

Beginnings

Mount Lebanon before 1840

Syrians!

Great Britain, Austria, Russia and Prussia in conjunction with the Sultan have decided that the Rule of Mehemet Ali shall cease in Syria and I have been sent here with an advanced squadron to assist you in throwing off the yoke of the Pashas of Egypt.

Syrians!

You know that a Hatt-i Scheriff has been issued by the Sultan securing the life and property of his subjects which is in full operation throughout the Turkish territories in addition to which the Allied Powers have engaged to recommend to the sultan to make an arrangement to render your condition happy and prosperous . . .

Inhabitants of Lebanon!

I call upon you to rise and throw off the oppressive yoke under which you are groaning. Troops, arms and ammunition are daily expected from Constantinople . . .¹

In August 1840, when the British squadron the *Powerful* anchored off Beirut, its seasoned captain, Commodore Charles Napier, circulated this proclamation to incite a rebellion against French-backed Egypt.² As we saw in the previous chapter, the Lebanese, particularly the Maronite peasantry, responded to these calls positively, and gave their sweat and blood to fight against Mehmed Ali's armies. Their struggle helped break the diplomatic resistance of Paris and Cairo against the Quadruple Alliance and the Porte, leaving no manoeuvring space for France except war or compliance with the demands of the allies. Their efforts immensely contributed to ending the diplomatic deadlock of the time. They enabled the 1840 intervention, helping to suppress Mehmed Ali's imperialist ambitions and to restore Syria to the sultan's authority in the hope of a better future for themselves.

¹ Copy of Proclamation, 14 Aug. 1840, BLM Napier Papers, Add MS 40036/46.

² Commodore Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B., *The War in Syria*, vol. 1 (London: John W. Parker, 1842), 15–18; Ponsoby to Wood, 28 June 1840; Wood to Ponsoby, 3 July 1840, *RWEC*, 146–7.

In the third and final part of the book, we will discuss their experience: the implications and effects of the 1840 intervention on the ground, what it meant for the Lebanese, how it was received, and what role it played in the outbreak of a new cycle of civil wars in 1841, 1842, 1845 and finally—and most tragically—in 1860.

It is true that much has already been published on the civil wars in Mount Lebanon, their complex origins, theatres, and repercussions.³ Fascinating as these studies are, they have usually built their narratives and employed analytical grids within the framework of an abstract—and sometimes ambiguous—notion of modernity that gradually threatened the existing modes of (feudal) politics and the economy in Lebanon, and produced sectarianism as a cultural response to uncertainties about future. With a few exceptions (e.g. Caesar Farah's incredibly detailed *Politics of Interventionism*), these studies have rarely kept in view the transformative role of persistent vectors, such as the Eastern Question, which made violence in Lebanon more complex and enduring, and more difficult to contain. In these studies, the Eastern Question has usually been considered as an 'age-old', intangible, and static component, a European, inter-imperial quandary only. Its inter-sectoral qualities, and the responses of the Porte and the Lebanese themselves to it, have received much less attention.

Here, I will consider Great Power interventions, the quest for security, and civil wars in Lebanon through a micro-spatial lens, by historicizing the Eastern Question as a constellation of factors. I will try to explain how the Eastern Question reached Mount Lebanon, extending into the manors of the feudal lords, or the so-called *muqatadjis*, that had for centuries formed the nucleus of the Lebanese society in Greater Syria. And I will seek to elaborate how it was played out by diplomatic (strategic), legal, religious, and economic agents—how

³ Aside from the aforementioned works of Fawaz, Farah, and Makdisi, the studies published on the wars include (in chronological order), Henry Churchill, *Mount Lebanon: A Ten Years' Residence from 1842 to 1852, Describing the Manners, Customs and Religion of its Inhabitants with a Full & Correct Account of the Druse Religion and Containing Historical Records of the Mountain Tribes from Personal Intercourse with Their Chiefs and Other Authentic Sources*, 2 vols (London: Saunders & Otley, 1853); Tayyib M. Gökbilgin, '1840'tan 1861'e kadar Cebel-i Lübnan Meselesi ve Dürziler', *Belleten* 10 (1951): 641–703; Abdul al Razzaq al Bitâr, *Haliyyât al-bashâr fi târikh al-qarn al-thâlith ashâr*, 3 vols (Damascus: 1961, 1963); Kamal S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965); Haluk Ülman, *1860–1861 Suriye Buhranı. Osmanlı Diplomasisinden Bir Örnek Olay* (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1966); Ilya F. Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon, 1711–1845* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968); Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban à l'époque de la révolution industrielle en Europe* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1971); Michel Chebli, *Une histoire du Liban à l'époque des émirs (1635–1841)* (Beirut: Librairie Orientale, 1984); Mikhail Mishqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder: The History of the Lebanon in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988); Karam Rizk, *Le Mont-Liban au XIXe siècle de l'émirat au Mutasarrifiya. Tenants et aboutissants du Grand-Liban* (Kaslik-Liban: Bibliothèque de l'Université Saint-Esprit, 1994); Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalization of Communal Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Yann Bouyrat, *La France et les Maronites du Mont-Liban. Naissance d'une relation privilégiée (1831–1861)* (Paris: Geuthner, 2013); Dima de Clerck, Carla Edde, Naila Kaidbey, and Souad Slim (eds), *1860. Histoires et mémoires d'un conflit* (Beirut: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2015).

resources, men, ammunition, funds, plans, and ideals were daily mobilized from imperial hubs into the mountain, not only from Istanbul or Cairo but, from around 1840, also from the capitals of the five Great Powers and other European states.

Using fresh archival and secondary sources, I will show that transimperial security culture thrived in Lebanon through the *already existing* sectarian and class divides and tensions that had been brought about in part by new streams of egalitarian and capitalist ideas and aspirations, the rise of new classes and class consciousness, as well as quest for political power in the mountain. I will thus differ from the revisionist scholarship on the history of Lebanon which considers sectarian disaggregation as a post-1840 phenomenon and a product of imperial interventionism—a ‘storm’ created by European and Ottoman imperial agents.

