



IN THE STEPS OF THE SULTAN

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Tylor Brand | Bilal Orfali

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IN MEMORY

Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn
1951–2022

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Introduction

To commemorate Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn's dissertation defense on September 9, 1982, his venerable mentor and committee chair Kamal Salibi delivered a short written address to mark the achievement and to impress upon the freshly minted scholar the gravity of the responsibility that he had earned. In keeping with the proud tradition of Arab scholarship, Dr. Salibi bestowed his own personal *ijāza* upon his student, granting him license to teach and tying him in to his own grand scholarly lineage, which flowed through Salibi from his own advisor Bernard Lewis to such Orientalist icons as Hamilton Gibb, Thomas Walker Arnold, William Wright, Reinhart Dozy, and finally to Silvestre de Sacy. Before he released him, he offered Abu-Husayn advice that would in retrospect serve as a philosophical lodestone throughout his career. Salibi reminded Abu-Husayn he must always strive for the advancement of knowledge even if it should render his own analysis "obsolete"—as Abu-Husayn had himself done to some of Salibi's prior judgments. Above all, Salibi exhorted his student to be humble, asserting that "the title of doctor is a mockery when it is not coupled with that virtue." In the forty years that followed, Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn exemplified this humble pursuit of knowledge through his scholarship and his commitment to his students.

To date, his work has faced little threat of obsolescence.

For four decades, Abu-Husayn chipped away at popular mythologies and opened entirely new avenues of research through his ability to mine both Arabic chronicles and the Ottoman Imperial Archive with his critical eye. His linguistic abilities and encyclopedic understanding of both regional and imperial history linked what had often been two distinct threads of scholarship that had almost by custom run parallel, and often cross-purpose to each other. As a result, his work had the distinction of being not merely revelatory, but also revolutionary. Like his mentor, Abu-Husayn brought an incorrigible zeal for challenging received wisdom and baseless (if often beloved) origin stories with rigorous scholarly evidence. His early work on provincial leaderships in Ottoman Syria provided some of the most detailed analysis of the relations of power between local power brokers, and by extension of the foundations that underpinned imperial power in the first century of Ottoman rule. By necessity, his work contested historical claims of

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powerful and politically entrenched families—including the vaunted Ma'anid emirs of Lebanese national mythology and, perhaps even more brazen given the importance of the family in present times, he penned a piece that untangled the Junblat lineage from their claimed connection to the Janbulad emirs of northern Syria.¹ His critical eye led him to take a special interest in the historiography of the region, particularly the work of the historian and Maronite patriarch Istifan al-Duwayhi, whose partial depictions of the Ma'ans in his monumental *Tarīkh al-azmina* served as a foundation stone of the Lebanese national narratives surrounding Fakhreddine Ma'an II.² His intimate knowledge of the historiography and of the historians who were responsible for it was one of his greatest assets as a critical scholar—particularly as one so prone to scholarly iconoclasm.

As important as Abu-Husayn's work on the local political structures of Lebanon and its environs had been, his most important scholarly contributions came from the mingling of Ottoman imperial archival sources and the perspectives of local actors in Syria and Lebanon. With the 1992 publication of the article "Problems in the Ottoman Administration in Syria during the 16th and 17th Centuries," Abu-Husayn offered a direct critique of parochial histories of the region by directing his voluminous understanding of contemporary local politics through the distant lens of the Ottoman administrators who were tasked with managing it.³ This important analysis was augmented in his work *Rebellion, Mythmaking, and Nation Building: Lebanon from an Ottoman Mountain Iltizam to a Nation*, which crucially contested the image of the Lebanese Emirate that had been cherished in the Lebanese national narrative of sectarian comity, instead showing the nuanced approach that both Druze and Maronite power brokers in Lebanon took towards their Ottoman overlords and how they used external parties to their advantage at the same time.⁴ While this somewhat dimmed the luster of local actors by identifying their motivations as more pragmatic than noble, it offered a far more realistic portrayal of

1 Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, *Provincial Leaderships in Syria, 1575–1650* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1985); Idem, "The Ottoman Invasion of the Shuf in 1585: A Reconsideration," *al-Abhath* 33 (1985): 13–21. Idem, "The Junblats and Janboulads: A Case of Mistaken Identity," in *Acta Viennensia Ottomanica: Akten des 13. CIE PO - Symposium*, edited by Marcus Köhbach, Gizela Prochazka-Eisl, and Claudia Römer (Vienna: Im Selbstverlag des Institutes für Orientalistik, 1999): 1–5.

2 Abu-Husayn, "Duwayhi as a Historian of Ottoman Syria," *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 1, no. 1 (1999): 1–13. Idem, "The Korkmaz Question: A Maronite Historian's Plea for Ma'anid Legitimacy," *al-Abhath* 24, no. 1 (1986): 3–11; Idem, "Khalidi on Fakhr al-Din: Apology as History," *al-Abhath* 14, no. 1 (1993): 3–16.

3 Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, "Problems in the Ottoman Administration of Syria during the 16th and 17th Centuries: The Case of the Sanjak of Sidon-Beirut," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 24 (1992): 665–75.

4 Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, *Rebellion, Myth Making and Nation Building: Lebanon from an Ottoman Mountain Iltizam to a Nation State* (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 2009).

local actors and their aspirations. In the latter stage of his career, Abu-Husayn expanded his work in the archives to offer thematic analysis of particular issues and regions across the *Mashriq*. He embraced topics like Ottoman minorities, *waqf* documents and the Hawran region.⁵ His most influential book, *A View from Istanbul*, combined incisive historical analysis with archival documentation offering astounding clarity on topics that are frequently beset by misunderstanding and anachronistic partisanship. The book's inclusion of translated Ottoman archival sources was of vital importance for English and Arabic readers who otherwise lacked access to the materials in their original Ottoman.⁶ His later collaborations brought him even further afield, including a sprawling project that analyzed the history of Syriac writing in the premodern Qatari peninsula, which spanned five volumes, and an editorial role in the monumental online encyclopedia project on World War I, *1914-1918-Online*.⁷ The strength of his sources and his personal disinterest in the nationalistic and sectarian historical politics gave him added authority in an often contentious Lebanese historical tradition.

Though it may seem strange that a scholar of his magnitude did not boast numerous books with imposing academic press credentials, the quality and volume of Abu-Husayn's scholarship made him an indispensable citation for anyone writing on topics even remotely linked to his field. At a time when scholarly conventions have made English the dominant language of the academy, Abu-Husayn made the calculated decision to continue publishing in his erudite Arabic prose, and even made his prominent English language works available in Arabic translation (even when he did not make some of his

5 Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, "An Ottoman against the Constitution: The Maronites of Mount Lebanon and the Question of Representation in the Ottoman Parliament," in *Religion, Ethnicity and Contested Nationhood in the Former Ottoman Space* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 89–113. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004216570_007.

6 Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn and Salih Sa'adawi, *al-Kanā'is al-'arabiyya fī l-sijill al-kanasī al-'Uthmānī: 1869–1922* ('Ammān: al-Ma'had al-Malaki li-l-Dirāsāt al-Dīniya, 1998); Abu-Husayn and Engin Akarlı, "Law and Communal Identity in Late Ottoman Lebanon (in Light of Two Waqf Disputes in 1893–1912)," *al-Abhath* 55 (2008): 113–46; Abu-Husayn, *Bayn al-markaz wa-l-aṭrāf: Ḥawran fī l-wathā'iq al-'Uthmāniyya: 1842–1918* (London: Mu'assasat al-turāth al-Durzi, 2015); Idem, *A View from Istanbul: Lebanon and the Druze Emirate in Ottoman Chancery Documents, 1546–1711* (London: Center for Lebanese Studies/I.B. Tauris, 2004).

7 Mario Kozah et al., eds., *Beth Qaṭraye: A Lexical and Toponymical Survey* (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2021); Mario Kozah et al., eds., *The Syriac and Arabic Lexicon of Hasan Bar Bahlul* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2019); Mario Kozah et al., eds. and trans., *Dadisho' Qaṭraya's Compendious Commentary on the Paradise of the Egyptian Fathers in Garshuni* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2016); Mario Kozah et al., eds., *An Anthology of Syriac Writers from Qatar in the Seventh Century* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015); Mario Kozah et al., eds., *The Syriac Writers of Qatar in the Seventh Century* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015).

Arabic language books available in English).⁸ And his work was indisputably important. In a conversation with one of the editors in 2010, Salibi himself judged his former student to be the pre-eminent historian in his field. While this is high praise, one is inclined to trust the source since he himself had a longstanding claim to that title. In 2013, his excellence was confirmed by the Turkish Historical Society, which granted his honorary membership in recognition for his profound contributions to Ottoman history.

But of course, the man known simply as Abed to his friends was far greater than the sum of his CV. For someone who has earned the sobriquet “Sultan” in this volume, Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn’s origin was hardly that of a prince in a gilded *kafes*. Born in the West Bank town of Nuba in the post 1948 era of Jordanian rule, Abed’s promise as a student earned him a USAID scholarship to study at the American University of Beirut in 1971, where he would remain in some capacity or another for the rest of his life. Between 1971 and 1982, Abed excelled with the patronage and mentorship of Dr. Salibi. Even after graduating with his Bachelor’s degree from AUB, his evolution as a scholar continued amid the ongoing burden of the civil war. In 1978, he earned his M.A. in Anthropology before returning to his natural field of History for his 1982 Ph.D. degree. He would remain a fixture in the university’s Department of History and Archaeology until his death. Though he had to fight through hardship, chaos, and the particular difficulties that life forced upon him as a Palestinian living in Lebanon during the war, Abed persevered, and even seemed to relish the absurdity of obstacles if they generated a good anecdote for later use. Abed frequently mentioned the story of when he was forced to swear that his tiny sons Kamal and Tarek would not undermine the sovereignty of the Lebanese state when he went to confirm their residency status. Despite the bureaucratic difficulties that it occasionally inspired, his deep pride in his Palestinian heritage was evident upon stepping into his office, which boasted three main focal points for visitors. To the left of his majestic wooden desk was an ever-growing wall of cards, photos, and greetings from dear friends; directly across from his desk, an impressive poster of the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire that hung framed over his well-worn couch; and finally, the image of a Palestinian boy casting a defiant stone at an Israeli tank, which greeted you every time you left. Each decoration represented a different facet of Abed’s personal and professional life. In a sense, he could not escape history, so instead he made it.

For those who knew him, Abed was defined as much by his warmth, his unyielding generosity, and his irrepressible sense of humor as he was by his scholarship. Like his mentor, Dr. Salibi, Abed was never without a story or a proverb. And like Dr. Salibi, Abed’s stories were as often as personal as they were historical, and almost always

8 Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, *Šinā’at al-uṣṭūra: ḥikāyat al-tamarrud al-ṭawīl fī Jabal Lubnān* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Sāqī, 2019); Idem, *Lubnān wa-l-imāra al-durzīyya fī l-’ahd al-’uthmānī: wathā’iq daftar al-muhimma, 1546–1711* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Nahār, 2005); Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn and Tarek Abu Hussein, *Riḥlat Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī ilā Iṣṭanbūl* (Iṣṭanbūl: Ghurfat Tijārat Iṣṭanbul, 2015).

delivered with a punchline. Whether due to his professional prominence or his personal magnetism (and often both), he was never without guests. If anything, his ability to produce scholarship so prolifically is even more impressive given the number of friends, peers, students, and admirers who made daily pilgrimages to the department seeking an audience with the Sultan. He was a particularly effective conjuror of scholarly networks simply because people wanted to be around him—and in the process they occasionally found other kindred spirits with whom to collaborate. For young scholars, Abed was a ready mentor who had few qualms about taking promising protégés under his wing (perhaps this was because of the importance of his own personal patron in his younger days). He was always eager to talk shop in any form—be it historical discourse, obscure facts, or even simply the latest gossip. When his friends were not enjoying his sparkling wit and encyclopedic knowledge, they sometimes benefited from the fact that the mere invocation of his name opened doors from Bkerke to the Bosphorus. It was hard not to feel beholden to him, but it would have been impossible for him to *not* be generous, even during the moments of ill health that silently plagued him in his later years. Perhaps the best indication of the impact that he had on the lives of those who knew him or merely knew of him was the flood of commemorations that coursed through both social media and the Lebanese national press for weeks after his sudden passing in late June of 2022. Although he is gone, such commemorations (and hopefully ones like this volume) will ensure that his legacy is not forgotten.

The Structure of the Volume

Much like the honorable subject of our volume, our contributors have provided chapters that encompass a wide range of historical themes and eras. It only seemed appropriate to organize the chapters into sections that highlighted Abed's own research interests.

The first section of the volume focuses on topics pertaining to Turkey and the Ottoman Empire. The opening entry by Hasan Kayalı offers a biographical account of parliamentary leader in Turkey's Grand National Assembly in the early 1920s, Saruhanlı Reşad—an unlikely political success story, who also happened to be the author's grandfather. The chapter provides intimate portrayal of Turkish politics at a transitional moment for the fledgling state. The second chapter by Selim Deringil, "A Rose among the Thorns' or a Thorn in the Side?" examines the unique and at times contentious relationship between the Maronite patriarchate in Mount Lebanon and the Ottoman political administration that was supposed to oversee it during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In it, Deringil explores the evolving nature of the relationship between the patriarchate and the imperial center from the nineteenth century until the fractious endpoint of that relationship under the rule of Jamal Pasha in World War I. The third entry by Christiane

Czygan similarly analyzes contentious politics surrounding a minority group—in this case the Alevite “kızılbaş” movement and its role in the heated Ottoman-Safavid clashes of the sixteenth century. Czygan approaches the issue through the words of poets—specifically, the Alevi writer Pir Sultan Abdal and Sultan Sulayman I himself—each of whom offered lyrical portrayals of the conflict that delegitimized their rival for the sake of their readership. Abderrahim Benhadda’s Arabic-language contribution approaches the issue of Ottoman-Arab relations from a near inverse perspective from much of Abu-Husayn’s work. Rather than the “View from Istanbul,” Benhadda instead looks at the indirect influence that the Ottoman Empire had on Morocco and its institutions from the perspective of one of the few parts of the Arab world that avoided falling under Ottoman rule. The final chapter of this section by Bilal Orfali delves into the historical circumstances of al-Ḥijāz prior to Ottoman rule, specifically exploring the works of poet and litterateur Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Ulayf. Orfali’s work centers on *al-Durr al-manẓūm*, a book that aimed to extol the virtues of Sultan Bayezid II. This sixteenth-century Arabian cultural contribution serves as a historical document that reflects the author’s perspective on the Ottomans and their relationship with Arabs, making it a significant work.

The second section of the volume takes the broad concept of Greater Syria as its organizing theme. The first chapter by Michael Provence is a conceptual journey through the historical and geographical byways of the Hawran region. Provence’s ability to interweave the narrative with his own personal connections to the landscape gives the piece a cross-temporal familiarity while offering a moving sense of the liminality of memory against the losses of time and the ravages of war. With Tufan Buzpınar’s chapter the volume remains in the Hawran, this time to conduct an analysis of the Ottoman Empire’s strategic approach to the region in the early Hamidian period through the lenses of Ottoman imperial documents and British diplomatic dispatches. Buzpınar’s nuanced narrative shows the evolving rationale of Ottoman policy in the challenging region amid the reshuffling of local power structures and shifting attitudes in Istanbul and abroad. The third chapter by James Reilly explores the social and geographical boundaries of eighteenth century Hama through *waqf* endowment deeds in contemporary court records. The chapter offers fascinating analysis of the dimensions of space and relations of power from the social to the personal level (indeed, the most personal level possible—those dealing with the dispensation of worldly goods upon the death of their owner). The final entry of this section by Abed’s longtime colleague Alexis Wick entwines two significant elements of Abed’s own life—his home institution of the American University of Beirut, and his Palestinian identity. The chapter examines how Palestinians, the concept of Palestine, the Palestinian cause served as integral and mutually reinforcing elements of the institution itself and its role as a center of intellectual and actual resistance in the region. While acknowledging the influence of American foreign policy at various points in the institution’s history, especially under the guidance of President Stephen Penrose, a

former member of the American Office of Strategic Services, Wick argues for a nuanced approach to AUB's identity as an institution. He emphasizes the indivisibility of Palestine from the spirit of the university and in the overlapping (if not entirely shared) historical tragedy of Palestinian loss and struggle that entangled the entire region over the course of the twentieth century.

The third section of this volume focuses on Lebanon—the country that Abed called home and the focus of some of his most important work. The first chapter by another of Abu-Husayn's longtime colleagues, Helene Sader, examines the relatively neglected archaeological history of Lebanon's Mamluk period through an analysis of the dig sites throughout the country. Along with her exhaustive accounting of the state of the field, Sader offers a sober assessment of the technical and practical challenges facing archaeologists dealing with the era today. Sader's piece is followed by a short chapter by Samir Seikaly that details the changing tastes, consumption habits, and behavioral attitudes in turn-of-the-century Beirut through the interpretations of *Lisān al-ḥāl* editor Khalil Sarkis's culinary and cultural commentaries, *al-Ādāt* and *Kitāb tadhkirat al-khawātīn wa-ustādh al-ṭabbākhīn*. Seikaly's chapter offers a fascinating study into contemporary conceptions of culture and modernity from the perspective of a prominent *nahdawī*. The subsequent chapter by Tobias Mörike follows the evolution of biogeography of Mount Lebanon through the work of Alexander von Humboldt and the constellation of scholars in its orbit. The chapter's focus on the expeditions highlights both the evolving understanding of the biodiversity and ecology of the region and also the ways that the data that such Orientalists produced augmented existing understandings of climate and biology in the region. In the next chapter, Tylor Brand analyzes the various ways that children experienced the Lebanese famine of World War I and the ways that their experiences were shaped by adult notions of childhood innocence. The chapter shows how shifting constructs of class and identity brought on by the famine influenced how adults understood children's dependency and vulnerability during the crisis. Such attitude shifts in turn influenced how or even whether children were shielded from the famine as it reached its nadir. The final chapter in the section is an analysis of Jibra'il Ibn al-Qila'i's *zajal* panegyric, *Madiḥa 'alā Jabal Lubnān*, by one of Abu-Husayn's final protégés, Charles al-Hayek. The chapter examines the text of the *Madiḥa* while considering both the contemporaneous implications of its historical depictions and what role the text has played in the attempt to historicize Lebanese identity in a national (and specifically Maronite) narrative by Lebanist writers in the late Ottoman period.

The chapters in the fourth section address a range of historical questions using particular case studies or events as points of framing. The first entry by Elizabeth Thompson uses the serendipitous meeting of Arab intellectuals at an Umm Kulthum concert in Port Said as a frame for the generational and cultural transitions in the Arab intellectual world in the post-World War I era. Thompson's microhistorical analysis

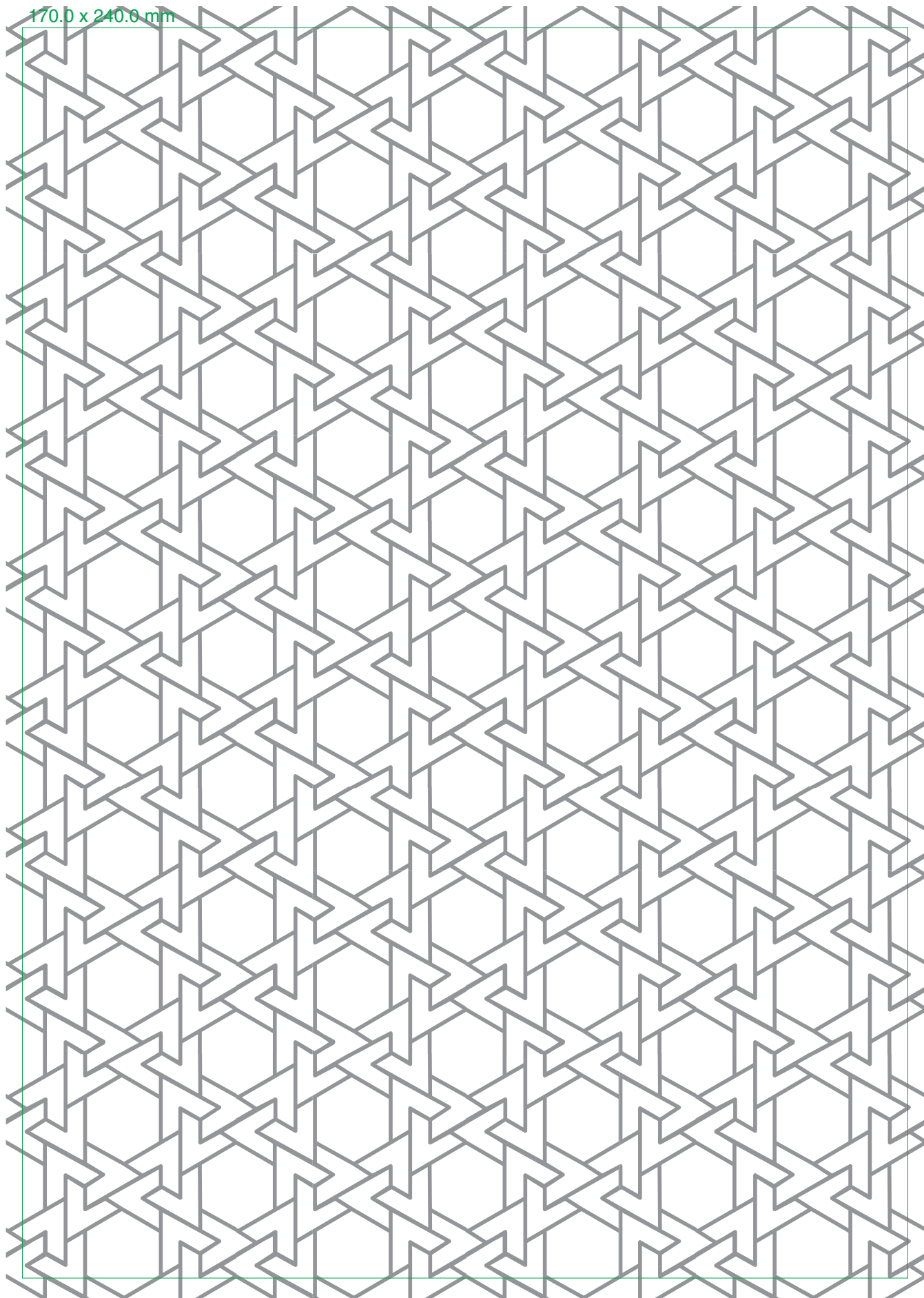
creatively juxtaposes the personal descriptions of the event itself written by such intellectual luminaries as Rashid Rida and Amir Shakib Arslan with their own lived experiences to reveal how their lives had been shaped (or upended) by the rapid changes taking place in the Arab world in the 1920s. Thompson's chapter is followed by Khaled El-Rouayheb's vividly written analysis of mystical love and aesthetics in the often-autobiographical work of the eighteenth century disciple of Sufi scholar 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, Ḥusayn al-Baytimānī. Despite the attempts to sanitize potential references to eroticism in such texts, El-Rouayheb demonstrates that such notions were strongly evident in Baytimānī's conception of mystical aesthetics, which held the beauty of the physical body to be an expression of the divine (the scholar himself faced controversy during his career for allegations of impropriety, which he vociferously denied). The next chapter features Suleiman Mourad's engaging analysis of how the caliphate has been regarded in various strands of Muslim intellectual thought since the Umayyad dynasty. Relying on a wide-ranging set of sources from across the region and over a dozen centuries, Mourad argues that despite the continuity of vocabulary used to depict the caliphate over time, concepts about the institution have varied depending on where and when it has been envisioned, and by whom. Nadia el-Cheikh contributes a chapter to this section on how the battle of Uhud helped to shape the identity of the early Muslim umma. Along with a compelling narrative of the events of the battle within their historical context, el-Cheikh's chapter demonstrates how the behaviors of various individuals and groups were harnessed for their didactic power in the battle's aftermath, serving as examples of both right and incorrect behavior and inadvertently opening avenues of discord for later writers who sought to re-historicize aspects of the battle to retroactively justify contemporary politics. The subsequent chapter by Mario Kozah on the Arabian oryx (the "unicorn") of Qatar in Syriac texts from the eighth and ninth century is a particularly fitting addition to the volume since it is tied to the important Syriac project that Kozah and Abu-Husayn undertook in the latter part of his career. Kozah's chapter looks at the *Qaṭrāyīth* expressions and usage from a narrow range of Christian texts in the era to try to gain a deeper understanding of the rich Syriac literary and cultural tradition that had flourished in Qatar before it was folded into the expanding cultural influence of Islam and the Arabic language. The oryx example is particularly apt for this volume, not merely for the interesting zoological history or because it has served an important symbolic role within Qatar's current national branding, but because of the etymological questions about the term and its referent in biblical scholarship, including from those working from Abu-Husayn and Kozah's home university of the (then) Syrian Protestant College in the nineteenth century. The next chapter by Abdul Rahman Chamseddine and Rana Siblini conducts an analysis both of the Qur'an as a literary text and of analysis of the holy book as such, arguing that the literary aspect of the text is ultimately affective—stirring emotions within the readers as they comprehend its contents. Next, Barbara

Kellner-Heinkele's chapter examines the history and writings of Mirza Haydar Dughlat and the riveting window he offers on the politics of the late Chagatay dynasty through his semi-autobiographical chronicle, *Tarikh-i-rashīdī*. Finally, Makram Rabah draws the volume to a close by connecting the life of our subject Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn with the turbulent politics of the 1970s and 1980s in the community he called home. Situated in Ras Beirut in the time of Abu-Husayn's college years, Rabah's chapter uses microhistory to critically assess the myths and popular memories of the legendary Israeli homeless spy, "the Featherman" Abu Rish.

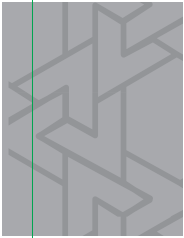
Even as we honor his achievements, this volume is ultimately as much a labor of love for our subject himself. Despite the remarkable scholarship that we have collected, the project has failed on one key point. We set out to honor Abed in his lifetime, and even tried to time its publication to coincide with the transition from his life as a distinguished scholar to his life as a distinguished retiree—but Abed's passing on June 23, 2022 robbed us of that possibility. It is some consolation that we were unable to keep the project a secret from him while he was alive because our contributors were so excited to share their ideas with him that they could not keep their mouths shut. Although he was characteristically reluctant to receive the praise that he is due, we are grateful that we could impose it upon him nonetheless.

It feels fitting to end this introduction by bringing it full circle. At the start of Dr. Salibi's speech all those years ago, he made a statement that feels fitting to repeat forty years later in this all-too-short retrospective celebration: "I quote to you the words of Hippocrates, 'Life is short; the art is long; timing is exact; experience treacherous; judgement difficult.' Yet the pursuit of knowledge continues." The evanescence of life is all too obvious, especially now, but we hope that Abed's art, the treachery of his experience, and the wisdom of his judgment will continue to inspire generations of scholars within the field for the years to come. This volume's contribution to knowledge is but a small gesture to that end, but we hope that it honors it all the same.

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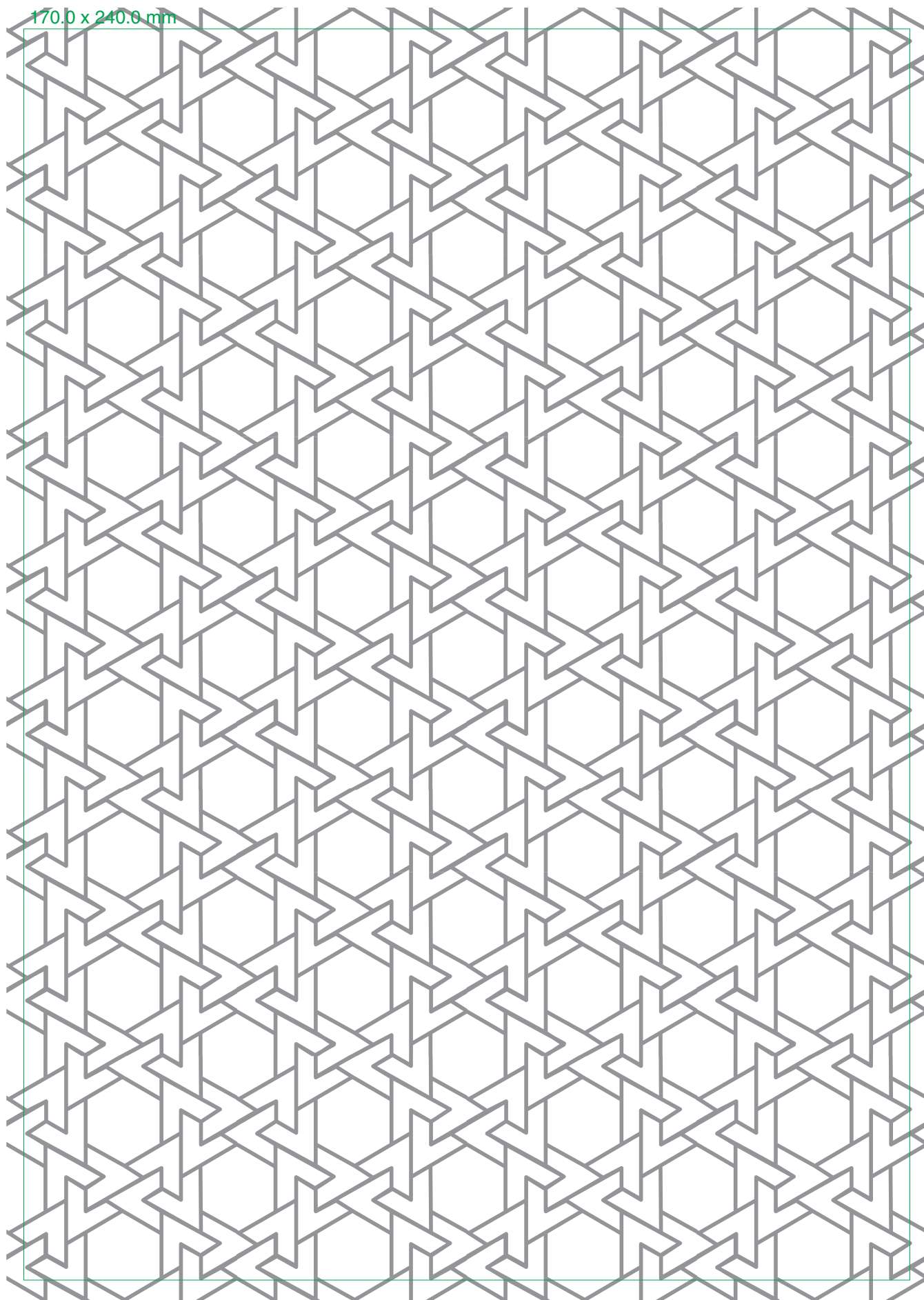


Section I

Turkey and the Ottoman Empire



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Ambiguous Politics in a Liminal State

Brief Career of Saruhanlı Reşad as Turkish Parliamentarian (1920–1926)

Hasan Kayalı

Ottomans born circa 1880 came of age against the backdrop of momentous historical contingencies of war and revolution that marked the early decades of the twentieth century. The agency of prominent men belonging to this cohort, magnified by autobiographical accounts and biographical studies, dominates historical narratives of the Middle East. The epoch of this generation has remained as the bastion of military and political history, even though growing attention to social and cultural history has duly addressed the shortcomings of great-men centric history writing and related historiographical paradigms. More recently, attention to the life and times of relatively more obscure or marginal figures has provided texture and correctives to standard historical accounts. The present study is a preliminary attempt at excavating the brief career of a provincial figure, Mehmed Reşad (1881–1926) from the western Anatolian town of Akhisar, whose adult life coincided with the decade and a half that marked the last phase of the metamorphosis of the Ottoman empire into national states.¹ It focuses on Reşad's unpredicted rise to the center stage of the newly constituted political order in

¹ For Reşad's brief biographical précis, see Fahri Çoker, ed., *Türk Parlamento Tarihi: Milli Mücadele ve T.B.M.M., I. Dönem, 1919–1923*, v. 3 (Ankara: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Vakfı Yayınları, 1995).

Ankara and examines the equivocal space he occupied therein.² Hence, the main concern of this essay will be a survey and analysis of Reşad's participation in the Grand National Assembly in the variegated political climate of Ankara in the early twenties.

An examination of Reşad as parliamentarian will be informed by a brief delineation of his path to Ankara, which will reveal the opportunity spaces that presented themselves to ordinary young provincial men in the tumultuous years of the end of empire in the Middle East. The first half of the twenties marked not only the unmaking of a time-honored political order in Turkey but also the making of new leaders during this very transformation. In retrospective accounts of these years marked by rapid and fundamental change and revolutionary outcomes, focus on certain protagonists and what they stood for has effaced from authorized narratives other figures and the undercurrents they personified.

Reşad was born in the town of Akhisar in 1881. His family patronymic, Saraçoğlu, suggests paternal artisanship or trade in harness gear, and more broadly, leather goods. His mother came from a family of religious functionaries from the same town. He attended school in Akhisar only through the *rüşdiye* (equivalent of middle school). Upon his father's death when Reşad was 16, he took a custodial job (*odacı*) in the local branch of Ziraat Bankası (Agricultural Bank). He worked for the bank for the next 11 years advancing in the ranks and re-assigned to branches outside of Akhisar, mostly in western Anatolia, but also including a two-month interval in the Syrian town of Safita in 1905. He received his first official title in the bank as assistant accounting secretary (*sandık muhasebe kitabeti refakatı*). In 1905, at the age of 24, he was promoted to accounting secretary, and in 1908 to assistant inspector (*müfettiş muavini*). The following year, he was appointed to Istanbul with a position in the central administration of the bank. In the Ottoman capital, he quickly transferred to the ministry of finance where he obtained a position in a department that dealt with provincial accounts (*Maliye Nezareti vilayat hesabat kalemi*). He received several promotions to become the assistant director of general accounts (*muhasebe-i umumiye müdür-i umumi muavini*) in 1917.

Reşad had not had a political career prior to his joining of the newly founded Grand National Assembly (*Büyük Millet Meclisi*) in 1920 at the age of 39. We know that he was an early member of the Akhisar Union and Progress "Club" from his low registration number

2 The internal documents of the government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and historical literature typically refer to "Reşad/Reşat Bey," without a patronymic or his "first" name, Mehmed. "Saruhanlı" Reşad refers to the province he represented in the Ankara parliament. Saruhan was a sancak (sub-province) of the Ottoman province of Aydın, the administrative center of which was İzmir. The administrative re-divisioning by the Ankara government constituted Saruhan (or Manisa, after Saruhan's main town) as a province in its own right, with Akhisar as one of its sub-divisions (*kaza*). Several years after Reşad's death, his wife took a last name for the family, as required by the 1934 Family Name Law (*Soyadı Kanunu*). This name, Kayalı, a patronymic of her side of the family, would be misattributed to Reşad in some references. Reşad's paternal forebears were known communally as Saraçoğlu, a moniker that did not carry over to official records. Reşad is the author's grandfather.

(026). During his last year as an Agricultural Bank inspector, he was commissioned to Bursa, where he possessed a letter of trust issued by the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress Akhisar district central committee (*Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti Akhisar Kaza Heyet-i Merkeziyesi*), dated May 20th, 1909.³ The letter was meant to enable him to enter all Union and Progress clubs and to share orders and information pertaining to all members. While the document would indicate that Reşad was an active member of the society, there is no evidence for links with the latter after he moved to Istanbul the following year.

The trajectory of Reşad's early professional career attests to the opportunities that became available to Turkish-speaking Muslim young men with modest education to advance in the ranks of Ottoman state institutions. His government service likely exempted him from enlistment for the war effort. His cohort would have performed their regular military service at the turn of the century but was well within the broad age group called to arms during the Great War. The successive posts he held in the ministry of finance suggest that Reşad did not enlist for service during the war. At the time of the Armistice of October 1918, he was still employed in the ministry. In foreign-occupied Istanbul, his government career must have looked sufficiently precarious that he decided to take up trade in partnership with his wife's brother Kayalızade Ahmed, who owned land in Akhisar. In a letter to Ahmed, dated January 17th, 1919, he wrote that he was now determined to leave his government job. Reşad informed Ahmed that two Jewish acquaintances (Salomon Efendi in Istanbul and Abram Efendi in Bandırma) were ready to assist until his resignation in case Ahmed had "ready-to-be-shipped" produce (figs and raisins). He submitted his resignation in February 1919. According to his wife, he was encouraged in this decision by his Armenian superior, Serope Nores Berberyan Efendi, who was disenchanted with his job at the ministry despite his high position.⁴

Reşad's calling in trade was frustrated by May 1919 when the Greek army began its invasion of western Anatolia. The same month he closed his office of eight weeks in Sirkeci, Istanbul, and went to Akhisar to participate in the defense effort, possibly motivated in this decision by a heightened awareness of the stranglehold that the Allied powers imposed on the capital. He played an active role in the ranks of the resistance forces and presided over the Akhisar branch of the committee organized for the defense of rights and against occupation and annexation (*Redd-i İşgal, Redd-i İlhak ve Müdafaa-ı Hukuk Cemiyeti*). In July 1919, he participated in the Balıkesir Congress just to the north of Akhisar, one of the first regional meetings aimed at coordinating resistance in Anatolia against the occupation. Greek troops arrived in the Akhisar region within three weeks of their landing in İzmir. As the leader of the Akhisar popular forces (*Kuva-yı Milliye Reisi*),

3 The letter was included in the small batch of papers that remained to his family.

4 Ali Çankaya, *Yeni Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler* (Ankara: Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1968), v. 3, 277–78.

Reşad's major task was the coordination of the forces necessary for the town's defense and the distribution of materiel and supplies needed for the upkeep of the gathered men. The regional resistance kept the Greek army at bay for close to a year in a series of skirmishes, in which Reşad participated and suffered a wound in one such confrontation in Papazlı near Akhisar.

During the few months that followed the Greek landing in İzmir, Anatolian nodes of resistance organized as defense of rights groups unified under joint direction. The congress in Sivas in September 1919 established the umbrella organization Anatolia and Rumelia Defense of Rights (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-ı Hukuk Cemiyeti* [ARMHC]) and a representative assembly headquartered in Ankara by the end of 1919 under Mustafa Kemal's presidency. Local militias continued the resistance against occupation led by men like Reşad in Akhisar. The course of events in 1920 thrust these groups and their leaders into political prominence. In March 1920, a raid by the Allied occupation forces on the Ottoman parliament in Istanbul set in motion the process of re-constituting it in Ankara as the Grand National Assembly. While the ARMHC's Representative Committee summoned the members of the Istanbul parliament to Ankara, only a small number were able or willing to go. The Committee tasked local defense of rights groups to oversee elections for provincial deputies to fill the seats. Saruhan sent Reşad as one of its five allotted deputies after one of the original winners declined to take his seat, and Reşad won in the re-election.⁵

The certificate documenting Reşad's election identifies him as "Mehmed Reşad," "son of Saraç Mustafa," "merchant resigned from the post of assistant general director of the office of accounting at the Ministry of Finance," and "president of Akhisar Defense of Rights [Society]." Istanbul addresses occur both for his business in the Sirkeci district (Celal Bey Han) and home in the Aksaray district (Cami Sokak). The certificate indicates his arrival date in Ankara as June 7, 1920, just over six weeks after the Grand National Assembly opened on April 23. Three years later, he was elected to the second term of the assembly that convened in July 1923 and served until his death in February 1926 at the age of 45.

Reşad held high-profile positions during his tenure as deputy. The parliamentary bloc of the Anatolia and Rumelia Defense of Rights Group (*Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-ı Hukuk Grubu*) [ARMHG], formed to isolate the crystallizing opposition in the assembly, elected Reşad in January 1923 to the presidency of its Administrative Council. Mustafa Kemal formalized this group as Turkey's first political party, the People's Party (*Halk Fırkası*), and later re-christened it as the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) (RPP). RPP dominated the parliament and state institutions in general until

5 Mahmut Goloğlu, *Üçüncü Meşrutiyet 1920* (Ankara: Başnur, 1970), 337. Reşad replaced İsmail Hakkı.

1950.⁶ Reşad further served as acting minister of public works (*nafla vekil vekili*) in 1922. His two-month tenure at this post straddled the cabinets headed by Fevzi [Çakmak] and Rauf [Orbay].⁷ The assembly, recognizing Reşad's practical experience in financial affairs, elected him to the budget committee (*Muvazene-i Maliye Encümeni*), the committee on the assembly accounts (*Tedkik-i Hesabat Encümeni*), and yet another committee that concerned itself with finance legislation (*Kavanin-i Maliye Encümeni*).⁸

During this first term of the GNA, or "First Assembly," Reşad presided over the budget committee for two years during the second and third annual sessions. In this capacity, he also served on the extraordinary war committee (*Harp Encümeni*), the equivalent of a security council. The establishment of the war committee in 1921 met with suspicion on the floor of the assembly as a stratagem for Mustafa Kemal to enhance his and the military's powers. It was constituted without a formal vote. Presided by Mustafa Kemal, the committee's six other members included Field Marshall Fevzi [Çakmak], prime minister and former and future chief of the general staff; Colonel Rauf [Orbay], former minister of the navy and prime minister in 1922; and General Kazım [Özalp], future minister of defense and president of the assembly.⁹

According to Frederick W. Frey's ranking of the relative importance of the various political posts in the 1920–1923 period, the president of the administrative council of the ARMHG ranked second to the president of the Grand National Assembly along with the chief of the general staff and the chairman of council of ministers ("prime minister").¹⁰ As president of the ARMHG administrative council, Reşad succeeded Mustafa Kemal (May 1921 to July 1922), who was also president of the assembly, and Ali Fuad Cebesoy (July 1922–January 1923), who had been appointed commander of popular forces at the Sivas Congress earlier and had served as the Ankara government's ambassador to the Soviet Union.¹¹

Reşad's activities in the budget committee not only constituted his major commitment but also shaped his political persona. The committee reviewed all expenses advanced by

6 RPP's later incarnations lived on to our day as governing party, in coalition governments or as the major opposition party.

7 Ministers individually elected by the assembly constituted the council of ministers (*vekiller heyeti*), loosely referred to here as "cabinet," which ordinarily suggests appointment by the chief executive.

8 *T.B.M.M. Albüm: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisinin 25nci Yıl Dönümünü Anış* (Ankara: T.B.M.M. Basımevi, 1945), 159–60, 176–79, 196–97.

9 *Ibid.*, 211.

10 Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1965), 228. The high level of prestige associated with the presidency of the ARMHG administrative council probably derives more from the fact that Mustafa Kemal held this position longer than anyone else than the actual responsibilities and weight it carried. The chairmanship of a permanent assembly committee ranked 14th in Frey's study. The prestige attached to the Minister of Public Works equals that of a permanent committee chairman.

11 *Albüm*, 244.

the council of ministers and frequently fell in contention with the latter. The first such crisis occurred in May 1921, when Prime Minister Fevzi Pasha proposed an expenditure budget of 108 million liras, far in excess of the expected revenues of 58 million liras.¹² The committee refused to accept the proposal and resigned in toto. Even though the resignation was rejected by the assembly, the ministers considered it as an expression of no-confidence and resigned in their turn. A new cabinet headed by Fevzi took measures to prevent a similar impasse and considerably increased the size of the budget committee by commissioning to it members from the other GNA committees. The ostensible purpose was to ensure a more thorough study of the budget, while the intended effect was to water down the influence of the experts on the committee.

Immediately after this imbroglio, Reşad took leave from the assembly to go to Gördes near Akhisar to help with the relief efforts of the Red Crescent (*Hilal-i Ahmer*) during the summer. He returned to the budget committee as its chairman. In December 1921, the assembly was still discussing the 1921 budget, and the new structure of the committee was conducive to further delays.¹³ Reşad raised his voice against various proposals on grounds of the large deficits the government would be running. He advocated the reduction of the postal administration's allotment.¹⁴ In January 1922, he resisted the council's proposal to increase the salaries of all state employees in the three southern provinces delivered from French occupation.¹⁵ With the fiscal year coming to an end and the 1921 budget still under discussion, Reşad decided to resign in February but was dissuaded by his associates.

At the root of the serious difficulties in balancing the budget lay again the huge expenses required for the war effort. Reşad criticized mismanagement in military affairs. Possibly provoked by his disagreements with the Fevzi cabinet over budgetary issues, he grew increasingly more critical of the prime minister, who simultaneously held the post of the minister of national defense. In December 1921, Reşad requested an explanation from the minister regarding the draft procedures of the army.¹⁶ Two weeks later, on the occasion of Fevzi's report in a closed session on the military situation since the Sakarya battle (August 23–September 13), Reşad questioned the accuracy of the statistics that Fevzi had presented.¹⁷ In another closed session in February 1921 he delivered his longest remarks on any issue, during the course of which he said:

12 *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Zabıt Ceridesi* (Proceedings of the Turkish Grand National Assembly), henceforth "ZC," May 16, 1921.

13 ZC, November 28, 1921.

14 ZC, December 24, 1921.

15 ZC, January 12, 1922.

16 ZC, December 1, 1921.

17 *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Gizli Celse Zabıtları* (Closed Session Proceedings of the Turkish Grand National Assembly), henceforth "GCZ," December 14, 1921.

The expenditures for [the ministry of] national defense constitute the largest portion of our expense budget.... The 44 million lira allocated to the military in 1921 amounts to 57.12% of our total expenditures.

Our general staff should establish an orderly system of accounts. This important task pertaining to the rights of the nation has not been addressed by anyone.

[The spending of the ministry of national defense] is one of the factors that have dealt a blow to our financial prestige The elements of inhuman waste, particularly in the rear services, must be displayed without forbearance.

We find ourselves in a ridiculous situation in the eyes of the world. It is absurd to approve the budget on the last day of the budget year.

National funds (*tekalif-i milliye*) have been misused and wasted. The budget committee brought this to the attention of the assembly (*heyet-i ali*), but unfortunately our reports were never read here.¹⁸

Reşad's objections to the army's share of the budget and its management of its finances are likely to have emboldened critics of Mustafa Kemal's conduct of political and military affairs of the government. In *Nutuk* (*Speech*), the account of the independence war that Mustafa Kemal crafted and read in front of the 1927 RPP Congress, he refers to a "movement directed against the army" when narrating the events of 1922. He discusses this tendency in the context of the growing opposition, which came to be referred to as the "Second Group," in contradistinction to the "Defense of Rights Group," which had coalesced around Mustafa Kemal in the assembly.¹⁹ In his speech, Mustafa Kemal identifies Rauf as spearheading the formation of the Second Group in the months following Rauf's January 1922 resignation from his position as minister of public works in the Fevzi Pasha government. Kemal criticizes Rauf and his associates as lacking confidence in the capabilities of the army. In his rendering, they demanded either an immediate attack against the Greek forces to advance the gains from the Sakarya Battle and seal the victory or resorting to political means to "produce results."²⁰

In March 1922, the news of foreign minister Yusuf Kemal's visit to the Sultan, which Kemal and Fevzi had tried to keep a secret, triggered a crisis in Ankara. In deliberations during a vote of confidence on March 3, Mustafa Kemal defended Fevzi. Most of the deputies were on the side of Mustafa Kemal Pasha at this time, but the Fevzi Pasha

¹⁸ GCZ, February 16, 1922.

¹⁹ On the Second Group, see Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet: İkinci Grup* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1994).

²⁰ Gazi Mustafa Kemal, *Nutuk* (Istanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1938), first published 1927, 452–53.

government could receive the vote of confidence with difficulty.²¹ The assembly deliberated in May on the extension of Mustafa Kemal's duties as commander-in-chief. As Mustafa Kemal relates in *Nutuk*, Selahaddin, a deputy from Mersin, remarked that the commander-in-chief posed an obstacle in the examination of the army's finances and the costs of maintaining the army.²² Mustafa Kemal countered that he does not favor the notion that the existence and strength of the army should correspond to readily available financial resources.

Reşad's remarks critical of army leadership must have resonated with the increasingly more vocal opponents of Mustafa Kemal. There is no evidence, however, that Reşad had links with or even sympathies toward these opponents who would form the Second Group. While the emergent opposition had Mustafa Kemal as its target, Reşad directed his criticism to Fevzi. The budget committee rejected on June 12 the proposed increase in the allotment of the gendarme forces and prevailed on the floor.²³ During the following week, Reşad's motion to reject proposed legislation permitting the free cutting of wood in state forests was defeated,²⁴ as did his motion to allocate more of the assembly's time in session to the discussion of the budget.²⁵ Finally, Reşad defended in vain his committee's opposition to the government's recommendation to increase the salary of the director general of the postal administration.²⁶

Thus, during the spring of 1922, Reşad participated in the assembly actively, and at times controversially, in his capacity as the president of the budget committee and the related role in the war committee. The assembly deliberated in a closed session on June 18 on the course of action to be taken in view of Britain's decision to send a delegation to investigate the situation of the minorities in Anatolia. While some advocated a formal protest, Reşad maintained that such would only constitute an expression of ineptitude and added, "why do we maintain this army? As a decoration? We increased its resources from 30 million to 60 million Why can the army not gain the capacity for attack and why do millions go to waste each year? I'm against this [protest]. We should resort to the army."²⁷ The next day, he submitted his resignation as the head of the budget committee.²⁸

An undated letter among Reşad's papers that is addressed to Mustafa Kemal criticizes Fevzi's handling of the military affairs. Another letter, dated June 24, 1922, is a query addressed to the chief of the general staff and the ministers of finance and national

21 Mahmut Goloğlu, *Cumhuriyet'e Doğru 1921–1922* (Ankara: Başınur, 1971), 227–31.

22 Kemal, *Nutuk*, 471–72.

23 ZC, June 12, 1922.

24 ZC, June 17, 1922.

25 GCZ, June 18, 1922.

26 ZC, June 19, 1922.

27 GCZ, June 18, 1922.

28 ZC, June 21, 1922.

defense: "How long will this state of inaction on the front last? If we are strong enough to attack why the hesitation in this favorable season? If we are not strong enough, what are we lacking? How are we to remedy these deficiencies?" These remarks echoed and converged with the Second Group's open criticism. Reşad, however, remained as a key player in ARMHG, the Defense of Rights Group. While Reşad's resilience seems surprising, Mustafa Kemal's strident tone against the Second Group in his famous speech was ostensibly an artifact of retrospection construed after Rauf and like-minded deputies would become more clearly delineated as the opposition block in subsequent months and years.

On June 25th, 1922, Reşad was granted three months of leave, for which he must have petitioned after the developments leading to his resignation from the budget committee. He did not, however, use the leave, possibly on Mustafa Kemal's suggestion. From his diary we know that he met with Mustafa Kemal on June 29 in the latter's residence. (It is not clear whether this was a larger meeting or an individual consultation.) The discussion pertained to the revitalization of the ARMHG, which had surfaced in May 1921 and was challenged now by the Second Group. Reşad harped again on the Fevzi government's incompetence and told the Pasha that the Defense of Rights Group should not remain as a mere base of support for the council of ministers.

According to the Fundamental Law passed in 1921, the president of the assembly (Mustafa Kemal) nominated candidates for ministerial posts and the deputies voted on these candidates. The ministers chosen thus elected a chairman from among their number. The Fevzi cabinet had been elected in this manner immediately following the approval of the Fundamental Law. In November of the same year, renewed debates started on the procedure to elect ministers. The assembly voted on July 8, 1922, to approve the abrogation of the candidate system and the direct election of the prime minister as well as the individual ministers by the assembly, undermining Mustafa Kemal's close control over the ministers. The Fevzi government resigned to allow the election of ministers under the new law. Two days later, a majority voted in Rauf as chairman of the council of executive ministers (*icra vekilleri heyeti reisi*), or prime minister.

In the Fevzi Pasha government, Dr. Adnan [Adivar] Bey, minister of health, also held the portfolio of the ministry of public works, standing in for Piriñçizade Feyzi, who was on leave. Adnan resigned with the rest of the ministers in the Fevzi cabinet, but Feyzi, the absent titular incumbent, did not immediately resign. The assembly elected Reşad as Adnan's replacement in acting capacity for Feyzi. This was a curious choice, because Reşad did not have obvious credentials for public works. It was also procedurally extraordinary, because only a full member of the council of ministers could serve in acting capacity for another minister. When Piriñçizade Feyzi submitted his resignation belatedly in August, Reşad briefly continued to perform the duties of the minister of public works until a fresh vote was held for the ministry on September 9. Reşad stood for election but lost to Feyzi, who returned to his previous post in the new Rauf cabinet.

Following Ankara's decisive military victory against the Greek occupying forces at the end of August 1922, warfare came to an end. The problem of administering the abandoned properties of the departing Greek population emerged as a central question in Akhisar. Returning from a trip to his hometown toward the end of the year as the peace talks commenced at Lausanne, Reşad brought to the assembly floor alleged corruption and abuse in the matters pertaining to the abandoned properties. He held the government responsible for the disorders and indicated that there was no fear of the government anywhere as it was considered totally ineffective.²⁹ He claimed that even an aide of the current minister of defense Kazım [Özalp] had illegally occupied a house in İzmir. Reşad's voice critical of the government continued to reverberate in the assembly during Rauf's tenure as prime minister.

At the beginning of 1923, fractures within the assembly multiplied and widened. In its biannual elections, the ARMHG elected Reşad as president of its administrative council (*idare heyeti*). The choice likely fell on Reşad as a middle-of-the-road deputy, as Mustafa Kemal resolved to transform the ARMHG into a disciplined party. In the late winter and early spring of 1923, Kemal left for visits to Anatolian provinces in order to appraise and shape the public opinion. The Lausanne talks reverberated in the assembly and occasioned heated debates, as Reşad remained in charge of the group in Ankara. An increasingly more strident cluster of deputies argued that the delegates representing the GNA at the conference ignored the charge of the council of ministers. Reşad emerged as a compromiser during the deliberations. He formulated motions on such other matters of general concern as the regulation of leaves of absence³⁰ and legislation pertaining to the election of deputies.³¹ Mustafa Kemal, while attempting to consolidate ARMHG as a cohesive group, also explored calling new elections to block the growth of the Second Group opposition. On March 31, he met with the council of ministers to deliberate on early elections before he consulted with the group. In *Nutuk*, he states that some deputies found his proposal for new elections untimely. There is no evidence on Reşad's personal opinion on the renewal of the elections, which the assembly approved on April 16 and broke up.

Before the 1923 elections Reşad wrote a letter to a friend to ascertain the feeling of the electorate about his candidacy for the Second Assembly. He mentioned that although he had a letter in his support from the "Group," he did not want to use it. He returned to the GNA in August 1923 as the only deputy representing Saruhan in both terms. He again served on the budget committee (as member until November 1923 and chairman through March 1924). The *Album* published by the GNA in 1945 in commemoration of

²⁹ GCZ, November 29, 1922.

³⁰ ZC, April 5, 1923.

³¹ ZC, April 3, 1923.

the twenty-fifth anniversary of the GNA provides detailed information about committee membership only about the First Assembly. Since not all committee activity is reflected in the assembly proceedings, it is likely that Reşad continued to serve on other committees pertaining to financial affairs. He joined a new committee constituted for the resettlement of the Muslim immigrants arriving from Greece in the Greek-Turkish population exchange (*Mübadele, İmar ve İskan Encümeni*). According to Frey, during the Second Assembly the budget committee was clearly the most important committee in the assembly, only surpassed by the national defense committee during the First Assembly.³² In his papers, Reşad notes that he was chosen as the GNA's representative to the Agricultural Bank administrative board on April 9, 1924. In fact, his name does not appear as one of the six candidates nominated for the position on this day in the assembly. There is correspondence, though, that was addressed to him as member of the bank's administrative board.³³

Within a month after the Second Assembly convened, the People's Party was founded under Mustafa Kemal's chairmanship as the new incarnation of the ARMHG. After the group's re-constitution, Reşad no longer had a position in its administrative council, which he had presided over briefly at the end of the previous term. He remained active in the work of the Second Assembly, often as a critical voice. In September 1923, he campaigned for the institution of the new ministry for the re-settlement of immigrants (*İmar ve İskan Vekaleti*).³⁴ Seeking further empowerment of the assembly vis-à-vis the council of ministers, he advocated the election of the members of the court of public accounts (*Divan-ı Muhasebat*) by the assembly and not the council.³⁵ In February 1924, he opposed the government proposal to allocate funds for the reconstruction of the assembly building.³⁶ Later the same month, Reşad's routine differences with the government appeared to take an ideological bent in a controversy with Yakup Kadri [Karaosmanoğlu], famed novelist, journalist, politician, diplomat, deputy in the new assembly, and close dining companion of Mustafa Kemal.

Reşad took the floor in the assembly on February 9, 1924, to voice regret about a newspaper article that Yakup Kadri published in the *Akşam* of three days earlier, which contended that the parliamentary budget committee was equivocating between the republic and the sultanate by allocating budgetary funds to the caliph and his family and maintaining their old titles.³⁷ Reşad rejected the charge in his address indicating that his committee only vetted budget items in the form that the government proposed. He

32 Frey, *Turkish Political Elite*, 446.

33 Also mentioned in a newspaper article authored by Refik Şevket (clipping from unidentified paper).

34 ZC, September 13, 1923.

35 ZC, November 24, 1923.

36 ZC, February 2, 1924.

37 ZC, February 9, 1924.

pointedly added, “Your colleagues in the budget committee are not the instruments of any power or office. It may be possible to write a newspaper article as a favor, but you cannot make a budget as a favor.” Thus, for the first time, Reşad was taking a position antagonistic to Mustafa Kemal, who seemed at this juncture to put extra-assembly pressure on the floor through his renowned associate. Reşad’s suggestion was that an opportunistic distortion of the professional authority of the budget committee was at play. His response must have made an imprint on Yakup Kadri, who in his memoirs recalled Reşad’s address as follows:

The Chairman of the Budget Committee stood up shaking in rage and said all kinds of things about me. According to him, I was being cruel (*zebunkeş*) in writing this and I had written it with an “order” from above.... These words caused great commotion against me. I could defend myself with difficulty on the platform which was being guided by my likeminded friends (*fikir arkadaşlarım*). I could see turbaned heads stretching to me in frenzy.³⁸

Retrospective association of critical voices with diehard religious reaction is a trope in republican history often deployed to discredit dissent. The questions raised about the caliphate’s status in the budget, though, belonged to the requisite groundwork for its abolition on March 3. Debate on a new constitution was to occupy the assembly next.

A general discussion on the constitution took place on March 9, 1924.³⁹ Article 25 pertaining to the prerogative to call new elections emerged as one of the more controversial points in the draft text: “While it is in the authority of the assembly to call for new elections, the president of the Republic is also authorized to take action in this direction after consulting the government and explaining his rationale to the assembly and the nation.” Several deputies spoke against this clause on the grounds that it conferred excessive powers to the president and undermined the sovereignty of the assembly. In the clause-by-clause ratification of the constitution, Article 25 came up for deliberation on March 23rd. Yunus Nadi, the chairman of the constitution committee, perceived the strong opposition to the clause and attempted to retract it for re-examination, which gave rise to a controversy over procedure.⁴⁰ In the end, Fethi, the current assembly president, proceeded with the ratification. Reşad was the first speaker to take the floor and speak against the clause.

Reşad’s argument had two aspects. First, he asserted that the public mistrusted the accumulation of powers in one individual. He briefed the assembly of his recent trip to

³⁸ Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Politikada 45 Yıl* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1968), 49.

³⁹ ZC, March 9, 1924.

⁴⁰ ZC, March 22, 1924.

his electoral district and of his contacts with the public in İzmir, Manisa, and Akhisar: "The people," he said, "expect populism (*halkçılık*); they expect work; they expect the truth. I assure you that those who seek personal rule are suspect in the eyes of the people." Second, he invoked Mustafa Kemal's earlier remarks supporting the sovereignty of the assembly. Alluding to assembly deliberations on March 9, he said: "The remarks of our colleagues who spoke against this clause earlier are appreciated by the people. However, they do not find these remarks more convincing than some maxims that I will proceed to read. These maxims have been pronounced by Gazi Pasha... and have been memorized like the text of the Quran.... His Excellency Gazi Pasha can rest assured that, thanks to his advice and instruction, the nation will not hand over even a tiny portion of its sovereignty to any person or office." He proceeded to quote remarks that Mustafa Kemal had pronounced at different times and on separate occasions starting with his words in Akhisar during a recent trip: "The foundations of [this new] state consist of complete independence and unconditional national sovereignty." After a recitation of other similar remarks, Reşad said that he wanted to know whether these maxims had been jettisoned.

While relating his impressions from the Akhisar area, Reşad said that the government could investigate his contacts ("*Temaslarımı hükümet tahkik edebilir*"). The remark aroused the suspicion of İsmet [İnönü] Pasha, prime minister since the declaration of the Republic on October 23, 1923:

İsmet: I wanted to ask a question. You mentioned a situation that the government can investigate. I want to know whether a meeting had been held.

Reşad: No, just contacts.

İsmet: Has it been decided to take action, should the decision of the assembly prove to be unwelcome?

Reşad: No, sir.

....

İsmet: The matter should be clarified. We are confronting the world. What am I going to investigate?

Reşad: I will summarize the feelings, desires, and my personal opinion as follows. My remarks would be rather long. Yet some [deputies] are getting sensitive and perturbed. My unqualified opinion is that no one would grant the right to dissolve [the assembly] even if God became president and the archangels his ministers (*Allah reisicumhur olsa...melaik-i kiram heyet-i vekile olsa*).

Consistent with extra-parliamentary maneuvers to promote agendas favored by the top political leadership, Yunus Nadi, prominent journalist and, like Yakup Kadri, a member of Mustafa Kemal's personal circles, defended the draft clause in the *Yenigün* of March 24.⁴¹ He argued that it was unacceptable to consider the assembly as an unremovable power, and those opposing the article only dealt a blow at the nation's sovereignty. "According to their view," he concluded cryptically, "there is an assembly but there is no nation." On the same day, nevertheless, the assembly voted to reject the draft Article 25.⁴²

By the time the assembly went into recess in late April 1924, Reşad had assumed an unmistakably critical stance of government agencies and of the crucial parliamentary initiatives to enhance Mustafa Kemal's powers. On March 30, his motion to amend Article 26 aimed at extending the assembly's powers to regulate the financial affairs of the state passed on the floor.⁴³ Reşad repeatedly expressed during the discussions on the yearly budgets criticism of individual departments. Most notably, on April 7th, he cast a negative vote to the motion seeking to invest the president with the position of the commander-in-chief.⁴⁴

The second annual session of the Second Assembly convened in November 1924. During the fourteen months (with only ten months in regular session) between this date and February 1926, when Reşad died, he maintained a relatively low profile in the assembly proceedings. We do not see his name in voting records or the proceedings for stretches of several weeks. In February 1925, an incident in the assembly, the infamous clash of arms between Ali [Çetinkaya] and Halit Pasha, which occurred outside the assembly hall interrupting a session in progress and would within days claim the latter's life, provoked Reşad to a broadside.⁴⁵ Upon reconvening, Reşad spoke up and demanded a stricter application of the internal regulations pertaining to possession of arms within the assembly. The next day, he took the floor again and said: "Gentlemen, for some time now one can perceive a reign of terror (*derebeylik havası*) in this assembly.⁴⁶ I know and feel that a lot of colleagues cannot express their opinion." He demanded that strict action be taken against possessing arms in the assembly. The remarks stirred the floor and several deputies denounced Reşad's speech. Although Yakup Kadri demanded that he take back his words ("otherwise either he gets out of here or we do"), assembly president Kazım was anxious to defuse the tension.

The charged atmosphere in Ankara at the beginning of 1925 coincided with the consolidation of a second political party, the Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver*

41 *Yenigün*, March 24, 1924.

42 ZC, March 24, 1924.

43 ZC, March 30, 1924.

44 ZC, April 7, 1924. 114 of the 156 votes were cast in favor of the proposal.

45 ZC, February 9, 1925.

46 ZC, February 10, 1925.

Cumhuriyet Fırkası [PRP]), founded in November 1924 by high-profile defectors from RPP including Rauf, Dr. Adnan, and Kazım Karabekir, the famed general second to Mustafa Kemal in military prestige. Contestation about a by-election in December, which was won by an independent candidate supported by the new party, was in the backdrop of the February duel in the assembly building between Ali, another close companion of Mustafa Kemal, and Halit, a PRP sympathizer. While Reşad never became a member of the PRP, his stance in parliamentary proceedings frequently converged with that of the Progressives. The relatively low profile he kept in his last year of service in the assembly may be related to Mustafa Kemal's clampdown on the Progressives and closure of PRP by June 1925, availing of emergency measures promulgated during the Şeyh Said Revolt in Kurdish-majority eastern Anatolia.

Reşad directed his activities to matters outside of Ankara during the 1924–1925 parliamentary session and the assembly's recess from April to November. In September 1924, he founded in Akhisar the first provincial bank of the Republic, the Akhisar Tobacco Growers' Bank (*Akhisar Tütünçüler Bankası*), countrywide second to *İş Bankası*, which had been established under Mustafa Kemal's patronage in Ankara the same month.⁴⁷ The abolition of the foreign tobacco monopoly and the departure of the Greek cultivators in accordance with the population exchange had introduced new opportunities and needs for farmers and merchants in western Anatolia. In tandem with the bank, Reşad was instrumental in the formation of an association of tobacco farmers "to reinforce mutual support and the interests and rights of tobacco farmers."⁴⁸ The author of an article published in the Izmir paper *Yanık Yurt* said about the Bank:

[Deputy Reşad Bey's work] Akhisar Tütünçüler Bankası brought the entire district to life and saved the peasants (*köylüyü*) from the hands of profiteers.... The bank has well-regulated current accounts (*hesab-ı cari*) in which almost all Akhisar merchants participate. Yet, the bank's greatest service is to accustom the farmers to banking procedures.... I replenished faith in the fact that the Turkish farmer, whose abilities had been mistrusted until now, will adopt the most modern developments if they have sincere guides.... The bank defers the dues of the tobacco debtors until the time when they sell their tobacco, and as such takes the most effective measures to prevent the farmer from having to sell his produce for a very low price.⁴⁹

Reşad died on February 20, 1926, in Paris at the age of 45 of peritonitis caused by appendicitis. He had traveled to Paris on leave from the GNA for the personal business of

47 Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Milli Kurtuluş Tarihi 1838'den 1995'e* (İstanbul: İstanbul Matbaası, 1974), v. 3, 180.

48 *Akhisar Tütünçüler Bankası Nizamnamesi* (1924).

49 *Yanık Yurt*, September 27, 1925.

completing the purchase transaction of the farm and building which had served as the Jewish Agricultural school. Set up by the Jewish Colonization Association, the site had been operational until World War I. Reşad bought (he had completed the transaction at the time of his death) the abandoned property in partnership with his wife's brother Kayalızade Ahmed and the latter's son-in-law. Reşad's body was brought to Turkey by the government and transferred to Akhisar in March. The assembly passed a special law on February 24, 1926, to assign a stipend to his widow, two daughters, and son (*Merhum Saruhan Mebusu Reşad Bey'in Ailesine Hidemat-ı Vataniye Tertibinden Maaş Tahsisi Hakkında Kanun*).⁵⁰ When Reşad's death was first announced in the assembly on February 22, Mahmud Celal [Bayar], fellow Saruhan deputy, minister of the economy in the First Assembly, and future president of Turkey (1950–1960), eulogized him with the following words: "This cherished and meritorious colleague of ours who never gave up his hopes on this country's future to discharge duties in the Grand National Assembly, on various committees, and the ministry of public works according to his own mentality, yet with virtue (*"kendi zihniyetine göre fakat çok faziletli vazifeler"*)."⁵¹ An examination of the nature of Reşad's participation in the political process of the early twenties as a political maverick affirms Celal's characterization.

Reşad was a self-made man of modest origins and education. Unlike the preeminent personae of his generation, he had not held positions of military or political leadership on the local, provincial, or imperial levels until the very eve of the decade of the 1920s. The professional experience that he acquired in the Agricultural Bank starting from the bottom rungs of the bank's hierarchy and his lateral career move to the bureaucracy of the ministry of finance allowed him to travel in the country and cast aside his small-town provincialism. One can conjecture that the privileging of Muslim elements in both the economy and the bureaucracy by the Committee of Union and Progress, which predominated Ottoman politics after 1908, opened doors to men like Reşad for social, political, and economic advancement. The traumatic impact of the ten-year war from 1912 to 1922 on the non-Muslim population in the broader Aegean region, as well as concomitant and subsequent population movements, created unforeseen opportunity spaces in agriculturally rich districts like Akhisar. Alongside his rapid advance in public office, Reşad harbored ambitions in trade and agriculture. He assumed in Akhisar the local leadership of the resistance to Greek occupation, which catapulted him to the constituent cadres of the new Turkey in Ankara as a parliamentarian representing his district and province.

Reşad's political persona in the GNA does not conform to the black-and-white categories subsequent nationalist narratives and historical scholarship have constructed.

⁵⁰ ZC, February 24, 1926

⁵¹ ZC, February 22, 1926.

This is in part due to his early death at the juncture of intense political struggles and maneuvers of the mid-twenties. His political behavior was idiosyncratic, as Celal implied in the tribute to his colleague; yet Reşad was not an outlier altogether. The early years of the GNA witnessed a collective search in the midst of a diversity of political outlooks, which deterministic narratives of the period tend to flatten and obscure. This preliminary glimpse at the career of Mehmed Reşad exemplifies the complexities of politics amidst the contingencies of a singular period of transformation in the history of the Middle East.

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“A Rose Among the Thorns” or a Thorn in the Side?

Ottoman Relations with the Maronite Church (1840–1919)

Selim Deringil

By legal precedent established by Islamic and Ottoman law, the holders of high ecclesiastical offices in the Ottoman Empire were required to obtain a *berat* (official license) from the sultan. The *berat* also entitled the holder to state protection and support in such matters as the security of church property, enforcement of church rulings, and civic issues concerning each community.¹

The Maronite Church had always been in an exceptional position vis-à-vis the Ottoman state in that the Maronite patriarchs had never been obliged to obtain a *berat*. When all of the other Eastern Christian churches had submitted to Ottoman rule after the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, the Maronite Church had been pretty much ignored as a relatively insignificant obscure sect in the remote Lebanese mountains. After the other Eastern Christian churches had accepted Ottoman rule, but preserved their independence from Rome, “only one tiny Eastern Christian communion in the mountains of Lebanon held a different perspective” and remained very adamantly loyal to the Vatican. In 1510, Pope Leo X, in a papal bull addressed to the Maronite Patriarch Peter of Hadath, declared that they were the “rose among the thorns,” planted among infidels, schismatics, and heretics.²

During the centuries of Ma'an and Shihab rule in the geography that would become Lebanon, the Maronite Church had very little direct contact with Ottoman power until

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- 1 Mübahat Kütükoğlu, “Berat,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* online: “A *berat* is a document ...granting the right to an appointment to an official post, the right to an income from a given source, the right to use something, [the granting of] a privilege or exemption, bearing the sultan's monogram (*tuğra*) and valid only for the time of the reign of the sultan embodied in the *tuğra*.... The awarding of the *berat* could be upon the petition of the person requesting it, or at the request of a high ranking official.”
 - 2 Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1988), 75.

the Tanzimat reforms: “The Ottomans...left these patriarchs at liberty to run their church as they pleased in co-operation with Rome, except that the monastery of Qannubin and its estate were now subjected to regular Ottoman taxation.”³

Yet the Maronite Church had always enjoyed a significant advantage compared to the other Eastern Christian churches, and that was precisely this connection with Rome.

When Fakhr al Din Ma'an II sought an alliance with Tuscany and the Pope in 1610, he proposed a draft treaty of alliance whereby he would support a Christian landing in Sayda to free the Holyland. In the draft he declared that “the Maronites had no less than 8000 troops” to contribute. The draft treaty was “forwarded to Florence and the papal court by the Maronite bishop of Cyprus.”⁴

In fact, the Maronite Church and its patriarchs do not emerge as significant actors in Ottoman politics until after the Tanzimat reforms in the mid nineteenth century.

In 1840, Patriarch Hubaysh declared that the Maronites were the true masters of the Mountain. A year later in June 1841, the British Consul Wood procured a decoration for Patriarch Hubaysh and a permanent Maronite legation was established at Istanbul, making him the first Maronite Patriarch to receive an Ottoman decoration.⁵

After the Civil War of 1860, “the Maronite Church emerged from these events as the undisputed leader of the Maronite community and the most powerful organization in the Mountain.”⁶

After the establishment of the new order in Lebanon under the *Reglement Organique* (Cebel-i Lübnan Nizamnamesi) in 1861, there began a “tit for tat” procedure whereby each new Maronite patriarch would be pressured to procure a *berat* and they would counter by asking for an imperial decoration. The interchange had a face-saving character for both sides; for the state the request for a decoration meant the Maronite Church recognized the Ottoman state as the ultimate sovereign power in the Mountain; for the Maronite bishops on the other hand the decoration meant the official recognition of their privileged status not requiring a *berat*. This process has been examined by Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn in a seminal article where he describes the relationship in these words:

This issue of the *berats* which the Ottoman government pursued for a long time, was ultimately settled by a compromise whereby the church informed

3 Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1988), 103, 72.

4 Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, *Rebellion, Myth Making and Nation Building: Lebanon from an Ottoman Mountain Iltizam to a Nation State* (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2009), 36.

5 Ozan Özavcı, *Dangerous Gifts: Imperialism, Security and Civil Wars in the Levant, 1798–1864* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 246.

6 Engin Akarlı, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon 1861–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 164.

the mutasarrıf of a bishop's election, and a communiqué would be issued to this effect by the mutasarrıf's office to concerned parties. The compromise appears to indicate on the Church's side, its perception of the local mutasarrıfiyya administration as a de facto Lebanese one.⁷

My view is that this perception was always a contested one and was to be revisited on the occasion of the election of each new patriarch. With increasing foreign pressure on the Ottoman state after the declaration of the *mutasarrıfiyya* in 1861, the Maronite Patriarchate gained a hitherto unprecedented importance as the major source of French influence in the region even beyond Lebanon. In this context the matter of the *berat* became a highly charged political issue, the significance of which went far beyond the offering and accepting of a symbolic decoration. Indeed, it became the focus of the struggle for recognition or negation of Ottoman sovereignty over the Mountain. This essay will trace how this struggle evolved over the periods of service of the last three patriarchs of the Ottoman period.

1 Patriarchate of Bulus Mas'ad 1854–1890

The first Maronite patriarch to receive an Ottoman decoration was Bulus Mas'ad (1854–1890). In the spring of 1862 the first Mutasarrıf of Cebel Lübnan, Davud Paşa, made a tour of the Keserwan. During this tour he “gave decorations to the Armenian and Maronite patriarchs.”⁸ Akarlı notes that “despite Bulus Mas'ad's well known dislike of him, Davud Pasha had backed his decoration, for the issue at this juncture...was to win the Patriarchate's support for the *mutasarrıfiyya*.”⁹

During the same tour he made a point of restoring the Khazen sheiks to their lands. The Sublime Porte praised him for his efforts pointing out that the Khazens, “numbering some three hundred souls had been thrown out of their homes by

7 Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, “An Ottoman Against the Constitution: The Maronites of Mount Lebanon and the Question of Representation in the Ottoman Parliament,” in *Religion Ethnicity and Contested Nationhood in the Former Ottoman Space*, ed. Jorgen Nielsen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 89–113.

8 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), *Babı Ali Evrak Odası* BEO N. GG. 1013. See also, *Cebel-i Lübnan Nizam Defteri*, 44–45 Sublime Porte to the Mutasarrıf of Cebel Lübnan. 7 Şevval 1278/8 April 1862. This must have been a particularly fortuitous occasion because Davud Paşa himself was an Armenian Catholic. The Armenian Patriarchate would have been the Catholic Armenian Patriarchate located in Bzummar. The patriarch in question would have been Gregory Petros VIII Derasdvazadourian (1844–1866).

9 Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, 71.

the people (*ahali*) and were living in Beirut in a state of extreme destitution and poverty.”¹⁰

This tour of the Keserwan could very well have been an effort on the part of the Mutasarrıf to improve his image with the Maronite community as a whole who were not in the least pleased with the Mutasarrıfıyya. At the investiture ceremony of Davud at Deir Al Qamar:

During the ceremony of inauguration at Deir Al Qamar, Davud Paşa was greeted ‘by the scream for blood’ and the ‘banishment of the whole Druze race’ by the Maronite victims [of the Civil War], mostly women, who ‘held up the bones and skulls of the slain and walked towards him’.¹¹

Bulus Mas’ad was the first Maronite patriarch to visit Istanbul and be received by the Sultan. On September 16, 1867, the Ottoman Foreign Ministry was to remark almost casually that “the Maronite Patriarch who has come to Istanbul recently is about to return. It has been deemed to be in keeping with the glory of the sultanate to favour him and some of his entourage.” The Ministry pointed out that since “the Patriarch was already the holder of a Mecidi First Class,” it had been decided to make him a gift of “a bejeweled box with the value of thirty thousand *guruş*” (*otuz bin guruş kıymetinde murasaa bir kutu*).¹²

The document contains a list of the members of the entourage thus favoured. They were:

The Bishop of Syria and Sayda Butros Al Bustani (Mecidiye Third Class), The Bishop of Jabal Keserwan and Baalbek Juhanna El Haj (Mecidiye Third Class), notable of the Maronite community Shaikh Dahdah (Mecidiye Third Class), notable of the Maronite community Pavlaki Hava (Mecidiye Third Class), notable of Cebel Lubnan Al Khoury Juhanna Habib (Mecidiye Fourth Class), First Secretary of the Patriarch Al Khoury Nimetullah Al Dahdah (Mecidiye Fourth Class), Second Secretary of Patriarchate Al Khoury Yousef Al Dıbs,

10 BOA. BEO. N. GG. 1013. The “people” in question here were the peasant insurgents led by Tanyus Shahin. See Ussama Makdisi, “Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate: The Revolt of Tanyus Shahin in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42.1 (2000): 180–208.

11 Özavcı, *Dangerous Gifts*, 348. This quote is as it appears in Özavcı’s text based on his research in the British National Archives.

12 BOA. Irade Hariciye (IH) 227/13298 17 Cemaziyülahir 1284/16 September 1867. Thirty thousand *guruş*/piasters would be the equivalent of 300 gold *liras* or 200 pounds sterling. This would be a significant sum as circa 50 gold *liras* could buy a medium size house. My thanks to Cem Behar for this information. See also Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family and Fertility 1880–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Yousef Hava son of Pavlaki Hava who had had the honor of being received by the Sultan (Mecidiye Fourth Class), Saman the brother in law of the Patriarch (Mecidiye Fourth Class), Physician of the Patriarch Gabrail (Mecidiye Fifth Class), novices Butros and Khalil (Mecidiye Fifth Class).¹³

A few things stand out from this document. The visit of the Maronite Patriarch with such a large entourage occurred only six years after the inception of the *mutasarrifiyya* when the prestige of the Maronite Patriarchate was high and the relationship between the Patriarch and the first Mutasarrıf, Davud Paşa, was still in a state of flux.¹⁴ Clearly the Porte wanted to honour the Patriarch and the Maronite community; this is borne out by the fact that even the Patriarch's doctor and two novice priests received decorations, possibly hoping to wean the Maronites as a whole away from French influence. Another interesting aspect of the document is that several personages appear in this "role-call of honour" who will be major figures in the future. Juhanna El Haj will become Patriarch in 1890, Yousef Dıbs will become famous (or infamous) for his strong character and pro-French stance as the Bishop of Beirut, Butros Al Bustani of the Beirut Committee and a major figure in anti-Ottoman activities at the turn of the century, Pavlaki Efendi (whose son was received by the Sultan) will be nominated for the Council of State (*Şurayı Devlet*).

Even before the death of a Maronite Patriarch, in the event of prolonged illness and old age, the question of the requesting of a *berat* and the question of which bishop would be chosen led to intense correspondence between the Mutasarrıfs and the Porte. On 27 February 1887, the Porte wrote to Vasa Paşa declaring that due to the "advanced age and illness" of Patriarch Bulus Mas'ad the question had been raised of the request of a *berat* in the event of his death. Vasa had been told that this was unlikely, and his suggestion that "among the bishops one with moderate views and loyalty" should be chosen was fully approved by Istanbul.¹⁵

13 BOA. Irade Hariciye (IH) 227/13298 17 Cemaziyülahir 1284/16 September 1867. The process of awarding and grading of recipients for *Mecidiye* decorations was minutely regulated. See Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), 176–77: "The order had been created to reward any subject who had displayed particular zeal in serving the state....The central medallion, of gold for the first four classes and silver for the last, would be decorated with the Imperial *tughra* and surrounded by a dark red enamel on which were written in gold the words Devotion (*Hamiyyet*), Zeal (*Gayret*) and Loyalty (*Sadakat*) corresponding to the attributes required for the bestowal of this noble order."

14 Engin Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, 164–65.

15 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/1 Sublime Porte to Mutasarrıf of Cebel Lubnan. 27 February 1887.

2 Patriarchate of Juhanna El Haj 1890–1898

Bulus Mas'ad seems to have hung on for nearly three years. After his death in 1890 Vasa was to claim victory over the French consul declaring that in the matter of the appointment of his successor, he had out-manuevered the consul and had assured the appointment of a bishop who was not his choice. "According to the principle of choosing the lesser of two evils (*ihitiyar-ı ehven-i şer'in kaidesine tevfiikan*) I assured the appointment of Juhanna Efendi who is more moderate in his views compared to the other bishops." Vasa went on to emphasize his success by declaring that the new Patriarch had "implicitly sought the government's approval" by informing him in writing of his appointment.¹⁶

Vasa's efforts seem to have been recognized as the Porte wrote to him declaring that "your efforts in this matter are commendable and your further efforts in warming these people's hearts towards the Sublime States similar to other communities will be much appreciated."¹⁷

The emphasis on "other communities" was clearly intended to dispel any implication of "Maronite exceptionalism."

The Ottoman government was extremely careful in matters of protocol, not letting the slightest nuance escape its attention. When four Maronite bishops visited the Vali of Beirut "in order to express their gratitude over the appointment of Juhanna El Haj," the Vali was told to politely thank them yet remind them that "the sphere of duty of the Patriarch is in Jabal Lubnan." The implication here was that the Porte was making sure that the bishops recognized the sovereignty of the Ottoman government in the Mountain in the person of the Mutasarrıf.¹⁸

Another even more delicate issue of protocol was to arise shortly. Patriarch Juhanna El Haj had thanked the Porte for his appointment and the key question was whether he should be awarded an imperial order (*ferman*) officially confirming him in his function as was done with other patriarchates. Vasa was consulted on the issue and told to make discreet but thorough enquiries about whether or not the patriarch would be prepared to accept a *ferman*. Vasa was very circumspect, pointing out that "if such a *ferman* is sent and if foreign pressure is brought to bear on him, he may refuse to accept it...and this would cause difficulties." He pointed out that "given the well-known inclinations and tendencies of the Maronite religious leadership towards France and determination to safeguard their personal interests, various pressures will be brought to bear on him. If he accepts the *ferman* this will mean that he will have to cut all ties with the foreigners." The Patriarch had left Beirut and was on his way to his personal retreat, the monastery

¹⁶ BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/7 Mutasarrıf Vasa Paşa to Foreign Ministry. 11 Ramazan 1307/ 1 May 1890.

¹⁷ BOA, Y.MTV 1/35/6 Grand Vizier's Secretariat to Mutasarrıf Vasa Paşa. 13 Mayıs 1306/ 26 May 1890.

¹⁸ BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/11 Sublime Porte to Mutasarrıf of Cebel Lübnan. 17 Şevval 1307/7 June 1890.

of Diman. Vasa had considered sending a messenger out after him but decided against it as this would “spoil him” (*şımarmasını intac edebileceğinden*). Just at that time, Vasa received a visit by “someone very close to the Patriarch.” This person told him that the Patriarch had charged him to ask Vasa whether “he could be awarded the exalted Mecidiye decoration” without asking for a *ferman*. Vasa reported that he had told the messenger that such a demand would be entirely inappropriate and would even “cast doubt on his loyalty” (*ademi sadakat nokta-i vahimesini dahi ifa*). The messenger “did not know what to say and completely agreed with me promising to relate the issue to the Patriarch.”¹⁹

The matter of decoration (*nişan*) as an alternative to a *ferman/berat* also took on a diplomatic dimension. On the 2nd of July, Vasa reported that he had discovered “through secret reliable investigations” (*tedkikatı hafıyye ve mevsuke*) that the Patriarch was sending Bishop Elias Hoyek, the First Secretary of the Patriarchate, to Rome to ask for the intervention of the Pope at the Porte in favour of El Haj’s decoration. The French Consul was also going to Paris where he was also expected to ask the French government to apply pressure for the same aim.²⁰

Some eight months were to pass before the Porte agreed to award El Haj the “Mecidiye first class which has been left over from his predecessor” (*selefinden kalan nişan*). Vasa pointed out that as the Patriarch was ailing and bed-ridden, he had “begged leave to postpone the ceremony of acceptance” until he had recovered.²¹

Two months later Vasa reported that the Patriarch had recovered and the decoration “entrusted to a special official” had been sent:

When the officials arrived at the Patriarchate they were received with grace. [During the ceremony] the Patriarch received the decoration, kissed it, and pinned it upon his person, uttering long prayers for the long life and health of the Sultan, this was accompanied by the resonant chants of ‘amen’ from all those present. For two days consecutively all churches, monasteries and

19 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/13 Vasa to Sublime Porte. 12 Haziran 1306/25 June 1890. A *ferman* was different from a *berat* as it was in the nature of an imperial order rather than a license. See Mübahat Kütükoğlu, “Ferman,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi online*: “Generic name for an order of the sultan bearing the *tuğra*. Also referred to as *emri-şerif*, *emri-I ali*, *emr-i Padişahi*.”

20 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/14 Vasa to Sublime Porte Foreign Ministry. 19 Haziran 1306/2 July 1890.

21 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/15 Vasa to Foreign Ministry. 19 Mart 1307/1 April 1891. This reference to the decoration “having been left from his predecessor” is clearly a reference to the decoration given to Bulus Mas’ad in 1862. As the decoration was given to a specific person, upon his death it reverted to the treasury. In this case it would probably be given back to the Mutasarrıf who was the closest Ottoman official. It is highly unlikely that it would have been sent back to Istanbul. My thanks to Edhem Eldem for this information.

other religious locations were to be decorated with lit candles and lamps accompanied by other manifestations of joy.²²

The relations between the Ottomans and the Maronites seem to have been officially quite good in the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II. In the spring of 1892, Bishop Elias Hoyek travelled to Istanbul as the official envoy of Juhanna El Haj. In a letter addressed to the Ministry of Justice and Religious Sects, he stated that “he was charged with the delivery of a message of thanks” for the decoration the Patriarch had received. The letter also contained a polite reminder regarding the “generous gift that had been promised to our college in Rome.”²³ The “gift” in question was the “eleven thousand franks that had been awarded as a gesture of the Sultan’s munificence to the Maronite College in Rome.” Hoyek had been received at the premises of the Imperial Chamberlain (*Mabeyni Hümayun*) and had been assured as to the manner in which the gift would be delivered.²⁴

On 28 December 1892, Juhanna El Haj sent a letter of thanks to the Sublime Porte stating:

The friendship and loyalty of the Maronite community to the Sublime State needs no explanation or exposition. May God grant it strength.

The loyalty of this community who have been the recipients of the Sultan’s munificence can be understood if one studies its history. As the glorious sultans and great men of the Sublime state have always been assured of the Maronites’ loyalty they have been accorded various favors and privileges regarding their religious freedom. Because of this they have been living in complete peace and security and have been praying continuously for the greater power and well-being of the Sublime State. When my predecessor had visited Istanbul and had been accorded various favours by the Sultan this had evoked the gratitude of the whole community. May God grant him a long life. As to the favours bestowed on my poor person by Sultan Abdulhamid I have been honoured by the glorious decoration of the Mecidiye and the Maronite College at Rome run by Maronites who are proud to be Ottoman subjects have received ten thousand franks. This had been recorded in the annals of gratitude. Because of my ill health and old age I was unable to come in person to carry out this duty of thanks. Hence I have sent my delegate Elias Hoyek.²⁵

²² BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/17 Vasa to Foreign Ministry. 11 Haziran 1307/24 June 1891.

²³ BOA, Y.MTV.CL 1/35/20 Elias Hoyek Bishop of Iraq and Syria and Delegate of Maronite Patriarchate to Ministry of Justice. 3 Mart 1308/16 March 1892.

²⁴ BOA, Y.MTV.CL 1/35/19 From Sublime Porte to Elias Hoyek. 10 Mart 1308/23 March 1892.

²⁵ BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/24 Sublime Porte Translators Office. Translation of the letter in Arabic by the Patriarch Juhanna El Haj dated 15 Kanun-u Evvel 1291/28 December 1892. There is no explanation of why the sum in question was reduced from eleven to ten thousand.

Even in this polite and diplomatic verbiage the emphasis was clearly on the “privileges” and “religious freedom” granted to the Maronites.

Although the relations with the Ottoman state were quite good at this time, Mutasarrıf Vasa Paşa had particularly rancorous relations with the Maronite Church to the point that he had been warned off by the Porte and told to improve his relations with them. Vasa had begun his term of office believing that he could wean the more secular minded Lebanese away from the influence of a domineering church. He saw that the higher Maronite clergy were the main conduit for French influence in the Mountain.²⁶ A particular focus of Vasa's ire was the Bishop of Beirut, Yousef Dibs. Dibs was an extremely influential prelate who had an extensive network of what would today be called *wasta* (useful connections). He had his own school, newspaper, and a printing press. He wielded great power over the Maronite clergy and community and had continuous and intense connections with the French consuls.²⁷

Dibs seems to have become the *bete noir* of Vasa who became obsessed with what he called the “seditious practices” (*vesail-i fesadiye*) of the bishop. When he sent close aide Bishop Elias Hitawi to Istanbul, it was rumoured that the bishop was to receive a high level decoration (Mecidi Second class). Vasa sternly warned against such an honour being accorded to the Maronite Church “who are in a state of disarray because of their declining influence here.” The news of the decoration had been published in Dibs' newspaper *El Musam*, which had subsequently been obliged to print a retraction. Vasa reported that the French consul had visited him and asked him to intercede in Istanbul for Hitawi to receive the decoration. Vasa had refused.²⁸

Dibs comes up again in Vasa's dispatches soon after this. Vasa reported on 25 April 1892 that as a “gesture of thanks and congratulation for Elias Hitawi's being honoured with a decoration,” Dibs had organized an outing for the French consul to visit the Patriarch in his residence at Bkirke. He was to travel on the French warship *Laland* in the company of some French officers whom he intended to present to the Patriarch. Yet a curious incident occurred after the ship docked in Junieh. As the consul and his entourage were landing, “a skirmish with knives and stones” occurred between the inhabitants of Zuk and Junieh “because of an old hatred,” causing fifteen injuries. The consul and the officers had taken refuge in the residence of the local *kaymakam*. Although the documents do not tell us what had caused what was no doubt a highly embarrassing incident, Vasa was sure that Dibs and the Maronite clergy were behind it as “French flags had been brandished.”²⁹

²⁶ Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, 51–53.

²⁷ Ibid., 54–57.

²⁸ BOA, Y.MTV 61/73 Vasa to Foreign Ministry. 19 April 1892.

²⁹ BOA, Y.MTV 61/98 Vali of Beirut İsmail Kemal to Yıldız Palace Imperial Secretariat. 25 April 1892; Y.MTV 63/24 Vasa to Imperial Secretariat. 24 May 1892.

It is significant that both of the communications above were sent directly to the Yıldız Palace because in these years Sultan Abdulhamid II (r.1876–1909) had become convinced that France was planning an invasion of Syria using Lebanon as a bridgehead.³⁰ On the 20th of October the Vali of Beirut İsmail Kemal wrote the following report:

According to secret investigations carried out here [it has been discovered that] the French have secretly enquired as to how many fixed defenses and how many soldiers are to be found here and what size of a military force would be required to take it. The French Consulate has answered that there are no fixed defenses and total of troops present number six thousand, a force of twenty thousand [troops] would be sufficient to take it.³¹

Thus the machinations of the Maronite Church were accorded much more importance than they would otherwise have merited. Seemingly trifling matters such as the awarding or not of an imperial decoration, or that whether or not a new patriarch should ask for a *berat*, had far wider implications.

It also appears that the Ottoman bureaucracy did not always trust the *mutasarrıfs* to behave as they should. The Valis of Beirut were often asked to check up on them. On 28 December 1889, the Vali of Beirut Reşid Bey was asked to investigate the behaviour of Vasa Paşa. The occasion was momentous. A French naval squadron had steamed into the harbor of Junieh and “saluted the Maronite patriarch by firing cannon.” It had also been reported that “by order of the government” the population had been urged to gather in numbers on the shore and greet the ships “waiving French flags.” The Vali hastened to reply that these were serious allegations as “this was the first time that the French navy came to Junieh.” Some of the people had indeed been invited to board the flagship. He concluded, “these acts which were allegedly permitted by His Excellency the Mutasarrıf would be not in keeping with his official status.”³²

The relations between the Mutasarrıfiyye and the Maronite Patriarchate seem to have improved during the mutasarrıfate of Naum Paşa. He reported that soon after his arrival at his post, “all of the religious leaders and sheikhs” had paid official visits to express their

30 Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, 49: “The French government shifted the emphasis in its Near East Policy onto the consolidation of its influence in Mount Lebanon as a necessary step to bringing Syria under French control....Consequently thwarting French design on Syria became a fundamental objective of Ottoman foreign policy.”

31 BOA, Y.PRK.ASK (Yıldız Perakende Askeri Maruzat) 29/25 Vali of Beirut İsmail Kemal to Grand Vezirate. 11 Muharrem 1303/ 20 October 1885. The communication bears the end note that it was delivered personally to the sultan.

32 BOA, Y.A.HUS 402/133 (Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Evrakı) Vali of Beirut to Ministry of Interior. 24 Şaban 1317/28 December 1889.

loyalty. “Only the Maronite Patriarch did not come and as usual sent two bishops.” Feeling snubbed, Naum Paşa had put off returning the visit claiming pressure of accumulated work at Bayteddin. Later, “having returned to the winter seat [at Baabda] and having undertaken a tour of inspection of the northern districts of the Jabal,” Naum paid his visit to Bkirke. He was received with full pomp and ceremony and during the feast, “the patriarch had said a prayer for the long life and health of the sultan.” On the next day Naum was pleased to report that as he was boarding ship at Junieh, “the Patriarch, accompanied by several bishops, came to return my visit.” The Mutasarrıf made sure to stress that such an event was in great contrast to previous events such as when Rüstem Paşa had paid two such visits only to receive one in return.³³

Juhanna El Haj was evidently a frail man who was only able to hold the Patriarchate for some eight years. After his death in 1898, the issue of a *berat* being accorded to his successor came on the agenda yet again. Upon the request of the Mutasarrıf Naum Paşa, the Grand Vizier's Secretariat sent him a memorandum summarizing the question of the awarding of *berats* to Maronite patriarchs since the inception of the Mutasarrıfiyya.³⁴ The memorandum made it clear that since Juhanna El Haj had been the first patriarch to be appointed after the creation of the Mutasarrıfiyya, the issue required clarification. The Porte stated that any such high religious office such as the patriarchate, according to established precedent in Ottoman governance, could only be held by the legitimation granted by a *berat*; the Maronite religious leaders had hitherto refrained from asking for such an official authorization. The memorandum declared: “given the well-known inclinations of the [Maronite] religious leaders and their desire to maintain their privileges,” the situation was delicate. If the Maronites were exempted from this rule this would mean that they were not conforming to the general regulations of the state; if on the other hand the Porte refused to recognize any patriarch appointed without a *berat*, this would “engender the vexatious intervention of the French Embassy.” It was pointed out that in the time of the previous Mutasarrıf Rüstem Paşa, if any bishop of the Maronite Church was appointed to any religious office without the approval of the Mutasarrıf, he would be “excluded from all official functions and would not be consulted on any official matter.” This measure seemed to evoke some degree of compliance because when Juhanna El Haj was chosen as Patriarch by the Synod of Bishops in 1890, they had “informed the local government and the Sublime Porte.” Nonetheless, despite pressure from the Mutasarrıf the request for a *berat* had not been forthcoming. The Porte made it clear that the reason for this was “their well-known inclinations [towards France]

33 BOA, Y.A.HUS 268/13 Naum Paşa to Grand Vezirate. 23 Cemaziyelevvel 1310/14 December 1892. It seems Naum was making specific reference to Rüstem Paşa, whose relations with the patriarchate had been particularly bad. The previous patriarch Bulus Mas'ad had been patriarch since 1854.

34 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/39 Grand Vizier's Secretariat to Mutasarrıf of Cebel Lubnan. 29 Kanun-u Evvel 1314/10 January 1899.

and their personal interest in the continuation of the monies provided by France for charitable works.” This insistence on the worldly reasons for the actions of the Maronite bishops would occur time and again whenever the issue of the *berats* was raised. The new patriarch had however “desired to receive an imperial decoration as had his predecessors.”

Another interesting aspect of this document is the provision made by the Porte that “this imperial order (*ferman-ı ali*) that all bishops and patriarchs who will carry out their religious duties in the Well Protected Domains should do so by *ferman* is part of the general regulations of the Sublime State. This is the equivalent of the practice of European rulers who do not have the right to appoint bishops and patriarchs, who appoint them by royal orders.”³⁵

Because there was no clear precedent, the Ministry of Justice and Religious Sects was consulted. They replied that as the Maronites did not traditionally ask for a *berat* when a new patriarch was to be appointed, they were unlike the other Christian groups and thus beyond the competence of their ministry. Thus, the Maronite bishops “had no official capacity” (*sıfat-ı resmîyyeyi haiz olmamalarına*) and there had never been any official dealings between them and the ministry regarding the death and appointment of a new patriarch.³⁶

3 Patriarchate of Elias Hoyek 1898–1931

Intense lobbying and intrigue went on during the process of choosing a new patriarch.³⁷ This was followed closely by the Ottoman authorities. A strong candidate in 1898 was Bishop Elias Hoyek, First Secretary of the Patriarchate. The Ottoman authorities had intercepted a telegramme sent from Beirut to Hoyek in Rome, by one “Romaya Akl,” strongly enjoining Hoyek to return to Lebanon before the election of the patriarch as “the community was in danger.” The Vilayet of Beirut explained that this person was evidently a supporter of Hoyek but they also explained that the lay community had little influence as the matter was decided by the bishops.³⁸

35 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/39 Grand Vizier's Secretariat to Mutasarrıf of Cebel Lubnan. 29 Kanun-u Evvel 1314/10 January 1899. “*Memalik-i Mahrusada ..vezaif-i ruhaniyesini icra edecek olan her piskopos ve patrik bir ferman-ı aliyi haiz olabilmesi Saltanat-ı Seniyye'nin hukuk-u umumiyesinden olub ferman-ı ali piskopos ve matranları bizzat tayin etmek hakkı kendülerine münhasır olamıyan Avrupa hükümdarlarının emr-i hükümdarilerine muadil bulunduğu cihetle..*”

36 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/40 Director of Sects (Mezahib Müdürü). 14 Kanun-u Evvel 1314/ 27 December 1899).

37 Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, 163–83.

38 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/23 20 Kanun-u Evvel 1314/2 January 1899. Secretariat of the Grand Vezirate to Ministry of Justice and Religious Sects. The telegramme is unsigned and was evidently intercepted by the Ottoman authorities who specified the sender. The Akls were a prominent Maronite family.

Elias Hoyek was the most “political” of all of the patriarchs at the end of the Ottoman era in Lebanon. He was well known for his staunchly pro-French views. His star had already been ascending while he was the First Secretary of the Patriarchate when he was sent by Juhanna El Haj to receive the decoration and give thanks for the grant of money by the sultan to the Maronite College in Rome. Hoyek was elected by the Synod of Bishops in December 1898. He announced his election to the Ottoman authorities, “assuring them of his loyalty to His Imperial Highness.”³⁹ Hoyek had received the strong support of the French consul and Monsignor Duval, the Frenchman who was the Papal legate: “Istanbul recognized the patriarch but, in contrast to the Haj case, withheld his decoration for the time being,” hoping to get the Mutasarrıf Naum Paşa to convince him to accept a *berat*.⁴⁰

His election was to re-ignite the controversy of the *berat* issue. The Porte issued a memorandum stating that the Maronite Patriarchs had never complied with the general rule that the religious heads of each community should apply for a *berat* when assuming their functions. The memorandum stated that at the time of Rüstem Paşa the practice had evolved whereby the newly appointed Maronite bishops and patriarchs had obtained an “authorization order” (*buyuruldu*) from the Mutasarrıf, but, “even this practice has fallen into disuse ever since.”⁴¹

Naum was to take a very cautious position on the matter. He wrote a careful memorandum outlining the various stages of the relationship between the Porte and the Patriarchate.⁴² He pointed out that since the Maronite Patriarchs had never obtained an official *berat*, hence the relations of the Ottoman government with them amounted to no more than “established precedent” (*kadim teamûlat*). Naum “went back thirty-two years,” tracing the origins of the matter “to the time when Bulus Mas’ad had visited Istanbul.” Then in the last years of the *mutasarrıfate* of Rüstem Paşa, “despite his undoubted political acumen and loyal efforts,” the efforts to get the Maronite Patriarchs to obtain a *berat* had been unsuccessful. Although the “patriotic efforts” of his successor Vasa Paşa had secured the appointment of Juhanna El Haj, in the end his efforts towards a *berat* had proved to be in vain. As to the situation under Hoyek, “when he had been sent as an envoy to convey the thanks [of the Patriarch] for the imperial gifts to the Maronite College in Rome,” he had been approached by the Porte on the *berat* issue but, “had begged off claiming their special practices and traditions.” Naum stated that he was trying to make progress in the

39 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/27 Vali of Syria Nazım Paşa to Sublime Porte. 14 Kanun-u sani 1314/27 January 1899.

40 Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, 170.

41 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/25 Sublime Porte to Ministry of Justice and Religious Sects. 4 Kanun-u Sani 1314/17 January 1899.

42 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/46 Naum Paşa to Grand Vezirate. 17 Zilhicce 1316/28 April 1900.

matter but feared that “further pressure might bring an outright refusal”; thus it was better if he “continued his efforts in a personal capacity rather than an official one.”⁴³

In the summer of 1904, the project of erecting a huge statue of the Virgin Mary in Junieh called “Our Lady of Lebanon” was mooted. The project received the blessing of Pope Pius X and was strongly supported by the Papal Legate (a Frenchman) Carlos Duval. Patriarch Hoyek requested the support of the Mutasarrıf Muzaffer Paşa. The Mutasarrıf supposedly “obtained a *ferman* from Istanbul in five hours... a miraculous speed unseen in Ottoman administration.”⁴⁴

Perhaps the most critical stage of the relationship between Hoyek and the Ottoman government occurred over the former visit to Rome, Paris, and Istanbul in 1905. Even before Hoyek left Beirut, Muzaffer Paşa wrote to Istanbul warning them that the Patriarch was “secretly making preparations for his trip to Rome accompanied by several bishops.” He had carried out “secret investigations as to the reason for his trip and where he would go.”⁴⁵ The emphasis on “secrecy” on both sides is an indication of mutual distrust. The Ministry of Justice and Religious Sects, who were consulted on the issue declared, “since the said patriarch is not of those patriarchs who have official connections and attachment to us we have no official information about such a trip.”⁴⁶

Muzaffer evidently kept a close watch on the activities of the patriarchal party. He reported on May 22 that “the Patriarch has paid his official visit to me and has embarked on a French ship *en route* to Alexandria. He will there transfer to an Austrian ship calling at Brindisi on his way to Rome.”⁴⁷ A few days later Muzaffer was to pen a long memorandum regarding the Maronite Patriarch’s trip in particular and what he saw as the “arrogance and pride” (*envai kibir ve gurur*) of the Maronites generally.⁴⁸ He pointed out that although the ostensible reason for the Patriarch’s visit was to “congratulate the Pope” on his election, in the past Maronite patriarchs had been content to send a delegation; the fact that he was going in person “was doubtless because he has a secret reason” (*maksad-ı hafıyye*). The Maronite clergy had enriched themselves thanks to their connections with France and the accumulation of wealth through what were supposedly “good works and charities.” They had also made sure that all the important posts in the mountain were held by

43 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 1/35/46 Naum Paşa to Grand Vezirate. 17 Zilhicce 1316/28 April 1900.

44 Christian Tautel, *Lucien Cattin le bâtisseur: un Jésuite suisse au service du Liban* (Beirut: Presses de l’Université Saint Joseph, 2020), 86. It is highly unlikely that a *ferman* could have been produced in such a short time.

45 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 3/144/2 Muzaffer Paşa to Sublime Porte. 20 Nisan 1321/3 May 1905.

46 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 3/144/3 Ministry of Justice and Religious Sects to Sublime Porte. 27 Nisan 1321/10 May 1905. This is one of several such communications where the ministry stressed that since the Maronite Patriarchs did not obtain *berats*, they had no official connections with them.

47 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 3/144/4 Muzaffer Paşa to Sublime Porte. 9 Mayıs 1321/22 May 1905.

48 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 3/144/6 Muzaffer Paşa to Sublime Porte. Marked “important and confidential” (*mühim ve mahremane*). 5 Mayıs 1321/18 May 1905.

“families of [Maronite] *muqataji* stock” who were “well known for their natural pride and arrogance.” The fact that Rashid al-Khazen was part of the Patriarchal delegation was proof of this. They had even begun to place the Shi’a of Keserwan under their influence: “They have forced the Matwali (Shi’a) to sell their land at low prices and abandon their property and these people have been obliged to leave because of the oppression of the Maronite officials.” Muzaffer contended that the Patriarch’s intended visit to Istanbul was to forestall the numerous complaints made against the Maronite officials.⁴⁹

Muzaffer reported that when Hoyek arrived in Paris, he was received with great pomp and circumstance and put up in a *hotel particulier* on the Champs Elysees at government expense. He had held court to the reporters of all the important newspapers. He had held forth on the “loyalty and fealty of all Maronites to France which was dependent on the continuing protection and friendship of the French government.” These words had been very favourably received by the French press, “he had made no mention at all of his legitimate government.” He had declared that although there had been problems among the Christians and Druze in the Mountain in the past, this “has now been resolved and the only danger remained the Muslims and England.” Muzaffer feared that the real reason for Hoyek’s visit to Istanbul was to “change the Reglement of Cebel Lubnan”; he noted: “the Reglement is very short and vague. Whenever attempts were made to change it in the past it has been against the interests of the Sublime State.” He pleaded to be allowed to come to Istanbul while the patriarch was there, “to forestall intrigues.” Muzaffer declared that subtle changes could be made to the Reglement which would increase the power of the Mutasarrıf without changing the essentials of the agreement.⁵⁰

Muzaffer seems to have bombarded Istanbul with missives. He sent Istanbul numerous cuttings from the French press. Some journalists commented on the fact that Hoyek’s visit coincided with the official declaration of the separation of Church and state in France, and the declaration of secularism (*laïcité*) as official French policy. When the reporter for the *Le Matin* asked Hoyek if his timing was fortuitous, the latter replied, “Gambetta was the first to admit that anticlericalism was not for export.... To this formula I would add the following: as long as I am Patriarch of the Orient, no matter what comes to pass, I will never abandon French interests. Our Church has a belief of upholding traditions, and one of the most beautiful of these traditions is the love that my church

49 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 3/144/ 6 Muzaffer Paşa to Sublime Porte. Marked “important and confidential” (*mühim ve mahremane*). 5 Mayıs 1321/18 May 1905. His information here appears to be remarkably accurate. Compare Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*, 106: “[In the eighteenth century] the gradual eviction of the Shiites followed sometimes by force, sometimes by monetary settlement. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Khazins had already come to own nearly the whole of Kisrawan, and only a few Shiite villages survived.”

50 BOA, Y.A.HUS 494/41/5 Muzaffer Paşa to Imperial Secretariat. 6 Şaban 1323/4 October 1905.

has for your country.”⁵¹ The reporter for *La Republique* noted that he was very impressed by “His Beatitude” who was “a real power from both the religious and political points of view.” Hoyek had told him, “In 1860 we had a war with the Druzes, now the Druzes are our friends. We would have nothing to worry about if it were not for the Muslims who are conquerors, *conquistadores* by nature.... There is always some power who is ready to provoke one tribe against their neighbour. Then, under the pretext of pacification this power moves in...you understand?” The reporter noted, “I then saw that the Patriarch’s eyes lit up with patriarchal malice.”⁵²

Muzaffer must have been pleased to see that not all French press coverage regarding Hoyek was positive. The *La Lanterne* ran a banner headline declaring, “He wants money!” (*Il veut de l’Argent!*). The reporter declared very irreverently, “‘His Beatitude’ has only been here two days and he is already opening his purse. Old Hoyek is trying to extort money. He is like all the others. Are we going to be taken in by this oriental? This is all the more scandalous that the government of the Republic has inflicted this humiliation on us, as he is being officially received at the very moment that the Chamber voted on the separation [of Church and State].”⁵³

Muzaffer’s insistently alarmist correspondence seems to have evoked some skepticism in Istanbul. The private secretary of the sultan was to remark, “the declarations of the said Mutasarrıf do not appear to be entirely free of the stigma of enmity.”⁵⁴

The Mutasarrıf’s efforts were in vain. Hoyek and his numerous entourage were received with great pomp in Istanbul and awarded decorations. Hoyek was given an audience by the sultan and received one of the highest decorations, the *Murassa’ Osmani* (*en diamonds*). Abdulhamid was extremely generous with the bestowals on this occasion, a total of twenty-nine decorations were bestowed ranging from the *Osmani* received by Hoyek himself, to the “silver medals of honour” (*gümüş iftihar*) given to “Fares Trad Agha Chief Servant of the Patriarchate” and his two assistants. Apart from the prestige bestowed

51 BOA, Y.A.HUS 494/41/8 Cutting from *Le Matin* 23 September 1905 signed by G. De Maziere. This column is underlined in red. Hoyek’s timing does indeed appear to be unfortunate. In 1905, the Napoleonic concordat with the Pope was denounced in the Chamber and, “By the separation laws that followed, all ties between church and state were severed.” Nonetheless the Pope resisted, “he excommunicated every deputy who had voted for the separation laws.” See Gordon Wright, *France in Modern Times* (New York: Norton & Co., 1974), 250.

52 Ibid. The reporter emphasized that Hoyek used the Spanish word *conquistadores*, “Dans les yeux de M. Hoyek luit une malice patriarchale.”

53 Ibid. *La Lanterne*, 24 September 1905. Unsigned article.

54 BOA, A.MTZ.CL 3/144/21 19 October 1905. 6 Teşrin-i Evvel 1905/ 19 October 1905. Imperial First Secretary Tahsin Paşa to Grand Vezirate, “bütün bütün şaibe-i iğrazdan salim görülmekte.”

on the recipient, “the bestowal of these decorations was a costly matter, especially for the prestigious diamond set insignia that were granted as a sign of imperial favor.”⁵⁵

4 The Maronite Church in the Great War

The Young Turk Revolution and the advent of the Second Constitutional Period (*ikinci meşrutiyet*) after the revolution of 1908 ushered in a new phase of the relations between the Ottoman government and the Maronite Church. After the restitution of the Ottoman constitution (*kanunu esasi*) and the re-opening of parliament (*Meclis-i Mebusan*), the question of whether or not the Mutasarrifiyya should send delegates was rekindled. The Maronite Church was adamantly against representation arguing that this would render null and void the autonomy granted to the Mutasarrifiyya by the Reglement of 1861. This debate has been exhaustively discussed in an article by Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn.⁵⁶ The main focus of Abu-Husayn’s article is a book written by a leading Maronite cleric, Bulus Mas’ad, the Maronite delegate in Cairo. Mas’ad argued that representation would gravely endanger the Mountain’s privileges. He did however strongly emphasize that the sultan’s Maronite subjects were entirely loyal to the Ottoman state. As put by Abu-Husayn: “Where the Ottoman state is concerned [the book] remained within the Maronite Church’s firm opposition to any encroachment on Maronite positions in Lebanon expressed in the strongest terms along with an equal emphasis on full unwavering loyalty to the Ottoman state which need not be dismissed as pure hypocrisy.” Mas’ad’s nemesis were the pro-representation Lebanese liberals and “Freemasons” who he claimed were dangerously deceived: “[who] started to agitate for freedom without knowing more about it than a Bedouin knows about western civilization.”⁵⁷

As the Ottoman entry into the Great War drew near, Ottoman distrust of the Maronites increased. The well-known pro-French sympathies of Hoyek led to extreme suspicion and sensitivity to the slightest alarming rumour. In September 1914, the Mutasarrif was instructed to investigate the rumour that the Patriarch had told the reporter of the *Le Matin* that “6000 Maronite volunteers were waiting for the least signal from France to enlist in the French Army.” The cutting from the newspaper had been forwarded by the Ottoman consulate in Paris. The Mutasarrif was instructed to look into the affair as “the well-known blatant pro-French demonstrations of some of the Christian communities in

55 BOA, İ.TAL Irade Taltifat 380/58 13 Teşrin-i Evvel 1321/26 October 1905. Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege*, 222. Although Eldem’s monumental work does not feature any decorations to Maronite patriarchs, the illustration on pg. 226 shows the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III (1834–1912) wearing the first class *Osmani*.

56 Abu-Husayn, “An Ottoman Against the Constitution.”

57 Ibid., 97–98. Mas’ad’s book was entitled *Lebanon and the Ottoman Constitution*.

Cebel Lübnan are very damaging to the interests of both the Patriarchate and the general order at this sensitive time.”⁵⁸

These instructions had been sent to the Mutasarrıf despite a strenuous denial by Hoyek that he had been in touch with the said reporter, “just as we have not seen the Beirut reporter of this newspaper we do not even know who he is.” He went on to express “his surprise” that such a rumour had been taken seriously and went on to express his hurt that “we would not have expected to be accused by high officials of our state of something we did not do.”⁵⁹

Indeed the Porte was to assure the Ministry of Interior that according to information received from the Mutasarrıf of Cebel Lübnan, “such activity would be totally against the nature of the Patriarch who avoids involvement in such delicate affairs.”⁶⁰

There is little doubt that in the Ottoman risk analysis for Lebanon during the Great War, the greatest danger they saw were the Maronites. The dictatorial Governor of the Fourth Army District, Cemal Paşa, and his Chief of Staff Ali Fuad were convinced that the Maronites were a potential fifth column.⁶¹ It was well known that they were pro-French and were demonized to the extent that even in the official archival publication of the modern-day Turkish Chiefs of Staff we read the following remarkable words:

The Maronites were sincere enemies of Islam. They were being supported from the outside. In Lebanon a sect called the ‘Holy Warriors’ had been created. Every one of them who killed a Muslim was paid a salary of four *liras* if he was a bachelor and eight *liras* if he was married. Of course these monies were provided by the French and the British who generously showered their gold for propaganda purposes.⁶²

58 BOA, DHEUM 7.Şb 2/1/1 31 September 1914. Ministry of Interior Directorate of General Security. The Ottoman Empire entered the hostilities on November 2, 1914.

59 BOA, DHEUM 7.Şb. 2/1/2 20 September 1914. Sublime Porte to Mutasarrıf of Cebel Lübnan. Translation of letter by Patriarch Hoyek.

60 BOA, DHEUM 7.Şb 2/1/6 21 September 1914.

61 On Cemal Pasha’s rule in Syria, see Talha Çiçek, *War and State Formation in Syria: Cemal Pasha’s Governorate during World War I 1914–1917* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014). Cemal became infamous in the annals of Syrian and Lebanese collective memory because of his execution of forty Arab patriots in Beirut and Damascus. To this day Cemal is remembered as “Al Saffah” the “blood shedder.” On memoir literature and its bearing on Lebanon, see Selim Deringil, ed., *The Ottoman Twilight in the Arab Lands: Turkish Memoirs and Testimonials of the Great War* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019).

62 *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Türk Harbi, IV. Cilt 1, Kısım., Sina Filistin Cephesi*, Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı (“The Turkish War in the First World War,” Vol. IV, Part 1, The Sinai and Palestine Fronts, Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies (Ankara, 1979), 690.

This reference to a sort of sect of “Maronite Hashisheen” is repeated almost verbatim from Ali Fuad’s memoirs.⁶³ Curiously, it is also included (down to the exact amount paid for each death) in Falih Rifki’s *Zeytindağı*.⁶⁴ Evidently the negative stigmatization of the Maronite population as the atavistic enemy became a racial stereotype that has endured. Both Cemal and Fuad sincerely expected a Maronite backed French landing in Lebanon. In both Cemal’s and Fuad’s memoirs Lebanon is depicted as the “weak spot” on the Syrian coast. There is frequent reference to the “thirty thousand rifles in Mount Lebanon.” What is even more interesting is that the same concern is voiced verbatim in the official history of the Turkish military, “it was imperative to keep in mind the thirty thousand rifles in the hands of the people of the Mountain who were pro-French.”⁶⁵ Cemal set out to deliberately harass the Maronite Patriarch Elias Hoyek. He considered exiling him to Anatolia but was prevented through the intervention of the Papal Nuncio in Istanbul, Monseigneur Dolce, and the Austrian government. Cemal humiliated the Patriarch, who traditionally never left his seat in Bkirke, by obliging him to visit him in Sofar. When Cemal sent his personal car to fetch Patriarch Hoyek, Rifki was to make the snide comment, “The Maronites considered the Patriarch to be a god. It was amusing to see a god riding in a motorcar.”⁶⁶ Rifki seemed to have a somewhat exotic view of Maronite beliefs. The Maronite Patriarch was certainly not regarded as a god. One of the Jesuit fathers was to write in his diary that Cemal summoned the patriarch and gave him “two days’ grace” to present himself, ostensibly to talk about famine relief. On the issue of the motor transport, Father Joseph Mattern was to write in his diary: “we are told of a rapprochement between his Beatitude the Patriarch and the Commander Cemal Pasha. They met in Damascus and travelled together by car as far as Jounieh. It seems that the Commander is in no way convinced of the Ottomanist sentiments of the Maronite nation. His Beatitude attempted to prove him wrong.”⁶⁷ One of the measures that the Maronites disliked the most was that Cemal Pasha removed the hitherto autonomous status of the Maronite patriarch making him an Ottoman official.⁶⁸ The patriarch arrived in Sofar on 25 July. According to Antoine Yammine, a Maronite priest who wrote one of the earliest accounts of Cemal’s rule in

63 Ali Fuad Erden, *Suriye Hatıraları* (Istanbul: İş Bankası, 2003), 56.

64 Falih Rifki Atay, *Zeytindağı* (Istanbul: Pozitif Press, 1932), 30. Falih Rifki Atay was Cemal Pasha’s intelligence officer and close aid throughout his governorate.

65 *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Türk Harbi*, 107.

66 Atay, *Zeytindağı*, 87.

67 Christian Tautel and Pierre Wittouck S.J., eds., *Le peuple libanais dans la tourmente de la grande guerre 1914–1918: D’après les archives des Pères Jésuites au Liban* (Beirut: Presses Universitaires Saint Joseph, 2015), 35. Diary entry of Joseph Mattern for 22 July 1915. The Jesuit fathers who were French nationals had to leave Lebanon. Those who were either Lebanese nationals or nationals of Germany or Austria were allowed to stay. The work cited here is a compendium of the diaries of several Jesuits who remained in Lebanon throughout the war.

68 Çiçek, *War and State Formation in Syria*, 91. Çiçek gives the date of the patriarchal visit as 27 July.

Syria, Cemal was surprisingly affable, receiving the patriarchal delegation with great pomp and circumstance. He even arranged for a considerable amount of provisions to be sent to the visiting prelate's flock. There was however a price to be paid. According to Yammine, Cemal prevailed upon the patriarch to issue a public statement that would be published in the French press, declaring that all was well in Lebanon and that "the myth that the authorities were deliberately organizing the famine by blocking the entry of food [to the Mountain] was a monstrous invention." The declaration also stated that the men who were executed had been proven to have undertaken traitorous activities, and that "all civilized states take such rigorous measures in similar circumstances." Yammine stated that the patriarch should not be held responsible for making the declaration because he had been forced to make it "in order to save the surviving members of his flock from a tiger thirsty for blood."⁶⁹ The issues surrounding the declaration remain unclear; no other source cites such an event.

After the war, Patriarch Hoyek presented an official declaration to the Paris Peace Conference roundly condemning Cemal and the Turks in general for "atrocities and executions committed in Lebanon."⁷⁰

Thus the long inherent tensions between the Ottoman State and the Maronite Church came out into the open as Ottoman power disintegrated. Hoyek came to be seen by the French as the head of state of Lebanon, "All along he was treated and received by the French authorities as if he were the head of Lebanon, and of the Lebanese par excellence." Nonetheless his agenda did not always overlap with the secular elite of Lebanon who stood for a more secular independent Lebanon. Thus, even under mandate rule the tension between the secular elite, largely the product of the Mutasarrifiyya tradition, and the Patriarchate continued.⁷¹

69 Antoine Yammine, *Quatre ans de misère: Le Liban et la Syrie pendant la guerre* (Cairo: Imprimerie Emin Hindie, 1922), 61.

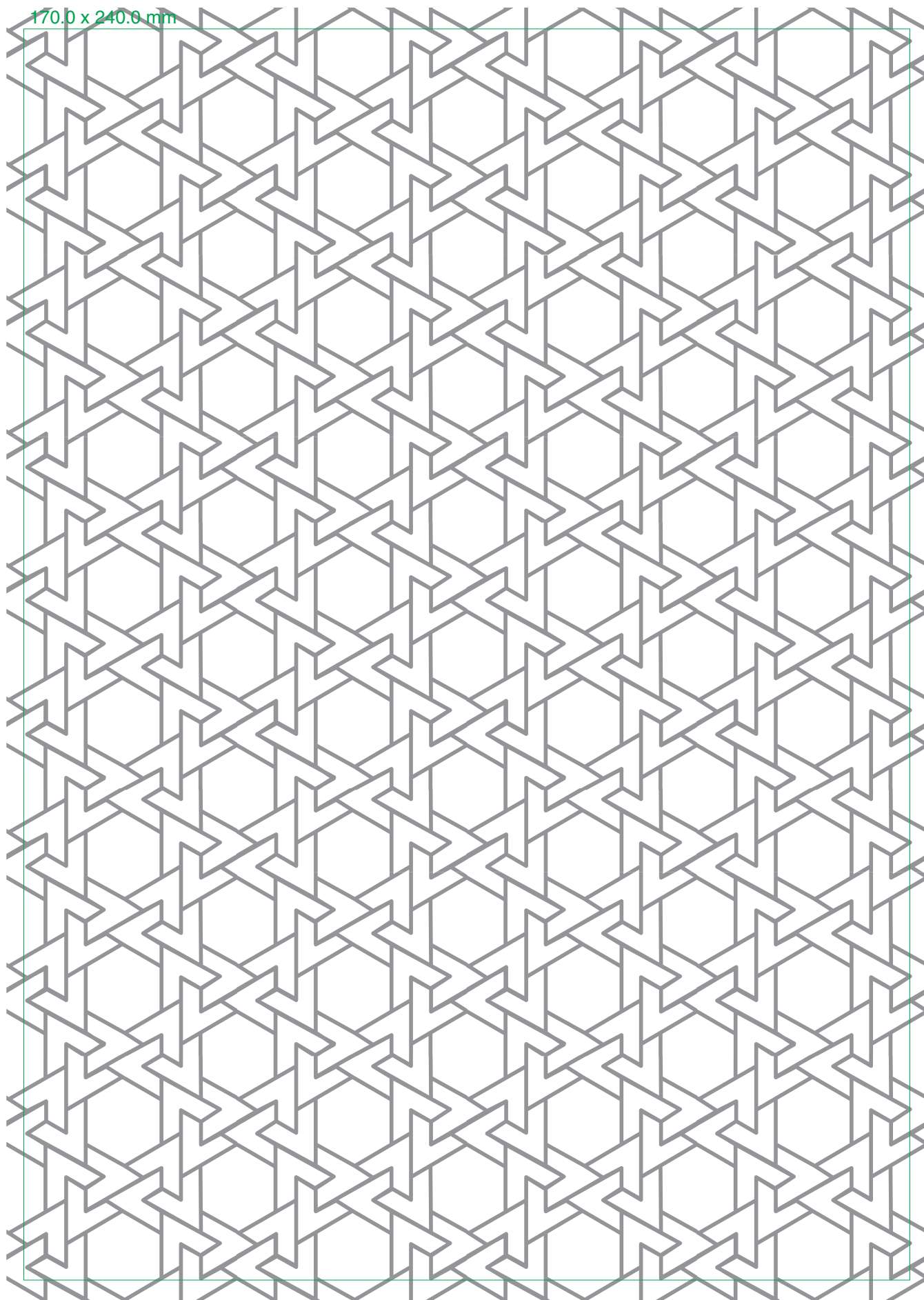
70 Elias Hoyek (Patriarche), "Les revendications du Liban: mémoire de la délégation libanaise à la conférence de la paix" (Paris, October 1919), in *La Revue Phénicienne* (Noel 1919), 24–28.

