NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S’il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l’université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l’aide d’un ruban usé ou si l’université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d’auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.
BRIDGING THE DICHOTOMY:
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE AND CLASS CONSOLIDATION IN
OTTOMAN BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS

by

M. James Quilty
B.A. (Honours), Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1987

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department
of
History

© M. James Quilty, 1992

Simon Fraser University
September, 1992

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means without the permission of the author.
The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

ISBN 0-315-91215-4
APPROVAL

NAME: M. James Quilty

DEGREE: M.A.

TITLE OF THESIS: Bridging the Dichotomy: Socio-Economic Change and Class Consolidation in Ottoman Beirut and Damascus

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

CHAIR: J. I. Little

____________________________
William Cleveland, Professor

____________________________
John Spagnolo, Associate Professor

____________________________
Derryl MacLean, Associate Professor

____________________________
Donald M. Reid, Professor
Georgia State University at Atlanta

DATE: 27 October 1992
I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

Bridging the Dichotomy: Socio-Economic Change and Class Consolidation in Ottoman Beirut and Damascus

Author: ___________________________

(signature)

M. James Quilty

(name)

(date)
Abstract

In the past decade Beirut and Damascus, and the notables that dominated these cities, have been the focus of some excellent social historical study. The two cities have never been the subject of a single comprehensive analysis, however, and are only occasionally treated together in the same work. The existing literature on Damascus mentions Beirut only in the context of the latter’s rise in economic and diplomatic stature at expense of the former. Similarly, discussions of Beirut usually consider Damascus in terms of its declining position in the region. Related to this historiographical eccentricity is the hermetic seal that seems to separate the literature on the two cities. Beirut has been studied by historians interested in those qualities which differentiated it from most other Syrian cities: its role as a non-Muslim enclave and a centre of western learning, western capital penetration, and, for much of the nineteenth century, a liberal (implicitly western) inter-sectarian tolerance. Damascus, on the other hand, has been looked upon as the embodiment of an Ottoman political, economic, and social system in disarray. Its main interest for historians has been its role in solidifying a political opposition to western encroachment, Arab Nationalism, and the social prerequisites to this coalescence, the consolidation of a notable class in the latter nineteenth century.

This thesis attempts to bridge the dichotomy that has separated the treatment of Ottoman Beirut and Damascus and their notables by comparing the development of the two cities over the course of the long nineteenth century. This comparison focuses specifically upon the socio-economic changes that were integral to the consolidation of the urban notability: the impact of European economic penetration and Ottoman reform; the cities’ position relative to their hinterlands; the notables’ relationship with their European and Ottoman patrons and their own urban clientele; and finally the notables’ relations with each other, both within each city and between Beirut and Damascus. Through this comparative
analysis, the thesis seeks to demonstrate that major material similarities existed between Beirut and Damascus in the last decades of Ottoman rule. It concludes that the forces of class consolidation were not more prevalent in Damascus but equally active, and inhibited, in both Damascus and Beirut.

Since this thesis re-evaluates the findings of the existing literature on the Syrian notability, it is largely based upon secondary sources. Where it has been opportune to do so, however, it has been augmented by material from the British Foreign Office’s series of consular reports entitled *Confidential Print: Turkey, 1841-1914*, 424 Series.
This thesis is dedicated to Richard Morgan, who reached the end before me.
Acknowledgements

This thesis would have been impossible without the considerable assistance given me by the teachers and students with whom I have worked since arriving at SFU. I would like to thank them for their support and direction, and for all the tolerance they have shown the self-indulgences that have marked my stay. In this regard I would particularly like to thank Bill Cleveland and John Spagnolo—the latter for insisting that the apparent muddle of the Middle East was actually a complex, the former for allowing me to explore this complexity, and for demanding that I express the complex comprehensibly.
Table of Contents

Approval..............................................................................................................ii
Abstract...........................................................................................................iii
Dedication........................................................................................................v
Acknowledgments...........................................................................................vi

Introduction. CONTINUITY AND CLASS CONSOLIDATION IN LATE OTTOMAN SYRIA:
A RECONSIDERATION.....................................................................................1

Chapter One. THE SYRIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY AND EUROPEAN PENETRATION
IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY..........................................................15
the Ottoman command economy to 1800.......................................................16
the Syrian political economy from 1800.........................................................19

Chapter Two. THE NOTABILITY OF NINETEENTH CENTURY DAMASCUS AND
BEIRUT: CITY AND HINTERLAND, PATRON AND CLIENT .........................45
Beirut, Damascus, and their hinterlands............................................................46
the Damascene estates and their Beiruti counterparts in the long nineteenth century ......55
ascending linkages and institutional structures...............................................56
descending linkages: migration, social integration, and mobilisation..............63

Chapter Three. THE BEGINNINGS OF CLASS CONSOLIDATION: FAMILY,
MERCHANT CAPITAL, AND UPWARD MOBILITY.........................................75
merchant capital and material diversification among the Sunni Muslim notability ......77
the commercial and administrative fields of the Christian notability....................93
coalescing interests: inter-urban and inter-sectarian co-operation.......................100

Conclusion. OTTOMAN DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT RECONSIDERED............105

Bibliography ...............................................................................................110
Introduction

CONTINUITY AND CLASS CONSOLIDATION IN LATE OTTOMAN SYRIA:
A RECONSIDERATION

This paper is concerned with the material forces that facilitated and prevented class consolidation among the urban notability of Syria, specifically of Beirut and Damascus, in the last century of Ottoman rule. Generally speaking, class consolidation was facilitated by the fact that most of the material benefits arising from the deep changes in the socio-economic structures of the region accrued to a very small minority of the Syrian population. Individuals within this small minority began to co-operate with each other economically, socially, and politically because they had a great many things in common vis-à-vis the accumulation and maintenance of their material interests, and because changes in the economic and legal system made it possible for them to do so. In this regard class consolidation was no different in Beirut and Damascus than it had been in Europe.

Class consolidation was different, and hampered, in these two cities for two reasons, both of which, I argue, may be encompassed within the dynamics of patron-clientage. Firstly, in its simplest terms, two distinct fractions of a single class emerged in Damascus and Beirut because two different patrons were active in providing the means of material advancement. One of these patrons was the Ottoman state, traditionally generating protégés among the Sunni Muslim notability, but not restricted to this group alone. The other 'patron', actually an amalgamation of diverse (but in this context aligned) interests, was that embodied in Europe. Like the Ottomans, the powers of Europe were inclined towards, and patronised, those Syrians who shared their world-view, thus usually their religion. The relationship between the Ottoman state and Europe, in the century before the Eastern Question was answered, was ambivalent to say the least. For the Syrian notables, this ambivalence translated into a freedom of movement which allowed them to advance their own interests. Their intermediary position between Ottoman reform and European
capital penetration gave them the lateral movement to increase their wealth and prestige; the ambiguity in Ottoman-European relations provided the notables with the means to cooperate with one another. The notables were unable to consolidate their mutual interests more fully because of the dissolution of their patrons’ ambivalent relationship in the crucible of the First World War.

The second reason that class consolidation was difficult for the notables was the deteriorating relationship of their clients. Just as the urban notables were clients to Ottoman administrators and European merchants, so did the notables themselves cultivate clients. Indeed, their intermediary role between urban constituency and state was the political expression of their wealth and prestige. In so far as the notables’ activities were also influenced by popular sentiments (which they endeavoured to harness but could not be guaranteed to control), conflicts between the Muslim and Christian masses acted as a very real impediment to class consolidation across sectarian lines.

These assertions may have the aspect of truism about them but historians have been surprisingly slow to take up the topic of class consolidation, even between the elites of two cities as closely related as Beirut and Damascus. There have been a number of reasons for this, one of which is the ongoing dichotomy that exists in our image of the Syrian, and Ottoman, population. This image is one of a people divided by religion—specifically between those in common with the western experience, Christianity and Judaism, and that which is not, Islam. This dichotomy, though valid within many contexts, was not absolute and, in the consideration of class consolidation, false. Nevertheless it is apparent, at least by implication, in the dominant paradigm that exists for the analysis of the urban notables of Ottoman Syria.

1 The term ‘elite’ is used here in opposition to ‘mass’, it being recognised that the primary elites of late Ottoman Damascus and Beirut were Imperial (usually Turkish) officials and their European consular counterparts. The commercial and administrative notability were, throughout this period, a ‘mediating elite’ (to draw on Weinbaum’s terminology), with all the restrictions and freedoms such status conferred. See Marvin G. Weinbaum, ‘Structure and Performance of Mediating Elites’, in William I. Zartman, Elites in the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1980).
The existing socio-political studies of the Arab notables generally trace their historiographical lineage to the short works of Albert Hourani, especially ‘Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables’. It, together with C.E. Dawn’s seminal piece ‘The Rise of Arabism in Syria’, outlines two themes that have premised nearly all subsequent analyses of this group: the urban notables’ vital role in ensuring and legitimising Ottoman rule in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the socio-political continuum that has grown out of their vitality and tenacity in maintaining power. The framework within which Hourani places the notables and the terminology he uses to flesh them out remain unaltered except insofar as subsequent works have added nuance to his broad strokes.2

The socio-political dynamic Hourani calls ‘the politics of notables’, apparently inspired by Max Weber’s ‘patriciate’, essentially rests upon three points: the notables’ freedom of political action, derived from the intermediary function they served between their clients and the Ottoman sultan; the subordination of the hinterland to the city; and relations of personal dependence between the urban notables and the urban masses.3 Hourani describes the notables as belonging to three broad social groups: the ‘ulama, the local garrison leaders (aghawat), and the secular notables, the a’yan. After sketching the predominance of Mamluk households in Egypt and such frontier cities as Saida and Baghdad, Hourani notes that ‘in their purest form’ the politics of the notables were to be found in the cities of Syria and the Hijaz. In these cities the core of the notability were not Mamluks but indigenous families which collectively formed an ‘ancient bourgeoisie’.4 This bourgeoisie survived the fervent attempts of centralising reformers to eliminate its

---

2 These works might all be termed ‘revisionist’ in so far as their extensive use of Ottoman archival material and biographical dictionaries, as well as the standard European sources relied upon by older studies (consular reports, travellers’ accounts, etc.), has allowed them to present a more balanced discussion of the material basis of the notability.
influence; it was less adept at resisting the rivalry posed by the one element in the region with the economic and political influence to usurp its position as intermediary, the European consular officials.

Though there certainly were alternative power groupings in the cities of greater Syria in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, it seems peculiar that Hourani should see a rivalry to exist between the notables and the consuls since the examples he cites describe the notables themselves seeking European patronage. In light of what we now know about the notables' relationship with the Ottomans (ie. that it was more one of co-optation than antagonism), it appears that if a rivalry existed it was not between the consuls and the notables, but the consuls and the notables' usual patrons, the Ottoman officials. But even this rivalry was ambiguous, given the altruistic intentions the Europeans attached to the pursuit of their interests in the Empire. Hourani also notes that the notables' political competition from the consuls was complemented by the economic rivalry posed by

...the merchant from the seaport [who] was replacing the local landowner as the provider of capital for the peasant and organiser of his production. Even more widely, the Christian and Jewish merchants were becoming moneylenders and thus acquiring some of the claims of landowners, and were looking to the foreign consulates to support their claims against the peasant....5

Any symmetrical relationships between consul and administrator, merchant and landowner is implied in Hourani, but not explicitly stated.

Most of the literature on the Syrian notables since ‘Ottoman Reform’ has also focussed on the cities of interior Syria, especially Damascus, and has departed little from Hourani’s basic terminology. Most has also been devoted to investigating the material bases of particular political phenomena. Two of Hourani’s more significant progeny are Philip Khoury’s Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism and Linda Schatkowski-Schilcher’s Families in Politics.6 Urban Notables accepts the descriptive categories into which

---

5 Hourani, ‘Ottoman Reform’, pp. 67-68.
Hourani breaks the notables—aghawat, ulama, and a'yan—as a premise, while devoting most of its analysis to how they consolidated into an Ottomanist ‘landowning-bureaucratic class’ between 1860 and the First World War. Families in Politics, on the other hand, traces the continuities of Damascene politics from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries and takes its terms of analysis from categories recognised by nineteenth century Damascenes. Though acknowledging the dissolution of the cleavages dividing the Damascene notables, Schilcher’s book is more concerned with the social dynamic that preceded this dissolution, namely the coalescence of a cosmopolitan localist faction of notables around the 'Azm family. In categorising the city’s patrician families, then, it distinguishes between the estates of the ulama and the ashraf and recognises the aghawat but not the a'yan, the latter being used as a generic term for notable. Older non-religious families are noted to have their origins in the aghawat, while more recent arrivals on the Damascus scene who were neither ulama nor ashraf are simply termed ‘newcomers’.

The study of the Syrian notability has continued to prosper, with one recent work considering the urban notables of interior Syria in a comparative analysis. The Arab cities outside geographical Syria have generally not received the same consideration. The only analysis we have of the Iraqi variation on the notable theme comes from Book I of Hanna Batatu’s massive study of that country. Hourani’s other periphery of notable politics, the cities of the Mediterranean coast, has been more neglected. Though the dominant families of Beirut’s Muslim and Christian communities have been the subject of some interesting

---

*Damascene Factions and Estates of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Weisbaden GmbH, 1985).


research, they have not been given the same intense scrutiny, nor the same type of scrutiny, as their contemporaries in Damascus.

Until recently, studies of Syria’s coastal cities have been less common than those of Syria’s Christian communities, and these studies have different concerns than those of the interior cities. One of the earliest works to differentiate the various strata of the Ottoman Christian communities is Robert Haddad’s *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society*. Haddad is concerned with the forces leading to the schism within the Greek Orthodox millet, and the evolution from this fracture of the Greek Catholic (Uniate) community. His approach has something of a materialist bent, noting that the *barat* of European protection acted as a major impetus in drawing the wealthiest segments of the Orthodox mercantile bourgeoisie into conversion (behind their ecclesiastical hierarchy). He then traces the development of the institution of the dragoman, and the manner in which European protégés evolved from being the agents of European consuls and merchants to their rivals. The relationship between the mercantile bourgeoisie of the Christian community and their clients is not discussed except in so far as it is noted that the lower strata of the Melkite community were not won over to the Unia until after the conversion of both their clerical and commercial elites. Haddad’s main focus is the evolution of elite identity. In this regard, he asserts that, by the nineteenth century, the Unia’s religious, educational, commercial, and capitulatory ties with western Europe made it ‘an essentially middle class community’ in the process of shedding its Ottoman identity for a European one.

More recently, scholarly attention has been focussed on the Ottoman coastal cities. The most thorough historical treatment of Beirut’s Christian and Muslim communities is

---


Leila Fawaz’s *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut*. Like Haddad, Fawaz is primarily concerned with the urban elite’s relations with Ottoman officials and European consuls and merchants, that is the notables’ ascending linkages.\(^{14}\) Thus while Fawaz devotes considerable attention to the relationship between the Muslim and Christian merchant families, and their relations with the Ottoman and European officials, she is less concerned with their influence in their respective communities. She stresses the common interests traditionally bonding the commercial elite of the Muslim and Christian communities in order to highlight the continuity of tolerance that characterised Beirut’s inter-communal relations.\(^{15}\)

If Beirut’s notables have received relatively little attention compared to Damascus’ Muslim notability, Damascus’ Christian commercial elite has been even more neglected.\(^{16}\) We may assume that these Damascene families had considerable status within their community, but neither they nor their community have come under scrutiny because the small Christian population made its political significance marginal relative to its economic strength. It has been noted, however, that its intensifying commercial and financial interests, and increasing security in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, made it possible for the ‘Christian bourgeoisie’ to extend its client networks within the community. Thus, ‘the route taken by many Christian families into the larger political elite was not

14 The distinction between the ascending and descending aspects of the notables’ intermediary role is discussed in Weinbaum, ‘Structure and Performance’, pp. 159-160.

15 When she does discuss the patronage of the Muslim and Christian notables, it is largely in relation to their efforts to control the sectarian strife that became increasingly common among the masses towards the end of the century. Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 118-119. The only work which really supplements *Merchants and Migrants*’ relative neglect of the Beirut notability’s clientele is Michael Johnson’s *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1840-1985*. Johnson’s book purports to analyse the city’s Sunni Muslim community from 1840 to 1986, but its main interest is actually the rise and decline of the Sunni *zu'ama* in Greater Lebanon. Though the focus of his discussion is the mid-to-late twentieth century, he does place this discussion in the historical context of late nineteenth century developments.

unlike that taken by its Muslim members'. The route was so similar to that of the Muslim
notability, in fact, that by the end of the nineteenth century, a number of these ‘bourgeois’
families had acquired estates as extensive as those of their ‘notable’ counterparts.17

Historiographically, then, the existing literature on Beirut and Damascus comes
from two different traditions. Discussions of Damascus concern themselves with the inter-
relations of the city’s political elite, and with the process by which they were more closely
integrated into the Ottoman system. The consideration of Beirut grows out of an older
concern with how the European powers successfully alienated Orthodox Christians from
the Ottoman system. Fawaz initiates a departure from this line of discussion by arguing
that traditionally co-operation and tolerance existed between the Christians and Muslims of
that city. The semantics of the historical treatment of the urban notables must remain a sub-
text to this discussion. In defining the term ‘notable’, Hourani refers to these patrician
families as an ancient bourgeoisie, and since then notable has been used in most
discussions of the elites of the interior cities. In studies of Beirut, and the Christian
community in general, it has been far more common to see these families called bourgeois.
This semantic dichotomy between the Muslim and non-Muslim notability is reminiscent of
the idealist notions of the ‘Islamic’ and ‘Western’ worlds noted by Edward Sa'id in his
analysis of western orientalism.18 A similar deconstruction of the scholarly discourse on
the Syrian urban notables surpasses the scope of this paper and the capacities of its author.
However, the dichotomy in the historical treatment of the Muslim and Christian notables
remains the touchstone of the paper.

The scholarship on the notables requires revision on two points: the ‘continuity
thesis’ as it was presented by Dawn and Hourani in the 1960s, and its ‘class consolidation’
corollary as it has been elaborated by Khoury, and to a lesser extent by Schatkowski-

17 Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 45-46 and n; Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 85.
Schilcher and Roded. The thesis suggests that there was a continuity in the means of accumulation used by the urban notable families of Syria, and sometimes even in the families practicing this accumulation, from the late eighteenth century to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. The main departure from this line of socio-political continuity in Damascus was the breakdown of the traditional, vertically-linked components of society (estates, and later factions) and the amalgamation of the wealthiest elements of these dominant families into a single class, the notability. As horizontal linkages were formed between notable families, and as the vertical linkages that had always bound these families to the mass of the urban population deteriorated, horizontal cleavage and class conflict developed.

Two major problems exist with this line of argument. They arise principally because those scholars who have been most instrumental in its advancement have been more interested in explaining the social basis of a political phenomenon, the rise of secular Arab nationalism, than in examining Syrian society for itself. In addition to marginalising significant notable families in Damascus which may not have been active as nationalist politicians, this discussion does not sufficiently investigate lines of class consolidation beyond the milieu of Damascus. Nor does it adequately prove the alienation of the urban masses from the notability. What it does do is document the progressive Ottomanisation of the religious and secular notables of the city—the shrinking

---

19 This bias was summed up rather nicely, by Hourani himself, thus:

... although most of us have given up the old conception of purely political history for something broader, even social history cannot be understood if we leave out of account the struggle for power in which all social forces express themselves, and the use of power in order to maintain, destroy, change or impose a social order....

Albert Hourani, 'The Ottoman Background to the Modern Middle East', (London: Longmans, 1970), p. 3.

20 Khoury does effectively deflect any criticism that might arise from this neglect. Non-nationalist politicians are easily accounted for by the Ottomanist-Arabist paradigm, and the extension of this paradigm into the Mandate period. Unfortunately there seems little relationship between those Ottomanist notables, who should have alienated themselves from their clientele, and those non-nationalists of the Mandate period whose clientele remained inaccessible to nationalist politicians. His neglect of Beirut, like that of Aleppo, is rationalised by noting that his main interest is Arab nationalism, after all, and that the relative insignificance of other Syrian cities in the rise of political Arabism prevented their inclusion in his study.
autonomous resource base of the ulama, their growing material dependence upon Istanbul, and the growing indifference of the pre-eminent secular a'yan to the plight of the urban and rural poor. Mass alienation is thus derived by means of logical induction. This sort of historical induction cannot be flawed in itself, especially since the urban masses (and any element that may have ameliorated their alienation) are invisible to historians. Nevertheless, once the thesis of elite consolidation and estrangement from the masses is made more provisional, so is the dichotomy between Damascus and the other cities of Greater Syria.

A change of perspectives

Before a fair comparison of Beirut and Damascus may be carried out, one which allows us to see the similarities between the two cities through the forest of apparent differences, it is necessary to adjust some of the existing terms of analysis at our disposal. Perhaps the most significant adjustment is in the isolation of material accumulation from economic production.

When analysing the economic basis of the nineteenth century Syrian notability, it is more useful to refer to means of accumulation rather than means of production. Certainly a discussion of the notables' means of production would be worthwhile. However, the impact of indigenous industrial capital upon class relations during this period is unknown, and our information about the relations of production arising from the notables' large-scale ownership of land is so anecdotal as to make it unreliable. In any case, the proportion of rural lands absorbed into large estates seems to have remained limited in the Ottoman era, with landed title remaining vested in the state, and local actors restricted to usufructory rights only. Material wealth was more readily acquired by means of trade and usury, iltizam and market speculation. While all of these activities could be lucrative, none of them was particularly productive. The proceeds of this accumulation were often used to acquire ownership of a means of production, whether silk factories in the Lebanon or land
in the Hawran, but such acquisition rarely displaced the other means of accumulation in ensuring the material basis of the notability. For individuals guaranteed access to such a means of accumulation an additional dividend was increased status for themselves and their families within their respective communities, and the opportunity to express this status through the distribution of patronage.

The significance of the extended family as an economic unit, of accumulation as well as consumption, cannot be overstated. Emerging from the eighteenth century environment of arbitrary taxation and random confiscation, wealthy families outside of the Muslim religious establishment had no institutional means to generate private capital or to protect existing wealth. These families therefore relied upon the extended family as a networking agency for capital accumulation beyond the reach of government, and as a pool of investment capital. We may speak, then, of a familial mode of accumulation among the Syrian notability.

There were two fields in which the familial mode of accumulation expressed itself. One was administrative, derived from the region’s integration into the reformed Ottoman administration, and the other was commercial, a consequence of Syria’s integration into the world economy. The two fractions of the notability were thus determined by their field of accumulation as much as their patrons, whether Ottoman or European. The notables’ primary fields of accumulation did tend to correspond to their main sources of patronage and, for that matter, to their religious affiliation: most Muslim notables filling bureaucratic positions were protégés of Istanbul, and most Christian notables were merchants with European protection. This said, it is important to note that the most successful notable families were, regardless of religion, supremely adaptable in their acquisitiveness. In practice, the most prominent of the Muslim landholding-bureaucratic families engaged in trade of one sort or another, it being particularly important to the Muslim notables of Beirut. Similarly, in the age of secularising Ottoman reforms, Christian members of the
commercial elite proved most adept at land acquisition, and often found it convenient to hold official and bureaucratic postings.21

These overlapping fields of accumulation were complemented by the remarkably similar socio-economic and political behaviour which are the focus of this paper. What governed this behaviour was neither entrepreneurial spirit nor corruption but a proclivity to gravitate to, and a tenacity in maintaining control over, the most lucrative means of accumulation available. The notables' willingness to subordinate the interests of the vast majority of the population to their own (that is, their immediate family and, eventually, their class) reflected the equal indifference of both the economic and administrative systems they manipulated. Muslim landholding notables are generally presented as less legitimate in their activities than their commercial (generally Christian) counterparts because they seemed more inherently at odds with the aims of their patrons. This is the case because, since Weber, the ethical standards of a European-style bureaucracy (and European-trained scholars) and the imperatives of European-style centralisation policies all frown upon the a'yan's manipulation of administrative office for material accumulation. Similar activities on the part of the commercial notability are not frowned upon only because no such scruples burden the European-style free-market economy.

