

# Imperial Norms and Local Realities

The Ottoman Municipal Laws  
and the Municipality of Beirut  
(1860-1908)

Malek Sharif



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BEIRUTER TEXTE UND STUDIEN

HERAUSGEGEBEN VOM  
ORIENT-INSTITUT BEIRUT

BAND 105

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BEIRUT 2014

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Cover design: Taline Yozgatian

Cover picture: the cover picture is a collage of four photographs reproduced in the Appendix

**Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Bibliothek**

Die Deutsche Bibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation  
in der Deutschen Nationalbiografie.

Detaillierte biografische Daten sind im Internet  
über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

**Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication  
in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie.

Detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet  
at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

ISBN 978-3-89913-997-6

ISSN 0067-4931

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Ergon-Verlag, Dr. H. J. Dietrich  
Keesburgstraße 11, D-97074 Würzburg

Printing: Dergham sarl, Jdeidet el-Metrn  
Printed in Lebanon

To my parents Ulfa Baasiri and  
Ali Sharif in deep affection,  
and to  
Kamal Salibi in gratitude, alas in memoriam.



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## Note on Transliteration

Ottoman words have been transliterated according to the *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*. Quotations from works written in modern Turkish have not been changed (e.g. the municipality appears in some books as *belediye* while in others as *belediyye*). Arabic words have been transliterated according to the system used in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Arabic names have been transliterated according to that same system, but in a simplified way, omitting all diacritical marks and all indications of long vowels (e.g. Hamada, not Ḥamāda). I have not changed the transliterations of names adopted by authors who write in a European language (e.g. Khoury, not Khuri). Ottoman and Arabic words widely used in English, such as Pasha and Beirut, are left in the familiar form.



## Acknowledgements

This is a book of many debts. Its inspiration came from my dear late professor and mentor Kamal Salibi. I was very fortunate to take long afternoon walks with him and considered these strolls as important as our seminars. We used to call Kamal Salibi the walking university. On many of these walks he showed me different parts of the historical centre of Beirut, pointing out old houses and edifices that witnessed major historical moments and housed influential personalities in late Ottoman Beirut. It saddened him to see them in ruins, so often victims of neglect or deliberate effacement. Once in the area overlooking Wadi Abu Jmil, he turned to me and said with great fervour: “You should write about Beirut during that period”. To this task I dedicated my research effort. Sadly, now I can only express belatedly my great debt of gratitude for his inspiration and limitless support.

Special thanks are due to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for granting a scholarship that allowed me to earn my Ph.D. at the Free University of Berlin. At the Institute for Turkic Studies (Institut für Turkologie) I was privileged to work under the caring supervision of Professor Barbara Kellner-Heinkele. I profited a great deal from her support, patience and meticulous method. Her encouraging motherly character made my work as her advisee enjoyable and almost burdenless. I owe my Doktormutter warm thanks. I also would like to thank Professor Gudrun Krämer, my second adviser, for the challenging readings and invigorating discussions.

I want to express my appreciation for the courteous assistance of the staff of the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Istanbul), especially Fuad Bey, for guiding me through the maze of the (old) catalogues. During my first visit to the archives, the cheerful companionship of my colleague Kerem Kayı made my sojourn in Istanbul a wonderful experience. I am grateful to Doctor Halet Eren, the director of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture in Istanbul (IRCICA), for granting me the permission to reproduce the photos from the Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu used in this book. The assistance of Zeynep Durukal made my research in IRCICA possible. I would like to thank the Körber-Stiftung for financing two research trips to Istanbul and Beirut. The staffs of the Rigsarkivet (Copenhagen), of

the Politische Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (Bonn, later Berlin), of the library of the Kaiserswerther Diakonissen (Berlin) and of the Jafet Library at the American University of Beirut were all very friendly and helpful.

In the process of writing, reviewing and rewriting this book I became indebted to a large number of friends and colleagues who read chapters of this work. I am very grateful for the critical remarks and reviews of Karin Schweißgut, Sruti Bala, Edward Schwartz, Khaled el-Rouayheb, and my former professors Abdul Rahim Abu Husayn and Samir Seikaly. Professors Kellner-Heinkele, Krämer, Abu Husayn and Seikaly are always *au courant* with the most contemporary literature and they never hesitated to share some of their relevant rich knowledge with me. I am especially grateful to the interest of professors Kamal Salibi, Stefan Wild and Stefan Leder who read the whole manuscript and provided me with invaluable comments. Abdul Rahim Abu Husayn was always available for discussions and brainstorming sessions. Tarif Khalidi took a most encouraging interest in my research and critically read the final version. His encouragement was badly needed, hence highly appreciated. Ussama Makdisi generously read different versions of various chapters as well as the final version of this book. For this and the many productive discussions I enjoyed having with him and his lasting support I am deeply grateful.

The help of my treasured friends Kathrin Möller and Christopher Hayes was crucial to my work in many respects. Their lasting friendly support and their magical solutions to linguistic and technical difficulties made this work possible, and so for their assistance I am especially grateful.

I am thankful to the Orient-Institut Beirut and its director Professor Stefan Leder for their willingness to publish this book in the series *Beiruter Texte und Studien* and for covering the printing expenses. Thanks are also due to Ines Weinrich who has been, and to Kurt Franz who is currently in charge of the series.

The support of my family was always forthcoming when needed. My parents, Ulfa Bassiri and Ali Sharif, helped me to develop my historical curiosity. Their knowledge of old Beirut was frequently requested to relocate areas and place names. My mother helped me in reading handwritten French letters, thus for her French orthographic expertise I am very grateful. My brother Marwan was supportive in many ways and never hesitated to extend his brotherly help when needed. My wife Syrinx von Hees accompanied this work from its early stages. Her support, tolerance and ability to provide timely constructive criticism fostered an excellent working atmosphere. For that and her intellectual contribution to this work as well as her passionate involvement in its research I must express my deepest gratitude.

## Introduction

In the nineteenth century Beirut changed beyond recognition within the life span of an individual. From being a minor coastal town, it developed into one of the busiest and most populous ports on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, becoming one of its most prosperous and prominent business centres, the centre of educational activity in the region, and the seat of European consular representation.<sup>1</sup> In recognition of its enhanced status, and in order to check and control the growing European—especially French—influence in the city,<sup>2</sup> the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul made it the capital of an expanded province (*vilayet*) in 1888. The new province of Beirut incorporated areas that extended south into Palestine and north up to the region beyond Latakiya. The creation of the new *vilayet* in 1888 was met with great enthusiasm by the Beirut notables, who had earlier repeatedly demanded the promotion of their own city to a provincial capital.<sup>3</sup>

This phenomenal expansion of Beirut can be attributed to a number of factors. In the first place and for all practical purposes, Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad ‘Ali and the *de facto* governor of Syria between 1831 and 1840, constructed a quarantine and a casern in Beirut in 1835, which

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<sup>1</sup> See Amin al-Khuri, *Al-Jāmi‘a aw dalīl Bayrūt li-‘ām 1889* (Beirut, 1889), and Leila Fawaz, “The Changing Balance of Forces between Beirut and Damascus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries”. In: *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée/Villes au Levant*, 55–56, numbers 1–2 (1990), pp.210–211.

<sup>2</sup> Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, hereafter referred to as BOA, Yıldız Mütenevvi Mâruzât Evrakı, Y.MTV, 24/5. The author of this report, dated 14 *Muḥarram* 1304 (13 October 1886), warned the Yıldız officials of the increasing political and commercial influence of the French and their companies in Beirut. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Muhammad ‘Awad cites other Ottoman reports from the Meclis-i Mahsus İradeleri classification dealing with the French influence in Beirut, *Al-Idāra al-‘Uthmāniyya fī wilāyat Sūriyya, 1864–1914* (Cairo, 1969), pp.331–332.

<sup>3</sup> BOA, Yıldız Sadâret Hususî Mâruzât Evrakı, Y.A.HUS, 210/59, belge 2.



housed a standing garrison.<sup>4</sup> The construction of the casern granted the city security and stability, coupled with relatively safe trade routes to the Syrian interior.<sup>5</sup> The quarantine turned Beirut into an obligatory port of call for maritime transport. These developments contributed enormously to the city's commercial activity and importance. Ibrahim Pasha established a city council (*majlis shūrā Bayrūt*, sometimes called *majlis Bayrūt*), which was entrusted with the supervision of Beirut's developing commercial affairs. This council also served as a commercial court.<sup>6</sup> He appointed Mir Mahmud Nami as governor (*muḥāfiz*) to administer the civil affairs of the city. Mahmud Nami was one of the first scholars whom Muhammad 'Ali Pasha sent to Paris to study engineering and mathematics.<sup>7</sup> During his tenure as governor of Beirut Mahmud Nami proved to be a capable official.<sup>8</sup> The emergence of Beirut as a political and legal centre attracted the attention of European representatives in Syria, who began to transfer their general consulates from towns such as Sidon and Acre to Beirut.

Ibrahim Pasha was compelled to retreat from Syria in 1840, but Beirut maintained its important role. The town became a regular port of call, especially for a growing number of European steamships, attracted to it due to the presence of foreign consulates, by the development of fairly sophisticated banking arrangements and by the proliferation of local and European

<sup>4</sup> Asad Rustum, ed., *Al-Maḥfūzāt al-malakiyya al-Miṣriyya*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beirut, 1986), vol. 3, p. 113 and vol. 4, p. 291; Kamal Salibi and Yusuf K. Khoury, eds., *The Missionary Herald. Reports from Ottoman Syria. 1819–1870* (Amman, 1995), vol. 3, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> In the period prior to the Egyptian occupation of Syria, Beirut and its hinterland witnessed a long period of upheaval and insecurity. As a result, a large number of commercial houses deserted the city. For detailed descriptions of the political instability in the provinces of Saida and Damascus and its impact on the fiscal and economic conditions in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, see Haydar Ahmad al-Shahaby, *Al-Ghurar al-ḥisān fī akhbār abnā' al-zamān*, parts two and three, edited by Asad Rustum and Fouad E. Boustany, in three volumes under the title *Lubnān fī 'ahd al-umarā' al-shahābiyyīn* (Beirut, 1969); see also Mikhail Mishqa, *Al-Jawāb 'alā iqtirāḥ al-aḥbāb*, translated by Wheeler Thackston: *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage and Plunder. The History of the Lebanon in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (New York, 1988); and see Nayla Kaidbey, ed., *'Abdallāh bin Ṭrād al-Bayrūtī: Muḥtaṣar tāriḥ al-asāqifa fī madīnat Bayrūt* (Beirut, 2002), pp. 91–106.

<sup>6</sup> Asad Rustum refers to a few instances in which the Beirut city council was required to look into a number of commercial cases that were filed by local and foreign merchants, see Asad Rustum, *Al-Uṣūl al-'Arabiyya li-tārīkh Sūriyya fī 'ahd Muḥammad 'Alī Bāshā*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beirut, 1988), vol. 3 and 4, pp. 247–250.

<sup>7</sup> Asad Rustum, "Bayrūt fī 'ahd Ibrāhīm Bāshā al-Miṣrī wa-'māl al-amīr Maḥmūd Nāmī fihā". In: *Al-Kullīyya*, 13 (Beirut, 1927). Reprinted in Rana Yusuf Khuri, ed., *Bayrūt fī al-muṣannaḥāt al-'arabiyya* (Beirut, 1995), p. 176.

<sup>8</sup> Henri Guys, *Beyrouth et le Liban. Relation d'un séjour de plusieurs années dans ce pays* (Paris, 1850), new edition by Hareth Boustany (Beirut, 1985), vol. 1, p. 13; and Rustum, "Bayrūt fī 'ahd Ibrāhīm Bāshā", pp. 178–179.

merchant houses.<sup>9</sup> A contemporary testimony affirms that Beirut was the only port on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean where promissory notes could be issued or collected.<sup>10</sup>

Beirut witnessed a gradual but steady increase in its population during the nineteenth century. The city had approximately 6,000 inhabitants when Ibrahim Pasha occupied Syria. Thirty years later the population amounted to a number ranging from about 30,000 to 50,000 inhabitants.<sup>11</sup> Part of this phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that in 1860, thanks to the successful effort of some of its prominent citizens and religious figures,<sup>12</sup> Beirut did not share the fate of Damascus, Hasbaya and Dayr al-Qamar.<sup>13</sup> It became a refuge for the many Christians who were uprooted by the sectarian bloodshed that is sometimes referred to as an *Occasion for War*<sup>14</sup> or the *Devil's Work*.<sup>15</sup> Driven away from their homes by merciless civil strife, many Christian merchants and craftsmen from Mount Lebanon and Damascus fled to the comparatively peaceful

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<sup>9</sup> John Bowring, *Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria. Addressed to the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Palmerston, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* (London, 1840), p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> Butrus al-Bustani, "Bayrūt". In: Butrus al-Bustani, *Dā'irat al-ma'ārif* (Beirut, 1881), vol. 5, p. 753.

<sup>11</sup> Thanks to the work of Leila Fawaz we know more about Beirut's population than about any other Ottoman port city during the nineteenth century. For a description of the demographic development of the city, consult Leila Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), pp. 28–60 and pp. 127–132. For Ottoman statistics and censuses, see Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, 1985), p. 161, and Justin McCarthy, *The Arab World, Turkey, and the Balkans 1878–1914. A Handbook of Historical Statistics* (Boston, 1982), pp. 18, 60–61 and 72. For a table of demographic statistics for Beirut between 1800 and 1922, mostly compiled from Western sources, see May Davie, *Beyrouth et ses faubourgs, 1840–1940. Une intégration inachevée* (Beirut, 1996), p. 114.

<sup>12</sup> The Beirut newspaper *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* reported that two Muslim religious figures, Muhammad al-Hut and 'Abdallah Khalid, played a crucial role in pacifying the Muslim populace of Beirut. The president of the chamber of commerce, 'Abdallah Bayhum, and the merchant Muhammad al-Barbir were very influential in maintaining peace in the city and in providing shelter to the refugees from the mountain. *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 7 June 1860.

<sup>13</sup> Sulayman al-Bustani, *Ibrā wa-dhikrā, aw al-dawla al-ʿUthmāniyya qabla al-dustūr wa-baʿdahu* (Cairo, 1908), pp. 101–102.

<sup>14</sup> Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (London, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism. Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, 2000), chapter 7, pp. 118–145. In this chapter, which carries the title "The Devil's Work", Makdisi describes the civil conflict in Mount Lebanon in 1860.

Beirut.<sup>16</sup> For a while they lived on alms and charity,<sup>17</sup> but as experienced merchants and craftsmen they were quick to enter the economic life of the growing city.<sup>18</sup> The arrival of this large number of migrants left its permanent mark on the city's urban features in the form of new quarters which were established on its outskirts in such places as *Rumayl* and *Ghalghul*. The city's expansion and the rise of its population resulted in the need for a specialized body to manage its more complex urban affairs.

This apparent need for a new form of urban administration due to the above-mentioned commercial and demographic developments coincided with serious plans and efforts for reform and change in the administration of the Ottoman Empire on both central and provincial levels. The nineteenth century saw sustained efforts by the Ottoman ruling elite to undertake political and administrative reforms of Ottoman polity. This process may have started with the army, but it developed to include almost each and every aspect of Ottoman public life. New institutions were created on the basis of 'modern' laws to answer the challenges that were facing the Ottoman Empire. This revival process is known as the age of Tanzimat, because the legislation that governed it was called *Tanzimat-i Hayriye* (the beneficent arrangements).

This study of Ottoman Beirut will investigate one of the new institutions created during the age of Tanzimat, namely the municipality (Ottoman *belediye* / Arabic *baladiyya*), the 'modern' institution in charge of urban administration as a whole to replace various age-old institutions that used to administer and control different aspects of the public sphere, such as *ihtisāb* (market control), *qaḍā'* (the Sharia court and its officials), *aşnāf al-ḥiraf* (the guild system) and the military.<sup>19</sup> The standard literature on the Tanzimat period largely ignores or barely touches on the provincial municipalities.<sup>20</sup>

For example, Bernard Lewis in his monograph, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, devotes little attention to provincial municipal reform.

<sup>16</sup> For the civil strife in Damascus as observed and reported by the Prussian consul in the city, see Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preußischer Konsul in Damaskus (1849–1861), dargestellt nach seinen hinterlassenen Papieren* (Berlin, 1989), pp. 174–244.

<sup>17</sup> *Neuester Bericht über die Arbeiten der Kaiserswerther Diakonissen unter den syrischen Flüchtlingen in Beirut und Sidon* (Kaiserswerth am Rhein, 1861), pp. 1–3.

<sup>18</sup> Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, pp. 56–59 and 98–99.

<sup>19</sup> Osman Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye* (Istanbul, 1338 maliye/1922), vol. 1, pp. 1654–1664.

<sup>20</sup> For example, the following works do not mention municipal reforms in the provinces at all: Turkey, Ministry of Education, editorial committee, *Tanzimat*, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1940), reprint (Istanbul, 1999), 2 vols.; Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal, 1964); Robert Mantran, ed., *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman* (Paris, 1989).

His short treatment of the subject suggests that the reforms were imposed from the imperial centre on a less than enthusiastic periphery. He also seems to question the success of these reforms. His brief discussion abounds in phrases such as: “remained a dead letter”, “proved as ineffectual”, “There is no evidence that anything was done about this” and “was not very successful”.<sup>21</sup> Lewis’s treatment of provincial municipal reform is far from idiosyncratic. Influential scholars such as Richard Hill and Roderic Davison seem to share Lewis’s assumptions about municipal reform.<sup>22</sup>

The works mentioned ignore the formative years of the municipalities in the provinces and the laws by which they were constituted. Consequently they date the foundation of municipalities at a later period of time. They also tend to attribute the establishment of this new institution to the influence of either prominent governors, such as Midhat Pasha (1822–1884), or to the impact of foreign nationals and the non-Muslim Ottoman subjects who collaborated with them.<sup>23</sup> The contribution of the local notables has never been properly investigated.

It is conceivable that the historians cited above arrived at these conclusions, simply because they conducted their research mostly on the basis of documents from Istanbul, while ignoring the plethora of primary literature produced in the provincial cities and dealing with provincial matters directly. One might argue that this approach to Ottoman municipalities in the provinces is already acknowledged by specialists to be

<sup>21</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford, 1961), pp.392–393; and Bernard Lewis, “Baladiyya 1.”. In: *EF*, vol. 1, p.974.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Leslie Hill, “Baladiyya 2.”. In: *EF*, vol. 1, p.975: “The Ottoman municipal legislation of 1281–94/1864–77 was applied throughout the Arabic speaking provinces of the Empire except in certain frontier regions... The new municipalities flourished where the *wāli* of the province was sympathetic to the *tanẓīmāt* and languished where he was not. Thus, under the guidance of Aḥmad Miḥḥat Pasha Baḡhdād in 1869–72 and Damascus in 1878–80 experienced an extensive if brief period of urban development. ... Participation of public-spirited local notables furthered urban reform.” Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire. 1856–1876* (New York, 1963), p.160: “Finally, the revised statute of 1871 created the municipality as an administrative entity, with a president and a council to see to local sanitation, public works, and the likes. This was an innovation for the Empire as a whole. If it had been carried out, considerable local improvement might have resulted. But, in fact, this part of the law remained largely unapplied, and the growth of municipal administration in the provinces began only after 1877.” In a footnote to this text he added: “... Midhat between 1869 and 1872 made a start at municipal organization in the Baghdad vilayet. But, the lack of municipal organization remained general.”

<sup>23</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, p. 160: “The sixth district, or “cercle”, of the capital, including Pera and Galata, had been set up as a pilot project in 1858 and functioned effectively, largely under foreign and non-Muslim impulsion.”

antiquated. However, the conclusions of the older standard studies are still cited, integrated and used in very recent works dedicated to the study of the provinces.<sup>24</sup>

In this study I hope to challenge the assumptions concerning municipal reforms that are found in the above-mentioned works of Lewis, Hill, and Davison. I will argue that local provincial notables played an active role in the establishment and subsequent operation of the new municipal councils. Furthermore, I intend to illustrate that at least the municipal council of Beirut proved capable of initiating and successfully completing a number of significant projects that had a profound influence on urban life, and that foreign interference often proved an obstacle to the functioning of the new municipalities.

Steven Rosenthal's revisionist work on the municipality of the sixth district of Istanbul, Pera and Galata—based largely on Osman Nuri's important works<sup>25</sup>—has already challenged some of the traditional views on municipal reform, at least in the capital.<sup>26</sup> For the Turkish-speaking provinces of the Ottoman Empire some research on the provincial and urban administration as well as the municipalities has been done in the 80s and 90s of the last century.<sup>27</sup> However, the municipalities in the Arab urban centres of the

<sup>24</sup> Wajih Kawtharani, in a study dedicated to authority, society and political activity in the Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire, *Al-Sulṭa wa-l-mujtama' wa-l-'amal al-siyāsī min tārīkh al-wilāya al-'Uthmāniyya fī Bilād al-Shām* (Beirut, 1988), pp. 99–100, not only shares the opinion of Bernard Lewis and Richard Hill, but he is even more dismissive regarding the effectiveness of the municipality. Mahmoud Yazbak, *Al-Nuḏum al-idāriyya wa-l-bunā al-ijtimā'iyya fī Hayfā fī awākhir al-'ahd al-'Uthmānī. 1870–1914* (Nazareth, 1994), p. 124; Mahmoud Yazbak, *Haiḑa in the Late Ottoman Period. 1864–1914. A Muslim Town in Transition* (Leiden, 1998), p. 76. He considers the municipal law of 1871 as the beginning of municipal institutions in the Ottoman provinces.

<sup>25</sup> Osman Nuri made a great effort in collecting, analysing and interpreting material concerning the history of municipal institutions in Turkey, see Osman Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye* (Istanbul, 1330–1338 maliye /1915–1922), 5 vols. This work was transcribed into modern Turkish script. The new Turkish edition by the municipality of Istanbul includes a detailed table of contents and an elaborated index: Osman Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye* (Istanbul, 1995), 9 vols.; (this last edition will henceforth be referred to as Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye* in order to distinguish it from the first edition in Arabic script henceforth referred to as Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*); Osman Nuri Ergin, *Türkiyede şehirciliğin tarihi inkişafı* (Istanbul, 1936); Osman Nuri Ergin, *Beledi bilgileri* (Istanbul, 1939).

<sup>26</sup> Steven T. Rosenthal, *The Politics of Dependency. Urban Reform in Istanbul* (Westport, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> İlber Ortaylı, "Administrative Organisation during the Tanzimat Period". In: Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, ed., *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilisation*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 2001), pp. 287–347, on the municipalities especially pp. 324–328; İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahallî İdareleri (1840–1880)* (Ankara,

Empire did not receive their fair share of attention, and the early history of organised communal urban administration in these provincial cities remained without investigation. In the last few years, the lack of adequate research on the municipalities has caught the attention of some historians. A number of enlightening dissertations dedicated to the urban, architectural and economic history of Damascus,<sup>28</sup> Jerusalem,<sup>29</sup> Tripoli-Libya<sup>30</sup> and Beirut<sup>31</sup> focus in varying degrees on the municipal institutions in these respective cities. The variety of approaches and primary source material used in these studies and the different theses they present complement this work, which constitutes a new attempt at bridging the gap in the history of urban institutions in Ottoman Beirut.

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2000); İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra Mahalli Idareler, 1840–1878* (Ankara, 1974), especially pp.168–237; İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (Istanbul, 1983; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Istanbul, 1995), pp.140–150; İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete. Yerel Yönetim Geleneği* (Istanbul, 1985); İlber Ortaylı, “Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet Dönemlerinde Yerel Yönetimler”. In: *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1985), vol. 1, pp.231–244; on the Belediye especially pp.240–244; Erkan Serçe, *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e İzmir’de Belediye. 1868–1945* (Istanbul, 1998); and lately Ahmet Akgündüz, *Osmanlı devleti’nde belediye teşkilâtı ve belediye kanunları* (Istanbul, 2005).

- <sup>28</sup> Stefan Weber, “L’aménagement urbain entre régulations ottomanes, intérêts privés et participation politique: La municipalité de Damas à la fin de l’époque ottomane (1864–1918)”. In: Nora Lafi, ed., *Municipalités méditerranéennes. Les réformes urbaines ottomanes au miroir d’une histoire comparée (Moyen-Orient, Maghreb, Europe méridionale)* (Berlin, 2005), pp. 177–227; and Stefan Weber, *Zeugnisse kulturellen Wandels. Stadt, Architektur und Gesellschaft des osmanischen Damaskus im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (<http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/2006/441/index.html>).
- <sup>29</sup> Yasemin Avcı, *Değişim süresinde. Bir osmanlı kenti: Kudüs (1890–1914)* (Ankara, 2004), and Yasemin Avcı and Vincent Lemire, “De la modernité administrative à la modernisation urbaine. Une réévaluation de la municipalité ottomane de Jérusalem (1867–1917)”. In: Nora Lafi, ed., *Municipalités méditerranéennes* (Berlin, 2005), pp. 73–138.
- <sup>30</sup> Nora Lafi, *Une ville du Maghreb entre ancien régime et réformes ottomanes. Genèse des institutions municipales à Tripoli de Barbarie (1795–1911)* (Paris, 2002).
- <sup>31</sup> Yaşar Eyüp Özveren, *The Making and Unmaking of an Ottoman Port-City: Nineteenth-Century Beirut, Its Hinterland and the World-Economy* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York, 1990); Yaşar Eyüp Özveren, “Beirut”. In: *Review*, 16, 4, Fall (1993), pp. 467–497; May Davie, *Beyrouth. 1825–1975. Un siècle et demi d’urbanisme* (Beirut, 2001); Nada Sehnaoui, *L’Occidentalisation de la vie quotidienne à Beyrouth 1860–1914* (Beirut, 2002); Samir Kassir, *Histoire de Beyrouth* (Paris, 2003); Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut. The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford, 2005); Jens Hanssen, “The Origins of the Municipal Council in Beirut”. In: Nora Lafi, ed., *Municipalités méditerranéennes* (Berlin, 2005), pp. 139–175; and Malek Sharif, “Missionaries, Medicine and Municipalities: a History of Smallpox Vaccination in Nineteenth-Century Beirut”. In: Ussama Makdisi, ed., *Beyond the Clash of Civilizations: Missionaries, Conversion and Tolerance in the Ottoman Empire*. A special issue of *Archaeology and History in the Lebanon*, 22 (2005), pp. 34–50.

Owing to the meagre information in secondary literature dealing with the municipalities in the Arab provinces, different dates have been wrongly assigned to the beginning of the municipal institution in Beirut.<sup>32</sup> It is now evident from the local press that as early as 1863, the various components which constituted Beirut's urban society found it both necessary and expedient to join in a municipal body that would oversee the city's urban requirements as a whole and respond to its needs as a community rather than as atomised groups with different religious affiliations. The municipality was entrusted with the development and administration of the city in its entirety. The success or failure of the municipality would thus have an immediate bearing on its political and financial development.

On 25 July 1867 (23 *Rabīʿ al-Awwal* 1284) the first municipalities' law of the provinces was promulgated in Istanbul.<sup>33</sup> This law stipulated that every Ottoman city was to set up a municipal council. In the course of this work I will show that the creation of the Beirut municipality was not merely in accordance with the law, but reflected the willingness on the part of some of the city's civil elite to undertake common urban functions. The local press in Beirut provides evidence that a city council had already been set up, presumably upon Ottoman and local initiatives, four years prior to the promulgation of the law. The fact that a municipal council had already been established strongly suggests that local communities played an active role in the effort to modernise the urban administration, rather than passively receiving order from the imperial centre. To understand the way the municipality of Beirut was established, how it functioned and what it achieved, is the subject of this study. One of the main aims of this work is to investigate the role of the local notables in the founding and running of the municipal council. In the case of the Ottoman provinces, a study of this kind is yet to be undertaken. The study of the Beirut municipality is of special importance for any student of the Tanzimat, because it provides us with a concrete idea of the implementation and the acceptance of 'modern' ideas and institutions in a provincial city of the Empire. It will also shed light on the way the laws and regulations published in Istanbul during the Tanzimat period came

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter I, below.

