

**Reckoning with the Past:  
The History and Historiography of the Kisrawan Uprising**

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## Abstract

*Nearly two decades after the restoration of Ottoman rule in Greater Syria and the proclamation of the Tanzimat reform project, Mount Lebanon became the site of large sustained popular mobilizations. In the district of Kisrawan, villagers banded together under a central committee and expelled the ruling landowning families while claiming a space in the political structure of the Qa'immaqamiyya in direct reference to the Tanzimat reforms. This study positions itself against two dominant tendencies in the scholarship of the revolt which present the event either as a reaction to the destructive effects of European commercial action on Mount Lebanon's society, or as a result of new forms of political consciousness generated at the site of various imperial encounters which inadvertently opened the door to "popular" participation in the formerly closed domain of politics. This study seeks to locate the historical conditions which made this phenomenon possible at the interstices between longue-durée shifts in the region's social structure, and rapidly emerging dynamics in the period 1830-1860 which shaped the vast expansion of commercial relations and the political re-ordering of Mount Lebanon. I argue that the form, timing, and content of the political movement known as the "Kisrawan uprising" of 1858-1860, was intricately shaped within the context of expanding commercial relations and shifting boundaries of the "state" and "reform" as they were experienced by local actors. In doing so, this study attempts to re-think the forces shaping political movements in Mount Lebanon which have been characterized as a new form of popular engagement with "Tanzimat politics".*

## Résumé

*Près de deux décennies suivant la restauration de la souveraineté Ottomane en Syrie, et la proclamation du projet de réforme Tanzimat, le Mont Liban est devenu le lieu des plus grandes mobilisations politiques populaires de l'histoire moderne de la région. Dans le district du Kisrawan au Mont Liban, les villageois se sont regroupés en un comité central et ont expulsé les cheikhs de la famille Khazin, les célèbres fermiers d'impôts du district, en revendiquant une place dans la structure politique du Qa'immaqamiyya, et ce en faisant directement référence aux discours des réformes Tanzimat. Cette étude se positionne contre deux tendances dominantes dans l'historiographie de la révolte : celle-ci présente l'évènement soit comme une réaction aux effets destructeurs de l'action commerciale européenne sur la société du Mont Liban; soit une manifestation de nouvelles formes de conscience politique générées suite à diverses rencontres impériales qui, par inadvertance, ont ouvert la porte à la participation « populaire » dans un domaine autrefois fermée de la politique. Cette étude cherche à analyser les conditions historiques qui ont rendu ce phénomène possible dans les interstices des changements de longue-durée dans la structure sociale du Mont Liban, et des dynamiques émergentes dans la période 1830-1860, qui ont façonné le phénomène d'une vaste expansion de relations commerciales et de la politique de « restauration » au Mont-Liban. Je soutiens que la forme, et le caractère des demandes du mouvement politique de 1858-1860, a été façonné dans le contexte de l'expansion des relations commerciales, des frontières des institutions de « l'état », ainsi que l'expérience vécue des réformes par les acteurs locaux. Cette étude tente de repenser les forces historiques qui ont donné lieu à une nouvelle forme d'engagement populaire avec la politique du « Tanzimat. »*

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## Introduction

“The news is known to have reached your noble ears of the disputes existing among the family of Their Excellencies the Khazin Shaikhs because of their devious plans about which they have their secret thoughts. (...) All this time we kept quiet, hoping that this was a temporary incident and would pass away and cease, and desiring to keep the peace and taking into consideration the nobility of their forefathers. Now, upon thorough consideration and deliberations upon that matter by all of us, we have found that the past, as compared to the present and the future, is to be reckoned as nothing.”<sup>1</sup>

In the early months of 1858, the districts of Mount Lebanon, a mountainous region in the province of Saida (Sidon) in Ottoman Syria, became the site of widespread political unrest. Conflict over the successor to the deceased *qa'immaqam* (district governor) of the “Christian districts” of Mount Lebanon, Haydar Abi Lami', had steadily built up over the course of the previous year, and now threatened to tear apart the political structure of the northern *qa'immaqamiyya* (sub-governorate) of Mount Lebanon. The political-administrative entity faced its biggest challenge as members of the districts' predominant landowning families rallied villagers to successfully drive out the ruling *qa'immaqam* of the northern districts. The *de facto* suspension of the ruling *qa'immaqam* was quickly followed by the expansion of an autonomous “popular” movement which began to coalesce among the villages of the Kisrawan district, taking an altogether different trajectory. By Christmas Eve of 1858, the villages elected *wakala* (delegates) to represent them, uniting under the leadership of a *wakil al-'amm* (general representative), and the umbrella of a central committee. Within one month, the villagers expelled the ruling landowning family of Kisrawan, the Khazins, claiming a space in the local political structure in direct reference to Ottoman Imperial reform edicts which had been promulgated in 1839 and 1856. For over two years (1858-1860), the district came under the informal control of this central

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<sup>1</sup> Letter addressed to the Maronite Patriarch, Bulus Mas'ad from the “people” of ten villages of the district of Kisrawan, announcing their decision to unite against the Khazin family, the predominant landowning family with ties to the political structure of the *qa'immaqamiyya* (sub-governorate) of Mount Lebanon. Antun Dahir al-'Aqqi, *Thawra wa fitna fi Lubnan: Safha majhula min tarikh al-jabal min 1841 ila 1873*. Ed. Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbak (Beirut: Matba'at al-Ittihad, 1938), 169.

committee representing the “united” villages of Kisrawan, until a negotiated settlement on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1860, dissolved the committee and allowed for the return of members of the Khazin family to reclaim their property and status in the district.

The timing of the revolt was particularly tumultuous as it coincided with unprecedented levels of intervention into local society, both by an imperial “center” seeking to carry out its reform project while re-imposing its sovereignty over Greater Syria following the nine year occupation of the region by the troops of Muhammad ‘Ali, and a vastly expanded political and commercial presence by European powers seeking to extend themselves into the Ottoman interior. Despite the picture of outside intervention, the story of Kisrawan’s sustained popular mobilization cannot be told solely through the actions of external actors seeking to reshape the local terrain according to their interests. This study seeks to locate the historical conditions which made this phenomenon possible at the interstices between *longue-durée* shifts in the region’s social structure, and rapidly emerging dynamics in the period 1830-1860 which shaped the expansion of commercial relations and the political re-ordering of Mount Lebanon.

My study focuses on the most sustained popular uprising in the modern history of Ottoman Mount Lebanon, the “Kisrawan uprising” of 1858. The story of this movement finds itself at the center of myriad historical processes, inhabiting several historiographical areas worthy of examination. I analyze the accounts of the uprising as represented in English and French scholarship, highlighting the Eurocentric narratives which have framed the interpretations of the event. I attempt to counter this tendency by placing the political contests of the mid-nineteenth century at the intersection of broad processes irreducible to “external” agents of change. To construct a picture of the region’s long-term transformation leading up to the mid-nineteenth century, I examine the changes in the social structure and configurations of rural life in Mount Lebanon during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on the impact of imperial processes of reform, the privatization of the fiscal system, commercialization of

agricultural production, shifts in land tenure patterns and the rise of new social groups associated with these changes. Furthermore, by showing how processes of political centralization overlapped with expanding commercial relations between 1830 and 1860, I argue that the historical conditions which enabled the Kisrawan uprising to occur should be seen as the result of several long-durée changes in the social structure of Mount Lebanon and the more immediate experience of Ottoman reform.

The first chapter of my thesis examines the modern historiography of the Kisrawan uprising as represented in English and French scholarship. The chapter reviews a broad range of methodological and theoretical approaches (from *Annales School* to *Subaltern Studies*) to the study of the event, and argues that common to these works is a reliance on a heavily Eurocentric discourse which presents the mid-nineteenth century as a period of abrupt change in which an “ancient regime” is brought to destruction through externally-driven processes. This common narrative framework, which serves as a key component of the interpretation of the uprising, largely fails to account for any “internal” processes of change, relying almost exclusively on external actors to explain historical developments. The contact with the exterior (construed as “European”), marks the departure from a “traditional” society to a new era of modernity. In all cases, the synecdochic link between modernity in Lebanon and the Kisrawan uprising depends on the radical ruptures of the mid-nineteenth century associated with the arrival of European capital, and the restoration of Ottoman rule. Furthermore, the true “essence” of this modernity is implicitly tied to the causal accounts of the uprising, whose “sectarian” or “class” origins are alternatively debated as forces congruent with modernity. This chapter builds on and contributes to the scarce body of literature on Lebanese historiography, adding to the existing scholarship which examines the foundational events of Lebanese nationalist historiography.

Chapter two builds on the critique outlined above, examining the changes in the social structure and configurations of rural life in Mount Lebanon during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It focuses on the commercialization of agriculture and changes in land tenure patterns, in order to provide a *longue-*

*durée* account against which the changes associated with the renewed European presence in the region can be re-evaluated. By calling into question this key element of the narrative framework underpinning the interpretations of the “revolt” of 1858, I challenge the causal accounts outlined in the historiography and open the possibility for an alternate explanation of the emerging forms of rural politics in the mid-nineteenth century.

Chapter three examines the period between 1830 and 1860, arguing that the revolt is intricately tied to two overlapping processes which were accelerated during this time— political centralization and expanding commercial relations. I argue that the manner in which these processes overlapped significantly shaped the experience of “reform” for a wide range of actors, giving rise to multiple layers of conflict in the process. In the context of increased competition and the increasing “formalization” of commercial practices, these overlapping processes gave rise to significant tension triggering a series of political crises from which the uprising of 1858 emerged. Tracing the political and economic changes between 1830 and 1860, the chapter begins by looking at the combined impact of political-administrative measures introduced during the Egyptian occupation, a shifting “geography of trade”, and a reconfiguration of political and economic power as part of a broader shifting urban-rural dynamic. I then focus on the restoration of Ottoman rule between 1840 and 1860 which followed the expulsion of Muhammad ‘Ali’s troops from Greater Syria and introduced significant reforms such as the establishment of new juridical and administrative bodies in Mount Lebanon and Beirut. I argue that the effect of Ottoman reform was complex and engendered multiple levels of conflict which centered on the struggle over control of the rural surplus. Rather than shattering the previous “social order”, as some have argued, it in many ways strengthened local political coalitions, and brought to a point of crisis multiple tensions relating to changing urban-rural relations over trade and commercial agricultural production.



Chapter four seeks to locate the political mobilization of the 1850s in Mount Lebanon and Beirut within the context outlined above, arguing that the 1858 uprising emerged out of several overlapping forms of collective action which can be read as responses to the wide range of conflicts which developed during the period of restoration. Paying attention to the movements which enabled the uprising to emerge, the chapter moves on to analyse the crystallization of the political movement, arguing that in terms of its social composition and the demands it presented, it should be understood as a new form of politics which sought to redefine the boundaries of political representation. Although it was ultimately a creative event, the revolt was contingent upon several political struggles ongoing during this period, its forms and demands inextricably linked to the overlapping formalization of political power with commercial expansion.

By combining an analysis of the recorded official correspondence from the office of the main juridical-administrative body in Mount Lebanon, in the four years preceding the revolt (1854-58), with signed petitions and the accounts of chroniclers contemporaneous to the events, I was able to shine additional light on the social background of the revolt's leadership. This is a direct contribution to the literature on the revolt, which has been characterized by a lack of information on this subject.<sup>2</sup> By clarifying the social composition of the leadership of the revolt, this study outlines the multiplicity of conflicts involved and helps to attain a better understanding of the revolt's outbreak than can be provided by the usual recourse in the scholarly literature to increased "oppression" and economic hardship as driving the revolt. This allows, among other things, for an examination of the Kisrawan uprising in relation to the growing conflict between urban-based commercial networks seeking to absorb Mount Lebanon within its economic, political, and legal spheres, and other networks of actors with direct access to political power in the countryside. Focusing on these dynamics allows us to move

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<sup>2</sup> The lack of clear background of the "rebels" has been noted by scholars. See for example Thomas Philipp's review of Axel Havemann's study on the Kisrawan Uprising: Thomas Phillip, Review of *Bewegungen im Libanongebirge des 19. Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zur Problematik sozialer Veränderungen* by Axel Havemann. *American Historical Review* 90, no.2 (Feb., 1985): 193-94.

our understanding away from Eurocentric accounts, challenging the historical accounts of the process of “integration” of Mount Lebanon into the European-dominated world economy, which have underestimated the solidity of local structures.

### **Sources and Methodology**

Most accounts of the revolt rely heavily on British and French consular sources as well as contemporaneous chroniclers of Mount Lebanon. In addition to these sources, I relied on the published records of the *qa'immaqam* (district governor) of the “Christian” districts of Mount Lebanon between the years 1854 and 1860.<sup>3</sup> Through a careful reading of the correspondence between local actors and the *qa'immaqam*, I was able to discern aspects which were largely obscured in the European sources, most notably the politics of “reform” and commercial expansion as managed by the newly established administrative bodies, which allowed a new aspect to introduce itself into the study, shedding light on the overlapping processes of political centralization and expansion of commercial relations. By making use of these historical documents as sources, I have sought to re-interpret aspects of the process of “integration” which have too often been written from the perspective of European agents, presenting a triumphalist account of European-driven capitalist development in the region.

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<sup>3</sup> The records for the years 1854-1860 are published, unedited and in the original Arabic in: Salim Hasan Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat al-qa'imaqamiyya al-nasraniyya fi Jabal Lubnan*. 4 vols. (Beirut, n.p., 1976)

## Chapter One: Narrating Revolt: A Revision of the Historiography of the Kisrawan Uprising

### Introduction

The rural unrest of Ottoman Mount Lebanon during the middle of the nineteenth century has generated a considerable amount of scholarly attention.<sup>1</sup> What has been called the “Kisrawan uprising” by historians broke out in the early spring of 1858 in the Kisrawan district of Ottoman Mount Lebanon. There is a general agreement that the “uprising” began as villagers across this district began organizing themselves, electing representatives and putting forth a series of demands in the form of petitions. Soon after, these villagers expelled members of the Khazin family, the predominant landholding family in the area, and expropriated their land. The villagers established a governing body with elected representatives, effectively replacing the existing political system for over a year. In the middle of the year 1860, some villagers from the Kisrawan district began to mobilize under the leadership of the governing body, moving into southern parts of the mountain at a time when episodes of mass violence between villagers in the region were being reported. A variety of contemporaneous actors ranging from European consular officials, local Ottoman administrators, and chroniclers, produced a significant body of writings surrounding these events. Alongside these accounts, various stakeholders in the conflict created a large archive, preserving the demands of the participants of the “uprising” and their correspondence with implicated parties. This provided the base for a substantial historiography to arise.

Viewed against a meagre historiography of rural revolts in the “Middle East” and with the now commonly accepted insight that an event’s historiographic “presence” cannot be explained in terms of its “actual” relevance, the proliferation of writings on the 1858 Kisrawan uprising seem even more curious.<sup>2</sup> This chapter attempts a selective investigation of the historiography, focusing on the English

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Owen for instance, writes that “Events in the Kisrawan have been endlessly written about, almost to the exclusion of other places.” Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1981), 322.

<sup>2</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1995), 19.

and French secondary literature in order to examine the dominant themes and approaches to the event. A close reading of these texts reveals a persistent tendency to emplot the Kisrawan uprising within larger narratives of Mount Lebanon's modernization and the development of sectarianism. Despite the wide range of historiographic areas and approaches, which span over forty years of scholarly production, a Eurocentric optic guiding its interpretation has remained fundamentally unchallenged. I argue that this is due in part to the persistence of a narrative of Mount Lebanon's modernization, which sees its contact with Europe as ushering in a new historical epoch. While this narrative finds its origins in early historical accounts of Mount Lebanon's political economy, recent works seeking to move away from "materialist" approaches to the uprising have failed to unsettle it, reproducing the schema of historical change and introducing a new range of problems in the historiography. Thus, despite a wide-ranging intellectual engagement with the event, Eurocentrism has continued to permeate the study of the Kisrawan revolt of Mount Lebanon.

### **Laying the Foundations: The Political Economy of Revolt**

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, renewed attempts at a systematic analysis of the 19<sup>th</sup> century peasant revolts in Mount Lebanon came from social and economic historians working from a wide variety of traditions ranging from classical Marxism to the French Annales school. These authors sought to examine the Kisrawan uprising within the context of sweeping structural changes occurring during this time. In doing so, they tended to focus on the impact of external factors, tying the events to a Eurocentric narrative of Mount Lebanon's modernization in which the activities of European industrialists in Mount Lebanon, most notably the establishment of mechanized silk-reeling factories, introduced capitalist relations to the region and thus "modernity", which later served as a hegemonic paradigm for the study of the region. These accounts have since solidified their position as part of the authoritative "canon" of material "causes" of the event, evidenced by the extent and frequency with which subsequent studies of the revolt have relied on them.

Dominique Chevallier's study of the 1858 uprising consists of one of the earliest attempts by a European historian to analyse the event. «Aspects sociaux de la question d'orient» can be read as part of his larger body of work on Mount Lebanon, which continues to form the basis of the dominant narrative of the region's "modernization" and historical development during the nineteenth century.

Working within a strong positivist tendency characteristic of his time, Chevallier's pioneering study draws on local sources in the goal of "piercing the secret of what modifies in the shadow of what remains."<sup>3</sup> He traces the events of Kisrawan to the beginning of Mount Lebanon's transition to capitalism, which he associates with the modernization of the silk industry under European domination. Presenting what can be called the "incorporation" thesis, Chevallier sees Europe's presence in Mount Lebanon as spurring momentous change, bringing about the destruction of its "traditional" system of production, conceived of as fundamentally unchanged since the inheritance of its techniques and forms of organization from medieval Islam.<sup>4</sup>

Chevallier's formal approach evidences strong similarities to other second generation Annales historians, relying on a Braudelian analytical schema of *longue durée*, *conjuncture*, and *événements*.<sup>5</sup> As we will see, this approach lends itself remarkably well to his thesis of historical change. The events of 1858 are foregrounded in a description of Mount Lebanon's geographic features, emphasizing the importance of the natural landscape in shaping the social and economic "complex" of the region. Chevallier's *longue durée* overview of Mount Lebanon's historical development exemplifies his understanding of different temporalities central to his thesis of modernization. The author situates the "conjuncture" presaging the events of Kisrawan in 1840 with the arrival of French capital investment. This encounter brought about the "modernization" of Mount Lebanon's silk industry, as French-owned

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<sup>3</sup> Dominique Chevallier, "Aspects sociaux de la question d'Orient: aux origines des troubles agraires libanais en 1858." *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisation*, 14 (1959): 52.

<sup>4</sup> Dominique Chevallier, "De la production lente à l'économie dynamique en Syrie," *Annales. Economie, Sociétés, Civilisation* 21, 1 (1966): 64.

<sup>5</sup> See Fernand Braudel's methodology outlined in: Fernand Braudel, "Histoires et Sciences sociales: La longue durée," *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 13 (1958): 725-753.

mechanized silk factories began spreading in increasing numbers, bringing about a “quick evolution” of the region.<sup>6</sup> The formal characteristics of Chevallier’s approach parallels his thesis: a traditional society, inhabiting a different temporality, is shaken by Europe’s contact. This thesis is nicely captured by the title of his subsequent work, “from slow production to a dynamic economy in Syria.”<sup>7</sup>

Chevallier argues that the quick “evolution” of Mount Lebanon had drastic consequences for Lebanon’s traditional society, as it weakened the ties of dependence between peasants and their landlords. In the absence of capital, the landed nobility could not compete with French industry and commerce – who’s newly introduced technological innovations, rendered the former’s old instruments redundant.<sup>8</sup> This process contributed to their eventual indebtedness and impoverishment, leading them to institute increasingly oppressive measures towards the peasantry as a desperate means of maintaining their social position.<sup>9</sup> The objective conditions of the peasantry worsened, and they began organizing themselves with the guidance of the lower clergy of the Maronite church. In the final analysis, what moved Kisrawan’s peasantry to action, Chevallier argues, was the increasing climate of exasperation, economic changes, and the general “excitation” which animated the Kisrawan district as a result of their contact with the West.<sup>10</sup>

The thesis presented by Chevallier has formed the dominant narrative of historical change and modernization in 19<sup>th</sup> century Mount Lebanon. This narrative is fully fleshed out in his later work, *La Societe du Mont Liban*, which continues to serve as the main reference for Mount Lebanon’s socio-economic history. The discourse underpinning Chevallier’s study is profoundly Orientalist, presenting the period as a “confrontation” in which “L’Europe des lumières” sought to extend its liberal principles to the rest of the world, “awakening the conscience of the people...permitting [them] to find the will to

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<sup>6</sup> Chevallier, “Aspects sociaux,” 52.

<sup>7</sup> Chevallier, “De la production lente,” 64.

<sup>8</sup> Chevallier, “Aspects sociaux,” 54.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 62.

maintain their own culture, and to enrich it.”<sup>11</sup> This extension of Europe into the Orient became a “confrontation” when the Orientals sought to maintain themselves as they had been, in the face of “conquering economies, politics, and doctrines”.<sup>12</sup> His earlier work on the Kisrawan revolt of 1858 finds its way into this book, fitting easily within this meta-narrative of “confrontation” whose “causes” are closely related. For Chevallier, the confrontation produced an “eastern crisis” which manifested itself partly in the widespread rural unrest in the region, and was essentially a clash between the region’s “pre-industrial structures” and western development.<sup>13</sup> His conception of uni-directional historicity is nowhere more evident than in the opening paragraph of his later work,

The extent of the unrest which, in the mid-nineteenth century, swept across Arab Middle Eastern Society with its sophisticated culture was proportionate to the confrontation of its pre-industrial structures with the effects of European innovation during the Industrial Revolution. Under what main forms did the latter *act upon* Middle Eastern countries [emphasis added].<sup>14</sup>

The tendency to view the “unrest” of the period as a result of European innovation *acting upon* a stagnant traditional society has remained a persistent trope in subsequent studies of Mount Lebanon, despite numerous challenges to this thesis in recent years.<sup>15</sup>

Irene Smilianskaya’s study of Greater Syria initially presents a different periodization of the region’s capitalist development, arguing that early forms of capitalist relations could be observed in

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<sup>11</sup> Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban à l’époque de la révolution industrielle en Europe* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste P. Geuthner S.A., 1982), x.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Dominique Chevallier, “Western Development and Eastern Crisis in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Syria Confronted with the European Economy” in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, W. Polk, W. Roe & R.L. Chambers eds. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968), 205. Chevallier makes explicit the rapidity with which this confrontation changed local society: “Il ne fallut même pas deux décennies pour imposer à la vieille sericulture du Liban les orientations d’un âge nouveau....Les moyens de l’économie nouvelle avaient été inventés à l’étranger ; ils furent imposés par l’étranger.” (It didn’t even take two decades to impose on the old sericulture of Lebanon the orientations of a new age...The means of this new economy were invented abroad; they were imposed from outside.) Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 233.

<sup>14</sup> Chevallier, “Western Development and Eastern Crisis,” 205.

<sup>15</sup> For information on transformations in domestic market relations in the region and the world economy as more than “Western” imposition, see Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Mount Lebanon as early as the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> Drawing on a classical Marxist approach to the peasantry, the author focuses in on the intensive socioeconomic development and privatization of land in Mount Lebanon between 1845 and 1860. But, like Chevallier, Smilianskaya describes this development as driven by French capital investment. French silk factories began establishing themselves around the villages of Mount Lebanon while banks, operating in Beirut and throughout Europe, set up shipping companies operating along the Lebanese coast.<sup>17</sup> These developments correlated with the appearance of “bourgeois layers” alongside new forms of cultural production, establishing the preconditions for “the emergence of a bourgeois world view.”<sup>18</sup> The deterioration of the objective conditions of the peasantry, caused by the intrusion of French capital, opened up space for the new bourgeois ideology to organize discontent.<sup>19</sup>

The full impact of the emerging bourgeoisie was felt during the popular revolt of 1840 as it joined “feudal” elements to lead the peasantry against Egyptian rule. Smilianskaya argues that the social composition of the revolt and the demands it presented signalled a “turning point in the history of the popular movement,” distinguishing this revolt from “traditional peasant riots” which had until then remained “confined to demands concerning taxes and led by dissatisfied feudalists.”<sup>20</sup> The appearance of the bourgeoisie is thus portrayed as a momentous event, bringing about an end to a cyclical time characteristic of the “feudal epoch” which “witnessed an endless number of such riots.”<sup>21</sup> The bourgeoisie’s influence on the peasantry is implicitly manifested in the new character of peasant

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<sup>16</sup> Irina M. Smilianskaya, “From Subsistence to Market Economy, 1850s: Razlozhenie feodalnikh otoshenii v Sirii i Livane v seredine XIX v” (The Disintegration of Feudal Relations in Syria and Lebanon in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century), in Charles Issawi, ed. *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914: A Book of Readings* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), 228.; cited in Abisaab, Malek. “A History of Women Tobacco Workers: Labor, Community and Social Transformation in Lebanon, 1895-1997.” Ph.D. diss., Binghamton University, 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Irina Smilianskaya, “Peasant Uprisings in Lebanon, 1840s-1850s,” in Charles Issawi, ed. *The Fertile Crescent, 1800-1914: A Documentary Economic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 48.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



demands for “... liberty and justice against tyranny,” which Smilianskaya claims would have a profound “ideological influence on subsequent events.”<sup>22</sup>

The change in the “nature” of the rural revolts as presented by Smilianskaya is implicitly linked to the development of capitalist relations and the bourgeois element it birthed. The organization of peasant discontent culminated in the Kisrawan uprising of 1858-1860, where the “feudal lords” of the district were expelled by the peasantry. Echoing other Marxists writing on peasants at the time,<sup>23</sup> Smilianskaya concludes that despite these successes, the spread of the insurgency was impossible since Mount Lebanon “lacked the socioeconomic and political preconditions for a bourgeois transformation.”<sup>24</sup> The importance of a bourgeois “dynamism” in driving historical change is further evidenced in the author’s claim that the failure of the Kisrawan uprising was structurally pre-determined, caused by the bourgeoisie’s underdevelopment, as they “had not yet formed themselves into a class.”<sup>25</sup> The character of the rural upper strata was only “half bourgeois, half feudal in its social essence” – satisfied with the removal of the feudal lords by the peasant insurgents, but unwilling to support their agrarian reforms.<sup>26</sup>

While Chevallier locates the traditional society of Mount Lebanon within an altogether different temporality until its contact with Europe, Smilianskaya broadens the framework to allow for the development of a limited capitalism beforehand. Despite this, she adheres to a narrative of progress which is fully contingent on the full development of a bourgeoisie, whose early development is associated with the incorporation of Mount Lebanon into the world economy in the mid-nineteenth century. The search for the bourgeoisie as the motor of change is typical of early Marxian historiography

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>23</sup> Hobsbawm, E. J. *Primitive Rebels : Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1959). In this book, Hobsbawm argues that unless peasants are organized into revolutionary organizations by other social actors, they will continue to be victims of the modernization process.

<sup>24</sup> Smilianskaya, “Peasant Uprisings in Lebanon,” 50.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

which saw the overthrow of feudalism by the bourgeoisie as a necessary precursor to the overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat. Smilianskaya's narrow reading of Marx thus dooms the Kisrawan uprising to a negative interpretation, its failure brought about by its structural lacks. She argues that because the bourgeoisie failed, Mount Lebanon did not progress to the capitalist stage of historical development, but instead reverted back to semi-feudalism. By locating Kisrawan within a model that at its core rejects the possibility of non-Western progressive politics, Smilianskaya's work follows directly the epistemological framework laid out by Chevallier.<sup>27</sup>

The search for "internal" causes of the uprising did little to uproot the trope of Mount Lebanon's static "traditional" society. Yehoshua Porath's 1966 study follows the above works closely in a conventional manner, foregrounding the narrative of the events in a description of Mount Lebanon's social system in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>28</sup> The static presentation of the "social system" over two centuries mimics Chevallier's temporal differentiation of Mount Lebanon before its incorporation into the European economy. The "causes" of the peasant uprising outlined by Porath also closely follow the above accounts, adding to the "incorporation" thesis the internal re-structuring of Mount Lebanon's political system as a result of Ottoman administrative reform. Porath argues that the new political context resulting from imperial processes further weakened the traditional landed class already decimated by the European socio-economic changes, prompting them to "redouble their oppression of the peasantry."<sup>29</sup> The author argues that in this context, "it was only natural that the peasantry was stirred to revolt."<sup>30</sup> This recourse to an emphasis on natural causes of the peasant revolt is important to

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<sup>27</sup> For a critique of this tendency, see John T. Chalcraft, "Pluralizing Capital, Challenging Eurocentrism: Toward Post-Marxist Historiography," *Radical History Review*, 91 (Winter, 2005): 13-39.

<sup>28</sup> Yehoshua Porath, "The Peasant Revolt of 1858-61 in Kisrawan," *Asian and African Studies*, 2 (1966): 77-78.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

consider, given the trivializing effect it has on the event and the limitations of explanatory models which rely exclusively on notions of increased “oppression” to understand collective forms of action.<sup>31</sup>

Porath builds on European consular and travellers’ reports, which he treats as objective sites of information, to describe the disintegration of the traditional social system of Mount Lebanon alongside growing “inter-communal tension” in a bid to link these processes to the episodes of violence in 1860. Treating the peasantry in an undifferentiated and essentialist manner, Porath argues that despite the expulsion of the landed nobility by the peasantry, and expropriation of the former’s land, at no point was the revolt “revolutionary.” Analysing the demands of the “rebels” contained in petitions, Porath argues that, “the most striking aspect of these demands is that at no stage did they include the expropriation of any of the Shaykh’s estates.”<sup>32</sup> He views the expulsion of the landed nobility as purely incidental, the result of the peasantry’s “...inability to come to terms with them.”<sup>33</sup> Porath’s conclusion relies on a narrow concept of “revolution” and treats the articulated demands in an unproblematic way, ignoring both discursive and contextual aspects of these texts. Thus, ignoring the origins of these writings and their reliance on conventions of argument and evidence, Porath takes their content to be unproblematic mirrors of a peasant *mentalité*.<sup>34</sup> He further ignores that the letters were addressed to the Maronite patriarch, the leader of the largest landowning institution in Mount Lebanon. These facts undoubtedly played a role in determining the content of the demands. The stakes involved in establishing the “revolutionary” character of the revolt are made clearer when he links the ideas of the peasants to the influence of the French revolution, re-asserting the primacy of European historicity.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See Peter Gran’s critique of modernization theory inspired accounts which emphasize the “heavy oppression of the people” in order to avoid locating internally driven dynamics. Peter Gran, “Political Economy as a Paradigm for the Study of Islamic History,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 11 (July, 1980): 513.

<sup>32</sup> Porath, “The Peasant Revolt of 1858-61 in Kisrawan,” 100.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> For an insightful analysis of the use of peasant petitions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Middle East, see: John Chalcraft, “Engaging the State: Peasants and Petitions in Egypt on the Eve of Colonial Rule,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37 (August, 2005): 303-325.

<sup>35</sup> Porath, “The Peasant Revolt of 1858-61 in Kisrawan,” 100.

The tendency to link Mount Lebanon's peasant revolts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the French Revolution is quite common. Issam Khalife's study of the rural uprisings during this time is another example of this trend.<sup>36</sup> Setting out to examine the impact of the French Revolution on the region, Khalife argues that the latter's ideas were, among other factors, at the origin of the peasant revolts in Mount Lebanon. These ideas had been transmitted through various channels, especially Protestant and Catholic schools, Catholic missions, a burgeoning printing press, and the Tanzimat reforms which Khalife argues were formulated with the help of the French.<sup>37</sup> Khalife further claims that the "theoretical programs" of the leaders of the peasant revolt evidences French influence through their use of concepts like *'awam* (the people) and the general interest. The author presents this as a significant development, arguing that peasants did not previously possess a sense of individualism.<sup>38</sup> In explaining the Kisrawan uprising's reliance on a supposedly consensual system of political representation, Khalife points to the entourage of the revolt's leader, Tanyus Shahin, which included two individuals who were "familiar with the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and the ideals of the French Revolution."<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, Khalife argues that the Maronite Church's involvement in the Kisrawan uprising prevented the development of "any secular ideas," while religious fanaticism, collective religious sentiments, and the workings of clerics and Druze notables prevented the decline of the political system in the context of notions of equality and national fraternity.<sup>40</sup> Concluding, Khalife argues that the failure of Mount Lebanon's society to embrace the principles of the French Revolution fully, in favour of confessional cleavages, prevented its success and its "passage to true modernity."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Issam Khalife, "Les Revoltes sociales au Mont-Liban," in Camille Aboussouan, ed. *La révolution Française et L'orient : 1789-1989* (Paris: Cariscript, 1989), 49-57.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 53-4. Original quotation in French: "connoisseur des écrits de Voltaire, Rousseau, et des idéaux de la révolution Française."

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 57. Original quotation in French: "passage à la véritable modernité. "

As its name implies, Eurocentrism has placed “Europe” at the centre of world historical change, with the effect that all histories tend to be “variations on a master narrative that could be called ‘the history of Europe’.”<sup>42</sup> The accounts examined thus far adhere to a grand-narrative of Mount Lebanon’s historical change which views the French presence as bringing about the destruction of the “traditional” social system of Mount Lebanon. The Kisrawan uprising in particular was portrayed as the culmination of this process, but ultimately failed to be revolutionary. This failure was taken as an indicator of the incomplete transition to modernity, understood as a failure to transition completely to capitalism, or to reproduce an idealized narrative of European (French) history.

### **The Kisrawan Uprising as the “Exception”**

This section examines the historical representation of the Kisrawan revolt in the historiography of rural movements in the broader context that is the Ottoman Empire. Several scholars, drawing largely on historical sociological approaches influenced by agrarian structuralism, have approached the study of this event through a comparative framework.<sup>43</sup> Noting the peculiarities of the uprising, these scholars have portrayed the Kisrawan revolt as an “exception” in the history of Middle Eastern rural unrest, relying on an explanatory schema which combines a structural analysis of the features of Mount Lebanon with the narrative of modernization set out by Chevallier, Smilianskaya and Porath. The exclusive reliance on these secondary sources by Gabriel Baer and Haim Gerber in their comparative treatments of the uprising amplifies the underlying assumptions of the former, which they use in order to draw large-scale conclusions about revolt in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>44</sup> In the place of historical analysis,

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<sup>42</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe : Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 27 ; cited in Chalcraft, “Pluralizing Capital, Challenging Eurocentrism,” 14.

<sup>43</sup> My use of the term “agrarian structuralist” is borrowed from Juan Cole, who uses it to describe the works of Barrington Moore, Eric Wolfe, Jeffrey Paige, and Theda Skocpol, in Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: The Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt’s ‘Urabi Movement* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1999), 5-6.

<sup>44</sup> Gabriel Baer, *Fellah and Townsman in the Middle East : Studies in Social History* (London; Totowa, N.J.: F. Cass, 1982), 253; Haim Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1987).

these scholars offer empirical generalizations which amount to a listing of variables increasing the “likelihood” of revolt. The trope of “exceptionalism” which has found comfort in nationalist literature of Lebanon, casting it as a “rose amongst thorns,”<sup>45</sup> is thus reproduced in the authors’ conclusions about the Kisrawan uprising in its Ottoman context. Their narrow conceptualization of rural “revolution,” as we shall see, leads them to declare a complete absence of such a phenomenon in the entire Middle East.

Gabriel Baer’s sweeping survey of peasant revolt in the Middle East attempts to answer why and under what conditions did “*fellah* [peasant] rebellion occur?”<sup>46</sup> Combining a structural analysis of those characteristics which correlate with peasant revolt across the region, with an analysis of articulated demands and forms of organization of peasant movements, Baer concludes that the Kisrawan revolt was a unique phenomenon.<sup>47</sup> Basing himself entirely on the secondary literature of Middle Eastern peasant uprisings, he ends up comparing peasant demands in a de-contextualized fashion, making completely unproblematic the historical processes of source production.<sup>48</sup> He argues that Kisrawan’s uniqueness is evident in the length of the revolt and the forms that the organizing took, as well as the resulting “profound redistribution of property.”<sup>49</sup>

Baer further argues that what distinguished Lebanon from other parts of the Middle East was the success of the Kisrawan revolt, which he explains as a function of several factors, each set against an idealized European model of history. The author claims that only in Lebanon was there a “unique democratic trend” which he links to the somewhat exceptional level of education enjoyed by Mount Lebanese peasants.<sup>50</sup> The Kisrawan revolt incorporated principles of democracy and equality – “the only

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<sup>45</sup> For an example of this, see Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988); for an extensive critique of Salibi, see Youssef M. Choueiri, *Modern Arab Historiography: Historical Discourse and the Nation-State* (New York, NY: Routledge Curzon, 2000).

<sup>46</sup> Baer, *Fellah and Townsman in the Middle East*, 253.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>48</sup> See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, for a full discussion of historical processes of source production.

<sup>49</sup> Baer, *Fellah and Townsman in the Middle East*, 312.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 275.

incidence of such an ideology found among revolting Middle Eastern peasants.”<sup>51</sup> Unlike other instances of peasant revolt, the villagers in Kisrawan rose against traditional lords, “whose rule had many feudal-like features.”<sup>52</sup> Demands made by peasants targeted the “traditional relations between landlord and peasant” – which differed from most cases where peasants “only demanded the return to the traditional usage and the repeal of oppressive innovations, such as the aggravation of the tax burden (...).”<sup>53</sup>

Turning away from articulated demands, Baer seeks to explain the success of the revolt in terms of its structural features, pointing to its agrarian system with feudal-like characteristics, “private property of land,” as well as a substantial political autonomy.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, he implicitly links the Maronite Christian character of Mount Lebanon to its success, as he blames the failure of other revolts in the region on Islam, arguing it “...was so deeply rooted and fellahs so ignorant that social ideologies could neither grow indigenously nor be acquired by them from outside sources.”<sup>55</sup>

Underlying Baer's study is a set of assumptions about peasants who are conceived as inherently backward-looking, conservative social actors, mobilized when their traditional ways of life are shattered by outside forces. In this regard, Baer constructs an essentialist view of the peasantry, quoting Barrington Moore: “what infuriates peasants... is a new and sudden imposition or demand that strikes many people at once and that is a break with accepted rules and customs.”<sup>56</sup> In the final analysis, he mirrors Porath's trivialization of the Kisrawan revolt, arguing that the peasant demands were not self-generated as they were “not based on any social or religious principles, but on the Tanzimat edicts of

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 272.

<sup>54</sup> Baer's thesis of Kisrawan as the “exception” due to its “unique” landholding patterns no longer holds in light of subsequent challenges to Baer's comparative work. Kenneth Cuno for instance, critiques Gabriel Baer and Charles Issawi's mischaracterization of Egypt's landholding patterns: “In most of Egypt and for centuries before 1800 land was individually held, and was in effect inherited as well as alienated, contrary to the arguments of Issawi and Baer,” in Kenneth Cuno, *The Pasha's Peasants: Land Tenure, Society, and Economy in Lower Egypt, 1740-1858* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 19.