One final idiosyncrasy in this paper's terminology arises less from an adjustment of terminology than from an effort to change the present historical perspective of Beirut. Ottoman Beirut has virtually always been considered as a European bridgehead in the Levant, whether as a source of western educational and intellectual currents or as the entrepot of western commodities and finance. The city has thus tended to be seen, with some justification, in terms of its relationship with Europe, and not in its relationship with the rest of the Empire. In an effort to Ottomanise nineteenth century Beirut, then, this paper quite deliberately considers its social and institutional structures from the perspective of those in Damascus. To do so it has modified the analytical terms introduced by Linda

21 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, p. 86 and n.
Schatkowski-Schilcher in her study of eighteenth and nineteenth century Damascus. Her study envisions traditional urban society as being divided into seven vertically-linked estates: ulama, ashraf, para-militaries, merchants, sufis, artisans, and rural migrants.22 The forces of change shaping Syria in the nineteenth century caused the gradual dissolution of the estates as meaningful political groupings and they certainly cannot be said to accurately depict Damascene society after mid-century. However the estates system does act as a schematic diagram of a particular urban society, and its breakdown provides a means of charting the impact of the forces of change upon that urban society. Its greatest utility, though, comes from the fact that, while few of these estates were actually prominent in Beirut, certain cognates did exist in that city, thus facilitating comparison.

This paper offers a modification, and thus a mild challenge, to Khoury’s conclusions about Damascus while applying Hourani’s basic premises about the politics of notables to Beirut. It compares the development of the two cities in terms of the consolidation of a notable class and the alienation of the urban masses from this consolidating class. The parameters of the paper are determined by the three factors that made the notables: the relative freedom of action they derived from their intermediary position between their clients and patrons; their success in subordinating the hinterland to their own interests; the relations of personal dependence they cultivated with their clientele. Following Hourani’s original paradigm in this manner is methodologically convenient because it roughly corresponds to the paper’s chapters. Chapter one places the notables’ rise against the panorama of the economic and administrative changes sweeping Syria in the long nineteenth century; chapter two considers them in relation to their respective hinterlands, and in their institutional relations with their patrons and clients. Taking

22 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, passim. I use Schatkowski-Schilcher’s term ‘para-military estate’ in place of ‘aghawat’ because the latter is the one estate label which suggests the elite families to the exclusion of the rank-and-file. Though unfortunate for the latter day connotations of the term, no other term adequately denotes the fact that historical basis of these families’ power rested in their control of a military force which might be, but was not necessarily, sanctioned by the Porte.
advantage of prosopographical information unavailable in the 1960s, chapter three examines the notable families' manner of accumulation and material interaction.
The nineteenth century was a period of radical change in the Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Empire's once virtually self-enclosed command economy was well on the road to being integrated into the European-dominated world economy. The thin edge of the wedge that realigned Syrian economic life lay in the traditional practice of granting commercial privileges to European merchants, but these privileges remained relatively benign until they were reshaped in the crucible of Europe's industrial revolution. Administratively the provinces of geographical Syria were bound more closely to Istanbul than they had been in the eighteenth century. These independently-minded provinces were domesticated by the reforms initiated during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839), and intensified under the Tanzimat regime (1839-1876). The forces of economic change that permeated Syria in the nineteenth century, like those of administrative reform, had the effect of destroying or reshaping many of the traditional institutions of the Ottoman political economy while tying the region more closely to the purveyors of these changes.

Though many features distinguished them, European economic penetration and Ottoman reform were both, in the context of nineteenth century Syria, expressions of essentially alien interests. The infiltration of these alien interests was marked by the web of consular and reformed administrative institutions that spread across Syria in this period. The European and Ottoman officials who presided over these institutions looked to local individuals whose informal, personal ties with Syrian society made them ideal as intermediaries, if not as altruistic defenders of their patrons' interests. These mediating elites were the only immovable objects in the gale that battered the Empire's traditional
economic and political institutions. Embedded in local society, they were able to ensure that the irresistible forces moving Syria actually reinforced their position rather than uprooting them. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the legal-material position of the non-Muslim elites was more tenuous than that of their Muslim counterparts, but as the century progressed the legal and material privileges of the two were equalised. This chapter traces the rising fortunes of the commercial and administrative intermediaries in the political-economy of nineteenth century Syria. Its aim is to explore the material bases of the urban notability of Damascus and Beirut and to highlight the broad similarities that existed in their manner of material accumulation. Subsequent chapters will focus on more specific parallels and divergences in the material development of the Beirutis and Damascenes, and how these restricted and liberated their respective activities.

**the Ottoman command economy to 1800**

Merchant capital was an integral part of the Ottoman command economy. Unlike their counterparts in the manufacturing sector, Ottoman merchants were encouraged to accumulate capital, since the state relied upon merchant-bankers and merchant-multazim to advance considerable sums of capital to the state. They were not allowed to trade at will, however. The state licensed only specific merchants to engage in regional trade, and it prohibited the export of raw materials needed for the provisioning of the cities and their industries. Merchants who had paid for the right to trade also had to contend with the state’s internal customs duties, which, along with commercial concessions, were a major source of state revenue. By these means merchant wealth remained limited until the sixteenth century, when growing European demand for raw materials increased the incentive for merchants to defy the state’s commercial prohibitions.

---

Traditionally the long-distance trade, like regional trade, had been subject to state controls, with merchants having to purchase commercial concessions while contending with a number of tariffs and duties. Though this long-distance trade was not restricted to luxury goods, the monopoly that grew out of Ottoman control of the east-west trade in spice and silk was the source of considerable state revenue. When this monopoly ended in the late seventeenth century, a consequence of Anglo-Dutch naval hegemony in the Indian Ocean, the Ottomans experienced a significant loss of commercial and customs revenue. Though the traditional long-distance trade was never completely disrupted, from the end of the sixteenth century it was complemented, and eventually superseded, by another. This new long-distance trade saw the raw materials that were usually channelled to internal consumption and industry exchanged for European manufactures. As this illicit trade grew, and the Ottomans’ control over their internal trade diminished, the Empire’s command economy became increasingly disarticulated. The state sought to strangle the trade (and thus counter the growing loss of revenue, shortages of raw materials and inflation) by tightening state restrictions on exports, but these efforts proved ineffective.

A key factor in the realignment of Ottoman trade was the presence of European traders on Ottoman soil. The practice of granting commercial privileges to European merchants was well established by the reign of Mehemed the Conqueror (1451-1481). Such trade concessions (or capitulations) were extended in order to expedite the passage of needed goods—such as raw materials for the production of weapons—into the Empire from dar al-harb. In order to encourage this trade, judicial accommodation had to be made for European merchants, who fell beyond the pale of the Ottoman millet system.

24 See footnote #39 for details.
26 For a recent discussion of the juridical side of the British capitulations, see J.P. Spagnolo, ‘Portents of Empire in Britain’s Ottoman Extraterritorial Jurisdiction’, Middle Eastern Studies, 27(2), 1991, pp. 256-282.
accommodation exempted Catholic, and later all, European traders from Ottoman legal, and many fiscal, constraints while making them subject to the authority of the duly recognised representative of their community in Istanbul. By the turn of the sixteenth century, these commercial concessions reflected European great power rivalry, as Britain and France both came to possess their own capitulations.27 In the ensuing struggle for commercial hegemony, France cultivated the role of protector of all Catholics in the Empire, a claim which took on added significance when Ottoman Christians began to convert to Catholicism.

By the time the industrial revolution had altered the economic balance between Europe and the Empire, all the great powers possessed such commercial privileges. In the context of great power competition, and pressure that they be modified to correspond to European commercial practice, the capitulations went from being unilateral concessions (which the Porte could withdraw at will) to bilateral treaties. They thus became sacrosanct, especially to those powers with major commercial interests in the Empire. Notwithstanding European merchants’ extraterritorial status, augmented since the seventeenth century by their control of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, the effect of western commodities upon the Ottoman economy was localised and uneven. Europe’s links to the major interior markets remained tentative, and the indigenous commercial and manufacturing sectors proved resilient until well into the nineteenth century.28

the Syrian political economy from 1800

In 1800 the international trade of Syria was largely a transit trade, with the great interior cities acting as entrepots for goods from the far east and Africa as well as Europe. The sum of western commodities entering through the small, insecure ports on the Mediterranean coast was still very limited, and most European goods made their way to Damascus from Anatolia or Egypt. The European trade, dominated by Europeans and non-Muslim Ottomans, generally involved an exchange of western manufactures and colonial goods for such raw materials as cotton, silk, and wool. The trade with the east, which remained the preserve of the Muslim tujjar, was much more substantial, with Indian and Iranian textiles and silks, Indian sugar, spices, and indigo, and Iranian tobacco, fruit, carpets and drugs all making their way to Damascus by caravan. In the late eighteenth century, such caravans passed through the Syrian desert between Baghdad and Damascus two or three times a year. In addition to the east-west trade, the annual Hajj caravans were particularly important vehicles of trade for the Damascene merchants, requiring up to 15,000 camels in the 1820s. Compared to this long distance trade, the commerce between the interior and the Mediterranean coast was insignificant, largely due to insecurity and the high tolls demanded to guarantee safe passage. As late as 1848, the British Foreign Office estimated that it cost less to ship goods from Damascus to Baghdad than from Damascus to Beirut.

In 1800 the vast majority of Syria’s meagre agricultural surplus was not marketed directly, but collected as tax in kind by local government agents. The tujjar were not

---

29 It is impossible to estimate the gross volume of Syria’s overland trade beyond noting that it remained considerably greater than the sea trade until at least the 1840s. Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent: a documentary history.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 128, 158-160.
divorced from these proceedings; indeed investment in the Empire’s fiscal system was
equivalent to investing in the regional trade. In this regard, merchants were active both in
providing credit to the multazim (as well as the peasant-producer) and in distributing the
agricultural goods the government had collected as tax. Occasionally their role was more
direct, as when they obtained monopoly rights for the purchase of particular crops; a
merchant holding such rights could make huge profits by dictating prices to producers that
were far below those received from urban consumers. Standing between the peasant and
external market forces, the merchant and the multazim were in the best position to
accumulate capital at the turn of the nineteenth century.31

The institution of the multazim dates from the end of the sixteenth century and the
Ottomans’ efforts to find an inexpensive means of revenue collection to replace the
moribund timar system. Itlizam, and the depredations it brought down on the Syrian
peasantry, need not be discussed here in great detail. It is only necessary to note that by the
end of the eighteenth century, Istanbul’s control over Syria’s tax regime was negligible at
best. Within this vacuum grew the semi-autonomous dynasties of the late eighteenth and
eyearly nineteenth centuries, both in the cities—the ‘Azms of Damascus and the household of
Jazzar Pasha in Saida for instance—and in the countryside—the amirs of the Lebanon and
Jabal Druse being two prominent examples.32

The Ottomans made their first concerted efforts to reassert direct control over the
provinces during the reign of Mahmud II. These efforts attempted not only to subdue

31 Owen, The Middle East, pp. 22-48. Charles Issawi, An Economic History of the Middle East and
32 A classic summary of the dissolution of the timar system and the rise of itlizam remains that of
Norman Itzkowitz in Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition (New York: Knopf, 1972), especially Chapter
Four; a more recent discussion of these developments may be found in Halil Inalcik, ‘Military and Fiscal
Transformation of the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700’ in Archivum Ottomanicum, VI, 1980, pp. 327-337.
See also Inalcik, ‘Centralisation and Decentralisation in Ottoman Administration’ and Abdul-Karim Rafeq,
‘Changes in the Relationship between the Ottoman Central Administration from the Sixteenth to the
Eighteenth Centuries’ in Thomas Naff and Roger Owen, editors, Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic
troublesome governors and shaykhs, but to attack the traditional institutions that stood between the sultan and his subjects. The assault on these institutions began with the Auspicious Event of 1826, which effectively decapitated the janissary corps. The religious institution, which could not be eradicated in this manner, was castrated by gradually curtailing the higher ulama's direct control over awqaf. Most of Mahmud's reforms did not reach fruition during his reign, however (his Ministry of Awqaf had to be dismantled, for instance), and in Syria they were pre-empted by the Egyptian occupation of 1831-1840.33

Egypt's Muhammad Ali imposed the most centralised administration upon Syria that it had experienced in centuries. This centralisation came at the expense of Syria's traditional notables, both urban and rural, whose independent influence had waxed in the eighteenth century as that of Istanbul had waned. For all its significance in foreshadowing the Tanzimat reforms, the Egyptian administration's impact upon Syrian society was ephemeral compared to that of the economic changes that accompanied it. To a degree the Pasha had expedited this economic change by bringing security to the countryside and encouraging trade and agricultural development—with the aim of harnessing his political aspirations to such development.34 Indeed, European commerce had prospered within this environment, much to the benefit of Syria's commercial elite.

The Damascene tujjar profited from the influx of European goods in the 1830s by trans-shipping them to centres in the east, north, and south. In these years they also benefited from the flourishing Baghdad trade, with most of Damascus' commerce with Beirut, Tripoli, and Egypt dealing in Baghdadi goods. Up to the 1840s, in fact, Damascus

---


34 A good overview of Syria's experience under Muhammad Ali may be found in P.M. Holt, Egypt and the Fertile Crescent (London: Longmans, 1966). See also Moshe Ma'oz, Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 12-20; Owen, The Middle East, pp. 77-78.
continued to experience a trade deficit with Baghdad.\textsuperscript{35} This prosperity among Damascus' Muslim tujjar came under attack, however, with the departure of the Egyptian army. The Syrian merchants who continued to prosper, and who must be credited with the long-term expansion of western trade, were the agents of European capital in the region, the non-Muslim tujjar.\textsuperscript{36}

Europe had cultivated Christian and Jewish protégés in the region since the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{37} Commercial factories and consulates usually employed them as dragomans, often without salary, in return for barats of consular protection; such documents entitled the holders to the same capitulatory (judicial, financial, and economic) privileges as their patrons. Though their knowledge of Arabic and Turkish was invaluable, the mediating functions they performed went far beyond mere translation. More important to their European patrons was their familiarity with the vagaries of local commercial and administrative practice and their intermediary role between European importers and Syrian retailers on one hand, and local cultivators and European exporters on the other. So integral was their mediation in commercial and agricultural, and eventually financial, developments that the protégés were soon able to dictate their own terms to Syrian agriculturalist and European merchant alike.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{35} In 1833 over 2 million francs worth of goods travelled from Damascus to Baghdad, but Damascus imported 4.5 million francs of Baghdadi goods in the same year. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 62. This deficit probably contributed to the drain of specie experienced in this period, since any difference in the sum of Baghdadi and European goods was paid either in cash or with European letters of exchange. Abdul-Karim Rafeq, 'The Impact of Europe on a Traditional Economy: the Case of Damascus, 1840-1870', Économie et Sociétés dans l'Empire Ottoman (fin du XVIII-début du XX siècle) (Paris: Bacqué-Grammont et Dumont, 1983), p. 421; Issawi, Fertile Crescent, p. 133.

\textsuperscript{36} British commercial statistics for 1840 estimate that Damascus had 66 Muslim commercial houses with a combined capital of £200,000 compared to the 29 Christian firms with £45-55,000, and the 24 Jewish firms with £160-180,000. Issawi, 'British Trade and the Rise of Beirut, 1830-1860', I.J.M.E.S., (8), 1977, pp. 98-99n.

\textsuperscript{37} Haddad, Syrian Christians, pp. 32-33 and n.

\textsuperscript{38} '[The barat] represented the formalization, by the Porte as well as the European powers, of privileges which were evolving during much of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries but with particular speed after 1660.' Haddad, Syrian Christians, pp. 34-47. See also Charles Issawi, 'The Transformation of the Economic Position of the Millets in the Nineteenth Century' in Braude, Christians and Jews, p. 273; Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 86-87.
By the 1830s, then, European commercial penetration reached a breadth that could no longer be accommodated within the confines of the capitulations alone. These privileges had been well suited to the protection of European merchants cloistered in coastal factories. But, as the flow of commodities quickened, their efforts to reach Syria’s interior trading centres became increasingly entangled in the web of internal tariffs and duties used by provincial administrators to generate revenue. Equally troublesome to European traders and their protégés, who disliked the loss entailed in sending empty ships back to Europe for want of cargo, were the high duties and frequent prohibitions imposed on exports. Muhammad Ali’s success in rendering the command economy more effective thus ran in direct opposition to the interests of European capital. Britain’s answer to this challenge was the 1838 Commercial Convention.

The Anglo-Ottoman convention, soon to be replicated for the other European powers, effectively reinforced and extended the capitulatory privileges of British subjects. It granted them the right to purchase goods anywhere in the Empire, while fixing the Ottoman import duty at 5%, the export duty at 12%, and transit fees at 3%; all state monopolies were abolished. Since the terms of the 1838 Convention and those that followed could not be altered without the consent of the powers, 1838 marks the end of

---

39 The gross value of British trade with the Levant increased from approximately £3,000,000 during the Napoleonic wars to £5,500,000 in 1845-9. France’s trade grew from £2,800,000 in 1791 to £3,600,000 in 1840-4, and swelled to £4,000,000 by the early 1850s. Owen, The Middle East, p. 87. While the value of Baghdadi goods reaching Damascus in 1825 was twice that of the Mediterranean goods in the same year, in 1833 the value of the former had shrunk to 30% of the latter; by 1836-38 over 50% of Syria’s sea-trade was with Europe. Owen, The Middle East, p. 97.

40 Since the Capitulations of 1673, Ottoman imports and exports were taxed at a rate of 3% ad valorem. Import merchants faced an additional duty of 2%, and an internal shipping duty of 8%; export duties went as high as 33% on some items. See ‘The 1838 Commercial Convention’ in Charles Issawi, The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 38; Owen, The Middle East, p. 91.

Ottoman economic sovereignty. Though not as devastating as once believed, the subsequent flood of cheap manufactured goods into Syria eventually destroyed much of its domestic industry. The lopsided balance of trade that resulted drained the region of massive amounts of specie until the cultivation of Syrian cash crops developed sufficiently to act as a means of exchange.

The ascension of Sultan Abdülmeid in 1839 was marked by the declaration of the *Hatt-i Serif of Gülhane*, the document that initiated the Tanzimat period, and passed the impetus of reform from the Palace to the Porte. The noble rescript announced the abolition of iltizam in favour of direct taxation, and declared Istanbul’s intention to ensure equal rights for Muslim and non-Muslim subjects alike, suggesting an attack upon the institutional hierarchies of the non-Muslim millets was imminent. With the Ottoman restoration to Syria in 1841, the Tanzimat reforms drastically reduced the prerogatives of the provincial governors. While the wali’s tenure was reduced to a single year, he was forced to share his executive powers with two other Ottoman officials, the serasker and the defterdar, each of whom was responsible to a different superior in Istanbul. The most significant impediment to the wali, however, was the Porte’s institution of a provincial administrative council, the *majlis al-eyalet*.

There was a good deal of precedent for the majlis in the occupation and pre-occupation years. The pashas of eighteenth and early nineteenth century Syria had found it politic to constitute a *diwan* of local notables and officials, which they consulted

---

42 Slight modifications were made to the import duties in 1861-62, 1907, and 1914 (to 8%, 11%, and 15% respectively) while the export tariff was gradually lowered to 1%. Issawi, *The Economic*, pp. 38-39. Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, pp. 127 ff.
44 Davison, *Reform*, pp. 36-43.
occasionally in the event of financial, commercial or security problems. Without such consultation, the governor could neither maintain his own position nor fulfill his obligations to the sultan to maintain a modicum of security and to collect taxes. The strong pashas of the pre-occupation period had restricted the diwan to an advisory function. During the Egyptian period, Ibrahim Pasha innovated upon this council, making it an effective administrative instrument. The Egyptian majlis was also more representative of the urban population, Muslim and non-Muslim, while remaining tightly controlled by the executive, thus explicitly limiting the power of the urban notables. The Tanzimat's version of the majlis, embodying the centralising ideals of the reform edicts, was intended to curb the independence of the wali while maintaining the subordination of the notables. Its effect, in this latter regard, was quite the opposite.46

Though the Ottoman majlis was meant to complement the wali, it was granted an unprecedented amount of power in its own right. Judicially the council assumed authority over all civil and criminal cases, leaving the qadi's court (mahkama) to adjudicate matters of personal status only. The provincial majlis retained these judicial powers until 1854, when administrative and judicial powers were divided between the majlis al-idara and the majlis al-tahqiq (also rendered majlis al-tamyiz) respectively.47 Administratively, the majlis was entrusted with the management of public works, the recruitment of irregular troops and police, and even the confirmation of minor officials. It also monitored agricultural production and pricing and supervised all land transactions, the latter becoming especially significant after 1858. The majlis' broadest powers were in the area of finance. Though iltizam had been abolished in 1840, the logistical difficulties involved in direct tax collection remained too much for the state and the farming of local taxes and duties was reinstated two

47 Ma'oz notes that this was a semantic differentiation only, with members of the same council merely meeting to consider administrative and judicial questions on different days. Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, p. 95; Schatkowski-Schilcher, *Families*, p. 117.
years later. Thus the notables not only assessed local taxes, but also auctioned the iltizam.48

The Porte’s inability to centralise its fiscal regime ensured that, for the duration of the reform period, the notables maintained their most lucrative means of accumulation while appearing to facilitate the reform movement. Though the Tanzimat did see the noose of taxation tighten around Syria, the notables successfully evaded new taxes like the farda (a capitation tax) at the expense of the artisanal and peasant classes and the lower strata of the non-Muslim communities. Urban and rural iltizam, meanwhile, continued to be a source of much speculation among the Muslim notables. This was the case because the majlis formulated its provincial budget some months before the value of the harvest, and therefore the sum of its tax, could be ascertained. Since the bidding was supervised by the majlis, the iltizam virtually always went to urban notables or their agents; if the sum of goods collected by the multazim exceeded the original assessment, as was often the case, the surplus went to the multazim, not the treasury. The tax most often farmed out was the tithe, an agricultural tax in kind. While bids for the tithe went to the majlis fairly early in the year, it was common practice for the multazim to delay collection for as long as possible. This prevented the peasant from marketing, or even determining, his surplus, while the price of the crop increased to the benefit of the multazim. Finance was not the only area of administrative reform the notables manipulated for their own benefit. Compulsory conscription, a central pillar of Ottoman military reform, was no longer resisted by the notables because they now had the means to secure recruitment exemptions for members of their families.49 One area in which the notables were in direct contradiction to the wishes of the Porte after 1840 was in their exclusion of the non-Muslim leadership from the

---

48 Ma’oz, Ottoman Reform, pp. 93-95; Khoury, Urban Notables, p. 17.
49 See footnote #60.
administrative process, the few non-Muslim notables who did sit on the majlis being intimidated into quiescence.50

The Ottoman governors' alienation from local society, accentuated during the Tanzimat by their brief tenure in office, made them willing to tolerate these de facto privileges and the obvious inequities that grew out of them. Unable to form independent contacts in the region, they were made all the more dependent on the mazbata (official reports) of the majlis when making administrative decisions. Financing the provincial administration was also impossible without the notables, whose contributions included payment for iltizam privileges, as well as the credits they supplied for military expeditions and transfers to the central treasury. They also guaranteed the vouchers (hawalas), issued to state employees, including the military, in lieu of salary. Governors were also inhibited from moving against the notables by the independent ties the latter cultivated with Istanbul. Efforts to curb the notables' abuses often led to the governor's censure, or even removal, by a senior official at the Porte.51

The commercial component of the majlis system was made autonomous of its administrative parent in 1850. In that year, after growing pressure to abandon the Shar'ia in favour of a western-style system of business law, the Ottomans promulgated a new Commercial Code. Commercial councils were established in Beirut and Damascus in 1850, and in Aleppo in 1853. The members of the majlis al-tijara were appointed by local officials and consuls, and included Muslim and non-Muslim merchants. The Damascene council had 14 merchants, seven Ottomans (4 Muslims, 3 Christians, 1 Jew), and seven Europeans; the twelve positions on the Beirut council were equally distributed between Ottoman Muslims, non-Muslims, and foreigners. By facilitating European commerce in

50 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 80; Ma'oz, Ottoman Reform, pp. 92-93; 160-162.
51 Davison, Reform, pp. 138-139; Ma'oz, Ottoman Reform, pp. 96-101; Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 80-81.
Syria, the majlis al-tijara institutionalised the commercial notables' means of accumulation as effectively as the majlis al-idara did for their administrative counterparts.\(^{52}\)

Though commercial majlises were established in both Beirut and Damascus, the entire commercial sector of both cities did not derive equal benefit from them. The greatest losers appear to have been Damascus' Muslim tujjar. Their traditional commerce did survive the immediate aftermath of the Egyptian withdrawal, with the gross value of the Baghdad trade exceeding that of Europe and the Lebanon as late as 1862.\(^{53}\) Insecurity in the hinterland greatly increased transport costs, however. These costs, combined with the high internal duties still facing Muslim merchants after 1838, conspired to gradually strangle the Baghdad trade.\(^{54}\) The implication to be taken from this is twofold. First, while the Tanzimat period saw the increased use of administrative office as a means of accumulation among Damascus' Muslim notability, the commercial field of accumulation was contracting for them.\(^{55}\) Second, because of their latitude in manipulating internal duties and taxes, the administrative notability of Damascus probably played as great a role in the marginalisation of Muslim tujjar families as the non-Muslim intermediaries of the European trade.