<sup>33</sup> The official Ottoman text of this law (*vilayet dahilinde olan şehir ve kasabalarda teşkil olunacak daire-i belediye meclislerinin suret tertibi ve memurlarının vezâifî hakkında tâlimattir*) can be found in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 491–497. The text of a semi-official Arabic translation (*sûrat tartîb majâlis al-dawâ'ir al-baladiyya al-laî tatashakkal fî al-mudun wa-l-qaşabât dâkhil al-wilâya wa-wazâ'if ma'mûrîhâ*) is available in *Al-Dustûr*, vol. 2, pp. 433–438.

to influence the daily life of the provincial subjects in different parts of the Ottoman realm. A more nuanced picture of the progress of municipal reform and organisation may also serve to question the simplistic “trickle down model” of the Tanzimat reforms.<sup>34</sup>

This work will focus on the municipality of Beirut, its incumbents, role and activities from the date of its early foundation in 1863 until the declaration of the second constitutional period (*ikinci maşrutiyet*) in 1908. The periodisation of this investigation is not arbitrary. 1863 is the date of the establishment of the first municipal council in Beirut.<sup>35</sup> By consensus among historians, the Tanzimat period ends in 1878, the year in which Sultan Abdülhamid II (reigned 1876–1909) suspended the parliament (*meb’usan meclisi*), abolished the constitution (*kanun-ı esasî*) and reassumed the corresponding powers and authority.<sup>36</sup> However, the municipal institutions and the laws of the provinces were not abrogated and remained in force until 1908, the date of the revolution against Abdülhamid II. Between 1863 and 1908 the city of Beirut witnessed rapid political changes and transformations. Internal Beirut dynamics encountered an array of new laws and regulations, promulgated from the capital Istanbul.

The municipal elections that took place in the Republic of Lebanon in 1998—for the first time after the civil war—triggered interest in Lebanese municipalities and their history. A number of Arabic monographs, mostly compilations of the consecutive municipal laws, beginning with the Ottoman period and ending with the latest municipal law of the Lebanese Republic, have been published.<sup>37</sup> Other works in the fields of Public Administration and Political Science, focusing on the prospects of municipal institutions in Lebanon, include a historical part—albeit minor—on the Ottoman period, but leave much to be desired.<sup>38</sup> It is worth mentioning here

<sup>34</sup> The term ‘trickle down’ derives from Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London 1993), p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> *Hadīqat al-akhbār*, 26 November 1863.

<sup>36</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History*, rev. ed. (London, 1997), pp. 1–4 and 52–94; Roderic H. Davison, “Tanzīmāt”. In: *EP*, vol. 10, pp. 201–209.

<sup>37</sup> Muhammad Murad, *Al-Majālis al-baladiyya wa-l-ikhtiyāriyya, taṭawwur waẓāʿif al-sulṭa al-qāʿidiyya fī al-mujtamaʿ al-Lubnānī* (Beirut, 1997); Mahmud ʿAbd al-Majid Mughrabi, *Majmūʿat al-qawānīn al-baladiyya fī Lubnān khilāl 100 ʿām* (Tripoli, 1993).

<sup>38</sup> Muhammad ʿAbdallah al-Mashnuq, *Hukūmat Bayrūt. Ishkālīyyāt al-qiyāda al-ʿasriyya li-baladiyyat al-ʿāshima* (Beirut, 1995); Paul Salim, Hasan Kurayyim and Randa Antun, eds., *Wāqīʿ al-baladiyyāt fī Lubnān wa-ʿawāʾiq al-mushāraka al-mahalliyya wa-l-tanmiya al-mutawāzina* (Beirut, 1998). For example, the governor of Beirut under Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt acquired a “new” name in these books. Mahmud Nami Bey محمود نامی بك became Mahmud Niʿme محمود نعمة. The names of the local members of the municipal council of Beirut, reportedly in 1899, changed beyond recognition:



that the current municipal council of Beirut is not aware of its own early history.<sup>39</sup> However, it has lately developed some interest in the Ottoman heritage of Beirut. It supported the publication of a luxurious volume containing 200 photographs from the collection of Sultan Abdülhamid II. This book includes short articles describing some of the urban developments that took place between 1876 and 1909.<sup>40</sup> A serious historical study on the municipalities in Mount Lebanon was published in 1998.<sup>41</sup>

The centre of the city of Beirut with its monumental buildings, which date back to the Ottoman and French mandate periods, and its historical squares that witnessed the declaration of independence, plays an important role in the collective cultural and political memory and post-war identity of the Beirutis.<sup>42</sup> The destruction that was caused during the civil war to these pivotal locations gave birth to nostalgic and somewhat idealised perceptions of the downtown area in a number of works by amateur historians.<sup>43</sup> Books by Lebanese architects, sociologists and economists, discussing the prospects for the comprehensive reconstruction and re-planning of the historical core of Beirut, include brief historical information.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand,

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Muhammad Ayyas became Muhammad Yas, Arqash became Arkash, Tabib became al-Tayyib, Mulhim became Muslim (Salim, *Wāqi' al-baladiyyāt*, pp. 27–28), etc. Mahmud Nami Bey encountered the same fate in Mashnuq, *Hukūmat Bayrūt*, p. 36. This work, pp. 38–39, also contains some inaccuracies concerning the relationship between the municipal council of Beirut and the Ministry of the Interior in Istanbul. It is evident from the alterations of the names that these works relied on secondary literature. This literature, in turn, relied only on early European works, which lacked diacritical marks in their transcription of Arabic names, without any consideration for local primary sources.

- <sup>39</sup> The website of the municipal council of Beirut published on the world-wide-web (www) in the year 2001 includes a short summary of the municipal history. The entire 55 years of municipal history, from 1863 to 1918, is summarised in two sentences, which, alas, includes incorrect information, names and dates; see [www.beirut.gov.lb](http://www.beirut.gov.lb).
- <sup>40</sup> Sawsan Agha Kassab and Khaled Omar Tadmori, *Beirut and the Sultan. 200 Photographs from the Albums of Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909)* (Beirut, 2002).
- <sup>41</sup> ʿAbdallah al-Mallah, *Al-Baladiyyāt fī mutaṣarrifiyyat Jabal Lubnān 1861–1918* (Beirut, 1998).
- <sup>42</sup> Samir Khalaf, *Heart of Beirut. Reclaiming the Bourj* (London, 2006), pp. 19 and 23.
- <sup>43</sup> Fouad Debbas, *Beirut, Our Memory. An Illustrated Tour in the Old City from 1880 to 1930*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (Beirut, 1986). It was originally written in French and later translated into English and Arabic; Ghassan Tuéni, *Al-Burj. Sāhat al-hurriyya wa-bawwābat al-mashriq / El-Bourj. Place de la Liberté et Porte du Levant* (Beirut, 2000). This book is a compilation of excerpts from the central square in downtown Beirut; Taha al-Wali, *Bayrūt fī al-tārīkh wa-l-ḥadāra wa-l-ʿumrān* (Beirut, 1993); Nasima al-Khatib, *Bayrūt al-turāth* (Beirut, 1995); Riyad Jarkas, *Bayrūt fī al-bāl* (Beirut, 1996).
- <sup>44</sup> Nabil Bayhum et al., eds., *Iʿmār Bayrūt wa-l-furṣa al-dāʿiʿa* (Beirut, 1992); Hasan al-ʿAbdallah, *Iʿadat iʿmār wasaʿ Bayrūt. Al-ḥamla al-ʿiqāriyya al-ūlā* (Beirut, 1993);

some academic historical research on the urban history of Beirut in the nineteenth and early twentieth century has also been undertaken.<sup>45</sup>

### Primary Sources and Methodology

The history of the Beirut municipality between 1863 and 1908 will be investigated from three different perspectives. The first and foremost is the Beirut view represented in local primary sources, mainly the local press, memoirs and contemporary literature published in Beirut itself. The second is the perspective from Istanbul, gleaned from Ottoman archival material as well as from official Ottoman publications. The third is the European viewpoint, derived from the investigation of Western archival material as well as from accounts and memoirs of foreign residents and missionaries who resided in Beirut for a long period of time.

Naturally, the best approach to study the Beirut municipality would be to peruse its own archives, but regrettably the municipal archives were either looted, misplaced or burned during the long years of the Lebanese civil war.<sup>46</sup> In view of this fact, and in order to compensate for the resulting gap, this study has to rely heavily on the contemporary local press. The Beirut papers and periodicals, which appeared during the period under study, have been perused and sifted for relevant information.

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<sup>c</sup>Asim Salam, *Al-ʿmār wa-l-maṣlaḥa al-ʿamma fī al-ʿamāra wa-l-madīna* (Beirut, 1995); Nabil Bayhum, *Al-ʿmār wa-l-maṣlaḥa al-ʿamma fī al-ijtimāʿ wa-l-thaqāfa* (Beirut, 1995); Jad Tabit, *Al-ʿmār wa-l-maṣlaḥa al-ʿamma fī al-turāth wa-l-ḥadātha* (Beirut, 1996); George Qurm, *Al-ʿmār wa-l-maṣlaḥa al-ʿamma fī iqtisād mā baʿd al-ḥarb wa siyāsatihi* (Beirut, 1996).

<sup>45</sup> Hasan Zaʿrur, *Bayrūt al-tārīkh al-ijtimāʿi, 1864–1914* (Beirut, 1992); Çağlar Keyder, Y. Eyüp Özveren and Donald Quataert, eds., “Port-Cities in the Ottoman Empire. Some Theoretical and Historical Perspectives”. In: *Review*, XVI, 4, Fall (1993), pp. 519–548; This issue of *Review* includes an excellent study on Beirut by Y. Eyüp Özveren, “Beirut”. In: *Review*, XVI, 4, Fall (1993), pp. 467–497; May Davie, *Beyrouth et ses faubourgs, 1840–1940. Une intégration inachevée* (Beirut, 1996); Peter G. Rowe and Hashim Sarkis, eds., *Projecting Beirut. Episodes in the Construction and Reconstruction of a Modern City* (Beirut, 1998); May Davie, *Beyrouth, 1825–1975. Un siècle et demi d’urbanisme* (Beirut, 2001). Leila Fawaz, “Foreign Presence and Perception of Ottoman Rule in Beirut”. In: Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp and Stefan Weber, eds., *The Empire in the City, Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Beirut, 2002), pp. 93–104.

<sup>46</sup> I reached this conclusion after repeatedly visiting all the different temporary offices of the Beirut municipality. I started my search for municipal archival material in August 1997, but gave up in June 2000. The municipal officials informed me that they consider themselves fortunate to have saved the most recent rosters of the lease contracts in the city, and they stated that they are certain that there are no old records or minutes of the municipal council that date back to the Ottoman period.

In a large number of studies the history of Lebanon has been interpreted along sectarian lines.<sup>47</sup> Some works highlight the role of one religious community in Beirut at the expense of other communities. Their choice of primary sources is selective, excluding sources that represent other communities in the city.<sup>48</sup> Such an approach might lead to a hazy reconstruction of the history of Beirut. In order to avoid this serious pitfall, I have examined as many different local newspapers as possible. These newspapers and their editors were in many cases the mouthpiece of their respective religious communities. Using this approach, this work will try to illustrate the opinions and attitudes of almost all the colours of the Beirut religious spectrum. ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani (1847–1935) the editor-in-chief of *Thamarāt al-funūn* was a Sunni Muslim, who later became mayor of Beirut.<sup>49</sup> *Al-Bashīr* newspaper belonged to the Jesuit mission in Beirut; during the period under study it was edited by a number of Arab and European monks.<sup>50</sup> The editor of *Lisān al-ḥāl* was Khalil Sarkis (1842–1915). He was a Protestant<sup>51</sup>. *Al-Maḥabba* was founded by the Greek Orthodox Christian Education Association in Beirut (*Jam‘iyyat al-Ta‘līm al-Masīhī al-Urthūdhuksiyya*).<sup>52</sup> The editors of *Al-Miṣbāḥ* were Niqla

<sup>47</sup> For a comprehensive and analytical study of the historiography of Lebanon in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Axel Havemann, *Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung im Libanon des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Beirut, 2002); Ahmad Beydoun, *Al-Ṣirā‘ alā tārīkh Lubnān* (Beirut, 1989); see also Kamal Salibi, *A House Of Many Mansions. The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), especially chapter eleven, entitled “The war over Lebanese history”, pp. 200–215.

<sup>48</sup> Hassan Hallaq, *Awqāf al-muslimīn fī Bayrūt fī al-‘ahd al-‘Uthmānī. Sijillāt al-maḥkama al-shar‘iyya fī Bayrūt* (Beirut, 1985); Hassan Hallaq, *Al-Tārīkh al-ijtimā‘ī wa-l-iqtisādī wa-l-siyāsī fī Bayrūt wa-l-wilāyāt al-‘Uthmāniyya fī al-qarn al-tāsī‘ ‘ashar. Sijillāt al-maḥkama al-shar‘iyya fī Bayrūt* (Beirut, 1987); May Davie, “Les familles orthodoxes à travers les cahiers du Badal ‘Askariyyet” (sic). In: *Annales d’Histoire et d’Archéologie de l’Université Saint-Joseph*, 5 (1986), pp. 1–44; May Davie, “L’espace communautaire orthodoxe dans la ville de Beyrouth (1775–1850)”. In: *Les Cahiers du CERMOC*, 8 (1994), pp. 99–111.

<sup>49</sup> The following references to the Beirut papers and their editors-in-chief are restricted to the contemporary primary source, namely the four-volume work of Philippe de Tarrazi (1865–1956), see Philippe de Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vols. 1 and 2 (Beirut, 1913); vol. 3 (Beirut, 1914); vol. 4 (Beirut, 1933). For the biography of ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani, see Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 25–27 and 99–101; for a study on his newspaper, see Iman al-Manasfi, *Al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Qabbānī wa-jarīdat Thamarāt al-funūn* (Beirut, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 11–18.

<sup>51</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 27–33 and 129–138.

<sup>52</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 4, p. 109.

al-Naqqash (1825–1894) and his son Jean, Beirut Maronites.<sup>53</sup> *Bayrūt* was edited by Rashid al-Dana (1857–1902) and his brother ‘Abd al-Qadir, who also became mayor of Beirut.<sup>54</sup> Both were Sunni Muslims. *Nafīr Sūriyya* was edited by the famous Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883), probably the most prominent Protestant in Beirut.<sup>55</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* was edited by Khalil al-Khuri (1836–1907),<sup>56</sup> who belonged to the Greek Orthodox rite. *Al-Mashriq* was the periodical of the Jesuit mission, edited by Louis Cheikho (1859–1928).<sup>57</sup> *Al-Jinān* was edited by the son of Butrus al-Bustani, Salim al-Bustani (1848–1884), a Protestant.<sup>58</sup> He also became a member of the municipal council of Beirut. *Al-Muqataṭaf* was edited by Ya‘qub Sarruf (1852–1927) and Faris Nimr (1856–1951), also Protestants.<sup>59</sup> This periodical moved to Cairo in 1885.<sup>60</sup> *Al-Jawā‘ib* was the leading Arabic newspaper, published in Istanbul between 1860 and 1883. It was edited by the famous Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1804–1887), a Maronite who converted to Protestantism and later to Islam.<sup>61</sup>

Although the press was excluded from council meetings, the municipality of Beirut itself was very careful regarding relations with the public, i.e. it published communiqués and its budgets appeared in the papers, it explained its projects and advertised for new concessions. The newspapers and periodicals which were particularly enlightening with respect to municipal affairs, and which represent an indispensable source for the study of the municipality, are *Thamarāt al-funūn*, *Al-Bashūr*, *Lisān al-ḥāl*, *Al-Maḥabba*, *Al-Miṣbāh*, *Bayrūt*, *Nafīr Sūriyya*,

<sup>53</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 33–35; for a biography and the political career of Niqla al-Naqqash see Malek Sharif: “A Portrait of Syrian Deputies in the First Ottoman Parliament”. In: Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif, eds., *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy* (Würzburg, 2010), pp. 286–291.

<sup>54</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 37–38 and 119–121.

<sup>55</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 1, 89–92.

<sup>56</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 102–105.

<sup>57</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 4, pp. 108–109.

<sup>58</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 68–70.

<sup>59</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 125–129 and 138–142.

<sup>60</sup> For detailed information on *Al-Muqataṭaf* and its readership, see Dagmar Glaß: “Die *Masā’il*-Kolumne in *al-Muqataṭaf*. Ein Indikator für die Rezeption einer arabischen Wissenschaftszeitschrift des 19. Jahrhunderts?”. In: Christoph Herzog, Raoul Motika and Anja Pistor-Hatam, eds., *Presse und Öffentlichkeit im Nahen Osten* (Heidelberg, 1995), pp. 59–82; and Dagmar Glaß, *Der Muqataṭaf und seine Öffentlichkeit. Aufklärung, Rasonnement und Meinungsstreit in der frühen arabischen Zeitschriftenkommunikation* (Würzburg, 2004), 2 vols.

<sup>61</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 61–64 and 96–99.

*Hadīqat al-akhbār*, *Al-Mashriq*, *Al-Jinān* and *Al-Muqataṭaf*.<sup>62</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, which first appeared on 20 April 1875,<sup>63</sup> was one of the city's most important newspapers. This can be explained by the fact that 'Abd al-Qadir Qabbani, the owner and editor-in-chief, showed a great interest in the affairs of the city and its administration. He dedicated a considerable number of his editorials to the municipality, its functions and problems. Qabbani's commitment was reflected in his nomination to the municipal council, to which he was elected in 1892. Between 1896 and 1900 he was re-elected more than once, and, as a result, he was chosen by the *vali* to assume the post of mayor of Beirut.<sup>64</sup> During this period of time his newspaper attentively followed the activities of the municipality and published its news and announcements on a regular basis.

Although the press has been used as a source in a number of important and enlightening studies relating to Arab political history during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth,<sup>65</sup> it has been underestimated and not, as yet, systematically employed as a primary source for studies on the social and administrative history of the period.<sup>66</sup> The neglect of the press as an important source for the study of the social and institutional history of the late Ottoman period may be attributed to two factors. The first is that the press of the period was generally believed not to have enjoyed freedom of expression.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, it was overlooked almost completely. More recent research on the press, however, has proved that the press at the time enjoyed a certain margin of freedom, especially in its reports on provincial institutions and affairs.<sup>68</sup> In a work entitled *The Oddities of*

<sup>62</sup> The holdings of the AUB's Jafet Library of the Beirut press for the period under discussion include complete sets of *Thamarāt al-funūn*, *Al-Bashīr*, *Lisān al-ḥāl*, *Al-Maḥabba*, *Al-Miṣbāh*, *Bayrūt*, *Nafīr Sūriyya*, *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, *Al-Mashriq*, *Al-Jinān* and *Al-Muqataṭaf*.

<sup>63</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 2, p. 25.

<sup>64</sup> For a biography of 'Abd al-Qadir Qabbani and his role in the municipality of Beirut please refer to Chapter IV, below.

<sup>65</sup> Marwan Buheiry, ed., *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890–1939* (Beirut, 1981); Tawfiq Birro, *Al-ʿArab wa-l-Turk fī al-ʿahd al-dustūrī al-ʿuthmānī 1908–1914* (Cairo, 1960).

<sup>66</sup> Exceptional examples of the press used as a source for writing the social history of Beirut are: Hasan Zaʿrur, *Bayrūt al-tārīkh al-ijtimāʿī, 1864–1914* (Beirut, 1992), and Nada Sehnaoui, *L'Occidentalisation de la vie quotidienne à Beyrouth, 1860–1914* (Beirut, 2002).

<sup>67</sup> See Shams al-Din al-Rifaʿī, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-Sūriyya*, vol. 1 (Cairo, 1969), especially pp. 47–227, covering the second half of the nineteenth century.

<sup>68</sup> Ciota proved that on a number of occasions Beirut journalists ignored the press code, and were not penalised for their acts, see Donald J. Ciota, "Ottoman Censorship in Lebanon and Syria, 1876–1908". In: *International Journal for Middle East Studies*, 10

*the Censor*, Salim Sarkis, a Beirut journalist and one of the principal critics of Ottoman censorship in the province of Beirut, produced fifty-four anecdotes, including words and subjects which were, according to him, related to taboos which journalists should avoid writing about.<sup>69</sup> These taboos centered entirely on the person and the personality of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Hence, the press had a large margin of freedom in covering local affairs and especially the activities of the municipality, which was elected by the people and did not directly represent the Sultan's authority.<sup>70</sup> Rashid Rida (1865–1935), one of the leading intellectuals of the period and the editor of *Al-Manār*, affirms the lenient application of the press code in Beirut. He reports a private conversation with ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani, in which the latter assured Rida that his articles would never be censored in Beirut, provided he did not criticize the person and the policy of Abdülhamid.<sup>71</sup> According to the press law of 5 *Sha‘bān* 1281 (4 January 1865), Articles 20, 21, 22 and 23,<sup>72</sup> and the newer version of 19 December 1880, Articles 19, 20, 21 and 24,<sup>73</sup> the press was not allowed to criticise any council or foreign representative in the Empire. However, the journalists expressed their dissatisfaction with the municipal council in the form of harsh criticisms, using scathing and caustic tones in many cases, or, less frequently, in the form of wishes and demands.<sup>74</sup>

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(1979), pp. 167–186; see also Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East. A History* (Oxford, 1995), especially chapter 2, pp. 28–50.

<sup>69</sup> Salim Sarkis was one of the editors of the Beirut newspaper *Lisān al-ḥāl*. He emigrated to England and later to Egypt, where in 1896 he published his work on the oddities of the censor *Gharāʾib al-maktūbjī*. Yusuf Quzma Khuri, ed., *Salīm Sarkīs. Gharāʾib al-maktūbjī* (Beirut, 1990), pp. 27–52.

<sup>70</sup> It seems worth mentioning that according to the provincial law of 1871 the functions of the *mektupçu*, “chief secretary of a ministry or province”, included the censorship of the press, see ‘Awad, *Al-Idāra al-‘Uthmāniyya*, p. 91. Due to this new function the Ottoman word *mektupçu* acquired in its Arabic spelling and usage, *maktūbjī*, the meaning of “censor”, see Khuri, *Salīm Sarkīs*, p. 20.

<sup>71</sup> Yusuf Ibish, ed., *Raḥalāt al-Imām Rashīd Riḍā* (Beirut, 1971), pp. 211–212. The same conversation between Rida and Qabbani is also reproduced in Rida's biography by Shakib Arsalan, *Al-Sayyid Rashīd Riḍā aw ikhāʾ 40 sana* (Cairo, 1937), p. 129.

<sup>72</sup> An Arabic translation of the press code of 1865 is reproduced in Salim al-Shidyaq, compiler, *Kanz al-raghāʾib fī muntakhabāt al-jawāʾib* (Istanbul, 1294/1877), vol. 5, pp. 56–59.

<sup>73</sup> An Arabic translation of the press code of 1880 is reproduced in *Al-Nashra al-usbūʿiyya*, 12 (Beirut, 1882), pp. 190–191, 197, and 205–206.

<sup>74</sup> This study does not intend to give the reader the impression that the Ottoman Empire was the haven of freedom par excellence. The literature of the period abounds in complaints about the restriction of the press and the persecution of journalists who dared to criticise the person and policies of Sultan Abdülhamid II. A large number of Syrian

Secondly, the neglect of the press can be explained with reference to a misinterpretation of nineteenth-century Ottoman history as a whole. A number of historians have overestimated the role of foreign contributions to legal and administrative development and thereby neglected the role of local and Ottoman efforts aimed at reform.<sup>75</sup> This has led to the neglect of some local primary sources, including the provincial press, as a source worthy of investigation.

Information about the formative years of the Beirut municipality, i.e. the period between 1863 and 1875, is mostly derived from *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*. It was the first newspaper to be published in Beirut, the first issue appearing on 1 January 1858. It was the pioneering newspaper in the whole of Ottoman Syria. Most of the other Beiruti newspapers were founded after the establishment of the municipal institution. *Al-Bashīr* was founded in September 1870 and *Thamarāt al-funūn* was established in April 1875, as already indicated.

Besides *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, the *Salnames* of Syria are a very useful source of information on the new municipality of Beirut. These *Salnames*, as their name indicates, were the official yearbooks of the province in question. The practice of publishing annual information about the Empire in the form of a book (*Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye*) was first introduced in 1263/1846–47 under Sultan Abdülmecid I (reigned 1839–1861).<sup>76</sup> These early *Salnames* were published to provide information about new and

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journalists who fell foul of the censorship were exiled to, or voluntarily sought refuge in Egypt or France, see Sulayman al-Bustani, *Ibrā wa-dhikrā*, pp.27–34; ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, *Ṭabā’i’ al-istibdād* (Cairo, 1902), reprint, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Aleppo, 1996), pp.47–53; Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp.3–8. For an overview of the relationship between the Ottoman government and the press prior to the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid, see Roderic H. Davison, “How the Ottoman Government Adjusted to a New Institution: The Newspaper Press.” In: Sabri M. Akural, ed., *Turkic Culture. Continuity and Change* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1987), pp. 17–27.

<sup>75</sup> Louis Cheikho wrote in *Al-Mashriq*, a journal that he edited during the period under study, a number of articles about the achievements of the municipality of Beirut. However, later when he, during the French Mandate period, wrote an entire book dedicated to the history and archaeology of Beirut, the Europeans only merited a brief mention in his book. He stated: “the credit for these impressive developments in the fields of trade and medical care (in Beirut) ... should go to the foreign countries, especially France, as it is well known.” Louis Cheikho, *Bayrūt tārīkhuha wa-āthāruhā* (Beirut, 1926; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Beirut, 1993), p. 158. For a critical review of Cheikho’s perception and presentation of history, see his biography in Muhammad Kurd Ali, *Al-Mu’āṣirūn* (Damascus, 1980), pp. 317–321.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas Xavier Bianchi, “Bibliographie ottomane ou notice des ouvrages publiés”. In: *Journal Asiatique* (Août-Septembre, 1852), p.245; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Vol. II, Reform, Revolution and Republic. The Rise of Modern Turkey. 1808–1975* (Cambridge, 1977), p.443.

reformed laws and regulations, better known as *Tanzimat-i Hayriye* (see above). They summarised the Tanzimat codes and reported on their application in the provinces. These *Salnames* may also have served the purpose of ‘image management’, by publishing annually the latest amendments to the laws, hence emphasising the continuation of the reform process.<sup>77</sup> *Salnames* entirely dedicated to the provinces appeared during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz (reigned 1861–1876) as a result of the reform in the provincial administration, elaborated in the provincial law of 1864. The first issue of *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* appeared in 1285/1868 in Damascus.<sup>78</sup> Although these were the yearbooks of an Arabic speaking province, they were written in Ottoman Turkish, the official and bureaucratic language of the Empire, and they continued to appear almost annually.<sup>79</sup> These *Salnames* contain important information about the city of Beirut, which was part of the province of Syria until 1888. When it was declared a province in its own right in that year, it became entitled to have its own yearbook, the first issue of which appeared in 1311–1312/1893–1894. Thereafter, the Beirut *Salnames* were written, prepared and printed in Beirut in the official press of the province. They contain lists of incumbent Ottoman and indigenous officials, the budget of the *vilayet*, statistical information about the population as well as detailed descriptions of public works, education and geographical data. However, *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* did not appear annually and varied in size. From 1888 until 1908, only seven issues were published.<sup>80</sup> The last appeared in 1326/1908 and included a large number of photographs portraying the latest public works and the most recent map of Beirut, prepared by the Beyrouth Waterworks Company. This emphasized and tried to present

<sup>77</sup> Roderic H. Davison, “Ottoman Public Relations in the Nineteenth Century: How the Sublime Porte Tried to Influence European Public Opinion”. In: Daniel Panzac, ed., *Histoire économique et sociale de l’Empire Ottoman et de la Turquie 1326–1960* (Paris, 1995), pp. 593–603.

<sup>78</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye*, birinci defa (Damascus, 1285/1868).

<sup>79</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye*, ikinci defa (1286/1869), 3. defa (1288/1871), 4. defa (1289/1872), 6. defa (1291/1874), 8. defa (1293/1876), 9. defa (1294/1877), 11. defa (1296/1879), 12. defa (1297/1880), 13. defa (1298/1881), 14. defa (1299/1882), 16. defa (1301/1884), 17. defa (1302/1885), and 18. defa (1304/1887).

<sup>80</sup> The first issue of *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* was published in 1311–1312/1893–1894, the second in 1318/1900, the third in 1319/1901, the fifth in 1322/1904, the sixth in 1324/1906 and the seventh in 1326/1908. The fourth issue of the *Salnames* is missing in all the libraries in Lebanon, Turkey and Chicago which have a large collection of Ottoman *Salnames*. Most probably this issue was not accepted by the officials of the Ministry of the Interior and consequently withdrawn from circulation almost immediately after its publication. Hasan Duman, *A Bibliography and Union Catalogue of Ottoman Year-Books* (Ankara, 2000), vol. 1, pp. 86–87.



evidence of the spread of modernity in the provinces.<sup>81</sup> In 1335–1336/1916–1917 a two-volume work, probably replacing a *Salname*, under the title *Wilāyat Bayrūt*, was issued.<sup>82</sup> This work was commissioned by Azmi Bey, one of the last Ottoman governors of the province of Beirut. It was the first time that such a book appeared in Arabic in addition to Ottoman Turkish. An intended third volume of the same work, dealing mainly with the capital of the province, the city of Beirut itself, never appeared. The two volumes published did not include information about the city.