Since fleshing out these points requires an understanding of the nuances of politics and society in Mount Lebanon in the decades preceding the 1840 intervention, it is important to first discuss the pre-1840 history of Lebanon and the beginnings of class conflict and sectarianism there. I will do so by following the story of a leading feudal family, the Druze Jumblatts, which will enable us to make better sense of the composite Lebanese experience of change before and after 1840.

The story of the Jumblatts is useful not only because the family lived through war and peace, violence and security in Syria for centuries, nor because their history furnishes us with a more intelligible and economical narrative amidst all the complexity and diverse factors that fanned violence and civil wars. The Jumblatts were also one of the richest (if not *the* richest) and most influential families in the country, in whose lands the Maronites and Druze had lived side by side in harmony for decades. It was in these very lands, and in a few others, that internecine and inter-imperialized violence erupted in the nineteenth century.

The Land of the *Muqatadjis*

In Bilād al-Sham or Greater Syria, there had been almost no direct Ottoman political control since Sultan Selim II had conquered the country in 1516. This situation lasted until the mid-nineteenth century. The decentralized administration permitted hereditary rule by politically and economically powerful families as long as they submitted to the authority of the imperial centre.⁴ In return for enjoying relative autonomy, these families were made responsible for taxation and security and for keeping the region within the Ottoman fold, which required them to attune themselves to the incessant demands of the imperial centre while

⁴ ‘Abd-al Qādir al-Azm (ed.), *Al-Usra al-‘Azmiya* (Damascus: Matba’at al-Inshā, 1960), 25ff.; cf. Hanioglu, *Late Ottoman*, 15.

responding to the requests of local elites and the population. The one major imprint of the Ottoman sultans on this system of vernacular politics was to divide Syria into three *vilayets* (provinces): Tripoli, Aleppo, and Damascus.⁵ Later, in 1660, a fourth *vilayet* in Sidon was established in order to exercise *nezaret* or superintendence over the others, mainly to check the activities of potentially dissenting Lebanese gentry.

The main duty of the Ottoman *valis* (governors) of the four *vilayets* was to ensure submission to the imperial capital and the sending of revenues. Yet, just like Bulutkaptan Ali and Mehmed Ali of Egypt,⁶ they occasionally aspired to greater autonomy, or even independence. Each time local notables accumulated sufficient power to pose a threat to the central authority of the Porte, the sultans would turn either to nearby governors or to rival notables and reward them with greater authority to create a power balance in the region—or, if this failed, an imperial army would be dispatched to restore Ottoman rule. In a similar vein, each time the local gentry rose against their Ottoman overlords (*valis*) as a result of heavy taxation, the irregularities of the tax system, or excessive demands for military aid, the governors would appeal to the same method of pitting these gentries against one another to subjugate the local elites under imperial authority, as was the case in Ottoman Egypt.⁷

The Jumblatts were one of the notable families in Syria, with their leaders holding the post of the paşa (*vali*) of Aleppo at the start of the seventeenth century. Of Kurdish (Ayyubi) descent and, after conversion from Sunni Islam, followers of the Druze doctrine,⁸ in the first decade of the seventeenth century, the relations between the Jumblatt paşas and their Ottoman overlords became strained when Hüseyin Jumblatt Paşa refused to send reinforcements to the sultan's Persian campaign. Following his execution, his nephew Ali Paşa aspired to found an independent state in Aleppo and Adana. In 1607, the sultan's military inflicted a heavy blow on the army of Ali Paşa. Some members of the family, scattered and much reduced both in number and in property, sought refuge in Mount Lebanon. The Lebanese grand emir at the time, Fakr'eddin II (1572–1635) of the Druze Ma'n family, warmly welcomed the Jumblatts, most notably Jumblatt b. Said and his son Rabah.⁹ The Jumblatts were then settled in the Shuf region, and a new episode began in the history of the family.

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⁵ Salibi, *Lebanon*, 16.

⁶ See Chs 3 and 5.

⁷ See Ch. 4.

⁸ An Islamic sect that sprang from Isma'ili beliefs in the 11th c., the Druze adhere to a gnostic and esoteric version of Shiism that combines Islamic teachings with Hellenistic, Iranian, and other Eastern pre-Islamic religious traditions. Kais M. Firro, *A History of the Druzes* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1992); Nejla N. Abu 'Izz al-Din, *The Druzes: A New Study of their History, Faith and Society* (Boston: E. J. Brill, 1993).

⁹ Abu 'Izz al-din, *The Druzes*, 209. Hazran tells us that Ali Paşa likewise sought refuge at first in Beirut. He then went to Istanbul, and was pardoned by the sultan and appointed as *beylerbeyi* in Hungary. He was either executed by local authorities in 1610 or died of natural causes in 1611, while his family is said to have been killed or enslaved. Yusri Hazran, 'How Elites Can Maintain their Power in the Middle East: The Junblat Family as a Case Study', *Middle Eastern Studies* 51(3) (2015): 346.

Mount Lebanon was a semi-autonomous region in Syria with its own unique structure of order, which lasted until 1842.¹⁰ Under Ottoman rule, it was administered by the local grand emirs, of the Ma'n family until 1697 and, from then on, of the Sunni Muslim Shihabs, whose main duty was to mediate the interests of local inhabitants and those of the Ottoman overlords to whom they paid a yearly tribute.¹¹ With the exception of Ahmed Paşa al-Jazzar (1722–1804), the paşa of Sidon who reigned between 1775 and 1804, Ottoman *valis* intervened in the internal affairs of the mountain only when the grand emir became too aspirational, when the taxes were not remitted, or when the local gentry became troublesome in official eyes.¹²

The inhabitants of Mount Lebanon lived in a patriarchal system of social hierarchy, with emirs at the top of the pyramid and hakims and sheikhs of various ranks below them. This hereditary feudal order was based on kinship and prestige, wherein the principal values held by society honoured the traditions of the ancestors.¹³ In this system, after the family of the great emirs (the Druze Yemenites and Arslans, and the 'Abu l'Lamas who eventually converted to the Maronite religion), and the second-rank emirs (the Shi'ite sheikhs of the Himadah house and the Muzhir house), came the Jumblatts, along with the eight grand sheikh families of the special class (*al-mashayikh al-kibar*), the 'sheikh of the sheikhs'. The latter were granted *muqatas*—lands of various sizes leased to them by the sultan—in 1711, and were therefore known as *muqatadjis* or fief-holders. Five of these great sheikhs were Druze (the Jumblatts, the Imads [Yazbakis], Abu Nakads, Talhuqs, and Abd al-Maliks) located in the south of the country, and three were Maronites (the Khazins, Hubayshes, and Dahdahs) that resided in the north.