As Damascus began to show signs of decline in the 1850s, Beirut continued to grow. During the Egyptian occupation Beirut, which was a major administrative centre for


\(^{53}\) In that year the gross value of Baghdadi, European, and Lebanese goods entering Damascus was 3,273,000, 2,978,000, and 3,000,000 francs respectively. Rafeq, 'The Impact', p. 423.

\(^{54}\) Leaving Baghdad in July, 1857, a caravan lost nearly all of its £T 5,000,000 worth of merchandise to beduin. The 1858 caravan reached Damascus unscathed, but most of the £T 10,000,000 of goods was diverted through Aleppo, increasing transport costs by 50%. Schatkowski-Schilcher, *Families*, p. 69; Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, p. 140. Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, pp. 176-177.

\(^{55}\) By the 1860s, trade for Damascus' Muslim merchants had become so expensive that those without alternative means had become debtors to Beirut financiers. Meanwhile, in Beirut only six of the 34 merchants dealing with Europe in 1826 could have been Muslim, while 15 were Ottoman Christian. By 1848 the number of Muslim merchants had shrunk to three. Owen, *The Middle East*, pp. 98-99; Issawi, 'British Trade', pp. 98-99 and n. Issawi suggests that, based on the 1827 estimates of the city's French consul, six Beirut Christians and five Muslims carried on extensive trade with Europe. Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, pp. 160-162.
Ibrahim Pasha, had already replaced Saida as the destination of Damascus’ coastal trade.\textsuperscript{56} The Ottoman restoration saw Beirut’s administrative significance recognised when it was made the capital of an expanded wilayah of Saida; its role as Damascus’ entrepot would be reinforced in the early 1860s with the completion of the Beirut-Damascus carriage road. This administrative elevation resulted in a number of European powers establishing consulates in that city. Beirut’s Christian population also increased throughout the 1840s and 1850s as a result of immigration from the Syrian interior. Fleeing the periodic unrest that characterised the interior at this time, uprooted Christians, often merchants and artisans, chose to settle in a centre with a large Christian population and consular presence.\textsuperscript{57}

With the material privileges of the non-Muslim commercial intermediaries institutionalised, the Porte took steps to elevate its non-Muslim subjects to equality with Ottoman Muslims. In 1855 it announced legislation abolishing the poll tax on non-Muslims, the \textit{jizya}, followed in the next year by a second reform decree, the \textit{Hatt-i Humayun}. The 1856 rescript extended the principles of the 1839 hatt, confirming the equality of Muslims and non-Muslims in the fields of military service, taxation, state education, and civic and religious rights. It provoked considerable opposition, not only among Muslims, but from the ecclesiastical hierarchies of the Christian millets as well. The latter were coming under increasing pressure to share their administrative prerogatives with the lay members of their respective communities, and the rescript threatened to accelerate this process.\textsuperscript{58} The declaration of the Hatt-i Humayun corresponded with a number of

\textsuperscript{56} Issawi, \textit{Fertile Crescent}, pp. 136-137.
\textsuperscript{57} Fawaz, \textit{Merchants and Migrants}, pp. 21-27; 53; 68-69.
\textsuperscript{58} Ma'oz, \textit{Ottoman Reform}, pp. 202-203; Davison, \textit{Reform}, pp. 52-59. Almost immediately after the abolition of the \textit{jizya}, however, a new tax was created for any Ottoman subject wishing exemption from military service, the \textit{bedel}. Since this tax was collected among the non-Muslim communities by their traditional millet hierarchies, these hierarchies were effectively reinforced. Both Muslim and non-Muslim notables purchased military exemption by this means. Davison, \textit{Reform}, pp. 94-95.
regional developments which aroused popular hostility against Syria’s protégé notability, and the Christian community generally.

Damascenes became alienated from their city’s Christians by the apparent affluence of this traditionally second class community during the economic decline of the 1840s and 1850s. As eastern commerce declined, the haemmorage of specie to the west had reached such proportions in the late 1850s that local merchants were effectively prevented from purchasing European goods. This in turn hindered Muslim craftsmen in their competition with European textiles. The non-Muslim sector of the Damascene economy, on the other hand, had had new life infused into it by the hard currency generated by the export of Lebanese silk. Access to this capital, together with higher quality, cheaper European threads and exemption from local duties, had allowed the Christian-owned textile operations of Bab Tuma to dominate the shrinking Damascus market.59

Animosity against the Damascene Christians intensified at the end of the 1850s when commercial intermediaries began to dominate the lucrative field of government finance. Such financial assistance had become more important to the Damascene administration, whose deficit was accentuated by the gradual decline in the region’s traditional trade and industry. In 1857 the wali began issuing short-term bonds (serghis) as a means of alleviating this pressure. The serghis carried an interest rate of 2.5-3% per month, and were renewable yearly. Since the administration was unable to honour these bonds, or pay the interest they accrued, it instead issued hawalas to serghis-holders, entitling them to the tithe revenue of a particular village or district. If the villagers proved unable to pay the interest or principal of the loan to the serghis-holder, it was renewed on the village itself, at interest rates of 24-30% per year. Subject to the same fraudulent accounting practices and usurious interest rates common to iltizam, these villages soon

59 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 66-67, 70.
accumulated unpayable levels of debt. Though all Damascenes with sufficient capital invested in the serghis, the non-Muslim merchants' access to European finance ensured that they played the leading role in investing in the provincial debt. When it became known that the province's creditors included European protégés, and that they had even advanced loans to finance the Hajj in 1858, anti-Christian animosity became more strident. The promulgation of the Ottoman Land Code in that year worsened matters, since it raised the spectre of Ottoman Christians and Jews, and even Europeans, acquiring ownership rights over much of the wilayah's richest land through foreclosure.

These socio-economic uncertainties provided the material basis of the tensions that gripped Damascus in 1860. They, together with the factional rivalry of the Muslim notability and a number of short term causes—the reduction of the wali's contingent of regular troops, the refusal of prominent Damascene Christians to pay the bedel, and the previous weeks' disturbances in the Lebanon—culminated in the Bab Tuma massacre on 9 July of that year. Though material factors played a prominent role in sparking the Bab Tuma incident, the economic consequences of the massacre were even more profound.

The most significant consequence of the massacre was the decline Damascus suffered as a centre for textile production. The vast majority of the city's 3,000-odd Christian owned looms were destroyed in the riots, and thousands of the Christian merchants and artisans who survived emigrated to the Syrian coast, especially to Beirut. The Muslim sector of the economy was equally disrupted by Fuad Pasha's reprisals against

---

60 Schatkowshi-Schilcher notes that the Muslim religious notables rarely invested in the serghis. She speculates that they were kept from the more profitable forms of investment by the Shari'a's prohibitions on interest, thus leaving the market to the secular Muslim and Christian notables. Families, pp. 81-84; Owen, The Middle East, p. 169.

61 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 85.

62 Good discussions of the Bab Tuma incident may be found in Ma'oz, Ottoman Reform, pp. 231-240; Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 87-106; and Kamal Salibi, 'The 1860 Upheaval in Damascus as seen by al-Sayyid Muhammad Abu'l-Su'ud al-Hasibi, Notable and Later Naqib al-Ashraf of the City' in Polk and Chambers, Beginnings, pp. 185-202.
those leading families felt to be responsible for the riots. While individual notables were executed, exiled and arrested, their families suffered from fines, land confiscation, and wholesale conscription into the Ottoman army. Though most Damascene Christians who fled did not return, those who chose to stay in the city were rewarded with large sums in compensation, again at the expense of the Muslim notables.

This disruption of the Damascus economy served to reinforce its decline, like that of Syria's other interior entrepots, relative to such coastal cities as Beirut. The capital generated by the export of Lebanese silk, so important in bolstering the European-oriented sector of the Damascus economy, was a key factor in accelerating the rise of Beirut. Though the largest of Beirut's silk factories belonged to French nationals, an increasing number of them were owned by the Beiruti commercial families who dominated the city's import-export trade. Estimates have it that the value of Beirut's silk exports increased by over 400% between 1850 and 1856, which suggests that the amount of capital accruing to its commercial notability was considerable indeed. Their access to European, particularly French, capital and preferred terms of credit allowed them to strengthen their hold over the distribution of European commodities in the interior. Though the Beirutis did not completely monopolise this trade, the Damascene merchants who remained active had to obtain letters of credit from coastal financiers. These mal al-fatura merchants were generally consular protégés, but a number of them were Muslims.

The severity of Fuad Pasha's punishment of Damascus' notables in the wake of the Bab Tuma incident may be attributed to his desire to forestall any pretext for a European

---

63 Owen, The Middle East, pp. 169-170; Khoury, Urban Notables, p. 8; Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 106.
65 Details concerning the Beiruti families involved in the silk trade may be found in chapter two of this text.
66 Owen, The Middle East, p. 155.
intervention in the region. In this he was largely successful. While Druse atrocities against
Lebanese Christians contributed to the creation of an autonomous Mutasarrifiya of Mount
Lebanon, sponsored by the concert of Europe and guaranteed by the Réglement, the French
expeditionary force sent to protect Syrian Christians never penetrated beyond the environs
of Beirut.68 Fuad also meant to force the Damascus notables to adhere more strictly to the
letter of the Tanzimat reforms, especially with regard to the equality of the sultan’s Muslim
and non-Muslim subjects. His success in this regard was more equivocal. Though the
Muslim notables were more accommodating of reform after 1860, they seem to have
conceded few of their prerogatives. As long as those prerogatives were still enshrined in
the majlis al-idara it was the notables, not the wali, who controlled the shape of reform.
The Porte’s increasing competence in enforcing its will in the region doubtless did push the
notables to make this accommodation, but an equal incentive was provided by the material
benefits of cooperation. The instrument of notable co-optation was the 1858 Land Code.

Like so many Ottoman reform measures the 1858 Land Code was a means of
raising revenue for the state. It did so by registering the owners of the usufructory rights,
and thus the tax obligations, for given areas of state land. Implemented in Syria in the
1870s, the Code corresponded to the region’s deepening commercial depression.69 The
Code thus provided the Damascus tujjar (and the notables generally) with an outlet for
investment in lieu of trade and a new legislative framework within which to formalise their
rural landholdings.70 Though the acquisition of rural land by urban notables did progress

68 For discussions of the establishment and adjustments of the Mutasarrifiya, see Kamal Salibi, The
Modern History of Lebanon (New York: Praeger, 1965), pp. 106-119, and John P. Spagnolo, France and
69 Again the merchants who most suffered from this depression were the Muslim tujjar, whose
eastern trade and Hajj trade both sustained a heavy blow with the opening of the Suez canal in 1869. Owen,
The Middle East, p. 171; Issawi, Fertile Crescent, p. 6.
70 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 103-105; Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 26-28; Owen, The
Middle East, pp. 170-172. In his examination of the Shari’a court records of 1828 to 1880, James Reilly
was surprised to see how few purchases were recorded for the Damascus tujjar, though those recorded were
invariably above average in value. James A. Reilly, ‘Status Groups and Propertyholding in the Damascus
rapidly during the commercial depression of the 1870s, such acquisition had been ongoing among Damascus' Muslim notables since the middle of the eighteenth century: it was not caused by the Code itself.71

Also corresponding to the implementation of the Code was the local expansion of the reformed bureaucracy as a result of the decrees of 1864, 1867, and 1871, known collectively as the Vilayet Laws. Intended to rectify some of the provincial administrative problems arising in the wake of the Tanzimat, the laws generally sought to extend the powers of the wali while rendering the administration more representative. In this latter regard the majlis al-idara al-wilayah was supplemented by administrative and judicial councils at the district (sanjaq) and subdistrict (qaza) levels, and by a general assembly or majlis al-umumi at the provincial level. The 1871 legislation created new administrative offices and established municipal councils (majlis al-baladiya) in the Empire's major towns and cities. In practice, the Vilayet Laws did little to restrict the Syrian notables' administrative prerogatives. Though hypothetically empowered by these reform measures provincial governors were overturned at such a rapid rate in the latter Tanzimat years (and the Hamidian period generally) that the Damascus walis were usually ineffective counterweights to the majlis.72 The majlis al-umumi did not sit beyond the early 1870s and the franchise in the election of the various councils was so limited as to restrict participation to members of the landed notability; this restricted franchise was largely academic in any case, since elections to the councils tended to lapse, leading to multiple


72 A slight exception to this rule was the period of Midhat Pasha's governorship of Damascus. For discussions of this period see Shimon Shamir, 'Midhat Pasha and the Anti-Turkish Agitation in Syria', Middle East Studies, 10 (1974), pp. 115-141, and 'The Modernisation of Syria: Problems and Solutions in the early Period of Abdülhamid', in Polk and Chambers, Beginnings, pp. 351-381.
terms of office for incumbents. Weaknesses in application aside, the expansion of the 'reformed' bureaucracy arising from the Vilayet Laws greatly increased the notables' capacity to accumulate capital and land: it thus amounted to the extension of a field of accumulation alternative to that of commerce.73

Though the socio-economic consequences of the 1858 Land Code reflected the continuity of the region's development as much as the change, a more radical departure from earlier patterns was witnessed in 1867. In that year, the Porte announced an edict allowing foreign nationals, and therefore protégés who had adopted European citizenship, to own land in the Empire.74 This legislation corresponded to a period of unparalleled influence on the part of the protégé notability. As their latitude in the commercial field of accumulation approached that of their administrative counterparts in theirs, the protégé notability also assumed postings in the expanding bureaucratic networks of their patrons. Just as the administrative notables rose from councillors to officials, so did the commercial notables rise from dragomans to vice-consuls.75 By the 1870s, furthermore, these protégés had gone from acting as intermediaries for European traders to actually controlling the European trade themselves. In this regard, and like the Muslim notability, they were following a pattern established much earlier.

Syrian Christian merchants had begun displacing Europe's commercial factories at the end of the eighteenth century when conditions in Europe and Syria conspired to drive

73 Davison, Reform, pp. 143-149; Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 26-30 passim; Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 105.
74 A discussion of patterns of landownership among foreigners before 1867, and the fiscal motivations underlying this edict may be found in Davison, Reform, pp. 260-261. A breakdown of the frequency and size of the Christian (and Jewish) protégés' purchases may be found in Reilly 'Status Groups', pp. 524-527.
75 Haddad, Syrian Christians, p. 37 and n; Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 86; 89-90. Muslim members of Beirut's commercial notability also worked in the consular service, though usually in lower echelon jobs. An exceptional case was that of Abdallah al-Ghazi (d. 1898), who served as a British consular agent in Tripoli. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 82.
many western merchants out of the region. Not only did the Syrian protégés step into the vacuum, the more enterprising of them made use of the names and European trading connections of their former employers. These connections, and capitulatory privileges, gave the Christian protégés a distinct advantage over other Ottoman merchants, though, as noted, Muslims were never completely excluded from trade with Europe.

European traders had reestablished their hegemony in the Levant by the early nineteenth century, but the proliferation of local firms with independent links with Europe continued. These firms were able to sustain themselves with lower profit margins than their European competitors, and, without need of translators or local managers, could operate more cheaply as well.

Another advantage the local merchants had over the Europeans was in their ties to the Syrian hinterland. Traditionally inclined toward keeping the government at arm's length, Muslim and non-Muslim merchants preferred to conduct their trade informally, with members of the same family, or at least of the same community. This rendered their trade links with interior Syria rather exclusive. Furthermore, though Syrian Christians took full advantage of the privilege bestowed upon them by European merchants and consuls, they showed themselves more than willing to abandon one patron for another, including the Ottoman wali, when conditions were propitious.

---

77 See footnote #55.
78 An equally significant, but less quantifiable, advantage that Syrian merchants of all faiths had over their European competitors was in their possession of a mercantile sensibility and work ethic more in tune with the local environment. For anecdotal recollections of this facet of the Syrian tujar, see Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 68 and n.
79 Owen, The Middle East, pp. 55-56. Though, as we shall see, Syrian merchants grew willing to cultivate alliances with traders outside their religious community, their exclusion of European trading interests remained a constant.
80 In 1862, for instance, the firm of Nicolas Sursuq and Brothers (which had been under Greek protection for 20 years) claimed to be Ottoman subjects in order to avoid a law suit being pressed by C.P. Lascaridi, owner of another Levantine company based in Marseilles, with whom the Sursuqs had been in business for decades. Sursuq received the full support of the governor of Beirut in this endeavour. Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, p. 86 and n.
and capital continued to disseminate throughout Syria, the number of European agents decreased.

Since Britain was the single largest exporter to the region, the displacement of British merchants is especially striking. Of the five British merchant houses in Damascus in 1842, only one remained by 1849; by 1871, the Damascus house had shut, though there were still five others operating in Beirut. By 1873, only one of the Beiruti houses remained.81 The forward movement on the part of Syria’s merchants did not stop at the Levant coast. The 1870s saw an increasing number of Syrian merchants settle in Manchester and London to act as agents of family firms based in Beirut and Damascus.82 Once again this was not really a new development as Syrian merchants had been settling in such European trading cities as Marseilles, Leghorn, and Genoa, thereby undercutting the merchants of those cities, since at least the 1830s.83

For their part, Damascus’ Muslim tujjar had reinforced their trading networks with personal contacts throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.84 The cultivation of personal ties with those centres that provided the means of material advancement did not benefit the pursuit of commerce alone. Those notables who controlled the distribution of administrative authority in Syria (often the same ones who maintained trading ties with family members in other commercial centres) kept political agents in Istanbul.

Eighteenth century Damascene administrators maintained two distinct but related types of informal linkage with Istanbul. Probably the more important of these were the

81 Owen, The Middle East, p. 88; Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 86-88. Issawi might debate these figures for Damascus since he has found as many as seven British houses in that city in 1842, and only one less in 1848. Issawi, ‘British Trade’, p. 98.
82 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 69 and n. In 1848 the British consul in Beirut compiled a comprehensive list of the 29 Syrian firms that imported most British manufactures into that city; only three of these were Muslim. These firms shared four British agents, two of them (P. Hava and Company in London and Paul Crabbé in Manchester) being Beiruis. Issawi, ‘British Trade’, p. 98 and n.
84 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 138-206 passim. This was true of the 'Azm, 'Azma, Shatti, Umari, Kaylani, and Hisni families.
bonds of patron-clientage, or *intisap*, tying them to prominent officials in the Palace and the Porte. Such ties were vital to secure upward mobility in the bureaucratic and religious institutions and within the janissary corps. The manipulation of such contacts was not restricted to Istanbul appointees, but was practiced by local officials as well.\(^{85}\) A more mundane but no less important contact for the wali in Istanbul was the *kapikethüda*, the financial and political agent at the Porte. Though employed by the governor, the kapikethüda's role in servicing the wali's 'debts' demanded that he have access to large sums of independent capital; he thus tended to hold important positions in the command economy of the Empire.\(^{86}\) The literature does not indicate that the notables of eighteenth century Damascus availed themselves of the kapikethüda's services. The practicality of such services would certainly have been known to them, however, since the pre-eminent governing family of the eighteenth century, the 'Azms, remained part of the *local* socio-political power structure throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the notables' contacts with Istanbul were also being reinforced along familial lines. On one hand it became increasingly common in the post 1870 era for individual members of the Damascene notability to lobby the Porte for possession of political offices or ancestral land tenure rights.\(^{87}\) As the cultural and administrative presence of the central government were felt in Damascus, the patriarchs of notable families began to send members of the family to Istanbul for higher education. Pursued in order to ensure the families' access to higher administrative positions in the Imperial bureaucracy, the state education facilitated the *de facto*

---


87 Schatkowski-Schilcher, *Families*, pp. 138-212 *passim*. A course of action followed by the 'Azm, Yusuf, Abid; Bakri, Jundi, Mahasini, Manini, Halabi, 'Umari, Khatib; Khaylani, Ibn Hamza, Hisni; Mardam, and Jaza'iri families.
Ottomanisation of the Damascene administrative elite, resulting as it did in the acquisition of the Turkish language, and even in intermarriage with prominent Turkish families. 88

The Hamidian period (1876-1908) was very significant for the Syrian notability as it saw the expansion of both their commercial and administrative fields of accumulation. The increased commercial activity on the part of the notables was partly tied to the development, or partial revival, of Syrian industrial enterprise. It would be a mistake to assume that this investment was particularly entrepreneurial, however: the actions of the Beirutis and Damascenes, the commercial and administrative notables, were more often those of the rentier than the entrepreneur.

