smith, *Civil Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History*, New Haven 1997, 5.

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Indians from the eastern seaboard, particularly Georgia, culminating in the Indian Removal Act of 1830. In the 1830s, furthermore, Louisiana, Georgia, Virginia, Alabama, and the Carolinas made it illegal to teach slaves to read, while the American Board of Foreign Missions refused to take a public stand against domestic slavery in the United States.[6] To speak then of the "virtues of honesty" (as Field does without qualification) in this context requires a re-examination of the assumptions upon which a complacent historiography of U.S. missionaries to the Levant is built.

More important, acknowledging the complexity of U.S. history and the ambivalent position of the missionaries in it will make us appreciate the independent nature of local Ottoman and Arab contributions to debates about liberalism, modernity, and tolerance in the Middle East. Put simply, even a brief review of the U.S. context of the missionary movement will make it clear why American missionaries were neither able nor willing to articulate a vision of freedom that was not predicated on the wholesale destruction of local religions, and indeed vital aspects of native culture. It will also illustrate why these same missionaries were able to conceive of the missionary encounter not as an exchange but, implicitly at least, as an imposition of what they considered to be a superior American culture and civilization on a passive Orient. The missionaries of the American Board, in other words, founded missions in Palestine and Syria at a moment of racial and democratic flux in the United States. It is imperative to recognize that they represented an organization that had been established in 1810 as part of a *reaction* to a growing liberalism in religious life in America – particularly to the rise of Unitarianism in New England, and also to growing Catholic immigration to the U.S.[7] The American Board insisted, however, that its missionaries represented "American Christians." It solemnly emphasized to its missionaries departing for the Orient the urgency and magnitude of their task: there existed a "multitude of perishing souls" in dire need of salvation. And it underscored its ardent conviction that the United States was uniquely poised to carry out this formidable burden. "From a continent but recently discovered," the Board instructed among its earliest missionaries upon their departure East: "You carry back the knowledge of the Scriptures and of salvation to regions where flourishing churches once stood, but where the power of religion has

6 Ibid., 219.

7 Clifton Jackson Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World: The First Half Century of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810-1860*, Cambridge, Mass. 1969, 3; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, New Haven 1972, 393-397; Oliver Wendell Elsbree, *The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America, 1700-1815*,Williamsport 1928, 84-98. Eighteen of the Board's twenty-six members in 1813 were college educated, of whom five were college presidents (of Yale, Bowdoin, Middlebury, Union, and New Jersey) as well as the governors of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Field, *America and the Mediterranean*, 88.

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long ceased to exist. As our Christian community cannot go in a body to deliver the message of their Lord, they send you to deliver it for them."[8]

Significantly, the American Board also firmly believed in the inevitable ascendance of an American-led Protestant Christian civilization that could benevolently encompass all humanity. Not immune but resistant to the race-thinking prevalent in 1820s America, they proclaimed a notion of one true faith (and implicitly culture) which urgently had to dismantle all other religions (and implicitly cultures) to pave the way for the second coming of Christ.[9] This translated in missionary practice into an unremitting paternalism towards all inhabitants of the Orient, especially the so-called "nominal" Christians of the Ottoman Empire.[10] When few natives converted and the mission to Syria seemed on the verge of failure, missionary attitudes hardened. By the 1850s, paternalism was replaced with outright contempt. The missionary Daniel Bliss, for example, referred to local converts as if they were petulant children, in need of strict control. "We knew," he wrote, "that they were but Babes in Christ, and that their opinions and feelings should not be too much regarded."[11] Edward Aiken, another missionary, went further:

> There is a lack of honesty and integrity, a slackness and indolence in all things, and a want of spiritual perception in this people, as a whole, the remains of which are yet seen in the most hopeful cases of conversion, and in the most reliable of our Church members.[12]

So committed were the missionaries to their evangelical crusade in the East that they began to identify themselves with the violent Christian knights who had "redeemed" the Holy Land some time before:

> Seven hundred years ago, a worn and weary band of warriors, the remnant of those who came to redeem the Holy Sepulcher, and who built those castles whose ruins crown so

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8 "Instructions to the Missionaries about to Embark for the Sandwich Islands and to the Rev. Messrs. William Goodell and Issac Bird, Attached to the Palestine Mission," delivered by the Corresponding Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston 1823.

9 An excellent example of how the American Board was conflicted about racial politics in the United States was that in 1827 they abandoned their experimental Foreign Mission School at Cornwall, Connecticut which sought to assimilate Indians to a white way of life. This happened following a local uproar when two Indian students married white women. See William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions*, Chicago1987, 65-67; Phillips, *Protestant America*, 65-66. At the same time, the Board appealed to the U.S. Congress in the mid-1820s to atone for the "national sins" visited upon native Americans by "wicked and unprincipled white people" which had brought the Indians to the brink of physical extermination. See "Memorial of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress Assembled," reproduced in *First Annual Report of the American Society for Promoting the Civilization and General Improvement of the Indian Tribes in the United States,* Milwood, [1824], repr. 1975, 65-71.

10 See Ussama Makdisi, "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity," *American Historical Review* 102 (1997), 680-713 for more details. See also Hilton Obenzinger's *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania*, Princeton 1999, 50.

11 "Letter from Mr. Bliss, Aug. 28, 1857," *Missionary Herald* 53 (1857), 399.

12 "Letter from Mr. Aiken, Aug. 31, 1857," *Missionary Herald* 53 (1857), 401.

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> many mountain summits around us, sent back to Europe a cry for help, which, ringing through the thousand homes of prince and serf, called forth an impetuous army to their relief, bristling with swords and spears, ready to endure toil and brave death. And now, from the very same battlefields, a cry for help is raised again, by those too few and too weak to sustain the conflict successfully with the powers of darkness and sin.[13]

The missionaries saw the impending failure of their evangelical mission not as a result of their own messianic fantasies about bringing Christianity to a world that already knew it, but as a problem intrinsic to the natives. When sectarian clashes broke out in Mount Lebanon and Syria in 1860, the missionaries were quick to interpret them within the paradigm of native stagnation and immutable sectarianism that could only be broken by American benevolence.[14] For the missionaries, the sectarian violence of 1860 confirmed their belief that native culture was not simply spiritually empty but culturally devoid of any virtue. That an American civil war was in the process of unfolding at that period did apparently not give pause to the missionaries. In their minds, the two societies were fundamentally incomparable except in the sense that the United States provided a positive model for the East to emulate. Thus, missionaries wrote about the events of 1860 in Mount Lebanon and Syria as proof of an essential Eastern intolerance and fanaticism, and Ottoman perfidy in the face of American evangelism; they were unwilling and unable, however, to articulate similar convictions about the United States following the civil war in America.[15] Missionary prejudice and paternalism, combined with their conviction in the primacy of American Protestant religion and culture, produced American missionaries totally unable by 1860 to articulate anything that can be classified as a liberal world-view. Just as it is important to acknowledge missionary contributions to an inclusionary model of education, to printing, and to a discourse of individual freedom, it is equally important to recognize how these contributions were limited by an exclusionary missionary ideology whose entire purpose was to eradicate – not sustain – religious coexistence.

More important for the purpose of this chapter is to recognize that the missionary encounter did profoundly influence local individuals who made their own contributions to debates about freedom and modernity in their own right. The best known of these was Buṭrus al-Bustānī. Bustānī was born in 1819, at a time when the social order of Mount Lebanon had been dominated by an oligarchy of Maronite and Druze notable families, and when social status, not religious affiliation, defined politics in Mount Lebanon.[16] He

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13 "Station Report (Sidon) 1858," *Missionary Herald* 55 (1859), 133-4.

14 See Makdisi, "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible."

15 See for example, Rufus Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches*, 2 vols., Boston 1884, II, 397; I have developed this argument in "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible."

16 I have argued this point at great length in *Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, Berkeley 2000, 28-51.

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was one of a handful of individuals who was educated at the Maronite seminary of ʿAyn Waraqa. The arrival of the American missionaries in the Levant, the Egyptian invasion and occupation of Syria in the 1830s and the promulgation of Ottoman reforms in the mid-nineteenth century signaled the birth of a discourse of modernization in the Orient. During this tumultuous period Bustānī associated himself with American Protestant missionaries, both as their Arabic teacher and as translator of the Bible.[17] His flirtation with Protestantism, his intimate knowledge of the case of the first Protestant martyr in the Ottoman empire, Asʿad Shidyāq (who disappeared in the late 1820s), and his involvement with the Syrian Society for the Acquirement of Sciences and Arts,[18] marked Bustānī as an independent-minded individual willing and able to look critically at his own society. His contact with the American Board missionaries was one important reason that led Bustānī to take an active interest in reforming his own society.

Initially, Bustānī's condemnation of what he thought to be backward practices in his own Eastern society, particularly its treatment of women, barely differed from standard missionary accounts about the subjugation of Eastern women. In an address he delivered in 1849 before the Syrian Society for the Acquirement of Sciences and Arts, a group compromising both American missionaries and Syrian intellectuals, Bustānī urged his audience to consider the fact that no society could advance without the proper education of its women. He stressed that men could not be considered to have knowledge, and implicitly to be free, without having their women share in this knowledge and freedom.[19] Like missionaries, Bustānī confined women's role to the rearing and education of children, to managing a home, and to being nurses. Yet the boldness of Bustānī's argument about the necessity of women's education, stated well before Qāsim Amīn's more famous treatise on the liberation of women, belied the degree to which he reproduced a Western colonial framework that segregated the world into advanced and backward nations and tribes. Bustānī, for example, justified British colonialism in India because it ostensibly liberated women from *sati* (widow immolation). He made it clear that he considered the women of Syria to be at a halfway point between the "civilized" women of Europe and the "barbarians" of the world, by which Bustānī lumped together the women of India, Africa, and the native Americans.[20]

Over the next few decades, however, Bustānī's criticism of Arab societies and his embrace of a quintessentially nineteenth-century colonial world-view was tempered by a recognition of the complexity of local society – in stark contrast to his missionary

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17 For more on Bustānī, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939*, Cambridge 1983 [1962], 99-102. See also Yūsuf Khūrī, *Rajul sābiq li-ʿaṣrihi: al-muʿallim Buṭrus al-Bustānī*, Beirut 1995.

18 The society was called al-Jamʿiyya al-Sūriyya li-Iktisāb al-ʿUlūm wa'l-Funūn, which translates literally into the Syrian Society for the Acquisition of Sciences and Arts.

19 Buṭrus al-Bustānī, "Khiṭāb fī taʿlīm al-nisā'," in Buṭrus al-Bustānī, *al-Jamʿiyya al-Sūriyya li-Iktisāb al-ʿUlūm wa'l-Funūn 1847-1852*, Beirut 1990, 45-53.

20 Bustānī, "Khiṭāb fī taʿlīm al-nisā'," 47.

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acquaintances, whose self-righteousness he increasingly resented. Bustānī believed in the redeemability of local society and traditions.[21] He articulated what can be classified as among the first indigenous discourses of modernity. He seized upon the cultural opening provided by his involvement with missionaries – by reading their tracts, conversing with them, learning from and instructing them – to bridge a missionary commitment to individual freedom with an Ottoman Arab history of religious coexistence. Bustānī attempted to reconcile East and West in a vision of a society that explicitly respected an individual's freedom of conscience and belief and that promoted religious coexistence through an elaboration of a secular politics and public culture. By recognizing that the U.S. missionaries at this time neither advocated nor conceived of a liberal or secular modernity, we will appreciate the fact that Bustānī's ideas were not derivative from the missionaries. Bustānī openly recognized his debt to the missionaries; yet he also was aware of the dangers of a missionary proselytization which left no space for Arab or Ottoman cultural autonomy, or for religious pluralism.

Among the most consistent themes that emerge from Bustānī's vision of modernity is his insistence of the role of individual freedom. His insistence on the individual's right to freedom of thought and expression is the clearest mark of missionary influence on Bustānī. In a speech he gave on the "Culture of the Arabs" on February 15, 1859 in Beirut before an assembly of local intellectuals and missionaries, Bustānī stated that "it is well known that freedom of thought is among the most important pre-requisites for comprehending the true state of affairs and for gaining knowledge, for enslaved thought cannot be open to knowledge."[22] Bustānī's commitment to individual freedom was stated even more explicitly when he wrote a short essay on the fate of Asʿad Shidyāq – the first Arab convert to Protestantism who was persecuted by the Maronite Church in the 1820s. In his 1860 *Qiṣṣat Asʿad Shidyāq*, Bustānī asserted:

> There is no doubt that the rulers of this world cannot bestow freedom of conscience. And even if all the forces of this earth and hell joined together, they would not be able to wrest [freedom] from the heart that possesses it. Nor can oppression, tyranny and prisons restrain it. For once any person has tasted the sweetness of this divine freedom there is no way to return him to slavery. It is a freedom that has descended from above, granted to humanity after it had been purchased and solidly sealed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. And through it God, the Controller of all whose words cannot be changed, granted a compact bonded by a strong vow and an unshakeable promise. Exert yourself, dear Reader, to gain and carefully safeguard this freedom.[23]

In this passage, Bustānī eloquently reiterated a classical Protestant formulation which tied freedom to individual exertion and spiritual salvation. American Board missionaries,

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21 See Buṭrus al-Bustānī, *Qiṣṣat Asʿad Shidyāq*, ed. Yūsuf Khūrī, Beirut 1990, 9.

22 Bustānī, "Khuṭba fī ādāb al-ʿarab," reproduced in Bustānī, *al-Jamʿiyya al-Sūriyya*, 101.

23 Bustānī, *Qiṣṣat Asʿad Shidyāq*, 39.

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of course, had from the outset of their mission consistently maintained that if given the opportunity to evangelize among the world's "perishing souls" then each individual sinner would have the opportunity to redeem himself by accepting the grace of God. This concurred with the Protestant meaning of freedom as the deliberate, divinely inspired conversion of an individual away from sin towards salvation. Tolerance, in other words, as far as the American missionaries expounded it, was rooted in their belief that there was a place for all peoples and all races at the rendezvous of salvation. Hence they as missionaries had to open schools for all; they had to emphasize literacy and print vernacular versions of the Bible precisely in order to make the scriptures generally accessible and salvation widely possible. Such a message was intended to be revolutionary in the sense that the missionaries desired to effect a total spiritual, cultural, and political revolution in the Ottoman and Arab order of things. But they also believed firmly that if this revolution was to be accomplished, native religions and culture would have to be destroyed. As the missionary William Goodell lamented when he recognized the difficulties of effecting such a revolution:

> It is a great grief to us that we can do nothing directly to diminish the political evils of the country, nothing to insure protection for the innocent or to bring the guilty to justice, nothing to abate national guilt by being instrumental in promoting a national reform. In this respect, our circumstances are widely different from those of our brethren at the Sandwich Islands or among the Indian tribes of the West, whose labors have a direct and efficient bearing on the body politic, and an influence more or less powerful on the minds of those who enact laws and who control the opinions and practices of others.[24]

There could be no tolerance, in missionary minds, of other ways of believing or structuring society. To wit, the American missionaries seized upon the persecution of As'ad Shidyāq as evidence of the corruption and worldliness of Eastern religions – Muslim and Christian. As the American missionary Henry Harris Jessup, Bustānī's contemporary, summarized the affair:

> Whoever reads the simple narrative of the life and death of Asaad Shidyaq, the first convert and martyr of Syria, will find a reformer as brave as Luther, and a martyr more steadfast than Cranmer. He published and defended his theses in defiance of the bishops; and was willing, all alone, to meet the storm of cursing and excommunication from the Church. Even his relatives persecuted him with the bitterest hate. He appeared defenceless before his enemies, but was borne off with violence to a distant and secluded convent, where he was cast into prison. For several months he was beaten daily; a chain was put around his neck, and the other end fastened to a ring in the wall. The common people were encouraged to visit him and to spit in his face, and otherwise insult him; but his spirit remained unbroken through all, and his faith firm. At last communication was cut off: a dreadful uncertainty

[24] Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Unit 5. ABC 16.5. Reel 502. William Goodell to Jeremiah Evarts, September 15, 1826.

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> hangs over his fate; but the sad conclusion was forced upon his friends that he perished in the hands of his unrelenting tormentors.[25]

As far as the missionaries were concerned, the Shidyāq affair brought together all the elements of a modern missionary drama: there was the protagonist himself, the one-time Maronite and "nominal" Christian Asʿad Shidyāq. In missionary eyes, he was comparable in his faith and steadfastness to Luther. Providence guided him to the missionaries in 1825; and in their employ he discovered his own supposedly depraved nature, he converted, rebelled against the "false" doctrines of popery, and for this he was persecuted and eventually martyred in the late 1820s. There were his persecutors, the Maronite Patriarch and his bishops, allegedly medieval in outlook, and inveterate enemies of the scriptures, devoid of rationality, love, and compassion. And, of course, there were the American missionaries themselves, disinterested agents of the God's benevolence, whose divinely inspired calling made them intersect with, and completely transform, Shidyāq's brief life and then record and remember his martyr's death. For the missionaries, the Shidyāq affair was a simple story of righteousness ranged against sin, of free individual will standing up to communal tyranny, of evangelical rationality pitted against Eastern superstition and of tolerance opposed to Oriental and Catholic despotism. Above all else the story was of divinely ordained progress in the face of unmitigated stagnation, and of freedom against liberty. For the missionaries attached to the American Board, Shidyāq's story, disemboweled of historical time and place, represented the very essence of supposedly disinterested American benevolence as it worked to evangelize the world. And this evangelized world, in their view, could only resemble the missionaries' own view of evangelical America.[26]

Bustānī understood the story of Asʿad Shidyāq to hold entirely different implications. He set out to gather as many of the documents relating to the case as he could, drawing on Arabic letters written to and by Shidyāq as well as on American missionary sources such as the *Missionary Herald*.

> It is well known that many of the inhabitants of these lands and many foreigners have heard of the name Asʿad Shidyāq and have known some aspects of his story, mostly from his partisans and his opponents. Neither [group], however, has been able to arrive at the truth. Many fictions and false allegations have been introduced into his story casting opprobrium on his persecutors and attributing to them actions they did not commit and motives they did not possess, just as he has been attributed with deeds and descriptions and motives which have no basis in fact. And when we ascertained that many at this time desire the truth of the matter, we have endeavored to investigate diligently news of his life. We gathered disparate writings, some in his own hand, others by the trustworthy hand of members of the community he had left, as well as by others, and based on those docu-

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25 Henry Harris Jessup, *Syrian Home Life*, ed. Issac Riley, New York 1874, 360-1.

26 See Fuad Shaʿban, *Islam and Arabs in Early American Thought: The Roots of Orientalism in America*, Durham 1991, 143-7 for an elaboration of this theme of America as a "City on the Hill."

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> ments whose veracity we could establish, we have constructed this, his story, strving to the greatest degree possible to avoid bias and personal sympathies.[27]

To craft then what he regarded as an objective story of Shidyāq, Bustānī composed chapters, sketching As'ad's family and educational background, and detailing a highly nuanced and complicated account of the affair. He explained As'ad's interest in Protestantism, his repudiation of Maronite and Roman Catholic dogma, and his persecution by the Maronite church. Like the missionaries, he severely reproached the Maronite Church for denying As'ad Shidyāq freedom of belief and expression. Contradicting Maronite assertions that As'ad had gone insane, or that he had been bribed by the American missionaries, Bustānī drew a portrait of a man moved by genuine spiritual and intellectual engagement with Protestant principles. Bustānī wanted to make As'ad's story an example of what he regarded as "real" faith – as opposed to blind obedience to dogma – and also of individual freedom. At the same time, he wanted to illustrate how As'ad was not simply tortured, as the missionaries repeatedly claimed or insinuated. Bustānī, instead, described how the Maronite Patriarch reacted to As'ad's dismay at the refusal and inability of the Maronite Church to provide what he called scriptural "evidence" for various Maronite practices and beliefs. Bustānī portrayed the Patriarch as someone who himself was genuinely perturbed by As'ad's crisis of faith, but who ultimately decided to force him into submission. In the process, he narrated how As'ad was at first detained and questioned, then imprisoned and interrogated in the remote monastery of Qannūbīn in Mount Lebanon. He recounted how As'ad died there in the late 1820s, probably of dropsy, although his body had never been recovered. Būstanī was careful to refute the sensationalism of missionary accounts without undermining the central theme of his narrative: that the Maronite Church had suppressed As'ad's freedom, and that it was primarily responsible for his untimely death. Bustānī insisted:

> All are in agreement that the patriarch's [robe] is stained with the blood of As'ad, regardless of how As'ad ultimately died. And given that the patriarch has departed to the world of justice, there is no need for us to dwell on this thought, except to say that the patriarch was condemned by the wise men of his and other sects whose vision was not blinded by prejudice nor their understanding debased by blind obedience. The patriarch's ill treatment of As'ad was indeed ill treatment of the person of the Sultan under whose shade As'ad reposed. And if the patriarch had desired to seize one dirham from As'ad's house he had no right because both are equal in rights; so how is it permissible for him to seize As'ad's soul.[28]

Bustānī concluded by reminding his readers and ecclesiastical authorities that Christ and his disciples did not persecute those who defied their teachings. Therefore leaders who encounter an individual who does not follow their beliefs "do not have the right" to

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27 Bustānī, *Qiṣṣat As'ad Shidyāq*, 9.

28 Ibid., 63.

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torture or kill him. Rather they should refute him with evidence, dispute with him verbally, and advise him with Christian gentleness; and if they do not succeed, "they should leave the situation to God, for He is wiser and more capable than them, especially since God does not accept those who are forced before him. Compulsion and persecution only augment the strength and resolve of persecuted Christians and increase their ranks. So it was, and so it shall remain in every place, in every era and every nation."[29]

Such a blistering attack on the Maronite Church was, nevertheless, completely unlike the missionary accounts of the same events being disseminated in the United States during and after the Shidyāq affair. Bustānī was careful to leave space in his account for dissenting Maronite and other Eastern voices. His narrative was peppered with instances of Maronite clergy who urged the Patriarch to rethink his imprisonment of As'ad.[30] Such an approach sought to reconcile a story of the church's assault on freedom with a narrative of freedom that allowed for the preservation and rejuvenation of Maronite, Eastern, and Arab difference. It contrasted with the missionaries' own sketchy and highly edited accounts of the Shidyāq story that appeared in the *Missionary Herald* and in a pamphlet published in the 1834 entitled the *Memoir of Asaad esh Shidiak*.[31] The missionary version of the story was calculated to translate American moral, spiritual, and cultural superiority over the East deeply felt by American readers into continued support for the missionary enterprise to the East. It was based on the assumption that the Maronite Church – defined through the As'ad Shidyāq story as singularly and unremittingly despotic – represented the entire East. It left no space for the autonomous regeneration of the East without the active intercession of the West and, in particular, of American Protestantism.

Put differently, Bustānī recognized that the missionaries opened the possibility for As'ad Shidyāq, and more generally speaking for the East, to relate in a new way to authority. By insisting that an individual read and be convinced of his own free will of the veracity of Protestant belief, the missionaries privileged direct intellectual engagement over physical compulsion, and demanded scriptural "evidence" in order to justify specific religious practices. There is no denying that at the level of the individual such as Shidyāq and Bustānī there was something powerfully attractive (which missionary opponents insisted was seductive) in this missionary religiosity. But by constructing a narrative of the Shidyāq affair that depicted the Maronite community as more than a simply tyrannical force bent on destroying freedom, Bustānī transformed a missionary message of exclusionary Protestant salvation predicated on the destruction of all other forms of religious belonging into an inclusivist message of salvation that could, in Bustānī's mind at least, accommodate multiple forms of religiosity. In other words,

29 Ibid., 64.

30 Ibid., 56-7, 59.

31 American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Memoir of Asaad esh Shidiak, Missionary Paper no. VIII, Boston 1834.

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whereas the missionaries envisioned individual freedom as a means to an American Protestant world of educated citizens that refused to acknowledge the veracity of any other belief or culture, Bustānī's vision of individual freedom accommodated religious difference. Whereas both missionaries and Bustānī aspired to a society without masters and slaves, the missionaries believed that such a society must emulate their quite idealistic vision of the United States – the way women dressed, the way people ate, the furniture they used, the God to whom they prayed, and ultimately, the language they spoke – whereas Bustānī insisted that Arab culture and Arab literature must themselves be allowed to flourish in a society made of Muslims, Jews, and Christians alongside Western cultures not subordinate to them. This is precisely the heart of Bustānī's speech on the culture of the Arabs which he had delivered a year before in 1859 as well as his writings in *Nafīr Sūriyā* which appeared in the immediate aftermath of the 1860 massacres.

Bustānī's speech on the culture of the Arabs, which he gave before an assembly of Muslim and Christian intellectuals and American missionaries in Beirut on February 15, 1859, gives the clearest indication of his understanding of history and the place of the Arabs in it.[32] Unlike the missionaries of his generation, including Daniel Bliss and Henry Harris Jessup, Bustānī believed passionately that history proved that the Arabs were clearly capable of advancement in their own language and through their own culture. Bustānī agreed with the missionaries that the Arabs had fallen into a period of stagnation and he urged Arabs not to dismiss Western knowledge simply because it was Western.[33] But he was quick to point out that there was a golden age of the Arabs – the Abbasid caliphate – when they were leaders in medicine, astronomy, literature, and governance. Indeed, it was the Arabs, he claimed, who awakened Europe from its dark ages, just as Western science now provided the Arabs with an opportunity to awaken themselves from their own dark age.

However, what was truly pressing for Bustānī was the question of how to embrace modernity. In his lecture, he made it very clear that just as he expected Arabs not to reject Western ideas simply because they were Western, they should also not reject Arab manners, clothing, culture, and above all, language just because they were Arab. In this defense of Arabic language and culture as perfectly suited to modernity, Bustānī scathingly denounced those whom he referred to as the *mutafarnijīn* – those who blindly imitated the West as if imitation were a substitute for genuine reform.[34] Blind emulation – be it in following the orders of self-proclaimed spiritual authorities, as in the case of As'ad Shidyāq, or in dressing in the latest Western fashions and speaking Western languages –

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[32] See Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus al-Bustani," *IJMES* 11 (1980); 287-304 for a good account of Bustānī; see also Frmua Zachs "Toward a proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria? Revisiting the American Presbyterian Missionaries and the Nineteenth-Century Levant" in *Welt des Islam*, 41, part 2, 145-73.

[33] Bustānī, "Khuṭba fī adab al-'arab," 112.

[34] Ibid., 108.

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was not modernization, according to Bustānī. He condemned those who aspired to perpetual cultural subordination to the West rather than to autonomous cultural amelioration. And this was precisely what Bustānī apparently found so disquieting in the missionary message as it was articulated by men such as Bliss and Jessup.[35] Bustānī made oblique references to those who thought the Arabs were incapable of reform, incapable of autonomous learning, and incapable of modernization. He ended his lecture, in fact, by calling on the Arabs to "Awaken. Take Heed. Awaken" and to seize the moment provided by the nineteenth century to become a modern people and culture.[36] While he very clearly regarded the high point of Arab civilization as having occurred during the Abbasid caliphate and in Arab Spain, Bustānī regarded both Christians and Muslims as Arabs. This was again in contrast to the missionaries, who could only write about the Orient by differentiating "nominal" Christians from "Mohammedans," and saw a future American Protestantism imposed on the East as the only way they could transcend irreconcilable sectarian differences. Bustānī argued that Arab civilization was entrenched in a history that transcended religious differences. He insisted, therefore, that an appreciation of this history could again open the doors to autonomous advancement supplemented by judicious borrowing from the West.

The sectarian bloodshed of 1860 in Mount Lebanon and Damascus did not deter Bustānī from pursuing his vision of an Arab modernity. Indeed, the massacres of 1860 galvanized Bustānī to elaborate his vision of secular coexistence rooted in an Arab past. Between September 29, 1860 and April 22, 1861, he anonymously authored and distributed a series of Arabic pamphlets in Beirut.[37] They were entitled *Nafīr Sūriyā* ("Clarion of Syria"), indicating both an alarm at what Bustānī perceived to the pervasiveness of sectarian animosities and an urgent, if didactic, call to the Syrian "nation" to awaken from its backwardness; Bustānī addressed his "compatriots" (*abnā' al-waṭan*) in the sixth issue, dated November 8, 1860 as follows: "Awaken! Awaken! Why are you still slumbering?"[38] Each pamphlet was signed simply by "a patriot" (*muḥibb lil-waṭan*). To be sure, Bustānī's vision of the precise outlines of this Syrian nation were vague in the manner of many mid-nineteenth-century romantic nationalist writers. For him, Syria was the geographic locale for an Arabic-based modernity. What was disconcerting in the events of 1860 – beyond the massive destruction they produced – was a failure on the

35 Abu-Manneh refers to A. L. Tibawi's *The American Missionaries in Beirut and Buṭrus al Bustānī*, St.Antony's Papers no. 16, London 1963, to suggest that an incipient rift had developed between the missionaries and Bustānī, with the latter exhibiting increasing independence of thought following the death of his friend and collaborator Eli Smith in 1857. See Abu-Manneh, "Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," 289.

36 Bustānī, "Khuṭba fī adab al-'arab," 117.

37 The original pamphlets are today preserved in the manuscript collection of the Jafet library of the American University of Beirut. They were collated, edited, and printed by Yūsuf Khūrī as *Nafīr Sūriyā*, Beirut 1990. All references here are to the printed versions of 1990.

38 Bustānī, *Nafīr Sūriyā*, no. 7, November 19, 1860.

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part of Syrians to realize that they were compatriots. Bustānī concluded his first pamphlet by reminding his readers: "O compatriots (*yā abnā' al-waṭan*), you drink one water, you breathe one air, and the language you speak, the ground upon which you tread, your welfare, your customs – they are all one."[39] He declared that the war of 1860 held important lessons for any who dared contemplate them. "Among them," he wrote on January 14, 1860, was:

> the recognition among compatriots that their general, and therefore private, welfare requires the manifestation of the ties of unity and harmony between [them]. No intelligent person can deny that the people of Syria are endowed with the highest level of refined intellect and natural nobility and the greatest desire to progress in culture and industry and to advance to the highest levels of civilization. Let those who hate and who are prejudiced against them say what they will. [Syria] is among the wealthiest of nations in terms of her natural resources and her trade location. Syria and her people did not reach the degree of decline, backwardness, and humiliation in which they now find themselves save through their lack of unity and love for one another, their lack of concern for the welfare of their country and compatriots, and their stupid and ignorant self-deliverance to the power and thrall of sectarian, communal, and familial interests … So long as our people do not distinguish between religions which must be left to the believer and his Creator, and the civil affairs [which must regulate a person's conduct] with his compatriots, or with his government, and upon which must be built the institutions of human society and political relations, so long as they do not erect a dividing line between these two principles …, they cannot hope to succeed in either one, or in both, as is evident [by the recent events].[40]

Bustānī, in short, advocated a secular meritocracy, and asserted that only through unity across religious lines could Syrians diminish foreign encroachment.[41] In the tenth *Nafīr Sūriyā*, written on February 22, 1861, Bustānī demanded that a firm "barrier" be placed between "religious authority" and "civil authority."[42] It was not, in other words, a matter of arguing against a vigorous role for religion in society; Bustānī believed quite firmly that "genuine" religion – conceived of didactically as a guarantor of a mythologized tradition of coexistence – provided a moral but not *political* basis for secular citizenship. "Ḥubb al-waṭan min al-imān," he wrote in the fourth *Nafīr Sūriyā,* exhorting his readers to a civic-minded compatriotism.[43] He called for a secular public sphere because he believed it was the only way in which members of different religious communities could transcend, without abandoning, a narrow religious identity and embrace a larger national entity that could safeguard their common welfare.

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39 Ibid., no. 1, September 29, 1860.

40 Ibid., no. 9, January 14, 1861.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., no. 10, February 22, 1861.

43 Ibid., no. 4, October 25, 1860.

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Bustānī's call for an explicit removal of religion from civil affairs was genuinely revolutionary, and, more than anything else illustrated the interpretative gulf that separated him from his missionary contemporaries.[44] In contrast to the American missionary lesson about the events of 1860 – that the Arabs could never extricate themselves from the morass of endemic sectarianism except through evangelical tutelage – Bustānī's plea for secularism was rooted in his passionate belief that 1860 reflected not the essence of the local inhabitants but their long moral, political, and scientific decline from their own culture. Not surprisingly, his last *Nafīr Sūriyā,* printed on April 22, 1861, recapitulated many of the same points that he had raised a year earlier in his essay on the Culture of the Arabs: civilization and progress were not blind imitation but a constant critical quest for knowledge which, like religion itself, was itself neither intrinsically Eastern or Western. As Bustānī summarized his own vision of progress and civilization in the eleventh *Nafīr*:

> Although we believe that acquiring advantage and benefit from any region or nation is a desirable and indisputable matter for every intelligent person, that most of the advantages [presently] arrive from the West, and that many Europeans deserve complete respect and recognition, we cannot concede absolutely and blindly that everything that comes to us from there is beneficial in and of itself and suitable for the prosperity and success of Easterners … Undeniably, those who condemn everything simply because it is Western and approve every thing simply because it is Arab, and *vice versa*, fall into a dangerous fanaticism.[45]

Bustānī's vision of modernity, and the place of Arabs in it, both borrowed from what was qualitatively different from anything the missionaries proposed. Both Bustānī and the missionaries believed in a world where individuals (through divine grace) shaped their own destinies, and both believed utterly in freedom of conscience and disavowed physical compulsion. Yet for the American missionaries, whose own mission to the Levant had developed partly as a reaction to the rise of liberalism in American religious thought and against the backdrop of the seemingly inevitable subjugation of Indians, freedom could only be articulated in terms of an evangelical triumph over oriental despotism and superstition. They could not, and would not until well after Bustānī, tolerate secularism or even advocate religious pluralism as a goal in and of itself. Bustānī, however, believed not just in freedom of individual choice, but also realized long before his missionary contemporaries that this freedom could only be

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[44] Here it bears stating that, *pace* Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 96 and Abu Manneh, "Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," Bustānī did not advocate secularism because he was a "minority" in an Islamic world, which assumes that individuals who belong to minority communities inevitably think and act as minorities. After all, Bustānī's clearest call for secularism came in his *Nafīr Sūriyā*, many parts of which were clearly intended to warn Maronite Christians against seeking vengeance against the Druzes in the aftermath of 1860.

[45] Bustānī, *Nafīr Sūriyā*, no. 10, April 22, 1861. Emphasis my own.

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achieved equitably in a society that limited the public role of religion at the same time as it recognized the validity of multiple forms of religious belief.

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Beyond the mountain refuge: searching for a wider perspective on Ottoman policy in Mount Lebanon

Maurus Reinkowski

Introduction

The three decades between 1830 and 1861 were a time of intense transformation and unrest in Mount Lebanon. Muḥammad ʿAlī's Egyptian army, under the command of Ibrāhīm Pasha, had invaded Syria and adjacent regions (i.e. Syria proper, Mount Lebanon, Palestine, Transjordan, and southeastern regions of modern Turkey) in 1831 and had installed a far more effective system of control and taxation than had been the case under the Ottomans. Despite repeated military defeats at the hands of the Egyptian armies, the Ottoman Empire was able with the help of the four European powers Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia to regain Syria, in 1840. In the following two decades general unrest and strife continued and broke out into open violence several times: major clashes occurred in 1841, 1845, and finally and most bloodily in 1860. The weakness of Mount Lebanon's administration and the violence were obviously remedied by the installation of the *Règlement organique / Cebel-i Lübnān Niẓāmnāmesi* of 1861, a product of long and intricate deliberations between high bureaucrats of the Ottoman Sublime Porte and European diplomats. From 1861 onwards Mount Lebanon, as a *mutaṣarrifiyya* (Ottoman province with a special status), shows a record of increased tranquility and relative economic prosperity.

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Before the Egyptian invasion of Syria in 1831, Mount Lebanon had been *de facto* a tributary autonomous principality with its own power structure.[1] The socio-economic conditions and the political regime of eighteenth-century Mount Lebanon can therefore be described without constantly recurring to the Ottoman overlord. The conditions from 1840 onwards were fundamentally different from the preceding period: the Ottomans now strove to integrate Mount Lebanon into the administrative orbit of the Ottoman Empire. Their intentions and efforts were, however, severely hampered by two factors. First, as the Ottoman Empire had had to resort to the help of European powers in order to regain Greater Syria in 1840, the European powers and their diplomatic representatives in Istanbul and in Beirut considered themselves entitled to interfere in Lebanese affairs. Therefore, on the international and diplomatic plane the "problem of Mount Lebanon" *(Cebel-i Lübnān meselesi)* shows clearly the extent to which the Ottoman Empire was already a penetrated system, i.e. internal Ottoman politics in Mount Lebanon cannot be seen detached from the dimension of international diplomacy and politics.[2] The majority of preserved Ottoman archival material shows the extent to which Mount Lebanon had high priority in Ottoman politics.[3] Second, the Ottomans suffered from a decisive lack of experience and expertise with Mount Lebanon and its population; they had maintained only marginal relations via the Shīhābi amir and the governor of Sidon. The area seems indeed to have been somewhat exotic to the Ottomans. In 1845 the Ottoman special commissioner to Mount Lebanon, Meḥmed Şekīb, wrote, playing on the word *qamar* (moon), that after a strenuous journey he reached "a village in the mountains which they call Deyrülqamer and which is quite near to the moon."[4] But indeed Dayr al-Qamar was the most important urban center in Mount Lebanon, and was called by the natives the "city of the Mountain."

Because of the intense European pressure and their difficulty in coming to terms with the complex reality of Mount Lebanon the Ottomans had a hard time in implementing the Tanzimat (literally meaning 'orders' and signifying a bundle of laws and edicts from 1839 onwards meant to reform, centralize, and consolidate the empire). The official Ottoman court historian Aḥmed Lüṭfī Pasha said – with the hindsight of several decades – that the leading Ottoman Tanzimat politicians did not want Mount Lebanon to be exempted from the reforms, but that even circumspect attempts to their implementation

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1 Alexander Schölch, "Zum Problem eines außereuropäischen Feudalismus: Bauern, Lokalherren und Händler im Libanon und in Palästina in osmanischer Zeit," *Peripherie* 5-6 (1981), 112.

2 L. Carl Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules, Dangerous Game,* Princeton 1984, 5.

3 See for example the special series İrade Mesail-i Mühimme, spanning the years 1839 to 1849, preserved in the Başbakanlık Arşivi in Istanbul (hereafter BBA), where the numbers 1111 to 1223 are devoted exclusively to Mount Lebanon, and the numbers 2144 to 2181 to the province of Sidon.

4 "Ḳamere ḳarīb bir Cebel-i kebīrde Deyrülḳamer dedikleri maḥalle," in: BBA/BEO A.MKT.MHM. 01-A 91 [1845], Varak 4.

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had been doomed to failure because of the enormous heterogeneity of the region and the incessant intervention of European politicians and diplomats.[5]

Historians working on the period 1840-1861 have always had difficulties understanding Ottoman policy and response to the events in Mount Lebanon. The lacuna of authoritative works on the crucial decades between 1840 and 1861 has been closed in the year 2000 by Caesar Farah[6] and Ussama Makdisi,[7] both drawing extensively on Ottoman archival material. A particularly thorny question to historians had been to explain the rise of "sectarianism," or – to use a more neutral sounding word – "confessionalism." There had always been widespread consensus that Lebanese confessionalism came about somewhat in the middle of the nineteenth century and that European, Ottoman, and inner-Lebanese factors were at work. But when it came to describing exactly the process by which confessionalism became dominant in the Lebanese political arena historians were mostly at loss. Engin Akarlı, for example, at one point characterized "confessionalism" as an Ottoman strategy to help to contain the endemic conflicts in Mount Lebanon, and at another as a destructive residuum of Lebanese political culture that the Ottomans skillfully manipulated to attenuate and transform into an institutional framework.8 Makdisi has ventured to delve deeper, and explains sectarianism as an expression of modernity rather than belittling it as a residue of atavistic practices. Sectarianism is, in his words, first "a practice that developed out of, and must be understood in the context of, nineteenth-century Ottoman reform. Second, it is a discourse that is scripted as the Other to various competing Ottoman, European, and Lebanese narratives of modernization."[9]

This chapter will not endeavor to refute arguments presented by other historians on Mount Lebanon, but will seek to procure an additional perspective on Ottoman policy in Mount Lebanon. A comparative look at the many and highly diverse provinces of the Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century might allow for a better understanding of what was specific and what was common to Ottoman political practices and strategies in Mount Lebanon. Two points will be dealt here in some detail: First, the Tanzimat measures were a clearly definable set of reform edicts and laws issued from 1839 onwards, and it is legitimate to speak, for reasons of convenience, of a "Tanzimat period," but the

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5 Aḥmed Lüṭfī, *Tārīh-i Lütfī*, 8 vols., Istanbul 1873-1910, VIII, 44.

6 Caesar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon, 1830-1861*, London and New York 2000. Farah devotes his voluminous book particularly to the intricacies of European and Ottoman diplomacy as well as to the internal Lebanese power struggle of the Druze and particularly the Maronite elite. He describes how each party attempted to "foil" (one of Farah's favourite verbs) the others' intrigues and strategies and his matrix is the chessboard of power politics.

7 Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, Berkeley 2000.

8 Engin D. Akarlı, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920,* Berkeley 1993, 28, 145, 149, 161 versus 134: "confessionalism was too deeply implanted in Mount Lebanon to be uprooted abruptly."

9 Makdisi, *Sectarianism*, 6.

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Tanzimat should not be conceived as a consistent body of practices applied uniformly all over the empire starting on November 3, 1839 with the reform edict of Gülhane *(hatt-ı şerīf)*. Benjamin Braude's warning against the use of *millet* as a "historiographical fetish" by assuming in it an "unjustified hoary, technical, administrative concreteness"[10] is valid also for the case of the Tanzimat. In the Tanzimat period Ottoman policy partially abrogated practices and strategies from the pre-Tanzimat period, partially transformed them, and partially simply continued to draw directly from this reservoir. Second, whereas historiography has assumed the existence of a universal and homogeneous "Tanzimat," it has, on the other hand, tended to treat Lebanese sectarianism alias confessionalism alias consociationalism as a specifically Lebanese problem. Instead of confining this phenomenon to a strictly Lebanese level a broader look at other regions of the Ottoman Empire might allow for a more balanced interpretation.

Grasping for order

Rather than interpreting Ottoman policy in Mount Lebanon between 1840 and 1861 as applying an homogeneous body of Tanzimat institutions and procedures, one can characterize it as tentative and steering a meandering course. Let me elucidate this point by dwelling shortly on Ottoman political terminology: Internal Ottoman correspondence shows a great variety of terms in its description of Mount Lebanon's ethnic-confessional groups.[11] Obviously enough, the Ottomans were struggling to grasp the ethnic-confessional pattern and conflict lines in Mount Lebanon, whereas in other peripheries they were more easily able to find a consistent definition of tribes and ethnic-confessional groups. For example, up to the 1870s the Catholic tribe of the Mirdites in northern Albania (a region that had been brought again under direct Ottoman control in the 1830s) was clearly defined as of Catholic *mezheb* (religious sect; religion, creed)[12] and as a *ḳabīle* (tribe) in its political organization.[13] Describing the various groups in Mount Lebanon, Ottoman authorities most frequently used the terms *ṭā'ife* (sect or body

[10] Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society,* II*: The Central Lands* ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, New York and London 1982, 74.

[11] The Druze and Maronites were more than mere tribes, but they were not simply confessional groups. For a workable definition of ethnicity in distinction to "tribes" see Lois Beck, "Tribes and the State in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Iran," in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, ed Philipp S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, Berkeley 1990, 196.

[12] All translations of Ottoman terms given in parenthesis are based on the *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*, Istanbul 1968.