Like most other Lebanese chiefs, the Jumblatts were mainly occupied with the cultivation of silk, mulberries, olive trees, and vines in their *muqatas*. They were responsible for the productivity, justice, and security of these lands, collecting and remitting taxes, policing, presenting a yearly tribute to the grand emir, and contributing armed men for his purposes.¹⁴ They enjoyed the privilege of partial exemption from taxes, keeping a percentage of the tax that they collected as a fee. And they cohabited with other gentry which had no ascribed status, such as clergy and small landowners, as well as with peasants, commoners (*'ammiyyah*) in rural areas, and artisans in urban centres.¹⁵

¹⁰ Farah, *Politics*, xviii; Schlicht, 'La France', 496.

¹¹ Chebli, *Une histoire*, 59; Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 16.

¹³ Harik, *Politics*, 71.

¹⁴ John Bowring, *Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria, Great Britain, Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1840), 102; Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence*, 65; Harik, *Politics*, 41.

¹⁵ Caesar Farah, 'The Road to Intervention', *Papers on Lebanon* 13 (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992), 10.

¹² Makdisi, *Culture*, 37.

In *Tarih-i Cevdet*, the Ottoman chronicler Ahmet Cevdet Paşa writes that at the turn of the nineteenth century the population of Mount Lebanon was 217,000, the majority of which (121,000) consisted of Catholic Maronites. Other sects that lived in the mountain were the Greek Orthodox and Catholics (47,000), Druze (30,000), Shi'ite Metuwalis (11,500), Sunni Muslims (6,500), and Jews (1,000).¹⁶

Even though the Maronite majority was concentrated in the north of the mountain, some peasants eventually moved to the south to work in the Druze and Greek Orthodox *muqatas* at the invitation of the *muqatadjis*, including the Jumblatts, who needed their labour power. In rare cases Druze peasants also worked under Maronite *muqatadjis*. The ethno-religious diversity and the limitations imposed on the Christians, such as dress codes and the heavy poll tax (*haraç*) due to their exemption from military service, did not disturb social accord. In this system, legitimacy relied on personal allegiance: it was 'more a function of . . . loyalty between protector and protégé than an attribute of coercion and impersonal authority'.¹⁷ Mutually dependent, the Christian peasants and their Druze or Muslim chiefs usually lived in harmony. This situation gradually changed, however, after the turn of the nineteenth century.

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During their early days in Mount Lebanon, the Jumblatts wielded almost no political influence and possessed very few estates. A turning point in their story came in 1711, when Jumblatt b. Said's nephew Ali b. Rabah married a daughter of Sheikh Qablan Tanukh, the leader of one of the most established feudal families. After the sheikh passed away in 1712 with no male descendants, all his property was inherited by Ali b. Rabah. Thereafter the Jumblatts became one of the richest families in the mountain, and stepped into the limelight of Lebanese politics.¹⁸

In the eighteenth century, the family featured in the archetypical feud between the *muqatadjis*, rallying behind them several families (Druze and some Maronite), against their rivals, the 'Imad family and their Yazbaki faction. The differences between the two factions, over having their Shihab candidate nominated as the grand emir, turned into more serious hostilities and occasional skirmishes.¹⁹ In the end, with the support of the paşa of Sidon, the Jumblatts managed to get Bashir II Shihab, the son of a Maronite convert, proclaimed as the new grand emir.

This was another crucial turning point in the family history. Dubbed the 'Red Emir' because of his red beard and his shrill and brutal methods of oppressing his opponents, Bashir II eliminated the Jumblatts' rivals one by one. He reduced dynastic and inter-factional quarrels to a minimum, using great force and thus bringing into subservience the major *muqatadjis* who he believed menaced tranquillity in the country. These were mostly Druze: the Arslans, Talhuqs, 'Imads,

¹⁶ *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol. 1, 275.

¹⁷ Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence*, 65.

¹⁸ Salibi, *Lebanon*, 9–10. Harik, *Politics*, 50.

¹⁹ BOA C.M.L. 40/1802, h. 29.1.1174; Salibi, *Lebanon*, 11–12; Harik, *Politics*, 46–7.

‘Abd al-Maliks, and Nakads. These families belonged to the Yazbaki faction. Especially the Nakads were among the major protagonists of the civil wars later in the 1840s.²⁰

To be sure, the grand emir’s intentions in suppressing these Druze families did not initially have any sectarian motivation, i.e. ‘deliberate mobilization of religious identities for political and social purposes’.²¹ In fact, he forged a military alliance with his namesake, Sheikh Bashir, the head of the Jumblatt family since 1792. The suppression of rival families empowered the Jumblatts and made them the most influential Druze *muqatadjis*.²² But it also upset the traditional ‘*muqata* system in which the overlords of the mountain, the grand emirs, ‘had no right to inflict personal injury in punishing a feudal lord’.²³

Bashir II killed many *muqatadjis* and confiscated their property, although custom ‘specified other means of punishment such as exile or destruction of property’.²⁴ He was arguably the first to violate this centuries-long tradition, which overturned the balance of power and the culture of recognition among the families. To Bashir II, oppression was a necessary evil. Even though he brought stability to a region of continuous factional conflicts, his methods also contributed substantially to the defilement of the ‘*muqata* system.’²⁵ It was during his reign that the seeds of class and sectarian violence were sown, the first shoots of which marked the beginning of sectarianism in Mount Lebanon.