The most striking example of commercial-industrial expansion in late nineteenth century Syria was to be seen in the development of Lebanese sericulture. The Mountain’s silk production was funded by, and tied to, parent firms in Lyons and Marseilles. Thus, as Lyons’ silk weaving industry grew from the mid-1880s on, so did mulberry cultivation and cocoon production in the Lebanon. By the 1890s approximately half the cultivated area of the Mountain was devoted to mulberry trees, and 50% of Beirut’s export profits came from silk thread. However only one-fifth to one-third of the proceeds actually went to the owners of the mills, the rest being absorbed by French and Beiruti merchant-bankers as loan interest and fees. Despite these profits, there was little or no effort on the part of the owners, or the Beiruti merchants on whom they were dependent, to modernise the mills or expand their capacity. For the Beirutis, who consistently pursued investment options with the least risk, industrial expansion was far less attractive than moneylending to small producers. 89

When commercial depression struck the Lebanon around 1900, then, most

Beiruti capital reoriented itself to alternative fields of investment, whether this be land purchase in southern Syria or commercial enterprise in Egypt.90

The opening of new agricultural lands on the Syrian interior was of equal benefit to the notables of Damascus, as was the increased commercial activity that grew out of this development.91 Though grain-producing areas were brought under cultivation throughout Syria in the late nineteenth century, falling international wheat prices ensured that only those areas with infrastructural ties to the world economy could devote their surplus to export.92 This consideration made the grain production of the Hawran region of major importance to the Syrian economy at this time; it made those Damascenes who controlled the production and marketing of this produce very wealthy.93 The rejuvenation Damascus handicrafts experienced in the 1880s owed its origins (at least in part) to the growth in agricultural revenues from the hinterland. The success of the handicraft revival may be attributed to the producers' focussing upon both extremes of the regional market, that is cottons and woolens for the peasantry and silks and cottons, often with intricate silver and gold thread-work, for the local elite. Though contemporary consular correspondence encouraged the Lancashire mills to reproduce the cheap cottons, the luxury items were beyond their capacity.94

90 Owen, The Middle East, p. 253; Saba, 'The Creation', p. 21.
91 Owen, The Middle East, p. 254.
92 Linda Schilcher, 'The Grain Economy of Late Ottoman Syria and the Issue of Large Scale Commercialisation', Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East, Çaglar Keyder, et al. editors, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 173-195. The development of infrastructure was also of major significance to Beirut. Fears that the construction of a railway from Damascus to Haifa would usurp Beirut's position as the region's main port led to the construction of a Beirut-Damascus rail road, completed in 1891. The 1890s also saw major improvements to the city's harbour facilities. Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 69-72.
93 Owen, The Middle East, p. 259. It is interesting to note the symbiotic relationship that developed between Lebanese and Hawrani agriculture at this time. As the former became less capable of feeding its own population (a consequence of its specialisation in sericulture) it had to rely more and more upon the grain of the Hawran and the Biqa'. Thus, the regional demand for Hawrani produce rose and fell in proportion to the international demand for Lebanese silk. Kais Firro 'Silk and Socio-Economic Changes in Lebanon, 1860-1919' in Elie Kedourie, et al, Essays on the Economic History of the Middle East (London: Cass, 1988), p. 42.
94 Owen, The Middle East, pp. 261-262.
The revival of Damascus' commerce and industry in the Hamidian period corresponded to a reinforcement of the administrative field of accumulation, already augmented during the Tanzimat years. This reinforcement took the form of informal ties of intisap between the Palace and certain families of the Damascene notability (and the Syrian notables generally). The most visible manifestation of this patronage in the 1880s was the role played by Damascene notables in the promotion, financing, and execution of the Hijaz railway scheme.95 This patronage provided the material basis of Abdülhamid's pan-Islamic ideology, which sought to bind the Sultan's Arab subjects to him at a time when his Empire was increasingly becoming one of Turks and Arabs.96

The imposition of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration upon the Empire's financial administration in 1878 seems to have had only a marginal impact upon the notables' accumulation patterns. Beirut's notables took advantage of some limited tax concessions offered by the Caisse to promote silk cultivation.97 In Damascus, the Administration's exactions seemingly did more damage to the income of the provincial treasury than that of the notability. Already drained by the notables' unchecked absorption of the region's surplus and the expenses of the Hajj and the Army of Arabistan, the Damascus treasury was only further impoverished by the revenue demands of the Porte, now made insatiable by the Caisse.98

With the 1908 Young Turk Revolution the Syrians' administrative field of accumulation once again threatened to contract. Immediately after the revolution those Syrian Arab notables who had been key advisors to Abdülhamid were removed from office; the ra'is, qadi, mufti, and naqib al-ashraf of Damascus' administrative majlis either

---

95 Khoury, *Urban Notables*, pp. 36-38.
96 See Elgin D. Akarli, 'Abdülhamid II's Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System,' in Kushner, *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, (Jerusalem: Yad Ishak Ben-Zvi, 1986), pp. 74-89. The impact of this policy upon Damascus' religious notables is discussed in chapter two.
97 Saba, 'The Creation', p. 20.
resigned or were dismissed, as were a number of mutasarrifs, and the province was readied
for its first election in over a quarter century. The notables who had dominated the majlis
since the 1870s were not enthusiastic about any potential challenge to the status quo, and
the localist opposition to the CUP slate was elected.99 The Young Turks soon embarked
upon a programme of bureaucratic rationalisation which harkened back to the rigid
centralising imperatives of the Tanzimat. Explicitly designed to remove unprofessional
local elites from the bureaucracy, the CUP’s centralisation policies saw Arabic replaced by
Turkish as the language of administration, and Arab officials gradually replaced by Turkish
ones, even in such bastions as the Ministries of Justice and Awqaf.100 Notwithstanding
the increasing unpopularity of the CUP in Damascus, the local opposition was defeated in
the 1912 elections.101 Neither these election results, nor the bureaucratic contraction they
threatened, upset the established Ottomanist notability, however. Convinced to be less
opposed to the ‘Turkification’ policies of the Porte between 1908 and 1912, Damascus’
most powerful notable families remained in office up to, and during, the First World War
and, consequently, retained control over their administrative means of accumulation. The
notables who were shut out of administrative office coalesced around such underground
organisations as the Party for Administrative Decentralisation, thus forming the backbone
of the local opposition.102

The Beiruti response to CUP policies was similar, but not identical, to that of the
Damascenes. The Christian notability had had no sympathy for the Islamic vision of
Ottomanism advanced by Abdülhamid II, and they had found a community of interest with

99 Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 56-57.
100 Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 58-59.
101 For details see Rashid I. Khalidi, ‘The 1912 Election Campaign in the Cities of Bilad al-Sham’,
102 The quantitative groundwork for this finding is, of course, C.E. Dawn’s ‘The Rise of Arabism in
Syria,’ in From Ottomanism to Arabism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), pp. 148-179; an
updated version of these findings may be found in Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 62-74.
a number of Muslim notables who had been alienated by the Sultan's excesses. Now these notables opposed the CUP's rigid centralisation policies within the framework of the Beirut Reform Society.\(^{103}\) An even more significant threat to the Beirut's field of accumulation was the resurgence of European, particularly French, commercial competition in the region.\(^{104}\) First felt in the Hamidian period, this increasing French presence had taken on more political overtones in the CUP years and eventually resulted in Beiruti notables' gravitating to the Unionist camp.\(^{105}\)

As Ottoman Syria neared the brink of the First World War, then, the notables of Beirut and Damascus found themselves in oddly similar circumstances. They had benefited greatly by acting as agents for, and taking advantage of the deficiencies of, alien interests seeking to impose their hegemony upon the region. As their patrons neared the accomplishment of their goals, however, the deficiencies of the notables' position were becoming apparent. Foremost among these was the fact that, as intermediaries, the consolidation of their patrons' interests diminished the notables' capacity to actually resist them, and therefore to preserve their means of accumulation.

The commercial and administrative notables had more in common than their insecurities as middlemen. One of the ways in which they both benefited from advancing their patrons' interests was in the extension of their own economic interests beyond the city into the hinterland. They were both successful in seeing these interests served, despite differences in Beirut and Damascus' administrative relationship with their hinterlands, and

\(^{103}\) For the goals of the Society and the membership of the Beirut Reform Society Committee, see Michael Johnson *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1840-1985.* (London: Ithaca, 1986), pp. 16-17.

\(^{104}\) Between 1904 and 1910 the share of Lebanese silk exports controlled by French merchants went from 17.23% to 42.23%. Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, p. 76.

in the cities' institutional structures. Chapter two thus examines the nineteenth century rise of the notables within two contexts: the extension of urban hegemony into the hinterland, and the changes and continuities in the cities' institutional structures.
Chapter Two

THE NOTABILITY OF NINETEENTH CENTURY DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT: CITY AND HINTERLAND, PATRON AND CLIENT

The nineteenth century saw two distinct fractions of the urban notability develop in Syria: those who rose to prominence as intermediaries and eventually administrators for the reforming Ottoman government, and thus tended to be Sunni Muslim, and those who arose as mediators for European merchants and consular officials, and often took consular positions themselves, the most powerful of whom were Christian. Both fractions acquired privilege, wealth, and prestige through their cooperation with agents of non-Syrian interests. Though no centre in Syria was the exclusive preserve of either notable fraction, there were two cities in which each was unequivocally dominant. Damascus served as the centre of Syria’s aristocracy of service, but European economic penetration ensured that a significant enclave of protégés resided in that city. Similarly, Beirut was Syria’s pre-eminent centre for the non-Muslim notability and the western commerce that sustained them, but the basic fact of Ottoman sovereignty, and the resilience of a number of prominent Sunni Muslim merchant families, ensured that it remained Ottoman.

Chapter one sketched the rise of administrative and economic institutions, the control of which allowed certain families to ascend to, or maintain, notable status. In Damascus especially, many of the prerogatives that these reform institutions came to exercise had been fulfilled by older institutions that had arisen out of the region’s traditional political economy. Such traditional institutions were forced to adjust, and often to break down, under the pressure of Ottoman reform and European penetration. Successor institutions were formed under this pressure, and it is in their similarity that we see the growing similarity of the two cities. This chapter, then, addresses itself to the original differences and the increasing similarities between Beirut and Damascus. Section one
discusses the cities' relationships with their respective hinterlands, both administratively and socio-economically. Section two compares the two cities in terms of the social groups and institutions that rose, or did not rise, to dominate them. Like Schatkowski-Schilcher's work on Damascus in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this section will attempt to consider these social groups, the heirs of the Damascene estates and their cognates in Beirut, in terms of their ascending linkages with their patrons and their descending linkages with their clients.

**Beirut, Damascus, and their hinterlands**

It was vital for the consolidation of the urban administrative and commercial notability to be able to extend their economic interests into the rural hinterland. This extension reinforced the notables' wealth and therefore their social and political prominence, as increased wealth provided them with the means to preserve and extend patronage networks among the lower strata of urban society. Everywhere that the city's influence was felt, it effected the existing social, economic and political balance in the Syrian countryside. The Beirutis and Damascenes followed essentially the same pattern of economic expansion, though a number of factors made the process somewhat different in the two centres. Perhaps the most significant difference between Damascus and Beirut, given the importance of administrative prerogative in extending notable influence beyond the city, was their administrative relationships with their respective hinterlands.

Damascus' prominent position in the Islamic world antedates that of the Ottoman Empire and, throughout the history of that polity, Damascus was the primate city of

---

southern Syria. Its importance as an administrative centre was augmented by its role as the staging point of the Hajj, and as the interior entrepot of the Baghdad transit-trade. As a result of its significance to the Ottomans, Damascus usually had a modicum of control over its extensive hinterland of oasis and rain-fed plain. For its part, Beirut did not acquire its economic and administrative significance until the Egyptian occupation. Apart from its narrow coastal plain, the city’s hinterland was the Lebanon range, whose history (particularly that of the Druse region) was one of various degrees of autonomy, from the *Imarah* to the Mutasarrifiya.

As a result of these differing administrative arrangements, the subordination of rural to urban interests followed a different course in the hinterlands of Beirut and Damascus and it had a slightly different impact upon the residents of these hinterlands. The greatest differences are to be found in the elements being displaced or marginalised by the urban notables, the means by which they were subordinated to urban interests, and the elements that arose to succeed them. These differences are significant not only because they underline points of departure in the evolution of the two cities, but also because they had a certain influence upon the institutional development of Damascus and Beirut. This institutional development, which certainly was distinct, must be explained if the essential similarities of the cities’ social structures are to be understood.

In both hinterlands the displaced elements included rural notables who had cultivated administrative autonomy under the de-centralised Ottoman regime of the eighteenth century. The differences between these notable groups lay in their relative status and degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the Porte. In the Lebanon the amirs and *muqta’ajis* were pre-eminent in this regard. The administrative, judicial, and fiscal prerogatives of the

107 This administrative significance varied, with its status as provincial capital being stripped away from 1864 to 1888, when the wilayah of Beirut was absorbed into an enlarged wilayah of ‘Syria’, i.e. Damascus. J.P. Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1914*. (London: Ithaca Press, 1977), p. 112; Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, p. 21.
Imarah provided the closest approximation of European feudalism in the Fertile Crescent, and gave these rural notables *de jure* ownership of the land.\(^{108}\) The tribal and peasant groups of the Damascus hinterland also enjoyed a degree of autonomy, but unlike the amirs and the muqa'tajis the beduin and peasant shaykhs had neither *de facto* nor *de jure* rights over their peoples' land. Decades before the 1858 Land Code made it possible to register land ownership, the Syrian peasantry either had effective smallholding usufructory rights, or maintained the traditional system of communal land tenure (*musha*).\(^{109}\) Sedentary peasants and those nomadic tribes without the advantage of a mountain retreat consistently had their autonomy impinged upon by the Ottomans, and they fell under the control of the reforming Ottoman regime sooner, and more utterly, than did the Lebanese.

The juridical bonds between peasant and rural notable were reinforced by more informal ties, though the affinities that these vertical linkages followed were different in the two hinterlands. The quasi-feudal relationship that existed between the Lebanese muqa'tajis and their peasantry in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (*ismiya* or *sumiya*) was essentially secular, tending to cut across religious and ethnic lines.\(^{110}\) On the other hand, the various communities of the Syrian plains were bound together, and to their leadership, by ties of ethnic, linguistic, and religious solidarity ('*asabiya*). Ottoman reform sought to dissolve the ethno-linguistic and religious cleavages dividing the Empire’s communities, and thus to marginalise the significance of '*asabiya* (and *ismiya*) in favour of a single loyalty to the sultan. But, as noted, the gulf between intention and impact in such matters was usually a broad one.

---

109 For a discussion of land tenure in southern Syria, where musha seems to have been most prevalent, see Gerber, *Social Origins*, pp. 75-82.
During the Tanzimat period the Lebanese peasantry saw the effective dissolution of the socio-economic and political privileges of the amirs and muqta'ajis, and with them their secular loyalties to these notables. But, as a consequence of the consolidation of the Maronite Church and the principle of communal representation (in the Dual Qa'imaqamiya and Mutasarrifiya), ismiya came to be replaced by 'asabiya as the force bonding the Lebanese people: that is, cross-sectarian loyalty to the rural notable was replaced by loyalty to the leadership of the religious community. Even in that part of Syria which was in close proximity to Damascus, it is questionable to what degree the bonds of 'asabiya were actually dissolved by Ottoman reform. Where it remained a force in the lives of the Syrian peasantry, in fact, 'asabiya proved resilient to the forces of urbanisation, and it remained a potential force to be utilised by the cities' popular leadership.

The manner in which the Damascenes and Beirutis subordinated their hinterlands was conditioned by their respective means of accumulation. Three means were available to the notables to extend their interests into the hinterland: iltizam (effectively monopolised by the urban notables after 1860); the extension of usurious capital into the countryside; and the opening of new lands that resulted from increased European and Ottoman demand for Syrian raw materials, and the consequent commercialisation of dry agriculture.

In the province of Damascus iltizam and usury were intimately related to the process of agricultural commercialisation. Here where the multazim, usurer, and merchant worked together to ensure maximum remuneration on their investment, the pattern of indebtedness, foreclosure, and purchase among the peasantry of the semi-arid plains was

---

112 The opening of new land by means of simple purchase cannot be dealt with in any great detail here. Its significance to the urban notability should not be underestimated, however, given the impetus provided by the commercialisation of grain production, and the increasing importance of the Syrian tithe to Ottoman revenues in the late nineteenth century. It proved as significant for the Beirutis as the notables of Damascus, as is witnessed in the famed Sursuq purchases on the Plain of Esdraelon. See Gerber, Social Origins, pp. 79-80, and Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, p. 67.
all too familiar. The Land Code of 1858 seems to have facilitated, but not essentially altered, this process. It saw the displacement of the peasants’ rights, whether musha, family, or individual title, in favour of that of the urban notables, with the former being reduced to the status of métayer. In the process, the administrative and social position of the rural shaykhs was marginalised, as urban notables were consistently able both to outbid them in the auctions for iltizam, and to wield the superior means of coercion needed to enforce their ascendancy. Their control over iltizam provided the Damascene notables with a primary pool of capital to use in the purchase of land when the commercialisation of agriculture made it profitable to do so in the 1870s.

The manipulation of usurious capital had long been felt in the Beiruti hinterland and, as in Damascus, it was associated with the commercialisation of agriculture, specifically sericulture. Unlike the Damascenes, for whom usury had always been complemented by their monopoly over rural iltizam, the Beirutis were separated from the Lebanon’s fiscal regime by its de facto autonomy under the Mutasarrifiya. Nevertheless the Beirutis’ pre-eminent position in the Mountain’s commercial and financial

---

114 Owen, *The Middle East*, pp. 255-256; Gerber, *Social Origins*, pp. 82-84. This pattern of displacement was probably not universal. In the Ghuta, for example, there was more evidence of smallholding among townsmen and villagers than there was on the plains. Reilly, ‘Status Groups’, pp. 523-524. Though urban interests did expand on the semi-arid plains at the expense of traditional landholding patterns, and though grain production did increase in the latter nineteenth century, these developments may not have been equally significant for all of Syria’s fellahin. Schilcher suggests that much of Syria’s peasantry was able to preserve its traditional landholding rights because slumping international grain prices between the 1870s and the 1890s were sufficient to divert some urban investment to directions other than land. Schilcher, ‘The Grain Economy’, pp. 190-194. Also see Gerber’s reassessment of the role of the 1858 Code in the marginalisation of the peasantry of Greater Syria, in *Social Origins*, chapter five, passim.

115 Reilly, ‘Status Groups’, pp. 524 and 530. He notes that though the purchase of rural lands was dominated by Ottoman officials in the 1860s and 1870s, consular protégés also made significant purchases in the period after 1867. Notwithstanding these purchases, the protégés’ rural land acquisition seems to have come out of foreclosure on loans to the provincial government. Reilly, ‘Status Groups’, pp. 525-526.

116 For a discussion of the dissemination of usurious capital in the Lebanon, see Saba ‘The Creation’, pp. 8-10.
life was reinforced by the authority of Beirut’s commercial majlis over the Lebanon, and the latter’s continuing dependence upon the former’s port facilities.117

The overwhelming impact of silk production on the economy of the Lebanon ensured that its notables were marginalised in a rather different manner than those of Damascus’ hinterland. Notwithstanding the Mountain’s administrative autonomy from the wilayah of Beirut, Lebanese sericulture was financed and marketed (and thus controlled) by Beiruti merchant-bankers, acting independently or as brokers for interests in Lyons and Marseilles. In the early nineteenth century there had been inhibitions to this development, particularly the ‘iqta relations that had traditionally governed the socio-political and economic life of the Lebanon. The Lebanese amirs and muqta’ajis had been in decline since the reign of Bashir II, however, and had had their judicial and fiscal autonomy effectively curtailed with the establishment of the Mutasarrifiya.118 The marginalisation of the ‘old feudality’ had simply been completed by the force of Beiruti capital penetration.119

Because the administrative and economic pressure upon the Lebanese notability came from two sources, the policies of the Mutasarrifiya and Beiruti capital, the successors to the rural notability in the Lebanon were different from those in the Damascus hinterland. In the latter, the indebtedness of the peasant smallholder had been accentuated by the decline of Damascene handicrafts. Without this source of urban labour to augment their income, the peasant-cultivators lacked sufficient means to cover their mounting debts to the

---

Foreclosure was inevitable. In the Lebanon, on the other hand, integration into the world economy and the industrialisation that resulted from sericulture saw the creation of a money economy. With enough ready capital to invest in land, Christian families of the Mountain became smallholders, or, when land was wanting and economic pressure increased, emigrated. Many Lebanese emigrated as far as Europe and the Americas, which was clearly beyond the means of most Syrian Muslim peasants, but many more Lebanese settled in Beirut. This pattern of migration was mirrored by the continued movement of Syrian peasants to Damascus, though the city was not necessarily able to absorb their numbers.

Once settled in the city, conditions for migrants to Beirut and Damascus appear to have been rather similar. The oldest quarters of Damascus are more readily contrasted with Beirut than compared, but traditionally migrants did not settle in the old city because tight guild control made it difficult or impossible to find work there. As early as the eighteenth century, then, migrants began settling in al-Maydan, a network of subquarters lying between the Hawran and the core of the old city which was relatively free from the influence of the artisanal guilds. Beirut’s population increase may also be attributed to its rural in-migration; like the Maydan (and unlike Damascus proper) there was an apparent want of guild structures to organise these rural migrants. If the asnaf existed in Beirut before its rise as an entrepot for European commodities, they seem to have been

---

120 Baer, 'Village and City', p. 80. See also Farouk-Sluglett, 'Some Preliminary Observations', pp. 414-415.
121 Firro, 'Silk', pp. 35-42; Saba, 'The Creation', pp. 3-4, Issawi, Fertile Crescent, p. 287.
122 Baer, 'Village and City', p. 79.
124 The best discussion of the role of migration in the growth of Beirut is in Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 28-60.
crushed under the weight of these commodities. As a locus of migrant settlement, Beirut shared a number of other features with al-Maydan. Prominent among these was the odd combination of assimilation and segregation that seemingly characterised the migrants’ patterns of settlement.

Early in the nineteenth century the quarters of Beirut and the subquarters and alleys of the Maydan were heterogeneous in so far as the inhabitants’ occupations and socio-economic status were mixed; they were homogeneous in that migrants tended to settle where the residents had a common ethnicity, language, religion and/or regional origin. Maydani migrants continued to identify themselves in terms that differentiated them from mainstream Damascus society, and implicitly from each other, by settling in distinct sub-quarters and neighbourhoods just as Beiruti Christians and Muslims separated themselves by quarter. As the nineteenth century progressed and the quarters expanded, however, there was an increasing incidence of Muslims and Christians, and immigrants from various regions, buying properties in close proximity to one another. Indeed some of the alleys of al-Maydan that had quartered the Maghribis, Turkmans, and Hawranis seem to have disappeared as they were integrated into surrounding neighbourhoods. Beirut and the Maydan were also alike in that (up to mid-century in any case) this reinforcement of the ethno-religious solidarities that bound their communities together did not necessarily lead to

---

125 For a discussion of the Damascene guilds in the 1880s see ‘Ilyas Qudsi on the Craft Organisations of Damascus in the Late Nineteenth Century’ in A Way Prepared, Farhad Kazemi, et al, editors, (New York: New York University Press, 1988), pp. 80-106. There were workers’ organisations that benefitted from Beirut’s role as the pre-eminent Syrian entrepot for European goods, and that city’s monopoly vis-à-vis Lebanese imports and exports. The most prominent among these were the lightermen, but there seems to have been no work done on this group. The most recent non-discussion of the organisation of Beirut’s nineteenth century workforce is in Ozeren, ‘The Making’, pp. 61; 220-221.
126 Similarly, in the 1830s the clientele of Damascus’ suqs was determined ‘as much by factors of kinship, neighbourhood ties, ethnic, or religious solidarity as by competition in the selection, quality, or prices of the goods offered....’ Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 64-65.
The rule of mutual tolerance only seems to have been broken during times of political crisis, and when the social dislocations of the late nineteenth century (a result of the intensification of rural migration) made such amity difficult to maintain.

Over the course of the nineteenth century Beirut and Damascus did not develop a perfectly parallel relationship with their respective hinterlands, but increasing similarities are evident because both cities were effected by administrative reform and capital penetration—albeit to differing degrees. The previous chapter noted that the notables of the two cities benefited greatly from their manipulation of commercial and administrative capital. Such manipulation tended to have more or less the same socio-economic impact upon the cities’ respective hinterlands, regardless of which type of capital the notables had at their disposal. In turn, notwithstanding different administrative relationships with their immediate environs, Beirut and Damascus were both greatly effected by immigration from their rural hinterlands. Consequently considerable similarities can be seen among the lower strata of both cities.

Beirut and Damascus’ relative periods of ascendency, the forces impelling their rise, their relationship with their hinterlands, and the process by which their hinterlands were subdued to urban interests correspond to the divergences in the cities’ pre-nineteenth century institutional development. The social forces contained within these disparate

---

128 Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, p. 108; Rafeq, ‘Bab al-Musalla’, pp. 304. It is noteworthy that throughout the Bab Tuma massacres of 1860 the Maydan’s Christian community in Bab al-Musalla was protected by the Muslim aghawat of the quarter—Salim and Salih Agha al-Mahayni, Umar Agha al-‘Abid, and Sa'id Agha Nuri. Though Maydani para-militaries did initially join in the carnage in Bab Tuma, they soon returned to Bab al-Musalla to stand by their aghawat, a fact that testifies equally to the bonds of loyalty tying the aghawat to their rank-and-file. See pages 53-57 of this text. Khoury, *Urban Notables*, p. 25.

institutions, which may be characterised as products of patron-client relations on one hand and rural-urban migration on the other, were not essentially different. Different actors tended to dominate the Beiruti stage than in Damascus, but they were from the same cast, followed the same script, and performed the same roles as the players in Damascus. These different actors, their roles, and their common script, are the subject of the next section.

The Damascene estates and their Beiruti counterparts in the long nineteenth century

It has already been noted that neither Beirut nor Damascus were the exclusive preserve of Muslims or Christians, of an administrative or a commercial notability. To say that the urban notables of Beirut and Damascus were simply merchants and bureaucrats who acquired landed interests would also be an oversimplification. Though the market and the bureaucracy were the main means by which they accumulated material wealth, individual notable families attained control over these means of accumulation by a number of different routes. In the classical Ottoman Empire the route to material accumulation tended to pass through either the military or the religious institution, which is apparent from an examination of the power centres in eighteenth and nineteenth century Damascus. In Beirut, a less Muslim city with a shorter history of military importance to the Ottomans, the significance of the traditional institutions of upward mobility is less obvious than those of the mid-to-late nineteenth century—trade and finance.