We do not know who the real authors of these *Salnames* were, but it is certain, that they were prepared by the office of the *mektupçu*. Copies of these *Salnames* were intended to be sent to the Ministry of the Interior in Istanbul, as well as to the different consulates within the limits of the province, as some issues actually were. Keeping this in mind, the *mektupçular*, probably under the instructions of the different *valis*, portrayed their provinces in somewhat idealised terms. Some parts of the *Salnames*—for example, those dealing with civic amenities and public works—tended to exaggerate the achievements of the incumbent *vali*, in some cases by attributing to him the execution of projects which he did not initiate or actually implement. Some of these falsifications became evident when the press began to report about what actually happened in a given province.<sup>83</sup>

Some of these *Salnames* are of particular importance to the study of the municipality of Beirut, especially those of 1319/1901 and 1322/1904, for they made public the list of conditions (*şartname*) which were agreed upon between the Ottoman state and foreign concessionaires who undertook to execute public works projects in the city. These *şartnames* are also important, because they clarify the exact relationship between the municipality and the companies contracted to do work on its behalf.

<sup>81</sup> Selim Deringel, *The Well-Protected Domains. Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876–1909* (London, 1998), p. 151: "... Ottoman statesmen sought to capitalize on aspects of their society and civilization which were attuned to the mainstream of world trends. By emphasizing symbols which had come to denote modernity, the Ottoman state was staking its claim to the right to exist. One very telling testament to this effort is the collection of photograph albums that the Sultan arranged to be presented as gifts to the Library of Congress in 1893 and the British Museum in 1894."

<sup>82</sup> Muhammad Rafiq Tamimi and Muhammad Bahjat, *Wilāyat Bayrūt* (Beirut, 1333 maliye, 1335/1917–1336/1918), 2 vols.; reprint (Beirut, 1987).

<sup>83</sup> For example, note the stark contrast between the report of *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1319/1901), *üçüncü defa* (third issue) on the construction of the clock tower in Beirut and that in the Beirut journal *Al-Mashriq* on the same edifice. *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1319/1901), *üçüncü defa*, 243, and *Al-Mashriq*, 2 (1899), pp. 769–774.

In the first *Salname* of Beirut, published in 1893–1894, the index of the Ottoman *Düstur* was included as a supplement.<sup>84</sup> The *Düstur* was a compilation of all the new Ottoman public laws that were promulgated after 1839. The first compilation of Tanzimat laws in book form was published under the title *Mecmu'a-i qavanin* in February 1851. Another volume including more recent laws under the title *Kafe-i qavanin ve nizamat mevcüde-i Devlet-i Aliye'ye düstur nam mecmu'a* appeared in February 1863.<sup>85</sup> This volume is known as *birinci defa* (“first issue”). A second, up-to-date volume, *ikinci defa* (“second issue”), appeared in March 1866.<sup>86</sup> A new edition, simply called *Düstur*, was published by the official press of the Ottoman Empire (*matba'-i âmile/dâr al-ṭibā'ca al-ḫamira*) between 1289/1872 and 1302/1884.<sup>87</sup> This edition is commonly known as the *birinci tertip* (“first arrangement”), in order to distinguish it from the laws that were published after the 1908 revolution, which are called the *ikinci tertip* (“second arrangement”).<sup>88</sup> The *birinci tertip* of the *Düstur* was published in four volumes and four supplements. It was divided according to the thematic subjects, and within the thematic divisions the laws were organised in a chronological order. In 1872 12,000 copies of the first volume were printed under the supervision of the minister of education Ahmet Vefik Efendi (1823–1891).<sup>89</sup> In spite of the considerable number of the first impression, the *Düstur* was out of print within a short period of time; a commercial edition using the same pagination of the official one was published in Istanbul at *Mahmud Bey Matba'asi* between 1291/1874 and 1302/1884. The laws were published in the form of imperial sanctions (*irade-i seniye*), laws (*qanun*), or regulations (*nizam*). None of the eight volumes of the *Düstur* and its supplement included any personal names or seals (*mühür*) in the colophon, unlike the early volumes of the Code of Civil Laws (*Mecelle-i ahkâm-ı adliye*), which consistently carried the signature of Cevdet Pasha and two members of the Council of State (*şurayı devlet*). Hence, it

<sup>84</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1311/1893–94–1312/1894–95), zeyl (appendix), pp. 1–204.

<sup>85</sup> Thomas Xavier Bianchi, “Bibliographie ottomane ou notice des ouvrages publiés dans les imprimeries turques de Constantinople”. In: *Journal Asiatique* (Août-Septembre, 1863), p. 270.

<sup>86</sup> *Qavanin ve nizamatın münderic oldığı mecmu'a-yı zamm-ı dâl ile düstur denilir, defa-i saniye* (Istanbul, Zilhicce 1282/March 1866); see the frontispiece of the *ikinci defa*.

<sup>87</sup> *Düstur* (Istanbul, vol. 1, 1289/1872–73; vol. 2, 1290/1873–74; vol. 3, 1293/1876; vol. 4, 1295/1878; zeyl 1, 1299/1818–82; zeyl 2, 1299/1881–82; zeyl 3, 1300/1882–83; zeyl 4, 1302/1884–85).

<sup>88</sup> M. Akif Aydın, “Düstur”. In: *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 10 (Istanbul, 1994), pp. 48f.

<sup>89</sup> M. Belin, *Bibliographie Ottomane ou Notice des livres Turcs imprimés à Constantinople, durant les années 1288 et 1289 de l'hégire* (Paris, 1873), p. 25.

is virtually impossible for a researcher to judge from the final versions of the laws published in the *Düstur* who were the original initiators and in which manner they arrived at a final draft. Nor can one specify, whether a particular law was the brainchild of a specific Tanzimat statesman. However, it is generally known that Fuad Pasha (1815–1869), Cevdet Pasha (1822–1895), Mustafa Reşid Pasha (1800–1858), Âli Pasha (1815–1871) and Midhat Pasha (1822–1884) inspired, influenced, participated in and chaired the meetings of the High Council of Reform (*meclis-i ali-i tanzimat*), the High Council of Judicial Rulings (*meclis-i vâlâyi ahkâm-i adliye*) and the Council of State (*şurayı devlet*) at different stages during the Tanzimat period. All of these councils were in charge of drafting new laws for the Empire.

The laws came into effect two weeks after their publication in the official Ottoman gazette (*Takvim-i Vekayi*) and the official gazettes of the provinces.<sup>90</sup> The Ottoman authorities in Istanbul encouraged and commissioned the translation of the laws into French,<sup>91</sup> the diplomatic language of the nineteenth century, as well as into the different languages of the Empire. A Greek and a Bulgarian translation were completed as early as 1873.<sup>92</sup> On 27 *Dhu al-Hijja* 1288 (7 March 1872) an Arabic translation was commissioned to Khalil al-Khuri (1836–1907), the editor-in-chief of *Suriye*, the official gazette of the province of Syria.<sup>93</sup> By commissioning translations into the various languages of the Empire, the Ottoman authorities wanted to spread the word about the new laws and regulations not only among the bureaucrats who—in theory—were expected to know Ottoman Turkish, but also among the different ethnic communities forming the population of the Empire.

The bilingual Arabic/Ottoman Turkish official gazettes of the provinces published the latest Ottoman laws in full, in the official Ottoman Turkish version as well as in an Arabic translation. This study examines the issues of the official gazette of the province of Syria published in Damascus under the title *Suriye* until 1888, when the *vilayet* of Beirut

<sup>90</sup> George Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman* (Oxford, 1905), vol. 1, pp. xiv–xv. See, for example, issue number 974 of the official gazette of the province of Syria, *Suriye*, 29 *Shawwâl* 1301/13 July 1884, in which an Arabic translation of *Qānūn al-jarā'im al-sihhiyya* (the law concerning crimes against public health) was published.

<sup>91</sup> Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 4, frontispiece and preface, states that he was awarded “an honour instituted by the Ottoman government as a recognition for enterprises of public utility to the Empire”. He received the Ottoman Gold Order of Merit (*liyakat nişanı*) for his work. For more information on Ottoman orders and decorations, see Jacob M. Landau, “Nishān”. In: *EF*, vol. 8, pp. 57–60.

<sup>92</sup> Belin, *Bibliographie Ottomane*, p. 8.

<sup>93</sup> BOA, ŞD 2270/6, belge 1.

was separately established. *Beyrut*, the official gazette of the new province of Beirut, is extremely rare, only very few late issues of this official newspaper still being preserved.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, I was able to trace some issues in German and Danish archives. These gazettes, unlike the privately owned and edited local newspapers, only represented the official opinion. However, their importance lies in the fact that they systematically published the latest laws and official announcements in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic.<sup>95</sup>

Apart from the *Salnames*, law books and official newspapers, I have also used documents from the Ottoman archives (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*) belonging to different classifications.<sup>96</sup> Some important archival Ottoman documents relevant to churches, synagogues and missionary institutions in Syria and Iraq have been investigated, interpreted and translated into Arabic.<sup>97</sup> Despite the temptation to rely exclusively on Ottoman archival documents, additional material has been used in order to provide a more accurate perception of Beirut and its municipality.<sup>98</sup> The aim is to counter-balance the picture derived from the official Ottoman archival material, by using not only a plethora of Beirut publications, but also foreign diplomatic

<sup>94</sup> Hasan Duman, *A Bibliography and Union Catalogue of Ottoman-Turkish Serials and Newspapers from the Beginning to the Introduction of the Modern Turkish Alphabet, 1828–1928* (Ankara, 2000), vol. 1, p. 183. I tried to gain access to the Hakkı Tarık Us Kütüphanesi, albeit to no avail, because it is a family-*vaqf*. I was not able to get hold of a microfilm of the issues available at Diyarbakir İlk Halk Kütüphanesi.

<sup>95</sup> For a study of all the official gazettes in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, their editors, their role and their reception by the readership, see chapter one of Ami Ayalon's work, *The Press in the Arab Middle East. A History* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 11–27, entitled "State Bulletins: Pronouncing the Official Truth".

<sup>96</sup> For the latest classification of the material available at the BOA and the most common abbreviations, see *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Istanbul, 2000).

<sup>97</sup> ʿAbdarrāhim Abu Husayn and Salih Saʿdawi, *Al-Kanāʿis al-ʿarabiyya fī al-sijill al-kanasī al-ʿuthmānī. 1879–1922* (Amman, 1998). This book is a translation of all documents found in the *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi* on Syria and Iraq in the first seven *defters* of the *Kilise Defterleri*, covering the period between 1869 and 1922. The translation of these documents into Arabic is of special significance, for it facilitates the access of Arab historians to Ottoman archival material, an important source for the history of the Arab lands which, as yet, has not been sufficiently tapped. In the introduction to his work ʿAbdarrāhim Abu Husayn highlights the significance of these documents for a reconstruction of the history of the Christian Arabs and the conditions they lived in under the Ottomans.

<sup>98</sup> Roderic H. Davison, "The Post-Prandial Musings of a Historian Who Has Been Working in the Ottoman Archives". In: *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 10, 1 (February 1976), p. 2: "The temptation to rely on government documents found in the archives is great, but do they tell the truth? Most archival documents are undoubtedly factual and truthful, even if they don't tell the whole truth..."

correspondence, available in American,<sup>99</sup> Danish<sup>100</sup> and German<sup>101</sup> archives.

The documents from the Ottoman archives, especially those from the *İrade* classification, rarely yield information regarding the execution and the impact of the orders issued in Istanbul concerning provincial affairs. The press, on the other hand, relates how and when these orders were applied and describes the effects of their application on provincial society. The consular correspondence, for its part, provides a picture which differs from that portrayed in the press. The foreign diplomats reported regularly on the execution and impact of new orders and regulations. The diplomatic correspondence also offers background information about the latest developments on the provincial level, at least to the extent that they deal with foreign nationals and their interests, or when new regulations have a direct bearing on the affairs of the foreign residents in the provinces.<sup>102</sup> Yet this primary source material

<sup>99</sup> Washington, D.C.: National Archives. *Series: Dispatches from the U.S. consuls in Beirut, 1836–1906*, T367, available as a microfilm at the Jafet Library of the American University of Beirut.

<sup>100</sup> Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet. The Danish National Archives, DNA. *Konsulatsarkivet i Beirut, 1872–1924, Nr. 685* (The archive of the consulate in Beirut). This archive is being used for the first time to study the history of Lebanon. The material from the archive of the Danish consulate in Beirut proved to be of great importance, because it does not only include correspondence between Beirut and Copenhagen, but also correspondence between the Danish consuls and the different authorities in Beirut. Some of the material was written in French, while the correspondence with the governors of Beirut and Syria was written in Ottoman. Announcements from the municipality as well as correspondence with it were written in Arabic. The survival of many documents in this archive could be attributed to the neutrality of the Kingdom of Denmark during the First World War. The French and the British general consulates in Beirut destroyed a large amount of their documents at the beginning of the war. The archive of the German general consulate was confiscated by the authorities of the French mandate in Lebanon at the end of the war.

<sup>101</sup> Berlin: Bundesarchiv. Auswärtiges Amt, Abteilung II, (AA, A II), *Beiakten betreffend: Die Jahresberichte des Kaiserlichen Konsulats in Beirut* (Foreign Office, Division II, Secondary files concerning the yearly reports of the Imperial consulate in Beirut); *R 901, Nr. 52359–52360; 53727–53730*. Bonn (now in Berlin): Das Politische Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, PAAA: *Acta der Kaiserlich Deutschen Botschaft zu Constantinopel* (Files of the Imperial German Embassy in Constantinople); *Acta betreffend Schriftwechsel mit der kaiserlichen Botschaft in Constantinopel sowie mit anderen Missionen und fremden Cabinetten über die inneren Zustände und Verhältnisse der Türkei* (Files concerning the correspondence with the Imperial Embassy in Constantinople as well as with other missions and foreign cabinets about the internal situations and conditions of Turkey); *Akten betreffend Niederlassung Deutscher Ärzte in Vorder-Asien. R 901, Nr. 21393* (Files concerning the settlement of German doctors in the Near East); *Allgemeine Angelegenheiten der Türkei* (General affairs of Turkey); *Orientalia Generalia; Türkische Staatsmänner* (Turkish statesmen).

<sup>102</sup> For a representative example of the combination of Ottoman, local and foreign correspondence providing us with an integral picture concerning the affairs of the municipality of Beirut, see Chapter V, below.

is to be used with caution. Contemporary historians expressed reservations concerning the Western diplomats' understanding of the Ottoman Empire. For example, the renowned statesman, lawmaker and historian Cevdet Pasha candidly articulated his doubts in a conversation with the French ambassador to Istanbul.

“Your residence was in [the European quarter] Beyoğlu. [From there] you could not even learn about the affairs of Constantinople, let alone the nature of the Ottoman Empire. Beyoğlu is an interspace between Europe and the Muslim [Ottoman] lands. From there, you see Constantinople through a telescope; however, all the telescopes you use are crooked.”<sup>103</sup>

The words of Cevdet Pasha are unambiguous, implying that the diplomat's knowledge was selective and incomplete. However, the diplomatic reports were derived from information provided by a wide network of diplomats residing in various cities throughout the Empire. These reports proved to be enlightening, especially when combined and contrasted with other source material of different authorship and nature.

Besides the Western consular correspondence, I have used published accounts and reports by American missionaries,<sup>104</sup> the German Deaconesses of Kaiserswerth<sup>105</sup> and the Jesuit Order<sup>106</sup> in Beirut. I shall also refer to

<sup>103</sup> The conversation between Cevdet Pasha and the French ambassador to Istanbul as depicted in the new Latin script edition of Cevdet Pasha's Memoirs *Tezâkir*: Mösyo Moustier dineldi anladı teşekkür eyledi: “Hayli vakit İstanbul'da oturdum. Buralara lâyıkıyla [sic] ma'lûmât alamamışım” dedi. Dedim ki: “Siz Beyoğlu'nda oturdunuz. Değil memâlik-i osmâniyyenin nefsi-i İstanbul'un bile ahvâlini lâyıkıyla [sic] öğrenemediniz. Beyoğlu Avrupa ile memâlik-i islâmîyye arasında bir berzahdır. Buradan İstanbul'u siz durbîn ile görürsünüz. Lâkin kullandığınız durbînler hep çarpıktır.” Cavid Baysun, ed., Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, vol. 3, third edition (Ankara, 1991), pp. 103–104.

<sup>104</sup> Kamal Salibi and Yusuf Q. Khoury, eds., *The Missionary Herald. Reports from Ottoman Syria. 1819–1870* (Amman, 1995), 5 vols. This work contains unabridged and unaltered reproductions of reports “originally published in *The Missionary Herald*: a journal first issued in 1805 as the official organ of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions [...]. The authors of the reports were Protestant missionaries, mostly Presbyterians or Congregationalists from New England.” Salibi, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, vol. 1, p. ix.

<sup>105</sup> *Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon, namentlich über das Waisenhaus Zoar*, Nr. 4–18 (1865–1895); *Bericht über das Diakonissen-Haus zu Jerusalem*, Nr. 1 u. 3 (1851 u. 1852–53); *Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande*, Nr. 2–23 (1854–1899); *Dank- und Denk-Blätter aus der Kaiserswerther Diakonissen-Arbeit im Morgenlande*, 1–18. Jahrgang (1901–1918); *Mitteilungen aus dem Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhause für die Mitglieder des Pfennig-Vereins*, Nr. 142 (1897); *Neuester Bericht über die Arbeiten der Kaiserswerther Diakonissen unter den syrischen Flüchtlingen in Beirut und Sidon* (1861); *Rechnungsbericht über die Kaiserswerther Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut*, Nr. 19 (1897); D. Julius Disselhoff, *Das Diakonissen-Mutterhaus zu Kaiserswerth a. Rhein und seine Tochterhäuser* (Kaiserswerth a. Rhein, 1893).

<sup>106</sup> Sami Kuri, S.J., ed., *Une histoire du Liban à travers les archives des Jésuites. 1816–1873* (Beirut, 1985–1996), 3 vols. The book is a compilation of 733 documents from

memoirs and accounts of some European and American consuls, medical doctors, scholars and missionaries that lived in Syria for long periods of time.<sup>107</sup> Due to their long residency one may safely assume that they were able to acquire a clearer picture of the region and the habits of its people than itinerant travellers who barely stayed at one location for a period of time long enough to form a reasonable and reliable opinion. The locals were perfectly aware of the dubious nature of itinerant European travellers' judgements concerning the urban societies they passed through. The prominent writer and scholar Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883), for example, noted: “probably, what causes the Franks (Westerners) to disrespect the Arabs ... is that the former have to do generally with the common people and mostly the basest of them. The travellers, especially, deal mostly with sailors, porters, muleteers and tourist-dragomans—the manners of such individuals are well known and the same all over the world—or with persons who would stretch their hand asking for baksheesh and alms.”<sup>108</sup> Presumably, the long-term residents were able to formulate a more profound judgement about their host society. However, the European, especially the diplomats, socialised mainly with their peers.<sup>109</sup> Their exposure to the common run of Beirut society and their knowledge and experience

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the archives of La Compagnie de Jésus in Beirut. They are partially edited with a clear indication of the omitted parts.

<sup>107</sup> The following are examples and not an exhaustive list of such memoirs used in this work: Edward B. B. Barker, ed., *Syria and Egypt under the Last Five Sultans of Turkey: Being Experiences, during Fifty Years, of Mr. Consul-General Barker* (London, 1876), 2 vols.; Henri Guys, *Beyrouth et le Liban. Relation d'un séjour de plusieurs années dans ce pays* (Paris, 1850), 2 vols.; Henry Harris Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* (New York, 1910), 2 vols. An Arabic translation of some letters of Agatangel Kremisky dating from 1896 to 1898 is reproduced in Mas'ud Dahir, *Bayrūt wa-Jabal Lubnān 'alā mashārif al-qarn al-īshrīn* (Beirut, 1985), pp. 103–307. Four reports by the Russian medical doctor Artemis Rafalowitz are reproduced in Arabic in Mas'ud Dahir, ed., *Sūriyya wa-Lubnān wa-Filasṭīn fī al-niṣf al-awwal min al-qarn al-tāsi' 'ashar* (Beirut, 1991), pp. 176–241. Lamec Saad, *Sechzehn Jahre als Quarantänearzt in der Türkei* (Berlin, 1913).

<sup>108</sup> Butrus al-Bustani, *Khitāb fī al-hay'a al-ijtimā'iyya wa-l-muqābala bayna al-'awā'id al-'arabiyya wa-l-īfranjiyya* (Beirut, 1869), p. 36. The same speech is reproduced with different pagination in Jan Dayah, *Al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustānī. Dirāsa wa-wathā'iq* (Beirut, 1981), pp. 83f. For the latest biography of Butrus al-Bustani, see Yusuf Quzma Khuri, *Rajul sābiq li-'aṣrihi. Al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustānī, 1819–1883* (Amman, 1995).

<sup>109</sup> The limited and selective social circle of the diplomatic corps was not peculiar to Beirut. For a similar behaviour of the foreign consular community in Ottoman Saloniki, see Meropi Anastasiadou, “Les Occidentaux de la place”. In: Gilles Veinstein, ed., *Salonique 1850–1918, la “ville des Juifs” et le réveil des Balkans* (Paris, 1992), pp. 143–144.

of its affairs were mostly filtered through their Christian contacts.<sup>110</sup> The Beirut Muslims barely appear in their works as individuals, but always as the “other”. I have used some reports by Egyptian travellers in order to redress the one-sided reports of Western residents.<sup>111</sup> Contemporary local guidebooks for the city have also been examined.<sup>112</sup> The memoirs written by two eye-witnesses of the period, Yusuf al-Hakim, an Ottoman bureaucrat in the provinces of Syria and Beirut, and Salim ‘Ali Salam, a Beirut notable, merchant and mayor of the city, will also serve as a corrective to the picture derived from Western sources.<sup>113</sup>

This work is divided into seven core chapters. The first chapter will focus on the formative years of the municipality of Beirut, prior to the publication of the first municipal law for the provinces.

The second chapter will discuss—in chronological order—the laws that governed the activities of municipal institutions in the Ottoman provinces before 1876, when the first constitution was declared. The aim is to provide a definition of the municipality and its functions. After establishing the legal framework of the municipality, the presentation and assessment of the actual application of these laws, namely in the case of Beirut, will become more clear.

The third chapter will concentrate on the role of the Ottoman parliament in amending the proposed municipal law for the provinces. The Beirut parliamentarians representing Syria in the *meclis-i meb’usan* will receive special attention. The municipal law for the provinces of 1877 will be analysed by means of comparing and contrasting it with the preceding laws. Finally, the means and manner of making the municipal laws known to the Beirut public will be examined in detail.

The fourth chapter will investigate the application of the municipal code in the city of Beirut. It will examine the elections of the council members. In this chapter I shall attempt to shed light on the socio-economic

<sup>110</sup> A case in point is Salim Shihade, the translator of the Russian general consulate in Beirut who, according to Kremisky, tried to isolate the consecutive Russian consuls from their own co-patriots and influence their decisions and policy, see Dahir, *Bayrūt wa-Jabal Lubnān*, pp. 250–256.

<sup>111</sup> Muhammad ‘Abd al-Jawad al-Qayati, *Nafhat al-bishām fī riḥlat al-Shām*, reprint (Beirut, 1981); ‘Abd al-Rahman Bey Samī, *Al-Qawl al-ḥaqq fī Bayrūt wa-Dimashq*, reprint (Beirut, 1981); Muhammad ‘Ali Pasha, *Al-Riḥla al-Shāmiyya*, reprint (Beirut, 1981).

<sup>112</sup> Amin al-Khuri, *Al-Jāmi‘a aw dalīl Bayrūt li ‘ām 1889* (Beirut, 1889); ‘Abd al-Basit al-Unsi, *Dalīl Bayrūt wa-taqwīm al-iqbāl* (Beirut, 1909).

<sup>113</sup> Yusuf al-Hakim, *Bayrūt wa-Lubnān fī ‘ahd āl ‘Uthmān*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Beirut, 1991); Yusuf al-Hakim, *Sūriyya wa-l-‘ahd al-‘uthmānī*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Beirut, 1991); Hasan Hallaq, ed., *Mudhakkarāt Salīm ‘Alī Salām, 1868–1938* (Beirut, 1982).



background of the mayors and the degree to which they were influenced by the ideas of the Tanzimat. A short biography of ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani, a journalist and mayor of Beirut at the turn of the century, will be included as an example of a Beirutite who tried to understand and act according to the *Zeitgeist*.

The fifth chapter will study the taxation policy and the financial resources of the municipal council. It will be shown how the people of Beirut belonging to different strata of society interacted with their municipality and reacted to its regulations and taxations. Of course, the nature of the sources discussed above implies that our information on the attitude and the mentality of the poorer and less articulate segment of urban society is usually scant and indirect, being filtered through the lens of the educated and articulate elite.

The sixth chapter will deal with the relationship between the municipality and the governor of the province as a representative of the central authorities in Istanbul. Chapters five and six will also examine the attitude of the foreign concessionaires towards the municipality and their cooperation with it.

The seventh chapter is dedicated to the impact of municipal projects and policies on the daily life of the Beirutis. One of the major occupations of the municipality was its engagement in health care and hygiene. Public health and the fighting of contagious diseases was a matter of life and death for the Beirutis and the Ottoman authorities. It was also of crucial importance for international trade involving the port of Beirut. Therefore, all the primary sources employed in this work, report extensively on this subject. This chapter will investigate the role of the municipality in providing the people of Beirut with health care. The intervention of the municipality in this field had a direct impact on the lives and the lifestyle of all strata of Beirutite society. Authoritative and enlightening works on the plague in the Ottoman Empire<sup>114</sup> and on public health in nineteenth-century Egypt<sup>115</sup> and Tunisia<sup>116</sup> have been published. However, our infor-

<sup>114</sup> See Daniel Panzac, *La peste dans l'Empire Ottoman, 1700–1850* (Louvain, 1985).

<sup>115</sup> See LaVerne J. Kuhnke, *Lives at Risk. Public Health in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley, 1990); Amira el-Azhary Sonbol, *The Creation of a Medical Profession in Egypt, 1800–1922* (Syracuse, 1991). Some articles published lately by Khaled Fahmy are especially enlightening: “Medicine and Power: Towards a Social History of Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Egypt”. In: *Cairo Papers in Social Science*, 23, number 2 (Cairo, 2000), pp. 15–62; and “Women, Medicine and Power in Nineteenth-Century Egypt”. In: Lila Abu-Lughod, ed., *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1998), pp. 35–72.

<sup>116</sup> See Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher, *Medicine and Power in Tunisia, 1780–1900* (Cambridge, 1983).

mation on health conditions in the Ottoman Empire as a whole during the second half of the nineteenth century is still minimal. The attitude of the Beirut people to, and their level of awareness of the different contagious diseases, like small pox, cholera and diphtheria, will be thoroughly examined in this chapter. The municipality's medical personnel and institutions will be studied for the first time, since the emphasis has so far been on the activities of foreign medical doctors and institutions. Public health is only one facet of the amenities provided by the municipality of Beirut. The municipality also engaged in, for example, urban planning, policing and market control. Each of these areas could equally have served as examples on the way in which the activities of the municipality impinged on daily life. However, it has not been possible to deal with all these areas of activity in depth and keep the present study within reasonable bounds.



## I The Municipalities in Syria prior to the Introduction of the Municipal Law

Many years before municipal councils were legally established in the Ottoman provinces, provincial notables and writers expressed a fascination with the idea of some sort of urban self-administration and corporate organisation. The vision of such writers was in part inspired by their knowledge of European municipalities, and partly by the establishment of a pioneering municipal council in Istanbul. Some of these ideas regarding urban corporate bodies were published in different works during the fifties and the early sixties of the nineteenth century.

For example, in 1855 Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1804–1887) published a voluminous monograph including some of his experiences and observations in France and Britain.<sup>1</sup> He was a shrewd observer of his host societies as well as his own. The author was especially impressed by the large number of ‘modern’ welfare and public benefit institutions in Europe. In *Al-Sāq ‘alā al-sāq* al-Shidyaq gives the following advice to his fellow countrymen: “When you visit foreign countries you should go to schools, printing presses, public libraries, hospitals and universities; upon your return home try your best to write a travel report to benefit your compatriots.”<sup>2</sup> According to al-Shidyaq, these civic institutions were established as a direct result of the collective work of public-spirited European citizens, and not necessarily governmental or official ones. He stated that “their rich merchants do not wear diamond and emerald rings, nor do they use gold chains as jewellery, or expensive furniture and china-ware; but they spend their fortunes on charity, for the sake of helping the grieved, widows and orphans, in establishing schools and hospitals, in repairing streets, embellishing their cities and arranging

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<sup>1</sup> For a biography of al-Shidyaq and an analysis of his significance in nineteenth-century Arabic thought, see Louis ‘Awad, *Tārīkh al-fīkr al-miṣrī al-ḥadīth min al-ḥamla al-faransiyya ilā ‘aṣr Ismā‘īl* (Cairo, 1987), pp.333–393.