[13] See for example BBA İrade Hariciye 6821, ʿArż Tezkiresi [1856]: "Merdita ḳabīlesi denilan ve Katolik mezhebinde bulunan ḳabīle…"; and İrade Hariciye 11013, ʿArż Tezkiresi [1862]: "İşḳodra civārında bulunan ve efrādı cümleten katolik mezhebinde olan Mirdita ḳabīlesi."

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of men; tribe) or simply *ṭaraf* (party to a cause or dispute). Whereas the latter seems to be neutral in terms of ethnicity and confession and only refers to antagonistic groups, *ṭā'ife* carries clear confessional implications. *Millet* (nation, people; religious community) appears considerably less frequently. In some cases, distinctly confessional terms such as *mezheb* and *cemā'at* (congregation, religious community) and terms signifying more tribal features such as *cins* (sort, type; race, stock, family, breed), *ḳabīle,* and *ḳavım* (people, nation, tribe, family; sect) are used interchangeably.[14] The blurredness of Ottoman terminology is not (or at least not only) due to the lack of Ottoman knowledge of the conditions in Mount Lebanon, it is also an expression of the Janus-faced character of ethnic-confessional groups. Tribal structures were (and still are) hidden behind the religious-confessionalist facade of Lebanese society.[15]

Ottoman political terminology in the middle of the nineteenth century was to a certain extent "enslaved"[16] by Western concepts, in paying attention to the exigencies of the diplomatic battle with Europe and in being impressed with Europe's superiority. Terms such as *medeniyyet* (civilization) or *insāniyyet* (humanity, humanness)/*huḳūḳ-ı insāniyye* (human rights), which had existed previously in Ottoman vocabulary, assimilated themselves to the European meaning. But even while stressing Ottoman terminological confusion and the passive absorption of European terms, one should not ignore the ability of the Ottoman political language to adapt Western concepts to its own needs. For example, the term *tesāvī* (being equal to one another, equality) is surely inspired by the French concept of *égalité*, but in Ottoman bureaucratic usage it is bereft of its original meaning and assimilated to Ottoman needs: *tesāvī* serves to designate the pre-Tanzimat concept of impartial equidistance, i.e. the state commits itself to treat all populations and groups (not individuals!) equally without committing itself to one side.[17]

It was not only the Ottomans' terminology on Mount Lebanon that was tentative and inconsistent, but also their political practices – or, to put it positively, the Ottomans not only used a large vocabulary to describe different shadings of ethnic and confessional patterns, they also possessed a diversified arsenal of political practices. A distinctly pre-Tanzimat practice was the practice of "ethnic containment."[18] The Ottoman state strove

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[14] See for example BBA İrade Mesail-i Mühimme 1124, Varak 8 [1842], where special commissioner Selīm Bey, when referring to the Maronites, uses *millet, ḳavım,* and *ḳabīle* synonymously.

[15] A point repeatedly stressed by Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansion: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered,* London 1988, 41, 55, 90, 91, 113, 165f., 217.

[16] Georg Elwert, "Nationalismus und Ethnizität: Über die Bildung von Wir-Gruppen," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 3 (1989), 457, uses the term „enslavement," originally coined for biochemical processes, to describe the adaptation or enslavement of processes or structures by stronger, exogeneous processes.

[17] *Tesāvī* is often connected with phrases saying that state authorities shall not undertake *taṣāḥub* (becoming a patron or protector) or *iltizām* (favoring; a preference).

[18] A term and practice that is not peculiar to the Ottomans only; see for just one example Haus-, Hof und Staatsarchiv Vienna, series Türkei VI, 82: report from Stürmer on Nov.10, 1841 to Metternich on the tribe

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to control, or at least to contain, tribal groups (or ethnic-confessional groups organized along tribal lines) which were to be found mainly in the peripheries of the empire. This practice showed a wide spectrum ranging from cooptation, expressed in terms such as *istimāle* (gaining goodwill, coaxing) and *taṭyīb* (making good, pleasant; rendering tranquil and happy), to brute military force *(ḳuvve-i cebriyye)*. *Tesāvī*, then, seems to be nothing otherthan a reshaped and modernized version of ethnic containment.

The Ottomans, taking into account their limited military and financial means, left traditionally ethnic groups to their own devices as long as they were in control of the groups' external contacts and as long as they could prevent the spread of unrest and violence into the adjacent regions.[19] The state authorities did not insist on direct control of these groups' internal power relations, they saw only to it that they had complete control of their external relations and their cross-frontier access to other areas.[20]

The 'peace treaty' of 1845 which the Ottoman authorities, led by the governor of Sidon, Vecīhī Meḥmed Pasha, forced upon the Maronites and Druze is a clear example of ethnic containment.[21] The document arrogates to the state the monopoly of power, but in some respects the Ottoman authorities recede to the role of a mere mediator.[22] The authorities act on the principle of collective responsibility of a community or village[23] – a

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of Abu Gosh near to Jerusalem: "Ibrahim Pacha avait soumis la tribu d'Abu-Gosch dont il a fait décapiter le chef et la contenait par la terreur." See also Ignace de Testa, *Recueil des traités de la Porte ottomane avec les puissances étrangères depuis le premier traité conclu, en 1536, entre Suléyman I et François I jusqu'à nos jours*, 11 vols., Paris 1864-1911, VI, 366, 375.

19 There is no direct Ottoman term for "ethnic containment." The expression *sirāyet etmemek üzere*, i.e. preventing the spread of unrest into other areas, is used frequently however.

20 For the success of this strategy in the case of Albania see Hasan Kaleshi, "Das türkische Vordringen auf dem Balkan und die Islamisierung: Faktoren für die Erhaltung der ethnischen und nationalen Existenz des albanischen Volkes," in: *Südosteuropa unter dem Halbmond: Untersuchungen über Geschichte und Kultur der südosteuropäischen Völker während der Türkenzeit,* ed H. Bartl and H. Glassl, Munich 1975, 133.

21 At the beginning of June 1845 a document obliging both parties to end hostilities was signed in Beirut, see Testa, *Recueil*, III, 180-183: "Convention conclué, sous la présidence de Bahri-pacha, entre les Druses et les Maronites, en date de Béirout le 2 juin 1845" contains the version to be signed by the Druze; compare also the version for the Maronites from May 31, 1845, BBA/BEO A.MKT.MHM 01-A 73, Varak 13.

22 The convention states that in order to contain further conflicts disputes between the two confessions have to be submitted to the government (article 1). If groups flock together with the aim of attacking members of another confession the government has to be informed by the endangered confession in order to disperse these groups (article 2). Preemptive strikes by parts of the population against the agressor group are not allowed. Only if the authorities do not interfere, despite having been informed, is self-defense legitimate (article 3).

23 If a village helps a culprit the state can punish those who assisted him and occupy the village (article 4). Acts of retaliation are carried out against a village when a murder has been committed in its precincts (article 7).

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rule which stands in the legal tradition of the *sharī'a*,[24] but in outright contradiction to the reform edict of 1839.[25]

Prominent in the Druze-Maronite "peace treaty" is the tenth article[26] which rules that all unsuitable events and occurrences during the unrest are subject to the clause "let byegones be byegones" *(mażā-mā-mażā)*.[27] In July 1860 Maronites and Druze were forced by the acting Ottoman governor of the province of Sidon, Hurşīd Pasha,[28] to sign a similar peace treaty, being based again on the formula *mażā-mā-mażā*.[29] Hurşīd Pasha, in a meeting with European consuls (on June 19, 1860) explained his motivation in imposing such a peace treaty with the weakened capacities of the Ottoman military.[30]

Both in 1845 and 1860 the *mażā-mā-mażā* clause seems to imply the fictitious idea of two parties concluding a treaty on equal terms. Faced with the outbreak of hostilities, local Ottoman authorities – total control of the region being beyond their means and

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24 Colin Imber, *Ebu's-su`ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition*, Edinburgh 1997, 89; Haim Gerber, *State, Society and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective,* Albany 1994, 34.

25 See for example in the French translation of the *hatṭ-ı şerīf* given by Testa, *Recueil*, V, 142: "Chacun possèdera ses propriétés de toute nature, et en disposera avec la plus entière liberté, sans que personne puisse y porter obstacle; ainsi, par exemple, les héritiers innocents d'un criminel ne seront point privés de leurs droits légaux et les biens du criminel ne seront pas confisqués."

26 Which reads as follows: "As both parties are God's creatures and subjects of the Sublime State they shall, whenever they live together at one place, always deal with each other as neighbors and friends. If anything unsuitable happens between them, both parties are bound to the clause `let byegones be byegones'. No party may do harm to the other and all must deal with each other in a pleasant way and not use words that violate the human sense of honor. Whoever does not hold to this [rule] will be indicted and punished."

27 One might discern in the Ottoman practice of *mażā-mā-mażā* a reflection of the *clause d'oblivion* in the European law of nations. On the use of this clause which was widespread in the eighteenth century and with less frequency in the nineteenth century, see Pierre Simon, "La Clause d'amnestie dans les traités de paix," *Revue générale de droit international public* 26 (1919), 245-261; see for example 249, note 1: Treaty of Versailles (1783) between France and Great Britain and between Spain and Great Britain respectively (article 1): "Il y aura un oubli et amnestie générale de tout ce qui a pu être fait ou commis avant ou depuis le commencement de la guerre qui vient de finir.". – On the fate of the *clause d'oblivion* in the twentieth century see Fritz Dickmann, "Die Kriegsschuldfrage auf der Friedenskonferenz von Paris 1919," *Historische Zeitschrift* 197 (1963), 1-101.

28 On his career see Meḥmed Süreyyā, *Sicill-i ʿOsmānī yāhūd tezkire-i meşāhir-i ʿosmāniyye*, 4 vols., Istanbul 1890-1899, II, 312; Hurşīd Pasha obtained, twelve years after his dismissal as governor of Sidon, a new assignment as governor of Kütahya.

29 Testa, *Recueil*, VI, 85: "Traité de paix entre les Druzes et les Maronites, signé à Beïrout, le 6 juillet 1860." See Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860,* Berkeley 1994, 229 f. for an English translation of the convenant.

30 Testa, *Recueil*, VI, 76: "Rapport collectif des consuls généraux européens de Beïrout, en date du 19 April 1860."

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seeing Maronites and Druze as ethnic groups to be contained and to be kept in a balanced opposition – feigned assumption of the role of mediator.[31]

The practice of *mażā-mā-mażā* has not been unique to Mount Lebanon. Vecīhī Meḥmed[32] had been, several years before his assignment to Sidon, governor of Bosnia with his seat in Travnik. In December 1838 he signed a treaty with envoys of Njegoš II, ruler of the factually independent Montenegro, affirming that everything that had happened in the contested district of Grahovo (between Montenegro and Hercegovina) would be considered as finally gone, forgotten, and amnestied.[33]

In both cases, 1845 and 1860, where the *mażā-mā-mażā* clause was used by the local Ottoman governors in order to pacify the region, the Ottoman Porte sent high ranking diplomats as special commissioners to the scene: Şekīb Efendi in 1845 and Fu'ād Pasha in 1860.[34] Both also granted amnesty, but on a completely different basis: peace was to be obtained by the verdict of the sultan, not by the fiction of a treaty. The state did not pose as a mediator between two groups; the sultan granted an amnesty on the basis of his (fictitiously) absolute power.[35]

Şekīb Efendi[36] and Fu'ād Pasha[37] were members of the elite corps in the Ottoman administration. They had spent longer periods in Europe (Şekīb Efendi in St. Petersburg and London, Fu'ād Pasha in London and with special missions to Madrid, Bucharest, St. Petersburg, Cairo, and Paris) and belonged to a different class than the Ottoman officers

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31 See the intense discussion among the Ottoman military and administrative corps in 1845 how to contain the conflict with insufficient troops, documented in the dossier BBA/BEO A.MKT.MHM 01-A 73, *passim*, but particularly Varaks 6, 7, 28, 52.

32 Meḥmed Süreyyā, *Sicill*, IV, 603f; see also the biographical appendix in Thomas Scheben, *Verwaltungsreformen der frühen Tanzimatzeit: Gesetze, Maßnahmen, Auswirkungen*, Frankfurt 1991, 403f.

33 Hamid Hadžibegic, "Odnos Crne Gore prema Grahovu u doba Njegoša," *Prilozi za orientalnu filologiju i istoriju jugoslovenskih naroda pod turskom vladavinom* 2 (1951), 203f., renders the original treaty in Latin characters: "..Grahova nahiyesinde şimdiye kadar her ne ki olmuş ise olmuş gitmiş olup [...] şimdiye kadar her ne ki olmuş olmuş cümlesi afv kılınmış." According to Gaspar Heer, *Territorialentwicklung und Grenzfragen von Montenegro in der Zeit seiner Staatswerdung (1830-1887)*, Bern 1981, 56, the Sublime Porte directly ordered Vecīhī Meḥmed to prepare and sign this treaty.

34 The flow of highranking Ottoman commissioners to Mount Lebanon (the most prominent were Muṣṭafā Nūrī Pasha 1841/1842, Selīm Bey 1842, Halīl Rıf'at Pasha 1844/1845, Şekīb Efendi 1845/1846, Selīm Pasha 1845/1846, Emīn Pasha 1846, Aḥmed ʿAṭā 1858, and Fu'ād Pasha 1860/1861) can be easily extracted from the detailed accounts given by Farah, *Interventionism, passim*.

35 See Lüṭfī, *Tārīh*, VIII, 396, for the proclamation of Şekīb Efendi on October 15, 1845: "vuḳūʿāt-ı mezkūre beyninizde mażā-mā-mażā ḥükmine ḳonulmuş olduğuna binā'en bu bābda ṭaraf-ı eşref-i ḥażret-i şāhāneden dahi ʿafv-ı ʿumūmī erzānı buyurulmuş." In January 1861 Fu'ād Pasha told his proxy Abro that a general amnesty would be announced after the executions of the Druze culprits were carried out: Testa, *Recueil*, VI, 212.

36 İsmet Parmaksızoğlu, art. "Şekip Mehmed Paşa," in: *Türk Ansiklopedisi*, Ankara 1981, XXX, 248.

37 Orhan F. Köprülü, art. "FUAD PAŞA, Keçecizâde," in: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Istanbul 1996, XIII, 202-205.

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and bureaucrats, such as Vecīhī Meḥmed and Meḥmed Hurşīd, who were only entrusted with regular positions in the provinces. That Şekīb Efendi and Fu'ād Pasha took another stance than the bureaucrats and officers working on the spot can again be understood by looking at their vocabulary. In the correspondence written by the governors and military officers terms such as *teba'a* (subjects) and *re'āyā* (originally used for all tax-paying subjects of the Ottoman Empire; from the eighteenth century onwards designating the Christian subjects only) abound.[38] Şekīb Efendi, however, used also the term *vaṭan ḳardeşi,*[39] exhorting thus the people in Mount Lebanon to brotherhood. Fu'ād Pasha went further and spoke of *vaṭandaş*,[40] a term clearly referring to an all-Ottoman identity. We may – in distinction to the traditional elite group and culture of the Ottomans *('Osmānlı)*[41] – call this new class of citizens, provided with restricted citizenship rights and bound to complete obedience, "Ottomen."

Cheap rule and a heavy price: confessionalism

The persistency of the Ottoman practice of ethnic containment may be illustrated by discussing a question seemingly far removed: the rise of confessionalism in Mount Lebanon.[42] Confessionalism in the Ottoman period, if it goes beyond the mere presupposition of a sectarian mentality, is embodied in the two institutions of ombudsman *(vekīl)* and particularly in that of councils *(meclis)*. The implementation of these two

38 Very rare, however, is *gavur* (giaour, infidel, unbeliever); see for one example BBA/BEO A.MKT.MHM 01-A 73 [1845], Varak 41.

39 Lüṭfī, *Tārīh*, VIII, 395, proclamation of Şekīb Efendi: "cümleniz bir memleketli vaṭan ḳardeşi bulunduğunuzdan.."; but again 396: "ve cümle şunūf-ı ṭebā'a ve berāyāsı."

40 See for example BBA İrade Meclis-i Mahsus 851/3, Leff 4 [August 1860]: Order of the day by Fu'ād Pasha to the Ottoman army: "..hep vaṭandaşlarımızı bir bilüb.."; for a phrase with a less all-Ottoman cast see İrade Meclis-i Mahsus 928/3: Mażbata of the Meclis-i Mahsus [January 1861] for the reorganization of the provinces of Damascus and Sidon: Each of the councils' members shall discuss matters of "gerek huşūşan ḳavım ve milletinin ve gerek 'umūmen vaṭan ve memleketlerinin zirā'at ve ticāret.. ." – See also one example where *vaṭan* definitely refers only to the local context: BBA İrade Dahiliye 30805, Leff 1: Fu'ād Pasha [September 1860]: "herkesin vaṭanına i'āde ḳılınacağı."

41 For a good definition of the "Ottoman" see Stanford J. Shaw, "The Ottoman View of the Balkan," in: *The Balkans in Transition: Essays on the Development of Balkan. Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century,* ed. Barbara Jelavich and Charles Jelavich, Hamden, Conn. 1974, 58.

42 The genesis of confessionalism out of the Ottoman *millet* system has been often proposed in secondary literature; Georges Corm, in a review article in *MESA Bulletin* 33.2 (1999), 216, confirms Latif Abdul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward*, Boulder 1997, in his belief in the existence of a *millet* system in Mount Lebanon; Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon, a Shattered Country: Myths and Realities of the Wars in Lebanon*, New York 1996, XI, 10, 21, 22, 64, is not sure whether confessionalism in Lebanon is an adaptation of the Ottoman *millet* system or a European introject. – Farah, *Interventionism*, XVII, 4, 11, and *passim* explicitly assumes the existence of a *millet* system for the Maronite community.

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institutions was carried through in cooperation with and under close scrutiny of the European powers, but it can hardly be said that *vekīl* and *meclis* are sociopolitical features alien to the Ottomans. Ottoman policy in the pre-Tanzimat period, i.e. the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century, allowed and even fostered the existence of councils, formal or informal, and the institution of ombudsman *(vekīl)* – also in ethnically and confessionally homogeneous areas – in order to minimize the cost of rule. The collection of taxes especially was delegated to these institutions or mediators so that the fiscal apparatus of the state, being located at the seat of the governor, could be reduced to a minimum.[43] The pre-Tanzimat tradition of councils and ombudsmen mediating the wishes of the population to the state, on the one hand, and relaying down the orders of the government, on the other, is akin to the strategy of ethnic containment: the state leaves, in the decentralized institutions of *meclis* and *vekīl,* free space of movement to ethnic and other groups – as long as these are contained in their limits.[44] This arrangement comes close to the British strategy in India at the end of the nineteenth century, which practiced "tranquil rule on the cheap."[45]

The institution of the *vekīl* (applied in Mount Lebanon from 1843 to 1860) – representing the interests of the *vekīl*'s confessional group before the authorities, but also channeling state demands to that group – might therefore be more aptly described as an instrument of ethnic containment disguised as confessional balance. But what about the most genuine institution of confessionalism in Mount Lebanon – the councils on a confessionally representative basis?[46] Were they tools of an "administrative streamlining,"[47] or were they meant to fragment and manipulate Mount Lebanon as part of an Ottoman divide-and-rule strategy,[48] or were they means of 'state-building and socio-political

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43 Michael Ursinus, *Regionale Reformen im osmanischen Reich am Vorabend der Tanzimat. Reformen der rumelischen Provinzgouverneure im Gerichtssprengel von Manastir (Bitola) zur Zeit der Herrschaft Sultan Mahmuds II, (1808-1839),* Berlin 1982, 45, 47, 61, 63.

44 Halil İnalcık, "Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration," in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History,* ed. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen, Carbondale and Edwardsville 1977, 48, describes the institution of provincial councils in the eigtheenth century somewhat enthusiastically as a kind of "decentralized home rule which provided the people with a say in government."

45 Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States. State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World,* Princeton 1988, 121.

46 First introduced as part of Şekīb Efendi's regulations in 1845; see Farah, *Interventionism,* 438.

47 As Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas,* Princeton 1962, 153, says for the central councils in Istanbul.

48 For reproaches of an Ottoman *divide-et-impera* strategy in Mount Lebanon see Samir Khalaf, *Persistence and Change in Nineteenth Century Lebanon: A Sociological Essay*, Beirut 1979, 21, 31, 69, 88, 134; see also Pierre Rondot, *Les Institutions politiques du Liban: Communautés traditionnelles à l'état moderne*, Paris 1947, 9, 45, 47, and Edmond Rabbath, *La Formation historique du Liban politique et constitutionnel : Essai de synthèse,* Beirut 1973, 192. Further examples of an argumentation in this vein are given in Makdisi, *Sectarianism*, 206, note 5.

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integration'?[49] Attempts to understand the exact genesis of the council system in Mount Lebanon and elsewhere might be in vain. We must be aware that Europe, exerting considerable pressure in all these decisionmaking processes, proved to be a multi-layered and conflicting tradition of regulating minority and confessional issues. Two main antagonistic lines may be detected: Whereas the first one guarantees an acknowledged status and even proportional representation of confessional minorities in common institutions, a second stresses segregation.[50] And indeed, at the beginning of the European-Ottoman consultations in 1860 some of the European representatives favored a model of ethnic segregation. European policy in Mount Lebanon oscillated between the segregative and cooperative patterns. European pressure to form a Christian and a Druze autonomous subdistrict (*qā'im-maqām*; not feasible in view of the demographic and social realities) and plans for an ethnic *désagrégation* in 1860/1861 stood in the segregative tradition.[51] But the *compositio amicabilis* of the *Règlement Organique* which seems so contradictory to the segregative stream is based on the same basic disposition: the perception and even invention of antagonistic confessions – which probably made the image of an atavistic hostility between Druze and Maronite so attractive to European observers.[52]

Ottoman motivations to install (or to accept the installation of) the system of proportional representation in Mount Lebanon may have been manifold: to meet European wishes and European perceptions; to hark back to old Ottoman traditions of autonomous rule; to replace the policy of ethnic containment with a more refined and efficient system of control and rule. On the whole, it can hardly be said that the installation of the confessionalist regime based on the *Règlement Organique* was a linear and always conscious process – both on the Ottoman and European sides.

One might speculate that the Ottomans followed the techniques of mimicry and assimilation, which have been described above for the field of political terminology, also on the plane of institutions. The Ottoman policy of installing confessionalist institutions may have impressed European observers as an extension of the *millet* system, but indeed it should be seen as a kind of pseudo-milletization. Faced with European pressure and the first signs of nationalist movements it might have seemed wise to cloak ethnic groups into the form of a *millet*, i.e. the perception of ethnic groups (with their potential

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49 Akarlı, *Ottoman Lebanon*, 3.

50 See Ernst Flachbarth, *System des internationalen Minderheitenrechtes. Geschichte des internationalen Minderheitenschutzes – positives materielles Minderheitenrecht,* Budapest 1937, 1-29, for an introduction into the problematics.

51 For details on the complicated negotations leading to the *Règlement Organique* see Farah, *Interventionism*, 675-98.

52 On the European (and Ottoman) invention of an atavistic hatred between Maronites and Druzes see Makdisi, *Sectarianism*, 23, 73, 78, 84, 142, 152, 198 (note 8), 213 (note 8). See for one example on the Ottoman side the report of Muṣṭafā Nūrī Pasha in BBA İrade Mesail-i Mühimme 1128, Varak 3 [1842]: Jabal al-Durūz splits into two factions, ruled by "old enmity" *(ʿadāvet-i ḳadīme)*.

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of mobilizing proto-nationalist movements) was intentionally replaced by the concept of confession.[53] Yet this speculation goes too far, as it takes one cliché, that of the Ottomans as a purely passive and destructive force, to the extremes of an opposite cliché, as the Ottomans as most cunning and highly skilled political actors.

If we conceive as the core of confessionalism the system of representation on a confessional basis then the whole of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century might be described as confessionalist. Councils on a confessional basis were introduced not only in Mount Lebanon, but also in numerous other *Règlements organiques* in the nineteenth century (e.g. Crete in 1867) and in general laws such as the law of 1864 (revised 1867) on the organization of the provinces.[54] Even the earliest imperial decrees for the installation of councils as part of the Tanzimat in the 1840s applied the principle of confessional representation.[55]

Proponents of the Lebanese confessionalist system have argued that confessionalism is so deeply rooted in the Lebanese political culture that its abrogation would be detrimental to the stability of the Lebanese state and democracy.[56] But history shows that the confessionalist principle, so widely practiced in the Ottoman Empire, was not inevitably adopted in the empire's successor states. Therefore, one should indeed reconsider Ghassan Salamé's argument – seemingly anachronistic and myopic at first glance – that confessionalism in the Lebanese republic owed itself to a "quid pro quo of state survival, a protective strategem on the part of the ruling segment [the Maronites: M.R.] to ensure the state survival" in the first years of Greater Lebanon.[57] Confessionalist institutions and devices were installed all over the Ottoman Empire. Why they persisted in some

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53 Roderic Davison, "Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response," in *Nationalism in a Non-National State,* ed. William Haddad and William Ochsenwald, Columbus, Ohio 1977, 40, remarks that treating minority groups as *millets* and not as nationalities was one of seven types of Ottoman reaction to the dissolution of the supra-national structure of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century.

54 See for example articles 59 and 60 where it states that the councils of the elders on the level of the villages shall decide and resolve cases "à l'amiable" (*ṣulḥan tesviye olunur deʿāvī*), which is nothing other than the European principle of *compositio amicabilis*; for the French version of the provincial law see Grégoire Aristarchi, *Législation ottomane ou recueil des lois, réglements, ordonnances, traités, capitulations et autres documents officiels de l'Empire Ottoman par Aristarchi Bey (Grégoire) publiée par Demétrius Nicolaïdes*, 7 vols., Istanbul 1873-1888, II, 283; for the Ottoman version see the collection of Ottoman law codes, *Düstūr*, I, 2nd edition, 1872, 619.

55 A detailed account of the *meclis* institution in the Tanzimat period is given by Stanford J. Shaw, "The Origins of Representative Government in the Ottoman Empire: An Introduction to the Provincial Councils, 1839-1876", in *Near Eastern Round Table 1967-68*, ed. Richard B. Winder, New York 1969, 53-142.

56 Antoine Messarra, *Théorie générale du système politique libanais : Essai comparé sur les fondements et les perspectives d'évolution d'un système consensuel de gouvernement*, Paris 1994, 21; see also his *Le Pacte libanais : Le message d'universalité et ses contraintes,* Beirut 1997, 152ff. – Even clear opponents of confessionalism stress the insurmountability of the deep-rooted confessionalism and therefore tend to mystify it; see for example Makdisi, *Sectarianism*, 174.

57 Ghassan Salamé, "Small is Pluralistic: Democracy as an Instrument of Civil Peace," in *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, ed. Ghassan Salamé, London 1994, 97.

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successor states and not in others, must also be answered in the context of the formation periods of these new states.

The way in which confessionalism in Lebanon is most often described reminds one of the monster of Loch Ness – with the difference of course that reports of the existence of the Lebanese creature are more serious and substantial. We are convinced that the often seriously agitated surface of the lake (i.e. Lebanon) is due to the gigantic limbs of the monster. We are supposed to have seen the limbs of this monster jutting out of the lake many times, but we don't know which part of its body we were confronted with – one foot, the head or the tail? – because we never have seen it in its entirety. We think that it settled in this lake somehow around the nineteenth century. Are we thus dealing with a sea monster that was caught in the lake before its connections with the open sea were barred? Or is the existence of this animal due to the lake's specific fauna and flora? In order to achieve a better understanding of the monster we have to look at the specific characteristics of Loch Ness; we have to investigate into all the other lakes of Scotland (i.e. the Ottoman Empire); and finally to compare it to the many other monsters to be found in the lakes of our world.

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Shifting identities and representations of the nation among the Maronite secular elite in the late Ottoman period

Carol Hakim

In the historiography of early Arab nationalism, the establishment of a separate Lebanese entity in 1920 has traditionally been perceived and presented as an "anomaly" accounted for by an essentialist view of the Maronites portrayed as a distinct separatist community. This view, however, tends to misconstrue the process that led part of the Maronite elite to advance a claim for an independent Greater Lebanon. The latter claim was not, as generally related, the result of a centuries-old dream of the Maronite community, nor did it represent the unanimous and perennial aspirations of the Maronite community presented as a unanimous bloc.[1]

The claim of the Maronite elite to establish an independent Greater Lebanon actually crystallized only a few months ahead of the establishment of such an entity in September 1920. It then came about as the result of a specific combination of circumstances, and represented the culmination of reformist thought and political activity among the Maronite secular elite dating back to the nineteenth century. This activity induced a long and intricate process of self-identification within elite circles, as well as diverse representations of an ideal political community.

Indeed, throughout the late Ottoman period and until World War I, the main motive and impetus of the secular Maronite elite was an aspiration to reform and reorganize a dismal sociopolitical situation according to new concepts of government predicated on ideas of liberty, civil and political rights, and equality, as well as patriotic loyalty in place of religious solidarity. Ambitions to reform the political sphere, led in turn to the emergence of nationalist identities, projections, and assertions, as the new political concepts advocated by the reformist elite implied the elaboration of new concordant politi-

[1] See for example Meir Zamir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon*, London 1988, 38; Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, London 1988, 16.

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cal identities matching the standards of the societies and polities which they wanted to establish.

The maturation and articulation of new identities and nationalist representations therefore appeared and evolved in relation to the lines of the various reformist political programs promoted and in proportion to the geographical spheres to which they were directed. They varied according to the delicate fluctuations in the general situation of the Ottoman Empire, accounting for frequent and sudden shifts in political agendas and identities. Members of the elite therefore elaborated and combined in differing ways various nationalist aspirations and identities, altering and readjusting them according to political circumstances and opportunities.

The diverse nationalist ideals, identifications, and representations adopted by the Lebanese elite thus denoted ideals to be attained, rather than actual realities. The imagined communities, whose historical and actual nationhood began to be asserted, symbolized models for a nation to be created in the future. This future was as yet not distinctly perceived by the elite, and did not anyhow appear to be immediate. Consequently, members of the secular elite remained reluctant to choose between different political and nationalist ideals and identities, which for them remained political options and potential alternatives which could be changed and revised.

Furthermore, these wavering, blurry, and multiple nationalist aspirations and identities reflected the perplexity of their authors as to how to acclimatize their new concepts, mainly derived from the West, to a different sociopolitical reality. They also exposed the conservatism and pragmatism of the intellectual and political elite which essentially looked for ways to improve its environment and which seemed reluctant to challenge altogether the prevailing status quo. Indeed, the would-be nationalists of the Lebanese province were mostly reformers, publicists, and politicians, not revolutionaries. They believed in the power of words, not radical action. Words had transformed them, and they tried through their political writings and activity to influence others in the same way. Moreover, they displayed a certain distrust of the lower classes of their projected nation, and were disinclined to mobilize the masses, preferring to air their opinions in the press, within the framework of elitist clubs, and through diplomatic channels. At best, they believed that the local population needed a long period of preparation and education before being able to assume their assigned role as fellow nationals.

Hence, the period preceding World War I did not witness a Lebanese nationalist movement as such, but an intellectual and speculative nationalist quest among parts of the secular Maronite elite in conjunction with a search for alternative political frameworks. In this respect, the secular Maronite elite did not differ much from other Arab, Syrian, or Palestinian nationalist activists in the Syrian lands. In a similar vein, they wrestled with several agendas, which notably included Ottomanism, Syrianism, and Arabism, until the actual collapse of the Ottoman Empire compelled them to make more definite choices. However, in addition to the agendas contemplated by the other

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inhabitants of the Syrian lands, activists from the Lebanese province devised, and benefited from, another alternative, namely Lebanism, which represented an additional option to Syrianism and Ottomanism, and denoted the particular sphere which they wanted to reform.

Special attention needs to be paid therefore to fluctuations in the empire's situation in order to retrace the delicate and parallel oscillations in political agendas and identities which they elicited among successive generations of reformers. Seen in perspective, some trends in this complex process can be discerned. Ottomanism took root in the region around the middle of the nineteenth century as a wider framework for the reform, development, and consolidation of the whole region and, for many members of the politico-intellectual elite, its significance fluctuated according to the progress made by the Ottoman government in this direction.

As for Syrianism, it similarly emerged after 1860 as a correlate and complement to Ottomanism and represented an additional local pole of sociopolitical identity for many inhabitants of Mount Lebanon and, more generally, for those of Bilād al-Shām. Politically, it derived from a more specific aspiration to reform and advance the Syrian provinces which, in the aftermath of the successive crises that had afflicted them, required particular arrangements for their development and progress within the framework of, and in conjunction with, the rest of the empire. At the same time, Syrianism represented a more tangible focus of identity than the larger Ottoman world and the more elusive Ottoman nation. It provided the most natural solution for those who felt the need to transcend the multifarious divisions of the local populations while reorganizing their immediate political sphere along secular and liberal lines. Most of those who adopted the Syrianist ideal did so because it represented a political project above, and outside the realm of, communalism and local particularisms.

Ottomanism and Syrianism remained closely linked to each other and to the reformist, secular, and liberal ideas that had contributed to their parallel local emergence. As such, Syrianism never really dissociated itself from a liberal view of the Ottomanist concept and somehow followed the same intricate course. For the early reformers, still hopeful and confident that the slow but progressive evolution of the Ottoman Empire toward more secular and liberal norms would lead to its ultimate regeneration, Ottomanism symbolized a genuine hope and commitment. Two decades or so later, under the more repressive and autocratic regime of Abdülhamid II, the liberal and secular Ottomanist policy of the Tanzimat period, aimed at promoting a concept of Ottoman citizenship based on a centralized state, was supplanted by a more traditional and patrimonial one, emphasizing personal loyalty to the person of the sultan, as head of an Ottoman Muslim state composed of looselyknit ethnic, communal, and parochial elements. Ottomanism hence lost much of its appeal for the liberal elite, alienated and disenchanted by this turn of events. However, despite their bitter disappointment most did not forsake their old dream of an eventual regeneration of Syria and the empire, and they continued

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to promote this ideal with an admirable perseverance. After 1908, Syrianism witnessed a new and brief revival parallel to that experienced by the liberal concept of Ottomanism, sustaining the decentralist movements focusing on the Syrian realm which developed in Beirut and among Lebanese and Syrian emigrant circles in Egypt during the last years of the Ottoman Empire.[2]

A first generation of reformers hailing from Mount Lebanon, such as Buṭrus Bustānī, Khalīl Ghānim, Adīb Isḥāq, Fāris Nimr and Yaʿqūb Ṣarrūf and Jurjī Zaydān, had tended, throughout the nineteenth century, to opt for wide political identifications, such as Ottomanism and Syrianism, that matched their ideal of establishing a polity organized around secular and national bonds superseding all other kinship, parochial, religious, and ethnic identities and allegiances. They immersed themselves totally in the new ideas and movements they embraced, and turned their backs on their pasts. They did not meddle in, nor did they then directly affect, the political life of Mount Lebanon. Imbued with a faith in progress, the early reformers believed that their liberal and secular ideas would ultimately and peacefully alter their whole environment, including Mount Lebanon. They were setting the stage for a better future, which they hoped would soon dawn, and had no intention of giving offense, or forcibly reversing communal *ʿaṣabiyya* and religious fanaticism, which they saw as remnants of the past which would inevitably be wiped away by the "spirit of the time." Although their confident optimism turned out to be unwarranted, they nevertheless laid the ground for future generations of Lebanese and Syrians who drew much inspiration from their writings.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, many figures from this first generation of reformers left Syria, driven away by the repressive regime of Abdülhamid. Nonetheless, they continued to promote political and social change in their native lands from the ones they had adopted – especially Egypt, where they established many newspapers. At about the same time, a flow of emigration began out of Mount Lebanon. The majority of those who then left the Mountain were not political *émigrés*. They were mostly peasants and members of the middle and lower bourgeoisie, driven away by recession and the lack of working opportunities. The educated middle class settled in Beirut, or left for Egypt, while the bulk of those emigrants of modest means proceeded to more distant lands, mainly to North and South America.

The emigrants forced to leave Mount Lebanon by the turn of the century were exposed to other cultures and ways of life, which altered their former ways of thinking. They contrasted the societies and polities of their new lands with those of their land of origin and perceived a need to change and reform the latter. At the same time, in their new lands, this second generation of Lebanese emigrants interacted with previous emigrant communities hailing from Bilād al-Shām, and different parts of the Ottoman Empire. As emigrants in a foreign land, sharing the same problems and experiences, they

[2] Syrianism only turned into an independent nationalist project aimed at establishing an independent Syrian entity in the whole region of Bilād al-Shām after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

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had all come closer together and "the Lebanese and the son of the *wilāya* became one in heart and soul."[3]

It was thus in these distant lands that many Lebanese emigrants emerged from their former communal and parochial world, and came to discover, and open up to, their immediate Syrian environment and their larger Ottoman world. They were affected by the liberal reformist and secularist ideas first expounded by Bustānī and his contemporaries and still *en vogue* among emigrant communities abroad. The early writings of Amīn al-Rīḥānī and Khayrallāh Khayrallāh,[4] for example, echoed the general principles expounded by these circles. They similarly bemoaned the divisions in their society, religious fanaticism, the authoritarianism and inefficiency of government, and the ignorance of the masses. Their general panacea for these evils was also very similar, encompassing religious tolerance, the secular organzsation of the political sphere on national bases, administrative reform, and the allocation of offices on the basis of competence, as well as the education of the masses.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the views and ideas of emigrant reformers, combined with the local effects of economic change, recession, and education within Mount Lebanon itself, affected a new rising generation of local intellectuals and members of the bourgeoisie who undertook, in alliance with part of the Mountain's political elite, to question and contest the prevailing status quo supported by the Maronite Church. The latter, which by the middle of the nineteenth century had spearheaded a Lebanist project aiming at establishing a quasi-autonomous Christian entity in Mount Lebanon, had gradually moved away from such a scheme and accommodated itself to the *mutaṣarrifiyya* regime which had tended to preserve its own interests and those of its community. As a result, the church had lost its leading role in support of the advancement of the status of the Lebanese province in favor of the reformist secular elite. The "liberal" Lebanese faction of the elite within the Mountain led its bid for power and change in the name of the modern and progressive ideas circulating in neighboring provinces and among emigrant communities abroad. Their ideas must therefore be studied in conjunction with reformist an, later decentralist currents, as well as the Ottomanist, Syrianist, and Arabist nationalistic notions *en vogue* among members of the elites in Syria, the Ottoman Empire, and the emigrant communities, with which they constantly interacted.

If the Lebanese reformers, scattered within and without Mount Lebanon, who had emerged by the first years of the twentieth century, were in agreement with their predecessors and many of their liberal contemporaries as to the general lines of the reforms required, they too were perplexed regarding the appropriate answers to more specific

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3 Amīn al-Rīḥānī, *al-Qawmiyyāt*, Beirut 1987, (repr.), 128.

4 Amīn al-Rīḥānī, *Shadhāt min ʿahd al-ṣibā*, Beirut 1991, (repr.),153-244; Khayrallah Khayrallah, *La Syrie*, Paris 1912.

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and thorny questions concerning on the means and methods of reform and the social, political, and geographical spheres that needed to be reformed. Nevertheless, some practical considerations directed their search for appropriate answers to the complex questions they encountered. Indeed, by that time, the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon already enjoyed some administrative and financial privileges, to which they were attached and for which they were envied by many in the neighboring Syrian provinces. Therefore, the scope and general lines of the political reform they desired were already almost delineated. If their own local government had drifted toward authoritarianism and arbitrariness, and their administration suffered from corruption and nepotism, some simple modifications to their *règlement* could possibly remedy the situation.

A specifically Lebanist option, aimed at the consolidation and improvement of the autonomous regime of Mount Lebanon, thus began to take form during the first years of the twentieth century. However, this "Lebanon first" option did not imply the abandonment of the other Syrianist and Ottomanist options. Rather, members of the Lebanese elite devised personal and delicately balanced complex solutions, combining in differing proportions various options and identities, each according to his own inclinations, experiences, and interests.

A common solution put forward by many members of the politico-intellectual elite in these pre-1908 years combined an immediate Lebanist political option with more remote Syrianist and Ottomanist options, which corresponded with overt Lebanist, and latent Syrianist and Ottomanist, nationalist identifications. Indeed, the apparent hiatus in the reform process under Abdülhamid, and the disillusionment of most liberals concerning an eventual reform of the empire meeting their expectations, led members of the Lebanese elite to focus their aspirations for political reform on Mount Lebanon, where they hoped, at the very least, to develop and consolidate their local autonomy and economy as a first step in the regeneration of the Syrian and Ottoman lands, or as a basis for eventual emancipation if no change or further deterioration occurred in the empire.[5] Yet, most members of the Lebanese elite continued to identify with the liberal ideal of a regenerated empire and a Syria definitely set upon the path of development and progress, where all inhabitants would enjoy equal civil and political rights and freedoms, and where there would be no need to maintain the particular communal and political regime of Mount Lebanon as a protection for its Christian population against the Muslim majority, or as a guarantee against an ineffective Ottoman administration. These more latent Syrianist and Ottomanist aspirations clearly manifested themselves in 1908 and 1918, when the circumstances for their realization finally seemed favorable.

Indeed, the momentous events that followed the Young Turk coup and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire reveal that, for many members of the secular elite, the "Lebanon

[5] See for example M. Jouplain, *La Question du Liban: Etude d'histoire diplomatique et de droit international,* Paris 1908.

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first" option actually represented something of "lesser evil" and that, in 1908 and 1918, when the Ottomanist and Syrianist options seemed within reach, they proved ready to forsake the Lebanist option for the Ottomanist and Syrianist ones. In both cases, it is only when the Ottomanist and Syrianist alternatives seemed to be in doubt that activists from Mount Lebanon fell back on the Lebanist option.

The Young Turk coup of 1908 ushered in a period of unrest, which ultimately contributed to the demise of the empire ten years later. The old political order and stability were seriously disrupted, while the general situation of the empire gradually became increasingly precarious due to the war in the Balkans and the covetousness of some foreign powers. The 1908 coup therefore shook the Lebanese elite, and brought to the fore their deepest aspirations – as well as their latent apprehensions, contained by the former regime. It upset the delicate balance most had managed to achieve between their multiple political options, allegiances, and identities, and forced them to readjust them incessantly under the pressure of the critical and rapidly changing circumstances that ensued.

At first, the July coup was welcomed by the liberal secular elite both in Mount Lebanon and abroad as they shared in the general enthusiasm that swept the entire empire in the few months following its occurrence. This event, which promised the fulfillment of their long-cherished hopes for a thorough political reform of the empire, reawakened their Ottomanist inclinations. Many, alienated by the constrained and clergy-ridden system of the Mountain, earnestly welcomed the prospect of partaking in the general movement of reform, and some were even prepared to give up their particular political system in order to associate themselves fully with this movement. A rejuvenated empire represented, in their eyes, a more fitting sphere to realize reforms meeting their expectations than the confined polity of the Mountain and its ailing communal and autonomous structures. In fact, the latter could only hamper the full association of the Lebanese with the new anticipated modern and liberal entity. Thus, the special regime of Mount Lebanon, which most had wanted to preserve as a guarantee against fuller integration in the maladministered and autocratic empire of Abdülhamid, now appeared as a barrier against full participation in the anticipated reform movement.