This dichotomy between the two cities is not as broad as it seems. Though the classical Ottoman religious and military institutions (so central to the socio-political balance of Damascus) were more diminutive, or non-existent, in Beirut, this city often did have cognate institutions and social groups. In fact, the ties forged between Paris, London, Istanbul and the merchants and administrators of Beirut and Damascus tended to be antedated by connections between these capitals and the cities' religious institutions. As
power centres the cities' religious institutions remained in a state of flux throughout the long nineteenth century, as did the 'informally armed' elements of the population. This flux was caused by the rise of new administrative and economic institutions, discussed in the first chapter, and by the related changes to the urban fabric caused by the immigration discussed in the previous section. The next section, then, will examine the alterations in the institutional and social structure of Beirut and Damascus from two perspectives: the notables' relationship with the source of their authority, and their relations with the mass of the population.

**ascending linkages and institutional structures**

It is in terms of their relations with their patrons that the traditional Damascene estates, and their counterparts in Sunni Muslim Beirut, experienced the greatest degree of disruption in the course of the nineteenth century. The cognates of these estates that existed for non-Muslim Beirutis and Damascenes were influenced by parallel or diverging forces depending on the Christian denomination, and thus the European patron, to which they ascribed. This caused the nineteenth century development of these cities' social institutions to be either parallel or radically divergent.

**the religious estates**

Centralising reformers from Mahmud II to the Young Turks sought to reduce the independent material base—and thereby the social and political influence—of the religious estates. The consolidation of Istanbul’s influence over Damascus’ (and Syria’s) Sunni Muslim religious institution antedated the nineteenth century reforms, however, and may be dated from the seventeenth century. This consolidation was seen at two levels. At one level the city’s main religious offices, especially that of the khatib of the Umayyad mosque, the Hanafi mufti, and the naqib al-ashraf, came to be dominated by those families who had
connections with officials in Istanbul. Another indicator of the Ottomanisation of the Damascene ulama was the dominant families’ adoption of the Hanafi madhhab at the expense of the Shafi'i. In the mid-seventeenth century eight of Damascus’ sixteen main religious families were Shafi'i (with two being Hanbali and six Hanafi). At the end of the eighteenth century, twelve of the remaining fourteen families had turned, partially or completely, to the Hanafi madhhab.

The Damascus estates were never hermetically sealed institutions. Many Damascene ulama and ashraf families found their origins among, and remained active as, tujjar. Since traditionally there were more means of protecting familial wealth among the religious estates than were available to the tujjar, the tendency for wealthy merchant families to pursue scholarly training is perhaps not surprising. As Ottoman reform and economic realignment began to dissolve the estates as meaningful political classifications, the lines between them grew more indistinct. Notable families of the late nineteenth century tended to present themselves as members of several estates at once. Though none of Damascus’ notables could match the diffuse influence of the Amir 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri, who occupied prominent positions in the ulama, ashraf, sufi, tujjar and para-military estates, it became increasingly common for ulama families with a noble pedigree to patronise or head various sufi orders. The nineteenth century consolidation of the city’s religious estates was further reflected in the combination of the offices of naqib al-ashraf and the shaykh al-mashayikh (that is the executives of the ashraf, sufi, and artisanal

---

131 Voll, ‘Old Ulama Families’, pp.56-57; Barbir, Ottoman Rule, pp. 81-83; Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 119-120.
133 Unlike that of the other estates, the property of the ulama, especially if it took the form of awqaf, was traditionally above taxation and confiscation. Roded, ‘Tradition and Change’, pp. 187-188.
134 Jaza'iri and his family are discussed in more detail later in the chapter. For a prosopographical sketch, see Khoury, Urban Notables, p. 34; Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 215-218.
estates) in one person, or at least in two members of the same family.\textsuperscript{135} This melding of offices and resources did not seem to delay the marginalisation of the religious notables, however. In fact, the consolidation corresponded to the loss of many of these offices’ traditional prerogatives to the majlis al-baladiya, which (like the other reform institutions) was increasingly dominated by the secular a’yan.\textsuperscript{136} Administration of public awqaf did remain in the hands of the ulama, though it too was gradually being infiltrated by the secular notables. Furthermore, as the population of Damascus, and demands upon the city’s charities, increased after 1860 the revenues accruing to the ulama from awqaf administration decreased drastically.\textsuperscript{137}

During the Hamidian period it appeared as though the dissolution of the religious estates, and the usurpation of their privileges by the reformed bureaucracy, would be reversed as state patronage to the ulama, ashraf and sufi estates was officially renewed. It is generally recognised that, while establishing an extra-governmental patronage network from the Palace to individual families, this official resuscitation of the estates system did not repair, or even check, the corrosive effect of the Tanzimat upon the religious institutions’ legal, educational and administrative prerogatives.\textsuperscript{138} Rather, this patronage, and the pan-Islamic ideology that overlay it, merely suffocated the religious notables’ objections to their economic marginalisation, which remained ongoing throughout. With the Young Turk Revolution, this patronage network was replaced by another one with more secular overtones, radiating from the officers dominating the CUP.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{135} There is evidence of this sort of familial consolidation in Beirut as well, where Shaykh Muhammad al-Agharr is said to have held the posts of qadi, Hanafi mufti, and naqib al-ashraf simultaneously. Johnson, \textit{Class and Client}, p. 69.

\textsuperscript{136} Though ulama were occasionally elected to the municipal and district majlis, none were elected to the majlis al-idara between 1870 and 1900. Khoury, \textit{Urban Notables}, p. 30.


\textsuperscript{139} Roded, ‘Tradition and Change’, pp. 198-199.
Thus, the balance of the Ottoman period did not see the economic integrity of the ulama and ashraf reinforced, but further weakened as individual families had to adjust themselves to the new means of accumulation embodied in the reformed bureaucracy. Those Damascene families who maintained their position among the cream of the local elite, while remaining active within the religious institution, tended to form marriage alliances with non-religious families who had accumulated large tracts of land through their administrative activities. Other notables of the religious estates simply devoted less of their energy to the pursuit of religious posts and turned to the bureaucracy and commerce as a means of capital accumulation.

The nineteenth century thus saw the progressive marginalisation of the religious estates and the growing precedence of material wealth over pedigree and scholarly credentials in determining notable status. The estate classifications themselves also became less significant to the dominant families of the ulama and ashraf as they intermarried with each other and with families from the aghawat and tujjar estates. By the late nineteenth century, then, the Damascene estates had dissolved in favour of a complex system of marriage alliances which cut across estate lines, and presaged the families' consolidation into a single class. Little is known about the Sunni religious notables of Beirut, let alone the impact of the Tanzimat and Hamidian periods upon them. However there is evidence that the scholarly and commercial notables of that city also consolidated their status through intermarriage.

140 In addition to the Jaza'iris, who acquired massive landed estates without such marriage alliances, these families included the Ghazzis, 'Ajlanis, Kaylanis, and Hasibis, and, to a lesser extent, the Attars, Hamzis, Mahasinis, Ustwanis, and Muradis. Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 31-34; Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 160-65, 169-74, 181-86, 194-204, 209-211, 215-218.
141 These families included the Bakris, Ayyubis, Malikis, Halabis, and 'Umaris. Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 34-35; Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 156-60, 188-91.
142 Johnson, Class and Client, p. 69. The marriage and business alliances of the Damascene and Beirut notables is discussed in greater detail in chapter three.
Corresponding to the Ottomisation of the Damascene (and Beiruti) ulama and ashraf was the Catholic Church’s missionary activity within the Ottoman Christian community. The Church first entrusted the Jesuits with the task of winning over Ottoman Christians to the Catholic fold in the late sixteenth century. Their representatives began appearing among the Maronites in the 1620s and by the second half of the seventeenth century the Maronites, who had never officially been integrated into either of the Orthodox millet hierarchies, were brought into a close orbit around Rome.143 The Empire’s Greek Orthodox (Melkite) community was soon infiltrated by Catholic missionaries, and by 1724 a Uniate Melkite (Greek Catholic) Patriarchate had been established, to be administratively recognised by the Porte in 1839.144 This paper is not interested in the doctrinal loyalties of Syria’s Christian communities, but in the material benefits derived from these loyalties. In this regard, a direct relationship can be seen between the material motivations underlying conversion from Orthodox to Catholic (or Protestant) Christianity, namely the barat of European protection, and those that seem to have compelled the Damascene ulama and ashraf to adopt the Ottoman madhhab.145

Though the Uniate clergy and the Sunni religious estates were alike in the consolidation of ties to their patrons, this consolidation had opposite long term material consequences for them. Rather than being economically marginalised at the hands of the secular a’yan, as the ulama and ashraf had been, the Maronite clergy was actually liberated from the influence of the Lebanon’s secular rural notability.146 The process of internal reform that was sparked by closer ties with Rome had as one of its goals the Church’s economic independence from these rural notables. The result of this economic imperative

143 Haddad, Syrian Christians, pp. 17-23.
145 A discussion of the material underpinnings of the Melkite elite’s conversion to Catholicism may be found in Haddad, Syrian Christians, pp. 32, 36-49.
146 A discussion of the domination of the Maronite church by the Lebanese amirs and muqta’ajis may be found in Harik, Politics and Change, pp. 83-84.
was that by the end of the eighteenth century the Maronite Church had become the wealthiest organisation in the Lebanon.147

The Melkite (or Greek Orthodox) community, the dominant Christian sect in Beirut and Damascus throughout the nineteenth century, had been the main victim of Catholic conversion since the sixteenth century. Not surprisingly, then, the Melkites had a rather different relationship with Europe and Istanbul than their Maronite and Greek Catholic counterparts.148 Imperial Russia did cast itself in the role of protector of the Syrian Melkites, and barats of protection were issued by the Russians. Orthodox ties to Russia were more belated and equivocal than France’s Catholic protectorate, however, and the Russians did not pursue their benevolence in Syria with the same aggressive diligence as the French.149 As far as the ecclesiastical hierarchy is concerned, the continued authority of the Patriarch of Istanbul over the Orthodox community, and the residence of most of that community within the Empire proper (as opposed to protected enclaves like the Lebanon), leads one to assume that there was a secularisation of control within the Orthodox community resulting from the Tanzimat reforms (particularly millet reform).150 In short there seems to have been a marginalisation of the role of Greek Orthodox clerics to parallel the marginalisation of the Sunni ulama.151

_The para-military estate_

---

148 For statistics on the changing confessional ratios of Beirut throughout the long nineteenth century see Fawaz, _Merchant and Migrants_, pp. 44-52.
149 See Caroline Attié ‘The Greek Orthodox Community in Lebanon: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives’ (MA. Thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1988). For specific examples of Beirut families receiving Russian patronage see Fawaz, _Merchant and Migrants_, pp. 87-95.
150 In this regard see Ma'oz, _Ottoman Reform_, pp. 202-203; Davison, _Reform_, pp. 52-59.
151 Though this assumption cannot be proven, it does suggest an additional structural reason for the marginal role of sectarian ideologies among the Greek Orthodox in independent Lebanon. See Attié ‘The Greek Orthodox’, pp. 49-71.
The transformation of the aghawat began with Mahmud II’s decapitation of the janissary institution in 1826. In so far as both Syria’s imperial troops (qapi-qul) and its local auxiliaries (yerliya) benefitted from asker’ privileges in the early nineteenth century, such privileges effectively ceased to exist in this year. But the aghawat remained able to mobilise a para-military force to promote their interests long after the janissary corps’ dissolution. Indeed, their continuing position of influence in Syria was largely derived from their domination, if not monopoly, of the local means of coercion. In the Tanzimat era, the para-militaries took advantage of the Porte’s endemic budgetary problems to receive recognition as irregular police or mounted gendarmerie. Clearly, however, the significance of the aghawat in the development of Damascus’ social structure rested not in its institutional longevity, but in its informal relations with the lower strata of urban society, relations which antedated the janissary institution itself.

The aghawat were not a force in Beirut in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is likely that, as an institution, the janissaries simply never had an opportunity to gain a foothold in the coastal province, much less infiltrate its socio-economic fabric as its members had in Damascus. The reasons for this stem from Beirut’s insignificance to the Ottomans before 1826. Another reason was accessibility. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the Aleppine janissaries shared power with the local ashraf and when the janissaries were important power brokers in ‘Azm Damascus, the precursor to the Wilayah of Beirut, the Eyalet of Saida, was controlled by the mamluk household of Jazzar

152 Studies of nineteenth-century Syria reveal urban para-military elements to have been dominated by janissary veterans throughout the Tanzimat period, and it appears as though they played a key role in the disturbances in Aleppo in 1850. Ma’oz, *Ottoman Reform*, pp. 102-107; Chevallier, ‘Western Development’, p. 219.
154 Discussed later in this chapter.
Thus, the classical Ottoman military institution was alien not only to Beirut but to the entire Ottoman coastal province in this period.

**descending linkages: migration, social integration, and mobilisation**

The traditional role Damascus' notables played between the urban masses and the representatives of the Porte has been described in terms of a tightrope walk. Their position as intermediaries depended upon the Porte’s recognising them as the ‘natural leaders’ of the urban population. At the same time, the notables had to be careful that they not be seen as siding too closely with the interests of the authorities, lest they lose their legitimacy in the eyes of their clients.

The notables’ relationship with the urban masses seems to have altered after 1860 when, compelled into co-optation, they leaned more heavily upon Istanbul to maintain their power, and gradually distanced themselves from the interests of their clients. This process of mass alienation from the notables was one of the inevitable by-products of elite class consolidation. The alienation of the urban masses from the urban notability may not have been as straightforward, nor as complete, as this view assumes.

Compared to our knowledge of their Damascene counterparts in this regard, little is known about the Beiruti notables’ relationship with their urban masses. Notwithstanding the obvious material differences between these two cities in the nineteenth century,
similarities do seem to have existed between the masses of Beirut and Damascus. These similarities stemmed from the role of rural migration in augmenting the population of both cities in the nineteenth century. Of special significance was the relationship that existed between these migrants and the heirs of the para-military and popular religious estates, who continued to play a role in these cities beyond the Ottoman period.

_the religious estates_

Some distinctions may be made between the institutional and social roles of the various religious estates of Sunni Damascus. While the ulama were the standard-bearers of Sunni orthodoxy, the educators and the judges, the sufis were the masters of the mystical path of Islam which was so popular among the urban masses, particularly the rural migrants on the fringes of society. The decline of the ulama’s economic and political influence was marked by the Tanzimat reforms, which saw them marginalised by the secular a’yan, and Damascus’ increasing population, which put considerable strain on their major resource base, the city’s public awqaf. Some of the sufi orders were sponsored by the state, and many others came to be dominated by the increasingly marginalised vocational ulama. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the sufis were also marginalised in this period. The ulama’s small number of large awqaf, which seem to

---

161 Many of Damascus’ ulama and ashraf families seem to have maintained ties of some sort with at least one sufi order or another. The ties that have been found in the literature are as follows: the Bakris (the Khalwatiyya); the Muradis (the Naqshbandiyya); the Bitars (the Sa’diyya); the Ghazzis (the Shaybaniyya, Naqshbandiyya, Khalwatiyya, and Qadiriyya); the Hanbalis (the Shaybaniyya); the Shattis (the Naqshbandiyya); the ‘Umariyya (the Khalwatiyya and the Qadiriyya); the Khatibs (the Shadiliyya); the Kaylanis (the Qadiriyya); the Ajlanis (the Rifa‘iyya); the Hisnis (the Safarjalaniyya and the Rifa‘iyya); and the Jaza‘iris (the Qadiriyya).
162 Schatkowski-Schilcher, _Families_, pp. 164-165; Khoury, _Urban Notables_, pp. 15-16, 30. This is not to suggest that individual sufi families were oblivious to the process of Ottomanisation. Roded notes that those shaykhs who rose to prominence among the notability tended to lose contact with the urban masses as they gravitated to more remunerative offices in the secular and religious administration. Also, Damascus’ most prominent orders, especially the Rifa‘iyya and the Sa’diyya, were made subservient to the state during the Hamidian period. Roded, “Tradition and Change”, pp. 243-246.
have been brought under central government control with relative ease, are to be contrasted with the multitude of small endowments which financed the sufi lodges.\footnote{163} This diffusion of the sufis' wealth would have made the central government's acquisition of control over it rather more difficult, and perhaps left the lodges with more autonomy. Also, the rural migration and social dislocation that had traditionally sustained the ranks of the sufis intensified in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; thus, social changes that acted as a drain upon the resources of the ulama may have strengthened the sufis.

The rural migration that sustained the sufi lodges of Damascus was also characteristic of Beirut in the late nineteenth century, but any discussion of Beiruti immigration must take into account the religion and the origin of the migrants. While Damascus received some Christian immigration from the Hawran region, Beirut's proximity to Mount Lebanon and the events of 1860 ensured that the overwhelming proportion of migrants to that city were Christian.\footnote{164} Christian religious institutions almost certainly played a significant role in the integration of these migrants into the urban community. \textit{How} the migrant was integrated probably varied with religion. For the Beiruti Maronites, for instance, the church was not centred in the city but on the Mountain. Thus, for this denomination, the centre of balance between Beirut and the hinterland leaned more towards the hinterland than was the case for Beiruti, and Damascene, Muslims. A factor which strengthened the hold of the hinterland (and the clergy) over Beiruti Maronites was the autonomous material wealth, and commensurate political influence, that the Maronite church had attained by the nineteenth century, while the Sunni Muslim religious institution was being subordinated to Istanbul, both financially and politically.\footnote{165} Still,
there is no convenient cognate for the sufi orders among either the Maronite or the Melkite Christians of Beirut. 166

The sufis may have played a significant role in integrating Muslim migrants to Beirut in the early nineteenth century, but there is little discussion of them in the scholarship. 167 By the Hamidian period the integration of Beirut’s migrants was taken up by religious agencies, but within an altered institutional structure. The first efforts to re-institutionalise the distribution of charity may be seen in Beirut’s Christian community, whose notables began founding schools and hospitals for their clients in the 1860s. In 1878 the city’s most prominent Sunni commercial and administrative families came together to form the Beirut Society of Benevolent Intentions, the Maqasid. 168 The Maqasid was originally established as an educational charity that later diversified into other social welfare services. Accused of seditious activities, the Society was closed by the Ottomans in 1881, its educational activities assumed by the majlis al-idara. It was allowed to reopen after the 1908 revolution but was closed again in 1912, not to reopen its doors until 1918. Whether it was an agency of sedition or not, when allowed to exist, it embodied the distribution of patronage to Beirut’s Sunni Muslim community, and influence within the Maqasid became a prerequisite for status within that community. 169

Mountain maintained its autonomy throughout the nineteenth century, Beirut was kept administratively subordinate to Damascus until 1888.
166 The sufis did have a counterpart of sorts among rural Maronites in the Lebanese Reform Order of Monks, who represented a popular version of Catholicism that stood in contrast to that of the Maronite secular priesthood. Harik, Politics and Change, pp. 156-159.
167 An undisclosed member of the Fakhuri family had been the leader of an unnamed sufi order in the nineteenth century. Johnson, Class and Client, p. 55.
168 The representatives of these families were Hasan Bayhum, Bashir al-Barbir, Muhammad al-Fakhuri, and Badi al-Yafi. Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 116-117; Johnson, Class and Client, p. 14. These families will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.
The overwhelming majority of the Damascene refugees fleeing to Beirut after 1860 were Greek Orthodox, the denomination of most Beiruti Christians. It does not seem as though the Damascenes were unconditionally accepted by, or readily absorbed into, the Beiruti community however. In 1900, then, the Damascene émigrés established a Society of Damascene Families in Beirut. Originally its patronage was limited to émigré families, but soon it extended itself to the Beiruti community and thus became nearly as influential to the city’s Melkites as the Maqasid was to the Sunnis. The spread of sectarian charity in late nineteenth century Beirut has been characterised as a symptom of the intensification of inter-communal competition at the elite level. From another perspective, it may be seen as an effort on the part of the Muslim and Christian notables to consolidate their hold over their clientele in an environment that did not provide the traditional means to do so.

In this regard it is interesting to consider the efforts during the 1870s to establish a Maqasid Society in Damascus. It has been suggested that Midhat Pasha established this Society, modelled on the Beiruti Maqasid, as a means of manipulating the local population for his own political benefit; in any case it did not survive his removal. On the other hand, a number of prominent Damascene notables seem to have been active in the Maqasid and were against the Hamidian government’s imposition of a centrally controlled majlis al-ma’arif to assume its responsibilities. Since two such notable families had suf...

---

170 The city-hinterland dichotomy has never been applied to Beirut’s Greek Orthodox immigrants. One might infer, since many of these migrants were from Damascus and since the Melkites were a largely urban community throughout the Empire, that it simply was not a concern for them.
171 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 114-117.
173 Two families that were so involved were the 'Umaris and the Ibn Hamzas. While the 'Umaris were associated with the Khalwati and Qadiri orders of sufis, Mahmud al-Hamza was said to be interested in the political activities of the sufis. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 180-181; 197-200.
connections, one might speculate about the relationship between the failure of the Maqasid and the perseverance of more traditional means of Sunni Muslim ‘charity’.174

the paramilitary estate

It has been noted that, notwithstanding the decapitation of the janissary corps in the early nineteenth century, the leadership of the local auxiliaries remained able to wield a considerable coercive force for several decades. The aghawat’s success in maintaining control over their rank-and-file seems to have had more to do with the social make-up of the para-militaries than the esprit de corps of their janissary heritage. In fact, there is a remarkable continuity in the social characteristics of the of the para-military rank-and-file. The fifteenth century ahdath, the zu’ar of the Mamluk period, the yerilya of the Ottoman period, and the zgriti of the early twentieth century were all para-military groups whose local origins and ambiguous relationship vis-à-vis the administration made them a potential threat to any central authority in Damascus. Though the Ottomans allowed local para-military elements to infiltrate the janissary auxiliaries, this practice seems to have been initiated by the Mamluks. From the Mamluk period on, all local militias drew their membership from the margins of Damascene society, and thus served a vital role in the integration of rural migrant groups into the city.175

174 Khoury does note that the religious organisations of the quarters, the jam’iyat, continued to be active in the early twentieth century, with their ‘arada (processions) taking on a more political, even secular, orientation as the Ottoman period drew to a close. This is significant for our understanding of the forces of integration at work in al-Maydan. By the Mandate period, the social contradictions and poverty of the quarter placed it beyond the reach of nationalist politicians, leaving ‘the area vulnerable to politicisation by more socially conscious forces, [like] Muslim benevolent societies....’ Syria and the French Mandate: the Politics of Arab Nationalism. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 285-310, especially pp. 305-310. The significance of this observation is obvious in light of the role of religious factors in the mobilisation of the Beiruti masses throughout the twentieth century.

175 For a fascinating discussion of the zu’ar, see Ira M. Lapidus, Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 105; 154-184. The best existing analysis of the popular quarters of Damascus in the early twentieth century may be found in Khoury, Syria and the French, pp. 286-310.
In his discussion of the janissary factions of eighteenth century Damascus, Karl Barbir attributes the factional fighting among the yerilya, qapi-ql, and mercenary groups to the strong sense of ethnically based social solidarity (‘asabiya) among their respective members.176 This solidarity (and the ethnic and linguistic differentiation that complemented it) also expressed itself spatially, with the qapi-ql tending to settle in, and dominate, Suq Saruja, ‘Awniya, and Bahsa Sanjaqdar, while the yerilya held al-Qanawat and al-Maydan.177

Ethnic solidarity seems to have remained significant for the aghawat in the late nineteenth century. Among the descendents of the imperial aghawat, the Shamdin family best exemplifies this point.178 Though the family patriarch Shamdin Agha settled in Suq Saruja in the nineteenth century, he inherited from his father the pre-eminent position among the Kurdish community of Hayy al-Akrad. While the Shamdins became Arabised in the course of the nineteenth century, they continued to control the clan structure of al-Akrad, which remained intact right through to the Mandate period.179

---

176 He writes:
Although each military group in Damascus had strong ethnic roots—such as Anatolian sekbas Kurdish rufenkcis, and the North African Magharibu—it was the strong sense of ‘asabiya, or feeling of social solidarity, rather than ethnic differences that appear to have given each group its identity.