<sup>55</sup> Baer, *Fellah and Townsman in the Middle East*, 275.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 272.

the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, in explaining the novel forms of political organizing evident in the revolts of Mount Lebanon, Baer is forced to link ideological developments directly to Europe, speculating: “It may well be, as Porath suggests, that Shahin [leader of the peasant revolt] had heard about ideas of the French Revolution from Lazarist monks who operated a school in his village Rayfun.”<sup>58</sup>

The interest of the Kisrawan uprising as the “exception” in the Middle East also manifested itself in the broader field historical sociology of the Ottoman Empire. Haim Gerber’s *Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* adopts the same framework developed by Barrington Moore, and makes use of the Kisrawan uprising in order to explain what he claims is a curious lack of peasant revolution in the Ottoman Empire. Gerber uses Baer’s thesis of the uniqueness of the Kisrawan peasant revolt which he calls, “the only true agrarian revolt in the modern history of the Middle East,” in order to argue for the singularity of the Ottoman Empire’s agrarian system which he claims did not lend itself to revolutionary upheavals comparable to the ones found in Europe.<sup>59</sup> In the process, he compares Lebanon’s agrarian system to the feudal regime “reminiscent of Medieval Europe,” again locating Lebanon’s specificity in its ties to a European social formation.<sup>60</sup>

Gerber’s use of Kisrawan as the exception to the Ottoman “rule” is based on tropes about Ottoman decline and its static, homogenous agrarian structure.<sup>61</sup> While this paradigm has been critically challenged, the use of the Kisrawan uprising to forward this thesis illustrates the tendency of the event to be recuperated and posed as the “exception” to an otherwise a stagnant Middle East. This view presents the Ottoman state as inherently static due to lack of dynamics deriving from its non-

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>59</sup> Haim Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1987), 136.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> This paradigm has been critiqued at length in Rifa’at ‘Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991). See also Harbans Mukhia, “Was there Feudalism in Indian History?,” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 8 (1981): 273-310, who applies this argument to the South Asian context, arguing that a lack of contradiction and social tension resulting from its “free” peasant production produced a “changeless system” in pre-colonial India; cited in Bernstein Henry, and Terence J. Byres, “From Peasant Studies to Agrarian Change,” *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 1 (January, 2001): 1-56.



conflictual agrarian structure. The ability to present Kisrawan as the “exception” is also dependent in part on the manner in which both Baer and Gerber understand the production of historical traces, limiting their analyses to articulated demands and outward revolt as transparent indicators of peasant mentality, divorced of any historical context. This is further buttressed by their reliance on outdated essentialist views of the peasantry articulated by Barrington Moore in the mid 60s.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, their reconstruction of the event and the “structural” features of Mount Lebanon are based entirely on the works of Porath, Smilianskaya, and Chevallier, charting the advent of change to European involvement, but also downplaying its overarching effect. Baer, in particular, argues that European capitalist involvement only changed the “causes” of peasant discontent and not its nature.<sup>63</sup>

Edmund Burke III contributes to this debate in his work on rural collective action in Mount Lebanon.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to Baer and Gerber, rather than treating them as unique, the large scale revolts in Mount Lebanon are viewed as comparable to others in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region. The author critiques Baer and Gerber for misreading the European experience of rural revolts, which they use to position the Middle East as a sort of world historical anomaly.<sup>65</sup> This is compounded, Burke argues, by their lack of awareness of recent research on peasant protest which further skews their approach and findings.<sup>66</sup>

Theorizing historical change in the nineteenth century, Burke claims rural protest movements in the Middle East can be grouped generally into three phases driven in large part by distinct vectors of change: 1. indigenous self-strengthening movements; 2. the incorporation of the region into the world-economy; 3. the colonial experience which saw European hegemony challenge “basic cultural values”

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<sup>62</sup> Peasant essentialism posits an internal logic to peasant society, whether cultural, sociological, or economic. For a thorough review of debates regarding peasant essentialism see: Bernstein and Byres, “From Peasant Studies,” 5-8.

<sup>63</sup> Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East*, 276.

<sup>64</sup> Edmund Burke III, “Rural Collective Action and the Emergence of Modern Lebanon: A Comparative Historical Perspective,” in Nadim Shehadi and Dana Haffar Mills, eds. *Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus* (London: Center for Lebanese Studies and I.B. Tauris, 1988), 14-30.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

and sparking “deeply rooted responses throughout the region.”<sup>67</sup> Within this framework, Burke presents the 1858 uprising in Mount Lebanon as akin to several uprisings in Tunisia (1864-5) and Algeria (1871-2) which also challenged the very basis of their agrarian structures.<sup>68</sup>

While seeking to move beyond the trope of Lebanese exceptionalism by adopting a comparative approach, Burke does not depart fundamentally from the narrative of modernization presented above. The Kisrawan uprising is still displayed as a response to the commercialization of agriculture in the Ottoman Empire and the Tanzimat reforms, brought about by the “increased integration of Lebanon into the world economy during the 1840s and 1850s,” which “undermined the positions of the muqata’ji amirs.”<sup>69</sup> Burke does however manage to bring some added nuances to the story of European penetration by allowing the Egyptian occupation of Syria to figure in the analysis. He argues that the years of Egyptian occupation in Syria (1831-1840) drastically altered the underpinnings of the “old system,” through “intensified government control, reorganization of land tenure, and closer integration into the world market.”<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, a thorough analysis of this process is not provided, and we are again forced to accept the mid-nineteenth century as a period of radical rupture brought about by external forces - in this case, the Egyptian regime.

Burke’s point of departure from Chevallier and others lies in his analysis of shifting alliances between local social actors. He argues that local elites impacted the formulations of demands and “played a decisive role in altering or maintaining features of the existing agrarian system.”<sup>71</sup> Focusing on the changing character of the revolt over its two year period, Burke points to a “revolution in the revolution,” evidenced by the broadening of collective acts by radical peasants in order to destroy the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 21.

remnants of the old agrarian structures and fight government “fiscal oppression.”<sup>72</sup> This radicalization affected the support base of the revolt, losing the sympathy of urban groups and contributing to an increased opposition by urban landowners, big merchants and the Maronite upper clergy.<sup>73</sup> By analysing the changing dynamics of the revolt, Burke offers a needed corrective to Baer’s arguments regarding the non-revolutionary character of the peasantry.

Other scholars working with the same approach, like Marwan Buheiry, accepted the above works as having treated the question fairly, arguing that “the origins, objectives, and consequences of this important episode in Lebanese history have received adequate attention from scholars...” and praising Baer in particular for his use of comparative historical sociology.<sup>74</sup> Accepting the dominant narrative of Kisrawan’s long-term causes, Buheiry sought to re-examine the event in light of new theories in the literature of internal conflicts. By looking at the “more immediate causes” of the event, which act as “accelerators and triggers,” the author identifies two previously ignored factors relating to the outbreak of the revolt.

According to Buheiry, one of the contributing factors to the outbreak of the revolt was the sudden interruption of sustained economic improvement, followed by a sharp economic downturn between 1856 and 1858.<sup>75</sup> The initial improvement in the living conditions of the peasants, due to increased access to international markets and a steady improvement of the short-term causes of the rebellion, had created rising expectations for the peasants. Following de Toqueville’s thesis that revolutionary protest occurs when conditions are improving, such expectations came to clash with the sudden period of downturn.<sup>76</sup> Essentially, Buheiry is arguing that the peasantry's range of acceptability

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Marwan R. Buheiry, “The Peasant Revolt of 1858 in Mount Lebanon: Rising Expectations, Economic Malaise, and the Incentive to Arm”, in Tarif Khalidi, ed. *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1984), 291.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 295.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

changed during this time, making them more prone to revolt under worsening conditions. The second factor, an increasing arming of the peasantry, shifted the balance of power in favour of the latter, providing them with the logistical means of altering their condition. While Buheiry's study holds empirical value in examining previously ignored aspects of the revolt, his approach treats the "peasantry" as an undifferentiated mass, who respond uniformly to external stimuli. Furthermore, what the new "expectations" of the peasantry consisted of is never made explicit, despite their supposedly shared nature and their centrality to his explanatory scheme. For this reason, Buheiry's approach does not depart fundamentally from older works on crowd action which viewed moments of revolt as instinctive responses to economic hardship, despite his substitution of the term "expectation" with the older explanatory category of "distress."<sup>77</sup>

### **Kisrawan and Sectarian Consciousness**

This next section explores a third area of scholarship, Lebanese sectarianism, in which the Kisrawan uprising has figured centrally. The theme of sectarianism remains one of the most prevalent areas of concern in Lebanese historiography.<sup>78</sup> The period between 1840 and 1860 has been identified by historians as one of "confessional conflict" due to repeated instances of violence between different religious communities.<sup>79</sup> As a result of its proximity to the mass violence of 1860, which has been interpreted as a sectarian civil war, the Kisrawan uprising has consistently been narrated as a prelude to this violence. The dominant tendency in this historiographical area has been to juxtapose the 1858 uprising against the large scale violence of 1860, as an example of "class conflict" degenerating into sectarian violence. Nowhere is this tendency clearer than in the work of Samir Khalaf, who noted, when

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<sup>77</sup>For a pioneering critique of these approaches see Edward P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century." *Past & Present*, 50 (February, 1971): 76-136.

<sup>78</sup> See Max Weiss, "The Historiography of Sectarianism in Lebanon." *History Compass*, 7 (January, 2009): 141-154.

<sup>79</sup> Axel Havemann, "Historiography in 20th-Century Lebanon: Between Confessional Identity and National Coalescence." *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies*, 4 (Winter, 2002): 51.

speaking of these events, that "what seemed like genuine class movements, sparked by collective consciousness and a concern for public welfare, were deflected into confessional conflict."<sup>80</sup>

The literature on sectarianism is important in that it steers accounts of the Kisrawan violence in a new direction. What we've seen thus far, both within the materialist framework and in the comparative studies of historical sociologists, is a tendency to explain the Kisrawan uprising in reference to structural change. Despite their different approaches, each of the studies discussed above emphasized the changing objective conditions of the peasantry as causal factors, which they linked to larger socio-economic processes in the region, initiated by European agents. What we see in the following accounts is an analytical shift from explanations focusing on external "causes," to the internal processes forming modes of consciousness. As will become evident, the notion of consciousness has been used in different ways. The significance of this shift is that it marks a clear break in the historiographical pattern, narrowing in on interior phenomena as driving factors of historical change.

Positioning himself within larger sociological debates regarding the "problem of sectarianism" in Lebanon, Khalaf argues for a different understanding of the effects of modernization on Lebanese history. Using the Kisrawan uprising and the violence of 1860 as case studies, he argues that "modernity" need not replace "tradition," but can exist instead in a dialectical fashion.<sup>81</sup> Relying on the accounts of Chevallier and Porath, the event of Kisrawan is recuperated and juxtaposed to the violence of 1860 in order to illustrate the incomplete shedding of "tradition" in the modernization process. He identifies the reason for the failure of the Kisrawan uprising as being a function of "persisting non-class loyalties which muted their grievances and eroded their solidarity."<sup>82</sup> He thus renders the Kisrawan

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<sup>80</sup> Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 23.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 42.

uprising as paradigmatic of Lebanon's historical character, arguing that non-sectarian confrontations are "almost always transformed into confessional hostilities."<sup>83</sup>

Relying entirely on "secondary" literature, Khalaf's causal account of the Kisrawan uprising is grounded in a problematic narrative of Mount Lebanon's historical transformation. Keeping within the modernization paradigm outlined in these sources, he argues that the "opening" of the Mount Lebanon "village society" to "all sorts of societal change and secular reforms" during the mid-nineteenth century shook the "state of harmony and security" characteristic of its traditional social system.<sup>84</sup> These changes began to "dislocate feudal relations," simultaneously disrupting the delicate balance existing between social groups.<sup>85</sup> The challenge to the "legitimacy" which the feudal system had previously enjoyed was brought about by the emergence of a "new spirit of collective consciousness" under the leadership of the Maronite church.<sup>86</sup> The advent of "new ideas" came from "reform minded clerics" who gradually distanced the church from the landed nobility as part of its efforts to rationalize the Church bureaucracy and "reorganize its economic resources in a more enterprising manner."<sup>87</sup> The Maronite clergy subsequently "transmitted" the new forms of consciousness to the Christian peasant, who was "made conscious of his communal loyalties" alongside a separate emerging "class consciousness."<sup>88</sup>

Khalaf thus explains the historical developments as a function of new competing forms of "consciousness," failing to examine the historical dynamics which produced such phenomena. The author presents the clergy as transmitters of both communal and class consciousness without explaining the process through which the transmission occurs, assuming that it is passively accepted and understood as a logical reflection of a shared reality. Instead, the transmission is said to exist by virtue of the absence of a parallel process in the Druze communities. Khalaf argues that the lack of an

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 32.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 34.

emancipated religious authority in the Druze community ensured that the “enthusiasm for class struggle” and “public consciousness” would remain a Christian phenomenon, without analysing or tracing the emergence of class dynamics.<sup>89</sup> The failure to develop a sufficient “class consciousness” assured that the peasant movement in the Druze districts would be deflected into an “open confessional struggle,” culminating in the massacres of 1860.<sup>90</sup> In other words, the historical development of Mount Lebanon is portrayed as a contest between competing forms of “consciousness,” seen as stable and uncontested self-understandings once they are produced and transmitted by the appropriate agents.

Axel Havemann’s study of 19<sup>th</sup> century peasant revolts in Mount Lebanon accepts Khalaf’s reading of the “Lebanese predicament,” arguing that “the persistent feature of Lebanon’s society is the relative lack of secular and national loyalties and class ties, on the one hand, and the survival of sectarian, communal, and primordial sentiments, on the other.”<sup>91</sup> Havemann also fails to depart fundamentally from the modernization paradigm, repeating the narrative of European economic “penetration” as shattering Mount Lebanon’s traditional society.

Reflecting changes in the field of social history, Havemann’s analysis places more emphasis on historicizing the “collective consciousness” of peasants in Mount Lebanon.<sup>92</sup> Unlike Khalaf’s treatment of “consciousness” as a top-down process of transmission, Havemann traces the development of consciousness to the “experience” of peasants, which he locates in the political organizing during earlier uprisings in 1821, 1840, and 1858-61. Turning to experience, Havemann argues that participation in

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Axel Havemann, “The Impact of Peasant Resistance on Nineteenth-Century Mount Lebanon,” in Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury, eds. *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991), 85.

<sup>92</sup> The shifting focus to historicizing “consciousness” as a product of historical experience was at the heart of the “cultural turn” in Marxist histories of Europe. For a seminal critique of a-historical uses of “class,” see E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964). In this work, Thompson attempts a study of class formation, arguing that “class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs.” Ibid., 9.

earlier rural movements “enhanced the peasants’ consciousness and self-esteem.”<sup>93</sup> Havemann’s focus on consciousness attempts to depart from a narrow structuralist causal framework which limits explanation to the objective deteriorating conditions of the peasantry, instead arguing that “other motives for revolting should be taken into consideration.”<sup>94</sup> Havemann’s use of the term “motive” here is significant in that it suggests a shift away from the concern with external “causes,” to interior processes in an effort to restore agency to historical actors.

In order to identify forms of “consciousness,” Havemann examines the written demands of peasants across three revolts in 19<sup>th</sup> century Mount Lebanon, paying attention to changing terminology. The use of new concepts such as “general interest, common benefit, and public welfare (*al-salih, al’umumi, al-maslaha*)” is taken as evidence of the formation of “a political consciousness.”<sup>95</sup> The lack of “religious” vocabulary leads him to argue this as a sign of a new “supra-confessional consciousness in the minds of commoners.”<sup>96</sup> The problem with Havemann’s work lies in his approach to historical evidence, which resembles the works examined above in assuming a straightforward referential quality of the peasant tracts. In other words, his evidentiary paradigm allows him to locate an unmediated form of “consciousness,” tracing its appearance and disappearance in texts as evidence of its presence “in the minds” of a collective.

The importance given to these new forms of consciousness as driving collective action becomes clear as Havemann argues that the lack of “receptivity to these ideas on the part of non-Maronite groups” led to the failure of the Kisrawan uprising to spread in other areas of Mount Lebanon.<sup>97</sup> In this sense, his approach to evidence is similar to that of Gabriel Baer and Porath, who take the peasants’ demands as unproblematic gauges of ideology. Both Baer and Havemann assume a transparent quality

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<sup>93</sup> Havemann, “The Impact of Peasant Resistance,” 93.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 95.



of texts, allowing them to establish the existence or absence of certain kinds of “ideology” and “consciousness” through articulated grievances. This leads to the locating of “lacks” elsewhere, adding a stable psychological dimension to the structural pre-conditions. Like Baer, Havemann takes historical silence (absence of the demands) as transparent indicators of the absence of a revolutionary mind (consciousness). Havemann is therefore able to ask the same questions as Baer, ultimately trivializing the revolt by claiming that “the movements were revolts or rebellions but not revolutions,” remaining “archaic in the sense defined by Eric Hobsbawm.”<sup>98</sup>

Havemann’s thesis however is underpinned by a weak conception of both “experience” and “consciousness.” Once “experience” produces “consciousness,” it exists at a completely autonomous level, producing motivation. This allows him to posit a model of historical change in which experience, consciousness, and motivation follow in a causal sequence. A lack of “consciousness” is therefore taken as a legitimate explanation for lack of action. The conceptual weakness of his use of the term is evident in his reliance upon metaphorical causal statements, arguing for the spread of a “spirit or mood of revolt” to explain the increasing instances of resistance.<sup>99</sup>

The attempt to link “experience” to “consciousness” is a noteworthy development in the historiography of Kisrawan, reflecting the increased use of these categories in the study of social movements. The appeal to “experience” as creating stable forms of consciousness has come under increasing criticism for its tendency to ignore the discursive construction of identity with the effect that it “naturalizes categories.”<sup>100</sup> Thus conceived, experience merely awakens a dormant self, ignoring the ways in which subjectivity and identity are produced.<sup>101</sup>

Ussama Makdisi’s book, *The Culture of Sectarianism* can be seen as working within this critique of “experience.” Like Khalaf and Havemann, he takes consciousness to be an important variable in

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<sup>98</sup> Havemann, “The Impact of Peasant Resistance,” 92. See above for the argument here relating to Eric Hobsbawm.

<sup>99</sup> Havemann, “The Impact of Peasant Resistance,” 91.

<sup>100</sup> Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry*, 17 (Summer, 1991): 782.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

driving historical change; however, through his efforts to trace the discursive construction of new forms of consciousness, he also departs from them. Makdisi's contribution to the literature marks a distinctive turn, consciously labouring in the path forged by some in the Subaltern Studies collective. Echoing Ranajit Guha's seminal work on peasant revolts in India, he claims that the "religiosity" embedded in the Kisrawan uprising has not been properly studied.<sup>102</sup> His study can thus be interpreted as an attempt to bridge the narrative divide evident in Khalaf and Havemann's work which portrays the Kisrawan uprising as class conflict and the violence of 1860 as its antithesis. He argues instead that both "events" inhabit the "realm of popular religious mobilizations that sought to overturn...[the existing social] hierarchy."<sup>103</sup>

Makdisi seeks to explain the forms of violence leading up to and including the Kisrawan revolt as the manifestation of a new "subjectivity" based on an "altered meaning of religion."<sup>104</sup> In this way, he departs from Khalaf and Havemann's attempts to simply recover signs of consciousness, which they rigidly classify as either "class" or "communal." Makdisi traces the emergence of the new subjectivity to a "multi-layered" encounter between European officials, Ottoman reformers and the local population.<sup>105</sup> In the context of an emerging discourse of religious difference emanating from European officials in Mount Lebanon, Ottoman officials articulated a new project of reform singling out religious identity as the basis for legal equality and citizenship, with important effects. The author argues that the Tanzimat reforms, which proclaimed equality *between* religious communities, were interpreted by Christian "commoners" as signifying equality *within* religious communities.<sup>106</sup> This process, he argues, changed *religious* subjectivity, as the "social, political, and religious" were allowed to be "antagonistically fused together," creating new possibilities of communal interpretation, and producing what Makdisi refers to

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<sup>102</sup> Ussama S. Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 10. See also Ussama S. Makdisi, "Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate: The Revolt of Tanyus Shahin in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42 (January, 2000): 180, 194; Guha, Ranajit. "The Prose of Counter- Insurgency," in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>103</sup> Makdisi, "Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate," 183.

<sup>104</sup> Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 9.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

as a “culture of sectarianism.”<sup>107</sup> The author attributes causal weight to this “culture of sectarianism” in both the Kisrawan uprising of 1858 and the inter-communal violence of 1860.

Another central concern of Makdisi’s work lies in restoring local agency, which drives him to locate motives irreducible to the external environment. He argues that as communal boundaries were re-conceptualized, “religion was detached from its social environment” and “...neighbours *suddenly* became potential enemies” [emphasis added].<sup>108</sup> This moment of detachment is necessary to elevate “subjectivity” or the “culture of sectarianism” to the realm of causality, which allows Makdisi to treat the former as a sovereign determining force.

In investigating changing understandings, Makdisi evidences a strong influence of symbolic anthropologists who sought to read “meaning” in social action.<sup>109</sup> By reconstructing the discursive context of Mount Lebanon, he reads into the symbolic content of action, interpreting behaviour for what it says rather than what it does. Reading social action as text, he thus retrieves the “meaning” of the violence and attributes it to a new “subjective” understanding. For example, Makdisi locates the first manifestation of this “culture of sectarianism” to violent events of 1841 in Mount Lebanon, when Christian villagers attacked their Druze landlords. He argues that “although material factors related to taxation and control of land underlay the violence of 1841, the Christian villagers of Dayr al-Qamar rejected the control of the Nakads because they were *Druze* notables.”<sup>110</sup>

In the end, Makdisi imputes internal motives to the action of Christian villagers, allowing “external” causes to serve only as a broad context to the violence. The shape of the violence of 1841 (between religious communities) is taken as a reflection of a new “meaning” of religion, standing in stark contrast with the “traditional” role of religious identity in Mount Lebanon, which did not overlap with secular loyalties (i.e. political identity). The new understanding of the boundaries of religion, he claims,

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

<sup>110</sup> Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 64.

served the basis for a new “popular,” “meaning of religion,” which necessitated the expulsion of their landlords: “For Shahin, the practice of post-Tanzimat Christianity was dependent on liberation from Khazin domination in the Kisrawan district and soon enough, from the grip that the Druze landowners maintained over Christians in the mixed districts.”<sup>111</sup>

Makdisi also attempts to ground changes of “meaning” in the experience of historical agents, which forces the author to enter their minds. For instance, when describing the source of shifting “meaning” behind religious identity, Makdisi claims: “this change in meaning stemmed from the memory of sectarian conflict in 1841.”<sup>112</sup> Establishing a link between a collective “memory” of sectarian events, which by definition rely on shared remembering and experiences of the event in question, and the production of new religious meaning is highly problematic. The author speaks with a surprising assertiveness regarding properties of the mind of a collective, and his use of experience is made even more problematic due to his reliance on collective action as manifestations of this changed meaning.

Another difficulty with Makdisi’s study lies in his concepts. “Sectarianism” here inhabits a peculiar conceptual space, as it is at times an instrumental phenomenon “consciously exploited” by historical actors as a means of making political claims “for their own material benefit.”<sup>113</sup> At other times, sectarianism is a “consciousness” which is “detached” from the “social environment,” functioning at a sovereign causal level.<sup>114</sup> The apparent confusion here lies in the kind of causal argument that Makdisi wishes to make. His work displays a clear concern with restoring agency, which requires that he focus on “consciousness,” which he understands as necessitating a non-structural framework of interpretation turning to the production of subjects and the role that interior states – conceptions of self – play in historical developments. In the end, he wants “sectarianism” to work as an autonomous force, driving him to arbitrarily separate the material context in an act of literary acrobatics. The task remains difficult,

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<sup>111</sup> Makdisi, “Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate,” 195.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>113</sup> Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 11.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 62.

as Guha himself notes, because once the “discourse is... one about properties of the mind, about attitudes, beliefs, ideas, etc. rather than about externalities which are easier to identify and describe, the task of representation is made even more complicated than usual.”<sup>115</sup>

What we see driving Makdisi's study is a desire for narrative coherency of the events of 1858 and 1860. Seeking to challenge the polarization of these two events in Lebanese historiography drives him to find a common denominator, and in doing so, he ends up keeping with the approaches of Khalaf and Havemann, accepting the 1860 war as being driven by a “sectarian” consciousness. Furthermore, in his attempt to locate the production of sectarianism completely outside of the interplay of an economic sphere, which he conceives of as separate, Makdisi does not depart significantly from the epistemological framework laid out by Khalaf.

Turning to the discursive construction of sectarianism, Makdisi seems to move away from the essentialist view of the peasantry who are often portrayed as reacting to Europe’s transformative role in the region. His avoidance of the use of the term “peasant” at any point in his study, opting instead for less “sociological” terms like “commoner” and “villager,” denies the possibility of a “peasant subjectivity” existing alongside his sectarian subject. It is also curious that he completely ignores the dynamics of agrarian change in contributing to this subjectivity. As a result, he does not explicitly engage with the dominant narrative of socio-economic change, and fails to de-center Europe from the events, benefiting instead from the construction of sharp breaks associated with the European encounter which allows him to seek the “origins” of sectarianism in supposed radical “ruptures” of the mid-nineteenth century (notably with the arrival of European imperial powers, missionaries, and the imperialism of the Ottoman state formulating their “civilizing” reform project in the peripheries of the empire).

Makdisi offers a new approach in his interpretation of consciousness as a question of “subaltern” understanding in which new subjectivities - sectarian identity - begin to emerge,

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<sup>115</sup> Guha, “The Prose of Counter-Insurgency,” 77.

reconstructing the “self” as a communal actor. The problem with this approach is that though it is forced to rely on material aspects to provide context to the events, those aspects are then severed from the processes of change despite their evident interrelation. The revolt is thus painted as the necessary outcome of a subjective, post-Tanzimat “Christian” identity. By linking the social struggle to a re-conceptualized shared religious subjectivity, Makdisi re-focuses the uprising away from materialist “causes” toward new “subjectivities” as the driving force of historical change. This new approach, while avoiding a narrow search for the deteriorating conditions of the peasantry as an explanation for the event, ends up ignoring the “peasantry” altogether.

Makdisi’s reliance on a notion of an historical actor-subject as a self-determining individual, forces him to disconnect material conditions from “consciousness” in a contradictory fashion. Rosalind O’Hanlon touches on this point in her critique of Ranajit Guha’s work on peasant insurgency. Pointing to Guha’s use of subaltern consciousness to explain insurgencies, O’Hanlon notes that while emphasizing the centrality of the “material” in producing opposed forms of consciousness between elites and subalterns, the “ideal” and “material” are presented as mutually opposed. The result is “the latter appearing, in a highly deterministic fashion, responsible not only for the existence, but for the very form of the first, while the former, in its prescribed sovereignty, forbids us to make any such allusion to a cause beyond itself.”<sup>116</sup> And so, Makdisi’s conscious omission of the “economic” aspects of the revolt, can be understood as a central requirement of his project, which necessitates an irreducible and autonomous “internal” model of causality as a means of restoring the conscious self-determining subject to the historical process.

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<sup>116</sup> O’Hanlon, Rosalind. “Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia.” *Modern Asian Studies*, 22 (February, 1988): 206.

## Conclusion

The historiographical production of the Kisrawan uprising has reflected a variety of approaches. This chapter has argued that Eurocentrism has permeated the study of the Kisrawan revolt of Mount Lebanon, despite the wide-range of intellectual trends. The first part of this essay focused on the works of Chevallier, Smilianskaya, and Porath, which analysed the material aspects of the Kisrawan uprising. Common to all these authors is the concern with locating the causes of the revolt within larger socio-economic processes of change in the region. These approaches, influenced by various schools of thought, from classical Marxist approaches to the peasantry, to the French Annales school, laid the basis for subsequent studies of the uprising. As has been demonstrated throughout, the dominant narrative framework of these studies has reflected Eurocentric accounts of Mount Lebanon's historical development, resulting in a tendency to portray the Kisrawan uprising as a reaction to the destruction of Mount Lebanon's "traditional" society by European capitalist "penetration."

As we have seen in the approaches of Baer and Gerber, the events of Kisrawan were recuperated into larger narratives of exceptionalism (Ottoman and Lebanese), basing their studies on the modernization paradigm. Both Khalaf and Havemann uncritically accept previous secondary accounts of structural change in the region, ignoring the local dynamics which shaped and determined the "capitalist penetration." Instead, "modernization" is described as a shadowy process, wholly accepted on behalf of peasants, who revolt only after their "traditional" political system collapses under the weight of European-driven processes of change. The turn away from structural accounts of the revolt to examining the role of "consciousness" by scholars like Khalaf, Havemann, and Makdisi, marked an important shift in the historiography, exhibiting an increased concern with "agency"-driven accounts of historical change. The approaches to consciousness also reflect changing engagements with notions of discourse and "experience" in the historical discipline. As has been argued above, the problems evidenced in recovering internal states and elevating them to the realm of causality, coupled with the

implicit refusal to challenge the Eurocentrism embedded in the narrative frameworks they deploy, has failed to offer the much needed corrective to earlier scholarship. The general drive to recuperate these events and narrate them as part of larger stories of “modernization” produces more silences than it uncovers.



## Chapter Two: Historicizing “Integration” and Social Change in Ottoman Mount Lebanon (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c.)

### Introduction

Historical interpretations of the Kisrawan uprising of 1858 have relied closely on Eurocentric accounts of Mount Lebanon’s socio-economic development. The narrative backdrop for these interpretations has been predominantly written in terms of European agency, focusing on the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a period of significant rupture. As recent works acknowledge, this is a familiar thesis of scholars influenced by both modernization theory and Marxism, and while the former is quicker to celebrate this process as progress, both ultimately adhere to the idea of innovation and rupture.<sup>1</sup> According to these views, the mid-nineteenth century is seen as a time when “traditional” or “feudal” structures underpinning Mount Lebanon’s society came to be challenged through its contact with a “modern,” read “capitalist,” and “liberal” Europe. The result is portrayed as an asymmetrical “confrontation” giving way to widespread “eastern crises” manifest in the rural “troubles” of the time.<sup>2</sup>

The moment of rupture attributed to the mid-nineteenth century is a key component of the interpretations of the Kisrawan revolt, as all the authors surveyed above adhered to a view that this period constituted a sharp break with the past, particularly in its effects on the social order. The varied approaches depended on this rupture for three main reasons. Firstly, the explanation of “peasant” action was premised on a fundamentally altered objective condition, brought about by increased oppression by their “shaykhs,” themselves reacting to the effects of European commercial action and

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<sup>1</sup> For a general critique of this position see: Faruk Tabak, “Agrarian Fluctuations and Modes of Labor Control in the Western Arc of the Fertile Crescent, c. 1700-1850,” in Caglar Keyder and Faruk Tabak, eds. *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1991), 152. For another example, see Kenneth Cuno, “Contrat Salam et transformations agricoles en Basse Égypte à l’époque ottoman,” *Annales : Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 4 (July-August, 2006):925-940.

<sup>2</sup> The term “confrontation” as well as the thesis outlined here is borrowed directly from Dominique Chevallier’s seminal work on the socio-economic history of Mount Lebanon during the nineteenth century, which continues to serve as the authoritative study on the subject. See Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban à l’époque de la révolution industrielle en Europe* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1971). For another classic formulation of this thesis see Irena M. Smilianskaya, “From subsistence to market economy, 1850s.” in Charles Issawi, ed. *The Economic history of the Middle East, 1800-1914* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 226-247.

the challenge it presented to their control over the means of production. Within this paradigm, the revolt cannot be understood without reference to increased oppression, since other “internal” dynamics are assumed to be lacking. Thus construed, peasants and other social actors remain an undifferentiated mass living in a society characterized by a large element of inertia.

Secondly, without the posited rupture, the timing and social character of the revolt is hard to explain. As we have seen with Irina Smilianskaya, who approaches the revolt through crude “reflection” theory characteristic of early Marxists accounts, the changing composition of the rural revolts throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Mount Lebanon is objectified, serving “like a mirror,” to reflect emerging changes in the social structure.<sup>3</sup> Claiming that earlier revolts (1820, 1840) did not contain a “bourgeois” element, Smilianskaya assumes that the conflicts of the mid-nineteenth century are the expression of new classes emerging as a result of a European-driven capitalist expansion, ignoring the indigenous developments which preceded it considerably.<sup>4</sup>

Thirdly, the widely held assumption that Mount Lebanon’s “social system” was essentially static requires this moment of rupture in order to explain events which broke away from this assumed pattern.<sup>5</sup> In other words, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century is conceived as unchanging and “paralysed” both in the forms of production and its social organization, then how else can we explain the uprising but as a function of externally-driven changes introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

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<sup>3</sup> Irina Smilianskaya, “Peasant Uprisings in Lebanon, 1840s-1850s,” in Charles Issawi, ed. *The Fertile Crescent, 1800-1914: A Documentary Economic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 48-51. Smilianskaya reveals her reductive explanatory model when she argues that: “[t]he social composition of these organizations was characteristic: like a *mirror*, they reflected the changes in the social structure of Syria and Lebanon.” [emphasis added] *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>4</sup> It is most clearly put in this statement when discussing the period of 1840-1860: “The development of capitalist relations was accompanied by the rise of bourgeois strata and by the differentiation and ruin of the peasantry.” *Ibid.*, 48. This development is associated with the development of Beirut as a center of commerce in the 1840s and 1850s which “was accompanied by the development of bourgeois layers (owners of commercial companies, merchants, brokers) and those of the intelligentsia (teachers, clerks, journalists, men of letters).” *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> This adherence to a static picture of an “ancien régime” is shared by most of the authors surveyed, ranging from political economy approaches of Chevallier, Smilianskaya, and Porath, to more recent works by Ussama Makdisi.

In order to re-assess the “ruptures” of the mid-nineteenth century, it is necessary for us to extend the period of study and examine changes introduced in the eighteenth century, as a survey of the socio-economic changes during this time allows us to challenge the dominant narrative which portrays all significant changes as externally-driven.<sup>6</sup> This approach is necessary in order to broaden our understanding of the process of “integration,” and put into question the dominant portrayal of an *ancien régime*, its collapse, and the historic blocs which emerged leading up to the peasant revolt of 1858. This *longue-durée* approach helps create a backdrop which allows the “innovations” of the nineteenth century to be re-evaluated, thus broadening our understanding of rural politics and the processes out of which the revolt of 1858 emerged. This approach builds on several recent works which have sought to challenge the dominant periodization of the modern Middle East and their implicit interpretations which focus on various watersheds in the nineteenth century as generative of “modernity.”<sup>7</sup>

This chapter begins by placing Mount Lebanon within its Ottoman context, starting with an overview of its land tenure system, administrative structure, and the dynamics introduced as a result of Imperial reform efforts in the fiscal system. The subsequent section examines the framework of agricultural production and the patterns of rural life in Mount Lebanon, highlighting the social relations embedded in commercial agricultural production. The final section surveys the significant changes in

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<sup>6</sup> As Gran notes in his review of Roger Owen’s work, western-centered views of history present many limitations, “among them that the problems of historical causation are solved before one begins.” Peter Gran, Review of *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, by Roger Owen. *The History Teacher*, 4 (August, 1982): 605. What is needed, he notes, is to examine the “changing character of the social formation within which there is an economy.” Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Gran’s intervention in the debate focused on Egypt during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Peter Gran, *The Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt 1760-1840* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979). Another monograph on 18<sup>th</sup> century Egypt by Kenneth Cuno contributed to this debate. Kenneth Cuno, *The Pasha’s Peasants: Land Tenure, Society, and Economy in Lower Egypt, 1740-1858* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1992). In the case of Greater Syria, Beshara Doumani’s work on Jabal Nablus also challenges the dominant periodization of “modernity” in the region and the question of the region’s integration in the world economy. Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). The case of Mount Lebanon resembles other historiographies of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Middle East, such as that of Ottoman Egypt whose socio-economic structures in the 18<sup>th</sup> century “...have been described as more primitive than they actually were.” Cuno, *The Pasha’s Peasants*, 3.

Mount Lebanon's social structure which took place between the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on the changing social base of *muqata'ajis* (tax-farmers), shifting patterns of land holdings, and the rise to prominence of new social groups based in market towns.

### **Ottoman Mount Lebanon as a Geographic, Political, and Economic Space**

As a geographic space, Mount Lebanon refers to the range of mountains stretching along the Mediterranean coast between the towns of Tripoli and Saida (Sidon), excluding Beirut. It is noteworthy that this region did not constitute an independent political entity set within stable, identifiable boundaries, as the frontiers of the various emirates (princdoms), which effectively administered the area, shifted frequently. The emirate of Fakhr al-Din (1585-1633), for instance, included several towns located beyond the edges of the mountain range.<sup>8</sup> The successors of the Ma'an dynasty, the Shihab family (1697-1841), ruled over a far reduced territory which varied enormously during their near continuous rule. It is only around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Amir Yusuf Shihab secured his emirate over these northern regions that the entire Lebanese mountain range came under unified rule. Despite this "unification," the usage of the term *Jabal Lubnan* (Mount Lebanon) only became widespread around the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the rule of Bashir Shihab, and was only adopted by the Ottoman authorities during the mid-nineteenth century to refer to a coherent entity called *Cebel-i Lubnan*.<sup>9</sup>

Mount Lebanon's land tenure system, which was central to social organization, was largely the product of its Ottoman context, which by the 17<sup>th</sup> century was firmly incorporated into the Ottoman system of tax farms (*muqata'a* or *iltizam*). The view that the system of land tenure and the Lebanese "emirates" functioned essentially as Ottoman institutions has gradually come to replace the thesis,

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<sup>8</sup> Carol Hakim Dowek, "The Origins of the Lebanese National Idea, 1840-1914," (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1997), 20.

<sup>9</sup> Ussama S. Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism : Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 30; Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1788* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2010), 33.

originally presented by Ilya Harik, that Mount Lebanon's *iltizam* system bore closer resemblance to medieval European feudal systems than to its neighbouring regions.<sup>10</sup> These tax-farms, which replaced the *timar* system of land holding throughout the Ottoman Empire, grew rapidly during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>11</sup> From this point, the system of *iltizam* served as the framework for organizing and administering land holdings, as the Ottoman Porte granted tax-farms (*iltizam* or *muqata'a*) to local notables on an annual basis in exchange for a set amount of taxes and legal dues. The exact rate of taxation was determined through assessments of the various domains on the basis of the land's potential productivity to which an annual land tax (*miri*) was affixed. These land grants became the basic fiscal units (*muqata'as*<sup>12</sup>) of the empire as the land was carved up among different tax-farmers (*muqata'ajis* or *multazim*), gradually replacing the *sanjaks* as provincial administrative subdivisions.<sup>13</sup>

The *iltizam* were largely exploited by notable families who were further distinguished by various hereditary titles of "amir," "muqaddam," or "shaykhs."<sup>14</sup> The *multazims* or *muqata'ajis* (tax-farmers) of the mountain range were drawn from powerful local families, which was partly the legacy of an Ottoman strategy of co-opting tribal leaders who would henceforth become intermediaries between the

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<sup>10</sup> See Ilya Harik, "The 'Iqta' System in Lebanon : A Comparative Political View," *Middle East Journal*, 19 (Autumn, 1965) : 405-421. Harik argued that the characteristics of the *iltizam* system in Mount Lebanon, referred to as the 'Iqta system, made "comparison with thirteenth century feudalism in Europe more relevant than with the *iltizam* system of neighbouring territories." Ibid., 420. An important critique of Harik's thesis was formulated by Dominique Chevallier in: Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 84-6.

<sup>11</sup> The *timar* system was based on holdings granted for life in exchange for military duties. According to Halil Inalcik, the desire to curb provincial governor's power, the degeneration of the *timar* system and the need to secure the flow of revenues to the center, all led to the gradual implementation of a system of tax farms. Halil Inalcik, "Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration," in Thomas Naff and Roger Owen, eds. *Studies in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Islamic History* (Carbondale, Illinois, 1977), 29-35. Roger Owen characterizes this shift as a change in the patterns of land administration and mechanisms of surplus appropriation. Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy* (New York: Methuen, 1981), 12. For a similar view, see also Huri Islamoglu and Caglar Keyder, "An Agenda for Ottoman History," *Review*, 1 (Summer, 1977), 31-57.

<sup>12</sup> The term is also interchangeable with *iltizam* (tax-farm), as is its derivative term for tax farmer *muqata'aji* or *multazim*.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Van Leeuwen, "Monastic Estates and Agricultural Transformation in Mount Lebanon in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 23 (November, 1991): 602.

<sup>14</sup> Van Leeuwen, "Monastic Estates," 602. The extent to which these corresponded to clear "sociological" categories is not known.