<sup>2</sup> Faris al-Shidyaq, *Al-Sāq ‘alā al-sāq fī mā huwa al-fāriyāq* (Paris, 1855), p. 515.

for the proper disposal of waste and putrefied refuse.”<sup>3</sup> Most probably, he deliberately exaggerated and idealised the collective social endeavours of some European merchants, in order to challenge and provoke the upper stratum of Syrian Ottoman society, which had not, as yet, established similar institutions. He advocated that these exploits by European merchants should be emulated. Al-Shidyaq sardonically expressed the strong wish “that one of my compatriots would convey these virtues to his people..., and that diamonds, emeralds, rubies... would be transformed into schools, books, and printing presses.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, al-Shidyaq highlighted the importance and emphasised the role of the citizens in establishing such urban services and urged his Arabic readers to set up civic institutions for the benefit of the public.

In another book by al-Shidyaq—which he wrote at around the same time as the aforementioned, but which was belatedly published in Tunis in 1867—the author reiterated his hope that his work would encourage his readers to follow the European example, in order to achieve civility and an urbane way of life (*al-tamaddun*).<sup>5</sup> He also compared and contrasted the European metropoli London and Paris. In this work, al-Shidyaq elaborated more on the municipal council of Paris—which he called *majlis madīnat Bārīz*—focusing on its activities in the fields of market control, public health and hygiene. He praised the municipality of Paris for its efforts in these three fields, while, in contrast, his judgements on London with respect to these matters were decidedly negative. The latter city, according to him, was notorious for its unfettered free market and for the lack of public health and hygiene measures in it. He added that different aspects of urban life in Paris were defined by a large number of laws and regulations and that the implementation of these laws was made possible by the abundance of law-enforcing officials.<sup>6</sup>

In 1860, al-Shidyaq established *Al-Jawāʿib*, an Arabic newspaper, in Istanbul. In its early issues he published selections from his previous books adding his observations on the municipal council of Pera and the new laws governing its activities.<sup>7</sup> In an early issue of *Al-Jawāʿib*, al-Shidyaq stated that the Europeans did not only establish associations for commercial purposes, but also “committees and societies for schools, hospitals and

<sup>3</sup> Al-Shidyaq, *Al-Sāq ʿalā al-sāq*, pp. 521–522.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Shidyaq, *Al-Sāq ʿalā al-sāq*, p. 523.

<sup>5</sup> Faris al-Shidyaq, *Kashf al-mukhabbaʿ fī funūn Urubbā* (Tunis, 1867); reprint (Beirut, 2002), pp. 14–15.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Shidyaq, *Kashf al-mukhabbaʿ*, pp. 258–260.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Salim al-Shidyaq, compiler, *Kanz al-raghāʾib fī muntakhabāt al-jawāʿib* (Istanbul, 1288/1871), vol. 1 pp. 87–101 and 151–153.

museums; they cooperate with each other and work as a corporate body.” However, he disappointedly added that the Europeans in Beyoğlu, especially those in the municipal council of Pera, had not, as yet, established committees for public benefit and welfare, hence not setting a good example for the people of Istanbul.<sup>8</sup>

Another case in point from contemporary literature which conveys the fascination with European corporate organisation derives from the travel account of Salim Bustrus (1839–1883). Bustrus, a Beiruti notable and merchant, who in 1855 toured Europe for ten months and published his travelogue the same year, urged his countrymen to follow the good example of the Europeans. He attributed European development to “unity, corporate activity, diligence, relinquishing partiality and abiding by the law.” He also advocated spreading these qualities in his home town in words and deeds.<sup>9</sup> His book included a detailed description of a large number of European capitals, focusing on Paris and its municipal divisions.<sup>10</sup> The general picture arising from the writings of al-Shidyaq and Bustrus is that they had strong beliefs in the positive effects of association and corporate activity. Such communal efforts were deemed by the above mentioned authors to be essential to the success and development of any urban community.

These conceptions of corporate organisation and civic engagement were not restricted to travel literature alone. Butrus al-Bustani, for example, expressed similar ideas in his newspaper *Nafir Sūriyya*. As an outspoken reaction to the upheaval caused by the 1860 civil strife, he emphasized the importance of law and order to the wellbeing and progress of society. He deemed the equitable execution of the law as an essential guarantor to achieve prosperity and civility.<sup>11</sup> The articles of al-Bustani demonstrate that he was aware, first, that civic initiatives were necessary in order to establish corporate organisations. Second, that this initiative alone was not sufficient and did not guarantee the viability of such organisations. Third, that these desired corporate bodies required clear laws to define their jurisdictions, and a law-enforcing apparatus to implement their regulations.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Al-Shidyaq, *Kanz al-rahāʾib*, vol. 1, pp. 96–97.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in the biography of Salim Bustrus in Jurji Zaydan, *Tarājim mashāhīr al-sharq fī al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ashar* (Beirut, 1902–03); reprint (Beirut, 1992), vol. 2, pp. 199–200.

<sup>10</sup> In his book, the author described monuments, religious and public edifices, parks, museums, public libraries, markets, squares, and streets in Naples, Rome, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Potsdam and Vienna as well as the modern quarters and institutions in Alexandria and Cairo, see Salim Bustrus, *Al-Nuzha al-shahīyya fī al-rihla al-salīmiyya* (Beirut, 1855); reprint (Beirut, 2003), pp. 30–36, 42–60, 70–106, 108–110, 113–121 and 122–123.

<sup>11</sup> Butrus al-Bustani in *Nafir Sūriyya*, 19 November, 1860.

<sup>12</sup> Butrus al-Bustani in *Nafir Sūriyya*, 19 November 1860 and 22 April 1861.

Once serious steps were taken by the Ottoman authorities to introduce provincial municipalities, many welcomed the innovation and perhaps considered it to be overdue. Local notables often seem to have taken an active role, participating in municipal affairs and frequently pressing for wider prerogatives to be given to these institutions. Many of those who did so, conceived of themselves as loyal Ottoman citizens, and there is no real evidence that they were motivated by anti-Ottoman or secessionist sentiments; they were most probably motivated by pragmatic considerations.

## A The Council of Municipal Organisation

The earliest mention of a Council of Municipal Organisation (*majlis li-l-nizāmāt al-baladiyya*) in Beirut appeared in the newspaper *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* on 29 November 1860. This council was established upon the request of Fuad Pasha, the Ottoman Grand Vizier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was in Beirut at the time to investigate the incidents of Mount Lebanon and Damascus.<sup>13</sup> Khalil al-Khuri, the editor of *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*—the only existing newspaper in Beirut at the time—brought this news as “good tidings” (*bushrā*) to the Beirut public. He expected that the foundation of such a council would introduce Beirut into “a new age in which it will gain in significance both on the moral and the material levels”. The responsibility of this council was “to concern itself with, and construct all sorts of public works that will be of benefit to the city and enhance its development and success”.<sup>14</sup> Fuad Pasha also ordered a Health Council (*majlis al-ṣiḥḥa*) to be established. It consisted of seven Ottoman and French civil and military medical doctors; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* provides us with their names and positions. They were Dr. Rosinean, the private physician of Fuat Pasha, Lieutenant Dr. Ibrahim Bey al-Najjar, the chief military physician in Beirut, Dr. Coleman, the chief physician of the French troops in the city, Dr. Pestalozzi, representing the Ottoman Ministry of Health, and the three French medical doctors, Dr. Souké, Dr. Cassini and Dr. Pinkoff.<sup>15</sup> The task of this council was to supervise the “cleansing and purification of the city... from all dirt and refuse... in order to prevent the spread of disease”.<sup>16</sup> The brief “good tidings” of Khalil al-Khuri did not provide sufficiently detailed information about the members of the Council

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed description of the civil war in Mount Lebanon and Damascus, see Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 29 November 1860.

<sup>15</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 29 November 1860. The names of the medical doctors in Latin script are in my own transliteration of the Arabic orthography provided in *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 29 November 1860.

of Municipal Organisation. However, we may infer that they were Beirutis, because al-Khuri, as a rule, specified the names, ranks, offices and titles of Ottoman and foreign officials.<sup>17</sup> The functions of both councils were published in *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*. From the operational procedures of both councils, it becomes clear that the Health Council was subordinate to that of Municipal Organisation. In one of its early meetings, the Health Council deemed it beneficial to the health of the public, especially the children, to offer vaccination against smallpox free of charge on two separate days every week. It presented its decision to the Council of Municipal Organisation, which gave its consent and announced the free vaccination campaign in the form of official placards (*i'lānāt*) that were posted in all the streets and alleys of the city.<sup>18</sup> These announcements, along with an explanation regarding the procedure of the vaccination and its benefit to children's health, were published in two consecutive issues of the Beirut newspaper.<sup>19</sup> The Council of Municipal Organisation undertook street maintenance work. The central market area was meticulously cleaned, new sewer conduits were laid, and as a final measure the streets were paved.<sup>20</sup> The Beirut newspaper reported on the new urban amenities without explaining how these projects were financed or who was responsible for deciding on the scale and the location of development projects. It seems that both councils were trying within the available means—which we know very little about—to tackle the pressing urban problems and health hazards in the city.

Between 1858 and 1861 the population of Beirut almost doubled, from an estimate of 40,000 to 75,000 inhabitants.<sup>21</sup> A large number of the immigrants from Mount Lebanon had suffered injuries and were lodged in crammed, squalid and unhygienic conditions in different schools and in Ottoman and foreign missionary makeshift medical centres throughout the city. In order to reduce the unexpected pressure on the limited resources of the city and to minimise the risk of outbreaks of contagious diseases, the Ottoman authorities tried to divert the refugees to other cities on the Syrian

<sup>17</sup> Most probably the appointment of a Beirutis to an official post was quickly spread throughout the city by word of mouth prior to the printing of the weekly newspaper. Hence, al-Khuri must have found it superfluous to publish their names in his paper.

<sup>18</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 February 1861.

<sup>19</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 21 February 1861 and *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 7 March 1861. Chapter VII of this book is dedicated to measures taken by the municipality of Beirut during the closing decades of the nineteenth century regarding public health awareness and medical care.

<sup>20</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 4 April 1861.

<sup>21</sup> Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, p. 31. The above-mentioned estimates stem from a letter written by William Eddy to the *Missionary Herald* of Boston. In: Salibi, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, vol. 5, p. 83.



coast. For example, the governor of the province (*eyalet*) of Sidon—Beirut being its capital until 1865—convinced more than 200 wounded Damascene refugees, who were being treated in one of the makeshift Ottoman hospitals in Beirut, to move to Tripoli where a care centre had been established for them at a khan.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, in July 1862 the *vali* of Sidon issued an order to the refugees from Dayr al-Qamar to leave the city of Beirut and return to their home town.<sup>23</sup>

In 1861 various fevers debilitated the Beirutis. The worsening health conditions were exacerbated by a long period of unusual drought,<sup>24</sup> which, in combination with the increase in the number of consumers in the city, must have caused the cost of food and supplies to skyrocket. In an attempt to stabilise the prices, the Council of Municipal Organisation published a list of fixed prices for 107 basic consumer goods sold wholesale and in retail in the markets of the city.<sup>25</sup> Setting the prices at a fixed rate was probably one of the last activities of this council. *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* ceased to report news regarding this council after the departure of Fuad Pasha later in that year.

## B The Civil Committees for Urban Functions

The need for new civic amenities capable of solving the dire urban problems was pressing. Chronic water shortage<sup>26</sup> and high prices persisted. In

<sup>22</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 9 April 1861.

<sup>23</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 7 July 1862.

<sup>24</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 21 November 1861. The following issue of *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* reports on *ṣalāt al-istisqāʿ*, a prayer for rain, which was conducted on Friday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, by the heads of all the religious communities of Beirut, the mufti and the imams, the Greek Orthodox archbishop, the Maronite bishop and priests, the Greek Catholic bishop and priests and the Jewish rabbi. The prayer was followed by a considerable number of Beirutis as well as by Fuad Pasha and other Ottoman officials; see *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 28 November 1861. The protestant American missionary Henry Jessup wrote the following about the lack of rain: “For forty days not a cloud appeared and the sky was like burning brass. There had been but one day of rain for six months. The sick longed for rain. About December 1<sup>st</sup>, when the dark clouds had gathered in the southwest larger than a man’s hand, Fuad Pasha ordered the religious heads of all sects to assemble in the public square and pray for rain. After they had assembled, the wind rose and one Maronite priest prayed holding an umbrella over his head. Fuad Pasha had not studied his barometer in vain, for that night the rain descended in torrents and continued for ten days. The air was cooled, the sick recovered and the epidemic ceased.”, see Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, p. 238.

<sup>25</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 26 December 1861.

<sup>26</sup> As can be deduced from an Ottoman archival document, a piece of correspondence between the governor of Sidon and the Grand Vizier, dated 30 *Shahbān* 1179, the city of Beirut suffered extreme conditions caused by the severe lack of water. Consequently,

1861 dengue fever appeared in epidemic form for the first time in the history of the city,<sup>27</sup> along with intermittent and quartan fevers which were endemic in the region.<sup>28</sup> The large number of patients attracted and encouraged a number of quacks and self-proclaimed physicians to practise their medicine in the city;<sup>29</sup> various deaths resulted from malpractice.<sup>30</sup> The government of the *eyalet* of Sidon published an announcement warning that malfeasance by charlatans was punishable according to the Ottoman Penal Code of 1858.<sup>31</sup>

In 1862 two committees were founded by the inhabitants of Beirut, with the encouragement of the Grand Administrative Council (*al-majlis al-kabīr*) of the *eyalet* of Sidon. The first was entrusted with the responsibility of street cleaning and maintenance.<sup>32</sup> The second had the task of organising, managing and establishing a permanent and reliable water supply. A report in *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* says the following about this committee: “The cost of laying a water pipe from the [Dog] river to the town had been estimated to cost between 10,000 and 15,000 purses (*kise*).<sup>33</sup> Some chari-

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religious schools and mosques had to close their doors to Beirut worshippers. BOA, C.B 673, (30 *Shaʿbān* 1179/10 February 1766). In the summer of 1861 the water shortage must have caused greater distress due to the sudden demographic growth of the city.

<sup>27</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, p. 238: “In the middle of October Beirut was visited by its first epidemic of dengue fever, called by the Arabs Abu Rikab (Father of the knees), from the severe pain at the knees. Not less than 25,000 out of 60,000 of the people were sick at one time. Whole families were prostrated, but very few died. It was supposed that no more than 2,000 of the 60,000 people escaped it. It was probably caused by the filthy state of the city and the gardens, after the residence of so many thousands for nine months, with no regard for sanitary precautions and no steps taken by the government to prevent disease.” Was Henry Jessup unaware of the measures, discussed above, taken by the council of urban administration and the council of health? Ussama Makdisi explains Jessup’s attitude as follows: “All around them (i.e. the American Protestant missionaries), they described what they took to be the moribund time of the Ottoman Orient.” Ussama Makdisi, “Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity”. In: *The American Historical Review*, 102, number 3, June (1997), p. 689.

<sup>28</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 22 September 1859.

<sup>29</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 31 October 1861.

<sup>30</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 7 November 1861.

<sup>31</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 November 1861.

<sup>32</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 6 February 1862.

<sup>33</sup> A *kise* was equivalent to the sum of 500 piastres (*kuruş*), see: James Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon* (Istanbul, 1890); reprint (Beirut, 1987), p. 1612. Hence, the cost of the construction of a water conduit from the Dog river to Beirut ranged between 5,000,000 and 7,500,000 piastres.

table and patriotic citizens (*al-ahālī*),<sup>34</sup> after deliberating with the Grand Council founded a citizens committee. This committee was to be under the supervision of the provincial government, and it will bid for a loan in order to be able to start executing this project. It asked for permission to offer public property in Beirut and its suburbs as collaterals and guarantees for the desired loan.”<sup>35</sup>

In the same article Khalil al-Khuri echoed some of the ideas expressed by al-Shidyāq and Bustrus, urging the committee to start working seriously on this crucial project. He also hoped that “all the citizens will be in agreement and will work hand in hand for the sake of executing this remarkable deed which will bring about great success and benefit to all of them. God forbid, if they disagree among themselves and if they show lassitude, it is very probable that a foreign company will execute this project...this will then be a disgrace for the citizens and the honour of the motherland.”<sup>36</sup>

The expectation of this committee, that it would receive permission from the Ottoman authorities to conduct financial transactions using public property as collateral security was too optimistic. It reveals a growing self-confidence on the part of some members of the Beirut society vis-à-vis the Ottoman central authorities. Furthermore, the establishment of such a committee suggests that certain members of the upper strata of the Beirut population were willing and ready to act collectively and organise themselves in a corporate body in order to address urban problems that were directly threatening the health of their community, the vitality of their commercial activity and, in the final analysis, the value of their property. However, the tasks and responsibilities were too complex to be attended to by a committee of private citizens with no clear jurisdiction, no official status of representation, and no proper financing. The purpose of the committee was to provide the city with water from *Nahr al-Kalb* (the Dog river), which flows into the Mediterranean approximately fifteen kilometres to the north-east of Beirut. Three hundred Beirut landlords interested in the project had promised a substantial sum of 1,500,000 piastres (*kuruş*)<sup>37</sup> upon

<sup>34</sup> ‘Citizens’ is my translation of the Arabic word *al-ahālī*, used in this newspaper report to convey the meaning of city dwellers.

<sup>35</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 10 July 1862.

<sup>36</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 10 July 1862.

<sup>37</sup> In 1844 a *tashih-i sikke* [coinage or currency reform] operation was undertaken in the Ottoman empire, it “established a new bimetallic system based on the silver *kuruş* and gold *lira* with 1 gold *lira* = 100 silver *kuruş*. The gold *lira*, the silver *kuruş* and the silver 20-*kuruş*, often called the *mecidiye*, became the leading coinage.” Şevket Pamuk, “Money in the Ottoman Empire, 1326–1914”. In: Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 971. According to Pamuk, throughout the period, 1850–1914, the equivalent

the completion of the initial works.<sup>38</sup> However, the committee deemed the promised amount to be insufficient and the date of its maturation too late, so that the project was ultimately shelved.

### C The First Municipal Council

The first body in Beirut that officially carried the name Municipal Council (*al-majlis al-baladī*) was established in 1863. In September of that year, the new council exchanged correspondence with Kabuli Pasha (1812–1877),<sup>39</sup> the governor of the *eyalet* of Sidon, of which Beirut was the capital until April/May 1865. The council promised that it would keep a book of accounts and would present it regularly to the office of the governor. They also pledged to undertake the necessary development, maintenance and repair work in the city. In a response letter published in the newspaper the governor expressed his gratitude for “their efforts and enthusiasm” and assured the council that he would provide it with “the necessary aid and support to fulfil their objective to develop the city”. The same issue of the newspaper reports on street repairs and cleaning activities by the municipality.<sup>40</sup> Such tasks needed to be financed. A sum of 150,000 *kuruş* per annum was put at the disposal of the Municipal Council. This amount was earmarked for municipal activities to be taken from the different taxes (*vergi*) collected from the *eyalet*.<sup>41</sup> As in the case of his reports on the previous local councils, Khalil al-Khuri mentions neither the names nor the number of the members of the Municipal Council. Nevertheless, the identity of the mayor of Beirut and another member of the Municipal Council can be known from one issue of *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, as well as from *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-ʿarabiyya*. An announcement in the newspaper concerning

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to one British pound sterling in Ottoman gold *lira* was 1.10, see Pamuk, “Money in the Ottoman Empire”, p. 972. However, Charles Issawi warns that “there were a wide range of internal exchange rates for both native and foreign coins until the First World War.”, see Charles Issawi, *An Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa* (New York, 1982), p. 186.

<sup>38</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 19 September 1861 and *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 10 July 1862.

<sup>39</sup> Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i osmanî yahud tezakire-i meşâhir-i osmâniyye* (Istanbul, 1315/1897), vol. 4, p. 52; and in Latin script, see Nuri Akbayer, ed., Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i osmanî osmanlı ünlüleri* (Istanbul, 1996), vol. 3, pp. 854–855.

<sup>40</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 26 November 1863.

<sup>41</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 25 September 1866. Khalil al-Khuri reports that the municipality had been receiving this sum for a number of years. However, it was not enough to undertake major projects. The editor demanded more income for the municipality in his article. The amount of 150,000 *kuruş* was less than the tax collected annually from the abattoir. This tax was one of eight taxes levied from different commercial activities in the city; see *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 16 November 1865.

market control and the auctioning of meat supply to the city, published by the municipality in 1864, carries the signature of al-Hajj ʿAbdallah Bayhum as mayor of Beirut.<sup>42</sup> A biography of Mikhail Mudawwar by a contemporary witness informs us that he was appointed as an honorary member of the Municipal Council upon his return from a tour of Europe in the mid-1860s.<sup>43</sup> Both Bayhum and Mudawwar were scions of notable Beirut families who played a crucial role in the politics and trade of the city in the course of the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup>

It is worth mentioning here that this Municipal Council was established before the publication of the first municipal law for the provinces, and two years prior to the one established by Midhat Pasha in the Danube province, which to this day is erroneously referred to as the first municipality in the Ottoman provinces.<sup>45</sup> Hence, it is understandable that the functions, rights and responsibilities of this council were not clearly defined, and that the relationship between the municipality and the provincial authorities was not, as yet, sufficiently delineated. The *vali* of the *eyalet* of Sidon and, at a later stage, the *kaimmakam* (lieutenant governor) and/or *mutasarrıf* (deputy governor) of the district of Beirut made decisions and executed projects that fell within the area of responsibility of the Municipal Council as described in their correspondence with Kabuli Pasha in 1863.<sup>46</sup> For example, the *kaimmakam* of Beirut ordered the *maştabas*—outdoor stone or wooden benches built against the front side of shops<sup>47</sup>—to be removed in order to enlarge the streets and facilitate the circulation of traffic in the market area.<sup>48</sup> In 1867, the *kaimmakam* of Beirut, Mehmet Kamil Pasha (1832–1913), issued an order to construct a “ring road” suitable for the traffic of carts. This street was to circumscribe the city of Beirut, connecting the Pine Forest to the mouth of the Beirut river through the lower parts of

<sup>42</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 22 December 1864.

<sup>43</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol.1, p.112.

<sup>44</sup> Chapter IV elaborates on the socio-economic background and the role of the different members of the consecutive municipal councils in Beirut.

<sup>45</sup> Serçe, *İzmir’de Belediye*, p. 35: “Osmanlı vilayetlerinde belediye örgütlenmelerinde ilk örnek oluşturan uygulama, diğer pek çok konuda olduğu gibi Midhat Paşa’nın yönetimindeki Tuna Vilayeti olmuştur”. Which translates: The first example of the application of municipal organisation in the Ottoman provinces, like many other matters [administrative innovations], took place in the Danube province, which had been under the direction of Midhat Pasha. And, Ortaylı, “Administrative Organisation During the Tanzimat Period”, p.326.

<sup>46</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 26 November 1863.

<sup>47</sup> For a description and an engraving representing the *maştaba*, see Edward W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, reprint (London, 1963), pp.322–325.

<sup>48</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 13 April 1865.

the elegant and newly developed residential area of the Ashrafiyya hill. The Beirut newspaper reported this news with an ironic overtone stating that the purpose of such a major and benevolent undertaking was to increase the areas for strolls and picnics for the Beirut public.<sup>49</sup> In addition, Kamil Pasha concluded negotiations and signed an agreement with a European contractor to pave all the broad streets in Beirut and make them suitable for horse-drawn carriages. The contract included the cleaning and the collection of refuse in the city. The cost of these activities was to be covered by the municipality.<sup>50</sup> While the *kaimmakam* was signing contracts in lieu of the municipality, and thus forcing it to meet the expenses, the Municipal Council was discussing one of the vital projects for the city of Beirut, namely, water supply from *Nahr al-Kalb*. However, due to the limited means at their disposal, the members of the Municipal Council were not able to reach an agreement among themselves concerning the execution of such a costly project. Thus, the citizens of Beirut, in spite of their attempt at collective action, failed to achieve this important undertaking. This was the second time that the water supply project did not come to fruition.<sup>51</sup> The editor of *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* proposed that the municipality should either claim some of the taxes collected by the provincial officials for the treasury or impose direct taxes of its own in order to realise the essential project in question.<sup>52</sup>

The second half of the 1860s was judged to be a catastrophic period for the city of Beirut by a large number of its own citizens. Firstly, the *eyalet* of Sidon, with Beirut as its capital, was abolished in April 1865 in accordance with the provincial law promulgated in Istanbul in the previous year.<sup>53</sup> The territory of the *eyalet* of Sidon was thereby annexed to the newly organised province of Syria (*Suriye vilayeti*), and Beirut, to the dismay of its citizens, was made subordinate to Damascus.<sup>54</sup> Hence, the city lost a large number of officials and bureaucrats who had previously resided in it, and was also deprived of the newly organised courts of law. Its citizens now had to refer to Damascus in order to submit their petitions, pursue legal suits of higher

<sup>49</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 May 1867. Al-Khuri also criticised the governor of Syria and the municipality of Damascus for not addressing the most important urban problem in the city, namely hygiene as well as the removal of a large amount of rubble from the Christian quarter in the city. Al-Khuri deemed the cleaning activities to be more essential than installing 1000 gas lanterns in the streets of Damascus at a high cost to the municipality; see *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 4 January 1866.

<sup>50</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 6 November 1867.

<sup>51</sup> See the activities of the civil committee for urban functions discussed above.

<sup>52</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 25 September 1866.

<sup>53</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 20 April 1865.

<sup>54</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 18 May 1865.

instance, or attempt to convince the Ottoman officials to agree to the execution of a major project for the city.<sup>55</sup>

Some of the men of letters in Beirut, reflecting the general atmosphere in the city, emphatically expressed their dissatisfaction with the reorganisation of the Ottoman provinces. They published in the press vociferous editorials and poems foretelling the detrimental impact of the new administrative organisation on Beirut, and ardently demanded that it must be made the capital of the new province. Some of these witty poems and epigrams were written by al-Shaykh Nasif al-Yaziji<sup>56</sup> (1800–1871), Khalil al-Khuri<sup>57</sup> (1836–1907) and al-Shaykh Ibrahim al-Ahdab<sup>58</sup> (1826–1891), who belonged to the most renowned literati of the time. Ibrahim al-Ahdab wrote two long poems in response to a same number of epigrams by the Mufti of Damascus Mahmud Efendi Hamza (1821–1887).<sup>59</sup> The Damascene Mufti—who was very close to the high echelons of Ottoman officialdom in his hometown<sup>60</sup>—criticised in his epigrams the long sojourn of the governor of Syria in Beirut and accused the Beirutis of being greedy.<sup>61</sup> The verse replies of al-Ahdab asserted that the *vali* of the province should make Beirut, rather than Damascus, his permanent official residence.<sup>62</sup>

The editorials of Khalil al-Khuri, in May of 1865, assured the Beirut readership that the Ottoman state and the “judicious new governor of Syria” will not allow Beirut to decline or lose its role and importance as a result of the new provincial organisation.<sup>63</sup> This was a major concern to the public; therefore, *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, for a period of almost three years, did not abandon its demand for designating Beirut as capital of the

<sup>55</sup> Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Establishment and Dismantling of the Province of Syria, 1865–1888”. In: John P. Spagnolo, ed., *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective* (Reading, 1992), pp. 11–13.

<sup>56</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 22 June 1865.

<sup>57</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 11 May 1865.

<sup>58</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 8 June 1865.

<sup>59</sup> For a biography of the Mufti of Damascus Mahmud Nasib Hamza, see Muhammad Bahjat al-Bitar, ed., *Abd al-Razzaq al-Bitar. Ḥulyat al-bashar fī tārikh al-qarn al-thālith ‘ashar*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Beirut, 1993), vol. 3, pp. 1467–1477.

<sup>60</sup> Bitar, *Ḥulyat al-bashar*, vol. 3, pp. 1469–1470 and 1473.

<sup>61</sup> Ibrahim al-Ahdab, *Al-Nafḥ al-miskī fī al-shi‘r al-Bayrūtī* (Beirut, 1284/1867–8), p. 182. I would like to express my gratitude to Ussama Makdisi for bringing to my attention this important source and allowing me to use his grandfather’s private copy of the rare *divan* of Ibrahim al-Ahdab.

<sup>62</sup> For two poems, written by Ibrahim al-Ahdab, concerning the residency of the *vali* of Syria in Beirut, rather than in Damascus, see his *divan*: *Al-Nafḥ al-miskī*, pp. 182–185.