Barbir, *Ottoman Rule*, p. 96. One might argue that in an environment of hostility (like the one emanating from the Damascene community at large in the latter nineteenth century) and competition among the various aghawat, the line between social solidarity (linkage) and ethnic differences (cleavage) might occasionally become indistinct.

177 Khoury puts the yerliya in the quarters of Shaghur and Salhiyya, in addition to the Maydan. *Urban Notables*, p. 21.

178 Schatkowski-Schilcher discusses the prosopographies of seven other aghawat families, of which three (aside from the Shamdins) were descended from the qapi-ql faction. They were the al-’Azms of Suq Saruja (and the Mu’ayyad al-’Azm sub-branch of the family, in al-Salhiyya), the Barudis who eventually settled in al-Qanawat, and the al-Yusufs of Sanjaqdar and Saruja. The origins of the al-’Azm family are subject of an ongoing scholarly debate, while the al-Yusufs were, like the Shamdins, Kurds. The Barudis are described as having been Egyptian, but it is not specified whether they were Ottoman, Turkman, or mamlik.

The power base of the Jaza'iri family, the most recent of the aghawat families to enter Damascene politics, highlights the significance of 'asabiya to this estate even more strongly. The Amir 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri, hero of the failed Algerian resistance to the French occupation, was, as noted, exceptional for the sheer number of traditional estates from which he derived authority. A scholar of the Maliki madhhab, shaykh of the Qadiri order, and descendant of the Prophet, he was also a major player in the regional and international grain trade and commanded an extensive retinue of Algerian para-militaries. 'Abd al-Qadir also received a considerable pension from the French government in return for retiring to Syria. When he did so, he was accompanied not only by members of his own extended family and bodyguard, but a self-inclosed client group of Algerian villagers whom he settled on the extensive lands he purchased upon his arrival in Damascus.\footnote{Khoury, \textit{Urban Notables}, p. 34; Schatkowski-Schilcher, \textit{Families}, pp. 215-218. The Jaza'iris probably also had some degree of influence in al-Maydan, where large numbers of Maghribis had settled in the century before 'Abd al-Qadir's arrival in Damascus. Rafeq places the Amir's residence (or one of his residences) in the 'Amara \textit{neighbourhood} of the Maghariba Quarter, just south of Bab al-Musalla; this seemingly contradicts both Khoury and Schatkowski-Schilcher, who locate the Jaza'iris in the 'Amara Quarter, in the city centre. Rafeq, 'Bab al-Musalla', p. 301.}

Though none of the sources highlight such links of 'asabiya between the Maydani aghawat and the local auxiliaries in the nineteenth century, an interesting correlation may also be seen in the social complexion of these aghawat and the residents of their quarter. As has been noted, the tight control that the Damascene guilds kept upon the older quarters ensured that the Maydan had been the recipient of peasant migration since the eighteenth century. Having avoided the proscriptions of the guilds, the peasant-migrants fell under the influence of the aghawat of the yerilya, who were also settling in the Maydan at this time and were in search of auxiliaries.\footnote{Khoury, \textit{Urban Notables}, pp. 21-22.} Such influence would have been difficult to avoid given the aghawat's control of urban iltizam in the quarter and the 'protection' they
provided to the residents of quarters under their control.\footnote{182} These relations of personal dependence become more interesting when one considers that three of the four families who continued to dominate the quarter throughout the nineteenth century claimed descent from Turkman or beduin stock.\footnote{183} It does not require a great leap of imagination to conceive of the aghawat emphasising a common ethnic, regional, or tribal association with the migrants entering the ranks of their corps if it reinforced their hold over them.\footnote{184}

Such bonds of 'asabiya between the Maydani aghawat and the para-militaries, with their heritage of ethnic and linguistic distinctiveness and ongoing spatial differentiation from the rest of Damascus, would be very significant in light of the growing economic relationship between al-Maydan and the Hawran region in the 1870s.\footnote{185} This relationship of personal dependence linking the peasant-migrants to the aghawat was complemented by the kinship ties the migrants invariably maintained with their families in the countryside.\footnote{186} It is not difficult to see how this interlocking pattern of dependency would facilitate the extension of the Maydani aghawat’s control over the Hawran.

\footnote{182} Khoury notes that though little is known about the aghawat’s ability to mobilise their quarters, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they seem to have penetrated such institutions of social integration as sufi orders and the militant butchers’ guild. See \textit{Urban Notables}, p. 21. Though he discusses the quarters of Damascus in more detail in his second book, Khoury does not penetrate into either al-Akrad or al-Maydan because the National Bloc did not control either of them. \textit{Syria and the French}, pp. 309-310.

\footnote{183} These families were the al-'Azmas (formerly the Turkumanis), the Shamlis (of the Shammar Beduin), and the al-'Abids (of the Mawali Beduin). According to Schatkowski-Schilcher, the fourth family, the al-Mahaynis, claimed no distinctive clan identity, but neither did they hold any military command and seemingly had little or no effective military power. She speculates that they belonged to the aghawat al-hayy, a title garnered from their involvement with the attempts to establish a reformed police force.

\footnote{184} Some insight into the relationship between the migrant rank-and-file of the para-militaries and the aghawat (and historically between the yerilya and the zgriti) may be found in the oral history of the zgriti Abu 'Ali al-Kilawi: his family belonged to a tributary of the Ruala beduin and emigrated from the Hawran to Bab al-Jabiyya (an extra-mural quarter standing between al-Maydan and the old city) in the early nineteenth century. See Khoury, \textit{Syria and the French}, pp. 303-308.


\footnote{186} For discussions of the tenacity of kinship ties among recent migrants to Middle Eastern cities see John Gulick, 'Village and City: Cultural Continuities in Twentieth Century Middle Eastern Cities' in \textit{Middle Eastern Cities}, pp. 145-150. Variations of this phenomenon in Beirut may be found in Spagnolo, \textit{France}, p. 211; and both Fawaz, \textit{Merchants and Migrants} and Ozveren, 'The Making', \textit{passim}. 
It has been noted that there was no institutional cognate of the aghawat in the city of Beirut.\textsuperscript{187} However, the 'asabiya that the Damascene aghawat seems to have manipulated when mobilising rural migrants did have a counterpart in the regional and religious loyalties binding Beirut's rural migrants.\textsuperscript{188} Evidence of the basic similarity of ethnic and religious solidarity in the urban setting may be seen in Beirut's increased para-military activity in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The port city's \textit{qabadiyya}, or quarter bosses, corresponded almost exactly to the Damascene zgriti in the same period. As in Damascus, where there was an intimate religious and ethno-linguistic relationship between the aghawat-zgriti and their clientele, the Beiruti qabadiyya were viewed as champions of the quarters' poor, and by extension defenders of their religion.\textsuperscript{189} Like the zgriti too, the qabadiyya tended to be regarded as thugs (zu'ar in Damascus, az'ar in Beirut) by residents of other quarters, or members of rival client groups.\textsuperscript{190} The only substantial difference between the two, aside from the fact that the latter had emerged from the city's janissary tradition, was the stature that some of the aghawat families were able to obtain relative to their Beiruti counterparts.

The main reason for the upward mobility of the Damascene para-military leadership was its relationship to the Hawran region. This relationship originated with the infiltration of the ranks of the yerilya by local merchants and the protection the auxiliaries offered to them. Gradually, as the yerilya extended its tax farming (hence landholding) interests into

\textsuperscript{187} The only Beiruti notables who may have been descended from 'para-military' stock were the Salams, whose family patriarch was a 'strong-arm' merchant active in the defence of the city in the 1820s. Interestingly enough, Salim al-Salam's street-level leadership of Beirut's Sunni masses led to his being called 'Abu 'Ali' in popular circles, a euphemism for Beiruti, and Damascene, quarter bosses. Johnson, \textit{Class and Client}, pp. 67; 70.


the Hawran, the aghawat were in the position to enter, and eventually to dominate, the production and shipment of grain in that region. When grain production became commercially viable in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it was primarily aghawat families who benefitted.\textsuperscript{191} In an environment in which penetration of the hinterland was restricted to commercial and financial activity, the Beiruti qabadiyya did not have the means to extend their interests beyond the quarter, leaving the hinterland to the Beiruti and Lebanese merchant princes and their European patrons.

Clearly a complete picture of the means of integration and control that existed in the popular quarters of Damascus and Beirut requires a consideration of the relationship between the para-military and popular religious elements in these quarters. Developments in twentieth century Lebanon have made it impossible to ignore the religious side of this equation in Beirut. But scholarly concern with the rise of secular nationalism in Damascus has led to an emphasis of the zgriti at the expense of the sufi, or whoever came to fill the sufi's shoes in the popular quarters. Given the significance of the popular quarters in the rise of revivalist groups like the Ikhwan al-Muslimin, it seems that this is an undue emphasis.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Damascus and Beirut could readily be differentiated from one another. At the most obvious level the two differed in their socio-political institutions. The classical Ottoman military and religious institutions still had a

\textsuperscript{191} Khoury, \textit{Urban Notables}, p. 28. As noted, Reilly found that there were surprisingly few records of land purchase among the Damascene tujar in this period, and those who had acquired the largest landed interests, were those who still referred to themselves as aghawat. It is equally possible that, whether aghawat or tujar, they (like their Christian counterparts) acquired much of their land through foreclosure rather than purchase. Reilly, 'Status Groups', pp. 527-528. A third possible explanation for this phenomenon is that, as Schilcher suggests, only those notables who possessed ilizim in the semi-arid hinterland (the aghawat) were pressed into land purchase there. More mobile forms of capital, like that of the merchants of the international trade, could be diverted into more lucrative areas. Schilcher, 'The Grain Economy', p. 191.
prominent role in nineteenth century Damascus. This was not the case with Beirut which had not been as significant as Damascus religiously or militarily, and which always seems to have had a substantial Christian population. This dichotomy between the two cities was reinforced by the economic and political empowerment of the Maronite Church and the creation of an autonomous Mutasarrifiya of Mount Lebanon in the nineteenth century, even though we might assume that there was a marginalisation of the religious hierarchy among both the Melkite and Sunni communities of the two cities. This split within the Beiruti notability, and between it and its Damascene counterpart, underlines the significance of external patronage to the notability as a whole.

Without discounting these differences, there were ways in which late Ottoman Beirut and Damascus were not dissimilar, especially in the two cities’ relationships with their respective hinterlands. Though the means of accumulation used by each city’s notables to penetrate the hinterland were slightly different (as was the relative impact of rural penetration upon the local peasantry), these differences merely represent variations on a notable theme. The inhibitions the Beirutis faced in the extension of their influence over the Lebanon did not reflect a want of resources or inclination on their part, but the influence of the Lebanese over an interested patron, the French, and all the great power intrigue this brought into play.

As focal points of immigration the similarities between the two cities become more striking. Peasants migrated to Beirut and Damascus for similar economic reasons, though Christian migration to Beirut in the wake of the 1860 disturbances was without parallel in Damascus. Upon entering their respective cities, migrants seem to have undergone the same experiences of segregation, integration, and (as the absorptive capacity of the cities was exceeded) alienation. Key players in this process of integration into urban life were, in both cases, modern expressions of popular religious and para-military institutions with a
long history in the region. One might thus conclude that it was among the lower strata that we may see the greatest similarities between Damascus and Beirut.

Chapter three will continue this discussion of the material similarities between Beirut and Damascus by focussing on the role of merchant capital in the rise of individual notable families. This information, available in prosopographies of the cities’ major notable families, highlights the significance of the extended family as a unit of accumulation. The workings of this ‘familial mode of accumulation’, including its manipulation of bureaucratic as well as merchant capital, provide the chapter’s parameters. The families are compared in terms of the history of their material bases as notables, the nature of their ties to their patrons, and the manipulation of their respective field of accumulation, whether it be the growing bureaucratic network or the ubiquitous world economy. As a natural extension of this discussion the chapter will focus upon some of the material relationships that developed in the course of the nineteenth century between individual families in Damascus and Beirut, and the more general trend towards Muslim-Christian co-operation in the latter Ottoman period.
Merchant capital played an integral part in the rise of the urban notability. In the classical Ottoman system, though, commerce was never an end in itself because commercial capital was too readily absorbed by the state. If confiscation was avoided by merchants they could, and did, pursue more secure means of accumulation and prestige, usually within the local religious or para-military institutions.\(^\text{192}\) With their monopoly over awqaf, both public and private, and iltizam, the ulama and aghawat estates were as lucrative as they were secure. This security was marginalised as the administrative changes initiated during the Tanzimat bypassed these institutions and invested their prerogatives in the reformed bureaucracy. The ‘reformed’ bureaucracy thus became an agency of Ottoman patronage to the Syrian notability and thus a new means of material security. This ‘administrative capital’ was as significant for most of the notable families of Beirut and Damascus as commercial capital.

As noted, the Ottoman merchants’ desire to avoid government interference in their activities saw the cultivation of family trading firms. Merchants were inclined to trade with relatives in other centres, and members of merchant families tended to emigrate to important trading centres, rather than trust a stranger not to shortchange them. The family business was more than an expedient means to advance individual interests; it was also an expression of the centrality of the family itself as a unit of production, or at least a unit of accumulation. An indication of this centrality can be seen in notable patriarchs’ enforcing cousin marriage, or in lieu of this official ‘chastity’, as a means of maintaining the family’s

\(^{192}\) Roded, ‘Tradition and Change’, pp. 70-71; 91-93.
material integrity. The tendency to treat the family as a unit of accumulation stayed with merchant families long after they had diversified their interests to other fields, and betrayed the mercantile origins of many of Damascus' most powerful notable families. As the nineteenth century progressed, however, the endogamous marriage patterns that characterised the familial mode of accumulation were replaced by exogamous ones as family heads began arranging marriages between their offspring and those of former factional rivals, now their allies. This familial mode of accumulation was not restricted to Damascenes alone, but was equally apparent among the notables of Beirut, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Thus, an essential material similarity existed between the mercantile elites of Damascus and Beirut at a time when the socio-political institutions of the two cities were otherwise very different. As these institutional differences diminished over the course of the nineteenth century, the material similarities between the cities' commercial elites expressed themselves in more active cooperation between the two.

This chapter will document the familial means of accumulation used by the notable families of Ottoman Damascus and Beirut, and describe its augmentation by inter-familial and inter-confessional co-operation. Though important cleavages continued to exist between the notability of the two cities, such co-operation implies that these families were beginning to share sufficient material interests to coalesce into a single class. The fact that all members of the notability were not able to coordinate their political interests suggests that this class consolidation remained incomplete by the end of the Ottoman era. It also suggests that any class consolidation noted within Damascus itself was equally tentative, since the notables of that city did not invariably co-operate politically, especially in the Mandate period.
merchant capital and material diversification among the Sunni Muslim notability

Commerce was no stranger to Damascus’ established notable families. For those families who had acquired influence in the local administration before 1800, however, the material interests accompanying that influence were so diverse that merchant capital appears to have been of relatively minor significance to them. This said, probably the most esteemed of the old aghawat families, the ‘Azms, were able to engineer a political recovery at the turn of the century with the aid of their commercial enterprise.193 The two major branches of the family maintained large khans in the city—the As'ad Pasha khan and the Sulayman Pasha khan—and they had interests in Damascus’ long distance trade and in the city’s regional trade with Aleppo, Hama, and Egypt, centres where branches of the family were established.194 By the 1890s commerce was still important enough for them to have family members on the chamber of commerce and the commercial majlis.195

The ‘Azm’s commercial activities were considerably augmented by the wealth accruing to them in the administrative field of accumulation—the manipulation of which, like the commercial field, rested upon informal family contacts. The capacity to generate offspring, then, was a fairly significant aspect of the familial mode of accumulation, one in which the Muslim notables would seem to have had certain advantages over their Christian counterparts. The case of Ahmad Mu'ayyad al-'Azm (1806-1888), the founder of this branch of the family, exemplifies this point. Ahmad married ten women from notable

---

193 The ‘Azms’ efforts to regain some of their former stature were assisted by a considerable quantity of awqaf property scattered throughout Syria and Egypt. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 138.

194 The family’s five branches were descended from the two matriarchal lines of Layla bint al-Sayyid Ibrahim al-'Azm (Hama) and Khadija bint Nasuh Pasha (Egypt and Syria), and the three patriarchal lines of Yasin al-'Azm (Hama), Ahmad Mu'ayyad al-'Azm, and 'Abdallah Pasha al-'Azm. The Damascene Mu'ayyad al-'Azm and al-'Azm branches were the most prominent of the five. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 138-141.

195 Khoury, Urban Notables, p. 36. Other old merchant-aghawat families seem to have settled family members in cities where they carried on trade, though it is impossible to determine whether settlement preceded trading ties or followed them. The ‘Azm (formerly the Turkumanis), for instance, who were involved in the Hajj trade, had family members living in Istanbul and Mecca. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 144.
families in Damascus, Hama, Aleppo, Egypt, and Beirut; the seventeen ensuing children were born into an imposing network of socio-economic and political relations. A number of Ahmad’s sons and nephews sat on Damascus’ various majlises, at the sub-district, district, and municipal levels, with two of his sons, ‘Abdallah (d. 1911/12) and ‘Abd al-Qadir (d. 1920) serving as president of the municipal council. Probably the most successful of Ahmad’s sons, though, was Shafiq who rose steadily from the Damascus district council to the Beirut customs (1886), the Damascus municipality (1891/92), and at some point became the director of the city’s land registry. Eventually Shafiq acquired the position of translator in the Sultan’s palace, and between 1896 and 1908 served on the Ottoman Public Debt Administration and the Ottoman Tobacco Commission. After 1908 he held an opposition seat on the Ottoman parliament and was active in the Decentralisation Party. For this indiscretion he was hanged in 1916. Shafiq was not the only Mu’ayyad al-‘Azm to rise to a post in Istanbul. His cousin Sadiq entered the Ottoman military, and by the turn of the century had become the Sultan’s aide-de-camp.

The Mu’ayyad al-‘Azms were not the central branch of the al-‘Azm family, however. More significant examples of the administrative means of accumulation may be found among the descendants of ‘Abdallah Pasha al-‘Azm, the last ‘Azm governor of Damascus. ‘Abdallah Pasha left nine children, two of whom, Muhammad Yadu and Muhammad Hafiz, produced a number of noted offspring. Though they (like their

196 Ahmad married into two of Muslim Beirut’s more prominent merchant families, the Yafis and the Bayhums; the children that issued from these couplings were raised in Ras Beirut and the village of ‘Arayya in the Lebanon. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 140-141.

197 Three of Ahmad Mu’ayyad al-‘Azm’s grandsons also held posts in Istanbul: Dhu’l-Nun ibn ‘Abd al-Qadir and Badi’ both served with the Public Debt Administration, while Wasil ibn Wajih was an educational functionary in Beirut and Istanbul. After decades of going unnoticed by the political biographers, one of the Khadija branch of the ‘Azms made an appearance in Istanbul. Haqqi ibn ‘Abd al-Qadir al-‘Azm held a number of offices in Damascus and throughout the empire, starting with the Damascus land registry office and the Istanbul customs. After a sojourn in Egypt, he reappeared in Istanbul in 1909 to take an important post in the awqaf bureaucracy. He soon had a falling out with the Young Turks, however, and returned to Egypt, where he played a prominent role in the founding of the Egyptian-based Decentralisation Party. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 139-141.
Mu'ayyad al-'Azm cousins) were repressed by the Ottomans in the 1790s and after 1860, by the 1870s the ‘Azms again began to appear in the municipal and subdistrict majlises, as well as the majlis al-awqaf and tamiyz, and they continued to do so for the rest of the Ottoman period. Probably the most powerful representative of this line was Muhammad Fawzi Pasha (d. 1920). Beginning as an educational functionary, he was appointed to oversee the provincial census in the late 1880s, sat on the majlis al-idara in the 1890s, and became ra‘is (president) of the baladiya in 1895. Subsequently he acted as the director of Damascus’ Hijaz railworks, and in 1908 sat in the Ottoman parliament; in 1911 he was appointed director of the Ottoman Awqaf Administration.

Throughout their period of influence in Damascus, the ‘Azms remained a secular administrative and mercantile family, but most of the older merchant families that aligned themselves with the ‘Azms’ long distance trading interests were associated with the ulama or the ashraf of the city. Probably the foremost among these were the Muradis who, in the early nineteenth century, owned three Damascus khans in Bab al-Jabiya, Bab al-Barid, and Suq al-Buzuriya. However, the Muradis’ capacity to manipulate the familial mode of accumulation, particularly in the administrative field, was far less adaptable than the ‘Azms’. They dominated the Hanafi ifta’ (muftiship) throughout the ‘Azm period and appear to have had access to reformed administrative offices in the 1870s, but the state’s reforms, particularly in the area of the public awqaf, effectively undercut their material base. Except for a few postings in the majlis al-idara, baladiya, tamiyz and awqaf, they seemingly never recovered their political prominence.

198 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 142-143; Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 36-37.
199 In his brief study of the eighteenth century Muradis, Barbir concentrates on the significance of land and administrative office, not trade, in establishing the family’s material basis. ‘All in the Family: The Muradis of Damascus’, The Proceedings of the Third Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey, (Princeton, 1983) No. XV, 1990, pp. 339-343. In the 1830s, however, it was speculated that the Muradis’ was one of the eight wealthiest trading firms in Damascus with capital exceeding two million piastres. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 63 and n.; 162.
In stark contrast to the Muradis, the ancient ulama family of 'Umari effectively revitalised itself after 1860 by participating in Damascus' new transit trade and its 'reformed' administrative institutions. Shaykh Muslim al-'Umari, who died in the early twentieth century, was one of Damascus' leading merchants and entrepreneurs, attempting to establish a glass factory there. Muhammad Sa'di al-'Umari (d. 1940) took his family's trading interests eastward, eventually settling in India. Another aspect of the 'Umaris' material recovery was the success of Salim ibn 'Abd al-Hadi (d. 1905/06) in lobbying Istanbul for control over his family's ancestral awqaf in the region of Jaffa. Salim was also active in the Ottoman civil administration, sitting on the municipal council (1879/80) and the city's civil courts, as did his sons and cousins. 201

Other merchant-ulama families found their material origins in the long distance trade but quickly entered the ulama estate once they established themselves. Motives cannot be imputed, but they possibly found it propitious to enter into an institution which provided more protection for accumulated wealth. The Shattis, merchants of the Baghdad trade, immigrated from that city to Damascus in the 1760s. Two of the three branches of the family established at that time (the descendants of the brothers Khidr and Mahmud Jalabi) remained active as tujjar, while the sons of the third brother, 'Umar, established themselves as ulama. 202

The Shattis' diffusion of family talents into different fields was emblematic of the familial mode of accumulation utilised by the most successful Damascene notables. The Ustuwani family had been ulama in Damascus since before the Ottoman conquest, with

---

201 The 'Umari's contacts with Istanbul actually dated from the eighteenth century, when Shakir ibn Mustafa al-'Umari lived in Istanbul for seven years, receiving several religious offices and acquiring a malikana over the Damascus village of Bismiya. Schatkowskj-Schilcher, Families, pp. 180-181.