This point of view was defended by several members of the politico-intellectual Lebanese elite, still hopeful, in the wake of the 1908 coup, of the success of the Young Turks' bid to safeguard and elevate the empire. Hence, Dāwūd ʿAmmūn, a future Lebanist activist, argued in private letters to his friends that the situation which obtained in the Mountain subsequent to the 1861/64 *Règlement* was politically and economically unsatisfactory. The Lebanese, he added, had been unable to improve their conditions on their own and, under the circumstances, "d only one choice left to obtain the reforms indispensable to the betterment of their conditions: to trust the Young

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Turks, forsake their autonomous status and accept the liberties that the new constitution offered to all Ottoman subjects."[6]

At the same time, in Cairo and Paris, Lebanese and Syrian members of the elite were establishing Ottoman associations to promote and support a liberal transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a constitutional and parliamentary entity in which all would share equal political and civil rights. Hence, in Paris, Shukrī Ghānim, imbued with the ideas of the Young Ottomans which he had inherited from his brother, Khalīl Ghānim, a former deputy to the 1876 Ottoman parliament, contributed to the formation of a Ligue Ottomane while, in Cairo, several members of the Lebanese and Syrian elite, including Fāris Nimr, Yaʿqūb Ṣarrūf, Dāwūd ʿAmmūn, Rashīd Riḍā and Rāfik al-ʿAẓm, founded a pro-Ottomanist association, al-Iḥyāʾ al-ʿUthmānī.[7] For all of them, the promise of achieving their long-cherished reformist ideals within a liberal Ottoman framework took precedence over all of their other political options.

Within Mount Lebanon, the coup galvanized into activity the liberal anti-clerical and anti-nobility movement which had been crystallizing for some years, loosely regrouping several Maronite politicians, such as Ḥabīb Pasha Saʿd, Salīm Bey ʿAmmūn, Kanʿān Dāhir and Jurj Zuʿayn, scattered cliques of intellectuals, Freemasons, and other disaffected parochial groups. The July coup appeared to them to present a favorable and unhoped-for opportunity to curtail simltaneously the authoritarianism and arbitrariness of the *mutaṣarrif*, and conservative and oppressive influence of the church and the notables. Throughout August and September, the liberals dominated the scene, organizing several banquets and meetings in celebration of the restoration of the constitution. Some, such as Ḥabīb Pasha Saʿd and Shakīb Arslān, actually joined the Beirut committee and strove to establish Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.) branches in the Mountain, rallying several functionaries, office-seekers, and other malcontents.

In September, following a forceful demonstration and the intervention of the C.U.P., they succeeded in imposing upon the *mutaṣarrif*, Yūsuf Pasha, a series of measures, including the proclamation of a constitution in Mount Lebanon. A few days later, they initiated a campaign in favor of the participation of the Mountain in elections to the new Ottoman *majlis*, once again coercing Yūsuf Pasha into compliance. However, this last step divided the ranks of the liberal coalition and caused, in reaction, the formation of a counter-movement opposed to the representation of Lebanon in the Ottoman parliament for fear that this measure might affect the Mountain's privileges.

Indeed, some Lebanese reformers did not share the blind enthusiasm and confidence of their associates. While all wished to benefit from the anticipated reforms augured by the restoration of the constitution and strove to take advantage of the new institutional ideas gaining ground around them in order to modify the obsolete and authoritarian

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6 Lyne Lohéac, *Daoud Ammoun et la création de l'Etat libanais,* Paris 1978, 46-47.

7 See Lohéac, *Daoud Ammoun,* 45; Shukrī Ghānim, *Ecrits politiques*, Beirut 1994, liv.

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regulations of their system, a group of liberals was reluctant to give up their autonomous organization – and the tangible privileges that went with it – for uncertain and problematic constitutional benefits. They preferred to ascertain beyond any doubt the actual achievement of anticipated improvements in the neighboring Syrian provinces and the rest of the empire before surrendering their special status.

The caution of the moderate liberals coincided with that of other sections of the Lebanese population, especially the apprehensive Maronite clergy which had, since the inception of the Young Turk coup, displayed strong misgivings about events in Istanbul and their eventual repercussions on the situation in the Mountain. Supported by the old notability, the Maronite Church altogether disapproved of any change in the autonomous status of the Mountain, or in the political system, concerned that such developments might disturb a status quo, which had tended to favor its own interests. Heartened by divisions in the liberal camp, the church joined forces with the more moderate members of the elite and traditional notables to organize a movement opposed to Lebanese representation in the Ottoman parliament.

In the end, the conservative coalition succeeded in scuttling preparations for the organization of elections and the Ottoman parliament held its opening session in December 1908 without the presence of any Lebanese delegate. Moreover, later developments within the empire, including the attempt by the C.U.P. to impose a more radical strand of Ottomanism – with clear Turkish, and ambivalent Islamic, undertones – and the war waged against it by the Balkan states acutely raised the question of the empire's survival and undermined the appeal and viability of an Ottomanist option. The movement for the integration of Mount Lebanon into the rest of the empire slowly died out, compelling local activists, under the pressure of these shifting circumstances, to consider other alternatives.

As a result, a wider consensus emerged among the elite, both at home and in the diaspora, to attempt to preserve and amend their own regime. While the liberal coalition within the Mountain labored, without much success, to curtail the "despotic" powers of the *mutaṣarrif* and to strengthen the prerogatives of the administrative council, emigrant activists began to form societies aimed at consolidating Mount Lebanon's special administration. Accordingly, in February 1909, members of the Lebanese community in Egypt established the Alliance Libanaise. This association, presided over by Iskandar ʿAmmūn, a distinguished lawyer, included his brother Dāwūd ʿAmmūn, who had by then renounced his fervent Ottomanist ardor, Dāwūd Barakāt, editor-in-chief of *al-Ahrām*, and Yūsuf Sawdā', a lawyer in Alexandria.[8] At the same time, a Comité Libanais emerged in Beirut, while Khayrallāh Khayrallāh, a journalist for *Le Temps*, and

[8] Yūsuf Sawdā', *Fī sabīl al-istiqlāl*, Beirut 1922, 25.

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Shukrī Ghānim, disillusioned by the Young Turk policy,[9] formed another Comité Libanais in Paris. Similarly, in New York, some members of the Lebanese community established yet a third Comité Libanais.

Until the outbreak of World War I, all of the claims presented by the members of these associations and committees never transcended the framework of an extended autonomy to favor full-fledged independence. Indeed, their claims were similar in their nature to the decentralist programmes that emerged simultaneously in other Syrian provinces, aimed at greater participation in local institutions and economic improvement. To meet this latter objective, Lebanese activists began to advance claims for the extension of the territory of the *mutaṣarrifiyya* on the basis of several arguments, including historic rights and economic needs. Yet, all of the territorial claims that emerged then were piecemeal in that they demanded the annexation of either the coastal town of Beirut – and eventually Sidon and Tripoli – the Biqāʿ valley, or some other adjoining district. No demands for a Greater Lebanon that included all three coastal ports and the Biqāʿ, as well as the southern district of Bilād Bishāra, arose during this period.

Finally, many members of the Lebanese associations did not strictly confine their aspirations to change in Mount Lebanon. Indeed, many concurrently lobbied in favor of a larger autonomy for the Syrian and Arab provinces as a whole. The activities of Iskandar ʿAmmūn, who acted simultaneously as president of the Alliance Libanaise and as vice-president of the Ottoman Decentralization Party, established in Cairo in 1913, are typical of such individuals.

The outbreak of World War I opened a new phase in the maturation of nationalist ideals among members of the Lebanese elite worldwide. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the declaration of the Wilsonian principles of self-determination and independence imparted new orientations to, and the further development of, their former aspirations. These events led them to shift from autonomist schemes to projects encompassing the independence of a Greater Syria, or a Greater Lebanon, either which falling largely under the protection of France.

At the same time, these events forced members of the Lebanese elite to realize more clearly and urgently the necessity of making definite choices. They compelled them to re-examine and readjust their diverse political options and multiple identities yet again, and to spell out precisely what they hoped to achieve. However, at this crucial moment, members of the elite continued to be irresolute and divided; they frequently changed their minds, tendering a succession of increasingly elaborate political programs and strongly asserted political identities that varied according to shifting circumstances and perspectives.

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9 "Où sont les espoirs d'antan, d'hier même? Les turcs les ont tués avec leur suffisance et leur exclusivisme," lamented Ghānim. See Adel Isma'il, *Le Liban – Documents diplomatiques et consulaires. Les sources francaises*, Beirut 1975, 30 vols., XIX, 24-5.

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Hence, when at first the prospect of establishing a Greater Syria emerged, many Lebanese argued strongly in favor of the integration of Mount Lebanon within this larger entity, which promised to fulfill their aspirations for a secular and liberal polity, while very few at this time favored the establishment of a Greater Lebanon to cater for its Christian inhabitants. In the following months, subsequent developments led most to retreat into intransigent separatism and to fall back on the Greater Lebanon option under French supervision.

It was only in 1917, when the situation began to clarify and the Allies' victory seemed assured, that Lebanese emigrants abroad began to mobilize. Given that Mount Lebanon was still under Ottoman rule, the emigrants initiated – and thereafter greatly influenced – a campaign to plan for the future of Lebanon, establishing several associations to achieve their aims. On June 16, some Lebanese and Syrians in Paris decided to form a Comité Central Syrien (C.C.S.), headed by Shukrī Ghānim. At the same time, the League for the Liberation of Syria and Lebanon was established in New York, with Ayyūb Thābit as its president and with Amīn al-Rīḥānī as its vice-president. Meanwhile, in Egypt, several Syrian committees emerged in various Egyptian towns, and then regrouped in a Conseil des Comités Libano-Syriens d'Egypte presided over by a Maronite notable, ʿAbdallāh Ṣfayr, and including several other Lebanese and Syrians, such as Ḥaqqī al-ʿAẓm, Alphonse Zenié and Edgard Ṭawīl. All of these committees called for the independence of a unified Greater Syria, which included Lebanon, under the aegis of France.[10] Concurrently, some members of the Alliance Libanaise, "surprised by the tendency of these milieux to assimilate Syria and Lebanon under one same government," decided to reactivate their association – first established in 1909 to safeguard the autonomous status of the Mountain – and to advocate the independence of a Greater Lebanon within its "natural and historical" frontiers under the guaranty of the Powers.[11]

Hence, during the last months of World War I, ideas and programs took shape which would preoccupy Lebanese attention until the actual establishment of the Lebanese and Syrian states in 1920: an independent Arab Greater Syria, governed by Fayṣal, and closely linked to the Arab kingdom of Sharīf Ḥusayn; an independent Greater Syria, under French or Western aegis, and politically dissociated from any future Arab kingdom; and a Greater Lebanon, sponsored by France and disconnected from the rest of Syria and the Arab world. While very few rallied to the first alternative, the second and third options deeply divided their ranks and provoked heated debate between the partisans of a Greater Syria and those of a Greater Lebanon.

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10 *Correspondance d'Orient* 167 (June 10, 1917) and 172 (August 25, 1917); Comite Central Syrien, *L'effort syrien pendant la guerre,* Paris 1919, 5-6.

11 Alliance Libanaise, *L'Alliance Libanaise d'Egypte et la question du Liban*, Cairo 1921, 6.

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The most intense polemic arose within the Lebanese community in Egypt,[12] where the Alliance Libanaise launched its campaign for an independent Greater Lebanon. The viewpoint of this particular association was then clearly in the minority.[13] Indeed, as soon as the prospect of establishing a Greater Syria emerged, many former members of the Alliance left the organization, preferring to join the various Syrian committees. Explaining the reasons for such a change of heart, a former member of the Alliance wrote at the time:

> Before the war, every wholehearted and sensible Lebanese had to be a member of the *Alliance Libanaise*, whose programme was to defend the privileges of the Mountain, constantly threatened by the bad faith of the Turks. Since the war, every wholehearted and sensible Lebanese has to cease to be a member of an association that no longer has any purpose, for, with the victory of France and its allies, not only Lebanon, but the whole of Syria, is to obtain the most complete and comprehensive liberation.

Many among the Lebanese, he finally concluded, "who like myself used to belong to this association before the war, have now detached themselves from it."[14] Another former member of the Alliance, Edgard Ṭawīl, wrote a book criticizing the proponents of a Greater Lebanon, who, he remarked, were trying to take advantage of the situation to irrevocably confirm the artificial partition of Lebanon from Syria. Based on the fact that Lebanon had enjoyed a certain autonomy since 1860, he added, the members of this group were advancing untenable geographic and ethnographic arguments to sustain their point of view. However, he went on, this autonomy had actually been a makeshift arrangement which had not favored progress and civilization. Moreover, he concluded,

> How and by what means will a people confined to a landlocked rock live on without industry, without resources. Lebanon may be independent in name, but it will surely be a vassal in fact. Let it not be imagined that the Lebanese territory could be enlarged, that it could encroach upon the coast and the Biqāʿ valley. In this game, one might as well call Syria Lebanon and Lebanon Syria.[15]

Others dismissed the Greater Lebanon project – and the Zionist project for that matter – as the embodiment of narrow and obsolete ethnic and confessional programs. Thus, the Egyptian Central Committee wrote: "One cannot invoke the political and ethnic divisions of antiquity to divide us into circumscribed regions and to condemn us to going back 20, 30, or even 40 centuries, to the time of the Hebrews, the Phoenicians and the

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12 The Lebanese community in Egypt, numbering some 35,000 before the war, represented the most numerous and most active Lebanese community abroad.

13 Yūsuf Sawdā', one of the most vocal member of this small association, reckoned as much in his memoirs. See *Fī sabīl.*

14 *Journal du Caire* (n.d.) as reproduced in *Correspondance d'Orient* 203 (December 10, 1918).

15 Edgard Ṭawīl, *La Syrie*, Alexandria 1918, 12.

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Chanaens."[16] For his part, Amīn al-Rīḥānī in New York equally denounced the communalist mentality of the proponents of a separation of Lebanon from Syria. In words expressing the multiple identities characterizing most Lebanese at the time, he wrote: "I am Syrian first, Lebanese second, and Maronite after that. I am Syrian, claiming the unity of Syria, nationally, geographically and politically. I am a Syrian whose homeland is Lebanon... and who relies for his religion on God alone."[17]

Thus, from 1917 until 1920, the ideal of Greater Syria seems to have been prevalent among Lebanese emigrant communities abroad. This alternative offered more promise of fulfilling the dream, long-cherished by many, to establish a secular, modern and prosperous entity, "a great and beautiful homeland,"[18] which would bring together all of its diverse elements, than the limited – and communally based – Lebanese sphere of the Mountain, from which most had grown alienated. Finally, as many noted, Lebanon could not be economically dissociated from its Syrian hinterland.[19]

However, the Lebanese proponents of a Greater Syria realized that their "dream" was only an ideal and that many concrete obstacles hampered its realization. Indeed, even though the idea of establishing a Greater Syria captivated them, they nevertheless feared that the many communal and ethnic divisions would soon engulf the prospective Syrian entity. At the same time, they feared the transformation of their ideal Syrian entity into a new Islamic state, dominated by the Muslim element, whereas what they had in mind was the establishment of a secular nation-state, following the Western model, where all inhabitants would enjoy equal rights. This is why they looked for the support of some Western Power – preferably France – which they naively believed would generously and altruistically help them to establish such an ideal entity.

"A feeling of national unity," opined for example the Egyptian Central Syrian Committee, "did not exist in Syria, but needed to be created." All those who asserted the ability of the Syrians to govern themselves independently, it added, did not base their argument on serious grounds. They only proceeded by analogy, arguing that if other people, such as the Greeks, the Serbs, and other Balkan nations, had proven capable of doing so, then the Syrians should also be able to do the same. However, the committee commented, they seemed to forget that these "populations were homogeneous, united by

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16 Conseil des Comités Libano-Syriens d'Egypte (Cairo, January 10, 1919), in: *Correspondance d'Orient* 207 (February 15, 1919).

17 Rīḥānī, al-*Qawmiyyāt,* 152.

18 Ghānim, *Ecrits politiques,* 202.

19 Several books testifying to the popularity of the Greater Syria idea appeared at the time, such as *La Syrie de Demain* by Nadra Moutran, *La Syrie* by Jacques Tabet, *La Syrie* by Edgar Ṭawil, and *La Syrie* by Georges Samné.

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racial and religious links, and unanimous in their national aspirations," whereas Syria lacked all these essential conditions and was composed of diverse and rival sects.[20]

Undismayed by the wide attraction of the ideal of a Greater Syria, a few members of the Alliance persisted in their line of thinking. However, their claims shifted from the consolidation of the autonomous status of Mount Lebanon, within the framework of the empire, to the total independence of an enlarged Lebanon. The boundaries of this prospective Lebanese entity were clearly delimited, according to a map drawn in 1860 by a French general that Lebanese activists had just rediscovered and which they presented as the "natural and historical frontiers of Lebanon." At the same time, the Lebanist discourse developed a comprehensive legitimizing history, stretching from the days of their alleged forefathers, the Phoenicians, to the present.

In the end, the enterprising campaigns of the emigrants to gain support for their respective ideals did little to influence the ultimate determination of the fate of Lebanon and Syria. Their views did, however, have an important impact in Mount Lebanon and its neighbouring provinces, where the ideas first adopted and circulated by the emigrants gained wide currency. Furthermore, during the ensuing months, the conflicting aspirations of the Lebanese elite within the Mountain and abroad were reconciled as a result of concrete developments in Mount Lebanon and Syria.

Indeed, developments in the Syrian lands, including the arrival of Fayṣal in Damascus and the pretensions of this scion of a *bona fide* Islamic dynasty to preside over the destinies of the projected Syrian entity, as well as the popular development of an Arab nationalism with Muslim undertones, undermined the prospect of establishing a Western-oriented and secular Greater Syria. As a result, members of the Lebanese secular elite, despairing of being able to fulfill their aspirations under the circumstances, gradually fell back on the Greater Lebanon option. Moreover, attacks by armed bands of the Arab army on Christian villages in the Biqāʿ and the south in 1919-1920, reawakened the fears of Christians living in these regions and abroad and prompted most to rally resolutely around the idea of a Greater Lebanon, under French aegis, which promised to offer better protection to the Christians. A typical example of such a reversal is that of ʿAbdallāh Ṣfayr, who dissolved the Egyptian Syrian Central Committee in July 1920 to form instead a Comite de Defense des Droits du Grand Liban. Shukrī Ghānim followed suit shortly thereafter.

Thus, it was only during the few months preceding the establishment of Greater Lebanon, and under the pressure of rapidly changing events, that the Lebanese Maronite elite and most of the population of Lebanon rallied to the idea of an independent Greater

[20] Requête des Comités Libano-Syrien d'Egypte (Cairo January 10, 1019), in *Correspondance d'Orient* 207 (February 15, 1919).

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Lebanon. Such an outcome was not at all predetermined or inevitable and, with hindsight, other outcomes could well be envisaged, had events in Syria during the pivotal years of 1919-1920 not taken such a sharp turn.

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FROM EARLY RESISTANCE TO RADICAL NATIONALISM IN SYRIA

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The northern Syrian revolts of 1919-1921 and the Sharifian regime: congruence or conflict of interests and ideologies?

Fred H. Lawson

Existing studies of the popular uprisings that swept across the countryside southwest of Aleppo beginning in the fall of 1919 assume that these rebellions represented local expressions of an embryonic Arab nationalist movement, whose primary aim was to prevent France from overthrowing the government that had been set up in Damascus by Amīr Fayṣal bin al-Ḥusayn and his allies. Iḥsān Hindī, for instance, reports that the partisans who mobilized under the leadership of Ibrāhīm Hanānū in early 1920 were inspired by a call "to defend the honor of the nation (*li'l-difāʿ ʿan sharaf al-waṭan*) and to protect its space and the nobility of its people by resisting the mandate of the loathesome French."[1] Philip Khoury claims that "under the influence of Ibrāhīm Hanānū and other leaders of a similar political persuasion, Aleppo's Muslim elite gradually assumed an Arab national identity. The decisive watershed in its conversion was not, however, the Arab Revolt of 1916, but what has come to be known in Syrian nationalist historiography as the 'Hanānū revolt'."[2] Abdul-Karim Rafeq is more categorical: "Unlike the Bedouin, the Syrian peasantry, especially in the mountainous areas, were in full revolt against the French in support of the Arab government of Fayṣal."[3]

Yet it appears misleading to characterize the guerrilla bands that emerged around Aleppo in 1919-1921 as unambiguously Arab nationalist or pro-Sharifian. Khoury remarks that "the northern Syrian resistance movement was far more influenced by the

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1 Iḥsān Hindī, *Kifāḥ al-shaʿb al-ʿarabī al-sūrī 1908-1948*, Damascus 1962, 71.

2 Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, Princeton 1987, 106.

3 Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Arabism, Society and Economy in Syria 1918-1920," in: *State and Society in Syria and Lebanon*, ed. Youssef M. Choueiri, New York 1993, 18.

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Turkish nationalist movement than it was by the Arab nationalist movement."[4] He goes on to say that "religious solidarity with the Turks, at least in northern Syria, was especially strong" at this time.[5] James Gelvin likewise underscores the connection between the Hanānū movement and the Turkish nationalists led by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), as well as highlighting the explicitly religious idiom in which the former couched most of its public appeals.[6] Anomalies such as these lead Keith Watenpaugh to assert that the Hanānū revolt was motivated not so much by Arab nationalism as it was by "a profound desire for the cleansing of the Ottoman Empire of alien forces; it stood for the social, religious and territorial integrity of the Ottoman state and the institutions it articulated, primarily the Sultan-Caliphate; and it called for the unmitigated Muslim sovereignty of that state."[7] Only later, and in very different historical circumstances, was the myth constructed of Ibrāhīm Hanānū as a paragon of Arab nationalism.[8]

This chapter revisits the declared objectives and programs espoused by the popular movement that appeared in northern Syria on the eve of the French occupation. Like Watenpaugh's account, it is skeptical that the guerrillas who took up arms during these months harbored much sympathy for the Sharifian authorities; as Khoury remarks, "the reluctance of Aleppine notables to jump on the nationalist bandwagon was compounded by resentment at the predominance of Damascus during the Fayṣal era."[9] Nevertheless, it finds little utility in depicting Ṣubḥī Barakāt, Ibrāhīm Hanānū, and their comrades as a cadre of Last Ottomans. If nothing else, the activities of the guerrillas who took part in the revolts belie the claim that the primary objective of the movement was to promote "a return to a decentralized Ottoman polity dominated by Muslims, which would protect [the local elite's] hegemony as land-owning rural notables or up and coming bureaucrats."[10] Those who fought against the coming of the French intended not to rehabilitate a rapidly disintegrating Old Regime, but instead to forge a new political order in northern Syria in the wake of the withdrawal of British troops from the region. The puzzle is to figure out just what sort of order.

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4 Khoury, *Syria*, 105.

5 Ibid., 107.

6 James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, Berkeley 1998, 133-4.

7 Keith D. Watenpaugh, Bourgeois Modernity, "Historical Memory and Imperialism," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA 1999, 155.

8 Birgit Schaebler, "Coming to Terms with Failed Revolutions," *MES* 35 (1999).

9 Khoury, *Syria*, 104.

10 Watenpaugh, "Bourgeois Modernity," 186.

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National character of the revolts

Contemporaneous reports concerning the events that set the stage for the northern Syrian uprisings of 1919-1921 illustrate the difficulties that arise if one asserts that the revolts were categorically Arab in character. The commander of the British expeditionary force in Syria, General Sir Edmund H. Allenby, informed his superiors in March 1919 that throughout the preceding winter "propaganda by agents of the Committee of Union and Progress has been active [in the districts around Aleppo], and armed bands of brigands are not uncommon in these provinces."[11] An American clergyman who traveled from Haifa to Tyre in the company of Amīr Fayṣal's aide-de-camp, Nūrī al-Saʿīd, that February observed that the trip "was considered extremely dangerous on account of the highway being infested with Turkish bandits." The partisans received both moral and material support from the leader of "Turkish nationalist" forces at Bourejik, Polat Bey, whom United States officials identified as the "Circassian Chief of Turkish 'chetehs'," a term that carried the derogatory connotation of "bandit" or "brigand."[12] His followers, the U.S. consul at Aleppo remarked in May 1920, consisted of "an exceedingly mixed class of men," including Turks, Kurds, Circassians and Arabs.[13] Similarly, it was a heterogeneous guerrilla formation made up of Kurds and Arabs that attacked the French military outposts at Qaraq Khān and Ḥammām that February.[14]

Throughout the winter and spring of 1919-20, Arab and Kurdish partisans based in the countryside around Aleppo co-ordinated their operations with the Turkish nationalist militias (Kuvay-i Milliye) under the nominal command of Polat Bey.[15] Such tactical collaboration had begun the previous fall, when US military intelligence reported that "in the region of Alexandretta Kemalist propaganda, which aims at a religious war, extends throughout that region and a few, fearing reprisals, have joined the Kemalist forces."[16] Among the many guerrilla formations that were active during the first half of 1920 was one led by "Ḥilmī Bey, formerly a Major in the Turkish Army, and lately holding the position of Captain in the Arab Army, and in recent months Arab Commander at Mouslimie, where he directed the movement of the 'chetehs' against the

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11 US National Archives (USNA), RG 165, box 1497, 2558-10; Public Record Office (PRO), WO 95/4372, Dec. 24, 1918.

12 USNA, RG165, box 1497, 2558-30; Masayuki Yama'uchi, "Reflections on the Social Movements during the National Liberation War of Turkey," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* (Tokyo), no. 15 (1979), 39.

13 USNA, RG 165, box 723, 2044-51.

14 PRO, WO 106/196, March 2, 1920.

15 USNA, RG 59, 890d.00/58; Robert F. Zeidner, "The Tricolor Over the Taurus," unpublished Ph. D. dissertation., University of Utah 1991, 403.

16 USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-38.

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French."[17] Meanwhile, a band of Kurds led by one Aḥmad Bey, the son of ʿUmar Agha, confronted a French detachment that was attempting to seize control of Antioch and its environs.[18] The U.S. consul at Aleppo reported that summer "that the Arabs and Bedouins [of the districts around Idlib] are being visited by propagandists under [the] pay of Mustafa Kemal Pasha."[19] In fact, U.S. officials tended to use the terms "cheteh" and "Turk" interchangeably to refer to the guerrillas as the year went by.[20]

One exception to this rule appears to have been the units commanded by Ṣubḥī Barakāt, which are invariably referred to as "Arab nationalist bands operating between Aleppo and Antioch."[21] British military intelligence observed that Barakāt's supporters enjoyed particularly close ties to the Sharifian government, which had deployed regular troops and set up caches of small arms in the villages outside Antioch in December 1918.[22] It is even reported that one prominent commander in the district, Aḥmad Ḥamdī, "formerly Captain in the Turkish gendarmerie in Aleppo, and more recently a notorious chief of 'chetehs'," quickly fell out with Barakāt and transferred his allegiance to the French.[23] Equally Arab in character were the guerrilla forces led by ʿUmar al-Bīṭār and Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Qassām, which consisted almost exclusively of Sunnis drawn from the villages surrounding Latakia.[24]

By contrast, the popular movement associated with Ibrāhīm Hanānū is consistently portrayed as fundamentally heterogeneous in national terms. A substantial proportion of the first group of fighters to take up arms consisted of deserters from the Ottoman armed forces.[25] A broadsheet distributed around Aleppo in October 1919 called on Turks and Arabs to "put an end to this misunderstanding ['between the sons of one religion'], and ...stretch our hands to make peace together and point our arms towards the traitors who wish to tear up Islam."[26] French military intelligence listed Arabs, Kurds, and Turks among the guerrilla formations that were active around Idlib in the spring of 1920.[27] Units under Hanānū's command co-operated closely with the *kuvay-i milliye* in the area between Antioch and Latakia toward the end of the year.[28] The U.S. consul in Aleppo

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17 USNA, RG 59, 890d.00/37.

18 USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-30.

19 USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-39.

20 USNA, RG 59, 890d.00.58.

21 USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-24; Elie Kedourie, *England and the Middle East*, London 1956, 170.

22 PRO, WO 95/4372, Dec. 27, 1918.

23 USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-30.

24 Basheer M. Nafi, "Shaykh ʿIzz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8 (1997), 185-215.

25 Adḥam al-Jundī, *Tārīkh al-thawrāt al-Sūrīya*, Damascus 1960, 64.

26 British Documents on Foreign Affairs, Part II, Series B (BDFA), Lantham, Md. 1985, vol. 1, 164.

27 PRO, WO 106/196, March 2, 1920; PRO FO 861/68, Dec. 11, 1920.

28 USNA, RG 59, 890d.00/58; BDFA, 2:186.

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reported in January 1921 that "the various bands now operating in the [countryside around the city] were, a few months ago, local affairs; however, at this time they are absolutely working in unison with the Turks in the national movement [led by Mustafa Kemal]."[29] One of Hanānū's chief lieutenants, Ṭāhir al-Kayyālī, organized and led what Gelvin calls a "pro-Kemalist band" that fought the French for control of Idlib during these months.[30]

National heterogeneity was just as evident in the leadership of the movement as it was in the ranks. Besides Hanānū, whose background was Kurdish, early field commanders included Aḥmad bin ʿUmar (also a Kurd), Najīb ʿUwaid (another Kurd), ʿUmar Bihār (an Arab) and Shaʿbān Agha (a Turk).[31] By the spring of 1921, the popular uprisings in the north were being directed by a remarkably diverse assortment of military commanders, including not only Hanānū himself but also Muṣṭafā Assim (a former Arab officer in the Ottoman armed forces), Ramaḍān ibn Shalāsh (an influential Bedouin chieftain from Dayr al-Zūr with close ties to the Turkish nationalists), and at least three senior Turkish officers (Rashīd Bey, ʿĀqif Bey, and Khulussi Bey).[32] Even more intriguing is the example of Ṣubḥī Barakāt, who, despite persistent reports linking him to the Arab government in Damascus, consistently comported himself as a Turk.[33]

Islam and the revolts

Those who joined the uprisings in the north tended to express their reasons for taking up arms against the French through the use of Islamic terms and symbols. In the words of Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "die Religion spielte bei der Motivierung der Rebellen eine wichtige Rolle."[34] As early as October 1919, a British intelligence officer noted that for "the vast majority of Moslems Arab Nationalism and Islamism are synonymous terms."[35] Northern Syrian partisans sympathetic to the Turkish nationalist movement circulated a proclamation that month in which they expressed an intention "to save the Country and Islamism from the hands of the enemies who think that our Country is a 'Digestible mouthful'." The circular went on to promise that "the *Mujāhidīn* who trust in

29 USNA, RG 59, 890d.00/61; RG 165, box 1658, 2657-EE-39.

30 Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 85.

31 USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-30; box 1658, 2657-EE-45; 2657-EE-47; PRO, FO 141/440, Feb. 7, 1921.

32 USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-63.

33 Sami M. Moubayed, *The Politics of Damascus 1920-1946*, Damascus 1999, 44.

34 Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Politische Macht in Syrien 1918-1925," in *Der Nahe Osten in der Zwischenkriegszeit 1919-1939*, ed. Linda Schatkowski Schilcher and Claus Scharf, Stuttgart 1989, 479.

35 BDFA, vol. 1, 163.

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the Right will soon be visitors of their Arab brethren, and will scatter away the enemy."[36] Gelvin points out that overtly religious rhetoric and imagery proliferated in the posters and broadsheets that were distributed in the cities and towns of northern Syria following the departure of the King-Crane Commission.[37]

Hanānū himself invoked Islamic solidarity as the basis for tactical cooperation with the Turkish nationalists. The contingent of Turks that joined the ranks of the Hanānū movement carried a banner emblazoned with the fraternal motto "Believers are Brothers."[38] Armed struggle against French occupation was from the outset designated a *jihād* and the fighters adopted the appellation *mujāhidīn*. Guerrillas led by Hanānū marched into battle to the strains of the Muslim call to prayer, while anyone who fought alongside the French was branded an apostate.[39] In addition, local commanders convinced villagers to join the revolt by disseminating reports of the abuse and discrimination routinely inflicted upon Muslim (Algerian) soldiers in the French armed forces.[40]

As the uprisings went on, the guerrillas heightened their appeals to Islam as a way to offset the organizational and technological advantages enjoyed by their adversaries. U.S. military intelligence noted in the fall of 1920 that in the districts around Alexandretta "arrests have been made of Nationalist agents while distributing Korans to the Algerian soldiers in the French Army."[41] By January 1921, there were signs that partisans outside Aleppo had started to coordinate their activities with units of the Green Army (Yeşil Ordu), an irregular military formation sponsored by the Turkish nationalist leadership in Ankara, whose adherents espoused a program that blended a variety of socialist, populist, and Islamic themes.[42]

In all of these ways, the northern revolts resembled a number of uprisings that broke out along the Syrian coast in the months immediately after World War I. One such rebellion involved a guerrilla band organized by Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Qassām. Basheer Nafi records that the formation that coalesced under al-Qassām's leadership, "which took the village of Zanqufa as its base, consisted mainly of his disciples and a few relatives. During a year-long struggle against the French," Nafi' continues, "al-Qassam introduced his followers to a combined religious and military training and implanted in them a strong sense of *jihād*."[43]

Heightened religious enthusiasm spilled over into other aspects of daily life in northern Syria in the wake of the revolts. The British consul in Aleppo noted in September

[36] *Ingiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk* (IBA), Ankara, 1992, vol. 1, 215.

[37] Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 185-188.

[38] Rafeq, "Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Politische Macht," 479.

[39] Ibid., 480.

[40] USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-31.

[41] USNA, RG165, box1498, 2558-38.

[42] George S. Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey*, Stanford 1967, 69-70.

[43] Nafi, "Shaykh ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Qassām."

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1921 that "the Moslems of Aleppo, who until lately used to trade on Friday, now close all their shops on that day. This simultaneous action," he went on, "is due to an awakening of religious fervour and to higher orders, and to me indicates a drawing away from the Aleppo Christians, with whom they had always been on a footing of intimacy owing to identity of language, customs and race."[44] Somewhat earlier, it was reported that the city's residents objected to the new state flag introduced by the French, on the grounds that it failed to incorporate the Islamic crescent into its design.[45]

Notions of independence

As early as October 1919, political activists in Aleppo expressed firm support for the creation of a new kind of political entity to supersede the crumbling Ottoman Empire. Iḥsān al-Jābirī told Gertrude Bell during her visit to the city that month that the leaders of the municipality favored the establishment of "a nominal Turkish suzerainty over all Arab provinces combined with decentralized Arab administration under British protection."[46] A handbill distributed at the time proposed "to join together the parts [of the empire] which belong to Turkey against Wilson's principles," and asserted the nation's "right to the Caliphate."[47] The chief of Aleppo's police, Colonel Shākir Niʿmat al-Shaʿbānī, cabled Mustafa Kemal's headquarters in Ankara at the end of the year to propose that Turks and Arabs work together to win "Syrian independence (Palestine included) with some form of link with the Caliphate or with both the Caliphate and the Sultanate."[48] On the basis of evidence like this, a British intelligence officer in Damascus concluded that "the majority of the Moslems in the Aleppo *vilāyet*, and a very large number in the *vilāyet* of Damascus, are in sympathy with Turkish aspirations, and would prefer union with Turkey to being under an unpopular European Power."[49] Growing awareness of the common interests that joined the Turkish and Arab resistance movements led to the translation into the Arabic language of Celal Nuri's 1913 treatise *Ittihad-i Islam*, which "urged Turco-Arab unity against European imperialism."[50]

Such sentiments appear to have been shared by the inhabitants of the towns and villages surrounding Aleppo on the eve of the Hanānū revolt. The guerrillas who con-

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44 PRO, FO 371/6456, Sept. 27, 1921.

45 PRO, FO 141/440, Feb. 7, 1921.

46 USNA, RG 165, box 1658, 2657-EE-17.

47 BDFA, 1:164.

48 Sina Aksin, "Turkish-Syrian Relations in the Time of Fayṣal (1918-20)," *Turkish Yearbook of International Relations,* 20 (1980-81), 7.

49 BDFA, vol. 1, 163.

50 Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks*, Berkeley 1997, 204.

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fronted the French at Idlib in February 1920 reportedly had as their primary objectives "the total expulsion of the French from Cilicia, the complete integrity of the Turkish Empire, and [the] propagation of pan-Islamism."[51] The leader of a major guerrilla formation operating northwest of Aleppo, ʿAlī Shāfiq (Özdemir), received a directive from Ankara that same month in which "Mustafa Kemal assert[ed] that the proposition to secure, through united action, the independence of Syria, Iraq and Turkey and form a confederation or some other form of union later to be decided upon, had been accepted and detailed instructions had been sent."[52]

Similar aspirations can be found in the most significant statement issued by the leadership of the Hanānū movement. At the end of March 1921, Ibrāhīm Hanānū – along with two other senior guerrilla commanders, Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī and Sayf al-Dīn al-Hilāl – issued a pronouncement that was delivered to the British, Italian, Spanish, and American consuls at Aleppo. The proclamation contained the following statement:

> The Syrian Nation reiterates now its categoric refusal for any foreign protectorate or mandate, and protests against the presence of the French and other mandates in its country, because the nation is able to govern itself alone, as shown by proofs, notwithstanding the political intrigues which have existed from the time of the signature of the Armistice until the French occupation of its country, and because the Nation possesses able men and specialists in military and civil life as well as technicians; because of its proper wealth and the resources of the country and the fertility of its soil; and on account of the proximity of the High Islamic Caliphate, which helps the Nation, and it considers itself a part of this general Islamic Union, defending itself under the flag of the latter as is seen now in the vicinities of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and all the other parts of Syria.[53]

Some sort of amalgamation with Turkey continued to be a goal of prominent northern Syrian activists even after the suppression of the Hanānū movement. In March 1922, for instance, a delegation of notables from Alexandretta petitioned the Turkish nationalist leadership in Ankara to integrate that city into the territory governed by the Grand National Assembly.[54] Partisans with close ties to Ankara continued to carry out armed incursions in the countryside around Aleppo throughout that summer, in an effort to persuade the French authorities to cede the district to Turkey.[55] Such sentiments remained widespread in Syria's northern marches as late as World War II.[56]

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51 BDFA, vol. 1, 276.

52 Aksin, "Turkish-Syrian Relations," 11.

53 USNA, RG 59, 890d.00/74; 890d.00/76.

54 IBA, vol. 4, 225.

55 IBA, vol. 4, 360.

56 Fred H. Lawson, "Westphalian Sovereignty and the Emergence of the Arab States System: The Case of Syria," *The International History Review*, 22 (2000).

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Social programs of the uprisings

Contemporaneous observers almost always labeled the guerrillas who took up arms following the British withdrawal from northern Syria "*chetes*." Yet the fighters who took part in the popular movement in the countryside outside Aleppo engaged in a wide variety of activities that transcend conventional notions of banditry. Furthermore, the leaders of the movement took firm steps to prevent the spread of outright lawlessness among the fighters under their command.[57]

At the outset of the revolt centered in Ḥarīm, Ibrāhīm Hanānū and his colleagues set up an administrative committee to supervise the collection and disbursement of all exactions and donations that were received in support of the guerrillas.[58] Later on, as the movement gained momentum, an informal "government" coalesced in the village of Armanaz "to organize administrative and financial affairs."[59] This body, which met under the auspices of the local *qā'im-maqām*, levied and collected taxes from property holders in the area until it was finally abolished by French troops.

One way in which foreign officials summarized the principles associated with the movement was to equate them with the program being advanced concurrently by the radical socialists of revolutionary Russia. In May 1920, for instance, a U.S. military intelligence officer wrote that the cities of Hama and Homs were now "controlled by [a] radical element with bolshevik tendencies."[60] "Bolshevik" circulars said to bear the signature of Lenin were confiscated by the French military authorities in Aleppo that December.[61] These handbills reportedly exhorted "the people [of the city] to take up Bolshevism as a means to fight the French, thereby saving the East for the Mohammedans."[62]

As the struggle against French occupation became more desperate in the spring of 1921, guerrilla commanders ordered that conscripts be inducted to fill the ranks of the fighting units. One such recruitment drive was carried out in the area around the village of Quṣayr.[63] Arab notables of Aleppo who were abducted while passing through guerrilla territory in the company of Europeans were regularly "robbed" of their valuables, although they were almost always subsequently released unharmed.[64] By the summer,

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57 Rafeq, "Arabism, Society and Economy," 20.

58 Al-Jundī, *Tārīkh al-thawrāt*, 65.

59 Ibid., 66.

60 USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-22.

61 PRO, FO 861/68, Dec. 11, 1920.

62 USNA, RG 59, 890d.00/58.

63 USNA, RG 165, box 1658, 2657-EE-44.

64 PRO, FO 371/6455, Jun. 24, 1921.

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partisan bands were requisitioning crops from the fields around Aleppo.[65] Activities like these engendered increasing anxiety among the city's elite, many of whose members began to distance themselves from the movement as the year went by.

The Sharifian regime and the revolts in the north

Relations between the Arab nationalist leadership in Damascus and the popular movement that arose in northern Syria in 1919-21 remain hard to decipher. Malcolm Russell observes that the Sharifian authorities at times forcibly detained guerrilla commanders who visited the capital during the first months following World War I, "in order to preserve relations with France."[66] Immediately after the October 1919 evacuation of British troops from Syria, the Damascus government issued orders to local partisans to desist from organizing and otherwise displaying their disdain for the French.[67] On the other hand, there is some evidence indicating that the Sharifian regime on occasion provided both material and moral support for guerrilla activities in the countryside as 1919 went by.[68]

The Arab nationalist leadership's posture toward the guerrillas became somewhat more coherent as the 1920 began. In January, Fayṣal directed the commanders of partisan units to stop their subordinates from attacking French military positions, so as not to provide the enemy with a pretext for launching a full-scale invasion of Syria.[69] That same month, in an address to the Arab Club of Damascus, he opened his remarks by seconding an earlier speaker's praise for the famous guerrilla leader Maḥmūd al-Fāʿūr of al-Qunayṭira: "Maḥmūd had withdrawn to the desert, long-suffering and silent, but when he was wronged he rose up and quietly did just what I want the nation to do." But Fayṣal quickly turned his admonition to the audience in a markedly different direction: "I ask the nation and the youth to cooperate with and support my government, which will lead them to prosperity; do what al-Fāʿūr did in his quiet way; refrain from multiplying words and attacking anyone with tongue or newspaper article; and trust the government."[70] That February, Fayṣal promised the French high commissioner in Beirut, General Henri Gouraud, that he would take steps to restrain the guerrilla forces operating in

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65 USNA, RG 165, box 1581, 2655-EE-38.

66 Malcolm B. Russell, *The First Modern Arab State*, Minneapolis 1985, 72.

67 *Al-ʿĀṣima*, November 27, 1919.

68 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 109.

69 Ibid., 128.

70 Abū Khaldūn Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī, *The Day of Maysalun*, Washington, DC 1966, 115.

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western and northern Syria, if Gouraud would in turn agree to withdraw his troops from the disputed but strategically important district around Rayyāq and Muʿallaqa.[71]

As tensions between Damascus and the French escalated during the spring, Fayṣal persistently refused to authorize the use of guerrilla warfare as a bargaining tactic, although the Sharifian government did provide assistance to the Bedouin force that raided Dayr al-Zūr in March 1920.[72] The authorities in Damascus sharply criticized the partisans who occupied the town of Jisr al-Shughūr a month later, on the grounds that the operation "endangered Syrian independence."[73] Fayṣal subsequently started to dispatch prominent guerrilla commanders on diplomatic missions overseas as a way to get them out of the country.[74] At the same time, he contacted General Gouraud's staff to propose "that the French forces cease operating against local inhabitants [the Alawite and Shīʿa irregulars], and instead allow his delegates to arrange peace."[75] When French officers complained about the sharp increase in guerrilla activity that took place in June, the governor of Aleppo, Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī, replied that "the recent raids were the work not of the village populations but of lawless bedouin brigands, and that the only means of dealing effectively with these brigands is to round them up with gendarmerie."[76]

Influential guerrilla leaders were indeed summoned to the capital on the very eve of the French occupation in July 1920. But it is not clear whether the meeting was called in order to urge these commanders to mobilize their followers for imminent military action, or instead to warn them to restrain their troops in order to avoid provoking unnecessary hostilities.[77] As French forces readied for battle on July 20, Fayṣal hastily acceded to a last-minute ultimatum from Gouraud, then issued orders to the guerrilla formations operating in the Syrian countryside that they take no action to prevent the French from advancing into the interior of the country.[78]

Whether or not the central administration in Damascus adopted policies that were intended to undercut or constrain the partisans fighting in the north, clear conflicts of interest can be seen to have separated the two camps. These incongrueties made it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for the Sharifian regime to collaborate unreservedly with the guerrillas. As a result, it turned out to be considerably easier than French commanders had anticipated to overcome local resistance and seize control of

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71 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 130.