71 Akarh, *The Long Peace*, 178–80.

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Poetry and Politics

The Alevites in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Literary Sources

Christiane Czygan*

Introduction

The Alevites were active players in the Ottoman-Safavid conflict during the sixteenth century. This conflict was shaped and reshaped in the realm of poetry, as poetry was not only a potent device because of its extraordinary popularity but formed itself as a transmitter of ideologies.¹ Hence, poetry was used to varnish one's own standpoint with an emotional appeal. In this contribution, I explore how poems by Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–1566) and the prominent Alevite poet, Pir Sultan Abdal, who lived with high probability in the era of Sultan Süleyman and Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576), fueled the conflict and gave it a voice.²

Sultan Süleyman was the most prolific Ottoman ruler poet who promoted himself in his poems as a lover of God, Muhibbi. While singing in his Divan the praises of mundane, mystic, and divine love, he sporadically also implemented social conflicts and expectations into his poems. The same was true for Muhibbi's coeval, Pir Sultan Abdal, who was venerated by the Alevites and Bektashis alike. His songs belonged to the liturgical canon of Alevites and Bektashis worship, and his later execution by the

* I warmly thank Gülçin Edith Ambros and Markus Dreßler for reading the text in advance as well as Fatma M. Şen and Ali Emre Özyıldırım for their help with the poems.

1 Irène Mélikoff, *Au banquet des Quarante: exploration au coeur du Bektachisme-Alevisme* (Istanbul: ISIS, 2001), 113; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler Yahut Daireenin Dışına Çıkanlar 15-17. Yüzyıllar*, 8th edition (İstanbul: Timaş, 2020), 59, 69, 181.

2 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı and Pertev Naili Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal* (Ankara: TürkTarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1943), 78.

Ottoman authorities may have increased his heroic aura. In their poetry, both proved to be powerful promoters of their diametrically opposed agendas.

In the Ottoman sources, the term *kızılbaş* (red headgear) occurred beside the designation Alawi.³ The red headgear, called ‘*Haydar’s Crown*’ (*Tac-i Haydar*), became a symbol of the adherents of Haydar—the father of the Safavid ruler Shah İsmail (r. 1501–1524)—and also functioned as a military distinction in the fights against the Ottoman government.⁴ In the sixteenth century, sometimes the term *kızılbaş* denoted Alawis and sometimes an unprecise group of rebels. However, from the state’s perspective, both *kızılbaş* and Alawis inherited the connotation of dissent, though sometimes it also indicated allegiance when fiscal duties were observed.⁵ Although the designation *kızılbaş* did not necessarily signify an Alawi,⁶ the interchangeable use of both terms in sixteenth-century realities makes a distinction impossible. Thus, in light of the nonbinary relationship between Alawis and *kızılbaş*, this paper uses both terms according to their use in the sources. For general approaches, the term Alevite is preferred.

Besides the evident and undisputable persecution of Alevites, recent research has explored moments of integration in order to reveal the empowerment that ensured their existence to our very day.⁷ Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer showed that socioeconomic benefits greatly impacted the confessional orientation. She further revealed that a certain fluidity existed between Sunnite and Shiite-related Alevite beliefs, and that changes and even rechanges of the different sides occurred.⁸

This paper delineates the mutual relations in poetry, exemplified by the ruler Sultan Süleyman and the prominent poet and dervish Pir Sultan Abdal. Whether as a ruler or a rebel, both had a great impact on the people. Their poems suggest little accommodation and give voice to dissent and their irreconcilability. Both poets had an enormous audience and influence over their subjects and adherents. Thus, we explore how the conflict was transferred to the lyrical realm, and how each side contested or legitimized its own agency.

3 Republic State Archive Istanbul (BOA), D.H. ŞFR 1333, and BOA. TRT MD. 1927: Measures by the vali of Ankara against Kör Dede and Alevite rebels; BOA. A DVNSMHD 976: Reports about *kızılbaş* who went to Iran and spread the new belief after their return to Anatolia; BOA. ADVNSMH 985: Reports about clandestine Alevite ceremonies and their prohibition by the Governor of Tarsus.

4 Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 6; Mélikoff, *Au banquet des Quarante*, 115; Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, “Neither Victim Nor Accomplice: The Kızılbaş as Borderland Actors in the Early Modern Ottoman Realm,” in *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire 1450–1750*, ed. Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 423.

5 Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, “Neither Victim Nor Accomplice,” 435.

6 Benjamin Weineck, *Zwischen Verfolgung und Eingliederung Kızılbaş-Aleviten im osmanischen Staat. 16-18. Jahrhundert*, (Kultur, Recht und Politik in muslimischen Gesellschaften; 42), (Baden-Baden: Ergon Verlag, 2020), 4, 33.

7 Weineck, *Zwischen Verfolgung und Eingliederung Kızılbaş-Aleviten*, 22.

8 Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, “Neither Victim Nor Accomplice,” 435f.

1 Historical Background

The notion of Alawis appeared in Anatolia in the fifteenth century with an Iranian origin. Haydar, an adherent of the Safavid order, was born in 1460. The powerful Turkmen ruler, Uzun Hasan (r. 1452–1478), installed him in Ardebil. During Haydar's short period of reign, his partisans, the Alevites, emerged. His son, İsmail, became a poet and a Safavid ruler committed to Shiite belief, though implementing also shamanic elements. He promoted himself as the essence of God and the incarnation of Ali.⁹ However, it should be emphasized that, in the sixteenth century, there was no coherent group or movement with a common belief or practice, but rather various regional and mystical influences shaped the different Alevite communities.¹⁰ It was more an umbrella term for those who deviated in one way or another from the government's demands or Sunni-religious obligations. The veneration for the fourth caliph Ali, the prophet Muhammed's son-in-law, formed the core of Alevite belief, and in this context, saints evolved by committing miraculous deeds (*keramet*).¹¹ In many ways, the Alevites conferred a divine aura to Ali, who was symbolized by the lion and the crane (*turna*).¹² The renowned French researcher Irène Mélikoff emphasized the joint esoteric dimension between Shiism and Sufism and their ultimate entanglement.¹³ It should, however, be noted that cosmological and shamanic elements were virulent in Islamic thought even in the sixteenth century.¹⁴ The 1550s represented a turning point in terms of ideology, for only after 1545 was a stricter Sunnitization realized.¹⁵

In historiographical writings, Ottoman military successes tended to overshadow the fragility of Ottoman society. The *Shahkulu* rebellion of 1511,¹⁶ for example, heralded the Safavid-Ottoman conflict and indicated the extent of support that Shah İsmail enjoyed in central and east Anatolia.¹⁷ The Alevites who venerated Shah İsmail largely joined the

⁹ Mélikoff, *Au banquet des Quarante*, 115.

¹⁰ Dressler, *Writing Religion*, 14f.

¹¹ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Alevî ve Bektaşî İnançlarının İslâm Öncesi Temelleri*, 14th edition (İstanbul: İletişim, 2020), 56, 64, 68; Weineck, *Zwischen Verfolgung und Eingliederung Kızılbaş-Aleviten*, 7.

¹² Mélikoff, *Au banquet des Quarante*, 111.

¹³ Ibid., 100.

¹⁴ Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 155–88.

¹⁵ Christiane Czygan, "Masters of The Pen: The Divans of Selimi and Muhibbi," in 1516: *The Year That Changed the Middle East*, ed. Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn (Beirut: AUB Press, 2021), 112.

¹⁶ Şerafettin Turan, "Beyazid II," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (islamansiklopedisi.org.tr), accessed 07.09.2022; Markus Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy: Competing Claims for Authority and Legitimacy in the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, eds. Hakan K. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 152.

¹⁷ Erdem H. Çıpa, *The Making of Selim: Succession, Legitimacy, and Memory in the Early Modern Ottoman World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 43–48.

rebellion,¹⁸ which had been prompted by the Safavids and hence posed an ideological challenge in addition to being an immediate security threat to the Ottomans. The Ottoman-Safavid tensions culminated in a series of wars (1514–1515, 1535–1536, 1548–1550, and 1553–1555), which were very taxing to the state financially and militarily as well as extremely unsettling for the population of Eastern Anatolia.¹⁹ The extraordinarily high taxation of the urban Anatolian population provoked migrations from Anatolia to Safavid-Iran, where less taxation and more autonomy had been promised.²⁰ Beneath the religious appeal of the Safavid movement lay the apocalyptic expectations of the perfect ruler/man/imam/Mahdi, corresponding to the “Messiah of the Last Age,” which were abundant and prompted further uncertainty and unrest within the Anatolian as well as in the Istanbulite population.²¹ The government confronted new mystic leaders with extraordinary suspicion, and there is evidence of arrests during and prior to Süleyman’s era.²² The accusation of heretical statements was extraordinarily dangerous and, if not publicly disclaimed, according to Hanafi-law, demanded the perpetrator’s death. How, in some specific cases, such as that of Molla Lutfi (d. 1494), the accusation alone sufficed to have someone executed remains an unanswered question and a matter of ongoing research to this day.²³

The Alevites further ignited the rather turbulent conflict between the Ottoman Empire and its Eastern neighbor and enemy, the Safavid state.²⁴ Their wave of migrations from the Ottoman into the Safavid realm, noncompliance with tax increases, and the refusal of military service,²⁵ along with their allegiance to Shah İsmail, the prime Ottoman

18 Baltacioğlu-Brammer, “Neither Victim Nor Accomplice,” 424.

19 Czygan, “Masters of The Pen: The Divans of Selimi and Muhibbi,” 112f.

20 Baltacioğlu-Brammer, “Neither Victim Nor Accomplice,” 442f.

21 Ebru Boyar, “Ottoman Expansion in the East,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Ottoman Empire as World Power, 1453–1603*, eds. Suraiya N. Faroqhi and Kate Fleet, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 102, 114; Ahmed Yaşar Ocak, “Idéologie officielle et réaction populaire: un aperçu général sur les mouvements et les courants socio-religieux à l’époque de Soliman le Magnifique,” in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps: Actes du Colloque de Paris Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais 7–10 Mars 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Documentation Française, 1992), 185–92; Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541–1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 164.

22 Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 180.

23 Ibid., 270–97.

24 On the Safavid threat outside Eastern Anatolia, see Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, “The Shiites in Lebanon and the Ottomans in the 16th and 17th Centuries,” in *Convegno sul Tema La Shī’a Nell’Impero Ottomano: Roma, 15 Aprile 1991* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1993), 108–19.

25 Baltacioğlu-Brammer, “Neither Victim Nor Accomplice,” 439; Markus Dressler, “Inventing Orthodoxy,” 155.

counterpart, threatened Ottoman sovereignty and faced stern persecution.²⁶ There is also evidence, however, that the state policies tried to distinguish between Alevites who observed taxation and those who did not. On the other hand, some of the Alevite tribe-chiefs realized the power they had and turned or even returned to the side that offered the best social conditions.²⁷ The lyrical factor has crucially remained underexplored in these new approaches toward Alevite empowerment. This is all the more astounding as both the ruler and the rebel were well aware of the emotional potential inherent in poetry and used it lavishly.

2 The Authors and the Manuscripts

Of interest here is the fact that the opposing rulers as well as Alevite leaders used poetry as an instrument of propaganda and legitimacy. It is generally agreed that poetry played an important role in the Safavid-Ottoman conflict, and that Shah İsmail composed numerous poems in plain Turkic with the intent of disseminating his message among the Anatolian dervishes and nomads through poetry.²⁸ In contrast, Sultan Selim I composed his poetry in Persian.²⁹ His successor, Sultan Süleyman, became a prolific Ottoman poet who chose the pen name of Muhibbi, the God-lover, which incorporated a strong mystical approach. The self-presentation as a lover did not hinder him from fiercely promoting an anti-Alevite. At the same time, a mystic and Alevite dervish in the vicinity of Sivas challenged the Sultan's sovereignty in his poetry. There are no historiographical or archival references to him, but there are to his poetry. Not even the traditional genre of a legendary history (*menakibname*) exists about him.³⁰ His pen name was Pir Sultan Abdal. Though it was long believed that Pir Sultan Abdal lived in the seventeenth century,³¹ Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı and Pertev Naili Boratov provided evidence for there being a coeval

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- 26 Christiane Czygan, "Songs of Power and Love: Context and Content of the Third Divan of Sultan Süleiman the Magnificent," in *Poetry, Interpretations and Influence on the World*, ed. Vivian Norton (New York: Nova Publishers, 2019), 52; Czygan, "Masters of The Pen: The Divans of Selimi and Muhibbi," 112f.
 - 27 Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "Neither Victim Nor Accomplice," 432–37; for the role of *menakibname*, see Ocak, *Alevî ve Bektaşî İnançlarının İslâm Öncesi Temelleri*, 31.
 - 28 Benedek Péri, "From İstâmböl's throne a mighty host to İran guided I;/Sunken deep in blood of shame I made the Golden Heads to lie," unpublished paper presented at the CIEPO Conference in Budapest 7–11 October 2014.
 - 29 Czygan, "Masters of The Pen: The Divans of Selimi and Muhibbi," 114; Benedek Péri, *The Persian Divân of Yavuz Sultân Selîm: A Critical Edition* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Research Networks, 2021), 19–22.
 - 30 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı and Pertev Naili Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal* (Ankara: TürkTarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1943), 5.
 - 31 Sadeddin Nüzhet, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, ed. Mehmet Can Doğan (Ankara: Çolpan Kitap, 2020), 26.

of Sultan Süleyman and his Safavid counterpart Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576).³² Irène Mélikoff revealed that Pir Sultan Abdal might have been executed between 1560 and 1567.³³ From his poems we learn that his name was Haydar, and that he was the head of a dervish convent in Banaz.³⁴ While this is well known, the reason given for his arrest and subsequent execution has remained a matter of contention. According to one strand promoted by Irène Mélikoff, his arrest and death sentence resulted from the uprising he had led. Following this strand, Hızır Pasha, one of his powerful disciples, tried to save him, asking to sing several psalms (*nefes*) without referring to the Shah. Pir Sultan Abdal, however, took his instrument and sang a psalm in which he glorified the Shah, conscious that this meant his death. Through the rhetorical device of ambiguous meaning (*tevrîye*), the term Shah pointed to the spiritual idol Ali, but also to Shah İsmail.³⁵ According to Gölpınarlı and Boratov, the conflict arose between Hızır Pasha and Pir Sultan Abdal, who rejected the authority of his former disciple, Hızır Pasha, because he had become the governor of the province of Sivas.³⁶ Though the two strands deviate concerning the role Hızır Pasha played, they both have Pir Sultan's denial of the Ottoman authority in common.

It should be emphasized that, after the sixteenth century, the Alevite and Bektashi orders merged, and clearer boundaries came about once again in modern times.³⁷ Thus, Pir Sultan Abdal was venerated by the Alevites and Bektashis alike, and his psalms belonged to the liturgical canon of both orders.³⁸

Orality strongly impacted the transmission of Pir Sultan Abdal's poetry, as they were sung during worship (*ayin*). Gölpınarlı and Boratov were the first to explore the many apocrypha dedicated to Pir Sultan Abdal and installed a canon of reliable poems. Using the many oral sources collected in the region of Sivas but also in Istanbul and Ankara, they traced his poems back to *mecmuas*, which were collections of various—and often disparate—content and other written compendia.³⁹ Surprisingly, to date, no distinction is made between the oral and the written psalms, and although some apocrypha have been revealed, the literary corpus by Pir Sultan Abdal has remained extremely disparate. It should be noted that, even today, there is no comprehensive edition of Pir Sultan Abdal's

32 Gölpınarlı and Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, 78.

33 Mélikoff, *Au banquet des Qurantes*, 58f.

34 Gölpınarlı and Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, 34.

35 Mélikoff, *Au banquet des Qurantes*, 60.

36 Gölpınarlı and Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, 35, 49f.

37 Dressler, *Writing Religion*, 12; Ocak, *Alevî ve Bektaşî İslâm Öncesi Temelleri*, 53–74.

38 Pir Sultan Abdal also venerated Hajj-ı Bektash in his psalms, Atilla Özkırımlı, "Pir Sultan Abdal Üzerine," in *Pir Sultan Abdal*, ed. Sabahhatin Eyuboğlu (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, n.d.), 11.

39 Gölpınarlı and Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, 13f.

poems. Even in the Konya manuscript from 1612,⁴⁰ a copy of Bisātī's *Menākīb ü'l Esrār Behçet ü'l Ahrār* (*Deeds by Legendary Personalities for the Joy of the Nobles*), new poems by Pir Sultan Abdal appear that were missed by Gölpınarlı and Boratov as well as other editors.⁴¹

Based on the publication by Gölpınarlı and Boratov, I have chosen one poem to illustrate Pir Sultan Abdal's lyrical skills as well as, more importantly, his political agenda and charisma.⁴² I analyze this in the following section.

Diametrically opposed to Pir Sultan Abdal's orally transmitted folk poetry, we find Sultan Süleyman's poems composed in the Arabic-based *aruz*-prosody and copied and collected many times in splendid poem collections called divans. Sultan Süleyman's volume of poetic production exceeded that of any of his predecessors and was never even remotely equaled by any of his successors. Hence, several divans attributed to him have appeared, and others are still being discovered. The Hamburg manuscript is a newly discovered imperial divan in which Muhibbi speaks to his audience of love in its different varieties: mystical love, love of the prophet, and mundane love.⁴³ Petra Kappert discovered this unique manuscript after almost a century of its oblivion in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg in the late 1980s. Her widower, Claus Peter Haase, asked me to pursue her unfulfilled plan of publishing the Divan, and I am currently preparing a critical edition. This manuscript comprises 657 poems and is important not only because of its early production date but because the poetry is less refined than that found in later manuscripts. In particular, this collection contains errors in terms of meter and other mistakes, edited out of Sultan Süleyman's later divans.⁴⁴ Still more extraordinary is the content of this Divan, because it contains a number of poems, eliminated in later poem collections because of their martial content. In one of these hitherto unknown and so to speak "new" poems, Sultan Süleyman transferred the conflict with the Alevites to the lyrical realm.

40 Bisātī [Şeyh Sāfi], *Menākīb ü'l Esrār Behçet ü'l Ahrār*, ed. Ahmet Taşgın (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2013), 5–7; Konya Mevlana Museum, Ferid Uğur's Library no. 1172.

41 See Gölpınarlı and Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal*; Ali Haydar Avcı, *Osmanlı Gizli Tarihinde Pir Sultan Abdal ve Bütün Deyişleri* (Ankara: Barış Kitap, 2012); Ergun, *Pir Sultan Abdal*.

42 Gölpınarlı and Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, 64f.

43 Christiane Czygan, "Songs of Power and Love," 48.

44 Christiane Czygan, "Depicting Imperial Love: Love Songs and Letters Between Sultan Süleyman (Muhibbî) and Hürrem," in *Suleyman the Lawgiver and His Reign: New Sources, New Approaches*, ed. M. Fatih Çalışır, Suraiya Faroqhi, and M. Şakir Yılmaz (İstanbul: İbn Haldun University Press, 2020), 249.

3 The Alevite in Muhibbi's Poetry

In the course of my complete reading of the Hamburg manuscript, I found only one poem focusing on the *Kızılbaş*. Yet, this poem is a prime example of Sultan Süleyman's voice merging with Muhibbi's voice. Although an entanglement between the Sultan's and the poet's voice existed—and was perceived as such in the biographical dictionaries—the lyrical narrator was not necessarily identical to the historical person, the Sultan. Thus, I try to distinguish the lyrical narrator from the historical person by exploring whether and to what extent the lyrical narrator formed an extension of the representative character as Sultan. In the following, hitherto unknown poem, neither mundane, divine, nor mystic love formed the core; rather, it evokes several weapons alluding to a military confrontation with the *Kızılbaş*. In this context, it should be noted that, in the contemporary official government language, the conflict with the *Kızılbaş* was considered a war, called *harb* or *cenk*. Thus, the topos of war was often referred to in archival sources when it came to actions against the *Kızılbaşes*.⁴⁵ In a lyrical context, however, the poet's claim of death must have been astounding as the conventional lyrical setting negotiated various facets of love but not martial ways of killing.

[hezec . - - - / . - - - / . - - - / . - - -]

“Yüzi kırtılmasun zengden ebed bu tığ-ı hün-fâşuñ /⁴⁶

Bu def'a kılmaya hünün eger cular Kızılbaşuñ.

Sinānuñ бүkilüb қaddı delegüm bu du-tā olsun /

Eger bağrunı delmezse varub toğrı evbāşuñ.

Dökilsün pırları tıruñ mecālı qalmasıñ pire /

Geçüb ger sineden bir yer itmezse o qallāşuñ.

Kesilsün şu'lesi topuñ tūfeng hıç olmasıñ rüşen /

Gözin açmağa rezm içre eger kırsa o huffāşuñ.

Muhibbî tığ bir elde ve bir elde gerek bir baş /

Bilenler böyledir derler ezelden resmî sāvaşuñ.”

“If this time the Kızılbaşes' blood does not flow in rivers /⁴⁷

Eternally, the blade of this blood-shedding sword shall not escape rust.

If it does not pierce these blackguards' hearts /

This lance may break into two, this is my wish.

If it does not stay in these rogues' chests /

45 Republic State Archive (BOA) A.DVMS.MHM.d.0007 [879]; A.DVNS.MHM.d.00027_0179.

46 *Divân-ı Muhibbî*, MKG Hamburg, 1886.186. f_95a_96b.

47 Translated by the author.

The arrow's fletching may fall out, the arrow loses its aim.
 If it is permitted that this bat will open its eye in war's lightning /
 The cannon's light will be extinguished, the gun never to spark again.
 Muhibbi, inescapably, sword in one hand, head in the other /
 This is how it has always been, that's the style of war the generals proclaim."

Muhibbi described the prototype of the enemy whose extinction is intended. In the *matla'*, the first distich, he used "*bu def'a*" to point to former attempts at destroying the Kızılbaş. It is unclear whether Muhibbi meant Shah Tahmasp (against whom he fought in the above-mentioned campaigns) or the Kızılbaş movement in general. We can, however, assume that the hate for the prime enemy, Shah Tahmasp, was projected to all his adherents and thus also to the rebellious Kızılbaşes in East Anatolia and those living in the Safavid realm. If the Kızılbaş escapes, the warriors' blade shall lose its function. Here, Muhibbi is not conceived as a passionate lover but as an angry warrior who has lost contempt by cursing his sword. In the next distich, the lance is cursed by uselessness should it not kill the Kızılbaş, designated pejoratively as blackguards. Thus, it does not suffice to curse the weapon; the anger must be turned into clear hate by labeling the Kızılbaş as evil. With this, Muhibbi ultimately transgressed the borders of lyrical convention by using vituperative utterances that, moreover, with "*evbāşuñ*," "*ḳallāşuñ*," and "*ḥuffāşuñ*" formed the *redif*. As rhymes, they are more prominent and further underline Muhibbi's perception of Kızılbaşes as the ultimate evil. Again, as a weapon, the arrow is threatened by uselessness if it does not pierce the Kızılbaşes. What Muhibbi did here is attribute a quasi-human nature to the weapons and simultaneously strip the Kızılbaşes of their human character. This culminated in the Kızılbaşes' designation as bats and the threat that the gunpowder shall expire if they stay alive. The beheaded Kızılbaşes are the inevitable consequence of Muhibbi's polemic bolstered by the affirmative statement of military representatives. It is not Muhibbi who is the murderer but the ratio of this war-like relationship.

With this poem, Muhibbi showed that, occasionally, he put poetry into the pure service of politics and used his poetry to legitimize the ruler's actions. Moreover, Muhibbi—or better Sultan Süleyman—deprived the Kızılbaşes from being his subjects and made clear that they had to be killed without mercy and by whatever means.

4 Pir Sultan Abdal's Call

We know that Muhibbi's poem must have been written before 1554. Given that Pir Sultan Abdal was executed in the 1560s, the following poem might have been created roughly

at the same time or a few years later. This psalm is conceived as a divine mission that demands action. It is God for whom they fought, highlighted in the refrain. The syllable counting meter is 4 + 4.

“Gelin canlar bir olalım⁴⁸
Münkire kılıç çalalım
Hüseynin kanın alalım
Tevekkeltü taällallah.

Özü öze bağlıyalım
Sular gibi çağlıyalım
Bir yürüyüş eyliyelim
Tevekkeltü taällallah.

Açalım kızıl sancağı
Geçsin Yezidlerin çağı
Elimizde aşk bıçağı
Tevekkeltü taällallah.
Mervan soyunu vuralım

Hüseynin kanın soralım
Pâdişahın öldürelim
Tevekkeltü taällallah.

Pir Sultan'im geldi cûşa
Münkirlerin aklı şaşsa
Takdir olan gelir başa
Tevekkeltü taällallah.”

“Come different souls, let us be one⁴⁹
Let us unsheathe the sword against the disbelievers
Let us revenge the blood of Hüseyin
May the almighty God come to our help

Let us connect with our deepest soul
Let our effervescence be like water
Let us make a march
May the almighty God come to our help

48 Gölpinarlı and Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, 64f. This poem was discovered in a collection belonging to Muharrem from İğdiş in Şarkışla. Gölpinarlı and Boratov, *Pir Sultan Abdal*, 13.

49 Translated by the author.

Let us deploy the red banner
 May the era of the Yezid perish
 In our hands the knife of love
 May the almighty God come to our help

 Let us destroy the race of Mervan
 Let us demand the price for Hüseyin's blood
 Let us kill the[ir] sovereign
 May the almighty God come to our help

 I am Pir Sultan, coming for an uprising
 May the disbelievers lose their minds
 What is preordained will happen
 May the almighty God come to our help."

In the first stanza, the poet called on his followers to unite and alluded to the Shiite trauma—the killing of Caliph Ali's son Hüseyin in the battle of Kerbela (10 October 680). It was a battle of the caliphate between the House of Ali, who had been murdered in 661 and thus roughly a decade previously, and the House of the Umayyads. The outcome of this battle in favor of the Umayyads consolidated their power and spurred the schism between the Sunnites and the Shiites. Thus, the poet referred to the deepest common trauma and designated the faction of the Umayyads, led by Yazid I, as disbelievers. The veneration for Ali, and in his wake for Ali's sons Hasan and Hüseyin, has formed the core of Alevite belief until today. Pir Sultan Abdal called for revenge for this humiliating defeat. The suggestive character of this psalm is enhanced by all verbs being in the optative form.

In the stanzas that follow, Pir Sultan Abdal called for action and a concrete uprising by evoking the march as a weapon and the Alevite banner. This concrete action was legitimized by the killing of the deeply revered Hüseyin, but because this event had occurred more than 800 years before, the concrete enemy could only be understood as the march against the anti-Safavid government. In this light, the demand to kill the sovereign could hardly be understood as the demand to kill the Umayyad's ruler, as Irène Mélikoff has suggested.⁵⁰ The concrete action prompted did not point to an event long past, but to the poet's present, so it could only allude to the killing of the Sultan. Hence, the reference to the trauma served as a means of provoking anger and shame and served to destroy all objections to the killing of government representatives or the Sultan himself.

50 Mélikoff, *Au banquet des Qurantes*, 62.

Conclusion

In contemporary research, the empowerment of the Alevites has been highlighted in terms of their economic and social conditions, with poetry remaining to this day crucially underexplored—though the poem under scrutiny ultimately reveals the standing a poet like Pir Sultan Abdal had with his call for the killing of the Sultan.

Muhibbi's poem on the Kızılbaş provides further evidence that a precise concept and terminology of the Kızılbaş-Alevites did not exist, as the denomination could have been used to signify the Safavid ruler, the people in the Safavid, or the Ottoman realm or all of them.

Ruler and rebel, both poets could not have been more different. Both poems, however, point with their strong appeal either for rebellion or for the killing of the Kızılbaş, thus also incorporating the Alevite Ottoman subjects, to a problem or, more precisely, to a taboo. From the government's and the Sultan's perspective, they had to convince the soldiers to kill their own people. From Pir Sultan Abdal's perspective, he had to convince the Alevites and their sympathizers to join the rebellion and fight against the Ottoman authority and the sovereign. Thus, poetry, with its strong emotional appeal, served as a means of overcoming a taboo and thus became an important device of politics.

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في استلهاام المغرب للتجارب والنُّظُم العثمانية

عبد الرحيم بنحادة

تتناول هذه الدراسة استلهاام المغرب للتجارب العثمانية من خلال الوقوف عند ثلاث لحظات مهمة في التاريخ المغربي. بيد أنه لا بد من التأكيد على مسألتين أساسيتين: الأولى تتعلق بإرساء دعائم حقل الدراسات العثمانية في المغرب، هذا الحقل الذي تأسس بمبادرة من باحثين اشتغلوا فيه فرادى، تُحرِّكهم أسئلة منهجية دقيقة تخصّ تاريخ المغرب. وقد عرف هذا الحقل تناميًا وحقق تراكمًا معرفيًا تجلّى في مناقشة العديد من الأطروحات والرسائل الجامعية وإصدار مجموعة من المنشورات التي عنيت بالبحث في التاريخ العثماني وعلاقته بالمغاربة والعالم المتوسطي. وشكّل هذا التراكم خروجًا عن المعتاد في الكتابات التاريخية المغربية التي عُرِفَتْ غالبًا بالتقوقع، وسمح هذا التراكم بفتح نافذة يطلّ منها العديد من الباحثين على عوالم أخرى تتيح لهم مراجعات تُعنى بتاريخ المغرب. صُبِّف العديد من الظواهر المغربية إلى عهد قريب ظواهر خاصّة، وقد أظهر البحث أنّها لم تكن كذلك، ولم تكن تخصّ المغرب وحده. ولعلّ ما يميّز نشوء هذا الحقل وتطوّره هو أنه جرى بمعزلٍ عن توجّهات البحث في الغرب وفي المشرق العربي. ففي الوقت الذي كان فيه البحث في تاريخ الدولة العثمانية في الغرب رهيئًا بأجندة غير علمية، وكان في المشرق العربي يدخل ضمن تسويغ "التخلّف"، كان البحث التاريخي المغربي المتعلّق بالعالم العثماني وليد الرغبة في التعرّف إلى أسباب الاستقلال المغربي ومعناه. أمّا المسألة الثانية فهي ينبغي لنا تأكيدها. لم تكن أطروحة القوّة العسكرية التي روّجتها الكتب المدرسية مقنعة للباحثين المغاربة، خصوصًا بعد الوقوف عند المشاكل الهيكلية للدولة المغربية والوقوف عند هشاشة الاقتصاد المغربي في القرن السادس عشر وبعده. وهو ما دعانا إلى البحث في أسباب أخرى يمكن أن تفسّر "وضعية الاستقلال"، وهو أمر فصلنا الحديث عنه في دراسات سابقة.¹

1 عبد الرحيم بنحادة، في تفسير الاستقلال، ضمن عمل 1516: العام الذي غير الشرق الأوسط، تحرير عبد الرحيم أبو حسين، دار نشر الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت، بيروت 2022.
عبد الرحيم بنحادة، «تنازع السيادة»، في من إيناون إلى إستانبول، منشورات كلية الآداب، الرباط 2012.

فهل ظلّ المغرب بعيداً عن التأثيرات العثمانية؟ قد يبدو ذلك إذا ما لم نخرج من قوقعة البحث التاريخي. ولكن، وعلى عكس ما يمكن أن يتبادر إلى الذهن من أنّ المغرب لم يتأثر بالنظم والمؤسسات العثمانية بفعل هذا الاستقلال، فإنّ المتفحص للنظم العثمانية والمغربية سرعان ما يقف عند التشابه والتقاطع بين هذه الأنظمة والمؤسسات، بل يقف أيضاً على التأثيرات البارزة لبعض النظم العثمانية في النظم المغربية.

حقيقةً، كانت للمغرب نظمه ومؤسساته التي حافظ عليها عبر التاريخ، وعبرت عن تقاليده السياسية المتميزة، واستلهم أيضاً العديد من النظم الأوروبية عندما شرع في مباشرة إصلاحاته في القرن التاسع عشر، غير أنّه لم يتغافل عن تلك التي عرفتها الدولة العثمانية عبر تاريخها.

وحتىّ أبين ذلك، سأقف عند ثلاث محطات أساسية تبرز استلهم المغرب للتجارب والنظم العثمانية. وبالقدر الذي يحاول البحث فيه رسم مظاهر التأثير العثمانيّ عبر هذه اللحظات الثلاث، يسعى أيضاً إلى رصد آليات انتقال التأثير العثمانيّ والوقوف عند ناقلي التجارب العثمانية.

المحطة الأولى، وهي محطة القرن السادس عشر: لقد عجز العثمانيون، لأسباب ترتبط بظرفيات المتوسط، عن ضمّ المغرب للسلطنة العثمانية، غير أنّهم تمكّنوا من اقتحام البلاط المغربيّ وأدخلوا إليه برتوكولاتهم وتقاليدهم وأثروا تأثيراً بارزاً في الإدارة السعدية، وبرز ذلك في استقراء التنظيمات الإدارية في القرن السادس عشر؛ إذ يحفل قاموسها بمصطلحات إدارية عثمانية.

وقد تتبّع السلاطين السعديّون الشأن العثمانيّ بشكل مباشر وغير مباشر، واستلهموا تجاربه. ففي ستينات القرن السادس عشر لجأ الأمراء عبد الملك وعبد المؤمن وأحمد (الذي لقّب فيما بعد بأحمد المنصور) إلى الجزائر، وبعد وفاة عبد المؤمن في تلمسان لجأ أخواه عبد الملك وأحمد إلى إستانبول، وهناك وقفا على التقاليد والنظم المعمول بها في الولاية والمركز. وبمجرّد عودة عبد الملك (1576-1578) إلى المغرب سنة 1576 واعتلاء أحمد المنصور (1578-1603) سدة الحكم بُعيد معركة وادي المخازن سنة 1578، شرع الأميران السعديّان في تطبيق العديد من مشاهداتهما البلاطية والإدارية. وربّما كان بين ذلك ما أقدم عليه أحمد المنصور من إنشاء سجلّات لتدوين ما في ذمّة القبائل من الضرائب وتنظيم الطرق عن طريق إنشاء نقط إدارية شبيهة بالكراوانسراي² والعمل على إحداث قوّة عسكرية مرتبطة بالدولة.

أمّا في ما يتعلّق بإنشاء السجلّات، فقد عمل على إنشاء دواوين لهذا الغرض. ويحفظ الأرشيف

² لا تميّز المصادر في كثير من الأحيان بين الرباط والكراوانسراي، بل نجدهما يُستعملان بشكل متبادل للدلالة على المباني التي أحدثت من أجل التجارة وعلى الطرق التجارية في المدن. وقد كانت هذه المباني تحتضن العابرين للطرق من التجار وتوفّر لهم احتياجاتهم المختلفة، بل عُدتّ أيضاً مجالاً لتبادل السلع بينهم. وكانت المسؤولية الأمنية داخل هذه المباني تقع على عاتق الدولة، وكان التجار يدفعون مقابل هذه الحماية الأمنية. وقد أصبحت هذه المباني أكثر تنظيماً وقوّة في إيران في عهد السلاجقة. وعمل السلاجقة على بناء ما يزيد على 100 مبنى على الطرق التجارية في منطقة الأناضول. ولم يتوقّف العثمانيّون عن إحداث هذه المباني سواء في الأناضول عندما تحوّلت الطرق التجارية ولم يعد أيّ دور للمباني التي أحدثها السلاجقة، أم في جهات أخرى من المجالات التي سيطروا عليها لاحقاً. انظر:

Şebnem Akalın, "Kervansaray," *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 25 (2002), 299–302.

المغربيّ نصّاً يبيّن هذا التوجّه، ويتعلّق الأمر بـ "ديوان قبائل سوس"³ الذي سجّل فيه إبراهيم بن علي الحساني⁴. وتنسج هذه الكناشة على منوال الدفاتر الإحصائية التي يصادفها المشتغل بالأرشيف العثمانيّ، وهي تسمح بكتابة التاريخ الماليّ والديموغرافيّ للمغرب. ورغم أنّ بعض الباحثين يميلون إلى القول إنّ أحمد المنصور قد عمل على استلهاام تجارب مغربية سابقة في هذا الباب⁵، فإننا لا نشكّ في أنّ الدولة السعدية انفتحت أيضاً على التجربة العثمانية واقتنعت بجدوى هذه النظم التركيّة، وسعت إلى تعميم هذه التجربة التي لم يكتب لها الاستمرار لأسباب ترتبط بمآل الدولة السعدية بعد وفاة المنصور السعديّ سنة 1603.

لم يقف المنصور عند الاقتداء بتجارب البيروقراطية العثمانية في تنظيم السجلات والدفاتر، بل نجده يحذو حذوهم في تنظيم الديوان. فقد حدّد المنصور، كما يقول صاحب *مناهل الصفا*، أياماً لانعقاد ديوانه سمّاها "أيّام الديوان"، وهي التي يجلس فيها للجُمهور والوفود وأحكام الجند ومناولة أمور المملكة بالنقض والإبرام وخصّ بذلك يوم السبت ويوم الإثنين والأربعاء.⁶ لم يقتصر تقليد المنصور عند اختيار "أيّام الديوان"، وهي نفسها التي كان يُعقد فيها الديوان العثمانيّ، بل تجاوزه إلى التقليد على مستوى النظر في القضايا المعروضة عليه وطريقة التأشير إليها، فقد كان يضع توقيعاً على الرسائل الموجهة إلى الخارج أو الظهائر، ويضع الطابع على كل ما يتعلّق بـ "البرאות والأشغال والعطاء".⁷

ولعلّ الفارق بين ديوان المنصور والديوان العثمانيّ، هو أنّ السلطان المنصور هو الذي كان يرأسه باستثناء الأوقات التي يتغيّب فيها عن العاصمة، والتي يوكل فيها الأمر إلى أحد أبنائه. وربما يكون حرص المنصور على أن يرأس الديوان نابغاً من رغبته في تكريس هذا التقليد. ويذكر هذا الأمر بما كان معمولاً به في الدولة العثمانية إلى زمن السلطان محمد الفاتح (حكم 1451-1481). أمّا في ما يتعلّق بالطرق، فيقول ابن القاضي (توفي 1616/1025)، وهو مؤرّخ أحمد المنصور السعديّ:⁸

3 إبراهيم بن علي الحساني، *ديوان قبائل سوس في عهد السلطان أحمد المنصور الذهبي*، تحرير عمر أفا (الدار البيضاء: مطبعة النجاح الجديدة، 1989).

4 لا توجد ترجمة مفصّلة لإبراهيم بن علي الحساني وبالتالي لا يمكن الوقوف عند تاريخ وفاته، وقد عاصر الحملة التي قام بها أحمد المنصور على سوس في سنة 1580. ويوضح هذا الأمر عمر أفا عند تقديمه للديوان. انظر: المصدر نفسه، 3.

5 يستند هؤلاء الباحثون إلى ما أورده المؤرّخ المجهول عندما ذكر أنّ الفضل في أمور تنظيم الدولة يعود إلى أحد وزراء بني مرين، قاسم الزرهونيّ الذي دلّ السعديّين على مختلف البنيات الإدارية للدولة المرينية ومنها الدواوين والسجلات. انظر المصدر نفسه، 4.

6 عبد العزيز الفشتاليّ، *مناهل الصفا في مآثر موالينا الشرفا* (الرباط: مطبوعات وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الإسلامية والثقافة، 1972)، 205.

7 المصدر نفسه، 200.

8 أحمد بن القاضي، *المنتقى المقصور على مآثر الخليفة المنصور* (الدار البيضاء: مكتبة المعارف، 1986)، 2: 28-827.

اعلم أن مخدومنا أول ما صرف إليه همته تمهيد الطرق على المسافرين بمنازل وخيام وأمر بسكنائها على الطريق، بين المنزلة والمنزلة ما يقرب من أربعة وعشرين ميلاً، يسكنها أهل البادية... وقد أجرى لهم على ذلك من إقطاع الأرض ما يكفيهم ثواباً لهم على سكنائهم هنالك، وأمرهم ببيع الشعير والطعام واللحم والعسل وغير ذلك ما يحتاج إليه المسافر ودوابه، وفي بعض المنازل من يصنع أطعمة جيدة ويبيعها ممن يستحقها وإن باتت لديهم قافلة يحرسونها طول الليل ويحيطون أمتعتهم وإن ضاع شيء فيما بينهم ضمنوه لرّبّه...⁹

هذه الإجراءات التي قام بها أحمد المنصور على هذا النحو لم تكن تخص الأتراك العثمانيين فحسب، بل عمل بها الأوروپيون أيضاً. وعندما نستطلع رحلة الغساني (1707)¹⁰ نجد أنه وصف شيئاً مشابهاً لما قدّمه ابن القاضي. وكان ظاهرة مغربية أيضاً، حيث نقف مع ابن مرزوق (توفي 1380 / 781)، وهو مؤرخ السلطان أبي الحسن المريني (حكم 1331-1351) على هذا الأمر، إلا أنه لا يخامرنا شك في أن المنصور السعديّ وهو يسّن هذا الإجراء كان يفكر في التجربة العثمانية في هذا المضمار لأنّه عايشها ووقف عليها.

أما في الجانب العسكريّ، فالظاهر أنّ التجربة العثمانية أبهرت السلاطين السعديّين وخصوصاً السلطان أحمد المنصور. لقد انتبه السلطان مولاي أحمد إلى أنّ التنظيمات العسكرية التي جرى تبنيها من قبل الدول التي تعاقبت على حكم المغرب بينت محدوديتها، لا بل حتّى خطورتها على استقرار الأوضاع في البلاد. ومن ثمّ، كان التفكير في إنشاء جيش "محترف" لا يدين بالولاء لأيّ قبيلة من القبائل. لقد وقف المنصور السعديّ على الدور الذي يمكن أن يؤديه جيش قبليّ، حيث أدّت العناصر العسكرية أدواتاً سلبية في معركة وادي المخازن، وعارضت عناصر الجيش من قبائل الخلط المساهمة في الحملة على تيكورارين التي جهّزها المنصور. في الوقت نفسه، حفظت ذاكرة المنصور الدور الذي يؤديه الجيش النظامي في الدولة العثمانية، فقد كان الجيش أداة أساسية من أدوات ممارسة السلطة في تلك الدولة، وكان يؤدي دوراً أساسياً في استتباب الأمن وفي الانتقال السلس للسلطة. لقد كان المنصور حاضراً في الدولة العثمانية عندما انتقل العرش من السلطان سليم الثاني (حكم 1566-1574) سنة 1574 إلى السلطان مراد الثالث (حكم 1574-1595). وكان المنصور حاضراً في المكان نفسه عندما خاضت جيوش الدولة العثمانية معركتين حاسمتين في البحر الأبيض المتوسط: معركة ليبانتو (1571) ومعركة حلق الوادي (1574). ومع اختلاف نتائجهما، أظهرت المعركتان للمنصور مدى التنظيم. ولا شك في أنّ ذاكرة المنصور حفظت كيفية سهر الجيش العثمانيّ على أمن البلاط وسلامته.

9 أحمد بن القاضي، *المنتقى المقصور على مآثر الخليفة المنصور* (الدار البيضاء: مكتبة المعارف، 1986)، 2: 28-827.

10 الغساني، *رحلة الوزير في افتكالك الأسير* (طوكيو: منشورات معهد الأبحاث في لغات وثقافات آسيا وأفريقيا، 2005)، ص 80.

11 Odile Moreau, «Notion et nature de l'État, de l'héritage ottoman aux réformes constitutionnelles modernes,» in *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, 110 (2013): 117-34.

يعتمد المؤرخ البولوني جوبسكي (Dziubinski)، الذي أنجز دراسة فريدة عن "الجيش والأسطول الحربي المغربي خلال مرحلة ملوك الأسرة السعدية"، يعتمد على وثيقة إنجليزية تؤكد أنّ المنصور السعديّ سعى إلى "توظيف العلوج مباشرة بعد انتهاء معركة وادي المخازن، كان من بينهم عدد كبير من الأطفال تقلّ أعمارهم عن خمس عشرة سنة بهدف تنشئتهم على قواعد الشريعة".¹² وبعد الحملة على السودان، استمرّ المنصور في النهج نفسه عندما وظّف العبيد المستجلبين بطريقة مماثلة على النحو الذي تورده المصادر الأجنبية التي تتبعت أخبار فتح السودان.

لقد كانت التجربة العثمانية ماثلة بين عيني المنصور — وإن حاول أن يتميز عنها سواء عند توظيف العلوج و/أو أم عند الاعتماد على العبيد عن طريق السماح لمجنّديه بالزواج على عكس جيش الإنكشارية — ولعلّ هاجسه لم يكن ذا طابع "حقوقي"، بل كان موسوماً بالرغبة في زيادة أعداد الجيش. لقد كان المنصور يدرك أنّ كثرة أعداد الإنكشارية تعود إلى طبيعة الدولة القائمة على أساس التوسع، وهذا ما لم يكن المنصور قادراً على الاستمرار فيه، فكان أن سمح لهم بالتزواج رغبةً في التكاثر. وقد استطاع المنصور بلوغ هدفه في هذا المجال وفي وقت وجيز، حيث أشار أحد الملاحظين الإنجليز إلى أنّ عدد جيش المنصور سنة 1603 قد بلغ أربعين ألف رجل.¹³

اعتمد أحمد المنصور أيضاً الترتيب نفسه في ما يتعلق بتقسيم الجيش إلى فرق وتنظيمات، كما اعتمد الألقاب والأسماء نفسها التي اعتمدها الأتراك العثمانيون. فهناك الباشاوات والقوادر والكواهي والمقدّمون والباشوظات والبولوك باشات والضباشيات واليولداش.¹⁴ وتعدّ كلّ هذه التسميات تركيّة، وتنهض دليلاً على أنّ التجربة العسكرية العثمانية ظلّت أنموذجاً يحتذى به السلطان أحمد المنصور.

لم يقف تأثير الدولة العثمانية على السلطانين السعديين عبد الملك المعتمد وأحمد المنصور عند القضايا التنظيمية فحسب، بل تجاوزه إلى النسخ على منوالهم في المنشآت العمرانية التي أقامها بخاصة في مدينة مراكش. فهل كان المنصور يحاكي العثمانيين في بناء القصور أيضاً؟ شرع أحمد المنصور في بناء قصر البديع في شهر شوال من العام 986/1579، أي بعد خمسة أشهر من تولّيه السلطة، واستمرّ العمل في بنائه مدّة تزيد عن ستّ سنوات. وقد حشد إليه كما يقول المؤرخون "الصنّاع وأرباب الحكمة من كلّ أرض". ورغم إجماعهم على أنّ قصور الأندلس كانت ملهمة السلطان المنصور ومرشدته في وضع تصميمه، فإنّ هناك العديد من المعطيات التي تؤكد حضور مشاهداته في قصور إستانبول أو ما بلغ إلى مسامعه عنها. لا يمكن أن نجزم بأنّ القصر كان صورةً طبق الأصل عن قصر طوب قابي، غير أنّ هذا الأخير أثر فيه كثيراً، ولعلّ ما يؤكّد هذا التأثير هو توزيع مباني القصر واللجوء إلى اعتماد كثرة القباب فيها، وكذا الاعتماد المكثّف على الرخام مادّةً أساسيةً في تبليط أرضية القصر. ولا يخامرنا شك في أن بناء المجمعات الدينية،

12 Andrzej Dziubinski, «L'armée et la flotte de guerre marocaine à l'époque des sultans de la dynastie Saadienne», *Hespéris-Tamuda* 13, no. 1 (1972): 61-94.

13 H. De Castries, *Les sources inédites de l'histoire du Maroc*, Première série – *Dynastie Saadienne Archives et Bibliothèques d'Angleterre* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1925), 2: 463.

14 عبد الله كنون، رسائل سعديّة (تطوان: معهد مولاي الحسن، 1954)، 118.

لا سيما جامعي المواسين ولالة عودة السعدية الوزكيتية بمراكش، كان على منوال النموذج التركي العثماني.

المحطة الثانية هي لحظة انقضاء القرنين السابع عشر والثامن عشر، عندما أقدمت الدولة العلوية على استلهاهم التجارب العسكرية العثمانية وسعت إلى استقطاب خبراء عسكريين أترافاً للمساعدة في تأهيل المنظومة العسكرية المغربية. كتب الأستاذ عبد الله العروي في كتابه تاريخ المغرب:

[...] سياسة إسماعيل لا تُفهم في إطار الدولة العلوية وحدها. ولا بدّ من النظر إلى ما حاوله المنصور وإن لم يحالفه التوفيق. والمحاولة دارت كلّها حول تأسيس جيش قائم بذاته ومستقلّ عن المجتمع، غير مرتبط بأية واحدة من القوى الفاعلة في الساحة المغربية... بيد أنّ عماد النظام الجديد استوحاه إسماعيل من الأتراك عن طريق السعديين، كانت الفكرة تتلخّص في فصل الجيش عن الجماعات المتقاسمة أرض المغرب كما توحّى أن يرتبط الجنود مباشرةً بشخصه وبه وحده.¹⁵

ولم يكن الأستاذ العرويّ مجانباً للصواب في ما قاله، وكلّ الخطوات التي أقدم عليها السلطان إسماعيل (حكم 1672-1727) تسير في هذا الاتجاه.

لقد حاول السلطان مولاي إسماعيل في البداية إصلاح الجيش بطريقة محلّية عن طريق إحداث جيش قبليّ يعتمد على القبائل العربية المنتشرة في الحوز والأطلس الكبير، غير أنّ هذا الجيش أثبت "عدم فعاليّته في ساحة القتال"، الأمر الذي جعل السلطان يفكّر في الاعتماد على جيش بديل، ويعلّل اختياره ذلك بقوله:

جعلنا بعون الله... ننظر من يصلح للجنديّة ومن يليق بها، فرأينا الأحرار وأهل المغرب لهذا العهد لا يصلحون للجنديّة ولا يليقون بها من وجوه شتىّ لما جُبلوا عليه من التكاسل والتخاذل وغلبة الشهوة وكثرة الأطماع المركوزة منهم في الطباع... وحيث رأيناهم على هذه الحال أعفيناهم وتركناهم على ما عليه من الاشتغال بمعاشهم والإقبال على منافعهم ويؤدّون ما يلزمهم لبيت المال عمّره الله وقصدنا إلى هؤلاء المماليك فاشتريناهم من ملاكهم بعد البحث عنهم والتفتيش فيهم على الوجه الشرعيّ.¹⁶

واعتمد السلطان في ذلك على التجربة السابقة في عهد المنصور السعديّ، حيث لجأ إلى سليل أحد خدام المنصور الذي دلّه على وجود ديوانٍ للعبيد في العهد السعديّ، فقرّر السلطان، كما يذكر أبو القاسم الزيّاني (توفي 1833)، تجميع الباقي منهم في قبائل الحوز، وتوسّع الجمع ليشمل بقيّة

15 عبد الله العرويّ، مجمل تاريخ المغرب (بيروت: المركز الثقافيّ العربيّ، 2012)، 497-98.

16 محمّد المهنّاويّ، "التنظيم العسكريّ وعلاقته بالسلطة والمجتمع في العهد العلويّ الأول (من قيام الدولة إلى سنة 1727)"، (أطروحة دكتوراه، جامعة شعيب الدكالي، كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية بالجديدة، 1995)، 1: 131.

المناطق المغربية. وأخيرًا، لجأ السلطان إلى زيادة أعدادهم عن طريق الشراء، إلى درجة يذكر معها المؤرخ نفسه أنه "لم يترك بتلك القبائل أسود سواء كان مملوكًا أو حرًا أسودًا وحرطانيًا".¹⁷ لم يستسغ المغاربة، وبخاصة العلماء منهم، مسألة تملك العبيد وإنشاء جيش العبيد البخاري، حيث سجلوا أنّ من شأن ذلك أن يقوّي السلطان، وتاليًا يستطيع فرض ما يراه من الضرائب. ومن جهته سعى السلطان إلى تأكيد الربط بين ضرورة الجهاد وتوفير جيش قوي،¹⁸ وكتب السلطان إسماعيل في إحدى رسائله لأحد علماء فاس مؤكّدًا أنّ الله يبيح للسلطان تقوية جيشه من أجل المحافظة على الخلافة، فالجيش في نظره هو من جند الله على الأرض، يسمح بالدفاع عن كلّ ما فيه خير للأمة.

لا يخامرنا شكّ في أنّ الطريقة التي اعتمدها المولى إسماعيل تكاد تكون مشابهة لتلك التي سلكها العثمانيون في تكوين جيش الإنكشارية، أو التي سلكتها سلطات سياسية إسلامية كانت أم مسيحية شرقية.¹⁹ وبدت درجة الاستلهايم أيضًا وإن بشكل متفاوت وفي مستويات عدّة: من التنشئة إلى الارتباط بمؤسسة السلطان، مرورًا بالابتعاد عن القبليّة والطائفيّة.

فبعد أن قام السلطان بتجميعهم، وزّعهم على سائر مختلف الثكنات مثلما هو عليه الأمر بالنسبة إلى جيش الإنكشارية. ولمّا كان هاجس الرفع من أعداد العبيد البخاريين حاضرًا بقوة في التجربة الإسماعيلية، فقد كان يُسمح لهم بالزواج على غرار ما قام به أحمد المنصور السعدي، وتشير بعض المصادر إلى أنّ عددهم ناهز مائة وخمسين ألفًا عند وفاة السلطان إسماعيل. كما أنّ هذا التزاوج كان يسمح للدولة المغربية بتغطية مجالات خدماتية أخرى؛ إذ يذكر المؤرخون المعاصرون أنّ عبيد الرملة كانوا يأتون السلطان

[...] ابتداءً من سنة 1688 بأبنائهم وبناتهم الذين هم في سنّ العاشرة فما فوق، فيوزّع البنات على القصور لتعلّم فنون الطبخ ومختلف الصنائع المنزلية، ويفرّق الأولاد على الصنائع والجرف من بناء ونجارة وسياسة الحمير، وبعد سنة يُنقلون إلى سوق البغال، وبعد سنة أخرى يعيّنهم لضرب المركز والطابية، ثم بعد سنة ثالثة يعيّنهم في الجندية ويشروعون في التداريب العسكرية على الأسلحة النارية دون الخيول... وظلّ هذا النظام قائمًا... يأتي الأطفال للتدريب والتربية كلّ سنة ويعود أولئك الذين أكملوا تكوينهم إلى مشرع الرملة.²⁰

17 أبو القاسم الزيّاني، *البستان الظريف في دولة أولاد مولاي علي بن الشريف* (الرشيدية: مركز الدراسات والبحوث العلوية، 1992)، 1: 157.

18 بهيجة سيمو، *الإصلاحات العسكرية بالمغرب 1844-1912* (الرباط: المطبعة الملكية، 2000)، 119.

19 Claude Cahen, «Note sur l'esclavage musulman et le Devshirme ottoman, à propos des travaux récents», *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 13, no. 2 (April 1970): 211-18.

20 محمّد القبلي وآخرون، *تاريخ المغرب تحيين وتركيب*، تحرير محمّد القبلي (الرباط: منشورات المعهد الملكي للبحث في تاريخ المغرب، 2011)، 411-12.

لماذا أَدَّى جيش العبيد البخاريّ دورًا تخريبياً في المغرب وأسهم في تكريس أزمةٍ دامت زهاء ثلاثين سنةً من العام 1727 حتّى العام 1757، في الوقت الذي كان فيه جيش الإنكشاريّة يؤدّي دورًا في تثبيت الأمن والاستقرار في الدولة العثمانيّة والسهر على انتقال السلطة بطريقة سلسة؟ يبدو أن جيش الإنكشاريّة كان أكثر ارتباطًا بمؤسسة الدولة وليس بشخص السلطان، وكان هذا الجيش أكثر تجذّرًا في النظام العثمانيّ، وإن حاول في بعض اللحظات أن ينتقل إلى ممارسة أدوار سلبية كما هو الأمر في القرن السابع عشر،²¹ غير أنّ هذه الممارسات لم تفض إلى انهيار أجهزة الدولة على غرار ما حدث في أزمة الثلاثين سنة (1727-1757).

جرى استلهاهم التجربة العسكريّة العثمانيّة في القرن السابع عشر في ظلّ توتّر العلاقات بين الدولة العثمانيّة والمغرب. فقد دخل السلطان مولاي إسماعيل منذ السنوات الأولى لحكمه في سجال مع أتراك الجزائر، بل في حروب معهم. وبلغت درجة التوتّر أقصاها عندما دخلت الجيوش المغربيّة في معارك ضدّ أتراك الجزائر، ووقف السلطان العثمانيّ مساندًا لباشاواته، موجّهًا رسالة شديدة اللهجة إلى السلطان العلويّ مولاي إسماعيل.²²

أمّا في القرن الثامن عشر، وفي أثناء حكم السلطان محمّد بن عبد الله للمغرب (حكم 1757-1790) وحكم السلطانين العثمانيين مصطفى الثالث (حكم 1757-1774) وعبد الحميد الأوّل (حكم 1774-1789)، فقد عوّّل المغرب كثيرًا على الخبرات العسكريّة للأتراك؛ إذ تشير وثائق الأرشيف العثمانيّ والنصوص المغربيّة إلى وصول عدد كبير من معلّمي الرماية الذين فرّقهم السلطان سيدي محمّد بن عبد الله على فاس وتطوان وسلا والرباط.²³ ويندرج إمداد المغرب بهذه الخبرات في إطار التقارب العثمانيّ المغربيّ من أجل مواجهة إمكانيّة مهاجمة الروس للدولة العثمانيّة، انطلاقًا من الشواطئ المغربيّة المتوسّطيّة.

وبالفعل، وصل العديد من الخبراء العثمانيين إلى المغرب من أجل تطوير عمل السلاح الناريّ، ولدينا شهادتان في هذا الباب:

الشهادة الأولى عثمانيّة، ويتعلّق الأمر بوثيقة من تصنيف جودت خارجية في الأرشيف العثمانيّ، وهي عبارة عن "بيورلدي" يعود تاريخه إلى 6 محرم 1181/5 يونيو 1767؛ إذ يذكر أنّ الإدارة العثمانيّة اختارت حاجي سليمان من منطقة فارنا (Varna، على البحر الأسود) لتبعثه إلى سلطان المغرب — صحبة السفير عبد الكريم راغون — لخدمته شريطة أن يعود إلى مقرّ السلطنة إستانبول بعد انصرام سنة كاملة.²⁴ ويتعلّق الأمر أيضًا بتقرير رُفِع إلى السلطان مصطفى الثالث (حكم 1757-1774)

21 يجب الإشارة هنا إلى الأدوار السلبية التي أداها جيش الإنكشاريّة لا سيّما عندما أجهز على السلطان عثمان الثاني سنة 1622 وخنق السلطان إبراهيم سنة 1648، وكذلك تدخله لعزل العديد من الصدور العظام وقتلهم مثلما حدث مع حسن باشا الصدر الأعظم زمن السلطان مراد الرابع سنة 1632.

22 رسالة مصطفى الثاني إلى السلطان مولاي إسماعيل، انظر نصّ الرسالة منشورًا (NHD: 5, 256-62). في: Abderrahim Benhadda, «Le Maroc et la sublime Porte : quelques réflexions sur les archives du Başbakanlık», *Studies on Turkish Arab Relations*, no. 4 (1989): 12-25.

23 ابن زيدان، *إتحاف أعلام الناس بجمال حاضرة مكناس* (القاهرة: مكتبة الثقافة الدينية، 2008)، 3: 58-261.

24 جودت خارجية، *الأرشيف العثمانيّ*، CH 7021.

بتاريخ 29 محرم 1181/28 يونيو 1767،²⁵ يخص الهدايا والإعانات التي حملها السفير عبد الكريم عند عودته. وتلخص الوثيقة هذه المعونات في 100 فنطار من الحديد الخام؛ وألف من البنب²⁶ (بيك عدد خميره)²⁷ ومدفعين. الشهادة الثانية مغربية، وتتمثل في ما أورده صاحب نشر المثنائي في الموضوع، يقول:

لما عزم السلطان على حصار مدن الساحل التي بأيدي الصبنيول... احتاج إلى بعض الآلات العظمى التي ترمى بها المدن من البنب والمهراز،²⁸ وأراد أن يصنع ذلك بالمغرب ويتعلمه أهل المغرب، لأنه لم يسبق لهم فيه خبرة، أرسل السيد الطاهر هذا قاضي مراکش... شيخ الركب النبوي الخياط عدیل... فكلّموا وزير السلطان العثماني... أن يأذن لمريد الخدمة بأجرته أن يسير معهم، فجاءوا بسنة عشر رجلاً من المعلمين، منهم من يخدم المهراز والبنب والنفط والكور، ومنهم من يصنع الكمن (كذا) السفن، فأكرمهم السلطان ورّتب لهم الأجرة والنفقة ووكل من يدفع لهم الإقامة، فكانوا يخدمون البنب بتطوان إلى أن تعلموا عليهم بعد مرورهم بفاس، وصنّاع الكمن والسفن ساروا إلى سلا... فمكثوا سنين إلى أن أخذ ذلك عنهم ورجعوا إلى بلادهم مكرّمين.²⁹

تسمح قراءة هاتين الشهادتين بتسجيل الملاحظات التالية:

- 1- تُبرز الوثيقتان حجم التعاون العسكري ونوعيته بين المغرب والباب العالي، وتُمكننا من الوقوف عند أسماء الخبراء العسكريين الذين وفدوا إلى المغرب ونوعية المهمة التي أُسندت إليهم. تختلف المصادر المغربية والوثيقتان التركيتان في أسماء السفراء الذين أوكلت إليهم هذه المهمة.
- 2- تشير الوثيقتان إلى أنّ عبد الكريم راغون (زار إستانبول سنة 1766) هو الذي اصطحب الطوبجيّ الصاجي سليمان، بينما تؤكد المصادر المغربية على سفارة الخياط عدیل والطاهر بناني (1775) وهما اللذان اصطحبا خبراء أتراكا إلى المغرب، فهل الأمر يتعلق بعملية واحدة أو يتجاوزها إلى عمليات أخرى؟
- 3- إذا كانت الوثيقة العثمانية تحدّد مدّة مكوث الخبراء العثمانيين في المغرب بسنة واحدة وتلجّ على ضرورة عودتهم إلى إستانبول بمجرد انتهاء السنة، فإنّ المصادر المغربية تقول بأنّ مدّة المكوث أكثر من سنة.

25 ابن الأمين، الأرشيف العثماني، AEIIM 5515.

26 كلمة تستعملها المصادر المغربية للدلالة على المتفجرات Bombes.

27 كما وردت في الوثيقة باللغة التركية العثمانية.

28 كما وردت في الوثيقة باللغة التركية العثمانية.

29 محمّد بن الطيّب القادري، نشر المثنائي لأهل القرن الحادي عشر والثاني (الرباط: مكتبة الطالب، 1977-1986)،

ولعلّ ما يؤكّد ما تذهب إليه المصادر المغربيّة مشاركة حاجي سليمان في حصار البريجة؛ إذ يذكر الضعيف أنّ السلطان سيدي محمّد بن عبد الله (حكم 1757-1790) وجّه إلى البريجة "البحريّة من مدينة الرباط والطبيجيّة والبنجابيّة والرياس وبعث معهم بابا سليمان... وهو الذي علّم أولاد الرباط وسلا... وكان معه بابا إسماعيل أيضًا طوبجي..."³⁰ وإذا علمنا بأنّ حصار البريجة كان في شعبان من عام 1182/دجنبر 1768، وبأنّ تاريخ إصدار الوثيقة العثمانية المتعلّقة بإرسال حاجي سليمان إلى المغرب هو 5 يونيو 1767، وبأنّ تاريخ الوصول إلى المغرب هو 12 شتنبر 1767 — حسب القنصل الإسباني في تطوان،³¹ أدركنا أنّ حاجي سليمان أقام في المغرب أكثر من المدة التي نصّ عليها البيورلدي العثماني. وهو ما يدفع إلى الاعتقاد بأنّ السلطان سيدي محمّد بن عبد الله قد اضطرّ — تحت ضغط الحروب الجهادية — إلى تجديد عقد خدمة الخبراء الأتراك بعد انقضاء المدة المحدّدة من طرف الإدارة العثمانية.³²

قد لا تهّمنا القضايا التفصيليّة التي أثارناها في ملاحظات تتعلّق بالشهادتين بقدر ما يهّمنا أنّ التجربة العثمانية في التنظيم العسكري كانت ملهمةً للسلطان سيدي محمّد بن عبد الله، وظلّت تلهمه طيلة حكمه، وهذا ما يفسّر هذا الانفتاح الواسع في استقدام الخبراء والذخيرة. المحطة الثالثة، هي لحظة القرن التاسع عشر والعشرين، عندما شرع المغاربة في استحضار التنظيمات العثمانية في برامجهم الإصلاحية، إنّ على مستوى الجيش أو الإدارة. وإبراز استلهم المغرب للخبرة العثمانية، سنقف عند ثلاثة مظاهر أساسية هي: الإصلاح العسكري والإصلاح الإداري والتجربة الدستورية.

1 الإصلاح العسكري

جرى استلهم التجربة العثمانية في المجال العسكري في مرحلتين: الأولى كانت زمن السلطانين عبد الرحمن بن هشام (حكم 1822-1859) ومحمّد بن عبد الرحمن (حكم 1859-1873)، أما الثانية فكانت زمن السلطان مولاي عبد الحفيظ (حكم 1908-1912) قبيل توقيع عقد الحماية بسنوات. أمّا بالنسبة إلى المرحلة الأولى، فتبدأ عند اتّخاذ فرنسا، المحتلة للجزائر بدءًا من سنة 1830، لقرار ملاحقة الأمير عبد القادر الجزائري (توفي 1883) في الأراضي المغربية. وترتّب على ذلك أنّ كبدت فرنسا القوّات المغربية خسائر فادحة في معركة إيسلي (14 أغسطس 1844). وقد كشفت إيسلي ضعف الجيش المغربيّ وحاجته إلى الإصلاح. ويُعدّ تاريخ الإصلاح العسكري في القرن

³⁰ محمّد الضعيف الرباطي، تاريخ الضعيف (تاريخ الدولة السعيدة) (الرباط: دار المأثورات، 1986)، 1: 321.

³¹ Ramon Lourido Diaz, "Relaciones del 'alawi Sīdī Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allah con el Imperio turco en la primera mitad de su sultanato (1757-1775)," *Hespéris-Tamuda* 24, no. 1 (1986): 137.

³² Abderrahmane El Moudden, "Sharif and Padishahs: Moroccan-Ottoman Relations from the 16th through the 18th Centuries. Contribution to the Study of a Diplomatic Culture," (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1992), 284.

التاسع عشر معروفاً بما فيه الكفاية إذ كُتبت له دراساتٌ كثيرة.³³ غير أنّ استلهاً التجربة التركية في الإصلاح يظلّ غير واضح، ويحتاج إلى مزيد من تسليط الأضواء.

توضّح بهيجة سيمو أنّ السلطان عبد الرحمن بن هشام (حكم 1822-1859) قد توصّل بمجموعة من الكتب ذات الصلة بالإصلاح العسكري، وهي كتب مترجمة من اللغة التركية إلى اللغة العربية ومنشورة في مصر.³⁴ وتهتمّ هذه المؤلفات كتاب القوانين الداخلية المتعلقة بمشاة العساكر الجهادية العسكري. ولعلّ من أهمّ هذه المؤلفات كتاب القوانين الداخلية المتعلقة بمشاة العساكر الجهادية في سبيل الله الذي أنجز أصلاً باللغة التركية وترجم إلى العربية، وظلّت ألفاظه التقنية باللغة التركية. ويؤكد مترجم الكتاب أحمد الخوجة التونسي ضرورة اللجوء إلى الألفاظ التركية وذلك "أنّ لغة العسكر هي لغة الترك مزجوها بلغة الروم والفارسية".³⁵

وعلاوةً على استقبال هذه الكتب، اعتمد المخزن المغربي على مدربين أتراك؛ ومن بين هؤلاء تذكر المصادر ضابطاً تركياً يدعى علي التونسي،³⁶ الذي وضع مشروعاً لإعادة تنظيم القوات العسكرية المغربية،³⁷ واقترح تأسيس ثلاثة فيالق وتحديد مجالات عملها وترتيبيتها وشكل القيادة والمناورات العسكرية والاصطفاف إبان الاستعراضات العسكرية.³⁸

ولم يتوقّف استلهاً التجربة العثمانية عند استقبال الكتب التركية والمؤطرين لبناء جيش نظامي على الشاكلة التركية، بل تجاوزته إلى إيفاد بعثات إلى مصر في عهد السلطان محمد بن عبد الرحمن. وفي هذا الإطار تشير وثيقة مغربية مؤرخة بذي الحجة 1283/أبريل 1867، يوردها صاحب الإتحاف، تقول: "... فافتضى نظرنّا تعيين ثلاثين من الأولاد الصغار والنجباء وتربيتهم بحضرتنا الشريفة في تعلّم ما لا بدّ منه من مقدّمات ذلك من حساب وتوقيت وهندسة وشبه ذلك، ثم نوجههم بعد

33 من أهمّ هذه الدراسات ما أنجزه عبد الحق المربني عن الجيش المغربي عبر التاريخ، وأطروحة ثريا برادة عن الجيش المغربي في القرن التاسع عشر، فضلاً عن أطروحة بهيجة سيمو عن الإصلاحات العسكرية، وأخيراً الدراسة التي أنجزها مصطفى الشابي عن الجيش في القرن التاسع عشر، وهي الدراسات التي سنحيل إليها أولاً بأول. وعلاوةً على ما أنجزه المغاربة في هذا الباب لا بدّ من التنويه بأطروحة ويلفريد رولمان وأوديل مورو. Wilfrid John Rollman, *The "New Order" in a Pre-Colonial Muslim Society: Military Reform in Morocco, 1844-1904*, 2 vols., University of Michigan, 1983.

Odile Moreau, "Une approche comparative de la réforme de l'armée entre le centre et la périphérie de l'Empire ottoman au XIX^e siècle," in *Outre-Mers*, no. 396-7, (2017): 11-29.

34 سيمو، الإصلاحات العسكرية بالمغرب، 57-58.

35 ثريا برادة، الجيش المغربي وتطوّره في القرن التاسع عشر (الرباط: منشورات كلّية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية، 1997)، 243.

36 محمّد المنوني، مظاهر يقظة المغرب الحديث (الرباط: مطبعة الأمنية، 1973)، 1: 76.

37 يذكر صاحب فواصل الجمان ما يلي: "لم تكن وزارة الحرب عند ملوك الغرب بولاية معروفة، ولا إلى شخص معيّن بمصروفة، وكان الجيش كلّهُ على النهج القديم، ليس له على طريق الحديث ترتيب ولا تنظيم، إلى أن وقع للسلطان سيدي محمّد بن مولانا عبد الرحمن زمن خلافته عن أبيهما وقع من الكسرة القويّة بحادثة أبي هراوة مع العساكر الفرنسية، فعلم أنّ ما أصاب جيشه العديد هو من عدم تنظيمه على الطراز الجديد..." انظر: المصدر نفسه، 77.

38 المصدر نفسه، 79.

لمصر، وأردنا انتخبهم من أولاد الجيش البخاري وأهل فاس والعدوتين وأهل الصويرة... وليكن سنُّهم من أربع عشرة سنة إلى خمس عشرة سنة...³⁹

لقد ظهر الاستلھام العثماني في هذه المرحلة في ثلاثة مستويات:

المستوى الأول، ويتمثل في التشكيلات العسكرية حيث أصبح التنظيم العسكري تركيًّا بامتياز، سواء تعلّق الأمر بالفرق المشكّلة له والأدوار التي يضطلع بها كلّ فريق أم تعلّق بشكل وقوفه وترتيبه، لا سيّما في كيفة سير الطوابير.

المستوى الثاني، وقد بدا واضحًا في مسألة المصطلحات العسكرية التركية التي رافقت هذه التشكيلات. لقد أصبحت أغلبية المصطلحات المستعملة في الرتب العسكرية تركيَّة، فقد كان "العسكر السعيد من أهل فاس الجديد" مكوّنًا من الآغا والخليفة وقائد المائة والملازم بمختلف درجاته وجاوش برتبه الأربع وطنبرجي (رماة المدافع) وطرنبطي⁴⁰ (المزمر الذي ينادي بالمزمار، الطرنبطة، للأكل أو التدريب أو الصلاة). ولم يقتصر إدخال المصطلحات على الجانب التنظيمي فحسب، بل تجاوزه إلى استعمال كلمات تركيَّة في التدريبات العسكرية. ومن ذلك مثلاً استعمال دور (Dur) التي تعني قف، وجاره بربر (çare beraber) التي تعني جميعًا يمين.

المستوى الثالث تجلّى في اللباس؛ إذ يشير دليل الضابط إلى البذلة العسكرية الجديدة المكوّنة من "بذلة بسروال أخضر أو أزرق وبدعيّة وكبّوط أحمر ونعالًا بتيّة أو تماك وطربوشًا أحمر".⁴¹ لقد كانت هذه البذلة العثمانية بدورها مستلهمة من التجارب الأوروبية منذ القرن الثامن عشر، ومن ثمّ لم يعمل المؤطرون الأوروبيون على تغييرها عندما أوكلت مهمّة تنظيم الجيش المغربي زمن السلطان مولاي الحسن.

وفي زمن السلطان مولاي الحسن (حكم 1873-1894) أدار المغرب ظهره للتجارب العثمانية، ورأى أنّ كلّ تحديث لا يمكن أن يكون سوى تحديث أوروبيّ، وتشكّلت فناعة لدى النخبة المغربية بضرورة السير على خطى الأوروبيين. وفي هذا الإطار جرت دعوة العديد من المدربين الأوروبيين من فرنسا وإنجلترا وإسبانيا وإيطاليا، وجرى إرسال البعثات الطلابية والعسكرية إلى البلدان الأوروبية. وقد غدا الإصلاح العسكري من وسائل الابتزاز الأوروبيّ، وهذا ما فطن له السلطان مولاي الحسن في آخر حياته فصار يطلب سحب المدربين الأوروبيين.⁴²

أمّا المرحلة الثانية، فشملت الإصلاح العسكري زمن السلطان عبد الحفيظ (حكم 1908-1912)، فقد تنبّه المخزن المغربي بعد الاعتماد الكليّ على أوروبّا زمن السلطان مولاي الحسن ومولاي عبد العزيز إلى أنّ الإصلاح على الطريقة الأوروبية كان يسعى في الأساس إلى تكريس التغلغل الأجنبيّ

39 عبد الرحمن بن زيدان، إتحاف أعلام الناس بجمال حاضرة مكناس، مكتبة الثقافة الدينية، الرباط، 2008، ج 5، ص 242.

40 برادة، الجيش المغربي وتطوّره، 246.

41 المصدر نفسه، 247.

42 المنوني، مظاهر يقظة المغرب الحديث، 1: 84.

في المغرب. وقد أضحى الأمر واضحاً عند توقيع الاتفاق الودّي بين فرنسا وإنجلترا سنة 1904. وقد تفاقمت الأمور عندما شرعت فرنسا في فرض قروض من أجل مواصلة الإصلاح العسكري، وأصبح واضحاً للمراقبين والملاحظين في نهاية العقد الأول من القرن العشرين أنّ فرنسا أصبحت ماسكة بزمام الأمور داخل الجيش المغربي في ظلّ بعثة يشرف عليها شارل مانجان (Mangin).⁴³ هذا الوضع دفع المخزن المغربي إلى إعادة ترتيب أوراقه، وبدأ يفكر في الدولة العثمانية ملجأً أخيراً، وأصبح اللجوء إلى الاعتماد على الأتراك العثمانيين ضرورة ملحة.

وقد وجد السلاطين المغاربة الفرصة مؤاتيةً للجوء إلى الاعتماد على الخبرات العثمانية، لا سيما في ظلّ الوضع الذي كانت تعيشه الدولة العثمانية، فقد كانت استجابة الأتراك للمطلب المغربي بإيفاد مدرّبين أترك تدخل ضمن إطار أوسع، عنوانه الجامعة الإسلامية. لقد ظلّ المغاربة بالرغم من كلّ شيء يتطلّعون إلى التجربة التركية في الترتيبات العسكرية، ومن ثمة قبل السلطان مولاي عبد العزيز بتجنيد مجموعة من الضباط العثمانيين الفارين من طرابلس وبنغازي الذين عرضوا خدماتهم على السلطان المغربي منذ سنة 1900. ويبدو أنّ هؤلاء العثمانيين كانوا ينتمون إلى جمعية "تركيا الفتاة"، فصدر عن السلطات التركية تحذير في موضوع اعتماد الدولة المغربية على مثل هؤلاء العناصر.⁴⁴

كانت الصحافة العربية والتركّية تلحّ على المغرب في ضرورة العودة إلى استلهم التجربة التركية في تحديث الجيش والاعتماد على الخبرة التركية في تحديث النظام العسكري في المغرب. وقد اقتنع السلطان مولاي عبد الحفيظ بهذه الطروحات، خاصة في ظلّ استعمال التحديث من طرف الفرنسيين وسيلةً لابتزاز المغرب وإرهاقه بالديون، وفي ظلّ الصدى الذي خلفته ثورة "تركيا الفتاة" في الدولة العثمانية. فسارع المولى عبد الحفيظ إلى توجيه رسالة عبر أحد وزرائه إلى إستانبول من أجل طلب مستشارين عسكريين. وقد استجاب الباب العالي لهذا الطلب بسرعة فائقة وبعث مدرّبين عسكريين.

كان للبعثة التركية صدى واسع في فرنسا التي كانت ترى فيها منافساً لدورها في إصلاح الجيش وفي الدولة العثمانية. وقد بدا هذا الصدى واضحاً في ما خصّصته لها الصحافة التركية، فقد كتبت صحيفة وقت تقريباً عن البعثة، بيّنت فيه أنّ إيفادها يدخل في إطار تكريس التعاون العسكري بين المغرب والدولة العثمانية، والانفتاح على التجربة التركية.⁴⁵ وقد وصل أعضاء هذه البعثة، حسب هذا التقرير على دفعتين: الأولى وصلت في نوفمبر 1909، والثانية مكوّنة من عشرة أفراد وصلت في شهر فبراير 1910. كما أشارت إلى أنّ أعضاء البعثة كانوا كلّهم من خريجي المدرسة العسكرية في

43 هو شارل إيمانويل مانجان (1866-1925) (Charles Mangin) تخرّج من المدرسة العسكرية في سان سير "Saint Cyr"، وأدّى أدواراً طلائعية في السياسة الفرنسية في جنوبي الصحراء والسودان قبل أن يمسك بزمام الأمور في إفريقيا الشمالية الفرنسية، وقبل أن يُعهد إليه بسحق مقاومة أحمد الهيبة في الجنوب المغربي سنة 1912. انظر:

44 محمّد المنوني، "نماذج من ارتباط المغرب بالمشرك العربي"، مجلة دارالنبأ، 1، ع. 2 (1984): 6-9.

45 المقال المحال عليه هنا هو الترجمة الفرنسية لما ورد في جريدة وقت Vakit.

إستانبول.⁴⁶ وقد عملت هذه البعثة على تنظيم الفياق في إطار تداريب منظّمة، بل تجاوزت هذه الأدوار المهنية لتعمل على الدعاية لتركيا بصفتها قوّة منقّدة، وتقوم بتحريض العلماء على الضغط على المخزن من أجل الاستغناء عن المدربين الفرنسيين.⁴⁷ وهذا ما أثار حفيظة فرنسا وجعلها تضغط بكلّ قواها من أجل إنهاء تجربة المدربين العسكريين الأتراك، فروّجت لانتماء أعضاء البعثة إلى جماعة إسلاميّة تهدف إلى تقويض الدور الفرنسي في المغرب. وهذا ما نجحت فرنسا في تحقيقه عندما قرّر السلطان عبد الحفيظ الاستعانة مرّة أخرى ببعثة عسكريّة فرنسيّة⁴⁸ مغلقاً قوس استلهاهم التجارب العسكريّة العثمانيّة.

2 الإصلاح الإداري

وضع المؤرّخ المغربيّ عبد الرحمن بن زيدان (1878-1946) كتاباً بعنوان *العزّ والصولة في معالم نظم الدولة*، يعرض فيه مختلف الترتيبات الإداريّة ونماذج منها، ويهدف بذلك إلى إظهار قِدم هذه الترتيبات في المغرب. واستناداً إلى هذا المؤلّف وعدد من الوثائق انتهى محمّد المنوني إلى جرد الوزارات التي "صارت تتألّف منها حكومة المغرب الجديد"، وهي الصدارة العظمى ومن ضمنها وزارة الداخلية، ووزارة الخارجية، ووزارة الحرب ويطلق على صاحبها العلاف الكبير، ووزارة الشكايات العدليّة، ووزارة الماليّة ويطلق على صاحبها أمين الأمناء.⁴⁹ وبواسطة العرض الذي يقدّمه المنوني لهذه الوزارات، يبدو استلهاهم التجربة العثمانيّة في ترتيبها واضحاً. لا نجادل في أنّ أوروبّا كانت حاضرة عندما كان المخزن المغربيّ يطور نظم إدارته، فقد أوفد سلاطين المغرب سفراء إلى أوروبّا أوكلت إليهم مهمّة توصيف سير الإدارات ومن بينهم إدريس بن إدريس العمراوي (توفي 1847) الذي قدّم وصفاً ضافياً لمختلف الوزارات الفرنسيّة في أثناء زيارته لباريس،⁵⁰ غير أنّ التأثير العثمانيّ كان واضحاً. ولنأخذ أنموذج وزارة الخارجية؛ إذ يظهر أنّ التطوّر الذي عرفته الوزارة هو نفسه الذي سارت عليه عند إحداثها.

46 Jean Deny, *Instructeurs turcs au Maroc sous Moulay Hafidh*, in *Mémorial Henri Basset* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1928), 219-27.

47 سيمو، *الإصلاحات العسكريّة*، 415.

48 Odile Moreau, «Une contribution ottomane à la réforme militaire « locale » au Maroc au début du XXème siècle : une expérience translocale?», in *Transmission des idées et des techniques au Maghreb et en Méditerranée*, edited by Abderrahim Benhadda et al. (Rabat : Publications de la Faculté des Lettres Rabat, 2009), 5-15.

49 المنوني، *مظاهر بقضة المغرب الحديث*، 1: 43.

50 إدريس بن إدريس العمراوي، *تحفة الملك العزيز بمملكة باريز: من أدب الرحلات (طنجة: مؤسسة التغليف والطباعة والنشر والتوزيع للشمال، 1989)*، 78.

ومثلما كان الأمر عليه في الدولة العثمانية، فإن وزارة الخارجية في المغرب نشأت وتطوّرت وفق مستويين تحدّد ضمنهما عوامل خارجية وداخلية؛ المستوى الأوّل هو ما يسمّيه كارتر فيندلي (Carter Victor Findely) بالمستوى الماكرو تاريخي (Macrohistorical level)⁵¹ وله علاقة بدرجة الانفتاح على العالم الخارجي؛ والمستوى الثاني وله علاقة بالتطوّرات الداخلية للبيروقراطية المحلية. ومثلما تحوّلت رئاسة الكتاب في الدولة العثمانية ضمن مسلسل من الأحداث والإجراءات البيروقراطية، تحوّل كتبة السلطان في المغرب إلى سفراء ثم إلى مسؤولين عن الأمور الخارجية، ولدينا في حالة ابن عثمان المكناسي (توفي 1799) ما ينبئ بهذا التحول.

ولد ابن عثمان المكناسي في أواسط القرن الثاني عشر الهجري/الثامن عشر الميلادي، وكان من الأسر المكناسية المشهورة، ولمّا أنهى تعليمه خالط أمراء الدولة العلوية الذين كانوا يسكنون في مدينة مكناس أو يتردّدون إليها، من أمثال الأمير عبد السلام. وهذه المكانة هي التي جعلت السلطان سيدي محمّد بن عبد الله يعيّنه قارئاً للكتب على مسامعه. وسرعان ما وجدناه على رأس سفارة أوفدها السلطان إلى مدريد سنة 1779، وقد استطاع ابن عثمان أن يحلّ الكثير من المشاكل التي ترنّبت على سفارة أحمد الغزال (توفي 1777) إلى الملك كارلوس الثالث (حكم 1759-1788)، وتمخّضت سفارته على توقيع اتفاقية أرنخويت في 30 مايو 1780، وهي الاتفاقية التي جرى بموجبها تنظيم العلاقات التجارية والديبلوماسية بين المغرب وإسبانيا. إنّ هذا النجاح جعل السلطان سيدي محمّد بن عبد الله يرقّي السفير ابن عثمان إلى مرتبة وزير مكلف بالعلاقات الخارجية، لا سيّما بعد النجاح الثاني الذي حقّقه سفارته إلى إسطنبول سنة 1784.

إنّ التطوّر الذي عرفته الخارجية المغربية في القرن التاسع عشر، بحكم تواجد عدد من السفراء الدائمين في المغرب وعدد من التجار وتنامي الحماية القنصلية، هو ما أفضى في النهاية إلى تشكيل السلطان مولاي الحسن وزارة خاصة بالأمور الخارجية. وأضحت هذه الوزارة مكلفة، على غرار مثيلتها في إسطنبول، "بالنظر في أمور المحميين والوساطة بين السلطان وسفراء الدول وعقد الشروط والمعاهدات بينه وبينهم، وكتابة الرسائل إليهم وإصدار الأوامر للعمّال في ما يتعلّق بإيالاتهم من دعاوي أهل الحماية..."⁵² اختصّ في هذه الأمور عدد من الموظّفين، ولكن في الوقت نفسه كانت الأمور الحرجة من اختصاص النائب السلطاني في طنجة وهو ما يذكّرنا تماماً بالتطوّر الذي عرفه إنشاء هذه الوزارة في الدولة العثمانية زمن السلطان سليم الثالث عندما استحدث غرفة خاصة بالأمور المهمة (Divan-i hiimayun miihimme odasi).⁵³

51 Carter V. Findley, "The Foundation of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry: The Beginnings of Bureaucratic Reform under Selim III and Mahmud II" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3, no. 4 (1972): 388-416.

52 المنوني، مظاهر بقطة المغرب، 49.

53 Fiendely, "The Foundation of Ottoman Foreign Ministry," 391.

3 الإصلاح الدستوري

لن نهتمّ بكلّ المشاريع الدستورية التي عُرضت على السلطان، والتي استحضرتها علّال الفاسي في كتابه *الحركات الاستقلالية*⁵⁴ وعددها خمسة مشاريع دستورية،⁵⁵ ولكننا سنكتفي بعرض المشروع الرابع منها لسبب أساسي كونه صادرًا عن أحد المشاركين، وتالياً مشبّعا بالتوجهات العثمانية. كما أنّه كُتب في سنة 1908، في تزامن مع اعتماد الدستور الثاني في الدولة العثمانية، وكان العثمانيون قد اعتمدوا دستورهم الأول في سنة 1876. لقد جاءت التجربة الدستورية المغربية متناغمة مع التجربة العثمانية في مضامينها غير مختلفة عنها في منطوقها. نلخص هذا التناغم في ثلاث نقاط:

أولاً- إنّ الجهة المبادرة لوضع الدستور هي "جمعية الاتحاد والترقي" المغربية، والتي أخذت تسميتها من الجمعية التي خاضت صراعاً مريئاً للوصول إلى السلطة في الدولة العثمانية زمن السلطان عبد الحميد الثاني (حكم 1876-1909). لا بدّ من التأكيد أنّ هناك بعض المحاولات التي سارت في اتجاه محو هذا التأثير، فعلاًل الفاسي عندما أعاد نشر الدستور في كتابه *الحركات الاستقلالية في المغرب العربي* أصرّ أن يسمّيه *دستور لسان المغرب العربي*. إنّ الأمر في نظرنا لا يتعلّق بكون النصّ الأصلي منشوراً في *لسان المغرب* بقدر ما يرتبط بتوجّه الأستاذ علّال الفاسي الذي كان يريد أن يزيل عن الدستور المغربي أية تأثيرات خارجية.

ثانياً- سياق الدستورين: لقد ارتبطت التجربتان بمسألة السيادة التي باتت مهدّدة سواء في المغرب أم في الدولة العثمانية. ومثلما كانت سنة 1876 السنة الأطول في القرن التاسع عشر؛ إذ عرفت أحداثاً مكثّفة انتهت بعزل السلطان عبد العزيز وجلوس السلطان عبد الحميد ومباشرة إصلاحات جوهريّة،⁵⁶ كانت سنة 1908 التي أعلن فيها الدستور المغربي الأول السنة الأطول في المغرب بفعل ما تخلّلها من أحداث. لقد بدأت سنة 1908 مع قصف الدار البيضاء (أغسطس 1907) من طرف الفرنسيين والأحداث التي أعقبتها، وكان لهذا القصف تبعات على مستوى التدخل الفرنسي في المغرب. لقد عدّت النخب السياسية في المغرب والدولة العثمانية أنّ القفزة التي حققتها أوروبا لا ترتبط بالمنجزات التقنية فحسب، بل ترتبط أساساً ببناء مؤسسات سياسية تسهم في إعادة النظر في العلاقة بين الحاكم والمحكوم.

ثالثاً- في تشابه القضايا التي طرحها الدستوران: هناك قضيتان أساسيتان الأولى تهّم فصل السلطات، والثانية تتعلّق بالمسألة الضريبية. يتقاطع الدستور المغربي مع الدستور العثماني

54 علّال الفاسي، *الحركات الاستقلالية في المغرب العربي* (الدار البيضاء: مؤسّسة علّال الفاسي، 2003)، 111-16.

55 عزّف عبد الرحمن المودن وجامع بيضا بهذه المشاريع الخمسة بطريقة جيّدة في مقالين منفصلين لهما. انظر:

عبد الرحمن المودن، «فكرة دستور المغرب بين الخيال والفعل»، في *انتقال الأفكار والتقنيات في المغرب والعالم المتوسطي*، تنسيق عبد الرحمن المودن وآخرين (الرباط: منشورات كلّية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية، 2008)، 205-32.

Jamaa Baida, «La pensée reformiste au Maroc avant le protectorat», *Hespéris-Tamuda* 36 (2001): 49-69.

57 Edhem Eldem, *L'empire ottoman et la Turquie face à l'occident, Leçons inaugurales du Collège de France* (Paris : Fayard, 2018), 61-2.

في وضعهما "مجلس الشورى" (مجلس المبعوثين في الدولة العثمانية) ضمن أولويات الإصلاح. كما يتقاطعان في المهام الموكولة إلى هذين المجلسين وفي طريقة إصدار القوانين التي تُعرض عليهما للمناقشة. وتبقى الوظيفة الأساسية للمجلسين هي الرغبة في نشر العدل وانتفاء الظلم⁵⁷ واستنهاض الهمم من أجل القضاء على الفساد، بمعنى آخر إنَّ الهدف من الدستورين تقوية هيبة الدولة حتَّى تتمكن من الوقوف في وجه الأطماع الأوروبية. إنَّ التشابه والتقاطع في محتويات المشاريع الدستورية ينهضان دليلاً على استلهاام المغرب للتجربة العثمانية بحكم أسبقيتها.

4 ناقلو التجارب العثمانية

يتعلّق الشقّ الثاني من هذه الورقة بالفاعلين في نقل التجارب العثمانية إلى المغرب. من هم هؤلاء الفاعلون؟ وما هي سياقات استلهاام التجارب العثمانية؟ يأتي على رأس هؤلاء الفاعلين السلاطين والأمراء. فمنذ المرحلة السعدية في القرن السادس عشر، ظلّت عيون هؤلاء مسمّرة على الدولة العثمانية، لقد كان من الطبيعيّ جدّاً أن تصل إلى المغرب أصداء الإنجازات العسكرية التي حقّقها العثمانيّون. وتمكّن بعض هؤلاء السلاطين من الوقوف من كُتب على التفوّق العثمانيّ في مجالات عدّة عن طريق مشاركتهم الفعلية في بعض المعارك إلى جانب العثمانيّين، ولعلّ المثال الأفضل على ذلك الأخوان عبد الملك وأحمد المنصور. عندما توفّي محمّد الشيخ السعديّ لجأ ثلاثة من أمراء الأسرة السعدية (أخوة السلطان عبد الله الغالب، عبد المؤمن وعبد الملك وأحمد الملّقب لاحقاً بالمنصور) إلى الأراضي العثمانية. وقد أقام الأخوة الثلاثة في تلمسان ثمّ في الجزائر قبل انتقال عبد الملك وأحمد إلى العاصمة العثمانية. وفي المرحلة الأولى من إقامتهم في ولاية الجزائر وقف الأخوة الثلاثة على طبيعة العلاقة التي كانت تربط الوالي بالإدارة المركزية، وطريقة تدبير الحكم اللامركزيّ للدولة العثمانية. وقد شارك عبد الملك المعتمد في معركتين مهمّتين في البحر الأبيض المتوسط، أمّا المعركة الأولى فهي معركة ليبانتو (1571) والثانية هي معركة حلق الوادي (1574). وبذلك يكون عبد الملك قد شارك العثمانيّين أفراحهم وأتراحهم. لكنّ الأهمّ من ذلك، أنّه وقف عند الخبرة العسكرية للجيش العثمانيّ ونظمه، كما وقف عند التشكيلات البحرية للدولة وأنواع السفن المشاركة في المعركتين. وخير عبد الملك طريقة تدبير الأتراك العثمانيّين للحمالات البرية عندما اصطحب معه جنوداً أتراكاً في الحملة على فاس سنة 1576.

لم يسمح قصر المدّة التي تولّى فيها عبد الملك الحكم في تفعيل ما وقف عليه في الجزائر وإستانبول من مؤسسات إدارية وعسكرية، بيد أنّ وصول أخيه الذي شاركه في هذه التجربة، لم يقطع حبل التواصل، وعمل كما بيّنّا أعلاه على الإفادة من بعض مشاهداته في الدولة العثمانية. وقد تواصل تردّد الأمراء المغاربة إلى إستانبول، ففي زمن السلطان سيدي محمّد بن عبد الله

57 المودن، "فكرة دستور المغرب"، 221.

جرى إيفاد عدد من هؤلاء. فمرةً أوفد ابنه المولى عبد السلام الذي توقف في إستانبول، وذلك برسم توزيع أموالٍ لتُفرَّق على أهل الحجاز⁵⁸، ومرةً أخرى بعث صهره محمد الزوين — المعروف في الوثائق العثمانية بالقائد محمد بن عبد الله — عندما تعلّق الأمر بإرسال السفن الجهادية، ومرةً عبد الملك بن إدريس، وهو ابن عمه وصهره أيضًا، الذي اصطحب سفارة ابن عثمان المكناسي ولم يحلّ في إستانبول إلّا في أثناء عودته من الديار المقدسة...⁵⁹

لم يكن الأمر يخصّ السلاطين والأمراء الذين زاروا إستانبول والبلاد العثمانية، بل كان يهتم السلاطين المغاربة الآخرين. فقد كان السلاطين العلويون مهتمين بالتجارب العثمانية لا في اللحظات التي ذكرناها فحسب، بل عبر تاريخ المغرب الحديث. فالسلطان سيدي محمد بن عبد الله كان مهتمًا بما يجري في الدولة العثمانية، ولا أدلّ على ذلك من كثرة السفارات التي أوفدها إلى الباب العالي والتي أثمرت تعاونًا عسكريًا بين المغرب والباب العالي تمثّل في وصول مدربين أترّك في المدفعية إلى المغرب في ثمانينات القرن الثامن عشر. وبدا هذا التوجّه في كثرة السفارات التي أوفدها السلطان سيدي محمد بن عبد الله إلى إستانبول. أمّا السلطان مولاي عبد الرحمن بن هشام (الذي جرت في عهده معركة إيسلي عام 1844 والتي تكبّد فيها المغاربة خسائر كبيرة) وكانت بمثابة الصفعة التي جعلتهم يتنبّهون إلى ضرورة إصلاح الجيش) فقد كان مقتنعًا بالمنظومة العسكرية العثمانية وحاول الانفتاح على تجاربها.

و ظلّ هذا الاقتناع ساريًا زمن السلطان عبد العزيز الذي كانت أمّه تركيةً، ولا شكّ في أنّ محيطه الداخلي كان مُسمّرًا عيونه على التجربة العثمانية، بالرغم من الضغوط التي كان يتعرّض لها من طرف الأجانب الذين نجحوا في إقناعه باحتذاء النموذج الغربي.

أمّا الفاعل الثاني في نقل التجارب العثمانية في هذه المرحلة، فتمثّل في السفراء. لقد أوفد السلاطين المغاربة العديد من السفراء إلى الدولة العثمانية في المرحلة الممتدة ما بين القرنين السادس عشر والتاسع عشر. أربعة من هؤلاء خلفوا كتابات وصفت الدولة العثمانية، فقد كتب أبو الحسن علي التمكروتي الذي أوفده السلطان أحمد المنصور إلى الأستانة على رأس سفارة إلى إستانبول سنة 1589 نصًّا سفاريًّا عنوانه "النفحة المسكية في السفارة التركية"، وكتب ابن عثمان المكناسي الذي حلّ في العاصمة القسطنطينية سنة 1784 نصًّا آخر عنوانه "إحراز المعلى والرقيب". وكتب أبو القاسم الزياتي نصًّا آخر بعد سنتين بعنوان "الترجمة الكبرى". وعندما نتأمل في الصفحات التي دوّنها هؤلاء السفراء نجدها تتوقّف بإعجاب عند القضايا التالية:

– عمران العاصمة العثمانية والانبهار بقصورها

– وصف الجهاز الإداري للدولة العثمانية والوقوف مطوّلاً عند برتوكول استقبال السفراء

– وصف الجهاز العسكري في الدولة العثمانية.

أمّا الفاعل الثالث، فيتمثّل في الأترّك الذين أقاموا في المغرب في لحظات مختلفة من التاريخ

58 ابن زيدان، الإتحاف، 5: 178.

59 المصدر نفسه، 178.

الحديث. لقد نقل هؤلاء، ولا شك في ذلك، العديد من المعارف والتقنيات إلى المغرب. ويمكن القول إن قوة حضور هؤلاء اختلفت بين زمن وآخر. ففي القرن السادس عشر كان الحضور التركي العثماني قويا في المغرب؛ إذ تذكر الوثائق الإسبانية مثلاً أنَّ العرائش وتطوان عشية معركة وادي المخازن⁶⁰ كانتا تحتضنان جالية عثمانية قدمت خدمات كبيرة للدولة المغربية لا سيما في مجال ركوب البحر. لقد أكدت هذه الوثائق الطابع القرصني للحضور التركي. أما في القرنين السابع عشر والثامن عشر، فقد خفت هذا الحضور في المرافئ المغربية. ويعود السبب في ذلك إلى الوضع العام في البحر الأبيض المتوسط وإلى المشاكل التي باتت تعانيها الدولة العثمانية في هذه المرحلة. وفي القرن التاسع عشر أصبح الحضور العثماني بارزاً، وعوضاً من أن تتحدث المصادر عن جماعات فهي تورد أسماء بعينها، ومن هؤلاء صحافيون وأطباء، وكان معظمهم من أصول سورية كالأخوين كرم المسيحيين المارونيين اللذين كانا يتمتعان بحماية الممثلة الدبلوماسية الفرنسية في طنجة،⁶¹ وكذا الأخوين نمور.

وقد حاول السلطان عبد الحميد الثاني "مأسسة" الوجود العثماني في المغرب، عندما بادر إلى مفاتحة السلطان المغربي والقوى الأوروبية المهيمنة على فتح تمثيلية دبلوماسية في المغرب. وبالرغم من فشل هذه المحاولات، ظلت الدولة العثمانية تؤدي أدوار التأثير بأشكال أخرى، ومن بينها استخدام المصيريين للتأثير في المغرب. لقد كانت مصر البلد الوحيد الذي كان يستقر فيه ممثل الدولة المغربية، وكان من بين الأدوار التي يقوم بها تسهيل إقامة الحجّاج المغاربة في بلاد الكنانة ورعاية مصالح الطلاب والتجار المغاربة. وبحكم العلاقات القوية بين مصر وإستانبول، فقد كان من الطبيعي أن تعبر أفكار عثمانية إلى المغرب عبر مصر في ظل غياب العلاقات الرسمية بين المغرب والدولة العثمانية. وكانت صحيفة المنار واحدة من الأدوات التي سخرت لنقل أفكار المشرق إلى المغرب.

خلاصات

إنَّ استلهاام المغرب للتجارب العثمانية في ميادين مختلفة سواء في الجيش أم في الإدارة لا يعني أنَّ المغرب لم يكن يتمتع ببنيات إدارية وعسكرية. فقد عملت الدول المغربية المتعاقبة على حكم المغرب على وضع أسس، وطوّرت هذه البنيات في مراحل تاريخية مختلفة. بيد أنَّ الدولة المغربية لم تكن منغلقة على ذاتها، وكانت تنظر إلى محيطها وتعمل على سنّ ما يجعلها قادرة على مواجهة الصعاب. ومن ثمَّ كان استلهاام التجارب سواء من المشرق أم من أوروبا. لقد كان من الطبيعي

60 عبد الرحيم بنحادة، "وثيقة عثمانية حول معركة وادي السبيل 4 غشت 1578: المساهمة والتأويل"، هيسبريس

تمود/ 31 (1993): 23-33.

61 Mohamed Bachir Masmoudi, "L'influence de l'État ottoman sur le Maroc avant le protectorat: le cas du journal Lissanul-Maghreb," *Istanbul Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 16-19 (Ocak Temuz, 1997). <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/5568> (accessed on 27 February 2020).

ولشروط تاريخية معروفة أن يمارس النموذج العثماني تأثيره في الدولة المغربية، ويعمل المخزن المغربي على استلهامه لتحديث أجهزته وتقويتها في مراحل مختلفة. وقد حدث أن جرب المغرب النماذج الغربية، غير أنه لم يستطع أن يفلت من ضغوط النموذج العثماني الذي أكد انسجامه مع واقع البلاد.

ويبدو أن استلهاهم التجارب العثمانية لم تحدده طبيعة العلاقات المغربية-العثمانية، فلقد كانت المحاكاة تجري عن طريق الاحتكاك المباشر الناجم عن حضور رسمي في الدولة العثمانية (سلاطين وسفراء وأمراء) في ظل التعاون والوثام. كما أنه كان يجري في ظل التوتر، فقد لاحظنا كيف انفتح السلطان مولاي إسماعيل على التجربة العسكرية العثمانية رغم تشنج العلاقات وتوترها.

لم يقتصر الاستلهاهم على الهيئة المخزنية فحسب، بل نجده على مستوى النخب أيضا. وقد لاحظنا كيف أن اسم الجماعة التي اقترحت دستوراً سنة 1908 كانت تحمل اسم "الاتحاد والترقي"، وكيف أن هذا الدستور حمل المضامين نفسها الموجودة في الدستور العثماني الثاني.

إن استقلال المغرب سياسياً لم يكن يعني استقلاله الحضاري، حيث لم يستطع الاستقلال السياسي أن يهدم الجسور التي ظلت صامدة بين شرق العالم الإسلامي ومغربيه، ويمثل النموذج العثماني في الإدارة والجيش واحداً من المظاهر التي تؤكد العروة الوثقى بين ضفاف البلاد الإسلامية.

شهاب الدين ابن العليف المكي وكتابه الدر المنظوم في مناقب السلطان بايزيد ملك الرّوم

بلال الأرفه لي

مقدمة

شاءت الظروف التاريخية أن تتشابك مصائر العرب والترك في السراء والضراء لما يزيد على ألف عام. ولا يسمح المقام هنا بتتبع جذور هذه العلاقة، ولكن يكفي القول إن هذا التشابك سابق على الفترة العثمانية ولم يكن دومًا انعكاسًا لموازن القوى بينهما. فقد كانا شريكين، كما كانا حكامًا لمحكومين، وفي أحيانٍ أخرى الأخوة الأعداء. وقد جمع بينهما تاريخ مشترك، وجمعت غاليتهما الرابطة الدينية، وفترت بينهما المصالح خاصة في أواخر أيام الدولة العثمانية وما تلا انهيارها من قيام دول المنطقة الحديثة على أنقاضها. أنتجت المستويات المختلفة لهذه العلاقة العربية التركية وتعقيداتها، خاصة في الفترة التي تلت نهاية الحقبة العثمانية، تباعدًا بل جفاءً بين العرب والترك، وقد انعكس هذا الجفاء في نظرة كلٍّ منهما إلى الآخر نظرة عدائية. وانسحبت هذه النظرة على الحقب التاريخية السابقة، وخاصة على الفترة الأطول زمنيًا، والأغنى تفاعلًا ثقافيًا، ونعني بها الفترة العثمانية التي جمعت العرب والترك في إطار جامع سياسيًا وثقافيًا على مدى أربعة قرون كاملة.

لقد شهد القرن العاشر/السادس عشر تغيرات كبيرة: غلبت الشيعة الاثنا عشرية الدولة الصفوية، واكتشف البرتغاليون طريقًا إلى الهند بمنأى عن سيطرة الدولة العثمانية ودولة المماليك، اللتين انشغلتا بحروب متتالية أفضت إلى سقوط دولة المماليك في مصر وسوريا. وكان دخول السلطان سليم الأول (حكم 918-926/1512-1520) عام 1516/922 بداية لحكم العثمانيين في المنطقة العربية، والذي استمرّ حتى عام 1918/1337¹. وكان العثمانيون قد سيطروا بعد معركة مرج دابق على معظم

1 للمزيد عن معركة مرج دابق ودخول العثمانيين الشام ومصر في هذه الفترة عمومًا، انظر: Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn (ed), 1516: *The Year that Changed the Middle East*.

انظر أيضًا:

Michael Winter, "Egypt and Syria in the Sixteenth Century."

ما يُعرف اليوم بالعالم العربيّ، ومع أنّ مركز السلطنة أو الخلافة لم يعد في العالم العربيّ، فإنّ وجهاء العرب ظلّوا موالين للباب العالي في إستانبول مستمدّين منه شرعيّة الحكم والنفوذ المحليّ. انطلاقاً ممّا سبق، لا بدّ لنا بصفتنا عرباً أولاً، وباحثين في العلاقات العربيّة التركيّة ثانياً، أن نعود لقراءة النصوص الأدبيّة والتاريخيّة ضمن إطارها الزمنيّ والجغرافيّ، لأنّ نسق على هذه النصوص وقائع سياسيّة من الأزمان اللاحقة (والأمر عينه ينطبق على الباحثين الأتراك طبعاً). وفيما يركّز أغلب الدراسات الحديثة على العلاقات العثمانيّة العربيّة في مصر وسوريا، فإنّ أهميّة كتاب الدر المنظوم في مناقب السلطان بايزيد ملك الروم لشهاب الدين ابن العليف المكيّ (ت 1520/926) أنّه لأحد أبرز وجوه الجزيرة العربيّة الثقافيّة في القرن السادس عشر الميلاديّ. فهو أحد علماء مكّة، وهي إذ ذاك ليست تحت السيطرة العثمانيّة، يكتب تاريخاً للدولة العثمانيّة وترجمة لمعاصره من سلاطينها بايزيد الثاني (حكم 886-918/1481-1512).²

لسنا هنا بصدد تقييم العمل من جهة إضافته للمعرفة التاريخيّة، ولكن من جهة أنّه انعكاس لصورة العثمانيّين والترك وما يربطهم بالعرب من وجهة نظر المؤلّف. وفي ضوء ذلك يمكن اعتبار هذا العمل وثيقة تاريخيّة هامّة.

1 الأدب العربيّ في الفترة العثمانيّة

لم يول مؤرّخو الأدب العربيّ، حتّى وقت قريب، كبير اهتمام بالفترتين المملوكيّة والعثمانيّة، ومردّد ذلك وجهة النظر القديمة القائلة بانحطاط الحياة الأدبيّة والفكريّة والثقافيّة بعد سقوط بغداد بيد المغول عام 1258/656. وقد ساءلت الدراسات الحديثة هذه المقولة، ممّا فتح المجال لسبل جديدة لدراسة التاريخ الفكريّ والثقافيّ في هاتين الفترتين.³ ومن الباحثين الذين ساءلوا مقولة الانحطاط في الفترة المملوكيّة محسن جاسم الموسوي وتوماس باور (Thomas Bauer).⁴ وقد بدأ عدد من

2 انظر ترجمة السلطان بايزيد الثاني في ابن حجر العسقلاني، *إنباء الغمر* 5/128؛ وابن تغري بردي، *النجوم الزاهرة* 12/217 و 267؛ والسخاوي، *الضوء اللامع* 11/148؛ والصيرفي، *نزهة النفوس والأبدان* 1/334 و 365 و 390 و 2/149؛ والسيوطي، *حسن المحاضرة* 1/160؛ والشوكاني، *البدر الطالع* 1/60؛ والمقريزي، *درر العقود الفريدة* 1/439. لمثل هذه المسألة لمقولة الانحطاط، انظر:

3 Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb*; Muhsin J. al-Musawi, *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters: Arabic Knowledge Constructions*.

انظر أيضًا:

Dana Sajdi, "Decline, Its Discontents and Ottoman Cultural History: By Way of Introduction."

4 انظر:

Muhsin J. al-Musawi, *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters: Arabic Knowledge Constructions*; وانظر مراجعة توماس باور للمجلد المخصّص للأدبيين المملوكيّ والعثمانيّ ضمن سلسلة كمبريدج للأدب العربيّ: Thomas Bauer, "In Search of 'Post-Classical Literature': A Review Article."

الباحثين الجادّين بتسليط الضوء على الأدب العربيّ في الفترة العثمانية.⁵ درست هيلين بفايفر (Helen Pfeifer)، على سبيل المثال، دور المجالس الأدبية في دمشق العثمانية.⁶ وسلّط آدم طالب الضوء على المقاطع الشعرية ودورها في الأدبين المملوكي والعثماني.⁷ ويتفق هؤلاء الباحثون على ضرورة تحقيق التراث ودراسته وفقاً لمعايير الفترة الزمنية التي ظهر فيها لا معايير القرن التاسع عشر. ونشهد اليوم أيضاً اهتماماً متزايداً بنشر الدواوين الشعرية من هاتين الفترتين، بالتزامن مع ظهور دراسات جادة تركز على أصحابها من الشعراء.⁸

يبحث الشعراء المادحون – كعادتهم – عن رعاة للأدب دوماً، وهذا يسري على شعراء الفترة العثمانية سريانه على شعراء الفترة العباسية. يرى توماس باور وحاجي عثمان غندز (Hacı Osman Gündüz) أنّ ما يميّز الشعر في الفترتين المملوكية والعثمانية هو تغيّر الفضاء الذي أُلقي فيه هذا الشعر. فالسلاطين المماليك والعثمانيون نادراً ما أتقنوا العربية،⁹ مع أنّهم كافأوا الشعراء المادحين.¹⁰ ويبدو ممّا وصلنا من الآثار أنّ فئتي الشعراء والكتّاب قد اختلطتا بفئة العلماء، وأنّ أشخاصاً من مختلف المهن والطبقات الاجتماعية قد نظموا الشعر.¹¹ كما وصلنا كمّ كبير من الدواوين الشعرية والرحلات وكتب المختارات التي تشي بحياة أدبية زاخرة. اتّصل الشعراء في الحجاز في هذه الفترة الزمنية بالسلاطين المماليك والعثمانيين في آن، ولا

5 انظر مقالة حاجي عثمان غندز التي يناقش فيها الإطار العام لمفهوم الانحطاط وسياقه في الدراسات العربية الحديثة:

Hacı Osman Gündüz, "Ottoman-Era Arabic Literature: Overview of Select Secondary Scholarship."

6 انظر:

Helen Pfeifer, "Encounter after the Conquest: Scholarly Gatherings in 16th-Century Ottoman Damascus"; Helen Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons: Conquest and Community in Early Modern Ottoman Lands*.

7 انظر:

Adam Talib, *How Do You Say "Epigram" in Arabic?*.

8 انظر:

Hacı Osman Gündüz, "Ottoman-Era Arabic Literature: Overview of Select Secondary Scholarship," 117–118.

9 يشير غندز إلى استثناءات منها مجلس السلطان المملوكي قانصوه الغوري (حكم 906–1501/922–1516)، ومجالس قضاة دمشق.

10 انظر على سبيل المثال مدح ابن سلطان (ت 1544/950) للسلطان سليم الأول:

Kristof D'hulster, "Caught Between Aspiration and Anxiety, Praise and Exhortation: An Arabic Literary Offering to the Ottoman Sultan Selīm I."

وانظر مديح ماميه الرومي (ت 985–1577/987–1579) للسلاطين العثمانيين:

Hacı Osman Gündüz, "Between Lamenting Vicissitudes of Life and Celebrating Ottoman Authority in the Sixteenth Century: Māmayya al-Rūmī's (d. 985–7/1577–9) Times and Poetry."

11 انظر:

Thomas Bauer, "Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches," 108.

وكذلك:

Hacı Osman Gündüz, "Between Lamenting Vicissitudes of Life and Celebrating Ottoman Authority in the Sixteenth Century," 318.

شكّ أنّ دعم العثمانيين للشعراء العرب كان غرضه الدعاية وتعزيز الولاء للباب العالي، وبالتالي السيطرة على مكّة المكرمة. والملاحظ أنّ اهتمام العثمانيين بمكّة سابق لهذه الفترة، فقد أوقف السلطان محمد الأول (حكم 816-1413/824-1421) جزءاً من أمواله على فقراء الحرمين، وكذلك فعل مراد الثاني (حكم 824-1421/855-1451)، ومحمد الثاني (حكم 855-1451/886-1481).¹² وعندما حجّ السلطان بايزيد في السنة التي تولّى فيها الملك، توثّقت علاقته بأمير مكّة الشريف محمد بن بركات (ت 1497/903) وكبار العلماء والأدباء فيها، فكان أن زاره بعضهم في إستانبول. وحين دخل السلطان سليم مصر، وافق الشريف بركات بن محمد بن بركات (ت 1525/931) على الدعاء للسلطان العثمانيّ مقابل الإقرار العثمانيّ بإمارته على مكّة.¹³

2 شهاب الدين ابن العليّ وآثاره

كثيرة هي المصادر التي ترجمت لشهاب الدين ابن العليّ، وقليلة هي المعلومات التي نعرفها عنه، إذ تكرر هذه المصادر المعلومات عينها بفروقات طفيفة. وثمة خلط في بعض المصادر بين عدد من الأشخاص المنحدرين من الأسرة نفسها، وينسحب هذا الخلط على الأشعار المنسوبة لشاعرنا في ديوانه. وقد اهتدى محقق ديوان ابن العليّ ياسر محمد غريب عبد السلام إلى عدد من الأشخاص الذين ارتبطوا بهذا الاسم إلى جانب الشاعر موضوع الدراسة، وهم:¹⁴

- الفقيه أبو الحسن عليّ بن القاسم بن العليّ بن هيس الزبيديّ (ت 1242/640)
 - الفقيه أحمد بن عليّ بن القاسم بن العليّ بن هيس الزبيديّ (ت 1282-1281/680)
 - مسلم بن العليّ (من شعراء القرن السابع/الثالث عشر)
 - جمال الدين محمد بن الحسن بن عيسى العليّ (ت 1413-1412/815)، وهو جدّ الشاعر موضوع الدراسة
 - نور الدين بن جمال الدين محمد بن الحسن بن عيسى العليّ (ت 1444-1443/847)، وهو عمّ الشاعر موضوع الدراسة
 - بدر الدين بن جمال الدين محمد بن الحسن بن عيسى العليّ (ت 1453-1452/856)، وهو والد الشاعر موضوع الدراسة
 - عليّ بن بدر الدين بن جمال الدين محمد بن الحسن بن عيسى العليّ، وهو أخو الشاعر موضوع الدراسة (ت 1492-1491/897)
- وقد نظم معظم أفراد العائلة الشعر واشتهروا به، ولكنّ الشاعر شهاب الدين أحمد بن الحسين ابن

12 السباعي، تاريخ مكّة: دراسات في السياسة والعلم والاجتماع والعمران، 342 و392.

13 السباعي، تاريخ مكّة: دراسات في السياسة والعلم والاجتماع والعمران، 393-394.

14 انظر دراسة ياسر محمد غريب عبد السلام، ديوان ابن العليّ (851-1447/826-1520): تحقيق ودراسة، 54 وما بعدها.

العليّف كان أشهرهم وأهمّهم لوجود ديوان ضخم يجمع شعره، ولاهتمام كتاب الطبقات به وإثره. وترد ترجمته في المصادر التالية:¹⁵

الضوء اللامع لأهل القرن التاسع لشمس الدين محمّد بن عبد الرحمن السخاويّ (ت 1497/902)، 1/290.

النور السافر عن أخبار القرن العاشر لعبد القادر بن شيخ بن عبد الله العيدروس (ت 1628/1038)، 180-185.

الكواكب السائرة بأعيان المئة العاشرة لنجم الدين الغزيّ (ت 1651/1061)، 1/122-124 (ضمن ترجمة أبو يزيد ابن محمّد آل عثمان).

سلم الوصول إلى طبقات الفحول لحاجي خليفة (ت 1657/1067)، 1/141.

شذرات الذهب في أخبار من ذهب لابن العماد شهاب الدين (ت 1679/1089)، 10/123-124.

البدر الطالع بمحاسن من بعد القرن السابع لشيخ الإسلام محمّد بن عليّ الشوكانيّ (ت 1834/1250)، 1/54-56.

هدية العارفين أسماء المؤلفين وآثار المصنّفين لإسماعيل باشا البغدادي (ت 1920/1339)، 139-140.

نعرف من هذه المصادر أنّ اسمه: شهاب الدين أحمد بن الحسين بن محمّد بن الحسين بن عيسى بن محمّد بن أحمد بن مسلم بن محيي المكيّ الشافعيّ، ويُعرف كأبيه بابن العليّف، وهو تصغير غلّف. يتفق معظم هذه المصادر على أنّ مولده كان بمكة المكرمة في جمادى الأولى سنة 1447/851. وعاش دهرًا من حياته في مكة لينتقل بعدها إلى المدينة المنورة، ثم يعود في الشوط الأخير من حياته إلى مكة التي مات فيها في الثامن من ذي الحجة سنة 1520/926. ويبدو من التواريخ المتوفرة لدينا أنّه قد عاش يتيمًا، إذ توفّي والده وهو في الخامسة من عمره. ويذكر السخاويّ زواجه غير مرّة، وإنجابه لولد في المدينة هو أبو الفضل محمّد بن أحمد بن العليّف، وهو شاعر كذلك، ولبنتين في مكة. ويشير السخاويّ إلى أنّ أحوال الشاعر الماديّة كانت صعبة لتكثر الديون عليه، لذا نراه يطالب في عدد من قصائده بأعطيات تقيل عثرته وتوفي مغارمه.¹⁶

تخبرنا المصادر بأنّه قد سمع بمكة على بعض المشايخ، وعمل بالنسaxe، وأكثر من مطالعة دواوين القدماء، وأخذ العربيّة والفقّه عن القاضي عبد القادر المكيّ المالكيّ (ت 1476-1475/880) وأبي الفتح عليّ بن محمّد نور الدين الفاكهيّ (ت 1476/880)، كما أخذ عن السخاويّ ونور الدين عليّ بن عبد الله السمهوديّ (ت 1506/911) اللذين يذكّرهما في ديوانه. وقد رحل الشاعر أيضًا إلى القاهرة لطلب العلم، فأخذ عن علمائها ابن الخيضرّي (ت 1489/894) والجوجريّ (ت 1484/889)،

15 وانظر: خير الدين الزركلي، الأعلام، 117/1؛ وعمر كخالة، معجم المؤلفين: تراجم مصنّفي الكتب العربيّة، 1/208.

16 انظر نماذج عن هذه القصائد في دراسة ياسر محمّد غريب عبد السلام، ديوان ابن العليّف (851-1447/826-1520): تحقيق ودراسة، 66-67.

وكانت له رحلات إلى دمشق وحلب وطرابلس. ويورد بعض المصادر¹⁷ رحلة للشاعر إلى إستانبول مدح فيها السلطان بايزيد الثاني، وتخصيص الأخير مبلغ ألف دينار جائزة له، وترتيبه مئة دينار ذهباً كانت تصل إليه في كل عام وصارت بعده لأولاده. فهل حقاً رحل ابن العليّ إلى إستانبول؟ لا يذكر السخاويّ معاصر ابن العليّ شيئاً عن هذه الرحلة في ترجمته للشاعر، وظاهر نصّ كتاب الدر المنظوم في مناقب السلطان بايزيد ملك الروم أنّه منقول عن مصادر كثيرة لا عن عيان أو لقاء مع السلطان بايزيد، والقصيدة الختامية في الكتاب توحى بأنّ الشاعر لم يلتق بالسلطان، بل أرسل له القصيدة. ويورد نجم الدين الغزيّ قصّة كتاب الدر المنظوم والقصيدة وعطاء السلطان في ترجمة السلطان بايزيد، ولكنّه يقول إنّها عندما "وصلت إلى السلطان أبي يزيد خان سرّ بها".¹⁸ لذا ليس هناك من دليل على أنّ ابن العليّ قد زار إستانبول.

ذكرت التراجم أعمالاً لابن العليّ لم تصلنا، هي: درر الأفراد في معرفة الأعداد، والشهاب الهاوي على الكاوي (ردّ على السيوطي)، والمنتقد اللوذعي على المجتهد المدّعي (ردّ على السيوطي)، وديوان هالة القمر في مدح خير البشر.¹⁹ ومما وصلنا من أعماله ديوان شعر وكتاب الدر المنظوم في مناقب السلطان بايزيد ملك الروم.

غلب المديح على شعر ابن العليّ، فنراه يمدح بشعره الكثير من معاصريه، غير أنّه خصّ بمعظم مديحه شريف مكّة بركات بن محمّد، ومن بعده أبا نُمي بن بركات (ت 1584/992). ويُعدّ الديوان وثيقة لأحداث عصره، إذ حفظ كثيرًا من الأحداث التاريخية مثل صراعات الأشراف على مُلك الحجاز، ونهايات الدولة المملوكية، والهجمات البرتغالية على البحر الأحمر، وحركات التوسّع العثمانيّ في الشرق. ونرى في ديوان ابن العليّ أيضًا - شأنه شأن معاصريه من الشعراء - اهتمامًا بالمديح النبويّ، ورثاء وهجاء لبعض معاصريه، وبعض الأغاز. وغالبًا ما تتضمّن قصيدة المديح عنده نسيبًا وحماسة وفخرًا وحكمة وشكوى.²⁰

للديوان نسختان: الأولى في المكتبة الملكية الدانمركية، كوبنهاجن 244 وعدد أوراقها 281 ورقة،²¹ والثانية في مكتبة برلين 7931 وعدد أوراقها 88 ورقة.²²

17 انظر مثلاً حاجي خليفة، سلّم الوصول إلى طبقات الفحول، 141/1؛ وابن العماد، شذرات الذهب، 124/10؛ وكذلك يرى ياسر محمّد غريب عبد السلام، ديوان ابن العليّ (851-826/1447-1520): تحقيق ودراسة، 68.

18 نجم الدين الغزيّ، الكواكب السائرة بأعيان المئة العاشرة، 123/1.

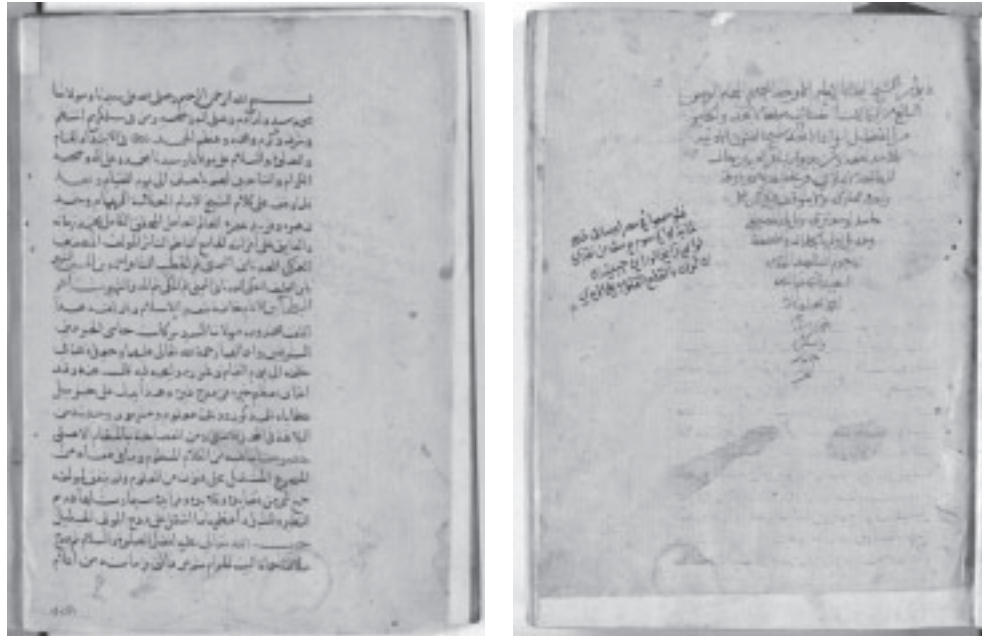
19 كتاب الأغاز ابن العليّ وحلّها الموجود في معهد الثقافة والدراسات الشرقية في جامعة طوكيو في اليابان 2417 (ورقة 36ب-49ب) هو لبدر الدين حسين بن عيسى بن محمّد والد ابن العليّ مؤلّف الدر المنظوم.