Ottoman Porte and its source of revenue.<sup>15</sup> By the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the allocation of *iltizams* in Southern Syria and the Lebanese mountain range had become largely determined by the ability of pretenders to comply with various financial demands of the provincial and central authorities.<sup>16</sup>

The changing nature of *iltizam* in Mount Lebanon was intimately tied to the larger Ottoman context, a point which is further reinforced when examining the impact of the introduction of the *malikâne* (life-term holdings) system. This Ottoman innovation, an imperial process which began in 1695, allowed for the granting of *iltizam* as lifelong and inheritable holdings which served as forms of quasi-property maintained in exchange for fixed payments and annual remittances.<sup>17</sup> The *malikâne* worked like the *iltizam*, in that it was a publicly auctioned contract, but the fixed payment determined at the outset of the bidding process allowed for the exclusive hold over all surplus<sup>18</sup> extraction at a set price for life.<sup>19</sup>

The development of *malikâne* allowed local notable families like the Shihabs to retain the position of *multazim* of their territory as a quasi-dynastic privilege.<sup>20</sup> By securing the grant of a conglomerate of *muqata'as*, the Shihab family began to dominate Mount Lebanon's politics in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century as the Grand Amirs (princes) of Mount Lebanon, remaining as tax-farmers-in-chief to whom all other *muqata'ajis* owed allegiance. In this capacity, they were responsible for remitting the taxes of

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<sup>15</sup> Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon*, 41.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy in Mount Lebanon: The Khazin Sheikhs and the Maronite Church, 1736-1840* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 38. These demands included advance remittances (*mu'ajjala*, or *salf*), in addition to regular taxes (*mal 'irsaliyya*) and personal gifts to officials, which came to acquire a semi-official character (*khidma*).

<sup>17</sup> For a groundbreaking study on the development of *malikâne* system during the 18<sup>th</sup> century see Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Régime Revisited: 'Privatization' and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Politics & Society*, 21 (December, 1993): 393-423.

<sup>18</sup> The notion of "surplus" here used in the same way as Roger Owen: "...the amount taken...of what peasants produced over and above what they needed to feed and clothe themselves and to maintain production." Roger Owen, *The Middle-East*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Salzmann, "An Ancien Régime," 402.

<sup>20</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 51. A caveat should be added here that the Shihab rule was contested by members of this family and others, and there was no uninterrupted life-long rule by any one member of the Shihab family.

the *muqata'as* on an annual basis to the governor of Saida (Sidon), who, in theory, renewed the grants upon receipt of these financial obligations.<sup>21</sup> The introduction of *malikâne* also allowed smaller *muqata'ajis* to purchase a kind of "lifelong lease," enabling them to sell or sublet the right to that lease so long as the new owner continued to pay the tax and remained prepared to provide armed men when required. By maintaining allegiance to the Grand Emir of the Mountain, to who they remitted the payment for their holdings, the *muqata'ajis* were left to manage their domains as they chose.<sup>22</sup>

With the proliferation of *malikâne* grants, tax farms became increasingly part of commercial exchange. Recent scholarship on Ottoman provincial politics argues that the conversion of *iltizam* into *malikâne* holdings (inheritable life holdings) increased the attractiveness of *iltizams* as a field of investment, which in turn led to a rise of a speculative market in them.<sup>23</sup> This was clearly observable in Mount Lebanon, where land was increasingly granted to the highest bidder. The increase in speculation over the right to collect taxes and exploit agricultural land, as well as the expansion of the practice of "auctioning off" official positions such as the provincial governor's office as commercial undertakings,

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<sup>21</sup> This process needs to be read within the context of Ottoman imperial policies, which Salzmänn has characterized as "centripetal decentralization." In this context, the Ottoman Porte undertook a policy of "decentralization" which allowed for a paradoxical rise of provincial grandees (*ayans*) all-the-while strengthening "central" hold on the provinces. See Ariel Salzmänn, "An Ancien Régime Revisited," 393-423. For the case of Egypt see Gabriel Piterberg, "The Formation of an Ottoman Egyptian Elite in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 22 (August, 1990): 275-289.

<sup>22</sup> Iliya F. Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society, Lebanon 1711-1845* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 21-69; Owen, *The Middle East*, 19; Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 35.

<sup>23</sup> Ariel Salzmänn's study continues to be the most important study of the process of "privatization" of the fiscal system and the development of *malikâne* holdings. See: Ariel Salzmänn, "An Ancien Régime Revisited," 393-423. Salzmänn notes that *malikâne* holdings, which were opened to both "state elites and provincial gentry," were attractive investments consisting of a "contract on state revenues which gave the tax contractor rights to collect taxes on the basis of established rates from the time of the award until the contractor's death." Ibid., 401. The potential for profit led to these contracts being often divided into shares which "could be traded privately, provided the holder paid the appropriate registration fees." Ibid., 402. This contract was guaranteed from state interference and "[s]o long as the *malikâne* holder continued to remit the annual payments (*mal-i miri*), he enjoyed an exclusive claim over the title and taxation on peasant production for life, with provisions made for inheritance of shares pending payment of a new *muajjele* [advance payment] by his sons or other male relatives." Ibid. For similar findings in the case of Egypt see: Kenneth Cuno, *The Pasha's Peasants*, 33- 45.

contributed to an increased blurring of legal categories of landholdings and furthered its commoditization.<sup>24</sup>

The competitive nature of the granting of tax-farms imposed significant pressures on *muqata'ajis* which profoundly shaped the dynamics of agricultural exploitation and landownership.<sup>25</sup> As the bidding process welcomed an increasing number of aspirants, the current holders of *iltizam* had to find means of appropriating a larger portion of the surplus, in order to meet an increasing disparity in the auctioned price and value of their holdings.<sup>26</sup> Thus, in addition to maintaining supremacy at the local political level, the success of tax farmers became premised on their ability to raise revenues and capitalize on the region's changing economic situation. The position of tax-farmer and executive office became inextricably linked to economic power and in turn, the status of tribal leaders inextricably tied to his status as *multazim* or *muqata'aji*.<sup>27</sup>

### Peasant-Muqata'aji Relations and Agricultural Production

The basis for agricultural production in Mount Lebanon's *muqata'as* remained the relationship between *muqata'ajis* and peasants, the vast majority of whom worked as sharecroppers.<sup>28</sup> This

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<sup>24</sup> Van Leeuwen notes that theoretically, while central control over the alienation of lands required official permission, private land sales proliferated. This blurred the basic distinctions between *miri* (state) and *milk* (private) lands, which Van Leeuwen takes as "indication of a discrepancy growing between the legal status of the land, and economic requirements." Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 72. See a discussion of the commercialization of land in Greater Syria in: Kenneth Cuno, "Was the Land of Ottoman Syria *Miri* or *Milk*? An Examination of Juridical Differences within the Hanafi School," *Studia Islamica*, 81 (June, 1995):121-152; James Reilly, "Regions and Markets of Ottoman Syria," *Chronos*, 10 (2004): 124-127. For the changing nature of Mount Lebanon's landholdings during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, see: Joseph Abou-Nohra, "Le rôle des ordres monastiques dans les transformations économiques et sociales au Mont Liban au XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle," In *Histoire économique et sociale de l'Empire Ottoman et de la Turquie: 1326-1960*, ed. Daniel Panzac (Paris: Peeters, 1995), 75-87. Souad Abou el-Rousse Slim, *Le métayage et l'impôt au Mont-Liban: XVIII<sup>ème</sup> et XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècles* (Beirut: Librairie Orientale, 1987); Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf in Lebanon During the Ottoman Period*, (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Wurzburg in Kommission, 2007); Van Leeuwen, "Monastic Estates," 601-617.; Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*.

<sup>25</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> This was further compounded by the devaluation of the Ottoman currency. Ibid. According to Caesar Farah, there were two ways that *multazims* could counter the disparity between the actual capacity of the land and their speculated value - by either petitioning the Sublime Porte for "a remission of part of the contract; or pressure the payee into making up the difference." Caesar Farah, *The Road to Intervention: Fiscal Politics in Ottoman Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992), 10.

<sup>27</sup> Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon*, 42.

<sup>28</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 71.



relationship varied greatly due to the different geographic and historical circumstances which shaped the extent of *muqata'ajis'* control over their domains.<sup>29</sup> Despite variation, the predominant framework of agricultural exploitation consisted of several kinds of share-cropping contracts (*shiraka*) concluded on an annual basis between *muqata'ajis* and cultivators.<sup>30</sup>

Before acquiring the right to cultivate the land, peasants were generally required to provide an advance payment worth approximately ¼ of the estimated yield. In return for these payments, the tax-farmer provided the tools and seeds required.<sup>31</sup> While cultivation rights of peasants were inheritable, the agreement between *muqata'aji* and peasants could be dissolved by either party at any point, upon which time the tax-farmer was under obligation of returning the advance payment. In turn, the peasant was responsible for transferring the land to another cultivator.<sup>32</sup>

While the agreements between *muqata'ajis* and peasants enjoyed a considerable amount of independence from the emir of Mount Lebanon who, despite serving as a tax-collector-in-chief, could not intervene directly in their relationship, there existed a basic framework on which peasant fiscal obligations were based.<sup>33</sup> As mentioned above, *muqata'as* (tax farms) were assigned an annual land tax

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 71. Souad Abou el-Rousse's study of monastic land holdings found that taxation was far heavier in Kisrawan than in the Metn district. The agreements concluded by monasteries themselves, which employed sharecroppers on their lands, were also highly differentiated. Slim, *Le métayage et l'impôt*, 107.

<sup>30</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 72. ; Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 131-149 ; Toufic Touma, *Paysans et institutions féodales chez les Druses et les Maronites du Liban du XVIIe siècle à 1914*. 2 vols. (Beirut : Publications de l'Université Libanaise, 1971). Scholars have identified three types of contracts practiced throughout the districts of the mountain: the "*muwaraqa*," "*mugharasa*," and the "*musaqat*," or "*muzara'a*." Significant differences existed between these contracts as the first type allowed the peasant a right to half the yield, while the other two reserved only a quarter of the yield to the cultivator. More importantly still, was the right to keep a portion of the land after a set number of years, which only the "*mugharasa*" contracts provided. Slim, *Le métayage et l'impôt*, 34 ; Ibrahim Aouad, *Le droit privé des maronites au temps des émirs Chéhab* (Paris : Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1933), 258-261.

<sup>31</sup> This varied considerably as well, as peasants were sometimes obligated to purchase the seeds directly from merchant-moneylenders. Gaston Ducousso, *L'Industrie de la Soie en Syrie* (Paris, 1913 : Beirut, 1918), 106.

<sup>32</sup> Slim, *Le métayage et l'impôt*, 34-49. These contracts also varied according to the kind of crop: *musaqah* (cereals), *munasaba* (orchards), and *muzara'a* (cereals). See Richard Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 71-73.

<sup>33</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 71. Abou el-Rousse Slim's monastic land holdings also point to vast differentiation in practice across lands in Mount Lebanon, noting that the sharecropping agreements in the convents of Mar Ilyas in Zahle and Mar Antun in Qarqafi near Kfar Shima only allowed their sharecroppers to claim ¼ of the crop yield, while the metayers of the Mar Yuhanna convent in the Metn district had rights to half of the

(*miri*) whose amount was determined by the anticipated productivity of the land. While *muqata'ajis* were responsible for levying this tax, the burden of the *miri* was placed on the cultivators who would pay this and additional taxes. These additional taxes varied enormously and were usually counted as part of the *miri* tax, in addition to a personal tax or head-tax (*fardah* or *jizya*). In the Kisrawan district of Mount Lebanon, taxes levied on peasants also included a seasonal or "holiday" tax, a marriage tax, and taxes on silk-reeling (*shawabsa*).<sup>34</sup> In exchange for collecting the taxes on behalf of the emir, the *muqata'ajis* received fiscal exemptions as well as the right to keep a percentage as a collection fee (*ijrat*).<sup>35</sup>

While there exist few studies examining sharecropping contract, the existing evidence suggests that at least from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the vast majority of taxes were paid in cash rather than kind.<sup>36</sup> As Roger Owen notes, the manner in which taxes were paid is of significance since a requirement of cash payments would put pressure on peasants and *muqata'ajis* to produce a marketable crop. Consequently, these actors would be further brought within the sphere of market forces, developing strong interests in organizing production as a function of relative prices and demand, furthering the need for cash which encouraged the borrowing of coin from merchants, moneylender, or even *muqata'ajis* themselves..<sup>37</sup>

While many different crops were grown in Mount Lebanon, at least from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward, silk became the predominant cash crop exported to international and regional markets,

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crop yield. See Slim, *Le métayage et l'impôt*, 27. There is further evidence that some monasteries also enjoyed fiscal privileges under the Shihab emirs. See Van Leeuwen, "Monastic Estates," 610.

<sup>34</sup> See Slim for a discussion of varied exactions demanded from sharecroppers during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Slim, *Le métayage et l'impôt*, 111-127. For a discussion of taxation in the Kisrawan district, see: Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 131-150. For a contemporaneous view by a European traveller see also: Constantin de Volney, *Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie*, vol.1 (Paris : Mouton, 1959 [1787]), 68.

<sup>35</sup> Generally this counted as 1/8 of the *miri*. Slim, *Le métayage et l'impôt*, 113; Caesar Farah, *The Road to Intervention*, 10.

<sup>36</sup> Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 138-9.

<sup>37</sup> Owen, *The Middle East*, 37. It is important to note that these categories were not mutually exclusive.

providing a lucrative source of revenue for *muqata'ajis* and peasant landowners.<sup>38</sup> The commercial character of Mount Lebanon's *muqata'as* meant that peasants dealt directly with merchants who competed for a share of their crops.<sup>39</sup> The marketing of silk was firmly tied to trading networks which connected villagers to markets for their products. The ability of merchants to enter into commercial agreements with villages was contingent on their relations with both villagers and ruling families.<sup>40</sup> Some merchants enjoyed the privilege of purchasing a particular crop from the peasants of a village or district, and could acquire a near monopoly depending on their agreement with local intermediaries, while others had to compete for the valued harvests of the Mountain hinterland.<sup>41</sup> Embedded in commercial relations were thus a series of tensions as merchants depended on intermediaries in order to secure control and access to the rural surplus.

Underpinning the extensive economic and commercial relations were a variety of contracts and credit arrangements based in law and local custom.<sup>42</sup> The main means of acquiring crops from peasants during this time remained the practice of *salam* (advance purchase) contracts, which made use of a prevalent moneylending system in order to secure agricultural commodities by those with sufficient

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<sup>38</sup> Gaston Ducousso, *L'industrie de la soie*; Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*; Butros Labaki, *Introduction à l'histoire économique du Liban* (Beirut: Librairie Orientale B.P, 1986). Fakh al-Din Ma'an for instance, derived a large part of his income from the export of silk to European and regional markets. Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 46. New trade circuits emerged during the 18<sup>th</sup> century between Syria and Egypt, as well as Rome and Livorno, which accompanied a slow shift from interior market centers like Aleppo to the coastal towns of Western Syria. See Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 63-92; Thomas Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt, 1725-1975* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985), 1-40. As we noted, the ability to adapt to the changing economic situation in Syria was central to maintaining one's position as a *muqata'aji*, which individuals like Fakh al-Din, and Zahir al-'Umar managed to do by controlling commercial relations and appropriating a part of revenues accruing from these trade activities.

<sup>39</sup> Faruk Tabak, "Local Merchants in Peripheral Areas of the Empire: the Fertile Crescent during the Long Nineteenth Century," *Review*, 11:2 (Spring, 1988), 180. As Tabak notes, "[t]he overwhelming dominance of small-holding peasantry in imperial society meant that the mobilization of rural surplus required a wide-ranging mercantile network, the territorial compass of which extended from distant to humble villages to market towns and commercial metropolises." This meant a wide range of actors would be involved in commercial activities, including a large variety of merchants competing for the rural surplus. Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> The extraction of rural surplus was taken by merchants and tax-farmers who stood as intermediaries in rural surplus extraction and agents organizing production.

<sup>41</sup> Owen, *The Middle East*, 42. See Doumani's discussion of merchant networks which included ruling families and a variety of intermediaries. Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 78.

<sup>42</sup> Reilly, "Regions and Markets," 114.

capital.<sup>43</sup> *Salam* contracts would allow merchants to secure a specified amount of a good in exchange for an advance payment to the contracting party. The date and place of delivery were also contracted and the price offered was lower than the anticipated market price on the delivery date.<sup>44</sup> This allowed knowledgeable merchants with available capital the opportunity to make considerable profits. The prevalence of such contracts were noted by foreign consuls during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and French merchants based in the cities of Tripoli, Saida (Sidon), Beirut, and Acre were reportedly following the practices of local merchants in extending *salam* contracts directly to peasants of the interior in order to secure crops of cotton and silk.<sup>45</sup>

The practice of *salam* contracts suggests several things: firstly, the existence of a stable or growing market of a highly valued product, sufficiently attractive for creditors to risk their capital through advance purchase (which had a number of risks involved); and secondly, the need on the behalf of cultivators of a cash advance to cover their costs of production or taxes.<sup>46</sup> Such contracts entailed considerable risks to merchants, as several circumstances could prevent the delivery of the contracted good on the convened place and date. Aside from poor climatic conditions and political turmoil which could reduce or disrupt the harvest, merchants had to face the possibility that peasants might flout certain terms of the contract which would require the former have access to means of enforcement.<sup>47</sup> This was not a rare event, as peasants had strong incentives to break their contract at times when market prices were far higher than the original price they contracted, especially when another

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<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of *salam* contracts in Greater Syria and Egypt see: Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 233-237; Kenneth Cuno, "Le Contrat *salam*," 925-940; Beshara Doumani, "Le contrat *salam* et les relations ville-campagne dans la Palestine ottomane," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 4 (July-August, 2006) : 901-924.

<sup>44</sup> For published copies of *salam* contracts between Khazin shaykhs and silk industrialist in the mid-nineteenth century, see Butros Labaki, *Introduction à l'histoire économique*, 391.

<sup>45</sup> In a memorandum dated 1717, for the "maintien du bon ordre et pour l'utilité de l'échelle de Seyde et celles de sa dépendence," French merchants in Saida (Sidon) are reminded that they are forbidden from giving money in advance and entering villages of shaykhs in order to appropriate "by these dangerous means the principle part of the harvest of cotton, oil, and other products." Adel Ismail, ed. *Documents diplomatiques et consulaires relatifs à l'histoire du Liban et des Pays du Proche-Orient du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours*. Part 1, *Sources françaises*, Vol.1 (Beirut: Éditions des oeuvres politiques et historiques, 1978), 185.

<sup>46</sup> Kenneth Cuno, "Le Contrat *salam*," 934.

<sup>47</sup> Doumani, "Le Contrat *salam*," 905.

competitor was willing to purchase their crops at this time. Such tensions were central to the dynamic underpinning peasant-merchant relations.<sup>48</sup>

As noted above, the monetized nature of Mount Lebanon's economy helps explain cultivators' need for cash to meet their taxation payments and the prevalence of advance-payment contracts. Much has been made of these practices which, prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had helped solidify patronage relations between contracting parties, and multiplied the ties of dependency between agricultural producers and various social actors.<sup>49</sup> These practices had an important effect on social relations, often to the detriment of peasant cultivators who were unable to capitalize on trading opportunities or acquire land. As commercialization of agricultural production grew throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, peasants were increasingly drawn into market forces. Contemporaneous accounts by travellers like Volney noted that in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century peasants were caught in a vicious cycle of debt, forced to sell their crops ahead of the harvest in exchange for loans at high interest rates.<sup>50</sup>

### **Commercialization and Changing Patterns of Landholdings**

The commercialization of agriculture deeply impacted patterns of landholdings throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. While a survey of the changing silk trade is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to note that the economic activity of Mount Lebanon during the Ottoman period was marked by involvement in several levels of trade – local, regional, and international. It appears that specialization of agricultural production in Mount Lebanon was such that from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Mount Lebanon's *muqata'as* were not self-sufficient, being firmly dependent on surrounding regions for their subsistence needs.<sup>51</sup> Regional trade circuits provided Mount Lebanon with a wide range of agricultural products. For instance, wheat was provided by the Bekaa' valley, the Hawran region in southern Syria, as well as Egypt. Coffee and rice was supplied from Egypt, while the Kurdish herdsman sold mutton at the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 905.

<sup>49</sup> Reilly, *Regions and Markets*, 128; Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 160-164.

<sup>50</sup> Volney, *Voyage en Égypte*, 265.

<sup>51</sup> Owen, *The Middle East*, 30.; Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 64.

market in Zahla.<sup>52</sup> This trade brought peasants into contact with merchants and tied them to regional demand.

The growth of regional and international markets for Mount Lebanon's silk during the 18<sup>th</sup> century has been linked to major changes in patterns of landholdings, notably the expansion of *waqf* lands (religious endowments) and the emergence of large estates under the control of monastic institutions.<sup>53</sup> The rapid increase in monasteries was such that by 1737 the Lebanese mountain included fifteen such institutions throughout its districts.<sup>54</sup> Thomas Philipp has argued that these monasteries should be considered apart from earlier monastic institutions as they systematized land purchases, attempted to improve agricultural methods, and actively sought to expand the marketing of their harvests.<sup>55</sup> With the acquisition of land, monasteries became responsible for levying taxes and thus, much like other *muqata'ajis*, the monasteries were the chief tax collectors in their areas.<sup>56</sup>

Monasteries also played a pivotal role in commerce, contributing to expanding the market beyond their zones of production by constituting commercial agencies throughout Greater Syria, Egypt, Rome, and Marseille.<sup>57</sup> Slim's study of monasteries and convents in the southern districts of Mount Lebanon presents evidence of the extent of their involvement in regional trade. The Order of Basilian monks, for instance, had several *wakils* (representatives) throughout cities in Syria and Egypt, whose role was to sell the agricultural products of the convents as well as purchase basic items of consumption.<sup>58</sup> The monastery of Mar Yuhanna in the Metn district, also had commercial agents during

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>53</sup> While the factors driving the developments during the 18<sup>th</sup> century are numerous, the growing demand for silk and other agricultural products were certainly important. Slim, *Le métayage et l'impôt*; Slim, *The Greek Orthodox*, 37; Joseph Abou Nohra, "Le rôle des ordres monastiques," 75-87; Van Leeuwen, "Monastic Estates," Tabak, "Agrarian Fluctuations".

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Philipp, "Bilad al-Sham in the Modern Period: Integration into the Ottoman Empire and New Relations with Europe," *Arabica*, 4 (2004): 412.; Bernard Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme Catholique*, (Rome: n.p. 1994), 437.

<sup>55</sup> Philipp, "Bilad al-Sham," 412; Joseph Abou Nohra, "Le rôle des ordres."

<sup>56</sup> Slim, *The Greek Orthodox*, 41; Slim, *Le Métayage et l'impôt*, 112-113.

<sup>57</sup> Abou Nohra, "Le rôle des ordres," 81.

<sup>58</sup> Slim, *Le Métayage et l'impôt*, 64.

the 18<sup>th</sup> century throughout Baalbek, Tripoli, Dayr al-Qamar, Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Acre, Egypt, and Rome.<sup>59</sup> This network of commercial representatives, responsible for marketing the agricultural surplus of monasteries, provides an idea of the importance of regional commercial circuits to the local economies of Mount Lebanon.<sup>60</sup>

The spread of these monasteries marked a shift towards the integration of small landholdings into larger units of production and the increasing commercialization of agriculture.<sup>61</sup> This shift was intimately tied to several developments in the Syrian interior, for these new monasteries in Mount Lebanon were financed and initiated by a newly rising class of Christian merchants in Aleppo and Damascus.<sup>62</sup> The spread of the monasteries were also inseparable from the above mentioned dynamics

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<sup>59</sup> This also included Ibrahim Sabbagh in Acre, the *mudabbir* of Zahir al-'Umar. The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a doubling of the number of agents in Egypt and Yaffa, while those in Baalbek and Tripoli seemed to disappear. Ibid., 65.

<sup>60</sup> This also provides us with an idea of the sources of the monasteries' rise in political power. It is important to note that, contrary to what Dominique Chevallier argued, the fall of European demand at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century did not lead to the paralysis of commerce and the general impoverishment of Mount Lebanon. Dominique Chevallier, "Aspects sociaux de la question d'Orient: aux origines des troubles agraires libanais en 1858." *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisation*, 14 (1959): 44. Recent scholarship reveals that considerable expansion of silk production occurred during this time, "which would not have been conceivable without growing, or at least sustained, demand from the Ottoman and international markets, and presumably, an invigorated indigenous industry." Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 67. It appears as though the expanding regional circuits of trade, notably those between Syria and Egypt which emerged during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, counteracted any drop in demand from European markets at this time. Ibid., 68; see also Abou el-Rousse Slim for an idea of the circuits of trade tied to monasteries. Thomas Philipp's study also provides information about the emerging Greek Catholic trade networks of the 18<sup>th</sup> century which drove this expansion. Thomas Philipp, *The Syrians in Egypt*.

<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, it appears that the commercialization of agriculture was also accompanied by crop specialization and differentiation of *muqata'as*. Slim, *The Greek Orthodox*, 37; Van Leeuwen, "Monastic Estates," 601-617; see the debate on this tendency in Caglar Keyder and Faruk Tabak, eds., *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 1-13. Tabak has argued that the creation of large agricultural holdings in the region, and the "reign of centrifugal forces administering and patrolling agronomically attractive areas throughout the eighteenth century signalled incorporation into the expanding world-economy." Tabak, "Agrarian Fluctuations," 154. For more on the region's integration into the world economy in the eighteenth century see Thomas Philipp, "Acre, the First Instance of Changing Times," in J. Hanssen, T. Philipp & S. Weber, eds. *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Wurzburg in Kommission, 2002), 77-92.

<sup>62</sup> Philipp, "Bilad al-Sham," 414. While this subject awaits study in the case of Mount Lebanon, other scholars have linked establishment of rural *waqf* lands to developments in urban centers, arguing that they providing opportunities for the exploitation of the countryside from urban social actors, "who would otherwise have been unable to exploit the peasantry." Rudolf Vessely, "Procès de la production et rôle du waqf dans les relations ville-campagne," in Randy Deguilhem, ed. *Le Waqf dans l'espace islamique : outil de pouvoir socio-politique* (Damas : Institut français de Damas, 1995), 229-241. This remains a distinctly understudied aspect of Mount Lebanon,

related to the “privatization” of the fiscal system and the spread of *malikâne* holdings, as the interests of the Shihab emirs in maximizing their tax revenues led them to support the expansion of these monasteries through several measures, notably through the extension of certain fiscal privileges.<sup>63</sup> By encouraging the formation of larger estates, emirs of the Shihab family hoped to realize a greater integration of the diverse holdings under their control, all-the-while expanding the productive lands under their *iltizam*, and increasing revenues.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Changing Base of Muqata’ajis and the Expansion of Commercial Relations**

The increasing overlap of tax-farming with commercialization of agriculture contributed to significant changes in land tenure patterns. In particular, the shift to a more “privatized” fiscal system and administrative apparatus meant that economic power became increasingly determinative of the distribution of tax-farms, allowing for an expansion of the social composition of *muqata’ajis*. As the success of tax-farmers was premised on their ability to raise revenues, the position of tax-farmers and holders of executive office depended on their maintaining supremacy at the local political level, as well as their ability to take advantage of the changing economic situation of the region.<sup>65</sup> Thus, the pragmatic economic concerns guiding imperial reform in land tenure paved the way for an expansion of

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despite considerable evidence of links between urban centers of the Syrian interior and the emergence of monastic institutions in Mount Lebanon’s countryside.

<sup>63</sup> Van Leeuwen, “Monastic Estates,” 610. These measures, in turn, encouraged the migration of peasants to profit from better conditions.

<sup>64</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 188.

<sup>65</sup> Stefan Winter notes that “the progressive monetarization of provincial government and the privatization of military power in the later sixteenth century created a context in which non-Sunni tribal leaders constituted viable, even ideal, candidates for local tax and police concessions, accredited by the state and integrated into the imperial military-administrative hierarchy. Yet their success would also depend on their ability to hold sway locally, to transcend their narrow parochial bases, raise revenues and capitalize on western Syria’s changing economic situation.” Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon*, 43-44. It was also this same dynamic which saw the replacement of formerly dominant Shiite *muqata’ajis* by new powerful actors like the Shihab family in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as economic and political power came to be concentrated in their hands. Ibid., 146.



the social base of tax-farmers, shifting political power which was increasingly determinative of the composition of the *muqata'ajis*.<sup>66</sup>

Against this background, the rise of certain groups during the 18<sup>th</sup> century which combined commercial activities with investment in land, and became part of an elite who bid on *iltizam* can be understood.<sup>67</sup> In her study of landholding patterns in Zahle, a principal market town of Mount Lebanon, Alixa Naff notes the gradual disappearance of “noble” ancestry in relation to landholdings and social status. Naff’s findings suggest that this change was associated with the ability of some groups to capitalize on the changing economic context (expanding commercialization of agriculture and trade) of the market town during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, noting that, “[w]hile in the past, property had been the economic mainstay of the status of the Grand Seven [noble families], over the years it became difficult to separate these landowners from the merchants because of the intermingling of the two economic endeavours.” She goes on to say that,

“[t]he great merchants had always been the first families, and as the merchants increased in number and wealth, they not only invested in property, but competed in other economic endeavours which were usually the preserve of the clique such as bidding on tax farms, and speculating on crops.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon*, 43. This point is addressed at length in: Salzmann, “An Ancien Régime,” 393-423. Salzmann also argues that the “privatization” of the fiscal system in the Ottoman provinces had an inclusive consequence as non-Muslims were able to enter the administrative apparatus. Ibid, 402-5.

<sup>67</sup> See: Fruma Zachs, “Commerce and Merchants Under Amir Bashir II: From Market Town to Commercial Centre,” *Oriente Moderno*, 86 (2006): 51-63; Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983); Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 79-80, 90-91; Alixa Naff, “A Social History of Zahle, the Principle Market Town in Nineteenth-Century Lebanon (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1972). Ariel Salzmann also argues in her groundbreaking study of *malikâne* holdings and the gradual “privatization” of the Ottoman fiscal system, that “provincial and state elites began to shift their portfolio holdings toward more lucrative areas of the economy, especially moneylending, commerce, and urban real estate...Particularly where these provincial elites had an entree to European markets – Zahir al-‘Umar’s uprising in the 1770s in Northern Palestine is an important example of a career path from tax farmer to cotton magnate – they established themselves as “power capitalists” in coastal or urban commerce.” Salzmann, “An Ancien Regime,” 406-407.

<sup>68</sup> Alixa Naff, “A Social History of Zahle,” 175. Naff adds that in addition to the gradual domination in commercial activities, these new merchant groups also took on a more decisive role in the political affairs of Zahle, becoming important bases of support for various political factions in the 1840s and 1850s and gradually joining the ranks of the expanding bureaucracy during the *mutasarrifiyya* period. Ibid.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Zuq Mikhayil in the district of Kisrawan had become, alongside the market towns of Dayr al-Qamar and Zahle, an important center of trade and industrial production in Mount Lebanon with a sizeable, and growing, handicraft industry. This handicraft industry had expanded rapidly during the 1790s, increasingly centered in the market towns of Mount Lebanon, selling their products in regional markets of Egypt, Greater Syria, Anatolia, and Salonika.<sup>69</sup> The growth of these towns was linked to the large economic processes which developed during the Shihabi emirate, notably the expansion of circuits of trade during the 18<sup>th</sup> century linking Syria and Egypt.<sup>70</sup>

The extent of this developing industry is hard to measure due to the lack of reliable statistics; however, estimates by travellers and consular agents help construct an idea about the size, organization, and techniques of production during this time.<sup>71</sup> In 1824, the French consul in Aleppo, Mathieu de Lesseps “estimated that out of 700 *quintars* (179,200 kilograms) [of silk] produced in Mount Lebanon, 200 were used in the weaving shops of Beirut, Saida (Sidon), Tripoli and the Mountain.”<sup>72</sup> These weaving shops reportedly employed a large percentage of the population, supplying the clothing needs of the region.<sup>73</sup> French Consul Henry Guys noted in 1835 that Zuq Mikhayil counted 135 looms weaving cotton, silk, wool and gold thread. This compares to the towns of Beirut (160 looms and 100

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<sup>69</sup> Paul Saba, “The Creation of the Lebanese Economy – Economic Growth in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” in Roger Owen, ed. *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon* (London: Ithaca Press, 1976), 2.; Zachs, “Commerce and Merchants,” 54-8.

<sup>70</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 80; Zachs, “Commerce and Merchants,” 54.

<sup>71</sup> Statistics in 1860 indicate that the handicraft industry had changed significantly, the number of textile shops were listed at 400 in Dayr al-Qamar, 50 in Zuq Mikhayil, 20 in Zahle, 20 in Saida. Gaston Ducousso, *L’industrie de la soie*, 180-82, 206; Butros Labaki, *Introduction à l’histoire économique*, 85. It is important to note that as Quataert argues, the role of domestic manufacturing in the rural economy has been neglected due to lack of statistics and scholarly bias which views manufacturing “only when it was urban-based and either guild-oriented or located in a factory setting.” Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 2. We note that other centers had arisen in the mid-nineteenth century, like Ghazir, which does not figure as part of the European statistics.

<sup>72</sup> Cited in Akram Khater, *She Married Silk: A Rewriting of Peasant History in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Mount Lebanon* (Ph.D.diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1993), 46.

<sup>73</sup> These weaving shops were linked predominantly to the local markets, employing a large percentage of the town’s population. See Burckhardt for a contemporaneous description of Zuk Mikhayil in John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London: John Murray, 1822), 183.

“shops”), Dayr al-Qamar (140 looms), and Ba’abda (40 looms).<sup>74</sup> Five years later, John Bowring estimated the total number of looms of Mount Lebanon at 1,200, while others estimated that no less than 2,000 were in use during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>75</sup> Following the 1860 clashes it is also reported that owners of destroyed weaving shops in Dayr al Qamar borrowed “750,000 piasters to rebuild 42 shops which had employed in totality more than 400 workers.”<sup>76</sup> These estimates did not include the reeling operations at home or by itinerant labourers.<sup>77</sup>

While little is known about the ownership of the shops which produced and sold these textiles, it was generally assumed that the “traditional” *muqata’aji* families were their primary owners.<sup>78</sup> A more recent study by Paul Saba suggests that these “emerging workshops may have been owned by peasant handicraftsmen who, Saba states “aided by members of their family, had accumulated surplus sums as a result of the widening of the market for silk and cotton cloth.”<sup>79</sup> While more research remains to be done on the ownership patterns of the textile manufactories, this evidence suggests that by the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, control over production was not the preserve of a narrow elite.<sup>80</sup>

The conditions of trade under Emir Bashir Shihab II largely enabled the growth of these market towns and the expansion of groups involved in relations of exchange. Merchants and wholesalers were allowed to buy and sell silk and other agricultural products relatively freely, outside of the direct control of the emir, allowing for those associated to networks of silk trade and manufacture to accumulate vast

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<sup>74</sup> “Tableau de l’industrie des habitants de Beyrouth et des principaux Bourgs qui en dépendent,” dated 1<sup>st</sup>, March 1835, in Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent, 1800-1914: A Documentary Economic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 382.

<sup>75</sup> John Bowring, *Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria* (London: William Clowes & Sons for HM Stationary Office, 1840), 20-1. Arthur Rupp, *Syrien als Wirtschaftsgebiet* (Berlin: E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1917) 128-9, cited in Akram Khater, “She Married Silk,” 49.

<sup>76</sup> Ernest Louet, *Expedition de Syrie: Beyrouth – Le Liban – Jerusalem, 1860-1861* (Paris: n.p., 1862), 346.

<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, there are considerable indications of this form of industry in other centers like Ghazir by the mid nineteenth century. This point will be addressed in the next chapter.

<sup>78</sup> Chevallier, “Aspects sociaux,” 52.

<sup>79</sup> Saba, “The Creation of the Lebanese Economy,” 2-3.

<sup>80</sup> This seems to be in line with Naff’s findings in the town of Zahle. As will be discussed further in the next chapter, the records of the Qa’immaqam’s correspondence between the years 1854-1860 suggest that families outside of the “traditional” prominent *muqata’aji* families of Mount Lebanon came to play diverse roles in the expanding textile industry.

amounts of capital.<sup>81</sup> Families like the Bakhus, Tubya, Medawwar, al-Bitar, and others, emerged as prominent merchant families of Kisrawan who, by the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, had managed to accumulate important sums of capital, which they lent in turn to Bashir Shihab and other families like the Khazins.<sup>82</sup> Taxation records during this period reveal that by 1801, moneylenders from Kisrawan, mainly Zuq Mikhayil, had “deeply penetrated the fiscal system,” becoming indispensable intermediaries by providing much needed capital to meet the tax demands of provincial governors. The rapid ascendancy of these groups was such that by 1818, the tax remittances of entire villages in Kisrawan went to them as re-payment for loans.<sup>83</sup>

The success of these families rested on their ability to control trade and agricultural production through their position as tax-farmers, while also constituting important links to emerging regional merchant networks.<sup>84</sup> This apparent shift was similar to the developments occurring in Zahle, as new groups came to control the financial position of older “traditional” *muqata’aji* families in Kisrawan like the Khazins, and also came to take over part of their capital resources through moneylending. Furthermore, various conjunctures contributed to increasing the power of new merchant-moneylending families during the 1820s as the lands of Bishara Jaffal al-Khazin, the tax-collector of the entire *muqata’a*

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<sup>81</sup> This appears to contrast with strongmen like Zahir al-‘Umar who imposed a monopoly on the export of cotton, greatly affecting the politics of trade of the region and leading to open conflict with some leaders of Jabal Nablus. See Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 101-106; Thomas Philipp, *The Rise and Fall*, 13-16, 49, 94-135. For information on the rising groups tied to trade in Mount Lebanon’s market towns, see: Zachs, “Commerce and Merchants,” 57; Alixa Naff, “A Social History;” Slim, *Le métayage et l’impôt*, 100-101; Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria*, 9, 168. Richard Van Leeuwen, for instance, points out that the market town of Zuq Mikhayil witnessed the emergence of a group of moneylenders who managed to expand beyond the realm of monetary transactions, acquiring properties as well. Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 87, 90-92.

<sup>82</sup> See Charles Churchill’s description of the “Boghos” [Bakhus] family in Ghazir and Mikhayil Tubiya during the 1850s. Charles H. Churchill, *Mount Lebanon: A Ten Years Residence from 1842 to 1852; Describing the Manners, Customs, and Religion of Its Inhabitants, with a Full and Correct Account of the Druze Religion, and Containing Historical Records of the Mountain Tribes, from Personal Intercourse with Their Chiefs and Other Authentic Sources*, v.1, (London: Garnet Publishing, 1994 [1853]), 71-72, 87-88. For the Medawwar family and al-Bitar, and the emergence of other merchant families in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, see the following works: Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 85-102; Slim, *The Greek Orthodox*, 84.

<sup>83</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 90-91. Van Leeuwen further notes that some of these moneylenders had monasteries among their clientele, while most of them had lent money directly to Bashir at one time or another.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 94; Slim, *Le métayage et l’impôt*, 100-101. Zuq Mikhayil was particularly linked to Greek Catholic merchant networks which came to dominate the commercial networks linking Syria and Egypt during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

of Kisrawan, were sold to merchants to whom he had contracted important debts.<sup>85</sup> In this way, the economic and fiscal roles of the Khazins, who had been the dominant *muqata'aji* family in Kisrawan during most of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, became increasingly marginalized.<sup>86</sup> As we will see later, these same groups also managed to capitalize on the shifting geographies of trade, gaining a foothold in Beirut and forming part of the growing merchant community during the late 1820s and 1830s.<sup>87</sup>

Political alliances were reconfigured at the same time, as the ability of these groups to provide capital in times of need allowed them to infiltrate the patronage networks of Bashir Shihab and other dominant political brokers (i.e. Khazin family), extending also into the “formal” political administrative apparatus, evidenced by the presence of new social groups in the administration of the emirate.<sup>88</sup> The emerging merchants and moneylenders of the Mount Lebanon’s various districts came to form a new alignment in Bashir Shihab’s complex system of political alliances, which allowed him to reduce his dependence on powerful “traditional” *muqata'aji* families,” as the latter’s ability to delay or halt the due payments of their *iltizam* (tax-farms) had constituted an important dynamic shaping the political alliances between the Shihab emirs and notable families like the Khazins and Jumblatt.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 89.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 92. These developments contributed to “a reallocation of capital resources, since the accumulation in the circuit of the traditionally powerful *muqata'aji* families was substituted by accumulation by moneylenders in the market towns, protégés of the Shihab emirs, and tradesmen in Beirut, Dayr al-Qamar, Zuq Mikhayil and Zahla.” Ibid., 80.