A plethora of factors enflamed sectarian inclinations in the mountain. Among these were the ascendancy of the Maronites, as a result of their demographic boom, their material enrichment as the foremost Lebanese silk producers, the gradual empowerment of the Maronite church, and the weakening of the Druze due to inter-factional fighting.²⁶ Since the capitulatory agreements of the sixteenth century, France had cultivated interests in Syria and acted as the protector of the Maronite Church, while Roman Catholic missionaries such as the Franciscans, Jesuits, and Lazarists had advised the Maronite patriarchs.²⁷ In the late eighteenth century, besides the Maronite college that had been established in Rome in 1584, new Catholic schools were opened in Lebanon. They helped spread literacy and educated generations of Maronite ‘*ammiiyyah*’ (commoners) who later took up positions as scribes, clerks, and household agents in the service of the notables, both Maronite and Druze *muqatadjis*, including the Jumblatts.

²⁰ For a detailed account of the Nakad family, see Naila S. Kaidbey, ‘Shihab–Druze Discord in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of a Powerful Druze family—the Abu Nakad’, accessed 20 Jan. 2019, https://www.academia.edu/9864172/Shihab-Druze_Discord_in_the_19th_Century_The_Case_of_a_Powerful_Druze_family_The_Abu_Nakad.

²¹ Makdisi, *Culture*.

²² Thomas Philipp, *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 78–9; Harik, *Politics*, 39.

²³ *Ibid.* 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Firro, *Druzes*, 54–5; Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence*, 68–71.

²⁶ Hazran, ‘Junblat’, 349.

²⁷ Salibi, *Lebanon*, 12.

The clergy acted as one of the channels which maintained the French name in the country, but also imported egalitarian ideas which posed a threat to the *'muqata* system.²⁸ Thanks to new interpretations of reform, the church gradually decoupled itself from the *muqatadjis* (Khazins, Hubayshes, and Dahdahs) who had long acted as patriarchs, supplied protection, formed the higher echelon of its hierarchy, and levied taxes on the clergy during the first two decades of the nineteenth century.²⁹ It freed itself from these taxes, which allowed it to amass considerable cultivable land. Moreover, instead of relying on the *muqatadjis*, the clergy came to receive physical protection from Grand Emir Bashir II, a Maronite himself with clerical advisers behind his throne.

All these modifications were pivotal in the forging of a communal consciousness among the Maronites under the influence of modern, egalitarian ideas, transmitted through the French-inspired clergy.³⁰ Already in 1807, Maronite *nazirs* (responsibles) were appointed in place of the *muqatadjis* for tax collection in the Khazins' Kisrawan district.³¹ Inspired by the erudite Bishop Joseph Istfan (1759–1823), the peasantry was introduced to the system of *vekils* (representatives) who raised the concerns of each Christian village they represented and, concurrently, manifested the transformation in the political perspective of the commoners. A shift occurred in the *'muqatas*, albeit largely incomplete, from personal and kinship-based allegiance to ties based on communal (initially class/peasant and eventually sectarian) and public interest. That is, in Mount Lebanon, class and sectarian consciousness formed virtually simultaneously in the early nineteenth century.

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A peasant rebellion that broke out in Kisrawan in 1819–20 on the initiative of Bishop Istfan was a catalyst of the shift. It displayed the dual nature of the emergent communal-based allegiance of the Maronite peasantry. Burdened by the tax demands of the grand emir (who, in turn, had been hard pressed by the Ottoman governor of Sidon, who had doubled the tribute due), the peasants rebelled. On the one hand, as a religious sect (Maronites), they demanded to be 'treated at least on equal terms with the Druzes', because the latter, under the leadership of Bashir Jumblatt, had refused to pay extra tributes to the grand emir, who had then not dared to challenge them.³² On the other hand, the peasantry had acted as a financially and politically oppressed class that rose against the control of the *muqatadjis*. They invited their co-religionists, the Maronite peasants, in the southern districts controlled by the Druze *muqatadjis*, to join them in rebelling against their chiefs. But the Jumblatts' Maronite tenants responded negatively to

²⁸ Churchill, *Mount Lebanon*, 89–90.

²⁹ Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence*, 72–3.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 74; Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 18.

³¹ Firro, *Druzes*, 54.

³² Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence*, 77–8.

such calls, as they did not have to pay the extra levies imposed on their northern co-religionists.

While, in the Maronite north, a dual communal consciousness grew chiefly through the medium of the clergy and from below, in the south of Lebanon, the Druze sectarian identity took a political form. The difference was that the latter was forged from above and mainly through the agency of the Jumblatts, especially when they turned against Grand Emir Bashir Shihab II in the mid-1820s.

In fact, the Jumblatt chief had helped the grand emir suppress the peasants' rebellion and kill its prime movers in 1821. Thereafter, however, the two figures had become rivals and engaged in a struggle for power. Bashir Jumblatt frowned upon his namesake grand emir's desire to consolidate his power by corroding the *'muqata* system. At the same time, he strove to unite the Druze under him.³³ Against the demographic rise of the Maronites, Jumblatt resettled hundreds of Druze families between the eastern Mediterranean coasts and Hawran, the stronghold of the Druze.³⁴ He harboured hopes to 'attain the highest authority of the Mountain', taking over from Bashir II the sub-governorship of the Druze.³⁵

The rivalry between the two Bashirs turned into hostility in 1822 in the context of a complex altercation between the Ottoman governors of Damascus and Sidon, when Jumblatt sided with the paşa of Damascus and Bashir II with the paşa of Sidon.³⁶ As the sultan endorsed the former's cause, Bashir II found himself in a perilous position and went into self-exile in Cairo. There Mehmed Ali Paşa received him warmly. Having set his eyes on an invasion of Syria, the paşa of Egypt first resolved the differences between the pašas of Damascus and Sidon, and then made a secret pact with Bashir II. As the grand emir set out for Lebanon, Mehmed Ali told him 'we will meet again... [O]ur meeting [will take place] in Syria', indicating his intentions of occupation.³⁷

This was the point at which Lebanon was drawn into Mehmed Ali's sphere of influence. From then on, the paşa supported the grand emir's policies. When the latter found out that the Jumblatts had schemed with the Sunni Shihabs against

³³ Firro, *Druzes*, 57; Hazran, 'The Junblat', 352; Abu-Shaqra, *al-Harakāt*, 15.