<sup>63</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 11 May 1865, and 18 May 1865.

Syrian province.<sup>64</sup> For example, in October 1867, an editorial by al-Khuri called for Beirut to be upgraded to become the capital of Syria; otherwise it should become the seat of the provincial government for at least six months every year.<sup>65</sup> In December of the same year, al-Khuri announced that Beirut was declared co-capital of the province, and in January 1868, he reported about the rejoicing of the public upon hearing the good tidings.<sup>66</sup>

This dispute concerning the capital of the province was, sure enough, not restricted to the literary and journalistic circles, some four hundred Beirut notables wrote petitions to Istanbul arguing the case of their city and requesting change in the administrative organisation. Counterarguments were presented from Damascene notables as well.<sup>67</sup> Beirut never became the capital of the province of Syria.

While the question of the capital of the province was still debated and discussed, a second crisis threatened Beirut; it witnessed in the second half of 1865 a major cholera epidemic. As a result, maritime traffic was delayed and trade in the city was impeded. A cautious estimate by *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* states that two thirds of the Beirutis deserted their homes in the city and sought refuge in the more salubrious and less crowded villages of Mount Lebanon. As a result, commercial activities in the city were brought to a standstill.<sup>68</sup>

A third problem, which influenced the trade of Beirut with Europe, was the depressing effect on the international markets of the two wars fought by Prussia against Denmark in 1864 and against Austria in 1866. These wars caused the European share prices to drop and reduced the demand for Syrian products, especially raw silk, which was exported through the port of Beirut by Beirut tradesmen and middlemen.<sup>69</sup> By 1867 the Beirutis deemed

<sup>64</sup> For the news concerning the establishment of the province of Syria, with Damascus as its capital, and the reaction in the press in Beirut, see *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 3 May 1865; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 11 May 1865; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 18 May 1865; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 8 June 1865; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 22 June 1865; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 28 May 1867; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 21 October 1867; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 19 November 1867; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 31 December 1867, and 14 January 1868.

<sup>65</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 21 October 1867.

<sup>66</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 31 December 1867 and 14 January 1868.

<sup>67</sup> Abu-Manneh, "The Establishment and Dismantling of the Province of Syria, 1865–1888", pp. 12–14; and Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut. The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 25 and 41–42.

<sup>68</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 26 October 1865. This was the first issue of the newspaper to be published immediately after the reduction of the virulent cholera epidemic in Beirut. The issue preceding this one was published on 29 June 1865. *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* had to close its press and offices for four months due to the epidemic.

<sup>69</sup> For more information on the role of sericulture in the economy of Beirut, see Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*; and Dominique Chevallier, *Villes et travail en Syrie du XIX<sup>e</sup> au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1982).



themselves to be radically impoverished and marginalised.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the expectations of the fledgling institution of the municipality to play a role in saving the commercial stake of Beirut increased. They also tried to revive the plan of supplying the city with water from *Nahr al-Kalb* and proposed the idea of enlarging their port.<sup>71</sup> During this period, the press tried to urge the municipality to undertake these major projects for the sake of preserving the importance of Beirut, and clearly also for the sake of protecting the value of the property in the city which,<sup>72</sup> according to the press, was diminishing by the day.<sup>73</sup>

Due to the remarkable absence of the municipality from the public sphere, especially the official celebrations, one may infer that it was not yet recognised as a distinct corporate body representing the city and its people. The festivities and military parades in Beirut on the occasion of the return of Sultan Abdülaziz from Europe lasted for three days and nights, yet it did not involve the municipality. The *mutasarrif* of Beirut and the military were the stars of the show; senior bureaucrats

<sup>70</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 28 May 1867.

<sup>71</sup> “In Turkey the first port to be improved was that of Izmir. In 1867 a British concessionary company began work, and after its liquidation a French company took over, opening the new port in 1875.” Issawi, *An Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa*, p. 50. Most probably it was not a coincidence that the Beirut press was urging for the improvement of the port of Beirut in the same year such a project was granted as a concession for the port of Izmir. *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 25 September 1866; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 28 May 1867.

<sup>72</sup> It seems worth mentioning here that a substantial part of the wealth of Beirut merchants and notables consisted in real estate. Some of them owned complete markets with more than 90 shops, a fact which has left its imprint on the nomenclature of Beirut suqs, streets and quarters to the present day. For more information on these families please refer to Chapter IV, below.

<sup>73</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 28 May 1867. Roger Owen considered the 1860s to be a period of relative prosperity in comparison with the following decade. He writes: “If the 1860s was a period of prosperity for Beirut and the Mountain, the 1870s saw a significant reduction in the level of economic activity. A series of bad silk harvests from 1868 was followed by a sharp fall in price. Hence, even when production recovered in the early 1870s, profits were much reduced. Later, in the mid-1870s, both Beirut and the Mountain suffered considerably from the effects of economic depression in Syria and Anatolia which led to a falling off of trade and a drastic reduction in the market for Lebanese goods. A further problem was the dramatic fall in the value of the Ottoman bonds held by many of the merchants and bankers of Beirut as bankruptcy approached. Cuts in the Ottoman subsidy towards the *mutasarriflik*'s budget made matters worse. The result was a contraction in credit, a decline in local investment and a marked increase in indebtedness. Land prices which fell by 50 per cent between 1865 and 1872 fell still more, forcing many people who had purchased plots on borrowed money to sell at a loss.” Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800–1914*, revised edition (London, 1993), p. 166.

and officials paid their respect to the *vali* and the *mutasarrıf* on this occasion, who also received the congratulations of distinguished Beirut notables. They watched the fireworks and artillery exercises along with the high-ranking Ottoman officials of the province.<sup>74</sup> However, they are only mentioned in their personal capacity as tradesmen or as representatives of their families, but not as members of the Municipal Council. The contrast between the absence of the municipality from the extended festivities in Beirut and the receptions prepared by the different European municipalities for Sultan Abdülaziz could not be starker. In Paris and Vienna the Sultan was received by the mayors of both cities and accepted their invitations in the town halls for a ball or a gala dinner organised in his honour.<sup>75</sup> In London he visited the council of the city in the town hall and gave a donation to the Lord Governor of London to be distributed among the poor of the city as a sign of gratitude for the generosity of the city council.<sup>76</sup> The obvious difference between the role of municipalities in European capitals in the state protocol and the lack of even a minor role for the municipality of Beirut is very telling regarding the fledgling beginnings of the new council in this provincial city. Evidently, the municipality of Beirut did not enjoy an officially acknowledged status yet.

In spite of the fact that the Beirut municipality lacked clearly defined functions and prerogatives and did not enjoy the least recognition in the Ottoman imperial protocol, it remains clear from the editorials in two different issues of *Hadīqat al-akhbār* that their author, Khalil al-Khuri, as early as 1866, envisaged the municipality as an institution of great relevance, capable of controlling the influence of foreign concessionaires and reducing their interference in internal affairs. Through his articles, al-Khuri most probably wanted to persuade, or even exert pressure on the Ottoman authorities to empower the municipality by means of granting it the right to collect taxes for the sake of executing urban amenities. He urged the municipality to provide the city with water from *Nahr al-Kalb* and to construct a safe port, warning the Beirut public and the Ottoman authorities that if such a project was not initiated and executed promptly by the Beirutis and their municipality, foreign concessionaires would definitely submit an application to realise these projects. Al-Khuri was alluding to the concession granted to a French company to construct a road and run a coach service between Beirut and Damascus, as well as to

<sup>74</sup> *Hadīqat al-akhbār*, 27 August 1867.

<sup>75</sup> *Hadīqat al-akhbār*, 23 July 1867; *Hadīqat al-akhbār*, 20 August 1867.

<sup>76</sup> *Hadīqat al-akhbār*, 6 August 1867; *Hadīqat al-akhbār*, 13 August 1867.

a later concession concluded with a British company in Izmir to enlarge the port of that city.<sup>77</sup>

The municipality of Beirut did not remain as a unique phenomenon for long. In 1864 a municipal council was established in Dayr al-Qamar, consisting of seven local (*dīrānī*) members.<sup>78</sup> A citizens' council (*majlis al-ahālī*) entrusted with municipal functions was established in Jerusalem in the same year.<sup>79</sup> In January 1865 the governor of Damascus established a municipal council for that city consisting of 24 members, a president, a secretary and a treasurer.<sup>80</sup> The municipalities of Dayr al-Qamar and Damascus enjoyed a clearly defined legal position, in contrast to those of Beirut and Jerusalem, because Daud Pasha (governor of Mount Lebanon 1861–1868) and Mehmet Rüşdi Pasha (governor of Syria), independently from one another, issued regulations concerning the functions, responsibilities and finances of the institutions in question.<sup>81</sup> In September 1866 the

<sup>77</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 25 September 1866; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 28 May 1867. A concession for the construction of the Beirut-Damascus road was granted in 1857 to the French company *Compagnie Ottomane de la Route de Beyrouth a Damas*. It executed the project according to the BOT (build, operate and transfer) principle. Hence, the company was immune to the intervention of the government concerning the running and the charges collected by the company throughout the agreed period of concession. For more information on the relationship between the Beirut municipality and the foreign concessionaires in the city, please refer to Chapter V, below.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Abdallah al-Mallah, *Al-Baladiyyāt fī mutaṣarrifiyyat Jabal Lubnān, 1861–1918* (Beirut, 1998), pp. 8–10.

<sup>79</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 7 April 1864. The historians of Jerusalem differ in determining the exact date of establishing a municipal body in that city. For example, Ruth Kark is not certain whether the council in Jerusalem was established prior to 1867, see Ruth Kark, “The Municipality of Jerusalem at the End of Ottoman Rule”. In: *Asian and African Studies*, 14 (1980), pp. 119–120. Mahmoud Yazbak, citing the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation of Bahjat Sabri, *Liwā’ al-Quds taḥt al-ḥukm al-‘uthmānī, 1840–1873* (Cairo: ‘Ain Shams University, 1973), reports that the municipality of Jerusalem was established in 1863, see Mahmoud Yazbak, *Haiifa in the Late Ottoman Period. 1864–1914. A Muslim Town in Transition* (Leiden, 1998), p. 76. Yasemin Avcı discusses different possible dates provided in the secondary sources and concludes that the municipal council of Jerusalem considered 1867 as its date of establishment, see Yasemin Avcı, *Değişim süresinde. Bir osmanlı kenti: Kudüs (1890–1914)* (Ankara, 2004), p. 137.

<sup>80</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 5 January 1865. Stefan Weber states that it is impossible to determine the exact date of establishing a municipal council in Damascus. He suspects that a council was founded after 1867, and assumes that the first documented evidence of the Damascene municipal council is available in *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* of 1868–69, see Stefan Weber, *Zeugnisse kulturellen Wandels. Stadt, Architektur und Gesellschaft des osmanischen Damaskus im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (<http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/2006/441/index.html>), p. 34. However, the contemporary press provides evidence that a relatively large municipal council with defined functions was established in Damascus as early as 1865.

<sup>81</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 5 January 1865 and Mallah, *Al-Baladiyyāt*, pp. 8–9.

governor of Syria issued new and more detailed regulations for the municipality of Damascus. These regulations consisted of 21 articles. Articles 17–21 aimed at increasing the revenue of the municipality of Damascus through a substantial raise of the communal taxes.<sup>82</sup> A police force of 20 men and a commander were entrusted with the execution of the municipal orders. However, the police remained responsible to the commander of the security forces. A regulation of 16 articles governing the activities of the police force and its authority were also published. These regulations were elaborate and differentiated, constituting a marked step towards the creation of specialised bodies with specific tasks, defined by clear instructions.<sup>83</sup> Both Beirut and Jerusalem remained deprived of such regulations. In 1866, during a visit to Beirut, the governor of Syria promised to make the municipal regulations applicable to the city of Beirut and to increase the revenue of the municipality as well.<sup>84</sup> However, no evidence can be found in the press, indicating that he actually fulfilled his promises during his visit to the city or in the course of the following year.

The early history of the pioneering and experimental municipalities in Syria in general, and Beirut in particular, reflects the lack of a clear-cut jurisdiction for the novel institution. The functions of the municipality and its relationship with the governor were not consistent throughout the province, and the institution lacked an unambiguous definition. These circumstances caused confusion regarding the tasks and decisions to be made. It seems that the governors of the two *eyalets* of Damascus and Sidon and later the province of Syria, as well as the four municipal councils established in that province, worked mostly on the basis of trial and error. This situation arose from the lack of a law delineating the prerogatives as well as the parameters of the municipality. However, judging from the minimal evidence to be found in the press, the municipality of Beirut appears to have made modest attempts at addressing some of the most pressing urban needs. Yet without a clear authority and a stable income derived from the collection of communal taxes the Municipal Council was not able to solve the persisting urban problems in the city or to engage in major development projects. In spite of this fact, or most probably because of it, the Beirut press in 1866 and 1867, i.e. immediately preceding the publication of the first municipal law for the Ottoman provinces, repeatedly urged the Municipal Council to play a more active role in the crucial development and the commercial promotion of the

<sup>82</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 25 September 1866.

<sup>83</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 25 September 1866. Previously the Fifth Army and the internal security forces were entrusted with the task of applying hygiene standards and executing the penal code in Damascus, see *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 28 May 1863.

<sup>84</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 24 December 1866.

city, which it deemed to be on the decline. When the first municipal law was finally published in 1867, its publication appeared overdue for some of the Beirutis, who were concerned about the future of their city and were already entertaining grand plans and projects for its development.

A close reading of the Ottoman laws published prior to 1867—the year in which the first municipal law was promulgated—reveals that the law-makers in Istanbul envisaged a distinct corporate urban body or institution, such as a municipality, to assist in the execution and the implementation of the laws throughout the Empire. A number of articles in the Penal Code of 1858, especially in Section III of the code, ascribe a specific role to the municipality. For example, article 254 clearly states that the act of flouting the instructions and regulations published by the municipality was a crime punishable by law.<sup>85</sup> The Streets and Construction Law of 1863 ascribed a key responsibility to the municipalities regarding construction safety and street enlargements.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, article 48 of the said law granted the municipality the right to propose amendments to the law when deemed necessary.<sup>87</sup> However, when an Ottoman official was appointed by the Ministry of Public Works (*naḫia vekâleti*) to oversee the application of the Streets and Construction Law in Beirut,<sup>88</sup> the instructions given to him omitted the word municipality and replaced it with two vague terms, namely local government or local council (*al-ḥukūma al-maḥalliyya* or *al-majlis al-maḥallī*), despite the fact that a municipal council had been established prior to the arrival of the new bureaucrat. These neologisms were amenable to different interpretations; they could be taken to refer either to the municipal council,

<sup>85</sup> The concluding sentence of article 254 of the Imperial Penal Code reads as follows: “*Gerek nizamât mülkiye-ye ve gerek idara-i belediye tarafından neşir olan nizamata tevfiḳ hareket etmeyenlar bir beyaz beşlikten beş beyaz beşlike ceza-i nakddi ahiz ile mücazat olunur.*”, see *Qavanin ve nizamatin münderic oldığı mecmu’-a-yı zamm-ı dâl ile düstür denilir* (Istanbul, Zilhicce 1282/March 1866), pp. 461–462. This compilation of Ottoman laws is commonly known as the *ikinci defa* of the *Qavanin ve nizamatin*. The official French translation of this sentence reads: “Seront punis d’une amende d’un à cinq medjities d’argent de Ps. 5, [...] ceux qui ne se seront pas conformés aux règlements de l’autorité municipale.”, see Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 7, pp. 51–52, and Grégoire Aristarchi Bey, *Législation Ottomane*, vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1874), p. 265. An early Arabic translation of section three of the Ottoman Penal Code was published in *Ḥadiqat al-akḥbār*, 13 October 1859, however, the Ottoman term *idara-i belediye* was translated into Arabic as *idārat al-balda* which literally means ‘the administration of the town or city’, without necessarily referring to any specific institution. In 1863 the word *baladiyya* was used for the first time by the same paper to denote the municipality.

<sup>86</sup> Articles 12, 29, 34, 46, and 48 of the Streets and Construction Law of 1863, *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 445, 450, 451 and 455.

<sup>87</sup> Article 48 of the same law, *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 455.

<sup>88</sup> *Ḥadiqat al-akḥbār*, 14 January 1864.

or to the administrative council of the province, including the governor at its head.<sup>89</sup> The second interpretation seems more plausible due to the use of the word *ḥukūma*, or “government”. Moreover, the prerogative of the municipality as specified by article 48 of the Construction Law was abrogated. The instructions to the representative of the Ministry of Public Works deprived the municipality of its right to propose amendments to the law; the instructions published in *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* unequivocally stated that proposing changes to the law was the prerogative of the administrative council of the province.<sup>90</sup>

Despite the fact that as early as 1858 the lawmakers perceived of municipal councils throughout the Empire as being endowed with specific functions in applying the newly drafted laws, it is evident that when these laws were put into effect, the already established municipalities were bypassed and ignored. The Fifth Army and the security forces remained in charge of attending to hygiene in the cities of Syria—excluding Damascus—and the Streets and Construction Law was to be enforced by an Ottoman official sent from Istanbul, without cooperating with the municipalities as the law decreed. Aided by two assistants, the supervisor of construction was in charge of applying this law throughout the length and breadth of the *eyalet* of Sidon. They were expected to examine all new construction sites in the province. Their travel expenses were to be covered by the owners of the respective construction sites.<sup>91</sup> Such an inspection procedure was costly and cumbersome; most probably a large number of sites were not declared in order to avoid paying the travel costs and the inspection fees. Thus, the new law might have produced results contrary to what had been expected. There could be a number of explanations as to why the Ottoman central authorities in Istanbul did not engage the provincial municipalities in the application of the laws. Firstly, it is possible that some ministries and departments in Istanbul were not fully aware of the existence of provincial municipal councils, or that they were not able to assess their efficacy.<sup>92</sup> A second explanation could be that the central authorities were reluctant to entrust the municipalities with new functions and jurisdiction, lest they might gain in leverage and

<sup>89</sup> The expression *al-ḥukūma al-maḥalliyya* was used in the municipal code of 1867 to denote the provincial administration headed by the governor, see article 7 of the said law.

<sup>90</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 January 1864.

<sup>91</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 January 1864.

<sup>92</sup> The earliest mention of a municipality in Beirut in the Ottoman archives dates back to the year 1868. In a letter dated 17 October 1868, the governor of Mount Lebanon, Nasrallah Franco Pasha (1868–1873), conveyed his positive opinion concerning the planned project to supply the city of Beirut with water from *Nahr al-Kalb* in Mount Lebanon, the neighbouring province. He also praised the endeavours of the municipality to enlarge the port, see BOA, ŞD.NF 2269/9, belge 1.

significance at a time when the reorganisation of the provincial bureaucratic structure was not yet complete. Until 1867, there was no clear authority to control the functions and activities of the municipalities and, if necessary, to channel their political influence and social impact on the urban level of the provinces. Another consideration could be that the central authorities were hesitant to acknowledge the existence of these councils so as not to share the tax revenue that was collected from the respective urban centres. As has been shown above, the press attempted to convince the local Ottoman authorities to increase the revenue of the municipalities. A contemporary historian, Nawfal Niʿmat Allah Nawfal (1812–1887), considered that the pledge to establish municipalities and grant them a substantial part of the tax revenue to be invested in local developments was an integral part of the *hatt-ı şerif* of *Gülhane* of 1839.<sup>93</sup> Hence, the idea to divert a certain amount of taxes in order to invest it in communal projects was earnestly entertained in the provinces, long before the establishment of the municipal council. Such a consideration was based upon local interpretations of the *hatt-ı şerif*. A further explanation could be that the central authorities in Istanbul were not particularly eager to increase the powers of the municipalities. Most probably they feared that a strong local urban administration might be a first step towards autonomy. With no checks and balances, the members of the municipal council might develop autonomous sentiments and ideas leading to self-governance.

The apprehensions of the Ottoman central authorities and the lawmakers regarding a municipal council that might assume too powerful a role were reflected in article 7 of the 1867 Municipal Code.<sup>94</sup> The law unequivocally restricted the competence and functions of the municipality with respect to organising the city and keeping it clean. It did not provide municipalities with specific administrative, judicial, or financial prerogatives, or a role in enforcing law and order. The municipal council was given unambiguous orders neither to interfere in the financial matters of the province nor to intervene in the administrative and judicial affairs of the city. Hence, the municipal councils were explicitly barred from demanding a share in the tax revenue. The last sentence in the article barring the municipality from

<sup>93</sup> Nawfal Niʿmat Allah Nawfal, *Kashf al-lithām ʿan muḥayyā al-ḥukūma wa-l-aḥkām fī iqlīmay Miṣr w-Barr al-Shām* (Tripoli, 1990), pp. 319–320.

<sup>94</sup> The official Ottoman text of this code with the title “The directions regarding the method of organizing municipal councils, that will be formed in the cities and towns of the provinces, and the functions of their officials” (*Vilāyet dahilinde olan şehir ve kasabalarda teşkil olinacak daire-i belediyye meclislerinin suret tertibi ve memurlerinin vezaiḥi hakinde talimattir*) is to be found in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 491–497. The text of a semi-official Arabic translation (*Şūrat tartīb majālis al-dawāʿir al-baladiyya al-latī tatashakkal fī al-mudun wa-l-qaṣabāt dākhil al-wilāya wa-wazāʿif maʾmūrīha*) is available in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 433–438.

interfering in the judicial affairs reflects the dread of the Ottoman central authorities of a municipal council which might gain leverage and use its influence by engaging in patron-client relationships with those who might seek its help to pull certain strings and exercise influence on their behalf in the provincial courts.<sup>95</sup>

The primary aim of this chapter was to outline the first attempts at establishing urban communal councils, not only in Beirut, but in the Ottoman provinces at large. The given portrayal of the earliest municipal councils based on the scarce, albeit extremely informative and valuable information, derived mainly from the only newspaper in Beirut during the 1860s, has shown how these councils were established, and how their functions and jurisdictions were rather amorphous and subject to alteration, usually on the basis of trial and error. However, a constant feature in the history of the early municipality and civic committees and councils in Beirut was the conscious engagement of some prominent citizens in the communal affairs of their town, and their unwavering belief in its development. They tried determinedly to play an active role in promoting their hometown in spite of political, administrative, financial and legal restrictions that caused the abortion of certain projects.

Selections of articles from two laws relevant to these early councils have been examined in order to convey the contradictory stance of the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul vis-à-vis the early municipal councils in Syria. The application of these laws shows that the central authorities were reluctant to recognise the councils as functioning legal bodies. However, the acknowledgment was not long to come. In 1867 the first law dedicated entirely to municipal councils in the provinces was promulgated. This law and its consecutive amendments will be the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>95</sup> The following is the Ottoman text of the article: “*Yedinci bent: işbu meclisin işi ve vasıfasi memlektçe tanzifat ve tanzimata münhasır olup bunun haricinde mesela vergi ve bedelat-i askeriye ve öşüriye ve rüsumat ve saire gibi hazine-i devlete ve hükümet mahalliye-ye ait olan ve töhmet ve cinayet gibi hükümleri umur-i zabtiye-ye mahsus bulunan işlere ve kezalik mecalis ve mahakimda fasıl ve rüyeti lazım gelen da'valara müdahale etmeyecektir*”. It translates as: “Article seven: the work and the function of this council is restricted to cleaning and organising the city, it is not to interfere in other [affairs], for example, taxes, payments for the exemption from military service, tithe, official fees and other similar [income or collections] which belong to the central treasury and to the local government; [the municipal council is] also [not to interfere] in misdemeanour and [the execution of] criminal sentences, these tasks are the reserve of the security forces; [nor in] the lawsuits which must be presented to councils and law courts for a hearing and a ruling.” In: *Düstur vol. 2*, pp.492–493; an Arabic translation is available in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp.434–435.





## II The Legal Framework of Municipal Institutions in the Ottoman Provinces prior to (1876–1878), the First Constitutional Period

As discussed in the introduction, the first law which decreed the founding of municipal councils in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire gave rise to great confusion. A few historians dealing with the social and administrative history of the Tanzimat assert that the municipal code of 1871 was the first Ottoman law to lay down the rules and regulations for the establishment of municipal councils outside the capital Istanbul. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Muhammad ‘Awad and Ruth Kark, for example, maintain that the first municipal law was promulgated by dint of the provincial law of 1871.<sup>1</sup> Mahmoud Yazbak states that “A complete novelty are the municipalities which the amendment [the provincial code of 1871] introduced”.<sup>2</sup> It is evident that these historians adopted the authoritative viewpoint of Bernard Lewis,<sup>3</sup> Roderic Davison,<sup>4</sup> Stanford Shaw

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Awad, *Al-Idāra al-‘uthmāniyya fī Sūriyya*, pp. 109–110; Kark, “The Municipality of Jerusalem”, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> Yazbak, *Al-Nuẓum al-idāriyya*, p. 124; Yazbak, *Haifa*, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis, “Baladiyya”, p. 974: “In the vilayet law of 1287/1870 [sic], provision was made for the establishment of municipal counsels in provincial cities, along the same general lines as in the code for Istanbul. There is no evidence that anything much was done about this. Some attempt, however, seems to have been made to implement parts of the provincial municipal code of 1294/1877.”; Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 392: almost verbatim as above.

<sup>4</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, p. 160: “Finally, the revised statute of 1871 created the municipality as an administrative entity, with a president and a council to see to local sanitation, public works, and the likes. This was an innovation for the Empire as a whole. If it had been carried out, considerable local improvement might have resulted. But, in fact, this part of the law remained largely unapplied, and the growth of municipal administration in the provinces began only after 1877.” In a footnote to this text, he added: “... Midhat between 1869 and 1872 made a start at municipal organisation in the Baghdad vilayet. But, the lack of municipal organisation remained general.” In his latest article “Tanẓīmāt” in the *EF*, especially pages 205–206, Roderic Davison praised the achievements of Midhat Pasha in the Danube and Baghdad provinces, however, without referring to the municipalities in particular.

and Ezel Kural Shaw concerning the municipal councils in the provinces.<sup>5</sup> Others, apparently unaware of the existence of the 1871 code, maintain that it was only after the promulgation of the comprehensive provincial municipal ordinances in 1877 that the municipalities were founded in the provinces.<sup>6</sup> Remarkably, very few appear to have made consistent use of the *Düstur* and the *Salnames* of the provinces as pertinent historical sources. Furthermore, even fewer historians tapped the contemporary press in Istanbul and the provinces as a relevant source for the study of the municipalities in the provinces.<sup>7</sup> It is evident from the *Düstur* that the first municipal code for the provinces was promulgated in 1867.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the *Salnames* of *vilayet-i Suriye* attest to

<sup>5</sup> Shaw and Kural Shaw, *Reform, Revolution and Republic*, p. 94: “The Vilayet Administrative Code of 1870 [sic] amplifying the provincial reform laws passed six years earlier, provided for the organisation of municipal councils in the towns and cities to cap the system already begun with the local *muhtars* and to take over direction of urban affairs from the governors.”

<sup>6</sup> Hasan Zaʿrur, in one of very few studies in Arabic on the social history of Beirut, maintains that the municipality of Beirut was established in the year 1878, see Zaʿrur, *Bayrūt*, p. 139. Sawsan Agha Kassab, in the Arabic introduction to a photographic album published by the municipality of Beirut, wrongly states that “the establishment of one of the first municipal councils in Beirut was during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II”, i.e. after 1876, see Kassab and Tadmori, *Beirut and the Sultan*, p. 16 of the Arabic introduction.