20 انظر موضوعات شعر ابن العليّ في أطروحة الدكتوراه للباحث ياسر محمّد غريب عبد السلام، ديوان ابن العليّ (851-826/1447-1520): تحقيق ودراسة، 73-118، وانظر أيضًا الدراسة الفنّية لشعره في المصدر نفسه، 121-214.

21 انظر

T. Rasmussen Stig, *De Orientalske Samlinger-The Oriental Collections*, 332.

22 انظر Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften*, 7/109.



مخطوط المكتبة الملكية الدانمركية 244، ورقة 2ب.

مخطوط المكتبة الملكية الدانمركية 244، ورقة 2أ.

3 الدر المنظوم في مناقب السلطان بايزيد ملك الروم

للكتاب نسخة واحدة هي مخطوط مكتبة فاتح 4357 بتركيا، تقع في 118 ورقة، ووُقعَت بخط المؤلف بتاريخ 16 ذو الحجة سنة 29/910 مايو 1505. تحيل كلمة "الروم" الواردة في عنوان الكتاب، ضمن سياق استعمالها في القرن السادس عشر الميلادي، إلى الشعوب التي تسكن بلاد الأناضول والبلقان. ويشير المؤرخون إلى أنّ المؤلفين العرب قد استعملوا مصطلح "التركي" (ج. الأتراك) للدلالة على العثمانيين وللتفرقة بينهم وبين المماليك، بينما استعملوا لفظة "الروم" للدلالة على الشعوب التي تقطن هذه الأراضي، واستعملوا لفظة "عثماني" للدلالة على الأشخاص العاملين في الدولة.²³ ويشير جمال كفادار إلى أنّ لفظة "الروم" تحمل دلالات طبقية لأنها تحيل إلى فئة برجوازية، بينما تشير لفظة "الترك" إلى الأرياف.²⁴ يقع الكتاب في مقدّمة وثلاث أبواب. بعد البسملة والحمدلة وبراعة الاستهلال المعهودة في

²³ انظر:

Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516–1928: A Social and Cultural History*, 13.

²⁴ انظر:

Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum," 11.

مقدّمات الكتب العربيّة، يذكر المصنّف سبب تأليف الكتاب، فيقول إنّ: "تقييد المآثر من أهمّ الأسباب، وتأييد المناقب من شأن ذوي الألباب، حفظاً لذكر محاسن الأيّام، وضبطاً لآثار أفعال الكرام، وترغيباً للسّير على جادّة أولي الفضل، وتنبيهاً على التحلّي بحلية ذوي العدل." [2] وهو بذلك يقتفي أثر كتّاب السيرة النبويّة وسير الخلفاء، وبالطبع فإنّه بذلك يضع السلطان بايزيد في سلسلة من العظماء، فهو على حدّ قول المصنّف: "سلطان الزمان، صفوة الصفوة من ملوك بني عثمان، كفو الملك، وربّ السرير، ودرة التاج، وإنسان الحدقة، وواسطة العقد، ونكتة المسألة، وقطب الدائرة، وقلب الجسد." [2] وهذه صفات سيكرّرها ويثبتها في الكتاب.

يدرك المصنّف أنّه استرسل في الكتاب ليتكلّم عن سلالة السلطان بايزيد وأرض الروم عامّة وأحداث تاريخيّة لا ترتبط مباشرة بالسلطان. ولكنّ هذه الزيادات – بحسب رأيه – "لمع مفيدة من نفائس الأخبار، ومحاسن الآثار" و"فوائد حكميّة" فيها "تلقيح للعقل وتنبيه للرأي وصقل للذهن"، "وربّما أدّى الاسترسال إلى أشياء نفيسة [...] على نسق التاريخ." [2-أ2ب]

يندرج الكتاب – علاوة على "السيرة" و"المناقب" – في إطار النوع الأدبيّ المسمّى "مرايا الملوك." ووفقاً لهذا النوع الأدبيّ يتشارك هادي الكتاب والمُهدى إليه في التّأليف، فالكتاب عن محاسن السلطان ومناقبه، وهو بذلك صورة لهذا السلطان. يقول ابن الغُليف: "علّمتني مكارمه كيف أنّني عليه، ودلّنتني مناقبه من أين أدخل إليه، فاخترت من درّ معادنه، وأنّبت على شريف محاسنه، ومدحته بما فيه فكأنّني أنفقت عليه من خزائنه." [3أ] وبما أنّ صاحب الكتاب ينتقي أو يقتبس من هذه المحاسن، فإنّ الصورة ستقتصر حتماً عن استيعاب مجموع المحاسن والمناقب الموجودة في الأصل، ولو أوتي جميع العدة اللازمة لذلك. ونرى ابن الغُليف يعتذر عن هذا التقصير، مصرّحاً بأنّه قد بذل "جهد المستطيع" وأنّ السلطان غير محتاج إلى "ثناء ناظم ولا ناثر ولا مدح خطيب ولا شاعر" خاصّة "بعد أن شهد له الإجماع." [2ب] لماذا إذن هذا الكتاب؟

يورد المصنّف سبباً آخر لتصنيف الكتاب، وهو أن يتشرف قلمه وبنانه ولسانه وتصانيفه وديوانه بذكر السلطان. ولكن علاوة على السبب الأوّل المذكور آنفاً – أي تقييد المآثر ترغيباً للسّير على جادّة أولي الفضل – والسبب الثاني – أي تشريف المصنّف بذكر السلطان – وهما سببان يرتبطان بالعادة والسنة الأدبيّة والتنميط، يورد المصنّف سبباً آخر مباشراً – وإن على عجلة واستحياء – يرتبط بالأوضاع التاريخيّة والسياسيّة والاجتماعيّة، باللحظة الزمنيّة والبقعة الجغرافيّة التي يكتب فيها ومنها، فيقول: "قصدت أن يكون له نصيب من الأدعية الحرّميّة والأثنيّة المدنيّة." [2ب] فالمصنّف هنا على تمام الوعي بأهميّة موقعه في الحرمين الشريفين وهما ليسا بعد تحت السيطرة العثمانيّة، وبأهميّة قبول أهل الحجاز – وبخاصّة العلماء منهم – للسلطان العثمانيّ من أجل إضفاء الشرعيّة على حكمه لهذه الأرض المباركة.

في مقدّمة الكتاب نقاش مستفيض يستعرض فيه المؤلّف ثقافته وسعة إلمامه بالتراث الأدبيّ والتاريخيّ العربيّ-الإسلامي. يبدأ المصنّف بتقصّي أنساب الروم والأقوال المختلفة في ذلك، وسبب تسميتهم ببني الأصفر، والعلاقة بينهم وبين اليونان، مصرّحاً في كلّ ذلك بمصادره. ويخصّص مبحثاً عن النبوة في الروم فيتكلّم عن النبيّ أيوب، والإسكندر وعلاقته بذوي القرنين وأصحاب الكهف. يلي ذلك فصلٌ عن فضل الروم وأخبارهم والحكمة عندهم، يركّز فيه الكاتب على أرسطوطاليس

(ت 322 ق.م) - الذي يعدّه من مقدونية - وهرقل (حكم 610-641) الذي راسله النبي (ص) فيورد قصّته من صحيح البخاريّ وغيرها من الأخبار المرتبطة به. يركّز هذا الفصل على دواعي فخر الروم ومنجزاتهم واكتشافاتهم، ووصف لبعض مدّتهم، وذكر من قدم من هذه المدن. يحاول المصنّف الإيحاء بالتقارب بين العرب والروم، إذ تُنسب إلى الروم بحسب المصنّف طوائف من العرب من تنوخ وغسان ولخم وجذام وعاملة وغيرهم، ويخصّ بالذكر صهيبيّ الروميّ (ت 659/38) ويورد الأخبار في قصّة إسلامه.

ينتقل المؤلّف بعد ذلك إلى ذكر أسلاف بايزيد ومديح مدينة إستانبول، معدّدا الأعمال المعماريّة التي أنجزت في عهده. ثمّ يتطرق إلى الحروب التي خاضها. يلي ذلك قسم في مناقب السلطان كإحسانه للفقراء، وتقريبه للعلماء، ونهجه في الحكم. كما ينوّه المؤلّف باهتمام بايزيد بالعلوم العقليّة والنقليّة وعلم الفلك، وإجادته للنثر والشعر.

يتميّز الكتاب بالتسلسل المنطقيّ والتدرّج في أبوابه، إذ يفضي الواحد منها إلى الآخر. فالباب الأوّل "في مناقب السلطان بايزيد ومآثر سلفه السعيد" وهو "نتيجة المقدّمة". يبدأ المصنّف في هذا الفصل بالحديث عن دولة بني عثمان وسلالتهم التي يقع السلطان بايزيد فيها "موضعّ الوساطة من عقود ملوكهم". ويفصّل المصنّف الأقوال المختلفة في نسب السلالة ويورد رأيًا - سيكرّه لاحقًا - وهو أنّهم ينتسبون إلى الخليفة الراشديّ الثالث عثمان بن عفّان (حكم 23-656/44-35)، وأنّ أصلهم من الحجاز (المدينة المنورة أو مكّة). يقول المصنّف في هذا الباب:

أخبرني بعض فضلاء الروم الواردين إلى المدينة الشريفة أنّ نسبهم الشريف يتّصل بكسرى أنوشروان وأنّ هذا شائع بين أهل الروم، وأخبرني بعض أهل المدينة الشريفة أنّ نسبهم ينتهي إلى عثمان بن عفّان رضي الله عنه. والذي ذكره الحافظ السخاويّ أنّ أصلهم الكريم من مدينة النبيّ صلّى الله عليه وسلّم وأنّ جدّهم عثمان الأعلى هو المنتقل [...] . [24]

ونراه يكرّر هذا الرأي في الباب الثاني:

قلت: فإن صحّ قول من يقول إنّ بني عثمان من ذريّة عثمان بن عفّان رضي الله [عنه] فإنّهم من أهل البيت على قول الإمام أحمد بن حنبل وجماعة من العلماء إنّ قريشًا كلّهم من أهل البيت وعثمان رضي الله عنه من بني عبد مناف، فإنّ هاشم وعبد شمس ولدا عبد مناف جدّ النبيّ صلّى الله عليه وسلّم. [90]

يفصّل المصنّف في الباب الأوّل الحديث عن أجداد السلطان بايزيد من السلاطين، فيتحدّث عن استتباب الملك لهم وتحليلهم بالكرم والعدل وإكرامهم العلماء وعمارتهنّ المساجد والمدارس وجهادهم.

بعدها يبدأ المصنّف بذكر خبر السلطان بايزيد الثاني، فيعزو إليه جميع خصال السلاطين السابقين الحميدة. وبحسب هذه الأخبار، فقد ظهرت نجابة السلطان بايزيد من صغره، وصار عند تولّيه الملك ملاذًا للجميع. ويورد المصنّف أخبارًا عن طلب السلطان بايزيد للعلم، والكتب التي

قرأها، ويذكر جمعه للعلماء من حوله وإكرامه لهم. يلي ذلك فصل في ذكر كرم السلطان، وهنا يرسم المصنّف صورةً للسلطان الكريم تكاد تكون نمطيّة، غير أنّ ما يميّزها هو الحديث عن كرمه تجاه أهل الحرمين الشريفين، فيقول:

وأما إحسانه وبّره بالخصوص لأهل الحرمين الشريفين، وسكّان المحلّين المنيفين، فأمر لم يُعهد مثله لملكٍ من ملوك الإسلام، فيما سلف من الدهور والأيام، [...] فإنّه لمّا أفضى الملك إليه، وصار المُعَوَّل في الأمور عليه، جعله الله باقياً فيه وفي عقبه، ووصل سبب الخيرات بسببه. صرف همّته الشريفة إلى النظر في أوقاف سلفه إليهم، وفيما أضافه من صدقاته المضاعفة عليهم، راجياً بذلك من الله جزيل الثواب، وعظيم الأجر والاحتساب. وصار يرسل إلى أهل الحرمين الشريفين في كلّ عامٍ مالاً جزيلاً يشترك فيه الخاصّ والعامّ، ويتناول منه أمراء الحرمين الشريفين ما جرت عادتهم به، ويختصّ العلماء، والقضاة، والنظار، والفقهاء، ومشايخ الحرم الشريف النبويّ وخدامه، وأرباب الوظائف بهما من الأئمة، والخطباء، والمؤدّنين، والفرّاشين، والوقّادين، والبوابين بجملة. ويعمّ معظم الناس من أهل السّنة والواردين والمجاورين من الغرباء، وزيادةً على ما يرسله من أوقافه وأوقاف آبائه ما ربّبه، برك الله في حياته، من المرتّبات السنّيّة بالمدينة الشريفة بالمسجد الشريف من قراءة قرآن، وحديث، ودروس على الأربعة مذاهب في كلّ يوم، وقدّر على ذلك مرتّبات سنّيّة تُحمل في كلّ سنة لأرباب الوظائف المذكورة. وفوق هذا مرتّبات حسنة من خالص ماله بأسماء الجماعة في غير عمل، لكلّ إنسان منهم نحو مائة دينار فما دونها تُحمل إليهم في كلّ سنة أيضاً. وجلّ اعتماد أهل الحرمين الشريفين الآن على ما يصل إليهم من صدقاته وكريم صلاته بحيث ضعف ما يصل إليهم ممّا عدا بلاد الروم. [34ب]

ينتقل المصنّف بعد ذلك إلى وصف مركز دولة السلطان بايزيد، إستانبول، فيفصّل الحديث عن سبب اختيارها مركزاً للدولة وصفاتها الطبيعيّة وانعكاس ذلك على ازدهارها الفكريّ والحضاريّ، كما يتحدّث عن صفة سكّانها. يلي ذلك فصل عن المباني التي بناها السلطان بايزيد في المدن المختلفة من مدارس ومارستانات وحمّامات ومساجد وجسور. يليه فصل عن جهاد السلطان بايزيد وفتوحاته، يسوق فيه المصنّف عدداً كبيراً من الأحاديث النبويّة التي تحثّ على الجهاد، ويعدّد إنجازات السلطان في هذا المجال. يليه فصل في حسن سيرة السلطان وعدله وحلمه وسياسته وفضله، يفصّل المصنّف فيه خصال السلطان بايزيد الحسنة. ويورد المصنّف هنا رسالة طويلة كتبها الطاهر بن الحسين الخزاعيّ (ت 822/207) إلى ابنه عبد الله حين ولّاه المأمون العبّاسيّ (حكم 198-813/218-833) مصر. بعد ذلك ينتقل المصنّف إلى ذكر أولاد السلطان بايزيد ليصل بعدها إلى الباب الثاني.

يخصّص المصنّف الباب الثاني من الكتاب لذكر طرف من أخبار الروم يصل فيه بين "ملوك بني عثمان" و"ملوك الروم"، فيبدأ بذكر الإسكندر ذي القرنين، ويتكلّم في الحرب بين الروم والفرس، وأخبار هرقل، وذكر الهدايا والمراسلات بين ملوك الإسلام وملوك الروم في الحرب والسلام والمهادنة.

أما الباب الثالث والأخير فمخصص لخبر القسطنطينية وما يتصل بها من بعض مدن الروم المشهورة. يورد المصنّف الأسماء المختلفة للقسطنطينية، وسبب تسميتها وبنائها، وعمارتها، ووصفها، وخبر دفن أبي أيوب الأنصاري (ت نحو 672/52) فيها، وفي أنّ فتحها من أشراف الساعة. يورد المصنّف هنا بعضاً من تاريخ الصراعات البيزنطية العربية ومنها حكاية فتح المعتصم العباسي (حكم 218-227/833-842) لعمورية. يصف المصنّف كذلك هرقل، ورومة وإقامة الباب فيهما، وسردانية، وطليلة.

نرى أنّ صوت ابن العليف بصفته المؤلّف حاضر في الكتاب عند تعليقاته وعند تلخيصه من باب إلى آخر، ولكنّ هذا الصوت يغدو جلياً في خاتمة الكتاب. يختم ابن العليف كتابه في مناقب السلطان بايزيد بقصيدة رائية مدحية طويلة تقع في 73 بيتاً من البحر الطويل، وهو يُعلّل اختياره لخاتمة شعرية بولعه بالآداب عامة وبأنّ الشعر "زبدة محضها، وحلبة ركضها، وثمرة ثورها، ووردة زهرها، لأنّه حليّ اللسان، وحلية الإنسان، وروضة النفس، وفاكهة الكلام، وفخر الملوك، وغوث الصعلوك". وهو يسوق عدداً من الأحاديث الشريفة والآثار التي تحثّ على نظم الشعر والاستماع إليه، مشدداً على دور الشعر في مديح السلطة:

فما زالت الخلفاء، والملوك، والأمراء، والوزراء، والأكابر يستدعون الشعراء لمديحهم
ويثيبنهم على المديح أجلّ مثوبة، ويفتخرون بذلك ويعدونه من المآثر الباقية
والمفاخر السامية، كلّ ذلك تخليداً لمناقبهم وحرصاً على بقاء ذكرهم. [116]

لكنّ خبراً يسوقه ابن العليف من كتاب العمدة لابن رشيقي (ت 1063/456 أو 1071/463) يُنبئ
بأكثر من ذلك:

وقيل لسعيد بن المسيّب رحمه الله إنّ قومًا بالعراق يكرهون الشعر فقال: نسكوا نسكاً
أعجمياً. [115ب]

إذن من يكره الشعر أعجميّ النسك، وبالتالي فإنّ مدح السلطان بايزيد بالشعر يوحى بـنسكه العربيّ ويزيد من أهليّته لقيادة العرب. تنظم القصيدة المعاني نفسها المبثوثة في ثانيا الكتاب. وتبدأ بحنين الشاعر إلى أحبابه الذين نأت بهم الديار بعيداً منه، ورغم هذا البعد فإنّه يراهم بضميره وفكره (الآيات 1-6). وهو يشفق أرضهم السهلة المباركة التي تأخّر عن زيارتها (7-12). ونراه يسأل الركبان أن يوافقوا برصاً وبعدها إستانبول ليصلوا إلى دار الملوك ويطلب منهم تقبيل ثراها (13-17). يبدأ الشعر بعد ذلك في وصف خصال "بايزيد الخير" (19)، فهو شريف المساعي (18)، نافذ النهي والأمر (18)، حمى بيضة الإسلام (19)، وأباد الطواغيت والكفر (20)، وجاهد في الله حقّ الجهاد (21)، وفتح البلاد (22)، سيرته في العدل أكرم سيرة (23)، وأيامه غرر (24)، له هيبة (25)، أطاع له من بين روم وفارس (26)، هو البحر (29)، والبدر (30)، والليث (31)، والغيث (32)، والسيف (33). يصفه الشاعر بعد ذلك بأنّه سليل بني عثمان (34) منتقلاً بذلك إلى مدح السلالة (34-40)، ولكنّ الشاعر يؤكّد على أنّ السلطان بايزيد وإن اشترك معهم في لفظ الملك فإنّه يتعالى عنهم جميعاً رفعةً وجلالةً وذاتاً وأوصافاً (42-44)، وهو كلّما دنا تواضعاً زاد سموّاً (45)، وزهت به أرض الروم ملاحه (46) وملاً قلب العدو مهابةً (47). فهو ابن عثمان الذي سار ذكره (49)، همام جواد ملقى

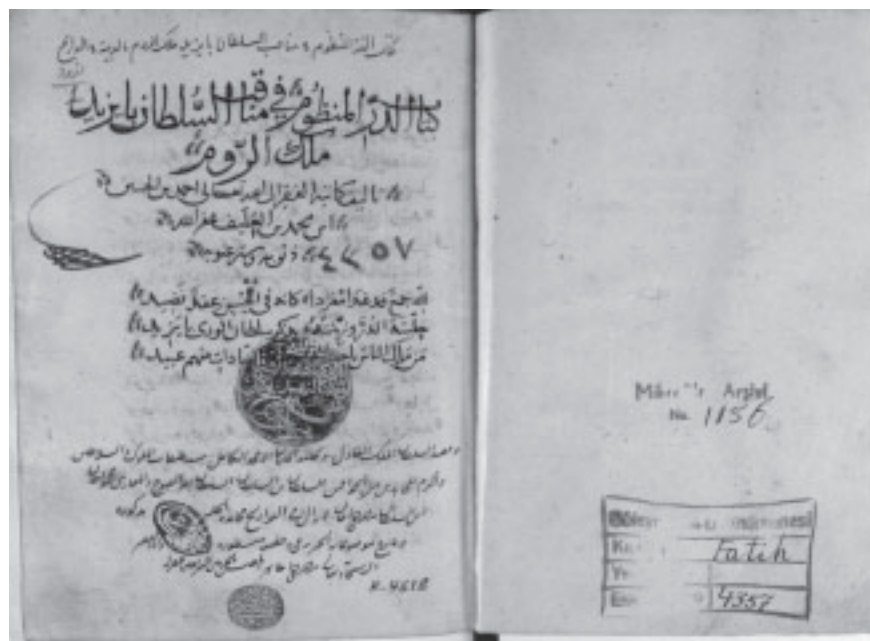
رجال الحمد والمدح والشعر (50)، ومحط ركاب الآملين (51)، ملك الإسلام (52). يركّز الشاعر في ختام قصيدته على جود السلطان (53-56)، فيمينه تروي عن يسار ونائل ووجهه يروي في البشاشة عن بشر (56)، وهو بكرمه هذا قد علّم الآخرين الشكر (57). ونرى الشاعر هنا يصرّح بطلب النوال لجبر صدع نفسه الكسيرة (58-59). فالمدح عزيز عليه في غير السلطان (60). وهو يطلب من السلطان مقابلة الشكر بمثله وتحقيق رجاء الشاعر (61-62)، ويدعو له في البيت الأخير بدوام التوفيق والعزّ والنصر (63).

أما بالنسبة لمصادر الكتاب فقد اعتمد ابن العُليّ على عددٍ كبير من الكتب المتوفرة لديه، منها على سبيل المثال: *عرائس المجالس* للثعلبيّ (ت 1036/427)، و*الآثار الباقية* للبيرونيّ (ت 1048/440)، و*مروج الذهب* للمسعوديّ (ت 957/346)، و*وفيات الأعيان* لابن خلكان (ت 1282/681)، و*الروض المعطار* لابن عبد النور²⁵ (ت. الربع الأوّل من القرن الثامن/الرابع عشر)، و*المنتظم* لابن الجوزيّ (ت 1201/597)، و*المجالسة* للدينوريّ (ت 944/333)، و*درر العقود الفريدة* للمقريزيّ (ت 1442/845)، وغيرها. ولكنّا نراه متنبّها إلى قصور هذه المصادر. ونسوق هنا فقرة تدلّ على منهجه في استعمال المصادر المتاحة له:

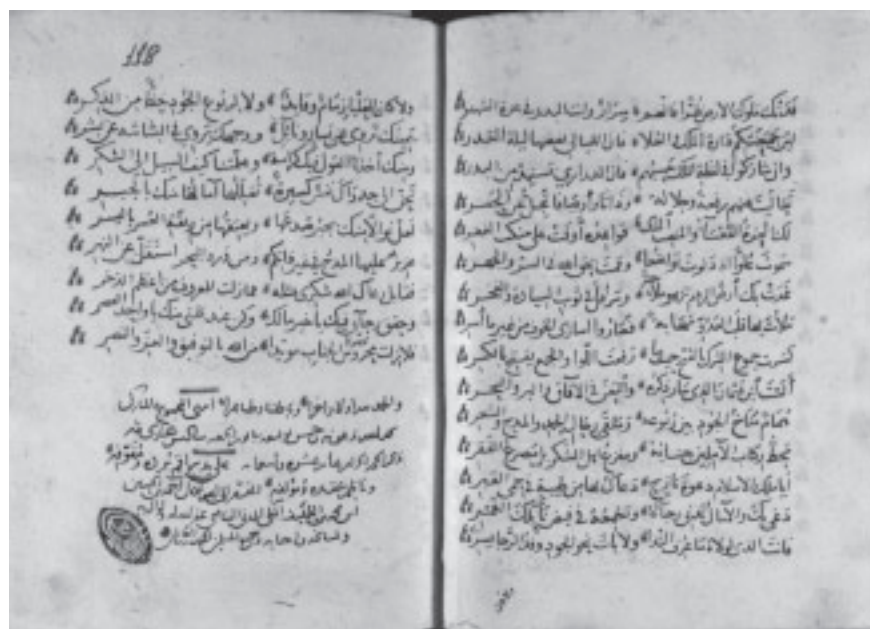
واعتمادي على ما حرّته في هذه الأوراق من التراجم وغيرها من الحوادث والوقائع على بعض كتب المؤرّخين التي اطلّعت عليها، ومن ذكر القربات التي سقتها على ما أخبرني به من يترجّح عندي صدقه من فضلاء الروم الواردين علينا، مع علمي أنّ كلّاً منهم غير موفٍ بالمقصود ولا مؤدّد للأحوال على حقيقتها، إمّا لعدم اطلاعه ونصديّه لذلك، أو قصور عبارته، أو جهله [...] [30ب]

25 نسبة الكتاب شائكة، وقد نسبته إحسان عباس في مقدّمته للكتاب إلى محمّد بن عبد المنعم الحميريّ؛ وانظر: أحمد الباهي، "حول هويّة ابن عبد المنعم الحميريّ مؤلّف كتاب: *الروض المعطار*،" وفيه نقاش حول نسبة الكتاب لابن عبد المنعم بن عبد النور الحميريّ.

109 شهاب الدين ابن العليف المكي وكتابه الدر المنظوم في مناقب السلطان بايزيد ملك الروم



مخطوط فاتح 4357، ورقة أ.



مخطوط فاتح 4357، ورقة ب-118

قائمة المصادر والمراجع

المصادر

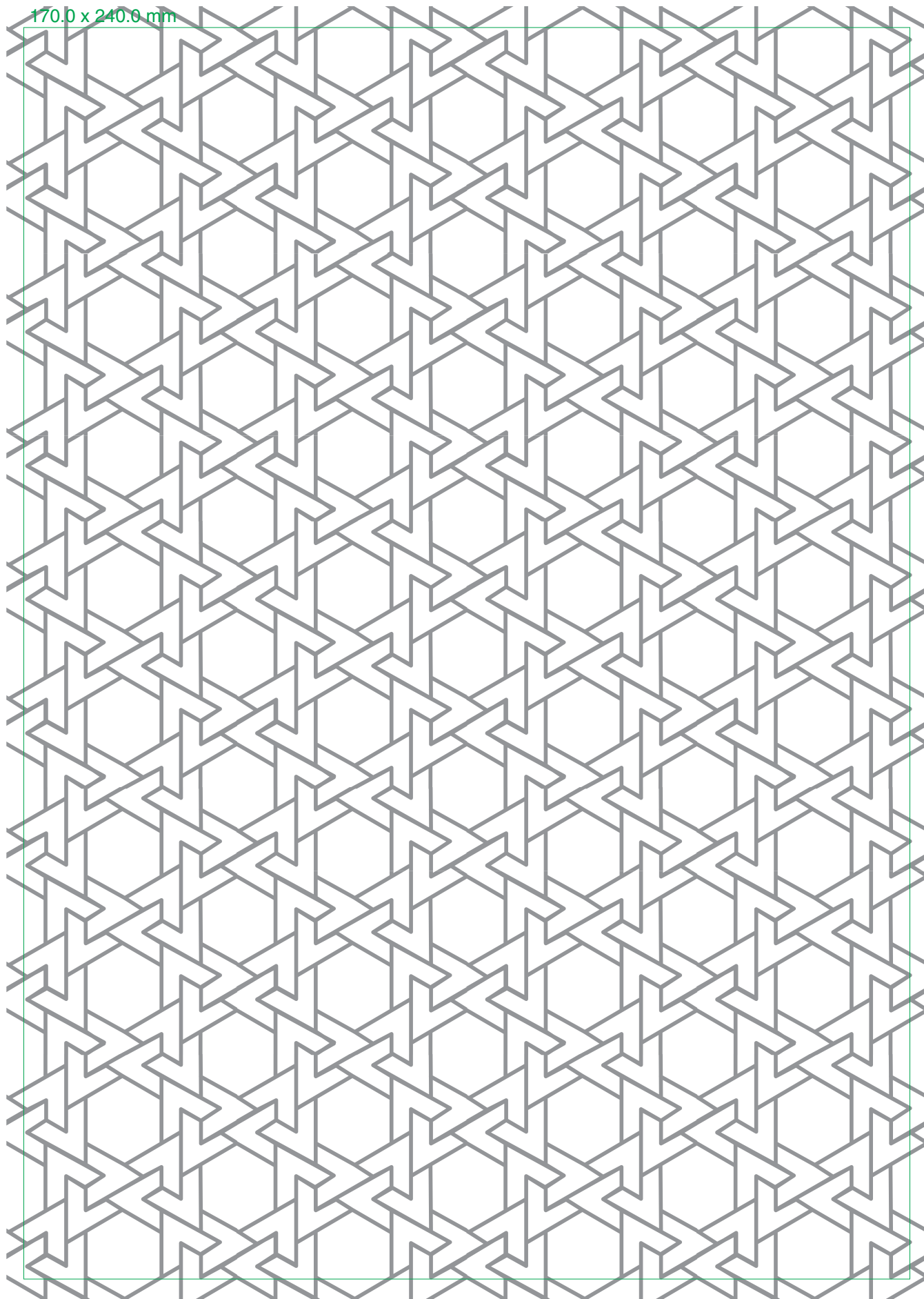
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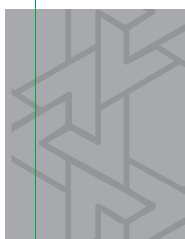
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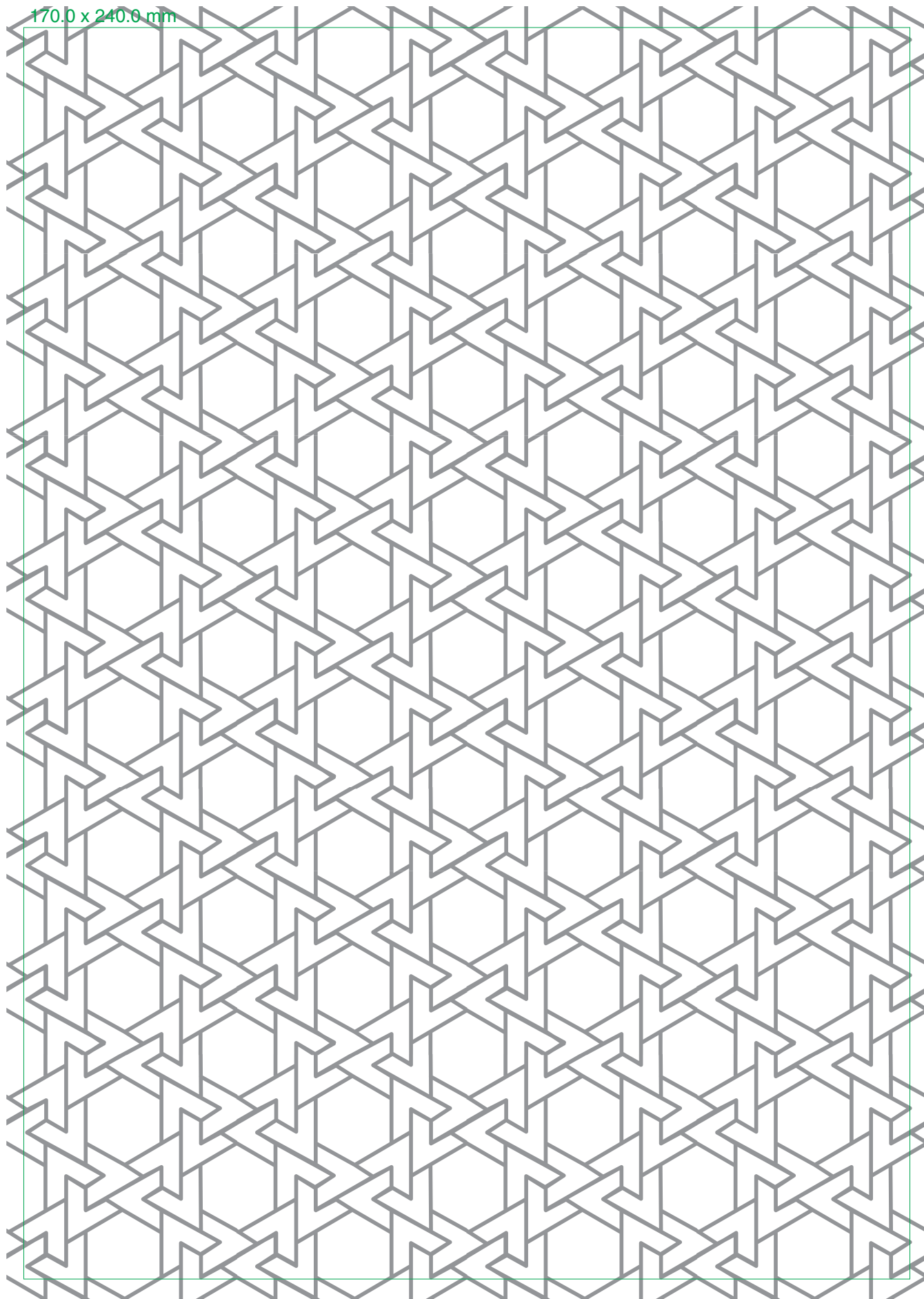


Section II

Greater Syria



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Revisiting Ḥawrān

Michael Provence

The title of this chapter, “Revisiting Ḥawrān,” has several meanings in a personal, scholarly, and historical sense. The chapter represents a virtual visit to a beloved physical place that I can no longer visit or perhaps even hope to visit. The time I spent and the people I met there some two decades ago were central to my personal development as a historian and as a person who cares deeply about the region and people of Bilad al-Sham. The topic and title also refer to my personal and professional connection to Professor Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, to whom this article, and the larger volume that includes it, is dedicated.

I met Abed in 1999 when I visited Beirut from Damascus. In those happy years, Ḥawrān and Beirut were the two poles of my existence; Damascus, my then home, was the center between the two. I made the trip from Damascus to Jabal Ḥawrān often. A bit less frequently I traveled to Beirut, and it was there, in his College Hall office, that John Meloy introduced me to Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, whose friendship, encouragement, and example would come to have the largest influence upon me and my work. Abed took us to lunch immediately, welcomed me, listened patiently, and shared my interest and enthusiasm for the history and people of Ḥawrān. In later years, particularly around 2006, we had a longstanding plan to make an auto trip to Syria and spend some days in Jabal Ḥawrān and the plain. I promised to introduce Abed to the friends I had made there in Darʿā, Suwaydā, al-Qanawat, al-Shahba, and al-Qrayya. It was a trip we both anticipated eagerly, but alas, as often happened, various events intervened, and this brief, imagined tour and visit is as close as we can ever come to a return to Ḥawrān. My friends in Ḥawrān are now mostly scattered across three continents; all refugees of one kind or another.

While Abed and I will never take the trip to Ḥawrān we planned, it occurs to me that the experience of estrangement was not new to him. A few years later, during a visit to California, I had occasion to interview him about his education and introduction to AUB. At the time I, of course, knew that he was born and experienced childhood in the now-occupied West Bank. But I was hazy on specifics. I remember being amazed to learn that

he had traveled from his parent's house in Nuba in the al-Khalil countryside for summer holidays in Amman with relatives in May 1967. In al-Khalil, he had just completed his first year of secondary school and had two more years to go. He related joining crowds in Amman to greet King Hussein after his visit to President 'Abd al-Nasser and signing the joint defense accord, alongside then-PLO chief Ahmad al-Shuqayri. The 1967 War and the Israeli occupation came a week later. In fall 1967, he was unable to return home and unable to register for school in Amman. He resumed secondary school in Amman in 1968 and finished in 1970. His final year in Amman and his school exams were interrupted by the clashes that culminated in Black September in 1970. He left Amman to attend AUB on a scholarship in October 1970. Amman remained as close as he could come to returning home. The negotiations of the 1990s made it possible for him to make a single, brief visit to his village, by which time his mother and father were long gone. For me, the pain of displacement he helped me understand made me a better, more empathetic historian, and probably a better human being. It should be obvious that debt is far too large to ever be repaid.

I became interested in Ḥawrān a few years before our first meeting, as a second-year graduate student, casting about for a research topic I could embrace. I knew, dimly, that my own ancestors were all rural folk of modest background. Rural revolutionaries seemed like they should be my people, and since the rural revolts all seemed to erupt in Ḥawrān, I was drawn to the place. Once I visited and experienced the warmth of the Ḥawārā and the beauty of their region, I knew I was hooked, and by the time I visited Abed, I was an enthusiast for the steppe lands, hills, and mountains south of Damascus.

Professor Abu-Husayn's scholarly engagement with Ḥawrān was far earlier, longer in duration, and was shared with his mentor Kamal Salibi, who wrote memorably about the region and its history, and Samir Seikaly, who wrote about depictions of the Druze. Abed wrote many important articles and chapters touching on Ḥawrān and its people, but surely his greatest contribution is his 2015 book *Bayn al-markaz w-al-aṭrāf: Ḥawrān fī al-wathā'iq al-'Uthmāniyya, 1842–1918*. The book is the most comprehensive exploration and presentation of Ottoman official views and correspondence on Ḥawrān ever published, and it is a model of deep archival research on rural Ottoman history. It will be a guide to future generations of historians of Ḥawrān and its still-formative nineteenth-century past.

All historians make their trade the exploration of lost worlds of the past. Sometimes probing the recent past can be too painful to bear. And plenty of historians have turned to the distant past as a refuge from the pain of the recent past. It is perhaps not an accident that Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn chose not to study twentieth-century Palestine or Lebanon. My scholarly choices were less carefully considered. Much of the Ḥawrān of my memory is gone, or changed, perhaps beyond recognition. The possibility to return or to share the region's splendors with Abed is gone as well. But it is also the case that our work involves imagination and creation, and in that spirit this chapter is an imaginary

tour of my memories and the journey I hoped to take with my beloved friend and mentor. I have tried to link Ḥawrān's very distant past to the more recent past, and modestly, to the painful present.

Today a journey to Ḥawrān usually begins from one of the two national capitals that span it: Damascus in the north and Amman in the south. Before 2011, hundreds of cars, buses, and trucks made the trip on the modern divided highway between the two capitals every day. Less traffic traveled the smaller roads south from Damascus to Jabal Ḥawrān and the border beyond. A dead-end road went south along the foothills of Jabal Shaykh, ending at al-Qunaytra. Train tracks, built a century ago, make the same trip and are often visible from the main road. Like auto roads everywhere, the highways of Ḥawrān follow routes long traversed, and in this case stretching back through the whole of human history. Indeed, the first humans probably migrated from their ancestral homes via the Rift Valley in Africa, of which Ḥawrān is a part. Nabatean and Roman traders, tax collectors, and armies walked through the plain. Pilgrims on the annual Haj caravan passed through too. But since our topic is Ḥawrān and those who stayed, as distinct from those who passed through on their way somewhere else, and since the national capitals, the paved roads, and trains are a mere blink of an eye in the long human history of Ḥawrān, perhaps we should begin our imaginary tour as thousands before us, with the former footpaths, now roads, over the mountains between the Mediterranean coast, the mountains and valleys of Lebanon, and the plain. From the coast and its largest southern city Saida, the main road heads east, ascending Mount Lebanon in its southern reaches, passing the mountain village of Jezzine, which perches atop cliffs on both sides of a river and cascading waterfall, and just below the high peaks. Jezzine was the southern outpost of the Ottoman special *mutasarrifiyyat Jabal Lubnan* between 1860 and 1920. Beyond Jezzine, the road briefly climbs and then descends circuitously east into the Wadi al-Taym.

Wadi l-Taym stretches north and south between the eastern slopes of Mount Lebanon and the western slope of Jabal al-Shaykh. The largest towns, Marjayoun, Hasbaya, and Rashaya, perch on the lower western slopes at elevations between 750 and 1350 meters. From the valley, the road tracks eastward for another dozen kilometers and begins to ascend the western foothills of Jabal al-Shaykh to Rashaya. Rashaya is a town striking for its alpine geography, towering eighteenth-century Shihabi castle, and picturesque limestone and red-tiled houses. The usually snow-covered peaks of Jabal al-Shaykh are its backdrop. It is also a place with historical significance far beyond its small population and current sleepy character.¹ It was once an important town between Damascus, the Ḥawrān plain, and the seaport at Saida, but today, national borders, migration, and regional conflict have consigned it to decades of population decline and irrelevance. In

¹ Reem Bailony, "Transnational Rebellion: The Syrian Revolt of 1925–1927" (unpubl. dissertation, UCLA, 2015), 118.

1919, opposition to the looming French occupation of what was then part of the Ottoman state of Syria brought Druze and Christian citizens of Rashaya together to protest in favor of independence. A few years later, in late 1925, one of the fiercest and bloodiest battles of the Great Syrian Revolt took place there. In 1943, during World War II and the Lebanese struggle for independence, the French delegate ordered Lebanese politicians Riad al-Sulh, 'Abd al-Hamid Karamah, Bishara al-Khoury, 'Adil Osseiran, and Camille Chamoun, among others, arrested and imprisoned far from Beirut in Rashaya's citadel.

In the first decade of the French mandate, Rashaya's population was mostly Orthodox Christians and Druze, in more-or-less equal measure, with smaller numbers of Maronites, Greek Catholics, and Sunni and Shi'i Muslims. With the outbreak of the Syrian Revolt in late summer 1925, the Druze of Rashaya participated in anti-French attacks with their cousins in Ḥawrān. Christians mostly did not participate, and in at least a few instances, rebels attacked and robbed their villages in the surrounding countryside. According to historian Reem Bailony, Sultan al-Atrash's younger brother Zayd entered Wadi l-Taym with rebel forces in November 1925. Smaller bands among the rebels attacked and pillaged Christian villages, which led to a crisis among the leadership. Zayd issued proclamations intended to unify the rebels, reassure Christians of the national integrity of the cause, and keep villagers supportive of rebel goals. Meanwhile French agents had urged Christians to accept weapons to arm themselves and make common cause against the enemies of the mandate. Zayd's efforts failed on all counts, and when Ḥamza Darwish attempted to collect "revolt taxes" from the Maronite village of Kawkaba, the villagers fired upon them. When rebels retaliated, they killed 28 villagers over the course of several hours. Days later Zayd's force entered Rashaya, where the majority of Christian villagers had fled in terror after learning of events at nearby Kawkaba. A French Foreign Legion company, along with locally raised Christian irregular forces, had repaired to Rashaya's fortified citadel to wait on the Druze forces. The rebel forces, numbering many hundreds and possibly thousands, besieged the citadel and fired upon it from the surrounding spurs of the mountain. After days of combat, some at extremely close quarters along the parapet, intensive French aerial bombardment and colonial cavalry reinforcements routed the Druze forces with heavy casualties and great destruction to the town.² The rebel survivors staggered in retreat along the paths of Jabal al-Shaykh, east to the plain of Ḥawrān.

The road they followed, then and now, winds up just past the high peaks of the mountain and a handful of small alpine settlements, over the pass, toward fertile and well-watered foothills. The view on a clear day spans the usually green hills and valleys, and in the distance, the vast plain of Ḥawrān, usually amber in color owing to the tinge of the earth and the green or gold wheat fields. The foothill villages and towns, from just south of Damascus toward the frontier with Jordan, are agricultural in economy

2 Bailony, "Transnational Rebellion: The Syrian Revolt of 1925–1927," 118.

and outlook. The largest and northernmost, Darayyā, has become a suburb of Damascus in recent decades, whereas its near neighbor to the south, Qaṭanā, remains a smaller mountain agricultural town.

Both towns, and at least some of the villages that surround them, are ancient. Roman, Umayyad, Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman ruins dot the landscape. Some of the mosques and churches are many centuries old, and both Darayyā and Qaṭanā have central squares reorganized in late Ottoman times with nineteenth-century buildings. In early spring 2011, Darayyā became a famous center of non-violent revolutionary agitation among the towns of Rif Dimashq, or the Damascus countryside. Government reaction against anti-government demonstrations was fierce, however, and the next year, Darayyā was the site of a notorious massacre of hundreds of citizens. The town fell under armed elements of the opposition; the Syrian army sealed and laid siege to the town for the following three years, destroyed most of the city, and killed uncounted thousands. Most of the town remains ruined and uninhabitable owing to three years of indiscriminate government airstrikes and constant artillery shelling. Many died from lack of food, water, and medicine during the siege. Qaṭanā fared relatively better after 2011, but became a refuge for thousands of ill-housed, displaced people from Darayyā, Daraʿā, and elsewhere. The natural and human landscape of Ḥawrān and the countryside of Damascus is probably more devastated today than at any time in human history, with the possible exception of the final years of the Great War in 1917 and 1918, when the British army marched from Palestine as the Ottoman army retreated north after famine had already visited, but just before the 1918 influenza. Mortality from the cumulative cataclysms then was estimated to have been 25%.³

South and east toward the plain and descending the foothills, the beauty of nature transcends human destruction, and as the snowcapped mountains recede, rolling plains of farms and fields unfold. One low, compact village passes, usually situated on slightly higher ground, as another comes into view, inevitably marked by a collection of trees, a minaret, or church spire, or both, a water tower, and surrounded by fields of various crops and sometimes grazing sheep. Low walls made from stones, long ago collected from the fields, mark the plots and the lanes that bisect them. As we head east and south, the stones and houses change in color and material, from tan made from timbers, mud, lime, and limestone, or more latterly cement, to black, made from basalt stone. The color of the soil changes too, from tan to brown, to darker red, to nearly black as the volcanic basalt comes to dominate.

3 Linda Schatowski-Schilcher, "The Famine of 1915–18 in Greater Syria," in *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani*, ed. John Spagnola (Oxford: Ithaca Press, 1992), 229–58.

The people of the villages change too. From the Druze and Christians of the slopes surrounding Jabal al-Shaykh, Sunni Muslims and smaller numbers of Orthodox and Melkite Christians come to prevail. Many villagers, both Muslims and Christians, trace their lineage to nomadic or semi-nomadic tribal sheep herders, and a few continue to move about and engage in pastoralism as their primary work. The tribes of Ḥawrān in the nineteenth century were divided between mostly small sheep herding tribes, like al-Faḍl around Golan and al-Sulut east around Jabal Ḥawrān, which moved within the region and sometimes occupied and farmed the many abandoned villages, and fully nomadic camel nomads of the great tribes that came seasonably from the deserts to the east and south. Among all the Ḥawārān, rural and tribal customs of hospitality, food, and family unite the people of the region. Strong bedouin coffee of the type commonly found in the cities only during holidays is served and drunk everywhere. Cuisine centers on mutton and rice and is often consumed collectively from a single plate, with no utensils. Guests are expected to accept the inevitable invitations.⁴

Three main roads span the region from north to south. The westernmost road traverses the foothills of Jabal al-Shaykh and ends at the occupied Golan Heights and the abandoned town of Qunayṭra, lost to Syria in 1967 and demolished by evacuating Israeli forces during the negotiations that followed the 1973 war. Today, little besides a skeletal stone hospital building still stands. A UN checkpoint and disengagement force is just outside the town, and the road continues to the cease-fire line a few hundred meters distant. Qunayṭra was a nineteenth-century boom town built by Ottoman state funding and settled by Circassian refugees from the wars with Russia in the Caucasus. The Circassians arrived with their weapons and state sponsorship, and difficult relations with their bedouin and Druze neighbors ensued. Norman Lewis, quoting nineteenth-century travel accounts, notes that Faḍl bedouin eventually made peace with the newcomers and may have acquired certain farming techniques from Circassian migrants, and thereby more readily eased into sedentary life.⁵

About 20 km east of Qunayṭra is the main road south, a modern divided highway which tracks the ancient Haj caravan road and the late nineteenth-century Ottoman Hijaz railway. Astride the road are a string of towns and villages, the most important of which is al-Shaykh Miskīn, which became an Ottoman regional center in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the state endeavored to assert more control over Ḥawrān.⁶ In the period after 1908, the state changed the seat of the liwa of Ḥawrān from al-Shaykh Miskīn to Darʿā.

4 Norman Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19–21.

5 Ibid., 106.

6 Engin Akarli, *Ottoman Criteria for the Choice of an Administrative Center in the Light of Documents on Hauran, 1909–1910* (Amman: Publications of the University of Jordan, 1989).

In the nineteenth century al-Shaykh Miskīn was one of the few permanently inhabited Ḥawrān towns, but like most of the region, the structures, including houses, canals, and wells, were intact from ancient times and ready for use. In nineteenth-century Ḥawrān there were more ancient, well-built, basalt stone houses than there were people who wanted to live in them. Migrants could render a village or neighborhood habitable, and its houses comfortably livable, with a minimum of labor.⁷ The author has been a guest in houses with carved stone doors weighing many hundreds of kilograms, doubtlessly hundreds, or perhaps more than a thousand years old, that swung easily on floor and ceiling bearings of renewable greased hardwood, such that a small child could open or close the door. Basalt is a tremendously durable material, and when the Ottoman State built the Hijaz railway around the turn of the last century, black basalt was the material of choice for the road bed, bridges, culverts, and new train stations, including the Damascus main line station and workshops at al-Qadam.

The suitability of al-Shaykh Miskīn as the local government center was not clear to everyone, however, as Engin Akarlı pointed out in an article based on Ottoman official correspondence. Ottoman provincial employees complained endlessly about the rustic deficiencies and lack of amenities of al-Shaykh Miskīn. They noted that the government house was only inhabited by single men, since their families refused to leave Damascus, and the government house was consequently grimy and poorly kept, projecting an unfavorable impression of the state and its servants to the villagers and bedouin. The local officials argued Darʿā was healthier, and more “civilized,” and as a major train depot on the new Hijaz line, would be a better center for all state functions. The critique of Ḥawrān village life evidently carried some weight, and the government center moved to Darʿā. As recently as the early 2000s it was difficult to find a restaurant of any kind in most villages and towns of Ḥawrān, and nighttime accommodations for travelers were non-existent. Villagers often extended warm hospitality to total strangers.

A few kilometers to the east of al-Shaykh Miskīn are the neighboring villages of Izraʿ and Buṣrā al-Ḥarīr, which border the volcanic badlands of al-Laja. Both villages are picturesque with many ancient basalt buildings. The population of Izraʿ is mostly Christian, both Orthodox and Melkite, with two ancient churches between them. Villagers claim the Orthodox church of Saint George is the first dedicated to the saint. A Greek inscription dated to 515 CE dedicates the church to God and to his martyred servant George. It is usually considered the oldest functioning church in Syria. The nearby church of Saint Ilyas (Elias), dating from the seventh or eighth century CE, serves the Melkites.⁸ The population of nearby Buṣrā al-Ḥarīr are mostly Sunnis, and they have an ancient basalt mosque not too different in boxy appearance from the churches of their neighbors.

7 Kais M. Firro, *A History of the Druzes* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 149.

8 Ross Burns, *The Monuments of Syria: A Guide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 157–58.

The mosque probably dates from Ayyubid or perhaps Mamluk times and has a basalt late Mamluk or Ottoman minaret which has been damaged, along with the mosque itself, by recent shelling. The towns' economies center on farming of wheat, barley, olives, grapes, fruits, and vegetables, but each also adjoins al-Laja to the east, which is an area so rocky little cultivation is possible. Buṣrā al-Ḥarīr, like many of the towns of Ḥawrān, was under Free Syrian Army control between about 2012 and 2018, and the Syrian Army assaults that re-asserted control caused wide destruction. Probably more than half the Muslim population of Ḥawrān fled to other places, and most have probably not returned.

Al-Laja, literally "refuge," holds a storied place in local lore. It is a vast pockmarked basalt lava field, triangular in shape, and nearly 20 km across. The stone is jagged everywhere and appears barely to have cooled. There are innumerable caves, grottos, and deep caverns, many known only to the nearest villages, and it is passable only on foot, and even then, only very slowly. There are few areas of soil, hardly any growing plants, and few trees. Water collects in pools. Probably since the dawn of organized states it has served as redoubt and hiding place for those wishing to escape the rule of the state and its agents. In the early twentieth century, Ottoman officials considered it the impenetrable hideout of bandits and a "stronghold of ruffians."⁹ In summer 1910, when Ottoman forces under Sami Basha l-Faruqi came to impose order on the Druze of the nearby mountain, many took refuge in the Laja, and in 1925 when French mandate Armée du Levant sought to suppress the Great Syrian Revolt, rebels hid in the Laja. The innovation of airplanes made it less secure than it had been.¹⁰ The Druze village of al-'Ariqa is the only settlement inside al-Laja, and it is famous for the vast cave underneath the village, which extends at least a square kilometer underground.

At the eastern edge of the Laja is a 1400-m black volcanic cone, with a partially collapsed crater on one side and a Druze shrine to the namesake of the peak, Tal Shihan, at the summit. Just south of the foot of the cone is the town of Shahba, situated on the lower northwest slopes of Jabal Ḥawrān. Today Shahba is a town of about 15,000 inhabitants, mostly Druze, some Christians, and bedouin Muslims. The town is notable for its many basalt Roman ruins including the ruins of a large temple, small theatre, and colonnaded street ending at a Roman memorial and a pleasant public area. Shahba was the birthplace of Roman Emperor Philip the Arab in the second century CE, and he lavished attention, money, and projects on his hometown well out of proportion to its population or prominence. In honor of its most famous son, it was known as Philippopolis.¹¹ The town also has a splendid small museum with some of the best mosaics in Syria. The leading

⁹ Akarli, *Ottoman Criteria*, 19.

¹⁰ Samir M. Seikaly, "Pacification of the Ḥawrān (1910): The View from Within," in *Proceedings of the XIIIth Congress of the Comité International d'Etudes Pre-Ottomanes et Ottomanes* (Prague: Oriental Institute, 1996), 367–76.

¹¹ Burns, *Monuments of Syria*, 279.

Druze families of Shahba, including the Ḥalabī and the Abū Fakhr, have raised secular and religious leaders since the nineteenth century. Shahba was probably only sparsely populated until the mid-to-late nineteenth century, when Druze migrants from the west arrived and gradually displaced semi-nomadic local bedouin.

The main road to the provincial capital of Suwaydā heads due south from Shahba and skirts the western slopes of Jabal Ḥawrān. The plain spreads out to the west, dotted with villages, and on a clear day, the often snowy peaks of Jabal al-Shaykh are visible 30 or 40 km in the distance. The slopes of the mountain are gentle, and to the left they are planted with olive trees and grapes. Low stone walls of basalt separate the terraced plots. Sometimes the stones are simply piled in a corner. To the right, looking west, the fields are mostly planted with rain-fed winter wheat in the fall. The wheat ripens in late spring and turns from green to gold in June and July, at which time the farmers harvest and thresh the crop. Usually the post-harvest stubble provides pasturage for sheep, goats, horses, and donkeys. Farmers use machinery to work larger plots, but many of the smaller plots are plowed and harvested by a combination of human and animal labor. The author remembers watching an elderly Druze couple working expertly together early one morning under the summer sun with their donkey to harvest and thresh their tiny plot. A smaller, older road runs higher up the gentle slopes between Shahba, al-Qanawāt, and al-Suwaydā. After a few kilometers it arrives at al-Qanawāt, at about 1200 m elevation. Al-Qanawāt is a lovely village, thick with basalt Roman ruins, including several large temple columns and a number of partially intact, ornately carved, decorated buildings. The village surroundings are fertile and wooded, and unlike the towns of the plain, al-Qanawāt has a stream that bisects the village and runs much of the year. Qanawāt was among the first Ḥawrān Druze strongholds in the early nineteenth century, and it was the seat of the then-dominant Ḥamdān clan. About 1860 the Aṭrash clan (pl. Ṭurshān) supplanted the Ḥamdān as leading shaykhs, or the house of the Shaykh al-Mashayikh of the mountain, and the Ḥamdān was reduced to a secondary status, their town no longer a political center.¹² All Druze shaykhly families maintain guesthouses, or *maḍāfa*, usually adjoining their houses, where they receive guests and visitors and serve coffee. Qanawāt remains, however, the seat of Druze religious leadership and the religious Shaykh al-ʿAql of Ḥawrān resides there.

To the south and west of Qanawāt, the road leaves the village toward the regional capital of al-Suwaydā. Suwaydā and its historical center appear a couple of kilometers down the hill at a slightly lower elevation. A newer, larger, divided road approaches the city from Shahba, but the road from Qanawāt is older and arrives directly at the central square, Saḥat Sulṭān al-Aṭrash, which has a number of old buildings and an equestrian statue of Sulṭān al-Aṭrash; a rarity in Syria where heroic statues are limited to members of

12 Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, 187–88.

the ruling family, or ancient, and hence apolitical, dead heroes. Suwaydā, like other Jabal Ḥawrān towns, was full of ancient ruins and sparsely populated until the nineteenth century, when Druze migrants arrived. Since the days of the French mandate it has been the provincial capital, and it owes its prominence to its strategic location at the crossroads between plain and mountain, to the early leading local family, al-Ḥamdān and to the Ottoman army. During the Great War of 1914–1918, the mountain became a refuge for those fleeing Ottoman state persecution, war, and famine. In the past decade, since 2011, it has again become a refuge for those fleeing war and devastation in other parts of Syria. The city has grown rapidly, partly thanks to money from migrants abroad, partly from internal refugees, and now it has more than 100,000 inhabitants. At the same time, war and currency devaluation have impoverished many.

Around the turn of the last century, Ottoman army engineers demolished a vast Roman temple complex in the center of Suwaydā and repurposed the cut basalt to build large barracks, still occupied by the Syrian Army, and a number of buildings. The square is dominated by a French mandate chateau-styled government *saray*, also constructed of basalt but otherwise familiar from innumerable French towns still in use today. Its construction indicates the importance the French mandate's architects held for the Druze and their region. It is unmistakably a symbol of power and presence. Across from the *saray*, facing the square, are other nineteenth-century black basalt, red-tile-roof buildings including one that served for decades as the only hotel in the region, called *rawḍat al-jabal*. The author once spent a freezing winter's night there on a rough wooden cot in a first floor room in which the windows lacked glass or shutters, buffeted all night by icy breezes off the mountain.

South of Suwaydā two roads branch off, one at lower elevation toward al-Qrayya, the other higher along the slopes toward al-Kafr, site of a famous 1925 battle and to the citadel town of Ṣalkhad. Al-Qrayya is the village of Sulṭān al-Aṭrash, leader of the 1925 Revolt and eminent Syrian national hero. His modest house, *maḍāfa*, and memorial tomb are there. Sulṭān al-Aṭrash was the son of Dhuqan al-Aṭrash, a secondary Aṭrash shaykh who was executed in 1911 for his part in the revolt against the Ottoman State the previous year. Sulṭān was born in 1891 and had been conscripted into the Ottoman army and sent to serve in the Balkans at the time of the 1910 revolt. In a wartime bid to cement Druze loyalty, Ottoman governor Cemal Pasha visited and handed out decorations and titles, naming Sulṭān an Ottoman Pasha. He evidently accepted the decoration, but Sulṭān resisted Cemal's calls to aid the war effort with men and grain. Family lore explains Sulṭān pinned the Ottoman medal on his dog but does not explain how he received the medal in the first place. Arab nationalist fugitives from Cemal's reign of terror in Damascus sought and received refuge with Sulṭān in al-Qrayya, including leading Syrian nationalist and SPC graduate 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Shahbandar.¹³ Ottoman officials and supply officers

13 As a student, Shahbandar led SPC student activists against compulsory chapel attendance.

sought Ḥawrāni grain from Druze farmers, but much of the crop went south, beyond the British lines, where payment was in gold rather than devalued Ottoman paper. Sulṭān, not yet 30 years old, navigated the perils of wartime between the Ottoman government and its enemies, and managed to avoid being drawn in till the outcome was clear. Some of his relatives bitterly attacked him for abandoning the Ottoman State, but he kept his own counsel.¹⁴



"Jebel el-Druze & Hauran. Ghureye. Sheikh Sultan el-Atrash Pasha in his home town," Library of Congress, Matson Collection, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019708019/>

14 See Michael Provence, "Druze Shaykhs, Arab Nationalists, and Grain Merchants in Jabal Ḥawrān," *The Druze: Realities and Perceptions*, ed. Kamal Salibi (London: Druze Heritage Foundation, 2005). See the recently published letter and document collection of Sultan al-Atrash, edited by his granddaughter, historian Rim al-Attrache, *al-Mudhkkirat al-haqika l-Sultan Basha al-Atrash: al-qa'id al-'amm lil-thawra al-suriyya al-Kubra (watha'iq min awraqahi 1910–1989)* (Beirut: Dar al-ab'ad lil-ṭibā'a wal nushr wal tawzi'a, 2022).

In fall 1918, Sulṭān led a Druze contingent to join Amir Faysal on the final march to Damascus. He returned to his village, but by the early 1920s, after France had defeated and expelled Faysal, Sulṭān became an intractable enemy of the mandate. By summer 1922, he was a fugitive himself and fled to British mandate Transjordan. French airplanes bombed and destroyed his house in al-Qrayya. A few years later he received amnesty, at which time he returned, rebuilt his house, and resumed farming his fields. His launch and leadership of the Great Syrian Revolt, or the Syrian Patriotic Revolution as it was called at the time between 1925 and 1927, led to his exile for a decade.

The Great Revolt brought the Ḥawrān to international consciousness. Newspapers around the world covered the events. Druze fighters, their Ḥawārnā allies, other Syrians, and ex-Ottoman soldiers had dramatic victories in the first months. With few soldiers available, France launched major air and artillery attacks against Ḥama and then Damascus, perhaps the first time a major city, full of civilians, was intensively bombed from the air. The bloody French campaign discredited the new League of Nations mandates system, the French empire, and several senior French generals.

In Ḥawrān the French counterinsurgency campaign was far more relentless and destructive than elsewhere. French aircraft bombed Ḥawrān villages every day for more than two years, and thousands were killed or displaced. In April 1926 a massive French force marched on Ḥawrān, intending to re-capture Suwaydā. As they camped below the mountain, a witness noted: “All the heights round SOUEIDA suddenly lit up with brilliant bonfires, which formed the well-known Druze rallying signal for war, and showed their decision to resist.”¹⁵ The next day’s battle for Suwaydā killed and wounded more than a thousand, evenly split between the defenders and French occupiers.¹⁶

The remaining rebels retreated to the villages higher up the mountain and eventually fled over the Mandate border to al-Azraq in Transjordan, where their families were already in refugee camps. Pressure from Paris forced the eventual expulsion of the refugees from the Transjordan Mandate. Sulṭān al-Aṭrash, his family, and comrades spent the next decade living in tents in Wadi l-Sirhān in the north west corner of the Sultanate of al-Saud, mostly subsisting on donations from Syrian immigrant communities abroad. Others, like Dr. Shahbandar and the professional soldiers, had more options and went elsewhere. Exile lasted until Leon Blum’s leftist government in France declared an amnesty in 1937.

The exiles followed different paths after their return. Sulṭān al-Aṭrash and the other Ḥawārnā returned to their villages and resumed rural life. His children and many of their generation sought university education, including at the American University of

¹⁵ FO 371/11506, SECRET, “The Capture of Soueida,” *Liaison Officer Report*, 5.

¹⁶ See Michael Provence, “French Mandate Counterinsurgency and the Repression of the Great Syrian Revolt,” *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan, eds., (London: Routledge, 2015), 146–47.

Beirut, professions in Damascus or abroad, and committed involvement in national politics. When Sulṭān died in 1982, half a million mourners attended the funeral. Then President Hafiz al-Asad paid his respects and promised to build a grand mausoleum, but never fulfilled his promise or allowed Sulṭān's admirers to complete the project. For more than two decades a concrete shell sat next to his house in al-Qrayya. Finally, in the years after Asad's death in 2000, the family and well-wishers finished a tomb and museum commemorating the hero. The mausoleum notwithstanding, al-Qrayya remains a modest, charming village of somewhere around 5000 inhabitants.

Departing al-Qrayya, the road south passes smaller villages and descends from the foothills. After a couple of kilometers al-Qrayya road joins the east-west road between Ṣalkhad and the famous Roman and Umayyad town Buṣrā al-Shām. Buṣrā lies about eight kilometers west and at lower elevation, at 850 m, from al-Qrayya. It is a town rich in history, even by the standards of the region. Buṣrā is unusual in that while it is a minor town today, it was a center for three empires over more than a thousand years. Buṣrā was already an important Nabatean city in the second or first century BCE, and in the later decades of the Nabatean kingdom it was the capital. After the Roman conquest in 106 CE, Buṣrā was the capital of Roman Arabia and soon received a massive basalt coliseum to complement its Nabatean imperial splendor. The coliseum, since augmented with well-integrated thirteenth-century Ayyubid ramparts, towers, and a moat, is considered the most beautiful and well-preserved Roman theatre anywhere in the Mediterranean.

Buṣrā remained an important town after the Islamic conquest and the retreat of the Eastern Roman empire. It was also the location of an encounter between the Prophet Muhammad as a pre-teen child, accompanying his uncle Abu Talib on a trading caravan, and a Christian Monk named Buhira, who is said to have foretold Muhammad's prophetic destiny. The story appears in early Islamic chronicles but was also re-cast in Byzantine works to undermine the divinity of the Islamic revelations. A partially intact building in Buṣrā is known as the Monastery of Bahira, and the local connection with the Prophet is a well-known point of pride among the people of the region until today.

Buṣrā was the first Byzantine city the Arab Muslims conquered in 634 under the first Caliph Abu Bakr and led by Khalid ibn al-Walid. It remained an important city until the Crusades, after which towns and trade routes further west gradually eclipsed its importance. By the nineteenth century it had a small permanent population. Today Buṣrā is the most intact ancient city in Syria, and its houses and buildings, some many centuries old, are still in daily use by the small population numbering some 20,000. Buṣrā's religious buildings include the Mosque of 'Umar which, despite its name and association with the caliph 'Umar, dates from the early eighth century CE. Several other very old mosques, a third-century CE administration building later used as Christian basilica, two paved colonnaded roads, several arches, and a large public bath make for

an unforgettable impression.¹⁷ Artillery and Syrian government airstrikes damaged the historical structures of Buṣrā between 2015 and 2018. Without the possibility of surveys, it is still impossible to accurately assess the damage.

The road from Buṣrā proceeds west, skirting today's Jordanian border about 5–8 km to the south. Several agricultural villages straddle the road until, after about 25 km, the road arrives at the regional capital of Dar'ā. Dar'ā is an important town on the Hijaz railway and the modern motorway south to Jordan and its capital, Amman. Dar'ā has long been a major agricultural city and an export depot for Syrian products, both agricultural and industrial. It is the southern border gateway to Syria through which all road traffic from Jordan, the Gulf, specifically Saudi Arabia, and Egypt passes. Professor Abu-Husayn related a story of Syrian border guards in the 1990s mentioning, with chilling casualness, how they kept track of his border crossings and knew more about his comings and goings than he did. The city has been under intense and uneasy Syrian government surveillance for decades and was suspected of opposition long before 2011.

Dar'ā is a city many passed through and few visited. It had a variety of Roman ruins and an ancient central mosque, locally called the 'Umari mosque, which was believed to have been a Roman temple and later church, converted to a mosque by the Caliph 'Umar, with a single, probably Ayyubid or Mamluk square basalt minaret, now toppled by artillery fire. The city retained its importance straddling trade and travel routes and had a large Hijaz railway station. For centuries the city was an important stop on the annual pilgrimage and was a pivotal Ottoman army headquarters during the 1914–18 Great War.

Dar'ā is today famous as the origin town of the 2011 Syrian Revolution, and the town is now largely destroyed and depopulated. In the decade between the ascendance of Syrian President Bashshar al-Asad and the Syrian Revolution of 2011, Dar'ā had also become a symbol of popular discontent and desperation. Dar'ā was the largest city in Ḥawrān, with more than 100,000 inhabitants and an important agricultural center, but it was also a place where government disinvestment and the effects of drought and climate change were most devastating. Internal migration from former steppe lands in northern and eastern Syria, which had become increasingly difficult for agriculture, had swelled Dar'ā's population. Government policy after 2000 focused on investment in banking, real estate, and glitzy developments in the mountains west of Damascus and the northern coast, leaving the agricultural countryside to suffer swelling population and declining resources, water, and employment prospects. New government elites, in contrast to earlier generations, were brazen in their disdain for rural regions and their people. The rain on which life depended seemed to diminish year after year. But even after a decade of unimaginable suffering, the people of Dar'ā did not surrender their dignity, and the city has remained a center of opposition, and one of the Syrian cities where protests still take place.

¹⁷ Burns, *The Monuments of Syria*, 78–86.

Historians sometimes console themselves with historical detachment, humor, and perspective when confronting pain and suffering. Optimists might emphasize historical cycles and note that bad times can end, and things can get better. Pessimists might note that change is the only constant, and things usually, but not always, get worse. Such detachment is not available to everybody, and might strike many as evasion or delusion. But perhaps the important thing is not *how* we carry on, but simply that we *do* carry on, seeking to understand, to love, to teach, and to exist. The greatest teachers can convey deeper, longer lasting lessons than even they intend, and their gifts of understanding can transcend lifetimes.

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Ottoman Policy Toward the Druzes of Syria (Hawran) During the Early Years of Abdulhamid II (1878–1881)

Ş. Tufan Buzpınar*

The Ottoman policy toward the Druzes of Hawran has not been the subject of any study until today, especially a study that has consulted Ottoman archival sources. Therefore, the main objective of this article is to shed light on the Ottoman policy toward the Druzes of Hawran in the early years of Abdulhamid II (1876–1909) by using Ottoman and British archival sources. The introduction of this article offers a piece of brief information about the history of the Druze migrations to Hawran in order to give an idea about the Druze population in the region. The following three sections of this study examine in detail three incidents related to the Druzes that the Ottoman authorities dealt with during the periods of three distinguished governors-general of Syria after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878, namely Cevdet Pasha, Midhat Pasha, and Ahmed Hamdi Pasha. In all three incidents, the Ottoman government insisted on using peaceful means to solve the conflicts with the Druzes. Hence, the main argument of the article is that Ottoman policy during the period under study was reconciliation and negotiation rather than coercion. It also argues, based on the Ottoman and the British primary sources, that the governors-general of Syria were particularly careful to prevent any foreign, especially British, interference in the Druze affairs in Hawran, as will be seen in the subsequent pages. This article therefore also amounts to a revision of the relevant literature.

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I

The Bilad al-Sham region (Greater Syria) has had a Druze population since the eleventh century. Hawran, however, did not attract Druze attention until the seventeenth century, more than a century after the Ottomans took the region under control in 1516. More specifically, Hawran became one of the important districts of Druze settlements during the eighteenth century when many Druzes, who were seeking shelter for various reasons i.e., social, political, and economic, migrated from the south and the north to Hawran. The Egyptian rule in the Bilad al-Sham region in the 1830s served to strengthen the sectarian attitudes, which led to an outbreak of fighting between the Maronites and the Druzes in Mount Lebanon. Thus, during the 1830s, more Druzes migrated to Hawran. The Druzes were also seriously disturbed by Egyptian rule. By 1838 the Druzes in Hawran felt strong enough to defy orders of conscription and disarmament, and revolted against the Egyptian forces. The fighting between the two sides lasted for several months, and although the majority of the Druzes accepted the amnesty terms offered by Ibrahim Pasha, the Egyptian ruler in Syria, a small number of them continued to rebel until the end of Egyptian rule in 1840.¹ During the Tanzimat period (1839–1876), two important factors led Druzes of different parts of the Bilad al-Sham to continue migration to Hawran. First, the Ottoman government's effort to reach every corner of the country to incorporate different groups of the Ottoman population into the increasingly centralized state system met resistance from the Druze population who were living in actual independence.² Second, the ever-increasing tension between the Christians and the Druzes in Lebanon led to a civil war in 1860 as a result of which many more Druzes migrated to Hawran.

By the time the province of Syria was reorganized in the 1860s, the Druze population in the mountainous area of Hawran reached such a number that Jabal Hawran started

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- 1 For a general account of Druze settlements in Hawran, see Norman N. Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800–1890* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 77–91; Kais M. Firro, *A History of the Druzes* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 31–78; Yvette Talhamy, “The Nusayri and Druze Minorities in Syria in the Nineteenth Century: The Revolt against the Egyptian Occupation as a Case Study,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 6 (2012): 986–92. For significant contributions to the Druze history in the Bilad al-Sham region, see Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn, *Provincial Leaderships in Syria 1575–1650* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1985); Idem, *The View from Istanbul: Ottoman Lebanon and the Druze Emirate* (London and New York: Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2004).
 - 2 For expansion of state authority to Hawran during the Tanzimat period, see M. Talha Çiçek, *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East: Ottomans and Arab Nomads in the Modern Era, 1840–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 134–36.

to be called Jabal al-Duruz.³ In the first official yearbook of the province of Syria, the area where the Druze population constituted the majority was called the district of Jabal Druze Hawran (*Jabal Druze Havran Kazası*).⁴ The name Havran was added after Jabal Druze because the name Jabal Druze had previously been used for a region in the district of Shuf in Lebanon.⁵ Yet between 1872 and 1884 the name Havran was dropped and only the name Jabal Druze was used for the district (*kaza*) centered in al-Suwayda.⁶ For some reason, in the year 1884, the name of the town was changed to Jabal Hawran.⁷ Intriguingly, from 1885 until 1890 it was again shifted to Jabal Druze.⁸ In 1890, however, the name Druze was permanently omitted from the official name of the town and only Jabal Hawran was used until 1901.⁹ Finally, in 1901 the region was administratively restructured and the town of Jabal Hawran was divided into three new towns: al-Suwayda, Salkhad, and Ahira. Thus, al-Suwayda became the official name of the town where the Druzes were in an overwhelming majority.¹⁰

The fact that the Druzes had settled in Hawran over the centuries prepared the ground for rivalry as to who would be the leading family of the newcomers. In time, several families emerged as the leading families from among the Druzes of Hawran. Kais M. Firro states that “at the beginning of 1860 there were eight leading families: al-Qal’ani, ‘Amer, Abu Fahr, ‘Azzam, Hnaydi, Abu ‘Assaf, Hamdan and Atrash, each ruling several villages.”¹¹ However, the Hamdans maintained their status as the leading family of the Druzes of Hawran from the first decade of the eighteenth century until the civil war of 1860. New migrations during and after the civil war of 1860 resulted in the change of leadership and led the Atrash family to succeed the Hamdans. Ismail, the leader of the Atrash family, gradually increased his reputation as an important local leader during the crisis of the 1840s and 1850s. Ismail’s actual power reached such a degree that during the

- 3 Firro, *A History*, 129–53; Idem, “The Ottoman Reforms and Jabal al-Duruz, 1860–1914,” in *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration: Studies in Honour of Butrus Abu-Manneh*, eds. Itzhak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 149–51.
- 4 Jabal Druze Hawran was used in the official provincial yearbooks until 1872. See *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye* [The Yearbook of Syria], no. 1 (1285/1868): 57; *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 2 (1286/1869): 103; *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 3 (1288/1871): 86.
- 5 For the usage of the term “Jabal Druze” in the Shuf district of Lebanon, see *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniyye* [The Ottoman State Yearbook], (1266/1850): 86; Firro, *A History*, 34.
- 6 See *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 4 (1289/1872): 104–15; *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 15 (1300/1883): 245. It is worth noting that in 1881 the town of Jabal Druze was attached to the *Mutasarrıflık* of Damascus (*Şam sancağı*), not to the *Mutasarrıflık* of Hawran. By 1879, Jabal Druze Hawran was commonly used by the people. FO, 78/2985, enclosure in Jago to Salisbury, no. 12, political, Damascus 16 August 1879.
- 7 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 16 (1301/1884): 194.
- 8 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 17 (1302/1885): 186–87; *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 21 (1306/1890): 120.
- 9 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 22 (1307/1890): 127; *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 31 (1317/1900): 219.
- 10 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 32 (1318/1901): 221.
- 11 Firro, *A History*, 181.

mid-1850s the Ottoman authorities recognized him “as the *de facto* leader.”¹² Hence, the Atrash family influenced Druze politics in the region for a long time to come.

II

Against this background and after the disastrous Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78, Abdulhamid II had to develop Ottoman policies toward the Druzes of Hawran, which was a very important district of the province of Syria. In addition to security reasons, especially because of its proximity to the land route of the Hajj caravan, Hawran played a key role in providing a significant number of camels every year for the transport of pilgrims and other groups who accompanied the Hajj caravan. Abdul-Karim Rafeq states that “the court records of Damascus give the names of the Bedouin sheikhs and villages in the Hawran region who rented out thousands of camels for the pilgrim caravan.”¹³ More importantly, Hawran had quite a fertile land and was considered the granary of the province.¹⁴ Without its supplies, especially Damascus would have faced serious shortages of wheat and barley. Considering the population of the city and the presence of the Fifth Army Corps in Syria, it was obvious that Hawran provisions played a central role in meeting the grain needs of the province.¹⁵ Despite its importance, Hawran lacked any means of modern transportation. By 1879, all its products were transported by camel or other available animals, and it took eighteen hours between Damascus and Hawran.¹⁶ Although the governor-general Ahmed Hamdi Pasha¹⁷ took the initiative to construct a carriage road between Hawran and Damascus in the mid-1870s, the crisis of the period did not permit its success. In 1879, Midhat Pasha reiterated the importance of connecting

¹² Firro, *A History*, 187.

¹³ Abdul-Karim Rafeq, “Damascus and the Pilgrim Caravan,” in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, eds. Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C.A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 136.

¹⁴ In Jago’s terms, “the granary of Syria;” FO, 78/2985, enclosure in Jago to Salisbury, no. 12, political, Damascus 16 August 1879.

¹⁵ Midhat Pasha used the expression for Hawran, “Şehr-i Şam’ın kileri” (pantry of the city of Damascus.) BOA, LMMS, 62/2932, enclosure 3, Midhat to the Grand Vizier, 12 Muharram 129[6]/ 6 January 1879. Similar views were expressed in a detailed report on Hawran prepared by its *mutasarrıf* (district governor) Muhammed Salih Efendi; BOA, Y.PRK.UM, 3/35, 13 Eylül 1296/25 September 1880. For a detailed examination of production capacity of Ajlun district of Hawran, see also Martha Mundy and Richard Saumarez Smith, *Governing Property, Making the Modern State: Law, Administration and Production in Ottoman Syria* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 57–58.

¹⁶ BOA, LMMS, 62/2932, enclosure 3, Midhat to the Grand Vizier, 12 Muharram 129[6]/ 6 January 1879.

¹⁷ Ahmed Hamdi Pasha’s first term in Syria lasted between January 1875 and May 1876.

Hawran either to Damascus or to the seaport by a carriage road or a tram road and asked the government to permit him to start preparations for the construction.¹⁸ After long discussions in the Council of Ministers, Midhat's request to start construction of a tram road was accepted, and the Sultan approved the initiative.¹⁹

Understandably, the Ottoman government considered that peace in Hawran was very important, and it was based on a delicate balance between the non-Druze Muslims, the Druzes, Arab tribes (Bedouins), and the local Christians. It was, therefore, important to prevent any attempt to upset the existing balance of power. There were two areas that posed a possible threat to the existing delicate balance: one was regarding the Druze relations with non-Druze tribes, and the second was concerned with fierce competition among the Druze tribes themselves, especially since many of these tribes who were moving around caused much tension. The recent history of the region witnessed several fights between these groups. Since the Druze tribes seemed eager to increase their power in the region for the last several decades, the most crucial task of the *mutasarrıf* (district governor) of Hawran was not to allow the local Druze leaders to upset the balance.²⁰ It was not an easy task for the government to find a *mutasarrıf* who would effectively pursue this policy. There was nobody in Hawran who was familiar with the laws and regulations of the state. District governors sent from Istanbul or chosen from among the officers in Syria proved to be ineffective, which resulted in frequent changes in the Hawran governorship. In 1878, for instance, the two *mutasarrıfs* were dismissed simply because of their inability to keep the balance between the Druzes and other groups in Hawran. Finally, in June 1878, *mutasarrıf* Atıf Pasha was considered incompetent and was replaced by Abdulqadir Efendi who was, on paper, quite familiar with affairs of the Arab lands.²¹

¹⁸ BOA, I.MMS, 62/2932, enclosure 3, Midhat to the Grand Vizier, 12 Muharram 129[6]/6 January 1879.

¹⁹ BOA, I.MMS, 62/2932, enclosures 1, 2, and 4. The sultanic decree is dated 21 Cemaziyelahir 1296/12 June 1879. Although the permission was granted, it appears that it was not materialized. Hawran was finally connected to the seaport at Haifa in September 1906. See Linda S. Schilcher, "Railways in the Political Economy of Southern Syria 1890–1925," in *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation: Bilād al-Shām from the 18th to the 20th Century*, eds. Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998), 97.

²⁰ BOA, Y.PRK.UM, 3/35, *mutasarrıf* to the governor general, 13 Eylül 1296/25 September 1880.

²¹ BOA, I.DH, 769/62668, 15 Cemaziyelahir 1295/16 June 1878. Similar arguments were used by Midhat Pasha when he proposed the appointment of Shihabzade Selim Bey of Damascus in May 1879. BOA, I.MMS, 63/2951, enclosure 1, 8 Mayıs 1295/20 May 1879.

The first governor-general of Syria during this period was Cevdet Pasha,²² a jurist, well-known historian,²³ and long-serving minister. During his visit to Hawran in the summer of 1878, Cevdet Pasha witnessed Druze efforts to take control of a crucial village called Izra' near Laja, where a significant number of Christians were living. The governor-general maintained that if the Druzes were to take the *mashyaka* (sheikhdom) of Izra', they will dominate the affairs of the Laja area from where they will spread their influence over Hawran and upset the balance of power in the region. This, in turn, will seriously weaken the government's authority in Hawran.²⁴ While Cevdet Pasha was in Hawran, Ibn Abu 'Assaf, one of the influential Druze sheikhs, asked the governor-general to officially recognise him as the sheikh of Izra'. Ibn Abu 'Assaf had already secured the support of some of the influential Druze sheikhs of Hawran. After investigating the position of Izra' and its relation to Hawran, Cevdet Pasha avoided taking a decision and responded to Ibn Abu 'Assaf that it had to be discussed at the administrative council of the province before any decision was taken.²⁵

When Abdulkadir Efendi, the new *mutasarrıf*, arrived in Hawran in the summer of 1878, Ibn Abu 'Assaf, with the support of some Druze sheikhs of the region, "deceived"²⁶ the *mutasarrıf* and secured an official document recognizing him as the sheikh (headman) of Izra'.²⁷ Abdulkadir Efendi issued the document without consulting the administrative council of Hawran and before informing the provincial authorities in

22 For a detailed account of Cevdet Pasha's term as governor-general of Syria, see Ş. Tufan Buzpinar, *Abdulhamid II, Islam and the Arabs: Ottoman Rule in Syria and the Hijaz (1878–1882)* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2021), 126–38.

23 Cevdet's history was published in 12 volumes and contains valuable information on the history of Ottoman Arab provinces in general and on the Druzes in particular until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The first nine volumes were published before his appointment to Syria in 1878, and the remaining three volumes were published between 1882 and 1884. See Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, I–XII (Dersaadet: Matbaa-i Osmaniyye, 1309), passim. For a brief assessment of Cevdet's approach to the Arabs in his history, see Ş. Tufan Buzpinar, *Hilafet ve Saltanat: II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Halîfelik ve Araplar* (Istanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2016), 241–45.

24 Jago, the British Vice-Consul in Damascus, states that the Druzes had been settling in Izra' for the last three to five years and their number was yearly increasing. It appears that Jago's report justifies Cevdet Pasha's concerns regarding the Druze determination to take Izra' under their control. For Jago's detailed report on Hawran, prepared after a two-week journey to the region in late May and early June 1879, see FO, 78/2985, enclosure in Jago to Salisbury, no. 12, political, Damascus 16 August 1879.

25 BOA, I.MMS, 60/2805, enclosure 1, Cevdet Pasha to the under-secretary of the Grand Vizier, 5 August 1294/17 August 1878.

26 Cevdet Pasha thinks that the *mutasarrıf* was deceived (*iğfal edilmiş*).

27 In the Ottoman system of administration and within the context of Hawran, the sheikh of a village was in fact the headman (*mukhtar*) of that village. For a clear statement that the sheikh of a village is actually the *mukhtar* (headman) of that village, see Ş.D. 2421/32, enclosure 6, the Administrative Council of the Province of Syria to the Grand Vizierate, 10 Kanunısani 1294/22 January 1879.

Damascus. It appears that the rival sheikhs of Hawran informed the governor-general, who categorically disapproved of the *mutasarrıf*'s decision and even explained in detail the reason why it was inappropriate to recognize Ibn Abu 'Assaf as the sheikh of Izra'. In fact, the provincial authorities held that this appointment would change the balance of power in the Laja region.²⁸ When Abdulkadir Efendi was informed of this development, he immediately sent an official to demand the document back from Ibn Abu 'Assaf. By then, Ibn Abu 'Assaf had already been acting as the sheikh of Izra', informing all concerned official and non-official people about his new position, and thus not only refused to return the document but also increased his power by recruiting some Druze cavalymen and infantrymen.²⁹

The *mutasarrıf*, then, asked the governor-general's permission to get the document back by using military force against Ibn Abu 'Assaf and his Druze supporters. The request was discussed at the administrative council of the province, which the military authorities also attended. After the discussions, it was concluded that since Ibn Abu 'Assaf held that sheikhdом by an official document, it was not right to remove him by military force. Moreover, such an initiative might lead to an unnecessary battle between the Druzes and the government forces. Although a majority of the population of Izra' were Christians, since they were *de facto* under the Druze rule, they would have to support the Druze cause. Thus, there had to be a peaceful solution to the problem or to use the official wording "without firing a rifle."³⁰

Several important reasons could be cited as to why the provincial authorities were reluctant to use force against the Druzes under the leadership of Ibn Abu 'Assaf. First, the Ottoman authorities were still recovering from the negative impact of the heavy defeat of the Russo-Ottoman War which ended in March 1878. Second, by August 1878 an important number of forces belonging to the Fifth Army Corps in Syria had not yet returned from the war zones. Finally, the most important task of the civil and military authorities in Syria was to make proper arrangements for the annual pilgrims. As is well-known, Damascus was located on the pilgrimage route to Mecca and served as a meeting and assembly point for the participants of the annual hajj. The *Surre Alayı*, the "official" portion of the hajj caravan sponsored by the Ottoman Sultan, also used Damascus as a resting place. Syria thus served as a regular host to thousands of pilgrims from the north and east, from within and without the Ottoman State, and its security and

28 BOA, I.MMS, 60/2805, enclosure 1; for the draft of the same document, see YEE, 36/27; Ş.D, 2421/32, enclosure 6, The Administrative Council of the Province of Syria to the Grand Vizierate, 10 Kanunısanı 1294/22 January 1879.

29 BOA, I.MMS, 60/2805, enclosure 1, Cevdet Pasha to the undersecretary of the Grand Vizier, 5 Ağustos 1294/17 August 1878, enclosure 1.

30 "*Tüfenk patlamaksızın*," in BOA, I.MMS, 60/2805, enclosure 1.

management were significant to the Sultan-Caliph's religious prestige.³¹ Therefore, the hajj arrangements had clear priority over any issue during the hajj season, including the one related to the Druzes. Said Pasha, the emir-i hajj in Syria, was fully engaged in hajj affairs. The other locally strong figure, Holo Pasha, a member of the Provincial Council, was on a tour to collect annual taxes, which was also important for providing food for the pilgrims and meeting other expenses related to hajj organizations.³²

Consequently, the best way for the Ottoman authorities was to solve the Izra' question by peaceful means. But Abdulkadir Efendi, the *mutasarrıf* of Hawran, was seen as ineffective and incapable of governing the Hawran district. Considering that Abdulkadir Efendi not only lost his prestige and authority in the Izra' question but was also unable to fulfil his routine duties, Cevdet Pasha convened a special commission in Damascus to discuss the Izra' question and the future of the *mutasarrıf*. The commission concluded that the *mutasarrıf* Abdulkadir Efendi should immediately be dismissed and face a trial in Damascus, and Osman Bey, a member of the administrative council of the province, should be appointed to succeed him with the title of *mir-i mîran* (pasha). Osman Bey was selected particularly because he was well-known for his determined and able character, and it was hoped that Osman Bey would solve the Izra' question by using "wise measures" (*tedabir-i hakîmâne*).³³ A week later, Cevdet Pasha sent a telegram to the interior ministry reiterating the importance of taking Izra' sheikhdom back from the Druzes by peaceful means and urging the ministry to appoint Osman Bey to Hawran as soon as possible. Cevdet Pasha underlined the view that since Osman Bey was well-known in the region for his fear-provoking character, with the official support and respect shown to him, it was ardently hoped that he would solve the problem with "wise methods" (*usul-i hakîmâne*).³⁴

Cevdet Pasha's reports and proposals were discussed at a special council of consultation convened by Safvet Pasha, the Grand Vizier. The council shared Cevdet Pasha's approach to solving the problem without using military force and approved his decision to dismiss Abdulkadir Efendi and appoint Osman Bey as the new *mutasarrıf* of Hawran. They disagreed, however, to reward Osman Bey with the title of *mir-i mîran*, arguing that it should be decided after witnessing Osman Bey's successes in governing Hawran. The council also noted that the case of Abdulkadir Efendi should be minutely investigated before his trial, and the result of the trial should be referred to Istanbul before its implementation. The Grand Vizier submitted the council's views together

31 For the importance of pilgrim caravan for Damascus, see Rafeq, "Damascus and the Pilgrim Caravan," 130–43.

32 BOA, LMMS, 60/2805, enclosure 1.

33 BOA, LMMS, 60/2805, enclosure 4, telegram, Cevdet Pasha to the Grand Vizier, 28 Ağustos 1294/9 September 1878.

34 BOA, LMMS, 60/2805, enclosure 3, telegram, Cevdet Pasha to the Interior Ministry, 4 Eylül 1294/16 September 1878.

with the documents sent from Damascus to Sultan Abdulhamid, who approved them the next day.³⁵ Before his departure from Syria, Cevdet Pasha sent a final telegram to the Grand Vizier Safvet Pasha informing him that Osman Bey had been to the Druze region near Rashaya, brought together the locally distinguished individuals to negotiate the important issues, and solved the disputes among them. Osman Bey also took solemn promises from the local leaders not to jeopardise the peace in the region and thus secured law and order.³⁶

As for the Izra' question, the former *mutasarrıf* Abdulkadir Efendi was interrogated by the Administrative council of the Province to find out the reason why he had officially recognized Ibn Abu 'Assaf as the sheikh of Izra'. In response, Abdulkadir Efendi argued that the Laja bedouins ruined Izra' by successive attacks, and by recognizing a powerful Druze as sheikh of the village he had hoped to save the village from the Laja bandits. He further argued that by doing so, he had hoped to make Izra' prosperous again. The council also tried to find out whether Abdulkadir Efendi's decision was influenced by the exchange of money or any other kind of bribes. The council members came to the conclusion that his decision was not the result of any bribes; rather it was based on good intentions and a lack of knowledge of the local affairs. Being convinced that Abdulkadir Efendi did not make the error on purpose, the council concluded that he was not guilty. They submitted their view of Abdulkadir Efendi's innocence to the Grand Vizierate and added that this incident should not prevent his appointment to another office.³⁷

Meanwhile, the new *mutasarrıf* Osman Bey summoned Ibn Abu 'Assaf to Hawran and sent him to Damascus, where he had to face similar procedures as Abdulkadir Efendi. Ibn Abu 'Assaf informed the provincial authorities that he had agricultural land in Izra', and because he was highly respected by the Druzes and other groups in the village, Abdulkadir Efendi recognized him as the sheikh. When Ibn Abu 'Assaf realised that the provincial authorities were determined not to approve his new position in Izra', he returned the nomination paper (*buyruldu*). The Administrative Council of the Province agreed that since Ibn Abu 'Assaf had land in Izra', it was not right to prohibit him from going to the village, but since he had served as sheikh of the village for a while, it was not appropriate to permit him to reside in the village. Thus the council decided to inform Osman Bey, the

35 BOA, LMMS, 60/2805, enclosure 5, 19 Şevval 1295/16 October 1878.

36 BOA, YA.HUS, 159/99, enclosure 1, 29 Zilkade 1295/24 November 1878 and enclosure 2, 10 Teşrinisani 1294/22 November 1878.

37 BOA, ŞD, 2421/32, enclosure 6, The Administrative Council of the Province of Syria to the Grand Vizierate, 10 Kanunısani 1294/22 January 1879. The Council of Ministers endorsed the provincial view and decided to keep him in the list to be appointed to a new position. See enclosures 1, 2, and 4 in the same file. See also BOA, MB, I, 49/129.

mutasarrıf of Hawran, that Ibn Abu ‘Assaf would not be allowed to reside in Izra’, and a new headman (*mukhtar*), i.e., sheikh, should be appointed to Izra’ from among other groups in the village to replace him.³⁸

III

Over a year later, there was another incident that led to bloodshed between the Druzes of the village of al-Duwayra and the Muslim residents of the village of Busra al-Harir. It appears that in the first week of October 1879, Yasin Hariri, the sheikh of Busra al-Harir, kidnapped a girl who was about to get married to a Bedouin from Jauf Arabia. In return, the Bedouin called on the Druzes of the village of al-Duwayra to protect him and his bride-to-be. An attempt to release the kidnapped girl led to an armed conflict between the supporters of Yasin Hariri and Hammud Nasr, the sheikh of al-Duwayra. Several people were killed on both sides, but apparently Yasin’s supporters suffered more losses.³⁹

The incident occurred at a time when the governor-general Midhat Pasha had serious tension in his relations with the central government and the commander of the Fifth Army Corps in Syria, Ahmed Eyüp Pasha. Instead of strengthening Midhat Pasha’s position, British Ambassador Layard’s visit to Syria in late September 1879 further weakened his position in Syria and Istanbul. In Syria, Midhat’s great hospitality to Layard angered Ahmed Eyüp Pasha so much that it led him to march off the troops who had been drawn up to salute Layard. In Istanbul, Layard’s visit led to rumours about a possible conspiracy between Layard and Midhat Pasha to dethrone the Sultan and replace him with his brother Reshad Efendi. Moreover, Midhat’s strong opponents such as Said Pasha, Mahmud Nedim Pasha, and Cevdet Pasha were appointed to key positions in the new cabinet formed on the 18th of October. The new cabinet was formed at a time when

38 BOA, ŞD, 2421/32, enclosure 6, 10 Kanunısani 1294/22 January 1879. In May 1879, Osman Bey resigned to look after his personal business, and Şihabzade Selim Bey, a member of the Administrative Council of the Province of Syria, was appointed to succeed him. BOA, I.MMS, 63/2951, 8 Mayıs 1295/20 May 1879. For a slightly different account of the development in Izra’, see FO, 424/79, Jago to Layard, Damascus, 1 January 1879; FO, 78/2985, enclosure in Jago to Salisbury, no. 12, political, Damascus 16 August 1879.

39 There are slightly different versions of this incident. For a contemporary account of the event, see FO, 78/2985, Jago to Layard, no. 25, Damascus 22 October 1879; “Memorandum on the recent troubles in the Hauran,” prepared by the British Vice-Consul Jago in FO, 424/91, Jago to Layard, enclosure 2 in no. 151, Damascus, 22 November 1879; for Midhat Pasha’s version of the incident, see Midhat Pasha, *Tabsıra-i Ibret*, (İstanbul: Hilal Matbaası, 1325), 379; Max L. Gross, “Ottoman Rule in the Province of Damascus, 1860–1909” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 1979), I: 295–96; Firro, *A History*, 197.

Midhat appears to have had the intention of resigning for some time and did, in fact, resign on 19 October 1879, which was not accepted by the Sultan.⁴⁰

Despite his fragile position, Midhat Pasha had to deal with the crisis in Hawran. Midhat Pasha held that the Druzes in Hawran had been opposing government decrees (*evamir-i hükümet*) for a long time whereas the Druzes in Lebanon and elsewhere obeyed the rules and regulations of their governments. In line with their habit of insubordination and opposition to authority, the Hawran Druzes tried to use every opportunity to increase their land and power. Due to such a lifestyle, based on their own conditions and not fulfilling any responsibilities, the region began to attract people with a similar mindset, and even more, the region began to accommodate the criminal elements who wished to escape the authorities.⁴¹ Midhat Pasha saw the last incident as part of this strategy and thought that if they were not faced with a strong force by the government, they would dominate the people of Laja and Hawran.⁴² The opponents of the Druzes in Hawran drew the attention of Midhat Pasha to the fact that all the non-Druze elements in the region had come together and agreed on the notion that unless the Druzes were brought to justice, they would be determined to use force against them. Well-known for their courage, the Druzes also took a firm position against their opponents. Under the circumstances, Midhat argued in a telegram to the Grand Vizier that “it is quite impossible to remain a passive spectator in face of a force of between three and four thousand individuals, all armed and ready to kill each other.”⁴³ Hence, he decided to send military forces to the region to prevent bloodshed between the two groups and requested the Porte to provide additional forces.⁴⁴

The Porte was already aware of the situation in Hawran, for British Ambassador Layard had visited the Grand Vizier Said Pasha and expressed his grief about the military preparations. Not long after, Midhat’s telegram was received and immediately examined. The Porte’s response was quick and clear. In principle, the Ottoman government shared Midhat’s view that the non-punishment of the Druzes was against state rules; however, the present conditions made it necessary to postpone military action against them.

40 For more on the developments that weakened Midhat’s position in Syria and led to his resignation, see Buzpınar, *Abdulhamid II, Islam and the Arabs*, 154–56.

41 Midhat Pasha, *Tabsıra*, 222–24, 376–79; Ali Haydar Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha: A Record of his Services, Political Reforms, Banishment, and Judicial Murder* (London: John Murray, 1903), 183–84. Midhat Pasha’s views about the Druzes were also known in Syria. See FO, 78/2985, Jago to Layard, no. 25, Damascus 22 October 1879.

42 Midhat Pasha, *Tabsıra*, 378. For a brief account of Midhat Pasha’s approach to the Druze question, see Sebahattin Samur, “Sultan II. Abdülhamid Yönetimi ve Havran Dürzîleri,” in *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Sempozyumu: İç ve Dış Siyaset, Bildiriler*, I (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), 82–84.

43 Ali Haydar Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha*, 186.

44 For details of the number of battalions sent to Hawran, see FO, 78/2985, Jago to Layard, no. 25, Damascus 22 October 1879; Jago to Layard, Damascus, 26 October 1879.

Several reasons, explicit and implicit, can be noted to explain the government's attitude. First, Sultan Abdulhamid was determined to avoid any new conflict at a time when the Russian forces were still in the Ottoman territories. For the same reason, the Sultan had to keep the British on his side against any possible Russian aggression. This was not an easy task. Since August 1878 the British had increased their demands regarding reforms in Eastern Anatolia. Abdulhamid had to make some gestures to the British to gain some time to resist the British demands and to secure a significant amount of British loan for which negotiations had been going on for some time.⁴⁵ Second, the Ottoman Empire was financially bankrupt since the mid-1870s, and afterward, the financial situation only got worse. In other words, every effort had to be made to avoid any new expenditures.⁴⁶ Third, "the sultan was worried lest Midhat's tough policy in a politically sensitive area would precipitate foreign intervention."⁴⁷ Finally, the government believed that even if the present conflict was solved by using military force, it would not end the enmity between the Druzes and the people of Hawran because they all "would attribute the real cause of the conflict to the lack of regional administrative order and their guardians [the British and the French] would use their influence for the continuation of the conflict."⁴⁸

Due to all this, the Council of Ministers, after discussing the issues, decided that the best way would be to postpone the complete submission of the Druzes to the state until an appropriate time and until the provincial reforms were fully implemented, and added that, for now, the conflict should be solved peacefully (*sulh suretîyle*) by reconciling the two parties (*te'lif-i tarafeyn*). Midhat Pasha was permitted to decide that if the indemnity (*bedel-i sulh*) offered by the Druzes was not enough to calm the people of Hawran, the required amount of indemnity could be paid by the state to end the enmity among its subjects. Midhat Pasha was also informed that, although preparations were underway for the required additional troops, if efforts of reconciliation of the two parties did not produce the desired effect, he should send some suitable local notables (*eşraf-ı mahalliyyeden münasipleri*) who had an influence on both sides to Hawran; and if

45 Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Sultan Abdülhamid II's Domestic Policy: An Attempt at Periodization," in *Abdülhamid II and His Legacy: Studies in Honour of F. A. K. Yasamee*, eds. Ş. Tufan Buzpinar and Gökhan Çetinsaya (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2019), 46. Layard supported the Ottoman requests to get British loans. Sinan Kuneralp, ed., *The Private Letters of Sir Austen Henry Layard during His Constantinople Embassy 1877–1880* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2018), 477, 517–18, 537.

46 The Sultan openly expressed this point in his telegram to Midhat Pasha on 2 November 1879; BOA, YEE, 79/77, enclosure 5, 21 Teşrinievvel 1295.

47 Engin D. Akarlı, "Abdülhamid II's Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System," in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, ed. David Kushner (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 82–83.

48 BOA, YA.HUS, 162/88, enclosure 2, Said Pasha to Midhat Pasha 15 Teşrinievvel 1295/27 October 1879. For a slightly different version of this document with a different date, see Ali Haydar Midhat, *The Life of Midhat*, 184–86.

necessary, the governor himself should go to the conflict zone and achieve peace without using force.⁴⁹

The government insisted on a peaceful solution to the crisis without using military force. Said Pasha, the Grand Vizier, reiterated the view that locally influential people should play a role to reconcile the two parties, and also Midhat Pasha himself should go to Hawran and personally take charge of the peace negotiations.⁵⁰ However, Midhat Pasha was not as optimistic as the members of the government in Istanbul regarding the peaceful solution to the Hawran crisis. He stated that because “between three and four thousand individuals, all armed and ready to kill each other” took their position to march against each other, he sent gendarmes and regular forces to prevent clashes between the two sides. Moreover, Midhat underlined the fact that the locally influential sheikhs and special envoys were employed to achieve a peaceful solution but to no avail. Moreover, the people of Hawran insisted that those Druzes who killed some of their members should be brought to justice; if not, the state should permit them to march against the Druzes. The Druzes, in turn, insisted that it was against their customs to surrender the culprits. Moreover, the Druzes continued to harm both Muslim and Christian villagers in the region. Midhat warned the government that the people of Hawran cannot be left to the mercy of the Druzes and added that, in his view, there was no other way than that of the use of force.⁵¹

While negotiations were going on between the Grand Vizirate and Midhat Pasha as to what was the best solution to the crisis, on 28 October 1879, serious fighting took place between the army units and the Druzes. Although the true nature of the fighting is not known, it appears from the Ottoman and British documents that while the gendarmes were trying to prevent clashes between the two parties, an uncontrolled fire triggered a serious clash, which led to numerous losses and wounded on both sides.⁵² The Ministry of War was informed via telegraph that the Druzes had fired on the gendarmes, and upon the killing of a captain, the gendarmes returned fire on the Druzes. The government categorically disapproved of the gendarmes’ reaction without instructions and warned that the Ottoman troops in the region should be forbidden to react without instructions from the military authorities. The government held the view that the troops were to

49 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 162/88, enclosures 1 & 2, 15 Teşrinievvel 1295/27 October 1879.

50 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 162/94, enclosure 2, Said Pasha to Midhat Pasha, 18 Teşrinievvel 1295/30 October 1879.

51 Ali Haydar Midhat, *The Life of Midhat*, 186–87.

52 Midhat Pasha put the blame on Cemil Pasha, the commander of the Ottoman forces in Hawran, for the clashes and estimated that over 300 Druzes were killed and more than 600 wounded whereas Jago claimed that 61 Druzes were killed, and the number of wounded was not known. Jago also claimed that nearly 100 soldiers were killed whereas between 30 and 40 were wounded. BOA, Y.A.HUS., 162/116, enclosure 3, 5, and 6, Midhat to the Porte, 23 Teşrinievvel 1295/4 November 1879 and 24 Teşrinievvel 1295/5 November 1879 respectively; FO, 424/91, Jago to Layard, Damascus 9 November 1879. For an account of the incident based on the British and French sources, see Firro *A History*, 198–99.

manifest the state power to make the Druzes accept peace. Within this context, Said Pasha informed Midhat Pasha that two battalions of regular troops and three battalions of reserve (*redif*) were to leave for Beirut soon.⁵³ Midhat Pasha responded that his request for more military units was not based on the intention of using them but rather on achieving peace with the demonstration of force. Despite the clashes between the army and the Druzes, Midhat Pasha underlined efforts to reconcile the two parties.⁵⁴

By the end of October 1879, it appears that there was a noticeable change in Midhat Pasha's attitude regarding the use of force in solving the current crisis. Several factors could be offered to explain it. First, Sultan Abdulhamid and the successive governments during his reign consistently tried to avoid armed conflicts and argued for negotiations to achieve peaceful solutions. This was the case during the governorship of Cevdet Pasha in 1878. It is worth mentioning that during the Druze crisis of 1879, Cevdet Pasha was a member of the Council of Ministers, and as explained earlier, he strongly favoured peaceful solutions. Second, the British government in general, and Layard in particular, wished to see negotiations as the best way to solve the crisis in Hawran. This was particularly important because when Midhat Pasha resigned on 19 October 1879, Layard used all his means to prevent the acceptance of the resignation and informed Midhat Pasha about it via Eldridge, the British Consul General in Beirut, about his efforts to keep him in Syria.⁵⁵ In addition, many regionally important figures such as Rustem Pasha, the *mutasarrıf* of Lebanon, some Druze notables of Lebanon, and Holo Pasha and Abdulkadir al-Jazairi in Damascus also preferred negotiations to the use of force.⁵⁶

Signs of a change in Midhat Pasha's attitude began to show in the final days of October. While preparations were underway for the departure of Holo Pasha, together with a member of the council to Hawran, a group of Druze notables from Lebanon, including sheikh Said Talhuq Bey, arrived in Damascus to facilitate a peace arrangement. After discussions with the distinguished Lebanese Druzes who, in Midhat's words, disagreed with the Druzes of Hawran and sincerely wished to contribute to the peace process, Midhat Pasha decided to send Said Talhuq Bey, together with some provincial officials.⁵⁷ He also took an unusual step and requested Jago to send Said Bey a responsive letter in

53 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 162/94, enclosure 2, Said Pasha to Midhat Pasha, 18 Teşrinievvel 1295/30 October 1879. Said Pasha conveyed the content of the correspondence with Midhat Pasha to the Palace and sent copies of the correspondence the Sultan's information. See enclosure 1 in the same file.

54 BOA, YEE, 79/77, enclosure 6, Midhat to the Porte, 21 Teşrinievvel 1295/2 November 1879.

55 The British government approved the steps taken by Layard to influence the Sultan and the Ottoman government not to accept Midhat Pasha's resignation. FO, 424/91, Salisbury to Layard, no. 1348, Foreign Office, 12 November 1879.

56 FO, 424/91, Jago to Layard, Damascus 9 November 1879.

57 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 162/116, enclosures 5 & 6, Midhat to the Porte, 24 Teşrinievvel 1295/5 November 1879.

order to strengthen his position to attain a peaceful settlement.⁵⁸ Said Bey and his team left on the 31st of October for Hawran. As part of the strategy of demonstrating military force to secure peace, additional *redif* soldiers and small detachments of regular and irregular cavalry, together with ammunition and guns, were sent to Hawran.⁵⁹ Midhat Pasha was very optimistic about Said Bey's mission, and on the 2nd of November, he informed the Sultan that "he strongly hoped that in a few days, a good result will be achieved."⁶⁰ On the same day, Sultan Abdulhamid responded by expressing his delight at receiving the good news and reiterated his strong desire to see the Druze crisis solved by "peaceful means and reconciliation at the earliest possible time."⁶¹ The next day, Midhat responded that he was doing his best to solve the Druze question in accordance with the Sultan's orders, but added that the army units should also act accordingly. Finally, Midhat requested that strict orders should be sent to Cemil Pasha, the commander of the forces in Hawran, to act in line with the new approach.⁶² In his telegram of the 4th of November, Midhat Pasha confidently assured the Grand Vizierate that the conflict will be solved within a few days "without using arms and in a manner befitting the dignity of the state and the army."⁶³

The new approach did indeed prove fruitful. On the evening of the 4th of November 1879, Said Talhuq Bey sent a message through telegraph to Damascus stating that the Druzes, the people of Laja, and Hawran returned to their own districts. The Druzes released the water flows to be used by the army units. Fourteen of the twenty-three culprits of Busra al-Harir lost their lives during the clashes and the remaining nine culprits, together with the Druze sheikhs and notables, would soon proceed to Damascus. Cemil Pasha also confirmed the peace achieved among the conflicting parties in Hawran and added that in one or two days' time, the Druze dignitaries will depart for Damascus.⁶⁴ According to Midhat's assessment, two factors played a vital role in solving the crisis: first, the Lebanese

58 For an English translation of Jago's letter dated 31 October 1879 and entitled "Copy of Letter to the Druze Chiefs of the Hauran," see FO, 78/2985.

59 FO, 424/91, Jago to Layard, Damascus 9 November 1879.

60 BOA, YEE, 79/77, enclosure 6, Midhat to the Palace, 21 Teşrinievvel 1295/2 November 1879.

61 "Bir an evvel sulh ve telif yolunda bitirilmesi," BOA, YEE, enclosure 5, Mabeyn to Midhat Pasha, 21 Teşrinievvel 1295/2 November 1879.

62 BOA, YEE, enclosure 7, Midhat Pasha to the Mabeyn, 22 Teşrinievvel 1295/3 November 1879. Midhat held that Cemil Pasha made a mistake while dealing with the Druze question and afterwards complained about his actions. BOA, DH.ŞFR, 113/13, 11 Teşrinisani 1295/23 November 1879.

63 "*askerin ve devletin şanına muvafık suretle*," BOA, Y.A.HUS., 162/116, enclosure 3, 23 Teşrinievvel 1295/4 November 1879.

64 BOA, Y.A.HUS., 162/116, enclosures 5 & 6, Midhat to the Porte, 24 Teşrinievvel 1295/5 November 1879; for a shorter message to the Palace, see enclosure 7 and 24 Teşrinievvel 1295. Midhat Pasha was informed that the Sultan was very "pleased and delighted" to receive the news of peace. Enclosure 8 in Y.A.HUS., 162/116.

Druze notables, Said Bey in particular, who sincerely wished to end the conflict⁶⁵; second, the unexpected number of lives the Druzes lost during the fighting against the army units made them search for some mediators to end the conflict.⁶⁶ Jago, the British Vice-Consul in Damascus, confirms Midhat's information that five Druze sheikhs sent a petition to the British and French consuls as well as Emir Abdulqadir al-Jazairi and some other influential figures in the region, explaining their positions and asking their contribution to achieve peace.⁶⁷

Said Bey and two leading Druze sheikhs⁶⁸ arrived in Damascus on the 9th of November to finalise peace procedures. They also brought with them four of the surviving culprits of the Busra al-Harir conflict who were then placed in prison. Midhat Pasha attached particular importance to the surrender of the culprits, for he claimed that it was against their customs, and for that reason, they commonly never delivered the culprits to the government. He concluded that since there was no need for the recently sent *redif* battalions, they were sent back to their districts, and the remaining regular troops in Hawran and Damascus would be released within three to four days.⁶⁹ The termination and final settlement of the crisis in Hawran were reported by Jago, stating that after "the surrender of four persons implicated in the conflict of Busr-el-Hariry, and by the arrival here of two notables of the Jabal Druze to express submission and regret, the troops have been withdrawn, the regulars to their barracks and the Redifs to their homes."⁷⁰ Said Bey was awarded by being appointed as the new *Kaymakam* (governor of the town) of the Jabal Druze, which was now directly attached to Damascus with a salary of three thousand Ottoman *kuruş*, being doubled from the previous salary.⁷¹

Said Bey left Damascus for his new position on 22 November 1879 and was welcomed by a large crowd who expressed "their loyalty to the government and their devotion" to

65 Eldridge shares Midhat Pasha's view that Said Bey played a key role in peacefully ending the crisis in Hawran. FO, 195/1264, Eldridge to Layard, no. 81, Beirut, 19 December 1879.

66 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 162/116, enclosures 5 & 6, Midhat to the Porte, 24 Teşrinievvel 1295/5 November 1879.

67 For an English translation of the petition, see FO, 424/91, Jago to Layard, Damascus, 9 November 1879. The petition was dated 16 Zilkade 1296 and signed by "Ibrahim el-Atrash, Hazimeh Haynedeh, Hezza Amer, Kasım el-Hilly, Mohd. Abu Assaf and Feedan el-KKulahany," received by Jago on 4 November 1879.

68 Jago stated that the head of the Druze religion was also among the Druzes arrived in Damascus. FO, 424/91, Jago to Layard, no. 30, Damascus 11 November 1879.

69 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 162/116, enclosure 4, Midhat to the Porte, 29 Teşrinievvel 1295/10 November 1879; see also enclosure 1, Said Pasha to the Palace, 26 Zilkade 1296/11 November 1879. In a telegraph message, Layard informed Salisbury that the conflict in Hawran was solved and that the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs informed him that the additional troops had been countermanded. FO, 424/91, Layard to Salisbury, no. 734 Telegraphic, Therapia 12 November 1879.

70 FO, 424/91, Jago to Layard, no. 31, Damascus 22 November 1879.

71 Ibid.; See also FO, 195/1264, Eldridge to Layard, no. 81, Beirut 19 December 1879.

the new governor who played an important role in reaching a peaceful settlement.⁷² The new *Kaymakam* began by bringing together the principal sheikhs, religious dignitaries, and notables of the Jabal Druze and tried to get their support for his administration. He established the administrative council, the court in the first instance and divided Jabal Druze into eight *nahiye* (township), appointed *mudir* (governor) and other officials to the key positions in the town.⁷³ In the second month of Said Bey's appointment, Eldridge reported that "perfect order seems to have been restored in this turbulent part of Syria that was so recently the scene of disorder and bloodshed."⁷⁴

However, nowhere does any available evidence support Firro's assertion that the "intervention of the British" and the "mediation of the British consul in Beirut" played a role in achieving a peaceful solution to the crisis.⁷⁵ On the contrary, Eldridge, the British Consul General in Beirut, and Jago, the Vice-Consul in Damascus, several times sent letters of complaint stating that Midhat Pasha deliberately avoided receiving their assistance in solving the crisis. In the first report on the incident, Jago stated, "in the present matter my opinion has not been asked,"⁷⁶ while in the second he had a long statement of complaint:

Owing to the strong repugnance ever shown by Midhat Pasha to the slightest semblance of Consular interference in internal matters, I have not considered it my duty to offer his Highness without invitation my good offices towards facilitating an arrangement, knowing by what he has said that such would not be accepted in a form which would authorize me in acting with any fairness either to the Druses or to myself, more especially as endeavours are being made to make it appear that the present resistance of the latter is owing to the support they expect from England.⁷⁷

72 FO, 195/1264, Eldridge to Layard, no. 81, Beirut 19 December 1879.

73 For the administrative divisions of the Jabal Druze and appointments to different offices, see *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 12 (1297/1880): 219 and *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, no. 13 (1298/1881): 139. For a reflection of the developments in a national newspaper, see *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* no. 436, 1879. For an assessment of the new arrangements, see Shimon Shamir, "The Modernization of Syria: Problems and Solutions in the Early Period of Abdülhamid," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, eds. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 372–74; Birgit Schaebler, "State(s) Power and the Druzes: Integration and the Struggle for Social Control (1838–1949)," in *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation: Bilâd al-Shâm from the 18th to the 20th Century*, eds. Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998), 338–39. For the impact of these new arrangements on the leading Druze families, see Firro, "The Ottoman Reforms and Jabal al-Druze," 156.

74 FO, 195/1264, Eldridge to Layard, no. 81, Beirut 19 December 1879.

75 Firro, *A History*, 199.

76 FO, 78/2985, Jago to Layard, no. 25, Damascus 22 October 1879.

77 FO, 78/2985, Jago to Layard, no. 26, Damascus 26 October 1879.

Eldridge found himself in a similar position. He visited Midhat Pasha on 21 October 1879 to convey Layard's message about the former's resignation. During the meeting, Eldridge asked Midhat if he could "be of any further service to him, in which case I was willing to delay my departure;" Midhat informed him that "he saw no necessity" for him to delay his departure. Expectedly, Eldridge's visit to Midhat Pasha was generally connected to the disturbances in Hawran, and "an intention of interfering on behalf of the Druzes was attributed" to him.⁷⁸ On 24 October, Layard requested Eldridge to do what he could to "dissuade Midhat Pasha from entering upon hostilities with the Druzes" and to tell him that Layard "earnestly hoped that he would settle the affair without bloodshed." Eldridge accordingly sent this message to Midhat Pasha privately and confidentially and reiterated that he would use his influence over the Druzes to induce them to surrender the parties accused on the condition that "his Highness should guarantee that both parties be treated with the same justice." Eldridge was disappointed when he was informed that Midhat Pasha had refused his offer.⁷⁹ On the 27th of October, Eldridge received a letter from Midhat Pasha who again declined to accept the Consul-General's assistance. Midhat Pasha promised to guarantee, however, that should the Druzes be surrendered, the proceedings against them would be "conducted with all fairness and impartiality." Eldridge concluded: "Under these circumstances, I do not consider myself justified [...] to modify my proposal."⁸⁰ Interestingly, even though Midhat Pasha requested Jago to provide a friendly letter to Said Bey on the 31st of October, he did not share the new developments with the Vice-Consul. That is why when Jago saw Midhat Pasha on the 3rd of November, he expressed his regret that he was not informed about the developments regarding the Druze crisis. On the following day (November 4), Jago received a petition from five leading Druze sheikhs of Hawran sharing their perspectives on the developments in Hawran. The petition starts with a positive statement: "we are from old times servants of the Sublime Porte and part of its subjects, and submissive to it, and offer to it our services personally and with our blood."⁸¹ What is more striking was that on the evening of the day Jago received the petition (November 4), the conflict was solved due to the mediation of Said Talhuq Bey.⁸² It was clear that Midhat Pasha consciously kept the British diplomats out of the peace negotiations not because he had an anti-British stance but because he

78 FO, 195/1264, Eldridge to Layard, no. 67, Aleih 24 October 1879.

79 FO, 195/1264, Eldridge to Layard, very confidential, no. 68, Aleih 26 October 1879.

80 FO, 195/1264, Eldridge to Layard, confidential, no. 69, Aleih 27 October 1879.

81 An English translation of the petition is included in FO, 424/91, Jago to Layard, no. 28, Damascus 9 November 1879.

82 Midhat Pasha conveyed the good news to the Porte on 5 November, stating that he received a telegraph from Said Bey in Hawran on the evening of 4 November that the crisis was solved; BOA, Y.A.HUS, 162/116, Midhat to the Porte, 24 Teşrinievvel 1295/5 November 1879.

calculated that the British involvement would make the Druze position harder and that in turn would weaken the chance of peace.

IV

Midhat Pasha was succeeded by Ahmed Hamdi Pasha in August 1880, and during his governorship, he also had to confront a fresh outbreak of disturbances in Hawran. From the start of his administration, Hamdi Pasha had singled out Jabal Druze, Jabal Nusayriyya, and Lebanon as a potential source of trouble, not only because they were *de jure* or *de facto* autonomous regions, but also because they were visibly under foreign influence, and disturbances there could open the way for foreign intervention.⁸³ Furthermore, the fact that the cost of managing discords in these areas was high increased the importance of maintaining peace amongst the indigenous people. The preservation of public order in the region was vital, even at the cost of compromising the government's direct authority. Such was the policy adopted by Ahmed Hamdi Pasha when, in December 1880, he faced an option between asserting his authority over the Jabal Druze by force or agreeing to nominal sovereignty for the sake of tranquillity.

As may be recalled, the termination of the disturbances in the Jabal Druze in November 1879 was followed by the appointment of a Druze governor, Said Talhuq Bey, who, it was hoped, would place Ottoman authority upon a solid foundation. Such a policy faced enormous opposition on the part of the Druze chiefs, and Said Bey asked Hamdi Pasha to back him by military force to overcome this opposition. Said Bey's request fell on deaf ears. Hamdi Pasha preferred a limited authority over the Jabal Druze, at least for the time being, to a risk of collision between the army and the Druzes, and replaced Said Bey with Munir Efendi, the governor of Rashaya. Munir Efendi understood his task by first bringing stability to the area, and only then gradually asserting the government's authority.⁸⁴

Before this policy could be put to the test, however, Hamdi Pasha had to deal with the Druzes once again. This time the matter was extremely serious. In late January 1881, the Druzes attacked the Sunni Muslim village of Karak, killing many of the inhabitants and burning some of their houses down. They claimed later that their action was revenge for the un-redressed murders of Druzes in the Muslim villages of the Hawran plains.⁸⁵ The

83 *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* no. 857 (3 May 1881).

84 FO, 195/1306, Jago to Goschen, no. 21, Damascus 22 December 1880.

85 FO, 424/122, enclosures 1 & 2, no. 37, Dickson to St. John, no. 6, Beirut, 31 January 1881; Jago to St. John, no. 2, Damascus 30 January 1881. Jago states that one hundred and four men and one woman were killed by the Druzes while Hamdi Pasha reports that seventy-five people were killed. FO, 424/122, Jago to St. John, no. 4, Damascus 13 February 1881; BOA, Y.A.HUS., 166/73, enclosure 2, 15 Kanunisani 1296/27 January 1881.

attack took Hamdi Pasha completely by surprise. This was apparent from the fact that a few days earlier two battalions of regular troops had left Damascus for Crete. Upon receiving news of the incident, Hamdi Pasha asked the Porte to stop the troops at Beirut and send them back to join the battalions already stationed in Hawran. The Porte held that the conflict should immediately be solved before it turned into a violent battle and a significant predicament. Hence, Hamdi Pasha was permitted to do whatever he deemed necessary, including the use of the locally influential notables to reconcile the two parties.⁸⁶

Hamdi Pasha sensed that the conflict was more than an ordinary blood feud and that it could be the beginning of a very significant initiative. Thus, he convened a special council including high officials, dignitaries, and notables (*eşraf ve mütehayyizan*) to discuss the situation in Hawran. They considered that the Druzes living in different parts of the Bilad al-Sham would naturally wish to cooperate with the Druzes of Hawran and that such a unity could change the nature of the conflict altogether. They also discussed the possibility of a foreign provocation that would strengthen the potential of spreading the conflict. To prevent such dreadful possibilities, the council unanimously decided on immediate reinforcement of the armed forces in Hawran by ten more battalions of reserves in the province.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, in response to the French consul's request, Hamdi Pasha had meetings with the Consul in Damascus. During the meetings, Hamdi Pasha shared his version of the true nature of the developments and the measures that they were working on, and both agreed on the principle that the conflict should be ended before it attracts foreign intervention, and discussed the possibility that Britain might wish to use the incident as a pretext to propose the appointment of commissioners to investigate the conflict.⁸⁸

Hamdi Pasha developed a series of measures to solve the conflict as soon as possible. Firstly, Sheikh Hazima of Majdal was arrested, for he was seen as the leading Druze sheikh who was behind the last seditious act. Secondly, he gave strict orders to the governors of Mount Lebanon, Hasbaya, and Rashaya to prevent the Druzes living in their jurisdiction from joining their co-religionists in Hawran.⁸⁹ They were also requested to confiscate any weapons and ammunition that could be transferred to the Druzes in Hawran. Jago adds

86 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 166/73, enclosures 1 and 2, 16 Kanunısani 1296/28 January 1881 and 15 Kanunısani 1296/27 January 1881 respectively.

87 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 166/86, enclosure 4, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 17 Kanunısani 1296/29 January 1881.

88 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 166/86, enclosure 2, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 18 Kanunısani 1296/30 January 1881. In the introduction of this telegram, Hamdi Pasha shared his positive image of the French policies toward the Ottoman State and his doubt about the intention of the British.