³⁴ But Jumblatt's policies were hardly inimical to the Maronites. He concomitantly accorded the Maronite peasants new lands in his district in Mukhtara, and even contributed to the construction of a monastery for which Pope Pius VII sent him a letter of gratitude. Hazran, 'The Junblat', 352.

³⁵ Henri Guys, *Beyrouth et le Liban. Relations d'un séjour de plusieurs années dans ce pays*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar Lahad Khater, 1985 [1850]), 79; 'Note relative à la victoire du pacha d'Acre et de l'émir Béchir sur les Druzes, 7 Feb. 1825, AMAE Papiers Desages 60PAAP/34/146.

³⁶ Hasan Damietta to Mehmed Ali Paşa, 21 July 1822, DWQ Bahr Barra Files (8). N. 53; Abdullah Paşa to Mehmed Ali Paşa, 5 Aug. 1822, DWQ Bahr Barra Files (8). N. 54; Muhammad Necib Efendi to Mehmed Ali Paşa, 2 July 1822, DWQ Bahr Barra Files (8). N. 48; 'Abdullah Abi 'Abdullah, *Tārīkh al-muarīn wa-masīhī al-sharq 'abr al-'usur III* (Dar Malaqāt, 1997), 218.

³⁷ 'Amil Khury and 'Adil Sulayman, *al-Siyasāt al-duwāliyyaa fi-l-sharq al-arabi II* (Beirut: Dār al-nashr li-l-iyāsa wa-l-nashr, 1960), 95; BOA HAT 384/20615; 384/20627.

him in order to control Lebanon, and the mountain subsequently descended into civil war, the paşa of Egypt unreservedly supported Bashir II.³⁸

Against this alliance, Bashir Jumblatt rallied the support of several families that included all the grand emir's nemeses—Muslim Shihabs, some Maronite sheikhs from Kisrawan, Orthodox Christians, and even the Yazbakis and their Druze peasants, who harboured personal animosity towards the grand emir or were charmed by the Jumblatts' lucrative gifts. Some 14,000 Druze were enlisted against the grand emir's troops. The latter consisted largely of Maronite peasantry but were also backed by Mehmed Ali (and through him the paşa of Sidon) and some Druze sheikhs.³⁹ This inaugurated a wider and more perilous period of Shihab–Jumblatt rivalry in the mountain that was to last at least until 1861.

Even though it might at first sight seem to be a cross-sectarian conflict, religious slogans were adopted to mobilize men and rouse the soldiers among the Druze in the Jumblatt camp as well as among the Maronites on the grand emir's side.⁴⁰ Religious identities *were* mobilized for political purposes. In the end, despite their numerical superiority and all the sectarian exaltation, the Jumblatts could not hold in Samqaniyya against the Mehmed Ali-backed army of Bashir II in early 1825. After several weeks of pursuit in the snow, the Druze leaders, including Bashir Jumblatt, were captured. The latter was then strangled in Sidon.⁴¹ His palace and assets in Mukhtara were destroyed, and the family's lands confiscated.⁴²

The Jumblatts' fall is often considered as one of the milestones of the open-ended sectarian political struggle in Mount Lebanon. According to the Lebanese historian Kamal Salibi, the Druze never forgot Bashir II's treatment of them, even though the grand emir had crushed the Jumblatts not because they were Druze but because he saw them as dangerous political opponents. The Druze would thereafter cease to cooperate wholeheartedly in the affairs of the emirate, instead awaiting an opportunity for revenge.⁴³ The American scholar Leila Fawaz argues: 'the death of [Sheikh Jumblatt]...introduced sectarianism into Lebanese politics.'⁴⁴

It is not entirely correct to confine the origins of sectarian violence in Lebanon to one single event. The rise of sectarianism in the mountain was a complex process that, for the moment, included the growing communal consciousness of the Maronites through the burgeoning clergy and the peasantry, as well as the

³⁸ BOA HAT 386/20670; 386/20671; 386/20672; 386/20676; Mehmed Ali Paşa to Abdullah Paşa, 4 Feb. 1824, DWQ Bahr Barra Files (22). N. 40; BOA HAT 387/20678; Haydar, *Lubnan*, 723; cf. Harik, *Politics*, 224.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 226–7.

⁴⁰ 'Note relative à la victoire du pacha d'Acre et de l'émir Béchir sur les Druzes', 7 Feb. 1825, AMAE Papiers Desages 60PAAP/34/146; Firro, *Druzes*, 58; Mishaqa, *Murder*, 94.

⁴¹ BOA HAT 1231/47990; see also HAT 1229/47938; Salibi, *Lebanon*, 47; Firro, *Druzes*, 61.

⁴² For the details of the fighting, see BOA HAT 668/32604; 1231/47987; 1231/47988; 1231/47989; Hariki, *Politics*, 226, 235; Polk, *Opening*, 84.

⁴³ Salibi, *Lebanon*, 27.

⁴⁴ Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 19.

Jumblatts' bid for leadership in the mountain which provoked a fierce and deadly rivalry with the Maronite grand emir, Bashir II.⁴⁵ It unfolded at a time—before 1840 and in the first decades of the nineteenth century—when the old *muqata* system and the allegiances between the lords and peasants had been somewhat tarnished by egalitarian ideas circulating among the clergy and the commoners. The influence of the once-powerful *muqatadjis* was now reduced to the administration of their peasants, 'though in a precarious manner unlike the past', and without any significant influence over the grand emir which they had previously enjoyed.⁴⁶

As for the Jumblatts, after their suppression by the Egyptian-backed Bashir II, the remaining family members fled to the Hawran plains—a Druze-dominated region in the south-east. There they sought shelter, keeping a low profile until a new opportunity arose for them to return to their lands in Mukhtara. That opportunity manifested itself when Mehmed Ali's daring Syrian campaign began in 1831.