<sup>7</sup> For the neglect of the press as a pertinent and highly significant primary source for the history of the Arab provinces in the nineteenth century refer to the introduction. Jamil al-Najjar is one of the very few historians who investigated the contemporary Arabic press of Istanbul and Iraq for his study on the province of Baghdad. He was able to trace the history of the municipality in the city of Baghdad back to 1868. Significantly, this date is prior to the arrival of Midhat Pasha as governor, but immediately after the publication of the municipal code of 1867. He did not provide the reader with elaborate information on the formative years of the Baghdad municipality. His significant information was derived mainly from *Al-Jawāʿib*, the influential Arabic newspaper published in Istanbul, see Jamil Musa al-Najjar, *Al-Idāra al-ʿuthmāniyya fī wilāyat Baghdād* (Cairo, 1991), pp. 255–257. Another historian, who dated the Ottoman municipalities in the provinces back to 1867, is al-Mallah. However, he attributed this development to the enthusiasm and interest of some provincial governors, see Mallah, *Al-Baladiyyāt*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> The official Ottoman text of the first municipal code for the provinces dates from 25 July 1867 (23 *Rabīʿ al-Awwal* 1284) with the title: (*Vilayet dahilinde olan şehir ve kasabalarda teşkil olunacak daire-i belediye meclislerinin suret-i tertibi ve memurlarının vezaifi hakkında tálímatır*) which translates as: “The directions regarding the method of organizing municipal councils, that will be formed in the cities and towns of the provinces, and the functions of their officials”. It can be found in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 491–497. The text of a semi-official Arabic translation (*Şûrat tartib majâlis al-dawâʿir al-baladiyya al-laʿi tatashakkal fī al-mudun wa-l-qaşabât dâkhil al-wilāya wa-wazâʿif maʿmûrihâ*) is also available in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 433–438.

the establishment of municipal councils in Beirut and Damascus four years before 1871, that is to say, directly following the publication of the 1867 municipal code.<sup>9</sup> It has also been proven in the previous chapter that the contemporary press provides convincing evidence that at least four municipalities were established in the province of Syria no less than four years before the publication of the first municipal law in 1867.<sup>10</sup> The Beirut newspaper *Hadīqat al-akhbār* reported the news of a municipal council in Beirut as early as September 1863.<sup>11</sup> The hesitant activities and vague jurisdiction of this early council have been discussed and demonstrated in the previous chapter. This finding might be of importance in view of the fact that the beginnings of municipal councils in the Ottoman provinces are still attributed—by almost all the historians concerned with the period—to the experiment of Midhat Pasha in the Danube province in 1865.<sup>12</sup> The significance of the early establishment of municipal institutions in Syria—more than a decade and a half before the arrival of the reforming governor Midhat Pasha in 1878—calls for a revision and a reassessment of the perception of reforms in the provinces. It seems worthwhile to reinvestigate minor roles played by different actors on the Tanzimat stage; such an investigation might lead to the discovery of more protagonists of change and reform in the provinces. It has been discussed and shown in the previous chapter that not only Midhat Pasha was interested in reform, but that also other governors and local notables espoused the process. They were equally enthusiastic about, and willing to engage in experiments for the sake of ‘development and progress’.<sup>13</sup>

A close reading of the various municipal ordinances and their amendments will explain the way the municipality of Beirut was organised

<sup>9</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1285/1868–69), p. 42; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1286/1869–70), p. 73; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1288/1871–72), p. 67.

<sup>10</sup> In the previous chapter I have shown that the municipalities of Beirut, Dayr al-Qamar, Jerusalem and Damascus were established in 1863, 1864 and 1865 respectively, i.e. the latest was established at least two years prior to the publication of the first municipal code.

<sup>11</sup> *Hadīqat al-akhbār*, 26 November 1863.

<sup>12</sup> For example, one of the latest monographs published on the municipality of Izmir states the following: “Osmanlı vilayetlerinde belediye örgütlenmelerinde ilk örnek oluşturan uygulama, diğer pek çok konuda olduğu gibi Midhat Paşa’nın yönetimindeki Tuna Vilayeti olmuştur.” Which translates as: “The first example of the application of municipal organisations in the Ottoman provinces, like many other matters [administrative innovations], took place in the Danube province, which was under the administration of Midhat Pasha.”, see Serçe, *İzmir’de Belediye*, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> Both words were profusely used when the press reported about, or demanded a project from, the early municipality of Beirut. Please refer to the preceding chapter.

and reorganised after 1867 in accordance with each revision of the law. These laws granted the municipal institution the necessary legitimacy and official sanction it needed vis-à-vis the Ottoman provincial officialdom on the one hand, and the general local public on the other. They determined and clearly defined the way the municipality was expected to function within the limits of a general Ottoman legal framework. A chronological study of these laws will help to understand the evolution of the municipality as an institution. Since the information on the drafting, assessing and amending of the municipal laws prior to the constitutional period is limited, this chapter will focus on the development of municipalities by thoroughly examining and analysing the published final drafts of the consecutive laws. Juxtaposing, or cross-examining, these successive laws will reveal the subtle differences in their diction, thus showing change in the perception of the municipalities on the part of the lawmakers. One of the objectives of this study as a whole is to contribute to a better understanding of the development of institutional thinking in the Ottoman Empire.

#### A The Municipal Code of 1867

On 25 July 1867 (23 *Rabīʿ al-Awwal* 1284), the Sublime Porte promulgated the first law governing the establishment of municipal councils in the cities and towns of the Ottoman Empire under the title *Vilayet dahilinde olan şehir ve kasabalarda teşkil olunacak daire-i belediye meclislerinin suret-i tertibi ve memurlarının vezaifi hakkında tâlimattir*, which translates as “The directions regarding the method of organising municipal councils, that will be formed in the cities and towns of the provinces, and the functions of their officials”.<sup>14</sup> The law was divided into two parts, the first consisting of nine articles, which defined the constituent members of the municipal council, their functions, social status and the finances of the municipality. The second part called ‘instructions concerning the general functions of the municipal council’ (*daire-i belediye meclisinin vezaif-i umumiyesi hakkında tâlimattir/ taʿlīmāt biḥaq ʿumūm waẓāʿif majlis al-dāʿira al-baladiyya*) comprised 16 clauses,<sup>15</sup> which—as their title indicates—clearly stated the duties of the municipal council and clarified the tasks of the security forces

<sup>14</sup> The official Ottoman text of this law can be found in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 491–497. The text of a semi-official Arabic translation is also available in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 433–438.

<sup>15</sup> *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 493–497 and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 438–439.

(*asakir-i zabtiye/al-ʿasākir al-ḍabṭiyya*) on behalf of the municipality.<sup>16</sup> Article one of the code stipulated that each municipal council should consist of a mayor (*bir reis/raʿīs*), an assistant to the mayor (*bir muavin/muʿāwin*) and six members. The engineer and the medical doctor of the district (*liva/liwāʿ*) or the sub-district (*kaza/qaḍāʿ*) were to be ex officio advisory members (*âza-yı müşaviresinden/min al-aʿdāʿ al-mushāwira*).<sup>17</sup> The engineer was to be selected by the Department of Public Works (*idārat al-nāfiʿa*) and was to serve as an inspector of the first rank.<sup>18</sup> A sufficient number of inspectors (*min maʿmūrī al-tafīsh*) were to be recruited from the different guilds in the city (*min al-dākhilīn fī anwāʿ al-aṣnāf*), while some members of the security forces (*al-ʿasākir al-ḍabṭiyya*) were to be selected to assist the municipality in its functions.<sup>19</sup> The municipal council was to employ a treasurer with a financial guarantor (*kefilli sandık emini/amīn ṣandūq*) and a secretary or clerk (*katib/kātib*). The assistant to the mayor served in the municipal council on an ad hoc basis.<sup>20</sup>

#### 1. The President of the Municipal Council (the Mayor), the Municipal Council and the Inspectors

An incumbent official serving in the city was to be selected on a temporary basis (*şimdilik/al-ʿān*) to act as president of the council. The members were to be appointed for two years “from the property owners of leverage and high standing in the city” (*altı nefer âzasının her biri memleketin erbabı kadir ve haysiyetinden olarak emlâk ve arazi sahibi bulunmak/min aşhâb al-qudra wa-l-ḥaythiyya fī al-balda wa-aşhâb al-arāḍi wa-l-amlâk*).<sup>21</sup> After an initial period of two years the members of the council

<sup>16</sup> For the sake of clarity and brevity the first part of the law (*vilayet dahilinde olan şehir ve kasabalarda teşkil olunacak daire-i belediye meclislerinin suret-i tertibi ve memurlarının vezaifi hakkında tâlimattir*) will be referred to hereafter as the municipal code of 1867, while the second part (*daire-i belediye meclisinin vezaif-i umumiyesi hakkında tâlimattir/taʿlīmât biḥaqq ʿumūm wazāʿif majlis al-dāʿira al-baladiyya*) will be referred to as the instructions of 1867.

<sup>17</sup> Article 1 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 491; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 433.

<sup>18</sup> Article 3 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 491; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 433.

<sup>19</sup> Article 1 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 491; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 433.

<sup>20</sup> Article 6 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 492; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 434.

<sup>21</sup> Article 2 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 491; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 433. The first sentence of this article which stated that “an incumbent official serving in the city is to be selected on a temporary basis to act as president of the council (*şimdilik/al-ʿān*)” was more of a regression and a setback in the case of Beirut. Prior to

were to be selected by a council of elders (*wa-yakūn ikhtiyāruhum min taraf majālis ikhtiyāriyyat al-qaṣaba*).<sup>22</sup> Half of the members were to be replaced every year. Neither the mayor nor the council members were to be remunerated for their services. The council was to rent an office, in which the municipal council was expected to convene twice a week, or more often if necessary, to discuss or propose new projects and act on all issues which fell under the jurisdiction of the municipality. The assistant to the mayor, the treasurer, the clerk and the inspectors were expected to keep daily office hours in the municipal office.<sup>23</sup> The law was silent about the legal or professional relationship between the council members and the mayor, nor did it elaborate on the way decisions were to be reached in council meetings.

The day on which the municipal code was promulgated, an elaborate list of “directives concerning the selection of inspectors, their status and their function” (*taʿlīmāt biḥaqq intikhāb maʿmūrī al-taftīsh wa-awḏāʿihim wa-ḥarakātihim*) was published as well.<sup>24</sup> These instructions consisted of fifteen detailed articles. They stipulated that inspectors should be selected by the commander of the police from the infantry of the internal security forces (*al-ʿasākir al-ḍabṭiyya*) and that they were to be divided into four ranks.<sup>25</sup> They were required to be able to read and write Ottoman Turkish

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the publication of this law the mayor of Beirut, al-Hajj ʿAbdallah Bayhum, was a scion of a well established traders’ family, and he and his brother al-Hajj Husayn Bayhum, like their father ʿUmar Bayhum before them, were interested and actively involved in the political, literary and social affairs of their home town. In other words, they clearly met the criterion set by article 2 of the law, i.e. they were “from the property owners of leverage and high standing in the city” (*altı nefer âzasının her biri memleketin erbabı kadîr ve haysiyetinden olarak emlâk ve arazi sahibi bulunmak/min aşhâb al-qudra wa-l-ḥaythiyya fî al-balda wa-aşhâb al-arâḏi wa-l-amlâk*).

<sup>22</sup> The process of selecting *muhtarlar/mukhtārūn* in the provincial cities and towns was determined by the 1864 provincial code, and their duties were finally elaborated and defined by the provincial code of 1871. Their main task was to serve as mediators in legal and fiscal affairs between the provincial authorities on the one hand, and the people who had chosen them on the other; see articles 107–110 of the provincial law of 1871, *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, pp. 417–419. Please note that Shaw and Kural Shaw translated the word *muhtar/mukhtār* as ‘headman’ and ‘mayor’. Shaw and Kural Shaw, *Reform, Revolution and Republic*, p. 90. This translation might lead to some confusion and misunderstanding. In this book the title ‘headman’ will be used consistently for *muhtar*, in order to avoid confusing his post with that of the president of the municipal council.

<sup>23</sup> Article 4 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 491; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 433.

<sup>24</sup> An Arabic translation of these instructions concerning the inspectors was published in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 666–670.

<sup>25</sup> This contradicted article 1 of the municipal code of 1867, which demanded the recruitment of this body of inspectors from the different guilds in the city.

as well as the language of the province in which they served. Inspectors of the first two ranks were additionally expected to command at least one foreign language, revealing the exaggerated expectations concerning this force. Their salaries varied, ranging from 750 to 200 piastres per month, depending on their rank; the costs of their azure-blue uniforms and their swords were deducted from their salaries.

The inspectors were responsible for the safety of traffic and its proper flow in the streets and alleys. Carts were not to block the way; the drivers of these carts were not to drive speedily within the city, and the beasts of burden were not to be left unattended or untied. Another task of these inspectors was to keep the streets and alleys clear of any object that might impede the traffic, such as barrels or goods exposed or stored on the sides of streets. Funfairs and festivals were authorised upon the payment of a specific fee, provided that such activities were supervised by an appropriate number of inspectors and sergeants. The municipal inspectors had the right to collect fines from individuals who did not observe the regulations of the municipality.<sup>26</sup> The amount of the fines ranged from one *beşlik* to ten Ottoman gold *lira*, as determined by chapter three (articles 254–264) of the Imperial Penal Code of 1858 and its subsequent amendments.

## 2 The General Functions of the Municipality

According to clause one of the instructions to the municipal council, the municipality was expected to immediately begin a survey of the condition of city streets, alleys and cul-de-sacs.<sup>27</sup> A map revealing the actual outcome of the survey had to be prepared, while a blue print of the city would have to be drawn in accordance with the regulations of the construction law, which had been issued four years earlier, on 20 October 1863.<sup>28</sup> The munic-

<sup>26</sup> Clauses 11, 12 and 14 of the instructions of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 496; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 438.

<sup>27</sup> Clause 1 of the instructions of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 493–494; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 436.

<sup>28</sup> The Ottoman text of the construction law is available in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 499–514; and a complete Arabic translation under the title *Nizām al-ṭuruq wa al-ʿabniya* was published in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 441–456. The first map of Beirut which was not drawn for military purposes stems from the Danish consul in Beirut, Loytved, who was an established engineer. However, it is not clear whether he undertook this task upon the request of the municipality. Later issues of the *Salname* of Beirut included detailed maps that were prepared by the Beyrouth Waterworks Company. The municipality of Beirut itself prepared maps for the purpose of regularising some of the streets. Some examples of municipal maps included in petitions sent to Istanbul are still preserved in the Ottoman archives. For example, see BOA, İ.MM 3313.



ipality was expected to start working on regularisation, i.e. straightening, widening, and paving of the busiest and most important streets, as well as building pedestrian paths along the sides of streets of appropriate width. The expenses of these development projects were to be covered by dividing the costs among the number of the people who benefited immediately from the improvements. That is to say, all the owners or occupants of houses and shops in a particular street had to contribute in different proportions, in accordance with the value of their property. These provisions applied equally to pious foundations (*awqāf*).<sup>29</sup>

A major concern for the municipality was public health. It was responsible for constructing special horse-drawn wagons for the collection of household refuse, keeping the streets free of rubbish and dirty puddles, above all the market place, and protecting the city from the hazards of fire.<sup>30</sup> The municipality was in charge of inspecting measures and weights, as well as controlling the quality of meat, bread and vegetables on sale in the city. The municipal inspectors were to prevent fraudulent trading, be it in connection with measures and weights or the quality of goods, and impose fines on those who acted fraudulently.<sup>31</sup> The instructions stated that keeping or rearing cattle in the city was not permissible. Any person who violated the law would be fined, and the animals in question were to be confiscated by the municipality.<sup>32</sup>

One of the responsibilities of the municipal council was to put an end to begging in the city. The internal security forces (*al-ʿasākir al-ḍabṭiyya*) and the inspectors were in charge of implementing this ban in the streets and markets. All beggars were to be apprehended on sight; those older than thirteen years were to be handed over to the provincial administration; the younger ones, as well as female mendicants, were to be placed in custody of their original quarters, whose inhabitants were responsible for their upkeep.<sup>33</sup>

### 3 The Income and Expenses of the Municipality

The law stated that the gradual increase of the municipal revenue directly depended on the initiative and enthusiasm of the council (*mawqūfun ʿalā iqdām wa-ghīrat al-majlis*). The major source of the municipality's revenue was a fee excised on licensing new buildings and constructions within the

<sup>29</sup> Clause 2 of the instructions of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 494; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 436.

<sup>30</sup> Clauses 4, 5 and 6 of the instructions of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 494–495; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 437.

<sup>31</sup> Clause 8 of the instructions of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 495; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 437.

<sup>32</sup> Clause 9 of the instructions of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 495; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 437.

<sup>33</sup> Clause 10 of the instructions of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 495–496; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 437–438.

area under its jurisdiction. The amount to be paid directly corresponded to the size of the planned construction. Buildings larger than one hundred square cubits (*dhirāʿ*)<sup>34</sup> cost double the rate of smaller ones. Article five of the code of 1867 stipulated that the municipalities in the provincial cities and towns should collect one fifth of the licensing fee excised in the capital Istanbul. The law vaguely states that the municipality was also entitled to levy a property tax after completing the cadastral survey of the city (*tahrir-i emlāk/tahrir al-amlāk*).<sup>35</sup> However, the law did not specify the process, the criteria, those in charge of conducting the survey, the amount due to the municipalities, nor the deadline for completing the reassessment of the property tax. The unspecified amount accruing from the proper collection of this tax was earmarked for the regularisation of streets and alleys (*tanzimat-i belediye tertibati/tarībāt al-tanzīmāt al-baladiyya*).<sup>36</sup> All the revenue and expenses were to be registered on a daily basis in a book of accounts, to be scrutinised by the municipal council each month. The municipal council was required to seek the permission of the governor of the province (*vali*) before embarking upon any major plan which would commit the municipality to large expenses (*wa-tajrī al-muqtaḍayāt ghub al-ʿistiḍhān min maqām al-wilāya*).<sup>37</sup>

The legislator recognised that the revenue of the municipality was not substantial, hence the council was not in charge of paying the salaries of

<sup>34</sup> The carpenters' cubit was identical with the architects' cubit (*al-dhirāʿ al-miḥmāriyya*) and measured approximately 77.5 cm. It was standardised at 75 cm in the nineteenth century, see Issawi, *Economic History of the Middle East*, p. 518, and Walther Hinz, "Dhirāʿ". In: *EF*, vol. 2, pp. 231–232. The streets and construction law of 1863 specified the official *dhirāʿ* to be equivalent to three fourth of the French metre, i.e. 75 cm, see paragraph 1 of the streets and construction law of 1863, *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 441.

<sup>35</sup> Article 5 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 492; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 434.

<sup>36</sup> It is evident from the parliamentary debates that took place ten years after the publication of this law that a cadastral survey for Syria had not, as yet, been carried out. A reassessment of the property tax was one of the main concerns of the Beirut parliamentarians. Please see Chapter III for more information on the attitude of the Beirutis concerning the tax in question.

Even during the late 1890s and the beginning of the twentieth century the property owners in Beirut refused to accept the estimates made by the cadastral surveyors, see BOA, ŞD 2292/24–A and ŞD 2296/44.

Shaw and Kural Shaw state that the cadastral survey for the Arab provinces was not fully completed until 1908, see Shaw and Kural Shaw, *Reform, Revolution and Republic*, p. 98. Quite evidently it took 41 years after the publication of this law to finish the cadastral survey, in other words, the municipalities were promised finances which did not materialise when most needed.

<sup>37</sup> Article 5 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 492; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 434.

the ex officio members—the engineer and the medical doctor—nor was it burdened with remunerating the inspectors or the municipal sergeants for their services, as these were paid by the provincial government.<sup>38</sup> Article 6 of the code clearly stated the maximum miscellaneous expenditure that the municipality could incur:<sup>39</sup>

Secretary's salary per month:	500 piastres
Treasurer's salary per month:	500 piastres
Janitor's salary per month:	125 piastres
Miscellaneous expenses including rent:	500 piastres
Total:	1625 piastres (the equivalent of circa £ 15)

The municipality was not entitled to spend more than its annual revenue. On the contrary, it was urged to save some of its income and to deposit it in a public benefit fund (*ṣandūq al-manāfiʿ al-ʿumūmiyya*) for an annual interest return.<sup>40</sup> Notwithstanding the creation of a separate municipal income, the municipal council was not free to dispose of its revenue at its own discretion. The municipal council needed the approval of the *vali* in order to undertake major projects which would require the expenditure of large sums of money.

#### 4 General Evaluation of the 1867 Code

It appears that in order to expedite the process of establishing municipal councils in the provincial cities and towns of the Empire, the law provided for the appointment, rather than the election, of the mayor as well as the municipal council for a period of two years only.<sup>41</sup> The 'selection' of the

<sup>38</sup> For a translation and discussion of a selection of articles from the regulation of the Public Medical Department (*nizām idārat al-ṭibb al-ʿumūmiyya*) of 20 August 1871 (3 *Jumādā al-Ūlā* 1288), see this chapter, below. These regulations abrogated article six of the municipal law of 1867 and decreed that a municipal medical doctor should become a regular municipal employee directly paid by, and answerable to, the municipality. During the discussions of the 1877 municipal code Ottoman parliamentarians emphasised the benefit of employing highly qualified and specialised employees, such as engineers and medical doctors. Therefore, they protested vehemently against restricting the freedom of the municipalities to enlarge its medical department by limiting the amount earmarked for salaries. For the parliamentary debate on article 16 of the municipal code of 1877, which was to limit the municipal expenditure, see Hakkı Tarık Us, *Meclis-i Meb'usan 1293–1877 Zabıt Ceridesi* (Istanbul, 1940), pp. 312–313.

<sup>39</sup> Article 6 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 492; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 434.

<sup>40</sup> Article 9 of the municipal code of 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 493; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 435.

<sup>41</sup> In Beirut the law was applied rigorously. The first appointed mayor of the city after the publication of the 1867 law was the incumbent bureaucrat Ahmad Abaza, notwithstanding the fact that the previous mayor of Beirut, prior to 1867, al-Hajj ʿAbdallah Bayhum, was a capable Beirut tradesman who understood the local problems and politics.

council's members reflected an attitude which was prevalent at the time in Istanbul and also in Europe: The people who would serve the city best were those who had vested interests in the development of the city.<sup>42</sup> Improving the physical condition of the city would increase the value of their properties. They were, in other words, the emerging bourgeoisie, or as the law puts it, the property owners of high standing and leverage. They were presumed to be familiar with and positively disposed toward European municipal amenities. It is obvious that the legislator did not envisage a fundamental conflict of interest between members of this social group similar to conflicts that emerged in later years when European concessionaires were legally empowered to sit in municipal councils.

The 1867 code did not specify the nationality of the members who were entitled to serve on the council. The only requirement was that the members "should be property owners in the city of high standing and leverage". One could infer that only Ottoman property owners, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, had the privilege to belong to a municipal council; for foreigners did not, as yet, have the right to register land or property under their names.<sup>43</sup> Probably seeking to make a favourable impression on the eve of his journey to Europe,<sup>44</sup> Sultan Abdülaziz (reigned 1861–1876) issued an imperial rescript (*irade-i seniye*) granting foreigners the right to own property throughout the Empire on 16 June 1867 (16 *Şafar* 1284).<sup>45</sup> The Sultan's *irade* eliminated a long-standing cause of friction between the European embassies and consulates on one side, and the Ottoman authorities on the other. "In return for their new rights, foreign property owners", like their Ottoman counterparts, "were required to conform to all present and future laws, police ordinances,

<sup>42</sup> Rosenthal, *Politics of Dependency*, pp. xxiii–xxvii.

<sup>43</sup> See Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Ownership of Real Property by Foreigners in Syria, 1869 to 1873". In: Roger Owen, ed., *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2000), pp. 175–239.

<sup>44</sup> The Beirut press reported that Sultan Abdülaziz published this *irade* just before boarding his Imperial Yacht on his way to France. *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 9 July 1867.

<sup>45</sup> The original Ottoman text of the *irade* is published in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 230–231. A semi-official Arabic translation of this *irade* is available in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, pp. 68–69. The contemporary Arabic press in Beirut and Istanbul published different translations of this *irade*. The translation published in *Al-Jawāʿib* included both the text of the *irade* as well as the protocol signed by the foreign ambassadors in Istanbul, acknowledging the privileges and accepting the obligations of foreign property owners in the Ottoman Empire. This translation was reprinted in Salim al-Shidyaq's compilation of his father's most important articles, see Shidyaq, *Kanz al-rahāʾib*, vol. 5, pp. 147–151. Another Arabic translation was also published in *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 October 1867. An official French translation of the imperial *irade* of 16 June 1867 is reproduced in Aristarchi Bey, *Législation ottoman*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1873), pp. 19–21, and in Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1905), pp. 337–341.

and municipal codes concerning landed property”.<sup>46</sup> By means of this *irade* foreign property owners were indirectly granted the right to be represented in the municipal councils, given that the 1867 code did not explicitly deprive them of that right, as was the case in the municipal code of 1877.<sup>47</sup> Between 1868 and 1877, two foreign members were simultaneously elected to the municipal council of Beirut; they were the French entrepreneur Comte de Perthuis and the Italian citizen who served as a general consul of Austria, George Laurella.<sup>48</sup> The 1867 code did not refer to the religious confession of the potential members, in contrast to the 1864 provincial code, which emphatically and repeatedly reiterated that the administrative council of the *vilayet* and *kaza* should consist of an equal number of Muslim and non-Muslim members.<sup>49</sup> Neither the code of 1867 nor the one of 1871 granted preferential representation on the municipal council according to religious denomination. On the contrary, this practice was deliberately relinquished, marking the birth of secular municipal institutions. Therefore, it would be rash to draw the conclusion that the two European members were selected to the council as representatives of the very small Roman Catholic community of Beirut.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Rosenthal, *Politics of Dependency*, p. 167. See also paragraph 2 of the imperial *irade* of 16 June 1867, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 230.

<sup>47</sup> See article 4 of the municipal law of 1877 in Yusuf ‘Araman, trans., *Qānūn al-baladiyya al-jadīd al-ladhī qarrarahu majlis al-mab’ūthīn*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Beirut, 1889), pp. 4–5; *Düstur*-vol. 4, p. 540; and Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1905), pp. 71–72.

<sup>48</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1286/1869–70), p. 73; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1288/1871–72), p. 67; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1289/1872–73), p. 89 and *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1293/1876), p. 99.

<sup>49</sup> For an Arabic translation of the articles of the 1864 provincial code governing the selection, function, rights and religious affiliations of the members of the provincial administrative council, see *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, pp. 383–386.

<sup>50</sup> Ignoring Ottoman laws as a relevant source for the writing of social and administrative history of the provinces might have led some historians into pitfalls and wrong conclusions. For example, Ruth Kark cautiously states: “It seems that representation on the council may have been granted initially to the various religious communities irrespective of their nationalities. In 1875 [sic] the law governing elections to the *Meclis-i Belediye* was published and this matter was modified in some measure.” In two footnotes she repeats the same claim, however, more emphatically: “The reference is to Hayyim Aaron Valero, who from 1865 headed his family’s private bank in Jerusalem...” and “Amzalek was a British subject but was elected as a Jewish representative...”, see Kark, “The Municipality of Jerusalem”, p. 121.

The two European Jews on the municipal council of Jerusalem cannot simply be assumed to have been representatives of the local Jewish community, for neither the municipal code of 1867 nor the law of 1871 granted representation on confessional terms. According to article 2 of the law of 1867, the presence of the foreign members was an indication of their social and financial status in the city, because a banker, regardless of his religious affiliation, was definitely eligible and entitled to become one of the six members “from the property owners of leverage and high standing in the city”

The presence of the European members could be understood as an attempt by the Ottoman provincial and central authorities to enhance and accelerate the introduction of certain European ideas and administrative practices into the municipal institution and thereby into society at large.

The code of 1867 apparently paid more attention to the appearance of the city than to basic infrastructural improvements. The law did not refer to water supply or to sewer systems, but dwelled on the regularisation of streets, especially the market areas.<sup>51</sup> The cleaning of the markets was also mentioned as being the task of the villagers who sold their products in the city, not of the municipality. Especially interesting was the prohibition of begging on streets and in alleys and the stipulations regarding the way beggars were to be treated.<sup>52</sup> The appearance of the city was, so it seems, the primary concern; the main streets needed to be orderly, clean, wide and, most importantly, free of beggars. The poorest stratum of society, recognisable by its absolute destitution and commercial ‘unproductivity’ was now perceived as a genuine ‘*classe dangereuse*’, hence they were not encouraged to gravitate to urban centres. Furthermore, if they originated from marginal quarters of the city itself, their presence was deemed dangerous and their acts unbecoming; given that they begged in the main

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(*altı nefer âzasının her biri memleketin erbabı kadir ve haysiyetinden olarak emlâk ve arazi sahibi bulunmak/min aşhâb al-qudra wa-l-haythiyya fî al-balda wa-aşhâb al-arâdi wa-l-amlâk*). As European citizens they were—as mentioned above—presumed to be familiar with and positively disposed towards European municipal amenities.