<sup>87</sup> In addition to the Tubiya, Bakhus, the Bayhum families, other prominent Beirut merchant families like the Abela, Medawwar, Sursok and Bustros had all accumulated capital by combining commercial dealings with their “immense urban and rural landholdings as their traditional form of wealth.” Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 97. The official correspondence of the *Qa'immaqam* of the sub-district indicates that merchant families operating in Kisrawan like the Thabit and Murad families, also managed to combine landholdings with commercial activity in Beirut. See an issue over a landsale in al-Judaïda, Kisrawan between *khawaja* Yaqub Thabit and Yusuf Murad, in Salim Hasan Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat al-qa'imamiyya al-nasraniyya fi Jabal Lubnan*, v.3 (Beirut, n.p., 1976), 18-9.

<sup>88</sup> See, among others, the Baradi, Mishaqa, Bitar, Baz families. Discussed in Iliya Harik, *Politics and Change*, 51, 167-173, 196; Slim, *The Greek Orthodox*, 84. See the chronicle written by Mishaqa, describing the family’s rise to prominence. See Mikhayil Mishaqa, *Al-Jawab 'ala iqtirah al-ahbab*. Ed. And tr. Wheeler M. Thackston Jr. as *Murder Mayhem, Pillage and Plunder: The History of the Lebanon in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

<sup>89</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 80.

It should be noted that while a variety of socio-economic processes contributed to changing the social base of *muqata'ajis* during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the relative marginalization of older prominent *muqata'aji* families was not a uni-linear development. The reduction of the size of estates of the Khazin family, for example, was also accompanied by internal differentiation within the family, evidenced by the rise of the Khazin branch in Zuq Mikhayil.<sup>90</sup> As will be discussed in the following chapter, some of the members of the Khazin and Hubaysh families, “traditional” *muqata'ajis* of Kisrawan, were being referred to as *khawaja* in the correspondence of the sub-district governor (*qa'immaqam*) – a title reserved for prominent merchant families. It will be demonstrated shortly that members of the Khazin family also managed to maintain some degree of control over the marketing and production of silk and the growing textile industry. This suggests that at least some members of notable families like the Khazin found ways of adapting to the changing economic context, establishing textile shops and maintaining a degree of control over the marketing of silk and textile production in the emerging centers in Kisrawan.<sup>91</sup>

Alongside the changing base of the *muqata'ajis*, there is also evidence of a growing differentiation of the peasantry in Mount Lebanon throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Despite presenting a limited picture of landholding patterns, travellers like Volney and chroniclers like Shayban al-Khazin noted that the late 18<sup>th</sup> century district of Kisrawan contained a large number of small-holding peasants.<sup>92</sup> These observations find support in more recent studies based on the available land records of this time in Mount Lebanon, which present evidence that some peasant cultivators were able to buy

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>91</sup> Other *muqata'aji* families like the Dahdah also managed to become prominent merchants, establishing a mercantile house in Marseille. See Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 202-205. Ghazir and Zuq Mikhayil seem to be the two main centers of manufacturing according to the sources. As will be discussed in the next chapter, both towns witnessed conflicts between merchants associated with Beirut circuits of production and the Khazin and Hubaysh families.

<sup>92</sup> Harik, *Politics and Change*, 27-28. Despite this evidence, a systematic study of landholdings during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Lebanon has yet to emerge. Akram Khater notes that scholars continue to lack of a clear idea about the percentage of land owned by the peasantry at any given time. Khater, *She Married Silk*, 20.

land from their *muqata'ajis*.<sup>93</sup> Slim's study of monastic holdings also suggest that peasants were able to acquire lands which they endowed as *waqf* as a form of investment strategy, constituting their holdings as inalienable productive lands. In the case of Kisrawan, records of the monastery of Dayr Mar Shallita in Ghusta reveal that between the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the late 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, over 80 percent of registered land donations had come from peasant-cultivators, while the rest were from members of the Khazin family.<sup>94</sup>

These developments should not be made to stand for evidence that Mount Lebanon was composed of a free-holding peasantry benefiting from a kind of freedom unparalleled in the region.<sup>95</sup> Such a process seems to have had a regional basis, as other scholars like Dina Rizk Khoury have argued that, between 1750 and 1850, the expansion of commercial agriculture and commoditization of land in the province of Mosul led to increased social differentiation in rural villages, as rich peasants began employing impoverished peasant labourers on their lands.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Naff, "A Social History of Zahle," 159. Naff's study also suggests those peasants who rented land from owners were able to transmit the rights of the use of the land to his progeny, and thus "could assume an attitude quite similar to that of small peasant owners." Ibid. For further discussion of Mount Lebanon's landowning peasantry, see also Harik, *Politics and Change*, 27-28.

<sup>94</sup> Slim, *The Greek Orthodox*, 91. Volney noted in his travels throughout the region that peasants donated their lands to religious institutions as a way of securing property, at which point they could lease the land or continue to cultivate it. Volney, *Voyage en Egypte*, vol.1, 421; vol.2, 269. While this contributed to easing the burden of peasants who feared the seizing of their land or the crushing debt burden, the land was often not redistributed to them as the courts ruled in favour of religious institutions in many cases involving such claims, "maintaining the lands in *waqf*." Slim, *The Greek Orthodox*, 72.

<sup>95</sup> In his study, "Le Droit privé des maronites au temps des Emirs Chehab, 1696-1841," Ibrahim Aouad concludes that: "In contrast to what existed in Syria and in all the other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the Lebanese always had full property of their lands and the notion of property was the same, in Lebanon, as it was with the Romans, which means it included the right to dispose of it freely." Ibid., 247-248. He added that European observers corroborate such an account. In agreement, he cites Volney's observation that "property (among Maronites) was as sacred as in Europe," and "its inhabitants are so attached to their lands, that we almost never see its alienation." Toufic Tuma's study "*Paysans et institutions féodales*" agrees with Aouad's assessment, explaining this state of affairs as a result of the fact that Islam did not take a firm hold in the region. Such statements are used by agrarian structuralists like Gerber and Baer to argue for Lebanon's "unique" historical trajectory along a more European historical.

<sup>96</sup> Dina Rizk Khoury, "The Introduction of Commercial Agriculture in the Province of Mosul and Its Effects on the Peasantry, 1750-1850," in Keyder and Tabak, eds., *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 155-172.

## Conclusion

By highlighting changes in the social structure and configuration of rural life during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, notably through a focus on the expansion of commercial relations and the changes in land tenure patterns, this chapter sought to offer a “longue-durée” backdrop against which the process of “integration” into the world-economy and the emergence of a distinct form of rural politics in the mid-nineteenth century can be better understood. I argued that the Ottoman context was crucial to understanding these changes both in terms of imperial policies which introduced new dynamics allowing for the expansion of the base of *muqata’ajis* (tax-farmers) and the increasing commoditization of land, and in terms of its internal trade whose growth contributed to the expansion of commercial relations and the rise of new social groups centering on the market towns of Mount Lebanon.

By paying attention to these “internal” dynamics, the chapter implicitly challenges the view presented by Roger Owen and Dominique Chevallier, among others, that local society was largely stagnant during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and that all significant changes in Mount Lebanon emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, largely as a result of renewed European commercial action. Such a narrative constructs an artificial divide between two epochs, allowing the mid-nineteenth century to appear as a dramatic “rupture” in which local society became disarticulated as its ancient regime collapsed in the face external intervention. Within the framework internal dynamics are largely ignored, which helps explain why the predominant mode of explanation of the Kisrawan uprising continues to focus on increased “oppression,” tracing the deterioration of objective conditions of an undifferentiated peasantry. This framework remains largely incapable of explaining the timing and composition of the revolt without resorting to this problematic thesis of socio-economic change, or relying on an overly idealist framework of explanation in which new forms of “consciousness,” largely derived from external sources, are made to fill in the explanatory gaps. It is to these internal dynamics which we turn to in the next chapter in



order to analyse emerging forms of rural politics and offer an alternate interpretation of the political mobilization in 1858 in the district of Kisrawan.

### Chapter Three: Imperial Boundaries and the Political Economy of Revolt, 1830-1860

#### Introduction

The Kisrawan uprising was shaped by an array of historical forces. The timing, social composition, and demands presented during the revolt suggest that it emerged out of a series of overlapping processes which were accelerated during the period of 1830 to 1860, in part as a result of centralizing measures introduced during the Egyptian Occupation and the restoration of Ottoman rule. I propose to see the period of 1830 to 1860 as a “unity” as it was characterized by a rapid acceleration of two converging processes – the expansion of commercial relations<sup>1</sup> and political “centralization”<sup>2</sup> – which greatly affected the entire social formation of Mount Lebanon and gave rise to significant social tensions out of which emerged several waves of political mobilization.

This chapter traces the political and economic changes between 1830 and 1860, beginning with a look at the Egyptian occupation of Greater Syria and, the manner in which the introduction of political-administrative measures overlapped with ongoing socio-economic processes and a shifting “geography of trade” to re-configure political and economic power as it became increasingly concentrated in the hands of a new elite of merchants based in Beirut. I then move on to examine the centralizing of economic activity in Beirut under Ibrahim Pasha, notably the marketing of silk and the re-direction of the mountain hinterland’s commercial production through the rising port-city. I continue by analysing the cumulative impact of these changes on Mount Lebanon’s social formation, paying particular attention to

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<sup>1</sup> I have avoided the term “integration,” as I feel it does not adequately help understand the process of economic change undergoing at this time. As Van Leeuwen’s recent study of 18<sup>th</sup> century Mount Lebanon explains, the “integration” of the region into international circuits of trade was a long and drawn out process which originates in the days of Fakhr al-Din. While quantitative leaps in exports of silk did occur in the mid-nineteenth century in Mount Lebanon, as Van Leeuwen argues, the international and regional trade in silk had greatly shaped the agricultural structure of Mount Lebanon from the “16<sup>th</sup> century onwards.” Richard Van Leeuwen, “Monastic Estates and Agricultural Transformation in Mount Lebanon in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 23 (November, 1991): 602. Other scholars have proposed to locate the “integration” of the region into the world economy around the 18<sup>th</sup> century as cash crop agriculture developed in the Galilee, linking the export of grain and wheat to the European dominated world economy. See: Thomas Philipp, “Bilad al-Sham in the Modern Period: Integration into the Ottoman Empire and New Relations with Europe,” *Arabica*, 4 (2004): 401-418.

<sup>2</sup> I have in mind here the expansion and concentration of political power in new administrative bodies centered in Beirut and in the separate *qa’immaqamiyya*.

the re-configuration of commercial networks in Kisrawan and the growing importance of urban-rural relations to the political economy. Doing so will help us better understand the key dynamics which shaped emerging conflicts in the 1840s and 1850s.

The second part of the chapter examines the period of restoration of Ottoman rule in Greater Syria (and Mount Lebanon), and the manner in which expanding commercial relations gave rise to several layers of tension as Ottoman reform efforts reconfigured political power in part through the establishment of new legal-administrative frameworks which became increasingly important in determining the shape of this broad process. I begin by outlining the economic changes, notably the “modernization” of the silk industry and the expansion of moneylending practices (two processes which scholars agree took central importance during this time), arguing that their impact on local society was inextricably linked to political centralization and the “formalization” of relations embedded in these activities. I continue by analysing the ways in which a wide range of actors came to forge new political and economic relations, and how local power structures defined and mediated the boundaries of commercial expansion. In the context of increased competition and the increasing “formalization” of commercial practices, these overlapping processes gave rise to significant layers of tension triggering a series of political crises out of which the uprising of 1858 emerged.

### **Ibrahim Pasha and Intensifying Urban-Rural Links**

The arrival of Egyptian troops in Greater Syria in 1831, led by Ibrahim Pasha, heralded significant political and administrative changes as it brought the entire region of Greater Syria under a single administration. The provincial divisions of Greater Syria were dissolved, as the *wilayets* (provinces) of Tripoli, Saida (Sidon), and Damascus were amalgamated under the sole governorship of the *vali* of Damascus for the duration of Ibrahim Pasha’s rule of the region (1831-1840).<sup>3</sup> While the administrative

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<sup>3</sup> Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy* (New York: Methuen, 1981), 77. As Owen notes, the Egyptian occupation was the first time in memory that Greater Syria was brought under a single administration backed by a powerful army.

and political changes at the provincial level disrupted the complex configuration of political alliances which had defined the relationship between provincial governors, the Grand Emir and *muqata'aji* families of Mount Lebanon, the establishment of several new political institutions contributed to centralizing political control in the urban centers of Greater Syria with repercussions on urban-rural relations throughout the region. A provincial *majlis al-shura* (advisory council) was founded in Damascus, while several other advisory councils were established in cities with a population of over 20,000. In addition, *mutasallims* (lieutenant-governors) were appointed to preside over each of the principal urban centers in Greater Syria, with the responsibility of maintaining security and overseeing the local administrative bodies.<sup>4</sup>

Much has been made of the arrival of the Egyptian military in Greater Syria under the leadership of Ibrahim Pasha, an event which is argued to have caused abrupt *caesurae* in the history of the region. While the importance of this event should not be downplayed, recent works have cast doubts on interpretations of this event as marking a radical rupture with the past, arguing instead that it accelerated rather than precipitated ongoing trends.<sup>5</sup> This position finds support in the processes

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<sup>4</sup> Ibrahim Pasha modified the administrative organization of the Mountain, placing Mount Lebanon under the governorship of the *vali* of Damascus. Caesar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon, 1830-1861* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 15.

<sup>5</sup> For a classic example of the thesis of radical change see William R. Polk, *The Opening of South Lebanon, 1788-1840: A Study of the Impact of the West on the Middle East* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963). See also the recent work of Ussama Makdisi for a more nuanced formulation of this thesis: Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). Several works on the history of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire have sought to challenge this thesis. See in particular Beshara Doumani's challenge to the thesis of the Egyptian occupation as marking a radical break with the past in Greater Syria: Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 40-45. Elizabeth Thompson's study of the *Majlis Shura al-Sham al 'Ali*, or high advisory council for the Damascus province, also poses a challenge to the thesis of radical rupture as she argues that institutional changes initiated under the Egyptian regime and subsequently revamped during the *Tanzimat* reform program, had built on previous practice. Focusing on the advisory councils, Thompson argues these bodies had evolved from various provincial councils which had existed for more than a hundred years and had served as "a forum for local elites to advise Ottoman governors on matters such as tax assessments, market regulation, and local security." Elizabeth Thompson, "Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-45," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 25 (August, 1993): 457.

outlined in the previous chapter, notably the expansion of relations of exchange, the rising importance of market towns, and the growth of social groups associated with these activities.

One way in which these trends were accelerated was through the introduction of new political-administrative bodies. The establishment of a *majlis al-shura* in Beirut in 1834 has been highlighted as a turning point in the local political configuration as none of its sitting members were drawn from the previous “network of scribes, administrators and financiers” who had emerged under the rulers of Acre.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the shift in political power of the ruling elite converged with *longue-durée* structural change to allow new groups to rise in importance. The forming of advisory councils like the one in Beirut marked what some have called a kind of “political coming of age” of merchants, as the latter received unprecedented access to political office.<sup>7</sup> This assertion seems wholly supported when looking at the composition of the *majlis* in Beirut. Organized under Mahmud Nami Bey, a French-trained Egyptian officer-engineer,<sup>8</sup> the *majlis* seated twelve members divided equally along religious lines (between Christians and Muslims): ‘Abd al-Fattah Agha Hamada, ‘Umar Bayhum, Ahmad al-‘Ariss, Hassan al-Barbir, Amin Ramadan, Ahmad Jallus, Jibra’il Humsi, Bishara Nasrallah, Elias Manasa, Nasif Matar, Yusuf ‘Ayrut, and Musa Bustros. The great majority of the members of the *majlis* were already well-established Beirut merchants with ties to regional and international circuits of trade and, as we noted in the previous chapter, formed part of a group of families issued outside of the “traditional” landowning elite, who had managed to capitalize on expanding commercial activity during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These families continued to profit from the commercial opportunities which accompanied the

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<sup>6</sup> Jens Hanssen notes that “with the possible exception of Elias Manasa, whose father Yusuf worked in the district administration of Beirut during Suleyman’s rule in Acre, none of these councillors were affiliated with the previous, burgeoning network of scribes, administrators, and financiers under the rulers of Acre.” Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut : The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 30-31. Hanssen bases his comparison on the list of administrators and financiers provided by Thomas Philipp in his study of Acre: Thomas Philipp, *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City, 1730-1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 216.

<sup>7</sup> The phrase is borrowed from Beshara Doumani which he uses to describe the establishment of a new merchant elite in the urban centers of Greater Syria. He argues that it reinforced “the greater reach of merchant capital.” Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 135, 138.

<sup>8</sup> Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, 30.

rapid influx of European capital and merchants during the 1830s, and a list compiled by the British Consul in Beirut reveals that the great majority of them positioned themselves as part of the main mercantile houses trading with the British.<sup>9</sup>

While the composition of Beirut's *majlis* signalled a "political coming of age" of the Beirut merchant community, the new administrative duties of the council encouraged a shift in the urban-rural dynamic as the council members' political power was greatly enhanced over the districts of Mount Lebanon. For example, members of the *majlis* were endowed with unprecedented influence over the fiscal politics of the Mountain, as any dispute over the levying and collection of *miri* taxes was dealt with directly with the *majlis*, which sat as the legal body of adjudication.<sup>10</sup> The *majlis* also broke out of the regular framework of provincial politics as the council was allowed to appeal decisions directly to Cairo,

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<sup>9</sup> Jens Hanssen claims that the Hamada family consisted of a group of merchants who had migrated from Egypt to Beirut in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, 30. For a discussion of the Bayhum and Bustros families, see Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 40, 96-7, 98, 105. According to the commercial correspondence of the French consul stationed in Beirut, "Said Abdel Rahman Barbir and Uncle" were listed alongside the "Matar brothers" as part of the principal Syrian merchants in Beirut in 1824, with "considerable commercial affairs." List of merchants reproduced in Rick Joseph, "The Material Origins of the Lebanese Conflict of 1860," (B.Litt. Oxford, 1977), 8. Dominique Chevallier also writes that the Matar family received French consular protection in 1835. See Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban à l'époque de la révolution industrielle en Europe* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste P. Geuthner S.A., 1982), 202-03, n.4. In another list compiled in 1848 by the British Consul in Beirut entitled "List of Syrian Mercantile Houses who Trade Direct with England," 'Ahmad al-'Ariss is listed alongside the "Berbir [Barbir] brothers," the "Beyhoum brothers", and the "Fayani brothers" as the principle Muslim merchants in Beirut trading with England in 1848. "Antun Nasrallah" also figures in the same list as a Christian merchant trading with England. List reproduced in Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent, 1800-1914 : A Documentary Economic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 167. While little is known about Humsi family, they appear later in the correspondence of the *qa'immaqam* of the "Christian" district with the Consul-General of France. The records for the years 1854-1860 are published, unedited and in the original Arabic in: Salim Hasan Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat al-qa'imamiyya al-nasraniyya fi Jabal Lubnan*. 4 vols. (Beirut, n.p., 1976), For the case of Humsi, see *Ibid.*, vol.4, 55.

<sup>10</sup> Farah, *Politics of Interventionism*, 16, 18. The re-configuration of fiscal politics profoundly affected the Mountain's *muqata'ajis* whose role as fiscal intermediaries was further undermined as officials appointed from Cairo and Damascus were charged with tax collection. This was not the first time that taxation of Mount Lebanon's district had flowed through Beirut – the Khazins had attempted to undermine the authority of Bashir al-Shihab in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by proposing to forward the taxes to the *mutasallim* of Beirut instead of the Grand Emir. See Richard Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy in Mount Lebanon: The Khazin Sheikhs and the Maronite Church, 1736-1840* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 89.

bypassing the authority of the *mutasallim* of Damascus.<sup>11</sup> Most importantly, however, was the fact that commercial disputes were arbitrated in the consultative council, allowing local merchants tied to the council to gain a significant advantage in commercial affairs.<sup>12</sup>

The changes in political power were all the more significant given that they occurred as Beirut was consolidating its status as the predominant coastal port linking Greater Syria to international and regional trade circuits.<sup>13</sup> Trade volumes rapidly increased through the city with maritime traffic and exports doubling between 1830 and 1833.<sup>14</sup> Exports also doubled between the years of 1833 and 1838, while imports increased by roughly a half during the same period.<sup>15</sup> The shift in relative importance of Beirut as a center of trade was directly encouraged by the policies of the Egyptian regime, which sought to re-direct commercial agricultural production through the city with important effects on the Mountain hinterland.

The needs of a growing Egyptian industrial sector partly underlay the efforts by Ibrahim Pasha to control the commercial agricultural production of Mount Lebanon. While increased demand for raw materials in Egypt had already contributed to driving up the price for Mount Lebanon's silk during the

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<sup>11</sup> Farah, *Politics of Interventionism*, 15. The rule of Bashir Shihab was also circumscribed by Ibrahim Pasha in several ways, not the least of which was the power of the newly established *majlis* of Beirut who answered to the *mutasallim* of Damascus and could appeal decisions directly to Cairo. John Bowring, *Report on the Commercial Statistics*, 127; Farah, *Politics of Interventionism*, 15. According to Bowring, the *mutasallim* was also largely "independent of the Shihabi Emirs of the Mountain." John Bowring, *Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria* (London: William Clowes & Sons for Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1840), 127. At the same time, these changes did not usher in the collapse of Mount Lebanon's political economic configuration as Bashir Shihab continued to exercise his rule over the region.

<sup>12</sup> Foreign merchants complained bitterly of the ability of local merchants to avoid debt repayment and receive preferential treatment through their connections with the city's *majlis*. See Rick Joseph, "The Material Origins," 197. The British consuls also repeatedly complained in 1844 that the *majalis* (plural of *majlis*) of Beirut and Saida (Sidon) "are known to be corrupt." Cited in: Leila Fawaz, "Foreign Presence and Perception of Ottoman Rule in Beirut," in Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber, eds. *The Empire in the City: Arab provincial capitals in the late Ottoman Empire* (Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002), 96.

<sup>13</sup> See Y. Eyup Ozveren, "Beirut," *Review*, 4 (Fall, 1993):467-97; Y. Eyup Ozveren, "The Making and Unmaking of an Ottoman Port-City: Nineteenth-Century Beirut, Its Hinterland, and the World Economy," (PhD. Diss., State University of New York, Binghamton, 1990); Laila Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*; Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*; Charles Issawi, "British Trade and the Rise of Beirut, 1830-1860," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 8 (January, 1977): 91-101.

<sup>14</sup> Owen, *The Middle East*, 80.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

1820s and 1830s, Ibrahim Pasha introduced several measures of general support for silk production, providing strong incentives to plant mulberry trees.<sup>16</sup> The British Consul-General in Beirut reported in 1836 that mulberry trees had increased by a quarter since the arrival of Ibrahim Pasha, while John Bowring, a British Member of Parliament who compiled commercial statistics on Syria during this time, claimed that 37,000 new mulberry trees had been ordered for planting in Beirut, Saida (Sidon), and Tripoli.<sup>17</sup> There are further indications that sericulture expanded throughout Mount Lebanon, the northern districts of Jubayl, al-Batrun, and Jabbat Bsharri in particular.<sup>18</sup>

Growing Egyptian demand for Mount Lebanon's silk also led Ibrahim Pasha to impose central control by attempting to put in place a monopoly over the valued crop.<sup>19</sup> After several failed attempts, Ibrahim Pasha was forced to give up the monopoly in 1835 in the face of widespread protests from producers and traders.<sup>20</sup> Further trade regulations were also met with significant opposition on behalf of European merchants and local producers.<sup>21</sup> Although the monopoly was abandoned, Beirut became increasingly important as a transit point for the region's silk trade. The centrality of the port-city to the economic life of Mount Lebanon was further enhanced as peasants were ordered to transport their

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<sup>16</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 69- 70; Polk, *The Opening of South Lebanon*, 171.

<sup>17</sup> John Bowring, *Report on the Commercial Statistics*, 250, cited in Owen, *The Middle East*, 79.

<sup>18</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 70. As Van Leeuwen notes, "as during the greater part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the upsurge in the silk trade of Mount Lebanon was not caused by direct trade contacts with Europe, but rather through the intermediation of manufacturers in the Ottoman Empire itself, which had become incorporated into trade networks connected with the European market. Seemingly, the demand on the Ottoman market, both for consumption and for the weaving industries, remained an important structural factor." Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Driving the demand was a growing industrial sector centered in Damietta and Alexandria. See Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 69; William R. Polk, *The Opening of South Lebanon*, 167-172.

<sup>20</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 70. Ibrahim Pasha commissioned a study "to ascertain the state of the silk market in Lebanon and especially to find out who were the principal merchants. Mehmet Ali [sic] then ordered his officials to buy the entire crop of Syrian silk and sent funds from Egypt for this purpose." Polk, *The Opening of South Lebanon*, 170. On another occasion an agent was put in charge of negotiating with Amir Bashir and several other merchants the purchasing of the entire crop and the issue of instituting a monopoly over the sale of silk. Ibid., 171. Amir Bashir also agreed with Muhammad Ali "to the *sub rosa* setting of prices by agreement of merchants and moneylenders in the principal cities." In the end, in the face of considerable European opposition and the logistical difficulties of exercising control over the silk crop, the monopoly was abandoned in 1835. Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> According to French Consul in Beirut, Henri Guys, cited in Ozveren, "The Making of an Ottoman Port-City," 126.



crops directly to Beirut.<sup>22</sup> Silk exports rose rapidly, nearly tripling over three years from “582 bales in 1833 to 1760 bales in 1836.”<sup>23</sup> Ibrahim Pasha introduced additional measures which contributed to centralizing commercial activity in the port-city, further shifting the marketing center of the Mountain’s agricultural products to the benefit of merchants established in Beirut.<sup>24</sup>

Installing a silk-scale in the city in 1833 as part of efforts to monopolize local trade, Ibrahim Pasha soon left it under the control of Beirut merchants, with the members of the *majlis* charged with supervising the marketing of the silk crop.<sup>25</sup> The long-lasting importance of this last development is underlined by the observations of the French Consul-General of Beirut, Prosper Bourée, who reported in 1842 that the silk prices were fixed in the city, during a meeting of the principal merchants and “cultivators” of silk, presided over by a “government agent.”<sup>26</sup> The price was said to be fixed according to the silk scale which was kept next to the *khan al-harir* (silk storehouse) where the meeting was held.<sup>27</sup> Controlling this process was crucial as it determined the base price of silk for the whole mountain, which was subsequently used in bargaining advance purchases of the crop. Bourée further noted that prices were often fixed at a lower rate in order to increase merchants’ ability to buy low in anticipation,

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<sup>22</sup> Henri Guys, Consul of France in Beirut, notes in a letter to the foreign minister: “...le pacha s’est non seulement pourvu de la soye dont il avait besoin par la voie du monopole, mais qu’on a exercé la plus grande tyrannie pour obliger les paysans d’apporter leurs soyes [sic.] à Beyrouth.” (...not only did the Pasha secure the silk he needed through the means of a monopoly, but he exercised the greatest tyranny to oblige the peasants to bring their silk to Beirut.) In Adel Ismail, ed. *Documents diplomatiques et consulaires relatifs à l’histoire du Liban et des Pays du Proche-Orient du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours*. Part 1, *Sources françaises*, vol.5 (Beirut: Éditions des oeuvres politiques et historiques, 1978), 286.

<sup>23</sup> Owen, *The Middle East*, 79. In 1833, Beirut exported a total of 932,150 grams of silk, followed the next year by a near tripling of export size. By 1836, the exports out of Beirut rose to 3,079,321. Polk, *The Opening of South Lebanon*, 172.

<sup>24</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 70.

<sup>25</sup> Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 110. This further irked the control over silk marketing by the Khazins until the 1820s.

<sup>26</sup> From the French : “...dans une réunion de négociants et des principaux cultivateurs de soie présidée par un agent du gouvernement, et dans laquelle on met à l’enchère un matteau de soie blanche dite ‘baladi’.” (...in a meeting of merchants and principal cultivators of silk, presided by a government agent, and in which was put to auction a matteau of white silk called ‘baladi’.) Quoted in Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 222.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

reducing the bargaining power of producers and middlemen.<sup>28</sup> In this manner, those who controlled this process had a great advantage over competitors with considerable effects on peasant producers, as it was reported that purchasers, depending on the proximity to the time of harvest, would usually offer at least ten percent less than the price which was set that year in Beirut.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, the centralization of marketing of the silk crop through Beirut had a significant impact on the mountain districts as it threatened the hold over the marketing of the valued commodity by certain groups. In the district of Kisrawan, control over the silk scale in the market town of Zuq Mikhayil had led to conflict in the early part of the nineteenth century due to its centrality in the marketing process of the entire crop of the *muqata'a*.<sup>30</sup> When Bashir Shihab appointed his nephew Hassan Shihab as administrator over Kisrawan (1800-1808), the latter attempted to shift the locus of silk marketing from Zuq Mikhayil to Juniya, establishing another silk scale in the port town. This act threatened to break the monopoly over silk marketing in Zuq Mikhayil held by members of the Khazin family and was not well received as Shaykh Bishara Jaffal Khazin, the predominant *muqata'aji* of Kisrawan, reportedly went to Juniya and destroyed the scale.<sup>31</sup> The re-directing of marketing of this increasingly valuable silk crop through the urban center of Beirut thus contributed to undermining the control over the silk trade by the Khazin family in Kisrawan.

These measures amounted to significant changes to the *modus operandi* of trade, the cumulative impact of which was to greatly enhance the power of urban merchants and turn Beirut into the marketplace where Mount Lebanon's silk was directed.<sup>32</sup> The centralization of the Mountain's

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<sup>28</sup> Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 223.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of advance-purchase prices of silk, see *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>30</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 87.

<sup>31</sup> See Ismail, *Documents diplomatiques*, vol.4, 98.

<sup>32</sup> Ozveren, "The Making and Unmaking of an Ottoman Port-City," 126. As silk exports from Beirut rose, as it became an "entrepot" for Mount Lebanon and the coastal district.

economic life in Beirut would outlive the monopolistic practices and “provide a further means of consolidating Beirut’s status in the commodity-chain.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Shifting Urban-Rural Dynamics: Kisrawan and the Re-configuration of Political Power**

The developments in Beirut cannot be separated from those affecting the rural “sphere.” At all levels, commercial activity linked the villages of the countryside with market towns which, rather than being isolated self-sufficient units, had “intense and multi-stranded relations with their immediate hinterlands.”<sup>34</sup> As the economic zones of production and trade shifted, their associated networks adapted, adjusting their configuration to capitalize on changing regional and international markets. And as Beirut became increasingly important as a center for export and a point of entry linking Greater Syria to regional and international trade circuits, having a foothold in the city became essential. This development explains the re-configuration of political-economic networks which followed and strengthened the emergence of the port-city. It is to this that we now turn our attention.

As noted in the previous chapter, new groups had emerged during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, from outside the “traditional” tax-farming families of the Mountain, who had managed to capitalize on the changing economy, most notably through their role in expanding Syrian-Egyptian networks of trade.<sup>35</sup> Their success depended on combining a diverse “portfolio” including tax-farming, moneylending, and trade. The same families, who had risen to prominence in Kisrawan by the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were also able to capitalize on the changing political economy, establishing themselves as part of the merchant networks of Beirut. The Jawharji family, for example, a prominent merchant moneylending family from Kisrawan, had firmly established themselves as traders in Beirut as the port-

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>34</sup> James Reilly, “Regions and Markets of Ottoman Syria,” *Chronos*, 10 (2004): 111. The hinterland can be defined as villages and small towns “whose primary commercial link was to a principal market center. Where the orbit of one market center tapered off and the influence of another began marked a border zone between two local markets.” Reilly, “Regions and Markets,” 114; Abdel Nour, 1982: 261-64.

<sup>35</sup> See Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 79-80, 90-92. Fruma Zachs also argues that the rise of Beirut’s merchant class cannot be understood without reference to the development of regional trade circuits during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Fruma Zachs, “Commerce and Merchants Under Amir Bashir II: From Market Town to Commercial Centre,” *Oriente Moderno*, 86, no.1, (2006): 51-63.

city increased in importance. By 1814, the French Consul in Saida (Sidon) refers to Ibrahim Jawharji, their contact in Beirut informing them about the trade situation in “Castravan” (Kisrawan), as “notre bon ami.”<sup>36</sup> Others like the Medawwar, Bakhus, Malhalmma, Munayyir, and Qattan families, who were listed as the prominent creditors in Kisrawan extending large loans to the Khazin family, also managed to establish themselves as successful merchant families with a prominent role in political economic networks of the city.<sup>37</sup>

The example of the Medawwar family illustrates the nature of changing urban-rural links in the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Typical in many respects of merchants of the time who were organized primarily as a “family firm,” the Medawwar family managed a number of commercial ventures. According to Henri Guys, the former French Consul in Beirut, the Medawwar family worked like a “wisely administered government.” The six brothers were each entrusted with one aspect of the family business: managing their considerable rural landholdings, their trading activities and all related correspondence, the family finances, as well as the “relations de villes” or public relations and legal issues.<sup>38</sup> Like many other important merchant families, the Medawwar tied themselves firmly to the French consuls, receiving French protection and becoming indispensable links for activities in local trade.<sup>39</sup> When Count Bentivoglio replaced de Lesseps as Consul-General of France in Beirut in the late 1850s, he handed over all the consulate general’s affairs to Mikha’il Medawwar, who would handle all

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<sup>36</sup> Ismail, *Documents diplomatiques*, vol.3, 95.

<sup>37</sup> The principal creditors of the Khazin family in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as revealed in tax records of the Kisrawan district: Fadil al-Mudawwar, Fransis Saba, Niqula Munayyir, Antun Qattan, Habib al-Duqqi, Yusuf ‘Allam. Other names figure as having paid the *miri* (land tax) of entire villages of Kisrawan: Zuq Musbah and Zuq Mikhayil to Luhud Bakhus; ‘Ajaltun to Fransis Saba; Rayfun to Habib al-Duqqi; Ghusta and Masra’a Kafr Dabyan to Jabur al-Jawharji; Sahil ‘Alma to Yusuf Shadid; monasteries: Niqula Munayyir, Musa Murad, and Antun Malhalmma. List provided in Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 91, n.54, n.55. For information on the acquisition of land by the prominent moneylenders of Zuq Mikhayil, see Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 91. For information about the Mudawwar family’s landholdings, see Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 90-91; Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 206-207, 218, 220; Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity: Intellectuals and Merchants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 57, 232-233, 65, 81, 144-45, 233.

<sup>38</sup> Cited in Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 91. The family also established a silk factory in Ghazir, Kisrawan, during the 1840s which they rented to foreign silk industrialists. Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 207.

<sup>39</sup> See Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 203-210.

the formal correspondence with the French foreign ministry and embassy in Istanbul.<sup>40</sup> The ascendance of large merchant families like the Medawwar as central figures in the commercial affairs of Beirut impacted other merchant families of Kisrawan, as seen in the examples of the Qattan and Munayyir families. The last two were among the prominent moneylenders listed in taxation documents of Kisrawan and creditors of the Khazin family, who tied themselves to the merchant networks of Beirut through commercial partnerships with Niqula Medawwar to whom they sent products from Kisrawan.<sup>41</sup> These families thus retained important links to Kisrawan all-the-while establishing firm ties to the political-economic networks of Beirut. As they expanded their commercial affairs, their areas of operation (economic activities) continued to be centered in Kisrawan.

### **Capitalizing on Shifting Centers of Trade**

One consequence of the consolidation of merchant networks was that the business interests of merchants became increasingly linked through their role in networks of trade which included a wide range of actors involved in the mobilization of the rural surplus. The most prominent merchants managed to consolidate their role as indispensable intermediaries in the networks of commercial silk production, which linked *muqata'ajis* like the Khazins to the centers of export. The example of the prominent merchant Butros al-'Asfar's dealings with members of the Khazin family in Kisrawan help illustrate the changing configurations of merchant power. 'Asfar, whose family accumulated considerable capital through their role in Syrian-Egyptian trade earlier in the century, established themselves during the 1830s as part of the Beirut merchant networks – founding a mercantile house in the city and aligning themselves with the new levers of political and economic power, embodied in the

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<sup>40</sup> Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 91.

<sup>41</sup> Khalil Munayyir and Antun Qattan appear in the correspondence of the *qa'immaqam* of the "Christian districts" in the 1850s regarding their commercial links with Niqula Mudawwar. See for example, Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 75-76. As will be seen in the last chapter, these two families would figure as *wakils* (agent/representatives) of the revolt of 1858.]

*majlis* and the foreign consulates which were rapidly gaining ground.<sup>42</sup> As the commercial activities of the Syrian coast came to be increasingly concentrated in Beirut, these groups managed to establish themselves as essential intermediaries and exert significant control over these activities, facilitated by their ties to the political levers of power of an expanding commercial community.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, merchants like Butros al-Asfar secured the peasants' surplus by establishing relations with members of the Khazin family.<sup>44</sup> A sort of patron-client relationship existed between the *muqata'ajis* of the Khazin family and merchants operating out of market and port towns. The latter worked through the Khazin landowners to advance them money in order to secure the silk crop, as well as lending them money at variable rates of interest.<sup>45</sup> While the usurious practices indebted the landowner considerably, it also paradoxically provided him with

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<sup>42</sup> For information on the establishment of foreign consulates in Beirut in the 1820s and 1830s, see Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 186-189. For information on the 'Asfar family, see Ibid., 203-205.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, the Khuri, Medawwar, Thabit, Lahoud, Bakhus, Jawharji families. Also the Sursock family had been tax farmers of Jubayl during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, moving to Beirut during the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century, while remaining in possession of their lands. Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 91. Another example is the Bakhus family who were listed as among the prominent moneylenders in Kisrawan during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ibid., 90-91; Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*. The Bakhus family also linked themselves to the centers of Beirut through their role as owners of a silk-reeling factory in Ghazir whose products were geared to the export trade through Beirut, and by linking themselves with foreign consuls. For a contemporaneous account of the Bakhus family, see Charles Churchill, *Mount Lebanon: A Ten Years' Residence from 1842 to 1853*. vol.1, (London: Garnet Publishing, 1994 [1853]), 77; 87-90. Churchill referred to Ilyas Bakhus in Ghazir, Kisrawan as "the virtual ruler of the Mukataa' [sic.]," Ibid., 90.

<sup>44</sup> According to Fawaz, the 'Asfar family established a silk factory in Mount Lebanon in the 1840s. They were a family originating from Jubayl, and were involved in silk trade with the shaykhs of Mount Lebanon and the Greek Orthodox family of Sursock, becoming "one of the most notable merchant families of Beirut, involved in finance, trade, and real estate." Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 65. This family also established an important commercial partnership with Mikhayil Tubiya, a prominent merchant tax-farmer with large landholdings, constituting one of 29 Syrian Mercantile Houses of Beirut listed as trading with England. See the British Consul's "List of Syrian Mercantile Houses who Trade Direct with England," in Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent*, 167.

<sup>45</sup> Dominique Chevallier, "Aspects sociaux de la question d'Orient: aux origines des troubles agraires libanais en 1858." *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisation* 14 (1959): 53. The relations were common and extended beyond the Khazin family, alongside 'Asfar, prominent merchants like Mikhayil Tubiya, and Ilyas Munayyir, were part of the merchants who became creditor of a ruling *qa'immaqam* (district governor) of Mount Lebanon. As will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter, such patron-client relations were essential requisites to trading activities. The *sijil* of the *qa'immaqam* reveals the modus operandi of trade, and the prominent role of Mikhayil Tubiya in several commercial deals with foreign merchants. The *qa'immaqam* referred to Mikhayil Tubiya as "the most trusted merchant", a level of "trust" likely related to his role as creditor to the *qa'immaqam*, a status which allowed him to bypass the role of some local *muqata'ajis* as intermediaries through his assignment as a guarantor of advance-payment contracts with foreign merchants. For example, see Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 87.

increased leverage, as the moneylenders often lacked the means of enforcing the payment of these debts. Furthermore, this relationship also allowed merchants the opportunity to expand their activities in villages under Khazin control, establishing credit relations directly with peasants and constructing patronage networks or “spheres of influence”.<sup>46</sup> Thus peasant-merchant relations were not clearly separable from those of the *muqata’aji* family who had been essential to these activities as the landlord was capable of enforcing debt collection on the behalf of his client, often sending a *mubashir* (official/collector) to claim payment from recalcitrant peasants.<sup>47</sup> For merchants, this relationship could lead to considerable tensions at times when capital was badly needed as the opportunities for profit expanded. While significant pressure could be put on peasants fairly easily, rich landowners and merchants could find ways of evading payment and could thus place limits on the circulation of capital, as will be discussed in more detail below.