When the Egyptians Came

After Grand Emir Bashir II eliminated the Jumblatts and established his absolute authority in Lebanon in 1825 with the support of Mehmed Ali, he sent news to Cairo, thanking the paşa and declaring his 'continued compliance with [Mehmed Ali's] orders'.⁴⁷ Six years later, when Mehmed Ali sent his army and navy to Syria and asked for Bashir II's assistance, however, the latter was at first hesitant. He was uncertain how to react to a conflict between Istanbul and Cairo, fearful of being jammed between their political differences.

Bashir II made his mind up only after receiving a furious letter from the paşa of Egypt, who asked him to support the Egyptian army in its campaign—otherwise 'my great love for you will change and . . . I will send five regiments of *Jihadis* to [Mount Lebanon] and I will destroy it'.⁴⁸ Mehmed Ali did more than threaten Bashir II, though, pledged also that he would help Bashir II 'cut out the Druze' for good this time.⁴⁹ The grand emir then sent his son to aid the Egyptian campaign, and remained loyal to Mehmed Ali until he was dismissed from power in 1840.

⁴⁵ Perusing the archival documents of the Maronite church, Harik concludes that the Maronite clergy were vigorously seeking 'to sever political and social relations between the Maronites and the Druze', which meant 'not only the separation of the two communities but also the rejection of the *iqta* tie [the '*ammiiyyah*] between the Maronite subject and the Druze lords, or between the Druze subject and his Maronite lord.' Harik, *Politics*, 241–2.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 231; Firro, *Druzes*, 61–2; see also M. Michaud and M. Poujoulat, *Correspondance d'Orient*, vol. 4 (Paris: Ducollet, 1834), 341–2.

⁴⁷ Amir Bashir al-Shihabi to Mehmed Ali Paşa, 5 Sept. 1825, DWQ Bahr Barra Files (10) N. 1.

⁴⁸ Polk, *Opening*, 96.

⁴⁹ Mehmed Ali Paşa to Amir Bashir al-Shihabi, 6 Sept. 1831, DWQ Dafatir Mu'ayya Turki Files (40), N. 766.

For the Jumblatts, and other Druze sheikhs—Abu Nakads, Talhuqs, and Abd ‘al Maliks—all of whom had been defeated at least once by Bashir II, the civil war between Istanbul and Cairo was the moment for revenge and the opportunity to return home. As the news of Mehmed Ali’s *démarche* reached them, they sent each other secret messages deciding to declare their allegiance to the sultan. With what resources remained in their hands from the fighting in previous decades, they joined the Ottoman imperial army.⁵⁰ The Ottoman authorities reinstated Numan Jumblatt, Bashir’s elder son, as the sheikh of the sheikhs in the mountain, as a measure against ‘the clear evidence of the treachery of [Bashir II] toward the Supreme State’, alluding to his alliance with Mehmed Ali.⁵¹

However, the hopes of the Jumblatts and the other Druze sheikhs were shattered when Ibrahim’s army defeated Ottoman forces in Homs and Konya.⁵² Sheikh Numan Jumblatt then ran away to Asia Minor, together with the fleeing Ottoman regiments. The Porte settled him first in Bursa and then Karahisar-i Sahib (modern day Afyon), though neither the local population nor the sheikh himself was happy with this new arrangement, the former finding it too expensive to host him, the latter asking for resettlement in more developed İzmir (Smyrna) or Rumelian provinces of the empire.⁵³ Numan stayed in Western Anatolia until 1839. The remainder of his family continued a silent residence in Aleppo and the Shuf region, while some fled back to Hawran.

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After the war between Istanbul and Cairo was arrested by the Kütahya truce of May 1833, Mehmed Ali’s son Ibrahim Paşa became fully engaged in the administrative reorganization of Syrian provinces, which were almost entirely excluded from the internal policy of the Ottoman government.⁵⁴ In the beginning, the Syrian population, and particularly the Christians, showed enthusiasm for the arrival of the Egyptians.

The French-backed Egyptian rulers of Syria knew that they needed domestic collaboration in their campaign. They therefore followed a very active policy of positive public relations with generous payments for supplies provided by locals to their army, ordered their men to avoid plunder, and sought to generate friendly relations with the wider populace, particularly the ‘rich local inhabitants’,

⁵⁰ Polk, *Opening*, 97. Hammud Abu Nakad’s plan to join the Ottoman forces failed, however, as his correspondence with the Ottoman paşas was intercepted by Bashir II: Firro, *Druzes*, 62. In his chronicle, Amir Haidar Shihab notes that the Druzes and Christians were engaged in limited fighting in Deir al-Qamar before the Ottoman and Egyptian forces confronted one another: Polk, *Opening*, 136.

⁵¹ BOA HAT 354/19898; 908/39773; Polk, *Opening*, 99–100, 103; Hazran, ‘Junblat’, 352; Firro, *Druzes*, 62.

⁵² See Ch. 5. Sebahattin Samur, *İbrahim Paşa Yönetimi Altında Suriye* (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1995), 29.

⁵³ BOA HAT 696/33505; 1231/47997.

⁵⁴ Petrunina, *Social’no*, 314.

introducing themselves as the liberators of Syrians from the oppressor Ottoman paşas.⁵⁵ They promised to lower taxes and exempt the locals from conscription, and made active efforts to improve the condition of the Christians.⁵⁶

As the Russian traveller Lieutenant-General P. P. Lvov and Consul Bazili observed, non-Muslims were admitted to the administrative bodies such as city councils (*majlis al-shura*) as well as in judicial functions and the tax offices.⁵⁷ In Lebanon, representatives (*vekils*) were appointed for each village according to their dominant denomination, and a main court, comprising three judges allocated with respect to their sects (two Maronites and one Druze), was established—a measure usually and mistakenly attributed by the revisionist literature to the post-*Tanzimat* restoration politics of the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁸

Ferdinand Perrier, a French aide-de-camp in the Egyptian army in Syria, wrote that ‘all [the] humiliating distinctions’ held against the Christians in the past—such as only being permitted to dress in certain colours and fabrics, or not being allowed to ride horses—were abolished, ‘as Muslims and non-Muslim believers were declared equal’.⁵⁹ These all proved to be crucial changes which dovetailed with growing egalitarian sentiments among the Maronite clergy and peasantry. But they also engendered the institutionalization of sectarian politics.