- <sup>51</sup> The lack of clear instructions to the municipality to undertake major infrastructural developments, like the water supply, must have disappointed some Beirut citizens who had demanded such a vital amenity from their municipality prior to the publication of the law. Some of them tried to act collectively to solve the water shortage in their city, but their efforts were not successful, because they lacked legitimacy and official sanction. Refer to the previous chapter.
- <sup>52</sup> Due to the lack of information on the treatment of the poor in Beirut prior to the publication of this law, a parallel from the northern Syrian city of Aleppo will be used. On this particular subject Abraham Marcus wrote the following: “Most of the charity took the form of casual almsgiving and customary liberalities. For many residents, putting a coin or piece of bread in the hands of a beggar was an almost unthinking reflex. Some adopted particular beggars, supporting them on a regular basis with charitable allowances. On Fridays beggars lined up the main streets to benefit from the generosity of the Muslim crowds headed for the communal prayer in the mosques. On religious occasions the well-to-do distributed food and money to the expectant poor who gathered outside their homes. Customary acts of charity to the poor also accompanied marriage celebrations and death rituals. Begging was commonplace, and accepted as a legitimate means of survival for the poor. The community did not seek to keep beggars off the streets, and had no houses of correction to lock them up or put them to work.”, see Abraham Marcus, “Poverty and Poor Relief in Eighteenth-Century Aleppo”. In: *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée/ Villes au Levant*, 55–56, numbers 1–2 (1990), p. 176.

areas of commercial activity they were perceived as loiterers. Therefore, the law decreed that they were to be confined to their original quarters, clearly conveying a picture of a society, at least in the eyes of the lawmakers, which had not yet advanced from charity—personal or communal—to welfare as a basic right. The lawmakers tried to restrict the movements of the poor, hence, reducing their chances of receiving relief, without making the municipality responsible for providing the needy with an alternative welfare system.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the fact that paragraph 5 of article 6 in the directives to inspectors clearly stated that it was an essential part of the inspector's duty to see to the proper implementation of the municipality's regulations,<sup>54</sup> the inspectors had a broader range of responsibilities. They were in charge of supervising market prices, controlling passports at points of entry into their area of service,<sup>55</sup> as well as of investigating crimes and looking for incriminating evidence, if the culprits were unknown. Hence, the inspectors were expected to execute varied tasks, somewhat analogous to the functions of three different modern-day authorities—the inspectors of the Ministry of Commerce and Economy, the immigration police and the detective squad. Moreover, the inspectors were directly responsible to the highest civil official in their region, be it the *vali*, *mutasarrif* or *kaimmakam*, and not to the municipality.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the municipality was not empowered to enforce its own urban regulations and market control measures.<sup>57</sup> It was dependent on the collaboration of the *vali* and the commander of the security forces. Hence, what Steven Rosenthal says of the traditional urban administration in Istanbul—prior to the establishment of the municipality—seems equally applicable to the municipality of Beirut under the 1867 municipal law. The law lacked clear lines of jurisdiction resulting in “a diffusion of responsibility, a lack of administrative specialisation, and a general imprecision in the definition of tasks.”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> For parallels in European history, see Roger Rice, *A Social History of Nineteenth-Century France* (London, 1987), pp. 50–52.

<sup>54</sup> An Arabic translation of the entire text of the directives to the inspectors is published in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, pp. 666–670.

<sup>55</sup> The Ottoman Passport Law was issued on 24 February 1866 (1283), see *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, pp. 531–534.

<sup>56</sup> Directives concerning the municipal sergeants' functions, see *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 480–485.

<sup>57</sup> It seems that such a state of affairs was not unique to the provinces under direct Ottoman control, but that similar conditions prevailed in the semi-autonomous Tunis as well. For a description of the conditions in Tunis, see William Cleaveland, “The Municipal Council of Tunis, 1858–1870: A Study in Urban Institutional Change”. In: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9 (1978), pp. 39–40.

<sup>58</sup> Rosenthal, *Politics of Dependency*, pp. 29 and 32.

The law betrays a somewhat undeveloped sense of the city as a corporate unit. This becomes especially clear in two articles. The first (article 2) refers to the regularisation of the streets at the expense of the direct beneficiaries, namely those who owned or occupied any kind of building—be it a house, a shop, or a hammam—on either side of a recently regularised street. The widening of streets was apparently not considered as an improvement to the entire city, to be paid for by all tax payers in the city. The second (article 10), clearly betraying a lack of urban corporate ideas, concerns the prohibition of begging. Female and prepubescent male beggars were merely handed over to the inhabitants of their original quarter, who were responsible for their upkeep. They were not consigned to the care of the city as a whole, i.e. to orphanages founded and financed by the municipality.

The emphasis of the 1867 code on the regularisation of the streets and on the precautions for preventing fires could be explained by the fact that the city of Istanbul had been ravaged a number of times during the preceding decade by catastrophic conflagrations, the worst of which was that of 1863. In the report which the High Council of Judicial Rulings (*meclis-i vâlâyi ahkâm-ı adliye*) prepared after that fire, the proposed solutions consisted in the regularisation of streets and the encouragement to convert from timber construction to masonry (*kârgir*).<sup>59</sup> This recommendation was incorporated into the second construction law (1863) which the municipalities were in charge of implementing.

In the law of 1867 one can detect an interesting departure from the old practice of assigning to the religious heads of the communities the division of the taxes and the selection of communal representatives to the different councils. It was no longer the privilege of the men of religion to nominate the representatives of their communities on this particular council. Furthermore, it was not their prerogative to divide the due communal taxes upon, nor to supervise their collection from, their coreligionists. These tasks fell upon the civilian headmen (*mukhtârûn*),<sup>60</sup> although some of them were representatives of a specific religious community, living in a separate quarter of the city. This way, the law limited and restricted the sway and leverage of the religious heads of the communities and granted some of their former prerogatives to civilians and/or a secular council.

Although the law of 1867 laid down the basis for establishing municipal councils, it bordered on the prosaic or merely simplistic; a large number of issues relevant to the vitality and viability of municipal institutions like, for

<sup>59</sup> Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul. Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 55–56.

<sup>60</sup> See 'Awad, *Al-Idāra al-ʿuthmāniyya fī Sūriyya*, p. 170.



example, sufficient revenue generation and clear demarcation of responsibilities were either ignored or left to obscurity.<sup>61</sup> The code imposed certain general urban regulations and market control measures, but no enforcement procedures accompanied these general regulations. Furthermore, the functionaries entrusted with the execution of these rules and regulations were not under the jurisdiction of the municipal council itself. Therefore, the municipality, with its powers of enforcement undefined, became dependent on the cooperation of other administrative authorities in the city, like the *vali* and the security forces. However, the law, as initially published, did not last for long. It was amended and extended a mere four years later. A new, more detailed law for the provincial municipalities was drafted and published as an integral part of the Provincial Law of 1871.

## B Chapter Seven of the Provincial Law of 1871 Concerning Municipal Affairs and Regulations

On 22 January 1871 (29 *Shawwāl* 1287) a new law concerning provincial administration was published. Chapter seven of this law carried the title *şehir ve kasaba devair-i belediye mecalisi beyanındadır*. This chapter consisted of 19 articles (from article 111 to article 129), and as its name indicates it was entirely dedicated to the municipal councils.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> The municipal law of 1867 did not live up to the expectations of Beirut intellectuals and journalists like Khalil al-Khuri, Nawfal Niʿmat Allah Nawfal, Butrus al-Bustani and Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq. The expectations of al-Khuri and Nawfal have already been discussed in the previous chapter, the role of al-Shidyaq in translating the Ottoman laws into Arabic will be presented in the following chapter. The law could be described as primitive and prosaic in comparison with the municipal law that established the municipality of Galata and Pera (24 *Shawwāl* 1274/ 7 July 1858), better known as the sixth district of Constantinople. The latter law was much more elaborate and granted the municipality more powers, prerogatives and authority. The law consisted of 94 articles and an addendum of two articles. The text of the law establishing the municipality of Galata is published in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 464–477, and in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 416–420. In the following year (17 *Ramaḍān* 1275) the municipal law of Galata was complemented with an elaborate law called *Nizām al-aziqqa*, which consisted of 103 articles, governing the use of public space. The text of this law is available in an Arabic translation in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 421–432. The original Ottoman text can be found in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 478–490.

<sup>62</sup> The official Ottoman text of the provincial law of 1871 is published in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 625–651. A complete French translation is available in Aristarchi Bey, *Législation Ottomane*, vol. 3 (Istanbul, 1874), pp. 1–38. Another French translation, though incomplete (i.e. chapter seven concerning the municipal affairs is missing), is available in Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1905), pp. 47–69. For an Arabic translation of chapter seven of the provincial law of 1871, see *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, pp. 419–421. Chapter seven of the provincial law will be referred to hereafter as the municipal code of 1871.

The regulations included in this chapter abrogated the municipal code of 1867. The prolegomenon to these regulations did not differ much from the one of the 1867 law, except in those parts that were related to the ‘selection’ (*intikhāb*)<sup>63</sup> of the municipal council members. More discriminating criteria for selection were introduced. Articles 113, 114, 115 and 116 clearly stated that the members of this council would be chosen by a majority of the council of elders (*al-majālis al-ikhtiyāriyya*). In order to be eligible for nomination to the municipal council, the nominees were to be at least twenty years old, of upright character and with no criminal record. Persons on active military, police or judicial service within the city and those executing a concession granted by the municipality were disqualified. The members of the municipal council were not allowed to serve, in the same capacity, in more than one city. They were to serve on the council for two years; after this period half of the members were replaced by new ones. This process of replacement was to be repeated annually. The confirmation of selected members was subject to the approval of the governor of each *vilayet*.<sup>64</sup> A person from

<sup>63</sup> The word in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic is “*intihab/intikhāb*”, which one might erroneously translate as “election”, but in its Ottoman context prior to the 1876 constitution the proper translation is “selection”, since the concept of direct elections, representation and responsibility towards an electorate had not, as yet, been introduced. Historians of the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East disagree on the subject of representation and elections in the Ottoman Empire. Davison is of the opinion that limited representation and elections existed prior to the constitutional period, see Roderic H. Davison, “The Advent of the Principle of Representation in the Government of the Ottoman Empire”, reprinted in Roderic H. Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774–1923. The Impact of the West* (Austin, Texas, 1990), pp. 96–111; Roderic H. Davison, “Atatürk’s Reforms: Back to the Roots”, reprinted in Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History*, p. 249. Zain Zain and Albert Hourani consider the Ottoman constitution of 1876, with its provision for an elected chamber of deputies, as the real birth of the principle of representation, see Albert Hourani, “The Decline of the West in the Middle East”. In: Richard Nolte, ed., *The Modern Middle East* (New York, 1963), p. 37; and Zain Nur al-Din Zain, “Al-Tamthīl al-sha‘bī wa-qawānīn al-intikhāb fī al-muqaṭa‘āt al-‘arabiyya min al-imbarāṭuriyya al-‘Uthmāniyya”. In: *Al-Abḥāth*, 14 (1961), pp. 100–120.

It is significant and telling to note that Butrus al-Bustani, in his dictionary *Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ*, which was published in Beirut in 1870, gave no more than the theological meaning of the word *intikhāb*. He explained it as “God determining who was predestined for eternal salvation”. Such a definition of the word *intikhāb* does not, at all, convey the sense of political elections. Al-Bustani, however, consistently referred to more recent usages of classical Arabic words, for example, he explained how the word *majlis* came to acquire its new meaning. Therefore, it seems that until 1870 the word *intikhāb* did not necessarily mean ‘election’, see Butrus al-Bustani, *Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ* (Beirut, 1869–70); reprint (Beirut, 1987).

<sup>64</sup> Articles 113, 114, 115 and 116 of the municipal code of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, p. 649.

the selected members would be appointed by the *mutasarrıf* to act as president of the council upon the concurrence of the *vali*.<sup>65</sup> The president of the municipal council (mayor) presided over the two regular weekly meetings of the council as well as exceptions. In the event of a mayor's absence, the oldest member of the council was to preside.<sup>66</sup> Article 122 specified that two thirds of the members constituted a legal quorum and decisions were to be taken upon the consent of the majority of the members present.<sup>67</sup>

#### 1 The Functions of the Municipality according to Chapter Seven of the Provincial Law of 1871

The urban responsibilities of the municipal council became more diverse under the new provincial law. Various amenities and developments were added to its original urban services. The municipality became responsible for providing the city with essential infrastructural amenities, like sewer conduits and potable water supply. Hence, its responsibilities according to article 124 of the code included:<sup>68</sup>

1. The supervision of all construction projects in the city, including those belonging to *awqāf*;
2. The supply of the city with potable water (if the service had been previously provided by the *awqāf*, these pious foundations were to carry the expenses of the service);
3. The demolition of buildings and constructions deemed hazardous to public safety;
4. The organisation of the flow of traffic, which included the establishment of reasonable fares for the transportation services throughout the city;
5. The regular collection of refuse;
6. The embellishment of the city;
7. The supervision of weights, measures, prices and the quality of the products on sale in the city;
8. The procurement of fire-fighting equipment;
9. Investigating the possibility of founding wharves, public squares and places for promenade and recreation;
10. Street-lighting;
11. The regularisation of roads, alleys and sewer conduits;

<sup>65</sup> Article 117 of the municipal code of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, p. 649.

<sup>66</sup> Article 121 of the municipal code of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, p. 650.

<sup>67</sup> Article 122 of the municipal code of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, p. 650.

<sup>68</sup> Article 124 of the municipal code of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, p. 650.

12. The surveillance of public assemblies in cooperation with the security forces (*al-ʿasākir al-ḍabṭiyya*);
13. The implementation of the lease contract regulation (*nizām al-qonṭrāto*).

## 2 The Resources of the Municipality

The legislator recognised that in order for the municipality to meet its stated obligations, its revenue needed to be expanded and increased. Six new sources of income were granted to the municipal institution.<sup>69</sup>

1. Appropriations from the central and/or provincial government for the execution of major plans;
2. Fines determined by the Imperial Penal Code;
3. Fees excised on the obligatory certification of lease contracts;
4. The toll imposed on the beneficiaries of street regularisation (*tanzimat al-turuq*), the amount being subject to the approval of the *vali* or *mutasarrıf*;
5. Revenue from the sale or rent of the land owned by the municipality;
6. Grants and contributions.

The council was obliged to prepare a monthly balance sheet, to be ratified first by the *mutasarrıf* and then by the *vali*. At the end of each year the municipality was expected to prepare an annual financial report and submit it to the Ministry of the Interior (*nezaret-i dahiliye*) along with a detailed budget for the following year.<sup>70</sup>

According to the lease contract regulation (*nizām al-qonṭrāto*) of 2 December 1867 (6 *Shaʿbān* 1284) the municipality was entitled to collect one percent of the rental value on each transaction conducted within its area of jurisdiction.<sup>71</sup> Article 19 of the regulation stated that no lease contract was considered legal unless it was certified by the municipality upon the payment of the above-mentioned fee. In addition, a sum of 100 *para*, the equivalent of two and a half piastres, was to be paid for the legal deed provided by the municipality. In order to finalise legal procedures, the deed would be registered by the clerk in the municipal roster upon the payment of five piastres. Those who did not abide by the lease contract regulation were fined threefold the original amount.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Article 126 of the municipal code of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, pp. 650–651.

<sup>70</sup> Article 128 of the municipal code of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, p. 651.

<sup>71</sup> The original Ottoman text of the lease contract regulation of 2 December 1867 (6 *Shaʿbān* 1284) was published under the title *kontrato nizamnamesi* in *Düstur*, vol. 1, pp. 263–267. An Arabic translation under the title *nizām al-qonṭrāto* is available in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, pp. 97–101.

<sup>72</sup> Article 19 of the lease contract regulation (*kontrato nizamnamesi*), *Düstur*, vol. 1, p. 267 and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, p. 101.

Chapter three of the Imperial Penal Code of 1858 (Articles 254 to 264) specified the contraventions subject to fines and penalties.<sup>73</sup> The highest amount of these fines originally did not exceed 100 piastres (an Ottoman gold *lira*), however, some articles were amended at a later stage and the fines were raised. They were to be collected by the security forces (*al-ʿasākir al-ḡabṭiyya*) on behalf of the municipality:

1. Individuals who obstructed roads, failed to light lanterns, dug up streets, littered pathways with domestic refuse or rubble,<sup>74</sup> or craftsmen who lit fires without the necessary precaution or failed to mend their stoves and chimneys properly were considered to be deliberately endangering public safety. They were, hence, liable to a fine ranging from one to five *beşlik*.<sup>75</sup> (The official rate for the *beşlik* was equivalent to 5 piastres.)<sup>76</sup>
2. Horsemen who speeded in city confines, and food vendors who sold inedible food were liable to a fine ranging from six to ten *beşlik* each.<sup>77</sup>
3. Merchants who used manipulated weights and deficient measures were liable to a penalty ranging from ten to fifteen *beşlik*.<sup>78</sup>
4. Merchants who illicitly raised the prices of their commodities were fined between ten and fifteen *beşlik* and additionally imprisoned for a period, ranging from 24 hours to three days. If the commodity in question was a daily necessity like bread, meat or coal, the fine was

<sup>73</sup> The earliest official text in a concordance of law of the Imperial Penal Code was published in *Qavanin ve nizamatın münderic olduğu mecmuʿa-yı zamm-ı dâl ile düstur denilir, defa-ı saniye* (Istanbul, Zilhicce 1282/March 1866), pp. 400–464. This source will hereafter be referred to as *Qavanin ve nizamat, defa-ı saniye*, in order to distinguish it from the later compilation of Ottoman laws called *Düstur*. The entire Arabic text of the Imperial Penal Code is available in *Al-Dustür*, vol. 2, pp. 371–373. An earlier Arabic translation dating back to the year 1859, almost immediately after the promulgation of the law, was published in a series of consecutive issues in the Beirut newspaper *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*. However, this translation was not very precise, because only few Ottoman terms were altered. Please refer to the previous chapter for more details. The official French translation is published in Aristarchi Bey, *Législation Ottomane*, vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1874), pp. 212–268, and in Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 7 (Oxford, 1906), pp. 1–54.

<sup>74</sup> Article 254, *Qavanin ve nizamat, defa-ı saniye*, pp. 461–462; Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 7 (Oxford, 1906), pp. 51–52; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 13 October 1859.

<sup>75</sup> Article 255, *Qavanin ve nizamat, defa-ı saniye*, p. 462; Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 7 (Oxford, 1906), p. 52; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 13 October 1859.

<sup>76</sup> Issawī, *Economic History of the Middle East*, pp. 521–522.

<sup>77</sup> Article 256, *Qavanin ve nizamat, defa-ı saniye*, p. 462; Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 7 (Oxford, 1906), p. 52; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 13 October 1859.

<sup>78</sup> Article 262, *Qavanin ve nizamat, defa-ı saniye*, p. 463; Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 7 (Oxford, 1906), p. 53; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 13 October 1859.

increased to twenty *beşlik* and the punishment was raised to one week's imprisonment.<sup>79</sup>

5. Transgressors on public utilities by erecting any illegal construction, be it on a street, in an alley or a public garden, were forced to pay an indemnity to the municipality in addition to removing the construction concerned. They were fined between fifteen and twenty *beşlik* as well as being incarcerated for a week.<sup>80</sup>

The amount of some of these fines and the duration of the imprisonment were increased on 16 April 1869 (4 *Muḥarram* 1286), when some articles of the penal code concerning health matters were reviewed and amended. A supplement to article 264 was added as well. This supplement increased the jurisdictions of the municipalities by making them directly responsible for licensing and controlling 'proper' burial practices in specified cemeteries. Contraventions of these regulations were punished with a long prison sentence ranging from one month to a full year and a high fine of one to ten Ottoman gold pounds (*lira*).<sup>81</sup> These deterring punishments were the highest determined by chapter three of the Penal Code. The amendments and the dramatic increase of the punishments were, evidently, directly linked to the frequent outbreaks of cholera in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the supplement to Article 264 could be seen as one of the many legal and practical measures taken by the Ottoman Empire to eradicate the cholera scourge. These amendments indicate that the lawmakers were willing to increase the jurisdiction and the responsibilities of the new municipalities, and that they deemed them and their unspecialised security forces and inspector capable of implementing this deterring article throughout the wide ranges of the Empire. Hence, the municipal institutions were envisaged as capable of playing an important and efficient role in fighting and controlling the health hazards facing the Empire.<sup>82</sup>

### 3 General Evaluation of Chapter Seven of the Provincial Law of 1871

The 1871 code did not reveal a more developed sense of the city as a single corporate unit than that of 1867. The widening of streets, apparently, was

<sup>79</sup> Article 263, *Qavanin ve nizamat, defa-ı saniye*, p. 464; Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 7 (Oxford, 1906), p. 53; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 13 October 1859.

<sup>80</sup> Article 264, *Qavanin ve nizamat, defa-ı saniye*, p. 464; Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 7 (Oxford, 1906), pp. 53–54; *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 13 October 1859.

<sup>81</sup> The hefty fine of ten Ottoman gold pounds (*lira*) was equivalent to five months' salary of a municipal inspector.

<sup>82</sup> Code Pénal Ottoman, Livre III, contraventions aux règlements concernant la santé et la propriété publiques et aux règlements et mesures de police, Supplément à l'article 264, in Young, *Corps de droit Ottoman*, vol. 7 (Oxford, 1906), p. 54.

not yet considered as an improvement to the entire city. Since the regularisation of streets was still effected at the expense of the direct beneficiary, areas inhabited by citizens who were not able to meet the costs of these regularisations were probably deprived of such improvements. Moreover, in the important areas of planning and reform, the role envisaged for the municipality seems to have been that of suggestion and coordination, rather than of initiation and implementation. Article 124 of the said law, which is to be regarded as especially relevant in this context, required that the council examine and study the feasibility of establishing—not actually founding—wharves, public squares and promenades (*yatadhākar* [*al-majlis al-baladī*] *bitaʿsīs al-miyan wa-l-sahāt wa-l-muftarajāt*).<sup>83</sup> However, unlike the first municipal law, this law provided for the supply of the city with essential and much needed infrastructure, namely the supply of the city with potable water, and the installation of a sewer system. However, it did not specify how the costs of these infrastructural developments should be met.

In traditional Ottoman practice the military and the judicial corps played an important role in urban administration. This is best illustrated by the various administrative tasks traditionally attributed to the qadi, the *subaşı* and others.<sup>84</sup> The law of 1871 broke with a long tradition, when it explicitly stated that the judiciary and the military should not interfere with urban administration unless they received clear instructions to this effect from their superiors. It is probable that this prohibition was intended to reduce the overlap in power with a view to increasing efficiency and reducing the risk of conflicting interests. Therefore “persons on active military, police or judicial service within the city and those executing a concession granted by the municipality were disqualified as candidates”.<sup>85</sup>

The members of the council were not allowed to serve in the same capacity in more than one city, most probably to enhance the sense of

<sup>83</sup> Article 124 of the municipal code of 1871, *Düstür*, vol. 1, p. 650. The Arabic translation of article 124 cited above is to be found in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, p. 420. The term *miyan* is the old fashioned Lebanese vernacular plural form of the word *mināʿ*, currently pluralised as *mawānīʿ*. The word *muftarajāt* refers to open spaces, gardens and promenades.

<sup>84</sup> For a rich collection of informative Ottoman documents from the shariʿa-court register of Istanbul highlighting the role of the qadi and the *muhtesib* in Ottoman urban administration, see Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 1, pp. 302–362; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 1, pp. 291–347; Rosenthal, *Politics of Dependency*, pp. 29–48; and Robert Mantran, “Hisba”. In: *EF*, vol. 3, pp. 489–490. For a further figure who played a major role in the pre-Tanzimat urban administration of Tripoli-Libya, see Nora Lafi’s chapters IV and V on *cheikh al-bilād* in her book, *Une ville du Maghreb entre ancien régime et réformes ottomanes*, pp. 105–182.

<sup>85</sup> Article 114 of the municipal law of 1871, *Düstür*, vol. 1, p. 649.

belonging to the city, which, in turn, would reflect positively on the performance of the municipal council.<sup>86</sup>

On 25 December 1869 (1286) vague instructions had been given to the security forces (*al-ʿasākir al-ḍabṭiyya*) to assist the municipality in its urban services.<sup>87</sup> However, it seems that the *ḍabṭiyya* repeatedly neglected their obligations towards the municipality, perceiving their responsibility for the welfare of the city merely as one facet of their extremely broad law enforcement duties. This, perhaps, was the underlying reason for issuing a more detailed directive to the security forces in the form of an imperial sanction (*irade-i seniye*) on 25 April 1870 (23 *Muharram* 1287),<sup>88</sup> consisting of fifty-seven items. This *irade* clarified the responsibilities of the *ḍabṭiyya* towards the municipality; they, so the *irade* stated, were in charge of market control as well as implementing municipal regulations, including the construction law. They were also required to coordinate with the *vali* and to obey his instructions when it came to civil affairs (*umur-i mülkiye*). Yet the security forces were neither responsible to the *vali* nor to the municipality; they were directly responsible to the commander of the regiment (*alay beyi*) in the capital of the province, who in turn was responsible to the security forces general (*mushiriyyat al-dābiṭa*) in Istanbul. Here one notes that the securing of urban tranquility was incumbent upon two different non-specialised bodies, namely the *ḍabṭiyya* and the above-mentioned inspectors. The duplication of surveillance bodies might have exacerbated the problem of jurisdiction and lack of administrative responsibilities. One might assume that when necessity compelled the municipality to intervene directly in urban affairs, such intervention was often ineffective or ill-coordinated, given that the various supervisory bodies and functionaries were not directly connected to the municipality in a hierarchical manner, but linked to it only through the office of the *vali*. Accordingly, the success of the municipality in fulfilling its urban services remained largely dependent on the benevolence and cooperation of the *vali* and the commander of the *ḍabṭiyya*.<sup>89</sup>

The 1871 law reflected some of the developments that took place in Istanbul following the death of the Grand Vizier Fuad Pasha (1815–1869) and the appointment of his successor Âli Pasha (1815–1871). The latter reorganised some of the ministries that had formerly been under the direct control of the Prime Minister. He separated the Ministry of the Interior

<sup>86</sup> Article 116 of the municipal law of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, p. 649.

<sup>87</sup> An Arabic translation of the instructions was published in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 659–660.

<sup>88</sup> An Arabic translation of the entire text of the *irade* was published in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 672–683.

<sup>89</sup> Rosenthal, *Politics of Dependency*, p. 32.



from the Prime Minister's office, and made it responsible for the central administration of all internal matters in the Empire, including municipalities. Article 128 of the 1871 municipal law charged the municipal council with drawing up a budget in advance of the fiscal year, forecasting the costs of projects, reconciling them with expected revenues, and then presenting the results to the Ministry of the Interior for final approval.<sup>90</sup> Thus, municipalities came under the scrutiny of the Ministry of the Interior in basic financial matters. The new tasks assigned to the municipality by the central authorities, namely the preparation of a detailed budget, functioned as an impetus towards more coordinated planning and allocation of revenue on the part of the municipal council. The greater financial responsibilities—the existence of a detailed and binding list of expected income—may have implied a more efficient collection of taxes.

A common feature of both the 1867 and 1871 municipal codes is the style and diction in which they were formulated. They were written in a somewhat diffident language, which was quite unusual for laws and regulations. It seems worth mentioning that neither of the above-mentioned codes had any punitive articles in case the municipal council failed to rise to what was expected from it, or failed to fulfil its responsibilities in accordance with the letter of the law. The mild language of the codes as well as the absence of punitive articles seem to reflect a generally prevalent attitude—a survival of the old concept of urban administration—which did not conceive of the relationship between the authorities and the city dwellers as one based on the rights and duties of citizenship. On the contrary, to serve on the municipal council was considered as a favour rendered by individual council members to the urban community. The law did not consider their service as a duty, but as a reflection of the virtuous character of the members, their concern and enthusiasm (*mawqūfun ʿalā ghirat wa iqdām al-majlis*).

### C The Regulations of the Public Medical Department

One of the main preoccupations of the municipality was public health. The municipality was deemed responsible for constructing a sewer system and providing special horse-drawn wagons for the collection of refuse, for keeping the streets free of rubbish and muddy puddles, especially in the market place, and for protecting the city against the hazards of fire. However, in addition to these obligations, the municipality became much more involved in public health matters when it assumed the responsibility of providing direct medical treatment to the city dwellers under its

<sup>90</sup> Article 128 of the municipal law of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, p. 651.

jurisdiction. The regulation of the Public Medical Department (*idare-i umumiye-yi tıbbiye nizamnamesidir/nizām idārat al-ṭıbb al-ʿumūmiyya*)<sup>91</sup> of 20 August 1871 (3 *Jumādā al-Ūlā* 1288) stipulated that a medical department should be established in each municipality, consisting of a licensed physician and a number of assistants. In addition, a municipal pharmacy was to be set up. The salary which the medical doctor was entitled to receive from the municipality ranged from 1000 to 1500 piastres per month, depending on the size and location of the city.<sup>92</sup>

The regulation consisted of 20 detailed articles. These articles clearly defined the duties and obligations of the municipal medical doctor and pharmacist, and unequivocally stated the measures they were requested to take in order to secure public health. The regulation also included clear punitive measures in case the municipal medical officials did not answer the call of duty in the case of an emergency, or did not fulfil their obligations properly. As mentioned above, the supplement to Article 264 of the Ottoman Penal Code (16 April 1869) could be seen as one of the measures taken by the Ottoman Empire to fight and eradicate the scourge of cholera. It was also assumed that the lawmakers were willing to increase the jurisdiction and the responsibilities of the new municipalities, and that they deemed them and their unspecialised security and inspector forces capable of implementing this deterring article concerning public health throughout the wide ranges of the Empire. Therefore, as of 1869, the municipal institutions were envisaged as capable of playing an important and efficient role in fighting and controlling the health hazards facing the Empire. With the establishment of the Public Medical Department the municipalities were entrusted and made directly responsible for public health within their area of jurisdiction. Delegating such a crucial task to the municipalities made the spreading of health care throughout the Empire more possible, and easier and quicker to realise.