72 Ibid., 157; Eliezer Tauber, *The Formation of Modern Syria and Iraq*, London 1995, chap. 7; Eisuke Naramoto, "An Introductory Note on Military Alliance between the Arab and Turkish Nationalists 1919-1920," *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies* (1986).

73 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 168.

74 Ibid., 241 n. 70.

75 Ibid., 270.

76 PRO, FO 141/438, Jun. 10, 1920.

77 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 180.

78 Ibid., 184.

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the country, beginning at Maysalūn in July 1920 and continuing over the course of the succeeding twelve months.

National character of the Sharifian regime

Two days after arriving in Damascus in October 1918, Amīr Fayṣal issued a proclamation in which he affirmed that the new "Arab government ... will treat alike all those who speak Arabic, regardless of sect or religion, and not discriminate in its laws between Moslem, Christian, and Jew."[79] He then traveled to Aleppo, where he declared that the city and its environs lay "at the tip of Arab territory." The amir went on to assert that the primary mission of the revolt he had led since 1916 was to oust "the Turks [who] ruled for 600 years during which time they destroyed the glorious edifice erected by our ancestors." In point of fact, he concluded, the revolt had achieved "nothing except [to] expel the Turks from our country. This is retribution because the Divine Power refuses to permit them to go unpunished for their crimes."[80] Fayṣal returned to Aleppo in June 1919 and told an enthusiastic audience gathered at the Arab Club that "I hope that every Syrian is an Arab before anything else. And I hope that everyone who speaks Arabic feels the way I do."[81]

National chauvinism was not limited to the Sharifian regime's public pronouncements. The military and civil administrators that Fayṣal appointed during his first months in Damascus consisted almost exclusively of Arabs, although they all had extensive experience working in Ottoman institutions of one sort or another.[82] Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī observes that this state of affairs took shape not by design, but rather grew out of exigencies arising from the fact that the new regime assumed control over the former Ottoman provinces of Damascus and Aleppo: "since most department heads in these two provinces were not Arabs, they left the country along with the [Ottoman] army. The leaders of the Revolt found it necessary to designate Arabs as replacements for these capable men." al-Ḥuṣrī goes on to say that "under the Ottomans the official language in Syria was Turkish... The Syrian government had to change the situation and replace Turkish with Arabic... Numerous committees worked hard to achieve quick results. The new Syrian state thus became fully entitled to be called 'The Arab State'."[83]

National-level politics during the Fayṣal era was driven primarily by competition among contending Arab elites: those born in Iraq versus those born in Palestine; the

79 Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Day of Maysalun*, 102.

80 Ibid., 103.

81 Ibid., 113.

82 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 123-4.

83 Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Day of Maysalun*, 120-121.

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comparatively young versus the relatively old; ex-military officers versus former civil servants.[84] The members of the competing parties shared a presumption that Syria now stood distinct from Turkey as a national entity, even as they disagreed among themselves about the precise nature of Syrian nationalism.[85] Even those who harbored misgivings about the idea of a predominantly Arab Syria had little choice but to sign on: "The imposition of Faysal's Arab state, with Damascus as its capital ...forced political leaders in Aleppo to join the Arab nationalist bandwagon to ensure that their personal interests and those of their constituents were not overlooked in Damascus."[86] By March 1920, in the aftermath of the declaration of independence by the General Syrian Congress, the country's council of ministers had come to be made up almost entirely of Syrian-born Arabs.[87]

Underlying animosity toward the Turkish national movement on the part of the Sharifian regime can be inferred from key aspects of its recurrent diplomatic maneuvering. At the end of May 1920, for example, Faysal attempted to break the impasse that had emerged in his negotiations with France by "offer[ing] complete support for French forces fighting the common Turkish enemy [in Cilicia], in order to preserve [the] boundaries recognized by the Peace Conference."[88] This offer was repeated in the wake of the ceasefire between the French and the Turkish nationalists that was announced in early June.[89]

Islam and Sharifian ideology

Islamic concepts and symbols played a complex role in the political ideology of the Arab nationalist leadership in Damascus. Malcolm Russell asserts that the Sharifian authorities "were not Islamic reformers, seeking renewal by regaining an early purity. Instead they were indebted to the West where many of them had studied. Their doctrine of nationalism was alien to the teachings of traditional Islam."[90] Khoury offers a more nuanced view: the officials who surrounded Faysal "never denied the importance of Islam as an integral foundation of the nation; but they interpreted it in terms of its culture and civilization and not as the Divine Law. They adopted the view that

84 Khoury, *Syria*, 84-86.

85 Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, passim.

86 Khoury, *Syria*, 88.

87 Angus M. Mundy, "The Arab Government in Syria from the Capture of Damascus to the Battle of Meisalun," MA thesis, American University of Beirut, 1965, 100-2; Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 141.

88 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 165.

89 Ibid., 171.

90 Ibid., 81.

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Islam provided the cement of the Arab nation." Nevertheless, on the whole the Sharifian authorities shared a belief that "Islam was too outmoded to serve as the supreme governing principle of the modern nation and state."[91]

James Gelvin demonstrates, however, that the modernist predisposition of the Sharifian regime was neither comprehensive nor immutable. The nationalist leadership's initial proclamations to the population of Damascus contained numerous appeals to Islam, as a religion capable of engendering national unity and harmony among all faiths. When such appeals failed to generate the sort of "true patriotism" or "'civic' model of the nation in which the bonds of citizenship and shared legal practice and political ideals would supersede the bonds of ethnicity and religion," government officials began to play down religious rhetoric and imagery.[92] Only when Islamic themes began to be articulated by the popular committees in the capital did the authorities resurrect religious concepts and symbols, in a bid to retain their waning influence over the general public. This trend accelerated as the threat of French occupation increased during the spring of 1920.

Local functionaries of the Sharifian regime likewise resorted to an explicitly Islamic idiom in an effort to gain control over the guerrillas in the north. In July 1920, the governor of Aleppo released a proclamation issued in Damascus that called on the province's inhabitants to take active measures to resist foreign domination: "Relying on God and on the Spirit of the Prophet," the circular announced, "the defence has been decreed. The country is calling you and the religion is inviting all of you to do your duty."[93] But like their colleagues in the capital, provincial officials raised the banner of Islam not as a first preference, but rather as a last resort.

Notions of independence

From the moment he set foot on Syrian soil, Amīr Fayṣal consistently advocated the "absolute independence" of the territories under his control. Pronouncements to this effect were issued immediately upon his arrival in Damascus, as well as during his initial visit to Aleppo.[94] The amir's sentiments appear to have been shared by virtually all of the members of the governing elite. Russell, for instance, claims that "none of the many political parties formed during the period of Faysal's rule urged a return to the Ottoman Empire."[95]

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91 Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism*, Cambridge, 1983, 99-100.

92 Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 183-184.

93 USNA, RG 59, 890d.00/34.

94 Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Day of Maysalun*, 101-103; Rafeq, "Arabism, Society and Economy," 5-6.

95 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 70.

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Unity with surrounding Arab countries, by contrast, was not dismissed out of hand. In May 1919, the official journal *al-ʿĀṣima* printed three articles that outlined the advantages that might accrue from the creation of a tripartite federation with Iraq and the Hejaz. The essay, entitled The Unified Arab Government, envisaged a political entity in which each of the three countries would be responsible for administering most of its own internal affairs, while "the central government would control customs, railways and education."[96]

Britain's announcement that it intended to evacuate its troops from Syria generated a widespread sense of crisis in the fall of 1919, which prompted popular committees in Damascus to call for some sort of unity with the Turkish nationalist movement.[97] In response to these demands, the General Syrian Congress adopted a resolution that rejected any political arrangement that violated Syria's political autonomy. At a closed-door session sometime after October 20, the congress committed itself to pursuing "the absolute independence of Syria ...free from the blemishes of a protectorate or trusteeship."[98] The commitment to Syrian autonomy was shared not only by the relatively moderate nationalists who took part in the congress, but also by more radical activists led by Shaykh Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb.[99] Both moderate and radical nationalists reaffirmed these sentiments when the General Syrian Congress reconvened in March 1920 to declare the country independent.[100]

The so-called "defense cabinet" that took office that May proved even more adamant in its insistence on preserving Syria's political autonomy.[101] Fayṣal made certain that the new ministers appointed to this cabinet understood their duties in the following words: "We have charged you with the formation of a new Cabinet whose main purpose shall be to maintain security and order within and to defend the rights of the country against all those from without who wish it harm or who try to stand in the way of its sacred independence."[102]

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96 Ibid., 80; Rafeq, "Arabism, Society and Economy," 6.

97 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 103.

98 Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Day of Mays*alun, 58.

99 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 114.

100 Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Day of Maysalun*, 116-117; USNA, RG 165, box 1498, 2558-16; Russell, *First Modern Arab State,* 133-4.

101 Russell, *First Modern Arab State*, 152.

102 Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Day of Maysalun*, 52.

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Social programs of the Damascus government

Confronted with the wide range of problems that plagued Syria in the immediate aftermath of World War I, the Sharifian regime had one overriding imperative: to establish and maintain order. Amīr Fayṣal emphasized this precept in his June 1919 address to the Arab Club of Aleppo: "Security is obviously one of the requirements of the country. It can be brought about only by men, i.e., the police and army... I want the Aleppans to have completed their arrangements by the time I come back again. In this respect your Damascene brethren have already done their duty very well. I hope that you will not linger too long behind them, indeed that you will outstrip them."[103]

Almost as crucial for the new government as establishing and maintaining order was raising revenue. As long as British troops occupied the country, the local administration received a cash subsidy from London. But as popular unrest began to spread during the winter of 1919-1920, the British government abruptly cut off the flow of funds to the finance ministry in Damascus. Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī, the acting head of the ministry, petitioned British headquarters in Cairo in June 1920 to reinstate the subsidy, arguing that unless regular payments were resumed the gendarmerie would collapse "and an era of complete license and lawlessness will begin."[104] The British high commissioner in Cairo recommended to his superiors in London that the subsidy be resumed. But before the necessary arrangements could be completed, the French army seized the capital and ousted Fayṣal.

Little work has been done on the Sharifian authorities' response to the heightened activism of urban workers during the turbulent months after the war. According to Rafeq, *al-ʿĀṣima* published a series of reports concerning a wave of strikes that broke out in Damascus during the spring of 1919. The newspaper's coverage highlighted the fundamental obligation of workers to respect the rights of factory owners, and stressed the interest that both parties shared in maintaining production.[105] It is probably safe to assume that this position reflected the regime's views concerning popular unrest, both in the capital and in the countryside.

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[103] Ibid., 114.

[104] PRO, FO 141/438, Jun. 5, 1920.

[105] Rafeq, "Arabism, Society and Economy," 25.

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Conclusion

Histories of the Fayṣal era generally assert that the uprisings that erupted in northern Syria in 1919-1921 formed part of a nationwide national resistance to French occupation, and therefore buttressed the position of the Sharifian regime. Yet in four major respects these rebellions at best diverged from the interests of the authorities in Damascus, and at worst undermined them. Whereas the movement led by Ibrāhīm Hanānū exhibited little in the way of Arab national character, Fayṣal and his allies insisted on the Arab nature of the new polity and society they were attempting to construct. Even though the participants in the northern revolts expressed their objectives and motivations in explicitly Islamic terms, the Damascus government exhibited a commitment to the secular ideals that underlay national politics in early twentieth-century Europe.

Furthermore, popular activists around Aleppo persistently advocated the creation of a new form of unified Islamic political entity that would conjoin Syria to Anatolia, Iraq, and perhaps even the Hejaz. Such a federation was anathema to the Arab nationalists who controlled the central administration in Damascus, partly because it smacked of the Ottoman Empire they had fought so hard to dislodge and partly because their attention was riveted on the idea of complete independence for Syria. Finally, the social programs that were implemented by the guerrillas conflicted with those adopted by the Sharifian government in two important respects. First, the policies carried by the partisans siphoned scarce resources away from the central treasury and into the hands of local administrative councils. Second, and more important, they threatened to redistribute wealth and power away from established elites and toward disadvantaged forces in Syrian society.

It is therefore fundamentally misleading to depict the northern uprisings of 1919-1921 merely as the provincial expression of the nationalist project envisaged by the Arab leadership in Damascus. Just as Gelvin demonstrates that not all social forces in the capital stood unambiguously on the side of the regime during the Fayṣal era, so the guerrillas who took up arms against the French in the countryside outside Aleppo fought for interests and principles that diverged in significant ways from those of the Sharifian government. Two ways to improve our understanding of the origins and objectives of the revolts in the north suggest themselves.

First, the northern uprisings can usefully be compared to the parallel revolts that broke out across southern Anatolia during the months immediately following World War I. Contemporaneous reports by British and American observers indicate clearly that the guerrilla bands led by Ṣubḥī Barakāt, Ibrāhīm Hanānū and Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī collaborated closely with units led by ʿAlī Shafiq (Özdemir). By historical accident, Özdemir has been embraced by Turkish nationalist writers, while Barakāt, Hanānū, and al-ʿAlī have been claimed by Arab historians. Yet these commanders and their supporters appear to

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have struggled for similar ideals, against identical foes. Moreover, the two movements exhibit problematic relations with their respective national leaderships, which nationalist historians have taken pains to mask. Focused comparisons of the northern Syrian revolts and the southern Anatolian partisans are likely to shed new light on both.

Second, there can be little doubt that the guerrillas of northern Syria were linked in some fashion to the Special Organization (Teškilāt-i Makhṣūṣa), which was set up sometime before 1911 under the auspices of Enver Bey, the minister of war of the Committee of Union and Progress in Istanbul. Throughout World War I, the Special Organization carried out "operations in which auxiliaries recruited and led by the *Teškilāt-i Makhṣūṣa* formed the majority of the forces involved – for example, Bedouin *mujāhidīn*; [and] volunteer units of Kurds, Circassians, Druzes and Laz tribesmen."[106] Philip Stoddard reports that "much of the organization's activity was directed toward an extensive Pan-Islamic propaganda campaign," designed "to cause uprisings against British and French colonial administrations."[107] A number of prominent Arab commanders, including Nūrī al-Saʿīd and Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī, are known to have gained battlefield experience serving in the Special Organization in Tripolitania and Sinai.[108] It is only reasonable to assume that others, who shared the C.U.P.'s disdain for al-Ḥusayn bin ʿAlī and his family,[109] passed through its ranks as well. Finding some way to investigate the military and political legacy of this shadowy organization will contribute greatly to disentangling the intricacies of relations between the northern revolts and the Sharifian regime.

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106 Philip H. Stoddard, "The Ottoman Government and the Arabs, 1911 to 1918," Ph. D. dissertation, Princeton University 1963, 57.

107 Ibid., 61.

108 Ibid., 94.

109 Ibid., 142-6.

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Rural resistance and the introduction of modern forms of consciousness in the Syrian countryside, 1918-1926

Nadine Méouchy

The armed resistance movements that emanated from the Syrian countryside[1] between 1918 and 1925, and which at times even overshadowed politics in the great urban centers, constitute a unique episode in the history of modern Syria.

The armed rural resistance against the French consisted of so-called *ʿiṣābāt* (sg. *ʿiṣāba*, gang or band), which arose throughout the Syrian west and moved from north to south[2] in two important phases: roughly from 1918 to 1921, with the *ḥarakat al-ʿiṣābāt* (the *ʿiṣāba* movement); and in 1925-1926, with the Great Syrian Revolt. These resistance movements developed along two complementary trends: the reinforcement of the modern military component, on the one hand, and the introduction of political modernity, on the other.

My research in its present form suggests that the confrontation of the Syrian countryside with the reality of the nation-state, in the context of foreign domination, entailed two main consequences:

- Within less than 10 years (1918-1926), these armed rural movements underwent radical, irreversible structural changes; and

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1 For the purposes of this chapter, geographical or administrative areas attached to Lebanon after September 1, 1920 are included as part of the Syrian countryside.

2 The armed conflicts in eastern Syria (Dayr al-Zūr and Raqqa) in 1919-1920 will not be considered here. These had other origins, arising mainly from the struggle between nomads and settlers. See ʿAbdallāh Ḥannā, *al-Masʾala al-zirāʿiyya waʾl-ḥaraka al-falāḥiyya min al-iḥtilāl al-ʿuthmānī ḥattā ʾl-istiʿmār al-faransī*, III: "al-ʿAṣr al-ḥadīth, 649-50 and V: *Dirāsāt madaniyya*, Damascus 1985.

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• These structural changes were in fact directly tied to the introduction of a political will in the countryside – first that of Fayṣal's state,[3] then that of the nationalist organizations opposed to the French Mandate. The effect of this will, which radiated outward from the cities, was to favor the emergence of new forms of political consciousness and identity in the countryside.

Without going into great detail on the new historical era that began in 1918, certain fundamental characteristics can be mentioned that had a direct bearing on the resistance movements:

1) The drawing of international borders: most immediately, these borders amputated traditional rural exchange networks and interrupted tribal *dīra*s. Those borders that separated Syria from Lebanon and Turkey are of particular importance in the context of this chapter, since they implied the assumption of a new identity at a time when Turkish nationalism and Maronite "Lebanism" had each attained territorial statehood.

2) The institution of a modern state intent on centralization (Fayṣal's Arab state, then the Mandatory state) and in search of a national constituency (Fayṣal's state). The new state – with Damascus as its capital – reoriented political and economic conflicts and helped sharpen regional differences and rivalries.

3) France's political and military dominance (in the framework of Franco-British competition in the Middle East): This dominance was established with the 1920 battle of Maysalūn, which Syrian nationalists then commemorated during the Mandatory period as the founding event of Syria's common national destiny.

4) The spread of a nationalist discourse, owing to the development of the local press and, beginning in 1918, the rise of the *waṭaniyyīn,* the nationalists in the public sphere. This discourse spotlighted major political happenings, such as the Arab revolt of 1916, the Wilson declaration, the General Syrian Congress of 1919-1920, and the arrival of the King-Crane Commission in 1920. All these episodes favored both the emergence of public opinion in the cities and the casting of new frameworks of politics and identity in the rural world. This set of factors upset the old social and political order in which, in particular, strong local notables had been able to maintain themselves within the framework of the Ottoman Empire.

This chapter will treat three themes: first, it will analyze the elements that constituted the *iṣābāt*; second, it will discuss the role of nationalism in the evolution from the *ʿiṣāba* movement to the Great Syrian Revolt; and third, it will attempt to analyze more precisely the character of the rural resistance movements of 1918 to 1926.

[3] On the role of the state in the formation of nationalism and national identity, see Rashid Khalidi's case study *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, New York 1997.

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The constituents of the *ʿiṣāba* movement (*ḥarakat al-ʿiṣābāt*)

What is an *ʿiṣāba*?
An *ʿiṣāba* is a common form of collectivity in this region, unique neither to the Arabs alone nor to any particular community, nor to any precise political tendency in the period under consideration.

In principle, *ʿiṣābāt* were small units of rebels, comprising 30 men on average (sometimes many more, as in 1925-1926), and commanded by a *raʾīs ʿiṣāba* who was either a local notable or a tribal chief. The *raʾīs ʿiṣāba* was frequently distinguished by his genealogy (*nasab*) and/or his warrior qualities. An *ʿiṣāba*, consisting of horsemen and/or foot soldiers, was generally known as the "men of so-and-so." The *ʿiṣāba* was based on family, tribe (where sedentary), or locale, and invariably encompassed members of a single sectarian community. To give some examples:
1) *ʿIṣābāt* based on family: the Dandashī clan of Tall Kalakh; the Bīṭār family of Jabal Ṣahyūn; the Barakāt family in the Antioch region (including Ṣubḥī Bey, Thurayā Bey and ʿĀṣim Bey); the Shiʿite Dandash clans of the Biqāʿ and Mount Hermon; the Jaʿfar of northern Mount Hermon and Akrum; the Jamīl of Akrum. These families brought their rural clients and other allied families into their armed activities.
2) Tribal *ʿiṣābāt*: the *ʿiṣāba* of Amīr Maḥmūd al-Fāʿūr, chief of the sedentary Faḍl tribe of the Golan.
3) Local or regional *ʿiṣābāt*: the *ʿiṣāba* of Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī; the Shiʿite *ʿiṣābāt* of Jabal ʿĀmil (Khanjar, Bizzī', Ḥamza); the *ʿiṣābāt* of Jabal Zawiyya and of Ḥārim Qaẓā (e.g. the *ʿiṣāba* of ʿAqīl al-Isqāṭī).

ʿIṣāba members were thus essentially recruited from among the rural population.[4] The *ʿiṣāba* was bound by local ties or blood loyalties and by a total allegiance to the leader, often symbolized by the display of a banner (known as *bayraq* among the Druze). In terms of operation, the *ʿiṣāba* practiced guerrilla warfare and usually took booty (arms, ammunition, mounts, etc.). These rebel groups were scattered into small mobile units, each placed under the authority of an independent chief, lacking any systematic, high-level coordination, thus allowing every single tribe to – eventually – join the armed operations.

An *ʿiṣāba* could therefore fit easily into the alliance networks situated around a leader of interregional importance. For instance, Shaykh Saʿdūn and Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī leveraged the allegiance owed them by sundry local bands into support for Ibrāhīm Hanānū who, in turn, recognized Fayṣal in Damascus. An *ʿiṣāba* could also ally itself with a tribe for a limited, one-time operation. Long-term alliances with tribes, such as Hanānū forged with the semi-nomadic Mawālī of Aleppo, were rarer.

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[4] The *ʿiṣābāt* leaders tended to mistrust the Bedouins (*ʿarab*) on account of their proclivity for pillage during armed operations.

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While *ʿiṣābāt* were thus rooted in the rural milieu, through their leaders they also remained tied to the cities whence they drew their economic and sometimes financial support. It was by means of this relationship with the cities that the *ʿiṣāba* movement underwent its most significant changes in the period under consideration.

To conclude this brief discussion of the *ʿiṣāba*, mention must also be made of the term itself to designate armed bands of the sort which have long existed in the Bilād al-Shām. The Arab sources[5] do indeed use other terms for armed bands, such as *jamāʿa, fiʾa, firqa thawriyya, ḥaraka*, or *jumūʿ*.[6] However, *ʿiṣāba* was both the most widely used term and indeed that by which the rebels called themselves. Though it carries pejorative connotations today, *ʿiṣāba* is the most authentic name for such movements and thus our term of preference in this chapter. The term *ʿiṣāba* has the added advantage, it would seem, of implying a certain social and cultural dynamic in its etymology. For an *ʿiṣāba* is related to *ʿaṣabiyya* (i.e. that which links the individual members of the *ʿiṣāba* with each other) as well as to *taʿaṣṣub*, which expresses the intensity of commitment to one's own *ʿiṣāba*.

First signs of evolution

This somewhat abstract model of the *ʿiṣāba* must be expanded, from 1918 onward, by a number of new factors arising from the changed historical context as outlined above. These factors transformed the bands' relationship with the newly interdependent territories as well as with the cities and the state, and determined the political content and direction these *ʿiṣāba* bands were beginning to take.

The first and perhaps most obvious change was the quantitative and qualitative improvement in modern military potential. Two new categories of recruits came to join the more traditional *ʿiṣāba* members: first, soldiers from the Sharifian army demobilized after October 1918,[7] along with a number of deserters from the French and Turkish armies; and second, officers serving either as Fayṣal's liaison agents (Shawkāt al-ʿĀʾidī, assigned to Amīr al-Fāʿūr and Aḥmad Muraywād) or as military consultants to the rebel bands (e.g. training volunteers for Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlī), or directly as *ʿiṣāba* commanders (Fuʾād Salīm, ex-general in the Sharīfian army; ʿĀṣim Bey, ex-lieutenant-colonel in the Turkish army).

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5 See especially "Mudhakkirāt Yūsuf al-Saʿdūn ʿan thawrat Hanānū," File 127, Centre of Historical Archives, Damascus. Shaykh Saʿdūn was Ibrāhīm Hanānū's administrative and military adjunct for the armed bands in the Quṣayr, Jisr al-Shughūr, and Ṣahyūn. Hanānū was president of the *dīwān* of the province (*muḥāfaẓa*) of Aleppo.

6 The fighters were called by different names: *afrād ʿiṣāba, rifāq, al-mujāhidūn, al-muḥāribūn, al-muhājimūn*, etc. In some instances, Saʿdūn even speaks of *junūd*, soldiers.

7 After the battle of Maysalūn (July 24, 1920), regulars from the Sharifian army also joined the bands.

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Numerous career officers thus contributed to the Fayṣal-era rebellions. After Maysalūn, several of them joined those *ʿiṣāba* groups still active. Nevertheless, modern military techniques and know-how were not a monopoly of those who had served in regular armies. A number of the tribal chiefs had in fact been enrolled in the Tribal School at Istanbul and learned the arts of war there.

Second, political modernity took hold in Syria, conditioned by several key factors. One factor was the role played by certain *ʿiṣāba* leaders devoted either to Fayṣal personally (such as the Dandashī clan) or to the idea of independence (Najīb ʿUwaid in Ṣahyūn). Another was the role played by the leaders of the nascent Arab nationalist movement in mediating between and linking the *ʿiṣābāt* and the central power. Before July 1920, it was these nationalists who negotiated the Sharifian government's assistance to the *ʿiṣābāt* (ammunition, technical support, liaison officers, financial aid, etc.) Accepting this assistance implied, of course, recognition of the government's authority. Yūsuf al-Saʿdūn recounts, to cite one example, how Ibrāhīm Hanānū, the nationalist leader of Aleppo, worked in concert with Rashīd al-Ṭalīʿ, the governor of Aleppo, and Ṣubḥī Barakāt, a notable of Antioch, to raise a *thawra* against the French.[8] The aim was in fact to stir up and unite all the bands of northern Syria in a single movement that would be politically dependent on the Arab government in Damascus.

After July 1920, the rebellions had to become better organized in order to survive. In northern Syria, Shaykh Saʿdūn reports how, in some cases, a monthly salary for combatants, regular taxation, and supply services were instituted with administrators appointed by the rebels (see below). In addition, agreements were struck with the Turks, prior to 1921, to provide military training. The rebellion leaders who refused to surrender after the French occupation of Syria had to compensate for the loss of the financial and logistical support by the Fayṣal government. This alone indicates that the importance of the Fayṣal government's aid, through the intermediary of local nationalist leaders, was perhaps more effective than many historians have thought.

This brings us to our last point: the relationship of these rebel bands with the newly established modern state in Syria. Until the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the state extended into the rural world mainly in two ways: through conscription and tax collection. Rural society's resistance against the state, which was usually organized by local chiefs intent on preserving their autonomy, was expressed as opposition to these two functions. The Fayṣal government's attempt after 1918 to impose itself through taxation, and especially conscription (in a rather desperate manner, after May 1920), elicited vigorous resistance throughout Syria, including in the capital. In some towns, handbills were posted denouncing taxation and military service, accusing the Damascus government of acting like the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress. Many young men who had deserted the Arab army, and who no doubt feared being re-drafted, went to join the

[8] See the first chapter of Saʿdūn, "Mudhakkirāt."

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rebel bands. Likewise, Shiʿite, Alawite, and some tribal Bedouin groups revolted mainly to avoid paying the taxes which the French (in the coastal province) and later the Mandatory state had attempted to institute or increase. In some cases, such resistance could issue in rivalries. One example is that of Ṣādiq Ḥamza al-Fāʿūr of Jabal ʿĀmil who, like his brother before him, dodged conscription into the Turkish army. During the economic woes and the famine of World War I, he recruited a number of army deserters and took to plundering the region. As soon as his band had gained sufficient power locally, Ṣādiq Ḥamza levied a tax (*ḍarībat Ṣādiq*)[9] on the villagers (although not on those of his own community). His men issued tax receipts which were apparently recognized by the administrative authorities. Northern Syria provided another example: In 1919, ʿĀṣim Bey, after swearing allegiance to Fayṣal, established himself with his *ʿiṣāba* in Antioch. There he arrogated the powers of government in order to finance his military operations and to secure local support. He appointed a *qāʾim-maqām* for the *qaḍā*, *nāḥiya* officials, and tithe collectors, and introduced a regular salary for his combatants.[10]

The *ʿiṣābāt* followed in the tradition of a regional autonomist movement, in the sense that they mobilized local notables (e.g. Shaykh Ṣālih al-ʿAlī) to defend their customary prerogatives, remained suspicious of (or rejected outright) the central government's intervention in society, and easily substituted *ʿiṣāba* leaders for state administrative functionaries. However, the historical context of the immediate post war period, and in particular France's military advance, and the sense of urgency it fostered, favored a strengthening of relations between the rural and urban spheres through the intermediary of the nationalists who sought to build a modern nation-state and transcend traditional identities.

Moreover, the shock of Fayṣal's defeat at Maysalūn and its consequences for the rural world (tighter border controls; economic changes in the countryside; foreign domination; the patriots' relegation to underground resistance) helped forge a feeling of a common experience and a common destiny, as indicated in the introduction.

From the *ʿiṣābāt* to the Great Syrian Revolt: the stakes of nationalism

The aim of this section is neither to recount nor to analyze the unfolding of events in the 1925 revolt.[11] Rather, we will argue that the nationalists exerted a significant amount of pressure on the rebellion in order both to affirm their preeminence over all forms of armed activity and, more importantly, to cast the *ʿiṣābāt* as a national Syrian army in shape and spirit.

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9 According to Ṣādiq Ḥamza's biography, this tax was equivalent to the capitation tax (*jizya*) and the land tax (*kharāj*). See ʿAlī Murtaḍā al-Amīn, *Ṣādiq Ḥamza al-Fāʿūr*, Beirut, 1975.

10 Saʿdūn, "Mudhakkirāt.."

11 For the Damascus region, see the chapter by Michael Provence in this volume.

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While the Great Syrian Revolt was constituted of bands of rural provenance, with the occasional participation (as in 1919-1921) of tribes, in 1925 recruitment was also occurring in the suburbs of Damascus (the Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-ʿArnīd/Abū Fāris groups from Shaghūr; the ʿAbd al-Qādir Sukkār group from the Mīdān).

Elsewhere, individual families or clans recruited fighters from their own villages and inculcated them with a political orientation, e.g. the rival Shiʿite clans Ḥaydar, who supported the revolt, and the Ḥamādas, who sided with the Mandate. In the Jabal Durūz, the bands were all organized by village and each carried its own flag. As soon as the insurrection spread beyond the Jabal, its membership became based simply on the sectarian community, with men coming from all different Druze regions to place themselves under the authority of a chief. In the winter of 1925-1926, for example, Shakīb Wahhāb of the Shūf assembled a force of some 500 men in Majdal Shams, composed of Druze from the Ḥawrān and Wādī al-Taym and, in lesser numbers, from the Shūf.

However, an *ʿiṣāba* was never entirely stable. It could grow to several hundred members or shrink to 20-30 horsemen and footsoldiers. It could also disappear as quickly as it had come together, particularly when its leader was killed. Ḥasan Kharrāṭ's group broke up upon his death; likewise the men of Maḥū, the leader of a Kurdish unit supporting the insurrection in the Antioch-Alexandretta district, dispersed following his death in January 1926 and thus quit their support for the Arab rebel bands.

The *raʾīs ʿiṣāba* was invariably a prominent figure, but in 1925 many leaders were actually from families of little social distinction. Among the reasons for this was the primary importance of suburbs or small way-stations (Nabak, Majdal Shams) in the revolt, as well as the fear of chaos, economic losses, and French repression. These fears discouraged the participation of urban notables such as the great landowners of Hama. In his memoirs, Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī relates how he and some friends founded the Ḥizb Allāh in order to mobilize Hama for the revolt.[12] The party was composed of officers and *shaykhs*; the latter were meant to function as go-betweens with the local population. However, the decision to depend on notables and religious figures "instead of organizing the people"[13] doomed the enterprise to failure.

In 1925, as in 1920, professional soldiers stood by the villagers, mountaineers, and small urban craftsmen. More than 30 officers[14] were in the field during the revolt, several of whom had deserted the Armée du Levant (e.g. Capitaine Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī) or

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12 *Mudhakkirāt Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī*, part 1, 1912-1932, Beirut 1975, 82. The foundation of this party, for which no date is given, preceded that of the Ḥizb al-Shaʿb. See 84.

13 Lenka Bokova, *La confrontation franco-syrienne à l'époque du Mandat, 1925-1927*, Paris 1990, 206.

14 The precise number is unknown. The French were convinced that there were over 200 officers in the field. See SHAT (Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Fort de Vincennes, France) - 4H 65 - D 4 - BR (Bulletin de Renseignement) no. 111 – May 11, 26. Ḥasan al-Ḥakīm proffers a list of 29 names (including one pilot) in his memoirs: *Mudhakkirātī 1920-1958*, Beirut 1966, 401.

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the Gendarmerie (Colonel Waḥīd Bey Ḥayātī, Syria state gendarmerie; Ṣādiq al-Dāghistānī). These officers were joined by other deserters from the Syrian gendarmerie, the legionnaires, or the Algerian rifle corps.

It is undoubtedly in the field of organization and management that the nationalists' intervention in the revolt is in greatest evidence. For the period 1918-1926, two separate objectives came together in the armed struggle: The first, that of fighting the French occupation, was shared by the common *mujāhid*. The second, which took form as of 1919 and found its ultimate expression in 1925-1926, was that of the nationalist leadership. Its overriding concern was to regulate the *ʿiṣābāt* so as to link them to the Arab government of Damascus. In 1925-26, as we have indicated, they sought to give the armed bands the appearance of a national army. Perhaps they also wished to demonstrate to France that it was not fighting gangs of "brigands," but rather an armed and mobilized society endowed with a national leadership.

The revolt's leadership could indeed appear to be more coherent by virtue of the special relationship between the Druze chiefs and the Damascene nationalists of the Ḥizb al-Shaʿb. This alliance was symbolized by the Revolutionary Council (Majlis al-Thawra) that convened at al-Suwaydāʾ. The Council raised its own flag; the same, in fact, which had flown over the General Syrian Congress of 1919-1920.[15] And on February 25, 1926, the Executive Council of the National Resistance in the Ghuta and Damascus Region (Majlis Qiyādat al-Thawra al-Waṭaniyya fī ʾl-Ghūṭa wa-Ḍawāḥi Dimashq) was founded under Nasīb al-Bakrī, with three administrative branches for finance, military affairs, and information and propaganda.[16]

The leaders of the rebellion intended to treat their struggle as a classical war where one sovereign state is attacked and occupied by another. Alongside their political organization they created a military command structure, dividing the areas into military zones. The Ghūṭa and Damascus region as far as Nabak was organized in seven sectors; Nabak constituted the juncture with the northern *ʿiṣāba* insurrection. Within each military zone, the rebel bands were under the authority of a military advisor appointed by the National Council, and had to follow specific guidelines. The council required each fighter to be identifiable and wear a distinctive badge that indicated to which *ʿiṣāba* he belonged. In return, the council was responsible for supplying the rebel bands in southern Syria.

For important operations, the general military command sometimes had armed units joined together under a designated chief. In several instances Sunni bands from the

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15 Philip Khoury, "Factionalism among Syrian Nationalists during the French Mandate," *IJMES* 13 (1981), 455. Khoury speaks of a provisional government headed by Sulṭān Pasha al-Aṭrash. In fact, the only title ever claimed by Sulṭān Pasha was *Qāʾid al-ʿāmm liʾl-thawra al-sūriyya al-kubrā* (interview with Manṣūr al-Aṭrash, son of Sulṭān, Damascus, May 2001).

16 Constitution and statutes cited in Dhūqān Qarqūṭ, *Taṭawwur al-ḥaraka al-waṭaniyya fī Sūriyya, 1920-1939*, Beirut 1975, 271-3. (Appendix 10 is taken from the private papers of Nasīb al-Bakrī).

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Anti-Lebanon were placed under the command of Druze chiefs from Mount Hermon, the Shūf or Wādī al-Taym such as Ḥamza Darwīsh, Shakīb Wahhāb, and Asʿad Kinj. Likewise, after the Druze commander Fu'ād Salīm was killed at Majdal Shams in December 1925, the rebel leadership appointed, as any general command might have done, a non-Druze chief (Aḥmad Muraywād) of equal martial abilities.[17]

The rebellion leadership attached great importance to discipline and to the image that the *thuwwār*, the revolutionaries, gave of the movement. Public opinion both inside and outside the country had to be convinced of the rebellion's political and national significance. The leadership therefore prohibited any sort of violence against the civilian population and tried to preempt looting by commissioning the National Council to provide the soldiers' supplies and rations (*iʿāsha*). A military tribunal was instituted at al-Ḥatīta in the Ghūṭa[18] to try those accused of espionage, corruption, or attacks on civilians. A young lawyer, Amīr Aḥmad al-Shihābī, was appointed prosecutor. One of the sanctions this court might impose, tellingly enough, was to divest a guilty soldier of the title *thā'ir*, revolutionary.[19] In short, the nationalist leadership endeavored to complement its military activities with political action, not only for the sake of defeating the French but also to lay the groundwork for the restoration of a sovereign Arab administration. This is why the leadership claimed executive powers such as conscription or, through its sometimes unscrupulous commanders, tax collection.[20] These contributions were needed to sustain the continuing armed conflict. The limits of volunteerism became clear once the war spread to Mount Hermon in the fall of 1925; and the Druze chiefs, according to the French military intelligence, introduced obligatory military conscription. Sulṭān Pasha al-Aṭrash ordered work to cease in the farms of the Jabal in order to free all men capable of bearing arms.[21] Similarly, when the French began to crack down on the Ghūṭa, in the spring of 1926, using veterans of the Moroccan Rīf campaign, the local resistance leaders required each village to provide 20 to 50 men.[22] Insurrection leaders in several areas levied taxes; Ramaḍān Shallāsh, for instance, did so in the name of the rebel government he had installed in Nabak. These levies were not fundamentally different from the heavy fines imposed on some villages by other chiefs, such as those of Shakīb Wahhāb on the

17 SHAT - 4H65 - D2 -BR no. 23 – Jan. 9, 1926, no.33 – Jan. 19, 1926.

18 "Dīwān al-thawra al-ḥarbī fī ʾl-Ghūṭa."

19 See Michael Provence's chapter detailing the trial of Ramaḍān Shallāsh.

20 Local taxation was perhaps not indispensable, seeing as the revolt was mainly financed from abroad, i.e. by Syrian and Lebanese emigrants and by Muslim solidarity funds particularly from Muslim India.

21 SHAT - 4H 65 - D1 - BR no. 5 – Dec. 11, 1925. Sulṭān al-Aṭrash's son, Manṣūr, on the other hand, speaks only of a relief force. While some fighters were called to the battlefield, other men were detailed to work the fields (interview, May 2001).

22 Otherwise the villages would be torched, the French intelligence services claimed. See SHAT - 4H 65 - D3 - BR no. 86 – April 3, 1926.

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Christian villages of the Mount Hermon.[23] Taxes, fines, and ransoms were all taken by force with the help of certain local notables and used, according to the villagers, for purely private affairs.[24]

Just as the *ʿiṣāba* movement had originated and flourished independently from the Damascus government, so too did the Great Revolt erupt in a local context, around one chief (Sulṭān Pasha al-Aṭrash), and on the basis of a sectarian solidarity unrelated to the political discourse in Damascus. Sulṭān Pasha's first victories in July 1925 repositioned the conflict, changing it from one between his family and the Mandate authority to one between the Druze and the central state government. The Druze insurrection then took on a Syrian Arab nationalist meaning thanks mainly to the contacts established long before between Sulṭān Pasha and Dr. Shahbandar, and also through the links between some Aṭrash (Nasīb, ʿAbd al-Ghaffār, Sulṭān) and the Hashemites. The nationalist stamp with which the Aṭrash marked the Druze movement in the aftermath of their August 3, 1925 victory helped them establish their dominance over the other clans, and made Sulṭān the undisputed leader not only of the Druze insurrection but also of the entire Syrian revolt.

The Great Syrian Revolt also demonstrated the important role played by the Damascene nationalists. They lent it some organizational structure and, above all, imparted to it some revolutionary ideological content – namely – that the revolt called for a change of political regime and the transformation of institutions. Furthermore, the Damascene nationalists put their own regional networks to use, providing the rebels with money, weapons, or political asylum. All these factors permitted Damascus to establish its own political primacy within Syria. The city of Aleppo, whose Turkish connection no longer carried any political significance, became increasingly marginalized vis-à-vis its southern rival.

Nevertheless, in 1925 as in 1920, it was the countryside that sustained the revolt by supplying the majority of participants and by providing the forces with tactical shelter. Moreover, when nationalist leaders from Damascus and Hama were being persecuted by the French, or simply isolated through the lack of cooperation from the urban notables, they would leave the city to join the combatants in the countryside[25] (e.g. Dr. Shahbandar, ʿĀdil Arslān). Further, a city's entry into the revolt was always preceded by an accord between Sulṭān Pasha al-Aṭrash and one or two town representatives, such as one concluded with the visit by Munīr al-Rayyis and Maẓhar Raslān of Hama to Sulṭān in September 1925. In 1918 and again in 1925, the nationalist leaders avoided moving the theater of operations into the cities (Hanānū at Aleppo in 1919-1920; Shahbandar at Damascus in 1925-1926 following the bombardment of the city by General Sarrail in

[23] Sulṭān Pasha exacted a fine from each volunteer serving in the French army equivalent to one half of his salary (interview with Manṣūr al-Aṭrash, Damascus May 2001).

[24] See Dhūqān Qarqūṭ, *Taṭawwur*, 270-271; Ḥannā, *al-Mas'ala al-zirāʿiyya*, III, 701.

[25] Ḥannā, *al-Mas'ala al-zirāʿiyya*, III, 706.

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October) but always focused on action in the countryside. Finally, the countryside was where ideas or slogans (many bearing the mark of the Ḥizb al-Shaʿb) were introduced or developed which were then taken up by the National Bloc. Thus during the campaign of November 1925, Zayd al-Aṭrash sought to reassure and perhaps even rally the Christians of Ḥasbāyyā and Rāshayyā with a proclamation based on the famous phrase "the religion for God and the fatherland for all."[26]

Despite the leadership's sustained efforts, the revolt of 1925 was impeded by numerous divisions – family, clan, sect and region – that characterized Syrian society in general, and its rural component in particular. The French aggravated these divisions by arming tribes and Christian villages against the insurgents, and by using units composed of minorities (Ismailis, Christians, Alawites, Shiʿites, Circassians, Armenians) to suppress the insurgents. The revolt also suffered from a lack of determination on the part of the social elite, and from rivalries between the nationalist elite.

An attempt to characterize the rural resistance of 1918-1926

The question of characterizing these resistance movements raises two issues: the vector of rural mobilization, on the one hand, and the image of the rebel and the pattern of resistance adopted in the specific case of 1920s Syria, on the other.