Furthermore, the implementation of modern Egyptian state apparatus warranted broader public security. The sanitary system was improved. Freedom of movement was facilitated through the introduction of government orders to enter towns.⁶⁰ The Bedouin threat was checked and roads were secured.⁶¹ Thanks to these measures, Beirut transformed from a backwater town into one of the Levant’s major commercial ports, with a brisk increase in the volume of trade in the 1830s.⁶² Equally importantly, under Mehmed Ali’s protection, local merchants, mostly consisting of Christian families, ‘began to coalesce into a powerful class of their own’, which (as we will see) would within a few decades significantly

⁵⁵ P. P. Lvov, *Siriya, Livan i Palestina v opisaniyax rossijskix puteshestvennikov, konsul’skix i voennyx obzorax pervoj poloviny XIX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 214; Petrunina, *Social’no*, 316; Edward Hogg, *Visit to Alexandria, Damascus and Jerusalem during the Successful Campaigns of Ibrahim Pasha*, vol. 1 (London: Saunders & Otley, 1835), 193.

⁵⁶ Samur, *Ibrahim*, 49.

⁵⁷ Lvov, *Siriya*, 214; Bazili, *Siriya*, 126; Petrunina, *Social’no*, 319.

⁵⁸ Lvov, *Siriya*, 214; Petrunina, *Social’no*, 317–18; Latifa M. Salem, *Al-Ḥukm al-maṣri fi al-shām 1831–1841* (Cairo: Madbouli, 1990), 84–5.

⁵⁹ Ferdinand Perrier, *La Syrie sous le gouvernement de Méhémet-Ali jusqu’en 1840* (Paris: Bertrand, 1842), 108.

⁶⁰ Polk, *Opening*, 112–13.

⁶¹ Samur, *Ibrahim*, 49. For Mehmed Ali Paşa’s control over the Bedouins and the hajj routes, see Aharoni, *The Pasha’s Bedouin*.

⁶² Toufoul Abou-Hodeib, ‘Quarantine and Trade: The Case of Beirut, 1831–40’, *International Journal of Maritime History* 19(2) (Dec. 2007): 233; ‘Commercial Report’, 16 Nov. 1835, TNA FO 78/264. See also Charles Issawi, ‘British Trade and the Rise of Beirut, 1830–1860’, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 8(1) (Jan. 1977): 92, 94. As Issawi tells us, ‘the total number of ships entering [Beirut] rose from 341 in 1835 to ... 680 in 1838.’

challenge the authority of the *muqatadjis* and the feudal order, alongside the Christian peasantry and the clergy.⁶³ In the latter half of the 1830s, new consulates were opened in Beirut by Britain, Belgium, the United States, and Russia, to oversee growing commercial relations as well as to protect the interests of their co-religionists.⁶⁴

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Once a hero and liberator of the Syrians, Mehmed Ali and his son Ibrahim turned into tyrants in the eyes of the locals within just a few years. Because of the continuous risk of war with Istanbul in the mid-1830s and the need for resources from Syria, they began to levy troops in coastal Lebanon, disarm the mountaineers and particularly the Druze to prevent an Ottoman-backed uprising, monopolize silk production (which was the main local industry), and impose the heavy *firda* taxes on all males regardless of their religion.⁶⁵ The locals were further aggravated by the imposition of *corvée* labour, the deforestation carried out to provide timber for the Egyptian navy, and the increase in prices due to the presence of a high number of troops.⁶⁶

All these prompted resistance against the Egyptian rule. The Druze risings in Palestine, Tripoli, and the region of Latakia in 1834 were quelled only when Mehmed Ali ordered, in the interests of ‘politics and humanity’, the suspension of conscription among the Druze.⁶⁷ But, due to fears of war with Istanbul, it was reimposed in 1837, and new revolts broke out in Hawran at the end of the year. A region traditionally inhabited by the Druze, the population of Hawran swelled in the 1830s with the arrival of their co-religionists who had fled the mountain or Palestine to avoid Egyptian oppression. During the 1837–8 uprising, Druze forces achieved successive victories against the Egyptian units.⁶⁸ According to Firro, the sense of Druze communal solidarity grew stronger at the time.⁶⁹

This was another major moment in Lebanon where religious identities were used for political ends. Adamant Druze resistance led Ibrahim Paşa to ask for

⁶³ Abou-Hodeib, ‘Quarantine and Trade’, 241–2; Kirsten Alff, ‘The Business of Property: Levantine Joint-Stock Companies, Land, Law, and Capitalist Development around the Mediterranean, 1850–1925’ (doctoral thesis, Stanford University, 2019), 56.

⁶⁴ M. Baron to Minister AE, 10 Oct. 1838, DIPLOBEL 940/38/9; Butenev to Nesselrode, 13 Nov. 1839, AVPRI, f. 149, o. 502/1, d. 397, ll. 1–3.

⁶⁵ Perrier, *Syrie*, 359; Farah, ‘Road to Intervention’, 12–13.

⁶⁶ Bashir II to Hannah Bahri, 7 June 1835, DWQ Abdin File No. 251, D.N. 104; Ibrahim Paşa to Mehmed Ali Paşa, 7 June 1835, DWQ Abdin Files (251), D.N. 100; Mehmed Ali Paşa to Ibrahim Paşa, 6 June 1835, DWQ Abdin Files (251), D.N. 51; Ibrahim Paşa to Mehmed Ali Paşa, 25 May 1835, DWQ Abdin Files (251), D.N. 64; Polk, *Opening*, 123–4, 156–9; Makdisi, *Culture*, 53; Mishaqa, *Murder*, 121; Henry Churchill, *The Druzes and the Maronites under the Turkish Rule from 1840 to 1860* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1862), 31.