202 It should be noted though that being an alim in no way precluded trade; Hasan ibn 'Umar al-Shatti seems to have earned his living as a merchant. In the 1870s the Shattis began to appear in the city's religious institution, holding such positions as the Hanbali ifta'. Schatkowskj-Schilcher, Families, pp. 177-179.
Muhammad Abu al-Safa (d. 1574/75) being the first member of the family to drop the Hanbali madhhab in favour of the Hanafi. After experiencing some decline during the 'Azm period the family regained prominence, seemingly due to the efforts of the three brothers Hasan (d. 1820/21), Mustafa, and 'Ali. Of the three, only 'Ali's descendants maintained the family's scholarly credentials, while those of Mustafa and Hasan dedicated themselves to agriculture and trade respectively. Perhaps the most interesting representative of the 'Ali branch of the Ustuwanis was Sa'id (1822/23-1887/88), who rose from the khitaba of the Umayyad mosque to sit on the majlis al-idara in the early 1860s and the court of appeal in 1865/66. In 1868 he was named qadi of Tripoli and, in 1869/70, ra'is of the majlis al-tamyiz, the secular counterpart to the qadi. Around 1890 the merchant Ustuwanis began to join their cousins in the ranks of the ulama, holding religious postings, including that of qadi of Damascus and Beirut, and secular offices—'Abd al-Muhsin was a deputy to the 1908 Ottoman parliament. As the last decades of the Ottoman period unfolded, members of all three branches of the family entered into the Ottoman secular education system, and were thereby able to maintain ties to the dominant means of accumulation in Damascus.203

The Khatibs were another merchant family which, like the Shattis and Ustuwanis, fell into more than one branch: the descendants of Salih and those of 'Abdallah. In the nineteenth century the Khatibs had diverse trading interests—with 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Salih (1806/07-1893/94) involved in the luxury (drug or perfume) trade and al-Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah (1810/11-1868/69) active in the Hajj trade. While al-Sayyid Muhammad and his children remained merchants, 'Abd al-Qadir took up a scholarly career, one pursued by his descendants. This familial division of labour seems to have continued into the twentieth century, though some members of the 'Abdallah branch also made their

way into the religious institution. Rashid (d. 1898/99), one of al-Sayyid Muhammad’s sons, appears to have followed in his father’s mercantile footsteps. He established himself for a time in Istanbul, where he was quite highly regarded, but he (and his son 'Abd al-Rahman) eventually returned to serve as the khatib of the Sinaniya mosque.204

Trade also played an important role in the rise of the relative upstarts of Damascus. One such ulama family were the Halabis, established in Damascus in the 1790s by one Sa'id ibn Hasan. The most prominent tujjar in this family was 'Abdallah al-Halabi, a rich silk merchant who had experienced considerable hardship during the economic crisis of the 1850s. Any decline in fortunes 'Abdallah experienced in the commercial field was offset by his influence with the Seyhülislam, which he seems to have manipulated in a power broking fashion. This influence did not save him from the exile imposed by Fuad Pasha after 1860, however, and though the Halabis were restored to religious offices in Damascus after 1870, they were not active in the administrative field after 1908.205

A more recent and dramatic arrival on the Damascus mercantile scene was that of the Jaza'iri family in 1855. Little is written in the city’s biographies about the family’s commercial dealings, but they were probably involved in the burgeoning grain trade with Europe. Upon his arrival in the city Amir 'Abd al-Qadir (1807/08-1883) acquired considerable tracts of land in the grain-producing regions surrounding Damascus, upon which he settled hundreds of his Algerian clients as share-croppers. It is known that in the 1860s and '70s 'Abd al-Qadir’s second son, Amir Muhyi al-Din (1843/44-1917/18), carried on in the grain trade from his base in Saida.206

204 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 193.
205 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 190.
206 During his time in Saida Muhyi al-Din was quite likely reinforcing his family’s long standing ties to the Abilas, a family of Christian grain exporters with members in a number of Syrian port cities, including Beirut. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 215-217.
The Jaza'iri's manipulation of the administrative field has been described as something of a puzzle. With all the status that came with 'Abd al-Qadir's being an acknowledged leader of five of Damascus' traditional estates, the family did not come to occupy a central place in the city's politics. This fact is doubly ironic given the fact that, of all the Damascene families, the Jaza'iris were alone in their receipt of patronage from both the Ottomans and the French—upon his arrival in the city 'Abd al-Qadir received 10,000 francs from Istanbul to house his entourage in addition to the yearly pension of 300,000 francs he received from Paris. Of 'Abd al-Qadir's nine sons, only one of them, 'Umar, remained a French protégé, with the other eight all declaring their loyalty to the Ottoman sultan, some assuming offices in the state bureaucracy. The eldest Jaza'iri, Amir 'Ali, gave up his French pension in 1888 as a precondition to marrying into the 'Abid family; in the early twentieth century he went on to hold offices in the sanjaq of Hama and to acquire considerable tracts of land, especially in the Hawran.207 After his father's death, and with considerable contacts in Europe, Amir Muhyi al-Din al-Jaza'iri exchanged his French pension for an Ottoman stipend of 50 lira a month, lands in the Damascus grain belt, and the title of pasha. In the 1880s Jaza'iri moved to Istanbul where he entered the sultan's entourage.208

Most of the merchant families that established themselves in Damascus in the nineteenth century, however, were not from the ulama/ashraf estates, nor did they enter the religious institution once they had established themselves. The most prominent of these families to hail from the old Baghdadi tujjar were the Quwwatlis. Established in the city's Shaghur quarter in the eighteenth century, the first member of the family to have received

208 Of the remaining brothers, it is known that the Amirs 'Abd al-Malik and Muhammad eventually joined Muhyi al-Din in Istanbul, the latter after some years on the majlis al-idara, while Ahmad, Ibrahim and 'Abdallah appear to have remained in Damascus with 'Ali. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 217-218; Khoury, Urban Notables, p. 34.
attention was Muhammad Sa'id al-Quwwatli. It is estimated that by the 1830s, Muhammad Sa'id's personal capital exceeded 1.5 million piastres, which made the Quwwatlis one of the eight wealthiest merchant families in the city.209 In the administrative field, Murad al-Quwwatli (d. 1908) was elected to the majlis al-idara in 1871 (and again in the early 1890s) and sat on the chambers of commerce and agriculture, while his brother Hasan, one of the leading merchants of the city, was the president of both those bodies in the early 1890s. As was the case with other notables holding such elective offices, the Quwwatlis acquired considerable tracts of land over the course of the nineteenth century, both in the Ghuta and in the grain belt.210

Another family to have risen in the ranks of the Damascene notability without the benefit of the religious institution were the Mardams, though there is some question about the family's origins. They claim descent from Lala Mustafa Pasha, the sixteenth century Ottoman General responsible for the conquest of Cyprus, and Fatima Khatun, daughter of the last Mamluk ruler of Syria. The nineteenth and twentieth century Mardams trace their origins to four brothers, or more precisely to the oldest brother's two sons, 'Uthman (1819/20-1886) and 'Ali (c1825-1887/88). Any question about the origins of the family arises from the fact that alternative sources have 'Uthman arriving in Damascus as a Tanzimat functionary in May of 1850. Whether a Damascene or an outsider, 'Uthman revealed his mercantile proclivities around mid-century when he built the Suq al-Jadid, a profitable market in the centre of the city, and served as the ra'is of the majlis al-tijara. 'Ali followed 'Uthman on the commercial majlis in the 1870s, and his son Hikmat served as a judge on the majlis in the early 1880s.211

209 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 63 and n.
210 Khoury, Urban Notables, p. 42.
211 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 213; Khoury, Urban Notables, p. 41.
After 1860, 'Uthman and 'Ali augmented any capital they had accumulated through commerce by successfully acquiring the rights to Lala Mustafa Pasha and Fatima Khatun’s extensive awqaf properties. This awqaf included urban property in Damascus and agricultural lands in the city’s immediate vicinity, as well as south of Damascus (in the Hawran, Jaydur, Jawlan, Hula, and Shara), around Saida and Safed, in the northern and southern Biqa' and the Lebanese Shuf. More locally, the Mardam brothers’ activities in the administrative field saw them elected to the majlis al-idara ('Uthman starting in the 1870s, 'Ali from 1878 to 1887), while 'Ali also sat on the majlis al-tamyiz. 'Uthman’s sons and grandsons continued to hold administrative posts at the municipal, district, and provincial level, and Rashid Pasha Mardam represented Damascus in the 1908 Ottoman parliament.212

The Quwwatli and Mardam families are unique among the new wave of Damascus notability in that all other non-religious families to attain prominence in the nineteenth century arose from the ranks of the city’s aghawat. Many, but not all, of these aghawat families were located in the Maydan. One of these was the Barudi family of al-Qanawat. The founder of the Barudi family, Hasan Agha al-Barudi, arrived in Damascus from Egypt in the late eighteenth century, a para-military in the employ of 'Abdallah Pasha al-'Azm. Both Hasan and his son Muhammad (d. 1889/90) acquired extensive lands over the course of the nineteenth century, most notably the abandoned holdings of Sharif Pasha al-Misri, Ibrahim Pasha’s civilian governor of Syria during the Egyptian occupation. By the early 1870s the Barudis were, according to the estimates of the Austrian consul, one of the region’s nine most significant grain exporters. Both Hasan and Muhammad sat on the

administrative council of Damascus sanjaq, the former being elected in 1870, the latter holding his seat from the late 1870s until his death in 1889.213

In the 1860s the Mahaynis were perhaps the pre-eminent family in the Maydan. They played a prominent role in preventing Maydani para-militaries from becoming involved in the Bab Tuma incident, and remained a significant force in the quarter throughout the early twentieth century. Though members of the family held posts in the majlis al-baladiya in the 1870s and 1880s, the material basis of their influence remained their activities in the grain trade.214

More successful in diversifying their commercial interests were the al-'Abids, the Mahaynis’ rivals in the Maydan. Descended from beduin stock, the al-'Abid family seems to have settled in the Maydan in 1700, though it did not achieve notable status until after the Egyptian occupation. In this regard the first family member of note was 'Umar Agha al-'Abid, a prominent grain merchant who restrained the quarter’s para-militaries and protected the Christian population of Bab al-Musalla during the events of July, 1860. 'Umar Agha was followed in the grain trade by his son 'Abd al-Qadir, while his other son (or grandson) Hawlu Agha (1824/25-1895/96) entered the reformed bureaucracy, eventually being awarded the title of pasha, and attaining the presidency of the majlis al-idara in the 1890s. Repeatedly sacked for mal-administration, yet rarely without a posting, Hawlu Agha is representative of the Ottoman state’s ambivalent attitude towards multazim who enriched themselves while effectively collecting taxes. Hawlu Agha also exemplified the ambiguous attitude towards Europe displayed by such families as the Jaza'iris, with whom the 'Abids intermarried. Though he is described as having terrorised Christian protégés throughout the 1870s, Hawlu Agha was himself portrayed by the French consul

---

213 The consul rendered the name as 'Paroudi'. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 147; Khoury, Urban Notables, p. 43.
214 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 149-51.
of Damascus as a long-time client of France. Hawlu’s two sons, Mustafa and Ahmad 'Izzat (1851-1924) continued their father’s administrative career, though the power attained by the second son outshone that of his brother, and of virtually all other Damascene notables.215

Any ambiguity toward the west 'Izzat Pasha al-'Abid may have inherited from his father was foreshadowed by his early education in both the schools of al-Maydan and the Christian schools of Beirut and the Lebanon. Returning to Damascus, he rose from the secretariat of the majlis al-idara to be the ra’is of the majlis al-tijara. After some newspaper work, he was made a judicial inspector, an office which led him to Salonika and Istanbul, and by the 1890s to the inner circle of Sultan Abdülhamid’s council of state. The Pasha’s son, Muhammad 'Ali Bey (1867-1939) was educated in Istanbul’s Galataserail Lycée and in Paris, and was posted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the early twentieth century. The administrative capital afforded 'Izzat Pasha by his relationship with the sultan was considerable. As the main promoter of such public works as the Hijaz Railroad and the Damascus tramway and electric works, al-'Abid was also the main individual beneficiary. Like Hawlu Agha before him (who purchased shares in the Suez Canal company), 'Izzat Pasha showed an inclination toward foreign investment. Much of the capital accruing to him from his various endeavours went to shareholding companies in New York, London, and Paris.216

The al-Yusufs were Kurdish livestock merchants when they arrived in Damascus around 1800 and they eventually settled in the quarter of Sanjaqdar.217 By the 1870s they were one of the two most powerful Kurdish aghawat families to survive the Ottoman

217 Presumably the al-Yusufs also kept a residence in the al-Akrad, the sub-quarter of al-Salhiyya where most of Damascus’ Kurdish community lived and among whom they and the Shamdins had competed for clients; they and the Shamdins also eventually kept large residences in Suq Saruja, the patrician quarter of the 'Azm family. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 153; Khoury, Urban Notables, p. 40.
restoration to Syria. The Yusufs probably remained active in both the regional and the Hajj trade, as Ahmad Agha (c. 1790-1863/64) and his son Muhammad (1839/40-1896/97) both held the post of *Amir al-Hajj*, and the latter is also known to have built a new suq in Hama. Muhammad’s appointment as Hajj commander was followed by a string of district governorships in Homs, Ba‘albek, Acre, the Hawran, Hama, and Tripoli, and crowned by the title of pasha (in 1868/69) and seats on the majlis al-idara and majlis al-awqaf (in the 1890s). The Yusuf’s power in the Kurdish community, and in Damascus generally, was further consolidated with Muhammad Pasha’s marriage to the only child of another Kurdish agha, Muhammad Sa‘id Pasha al-Shamdin, then the muhafiz of the Hajj.

Shamdin Agha (d. 1860), the patriarch of the Shamdin family was the most imposing of the Kurdish aghawat in the nineteenth century. In the 1830s he was a multazim in the region of the Bqi‘a’, and he remained in command of the city’s Kurdish auxiliaries throughout the 1840s and 1850s. His son Muhammad Sa‘id was exiled to Istanbul in the aftermath of the Bab Tuma incident, but by the 1870s he was back in Syria with the rank of pasha and became the perennial muhafiz of the Hajj. The only child of his daughter’s marriage to Muhammad Pasha al-Yusuf was ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Yusuf. This individual eventually inherited the muhafiz (in 1892), Muhammad Sa‘id’s accumulated wealth (which included extensive awqaf in the Ghuta and lands in the Hawran and al-Qunaytra), and the uncontested leadership of the Kurdish community of Hayy al-Akrad. Entitled some time in the nineteenth century, ‘Abd al-Rahman Pasha al-Yusuf married the daughter of Khalil Pasha al-‘Azm and thus participated in the trend of class consolidation

---

218 By this point the Amir al-Hajj was actually made up of two distinct posts, that of *amin al-kilar* and *muhafiz*, both of which were held for a period by al-Yusuf and son. Schatkowski-Schilcher, *Families*, p. 153.

noted among the Damascus notability in this period. From 1908 to 1914 'Abd al-Rahman headed the Damascene branch of the CUP.220

Commerce was generally as essential for the Muslim notability of Beirut as it was for their Damascene counterparts. Though we have less information on Beiruti Muslims’ use of traditional institutions like the ulama and ashraf in ensuring their upward mobility, administrative office also seems to have played a significant accumulative role for them.221

For the aristocratic Sulh family, who settled in Beirut in the mid-nineteenth century, the administrative field was actually more significant than commerce. They manipulated it as efficiently as their Damascene counterparts, both in terms of the diversification of the family’s material interests, and in the construction of networks with other families through marriage. Ahmad Pasha al-Sulh, an officer in the Ottoman army, served as the mutasarrif of Acre and Latakia and eventually attained the rank of general. His brother 'Abd al-Rahim had a career in the civil administration which eventually took him to Istanbul. Ahmad Pasha’s three sons all followed distinct paths in the administrative field, two pursuing offices in the imperial bureaucracy and the third remaining in Beirut. Kamil, the eldest, served as a judge (it is not specified whether a qadi or a civil magistrate) in the Balkans and Libya, and later settled in Damascus where he married into one of that city’s notable families; he was also a member of Beirut Reform Committee. Rida (1860-1934), the youngest, served first as the mutasarrif of Salonika, then in 1909 was elected to represent Beirut in the Ottoman parliament; some time in the nineteenth century he married into an aristocratic Anatolian family. During the period of Ahmad Pasha’s governorships in the

220 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 148-149.
221 One of the very few Beiruti ulama that we do have any information on are the Fakhurs, a family of scholars and sufis who filled such religious posts as qadi and mufti in nineteenth century Beirut. Though they were by no means one of the wealthiest Beiruti families, at least one member of the Fakhuri clan, Muhammad, sat on the municipal council of Beirut late in the Ottoman period and was a member of the Beirut Reform Committee. Johnson, Class and Client, pp. 54-55.
Syrian provinces the Sulhs accumulated considerable lands in the region of Saida, and Munah al-Sulh was made responsible for these. He also served on the Beiruti majlis al-idara and married into one of Beirut's more significant families at the time, the Ramadans.222

More typical of the Beiruti notability were the Bayhum family, a branch of the 'Itani family who had emigrated from Spain at some point in the distant past. The Bayhums first made an appearance in Beirut in the eighteenth century, tracing their roots to one Mustafa Husayn al-'Itani. Mustafa Husayn was a wealthy import-export merchant in the early nineteenth century who received the name bayhum, 'their father', because of the diversity of his clientele. A resident of the Musaytiba quarter, Mustafa Husayn fathered six successful merchants in Nasir, Muhammad, Yusif, 'Umar, 'Abdallah, and Mustafa.223 The Bayhum family proved as adaptable in their manipulation of the commercial field of accumulation as the Sulhs were in the administrative. They did not specialise in a particular commodity but dealt in both the goods of the traditional long distance trade—spices, silks, and textiles—and the European manufactures and agricultural produce of the new trade. In this regard different family members concentrated on different aspects of the business. Thus Muhammad Jamil (b. 1887) was an insurance agent and landowner, while Ahmad Mukhtar (1878-1920) ran the import-export business in Suq al-Jamil with the help of his brother Rashid, his cousin Muhammad 'Umar, and his nephew Amin (b. 1899). Also in the tradition of Syria's family firms, the Bayhums kept their own agents in the European centres with which they traded. Consequently between 1904 and 1911 the house of

222 Johnson, Class and Client, pp. 57-58.
223 Though the Bayhums maintained large client networks earlier in the century, in the late Ottoman period they began to decline in this regard relative to the Sulh and Salam families. While these families were reinforcing their ties to the urban masses, 'the growth of the Bayhum's business interests took some of them to the world of high finance and cut them off from their roots.' This alienation was symbolised by the dominant family members having moved from the popular quarter of al-Musaytiba to the opulent suburbs in Ras Beirut and along Rue Omar Beyhum, a migration that parallels the movement of the Damascus elite to such quarters as al-'Amara and Suq Saruja. Johnson, Class and Client, pp. 66-67.
Bayhum, then under the leadership of 'Abad and 'Abdul Mukhtar, was one of the five Muslim trading houses to maintain a share in the city's silk exports, leading contemporary consular reports to refer to them as the richest and most influential of Beirut’s Muslim families.

Not unexpectedly, the Bayhums were also involved in the administrative field of accumulation. Yusif al-Bayhum had held prominent administrative positions and is said to have had close ties with the Shihabi amirs, particularly Bashir II. In this regard, as money-lenders the Bayhums were key players in the bankruptcy of a number of the Lebanon’s rural notable families. Husayn al-Bayhum was elected to represent Beirut in the 1877 Ottoman parliament. His sons Rashid and Ahmad Mukhtar, were active in Beirut’s majlis al-idara al-liwa, and Ahmad Mukhtar became a member of the Beirut Reform Committee in 1913. Muhammad Jamil held the ra'is of the majlis al-baladiya, and was also active on the district and provincial councils; in 1913 he accepted a seat on the Ottoman Senate. All of these men were prominent landowners since their family, in a manner not dissimilar to their Damascene counterparts, had used the revenues from their commercial, administrative, and financial endeavours to accumulate huge urban and rural landholdings.224

The most prominent newcomers among Muslim Beirut’s notability were the Salams. 'Ali al-Salam attained status in Beirut on the strength of his interests in the regional trade between Beirut and Aleppo, Damascus, Jaffa and Alexandria, and his marriage to a member of Ras Beirut’s notable family of Shatila. 'Ali’s son Salim (1868-1938) carried on in his father’s mercantile footsteps, and used his considerable capital to invest in citriculture. Salim’s involvement in the administrative field was equally extensive. In addition to serving on Beirut’s majlis al-tijara, he was made ra’is of the majlis al-

---

224 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 96-98; Johnson, Class and Client, pp. 60-64. This family was also intimately associated with the Beirut Maqasid. Hasan al-Bayhum was a founding member in 1878 and the Society’s director until 1881; Ahmad Mukhtar al-Bayhum was a leading member of the Board of Directors from 1908 to 1912.
baladiya, and sat on the administrative councils of the liwa and the wilayah. Finally, in 1914, Salim al-Salam was elected to represent Beirut in the Ottoman parliament.225

From their residence in al-Musaytiba Salim and his family of nine sons and three daughters followed roughly the same lines of material diversification as their contemporaries in Beirut and Damascus. While some family members carried on in the business, others acquired relevant professional skills. Salim’s oldest son ‘Ali (1889-1961) was an agricultural engineer, while Malik (b. 1917), his youngest, attended a British university to become a civil engineer. When Salim died the family’s business affairs, including their National Fats and Oil Company, passed to the control of another son, Sa’ib al-Salam. Also characteristic of the familial mode of accumulation were the Salam’s efforts to diversify their interests through inter-marriage with other notable families. They were not initiating this trend, but joining an ongoing process of consolidation. Earlier in the nineteenth century, for instance, a male member of the Barbir family (old commercial notables with ties to France dating from the eighteenth century) was married to a woman of the Agharr family (prominent members of the ulama and ashraf).226 Salim al-Salam married one of the daughters of this coupling, who was a maternal first cousin of his. Salim’s offspring followed this example, with his son ‘Abdallah marrying a Bayhum and his daughter Fatima marrying into another Beirutite family, the Tabbaras. More significant were the Salams’ marriages with families outside of Beirut. Malik established ties to the Karami family of Tripoli, Muhammad and two of his sisters married into the Khalidi family of Jerusalem, and Sa’ib, future head of the family, married a woman from the Damascus family of Mardam who, like the Salams, were relative upstarts among the notability.227

225 Johnson, Class and Client, pp. 67-68; 71.
226 The Barbir Brothers are included among the list of thirty or so merchant family companies which dominated Beirut trading circles from the 1840s until the Second World War. Issawi, ‘British Trade’, p. 98.
227 For a discussion of the factional conflict between the Salams and the Bayhums that preceded consolidation in the early twentieth century see Johnson, Class and Client, pp. 68-69.
the commercial and administrative fields of the Christian notability

Most of the Damascene merchant-aghawat families who rose to prominence in the nineteenth century did so by combining the opportunities offered by the integration of the region into the world economy and the Ottoman reformed administration. Ironically, the Damascene merchants who benefited the most from integration into the world economy, the Christian merchant-bankers of the European import-export trade, are the ones whose commercial activities we know least about. Estimates have it that in the 1830s 29 Christian Damascenes were engaged in this trade. The most prominent of these Christian tujjar were the 'Anhuris, with the mercantile leadership of the family falling on Hanna al-'Anhuri. Importers of European commodities and Baghdadi silks, the 'Anhuris also played a major role in the city's textile industry throughout the 1860s. Though there is no mention of the 'Anhuris using their great wealth to acquire land, some of the protégé families did accumulate considerable land after the 1870s—seemingly through foreclosure since records do not note extensive Christian purchase in the late Ottoman period.

The two most notable merchant-usurers in the city's Christian community were Bishara al-Asfar and 'Abduh al-Qudsi. Asfar held at least one consular position, that of German Dragoman, in 1890; he was also a Catholic, which suggests that the Damascus Asfars were a branch of the Maronite Asfars, a family who traded in silk and owned silk mills in Beirut. They also financed a number of Lebanese muqta'ajis, and were creditors of the 'Abillama family. The Qudsis were among Damascus' more prominent Christian merchant families to acquire large estates. In 1884 two Qudsis, 'Abduh and Khalil, held the positions of Dutch and Belgian Dragoman respectively. The family also seems to have had extensive ties to the Ottoman administrative field, with Musa al-Qudsi sitting on the

---

228 Rendered 'Hanouri' by European records. Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 63; 72.
Bureau of Property and Taxation in 1878 and 1884, and Khalil Bey al-Qudsi being a member of the Commission of Public Works and the Chamber of Agriculture in 1884. The Shamiyyas, another prominent landholding mercantile family, had similar ties to the reformed bureaucracy; Rufa'il al-Shamiyya was a judge on the Court of Summary Justice in 1878 and 1892, while Jabra'il al-Shamiyya sat on the majlis al-idara al-liwa.231

Rather more information is available on the activities of the Christian notability of Beirut. As might be expected, these merchant notables had a more marked association with the European-dominated commercial field of accumulation than with the Ottoman administrative field. At no point could the Beirutis be seen as siding too closely with European interests, however, and certain advantages were still to be wrought from participating in the administrative field.