The driving elements of rural mobilization

Our aim here is to prioritize the factors underlying *ʿiṣāba* mobilization. Factors related to the nationalist discourse can be discarded, since uprisings in particular regions were not synchronized with those elsewhere. To begin with, the social and economic reasons are fairly evident: the Syrians' dismay over French monetary and fiscal policy; economic woes due to European competition and the erection of trade barriers; and the drought of 1925 which drove up the cost of living. Economic disorder and the damage caused by the revolt served to sustain it. One notes, nevertheless, that the promise of land was not a sufficient reason for peasants to choose one camp over another. Druze peasants, for example, could have chosen to benefit from Capitaine Carbillet's land reform-project. French military sources claim that Sulṭān Pasha, in order to incite men to go and fight in difficult (i.e. hostile) areas, "apparently decided that every combatant who goes to the Leja will get to own a plot of land in that region."[27] Doubtless, many

[26] Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Safarjalānī, *Tārīkh al-ṭhawra al-sūriyya,* Damascus, 1961, 265. Quoted in Ḥannā, *al-Mas'ala al-zirāʿiyya*, III, 691.

[27] SHAT - 4H 65 - D3 - BR no. 71. Manṣūr al-Aṭrash denies this categorically (interview, Damascus, May 2001).

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peasants supporting the insurgents hoped that victory would bring a redistribution of the lands that belonged to the urban absentee owners collaborating with the French.[28] Yet, insofar as the revolt's leaders never proposed to overturn the social and economic order as such, the real reasons for rural mobilization must be sought elsewhere. Furthermore, the rebels' own aggressive behavior toward the rural districts (e.g. forced taxation) and the personal rivalries among their leaders (such as impeded the military organization of the Ghūṭa)[29] could and did alienate villagers solely preoccupied with bettering their own socioeconomic lot.

The fundamental motive of *ʿiṣāba* mobilization was rather to protect a style of life and a set of cultural values, increasingly undermined by rapid economic change and French interference. It is this societal culture that placed the individual at the juncture of multiple group affiliations: first, the level of primordial and local solidarities activated by the *ʿaṣabiyya*; the family, clan, or community's *esprit de corps*, which provided a system of social reference (the *raʾīs ʿiṣāba*, for instance, is endowed with a *nasab* just like a tribal chief). Second, on a more institutionalized and articulated level, Islam served as the basis of social culture and as the vector for belonging to a larger community. These two levels generated a complex of Arab-Islamic representations which constituted the third level, that of identity. It is in these representations that the values of the *ʿiṣāba* functioned: bravery, honor and *jihād*.

To illustrate this, let us recall that, in 1918 and 1925 respectively, Senegalese and Algerian soldiers deserted and joined the insurrection in the name of their common Islamic faith. In general, appeals to revolt were always a call "ilā al-jihād al-muqaddas" (to holy *jihād*) against the French who were designated as *al-ʿadūw al-kāfir* (the infidel enemy). Another example of Islam's importance as a common culture is the constant desire to confer religious legitimacy on calls to arms. As Saʿdūn explains in his account, *jihād* was to be considered a *farḍ ʿayn*[30] "if the enemy conquers one of the lands of Islam."

Islam's prominence at the heart of a cultural identity and "imagined community," which found expression particularly when the community was confronted by a traumatizing event such as Maysalūn, does not mean that religious figures played any significant role. On the contrary, during the Fayṣal era the Arabists, a modernist intellectual elite, dominated the public sphere. Those few men of religion who sided with the nationalists were nontheless supporting a political program based upon civil jurisprudence. Our sources do not suggest that Islamic religious elites or institutions played any particular role in these resistance movements. Shaykh Saʿdūn in fact uses his memoirs to lash out against the men of religion for their lack of commitment.

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28 Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945*, Princeton 1987, 497-8.

29 Ḥannā, *al-Mas'ala al-zirāʿiyya*, III, 705.

30 The *farḍ ʿayn* is a religious duty that must be exercised by each individual believer and cannot be delegated, in contrast to the *farḍ kifāya*, a duty that can be exercised by some in the name of all.

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Certain rebel chiefs who had been won over to nationalist ideas were instruments for the *mujāhidīn* to expand their horizons. The rural population was invited to identify not only with a new national space, but also with a new appellation for this space: Sūriyya had replaced Bilād al-Shām and was, henceforth, *al-bilād al-muqaddasa*. In August 1925, Sulṭān Pasha issued a call to arms to "Syrian Arabs" and to the "patriots" struggling for the independence of the sacred homeland.[31] The time had come, according to his appeal, for *jihād*; for a holy war (*ḥarb muqaddasa*) for independent Arab Syria's unity; for the establishment of a popular government (*ḥukūma shaʿbiyya*) with a constitution foreseeing the absolute sovereignty of the nation (*umma*); for the withdrawal of the occupation forces and the foundation of a national army; for the application of the principles of the French Revolution and of human rights in terms of freedom, equality, and fraternity. Numerous other appeals were made to "the Syrian nation" in pamphlets signed by Sulṭān Pasha or nationalist organizations founded during the revolt (e.g. the "call to the Syrian nation" issued by the Committee for the Liberation of the 'Syrian Lands in August 1925).

The common *mujāhid* had been mobilized to fight against foreign Christian domination in Syria. He was carried forward in his struggle by the declarations of his leaders, to whom he was bound by countless personal ties, repeating and appropriating their leitmotif of fatherland, Syria, independence and sovereignty, unity, and government by the people. The rural resistance movements were molded by cultural factors that in themselves constituted elements of a national identity in the making. It is for this reason that they were able to play a pioneering role in bringing a modern consciousness to the countrysides.

The form of the Syrian resistance model and the type of rebel

It is often only a fine line that separates the resistance fighter from the bandit, and the folk hero from the (sectarian) outlaw. It is a fine line because they share the same group structures and the same modes of action, especially in times of upheaval. This helps explain the *ʿiṣāba* leaders' constant concern with morality, a concern widely shared by the authors of the memoirs as well as by a number of Arab historians.

"The bandit" is a well-established subject of research, ever since Hobsbawm's studies on social banditry in the 1960s. In short, Hobsbawm saw banditry as a struggle to preserve a particular social order or form of society. Often, the bandits themselves did not realize that their society was in a state of transformation.

In the case of the rebel bands considered here, it is clear that the political content given to the revolt made way for the honorable conversion of some ex-bandits (e.g.

[31] The text of the August 23 call to arms is reprinted in ʿAlī Riḍā, *Qiṣṣat al-kifāḥ al-waṭanī fī Sūriyya ʿaskariyyan wa-sīyāsiyyan ḥattā 'l-jalā', 1918-1946,* Aleppo 1979, 221-3.

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Ṣādiq Ḥamza al-Fāʿūr). It could thus mask the material goals of their activities, and at the same time provide them with the nimbus of patriotism and the moral high ground.

The *ʿiṣābāt* operated within a more general model, which serves to explain their specificity. In his work on *Peasant Wars*, Eric Wolf has proffered these main conclusions:[32]

1) There exists a universal peasant dream of the village delivered from the tax collector, from conscription, and from the landowner. For the Near East one might also add: from the Bedouins.

2) Peasant rebellions in the twentieth century were local responses to profound social transformations where society as a whole was at stake. The peasants, of course, responded on that level where they perceived these transformations.

3) Rebellions are launched by middle-class peasants, i.e. those who own their land and cultivate it as a family. Poorer peasants are too dependent on the landowner to revolt, and rich peasants have no motivation.

As far as Syria is concerned, it would appear that the majority of *mujāhidīn* were small or middling landowners. We know, for example, that the 1858 Land Code accelerated the process of property privatization. In some instances, peasants began to buy the land parcels on which they had worked, such as in the Alawite Mountains. We also know that the Ghūṭa was a zone of small properties. Birgit Schaebler's research on the Jabal Durūz points to the importance of small and middle-sized properties in that area.[33] Finally, oral history interviews that I was able to conduct in the later 1980s with some former rebels confirm these impressions. These middling peasants, according to Eric Wolf, are the most conservative and the most bound to traditions. Therefore they enter into rebellions and, in so doing, they destabilize a social order and sometimes even overturn it completely.

4) In present-day peasant wars and revolts, two phenomena together seem to give form to the armed peasant groups: the institution of a military organization, and that of a political organization (the latter often of a paramilitary type).

These features as proposed by Eric Wolf would seem to corroborate that the *ʿiṣābāt*, while explicable in a wider frame of analysis, also had their own specific traits, which distinguished them from other peasant movements in terms of their cultural basis. Further, these features underline the idea raised in the introduction that the rural resistance

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32 Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, London 1973, 276-302.

33 See Birgit Schaebler, *Aufstände im Drusenbergland*, Gotha 1996, and also Michael Provence "Plowshares into Swords: Anti-Colonial Resistance and Popular Nationalism in French Mandate Syria, 1925-1926." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago 2001.

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movements, in being confronted with the modern nation-state extending into the countryside, underwent irreversible structural changes. In other words, the *ʿiṣābāt*, by gradually breaking out of their narrow geographic confines, were ultimately bound to disappear from the modern social and political scene.

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Identifying rebels:

insurgents in the countryside of Damascus,

1925-1926

Michael Provence

> The strength of the movement is in the middle and lower classes, who, indeed, reproach the notables for their lack of co-operation ... What constitutes the difficulties at Damascus is universal popular support for the rebels ... The guerrilla [war] in the city is rendered possible by the universal complicity of the humbler inhabitants, who are not far from regarding the rebels as heroes. My barber, for instance, did not hesitate to compare them to "Antar," the hero of popular Arab legend, much to [his] disadvantage, who, he pointed out, never had to fight against artillery, tanks and aeroplanes.[1]

The Great Syrian Revolt began in the southern countryside in mid-summer 1925. In a development dreaded by French Mandatory authorities, rebel activity quickly spread to the outskirts of the capital, particularly in the surrounding orchards and gardens of the Ghūṭa and the neighborhood of Mīdān, which stretched along the road south to the Ḥawrān, Transjordan, and the Hejaz. French authorities responded to guerrilla activity in the capital with a devastating aerial and artillery bombardment that lasted two days, destroying large parts of the city and killing over a thousand inhabitants.[2]

The bombardment did not have the desired effect. Rather than pacifying the population with fearful awe, it led to an outraged expansion of rebel activity. Guerrilla bands soon gained control of the countryside on all sides of Damascus. They continually cut the lines of communication by road, telephone, and train, on all sides of the city. Da-

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1 British Foreign Office (FO) 13128/193, Damascus Consul Smart to Foreign Minister Chamberlain, January 28, 1926.

2 FO, Telegram, 13028/269, Smart to Chamberlain, October 21, 1925, and U.S. Dept. of State, 1925, vol. 2, Knabenshue to Secretary of State, October 19, 1925, p.108. *The Times*, "Damascus Riots. The Full Story, City Shelled for 48 Hours, Famous Places Destroyed," October 27, 1925.

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mascus went days on end virtually cut off from outside contact. Large areas of the old city were in rebel hands night after night. Contemporary sources document that the countryside was completely under the control of the insurgents. It took nearly a year, and massive reinforcements of troops and equipment, for the Mandatory power to regain effective control of the countryside of Damascus.

Who were the rebels of the Damascus countryside? The answer depends on how the question is asked; on what documents are interrogated, and on how they are read. They left a few documents and memoirs to guide us, but the most forceful testimony for their existence and military effectiveness is the voluminous correspondence of their enemies: the Mandate government.

This chapter represents a methodological experiment. It excavates the popular history of the uprising through the words of the insurgents as they recorded them, and through their actions as the Mandatory power recorded them. It searches for traces of their collective consciousness in both locations and seeks to contrast hostile sources with insurgent sources. I follow a theoretical argument of Ranajit Guha that the collective consciousness of an insurgency is inscribed in negative outlines in the consciousness (and the archives) of its enemies.[3] He argues that insurgency leaves an imprint, a mirror image in negative, in the bureaucratic records of those who seek to dominate it. Just as a glass window smashed by a fist leaves traces on the hand that shattered it, so too must those the Mandatory power sought to control and dominate leave traces of their consciousness on its bureaucratic records.

This study rests on two principal sources: diplomatic and military intelligence reports and the scattered documents of the rebels themselves preserved in the Syrian National Archives (Markaz al-Wathā'iq al-Tārīkhiyya) and various memoirs and document collections. The bands active in the area surrounding Damascus have been neglected by secondary scholarship. With the passage of time their role has been forgotten, and the Druze aspect of the revolt and Druze resistance in the Ḥawrān dominates historical memory. The Druze rebels in the Ḥawrān and the mostly Muslim rebels around Damascus certainly had much in common, but the ties between them are outside the scope of this chapter. It will concentrate on the rebels of the Damascus countryside named in military reports.

The daily military intelligence reports of the Mandate Armée du Levant covered rebel activities in detail.[4] The reports list the movements and strength of each band and the villages where they were suspected of hiding. They list the names of the leaders and the villages where they were thought to originate. They are inconsistent and confused in the spelling of names and the speculation of alliances and intentions, but, read together, they provide the clearest impression available of the actions, tactics, aims, and, by implica-

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3 Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India,* Delhi 1983, 15-6.

4 I thank Nadine Méouchy for sharing her personal copies of these reports with me. See her chapter in this volume on the sources and forms of solidarity among insurgents.

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tion, the thoughts of the rebels. The reports are valuable both for what they say and for what they do not say. Influenced by the political considerations of the imperial metropole, and the vagaries of French politics, the reports downplay the severity of the situation. They consistently report satisfactory conditions and calm in each sector before proceeding to mention bloodlessly, and almost casually, that the train and telephone lines and roads heading in some direction or other from the capital had been all cut the previous night, but are expected to be restored shortly.[5] The reports show impressive coordination and tactical sophistication among men consistently identified as bandits and outlaws.

The detailed diplomatic reports of the British Consulate in Damascus are also useful. They provide a mild corrective to the French sources, because while they are critical of the French and are sometimes characterized by general hostility toward French policy and personalities, they are, like the French reports, far more hostile toward the rebels. The British Consul often tempered his delight with French misfortune with the admission that a nationalist uprising in Syria could also gravely threaten British Mandatory "interests." While French sources indicate a determined commitment to downplay the threat posed to the Mandate by the insurgency, British sources display no such reticence. Comparing the reports show the French sources always counting greater numbers of rebels and fewer civilian casualties than British reports. While French intelligence rarely reported European civilian or French military casualties, the British reported civilian casualties with a certain gleeful smugness.

The rebels of the Damascus countryside also produced a small corpus of letters, documents, and memoirs. These sources too bear the marks of political concerns and sometimes the jealousies and struggles between rebel leaders. The memoirs and documents cover battles against the French and sometimes the political battles between the rebel leadership. These sources describe in detail events that were apparently unknown to French intelligence. While French sources provide powerful evidence of rebel unity and cooperation, insurgent sources indicate the tensions and the costs of maintaining unity. Rebel memoirs and documents will allow this chapter to contrast what the insurgents said about themselves and about each other with what their enemies said about them.

Contemporary European opinion was highly critical of the French bombardment of Damascus. The high commissioner, General Maurice Sarrail, lost his job after his decision to shell the capital and was recalled to France. While foreign observers criticized the shelling of Damascus, they were unaware of or unconcerned with the continuous bombardment of the surrounding countryside. As Philip Khoury noted, critics of the French usually underestimated the threat the insurgents posed to the Mandate relative to the response. They failed to question the right of the Mandatory power to use such

[5] See for example, Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre (SHAT) 4H65/D2, BR 20, Jan. 5, 1926. "Region de Damas. Report on the Akkache ('Akkāsh) band."

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force.[6] Critics consistently pointed to the low level of rebel organization and coordination, and though French public sources echoed this contention, secret military intelligence and the documents of the rebels themselves tell a different story.

Military intelligence tells a story of specter-like rebel leaders and disappearing bands of hundreds who reappear night after night far from their last engagement. The coordination and tactical sophistication of men continually described as bandits and outlaws clearly confounded French intelligence. The reports are fragmentary and inconsistent and offer no explanation of how X, leader of band A, suddenly came to be fighting alongside Y, leader of band B, far from his village or supposed base of operation. Alliances shifted rapidly and it seems that the intelligence officers compiling the reports had to work hard to avoid describing rebels as being in two places at once. They repeatedly mention the activities of insurgents whose names appear rarely in rebel documents or in subsequent accounts.

At least three or four major bands were active in the area around Damascus. Their sphere of operations ranged from al-Nabak in the north along the Homs road at the edge of the desert, to the Ḥawrān in the south and the Anti-Lebanon mountains west of Damascus. Reports from early December 1925 show their activities. They appear often to have joined forces for operations in neighboring areas. The band of Jumʿa Sawsaq ranged from the region of al-Nabak on the edge of the desert, around Rankūs, and south to Zabadānī. His forces were reported to range from 600 up to a thousand men. The Mīdān, the Ghūṭa of Damascus, and ranging into the mountainous areas to the north of the city, was the area of operations of the celebrated *qabaḍāy* (popular quarter leader) of al-Shāghūr quarter, Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ. West of Damascus in the Baradā river valley, winding up into the Anti-Lebanon mountains was the territory of the band of Saʿīd ʿAkkāsh, usually referred to as ʿIṣābat Awlād ʿAkkāsh.[7] His brothers, Aḥmad and ʿAbduh, sometimes seem to have been attached to other bands for individual attacks.[8]

Large groups of Bedouin frequently joined one band or another and appear in the reports. The Bedouin were usually described as under the command of Ramaḍān Pasha

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6 Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945,* Princeton 1987, 179-180. See for example William Scheifley, "Syria's Rebellion against French Rule," *Current History* January 1926, New York, 485-90. He attributed the revolt to agitation by the French left. Apparently, Syrians lacked the political consciousness even to articulate their own grievances.

7 Muḥammad Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa min al-ayyām al-ḥamrā',* Jerusalem 1935, repr. Beirut 1988, 107. See Alice Poulleau, *A Damas sous les bombes, 1924-1926*, Paris 1926, 130.

8 SHAT 4H65/D1, BR8, December 8, 1925, "Region de Nebek-Homs." For rebel numbers see SHAT 4H65/D1, BR14, December 22, 1925, "Region de Homs." See also Muḥyī 'l-Dīn al-Safarjalānī, *al-Tārīkh al-thawra al-sūriyya,* Damascus 1961, 227. He describes a much more limited range for each band and, like most Arabic secondary sources, ignores Ramaḍān Shallāsh and Saʿīd ʿAkkāsh altogether. British diplomatic reports indicate much smaller rebel numbers but, unlike French reports, mention wide popular support for the rebels. See for example, FO 13128/193, Smart to Chamberlain, January 28, 1926. The British consul probably did not have intelligence sources in the countryside and likely relied upon casual conversations with French officers.

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Shallāsh, a tribal chief, and former Ottoman army officer, from Dayr al-Zūr. He was sometimes joined by his partner from the battle of Hama in October, 1925, "le Capitaine déserteur" Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī. They were often accompanied by other men from the region of al-Nabak, including Khalāṣ al-Naḥīr, Khālid al-Nafūrī, and Tawfīq al-Ḥaydar who was, however, from a prominent Shiʿī family in Baʿalbak. He was a younger brother of Saʿīd al-Ḥaydar, a member of Dr. Shahbandar's Ḥizb al-Shaʿb (People's Party), who had gone to prison in 1922 with Shahbandar and fled to the Jabal Durūz with him early in the revolt.[9] These men appear repeatedly in the reports and clearly cooperated with any number of other rebels in nearly every region.[10]

By mid-December scores of villages in the area around Damascus had been bombed from the air. A random report reads: "The aerial bombardment of the village of Madaya [Maḍāyā] was conducted on 15 December with the following results: 6 dead, 2 injured, 30 houses seriously damaged."[11] Pro-French Damascus newspapers listed 30 villages damaged or destroyed, and the Syrian-Palestinian Executive Committee claimed that 40 additional villages were bombed and not listed.[12] The village of Maḍāyā, for example, was in the mountains west of Damascus near Zabadānī. The Mandate census lists it as a large village of over a thousand inhabitants in the late 1930s.[13] The British consul, returning from Beirut, spoke with the *qā'im-maqām* (district head) of Zabadānī two days after the bombardment. The *qā'im-maqām* reported that he had resigned in protest over what he described as the pointless destruction of Maḍāyā, which was in his district. He reported eight dead and many wounded and claimed that the village was innocent and had only been occupied by rebels overnight.[14] It was on the Damascus-Beirut railway line and French reports claimed that its train station had come under attack a few days earlier. Maḍāyā was in the normal region of operations of the Saʿīd ʿAkkāsh band. But the attack on the train station was reportedly the work of the Jumʿa Sawsaq band along with 500 men.[15] The bands were able to concentrate their attention on the region west of

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9 Khoury, *Syria and the French*, 144-145. See Hisham Nashabi, "The Political Parties in Syria, 1918-1939," M.A. thesis, American University of Beirut 1952, 101-102. For Khālid al-Nafawrī and others see Munīr al-Rayyis, *al-Kitāb al-dhahabī lil-thawrāt al-waṭaniyya fī 'l-mashriq al-ʿarabī*, I, *al-Thawra al-sūriyya al-kubrā*, 407., Beirut 1969, 3 vols.

10 SHAT 4H65/D1, BR19, January 2, 1926, "Region de Homs-Nebek."

11 SHAT 4H65/D1 BR10, December 17, 1925, "Region Ouest de Damas." See also *Alif Bā'*, December 17, 1925.

12 Cited in Dhūqān Qarqūṭ, *Taṭawwur al-ḥaraka al-waṭaniyya fī Sūriyya, 1920-1939*, Beirut 1975, 268-269.

13 Service Géorgaphique des Forces Françaises du Levant, *Syrie: Répértoire Alphabétique des Noms des Lieux Habités*, Beirut 1945, 117.

14 FO 13028/358 Smart to Chamberlain, December 18, 1925.

15 SHAT 4H65/D1 BR7, December 12, 1925, "Region Ouest de Damas." It was probably more like 50-100 men.

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Damascus because the areas north of the capital, stretching towards the area of al-Nabak, had been securely under rebel control since early November 1925.[16]

The ʿAkkāsh band, on the other hand, was reported in the Ghūṭa along with Ramaḍān Shallāsh and Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ. The same intelligence report confirmed that "a number of the inhabitants of the Ghūṭa are joining the bands, so that their effectiveness increases day by day." Meanwhile unnamed "bandits" in the area of Blūdān, near Maḍāyā, probably part of the Jumʿa Sawsaq band, cut the telegraph lines and attacked an armored train and a detachment of gendarmes sent to guard the repair of the line. Jumʿa's brother Aḥmad was still in the region of al-Nabak, their apparently more usual area of operation. He was reported to have joined with Khālid al-Nafūrī, and Tawfīq al-Ḥaydar for an attack on the train station at al-Quṣayr, just south of Homs on the Damascus railway line.[17]

The French were unable to counter this type of warfare. Men whom intelligence officers described as bandits and outlaws seem to have had nearly super-human powers of organization and coordination. The only response was aerial bombardment. After airplanes bombed the villages, tanks and troops followed. By then, of course, most rebels were long gone but the villages were usually far from abandoned, and there was no quarter for those who did not leave. An account from a Foreign Legion soldier who later deserted describes the scene:

> We took part in a pleasant little punitive expedition on our second day here [al-Qadm, just outside Damascus]. There was a small village about five kilometers away, on the railroad, and some of its inhabitants lately had taken to the amusement of sniping at the military trains as they passed. Several had been killed and several more wounded. The *caïd* had been ordered to produce the guilty. He had answered in the usual dilatory oriental manner. There had not been any shooting. If there had, he did not know who had done it. And anyway, he did not know where they were hiding; he could not produce them.

This would have been mid-October 1925 and could have been any one of several villages destroyed in that month.[18] The soldier, Bennett Doty, goes on to describe machine-gunning the inhabitants who refused to flee the village, looting everything present, and burning the remains to the ground.[19] Doty recounts Colonel Andréa ordering

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16 FO 13128/194, Smart to Chamberlain, January 31, 1926.

17 SHAT 4H65/ D1 BR7, December 12, 1925, "Region Ouest de Damas." As my discussion of rebel sources will show, Ramaḍān Shallāsh could not have been with Kharrāṭ and the ʿAkkāsh at this time.

18 *Alif Bāʾ*, October 28, 1925. Listing of villages in the Damascus countryside destroyed or damaged. *Alif Bāʾ* was French subsidized. The military authority suspended several Damascus papers during the revolt. Extant copies of the few papers that continued publishing are rare.

19 Bennett J. Doty, *The Legion of the Damned: The Adventures of Bennett J. Doty in the French Foreign Legion as Told by Himself*, New York 1928, 172-5. This is a strange book. Its author was an American Foreign Service volunteer who later deserted with an English Foreign Service volunteer who also wrote a memoir. See John Henry Harvey, *With the Foreign Legion in Syria*, London 1928. Each blames his desertion on the other. Doty's book seems more reliable and has more verifiable information. Harvey's book is

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the summary execution of all prisoners and any Syrian found with a firearm. British consular reports support Doty's story and suggest that the village may have been Malayḥa in the eastern Ghūṭa.[20]

A few days later they marched into the Mīdān. The Mīdān was the route to Damascus for agricultural produce from the Ḥawrān and the Ghūṭa as well as away in for armed insurgents. Doty describes destroying inhabited houses in the Mīdān with close-range tank and artillery fire in order to clear a safe path for troop movement. This was the beginning of Andréa's operation to create the Damascus ring road, which he started late in 1925 and finished in February. It was a fortified security cordon isolating the city from its outlying districts and countryside. The cordon cut the Mīdān in half. Andréa was promoted to General in late December 1925, and was generally credited with crushing the revolt.[21]

In the short term these methods failed to stem the tide of resistance.[22] The bands remained active through January and numbers continued to rise. The ʿAkkāsh band continually disrupted communications to the north, south, and east from Damascus. On the night of January 11 they cut phone and rail lines between Damascus and Beirut. They were apparently joined by Shakīb Wahhāb from the Shūf, Nasīb ʿAryān from Ayha (*sic*), and Muḥammad Sharaf along with three others from Jabal Durūz. Workers with a military escort repaired the tracks during the day, but the next night the rebels did a more thorough job.

The following night they tore up lengthy sections of track even closer to Damascus, near Dumar. At eleven o'clock that night the armored train derailed and a freight train following it also derailed. "The band fired on the armored train from the surrounding peaks, injuring two train employees, one seriously. Traffic will be interrupted for several days..."[23] On the same night of January 12-13 a passenger train near ʿAyn al-Fīja was

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more horrifying and fantastic and contains fewer names, dates, or locations. It also contains overt anti-French sentiment. He describes for example burning a Christian village not involved in the revolt in Ḥawrān and murdering the inhabitants for refusing to pay taxes, and an unnamed French officer who went into a frenzy and murdered several shackled "Druze" prisoners with his pistol and saber. (pp. 158-162 and 164-5). Both men were veterans of World War Iand both memoirs are inexplicably well written.

20 FO 13028/281, Smart to Chamberlain, October 15, 1925. Smart reported that the prisoners, including a British Indian subject, were shot after French troops brought them to Damascus. He added that the troops openly sold their plundered loot in Damascus.

21 Doty, *Legion of the Damned*, 120 and 185. General Andréa also wrote his memoirs, which of course, do not mention these events. See Général Charles Joseph Andréa, *La Révolte druze et l'insurrection de Damas,* Paris 1937. For the ring road see pp. 85-6. The ring road still exists and, shorn of its barbed wire, is now elevated. Perhaps coincidentally, it remains unpopular among Mīdānīs.

22 Despite Andréa's optimism and the accolades of his superiors, the security cordon was not immediately successful. Smart reported rebels stealing building materials and barbed wire with impunity to use on their own barricades *inside* the city. See FO 13128/204, Smart to Chamberlain, February 15, 1926.

23 SHAT 4H65/D2 BR27, January 12, 13, 1926, "Region de Damas." See also FO 13128/191, Smart to Chamberlain, January 19, 1926. The reports agree in general but Smart condemned the authorities for not

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trapped by the disruption of the rail line and came under rebel fire. Its military escort engaged the rebels and supposedly managed to prevent them from capturing the munitions carried in the train, but the first relief expedition sent disappeared entirely and was reported probably captured. By January 16, the train had still not been relieved, but an armored train was expected to reach it that night.[24] It was unclear where the intelligence officer got his information, since the condition of train was not reported until four days after it was attacked, and apparently it had been under siege and isolated by the insurgents since that time. The report stated with casual and almost surely inaccurate optimism that the passengers and the munitions were safe and untouched. The rail lines were finally reopened on the evening of January 16, and there were no losses reported on the trapped train.

Within a week the insurgents were massing outside Damascus for a renewed attack on the train lines. This time it was in even greater force. Reports from January 22 indicate 600-700 armed insurgents in the region of Dumar under the probable command of ʿAbd al-Qādir Sukkār, in cooperation with the ʿAkkāsh band. Meanwhile somewhere around a thousand armed "Druzes" and "bandits" in several groups were active in the other areas surrounding Damascus.[25] This pattern prevailed throughout January and into February. Rebel activity continued in Wādī al-Baradā, the Ghūṭa and Mīdān, and north towards al-Nabak and in the Anti-Lebanon range. The insurgents continued to control the initiative with impressive organization and coordination of tactics. They repeatedly targeted and destroyed the lines of transportation and communication from Damascus in all directions.[26] The intelligence reports reveal a desperate military situation despite their clinical language and determined avoidance of casualty figures.

The reports provide a clear negative imprint of the insurgent consciousness of the armed enemies of the Mandate. They show that the rebels of the Damascus countryside were organized, coordinated, and focused on the strategic goal of expelling the French from the mandated territory by destroying the infrastructure of Mandatory rule. The power of the insurgents to disrupt every aspect of Mandatory military rule seemed to awe French intelligence officers. British reports sketch clearly what the French reports only hint at: the rebels had the committed support of vast numbers of the Syrian population, both in the countryside and in the capital. Their countrymen saw men the French

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acting before the attack and he gave the insurgents more credit for tactical skill. He added that after relieving the trapped train, troops pillaged and burned two nearby villages, Ashrafiyya and Judayda, surely driving the male villagers into the arms of the rebels.

24 SHAT 4H65/D2 BR30, January 16, 1926, "Region de Damas."

25 SHAT 4H65/D2 BR34, January 22, 1926, "Region Nord-Ouest de Damas." These numbers are almost certainly exaggerated.

26 British reports confirm that even with 10,000 troops in Damascus, the French did not control any part of the surrounding countryside and were unable to prevent attacks inside the capital. See FO 13128/194, Smart to Chamberlain, January 31, 1926.

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identified as bandits and criminals, as nationalist heroes. The question of how the rebels identified themselves remains for the next section.

How did the insurgents of the Damascus countryside achieve such impressive military results? Their own documents record major meetings on several occasions to discuss and decide matters of importance to the revolt. Early in December 1925 they met at the house of Abū ʿAbdū al-Saqbānī, *mukhtār* (village head) of the Ghūṭa village of Saqbā.[27] This was approximately the same time as the multiple attacks of early that month. The meeting brought together many of the men named in French intelligence reports, as well as others rarely named as fighters. Nasīb al-Bakrī, a prominent member of the Damascene notable class, was there and though he appears infrequently in the French or British sources, his private papers, preserved in the Syrian National Archives, name him as president of the rebel council.[28] He was joined by Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, ʿAlī al-Aṭrash, and Zayd Āl ʿĀmir, all Druze from the south, and Nazīh Muʾayyad (al-ʿAẓm), ʿAbd al-Qādir Sukkār, Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, Zakī al-Ḥalabī, Zakī al-Durūbī, and the council secretary Fāʾiq al-ʿAsalī, who were mostly from Damascus or Hama.[29]

There were two main bands fighting in the Ghūṭa represented at the conference. According to Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, the "Druze" band had become the strongest since he, ʿAlī al-Aṭrash, and Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn (al-Ḥalabī) had come from the Jabal Durūz, Nazīh al-Muʾayyad (al-ʿAẓm) had come from the Golan to join the band, and ʿAbd al-Qādir Sukkār had come from the Mīdān. The other principal band was the al-Shāghūriyya band of Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ. Although he rarely took part in operations, Nasīb al-Bakrī had major influence over Kharrāṭ's band. According to Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, as the Druze band eclipsed al-Shāghūriyya, Bakrī sought to extend his influence over it too.[30] There was clear tension between rebel leaders over responsibilities and leadership, and command structure was one of several matters under discussion, including operational regions and responsibilities, upcoming military operations and, most notably, a debate and judgment against rebel leader Ramaḍān Shallāsh for "transgressing the objectives of the nationalist revolt."[31]

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27 Al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 109. This was probably the second meeting at Saqbā. The first was on or around November 26, 1925. Ibid. 61.

28 Nasīb al-Bakrī papers, "al-Ḥukm ʿalā aḥad qādat al-thawra: Ramaḍān Shallāsh," Markaz al-Wathāʾiq al-Tārīkhiyya, (MWT), Damascus. The Bakrī family was among the wealthiest and most powerful in Damascus. See: Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics,* Stuttgart 1985, 159-160.

29 A variety of sources indicate that Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn, Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, Zakī al-Ḥalabī, Zakī al-Durūbī, Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī, Ramaḍān Shallāsh, and probably ʿAlī al-Aṭrash were all graduates of the Ottoman military college. James Gelvin has illuminated the earlier nationalist political activities of some of these men and paved the way for future studies of popular nationalism, including this one, in *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics at the Close of Empire,* Berkeley 1998. See also his chapter in this volume.

30 Al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 107.

31 Bakrī papers, "al-Ḥukm." The list of matters for discussion is from al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 107. The judgment against Ramaḍān is the only item preserved in the Bakrī papers from the Saqbā meeting. Unsurprisingly,

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The debate over Ramaḍān Shallāsh was apparently fractious. It is not entirely clear what he was accused of or why. There are three separate accounts, and each differs significantly in detail. The Bedouin chief, and veteran of the attack on Hama, was to be "expelled from the revolt and stripped of his office and insignia."[32] A graduate of the Ottoman war college, he had served in the Ottoman army in Libya in 1912 and the Arab Army during World War I, and was a schoolmate and friend of ʿAlī al-Aṭrash from the Ottoman school for sons of tribal chiefs.[33] Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ claimed that Ramaḍān requested a meeting with Nasīb and ʿAlī al-Aṭrash, and Nasīb used the opportunity to eliminate him from competition for leadership. Munīr al-Rayyis, who was also at Saqbā, but arrived after the trial, claimed that Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ called the meeting expressly to seek revenge against Shallāsh, and that their personal animosity was well known. Kharrāṭ accused Shallāsh of "impositions and ransoms and financial collections in the name of the revolt."[34]

On the other hand, Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ claimed that Nasīb al-Bakrī accused Shallāsh of demanding one thousand guineas in gold from the people of Dūmā, and Shaykh Ḥijāz accused him of molesting a woman in the village of Ḥamūra. Al-ʿĀṣ reported that he argued forcefully that the accusations were baseless and that they should refer the judgment to Sulṭān al-Aṭrash, the commander in chief of the revolt. In his memoir, Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ cursed Nasīb and charged him with harboring "secret hatreds and ambitions."[35] He condemned Kharrāṭ only by implication. Rayyis, by contrast, condemned Kharrāṭ and had harsh words for Bakrī and al-ʿĀṣ merely because they did not restrain Kharrāṭ and prevent the injustice to Shallāsh.

> When I heard what had happened to Ramaḍān Shallāsh, I admonished Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ for keeping silent about the ridiculous trial. Kharrāṭ did it only for revenge and I wondered how he managed it in the presence of al-ʿĀṣ and Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn and Nasīb al-Bakrī and the others who had to approve the unjust procedures, which were neither logical nor legal. Al-ʿĀṣ explained that they had only agreed to summon Shallāsh in order to investigate the accusations against him.[36]

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he makes no mention of the apparently fractious debate over his leadership, or its conclusion. A number of participants in the conference are mentioned by Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ but not by Bakrī.

32 Bakrī papers, "al-Ḥukm." The legalistic language is unique to Bakrī's record. The judgment purports to be decision number 91 of the Leadership Council of the Nationalist Revolt in Ghūṭa and the Region of Damascus. It is also dated ten days after the date al-ʿĀṣ and Rayyis give: 26-27 Jumādā al-ūlā 1344 (December 14-15, 1925), as opposed to December 5, 1925.

33 Al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 109. See Eugene Rogan, "Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes," *IJMES* 28 (1996), 88, table I. Shallāsh is listed in the first graduating class and a certain ʿAlī from Suwaydā' is also listed without further information. It seems reasonable to assume that this was ʿAlī al-Aṭrash.

34 Al-Rayyis, *al-Kitāb al-dhahabī*, 71.

35 Al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 109.

36 Al-Rayyis, *al-Kitāb al-dhahabī*, 371.

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Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ blamed Nasīb al-Bakrī for the injustice against Ramaḍān Shallāsh. He implied that Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ, whom French troops killed not long after in an ambush in the Ghūṭa, was simply a tool of Nasīb Bey's ambition.[37] Perhaps writing soon after the death of Kharrāṭ, al-ʿĀṣ sought to avoid harsh criticism of a martyred hero of the revolt.[38] Still, quite apart from sparing Kharrāṭ from condemnation, Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ identified Nasīb al-Bakrī as the undisputed power behind Kharrāṭ and his band, and he contested his leadership at every turn. Bakrī has been portrayed as the preeminent leader of the revolt in the countryside of Damascus, but his traditional patronage-based political and military leadership was clearly not without challenge.[39] Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ accused Bakrī of nuzzling up to ʿAlī al-Aṭrash in an attempt to gain access to the Druze leadership and become "general leader or unhindered dictator, (*ḥākim bi-amrihi*) of the revolt."[40]

Nasīb al-Bakrī naturally preserved a different version of events in his private papers. The judgment contained in his papers claimed that Ramaḍān was guilty of extracting heavy fines for his own pocket from the villages of Madīʿa, al-Qasa, and Ḥirrān al-ʿAwāmīd in the eastern Ghūṭa. The report claimed that the villagers had accused Ramaḍān and that he had admitted his misdeeds before the revolt's official tribunal. Accordingly, Shallāsh would be expelled from the ranks of the rebels. But his life would be spared and his freedom would be unhindered. The otherwise unspecified judgment was to be carried out by Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ.[41]

After the conclusion of the first night's meeting and the judgment against Ramaḍān, they argued over the direction of the revolt. Al-ʿĀṣ reported that he urged Bakrī to relinquish offices he was unable to fulfill. As a politician, his talents as a military leader were limited and he always sought to rule by decree. He could not hope to supplant Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn, who understood military matters and was a son of the tribe (Druze) and comrade of ʿAlī. They also debated an upcoming attack on the Circassian village of Murj al-Sulṭān. Saʿīd argued against ʿAbd al-Qādir Sukkār, who fervently wanted to teach the "treacherous collaborators" a lesson. Saʿīd reported that he argued against attacking a Circassian village because they would be playing into the hands of the

37 Ibid., 398.

38 Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ was killed fighting in Palestine in 1936. His memoir was first published in 1935 and is thus as close as possible to a contemporary account. Munīr al-Rayyis, by contrast, published his book in 1969, though it seems it was probably recorded, at least in part, at the time of the revolt. Nasīb al-Bakrī died in 1966, three years before the publication of al-Rayyis's memoir.

39 For example, see Khoury, *Syria and the French*, 161-162.

40 Al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 107, original parentheses. Bakrī's record of the deliberations about Shallāsh do not mention the presence of the ʿAkkāsh brothers or Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ. Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ claimed that these men were present and fully under Bakrī's control. I should note that this ʿAlī al-Aṭrash was not Sulṭān's brother, but a member of the Suwaydā' branch of the family. I thank Manṣūr Sulṭān al-Aṭrash for supplying this detail.

41 Bakrī papers, "al-Ḥukm." Even if these accusations were true, they would probably not have warranted a trial. Al-ʿĀṣ's account indicates clearly that nearly everyone was engaged in some pillaging and levying of "revolt taxes," usually from rich landlords.

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French who sought to exacerbate ethnic and sectarian divisions by utilizing Circassian and Armenian troops against the rebels.[42]

Both Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ and Munīr al-Rayyis reserved their most damning condemnation for the sentence against Shallāsh. Ramaḍān had barely arrived the following day when Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ and his band arrested him and removed his weapons, horse, and money. They placed him under guard and proceeded to divide the spoils. Al-ʿĀṣ claimed that it was all done while he was absent and in contradiction to what they had agreed upon. Al-ʿĀṣ later protested that they had to return Ramaḍān's belongings, but they were unwilling to reconsider apart from leaving him his horse. Shortly after, the French bombed the area from the air, and the rebels fled. Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ released Ramaḍān and he mounted his horse and rode off alone. Shaykh Ḥijāz had taken his sword and Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ had taken his firearms. They divided his supposedly plundered gold among themselves.[43]

Munīr al-Rayyis reported events differently. In his account, Kharrāṭ's men seized Shallāsh on his orders and transported him to Saqbā. When they arrived, Kharrāṭ gave orders to search his belongings. He took Shallāsh's documents and began reading them aloud. They found nine Ottoman gold pounds, which al-Rayyis claimed Shallāsh had borrowed while he and Nasīb al-Bakrī were guests of a Mīdānī notable. Kharrāṭ seized his sword and dagger, and tore the medal from his jacket given by Sharīf Ḥusayn, naming him "Pasha." Kharrāṭ put the medal on his own chest and proclaimed, "I deserve this more than you." Al-Rayyis added that Kharrāṭ appointed himself prosecutor and judge and that the others could not stop him because everyone wanted to avoid trouble between the rebels. As mentioned by al-ʿĀṣ, soon after, a French air raid on the village allowed Ramaḍan to escape.[44]

The conference concluded with a list of resolutions recorded by Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ. The first resolution stipulated that al-ʿĀṣ retained general leadership in battle. The second resolution summarized the order of communal battle leadership with respect to all decisions and listed Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, Nazīh al-Muʾayyad (al-ʿAẓm), ʿAlī al-Aṭrash, Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn (al-Ḥalabī), and Abū ʿAbduh (ʿAbd al-Qādir) Sukkār. The leaders supposedly allied with Nasīb al-Bakrī appear nowhere on the list. The resolution stressed an end to personalized leadership decisions. Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ wrote that before Saqbā they were each independent and sought to command alone, but that after Saqbā they sought to command by communal decision and to coordinate their actions. He lamented that the affair of Ramaḍān showed that the system did not work; they could attain unity on the battlefield, but unity in politics was far more difficult and all their achievements could be squandered by personal rivalries.[45]

42 Al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 111.

43 Al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 113-114.

44 Al-Rayyis, *al-Kitāb al-dhahabī*, 371-2.

45 Al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 112.

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The insurgency in the countryside of Damascus did not wane after these events. French intelligence reports recorded continual escalation of rebel pressure through winter and into the spring of 1926. Immediately after the meeting at Saqbā, the "Druze" band led by Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn moved towards Jabal Durūz, though they returned to fight in the Ghūṭa later. Ḥasan al-Kharrāṭ was killed, but his band continued to fight, and Ramaḍān Shallāsh, in a move that surely vindicated his enemies, surrendered to French authorities and collaborated with them. He tried to convince some of his few remaining comrades to join him in fomenting revolt near Dayr al-Zūr with the help of his tribesmen. He and a few others left the region of al-Nabak where they had been recruiting new fighters along with Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, Khālid al-Nafūrī, Munīr al-Rayyis, and Jumʿa Sawsaq, and headed towards Dayr al-Zūr. This was mid-January and the mountains were thick with snow. At al-Salamiyya, east of Hama, Shallāsh announced his intention to surrender to the French and sought mediation through a local notable. Two of his party remained with him and two left. Al-Rayyis wrote that Shallāsh kept the machine gun, and one of his party stole a rifle that belonged to one of the men who chose not to surrender. The two men who did not surrender, Jamīl al-ʿAlawānī and Ibrāhīm Ṣudqī, turned up later, exhausted and starving with one horse and one rifle between them, to rejoin their comrades in the region of al-Nabak.[46]

Ramaḍān Shallāsh, meanwhile, accepted a subsidy from the French government and French government scholarships for his sons.[47] He soon authored a letter to his former comrades urging them to surrender. Shallāsh defended his courage and his record as a fighter and maintained that his cooperation did not make him a collaborator or a traitor. He urged the insurgents to surrender to the new high commissioner, Henry de Jouvenal, who, he claimed, was fair and just, and who would accept their demands without further violence.[48] His appeal had few takers, and it must have been difficult for his former comrades to defend Shallāsh and criticize his attackers still among them, while they continued to fight and later went into exile as he returned to Dayr al-Zūr on a French subsidy.