89 Rustem Pasha, the *mutasarrıf* of Mount Lebanon, informed Dickson, the British Acting Consul-General of Beirut, that he had given strict orders to prevent any of the Lebanese Druzes joining the Druzes in Hawran and that he had also taken guarantees from the different Druze chiefs that their followers would not leave Lebanon. FO, 424/122, Dickson to St. John, no. 6, Beirut 31 January 1881.

that the authorities successfully prevented written communication between the Druzes and the outer world by searching all the people leaving Hawran.⁹⁰ Thirdly, to weaken the Druze power, Hamdi Pasha, using Holo Pasha as an intermediary, managed to bring the leading sheikhs of the Arab tribes of Laja to Damascus, where they were given documents of serious tax privileges as well as prestigious presents in appreciation of their decision not to join the Druzes. More important, Sattam al-Sha'lan, *sheikh al-mashayikh* [the paramount sheikh] of the Ruwala tribes, gathered his tribal forces and took positions against the Druzes.⁹¹ In Hamdi Pasha's view, the anti-Druze stance of the Laja tribes constituted a serious loss of power on the part of the Druzes of Hawran.⁹² Finally, to reinforce the Ottoman military units in the region, a battalion of 350 soldiers, together with two cannons, was stationed at Busra al-Harir on the 30th of January 1881 under the command of Colonel Suheyl Bey. In addition, the second battalion with the same number of soldiers left Damascus on the 29th of January for Karak under the command of Colonel Mustafa Bey. Moreover, the governors of Akka, Balka, Beirut, Hama, and Lazkiya were ordered to supply an important number of cavalry regiments. Some units from those regions had already arrived in Damascus by the 31st of January 1881. Two battalions of regular troops from Beirut and two battalions of troops from Iskenderun (Alexandretta) were also on their way to Damascus proceeding to Busra al-Harir. When all those five battalions would arrive at Busra al-Harir, their number would reach 1750 soldiers. Hamdi Pasha argued that this number would not be adequate to stop the Druzes and reiterated his earlier request of recruiting ten battalions of *redif* soldiers.⁹³

Yet, these military preparations did not mean that Hamdi Pasha was eager to seek a military solution to the current conflict; rather, he wished to demonstrate the government's determination not to allow arbitrary action to undermine the security of the region. He unequivocally stated in his telegram of the 31st of January to the Porte that

90 FO, 424/122, Jago to Goschen, no. 7, Damascus 27 March 1881.

91 This was not the first nor would it be the last time that the Ruwala tribes acted in alliance with the Ottoman government. In 1892, Sattam was invited to the Yıldız Palace, where he was awarded the title of pasha and a decoration. For more on Ottoman Ruwala relations, see Çiçek, *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East*, 153–54, 165–66.

92 BOA, I.DH, 821/66225, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 19 Kanunısani 1296/31 January 1881; Y.PRK.BŞK, 4/52, Hamdi Pasha to the Mabeyn, 20 Kanunısani 1296/1 February 1881; Y.PRK.UM, 4/46, enclosure 2, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 27 Şubat 1296/11 March 1881. It appears that some members of those Arab tribes were released from prison and sent to Hawran to assist the government forces. FO, 424/122, Jago to St. John, no. 4, Damascus 13 February 1881.

93 BOA, I. DH, 821/66225, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 19 Kanunısani 1296/31 January 1881; the same document is in Y.A.HUS., 166/83, enclosure 2. Jago reports that two battalions of regular troops and 150 mounted riflemen left for Hawran. FO, 424/122, Jago to St. John, no. 2, Damascus 30 January 1881.

he did not have the intention of using military force against the Druzes.⁹⁴ He strongly believed that the use of force would not solve the problem because, as he expressed, even “if a few hundreds of them were executed all at once, it would not make any impact on changing their course of actions.”⁹⁵ Therefore, Hamdi Pasha and Hüseyin Fevzi Pasha, commander of the Fifth Army Corps in Syria, reasoned that a threatening show of force, together with keeping their leaders away from the conflict zones, would bring the Druzes to a peaceful agreement. Yet to intimidate the Druzes, who were renowned fighters, both felt that a more than the usual number of troops should be deployed and asked that all available military forces in and around Syria be placed at their disposal.

Said Pasha, the Grand Vizier, convened the Council of Ministers on the day he received Hamdi Pasha's telegram. The ministers agreed on the principle that the conflict should be solved as soon as possible, and the speed of the solution is vital to prevent any foreign interference in the conflict. Hamdi Pasha's requests were accepted, and he was reminded of the importance of securing law and order in the region. The Porte also underlined the necessity of limiting arrests to the Druzes who were actually involved in the massacre of the Karak inhabitants.⁹⁶ In a separate telegram from the palace, Hamdi Pasha was asked to take effective measures to prevent foreign “deceit and intrigue” and to share his views regarding the news that about twenty thousand Bedouin Arabs were gathering to support the people of Hawran against the Druzes.⁹⁷ Hamdi Pasha went on to admit that the Karak incident angered the Arab tribes of Hawran and Muslim public opinion had become much excited against the Druzes, and that necessary measures were taken to calm the anti-Druze Arab tribes; he also spread the news that the offenders would definitely be punished.⁹⁸

After reviewing Hamdi Pasha's telegrams about the Karak incident, Sultan Abdulhamid made an interesting assessment that shows the degree of his anxiety about the British designs regarding the Bilad al-Sham region. The Sultan concluded that the Druze actions were the result of “foreign instigations” (*tahrikat-ı ecnebiye*), for the British were trying to depopulate Hawran and Tiberias regions by dispersing the native people by various means to settle the Jews in their places. The Sultan was in fact referring to Laurence Oliphant's project of Jewish settlement in the Balka region of Palestine, which was submitted to the

94 BOA Y.A.RES, 9/70, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 19 Kanunısani 1296/ 31 January 1881; Y.A.HUS, 166/83, enclosure 2, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 19 Kanunısani 1296/31 January 1881.

95 BOA, Y.PRK.UM, 4/46, enclosure 2, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 27 Şubat 1296/11 March 1881. Interestingly, Jago had the same view regarding the Druze character. After peaceful settlement of the Karak incident, Jago shared his observation that “coercive measures would have resulted only in useless bloodshed.” FO, 424/122, enclosure 1, no. 107, Jago to Goschen, no. 9, Damascus, 30 April 1881.

96 BOA, I.DH, 821/66225, Said Pasha to the Palace, 29 Safer 1298/31 January 1881. The Imperial decree (*irade*) was issued the next day, i.e. on 1 February 1881.

97 BOA, M.B.I, 70/164, Mabeyn to Syria province, 19 Kanunısani 1296/31 January 1881.

98 BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK, 4/52, enclosure 2, Hamdi Pasha to the Mabeyn, 20 Kanunısani 1296/1 February 1881.

Ottoman government in the summer of 1879 and was refused in May 1880.⁹⁹ He had no doubt in his mind that the British were continuing “detrimental” activities in the region and the Druze actions against the people of Hawran were consistent parts of the wider British plan. Hence, Hamdi Pasha was ordered to prevent any such designs by taking “wise measures” and implementing them with determination.¹⁰⁰ Hamdi Pasha assured the Sultan that all necessary measures were taken to prevent the unity of the Hawran Druzes with the Druzes of the other regions as well as measures to ensure that any new Druze attack on Hawran villages would not take place. He added that recruitment of reserve battalions was going on and public order was provided everywhere in the province.¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, Hamdi Pasha appointed a special commission at Damascus, comprising both Muslim and Christian officials who were members of the local courts. The commander Hüseyin Fevzi Pasha was the head of the commission. Its members were Holo Pasha, a member of the Administrative Council; Mardambeyzade Ali, a member of the Administrative Council; Jibran Efendi, a member of the Administrative Council; Muhammed Efendi, a member of the Court of Appeal; Eyyubizade Muhammed Ali Efendi, a member of the Court of Appeal; Muradizade Musa Efendi, a member of the court of First Instance; and Jibran Bahri Efendi, also a member of the court of First Instance. Hasan Efendi was selected to serve as the secretary for Turkish and Arabic. Finally, Hüseyin Fevzi Pasha was allowed to employ one or two more members of the military officers. Hamdi Pasha claimed that members of the commission were chosen from among the most prestigious members of the province and that they were fully aware of the Druze question in Hawran.¹⁰² Finally, by securing the support of such distinguished local dignitaries, Hamdi Pasha tried to make sure that they would not undermine the government’s approach to the Druze question.

The main task of the commission was to investigate all aspects of the Druze attack on Karak and to carry out negotiations to procure the surrender of the Druzes personally involved in the attack. After identifying the harm inflicted on the Karak people, the commission will either retake them in kind or make them pay their value in cash. They will also collect outstanding taxes in kind. Court members of the commission will prepare all legal documents regarding the individuals who were personally involved in the Karak

99 For a comprehensive account of Oliphant’s project and Ottoman response to it, see Ş. Tufan Buzpinar, “The Ottoman Response to Laurence Oliphant’s Project of Jewish Settlement in Palestine (1879–1882),” *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 56 (2020): 259–86.

100 BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK, 4/52, enclosure 1, Mabeyn to Syria province, 21 Kanunısani 1296/2 February 1881.

101 BOA, Y.PRK.UM, 4/46, enclosure 1, Hamdi Pasha to the Mabeyn, 24 Kanunısani 1296/5 February 1881.

102 BOA, Y.PRK.UM, 4/46, enclosure 2, Hamdi Pasha to the Mabeyn, 27 Şubat 1296/11 March 1881. For the importance of notable families of Abids, Ayyubis, Mardams and Muradis, see Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985), 104–5, 153–56, 160–65, and 211–14.

incident so that they would be tried fairly by the Nizamiye court in Damascus. Finally, the commission will prepare a reform proposal to ensure security, peace, law, and order in Hawran and the Jabal Druze.¹⁰³

The commission, headed by Hüseyin Fevzi Pasha, the commander of the Fifth Army Corps, and accompanied by reinforcements, left Damascus for Hawran on the 24th of March 1881.¹⁰⁴ The commander was “accompanied by three battalions of infantry and six guns, making, with recent reinforcements from the Balka, the forces in the Hauran to amount to between 6,000 and 7,000 men.”¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, the Druze chiefs solicited the intervention of the British consulates at Damascus and Beirut, but in vain. Dickson made no reply to the Druze appeal, while Jago refused to intervene in the dispute because he felt confident “that the merits of the case apart, any interference on my part could lead to no good result and would tend directly to render more difficult any settlement, by installing false hopes on the one side and engendering suspicion on the other, I declared at once my inability to do as they wanted.”¹⁰⁶ The consuls’ stance was fully endorsed by the British Foreign Office.¹⁰⁷

The provincial authorities remained determined to solve the problem through peaceful means. They assured the Druze chiefs of fair treatment of the culprits and that their intention was simply to punish the culprits and that they did not intend to extend their action to the Druzes as a whole. As an indication of their assurances, the authorities halted their troops in their positions surrounding the Jabal Druze. Meanwhile, they brought notables of different groups, Muslims, Christians, Druze, and Bedouins, to the negotiation table, and honoured them with presents and flattering words. Although the details of the negotiations are obscure, in the end, a face-saving solution was devised, during which especially the powerful Atrash family played a constructive role in reaching a settlement.¹⁰⁸ The Druze expressed their willingness to restore a portion of the loot taken at Karak and assented to pay back in monetary value for the rest. The authorities, for their part, dropped their demand for the surrender of the culprits and permitted overtures of a private settlement to be made by the Druze to the Hawranese. The agreement was

103 BOA, Y.PRK.UM, 4/46, enclosure 2, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 27 Şubat 1296/11 March 1881.

104 BOA, Y.PRK.UM, 4/46, enclosure 3, Hamdi Pasha to the Mabeyn, 15 Mart 1297/27 March 1881.

105 FO, 424/122, Jago to Goschen, no. 7, Damascus 27 March 1881.

106 FO, 424/122, enclosure 1, no. 107, Jago to Goschen no. 9, Damascus, 30 April 1881. This dispatch includes the application of the Druzes and Jago’s response to them. For the Druze’s application to Dickson and the latter’s response, see FO, 424/122, enclosures 1 & 2, no. 64, Goschen to Granville no. 232, Constantinople 24 March 1881.

107 TNA, Granville Papers, 30/29, no. 344, Granville to Goschen, no. 270, Foreign Office 11 April 1881; FO, 424/122, no. 113, Granville to Plunkett, no. 400, Foreign Office 31 May 1881.

108 Soon after the settlement, the Atrash family was rewarded for their cooperation with the government. Ibrahim, Shibli and Muhammad al-Atrash were appointed *mudirs* of Suwayda, ‘Ira, and Salkhad respectively. See Gross “Ottoman Rule in the Province of Damascus,” 344, fn. 76.

followed by a proclamation of amnesty and the raising of the blockade of Jabal.¹⁰⁹

Yet, Hamdi Pasha was not satisfied with what was evidently a temporary solution. He held that when the troops withdrew, a conflict between the opposing sides was likely to transpire, and in order to forestall this, he and Hüseyin Fevzi Pasha agreed to make al-Suwaydā the centre of Ottoman military forces in the region. In addition, it was decided that several military units would be stationed at different key points in Hawran. They also agreed that road facilities should be improved as well as new barracks and fortresses should be built at key points.¹¹⁰ New barracks were indeed built at places like 'Ira and Mazra'a near al-Suwayda. The number of gendarmerie and police was increased, and several battalions were kept in the troubled areas.¹¹¹

V

In conclusion, the Druzes of Hawran were the only group of people who posed serious challenges to the provincial government in Syria in the early years of Abdulhamid II. By 1878, the Druzes had already become a locally powerful group in Hawran where, despite its strategic importance, the Ottoman government could not take the necessary measures to impose its authority in the aftermath of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878. The weakness of the local government reached a point that put the regional balance in danger. In other words, the Ottoman authorities held that a peaceful future between the Druzes and the other Arab tribes in Hawran depended on a delicate balance that was already under serious threat. To preserve the local balance, it was agreed by successive governors-general and the central government that the rising power of the Druzes should be taken under control by gradually increasing state authority and integrating the region into the Ottoman system. Hence, they first tried to limit the new Druze migrations to the region and prevent the Druzes from taking new non-Druze villages under their control. Second, they tried to gain the support of the strong Arab tribes in and around Hawran against the Druzes, which was apparently one of the decisive factors that contributed to achieving a peaceful solution. Third, the local government secured the cooperation

109 FO, 424/122, enclosure 1, no. 107, Jago to Goschen no. 9, Damascus, 30 April 1881. It is worth mentioning that in this report, Jago shares his observation that the compromise reached between the Druze and the local authorities disappointed both the Hawranese and Damascenes. That is because the exaggerated news about the Druze atrocities committed against the Muslims and the Christians alike created a very strong anti-Druze feeling. Therefore, they were hoping that the authorities would crush the Druzes with the military force they gathered.

110 BOA, Y.PRK.UM, 4/46, enclosure 2, Hamdi Pasha to the Porte, 27 Şubat 1296/11 March 1881.

111 Gross, "Ottoman Rule in the Province of Damascus," 343–44; Firro, *A History*, 205; Yıldız Tasnifi, Maruzat Defteri, no. 2, doc. no. 1327, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1298/18 May 1881.

of some distinguished local tribes such as Ruwala, and more importantly convinced the powerful Atrash family to work with the government. Finally, they spent every effort to prevent foreign, especially British, interference in the Druze affairs, believing that it would strengthen the government's position to bring the Druzes to the negotiating table.

Nevertheless, the period under study witnessed the Druze efforts to increase their power in the region by using almost all opportunities, peaceful or otherwise. The case of Ibn Abu 'Assaf at Izra' was a significant example of the peaceful attempts for Druze expansion around Laja. As explained, Cevdet Pasha and the Porte stood firm to prevent Ibn Abu 'Assaf from achieving his goal and they succeeded without using military force even though the district governor was in favour of a military solution. Realising the degree of determination on the government's side, Ibn Abu 'Assaf, on his part, wisely accepted a middle-ground solution which in reality meant recognition of his strong position in the region.

As for Midhat Pasha's attitude towards the Druze question, the governor-general faced the problem at a time when he had strained relations with the central government and the commander of the Fifth Army Corps in Syria. He resigned on the 19th of October 1879 before taking any action regarding the conflict at Busra al-Harir, which happened in early October. Only when his resignation was not accepted by Abdulhamid II did Midhat Pasha start to correspond with the Porte regarding the Busra al-Harir conflict and express his view that the developments in Hawran had reached such a degree that there was no other way but the use of force. Both the Sultan and the Grand Vizier insisted that peace should be achieved by reconciling the two parties. By the end of October 1879, Midhat Pasha recognized the fact that apart from him, the Palace, the Porte, and the British government were all insisting on peaceful solutions and the necessity of avoiding the use of force. The central government underlined time and again the need to use notables and other locally influential figures as mediators between the two parties. The government even put pressure on Midhat Pasha to proceed to Hawran in person and supervise negotiations. Although he resisted this last request, Midhat Pasha finally sent a delegation headed by a Lebanese Druze sheikh, Said Talhuq Bey, who played an important role in the reconciliation of the two parties.

The final incident that provided another opportunity to see the Ottoman policy succeed toward the Druzes of Hawran took place in late January 1881 at Karak village. The Karak incident was the bloodiest of the three incidents examined in this paper. The Sultan, the Porte, and the governor-general unanimously agreed that the conflict had to be solved as soon as possible by peaceful means. Moreover, Abdulhamid II and Hamdi Pasha both held the view that the conflict was not an ordinary blood feud; rather it could be the result of a foreign, probably British, instigation. Hence, Hamdi Pasha took effective measures to prevent communications of the Hawran Druzes with other Druzes in different *mutasarrıflıks* as well as their correspondence with the British and other foreign representatives in the region. They underlined that the speed of achieving a peaceful solution was crucial to prevent any foreign intervention.

After solemnly assuring the central government that he would not use military force and only the culprits would be brought to justice, Hamdi Pasha deployed more than the usual number of military units to Hawran and sent a special commission to solve the conflict peacefully. He consistently tried to separate the innocent Druzes from the guilty ones, and published proclamations stating that the commission will only interrogate the Druzes who took part in the incident while the others could continue their usual work. He also assured the Druze sheikhs that the proceedings of the commission would be just and reconciliatory (*adilane ve muslihane*) and that the commission would attempt to work with them to achieve justice. As it turned out, the commission worked with the powerful Atrash family in reaching a settlement. Moreover, Hamdi Pasha managed to gain the support of strong Arab tribes in the region against these Druzes. Thus, Max L. Gross is right to state that as a result of new measures taken by the government, "the Ottoman position was considerably strengthened."¹¹² Finally, the findings of this article support the view that the Ottoman Empire preferred negotiation and reconciliation to coercion in its relations with the Arab tribes in the Bilad al-Sham region during the Tanzimat and after.¹¹³

¹¹² Gross, "Ottoman Rule in the Province of Damascus," 345.

¹¹³ M. Talha Çiçek, *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East*.

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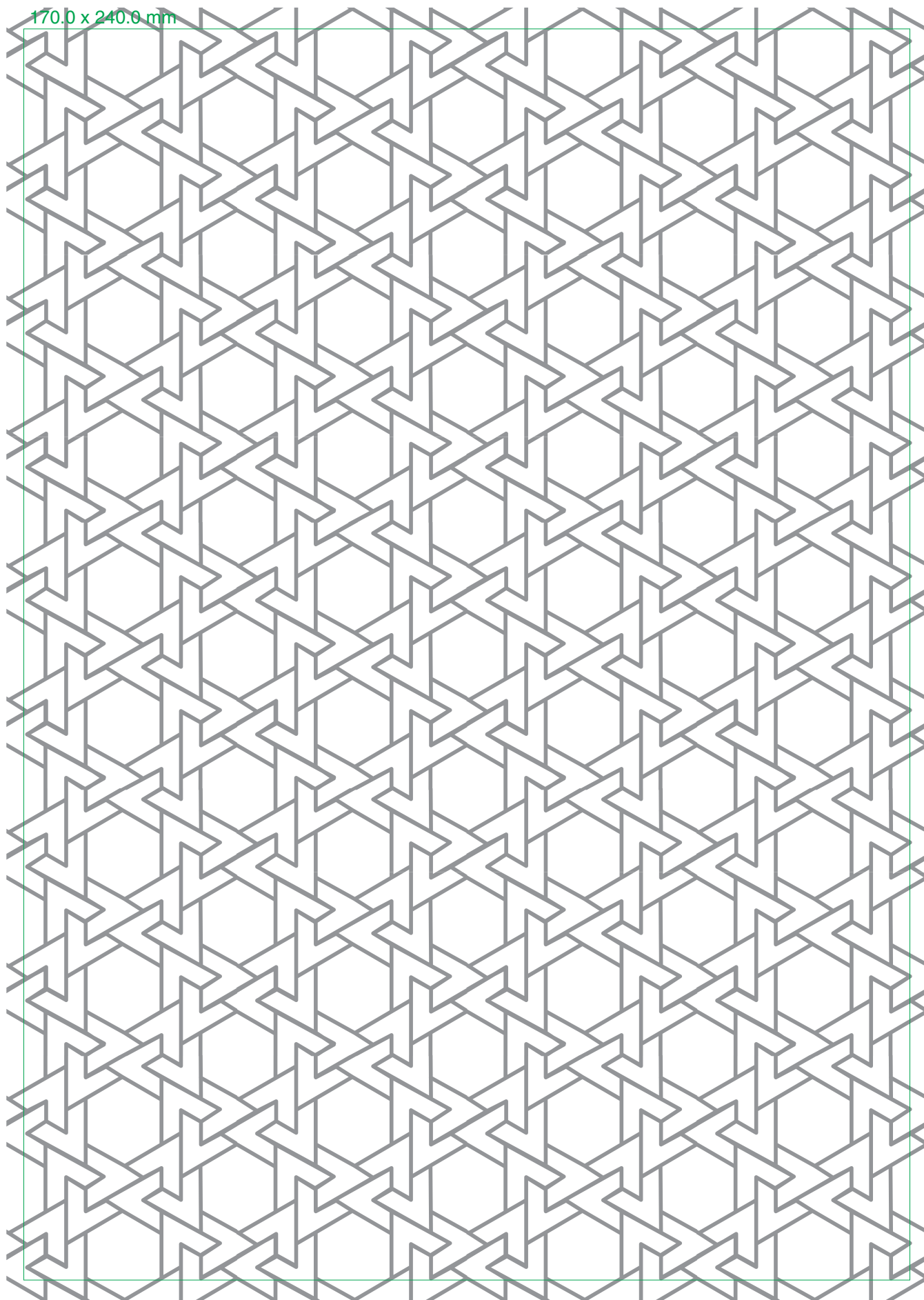
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Spatial and Social Boundaries in Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Hama

*James A. Reilly**

Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn was a leading figure in a generation of scholars who have enhanced the academic understanding and appreciation of the Ottoman era for Bilād al-Shām, and its significance. This piece is dedicated to his achievements.

Introduction

This paper discusses some of the spatial and social boundaries that marked urban life during the pre-Tanzimat reform period in a smaller Ottoman town, namely Hama (Syria) in the later eighteenth-century. It asks what can (and cannot) be known about visible and invisible boundaries in this district center. Material is limited, since Hama has yielded few local (Syrian-Arabic) historical sources apart from the town's sharia court records, conserved in Damascus up till the present. Supplementing the sharia court records are comments and remarks from travelers (Ottoman and foreign alike) who passed through the town and wrote accounts of their journeys. Hama-centered examination of Istanbul archives in the future likely will yield additional insights and contextual materials, but for now the sharia court records are scholars' main sources for the internal life of the eighteenth-century town. They are written mostly in Arabic except for copies or transcripts of Ottoman Turkish documents generated by the Sublime Porte

* Transliteration: Arabic loan words found in English dictionaries are unmarked, with no italics or diacriticals.

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or (occasionally) sent from the provincial center Damascus.¹ This paper will focus on a waqf endowment deed (*waqfiyya*) of 1782. Preserved in the sharia court archive,² the endowment document is a useful source for delineating spatial and social boundaries in that time and place. The discussion closes with some thoughts about how inherited spatial and social boundaries interacted with modern currents of bureaucratic and political reform in the final Ottoman century.

1 Ottoman Hama

Though overshadowed in Ottoman Syrian historiography by well-documented metropolises with rich literary cultures, Hama nonetheless merits inclusion into studies of Ottoman-era urban life. It was a regional agricultural and craft center in its own right, with ties to agricultural and pastoral hinterlands. Hama also was the center of an administrative and military district, as its treasury and craft guilds supplied Ottoman garrisons in nearby fortresses including Shayzar on the Orontes River and Mişyāf in the Ghāb valley. Finally, Hama was a stopping point on the royal road (*al-ṭarīq sulṭānī*) that linked Aleppo and Anatolia in the north with the port of Tripoli in the west and with Damascus and the Hijaz in the south, a critical artery for the transportation of goods, soldiers, and pilgrims.

Suqs and neighborhood quarters were the principal units that defined the geographic space of Hama. In the documentation at hand, suqs, and neighborhoods (sing. *maḥalla*) did not themselves need or require more specific definition or mapping. The prevailing assumption was that “everyone knows” what spaces or places to which the names of suqs and neighborhoods referred. People and places belonged to particular suqs or neighborhoods, and these affiliations were sufficient to place them in an imagined map of the city. Sharia court documents do not dispute boundaries or locations of particular suqs or neighborhoods. Neither are these defined, in the sense that one never sees a document explaining that one neighborhood ends at a particular point or thoroughfare, and another begins. A notation that a suq was formerly known by a different name might reinforce the identity of a given market,³ but here too a suq’s identification by name (not by location or by another kind of mapping) sufficed. Names of suqs typically were linked to the location of an eponymous mosque, or to a founder-builder, or to the dominant

1 Vladimir Glasman, “Les documents du tribunal religieux de Hama: leur importance pour la connaissance de la vie quotidienne dans une petite ville de la Syrie centrale à l’époque ottoman,” in *Les villes dans l’Empire ottoman: activités et sociétés*, ed. Daniel Panzac (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1991), 17–39.

2 Law Court Records of Hama (LCRH) vol. 45, [no pagination], doc. 498, 2 Rabiʿ I 1196/ 15 Feb. 1782.

3 LCRH 45, doc. 348, 10 Dhū l-Ḥijja 1196/ 11 Nov. 1782.

craft(s) practiced therein. (For instance, Hama's most prominent suq was named al-Manṣūriyya, after the Ayyubid prince who constructed it in the thirteenth century.)⁴

Like residents of other Ottoman towns, Ḥamawīs displayed an array of social boundaries that categorized classes or groups in the population and distinguished them from each other. Categories included social binaries, where the existence of one group presupposed the existence of another that was its complementary opposite. Thus: men/women, elites/commoners, Muslims/dhimmis, free persons/slaves, urban people/rural people (villagers or Bedouins). In principle each one of these binaries encompassed the whole of society. Other kinds of social boundary classifications highlighted occupations or professions, and thus did not imply complementary opposites. But bound up in the complementary binaries were associations of status and power: men had more than women, aristocrats more than commoners, Muslims more than non-Muslim dhimmis (here always Christians), free persons more than slaves, and townspeople more than rural people. This was part and parcel of an Ottoman imperial system that was built on division and diversity, and that preached the submission of all social elements to a remote, yet powerful sovereign legitimized by his theoretical devotion to justice and to the sharia.⁵

The Hama sharia court documents signify disparities in power, or status, or both through:

1) The relative weight given to men's and women's testimonies, as well as their shares of joint incomes and inheritances (with men's shares typically twice those of women). Thus, one finds that women's testimony against men would be discounted unless the women could call on male witnesses to support them.⁶

2) The legal dependence of dhimmis in a manner parallel to that of Muslim women, whereby Christians did not represent themselves or their interests in an adversarial context against Muslims, unless the dhimmi litigants enjoyed Muslim patronage or sponsorship. In pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Syria, this dependence grew out of both "legal doctrine and social prejudice."⁷

4 Rashīd al-Kaylānī, *Ḥamāh tārikh wa-ḥaḍāra* (Homs: Maṭba'at al-Yamāma, 2002), 90.

5 Cf. Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 99–101. An early eighteenth-century Syrian-Arab understanding of the Ottoman Sultanate's claim to legitimacy along these lines is discussed in: James A. Reilly, "The Universal and the Particular: A View from Ottoman Homs ca. 1700," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 44, (2014): 354–55.

6 LCRH 45, doc. 360, 23 Shawwāl 1195/ 10 Oct. 1781.

7 Najwa Al-Qattan, "Dhimmi in the Muslim Court: Legal Autonomy and Religious Discrimination," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 3 (1999): 438. The prevalence of this practice in Hama is argued by analogy, and by the absence of known instances in Hama where dhimmis unsupported by Muslim witnesses initiated adversarial proceedings against Muslim defendants.

3) Honorifics attached to the names of elites and other high-ranking individuals, privileging them with a semiotic advantage denied to those who had no such titles. Recurring documents recite the list of Hama's grandees and elites. They included people of military rank (beys and *aghas*) and of religious-legal distinction (*ashrāf*, ulama, deputy judges and recognized teachers).⁸ Commoners—people without such titles—were unlikely to initiate an adversarial process against people of high or honored rank without powerful sponsors or allies, given the social and power disparities between them.

4) The authority of an urban institution (the sharia court) to adjudicate disputes or conflicts among rural people. Rural people appear in the pages of the court archives to acknowledge that they owed money to urban people; and urban people would come to the court complaining of robbery by rural people (typically by 'Anaza Bedouin in the later eighteenth century).⁹ But never in the Hama environment does one encounter rural people challenging urban people in an institutionalized, adversarial manner, an absence that lends support to the notion that in the urban/rural binary the former were placed (by an urban institution and its documentation) in the more privileged position.

5) Slaves and slavery are documented in Hama's sharia court records from time to time, usually incidentally, in a manner that suggests the free-slave binary was an ordinary and unremarkable aspect of eighteenth-century society even if actual slaveholding was limited to the better off.

Granted, the argument about a correlation between status disparities and power is made partly by citing documentary silences: no rural challenges to urban privileges; no unsupported dhimmi challenges to Muslims; no women unsupported by a male challenging a man or men; no unsupported commoners challenging an individual from the elite; no challenge to a slave owner alleging abuse of his or her power. Yet silence can be, itself, an indication of social power relationships and imbalances.

1.1 *The Waqf of Ibrāhīm Efendi Malikī Zādeh*

A waqf endowment deed from Hama dated 1782¹⁰ casts light on both kinds of boundaries: spatial and social. For the next few pages, this paper looks at boundary definitions expressed in the deed and some of the implications of these definitions. Afterward, the discussion will zoom out to ask questions about the meanings and implications of spatial and social boundaries in pre-Tanzimat Hama and, by implication, in other Ottoman cities of the era.

8 LCRH 45, docs. 439–440, 15 & 19 Shawwāl 1197/ 13 & 17 Sept. 1783.

9 LCRH 45, doc. 248, 13 Sha'bān 1191/ 16 Sept. 1777; doc. 482, 21 Shawwāl 1198/ 7 Sept. 1784; doc. 510, 3 Rabī' II 1196/ 18 March 1782.

10 LCRH 45, doc. 498, 2 Rabī' I 1196/ 15 Feb. 1782.

In 1782 a wealthy religious scholar and teacher, al-Ḥājj Ibrāhīm Efendi Malikī Zādeh, a notable of Hama,¹¹ endowed a range of properties in the town to support his descendants and the family's fourteenth-century mosque-tomb (*masjid madfan al-Malikiyya*).¹² He merged his newly created waqf with an endowment that his late mother had earlier made on behalf of the mosque-tomb. Ḥājj Ibrāhīm became the manager (*mutawallī*) of the consolidated endowment. By being dedicated to support both his descendants and employees of the mosque-tomb (caretakers, preachers, prayer leaders, teachers, books, and resident students), Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's waqf shared elements of both *ahlī* and *khayrī* (family and charitable) endowments. The waqf brought together various personal properties that Ḥājj Ibrāhīm owned in different parts of Hama, plus an exurban garden property close to town. His mother's endowment, in the meantime, was linked to a garden property near the provincial capital, Damascus.

This kind of endowment, one that worked with existing properties and structures and that dedicated the revenues to supporting families and institutions, was common in Hama as in other Ottoman towns. Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's endowment was not, in other words, a kind of "imperial" waqf that altered the urban fabric by building an entire suq and other commercial appurtenances to support new mosques or madrasas. The closest that Hama came to that phenomenon in the eighteenth century was linked to the figure of As'ad Bey al-'Azm, district governor of Hama for most of the 1730s prior to becoming a Pasha and ascending to the governorship of Damascus province (1743–1757). Befitting his status as a grandee and as one of the emerging notables (*a'yān*) of the Syrian lands, As'ad Pasha built a public bath in Hama. A wealthy nephew of his who presided in Hama as district governor in Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's day, Naṣūh Bey al-'Azm, also built up a propertied empire. Yet neither al-'Azm grandee constructed entirely new neighborhoods, even though they altered parts of al-Bāshūra quarter to accommodate the family's 'Azm Palace (still extant today).¹³

However, the properties that Ḥājj Ibrāhīm endowed demonstrate the breadth of his various private holdings. They included an orchard, a tobacco khan, an entire suq, two coffee houses, generic shops, a public oven, a coffee roasting shop, a bakery, a workshop, a shop for sifting flour, and a house. The waqf deed's delineation of these properties' boundaries relied on relationships, not measurements. Sometimes a public road defined

¹¹ LCRH 45, doc. 440, 19 Shawwāl 1197/ 17 Sept. 1783.

¹² This mosque is still extant, referred to as Jāmi' Bāb al-Balad in the early twentieth century and as al-Jāmi' al-Malikī today. It is located in al-Murābiṭ quarter, near the southern end of Sūq al-Manṣūriyya and near the gate that was known as Bāb al-Balad (destroyed in 1960). See Aḥmad al-Ṣābūnī, *Tārīkh Ḥamāh* (Hama: al-Maṭba'a al-Ahliyya, 1956), 109; al-Kaylānī, *Ḥamāh tārikh wa-ḥaqāra*, 79; "Tārīkh Ḥamāh: al-Jāmi' al-Malikī al-Sharīf bi-Ḥamāh," <https://www.facebook.com/hama.history/posts/2466303133485938/> (accessed on 9 November 2021).

¹³ James A. Reilly, "The 'Azms of Hama: Patricians in an Ottoman Town," in *Qasr al-'Azm: Ein osmanischer Gouverneurspalast in Hama/Westsyrien*, ed. Karin Bartl and Abdelqader Farzat (Darmstadt: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2013), 16–19.

a property's boundary (typically on one or two sides), but most property boundaries were delineated with reference to structures identified by their function or by their possession. For instance, the tobacco khan (*Khān al-Tutun*) was bordered on one side by a coffee shop that had been endowed by As'ad Pasha al-'Aẓm, with the remainder of the khan's south wall adjoining the house of one 'Uthmān Dalātī. Another wall of the khan was defined by "the suq" onto which its door let out. (The suq in question is subsequently identified in the document as Sūq al-Barādi'iyya, when Khān al-Tutun appears again in the text as the boundary of a shop located in that suq.) Other boundaries, for other properties, include designations such as a shop belonging to so-and-so, or the shop of the heirs of so-and-so, or a shop belonging to the family of thus-and-such, or the waqf of a particular family or individual. Many were clustered in al-Murābiṭ quarter, the Malikī family's home base and the site of its maṣjid. The sole residence endowed in the *waqfiyya*, Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's house in al-Murābiṭ, also fits this pattern of boundary delineation: the house's boundaries were public roads, on the one hand, and properties and a house identified by the names of their owners on the other.

The striking thing about these delineations is that they all are relational: none is defined by measurements. Their utility, in other words, depended on local knowledge, not on bureaucratic or third-party certification. This principle of dependence on local knowledge also extended to the single exurban property in Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's endowment. His orchard (*bustān*) was defined and bounded by natural features and by an adjoining property. Located in irrigated farmland outside of Hama, the orchard known as al-Khuḍayrī was located near an estate (*mazra'a*) known as Arzī, and its boundaries included a road that led to the Orontes River, the river itself, rocky ground, a road leading to a watering place (*ṭarīq mawrid*), and a named piece of land.

Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's *waqfiyya* not only demonstrates the relational nature of physical or geographical boundaries, rooted in local knowledge and in properties' use-values, but it also casts light on social boundaries within an extended family household. These social boundaries are apparent in the endowment deed's careful delineation of who should be beneficiaries of the waqf and in what order of precedence; who should be eligible for custodianship of the waqf; and who (among would-be claimants) should be excluded from having shares in the endowment's income.

Among the conditions that Ḥājj Ibrāhīm specifies in his *waqfiyya* is that beneficiaries (recipients of the waqf's income) should in the first instance be himself; and after his death they should be Khadīja Qāḍūn and Fāṭima Khātūn, his daughters by his wife al-Sayyida Maryam bt. al-Sayyid Muṣṭafā Efendi Ṭarābulsī. After that, beneficiaries should be these daughters' children, their children's children, and so on as long as the line continues. Additional beneficiaries will be any children born to Ḥājj Ibrāhīm at a future date. The share of benefits should be distributed among beneficiaries according to *shar'ī* principles (*'alā al-farīḍa al-shar'iyya*), explicated as calculating a woman's share

to be half that of a man's. An exception is made, however, for the daughters Khadīja and Fāṭima whose shares of income should be calculated *as if they were males*. Ḥājj Ibrāhīm goes on to exclude certain potential claimants from access to the waqf's income, namely his wife Maryam's siblings and their descendants. Should all eligible descendants die out one day ("God forbid"), the waqf's revenues will be directed to the Malikī family maṣjid-tomb, with its income divided among the mosque's salaried positions, its students, and the poor.

As for management (*nizāra* and *tawliya*) of the waqf, Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's conditions specify that he will exercise these duties during his lifetime. Afterward, management should go to his maternal cousin (who is another of his wives), Qāḍūn bt. al-Ḥājj 'Alī Agha. The revenue collector (*jābī*) of the waqf during Qāḍūn's custodianship should be her slave Rustum b. 'Abdallāh. Subsequently, people of integrity from among the waqf's beneficiaries will exercise custodianship of the waqf. These custodians should, in turn, select sound and knowledgeable revenue collectors.

In Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's stipulations and conditions, one can see a set of social boundaries within households and extended families. Not all of his children and their descendants are to be beneficiaries; this privilege is restricted to the two daughters named and to children born to Ḥājj Ibrāhīm at a future date. (Elsewhere in the document we learn that at the time of drawing up the endowment deed, Ḥājj Ibrāhīm already had other children by slave concubines. But the *waqfiyya* does not name these children nor does it include them and their descendants as beneficiaries of the waqf.) In like measure, Ḥājj Ibrāhīm wanted to ensure that his wife Maryam's natal family should not share in the waqf's income, notwithstanding Ibrāhīm's privileging of his children by Maryam (i.e., his daughters Khadīja and Fāṭima) in their equal shares of the waqf's payout.

The endowment deed further stipulates that waqf beneficiaries, Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's survivors, and his descendants who are not beneficiaries, all can live in the endowed house rent-free. His two wives and the two concubine mothers (sing. *umm walad*) of his children shall not pay rent for as long as they live in the house. He prescribes an allowance that his wives and concubine mothers should receive after his death. However, they will forfeit this allowance if any of them should move out of the house or should marry. In other words, by moving out or marrying, his widows and concubines would leave the household's inner circle and lose Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's posthumous patronage.

A final point in the *waqfiyya's* construction or expression of social boundaries is Ibrāhīm's stipulation that leases of waqf property should not exceed two years in length, and that no person of power (*dhū shawka*), no grandee (*dhū jāh*), and no oppressor (*ẓālim*) should be granted a lease. Here is an instance where a notable from a well to do, propertied scholarly background displays awareness of grantees' abuse of power and privilege, and therefore seeks to build in safeguards for his endowment against grantees' manipulation or usurpation in the future. One may conjecture that the rapid accumulation by Ḥājj

Ibrāhīm's contemporary, Hama district governor Naṣūh Bey al-ʿAẓm, of vast properties in Hama including waqf properties, may have motivated Ḥājj Ibrāhīm to include this restrictive condition.¹⁴ As a normative statement it is very clear; but its practical legal effect in the indeterminate future is less so.

Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's endowment deed demonstrates that spatial boundaries were determined by local knowledge and by local relationships. There was no need for a higher or overarching method of measuring and quantifying real property. Real properties (including shops, land, and houses) existed by virtue of their relationship to owners and to neighboring properties and their owners.¹⁵ Likewise, the deed demonstrates an understanding of social boundaries within extended family households. Some descendants were more privileged than others; responsibility for a household's welfare extended to wives and concubines, but not to in-laws and to their descendants. The inclusion of slaves within the inner sphere of household kin, even as free in-laws were excluded from this inner sphere, highlights complexities of kinship hierarchies. Thus, we see Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's provision for the two *umm walad* concubines, and his designation of a wife's slave to be the waqf's salaried *jābī* after Ḥājj Ibrāhīm's death.¹⁶

Conclusion

Spatial and social boundaries in pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Hama are distant conceptually and practically from what would later follow, when government officials inaugurated bureaucratically driven modernization efforts. As part of their impetus to modernize Ottoman state and society, officials would strive to capture a statistical picture of the lands, populations and resources under their nominal sway, the better to measure and control what heretofore had been rooted mainly in local knowledge.¹⁷ This kind of abstracted knowledge would be mobilized in efforts to impose "spatial order and personal discipline," part of "a common attempt to construct order, which [came] into being as an end in itself."¹⁸ A humble district center, Hama was not a major focus of urban engineering

14 On Naṣūh Bey's avarice, see Reilly, "Aẓms of Hama," 18.

15 On the importance of local knowledge in the pre-reform Empire, I am influenced by Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 63–66.

16 Cf. characteristics of contemporary elite family relationships discussed in Margaret L. Meriwether, *The Kin Who Count: Family and Society in Ottoman Aleppo 1770–1840* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 207–12.

17 Cf. Mikhail, *Nature and Empire*, 238–39.

18 Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1988), 63, 78.

efforts in the later Ottoman period, aside perhaps from the extension of the railway to the town in 1902 including construction of a station outside of the historical old city. However, the Ottoman provincial capitals of Damascus and Beirut saw the construction of new government buildings and civic structures according to principles of bureaucratically driven urban organization and order, offering a Syrian template for late Ottoman urban modernity.¹⁹ Accompanying the processes aimed at measuring, abstracting, and ordering new urban space, the modernizing Ottoman state sought to redefine social boundaries in order to create a “national” public that in principle would incorporate male dhimmis, commoners, and rural people and instill in them all a sense of identification with the Ottoman dynasty while at the same time making greater demands on them.

The logic of bureaucratic rationalization and modernization would run up against the practice of inherited patterns and methods. For purposes of understanding physical and social boundaries in Ottoman towns, inherited understandings of boundaries and categories (illustrated in Hama) would condition the way in which Syrian-Ottoman towns and their populations engaged with Ottoman modernity. Highly personalized boundaries and properties dominated in older, built up areas. This mass of complex, strongly personalized relationships may have encouraged urban planners to build or construct new planned quarters (separate from the old and pre-existing), quarters that expressed a new set of relationships in the use of space and the relationship of people to the state—phenomena of urban modernity whether indigenous (Ottoman-national) or colonial. Conversely, the subsequent characterization of older built-up areas as bastions of non-modern or anti-modern “tradition” could and did create new boundaries in the modern urban setting, at times representing a collision of values and perceptions. These eventually would assume political and cultural form.²⁰ Likewise, the bureaucratic (Ottoman and post-Ottoman) quest to create a “national” public, bound to the state in ways that overshadowed other types of social distinctions, could not erase or ignore the kinds of deeply entrenched social boundaries so transparently on display in pre-reform Ottoman Hama. By the twentieth century slavery might have disappeared, but the importance of clans, religious identifications, inherited social status, gender, urban and rural interests and their overlapping interrelationships were not so easily homogenized in the blender of the Ottoman imperial or subsequent national state. In practice, both the colonial and national state would mobilize populations around these values and differences.

While pre-reform, eighteenth-century Hama’s social and spatial boundaries may seem remote from what developed later in the Ottoman era and beyond, these boundaries

19 Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 240–63; Stefan Weber, *Damascus: Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation 1808–1918* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute in Damascus, 2009), 1: 114–70.

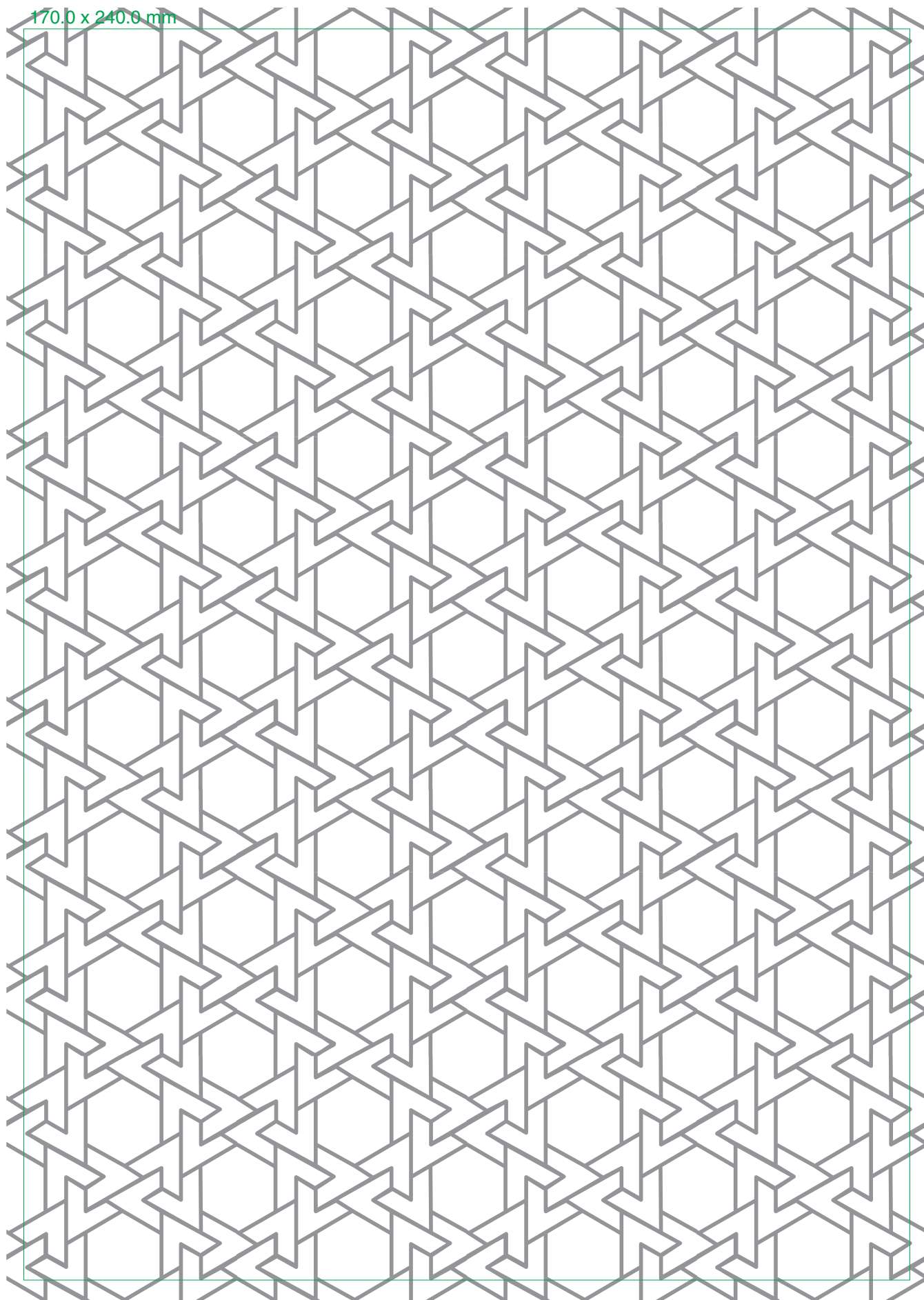
20 Cf. Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism 1920–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 294–98.

continued to cast a shadow—or to condition—the ways in which people interacted with each other and with state representatives who sought to strengthen or to establish modern forms of bureaucratic rule over them.

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Fractal Palestine

Land, People, and Symbol at the American University of Beirut

Alexis Wick

The history of an institution—any institution, but especially an institution of learning such as a university—is fascinating in its own right, but even more in the windows that it opens onto questions of structure, agency, identity, and ideology. In the case of the American University of Beirut (AUB), sitting as it does on the crest of numerous geo-historical and geo-political rifts of primary importance, it is particularly revealing in relation to the nexus of culture, imperialism, knowledge production, and nationalism.

The subject of this short essay is the articulation of two distinctly unique historical categories. It is a voluntarily impressionistic exercise: rather than providing a conclusive account, fastened shut by social scientific data (such as student statistics and their development trends, or an exhaustive bio-bibliographic assessment of intellectual production at the university), this chapter prefers to offer snippets of a fractal portrait of a longstanding meeting of the two entities.

On one end of this equation, there is the Syrian Protestant College/American University of Beirut, a missionary educational institution first opened in 1866, chartered in New York City in the United States, with no official connection to local authorities and an ambiguous relationship with the Ottoman imperial order before World War I, the European colonial powers during the Mandate era, and the national regimes that followed. Until the end of World War II, it did not even have a formal link with the US government, from which it had received neither funding nor personnel before that historic threshold of the Cold War. This is what allowed the university to maintain neutrality throughout World War I (and even provide some support for the Ottoman war effort), while its president Howard Bliss addressed the Paris Peace Conference afterwards, calling for sending a commission to ascertain the wishes of the population of Syria (including Palestine) regarding their political future. Bliss' line of argumentation in Paris closely echoed the express demands

of the Arab delegation headed by Amīr Faiṣal, son of the recently self-proclaimed King of the Arabs (with an extra layer of paternalism, orientalism, and indeed explicit racialism, as could be expected).¹ As he wrote in an earlier memorandum sent to the US delegates: “My suggestion would be that the Peace Conference appoint a Commission of wise, able, and impartial men, back them with adequate power and charge them with ascertaining the desires of the people of Syria.”² The Arab delegation, composed of Amīr Faiṣal along with a number of dynamic young Arab intellectuals of the time, including most importantly Rustum Ḥaidar (from Baalbak), Aḥmad Qadrī (from Damascus), and ‘Awni ‘Abd al-Ḥādī (from Nablus), was delighted by Bliss’ intervention. Indeed, interviewed for the university paper *Outlook*, Faiṣal celebrated the role of this singular institution: “Dr. Daniel Bliss, the founder of the College at Beirut, was the grandfather of Syria; and his son Howard Bliss, the present President, is the father of Syria. Without the education that this college has given, the struggle for freedom would never have been won. The Arabs owe everything to these men.”³

On the other end of the equation there is Palestine, a name, a land, a territory, an entity, a people, a consciousness, a question, a problem, a longing, of obviously national nature, yet with multiple other resonances. Palestine is certainly a particular place and a people, and it has been for a very long time, but it is not *only* a place or a people; it is also many other things at the same time.⁴

Anyone who has spent time at AUB, or studying the AUB, will instantly sense the relevance of the conjugation of the two entities, especially in the last few decades: even today, the Palestinian cultural club remains an active and dynamic student organization, issuing a regular bi-lingual publication, *al-Huwīyya*, and coordinating the yearly *Israel Apartheid Week* in the Spring (which recently featured the return of the legendary Lailā Khālīd to campus). The late 1960s were of course the apex of the student and anti-imperialist movements worldwide—at the AUB, this translated into the hegemony of the ‘question of Palestine’ in its multiple iterations, and indeed, into the dominance of factions of the Palestinian resistance movement among activist students and in student

1 Formally, it was received by the conveners of the conference as the Arab delegation from the Hijaz. On the delegation and its efforts in Paris, see Alexis Wick, “Of Missing Actors – Palestine and Arab Diplomacy in Paris, 1919–1920” (Unpublished MA thesis, Columbia University History Department, 2004).

2 Cited in Zeine N. Zeine, *The Struggle for Arab Independence: Western Diplomacy & the Rise and Fall of Faisal's Kingdom in Syria* (Beirut: Khayyat's, 1960), 70n3. For the full text of Bliss' address to the Council of Ten, see “Appendix F,” in Zeine, *The Struggle for Arab Independence*, 222–25.

3 Ibid., 70.

4 This is well-known, and as will be shown below, it is nothing new but dates rather to the very beginning of the question of Palestine. Like other names, Palestine signifies many meanings. For recent attempts to interpret this signification, see, for example, Alain Gresh, *De quoi la Palestine est-elle le nom?* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2012), or Roger Heacock, *La Palestine: un kaleidoscope disciplinaire* (Paris: CNRS, 2011).

politics more largely. Over forty years before her latest intervention on campus, Lailā Khālīd had been a student at the AUB for a year in 1963, and had delivered an important speech at the Speaker's Corner in October 1970, denouncing Black September and US support for the Jordanian monarchy.⁵ According to a recent article in *MainGate*, the university magazine, Khālīd “attack[ed] the Jordanian government for its repression of the Palestinians in Camp Wahadat in Amman, called for pan-Arab national unity, and underscored the importance of the Palestinian resistance.”⁶

‘Palestine’ indeed held center stage at the AUB in this period. Historian Makram Rabāh has described campus politics in these years as being “ancillary to the Palestine Revolution.”⁷ As he documents, four out of five presidents of the Student Council in the time between its reestablishment in 1969 and its re-disbandment in 1974 were not only Palestinian, but in fact affiliated with the major Palestinian party Fatah. In fact, the very first Speaker's Corner is indicative in this regard: Fu’ād Bawarshī, the Palestinian president of the Student Council, opened the floor by explaining the rules, and then, in response to the general silence, Ḥanān Mikhā’il (later ‘Ashrāwī) urged students to speak their mind and say what they felt. Both would become prominent figures of the Palestinian national movement.

The same year Lailā Khālīd gave her speech, the US periodical *Newsweek* labeled the AUB “Guerrilla U,” explicitly as a result of the fact that “Politics at AUB today is tied directly to the Palestinian guerrilla movement.” The sheer number of the major figures of the Palestinian leadership, political, intellectual, ideological, as well as social and economic, that were connected in one way or another to AUB is striking: the *shahīd* Kamāl Nāṣir, the *hakīm* Jūrj Ḥabash, the philanthropist ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Qattān, to name just a few of the most famous (but there are, obviously, very many others, covering the whole century and a panoply of vocations). In addition, numerous members of the esteemed faculty, past and present, have a Palestinian affiliation (the family names Dajānī, Khālīdī, Maṣrī, Ṣāyigh, or Saiqālī, for example, are indistinguishable from either the AUB or the Palestine scene).

This period of the 1960s, 70s, and beyond has been written about often, both by participants and subsequent scholars.⁸ The importance of Beirut in general and AUB in particular to the story of the Palestinian resistance movement of the 1970s and 80s, and

5 Modeled on the Hyde Park original, the Speaker's Corner at AUB was launched in 1969 by the Student Council so as to provide an open outlet for student discussion and vocal activism.

6 *MainGate*, Summer 2009, vii, no. 4. Accessed online at <http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webmgate/summer2009/article4.htm> on 5/11/2013.

7 Makram Rabah, *A Campus at War: Student Politics at the American University of Beirut, 1967–1975* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2009).

8 A complete list of the relevant titles would be too numerous to cite here. For particularly eloquent first-person accounts involving the AUB directly, see Kamāl al-Ṣalībī, *Ṭā’ir ‘alā sindiyāna: Mudhakkarāt* (Amman: Dār al-Shurūq, 2002) and Fathī al-Biss, *Inthiyāl al-dhākira: Hādha mā ḥaṣal* (Amman: Dār al-Shurūq, 2008).

vice versa, the centrality of Palestinian parties to the activity of the Lebanese political and intellectual arena (not to speak of the social or economic dimensions) are well-known.

What this essay aims to show, however, is that these features belong to a long and deep historical tradition within the university stretching back at least to the very beginning of the century, if not more. In other words, the prevalence of the question of Palestine on the AUB campus in the late 1960s and beyond was not simply a result of the lightening rise of the guerilla factions of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO; primarily Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) in Lebanon at that time, but instead a rather continuous feature of the city of Beirut in general, and of the university's life from its inception.

The argument runs along two complementary planes: the first tracks the important presence of Palestine as an expression of locale in the life of the university; the second explores the apparitions of 'Palestine' as a floating signifier, implicating many other dimensions of meaning. Thus this essay is about both Palestine as an actually existing place and Palestine as the fractal refraction of various other things and concepts continually defined and redefined over time.

* * * * *

The connection of AUB students to Palestine as an actual place goes back to the very beginning. One of the first five graduates of the university, Qaiṣar Ghurayyib, a medical doctor, established himself in Jaffa. A member of the initial cohort of five students who graduated with a B.A. in 1870 (along with the famous intellectual, publisher, and journalist Ya'qūb Ṣarrūf, incidentally), he is listed as the very first name in the formal AUB Directory of Alumni. He then continued in the medical school, in the course of which he was a contemporary of another famous figure of late nineteenth century Arab intellectual life, Shiblī Shumayyil, before obtaining his M.D. in 1874 and eventually moving to Jaffa, Palestine, where he became a physician in the English Hospital.⁹ There is nothing surprising in this, of course, for mobility and exchange were common features of the time, especially since there were no borders between these lands which all belonged to the same wider political and legislative Ottoman unit. In his memoirs, Kamāl al-Ṣalībī evokes the travels of his father and grandfather and their sojourns in different places, including cities of what is now Palestine and Jordan.¹⁰ Naturally, movement also went in the opposite direction, towards Lebanon and Beirut.¹¹

⁹ The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni, 1870–1952* (Beirut: Alumni Association, 1953), 1, 4.

¹⁰ See chapter 1, "Usra tatakawwan" of al-Ṣalībī, *op. cit.*: 7–34.

¹¹ For the story of a young Palestinian's experience of Beirut in the early twentieth century, see chapter 8, "The Last Feudal Lord," on 'Umar Ṣāliḥ al-Barghūṭi, in Salim Tamari, *Mountain Against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 133–49.

More significantly, Jerusalem can boast of being the location of the first branch (outside Beirut at least) of the Syrian Protestant College alumni association. The June 1911 volume of *al-Kulliyah*, the student paper, announced the creation of the association, naming twelve members: Rev. Farhud Kurban, Dr. Najib Jamal, Dr. Albert Abu-Shedid, Mr. Adolph Datsi, Dr. Tawfiq Canaan, Dr. Wadie Haddad, Dr. Elias Halaby, Dr. Moses Albert, Mr. Kamal Haddad, Mr. Elias Galet, Mr. George Said, and Mr. Ibrahim Jamal.¹² The first president of the association was Najib Jamal, with Adolph Datsi as vice-president and George Said as secretary-treasurer. Two features of this list are particularly noteworthy: first, the prevalence of medical doctors—and indeed, the Syrian Protestant College distinguished itself in the field of medicine from the very start—and second, the presence of two names of clearly European origin (including the Vice-President). President Howard Bliss reported the following year having met with SPC graduates during a trip to Palestine, both in Jaffa and in Jerusalem, where he was received by the alumni association for a memorable dinner (to which the great Palestinian educator and public intellectual Khalil Sakakini was also invited).

Among the original members (and soon to be president) of the Jerusalem alumni association was Dr. Tawfiq Kan'an, a fascinating figure of the Palestinian intelligentsia. Kan'an was outstanding, though in many ways typical, case of the Palestinian presence at SPC/AUB. Born in 1882 in Beit Jala to Protestant parents, he studied medicine at the SPC, then went back to his native land to become an eminent physician in Jerusalem and eventually the director of the Augusta Victoria Hospital. He was a respected researcher of matters both medical and not (mainly focusing on popular rural culture and folklore, often involving historical, ethnographical, botanical, architectural, agricultural, and religious dimensions), as well as an important nationalist pamphleteer and activist. He graduated with honors from the SPC medical school and remained deeply devoted to his alma mater, delivering the graduation speech for his class in 1905 and maintaining regular contact with the institution by contributing to university publications. Indeed, his first proper research-based medical article (on "Cerebro-spinal meningitis in Jerusalem") was published in *al-Kulliyah* in 1911. The following year he published, again in the SPC's *al-Kulliyah*, an article on "Demons as an Aetiological Factor in Popular Medicine," which was a part of a larger project that would appear in 1914 in the form of a book in German entitled *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Superstition and Popular Medicine in the Land of the Bible).¹³ His contributions to SPC/AUB-associated publications continued in the next decades, and he published some of his famous work on Arabic talismans in the *Berytus Archaeological Journal*.

¹² *Al-Kulliyah*, II/3 (June 1911). I follow here the spellings of the names as listed in the source.

¹³ On Tawfiq Kan'an, see especially the commemorative article by Khālid Nāshif, "Tawfiq Kan'an: taqwīm jadīd," in *Majallat al-dirasāt al-filasṭīniyya*, 13/50 (Spring 2002): 69–91. For a wider discussion of "Canaan's circle" of "nativist ethnographers," see chapter 6, "Lepers, Lunatics, and Saints: The Nativist Ethnography of Tawfiq Canaan and His Circle" in Salim Tamari's, *Mountain against the Sea*, 93–112.

Kanʿān was acutely sensitive to Palestine and Palestinian identity, and to the existential threat posed to it by the Zionist movement. Already in 1909, he published a piece in German on the characteristics of Palestinian agriculture (“Der Ackerbau in Palästina”), in which the problem of Zionist settlements features. His growing opposition to the colonization of Palestine led to two watershed publications in 1936 (*The Palestine Arab Cause*, a powerful pamphlet that appeared immediately in the wake of the general strike, and then, the longer, more argumentative *Conflict in the Land of Peace*), as well as to direct political action (such as a memorandum sent to the Higher Arab Committee).¹⁴ In 1944, he helped establish the Arab Medical Society of Palestine, of which he became the first president, and then in 1948, amidst the unraveling catastrophe, he also joined in creating and coordinating the Higher Arab Relief Committee.¹⁵ The connection to the SPC/AUB remained throughout. The university magazine, for example, announced the publication of Kanʿān’s book *Conflict in the Land of Peace*.¹⁶ But much more importantly, it is truly remarkable to note how many of Kanʿān’s close associates and friends had also been students in Ras Beirut: most importantly, fellow physicians such as Yūsuf Ḥajjār (M.D. 1915), ʿIzzat Ṭannūs (M.D. 1918), Maḥmūd Ṭahir al-Dajānī (M.D. 1932), and Shafiq Naṣr Ḥaddād (M.D. 1934), among many others.¹⁷

Even more startling than the sheer number and dynamism of alumni in Palestine is the fact that the SPC hosted what is probably the first “Palestine society” in the Arab world. This is quite fascinating indeed, though details about its activities are hard to come by. The February 1914 issue of the student paper mentions for the first time the existence of such a “Palestine society,” but the content of the article indicates that it existed before (since advice is requested from previous members). “The purpose of the society,” explains the article signed Aziz Marmora, President, “is to unite the hearts, and to unify the aims of, those students who come from Palestine and to create a society spirit among the members so that in the future we may strive together with the same ideals and purposes for the land which we represent.”¹⁸ The following issue (of March 1914) reported in the section on “Student activities” on the meeting of the Palestine society, which was attended by “over 60 persons coming from Palestine” and connected in various capacities to the college.¹⁹ Revealingly, the program of the meeting included, aside from entertaining interventions, what appears to be an explicitly *political* “address on the necessity of union in Palestine by Mr. Jamal Husaini.” This was, however, on the eve of the War, when conditions naturally changed thoroughly for the students of the college,

14 Nāshif, *op. cit.*, 79.

15 Ibid.

16 *Al-Kulliyah Review*, 4/7 (Jan. 1937): 3.

17 On these personalities, see their entries in the *Directory of Alumni*.

18 *Al-Kulliyah*, 5/4 (Feb. 1914): 115.

19 *Al-Kulliyah*, 5/5 (Mar. 1914).

and the “Palestine society” does not make any other appearance. A “Palestine Club” or “Palestinian Club” is mentioned in later years, but not as a formal student organization.²⁰

This should not come as too much of a surprise since, among the population of Palestine itself, considerable feelings of various forms of patriotism had deep roots well before the war.²¹ The issue of Zionism and of the increasingly intensive and ideological Jewish immigration of the Second Aliyah was of primary concern. In May 1911, the representative of Jerusalem at the Ottoman parliament Rūhī al-Khālīdī delivered a speech in Istanbul denouncing Zionist colonization. Even more significant perhaps, the Jaffa-based newspaper *Filastin* (its name is meaningful in itself) criticized the Arab Congress held in Paris in 1913 for not taking an unequivocal stand against Zionism.²²

Thus, a certain sense of identity among Palestinians already existed in the very late Ottoman SPC, but this should not be overstated: what is perhaps most interesting in the pre-WWI period is the common devotion to Ottoman identity by all parties involved—certainly the administration, but also, as far as can be ascertained, the students. In a tribute to Howard Bliss, the faculty commemorated first and foremost the integration into the Ottoman order that occurred under his presidency, having obtained the necessary authorizations and recognition from the authorities, so that the university “maintained a consistent attitude of loyalty to the existing Ottoman government,” even through the war.²³ In fact, the university partook of the Ottoman war effort itself:

Soon after the outbreak of war, the faculty considered what the College might do in the way of war relief. The government was informed that any wounded soldiers sent to the College hospitals would be cared for free of charge. Dr. Bliss and Dr. Ward visited the Governor-General and through him tendered to Djemal Pasha the offer of a medical mission to southern Palestine on behalf of the soldiers of the Ottoman army.²⁴

Before the war, in May 1910, the Ottoman Turkish instructor of the SPC (by the name of Levon K. Lemnian) underscored in *al-Kulliyah* the importance of language to identity

²⁰ See, for example, *al-Kulliyah Review*, 2/2 (Oct. 27, 1934), and *al-Kulliyah Review*, 1/4 (Feb. 3, 1934): 5.

²¹ On this point, see Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity* (1997). This is obviously not to say that a sense of nationalism existed in Palestine at the time, but simply to indicate that the political elite of Palestine was not immobile and dumb before World War I, as many narratives would want us to believe. The strict contours of the community might not have been precisely imagined, but imagination there surely was.

²² Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement* (London: Routledge, 1974), 27.

²³ *Al-Kulliyah*, 6/9 (June 1, 1920).

²⁴ Stephen Penrose, *That They May Have Life: The Story of the American University of Beirut, 1866–1941* (New York: The Trustees of the American University of Beirut, 1941), 153.

and unity, and that all Ottoman citizens should be taught their common language.²⁵ This corresponds well to the official ethos of the times, especially after the revolution of 1908, which espoused the goal of nurturing a sense of Ottoman identity and belonging fostered by a language and culture that would transcend divisions in ethnicity or faith.

If the pre-war years had already witnessed some feelings of Palestinian identity, stirred in part by Zionist colonization but also by a long tradition of local autonomous rule and sense of self, these would only become more acute and more explicitly formulated in the years after the breakup of the Ottoman realm. The establishment of the Mandate system made from the fluid boundaries of historic Palestine an integrated totality, defined strictly by borders and an administrative structure, and separated from its new neighbors (what will become Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan) by a different grammar of rule (different linguistically, juridically, politically, etc.). Of course, these imperialist policies did not take into consideration the wishes of the local population—much to the contrary. The Anglo-French declaration of November 7th, 1918, which affirmed the principle of self-determination as the *modus operandi* for the future of the region, had a powerful effect on the Palestinians, and most of their representatives demanded unity with Syria and complete independence.²⁶ Many Palestinian intellectuals and political leaders made their way to Damascus in order to help in establishing an Arab government over the region.²⁷

Nonetheless, Palestinians were now being interpellated precisely as such, and in parallel the constitution and prominence of Palestinian students at AUB consolidated itself following the war. This was, ultimately, for a rather simple reason as the Director of Education in Mandate Palestine stated:

The American University of Beirut holds a position which is unique in the Near East. No other institution in this part of the world offers the same opportunities of higher education (...). The fact that English is the medium of instruction, while great attention is paid to the study of Arabic, the native tongue of the majority of students, and that courses of study are offered in various higher branches of learning, renders the University peculiarly adaptable to the needs of those countries of the Near East under British influence, and to none more than Palestine.²⁸

And indeed, from the early 1920s, there were funds from the Palestine Government for Palestinian students to study at AUB, and its graduates quickly filled many positions in the

²⁵ *Al-Kulliyah*, I/4 (1910): 115–17.

²⁶ Porath, *The Emergence*, 85.

²⁷ See 'Isā el-'Isā's recounting of his way to Damascus in his memoirs, reproduced in Noha Tadros Khalaf, *Les mémoires de 'Issa al-'Issa : journaliste et intellectuel palestinien (1878–1950)* (Paris: Khartala, 2009).

²⁸ Penrose, *op. cit.*, 153.

bureaucracy of the British Mandate for Palestine (as the university magazines regularly noted). This was especially the case in the medical, pharmaceutical, and educational fields. When the “Palestine Pharmaceutical Association” was created, five out of its seven officers were AUB graduates.²⁹ As suggested above, a similar situation obtained for the Palestine Medical Association.

In the domain of agriculture too, just to give another example, the connections were intimate. Dr. ‘Izzat Ṭannūs wrote a piece in early 1930 in the university journal, decrying the plight of the “*fellah*” (peasant) in Syria and Palestine (and especially Palestine), and urging AUB to teach agriculture. As a matter of fact, in 1930 the Institute for Rural Life, which operated as a program for agricultural outreach, was founded.³⁰ A few years later the Village Welfare Service was instituted out of the university as a continuation of this volunteer outreach effort, and in cooperation with the Education Department of Palestine, it provided support in particular for the rural districts of Palestine—though similar programs were developed in Lebanon too.³¹ In 1936, AUB organized citrus growers from the region of Tripoli and Sidon to go to Jaffa district to develop new techniques of production.

Needless to say, the influence did not always work in expected ways or to the advantage of the mandate authorities: two of the three national heroes executed by the British in Acre prison for their role in the al-Buraq revolt of 1929 were AUB graduates (Fu‘ād Ḥijāzī and Muḥammad Jamjūm).

The Jerusalem alumni association was only the first of a whole series of very dynamic branches of the alumni association in Palestine. In April 1921, an AUB professor reported on his Easter holidays in Palestine in the student paper, mentioning that “in Jerusalem, there is probably the most active Alumni Association of which the University can boast.”³² It stated how delightful it had been “to break bread in the homes in Tyre and Tiberias, in Nazareth and Jenin,” and extolled the public role of AUB graduates in Palestine.³³ “The student body,” the author exclaims, “may well be proud of the place their Alumni have taken in the development of the land of Palestine. (...) Two are in the Advisory Council for Palestine, at least two are Governors of districts, one is in charge of the finances of his district, others are secretaries to high officials and still others are district supervisors of education.”³⁴

In 1935, another article speaks of Jerusalem as an “AUB metropolis” when it comes to its students past and present: “The alumni organization has established no bureau or office, but (...) every government department, every school, every office or business house of

29 *Al-Kulliyah*, 8/6 (Apr. 1922): 94.

30 AUB Archives, A.A.: 3.5.2.

31 *Al-Kulliyah*, 20/1 (Nov. 1, 1933), AUB Archives, A.A.: 4.3.

32 *Al-Kulliyah*, 7/6 (Apr. 1921): 97–8.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*

any importance, seems to be alumni headquarters.”³⁵ Like the previously cited piece, this article too goes on to list with glee the most prominent AUB alumni in Palestine.

Other than Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, Nazareth, Tiberias, Acre, Tulkarem, Nablus, and Ramallah would develop alumni associations, both formal and informal, over the course of the 1920s and 1930s.

It was also following the war that the University would begin listing the data on registering students by place of origin, which is logical since now, as stated above, the different people of the region were constituted by the new administrative systems. Previously, the numbers had been divided only in terms of religious affiliation, but beginning in 1922, the university listed the distribution of students by what it termed “localities” (it would soon adopt the label “nationality”)—and Palestine is, from the start, listed separately from Syria (which, by contrast, is always linked to Lebanon).³⁶ Throughout the twenties, thirties, forties, and beyond, the students from “Palestine” are always close second, following Syria-Lebanon (keeping in mind also the much greater total population of the latter). In 1943, for example, there were 299 students from Syria and Lebanon registered at the University, and 210 from Palestine.³⁷

There is, however, evidence that the students did not necessarily, or only, identify themselves as such: during the 1922 “Inter-racial night” of the West Hall Brotherhood (a tradition which Philip Hitti is said to have brought back with him from New York), “The Syrian students, showing by their placards that they made no distinction between Northern Syria and ‘Southern Syria’ (Palestine), enacted ‘The Spirit of Syria’. The Spirit herself stood in the center, draped in flurly white, and recounted the part that she had played in the origins of civilization.”³⁸ In later versions of these cosmopolitan gatherings, however, Palestine would be set apart.³⁹ But the question did not disappear: in 1936, an alumnus wrote to the AUB journal, refusing to separate Syria from Palestine, and affirming Syria as an “indivisible unit.”⁴⁰ Indeed, the memoirs of students and faculty from the period indicate very clearly that the two dominant political currents on campus were forms of Syrian nationalism and Arab nationalism (the former led by Antūn Sa’ādah, who himself was a familiar of the AUB community, where he even taught German; the latter by long-time AUB faculty member Koştanţin Zuraiq).⁴¹ This did not prevent the

35 *Al-Kulliyah Review*, 3/3 (Nov 16, 1935).

36 *Al-Kulliyah*, 8/4 (Feb. 1922): 55.

37 AUB Archives, A.A.: 2.3.4.4.5.

38 *Al-Kulliyah*, 8/4 (Feb. 1922): 59–60.

39 *Al-Kulliyah*, IX/8 (June 1923): 141.

40 *Al-Kulliyah Review*, 3/11 (March 28, 1936): 6.

41 See, for example, the stirring recollections of Yūsif Sāyigh in Rosemary Sayigh (ed.), *Yusif Sayigh: Arab Economist and Palestinian Patriot: A Fractured Life Story* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2015) and of Hishām Sharābī in Hisham Sharabi, *Embers and Ashes: Memoirs of an Arab Intellectual* (Northampton: Interlink Books, 2007).

expression of more narrow patriotic affiliation as well. In his article mentioned above on the peasants in Syria and Palestine, 'Izzat Ṭannūs explicitly stated that what meant to him the most was Palestine, "which, along with the university, held first place in his heart."⁴² Just a few years later, however, the university magazine ran a contribution by a student calling for the revival of the Arabic Society, explicitly decrying the fostering of narrow patriotisms: "It is really a pity that a society with such a long and fruitful past should die out, then destroying an important tie among the Arabic speaking students. (...) We have enough societies that serve to uphold nationalism and divide the Arab students into different groups: the Iraqi, the Egyptian societies, the Palestinian Club outside, which has many members among the Palestinian here."⁴³

* * * * *

It is obvious from the above that the political developments relating to the region as a whole and Palestine in particular could not help but affect university affairs regularly. This, it should be said, was clearly against the university administration's best efforts. Student societies were explicitly enjoined *not* to engage in any political or ideological activity, and students were sometimes required to sign pledges to abstain from politics.⁴⁴

When Professor Day was sent by AUB as an official delegate for the opening ceremony of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1925, the Palestinian alumni vigorously protested, saying that "the Hebrew University was more an instrument of Zionist propaganda than an institution of learning," and that by sending a representative, AUB was declaring its sympathies for the Zionist project.⁴⁵ The response of the administration was rather defensive, underscoring the seriousness of the matter: "The AUB desires to have friendly relations with all institutions of learning in this country by whomever conducted, and at the same time to abstain from all partisan manifestations. (...) Neither Arab nor Jew have any right to assert that the AUB (...) took any part in the controversy, nor to make capital out of the representation of the AUB on that occasion."⁴⁶

Political questions relating to Palestine captivated AUB students during the Great Revolt of 1936–39. Then president Bayard Dodge mentioned this repeatedly in his diaries: in 1935, he speaks of the administration's "constant fear lest the students might break out into political demonstration"; of 1938 he wrote, "it had been a hard year, as the students

42 *Al-Kulliyah*, XVI/4 (Feb. 1930): 87.

43 *Al-Kulliyah Review*, 1/4 (Feb 3, 1934): 5.

44 AUB Archives, A.A.: 2.3.4.1.5, B. Dodge diary (Box 1, File 5), p. 57.

45 *Al-Kulliyah*, XI/6 (April 1925): 97.

46 *Ibid.*

were stirred up by the Arab revolt in Palestine and nationalist unrest in Damascus, but all ended happily.”⁴⁷

Indeed, though the participation of Jews from everywhere, and in particular from Palestine, in the life of the university—both as students and in extra-curricular activities—had been important in the past (indeed, one of the early student groups was “Kadima,” the “Hebrew students society”), things became more complicated at this point. Palestinian teams, many of which were explicitly Jewish, were some of the most common opponents of the AUB athletic team—but after the heightened rise of tensions in conjunction with the revolt (leading even to the torching of a football team’s bus while on a visit to Beirut⁴⁸), Jewish teams never came back again.

Even more interesting is an article that appeared in the student journal in January 1937, reporting on Mr. Tannus and Mr. Mufarrij’s recent ten-day visit in Palestine during the Christmas vacation after a two-year absence. Simply entitled “A trip to Palestine,” it affirmed with noticeable confidence and expectation: “The greatest change of all and the most significant seemed to be the unity of the people. Social strata seemed to have disappeared and the peasant and land owner, small shop keeper and politician are apparently on an equal footing.” “All this points to a moral revival,” it continued, before ending with a hopeful nationalist quote: “Of such beliefs are empires made.”⁴⁹

With the advantage of hindsight, this obviously smacks of naïve idealism, but what is important here is that the matter interested the student body, which, it may be inferred, would have shared at least the vague framework with such utopian naiveté. The same issue also announced the publication of Tawfiq Kan’ān’s acute critique of the colonial British and Zionist position concerning Palestine in revolt, *Conflict in the Land of Peace*.

Unsurprisingly, the question of Palestine and Palestinians reached boiling point following the UN partition plan, and increasingly so with the ethnic cleansing that accompanied the destruction of Arab Palestine and its replacement by the Jewish state. It was the first point of the President’s Annual Report of 1948–9. The issues of the AUB student journals of the time are smothered by the trauma of the loss of Palestine and especially the suffering of the refugees. The March 1949 issue of *al-Kulliyah* magazine made its feelings clearest by adorning its cover with the photo of a wretched newborn held by a nurse, with the title “An Innocent Victim of the Jewish Aggression in Palestine.” Articles repeatedly called upon President Penrose to help alleviate the plight of the refugees; and indeed, among other things, a number of fellowships were earmarked to go to Palestinian refugees. In the meantime, former president Bayard Dodge had served as a representative in Beirut of the UN as related to the question of the refugees. The AUB archives contain a letter dated December 2nd, 1948, and signed by Trygve Lie, Secretary

47 AUB Archives, A.A.: 2.3.4.1.5, B. Dodge diary (Box 1, File 5), p. 55.

48 This event is mentioned in Amjad Ghanma’s “I Remember,” in *al-Kulliyah*, 1994.

49 *Al-Kulliyah Review*, 4/7 (Jan. 1937): 5. The spelling of the names follows the source itself.

General of the UN, requesting that Dodge remain “a consultant to me in the matter of the Palestinian Refugee Relief Programme,” and authorizing him “to establish a UN Field Liaison office in Beirut and to represent the UN Relief HQ Liaison officer.”⁵⁰

Dodge was clearly very involved with refugee relief work from the start. In his unpublished diary, he notes the arrival of refugees to Lebanon and Syria, and speaks of them as “Arabs, scared or driven from Palestine by Jewish gangsters and movement of troops.”⁵¹ In several published articles, Dodge repeatedly discussed the question of Palestine, and especially its refugees, always bearing in mind that these issues should never be separated from the wider regional environment.⁵²

This moment marks a watershed in the history of AUB and its relationship with Palestine and Palestinians. For the first time in its history, AUB started receiving funding from the federal government of the United States, just as Dodge’s successor, Stephen Penrose, was the first president of the university who had been closely affiliated with the US government—indeed, he had worked for the Office of Strategic Services (the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency) in Cairo during World War II. As historian Betty Anderson explicitly writes, this “tied AUB to US policies in new ways.”⁵³ Surely it is not a coincidence that this historical moment also witnessed a radical shift in global politics, with the beginning of the Cold War. Palestine (as symbol, people, and land) being a primary victim (and enemy) of U.S. imperialism and Cold War tactics, it was inevitable that the meeting of AUB and Palestine, ever the stronger, should produce different articulations.

* * * * *

It is at this moment of catastrophe that what I am calling the fractal presence of Palestine comes vigorously to the fore. Palestine and Palestinians, after 1947, come to mean much more than a simple geographical locale or national grouping. This was of course true throughout the world, but it seems particularly poignant at AUB. The very first contribution to the December 1947 issue of the AUB student magazine *al-Kulliyah* (in Arabic)—that is, days after the UN’s disastrous decision to vote in favor of the Partition of Palestine—was a powerful article signed by Koştanţin Zuraiq, vice-president of the university, and entitled “The Palestinian Issue: A struggle between principle and force” (*Al-qaḍīyya al-filistīniyya*:

⁵⁰ AUB Archives, A.A.: 2.3.4.5-5.

⁵¹ AUB Archives, A.A.: 2.3.4.1.5, B. Dodge diary (Box 1, File 5), p. 116.

⁵² Bayard Dodge, “Peace or War in Palestine,” in *Christianity and Crisis*, March 15, 1948; Bayard Dodge, “Must There be War in the Middle East,” in *Reader’s Digest*, April 1948; “The Problem of the Palestinian Refugees,” Autumn 1949; “Ups and Downs in the Arab East,” in *Foreign Notes*, June 1949.

⁵³ Betty Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 137.

ṣirāʿ bayn al-mabdaʾ waʾl-quwwa).⁵⁴ It is a reasoned and persuasive argument for the right of Palestinians to self-determination on their land, and a refutation of Zionist claims to the contrary. But what is most interesting is that he explicitly frames the struggle against the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as being, “from the Arab point of view, not only a national struggle, but also a struggle on behalf of a higher human principle [*mathal*], a struggle between justice and force [*baynaʾl-ḥaqq waʾl-quwwa*], between principle and vested interest [*baynaʾl-mabdaʾ waʾl-maṣlaḥa*].” He predicts in the end a long, exhausting struggle for the Arabs against the logic of force and vested interests—a fight he describes as “the noble, holy struggle” (*al-jihād al-karīm al-muqaddas*). Evidently, for Zuraiq, Palestine meant more than a location; it took the place of the very essence of the becoming of the Arabs, indeed of humanity writ large.

Similarly, in April 1948, outgoing AUB president Bayard Dodge penned a piece entitled “Must there be war in the Middle East?,” which was a vigorous critique of the idea of partition, presenting instead a case for a binational Palestine. Again, Palestine is framed as meaning much more than itself as a place. “The question of Palestine,” he wrote, “is no longer a question only of Palestine.” “The question of Palestine,” he reiterates at the end, “is basically a moral, religious, spiritual question.”⁵⁵

Palestine would become firmly entrenched at AUB as a signifier of Arabness and Arab identity, indeed, of anti-colonialism, self-determination, justice, and truth more largely. For example, at the height of the dominance of the “Palestinian factions” over radical student politics at AUB, during the famous 1971 strike and sit-in, one of the demands of the Fatah-led student council was, counter-intuitively perhaps, the *lebanization* of the university. Also, Lailā Khālid opened her October 29th, 1970 speech with the following words: “I could speak in English, but since I’m at the American University of Beirut, I’ll speak in Arabic.” This had been an ongoing issue at the SPC/AUB ever since the change of the language of instruction in the early 1880s. Actions of all sorts (petitions, newspaper articles, demonstrations etc.) directed at the revival of instruction in Arabic occurred recurrently. They could now be channeled, at least in part, by the evocation of the question of Palestine.

* * * * *

Palestine and Palestinians have been central to the identity of the American University of Beirut from its very inception onwards, both as an empirical reality, resulting from the intimate connections between this institution, the land and its people, and as a fractal presence, ideological, theological, theoretical, symbolic, and semiotic.

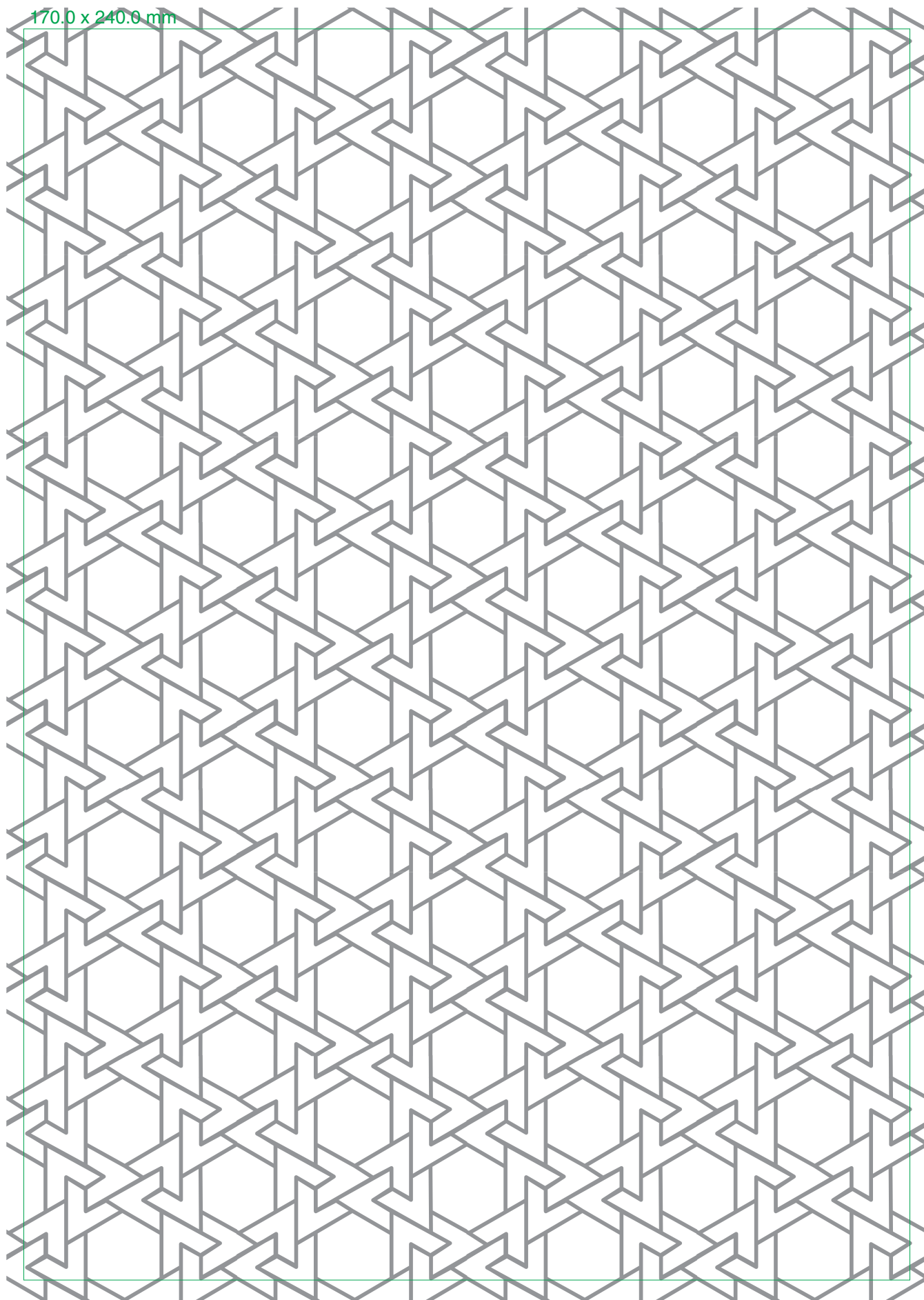
54 Koṣṭanṭīn Zuraiq, “al-qadiyya al-filistīniyya: ṣirāʿ bayn al-mabdaʾ waʾl-quwwa,” *al-Kulliyah*, 22/9 (Dec. 1947): 1–10.

55 Bayard Dodge, “Must There be War in the Middle East,” in *Reader’s Digest*, April 1948: 34.

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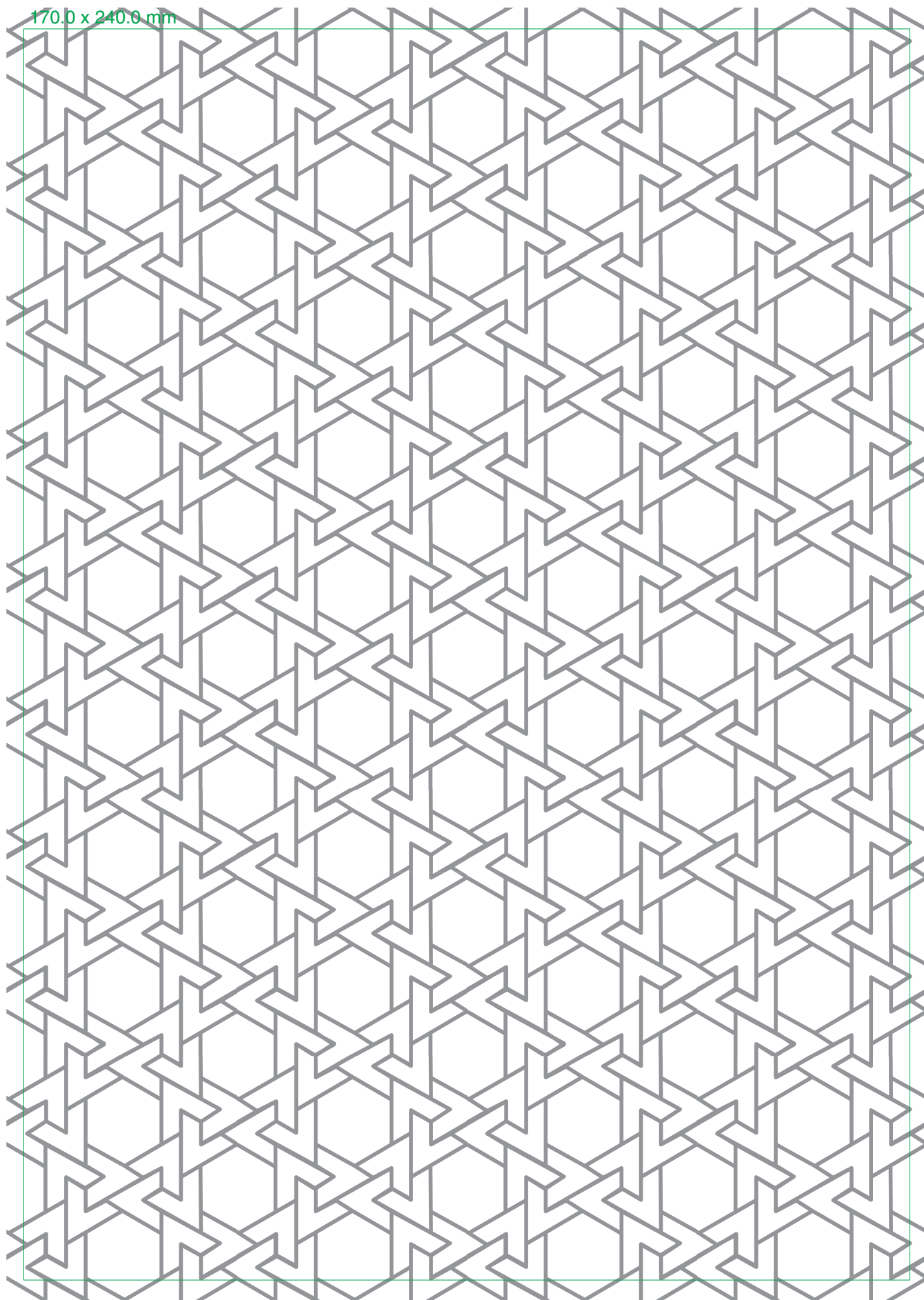


Section III

Lebanese History



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The Mamluk Period In Lebanon

The Archaeological Evidence

Hélène Sader

Lebanon came under Mamluk rule after Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars defeated the Mongols at the battle of 'Ayn Jalūd in 1260.¹ In 1266–1268 and in 1283 the Mamluks raided the Maronite countryside of Tripoli. In 1289 al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn conquered Tripoli and in 1291 Qalāwūn's son, Mālik al-Ashraf, conquered Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, Byblos, Anfeh, Batroun, and Sarafand.² In retaliation for attacks launched against Mamluk troops in 1292 and 1300 by mountaineers of the Kesrawan, the Mamluks organized a large punitive expedition in 1300, defeated the rebellious groups, and imposed a heavy tribute on them.³ In 1305 the Mamluks led a third attack against the Kesrawan which resulted in the destruction of this mountain area's villages and its abandonment by its Shiite and Druze population.⁴ The Mamluks also secured the mountains in Northern Lebanon and according to Kamal Salibi, "Even Ġibbat Bšarri, the highest and most rugged of the Maronite Mountain districts, had been brought securely under Mamluk control by the end of the fourteenth century...."⁵ Their rule over Lebanon lasted over 200 years and it came to an end after their final defeat by the Ottomans in 1516.

¹ Albrecht Fuess, "Beirut in Mamluk Times (1291–1516)," *ARAM* 9, no. 1 (1997): 86.

² Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500*. (Beirut: Khayyats, 1965): 345; for Beirut, see Hours and Salibi, eds., *Sāliḥ b. Yahya: Tārīḥ Bayrūt, récits des anciens de la famille de Buḥtur b. 'Alī, émir du Gharb de Beyrouth* Beyrouth: Dar el-Machreq Éditeurs (Imprimerie Catholique), 1969.

³ Ahmad Hoteit, "Les expéditions mameloukes de Kasrawān: critique de la lettre d'Ibn Taimiya au Sultan an-Nāsir Muhammad Bin Qalāwūn," *ARAM* 9, no. 1 (1977): 77, 83.

⁴ Hoteit, "Les expéditions mameloukes," 78.

⁵ Kamal Salibi, "The Maronites of Lebanon under Frankish and Mamluk Rule (1099–1516)," *Arabica* 4, no. 3 (September 1/2 1957): 301.

While the Mamluk history of Lebanon is relatively well-documented, there is lack of substantial archaeological evidence for their presence and for the situation of the country under their rule. In this modest contribution to honor Abdulrahim Abū-Ḥusayn, a great scholar and a dear friend and colleague, I would like to give a short update on the state of the archaeological evidence relating to the Mamluk period. I am fully aware that the list compiled here is not exhaustive and that more could be available in unpublished excavation and survey results. I will briefly present the Lebanese sites where Mamluk presence or some aspects of Mamluk material culture are attested. I will conclude with a preliminary assessment of this evidence as well as the problems this particular area of research is still facing.

1 Archaeological Evidence for Mamluks in Lebanon

1.1 *Archaeological Evidence from the Coastal Cities*

The Mamluks were mainly concerned with securing all the harbor cities of Lebanon because they were fearing that the Crusaders, who had withdrawn to Cyprus, would try to come back to reconquer their lost territories. They destroyed all major fortresses and fortification walls of the coastal sites and caused the abandonment of most of them. Only Beirut and Tripoli seem to have recovered from these destructions.⁶

Tell 'Arqa

Tell 'Arqa, ancient *Irqata*, was excavated by the French Institute of Archaeology in Beirut. The site has yielded substantial evidence for Mamluk occupation in Phase A, levels 1 and 2, which was the last occupation period of the site.⁷ The excavators speak of a "medieval" fortification and tower without specifying its date and its builders.⁸ The only Mamluk material that was published from the site was the one found in the dump filling a medieval cistern⁹ which contained in almost all layers typical Mamluk sherds of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Tripoli

Tripoli was the only Lebanese city that was built anew by the Mamluks. The city was made the seat of one of their provincial capitals. It is considered to be the best example of

6 Fuess, "Beirut in Mamluk Times," 87.

7 Jean-Paul Thalmann, "Tell Arqa," *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 4 (2000): 25.

8 Ibid., 31–33.

9 Suzy Hakimian, "Céramiques médiévales trouvées dans une citerne de Tell 'Arqa," M.A. thesis (Beirut: USJ, 1980); Suzy Hakimian and Hassan Salamé-Sarkis, "Céramiques médiévales trouvées dans une citerne de Tell 'Arqa," *Syria* 65, no. 1/2 (1988): 1–61.

Mamluk presence and culture in Lebanon and the third best representative of Mamluk architecture after Cairo and Damascus. The Mamluks chose to build their city on both banks of the Qadisha, also known as the Abu Ali River, away from the harbor area of al-Mina. They chose a site some three kilometers inland, at the foot of the Crusader castle of Saint Gilles. Surviving mosques, *madrasahs*, *khans*, and *hammams* represent standing examples of Mamluk architecture. These monuments as well as the history of Tripoli have been thoroughly studied by several scholars. The Mamluk monuments in particular were investigated and described in detail by several authors and more recently by Hyatt Salam-Liebich¹⁰ and 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmuri.¹¹ However, the study of Mamluk Tripoli was restricted almost exclusively to its architecture except maybe the study by Hassan Salamé-Sarkis,¹² which was based largely on excavation results. Little is known about other aspects of its material culture and hardly any information is available in the publications about the economic and social situation of the city. In spite of the fact that several restoration works were undertaken on some Mamluk monuments of Tripoli such as *Sūq al-ḥaraj* and *ḥammām 'Izz al-dīn* which have probably yielded pottery as well as other small objects from that period, there was unfortunately no study or even mention of such remains.

Anfeh

Anfeh was conquered in 1291 by the Mamluk Sultan Mālik al-Ashraf. A survey of the peninsula and its area¹³ has yielded so far scanty evidence for Mamluk occupation. According to Antaki: "The bulk of the material retrieved from the peninsula was also assigned to this period (i.e. Crusader), with the exception of a very few vessels dating to the Fatimid period and others to the Mamluk period."¹⁴

Burj al-Fidār

This watch tower was built by the Mamluks at the end of the thirteenth century south of Jbeil. It is part of the fortifications that the Mamluks built along the Lebanese coast to protect it from eventual Crusader attacks.

10 Hyatt Salam-Liebich, *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1983).

11 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmuri, *Āthār Ṭarāblos al-Islāmīyya: Dirāsāt fi l-tārīkh wa-l-'amāra* (Tripoli: Dār al-Imān, 1994) in Arabic, and Omar Abdel Salam Tadmuri, "The Plans of Tripoli alSham and its Mamluk Architecture," *ARAM* 10, (1998): 471–495.

12 Hassan Salamé-Sarkis, *Contribution à l'histoire de Tripoli et de sa région à l'époque des Croisades: problèmes d'histoire, d'architecture et de céramique* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1980).

13 Nadine Panayot-Haroun, "Anfeh Unveiled: Historical Background, Ongoing Research, and Future Prospects," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 3, no. 4 (2015): 396–415.

14 Patricia Antaki, "The Medieval Heritage of Anfeh and its Region (North Lebanon): The Results of the Archaeological Mission of the University of Balamand," *Carnets de l'IFPO*, <https://www.ifporient.org/category/actualite/carnets-de-lifpo/>, August 2021.

Nahr al-Kalb

An inscription bearing the Mamluk blason and the name of Sultan Barqūq was erected on the left bank of Nahr al-Kalb by Aytmiş al-Bajāsi, an army chief commander, *atabek al-ʿasāker*.¹⁵

Beirut

Beirut regained its strength after its destruction by the Sultan Mālik al-Ashraf, and it became an important trading harbor city in Mamluk times.¹⁶ Its fortifications were partly rebuilt mainly in the harbor area to protect it from pirate attacks.¹⁷ Salvage excavations took place after the 1975–1991 armed conflict, when Beirut’s central district started to be rebuilt. Substantial evidence for the Mamluk era was exposed. The Crusader church of Saint John was transformed into a mosque in 1291. A *zāwiya* or *ribāṭ* built at the end of the Mamluk era and inaugurated in 1517 was accidentally discovered during the bulldozing of former *Sūq Tawīl*. The building had a dated inscription mentioning the name of its builder, Ibn ʿArrāq al-Dimašqī.¹⁸

Furthermore, the stratigraphic excavations of the Beirut Central District yielded large amounts of remains mainly pottery, which was referred to as “medieval” without specifying whether it belonged to the Fatimid, Crusader, Mamluk, or Ottoman period. The fact that Mamluk ceramics were not specifically identified was mainly due to the preliminary presentation of the archaeological results and to the lack of expertise of the leading archaeologists in this field. It is only occasionally that Mamluk pottery was mentioned by name and dated.

However, the study of the medieval material retrieved in the area of the ancient Sūqs (Site BEY 006) brought important evidence for Beirut’s Mamluk occupation. Indeed, remains of Mamluk buildings were found east of the *ribāṭ*, near the Rue Weygand.¹⁹ There, evidence for various industrial activities from the medieval period was exposed. Glass, pottery, and metal wasters attested to the existence of all these industries. A total of 2.3 million pottery sherds were retrieved from this area and the study of the various wares and types allowed excavators to subdivide this “medieval period” preliminarily into three phases: Phase I was dated to the Fatimid period, Phase II mainly to the Crusaders, and

15 Thérèse Bittar and Marie Lamaa, “L’inscription au nom d’Aytmiş al-Bajāsi,” *Bulletin d’Archéologie et d’Architecture Libanaises*. Hors-Série Volume V (2009): 315–323.

16 Fuess, “Beirut in Mamluk Times,” 86.

17 Ibid., 89.

18 For the lecture ʿArrāq instead of ʿIrāq, the biography of the builder, and the study of the monument’s architecture, see Howayda al-Harithy, “Weaving Historical Narratives: Beirut’s Last Mamluk Monument,” *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 215–30.

19 Dominic Perring et al., “BEY 006, 1994–1995 The Souks Area: Interim Report of the AUB Project,” *Bulletin d’Archéologie et d’Architecture Libanaises* 1 (1996): 200.

Phase III to the Mamluk era.²⁰ In his dissertation on the archaeology of this area, El-Masri refined his stratigraphy and was able to ascribe Phase IV clearly to the Mamluk period: "Phase IV is attributed to the Mamluk Period (the fourteenth century) and is characterized by leveling activities and the digging of robber trenches for the extraction of ancient masonry. Some of the deposits involved are associated with domestic occupation as well as industrial production. Many pottery wasters have been collected from these deposits. This area was probably used, in part at least, as a dumping area for a pottery production site. Kilns of the period have been excavated further north..."²¹ Indeed, substantial evidence for Mamluk occupation including five pottery kilns was found in the northern extension of Allenby Street in site BEY 010.²² Furthermore, a preliminary report on the Islamic and Roman period pottery of this sector was published.²³ The author concluded that the "study of the Islamic period material to date suggests that most cooking wares in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries were provided by a single industry, producing a clean, dark red fabric sometimes with a dark brown clear glaze, which had a widespread distribution in the region." One of the above mentioned buildings excavated in that same area (BEY 006) was a glass workshop. One of its rooms contained glass wasters, charcoal, and ash.

In short, while Tripoli provided examples of public Mamluk architecture, Beirut presented so far the only and best evidence for a Mamluk period urban quarter dedicated to both dwellings and industries.

Other areas of the Beirut Central District have also yielded medieval remains, particularly Mamluk pottery. The evidence from a site north of Martyrs' Square, Bey 002, provided "medieval" material.²⁴ The excavator confessed, however, that it was difficult to date the various phases of this period with precision. Therefore, Mamluk material was included within the larger category of "medieval" pottery. Another excavation site also located in the area of Martyrs' Square (BEY 027) yielded medieval strata. The excavators were hesitant in giving a clear Mamluk identity to their medieval pottery, which they dated "plausibly" but not "finally" "*de la fin du XIIIème ou du début du XIVème siècle*."²⁵

20 Sami El-Masri, "Medieval Pottery from Beirut's Downtown Excavations: The First Results," *ARAM* 9, no. 1 (1997): 103–119.

21 Sami El-Masri, "*Beirut, the City and its Crafts in the Medieval Period*," Ph.D. Diss., (Free University of Berlin 1999), 73–74.

22 Hussein Sayegh, "Bey 010 les souks, secteur nord/est," *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 1 (1996): 239 and 266.

23 Jeremy Evans, "Bey 006 Islamic and Roman Period Pottery Preliminary Report," *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 1 (1996): 218.

24 Catherine Aubert, "Bey 002 Rapport Préliminaire," *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 1 (1996): 60.

25 Pascal Arnaud et al., "Bey 027 Rapport Préliminaire," *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 1 (1996): 115.

Tell al-Burak

Moving further south, the site of Tell al-Burak, nine kilometers south of Sidon, provided the first evidence of a small rural occupation from the Mamluk period. The excavations have unveiled the remains of four houses dated to the latter period based on the retrieved ceramics material.²⁶ According to the excavators, and based on the ceramic evidence, “the houses were occupied during the Mamluk period.” The later Ottoman ceramics may have been deposited by “people who continued to visit the site after the abandonment of the houses.”²⁷ Lana Shehadeh observed in her interpretation of House I that the builders “planned and erected the house based on non-urban building traditions and they lived in a rural landscape.”²⁸ Since all the excavated houses present the same building characteristics, they are good examples of the vernacular architecture of Lebanon during the Mamluk period.

Sidon

Little evidence for Mamluk occupation was found at Sidon. Except for the al-‘Omārī Mosque which was built in the late thirteenth century by the Baḥrī Mamluks, no other monuments of this period were identified. The al-‘Omārī is the oldest standing mosque in Sidon. It was built on the remains of a Crusader building.

Tyre

This important harbor city was the *asylum* or refuge of the Christians in general and the Crusaders in particular when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Moslems. The Crusaders fortified it strongly with a triple fortification wall which was razed to the ground by the Mamluks when they conquered the city. When the Moroccan explorer Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited Tyre in 1355, he found it a mass of ruins. Regarding the archaeological evidence, Mamluk levels were not properly investigated and the findings were never published. The attention of the excavators was focused on the Crusader remains and no mention of the following occupation can be traced.²⁹ From the fine pottery and glass vessels that continued to be produced in Tyre in the early Mamluk period, only a few examples reached the storage of the Directorate General of Antiquities (hereafter DGA), and a few examples are displayed in the Beirut National Museum.

26 Nathalie Kallas and Lana Shehadeh, “The Mamluk-Ottoman Remains in Area I,” in *Tell el-Burak I: The Middle Bronze Age. With Chapters Related to the Site and to the Mamluk-Ottoman Periods*, eds. Jens Kamlah and Hélène Sader. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019, 41-86.

27 Ibid., 72.

28 Ibid., 48.

29 Maurice Chéhab, *Tyr à l'époque des Croisades 1: histoire militaire et politique* (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1975).

1.2 *Archaeological Evidence from the Lebanese Mountains*

Al-Jawze (Metn)

The site of al-Jawze is located in the Metn district of Mount Lebanon at an altitude of 1410 m not far from the ski resort area of Za'rūr. The site has suffered from clandestine excavations and looting which led the DGA to undertake excavations to preserve its archaeological remains. The excavations were entrusted to a Lebanese-French mission. A medieval occupation dated to the twelfth - fourteenth c. covered the whole site. In building H, Mamluk sherds dating to the thirteenth to fifteenth century were found on the floors as well as in the fills of the house.³⁰ Metal objects dated to the same period were also retrieved³¹ as well as evidence for metal industry. In spite of the fact that the excavators used the specific term "Mamluk" in some instances, they more commonly referred to the material as "medieval," a vague and confusing term which seems to include Crusader, Mamluk, and early Ottoman! They do specify, however, that the Mamluk period is the most widely attested: "...la période médiévale, quant à elle, est particulièrement bien attestée dans sa phase mamelouke durant laquelle on constate une ouverture du site aux productions de la Méditerranée et une émancipation de l'emprise du village qui semble connaître son apogée dans la première moitié du 14^e siècle."³² Mamluk presence in this remote area of the Metn is not surprising since the Metn was part of the Kesrawan district, against which the Mamluks led punitive expeditions.

ʿĀṣi al-Ḥadath

One of the most spectacular Mamluk period finds was exposed in a cave at the site known as ʿāṣi al-Ḥadath, a grotto overlooking the Qadisha Valley at an altitude of 1300 m. Speleologists discovered this almost inaccessible grotto which had inside it several "mummies" of both children and mainly female adults. The bodies were naturally mummified and their clothes were either partly or entirely preserved. The cave was dated to the Mamluk period and more particularly to the end of the thirteenth century when the Mamluk sultans Baybars and Qalāwūn attacked the mountains around Tripoli in preparation for the latter's conquest. According to various historians,³³ the Mamluks attacked several villages in 1283, among them that of al-Ḥadath, whose inhabitants fled and took refuge in the impregnable grotto where most of them died and were buried.

30 Lina Nacousi et al., "El-Jaouzé (Metn): Rapport sur les travaux menés en 2014, 2015 et 2016," *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 18 (2018): 142.

31 Ibid., Figs. 91, 103, 109, and 111.

32 Ibid., Dominique Piéri and Frédéric Alpi, "Annexe 2: céramique: premiers résultats sur la céramique d'El-Jaouzé (Campagnes 2014 à 2016)," *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 18 (2018): 167.

33 Fadi Baroudi, "La grotte de ʿāṣi al-Ḥadath: de la documentation historique à l'exploration archéologique," in *Momies du Liban: rapport préliminaire sur la découverte archéologique de ʿāṣi al-Ḥadath (XIII^e siècle)*, 82. Beirut: Edifra, 1994.

The most interesting finds were the preserved clothes and leather items such as belts, shoes, and soles, which betray the manufacture, shape, and decoration of these objects of daily use during that period. Among the finds are also two Syriac manuscripts and various short inscriptions written in Arabic. Mamluk coins dating to the reigns of Qalawūn, Baybars and his son Saʿīd Baraka Ḥan, as well as typical glazed pottery sherds and arrowheads, clearly date the grotto remains. All the finds give precious information on the life of mountain villagers during the early Mamluk period.³⁴

1.3 *Archaeological Evidence from the Biqāʿ Valley*

Baalbek

Baalbek is the only excavated site in the Biqāʿ Valley to have yielded evidence for Mamluk presence. We know from historical documents that Baalbek was destroyed by the Mongols in 1260 and reconstructed under Mamluk rule.³⁵ The city became a province dependent upon Damascus. Several monuments attest to Mamluk involvement in the city development, and the excavations on the site of Bustān Naṣīf and Bustān al-Khān testify to the efforts the Mamluks invested in the city.

During the reign of Sultan Qalāwūn, the Friday mosque was restored and a new one was built in Rās al-ʿAyn. Qubbat as-Saʿadīn, a funerary monument dated 1409, is one of the surviving monuments of this period. Other public buildings such as baths were found in Bustān al-Khān and in Bustān Naṣīf as well as a small mosque exposed in the area of the latter site. Several inscriptions attest to the existence of public monuments such as fountains and markets which have now disappeared. Both inscriptions and archaeological remains attest to the wealth of Baalbek in Mamluk times. The fifteenth century al-Zāhirī wrote that “in Baalbek there are more mosques, schools, religious buildings, markets, baths, gardens, and rivers ...”³⁶

Older and recent excavations on the sites of Bustān Naṣīf and Bustān al-Khān have yielded evidence for Mamluk buildings and substantial amounts of pottery dating to that period.³⁷ These important studies of a stratified ceramic material are a major step in the

34 For exhaustive information about this discovery, see Boutros Abi-Aoun et al., *Momies du Liban: rapport préliminaire sur la découverte archéologique de ʿāṣi al-Ḥadaṭ (XIIIe siècle)*. Beirut: Edifra, 1994 (with additional bibliography).

35 Heike Lehmann, “The Urban Development of Baalbek in the Light of Preserved Historical Buildings: A Preliminary Study,” *Bulletin d’Archéologie et d’Architecture Libanaises*. Hors-Série IV (2008): 182.

36 Ibid., 182.

37 Lehmann, “The Urban Development of Baalbek”; Bettina Fischer-Genz, et al. “Pots in a Corner: Ceramics and Glass Finds from a Closed Medieval Context in Bustan Nassif (Baalbek),” *Bulletin d’Archéologie et d’Architecture Libanaises* 14 (2010): 289–305; Verena Daiber, “The Fine Wares from Medieval Baalbek,” *Bulletin d’Archéologie et d’Architecture Libanaises*. Hors-Série IV (2008): 289–317.

identification and classification of Mamluk pottery. They also helped identify foreign imports and establish the characteristics of the local pottery.

Concluding Remarks

The archaeological evidence relating to the Mamluk period in Lebanon is meager and more efforts are needed to expose Mamluk levels of occupation all over the country. This evidence could have been more substantial had archaeologists identified the excavated medieval material with precision. While a few clearly identify Mamluk materials, others simply refer in their preliminary reports to “medieval” remains without further precision. The problem of terminology is a serious one that we encounter in the majority of the reports presenting excavation or survey results. I believe this vague designation has to do with the fact that the archaeologists active in these operations were not familiar with the ceramics of these late periods and could not identify Mamluk ceramics before a detailed study of the material by a specialist. Only a few reports such as those presenting, in detail, the material retrieved from Baalbek, Beirut’s old Sūqs, Tell ‘Arqa, Tripoli, ‘āṣi al-Ḥadath, and Tell al-Burak have brought information about the situation in Lebanon and the daily life of its people during Mamluk occupation. We hope that more specialized studies of the “Mamluk” material will be sorted out from the “medieval” materials and published.

Several surveys are currently on-going in North Lebanon, the area where Mamluk occupation is widely attested in the historical sources. The Kūra survey, for example, has yielded evidence for medieval, including Mamluk pottery.³⁸ The Kubba Archaeological Survey³⁹ has also provided a substantial ceramic corpus from the Mamluk period. According to the archaeologists, the retrieved material is very close to that of Anfeh and Beirut: “In particular, the presence of locally made lead-glazed wares with a wiped band below the interior rim, points towards the existence of a local ceramic tradition across this area of the northern Lebanese coastal littoral and inland Nahr al Jawz valley.” The Nahr al-Jawz survey has also spotted Mamluk material in some settlements.⁴⁰

Another reason for the rarity of published Mamluk archaeological material is the lack of interest in the later “Islamic/medieval” periods because most archaeologists working in Lebanon are interested mainly in Prehistory, Bronze, and Iron Ages, as well as in Classical

38 Marco Iamoni et al., “The Northern Lebanon Project: Archaeological Survey of the Plain of Koura and the Province of Tripoli: First Season Report,” *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 19 (2019): 147–172.

39 Jennie Bradbury et al., “The Kūbbā Coastal Survey: First Season Report,” Forthcoming in *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises* 21 (2021).

40 Stephen McPhillips et al., “The Jawz Valley: Reconstructing an Ottoman ‘Waterscape’ in Mount Lebanon,” *Levant* 50:2 (2019), 212.

archaeology. Speaking of this issue, Eveline J. van der Steen (1997)⁴¹ argues “that most of the material from the recent rescue digs here in Beirut has been, and still is, bulldozed away” in order to reach older strata.

In spite of the utter destruction of the coastal cities and of some mountain villages attested by the historical sources, mainly in North Lebanon and the Kesrawan, the archaeological evidence has shown that in most excavated Mamluk sites there were active pottery, glass, and metal industries and that both agriculture and trade were flourishing as indicated by the Beirut and Baalbek material.

This short compilation of the available archaeological evidence for Mamluk presence in Lebanon will hopefully invite archaeologists to better examine and study this important phase of Lebanese history in order to provide a glimpse into the economic situation and the daily life of the Lebanese population under Mamluk rule.

41 Eveline J. van der Steen, “What Happened to Arabic Geometric Pottery in Beirut?” *ARAM* 9, no. 1 (1997): 121–27.

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How to Behave and What to Eat

Beirut in the Late Nineteenth Century

Samir M. Seikaly

Even if it were possible, what follows is not by any means an empirical investigation of how people, natives as well as the many foreigners who inhabited the expanding commercial hub of the port-city of Beirut, conducted themselves or how and what they fed themselves. It is rather an attempt to highlight the existence of two contemporary, therefore primary, books dedicated to the twin subjects of human behavior and human sustenance written by someone who was expected to know, namely Khalil Sarkis, owner and principal editor of the celebrated *Lisān al-ḥāl*, a paper which, at least in the scholarly literature, is better known than its owner. Elsewhere,¹ I have attempted to show that he strived manfully to come out of the long shadow cast by his famous father-in-law, Buṭrus al-Bustānī, succeeding in becoming a print baron, achieving recognition for his reliability as a journalist but not as a major *nahḍa* writer,² a situation which might explain why, even today, much of his literary output is overlooked,³ in particular as it related to human behavior and to human sustenance. In actual fact, he wrote two books on the

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- 1 See Samir Seikaly, "Khalil Sarkis: Out of the Shadow of the Master," in *In the House of Understanding: Histories in Memory of Kamal S. Salibi*, ed. Abdul Rahim Abu Husayn, et al. (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 2017), 195–218.
 - 2 See Ami Ayalon, "Private Publishing in the *Nahḍa*," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 4 (November 2008): 561–77; Idem, *The Arabic Print Revolution: Cultural Production and Mass Readership* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 36–49.
 - 3 In his book *Fin de Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (2005), Jens Hanssen has some mention of Sarkis in relation to his *Lisān al-ḥāl* but fails to reference the two books being considered here. Toufoul Abou-Hodeib in her *A Taste for Home: The Modern Middle Class in Ottoman Beirut* (2017) only incorporates Sarkis's book dealing with *al-Ādāt* in her bibliography.

twin subjects, the first he called *al-ʿĀdāt* (shortened title);⁴ the second, according to one variation, carried the title *Kitāb tadhkirat al-khawātīn wa-ustādh al-ṭabbākhīn*.

I

Al-ʿĀdāt was published in 1911, just a few years before the death of Sarkīs in 1915. To a degree it owes part of its inspiration to an earlier lecture delivered by his father-in-law carrying the (shortened) title *Khīṭāb fī l-hayʾa l-ijtimāʿiyya*.⁵ Like Bustānī before him, Sarkīs also invoked the archetypal figures of the westerner (*al-gharbī*) and his oriental opposite (*al-sharqī*),⁶ not for comic relief, but to demonstrate that customs and habits were neither static nor universal and that they responded to time and geographical location, to human needs and temperamental disposition. As such they could beget conflict but, by cross fertilization, could also generate higher civilized orders—*shuʿūb mutamaddina* as he chose to put it.⁷ As a member of that new world order, he produced a detailed etiquette manual for the guidance of likeminded individuals inhabiting the evolving port of Beirut. More idealized than practical, the manual detailed proper human behavior in the more salient stages of human intercourse, for example, in socialization (*ziyārāt*), banquets (*walāʾim*), weddings (*aʿrās*), and obsequies (*maʿātim*). But unlike his late father-in-law, and, for instance, ʿĪsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf, himself a *nahda* educational figure of some importance,⁸ Sarkīs was not torn by the dilemma of which customs to retain and which to jettison. Instead, he openly preached the customs and manners of those he reckoned as civilized, itself a coded, but rather transparent, allusion to the West. His book was meant for the believers, those new middle-class men and women who were busy transforming themselves, their society and the city they inhabited, a city which, judging by the tenor and content of his book, had engendered an expanded living space in which women and men, though cognizant of the need to maintain vigilance and decorum, could nevertheless exercise relative freedom of movement, some form of supervised companionship, and the novelty of in-house hospitality as well as external entertainment,

4 The full title is *al-ʿĀdāt fī l-ziyārāt wa-l-walāʾim wa-l-aʿrās wa-l-maʿātim wa-ādāb al-maḥāfil wa-ghayrihā mim mā huwa jāri wa-muṣṭalaḥ ʿalayha ʿind al-shuʿūb al-mutamaddina* (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa l-Adabiyya, 1911).

5 The full title is *Khīṭāb fī l-hayʾa l-ijtimāʿiyya wa-l-muqābala bayna al-ʿawāʾid al-ʿarabiyya wa-l-ifranjiyya* (Beirut: Maṭbaʿat al-Maʿarif, 1869).

6 For the concepts *gharbī* and *sharqī*, see *Lisān al-ḥāl*, March 23 and 26, 1907.

7 For this concept, see title page of the book as well as the short introductory sections entitled *Tamhīd* and *Mulāḥaẓa*. For the sedentarization of the two concepts of *tamaddun* and *taqaddum* in nahdawi discourse see Wael Abu-ʿUksa, *Freedom in the Arab World: Concepts and Ideologies in Arabic Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, chapter 2.

8 See ʿĪsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf, *al-Akhlāq majmūʿ ʿādāt: khīṭāb alqāh fī l-madrasa l-sharqiyya li-l-rūm al-kāthūlik fī Zaḥla* (Bayrūt: al-Maṭbaʿa l-Adabiyya, 1902).

be it at official banquets, ceremonials or private dance occasions (*mukhāṣara*).⁹ Those who fell within the ambit of modernity, the men and women of Beirut, were the audience he addressed and was eager to proffer guidance to, in all matters pertaining to human intercourse whether in the home or at receptions, relating to dress or to eating, on the occasions of birth, engagements, marriage or death. His was the etiquette book that reality in its modern form demanded and reflected. But it was a reality which, as far as the changing condition of women was concerned, elicited a marked degree of reservation on the part of the author.

Sarkīs consecrated the first chapter of *al-ʿĀdāt* to women. Moreover, in the subsequent chapters, she is depicted by him as having a prescriptive right to some form of education, to circulate freely and, if still single, to indulge in a variety of in-home or out of home activities. All this could lead to the wrong conclusion that he was an unqualified supporter of the quest for full female emancipation. It is of course true that in his analysis he attributed considerable importance to women who, by divine dispensation, were fated to bear, suckle, and tend to the children who, in time, would become, as it were, cornerstones of what he described as *shuʿūb mutamaddina*. But, however much he valued the role of women as partners in marriage and as subsequent caretakers of home and children, they were, and would remain, secondary. Man, for him, is sovereign (*ṣāhib al-sulṭa*), exercising authority and compelling obedience (*yuṭālibu bi-l-tāʿat wa-l-khuḍūʿ*). In return, and provided he lived up to his responsibilities as the ‘god of the house’ (*rabb al-bayt*), she owed him respect, obedience, and love (*ʿalayhā an taḥtarima rajulah wa-tuṭīʾahu wa-tuḥibbahu*).¹⁰ Writing at the dawn of the new century, despite having opened the leading pages of his paper to the women question, and himself having attributed some importance to women in the general process of civilization (*tamaddun*), Sarkīs nevertheless continued to adhere to a potent form of patriarchy.

Research has not turned up much significant reaction to Sarkīs’s book. There is however a striking, though concise, overview appearing in the Damascene *al-Muqtabas*, owned and edited by Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī. Having praised Sarkīs’s role in pioneering the print revolution, he nevertheless criticized *al-ʿĀdāt* as being inappropriate for a conservative society practicing female seclusion, was exclusive, applicable if at all, to an aristocratic upper crust, and in any event of foreign provenance, therefore untenable. But Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī might have said it all: why, he wondered, did not the author openly declare the European roots of his philosophy so those who could, may adopt it or reject it?¹¹

9 This is the term he uses for dancing. For proper behavior during such occasions, see *al-Layālī al-rāqīṣa bi-l-mukhāṣara*, 62–72.

10 In *Al-ʿĀdāt*, chapters 1 and 2 entitled respectively as *al-Marʾa* and *al-ʾAnisa*, 4–10.

11 In his celebrated Damascene periodical *al-Muqtabas* 6, no. 2 (1911): 176.

II

Unlike *al-Ādāt* which has virtually passed into oblivion, the book having to do with food has fared much better. In fact, it went into print six times, the first late in the nineteenth century, in 1885, carrying a title redolent with imperial associations, namely *Kitāb Tadhkirat al-khawātīn wa-ustādh al-ṭabbākhīn*. We know about the year of its appearance, its content, its divisions and, somewhat indirectly, its author through one of Beirut's main weeklies, *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, edited by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Qabbānī, dated March 18, 1885 and carrying the number 524. On page 4, it announced the publication of a book concerned with the making of good food, divided into two parts, the first devoted to the preparation of food that accords with western (*ifranjī*) tastes, the second, also concerned with good taste but this time through Arab dishes (*al-ma'kulāt al-'arabiyya*). Although thanks are proffered to the owner of the printing press, (Khalīl Sarkīs) the actual name of the author is not reproduced.¹² Perhaps, more peculiar is the fact that in contrast with *al-Ādāt* where the name of the author, Khalīl Sarkīs, is emblazoned on the title page, it is withheld entirely from the title page of all the six editions of the cookbook. But with or without his name being displayed, the work undertaken by Sarkīs is truly staggering. Of the six editions published during a fifty-year span only one is abridged, but still running for at least 200 smaller-sized pages. The first edition appeared on the market in 1885, priced at one majidi riyal; the second, published in 1900, was sold at half the original price in order, said the sales pitch, to make it affordable to both housewives and schoolgirls who traditionally cared little about the kitchen or cooking.¹³ A third edition, that of 1905, entailed a slight shift in the title, becoming simply *Ustādh al-ṭabbākhīn*. The same year, 1905, saw the appearance of an abridged version of the book; the small change in the title, adding the word *Mukhtaṣar*, attests to that fact.¹⁴ A fourth edition seems to have been published in 1912 but it did not elicit much public attention, judging by virtual press silence about the matter. In dramatically different circumstances, with the country now under what can be described as virtual annexation by France, a fifth edition was marketed in 1923, to be followed by a sixth and final edition, larger in physical size and clearer imprint all, one suspects, marking the 45th anniversary of inception.¹⁵

If one were to exclude the shortened *Mukhtaṣar*, it would not be an error to describe the remaining editions as being encyclopedic, storehouses carrying myriad information

¹² See the Beirut weekly *Thamarāt al-funūn*, March 18, 1885, no. 524.