What is important to note is that there appears to have been a consolidation of merchant networks during this time as several prominent merchant families rallied around the above mentioned Butros al-‘Asfar who served as a connection between Beirut merchant families extending loans to the Khazins and purchasing their silk.<sup>48</sup> Among others, the wealthy Beirut merchant family –the Beyhoum – appear to have relied on Butros al-‘Asfar for recovering debts extended to Qansuah al-Khazin as well as

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<sup>46</sup> As Doumani notes in his study of merchants in Jabal Nablus, extraeconomic relations were cultivated by merchants in order to establish trade networks and spheres of influence akin to modern day market shares. Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 60, 78.

<sup>47</sup> Chevallier, “Aspects sociaux”, 53. Other scholars have noted this somewhat paradoxical relationship in the context of Greater Syria, where the most powerful ruling families were also the most indebted. See Zouhair Ghazzal, *L’économie politique de Damas durant le XIXe siècle: structure traditionnelles et capitalisme*, (Damascus: Institut Français d’Études Arabes de Damas, 1993), 10-11.

<sup>48</sup> This was not limited to the ‘Asfar family, as we noted above the same was observable with the Medawwar and Misk families. This suggests two things – for one, large merchants were able to capitalize on their position and access to both “formal” and “informal” political brokers. And secondly, urban merchants like Beyhoum didn’t deal directly with the Khazins, neither did local merchants like the Thabit and Lahoud families, even though some members of the Thabit family were living in Kisrawan. For information on the Lahoud family, see Butros Labaki, *Introduction à l’histoire économique du Liban: Soie et commerce extérieur en fin de période Ottomane, 1840-1914* (Beirut: Publication de l’Université Libanaise, 1984), 385-388. Ilyas Lahoud was a landowning peasant from Baabdat, in the Metn district, who turned into a small merchant, linking himself as a silk courtier and dealing with the Bassoul Mercantile house in Beirut. Ibid., 385. The Thabit family would also maintain close commercial links with the Bakhus family, silk industrialists in Ghazir. Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 221.

securing the latter's silk supplies.<sup>49</sup> This gives us an idea as to the nature of these patron-client relationships and trade, while also indicating the means by which newly constituted urban groups extended their operations into the hinterland, competing for the rural surplus through the mediation of merchants to whom they were connected.

At the same time, activities of the 'Asfar family help us understand the relations of exchange and production during this time. The silk they purchased through advance payment contracts with members of the Khazin family presumably went to their mechanized silk factory which they established in the 1840s, one of five owned by local merchants in 1846.<sup>50</sup> This kind of activity increasingly linked the Kisrawan district to the commercial circuits of Beirut as the reeled silk was predominantly used for export to European markets. We see that by 1848 merchants like Butros al-Asfar redirected the produce towards Beirut, forging a commercial partnership with merchant/*muqata'aji* Mikhayil Tubia and establishing a mercantile house in the city.<sup>51</sup>

The links with merchants like Butros 'Asfar were not uni-directional, in that merchants who maintained a presence in Kisrawan also relied on him for the collection of debts acquired by the Khazin family. This suggests that the changing configuration of merchant power and the workings of merchant and moneylending networks became increasingly linked to large urban-based merchants, on whom they depended to have their debts paid back. These kinds of relations support the existing evidence that suggests the Khazins had not managed to gain a direct foothold in Beirut, as 'Asfar secured his position as a key intermediary between urban merchants like the Beyhoum and the Khazin family. The failure of

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<sup>49</sup> Other local merchants with considerable activities and political ties to Beirut like the Thabit family, who also maintained a presence in Kisrawan, and Lahud (Amshit, Jubayl) families, also figured among the creditors of the Khazin family working through 'Asfar to collect debts and purchase silk. Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 205, n.6.

<sup>50</sup> Butros Labaki, *Introduction à l'histoire économique*, 103 ; Gaston Ducouso, *L'industrie de la soie* (Paris : A. Challamel, 1913), 124; Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 65. According to Chevallier, the Khazins' silk supplies were also shipped to Damascus, as 'Asfar appeared to diversify his trading activities. Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 202-203.

<sup>51</sup> See "List of Syrian Mercantile Houses who Trade Direct with England," in Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent*, 167.



the Khazin family to capitalize on the changing geographies of trade is most dramatically demonstrated by the fact that in 1821, it was discovered that Nawfal al-Khazin (Ibn Husn) had been officially registered as the Consular representative of France in Beirut, a post that had also been vacant for the past thirty years.<sup>52</sup> While this discovery led to the re-appointment of Nawfal al-Khazin as the Vice-Consul of France in Beirut, the latter died shortly after marking the end of the Khazin's control over this post.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the involvement of the above mentioned Butros al-'Asfar in mediating an advance purchase agreement made in 1840 between members of the Khazin family and foreign merchants silk industrialists also indicates that while some members of the Khazin family continued to exercise control over the rural surplus of "their" villages, Beirut merchants were firmly implanted as intermediaries in the sale of cocoons to silk industrialists and exporters from Beirut.<sup>54</sup>

#### **Ottoman Restoration: Administrative Reform and the Expansion of Commercial Relations**

The rule of Ibrahim Pasha lasted until 1840, when he faced widespread revolts and the formation of a joint British-Ottoman-Austrian force which succeeded in expelling him and restoring Ottoman rule to Greater Syria.<sup>55</sup> The ousting of Ibrahim Pasha had long-lasting effects as it was intricately linked to the signing of the 1838 free-trade Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention, the proclamation of the *Tanzimat* (re-ordering) reforms, and the firm establishment of European powers in the Ottoman political scene.<sup>56</sup> The beginning of the *Tanzimat*, a empire-wide project of reform, is associated with the promulgation of the *Hatt-i Serif* of Gulhane in 1839, an edict which announced the commitment of the Ottoman state to safeguard the lives, honour, and property of all its subjects,

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<sup>52</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 93; Ismail, *Documents diplomatiques*, vol.3, 173-5.

<sup>53</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 93.

<sup>54</sup> See the published contracts between members of the Khazin family and French silk industrialists in Butros Labaki, *Introduction à l'histoire économique*, appendix. Even the grip over Junieh came to be challenged, as we see Khalil al-Munayyir in charge of the Khan in Junieh in 1856, see Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 76. See Van Leeuwen for a discussion of the weakening grip of the Khazin family over the silk trade in the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 92.

<sup>55</sup> Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 53.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

regardless of religious affiliation.<sup>57</sup> Several reasons underlie the consensus among scholars that these events were momentous. For one, the proclamation of the Gulhane decree of 1839 marked a discursive shift in the notion of Ottoman subjecthood, on which a modern project of citizenship was elaborated on the basis of religious equality.<sup>58</sup> While the Gulhane decree opened up the discursive space for the new notions of Ottoman subjecthood, commercial treaties like the 1838 “free trade” agreement contributed to facilitating the access to interior markets by coastal merchants, which was quickly followed by a dramatic increase in the size of the foreign merchant communities throughout the Ottoman Empire, most notably in Beirut.<sup>59</sup> It is within this context of imperial re-ordering that the restoration of Ottoman rule over Mount Lebanon should be read.<sup>60</sup>

The arrival of Ottoman troops in Mount Lebanon signalled the beginning of this process of “re-ordering” and between the years of 1840 and 1845, the political and administrative status of Mount Lebanon and the coastal areas underwent several important changes. The expulsion of the Egyptian regime was accompanied by Bashir Shihab’s forced exile as the latter’s support for Ibrahim Pasha was viewed as an act of disloyalty by the imperial center, costing him his *iltizam* (tax-farm) and position as Grand Emir. His nephew, Bashir Qasim Shihab was appointed in his place in 1840, but was unable to consolidate his rule which met widespread opposition and was punctuated by intense bouts of violence in the Mountain town of Dayr al-Qamar.<sup>61</sup> On January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1842, Bashir Qasim was deposed and

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<sup>57</sup>For a full translation, see: J.C. Hurewitz, *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics, A Documentary Record*, vol.1. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 269-271.

<sup>58</sup> Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*.

<sup>59</sup> Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 109; Owen, *The Middle East*, 88.

<sup>60</sup> The study of the Ottoman reform “era” remains mired in controversy, understandably as one scholar puts it, the “term is inherently connected to the concepts of the nation-state, administrative rationalization, scientific and technological progress, market economy and monetarization, bureaucratization, centralization and individualization.” As Neumann notes, these are “among the elements of the modernization paradigm.” Christopher Neumann, “Ottoman Provincial Towns from the Eighteenth to the Nineteenth Century: A Re-Assessment of their Place in the Transformation of the Empire,” in Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp and Stefan Weber, eds. *The Empire in the City: Arab provincial capitals in the late Ottoman Empire*, eds. (Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002), 131.

<sup>61</sup> The violence occurred after several Druze *muqata’ajis* who had been exiled during the Egyptian occupation returned to claim their lands. See discussion in Ussama Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 61-63.

replaced by Omer Pasha, an Ottoman official put in charge as governor of the Mountain.<sup>62</sup> This appointment was maintained until the establishment of a new political-administrative order under a joint European-Ottoman decision officially ushering in, on January 1843, the “Double *Qa’immaqamiyya*” (sub-governorship) lasting until the “civil war” of 1860.<sup>63</sup>

New political and administrative borders were issued following the joint-decision of 1843, carved out along imagined sectarian divisions, bisecting the territory into a northern “Christian” district under a Maronite district governor (*qa’immaqam*) and a southern “Druze” district under a Druze district governor. This division was re-confirmed in 1845 by the Ottoman foreign minister, Shekib Effendi, in a document known as the “Shekib Effendi Agreement”, following renewed bouts of violence throughout several villages of Mount Lebanon.<sup>64</sup> These changes were profoundly turbulent as the administrative configuration of the Double *Qa’immaqamiyya* disrupted the existing geographies (cultural, economic, and political) of Mount Lebanon, impacting the entire social formation. The Maronite Church lobbied extensively alongside some urban merchants to have Mount Lebanon constituted as a “Christian” emirate under Shihabi rule.<sup>65</sup> Those actors whose landholdings were not concentrated in one geographical area, as was the case with a large number of *muqata’ajis* and ecclesiastic institutions, saw

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<sup>62</sup> The first policy of Omer Pasha was to appoint families which had supported the Ottoman return to Syria, placing Francis al-Khazin in charge of Kisrawan, Faris Hubaysh as the mutasallim of Ghazir, Mansur al-Dahdah in charge of the district of al-Futuh. For the full list of appointments see: Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 175, n.1. Fransis al-Khazin was also given important sums of money to be distributed to the supporters of the Ottoman restoration force, while other members of the Khazin family, like Mansur and Khalil Blaybil, were appointed as advisors to Omer Pasha. Ibid., 225.

<sup>63</sup> Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 256.

<sup>64</sup> The Shekib Effendi agreement outlined elaborate regulations regarding the government of the districts, leading one scholar to call it “the first systematic attempt to provide the Mountain with a bureaucratic governmental structure” Engin D. Arkali, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 28. For a translated copy of the Agreement see: Baron I. De Testa, ed. *Receuil des traités de la Porte ottoman avec les puissances étrangères*, vols.3-6 (Paris: Muzard, 1884), 200-208.

<sup>65</sup> Carol Hakim-Dowek, *The Origins of the Lebanese National Idea, 1840-1914*, (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1997), 63-105; Caesar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 209-336; Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 53-97. See Farah for more information. Chevallier also mentions that Butros al-‘Asfar was accused by Druze shaykh Yusuf ‘Abd al-Malek in 1843 of meddling with the affairs of the mountain alongside Portalis, and favouring the Yazbaki party alongside the Maronite plan to restore the Shihabs. Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 205. Mikhayil Tubiya was also one of the main funders of the drive to restore Shihab rule. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 352.

their lands come under the administration of separate governments. Political connections, both formal and informal, which had been necessary in order to protect landholders from competitors “laying their hands” on the agricultural surplus, were in many cases challenged by the re-configuration of the political and administrative order.<sup>66</sup>

The new imperial boundaries clashed with existing political-economic geographies, as the spatial configuration of trade which had gradually become centered in the market towns of Mount Lebanon throughout the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was not reflected in the new administrative borders of the *Qa’immaqamiyya*.<sup>67</sup> The rise of Beirut as a privileged point of contact for expanding foreign markets signalled a shift in the regional centers of trade and altered the intense and multi-stranded relations between the mountain hinterland and the Beirut, as well as surrounding urban centers like Tripoli and Saida (Sidon).<sup>68</sup> This shift had been accelerated during the Egyptian occupation (1831-1840), as Ibrahim Pasha’s centralizing measures contributed to increasing the ties between Mount Lebanon’s silk producers and Beirut, whose cumulative impact was to consolidate Beirut’s role as the central marketplace where the Mountain’s silk was directed.<sup>69</sup> This marked a shift in the urban-rural dynamic as Mount Lebanon’s subordinate “hinterland” status was legally entrenched as the Mountain’s fiscal and commercial affairs were placed under the jurisdiction of Beirut’s *majlis*.

Neither the new administrative boundaries of the Double *Qa’immaqamiyya*, nor the reconfigurations of political power reflected these changes. For one, the *majlis* of the two respective

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<sup>66</sup> For instance, the *muqata’ajis*’ ownership of land was not limited to their immediate domicile. The records of the official correspondence from the office of the “Christian” *Qa’immaqam* is replete with examples of requests for ensuring the safety of lands in neighbouring districts. The records for the years 1854-1860 are published, unedited and in the original Arabic in: Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*. See for instance the case of shaykh Shibli Maalouf, a Zahlani merchant controlling farmland in the Bekaa asking for the Christian *Qa’immaqam* to intercede on his behalf and ensure the integrity of his landholdings in the face of competitors, in *Ibid.*, vol.2, 90. See also the problems over *khawaja* Butros Nasr’s *iltizam*, in *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>67</sup> For a recent discussion of the rise of Mount Lebanon’s market towns see: Fruma Zachs, “Commerce and Merchants.”

<sup>68</sup> James Reilly, “Regions and Markets,” 124-127.

<sup>69</sup> Yasar Eyup Ozveren, “The Making and Unmaking of an Ottoman Port-City: Nineteenth Century Beirut, its Hinterland and the World Economy.” (Ph.D. diss., State Univ. of New York, Binghamton, 1990), 126; William R. Polk, *The Opening of South Lebanon, 1788-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 172.

mountain districts differed considerably in their social composition with that of the urban center.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, the juridical-administrative autonomy of the Mountain districts vis-à-vis Beirut was re-established as the commercial and fiscal affairs of the hinterland were kept outside the sphere of urban political-legal control.<sup>71</sup> These changes thus affected the interests of a wide range of actors whose overlapping political and economic networks were linked to formal and informal political brokers of the pre-restoration order. As we will see in the following chapter, the conflicts over administrative boundaries of Mount Lebanon came to involve the very definition of the “hinterland,” drawing in urban groups who lobbied for the inclusion of the Mountain within their juridical boundaries.<sup>72</sup>

### Commercial Expansion and the Politics of Silk Industrialization

These developments occurred at a time of rapid expansion of commercial relations throughout the region. The expulsion of Ibrahim Pasha’s troops allowed for an escalation of foreign presence in Greater Syria, as the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) turned to the support of European powers to oust the Pasha. As we noted, this support led directly to the signing of the 1838 free-trade Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention, which helped open the Ottoman interior to European business by

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<sup>70</sup> The members of the *majlis* of the Christian *qa’immaqamate*:

Substitute of the Maronite Kaimakam, shaykh Ya’qub al-Bitar; shaykh Hussein-al-Khatting, Muslim judge of the village of Ras-el-Kossan; Osman Resamy, Muslim councillor of the Mountain; Hassan-Hundi, Shi’ite councillor of the village of Kassir; Ali Ballut, Druze judge of Metn; Ali Abu Qaidbeyk, Druze councillor of Houbseh; Khouri-Arsenius-Fakhury, Maronite judge of the village of Ba’abda; shaykh Jirjis Abi-Saab, Maronite councillor of Mazraa; Suleiman Merhedjii, Greek judge of Choueir; Menoubi Abu-Roussam, Greek councillor of Ras-el-Metn; Ibrahim Jhami, Catholic judge of Sahel; ‘Abdallah Abu-Khatir, Catholic councillor of Zahle; Hodscha Halil-Kordali, Maronite secretary of the council. See the full list, including the members of the *majlis* of the Druze *qa’immaqamate* in Testa, *Recueils des traités*, 202. In addition, the Khazin shaykhs secured the appointment as *ma’amur* (administrator/sub-district governor) of the Kisrawan district. Qansuah al-Khazin, alongside ‘Abdullah al-Khazin, were the *ma’amur* of Kisrawan in the late 1850s. See Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.1, 139; vol.3, 150.

<sup>71</sup> The advisory council of Beirut would continue to rule on commercial cases of the city, remaining in a supervisory role after the establishment of a separate commercial court *majlis al-tijara* in 1850 in Beirut. While the jurisdiction of the urban judicial body was expanded in 1849 to include Jaffa, Haifa, Jerus, Acre, Safed, Tiberias, Sour, Saida (Sidon), Tripoli, and Latakia, it would remain strictly prohibited from interfering in the affairs of Mount Lebanon until changes introduced in the 1860s. See Caesar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 473-498. The other *majalis* which were set up in the districts of Mount Lebanon would thus remain legally autonomous vis-a-vis Beirut.

<sup>72</sup> For a discussion of urban groups coming into conflict with the administrative boundaries set out in the period of Ottoman restoration, see Caesar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 373-498.

eliminating monopolies and lowering tariffs on European goods.<sup>73</sup> The signing of the 1838 Commercial Convention further facilitated the expansion of the foreign merchant community in Beirut, adding another layer of competitors turning their interest to the Mountain hinterland.<sup>74</sup> One of the effects of this opening was to increase the demand for Mount Lebanon's silk which, by the mid-nineteenth century, had already begun to take pre-eminence over other productive activities, with important repercussions on agricultural, industrial, and commercial spheres of the local economy.<sup>75</sup> The increased demand for silk cocoons and the modest rise in production resulted in heightened competition for the valued commodity, made even more intense by the needs of a growing silk-reeling industry throughout this period. Competition over supplies of silk cocoons peaked in the decade of the 1850s as silk

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<sup>73</sup> Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 43, 106; Owen, *The Middle East*, 91. According to Owen, "[t]he result, in the end, was a clear victory for the European merchants: they secured the uninterrupted access to the Middle Eastern harvest they wanted; any future attempts by the rulers of Turkey and Egypt to control the sale of particular products were soon defeated." Ibid. As will be shown below, this statement completely ignores the complex politics for access and control of the rural surplus.

<sup>74</sup> British subjects, for instance, who fell "within the jurisdiction of the Beirut consul" rose from "75 in 1843 to 163 in 1846, 227 in 1849, and 282 in 1851..." Charles Issawi, "British Trade," 98. The signing of the 1838 Commercial Convention was not the sole cause of this rapid expansion, which was also facilitated by the abolition, in 1825, of the monopoly exercised by the Levant Company; the development in transport; the increasing role of foreign governments in supporting the commercial interests of their merchants. Owen, *The Middle East*, 89-91.

<sup>75</sup> Owen, *The Middle East*, 154. Despite the rising demand for local silk, there has formed a kind of scholarly consensus on the limited increase in production during this time. Chevallier, Labaki, and Khater, for instance, argue that any increase in production of silk cocoons occurred mainly after 1860. See Akram Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 17; Butros Labaki, *Introduction à l'histoire économique*, 38-39; Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 232. Furthermore, Kais Firro presents evidence that silk cocoon yields did not produce more than 2 million kilograms of cocoons on average before 1880, despite the growth in plantations which accompanied the growth in the silk industry and trade. Kais Firro, "Silk and Agrarian Changes in Lebanon, 1860-1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 22 (May, 1990), 154-55. Firro explains as a result of two factors: firstly, by the fact that the introduction of new breeds of silkworm eggs brought new diseases, and counteracted any growth in yields which would have accompanied increase in mulberry trees; secondly, the nature of silk production is such that any increase takes years to achieve, and thus cannot react swiftly to rising demand. Newly planted mulberry trees take over five years before ever being able to grow the first leaves needed to feed silkworms. Ibid., 156. As we saw earlier, the increase in importance in the crop was not reducible to the demand of European markets. Much growth of silk occurred at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when European demand was at its lowest. It appears that regional demand was driving this growth.

industrialists, merchants, and *muqata'ajis* tied to different networks of trade fought hard to secure their supply.<sup>76</sup>

It should be noted that the multitude of interrelated activities involved in production, processing, and export of silk makes problematic any broad claims as to its changing nature and impact on local society.<sup>77</sup> This being said, the involvement of foreign industrialists in the local silk manufacturing industry, which accompanied the rapid influx of foreign merchants in Greater Syria in the late 1830s and 1840s, signalled an intensification of commercial relations and a shift in the patterns of silk production. Bolstered by the high demand from European markets and a more favourable climate for foreign commercial activities, European industrialists, soon followed by local merchants, established several mechanized silk factories in Mount Lebanon, adding to the existing “traditional” silk-reeling manufactories and domestic silk-reeling activities.<sup>78</sup>

The establishment of these mechanized silk spinning mills (*karkhana*), alongside the rapid influx of foreign textiles which followed the 1838 free-trade agreement has figured at the center of causal accounts of the revolt of 1858, as scholars have linked these processes to the decline of “traditional” *muqata'ajis* like the Khazin family in order to explain the supposed increased “oppression” of the Khazin family on the peasantry.<sup>79</sup> Recently, however, accounts have cast doubt on the thesis of unmitigated

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<sup>76</sup> Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 232. French estimates in 1861 reported that more than two thirds of the silk sales of Lebanon were going to French markets, either as silk reeled in French-style filatures, or by pressed cocoons. Ibid., 232.

<sup>77</sup> Owen's work is important in noting the problems associated with making any claims as to the changing nature of silk production in the countryside at this time. He argues that given the multi-levelled process of production (which he claims involved “five separate but related activities” and the “absence of reliable statistics for either Mount Lebanon or Syria as a whole” makes it “impossible to give a coherent account of the increase in silk production during the period in question.” Owen, *The Middle East*, 155.

<sup>78</sup> As Beshara Doumani argues, Ibrahim Pasha's policies of centralization of political control in Greater Syria and the support of activities of foreign merchants “opened new vistas for trade and circulation of merchant capital.” Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 109. See also: Roger Owen, *The Middle East*, 88, 90-91; Charles Issawi, “British Trade,” 98-99.

<sup>79</sup> As noted in the first chapter, scholars have argued that renewed European commercial interest, signalled by increasing demand for silk and the “modernization” of the silk industry, led to a decline of the traditional silk-spinning and textile industry. The discussion of silk industrialization has largely been limited to tracing the decline of “traditional” *muqata'ajis* like the Khazin family in order to explain the supposed increased “oppression” of the

decline, noting that the rapid influx of European goods and the establishment of mechanized silk-reeling operations largely failed to result in the predicted destruction of the local handicrafts industry.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the available evidence shows that patterns of ownership of textile shops and land had been highly differentiated by the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, suggesting that the Khazin family had not exercised a monopoly over the means of production, thus making it problematic to argue for any radical change with the advent of European investment.<sup>81</sup> Secondly, while a systematic study of the patterns of ownership of silk manufactures is lacking, the available evidence suggests a more nuanced picture as some members of the Khazin family managed to compete in the new context of commercial expansion, establishing a silk factory or maintaining textile shops in Zuq Mikhayil and Ghazir, at least until the outbreak of the revolt in 1858.<sup>82</sup> This being said, the costs involved in running a silk factory meant that ownership remained firmly in the hands of actors who had accumulated large sums of capital.<sup>83</sup> For silk-spinning peasant artisans, the spread of mechanized silk factories must have made it

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Khazin family on the peasantry, which in turn serves as the predominant framework of explanation for the peasants' actions. Working within a narrow model of "oppression" to explain political mobilization does not help us explain the form and timing of revolts as "objective" conditions often decrease without being followed by political mobilization. Furthermore, tracing the effect of a "European" commercial action on local society avoids the burden of having to pay attention to processes internal to Mount Lebanon, with the effect that peasants and *muqata'ajis* remain historical actors only inasmuch as they are acted upon. See Chapter 1 for a thorough discussion of these approaches.

<sup>80</sup> Dominique Chevallier and Roger Owen both argued that contemporary European accounts presented a picture greatly influenced by their expectation of an immediate decline of local production following the rapid influx of European made textiles. See Dominique Chevallier, "Un exemple de résistance technique de l'artisanat Syrien aux XIXe et XXe siècle. Les tissus Ikatés d'Alep et de Damas," *Syria*, XXXIX, 3-4 (1962): 300 ; Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy*, 93-5. Roger Owen, for instance, argued that demographic expansion during this time translated into an increased demand for cloth, which could absorb the increased supply of these European goods. The result was that any "decline" was almost "immediately followed by a revival." *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>81</sup> See discussion in Chapter 2.

<sup>82</sup> Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 100. For mention of textile shops of Khazin and Hubaysh shaykhs in Zuq Mikhayil and Ghazir, see Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 75; vol.4, 73.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* As we saw, prominent merchant families of Beirut and Kisrawan like the Sursock, 'Asfar, Bakhus, and Medawwar families, among others, were owners of silk factories, the latter two establishing their *karkhana* in Ghazir, Kisrawan. This marks continuity as these groups had already managed to consolidate their position as key economic and political actors earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, entering the ranks of tax-farmers and landowners. For a discussion of ownership patterns, see Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 211-221; Butros Labaki, *Introduction à l'histoire économique*, 41-45 ; Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 61-102.



more difficult for them to compete as their hand-reeling operations had to contend with well-organized mechanized production.<sup>84</sup>

The increase in numbers of *karkhana* also led to certain changes in patterns of silk production which directly affected peasant families.<sup>85</sup> For one, with the increase in silk filatures came a concomitant increase in peasants' reliance on wage labour and its accompanying obligations.<sup>86</sup> During the 1840s and early 1850s, it is estimated that "thirty silk-reeling manufactories, employing an average of 70-80 hired workers" were founded throughout the districts of Mount Lebanon.<sup>87</sup> By 1851, according to a French inquiry, a total of 830 to 850 persons worked in the growing industry, between 630 and 650 persons working in French filatures, and an additional 200 in English filatures.<sup>88</sup> These numbers did not include locally owned mills which a French consular dispatch claims had reached a total of 33 by 1862, a steep rise from the nine European-style mills registered in 1852.<sup>89</sup> This being said, the growing percentage of peasants working in the *karkhana* of Mount Lebanon did not represent a radical transformation in their work patterns as many appeared to have remained transitional or seasonal workers, combining their work in factories with rural work as part of the familial strategy of survival.<sup>90</sup>

The broader impact of silk industrialization on local society is intricately linked to the needs of silk industrialists as securing labour, regular supplies of raw materials, and capital, brought the intervention of new political actors and a new level of "central" control over rural life. The records of the

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<sup>84</sup> Owen, *The Middle East*, 95.

<sup>85</sup> Malek Abisaab and Akram Khater note that this included changes in the gender division of labor. Malek Abisaab, *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 8; Akram Khater, *Inventing Home*, 327.

<sup>86</sup> Men were paid between 4-5 piasters for a day's work, while women were paid only 1 piaster for the same work day. See Khater, *Inventing Home*, 20.

<sup>87</sup> Paul Saba, "The Creation of the Lebanese Economy: Economic Growth in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Roger Owen, ed., *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon* (London: Ithica Press, 1976), 13. Before this time, in addition to the work performed in textile and reeling shops of Mount Lebanon's market towns, silk was predominantly woven by *hilalis* (itinerant spinners) "who used a hand-power spinning wheel which the French called *roue arabe*." Akram Khater, *Inventing Home*, 19.

<sup>88</sup> Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 219. According to a French Ministerial inquiry.

<sup>89</sup> Numbers in 1862 suggests that 33 of the silk filatures were locally owned, while the rest were in the hands of European industrialists. Khater, *Inventing Home*, 7 – citing a consular dispatch dated August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

<sup>90</sup> Abisaab, *Militant Women*, 9.

Christian *qa'immaqam*'s correspondence with foreign consuls and silk industrialists reveal the extent to which this political body played an instrumental role in factors of production for the growing silk industry. Working through their respective consulates, when a direct appeal to the *qa'immaqam* had failed to produce any action, foreign industrialists lobbied to have peasant labourers respect work agreements, succeeding at times to have workers who had "fled" return to their factories through the intercession of the *qa'immaqam*.<sup>91</sup>

Accounts of the modernization of the silk industry have tended to ignore its impact on the peasantry, or have portrayed it as essentially emancipative.<sup>92</sup> The available evidence suggests, however, that this process was not passively accepted by peasants and "resistance," a problematic term by all accounts, came in various forms. In the context of a growing silk industry, the competition over labour was fierce and foreign silk industrialists, the "pioneers" of the mechanized silk-reeling industry in Mount Lebanon, had great difficulty securing labour for their "modern" silk reeling factories. The scarcity of labour often led to conflict as silk industrialists accused each other of "stealing" their labour supply, with many operations closing down as a result.<sup>93</sup> In noting the difficulties encountered by foreign silk industrialists in securing labour, Dominique Chevallier ignores that there may have been any resistance to this process, claiming instead that the spirit of French silk-workers who at times provoked "insubordination and revolt" in the factories of Lyon was absent in the local workers of Mount Lebanon.<sup>94</sup> Explaining the supposed lack of resistance to the process, Chevallier claims that the

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<sup>91</sup> See for example, Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 124, 147.

<sup>92</sup> Dominique Chevallier and Yehoshua Porath's example focus solely on the effect of silk industrialization on the Khazin shaykhs. Dominique Chevallier, "Aspects sociaux de la question d'Orient: aux origines des troubles agraires libanais en 1858." *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisation* 14 (1959): 35-64; Yehoshua Porath, "The Peasant Revolt of 1858-61 in Kisrawan," *Asian and African Studies* 2 (2) (1966): 77-157.

<sup>93</sup> Even in the case of smaller reeling operations, labour had been hard to secure. Nicolas Portalis, for instance, had to abandon his operations in the market center of Ba'abda, close to Beirut, citing lack of workers. Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 213.

<sup>94</sup> Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 220. Chevallier states : "La position des industriels français était différente. Leurs achats de cocons et leur embauche de main d'oeuvre pour filer la soie n'en faisaient pas seulement des fournisseurs de travail et de revenus; ils introduisaient des circuits de production et d'échanges qui ruinaient, aussi sûrement que les nouveaux règlements ottomans, les systèmes de contrôle et de métayage dont bénéficiaient les

destructive force of European commercial action on local *muqata'ajis* contributed to tipping the balance of forces in favour of peasants in their struggle against the system of control and sharecropping which was the source of *muqata'ajis'* power. It is thus, he claims, that the interests of "Maronites" [the term referring to religious sect he substitutes for peasants] overlapped with those of French industrialists, which resulted in the "popular" support of silk filatures.<sup>95</sup>

Despite this characterization, examples of "resistance" abound in the records of the *qa'immaqam's* official correspondence. Workers "stole" money, refused to return to work, and rose up violently against the managers of silk factories.<sup>96</sup> Such acts were treated by the local government as grave violations which threatened the entire process of silk industrialization. Responding to a complaint by the Consul-General of France regarding a recent outbreak of violence at French silk industrialist Mourgue d'Algue's factory in 'Ayn Hamada in the Metn district the *qa'immaqam* of the Christian district, assures him that measures are being taken to prevent future occurrences of violence,

... [C]oncerning the fight that resulted in the drawing out of weapons by Mikhayil Ibn Yusuf Abu 'Asa from al-Dlayba against *khawaja* [merchant]"Fabrick" the *mudir* [supervisor/manager] of the machinery at the *karkhana* [silk factory] of *khawajat* "Murk" [Mourgue d'Algue] and his partners in 'Ayn Hamada. It is for you to know that this case has not been overruled and once your orders were received, we started initiating proceedings to ensure justice. And as it was understood from your side, that there is some negligence in carrying out the case, a *mubashir* [official] was sent to Mikhayil to convict and punish him, and to make an example of him for others so that all justice would prevail.<sup>97</sup>

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*muqataajis* [sic.]. Leur action économique les engageaient inévitablement dans le combat contre d'anciens rapports de dépendance, et par conséquent elle les liait plus aux intérêts du peuple chrétien qu'elle ne les en écartait. L'appui que les filateurs français recevaient du clergé – et qu'ils lui apportaient – était l'expression consciente de cette situation, et il les assurait d'une adhésion populaire." (The position of French industrialists was different. Not only did their purchases of cocoons and their employment of laborers to reel silk make them providers of jobs and revenue; they introduced circuits of production and exchanges which ruined, as surely as the new Ottoman regulations, the systems of control and sharecropping which had benefited the *muqata'ajis*. Their economic action inevitably engaged them in the struggle against ancient relations of dependence, and by consequence, tied them closer to the Christian people that it did create distance. The support which the French silk reelers received from the clergy – and the support they gave in return – was the conscious expression of this situation, and assured them popular adhesion.)

<sup>95</sup> Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 220.

<sup>96</sup> For some examples, see: Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 38, 75, 76, 78, 98, 124,147; Ibid., vol.4, 32, 34, 37, 67, 98, 152, 172, 174, 182.

<sup>97</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 67.

More serious even were the defections of hired workers to factories or textile shops owned by locals. While accusations of stealing labour had been commonplace between European silk industrialists, the decision by workers, especially young women, to leave supposedly more “lucrative” European factories to work in local shops generated considerable opposition by foreign silk industrialists.<sup>98</sup> Such was the case of *al-banat min salima*, the “girls of salima,” involving several women from the village of Salima who left the employ of Mourgue d’Algue to work at a locally-owned factory under a certain *khawaja* Faris Antun. The case was brought to the *majlis* of the Mountain, where the women were ordered to stop working and respect their *Irtibat* (obligations) with the French industrialists. The family of the ruling Christian *qa’immaqam*, the Abi Lami’ , who were the *muqata’ajis* of the village, were asked to ensure that Faris Antun’s factory did not continue employing these girls,

To *khawaja* Murk [Mourgue d’Algue], What you have mentioned about the girls of Salima, the case is currently suspended at the *majlis*, and the final decision was that they will not work for anybody until the case is dismissed. They did not respect this decision and broke it, and started to work for Faris Antun. And now, you are asking that we stop them from working. We know this now, and we are going to give them an order to have them stop working. We are now sending you a letter from our beloved brother al-Amir ‘Ali Hassan, and he will proceed to stop them from working and make sure that the law is [followed] and give the rights to the people.<sup>99</sup>

This case reveals the layers of tensions developing as new actors fought to secure labour and enforce contracts through the intervention of the *qa’immaqam* who worked through local power brokers, in this case the *muqata’ajis* of the village of Salima, in order to have the interests of Mourgue d’Algue protected. The decision by the *majlis* to forbid the women of Salima from working at Faris Antun’s factory illustrates, among other things, the new level of intrusion by formal political bodies in the spheres of rural life. This example can also broaden our understanding of the process of silk

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<sup>98</sup> See the references of accusations between French and British silk industrialists accusing each other of stealing workers, in Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 219. Historians like Chevallier have argued that the local textile industry only survived the new European competition by paying reduced salaries and by using textiles unsuited to external markets. But by the 1850s, the French consulate in Beirut spoke of the local textile industry as so competitive that it threatened to ruin French industry. Akram Khater, “She Married Silk: A Rewriting of Peasant History in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Mount Lebanon” (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1992), 42.

<sup>99</sup> Hichj, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 173-174. For the complete case correspondence, see Ibid., 34, 37, 106, 112, 118, 152, 172-4, 182.

industrialization as it sheds light on the wide range of actors who came into conflict in the context of labour scarcity and an expanding “state.”

### **Expansion of Moneylending**

The growth of the silk industry was part of a broader process of expansion of commercial relations which had multi-varied effects on the social formation. Furthermore, the character of this expansion was inseparable from the changing urban-rural dynamics outlined above, and as a result of the potential profits to be made from silk purchases, Beirut-based merchants increasingly sought to expand their affairs into the mountain hinterland, many of them succeeding in establishing silk-reeling factories in addition to their mercantile houses and thriving export activities.<sup>100</sup> Facilitating this expansion was a growing number of banks and mercantile houses in Beirut which constituted new sources of capital, enabling an increase in purchases and extension of credit for those actors who could access these new financiers.<sup>101</sup> Merchants of the hinterland increasingly tied themselves to urban merchant networks, as partners or brokers of urban firms, constituting the urban merchant networks which enabled the mobilization of peasant surplus and its re-direction to the mills and trading houses of Beirut. It is not known how many brokers worked for these trading houses, but we know that those who did received a commission on the quantity purchased, and their capital was supplied directly by silk industrialists and mercantile houses in Beirut.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> For a discussion of the growing interest in silk purchases by urban merchants, see Owen, *The Middle East*, 154. While European trade was increasingly important, several caveats should be presented, most notably that the percentage of trade with France was still relatively limited, with the bulk of exports which went through Beirut ended up in Egyptian ports. Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> On the opening of the Beirut office of the Imperial Ottoman Bank (BIO), and the ownership of local banks, see Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, 51, 158.

<sup>102</sup> Kais Firro, “Silk and Agrarian Changes,” 161. The relations involved in this exchange were both “economic” and “political” in that they could turn to the influence of the mercantile houses and consuls to which they were linked in order to gain leverage in order to further their business interests and protect themselves from “violations”. See for instance the example of an “agent” forcing his way to the surplus of the Abu Khalil family in Bekfiyya, following the intervention of the French Consul-General and the qa’immaqam. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 36. See also Faris Mansur, the “partner of Yaqub Thabit” in Ibid., 120

Furthermore, these ties were strengthened as the centers of financing became increasingly important for a wide range of actors. Henri Guys noted that during this period, local moneylenders borrowed money from European mercantile houses at rates averaging 6%, which was subsequently loaned to peasants at higher rates varying between 20% and 100%.<sup>103</sup> As will be discussed below, the movement of urban-based capital and the politics embedded in these activities gave rise to important tensions which took on the character of political conflict, in part as the needs of silk industrialists during times of capital shortages forced them to seek the quick recovery of loans.

The circulation of capital, which was necessary for the expansion of commercial relations in the Mountain, was further facilitated by the establishment of *majalis* (advisory councils) and commercial courts. Moneylending practices were made easier by these new administrative and legal frameworks, as lists of debtors were sent to these political bodies from merchants whose distant locations would, previously, likely have resulted in prohibitively high transaction costs for conducting such affairs. Moneylenders from Kisrawan expanded their affairs into Baalbek, while merchants from the more distant regions of Jabal Nablus secured the collection of debts in the Mountain through the *majlis* of the province in Beirut and those of the *qa'immaqamiyya*, who at times coordinated efforts. Writing to Francis Misk, a prominent merchant in Beirut, the *qa'immaqam* of the "Christian" district of Mount Lebanon informs him of a successful debt collection on the behalf of Nabulsi merchants,

...[W]e have told you before about the direct order we have given to Niqula Khury from Wadi Shahrur beside the city [of Beirut], for the declaration of freedom from the money he owes to the *khawajat* of Nablus and their representative Milhelm Ibrahim. The two *khawajat* sent us confirmation that they received the money...<sup>104</sup>

The formalization of moneylending practices through the central political apparatus also contributed to the reconfiguring of social relations embedded in commercial affairs, allowing for a

<sup>103</sup> Henri Guys, cited in Labaki, *Introduction à l'histoire économique*, 41.