⁶⁷ On Mehmed Ali’s order, Mehmed Ali Paşa to Ibrahim Paşa, 15 June 1835, DWQ Abdin Files (212), D.N. 76. For an Ottoman report written on the origin of the uprising, see BOA i.MTZ.(05) 3/91. See also Firro, *Druzes*, 68–9.

⁶⁸ BOA HAT 380/20555; Alexandre Deval to Comte Mole, 16 May 1838, DDC 218.

⁶⁹ Firro, *Druzes*, 66–78.

reinforcements from Bashir II. The latter took the reins into his own hands and in 1837 campaigned hard, with extensive use of sectarian vocabulary. The grand emir not only enlisted Maronite peasants against their former overlords but also expelled all the Druze working in his palace, and issued proclamations that those who joined the insurgents would be subject to harsh punishments including the destruction of their houses and villages.⁷⁰

By June 1838, about 15,000 Maronites fully equipped for war were ready to fight under Bashir II.⁷¹ Even though some historians argue that the Christians did not fight the Druze out of religious zeal,⁷² before the fighting began Bashir II had sent a letter to 'all the Christian soldiers on Mount Lebanon', thanking them for their 'love and obedience' to the Egyptian government, and announcing that Ibrahim Paşa distributed arms 'in order to defend your property and to manifest your pride against your enemy, the community of the heretical Druzes, who deny the prophets'.⁷³

The country then descended once more into terror. The Druze forces were overwhelmed during major encounters over the summer, at least 1,000 of them being slaughtered by Bashir's men in the post of Bardah.⁷⁴ What makes this second major Druze rising against Egyptian rule so important is that some of the Druze *muqatadjis* fought with, and were suppressed by, their former Maronite tenants, which aggravated tensions between certain members of the two sects.⁷⁵

The sectarian disaggregation among Lebanese society grew stronger still in 1840, ironically at a point when the Maronite peasantry, Maronite Khazin sheikhs, and the Druze chiefs had in May once more formed a pragmatic alliance with each other to rise against Ibrahim Paşa and Bashir II.⁷⁶ What had drawn them together was the common threats they suffered from: unremitting conscription, *corvée* labour, and heavy taxation.⁷⁷ They made a covenant in Antelias to act as one. However, when some of the Druze sheikhs dropped out of the league because Bashir II promised them the legal possession of the lands in the Kisrawan region, the Maronite peasantry became immensely resentful of the 'betrayal' of the Druzes.⁷⁸ They nonetheless persevered, surrounding Beirut and attacking the

⁷⁰ Ibrahim Paşa to Muhammad Serif Paşa, 28 Feb. 1838, DWQ Abdin Files (255), D.N. 346; Firro, *Druzes*, 73.

⁷¹ On Mehmed Ali's order, Mehmed Ali Paşa to Ibrahim Paşa 15 June 1835, DWQ Abdin Files (212), D.N. 76. On the origin of the uprising, see BOA i.MTZ.(05) 3/91; Firro, *Druzes*, 68–9.

⁷² Makdisi, *Culture*, 55.

⁷³ Firro, *Druzes*, 80–81; Chafseand to Secretary of State (Washington, DC), 30 Sept. 1838, NARA R59/T367.

⁷⁴ Mahmud Bey to the Governor of Beirut, 5 July 1838, DWQ Abdin Files (256), D.N. 67; Alexandre Deval to Comte Mole, 16 May 1838, Deval to Mole, 20 Sept. 1838, DDC, 224–5; BOA HAT 380/20555; BOA 374/20428; Firro, *Druzes*, 74–5; Wood to Ponsonby, 14 Oct. 1839, RWEC, 136.

⁷⁵ Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 21.

⁷⁶ Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence*, 70, 79–85.

⁷⁷ Defter III, 102- a, b; 'Abdullah, *Tarikh*, 242–4.

⁷⁸ Farah, 'The Road to Intervention', 13–14; Harik, *Politics*, 246.

town every day, exchanging fire with the regulars within the town before retiring again.⁷⁹ In the end, the rebellion was brutally quelled in July 1840.

As noted in the previous chapter, this moment of defeat and desperation for the Lebanese—more precisely, Maronite peasants—coincided with the London Convention of 15 July. British, Ottoman, Russian, and eventually Austrian and Prussian agents daily arrived in Lebanon to end the rule of Mehmed Ali and Ibrahim there. From then on, Mount Lebanon became the epicentre of inter-imperial cooperation and competition.

In conclusion, a serious blow had already been dealt to the old *'muqata* system in Lebanon before the 1840 intervention. The pre-1840 era had seen fierce inter-familial (Jumblatt/Yazbaki, and more importantly, Druze Jumblatt/Maronite Shihab) animosities, the suppression of the *muqatadjis* by Bashir II, the rise of egalitarian ideas among the Maronite clergy and peasantry, their claims to property, the establishment of new representative institutions, Druze aspirations for autonomy led by the Jumblatts, fierce religious conflict, and the formation of quasi-sectarian councils. Sectarianism and class consciousness emerged in Ottoman Lebanon during Bashir II's rule, not after he was discredited in October 1840 by the agents of the Great Powers.⁸⁰ I will beg to differ from Makdisi here: 'the conditions for a sectarian storm' had already been created before the Powers arrived.⁸¹ In reality, it was the existing crevice in the social order that provided European and Ottoman imperial actors with channels for influence, interference, and control, and with unique opportunities to sustain their interests. What the imperial agents did was to hasten the movement of the storm clouds towards each other, and magnify the intensity of the impact, as the age of the Eastern Question began in Mount Lebanon.

⁷⁹ Chafseand to Secretary of State, 24 June 1840, NARA R59/T367.

⁸⁰ Ponsonby to Wood, 2 Sept. 1840, *RWEC*, 159.

⁸¹ Makdisi, *The Age of Coexistence*, 64.