His prosecutor, Nasīb al-Bakrī, also came out comparatively well from the revolt. Like many of the other leaders, he was forced into exile, but was pardoned after less than a year, in March of 1928. His family's vast estates, which the Mandate authorities had bombed and confiscated, were also returned.[49] Other leaders such as Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn, Nazīh al-Muʾayyad, Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī, and Saʿīd al-Ḥaydar spent ten years

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46 Al-Rayyis, *al-Kitāb al-dhahabī*, 407-408.

47 Ibid., 371.

48 Letter dated 20 Rajab 1344 (February 4, 1926) reproduced in Salāma ʿUbayd, *al-Thawra al-sūriyya al-kubrā, 1925-1927, ʿalā ḍawʾ wathāʾiq lam tunshar*, Beirut 1971, 370-1.

49 Khoury, *Syria and the French*, 332.

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in exile under sentence of death.[50] Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ was killed fighting in Palestine in 1936. Most ordinary rebels simply returned to rebuild their ruined farms and villages. It is an enduring tribute to these ordinary rebels of the countryside of Damascus that despite the bitter factional battles between their leaders and the brutal methods of the French forces, they fought and often defeated the Mandate army day after day for more than a year. In his memoirs Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī, who resolutely refused to identify by name the rebel leaders he damned for their damage to the struggle, wrote:

> Events confirmed what I perceived and felt: the best among them was the ordinary class of people (*ṭabaqat al-shaʿb al-sādhija*). All our calamities and defeats were due to the ambitions and rivalries of our leaders, who were concerned only with showing off and with their love of display. I saw that the true revolt against the imperialists should be based only on the ordinary and honest classes of the people.[51]

This chapter has sought to identify some of the lesser-known rebels of the Great Syrian Revolt. It has contrasted hostile French and British sources with insurgent memoirs and documents in an effort to excavate the popular history of the insurgency in the countryside of Damascus. French intelligence reports outline, in negative relief, aspects of the collective consciousness of the insurgents. The reports show clearly that men who were claimed repeatedly to be bandits and outlaws, without a clear political consciousness, acted with tactical coordination, courage, resourcefulness, and clear strategic goals, to rid Syria of the French Mandate. British sources confirm what the French reports only hint at: the rebels enjoyed wide popular support among ordinary Syrians. The revolt could not have continued without this backing. Documents originating with the rebels themselves show how they achieved their coordination of tactics and aims. They also cover in detail the personal and political tensions and struggles of maintaining unity among the insurgent leadership.

Both intelligence reports and insurgent documents list many names. Some that occur repeatedly have been mentioned here. But what observations may be made about the people behind the names? The first observation is a negative one. Damascene notable politicians who figured prominently in interwar nationalist politics are conspicuous by their absence from these sources. For this, I offer two fairly obvious explanations. First, a few of those who might have resumed, or launched, careers as nationalist political leaders, were forced into lengthy exile under threat of French death sentences. Among those exiled who were active in the revolt in the countryside of Damascus were Nazīh al-Muʾayyad al-ʿAẓm and Tawfīq al-Ḥaydar, both from prominent land-owning families. Second, and more importantly, while a few members of the future National Bloc leadership (al-Kutla al-Waṭaniyya) were in jail during the revolt, most seem merely to have

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50 See al-Bakrī papers, Ministry of Justice Decree No. 1817 (MWT, No. 115), February 20, 1928, for a list of the condemned.

51 Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī, *Mudhakkirāt Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī*, ed. Khayriyya Qāsimiyya, Damascus 1990, 147.

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been uninvolved. A comparison between the most frequently mentioned insurgent leaders and the Bloc leadership indicates that they were virtually mutually exclusive. The one exception is Nasīb al-Bakrī. Among the rebels mentioned in this chapter, he was also the only graduate of the elite Damascus academy, Maktab ʿAnbar, long considered a nursery for nationalist political leaders.[52] So while the revolt was clearly nationalist, it was not led by the socially and politically prominent nationalist leadership. The revolt threatened the material and political interests of such people, and when they were involved, as in the case of the Bakrīs, they often struggled for the control and direction of the revolt with other more radical leaders.

There remain a few observations about the insurgents who did appear repeatedly in the sources. Many of the men mentioned in this chapter had a military background and most of them had attended and probably met one another at the Ottoman Imperial Military Academy (Mekteb-i Harbiye). Ramaḍān Shallāsh, Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī, Zakī al-Ḥalabī, Zakī al-Durūbī, and probably ʿAlī al-Aṭrash were all graduates of the military academy between the years 1900 and 1914.[53] Most of them fought first with the Ottoman army and later with the Arab army in the revolt against the Ottomans during World War I. With the exception of Zakī al-Ḥalabī who was from the Mīdān, none of them were from Damascus, though they all came from the areas that fell under the French Mandate, either in Syria or Lebanon. None of them were from urban notable families, and though a few of them gained further acclaim as military men, none of them entered nationalist politics.[54]

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52 For the Bloc leadership, See Khoury, *Syria and the French*, Table 10-2, 254-257. While the Bloc leadership included men who were peripherally involved, such as Jamīl Mardam and Shukrī al-Quwwatlī, and Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, who was in jail during the revolt, their names are absent from the sources surveyed for this chater. All were graduates of Maktab ʿAnbar. It is important to draw a distinction between Ottoman civil education and military education. While Maktab ʿAnbar was the civil secondary school, there was also a military secondary school in Damascus. One provided students for the Mülkiye in Istanbul, the other for the Harbiye. Military education was fully subsidized by the government and was widely seen as a path for upward mobility among those of modest means. Civil education was generally not subsidized and was a path to higher government position for sons of families that were already prominent. See Reeva Simon, "The Education of an Iraqi Ottoman Army Officer," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslich, Reeva S. Simon, New York 1991, 153-4. For Maktab ʿAnbar see the contribution of Eugene Rogan in this volume.

53 For Ramaḍān Shallāsh see Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 109. For Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn see Jūrj Fāris, *Man huwa fī Sūriyya 1949*, Damascus 1950, 129-130. For Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, see Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, *al-Tajārib al-ḥarbiyya fī ḥurūb al-thawra al-sūriyya,* Beirut 1990, 11-12. For Fawzī al-Qāwuqjī, see Adham al-Jundī, *Tārīkh al-thawrāt al-sūriyya fī ʿahd al-intidāb al-faransī,* Damascus 1960, 557. For Zakī al-Ḥalabī see Saʿīd al-ʿĀṣ, *Ṣafḥa*, 44-45. And for Zakī al-Durūbī see al-Jundī, *Tārīkh*, 507.

54 For other examples and a fuller discussion of this emerging class, see Rashid Khalidi, "Society and Ideology in Late Ottoman Syria: Class, Education, Profession, and Confession," in: *Problems in the Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honor of Albert Hourani*, ed. John P. Spagnolo, Oxford 1992, 118. He makes the point that radicalized provincial military officers of humble background would yet have

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Ultimately the revolt in the countryside of Damascus relied on the participation and continued sacrifices of ordinary Syrians. These people were farmers, tradesmen, and small merchants. The sources examined in this chapter mention only a few of their names. Most of them came from the Mīdān, the popular quarters of Damascus, the Ḥawrān, and the villages of the Ghūṭa. While their names may be obscure, the efforts of their enemies to dominate them and crush their resistance, and the voluminous records that resulted, insure that an echo of their voice has remained.

their part to play in Syrian history, as they did in Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt. Their entry into national politics in Syria would have to wait for another generation.

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Zakī al-Arsūzī and Syrian-Arab nationalism in the periphery: the Alexandretta crisis of 1936-1939[1]

Dalal Arsuzi-Elamir

Introduction

So far, Arab nationalism in Syria during the French Mandate has almost always been discussed from the standpoint of the political elite in Damascus and the events that took place there. Since the interpretation of history is always also an interpretation of the present, a treatment of this history and the loss of the region of Alexandretta to Turkey has been avoided up to now. The Arab character of the region was called into question by the claims placed on it by Turkey, by the political interests of France, and by the existence of a large Turkish minority living there. Under these circumstances, the concept of Arab nationalism was used as an instrument to challenge such claims – whether of Turkish, French, or even Arab origin. This chapter will attempt to examine the development of the Arab nationalist movement in the region of Alexandretta, to distinguish it from the other forces involved in the struggle for power there, and to define its relationship to them. In this connection, it will be of vital importance to analyze the working methods of the Arab nationalist movement during the Alexandretta crisis and to evaluate the political and intellectual role played by Zakī al-Arsūzī, the most important representative of Arab nationalism in the region of Alexandretta.

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[1] This article is part of a larger research project. See Dalal Arsuzi-Elamir, *Arabischer Nationalismus in Syrien: Zaki al-Arsuzi und die arabisch-nationale Bewegung an der Peripherie Alexandretta / Antakya 1930-1938* (Studien zur Zeitgeschichte des Nahen Ostens und Nordafrikas, vol. 9), Münster 2003.

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Secondary sources providing details of the development and worsening of the Alexandretta crisis and the international background to it, and primary sources, including the complete works of al-Arsūzī, *al-Mu'allafāt al-kāmila*, have been used. In addition, private archival sources (the Antakyan Collection of Letters)[2] and official sources (diplomatic reports), whose material has mostly been used for the first time, together with contemporary press reports and newspaper interviews, have been consulted in order to round off al-Arsūzī's biography and to make his intellectual development and political career comprehensible. It is the press reports and newspaper interviews previously mentioned that provide an insight into the internal structures of the region, as well as into the cooperation and disputes between the existing political parties and various population groups, and into the political events of that period.

Prevailing conditions in the region of Alexandretta

The region of Alexandretta lies to the northwest of Aleppo and north of Latakia.[3] Its total area is 4,805 square kilometers.[4] The two largest towns in the area are Alexandretta and Antakya. The town of Alexandretta is situated on the southern edge of the coastal bay of this region, where it functioned as the port for northern Syria and Iraq. Antakya lies in the Orontes valley – between al-Suwaydiyya in the west, Lake ʿUmq in the north and Mount Qaṣīr in the east.

The population was comprised mainly of Arabs, Turks, and Armenians, although there were various other groups such as Kurds and Circassians.[5] In 1936 the population of this area was roughly 240,000. This could be broken down as follows: 49 percent Arabs (117,600 of whom two thirds were Alawites, roughly 20,000 Orthodox Christians and the rest Sunnis); 23 percent Turks (55,000); 18 percent Armenians (43,000); 8 percent Turkomans (20,000); the remaining 2 percent were made up of other minority groups.[6] The segregation or amalgamation of the different groups (Turks and Turkomans) came about in the mid-1930s as a result of the development and subsequent worsening of the Alexandretta crisis, with the aim of stressing the majority or minority component of a particular group within the population of the area. This is also true of the

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2 This is a collection of letters which the ʿUrūbiyyūn and their sympathizers in the region of Alexandretta exchanged with the ʿUṣba in Antakya for the purpose of clarifying questions of organization, swapping experiences, and passing on information about the political situation. The letters are in the private possession of the author and are here referred to as the Antakyan Collection of Letters.

3 See map.

4 Nakhla Ward, *Ḥaḍārat Anṭākiya ʿabra ʾl-ʿuṣūr*, Brazil 1956, 185.

5 Yūsuf al-Ḥakīm, *Sūriyya waʾl-intidāb al-faransī*, 4 vols., Beirut 1983, IV, 164.

6 Alīsān Bāyirāmyān, *Qaḍiyyat liwāʾ al-Iskandarūna*, Damascus 1970, 23.

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the various Arab groups (Alawites, Sunnis, and Christians) who were classified according to their religious denomination and not their nationality.

The individual groups were unevenly distributed throughout the region. The Turks, for example, made up 50 percent of the population in Antakya, whereas the Arabs comprised only 40 percent, while in the surrounding region they made up 70 percent of the total population. In Alexandretta, the Arabs made up over 70 percent of the population, and in al-Riḥāniyya 80 percent. Here 15 percent of the population was Turkish, while in al-Suwaydiyya 90 percnt were Arabs. In the villages of Jabal Mūsā and some of the villages of Baylān and Qirqkhān 90 percent of the population was Armenian. 75 percent of the inhabitants of al-Urdū were Turks, while 75 percent of the inhabitants of al-Qaṣīr were Arabs, most of them Sunnis. The rest of this town's population was made up of Turks.[7]

The population of the countryside was comprised mainly of Alawites who cultivated land which they had leased from large-scale landowners. These were mostly of Turkish or Arab Sunni descent. The latter spoke Turkish in addition to Arabic and sympathized with their Turkish "social and religious brethren," something that led to comparative social homogeneity amongst this section of the population. Only a few of the Alawites were well off and had their own land. This relatively small group constituted the notables in the villages where they lived. The town-dwellers amongst the Arabs were, for the most part, shopkeepers or plied some not very lucrative trade. Only a section of the town-dwellers were well off. They were the notables in the various quarters of the towns where they lived; some of them even acted as government officials. The broad majority of town-dwellers worked for wages.[8]

At the beginning of the period of Ottoman rule, the region of Alexandretta belonged administratively to the *vilāyet* of Aleppo.[9] Toward the end of the sixteenth century, when the state adopted the *vilāyet* system of administration, the region of Alexandretta was annexed to the *vilāyet* of Aleppo.[10] In 1864, while the *vilāyet* system was being reorganized, the region of Alexandretta remained attached to Aleppo. Throughout the entire period of Ottoman administration (1516-1918), the region of Alexandretta never existed as an autonomous regional administrative unit. Sultan Selīm I, who was fully aware of the importance of this region, tried in the sixteenth century to place emphasis on the Turkish language as part of his program of Turkification and to increase the percentage of Turks in the population by settling Turkomans from his retinue. Subsequently the Arabic names of some of the villages and administrative communities (*nāḥiya*) were

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7 Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Zarqa, *Qaḍiyyat liwā' al-Iskandarūna: Wathā'iq wa-shurūḥ Anṭākiyyāt,* 3 vols., Beirut 1993, I, 244.

8 Ibid., II, 52.

9 Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Zarqa, *ʿAdam sharʿiyyat al-wūjūd al-turkī fī iqlīm al-Iskandarūna*, Cairo 1967, 11.

10 Al-Zarqa, *Qaḍiyyat*, I, 18.

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replaced by Turkish ones.[11] During the French Mandate, Antakya, Alexandretta, and Qirqkhān became districts (*aqḍiya,* sing. *qaḍā'*). Alexandretta became the administrative and political center of the region, as well as the seat of the deputy high commissioner.[12] The Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) incorporated the whole region of Alexandretta into the "blue area," since it belonged to Syria and was therefore to be under French influence.[13] On November 27, 1918, Gouraud ordered the districts of Antakya, Ḥārim and Baylān to be annexed to the region of Alexandretta, in order to form a new political administrative unit (*sancaḳ/liwā'*) with self-administration in the western part of the Arab areas occupied by France.[14] At the peace conference (Sèvres), the Ottoman State recognized the region of Alexandretta, as well as Kilikia, as being integral parts of the Arab area which had been separated from the Ottoman State.[15] On April 25, 1920, France was given Mandatory power over Lebanon and Syria, including the region of Alexandretta, which served as the natural port of exports for Aleppo.[16] This Mandate was acknowledged at the meeting of the League of Nations in London on July 24, 1922. In September, 1920, the four units Etat de Grand Liban, Gouvernement de Damas, Gouvernement d'Alep and Territoire des Alaouites had been established on the basis of racial and sectarian criteria.[17] The petty state of Aleppo included the region of Alexandretta, which still retained its own autonomous administration.[18] In September 1921, Jisr al-Shughūr, Ḥārim, Katsaba, al-Bāyir, and al-Basīṭ, which had been added only a year previously, were separated off and attached to Aleppo and Latakia for "economic reasons."[19] The political price of these changes was paid by the Arabs, since the percentage of Turks living in the region of Alexandretta increased. This was due to the fact that the inhabitants of the districts and regions that had been separated off were mostly Arabs.

France entered into a number of agreements and treaties with Turkey, preceded by a semi-official visit to Turkey by Franklin Bouillon, which was concluded after a series of talks about the First Ankara Agreement of October 20, 1921. This agreement ended the hostility between the two countries and contained a clause to the effect that Turkey,

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11 ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Kayyālī, *al-Marāḥil fī 'l-intidāb al-faransī wa-niḍālinā 'l-waṭanī*, 4 vols., Aleppo 1958-60, IV, 413.

12 Al-Zarqa, *Qaḍiyyat*, I, 237.

13 Dhūqān Qarqūṭ, *al-Mashriq al-ʿarabī fī muwājahat al-istiʿmār: qirā'a fī tārīkh Sūriyya al-muʿāṣir*, Cairo 1977, 157.

14 Al-Kayyālī, *al-Marāḥil*, IV, 407.

15 Majīd Khaddūrī, *Qaḍiyyat al-Iskandarūna*, Damascus 1953, 5.

16 *Orient Nachrichten für Wirtschaft, Technik und Kultur* (Journal of the German Orient-Verein e.V.) 29-30, Dec. 30, 1936

17 Helmut Mejcher, "Der arabische Osten im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert 1914-1989," in *Geschichte der arabischen Welt*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann, Munich 1991, 432-501, here p. 444.

18 Bāyirāmyān, *Qaḍiyyat*, 24.

19 Ibid., 29.

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from then on, would no longer give military support to the Syrian rebels in the north. As part of this agreement, France handed over 18,000 square kilometers of Syrian land to Turkey.[20] In addition, article 7 of the agreement stipulated that "a special system of administration" should be introduced for the region of Alexandretta within that of the petty state of Aleppo, something which weakened the relations of this region with Aleppo. On the basis of a special resolution, the French governor of Aleppo handed over to the region of Alexandretta the majority of functions relating to the region, which had previously been under the jurisdiction of the Arab chief administrator of Aleppo.[21] The agreement strengthened the role and importance of the Turkish section of the population at the expense of that of the Arabs, as privileges were accorded to the Turks in the cultural and financial sectors. It also laid down a special administrative statute, but not a political one. The peace treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923 confirmed this agreement, as being the only valid legal basis on which the border between Syria and Turkey could be drawn. France created this particular political situation in the region of Alexandretta by giving it a special status within the French Mandatory territories. By this way France tried, on the one hand, to win Turkey's friendship and achieve cooperation with it in the eastern Mediterranean area and to enforce its policy of "divide and rule" by strengthening the large Turkish minority in comparison to the Arab majority. In addition, within the framework of her policy to divide the Syrian territory into a series of smaller areas with special rights, France saw no reason to convert the region of Alexandretta into a petty state. It had no clear denominational character which could have justified France in making the region of Alexandretta a denominational state like those of the Druze and Alawites. The Turks were, without exception, Sunni Muslims, the Arabs partly Sunni Muslims or Christians, but mostly Alawites. By granting the region a "special system of administration," France aimed to satisfy Turkey by not attaching the region of Alexandretta entirely to Syria. One important result of this agreement was that Turkey could now have a say in the affairs of the region, thanks to the official recognition of the Turks living there and the granting to them of special status. Turkey also had the right to make further demands and was ultimately able to annex the whole region in 1938/1939.

On March 20, 1930, the constitution of Alexandretta was ratified, so as to give the political system a legal and constitutional veneer and to protect the policy of separation carried out by France in Syria.[22] The various regulations concerning the governmental status in the region of Alexandretta were put together on May 14, 1930, in a fundamental system called the *Règlement organique du sandjak d'Alexandretta*,[23] in which "the

[20] Khaddūrī, *Qaḍiyyat*, 7.

[21] Bāyirāmyān, *Qaḍiyyat*, 28.

[22] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bīṭār, *Qaḍiyyat liwāʾ al-Iskandarūna waʾl-waḥda al-sūriyya min taqsīm al-dawla al-ʿuthmāniyya ḥattā taslīmīhi ilā Turkiyā* 1918-1939, Damascus 1997, 36.

[23] Political Archive of the Foreign Office, Bonn, div. XII Turkey: Drawing the Border between Turkey and Syria (R 105156).

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special system of administration" was determined. It was the job of the Mandate committee to make sure that guarantees given to the Turkish section of the population in this area with regard to culture and language, as well as certain other concessions agreed on, were adhered to.[24] On the one hand, this constitution gave the region of Alexandretta – as part of Syria – its own administrative, economic, and financial systems; on the other hand, it upheld the existing situation, whereby the region of Alexandretta was dependent on the Syrian government as far as legislation, budget, and the appointment of high-ranking officials and judges were concerned.[25]

On May 29, 1937, the League of Nations confirmed new laws concerning the *sancaḳ*: Statut du Sandjak and Loi fondamentale du Sandjak, whereby the region of Alexandretta was to represent an *entité distincte* with complete autonomy in all domestic affairs. Its external affairs were to be controlled by the French Mandatory authorities in Syria which formed a customs and monetary union with the region. This new statute came into force on November 29, 1937.[26]

Zakī al-Arsūzī and Syrian Arab nationalism: the Alexandretta crisis of 1936-39 and the ceding of the region to Turkey

The Alexandretta problem started on a local level at the beginning of the 1930s, was recognized in 1936 on a regional and international level as being a "question," and came to be known in the autumn of the same year as the "Alexandretta crisis." It had gone through a number of preliminary stages:[27] The initial stage began with the First Ankara Agreement of October 20, 1921, which is regarded as the first step on the way to separating the region of Alexandretta off from Syria. The French Mandatory authorities justified their policy of Turkification in the region of Alexandretta by claiming that they only wanted to carry out the regulations laid down in this agreement. In this way, they preserved their friendship with Turkey. The "special situation" into which the agreement had put the region of Alexandretta meant that no cooperation or move toward solidarity was achieved among the various sections of the population, nor was there any integration of the groups into the society of Mandatory Syria to which the region of Alexandretta belonged, even after the First Ankara Agreement. The integration of the society within the region of Alexandretta or of the Arab population with the rest of the Syrian

24 Ibid.

25 Al-Kayyālī, *al-Marāḥil*, IV, 411.

26 Political Archive of the Foreign Office, Bonn, div. VII Syria, (R 104793), Geneva May 2, 1937.

27 See Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate,* London 1987, 494-515; Stephen H. Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate,* London 1972, 237-243; Keith D. Watenpaugh, "Creating Phantoms: Zakī al-Arsūzī, the Alexandretta Crisis, and the Formation of Modern Arab Nationalism in Syria," *IJMES* 28, 3 (1996), 363-389.

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Arab society was prevented first by the discriminatory policies of the French Mandatory authorities, which gave the various sections of the population different rights and duties, secondly by the financial and moral support that Turkey gave the Turkish section of the population, and third by the "special system of administration" that had been introduced in the region. The result was a conflict which boiled up between the two opposing nationalities, the Turks and the Arabs. The Arabs felt threatened by the Turks, who had begun to demonstrate their strength by fighting and provoking the Arab forces and their allies. This political course had been prepared for more than ten years – from the early 1920s – until it took its final shape on both the Turkish and Arab sides. The forces that had developed in order to assert their interests, goals, and needs against those of the others fought a running battle from the early 1930s onward to impose their respective national identities on the region of Alexandretta, once and for all.

The various political events in the region of Alexandretta from 1930-35 paved the way for the second preparatory stage of the Alexandretta problem, which began with the signing of the Franco-Syrian Treaty on September 9, 1936. Turkey exploited the development of Franco-Syrian relations, offered itself as the official partner in the negotiations over internal affairs in the region of Alexandretta, and turned the situation of the Turks in the region into a topic for discussion on an international level. As a solution to their allegedly problematic situation, they demanded that the region of Alexandretta be completely partitioned off from Syria and put under the joint protection of Turkey and France. In this way, the problem was raised from a local and regional level to an international one – in other words to a "problem" or a "question" for the League of Nations, which was asked to recognize the agreements Turkey had reached with France and thereby make them internationally valid resolutions. The result of the negotiations and investigations between France and Turkey, and also by the League of Nations, was the Statut du Sandjak and the Loi fondamentale du Sandjak. Consequently, the second step on the way to separating the region of Alexandretta from Syria had been taken.

The development of the third stage, which lasted until June 23, 1939 – until the official annexation of Alexandretta to Turkey – consisted of developing measures to enforce the previously mentioned resolution made by the League of Nations, which was to come into effect as of November 29, 1937. The enforcement of this resolution was accompanied by measures taken on the part of the French Mandatory authorities against the opponents of the resolution – namely al-Majmūʿa al-ʿArabiyya (the Arab Group) and their supporters. At the same time, important political changes in the field of administration were carried out. During the plebiscite in the first few months of 1938, there were violent conflicts and clashes between the Turks and the Arabs. The beginning of the end was the arrival of the Turkish army on July 5, 1938, the election of a parliament in the region of Alexandretta and the proclamation of the independent state of Hatay on September 2, 1938, which existed for roughly a year, until Turkey announced its decision on June 23, 1939, to annex the region of Alexandretta. This

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concluded the drama encircling the "Alexandretta question," which over the years had become the "Alexandretta crisis."

The most important political factions in the region of Alexandretta

On a political level, the internal history of the region of Alexandretta can be described from the example of two factions which differed from one another as far as their language, culture, and nationality were concerned and which vied with each other for social and political dominance in the society of the region of Alexandretta. Each of the groups suffered under the various internal divisions that determined the political scene in the region of Alexandretta.

The Turkish faction basically comprised two political groups. The most important of these consisted of socially and politically conservative large-scale landowner families. They also were associated with the Sunni clergy and saw in Kemalism a violation of religion; more importantly, they felt that the Kemalist movement challenged their position of power. For that reason they pleaded for self-administration in cooperation with Damascus. Their hallmark, which distinguished them from members of the other groups, was the wearing of *ṭarbūsh*. The second group consisted of the reformers, the majority of whom acknowledged Kemalism and stood for the separation of the region of Alexandretta from Syria and for its annexation to Turkey. The members of this group wore European hats. Socially and ideologically this group had much in common with the supporters of al-Arsūzī, despite their bitter fight over mutually exclusive nationalist programs.

The Arab faction comprised a variety of political groups; what they had in common was the fact that they rejected the complete independence of the region of Alexandretta from Syria.[28] From a religious point of view, the Arab group was made up of Sunnis, Alawites, and Christians. Within each of these groups, there was a variety of political opinions and varying interests. The Alawite leaders at first welcomed the possibility of instituting self-administration in the area, because they were afraid the region would be completely merged with the Syrian state where the Sunnis dominated the government; should it come to a merger, the Alawites would be relegated to an insignificant fringe group. The Christian traders, on the other hand, were frightened of any change in the status of the region of Alexandretta, which would have meant an end to the trade links with Aleppo. The Sunnis repeatedly changed their position. Initially they supported the Geneva Agreement, as they sympathized with their "social and religious brethren," the Turkish landowners, thereby hoping to gain more power for themselves. In the course of time, though, as they realized that the local Kemalists were giving more and more

[28] Paul du Véou, *Le Désastre d'Alexandretta*, Paris 1938, 42.

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weight to their demand for complete independence of the region and its annexation to Turkey, they tended increasingly to support the idea of a merger with Syria, because here they had hopes of enhancing their religious and political influence in the region due to the good political relations they enjoyed with Damascus, but not with Ankara. For the same reason, the large-scale Turkish landowners favored a change in the situation, and partly signed up on the Arab Sunni list,[29] instead of on the Turkish one.

In the Arab faction there was a variety of political parties which were strengthened by the fact that a number of Armenians had joined them. The most important amongst them was ʿUṣbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī (League of National Action), whose members and officials were known in the region of Alexandretta as ʿUṣbawiyyūn or ʿUrūbiyyūn.

Zakī al-Arsūzī and the beginnings of his political activities: the formation of the Arab nationalist movement

The intellectual and political activities of al-Arsūzī from the beginning of the 1930s onward contributed to an increased political and social awareness amongst his Arab pupils and to the founding of a militant group of nationalist-minded Arabs who launched the slogan "The Arab national heritage is our religion." Al-Arsūzī added to that by declaring himself the "Prophet of Arabism." This, for the Muslim ear rather provocative, almost blasphemous expression – the last prophet being Muḥammad, who had revealed Islam – was meant as a deliberate attempt to overcome the confessionalism of society. This break with religion was so successful because al-Arsūzī combined it with a call for social justice and national integration. The majority of the Arab section of the population reacted to his ideological activity by adopting this new national identity and making Arab nationalism the point of reference for its political activity.

In 1930, when al-Arsūzī was given a job as a history and geography teacher at the high school in Antakya, he was shocked by the segregation of pupils and at the way in which the French Mandatory government, represented by the French cultural council, which wanted to promote narrow denominationalism and prevent social integration, discriminated between them. When he started teaching, he did away with the seating plan according to religious denomination, which had been introduced by the French authorities. He justified his action by the fact that the majority of his pupils were Arabs.[30] The situation in which he lived and worked developed al-Arsūzī's political determination, and encouraged him to mobilize his pupils by turning his history classes into

[29] In articles 9 and 14 of Loi fondamentale du sandjak, which came into effect on November 29, 1937, provision was made for the voters to sign up on one of the lists for Turks, Armenians, Kurds, Alawites, Sunni, and Greek Orthodox Christians.

[30] Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Zarqa, 50-page manuscript written for the anniversary of al-Arsūzī's death, unpublished, Damascus 1969, 28.

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lessons about nationalism and morals. He saw in his work as a teacher the opportunity to gain a platform for his message. He believed in freedom, justice, and equality, and his aim was to achieve truth and knowledge for everyone – whoever they might be;[31] all this, of course, within the frame of an Arab nationalism. His aim was to transform his pupils and followers into citizens living in a free society. Even more, he wanted to educate them and transform them into heroes who would not be satisfied with having just a job and a peaceful life, but who through their unconditional willingness to sacrifice themselves would serve the society in which they lived, without thinking of their reward or striving for personal gain.[32] He taught them that liberty consisted of freeing themselves from all forms of repression and tyranny. He taught them what he himself had learned in Paris – namely that everyone should be equal before the law.[33] His deep convictions, together with his didactic skills and eloquence, resulted in his teaching having a profound effect on his pupils. Consequently, a group of them was willing to carry al-Arsūzī's ideas beyond the bounds of the school. In this way, the movement which he had started in a high school in Antakya finally spread to all the Arab schools, as well as to other sectors of public life in Antakya. The newspaper *al-ʿUrūba* describes this development in the region of Alexandretta as follows:

> The intellectual revolution took place in the *tajhīz* school (high school) in Antakya. After returning from Paris, al-Arsūzī began to impart the basic principles of his knowledge, following his own program which had been inspired by a thorough study of western culture. The purpose of this was to correct the prevailing concepts about things in general, as well as the commonly held philosophy of life and human existence. The Association of Fine Arts contributed to the spreading and polarization of his philosophy. Al-Arsūzī was in a position to shake the people out of the regression which threatened to engulf them – regression which looked at the past as something sacred and from which it drew its highest ideals. In contrast, al-Arsūzī's perspective was future-oriented; from it he gained his inspiration for a new way of life. This envisaged a form of nationalism in which all Arabs regardless of their religious affiliation were completely integrated. In order to carry out his important experiment, which was conceived by him as an example for the Arab *umma* (nation) on its way to Arab unity, the old social and political organizations had to be replaced and a new constitution laid down, which complied with al-Arsūzī's concept and which corresponded to, and reinforced the feelings of the people.[34]

The Mandatory power's attention was drawn to al-Arsūzī, and it sent secret agents to keep a close watch on him. Arsūzī tells in his memoirs that once the French school inspector attended his class. Afterwards al-Arsūzī was called to his office and asked: "Do you think you are teaching in a French high school? What you preach is impressive, but

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31 Zakī al-Arsūzī, *al-Muʾallafāt*, 6 vols., Damascus 1972-1976, I, 9.

32 Ibid., 37.

33 Ibid., 10.

34 *Al-ʿUrūba*, Nov. 15, 1937.

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you forget you are in a country which is subject to the French Mandate and the policy of this Mandatory power has certain prerequisites."[35] Things went so far that al-Arsūzī was threatened by secret service officers in front of his pupils.[36] His class was closed down and he was dismissed in 1933. The students organized strikes, offered resolute resistance to the head of the high school and other educational institutions, and stayed away from class. According to *al-Liwā'* this was the first strike in the region since 1923.[37]

Even while he was a teacher, al-Arsūzī commenced his political struggle, through his pupils in Antakya in sports and scouting groups, art and culture clubs, which – infiltrated by his supporters – were turned into a meeting ground for nationalist-minded Arabs. During this period, his own house served the same purpose. In this way, between 1930 and 1934, al-Arsūzī's supporters and followers formed the hard core of a new political movement, and were the advocates of a new philosophy and the authors of every article and essay which appeared in the region of Alexandretta in the name of the young Arabs there.

Al-Arsūzī and the founding of the ʿUṣbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī: the structure, political activities, and the goals of the ʿUṣba

The ʿUṣba was founded at a conference in Qarnāyil in Lebanon on August 20, 1933.[38] The aims of the conference participants, who came from a variety of Arab countries, were defined as follows: the absolute sovereignty and independence of the Arabs, comprehensive Arab unity, the realization of which should enable the Arabs to rule themselves, to flourish economically, and to achieve a national revival. Arab unity was therefore considered to be an imperative goal along the road to power and independence. The most important means to attaining it was the unification of all nationalistic opposition movements in the Arab areas: to encourage their solidarity, to stamp out all feelings of regional and denominational aloofness, and to promote the recognition of the ʿUṣba al-qawmiyya as the sole representative of this movement. The ʿUṣba opposed foreign colonialism together with feudalism and social injustice. It was on the basis of this that the ʿUṣba put together its political, social, and economic program. Through a comprehensive revival movement, the national decline was to be turned around.[39] The center of the ʿUṣba was Damascus. It founded branches in the different Arab states such as Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, and the various towns of Syria – among them Antakya. Al-Arsūzī had

35 Al-Arsūzī, *al-Mu'allafāt*, vol. 1, 10.

36 Al-Zarqa, MS, 29.

37 *Al-Liwā'*; Jan.2, 1938, article on the initial awakening of the Arab groups of the *liwā'* of Alexandretta.

38 Dhūqān Qarqūṭ, *Taṭawwur al-ḥaraka al-waṭaniyya fī Sūriyya: 1920-1939*, Beirut 1975, 178.

39 *Bayān mu'tamar al-ta'sīs li-ʿUṣbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī al-munʿaqa fī Qarnāyil 1933*, Damascus n.d., 1 ff.

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been present with Ṣubḥī Zakhūr at the conference of Qarnāyil. In the spring of 1934, he went to Homs with Zakhūr and Ramaḍān Najīb, where they swore allegiance to the ʿUṣba. After their return to Antakya, he organized sub-groups of the ʿUṣba in Antakya, Alexandretta, al-Suwaydiyya, Arsūz, and other towns in the region of Alexandretta. Zakhūr was the chairman of the sub-group in Antakya. Al-Arsūzī was in charge of the ʿUṣba in the whole region of Alexandretta.[40]

The ʿUṣba had behind it the support of the young Arabs of Antakya, who showed a passionate interest in Arab nationalism which was spreading rapidly – especially among the lower classes in the towns. The ʿUṣba was able to extend its activities to all areas of the region, first by appealing to people to support the cause of the Arab national heritage and nationalism, and second by opposing denominationalism, exploitation by the large-scale landowners, and all forms of social and political exploitation. This included a call for the emancipation and education of women and the abolition of the veil, which was perceived as the symbol of the backwardness and isolation of women, preventing them from participation in public life and progress. Lastly, the French, who oppressed the Arab sector of the population and supported the separatist Kemalist and Turkish political movements were, to be resisted just as were the officials who collaborated with the Mandatory power. The latter were particularly active in Antakya, the center of the Arab-Turkish struggle. In daily confrontation with the large Turkish minority living there, the ʿUṣba grew in strength. Within a short space of time, it was able to join forces with rival Arab groups and transform itself into a mass movement, which spread throughout the whole region. Al-Arsūzī's program was to insist on the subordination of denominationalism to the communal struggle for the Arab heritage – in contrast to French policy, which stressed denominationalism and tried to split the Arab community. He explained his position as follows: "We are Arabs in the first instance, not Christians or Moslems; let us, from now on, declare nothing but our Arab nationality."[41] He had realized that the French government's colonialist policy used the Mandate to combat the idea of Arab nationalism and the organizations that supported it throughout Syria.[42] This fight for the Arab cause intensified regionally and internationally. An incident on December 10, 1936 shows how united the Arab nationalist movement had become. The Turks closed the big mosque in Antakya to the Muslim Arabs and forbade them to pray there, resulting in the largest nationalist and political demonstration ever. The Muslims consequently held their Friday prayers in a church, in the presence of Christians. This was a manifestation of Arab nationalism in the region of Alexandretta as al-Arsūzī had propagated it.[43] Another incident took place on the evening of June 13, 1938, when al-Arsūzī

40 Interview with Ṣubḥī Zakhūr, Damascus, August 18, 1997.

41 ʿAbdallāh Ḥannā, *Min al-ittijāhāt al-fikriyya fī Sūriyya wa-Lubnān*, Damascus 1987, 84.

42 Interview with Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Zarqa, Damascus, Sept. 9, 1997.

43 *Al-Liwāʾ*, Jan. 24, 1937, Ṣubḥī Zakhūr mentioned this event several times in interviews in 1997/1998/1999, as did al-Zarqa and Fāyiz Ismāʿīl.

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was arrested. As a sign of protest, several hundred women marched to the seraglio and the hotel where the League of Nations was housed. Since no one was willing to listen to them, the women spent the night outside the seraglio in the open, from where they had to be removed by force on the morning of June 14. The troops used guns, which wounded some of the women.[44]

The leaders of the Arab groups refused to comply with the demand issued by the French Mandatory authorities, and coupled with personal threats, that their supporters should not participate in the forthcoming elections, a move aimed at ensuring Turkish domination.[45] In addition, "the Arab population could not be won over to the Turkish cause – either by the material enticements offered by the Turks, or by their threat that they would be victors in 'Hatay' the following day and then take their revenge."[46] A German observer described the success achieved by the Arab movement in its struggle for its national goals as follows:

> The Alawites remained faithful to the Arab cause, nor did the Sunnis and Christian Arabs allow themselves to be intimidated by increasing pressure from the Turks during the election. This is all the more surprising, since they must not only have realized that the Arab cause was lost in the region of Alexandretta, but that the French delegate, Colonel Collet, who was known to be hostile towards the Arabs, was doing everything in his power – even, it seems, by threatening to bomb the Arab sectors of Antakya with mortar – to bring home to them that they couldn't count on France, but would do better not to resist the Turks any longer. With the exception of the large-scale landowners, the Arabs seem to have remained inflexible in their attitude, a sign of their growing sense of nationalism.[47]

The role of the ʿUṣba movement in this struggle was significant, because it represented not only the political hopes of the majority of Arabs in the region, but also their social interests.

The school had been the didactic and ideological starting point for al-Arsūzī's Arab movement, from where it conducted its political activities and imparted its insights into the basis and principles of Arab nationalism. The Arab movement expanded from a group of pupils, students, and intellectuals to include craftsmen, farmers, and agricultural workers. Its number of registered members was small – not more than 300 people – but the majority of the Arab population supported it.[48] To this number a large group of Armenians can be added. Its members and followers – as well as its leaders – came

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44 Political Archive of the Foreign Office, Bonn, div. VII Syria, (R 104794), Beirut, June 16, 1938.

45 Ibid., Beirut, June 7, 1938.

46 Ibid., Beirut, March 23, 1938.

47 Ibid., June 24, 1938.

48 File 23/Feb. 12, 1938, Markaz al-Wathāʾiq al-Tārīhkiyya bi-Dimashq (MWT). Also in a statement by Nabīh al-ʿAẓma, Feb. 19, 1938.

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mainly from the lower and middle classes and belonged to various religious denominations.[49]

The ʿUrūbiyyūn in the region of Alexandretta wore the *sīdāra fayṣaliyya* (military service caps) as a symbol of their struggle and as their hallmark; this was to distinguish them from the Turks, who wore hats. Their idea about the importance of clothing and of one's outer appearance in the struggle for Arab nationalism was "that the outer appearance of a person reflected his feelings and brought him closer to others. King Fayṣal I had introduced the service caps in Iraq and made them a piece of national clothing which symbolized the will of the Arabs to achieve political unity in the twentieth century. As far as the Arabs in Liwāʾ al-Iskandarūna (the province of Alexandretta) were concerned, two additional ideas justified their wearing these service caps. On the one hand, they regarded King Fayṣal as the bearer of the message of Arab nationalism; on the other, they believed that the uniformity of clothing constituted an essential factor in the awakening of a common awareness and in the anchoring of emotions in the soul of the nation. In this way, they wanted to strengthen relations between the people in this area and its mediators. At the same time it complied with their wish to free themselves of outdated traditions,[50] which were symbolized by the *ṭarbūsh* worn by the traditionally conservative groups.

The representatives of Arab nationalism, which the ʿUrūbiyyūn considered themselves to be, published a newspaper which appeared under the name of *al-ʿUrūba,* ("Arabness"), from October 30, 1937. Its job was to make the general public aware of the radical political changes that were taking place in the region of Alexandretta and to inform the Arab world and countries abroad of these changes.[51] In *al-ʿUrūba* the name, of the authors seldom appeared under their articles. These authors "were not interested in having their names published, for their prime goal was their work for the Arab national heritage."[52] Apart from that, anonymity, of course, saved them from being persecuted. *Al-ʿUrūba* was a mouthpiece for the views and intellectual positions of al-Arsūzī.[53] The Arab National Heritage Club (Nādī al-ʿUrūba) was founded in Antakya, then based in Alexandretta. It spread the Arab message, organized resistance to the Kemalist Turks, and united the Arab factions.[54] The ʿUṣba also organized demonstrations and meetings and, on a voluntary basis, a program to eradicate illiteracy – one of its most important and essential tasks. The cultural and sport clubs served the ʿUrūbiyyūn as places for political gatherings and lectures and for a cultural and intellectual exchange. Larger political party gatherings took place secretly – outside the town. The

[49] Bāyirāmyān, *Qaḍiyyat*, 45.

[50] *Al-ʿUrūba*, Nov. 2, 1937.

[51] *Al-ʿUrūba*, Oct. 30, 1937.

[52] Interview with Ṣubḥī Zakhūr, Damascus, April 1, 1999.

[53] Interview with al-Zarqa, Damascus, Sept. 3, 1997.

[54] Khaddūrī, *Qaḍiyyat*, p. 76, see photograph.

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clubs played an important role in creating a political and social awareness among young people.[55] Indeed, all the public amusement places – for instance cafés – were used by the ʿUṣba for its political activities. The Café Mīkhā'īl was a popular meeting place. At particular times, al-Arsūzī or other active members of the ʿUṣba were to be found there discussing relevant issues with the people.[56] To spread the spirit of Arab nationalism the ʿUrūbiyyūn performed various Arab plays on public squares in the larger towns or in their own clubs, as well as foreign plays translated by them. A patriotic Arab song[57] was always sung before the theater performances and at the beginning of public functions.