<sup>104</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 92-3. The rest of the letter notes "...and attached to our letter is a note from Bishara al-Haddad confirming the arrival of the statement of accounts required from Bu 'Ali Hamidan to *khawaja* Smuyl [Samuel] concerning the feedback which came from your general, the most respected." Bishara al-Haddad's ties to Francis Misk and Na'amtallah Khuri, evidences the manner in which local Kisrawani families linked themselves to the urban merchant community in order to pursue their business interests.

bypassing of established networks, as new political brokers were introduced in the process. Merchants were able to deal directly with the *qa'immaqam's* administration, by forwarding lists of debtors to the *majlis* which would rule on the issue and give orders to begin collection. For example: "To the *khawajat* Audiya brothers, regarding the list of your money in Bilad Jubayl, it has arrived. And according to your request, we have given a direct order to start collecting it."<sup>105</sup>

Another example can be found in a letter written from the *qa'immaqam* to the authorities in Baalbek, informing them that money is being collected from debtors on the behalf of a prominent merchant from Zuq Mikhayil in Kisrawan,

Long ago we had a request from our beloved *khawaja* Yusuf 'Allam,<sup>106</sup> regarding the money from Muhammad Abu Salibi. Muhammad owes him this money. This Muhammad is present in Baalbek and we have given a request to our beloved Qabalan al-Aziz to collect this money from him and we want the receipt declaring the payment of the debt. And if this is required for the lawsuit, we will order Muhammad to go to the *majlis* to get it from them...<sup>107</sup>

Moneylending relied on intermediaries like the above mentioned Qabalan al-Aziz in order to ensure that debts were collected and Yusuf 'Allam's business interests protected, which helps outline the ways in which the changing politics of moneylending and trade, increasingly centralized through the office of the *qa'immaqam*, allowed for a reconfiguration of these practices. Previously, such a transaction may have necessitated the direct involvement of the village *shaykh* to whom 'Allam would have depended on for his access to debtors.

The expansion of credit relations were characterized by great asymmetries, and in this context, larger moneylenders and merchants were able to benefit at the expense of smaller merchants and the peasantry. As mentioned above, interest could be attached to advance payment contracts or loans with

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>106</sup> Yusuf 'Allam was among the prominent moneylenders of Kisrawan to have extended credit to members of the the *bayt* (branch) of *awlad* Abi Qansawh of the Khazin family. For a list of moneylenders from Kisrawan see: Richard Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 91.

<sup>107</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 102. Other examples abound: see *khawajat* Awadya Brothers, getting debts collected from Jubayl, Ibid., 110. French silk industrialists Joseph Berard and his partners from the Beirut Commercial House of Piccioto and Bertrand, ask the Consul-General of France to put pressure on the Christian *Qa'immaqam* to collect debts owed to them by locals. Ibid., 117. See also Beirut merchants working increasingly through the French Consul-General to get debts paid back. For example, Ibid., vol.4, 26.

rates varying between 20 to 100 percent.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, large merchants could draw on a variety of tools including the new bureaucracy which, in addition to facilitating the spread of commercial relations, helped increase their control over rural life and commerce. Urban merchants and industrialists like Butros al-Asfar could draw on their connections with local strongmen and *muqata'ajis* like the Khazins, with whom al-Asfar had established important commercial links, or else opt for the "formal" channels of coercion such as the *majalis* of Beirut or the Mountain districts in order to collect loans or settle other outstanding matters.<sup>109</sup> An example is found in the conflict which arose over a debt owed by a certain Yusuf Fulaifil from the village of Judayda, in Kisrawan.<sup>110</sup> A letter by the *qa'immaqam* reveals the extent to which merchants like al-Asfar could now effect pressure on local inhabitants in the context of the new politics of trade,

(...) [W]e have received a *Mushiri* (provincial) decree concerning your suit against Yusuf Fulaifil from Judayda, Kisrawan, for the amount of *darahims*<sup>111</sup> and to have your suit be made by your representative to discuss with the *majlis* (council) and now we received the papers by him

<sup>108</sup> Paul Saba, "The Creation of the Lebanese Economy," 10. Such practices were repeatedly remarked on by contemporary chroniclers as having contributed to the ruin of the peasantry and several ruling families. See Mikhayil Mishqa, *Al-Jawab 'ala iqtirah al-ahbab*. Ed. And tr. Wheeler M. Thackston Jr. as *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage and Plunder: The History of the Lebanon in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

<sup>109</sup> For other examples involving the Thabit family, see Hichi, *Sijil muhararat*, vol.1, 61, 78; vol.2, 78; vol.3, 79. These are of particular interest given that direct appeals to the *qa'immaqam* were successful in many cases, while they relied on Butrus 'Asfar in order to collect debts owed by the Khazins, suggesting that this politically powerful family was not necessarily subject to the *qa'immaqam*'s pressures. At the same time, it is important to note that 'Asfar was dependent on the Qa'immaqam, and there were limits to his influence. See the letter to Consul-General Moore by Butrus 'Asfar and Mikhayil Tubiya regarding the failure of the *Qa'immaqam* to repay the debts he owes to the latter. Moore to Mr. Alison, inclosure 3 no.1, inclosure 4, no.1, in Great Britain Foreign Office, *Despatches from Her Majesty's Consuls in the Levant Respecting Past or Apprehended Disturbances in Syria 1858 to 1860* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1860), 2-4.

<sup>110</sup> As will be discussed in the next chapter, the Fulaifil family of Judaida would later become involved as *wakils* (agent/representatives) in the revolt of 1858 which demanded a redistribution of political power, directly challenging the control of the position of *ma'amur* (administrator/sub-district governor) of the district of Kisrawan by members of the Khazin family. The demands of the rebels were published in: Antun Dahir al-'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna fi Lubnan: Safha majhula min tarikh al-jabal min 1841 ila 1873*. Ed. Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbak (Beirut: Matba'at al-Ittihad, 1938); Malcolm H. Kerr, *Lebanon in the Last Years of Feudalism, 1840-1860: A Contemporary Account by Antun Dahir al-'Aqiqi and Other Documents* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1959).

<sup>111</sup> Plural for *dirham*. Doumani notes that the term *dirham* was originally a referent of a weight measurement which came to be used more broadly to signify an amount of something. Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 248. See a breakdown of weight measurements in Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 222. See also Van Leeuwen for a discussion of the meaning of the term. See also Akram Khater for a discussion of the term *dirhem* in Akram Khater, "She Married Silk", 272-274.



saying that you have reviewed them and since your *wakil* (agent/representative) has not arrived it is required to have him sent as soon as possible to carry the case out.<sup>112</sup>

The provincial decree which al-Asfar had sent to the *qa'immaqam* in order to force the debtor to court illustrates the considerable pressure which influential urban merchants could exert over their clients. By drawing in the provincial government, the merchant was skilfully challenging the jurisdiction of the *qa'immaqam*, inviting outsiders to weigh in on a clearly "internal" legal matter and thus guaranteeing that the *qa'immaqam* take interest in the case.

This case further highlights the manner in which commercial relations developed between large urban merchants and the peasantry, as the new politics of moneylending shifted to allow the intervention of district and provincial governments, bypassing the more immediate relations involved in these undertakings. The fact that the Fulaifil family are not referred to as *khawajat* (merchants) in contrast to Butros al-Asfar and all other correspondence between the *qa'immaqam* and merchants, and that they later aligned themselves with peasant interests as *wakils* in the revolt of 1858, strongly suggests that they were drawn from a layer of rich peasants who combined agricultural work with commerce.<sup>113</sup> Much has been made of these kinds of relations and their effect on re-configuring patronage ties between villagers and urban merchants, as the social space widened along the development of a differentiated peasantry, undermining its ties with the ruling families.<sup>114</sup>

Despite the widening of the social space, this "re-configuration" of patronage relations should not be construed as resulting in any improvement in the condition of the peasantry as their ties of dependency between their landlords came to be replaced by those of large merchants like 'Asfar. There is evidence that peasants bore the brunt of more effective and coercive means of debt-collection which resulted from this centralization of political power and the aggressive manoeuvring by merchants and

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<sup>112</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 102.

<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, as Porath as noted, the *wakils* must have been drawn from wealthier elements of the peasantry as the costs involved in serving as a representative in the movement were not negligible. Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 114.

<sup>114</sup> See for instance Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 164-171; Reilly, "Regions and Markets."

industrialists to ensure that labour, capital, and the peasant's crops were secured. As we noted above, foreign merchants, for instance, were able to make use of official channels in order to have their commercial and work contracts enforced, which would otherwise have been near impossible given their lack of ties to their areas of operation. Peasants were thrown in jail, and had their possessions seized on the orders of the *qa'immaqam*.<sup>115</sup> Writing to the Consul of England in Beirut, the *qa'immaqam* instructs him to relay information to the British merchant-industrialist *khawaja* (merchant) Courtauld and his partners, the owners of the *karkhana* (silk factory) of the Dahdah Shaykhs, as to the accepted *modus operandi* of debt-collection: "...As you know that it is followed for all cases of the European *khawajat* (merchant, plural), as the one in debt with no way to repay his debt to the *khawajat*, we ask the *khawajat* to go to those people and evaluate their belongings financially and take them in exchange for their debts."<sup>116</sup>

Silk industrialists also managed to combine new mechanisms of debt collection in order to secure labour for their factories. Working directly or through their agents who secured supplies of cocoons for their spinning mills through advance purchase contracts, industrialists managed to indebt peasant producers by committing them to delivering a set amount of silk on a specific date in exchange for a cash advance. In the case of a failure to fulfill this contract, industrialists could seize their possessions or, when an individual's possessions could not cover his debts, as was often the case, creditors would take advantage of the debtor's position of weakness to lock him into a situation of great dependency by extending further loans, or could have him work off his debts in a textile shop or factory. These measures received official sanction from the *majlis* of the *qa'immaqam* which would order defaulting debtors to be imprisoned or forced into the factory of their creditor to pay their debt through

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<sup>115</sup> Needless to say, imprisonment was more easily enforced on those of low status, who could be released upon the "guarantee certificate of a trusted person." Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 42.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 16. The same rule applied for local merchants. For an example of a prominent Beirut merchants of the Bustros family seizing the belongings of Jirjis 'Ali Sarkis al-Buwayri from Junieh, Kisrawan, see Ibid., 18. As we mentioned above, the Bustros family were wealthy merchants from Beirut who were appointed as members of the *majlis* in the city under Ibrahim Pasha.

labour. Writing to the French Consul-General in 1855, the *qa'immaqam* of the "Christian" districts explains the result of a lawsuit: "Ilyas Hanna owes 2,200 Bashlak to the Arab and the manager of the al-Dahdah *kakhanah*. Both sides attended, and the owner of the money asked for his money from the debtor. This is why Ilyas was appointed as a worker of the *qa'immaqam* Bulio the French, in order for him to pay his debts..."<sup>117</sup>

Control over labour was not limited to enforcing contracts on behalf of silk industrialists, but included an unprecedented management of production as the *majlis* of the *qa'immaqam* issued direct orders to peasants and small textile shops who had unpaid debts to merchants and silk industrialists, to close their shops or cease working altogether until loans could be repaid.<sup>118</sup> Without these means of coercion, foreign capital would remain at the mercy of the local population's acquiescence.

### **Manipulating New Political Channels and Changing Political Relations**

Although the new political institutions began to take prominence over the more informal configuration of politics of pre-restoration Lebanon, it should be noted that both formal and informal channels of political power co-existed during this time and local actors continued to draw on them in order to advance their interests in the increasingly competitive context which accompanied the expansion of commercial relations. The outcome of the competition for the agricultural surplus depended largely on the ability to manipulate informal networks and the new political channels of influence in order to come out on top. The example of a commercial dispute which arose in 1855 between two wholesale merchants of Mount Lebanon, Yusuf al-Jaddi and Yusuf al-Baraydi, helps support this point while simultaneously revealing the various layers of conflict and shifting political relations which were emerging at this time. Writing in July 1855, the *qa'immaqam* of the "Christian"

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>118</sup> See for instance the case of the wife of Jirjis Naama from the village of Salima, whose shop was forcefully closed down until her debts were repayed, in Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 120. See also the closing of a textile shop in the mountain for failure to repay a debt owed to Habib Qashu', a Beirut merchant, who later figured as part of the "Young Maronite League" under the leadership of Bishop Tubiya 'Awn. Ibid., 106.

districts of Mount Lebanon informs *khawaja* Yusuf al-Jaddi that an official intercession on the latter's behalf has failed to yield the desired results,

...[A]s you previously asked for the presence of Yusuf Al-Baridi from Zahle to plead with your deputy... he is not available, and Yusuf had some important affairs to take care at his shop, he appointed a *wakil* [agent/representative] on his behalf and went on his way to his business. He did not leave until he confirmed the report that he did not manipulate or interfere with the partition/division of the *mazra'a* [agricultural field] at all saying that what he is exporting belongs to the *fellahin* [peasants] paying him his dues. Despite the efforts made by your Excellency's deputy Milhem Musallam who did everything possible to convince him that the deal should be split in half, equally between them, but he did not agree with the recommendations made to him not to interfere...<sup>119</sup>

Both of these merchants directed their purchases toward different markets, the former to Beirut, and the latter towards the interior markets of Syria. Despite his contact with the *qa'immaqam*, Yusuf al-Jaddi never succeeded in securing a portion of the harvest from the peasants and decided to appeal the decision, suing Yusuf al-Baraydi for his "interference" with the crops. Although continuing the legal proceedings through the established legal channel of the *majlis al-Jabal*<sup>120</sup> (council of the Mountain), al-Jaddi also made use of his connections in Beirut, contacting the Consul-General of France in order to put additional pressure on the *qa'immaqam* and guarantee his interest in the matter. The case took on increasing prominence as the *Mushir* (provincial governor) of Saida (Sidon) was drawn in as well.<sup>121</sup> In the face of tremendous political pressure, the *qa'immaqam* was forced to provide an explanation for *khawaja* al-Jaddi's failures. In a letter to the French Consul-General in Beirut one year later (1856), the *qa'immaqam* explains in very blunt terms the limits of his power,

... [W]e received your petition that contains the suit of Yusuf al-Jaddi against Yusuf al-Baraydi and a copy was [also] sent from *khawaja* al-Jaddi. And all that is mentioned in it regarding that al-Baraydi seized upon the materials that people of Zahle were keeping in the village of Karak and *khawaja* al-Jaddi is appealing to recollect it from him. All is understood about the events taking place in Zahle and all is under your review and hearing with the reports that we sent to you earlier. And for the Excellency of the *Mushir*, he has not sent us any order regarding what we have shown [him] nor from your party. We did not mean to create any sort of detachment in our relations with Yusuf al-Jaddi with our investigations and this is something that we try to avoid because he is the one who is most familiar with their affairs and news, and

<sup>119</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.1, 175.

<sup>120</sup> In the official correspondence of the *Qa'immaqam* of the "Christian" district, the terms *majlis al-Jabal* (council of the Mountain) and *majlis al-idara* (Administrative Council) are used interchangeably. The *majlis* in Beirut is referred to as such, while the Commercial Court set up in 1850 in Beirut is referred to as *majlis al-tijara*.

<sup>121</sup> Hursid Pasha, who succeeded Wamik Pasha as the *wali* (governor) of Saida, was referred to as the "*Mushir*". See Ussama Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 109.

because they never hide anything from him. *Al-Baraydi is one of them and for that they are being disobedient with their actions, because of their stupidity.* Hopefully no failure in duty will occur and Yusuf's rights are to be preserved.<sup>122</sup> [emphasis added]

In acknowledging the source of the villagers' "stupidity," the *qa'immaqam* was outlining the limits of his power in the face of Yusuf al-Baraydi's personal ties which constituted the merchant networks of the interior. In this case, Yusuf al-Baraydi held considerable influence in local affairs, being a merchant from a prominent family in Zahle who had served in Bashir Shihab's administration and had managed to capitalize on the new trading opportunities which underpinned the market town's rise throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>123</sup> Over time, al-Baraydi had managed to establish strong ties with the villages of the interior, which formed part of the familial network of trade. In doing so, the merchant had become "one of them" to use the *qa'immaqam*'s term, allowing him to secure the harvest at the expense of al-Jaddi's ambitious expansion into the interior.<sup>124</sup> The case further reveals the emerging layers of conflict arising as urban merchants sought to extend their reach into new economic geographies.<sup>125</sup> In the context of intensified competition over the agricultural surplus,

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<sup>122</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 93.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., vol.1, 175; Fruma Zachs, "Commerce and Merchants," 51-63; Alixa Naff, "A Social History of Zahle, the Principle Market Town in Nineteenth-Century Lebanon (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1972); Leila Fawaz, "Zahle and Dayr al-Qamar: Two Market Towns of Mount Lebanon During the Civil War of 1860," in Nadim Shehadi and Dana H. Mills, eds. *Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988), 49-64.

<sup>124</sup> It is necessary to note the difficulties in using the *Sijil* of the *Qa'immaqam* as a "source" of history. The letter here is of course saturated with a discourse of power which obscures the "true" nature of the relations which allowed al-Baridi to secure the peasants' harvest at this time. The power relations remain hidden and cannot be recovered by replacing this discourse with its opposite signifier. Their "stupidity" was neither their "brilliance" in preventing al-Jaddi's unwanted encroachment into their lands, nor was it the product of a blind "loyalty" to someone they considered to be "one of them." There are many mechanisms which al-Baraydi could have drawn on to make his claim to the surplus stand. What remains important to note, however, is that it does show the expanding possibilities which emerged from increased competition. Peasants had, at least in theory, the possibility of re-directing their harvests to more profitable ends and, in the process, could work to re-negotiate their relationships with those who now competed more intensely over their surplus production.

<sup>125</sup> Urban merchants who extended their operations into other areas had to face the complex overlapping political and economic relations which constituted trade networks. For another example see the conflict over purchase of wheat in Zahle between French silk industrialist Fortuné Portalis and *khawaja* 'Ali Ma'aluf, from a prominent merchant family of this town. See Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 30,32,34.

merchants made use of newly emerging political relationships alongside old established networks, both of which were critical in determining the “success” of this contest.<sup>126</sup>

This context provided the means for a wide range of actors to re-negotiate their relationship to political authority, using alternative channels of influence, as the reconfiguration of circuits of production and trade impacted the configuration of political and economic power directly. For instance, merchants or rich peasants of Mount Lebanon could work as intermediaries for the growing urban-based economic networks, as was the case of the increasing number of brokers under the employ of Beirut mercantile houses. These “economic” relationships overlapped with the “political” as mercantile networks also offered access to the levers of political power. One example is found in the case of the Haddad family in Kisrawan, who worked as intermediaries for urban merchants like Na‘matallah al-Khuri and Francis Misk, settling “accounts” on their behalf and directing silk cocoon purchases to their mercantile houses in Beirut. Both of these actors were politically powerful and the Haddad family called upon them on several occasions to seek redress over commercial disputes.<sup>127</sup> Na‘matallah al-Khuri wrote to the Christian *qa'immaqam* on several occasions on behalf of his client in order to ensure that a case between Haddad and “his opponents” was being taken care of in the *majlis* of the mountain.<sup>128</sup> When a conflict broke out over supplies of silk cocoons between members of the Haddad and Hubaysh families in the town of Ghazir, Na‘matallah al-Khuri again took the defence of his client to make sure

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<sup>126</sup> For another example in which a client of the French Consul-General succeeds in securing the peasant’s surplus at the expense of a competitor, following the former’s contact with the *qa'immaqam*, see *Ibid.*, vol.4, 26.

<sup>127</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 75. Francis Misk had become an influential “British protégé in the service of Bashir II in the powerful position of a *divan efendisi* who was “to the Pasha what the grand vizier was to the sultan.” Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, 36; Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 79. He was reinstated during the time of Bashir Qasim for a short while, before the government was dissolved and refigured. See Farah for more details. Na‘matallah was a prominent merchant with a mercantile house in Beirut. His stature as a member of the city’ merchant community allowed him to head Beirut’s customs office after 1860. Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, 36. On another occasion, Nam‘atallah al-Khury wrote to the Qa'immaqam to see to it that the case involving Habib al-Haddad and “his opponents” receive the due attention. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 116. For more information on the Haddad families links with urban merchant networks see *Ibid.*, vol.2, 92-93. It is important to note that this family, Habib al-Haddad and others, were signatories to the final settlement of the Kisrawan uprising, as *wakils* of ‘Aramun “and its environs.” See ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 118, 147.

<sup>128</sup> Of added interest is that the mentioned members of the Haddad family figured among the names of *wakils* in the revolt in 1858, a point addressed in the next chapter.

that the accused Shaykh Bishara Hubaysh, from the prominent *muqata'aji* family of Kisrawan who had secured the position of *mutasallim* (administrator) of the town, would not escape judgment.<sup>129</sup>

Other merchants of mountain districts began working through the intermediary of prominent urban merchants and European consuls in order to secure their business interests.<sup>130</sup> Local merchants who could exert pressure through these new channels could sometimes successfully increase their bargaining position.<sup>131</sup> One example is found in a letter written to the French Consul in Beirut, in which the *qa'immaqam* of the "Christian" district re-iterates his intention to protect the interests of the Consul's clients, a merchant family from Kisrawan: "All that you indicated concerning taking care of *khawajat* Ilyas Tannus Nasr and his brothers is understood. And so, they are going to be considered and understood as they always were and now for your sake, they will have our consideration in the help needed to [ensure] their benefits."<sup>132</sup> The use of these alternate channels represented new forms of

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<sup>129</sup> See Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 75.

<sup>130</sup> See the discussion above regarding the Beyhoum, Lahoud, and Thabit families who worked through Butrus 'Asfar to secure debt repayments and silk supplies from the Khazins. Discussed in Chevallier, 202-03. See also the case of Kisrawan merchants like the Munnayir and Qattan families who worked with Niqula Mudawwar. *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 76. The mercantile house of Tubiya and 'Asfar also worked through the European consuls as well as Niqula Mudawwar when, following the economic "crisis" in 1857 which occasioned a sharp reduction in European credit sources, the former sought to have substantial loans paid back by the Christian *qa'immaqam*. See Great Britain Foreign Office, *Despatches from Her Majesty's Consuls*, 3-4. There are other examples of merchants multiplying their channels of influence by tying themselves closely to foreign consulates. Two Kisrawani families mentioned above exemplify these developments. Members of the Bakhus family, for instance, worked for both the French and English Consul, a member of the family served as a dragoman for the latter. For information about the Bakhus family's involvement with the English Consul, see Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 384, 387, 396-7. For their links to the French consul see 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 21. For a contemporaneous account of the Bakhus family, see Charles Churchill, *Mount Lebanon*, 77, 87-90. Churchill referred to Ilyas Bakhus in Ghazir, Kisrawan as "the virtual ruler of the Mukataa' [sic.]", *Ibid.*, 90. The Bakhus family also maintained commercial ties with the Thabit family. See Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 221. Politically, the Medawwar family had also risen to prominence through their cultivation of ties with the French consulate in Beirut, obtaining consular protection in the 1840s, serving as dragoman to the French consul and securing the directorship of the Ottoman chancellery in the 1850s. Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, 90-91, 95. ; Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 202-205.

<sup>131</sup> See the countless examples of merchants using the foreign consuls to put pressure on the mountain's bureaucracy to get debts collected in Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 17; 18; 75; 91; 106; 120; vol.4, 55.

<sup>132</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 73. These names appeared on the lists of *wakils* in the revolt. There are countless examples of merchant families working through the French Consul to effect pressure on the *qa'immaqam* to have their interests defended. One case which is particularly informative and illustrative of the re-configuration of political networks is the case of Beirut merchant 'Amdy Humsi, whose family was seated at the *majlis* in Beirut, under Ibrahim Pasha. Writing to the General of France: "...everything is noted concerning the request of *khawaja* 'Amdy Humsi, the "French merchant" from [owed by] Faris Antun from Salima, as the amount of 38,925 piasters

political engagement outside of the official “structures of power”, indicating small changes in the *modus operandi* of trade, and a gradual erosion of established patron-client relations.<sup>133</sup>

For the majority of peasants whose access to consuls and members of the *majlis* was very limited, the changing socio-economic context also offered opportunities to re-negotiate their relations to political authority, albeit in a highly power-laden context characterized by significant asymmetries. One way in which they could do this was by taking advantage of the increasingly competitive environment which followed the increase in demand of the Mountain’s silk. This context offered them the opportunity to redirect their agricultural surplus towards different competitors. This was a perennial concern for merchants and tax-farmers who had firmly implanted themselves as intermediaries, a concern which left its trace in the records of the *qa’immaqam*’s correspondence with the former who wrote letters in order to prevent competitors from “laying their hands” on their *iltizam*.<sup>134</sup> The above cited example of *khawajat* Jaddi and Baraydi illustrates the way in which peasants had some agency in determining whether commercial networks would be reproduced. As others have noted, the “choice” by peasants to direct their crops towards one individual over another suggests that they were not passive actors in these contests over their surplus.<sup>135</sup>

The example of conflict in villages of Kisrawan helps illustrate this point and opens up a broader perspective on the impact that expanding commercial relations had on the peasantry. The village of

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and to send officials to recollect the mentioned amount of money is all known and in accordance to your order, two officials were sent and were ordered not to leave until they have the money with them and to get it back to *khawaja* Humsi.” Ibid., 55. See also the example of Ilyas al-Leef “from ahali al-Zuq” in Kisrawan, who petitioned to the French General Consul in Beirut over a moneylending dispute which became violent. Ibid., 71. Such contacts are indicative of important changes in relations to political authority as foreign consuls are used as channels to put pressure on the mountain’s political elites.

<sup>133</sup> The examples of a wide number of individuals in Kisrawan and elsewhere making use of alternate political channels to protect their interests signals a new form of political engagement and an important change in the structures of political power.

<sup>134</sup> See the example of shaykh Shibli Maalouf, a Zahlani merchant controlling farmland in the Bekaa putting pressure on the Christian *qa’immaqam* to intercede on his behalf and ensure that the crops from his *iltizam* remain safe in the face of competitors, in Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 90. See also the case of *khawaja* Butros Nasr’s *iltizam*, in Ibid., 74.

<sup>135</sup> Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 78-79.



Darayya, located in Kisrawan and whose inhabitants participated in the revolt of 1858, was the site of a heated contest in between competitors over the crops of the *fellahin* (peasants) which drew the latter directly into the struggle for access and control of the rural surplus. This particular confrontation broke out in 1856 as two merchants, a British subject and landowner Charles Churchill, and a local merchant “*khawaja* Nasr,” attempted to secure an advance payment contract of wheat with the peasants of the village, drawing, in the process, the intervention of *shaykh* Butrus Wakid Hubaysh.<sup>136</sup> Upon the request of Charles Churchill, the Hubaysh *shaykh* ordered the *fellahin* to desist from their actions, warning them “not to accept [Nasr’s] horses,” and prevented his agents from working with the peasants.<sup>137</sup> Thus, the opportunity for peasants to re-direct their surplus entailed significant risks as it brought them into direct conflict with merchants and local power brokers who often put pressure on them to make the “right choice.” In this case, the *fellahin* chose to ignore *shaykh* Butrus Wakid Hubaysh’s orders despite his belonging to a ruling family of *muqata’ajis* in Kisrawan, leaving Churchill embroiled in a prolonged legal battle with *khawaja* Nasr over his “right” to the crops of the villagers.<sup>138</sup> An important implication of this case is that it helps us rethink social tensions away from the simplistic “oppression” model outlined above, to one in which conflict is generated at the interface of micro and macro processes of political and economic change.

### **New Political Relations and the Engagement with the Qa’immaqam**

Several changes at the administrative level provided ways to re-negotiate relation to political authority. Ottoman reform, which had been officially promulgated in 1839 with the Gulhane decree, had already offered the basis for a new citizenship. While the Shekib Effendi agreement of outlined provisions meant to reform the tax-farming system and centralize the control over taxation. Peasants and small landowners also directly interacted with the new administrative/legal frameworks which

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<sup>136</sup> For information of the relationship between Charles Churchill and the Hubaysh and Khazin *shaykhs*, see Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 516, 519, 534, 563.

<sup>137</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 23.

<sup>138</sup> For the complete case see: *Ibid.*, 23, 36, 40, 45, 71, 87.

emerged during the restoration of Ottoman rule, illustrating the emergence of new forms of political engagement. Fiscal reform outlined in the Shekib Effendi agreement meant that the evaluation of taxes was to be conducted through the *majlis* of the respective *qa'immaqams* who would issue a signed document for *muqata'ajis* stating the legal amount of taxes that could be claimed.<sup>139</sup> These notes were issued by the seated members of the *majlis* in accordance to the amount which had been determined in proportion to the productivity of a given piece of land, and only upon their presentation would the collection of taxes be deemed "legal."<sup>140</sup> This appears to have been enforced, at least some of the time.<sup>141</sup> It also gave the peasantry a weapon with which they could make claims of "unjust" exactions. We have examples of peasants and owners of land contacting the *qa'immaqam* in regards the taking of unjust amounts of *miri* (land tax) by those in charge of collecting taxes.<sup>142</sup>

While petitioning had been an accepted form of political/legal engagement, the centralization of fiscal and commercial matters under the *majlis* of the *qa'immaqam* provided new means for which people could present their grievances and seek redress in the case of "illegalities". One example is found in the response of the *qa'immaqam* after receiving complaints by the *ahali* of a village in the Batrun district, of unjust levying of customs on tobacco. Writing to Hussein Agha, the *mudir* (manager) of the *Gumruk* (customs) of Tobacco in Junieh, Kisrawan, the *qa'immaqam* orders a cessation of an excess collection of customs upon receiving complaints from the *ahali* of the village of Assia,

As it was presented [to us] from Ilyas and Yunis, sons of Yusuf Shahin from Assia, that the operation [mission] wasn't illegal. The people of Assia [in Batrun] have complained about this, and we're letting you know to cancel this mission and to try and prevent this over-collection of money that you have taken from the *ahali* [people] of Assia. Give the money back right now, and in the future, they should behave accordingly and go

<sup>139</sup> It is explicitly stated in Article 4(3) that only upon presentation of signed notes issued in the *majlis* would *muqata'ajis* be legally allowed to claim tax revenues in their *iltizam*. See Article 4(3) of the Shekib Effendi Agreement, in Testa, *Recueil des traités*, 266.

<sup>140</sup> See Van Leeuwen for discussion on evaluation of *miri*.

<sup>141</sup> For examples, see Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.1, 28, 39; vol.3, 43.

<sup>142</sup> For example, the *qa'immaqam* of the Christians writes to his equivalent in Baalbek and to the *muqata'aji* Amir Sulayman Harfush, to let him know that *khawaja* Butrus Nasr has already paid the *miri* for the village of Dayr al-Ahmar, stating that "Since the money had already been collected and documented with the *khawaja*, so we ask you to withdraw the order as we cannot collect the money twice from the people." Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 75.

with *al-maslahat al-ahali* (the benefit of the people). And this will be proven by the absence of reasons for which the *ahali* are complaining. And according to this, there is no need to continue the operation, because you don't need to collect any more money...<sup>143</sup>

This example illustrates among other things, the degree to which centralization was driven from below, as the *ahali* (commoners) requested the interference of the *qa'immaqam* in their affairs in order to protect against excessive levying of fees which contravened the project of Ottoman reform. Small landowners also complained to the *qa'immaqam* of illegal tax demands, evidenced in the latter's reply to a certain Jirjis Khalat in which the lawful boundaries of fiscal exactions are outlined,

Regarding everything you mentioned about the olive orchard in the area of Amyun and the people are asking you for *mal miri* (annual land tax) more than the orders in his hand, which were given by my predecessors, and you want our order to these people to cancel this request and to be treated according to the mentioned orders.... Now we are relying on the *ruznama* (tax office)... And since this grove must have a rule in relation to distribution of the place, and according to the *kharaj* (tax) that the yield is assigned. But if the people want to increase that, they are not allowed to.<sup>144</sup>

The *qa'immaqam*'s reply outlines the manner in which grievances could be addressed. Petitioning the *qa'immaqam* was risky as local *shaykhs* remained powerful intermediaries on whom the *qa'immaqam* and other actors continued to rely on in order to execute "central" orders. For example, the *qa'immaqam* relied on the *ma'amurs* (administrators/sub-district governors) as well as powerful *muqata'ajis* outside of the formal governmental structure in order to enforce the collection of debts and ensure the "safe" return of workers to factories from which they had "escaped."<sup>145</sup> In the case of Kisrawan, the Khazin family had managed to secure the position of *ma'amur* and thus infiltrated the ranks of the new bureaucracy.<sup>146</sup> This helps explain, partly, why some inhabitants turned to other

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 24, 34.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>145</sup> See for example, the letter to the French Consul-General in Beirut, in Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 28. Writing to the Consul-General of France in Beirut, the *qa'immaqam* notes: "...regarding the 10 workers who escaped, who were appointed at the place of the respected *qa'immaqam* Bulio. We have ordered to our *ma'amurin* [two *ma'amur*] to bring them back as soon as possible..."

<sup>146</sup> See 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*. And the restoration of Ottoman rule when this position was originally given to them. The *ma'amurs* of Kisrawan remained from the families of the Khazin and Hubaysh (Ghazir). See: Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 758. The *ma'amur* of the Khazin family during this time appear to be Qansuah and 'Abdullah al-Khazin. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.1, 139.

political brokers, such as the French Consul, in order to put pressure on the *qa'immaqam* to seek redress.<sup>147</sup>

The newly established political bodies of the Mountain thus inhabited fluid boundaries and the manner in which the *qa'immaqam* operated evidences the continued dependence on the “informal” channels of power for the enforcement of their orders.<sup>148</sup> The *muqata'ajis* continued to play a central role in the enforcement of “official” orders, particularly those who held the position of *ma'amur* (administrator/sub-district governors) over their district.<sup>149</sup> Writing to the Consul-General of France, the *qa'immaqam* explains his method of dealing with the loans he is delivering to a client of the French Consul: “What you have mentioned is understood for delivering the money owed to the *khawajat* [merchants] de Roustan and his partners. *We have managed the issue through our beloved shaykh Dahdah and khawajah Niqula Attian for the 10,000 Qurush [currency].* We will include receipts as well (...)”<sup>150</sup> [emphasis added]. This letter illustrates the degree to which the *qa'immaqam* was still dependent on the informal networks to enforce their rulings, and thus at every level, the process of “integration” was managed and shaped by local realities. The survival of informal political brokers alongside the expansion of commercial relations added pressures on the producing classes of Mount Lebanon, as a differentiated peasantry came to feel the increased power of both formal and informal mechanisms seeking to impose new levels of control and lock them into relationships of dependency.

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<sup>147</sup> See the example of Ilyas al-Layf from Zuq Mikhayil, claiming that Nasif Kiwan from Harat al-Balad brutally attacked him when coming to collect debts, in Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 71. He is writing to the foreign consul in order to have him put pressure on the *qa'immaqam*, and the Khazin shaykhs are assigned to the case. In this context, it is not hard to understand that the demands of the peasants who rebelled included a new system of representation, with separate *wakils* representing them and their shaykhs.

<sup>148</sup> This contrasts somewhat with predominant view of “centralization” expounded by scholars who view it as having greatly reduced the power of the *shaykhs* who lost their judicial role. Richard Van Leeuwen has shown that that legal reform had changed this situation earlier on, and there are indications that the *shaykhs* were still in control of customary issues dealing with family, in addition to managing cases and gathering information regarding claims. Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 137. See for example the case involving the daughter of Ahmed Harez, for which the *qa'immaqam* argues “...since the case involves a marriage issue, so we consider it a religious case and it should be directed to the *shaykhs* for solving the case.” In Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 42.

<sup>149</sup> As we noted before, merchants like Tubiya 'Asfar depended on the local *muqata'ajis* like the Khazin family in order to collect debts from peasants. See Chevallier, “Aspects sociaux,” 53.

<sup>150</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 75.

## Conclusion

As we noted above, the re-configuration of political power following the restoration of Ottoman rule and the changing political economy did not spell the end of an “ancien regime,” which meant that the local existing power relations of the “hinterland” became particularly tense in the context of increased competition. Access to the village, while significantly more open as a result of “centralization,” was not guaranteed, nor was the ability to collect debts which became increasingly important, especially for those involved in silk manufacturing which required large amounts of capital to succeed.<sup>151</sup> These continued to be largely dependent on the relations with the residents of the village and ruling families who may have “owned” the village, both literally and metaphorically. The correspondence of the *qa'immaqam* reveals several cases of commercial brokers being assaulted by guards of villages blocking their entry on their way to purchase silk, presumably on the orders of the “owner” of the village who sought to impose himself as a middleman.<sup>152</sup> The case mentioned above of the Hubaysh intervention in the village of Darayya, Kisrawan, also supports this point. As we saw above, the politics of silk industrialization gave rise to complex layers of tension between peasant labourers and silk industrialists who competed for control over labour and silk supplies, as well as the new political bodies and their local power brokers, who managed this process through unprecedented direct intervention. This chapter examined the effects of silk industrialization on patterns of production as an increasing number of peasants came to rely on wage labour as part of their familial survival strategies. While the spread of silk filatures did not result in the destruction of the local textile industry, it made it increasingly difficult for silk spinning peasant artisans to compete as foreign and local merchant families managed to capitalize on the new opportunities. The experience of peasant labourers was inseparable from the developing politics of silk industrialization, which allowed for increased coercion as “central” political

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<sup>151</sup> As will be noted before, the majority of those in Beirut who lobbied for a change in jurisdiction were part of an exclusive club of silk industrialists.

<sup>152</sup> See the beating of Butrus al-Khury, the “clerk of a shop” on his way to purchase crops in the village of Hammana. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 49.

bodies intervened to return “fleeing” workers to their employers’ silk factories, and allowing debt obligations to be serviced through forced labour. Resistance to these processes by peasant labourers was met with direct intervention by the Mountain’s *majlis* and local power brokers through whom they worked, drawing in the involvement of a wide range of actors in the process, with implications for understanding peasants’ relationship to new political authority. Existing tensions were not limited to those between peasants and industrialists, as layers of conflict developed between industrialists, whose involvement in a tense contest over the control of labour and the peasant surplus brought them into direct conflict with each other, and the political brokers through which they worked.

We also saw that the expansion of markets for silk encouraged the extension of urban-based capital into the hinterland, facilitated in part by the new sources of capital (mercantile houses and banks in Beirut) as well as the new administrative and legal frameworks (*majalis* and commercial courts). This in turn contributed to reconfiguring the politics of moneylending as the extension of capital became increasingly formalized through the central political apparatus, impacting social relations embedded in commercial relations. By inviting the intervention of “central” political bodies to ensure the collection of debts, merchants actively contributed to re-configuring the politics of capital circulation as new political brokers were introduced into the scene. This led to tension at times as village shaykhs resisted the imposition of collectors on the behalf of the *qa’immaqam*. The expansion of credit relations were characterized by great asymmetries, and in this context, larger moneylenders and merchants were able to benefit at the expense of smaller merchants and the peasantry as they could draw on a variety of tools including the new bureaucracy to pursue their business interests. Large amounts of political pressure could be brought to bear on the peasantry as a result, and the new means of enforcement generally bypassed the more immediate relations involved in moneylending as new political brokers mediated these activities. There is evidence that peasants bore the brunt of more effective and coercive

means of debt-collection resulting from centralization of political power, while the expansion of credit relations also led to conflict between merchants and peasants.

The expanding space of commerce meant that a wide range of actors could forge new political-economic relations, notably with urban brokers, as the mobilization of peasants' surplus required a large network of agents. The ways in which economic networks were re-configured and expanded, directly impacted political relations at the local level, as new political brokers were introduced and invited to exert pressure in support of their clients' interests. By looking at the way in which such networks and economic partnerships expanded, we are able to better understand how economic change impacted political relations in a broader sense, away from a formalist approach, to a more nuanced view in which political structures mediate economic change which in turn allows for a reconfiguration of political relations. Re-negotiating political and economic relations entailed risks and brought a range of actors into conflict. This helps us rethink social tensions, away from a simplistic oppression model, to one in which conflict is generated through a variety of micro changes at the political and economic level. It is this context which set the stage for the political mobilizations and demands put forth during the Kisrawan revolt, to which we now turn.