¹³ See the sales pitch appearing in *Lisān al-ḥāl*, December 15, 1900, no. 3605.

¹⁴ See the advertisement to that effect appearing in the Beirut weekly, owned by Khalīl Sarkīs himself, carrying the title *Lisān al-ḥāl*, December 3, 1905, no. 4974.

¹⁵ There are online copies of the book at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the Qatar National Library. I owe special thanks to Youssef El-Khoury Salem for crucial assistance in locating the various editions of the book on- and offline.

pertaining, directly or indirectly, to the production of good food and its consumption. The 1900 edition, which is the one used in this presentation, has a table of contents which alone ran for a full twelve pages, while the entire volume comprised 379 pages divided into two books (sing. *kitāb*), the first devoted to oriental (*sharqī*) dishes while the second covered European recipes (*‘ala al-ṭarīqa al-gharbiyya*). His knowledge of the European cuisine, he candidly admitted, was secondary, derived from the foremost (*ashhar*) European texts written about the subject. By contrast, his knowledge of Arab cuisine came from experience,¹⁶ likely derived from his mother’s own kitchen, and that of his wife’s, Louisa. But regardless of its source or multiple manifestations, cookery for Sarkīs was both a necessity and a craft putting it, in his Arabic usage, as *ṣinā‘at al-ṭabkh*. It was a necessity because, unlike animals, men could not feed upon each other nor, again unlike animals, are they clothed by nature, hence the necessary development of the twin human crafts of tailoring and cooking, both of them pre-conditions for the attainment of a civilized state of being, reproduced by him as *ṣafā’ al-‘aysh*.¹⁷

As a critical yet tender craft cookery required first of all cleanliness, what is known today as hygiene, then long labor, patience, and skill, demanding the close attention not of maids or indentured laborers but of the house ‘goddess,’ that is the wife, possibly supported by her mother-in-law, but certainly by her daughter. Given his educational formation and immersed as he was in the militant Anglicanism to which he had earlier converted, Sarkīs was not perhaps a bon vivant. Nevertheless, he rated good food highly, first for utilitarian reasons, both because it was conducive to a healthy life and, in the long run, a more economical one but also on account of the fact that it imparted, at least during the act of consumption and digestion, immediate and intense pleasure (*ladhdha*). Expressed more economically, he said, good cooking generates pleasure, is useful, and uncostly—in his Arabic usage *ladhdha*, *fā’ida*, *tawfīr*.¹⁸ In his single visit to the U.S., he was overawed by the wonders of the new world, but he thought it scandalous that the Americans were indifferent to good food, seemingly electing to invariably consume chunks of ungarnished meat, accompanied, if at all, by a small measure of boiled potatoes, green peas, some spinach, or cauliflower, all of them, he noted, contrasting with the delicious variety of dishes available back home.¹⁹ It was, of course, in his kitchen book that he left us a complete record of the rich, varied, and inventive Arab cuisine as it existed at the end of the nineteenth century and the dawn of the new one. In that book of seemingly endless recipes could be found, first, a kind of prologue on home

16 See Khalil Sarkīs’ *muqaddima* in the 1900 edition of *Kitāb Tadhkīrat al-khawātīn wa-ustādh al-ṭabbākhīn*, 2–3.

17 Ibid., 5.

18 To be found in the section entitled ‘household management,’ (*Tadbīr al-manzil*), 4.

19 For his amusing description of American food, see Khalil Sarkīs, *Rihlat mudīr al-Lisān ilā l-Asitāna al-‘aliyya, wa-Ūrubbā wa-Amīrkā* (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘a l-Adabiyya, 1893), 88.

management detailing, month by month, what is most appropriate to wear and what to eat, how to stock provisions for winter, and how to manipulate the market so as to guarantee favorable terms, followed by a chapter enumerating a variety of local soups and how to prepare them, followed by another devoted to rice, a third for vegetable stuffings, succeeded by one on animal entrails, meat (*kubaybāt*, *kuftāt*), poultry and fish dishes, as well as jams and sweets, to single out just a few. In this context it is to be noted that Sarkīs, who in his career as a journalist was eager to nurture cordial relations with all the religious constituents of his native city, nevertheless assumed the consumption of wine with meals almost as a matter of course or of taste and, moreover, included more than passing reference to the use of pork as a cooking ingredient and as an appetizer. Surprisingly, a chapter on appetizers has relevance today in what has gone down in recent history as the hummus war. In it Sarkīs includes a reference to two varieties of hummus. The plain one, referred to as *mutabbal*, is garnished with olive oil; the second, seasoned with ghee, is covered by a generous dose of pine nuts. A third variety, currently prevalent in Beirut, consisting of a spicy mixture of fried minced meat, chopped onions and pine nuts, appears to have been unknown to Sarkīs or at least was not mentioned in the edition used in this paper. Thanks to Sarkīs's cookbook it can now be affirmed that people in Beirut knew and enjoyed eating hummus even before the Zionist movement came formally into being in 1897 when the first Zionist Congress convened in Basel.²⁰ More important for our purposes is to note the beginning of a kind of a Sarkīs comeback: a recent study focusing on the rise of *kibbeh* to national prominence in Lebanon relies heavily on his cookbook.²¹

There is much more to Sarkīs's two books than is here indicated. What is clear, to me at least, is that there is much in them that can be used to unravel the mindset and ideas of a practicing *nahda* thinker and, just as important, for engaging and interrogating the intellectual feed and food on offer to the people of the city of Beirut as it existed in the closing years of a dying century. Needless, perhaps, to add, the two books will also serve well culinary historians, gastronomists, and those like them who view food as a cultural signifier to broader socio-economic and political trends or realities.

20 For the hummus war, see Nir Avieli, "The Hummus Wars: Local Food, Guinness Records and Palestinian-Israeli Gastropolitics," in *Cooking Cultures: Convergent Histories of Food and Feeling*, ed. Ishita Banerjee-Dube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 39–57.

21 See Graham Auman Pitts and Michel Kabalan, "When did Kibbe become Lebanese? The Social Origins of National Food Culture," in *Making Levantine Cuisine: Modern Foodways of the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Anny Gaul, et al. (Austin: University of Texas Press), 23–46.

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Mount Lebanon as Epistemic Site

Beginnings of Biogeography in the Levant

Tobias Mörike

In 1897 the German botanist Joseph Bornmüller (1862–1948) hiked up Mount Şannīn in the Mount Lebanon range.¹ Climbing the top of the mountain marked the peak of Bornmüller's scientific excursion, which began in March of the same year in Jaffa as a roundtrip to investigate the botany of Palestine. Already a year earlier, the physician and lecturer at the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, George Edward Post² (1838–1909), had published a descriptive catalogue of plants found in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria.³ Provided with this major catalogue, Bornmüller pursued questions about the origin of plants, reported on flowers that farmers used for firewood, and searched for wild oats and the archetype of the *Reseda odorata*—a plant introduced as garden mignonette or “Duftreseda” to European gardens. Bornmüller was interested in West Asian botany at large; during his life he undertook 16 voyages to South-East Europe, Anatolia, and Iran,⁴ which served mainly the goal to fill gaps in his herbarium.⁵ Although Bornmüller was mostly concerned with taxonomy, the classification of plants, his climb on the Şannīn

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- 1 Joseph Bornmüller, “Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Flora von Syrien und Palästina,” *Verhandlungen der Zoologisch-Botanischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 48 (1898): 544–653.
 - 2 On George Edward Post, see Lytton John Musselman, “The Botanical Activities of George Edward Post (1838–1909),” *Archives of Natural History* 33, no. 2 (2006): 282–301, <https://doi.org/10.3366/anh.2006.33.2.282>; Lutfi M. Sa'di and George Sarton, “The Life and Works of George Edward Post (1838–1909),” *Isis* 28, no. 2 (1938): 385–417.
 - 3 George Post, *Flora of Syria, Palestine and Sinai - from the Taurus to Ras Muhammad and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Syrian Desert* (Beirut: Syrian Protestant College, 1896).
 - 4 Gerhard Wagenitz, “Joseph Bornmüller,” *Willdenowia* 2 (1960): 343–60.
 - 5 Bornmüller collaborated closely with Carl Haussknecht in Weimar; among his correspondents were the botanists Paul Ascherson and Georg Schweinfurth in Berlin. He also collaborated with the Geneva Herbarium.

was an exercise in systematic consideration of the biogeography of the region by layers of altitude and temperature. Following Alexander von Humboldt's geobotany,⁶ observers of flora and geology conceived Mount Lebanon as a modeling site for understanding the relation between soil, climate, human activity, and flora and fauna. The theorization of layered vegetation on the mountains represented a mechanism for conceiving of the region at large.

This chapter undertakes a presentation of early nineteenth century biogeography of Lebanon to the following objectives: In the first place, the chapter aims to highlight researchers who studied Mount Lebanon not only by describing individual plants, but as layered vegetational zones. Most botanists who were working on Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine by the end of the nineteenth century were producing lists of plants—classifying and organizing their findings in the field by attributing scientific names and hierarchies. While botany at large as an academic discipline shifted to genetics and geobotany by the end of the nineteenth century,⁷ plant scientists working on the Eastern Mediterranean were largely amateur plant collectors disconnected from the broader questions in their discipline. Among these taxonomists and biblical scholars who were describing and classifying plants throughout the second half of the nineteenth century are Pierre Edmond Boissier⁸ (1810–1885), Charles-Isidor Blanche⁹ (1823–1887), and William Barbey-Boissier¹⁰ (1842–1914), who were not only connected through teacher-pupil relationships and correspondence: they shared a common perspective. As religious Christians they imagined botany as an end for indexing god's creation and identifying biblical plants. Boissier, the author of *Flora Orientalis* (1847), the first comprehensive catalogue of West Asian plants, was an ardent anti-Darwinist—a point of view his later confrere in Beirut George Edward Post would share.¹¹ Therefore the first objective of the article is to identify

6 For a discussion of Humboldtian science, see the chapter in Nicholas Jardine, ed., *Cultures of Natural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

7 An observation based on Eugene Cittadino, *Nature as the Laboratory: Darwinian Plant Ecology in the German Empire, 1880–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also Lynn K. Nyhard, *Modern Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

8 Michel Grenon, "Edmond Boissier (1810–1885): scientifique, voyageur, mécène et collectionneur," *Archives des Sciences* 64 (2011): 3–24; Edmond Boissier, *Flora Orientalis*, vol. I (Basel: Georg, 1867).

9 Maximilien Quantin, *Notice biographique sur Charles-Isidore Blanche, consul de France à Tripoli (Syrie)* (Auxerre: Imprimerie Bonsant, 1889); Isidor Blanche and Charles Gaillardot, *Catalogue de l'herbier de Syrie* (Paris: Timothée Puel, 1854).

10 Caroline Barbey and William Barbey, *Février-Mai 1880: herborisations au Levant* (Lausanne: Georges Bridel, 1882); Paul Ascherson, "Barbey's Herborisations au Levant und Dr. Otto Kersten's botanische Sammlungen aus Palästina," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, no. 6 (1883): 219–29.

11 Musselman, "The Botanical Activities of George Edward Post (1838–1909)"; Lutfi M. Sa'di and George Sarton, "The Life and Works of George Edward Post (1838–1909)."

the missions that used botany on mountain sites as field science to derive and to apply scientific models for the explanation of correlations between soil, climate, and human activity. It will also delineate different practices and understandings of the development of biogeography, which was historically called phytogeography and geobotany. This article will focus on scholars linked to Humboldt to emphasize his relevance for scientific missions in the region. This approach limits the focus, excluding other main contributors and theoretical approaches. Historians of science like Malte Christian Ebach¹² called for a distancing from Humboldt as the founding father of biogeography and of a more nuanced historiography. Humboldt was by far not the only one formulating theories on biogeography; others like the Swiss Alphonse Pyrame de Candolle, who revised and developed the ideas of vegetational zones in his *Géographie botanique raisonnée*, (1855) presented different models and methods. Instead of emphasizing on the climatic conditions, Candolle saw the adaption of plants to a specific climate and transfer of plants well adapted to a specific condition as decisive factors for explaining their distribution.

For the transfer of Humboldtian science it should be mentioned that although Humboldt never travelled to Lebanon, his influence on scientific and political networks in Prussia enabled and encouraged research in North Africa and West Asia. Humboldt was closely associated with the geographer Carl Ritter, who published intensively on West Asia, compiling textual material from historic sources and recent findings by scientific missions. Through his position in the Prussian Academy of Science and his contacts to King Frederic Wilhelm IV, to the diplomat Christian Karl Josias von Bunsen and the orientalist Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, who served as minister of science, Humboldt facilitated the expeditions of Karl Richard Lepsius to Egypt and the nomination of Johann Gottfried Wetzstein¹³ as consul in Damascus. Wetzstein undertook travels to the volcanic plateaus of the Tulūl Eş-Şafā, the Hauran, and the Jaulan. While Wetzstein was primarily interested in geological features, this paper focuses on botany and emphasizes on the missions of Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg and Friedrich Wilhelm Hemprich (travels 1820–1825) and Theodor Kotschy (travels 1839 and 1855), asking about their approaches to Mount Lebanon as a scientific site. How did they produce measurements and scientific data—inscriptions in the terms of Bruno Latour¹⁴ that others could relate

¹² Malte Christian Ebach, *Origins of Biogeography*, vol. 13 (New York: Springer, 2015).

¹³ Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, *Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen nebst einem Anhang über die sabäischen Denkmäler in Ostsyrien* (Berlin: Reimer, 1860); Boris Liebrecht, ed., *Manuscripts, Politics and Oriental Studies: Life and Collections of Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (1815–1905)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); Ingeborg Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein: Orientalist und preußischer Konsul im osmanischen Syrien (1849–1861)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2016).

¹⁴ Bruno Latour, "Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together," in *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Culture and Present*, ed. H. Kuklick (Greenwich, Conn.: H. Kuklick, 1986), 1–40.

to? Did they conceive the region as a specific region with individual botanical relicts and borders, or did they apply a preconceived understanding of ecological zones like the Alpine landscape known from Europe?

On a third level, the chapter aims to open perspectives on the history of science of the region. While Alexander von Humboldt has been closely examined, the literature on scientific missions in the Levant remains scarce.¹⁵ While Marie Louise Pratt¹⁶ scrutinized Humboldt's construction of truth in travel accounts, historians of science like Malcolm Nicholson¹⁷ considered the scientific legacy of Humboldt in light of a larger history of biogeography, and others like Tobias Kraft¹⁸ studied the composition of arguments by Humboldt using visual, textual and statistical material, to name only a few contributions of an abundant literature. At the same time, for the context of Egypt and North Africa, recent works on the alternation of the environment to a productive landscape have focused on local agency like Alan Mikhail¹⁹ or highlighted colonial environmental narratives like Diana Davis.²⁰ Botany as a mode of representation²¹ and knowledge production still needs to be examined in regard to the Middle East through a consideration of the adapting and transforming of local knowledge, as well as through the lens of place and practice of science.²²

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- 15 For recent publications, see J. M. I. Klaver, *Scientific Expeditions to the Arab World (1761–1881)* (Oxford: Arcadian Library, 2009); Yota Batsaki, Sarah Burke Cahalan, and Anatole Tchikine, eds., *The Botany of Empire in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2016); Antonino De Natale and Antonino Pollio, "A Forgotten Collection: The Libyan Ethnobotanical Exhibits (1912–14) by A. Trotter at the Museum O. Comes at the University Federico II in Naples, Italy," *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1746-4269-8-4>.
 - 16 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Reprinted (London: Routledge, 1992).
 - 17 Malcolm Nicholson, "Humboldtian Plant Geography after Humboldt: The Link to Ecology," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 29, no. 3 (1996): 289–310.
 - 18 Tobias Kraft, *Figuren des Wissens bei Alexander von Humboldt: Essai, Tableau und Atlas im amerikanischen Reisewerk* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014).
 - 19 Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
 - 20 Diana K. Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome: Environmental History and French Colonial Expansion in North Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).
 - 21 Ulrike Kirchberger and Brett M. Bennett, *Environments of Empire: Networks and Agents of Ecological Change* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020).
 - 22 Simon Naylor, "Introduction: Historical Geographies of Science – Places, Contexts, Cartographies," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 38, no. 1 (2005): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007087404006430>.

1 Mount Lebanon as a Modeling Site? Episodes of Humboldtian Science in the Levant

Alexander von Humboldt has been famed as a forerunner of many scientific disciplines like geography, meteorology, and climate sciences. When climbing the Pico do Teide on Tenerife and allegedly the Chimborazo in present-day Ecuador, Humboldt and his colleague Aimée Bonpland noted in detail which plants grew at what altitude and made assumptions about the areas that were beyond their reach,²³ producing a map of vegetation zones correlating isothermal lines. By 1805, after their return to Europe, they revised a theory of vegetation zones connecting altitude, air pressure and temperature as an explanatory model for the existence of certain plants in specific locations,²⁴—a model he would visualize in 1807 in the *Tableau Physique*. While the origin and development of biogeography has been studied intensively,²⁵ the usage of Humboldtian science in the Middle East has not been highlighted so far, although Humboldt provided a framework for an understanding of the region's vegetation by climatic patterns. The *Ideas for a Geography of Plants* posed questions which should inspire research throughout the nineteenth century—like investigations on the origin and introduction of cultivated species or the similarities of geologic material, which hinted at similar formative processes.²⁶ Subsequently, Lebanon and Syria were studied as repositories of botanical relicts like wild wheat²⁷ and the Lebanese cedars, as well as a site for botanical extraction of useful and decorative plants to Europe.

Humboldt's later work *Kosmos*, which attempted to summarize all knowledge of the natural sciences, followed a completely different path. Instead of the collection of samples and mass data, the work compiled textual descriptions, including subjective descriptions. When Humboldt would describe *Naturgemälde* in the mountain ranges in Syria and Lebanon, he would look at the descriptions of Tacitus²⁸ or discuss the existence of crocodiles in Palestine based on the book of *Hiob*.²⁹ Like his contemporary Carl Ritter, another founding figure of geography as a scientific discipline, Humboldt conceived

23 Pierre Moret et al., "Humboldt's Tableau Physique Revisited," 116, no. 26 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1904585116>.

24 Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland, *Essay on the Geography of Plants* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

25 Ebach, *Origins of Biogeography*; Malcolm Nicolson, "History of Plant Ecology," *ELS*, 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1038/npg.els.0003288>; Nicolson, "Humboldtian Plant Geography after Humboldt: The Link to Ecology."

26 Humboldt and Bonpland, *Essay on the Geography of Plants*.

27 Omar Tesdell, "Wild Wheat to Productive Drylands: Global Scientific Practice and the Agroecological Remaking of Palestine," *Geoforum* 78 (2017): 43–51, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2016.11.009>.

28 Alexander von Humboldt, *Kosmos: Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1847).

29 Humboldt, *Kosmos*.

the world through historic documents dating from Antiquity and the era of Greek and Roman colonialism in the Levant. Recollection of scientific information from texts relating to human interpretation of nature is an approach that would open the road for an Environmental Orientalism by conceiving as historical relicts not only the places and peoples of the region, but its places and landscapes as well.

At the same time, specimen and botanical knowledge of Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine were scarce at the early nineteenth century Europe. The material of Frederik Hasselquist was compiled by the only returnee of the Danish-Arabia expedition Carsten Niebuhr, who was no expert on botany.³⁰ Peer Forskal's plants remained secluded in royal cabinets,³¹ and Humboldt's contemporaries Ulrich Jasper Seetzen and Friedrich Horneman vanished during their travels. Moreover, the material sent by Seetzen before his death in 1811 was only evaluated and indexed in the 1840s.³² The most comprehensive overview on Mediterranean plants at the early nineteenth century was provided through the collections of Jacques Labillardière (travels in 1786–1787). Geographical features, climatic patterns, and an overview of the vegetational patterns of Lebanon were a gap in European conceptions of the Earth's surface.

2 Data, Plants, and Guesswork 1820–1825: Ehrenberg and Hemprich

By the 1820s Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg and Friedrich Wilhelm Hemprich, two naturalists trained as medical doctors, undertook an expedition to Egypt, Palestine, the Libyan Desert, the Nile Valley, and the north coast of the Red Sea. Their voyage began in 1820 as members of the expedition to Siwa Oasis by Count Minutoli. Humboldt personally vouched for their participation in the voyage, providing letters of recommendation and advocating for the sponsorship of the mission by the Prussian Academy of Sciences.³³ Only Ehrenberg would return from the expedition, as Hemprich died in Masawa in 1825.

The voyage of Ehrenberg and Hemprich to Lebanon was a coincidence as they were short on funding and trying to escape a plague outbreak in Alexandria when they left

30 P. Forskål, *Icones Rerum Naturalium: Quas In Itinere Orientali Depingi Curavit Petrus Forskål, Prof. Haun. Post Mortem Auctoris Ad Regis Mandatum Æri Incisas Edidit Carsten Niebuhr* (Havniae: Möllerus, 1776).

31 Hans Oscar Juel, *Bemerkungen über Hasselquist's Herbarium* (Uppsala: Svenska Linné-Sällskapets Arsskrift, 1918); Fredrik Hasselquist, *Voyages and Travels in the Levant in the Years 1749, 50, 51, 52. Containing Observations in Natural History, Physick, Agriculture, and Commerce: Particularly on the Holy Land, and the Natural History* (London: Printed for L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1766).

32 Friedrich Kruse and Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, *Commentare zu Ulrich Jasper Seetzen's Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönicien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten* (Berlin: Reimer, 1859).

33 Anne Jobst, Neue Briefe Christian Gottfried Ehrenbergs an Alexander von Humboldt, in Ette, *Ottmar; Knobloch, Eberhard* (Hrsg.), *HiN : Alexander von Humboldt im Netz*, XV (2014) 29, 2014, 70–78.

with three assistants to Beirut in 1824. From Beirut they went to Harrisa, from where they visited the mountains of al-Mantarah and 'Ain Jraïn, leaving to Mount Şannîn, to the Cedars in the Valley of Bsherre.³⁴ Eventually they sent 145 mammals, 784 birds, five crates of plants, and numerous amphibia, fish, corals and fossils to Berlin.

As the only returnee of the voyage, Ehrenberg provided a report³⁵ but was never able to evaluate the collected material to a full extent. He only published one volume of the mammals collected in *Symbolae Physicae*, while other scholars would revise the material throughout the nineteenth century. Although all of the material collected during the voyage arrived complete in Berlin, it did not meet the appreciation of the keeper of the Berlin collection, who not only produced a new index and destroyed a large part of the geographic information by removing original labels; he also sold and exchanged objects from the collection as duplicates or offered the material to other scientists for evaluation before Ehrenberg returned.³⁶ Although zoologists evaluated the collection and their classification,³⁷ the botanical collections and the overall approach of the voyage received little attention. Only in 1900 Karl Schumann,³⁸ the curator of Berlin's Natural History Museum, published the roughly 100 color engravings of over 1000 plants collected on Mount Lebanon.

In addition to the large collection of specimens of plants, fossils, taxidermies, and other conserved animals preserved in Berlin, a scientific report by Humboldt³⁹ documented the finding of the voyage, which is primarily known for Ehrenberg's observation of microorganisms and microscopic fossils. Ehrenberg and Hemprich's expedition has been portrayed in historical studies: after the death of Ehrenberg, Max Laue⁴⁰ produced an extensive biography. Already in 1954 Erwin Stresemann edited their correspondence⁴¹ as

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- 34 Erwin Stresemann, "Hemprich und Ehrenberg zum Gedenken: Ihre Reise zum Libanon im Sommer 1824 und deren ornithologische Ergebnisse," *Journal für Ornithologie* 103, no. 4 (1962): 380–88. Jiří Mlíkovský and Sylke Frahnert, "Type Specimens and Type Localities of Birds Collected during the Hemprich and Ehrenberg Expedition to Lebanon in 1824," *Zootaxa* 2990 (2011): 1–29.
- 35 Friedrich Wilhelm Hemprich and Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg, *Naturgeschichtliche Reisen durch Nord-Afrika und West-Asien in den Jahren 1820 bis 1825* (Berlin: Mittler, 1828).
- 36 D. B. Baker, "C. G. Ehrenberg and W. F. Hemprich's Travels, 1820–1825, and the Insecta of the *Symbolae Physicae*," *Deutsche Entomologische Zeitschrift* 44, no. 2 (1997): 174.
- 37 Mlíkovský and Frahnert, "Type Specimens and Type Localities of Birds Collected during the Hemprich and Ehrenberg Expedition to Lebanon in 1824."
- 38 Humboldt, *Kosmos*, 120.
- 39 Alexander von Humboldt, *Bericht über die naturhistorischen Reisen der Herren Ehrenberg und Hemprich: Durch Ägypten, Dongola, Syrien, Arabien und den östlichen Abfall des habessinischen Hochlandes, in den Jahren 1820–1825* (Berlin: Druckerei der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1826).
- 40 Max Laue, *Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg: Ein Vertreter deutscher Naturforschung im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Springer, 1895).
- 41 Erwin Stresemann, "Hemprich und Ehrenberg: Reise zweier naturforschender Freunde im Orient, geschildert aus ihren Briefen aus den Jahren 1819–1826," *Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, no. 1 (1954): 1–177.

well as a selective summary of their travel diaries⁴² that were found in Berlin in 1961. Recently, the visual material of the voyage was highlighted in an exhibition in Berlin.⁴³

Throughout the voyage, Ehrenberg and Hemprich aimed to study vegetation layers of the mountains they visited, such as Mount Sinai and the Gedam in Djibouti. Ehrenberg drew profile sketches of the East coast of the Red Sea, of Lebanon, and of Cyprus, indicating vegetational layers. Although Ehrenberg and Hemprich collected over 1600 plants in Lebanon, they lacked adequate data for correlating their findings. In a list of instruments, Hemprich and Ehrenberg include a microscope, a compass, three thermometers, and five pocket watches. A barometer for measuring atmospheric pressure and a device for determining the altitude of mountains lacked in their equipment. Ehrenberg and Hemprich could only recollect angle measurements of the peaks of Mount Lebanon's mountain range. Despite the fact that Ehrenberg missed the record of the collected plants and measurements of altitude, he produced a leveling of the biogeographic zones of the Lebanon Mountain range, merging the visited locations into one sketch and locating the relative altitude of the places visited and the trees observed. Ehrenberg followed Humboldt's example of observation, measurement, and guesswork. While Humboldt never made it to the peak of the Chimborazzo, Ehrenberg and Hemprich lacked the material to correlate physical geography to vegetation. Ehrenberg's sketch of the vegetational levels is a composition which was most likely produced after his return to Berlin. Ehrenberg condensed his own observation into a Humboldtian model of vegetational zones despite his lack of measurements and data. Just like Humboldt's biogeography of the Chimborazzo, Ehrenberg's sketch was a self-explanatory image of an idealized mountain, excluding uncertainties of water patterns and geological structures. Yet the measurements and maps they produced proved to be sites of geographic inscription which were taken up and continued by other scholars.

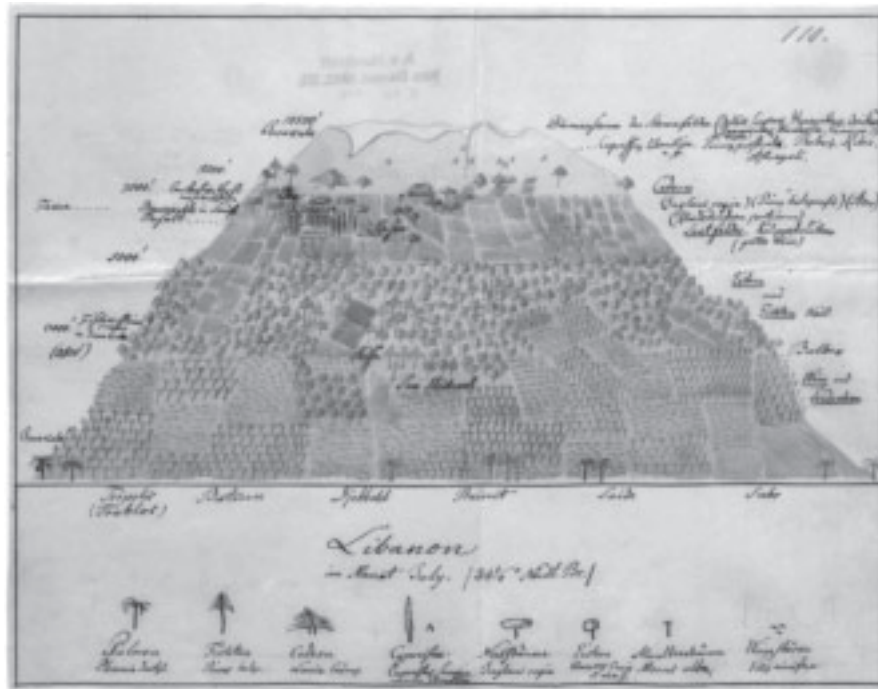
3 Natural Systems by Narrative Observation: 1853 Kotschy

About 30 years later the Austrian botanist Theodor Kotschy⁴⁴ would undertake his second voyage to Mount Lebanon. Kotschy not only exchanged letters with Humboldt

42 Stresemann, "Hemprich und Ehrenberg zum Gedenken: Ihre Reise zum Libanon im Sommer 1824 und deren ornithologische Ergebnisse."

43 Ottmar Ette and Eberhard Knobloch, eds., "Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg: Lebensbilder eines Naturforschers. Themenheft und Katalog zur Ausstellung," *Humboldt im Netz* 22, no. 42 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.18443/hinvol22iss422021>

44 For a biography of Kotschy, see Parissa Keshavarzi, "Mitteleuropäische Orientbotanik des 19. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel des österreichers Theodor Kotschy, Dissertation" (Düsseldorf: Heinrich-Heine-Universität, 2020).



and Ehrenberg, he also drew from the *Atlas of Asia* by Heinrich Berghaus,⁴⁵ who made use of Ehrenberg and Hemprich's angle measurements on the mountain peaks. Already in 1836 he had accompanied the geologist Georg Russegger in an expedition to Lebanon and would return for a second voyage in 1853.

Kotschy was a prolific traveler and collector who identified and classified species of oaks in the Mediterranean and assembled one of the founding collections of the Museum of Natural History in Vienna. Kotschy did not travel with a large set of instruments (he mentions a thermometer and binoculars) and points out his regret to have travelled without a barometer, nor did he collect geographic measurements. He can be considered more a collector of specimen and traveler than a compiler of measurements, although he made significant contributions like the coincidental discovery of wild wheat.⁴⁶ For the most part, he would share his material with Pierre Edmont Boissier in Geneva for classification.

45 Karl Georg Theodor Kotschy, "Der Libanon und seine Alpenflora," *Verhandlungen der Zoologisch-Botanischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 14, no. 1 (1864): 733–68.

46 Hans Walter Lack and Michiel Van Slageren, "The Discovery, Typification and Rediscovery of Wild Emmer Wheat," *Willdenowia* 50, no. 2 (2020): 207–16.

For his reports *Sommerflora des Antilibanon und des Hermon* and *Der Libanon und seine Alpenflora* based on his voyage of 1853, Kotschy used Humboldt's *Naturgemälde* as an outline for a narrative of observation, combining explanations on the geological formations of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain range, of the flora and fauna, and the human activity. The mountain range exemplified for him a landscape of dense human population and intense agriculture, which could be explained by soil and climate.⁴⁷

Kotschy traveled from Beirut to Damascus and from there to the western part of the al-Qalamūn mountains in the Anti-Lebanon (Ḥalbūn) to Blūdān and up the Sharqī and Gharbī mountains and eventually to the Jabal al-Shaykh (Hermon). His interest lay as much in cultivated land as in wild plants. For each village visited he provided information on the nutrition and the plants cultivated in the gardens. The alternation and modification of the environment becomes a question for Kotschy. He discussed binding the sand dunes that threatened the city with ground covering plants—which about fifty years later became a question for German and Zionist farmers confronting the sand dunes of the emerging Tel Aviv. At the same time, the construction of a water pipe from the Nahr al-Kalb promised the replacement of mulberry trees by “rich orchards,” tripling the productivity of the land.

During his voyage Kotschy followed herders to plains rich in flowers. Contrary to later discourses which conceived of goats and sheep as damaging to the plants and as a cause of deforestation, as Diana Davis⁴⁸ has shown, Kotschy saw the herds as guides to fertile and flower rich patches. Moreover, his work is rich in ethnobotanical details. For example, he mentions that herders avoid golden flax (*Linum flavum*): “which is called Akkar here, and surrounded by boundary stones, herdsmen do not let their goats come near. The animals darken after eating them and die quickly,”⁴⁹ or he remarks that “*Vicia canescens* is the main nutrient of many thousands of sheep in the Cedar Valley because it is particularly nutritious for all horned cattle.”⁵⁰ Other points of interest for Kotschy are bad herbs and disruptions of farming and gardening by boars and bears.

Following this panorama of an environmental description combining observation and collection, Kotschy aimed to climb the Jabal al-Shaykh to index its vegetation. At the same it was unclear if the mountain served as a source to the Jordan River. In imitation of Humboldt, Kotschy climbed the mountain with his assistants, collected and noted plants on the ascent and descent, and observed the panoramic view that stretched from the Jalil to the plains of Damascus and the Bekaa Valley. A perfect repetition of Humboldt—in

47 Kotschy, “Der Libanon und seine Alpenflora,” 731.

48 Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome: Environmental History and French Colonial Expansion in North Africa*.

49 Davis, *Resurrecting*.

50 Theodor Kotschy, *Die Sommerflora des Antilibanon und Hohen Hermon: Vorgetragen in der Sitzung vom 6. November 1861* (Wien: Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1864), 448.

that the yield of plants was low—Kotschy only found 34 species⁵¹ on the whole mountain, which he explained by percolation of water, which he claimed seeped into the mountain: “The Hermon offers the peculiarity that, despite the many depths and large snowfields, it has only a few small seepage springs, but their outflows are immediately lost. Also, from the snow masses nowhere, all the moisture seeps into the mountain, therefore, there is a great lack of plants on the whole mountain.”⁵² With few instruments and following the footsteps of shepherds, Kotschy not only assembled a botanic collection, but provided a first explanation to the water patterns and geologic patterns of the region. The origin of many rivers, like the exact sources of the Jordan, were still unknown to European cartographers by the late nineteenth century and instrumental for agriculture and aquifers for cities.

Also during the second part of the voyage⁵³ Kotschy would focus on the mountain ridges, this time going up the Wādī al-Mazrāb, the Makmal, the Şannīn, and travelling to the Qadisha Valley. The focus on mountains should be underlined by a leveling of vegetational zones: pointing out that agriculture was possible until an altitude of 600 feet, followed by olive trees, myrtles, Judas trees, pistachios, carob, oleander until 1000 feet, then above them prickly oaks and Syrian acer and pine trees from 3000 feet, and forests of oaks and cedars at about 4000 to 6000 feet—a Humboldtian model based on the levels as he observed them in the field.

4 Mountains as Modeling Site

The two examples of the mission by Ehrenberg and Hemprich on the one hand, and of Kotschy on the other hand, show two different approaches to science and scientific practice of plant geography. Both share the production of samples and specimen and an attempt to recognize systematic influences. Ehrenberg and Hemprich collected data and aimed for a compilation of measurements. Most of their material remained unpublished due to loss of data in the Natural History Museum in Berlin, where original labels indicating locations were removed by the curator prior to Ehrenberg's return, the death of Hemprich, and Ehrenberg's other projects like his travels to Siberia. Ehrenberg's and Hemprich's legacies were the angle measurements and geographic data, *inscriptions* which were reused in the maps of Heinrich Berghaus.

51 Kotschy, “Der Libanon und seine Alpenflora.”

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

Theodor Kotschy followed a different approach which was equally grounded in Humboldtian science. Kotschy combined his observations on human activity, such as gardening and cattle grazing, with his plant collection. Together with his collection, Kotschy delivered an interpretive theory through the description of natural features and personal experiences: a *Naturgemälde*, an interpretative description modeled on his experience on Austrian and Silesian mountains. In the second part of the nineteenth century travel, mass tourism and also scientific journeys to Lebanon and Palestine intensified. The foundations for scientific modeling would change tremendously in the second half of the nineteenth century. Later scholars would conceive of Palestine as a merger between Irano-Turanian, Mediterranean, and Nilo-Saharan botany, tracing out botanical border zones and cultivation patterns. In 1860, Joseph Dalton Hooker,⁵⁴ a friend of Charles Darwin, visited the cedars of Mount Lebanon and first considered the formation of glaciers in the Mount Lebanon range. Hooker widened the scope from the localization of plant habitats to the recognition of geological patterns by comparing the district forms of cedars in specific locations. Moreover, the map of Lebanon produced by the French military corps in 1862 provided for the first time a measurement of altitudes and of the relative dimension of Mount Lebanon, which allowed the identification of specific sites and botanical cartography. Despite the works of Joseph Dalton Hooker and the spread of the evolutionary biogeography of Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, who explained biodiversity by climatic adaptation, George Edward Post⁵⁵ and Henry Baker Tristram⁵⁶ showed little interest in geobotany in their respective catalogues of the flora of Lebanon and of Palestine, despite the fact that botany as a field was about to shift from the mere localization of plants to the explanation of the adaption of plants in specific localities.

Regardless of the scientific missions of French, Austrian, and to a lesser extent British and German scholars of the nineteenth century, it was only in the early twentieth century that Louis Bouloumoy⁵⁷ and Pierre Mouterde⁵⁸ (followed by Lebanese botanists) would provide a comprehensive overview and theory of the relation of plants to climate on Mount Lebanon.

54 William Bertram Turrill, *Pioneer Plant Geography: The Phytogeographical Researches of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1953).

55 George E. Post, "The Flora of Palestine and Syria," *The American Naturalist* 3, no. 3 (May 1869): 121–24, <https://doi.org/10.1086/270383>.

56 Henry Baker Tristram, *The Survey of Western Palestine: The Fauna and Flora* (London: The Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1884).

57 Louis Bouloumoy, *Flore du Liban et de la Syrie* (Paris: Vigot, 1930).

58 Pierre Mouterde, *Nouvelle flore du Liban et de la Syrie* (Beirut: Éditions de l'Impr. catholique, 1966).

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Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg: Plant geographical profile of the Lebanon Mountains. SBB-PK, estate A. v. Humboldt, box 12, Nr. 110.111, Bl.2r. (Public Domain via SBB-PK.)

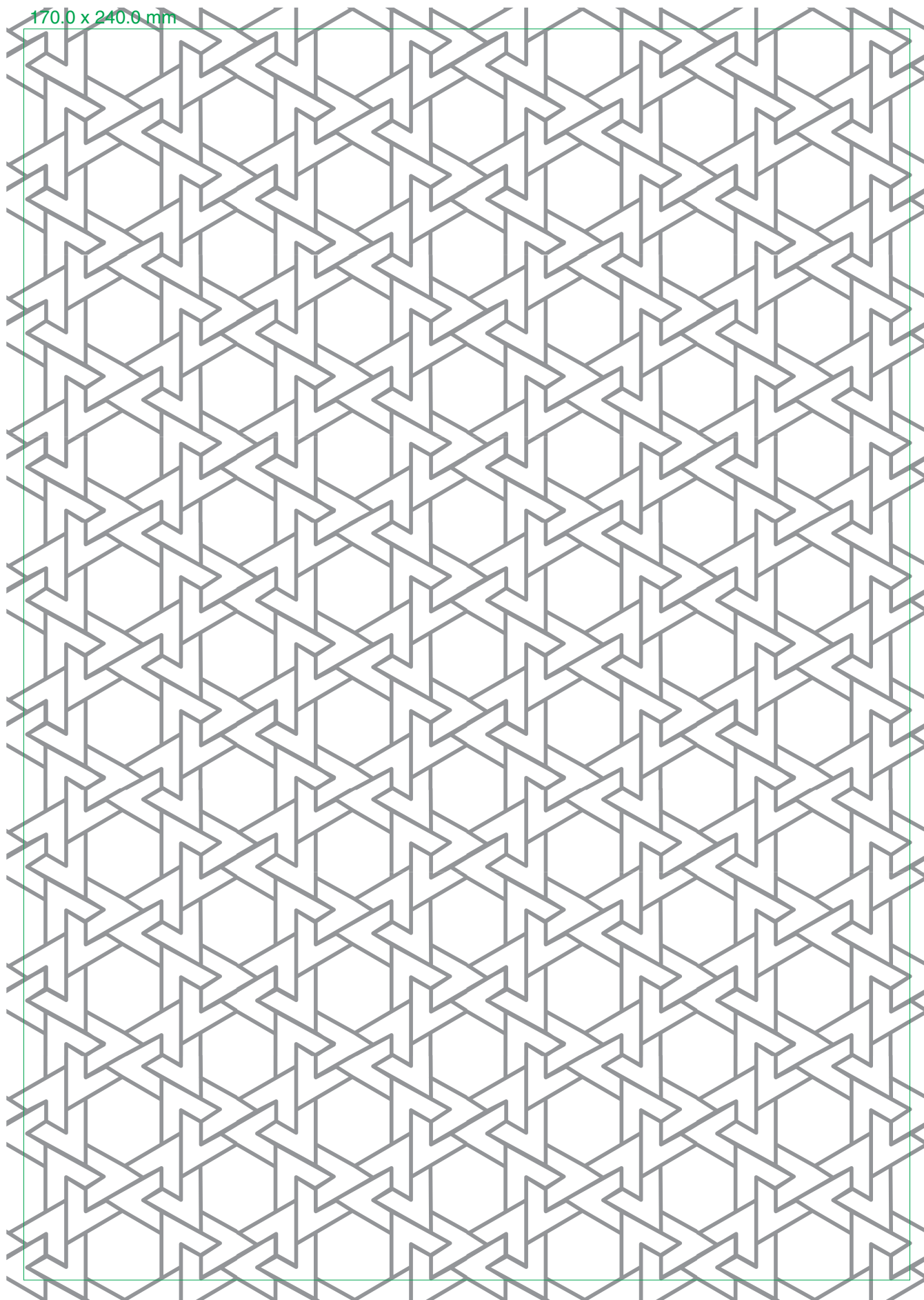
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Childhood and Children in the Lebanese Famine of World War I

Tylor Brand

My choice of topics for this volume was a personal one. A few months after arriving at the American University of Beirut as a doctoral student, I walked into Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn's office and told him that I suspected that I had made a terrible life choice. After agreeing with me, he told me that it was too late to turn back, so I would have to just keep working. I am glad that I did. For more than a decade, I counted Abed as a teacher, a mentor, a benefactor, and a friend dear enough to be family. While I was certainly not a child while on campus like the subjects of my chapter, my world would have been far darker without his guidance and care. His passing was as much the passing of a father figure as it was the loss of a friend. This is for him.

Haunting, horrific, and widely available on the internet, the wartime photography of Ibrāhīm Na'ūm Kan'ān has become the standard visual reference for the famine that ravaged Lebanon during World War I.¹ Though they featured different subjects, the source themes are consistent from image to image. In one photo, a ragged family huddled in the rubble of a building. In another, two impossibly small children comforted each other as

¹ I use the term "Lebanon" anachronistically here for reference, as the famine played an outsized role in the Lebanese historical imagination in the years after the war. The images in question have been commonly used in both international and Lebanese commemorations of the era. In recent years, documentaries from the *BBC* and *Megaphone* featured the images prominently and often uncritically. To view part of the collection, see Emile Anthony Issa al-Khoury, "Famine au Mont Liban (1915–1918): images de l'horreur," *L'Orient Le Jour*, <https://www.lorientlejour.com/multimedia/702-famine-au-mont-liban-1915-1918-images-de-lhorreur>. Last accessed October 30, 2021.

their mother lay sprawled behind them. A third showed a young child weeping over the body of his mother as two other children impassively looked on. Another showed a child helping her mother carry the corpse of her sibling. In nearly all of the images, the human subjects were emaciated, unbathed, and unhappy, framed to emphasize their emotional suffering and vulnerability. They were also nearly all children.

It is not surprising that Kanʿān was able to convey the pathos of the era through his work—the subjects of his photos were truly pitiful, even if they were deliberately posed for the camera.² Whether authentic or staged, Kanʿān’s work highlights a pervasive trope in the art and literature of the famine: the innocent, victimized child, whose suffering served as a metaphor for the suffering of the nation. This theme was central to Gibran Khalil Gibran’s grim painting “The Birth of a Tragedy,” in which an infant nursed the corpse of his mother against the dark backdrop of the Qadisha Valley. Similar imagery of child and mother appeared in the most famous literary work on the famine, Tawfīq Yūsuf ʿAwwād’s *al-Raghīf*.³ In Gibran’s poem, “Dead Are My People,” he literally offered himself for the life of the innocent child, writing, “were I an ear of corn grown in the earth of my country, the hungry child would pluck me and remove with my kernels the hand of Death [from his soul].”⁴ This device was just as useful in non-fiction accounts that frequently depicted the collective suffering of the era through the imagery of innocence, for which children were the archetype. Anṭūn Yammin used the pathos of family to appeal to his readers in the introduction of his 1919 jeremiad, *Lubnān fi l-ḥarb*, writing “cry for the fathers who bury their children with their own hands. Cry for the mothers who die with babies desperate for a drop of their milk. Cry for the nursing children who receive tears instead of milk.”⁵ In his wartime retrospective, Jirjis Khūrī l-Maqdisī similarly framed the tragedy of the crisis as the negation of childhood innocence, writing, “where were the boys who were playing and shouting in the alleys of the towns and city? Happiness ceased and was replaced by sorrowful sighs and unremitting sadness.”⁶ If anything, the theme of childhood innocence was even more pronounced in sympathetic foreign accounts of the famine. In her postwar account, American Press secretary Margaret McGilvary frequently mentioned childhood suffering and abuse to generate sympathy among wealthy American donors after the war.⁷ Not to be outdone, George Doolittle’s

2 Melanie Tanielian, *The Charity of War: Famine, Humanitarian Aid, and World War I in the Middle East* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 246–47.

3 Tawfīq Yūsuf ʿAwwād, *al-Raghīf* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Makshūf, 1939).

4 Gibran Khalil Gibran, “Dead are My People,” <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/dead-are-my-people/> Last accessed on October 30, 2021.

5 Anṭūn Yammin, *Lubnān fi l-ḥarb* (Bayrūt: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Adabiyya, 1919), 5.

6 Jirjis Khūrī Maqdisī, *Aḡam ḥarb fi l-tārīkh* (Bayrūt: al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿIlmiyya, 1927), 69.

7 Margaret McGilvary, *The Dawn of a New Era in Syria* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1920).

176-page unpublished account of the war counts the word “children” 179 times and “child” an additional 44 times.⁸

Not every mention of children in the sources was calculated to wring emotion from the reader, but there is a reason that children (and women) tend to be overrepresented in famine portrayals. As undeniable innocents, their presence added moral weight to the suffering that the artists and writers depicted. However, while they were effective at conveying the traumas of the crisis, such depictions also dramatically oversimplified our understanding of the lives of children during the war. Wretched imagery often rendered children as passive consumers of social circumstances at best, or tragic victims at worst. While such characterizations were worked well in literature, living, breathing children lived far more complex existences, and even dead ones were far more than simple victims. Though few children in the region enjoyed the bucolic, innocent childhoods of modern industrialized countries,⁹ they were hardly a single unified social category—like adults, the famine’s impacts on children varied significantly by circumstance and by child. The reduction of children to a monolithic, symbolic literary device erases the complex realities that children faced and navigated during the famine period—sometimes without the benefit of adult care. Though children were dependent, they did not cease to be individual actors during the famine, even if they acted on a far smaller stage than some of their adult counterparts.¹⁰

Because famine is at its core an economic event with profound physical and social consequences, it is easy to imagine this difference as a simple reflection of collective or household economics.¹¹ However, social and class distinctions could also determine if a child’s dependency would be an asset or a burden during the crisis. Economic and social differences are not simply states of being; they are also social constructs that can take on radical new meanings during times of crisis. For some vulnerable children, famine-based social reassessments relegated them to the margins of society, and for a lucky few, it offered protection (real or imagined) within the wartime humanitarian system. In her work on childhood in the late Ottoman Empire, Nazan Maksudyan argues that contemporary portrayals of vulnerable children effectively reduce the concept of childhood to a

8 George Curtis Doolittle, *Pathos and Humor of the War Years in Syria: A Book of Personal Experiences* (unpublished manuscript, 1920).

9 On this topic, see Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1962); James Marten, *The History of Childhood: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 118–26.

10 Nazan Maksudyan, *Ottoman Children and Youth during World War I* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2019), 10–12.

11 Beyond more classic Malthusian attitudes, this is concretely defined in Sen’s entitlement paradigm. Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 1–4.

“discourse among adults.” Such discourses are often more indicative of society’s attitudes and aims than anything true about the objects of the discourse themselves.¹² In the context of the wartime famine, childhood was merely one of many such overlapping, shifting discourses that developed in response to the ways that the famine altered society. The paternalistic social attitudes that formed about worthiness, poverty, and suffering were in many cases amplified when applied to children. We may be tempted to dismiss such distinctions as simple reflections of social inequality, but the attitudes that drove them were real, as were the effects. The nature of paternalistic protection or maternalistic care that a child received, whether from parents,¹³ institutions, the state, or humanitarian organizations was often as much a reflection of their composite social identity within wartime social discourses as it was of their economic status alone. The effect was to place childhood experience on a spectrum: while some children lingered on the margin of society, even to the point of death, others faced added responsibility and hardship but lived in relative stability—and still others spent the famine in blissful ignorance.

1 A Tale of Two Famines

Most of the time that children were mentioned in famine literature, the image was that of a hypothetical Lebanese child, suffering miserably from starvation, cold, and neglect. While thousands of children undoubtedly fit this archetype, the ways that children experienced the crisis was hardly homogeneous. As the relatively well documented cases of Archie Crawford and Ibrāhīm Khalil ‘Awwād indicate, the contrast between the ways that vulnerable children and their secure peers lived through the crisis could be stark.

For Crawford, the war was a mostly boring interlude in his otherwise cloistered childhood. Though the era was filled with uncertainty, he floated above the worst of the crisis within a bubble of stability and security. The son of Syrian Protestant College Professor James Crawford, Archie was like most people in the crisis in the sense that his wartime experience was shaped by his identity. Archie’s American passport and his association with the college kept him socially insulated from the suffering of the crisis, and the steady salary that his father was guaranteed at the college kept him financially

¹² Nazan Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire*, 3.

¹³ This statement comes with a warning: although poverty (at its most extreme, abandonment) was the greatest risk factor for children in the crisis, it should not be assumed that class or level of vulnerability had any impact on the care for children, as some moralistic contemporary observers implied in their accounts. Poverty certainly placed children at greater risk, but it had no inherent impact on the willingness of parents to protect their children out of love and familial instinct. Indeed, even amid the overblown tales of abuse and moral collapse, the sources are filled with accounts of parents sacrificing everything, even their own lives, so their children might live to have a future.

safe, particularly since the Ottoman state permitted the college to buy its supplies at a reduced military rate. Archie's interviews, retrospectives, and diaries about the period reflected the liminality of his life in the famine. His age made him aware of the severe situation that surrounded him, but it still permitted him the privilege of ignoring it. Nevertheless as a boy of fifteen when the war began, he was also on the cusp of adulthood at a time when childhood was a luxury.

While the war did exist for young Crawford, it was only as an abstract thing. At times, the trappings of war were pleasant diversions. In one interview, he recalled that when the Ottoman military test-fired their 75mm artillery in 'Aynāb, the boys would run down to the craters to collect the shell fragments.¹⁴ His fascination with machines of war extended to the Allied warships enforcing the deadly blockade of the region. In his August 1915 diary entries, he logged a record of patrol boats that passed by the college, noting their time of passage, names, and origin, along with a few rough sketches of individual boats.¹⁵ Even the 1915 locust plague that arrived around his sixteenth birthday was more a matter of fascination for Archie and his peers than a cause for concern. Amid the collective horror of the adult population as the voracious creatures devoured crops and destabilized food markets, the most unpleasant effect mentioned by children in the American schools was the closure of their usual swimming spots due to the masses of insect corpses washed up along the coast.¹⁶ As families (including rural children) across the region struggled and failed to protect their crops, many privileged children were at play, making locust kites by tethering their legs with string, or conscripting them into service as "messenger locusts" by tying small notes to their bodies and releasing them.¹⁷ Huntington Bliss, another campus child who was twelve at the time, fondly remembered racing to the beach after Sunday school to swat the insects into the sea with a tennis racket.¹⁸

Archie's contemporary diary and later interviews mingled serious thoughts on the wartime period with tales of boyish leisure, marking both his complicated relationship with the famine and the complexity of life within it. In one account he wrote decades after the war, he described an event that would seem more at home in a Mark Twain novel than a horrific famine:

14 Nicholas Ajay, "Interview with Archie Crawford," in Nicholas Ajay, "Mount Lebanon and the Wilayah of Beirut, 1914–1918," 2, (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown, 1973), 96.

15 Archie Crawford, "The Diary of Archie Crawford," published in Nicholas Ajay, "Mount Lebanon and the Wilayah of Beirut, 1914–1918," 2, (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown, 1973), 145.

16 Nicholas Ajay, "Interview with Huntington Bliss," in "Mount Lebanon and the Wilayah of Beirut, 1914–1918," 2, (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown, 1973), 108.

17 Crawford, "The Diary of Archie Crawford," 133.

18 Jonathan Stacey, *A History of the American Community School (ACS) at Beirut* (Beirut: The Alumni Association of the American Community School, 1998), 7.

We used to play in the yard extending north to the Eye (later Medical) Pavilion. I remember once we were throwing knives to try to stick them in a big fig tree trunk, and Gus Freyer threw his knife too hard so that it bounced back and stuck itself in his calf. That finished that game for us! We asked to have a big skipping rope, and one day I was coming down when Frank was coming up, and his head hit my mouth and broke off half of my upper front tooth; I think the missing piece is still in his skull.¹⁹

Archie's diary was filled with similarly mundane activities, including shooting at the campus cats with an air rifle or swimming along the coast near the college.²⁰ When life on the campus grew too boring, Archie and his companions bought discount tram booklets (valued between a quarter and a third of a piaster) and rode into the city center. As children, the journey made for a pleasant day trip, despite the volume of beggars who frequented the city square during the war.²¹

For those living on campus, life initially continued relatively unabated. This was mostly thanks to the policies of the school administrators. In his history of the University, Stephen Penrose noted that Syrian Protestant College President Howard Bliss prioritized "the preservation of the normality" of life for the students amid the distraction of the war and famine.²² This was confirmed by firsthand accounts. In 1916, William Nimeh wrote in the student journal *al-Kulliyah*, that the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), paid "special attention to entertainments" in order to counteract "the gloomy, trying, time and to cheer up spirits as much as possible."²³ Lacking the social activities put on by the college, Nimeh suggested that "the world would have seemed darker than it was."²⁴ Mission school reports detail frivolities, including an Arabic language enactment of Little Red Riding Hood and more serious ones, like charity work. Some activities sought to preserve normalcy, while others aimed to inculcate responsibility.²⁵ Despite the famine, campus children continued to play sports; some reports even indicated that the children showed "more interest than usual" in athletics in the initial year, as private schools

19 Stacey, *A History of the American Community School*, 12.

20 Crawford, "The Diary of Archie Crawford," 127, 142.

21 Ibid., 147.

22 Stephen Penrose, *That They May Have Life: The Story of the American University of Beirut, 1866–1941* (Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1970), 156.

23 William Nimeh, "Report of the Young Men's Christian Association for 1914–1915," *al-Kulliyah*, vol. 6, 1914–15, 29.

24 William Nimeh, "War Annals of the College Part 4: 1915–1916," *al-Kulliyah*, vol. 6, no. 5 March 15, 1920, 37.

25 Dora Eddy, "Synopsis of Sidon Seminary Report 1915," Presbyterian Historical Society (Hereafter PHS) Archives RG-115-17-18 Sidon Girls' School Reports 1906–1955, 1.

continued their annual intermural competitions.²⁶ Athletic games were so popular that at the end of the war, the equipment was in tatters after four years of extensive use.²⁷

These examples of the relatively carefree existence of the children of the college community contrasted sharply with the realities of children who lacked the benefit of a foreign identity or stable income. While Crawford, Bliss, and their peers passed the time in relative security despite the situation around them, the outbreak of war marked a dramatic turning point for nine year old Ibrāhīm Khalīl 'Awwād. Like many other young Lebanese men, Ibrāhīm's father had migrated abroad in search of prosperity for his family.²⁸ However, the Allied blockade and the Ottoman cessation of bank transfers cut his family off from their provider himself and the steady income he remitted. As a result, Ibrāhīm's status plunged from one of security and safety into one of precariousness over the course of a few months. Young though he was, he did what he could to help his mother, but in doing so he was made distinctly aware of the worsening crisis and his own family's deepening poverty. His memoir recalled with painful clarity the day that his mother sent him to the butcher with her wedding ring to barter for meat to feed her children (the butcher, mercifully refused it).²⁹

The family's destitution eventually forced his mother to move them to her father's home in Bḥarṣāf in 1915. The security that this provided Ibrāhīm came at a cost. Like many youths in his position, he spent much of his time laboring alongside his extended family, tending to crops, protecting the food from human and animal predation, and helping with the harvest. Although he was somewhat lucky for the security of his grandfather's home, his new dependence took its toll as well. Too shy to look after his own needs while his family relied on the charity of his grandfather, and acutely aware of the danger that they all faced, Ibrāhīm found himself unable to ask for food when he needed it. He fondly remembered the kindness of his aunt, who slipped him precious morsels from her pockets out of sympathy.³⁰ Though Ibrāhīm's life contrasted drastically with Archie's, he was still fortunate that he was able to rely on extended family and their land as a buffer.

26 George Scherer, "Annual Report of Sidon Station, Syria Mission for the year 1914–1915," PHS Archives RG-115-17-19 Sidon Station Reports 1907–35, 7; Nimeh, "War Annals," *al-Kullīyah*, 37.

27 Nimeh, "War Annals," *al-Kullīyah*, 37.

28 On migration, see Salīm Baylān, "Al-Nufūs fī Lubnān," in *Lubnān: Mabāḥith 'ilmīyya wa-ijtimā'īyya* 2, ed. Anṭūn Bishāra al-Qīqānū (Beirut: Dār Laḥd Khāṭir, 1993), 262. For recent work, see Stacy Fahrenthold, *Between the Ottomans and the Entente: The First World War in the Syrian and Lebanese Diaspora, 1908–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 17–19; Graham Pitts, "The Ecology of Migration: Remittances in World War I Mount Lebanon," *Arab Studies Journal* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2018): 102–04.

29 Ibrāhīm Khalīl 'Awwād, *Min 'ahd al-mutaṣarrifīyya ilā 'ahd al-istiqlāl: mudhakkirāt* (Beirut: Maṭba'āt Ḥāyik wa Kamāl, 1981), 31.

30 *Ibid.*, 33.

In his memoir he recalled local children in worse conditions begging him to allow them to take his place on the threshing board as he worked for his grandfather.³¹

These two examples are not intended to demonstrate the only two modes of famine childhood, but they do demonstrate the nuances that are missed by homogenizing discourses of famine childhood. However, they also offered examples of how class and social status influenced the forms of protection that children were afforded during the wartime era. The famine was undoubtedly a period of great suffering, but the degree to which children personally encountered it, let alone experienced it, depended on far more than just how much they had to eat.

2 Protection, Privilege, and the Moral Hazards of the Famine

A child's perceived vulnerability was often an extension of their relationship with paternal structures in society, and how in turn, they were treated by their guardians. Paternalistic protection, in turn, served children differently based on who was offering the protection and what sorts of support were deemed appropriate for a given child. For privileged children, this support extended beyond the mere physical support to include their emotional and moral health as well.

Children's exposure to suffering was a particular concern for American writers about the famine, who were appalled by the thought of children facing such trauma directly. In a retrospective written for the history of the American Community School (ACS), Harry Dorman wrote that children were shielded from the famine, even to the point of being prohibited from going downtown, where poverty and suffering were most acute.³² Dorman's description of recess at the American Community School in 1917 (when he would have been eleven) is the picture of innocence:

In those days, the game assumed mammoth importance and excitement for us. At recess we would pour out on to the playground, touch our own base line as a starter, and boldly move towards the central open area in challenge and defiance of any "fresher" girl who would emerge to chase us off... All this was during the terrible war years of World War I, and gives an idea of how completely, as kids, we were sheltered by our parents from what was going on around us.³³

³¹ Ibrāhīm Khalīl 'Awwād, *Min 'ahd al-mutaṣarrifīyya ilā 'ahd al-istiqlāl: mudhakkirāt* (Beirut: Maṭba'at Hāyik wa Kamāl, 1981), 34–36.

³² Stacey, *A History of the American Community School*, 13.

³³ Ibid.

Despite such happy memories, Dorman recalled snatches of the famine in his peripheral memory: “we did use to see and wonder at the great circular patches of orange color that began to appear on the rough plaster walls that lined Beirut’s streets and gardens, little orange circles and larger ones too.”³⁴ It was only later that Dorman learned that the circles came from starving individuals rubbing the rind from oranges to avoid wasting the pith. Adults viewed this interaction with dread. On May 23, 1917, Edward Nickoley wrote of babies mimicking the moans of the starving, and recorded with distress the “graphic details” Mary Jessup gave of a boy she watched dying on the road.³⁵

As such examples show, the perception of children as vulnerable and innocent meant that famine presented an acute moral threat even when it did not present a physical one. There are many examples of how parents sought to shield their children from the famine, even while suffering within it. Some migrated to safer locations, some sold belongings or even their bodies to feed their children. Others spent precious resources on expensive luxury goods to approximate the better times before the crisis, or sought to shape the environment that children were in to control their exposure to trauma. Schools and youth organizations presented interesting case studies that demonstrate the complexity of status and social expectations during the famine. Not everyone who attended private schools were wealthy, and many who attended faced economic hardship at home, even when rates were reduced to allow pupils to continue their education. At the schools, children would be fed and sheltered while they played while the crisis raged outside the campus walls—or at home. The mission schools were not the only ones open at the time. (Even if many of the 7,000 boys and 6,000 girls recorded in Mount Lebanon’s schools around the time of the war were forced to drop out as schools closed, a number of accounts of village school life crop up in the sources.)³⁶ However, such private schools provided distance from suffering and often board to support children when the cost of living was high.³⁷

Mission schools were paternalistic institutions that regarded the children in their care as inherently fragile. On campus, the children were provided with a safe, sheltered environment, medical care, bedding, and regular meals. However, when they returned to their own homes and villages, some had to confront the horrors of the famine directly, or at least in closer proximity. School administrators were acutely aware of this and assumed roles as both educators and guardians of their young pupils. In her 1915 report on the

34 Stacey, *A History of the American Community School*, 13.

35 Edward Nickoley, “Historic Diary,” (1917). Edward Nickoley Collection, 1873–1937. ARCHIVE AA 2:3.3. Box 1, File 2. American University of Beirut/Library Archives, Beirut, Lebanon, 44.

36 ‘Īsā Iskandar Ma’lūf, “al-‘Ulūm wa-l-adāb fī Lubnān wa-Fīnīqīa,” in *Lubnān: Mabāḥith ‘ilmīyya wa-ijtimā’iyya* 2, edited by Fu’ad Ifrām al-Bustānī (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt al-Jāmī’a al-Lubnāniyya, 1969), 572.

37 See Afif Tannous, *Village Life and Beyond* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2004), 40–41; see also Anīs Furayḥa, *Qabl an ansā* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Nahār li-l-Nashr, 1989), 46, 51.

Sidon Girls' School, assistant principal Dora Eddy wondered who felt more sadness about the end of the year. Was it the girls, who were leaving their friends and teachers for homes "saddened by sickness and death and burdened with want," instead of the easy, "carefree" life they experienced while boarded at school—or was it the teachers, who "saw them go and realized more fully than they how hard the summer was going to be, and how uncertain it was that the following year would find them with us again."³⁸ This problem worsened as the budgets shrank. The Sidon Girls' School was forced to convert itself to a day school, cutting costs by providing only one meal. Despite the cutbacks, the staff still saw itself as saviors of the children (and their parents). In her report on the school from 1916 to 1917, Eddy observed that, "the crying of hungry children all over the country has been a sad strain on the nerves and tempers of the equally hungry mothers," noting that "little children who had become a burden to their weary mothers were gladly taken in to be taught and cared for from eight till three."³⁹

Administrators sought to form a protective shield around their students, both emotionally and physically. Eddy's 1915–1916 report on the Sidon Girls' School noted that when administrators heard of tragedy in a student's home, the girls were kept "hardly conscious of its existence." One might doubt if this was actually beneficial, since it merely postponed the process of grieving and recovery until the students were no longer in the safety of the school. The primary beneficiaries seemed to be the school's staff, which could avoid the traumatic duty of breaking the news to the girls. Eddy concluded, "we never failed to be thankful where we saw them so carefree and happy, that a few young lives were being spared the sorrow so pressing outside."⁴⁰

Schools provided an interesting exception from economically based social standing since an affiliation with a foreign school conferred status upon even economically vulnerable students by associating them with the elites who patronized the school and the influence of the American missionary community. This allowed even students who faced want at home to engage in activities like humanitarian relief, which generally required a degree of social prominence. To some extent, this was encouraged by the fact that some mission schools treated the widespread social breakdown as an opportunity for moral growth. The American School for Girls in Beirut's annual report of 1914 to 1915 proudly touted the student body's charitable works to the Presbyterian Mission Board in America. One week the girls removed fruit from their daily snacks and donated the saved funds to charity; in another case, they donated 450 piasters for flour distribution in the nearby quarter of Muṣayṭba by skipping their annual "Christmas treat." Similarly,

38 Dora Eddy, "Synopsis of Sidon Seminary Report 1915," PHS Archives, RG-115-17-18 Sidon Girls' School Reports 1906–1955, 2.

39 Dora Eddy, "Report of the Sidon Seminary, Oct. 1916–1917 Oct.," PHS Archives RG-115-17-18 Sidon Girls' School Reports 1906–1955, 1.

40 Eddy, "Synopsis."

donations that normally supported foreign mission work funded two months of milk for a girl recovering from typhoid; in another case they were spent on food and medicine for the poor. At times students were even permitted a brush with real suffering in campaigns to distribute bread or read Bible verses to the starving.⁴¹ The school in Sidon similarly sent volunteers from the school to help distribute wheat to needy villages nearby.⁴² For many of the more privileged students, such closely monitored work was the closest that they would get to the reality of suffering in the war.

As students aged, perceptions of their vulnerability shifted as well, permitting them more responsibility (and more risk). Before Beirut's Governor 'Azmi Bey suspended relief work in the province, the Syrian Protestant College's YMCA club acted as an appendage of the Beirut chapter of the American Red Cross, directing traffic for the Employment Committee, raising funds for charitable activities, and volunteering in the children's hospital and the broader community.⁴³ Even after direct aid was halted, the college's medical and nursing students remained important cogs in the relief machine, helping to spell professional medical staff who were increasingly burned out by the demands of simultaneous famine and typhus epidemic, (plus a worse than usual incidence of malaria with little medicine to treat it). Students also supported aid work at the sprawling Brummāna orphanage and shelter. Such volunteer work was no trifling matter. Medical workers were disproportionately exposed to infection during typhus outbreaks as lice easily passed from patients to caretakers. Philomela Van Zandt expressed an awareness of this part of her job as a volunteer at the typhus clinic in the south of the city.⁴⁴ She told Edward Nickoley, "the question seems to be whether I am to get these beasts or whether they are to get me."⁴⁵

Relief work implies an imbalance of power between the giver and the recipient, so to participate in relief activities, or to receive aid, was a reflection of one's social status. To help, one generally was from a privileged class or nationality, or associated with the status of an institution that conveyed that privilege. 'Anbara Salām (later al-Khālīdī) provides a fine example of this in her account of the Young Girl's Club, organized for Beirut's young and affluent by Beirut Governor 'Azmī Bey. Initially comprised of 'Anbara herself, Amīna Ḥamzāwī, Ibtihāj Qaddūra, 'Ādila Bayhum, Wadād Maḥmaṣānī and Waḥīda Khālīdī, the

41 Ottora Horne, "Annual Report: American School for Girls, Beirut, Syria, December 1914–December 1915," PHS Archives RG-115-3-1 American School for Girls, reports, 1838–1955, 1.

42 George Scherer, "Annual Report of Sidon Station, Syria Mission for the year 1914–1915," PHS Archives RG-115-17-19 Sidon Station Reports 1907–35, 7.

43 Nimeh, "Report of the Young Men's Christian Association for 1914–1915," 28–30.

44 Philomela was the daughter of Jane Van Zandt, who established the college nursing school in 1905. Nickoley identified the location near "the sands" to the south of the city, which at the time probably meant the clinic in Ṣanā'i'.

45 Nickoley, "Historic Diary," 4.

group was something of a who's who of young Beirūti high society that met in the poet Bishāra al-Khūrī's posh home in Zuqāq al-Balāṭ. Ostensibly a social group, their activities centered on educational development and cultural enrichment. In addition to its regular meetings, the club provided a tutor in Arabic and French as well as a piano teacher for the girls. It later expanded to include elite philanthropy, opening a school explicitly dedicated to children from those "old established" families of Beirut that had fallen on hard times.⁴⁶

Juxtaposing the aid that the club provided to the poor children of the famine with that offered to children of the formerly wealthy offers an indication about how the overlap in discourses of childhood and poverty functioned in practice. In essence, they defined what aid was considered necessary and appropriate for given recipients: poor children needed shelter and food—high class ones needed enrichment. Though any aid was undoubtedly beneficial to those who received it, the distinction was an expression of the security and privilege that the children's social position afforded. 'Anbara and her peers, like the students in the mission schools were protected by their adult guardians, but also by their social standing. By virtue of their status, they were able to assist those in need. The poor, in contrast, were *to be* helped through the self-aware beneficence of their social betters, as they were unable to help themselves. Their state of need defined them as not only vulnerable, but often helpless as well. While this was demonstrably false, as the next section indicates, those children who did struggle to survive independent of their guardians were often penalized for behaviors that defied notions of proper, worthy behavior for children in need. As children in precarious circumstances faced hunger and loss, to say nothing of existential threats, abandonment, and suffering in worst case scenarios, for the privileged, the famine was something that happened to others—if their guardians had their way, it might have only been orange circles on stone walls.

3 The Ambivalent Vulnerability of the Impoverished Child

The discourse of childhood in the famine assumed that a hypothetical child bore a burden of vulnerability that had to be managed. However, as the previous section indicates, exactly what those vulnerabilities were and how they were to be handled depended on who the child was, and where they fit within the general scheme of society. For children of protected groups and classes, famine was a moral threat, which could be managed by shielding them from the crisis or seeking to maintain access to education and leisure. For children whose lives were directly threatened by the crisis, their perceived vulnerability

⁴⁶ 'Anbara Salam al-Khalidi, *Memoirs of an Early Arab Feminist: The Life and Activism of Anbara Salam Khalidi*, trans. Tarif Khalidi (London: Pluto Press, 2013), 73–75.

could be decidedly more complex. Typical social and familial structures were splintered by the crisis, and gender norms were disrupted in households across the region.⁴⁷ Thousands of men migrated for work, were pulled off to war or died in the famine. Women were left without social support for themselves or their families, and were occasionally pressed into physical labor on behalf of the state.⁴⁸ Many children, in turn, were forced to act as adults to survive. While many grieved the loss of a parent, they also faced the added burden of caring for younger siblings. In their fluid stages of emotional development, vulnerable children faced unique risks and dealt with particular forms of trauma.⁴⁹ While contemporaries of the famine often expressed sympathy for the physical and emotional suffering of starving children in general, social behaviors suggested that such sympathy was often conditioned by other contingent constructs of poverty and power that were entwined in the social discourse of the famine era—discourses that were particularly evident in the writings of humanitarians.⁵⁰ As a result, many vulnerable children were placed at greater risk due to collective interpretations of their social status.

Because children were regarded as helpless and more worthy of assistance, many writers tended to be sympathetic to their plight and to the emotional cost to their families. In his 1916 mission report, George Doolittle wrote, “Everywhere the overburdened women are disheartened, and in many places indifferent. Children are dying of starvation before their mothers’ eyes, winter is approaching with an absolutely empty larder, sons and husbands and brothers are called to perilous military service.”⁵¹ However, there was a disconnect between the sympathy that the mention of children generated and the ways that poverty was treated in practice, especially as the years passed and the famine worsened. Since “children” served as a literary device in famine writings, their suffering could often have contradictory meanings, depending on the context. In some sources, their plight could be cited to dredge up sympathy for the suffering in the region, while

47 Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 25–27.

48 See Elif Mahir Metinsoy, *Ottoman Women during World War I: Everyday Experiences, Politics and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 31; Yiğit Akin, *When the War Came Home: The Ottomans’ Great War and the Devastation of an Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 69, 114–18.

49 Recent research on PTSD in Syrian children during the current crisis offer insight into the matter: Karam et al, “Role of Childhood Adversities and Environmental Sensitivity in the Development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in War-Exposed Syrian Refugee Children and Adolescents,” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 214, no. 6 (June, 2019): 358.

50 For more on this, see Tylor Brand, “That They May Have Life: The Syrian Protestant College and Emergency Relief during World War I,” in *One Hundred and Fifty* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 2016), 52–61.

51 George Doolittle, “Report of Sidon Station, Syria Mission, Summer 1915, to summer 1916,” PHS Archives RG-115-17-19 Sidon Station Reports 1907–35, 9.

mentions of their maltreatment could be used as evidence of the famished population's moral collapse.⁵² In each reference, childhood was more an abstract concept illustrated by particular cases that were intended to reflect a perceived reality, and often carried a social judgment as well.

The treatment of children was at times considered a proxy for social decay, and in the eyes of contemporaries, one of the worst crimes against the young was abandonment. Though perhaps overstated in the sources, vulnerable children in the famine were at occasionally sent to distant family members or placed in orphanages if parents were unable to support them. Retrospectively, this may have been prudent: famine mortality was reportedly higher in adults, who needed more calories per day to survive.⁵³ Despite these justifications, observers writing from security found this coping strategy repellant. Some cases were sympathetic—Mary Dale of the Syrian Protestant College wrote dourly in her diary about an 18 year old woman who asked her to take her baby to keep it from dying.⁵⁴ Others were less so. Edward Nickoley wrote that those in the mountains were giving or selling their children to Ottoman officers, sometimes out of mercy and sometimes allegedly for gain.⁵⁵ Echoing Nickoley, Jirjis Khūrī al-Maqdisī wrote that many children found themselves on the streets without any support when the person who bought them lost interest or left.⁵⁶ Maqdisī made special note of their social status. Some, he observed, were students before the war. Some were deprived of their livelihood by the war. Some had lost parents. Some had been sold by their parents to a military officer, who subsequently abandoned them. Many tried, and often failed, to eke out a living on the streets, where “death swept the deceased from them each day.”⁵⁷ For Maqdisī, their previously high status made their fall into wretchedness more tragic than their poverty alone.

Paradoxically, while the disruption of social norms placed children at higher risk, social attitudes towards childhood actually made official or charitable assistance more accessible for children in the war. Those who sacrificed the most for children certainly received the loudest plaudits in the sources. Heroes of the famine included Maronite Bishop Anṭūn ‘Ariḍa of Tripoli, who sold his church's silver cross to save 200 children during the period, and the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Damascus Gregorios Ḥaddād, who accepted hundreds of orphans of all faiths. When his efforts caught the eye of

52 An excellent example of this is Edward Nickoley's 1917 discussion of the erosion of morals in the famine, Nickoley, “Historical Diary,” 4, 6.

53 See Peter Svedberg, *Poverty and Undernutrition: Theory, Measurement and Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 115–122; Anonymous, “Report of Sidon Station 1916–1917,” 1. See also Nickoley, “Historic Diary,” 3.

54 Ajay, “Mount Lebanon,” 400.

55 Nickoley, “Historic Diary,” 6.

56 Maqdisī, *Aḏam ḥarb*, 69.

57 Ibid., 69.

regional military commander, Ahmad Jamal Pasha, he offered state funding for Ḥaddād's relief efforts.⁵⁸ Wealthy members of the community (often women) also frequently dispersed patronage, often through shelters specifically catering towards women and children. The most famous was run by the Qurṭās family in Brummāna. Through a chance alliance with the well-connected Syrian Protestant College dentist, Arthur Dray, their local soup kitchen converted into a mega-shelter that served thousands with government support. Jamal Pasha, (who was reported to have had a soft spot for little ones), permitted humanitarians from the American Mission and the Syrian Protestant College to establish or patronize aid work in places like Brummāna, 'Alāy, 'Abey, and Sūq al-Gharb, and also worked with Beirut's elites to establish workshops and shelters for women and children.⁵⁹ Other Ottoman authorities like Beirut Governor 'Azmi Bey, Beirut's mayor, 'Umar Dā'ūq and regional administrators like Yūsuf al-Ḥakīm established or patronized hospices to care for the growing numbers of orphans on the streets.⁶⁰

However, just because some shelter was available did not necessarily mean it was life-saving. Many of the state-run shelters were so poorly supplied, and incompetently run that it was actually a question if children were better off on the streets. The threat of typhus, tuberculosis and neglect were so great in shelters run by 'Azmi Bey that they had to be shut down.⁶¹ Even the American shelters were hardly innocent. Because of their philosophical aversion to providing something for nothing, the American humanitarians forced children to earn their keep by producing manufactured items in workshops that could be sold to support the program.⁶² Even in a charitable shelter for children, there was apparently no such thing as a free lunch.

Alongside the threat of death, the children in shelters often also suffered from the traumas of their past experiences. Several reports described orphanages as filled with listless starving children, who spent much of their time inert and staring at a fixed point on the ground rather than interacting with their peers. Red Cross staff wondered that they had lost their appreciation for life since they rarely smiled, and some seemed to have forgotten how to play due to their trauma.⁶³ In her memoir, Halidé Edib wrote of one girl at the 'Ayntūra orphanage who latched onto Edib as a maternal replacement.

58 Yūsuf al-Ḥakīm, *Bayrūt wa-Lubnān fī 'ahd Āl-'Uthmān* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Nahār li-l-Nashr, 1991), 253–54.

59 Anonymous, "College Notes," *al-Kulliyah*, vol. 6: 1914–1915, Students' Magazines, AA: 4.2.1, American University of Beirut/Library Archives, 38.

60 Al-Ḥakīm, *Bayrūt wa-Lubnān*, 257–58.

61 Bayard Dodge, "Relief Work in Syria During the Period of the War," (1919), Howard Bliss Collection: AUB President 1902–1920. ARCHIVE AA:2.3.2. Box 18, File 3. American University of Beirut/Library Archives, Beirut, Lebanon, 5.

62 Ibid., 8–10.

63 James Barton, *Story of Near East Relief (1915–1930): An Interpretation* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1930), 253–54. See Cynthia Monahan, *Children and Trauma: A Parent's Guide to Helping Heal* (New York: Lexington Books, 1993), 6, 32.

Edib wrote that the girl described her parents' murders in gruesome detail, to the point of renaming her mother as "Hadije with the bowels on the earth."⁶⁴ Edib, who herself has been accused of situational cruelty and labeled an accessory to cultural genocide in the memoirs of Armenian children in her care, wrote, "I had never hoped to hear laughter in Aintoura; the most I looked for was less tears and less sickness."⁶⁵

Such examples suggest the real impacts of suffering on children as individuals. Despite their age, children were not innocent or ignorant of the crisis around them—research indicates that they can achieve a "mature" understanding of the various aspects of mortality at ages ranging from four to twelve with most children understanding the biological aspects of death by the age of 7.⁶⁶ The consequences may be hard to detect retrospectively, but they undoubtedly existed and, as Cynthia Monahon has argued, such trauma could exercise "tyrannical" effects on the child in the long term.⁶⁷ This trauma even affected those who merely experienced it by proxy. In an interview conducted decades after the war, Huntington Bliss stated, "the impression of the misery of these people is still with me. Even now I finish what is on my plate because I cannot forget that period when food was so precious."⁶⁸ Undoubtedly, children who were exposed to the crisis from a very young age were even more likely to understand the harshness of the crisis than a child who had never had to endure such calamity.⁶⁹

Despite the trauma, (or perhaps with its assistance) many children developed remarkable aptitude for survival in the physically hazardous and emotionally traumatic famine environment.⁷⁰ The independence that they developed as a result may have contributed to some children's sense of "mastery" of difficult situations,⁷¹ but we must resist the urge to romanticize the effects of this trauma. Although many children developed precocious independence and self-interested behavior to survive, these

64 Halidé Edib, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib* (New York: The Century Co., 1926), 467. See Keith David Watenpaugh, "Introduction," in Karnig Panian, *Goodbye Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*, trans. Simon Beukegian (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), xii-xiii.

65 Ibid., 446.

66 Mark Speece, "Children's Concepts of Death," *Michigan Family Review* 1, no. 1 (1995): 57.

67 Monahon, "Children and Trauma," xvi, 3.

68 Nicholas Ajay, "Interview with Huntington Bliss," in "Mount Lebanon and the Wilayah of Beirut, 1914–1918," (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 1973), 2: 108.

69 Karam et al., "Role of Childhood Adversities," 358.

70 This is not uncommon. See Alan M. Ball, *And Now My Soul Is Hardened: Abandoned Children in Soviet Russia, 1918–1930* (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994), <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft700007p9/>. The Brummana shelter paid host to the town's future mayor, Philip Abū Ḥamad and Anṭūn S'āda during the war. See Nicholas Ajay, "Interview with Mariam Aswad Cortas, Mrs. Salma Aswad Risq and Mr. Emile Cortas," in Ajay, "Mount Lebanon and the Wilayah of Beirut, 1914–1918," 2: 73.

71 Monahon, *Children and Trauma*, 10.

adaptations conflicted with the idealized notion of childhood that adult observers held. Some adults regarded those acquired traits as antisocial or even feral and punished the children for them. The missionaries of the Sidon Girls' School provide several examples of this. One report described a girl who had been placed with relatives in Lebanon against her will at the outbreak of the war because her parents were stuck in Egypt. Essentially abandoned, the girl frequently acted out her frustration and sadness and exhibited a constant disregard for authority that caused her uncle to give her to the mission school as an "orphan." There she stayed until she was accused of stealing, at which point the school revoked her orphan status and forced her back to her extended family.⁷² The report did not mention her fate. Another report mentioned the need to defend the mission's citrus trees from the hands of hungry boys.⁷³

Such examples were not unique. Despite the general sympathy for children as a category, sources conveyed increasingly negative attitudes towards actual children in need as the years drew on. Like adults who joined them on the streets, abandoned, mendicant children seem to have been regarded as pests or parasites during the famine period. Since they were not able to support themselves legitimately, the children were forced to beg, scavenge or steal what they could to survive—all activities that were regarded as socially toxic by privileged classes. In an interview years after the war, Mary Kfūrī Ma'lūf recalled an instance when her mother left her in charge of her brothers while she traveled in search of work. When young Mary asked a shopkeeper for a piece of bread to keep her and her brothers alive, saying her mother would pay for when she comes back, the woman drove her out and told her that her mother was dead.⁷⁴

Like Ma'lūf, the famine and its dearth of social supports (outside of the very limited reach of government, religious and private charity) forced many children into positions of responsibility at a young age. At the age of seven, future historian Nicola Ziadeh recalled looking after household affairs for his mother. This ranged from mundane activities like learning credit from a Damascene shopkeeper to the traumatic and dangerous task of searching for the body of his missing father amid the bloated corpses in the city morgues during a typhus outbreak.⁷⁵ Another child sacrificed the one doll she had carried from her previous life of security so her mother could cook its bran stuffing in the hopes of

72 Charlotte Brown, "Report of the Sidon Seminary Oct. 1917–Oct. 1918," PHS Archives RG-115-17-18 Sidon Girls' School Reports 1906–1955, 2.

73 Dora Eddy, "Report of the Sidon Seminary, Oct. 1916–1917 Oct.," PHS Archives RG-115-17-18 Sidon Girls' School Reports 1906–1955, 4.

74 Gregory Orfalea, *The Arab Americans: A History* (Northampton: Olive Branch Press, 2006), 69–70.

75 Nicola Ziadeh, "A First Person Account of the First World War in Greater Syria," in *The First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Olaf Farschid, Manfred Kropp, and Stephan Dahne (Beirut: The Orient Institute, 2006), 265–77.

surviving their trek to a shelter.⁷⁶ One family history preserved the story of a hungry little girl who cleverly tried to negotiate with her mother, adorably demanding “just” a tiny sandwich “the size of her hand” to soften her hunger.⁷⁷ George Doolittle described one young girl’s clever ruse to distract her starving sister, who had been begging her mother for food. The girl remembered a public demonstration was to be held that day, and she informed her sister matter-of-factly that they could not eat before attending it. Her well-meaning lie prevented her mother from having to admit that she had nothing to feed the child.⁷⁸ While younger children were entirely dependent on adults, many older ones like Mary Ma’lūf or Ibrāhīm ‘Awwād were forced to be small adults, even to the point of entering the workforce in order to support themselves and their families. Since women’s wages were a fraction of a man’s, even an adolescent boy could actually earn more than his adult mother.⁷⁹

Some children dealt with this responsibility in remarkably mature ways, but sometimes this responsibility had tragic consequences. When Mary’s mother left, she could only leave her a single loaf of bread from which to dole out tiny portions to her brothers. Both of her siblings eventually died, refugees in their ancestral town of Zaḥle, while their young guardian could do little more than watch.⁸⁰ Curiously, the most notorious (and verifiable) case of cannibalism in the famine was committed by two teenage girls from the Tripoli area who were caring for their siblings after their parents died. According to accounts, they used their siblings to lure children from the town, then killed them, took their clothing, ate what they could, and after rendering the fat to sell in the market, finally dumped the bones down a well. They were only caught when a mother tailed one of the brothers home after seeing him wearing a shirt that had belonged to her own child.⁸¹

Such stories, whether true or false, hinted at the potential consequences of social attitudes toward uncontrolled children during the famine. In Jabal ‘Āmil (and in Sidon and Beirut, but undoubtedly elsewhere too) the large number of well-aggregated orphaned or abandoned children represented an annoyance, or even a subtle threat to communities. Given their numbers, this is not surprising. Maqdisī estimated that 2,600 orphans had survived the war in the Shūf in an area that officially numbered 155,938 prewar inhabitants. Conservatively, 1.5 percent of the overall prewar population survived

76 Dodge, “Relief Work in Syria During the Period of the War,” 7.

77 Interview with Hayat Mahmoud, January 24, 2014.

78 Doolittle, *Pathos and Humor in Wartime Syria*, 33.

79 John Nakhkhūl, “Bilād al-Batrūn fī l-ḥarb al-‘ālamīyya al-ūlā: al-jarād, al-ghalā’, al-majā’a, al-wafayāt,” in *Lubnān fī l-Ḥarb al-‘ālamīyya al-ūlā* 2, ed. Antoine Qassīs (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt al-Jāmi’a al-Lubnāniyya, 2011), 821.

80 Orfalea, *The Arab Americans*, 68.

81 This was discussed in many places, including Laḥd Khāṭir, *Jabal Lubnān fī ‘ahd al-mutaṣarrifīyyīn* (Beirut: Dār Laḥd Khāṭir, 1982), 207. NA, “Tripoli Station Report 1917–1918,” PHS Archives RG 115-19-18, Tripoli Station Reports 1891–1919, 4.

as orphans.⁸² George Doolittle nearly tripled this estimate, guessing that the war left 7,500 children.⁸³ Even omitting the large number who had died or had been rehomed with relatives, such a total suggests that the number of homeless children was likely quite large in some of the larger towns. The village of 'Ayn 'Alaq was left with a total of 12 orphans after the war, with other children scattered through the valleys, across the Biqā' and even into Jordan, seeking survival.⁸⁴ While there is no mention of criminal gangs recruiting children as beggars or thieves as was reported in Istanbul during the war, it would not be surprising.⁸⁵ We do know that orphaned children did band together for protection, moving from town to town and city to city seeking shelter, food and safety from both animals and criminals.⁸⁶ This was prudent—Sulaymān Ṣāḥir's wartime retrospective described several cases of child abuse that escalated to the point of murder and cannibalism.⁸⁷ Though vulnerable children were certainly not passive victims, their experience of the famine was exceptionally difficult. Between the physical pain of hunger, the cold of winter, the desperation of need and the psychological pain of loss, uncertainty, and the added stress from the need to care for loved ones, children were forced to deal with untold varieties of risk and distress, often without the stability of a secure home, the loving care of their parents, or even a discernible path into the future.

Social attitudes towards poverty at times made it more difficult for impoverished children to receive the assistance that they needed, either by rendering them unwanted or problematic in the eyes of those who could help them, or by associating them with the perceived contamination of poverty. Humanitarian attitudes were not merely reflections of relations of power, but policies began to manifest some of the beliefs that the aid workers held about the famine and its apparent victims over time. In 1917, the American Mission and Red Cross developed a release strategy that, while favoring aid to children, restricted its distribution to the soup kitchens, where children would have to eat it on site. The justification for this was the moral failure of the Lebanese population in the eyes of the American humanitarian aid workers, who cited two cases in a station report to support their stance. In one, a father took the food that his child was given at the soup kitchen until the child starved to death. Curiously, the second case described a father who kicked his daughter out of his house when missionaries refused to allow her

82 Maqdisī, *A'zam ḥarb*, 70. For statistics, see Muḥammad Bahjat and Muḥammad Rafīq al-Tamīmī, *Wilāyat Bayrūt 2* (Bayrūt: Dār Laḥd Khātir, 1987), 23; Ḥusni Bayk Muḥyi l-Din, "Jadwal iḥṣa' ahālī Jabal Lubnān 'an sanat 1329," in "al-Umūr al-ṣiḥḥiyya fi Jabal Lubnān," (pullout) in *Lubnān: mabāḥith 'ilmīyya wa-ijtimā'iyya 2*, edited by Fu'ād Ifrām al-Bustānī (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt al-Jāmi'a al-Lubnāniyya, 1970), 634–35.

83 Doolittle, *Pathos and Humor*, 78.

84 Mārūn Ḥāyik, *'Ayn 'Alaq bayn al-qarn al-sābi' wa-l-qarn al-ḥadi wa-l-'ishrīn* (Beirut: Mia Press, 2005).

85 Ahmad Emin Yalman, *Turkey in the World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 258.

86 Sulaymān Ṣāḥir, *Jabal 'Āmil fī l-ḥarb al-kawniyya* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Maṭbū'āt al-Sharqiyya, 1986), 46.

87 Ṣāḥir, *Jabal 'Āmil*, 46.

to bring food home—an obviously negative consequence of the humanitarian policy, but one that served as a justification for the strategy due to the ostensible moral collapse of the needy.⁸⁸ As innocent children, social attitudes afforded them some support, and often sympathy, but accessing humanitarian aid at a time when many communities were paring down charitable giving was only possible if one was in the right place and could gain access at a time of overwhelming demand.⁸⁹ In the end, salvation was all too often reserved only for the lucky few who were able to access it and the luckier few who were deemed worthy of it.

Conclusion: Suffer the Children

Though most sources regarded children as little more than Maksudyan's discourses among adults, it is curious what outcomes those discourses sought to produce. In the postwar period, children were viewed as undeniable innocents whose suffering in imagery and writings represented the wrongs that the Lebanese population as a whole suffered. If "they" (generally meaning the Ottoman Turks) could do *that* to children, what could they do to adults? As sources of pathos, children were very effective literary devices, even if it made them little more than metaphors. On the other hand, children were also effectively used to point out perceived failings of other adults. The abuse of children, their abandonment to the streets, and especially atrocities wherein they were murdered and cannibalized carried a harsh judgment of either the country's leadership, or even the moral character of the people themselves. For many, famine was corrosive, and what was better evidence of that than the butchery of helpless children?

As this chapter indicates, the characterization of children in the wartime and postwar discourses were all gross oversimplifications of the actual struggles that children faced during the war, and of the ways that children sought to overcome them. In such accounts, children were regarded as a homogeneous, universally suffering group, whose lives had been tragically twisted by the famine. In practice, to be a child in the famine was far more complicated—but in many ways just as determined by aspects of their identity beyond their youth alone. While childhood granted children sympathy, how they were actually treated was often influenced by other simultaneous famine discourses. As a result, some children were worthy of sympathy and support, and others were left to fend for themselves.

88 Robert Byerly, "Report of Sidon Station, 1917 to 1918," PHS Archives RG-115-17-19 Sidon Station Reports 1907-35, 1.

89 Brand, "That They May Have Life," 57-58.

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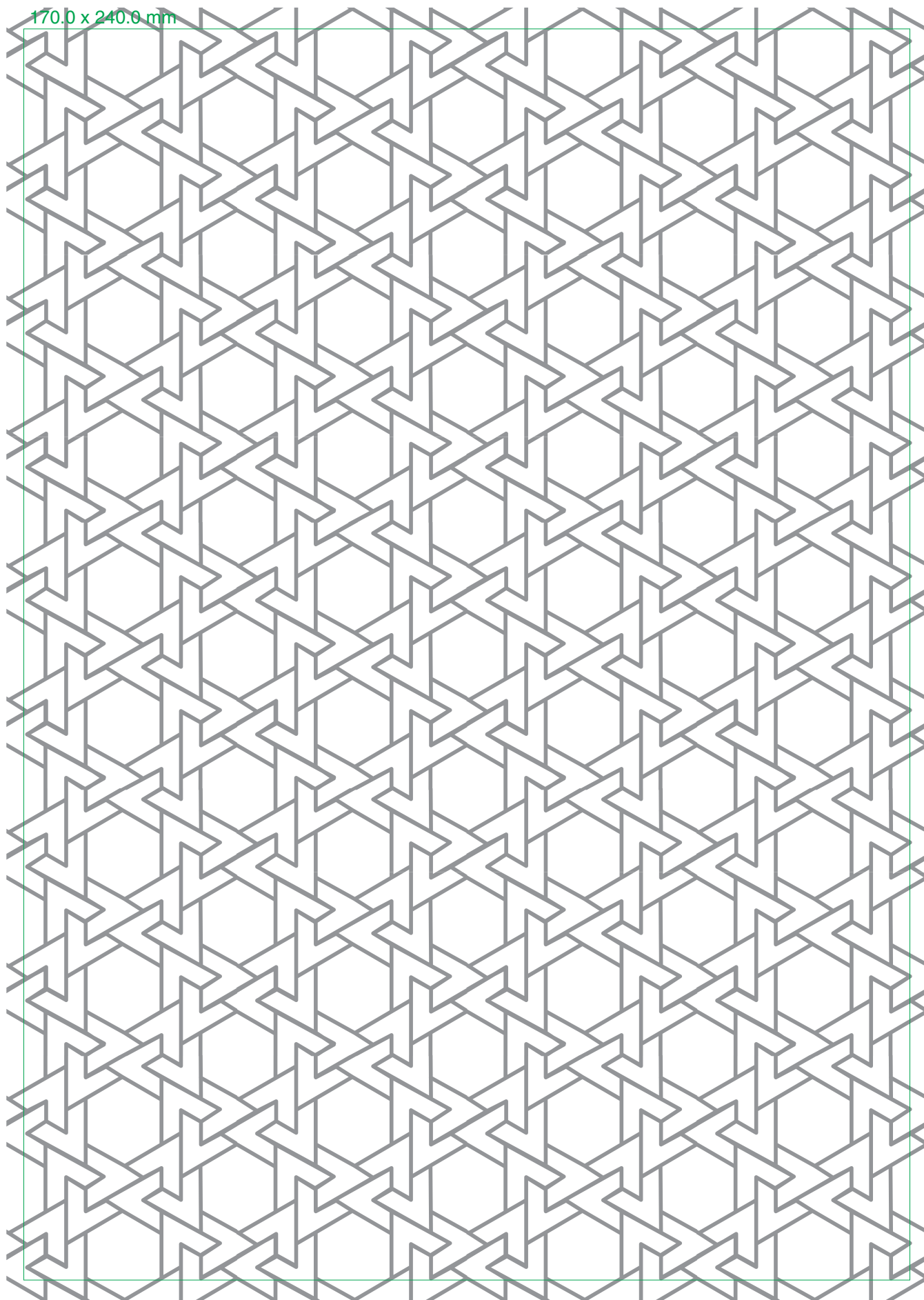
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Early Expressions of Maronite Identity

The *Madiha 'ala Jabal Lubnan*: Ibn al-Qila'i, Panegyric, and History in late Fifteenth-Century Mount Lebanon

Charles al-Hayek

*"The construction of a past ... is a project that selectively organizes events in a relation of continuity with a contemporary subject, thereby creating an appropriated representation of a life leading up to the present, that is, a life history fashioned in the act of self-definition."*¹

National narratives have been identified as powerful cultural tools, influencing both historical understanding and national identity construction. These national narratives use histories to construct and develop a communal sense by identifying past and present, by idealizing a past, and by looking at how past and present are related in enabling the process of national identification. There is a lot of literature on the construction of the Lebanese and Maronite identity, and on how "Traditional Maronite historiography seems to have originated as an expression of national pride."²

This paper aims at examining the "Panegyric on Mount Lebanon," written by Ibn al-Qila'i in the late fifteenth century, as the first recorded expression of a "Maronite" identity, and aims at observing the process of the construction of this identity in the poem. In this paper, I argue that the "Panegyric on Mount Lebanon," as an early source on early Maronite history, reflected the three fundamental elements of that expression of national pride: perpetual orthodoxy, i.e. union with Rome, struggle for independence in Mount Lebanon and autonomy vis-à-vis direct Muslim rule, and internal cohesion under

1 Jonathan Friedman, "The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity," *American Anthropologist* 94, no. 4 (1992): 837.

2 Kamal Salibi, *Maronite Historians of Medieval Lebanon* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1959), 15.

the authority of the spiritual leader, the patriarch, and the secular Maronite leaders, the *Muqaddams*. Elements expressed in the panegyric were revived and incorporated into the emerging “Lebanist” idea in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, as the Maronite idea of Lebanon became wider and started incorporating other communities.

The elements of the *Madiha* resonate with the long process of the construction of a Maronite, Lebanist, and later Lebanese identity in the writings of mainly Maronite cleric scholars between the early eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their writings were instruments “...that would render a nation out of the Church’s followers and a nation-state out of the lands the Church controlled.”³ The key components of this process were the attempts to justify, through historical writings, the separation of the Maronite Church and its followers from their cultural and political context. To assert a separate identity for the Maronite Church, the Maronite people and their land, dissociation from the Arab-Islamic milieu of *Bilad al-Sham* was imperative, and the elements of the *Madiha* were used in shaping this identity. The three fundamental elements of the Maronite identity as expressed by Ibn al-Qila’i, union with Rome, autonomy vis-à-vis direct Muslim rule, and internal cohesion under, were gradually integrated and reformulated in a chain of history writings that start with the works of Patriarch al-*Duwayhi*. Later on, the same process can be observed in the writings of Bishop Nicholas Murad, Bishop Yusuf al-Dibs,⁴ Patriarch Boulos Masa’ad, Father Boutros Dib, and Father Boutros Daw.⁵ The emerging Lebanist idea expressed in the writings of these clerics was coextensive with Maronite identity, and later became a fundamental part of the interpretation of Lebanon as a distinctly Christian, a distinctly Maronite unit, by partisan historians in the period of the Mutasarrifiyya. Furthermore, the elements of the *Madiha* were also used by lay scholars in the early twentieth century, such as Boulos Njeim (Jouplain) and Yusuf Sawda, in their formulation of the Lebanese idea and project of a Lebanese state.

Their writings had significant impact on the formulation of the Lebanist idea and Lebanese nationalism, and they give a retrospective value to the *Madiha*’s status as an instrument of collective identity in both its own historical context, and as a reference point for Lebanist constructivist historians at a later date. The chronicles and historical writings intersect with the *Madiha*; however, they are not identical with its content. What is observed is that the historical aspect of the *Madiha* is not often preserved in the later Maronite texts, yet the elements of the Maronite collective identity are all inspired by the *Madiha*, and still to this day, foundational in the representation of the Maronite identity.

3 Mouannes Hojairi, *Writing the History of Mount Lebanon* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2021), 2.

4 Yusuf al-Dibs, *al-Jami’ al-mufasssal fi tarikh al-Mawarina al-mu’assal* (Beirut: Dar Lahd Khatir, 1987).

5 Butrus Daw, *Tarikh al-Mawarina al-dini wa-l-siyasi wa-l-hadari*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar, 1972).

Given the significance of the *Madiha* in the genealogy of the Maronite, Lebanist, and Lebanese identities, observing it in its context sheds new light on this process of identity and narrative construction in Lebanese history.

1 A Missionary to His Own People

The writings of Ibn al-Qila'i play a pivotal role in the construction of a Maronite identity. The historical narratives developed in his *zajaliyyat* (vernacular poems) and letters were used by later Maronite historians, and are still to this day used as a primary source for an obscure period in Lebanese history: Frankish and Mamluk rule. In the absence of any written biography of Ibn al-Qila'i, little is known of his early life. He was born as Jibrail Ibn Butrus Ibn al-Qila'i around the middle of the fifteenth century in the Maronite town of Lehfed in Bilad Jubayl, in the *Mamlaka* of Tripoli, a province under Mamluk rule. He received basic instruction in Arabic and Syriac in his teens, and was later recruited by the Franciscan order by Fra Gryphon of Flanders, sometime between 1470 and 1475, and sent to Venice, and then to Rome, to be trained in Catholic dogma and Latin⁶ language. He is supposedly the first Maronite to be sent for training in "Western" Catholic institutions. After his ordination as a Franciscan friar, he returned to Mount Lebanon in 1493 as a missionary to his own people. In Mount Lebanon, he starts an intensive career in ardently preaching union with Rome to the Maronites, in the context of the Jacobite crisis. During this period, he wrote extensively in prose and in vernacular Arabic poetry, i.e. *zajal*, in an effort to promote the ideas of Maronite perpetual orthodoxy, the benefits of union with Rome, and of internal social, religious and political cohesion. He went back to Cyprus as superior of the Franciscan in the island, and was appointed Maronite bishop of Cyprus in 1507, where he died in 1516. He is considered as the first Maronite to have had access to sources on the Maronite Church in Rome. To refute the heretical Monothelistic origins of the Maronite church, as western sources suggested, he elaborated the theory of Maronite original and unbroken orthodoxy with Rome.⁷ This is still, to the present day, a major element of Maronite historiography and identity. His writings are an important source on Maronite Church history and the history of Lebanon under late Mamluk rule.

6 Joseph Mukarzel, *Gabriel Ibn al-Qila'i (ca 1516): approche biographique et étude du corpus* (Beirut: P. USEK, 2007), 53.

7 Kamal Salibi, "The Traditional Historiography of the Maronites," in *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 219.

2 The Panegyric in Historical Context

Ibn al-Qila'i wrote history as a sermon to his people to prove the unbroken union with Rome, and to explain that periods of heresies and division were the causes of the calamities that Maronites experienced in their history. His panegyric was written in times of what could be described as a Maronite identity crisis, on the backdrop of solidifying union with Rome, and fighting the Jacobite influence and settlement in the Maronite areas of Mount Lebanon.

In fact, the relative security and prosperity Jubbāt Bsharri⁸ enjoyed under the rule of the *Muqaddams*, local highland governors, was a factor in the movement of Jacobites from upper Mesopotamia (Mardin and Tur Abdin), and Melkites from Hawran and the Anti-Lebanon mountain range, into the Jubbāt. Fleeing unrest linked to Mongol raids, they appear to have had higher literacy rates from the largely peasant illiterate Maronite community. Taking advantage of this Maronite illiteracy, the learned elites of the Jacobites used education as a tool to convert Maronite youth. The young *Muqaddam* Abd al-Min'im II (ruled between 1471 and 1495) became a convert, and the Jacobite community enjoyed his support in building churches in Bsharri and the Jubbāt. This Jacobite activity is mentioned by both Ibn al-Qila'i⁹ and by later Maronite historians such as *al-Duwayhi*.¹⁰ Jacobite activity resulted in the spread of the doctrine and rituals of Miaphysism, the dogma of the Jacobite Church, amongst Maronites. The Maronite patriarch, the majority of the clergy, and lay Maronites viewed Jacobite activity with suspicion and saw it as a threat to the unity of the Maronite Church and community.

To counter the preachings of the Jacobites, Ibn al-Qila'i set out to write his *Madiha* around 1495. The *Madiha* was written as a vernacular Arabic poem, or *zajal*, a popular medium in Mount Lebanon to express different aspects of life, including quasi-historical and heroic epics.

It was conceived as an educational strategy to teach Maronite peasants, who were illiterate and accustomed to this form of popular poetry, the fundamentals of the Catholic faith. The *Madiha* was to also give them a sense of a common identity, developed around the notions of religious orthodoxy, internal cohesion, and Mount Lebanon as the Maronite homeland. The panegyric was also a sermon to Maronites, explaining that calamities are a divine retribution and a punishment for lapsing into heresy.

8 Jubbāt: Mamluk subdivision of a province, usually located in a mountainous region, also known as Jumat.

9 Jibra'il Ibn al-Qila'i, *Zajaliyyat Jibra'il ibn al-Qila'i: dirasat wa tahqiq Butrus al-Jummayil* (Beirut: Dar Lahd Khatir, 1982).

10 Istifan al-Duwayhi, *Tarikh al-Azmina* (Beirut: Dar Lahd Khater, 1985).

3 Structure, Language, and Logic of the Panegyric

The panegyric on Mount Lebanon is considered to be the longest poetical work by Ibn al-Qila'i and the one "which almost approaches the epic."¹¹ It consists of 295 quatrains composed of four strophes, written in Saint Ephrem's meter or "Memre."¹² This paper adopts the structure of the poem proposed by Dr. Moukarzel in his work on Ibn al-Qila'i,¹³ dividing it into twenty-six parts. It will explore the different notions used by Ibn al-Qila'i (geographical, ethnic, cultural, national, communal, and political) to formulate the Maronite identity, the notion of Mount Lebanon as a Maronite homeland, and the historical struggle to maintain its autonomy from Muslim rule as the *raison-d'être* of the Maronites.

3.1 *Preamble (Verses 1–3)*

The author opens his panegyric with the invocation of God, and in verse number two, he reflects on the importance of recording history and mentions the previous annals in verse three, which he used as sources. What is interesting is that in verse number three he uses the terms "Our Homelands" and "Dwellers in Mount Lebanon" to describe the Maronites and their relation to Mount Lebanon. Both terms reflect Maronite communal and geographical claims of ownership of Mount Lebanon as their exclusive homeland.

3.2 *Internal Situation (Verses 4–18)*

This part refers to a semi-legendary past when Maronites lived alone, victorious in Mount Lebanon as a Christian community in full union with Rome. The religious and heroic dimension of this part is reflected by the language used by Ibn al-Qila'i to underline this imagined golden past. In verse number four, Maronites are depicted as having "Kings" and "Heros," defending coastal regions and mountains and living in "The mountain of God," i.e. in Mount Lebanon, now given a divine dimension. Furthermore, in verse number five, he states that "God dwelled amongst them" and gave authority in the mountain to the humblest to rule the land. Verse numbers five, six, and seven detail the role of the governor as a just ruler, using laws defined by the "Seat of Peter," i.e. the Papacy, to dispense justice. Verse numbers eight to twelve describe the influx of refugees into Mount Lebanon who convert (i.e. to the Maronite faith) and are given a dwelling by the patriarch, who is depicted as the leader of the Maronites in Mount

¹¹ Salibi, *Maronite Historians*, 35.

¹² Seven-syllable meter (7+7) used by Saint Ephrem, fourth century Syriac theologian (d. 373 AD), became known as the "Meter of Mar Ephrem" or "Memre" (Sermons).

¹³ Mukarzel, *Gabriel Ibn al-Qila'i*, 420.

Lebanon. The religious identity of the inhabitants in Mount Lebanon is detailed in verse numbers fifteen to eighteen. The Maronites' exclusive ownership of Mount Lebanon is underlined by listing out the "others" in verse fifteen as heretics, Muslims, and Jews. This verse implies, in religious terms and in using the confrontation with "Others," that all of Mount Lebanon was Maronite, and belonged to no other. Verse numbers sixteen to eighteen detail the authority that the Maronite patriarch enjoyed over his people. One observes in this section that Mount Lebanon is God's given homeland to the Maronites, and non-Maronite Christian heretics, namely Jacobite and Melkites, Muslims and Jews, are not welcomed to dwell in it, or simply, by divine will, cannot do so.

3.3 *Geographical Definition of Mount Lebanon (Verses 19–24)*

According to verse nineteen, Mount Lebanon has well defined borders, protected with "the sword of faith," with no Muslims living within its borders. Again, the author uses religious and military terminology to outline the elements necessary to defend Mount Lebanon with a sword, highlighting the struggle to keep it free from Muslim rule, and with faith, i.e. the Catholic faith. Verse numbers twenty to twenty-four describe areas in the present-day caza of al-Matn as the nucleus of Maronite presence in Lebanon and enumerate names of villages and regions, some still identifiable in present days with the same names, with military fortifications and bishop seats. It also mentions the beauty and fertility of the district in verse number twenty-two. The inhabitants of this district are described at the closure of verse number twenty-four as knights, heroes, and soldiers, overseeing these regions. Here, the author seems to extend Mount Lebanon to districts beyond its fifteenth-century geographical scope, identified with the northern high segment of the present day western range of Mount Lebanon.

3.4 *Death of a "King" (Verses 25–30)*

A "king" is placed by Ibn al-Qila'i in Baskinta, a town in present day al-Matn caza which operated as a point for Maronite raids into the Beqaa fertile plain. Following the raids, the "king" moves to Kab Elias, an important caravan stop on the route linking Beirut to Damascus, to secure his control over the Beqaa, an area placed as verse number twenty-six states, "under his foot." Verse number twenty-six mentions that his deeds reached the "Sultan," without either naming him or identifying the state he rules. The sultan sends his envoy a *Khal'a*, the symbol of recognition of a function by the imperial or central authority. The envoy invites the king and his soldiers to a feast, where, once drunk, the king is killed and is buried in Kab Elias. Subsequently, Maronites lose the Beqaa to the Muslims because the king died a sinful death while drunk, and his name was not recorded by history. The loss of land, power, or prestige is thus, as explained by the author, a consequence of sins. This will be a recurring theme in the panegyric.

3.5 *Sem'an's Heroism (Verses 30–36)*

The king's nephew Sem'an, who is described as being a *muqaddam*, a title used in Mamluk administration, takes the initiative and fights the Muslims for thirty years. With an army of a thousand and five hundred soldiers, he fights the Muslims, and his Maronite troops are victorious. However, they have to abandon Antelias, on the coast of al-Matn. According to verse number thirty-six, he decimated the Muslims and left no man standing. This part reflects on the heroism of the Maronite leaders in the context of their struggle to safeguard the autonomy of Mount Lebanon vis-à-vis Muslim rule.

3.6 *Leadership of Sem'an (Verses 37–45)*

Following his victory, Sem'an pays a visit to the "King" of Jubayl. As explained by Salibi, this Sem'an may have been one of the vassals of the Frankish lords of Gibelet (Jubayl), operating in Kisrawan.¹⁴ He is accompanied by the Maronite patriarch in his visit. It is in this section that Ibn al-Qila'i proposes a geographical definition of Mount Lebanon as being an area that stretches from al-Durayb in Akkar to *Bilad al-Shuf*. Once again, the geographical definition of Mount Lebanon is extended beyond the widely-recognized scope in the fifteen centuries. He mentions the borders as he speaks of forty Maronite bishops, gathering with the Patriarch to sanction the investiture of Sem'an as ruler of Kisrawan. Verse number forty-three depicts how secular Maronite leadership, i.e. the *muqaddam*, is subordinated to the religious or ecclesiastical leadership, i.e. the Maronite church. Sem'an is granted victory by God as long as he is an obedient Maronite (Verse 44). This religious dimension to victory, right to the land, prosperity, and peace as elements linked to religious obedience and orthodoxy, is also one of the recurrent themes in the panegyric. Sem'an dies after long years in power and was buried in Baskinta.

3.7 *Muqaddam Kisra (Verses 46–59)*

In this segment of the panegyric, Ibn al-Qila'i uses in verse forty-six *Marun* as a metonym for Maronites, who under the leadership of *Muqaddam* Kisra lived in victorious times. In verse forty-seven, Kisra is recognized by the Byzantine emperor as "King of Mount Lebanon," another element to the Maronite claims to exclusive ownership of Mount Lebanon. And in verse number fifty, Kisrawan¹⁵ is said to have been named after him. Raids conducted by the *muqaddam* of Lehfed,¹⁶ Kamel, into the land of Baalbek (Verse 51) lead to some sort of an alliance with *Muqaddam* Kisra. This part, especially verse numbers

¹⁴ Salibi, *Maronite Historians*, 48.

¹⁵ Kisrawan: a district in central Mount Lebanon.

¹⁶ Lehfed: a town in the district of Jubayl.

fifty-four and fifty-five, echo the Frankish systems of feudalism and vassalage. This might echo what historical sources, mainly Frankish, describe Maronites as auxiliaries to Frankish troops, particularly as skilful archers. Kamel ends up marrying the daughter of Kisra, and another, *Muqaddam* Mas'oud, is mentioned in Hbalin¹⁷ (Verse 55). It is important to note that the events related by Ibn al-Qila'i are rarely chronological, and are often confused. It is also important to observe the metonym used for the Maronite here: Marun, probably an allusion to the spiritual father of the community, Saint Maroun, who died around 410 A.D. Once again, Ibn al-Qila'i is depicting the Maronites in the panegyric as a religious community, fighting for a homeland, i.e. Mount Lebanon. This community is granted victory by God as long as it maintains political cohesion, under the joint leadership of the Patriarch and the *muqaddams*.

3.8 *The Kisrawan Campaign (Verses 60–82)*

The first part of the poem, which deals with Maronite victorious past, ends here. The second part starts with verse number sixty and deals with the end of the Maronite golden age in Mount Lebanon. Verse number sixty is particularly important; in it, the author uses the expression *Sha'b Marun* (People of Marun), describing the Maronites as a *Sha'b*, or a distinct social and religious community living in a period of bliss. However, this period of bliss seems to irritate the devil who sends two monks to preach the Jacobite doctrine in Mount Lebanon. Verse numbers sixty-one to sixty-three might be considered as a reflection of the Maronite schism of 1283. According to historical sources, union with Rome did not enjoy unanimity, and Maronites living in the upper segments of Mount Lebanon seem to have refused this union.¹⁸ This tension, attributed to heresy in the panegyric, leads the Pope to send envoys to correct the doctrine and faith of the Maronites. However, Patriarch Luqa al-Banharani refuses to meet with the Pope's legates. The schism paves the way for Mamluk sultan Barqouq to send his armies to conquer Mount Lebanon and Kisrawan. Verse number sixty-five mentions that Mamluk soldiers besiege "Mount Lebanon" and found it, according to verse number sixty-six, divided on itself, subject to tyranny, and having lost obedience and faith, i.e. loyalty to Catholic orthodoxy. Verse number sixty-seven mentions papal excommunication, the ultimate Catholic sanction. Divided, ex-communicated from the Catholic Church, and weakened, the Maronites are now prone to Muslim invasion. Kisrawan is devastated and Maronites are defeated as a result of their sins and heresy. This part unfolds as a sermon, reminding the Maronites of their bygone golden years under union with Rome and strong internal cohesion. It also depicts the calamities as a direct result of lapsing into heresy.

¹⁷ Hbalin: a town in the district of Jubayl.

¹⁸ See Kamal Salibi, "Maronite Church in the Middle Ages and its Union with Rome," *Oriens Christianus* 42 (1958): 42.

3.9 *Patriarch Jeremiah in Rome (Verses 83–104)*

The lord of Jubayl asks the Maronite patriarch, Irmya al-‘Amshiti (Jeremiah), to defend for his own flock in Rome in the presence of the Pope and to ask for forgiveness for the sins of the *Sha‘b Marun* (verse numbers eighty-five and six). The annulment of the papal excommunication is stated as a condition to receive papal blessing once again (verse number eighty-six). ‘Amshit, a town in the vicinity of Gibelet, the Frankish lordship of Jubayl, is mentioned as the seat of the Maronite patriarch, who leaves to Rome with a deacon from the little town of Habil. Verse number ninety-one describes Irmya in Rome as the patriarch of Mount Lebanon, strengthening the claims of ownership of Mount Lebanon by the Maronites. Verse number ninety-five mentions the words spoken by the patriarch in the presence of the Pope. He speaks of “his people” as being obedient and faithful to the Catholic doctrine and Church. Verse number one hundred and four mentions the return of the patriarch with Cardinal Guillermo as papal legate, sealing the union of the Maronite Church with Rome. To witness the return to the Catholic faith, the Maronites are identified as the *Ahl Jabal Lubnān*, or the community of Mount Lebanon. It is observed that in this part, Maronites are described as both a *Sha‘b* (people), and as *Ahl* (community). Ibn al-Qila‘i depicts the Maronites in the *Madiha* as a religious community which has ownership of a geographical space, and which is placed under a patriarch acting as a quasi-tribal leader, in his capacity as spiritual and temporal head.

3.10 *Union with Rome (Verses 104–115)*

This segment of the *Madiha* describes the Maronite patriarch as Patriarch of Mount Lebanon (Verse 106), and mentions a profession of faith of the Maronites that conforms with the Catholic dogma. This profession reflects the adoption of the tenets of the Christological dogma as defined by the Catholic Church, in opposition to that defined by the Jacobite faith (Verses 111–113). It also states that heretics cannot live in Mount Lebanon any more (Verse 109), as it goes back to its union with Rome. The author stresses once again that the Maronite identity is a religious community whose identity is constructed around recognition of the union with Rome, an exclusive claim to Mount Lebanon, and the obedience to the patriarch.

3.11 *Sedition in Jubbat al-Munaytra (Verses 116–119)*

A sedition is recorded in the high mountains of Jubayl in the rugged Jubbat al-Mnaytara region, following the death of the Frankish lord of Jubayl. A Maronite *muqaddam*, Bakhos, assists the young new heir to the lordship of Jubayl. The Jubbat is joined by Lehfed in the sedition, and a new *muqaddam* and a bishop are elected (verse number one hundred eighteen). This new sedition pushes the Maronite patriarch to leave Yanūh

in Jubbat al-Munaytra¹⁹ to Kfifan,²⁰ a town closer to Jubayl. This part reflects the internal development of the Maronite community following the establishment of formal union with Rome, which seems not to have enjoyed unanimity. Maronites who lived in high mountains refused, while Maronites who lived closer to areas under Frankish control accepted. The basics for Maronite identity, as explained previously by the author, were not unanimously accepted by all Maronites, and religious and social cohesion is lost. Sedition is depicted as an internal threat to Maronite cohesion, a threat that opens the Mount Lebanon to misfortune.

3.12 *Sultan in Qanubin (Verses 120–122)*

A deposed hypothetical Mamluk sultan enjoys the hospitality of the monks of the valley of Qanubin (Verse 120). Once again on the throne, the Sultan sends financial assistance to restore the monastery and other ascetic foundations in the region (Verse 122). However, this financial assistance, being foreign and Muslim, opens the Jubbat to misfortunes. Once again, the Christian dimension of the Maronite identity and its land, i.e. the Qanubin Valley as being part of Mount Lebanon, are stressed in this part by Ibn al-Qila'i. This section was probably added to emphasize the Maronite identity of the land and the unwelcomed nature of any Muslim intervention.

3.13 *The Fall of Hadath al-Jubbat (Verses 123–134)*

Given the situation, strangers take up residence in Qanubin Valley, disguised as monks (Verse 124). They appear to be forty Muslim soldiers who took residence in al-Fraydis.²¹ The *muqaddam* uncovers the plot and the forty soldiers are killed. The incident leads to seven years of war with the Muslims. Finally, the town of Hadath al-Jubbat²² falls into Muslim hands because of treason (Verse 131). The inhabitants are massacred and placed under Mamluk rule. This part reflects the fall of Hadath al-Jubbat to Turcoman irregulars acting as auxiliaries of the Mamluk army, operating in the hinterland of Tripoli in the context of a truce signed between the Frankish county of Tripoli and the Mamluk state in 1283. This part stresses the dangers of Muslims living in Maronite land and depicts, once again, the ongoing struggle to maintain Maronite lands free of Muslim rule.

19 Jubbat al-Munaytra: a district in the highlands of Jubayl.

20 Kfifan: a town in the hinterland of Jubayl.

21 Al-Fraydis: a region in Jubbat Bsharri, Northern Lebanon.

22 Hadath al-Jubbat: a major town in Jubbat Bsharri, Northern Lebanon.

3.14 *Muqaddam in Bsharri (Verses 135–143)*

Maronites elect a new *muqaddam* in Bsharri, with jurisdiction over an area that stretches from Hardin to Aytu (Verse 137). The new *muqaddam* is expected to defend the Jubbat and prevent the entry of any Egyptian (probably Mamluk) or Muslim into the Maronite land. This part stands out as a warning to all Maronite *muqaddams*: they are blessed by the Pope as long as they, and their offspring, maintain union with Rome. Should they fall into heresy, they will be subject to ex-communication (Verse 138). Once again, the exclusivity of the claims of ownership of the Jubbat as part of Mount Lebanon by the Maronites is reflected by one of the duties of the *muqaddam*: he has to forbid any Muslim or heretic to live in the Jubbat under his authority. The *muqaddam*, who represents highest Maronite secular authority, is subordinated to the Maronite Church through the office of archdeacon, or Shidyaq,²³ in verse number one hundred forty-two. He is also recognized as *Kashif* (Verse 143) by the Mamluks, or a local provincial administrator/tax collector. Here again, Ibn al-Qila'i stresses the importance of the obedience to the Pope, i.e. the Catholic Church, as one of the elements of Maronite identity and the exclusivity of Maronite presence in Mount Lebanon, with no non-Maronite living within it.

3.15 *Muqaddam Salem (Verses 144–149)*

Under this new *muqaddam*, strangers start infiltrating once again into Mount Lebanon, such as Jacobites and Melkites, who come and settle in the Jubbat. The cruelty of the *muqaddam* in his decision to allow non-Maronites to settle in the Jubbat leads to his excommunication and fall (Verse 149). The loss of union with Rome is depicted by Ibn al-Qila'i here as a warning; Maronite leaders should never forget that union with Rome is a key element in defining Maronite identity.

3.16 *Fall of Tripoli (Verses 150–155)*

In this part, Ibn al-Qila'i draws a correlation with the end of Frankish rule in Tripoli and the division within the Maronite community (Verse 151). Once again, the author stresses internal cohesion as one basis of Maronite identity, and its loss as one of the main factors of the weakness and defeat of the Maronites and of the defeat of the Frankish in Tripoli.

23 Shidyaq: a subordinate office in the Church.

3.17 *Maronite Battles (Verses 156–175)*

In the segment, all of the non-heretical *muqaddams* come together to fight for the defence of Mount Lebanon. Six Maronite *muqaddams*, Khaled of Mishmish,²⁴ Sinan and Suleiman of Ilij,²⁵ Sa'adeh and Sarkis of Lehfed, and Benyamin of Hardin²⁶ are mentioned by name and fight the Mamluk troops and are victorious in defending the land. The heroic tones of this part depict victory as the subsequent outcome of Maronite political cohesion.

3.18 *Kashif Niqula (Verses 176–190)*

The thirty victorious *muqaddams* (Verse 177) refuse to give any of the booty to the *muqaddam* of Bsharri and demand his demotion from the Patriarch because he is a traitor and a heretic. Niqula, the new *muqaddam* appointed by the Patriarch, is entrusted with the mission of punishing the corrupted generation in Mount Lebanon (Verse 185). Heretics flee Mount Lebanon in fear of the new *muqaddam* (Verse 120). Once again, Ibn al-Qila'i depicts social and religious Maronite cohesion as fundamental elements in the defence of the Maronite community and Mount Lebanon as their homeland.