The old Beiruti family of Bassul owned one of the city’s three biggest silk exporting concerns in the early twentieth century and they were also one of the city’s biggest landowners. Nicholas Bassul was a Beiruti hotel owner who worked as dragoman for the British consulate in the 1850s. Sallum al-Bassul, presumably a relative of Nicholas, worked for the British consulate in 1876, and served as the fourth dragoman in 1886.232 The Misks, contemporaries of the Bassuls, were also associated with the British, with Francis Misk holding the post of second dragoman to the consul in the mid to late 1870s, while his son Alexander rendered ‘useful’, but unspecified, services around the office. In return for Francis’ assistance the British granted consular protection to his entire family. With this protection Francis and Antun Misk’s commercial interests expanded, and

231 Other prominent Damascenes in consular service were the Protestant Mishaqa, the Russian Orthodox Siba, and the Catholic Ghanaja. There seem to have been more Christian families with contacts with the Ottoman administrative field: the Asbir, Jubran, Najri, Shalhub, ‘Akhrawi, ‘Absi, Siba, Shawi, Abu Sha’r, and Abu Hamad. Khoury, Urban Notables, pp. 45-46 and n.
232 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 88-89.
they came to be included among the dominant Beiruti commercial families in the century preceding the Second World War.\textsuperscript{233} By the 1870s they had also become major landowners and financiers. The Misks were also honourary dragomans in Damascus, which suggests that there was some relationship between this family and the Damascene Mishaqas; in fact, given the vagaries of transliteration practices, the two might well have been branches of the same family.\textsuperscript{234}

The family of Abila was another which cultivated close contacts with both the British and the Damascenes. The Abilas were of Maltese descent and probably came to the Levant as part of Napoleon’s expedition. They entered the employ of the British consulate in Saida in the early twentieth century, and eventually established branches of the family in Beirut. In the late 1870s Habib Abila was the British consul’s confidential interpreter and after a time became the unpaid vice-consul for Saida. Habib and his brothers were also involved in the regional trade in staples, especially grain, in which capacity they also acted as moneylenders to peasant producers; it was probably by this means that the Abilas became large landowners. In the manner of their Muslim counterparts the Abilas also married their children into some of the region’s most influential Christian families, both in Saida and Beirut and in Damascus.\textsuperscript{235} Their ties to Damascus also extended to the Muslim notables of the city. Shibli Abila was known to be Amir 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri’s commercial agent in Saida in the 1850s.\textsuperscript{236}

As with the Muslim notables and the Christian families of Damascus the most powerful of Beirut’s Christian notables were able to maintain ties to both Ottoman and European sources of patronage. The Mudawwar family exemplifies this point perfectly.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{233} Issawi, ‘British Trade’, p. 98.
  \item \textsuperscript{234} In 1884 one Salim Mishaqa, the lay head of the city’s Protestant community, was the dragoman in Damascus’ British consulate. Fawaz, \textit{Merchants and Migrants}, pp. 88-89; Khoury, \textit{Urban Notables}, p. 119.
  \item \textsuperscript{235} Fawaz, \textit{Merchants and Migrants}, pp. 89-90.
  \item \textsuperscript{236} Schatkowski-Schilcher, \textit{Families}, p. 215.
\end{itemize}
Greek Catholic immigrants from the Lebanon, this family had interests in local commerce, finance, industry, and agriculture. In order to best manipulate these resources, the Mudawwars worked as dragomans and secretaries in the French consulate and subsequently acquired consular protection. They also made use of the Ottoman administrative field, with one member of the family acting as head of the provincial chancellery around mid-century. The six brothers who ran the family business at this time divided the labour of accumulation much like their Muslim counterparts: two brothers were involved in commerce, one with finance; another tended the family’s large rural landholdings; the third looked after the family’s legal problems, while a fourth was responsible for ‘public relations’.237

Up until the end of the Ottoman period the dominant Christian sect in Beirut was the Greek Orthodox, and it was from this community that the most powerful of the commercial notability arose. One of the grandest of these families were the Bustrus, who originally migrated to Beirut from Cyprus in the early seventeenth century. Considered notables by the turn of the nineteenth century, the Bustrus’ position in the coastal cities of the Levant suffered during the reign of Jazzar Pasha but experienced a resurgence in the 1820s under his successor 'Abdallah Pasha. It was at this point that the family, probably under the leadership of Antoun Bustrus, acquired the iltizam for the port of Beirut, an office still held by Antoun’s son George in the 1830s; another Bustrus was one of the six Beiruti notables chosen to participate in the original Egyptian majlis. This association with the administrative field continued into the Ottoman restoration, and the family maintained close ties to both Ottoman and European officials—they were Russian protégés.238

By the early nineteenth century George and his three brothers Bustrus, Joseph, and Musa had built a family mansion in the Christian suburb of al-Ashrafiyya. From this base

237 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 90-91.
238 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, p. 94.
the brothers spun a web of marriage and business contacts comparable to that of their Muslim counterparts, with George and Bustrus marrying into two of the city’s richest and best established families, the Jubaylis and the Fayyads.\textsuperscript{239} After the deaths of his two brothers in the 1840s Musa maintained the family business, and M. Bustrus and Nephews was known as one of the city’s more important trading and investment houses.\textsuperscript{240} It owned extensive real estate in the city of Beirut and agricultural lands throughout Syria and Egypt. Primarily involved in the grain trade (though it also owned olive and mulberry plantations), M. Bustrus and Nephews was the Syrian agent for both Spartali and Company of London and British Liverpool Steamers; it was also a shareholder in the Beirut-Damascus road company and the Beirut port company. Its profits effectively elevated the Bustrus family to Beirut’s merchant aristocracy, the Seven Families.\textsuperscript{241}

Perhaps the most famed of Beirut’s Seven Families were the Sursuqs. Also Melkites, in the seventeenth century the Sursuqs had been large landholders and multazim near Adana in southern Anatolia. It was as multazim that members of the family immigrated to Jubayl district, near Beirut, where they acquired land—whether through extortion or as a grant from the state is uncertain. Some time in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century members of the family established themselves in Beirut as traders. As their mercantile status increased the Sursuqs began to take consular positions: Mitri became the dragoman of the American consul in 1832, and another unnamed member of the family served with the French consulate in 1856; Nicholas (probably Mitri’s son and head of N. Sursuq and Brothers) was associated with the Greek consulate, travelling on a Greek passport in 1839 and enjoying Greek protection until at least 1862; in 1865, the same year he went to work for the Russian consulate as third dragoman, Nicholas’ firm came under

\textsuperscript{239} Fawaz, \textit{Merchants and Migrants}, pp. 98-99.  
\textsuperscript{240} Issawi, ‘British Trade’, p. 98.  
\textsuperscript{241} Fawaz, \textit{Merchants and Migrants}, pp. 94-95.
Russian protection, a status that continued throughout the 1870s; Nicholas’ brother Musa seems to have been a German protégé, at least periodically, between 1875 and 1881. Though they cultivated European consular ties, the Sursuqs also maintained their old association with the Ottoman administrative field. There is little information about their involvement in local administration, but they clearly had influential contacts in Istanbul. In 1905 Alfred Sursuq, Musa’s son, was appointed secretary of the Ottoman embassy in Paris, and Michel, Alfred’s brother, was elected to the 1914 Ottoman parliament.

The field in which the Sursuqs were most obviously successful, and through which they made their most intimate contact with the centres of European power, was commerce and finance. Like his Muslim counterparts, Mitri Sursuq was quite successful in generating children who would expand the family’s interests; he fathered seven sons—Nicholas, Musa, Khalil, Ibrahim, Joseph, and George—and two daughters—Clémence and Mariana. Involved in the international grain trade, the Sursuqs were also Beirut agents for Lascaridi and Company in the 1850s and 1860s. They also invested in such local projects as the Beirut-Damascus roadworks, the Beirut port company, and the Suez Canal company. Their involvement in Suez arose from some of the brothers having emigrated to Egypt, possibly for commercial reasons, during the reign of Sa’id Pasha (1854-1863). Having lent considerable sums of money to both Sa’id and the Khedive Isma’il (1863-1879) for their lavish development projects, the Sursuqs were repaid with stocks in the Canal company. The greater part of the family returned to Beirut in the 1860s and built a number of residences in al-Ashrafiyya, not far from where the Bustrus would build. From this base of operations they invested in the burgeoning silk industry while pursuing their usual interests in trade, finance, and land. Musa Sursuq accumulated a startling amount of personal wealth which, upon his death in 1887, was divided among his business partners.

242 Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, pp. 91; 93-94.
(ie. his surviving brothers and nephews) his wife, three sons, and five daughters. His will indicates that this wealth included residential and commercial real estate as well as vacant land in Beirut and its environs, Alexandria, Mersine, Tarsus, and throughout southern Turkey. Their considerable rural holdings, sometimes entire villages, were scattered from the Lebanon and southern Syria (later Palestine) to Egypt.243

Though they maintained close ties with the Ottoman elite and the local Muslim and Christian notability, the Sursuqs engendered more intimate relations with their former European patrons, now their peers. Alfred, who had been sent to Paris as an Ottoman diplomat, married into the old Italian noble family of di Cassano. From this point the family proceeded to generate a family network that mirrored those of such Damascene aristocrats as the 'Azms and the 'Abids, the difference being that the Sursuq's connections were with the European notability, not the Ottoman. Alfred's daughter Yvonne married Lord Cochrane, while his first cousin Nicolas married his sister-in-law. In turn Nicolas' oldest sister married Marchese Alberto Theodoli, while her sister married the head of the Colonna family.244

The Bustrus and Sursuqs have a long lineage in Beirut, but the cities' Christian notables also had their share of upstarts. Prominent among these were the Greek Orthodox Dabbas family, who emigrated from Damascus in the wake of the Bab Tuma incident. In Damascus the family had been members of the Melkite community's religious notability since at least the seventeenth century, producing three archbishops—Athanasius III (1611-1619), Kerillos III (1620), and Athanasius IV (1720-1724). These three all held imperial barats, as did Gergi Dabbas, who was Damascus' chief engineer in the mid-eighteenth century. In the mid-nineteenth century Gergi's grandson Dimitri had taken up silk

243 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 92-93.
244 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, p. 93.
manufacture, and it was Dimitri who led the family’s flight from Damascus to Beirut in 1860.\textsuperscript{245}

In the years after 1860 Dimitri was forced to take up money-changing and silk-reeling, but he eventually returned to Damascus to retrieve some of his lost capital. Back in Beirut he re-established his silk manufacturing business and formed partnerships with other traders in Beirut and Alexandria.\textsuperscript{246} Though Dimitri chose to stay in Beirut, members of his family did establish themselves in both Damascus and Alexandria, probably for commercial reasons. Having established his family’s material security, Dimitri married into the notable Khuri family in 1870 and set to building a patronage network among the Melkite community of his adopted city.\textsuperscript{247}

\textit{coalescing interests: inter-urban and inter-sectarian co-operation}

As has been noted in the previous two sections, there is evidence of socio-economic contacts between the notable families of Damascus and Beirut. Notable intermarriage was evident among the most powerful notables—between the Mu'ayyad al-'Azms of Damascus and Beirut’s Yafis and Bayhums, and between the Salams and the Mardams. It was also apparent among the less significant families—the Hasibis, an ashraf family of Damascus, is known to have made a marriage alliance with the Haddads of Beirut.\textsuperscript{248} There is also evidence of more ephemeral relations between the notables of the two cities, which may suggest deeper associations not noted by the authors of the biographical dictionaries. 'Abdallah Agha al-Shamdin, the chief of the Damascus police in 1871, emerged as the chief

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{245} Fawaz, \textit{Merchants and Migrants}, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{246} According to Issawi, this partnership was with the Fayyad family, one of the oldest and richest Christian families in Beirut; it will be remembered that Bustrus al-Bustrus married into this family. Issawi, 'British Trade', p. 98.
\textsuperscript{247} Fawaz, \textit{Merchants and Migrants}, pp. 98-99.
\textsuperscript{248} The Suls also married into the Damascus notability, but it is unknown which family or families. Schatkowski-Schilcher, \textit{Families}, p. 211.
\end{footnotes}
of the Beirut police in 1879. Similarly, 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Ustuwani was the na'ib qadi of Beirut’s mahkama court in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Intermarriage between members of the Muslim and Christian notability of the two cities was impossible, and, aside from the ties between the Jaza'iris and the Abilas, few economic relationships have been recorded. Informal business partnerships are said to have existed between the Muslim and Christian commercial notability, however. These partnerships, which typically saw the Christian import-export merchant allied with the Muslim overland trader, were the means by which European commodities were able to penetrate into the Syrian hinterland from the coast. Further evidence of the financial relationship between Beiruti and Damascene merchants can be seen in the phenomenon of the mal al-fatura traders of the mid-nineteenth century. Unfortunately biographical information on the Damascenes who indulged in coastal finance is also scanty. It seems, though, that the ashraf family of al-Hisni was able to benefit from such opportunities. The brothers Mahmud (d. 1893/94) and Salih al-Hisni (d. 1892/93) were respectively active as mal al-fatura and Istanbul-Hijaz merchants. Sometime in the 1850s the Hisnis seem to have accumulated enough capital to drop the mal al-fatura designation, and to concentrate their attention on the lucrative regional trade with Egypt.

Within the city of Damascus there are few examples of inter-sectarian economic cooperation. One example, of a decidedly passive nature, was reported in the city’s shari’a court records for 1869. In this case a Jewish Damascene was noted as owning one-eighth of the trees in an orchard while the other seven-eighths belonged to a Muslim family.

249 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, pp. 147-148.
250 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 183.
251 Fawaz, Merchants and Migrants, pp. 95-96. Given the perseverance of Muslim import-export merchants, and the apparent residence of Christian Beirutis in Damascus, this pattern was not without exceptions.
252 See page 32 of this text.
253 Schatkowski-Schilcher, Families, p. 206.
Reported cases of informal inter-sectarian partnerships at the elite level are far more common in Beirut. Salim Salam was one of the few nineteenth century Sunni Muslim notables to have formal business ties to a Christian, though this Christian remains unnamed, and he maintained close personal ties to a number of Christian secular and religious notables, including the Melkite Archbishop and 'Abdailah al-Bustani, the latter being employed to teach his daughter. Another example of informal relations between notables is the close friendship that existed between Muhammad Bayhum (grandson of Husayn 'Itani) and Yusuf Sursuq. Viewed as the elder statesmen of their respective families and communities, they made efforts to mediate the increasingly violent conflicts that were erupting between Beirut's Christian and Muslim masses in the last decade of Ottoman rule.

The most famous example of inter-confessional business partnership in Beirut, also involving the Bayhums and Sursuqs, arose in the last year of uncontested Ottoman hegemony in Syria. Significantly enough, this partnership was a direct outgrowth of Ottoman state patronage. Seemingly in an effort to win the support of notables involved in the Beirut Reform Society, in June 1914 the Young Turks granted the Lake Hula land concession to 'Umar Bayhum and Michel Ibrahim Sursuq. The concession obliged the holders to form a company of Ottoman subjects to deepen the Jordan River and extend the area of cultivation surrounding it. This company included many notables from the sanjaq and city of Beirut, including the Salams, the Fakhuris, and Tabbaras (Beiruti Sunnis), the As'ads (Shi'is), Arslans (Druse'), as well as the Bayhums and Sursuqs.

---

255 Johnson, Class and Client, p. 69.
256 Johnson, Class and Client, p. 61.
257 Johnson, Class and Client, pp. 64-65. For more information on the liquidation of the Hula concession in the Mandate period, from the Salam perspective, see Johnson, pp. 72-73.
The prosopographical information available to us on the notable families of Beirut and Damascus suggests that their material bases were strikingly similar. Existing records do not provide us with information about all the families that were considered notable. Of those that did leave records, though, the most economically successful and socially prestigious tended to regard the family as, among other things, a unit of accumulation. Whether their primary field of accumulation was commercial or administrative, the notability was most adept at establishing informal contacts with relevant centres of power and utilising familial loyalties to protect their interests when institutional safeguards would not.

As the cleavages separating individual families dissolved and notable inter-marriage became more common, social and economic ties were also established between the Muslim and Christian notables. At first these relations were based on economic necessity—the need to accommodate the Damascenes' (or Muslims') knowledge of the interior markets to the Beirutis' (or Christians') commercial and financial connections with Europe. There is evidence though that, in Beirut in any case, the notables conceived their community of interests in more personal terms. This wedding of elite interests corresponded to the rising international tensions preceding the First World War. The fact that these interests do not seem to have coalesced on a broader scale may be attributed to the rift between their European and Ottoman patrons as much as any irreconcilable religious differences. Though the popular classes in Beirut and Damascus became increasingly likely to view social conflict in religious terms, there is evidence that the leaders of their communities were more inclined to ameliorate than to exacerbate such sectarian conflict. This inclination to co-operate on matters of mutual self-interest, quietly or otherwise, represents a tentative consolidation of notable interests along class lines. Regardless of whether such a consolidation continued or not, the question of quiet inter-sectarian co-operation at the elite level is one that deserves further exploration.
Conclusion

OTTOMAN DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT RECONSIDERED

Historians, including those of the Middle East, face two basic choices in their consideration of the past. They may chose, on one hand, to present the course of a given set of events as they were perceived by those who participated in them. On the other hand they can attempt to look past the perceptions of these events and discuss them in terms of their apparent material impact upon a given sector or group. Granted, history is inherently subjective, making it impossible to side-step subjective representations of the past; but in the context of late Ottoman Syria looking past the perceptions of historians can be very informative. This thesis has attempted to do no more than suggest an alternative perception of Beirut and Damascus to those commonly espoused in the literature.

The most basic, and insidious, of these perceptions has seen the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire as the decaying manifestation of an Islamic ideal-type. This Ottoman decline is placed in opposition to the rise of Europe, the most relevant manifestation of which was European capital and imperial penetration into the region. In the history of Ottoman Syria these perceptual biases express themselves most loudly in the dichotomy between Beirut and Damascus. Beirut, dominated by Ottoman Christians and their European patrons, and as such a bridgehead of European capital, intellectual, and eventually imperial penetration in the region, has usually been presented as an enclave of Western ‘progress’ in a sea of Oriental ‘decline’. Damascus is discussed in quite different terms. It is noted as being a centre of declining economic fortunes: the staging point for the overland route to Hajj, it was pivotal in the Hajj trade—a position which was marginalised as the sea route grew more popular in the nineteenth century; regionally, Damascus had been without rival as a commercial centre, being the entrepot for the
Baghdadi caravan trade on one hand and the Egyptian trade on the other—a role which declined with the rise of coastal entrepots like Alexandria, Basra, and, of course, Beirut. Imported European commodities, the reason for the rise of these cities, also ensured the decline of Damascus as an industrial centre. The only vaguely ‘progressive’ tendency which Damascus exemplified was its role in the rise of political Arab nationalism, and it is for this reason that it has been the focus of recent historical discussion.

With the aid of some semantic sleight-of-hand, this paper has suggested that, materially, Beirut and Damascus were not as different as they have been perceived to be. There is no doubt that Beirut rose on the tidal wave of western capital penetration, but it was not a rise in which only the Christian merchants of the city participated. The notion of a precipitous and absolute economic decline of Damascus must also be questioned. Obviously the Damascene agents of western capital, the indigenous Christian community, prospered, especially after 1860. But the expanding world market was also successfully manipulated by those Muslim merchants who continued to dominate the traditional long-distance trade (like the Quwwatlis), and by those who benefitted from coastal finance (like the Hisnis), or who broke into the new long-distance trade through their control of grain distribution and export (as did the al-'Abids and the Jaza'iris).

In an absolute sense, the ‘decline’ of Damascus, or at least the decline of its notables, is made even more untenable when one considers the impact of Ottoman reform upon the city. The intention of this reform may have been to subordinate the provinces to the Porte, but its impact was to create an administrative field of accumulation to complement the commercial field. The administrative means of accumulation, based on the manipulation of such resources as iltizam and public awqaf, provided the notables with the means to control a considerable area of cultivable land, and to acquire ownership rights over it. Thus, while some families may have been especially active in the commercial field
of accumulation (like the Beiruti Sursuqs or Damascene Quwwatlis) few of the most successful families could afford to divorce themselves from administrative office.

Whether the urban notables' power was derived from the manipulation of administrative or commercial capital—whether its source was Ottoman or European patronage—it allowed them to extend their economic interests into the rural hinterland of southern Syria. The main difference between the Beirutis and Damascenes in this regard was not their methods, but in the means available to hinterland elements to obstruct their incursions. The greatest obstacle to the urban notables was to be found in the Lebanon. The Mountain's relative resilience grew from the economic empowerment of important sectors of its society (a consequence of the cultivation of silk and the introduction of a money economy) and the autonomous political structures of the Mutasarrifiya.

Both Beirut and Damascus absorbed extensive migration from their rural hinterlands. Notwithstanding the different institutional structures that may have existed in these hinterlands, and within the cities themselves, the impact of such migration upon the cities' social structure seems to have been comparable. Like their Beiruti counterparts, migrants to Damascus, especially those settling in al-Maydan, tended to cluster together in sub-quarters and alleys according to religious, linguistic, and ethnic affinity. Though little hard data exists on the absorption of rural migrants into the urban community, it seems that, in both cases, this process of integration prevented overt conflict among the different migrant groups. Popular religious and para-military elements played a prominent role in this integration, and they came to express the frustrations of the lower strata when social tensions did grow among them in the last decade of Ottoman rule.

The structural similarities that existed between Beirut and Damascus provided the socio-economic underpinnings for the affinities between the cities' notables. The most noteworthy parallel between the Beiruti and Damascene notables, regardless of religion, was their efficient use of the family unit as a means of accumulating capital. For the
notability the family firm seems to have expressed more than a family's common business interests. Its characteristics are sufficiently regular and widespread to suggest that it embodied a distinct mode of accumulation, one which evolved because, before the latter nineteenth century, the Syrian environment was inhospitable to accumulation without coercive strength.

The characteristics of the familial mode of accumulation were the devotion of each individual's talents to the extension and preservation of the family's wealth and status. In the context of nineteenth century Syria, such a pursuit of wealth required more than a dedication to commerce or industry. It demanded that families diversify their economic interests, preferably into a field secure from the vagaries of arbitrary confiscation. Such security was available only to the privileged, the source of such privilege being administrative or consular service. For the most affluent families, then, economic success (usually in trade) was complemented by activity in the administrative field of accumulation.

Around mid-century, especially after 1860, this pattern of family accumulation was supplemented as notable families in Beirut and Damascus began to establish marriage alliances with each other. This phenomenon, the first signs of class consolidation among the Muslim notables of Damascus, was also apparent in Beirut and, though the sources are more scanty in this respect, between Beirut and Damascus. Similar traces of inter-marriage in Beirut and Damascus, and of cross-pollination between cities, are also evident among the Christian notables of the two cities. There is even evidence of inter-sectarian co-operation, both in Beirut and between Beirutis and Damascenes. Such co-operation suggests that the forces that contributed to the consolidation of an urban notable class in the last years of Ottoman rule were having a similar impact upon the notability of these two cities. It has not been suggested that this class consolidation across sectarian lines continued, as it most certainly did not. It has been asserted that consolidation did not continue because of the changing administrative and social context in which the notables
maneuvered. This, not some abstract, irreconcilable dichotomy between the Muslim and Christian notability, was the great impediment to class consolidation in Ottoman Syria.
Bibliography

primary sources


secondary sources

books and theses


*articles and monographs*


Batatu, Hanna. ‘Class Analysis and Iraqi Society’, *Arab Studies Quarterly* 1, 3 (1979), pp. 229-244.


Hourani, Albert. 'The Ottoman Background to the Modern Middle East.' London: Longman, 1970.


—. 'Military and Fiscal Transformation of the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1800.' Archivum Ottomanicum VI (1980), pp. 327-337.


—. 'Notes on the Negotiations Leading to the Anglo-Turkish Commercial Convention of 1838.' Bibliothèque De L’Institut Français D’Études Anatoliennes D’Istanbul: Memorial Ömer Lütfi Barkan XXVIII (1980), pp. 119-134.


Kushner, David. ‘The Place of the Ulema in the Ottoman Empire during the Age of Reform (1839-1918).’ Turcica 26 (1982), pp. 51-74.