The task of journalists working for the ʿUṣba in Antakya was to report the local news concerning developments in the Alexandretta question as well as to make known what newspapers in the Arab world and abroad were writing about the region of Alexandretta.[58] On every occasion, the great importance of solidarity amongst all Arab forces fighting for the integration of Alexandretta in Syria was stressed. The necessity of solidarity beginning within the family, in farms, and in the villages was pointed out.[59] Oral and written instructions were given on how to become active, how to organize campaigns, how to arrange meetings, and how to demonstrate to the Turkish separatist movement and the Arabs the power of the ʿUṣba.[60] There were also rivalries and different tendencies within the Arab nationalist movement. On one occasion a delegation of 200 ʿUṣba supporters was sent to a demonstration in Alexandretta. This was an attempt to thwart the local National Bloc in its efforts to present its members as the only political force of the Arabs. The ʿUṣba in Antakya sent some of its members to other areas and to other local groups to supervise the political work there and to exchange opinions and experiences. The ʿUṣba in Antakya had permission to dismiss subversive members from other local groups, too.[61] The second problem emanated from the fact that the ʿUṣba, while fighting the Turkish presence in Antakya, was also involved in a bitter power struggle with the Arab National Bloc Party.

The policies of the ʿUṣba were molded not only by mistrust of the aims of the French and those of the Syrian government, but also by a firm stand against the resolution passed by the Council of the League of Nations and against everyone who approved it or who collaborated with the French.[62] As a consequence of the generally tense political atmosphere and the number of enemies of al-Arsūzī and his Arab nationalist movement,

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55 *Al-ʿUrūba,* Nov. 5, 1937.

56 Interview with Ṣubḥī Zakhūr, Damascus, April 1, 1999.

57 Interview with Fu'ād Jabāra, brother-in-law of Shahīn Jabāra, Damascus, Sept. 17, 1972: al-Zarqa, private papers.

58 Antakyan Collection of Letters, letter of Oct. 19, 1936.

59 Ibid., message about the delivery of 600 flyers for distribution: work schedules, Nov. 5, 1936.

60 Ibid., see the letter of 28.2.1937 for an example.

61 *Al-ʿUrūba*, Dec. 1, 937.

62 Ibid., Nov. 16, 1937.

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the ʿUṣba proceeded cautiously in the region of Alexandretta and restricted its cooperation with other parties quite considerably. For that reason, a rumor spread that it was very intolerant of everyone who did not belong to it, accusing such people of spying and of treason. Some of the ʿUṣba members in the region of Alexandretta were accused of being fanatical. However, they were also praised for "standing" up to the Turks.[63]

Its commitment to the Arab national heritage was more important for the ʿUṣba than any denominational or personal considerations, as its members often stressed. It gave this commitment a new, more profound dimension, by not only upholding it theoretically and verbally as other groups did, but by turning it into active and tangible reality. Even its enemies recognized its contributions to spreading and strengthening the spirit of Arab nationalism in the region of Alexandretta, its struggle against the French, who considered a deal with the Turks more advantageous for themselves, and its commitment to uniting the Arab factions and destroying religious denominationalism which the French had politicized. As was reported: "The ʿUṣba has its merits, which must not be forgotten, even if it is extreme and should be more moderate."[64] The ʿUṣba remained politically and socially active, and was able to record a majority of the votes in the elections of mid-1938, despite the extremely well-targeted Turkish propaganda which enticed or intimidated people, despite the delegation of thousands of voters from Turkey to campaign for the Turkish list and despite the firm decision of the Turkish government to occupy the region of Alexandretta immediately, should the forthcoming elections have an unsatisfactory result.[65] In this connection, the commission of the League of Nations felt obliged to write a memorandum about the intimidation methods used on the non-Turkish sections of the population, the withdrawal of which was requested by Collet.[66] When the Turkish army occupied Antakya on July 5, 1938, al-Arsūzī left the region of Alexandretta, together with a group of his pupils, and fled to Syria in the hope of return-

63 Statement by Nūr al-Dīn/file 23, Aug. 2, 1938, MWT. Nūr ad-Dīn was appointed by the Syrian government to proof the case of Alexandretta.

64 Ibid., file 23/Feb. 12, 1938, MWT. Also statement by Nabīh al-ʿAẓma, Feb. 19, 1938.

65 Political Archive of the Foreign Office, Bonn, div. VII Syria, (R 104794), Ankara, May 17, 1938.

66 Political Archive of the Foreign Office, Bonn, div. VII Syria, (R 104794), Beirut, June 16, 1938. Both the Turkish and the French governments had conveyed their desire to the general secretary that the commission of the League of Nations stop their work in the region of Alexandretta. It is true that the intervention of the League of Nations was called for by the Turks first, because the French government was not willing to comply with the Turkish demand for a plebiscite in the region of Alexandretta. After French-Turkish negotiations had led to an agreement about the plebiscite with the help of the League of Nations, a commission of the League of Nations was sent to the area to conduct the elections according to the regulations agreed on by the parties and the Council of the League of Nations. Almost immediately after the commission of the League of Nations had begun its work, it turned out that Turkey had been wrong about the plebiscite in the area and that an unbiased plebiscite would not bring the result desired by the Turks. Therefore, Turkish-French negotiations were renewed, with the aim of getting around the plebiscite and ceding the area to Turkey without taking popular opinion into consideration. Foreign Office, Bonn, political div. VII Syria, (R 104794), Geneva, July 1, 1938.

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ing later and continuing the struggle. At first, he lived for a while in Aleppo, then made his home in Damascus. In 1939, he officially announced in a number of newspapers that he was leaving the ʿUṣba, partly because he was shocked at the condition of the ʿUṣba in Damascus, but mainly because it was clear that the majority of its leaders with whom he had worked earlier were only interested in pursuing their own private interests and because he understood that in spite of all his propaganda he had failed.

Conclusion

During the 1930s the ʿUṣbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī played an important role in the political life of Syria and represented the ideology of Arab nationalism in a more coherent and systematic form than earlier generations. The official center of the party was Damascus, but its field of activities was Antakya. The ʿUṣba remained an elitist group of special character. It was well organized in government schools and at the university, but lacked a permanent mass basis.

The Arab ʿUṣba, which was led by al-Arsūzī in Antakya, shared many social and ideological aspects with the Kemalist movement of Turkish nationalism. Both pursued programs which excluded the existence of other ethnic groups and recognized national identity as the only relevant organizational principle of politics. Al-Arsūzī's nationalism also included a strong social component, however, which led him to attack not only Turks but also the upper class of Arab large landlords.

Al-Arsūzī succeeded spreading his kind of Arab nationalism in Antakya, which meant for him also a fight against underdevelopment, sectarianism, and social injustice within society. He succeeded in mobilizing the Arab population to political action. He was especially popular among the young generation. His name stood for change and new ideas, challenging the old elites *(zuʿamāʾ)* and their claim to leadership. With that he gave the Arab movement in Antakya not only a national but also a revolutionary character. Under his guidance the ʿUṣba gained importance not only in Antakya but in all of Syria. The party it did not survive his departure in early 1939. However, it left its traces in the national politics of Syria. Former members and sympathizers of the ʿUṣba had gained the experience and skill to do political work both among the urban and rural masses. This experience especially benefited the Baʿth when former ʿUṣba members and others founded it.

Given the fact that the two nationalist projects for the region, Turkish and Arab, were mutually exclusive, only one could "win" in the end. Nevertheless, the question has to be put why it was al-Arsūzī and his Arab movement that failed so disastrously in achieving their objective, in spite of its activism and popularity and in spite of the great intensity with which the struggle for the Arab nation as a whole was fought in Antakya.

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The answer can be found in various factors and conditions. In the case of the class of large landowners in Antakya, confessional and ethnic identity played hardly any role: Turkish and Arab landowners[67] cooperated with each other. They promoted the idea of collaboration with the government in Damascus while maintaining a large degree of administrative autonomy for Antakya. They fought al-Arsūzī's nationalist movement, because of its demands for greater social justice, for example in the case of Antakya mainly more rights for the peasants vis-à-vis the landowners. By 1938 the large landowners were more inclined toward complete integration of the region with Syria, because of their fear of the increasing power of the Kemalists. On the basis of their good relations with the national leadership in Damascus they hoped to be able to maintain their own way of life and their political position and influence.

Syria's uncertain political elite in Damascus was first and foremost interested in maintaining its own landholdings and its (limited) political influence, which was guaranteed by collaboration with the French; hence their willingness to compromise with French interests. In the Alexandretta question they hesitated to take a clear position and even displayed a curious indifference, which resulted form the following circumstances:

(1) The older generation, especially, which had served in the Ottoman Empire, still considered the Turks "brethren of the faith." Even the early years after the war had been full of social and political interaction and cooperation. Turkey was not considered a "foreign enemy," hence it was difficult, if not impossible, to rally all the Arabs in Syria and beyond against the Turkish claims to Antakya. When Ṣubḥī Zakhūr reported on the crisis in the liwā' at a meeting of the Arab consuls in 1938 in order to gain their support, the Egyptian representative, astonished about the attitudes of the Arabs to the Turks in the region, asked him: "Where is the crisis? What goes out of one pocket comes back into the other."[68]

(2) The elite in Damascus, consisting of upper-class urban notables and large landowners – just like the Arab-Turkish landowning elite in Antakya – looked with a wary eye on the radical Arab movement in the region, because the young nationalists leading this movement insisted also on a degree of social justice, which seemed to endanger the privileges and rights of the upper strata of society. When, in addition, the Arab nationalists in the Alexandretta region refused to be controlled by Damascus or to subordinate their goals to those of the Damascene elite, the latter worked to undermine them.

The the origins, development, and solution of the Alexandretta question cannot be separated from the Near East policies of the Great Powers. The measures taken by France and England to "solve" the crisis moved within the traditional frame of international politics of the European powers. In this case it meant conceding Alexandretta to Turkey in order to ensure Turkey's siding with the Western powers. The goal was to

[67] In this context the expression "Turkified Arabs" is interesting. It reflects well how uncertain the ethnic differenciations and national identities initially were.

[68] Interview with Ṣubḥī Zakhūr, Damascus, April 1, 1999.

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obtain Turkish-English and Turkish-French agreements of mutual assistance against the threat of Germany and Italy in an already predictable war. Turkey was able to exploit this situation and realize its demands for the annexation of the Alexandretta region. France has always been held responsible for not fulfilling its obligation as a Mandatory power, i.e. to guarantee the territorial integrity and unity of the whole Mandate given to them. But in the background it was England that pressured France into agreeing to the cession of Antakya. In this way Great Britain could ensure an alliance with Turkey and, at the same time, also weaken the position of France in the Middle East. The League of Nations, though guardian over the Mandate system, became in the end an instrument for the legitimization of the policies of the Western powers.

In the last analysis, the intense political activities of ʿUṣbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī and of al-Arsūzī, their success in mobilizing the population, and their electoral gains were bound to fail because the solution of the Alexandretta crisis was decided by the Great Powers, France and Great Britain. Not even the hesitant and ambivalent role of the political elite in Damascus had any impact on the decisions of the Great Powers.

The history and the significance of the Arab nationalist movement in the region of Alexandretta has been neglected due to the loss of the region to Turkey in 1938/1939. This omission from the collective memory occurred not only because any critical debate of political failure threatens established national myths, but also because the interpretation of the past is always an interpretation of the present: a risky undertaking in a society so tightly controlled as that of Syria.

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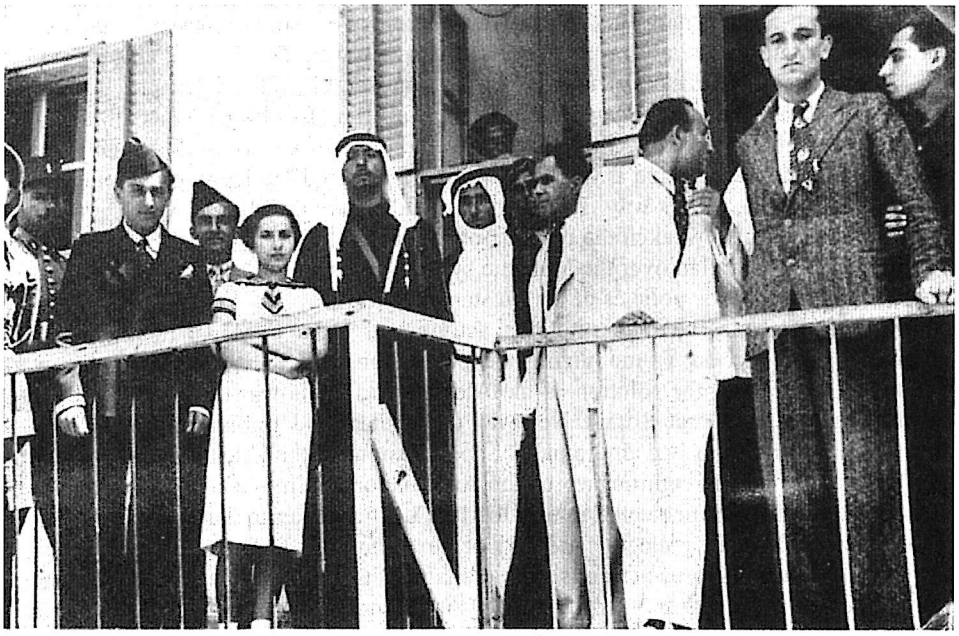

في « نادي الفنون الجميلة في انطاكية » الذي أسسته عصبة العمل القومي ستارا لنضالها السياسي . صورة تجمع الرجل والمراة ، البدوي والحضري ، العسكري والمدني .. المعروف من اشخاصها (من اليسار) زكي الارسوزي ، صبحي زخور ، فاوديت نعيم . والى يسار شبوخ البدو الثلاثة الدكتور مانوسيان ، نديم ورد ، نخلة ورد ، ابراهيم فوزي

In the *Nādī al-ʿUrūba* (Club of Arabism)/Antakya 1937: al-Arsūzī (x), on the left behind him Ṣubḥī Zakhūr. They are wearing *Sidāra Faiṣaliyya* (service caps). With them there is also a group of supporters, among them Odette Naʿūm, on the right-hand side Matūsīyān, Nadīm Ward, Naḥla Ward, Ibrāhīm Fauzī.

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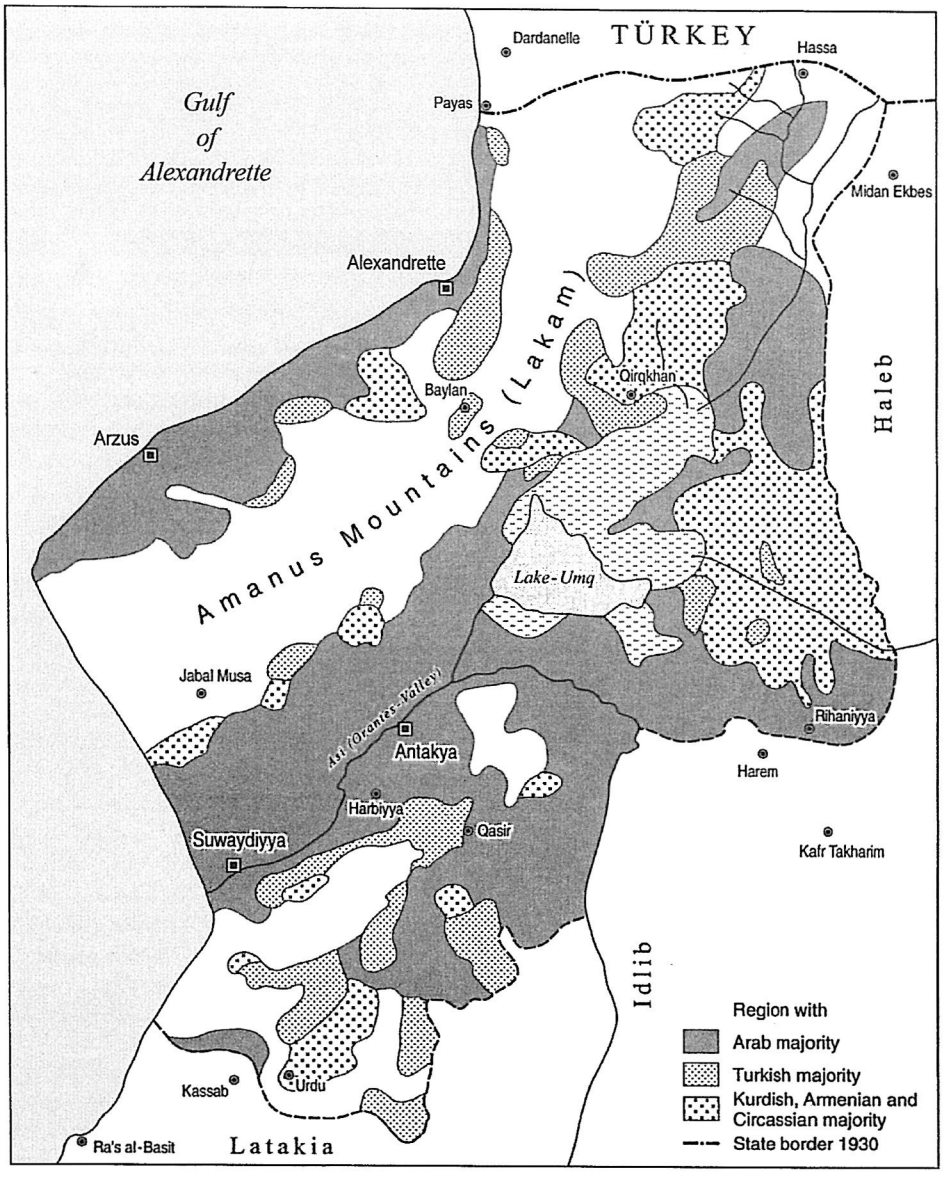

The Demography of the Sandjak of Alexandrette 1930

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An effort to foster Arab nationalism in the early 1930s: the League of National Action

Khairia Kasmieh

Preface

This chapter does not attempt to analyze the question of Arab nationalism in detail. Its main purpose is to throw fresh light on the circumstances that surrounded the establishment of a political movement in the early 1930s in Bilād al-Shām during a moment of rapid transition in Syrian political life – a period when the efforts of politicians and parties were directed towards strengthening the national factor in order to achieve the main political goal, that is, the elimination of the foreign presence.

The conclusions drawn from the main factors that contributed to the evolution of the League of National Action (ʿUṣbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī) help one to better understand the political history not only of Syria but of other countries in the Arab world, in addition to the intricate interplay of local forces and world powers of that time. It is thought necessary, though, to include a brief introduction, dealing with the Arab nationalism and the challenges it had to confront.

The movement of Arab nationalism: its rise and maturity

Arab nationalism, the "embodiment of the sentiment of Arabness (*ʿurūba*)," which had developed during the later part of the nineteenth century, was based on several factors,

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including geography and culture.[1] It recalled a golden age of Arab greatness, which was held to be the true image of Arab genius. It was this genius that Arab nationalists sought to recreate.[2]

Since the aim of the nationalist movement was to create a progressive and flourishing modern society, the revival of the Arab language as a medium of modern expression and bond of unity was a central theme.[3] It was the Arabic language and culture that inspired Arab thinkers, Muslims and Christians alike, to develop Arab consciousness and call for an Arab identity.[4]

The Arab idea of nationalism before World War I was mingled with the idea of Islamic unity, and religious concepts were integrated into the national dogma.[5] Arab nationalists hardly aimed beyond the rehabilitation of the Arab race in a multi-national empire. Some who had fallen under the influence of European liberal ideas, and adhered fully to the basic tenets of the liberalism of nineteenth-century Europe,[6] stressed the national rather than the religious-ecumenical values, but none advocated separation from Islamic unity.[7]

Arab nationalism gathered strength and some coherence on the eve of World War I as a reaction against tyranny and against the centralization policies of the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.).[8] While the Arab national movement in Asia undermined the Islamic mode of loyalty in whose name the Ottomans had ruled the Arab lands, Egypt developed a distinct, self-contained secular national identity not connected with Arab nationalism.[9]

Arab nationalism had become synonymous with a broad Arab unity. It postulated the existence of a collective Arab national consciousness that demanded political self-realization in a single, united state.[10] Arab unity was still a matter of sentiment rather than a well-defined political doctrine when World War I erupted.

Arab nationalism of the pre-war period saw its hopes destroyed and drew new political lessons from this experience. The Great War of 1914-1918 changed the world. For

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1 Majid Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World: The Role of Ideas and Ideals in Politics*, Baltimore and London 1970, 194.

2 Henry Siegman, "Arab Unity and Disunity," *MEJ* 16 (1962), 49.

3 Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, London 1991, 343.

4 Khadduri, *Political Trends*, 180.

5 Naseer Aruri, "Nationalism and Religion in the Arab Worlds: Allies or Enemies," *Moslem World* 67 (1977), 266.

6 Hisham Sharabi, "The Transformation of Ideology in the Arab World," *MEJ* 19 (1965), 475.

7 Khadduri, *Political Trends*, 19.

8 Ahmed Gom'aa, *The Foundation of the League of Arab States Wartime Diplomacy and Inter-Arab Politics 1941-1945*, London and New York 1977, 4.

9 Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, 2nd ed., London 1986, 16.

10 Siegman, "Arab unity", 48-9.

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the Arab East, the most important change was the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the triumph of European imperialism.[11] The buoyant optimism and idealism of modern Arab political thought faced its severest testing after World War I. No sooner had the war been terminated than most Arab countries found themselves occupied, controlled, and dismembered by the wartime allies. A system of colonial rule, in the guise of Mandatory trusts, was imposed on them against their wishes. Equally serious was the bewildering vivisection of the eastern Arab world and particularly geographical Syria (Bilād al-Shām).[12]

As a result of the post-war settlement, a multiplicity of new states and regimes had come into being whose political status ranged all the way from partial independence to complete dependence.[13] The new political divisions contradicted the idea of Arab unity. The existence of the Arab nation had not been questioned in the last phase of the Ottoman Empire. Arab Asia had not been divided by any national, natural, or racial boundaries of importance.[14] The divisions of the postwar settlement called its existence into question and threatened to set up the idea of Syrian, Lebanese and Iraqi nations as rivals, encouraged by the policies of the Mandatory powers.

The new political divisions not only tended to create different systems of administration, law, and education, but also split the Arab movement by giving it in each region different tasks that had immediately to be dealt with.[15] The Arab nationalists decided that in view of these obstacles, it was natural in the circumstances to concentrate on the immediate goal of independence, or at least to secure a greater measure of self-government from the Mandatory powers.[16] Arab nationalists between the two world wars were primarily concerned with ridding their countries of the presence of the occupying power: the French in Syria and Lebanon, the British everywhere else. Nationalism in this period could be defined almost wholly as a rejection of foreign control. Men of different tendencies and backgrounds were united under the banner of national independence. But each territory carved out by the Mandatory powers had to struggle on its own for independence, although lipservice to unity was often paid by nationalists.[17] The more pragmatic among them saw in the achievement of independence a necessary first step toward unity. Others saw that the achievement of unity, even on a modest scale, starting perhaps with the Greater Syrian states or with the union of Iraq and Syria, was necessary for the success of the nationalist struggle for independence.[18] The struggle for

11 Sharabi, "The Transformation," 476.

12 Hazem Nuseibeh, *The Ideas of Arab Nationalism*, Ithaca, New York 1959, 148.

13 Ibid., 149.

14 Seale, *The Struggle*, 5.

15 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*, Oxford 1970, 292-293.

16 Gom'aa, *The Foundation*, 5.

17 Seale, *The Struggle*, 1.

18 Gom'aa, *The Foundation*, 5.

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local independence during the interwar period was made more complex by the fight for national unity. These two concerns, independence and unity, became the main objectives of Arab nationalism.

The Arab nationalists have always maintained that, since the Arabs were bound by a community of interests and aspirations – geographical, historical, and cultural – they were also entitled to form some kind of actual political union. This movement came to be known as pan-Arabism. Laying all their emphasis on the existence of the Arab nation, the nationalists also emphasized its quest for political unity. This idea found expression in publications, in ephemeral groups, in help and sympathy given from one country to another in its struggle, and, above all, in periodical conferences bringing together men from different Arab countries and ending with the passing of general resolutions.

The nationalists' concept of unity up to the 1930s excluded Egypt and North Africa with which links seemed more religious than national. By "Arabs" they meant the Arabic-speaking inhabitants of Asia, of Greater Syria and Iraq.[19] In general, the nationalism of this period displayed a radical secular character based upon the belief in a bond which could embrace people of different sects or faiths and upon a policy representing the interests of state and society.[20] This implied that national ties, which united men, were more important politically than religious beliefs, which divided them. Despite their secular commitments, nationalist leaders and thinkers – even those who espoused a Western mode of thought – regarded Islam as an integral part of the Arab heritage and as a component of, rather than an obstacle to, nationalism.[21]

During the interwar years, Arab nationalism necessarily remained confined to political aims, since independence and national unity were regarded as overriding. Social and economic ideals had not yet captured the imagination of nationalist leaders.

There are several reasons why Syria deserves special attention during this period: one is the strategic position of Syria, guarding the northeastern approaches to Egypt, the overland route to Iraq from the Mediterranean, the head of the Arabian Peninsula and the northern frontier of the Arab world. Another is that Syria can claim to have been both the head and the heart of the Arab national movement since its beginning at the turn of the century. By 1920 this vast area had been carved up by Britain and France into no less than seven administratively autonomous units; Syria, severed from her hinterland, became a limbless trunk.[22] While Britain, in installing Fayṣal as king of Iraq and ʿAbdallāh as prince of the Emirate of Transjordan in 1921, attempted to allay Arab bitterness and to preserve effective British control behind a façade of national rule, the

19 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 292-294.

20 Hourani, *A History*, 343.

21 Aruri, "Nationalism," 271.

22 Seale, *The Struggle*, 5.

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French went a long way in trying to stem the tide of Arab nationalism in Syria.[23] Syrian nationalists were victimized and excluded from office, and some of them went into exile. The efforts of France to nurture ideological separatism were crowned with no success despite her use of force on more than on occasion to suppress Arab nationalist revolts.[24]

The hotbed of Arab national feeling and activities between the two world wars was still Syria, where the idea of Arab nationalism had first become explicit. Indeed, the goal to which most Syrian nationalists aspired was pan-Arabism. Pan-Arabists had to reject the idea of an exclusive Syrian nation. They could accept the pragmatic goal of "Greater Syria" so long as it helped building the Arab nation. If a union of all Arab states could not be obtained, then it would make sense to seek at least a partial union.[25]

Syria, under French rule, watched with special envy the pace of constitutional development that Britain introduced in Iraq.[26] Although Syria was the more advanced of the two regions, it was Iraq that achieved independence first. The emancipation of Iraq from the Mandatory system fulfilled one of the fundamental aspirations of the Iraqi nationalists, namely the rise of an Arab country to statehood with a seat in the League of Nations. But this remarkable achievement was regarded by the nationalists only as a step toward the realization of their ultimate national objective, the independence and unity of the whole Arab world. After Iraq's independence pan-Arab leaders, especially Syrians and Palestinians, began to move to Iraq and to urge its people to pursue Arab nationalist goals and to inspire them with the idea that Iraq was the most promising country to play the role of an Arab Prussia in the struggle for Arab unity.[27] Although the British discouraged King Faysal from identifying himself with or committing himself to any policy designed to bring about the political unity of the Arabs, Iraq was looked upon as the most promising country to provide leadership long before Egypt entered this field.[28]

Egypt was a late convert to the cause of Arab unity. From 1914 until the mid-1930s the British occupation remained the major preoccupation of Egyptian politics, further contributing to her isolation from currents of opinion in the Arab world. It was not until the last years of the 1930s that the pan-Arab idea came to have an important influence on her political thinking and orientation.[29] One of the main objects of national activities was the rallying of support for the Arabs in Palestine. Arabs were becoming increasingly worried by the growth of Jewish immigration and the establishment of a Jewish

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23 Gom'aa, *The Foundation*, 4.

24 Caesar Farah, "The Impact of the West on Ideologies in the Arab World," *Islamic Culture*, VXXXV, 2, (April 1961), 107.

25 Daniel Pipes, *Greater Syria: The History of an Ambition*, New York and Oxford 1990, 47.

26 Seale, *The Struggle*, 5.

27 Khadduri, *Political Trends*, 177-264.

28 Gom'aa, *The Foundation*, 29.

29 Seale, *The Struggle*, 16.

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national home in Palestine. The growing realization that only the support of the Arab world could halt the Zionist enterprise in Palestine and preserve its Arab character became one of the most powerful beliefs expressed at every opportunity. The Arabs began to realize the full implications of the Zionist program. They feared Jewish domination of Palestine politically and of all Arab countries economically. The Arab opposition to Zionist designs in Palestine was rightly described as the most important of all factors which had stimulated the sense of Arab unity.[30]

The period between the two world wars saw also a rapid change in the composition and orientation of the new elite.[31] Until the late 1920s and early 1930s leadership had been the monopoly of a small but powerful group of mainly former officers and officials, who had come for the most part from families of urban notables and had acted by means of shifting alliances and systems of patronage.[32] Members of the older generation were now being challenged by a new elite from other social classes who came to maturity after World War I in the government schools of the Arab countries and at the American University of Beirut or the high schools of Europe.[33] (Schooling in this period was still mainly confined to those who could afford it, or possessed some other advantages.)

It was in the early 1930s that a new sort of nationalism began to rise in the Arab East which was more consistently and systematically thought through than that of the older generation. Not satisfied with the old methods of organization and action,[34] the new generation, more at home than the previous one in the European-dominated world, prepared to challenge the older generation.[35] The latter, according to the former, had certain defects: although in principle concerned with Arab unity, in fact their horizon was bound by the problems of a specific Arab country. They were preoccupied with their internal problems, which led to concentration on parochial tendencies.[36] Their aim was not the immediate seizure of independence, but the exertion of pressure with a view to making an agreement with the dominant power. They had no clear idea of what should be done once independence had been won.[37] The Islamic nature of Arab nationalism had become unfashionable and seemed inopportune, and met with much criticism from the new generation of nationalists. Thus Islam and the problems centering around it were no longer a major concern of political action.[38] In the early 1930s, after a brief halt, the

30 Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, Vol. II: *From Riots to Rebellion 1929-1939*, London 1977, 128-9.

31 Sharabi, "The Transformation,"476.

32 Seale, *The Struggle*, xiv.

33 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 307.

34 Ibid.

35 Sharabi, "The Transformation," 477.

36 Gom'aa, *The Foundation*, 5.

37 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 307.

38 Sharabi, "The Transformation," 477.

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Arab nationalists in the Arab East, especially in Syria and Palestine, began to map out a plan for united nationalist action. They took advantage of their participation in the Jerusalem Islamic Congress of December 1931 to meet and discuss the Arab question in general. They decided to formulate a pan-Arab national covenant and to lay down the foundation for convening a general Arab congress. The covenant stressed the indivisibility of the Arab countries, the repudiation of any local and regional policies, and the objection of the Arab nation to any form of imperialism.[39] The proposed congress met with opposition from the ruling Arab monarchies and from the British and, in the end, nothing came of these plans to hold such a congress.[40] That failure encouraged the emergence of more radical political forces. Side by side with the old orders, the young radicals became increasingly articulate and evidently gained ground. Societies and organizations supporting Arab nationalist ideology were allowed to flourish, appealing mainly to a younger generation.[41] They were hierarchically organized in parties and groups, drawing their members in principle from all Arab countries, for they acknowledged no national or colonial boundaries; in fact, though, most members were recruited in the Bilād al-Shām region. They tried to evolve and spread a doctrine of nationalism and a program of action.[42] European youth movements provided valuable lessons. Most importantly, they were considered a source of inspiration in the growing protest against European domination and Zionism.[43]

One of these groups was the al-Ahālī group formed in Iraq 1931, which stood for parliamentary democracy, individual rights, and sweeping solid reform, while rejecting the doctrine of class warfare and laying emphasis on the unity of the nation.[44] Another radical organization was the Istiqlāl Party, formed in 1932 in Palestine as a by-product of the attempt to establish a comprehensive pan-Arab, anti-imperialist, and militantly anti-Zionist political organization.[45]

Such new parties and radical movements left their mark on the politics of nationalism in the Arab East. They demanded to take a more active part in the political process, they wanted to redefine their relations with the old nationalist elite, and they wanted a redefinition of nationalism that corresponded to and accommodated the structural changes.[46]

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39 Gom'aa, *The Foundation*, 5.

40 Khayriyya Qasmiyya, "Muḥāwala fī 'l-'amal al-'arabī al-mushtarak lam tatimm: al-mu'tamar al-qawmī 1933," *Majallat al-Waḥda al-'Arabiyya*, Paris 48 (Sept. 1988), 158-174.

41 Farah, "The Impact," 107; Porath, *The Palestinian*, 123.

42 Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandat: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945*, Princeton 1989, 144.

43 'Alī Ḥājj Bakrī, *al-'Aqliyya al-'arabiyya bayna al-ḥarbayn*, Damascus 1952, 115-136.

44 Majid, Khadduri, *Independent Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics from 1932 to 1958*, London, New York and Karachi 1960, 69ff.

45 Bayān Nuwayhiḍ al-Ḥūt, *al-Qiyāda wa'l-mu'assasāt al-siyāsiyya fī Filasṭīn 1917-1948*, Beirut 1981, 268ff.

46 Khoury, *Syria*, 626.

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They were important because they tried to express a nationalist doctrine more systematically and uncompromisingly than their elders, but proved little more effective than those they wished to replace.[47] In most countries, the level of political organization was not high, either because the imperialist powers would not permit too serious a threat to their own position or because traditional patterns of political behavior persisted.[48] As a reaction to continued national frustration the aforementioned organizations began to fall under anti-liberal influence and tended to become militant in character.[49]

The League of National Action: its rise, aims, and fate

The most important and representative radicalized organization to emerge in the 1930s was the League of National Action, advocating a program barely distinguishable from the standard nationalist position[50] and expressing a general desire to change the too-moderate views of the traditional politicians.[51]

The roots of the League (al-ʿUṣba) could be traced to 1929 when a small group of young Arab students (mostly from Bilād al-Shām) at European universities met in Geneva to discuss the urgent need to form a secret society of Arab nationalism to embark on a revolutionary program inspired by the previous societies (al-Fatāt and al-ʿAhd). It was a clandestine society and confined to a limited number. Its first name was the Arab Liberation Society.[52]

Among the rather ambitious aims of the society, three were of particular importance: to establish relations with key pan-Arab nationalist leaders; to set up a central coordinating committee with clandestine branches (cells) through the Arab world to infiltrate existing pan-Arabist organizations; and to encourage the formation of frontal parties whose activities the Arab Liberation Society could steer.[53] In 1932, two such organizations were active and ripe for penetration: the Ahālī group in Iraq and the Istiqlāl Party in Palestine. There still remained the problem of setting up a frontal organization in Syria. The key rested with a young intellectual lawyer, ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Dandashī, (a graduate from Belgium), a champion of the Arab nationalist cause. The Damascene cell

47 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 208.

48 Hourani, *A History*, 328.

49 Khadduri, *Political Trends*, 176.

50 Farah, "The Impact," 106.

51 Stephen Longrig, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, London and New York, Toronto 1958, 189.

52 Nuwayhiḍ al-Ḥūt, *al-Qiyāda*, 491. The author mentioned that the society had no definite name. She relied on an interview with one of the society's founder Waṣīf Kamāl, while Khoury, *Syria*, 401, quoted a prominent founders of the society whom he met in Beirut in 1976, Farīd Zayn al-Dīn, who emphasized the name of the society.

53 Khoury, *Syria*, 403.

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of the Arab Liberation Society carefully cultivated him to prepare the groundwork for the Qarnāyil conference.[54]

The League of National Action had its inception in a conference which was held in secrecy (August 1933) in the Lebanese mountain village Qarnāyil. The conference proved to be the most important interwar gathering of radical Arab nationalists (nearly 50) from all over the Arab East, especially from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine.[55]

In attendance was an elite of men aiming at finding ways to unite the course of Arab nationalism and to eliminate foreign domination.[56] After four days of rigorous debate, the participants at Qarnāyil produced a statement entitled "To the Arabs from the League of National Action."[57]

The new organization embodied the beliefs and ambitions of a new generation of angry young nationalists which had begun to emerge through the Arab East.[58] The League which resulted from the meeting in Qarnāyil took over the coordination of pan-Arab activity from the amorphous Arab Liberation Society. The League defined its main goals in two interwoven principles: Arab sovereignty and independence and comprehensive Arab unity.

It considered Arab unity as an integral part of sovereignty.[59] The League particularly emphasized the need for economic development and integration (taking into consideration local conditions), in order to wage a successful struggle against the exploitation of foreign powers and against feudalism.[60] As for confronting the evil of modern imperialism, the League urged the unification of Arab national resistance in the Arab countries without neglecting local struggles and regional issues.[61] With specific reference to Syria, the League at Qarnāyil advocated a hardline stance of no compromise with the French and an active display of hostility to any party prepared to cooperate with the colonizers. Its members vowed not to accept any government post as long as foreigners remained in control of Syria.[62] The Qarnāyil conference discussed in details the Palestine issue and the danger of Zionism to the Arabs. Zionism had a twofold aim: to expel the Arabs from

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54 Ibid., 405.

55 Muṣṭafā Balāwnī, "al-Aḥzāb al-siyāsiyya fī Sūriyya, 1918-1939" M.A.thesis, Damascus University 1984, 136. Some of the participants at Qarnāyil conference are mentioned: Farīd Zayn al-Dīn, Akram Zuʿaytar, ʿAbd al-Razzāq Dandashī, Shafīq Sulaymān, ʿAlī Nāṣir al-Dīn, Waṣīf Kamāl, Thābīt al-Azzāwī, Sāmī Shawkat.

56 Farah, "The Impact," 106.

57 *Bayān muʾtamar al-taʾsīs li-ʿUṣbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī al-munʿaqad fī Qarnāyil 1933,* 27 pp. Damascus n.d.

58 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 308.

59 *Bayān*, 8-9.

60 Ibid., 10.

61 Ibid., 11.

62 Ibid., 26-7.

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Palestine, and to replace them by Jewish immigrants. The League established the main principle of boycott against the economic threat of Zionism.[63]

From its program, it is clear that the League of National Action stood for an uncompromising nationalism and pan-Arabism, and for energetic social reform on egalitarian but not communist lines.[64] Although it was reformist, and in some way populist, its interests lay more with the struggle for independence than with the social problems that an Arab government would face.[65]

From the outset the League attempted to organize itself along the lines of a modern political party. It had a central political council in Damascus and a general secretary.[66] The League had several branches linked to its central council in Damascus. In Homs, the strongest center,[67] it received the patronage of the Atāsī-family and the Greek Orthodox community, whose schools helped to reinforce Arab identity and cultural awareness.[68] In Antioch the branch was headed by Zakī al-Arsūzī, a Sorbonne-educated schoolteacher. To achieve the goal of pan-Arabism, Arsūzī called for a social revolution, which would create a social order capable of uniting the Arabs. The new social order should be based on Arab nationalism, socialism, and opposition to imperialism, to be achieved through a revolutionary process.[69]

The League's principal focus in the *sancaḳ* of Alexandretta (Liwā' Iskandarūn), which dominated Syrian political thinking and emotion for the years 1937-1939, was on preventing a Turkish takeover in Alexandretta and on continuing the anti-imperialist struggle. The Turkish measures were encountered by pathetic resistance.[70] Step by step, the separation from Syria and the annexation of the *sancaḳ* of Alexandretta by Turkey had been accomplished. The League blamed France for its involvement in the loss of the *sancaḳ*, and launched a bitter attack on the National Bloc ministry for alleged half-heartedness. The Turkish and French authorities cracked down on the major force of Arab resistance, the League: its offices were shut down and its leader, Zakī al-Arsūzī, arrested. Later on, he took up residence in Damascus.[71]

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63 Ibid., 11.

64 Longrigg, *Syria*, 228.

65 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 66.

66 Ṣabrī al-'Asalī was the first general secretary before he joined the National Bloc in 1936. He was followed by 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Dandashī, whose death was a severe blow to it. Longrigg, *Syria*, 228, (from interviews with old members of the League in 1984).

67 Longrigg, *Syria*, 228.

68 Khoury, *Syria*, 424.

69 Khadduri, *Political Trends*, 207. See the article by Dalal Arsuzi-Elamir in this volume.

70 *Liwā' al-Iskanadrūna al-shahīd,* issued by the League of National Action, Damascus n.d.

71 Longrigg, *Syria*, 237-244. The National Bloc or al-Kutla al-Waṭaniyya, was a group of veteran nationalists who had waged the struggle for independence against France between the wars. Seale, *The Struggle*, 24.

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The League had its own political mouthpiece, a weekly, called *al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī*, and a paramilitary organization, the Guards of Arabism, a common device for resisting Mandatory authorities. The League encouraged all its members to join this paramilitary organization.[72]

As for the social and intellectual formation, the League incorporated a second generation of Syrian nationalists. All of its leaders had received advanced education in Europe (mostly in France) and at the Syrian university in Damascus. This placed the League's leadership on a more sophisticated intellectual footing than the National Bloc elders.[73] Besides, the League's leaders were on average 20 years younger than their counterparts. The League was dependent on the young students of secondary schools and universities.[74] In its front rank stood men from the professional middle class, most of them either practicing lawyers or instructors of law, while the remainder was divided among the other professions.[75] Some leaders belonged to the big land-owning families, who joined the League's ranks in spite of its harsh attitude towards feudalism.[76]

It is difficult to estimate accurately the number of its active members.[77] Although it was not a mass-based party, but distinctly elitist,[78] it sought to extend its organization by a wide local devolution. It failed to operate seriously outside Syria, but within Syria it achieved, for some years, a high level of publicity and vigor.[79] The range of its influence among the young, educated class in Syria in the 1930s was considerable and it was, therefore, regarded as a pressure group.[80] Never in a position of responsibility, it could insist on intransigent positions unsullied by political compromise. It expressed itself by meetings, speeches, manifestos, and mass demonstrations.[81] The League was at the forefront of pan-Arab solidarity with the Palestine cause, especially during the revolt of 1936-1939 and at the Blūdān conference of 1937, along with other ideological and political parties and organizations.[82] A Palestinian activist and one of the organizers of Qarnāyil conference, Akram Zuʿaytar, lamented the death of A. R. Dandashī, the general

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72 Balāwnī, "al-Aḥzāb," 141-210.

73 Khoury, *Syria*, 415.

74 Balāwnī, " al-Aḥzāb ", 149.

75 Khoury, *Syria*, 415.

76 e.g. ʿAdnān al-Atāsī (Homs) and Muḥsin al-Barāzī (Hama).

77 Khoury, *Syria*, 417-419, table 15.2 (biographical data: League of National Action).

78 Ibid., 423.

79 Longrigg, *Syria*, 228.

80 Seale, *The Struggle*, 165.

81 Longrigg, *Syria*, 228.

82 Porath, *The Palestinian*, 274. Fuʾād Mufarrij, *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿarabī al-qawmī fī Blūdān*, National Arab office for Propaganda and Publishing, Damascus 1937, 11-2.

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secretary of the League, recalling his services to the Palestine issue by all available means.[83]

Based in Damascus, al-ʿUṣba naturally had to take a stand on National Bloc strategy and activities. It bitterly opposed the old nationalist elite for compromising with the French and for its willingness to stress Syrian nationhood at the expense of pan-Arabism.[84] The League attacked the 1936 treaty on the ground that it aimed at isolating Syria from the goal of the Arab unity.[85] Moreover, the treaty did not offer real independence and comprehensive Syrian unity.[86] By stressing the Bloc administration's ineffective handling of the Alexandretta debacle and its luke-warm commitment to the revolt in Palestine, the League added to the difficulties of the National Bloc.[87]

The growing attractiveness of al-ʿUṣba in the government schools, university and Boy Scouts indicated that the Bloc's influence among the educated youth of Damascus was on the wane. But so long as relations with France continued to dominate the Syrian political scene and her troops continued to occupy the country, the National Bloc, for all its shortcomings, remained the only candidate for office.[88]

Al-ʿUṣba, which was never absorbed by the Bloc, found that the only way it could exercise its dissatisfaction with the well-entrenched leadership of the Syrian independence movement was to mount a challenge to the Bloc's youth wing, the Nationalist Youth.[89] This political organization was founded early in 1936 under the aegis of the Bloc to act as its agency among the young, and to bring within the orbit of the Bloc politics the paramilitary bodies that had come into being. Its own Steel Shirts Squads were united by the aim of checking all rivals – and especially al-ʿUṣba, which was in the process of setting up its own paramilitary force, the Guards of Arabism.[90] Al-ʿUṣba parades and meetings led continually to street brawls with the adherents of other organizations.[91] In general the streets became the stage for the gang wars, mass demonstrations, and stone-throwing of rival paramilitary youth movements.[92] The League was

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83 Akram Zuʿaytar, *al-Ḥaraka al-waṭaniyya al-filasṭīniyya 1925-1929: yawmiyyāt Akram Zuʿaytar*, Institute of Palestinian Studies, Beirut 1980, 4. The author mentioned that French authorities forbid him from going to Damascus to attend the eulogy of Dandashī.