3.19 *Prosperity in Mount Lebanon (Verses 191–199)*

The equilibrium between Maronite ecclesiastical and temporal authority is restored, Muslims are at bay, heretics leave, Maronite *muqaddams* are united, and Mount Lebanon is secure under their authority (Verse 191). The three elements of Maronite success usher once again a period of prosperity (Verse 194). For forty years, Mount Lebanon lives through an intense religious life in perfect union with Rome (Verse 198). Mount Lebanon is therefore in a period of felicity, self-protected against Muslims, with God himself giving this joy his blessing as long as union with Rome is maintained.

3.20 *Elisa The Hermit (Verses 200–204)*

In this segment, the author explains how the devil seduces the hermit Elisa, who becomes arrogant (Verse 200) and “a blasphemous heretic like a snake” (Verse 203). He teaches heresy; however, he falls and dies. This story is a warning for bad days to come and a transition from the prosperity that Mount Lebanon witnessed under Kashif Niqula to upcoming times of trouble as a result of heresy.

²⁴ Mishmish: a town in the highlands of Jubayl.

²⁵ Ilij: a town in the highlands of Jubayl. It was the seat of the Maronite Patriarchate from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century.

²⁶ Hardin: a town in the highlands of Batroun.

3.21 *Fallen Patriarch (Verses 205–217)*

Heresy spreads again in the Jubbāt (Verse 205), and even the patriarch seems to accommodate the situation (Verse 206). Maronites are once again divided (Verse 207). This political, geographical, and religious division leads to a Muslim invasion and the conversion of many Maronites to Islam (Verse 210). God abandons the Maronites for their relapse into heresy and division (Verse 211), and Muslims (i.e. Mamluks) end up conquering the whole of *Marunya* (Verse 213). Mamluk conquest is made worse by the fall of the patriarch and the death of the new patriarch from Hjulā,²⁷ who is wrongly accused by forty false witnesses (Verse 215) and burned alive in Tripoli.

It is interesting to observe the name that Ibn al-Qilā'i provides for the land of the Maronites in verse number 213: *Marunya*. The term is obviously derived from *Marun*, the name of the spiritual father of the Maronites. Ibn al-Qilā'i links the religious name of the community to its geographical space, making them inseparable, and strengthening the Maronite claims to exclusive ownership of Mount Lebanon.

3.22 *Union Again (Verses 218–222)*

In this segment, the author reflects on the role of the papal legate Almeric, who intercedes and obtains papal blessings to the Maronites (Verse 218). Maronites elect a new patriarch who confirms the adherence of his flock to the faith of *Marun* and union with Rome (Verses 221–222). Rome is depicted here as a “savior,” and her intervention restores Maronite union with the Mother Church. As always, this connection to the notion of union with Rome is central to the Maronite religious identity, as explained in the poem in many parts by Ibn al-Qilā'i.

3.23 *Jacobites in Mount Lebanon (Verses 223–231)*

In this part, Ibn al-Qilā'i, once again, details the factors of Maronite misfortune: a weak patriarch who is under the influence of a strong *muqaddam*, 'Abd al-Min'im, who converted to the Jacobite faith. Intense Jacobite preaching is mentioned, targeting mainly Maronite youth (Verse 227). Another significant element in this segment is the use, in verse number 229, of *Marun* as a metonym for Maronites. Once again, the author links the community's identity to its spiritual father. Emerging as a religious community, the Maronites are now exposed to the dangers of relapsing into heresy. One could argue that in this segment of the panegyric, Ibn al-Qilā'i might have been trying to highlight a correlation between the conversion of the Maronite political leadership to the Jacobite faith, seen as a heresy, and the dangers that befell the Maronites as a community.

²⁷ Hjulā: a village in the district of Jubayl.

3.24 *Heretics in Lehfed (Verses 232–241)*

The three foundational elements of the Maronite identity, a recurrent theme in the *Madiha*, are clearly identified by Ibn al-Qila'i in this segment, namely union with Rome, obedience to the patriarch, and the unity of purpose of the *muqaddams*. They appear to be shaken here as heresy reached the hometown of the author, Lehfed, and spreads in Mount Lebanon (Verse 232). The young *muqaddam* is portrayed as an evil ignorant heretic (Verse 241). Subsequently, in this particular context, Maronites are exposed to danger.

3.25 *Sins of Mount Lebanon (Verses 242–272)*

In this segment of the panegyric, Mount Lebanon is depicted and reprimanded as a spiritual community that represents the Maronites. These reprimands are for the long list of sins to which the Maronite community had fallen. This section reflects the constructed tenets of Maronite doctrine, identity, and relation to Mount Lebanon. In verse number 249, Amir Ahmed stands as a metonym for any Muslim invasion, always at bay. In verse number 250, the amir is given authority to punish Maronites who lapsed into heresy (Verse 251). It is important to observe how this part unfolds as a long sermon, as in verse number 252, where the author invites every Maronite to abjure the Jacobite heresy. The same verse describes strangers, i.e. Muslims and heretics, as wolves who should be driven out of Mount Lebanon. Verse number 268 states that enemies cannot enter into Mount Lebanon, a mountain protected by saints and prayers. Once again, the elements of the Maronite identity unfold in this part: a struggle for freedom, a claim to the ownership of Mount Lebanon, and a call to maintain union with Rome and refute heresies.

3.26 *“Woe to you, O Bsharri” (Verses 273–293)*

This part unfolds as a long list of warnings to Bsharri, the seat of the heretical *muqaddams*. The different misfortunes are described as a consequence of heresy, and in verse number 282 Bsharri is reminded that the “Fruit of Jacob,” i.e. the Jacobites, is alien in all aspects to her. In verse number 283, the author calls on Bsharri to repent and to marry *Marun*, i.e. to embrace once again its original Maronite identity. Verse number 284 reminds Bsharri that her roots are Maronites, and verse number 286 lists the names of the heretical *muqaddams* who allowed Jacobites to establish churches in Bsharri. Again, in verse number 287, *Marun* stands for the Maronite community here, and is said to be worried about the fate awaiting the heretical town, Bsharri. Verse number 291 calls upon Bsharri to wake up and remember that originally the town was not excommunicated, and last, Verse 293 calls upon Bsharri to drive out Jacobites and to repent. Once again in his poem, the author stresses the correlation between the Maronite identity and the union with Rome and the calamities that befell the Maronites once they abandoned it.

3.27 *Closure (Verses 294–295)*

In the last two verses of the *Madiha*, by calling upon Bsharri to repent, Ibn al-Qila'i is calling upon all Maronites to abandon the Jacobite heresy, so God can grant the community, once again, their bygone glory. Furthermore, a significant chronological element is given in this segment in verse number 295:

“...ومن التواريخ اتخذت - عن ستمائة عام حصلت - عهد مارون في جبل لبنان.”

“...and from the chronicles I have taken, on the six hundred years that have passed, [since] the days of Marun in Mount Lebanon.”²⁸

Ibn al-Qila'i, at the closure of his epic panegyric, stresses once again on the correlation between Mount Lebanon and the Maronite community. He also highlights the chronological context of the “days” of Maronite presence in Mount Lebanon, stating that six centuries have elapsed since the beginning of the “days” of *Marun*, used once again as a metonym for the community in Mount Lebanon. An element that seems to echo the final migration of the Maronites from the al-'Assi plains in present-day Syria, to the highlands of Mount Lebanon, in the wake of the renewed Byzantine incursions.

4 Observations

The writings of the Maronite bishop Ibn al-Qila'i (1450–1516) reflect the urgency for unification in a period of division and hardships, whether of a religious, doctrinal, or political nature, in the Maronite community. He seems to be using the *Madiha* as a jeremiad to warn his community, which appears prone to division and infidelity, and to remind his flock to either unify their ranks or risk invasion, subjection, and disasters. Ibn al-Qila'i treats the Maronites, in most of his writings, as a united community, calling them *Sha'b Marun*. In his *Madiha*, he depicts the Maronites in a quasi-epic and a sometimes poetic heroic tone with various theological themes as a people, or religious community, with a historical struggle, that of maintaining Mount Lebanon, their homeland, free of Muslim rule. Even though *Madiha* “attempts no distinction between authentic history and the fanciful or traditional,”²⁹ it is considered to be a milestone in the formation of the Maronite identity in Mount Lebanon, defined by three fundamentals: union with Rome, internal cohesion, and exclusive ownership of Mount Lebanon.

²⁸ Ibn al-Qila'i, *Zajaliya*, Verse 295.

²⁹ Salibi, *Maronite Historians*, 36.

4.1 *Union with Rome*

Ibn al-Qila'i is considered as the author of the theory of Maronite perpetual orthodoxy, a theory that is still central to present-day Maronite historiography, history, cultural heritage and identity. Ibn al-Qila'i, in an attempt to popularize and strengthen union with Rome and Catholic dogma as well as the religious and political history of the Maronites, used *zajal*, or vernacular Arabic poetry, a powerful educational tool in a rural context. He used history, mixed with local traditions, to prove to the Maronites that union with Rome was no novelty but the original historical state of the Maronite Church since it was first established by Patriarch Yuhanna Marun in 686 A.D. in Mount Lebanon. He also argues that Maronites are prosperous when in full union with Rome. The religious undertone of the warnings by Ibn al-Qila'i is expressed in a logic of causality and correlation: heresy leads to subjection of the Maronites to Muslim rule as a divine retribution for their sins. The lapses into heresies are explained as external factors brought to Mount Lebanon by outsiders, namely Jacobite or Melkite. Once they "infiltrate" into Mount Lebanon, Maronites lose their political independence and become subjugated to "Muslim" rule.

4.2 *Internal Cohesion*

In the *Madiha*, Ibn al-Qila'i depicts the Maronites as a people, *Sha'b Marun*, and uses *Marun* as a metonym for the community and stresses the religious bond of the community internally, in relation to *Marun*, the spiritual father, and externally, in relation to the Pope in Rome. Maronite cohesion is founded on the notion of a perpetual union with Rome and obedience to the patriarchs and *muqaddams*. In heroic tones, he implies how this cohesion under joint spiritual and poetical leadership has led Maronites historically to victory. Moreover, this cohesion is central to the defence of Mount Lebanon, portrayed as a Maronite homeland. He also points that when the community is prone to division and heresy, a cycle of calamity always follows and ends with Muslim invasion of Mount Lebanon. Muslims are depicted as not only enemies of the faith, but also "foreign" oppressors who aimed at and were capable of subjugating the Maronites when they lapsed into heresy. Maronites were relatively free of direct Muslim rule, and, as detailed and reflected in this poem, the struggle to preserve internal cohesion was key in preserving this freedom.

4.3 *"Marunya": Mount Lebanon as a Maronite Homeland*

One of the significant aspects of the *Madiha* is how Ibn al-Qila'i defines and portrays Mount Lebanon. Mount Lebanon is described in the poem respectively as *Mawtinna* (our lands), *Jabal Allah* (Mountain of God), and *hududuhu mahfuza* (with defined borders). In one particular case, the mountain takes the name of the community and

becomes organically linked to its identity and history as *Marunya*, or the homeland of the Maronites. In other verses of the panegyric, one observes that Mount Lebanon is depicted as a sacred mountain, where God dwells and where saints and prayers take part in its defence. In one rather powerful declaration of ownership that singles out the outsiders who are not supposed or permitted to dwell in Mount Lebanon, Ibn al-Qila'i writes in verse number 15 the following:

“وهرطقي ليس كان عندهم - ولا مسلم يسكن بينهم - ويهودي ان كان يوجد عندهم -
قبره تكشفه الغربان”

“...No heretic was among them - nor a Muslim lived among them - and if a Jew was, his grave is uncovered by crows.”³⁰

This powerful statement projects the notion of exclusive ownership of Mount Lebanon by the Maronites, and no heretic (namely Jacobites or Melkites), Muslim, or Jew is allowed to dwell among the Maronites. On another note, one can also argue that the term heretic here might have even been used by the author to describe either Maronites who refused union with Rome or Maronites who still preserved some aspects of their Monothelistic past. Of the three “outsiders,” the Muslim plays a central role. Portrayed as Amir Ahmad in some verses, the Muslim is seen as a potential invader and overlord, and Maronite unity is developed as a notion central to the preservation of Maronite autonomy from Muslim rule in Mount Lebanon. However, this does not reflect any inherent antagonism between the Muslim and the Maronite identity; the Muslims are central for the fact that they constituted the most powerful, namely the ruling elites and the Mamluk state. In this enumeration, Ibn al-Qila'i stresses on the identity of Mount Lebanon as a homeland of and for the Maronites. Maronites are described as *Ahl Jabal Lubnān*, or “community of Mount Lebanon,” and their patriarch is given the title of *Batraq Jabal Lubnān*, or “Patriarch of Mount Lebanon.” All elements are combined to strengthen the claims of exclusive Maronite ownership of Mount Lebanon.

5 History as Panegyric

In his *Madiha*, Ibn al-Qila'i is the earliest Maronite scholar who expresses the fundamentals of a Maronite identity. His writings must have reflected the local “histories” circulating among the Maronites at that time. He related the narrative of a struggle for the freedom of the Maronites in Mount Lebanon against successive Muslim invasions.

30 Ibn al-Qila'i, *Zajaliya*, Verse 15.

He also introduces union with Rome as a central theme to underline its advantages and the calamities that befell the community when it was prone to disunity and heresy. He expressed the different elements of the Maronite identity in religious notions (mountain of God, obedience to the pope and patriarch, faith, heresy, excommunication, repentance), in geographical notions (homeland, land), and in communal notions (our country, our homeland). His writing and his concept of the different notions of the Maronite identity could echo or have shaped the collective memory of the fifteenth century Maronites under Mamluk rule. To justify his claims, mainly his claims of perpetual orthodoxy and ownership of Mount Lebanon, he wrote his history as a panegyric, with an epic tone, arguing that Maronites have always been loyal to the union and that their ownership of Mount Lebanon is reflected in their ongoing struggle to maintain freedom from Muslim rule in it, thus giving the Maronites a “national cause.” He also writes about the role and function of the Maronite patriarchs, depicted as quasi tribal leaders, and describes their humble lives, sanctity and their efforts to maintain unity with Rome and internal cohesion. He also depicts the story of the fallen patriarchs and the dangers of dissidence at such high function on the community.

The writings of Ibn al-Qila'i are also an important source on the history of the local Maronite chiefs, the *muqaddams*, and their relation to Maronite ecclesiastical hierarchy and imperial states, i.e. Frankish states and Mamluk empire, even if he does not distinguish between them in his writings. It also reflects the period when the Maronite patriarchate, once the only authority of the Maronite community, had to deal with the emergence of the political role of the *muqaddams*. It also reflects the dynamics of integrating the *muqaddams* into church hierarchy as archdeacons, or Shidyaq, in an effort to subordinate and legitimize this new leadership. However, his expression of the Maronite identity does not attribute to the Maronite a distinct ethnic affiliation. It does not try to differentiate between Maronites and others in references to cultural practices. The fundamental differentiation one could argue with the other communities is the notions of a homeland, exclusively Maronite, in Mount Lebanon, which is developed through the panegyric. Ibn al-Qila'i wrote his history in an Arab dialect and in a vernacular Arab poetic form which is prevalent in the whole of *Bilad al-Sham*. This attests to the fact that by the fourteenth century, the Maronites were already using Arabic for their written expression and as language of daily life.

Furthermore, he was not writing contemporary history, and many of those named in his *Madiha* were already dead at the time of its inception. The bewildering series of momentous and often catastrophic events appear to have been written, in an epic tone, as “history” of the Maronites in Mount Lebanon. However, this “history” is, in fact, recorded not by a historian but by a verse panegyrist, and that is no accident. There was no possibility for the lengthy and scholarly *Tawarikh* or chronicles of the classical Muslim scholars of his time, or the emerging new histories in Europe, in the context of

a mostly rural and illiterate Maronite community, living in the rugged terrain of Mount Lebanon. The panegyric had to serve somehow a certain propaganda requirement in the context of the Maronite internal struggles and the reemerging influence of Rome within the community. What was needed was a vernacular poem, with a high and manifest propaganda content, to rapidly preach the Maronite history as an apology for union with Rome and internal cohesion of the community. However, a fundamental question around the *Madiha* can be outlined: were the aspirations and fears of Ibn al-Qila'i common among Maronites of the fifteenth century? If so, his writings give us a rare glimpse of the nature of Maronite identity at the time and enable us to retrace the roots of the three pillars of the Maronite identity: autonomy or freedom in Mount Lebanon, internal cohesion, and union with Rome.

The genealogy of the construction of the Maronite identity has been shaped and influenced by a chain of history writings that started with Ibn al-Qila'i in the late fifteenth century. In terms of foundational texts, two stand out: Ibn al-Qila'i and *al-Duwayhi* portrayals of Maronite history and identity. They were, and still are to some extent, the earliest instruments of the construction of this identity. Even if the two intersect and differ at the same time in their portrayal of the Maronite community, the elements that they both expressed have been processed by later Maronite historians as they attempted to shape and justify their conception of not only their own community, but its relationship to the land in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Maronite exclusivism and Lebanism were beginning to ferment in both the mountain and the mahjar. In his *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*,³¹ Benedict Anderson theorized the condition that led to the development of nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and defined the nations as an "imagined community." He argues that the nation is imagined because it implies a sense of communion or "horizontal comradeship" between people who often do not know each other or have not met. Despite their differences, they imagine belonging to the same community, and they attribute to the latter a common history, traits, beliefs, and attitudes.

However, by placing the Maronites in their context, one can argue that as a community, they first shared a sense of communion defined in strong religious undertones; second, they lived as a rather compact community in northern Mount Lebanon; and third, as the panegyric reflects, they were already sharing an emerging sense of an identity, not as an imagined community, *Jabal Lubnān*, but as a proto-nation using history to produce identity. "Making history is a way of producing identity insofar as it produces a relation

31 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised and extended edition (New York: Verso, 1991).

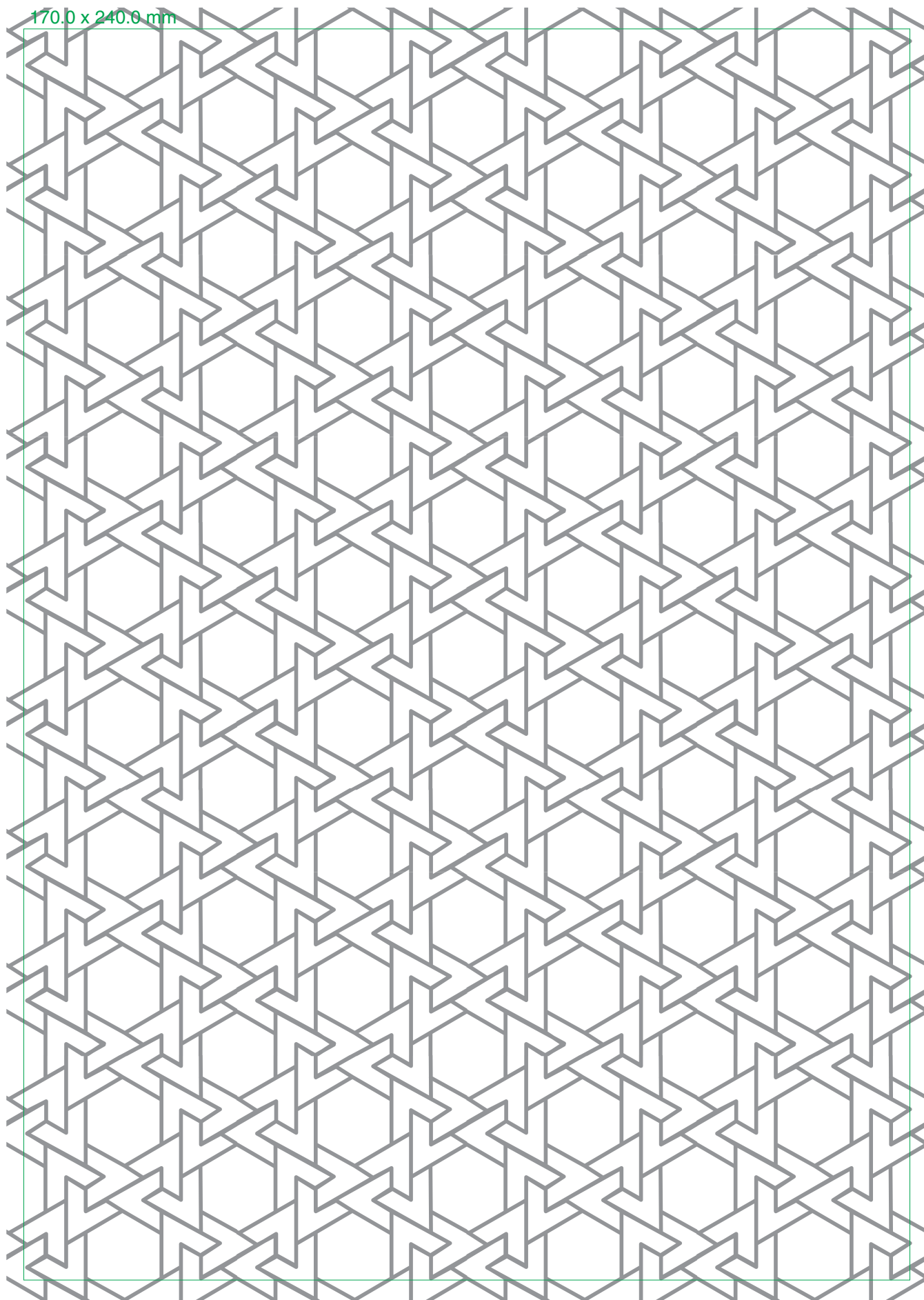
between that which supposedly occurred in the past and the present state of affairs.”³² Last, given the current literature on Maronite identity, history and historiography, and even after the publishing of the revisionist histories of the Maronites, the success of the fundamentals of Ibn al-Qila’i and his *Madiha* are remarkable.

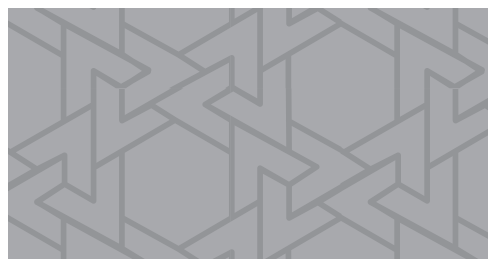
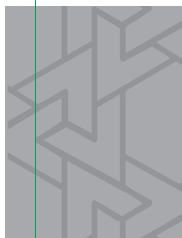
32 Friedman, “The Past in the Future,” 837–59.

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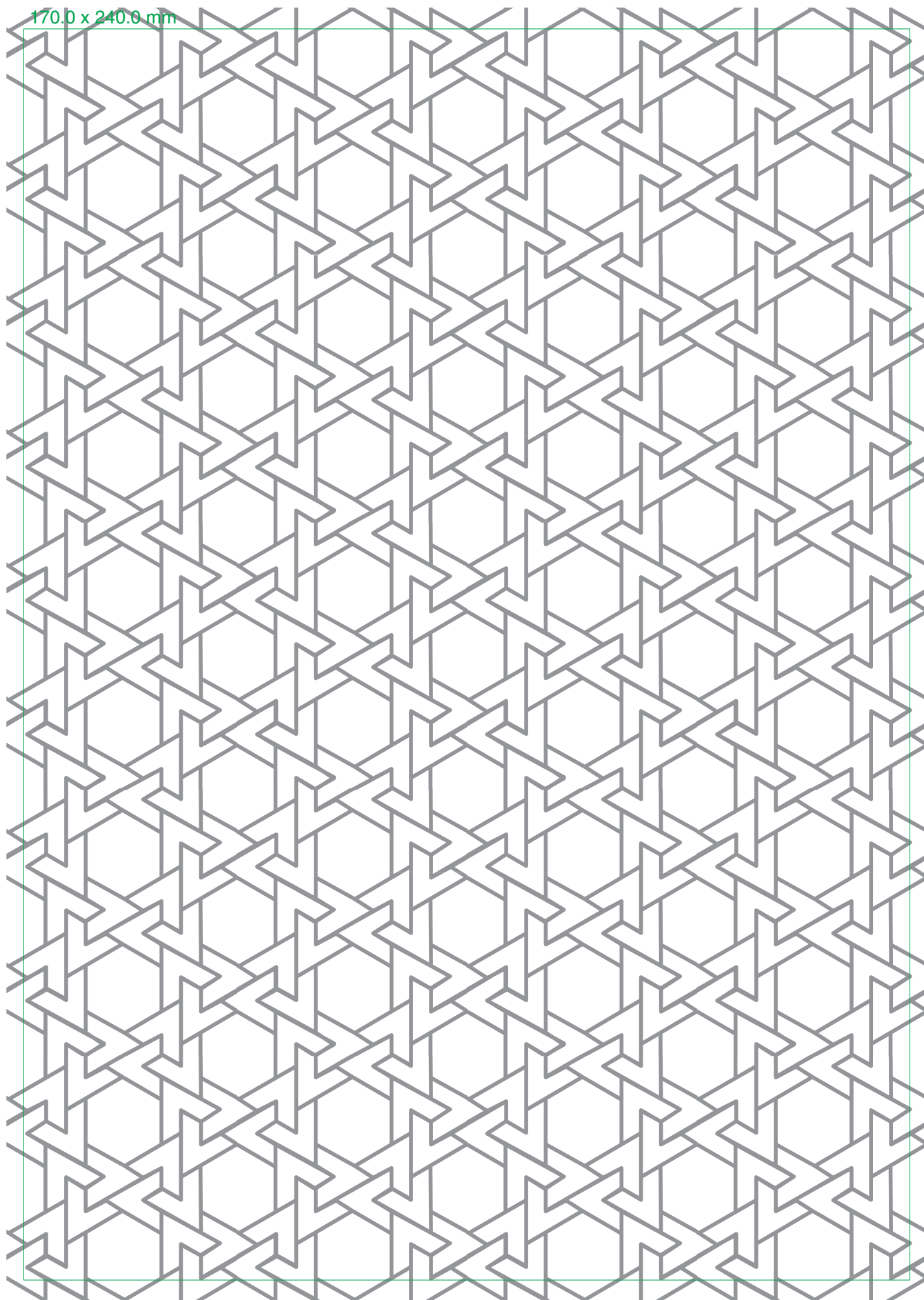


Section IV

Historical Questions



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An Imam, a Poet, and a Reporter Walked into a Music Hall

The 1929 Encounter of Sayyid Rashid Rida and Prince Shakib Arslan with Umm Kulthum

Elizabeth F. Thompson

When I first read the news article discussed here, I immediately thought of my dear colleague Abed (Abdurahim Abu-Husayn), not only because he studied Druze families like that of Shakib Arslan, but also because of his humanistic (and humorous) approach to scholarship, culture, and human nature. Abed shared the sense of wit and absurdity in the world with the article's author, Mohamed Ali Eltaher. He was also open-minded and tolerant, in a way suggested in this encounter with Umm Kulthum. I remember, in particular, the day we spent together in Charlottesville, Virginia, when my former department at the University of Virginia had a scholarly exchange program with AUB. It was raining, so we went to see a movie. The only one showing was an Iranian film about the difficulties of women confronting the moral police in Iran. I worried he wouldn't approve of its feminist viewpoint on prostitutes. To my relief, he responded with compassion. I offer this article as a gesture toward perpetuating the spirit Abed brought to his own research.

It was a September evening in 1929, in Port Said, Egypt, where the Suez Canal connects the Red Sea to the White Sea, as the Mediterranean is called in Arabic. Shakib Arslan, an international Muslim leader born in Mount Lebanon, paused there on his return from a pilgrimage to Mecca. Arslan was a writer and politician known as the "Prince of Eloquence" and many of his friends who journeyed from Cairo to greet him that evening were also men of the pen: Ahmad Shawqi, the Egyptian "Prince of Poets"; Ahmad Zaki Pasha, an Egyptian scholar known as the "Shaykh of Arabism"; Mohamed Ali Eltaher, a newspaper

publisher and activist from Nablus, Palestine; and Sayyid Rashid Rida, publisher of the well-known Islamic magazine *al-Manār*, who was born near Tripoli, Lebanon.

They and many others had come to Port Said because Arslan could not enter Egypt beyond the boundaries of the city. King Faruq's government had denied him entry—likely because Arslan had embraced Abd al-Aziz Ibn Saud, a rival to the Egyptian monarch's bid to become caliph. The meeting that day dramatized the fractures of the Arab world since the fall of the Ottoman Empire a decade earlier. These men all struggled to reunite Arabs in a cultural and political renaissance that would empower them to throw off European colonial rule.

They gathered at the Casino Palace Hotel to reminisce about old times. It had been years since Arslan had visited. "Honorable Prince, you have come to Egypt but it's as if you haven't come because you have not heard Umm Kulthum," Eltaher remarked. But lo! The great singer was giving a concert that same evening. They purchased tickets and took their seats.

"Is it permitted to listen to Umm Kulthum?" Eltaher asked Rashid Rida, who regularly offered judgements on religious matters (fatwas) in his magazine.

"How not, since you see me here?" Rida responded. Arslan gestured to his good friend Rida and remarked in jest, "He is himself the fatwa!"

The Star of Music thrilled Arslan, who improvised a rhyme in appreciation:

"Heads topped with snow
Were warmed from below,
As they swayed to the ballads
Of Umm Kulthum and her band.
How lucky we were
To hear her magic verse."¹

The reporting of this brief encounter marks a pivotal moment in Arab politics, when the once-disillusioned Ottoman generation passed the torch to a new generation. By 1929, the elderly men had inspired a fusion of politics and culture that transcended divisions wrought by the Europeans who had parceled Arabs into nation-states after World War I. First and foremost, their encounter highlights how Egypt had become incorporated into the Arab world, especially through culture, since the Great War. Their encounter also reveals the tensions inherent in the new world of mass politics, especially as it was fueled by a revolution in mass culture. One of the outcomes of these tensions, as this chapter

¹ Mohamed 'Ali Elṭaḥer, "Murur al-Amir Shakīb bi-l-qāṭar al-maṣri: Kayf waṣal wa kayf aqām wa kayf sāfir," *al-Shura* 5:244 (9 October 1929), 1. Arslan's rhyme in Arabic was "Ru'us taghata bi-thalj al-mushīb/ wa lakinahuma al-nar min taḥtiha/ tamīl min al-ṭarab al-mustamir/ lada Umm Kulthum ma' takhtiha/ Atiḥ lana sam' ayatiha/fa'datuh nafsi min bikhtiha."

concludes, was a new politics of cultural control and sanitation, as expressed in a pair of articles on singing published by Sayyid Qutb, the future Islamist leader, in 1940.

1 The Snowy-Haired Generation

The heart of the group was Shakib Arslan (1869–1946), who had sided with the Ottomans and the Germans in World War I and was still banned from Allied-controlled Arab countries 11 years later. Born to a prominent Druze family in Mount Lebanon, he had emerged in the 1890s as a notable poet and student of the Islamic reformer, Muhammad Abduh. He met the poet Shawqi and fellow Abduh student Rida at that time. After 1918, Arslan lived in exile in Switzerland, where he acted as representative of colonized Arab peoples to the League of Nations. He also published books and articles on politics, history, and culture, and became one of the most widely read Arab writers in the postwar era.²

Like most students of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, Shakib Arslan preached the need for unity against colonialism. The Ottoman caliph had once been a symbol of unity in the Sunni Muslim world. When the new Turkish republic abolished the caliphate in 1924, Arslan was initially distraught. He then embraced ‘Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud as a potential new caliph, praising him for his military valor and Islamic faith. In the late 1920s, the new Saudi kingdom was the sole Arab country that enjoyed complete independence. Arslan accepted Ibn Saud’s invitation to host his Islamic world conference in Mecca in 1926. Now, three years later at age 60, Arslan embarked on the pilgrimage to Mecca to bolster Ibn Saud’s prestige and demonstrate that his kingdom was safe for all pilgrims. When Arslan stopped in Egypt en route to Mecca in May, however, Egyptian security officers had cut short his meeting with friends like Rashid Rida. Now, in September, King Fuad again denied his request to stay and visit his friends in Cairo. Arslan was also banned from his homeland in Lebanon by rulers of the French mandate. They too saw him as a threat. In the Saudi kingdom, Arslan later wrote, “I felt like a free Arab in a free Arab country.”³

Sayyid Rashid Rida (1865–1935) was born four years before Arslan. Their friendship, begun in the 1890s as students of Muhammad Abduh, was suspended in the years leading to World War I. While both advocated religious reform, Rida was more devoted to political reform. Arslan would defend the Ottoman caliphate; Rida would oppose Ottoman tyranny. Rida was forced into exile in Egypt for advocating constitutional

2 William L. Cleveland, *Islam Against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism* (London: al-Saqi, 1985), xxi; al-Amir Shakib Arslan, *Autobiography [Sira Dhātīyya]* (Shuf, Lebanon: al-Dar al-Taqaaddumiyya, 2008), 8–14.

3 Cleveland, *Islam Against West*, 70–74.

reforms. In Cairo, Rida established his magazine *al-Manār* (The Lighthouse) as a beacon of Islamic reformism. It was read from North Africa to South Asia. In 1919, after the Ottoman defeat, Rida returned to Syria to help build a democratic regime in Damascus. He was president of the Syrian Congress when the French invaded and destroyed the Syrian Arab Kingdom in July 1920. Rida and Arslan rekindled their friendship a year later, when they organized a delegation to Geneva to protest the French mandate in Syria and Lebanon at the League of Nations. Ignored at Geneva because they did not represent a sovereign state, they eventually turned to Ibn Saud, who ruled the last significant independent Arab state after 1924. All other Arab rulers, like King Fuad, had shackled the Arab future to compromises cut with European occupiers.

Rida and Arslan were joined in Port Said by Ahmad Zaki Pasha (1867–1934), who co-founded with Rida the Eastern League (*al-Rabita al-Sharqiya*) to promote a renaissance in Eastern unity and culture. He and Rida had known one another since 1898 and had spent many Ramadan nights discussing how to reconcile religious teachings with modern knowledge. Zaki had long served in government as administrator of waqf foundations, but had also published prolifically in top Egyptian periodicals. Zaki, Rida, and the Eastern League became the nucleus of an Arabo-Islamic movement in Cairo that had, by 1929, split with erstwhile secular allies who rejected the influence of Ibn Saud. They were not, however, conservative traditionalists. The Eastern League aimed to liberate the East, not to oppose Western ideas; its founders chose Cairo as its headquarters because Egypt was seen as a bridge between East and West.⁴

A fourth “snowy haired” concertgoer was Ahmad Shawqi (1868–1932). He and Arslan joked affectionately that neither had changed since they had met in Paris 40 years earlier. Born in Cairo to an aristocratic family, Shawqi worked in the royal chancery of the nationalist Khedive Abbas Hilmi II until World War I, when he was exiled to Spain. He began writing neo-classical poems nostalgic for Arab Andalusia. Upon his return to Egypt after the war, he embraced broader Arab and Islamic themes. Shawqi dominated the literary scene, writing dramatic plays for the stage like “The Death of Cleopatra.” He also supported young musicians like Muhammad Abdelwahab, who revived and innovated on Arab classical traditions. Shawqi praised Umm Kulthum not only for her beautiful voice, but also for phrasing verses with deep understanding.⁵

4 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, “Jami‘at al-Rabita al-Sharqiya,” *al-Manār* 23 (March 1922), 219–26; Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, “Ahmad Zaki Pasha, Shaykh al-‘Aruba,” *al-Manār* 34 (June 1934), 39.

5 Virginia Danielson, *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 97.

2 The Younger Generation

Mohamed Ali Eltaher (1896–1974) was just 33 years old, half of Rashid Rida's age. Born in Nablus in 1896, he was an autodidact with no formal diplomas. As a teenager, he became an anti-Zionist activist and fled persecution in Palestine only to be jailed in Egypt during World War I. After the war, he returned briefly to Palestine to protest the division and occupation of Greater Syria by the British and French. Once again he was forced into exile in Cairo, where he launched his newspaper *al-Shura* in 1924. Eltaher's editorial office became a popular meeting space for nationalist intellectuals. The paper's masthead declared its commitment to the "affairs of Arab and oppressed nations." It published news, opinions, and petitions from colonies across Africa and Asia. The British and French banned the paper in their mandated territories. But Eltaher would continue his advocacy for Palestine at risk of imprisonment, censorship, and eventual expulsion from Egypt in the 1950s. He was recognized as a great Arab *mujahid*, or struggler, with awards from the Bey of Tunis in 1956 and by the King of Morocco and President Bourguiba of Tunisia in the early 1960s.⁶

Another youthful member of the group was Abdul Rahman Hassan Azzam (1893–1976), a native Egyptian born in Giza. Unlike Eltaher, Azzam had pursued formal education, including medical school in London. On the eve of World War I, he became active in Ottoman politics and fought the Italian invasion of Tripoli (Libya). He joined the Egyptian nationalist Wafd party and won a seat in parliament after the war. But he also maintained a transnational political network among formerly Ottoman Arabs. Sixteen years after the Port Said meeting, Azzam would become the first secretary-general of the Arab League.

The youngest participant in the encounter mentioned by Eltaher was the singer herself, Umm Kulthum, aged 25. She was born in 1904 in a village of the Nile delta and began reciting the Qur'an and singing publicly as a child. Through connections made by prominent landowners, Umm Kulthum launched her musical career in Cairo in the early 1920s with concerts in music halls and recording contracts. The year 1926 was a turning point. She replaced her family with top musicians in her band and hired the poet Ahmad Rami to write lyrics of romantic songs, which replaced religious ones in her repertoire. Umm Kulthum became so popular that she began to perform in prestigious theaters. A year or two later she met the Prince of Poets, Ahmad Shawqi, and so she may well have recognized him in the audience that night in Port Said. Years later, Umm Kulthum would record five of Shawqi's neoclassical poems (*qasa'id*) set to music. He had composed one of them, "*Sa'lu Ku'us al-Tila*" (Ask the Liquor Glasses) as a gift to her before he died in 1932.

6 "Biography," *Mohamed Ali Eltaher* (website), accessed 15 January 2023 at: https://eltaher.org/biography/english/biography_index_en.html.

Another, “*Sa’lu Qalbi*” (Ask My Heart), was written by Shawqi for the Prophet’s birthday in 1914. It became a political anthem with its verse: “Demands are not met by wishing. The world can only be taken by struggle.”⁷

3 Political Geography of the Encounter

The joyous reunion was publicized as a front-page article by Eltaher in his newspaper *al-Shura* two weeks later, on October 9, 1929. Eltaher may have simply wanted to advertise that he had famous friends. But he also portrayed the story politically, next to an article about the summer pilgrimage and suffering of pilgrims in dangerous heat, an issue that concerned the whole Muslim world. Other articles framed the Port Said encounter in the context of news about the Saudi government, the new cabinet in Egypt, and especially the punishment of Arabs after the violence at the Wailing Wall in Palestine.

The style of Eltaher’s story positioned Shakib Arslan as a beloved and honored leader of the Arab world by focusing on his precise movements and words. The Prince of Eloquence first arrived at the city of Suez. The ship was late, just as most Orientals don’t respect schedules and appointments, Eltaher remarked, explaining that the Italians who sailed the ship were themselves half-Oriental, since they made their living by shuttling passengers around the Red Sea. Finally, Arslan disembarked. But his friends had to wait another hour to greet him while Egyptian security officials searched him and his bags. Eltaher emphasized how the Arab hero was persecuted in exile by quoting Arslan’s joke to Ahmad Shawqi that he could not invite the poet to his home in Lebanon because he was banned from there. “We no longer have a country, so we invite people to Switzerland!”⁸ Meanwhile, Eltaher noted, Arslan’s mother awaited him upstairs in the hotel. She had come to visit him from Palestine, another country where the Prince of Eloquence was banned.

Arslan then traveled from Suez to Port Said to catch a ship to Europe two days later, on September 22. His friends followed him. Ahmad Shafiq Pasha (1860–1940), another leader of the Eastern League, joined them there. He carried a letter of welcome for Shakib Arslan from Prince Umar Tusun (1872–1944). Tusun was a popular member of the Egyptian royal family known for his scholarship and nationalism. Like the young Azzam, he had mobilized to defend Tripolitania (Libya) from the Italian invasion. He later headed the Egyptian Olympics committee and promoted scouting and agricultural reform in the Nile Valley. Like others in the Port Said group, Prince Tusun saw Islam as a basis of Arab

⁷ Danielson, *Voice of Egypt*, 83, 97, 110–14, 139.

⁸ “Biography,” *Mohamed Ali Eltaher* (website), accessed 15 January 2023 at: https://eltaher.org/biography/english/biography_index_en.html.

cultural revival. His note to Arslan wished him a “*hajj mabrur*,” a blessed pilgrimage. “A flood of congratulatory telegrams and letters continued to arrive from Syria, Egypt and Palestine,” Eltaher wrote. “The Hotel Casino became a Suk al-Akaz (famous market in Mecca) during the prince’s stay.”⁹

Arslan’s brief visit to Egypt dramatized the geographical aspirations and the obstacles to Arab unity in 1929. On the one hand, Eltaher’s story evoked Arslan’s charismatic leadership of Arabs from Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt. It also underlines how Egypt had entered the Arab world in the previous decade. In 1919, leaders of the Egyptian revolution had struggled for freedom primarily for the people of the Land of the Nile. Back then, Rida and King Faisal had struggled to liberate Greater Syria as a polity distinct from—but perhaps affiliated with—Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula. Now, in 1929, Egypt produced a diva who was idolized across the region and hosted transnational organizations like the Eastern League.

On the other hand, the story dramatized the forces that continued to divide Arabs. Competing with the joy of reunion was a deep nostalgia for the Ottoman world, when Arabs had lived under the same government. Several of the story’s protagonists still suffered exile. Arslan was a man without a country. While he had accepted Ibn Saud’s offer of citizenship in 1926, he continued his advocacy in Europe. European colonizers were mostly to blame for displacing and dividing Arabs. But as Eltaher emphasizes, King Fuad of Egypt played the same game. Rivalry among Arab leaders, in this narrative, had orphaned the one man whose eloquence could revive Arab solidarity.

4 Negotiating the Boundary between Cultural Revival and Decline

Like Arslan, the young Eltaher regarded the two days in Port Said as a meeting between older and younger generations. He did not know (but he would have likely suspected) that several in the party were soon to exit the worldly stage: Shawqi, Rida, and Zaki would pass away by 1935.

Eltaher dramatizes this generational encounter on the terrain of culture: He asks Arslan how Umm Kulthum’s voice compared to the great singers he had heard “a third of a century ago: Abduh al-Hamuli, al-Sitt Almaz and Shaykh Yusuf Manyalawi.” With his rhyme, Arslan affirmed that she not only measured up to the old greats, but also promised to revivify a culture grown grey with age. Arslan would write a book shortly after leaving Port Said, *Why Have Muslims Fallen Behind While Others Have Progressed?*¹⁰ The book was

9 “Biography,” *Mohamed Ali Eltaher* (website), accessed 15 January 2023 at: https://eltaher.org/biography/english/biography_index_en.html.

10 Shakīb Arslān, *Limādhā ta’akkhara al-Muslimūn wa-limādhā taqaddama ghayruhum*, (Cairo: Matba’at al-Manār, 1932/33).

serialized in Rida's *al-Manār* in response to a query from an Imam in Java sent a few days after the concert, on 26 September 1929. The problem is not Islam, Arslan responded. The same religion had inspired the cultural and political flowering of the caliphates in the seventh through ninth centuries. But "Today the Muslims, or at least most of them, have lost the fervour of the forefathers," he wrote.¹¹

By fervour, Arslan meant more than simply military will. Only the Turks and the Arabs under Ibn Saud have sacrificed what it took—in their lives and in charity and taxes—to retain their independence. Ignorance, corruption, and rigid traditionalism have weakened Muslims elsewhere. "There is no victory that the foreigners have achieved in the land of the Muslims in which the Muslims themselves did not help them to varying degrees."¹² The Japanese have kept up with Europeans because of another kind of passion, for beauty, art, and harmony that sustain their communal and national feeling. Because they held their past sacred, they were able to modernize in the present without losing their soul. But when Muslims call to revive and revere their Qur'an and the Arabic language, "all hell is raised by those in whose hearts there is a sickness." To be modern, they insist wrongly, is to jettison the past and imitate Europe.¹³ Both Shakib and the Eastern League blamed European colonization as the corrupting force that deprived Muslim societies of vitality.

Herein lies a clue to why these men embraced Umm Kulthum's music that night. She expressed passion for love and life with skills honed as a Qur'an reciter and in verses shaped by classical Arabic poetry. She articulated reverence for tradition in modern ways, in public concerts and on record discs. She represented, that night, the voice and spirit of a breathing, living, forward-looking culture. "Let us dust off the grime of pessimism and move forward," Arslan concluded in his book. "We will reach our destination only by work and perseverance and courage."¹⁴

But Eltaher's article posed a second question, to Sayyid Rashid Rida, about whether it was religiously proper to listen to Umm Kulthum sing. The question is a central concern in the story. Arslan had just returned from the holiest of religious duties, the pilgrimage. He revered Rida so much, Eltaher remarked, that "nothing makes him happier than performing the prayer behind Rida."¹⁵ The question betrayed his nervous uncertainty about the boundaries of good culture and bad, inspiration and decadence, religion and public affairs.

11 Mohamed 'Ali Elṭaḥer, «Murur al-Amir Shakīb bi-l-qāṭar al-maṣrī: Kayf waṣāl wa kayf aqām wa kayf sāfr,» *al-Shura* 5:244 (9 October 1929), 1.

12 Ibid.

13 Quotes taken from a recent English translation: Shakib Arslan, *Limādhā ta'akhhara al-Muslimūn wa-limādhā taqaddama ḡhayruhum*, Nadeem M. Qureshi, trans. (London: Austin Macauley, 2021), 20–21, 39, 63–64, 69.

14 Arslan, *Why Muslims Lagged*, 122.

15 Mohamed 'Ali Elṭaḥer, «Murur al-Amir Shakīb bi-l-qāṭar al-maṣrī: Kayf waṣāl wa kayf aqām wa kayf sāfr,» *al-Shura* 5:244 (9 October 1929), 1.

Rida had issued fatwas in the past on listening to music. In disagreement with past hardliners, he ruled that it is basically permissible to listen to musical instruments and singing. But he shared their concern that the context in which music is heard is critical. At a wedding it is certainly allowed. Indeed, Rida reminded his readers, God wants people to enjoy themselves in permissible entertainments. But if the music tempts the listener into immoral behavior, or if the performer engages in seemingly immoral behavior, then a good Muslim should stay away.¹⁶ Just the previous month, in August 1929, Rida published a fatwa on teaching women to play musical instruments. He answered that if a woman's music is intended to enrich life in the home, it is permitted. But if she intends to perform before drunken men, it is not.¹⁷ Here, it is perhaps significant that Rida and the group sat in a special box to view Umm Kulthum's concert, presumably apart from those in the hotel who might have been consuming alcohol. We might also surmise that the concert included no skimpily clad dancers! Given the context of Arslan's visit and the collective spirit of the group, Rida likely recognized Umm Kulthum as an agent of Arab cultural revival. In his mind, this would take precedence over scruples about public performance.

Umm Kulthum's performance at the Hotel Casino placed her in the crosshairs of cultural politics in an era of emergent mass politics and mass culture. Much has been written about the difficulty of women singers in 1920s Cairo, as they navigated a minefield of criticism and praise of their public performance. Umm Kulthum famously opted for long-sleeved dresses to ward off lewd suggestions. Posters advertising her concerts in the late 1920s show her wearing a modest but modern headwrap to cover her hair. Even so, Umm Kulthum's repertoire in 1929 favored love songs about the loss or rejection of a beloved. She sang fewer religious songs because audiences rejected them. But we might reasonably surmise that Umm Kulthum did not sing her songs in the provocative manner to arouse the kind of immoral impulses that Rida warned against.

Rida's presence at the Casino Palace Hotel concert not only conformed to his past views on listening to music but also confirmed his commitment to building a vigorous modern culture unbound by overly strict interpretations of Islamic teaching. Scholarship on religious responses to the emerging public entertainment sphere in early twentieth century Cairo—and especially to women's presence in it—has largely ignored this critical, political context that accounts for a gray area of negotiation. Useful here is Virginia Danielson's observation that Umm Kulthum navigated the politics of public space by performing Arabic songs that resonated with cultural authenticity, against the

16 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, "al-As'ilat al-jāwiyya fi samā' ālat al-lahū," *al-Manār* 9 (February–March 1906), 35–51, 147; "The Permissibility of Singing" [Ibāhat al-ghinā'], *al-Manār* 13 (February 1910), 15–16. Rida reiterates his general views in 1922 and 1927, but never published specifically on Umm Kulthum.

17 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, untitled fatwa in response to a query from 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ba'alabakī of Beirut, *al-Manār* 30 (16 August 1929), 188.

association of moral corruption with European influence.¹⁸ Essential context is also found in studies of the 1920s popular press in Egypt, which developed a language of national morality that applied not just to elite readers, but rather encompassed all classes around a supposedly common Muslim ethics. Women's presence in public was a pivotal site wherein the nation's morality was regularly tested.¹⁹

Eltaher's story about Rida and Umm Kulthum problematizes one of the most well-known accounts of the era by Hasan al-Banna. In his memoirs (published in the 1940s) al-Banna recounted his moral shock upon arriving from his Delta village in Cairo in the early 1920s. A "wave of atheism and debauchery" had stormed the city, he wrote. This wave came from the West, Banna argued, and the government failed to dam the flood of immorality because ideologues argued that modern societies must divide religion and state. He and other students launched their Islamic movement to counter the anti-Islamic waves that had swept across Egypt. In his moral universe, freedom and democracy bred "anarchy and lewdness."²⁰ Although Banna claimed to have attended Rida's lectures, his memoirs reveal little of Rida's insistence that God intended what was not explicitly prohibited to be enjoyed. Rida's fatwas expressed more confidence in individual moral judgement.

Eltaher's story, at minimum, forces us to reconsider the common view that Rashid Rida had become a hardline conservative late in life. While he had embraced restoration of a limited caliphate (with no direct political power) and he had criticized the women's movement for anti-Islamic secularism, he had clearly not rejected all developments in culture. Rida shared with his friends at the concert a belief that such vitality was crucial to restoring Arab political and economic sovereignty. In contrast, Banna recognized no value in the Arab cultural renaissance of the 1920s: Only Islam alone could provide the vital force of renewal. Indeed, he targeted Arab nationalists who equated modernity with secularism and so banished religious studies.

When Banna launched the Muslim Brotherhood the previous year, in 1928, a deep cleavage had already opened between secular liberals and Islamic populists as a consequence of the older generation's failure to obtain independence after World War I. Even as Arslan reunited with his friends from Ottoman days, Egyptians were moving on

18 Virginia Danielson, "Moving Toward Public Space: Women and Musical Performance in Twentieth Century Egypt," in *Hermeneutics and Honor: Negotiating Female "Public" Space in Islamic/ate Societies*, ed. Asma Afsaruddin, Harvard Middle Eastern monographs, 32 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 116–39.

19 Shaun T. Lopez, "Madams, Murders, and the Media: *Akhbar al-Hawadith* and the Emergence of Mass Culture in 1920s Egypt," in *Re-Envisioning Egypt 1919–1952*, ed. Arthur Goldschmidt, Amy J. Johnson, and Barak A. Salmoni (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2005), 371–97.

20 Hasan al-Banna, *Memoirs of Hasan Al Banna al Shaheed*, M. N. Shaikh, trans. (Karachi: International Islamic Publishers, 1981), 109–111.

from the postwar era. Saad Zaghlul, a politician who embraced both Islam and liberal democracy much as Rida had, died in 1927. While the older generation shared Banna's concern about the public rejection of Islam, they did not share his either/or binarism. As Henri Lauzière has demonstrated, Rida was a pragmatist who supported Ibn Saud as a potential leader to unite the Arab and Islamic worlds, but he did not agree with the repressive legal interpretations of the kingdom's Wahhabi religious officials.²¹ Even as Rida and Arslan enjoyed Umm Kulthum's concert, they were sending their students to Mecca and Riyadh in hope of moderating Wahhabi beliefs so as to support the growth of a modern Muslim society.

5 A Conclusion by Way of Three Vignettes

By way of conclusion, this chapter offers three examples of how the younger generation carried on the negotiation between the mass politics of modern Arab revival and the new appeal of mass culture, in the form of music.

At the start of the 1940s, the famous literary critic, educator, and future leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb, published two articles in the prestigious literary weekly magazine *al-Risala*.²² Edited by Ahmad Hassan al-Zayyat, the magazine published important writers like Taha Hussein and Ahmad Zaki Pasha (present at the Hotel Casino). Qutb moved in these literary circles, but these articles addressed public policy. They called for strict censorship of “whining” love songs like the now-classic song by Asmahan, “Oh My Love, Come and See What Happened to Me.” Qutb urged the government to suppress such music because it softened masculinity, perverted femininity, and generally weakened society's moral fiber. In this, he seemed to resemble views of Rida and Arslan. However, Qutb was outraged that love songs now freely entered homes through the new radio network, which was unavailable in 1929. If the government didn't act, he argued, then society must organize morality squads to police such music. Qutb repeated these arguments in 1952, shortly after the Free Officers' revolution. Because King Farouk had not imposed censorship, he argued, the revolution must silence “dirty songs” by singers like Umm Kulthum. The Free Officers ignored Qutb's appeal and Umm Kulthum became an icon of the revolution.

21 Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the 20th Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 60–94.

22 Sayyid Qutb, “al-Ghinā' al-Murīd Yankhur al-Khuluq al-Maṣri wa al-Mujtama',” *al-Risāla* (2 September 1940), 1382–84; “Teams to Combat Sick Singing” [Firaq li-Mukāfahat al-Ghinā' al-Murid], *al-Risāla* (27 January 1941), 94–96; “Shut Up These Dirty Voices” [Akhrisū hadha-l-aṣwāt al-dinsa], *al-Risāla* (22 September 1952), 1049–50.

Meanwhile in the mid-1940s, as mentioned above, Umm Kulthum won wide acclaim for recording musical settings of five of Ahmad Shawqi's neoclassical poems (*qasa'id*). We might wonder whether her turn toward an Islamic idiom was a response to criticism of love songs like that of Qutb. But her turn to an Islamic idiom was not reactionary; rather, as Virginia Danielson noted, it was a populist turn away from elitist secularism in favor of an authentic Egyptian culture that included Islam. Umm Kulthum brought the same spirit to her 1945 movie "*Sallamah*." The movie illustrated Rida's argument for moderation in his fatwas, which recalled that early Arab caliphs listened to and approved of music as long as it was performed in a moral context. Umm Kulthum played a slave girl in seventh-century Mecca who was sold by her hardline master because he heard her singing alone outside of the house. Her new aristocratic owner trained her to sing, but she resisted singing at his parties with belly dancers and drunken men. She was saved by the hero of the movie, a pious man who loved her voice when he heard her sing Qur'anic verses. The movie was directed by a Jewish Egyptian, Togo Mizrahi, emphasizing its grounding in a modern, inclusive idiom. It was shown repeatedly on Egyptian television in the 1960s, suggesting at least government approval, if not also continued popularity among the public.²³

Finally, the 2011 Arab uprisings introduced a new round of negotiation. In Egypt, the confrontation between the Muslim Brotherhood's party and secularist liberal groups splashed onto city walls. A graffiti of Umm Kulthum's face appeared with the slogan "Art is not taboo."²⁴ Meanwhile in Saudi Arabia, the government began to reverse the influence of Wahhabi clerics who had long discouraged the public performance of music, except for Bedouin folk music with no instruments, or only the traditional *rabab*. In their reasoning, music is a distraction from devotion to religion. While Rida had also warned against music that might tempt the listener, Wahhabi imams, like Banna and Qutb, did not trust the public to judge for themselves. Because any exposure could lead to anarchy and lewdness, they regarded music as a public threat. However, popular pressure in the past decade has forced the Saudi government to open new venues for musical performance, although women's voices remain mute.²⁵

23 "Sallamah," Togo Mizrahi, director and producer; Bayram al-Tunisi, screenwriter. Al-Sharika al-Aflām al-Maṣriyya, 9 April 1945; Danielson, *Voice of Egypt*, 100–125. On television showings, I draw on a personal interview with Hafez Sami, Egyptian film enthusiast who consulted the weekly television guides of the 1960s, 4 November 2022.

24 "Art is Not Taboo" [al-Fann Mish Harām], Gigi Ibrahim/flickr, reproduced in Sarah Marzouk, "18 Shots of the Revolutionary Art in the Streets of Egypt," *The Culture Trip* (16 June 2017), accessed January 17, 2023, at: <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/egypt/articles/18-shots-of-the-revolutionary-art-in-the-streets-of-egypt/>.

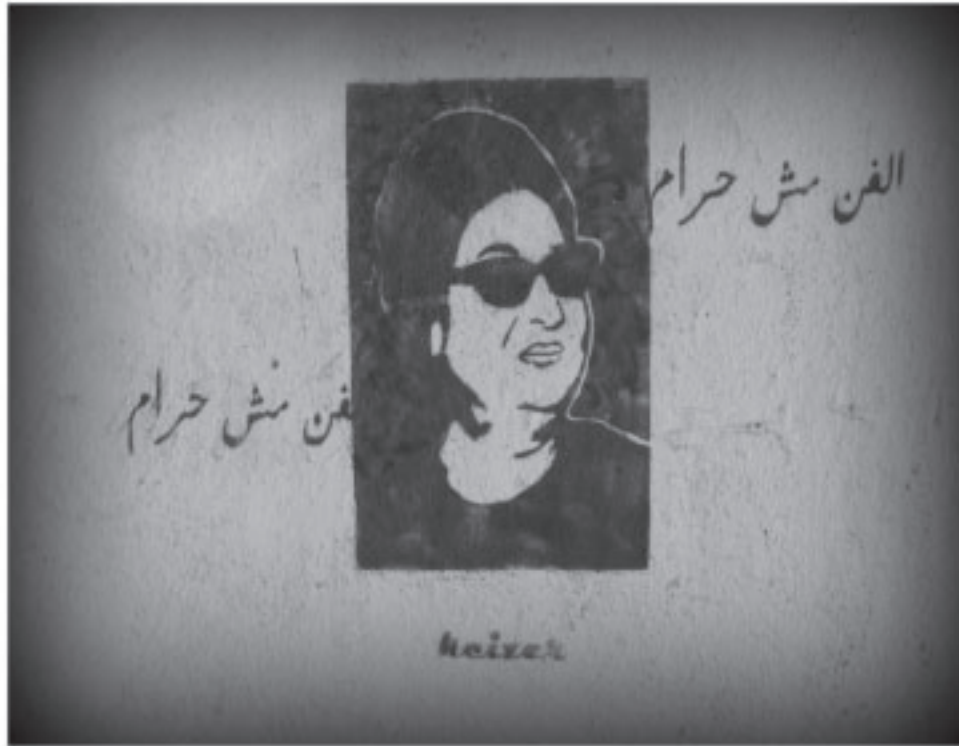
25 Jonas Otterbeck, "Wahhabi Ideology of Social Control Versus a New Publicness in Saudi Arabia," *Contemporary Islam* 6 (2012), 341–53.



Umm Kalthum in a 1929 Concert Poster.

Source: <https://www.mobtada.com/zaman/1184890/>

إعلان-قديم-يكشف-لقب-أم-كلثوم-في-العشرينيات



Egyptian graffiti following the 2011 uprising. The Arabic reads: "Art is not taboo"

Source: <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/egypt/articles/18-shots-of-the-revolutionary-art-in-the-streets-of-egypt/>

The original is found on Gigi Ibrahim's flickr site:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gigiibrahim/albums/72157628004373980>



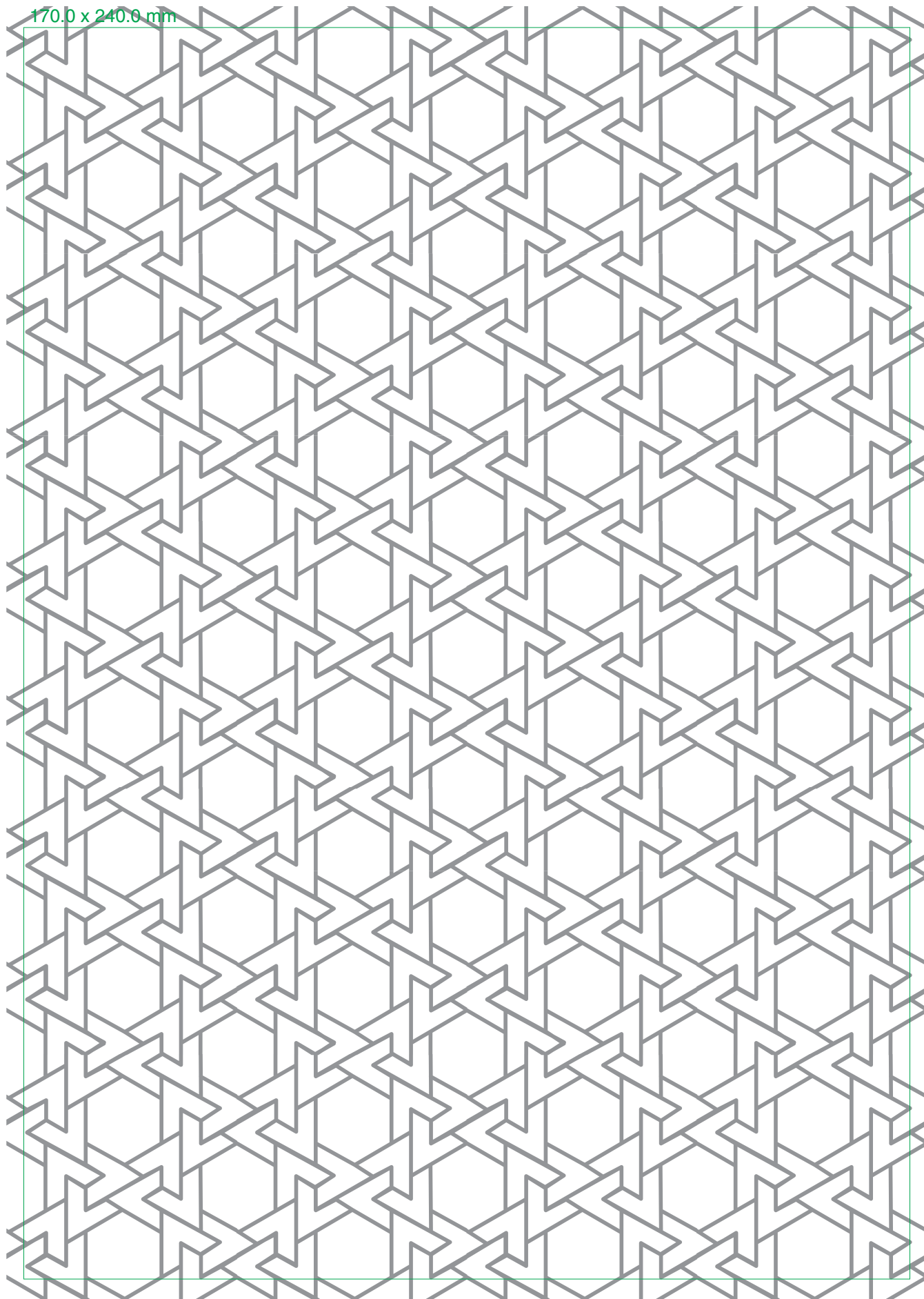
Photo of Shakib Arslan (left) and Rashid Rida (to Arslan's left) in Geneva, 1921, where they led the Syro-Palestinian delegation to the League of Nations with Prince Michel Lutfallah (center, next to Rida). Cropped from original copy, reprinted with permission, from the Mohamed Eltaher website.

Political negotiation over the role of culture in national revival has been playing out over the century since the era of Rashid Rida and Shakib Arslan's reunion at Port Said. While scholars have tended to discuss their politics within the rubric of intellectual or religious history, this chapter has argued that we must also place this discussion within the context of post-World War I, when two movements converged to reshape Arab society: mass media and mass politics. At the same time that the photographic press, radio, and cinema inspired broadly accessible forms of popular culture, the first truly grassroots political movements emerged, advocating communism, Islamism, nationalism, and most generally anti-colonialism. Debates on political policy, the influence of European culture and technology, and the need for Islamic reform jumped from the pages of specialized journals into this new popular, public sphere. Eltaher's article captures the dynamic tensions of the era within the prism of a particular, luminous moment that punctured the political gloom.

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170.0 x 240.0 mm



Ḥusayn al-Baytimānī (d. 1761) and Seeing Divine Beauty in Humans

*Khaled El-Rouayheb**

But he whose initiation is recent, and who has been the spectator of many glories in the other world, is amazed when he sees any one having a godlike face or form, which is the expression of divine beauty; and at first a shudder runs through him, and again the old awe steals over him; then looking upon the face of his beloved as of a god he reverences him, and if he were not afraid of being thought a downright madman, he would sacrifice to his beloved as to the image of a god.

– Plato, Phaedrus 251A (trans. Jowett)

Introduction

Plato famously believed that the beauty we experience in this phenomenal world is a pale imitation of absolute, immaterial Beauty. Though no hedonist, he believed that the love of human beauty could help kindle a person's appreciation and longing for the realm of Forms.¹ Similar notions are also in evidence in certain strands of medieval Sufism.

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¹ For two relatively recent surveys of Plato's ideas concerning love and beauty, see Richard Kraut, "Plato on Love," in *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, ed. Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 286–310; and C. D. C. Reeve, "Plato on Begetting in Beauty," in *Plato on Art and Beauty*, ed. Alison Denham (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 142–72.

Hellmut Ritter, in his magisterial study of the Persian mystical poet Fāriḍ al-Dīn al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 618/1221), first published in German in 1955, devoted a lengthy chapter to what he called “the religious love of beautiful people” and traced the theme in the life and works of Persian mystics such as Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), Rūzbihān al-Baqlī (d. 606/1209), Awḥad al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 635/1238), and Fakhr al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 688/1289).² In this tradition, a beautiful human being—a beardless, adolescent youth or a young woman—was considered a “witness” (*shāhid*) to the overwhelming beauty of God. Not surprisingly, the idea was controversial, and the term *shāhid-bāz* in Persian, i.e., “one who consorts with the *shāhid*,” was often simply used to mean “sodomite” or “whoremonger.”³

Less attention has been given to the theme in Arabic mystical literature. There has also been an embarrassed or apologetic tendency to explain away any references in Arabic mystical poetry as mere literary conventions with no basis in actual belief or practice. J. Spencer Trimingham, for example, in his influential *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (1971), wrote that the relevant practice was “prohibited altogether in the Arab world, the occasional reference, such as in ʿAbd al-Ghanī l-Nābulusī’s works, does not mean anything.”⁴

When I first explored this topic, I was a graduate student at the American University of Beirut in the early 1990s, working under the supervision of Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn. I was—and remain—convinced that Trimingham’s sweeping dismissal is unjustified. Nābulusī’s work “*Ghāyat al-maṭlūb fi maḥabbat al-maḥbūb*,” which I then read in manuscript form but has since been edited by Samuela Pagani, confirms that the mystical adoration of beautiful humans was still a living tradition in Nābulusī’s lifetime (1050/1641–1143/1731).⁵ The present chapter is dedicated to the theme in the poetry of one of Nābulusī’s students, Ḥusayn b. Tuʿma al-Baytimānī (d. 1175/1761).

1 Ḥusayn al-Baytimānī

ʿAbd al-Ghanī l-Nābulusī is a relatively well-known figure for historians working on the Arab lands in the period between the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt in 1516–7 and the onset of modernity in the nineteenth century. Ḥusayn al-Baytimānī, by contrast, is a much more obscure individual whose name even specialists in the period and region may not recognize. Yet, Baytimānī was one of the most prolific disciples of Nābulusī.

2 Hellmut Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele: Mensch, Welt und Gott in den Geschichten des Farīduddīn ʿAṭṭār*, (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 434–503.

3 This is the meaning of *shāhid-bāz* given in F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 727a.

4 J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), 212, n1.

5 ʿAbd al-Ghanī l-Nābulusī, “*Ghāyat al-maṭlūb fi maḥabbat al-maḥbūb*,” edited by Samuela Pagani, in *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*: Supplemento 68, no. 1 (1995).

Recent years have seen the publication of some of his writings, including a commentary on *al-Tadbīrāt al-ilāhiyya* by the eminent Andalusian mystic Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638/1240).⁶

The attributive “al-Baytimānī” derives from the village of Baytimā south-west of Damascus.⁷ Biographical sources do not record a date of birth for Ḥusayn al-Baytimānī, but they do report that he studied in Damascus with a number of scholars and was particularly close to two of them:⁸ The first is Nābulusī, of course, with whom Baytimānī studied Sufism for around fifteen years; the second is Ilyās al-Kurdī (d. 1138/1726), who had Sufi inclinations but was also an eminent teacher of exoteric sciences such as syntax, rhetoric, logic, and creedal theology, and with whom Baytimānī also reportedly studied for around fifteen years. Baytimānī was initiated into the Qādirī Sufi order by Yāsīn al-Kilānī (d. 1146/1733)—a good reminder that Nābulusī, despite his numerous works explicating and defending Sufi doctrines and practices, was not an initiating Sufi master. This Yāsīn al-Kilānī was the son and successor of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kilānī (d. 1084/1673) who had initiated Nābulusī into the Qādirī order.⁹ Baytimānī later headed his own *zāwiya* in the Maydān district of Damascus, and also led *dhikrs* at the Ismā‘īliyya *madrasa* established in 1141/1728–9 by the then governor of Damascus Ismā‘īl Paşa al-‘Aẓm. He died on Jumada I 7, 1175/December 4, 1761.

6 al-Baytimānī, *al-Futūḥāt al-rabbāniyya fī sharḥ al-Tadbīrāt al-ilāhiyya fī iṣlāḥ al-mamlaka l-insāniyya*, edited by ‘Aṣīm Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī l-Ḥusaynī al-Shādhilī l-Darqāwī (Beirut: Kitāb-Nāshirūn, 2015). Other recently published works are *Kashf astār al-tawḥīd li-l-murīd ‘an wajh jalālāt al-Qur’ān al-majīd*, ed. ‘Aṣīm Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī l-Ḥusaynī l-Shādhilī l-Darqāwī (Beirut: Kitāb-Nāshirūn, 2019) and *Ḥabl Allāh al-matīn fī ‘aqīdat al-Shaykh al-Akbar Muḥyī l-Dīn*, ed. İyat Erbakan & Halil İbrahim Delen, *Tekirdag Theology Journal* 5 (2019): 145–201.

7 In his *Dīwān*, Baytimānī mentioned his grandfather as “*al-Baytimānī mawlidān nisbatan ilā wilādatih fī qaryat Baytimā min qurā Dimashq al-Shām*”; see al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān Fath al-malik al-jawwād fī naẓm al-ḥaqā’iq wa-madh al-asyād* (MS British Library, Or. 3175), fol. 2a. The editors of *Ḥabl Allāh al-matīn* (see preceding footnote) mistakenly suppose the attributive “Baytimānī” to refer to the city of Batman in south-eastern Turkey.

8 The two main sources on Baytimānī are Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī, *Silk al-durar fī a’yān al-qarn al-thānī ‘ashar* (Bulaq: al-Maṭba‘a l-‘Āmira, 1874–1883), II, 52–55 and Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *al-Wird al-unsī wa-l-wārid al-qudsī fī tarjamāt al-‘Arif ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī*, ed. Samer Akkach (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 236–45.

9 al-Ghazzī, *al-Wird al-unsī*, 154. For further information on Yāsīn al-Kilānī and ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kilānī, see Muḥammad al-Bakhshī l-Ḥalabī, *Shams al-mafākhīr fī dhikr dhurriyyati ‘Abd al-Qādir* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sa‘āda, 1326/1908). Their dates of death are mentioned on p. 87. The precise date of death of Yāsīn al-Kilānī is mentioned in the chronicle of his contemporary Ibn Kannān al-Ṣāliḥī (d. 1153/1740); see Ibn Kannān al-Ṣāliḥī, *al-Ḥawādith al-yawmiyya min tārikh aḥad ‘ashar wa-alf wa-miyya*, ed. Akram al-‘Ulābī, *Yawmiyyāt shāmiyya* (Damascus: Dār al-Ṭabbā‘, 1994), p. 437.

2 The *Dīwān*

Baytimānī's *Dīwān* of poetry is entitled *Faṭḥ al-malik al-jawwād fī naẓm al-ḥaqā'iq wa-madh al-asyād*. The manuscript I have inspected is extant in the British Library (MS Or. 3175). It comprises 190 folios, copied by a certain Muṣṭafā Ibn al-Kūlahlī who completed the task on Muḥarram 18, 1229/January 10, 1814. When compared to other mystical *Dīwāns* from the period, it is striking that Baytimānī often gave extensive prose introductions to his poems that reveal the occasions of their composition. As will be seen below, some of these introductions relate with disarming honesty some of the accusations that were directed at Baytimānī by his detractors.

The *Dīwān* has a relatively lengthy introduction, in prose with interspersed verse. This begins on fol. 1b, and it is only on fol. 7a that the title of the *Dīwān* is given, followed by the phrase, "and this now is the beginning of what is intended" (*wa-hādhā awwal al-shurū' fī l-maqṣūd*). The introduction gives information on the lineage of the author, his father's family claiming descent from the founder of the Rifā'ī Sufi order Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī (d. 578/1182), and his mother's family claiming descent from the founder of the Qādirī order 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166) and via him to the Prophet. This is followed by a disquisition on the predilection of "the people of God" for expressing their mystical experiences in verse. Though the author chose to follow their lead, he was at pains to point out that his rank is not that of a poet—most readers of his *Dīwān* will probably agree—and that the "people of God" are less interested in prosody, lexicography and syntax and more focused on content. Baytimānī then gave his spiritual lineage, mentioning some of his teachers and singling out 'Abd al-Ghanī l-Nābulusī as the most important in Sufism. He wrote:

Of these, the one whom I rely upon in these divine sciences, and in all my works in this exalted station and this noble [science of] unity, and in him I have the perfect model and utmost precursor and the highest rank of mentorship, is the Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghanī, may God sanctify his soul. I intend him when I simply say "my shaykh" in my works on divine unity.¹⁰

والمعول عليه منهم هنا في هذه العلوم الربانية وفي سائر مؤلفاتي في هذا المقام
المنيف والتوحيد الشريف ولي فيه كمال القدوة وغاية الخطوة وأعلى مراتب
الأخذ باليد هو سيدي الشيخ عبد الغني قدس الله سره وهو خاتمة مشائخي في
علوم الحقيقة وسلوك هذه الطريقة وبه أعني حيث أطلقت قولي «شيخي» في
مؤلفاتي التوحيدية.

10 al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān*, fol. 4b.

Baytimānī wrote that he had included in his own *Dīwān* some of the poems of Nābulusī, to emphasize that the two were as one in this spiritual endeavor:

I have written in this *Dīwān* of mine some poems by my Shaykh and ascribed them to him, may God sanctify his soul, with the intention of seeking blessings (*baraka*) and by way of indicating that there is no difference between me and him in this station except that I am his subsidiary and he my Imam, and he is a father to me and I his son.¹¹

وقد كتبت في ديواني هذا بعض قصائد من كلام شيعي وعزيتها إليه قدس الله
سره قصدة (كذا) التبرك بها وإشارة إلى أنه لا فرق بيني وبينه في هذا المقام غير
أنني فرعه وهو لي إمام وهو لي أب وأنا له ولد.

Baytimānī wrote a hagiography of Nābulusī.¹² From this, it is clear that not all Nābulusī's students and acquaintances were happy with Baytimānī's association with their master. The theme of at least one story in the hagiography is that some tried, by backbiting and insinuation, to prevent Baytimānī from attending the lessons of Nābulusī and that Nābulusī had at first acceded to their demand until Baytimānī insisted on showing up nevertheless, whereupon Nābulusī loudly reiterated his affection for Baytimānī and allowed him to join the lesson.¹³ Baytimānī's profuse invocations of Nābulusī's authority should presumably be seen against the background of this contemporary opposition.

3 Mystical Aestheticism in Baytimānī's *Dīwān*

Mystical poetry in Arabic (and in Persian and Turkish) adopted, from an early period, the conventions of profane love-poetry (*ghazal*), usually of the wilder, *udhrī* type. God took the place of the human beloved, and the mystic the place of the overwhelmed, pining lover complaining of "separation" and hoping for future "union." It is well-known that mystical poems, like those by the great Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), could therefore be read at two levels: as straightforward *ghazals* or as mystical poems, later mystical commentators often bringing out the deeper mystical meanings behind mentions of the

¹¹ al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān*, fol. 7a.

¹² An autograph of the work, entitled *al-Mashrab al-hanī l-quḍī fī karāmāt al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghanī l-Nābulusī*, is extant in Princeton University Library, Islamic MS Garrett Y1808. See Rudolf Mach, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahuda Section) in the Garrett Collection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), nr. 4718.

¹³ The story is quoted from Baytimānī's hagiography in al-Ghazzī, *al-Wird al-unsī*, 242–43.

beloved's rosy cheeks, black ringlets of hair, ruby lips, beauty spot, doe eyes, long eyelashes, and upright physique.¹⁴

What I call "mystical aestheticism" is the more radical—and more controversial—view that a real, human beloved's physical features are a manifestation of the all-consuming beauty of God. The references to a human beloved in a poem are not simply conventional allegories for the mystic's love of God. The actual human beloved is instead a locus of divine manifestation or epiphany (*tajallī*). In other words, the mystic has a human beloved but claims to be captivated, not by the skin and bones, but by the divine beauty that manifests itself in, and at the same time transcends, the skin and bones. In the introduction to the *Dīwān*, Baytimānī wrote:

When I use the masculine form in divine and love poetry my intention is to refer to true Existence that appears in creation by way of encompassing it. And when I use the feminine form when speaking of love and love-poetry, I intend the divine presence (*ḥaḍra*) and the true beloved that manifests Her beautiful attributes in all the forms of the world ... She is the dominant – by means of Her attributes of beauty and majesty – over every thing, and it is therefore appropriate for us to love Her in everything.¹⁵

وحيث أقول في نظمي بصيغة المذكر في الإلهيات والتغزلات فمرادي به الوجود الحقّ الظاهر بالإحاطة في الخلق وحيث أقول بالمؤنث في وصف المحبة والغزل مرادي الحضرة الإلهية والمحبة الحقيقية المتجلية بمحاسن صفاتها في جميع الصور الكونية... فهي المهيمنة بصفات جلالها وجمالها على كلّ شيء فيحقّ لنا أن نتعشقها في كلّ شيء.

Baytimānī went on to invoke Sufi notions of the Light of Muḥammad and the Reality of Muḥammad as the primordial manifestation of God and as the underlying reality and telos of creation.¹⁶ The previous quotation continues thus:

And of the greatest such [manifestation worthy of love] is the Muḥammadan beauty and the Aḥmadī secret whose perfection pervades everything [...] For the lovers and amorous admirers see his beauty, peace and blessings be upon

¹⁴ The classic study of Islamic mystical poetry is Annemarie Schimmel, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). The poetry of Ibn al-Fāriḍ is discussed on pp. 41–45.

¹⁵ al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān*, fol. 6b. The Arabic *حاضرة* is feminine, hence the use of "Her" and "She" in the translation.

¹⁶ On these ideas in later Sufism, see Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muḥammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 123–43.

him, in the attractions of all things, for all attractions are from his noble beauty and sublime handsomeness, and therefore they incline to him longingly and joyously, for he is from the light of God the Exalted.

ومن أعظم ذلك الجمال المحمّدي والسرّ الأحمدي الساري كماله في كلّ شيء ...
لأنّ العشاق والمحبّين يشهدون جماله صلّى الله عليه وسلّم في محاسن الأشياء
كلّها إذ جميع المحاسن من حسنه الشريف وجماله المنيف فيميلون إليه شوقاً
وفرحاً إذ هو من نور الله عزّ وجلّ.

In a later prose interlude (*faṣl*) in the *Dīwān*, Baytimānī returned to the idea of phenomenal beauty being a locus of the manifestation of the divine presence. He wrote:

The divine presence (*ḥaḍra*) that encompasses – by way of underpinning – the form of each existent has no form to limit it. I experienced from it the unveiling of the heart and the insight of the spirit and many kinds of luminous condition. Whenever I saw Her manifesting Herself to me in a form, I would regard Her from this perspective, and so the possessor of the form would think that I look at him [...] If I saw Her in a form then I would want to restrict myself to it, and I would not find Her, for She is beyond this [form] and imperceptible, and the form would appear to me as an attractive, created and fleeting form. I would then turn away, aware that I cannot obtain it.¹⁷

ولما كانت الحضرة الإلهية المحيطة بقيوميتها على صورة كلّ موجود وليس
لها صورة تحصرها وقد إعتراني منها كشفٌ قلبيّ ومعرفةٌ روحانية وكثرت عليّ
في ذلك تنوّعات الأطوار النورانية وكنت كلّما شهدتها تتجلّى عليّ في صورة
أنظر إليها من ذلك الوجه فيظنّ ذو الصورة الحسّية أنّي أنظر إليه ... وإذا رأيته
في الصورة أريد الوقوف عندها فلم أجدها وإذا هي من وراء ذلك لا تُدرك وتظهر
لي في تلك الصورة صورةً حسنة حادثة فانية فأعرضُ عنها فأدركنّ العجز عن
تحصيلها.

Baytimānī went on to spell out how this dialectic of divine presence and absence should be kept in mind when reading his poetry:

When I mention in it [the *Dīwān*] the attractions of beautiful women or handsome boys, I intend the real beloved that is manifest to us in that form, not the composite, sensible form itself ... Let not your faulty understanding

17 al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān*, fol. 106b.

lead you to believe that I love the corporeal form which the religious law proclaims to be forbidden or that my intention from this is what the veiled soul seeks of prohibited love and lowly motives of the people of corruption. This is not so with me. My way is divine love that is beyond what the inferior souls seek with their netherworldly passions and beyond what animal minds qualify with their corrupt opinions.¹⁸

وحيث أذكر فيه شيئاً من محاسن المرأة أو الغلمان الحسان المراد منه المحبوبة الحقيقية الظاهرة لنا في تلك الصورة لا إلى الصورة المركبة الحسية ... ولا يؤدّيك فهمك القاصر أنّي أحب الصورة المجسّمة التي حرّمها الشرع وأنّ قصدي من ذلك ما تطلبه النفس المحجوبة من الحبّ المحرّم والغرض الفاسد عند أهل الفساد ليس ذلك بي ومذهبي الحبّ الإلهي من وراء ما تطلبه النفوس القاصرة بشهواتها العاجلة وتقيّده العقول الحيوانية بأرائها العاطلة.

Despite Baytimānī's avowals, it cannot have been easy, from a third-person perspective, to differentiate a mystic lover's admiration for a beautiful human from the more mundane admiration of the profane lover. This inevitably led to suspicion and recrimination. Baytimānī wrote, with unusual forthrightness, of the kind of problem that could be encountered by the mystical aesthete:

I was seized by a condition (*tawr*) of divine love, and my ardor and love increased, and so my mind was set ablaze with love for a righteous person in whom I saw the spiritual matter and the divine secret. He was one of my dearest brothers and beloveds, and the most pure in his friendship. From the strength of my love and care for him, I would see him as a dome of light that was embraced by my heart under the cover of the divine throne ... When he saw me in this state he thought that I was infatuated by his bodily form, and so he disapproved without consideration to what was happening to me, and in his mind there came to be some ill thoughts concerning me, of which I was innocent. News of his disapproval came to me from the world of spirits ... and I said the following [poem], addressing him about this matter...

O he who sees the good from us as bad! May you perish! You've cast aside my beneficence!

And returned a good quality with a bad, with which there comes coldness and severance, my negligent fellow! [...]

18 al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān*, fol. 106b–107a.

You've thought of me a lowly thought that is outside the religion of the people of love and passion.

How many times have we said that the heart is infatuated with the beauty of the face of the One who has no rival!

And you thought that it was with a body and blood that is mixed with pus and putrefaction! [...]

You were my younger brother and a son whom I nurtured with my heart and souls,

So that I made clear the spending of my wine on you and treated you with beneficence.

Now by your disapproval you've become an opponent who has cut off the rope of friendship and turned away from what I brought forth [...]¹⁹

قد إعتراني طور في وارد المحبة الإلهية فكثير وجدي وزاد غرامي ووقدي فتولع
خاطري في حب شخص صالح تراءى لي فيه الأمر الروحاني والسر الرباني وهو
من أعز اخواتي وأحبائي وأصدقهم لي مودة ومن شدة حبي له وإعتنائي به كنت
أراه قبة من نور يعانقها قلبي تحت أستار العرش ... فلمّا رأي في هذه الماهية
ظنّ بي أنّي متعشّق لصورته الجسمانية فأذكر عليّ حالي ولم يصبر على ما جرى
لي وصار في خاطره منّي شيء من سوء الظنّ بي ولم يكن ذلك بي فورد عليّ وارد
إنكاره في عالم الأرواح ... فقلت مخاطباً له في هذا الشأن:

يا من رأى منا المليح قبيحاً	تبّاً عليك خرجت عن إحساني
وبذلت حسن الوصف بالقبح الذي	فيه الجفا والقطع يا متواني (...)
وظننت بي ظناً رديئاً خارجاً	عن دين أهل الحب والوجدان
كم مرّة قلنا الفؤاد متيم	بجمال وجهه ما له من ثان
فظننته في الجسم والدم الذي	بالقيح مخلوطاً وبالإنّتان (...)
كنت الأخي لدي والابن الذي	بالقلب أراعاه وبالأجنان
حتّى عليك جليت صرف مدامتي	وسلكت فيه منك بالإحسان
أضحيت بالإنكار خصماً قاطعاً	حبل الوداد وملت عن تبياني (...)

The person in question seems to have been a younger man—witness Baytimānī's statement that the person was like a younger brother or son to him. The Platonic/mystical adoration of beautiful people, in both Greek antiquity and medieval Islam, seems most often to have been directed at beardless boys in their early teens. This was certainly the case with the Persian mystics discussed by Hellmut Ritter. It was also the case with Baytimānī's teacher Nābulusī, whose defense of mystical aestheticism clearly assumed that the object would normally be a male youth. In his aforementioned *Ghāyat al-maṭlūb*,

19 al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān*, fol. 33a–33b.

Nābulusī argued that the mystics who adore a handsome beardless youth are reenacting the primordial moment in which the angels prostrated themselves in front of Adam, who according to some traditions was created beardless.²⁰ In his *Dīwān* of mystical poetry, Nābulusī summed up the point thus:

O he who blames me out of ignorance for loving that precious boy!
 What do we have to do with the ignoramus who pursues us with weak words
 and lowly mind!
 In beauty and masculinity there is a secret that only the sanctified know.
 Live well or die with your disease; face us with a smile or a frown!
 Think well or ill, we are too elevated to be soiled.
 If you equate in creation between the handsome and the ugly, your analogy
 is faulty.
 You were ordered to prostrate yourself to Adam; you were not ordered to
 prostrate yourself to Iblis.²¹

في هوى ذلك الغلام النفيس بكلام واهٍ وعقل خسيس ليس يدريه غير ذي التقديس واليقنا بابتسام أو تعبيس نحن في رفعة عن التدنيس وقبيح أخطأت في التقييس وما أنك اسجدوا إلى إبليس	أيها اللائم الذي لام جهلاً ما لنا والجهول يبحث عنا إن في الحسن والذكورة سرّاً عش سليماً أو مت بدائك فينا أحسن الظنّ أو به كن مسيئاً إن تساوي في الخلق بين مليح قد أنك اسجدوا لآدم فافهم
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Though Baytimānī was not foreign to these ideas and sentiments, as shown by the example mentioned above, his *Dīwān* is striking—especially when compared to that of his teacher—in the prominence given to the mystical adoration of women. Introducing one poem, he wrote:

I looked at the world of women with the eye of reflection and with respect to their human realities and spiritual generation, created with the Muḥammadan light, and I saw that they are among the greatest manifestations of existence and the nearest grades of witnessing. And I saw in them the divine light shining from the Muḥammadan niche and glimmering in their faces, and that they are an end in itself in the propagation of the human species, and

²⁰ al-Nābulusī, *Ghāyat al-maṭlūb*, 73–76.

²¹ ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Dīwān al-ḥaqā’iq wa-majmū‘ al-raqā’iq* (Bulaq: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Āmira, 1270/1854), 1:270.

with them homes thrive and children are cared for. God has made them [for] prophets and emissaries and the elite and commonality of men, both in this world and the next, and He has instilled in them the service of, and beautifying themselves for, men, as is not present in others. When I saw this, I took it upon myself to praise them from this respect and give them what is their due, and I said...²²

قد نظرت إلى عالم النساء بعين الاعتبار ومن حيث حقائقهنّ الإنسانية ونشأتهم
الروحانية المخلوقة مع النور المحمّدي فرأيتهم من أعظم مظاهر الوجود
وأقرب مراتب الشهود ورأيت فيهنّ النور الإلهي يشرق من المشكاة المحمّدية
يتلألأ في وجوههنّ إنهنّ المقصودات بالذات من نتاج توالد النوع الإنساني وبهنّ
تعمّر البيوت وتتربّى الأطفال وقد جعلهنّ للأنبياء²³ والمرسلين وخواصّ الرجال
وعوامهم في الدنيا والآخرة ومن حيث ما جعل فيهنّ من خواصّ الخدمة والتجمل
للرجال ممّا لا يكون في غيرهنّ فلمّا رأيت ذلك إلّ التزمت من حيث هذا الوجه
بمدحهنّ وفاءً بحققهنّ فقلت في ذلك ...

The sentiment expressed by the following, long poem is unusual and therefore worth quoting at length:

Women of perfection who with certainty uphold the religion of Ṭahā the
abrogator of religions
They serve God with eagerness, outwardly and inwardly, with the guidance of
true belief
Their taverns in paradise appear, and their hearts are the stores of spiritual
insight
A light glimmers from the beauty of their faces, surpassing the attractions of
the boys of paradise
Their wombs are the fields of the pious and their breasts the drinking wells of
the parched
The house of existence has become populated by them, and without them
there would be no passion
O womenfolk, you are from the light of Ṭahā the Chosen, and to our sense of
smell you are as sweet basil.
We men incline toward you forever, with craving as has been told in the
Quran²⁴

²² al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān*, fol. 113b.

²³ In the MS: *al-anbiyāʾ*.

²⁴ Possibly a reference to Quran 3:14: *zuyyina li-l-nāsi ḥubbu l-shahawāti min al-nisāʾi...*

Your bodies encompass all attractions, like a garden fragrant with gold
 Our lordship over you is for all time, but with us you have the love of ardent
 passion.
 The roses of your cheeks, their burning is sweet, and embracing you dispels
 sorrows.
 The two cheeks like moons are fully perfected, swaying like branches above
 bosoms
 You are the delight of our hearts, may those perish who on your account revile
 me
 You are our brides who are manifest for us, like the houris characterized by
 benevolence
 Your physiques put spears to shame, for your beauty is from the light of the
 Beautiful who is near
 Those who look from kohl-filled eyes dazzle our minds with arrows and
 spearheads.
 Those smiles are mines that weld together a necklace of pearls and corals
 You are the beauties of the neighborhood and the gardens of gaiety, and I am
 the enchanted lover
 You have secrets of which we are unaware but are only hidden to the blind
 All stations [of the mystic path] are proud of you, and so is the religious law
 of the 'Adnanite
 Without you all places are dark, as if their foundations are in ruin
 You are without doubt our vestment, as in the Book, and we are yours in turn²⁵
 You are certainly, as I said, the quintessence of beauty and the flower of the
 cosmos
 The one who says otherwise is deficient, and ignorant of the blessing of the
 Benefactor
 You have, in my view, a station in the Garden of Knowledge, by God
 God has blessed us with you, Welcome o blessing of the Benefactor!
 You repel each and every loathsome thing, and you have the protection of the
 Judge.²⁶

نساء²⁷ كمال قمن بالإيقان في دين طه ناسخ الأديان
 قد قمن يعبدان الله²⁸ بهمة ظهراً وبطناً في هدى الإيمان

25 A reference to Quran 2:187: *hunna libāsun lakum wa-antum libāsun lahunna*.

26 al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān*, fol. 113b–114a.

27 Thus in the manuscript. It is clearly unmetrical. The meter (*kāmil*) calls for something like ونسا.

28 Thus in the manuscript. Meter and grammar call for يعبدن الإله.

حاناتهنّ من الجنان تظاهرت
نور تلاًّلاً من جمال وجوههنّ
أرحامهنّ مزارع لأولي التقا
بيت الوجود أضحى بهنّ²⁹ عامراً
يا نسوة من نور طه المصطفى
نحن الرجال لكم نميل على المدا
أجسامكم حوت المحاسن كلّها
لكنّ سيادتنا عليكم دائماً
ورد الخدود بكم يطيب شعافه
والوجنتان كما البدور تكاملت
ما أنتم إلّا سرور قلوبنا
أنتم عرائسنا التي تجلّي لنا
قاماتكم تزي الرماح لأنّها
والناظرات من المراود أدهشت
والباسمات من المعادن أعقدت
أنتم ملاح الحيّ روضات الصفا
فيكم من الأسرار ما ندري بها
إنّ المنازل كلّها فخرت بكم
وبدونكم كل الأماكن أظلمت
أنتم بلا شكّ لباس عناقنا
أنتم يقيناً مثل ما قد قلته
من قال فيكم غير هذا ناقص
يا من لكم عندي المقام كما أرى
والله منّ بكم علينا نعمةً
وقيّتموا كل المكاره جمّةً

وقلوبهنّ خزائن العرفان
قد فغن فيه بمحاسن²⁹ الولدان
وصدورهنّ موارد الظمآن
وبدونهم ما فيه من وجدان
أنتم لنا في الشّم كالريحان
شوقاً كما قد جاء في القرآن
مثل الرياض تفوح بالعقيان
ولكم لدينا الحبّ في الهيمان
وعناقكم يجلي صدى الأحران
فوق النهود تميل كالأغصان
تبّاً على من فيكم يلحان
كالخور موصوفات بالإحسان
في الحسن من نور الجميل الدان
منّا العقول بأسهم وسنان
عقداً حوى درّاً مع المرجان
وأنا الذي بالعاشق الولهان
لكنّها تخفى على العميان
ديناً وأخرى شرعة العدناني
فكأنّها مهدومة الأركان
طبق الكتاب ونحن لبس ثان
عين الجمال وزهرة الأكوان
وهو الجهول بنعمة المئان
في جنّة العرفان بالرحمن
أهلاً بكم يا نعمة المئان
وعليكم ستر من الديان

As in the case of the male beloved who misunderstood the nature of Baytimānī's passion, Baytimānī's attitude to women also made him the object of suspicion among some of his contemporaries. In the *Dīwān*, by way of introducing a poem, he related that a number of neighbors spread the rumor that he had committed fornication (*zinā*), and as a consequence a number of his followers abandoned him. He wrote:

I was overcome by a state of amorous rapture in which I would sometimes be conscious of myself and other times take leave of my senses. I suffered from a

29 Thus in the manuscript. The meter calls for محاسن.

30 Thus in the manuscript. The meter calls for بهنّ أضحى.

great affliction that prevented me from sleeping night or day. My nature was constricted and my soul oppressed, and I did not know my own situation. In this state, my neighbors and the people of the neighborhood turned on me and accused me of fornicating with a woman, and I had not done so. A large number of my followers therefore abandoned me.³¹

قد إعتراني طور من الوله في وقت فكنت فيه تارةً أشعر بنفسي وتارةً أغيب عن حسّي وقد أصابني في ذلك داءٌ عظيم منعني من النوم ليلاً ونهاراً وقد إنحصرت فيه طبيعتي وداقت فيه أنفاسي ولم أدر كيف أنا وفي هذه الحالة اخذتني الجيران وأهل محلّتي بالسنتهم وأشاعوا عني أنّي زنيّت بإمرأة ولم يكن وقع منّي ذلك فلارْتَدَّ عن صحبتي جماعةٌ كثيرة من أتباعي.

Baytimānī went on to say that he was scolded by one of those who had authority and used it unjustly (*al-mutaḥakkimīna bi-l-ẓulm*), perhaps a local judge or a neighborhood grandee. However, he assured the reader that this person, for daring to rebuke a pious Qādirī Sufī, died within a year and his house was sold to Christians. Similarly, all the novices who abandoned Baytimānī came to experience great misfortune.

It is difficult to know what to make of all this. Baytimānī, of course, insisted on his innocence, though it is hard not to notice that he introduced the story by emphasizing that he was in the throes of “rapture” (*walah*) and not fully conscious of what he was doing at the time. Was he implying that, even if there was impropriety, it was committed while his reason and senses were not fully functional and that therefore he was not legally culpable? In any case, the incident reveals that mystical adoration could easily be perceived by outsiders as libertinism.

Baytimānī’s interaction with women led to other controversies. He wrote the following, again by way of a lengthy introduction to one of his poems:

My teacher ‘Abd al-Ghanī l-Nābulusī, may God sanctify his soul, ordered me while he was alive to teach women the articles of faith and the explication of “There is no god but Allah”, and he explained to me what was incumbent on me in this matter, so I obeyed. When I was about to do as I had been ordered, one of the masters of the [Qādirī] order objected on account of what some slanderer had related to him, and he sent me a message prohibiting me from this, so I abandoned my plan. This master then went to sleep that night, and his administrator (*naqīb*) – who had no knowledge of the case – knocked on his door in the middle of the night. The shaykh went to him and the administrator said, “My ustādh! The Prophet, may peace and blessings be upon him, came

31 al-Baytimānī, *Dōwān*, fol. 35a–35b.

to me in a dream and said: Go to your shaykh so-and-so and say to him, 'Don't prevent women from what they want.'" When the shaykh heard this he donned his cloak immediately and came to my house and threw himself at my feet and said, "I repent from opposing you in this and other matters."³²

قد أمرني شيخي عبد الغنيّ النابلسيّ قدّس الله سرّه في حال حياته أن أقرأ النساء في عقائد الإيمان وعلم لا اله الا الله وبين لي ما هو الواجب عليّ في ذلك فإمتثلت أمره فلمّا توجّهت إلى تنفيذ ما أمرت به عارضني رجل من مشايخ الطريق بما حسّن له بعض الوشاة من القبيح فبعث إليّ ينهاني عن ذلك ولم يأذن لي بما هنالك فرجعت عمّا عزمت عليه فنام الشيخ في تلك الليلة وإذ بنقيبه نصف الليل يدقّ عليه الباب ولم يكن له علم بالقصة فخرج الشيخ إليه فقال له النقيب: يا أستاذ إنّه قد جائني النبيّ صلّى الله عليه وسلّم في المنام وقال لي: قم واذهب إلى شيخك فلان وقل له: لا تمنع النساء من مطلبهنّ. فلمّا سمع الشيخ ذلك منه شدّ ميزره في الحال وأتى إلى بيتي وترامى عليّ وقال: التوبة عن معارضتكم في مثال هذا وغيره.

The controversy flared up again after the death of Nābulusī. Baytimānī wrote:

Seven years after the death of my mentioned teacher, women would come to my house and listen to the lesson with men, and I set up a partition between them. A group objected to this and urged me to dismiss the women and not let them come to me and listen to my lesson, and I was inclined to do so. Then that night my mentioned teacher appeared to me in a dream, along with a number of other scholars and notables, and he said to me: "Don't dismiss the female believers from the gatherings of knowledge if they come to learn about religion and the markers of belief."³³

ثمّ إنّه بعد وفات شيخي المذكور بسبعة³⁴ سنين كانت تجتمع النساء إلى بيتي يسمعن الدرس مع الرجال وجعلت بينهما ستارة فاعترض جماعة ولجّوا عليّ بأن أطرّد النساء ولا أدعهنّ يدخلن إلى عندي ولا يسمعن درسي فهممت بذلك فرأيت في تلك الليلة شيخي المذكور جاء في المنام ومعه جماعة من أهل العلم والفضل فقال لي: لا تطرد المؤمنات من مجلس العلم إذا جيئن يتفقهن في الدين ويتعلّمن شعائر الإيمان.

32 al-Baytimānī, *Dīwān*, fol. 184a.

33 Ibid.

34 Thus in the manuscript. It should be سبع.

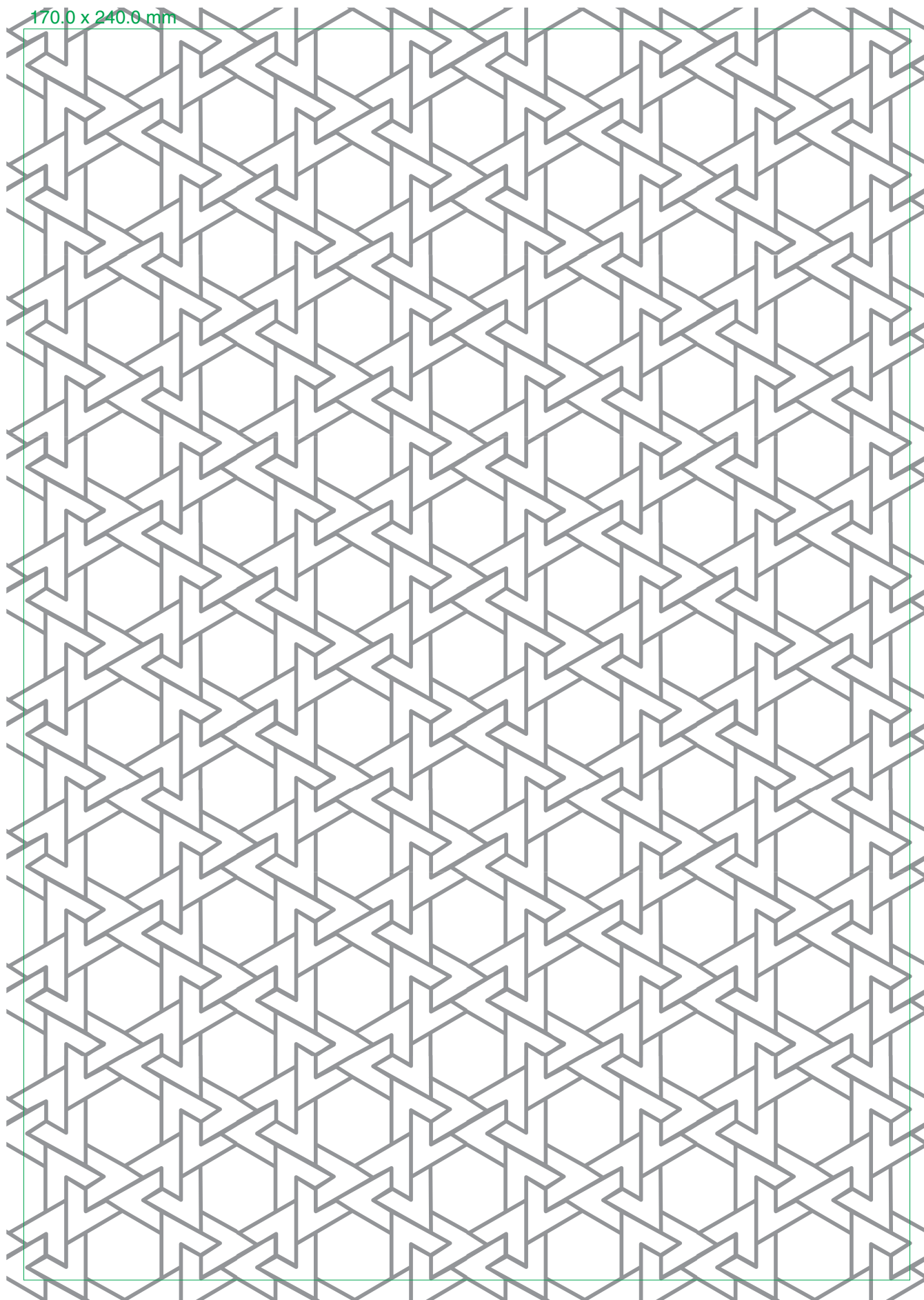
Conclusion

Baytimānī may not have been a particularly “good” poet when compared, for example, to Ibn al-Fāriḍ or his teacher Nābulusī. Whatever renown he had—as a poet or Sufi theoretician—seems not to have extended beyond Damascus, and none of his works were printed in the course of the nineteenth century. From a historian’s perspective, however, this is beside the point. His *Dīwān* is clearly an important source for the cultural historian and gives valuable glimpses into the life and thought of a middling Sufi shaykh and poet in Damascus in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. His often intimate and autobiographical tone is, if not unique, still unusual and revealing. Apart from the theme explored in this short contribution, there are also accounts of dreams, of his troubles as a father with children whose mother had died, and of accusations by some of his contemporaries that he was not learned enough in the exoteric sciences to be entrusted with teaching. His *Dīwān* will hopefully be edited and thus become more easily accessible to researchers.

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The Caliph

Reflections on a Complicated Legacy of an Institution in Islamic Thought*

Suleiman A. Mourad

In Rajab 659/June 1261, some months following the Mamluk defeat of the Mongol army in the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt in Ramaḍān 658/September 1260, a person named Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad appeared in the Mamluk court in Cairo. He claimed to be the son of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Zāhir bi-amr Allāh (r. 622/1225–623/1226) and uncle of the last caliph al-Musta‘īm bi-Allāh (r. 640/1242–656/1258) who was killed by Hülegü in Şafar 656/February 1258. Sultan Baybars (r. 658/1260–676/1277) welcomed the visitor and saw a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity flash in front of his eyes. Declaring Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad a caliph would make Baybars the savior of the caliphate and an outright hero in Sunnism, thus removing the questions of his legitimacy that has plagued his rise to power. Originally brought as a slave from what is today northwest Kazakhstan, Baybars rose through the ranks and became a senior commander in the Ayyūbid army. He was involved in the assassination of the Ayyūbid Sultan Tūrānshāh (r. 647/1249–648/1250), and less than a decade after the Mamluks took over, Baybars killed his own predecessor sultan Quṭuz (r. 657/1259–658/1260) and took the throne.

The great Ayyūbid and Mamluk historian Ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298) reported about the arrival of Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad. Ibn Wāṣil must have suspected some chicanery, for he pointed out Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad’s race/dark skin color and that those who came with him as avowers were Arab Bedouins (both of which are to be read as negative remarks).

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Ibn Wāṣil added that Baybars convened the administrators, officers and judges of his court as well as senior scholars and jurists of Cairo. The assembled dignitaries interrogated Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad and were assured by his answers that he was not an imposter. Everyone took turns to declare allegiance (*bay'a*) to him as the new caliph and Abū al-Qāsim chose the title of al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh, that is “the one empowered by God.” The caliphate was saved thanks to Baybars, and al-Mustanṣir’s first act was to “confirm” Baybars as sultan. A public declaration ensued.¹ News was sent throughout the Mamluk realm; a letter arrived in Damascus on 19 Rajab 659/19 June 1261 and was read aloud in the ‘Ādiliyya College, to the cheers of many locals.² Sunnism had its caliph.

Al-Mustanṣir was determined to return to Iraq with an army to liberate Baghdad from the Mongols. Sultan Baybars happily obliged and equipped the new caliph with soldiers and cash. Al-Mustanṣir departed with a large retinue of scholars from Egypt and Syria, many of whom had their eyes on the now-vacant prestigious positions in the ‘Abbāsid administration and the well-endowed professorships in the city’s colleges. Before reaching Baghdad, however, they were ambushed by a Mongol brigade and massacred.

The tragic end of this short episode notwithstanding, it revealed the level of anxiety many Sunnī Muslims in particular felt when Caliph al-Musta‘ṣim was killed in 1258. Despite the fact that the ‘Abbāsid caliphs were, since the tenth century, largely ineffectual, even objects of ridicule in poetry, and only exercised symbolic authority in the world of Sunnī Islam, their presence extended a semblance of normalcy for Sunnīs. The death of al-Musta‘ṣim abruptly interrupted this normalcy and caused some panic, which we hear in the repeated refrain by many Muslim chroniclers: “Islam has never seen a worse or more terrible calamity than this one.”³ Thus, the appearance of a claimant in the Mamluk court awakened the desire to instate a caliph who would assure the continuity of the institution, for many thought the world would not be normal without it.

World order was surely on the mind of many Muslims when Baghdad was sacked by the Mongols. Even though the circumstances of the killing of al-Musta‘ṣim are not known, several legends circulated about it. One such legend reveals how some Muslims equated the presence of the caliph with the endurance of the world. In other words, the world could not exist without a caliph. For instance, the Twelver Shī‘ī historian Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā (d. 710/1310) related in his book *al-Fakhrī fī al-adāb al-sulṭāniyya wa-l-duwal al-islāmiyya* (*The Eminent Book on Good Governance and Islamic Dynasties*) the following about al-Musta‘ṣim’s killing:

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- 1 Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb fī akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, ed. ‘U. Tadmurī (Ṣaydā: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2004), 6: 312–13.
 - 2 Abū Shāma, *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa-l-sābi‘ al-ma‘rūf bi-l-Dhayl ‘alā al-Rawḍatayn*, ed. ‘I. al-‘Aṭṭār al-Ḥusaynī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1974), 213.
 - 3 For example, Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb*, 213; and al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir’āt al-zamān* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1992), 1: 85.

When Hülegü captured Baghdad and wanted to kill caliph Abū Aḥmad ‘Abd Allāh al-Musta‘ṣim, someone told him that if the caliph is killed, the entire universe will lose its balance, the sun will not rise, the rain will not fall and the plants will not grow. He hesitated, and then asked a scholar about the matter. The scholar was very honest in his reply: “Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was much better than this caliph by the admission of everyone in the world. He was killed and these things did not occur. Likewise al-Ḥusayn, and even the ancestors of this caliph, they were horribly killed and neither the sun failed to rise nor the rain stopped.” When Hülegü heard that, his hesitation was gone.⁴

What this legend tells us is that Hülegü was reluctant to execute al-Musta‘ṣim until he was assured by a scholar in his court that nothing will happen to the world if the caliph was killed. Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) named the Shī‘ī vizier Ibn al-‘Alqamī (d. 657/1259) and philosopher and scientist Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) as the two who assured Hülegü that the killing of al-Musta‘ṣim would cause no worldly imbalances, and even suggested to him that, to be on the safe side, the caliph’s body be placed in a container lest any drop of blood reached the ground.⁵

It is relevant here to point out that Sunnī scholars in general placed the blame on the Shī‘īs for the sack of Baghdad and the killing of al-Musta‘ṣim along with several prestigious Sunnī scholars, alleging that Ibn al-‘Alqamī’s aversion and hostility towards Sunnism drove him to invite the Mongols to invade Baghdad.⁶ It is also important not to over exaggerate the sense of panic about the end of the Sunnī caliphate. The famous Sunnī historian Abū Shāma (d. 665/1267), for instance, sounded indifferent about the death of al-Musta‘ṣim and the end of the caliphate in the two sections in his chronicle where he very briefly reported about the sack of Baghdad.⁷

In this paper, I argue that the development of the institution of the caliphate and the religious thought about its function and role in the Muslim polity and Islamic religion were motivated by historical dynamics. During the Umayyad and Fatimid periods, those dynamics led to the promotion of the caliph as God’s deputy in order to claim absolute religious and political authority (irrespective of whether or not that was achievable). Different historical dynamics led to the gradual marginalization of the institution of the caliphate, resulting in the reassignment of religious authority to scholars and political authority to sultans and viziers. However symbolic and ceremonial the actual caliphs became, and in some cases nonexistent, many Muslim scholars kept talking about the

4 Ibn al-Tiqaqā, *al-Fakhrī fī l-ādāb al-sultāniyya wa-l-durwal al-islāmiyya* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1960), 141–42.

5 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, ed. ‘A. Shīrī (Beirut: Dār Ihya’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1988), 13: 234.

6 See, for instance, al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir’āt al-zamān*, 1: 88; and Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ al-fatāwā*, ed. M. ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2000), 16 (part 28): 279.

7 Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 198 (year 655 H) and 198–199 (year 656 H).

crucial role of the institution in theoretical or theological terms even though in their own respective times, they did not see a place for it.

1 The Umayyads: God's Caliphs

The term caliph (*khalīfa*) indicates the title of the ruler of the Muslim polity and it also evokes the institution itself (*al-khilāfa*). Even though Muslim literary sources apply it retroactively to Abū Bakr (r. 11/632–13/634), the first Muslim ruler after the Prophet Muhammad, there is no proof for that being the case. Datable evidence, however, suggests that the title was first claimed by the Umayyads (r. 41/661–132/750) and meant “deputy of God” (*khalīfat Allāh*).⁸ When Muslim scholars later on applied it to the period of what is known as the “rightly-guided” caliphs (*al-khulafā’ al-rāshidūn*), they were mainly contesting the Umayyads’ claim and arguing that the first caliphs used the title to mean “successor of the Messenger of God” (*khalīfat rasūl Allāh*).

Also important regarding the title *khalīfa* is that it could be synonymous with the title *imām* (supreme leader). The two are used interchangeably in Sunnī scholarship and some Shī’ī sources. Twelver Shī’īs apply the term *khalīfa* to some of their supreme leaders, such as ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. But with the loss of political power, they maintained a separation between the two: *imām* signifying supreme religious leadership, which was an exclusive reference to Shī’ī imams, whereas *khalīfa* designating political rule, which could be applied to proto-Sunnī or Sunnī head of the Islamic polity.

The Qur’ān mentions the term *khalīfa* several times (be it in singular or plural, noun or verbal forms). Except in one case, they all mean either the human creation (e.g., 2:30 and 27:62) or groups who replaced other groups (e.g., 6:133 and 7:69). However, in verse 38:26—where God declares: “O David, we appointed you a deputy (*khalīfa*) on earth, so judge between people in truth”—the term clearly indicates governance and adjudication of human affairs. Nevertheless, it does not seem that Muslim rulers adopted it until the Umayyads.⁹ Indeed, as said earlier, evidence points solidly to the use of the term during the Umayyad period, such as in the “Standing Caliph” dirham minted in 75/694–695 during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65/685–86/705), which features his

8 See Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 4–23; and Wadad Qadi and Aram A. Shahin, “Caliph, Caliphate,” in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, eds. G. Böwering et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 82–83.

9 I acknowledge the existence of a later body of traditions and historical accounts that allege the first four caliphs adopted the title *khalīfa*. But to date, there is not a single piece of evidence (in papyri, inscription, etc.) attesting to a pre-Umayyad usage.

portrait and identifies him as “*amīr al-muʿminīn khallafahu Allāh*,” meaning “Commander of the Faithful, whom God made Caliph.”¹⁰

Yet, it is in Umayyad poetry where we see the widespread use of the expression *khalīfat Allāh*. The three famous Umayyad court poets employed it in odes for different caliphs. Poet al-Akhṭal (d. 92/710), for example, addressed caliph ʿAbd al-Malik, saying:

I sacrifice my soul for the Commander of the Faithful. When
he reveals his teeth on the arduous day of battle, he is confident.
He rushes into battle, with fortune on his end,
Caliph of God, whose intervention we seek when rain fails to descend.¹¹

Similarly, poet al-Farazdaq (d. 641/732) quipped when caliph Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 96/715–99/717) laughed at his physical weakness:

Do people wonder that I made the best one among them roar with laughter,
Caliph of God, whose intervention we seek when rain falters.¹²

Likewise, poet Jarīr (d. c. 110/728) proclaimed in the court of caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99/717–101/720):

Caliph of God, what do you have for us as reward,
seeing that we are not your family and we do not own a lavish abode?
...
He attained the caliphate, indeed it was for him ordained,
akin to God’s reunion with Moses, which was destined.¹³

Leaving aside the exaggeration (caliph possessing unmatched bravery, able to intervene to end droughts, being preordained by God, etc.), the significance of this poetry is that it promoted the notion of the caliph as God’s deputy. Moreover, the Umayyad caliphs themselves were the direct beneficiaries of this propaganda, as it substantiated their claim to absolute and uncontested authority over the political and religious realms. There were regular confrontations with ʿAlid claimants; the killing of imam al-Ḥusayn in 680 is a

10 An example of the coin can be seen at <<https://www.islamic-awareness.org/history/islam/coins/drachm24.html>> (accessed 12 August 2021).

11 Al-Zajjājī, *Ishtiāq asmāʾ Allāh*, ed. ʿA.-R.-Ḥ. al-Mubārak (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1986), 276. The poetry is also found in al-Farāhīdī, *al-Jumal fī l-naḥū*, ed. F. D. Qabāwa (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1985), 62; and Sibawayh, *al-Kitāb*, ed. ʿA.-S. Ḥārūn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1988), 2: 62.

12 Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. M. A.-F. Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʾārif, 1967–1976), 6: 548.

13 Jarīr, *Dīwān Jarīr bi-sharḥ Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb*, ed. N. Tāhā (Cairo: Dār al-Maʾārif, 1969), 1: 416.

case in point. There was also the case of Ibn al-Zubayr (r. 64/683–73/692) who challenged the legitimacy of the Umayyad caliphs, and who used the title of *Khalīfat al-Raḥmān* (Deputy of the Merciful).¹⁴ Therefore, given the role of poetry as a very impactful media outlet, these lines, and many like them, helped disseminate the notion of the caliph as one acting out a divine role and cemented it among Muslims at the time. One might even argue that the opposite view—that the caliph meant “successor” of the Prophet Muhammad—was articulated as a rejection of the widespread use of the title *khalīfa* by the Umayyads and their propagandists to mean the deputy of God on earth.

2 Al-Ma'mūn: A Turning Point

A major turning point in the history of the institution of the caliphate was the reign of al-Ma'mūn (r. 198/813–218/833) and his imposition of the *miḥna* inquisition (specifically, the theological inquisition around the issue of the createdness of the Qur'ān). One of al-Ma'mūn's objectives was to reestablish his absolute authority as caliph in religious affairs, which was being contested by an emerging class of religious scholars.¹⁵ We can have a good idea of his own understanding of caliphal authority in a letter he wrote in early spring of 218/833 to Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm (d. 235/850), who was governor in Baghdad and head of the police there:

It is a duty owed to God that the imam-caliphs of the Muslims exert their efforts to uphold God's religion that he entrusted to them, transmit the prophetic teachings for which he made them heirs, and spread the knowledge that he deposited in them¹⁶

Thus, al-Ma'mūn believed that the caliphate bestowed on him the duties of trustee of religion, heir of the Prophet, and propagator of knowledge. His *miḥna* inquisition alienated mainly Ḥadīth scholars, who were some of its first victims and who came to play a major role in the development of traditionalist Sunnism.¹⁷ This was a watershed

¹⁴ On this, see Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 12.

¹⁵ On al-Ma'mūn and the *miḥna* inquisition he launched, see John A. Nawas, *al-Ma'mūn, the Inquisition, and the Quest for Caliphal Authority* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2015), especially chapter 4.

¹⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 8: 631–32.

¹⁷ I use “traditionalist Sunnism” instead of the widespread “orthodox Islam” for two reasons. First, orthodox Islam gives the impression that it is the only correct form of Islam, and others are unorthodox and therefore incorrect. This widespread belief is historically false and it is a form of advocacy (whether intended or not). Two, traditionalist Sunnis believe in the tradition, thus the issue has nothing to do with orthodoxy properly speaking (orthodoxy means correct belief). In this

moment in Islamic history in that the caliph's absolute religious authority in Sunnī Islam was shattered beyond repair. It can be said, therefore, that what al-Māmūn unintentionally accomplished was cementing the belief among religious scholars that Islam must be under their authority as a collective class, which became the uncontested reality in Sunnism by the end of the ninth century.¹⁸

A similar process occurred in Twelver Shī'ism almost simultaneously and for completely different reasons, ushering the transition from the belief in the active imamate to the absent imamate. The main cause was the disappearance of the twelfth imam Muḥammad al-Mahdī in 260/874, which started the transfer of the reins of religious authority in Twelver Shī'ism to religious scholars.

The tenth century saw the almost-complete erosion of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs' political authority with the rise of the Shī'ī Būyids (334/945–447/1055) and their control of Baghdad. Since then, the most that can be said about the 'Abbāsīd caliphs is that they were largely symbolic figures,¹⁹ like some royals today. Their function was ceremonial to bestow legitimacy on the actual rulers who pledged nominal allegiance to them (Būyids, Seljuks, Ayyūbids, Mamluks, etc.).²⁰ The other Sunnī caliphal state at the time, the Umayyads of Spain,²¹ also ended in 422/1031 and had marginal impact, if any, on the history of the institution in a pan-Islamic context.

These weaknesses notwithstanding, Sunnī religious scholars revisited, theoretically at least, the importance of the caliphate as an institution and its divine role in the leadership of religion and state. The words of al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) sum up this tendency, despite the fact that the actual caliphs at his time—al-Qādir bi-Allāh (r. 381/991–422/1031) and al-Qā'im bi-amr Allāh (r. 422/1031–467/1075)—were mere puppets. In his influential book *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* (*the Ordinances of Government*), al-Māwardī argued that:

respect, traditionalist Sunnism emphasizes the priority of orthopraxy, that is right behavior and practices which are based on the traditions established by the founding fathers of Islam (from Adam and Eve and the many biblical prophets and sage men and women, all the way down to the Prophet Muhammad, his Companions and some early Muslim figures). Therefore, traditionalist Sunnism is not really centered around a strict theological system, like for instance the Shī'īs or non-traditionalist Sunnīs such as the Mu'tazila movement or even Sufism.

18 On the rise of the proto-Sunnī scholarly elite, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early 'Abbāsids: The Emergence of the Proto-Sunnī Elite* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

19 Even symbolic figures muster some power. The point I am making is about the general perception that became widespread among Muslims, namely that the institution and its occupant are no more as important or powerful as they once were.

20 Notwithstanding the very few instances when a caliph tried, often unsuccessfully, to reestablish his political authority. On that issue, see Eric J. Hanne, *Putting the Caliph in His Place: Power, Authority, and the Late Abbasid Caliphate* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007).

21 On the caliphate of the Umayyads of Spain, see Janina M. Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate: The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in al-Andalus* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

The almighty God has delegated for this community a leader (*imām*) who is the successor (*khalaf*) of the prophecy, and made him the guardian of religion. He delegated to him governance so that its management is based on legitimate religion and there be a unity in obedience to his word. Thus, the imamate was made as a foundation, upon which the laws of the community are based and the affairs of the Muslim community are steadied²²

It is beside the point if al-Māwardī really believed when he wrote his book that the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Qādir bi-Allāh or al-Qā’im bi-amr Allāh was qualified to be the supreme leader as he described above. One might argue that, as a Sunnī, al-Māwardī was advocating for the legitimacy of the institution and those who occupied it in the past, yet acknowledging that over time the caliph became only nominally the head of Islam and the Islamic state.²³ The real objective of his book was actually to sanction the reality that existed at his time, namely that actual political power was now in the hands of sultans and viziers and not caliphs, which in his opinion was legitimate in Islam. Indeed, in *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, al-Māwardī gave the religious and historical foundations for the caliph delegating all his political powers to sultans, viziers and governors, which he called *tafwīd* (delegation) and *istināba* (deputation).²⁴ Therefore, his words quoted above reflect a desire and an exercise in theoretical reflections about the “ideal” caliphate, which many Sunnī scholars shared, and were not therefore a call to reform it or revive it.

Indeed, faced with a new reality, Sunnī scholars gave up on the institution of the caliphate as the base of real political power and legitimacy, and reassigned them to those who actually held power, provided they champion Sunnism and its religious tenets.²⁵ We find this evidently clear with al-Juwaynī (d. 1085) and his endorsement of the Seljuks’ seizure of political power in his influential book *Ghiyāth al-umam fī iltiyāth al-ẓulam* (*Rescuing the Lands from the Overwhelming Darkness*):

If a powerful man, enjoying massive followers and widespread support, were to rise, upholding the law, commanding right and prohibiting wrong, and taking responsibility on behalf of the Muslims for what they entrusted to

²² Al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, ed. A. Jād (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2006), 13.

²³ For the debate regarding the motives and intentions of al-Māwardī, see Ann K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam. An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory: The Jurists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 83–102; and Patricia Crone, *God’s Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 232–35.

²⁴ Al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, 50–53 and 62–68.

²⁵ Some of the greatest Sunnī jurists espoused this shift, such as al-Juwaynī (d. 1085) and al-Ghazālī (d. 1111): see Lambton, *State and Government*, 103–129; and Crone, *God’s Rule*, 222–55.

him, then that man should proceed forward. For God will support him on the condition that he pursues the benefits and what leads to success.²⁶

In these words, al-Juwaynī gave total legitimacy to the Seljuk sultans and their powerful viziers to become the de facto guardians of Sunnism and the Sunnīs, and did not even require any type of deputation or delegation from the ‘Abbāsīd caliph.

In every respect, it was the views of influential scholars like al-Māwardī and al-Juwaynī that cemented among Sunnīs the final shift of political authority from the institution of the caliphate to the institution of sultanate, and which became the hallmark of rule in pre-modern Sunnism since the late eleventh century. Moreover, these influential Sunnī scholars equally believed that it was no more tenable to restore the authority over religious matters back to the caliph, now that they as a class became well established as the true guardians of the Islamic religious sciences.