## Chapter Four: The Kisrawan Uprising: Popular Mobilization in the Age of Reform

“But Satan watched over his work closely, and did not leave the people in peace, but started planting evil thoughts and envy among them, so that Amir Bashir Ahmad Abi-l-Lami’ [sic.] rose against his uncle Amir Haidar in order to take the government of the Christian Qa’im Maqamiya [sic.] in the Mountain from him.”<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The late 1850s were a time of great political upheaval in Mount Lebanon. By 1858, the district of Kisrawan had become the site of a large-scale political movement which explicitly challenged the established political order, expelling the ruling families of the district and staking a claim in Mount Lebanon’s political system. Rather than being a sudden upsurge of built-up tensions, multiple historical forces gave rise to overlapping conflicts which enabled the outbreak of the Kisrawan uprising in 1858. As one scholar notes, “[r]evolutions, as a form of turbulence, entail an untidy conjuncture of several types of collective action, carried on in an often uncoordinated manner by different social groups.”<sup>2</sup> This last observation finds support in the contemporaneous accounts of the conflict, which appear to link the uprising to several forms of collective action emerging in the late 1850s, three of which are of particular interest to us: one played out in Beirut over the administrative status of Mount Lebanon and its legal-juridical boundaries; the second can be broadly described as the contests over the successor of the *qa’immaqam* (district governor) of Mount Lebanon’s “Christian” district; and the third concerned the political office of the *ma’amur* (sub-district governor) of Kisrawan. All three forms of political mobilization were shaped by this new context, the first two spilling over in an unpredictable fashion and enabling the “uprising” of 1858 to occur.

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<sup>1</sup> Antun Dahir al-‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna fi Lubnan: Safha majhula min tarikh al-jabal min 1841 ila 1873*. Ed. Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbak (Beirut: Matba’at al-Ittihad, 1938), 40.

<sup>2</sup> Juan R.I. Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt’s ‘Urabi Movement* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1999), 234. Such an approach to social movements is influenced by recent theoretical discussions of historical “events” in Harry H. Sewell Jr., *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005). The issue of conjuncture is of particular use to historians who seek to avoid teleological approaches to the study of events, which forces one to accept that “[n]ot only structural preconditions but also nonlinear, unpredictable escalations of small events into large ones proved crucial for the course of the Revolution.” Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution*, 273.



The first part of this chapter traces the development of a political crisis involving a growing class of merchants in Beirut, led by silk industrialists, as their attempts to expand into the hinterland brought them into direct conflict with Mount Lebanon's political apparatus. The chapter then moves on to analyse the early forms of organizing in the villages of Kisrawan and its neighbouring district, paying attention to their links to the urban crisis and large-scale mobilization by opponents of the ruling *qa'immaqam*. These two broad forms of collective action facilitated the emergence of an independent political movement which has come to be referred to as the "Kisrawan uprising." The chapter continues by mapping out the development of this political movement, analysing the demands and social composition, which allows for an alternate interpretation capable of rooting it within the context outlined in the previous chapter. I argue that in its form and "content" (i.e. political project) the "revolt" constituted a new form of politics which was inseparable from the experience of overlapping economic and political changes outlined above.

### **The Post-Restoration Juridical Order and the Limits of Expansion**

The political climate of the 1850s was particularly tense as the political and legal configuration of Mount Lebanon became the subject of increased contestation by a wide variety of actors. For one, the legal and administrative boundaries of the mountain "hinterland" which had been the cause of ongoing conflict since the restoration of Ottoman rule in Mount Lebanon became a point of tension over which the interests of foreign and Beirut merchants overlapped. As described previously, the expansion of commercial relations, the centrality of the hinterland in the economic growth of the 1840s and 1850s, and the increasingly competitive environment, meant that the "success" of merchants and silk industrialists came to depend on their ability to put pressure on the political brokers of the Mountain, which became increasingly centered in the *majlis* of the *qa'immaqam*, responsible for adjudicating fiscal, commercial and criminal matters of the Mountain. The fact that the legal jurisdiction of the Beirut *majlis* did not include Mount Lebanon's districts placed important checks on urban commercial

expansion into the hinterland as access to the local levers of power was not guaranteed.<sup>3</sup> This problem was worse for foreign merchants whose limited means of recourse in the eventuality of a commercial dispute with inhabitants of Mount Lebanon made them even more reliant on the *majlis* of the respective *qa'immaqam*, over which they held little control. For merchants operating out of Beirut, this seemed to pose a problem as they worked hard to have legal cases involving inhabitants of the Mountain tried in the newly constituted commercial tribunal.

The reluctance of Mount Lebanon's political actors to be subsumed within the urban legal sphere became a point of tension over which the interests of foreign and local merchants of Beirut coalesced. In 1853, Beirut mercantile houses enjoying French consular protection, including those of local silk-industrialists of the Farjiallah and Medawwar families, petitioned the Consul-General of France, Lesparides, regarding the refusal of the Druze and Christian *qa'immaqams* to force inhabitants of Mount Lebanon to be sent to the commercial tribunal in Beirut.

We learned that the Druses and Maronite Caimacams [sic.] are opposed to their subjects, when they face difficulties of a purely commercial nature with Europeans, to come have their contestations adjudicated by the Commercial Tribunal of the Province in Beirut.

They claim that following the arrangement signed in 1843 [sic. 1842] between the five great powers and the Sublime Porte, the inhabitants of the Lebanon are, in first resort, placed exclusively under the jurisdiction of the majlis of the Mountain. We have the honour of having you observe, Mister Consul-General, that the pretensions of the Caimacams [sic.] are not well founded, firstly, because in only considering the spirit of the treaties it is clear that the Powers had the purpose of withdrawing people of Lebanon from the preponderance of the Turkish Tribunals, by giving them judges which were proper to them, chosen from them in the Mountain – and then, the commercial courts, having been formed at the request of the European powers, until after the treaties of 1843, the Caimacam [sic.] cannot reject their jurisdiction on the grounds of their absence in the treaty in question.

A commercial code was elaborated by the Sublime Porte, which proves that it had considered as inadequate, the Legislation of the ordinary Tribunals in commercial matters. To force us, subsequently, to suffer this legislation, even more inadequate in the majlises [sic.] of the Mountain is to act against the goal of the institution of Commercial Tribunals and it is for this reason that we ask you, Mister Consul-General, to please explain to Mister the Ambassador of France in Constantinople, all the harm that would be done to our interests by the claims of the Druze and Christian Caimacams [sic.], if they were admitted, and to obtain from the Sublime Porte and the Foreign Powers... that the purely commercial affairs

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<sup>3</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, despite the expansion of the jurisdiction of the Beirut *majlis* in 1849 and the establishment of a separate *majlis al-tijara* (commercial court) in 1850 in Beirut, both would remain forbidden from interfering in the affairs of Mount Lebanon until changes introduced in the 1860s. See Caesar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon, 1830-1861* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies and I.B. Tauris, 2000), 473-498.

between the inhabitants of the Lebanon and the Europeans be judged by the Tribunal of Commerce in Beirut.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these efforts, the *qa'immaqams* of the "Christian" and "Druze" districts were unwilling to have an urban *majlis* adjudicate the commercial matters of the Mountain districts. In 1856, three years after this last petition was written, in a direct reply addressed to the French silk industrialist Nicholas Portalis, the Christian *qa'immaqam* reiterates his refusal to have inhabitants of the Mountain be judged in the Commercial Court of Beirut, reminding him that cases involving inhabitants of the Mountain are to be dealt with through the *qa'immaqam's* administrative council (*majlis al-idara*):

...in reference to the case between yourself and Risha Bu Suleyman from Metn and Mansur Al-Ashy and Yusuf Istifan from the *mahala* of Qabalan, it is currently in the *majlis*. And in this case, it had been asked from your side fifteen "Aqa" and a half and seventy "Qursh" [Ottoman currency]. So you would like to have this money from him, but he was giving an excuse to the council of commerce (*majlis al-tijara*) and it was known according to your demand from Risha that you may go directly to him [to claim the money] but you cannot send the case to the council of commerce, because as you know such cases need to be addressed in the council of administration (*majlis al-idara*).<sup>5</sup>

In this respect, the interests of Beirut merchants began to overlap with foreign merchants, both of whom remained dependent on the Mountain's political authorities and informal brokers to have their claims enforced. In a letter to Beirut merchant Sayyid Mustafa Afra, the *qa'immaqam* denies the latter's request to have a local debtor brought to Beirut to face a lawsuit:

What you have mentioned regarding your case against Jadaun Abu Nujm al-Shishi, from the neighborhood "Hml al-Shahm," and your request to send him to Beirut with his witnesses in order to begin the case with you is well known now. However, the lawsuiting of this case in Beirut is not allowed because it is not according to the laws used. As you know the lawsuiting is in the *majlis al-Jabal* (council of the Mountain), so we are asking you to send your *wakil* [agent] to the *majlis*, and we will ask Jadaun to come. And God willing, nothing bad will happen.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Memorial of French merchants in Beirut to Lesparides," dated February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1853, in Rick Joseph, "The Material Origins of the Lebanese Conflict of 1860," (B.Litt. Oxford, 1977), 99-100. The signatures of this petition were as follows: E.Truilhier of Rostand et Cie., Medawar Brothers, E. De Picciotto and E. Bertrand, Hawadier Brothers, N. Portalis and Cie., P.Segre of M. Roquerbe and Co., Duchenes Ernst and Co., M. Fargiallah [Farjiallah] of Schloesing and Co., Mourgé and Co., E. Gauthier, de Micheau, J.Malertuy, Ferrier, B. Bernier, Bougrain, for Figon. It is important to note that that Figon, Mourgé and Co., Medawar, Bertrand, Portalis, and Fargiallah [Farjiallah] were all silk industrialists, while the commercial operations of the other mercantile houses were almost exclusively based in Mount Lebanon.

<sup>5</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 161.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 161.

There are some rare examples of successful cases being brought to Beirut, but generally speaking, the intervention of powerful families like the Khazins were required in order to do so.<sup>7</sup> The issue became worse during times of economic crisis, as was the case in 1847 and 1857, when the prices of Syrian commodities on the European market dropped dramatically, resulting in the withdrawal of credit from European financiers to their “agents in Syria.”<sup>8</sup> As a result, local and foreign merchants were forced to rely on their own capital reserves and many European silk industrialists in Mount Lebanon found themselves without operating funds.<sup>9</sup> Alongside other European wholesalers in Beirut, they sought to collect outstanding debts they had extended to locals. In order to do so, they were greatly constrained as their means of recourse remained largely limited to the *majlis* in Beirut, where commercial matters were arbitrated by leading Beirut merchants presiding over the cases.<sup>10</sup> The tensions over the separate jurisdictions of Beirut and Mount Lebanon became a major issue around which foreign and an increasing number of Beirut merchants rallied around, as meetings over legal and political reform became increasingly frequent between the leading merchants of the city throughout 1857 and 1858.<sup>11</sup> Thus, a layer of conflict emerged which crystallized along geographic lines, representing a changing political economy in which the very definition of “hinterland” was at stake.

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<sup>7</sup> See for example the intervention of Sheikh Yusuf al-Khazin, who agreed to serve as a *wakil* in the case between Sheikh Shahin al-Dahdah and *khawaja* Jirjis Abid in the *majlis al-tijara* in Beirut, in Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.1, 145, 155.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph, “The Material Origins,” 76; Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy* (New York: Methuen, 1981), 163.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph, “The Material Origins,” 76; Owen, *The Middle East*, 163-4.

<sup>10</sup> This was not limited to small merchants, as is evident in the case of Butrus ‘Asfar and Mikhayil Tubia, arguably among the wealthiest merchants whose activities included wholesale export through their mercantile house in Beirut and the running of a silk factory, who found themselves without the means of collected a large debt they had extended to the *qa’immaqam* of the “Christian” districts. Moore to Mr. Alison, inclosure 3 no.1, inclosure 4, no.1, in Great Britain Foreign Office, *Despatches from Her Majesty’s Consuls in the Levant Respecting Past or Apprehended Disturbances in Syria 1858 to 1860* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1860), 2-4. Following the 1857 commercial crisis, ‘Asfar and Tubiya found themselves in need of capital to sustain their commercial and industrial activities, and they worked through the various consuls in Beirut, as well as Mikhayil Mudawwar, in order to collect this time.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph, “The Material Origins,” 180.

### The “Beginning of the Revolt”: Gatherings at Zuq Mikhayil and Ghazir

The tensions over the political structure of Mount Lebanon were not limited to the urban center. Large-scale gatherings were being reported throughout the district of Kisrawan, with the first manifestation of an organized movement taking place in the market town of Zuq Mikhayil in the early part of 1858, when a crowd met to voice complaints against some shaykhs of the district.<sup>12</sup> The crowd reportedly sent a delegation to Beirut in order to present a list of grievances to Khurshid Pasha, the governor of the province, bypassing the ruling *qa'immaqam* in the process.<sup>13</sup> French contemporary Antoine Batistin Poujoulat wrote that a meeting “...of three hundred peasants of this nation took place in Zouk, at the beginning of 1858.”<sup>14</sup> The author further claims that the Greek Catholics, who formed the majority of the inhabitants of this town, were rich and influential and under the command of “emissaries of the *Serail* of Beyrouth.”<sup>15</sup>

That the beginnings of rural mobilization occurred in Zuq Mikhayil is not insignificant, as it was the central market town of Kisrawan which had, by the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, become an important site of handicraft industry as well as a center of silk marketing which members of the Khazin family had managed to monopolize through their control over the silk scale, at least until the death of Bishara Jaffal al-Khazin in 1826.<sup>16</sup> Charles Churchill, a British subject who lived in Mount Lebanon during the 1850s, marrying into the Shihab family and involving himself in the commercial activities of Kisrawan, referred to Zuq Mikhayil as “the silk emporium of the Kesrouan [sic.],” noting that it had

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<sup>12</sup> Yehoshua Porath, “The Peasant Revolt of 1858-61 in Kisrawan,” *Asian and African Studies*, 2 (1966): 86.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>14</sup> Batistin Poujoulat, *La Vérité sur la Syrie* (Paris : Gaume Frères et J.Duprey, 1861), 67.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 67. The *Serail* was the name referring to government buildings, which presumably housed the *majlis* of Beirut. For a discussion of the changing use of the *Serail* in Beirut, see: Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut : The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 241-263.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy in Mount Lebanon: The Khazin Sheikhs and the Maronite Church, 1736-1840* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 88. There is no precise information as to who controlled the silk scale of Kisrawan after the death of Bishara al-Jaffal al-Khazin in 1825. Van Leeuwen presumes, however, that by the 1840, the Khazin family had lost control over the silk scale and the marketing of Kisrawan’s silk crop, especially after Bashir Shihab had “decreed that the whole silk crop should be transported to Beirut.” *Ibid.*, 92.

“lately increased in importance” and become “the principal town of this province.”<sup>17</sup> As we noted previously, it was one of three market towns whose merchants Bashir Shihab had attempted to incorporate within his patronage network.<sup>18</sup> These merchant families also managed to capitalize on the shifting geographies of trade, firmly implanting themselves in Beirut and linking themselves to the political and economic networks of the city.<sup>19</sup>

Of added significance was that the market town had lately become the site of tensions between local merchants and members of the Khazin and Hubaysh families. In a letter to the French Consul-General at this time, the Christian *qa'immaqam* outlines the efforts at mediating the growing conflict:

A letter was sent earlier concerning the ongoing lawsuit of the *khawaja* Hawwa against the shops of the *khawajat* Khazin and Hubaysh in Zuq. They did what was appropriate and sent what was required to Shaykh 'Abbas al-Khazin concerning this matter so that they can get a meeting/address that requires calling forward Shaykh Khalid Hubaysh who was promoted to the rank of *Ikleriky* [clergyman] lately, and he sent us a letter as well and we will forward you this letter to look at in order to update you with what's happening.<sup>20</sup>

The monopolization of political power by these two families who also appeared to be operating a shop in Zuq Mikhayil and were being referred to as *khawaja*, a title reserved for prominent merchants, points to the tensions which were building at this time between members of a growing merchant community in Kisrawan. Shaykh 'Abbas al-Khazin had been appointed by the *qa'immaqam* to manage the case involving his family members, while Ilyas Hawwa had contacted the French Consul-General to put pressure on the *qa'immaqam* to see that the case would not be neglected. As discussed in the previous chapter, this was becoming more common as a wide range of actors from the Mountain districts and the urban center began making use of alternate political channels as a means of seeking

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<sup>17</sup> Charles Churchill, *Mount Lebanon: A Ten Years' Residence from 1842 to 1853*. vol.1, (London: Garnet Publishing, 1994 [1853]),77.

<sup>18</sup> Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 90.

<sup>19</sup> Following the death of Bishara Jaffal al-Khazin in 1826, the same families managed to acquire a portion of the latter's sizeable estate which grew considerably during his roughly twenty-year service as the chief tax collector of Kisrawan. Ibid., 89, 91.

<sup>20</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 72.

redress.<sup>21</sup> The letter also reveals another layer of conflict as the *qa'immaqam* took the time to notify to the Consul about the recent promotion of Shaykh Khalid Hubaysh to the membership in the higher clergy of the Maronite Church. This recent promotion would affect the status of the case as the Maronite Church forbade the clergy from entering civil tribunals, a point Patriarch Bulus Mas'ad had recently made clear in a case involving Beirut merchants and their financiers who attempted to enforce the re-payment of an allegedly outstanding debt contracted by a priest of the convent of Mar Hanna Kala'a.<sup>22</sup> The special legal status of clergymen had become a point of significant tension for Beirut merchants involved in commercial disputes with monasteries.<sup>23</sup> This conflict further suggests that other than simply suffering the effects of a changing political economy, at least some of the shaykhs of the Khazin family managed to compete.<sup>24</sup>

### Organizing in 'Ajaltun and Mazra'at Kafr Dabyan

Another wave of organizing reportedly took place at the same time in the villages of 'Ajaltun and Mazra'at Kafr Dabyan, where chronicler al-'Aqiqi claims that the "common people" held their first meetings.<sup>25</sup> It is in the first of the two villages that al-'Aqiqi wrote of young men (*shabab*) forming compacts among themselves, electing *wakils* (agents) and *shuyukh al-shabab* (leaders of young men) to

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<sup>21</sup> See the discussion in the previous chapter. For other examples from inhabitants of Zuq Mikhayil pressuring the French Consul-General, see the case of Iyas al-Layf from "*ahali al-Zuq*" regarding violence by moneylenders against the people of Zuq Mikhayil. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 79.

<sup>22</sup> See the case between Fransis Misk and Butrus Ghaziri, the superior-general of the Antonine monks, in Rick Joseph, "The Material Origins," 133-140.

<sup>23</sup> Members of the British community, for instance, wrote petitions in 1859 asking for changes in the legal status of monasteries and clergymen. See Rick Joseph, "The Material Origins," 151. These tensions cast significant doubt on the prevalent interpretations of the revolt, which portray an emancipated clergy siding with a "peasant" movement against a "feudal" elite. See for example Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (New York: Praeger, 1965), 74-78; Ilya Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon, 1711-1845* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 200. For a critique of this thesis see Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 209, n.37. The internal conflicts of the Maronite Church were significant. For an important dispute involving the bishops Istifan al-Khazin and Tubiya 'Awn, see Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.1, 127.

<sup>24</sup> This is further revealed by the fact that they continued to remain owners of textile shops in Zuq and Ghazir, and were reportedly owners of silk factories as well.

<sup>25</sup> Antun Dahir al-'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 46. Yehoshua Porath dates these meetings to "February or March of that year." Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 86-87.

represent them in the persons of Salih Jirjis Sfayr and Dawud Mahbub al-Qamu', two wealthy inhabitants of Kisrawan.<sup>26</sup> Little is known about this early phase of organizing, with chroniclers claiming that this gathering was essentially a-political, remaining purely a response to the "terror...instilled by the Khazin family into the people of Kisrawan," an acceptable premise for writers belonging to a class whose wealth had allowed them to enter the elite domain of politics, as the aims of self-defence posed little threat to the socio-political order.<sup>27</sup>

The mobilization and formation of *shuyukh al-shabab* (leaders of the young men) appears to have overlapped with the increasingly tense urban-rural dynamic as political organizing was facilitated, at least in part, by urban groups with interests in changing the political configuration of Mount Lebanon, a project which had already found expression in the numerous petitions signed in Beirut urging for the re-definition of the political-legal boundaries of the mountain hinterland. Recent scholarship suggests that the election of *shuyukh al-shabab* was not limited to Kisrawan, as similar groups emerged throughout the Mountain, coordinated and funded by merchants and members of the Maronite clergy with links to a "central committee" in Beirut. Caesar Farah, for instance, presents evidence of an organized campaign to enlist the support of Christian groups in the Mountain in the efforts of overturning the existing political configuration. To this end, a central committee under the leadership of Tubiya 'Awn, the Maronite Bishop of Beirut, organized committees in Zahle, Dayr al-Qamar, Jizzin, and Kisrawan in order to draw plans for common action. Farah claims that, "in addition to drilling Maronite youths and providing them with arms and ammunition, these committees were to serve as rallying

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 77-78. It is important to note at this point that both men were not poor peasants. Salih Jirjis Sfayr was a creditor of Bashir 'Ahmad, the *qa'immaqam* of the Christian district, while the al-Qamu family were wealthy and respected individuals living in Kisrawan. For more on these families see: 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 45-46. For Salih Jirjis Sfayr, see: Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 30.

<sup>27</sup> 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 72. For a discussion of the social background of chroniclers at this time and their ties to political power, see Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity: Intellectuals and Merchants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Leiden and Boston, MA.: Brill, 2005), 12-39.



points when hostilities broke out.”<sup>28</sup> This form of mobilization drew on previous experience as *shuyukh al-shabab* had been organized in 1844, funded, trained, and armed by merchants and individuals with links to the Maronite clergy, as part of an effort to restore the Shihab emirate and constitute Mount Lebanon as a “Maronite” principedom.<sup>29</sup>

While the involvement of urban groups should not be taken to mean that these gatherings were merely the product of elite manipulation, the material and logistical support they provided enabled them to grow and thus cannot be ignored. While the details of this support are murky, Belgian Consul De Turck, an arms trader himself, reported that large shipments of arms passed through Beirut customs between the years 1856 and 1858.<sup>30</sup> Lord Dufferin later claimed that the customs house returns for the years 1857 to 1860 revealed that upwards of 120,000 stands of arms and 20,000 pistols were imported into Lebanon.<sup>31</sup> To these reports were added the accounts of other consuls and chroniclers who claimed that peasants were being intensively armed during this time.<sup>32</sup> The records of the Maronite

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<sup>28</sup> Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 545.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 376-379. Farah notes that British consular agents reported the organization of committees headed by *shuyukh al-shabab*, spread over the mountain districts with ties to Maronite merchants who provided funds and weaponry directly to these groups. Ibid., 378. For more information on the sectarian political projects of the Maronite clergy, European and Ottoman powers, see Ussama Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*.

<sup>30</sup> See discussion of this armament in Marwan Buheiry, “The Peasant Revolt of 1858 in Mount Lebanon: Rising Expectations, Economic Malaise, and the Incentive to Arm.” in Tarif Khalidi, ed. *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1984), 291-301.

<sup>31</sup> Lord Dufferin had argued that the Beirut Committee shared top responsibility for the violence against the Druze. As Leila Fawaz noted in her study of the war of 1860, Dufferin argued that “...Maronites had gathered armed men in various parts of the Mountain; their spiritual leaders had circulated inflammatory leaflets; a central committee of very questionable character had been established in Beirut. There was even reason to believe they had twisted arms to involve reluctant Christians in their war. Dufferin supported his accusations with facts and figures; custom-house returns proved that over 120,000 rounds of ammunition and 20,000 guns had been imported by the Maronites into Mount Lebanon between January 1857 and the spring of 1860.” Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 211, n.45.

<sup>32</sup> As Buheiry notes, the “direct and conclusive evidence is fragmentary, but for the Kisrawan both Consuls and Chroniclers agree on the intensive arming of the peasantry and also on direct purchases by the peasants themselves.” Buheiry, “The Peasant Revolt,” 297. See also ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 53, 100, 114, 117. James Finn, the British Consul in Jerusalem, wrote to the Earl of Malmesbury, on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1858, regarding these arms purchases:

“I have heard of one mercantile house (Maltese) in Beyrout [sic.] having within two years made immense imports with profit. The articles were all sold even before arrival. During the same period, one shop in Jerusalem has sold 30,000, imported via Jaffa, and they were distributed at that port to Gaza, Hebron, etc. At this moment more are on the passage out, but all these are inferior in number to the sales in Beyrout. Such numbers are scarcely

*qa'immaqam* also corroborate the illicit movements of weaponry reported above. Writing in 1857 to a merchant in Beirut, *khawaja* Yusuf al-Sayigh, following the seizure of contraband ammunition from a certain Jirjis Sam'an, the *qa'immaqam* warns the merchant of the illegality of such affairs, reminding him that moving ammunition "from the place they are stored in Beirut" was strictly forbidden by "the rules of the mountain."<sup>33</sup>

Although the peasantry was reportedly purchasing these weapons, various sources suggest that such purchases were only made possible after Beirut merchants had extended loans, or given the weapons directly on credit. Following the violence which broke out in 1860 between Maronite and Druze communities of Mount Lebanon, Druze leaders gave detailed accounts to the British Consul about the arming of Maronite peasants, claiming that large quantities of weaponry were distributed from Beirut following the organizing of the central committee mentioned above, who issued bills of payment to be paid at a future date.<sup>34</sup> The arming of the peasantry by Beirut agents and the borrowing of money from the "peaceful bourgeois" also figured as part of a list of 21 accusations formulated by members of the Khazin family against the leaders of the revolt, and presented to the French and British consuls.<sup>35</sup>

The "central committee" in question, also referred to as the "Young Maronite League" which consuls and journalists were quick to blame for the outbreak of fighting between Maronite and Druze groups in 1860, was composed of individuals who were profoundly opposed to the current political arrangements in Mount Lebanon and Beirut.<sup>36</sup> One member, Michael Farjiallah, was the owner of a

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conceivable to be true... The peasantry notwithstanding the losses sustained by extortion of their own Sheikhs and of the tax-farmers, have accumulated an unprecedented degree of wealth... The people are therefore able to purchase arms, both numerous and of strong quality, and many a rustic is in possession of two or three guns of his own property, besides the never-failing short swords called *khanjars*." Cited in Buheiry, "The Peasant Revolt," 297.

<sup>33</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 36.

<sup>34</sup> Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 546.

<sup>35</sup> A translated list is provided in Richard Edwards, *La Syrie 1840-1862*, (Paris: Amyot, 1862), 127-130.

<sup>36</sup> Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 211. There is little doubt that the "central committee" in question was profoundly interested in changing the juridical-legal status of the Mountain, as Joseph and Owen have both argued. Joseph, "Material Origins," 104-162; Owen, *The Middle East*, 163. The composition of the committee, known as "the Beirut Committee" was reported on by both consuls and journalists. According to a London Times article dated June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1860, "...it is now positive that a society was formed, of which it is said that the Roman Catholic [sic., Maronite]

large silk filature in Mount Lebanon and had previously figured as a signatory, alongside the Mudawwar family and other Beirut mercantile houses, to several petitions addressed to the Consul-General of France in Beirut, lobbying for changes in the juridical boundaries of the Beirut *majlis* to include the Mountain districts.<sup>37</sup> Other prominent Beirut merchants were members of the Young Maronite League, including Mansur Tiyan, a member of the *majlis* of Beirut, Naum Kayfani, a merchant under foreign protection, Asaad Thabit, a merchant in Beirut serving as the dragoman of the Prussian consulate and from a prominent moneylending family in Kisrawan who extended loans to members of the Khazin family.<sup>38</sup> Other mentioned members were Ya'qub Thabit, Niqula Naqqash, Habib Qashu', Ayub Traboulsi, and Mansur 'Ada, all prominent merchants in Beirut, with the exception of Traboulsi who continued to operate from Dayr al-Qamar.<sup>39</sup>

### **The *Ahali* Organize against the Ruling *Qa'immaqam***

These “popular” gatherings also overlapped with a larger political opposition movement forming against the ruling *qa'immaqam*, a continuation of the protracted conflict over the successor of Haydar

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Bishop Tobia, and the Emir Kais [Mejid] Shehab, were presidents, for the very Christian purpose of exterminating the Druses of Lebanon. An executive committee was organized, composed of Naum Kicano, Assad, son of Isaac [I'sa] Tabet; Michael Fargiallo, native merchants and Bankers of Beyrout; and it is said that Ayoub Traboulsi, a merchant of Deir-el-Kamar, was attached to them. The duty of this committee was to furnish arms, ammunition and money to the Christian population, which they did chiefly through the priests of the villages, on the sole condition of fighting the Druses; otherwise they were to be charged with the value of the arms, etc. It is asserted that upward of fourteen thousand muskets, and a proportionate quantity of ammunition, were in this way delivered to the peasantry.” Report from the correspondent of the London Times, Shemlain, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1860, published in the Times, Saturday, July 21, 1860, cited in Joseph, “The Material Origins,” 159. Jens Hanssen also notes that “young professionals, lawyers, merchants, and journalists of non-feudal genealogy whose parents and grandparents had settled in Beirut as scribes and merchants” had also “championed the Franco-Maronite alliance for a Maronite Mountain in the 1850s and 1860s and were collectively known as the ‘Young Maronite League’, which was formed by the bishop of Beirut during the Civil War.” Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, 145.

<sup>37</sup> As noted above, one petition had been written in 1853, while the most recent was dated December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1858. Joseph, “The Material Origins,” 151. Both petitions had included Medawwar and Farjiallah, local silk factory owners, as well as representatives of twenty-five European and Syrian firms in Beirut. Ibid., 149.

<sup>38</sup> Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, 202. See also the case over contested land sales in Kisrawan by Asaad Thabit, the brother and partner of Ya'aqub Thabit. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 18.

<sup>39</sup> According to a report from the correspondent of the London Times, Shemlain, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1860, in the Times, Saturday, July 21, 1860, quoted in Joseph, “The Material Origins,” 159. See also the list given by foreign consuls, quoted in Fawaz, *An Occasion to War*, 209.

Abi Lami' who died in May 1854, which had split the leading families of Kisrawan into two factions.<sup>40</sup> This conflict had reached a new level of intensity in 1858 when the opponents of the ruling *qa'immaqam* began enlisting the support of villagers for the candidacy of Bashir 'Assaf Abi Lami', organizing general meetings throughout the Kisrawan district beginning in early May of 1858.<sup>41</sup> One such meeting was held in the town of Zuq al-Kharab on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1858, drawing people "from all parts of Kisrawan", and during which time Husn, 'Abdallah, and Fransis al-Khazin, signed a decree calling for the expulsion of the *qa'immaqam* and the need to close ranks. This meeting was quickly followed by another gathering in the village of Bhannis in the al-Matn district, which took on a threatening character, prompting the ruling *qa'immaqam* to flee to Beirut in the face of a large contingent of armed men.<sup>42</sup> The exile of the *qa'immaqam* was rapidly followed by another rally in the Metn district village of 'Ayn'ar on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1858, where participants pledged to resist his return, submitting petitions to this effect to the Ottoman Governor of Saida and the Maronite Patriarch.<sup>43</sup>

Soon after, the movement against the *qa'immaqam* expanded as his opponents intensified their mobilization efforts, putting pressure on the villages of southern Kisrawan to join, appointing *wakils* (representatives) and "investing them with seals of office to stamp petitions against the Christian *qa'immaqam*."<sup>44</sup> To this end, the opposing branches of the Khazin family enlisted the support of the "peasant self-defence organizations", from 'Ajaltun and Mazra'at Kafr Dabyan, whose leaders were

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<sup>40</sup> Following the death of *qa'immaqam* Haydar Abi Lami', in 1854, there was a drawn out struggle over his replacement which split alongside two factions: those in favour of his nephew Bashir 'Assaf, and those in favour of his cousin Bashir 'Ahmad. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 501. These two parties ('Assafis and 'Ahmadis) split the leading Maronite families. 'Assaf had "a powerful political alliance with Shaykhs Butrus Wakid Hubaysh and Bishara al-Khazin. He also had the support of the inhabitants of Zahle, Jubayl, and the Batrun, all of whom opposed the Qa'immaqam." Ibid., 511. The *majlis* in Beirut was also involved, meeting "almost daily in an attempt to defuse the explosive situation." Ibid., 511. The conflict had split the Khazin family into two factions. See document 7 in 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 168-69.

<sup>41</sup> Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 67; Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 89; Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 512. In early May 1858, the first general meeting was held in early May 1858, in the village of Antilyas. Other meetings were reportedly convened by some members of the Khazin family from the opposing factions. Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 88.

<sup>42</sup> Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 89; Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 512.

<sup>43</sup> Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 89; Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 512, n.110.

<sup>44</sup> Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 89.

known individuals with ties to the 'Assafi faction opposing the ruling *qa'immaqam*.<sup>45</sup> By September 1858, the *qa'immaqam* was temporarily suspended, and another was appointed in the interim, "pending completion of an inquiry into the complaints about the deposed *qa'immaqam*."<sup>46</sup>

Local chroniclers wrote about this conflict as the product of elite machinations, denying any agency to the *ahali* (commoners) who participated in the movement. The account of Antun Dahir al-'Aqiqi, a contemporary to the events, frames the episode within a moralizing discourse in which he seeks to explain the subsequent outbreak of popular opposition against the shaykhs of Kisrawan as the inevitable product of these shaykhs' violating the closed circle of elite politics by organizing popular committees to "incite the people" in favour of their narrow interests.<sup>47</sup> This chronicler's account re-affirms the incapacity of peasants to organize, presenting the causes of the revolt as the result of increased oppression on the part of the shaykhs as they sought to coerce them into supporting one candidate over another. The peasant's actions were thus simply the natural outcome to this increased oppression and the shaykhs' opening of the formerly closed domain of politics which the author summarizes in this reductive statement: "these shaykhs did not realize that the affair would end on their own heads, as the saying goes: he who desires evil for his brother will reap the evil himself."<sup>48</sup>

The fact that the "commoner" gatherings at 'Ajaltun and Marza'at Kafr Dabyan had *wakils* known for their ties to the opposing 'Assafi faction suggests that the popular committees had more at stake than mere "self-defence."<sup>49</sup> The ease with which these large groups of villagers from Kisrawan joined the mobilization against the *qa'immaqam* suggests that it cannot be conceived as the result of elite manipulation, as mobilization efforts by elites had failed in the past, despite similar pressures and

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<sup>45</sup> See a discussion regarding the leadership's links to the 'Assafi faction in the conflict over the position of the *qa'immaqam* in Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 89. See also 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 78-9.

<sup>46</sup> Moore to Malmesbury, 14 September 1858, cited in Malcolm H. Kerr, *Lebanon in the Last Years of Feudalism, 1840-1860: A Contemporary Account by Antun Dahir al-'Aqiqi and Other Documents* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1959), 15.

<sup>47</sup> 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 78.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 41.

incitement.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, as the political administration of the *qa'immaqam* took an expanded role in the various spheres of rural life, the stakes over the office grew and it became increasingly crucial for a wide range of actors to gain influence over the Mountain's political apparatus.<sup>51</sup> In any case, it appears that the political mobilization against the ruling *qa'immaqam* helped these movements expand as they continued to organize independently of ruling families.

### **Beginning of United Action of Kisrawani Villages**

A third wave of organizing grew out of the political mobilizations against the *qa'immaqam* as peasants soon began meeting independently of the district's ruling families. By October 1858, an autonomous movement began to coalesce as *wakils* representing a total of ten villages in Kisrawan met in 'Ajaltun.<sup>52</sup> Writing to the Maronite Patriarch Bulus Mas'ad, the representatives of the villages announced their decision to bind themselves "in a spirit of love free from deceit", casting their movement as a response to the increasingly heated contests between the opposing factions of the *qa'immaqam*.

The news is known to have reached your noble ears of the dispute existing among the family of Their Excellencies the Khazin Shaikhs because of their devious plans about which they have their secret thoughts. This dispute has done obvious harm to us. Although one group among them desire us to support them in order to complete their plans that they have laid and the other does not want us to give our support, both are employing insults and blows on us to fulfill their aims....For this reason we can no longer bear the unbearable, and ... we, the people of the villages listed below, have met together, and ... have found no sure way to ward off the said evils from us as a group and individually, except to bind ourselves together in a spirit of love free from deceit, and to stand aside from all provocations. Upon the occurrence of oppression in any village, a petition shall be presented to whomever is in authority on behalf of all of us as a group. This bond has been entered into by all of us, and we have confirmed it by solemn oaths [...]<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See for instance the inability of merchants to recruit peasants to fight in favour of restoring the Shihab emirate in 1841. Writing to Emir Haydar, Mikhayil Tubiya explained that he was unable to pay for 1,500 warriors who were promised to him, because the peasants were reluctant to fight alongside the pro-Shihabi factions. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 352, 370, n.88.

<sup>51</sup> In addition to other "officials" like the *ma'amurs* of the districts, and the members of the *majlis*, the *qa'immaqam* was the embodiment of an expanding bureaucracy.

<sup>52</sup> 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 168, document 7. This letter on the behalf of ten villages in the district of Kisrawan: Ghadir, J'ita, Balluna, Darayya, 'Ajaltun, Raifun, 'Ashqut, Biq'ata, al-Qlai'at, Mazra'a Kafr Dabyan. See Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 91-92 for a full discussion of the timing of this revolt and the rationale for the dating this gathering to October 1858.

<sup>53</sup> 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 168, document 7.

An outbreak of violence in Zuq Mikhayil in December of 1858 between members of the Khazin family and the inhabitants of the market town provided the impetus for further mobilization, drawing the direct involvement of several villages in Kisrawan.<sup>54</sup> Writing to the Maronite Patriarch Bulus Mas'ad on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1858, the “people of Zuq Mikhayil” report of their growing conflict with members of the Khazin family:

Our petition concerns the fact that discord has arisen between us and their respected Excellencies Shaikh Yusuf Radwan and Shaikh 'Abbas Shaiban al-Khazin. We now understand that all Their Excellencies the Shaikhs of the Khazin family are meeting in one of the villages of Kisrawan and are gathering together with the intention of besieging us in our places and robbing us of our possessions. We do not know whether they will actually do that or not, but for fear that they might carry out their intentions we are presenting this petition to Your Beatitude's sacred hands, seeking your paternal compassion, that you may consider our protection in accordance with the wisdom of Your Blessedness. At the same time we have presented petitions to His Grace the Consul General of the great French Government, for the sake of our safety and in consideration of the matter of our protection. Everything depends on the command of Your Beatitude. May God perpetuate the days of Your Blessedness, our master.<sup>55</sup>

The fact that the people of Zuq Mikhayil had contacted the French Consul in Beirut further highlights the importance of shifting political and economic dynamics which had developed in the previous decades, as alternate “urban” political channels were carefully exploited in order to put pressure for a resolution of the conflict.

The organizing at Zuq Mikhayil caused great concern to the Khazins, prompting the Abu-Nawfal branch of the family, who had been mobilizing as part of the 'Assafi faction, to close ranks and form a compact.<sup>56</sup> Shaykh 'Abbas al-Khazin who, as noted above, had recently been appointed to mediate a commercial dispute involving merchants of Zuq Mikhayil, wrote to the Maronite Patriarch, recounting the episode and warning him of the dangerous character of the council given its urban links. In his letter, 'Abbas claimed that:

A council was formed in al-Zuq exceedingly well situated to spread those aims because of the connection of this council to Beirut. There was in the council a strange diabolic policy to impregnate everyone in Beirut, from the high-ranking to the humble, with those of the aims that was appropriate to him: to the governor what was agreeable to him, to the Qa'im Maqam [sic.] the same; the Muslim would be

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<sup>54</sup> Porath, “The Peasant Revolt,” 92.

<sup>55</sup> 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 166, document 5.

<sup>56</sup> See Document 1 in 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 159-160. The compact states that Husn and Qa'dan al-Khazin were elected to serve as *wakils* to represent the interests of the family

indoctrinated with what he desired, the foreigner the same, and similarly the Christians of various sects. By this indoctrination you see that the excitement was agreeable to all; and in the same way the policy was used with the common people. The wise persons among the people tried to persuade the council that the [proper] aim was solely to improve and reform the overlordship, not to destroy it, and that should the excitement reach too high a degree, the reform would not be achieved. The ignorant people have been indoctrinated, each according to his interests (...)<sup>57</sup>

Drawing on common anxieties, the Khazin shaykh notified the Maronite Patriarch of the dangerous potential of such organizing as it could ignite a broader conflict which was already fomenting in Beirut, making sure to shatter the coherence of any merchant-Maronite alliance which had previously mobilized in favour of restoration of the Shihab family at the head of government, suggesting that Muslims and Christians “of various sects” would be indoctrinated “each to his own interest.”