84 Khoury, *Syria*, 628.

85 Farah, "The Impact," 108.

86 *Records of Syrian Parliamentary Debates*, Damascus, Feb. 28, 1936. This attitude towards the treaty caused the League's general secretary to join the rank of the Bloc and to win a seat in the parliament as a candidate.

87 Longrigg, *Syria*, 228.

88 Seale, *The Struggle*, 26.

89 The private papers of Fakhrī al-Bārūdī, (general secretary of the National Youth), document 141 (Arabic), Center of Historical Archives, Damascus/Syria.

90 Longrigg, *Syria*, 228-9.

91 Ibid., 228.

92 Seale, *The Struggle*, 25.

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actively engaged in nationalist political life until World War II, when the French authorities forced it, together with a list of political subversive and radical organizations, to go underground and to disband temporarily.[93]

In the final assessment, al-ʿUṣba could be considered as one of the movements seeking to bridge the widening gap between the nationalism of the old traditional upper classes and the populist nationalism of the new middle class. It expressed and harnessed that popular sentiment in a bid to expand the base of political activity in Syria. Despite its failure to understand the realities of the Syrian situation, the League proved to be the ideological parent of the Baʿth Party, the political organization with the longest-lasting influence on Syrian political life in the postwar era.[94] The League helped to lay the intellectual and organizational foundation of radical pan-Arabism and al-Baʿth (officially established in 1947).

Among the Baʿth founders and early leaders were former members of al-ʿUṣba. Similar to al-ʿUṣba leadership, which included a number of European-educated young men, several early Baʿth leaders were trained in Paris. Apart from lawyers, professors and other members of the liberal professions, al-ʿUṣba – and al-Baʿth after it – attracted large numbers of schoolteachers. The League and early Baʿth leadership also belonged to the same generation of young Syrian men born between 1900 and World War I.[95]

93 Khoury, *Syria*, 414. The French shut down the League's offices in March 1939. A few months later the League was suppressed after being implicated in a plot against the administration. Many of its members fled abroad.

94 Khoury, *Syria*, 627.

95 Ibid.

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The experience of organized nationalism: radical discourse and political socialization in Syria and Lebanon, 1930-1958[1]

Christoph Schumann

In his autobiography, the Jordanian politician Jamāl al-Shāʿir writes about his defection from the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) to the Arab Socialist Baʿth Party in retrospect: "My joining the Arab Baʿth Party was neither unusual nor difficult after the educational culture I had witnessed in the city al-Salṭ, as well as my experience in the Syrian [Social] Nationalist Party, the events of the year 1948, and the political atmosphere at the American University of Beirut and in Damascus."[2] While this happened in 1949, only a few years earlier, in 1947, Hisham Sharabi left the small Arab nationalist student "cell" at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and joined the SSNP. Remembering this event, he writes in his autobiography *al-Jamr wa'l-ramād*: "Despite the fact that I turned intellectually from the centre of Arab nationalism to its absolute opposite, namely Syrian nationalism, my mental and emotional mood did not differ much from the state I was in before. The values, the sayings, and the meanings remained the same. Only the contents changed in some aspects."[3]

These two authors are certainly not representative of the whole of their generation of organized radical nationalists. However, from one party to another, ideological currents, even between different nationalisms, were far from exceptional during the 1940s and 1950s. One well-known example is the Syrian politician Akram al-Ḥawrānī who was a member of the SSNP before he founded the Arab Socialist Party (ASP) and finally

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1 A part of the following reflections has been published in my book *Radikalnationalismus in Syrien und Libanon. Politische Sozialisation und Elitenbildung, 1930-1958*, Hamburg 2001.

2 Jamāl al-Shāʿir, *Siyāsī yatadhakkar: Tajriba fī 'l-al-ʿamal al-siyāsī*, London 1987.

3 Hishām Sharābī [Hisham Sharabi], *al-Jamr wa'l-ramād: Dhikrayāt muthaqqaf ʿarabī*, [1978], 2nd ed., Beirut 1988, 72. Sharabi wrote a second autobiography: *Ṣuwar al-māḍī: Sīra dhātiyya*, Beirut 1993, here esp. 190.

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joined the Baʿth Party together with his political followers. In contrast to this, former historical studies on the Middle East have tended to treat Arab, Syrian, and Lebanese nationalism as rather separate phenomena. The main interest so far has concentrated on certain intellectuals, such as Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī or Michel ʿAflaq, and a number of organizations, particularly the Baʿth Party. Yet with Benedict Anderson's famous reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism, the ground was prepared for a new understanding of nationalism.[4] Since then, nationalism has been understood as a phenomenon of collective imagination resulting from propaganda by profit-making mass media. In addition, analytical approaches have show that one cannot speak of nationalism as a coherent framework of ideas, loyalties, and ideological references. Instead, more attention is being paid to its inherent frictions, contradictions, and internal power relations.[5] Thus, the nationalist discourse appears to be a field of incessant social and political struggles on definitions, contents, symbols, and forms. This critical approach toward nationalism, combined with a consideration of its social contexts, opens new comparative perspectives.

This approaches Syrian and Arab nationalism from a collective biographical perspective. In doing so, it assesses the prerequisites and circumstances for individuals who entered radical nationalist parties. What kind of political orientations did the young members experience in their families and during their education? Why and how did the parties attract them? A second point of interest is the assessment of the radical parties' role in the political socialization of their members. How important were the party platforms, the ideological writings of their leaders, and their nationalist concepts in the eyes of the political activists? How did the political activities within the parties affect the self- and worldperception of their members? And, finally, what were the means of integrating new members? The following reflections concentrate on the area of Lebanon and Syria between 1930 and 1958. This period roughly comprises the formation and consolidation of a number of new radical nationalist organizations, among them the SSNP (founded in Beirut in 1932), the League of National Action (founded in Qarnāyil in 1933) and, later on, the Arab Baʿth Party (officially founded in 1947). At the end of this period, the year 1958 marks a crucial moment in the history of both Syria and Lebanon. In Syria the state dissolved itself and merged with Egypt in the United Arab Republic, while in Lebanon the revolutionary events of 1958 gave a first glimpse of the political and social struggles of the future. In both cases, the ideological movements in general, and the nationalist parties specifically, played a key role in challenging the existing state and its internal power relations.

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4 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread on Nationalism*, London 1983.

5 James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, New York 1997; also their *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930-1945*, Cambridge 1995; James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics at the Close of the Empire*, Berkeley 1998.

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A new insight into the internal political life of radical nationalist parties and the biographies of their followers is now provided by a remarkable number of autobiographies written and published by (former) party members during the last two decades. Yet the use of autobiographies as historical sources raises questions concerning their value for attaining knowledge about the past. In fact, historians have to deal with a double distance of time: first, the distance between the described events and their writing down by the author; second, that between the publishing of the book and its reception by historians. Therefore, the "historical knowledge" that can be attained by the use of autobiographies has to be divided into three different kinds of historical "facts". First, there is the obvious desire of the authors to communicate their personal and political experiences in public by using autobiographies as a historiographical form. By trying to bring their own biographies and the witnessed contemporary history of their society together into one comprehensive story, they create a great number of texts, albeit with a historically limited variety of narrative forms. According to time and place, these limits of the narrative plots used constitute historical fact.[6] Second, by telling their life stories, the autobiographers provide a rather complex insight into both their own self- and worldperception and into the social circumstances of their upbringing. Thus, the autobiographical narratives show the internalized patterns of the authors' social "habitus" just as they allow the drawing of conclusions on the process of socialization by which these patterns were acquired.[7] The third kind of "fact" comprises the facts and events as they are described in the autobiographical texts. Since the factual correctness is often doubtful, verification by cross-checking with other sources or other contemporary autobiographies is necessary.

Family backgrounds

Despite the political motivation of most autobiographers to write down and publish their life stories, most of them tell much about their family backgrounds and their experiences in the schools and universities. The described social milieus cover a broad variety from the urban upper class to the rural and urban lower-middle classes. Higher education, however, plays the same crucial role in all autobiographies under investigation. This fact corresponds to the social basis of the radical nationalist organizations which drew their adherents mainly from the well-educated, new middle class. In addition, the composition

6 For this, see Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore and London 1987; idem, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Baltimore 1973.

7 For the notions "habitus", "social position", and "socialization" see: Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction : Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris 1979; idem, *Le Sens pratique*, Paris 1980; idem, "Espace social et genèse de 'classe, "*Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 52/3 (June 1984).

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of an autobiography requires the ability to read and write, a prerequisite that applied to only a rather small segment of the society at that period.

Autobiographers stemming from the upper class who joined radical nationalist parties later on tend to depict their family milieus as politically interested and their general orientation as overwhelmingly patriotic. Nadīm Dimashqiyya (b. 1920), for example, who joined the League of National Action during his studies of economics at the American University of Beirut, belonged to a well-established Sunni family in Beirut.[8] His father, Badr Dimashqiyya, elected mayor of the city in 1922 and was the founder of a ceramics factory. Nadīm's mother, Julia Ṭuʿma, stemmed from a Protestant family of Catholic origin. She was one of the best-educated women of her generation, and became famous by publishing the magazine *The New Woman* (*al-Marʾa al-Jadīda*), beginning in 1921. It is no wonder that Nadīm Dimashqiyya felt a strong and positive influence from his family background:

> Under the wings of my parents, I learned the love of the fatherland and the love of literature and Arab history. Thanks to their common effort, I was raised in the company of modern thought as well as the universally prevailing scientific progress, and furthermore the consciousness of social duty and cooperation for the sake of raising the condition of society by knowledge and culture.[9]

More critical is Hisham Sharabi's assessment of his own family. Sharabi (b. 1928), who was an active member of the SSNP during the 1940s, came from a Sunni upper-class family in Palestine. His grandfather worked as a higher Ottoman bureaucrat in Buṣrā and his family owned some land in Lebanon. The physical distance of the exile and his academic education enabled Sharabi to perceive the social implications of the political orientations of his family more clearly than did Dimashqiyya. He portrays the political atmosphere at home as follows:

> The national consciousness in which we grew up did not tie our life and action to our people's reality and life. Independence meant for us to shake off the foreigners who held the positions of power in our country and refrained us from holding them ourselves. The liberation of the people, however, and the liberation of our society [...] never entered our imagination.[10]

While upper-class nationalism primarily contained an implicit consciousness of one's own higher position in society (*al-khāṣṣa*) with regard to the "common people" (*al-ʿāmma*), this did not exclude the call for social and cultural reforms, as long as the existing social relations were not turned upside down.

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8 Nadīm Dimashqiyya, *Maḥaṭṭāt fī ḥayātī al-diblūmāsiyya. Dhikrayāt fī 'l-siyāsa wa'l-ʿalāqāt al-dawliyya*, Beirut 1995. For a similar social background see: Riyāḍ al-Mālikī, *Dhikrayāt ʿalā darb al-kifāḥ wa'l-hazīma*, Damascus 1972; al-Naqīb Adīb Qaddūra, *Ḥaqāʾiq wa-mawāqif*, Beirut 1989; Sharābī, *al-Jamr wa'l-ramād* and idem, *Ṣuwar al-māḍī*.

9 Dimashqiyya, *Maḥaṭṭāt fī ḥayātī al-diblūmāsiyya*, 19f.

10 Sharābī, *al-Jamr wa'l-ramād*, 19.

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In contrast to this, the patriotism of the middle class, as it is described in the autobiographies, tended to imagine the nation according to an idealized self-image,[11] and its future therefore should be ascetic, reform-minded, eager to learn, and self-sacrificing. The fathers of these autobiographers did not claim leading positions for their sons, but they demanded equal opportunities for their social ascent by means of higher education. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Sātir (b. 1920), who was a militant partisan of the SSNP, is an example of this social stratum. He came from a Shiʿite petit-bourgeois family in Baʿalbak. His grandfather opened a small butchery, and it was his major wish that his grandson should receive a higher education and become an advocate. ʿAbd al-Sātir writes about the political orientations in his early surroundings:

> Except for the simple patriotic mood in my family, no one was involved in politics. At that time, patriotism meant for us the termination of colonialism and the return to Syrian unity. Arabism was not a topic of conversation in our milieu, because it was never, even for a day, separated from our belief in Syrian unity. No wonder, because we spoke Arabic and our roots went back to the [Arab] tribe of the Hamdān. Thus, I grew up with the natural enthusiasm for everything Syrian and everything Arabic, and in the natural belief that we are Syrian Arabs.[12]

However, ʿAbd al-Sātir did not see his engagement in the radical nationalist SSNP as a direct consequence of his family's political convictions. In retrospect, he sharply critizises the "subservience and the self-abasement" of the people in Baʿalbak vis-à-vis the French mandate. In his view, his early surroundings lacked appropriate organizational forms, a coherent ideology, and an effective strategy. All of which he felt he found in the SSNP later on. Therefore he experienced the strict organization of the SSNP and its aura of conspiracy as a sharp contrast to the political atmosphere in Baʿalbak.[13]

Apart from these differences between the political orientations in the upper- and the middle-class milieus, all autobiographers from these backgrounds mention the general patriotic mood in their families. This stands in remarkable contrast to authors who come from the lower-middle class.[14] The latter tend to describe their families as rather apolitical, with even the general atmosphere at home often not considered patriotic. Instead, religious conservatism often prevailed and the loyalty to the quarter, the village, the

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11 For the urban middle-class milieu see: Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Sātir, *Ayyām wa-qaḍiyya: Min muʿānayāt muthaqqaf ʿarabī*, Beirut 1982; Ḥāfiẓ al-Mundhir, *Dhikrayāt Ḥāfiẓ al-Mundhir*, Beirut 1983; Ibrāhīm Yamūt, *al-Ḥiṣād al-murr: Qiṣṣat tafattut qiyādat ḥizb wa-tamāsuk ʿaqīda*, Beirut 1993. For the rural middle class see Shawqī Khairallāh, *Mudhakkirāt*, Beirut 1990.

12 ʿAbd al-Sātir, *Ayyām wa-qaḍiyya*, 38.

13 Ibid.

14 For the urban lower-middle class see Mīshāl al-Ghurayyib, *Mudhakkirāt mārūnī*, Beirut 1984; ʿAdnān al-Mulūḥī, *Bayna madīnatay: Min Ḥimṣ ilā 'l-Shām*, London 1990; ʿAbdallāh Saʿāda, *Awrāq qawmiyya: Mudhakkirāt al-duktūr ʿAbdallāh Saʿāda*, Beirut 1987. For the rural lower middle class see: Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Ḥiṣād: Sinīn khaṣiba wa-thimār murra*, Beirut 1994; Bashīr al-ʿAẓma, *Jīl al-hazīma: Bayna al-waḥda wa'l-infiṣāl. Mudhakkirāt*, London 1991.

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family, or the clan constituted the dominant framework of reference. While all nationalist autobiographers fiercely condemn confessionalism, some, those from the lower-middle-class especially, describe it as a part of their own experiences within their families and their early surroundings.

ʿAbdallāh Saʿāda (b. 1919), for example, who became a top official of the SSNP grew up in a lower-middle class milieu in Amīyūn in Lebanon. His father was a Greek Orthodox priest who died at a young age and left his family deep in debts. Nevertheless, the young ʿAbdallāh had the opportunity to leave the village and to enroll at a secondary school in Tripoli. When his mother said goodbye to him, she gave him a last piece of advice: "My son, if you want me to be satisfied with you, don't socialize with the Muslims (*lā tuʿāshir al-muslimīn*)."[15] At that time, Saʿāda was astonished by this, because he had met few Muslims until then. But his request for her reasons for this warning was only answered by a "*mā biyuswā!*" (It's not done!). The Maronite Mīshāl al-Ghurayyib (b. 1931), who later became an Arab nationalist and an ardent secularist, criticizes his father more harshly. He felt betrayed by him, because he gave him the French first name Michel. From the author's point of view, this was a complete contradiction to the tradition of his family, which was of pure Arabic origins. To demonstrate this, Ghurayyib includes his family tree in his autobiography, pointing out that his roots go back to the ʿAzīzat tribe in Jordan.[16]

In general, autobiographers from a lower-middle-class background show a strong disposition to understand their own life stories as an escape from ignorance, poverty, and backwardness.[17] Therefore, they often see their own political commitment as a reaction to their negative experiences in their early environment. Their ideas about the revolutionary changes that had to be brought about by the nationalist movement are tightly intertwined with their interpretation of their own upbringing. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm (b. 1928), for example, who came from an impoverished peasant family in the Ḥawrān, saw the radical transformation of the rural society as a necessary prerequisite for the nation's revival:

> We [i.e. the boys from my village] compared the freedom we enjoyed as pupils in the city and its wide horizons with the ignorant tyranny and the limited horizon in which we were drowned every time we came back to the village... The men who represented this society on the level of the village and the district became the target of our criticism despite our young age and our immaturity. We began to look at them as if they personified ignorance, backwardness, injustice, and the basic pillars of foreign colonialism... We saw it as our duty to destroy these idols [i.e. the village notables] and to open the way for the peasant

15 Saʿāda, *Awrāq qawmiyya*, 19.

16 Al-Ghurayyib, *Mudhakkirāt,* 9ff.

17 For the theme of poverty in Arabic autobiographies see Tetz Rooke, *In my Childhood: A Study of Arabic Autobiography,* Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, no. 15, Stockholm 1997, 200-236.

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> masses to free themselves and to be emancipated from clannish subservience and ignorance.[18]

Beyond ʿAbd al-Karīm's negative assessment of his early surroundings, this quotation indicates the crucial role played by school and university education in the politicization, or rather radicalization, of the author. In view of the broad variety of educational institutions during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, ranging from the overtly nationalist-orientated state schools in the bigger cities of Syria to the anti-nationalist and pro-French institutions, one has to be aware of a complex interrelation of several factors rather than a mono-causal connection. In this context, ʿAbd al-Karīm's reference to the "freedom" and the "wide horizons" of his schooldays in Damascus did not only mean the freedom to do what he liked in his leisure time, like smoking cigarettes in secret or going to the cinema,[19] but it meant also openness to political influences from outside. Going through the autobiographical material, three main sorts of direct and indirect political influence during the authors' schooldays: one can distinguis direct indoctrination by certain school or university teachers, as for example Michel ʿAflaq, Zakī al-Arsūzī, or Anṭūn Saʿāda;[20] the activities of the nationalist parties and groups within the educational institutions; and the common politicized atmosphere of the social and political struggles during the French Mandate and the first decade of the independence era. Here, all autobiographers describe the deep and lasting impressions of the large political manifestations they witnessed. While the pupils of the Syrian state schools in cities like Damascus had the opportunity to participate in demonstrations together with their classmates almost weekly, those coming from the remote rural areas were struck by their new political experiences in the cities. The ʿAlawī author ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Yūnus (b. ca. 1914), when he came from the rural surroundings of Sāfītā to Tripoli was thus impressed:

> Once, when I visited him [my friend Muḥammad] in Tripoli, the security situation was at its worst. The sons of Damascus demanded unity with Syria and the French opposed this with barbary, cruelty and wickedness! On a Friday, the people from Tripoli went on the streets in powerful demonstrations and the French soldiers started to shoot around wildly... For some moments we could only move back into the house crawling on our stomachs because of the pouring bullets, while others entered the house through the windows. At that moment, I saw a compatriot falling down dead in front of the house. This was the first time in my life that I witnessed someone being killed next to me. From then on, fear and worry stayed with me all the time.[21]

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18 ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Ḥiṣād*, 72f.

19 See e.g.: Sharābī, *Ṣuwar al-māḍī*, 104 and ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Ḥiṣād*, 52, 56, 76f.

20 Anṭūn Saʿāda was working as a language teacher at the A.U.B., when he started his political career in the early 1930s.

21 ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Yūnus, *Mudhakkirāt al-Duktūr ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Yūnus*, Damascus 1992, 44. Compare Farīd Juḥā, *Anā wa'l-madrasa. Dhikrayāt wa-ṣuwar wa-tajārib athnā' khamsīn ʿāman min al-ḥayāt maʿa 'l-madrasa,* (privately publ.) Aleppo 1985, 26; al-Mālikī, *Dhikrayāt ʿalā darb al-kifāḥ wa'l-hazīma*, 38f.

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School and university education

Beyond these direct influences, the general socio-political imprints that were acquired by the pupils and students during their higher education were of similar effectiveness. All autobiographers under investigation ascribe a very high biographical importance to the period of their education. When they left the secondary schools, they were not only proud of their knowledge and their diplomas, but also associated them with broad expectations concerning their personal future. They hoped to find appropriate jobs immediately after leaving the secondary schools and universities. However, these expectations did not meet corresponding social possibilities. In the juridical field in particular, the career prospects were very limited for members of the middle and lower-middle class.[22] In addition, the authors show an obvious tendency to articulate both their career expectations and their sense of their own place in society in rather political terms. Central to this disposition was their professional self-view, which was highly politicized in most cases: The teachers felt themselves responsible for educating a new national elite as well as spreading a "nationalist consciousness" in the rest of the people; the physicians thought about comprehensive medical programs to improve the public health; and the advocates saw their duty not only in defending individuals, but also in securing the nation's rights in the face of colonialism, Zionism, and "feudalism."[23] Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Sātir characterizes the social position of his own profession as follows:

> The lawyers belong by nature of their profession and their culture to the highest level of the intellectual elite in society. The work of the lawyer requires from him that he is highly educated not only in all branches of jurisprudence, but also in the social sciences, in medicine, in the engineering and technical sciences, in philosophy, in the financial and trade sciences and even more beyond this, because dealing with legal causes requires references to all these subjects… The practitioner of law is led, because of the law's connection with the state-institutions, to a constant contact with the means of power which prompt him to political activity.[24]

In examining the authors' political socialization, it can be said that their recently acquired higher education was of double importance. First, it was the basis for the authors' expectations for their social ascent and their claim to political participation in a leading position. Second, the young nationalists regarded education and culture as the most

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22 Compare the autobiographies of Mīshāl al-Ghurayyib, Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Sātir, and Riyāḍ al-Mālikī. For a general assessment see Donald M. Reid, *Lawyers and Politics in the Arab World, 1880-1960,* Studies in Middle Eastern History, vol. 5, Minneapolis and Chicago 1981.

23 For teachers see Juḥā, "Anā wa'l-madrasa," *passim*; Sāmī al-Jundī, *al-Baʿth*, Beirut 1969, 37ff. For physicians, al-ʿAẓma, *Jīl al-hazīma*, 121-167. For advocates, al-Mālikī, *Dhikrayāt,* 52-96; ʿAbd al-Sātir, *Ayyām wa-qaḍiyya*, 58-72.

24 ʿAbd al-Sātir, *Ayyām wa-qaḍiyya*, 64f.

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important means for a comprehensive reform of the nation. In this regard, the school and university days were not only a biographical phase of rich political experiences and influences, but they also left a formative imprint on the self- and world-views of the autobiographers as well as on their personal and political expectations.

The attraction of organized radical nationalism

In retrospect, most autobiographers remember their first nationalist activities as tightly intertwined with their schooldays. A typical example of this is Shawqī Khayrallāh (b. 1927), who acquired his school-leaving certificate in 1944 and, in the same year, joined the SSNP:

> After we finished our baccalaureate, my classmates and I felt that we reached the stage of manliness in all fields. Bearing a baccalaureate is an important thing that is tiring and rests heavy on one's shoulders. [...] However, I graduated from the last school-year and I was bearing a mission (*risāla*) which was of even higher importance than the baccalaureate and which was in the public interest. Therefore it was necessary that I fulfilled my duties. I just had sworn the party oath and, following this, Ghassān Tuwaynī and I were entrusted with the responsibility to do party work during the summer in the region of Baḥamdūn – al-Jarad in the district of 'Aley.[25]

At that time, Khayrallāh was enroled at the Maronite Madrasat al-Ḥikma in Beirut. Yet in his case, it was not the teachers who propagated a certain ideological orientation. For him, the political pluralism among the pupils was obviously of much higher importance. He reports that it was not unusual that "the classroom was opened in the morning and, inside, a small booklet with the party principles of the SSNP commented by the *Za'īm* [i.e. Anṭūn Sa'āda] or a publication of the Katā'ib was found."[26] The enlisting of new members was obviously among the most important party activities of the young members, as the secondary schools and the universities constituted the main recruiting ground. For this reason, most autobiographers found their way into the parties by personal contacts, mostly via friends or relatives. Adīb Qaddūra (b. 1917), for example, remembers that it was his cousin Wafīq al-Ḥisāmī who whispered to him one day "with secretiveness and seriousness that there existed an unofficial party, which was absolutely secret and which believed in the same notions, ideas, principles and values that we did."[27]

In some cases, the autobiographies show that the teachers were not only important for the political education of their pupils, but also in setting up new nationalist organizations.

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25 Khairallāh, *Mudhakkirāt*, 79.

26 Ibid., 76.

27 Qaddūra, *Ḥaqā'iq*, 46.

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Anṭūn Saʿāda, Zakī al-Arsūzī, and Michel ʿAflaq, for example, recruited the core membership of their later parties among their pupils and students. Beyond the formal lessons in the schools, extraordinary meetings were held in a smaller circle in rooms and apartments, which were rented for this purpose. In this context, the teachers' role almost fused with the role of a leader, just as the difference between a studying group (*ḥalqa*) and a party cell (*khaliya*) was often more than blurred. Zuhayr al-Mārdīnī who sets his "teacher" (*al-ustādh*) Michel ʿAflaq at the centre of his memoirs, describes the atmosphere of these meetings during the early 1940s as follows:

> I was in the middle of the events which led to the emergence of Michel ʿAflaq as a famous history teacher at the Tajhīz-School. Therefore it is enough to say that I was one of his pupils… At that time, Michel ʿAflaq was, in the view of his followers, a daily teacher, but, in fact, he was more than a teacher and they were more than his pupils. They followed him like shadows, they learned from his sayings, they accompanied his short, interrupted conversations as well as the long intervals of his silence. Thus, our meeting place saw the birth of a secret leader of a secret organization, which distributed enthusiastic leaflets written by hand or copied with the "Stansil."[28]

The "teacher-leaders," such as Michel ʿAflaq were connected to their followers by a mutual bond. On one hand, they reinforced their pupils' inclination towards an intellectual elitism. The clearest expression of this is probably the leaflets that were distributed during Michel ʿAflaq's election campaign in 1943. Sentences like "We represent the mission of Arabism (*risālat al-ʿurūba*) against professional politics. We represent the new Arab generation (*al-jīl al-ʿarabī al-jadīd*),"[29] certainly did not impress a broader public, but it perfectly described the way in which ʿAflaq's young educated followers saw themselves. On the other hand, the young nationalists admired their teacher-leaders intellectually and accepted their primacy in imposing ideological definitions and interpretations. Hisham Sharabi, for example, confesses in his first autobiography that he was so fascinated by the personality of Anṭūn Saʿāda that he was unable to resist him, even at the time that his best friends, among them Fayez Sayegh, were excluded from the party for ideological reasons.[30]

Yet the young nationalists' admiration of their teacher-leaders was, above all, connected to the latters' personalities and their intellectual superiority. While most autobiographers ascribe a high importance to their charisma and to the secret and determined atmosphere surrounding them, no one claims to have been influenced by their ideological treatises or rather the complexity of their nationalist theories, such as Anṭūn Saʿāda's 'spirito-materialism' (*al-madraḥiyya*) or Zakī al-Arsūzī's idea of the Arabic language's

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28 Zuhayr al-Mārdīnī, *al-Ustādh: Qiṣṣat ḥayāt Mīshīl ʿAflaq*, London 1988, 85f.

29 Mīshīl ʿAflaq, "Ḥawl al-maʿraka al-intikhābiyya, Bayān 24.7.1943", in *Mīshīl ʿAflaq: al-Kitābāt al-ūlā maʿ dirāsa jadīda li-sīrat ḥayātihi*, ed. Dhūqān Qarqūṭ, Beirut 1993, 207-211, here 208f. Compare also Mīshīl ʿAflaq, "Fī dhikrā al-rasūl al-ʿarabī" and idem, "Naḥnu al-jīl al-ʿarabī al-jadīd," in 188ff and 198ff.

30 Sharābī, *al-Jamr wa'l-ramād*, 82.

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genius.[31] Most authors even confess that they were not very interested in philosophical questions, while, at the same time, they recognized the absolute validity of the party principles with reference to their "scientific" and "philosophical" basis.[32] In this regard, the scientific or philosophical form of these writings was obviously of higher importance than their argumentative coherency.

In contrast to the nationalist theories of the parties, their short key documents, such as principles or slogans, were of greater importance and, according to this, were more frequently mentioned in the autobiographical texts. However, the motto of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party "Unity, Freedom, Socialism" (*waḥda, ḥurriyya, ishtirākiyya*), for example, was not intended to decide or to clarify ideological questions, but rather to bridge internal differences and to demarcate the distance from rival organizations. By this, the political semantics and the specific manners of expression of each party constituted a crucial link between the organization's self-image and the members' feeling of identity with it. Therefore, the internalization of these discursive patterns constituted an important first step in the political socialization of new members and demonstrated their new affiliation to the outside. In this connection, the party leaders played a pivotal role in laying down the key words and slogans of their political organizations. The fierce controversy on the question, whether Michel ʿAflaq or Zakī al-Arsūzī first used the term al-Baʿth al-ʿArabī as a name for a political party, gives a slight impression of the importance of well-chosen definitions and slogans. Sāmī al-Jundī (b. 1921), for example, stresses this fact in his account of Zakī al-Arsūzī's short-lived Arab Nationalist Party (al-Ḥizb al-Qawmī al-ʿArabī) (ANP). He quotes the four principles of this party and comments on them as follows:

> 1. The Arabs are one single nation. 2. The Arabs have one single leader who shows the Arab nation's potentials, represents them and expresses them in the most honest way. 3. Arabism (*al-ʿurūba*) is our nationalist consciousness, the source of all sacred. 4. The Arab is master of his fate (*al-ʿarabī sayyid al-qadar*).

The short and simple explanation of these principles leads us to the comprehension of the cultural view from which they emerged just as of the wide distance between these principles and those of former organizations. They mean a qualitative intellectual separation from our society and an absolutely new assessment of the human being… These few decisive words can be learned easily and repeated by the party member. They are an expression of the new solid form in which the influence of the European thought becomes clear. Every single word means one idea.[33]

Sāmī al-Jundī contrasts these principles with what he conceives as the Ba'th Party's later ideological and intellectual "chaos". In his view, the ideological clarity of Arsūzī's ANP

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31 Sāmī al-Jundī and Zuhayr al-Mārdīnī's silence on this topic is eloquent.

32 See e.g. ʿAbd al-Sātir, *Ayyām wa-qaḍiyya*, 89; ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Ḥiṣād*, 101.

33 Al-Jundī, *al-Baʿth*, 22.

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was never reached again in the history of Arab nationalism.[34] Even though it seems today that the "clarity" of these principles was mainly caused by their generality, his quotation shows the importance of party principles in reinforcing political distinctions as well as in integrating new party members.

Another new characteristic of the radical nationalist parties was their strict organizational form and their formalized membership. In comparison with the loose coalitions of nationalist notables, such the National Bloc, the conference of Qarnāyil, which led to the foundation of the League of National Action, already showed a changed understanding of politics.[35] The participating radical Arab nationalists not only tried to agree on a number of political goals, they also searched for a solid common basis in a number of general principles which were derived from a rather comprehensive criticism of contemporary Arab society. Nevertheless, Sāmī al-Jundī criticizes the vague "emotional sense of duty" by which the League was held together. For this reason, he appreciated the association of the individual with the above-mentioned ANP by an "organized membership" (*ʿuḍwiyya tanẓīmiyya*).[36] The SSNP even demanded a special party oath from their new members. Anṭūn Saʿāda himself laid its words down in the constitution of the party:

> I, [...], swear by my honor, my truth and my conviction that I belong to the Syrian Social Nationalist Party in all sincerity and true faith; that I agree to make its ideals the guiding principles of my life, my family and my home; that I will keep its secrets ...; that I act in accordance with its rules and regulations and respect its decisions and obey them; that I execute my orders honestly and meticulously; that I watch over its interests, support the Leader and submit to his authority; that I will not betray the party or any of its branches or members; that I will give any assistance I can to any active member of the party whenever he is in need of it; and that I will perform dutifully all my obligations toward the party.[37]

Even though the text of this oath has to be regarded as a key document of the SSNP, the aim was not to repeat and to clarify the central doctrines and definitions of the party ideology once more. Instead, the oath turned the abstract organization of the SSNP into a "sworn" community which could be experienced by every single member through this ritual of incorporation. In fact, the moment when the oath was taken is remembered in

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34 Ibid., 25, 41.

35 *Bayān al-muʾtamar al-taʾsīsī*, issued by ʿUṣbat al-ʿAmal al-Qawmī, Damascus Aug. 24, 1933. See Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandat: The Politics of Arab Nationalism 1920-1945*, London 1987, 400ff.

36 Al-Jundī, *al-Baʿth*, 22.

37 Anṭūn Saʿāda, *Dustūr al-Ḥizb al-Sūrī al-Qawmī al-Ijtimāʿī*, Beirut 1952, 11f. Saʿāda formulated the constitution of the S.S.N.P. in 1934 and it was first published in January 1937. The quotation follows the translation of Labib Zuwiyya Yamak, *The Syrian Social Nationalist Party: An Ideological Analysis*, Cambridge 1966, 112. The oath of the Arab Baʿth Party was laid down in the congress of its foundation in January 1947: "Je jure sur mon honneur et ma foi que je serai fidèle aux principes du Parti Baath Arabe, dévoué à son engagement, attaché à son règlement, et que j'exécuterai ses directives." Following Pierre Guingamp, *Hafez al-Assad et le Parti Baath en Syrie*, Paris 1996, 54.

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almost all autobiographies of former party members as a fundamental life experience. This applies both to authors who stayed inside the party and to a considerable number of persons who left it for one reason or another. Adīb Qaddūra, for example, who resigned from the party in the course of the Lebanese internal conflict in 1958, describes his induction into the party as follows:

> A few days after [I heard of the SSNP the first time], I raised my hand and took the solemn oath. This was the most important, the most serious, and the most effective moment in my life. There were two witnesses of my oath: ʿAzīz Tābit and Wafīq al-Ḥisāmī. … A few days later, I was charged with my first secret duty in the party cell.[38]

In all radical nationalist organizations, new members were, like Adīb Qaddūra, integrated at first into the "cell," which was the smallest unit on the lowest level of the organizational structure. Most authors report that they soon spent most of their free time with party activities. Ḥāfiẓ al-Mundhir (b. 1920), for example, stresses this deep impression at the time when he entered "this new attractive world which was roaring and raging from movement, activities, order and discipline as well as from affection, friendship and unlimited devotion."[39] Another example is Hisham Sharabi, who spent most of his time in the intimate circle of Anṭūn Saʿāda. In retrospect, he wonders how he made his livelihood at that time and he confesses that he neglected his family, which was in a deep depression after they had lost house and homeland due to the war in Palestine.[40]

Going through the autobiographical material, one can distinguish three different kinds of party activities. The public campaigns included a broad variety of forms reaching from rallies in uniform to the distribution of leaflets. For the party members especially, these actions assured their own determination and militancy. Often, the single activists or would try party cells to outdo each other with regard to their courage and their willingness to make sacrifices.[41] In contrast to this, the internal meetings were less spectacular. The discussions on the party ideology within the party cells tended to turn into endless monologues by the cell-leader, while "the opinions of the members were not heard."[42] Only the more charismatic teacher-leaders were able to fascinate their young listeners by their history lessons or their political speeches. The third means for a quick integration of new members was to assign responsibilities to them soon after they joined the party. In this regard, the above-quoted report of Adīb Qaddūra, who was charged with his first secret duty only a few days after he took his oath, is a typical example. In most cases, these new assignments concerned the leading of a

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38 Qaddūra, *Ḥaqāʾiq*, 47.

39 al-Mundhir, *Dhikrayāt*, 19.

40 Sharābī, *al-Jamr wa'l-ramād*, 198.

41 See e.g. ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Ḥiṣād*, 68ff; Saʿāda, *Awrāq qawmiyya*, 23ff.

42 Here J. al-Shāʿir on the S.S.N.P. meetings, in: *Siyāsī yatadhakkar*, 37; Similarly H. Sharābī on his Arab nationalist student cell, in *al-Jamr wa'l-ramād*, 69.

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party cell or the coordination between different regions or levels within the party hierarchy. Nadīm Dimashqiyya, for example, became the leader of a student group of the League of National Action, while he was still studying economics at the AUB, and Sāmī al-Jundī's first "great responsibilities," as he writes ironically, comprised the supervision of a small group of pupils at the Tajhīz School in Damascus and the administration of the party's small budget. If one compares the autobiographical accounts with one other, it is remarkable that the SSNP members in particular were integrated into the party by an incessant number of party activities and other obligations. For this reason, however, a lot of them felt a conflict between their career aspirations and their political commitment soon afterwards.[43]

However, what were the enduring effects of the authors' integration into their respective parties with regard to their political socialization? The central pattern of political self- and world perception, which is more or less explicitly reproduced by all autobiographers who were once members of radical nationalist parties, is the unquestioned belief that the fight for the future of the nation, as well as the struggle of their own parties for the political power, and, last but not least, their personal expectations for a better future, constituted one and the same "cause" (*qaḍiyya*). By this, their individual hopes merged with the parties' call for a comprehensive reform of the society. This future transformation would not only replace the ruling notables by a young educated elite – as the young party members saw themselves – but would also give a new importance to knowledge, education and expertise – or, in other words, to their recently acquired cultural capital.

Concerning the intellectualist – or rather elitist – atmosphere within the radical parties, the young nationalists felt quite comfortable, because the ideological discussions in the group meetings were obviously similar to their experiences from the schools. Beyond this, they felt encouraged by their acquired party responsibilities, which they regarded as a foretaste of what the future would bring. It is clear why Hisham Sharabi, for example, felt that he was taken seriously as a student of philosophy when Anṭūn Saʿāda wrote to him in a letter that "the future social-nationalist society deserves experts for its doctrine who concentrate on building up the basis for the renaissance (*Nahḍa*) of the nation and on strengthening its self-confidence as well as its trust in destiny."[44] "At that time," Sharabi writes further on,

> our lives were dominated by the future. We experienced the major part of the present, while we were waiting for the future which would bring all our dreams to fruition… I desired the same as all the others who belonged to this rising generation: the basic transformation of this corrupt society. We wanted revolution. However, revolution was a

[43] Saʿāda, *Awrāq qawmiyya*, 64f; ʿAbd al-Sātir, *Ayyām wa-qaḍiyya*, 64f; Yamūt, *al-Ḥiṣād al-murr*, 82, 103, 116.

[44] Sharābī, *Ṣuwar al-māḍī*, 188.

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> theoretical matter for us or even a romantic event: we take the power and change the course of history.[45]

From this quotation it becomes clear that Sharabi's personal expectations did not only fit perfectly together with the party's claim to power, but were also linked to a specific perception of time. At that time, Sharabi and the other autobiographers saw the nation's glorious past as detached by a period of decline and corruption. They hoped that the radical nationalist parties would be able to bring this golden age back by means of a revolutionary and comprehensive reform of society. While they regarded this transition as almost inevitable or rather 'fate' (*muqaddar*),[46] they thought it was their "mission" (*risāla*) or rather their 'cause' (*qaḍiyya*) to initiate this crucial process. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm, for example, who was mentioned above as someone from an impoverished social background who was able to realize a certain upward social mobility by secondary education and finally became an officer, describes the self-perception he had in the late 1940s as follows:

> I believed that I belonged by virtue of my membership in the Arab Baʿth Party and my position as an officer to the front line of the combative elite of our people... We all believed that the generation of the youth and the party of which we were members were enough to take over the mission of the nation, the realization of its goals, as well as the expectations of the people in Syria and the other regions ...[47]

The period of the authors' intensive involvement in the activities of their parties was mostly accompanied by a strong identification of each person with his party as well with the nation, as he conceived it. In addition, this self-view was embedded in a specific perception of time by which the individual's personal situation and the nation's present state were equated with each other and confronted with a contra-factual image of an utopian future.

Conclusion

The social backgrounds of the autobiographers being examined showed the broad variety of sociocultural milieus from which the radical nationalist parties drew their adherents. While authors of upper-class origin describe the patriotism of their families as tightly connected to their unquestioned claim to replace the Mandatory power after its retreat, those authors from the middle class depict the political atmosphere within their

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45 Ibid., 171 and idem, *al-Jamr wa'l-ramād*, 197.

46 The Arabic word *qadar* is fairly widespread in the sources. See for example the above-quoted fourth principle of Arsūzī's ANP: "The Arab is master of his fate (*al-ʿarabī sayyid al-qadar*)." Another example is the book of Mutāʿ al-Ṣafadī, *Jīl al-qadar*, Beirut 1960, which was a bestseller in the 1960s.

47 ʿAbd al-Karīm, *Ḥiṣād*, 102.

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families as more egalitarian and reform-minded. Even though their fathers did not claim an elite position for their sons, they hoped that the future of the nation would enable their descendants to realize a certain social ascent by school education and thus improve the material conditions of the whole family. In contrast to this, authors from a lower-class or a lower-middle-class background primarily describe their surroundings, and even their own families, as dominated by traditional loyalties, such as the family, the tribe, the village, or the confession. Beyond this, their poor material conditions left little room for their desire for social improvement by education as well as for their hope for betterment by social reforms.

However, school and university education played an important role in bringing young men from all classes together and in modifying the patterns of their social habitus to a certain degree. In this regard, all autobiographers under investigation display a remarkable high esteem for culture, knowledge, and science with view to their own career prospects as well as with regard to the future reform of their society. For good reasons, the radical nationalist parties saw the secondary schools and universities as the main recruiting-grounds for potential members. There, they were able to address the specific political and social dispositions of the nationalist-minded pupils and students. The meetings of the party cells often resembled academic seminars, and the theoretical writings under discussion often had the form of scientific treatises or literary manifestos. So, the young well-educated nationalists felt they were taken seriously by their leaders, who were often also their teachers.

The radical nationalist parties integrated their new members by a number of means. The use of certain symbols, notions, and matters of expression created the common feeling of belonging to a discoursive community and demonstrated the party affiliation of the members to the outside. In the SSNP, an oath had to be taken by every new party member. This ritual turned the abstract organization into a perceptible group and strengthened the sense of commitment of every member. Later, the party cells constituted the main framework for the political socialization of the newcomers in all nationalist organizations alike. Here, a dense program of activities, meetings, and responsibilities reinforced the integration and political orientation of the members. The main result of the political socialization was the members' belief that the future of the nation, the struggle of their own party and their personal prospects were tightly connected to each other. They considered their nation to be at a point of absolute decline, corruption, and backwardness, a state, which could only be changed by a revolutionary and comprehensive reform of the whole society. This, not only bring back the golden age of the nation, but ondindividuals believed that their parties would also reach power and their personal expectations would be fulfilled.

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