Indeed, we see this shift adopted by Sunnī scholars from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. For instance, in *Tārīkh al-khulafā’* (*Annales of the Caliphs*), the famous scholar of the late Mamluk period al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) chronicled the caliphs from the time of Abū Bakr until his own period.²⁷ Yet, al-Suyūṭī from the onset emphasized that the continuity of the institution of the caliphate was not something that the Prophet Muhammad envisioned. Actually, according to a prophetic hadith, Muhammad announced that the caliphate would only endure for thirty years after him.²⁸ In another hadith, Muhammad specified the number of caliphs as 12; al-Suyūṭī commented on this particular hadith saying that ten true caliphs have already come—Abū Bakr, ‘Umar (r. 13/634–24/644), ‘Uthmān (r. 24/644–35/656), ‘Alī (35/656–40/661), al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī (r. 40/661–41/661), Mu‘āwiya (r. 40/661–60/680), Ibn al-Zubayr, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, al-Muhtadī bi-Allāh (r. 255/869–256/870), and al-Zāhir bi-Amr Allāh (r. 622/1225–623/1226)—and two remain to appear.²⁹ This suggests that al-Suyūṭī was thinking of two tiers of caliphs: true caliphs and claimants. Equally important, he seems to have thought of the current ‘Abbāsīd caliphs of Cairo as simply there to assure the continuity of the institution so that in the future the two remaining caliphs will appear from their progeny.³⁰ In other words, al-Suyūṭī accepted the reality that current caliphs of his time had no role either in the political or religious realm.

The Ottoman invasion of Egypt in 922/1516–923/1517 witnessed the end of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate in Cairo, thus introducing a new dynamic into the shift discussed above,

26 Al-Juwaynī, *Ghiyāth al-umam fi iltiyāth al-zulam*, ed. ‘A.-‘A. al-Dīb (Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 2011), 283.

27 Al-Suyūṭī only listed two dynasties: the Umayyads and the ‘Abbāsīds (of Baghdad and Cairo), and ignored all other caliphal dynasties, especially the Fatimids and the Umayyads of Spain.

28 Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafā’* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1988), 12.

29 Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafā’*, 15.

30 Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafā’*, 18–19.

namely the opportunity to bring the argument presented by the likes of al-Māwardī and al-Juwaynī to its ultimate conclusion. For instance, Lūtfī Pasha (d. 971/1564), a notable Ottoman scholar who occupied for two years (946/1539–948/1541) the post of Grand Vizier under Sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver (r. 926/1520–974/1566), wrote a treatise on rightful leadership, which he entitled *Khalāṣ al-umma fī maʿrifat al-aʿimma* (*The Salvation of the Community in Knowing the Right Leaders*). The purpose of the treatise was to argue that Sultan Süleyman does not only merit being the uncontested ruler of his time; he must also be acknowledged as the legitimate caliph of the age. Lūtfī Pasha had two obstacles to overcome. First, he had to resolve the problem that the caliphate is conventionally restricted to descendants of the tribe of Quraysh, given the fact that the sultan was a Turk and not an Arab. Lūtfī Pasha did so by showing that Muslim scholars never agreed that caliphs must be exclusively from Quraysh, and that the convention was only applicable to the formative period of Islam and not to his own time.³¹ Second, he had to argue that Süleyman fulfilled all the religious requirements and must therefore be recognized as the caliph. In this respect, Lūtfī Pasha argued:

The caliph is the one who commands right and forbids wrong. If the required conditions are fulfilled by a person, namely hegemony, dominance, execution of religious law with justice, and general leadership, then he is a sultan who merits the title of imam and caliph.³²

He added with emphasis that those who refuse to admit that Sultan Süleyman is the imam and caliph have no religious grounding,³³ and are therefore heretics.³⁴

As mentioned earlier, Lūtfī Pasha brought the central point of al-Māwardī and al-Juwaynī to its ultimate conclusion. It is not only that political rule transfers to the sultan given the weakness of the caliph. The sultan becomes the caliph.

3 The Caliph in Shīʿism

In the Shīʿī world, caliphal rule only existed among the Ismāʿīlī Fāṭimids who established themselves first in what is today Tunisia in the early tenth century, and then conquered Egypt, the Ḥijāz, Palestine and central Syria before the first millennium was over. The

31 Lūtfī Pasha, *Khalāṣ al-umma fī maʿrifat al-aʿimma*, ed. M. Makhḷūf (Cairo: Dār al-Āfāq al-ʿArabiyya, 2001), 47–48. Lūtfī Pasha finished writing this treatise on 3 Ramaḍān 961/2 August 1554.

32 Lūtfī Pasha, *Khalāṣ al-umma*, 43–44.

33 Ibid., 68.

34 Ibid., 44 and 66–67.

Fāṭimid rule came to an end in 567/1171 when Saladin refused to allow a caliph to be sworn in following the death of caliph al-ʿAḍid li-dīn Allāh (r. 546/1160–567/1171).

Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974), chief-judge of Egypt under the early Fāṭimids, preserved his appointment letter which he received from caliph al-Muʿizz li-dīn Allāh (r. 341/953–365/975). In it, al-Muʿizz wrote:

Whenever something continues to perplex you and thus be difficult for you, and remains obscure and thus intractable, refer it in the final instance to the Commander of the Faithful, so that he might direct you to the correct ruling on the issue, so that you might adopt it and act upon it accordingly, for he is the remnant of the Caliphs who were guided by God and the descendant of the Rightly Guided Imams, for God, exalted and sublime be His praise, has decreed that people consult them, draw from their knowledge, and refer matters of importance to them.³⁵

According to this letter, God has decreed that the Fāṭimid caliph (who is also the imam) be the source of earthly knowledge for his followers and the reference point on all matters. He is the remnant of the rightly-guided caliphs who came before him, which al-Muʿizz intended it to mean strictly his own genealogical predecessors and not all past caliphs.

Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān elaborated further on the role of the Fāṭimid caliph, claiming that he alone knows God's law, including the commandments stipulated in the Qurʾān, the clear therein and the concealed. Only the caliph can explain God's commandments to the believers, and the world cannot exist without him.³⁶ It is therefore not a surprise that Shīʿism requires as a condition of faith the belief in the divine role of the imam as a supreme leader.³⁷ But the historical context in which this role was asserted by caliph al-Muʿizz and al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān is also very informative for our discussion. Fāṭimid control over Egypt, which started in 969, was at its beginning and thus necessitated that they establish their absolute authority over religious and political matters against claims made by other groups (especially the Sunnīs, who would have been more inclined to proclaim the ʿAbbāsīd caliph as their “authority”).³⁸

Even in the case of the Twelver Shīʿīs who were not able to form a caliphate like that of the Fāṭimids, the imam (also called caliph-imam) remained theoretically the source of political and religious authority. For instance, Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991) asserted that “the caliph-imam is needed in order to guarantee that the world remains on the right

35 Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Disagreements of the Jurists: A Manual of Islamic Legal Theory*, ed. and trans. D. J. Stewart (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 38–39.

36 Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Disagreements of the Jurists*, 44–45.

37 See, for instance, al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī* (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Fajr, 2007), 2: 18.

38 On the Fāṭimids, see Michael Brett, *The Fatimid Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

path.³⁹ He also contended that because the caliph is God's deputy, he must be infallible (*ma'ṣūm*),⁴⁰ and that only God chooses the caliph, and the angels and humans have no role in the selection.⁴¹ Similarly, al-Nawbakhtī (d. c. 310/922) stressed that the world cannot exist without an imam:

If there were only two people on earth, one of them must be the proof of God so that God's command would persist. If one of them died, the one who survived would be the proof so that God's commands and prohibitions would continue to be maintained in his creation.⁴²

Yet, by the time of both al-Nawbakhtī and Ibn Bābawayh, the imam was no more physically present among his supporters—he was in the “occultation” (*ghayba*) phase: the lesser occultation (260/874–329/941) and the greater occultation (after 329/941)—and thus could not actually assume any of his roles. As such, Twelver Shī'īs lived and accepted the political authority, however symbolic sometimes, of actual rulers, including the Sunnī 'Abbāsid caliphs. As noted at the beginning of this paper, the Twelver Shī'ī Ibn al-'Alqamī was the vizier of the Sunnī Caliph al-Musta'ṣim. Equally, al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), one of the most influential Twelver Shī'ī theologians/jurists, avoided the mention of the term *khalīfa* in the chapter on the Imamate in his seminal book *Manāḥij al-yaqīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* (*The Surest Paths on the Principles of Religion*).⁴³

The absence of the imam, starting with the greater occultation phase, gave the religious scholars a gradual monopoly over the Twelver Shī'ī jurisprudence.⁴⁴ In the early sixteenth century, they adopted the concept of the general deputyship (*niyāba 'amma*) of the imam, namely that the jurist who assumes the roles of the imam does not need to be appointed by him, for the position is attained through knowledge of jurisprudence and ability to do *ijtihād* (independent reasoning).⁴⁵ The post was first bestowed on 'Alī

39 Ibn Bābawayh, *Kamāl al-dīn wa-tamām al-ni'ma*, ed. Ḥ. al-A'lamī (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lamī, 1991), 20.

40 Ibid., 17.

41 Ibid., 20–21.

42 Al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-shī'a*, ed. H. Ritter (Istanbul: Maṭba'at al-Dawla, 1931), 90.

43 Al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī, *Minhāj al-yaqīn fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. M. R. al-Anṣārī al-Qummī (Qumm: Maṭba'at Yārān, 1995), 289–332.

44 On Shī'ism, see Najam Haider, *Shī'i Islam: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

45 The point is first made by 'Alī al-Karakī, as we come across it in his *Qaṭ'at al-lajāj fī taḥqīq ḥāl al-kharāj*, ed. M. al-Gharawī (Qumm: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1990), 62 and 76. More clearly by his student Zayn al-Dīn al-'Āmilī, *Masālik al-afḥām ilā tanqīḥ sharā'i' al-islām* (Qumm: Mu'assasat al-Ma'arif al-Islāmiyya, 2008), 3: 108 and 13: 334.

al-Karakī (d. 940/1534).⁴⁶ But it was in the eighteenth century that this deputyship was believed to extend to the realm of politics and governance.⁴⁷ So what did Ibn Bābawayh and al-Nawbakhtī mean by talking about the caliph in the way they did? It could have been partly a theoretical speculation and nostalgic aspiration given the reality around them. But we should not dismiss the possibility that it was also theologically necessary given the Twelver Shīʿī belief in the absolute right of their imams to have occupied the post of caliph, and guard the right of the hidden imam to it once he reappears.

4 Modernity with/without Caliph

Modernity introduced new challenges in the Muslim world. The race to “reform” and “progress” became the obsession of most Muslims, especially religious and secular reformers, and affected their thinking about the caliphate. Some argued that the institution is essential in order to oversee the reforms and guarantee their compliance with Islamic law and dogma. Others saw it as irrelevant and even un-Islamic in the sense that true Islam calls for the separation of religious matters from state matters.

The Indian Muslim reformer Chirāgh Ali (d. 1895), for instance, alleged that “Mohammadanism as taught by Mohammad, the Arabian Prophet, possesses sufficient elasticity to enable it to adapt itself to the social and political revolutions going on around it.”⁴⁸ He was provoked to write his book—*The Proposed Political, Legal, and Social Reforms in the Ottoman Empire and Other Mohammadan States*—following accusations by some European scholars and clergy that Islam hindered the Muslims’ ability to reform and join the modern age. After providing a historical overview in support of his claim, Ali posited the question: “Who can effect the proposed reforms?” His answer could not have been more assertive and emphatic:

I reply at once, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan. He is competent enough to bring about any political, legal or social reforms on the authority of the Koran, He is the only legal authority on matters of innovation; being a successor to

46 See Devin J. Stewart, “An Eleventh-Century Justification of the Authority of Twelver Shiite Jurists,” in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone*, eds. B. Sadeghi et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 472–73.

47 Needless to say, within Twelver Shīʿism, there remains a sharp division over this issue between the rationalists (*uṣūlīs*) who accept it and traditionalists (*akhbārīs*) who reject it. See the grand ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri (d. 2009), *Dirāsāt fī wilāyat al-faqīh wa-fiqh al-dawla al-islāmiyya* (Beirut: al-Dār al-Islāmiyya, 1988), 1: 405.

48 Cherāgh Ali, *The Proposed Political, Legal, and Social Reforms in the Ottoman Empire and Other Mohammadan States* (Bombay: Education Society’s Press, 1883), ii.

the successors of the Prophet (*Khalifa Khalifai Rasul-Allāh*), and the *Ameer-al-Momineen*, the *Saut-ul-Hai*, or the living voice of Islam.⁴⁹

Thus, according to Ali, it was the Ottoman sultan who has the exclusive mandate and capacity to give the desired political, legal and social reforms the legitimacy they need. As caliph and commander of the faithful, he is the living voice of Islam (*Saut-ul-Hai*). Given his legal authority—that is, the authority given to him under Islam as Ali alleged—the caliph must lead the Muslims through the unavoidable transition by reforming Islam to meet the demands of the modern age. Ali's views and advocacy on the caliphate were later on instrumental in the formation of the Khilafat Movement in India (1919–1924), which collapsed largely due to the abolition of the Turkish caliphate as we will see below. Yet, here as well, Ali's views that many in India shared at the time originated in the peculiar dilemma and fear of the Indian Muslims who were wedged between a Hindu majority on the one hand, and a suppressive British imperial rule on the other hand. Promoting a pan-Islamic caliphate gave them a sense of belonging to a conceived Muslim universe beyond India, irrespective of whether or not it was a realistic aspiration.⁵⁰

It is to be noted that the Ottoman sultans toyed with the title of caliph throughout the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, largely in order to garner support for themselves and the wars of the Ottoman Empire, be that the Crimea War (1853–1856) or during the First World War (1914–1918). There were as well other groups who self-proclaimed their leaders as caliphs, such as the movement established by Usuman dan Fodio (d. 1817) in today's northwestern Nigeria and which spread to central West Africa and came to be known as the Sokoto Caliphate. There was as well the claim of the ruler (*Sharīf*) of Mecca al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (d. 1931), who unsuccessfully declared himself caliph in March 1924 following the abolition of the Turkish caliphate in order to use it primarily against his rival Ibn Sa'ūd (founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

The defining moment in the debate about the caliph and his function in modern Islam unfolded in the early 1920s when Turkey became a republic and President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1923–1938) requested the abolition of the caliphate, which was ratified by the Turkish parliament on 3 March 1924. At that time, the “caliph” was Abdülmejid II; he assumed the post on 1 November 1922 when republican rule brought an end to the Ottoman sultanate.

One of the powerful voices to write in support of maintaining the office of caliph was the Islamist reformer Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935). He devoted an entire book to the topic, entitled *al-Khilāfa aw al-imāma al-uzmā* (*The Caliphate or Supreme Leadership*),

49 Ali, *The Proposed Political, Legal, and Social Reforms*, xxix–xxx.

50 More on this, see Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857–1964* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1967).

and which he published in 1922. He also wrote about the issue in his influential magazine *al-Manār* (*The Lighthouse*). The book and articles reveal the depth of the investment of Riḍā and some Sunnī pan-Islamists in the project of modern pan-Islamic political revival led by a caliph, yet how complex it is.

As a staunch advocate for the institution of the caliphate, Riḍā argued that:

The caliphate is the locus of unity, source of legislation, embodiment of order, and guarantor of the execution of rules. Its supporting cast is the class of learned elite who provide it with counsel, and whose head is the Supreme Leader. As required by our foundational sources, they all must be proficient in legislation, including independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) and rational deduction (*istinbāṭ*).⁵¹

Thus, the caliph is not only the symbol of unity; his office combines all the essential functions of effective governance: legislative, executive, and judicial. Moreover, as “Supreme Leader,” he is the head of the representative council, which comprises the men of power and influence (in Arabic, *ahl al-ḥall wa-l-ʿaql*).

Riḍā also alleged that having a caliph is not only a rational binding duty but also a legal binding duty.⁵² Thus, for Riḍā, the Muslims fail to fulfil their religious duties if there is no properly elected caliph⁵³ to whom they must avow allegiance (*bayʿa*).⁵⁴ In selecting the caliph, priority should be given to descendants of the Meccan tribe of Quraysh, but the caliph can be any Arab, or even if no qualified Arab is found, he can be a non-Arab (*min al-ʿajam*);⁵⁵ although Riḍā insisted that the person who is to become caliph must master the Arabic language.⁵⁶ A caveat, Riḍā warned against rushing the process and declaring a caliph just for the sake of it, which makes his plea seem not that urgent after all, and renders his claim that the Muslims err if they do not have a caliph as an empty rhetoric.

The abolition of the Turkish caliphate in 1924 gave Riḍā another chance to reassert his views about the indispensable role of the caliph for Islam and the Muslims. His biggest stage this time was the pan-Islamic conference which al-Azhar convened in Cairo between 13 and 23 May 1926 to discuss the question of the caliphate. For Riḍā, the conference was a necessary step towards the unification of the Muslims in order to protect and preserve Islam.⁵⁷ The biggest challenge for him, which he voiced in his address

51 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *al-Khilāfa* (Cairo: Muʿassasat Hindāwī, 2013), 91.

52 Ibid., 14.

53 Ibid., 19–21.

54 Ibid., 15.

55 Ibid., 21.

56 Ibid., 85.

57 Riḍā, “Muʿtamar al-Khilāfa,” *al-Manār* 26.10 (1926): 790.

at the conference, revolved around the issue of how to select the group of learned elite who will have the exclusive role of appointing a caliph. Thus, he argued, the success of the conference hinged on its ability to put in place a vetting process to determine first the qualified electors, who then can choose and install a caliph.⁵⁸

Riḍā admitted though that many Muslims, including religious scholars, were against the reinstitution of the caliphate.⁵⁹ One of those opponents was the religious cleric ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq (d. 1966) who published in 1925 his controversial book *al-Islām wa-uṣūl al-ḥukm: baḥth fī al-khilāfa wa-l-ḥukūma fī al-islām* (*Islam and the Principles of Rule: An Essay on the Caliphate and Government in Islam*). ‘Abd al-Rāziq argued that there was not a single verse in the Qur’ān that supports the claim that the installation of a caliph is a religious duty.⁶⁰ Worse than that, he continued, the book of God and the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad do not mention the caliphate at all,⁶¹ and there was never a consensus about it among the Muslims.⁶² Thus, in ‘Abd al-Rāziq’s view, the caliphate, both in its religious and political aspects, is alien to the teachings of Islam, and the issue of governance is completely left to the Muslims to determine based on rationalism, experience, political philosophy, and what is to their best interests at any given time.⁶³

The fact that the push for the election of a caliph was essentially dropped even by its staunchest advocates only proves that modernity and colonial rule created a dominant realization among the majority of Muslims that the institution was better left as a vestige of a “glorious” past. It does not belong in their future political plans, except as a distant desire. Nevertheless, the debate about it was necessitated and geared by the open and often hostile dispute among the Muslims over which political course will be the most effective for the present and future. One trajectory was the clash over state nationalism (Syrian, Egyptian, Turkish, etc.), ethnic nationalism (pan-Arab, pan-Turkic, etc.), or pan-Islamism. Another trajectory was the quarrel over the need to “return” to the Islam of so-called “golden years” of the Prophet Muhammad and the rightly-guided caliphs or the necessity to devise a new Islam suitable for modernity. A third trajectory was the disagreement over how much of European modernity was allowed to be borrowed by the Muslims, and if it was to be “Islamized” before it can be usable. A fourth trajectory was the issue of separation of church and state. The debates over these trajectories inspired some modernists to revisit the role of the caliph, and in many ways predetermined the outcome.

58 Riḍā, “Mudhakkara muqaddama ilā Mu’tamar al-khilāfa al-‘ām fī Miṣr al-Qāhira,” *al-Manār* 27.2 (1926): 142.

59 Riḍā, “Mu’tamar al-Khilāfa,” 791.

60 ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *al-Islām wa-uṣūl al-ḥukm: baḥth fī al-khilāfa wa-l-ḥukūma fī al-islām* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣrī, 2012), 25.

61 ‘Abd al-Rāziq, *al-Islām wa-uṣūl al-ḥukm*, 27.

62 Ibid., 34 and 47.

63 Ibid., 137.

Even in Twelver Shī'ī circles, the institution of the caliphate is ignored in the discussions about Islamic governance today.⁶⁴ If it is evoked, the discussion is restricted to the historical context of early Islam or theoretical aspects, as seen earlier. For instance, in his *al-Imāma al-kubrā wa-l-khilāfa al-'uẓmā* (*The Great Imamate and the Supreme Caliphate*), Ayatollah Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Qazwīnī (d. 1960) argued that “the grand imamate and supreme caliphate is a universal divine task (*wilāya ilāhīyya 'amma*)” and that “belief in the great imamate and glorious caliphate is an integral component of prophethood and its essential mission, and is therefore a foundational principle of religion.”⁶⁵ Yet, he does not address at all how Twelver Shī'īs in his day should go about actualizing the institution.

Furthermore, modern Twelver Shī'ī theologians and jurists generally dropped the use of *khalīfa*; the term is missing from the religious vocabulary of modern Twelver Shī'ism, especially in post-revolutionary Iran where religious and political authorities are invested in the institution of Guardian Jurist (*Velayat-e faqih*).⁶⁶ In other words, the jurist does not “actualize” the theoretical discussion that we find in classical Twelver Shī'ī literature about the caliph.⁶⁷

Concluding Remarks

The examples discussed above represent some of the most important opinions and debates about the function of the caliph and the institution of the caliphate in Islamic thought and political practice. Yet, they are not exhaustive and one could have included many other voices and experiences from different time periods, geographical areas, or doctrinal persuasions. Nevertheless, the scope of this paper necessitates some brevity.

Acknowledging the limitations, the discussion has shown that the Muslims' thinking about the caliphate and the role of the caliph was never similar, even if the vocabulary might have been the same. The motivations were tied to the historical circumstances that produced social, political and religious realizations and needs. With the Umayyads

64 See, for example, Montazeri, *Dirāsāt fī wilāyat al-faqih*, 1: 161–204.

65 Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Qazwīnī, *al-Imāma al-kubrā wa-l-khilāfa al-'uẓmā*, ed. J. al-Qazwīnī (Beirut: Dār al-Qāri', 2003), 2:19. See also, 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Baqqāl, *al-Imāma haṭṭā wilāyat al-faqih* (Tehran: Wizārat al-Irshād al-Islāmī, 1982).

66 The doctrine of *Velayat-e faqih* (*wilāyat al-faqih* in Arabic) was first developed by Twelver Shī'ī jurists in the eleventh century in order to reassign to themselves some of the executive powers of the absent Imām. It was Ayatollah al-Khomeini (1902–1989) who made the case for the absolute authority of the guardian jurist on all political and religious matters. For an extensive discussion of *Velayat-e faqih* in modern Shī'ism, see Montazeri, *Dirāsāt fī wilāyat al-faqih*.

67 The few exceptions focus on the historical debates and do not seem to address the institution in the time of occultation. See, for example, al-Qazwīnī, *al-Imāma al-kubrā*, especially volume 2.

and Fāṭimids, these expectations and needs necessitated the promotion of the caliph as God's deputy in order to allow them to claim absolute religious and political authority. Different circumstances altered those realizations and needs, and led to the Muslims gradually accepting the marginalization of the actual institution of the caliphate, as we saw with al-Māwardī and even in Twelver Shī'ism, or supporting the transfer of its role to the sultans, as expressed by al-Juwaynī and Lūtfī Pasha. The attempts of the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Ma'mūn to reassert his absolute powers only accelerated the downfall of the institution. The caliphate's mandate in religious affairs passed to the religious scholars and in political affairs transferred to the sultans and viziers, which was clearly the case in most of 'Abbāsīd and even late Fāṭimid history, and ever since. However symbolic and ceremonial the actual caliphs became, the reality did not subvert many Muslim scholars from talking about it in theoretical or theological terms, and possibly even desiring that one day the institution would go back to its "glorious" phase.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, modernity awakened all types of desires about the nature and course of the reforms that the Muslims envisioned or wished to enact. Some religious and political reformers, as we saw with Chirāgh Ali and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, advocated that reform is only possible and achievable if the caliph (whether an existing caliph or one to be elected) takes charge of it. But the advocacy for the revival of the caliphate was met with staunch resistance, as we saw with 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq and the popularity of his views among many Arab-Muslim elites, the success of the anti-caliphate movement in Turkey, and the collapse of the Khilafat Movement in India. More importantly, any chance at reviving the position lacked the historical momentum, which clearly was against it.

That nowadays only the most vicious forms of Islamic militancy advocate for the actual reinstatement of the caliphate (such as the movement of Dā'ish or the Islamic State)—or clandestine groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir⁶⁸—only demonstrates how alienated the Muslims generally are from making the institution of the caliphate an essential component of their political and religious reality. This does not mean that all of those who reject its reality are against it as an idea. As we saw in several cases in this paper, the dichotomy between the actual and the ideal sums up for us the way Muslims have promoted or

68 Hizb ut-Tahrir (*Hizb al-Tahrir*) was founded in 1953 in Jerusalem as a pan-Islamic political party, with its main aim to reestablish the caliphate. It adopted a militant stance starting in 2001, which led to its banning in several Muslim and non-Muslim countries. On the early history of Hizb ut-Tahrir, see Suha Taji-Farouki, *Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (London: Grey Seal, 1996). See also the party's own website: <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info/en/index.php/>. One should note that more recent studies on Hizb ut-Tahrir are produced by think tanks tied to intelligence services in the US and UK, and are therefore questionable in terms of their academic quality and covert motives.

ignored the caliph and the institution of the caliphate throughout Islamic history. Not as a binary, but as a very complicated dialectic blending reality and desire, actual and symbolic, necessity and nostalgia, caliph and sultan.⁶⁹

69 As the current chapter was heading to press, an important book came out that addresses the juristic debates about the vanishing authority of the caliph and the need to transfer some of its functions and privileges to the Mamluk sultan. For more on this, see Mohamad El-Merheb, *Political Thought in the Mamluk Period: The Unnecessary Caliphate* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022).

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The Battle of Uhud and the Shaping of a New Identity

Nadia Maria El Cheikh

The battle of Uhud was a central event in early Islam. It was felt to have been a trial, for it was the Prophet's first and only real defeat in battle and it is in connection to this setback that Uhud both narrated history and taught lasting lessons. The narratives expressed a variety of interests and controversies. In this article, I try to delineate a few of the ways in which the memory of Uhud was constructed, specifically around enduring examples that were meant to warn and guide the emerging community of believers.

A major challenge in examining accounts of the early period, including the battle of Uhud, is that the available evidence dates from the late second/eighth century at the earliest and is constituted of Abbasid narratives which were intended not "to tell facts but rather to provide commentary" on political, socio-cultural, and religious/moral causes deriving from controversial historical episodes.¹ The master Islamic narrative that was developed over the course of the late second/eighth and third/ninth centuries was meant to confirm Muslims as the only followers of the true faith, and to explain how Islam had attained its superior position. It thus functioned as a historiographical filter that led to the crafting of a then widely accepted and agreed-upon version of the early Islamic past.² Uhud was a central event in the life of the Prophet and the early community and became consequently a cornerstone in "articulating a narrative of the primordial past"³ and in helping crystallize distinctions between believers and non-believers as well as instituting new codes of behavior.

1 Tayeb El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography: Harun al-Rashid and the Narrative of the Abbasid Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13.

2 Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1998), 125. Antoine Borrut, "Vanishing Syria: Periodization and Power in Early Islam," *Der Islam* 91 (2014): 37–68.

3 Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 12–13.

1 The Battle of Uhud: A Retaliation for the Battle of Badr

The early narratives place the battle of Uhud in connection to the earlier battle of Badr, the first major confrontation between the Quraysh polytheists and the new monotheist community in Madina. The battles of Badr 2/624 and Uhud 3/625 constitute defining moments in the earliest phase of Islam. Narrating Uhud required narrating Badr, so organically are the two narratives connected.

The new Muslim community, the *umma*, was united by monotheistic belief and its major task at its moment of inception, as propounded in the early Islamic narratives, was to conduct armed struggle against the powers of idolatry and unbelief. The first confrontation took place in 2/624 at Badr. The Prophet Muhammad had received news that the head of the Umayyad clan, Abu Sufyan, was leading a rich caravan from Syria to Mecca. He intercepted the caravan, and the Meccans suffered a catastrophic defeat. About seventy of them were killed while only fifteen Muslims were killed. It was a resounding victory of the Muslims over the old Meccan aristocracy and turned the Islamic community in Madina into a major player in the Hijaz and Arabia at large. The defeat of the Meccans constituted a major loss, both in casualties as well as in prestige, a factor that necessitated the confrontation that was to take place at Uhud a year later.

Significantly, the battle of Badr was paired in Islamic sources with the major confrontations of the early first/seventh century pitting the Empires of Byzantium and Persia, starting CE 611, when the Persians undertook the conquest of Syria, and captured Antioch and Damascus. In AD 614, the Persians conquered Jerusalem. The loss of the Holy City deeply shocked the Byzantines, and the effect was compounded by the transportation of the relic of the True Cross to Ctesiphon. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius eventually took the offensive, conducting campaigns against the Persians. In CE 627, he finally defeated the Persian army near Nineveh and the Persian king, Chosroes, was dethroned and killed. The provinces of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, as well as the True Cross, were returned to the Byzantine Empire.

The Arabs of the peninsula were caught up in this protracted conflict, which is mentioned in the Qur'an, in Surat al-Rum (30: 1–5):

Alif Lam Mim (1) The Byzantines (*Rum*) have been vanquished (2) in the nearer part of the land; and, after their vanquishing, they shall be victors (3) in a few years. To God belongs the command before and after, and on that day the believers shall rejoice (4) in God's help; God helps whomsoever He will; and He is All-mighty, the All-compassionate (5).

The wars, as reflected in the exegetical literature, seem to have led to a division within the Quraysh of Mecca separating those who thought that the Persians would win from those

who were counting on a Byzantine victory. Especially significant is that the exegetical texts suggest a profound affinity between the Byzantines and the new community of Muslims. Thus, Muslim victory over the polytheist Qurayshites at the battle of Badr and the final Byzantine victory over the Persians were coupled. The early exegete Muqatil b. Sulayman (d. 150/767) states, for instance:

The Persians defeated the *Rum* in the nearer part of the land... and the *Rum*, after their defeat, will be victorious over the Persians in a few years.... Persia had defeated the *Rum* and the *kuffār* (non-believers) of Mecca rejoiced, saying that the Persians, like us, do not have a [holy] book and they have defeated the *Rum*, who are people of the Book like you and so we will defeat you, the way the Persians defeated the *Rum*.... On the day of Badr, the Muslims triumphed over the *kuffār* of Mecca and [at the same time] the news reached them that the *Rum* had triumphed over the Persians and the Muslims rejoiced for that.⁴

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, in his fourth/tenth century masterly exegetical work *Jami' al-bayan fi ta'wil al-qur'an*, sums up the various interpretations:

The Persians defeated the *Rum* (in the nearer land) from the land of *al-Sham* to that of Persia... but the *Rum* will defeat the Persians subsequent to their earlier defeat (in a few years, for it is God's will) before their victory and after, on either occasion.... And on the day the *Rum* defeat the Persians, the believers will rejoice for God's victory over the polytheists (*mushrikun*) and for the victory of the *Rum* over the Persians.... This is the victory of the believers over the polytheists at Badr. ... Sufyan said: 'I heard that they won on the same day as the battle of Badr.'⁵

The commentaries adhering to this traditional reading and interpretation explain the believers' joy at a Byzantine victory on two accounts: First, the "believers shall rejoice" because the Byzantine victory signifies the triumph of monotheism over polytheism and second, they will also rejoice for the triumph of the Muslims over the polytheists of Quraysh at the battle of Badr. In later commentaries, the believers' joy became uniquely connected to the Muslim victory over the polytheists at Badr.⁶

4 Muqatil b. Sulayman, *Tafsir al-qu'ran*, AMs (microfilm), tafsir 101, vol. 2, folio 50, Institut des manuscrits arabes, Cairo.

5 Abu Ja'far al-Tabari, *Jami' al-bayan fi ta'wil al-qur'an* (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Maymaniyya, 1321), 21:10–14.

6 Abu al-Qasim al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf 'an haqa'iq ghawamid al-tanzil* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1986.), vol. 3, 467; Abu 'Abdallah al-Ansari al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami' li ahkam al-qur'an* (Cairo: Dar al-Qalam, 1967), 14:5.

The devastating defeat at Badr was unacceptable to the Quraysh leadership. Abu Sufyan, the prominent Meccan leader and experienced military commander, was asked to raise a force to destroy Muhammad once and for all. The following year, Abu Sufyan led an army in the direction of Madina. The confrontation took place at Uhud.

A general consensus as to the sequence of events pertaining to the battle of Uhud seems to have emerged by the time of Ibn Ishaq (d. ca 150/767), as conserved in the *Sira* of Ibn Hisham (d. 213/828), the first extant biography of Prophet Muhammad. The material on the battle of Uhud is copious and at times quite detailed, including accounts of trivial incidents seeking to glorify some individuals or rebutting accusations against others. The Muslims' defeat is often laid at the feet of 'Abdallah b. Ubayy b. Salul who, prior to the migration of the Prophet to Madina, had full authority over the clans of the Aws and the Khazraj.⁷

The *Sira* provides details of the actual military strategy and tactics adopted by the Prophet who is reported to have said: "If you think it well to stop in Madina and leave them where they have encamped, for if they halt they would have halted in a bad position and if they try to enter the city, we can fight them therein."⁸ However some men who had not participated in Badr wished to go out and meet the enemy in open battle "lest they think that we are too cowardly and too weak to fight them." 'Abdallah b. Ubayy agreed with the Prophet and advised him to stay in Madina, for "we have never gone out to fight an enemy but we have met disaster, and none has come against us without being defeated."⁹

However, those who were eager to fight the Quraysh kept on urging the Prophet to lead them in open battle until he finally acquiesced. 'Abdallah b. Ubayy strongly disagreed with this decision and withdrew his contingent of tribesmen. The battle went badly for the Muslims for a variety of strategic and tactical reasons. The Muslims were greatly outnumbered, and meeting in the open plain relinquished the advantage to the Meccans. Even more, the Muslims had no cavalry while the Meccans had two hundred mounted horsemen under the command of Khalid b. al-Walid.¹⁰

The Muslims are said to have carried the early part of the battle, but then there was a sudden reversal of fortune due to the fateful decision of the Muslim archers who abandoned their position. Khalid b. al-Walid exploited the break in Muslim lines and attacked the Muslim flank and rear. A large number of Muslims were killed, including the Prophet's uncle Hamza b. 'Abd al-Muttalib, whose death grieved Muhammad enormously.¹¹ A great confusion followed, especially after the rumor spread that Muhammad had been killed.

7 Ibn Hisham, *al-Sira al-nabawiyya*, eds. Mustapha al Saqqa et al. (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifa, n.d.), vol. 3, 584.

8 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 63; translation in A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 371.

9 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 63; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 373–74.

10 Richard A. Gabriel, *Muhammad: Islam's First Great General* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 111.

11 W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 21–23.

The enemy had in fact managed to reach the Prophet, smashing his tooth, scoring his face, and injuring his lip.¹² As the blood began to run down his face, the Prophet started to wipe it away, saying, “How can a people prosper who have stained their prophet’s face with blood while he summoned them to their lord?” God thus revealed that “It is not your affair whether.... He relents towards them or punished them, for they are wrong doers.”¹³ According to al-Waqidi, “Fatima came out with the women. She saw what was on the face of the Prophet, embraced him and began to wipe the blood from his face.”¹⁴

2 The Battle of Uhud: Defining New Categories

The Muslims were defeated and, according to Ibn Hisham’s *Sira*, sixty-five Muslims were killed.¹⁵ The resounding defeat of the Muslims is connected to several reasons, notably the fact that a majority of Muslims did not heed the Prophet’s advice not to meet the enemy outside the city. The reason is implied: the Muslims were defeated for having disobeyed the Prophet as they fought and quarreled among themselves: “Thus God removed his favor from them to try them – as God had decreed.”¹⁶ The unsatisfactory outcome of the battle is attributed, moreover, to the withdrawal of the contingent of ‘Abdallah b. Ubayy and the disobedience of the archers.

The *Sira* confirms that several Qur’anic verses in Surat al-‘Imran allude to Uhud. The verses do not narrate the battle but rather teach and exemplify.¹⁷ Uhud was an affliction that served to screen the sincere believers from those who behaved cowardly, those who were fearful of death, preferring life in this world over life in the next, and so they fled from around the Prophet leaving him at the mercy of the enemy attacks:

Some of you there are that desire this world,
And some of you there are that desire the next world
Then he turned you from them, that He might try you;
And He has pardoned you; and God is bounteous to the believers.
When you were going up, not twisting about for anyone,

¹² Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 80; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 380.

¹³ Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 79–80; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 380. The Qur’anic verse is in Sura 3:123.

¹⁴ Al-Waqidi, *Kitab al-Maghazi*, 249; trans. *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi’s Kitab al-Maghazi*, edited and translated by Rizwi Faizer (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 122.

¹⁵ The battle of Uhud is recounted in detail in Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 60–169.

¹⁶ Ma’mar b. Rashid (according to the recension of Abd al-Razzaq al-San’ani, *Kitab al-Maghazi*), ed. and trans. by Sean W. Anthony (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 77–79.

¹⁷ C. F. Robinson, “Uhud,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, second edition (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

and the Messenger was calling you in your rear;
So he warding you with grief on grief...¹⁸

A more dangerous category than that of the cowardly deserters were the *munaḥiqun*, the hypocrites:

And what visited you the day the two hosts
encountered, was by God's leave and that he might
know the believers;
and that he might also know the hypocrites
when it was said of them, 'come now, fight
in the way of God or repel!' They said, 'if only
we know how to fight, we would follow you.'
They that day were nearer to unbelief than to belief
saying with their mouths that which never was in their hearts;
and God knows very well the things they hide.¹⁹

It is indeed from the Uhud narrative that we learn for the first time of the existence of the *munaḥiqun*, those inhabitants of Madina who wavered in their support of the Prophet. This new category emerges as a sequel to the resounding defeat and heavy losses suffered by the Muslims at Uhud. Ibn Hisham states that "the day of Uhud was a day of trial, calamity and heart searching on which God tested the believers and put the hypocrites on trial, those who professed faith with their tongue and unbelief in their hearts."²⁰ The *munaḥiqun* were hypocrites or dissenters. Their leader, 'Abdallah b. Ubayy, defected at Uhud.

Ibn Hisham also mentions Hatib b. Umayya b. Rafi', an old man who had lived long in the heathen period and whose hypocrisy appeared when his son Yazid was brought to him grievously wounded, for Hatib said: "What good news do you give him of a garden of rue? By God, you have robbed this man of his life by your deception."²¹ Hatib was admitting his unbelief in the afterlife, a central tenet of the new religion. Hatib's son has, accordingly, nothing to look for, once he succumbs to his wounds, as the promise of paradise is but a deception. Hatib thus revealed his true colors at a moment when the Prophet reiterated as he looked at the slain: "I testify concerning these that there is none wounded for God's sake but God will raise him on the resurrection day with his

18 *Qur'an*, Surat al-Imran, 3: 153–4; trans. Translation in Arthur Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (Oxford: University Press, 1982), 65.

19 *Qur'an*, Surat al-Imran, 3: 166–67; trans. Arberry, *The Koran*, 66.

20 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 105; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 391.

21 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 88; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 383.

wounds bleeding, the color that of blood, the smell like musk.”²² This is confirmed in an exchange between the Prophet’s Companion and second caliph, ‘Umar b. al-Khattab, and Abu Sufyan:

Abu Sufyan called out: ... May Hubal be exalted! ‘Umar retorted: God is most exalted and most glorious...but Abu Sufyan persisted: What a wondrous deed you have wrought – the slain a recompense for the slain of Badr! Again ‘Umar retorted: The slain are not equal! Our slain are in Paradise, but your slain are in hellfire!²³

Another hypocrite was Quzman, a man of unknown origin who fought fiercely, killing several polytheists. He was disabled by his wounds and so the Muslims told him: “You have done gallantly, Quzman, be of good cheer! Why should I, he said, I only fought for the honor of my people! But for that I should have not fought.”²⁴ Instead of fighting for the victory of monotheism, Quzman revealed himself to have persisted in the pre-Islamic code of value, fighting for the honor of his clan rather than for the glory of God. Yet another hypocrite was al-Harith b. Suwayd b.al-Samit, who fought with the Muslims at Uhud but then defected to Mecca and later asked for forgiveness. According to the *Sira*, it is in reference to his actions that the following Qur’anic verse descended: “How can God guide a people who have disbelieved after belief, and after that they have testified that the apostle is true, and proofs have been given to them. God will not guide an evil people.”²⁵

While Badr consolidated the divide between the Quraysh and the new community of believers (the *umma*), Uhud gave rise to a central new category within the emerging *umma* as to who truly belongs and who does not. The latter were the hypocrites who were exposed during the battle of Uhud, “those insincere believers who outwardly profess Islam while their hearts harbor doubt or even unbelief.”²⁶ They are especially harmful to the cause of the Muslims and are described in the Qur’an in an unflattering way:

And some there are who say
‘we believe in God and the Last Day’
But they are not believers, they would trick God and the believers

22 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 98.

23 Ma‘mar b. Rashid, *Kitab al-Maghazi*, 79.

24 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 88; trans. A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 383.

25 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 88–89; trans. A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 383–84. The Qur’anic verse is in Sura 3, 80.

26 Camilla Adang, “Hypocrites and Hypocrisy,” *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an*, second edition (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

And only themselves they deceive and they are not aware
 ... they are the workers of corruption
 ...when they meet those who believe, they say 'We believe';
 But when they go privily to their Satans, they say,
 'We are with you, we were only mocking.'²⁷

Thus, Uhud served to screen the true from the false believers. The defeat also served to crystallize the positions within the community, elaborating the firmness and commitment to be expected from the true believers. The trial of Uhud led the Prophet to work on consolidating his political power in Madina, where he was challenged, among others, by the "hypocrites," those "lukewarm supporters who worked against him behind the scenes."²⁸ Following the defeat at Uhud, Prophet Muhammad focused on the internal solidification in preparation for his final move against Mecca.

3 Uhud: Imparting New Practices

3.1 *On Mutilation*

The battle of Uhud helped define central concepts and practices for the emerging *umma*. The new community struggled against unbelief and idolatry within the cultural and political context of pre-Islamic *jahiliyya*. The transformation Islam was calling for could only be appreciated when measured against the darkness of the time of ignorance. New practices, distinct from the pre-Islamic customs, were being defined through Qur'anic revelation as well as through the actions and utterances of the Prophet. One of the lessons learned at the battle of Uhud pertains to the proper conduct with respect to the corpses of the fallen enemies. This arose as a reaction to the ways in which the corpses of the Muslim martyrs were treated by their adversary, notably by Hind bint 'Utba.

Hind bint 'Utba, the wife of the Qurashite leader Abu Sufyan, had lost her father 'Utba during the battle of Badr and she was keen on avenging him. Her target was the Prophet's uncle Hamza, who had killed him. At Uhud, she had her chance when the slave Wahshi struck Hamza with his javelin. As the battle was lost for the Muslims, in a transport of vengeance, Hind and the women with her mutilated the corpses of the fallen Muslims. They strung their cut-off ears and noses into anklets and necklaces. Hind finally ripped

²⁷ Qur'an, Surat al-Baqara, 2:8–20; trans. in Arberry, *The Koran*.

²⁸ Fred Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 43–44.

out Hamza's liver, biting on it.²⁹ The sight was horrible: Hamza's belly was torn, his liver was missing, and his nose and ears cut off. The Prophet is said to have uttered at once: "Were it not that Safiyya [Hamza's sister] would be miserable and it might become the custom after me, I would leave him as he is, so that his body might find its way into the bellies of the beasts and the crops of birds. If God gives me victory over [the] Quraysh in the future I will mutilate thirty of their men."³⁰

Al-Tabari includes a report in which Abu Sufyan himself is spotted mistreating the corpse of Hamza, the most prominent casualty on the Muslim side. He was reprimanded by a follower: "Banu Kinana, can this be the leader of the Quraysh acting as you see with the corpse of his cousin!" Abu Sufyan answered: "Keep it quiet, it was a slip."³¹ Al-Tabari reports that Abu Sufyan mentioned in this connection: "A day for the day of Badr, war has its ups and downs. You will find that some of your dead have been mutilated. I neither commanded it, nor does it displease me."³² Al-Waqidi's report clarifies the fluctuating position of Abu Sufyan: "Abu Sufyan said, raising his voice: Indeed, you will find corruption and mutilation with your dead that is not the result of an opinion from our elders. The zeal of *al-jahiliyya* overtook him, however, and he added, when it happened, we did not detest it."³³

Seeing the Prophet's grief and rage, the Muslims pledged, on their next victory, to injure their enemy in a way which none of the Arabs had ever seen.³⁴ Qur'anic verses, however, descended, proscribing excessive vengeance and advocating patience: "And if you chastise, chastise even as you have been chastised; and yet assuredly, if you are patient, better it is for those patient." And so the Prophet forgave, was patient and forbade mutilation.³⁵ The *Sira* mentions, further, that "the Prophet never stopped in a place and

29 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 91; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 385. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 1957), vol. 3, 10; al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-rusul wa al-muluk*, eds. S. Guyard and M. J. De Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1965, 1879–1901), prima series, III, 1415; Ahmad al-Ya'qubi, *Tarikh* (Beirut: Dar Beirut, 1980), vol. 2, 47. According to Maxime Rodinson, the Arabs regarded the liver as an especially precious part of the body. To chew the liver of an enemy would seem to mean annihilation or the highest curse. In "Kabid," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, second edition.

30 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 97; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 387.

31 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, prima series, vol. 3, 1418.

32 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, prima series, vol. 3, 418; trans. *The History of al-Tabari: The Foundation of the Community* (Albany, 1987), vol. 7, 131.

33 Al-Waqidi, *Kitab al-Maghazi*, vol. 1, 297; trans. *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, 144.

34 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, prima series, vol. 3, 1420–21.

35 *Qur'an*, 16: 127. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, prima series, vol. 3, 1421. While al-Tabari, in his exegetical work, does not mention Hind bint 'Utba in his commentary of this verse, the Shi'i scholar al-Tabarsi refers to her and to her actions: "She took his liver and chewed on it." Abu 'Ali al-Fadl al-Tabarsi, *Majma' al-bayan li usul al-qur'an* (Cairo: Dar al-Taqrib Bayna al-Madhahib al-Islamiyah, 1972), vol. 6, 243.

left it without ordering us to give alms and to forbid us from committing mutilation.”³⁶ On the battlefield at Uhud, the mutilation of the fallen corpses of the Muslims reflected customs of a past that the new religion was keen to obliterate. The Prophet of the nascent religion seized this moment to teach an important lesson about the proper comportment with respect to the mutilation of enemy corpses, extinguishing the visceral instinct of revenge, the extremes of behavior, and defining instead a new way of being.

3.2 *Re-defining Death Rituals*

The lessons that the trial of Uhud was to transmit, given the heavy losses in life that the Muslims incurred, include a variety of facets related to burials and death rituals. Uhud would become a main site for defining death rituals for the new monotheist community. Ibn Hisham reports that when some Muslims carried their dead to Madina to bury them there, the Prophet prevented them and directed them to bury them where they lay. The Prophet instructed the following: “Look for the one who has collected most of the Qur’an and put him in front of his companions in the grave.” They buried two and three in one grave.³⁷

Specific directions for proper burials were also reported. With respect to the burial of the Prophet’s uncle Hamza, the Prophet ordered that “Hamza be wrapped in a mantle; then he prayed over him and repeated *allahu akbar* seven times. Then the dead were brought and placed beside Hamza and the Prophet prayed over them all until he had prayed seventy-two prayers.” Buried with Hamza was his nephew ‘Abdallah b. Jahsh, who had equally been mutilated.³⁸

Uhud also provided a precedent on how to conduct funerary rites when it was difficult to perform them properly. The bodies of the martyrs at the battle of Uhud were not washed prior to burial because a considerable number of companions were wounded, and it was difficult for them to haul water all the way from Madina for the purpose of washing the corpses. The jurists, hence, made an exception for the fallen warriors in battles whereby, as in Uhud, it is permissible for the corpses not to be washed.

In addition to the new injunctions with respect to proper burial, the narratives provide illustrations of the adjusted roles that women were to play around death. The new Islamic ethos called for a modification of behavior, a display of restraint and forbearance at the sight of death. Safiyya’s response to the mutilation of her brother Hamza represented a prime example. When Safiyya came to see the corpse of her brother, the Prophet tried to prevent her from seeing the ugly mutilation inflicted on his corpse. Safiyya refused saying: “Why? I have heard that my brother has been mutilated for God’s sake... I will be calm and

³⁶ Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 96.

³⁷ Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 98; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 388.

³⁸ Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 97; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 388.

patient if it is God's will."³⁹ Safiyya eulogized her brother Hamza in verses that confirm the profound belief of a Muslim woman and her acceptance of God's divine decree:

Are you my sisters asking in dread
The men of Uhud, the slow of speech and the eloquent?
The latter said Hamza is dead,
the best helper of the apostle of God.
God the true, the Lord of the Throne, called him
To live in paradise in joy. That is what we hoped and longed for.
Hamza on the day of gathering will enjoy the best reward.
By God I'll never forget thee as long as the east wind blows...⁴⁰

Safiyya was mirroring the new paradigm of how the women of the emerging *umma* were to confront mortality. Safiyya's patient reaction and words at the sight of the corpse of Hamza reflect a withdrawal from the female world of lament and grief, giving instead the death of the fallen martyrs its full meaning. An ethic of patience was now expected when confronting the tests of time and God's decrees. This major lesson was first and foremost taught at Uhud.

Following the battle of Uhud, and hearing the sound of weeping and wailing over the dead, the Prophet said: "But there are no women weeping for Hamza!" The people of Madina heard him "and from then on, no funeral ceremony took place which did not begin with the women weeping for Hamza."⁴¹ However, when women came to cry for Hamza by the Prophet's home upon the latter's request, "[T]he Prophet slept and later woke up and they were still crying so he said: woe unto them! They are still here! Let them go back and never cry again over a dead person."⁴²

The Muslim women showed a pious resignation in relation to the fate of their relatives who fell during the battle. The high number of Muslim deaths at Uhud provided the context to teach Muslim women how to abandon pre-Islamic practices of intense lamentation over the fallen men in battles and to conform instead to an attitude of forbearance and acceptance of God's decree and believe the promise of the afterlife. The yearning for vengeance by the *jahilis* was, by contrast, unquenchable. Even after their victory at Uhud, the killings, and the mutilation of the corpses, Hind bint 'Utba, on her return to Mecca, is said to have recited:

39 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 97; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 389.

40 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 167; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 425.

41 Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-farid*, eds. Ahmad Amin, et al. (Cairo: Matba'at Lijnat al-Ta'lif wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr, 1367, 1940–1949), vol. 2, 235. For a detailed analysis of this section in *al-'Iqd*, see Nadia Maria El Cheikh, "The Gendering of Death in *Kitab al-'iqd al-farid*," *al-Qantara* 31(2010): 411–36.

42 Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, vol. 3, 17–18.

I came back my heart filled with sorrow,
 For some from whom I sought vengeance had escaped me,
 Men of Quraysh who were at Badr,
 Of Banu Hashim, and of Yathrib's people.
 I gained somewhat from the expedition
 But not all that I had hoped.⁴³

4 Uhud: A Lasting Memory

Uhud raised central questions about the nature of God's providence and why he allowed his Prophet to suffer defeat. Ideologically, the Muslims wished to understand how seemingly God favored the polytheist Meccans over Prophet Muhammad and the new community of believers. The narrative offers several answers. In addition to God's wisdom behind the trial, the defeat was not due to the Meccans's superior numbers or other tactical and strategic advantages but rather to weaknesses inherent in the Muslim community in Madina, notably indiscipline, disobedience, and fake belief. The Qur'an specifically states: "What befell you on the day... in order that he might know the believers and in order that he might know the hypocrites (3:166/160)."⁴⁴ The narrative of Uhud brings out simmering tensions and conflicts within the early community. Ibn Hisham ends his main narrative on Uhud by concluding: "The day of Uhud was a day of trial, calamity and heart-searching ... a day in which God honored with martyrdom those who he willed."⁴⁵

The trial of Uhud was moreover intended to communicate to the believers that Muhammad was indeed a prophet like the earlier Biblical prophets who struggled to uphold God's teaching and laws. Like any major ordeal, the hardship of Uhud provided opportunities for defining new categories and new practices. The Uhud accounts, thus, helped define monotheism against idolatry, true believers versus hypocrites, and instituted new codes of behavior.

Uhud, however, was also a battle between two Qurashite families: the Umayyad clan, led by Abu Sufyan, and that of the Hashemites, led by Prophet Muhammad. This rivalry will survive in the texts and take a new lease on life following the toppling of the Umayyads by the Abbasids in 133/750. Al-Tabari includes the following anecdote under the year 284/897 when the Abbasid caliph al-Mu'tadid billah planned to have the first Umayyad Caliph Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan cursed from the pulpits. He ordered the drafting

⁴³ Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 168; trans. Guillaume, *Life of Muhammad*, 425–26.

⁴⁴ Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, 6–7.

⁴⁵ Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 105; trans. Guillaume, *Life of Muhammad*, 392.

of a document to that effect, which included a historical narrative centered on Mu'awiya's son and successor caliph Yazid (r. 61–64/680–683):

Yazid was firmly in control; he sought revenge and retaliation for the polytheists against the Muslims. He forced the men of Harra to fight a battle more loathsome than any in the history of Islam, and more evil than any with respect to crimes committed...crimes consisting of bloodshed and the violation of women and property... he publicly announced and manifested his unbelief and polytheism in the following verses:

Would that my elders (who fought and died) at Badr had witnessed
(At Uhud) the lack of steadfastness of the Khazaraj when the spears fell
We have now killed their leading lords
And successfully adjusted the inequality of Badr...

Al-Tabari's text considers this poem a "statement of one who does not care for God, his religion, his book or his messenger."⁴⁶ The poem was proudly extolling the victory of Yazid at the battle of al-Harra which took place in 65/683, as a day of revenge for the humiliation that Quraysh, and specifically the Umayyad clan, endured at the battle of Badr. The victory of the Quraysh, led by the Umayyads at Uhud, was not enough to erase that major defeat. Hence more than fifty years later, as included in a document drafted almost three centuries later, the memory of that debacle was to be reckoned with in a battle that pitted the Umayyad clan against the Quraysh and Ansar leaders in Madina who had refused to acknowledge the hereditary succession of Yazid to the caliphate.

Another enduring memory relates to the sword of the Prophet. The Prophet's sword Dhu al-Faqar is said to have been handed on the battlefield at Uhud by the Prophet to his cousin and son-in-law, 'Ali b. Abi Talib. The *Sira* states that the Prophet gave his sword to 'Ali saying: "No sword but Dhu al-Faqar and no hero but 'Ali."⁴⁷ While both the Sunni and Shi'i traditions connect the sword to 'Ali, the Shi'i tradition purports that the gift of this sword to 'Ali by the Prophet was meant to signify that 'Ali had been chosen to succeed and to inherit the leadership of Muhammad. The possession of the sword served a function in the Shi'i claims against their Abbasid rivals and "became a matter of symbolic importance to the ruling caliph."⁴⁸ The sword disappeared to re-emerge in the early fourth/tenth century. In 320/932 the palace of the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir was plundered. Amidst the looting, a lady cried out for someone from among the mob to

46 Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Tertia series, vol. 4, 2164, 2173–74 and 2176. Translation of the poem in *The History of al-Tabari: The Return of the caliphate to Baghdad*, translated and annotated by Franz Rosenthal (Albany, 1985), vol. 38, 58–59.

47 Ibn Hisham, *Sira*, vol. 3, 100.

48 Francesca Bellino, "Dhu'l-faqar," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, third edition (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

shield her. One man rose to the occasion and brought her to safety. Not having much to offer back in return, she indicated to him that in one apartment there was a box in which he would find the fabled sword of the Prophet, Dhu al-Faqar, the very one Muhammad had given to 'Ali at the battle of Uhud. This man was an Isma'ili agent of the Fatimid caliph. Through his acquisition of Dhu al-Faqar, God was restoring this sacred symbol to its rightful owner, the Fatimid caliph who was being confirmed as the true heir of both the Prophet and of 'Ali.⁴⁹ The Fatimids were granted through possession of the sword an additional marker of their legitimacy in their rivalry vis-à-vis the Abbasids.

The *Sira* includes a list of the fallen martyrs at Uhud.⁵⁰ Their presence on this list, their closeness to the Prophet, their participation in this key confrontation and their martyrdom bestow a unique meaning to this battle. Uhud's lingering memory reflected its central importance in the early history of the Muslim community. The multi-layered narrative was constructed in ways to understand the weighty defeat, teach important lessons, and initiate new practices. Its ultimate purpose was to contribute towards the shaping of a new identity for the emerging community of believers.

49 Paul Walker, "Symbols of the Past: The Theft of Souvenirs and Sacred Relics in the Rivalry between the Abbasids and the Fatimids," in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honor of Wilfred Madelung*, ed. Farhad Daftari and Joseph W. Meri (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 364–86. The story is found in Fatimid sources. See al-Qadi al-Nu'man, *al-Majalis wa al-musayarat*, ed. al-Habib al-Faqi et al. (Tunis: al-Jami'ah al-Tunisiyah, Kuliyat al-Adab wa-al-'Ulum al-Insaniyah, 1978), 114.

50 Fred Donner, *Narrative of Islamic Origins*, 165. The use of lists is designed, according to Julia Bray, to provide easier ways of learning and evoking cultural memory. J. Bray, "Lists and Memory: Ibn Qutayba and Muhammad Ibn Habib," in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam*, 210–31.

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The Arabian Oryx or Unicorn in *Qaṭrāyīth*, the Ancient East-Arabian Language of *Beth Qaṭraye**

Mario Kozah**

1 The Historical Background

Beth Qaṭraye, Syriac for “region of the Qataris,” is a term found in Syriac literature referring to the region of north-east Arabia including today’s Qatar, Bahrain, and parts of the United Arab Emirates from the fourth to the ninth centuries AD. It was an important cultural, linguistic, and religious crossroads in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods, when it produced a number of important Syriac Christian authors who came from this region. Most research has so far only focused on these Syriac authors¹ and their writings² rather than other aspects of Beth Qaṭraye. This cultural and historical reality in Beth Qaṭraye is a true reflection of the spirit of harmony and co-existence that existed there during this period between Christians, Jews, and Muslims. It reveals the important fact that the Syriac Christian community in this region was not only surviving, but it was also producing the finest and most educated authors of the time, many of whom became intellectual, spiritual, or religious leaders across the wider region.

* An early version of this paper was given at the second conference on the Ancient Languages of the Arabian Peninsula and their Impact on Arabic, held on 19–20 October 2016 at the Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, Qatar University.

** A homage to countless fabulous research expeditions with Abed, which always seemed to begin and end on board a “flying Oryx.”

1 See Mario Kozah et al., eds., *The Syriac Writers of Qatar in the Seventh Century* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2014).

2 See Mario Kozah et al., eds., *An Anthology of Syriac Writers from Qatar in the Seventh Century* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015).

Newly published research collecting and analysing information on the pre-Islamic and early Islamic historical geography and toponyms of the Beth Qaṭraye region from the most important available Syriac sources as well as Arabic geographical works has also revealed more vocabulary from the language of Beth Qaṭraye referred to as *Qaṭrāyīth* (“in Qatari”) used in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period.³ A preliminary philological investigation of this new data of 50 words appears to reveal that the vernacular of *Qaṭrāyīth* consists mainly of Arabic vocabulary (40 out of the 50) as well as a few Syriac and Pahlavi loanwords, and maintains possible evidence of some Arabic and relatively fewer Syriac grammatical structures and lexical influences.⁴ As such, it constitutes the oldest evidence of Arabic from East Arabia revealing a language that seems to be either a form of Arabic or significantly influenced by Arabic from that region. The historical, archaeological, and geographical studies undertaken so far have also revealed the cultural relations between this region and other areas around the Gulf, and how patterns of social predominance shifted over time, providing a better understanding not only of the dynamics of society within Beth Qaṭraye, but also the place of Beth Qaṭraye within the larger history of the Near East in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods.⁵

An interesting historical reference to Beth Qaṭraye is found in a work by Thomas of Marga, a Church of the East bishop and author of an important monastic history in Syriac, known as *The Book of Governors*, who flourished in the ninth century AD. In his monastic history he recounts the journey of the Church of the East patriarch Catholicos Giwargis I (659–680 AD) who travelled from Beth Aramaye in Iraq to Beth Qaṭraye in the late seventh century for a local synod on the island of Dayrin (probably today’s Muḥarraḡ island). The purpose of this journey was to reconcile the Syriac community in this region who were behaving independently of the ecclesiastical authorities both in Persia and Seleucia-Ctesiphon from the time of his predecessor Isho’yahb III, who had been patriarch of the Church of the East from 649–659 AD and who had written a number of letters to various groups in Beth Qaṭraye, urging them to reconcile themselves to the catholicosate—but all to no avail. Unlike his predecessor’s efforts, however, Giwargis I’s pastoral visit was successful:

And after these things Mar Catholicos went down to Beth Qaṭraye that he might reconcile its inhabitants who had cut themselves off from obedience to the episcopal see of Rev Ardashir, which is Persia; and he went to the island of

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- 3 See Mario Kozah et al., eds., *Beth Qaṭraye: A Lexical and Toponymical Survey* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2021).
 - 4 Mario Kozah, “New Evidence for an Early Islamic Arabic Dialect in Eastern Arabia? A Literary and Historical Survey of Qaṭrāyīth (“in Qatari”) Spoken in Beth Qaṭraye,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 81, no. 1 (2022): 71–83.
 - 5 See Haya Al Thani et al., “A Toponymical Survey of Beth Qaṭraye,” in *Beth Qaṭraye: A Lexical and Toponymical Survey*, eds. Mario Kozah et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2021), 107–73.

Dayrin, and in this way its inhabitants were also reconciled. And he went up from there, and came to this holy monastery, and he brought with him cloths for the altar which had been woven for him in the island of Dayrin, of Beth Qaṭraye.⁶

In addition to the notable brocade and cloth-weaving industry mentioned in the above citation, the seventh and eighth centuries witnessed a remarkable literary culture that emerged among the East-Syriac Christian ascetics of the Gulf region; the expansion of coenobitic institutions was clearly established, with recently discovered archaeological evidence from around the Gulf connected to the same period.⁷ Very little is known of the subsequent history of Beth Qaṭraye; Christianity may have disappeared from the region after the ninth century.⁸

2 Syriac Authors from Beth Qaṭraye

In the sixth and seventh centuries, Syriac Christian Beth Qaṭraye produced a number of important authors.⁹ Among the various authors designated as Gabriel Qaṭraya in the sources, there is a biblical interpreter who was a teacher in Seleucia-Ctesiphon in the mid-seventh century, and a commentator on the liturgy who lived in the first half of the seventh century.¹⁰ Another biblical interpreter frequently quoted in certain eighth and ninth century East-Syriac commentaries as well as in later sources is Aḥub Qaṭraya.¹¹

While Christians in Beth Qaṭraye used Syriac as their literary and liturgical language, Persian and Arabic existed and were used by the inhabitants in the region as well. This social and linguistic complexity is further revealed in numerous glosses explicitly

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- 6 Ernest A. W. Budge, *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop De Marga A.D. 840*, vol. I (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1893), 86.
 - 7 See Mario Kozah, "Introduction," in *The Syriac Writers of Qatar in the Seventh Century*, eds. Mario Kozah et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2014), 1–22 and Haya Al Thani, "An Archaeological Survey of Beth Qaṭraye," in *The Syriac Writers of Qatar in the Seventh Century*, eds. Mario Kozah et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2014), 23–35.
 - 8 Lucas Van Rompay, "Beth Qaṭraye," in *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, eds. Sebastian P. Brock et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011), 72–73.
 - 9 Sebastian P. Brock, "Syriac Writers from Beth Qaṭraye," *ARAM* 11, no. 1 (1999): 85–96.
 - 10 See Sebastian P. Brock, "Gabriel of Beth Qaṭraye as a Witness to Syriac Intellectual life c. 600 CE," in *The Syriac Writers of Qatar in the Seventh Century*, eds. Mario Kozah et al., 155–69.
 - 11 See Bas Romeny, "Syriac Biblical Interpretation from Qatar: Ahob of Qatar," in *The Syriac Writers of Qatar in the Seventh Century*, eds. Mario Kozah et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011), 133–55.

referring to a local vernacular identified as being the “language of Beth Qaṭraye”¹² (in some cases the adverb *Qaṭrāyīth* is used), all preserved in later works, most frequently in biblical commentaries as well as in the tenth century lexicon of Bar Bahlul.¹³ A few of these glosses are specifically attributed to the biblical interpreters Gabriel and Aḥub Qaṭraya but the majority do not have such an attribution. While some can be identified as Aramaic in origin, others point to Persian (Pahlavi) but most to an Arabic origin. Users of this vernacular language called *Qaṭrāyīth* must have been among the readers and writers of Syriac texts produced by authors from Beth Qaṭraye.

Qaṭraye Christians knowledgeable in literary Syriac, Arabic and Persian also served as translators in the wider region. The Persian translator for the (undoubtedly Arabic speaking) Lakhmid king al-Nu‘man III (579–601) is said to have been a Syriac Christian from Beth Qaṭraye. A monk from Beth Qaṭraye is also credited with a preface and translation from Persian into Syriac of the *Law Book* of Shem‘on of Rev Ardashir.¹⁴

2.1 *The Anonymous Commentary*

Although none of his works survive, Aḥub Qaṭraya is in fact cited in a number of East-Syriac biblical commentaries and in particular the so-called East-Syriac *Anonymous Commentary*,¹⁵ a ninth century work which in its most extended form covers both the Old and New Testaments.¹⁶ The AC contains quotations from another seventh century biblical commentator from Beth Qaṭraye, relied upon as an authority for both the Old and the New Testaments, who is at times referred to as Rabban Gabriel Qaṭraya and at others as Mar Aba Gabriel Qaṭraya or simply as Gabriel or Rabban.¹⁷ Rabban without further description is mentioned numerous times in the course of this commentary.

12 See Ricardo Contini, “La lingua del Bēt Qaṭrāyē,” in *Mélanges David Cohen: études sur le langage, les langues, les dialectes, les littératures, offertes par ses élèves, ses collègues, ses amis, présentées à l’occasion de son quatre-vingtième anniversaire*, eds. Jérôme Lentin and Antoine Lonnet (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2003), 173–81.

13 Lucas Van Rompay, “Bar Bahlul, Ḥasan,” in *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, eds. Sebastian P. Brock et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011), 54.

14 For a full edition and translation of the preface, see Mario Kozah, “Preface to Mar Shem‘un’s *Law Book* by an Anonymous Monk from Beth Qaṭraye,” in *An Anthology of Syriac Writers from Qatar in the Seventh Century*, eds. Mario Kozah et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015), 147–55.

15 Henceforth AC.

16 Of these manuscripts the oldest and most comprehensive, covering both the Old and New Testaments, is Ms. (olim) Diyarbakır 22. The other manuscripts of the AC which only contain the Old Testament part or even only the Pentateuch section are MS Mosul 1; MS Kirkuk 8; MS St. Petersburg (olim Diettrich 2); MS Vat. Syr. 502; MS Vat. Syr. 578; MS Birmingham, Mingana 553; MS Louvain, CSCO Syr. 13; MS Chaldean Archdiocese of Irbīl (ACE) 21.

17 Not to be confused with the liturgical commentator Gabriel Qaṭraya bar Lipeh (also 6th/7th cent.). See Sebastian P. Brock, “Gabriel Qaṭraya,” in *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, eds. Sebastian P. Brock et al. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015), 171.

Interestingly, in addition to citations from Aḥub and Gabriel Qaṭraya, the AC also includes many glosses containing words in the vernacular language of *Qaṭrāyīth* spoken by *Qaṭraye* (Qataris). Perhaps the unnamed editor of the AC originated from Beth Qaṭraye and that the “School” which he refers to throughout the text was one that was headed by Rabban Gabriel Qaṭraya perhaps in the Beth Aramaye region.¹⁸ The second possibility, related in part to the first, is that many of the readers of the AC were possibly students from a school in Beth Qaṭraye¹⁹ who would therefore have benefitted from further elucidations and glosses in their own dialect of *Qaṭrāyīth*, a language that is also used by Aḥub Qaṭraya and Gabriel Qaṭraya—two of the greatest Syriac exegetes of the seventh century, who both hailed from Beth Qaṭraye as their demonym clearly indicates.

3 The Arabian Oryx or Unicorn in Qaṭrāyīth

Research into the rest of the as yet unexplored section of the *AC* has indeed revealed new words in *Qaṭrāyīth* as well as more unpublished citations from Aḥub and Gabriel Qaṭraya.²⁰ One such *Qaṭrāyīth* word “*wazar*” meaning the Arabian oryx or unicorn is used to gloss the Syriac word *raymā* in the Peshitta OT, which is itself a translation of the Hebrew *re'em* in Deuteronomy 14:5. The verse from the Peshitta OT is as follows:

לדאסאלען זיך געפאלן. מ'האט דאס געזאגט. און דאס איז דאס וואס
 האט געפאלן. און דאס איז דאס וואס האט געפאלן.²¹

Do not eat all that is unclean. These are the animals that you will eat: the ox, the lamb, the sheep, the goat, the stag, the deer, the bubale, the ibex,²² the oryx,²³ the rock-goat, and the mountain goat.

18 We know that Gabriel Qaṭraya was associated, at least for some time, with the School of Seleucia. Perhaps this school, active from the sixth century onwards, served as a point of connection between the Nisibene tradition and the southern provinces; see Gerrit J. Reinink, “The School of Seleucia and the Heritage of Nisibis, the ‘Mother of Sciences,’” in *Le vie del sapere in ambito siro-mesopotamico dal III al IX secolo*, eds. Carla Noce et al., *OCA* 293 (Rome, 2013), 115–31. I am grateful to Luk Van Rompay for highlighting this point to me.

19 Brock, "Gabriel of Beth Qatrave as a Witness to Syriac Intellectual life c. 600 CE," 165–66.

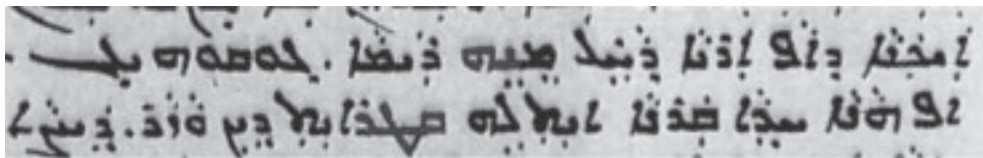
20 For a full list and analysis of the newly discovered lexemes, see Mario Kozah et al., eds., *Beth Qaṭraye: A Lexical and Toponymical Survey*.

21 Peshitta OT, 14:3-5.

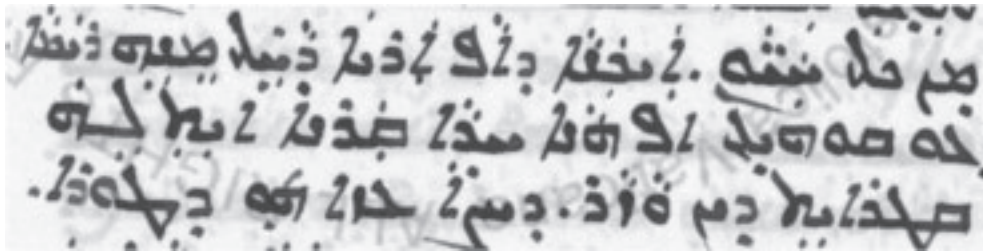
22 Citing Rabban (Gabriel Qatraya), the AC explains this word as meaning “rhinoceros.”

23 The usual translation for *raymā* is “wild ox or unicorn”; however, as will be demonstrated, the *AC* interpretation suggests that the word is to be understood to mean oryx or Arabian oryx or unicorn.

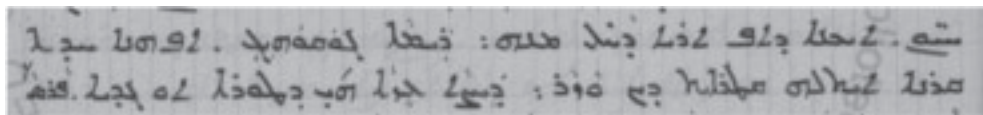
A number of other verses in the Old Testament Bible in addition to Deuteronomy 14:5 refer to a horned animal called *re'em* in Hebrew. This word was translated “unicorn” or “rhinoceros” in many versions of the Bible, but modern translations prefer “wild ox,” which is a more accurate rendition of the Hebrew *re'em*. As a biblical animal, the unicorn was interpreted allegorically in the early Christian church. However, in addition to explaining *re'em* in Deuteronomy 14:5 as meaning “unicorn,” the AC provides us with a second, more autochthonous, definition of the Syriac *raymā* as “Arabian oryx” which can in fact be gleaned from the glosses it provides including the Pahlavi translation *gawqūhīg* and newly discovered *Qaṭrāyīth* word for it, *wazar*:



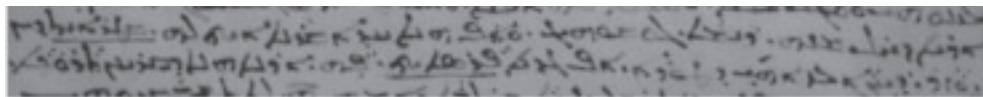
Mingana 553 f. 103^v l. 19–20.



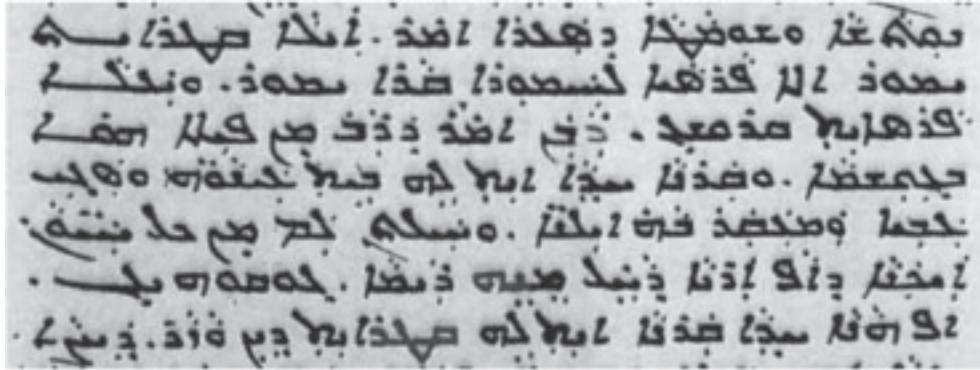
Vat. Sir. 502 f. 166^r l. 17–19.



Vat. Sir. 578 f. 64^r l. 16–17.



Diyarbakır 22 f. 60^v l. 32–33.

MS Mingana Syr. 553 fol. 103^r.

The stag (*aylā*) in Qaṭrāyīth is *yamūr*, however in Persian the bubale²⁴ is called *yamūr*. The rhinoceros (*ya'lā*) in Persian is called *kargshg*. Rabban states that it is larger than an elephant in body size and has one horn on its forehead which is very hard, and it uproots trees with it. It is clearly more powerful than all animals. Even the lion takes fright from it. The oryx/unicorn (*raymā*) [is called] *gawqūhīg* in Persian. This also has one horn. In Qaṭrāyīth, then, [it is called] *wazar*.

Commenting on Deuteronomy 14:5, the AC begins with a Qaṭrāyīth gloss on *aylā* (meaning “stag” in Syriac) which is given as *yamūr* in Qaṭrāyīth. The commentator then points out that the meaning of *yamūr* in Qaṭrāyīth differs from its homonym in Persian where it means the bubale or fallow deer (the synonym of Syriac *yaḥmūr* in the Bible verse). Next, the word *ya'lā* (meaning “ibex” in Syriac) found in the Peshitta OT verse is glossed by providing the Pahlavi synonym *kargshg* which in fact is found to mean “rhinoceros” in D.N. MacKenzie's *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*.²⁵ This rather unusual definition of the Syriac word *ya'lā* is confirmed by the commentator's reference to Rabban (Gabriel Qaṭraya's) description of this animal bearing characteristics that could only fit a rhinoceros such as the fact that it only has one horn on its forehead which it uses to uproot trees and that it is larger than an (Indian?) elephant in size and more powerful than all other animals.

The commentary on Deuteronomy 14:5 continues with a gloss on *raymā* (meaning “wild ox” or “unicorn” in Syriac) by first providing the Pahlavi synonym *gawqūhīg* found

²⁴ Referring to the fallow deer or Syriac *yaḥmūr* in the Bible verse Deut. 14:5.

²⁵ Karg [*kīg* | N ~] rhinoceros. David N. MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 50.

also to mean “wild ox or cow” but not “unicorn.”²⁶ Interestingly the Arabic for “wild cow” (*al-baqarah al-waḥshīyyah*) is used to refer to a species (among other species including a general description of what appears to be a unicorn) of bovine antelope,²⁷ more specifically the Arabian oryx, *al-rīm*²⁸ or *al-rīm*,²⁹ itself a cognate of the Peshitta OT Syriac *raymā* and in fact selected by Cornelius Van Dyke to render the Hebrew *re'em* in his 1865 Arabic translation of the Bible. Thus, it can be concluded from the Pahlavi gloss and similar Arabic usage that the AC defines Syriac *raymā* as meaning “wild cow” or “Arabian oryx” rather than “wild ox” which is now the generally accepted translation of Hebrew *re'em*. The ensuing description of this animal however as also having “one horn” has a twofold significance. The first is that this one-horned animal differs from the “rhinoceros” just given as Syriac *ya'lā*, thus excluding the translation of *raymā*/ *re'em* as “rhinoceros” found in some older versions of the Bible. The second is the conflating of the mythical unicorn with the Arabian oryx in the word *raymā*.

The Arabian oryx (oryx leucoryx), or white oryx, is a medium-sized antelope whose resemblance to descriptions and depictions of the mythical unicorn is striking especially since from personal observation the Arabian oryx can appear to have only one horn when seen in profile. What is more, the author of the AC was not the first to associate the unicorn with the oryx, rather, this association first appears in Aristotle³⁰ (384–322 BC) then Pliny the Elder³¹ (23–79 AD), citing the former almost verbatim, who both maintained that the oryx was a unicorn i.e., had one horn. It is within this context that the *Qaṭrāyīth* word “*wazar*” for the oryx/unicorn is provided to conclude the gloss on *raymā*, further supporting the association which the commentator is making in the light of the fact that the inhabitants of Beth Qaṭraye would have certainly seen and even hunted the Arabian oryx in its historic habitat. Given their great familiarity with this celebrated local animal, it is not surprising that the *Qaṭraye* inhabitants of Beth Qaṭraye would have coined a word for it in their vernacular of *Qaṭrāyīth*.

To sum up, a number of passages in the Bible refer to a horned animal called *re'em* (Job 39:9; Job 39:10; Numbers 24:8; Numbers 23:22; Psalm 92:10; Deuteronomy 33:17). This noun was translated as “unicorn” or “rhinoceros” in older translations of the Bible; however, many modern versions opt for “wild ox,” which is in fact the correct meaning

26 Gāw [TWRA < A *twr'* | M *g'w*, N ~] ox, bull, cow; *astr.* Taurus. Ibid., 35; *kōfig* [-*yk* | N *kōhī*] wild, mountain. Ibid., 51.

27 “*Al-baqara al-waḥshīyya* a species of bovine antelope.” Edward W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon: Derived from the Best and Most Copious Eastern Sources* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863), 234.

28 “*Al-rīm* [the antelope leucoryx, or white antelope:] an antelope that is purely white.” Ibid., 998.

29 Ibid., 1204.

30 “...the oryx, is single horned and cloven-hooved.” Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, trans. D'Arcy Wentworth Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), Book II.I, 499.

31 “...and the oryx is both one-horned and cloven-footed.” in Pliny, *The Natural History* trans. John Bostock and Henry T. Riley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1855), Book XI. 106, 89–90.

of the Hebrew *re'em*. As a biblical animal, the unicorn was interpreted allegorically in the early Christian church. Following in this tradition, the *AC* interprets Syriac *raymā* in Deuteronomy 14:5 to be a unicorn, which can be surmised from its description of this animal as possessing “one horn,” similar to the rhinoceros described immediately before. In addition, the *AC* provides a second potential reading of the Syriac *raymā* as Arabian oryx, which can be gleaned from the two glosses it provides, namely, the Pahlavi *gawqūhīg* and newly discovered *Qatāyīth* noun, *wazar*. The Pahlavi *gawqūhīg* is used for “wild cow” or “wild ox,” whose equivalent translation in Arabic, perhaps a calque, would be *al-baqarah al-waḥshiyyah* or bovine antelope, a commonly used reference for the Arabian oryx. The newly discovered *Qatāyīth* gloss seems to be derived from the Pahlavi *wuzurg* meaning “big” or “great,” perhaps referring to the greatness of the unicorn or, alternatively, the large size of this particular species of bovine antelope. On the other hand, *wazar* could easily be a hypocoristic form of *wuzurg-shāx* “big horn” for the beast known today in Persian as *tiz-shāx* “Oryx,” literally “sharp horn.” A final observation is the fact that the cognate of Syriac *raymā* in Arabic is *rīm* or *ri'm* defined by Lane as the “antelope leucoryx,” or Arabian Oryx, further supporting this proposed definition here of *wazar*.

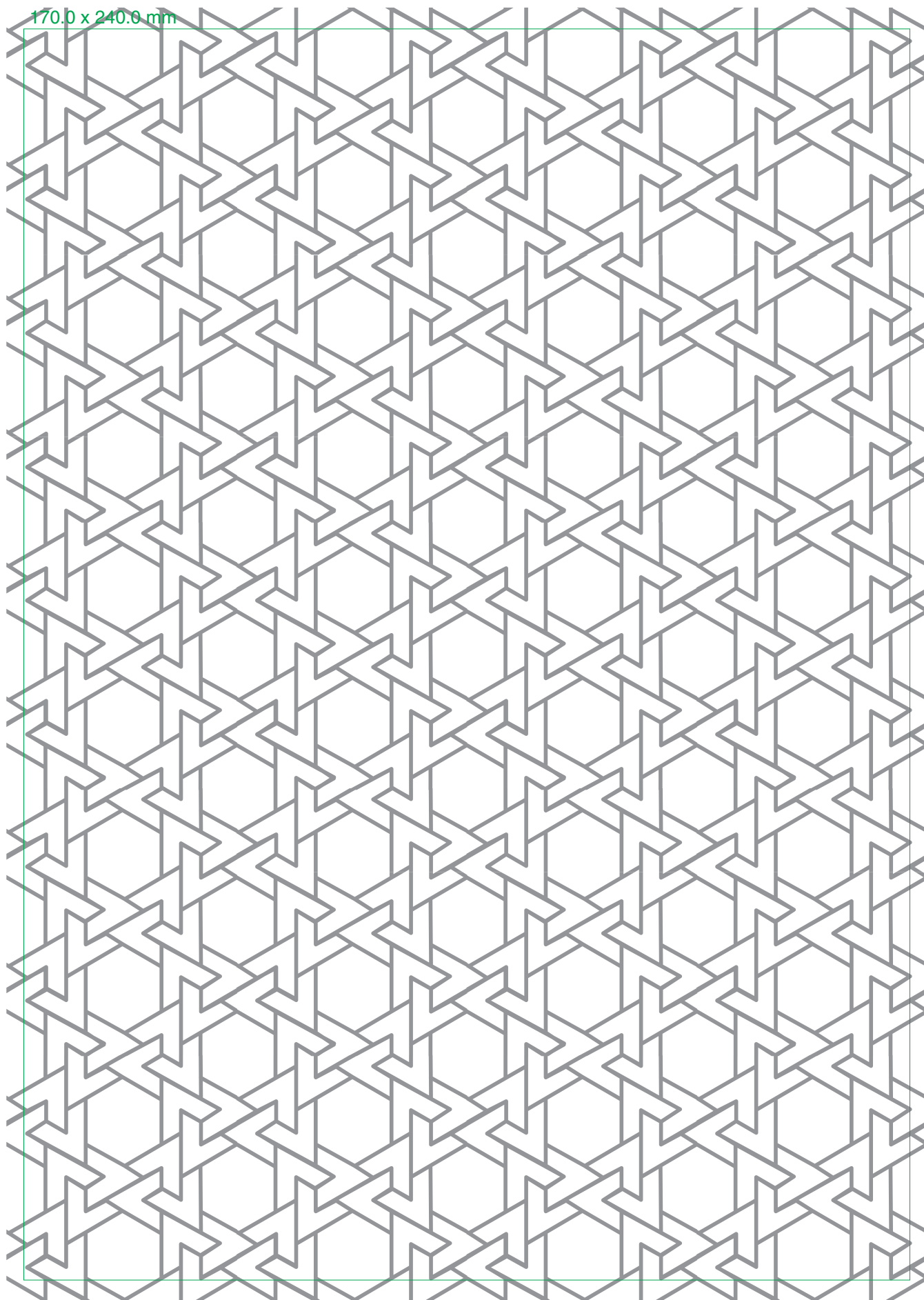
Historically, the Arabian oryx probably ranged throughout most of the Middle East. In the early 1800s, they could still be found in the Sinai, Palestine, the Transjordan, much of Iraq, and most of the Arabian Peninsula. The symbolic and cultural importance of this animal for the Gulf today makes this unique discovery in the ancient vernacular of that same region particularly interesting and worthy of consideration with a view to deepening our broader understanding of the morphology of this ancient language from north-east Arabia.

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On the Nature of the Qur'an: The Literary Approach Revisited

A Study of Khalafallah's Controversial Interpretation of the Historical Narratives and Allegories in the Islamic Scripture

*Abdul Rahman Chamseddine
and Rana Siblini*

"To hear with the heart is not strictly something cognitive but involves the body in its entirety, as a complex synthesis of patterned moral reflexes."¹

Introduction

The prevailing view regarding the nature of the Qur'an has traditionally been that it portrays accurate historical events that are referenced within it. This position is an extension of the conservative tradition among Muslim scholars. Despite the schism among theologians during the Inquisition (*Mihna*) era, whereby the traditionalists upheld the belief that the Qur'an is the verbatim, uncreated word of God, and the rationalists maintained that it was created, the issue of the historicity of the Qur'an remained uncontested.²

However, subsequent to this contentious episode in the history of Qur'anic reception, a new discourse emerged that called for an alternative approach to the nature of the Qur'an. Among the various perspectives put forth on this matter, one that entailed a more literary interpretation of the Qur'anic text gained traction. An orientation with literary

¹ Charles Hirshkind, *The Ethical Soundscape* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 79.

² For the discussion of the Inquisition, review Wilferd Madelung, "The Origins of the Controversy concerning the Creation of the Koran," *Orientalia Hispanica sive studia F.M. Pareja octogenario dicata*, edited by J. M. Barral, vol. I, no. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 504–25.

characteristics was discernible in the works of some scholars, proposing a literary approach to the Qur'an based on its artistic value in the context of a belletristic appreciation.

In modern scholarship, a literary approach with a specific focus on the narratives recounted in the Qur'an, specifically those concerning the prophets and early events of historical nature, has emerged. This approach contends that although these stories contain some elements of time, place, characters, and plot, they cannot necessarily be viewed as a source of historical fact.

In this paper, we attempt to assess the methodological approach of Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah, a prominent scholar and advocate of the literary approach to the Qur'anic text in the twentieth century, in contrast to the historical approach which he himself criticizes. Conversely, this study aims to explore an alternative perspective regarding the artistic approach employed by Khalafallah. Specifically, we propose to examine a similar artistic approach that differs from the traditional orthodox method, which relies heavily on a textual approach. Instead, our proposed remarks are based on the oral tradition of the Qur'an, with a particular emphasis on the act of listening. Through this alternative lens, we seek to provide fresh insights and offer new opportunities for critical engagement with the text.

1 The Literary Study of the Qur'an: Historical Development and Contemporary Approaches

The literary debate surrounding the Qur'an has a long and complex history, stretching back to the early centuries of Islam when the Qur'an was first recorded on paper. Despite its undeniable status as a sacred text, the Qur'an has also been subject to scholarly scrutiny and analysis, particularly from a literary perspective. This is due in part to the fact that the Qur'an is not merely a work of literature but is considered by Muslims to be a living miracle whose rhetorical power transcends time and space.³

As a result, discussions of the literary nature of the Qur'an have been a sensitive topic, as scholars have struggled to apply standard literary analytical methods to a text that is considered to be without error. However, from a rhetorical perspective, the Qur'an is also recognized as a unique masterpiece of literature, unmatched by any other work in the Arabic canon. In the Islamic belief system, no part of the text is considered superior to any other, and it is seen as a symbol of perfection in every dimension.

Given the significance of the Qur'an in Muslim faith and culture, it has been the task of scholars and theologians to explore what exactly makes this sacred text so effective and

3 Ziauddin Sardar, "Review: The Qur'an by Tarif Khalidi," *The Guardian*, June 20, 2008.

supreme. This has given rise to the literary study of the Qur'an, a field of inquiry that seeks to understand and appreciate this remarkable work's rhetorical and literary qualities.

Tarif Khalidi, a renowned contemporary Islamic scholar and author, has played a crucial role in advancing various contemporary forms of Qur'anic interpretation. According to Khalidi, the Qur'an is regarded as a sacred text that offers salvation through the potency of its rhetoric.⁴ In his contributions to *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and the Arts*, Khalidi has systematically outlined the journey of the Qur'an in its relation to literature into three main stages throughout the literary and religious history of Islam.⁵

According to Khalidi, the first evolution towards a literary approach to the Qur'an can be traced back to the ninth century, almost two centuries after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. This initial phase of literary development was pioneered and led by Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 150 A.H.).⁶

As per Khalidi's periodization, the second phase occurred around six hundred years after the first stage. After the pioneering endeavors of al-Jāḥiẓ to establish a criterion of literary eloquence in the ninth century, Jalāl ad-dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 A.H.) emerged as a significant scholar who contributed to this field of study.⁷ Al-Suyūṭī sought to bridge the gap between the study of literature and theology by finding a synthesis between the two. In his time, there was a heated debate between literary and religious scholars regarding the inimitability (*i'jāz*) of the Qur'an. It is well-known that literary theory was greatly influenced by the Qur'anic rhetorical sciences.⁸ Two issues that came into question were finding a coherent doctrine for the Qur'an's inimitability and correctly interpreting some of its more ambiguous verses.⁹ As the dissemination of the Qur'an expanded culturally and geographically, heretics from all sides began to expand their arguments against it.¹⁰ Therefore, it was the responsibility of all Muslim scholars, whether their academic work was secular or religious, to attempt the formation of a coherent argument against these nonbelievers.

In its final chapter, the relationship of the Qur'an and the literary study reached a critical turning point during the twentieth century in Egypt, which is described by Khalidi as the "literary moment." A prominent figure in this moment was the well-known scholar Amin al-Khuli (d. 1966 C.E.) along with his student, Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah

4 Tarif Khalidi, "Islam and Literature," *The Oxford Handbook for Religion and the Arts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 302.

5 Ibid., 304.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 305.

8 W. Heinrichs, "Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī," *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, edited by Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey, vol. I (London: Routledge, 1998), 16.

9 Ibid., 654.

10 Khalidi, "Islam and Literature," 305.

(d. 1991 C.E.). Their work marked the culmination of a much larger cultural renaissance in the Arabic world, where new literary movements were often referred to as *Tajdid*, the Arabic word for 'renewal.' This Arabic Renaissance sought to present the Qur'an as a text that was not confined to the domains of history, politics, or science.¹¹

It is important to examine this final stage of the literary approach, as represented by al-Khuli and the milieu of the twentieth century. In particular, Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah, al-Khuli's disciple, is an instrumental figure in this era, especially his thesis, which proposes an 'artistic' approach and will receive significant attention in this study. The current research attempts to critically build upon this study as its precursor, with the aim of suggesting an approach to the Qur'an as a sacred recital language founded on the aural aspect.

2 The Literary Moment and its Approach to the Qur'an

The Egyptian Renaissance, also known as the *Nahḍa* was a period of intellectual and cultural revival in the Arab world that began in the late nineteenth century and continued through the early twentieth century. It was characterized by a renewed interest in Arab culture and heritage, as well as a desire to modernize and reform Arab society. This view was shared by a number of scholars at the Egyptian National University, among them the celebrated Taha Husayn (d. 1973 C.E.). With a distinguished background as a literary historian and critic, Husayn possessed an extensive understanding of textual studies. Utilizing this expertise and drawing upon his knowledge of the subject, he proposed a theory advancing that the Qur'an's inimitability was primarily attributed to its distinctive literary genre that could not be categorized as fiction, non-fiction, or historical writing. In Husayn's words, "it's neither poetry nor prose: it is Qur'an."¹² He skillfully combined his broad-based research on Arabic rhetoric, *balāgha*, with his personal interpretation of the Qur'an. For a considerable period of time, the Qur'an was regarded among Muslim scholars as embodying the highest standards of excellence a text could achieve. The appreciation of its literary superiority was ascribed to both God's miracle of verbal expression and His selection of the Arabic language as the medium for conveying His

11 Sayyid Quṭb (d. 1966 C.E.) and the Egyptian Qur'anic thinker Nasr Abu Zayd (d. 2010 C.E.) are scholars who followed the work of al-Khuli and Khalafallah and contributed to the development of a more innovative method of interpreting the Qur'an. Their approach seeks to understand the rhetoric of this holy book with fresh insights, shedding new light on the understanding of its meaning. Nasr Abu Zayd et al., "The Twentieth Century," *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis* (Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 58.

12 Navid Kermani, "Revelation in its Aesthetic Dimension: Some Notes about Apostles and Artists in Islamic and Christian Culture," in *The Qur'an as Text*, edited by Stefan Wild (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 221.

message.¹³ The medieval studies of Qur'anic exegesis acknowledged and sanctioned this literary dimension. Nevertheless, in contemporary times, the application of literary techniques to interpretation as an established discipline (*tafsīr*) has been deemed precarious in an increasingly hostile and conservative academic environment.¹⁴

Balāgha can be defined as the art of words or the study of aesthetic effectiveness.¹⁵ Taha Husayn was a firm believer in the importance of utilizing techniques of *balāgha* in the linguistic analysis of the Qur'an. The study of *balāgha* emerged as a direct result of the scholarly endeavor to produce the most accurate possible exegesis of the Qur'an. As previously noted, the Qur'an had always been lauded for its eloquence. Thus, a deep understanding of *balāgha* and literary rhetoric could enhance the exegesis and interpretation of the Qur'an. It is worth noting that early exegetes were required to be proficient not only in the Qur'an and its passages, but also in the science of *balāgha*.¹⁶

Like Taha Husayn, Amin al-Khuli contended that the Egyptian Renaissance, much like its European counterpart, should naturally begin in art and literature. He sought to reconcile Islamic tradition with modernity and to find innovative ways of understanding and interpreting the sacred text in light of contemporary intellectual and cultural trends. One of the ways in which al-Khuli sought to break with traditional interpretations of the Qur'an was by emphasizing the importance of literary analysis and interpretation.¹⁷ He believed that the Qur'an was not simply a religious text, but also a work of literature that could be studied and analyzed using the same tools and methods used to analyze other literary works.¹⁸ As a prominent figure born in the height of the Egyptian Renaissance, al-Khuli drew inspiration from the philosophies of Romanticism that were then emerging in literary studies.

Amin al-Khuli applied all the innovations of the literary Renaissance to his works, including *balāgha*, *tafsīr*, *adab* (literature), and *naḥw* (grammar).¹⁹ The question of *i'jāz* inspired many great thinkers and theologians to reflect upon what specifically makes the Qur'an so uniquely special, and it was also a driving force for al-Khuli's research.²⁰ As mentioned earlier, al-Khuli was a staunch supporter of Husayn, as reflected in his

13 Kate Zebiri, "Towards a Rhetorical Criticism of the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2003): 105.

14 Abu Zayd, Nasr Hamid, and Esther R. Nelson, *Voice of an Exile: Reflections on Islam* (Westport: Greenwood, 2004), 33.

15 Zebiri, "Towards a Rhetorical Criticism," 104.

16 Ibid., 105.

17 Abu Zayd, "The Dilemma of the Literary Approach to the Qur'an," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 23 (2003): 22.

18 Ibid.

19 Abu Zayd et al., "The Twentieth Century," *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis* (Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 58.

20 Abu Zayd, "The Dilemma," 8.

research. He supported many scholars in Egypt at the time, encouraging them to push the boundaries of research in the development of this literary approach.²¹ “He made it crystal clear that we can come to the sacred text from different angles, such as philosophically and ethically, but to do that, we must first begin by studying the Qur’an as a literary text.”²² For many years preceding this Egyptian literary moment, there had been a very limited diversity of interpretive schools of thought, and this had much to do with the deep-rooted selection of interpretations and translations, which are now hundreds of years old.

In the process of interpreting the Qur’an, there is an established hierarchy of sources to consult. The first source of interpretation are the Qur’an itself, as it is the primary authority in Islam. The second source is the Ḥadīth or the sayings and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The Ḥadīth is regarded as second only to the Qur’an in importance in Islamic theology, and has served as a basis for legal and moral decisions.²³ Following the Ḥadīth, the next source of interpretation is the *Ṣaḥāba*, consisting of testimonies from Muhammad’s closest followers in the generation after him. While there are extensive Qur’anic commentaries written by scholars in later generations, the field of written interpretation had not experienced significant innovation. Hence, the literary moment came as a turning point. Amin al-Khuli and other respected professors encountered strong opposition to their approach. As a result, many were forced into retirement and accused of violating Islamic law with their theological research.

Al-Khuli approached the Qur’an with a pragmatic perspective, considering it as a product of the seventh-century pagan mentality. He emphasized the importance of interpreting the specific wording in the context of the larger message of the Qur’an, which ultimately preaches justice and love. This approach challenged the long-held opinion that the Qur’an is a timeless text, relevant in any day or age.

Al-Khuli’s ideas greatly influenced his student Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah, who faced intense academic and religious criticism for his literary interpretations of the Qur’an. As a product of artistic thought, Khalafallah’s religious identity was intertwined with his artistic perspective, which led to a dilemma in the Islamic academic institutions of Egypt and caused some scholars to disparage his name.²⁴

²¹ Abu Zayd and Nelson, *Voice of an Exile*, 53.

²² Ibid.

²³ G.H.A. Juynboll, “Ḥadīth and the Qur’an,” *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe et al. (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University, Brill Reference Online).

²⁴ See Niazi Azhar, “KhalafAllah, Muhammad Ahmad,” *Islamicus.org.*, July 23rd, 2014.

3 The Contributions of Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah

Born in 1916, Khalafallah's academic journey included attending a series of conventional Islamic and governmental schools, a common trajectory during his era. His educational growth and development adhered to expected norms and occurred within established Islamic teaching institutions. Notably, his early academic experiences cannot be linked directly to his later ideologies. However, it was upon his graduation from the Egyptian University, presently recognized as Cairo University, that his work began to diverge from the conventional and encounter challenges. Under the guidance of al-Khuli, Khalafallah initiated his graduate studies, where his work began to diverge from the norm and be challenged.

Khalafallah and al-Khuli's proposals aimed to highlight the significance of a literary approach in comprehending the Qur'an, rather than diminish its value. By viewing the Qur'an as a work of allegory and metaphor, Khalafallah, under the careful guidance of al-Khuli, endeavored to extract moral lessons from the stories and historical accounts presented in a qualitative rather than quantitative framework. Notably, this approach assumes greater significance as the Qur'an, with a few exceptions, does not indicate specific dates or periods when dealing with historical events. This literary exegesis aimed to uncover the underlying moral message from the intricate wording and metaphors utilized in the text. However, the act of reading the holy scripture, considered to be the true words of God, as a literary masterpiece was not well-received by the Egyptian people or educational institutions,²⁵ as well as by the majority of readers in the Arab world.

In light of the critical discourse surrounding the Qur'an, detractors have contended that the text represents a compendium of narratives loosely grounded in artistic prose, rather than a historical chronicle of factual events. As such, these critics have argued that such an interpretation may engender a sense of skepticism regarding the authenticity of the scripture, potentially undermining its status as a reliable source of information, and instead positing it as a mere collection of tales, imbued with subjectivity and open to varying degrees of interpretation. Of particular contention in the discourse surrounding the Qur'an are the historical aspects of the text, which have been the subject of significant scrutiny. Khalafallah's contributions to this discourse have proven to be particularly divisive, with his examination of the historical content of the scripture drawing particularly vocal criticism. However, it is worth noting that Khalafallah's approach to the text, like that of al-Khuli, is characterized by a willingness to engage with the material in a more open-ended manner, thereby facilitating a more thorough exploration of the stories and themes present within the Qur'an. It is important to distinguish, however, that the objections to Khalafallah's work are not centered on his purported distortion

25 Abu Zayd and Nelson, *Voice of an Exile*, 53.

of the Qur'an or his alleged mistranslation of its contents for pedagogical purposes, but rather on his interpretative methodology.²⁶

Khalafallah's interest in the literary analysis of the Qur'an was most influenced by al-Khuli's teaching of analysis rather than by his interpretation of it. Specifically, al-Khuli advocated for reading each segment of the text as an interconnected whole, rather than simply as a collection of plots and characters. In al-Khuli's view, priority should be placed on scrutinizing the words themselves as well as on the intricate patterns that exist between verses and chapters. He maintained that the astute commentator must be keenly attuned to the careful usage of language and the underlying themes that are woven throughout the text.²⁷

Both al-Khuli and Khalafallah posited that the Qur'an is not a historical document that serves merely to educate Muslims about a bygone era. Rather, they contended that the primary function of the Qur'an lies in its artistic prose, which serves to convey a greater message. In this context, the role of the analyst is to decipher this message through literary means of analysis. In order to facilitate a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an, it is incumbent upon institutions to promote and prioritize literary analysis, which serves as a crucial tool in unlocking the rich complexities of the text.

Khalafallah demonstrated a steadfast commitment to the theories espoused by both himself and his teacher, as evidenced by his continued advocacy for their perspectives in subsequent years.

Khalafallah and al-Khuli were not the earliest proponents of a modernized approach to the Qur'an, as evidenced by the contributions of the Egyptian scholar Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905 C.E.). According to Zaki Badawi, an Egyptian Islamic scholar, Abduh led a movement in the late nineteenth century throughout Egypt and other Muslim countries to "modernize" traditional Islamic institutions.²⁸ Abduh was undoubtedly involved in political activism during his academic career, and his modernist theories were employed not only in the interpretation of the Qur'an but also in advocating for "Muslim Unity." Born in 1849, Abduh lived through the period of Egyptian colonialism and became disenchanted with the increasing corruption and disunity in his country. The westernization of education under colonial rule heavily influenced Abduh's advocacy for reform in Islamic thinking and institutions. British colonialism extended its influence into various sectors of governmental institutions, leading to a pervasive

²⁶ Abu Zayd and Nelson, *Voice of an Exile*, 53.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ On Abduh, see Zaki Badawi, *The Reformers of Egypt* (London: Croom Helm for the Muslim Institute, 1978), 11–44.

western influence in Egyptian schools.²⁹ Abduh, however, was skeptical of this influence and sought to advance a more independent and organic form of Islamic education.³⁰

Abduh's concerns were substantiated by the experiences of Khalafallah and al-Khuli, both of whom encountered opposition from their academic institutions for their progressive research. The universities in Egypt, of which they were a part, began to neglect the aesthetic and literary aspects of the Qur'anic texts, and instead focused solely on established theological interpretations, which is not ideal for a leading Arabic university. Remarkably, there are many similarities between the objectives of Khalafallah's thesis, "The Art of Narrative in the Qur'an," and Abduh's own works.

Barbara Stowasser's book on Qur'anic interpretation with respect to women provides insight into these similarities. She writes:

In his interpretation of the Adam and Eve story, for instance, Abduh contends that the story's purpose is to serve as an example of admonition and guidance; the story serves to define human nature and man's God-willed mission on earth. Furthermore, the story is also understood as parable for mankind's historical development from innocence to greed and strife, to be followed, "God-willing," by a better future in an age of reason and reflection. Abduh goes so far as to say that this story has nothing to do with history, because history does not concern religion.³¹

Clearly, in the opinion of Abduh, the Qur'an should not be regarded solely as a historical document, as this would be a reduction of its true value. Instead, he advocated for a more profound appreciation of the work, drawing on the example of the pre-Islamic Arabs who were initially attracted to the beauty and power of the Qur'an's language, rather than the literal meaning of its stories. According to Abduh, the true meaning of the Qur'an is concealed within the words themselves.³² Abduh, along with subsequent scholars such as al-Khuli and Khalafallah, sought to encourage Egyptian scholars to engage with the Qur'an through both literary and aesthetic approaches, thereby uncovering deeper levels of meaning within the sacred text. Their work allows for the combination of approaches, literary and aesthetic, in order to examine, more deeply, the Qur'an as it was originally intended to be experienced.

²⁹ See Robert L. Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882–1914* (Princeton: University Press, 1966).

³⁰ Badawi, *The Reformers of Egypt*, *ibid.*

³¹ Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an: Traditions and Interpretation* (Oxford: University Press, 1996), 17.

³² *Ibid.*

4 Beyond History: A Reevaluation of the Qur'an's Purpose and Value

In the realm of Qur'anic scholarship, the view that the Qur'an is not solely a book of history but rather a work of literature has been espoused by numerous scholars. Within the modernist Egyptian theological movement, this idea was particularly championed by influential figures. Among these was Khalafallah, who played a significant role in the movement and is best known for his controversial doctoral dissertation, which proposed that the narrative accounts involving prophets and pre-Islamic history were primarily artistic and literary in nature, rather than strictly historical.³³ According to Khalafallah, these accounts served a purpose beyond the mere representation of historical facts, instead functioning as a means of conveying moral teachings. However, the validity of this moral argument has been called into question, as morality is relative and not always clearly conveyed through the text. For example, Sūrat Yusuf, considered one of the most beautiful Sūras in the Qur'an, lacks a clear moral lesson despite its impact on listeners. Nevertheless, when viewed as an informative Sūra, it can be interpreted as conveying a critical piece of information regardless of its historical veracity. As Verses 99–100 in the Sūra state:

When they entered into Joseph's presence, he embraced his parents and said: 'Enter into Egypt, if God wills, safe and secure.' Then he raised his parents up upon the throne, and they fell prostrate before him. He said: 'Father, this is the interpretation of my former dream; now my Lord has brought it to pass. He was gracious to me when He delivered me from prison and brought you from the wilderness, after Satan had sowed conflict between me and my brothers.'³⁴

In this verse, the term "wilderness" has been translated from the Arabic word "*Badw*," which refers to the traditional Bedouin way of life, rather than the urban or civilized way of life that was typically associated with Egypt. Consequently, the verse can be interpreted as a celebration of civilization in contrast to the Bedouin lifestyle, or it can be viewed as indicating the timing of the arrival of the Israelites in Egypt. Therefore, it is evident that no moral lesson can be inferred from this verse alone.

In 1942, Khalafallah commenced his teaching career at the University after obtaining his graduate degree with a thesis entitled "Polemics of the Qur'an." However, even within this work, the contentious nature of his academic pursuits began to surface. Despite having written a considerable amount prior to his doctoral thesis, the full extent of his audacious pursuits would not be revealed until 1947, with the publication of a controversial work.

³³ Abu Zayd, "The Dilemma," 20.

³⁴ Tarif Khalidi, *The Qur'an: A new Translation* (New York: Viking, 2008), 192.

Unsurprisingly, this publication, which presented an artistic approach to the Qur'an, was rejected by Egyptian academic institutions. As a result of the extensive criticisms, Khalafallah resigned from his position at the University in 1948.³⁵

Al-Khuli's influence on Khalafallah's thesis is apparent in various aspects. Indeed, it is evident that Khalafallah adopts his teacher's method of Qur'anic interpretation.³⁶ With respect to this interpretive approach, Nasr Abu-Zayd posits that "The first step is collecting the Quran's stories. The second step is to rearrange these stories according to the chronological order of their revelation, in order to analyze and explain them according to their original context, i.e., the social environment, the emotional state of the Prophet, and the development of the Islamic message."³⁷ Khalafallah maintains that by following these instructions, one could comprehend how the seventh-century Arabs were meant to understand the Qur'an, and that such an understanding would be invaluable in the literary study of this sacred book.³⁸ Furthermore, he maintains that by asserting that the Qur'an is a historically accurate text, past theologians had become too reliant on preconceived interpretive frameworks, which ultimately resulted in the wastage of time and effort in their endeavors to prove this principle.³⁹

Khalafallah's personal philosophy centered on the controversial belief that the allegories in the Qur'an fall into an ambiguous genre rather than serving the purpose of historical accuracy. To denote these allegories, he used the term *amthāl*, which conveys their non-historical and elusive nature.⁴⁰ Classical commentators of the Qur'an, over the years, had frequently resorted to Judeo-Christian sources to explain the abundant uncertainties in their scripture. In contrast, the literary approach advocated by Khalafallah calls for a more nuanced method of interpretation, combining classical and modernist approaches. The classical approach also employs the term *amthāl* to describe the narratives and differentiates between literal meaning (*al-ma'nā*) and its interpretive implications (*luzūm*), which are not always congruent.⁴¹ The modernist approach, on the other hand, takes cues from medieval literary interpreters, but with a more specific method. By using historical characters and events as examples, Khalafallah sought to demonstrate that although the body of a narrative may appear historical, its meaning does not necessarily indicate an accurate history.⁴² While literature often employs

35 See Azhar, *ibid.*

36 *Ibid.*, 56.

37 Abu Zayd, "The Dilemma," 24.

38 Abu Zayd, "The Twentieth Century," 56.

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*, 57.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*

historical facts to lend credibility to a story, the purpose of a narrative, even if based on historical truth, can frequently be surprisingly ahistorical.

In Islamic scholarship, there is a general consensus that the Qur'an does not serve as an elementary history book. It is widely recognized that the text rarely includes precise details such as dates or specific names of places. Upon first reading the Qur'an, it is evident that the narrative often leaves such particulars vague, while placing a greater emphasis on the moral lessons that can be derived from the text.⁴³ Despite the lack of emphasis on precise historical details, Muslims accept the Qur'an as a creation free of errors, including the accuracy of pre-Islamic accounts of the prophets that lived before Muhammad. In fact, these accounts are often considered prime examples of sacred history in the Muslim world.

In his thesis, Khalafallah advances the importance of linguistics in the study of the Qur'an, highlighting the timeless quality of its scripture and the significance of its aesthetic qualities. He argues that focusing too heavily on the defense of the historical accuracy of the Qur'an may ultimately undermine its legitimacy. A parallel can be drawn to the Book of Genesis in the Bible, which was previously regarded as a historical fact by the Catholic Church, but was ultimately disproven by modern historical science, leading to controversy.⁴⁴ Khalafallah aims to prevent such a treatment of the Qur'an, which he believes to be the ultimate and eternal word of God. He acknowledges the value of the historical accounts in the scripture, but emphasizes that their purpose lies in providing guidance and direction, particularly to the first Muslim community during the early stages of the religion's development. By prioritizing its historicity, the eternal nature of the scripture may be denied, according to Khalafallah's perspective.⁴⁵

In his analysis of the Qur'an, Khalafallah posits that the text should be considered a work of literature, rather than an elementary history book. This approach allows for a clear distinction between the historical facts presented within the text and its literary qualities. Khalafallah's belief that the Qur'an primarily addressed the Arabs of the seventh century, a position shared by his teacher Amin al-Khuli, was met with criticism later in his life. He acknowledges that the Qur'an references concepts such as 'the evil eye' and witchcraft, which were prevalent during its time of revelation, but may not be relevant in the twentieth century. However, this view appears inconsistent with his argument regarding the historical truth of the Qur'anic stories, as these beliefs are not presented in a historical context in the text. Khalafallah's approach to studying the Qur'an, which is focused on its historical context, bears the influence of the orientalist approach to

43 Muhammad Ahmad Khalafallah, *al-Fann al-qaṣaṣī fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Cairo: The Anglo Egyptian Bookshop, 1965), 51–54.

44 Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an*, 17–18.

45 Ibid., 19.

studying religious texts since he is approaching the Qur'an as a "study of documents and the historical context in which they arose."⁴⁶

In his thesis, Khalafallah presented a literary approach to the study of the Qur'an, which he divided into three chapters: Introduction, Method, and Conclusion. Further, he subdivided his study into two distinct categories: "The Historical, Social, Ethical and Religious Meanings and Values" and "The Art of Narration in the Qur'anic Stories."⁴⁷ However, despite the impressiveness of Khalafallah's academic work, the committee members at Cairo University deemed it necessary to modify the text before publication.⁴⁸ This opposition to Khalafallah's thesis reflects the conservative Qur'anic exegesis and has, for decades, impeded progress in the field of Islamic theological studies.

The committee members held four primary objections to Khalafallah's work. First, they maintained that the Qur'an represents the true word of God, and to reduce it to merely a literary text would be tantamount to denying its divine origin and legitimacy.⁴⁹ Second, the committee found the literary approach flawed in its assumption that Muhammad, not God, wrote the Qur'an. Such an assumption contradicts fundamental Islamic doctrine.⁵⁰ Third, Khalafallah's belief that the historical content of the Qur'an should not be viewed as factual was perceived as a grave offense against the holy scripture. This viewpoint was seen as an act of blasphemy and even apostasy, as it was considered a demotion of the Qur'an to the level of a mere history book.⁵¹ Finally, the assertion that the language and structure of the Qur'an are a product of the seventh century was considered an insult to the divine origin of the text, as it suggested that the Qur'an was a human creation.⁵²

In summary, Khalafallah's literary approach to the Qur'an was met with resistance by the committee at Cairo University. Their objections demonstrated progressive Islamic scholarship challenges due to a conservative interpretation of the scripture.

It is noteworthy that the criticisms leveled against Khalafallah and his literary approach to the Qur'an presuppose his belief that the Qur'an is a product of human origin, a presumption that he explicitly refutes. Following the circulation of his proposed thesis, Khalafallah faced aggressive accusations of breaking with Islamic doctrine and law from popular media and some scholarly groups in Egypt. Nevertheless, Khalafallah, along with Amin al-Khuli and other proponents of the literary approach, argue that it is the duty of Muslims to study the Qur'an with the utmost attention and dedication, without

46 William A. Graham, "Qur'an as Spoken Word," in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, edited by Richard C. Martin (Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2001), 25.

47 Abu Zayd, "The Dilemma," 24.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., 9.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

compromising their faith or ideology. As the holy book of Islam, the Qur'an should be analyzed and examined in every possible way. Proponents of this view suggest that an intensive literary study of the Qur'an could even bolster the theory of its inimitability, since it seeks to investigate the sacred text in a fascinating manner. However, it should be noted that literature, like history, is merely another textual genre. Thus, the true fascination in studying the Qur'an lies in its examination as a sacred language, which is neither strictly historical nor purely literary.

Khalafallah advocated that historical stories, both in terms of their content and the perspective of their narrators, are only loosely dependent on historical facts. Such narratives often omit details such as dates, places, and chronological events to serve the story's thematic purpose.⁵³ Historical literature tends to focus on well-known and prominent events, or on the collective mental images of a group of people. Khalafallah argued that the literary approach to understanding these stories is not a modernist perspective alone; rather, even ancient Arabs recognized that literature deals with appearances and emotions, rather than strict adherence to factual essentials.⁵⁴ These early storytellers were content with a mental insight based on societal norms and customs, rather than a rational and logical justification rooted in reality. This perspective allowed for greater artistic freedom in the telling of stories, with examples offered for the purpose of guidance and instruction. Such ancient storytellers were not bound to strict adherence to historical accuracy, as was required of philosophers and historians of the day.⁵⁵

According to Khalafallah's views, a significant issue in analyzing literary works from the era of ancient storytellers is the challenge of distinguishing between actual historical facts and those used solely for the advancement of the story's message.⁵⁶ A major obstacle in this task is the lack of an official methodology that can be utilized to discern the differences. As a result, researchers cannot differentiate between actual historical events that were transmitted objectively by the author, and those created purely by his imagination. To address this issue, Khalafallah proposed his own potential theory, suggesting that the only feasible way to extract historical realities from a story is to be aware of the parameters and limits of freedom enjoyed by the author while depicting the events.⁵⁷ However, he discovered that identifying the scope of an author's freedom proved to be more challenging than extracting specific historical realities from a story. Khalafallah resolved this complexity by prioritizing the objectives of the story before delving into the search for historical facts.⁵⁸ The objectives are significant in determining

53 Khalafallah, *al-Fann al-qaṣaṣī*, 47.

54 Ibid., 48.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., 49.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid., 50.

the ultimate modality and formation of the story, and in how images and characters are depicted. Consequently, it is the story's objectives that determine the extent of historical flexibility employed by the author.

In the context of his broader investigation, Khalafallah raises a crucial question: can the Qur'an be understood as sharing the same degree of historical flexibility as the stories of its time, or does it, in fact, present a singularly honest tone that adheres to historical accuracy in every respect? This question is all the more pressing given the wide latitude that storytellers enjoyed during the pre-Islamic period as well as during the lifetime of Muhammad and the generations that followed. While recognizing that the Prophet cannot be easily assimilated to the ancient narrators, a rigorous study of the Qur'an must take into account the prevailing practices and cultural norms of his era, and how they may have shaped his approach to narrative. Khalafallah notes that many examples in the Qur'an exhibit the same artistic storytelling techniques found in other genres of literature. To acknowledge this fact is not to deny the sacred character of the Qur'an as God's true word, but rather to recognize the complex interplay between religious revelation and artistic expression that is evident in the text.

The inclusion of the core principles of Islamic doctrines and principles, as well as critiques of the fake doctrines and worship prevalent in the seventh-century Arab world, is apparent in the stories presented in the Qur'an. However, Khalafallah offers an interesting perspective on the significance of these additions, asserting that while they do exist in the Qur'anic narrative, they are not necessarily the primary goals being aimed at.⁵⁹ Rather, the text also plays a social role in society, which can be fulfilled by various forms of artistic expression, such as music, sculpture, and photography. This social role is closely tied to human emotions and the tendency for individuals to act based on the dictates of their emotions.

5 Linguistic Nuances and Oral Transmission in the Qur'an: Exploring the Role of Oral Recitation in the Preservation and Power of the Sacred Text

It is a well-known fact among Muslims that the very first word that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad was "*iqra*,"⁶⁰ which is commonly understood to mean "read." However, some scholars have argued that its intended meaning is "recite." The significance of this linguistic nuance is noteworthy, as the term "*iqra*" shares the same root as the word "*Qur'ān*." The notion that "*iqra*" should be interpreted as "recite" is particularly compelling

59 Khalafallah, *al-Fann al-qaṣaṣī*. 200.

60 Al-'alaq, 1.

when one considers the significance of oral recitation within both Islamic and pre-Islamic societies. For centuries, the Arabic-speaking world has placed great importance on its oral traditions and has often favored them over written practices. Many of the greatest works of pre-Islamic poetry were passed down through oral transmission,⁶¹ and exist today only thanks to those who had committed their numerous verses to memory.

The Qur'an, a sacred text revered by Muslims worldwide, was gradually revealed to Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel over a period of 23 years, between 610 and 632 C.E.⁶² The Prophet shared these revelations with his followers as they were received, and he preached these revelations to all who would listen.⁶³ But no physical copy of the Qur'an was available until after his death. Despite the Prophet's request for his companions to transcribe the Qur'an,⁶⁴ it was not until 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb voiced his concerns about the potential loss of the text that the collection of the scattered verses was initiated by Abu Bakr.⁶⁵ This anecdote illustrates that the Qur'an, in its initial form, was more of a collection of independent texts than a cohesive book, and its preservation was primarily reliant on the memories of the *qurrā'* or reciters, whose death posed a threat to the survival of the sacred text.

It is worth noting that the Qur'an was not intended to be compiled into a book from the outset. However, the process of assembling the scattered texts into one authoritative volume was a pivotal moment in the history of the text, imbuing it with significant authority and power. This process can be compared to modern attempts to codify law and create authoritative texts that clarify ambiguities and unify power structures. Although the motivation behind the collection of the Qur'an is not entirely clear, it is evident that the transformation of the memorized, scattered sacred text into one authoritative book required a significant degree of power and authority, and conferred this power upon those who possessed expertise in its contents.⁶⁶

61 See Michael Zwettler, *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: Its Character and Implications* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1978).

62 See A.T. Welch, R. Paret, and J.D. Pearson, "al-Ḳur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, edited by P. Bearman et al., Brill Reference Online.

63 Muhammad Khalaf-Allah Ahmad, and Muhammad Zaghlul Sallam, *Three Treatises on the i'jāz of the Qur'an: Qur'anic Studies and Literary Criticism* (U.K.: Garnet Publishing Limited, 2014), xi.

64 According to tradition, the Prophet, at the beginning of the Qur'anic revelation, prevented the Companions from writing anything other than Qur'an: *Lā taktubū 'annī, wa man kataba 'annī ghayra al-Qur'ān falyamḥuhu, wa ḥaddithū 'annī wa lā ḥaraj* (Do not write from me and whoever writes anything from me other than the Qur'an must erase it, but you can narrate from me without restraint.) After a while, the Prophet gave general permission to write after him. This occurred when most of the revelation was already revealed or well memorized by the believers, so he said: *Qayyidū al-'ilma bil-kitāb* (Record knowledge by writing). See al-Dārimī, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1996), 127.

65 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' at-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1991), *Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 4701.

66 See Thomas Bauer, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität: Eine andere Geschichte des Islams* (Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2011).

Toshihiko Izutsu, a prominent Islamic scholar, distinguished between two divergent categories in the Qur'anic literary conception: that of language (*lisān*) and speech (*kalām*). In its literal sense, the term speech refers to the records of the Prophet's oral delivery that comprise the Qur'an, featuring rhetorical devices distinct from those employed in writing. On the other hand, the term language represents the selection of Arabic as the medium of the divine message, a deliberate choice that cannot be construed as a coincidence, as divine actions of this magnitude are purposeful.⁶⁷

From the very beginning, Islam was extremely language conscious, and with good reason. For everything here began by God's having spoken. The whole Islamic culture made its start with the historic fact of God's revelation of the Koran. But this was not by any means a mere "sending down" of a sacred Book; it meant that God spoke, no more nor less. And that *is* the revelation.... This makes language one of the cardinal problems of Islamic thought. From this point of view, one would almost feel inclined to qualify Islam as essentially verbal or linguistic, with all the cultural implications of such a qualification.⁶⁸

The aforementioned assertion is corroborated by the Qur'an itself, as evidenced by the frequent use of the term "*kalām Allah*" (God's speech) within the Holy revelation. Sūrat al-Tawba provides an illustrative example of this, wherein it is stated that "if a polytheist seeks your protection, grant him protection until he hears the speech of God (*kalām Allah*), then escort him to where he feels safe."⁶⁹ This phrase is frequently repeated in the Qur'an, which underscores its emphasis on its divine nature as the speech of God.⁷⁰ Indeed, nothing can be more sacred than the speech of the Almighty Himself. It is noteworthy that God's message in the Qur'an is intended for a specific group of people at a particular moment in history. Although the majority of Muslims associate with the Qur'an through its recitation, as opposed to its written form, the text has mostly been approached by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars as a literal written document rather than an impactful recital in an aural language.⁷¹

On the other hand, Angelika Neuwirth supports the argument of the oral nature of the Qur'an, relying in this on the analysis of its rhetorical tools and on the fact that it

67 Toshihiko Izutsu, "Revelation as a Linguistic Concept in Islam" (Tokyo: Sept. 1962), 123. This is a published draft of a lecture given at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Montreal, spring 1962.

68 Ibid., 124.

69 Tarif Khalidi, *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (New York: Viking, 2008), 145.

70 Izutsu, "Revelation as a Linguistic Concept," 124–26.

71 Lauren E. Osborne, "Textual and Paratextual Meaning in the Recited Qur'an," in *Qur'anic Studies Today*, edited by Angelika Neuwirth and Michael A. Sells (New York: Routledge, 2016), 228.

was revealed in excerpts to the prophet Muhammad. She declares that its revelation in excerpts or proportions is “a mnemonic device required when memorization without written support was demanded from the listeners.”⁷² Similarly, she claims that the rhetorical tools, the rhyme, the short verses, and the use of communal oral memory and culture are all used in the Qur’an to ease its memorization.