### **The Wakil al-‘Amm and the Crystallization of Popular Organizing**

The clash between members of the Khazin family and inhabitants of Zuq Mikhayil led them to band with the villages of Junieh, electing *shuyukh al-shabab* to guard themselves against “retaliation”, and thereupon contacted villagers of ‘Ajaltun and its surroundings for support. Armed men from the villages of Raifun, ‘Ajaltun, ‘Ashqut, and al-Qlay‘at arrived in Zuq Mikhayil and asserted themselves in support of the inhabitants of the town.<sup>58</sup>

The arrival in Zuq Mikhayil of *wakils* from these villages resulted in important changes at the organizational level of the movement and in a rapid escalation of demands and action. The first change came on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1859, when ten villages voted in favour of a general representative in the person of Tanyus Shahin, a muleteer with ties to the Lazarist monks. The villages thus came under an overarching organizational structure headed by Shahin, who was “formally designated as *wakil* of the

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<sup>57</sup> ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 164-166, document 4.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Aqiqi claims that Ilyas Munayyir was elected *shaykh al-shabab* of Zuq. ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 47. As we noted previously, Ilyas Munayyir came from a prominent merchant family who had risen in importance in Zuq Mikhayil in the first years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were creditors to the villages and shaykhs of Kisrawan, and by the 1850s, the Munayyir were firmly linked to Beirut commercial networks, as well as Zuq. Like the prominent merchants Mikhayil Tubiya and Butrus ‘Asfar, Ilyas Munayyir was also a creditor to the *qa’immaqam*. Paul Saba, “The Creation of the Lebanese Economy: Economic Growth in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries” in *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*, ed. Roger Owen (London: Ithica Press, 1976), 10.



Higher Villages of Kisrawan.”<sup>59</sup> This followed on the heels of a decision by the “united villages” to send a delegation to go to Beirut and meet with Khurshid Pasha, the governor of the province of Saida, in order to voice their grievances with the Khazin family.<sup>60</sup> By appealing to the governor of the province, the villagers were implicitly challenging the ability of the acting *qa’immaqam* to settle their grievances, while escalating the conflict in a risky bid for closure.

The movement quickly took on a political character and as the organizational structure began to crystallize, the rebels presented a series of demands to the different political actors. In a petition dated January 1859, and addressed to the Patriarch of the Maronite Church, Bulus Mas’ad, the “people of Kisrawan in a body” outline five items “demanded by us from the Khazins”.<sup>61</sup> The demands present us with important clues as to the nature of this emerging political movement at its outset, as they deal primarily with issues of legal and political representation, the regulation of land sales, and collection of debts.

The first article proposes reform on the legal means of recourse currently available to the inhabitants of Kisrawan, demanding to have separate elected individuals representing the *ahali* (common people) and “the shaikhs.” As highlighted previously in the commercial dispute of Ilyas Hawwa against the “khawaja Khazin and Hubaysh” in Zuq Mikhayil, ‘Abbas al-Khazin had been assigned to investigate the case before it was ruled in the *majlis* of the Mountain.<sup>62</sup> Such conflicts of interest were inherent in the current political configuration and detrimental to a wide range of actors, a fact which was becoming increasingly problematic in the context of expanding commercial relations and the central role new administrative bodies played in rural life. The petition further requests that “any amount which is owed by the shaikhs shall be paid immediately,” suggesting that the issue of debts was long-standing

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<sup>59</sup> Porath, “The Peasant Revolt,” 94; Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 170, document no. 9.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 170-173, document 9, 10.

<sup>61</sup> Porath dates this letter to January 1859. Porath, “The Peasant Revolt,” 89. Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 178, document 16.

<sup>62</sup> Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 72.

and of central concern to the petitioners. As we already noted, this had been a pressing issue for Beirut merchants, and anyone involved in the circulation of capital. For peasants who had contracted debts and were thrown in prison and made to work in textile factories, such a demand embodied a call towards greater equality of treatment in the eyes of the law.

Several other measures set out to redefine the boundaries of social differentiation more explicitly, insisting that the “rank of sheikh shall be the same as ours in all matters without any exception whatever.”<sup>63</sup> To this demand was added another pertaining to the illegal “donation taxes” associated with purchases of “places belonging to them”, asking that these practices be unconditionally abolished. The most important demand presented by the petitioners, however, dealt with the issue of the *ma’amur* (sub-district governor) which had remained firmly in the hands of the Khazin family since the establishment of the double *qa’immaqamiyya*. The proposal thus firmly challenged the basis of Kisrawan’s political representation towards the broader administrative body headed under the *qa’immaqam*, demanding that “none of the shaikhs shall be appointed ma’amur over us.”<sup>64</sup>

Further demands were subsequently presented to the *majlis* of the *qa’immaqam* for adjudication, in addition to petitions sent to the Maronite Patriarch and the Consul-General of France.<sup>65</sup> Much like the demands analysed above, they dealt specifically with legal abuses outlined in the provisions of the Shekib Effendi agreement, and made specific reference to the *Tanzimat* reforms. In a petition presented to the Patriarch, the writers demanded that the collection of the *miri* (land-tax) be

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<sup>63</sup> ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 178, document 16.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> In addition to the issue of political representation, several demands were presented in reference to abuses of office, and asking that: “1. the right of gifts be abolished and restituted; 2. The abolition of the right for shaykhs to authorize marriage, and a reimbursement of the taxes taken in this function; 3. Forbidding shaykhs from beating the *fellahin* and forcing them into corvée labour; 4. Refusal to pay the head tax on behalf of the Shaykhs. Abolition of the *jizya* and to take it for “bien-fonds” and full restitution of sums already taken; 5. Restitution of three *mal* (taxes) for the three years of which the Kisrawan had been absolved because of its participation in the Egyptian Occupation in 1840; 6. The sums which the Shaykhs had received in 1840 in order to pay volunteers fighting along the allied troops should be given to those who merit it; 7. Restitution of the taxes taken for the cadastral survey which was never executed.” Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 533. A favourable decision was eventually given on all the articles, except those which dealt with changes in the forms of political representation. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 533.

“in accordance with principles, and likewise the head tax, falling on the great and the small according to the register instituted by His Grace Shakib Pasha...”<sup>66</sup> Another demand framed in direct reference to the *Tanzimat* decrees pertained to, “...oppressions, wrongdoings, exaction of extras from travelers and servants, and money transfers (*hawalat*) taken from the people by the dissimulations of Their Excellencies the Shaikhs...” claiming that such acts were “contrary to the laws of the Sublime State and the benevolent decrees (*al-tartibat al-khairiya*)...” The demands further appealed to the existing legal frameworks as the proper means of recourse, asking that “when these deeds are ascertained by whatever body is designated, whether the present council or another, the doer of these offenses and of violations of the law, after confirmation, must return and repay what he has taken in its entirety.”<sup>67</sup>

While the demands suggest a broad range of concerns, they help delineate the interests behind this movement as proposed reform worked within the political-legal framework established during the restoration of Ottoman rule, targeting specific issues such as the circulation of money, fiscal regulation, taxes associated with land purchases, as well as legal and political representation, all of which gradually became central to the *qa'immaqam*'s administration.

### **The Limits of Expansion – Internal Divisions**

The coherence of the movement was put into question as it encountered difficulties in attempting to expand in northern Kisrawan, with the villages of 'Aramun, Judayda, Dlibta, Ghusta, and

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<sup>66</sup> Directly referring to the Shekib Effendi agreement which states that: “The most important affair of the councils is taxation, whose distribution, to obey to the imperial will of our gracious sovereign, will be done in a manner that each pay according to his means (...)” (See agreement in Testa) The register referred to here has to do with the official registers of the *qa'immaqam* which centralized and determined the legal apportioning of taxation per district: “...It is necessary that the *mejlises* [sic.], convoked in full, establish every year, around the time of tax collection, under the presiding presence of the kaimakam [sic.], after a full general deliberation, a list of the general charge of each district, and then the particular charge of each village, of each monastery...” Baron I. De Testa, ed. *Receuil des traits de la Porte ottoman avec les puissances étrangères*. Vols.3-6 (Paris : Muzard, 1884), 206.

<sup>67</sup> 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 162-3.

Shnan'ir, refusing to come under the leadership of Tanyus Shahin.<sup>68</sup> Although these villages eventually accepted the *de facto* rule of Shahin by October 1859, the demands they presented to the Patriarch indicated a key difference in their definition of political representation, as they refused to have the *ma'amur* be decided by "popular" vote, insisting instead that he be appointed directly by the Patriarch.<sup>69</sup> The issue of political representation, and the boundaries of its inclusion, created further divisions within the united villages, with the representatives of the "villages of the valley" supporting a compromise position over the office of the *ma'amur*, which would allow the *qa'immaqam* to propose candidates.<sup>70</sup> These dissensions culminated in Zuq Mikhayil as peasants rose against their *wakils* in favour of maintaining Shahin as *ma'amur* of the districts.<sup>71</sup>

That the movement exhibited strong divisions is further evident in the heated disagreements over the political legitimacy of the *qa'immaqam* and his *majlis*. In a direct communication with Shahin, Yuhanna Habib, an agent of the Maronite Patriarch who had previously served as a judge in the *majlis* of the *qa'immaqam*, reported of Shahin's insistence that the people did not consider the *qa'immaqam* "to be the confirmed ruler."<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, Shahin claimed that the behaviour of the *qa'immaqam* towards the movement, which he characterized as "threatening and menacing conduct...was a result of the general agreement made among the landholders..."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> By May 18<sup>th</sup> 1859 the villages of Judayda, 'Aramun, Shnan'ir, Ghusta, and Dlibta were writing to the Patriarch complaining of abuses at the hands of Tanyus Shahin's forces. 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 181-182, document 19. They report of threats issued by Shahin if they did not provide money and food for his arriving troops. Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 163. In a letter to the Patriarch, dated December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1859, the villages of al-Judaida, Shnan'ir, Dlibta, 'Aramun, Ghusta, and Batha propose that the office of the *ma'amur* be reformed, but not determined by popular election. They proposed that legal and political representation be reformed, asking that a number of *wakils* (representatives) be instituted in accordance to the size of the village "so as to achieve peace and facilitate the *ma'mur*'s orders and to facilitate his work and interests without hindrance." Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> This included the villages of Zuq Mikhayil, Juniya, and Ghusta. Ibid., 193, document 30.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 194, document 30.

<sup>72</sup> Dated December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1859, Ibid., 199-200, document 32.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

### Merging of the Kisrawan Revolt and the “Sectarian” Mobilization

The larger conflicts which were raging in the mixed districts of Mount Lebanon between Druze and Christian militias became a point of concern to various actors as the contacts between Christian groups in Mount Lebanon multiplied and pressure was firmly placed on Tanyus Shahin to come to the rescue of the “Christians” who had engaged in battle with Druze elements in the southern districts. The urban groups who organized under the Young Maronite League began pressuring the movement in Kisrawan to join the Christian groups spread throughout the Mountain districts.<sup>74</sup> Letters written to Shahin warned him against inaction, claiming that “if you do not arise in mass immediately, there will be shame for the people of Kisrawan, and cowardice ascribed to the people of Kisrawan.”<sup>75</sup> The letter further instructs him to go to the village of Antilyas where ammunition has been made available to his men, reminding him that Kisrawan is the only district not to have risen. The postscript further indicates the overlap of this movement with the urban contests, claiming that “some gentleman came to us from Beirut and spoke to us, asking, what would you like us to bring you?” It appears that from this point, Shahin gathered some followers and went to Antilyas where the weapons were provided by the organizers from Beirut. Shahin writes to the villages of the districts of al-Futuh and al-Kufur announcing that, “we all rise with our people to the aid of our brother Christians, to defend them and to protect our homes...” Shahin further notes that ammunition is plentiful and that “it is necessary to have the priests come, since this is an undertaking of Christian zeal.”<sup>76</sup>

These mobilizations found much less support than the original movement against the *shaykhs* of the ruling families of Kisrawan. Reports from Bishara Ghanim, a *wakil* of the movement, claimed that support for the movement was lacking, stating that for five days he has been visiting al-Zuq, Juniya,

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<sup>74</sup> Villagers wrote from al-Shuf, Iqlim, Jazzin, Dayr al-Qamar, and Zahle asking for military support from the men of Kisrawan. ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 106; Porath, “The Peasant Revolt,” 121.

<sup>75</sup> In a letter dated May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1860, Nu‘man ‘Id and Bakhus Abi-Ghalib submit to Tanyus Shahin information about the general rising. ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 211, document 42.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 212, document 42.

Masbah, and Hara Sakhr, in order to gather men, but “have been unable to obtain 100 men.”<sup>77</sup> He states that at “present we are in al-Zuq and have been promised [only] 50 men from al-Zuq to go with us, although altogether there are over 100 men present there.” Ghanim further notes that support for this mission is of primary importance, reminding Shahin that “whoever do not obey your orders, let us know, so that we may return with our people to compel them by force.”<sup>78</sup>

The participation of inhabitants of the Kisrawan district in the “war of 1860” was brief and very limited, lasting only a month. Shortly after this episode of violence, the “uprising” came to an end. On July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1860, a final document was signed outlining the conditions of return for the Khazin shaykhs, as a deal was brokered by Tubiya ‘Awn, the Bishop of Beirut who presided over the Young Maronite League. Thus, upon the signing of the document by *wakils* representing a total of twenty-three villages of Kisrawan, the conflict came to an end, as the Khazin family were allowed to return “to their homes and regain their property and their sustenance and other produce without opposition...” Final provisions were outlined regarding the repayment of outstanding debts and making sure that “[w]herever there is delay, refusal, or protest, the signature of the delayer, refuser, or protester shall be given in legal form.”<sup>79</sup> Thereafter, the villagers absolved themselves of responsibility, claiming that “certain selfishly motivated persons induced us into rebellion against the commands of the government” and declared themselves “...submissive and obedient to the commands and laws of the gracious Sublime State.”<sup>80</sup>

### **The Social Composition of the Revolt**

The “revolt” of 1858-1860 was not a sudden upsurge playing against a background of great passivity. The previous decade had been characterized by various forms of resistance by a highly differentiated peasantry against heterogeneous and increasingly pervasive forces of subjugation emanating from a variety of political bodies seeking to discipline and reshape the terrain according to

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<sup>77</sup> ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 213, document 46.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 214, document 46.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 216, document 47.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

the imperatives of capitalist development. As we demonstrated, post-restoration Mount Lebanon had also seen a wide range of actors come into conflict over the contest for access and control over labour, raw supplies, and capital, while expanding commercial relations overlapped with the emergence of new political and legal bodies to help reshape the boundaries of political authority, re-configuring the existing social relations embedded in these activities. These overlapping processes help explain, in part, the social composition of the revolt.

Despite the numerous accounts of the revolt, very little attention has been placed on the social composition of the movement.<sup>81</sup> Yet a closer look at the composition of the leadership of the movement helps us to link the processes outlined above to the form and timing of the revolt. The available evidence suggests that a significant percentage of the *wakils* were prominent merchant-moneylenders, and rich peasants, some of whom had links to mercantile networks of Beirut, including close ties to members of the “Young Maronite League” mentioned above. On the eve of the election of Tanyus Shahin, the *wakils* of the “allied villages” included Salih ibn Jirjis Mansur Sfayr, Antun Bishara Qattan, Ilyas Munayyir, Ilyas Khadra.<sup>82</sup> All four were prominent merchant-moneylenders from Kisrawan, and Munayyir and Qattan came from families who had been creditors to the Khazin family and were firmly linked to Beirut merchant networks, notably through their commercial partnership with the Medawwar

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<sup>81</sup> Yehoshua Porath breaks down the social origins of the 116 individuals who served as *wakils* at some point in the revolt, as follows: “Nine or ten of them were priests...Another 28 belonged to families two – or occasionally even three – of whose members were *wakils*.” Porath, “The Peasant Revolt,” 113. Porath further notes that some must have been from wealthy families given their ability to be *wakils*, while Butrus al-Khuri, a *wakil* of ‘Ashqut, must have been a “man of means.” Ibid. The most recent work examining the social composition of the revolt, by Axel Havemann, notes the lack of information about its participants, providing a sociological overview of three persons who figured in leadership positions in the revolt: Salih Jirjis Sfayr, Ilyas al-Munnayyir, and Tanyus Shahin, and concludes that the first two were of higher social standing, a fact he claims does not change the fundamental characteristic of the movement as a revolt of the “people.” Axel Havemann, *Rurale Bewendegen im Libanongebirge des 19. Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zur Problematik sozialer Veränderungen* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1983), 225. Havemann, partly as a result of the sources he has access to, does not highlight the link to Beirut, nor the significant role which merchants in Zuq Mikhayil and other places played in the revolt.

<sup>82</sup> ‘Aqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 171, document 10.

family.<sup>83</sup> Another list of *wakils* from nine villages of Kisrawan, recorded less than two months after the initial set of demands were presented to the Patriarch, suggests that the leadership was composed of rich peasants, merchants and at least one member of the lower clergy of the Maronite church.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the signatories to the final agreement which allowed for the return of the Khazin shaykhs to Kisrawan, signed on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1860 between the *wakils* of twenty-three villages of Kisrawan, evidenced some continuity in the composition of the leadership described above.

The fact that a great number of the *wakils* were not peasants but wealthy merchants allows us to better link the revolt and the political project which emerged to a larger crisis of political representation which arose directly from the context outlined above, most notably the overlapping expansion of commercial relations and political centralization. Several *wakils* like the Haddad, Nasr, Mansur, and Khuri families were directly linked with urban mercantile networks which they increasingly

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<sup>83</sup> Munayyir and Qattan were creditors of the Khazin family, and as we noted in the previous chapter, were part of merchant networks tied to the Mudawwar family in Beirut. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 75-76. For additional information about Munayyir and Qattan and their role as moneylenders in Kisrawan, see Van Leeuwen, *Notables and Clergy*, 91, n.54, n.55. Paul Saba claims that Ilyas Munayyir was a creditor of the deposed *qa'immaqam*. Paul Saba, "The Creation of the Lebanese Economy," 10. As for Ilyas Khadra, our sources indicate that he was a moneylender as well, with agents working to recover loans he extended to certain individuals in Tripoli. See, for example, the letter from the *qa'immaqam* to *khawaja* Ibrahim Zakur in Tripoli, regarding a "...request to send the records of loans belonging to our beloved *khawaja* Ilyas Khadra..." Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 128. Fawwaz Traboulsi claims that Sfayr was a notable who was a creditor of the *Qa'immaqam*. Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 30. Another *wakil* mentioned by 'Aqiqi is Ilyas Habalin from Zuq Mikhayil, but the timing and length of service is unclear. 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 53. Habalin came from a wealthy family in Zuq Mikhayil and had been educated in 'Ayn Tura, the college of the Lazarist monks, becoming a teacher in well-known schools in Beirut before being appointed in 1866 as editor-in-chief of the official journal *Lubnan* in Beirut. Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 226.

<sup>84</sup> Among the *wakils* of 'Ashqut figured Sarkis Thabit, a member of the Thabit family some of whom were well established merchants in Beirut and who figured as members of the Young Maronite League mentioned above. From the village of Biq'ata, the *wakil* Faris Mansur was a merchant who was engaged in a commercial partnership with Yaqub Thabit, one of the members of the Thabit family who figured as a member of the Young Maronite League. Members of the Kassab family who served as *wakils* of Qlai'at, were involved in selling silk cocoons directly to silk industrialist Nicholas Portalis. They also fell into significant debt with the latter and were embroiled in heated legal battles over their debt obligations with other foreign silk industrialists. For the Kassab family, see Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.3, 68; vol.4, 53, 54. In addition to these *wakils*, it appears that at least one priest served as *wakil* during this time. For details about the involvement of lower members of the clergy, see Yehoshua Porath, "The Peasant Revolt," 138.



relied on to defend their “interests”.<sup>85</sup> More importantly, some of these families were directly involved in conflicts with members of the ruling families of Kisrawan relating to control over silk supplies.<sup>86</sup> Their alternate use of political channels to put pressure on the *qa'immaqam* to defend their interest suggested a larger political crisis developed as an expanding mercantile community sought to compete in the increasingly competitive context of “free-trade,” which was inseparable from the changing political relations.

The interest of merchants did not always align and as we noted previously, many conflicts arose in the contests over access and control of the rural surplus. In addition to the Kassab family (*wakils* of al-Qlai'at), the Fulaifil family from Judayda were also involved in sales of silk cocoons directly with silk industrialists, which brought them into direct conflict with the latter who sued them over a commercial dispute.<sup>87</sup> As these practices became increasingly formalized through the *majlis* of the *qa'immaqam* (in addition to the Beirut *majlis*), those involved in commercial activities came to hold greater stakes in exercising influence over this expanding political body. Thus, the “formalization” of commercial relations

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<sup>85</sup> As mentioned above, the Haddad family were identified in the correspondence of the *qa'immaqam* as being involved in trade with Beirut based merchants, as commercial agents of Fransis Misk and Namatallah al-Khuri in Beirut. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 92-93; vol.4, 116. For the involvement of this family in a violent conflict with the Hubaysh family in Ghazir over silk supplies, see *Ibid.*, vol.3, 116. For more on the Haddad family and their involvement in moneylending disputes, see 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 118, 147. The Nasr brothers were merchants tied to Beirut mercantile networks, who at times used the French Consul-General in order to have their interests defended in the Mountain. See example cited in the previous chapter and Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.4, 73. A number of other *wakils* of the villages came from similar backgrounds.

<sup>86</sup> See the case of the Haddad family outlined in the last chapter.

<sup>87</sup> The Hantush family, *wakils* of Qlai'at, were wealthy merchant-moneylenders who owned land in Zuq Mikhayil. For a case involving Niqula Hantush over a piece of land he owns in Zuq, see Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.1, 80. For additional cases involving the Hantush family, see *Ibid.*, vol.4, 80. Other prominent merchant families included the 'Assaf family (*wakils* of 'Aramun), the Sa'ada family (*wakils* of Mairuba), Butrus al-Khuri (*wakil* of 'Ashqut and Biq'ata), 'Isa Thabit (*wakil* of 'Ashqut and Biq'ata) and Sarkis Thabit (*wakil* of 'Asqut). Butrus al-Khuri, whom Porath refers to as a “man of means” was a prominent moneylender who also appeared to work as an agent for a Beirut firm, purchasing cocoons. He was assaulted by the villagers of Hammana, who knocked off his *tarbush* (hat) and stole money from him. *Ibid.*, vol.3, 49. For information on the 'Assaf as a wealthy family involved in moneylending, notably to members of the Hubaysh family, see 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa Fitna*, 46-7, 117, 130, 147. For information on the Thabit family, see Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mount Liban*, 202-203; Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 57, 239-240. 'Isa Thabit was reportedly the father of Asaad Thabit, a member of the Young Maronite League. See discussion above for more information. From the village of Judayda, the Fulaifil family served as *wakils*, and were presumably rich peasants who had become involved in a legal battle with Butrus 'Asfar over supplies of silk cocoons. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.2, 46, 127. For the Sa'ada family and their “partnerships” in Ghazir, see *Ibid.*, vol.4, 182.

in the context of increased competition helps explain, in part, the willingness of a wide range of merchants to stake a claim in the expanding political structure of Mount Lebanon and push for reform in political and legal representation.

Despite the central presence of merchants and moneylenders in the leadership of the revolt, a differentiated peasantry also figured as representatives of the revolt, with Tanyus Shahin, a muleteer, as the head of the movement.<sup>88</sup> The character of the political mobilizations which developed throughout Kisrawan reflected this context as the explicit engagement with the new legal and political framework, which came to define the boundaries of the movement articulated in the demands of the “rebels”, can be read as a larger attempt to re-define the role of an expanding bureaucracy on the part of a wide range of actors. There was thus a demonstrated crisis of political representation which resulted, in part, from the context of expanding commercialization and a re-configuration of social relations embedded in economic activities.

The expanding boundaries of the Mountain’s political apparatus, centered around the *qa’immaqam* and the *majlis*, was inextricably linked to the process of commercial expansion. The *majlis* of the *qa’immaqam* came to play an increasingly important role in enforcing a variety of agreements, and the evidence suggests that peasants were subjected to increasingly coercive means of debt collection. Facilitated by the circulation of capital and the large amounts of political pressure that could be brought to bear on the peasantry, the new means of enforcement generally bypassed the more immediate relations involved in moneylending as new political brokers mediated these activities. The “formalization” of politics through the *majlis*, responsible for adjudicating fiscal and commercial

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<sup>88</sup> Other families may have come from less wealthy background but were distinguishable from sharecropping peasants. The Dib family from Dar’un, for instance, collected samn (clarified butter) and other provisions for members of the Khazin family in their village. Hichi, *Sijil muharrarat*, vol.1, 139. From the village of Ghusta, two wakils were priests (father Butrus Manassa and Father Antun Istafan). As were a number of others from Dlibta (Ya’qub Jumayyil), ‘Aramun (Jibrail Sabat), al-Judayda (Fransis Farhat), Shnan’ir (Fransis Nasr) Dar’un (Ya’qub Jirjis, Ilyas Surur), Sahil Alma (Yusuf Marun) Biq’ata (Janadyus al-Khuri, Hanna Abu Habib). All identified by Yehoshua Porath, “The Peasant Revolt,” 138.

disputes, meant that political representation was increasingly important as it overlapped with contests over surplus extraction. For peasants, the increasing prominence of the “state” in rural life also meant that popular representation became increasingly important.

## Conclusion

The Kisrawan revolt of 1858 overlapped with several layers of conflict, including conflicts between groups seeking to control the politics of and larger political struggles developing over the control and direction of a new politics of trade. The various forms of collective action which coalesced into an organized political movement in the Kisrawan district were not composed of a homogeneous “peasantry” fighting against a “feudal” class. The evidence, however fragmentary, suggests that the leadership of the revolt was composed of a highly differentiated peasantry as well as wealthy moneylenders and merchants whose families had formed part of the rising class of merchants in Zuq Mikhayil and the Kisrawan district during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Internal tensions exhibited from the beginning of the movement were partly the product of this heterogeneity, and the multiple intentions and diverse interests which embodied the movement. The revolt of 1858 was thus unpredictable and the event essentially creative.<sup>89</sup>

The interpretation of the revolt here presented counters current scholarship on several levels. Firstly, it challenges the scholarship which sees the forms and demands of the political mobilization as having been inspired by vague notions of social equality, either as a result of the transmission of ideas of social equality by various external agents, or as a direct result of the ambiguities inherent in the *Tanzimat* project which inadvertently opened the realm of politics to the *ahali* through its proclamation of religious equality as the basis of Ottoman citizenship. Instead of following these lines of argument

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<sup>89</sup> Two main lines of division can be identified within the organized villages. The first division was between the North-Western villages which did not join Tanyus Shahin’s movement until the final agreement, and also presented near-identical demands to various political brokers with the important distinction relating to the appointment of the *Ma’amur*. See ‘Aqiqi, *Thawra wa fitna*, 173, document 12; 178, document 16. Another division appears to have formed in Zuq Mikhayil, led by Hanna al-Malhamma, a prominent merchant and moneylender from Zuq.

which work at an excessively idealist level, and which rely on a simplistic portrayal of social and economic change as a “context” for discontent, I have attempted to root the forms of political engagement during the “uprising” to the experience of rapid expansion of commercial relations and the establishment of new “central” political and legal frameworks, two overlapping processes which reinforced each other and shaped the experience of reform for a highly differentiated peasantry.

Furthermore, I have tried to show how new interests developed for a broad range of actors, allowing for an explanation as to the diverse social base of the revolt, as well as for the new forms of mobilization, arguing that they were facilitated by changing relations to political authority and various overlapping conflicts which allowed the revolt of 1858 to emerge. The expanding space taken by the new political and legal frameworks, introduced during the Egyptian occupation and Ottoman reform, was largely the product of the needs of a wide range of actors seeking to access and control peasant labour and surplus.

## Conclusion

This study has sought to question the dominant accounts of the uprising of 1858-1860 in Mount Lebanon's district of Kisrawan, as represented in French and English scholarship, whose interpretations of the event have been fundamentally shaped by a Eurocentric framework permeating the history of Mount Lebanon. Scholars seeking to interpret the event within its socio-economic context have located its "causes" as a function of larger "externally-driven" processes of change, most notably the effect of the French-driven modernization of the local silk industry and the rapid expansion of European trade in the region. By focusing on these developments, scholars have continued to explain the outbreak of the revolt of 1858, essentially, as a reaction to the destruction of Mount Lebanon's "traditional" society by European capitalist "penetration." While more recent scholarship has sought to turn away from structural explanations of the revolt, by focusing on the role played by changing forms of "consciousness" in shaping the revolt, its concern with recovering "consciousness" and treating it at an autonomous causal level, coupled with the implicit refusal to challenge the Eurocentrism embedded in the narrative frameworks they deploy, has failed to offer a much needed corrective to earlier scholarship, while simultaneously presenting a new range of interpretive problems.

The Eurocentric framework of interpretation which permeates the wide-ranging approaches to the study of the Kisrawan uprising depends on a narrow reading of the region's history, which sees the advent of European commercial and political presence in the region as marking a radical break with the past. Extending the period of investigation to include changes which occurred during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries undermines such a thesis. Rather than a relatively immobile or stagnant society whose foundations would be shaken with the advent of European capital in the 1840s, Mount Lebanon's social structure underwent important changes over the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, in part as a function of Ottoman imperial policies and the expansion of commercial agricultural production. As *malikâne* grants proliferated and the fiscal system became progressively privatized throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, tax

farms became increasingly part of commercial exchange. As the bidding process underlying distribution of tax-farms welcomed an increasing number of contenders, pressures were placed on current holders of *iltizam* to find means of appropriating a larger portion of the surplus. The underlying dynamics of tax-farming meant that the ability of tax farmers to maintain their position was, in part, premised on their ability to raise revenues and capitalize on the changing socio-economic context.

At the same time, regional and international markets for Mount Lebanon's silk expanded during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and new groups and institutions were able to capitalize on growing trading opportunities, leading to changes in patterns of landholdings. A tendency toward consolidation of large landed estates was observed in Mount Lebanon, most notably in the case of monastic landholdings, while the social base of *muqata'ajis* expanded as newly emerging social groups serving intermediary roles in expanding regional and international trade networks joined the rank of landowning elites who bid on tax-farms. These groups, whose involvement in trade and moneylending throughout Mount Lebanon's various districts made them indispensable intermediaries in the fiscal system, came to form a new alignment in the emirates' complex system of political alliances, marking a shift in the configuration of elite politics. This, in turn, allowed the Grand Emir to reduce his dependence on powerful "traditional" *muqata'aji* families. Alongside these changes is also evidence of a growing differentiation of the peasantry in Mount Lebanon throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the social structure of Mount Lebanon underwent significant changes before the advent of European capital, the modernization of the silk trade, the expansion of European trade and Ottoman reform efforts, all of which have been credited with shattering the supposedly "traditional system" of Mount Lebanon.

The historical conditions which made the Kisrawan uprising possible need to be located at the intersection of these long term trends and developments which occurred between 1830 and 1860 as several ongoing socio-economic processes were accelerated while new dynamics were introduced as a result of centralizing measures implemented during the Egyptian Occupation and the subsequent

restoration of Ottoman rule in Mount Lebanon. This period witnessed the rapid acceleration of two overlapping and mutually constitutive processes - the expansion of commercial relations and political “centralization.”

The arrival of Egyptian troops in Mount Lebanon in 1831 heralded important changes as a series of political and administrative changes were introduced, which overlapped with ongoing socio-economic processes and a shifting “geography of trade”, to contribute to a wide-ranging re-configuration of local political and economic power. The establishment of a *majlis al-shura* (consultative council) in Beirut allowed an unprecedented degree of political control by new social groups, as the *majlis* of Beirut came to be controlled by an ascending group of merchants based in the port-city. Rather than marking a radical break with the past, the social composition of the *majlis-al-shura* evidenced continuity with ongoing processes which developed throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as the urban institution came to be controlled by the same social groups which had managed to capitalize on the region’s changing socio-economic context through their role as intermediaries in expanding regional trade networks. The administrative duties of the urban *majlis* worked to change the urban-rural dynamic as the urban institution was endowed with an unprecedented level of control over the fiscal and commercial affairs of Mount Lebanon. Coupled with the increasing “political” centrality of Beirut vis-a-vis Mount Lebanon was the rapid increase of the port-city’s economic importance in the region, a process which the Egyptian regime actively encouraged through measures which centralized the marketing and export of Mount Lebanon’s commercial silk production through Beirut. The cumulative impact of these changes had important effects on Mount Lebanon’s social formation as social relations embedded in production and trade shifted as commercial networks were reconfigured. The *modus operandi* of trade in Mountain districts like Kisrawan was altered to the detriment of certain groups like the *muqata’ajis* of the Khazin family who failed to establish themselves as intermediaries in the new urban networks of trade. Those groups who did manage to benefit from the political and economic centrality of Beirut were, in many

cases, the same families who had risen to prominence in the district of Kisrawan and elsewhere by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, through their role as intermediaries in the fiscal system, now establishing themselves firmly as part of the political and economic networks of Beirut. Thus, as Syria's commercial activities became increasingly centered in the port-city, these groups were able to capitalize on these shifts, constituting themselves as essential intermediaries, facilitated by their ties to the political levers of power in Beirut.

The arrival of Ottoman troops to Greater Syria in 1840 marked the end of the Egyptian rule in Greater Syria and the beginning of a process of reform as Ottoman rule was restored in the region. The re-establishment of Ottoman sovereignty over Mount Lebanon coincided with the proclamation of an empire-wide project of reform, collectively known as the *tanzimat* (re-ordering), which re-configured administrative and political power in the mountain districts. These new administrative and political configurations disrupted existing political-economic geographies of Beirut and Mount Lebanon which had solidified during the Egyptian interregnum.

The shape and experience of reform, however, was inseparable from the rapidly expanding commercial relations in Mount Lebanon and Beirut, which in turn gave rise to several layers of tensions. While political power became increasingly centralized through the newly established legal-administrative frameworks, namely the *majalis* of the *qa'immaqamiyya*, the central institutions took on an unprecedented role in regulating various spheres of rural life. As the boundaries of institutional regulation expanded, the political institutions of the mountain took on increasing importance in determining the shape of commercial expansion, which became an increasing point of tension for actors tied to different political-economic networks which had solidified during the previous decade.

Thus, the impact of important economic changes, most notably the rapid establishment of mechanized silk-reeling factories, the expansion of regional and international markets for Mount



Lebanon's silk, increased competition for local silk, and the growth of moneylending practices, was intricately linked to the process of reform which shaped and was shaped by these broad processes. In the context of expanding commercial relations, and the formalization of relations embedded in production and trade, a wide range of actors came to forge new political and economic relations as local power structures defined and mediated the boundaries of commercial expansion. These overlapping processes gave rise to significant layers of tension triggering a series of political crises out of which the uprising of 1858 emerged.

The 1850s was a particularly tumultuous time as the legal and administrative boundaries of Mount Lebanon became the subject of widespread contestation, drawing in a wide range of social actors. As commercial relations expanded, and the Mountain hinterland became the site of increasing competition over labour and silk supplies, the "success" of merchants and silk industrialists in these contests came to rest on their access to the Mountain's political levers of power, increasingly centered in the "formal" institutions such as the *majalis* of the *qa'immaqam*, who regulated fiscal, commercial and criminal matters. Conflict over the juridical boundaries of Beirut and Mount Lebanon became a point of tension around which foreign and Beirut merchants began organizing around throughout 1857 and 1858.

Opposition to Mount Lebanon's political structure included several overlapping forms of collective action aimed at changing the configuration of political power in the "Christian" *qa'immaqamiyya*. Groups led by *shuyukh al-shabab* (leaders of young men) formed throughout the mountain districts organized as part of the ongoing political contests over the successor of the *qa'immaqam* of the Christian districts which became particularly heated in 1857-1858. The mobilization and formation of *shuyukh al-shabab* appears to have overlapped with the increasingly tense urban-rural dynamic as political organizing was facilitated, at least in part, by urban groups with interests in

changing the political configuration of Mount Lebanon. Urban groups, tied to a “central committee” provided logistical and material support to these rural gatherings, which enabled them to spread.

Following the successful expulsion of the ruling *qa'immaqam*, a third wave of organizing emerged as villagers began organizing independently of the district's ruling families. The movement evolved rapidly, and as an organizational structure began to crystallize, the “rebels” began presenting a series of demands framed according to the principles of the *tanzimat* reforms, making specific reference to provisions contained in the Shekib Effendi agreement which outlined the legal and political boundaries of the double *qa'immaqamiyya*. Although the rebels presented a broad range of demands, certain interests can be discerned as proposed reform worked within the political-legal framework established during the restoration of Ottoman rule, and targeted specific issues such as the circulation of capital, the regulation of fiscal exactions, taxes associated with land purchases, as well as legal and political representation, all of which had become central spheres of regulation under the *qa'immaqam*'s administration.

While the movement enjoyed popular support, there were limits to its expansion as several villages in northern Kisrawan resisted the leadership of Tanyus Shahin, the *wakil al-'amm*. A key point of tension related to the boundaries of political representation as factions developed over the refusal to have the *ma'amur* be decided by “popular” vote. The larger conflicts which were spreading in the mixed districts of Mount Lebanon between Druze and Christian militias threatened to fragment the movement as Christian militias contacted the leader of the “united villages,” Tanyus Shahin, to come to the “rescue” of the “Christians” engaged in battle in the southern districts. In addition, the Beirut-based groups organized under the “Young Maronite League” put significant pressure on the united villages of Kirawan to join the Christian militias fighting in the mixed districts. The participation of the villagers from the Kisrawan district in the “war of 1860” was brief and much narrower than the political mobilizations, drawing only a few hundred and lasting only a month. This involvement in the broader conflict raging in

Mount Lebanon marked an end to the “uprising”. On July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1860, a final agreement was brokered by Tubiya ‘Awn, the Bishop of Beirut who presided over the Young Maronite League, allowing for the return of the Khazin shaykhs to Kisrawan.

The “revolt” of 1858-1860 was not the product of a sudden upsurge of tensions, but rather had built on various forms of resistance undertaken by a highly differentiated peasantry during the previous decade in the face of a wide range of actors competing for control over labour, raw supplies, and capital. The outcome of these contests and the shape of expanding commercial relations overlapped with the emergence of new political and legal bodies which ultimately re-configured social relations embedded in these activities and the boundaries of political authority. As these relations became increasingly formalized through the central political institutions of Mount Lebanon, in addition to the Beirut *majlis*, those involved in commercial activities came to develop interests in exercising influence over the expanding political institutions. As commercial relations were formalized, driven in part by a context of commercial expansion and increased competition, we can begin to understand the possibility of broad coalitions forming in order to negotiate the boundaries of political authority and stake a claim in the central institutions of Mount Lebanon, and redefine the contours of political and legal representation. But the expansion of the local bureaucracy did not wipe away existing power relations, and both “formal” and “informal” political brokers co-existed. The fluid boundaries of the “state” set the stage for an intense contest by a variety of actors who sought to manipulate different political brokers to their ends in the contests over control of labour, raw supplies, and the circulation of capital. All of which had a heavy impact on producing classes.

These overlapping processes help explain the social composition of the revolt, which included a great number of wealthy merchants and rich peasants among its leadership. And thus, the participation of merchants as *wakils* in this movement, alongside a highly differentiated peasantry, allows us to link the forms of political contestation to a larger crisis of political representation which emerged in the

context of the new politics of reform, which were shaped by the overlapping processes of commercial expansion and political centralization.

My reading of the modern scholarship on the “Kisrawan uprising” raises a number of important questions which this study attempted to address. This thesis argues that the changing nature of Mount Lebanon’s social structure and the extent of its commercial agricultural production should not be located solely at the intersection of encounters with European commercial and political actors which, supposedly, radically transformed a “traditional” society. More precisely, I argued that the historical conditions which rendered the Kisrawan uprising possible should be located at the interstices of longue-durée changes of Mount Lebanon’s social structure, which developed throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century and early nineteenth century, as well as the overlapping processes of commercial expansion and political centralization between the years 1830-1860.

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