The Qur’an underscores the emotional impact of its speeches and sayings on the hearts of its listeners, engendering a fascination with the divine word.⁷³ In order to achieve this objective, the Qur’an ensured that its words were eloquent and effective in eliciting an emotional response from the observers. Scholars have posited that God chose the Arabic language, which was superior in the medieval world, to disseminate his message to the world. Arabic was the supreme art form of the Arabs and a central aspect of their communal life.⁷⁴ The ancient Arabs esteemed poets, as evidenced by their congratulations on three occasions: the birth of a boy, the foaling of a strong stallion, and the arrival of a skilled poet.⁷⁵ Thus, it is crucially important to scrutinize every word, and the effect intended to be produced on the listener, as imparting an emotional impact, is considered the goal of all art forms. However, analyzing a creative work’s artistic significance and essence requires considerable effort and attention. The degree of attention paid is a testament to the work itself; a difficult-to-comprehend issue indicates a more rigid artistic work, while an overly simplistic issue indicates triviality.⁷⁶ Consequently, one might infer that Khalafallah’s theory is predicated on regarding the stories of the Qur’an as literary works that address human emotions, as opposed to historical accounts, given his assertion that they are not of a historical nature.

The aforementioned perspective fails to recognize the sacred nature of the Qur’an. By reducing the text to a mere literary work, Khalafallah’s approach overlooks the profound spiritual impact of the Qur’an on its readers. While it is true that beautiful literature can evoke strong emotional reactions, the Qur’an is more than just a work of art. It is the divine speech of God, *kalām Allah*, which Muslims believe to be the literal word of God.

The concern that the inclusion of historical events in the Qur’anic stories may lead to discrepancies and undermine the legitimacy of the text is a valid one. However, it is important to note that the Qur’an is not a historical text to be studied using historical methods. Rather, it is a sacred text that presents metaphysical concepts, such as God, angels, heaven and hell, and destiny, which belong to the realm of the sacred or the

⁷² Angelika Neuwirth, “Two Faces of the Qur’ān: Qur’ān and Muṣḥaf,” *Project Muse* (2010): 11.

⁷³ Osborne, “Textual and Paratextual,” 203.

⁷⁴ Pierre Cachia, *Arabic Literature: An Overview* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Khalafallah, *al-Fann al-qaṣaṣī*, 202–203.

“numinous.”⁷⁷ These concepts cannot be approached using empirical methods or subjected to historical scrutiny. Consequently, the absence of specific details such as dates and locations in these stories is inconsequential, as they are not the main focus of the text. The stories of previous humans and their experiences with the sacred are presented from a sacred perspective and serve a different purpose than to convey historical information. These stories highlight the relationship between the sacred and the profane, and provide guidance for believers on how to benefit from the sacred in their worldly lives.

The literary methodology continues to offer a convenient framework for applying textualization to the study of the Qur'an and for approaching it from a literary perspective. While the Qur'an undoubtedly constitutes a linguistic message, its status as a purely written text remains unresolved. As its name suggests, the Qur'an necessitates recitation and a reciter. Thus, despite its divine origins, the sacred text still relies on the artistic human intervention of recitation and attentive listening. The concept of active listening to the sacred is inextricably linked to authorship as a means of societal advancement and artistic replication. The audience engages in an artistic form of listening to the Qur'an, which is shaped by their sensitivities in a manner that differs from the response to a visual work. Listening, like the sacred, is associated with the unseen, as the reciprocal relationship between sight and hearing is absent. “A writer notes: ‘I can hear what I see: a piano, or some leaves stirred by the wind. But I can never see what I hear. Between sight and hearing, there is no reciprocity.’”⁷⁸ Incomprehensibility is a shared attribute of listening and the sacred, as the impact of sound on the listener remains an enigmatic realm that is yet to be fully understood. The involvement of the body is a key objective of listening in Islam, as its ethical traditions explicitly recognize somatic learning.

The human body was not to be viewed simply as the passive recipient of ‘cultural imprints,’ still less as the active source of ‘natural expressions’ that are clothed in local history and culture, as though it were a matter of an inner character expressed in a readable sign, so that the latter could be used as a means of deciphering the former. It was to be viewed as the developable means for achieving a range of human objectives, from styles of physical movement (e.g. walking), through modes of emotional being (e.g. composure), to kinds of spiritual experience (e.g. mystical states).⁷⁹

77 “The numinous (from Latin *numen*, god) presents itself as something ‘wholly other,’ something basically and totally different. It is like nothing human or cosmic.... The sacred always manifests itself as a reality of a wholly different order from ‘natural’ realities.” See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, translated by John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 26.

78 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 10.

79 Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 76.

Listening, therefore, shapes the whole character of the listener at the level of the individual. In the case of ideal Islamic practices, every Muslim must participate in listening to the Qur'an and must deliver the message to other listeners, so their participation is consisted of two components: listening and transmitting. According to Verse 204 of Sūrat al-A'rāf, the Qur'an has to be read and then listened to with care; the verb that emphasizes the act of listening comes in a more specific manner by using the word "*anṣitū*" to stress the importance of listening.

When listening to the Qur'an for the sake of transmission, the individuals inject themselves, their voices and nuances, into the text, thereby transforming them from mere consumers to active reproducers. This act would create a public discourse which, in turn, would create a community. This means that Muslim's reception of the Qur'an aurally gives us a harmonious image of it and of God, consequently, which thus keeps them present in human consciousness since "interiority and harmony are characteristics of human consciousness."⁸⁰ The communal listening to the Qur'an establishes a Qur'anic community that has its members in harmony with each other. While practicing reading, everyone on their own gives everyone a different context, a different experience and maybe understanding of the text, which emphasizes the differences between people in the community or the society and the distinctness of every single person. Besides, "knowledge is ultimately not a fractioning but a unifying phenomenon, a striving for harmony."⁸¹ Since the Qur'an is knowledge, then it strives for harmony. This is in some way a granted belief by Muslims, for the notion of an Islamic *Umma* is much celebrated in Islam, where it is mentioned in the Qur'an several times, like "*جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً*" (*ja'alnākum ummatan*), for example, which is a speech act. The *umma* according to the *Doha Historical Dictionary of Arabic* is every group of people that is gathered by one thing, whether religion, time, or place, or the like. It is gathered by something, then it is a harmonious unit. It should be noted here that harmony does not imply similarity at any expense; even contradictory things can get together in harmony. This harmony of contradictions is one of the main characteristics of the Islamic community throughout its history, as argued by Shahab Ahmad in his "What is Islam?"⁸²

In summary, one of the aims of the Qur'an is to establish a community or communities, and as demonstrated by Ong, the aural approach to the Qur'an is essential to achieve this aim. This is mainly due to the fact that "most of the characteristics of orally based thought and expression relate intimately to the unifying, centralizing, interiorizing economy of sound as perceived by human beings."⁸³ Thus, it can be concluded that the question of the difference in perception between the aural and literal Qur'an has been addressed,

80 W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Routledge, 2002), 71.

81 Ibid., 72.

82 See Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016).

83 Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 73.

and the significance of aural perception in the case of the Qur'an, and its superiority over visual perception, is evident. Consequently, it should be noted that the Qur'an itself places greater emphasis on listening than seeing. It is important to note that since God is the ultimate truth for Muslims, and "truth itself, as a transitivity and incessant transition of a continual coming and going"⁸⁴ should be "listened to rather than seen,"⁸⁵ the Qur'an as the Speech of God (*kalām Allah*) should be listened to rather than seen.

84 Nancy, *Listening*, 4.

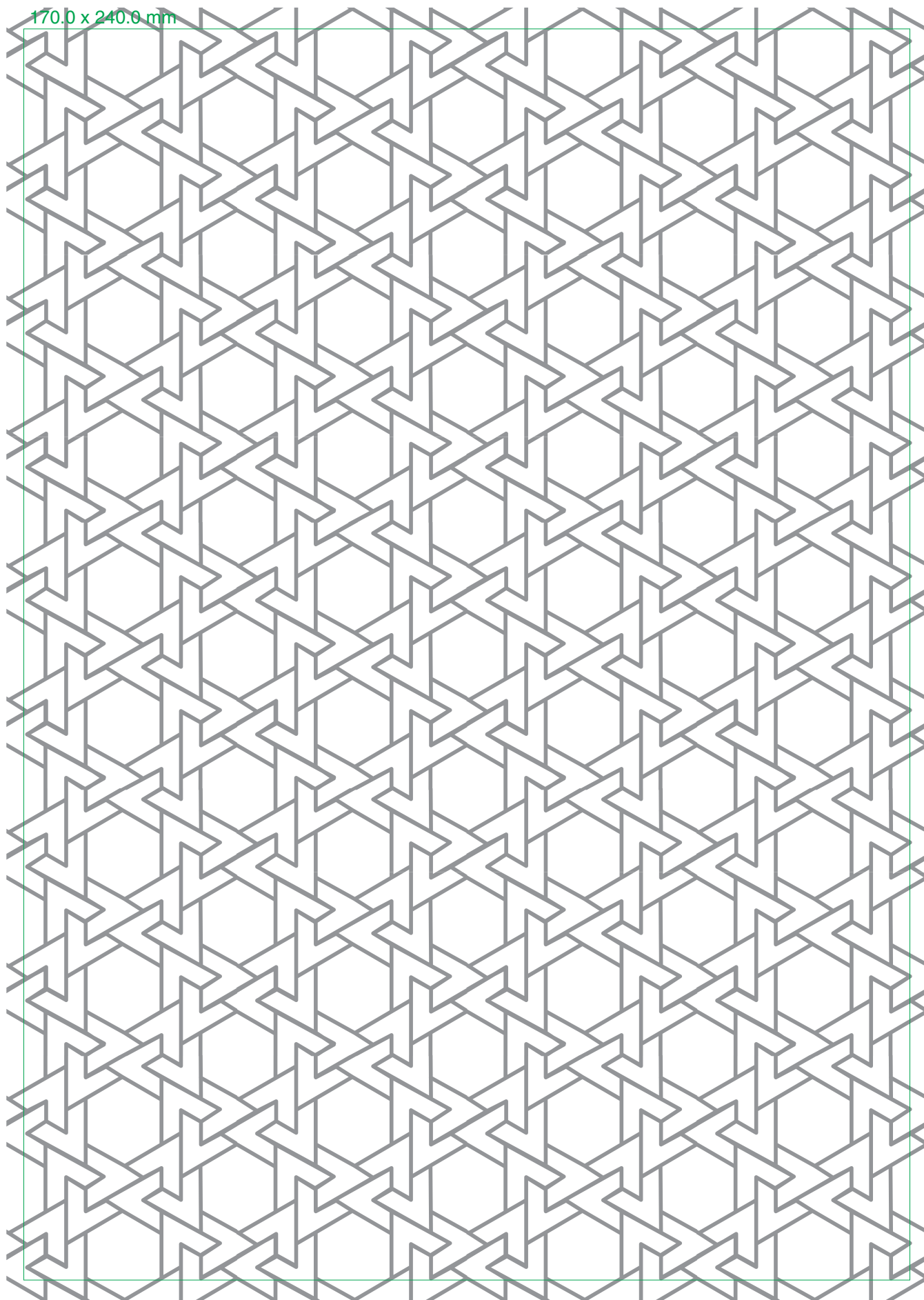
85 Ibid.

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The Hero in Quest of a New Battle Ground

Rise and Fall in the Life of Mirza Haydar Dughlat (1499/1500–1551)

Barbara Kellner-Heinkele

“It is not the purpose of historians to record the good qualities of rulers and ignore their bad deeds but rather to write whatever is in order that the history of the nations of the world may be preserved to serve as good advice to any of the ruling class or others who may peruse it so that they may realize what fruit and consequences good moral conduct and evil actions have borne. Anyone who learns these lessons and accepts this advice should incline to pious acts and avoid evil deeds so that he may be remembered for good.”

- *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, translated by W. M. Thackston, 71–72

Introduction

This essay is written in honor of Professor Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, the scholar, academic teacher, and esteemed colleague, and in admiration for his work as an historian. It attempts to show that the life and peregrinations of the historian, statesman, and conqueror Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat (1499/1500–1551), as he describes them in his work *Tarikh-i Rashidi* (*TR*),¹ constitute remarkable military and political achievements in the period

¹ For this essay, the edition and translation of the Persian text by W. M. Thackston was used: *Mirza Haydar Dughlat's Tarikh-i Rashidi: A History of the Khans of Moghulistan*. [Cambridge, Mass.]: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1996. (Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures, 37. Central Asian Sources, II). [Abbreviated here as *TR*.]

of political upheavals in Central Asia and India during the first half of the sixteenth century.² Both a chronicle and an eyewitness account, the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* illustrates the fragility of human life in a hostile political setting and the extraordinary determination of the protagonists to resist adverse forces of nature.

While Book I of the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* (composed in 1544–1546) is basically a chronicle of the Moghul (=Eastern Chaghatay) Khans (1329 to 1533), Haydar devoted the much larger Book II to the years 1462 to early 1540s, which had imminently to do with himself and his Chaghatay, Timurid, and Moghul relatives and associates. In Book II (completed in summer 1541) we can follow Haydar's agitated vita and further peregrinations³ from

Thackston, W. M., trans. and ann. *Mirza Haydar Dughlat's Tarikh-i Rashidi: A History of the Khans of Moghulistan*. [Cambridge, Mass.]: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1996. (Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures, 38. Central Asian Sources, III). [Abbreviated here as *TRTr*.]

- 2 For the historical background, see Wilhelm Barthold, *Zwölf Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1962), 201–47; Yuri Bregel, "Uzbeks, Qazaqs and Turkmens," in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, edited by Nicola di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 221–36; Stephen F. Dale, "The Later Timurids, c. 1450–1525," in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, edited by Nicola di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 199–217; R. D. McChesney, "The Chinggisid Restoration in Central Asia: 1500–1785," in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, edited by Nicola di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 277–302; James Millward, "Eastern Central Asia (Xinjiang): 1300–1800," in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, edited by Nicola di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 260–76; Stephen F. Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India (1483–1530)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 67–133; Ma Dazheng, "The Tarim Basin," in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia V. Development in Contrast, From the Sixteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, edited by Chahryar Adle, Irfan Habib, and Karl M. Baipakov (Paris: UNESCO, 2003), 181–208; Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 117–66; and Bertold Spuler, "Geschichte Mittelasiens seit dem Auftreten der Türken," in *Geschichte Mittelasiens*, mit Beiträgen von Karl Jettmar, Hans Wilhelm Haussig, Bertold Spuler, und Luciano Petech (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), 220–43.
- 3 For Mirza Haydar's vita and his work, see Wilhelm Barthold and Z. V. Togan, "Haydar Mīrzā," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* 5/1 (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1977), 317; Barthold-Togan, "Haydar Mirza," 388; Elias in *The Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat: A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia*, translated by E. Denison Ross (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1895), 1–27; H. F. Hofman, *Turkish Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey* III, pt. 1, vol. 3 (Utrecht: Library of the University of Utrecht, 1969), 156–71; Enver Konukçu, "Haydar Mirza," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* 17 (Istanbul: İSAM Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1998), 29–30; Joo-Yup Lee, *Qazaqliq, or Ambitious Brigandage, and the Formation of the Qazaqs State and Identity in Post-Mongol Central Eurasia* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), index s. v. Muḥammad Ḥaidar Dughlat; and Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, "Moghul Tribal Tradition According to Mirza Haydar Dughlat's *Tarikh-i Rashidi*," in *Religion and State in the Altaic World: Proceedings of the 62nd Annual Meeting of the Permanent*

Babur's Kabul to Kashgharia/Eastern Turkestan, where Sultan Said Khan Chaghatay had reconquered Yarkand and made it his new capital (1514) once the Ferghana Valley was definitely lost to the rule of the Uzbeks (*TRTr*: 181/*TR*: fol. 134b).

In many ways the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* can be compared with the more famous *Baburnama*, a largely autobiographical text by the Timurid Zahir al-Din Babur (1483–1530), Mirza Haydar Dughlat's cousin in the Chaghatay maternal line.⁴ The *Baburnama* shows how from the age of eleven (1494) Babur had to struggle for what he considered his legitimate position in Transoxania, sometimes miserably hanging on, but never to relent until in 1512 he had to give in to the superior forces of the conquering Uzbeks, the new dominating power in Central Asia.⁵ Eventually, from 1517 on, Babur turned towards Hindustan, where after a series of campaigns and battles he laid the foundations of the Timurid-Mughal empire that was to last into the nineteenth century.⁶ For much of his life a gentleman adventurer and wandering soldier-of-fortune (*qazaq/qazaqliq*),⁷ Babur's fame rests in particular on his literary achievement, the *Baburnama*, which is accepted as a piece of world literature both in regard to its rich contents and as a linguistic monument of Türki, the pre-modern literary language of Central Asia.⁸

In imagery and variety of subjects the *Baburnama* has always overshadowed Mirza Haydar Dughlat's *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, originally written in Persian and subsequently translated into Chaghatay (Türki). Basically a chronicle of the later Chaghatay dynasty, the descendants of Chinggis Khan's second son Chaghatay, Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat composed it in the course of just five years (1541–1546) while he governed Kashmir (1541–1551), nominally on behalf of the Timurid-Mughals,⁹ while the *Baburnama* was composed over most of Babur's life (1483–1530). Haydar mentions many details from

International Altaistic Conference (PIAC) Friedensau, Germany, August 18–23, 2019, edited by Oliver Corff (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2021), 75–92. Mansura Haidar, *Mirza Haidar Dughlat as Depicted in Persian Sources* is only partly helpful.

4 Here, the translation of A. S. Beveridge was used: *Bābur-Nāma (Memoirs of Bābur)*, 1979; for a historical and literary analysis of the work, see Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, 247–89.

5 On the Uzbek conquests under Muhammad Shibani Khan, see Bregel, "Uzbeks, Qazaqs and Turkmens," 221–29; McChesney, "The Chinggisid Restoration in Central Asia: 1500–1785," 291–93.

6 General overviews are to be found in Barbara Metcalf and Thomas Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 3rd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

7 See Lee, *Qazaqliq, or Ambitious Brigandage, and the Formation of the Qazaqs*, passim.

8 Stephen F. Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," in *A History of Persian Literature*, X: *Persian Historiography*, edited by Charles Melville and Gen. Ed. Ehsan Yarshater (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 577–91; János Eckmann, "Die tschaghataische Literatur," in *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta* II, edited by Pertev Naili Boratav (Mainz: Franz Steiner, 1964), 370–76; Hofman, *Turkish Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey*, Section III, pt. 1, vol. 3, 162–83; Claus Schönig, *Finite Prädikationen und Textstruktur im Babur-name* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997).

9 At that time, Humayun (r. 1530–1556), Babur's eldest son, held the rank of supreme Timurid-Mughal ruler in India, but his rule was rather shaky before he was able to claim the throne for good in 1555;

the adventurous vita of Babur, and it can be assumed that Haydar, as a boy living at Babur's court in Kabul (1508–1512, see below), had the chance to see Babur take notes. Many passages of the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* show that Babur was Haydar's hero for life (e.g. *TRTr*: 133–137/*TR*: fol. 94b–99, *TRTr*: 153–154/*TR*: fol. 113–114b, *TRTr*: 174/*TR*: fol. 129–129b).¹⁰ There is also a possibility that he saw a manuscript or parts of the work while he stayed in northern India during the late 1530s as a close associate at the refined court of Humayun, Babur's successor (d. 1556). It is not far-fetched to suppose that the *Baburnama* inspired Haydar to compose himself a chronicle with autobiographical passages, although he does not say so explicitly. Rather, he claims that the reason for composing his *Tarikh* was the need and his wish to rescue the history of the Chaghatay khans from imminent oblivion, as they were “on the verge of disappearing from people's memory” (*TRTr*: 89/*TR*: fol. 59b), “most of my own history is intimately tied to them [the khans].” (*TRTr*: 90/*TR*: fol. 60b). Not of Chinggisid descent, but connected by close family ties with the Chinggisid-Chaghatay and Timurid royal families, the parallels of his own life with those of Babur's endless struggles and eventual success were not lost on Haydar Mirza.

1 The Education of an Aristocrat on the Run

Haydar was born in Tashkent (or possibly in Ura-Tepe) in 905/1499–1500, when his father Muhammad Husayn Dughlat Kürägän (1468–1508) was honored with the governorship (1493/94–1503) of Ura Tepe (or Ura-Tjube) and its district¹¹ by the Chinggisid-Chaghatay ruler Sultan-Mahmud Khan (1463–1508), his brother-in-law and intimate friend. At the time, the Ferghana Valley, along the headwaters of the Syr Darya and nearby regions (Bukhara and Samarkand), were disputed between Timurid princes and the Eastern Chaghatay khans, since the latter were again on the rise after Yunus Khan, Haydar's maternal grandfather and one of the most sophisticated personalities of his time, came to the throne (r. 1462–1487). It is interesting to note here that Haydar's mother, Khub Nigar Hanım, was the younger sister of Babur's mother, Qutlugh Nigar Khanım. The remarkably dense marital relationships between members of the Chaghatay, Timurid and Dughlat families formed a network of great geographical extension which, however,

see Richard Burn, “Humayun,” in *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. 4: *The Mughul Period*, edited by Wolsley Haig and Richard Burn (Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1963), 21–44.

10 Dale's study of Babur and the *Baburnama* frequently refers to Haydar Dughlat's *Tarikh*, but in no way compares the two works.

11 Today Istaravshan in northern Tajikistan, at the entrance to the Ferghana Valley; see Wolfgang Holzwarth, “Ura-Tepe,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 819–20.

more often than not led to disputes and conflicts rather than support and protection¹² as Haydar himself had to experience over most of his life. Haydar's childhood in lovely Ura-Tepe in the foothills of the Turkistan mountain range came to an end when, around 1500, Muhammad Shibani Uzbek (1451–1510)¹³ entered the scene, causing the squabbling Timurids and Chaghatayids, along with their families and retainers, either to humbly take service with him or take flight.¹⁴

Eventually, in 1504, during the siege of the important Timurid/Chaghatayid stronghold of Hissar,¹⁵ Haydar's father opted to attach himself to Muhammad Shibani Khan's retinue (*TRTr*: 101/*TR*: fol. 69), while his children, including baby Haydar, were put up in Kunduz (one of the stations on the Pamir branch of the Silk Roads),¹⁶ recently conquered by Shibani, and subsequently in Shahrīsabz,¹⁷ an oasis on the Silk Road track towards Samarkand and Semirech'e, which Shibani Khan had generously given as a fief to Haydar's father (*TRTr*: 102/*TR*: fol. 69b; *TRTr*: 116/*TR*: fol. 81).¹⁸ Looking at a map,¹⁹ it becomes clear that Haydar, a very young child, and his siblings were sent, within a short period of time, from Ura-Tepe south across the fearsome Zarafshan mountain range and down the Wakhsh Valley to Kunduz, now northern Afghanistan. Shahrīsabz, then situated a two days' journey south of Samarkand, was reached by moving from Kunduz north and across the Amu Darya (Oxus River) into Mawaraannahr/Transoxania.²⁰ For the modern reader, the distances young Haydar had to cover in the first years of his life and the hardships and logistics involved in such travelling are quite amazing. But changing fortunes in war and peace were almost

12 Cf. Maria E. Subtelny, "Babur's Rival Relations: A Study of Kinship and Conflict in 15th–16th Century Central Asia," *Der Islam* 66 (1989): 102–18.

13 See R. D. McChesney, "Shibāni Khān," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *EL2*, X (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 496–98.

14 For the background of the ensuing monumental changes in Central Asian history, see Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, 144–61.

15 Situated in the upper Amu-Darya region, near today's Dushanbe/Tajikistan. Yuri Bregel, "Hesār (1)," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* [*Elr*] XII (New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 2003), 303–305 (online 2012).

16 Nowadays Kunduz is well-known as a town in northern Afghanistan; see C. E. Bosworth, "Kunduz," *EL2*, V (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 388–89.

17 Earlier known as Kish or Kesh; see Pavel Lurje, "Keš," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* *Elr* XVI (New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, online 2009; updated 2017), 332–33; C. E. Bosworth, "Kish," *EL2*, V (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 181–82.

18 No year is given, but since this detail is mentioned within Haydar's biography of Shibani Khan whom he calls "Shahi Beg," the year could be 1504, more precisely the summer of 1504 since the event is connected to Shibani's conquest of Balkh.

19 For the network of silkroad tracks, see Yuri Bregel, *An Historical Atlas of Central Asia* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 68–69. The physical dimensions of this area of mountains, steep river valleys, steppes and deserts become clear; *ibid.*, 2–3.

20 Bregel, *An Historical Atlas of Central Asia*, 68–69. Hermann Kreutzmann, *Wakhan Quadrangle*, analyses a splendid selection of historical and modern maps of the area Haydar crossed in all directions.

the routine for the elite and military classes of the time, as is well-known for Babur and his ancestor Amir Timur (d. 1405), also Haydar's grandfather Yunus Khan Chaghatay (r. 1461–1489), the Timurid Husayn Baqara (r. 1469–1506), Muhammad Shibani of Jöchid descent, and many other figures that left their mark on the history of Central Asia.²¹

Muhammad Shibani (1451–1510) was a restless campaigner who, with his troops, formed mainly of Uzbek followers, revived the Jöchid/Chinggisid legacy in Western Central Asia between 1500 and 1510, to the detriment of Timurid and Chaghatay claims to this territory. Faced with Shibani's advance, no one of the Timurid and Chaghatay elite could in future be sure of his life. For this reason, in 1504 Muhammad Husayn Dughlat took his son Haydar—"I remember these events as though in a dream," writes Haydar,—and 16 of his retainers and servants and fled (*TRTr*: 116/*TR*: fol. 81b) to his distant relative through marriage, the Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara Mirza in Herat (Khorasan, today's western Afghanistan), at a distance of more than 1,000 km from Shahrisabz.

Husayn Bayqara (r. 1469–1506), the master of a splendid court and patron of a second blossoming of Timurid culture,²² now seemed possibly the last resort for fugitives from Shibani. But soon it became clear that neither Husayn Bayqara nor his sons were in any way up to protecting the guests or even their own realm from Shibani (*TRTr*: 132/*TR*: fol. 94).²³ In despair, Husayn Dughlat again took to the road and sought refuge with his nephew Babur who—with a small troupe of his followers—had taken residence in Kabul. The town, surrounded by various mountain ranges,²⁴ seemed safe enough from Muhammad Shibani's appetite for conquest, but close enough a strategic point of departure for Babur to eventually beat Shibani's Uzbeks back into the steppe, out of what Timurids and Chaghatayids considered their territorial patrimony. For the Dughlat fugitives, Herat had been a disappointment in terms of security and spirit of resistance, but to little Haydar (at about the age of four) Herat had offered the best in education, as he could learn, as young as he was, from the most famous scholars, artists, and sheykhs of the period, as he writes nostalgically 40 years later (*TRTr*: 117–132/*TR*: fol. 82b–94).²⁵

21 The political and social circumstances that led to *qazaqliq*, or heroic brigandage, of leading characters and their followers in Central Asia is well and in detail described in Lee, *Qazaqliq, or Ambitious Brigandage, and the Formation of the Qazaqs*; Lee, "The Political Vagabondage of the Chinggisid and Timurid Contenders to the Throne and Others in Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Qipchaq Steppe," 59–95.

22 In her *Timurids in Transition*, Subtelny gives a new twist to the personality of the prince by emphasizing his centralizing economic efforts; see also Hans R. Roemer, "Hosayn Bāyqarā," *Elr* XII (New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 2004/2012), 508–11.

23 Cf. Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, 206–15.

24 In the *Babur-Nama*, Babur praises the beauty of the Kabul region, but is also very explicit on the dangers and hardships that a traveller or fugitive from Transoxania or Khorasan to Kabul had to face; see in particular *Babur-Nama*, transl. A.S. Beveridge, 199–227.

25 Haydar gives here the biographies of more than 60 scholars, poets, artists, and musicians.

However, in the face of Shibani's systematic conquest of Transoxania (with its centers Bukhara and Samarkand), Khorezm (south of Lake Aral), Khorasan, and Badakhshan,²⁶ and his awkward relationship with Babur, Haydar's father saw no safety in Kabul, hence no end to the family's miserable wandering about, other than again submitting to Shibani's mercy (1508). This required another dangerous trip from Babur's Kabul to Bukhara, where Shibani Khan immediately had Haydar's father and uncle executed (*TRTr*: 140/*TR*: fol. 101b). In the *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, Haydar explains why in 1504 Muhammad Shibani Khan had lavished favors on Haydar's father and uncle: The Khan hoped to win to his side the Chaghatay nobles and their warriors. When this plan largely failed, he changed strategy and determined to wipe out the complete Chaghatay leadership. Earlier, in 1504, Haydar's father and uncle had been warned in time and fled to Herat (*TRTr*: 116/*TR*: fol. 81b). By 1508, as Shibani's policy towards the Chaghatayid elite had not changed, Haydar's father and uncle were doomed. Child Haydar was the next on the blacklist but almost miraculously escaped (*TRTr*: 141/*TR*: fol. 102b). It is no wonder that in his *Tarikh-i Rashidi* Haydar gives vent to his distaste for Shibani, just as Babur does who also lost his future to the Uzbek conqueror (*TRTr*: 154–156/*TR*: fol. 114–116).²⁷

Central Asia has preserved many tales of how a faithful servant saves the life of a dynastic child,²⁸ and true to the topos, Haydar was snatched from Uzbek-occupied Bukhara and brought to Zafer Castle in Badakhshan (northern Afghanistan) where his and Babur's maternal cousin, the Chaghatay Sultan Uways, called "Mirza Khan," (d. 1521) resided in rather rustic circumstances. After a year there, Haydar was probably quite happy when in fall 1509 Babur requested that young Haydar be dispatched from Zafer Castle to Kabul (*TRTr*: 152–153/*TR*: fol. 112b–113).

26 On Badakhshan, see H. S. Pirumshoev and A. H. Dani, "The Pamirs, Badakhshan and the Trans-Pamir States," in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia, V. Development in Contrast, From the Sixteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, edited by Chahryar Adle, Irfan Habib, and Karl M. Baipakov (Paris: UNESCO, 2003), 230–35; X. de Planhol, D. Baland, and W. Eilers, "Badakšān," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Elr III (New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 1988), 355–61.

27 Nevertheless, Haydar's distaste for Shah Ismail Safavi (r. 1501–1524) ran much deeper than that for Shibani; see *TRTr*: 155–158/*TR*: fol. 115–117, where the atrocities the Shiites committed in Khorasan are described. While Haydar and Babur pour scorn on Shibani Khan, there are also contemporary historians who have their own reasons to paint a different picture by praising his political talents and cultural refinement, such as Faḍlallāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī's *Mihmān-nāma-i Bukhārā*, a panegyric book of Shibani by a Sunni scholar; cf. Ursula Ott, *Transoxanien und Turkestan zu Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts: Das Mihmān-nāma-yi Buḥārā des Faḍlallāh b. Rūzbihān Ḥunḡī* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Klaus Schwarz, 1974). Also McChesney, "Shibānī Khān," *El2*, X, 497.

28 Cf. *TRTr*: 6–8/*TR*: fol. 5b–6b, where Haydar narrates how one of his forefathers saved the boy Tughlugh-Temür, at that time the last male of the Chaghatayid dynasty and "raised [him] to the khanate." Haydar begins his *Tarikh* with Tughlugh-Temür Khan (r. 1329–1362), the founder of what is known as the later or Eastern Chaghatay Empire; cf. Peter Jackson, "Chaghatayid Dynasty," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Elr V (New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 1991), 343–46.

Many passages in the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* demonstrate that throughout his life, Haydar never relented in his admiration for Babur. His description of Babur's superior military qualities, cultural accomplishments, and personal charm sound sincere and free of jealousy (*TRTr*: 153–154/*TR*: fol. 113–114). He acknowledges Timurid Babur's preeminence, even in regard to Sultan Said Khan Chaghatay (r. 1512–1533), later Haydar's longtime master and friend, when it should have been the other way round, for theoretically, a Chinggisid-Chaghatay was endowed with older legitimacy and sovereign rights than a new-comer Timurid.²⁹ Babur's appraisal of Haydar, on the other hand, is short and sounds a bit dismissive.³⁰ Babur was possibly offended that young Haydar, after the three years he had spent happily at Babur's side in Kabul getting a gentleman's education, in autumn 1512 followed his Chaghatay khan's bid to join him in defending the diminishing Chaghatay lands against their enemies: Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz,³¹ and sometimes Timurids and Chaghatayids (*TRTr*: 174/*TR*: fol. 129b).



Illustration 1: Approach to Yarkand.

(Source: R. B. Shaw, *Visits to High Tartary, Yarkand and Kashgar*, facing p. 174).

29 In 1529, for example, Sultan Said Khan was on the point of accepting the plea of the Badakhshanis to become their ruler. When he realized, however, that Babur claimed this territory for his family, Said Khan would not go against him and withdrew; see *TRTr*: 240–241/*TR*: fol. 214–214b. But cf. Ali Anooshahr, “Mughals, Mongols, and Mongrels: The Challenge of Aristocracy and the Rise of the Mughal State in the *Tarikh-i Rashidi*,” where he argues not quite convincingly that the Moghuls looked down on the Timurids.

30 *Bābur-Nāma* (*Memoirs of Bābur*), 21–22.

31 Cf. K. M. Baipakov and B. E. Kumekov, “The Kazakhs,” and T. Tchorev, “The Kyrgyz,” in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia V. Development in Contrast, From the Sixteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, edited by Chahryar Adle, Irfan Habib, and Karl M. Baipakov (Paris: UNESCO, 2003), 89–125.

From now on, for the following 20 years, the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* reports mainly success and glory: military campaigns against Muslim neighbors, royal hunts, dynastic feasts, and Holy War. For some of these years, Haydar delivers a fascinating and surprisingly detailed description of an aristocratic lifestyle in East Turkestan and the surrounding mountain ranges; other years are not even mentioned. Haydar demonstrates an amazingly clear knowledge of the geographical position, dimensions, and topographical characteristics of the countries he became acquainted with in these years. In 1513–1514 and again in 1520 Sultan Said Khan and Haydar crossed the Alatau range and visited the Kazakhs in the Chu River area (today shared by Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan), but came to understand that this tribal federation was too powerful and too unreliable—as they saw it—to be won over to the Chaghatay cause. More and more, Moghulistan (between İssik Köl and Lake Balkhash) became a contested terrain between the Chaghatayids and the Kyrghyz. Haydar travelled all over this country (1517, 1521) “for six months...and never came to the end of it” (*TRTr*: 188/*TR*: fol. 139b; *TRTr*: 225–228/*TR*: fol. 204b–206), probably in a reconnaissance mission. This new powerful rival, the Kyrghyz tribal groups, moved from the North-East into the Tianshan (north of the Tarim Basin, East Turkestan) and forced the khans and their people out of the mountain pastures into the remaining territory of the original *ulus* Chaghatay, to Kashghar, Yarkand, Khotan, Aksu, and Turfan (today in Xinjiang, northwestern China) to name only the more important of the oases that formed the much diminished power base of the Chaghatay dynasty in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.³²

As an eyewitness of this territorial decline, Haydar makes a detailed description of Kashgharia and the regions east of it (*TRTr*: 184–193/*TR*: fol. 136b–142). He travelled the length and breadth of it — “it is on the average a two-month journey from Kashghar to Turfan,” (*TRTr*: 215/*TR*: fol. 157b) — both in peaceful missions (1516, 1519) when Sultan Said Khan and his older brother Mansur Khan (d. 1543), ruler of Turfan, agreed to leave each other in peace (*TRTr*: 215–217/*TR*: fol. 157b; *TRTr*: 223/*TR*: fol. 195–197b), as well as in hostile engagements with political rivals such as Aba Bakr Dughlat (r. ca. 1468–1516), Haydar and Said Khan’s maternal uncle by marriage.³³ When the presence of new, more powerful neighbors continued to endanger the routes to gainful campaigns across the northern and northwestern mountain passes,³⁴ Sultan Said Khan turned to seeking booty and wartime glory among the “infidels” (non-Muslims and non-Sunnis) in Badakhshan, Bolor (between Badakhshan and Kashmir; *TRTr*: 239/*TR*: fol. 213b–214), and Baltistan (Ladakh) to the

³² For late Chaghatay history, see Millward, “Eastern Central Asia (Xinjiang): 1300–1800,” 266–71.

³³ See dynastic tables in *TRTr*, pp. XII and XIV. According to Haydar, Aba Bakr’s long reign is marked by continuous atrocities even against his own subjects, *TRTr*: 166–169, 201–204/*TR*: fol. 124–125b, 148–150b.

³⁴ Haydar mentions the Bars Qavun pass, across the Tianshan Mountains, leading to the Issyk Köl, a one-month journey from Kashghar (*TRTr*: 220/*TR*: fol. 200–200b) and the Qongghar Öläng pass that leads to Osh and Andijan, among others; see *TRTr*: 234/*TR*: fol. 210b.

southwest and south of Kashgharia (from 1519). The ghazi-warriors took upon themselves incredible hardships when they ventured into forbidding mountain ranges and dizzying ravines, in particular in the Pamirs (upper Oxus Valley) and the Karakorum.³⁵



Illustration 2: Peak in the Kuen Lun Range
(Source: R. B. Shaw, *Visits to High Tartary, Yârkand and Kâshghar*, frontispiece).

35 Haydar's narrative of dangerous mountain travel prompts admiration since the late nineteenth century European travellers confirm that he did not exaggerate at all; see, for example, Robert Shaw, *Visits to High Tartary Yârkand, and Kâshghar (formerly Chinese Tartary), and Return Journey over the Karakoram Pass* (London: John Murray, 1871), 78–145; Henry Walter Bellew, *Kashmir and Kashghar: A Narrative of the Journey of the Embassy to Kashghar in 1873–74* (London: Trübner & Co., 1875), 144–218; Albert von Le Coq, *Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan*, with an introduction by Peter Hopkirk (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1988), 153–64.

The campaigns into Badakhshan (1519, 1529; from Kashghar west across the Pamirs), Bolor (1527; south of Badakhshan), Baltistan (1532; Ladakh, Haydar's "Balti"; south of the Karakorum mountain range),³⁶ Kashmir (1532–33, Haydar's favorite land), and Tibet (1532–1533) involved killing the locals, burning their villages and driving away their animals, but this was Holy War! (*TRTr*: 256/*TR*: fol. 164–164b).³⁷ When Sultan Said Khan attracted altitude sickness³⁸ for the first time, he would not relent in his goals. He himself returned to Yarkand, but ordered Haydar to continue the raids into Tibet. When Said Khan died of altitude sickness in July 1533, the new khan, his son Abd al-Rashid Khan, also known as Rashid Khan (r. 1533–1560), banished Haydar and his family from the Chaghatay realm (*TRTr*: 280/*TR*: fol. 179b–180) for reasons Haydar does not specify, but he hints that Rashid might have grudged Haydar's brotherly relations with Said Khan and his Dughlat backing in Kashgharia. Over the following years, the new khan knew to get rid of the influential Dughlat clan that had wielded significant power over Eastern Turkestan since the times of Amir Temür.³⁹ Haydar had been in charge of Rashid's education in the martial arts and etiquette (*TRTr*: 80–81/*TR*: fol. 54b–55), although he was only ten years older than the prince (b. 1509) who, in Haydar's text, comes across as a stubborn and not very sympathetic person: malleable, hot-headed, and crude in his tastes. But Haydar also concedes to him bravery in battle and a talent in music and poetry (*TRTr*: 78–85/*TR*: fol. 53–58).

2 New Horizons: India and Kashmir

Exile from Kashgharia did not mean the end of our resourceful and multi-talented author. In restrained words he narrates how, in the deep of winter, he moved with a few faithful followers through the Pamirs and Wakhan to the snowbound valleys of Badakhshan and finally stumbled into Zafer Castle, where he had lived 25 years earlier as a guest of his relative Mirza Khan. He was well received although victuals were scarce, and although, earlier, relatives of his from the Timurid and Chaghatayid families had meddled with

36 For an overview of the introduction of Islam into this region, see Wolfgang Holzwarth, "Islam in Baltistan: Problems of Research on the Formative Period," in *The Past and the Present: Horizons of Remembering in the Pakistan Himalaya*, edited by Irmtraud Stellrecht (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe, 1997), 21–31.

37 Said Khan was not primarily seeking booty, but was also inspired by Naqshbandi sufism; cf. Thierry Zarcone, "Soufis d'Asie centrale au Tibet, aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles," *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* 1–2: *Inde-Asie centrale. Routes du commerce et des idées* (Tachkent & Aix-en-Provence: Édisud), 327–28. Mirza Haydar's text supports this interpretation (*TRTr*: 230–232, 271/*TR*: fol. 208b–209, fol. 174).

38 For Haydar's very realistic description of altitude sickness in humans and horses, see *TRTr*: 254–55/*TR*: fol. 163–163b.

39 Ma Dazheng, "The Tarim Basin," 182–83. Wilhelm Barthold and [B. Spuler], "Düghlāt," *EI*2, II (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 622.

political affairs in Badakhshan (*TRTr*: 240–241/*TR*: fol. 214–214b). The situation in Zafer Castle became even more constrained when before short Haydar's wife (Rashid Khan's paternal aunt) and some dependents arrived in extreme poverty and exhaustion from Yarkand: "She [Haydar's wife] arrived in Badakhshan in a terrible state of destitution. With a flock of mountain goats in tow, she arrived with her retainers, around ten persons Rashid Sultan had allowed to go with her." (*TRTr*: 282/*TR*: fol. 181).

When the door closed on his past, Haydar—now around 35 years old—looked out for new fields of activity that would match his position and talents. Babur, his longtime role-model, had died in 1530, but Babur's sons, the Timurid-Mughals Humayun, Kamran Mirza, and Hindal Mirza were campaigning between Kabul and the Ganges, trying to hold their own against each other and the regional potentates, but also against the Uzbeks and Safavids. There he saw his chances.

There is a gap of several years where the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* gives next to no information of Haydar's activities. Between the lines, we understand that during the years 1533–1538, Haydar succeeded in making himself indispensable to Babur's sons Humayun (b. 1508, Kabul, r. 1533–1556) and Kamran Mirza (Kabul 1509–1557 Mecca), whom he had known as a boy in Kabul. Their constant campaigning took him to their various residences Kabul, Lahore, and Agra. At one point, Kamran made Haydar governor of Lahore for one year while he himself made war on the Safavids (*TRTr*: 283/*TR*: fol. 182). We know from Babur's autobiographical work how strenuous life in India was for people used to the Central Asian climate, no matter whether in war or peace. Haydar proudly writes that he stood by Humayun in the famous (lost) battle of Chausa or "of the Ganges" (1539; near Varanasi, India) against the Pathan leader Sher Khan Suri (d. 1545) (*TRTr*: 285–288/*TR*: fol. 183–185),⁴⁰ where he, as he claims, was more or less the only military leader who was not carried away by confusion. Haydar's eyewitness description of the battle of the Ganges can be considered a classic of military prose.

In a final coup, Haydar Mirza convinced Humayun that he was able to conquer Kashmir for the sons of Babur and make it a refuge for them as long as the Afghan enemies loomed large (*TRTr*: 289–290/*TR*: 186–186b). In November 1540 Haydar invaded Kashmir with a small contingent of about 400 men and made himself master of the country he had coveted since he had conquered it for the first time in winter 1532–1533. Here, he was able to settle down at last. However, his excessive religious [Sunni] fanaticism seems to have made him repulsive to the Kashmiris.⁴¹ His reign lasted until 1551 when he was killed by local opponents.

40 Burn, "Humayun," 34–36.

41 Abu 'l-Fazl, *The History of Akbar*, vol 2, edited and translated by Wheeler M. Thackston (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 25–33; *The Cambridge History of India, Vol. 3: Turks and Afghans*, edited by Wolsley Haig (Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1958), 288–89; Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, edited by Hamid Naseem (Srinagar: Gulshah, 2002), 203–35; Mohibbul Hasan, "Kashmir," *El2, The Encyclopaedia of Islam V* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 706–10. See also, on religious dissent in Kashmir and

Conclusion

Some histories of Persian literature seem to have little patience, or space, for Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat's *Tarikh-i Rashidi*. Dale, for example, concedes "...that Heydar Mirzâ consciously wrote as an historian, albeit at many times as an unreliable one."⁴² Browne,⁴³ on the other hand, writes: "This book, which, as its title implies, has a much larger scope than the Bâbur-nâma, of which the author made use in its compilation, greatly supplements and illuminates the earlier work." Haydar himself states realistically: "It is a guiding principle in this epitome to introduce only summary accounts of events I have heard from people through hearsay. If I have seen such events recorded repeatedly, regardless of the detail in which they are fixed in my memory, since I have not actually witnessed them with my own eyes – and therefore in recording them there is a chance of exaggeration – I consider it obligatory to avoid them. Events I have witnessed myself I have recorded as I saw them." (*TRTr*: 166/*TR*: fol. 124). In any event, the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* is an astonishingly rich work and one of the rare indigenous sources for the history of Central Asia in post-Mongol times.⁴⁴ For events, conditions and customs of the first half of the sixteenth century it is practically the only source written from within the territory. Its charm rests in the pleasantly unagitated eyewitness accounts of its author and his first-hand experience of Central Asian landscapes and peoples. His precise descriptions of Kashmir (*TRTr*: 258–264/*TR*: fol. 166–169) and Tibet (*TRTr*: 251–257/*TR*: fol. 161b–164) are unique insofar as they belong to the earliest comprehensive accounts of these countries in early modern times.

Haydar's reaction to it, 'Abdul Majid Mattoo, "The Nurbakhshis of Kashmir," in *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries II: Religion and Religious Education*, edited by Christian W. Troll (New Delhi: Vikas, 1985), 107–13.

⁴² Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," 583.

⁴³ Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia III: The Tartar Dominion (1265–1502)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 392. Haydar Mirza's merits as an historian are considered by Brill in his study *The 'Grave Task' of Writing Turko-Mongol History*.

⁴⁴ Yuri Bregel, "Historiography XII: Central Asia," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation XII/4, 2004 online). For Quinn, the *Tarikh-i Rashidi* belongs, similar to Abu 'l-Fazl's *Akbarnama*, to the Timurid historiographical legacy. Both works are in particular indebted to Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi's *Zafarnama* (completed 1425) as a model chronicle; see Sholeh A. Quinn, "The Timurid Historiographical Legacy: A Comparative Study of Persianate Historical Writing," in *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East: Studies on Iran in the Safavid Period*, edited by Andrew J. Newman (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 21–23, 28–30.

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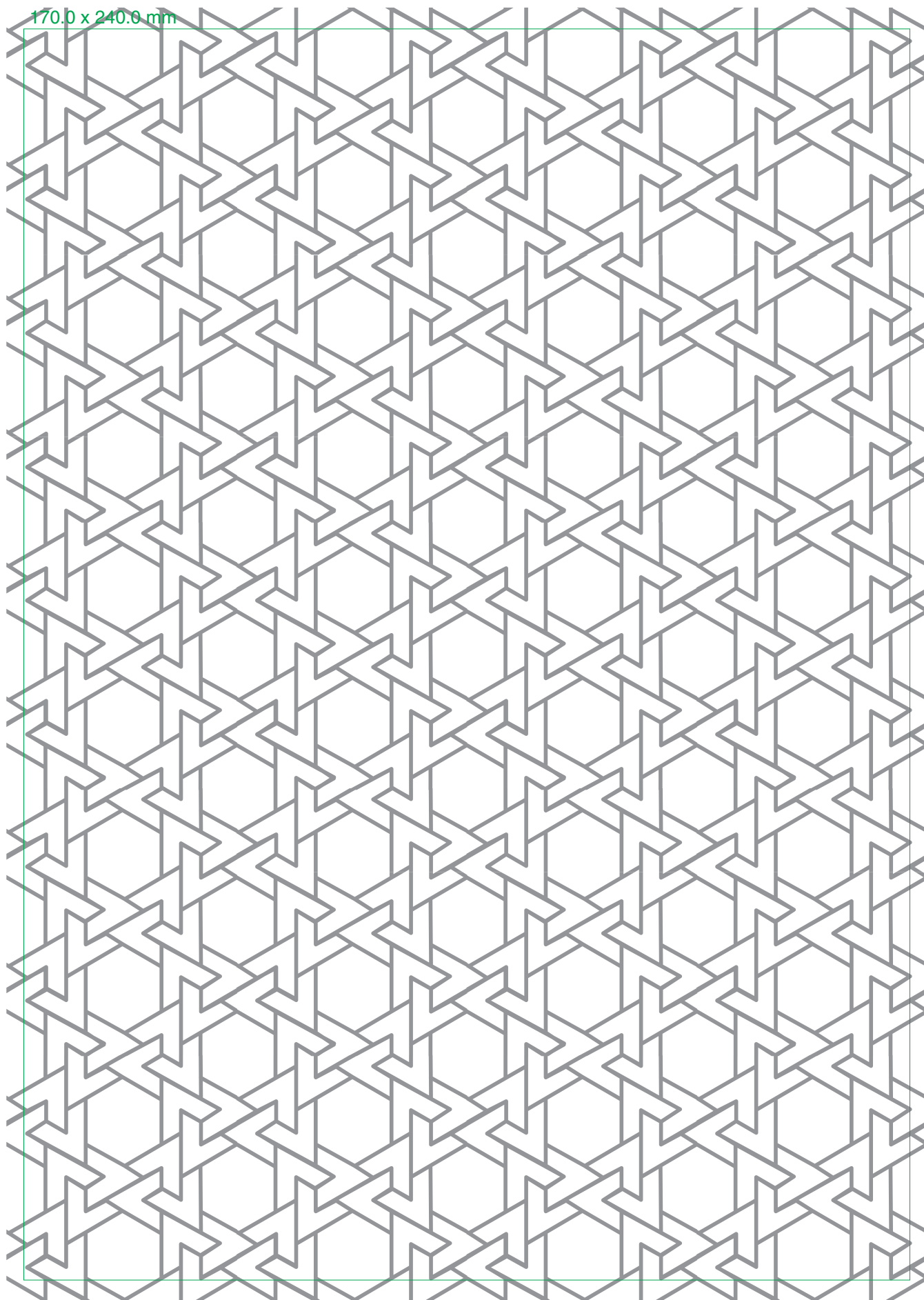
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The World of Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn and the Featherman of Ras Beirut

Makram Rabah

Little did I know that upon entering the American University of Beirut (AUB) in the Fall of 1999, that I would be fortunate enough to meet a world-renowned scholar and a kind man who soon became not only my mentor, but also my friend and spiritual father.

My Mou'allam Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, just like his own mentor Kamal Salibi, is the perfect personification of a wise and modest Ras Beirut resembling the magnificent banyan tree in front of the iconic West Hall whose shade and deep roots have grounded and fostered generations of students and scholars—all of whom are owed gratitude and unfathomable respect and love. Born in Nuba Palestine, educated in Amman and later at AUB, marrying and having two sons who grew up in Ras Beirut, becoming the chief expert on Ottoman Lebanon and the Levant, Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn is what Beirut and Lebanon wish to remain, a beacon of hope and knowledge. The sight of his casket raised by his students—his adopted sons—from AUB's Main Gate to the Daouk Mosque on Bliss Street will forever linger as a testament of the greatness and the depth of his generous soul, guarded by his shy and kind eyes.

The founding fathers of the Syrian Protestant College, later AUB, purchased land in 1866 in Ras Beirut as a site for their newly founded campus. It was an area outside the walls of the gated city of Beirut and thus, peripheral to downtown Beirut, the heart of commercial and government affairs in the region. With time and due to the university among other factors, Ras Beirut grew into an area which Kamal Salibi, renowned historian of Lebanon, believed to be “the most civilized place on earth,” where one “can get a haircut at his

Shi'ite barber and meat from their Sunni butcher and greet his neighbors, who came from different religions and classes.”¹

To many, Salibi's insistence on the exceptionalism of Ras Beirut is nothing short of a blatant hyperbole yet to many of the natives and adopted inhabitants of the area, Salibi's description reflected their daily realities. Ras Beirut stretched from the Saint George Bay to the East and the Raouche Pigeon Rock to the West and bordered by the calm Mediterranean to the South and the Druze cemeteries to the North. This small quarter of Beirut was home to thousands of youths who graduated from its many schools and universities, lived in its buildings, dined in its restaurants, and haunted its cafes before they headed out into the region and the world to excel in different fields. Ras Beirut transcended the geographic sphere and with its multitude of ideas. The diversity it nurtured enabled many, including Abudlrahim Abu-Husayn, Kamal Salibi's star pupil and his intellectual son, to dream of a better world and to acquire an education unmatched in the region and perhaps beyond.

Born in Nuba, Palestine on March 1, 1951. Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn was ranked one of the top students in the Tawjihi exams, which earned him a USAID scholarship to AUB. Abu-Husayn's high school transcript clearly displays the grades of an exceptional student; he was able to score 902 out of the possible 1000 earning him a spot among the first ten across the kingdom. In August of 1970, in the scorching heat and humidity of Beirut, 19-year-old Abu-Husayn arrived at the University. He planned to study English and later return to Jordan to become a teacher. However, his plans would change as AUB would become his home for the next 51 years until he passed away at the University's medical center from complications after a major surgery in the summer of 2022.

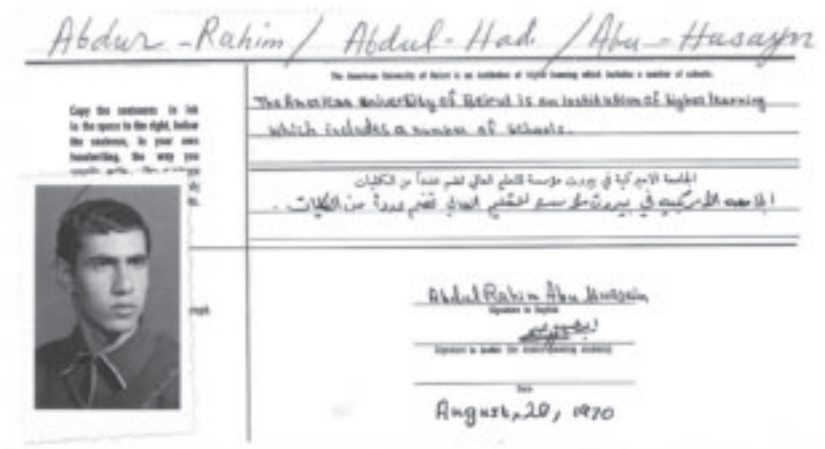


Figure 1 - Abu Husayn's Student ID upon entering AUB.

¹ Kamal Salibi, interview by Makram Rabah, Lebanon, December, 2006.

In 1977, Abu-Husayn unknowingly shared the streets of Ras Beirut with one Abu Rish (Father of Feathers), a man whose nickname was given to him by the locals, inspired by the feathers on his hat. The people of Ras Beirut didn't give much attention to Abu Rish and brushed him aside as nothing more than a crazy, foul-smelling vagabond. He loitered at the end of Bliss Street, the main avenue running along AUB's main gate, and made no real contributions to the cultural resistance of Lebanon. Given his homely appearance and repulsive odor, he also wasn't favored in the neighborhood. This seemingly harmless drifter, however, surprised everyone, when he reappeared during the Israeli invasion of 1982, this time wearing an Israeli officer's uniform and leading his troops on cracking down on the Palestinians and their Lebanese allies.²

This work will try to piece together the story of the beggar spy who perhaps ranks first in the urban myths of Ras Beirut. Many people have heard the story of Abu Rish, some have even chatted with, insulted, or beat him, yet no one has ever uncovered how or why would this man live on the streets masquerading as a beggar and what was his real mission, beyond the obvious. By doing so the world of Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn and Abu Rish will no doubt intersect to draw a micro history of an area which opened its arms to scholars and spies alike. Using oral history(s) collected from interviews with the local inhabitants of the area Abu Rish squatted in, and from a number of primary and secondary archives that documents Israeli espionage activities in Lebanon, this study brings back to life Abu Rish and the untold stories of Ras Beirut.

1 Bliss Street meets Black September

The young Abu-Husayn's arrival in Beirut in the summer of 1970, could not have come at a more important juncture in the history of both the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan or the Lebanese Republic. It coincided with Black September in Jordan and the subsequent events that followed. Black September, as it was later branded, was a civil war between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Jordanian monarchy, that ultimately brought on the destruction of the entire military infrastructure of the PLO and its final expulsion from Jordan. This second Palestinian exodus saw the PLO, and other Palestinian factions relocate to Lebanon, a step which was made possible a year earlier in 1969 through the Cairo Agreement, which was signed by the PLO and the Lebanese

² Abu Rish the beggar spy is not to be confused with Mohammed Khalil Aburish (Abu Saïd Aburish), who worked for the Time magazine in Beirut and whose stories of espionage and adventures at the infamous spy bar the Saint George Bar that his son Said Aburish documented in his book, Said Aburish, *The St George Hotel Bar*. London: Bloomsbury, 1989.

state under the patronage and endorsement of Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser.³ While Abdulrahim was never a political activist, at least as he saw it, he was not so different from his young Palestinian peers who entered AUB, a bastion of traditional Arab Nationalism and a new platform for the Palestinian revolution which grew out of the 1967 Arab debacle.

Prior to the 1967 defeat, Arabs were vehemently convinced of the eventuality of the liberation of Palestine through the efforts of the traditional Arab armies under the leadership of Abdul Nasser and his brand of Arab nationalism. However, this conviction slowly fizzled out giving way to the popular resistance model which the Fatah Movement and the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), amongst others embodied. Consequently, coupled with the May 1968 global youth revolution and the rise of the New Left, Nasser fell out of favor, to be replaced by more militant leaders such as the chairmen of the PLO Yasser Arafat and George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP and guerrilla fighter Leila Khaled, who became the first woman to hijack a plane, making her an “Icon of Palestinian Liberation”.⁴

Writing about the 1970 Black September events and their effects on the AUB campus and the world around it, historian Betty Anderson clearly identifies the above-mentioned factors, as well as other local reasons, for the rise of a more politicized students movement led by the pro-Palestinian factions. Consequently, these student activists and the rise of the New Left paved the way for the full radicalization and eventual militancy of many of these students who transitioned to the various Lebanese and Palestinian militias that engaged in the civil war in 1975.⁵ “Guerrilla U,” as the October 1970 issue of Newsweek magazine branded AUB, underscored how the international community and the conservative Arab regimes looked at this liberal arts institution as one that is molding and nurturing young radicals, those who will return home after graduation to possibly lead local reforms or rebellions and create trouble at home. The liberal arts education which the founding fathers of AUB hoped that their institution would bestow to the people of the region was not only centered around the classroom and the content of the curriculums. The teaching experience invested in installing liberal values in their students who in turn will be elements of change both in Lebanon and beyond. Thus, the AUB campus as an incubator took full advantage of the city of Beirut and more so Ras Beirut the area around

3 For a more detailed account of the events of Black September please see Dan Naor, “‘Spring of Youth’ in Beirut: The Effects of the Israeli Military Operation on Lebanon.” *Israel Affairs* 20, no. 3 (2014): 410–25.

4 On Leila Khaled, see: Sarah Irving, *Leila Khaled: Icon of Palestinian Liberation*. (London: Pluto Press, 2012).

5 Betty S. Anderson, “September 1970 and the Palestinian Issue: A Case Study of Student Politicization at the American University of Beirut (AUB),” *Civil Wars* 10, no. 3 (2008), 261–280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2014.922805>

it to establish the grounds of a liberal community grounded in diversity and inclusion, or at least that was the paradigm the AUB and Ras Beirut upheld for itself starting as early as 1950. This vibrant intellectual milieu was ideal for the PLO and other political factions to the left of the political spectrum, as Ras Beirut and its educated middle class were openly supportive of the calls by the Palestinian Liberation movement and many of its sons and daughters were soon recruited into the various political cells which were established in and around AUB, including the International College- (IC), AUB's preparatory school.

By the early 1970's, the Fatah Movement, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, had established itself as the chief Palestinian faction, as it encompassed a wide array of ideologies, from the Marxist, Islamist, Maoists, yet remained somewhat mainstream. This fact allowed Fatah to reach different segments of the youth, amongst them was Fathi al-Biss a young Palestinian who grew up in the Jordanian al-Baqa'a refugee camp in Jordan and had earned a scholarship to study at IC and later at AUB where he majored in Pharmacy. Al-Biss, recruited into Fatah during his stay at IC, rose in the ranks of its student section to become a prominent member of the Maoist faction which came to dominate the Fatah student section as early as 1974.⁶

Shortly after entering AUB, Fathi met Abu-Husayn at the dormitory where they were both staying, starting a friendship which would last for the next 51 years until the latter's death. The next year both Fathi and Abdul Rahim moved from campus and rented a small apartment off Bliss Street, where Fathi took the liberty of turning their new dwelling into a hangout for his Fatah comrades. This vexed Abu-Husayn who was unable to study at home or to focus on his schoolwork, prompting him to move accommodation shortly after. Unlike his Palestinian friend and roommate, Abu-Husayn was not very interested in organized politics. While he shared Fathi's commitment and ideas towards the liberating of their homeland, Abu-Husayn was more interested in finishing his studies and to go back to Jordan or to the Arab Gulf to find employment. Writing in his memoirs al-Biss profiles his friend Abu-Husayn:

My friend [Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn], who I met in my senior year of high school, would always cheer me up and encourage me to persevere in my studies. I met him at the Newman's dorms where he used to live. He came a year earlier to study at AUB after receiving a scholarship because of he placed in the top ten of the students in Jordan. Like me, he [Abu-Husayn] was from a peasant origin from the village of Nuba in the region of al-Khalil in Palestine where he immigrated with him family to Jordan. He also came from poverty and hardship and was determined to excel in his studies in order to become successful. He was

6 Mahmoud Chreih, "From Radicalism to Moderation" (unpublished manuscript), typescript, 23.

studying history⁷, he was a very quiet person, the counter opposite to my active persona. He was one of the people outside my political circle and the Fatah movement, yet I would always entrust in him my problems and concerns. His joyful character was always good to have when we would meet over meals with Khalil, Ghaleb, who would share eggs and canned food and exchange stories of Palestine and tales of the refuge and the Palestinian plight in the diaspora, and hopes of changing our lives by excelling in our studies.⁸

Yet Abu-Husayn like the overwhelming majority of students from Palestinian descent or those supportive of the Palestinian cause, joined in the activities and the craze of the revolution pushing AUB, Ras Beirut, and Lebanon in general into the spotlight, making it a center of interest to many countries and their respective intelligence agencies around the world, chiefly amongst them Israel, which had a vested interest in securing its northern border against any attacks by the Palestinians and the Lebanese factions which supported them.

2 Beirut: The Den of Spies

Prior to 1969, Beirut was always an active ground for the various security agencies information gathering activities, as the city with its different intellectual circles, cafes and bars and restaurants, was a treasure trove of secrets. Beirut thus became the inspiration of spy novelists such as Ian Fleming, the author of the James Bond series, who visited Beirut in 1959 and ultimately incorporated Beirut in a chapter of his book, *The Man with the Golden Gun*.⁹ The infamous spyhole bar at the Saint Georges Hotel, was the watering hole as well as the information hunting ground for Kim Philby, the British double agent and the correspondent of *The Economist* and *The Observer*, a cover which gave Philby unmitigated access to the region's political elite. It was from his apartment overlooking the old presidential palace in Kantari, a few blocks from AUB, that Philby was exfiltrated in January 1963 by the Soviet Intelligence to Moscow, where he lived until passing away in 1988 at the age of 76.¹⁰

7 In fact, Abu Husayn was studying English at the time he and al-Biss met, but Abu Husayn would later do his PhD in History after finishing a masters in anthropology.

8 Fathī al-Biss. *Inthiyāl al-dhākira: hādhā mā ḥaṣal*. 1st ed. Amman: Dar al-Shuruq, 2008, 113. My translation.

9 Edward Biddulph, "Hong Kong: Visiting one of Ian Fleming's Thrilling Cities," *James Bond Memes*, August 17, 2016, <https://jamesbondmemes.blogspot.com/2016/08/hong-kong-visiting-one-of-ian-flemings.html>.

10 On Kim Philby, see: Ben Macintyre, *A Spy Among Friends: Kim Philby's Great Betrayal*, 1st ed. (New York: Crown, 2014).

Consequently, Ras Beirut, the world of Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn, became a hotbed of espionage and covert work. Many spies from various countries who were actively collecting information were hiding behind their diplomatic credential and cover jobs and did so publicly under the watchful eyes of the Lebanese Military intelligence, commonly referred to as the Deuxième Bureau. For the Israelis, however, the challenge of following up on Lebanon and any imminent threat therein was compounded by the fact that Lebanon and Israel were in a state of war and thus any Israel agent caught operating in Lebanon would be executed or even worse, tortured. Israeli covert activities in Lebanon predated the rise of the state of Israel as the Jewish agency. Its Arab department, headed by the Damascus-born Eliahu Sasson, actively pursued the notion of “a minority-alliance with the Maronites of Lebanon to obtain information and keep a finger on the pulse of Arab activity.”¹¹ Kirsten Schulze’s work, *Israel’s Covert Diplomacy in Lebanon* details Sasson’s and other members of his team including Eliahu Epstein (Elath), an AUB student at the time, who met regularly with Lebanese politicians mainly the Maronite intellectuals as and members the clergy.¹² Elath was later appointed as head of the Middle East Division of the Jewish Agency. He often met with the Young Phoenicians and formed a friendship with their leaders, Alfred Naqash and Charles Corm, who were blatantly anti-Arab—not to say anti-Islamic—and were proponents of creating an alliance of minorities to curtail the threat of Islam.¹³ Yet even the overt peaceful activity of the Jewish Agency and its representatives would soon become more difficult as the Zionist and the Palestinians embarked on a series of violent clashes against each other and the British Mandate. Consequently, on the eve of the British withdrawal, the Jewish Agency started to recruit and train Arab Jews who had immigrated to Palestine and prepare them to travel to a number of Arab countries as spies, to serve a state which had yet to be born. In the first weeks of May 1948, the Arab section of the Jewish agencies started to dispatch waves of it spies to different part of the Arab world, to carry out a number of missions ranging from reporting back on the Arab press and its depiction of the emerging Jewish state, to helping Arab Jews immigrate to Palestine and carrying out sabotage operations when needed.

Technically, these operatives cannot be labeled as Israelis as their deployment predated the official birth of Israel on 14 May 1948, as many of them learned about the Jewish victory over the Arabs from reading or listening to the Arab media which eventually conceded the defeat of the Arab armies and the rise of the state of Israel. Among these pioneering Jewish spies were four young Jewish Arabs in their early twenties, Gamliel Cohen (Damascus), Isaac Shoshan (Aleppo), Havakuk Cohen (Yemen), and Yakuba Cohen (Jerusalem, British Palestine). They were instructed to make Beirut their new home and

¹¹ Kirsten Schulze, *Israel’s Covert Diplomacy in Lebanon*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998, 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, 18.

¹³ *Ibid.*

to acquire covers as newly arriving Palestinian refugees fleeing Jewish violence.¹⁴ In his award winning book *Spies of No Country: Behind Enemy Lives at the Birth of Israel*, Matti Friedman documents the lives and adventures of the Beirut spy cell who established a sweet shop ran by Gamliel in the area of Ouz'ai south of Beirut which is conveniently near the beach crucial for operational needs. The others opened a small newspaper kiosk by a Christian elementary school called the Three Moons in the heart of the Christian quarter of Beirut.¹⁵ The "ones which became like Arabs" as these spies were referred too back in Israel would report back regularly to their section using a radio that was concealed in a wooden box and placed in a small rooftop room which the spies rented in Beirut. With time, the records and their reports indicate how these four spies were able to seamlessly integrate in Beirut society and form bonds of friendship and even romantic affairs. The cell's audacity was perhaps tested when Gamliel became a card-carrying member of the Nazi-inspired Syrian Social National Party and "became deputy head of a neighborhood party branch, attending meetings and exchanging straight-armed salutes with other members."¹⁶ The Beirut cell never got any form of public recognition at the time until their story was written by Friedman seven decades later, and their exfiltration from Lebanon in the Spring of 1950 closed the chapter on their operation without the Lebanese even knowing of their existence.

Contrary to the four young Jewish spies who kept a very low profile, the activity of Shula Cohen known as the Pearl was more visible across Lebanon and eventually led to the Lebanese authorities picking up and cracking down on the spy ring, she operated from the home of her Lebanese merchant husband. Through an arranged marriage to Joseph Kishik, Shula capitalized on her new status in Beirut and established an impressive and a powerful network of acquaintances and assets which helped her gather information for the Israeli Mossad as well as play a pivotal role in smuggling Arab Jews through the Lebanese border into Israel.¹⁷ In 1961, following a long surveillance operation, the Lebanese Army's Deuxième Bureau was able to expose and arrest Shula, who was tried for treason and condemned to death before her sentence was commuted to 20 years in prison. In 1967, Shula was released as part of the Arab-Israeli prisoner exchange, retiring in Israel where she was bestowed with the honors and awards to heroes of her status, passing away in 2017 at the age of 100. Shula was more fortunate than her associate the famed Eli Cohen who was embedded in Syria under the alias Kamel Amin Thaabet. Cohen, for a span of four years (1961 to 1965), proceeded to build a profile that allowed

14 Matti Friedman, *Spies of No Country: Behind Enemy Lives at the Birth of Israel*, 1st ed. (Toronto: Signal McClelland & Stewart, 2019), 100-118.

15 Ibid., 118-119.

16 Ibid.

17 On Shula Cohen, see: Aviezer Golan and Danny Pinkas, *Shula: Code Name the Pearl*, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1980).

him to become a pillar of the Damascene social scene, and was even rumored to have been considered for a cabinet position before he was arrested and lynched in public, his body left for the people to see.¹⁸

Interestingly, Israeli espionage activity until the appearance of Abu Rish in Ras Beirut in the mid 1970's took on the traditional spy novel type pattern as most of these operatives, highlighted above, took up normal cover identities to allow them to blend in into the landscape. Moreover, despite the dangers and the challenges of the missions of these spies none of them was forced to live on the streets and to assume the role of a beggar and endure the humiliation and hardships that come along with it.

3 The Featherman of Bliss Street

The exact date of the arrival or appearance of Abu Rish in Ras Beirut is not certain as the different people interviewed for this study give a varying range stretching from 1977 to shortly before the Israeli invasion of 1982, when he simply vanished only to reappear after the Israeli army entered West Beirut in August of 1982 after the PLO's withdrawal. These varying dates have to do with my sources' age or their profession at the time, but what is certain according to a retired Lebanese police General Salim Slim is that Abu Rish was around when he was posted to *Makhfar Hbeish* (Ras Beirut Police Station), a position he held from 1977 to 1984. Slim, who later commanded the Judicial Police (non-uniformed detective division), was intrigued by this homeless person and eventually summoned Abu Rish to his office and questioned him about his predicament and why was he forced into a life of a vagabond. According to Slim, Abu Rish claimed that he was a rich Lebanese merchant who made his fortune in Latin American, however he lost his business because of family dispute and thus he was forced to take to the streets.¹⁹ Abu Rish gave similar response to people who asked him about his situation, mostly he underscored the fact that he had lived abroad in Brazil and that he came from a rich background, two elements which helped him justify his somewhat thick Arabic accent and the fact that he spoke a few languages such as English and German. Another background story was that Abu Rish was from Armenian descent and had lived in the Christian part of Lebanon before the start of the civil war in 1975. The right-wing Christian militia, the Lebanese Forces had killed his wife and family, a crime which drove him mad and made him flee to West Beirut. Abu Rish's stories were not very farfetched at the time, as the start of the civil war saw a phenomenon of people, both combatants and civilians, suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder and consequently decided to become drifters and

18 Eli Ben-Hanan, *Our Man in Damascus: Elie Cohn*, (New York: Crown, 1969), 68.

19 General Salim Slim, interview by Makram Rabah, Lebanon, June 2023.

hippies.²⁰ Hassan Mneimneh, who used to see Abu Rish around Hamra recalls well that the sight of beggars on the streets of Beirut became a common occurrence that did not engender any type of suspicious response from the locals, they also never doubted the intentions of these poor folks. Mneimneh recalls that Abu Rish used to occupy a small tent or perhaps a makeshift shed in an abandoned plot of land at the end of Bliss Street facing the German School and Cultural Center (The Goethe-Institut) right next to the old lighthouse and a few blocks away from the Mediterranean Sea. Mneimneh used to see Abu Rish often during the summertime as he and his friends were making their way to the Sporting Beach Club. He would often stop and indulge him in conversation. At the time, Mneimneh did not notice that Abu Rish spoke Arabic with a German accent nor that he shared the mannerism reserved for European Orthodox Jews, something which Mneimneh would spot only after moving to the United States to pursue his education 1982. There, he was exposed to different Jewish cultures and thus, was able to make the connection.²¹ The fact that Abu Rish spoke German is confirmed by a number of sources amongst them Andreas Geadon whose family owned and rented out the building to the German School and Cultural Center and where his family also lived. The Ras Beirut native was born to a Lebanese antique merchant and an Austrian mother, Andreas recalls how Abu Rish used to hangout outside their building and remembers how his mother and the women of the neighborhood used to avoid him and even discourage their children from playing or even approaching him.²² According to Andreas, the foul-smelling beggar used to sit inside the library of the Goethe Institute spending hours reading from the books and journals available, most of which were naturally in German. The doorman at the Goethe Institute confirmed to Andreas that on multiple occasions the library staff called on him to gently expel Abu Rish who wanted to stay after opening hours.²³ Furthermore, after being interviewed for this paper, Andreas asked his mother about Abu Rish, and she unequivocally confirmed that he did indeed speak German and that she heard him on many occasions converse with himself in her mother tongue. The fact that Abu Rish was not a native Arabic speaker drove him to avoid talking to adults and when he did, he did so briefly so as not to indicate that he was indeed not Lebanese. Most of the people I interviewed who have had full conversations with Abu Rish or interacted with him for long periods of time were teenagers or even children at the time.

The fact that Abu Rish was a polyglot is further confirmed by Serge Akil who lived at the intersection of Najib Ardati and Manara Street where Abu Rish had relocated beneath the young Serge's building, sleeping on a makeshift mattress made from thick carboard. Abu Rish's new dwelling was only a hundred meters from his previous location

20 Hassan Mneimneh, interview by Makram Rabah, Washington DC, April 2023.

21 Ibid.

22 Andreas Geadon, interview by Makram Rabah, Lebanon, June 2023.

23 Ibid.

at Bliss Street, the second of three location he would move too further down the street on the intersection of Ardati and the Tannoukhiyen street (see map). Serge Akil was a mere schoolboy at the time and remembers the days he used to spend playing and talking to Abu Rish and clearly recalls how the gentle beggar used to talk to him, most of the time in English, and on one occasion even helped him with his homework. Serge, the son of a Naval officer in the Lebanese Army and a mother of Egyptian Armenian descent, recalls how one day and while looking down from his balcony heard Abu Rish speak Armenian, after which he joyfully ran to his mother shouting “Abu Rish speaks Armenian, Abu Rish speaks Armenian”, something which his mom purely dismissed as childish tomfoolery. Serge remembers how one day Abu Rish approached his father who used to smoke Cuban cigars and begged him not to throw out the cigar butts and instead give it to him to finish off, a weird request which Serge’s father granted. On one occasion Serge was intrigued by a picture which Abu Rish was holding, that shows a man wearing a suit and a hat, to which he asked “Abu Rish who is this, your father?” to which Abu Rish loudly answered “this is God of course.”²⁴



Figure 2 - A map showing the dwellings of Abu Rish.

24 Serge Akil, interview by Makram Rabah, place, July, 2023.

Right across from Serge's building and Abu Rish's abode, Bassam Zein (Abu Shadi) remembers the giant of a man which wore a combination of rags and dirty clothing sometimes one on top of the other and above them a big winter coat which he wore even under the heat and humidity of the Beirut summer. Abu Shadi, vividly recalls how Abu Rish collected bottle caps which he fashioned into medals he wore across a sash on his chest and that he always covered his bushy head with a hat adorned with feathers.²⁵ Abu Shadi, who worked in his father's bakery since the age of seventeen, confirms that for years Abu Rish was part of the landscape of the neighborhood and his constant presence made him somewhat invisible to the people who simply got used to seeing him around. At the time Abu Shadi confirms that people at large never suspected Abu Rish being a spy and simply dismissed him as a mad beggar:

Do not believe anyone who brags and claims that they suspected that Abu Rish was a spy, he had everyone fooled and he played his role to perfection, with his weird dress and always drunk, eating from the garbage and hording litter and no one suspected that he was a spy throughout his years in Ras Beirut.²⁶

According to Abu Shadi, Abu Rish was a great actor, he would divert attention from himself by his caveman appearance and constant odor of urine and alcohol; he was often seen holding a bottle of alcohol. The fact that Abu Rish was indeed an alcoholic cannot be confirmed but it is permissible that his drunkard appearance made his mission easier or alternatively, drinking was a coping mechanism in which Abu Rish endured his self-imposed torment. Abu Rish was so deep into his character as a beggar that people, especially women, crossed the street or changed direction whenever they spotted him. While Abu Rish was peaceful and typically friendly, many people from the neighborhood, including the Lebanese militias, bullied and physically assaulted him, requiring him to be hospitalized at times. According to M, a volunteer at the Lebanese Red Cross Emergency Response Unit, he had responded at least twice to an emergency call that involved Abu Rish where he required to be transported to the hospital.²⁷ M, vividly recalls how calm and relaxed Abu Rish was when he arrived even when he was severely injured. One time, Abu Rish suffered from a broken arm, which is excruciatingly painful, yet as M recalls, Abu Rish sat unbothered and allowed the paramedic to administer a brace without

²⁵ Bassam Zein, interview by Makram Rabah, Lebanon, June 2023.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ An interview with an anonymous volunteer with the Lebanese Cross Emergency Response Unit, interview by Makram Rabah, Lebanon, June, 2023. Red Cross members are required by their code of ethic not to give information about their missions for the sake of privacy and other ethical considerations. M confirms that he himself responded to two of these emergency calls while paramedics at the Red Cross confirmed to him that their unit had done so on many other occasions.



Figure 3 - One of the few pictures of Abu Rish (As-Safir Archives).



Figure 4 - Abu Rish in one of his spots near the Goethe Institute on Bliss Street (As-Safir Archives).



Figure 5 - Abu Rish in his makeshift home on Ardati Street (As-Safir Archives).

uttering any words of pain or shedding any tears. M confirms that Abu Rish was a tall man and very well-built, he would not fit in the ambulance cot which was 180cm tall. Consequently, under the heavy dirty coat he wore, Abu Rish was muscular and thus could have defended himself, instead he took the occasional beatings. Abu Rish's patience and forbearance to these assaults and the wretched conditions of being homeless were a sign of a trained sober agent with a serious mission in mind.

These military and spy traits of Abu Rish were clear to Khalil Bdeir, known by his many customers as Mike the Barber. Mike whose famous barber shop has been in operation since 1961, remembers his vagabond neighbor who always aroused his suspicion. Mike reached out to several local militias to apprehend and question him. The local chapter of *Al-Murabitoun* (Independent Nasserite Organization), the Progressive Socialist Party, and both the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Fatah subjected Abu Rish to extensive interrogation after which they deemed him to be a mere crazy harmless drifter.²⁸ Mike on the other hand never trusted Abu Rish due to his military physique "he was a muscular guy, his thighs where that of someone who has been in the army, but he was smarter than we are, he was able to fool us all."²⁹ One particular matter that intrigued Mike was how did this character survive and what was his main source of income, a matter which forced him on one occasion to ask him this question. Mike remembers how Abu Rish response was a bit aggressive as he took out a collection of paper tissues and took one of them "you see this tissue, I am living on the fringes of life."³⁰

When Abu Rish first appeared in public, he would do small chores which earned him some money or even food. He would be spotted making deliveries for local supermarkets such as the famed Smith Supermarket on Sadat Street or washing locals' cars or even picking up garbage bags from different apartments to dispose of them. Such chores allowed him to gain access to buildings and apartments without drawing any suspicion as well as make him useful to the neighborhood which slowly but surely started to care for him. According to Segre, on one occasion Abu Rish vanished for a few weeks, it triggered some panic among the women of the neighborhood, especially Serge's mother who feared that he had been hurt, or worse, killed by a local militia.

One phenomenon which Abu Shadi could not understand at the time, was the spray can markings Abu Rish used to scribble on the walls where he would loiter, markings which made no real sense, nor did they resemble anything Abu Shadi or the other inhabitants of the area recognized. In retrospect, Abu Rish' graffiti could have possibly been a form of signaling system he employed to send message to his handlers, who would never interact with him publicly, but rather would lurk and wait for him to communicate with them through this method.

²⁸ Khalil Bdeir (Mike the barber), interview by Makram Rabah, Lebanon, August, 2023.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

While many of the inhabitants of Ardati Street are beyond convinced of Abu Rish's spy status, Ahmad Fathallah, the Physical Education instructor at the International College (IC) and the owner of the famous Corner Sport shop, has a different tale to tell about Abu Rish. Fathallah, whose shop was adjacent to Abu Rish's dwelling was one of the few adults in the neighborhood that actually spoke to the eccentric beggar, giving him food and clothes and at times even allowing him to bathe at his shop.³¹ Fathallah unequivocally denies that Abu Rish was an Israeli spy and confirms that much of the fuss surrounding this character was caused by the international and local press who simply wanted to write something sensational and thus the whole myth was born. For Fathallah, Abu Rish was:

A poor man from Armenian descent who simply had lost his mind because of the war and thus he was forced to the streets. Abu Rish never hurt anyone nor did he ever accept to take or beg for money. Some evil people from the neighborhood would bully him and beat him up... Haram (this is inhuman). Second it is preposterous to assume that Israel needs to go through all this trouble to spy on Lebanon and this particular part of Beirut, we never had any real secrets, we never had any weapon facilities or nuclear weapons."³²

Fathallah confirms that the only side which is qualified to accuse Abu Rish of being a spy is the Lebanese state, which in fact did arrest and interrogate him, only to later release him. Before the 1982 invasion, the Lebanese state launched a campaign to crack down on spies and thus began to arrest anyone who was suspicious or simply undocumented, two traits which applied to Abu Rish, who was arrested and taken to the Military Intelligence Branch by an officer called Ahmad Habal. Upon Fathallah's enquiry, Habal confirmed that after hours of interrogating Abu Rish, he turned out to be a simple harmless beggar, who was now working as an errand boy, fetching food and cigarettes for Habal and his troops.³³ The fact that Abu Rish was able to deceive and convince both private citizens and trained intelligence professionals only attests to his level of skills, advanced training, and stoic character and above the mission(s) at hand.

4 A Beggar with a Mission

The exact nature of Abu Rish's mission has yet to be determined as the area he surveilled had no real military significance, nor did the PLO maintain any prominent

³¹ Ahmad Fathallah, interview by Makram Rabah, Beirut, September, 2023.

³² Ibid.

³³ Fathallah, interview.

security presence. While Ras Beirut and its vicinity housed a number of key embassies and educational institutions, including the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, embedding an agent for over seven years to live on the streets and allocating the necessary resources for his safety and continuity requires the presence of more vital targets. The area did in fact have a few safe houses that the PLO leadership used for secret meetings or activities of a personal nature, yet the Israelis never took actions nor tried to attack these targets. According to Abu Shadi, the street which he and Abu Rish shared had one building which the top PLO leaders Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) and Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) frequented, yet this was not really a great secret as the entire neighborhood knew of this and naturally so did the Lebanese authorities.³⁴ Adjacent to the Abu Rish's squatting location and in Serge Akil's building was the PLO central media office, an entity which ran the elaborate media and publication network the PLO had across Lebanon and the region. The PLO media office also paid monthly salaries and subsidies to many of the pro-Palestinian journalists, so many came at the beginning of each month to collect their dues. The PLO opened this office right after their exodus from Jordan and their eventual settlement in Lebanon. However, by the date of Abu Rish's appearance in 1977, the PLO had moved the office in question elsewhere.

Another important PLO entity in the vicinity of Abu Rish's hunting ground was the Palestine Research Center (PRC) which was located a block away from Ardati street. Founded in 1965 by the PLO's executive committee and directed by the renowned Palestinian scholar and diplomat Fayez Sayegh, the PRC would be the repository of the memory of the Palestinian people in exile. The PRC housed more than 25,000 volumes and one of a kind documents on the Palestine, and it would give a platform for leading Palestinian and Arab scholar to research and publish on the issue.³⁵ Amongst these scholars were Constantine Zuryak, Walid Kalidi, Rashid Khalidi, and Anis Sayegh, who would replace his brother Fayez as head of the PRC and edit the center's flagship publications *Shu'un filastiniyya* (Palestinian Affairs) and *al-Watha'iq al-Filastiniyya* (The Palestinian Documents).³⁶ Despite its academic and non-military mandate the PRC was the target of successive attacks. The first was a bomb which damaged the center in 1970, followed by a parcel bomb sent to Sayegh which he survived but lost a finger to and

34 Zein, interview.

35 Jiryis Sabri and Salah Qallab. "The Palestine Research Center." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 14, no. 4 (1985): 185. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2537147>. Shortly after its establishment the PRC were given diplomatic status by the Lebanese government and were given all the amenities extended to foreign diplomatic missions.

36 For more information, see: "وثائق تاريخية," Palestinian Research Center, 2018, <https://www.prc.ps/category/وثائق-تاريخية>; مجلة شؤون فلسطينية; وثائق/وثائق-تاريخية. Palestinian Research Center, <https://www.prc.ps/دوريات/>

then a rocket attack in 1974 which caused considerable material damage.³⁷ Sayegh, like many Palestinian intellectuals was the target of a number of assassination attempts which drove him to resign from his directorship and leave to Cairo where he served as the Director of Palestine Department at the League of Arab States. After the PLO's withdrawal from Beirut in August of 1982, the Israeli army looted the center and confiscated all its archive, only to return them following a prisoner exchange between the PLO and Israel in November of the following year. The PRC however was finally put out of commission when a car bomb laden with 150 kg of TNT demolished the building injuring 150 and killing 18 people, including the wife of the director Sabri Jiryis, Hanneh Shahin.³⁸ The PRC like many of the PLO's cultural entities and projects, was no less important to their Israeli enemies and its intelligence services and thus it is permissible to assume that Abu Rish's objective(s), or at least part of them, was to surveille and gain a better understanding of PRC's work and the community of scholars who operated it, most of whom took Ras Beirut as their primary residence.

One must assume that Abu Rish was part of a bigger spy ring which had a constellation of safehouses spread out across the city and handlers which ran agents with Abu Rish's profile. The Israeli Mossad had an impressive network operating in Beirut and in Lebanon as a whole, this is corroborated by a number of targeted assassinations that Israel carried out in Lebanon against high profile PLO individuals. The 1973 Israeli raid on the Black September PLO leadership and the 1979 assassination of the head of Fatah's intelligence branch Abu Hassan Salameh known as the Red Prince, are both a case in point.

In 1973, the Sayeret Matkal Israel's top special forces unit led by Ehud Barak, the future Prime Minister of Israel, disembarked on the beach south of Beirut to be met by Mossad agents who escorted them to the heart of Beirut, where they raided an apartment building that housed three PLO's top commanders, Muhammad Youssef al-Najjar, Kamal Adwan, and Kamal Nasser killing them before the raiding party was escorted to the exfiltration point and safely back to Israel.³⁹ In fact, the flawless execution of the hit and the surgical accuracy of the assassination squad was based on accurate intel that Caesarea agents, the most secretive deep cover division that the Mossad had procured, including the position and layout of the building and the security forces in its vicinity.

37 "Anis Sayigh: A Profile from the Archives." *Jadaliyya*, Arab Studies Institute, 3 August 2014, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/31046>.

38 Thomas Friedman, "18 die in bombings at P.L.O.'s Center in Western Beirut," *New York Times*, February 6, 1983, <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/02/06/world/18-die-in-bombing-at-plo-s-center-in-western-beirut.html>.

39 Ronen Bergman, *Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations*. Translated by Ronnie Hope. 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 2018), 157-168. Named after the ancient town built by King Herod the Great, this unit within the Mossad ran all of the targeted assassinations and was commanded by Michael Harari, a legend within the Israeli intelligence community.

More so, the operation code named Operation Spring of Youth was based on the original information that Unit 504 of the Israeli Military Intelligence (AMAN) got from one of its top Lebanese assets Clovis Francis, a Christian native of Marjayoun, the same town which produced Saad Haddad the commander of the South Lebanon Army (SLA), a local militia which Israel established after its 1978 occupation and the establishment of the South Lebanon security zone.⁴⁰

The grandchild of the Jewish agency's Arab division spy network, Unit 504, first relied on Arab Jews before it expanded its recruitment to include any Israeli that was "intimately familiar with the language and customs of the Locals" and possessed other talents which made them good spies.⁴¹ Unit 504's main function was to run Arab-speaking assets, which numbered in the hundreds, some more often than not like Clovis Francis never asked for payment but strongly believed in the alliance between Lebanon and Israel.⁴² Consequently, it was a similar Unit 504 assets code-named Rummenigge, Amin al-Hajj, who supplied Israel with vital information that led to the assassination of Abu Hassan Salameh. Al-Hajj, a Lebanese Shi'ite who claimed to have hated the PLO and rumored to operate a regional drug smuggling network, used his underground connections to map out Salameh's habits and weak points, and thus provided Unit 504 and Caesarea another chance to collaborate in Operation Maveer, that ended the life of Salameh.⁴³ The hit on Salameh was not as elaborate as the one carried out in 1973, but it showed perfect synergy between the Israeli clandestine services, something which Ronen Bergman book, *Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations*, elaborates on in detail.

Noticeably, the Israeli and Western scholarship on Israel's clandestine operations is abundant and the literature available to the public includes detailed access to archives and interviews with former Israeli spies and operatives yet none even makes any mention of the beggar spy, which makes the search for him even more mysteriously interesting. As it is customary, many clandestine operations in Lebanon and elsewhere have been revealed by Israel itself and many of the people that carried them out were publicly recognized by Israel and honored as warriors and heroes' post-retirement. Moreover, Israel even has a civilian outfit called "Spy Legends" founded by a former Lieutenant Colonel Avner Avraham, which promotes itself as "the first ever agency that specializes in espionage and covert intelligence operations."⁴⁴ Spy Legends offers its clients a number of services including the option to hire former Mossad agents and experts in the field for speaking

40 Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Intelligence Agency, *Daily Report: South Asia*. Vol. 84, 1984, Issues 22-41.

41 Ronen Bergman, *Rise and Kill First* (New York: Random House 2018), 49.

42 Ibid., 157.

43 Bergman, *Rise and Kill First*, 208.

44 "Spy Legends Agency," Spy Legends, 2023 <https://www.spylegends.com/about-us>.

engagements, with a list of skilled personnel who had operational and field command of Israel's top clandestine operations.⁴⁵

In 2017, Duki Dror, an internationally acclaimed Israeli documentary filmmaker released *Inside the Mossad* a four-part miniseries that tracks the evolution of the Mossad from its inception to the modern day, and delves into the many clandestine operations they carried out, from the abduction of Adolf Eichman in Buenos Aires in May of 1960, to the assassination of Hezbollah's top military commander Imad Mughniyeh in Damascus in February 2008.⁴⁶ Dror's documentary features interviews with 18 top retired Mossad agents, ranging from field and case officers all the way to the top leadership, all of whom enthusiastically volunteered information about their careers and achievements. Yair Ravid, the head of the Mossad station in Lebanon from 1982 to 1985, is one of these informants that does not hold back and even goes as far as to publicly criticize the Israeli political establishment's decision to support the Lebanese Forces, an act which in his opinion further threatened Israel security. Ravid, known by his codename Abu Daoud, previously commanded the Northern Region of Unit 504, running agents in Lebanon and Syria and leading the establishment of the South Lebanon Army, commanded by Major Saad Haddad. After retirement, Abu Daoud published *Window to The Backyard: The History of Israel-Lebanon Relations – Facts & Illusions* in which he gives detailed accounts of the operations he ran in Lebanon, but he simply omits names or uses aliases.⁴⁷ In theory, Abu Daoud was the operational commander of Abu Rish, and any other deep cover Israeli operative which spoke Arabic to try to pass as a native.

In the case of Abu Rish however, the Israeli as well as the Arab sources are suspiciously silent and even went to the extent of denying that he was a spy. Interviewed via proxy, Abou Daoud unequivocally denied that Abu Rish was an Israeli spy and that any talk of this nature is mere imagination.⁴⁸ According to Abou Daoud "Israel did not need to go to all this trouble to get information from Lebanon, as we had a lot of friends including the Lebanese government and its various agencies which would share information with us when needed."⁴⁹ The old veteran spymaster who speaks perfect Arabic and possess all the mannerisms of a Lebanese, adds:

In Lebanon, Israel had two type of friends, people who wanted money and people who wanted gold. People who were after money were easy to handle

45 "Spy Legends Agency," Spy Legends, 2023 <https://www.spylegends.com/about-us>.

46 *Inside the Mossad*, directed by Duki Dror, script by Yossi Melman and Chen Shelach, (2017; Melbourne: Madman Entertainment), Netflix.

47 See: Yair Ravid, *Window to The Backyard: The History of Israel-Lebanon Relations – Facts & Illusions* (Yehud-Monson: Ofir Bikurim Publishing, 2016), Kindle.

48 Yair Ravid, interview by Makram Rabah, July, 2023. This interview was conducted through a proxy from Washington, DC.

49 Ibid.

while those who wanted gold were driven by power and a craving to dominate over the rest of the Lebanese.⁵⁰

As Mossad station chief, Abou Daoud was surprised by the passion of his contacts, who went out of their way to provide him with information on their mutual enemies the Palestinians or any of their allies.⁵¹ In addition to these assets, Abu Daoud, who built the relationship with the Lebanese Phalangist Party and its leader Bashir Gemayel, could simply call upon their infamous intelligence branch commanded by Elie Hobeika whose name was synonymous with the massacre of the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camp perpetrated in September of 1982.

Abou Daoud's disownment of Abu Rish and playing down the role he might have played throughout the seven years of his presence in Ras Beirut is ironically shared by the PLO and some members of Fatah. Ghassan Makarem, a Lebanese hailing from the Druze village of Ras al-Matn was amongst the first wave of young men who traveled to Syria in 1968 to join Fateh's training camps. At the tender age of 18, Makarem moved to Jordan to join his Fateh comrades in guerilla operations and raids into occupied Palestine.⁵² Makarem's zeal and dedication made him go up in the ranks until he was allowed to join Force 17, Fatah's Intelligence branch and Yasser Arafat's bodyguard corps commanded by Abu Hassan Salameh. Abu Talal—Makarem's *nom du guerre*—affirms that the person referred to as Abu Rish was not a serious operative and did not pose any real danger to Fatah's security. The PLO had five different security agencies operating in Beirut and Makarem confirms that all five including Force 17 had detained Abu Rish at one time or another and interrogated him, only to find that he was simply a disturbed man with no family to support him.⁵³ Makarem does not deny that the Mossad, especially after the assassination of Salameh, was able to infiltrate the PLO via local Lebanese and Palestinian spies, yet in the case of Abu Rish, his peripheral location and lack of access made him inconsequential. In this respect, Makarem confirms that Force 17 at one time apprehended a high-ranking PLO officer who was recruited by the Mossad to gather information about the PLO chairman and at one point commissioned him to assassinate Yasser Arafat. This Israeli spy was a duty officer in the PLO command and operations room and had access to both PLO correspondence as well as Arafat himself, yet "despite the millions he was offered was unable to morally carry out the hit."⁵⁴

50 Yair Ravid, interview by Makram Rabah, July, 2023. This interview was conducted through a proxy from Washington, DC.

51 Ravid, *Window to The Backyard*.

52 Ghassan Makarem, interview by Makram Rabah, Lebanon, July, 2023.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

Zahi Akra, a fellow Fatah member and a resident of Ardati Street where Abu Rish operated strongly disagrees with Makarem's assessment. Akra who joined AUB in 1970, was a very active member of Fatah's student branch and had in fact lived in Ras Beirut throughout his student years in AUB, until he left Lebanon in 1980 after finishing his Master's in History under the mentorship of Kamal Salibi. Akra was always suspicious of the dirty beggar that lived on his street, as he always felt that Abu Rish deliberately avoided him and when he did interact with him, the eccentric beggar kept the conversation to a minimum.⁵⁵ Akra clearly remembers how Abu Rish would at times sleep in the entrance of his building as he would get startled when Akra opened the gate at a late hour, only to go back to sleep.

At the time, Akra felt that something was not right about Abu Rish but he never thought that he might be an Israeli spy. While Abu Rish was always loitering around, at times he would vanish for a few weeks before resurfacing, but according to Akra more refreshed and energized and perhaps a bit cleaner than his usual self. In retrospect, Akra believes that Abu Rish would simply take these much-needed breaks in order to stay sane and possibly retreat to a Mossad safe house in the city to report on his findings and to get further instructions. Abu Rish's reporting mechanism and its obscurity adds to the mystery surrounding him, as he was never caught by the many agencies that arrested him in possession of any radio equipment or any documents that might implicate him in any espionage activity. This perplexing matter might be justified by Abu Rish's occasional disappearance from Ras Beirut, where he would have retreated to a safe house or simply might have been exfiltrated by sea to Israel, which justifies why he was located less than 1 km away from the beach. Another possible means of Abu Rish communicating with his handlers is through the network of foreign reporters in Beirut some of whom interviewed him for feature stories they were doing for their agencies, or so they claimed. According to Hassan Mneimneh, it was a common occurrence to see reporters chasing the feather man around to interview him, and try to understand why he was living on the streets with his colorful clothing and feathered cap. Hassan himself took a number of these reporters to see him, where they were interested to study Abu Rish as part of a bigger community of people who had suffered from PTSD and thus, they took to a life of a drifter and became conscientious objectors to the ongoing civil strife.⁵⁶

Beirut at the time was a vibrant scene to an assortment of Western correspondents who made their fame and fortune reporting on the ongoing civil war and using Lebanon as a base to travel around the region. Despite the security risks of living in Beirut, before 1982 the subsequent rise of Hezbollah, Westerners were not at risk of targeted killings or abductions. Ras Beirut became a safe haven for the likes of Thomas Friedman (*New York*

⁵⁵ Zahi Akra, interview by Makram Rabah, August, 2023.

⁵⁶ Mneimneh, interview.

Times), David Hirst (*The Guardian*), and Robert Fisk (*The Independent*) are a few of these iconic names that became synonymous with that period of time. While most of these journalists carried out their duties professionally, some were using their profession as a cover to work with their countries, or in many cases foreign intelligence agencies. Roger Auque, the French journalist, and later diplomat is a clear case in point. Auque who was a freelance journalist in Beirut during the Lebanese civil war had right-wing leanings which is why he was very close to the Lebanese Phalangist Party and made regular incursions into West Beirut. Consequently, Auque was abducted by Hezbollah in 1987 and was later ransomed by his government alongside another French Journalist, Jean-Louis Normandin, of Antenne 2 TV. Auque would go on to have a stellar career reporting on the region for several prominent outlets such as RTL, Le Figaro Magazine, Paris Match, and VSD. Yet Auque's autobiography, published postmortem, reveals a career spent working for the Israeli Mossad, something which came surprising to many of Auque's friends including Hassan Mneimneh.⁵⁷ Auque was shameless in relating his relationship with the Mossad and with his own country's *Direction générale de la Sécurité extérieure, DGSE*:

The Israeli intelligence services paid me to complete certain missions, such as secret missions in Syria under the cover of a reporter. These missions were at times very dangerous, and I risked the worst, including death in the case of failure. I traveled to Damascus a number of times in order to make contact with the local elite, doctors, researchers and others – all of whom wanted to emigrate to the United States. Every time I would get the equivalent to a month's wage.⁵⁸

While Auque was already a journalist when he was recruited to spy for Israel, the Mossad did in fact invest in building the profile and training its own agents to infiltrate the vast world of journalism. Such was the case of Patricia Roxborough a photojournalist whose Canadian passport hid her true identity as the South African born Mossad agent Sylvia Raphael.⁵⁹ Gifted with great beauty and trained in the art of espionage by the famed Moti Kfir, the commander of Unit 188's School for Special Operations, Raphael would be embedded in different capitals around the world including Beirut, where she is reported to have "assassinated several leading Palestinian militants

⁵⁷ Mneimneh, interview.

⁵⁸ Lior Zilberstein, "The Israeli agent behind enemy lines," *Ynet News* (Rishon LeZion), February 17, 2015, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4627312,00.html>. Also see: Roger Auque and Jean-Michel Verne, *Au service secret de la République* (Paris: Fayard, 2015).

⁵⁹ On Sylvia Rafael, see: Ram Oren, Ronna Englesberg, and Moti Kfir. *Sylvia Rafael: the Life and Death of a Mossad Spy*. (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2014).

based in Beirut, Lebanon, with letter bombs.”⁶⁰ Raphael was in fact on her way to the airport in Paris to catch a flight to Beirut, where she was instructed by her handler to check into the Sands Hotel, to arrange for the arrival of the Israeli hit squad who assassinated the three senior Black September leaders, a trip Syliva had to miss when she was hospitalized for severe appendicitis attack and was immediately operated on.⁶¹ Raphael was later arrested when the Mossad carried out a hit on Ali Hassan Salameh in Norway in 1973, only to turn out that they had in fact wrongly assassinated Ahmed Bouchikhi, a Moroccan waiter. As a result, six out of the 15-member hit team, including Raphael was arrested and sentenced to jail, only to be released two years later.⁶²

Interestingly, while Abu Rish was always the center of these so-called reporters’ attention, they never filed any stories about him despite the many presumed interviews and pictures they took of him. The only instances of Abu Rish making it into the press came after his discovery as a spy. Three pictures of him taken before 1982 appear in the daily *As-Safir* Newspaper⁶³ as well as less than a minute and a half in Jocelyne Saab’s *Beyrouth Ma Ville*, a 38-minute documentary produced directly following the Israeli invasion in 1982.⁶⁴

Unknown to Saab, her camera caught the beggar-spy in front of Ahmad Fathallah Corner Sport carrying out his chores that included washing the neighborhood cars. Saab’s commentary on Abu Rish reflected her anger towards a ruined city which she compared to a brothel:

We had a crazy man in town Abu Riche pretty and poisonous flower in a gangrenous city when we filmed him, we had no idea he was a spy an Israeli soldier in disguise we didn’t know what Beirut was hiding nor did he or the people who put him there. Man, always believes what he sees and what he sees always ends up cheating him. He wasn’t crazy and the city wasn’t what it seemed to be. Beirut, a whore house, a whore city, a stepmother city. That’s how we felt about it before that’s how we talked about it. Money, spying, aggressive and destructive modernity.⁶⁵

60 Ronen Bergman, “An Israeli Spy Who Roamed in Plain Sight, Behind a Lens,” *New York Times: New York Edition*, March 14, 2023.

61 Oren, Englesberg, and Kfir, *Sylvia Rafael*, 169-170.

62 Ibid., 187-195.

63 Three pictures of Abu Rish are filed in As-Safir archives on 25-10-1982 entitled “The Israeli spy in Beirut, an officer in the Israeli army, plays the role of a beggar, and they call him (Abu Al-Rish),” without any corresponding article.

64 *Beyrouth, Ma Ville*, directed by Jocelyne Saab (1982; Paris, Aleph Production). Timestamp 07:15.

65 Saab, *Beyrouth, Ma Ville*.



Figure 6 - Abu Rish from footage taken by Jocelyne Saab doing chores in front of Ahmad Fathallah's shop Corner Sport.



Figure 7 - Abu Rish the Feather man of Ras Beirut.



Figure 8 - Abu Rish washing cars for tips.

5 The Begger-in-Uniform

In the summer of 1982, the truth surrounding Abu Rish was settled by the columns of the Israeli marching army which launched Operation Peace for Galilee, which meant to expel the PLO and ultimately sign a peace treaty with Lebanon. The Mossad and the official PLO refutation of the spy status of Abu Rish is easily debunked by a number of testimonies of residents of Beirut who saw him as part of the invading Israeli army in the summer of 1982. Shortly before the Israeli invasion in June of 1982, Abu Rish vanished from the streets of Beirut only to reappear clean shaven and wearing an Israeli army officer's uniform, but this time accompanied by troops he commanded as they systematically combed Beirut for 'saboteurs'—a name the Israelis used to refer to their Palestinian enemies—as well as weapons caches. The return of Abu Rish is a prominent urban myth in Beirut. As the story goes, once the Israelis entered Ras Beirut an Israeli Jeep drove down Bliss Street all the way to where Abu Rish used to squat, after which an officer steps out of the Jeep and walked towards the beggar who was sleeping on the ground and saluted him, to which Abu Rish replied "why did it take you so long [to invade]". Accordingly, the public wrongly confirms that Abu Rish stayed in Beirut during the siege of the city and helped direct the Israeli planes to their targets. Realistically, this narrative has a number of errors which harms its credibility, as Abu Rish according to all the sources interviewed had left the area months before the Israeli invasion started. Moreover, Ras Beirut and the area he frequented was never heavily shelled by the Israeli army or the air force, contrary to other locations around the city and specifically in the area known as al-Fakhani near the Arab University where the PLO headquarters was situated. Therefore, the ceremonial salute the dirty beggar got from the Israeli officer would have been impossible given the aforementioned evidence.

Be that as it may, after September 1, 1982, the date of the PLO's withdrawal from Beirut, Abu Rish was spotted in different locations around Ras Beirut. General Salim Slim who had questioned Abu Rish back in 1977, was flabbergasted when two Israeli officers stormed his office in *Makhfar Hbeish* (Ras Beirut Police Station), one of which was the infamous beggar. Abu Rish who never identified himself by his real name, addressed his compatriot in Arabic saying "this man [Slim] is a gentlemen, he never bullied me."⁶⁶ Abu Rish and his companion were interested in a list of names of local Beirut Druze families which they wanted information and access to and they were hoping that Slim as a fellow Druze can help on this matter.⁶⁷ Slim was quick to respond that he had no intention nor capacity to help out and that his mandate as a police officer forbade him from accommodating their request. It was clear for Slim, that Abu Rish had been surveying

66 Slim, interview.

67 Ibid.

the Druze families of Beirut, most of which were residents of Ras Beirut and were active members of Walid Joumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party, a key ally of the PLO.

Most of the Abu Rish sighting(s) in uniform were of him standing on various roadblocks across Beirut, but the most prominent sightings were those of him manning a roadblock opposite the famous Tokyo restaurant right across *al-Riyadi Club* in Manara, just down the road where his old squatting shed was located. Salam Kawakibi, the great-grandson of Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, the famous Syrian intellectual from the city of Aleppo, was eyewitness to this. Shortly after the PLO's exodus from the Beirut, Salam accompanied his family on a trip to Beirut to check up on their relatives who used to live in Ras Beirut, a trip which they used to do quite often and at times even spend summers there. Salam, who is now the Director of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Paris, recalls as a boy how he would see Abu Rish in his beggar persona, but during his summer trip in 1982 he was startled to see him in military uniform as he stopped his relative's car. Abu Rish stuck his head in the car window before he took a step back and gave orders to his men "you can let them go; these folks are from my neighborhood."⁶⁸

Both of Abu Rish's next-door neighbors would confirm Abu Rish's military status, Zahi Akra who had left Beirut by 1980, was amazed to see a picture of the mad beggar in Israeli uniform on the pages of the *Daily Telegraph*. Akra noticed a young man in fatigues onboard an Israeli Jeep and the caption read "an Israeli officer with the rank of *Aluf* (Major General), previously embedded as a spy in the streets of Beirut"⁶⁹ Zahi might have mixed up the rank of Abu Rish as his age did not permit him to achieve this rank however, he would have been a rank of *Sgan Aluf* (lieutenant colonel) which is a more plausible rank for someone in the age range of 35-40.⁷⁰ While I was not able to locate this specific picture, Zahi's tale is corroborated in a *Daily Telegraph* article "Israeli spies pinpointed Israeli Targets" that mentions Abu Rish and also tells of other similar spies who were spread out across Beirut.⁷¹ The *Telegraph's* Beirut correspondent, Ian Glover-James, through a series of interviews confirms the presence of this deep-cover Israeli spy ring which harbored Abu Rish and people with his same profile. According to Glover-James:

One widely reported case in Beirut was that of a tramp who camped in a shelter of packing cases and refuse opposite the former Syrian intelligence office in Rue Hamra. He is known as "Mr. Feather" because of the feathers in his hair, wore ribbons, rang a bell and was regarded as a harmless eccentric. Perhaps the only clue to his being more sinister was an apparent ability to

⁶⁸ Salam Kawakibi, interview by Makram Rabah, Amman, July, 2023.

⁶⁹ Akra, interview.

⁷⁰ In the 1970 the Israel army regulation permitted an officer to achieve this rank by the age of 33, since then the age limit has been raised.

⁷¹ Ian Glover-James, "Spies pinpointed Beirut targets," *The Daily Telegraph*, October 2, 1983.

speak four languages and a habit of sitting in the Goethe Institute reading German literature. Just before Israel launched its June 6 invasion of Lebanon he disappeared. He was next recognized at the beginning of September in East Beirut in an Israeli uniform with the rank of captain guiding search teams hunting guerrilla suspects.⁷²

The *Telegraph* article also tells of a cassette street vendor who used to annoy a famous Gynecologist at Fouad Khoury Hospital a few blocks from AUB by playing his music collection out loud to solicit sales. Despite the physician's continuous complaints to the vendor that this was annoying to the patients, the loud music persisted. Shortly after the Israeli invasion, Dr. Fayez Suidan, one of Lebanon's renowned obstetrics and gynecology surgeons from Palestinian decent, was startled when an Israeli officer stuck his head through his car window and smiled, "should I apologize for all the disturbances I caused you", conveniently its was none other than the rowdy cassette vendor.⁷³ Marie Thérèse Akil, Serge's mother, heard this same story from Dr. Suidan in person, when she visited him in his clinic. Marie Thérèse, who used to give the drifter food, had her own Abu Rish sighting but on the covers of *Confidences*, a weekly women's magazine she used to purchase regularly from Librairie Antoine in Hamra.⁷⁴

6 Where on Earth is Abu Rish?

The fact that Abu Rish was sighted on numerous occasions in uniform is beyond established, and thus the insistence and sly denial of Abou Daoud, Abu Rish's superior, that he was nothing more than a mere eccentric beggar makes the quests to find him even more interesting. As 41 years have passed, there are a few plausible explanations why the real identity and full story of Abu Rish is still an Israeli classified secret. One strong reason is that the character of Abu Rish is still active in Israeli politics, or he might have a key governmental position, and that he himself wishes not to shed light on his previous clandestine career. Second, although unlikely given that he is almost in his late seventies, Abu Rish might be still operative and undercover somewhere outside Israel, perhaps as an ambassador, or he might have family members who have followed in his footsteps, making discretion a must. Finally, the polyglot spy may wish to spend his retirement years in peace, unbothered by the constant interview requests and badgering of the media and scholars, such as the author of this study.

⁷² Ian Glover-James, "Spies pinpointed Beirut targets," *The Daily Telegraph*, October 2, 1983.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Akil, interview.

The quest to reveal the complete mysterious story of Abu Rish persists, yet the different bites of information at our disposal has thus far presented a microhistory of both a master spy with a mission in a city which became a main focus in the destructive game of nations. Abdulrahim Abu-Husayn and Abu Rish occupied the same world of Ras Beirut at least between 1977 to 1982, and while Abu-Husayn germophobic character and shy nature made him avoid talking or even approach him, others were more adventurous.⁷⁵

For an entire generation of young men and women who grew up around Ras Beirut, Abu Rish was their check-in point on their way to the beach on a hot summer day, and to others who lived in his immediate vicinity a friend who they snuck food to; a kind beggar who helped them solve their homework and even practice their English. The search for Abu Rish, like that of the stories of the people of Ras Beirut and beyond can only give us a better understanding of a city which in unison with AUB made this beggar sleep on the streets and eat from the garbage awaiting his big hunt, a city which still has the capacity to captivate and enchant its locals and its adopted children alike.

75 Abu Husayn confirmed to me that he indeed did see Abu Rish around, yet he never made any attempt to learn more about him or to even talk to him.

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Authors' Biographies

Abderrahim Benhadda is Professor of History for Graduate Studies at the Doha Institute. His research focuses on Ottoman and Moroccan history between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. He is also interested in the history of historiographies in Turkey and Morocco. His recent book is entitled *Turkish Historiographies: How Turkish Wrote Ottoman History 1860–1973* (The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 2022). He is writing another book titled *Writing History in Morocco 1956–2020*.

Tylor Brand is Assistant Professor of Near and Middle Eastern Studies at Trinity College, Dublin, where he specializes in the history of crisis, disease, and famine in the modern Middle East. His monograph, *Famine Worlds: Life at the Edge of Suffering in Lebanon's Great War* (Stanford University Press, 2023), examines the social and personal impacts of the Lebanese famine of World War I. He received his PhD from the Department of History and Archaeology at the American University of Beirut in 2014.

Tufan Ş. Buzpınar is Professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Istanbul Medipol University. He received his BA from Ankara University in 1984, and his MA and PhD degrees from the University of Manchester in 1986 and 1991. He is the author of *Hilafet ve Saltanat: II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Halifelik ve Araplar* (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2016) and *Abdulhamid II, Islam and the Arabs: Ottoman Rule in Syria and the Hijaz 1878–1882* (The Isis Press, 2021).

Abdul Rahman Chamseddine is Assistant Professor of Arabic Language and Culture at Georgetown University in Qatar. His research focuses on the history of Islamic terminology from early Islam, particularly on Quranic terms that describe religious identities, about which he has published peer-reviewed articles in English and Arabic. His work in this area includes the recently published book *Qur'anic Identities* هويات قرآنية (Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 2023). His ongoing book project, *Listening to the Sacred*, examines the nature of the Quranic language as an oral recitation rather than a written script.

Christiane Czygan is Researcher of Islamic Studies at the University of Bonn. She is interested in the dynamics and concepts of rulership and their modes of communication in poetry and in the press. She is the author of *Zur Ordnung des Staates: Jungosmanische Intellektuelle und ihre Konzepte in der Zeitung Hürriyyet (1868–1870)* (DeGruyter, 2020). She is currently working on her second book, a hitherto unedited poem collection by Sultan Süleyman from 1554.

Selim Deringil is Professor of History in the Humanities Department at the Lebanese American University. His interests are cultural and intellectual history, with a focus on comparative themes in Ottoman and European history. His recent book, *Conversion and Apostasy in the late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), won the Fuad Koprulu Book Prize for 2013. He has held various teaching positions in Turkey, the United States, Britain, and France. His works, which include six books and numerous articles, appear in Turkish, English, French, Hungarian, Greek, and Japanese.

Nadia El Cheikh is scholar of the Abbasid Caliphate and Byzantium, with women and gender as a focal point of her research. Her publications include *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs, 2004) and *Women, Islam and Abbasid Identity* (Harvard University Press, 2015).

Khaled El-Rouayheb is Richard James Jewett Professor of Arabic and Islamic Intellectual History at Harvard University. His research focuses on Islamic intellectual history, especially in the early-modern period and the history of Arabic logic. He is the author of *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and *The Development of Arabic Logic, 1200–1800* (Schwabe Verlag, 2019).

Charles al-Hayek is a history instructor whose work focuses on making history and cultural heritage accessible to a wide audience. He is the founder and curator of “Heritage and Roots,” a platform that breaks down complex historical concepts, presents them in engaging and relatable ways, and ensures that the broader public can connect with history and cultural heritage on a personal level. His expertise includes conceptualizing and implementing educational cultural heritage projects and the production of docuseries such as “Lebanon’s Centennial: A Hundred Years of Fact and Fiction” (CAH-AUB), “The Arab World in 30 Monuments” (Arab Thought Foundation), and “Lebanon in a Story” (LBCI).

Hasan Kayalı is Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego. He received his doctorate in History and Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University. He has written on the administration of Arab provinces in the late Ottoman Empire and the Middle East transition from empire to nation-states. He has authored *Imperial Resilience: The Great War’s End, Ottoman Longevity, and Incidental Nations* (University of

California Press, 2021) and *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Second Constitutional Period of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (University of California Press, 1997).

Barbara Kellner-Heinkele is Professor Emerita and founder of the Institute of Turkic Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. Her published and edited work focuses on the history and culture of the steppe peoples from the fifteenth-eighteenth century, the Central Asian dominions, and the cultural and institutional history of the Ottoman empire in the eighteenth-nineteenth century. She is particularly interested in unique and autograph manuscripts, which has led to her involvement in the international and interdisciplinary cooperation on egodocuments. She is co-editor of *Archivum Ottomanicum*.

Mario Kozah is Assistant Professor of Islamic History in the Department of Humanities at the College of Arts and Sciences, Qatar University.

Tobias Mörike is curator with a regional focus on West Asia and North Africa at the Weltmuseum Wien in Austria. He was part of the exhibition team *Science Fiction(s): If there Were a Tomorrow* (Weltmuseum Wien, 2023). He was also head of the Islamic Art Department at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg, Germany, where he curated *Be with the Revolution* (2021), *Syria 2087*, *Anna Banout* (2020), and *The Blue Hour, Khaled Barakeh*. He earned his PhD at Erfurt University, with a dissertation on the collections and maps of German Palestine exploration. Among his research interests are the history of Maronites in Europe, the history of maps and collections, and the history of science in Arabic.

Suleiman A. Mourad is Myra M. Sampson Professor of Religion at Smith College. His research focuses on Islamic history, religious thought and legal traditions in the medieval and modern periods. His publications include *The Mosaic of Islam* (Verso, 2016) and *Muslim Sources of the Crusader Period* (Hackett, 2021). He also writes op-eds and contributes to podcasts and documentaries on historical and current issues; he has a weekly column in *180Post.com*.

Bilal Orfali, is Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American University of Beirut. He specializes in Arabic literature, Sufism, and Qur'ānic Studies. He is the author and editor of more than twenty books on Arabic studies. His recent publications include *Radiant Lights* (Brill, 2022), *The Maqāmāt of Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī: Authorship, Texts and Contexts* (Reichert Verlag, 2022), *Mysticism and Ethics in Islam* (AUB Press, 2022), *Approaches to the Study of Pre-modern Arabic Anthologies* (Brill, 2021), *Light Upon Light* (Brill, 2019), and *Insatiable Appetite: Food as Cultural Signifier in the Middle East and Beyond* (Brill, 2019).

Michael Provence is Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego. He is the author of *The Great Syrian Revolt* (University of Texas Press, 2005) and *The Last Ottoman Generation* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). Both books have been translated to Arabic and Turkish. He was a visiting assistant professor at the American University of Beirut (AUB) in 2005–2006, and has visited often since. He cherishes his connection to AUB and the Department of History and Archeology.

Makram Rabah is Assistant Professor of History at the American University of Beirut. Rabah holds a PhD in History from Georgetown University and a law degree from the Lebanese University. His research interests include the modern Middle East, the modern history of Lebanon, the Lebanese Civil War, and the role of memory in the reconciliation process. He is the author of *A Campus at War: Student Politics at the American University of Beirut 1967-1975* (Dar Nelson, 2009). His recent book, *Conflict on Mount Lebanon: The Druze, the Maronites and Collective Memory* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020) covers collective identities and the Lebanese Civil War.

James A. Reilly is Professor Emeritus of Modern Arab and Middle Eastern History at the University of Toronto. He is the author of *A Small Town in Syria: Ottoman Hama in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (P. Lang, 2002), *The Ottoman Cities of Lebanon: Historical Legacy and Identity in the Modern Middle East* (I.B. Tauris, 2016), and *Fragile Nation, Shattered Land: The Modern History of Syria* (I.B. Tauris, 2019).

Hélène Sader is tenured Professor of Archaeology in the Department of History and Archaeology at the American University of Beirut. She received her PhD in Assyriology and Northwest Semitic Epigraphy from the University of Tübingen in 1984. Her main research interests are the archaeology and history of Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine—mainly the Iron Age—and Phoenician epigraphy.

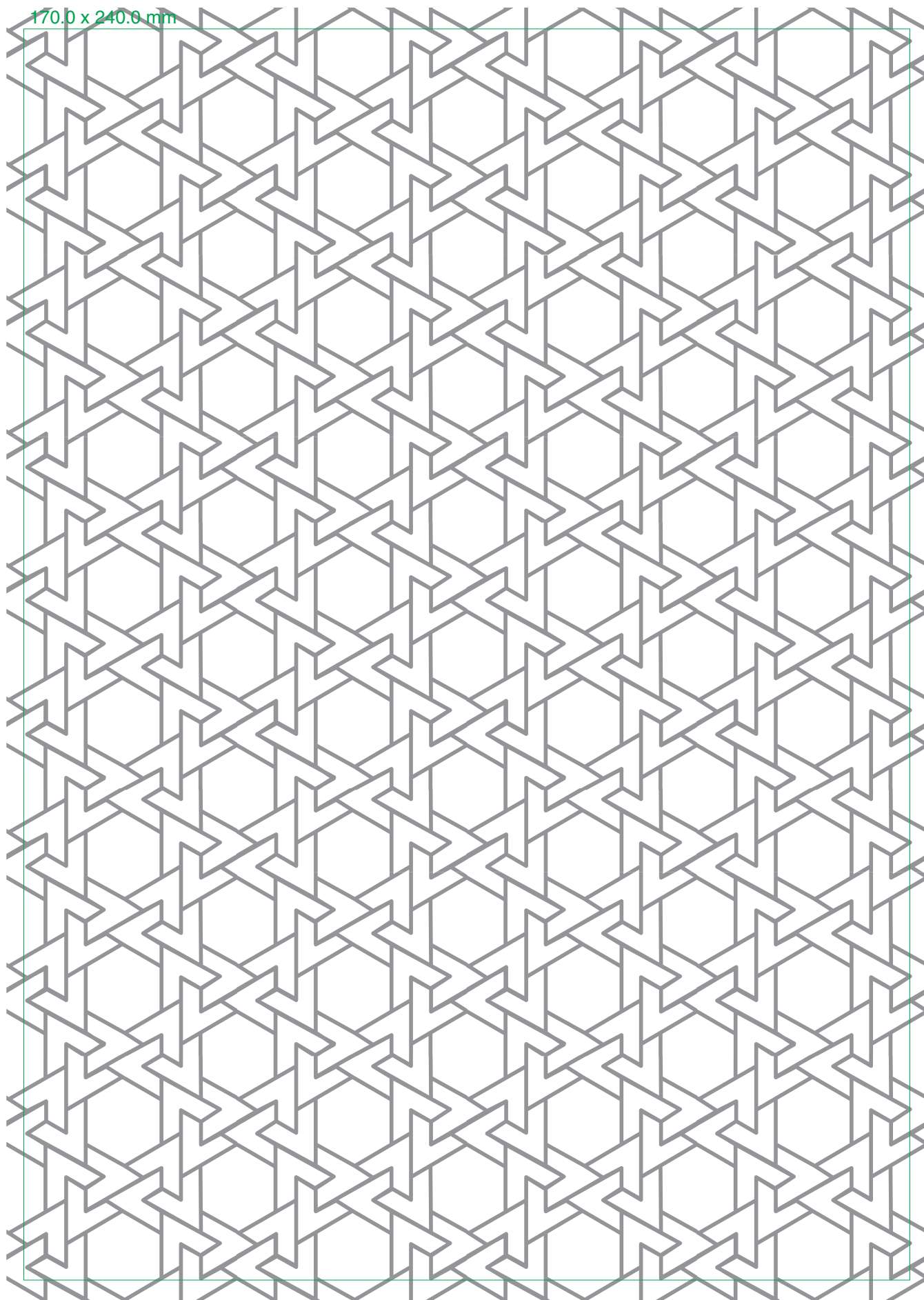
Samir Seikaly is Emeritus Professor and a long-time member, and frequent chairperson, of the Department of History and Archaeology, and the Civilization Sequence Program at the American University of Beirut. He was appointed to the Shawwaf Visiting Professorship during the spring term of the academic year 2021–22 in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University.

Rana Siblini is Lecturer of Arabic Language and Culture at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. She received her PhD in Arabic Language and Literature from Münster University in Germany. Her research interests focus on pre-modern Arabic poetry, society and literary practices, and nostalgia studies. She is co-author of *An Uprising in Teaching Arabic Language* (the Arab-German Young Academy, 2016), and co-editor of the volume *Arabic and Knowledge Production* (Dar al-Machreq, 2022), published in Arabic.

Elizabeth F. Thompson is Mohamed S. Farsi Chair of Islamic Peace at the American University in Washington D.C. Her most recent book is *How the West Stole Democracy from the Arabs: The Syrian Congress of 1920 and the Destruction of its Historic Liberal-Islamic Alliance* (Grove Press, 2021).

Alexis Wick is Associate Professor in the Department of History at Koç University. Among other publications, he is the author of *The Red Sea: In Search of Lost Space* (University of California Press, 2016) and the editor of the forthcoming *Cambridge Companion to Ottoman History*.

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