A translation of a few selected articles will convey an idea of the new responsibilities of the municipalities and their medical doctors, as well as of the assertive and imperative tone of these directives:

- Article 5: The municipal doctor should examine patients free of charge twice a week, in a clinic specially designated by the municipality. He

<sup>91</sup> The Ottoman text of the regulation of the Public Medical Department (*idare-i umumiye-yi tıbbiye nizamnamesidir*) was published in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 800–803; a semi-official Arabic translation called *nizām idārat al-ṭıbb al-ʿumūmiyya* was published in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 713–715. An unofficial French translation, which Young referred to as “traduction non garantie”, is available in Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3 (Oxford, 1905), pp. 205–207.

<sup>92</sup> Shakir al-Khuri, *Majmaʿ al-masarrāt* (Beirut, 1908); 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beirut, 1985), p. 261.

ought not to charge a single *para* when he examines patients during these two days, regardless of whether the patients are rich or poor.<sup>93</sup>

- Article 7: The doctor is obliged to show enthusiasm in his work and hurry to examine patients regardless of their financial position. He is also obliged to visit the patients in their own homes, if their condition does not allow them to move.<sup>94</sup>
- Article 8: Those who demand that the doctor visit them at home and are able to pay for this service will pay the doctor the official rate specified by the municipality.<sup>95</sup>
- Article 9: Carelessness on the side of the municipal doctor in the fulfilment of the above-mentioned obligations without a valid excuse necessitates his dismissal from post.<sup>96</sup>
- Article 12: The municipal doctor is ordered to examine the topography of the place where he practises his profession. In case of the presence of endemic diseases he is to discover the cause of the endemic disease in question, and to determine the proper health measures necessary to eradicate it.<sup>97</sup>
- Article 13: The municipal doctor is obliged to present a report to the department of health in Istanbul on health conditions in his area of service within a maximum period of nine months from the day of his appointment by the municipality.<sup>98</sup>
- Article 17: The municipal pharmacy should be managed by a licensed pharmacist under the supervision of the municipal doctor.<sup>99</sup>
- Article 19: Medication prescribed to poor patients by the municipal doctor is to be dispensed free of charge by the pharmacist. These prescriptions should be presented to the mayor on a weekly basis.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Article 5 of the Public Medical Department, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 800; Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3, p. 206.

<sup>94</sup> Article 7 of the Public Medical Department, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 800; Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3, p. 206.

<sup>95</sup> Article 8 of the Public Medical Department, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 801; Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3, p. 206.

<sup>96</sup> Article 9 of the Public Medical Department, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 801; Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3, p. 206.

<sup>97</sup> Article 12 of the Public Medical Department, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 801; Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3, pp. 206–207.

<sup>98</sup> Article 13 of the Public Medical Department, *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 801–802; Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3, p. 207.

<sup>99</sup> Article 17 of the Public Medical Department, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 802; Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3, p. 207.

<sup>100</sup> Article 19 of the Public Medical Department, *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 802–803; Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3, p. 207.

- Article 20: Medication prescribed to wealthy patients is to be charged according to the official rate specified by the medical department in Istanbul. An official price list should be posted in an accessible place in the pharmacy.<sup>101</sup>

The medical department regulation represents another marked departure from the previous laws concerning the municipality. In these regulations we witness, for the first time, the introduction of the idea of the rights of the city dwellers vis-à-vis their municipality, regardless of their financial situation. It was the duty of the municipality to attend to the medical needs of its citizens by appointing a medical doctor. This duty actually imposed a heavy financial responsibility upon the municipality, which it had to cover from its own resources. The salary of the medical doctor alone was almost equal to the amount that the municipality was allowed to spend on all miscellaneous items according to the 1867 code. The income of the municipality mainly accrued from licensing construction or from fees collected upon the certification of lease contracts, that is, from tax payers to be found mainly among property owners, or, in other words, the upper stratum of society. However, medical services were not intended for this class in particular. On the contrary, the beneficiaries were mostly the poor of the city. There was a major loophole in this law. It did not provide a specific definition of the term “poor”. The exemption of poor patients from payment was left to the discretion of the municipal medical doctor.

One could hold that this law also reflects the early beginnings of the modern idea of public social welfare, as opposed to the traditional idea of private charity delivered to a specific religious community, either directly or through different pious foundations (*awqāf*).<sup>102</sup> It is also worth mentioning that the wording of this regulation differed completely from the codes of 1867 and 1871. The general tone of the medical directives was not mild or polite; on the contrary, it was clear and imperative. The diction was precise, the instructions were expressed in straightforward, concise and forceful articles. Most probably the directives for the Public Medical Department were either drafted or written upon the suggestions of one or more of the medical doctors teaching at the Imperial School of Medicine (*Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-yi Şahâne*) in Istanbul at the time. Interestingly enough, there is

<sup>101</sup> Article 20 of the Public Medical Department, *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 803; Young, *Corps de droits Ottoman*, vol. 3, p. 207.

<sup>102</sup> In order to understand the beginning of the idea of public social welfare, one must compare and contrast the regulations of the Public Medical Department with clause 10 of the instructions attached to the municipal law of 1867, concerning the consignment of the poor to their original quarters, where they were expected to live on alms and private charity.

a striking resemblance between some articles in these directives and the Hippocratic Oath. In this law we witness, for the first time, the inclusion of clear punitive articles directed against the municipal doctors who failed to respond to the call of duty. In other words, this law recognised the rights of citizens to medical and related services.

The laws and their amendments discussed so far were mostly drafted by the Council of State (*şurayı devlet*). The amendments were most probably made after a process of assessing and evaluating the application of the published laws. However, this process is still unknown to researchers to the present day. From the laws themselves one can deduce the purposes of publishing such laws as well as the perceptions of the lawmakers in question. However, the impact of these laws on the provincial society and its daily life are definitely to be detected from different sources and from a different perspective, namely that of the provincial cities. It is still unclear how, or even whether, the representatives of the provinces contributed to the development and assessment of the laws promulgated prior to the constitutional period. It is to be assumed that they did not play any role in the preparation of the laws. However, this state of affairs changed during the constitutional period and the representatives of the provinces were allowed to play a role, and so they did. The contribution of the parliamentarians to the discussion of the laws, their comments and observations will constitute a major part of the following chapter. It will also include information about the reception of all the municipal laws by the Beirut public throughout the period this study is concerned with.

### III The Municipal Code for the Provinces of 1877, the Ottoman Constitution and the Parliament

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1876 (7 *Dhū al-Hijja* 1293) Sultan Abdülhamid II (reigned 1876–1909) promulgated the Basic Law or the Constitution of the Ottoman Empire (*kanun-ı esasî*).<sup>1</sup> Article 112 of the Constitution is of particular significance to the development of Ottoman municipalities. This article of the Constitution reads as follows:

“Anayasasının 112. maddesi: Umur-u belediyye [sic.] Dersaadet ve taşralarda bi’lntihab teşkil olunacak, devair-i belediye meclisleriyle idare olunacak ve bu dairelerin suret-i teşkili ve [ve]zaifi ve azanın suret-i intihabı kanun-u mahsus ile tayin kılınacaktır.”<sup>2</sup>

A number of outspoken pledges that were decisive to the development of a viable municipal institution were made in this article. The Constitution guaranteed that urban amenities would be provided by the municipalities which were to be established throughout the Empire. A special law was to be drafted for this purpose. This law would designate the functions of the municipality and its organisation, as well as the appropriate method of electing (*intihab/intikhāb*) the members of the municipal council. Therefore, the Constitution not only explicitly professed the basic right of Ottoman subjects/citizens to municipal amenities and services, but also

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<sup>1</sup> Complete Arabic translations of the Basic Law were published in 1876 and 1877 in many newspapers and compilations of laws. See, for example, *Jāmi‘at al-qawānīn*, new ed. (Beirut, 1893), pp. 5–23; this translation was reprinted in Beirut in 1893, i.e. 15 years after the abrogation of the Constitution. The Arabic newspaper published in Istanbul, *Al-Jawā‘ib*, published an official translation of the basic law; this translation was reprinted in Shidyāq, *Kanz al-rahā‘ib*, vol. 6, pp. 5–27. The official Ottoman Turkish text of the Constitution is available in *Düstür*, IV, pp. 4–20.

<sup>2</sup> Article 112 of the Ottoman Constitution is cited in Ortaylı, *Tanzimatdan Cumhuriyete*, p. 151. The Official Ottoman text of this article is available in *Düstür*, vol. 4, p. 18. For Arabic translations of Article 112 of the Basic Law, see *Jāmi‘at al-qawānīn*, pp. 21–22, and Shidyāq, *Kanz al-rahā‘ib*, vol. 6, p. 25.

recognised and established their right and obligation to choose their representatives on the municipal councils by way of direct elections (*intihab/intikhāb*). Consequently, this article made the municipal council potentially responsible and answerable to the electorate. The promises put forward by article 112 of the Constitution to prepare new municipal laws were honoured. A new municipal law for the capital, Istanbul, and another one for the provinces were drafted and presented in April 1877 to the lower house of the Ottoman parliament (*meclis-i meb'usan*).

### A The Municipal Code for the Provinces of 1877

A new municipal law in accordance with the spirit and the letter of Article 112 of the Constitution was discussed and ratified by the Ottoman parliament (*meclis-i meb'usan*) and subsequently published as an imperial decree (*irade-i seniye*) on 5 October 1877 (27 *Ramḍān* 1294). This law marked a watershed in municipal institutional history, and represented the onset of modern urban institutional thinking in the Ottoman Empire. The most significant innovations in the new code were to be found in some of its provisions. Chapter III of this code (Articles 18–38) decreed that the municipal council was to be directly elected by eligible citizens. The relationship between the mayor and the council and between the council and the governor was clarified. The sway, jurisdiction and the activities of municipalities were enlarged to include a broader spectrum of urban services. The fact that it was drafted by the Council of State (*şurayı devlet*), but discussed and ratified by the short-lived Ottoman parliament—and not by the Sublime Porte or one of its specialised juridical committees—was a further novelty. All previous attempts to reform the provincial urban administration had remained within the framework of traditional assumptions. The urban administrative reforms introduced by the 1867 and 1871 codes had amounted, essentially, to a civil and secular modified version of the age-old *ihtisāb* institutions. Consequently, these reforms had stopped short of creating viable institutions, capable of meeting the increasing needs for urban services and amenities in a rapidly changing urban society. The new needs of Ottoman urban society came about with the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy. This integration necessitated an immediate enlargement of ports, wharves, and storage areas, as well as a planned transformation of the physical structure of marketplaces, if not of the cities in general.<sup>3</sup>

The most important innovations that were introduced in this code will be discussed in detail below. Those concerning the multifaceted functions

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<sup>3</sup> Ortaylı, “Administrative Organisation during the Tanzimat Period”, p. 324.

of the municipal council will be presented in the form of a list, thus facilitating a comparison between the newly envisaged tasks of the municipality and former ones decreed in the previous laws of 1867 and 1871.

### 1 The Election of the Council Members

The municipal law of 1877 was divided into 67 articles; more than a fourth of this corpus was dedicated to the elections of the municipal council.<sup>4</sup> Chapter III of the law comprised twenty articles (Articles 18–38), meticulously and exhaustively defining the electoral procedures. It appears as though the legislators deemed it necessary to enlighten the body of electors about their newly acquired electoral rights and obligations. Article 18 specified the attributes of the electors; the electoral right was restricted to male voters. All electors were to be of Ottoman nationality and above the age of twenty-five, to have paid a property tax (*vergi*) of at least fifty piasters, to possess civil and personal rights, and not to have been convicted of any crime.<sup>5</sup>

In order to qualify for nomination aspirants needed to be Ottoman male subjects, neither claimants to any non-Ottoman citizenship nor to foreign protection. The nominees were to be at least thirty years old, to pay a property tax of a hundred piasters or more, to reside in the area in which they stood as candidates, to have proficient knowledge of Turkish,<sup>6</sup> to possess civil and personal rights, and not to have a criminal record. Physicians, municipal officials, persons on active military, police, and juridical service,

<sup>4</sup> The Ottoman text of this law was published in *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp. 538–553. The same Ottoman version is also available in Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, pp. 69–83. The Ottoman version transcribed into Latin script is available in the new edition of Osman Nuri's five-volume work republished in Istanbul in 1995, in nine volumes, see Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, pp. 1658–1671. An Arabic translation by Yusuf 'Araman was published in Beirut four times between 1877 and 1889 under the title *Qānūn al-baladiyya al-jadīd al-ladhī qarrarahu majlis al-mab'ūthīn*. The fourth edition of this translation was reprinted in a compilation of Ottoman laws: *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn*, new edition (Beirut, 1893). This compilation retained the original pagination of each translated law. An unofficial French translation is available in Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1905), pp. 69–84. This is the only provincial municipal law published in Young's seven-volume work. Young warns the reader that the translation is not official, i.e. a 'traduction non garantie'. The *Législation Ottomane* which is an earlier compilation of French translations of Ottoman laws by Grégoire Aristarchi Bey includes the codes of 1867 and 1871, but not the latest law of 1877.

<sup>5</sup> Article 18 of the 1877 municipal law, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn*, *Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 7; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 541; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 73. Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 72; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1661.

<sup>6</sup> The requirement that the nominees should have a proficient knowledge of Ottoman Turkish triggered a debate in the Ottoman parliament. The deputy of Beirut Niqula al-Naqqash demanded that this precondition should be dropped, see the debate referred to in this chapter, below.



and those having a concession granted by the municipality or municipal tax-farmers were not eligible as candidates.<sup>7</sup> The exclusion of medical doctors was probably due to the fact that during the late nineteenth century there was a lack of physicians in the Ottoman Empire, and that they were thus not allowed to partake in activities which might divert their attention, time and energy from their medical practice.

Preparations for elections would commence at the beginning of November every two years.<sup>8</sup> The first step in the process of municipal elections consisted in asking the religious leaders of all the confessions in the city and the *mukhtārs* of the different quarters to nominate two persons to serve on the electoral college (*intihab encümeni/lajnat al-intikhāb*). They were expected to submit at least twice as many names as the number of persons eventually to be chosen by lot.<sup>9</sup> The task of the electoral college was to draw up a register (*defter/daftar*) of all the inhabitants eligible for nomination in the district and of those who had the right to vote. This register would be verified by comparison with the cadastral records before November 25. On that day copies of the register would be posted at the entrance of all mosques and other places of worship in the city.<sup>10</sup> These election registers were to specify the different days of elections in the different electoral districts of the city. It also had to provide the public with a clear explanation of the legal procedure of redressing any error that might have occurred in the process of collecting the names of those eligible to vote.<sup>11</sup> Appeals concerning the validity of the register could be made to the electoral college within eight days from the date of their posting.<sup>12</sup> In turn, the electoral college had to respond within eight days to the objection raised by those who considered that their names had been unjustly

<sup>7</sup> Article 19, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 7; *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp. 541–542; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 73; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, pp. 72–73; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1661.

<sup>8</sup> Article 20, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, 7–8; *Düstur*, vol. 4, 542; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, 73; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 73; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1661.

<sup>9</sup> Article 21, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 8; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 542; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 73; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 73; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 3, p. 1661.

<sup>10</sup> Article 23, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 8; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 542; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 74; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 73; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1662.

<sup>11</sup> Article 29, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 9; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 543; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 74; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 74; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1662.

<sup>12</sup> Article 24, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 8–9; *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp. 542–543; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 74; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 73; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1662.

omitted from the election register.<sup>13</sup> If the electoral college did not redress the alleged blunder, the demurrers had the right to resort to the court of first instance in the city within ten days.<sup>14</sup> The court had to announce its irrevocable decision within a week's time.<sup>15</sup> It should be kept in mind that the electoral college—which was composed along sectarian lines—was not in a position to influence municipal elections, as it merely performed the clerical work by preparing the election registers.

The elections were to last from February first until the tenth of the same month every two years. Each voter was entitled to cast a single ballot on which he was to write clearly six to twelve names of the eligible nominees.<sup>16</sup> On the last day of the election the ballot boxes would be opened using both the keys of the mayor and the eldest member of the electoral college. Ballots would be sorted immediately in order to announce the result to the *vali* who would confirm the members elect in their posts.<sup>17</sup>

## 2 The Municipal Council (*meclis-i belediye/al-majlis al-baladī*) and the Mayor (*meclis-i belediye reis-i/ra'īs al-majlis al-baladī*)

The municipal council was to be composed of Ottoman subjects. Six to twelve members, depending on the size of the city, were to be elected for a period of four years.<sup>18</sup> Half of the council's members were replaced every two years, without losing their right to re-election. Which half of the council would not rotate was determined by the drawing of lots.<sup>19</sup> No

<sup>13</sup> Article 25, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 9; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 543; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 74; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 73; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1662.

<sup>14</sup> Pasragraph 16, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 9; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 541; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 72; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 72; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 1, p. 1660.

<sup>15</sup> Article 27, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 9; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 543; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 74; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 74; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1662.

<sup>16</sup> Article 30, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 9–10; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 543; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 74; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 74; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, pp. 1662–1663.

<sup>17</sup> Article 33, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 10; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 544; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 75; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 75; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1663.

<sup>18</sup> Article 4, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 4–5; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 540; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, pp. 71–72; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 71; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, pp. 1659–1660.

<sup>19</sup> Article 36, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 11; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 544; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 75; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 75; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1663.

person could be member of two different councils at the same time.<sup>20</sup> The municipal council was to meet semi-weekly. It was the duty of the municipal council to discuss, propose and act on all issues which fell under the jurisdiction of the municipality as well as to study and approve the annual budget and all contracts made in the name of the municipality. Once a month all municipal receipts and expenditures were examined.<sup>21</sup>

The mayor, or ‘the president of the council’ as the law states, was first among equals vis-à-vis the rest of the council members. He was to be appointed by the *vali* from among the elected council members. He presided over meetings of the council and he could call for extra sessions over and above the regular semi-weekly meetings. However, he was responsible for the execution of all the decisions made by the municipal council, and he was expected to keep daily office hours in the offices of the municipality.<sup>22</sup> His only privilege was to receive a monthly salary, whereas the rest of the council members received no remuneration for their services.<sup>23</sup>

### 3 The Municipal Assembly (*cem’iyet-i belediye/al-jam’iyya al-baladiyya*)

Bearing in mind that the law was discussed and ratified by members of the Ottoman parliament representing different provinces of the Empire, one may assume that the members of the *meh’usan meclisi* were aware of the difficulty of applying a uniform municipal code throughout the different provinces. In order to overcome this obstacle in application, an innovation was introduced, thus making the law more flexible. The provincial authorities were to become more involved in municipal affairs, especially in decision-making processes. A mixed municipal assembly was to be formed of the local administrative council and the municipal council.<sup>24</sup> The municipal

<sup>20</sup> Article 7, *Jāmi’at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 5; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 540; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 72; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-i belediye*, vol. 2, p. 75; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-i belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1660.

<sup>21</sup> Article 44, *Jāmi’at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 14; *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp. 546–547; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, pp. 77–78; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-i belediye*, vol. 2, p. 77; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-i belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1666.

<sup>22</sup> Article 42, *Jāmi’at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 13; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 546; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 77; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-i belediye*, vol. 2, pp. 76–77; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-i belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1665.

<sup>23</sup> Article 4, *Jāmi’at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 4–5; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 540; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, pp. 71–72; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-i belediye*, vol. 2, p. 71; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-i belediyye*, vol. 4, pp. 1659–1660.

<sup>24</sup> Article 50, *Jāmi’at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 16; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 548; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 79; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-i belediye*, vol. 2, p. 79; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-i belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1667.

assembly was to hold two semi-annual sessions, of fifteen days each. The first session was to be held in April, the second month of the fiscal year, to assess the achievements of the municipality. The second was to convene in November, with the purpose of planning new projects and preparing a budget for the following year.<sup>25</sup> The decisions of the municipal assembly as well as those of the municipal council were to be made on the basis of a simple majority, and the quorum was half the members plus one.<sup>26</sup> The municipal assembly had the right to propose amendments to the municipal code, based on what it believed to be most suitable for the peculiar conditions of the city. Once approved by the *vali* and the general council of the entire province the suggested amendments were to be announced and implemented.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4 The Finance and Functions of the Municipality

The tasks of the municipal council and its immediate functionaries became much more diverse than those decreed by the 1871 code.<sup>28</sup> The duties of the municipality covered almost all conceivable facets of urban life. To facilitate the execution of these responsibilities, the revenue of the municipality was increased for the third time since the promulgation of the 1867 code.<sup>29</sup> The municipality acquired the legal right to possess and manage property. Its allocated dues increased in number. The municipality became entitled to levy a tax on daily business transactions in the city, like the slaughtering of cattle and the use of weights, measures and platform balances in the markets.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the income of the municipality, for the first time since 1867, now corresponded to the size of the city and its business transactions. Increasing the municipal revenue was the

<sup>25</sup> Article 52, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 16; *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp. 548–549; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 79; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 79; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1667.

<sup>26</sup> Articles 11 and 54, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 5 and 17; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 540 and 549; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, pp. 72 and 80; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, pp. 71 and 79; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, pp. 1660 and 1668.

<sup>27</sup> Article 53, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 16–17; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 549; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, pp. 79–80; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 79; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, pp. 1667–1668.

<sup>28</sup> For the tasks of the municipal council as specified in the municipal laws of 1867 and 1871, see Chapter II, above.

<sup>29</sup> For the finances of the municipality as decreed by the previous municipal laws, see Chapter II, above.

<sup>30</sup> Article 29, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 11–12; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 543; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 74; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 74; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1662.

subject of intense debate in the lower house of the Ottoman parliament. The debates show that taxation was not uniform throughout the Empire; some taxes were collected in certain provinces but neglected in others, and taxes earmarked for municipal expenditure were collected for the central treasury.<sup>31</sup>

In order to portray the expanded tasks which now fell under the municipality's jurisdiction and to identify the new civic consciousness which the 1877 code incorporated, a detailed description of the municipality's services, responsibilities and obligations as decreed by Article 3, the most extensive clause of the municipal law, are reproduced below.<sup>32</sup>

#### a) Infrastructure, Construction and Maintenance Functions

Among the duties which fell within the jurisdiction of the municipality and had a direct bearing on the city's daily functioning were the following:

- The supply of the city with potable water;
- The procurement of fire-fighting equipment and the establishment of a fire department;
- The construction of wharves and spacious docks in their vicinity;
- The maintenance of public gardens and squares;
- The lighting of streets;
- The embellishment of the city;
- The regularisation of roads, alleys and sewer conduits.

#### b) Administrative and Control Functions included the following:

- The inspection of all carriages and horses in the city, organisation of the flow of traffic, including fixing reasonable fares for the transportation services throughout the city and specifying special stops for public carts;
- The careful and meticulous supervision of all construction projects in the city, including public buildings under construction or renovation;
- The surveillance of public assemblies in cooperation with the security forces (*al-ʿasākir al-dabṭiyya*);
- The supervision of weights and measures as well as the control of prices and the quality of the products on sale in the city;

<sup>31</sup> See the discussion on the role of the parliament in amending the draft of the municipal code of 1877, below.

<sup>32</sup> Article 3, *Jāmiʿat al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 2–4; *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp. 538–540; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, pp. 70–71; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, pp. 69–70; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, pp. 1658–1659.

- The implementation of the lease contract regulation (*nizām al-qonṭrāto*);
- Keeping an up-to-date population register;
- Keeping a property register which was to include the name of the owner, the value of the property and its estimated rental value as well as a detailed plan of the property;
- Inspection of the sailing boats in the port as well as the specification of safety measures concerning passengers and their cargo;

c) Public Health Responsibilities included:

- The regular collection of refuse and its disposal in special locations outside the city or into the sea;
- The inspection of hygiene conditions in inns, restaurants, coffee houses, theatres (*tiyatro*), circuses (*canbazhane*), fairs and marketplaces;
- The construction of abattoirs outside the residential areas of the city, where all the butchering was to take place;
- The daily inspection of bakeries to control the quality of the bread;
- The daily inspection of butcheries;
- The construction of public latrines in suitable places in the city and control of their maintenance;
- The regular inspection of tanneries and catgut factories that were liable to putrefaction and emitting foul and pungent odours;
- The demolition of condemned buildings and constructions deemed hazardous to public safety.

d) Social Welfare Functions included:

- Establishing orphanages and cost-free vocational schools to house and educate orphans as well as deaf, mute, blind, or poor children in the city;
- Establishing a municipal hospital to offer free medical care for the destitute and needy inhabitants of the city;
- Providing the physically able beggars with appropriate work, as, for example, by employing them in the fire department of the municipality. Children of disabled mendicants were to be educated in the municipal vocational school.

## 5 An Assessment of the 1877 Municipal Code

Notwithstanding the verbatim incorporation of some provisions from the previous municipal codes, the 1877 code introduced major innovations regarding the elections, functions, revenue, sway and jurisdiction of the municipality. For the first time, the municipality was regarded as a corporate body from a legal point of view. Hence, the municipal council acquired

the civil and personal rights of any Ottoman subject.<sup>33</sup> It could own property, dispose of it at its own discretion, and defend its claim to it as it deemed suitable without consulting the central authorities or the *vali*. This code strengthened the legal position of the municipality vis-à-vis concessionaires who failed to abide by the specifications determined in the concession's list of conditions (*şartname*).

It was pointed out earlier that the 1867 code did not provide any information concerning the legal and professional relationship between the council members and the mayor, nor did it elaborate on the manner in which decisions should be made in the council's meetings. The 1877 code paid special attention to this point. It included a number of articles (Article 4–17) that could be considered as bylaws governing the functions and the internal affairs of the municipal council. In spite of the fact that council members were not compensated for their services, they were obliged to attend the municipal meetings regularly. In case a member showed indifference to the affairs of the city, for example by skipping three consecutive meetings without a valid excuse, the council was obliged to consider him as having resigned and to replace him with the person who had received the next highest number of votes in the municipal elections.

According to the new code, the municipal inspector (*müfettiş/mufattish*) and sergeants (*çavuşlar/jāwishiyya*) were to be selected, appointed and paid by the municipality. The criteria for selection remained as specified by the “directives concerning the selection of inspectors, their status and their functions”, which was promulgated on the same day as the 1867 code.<sup>34</sup> In contrast to the directives of 1867, the sergeants were now directly responsible to the municipal council. Consequently, the municipal council directly

<sup>33</sup> Article 3 of the municipal code of 1877 did not only specify the functions of the municipality, but elaborated on the legal rights of the municipality as a corporate body. Article 3, *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 2–4; *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp. 538–540; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, pp. 70–71; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-i belediye*, vol. 2, pp. 69–70; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-i belediyye*, vol. 4, pp. 1658–1659. A comparison of the rights of the Ottoman municipalities with those of Alexandria suggests that Ottoman law introduced this idea more than a decade before it was adopted in Khadival Egypt. Gabriel Baer maintains that the municipality of Alexandria, which was the first municipality to be established in Egypt, acquired its legal rights as a corporate body in 1890, thirteen years later than its Ottoman counterparts, see Gabriel Baer, *Studies in the Social History of Modern Egypt* (Chicago, 1969), p. 205. According to André Raymond the city of Alexandria was granted the municipal status in 1890, while other Egyptian cities could not claim such a status until 1912, see André Raymond, *Cairo* (Cambridge Massachusetts, 2000), p. 327.

<sup>34</sup> Articles 56 and 57, in *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 17–18; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 549; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 80; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-i belediye*, vol. 2, p. 80; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-i belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1668.

controlled the functionaries who were entrusted with the enforcement of its orders and regulations. This was a solution for the overlap of administrative responsibilities, between the municipality on the one hand, and the *vali* and the commander of the security forces (*zabtiye/dabtiyya*) on the other. It was suggested earlier that this overlap, in particular, had contributed considerably to delaying, sometimes even obstructing, the work of the municipalities.

Chapter VII of the law (Articles 56–61) defined the prerogatives and the tasks of the municipal sergeants and inspectors. The inspector was granted the rank of commander of the municipal sergeants. The municipal sergeants were to patrol their beats regularly every day. On patrol they were the representatives of the dignified solemnity of the municipality; they were, as a result, not allowed to smoke, to carry an umbrella or a walking stick, to frequent coffee houses or theatres, or to speak with people in the streets unless in the line of duty.<sup>35</sup> In order to guarantee the proper conduct and the enthusiasm of the municipal sergeants in the fulfilment of their assigned tasks a punitive measure (Article 67) was included in the code. In case the sergeants did not abide by the letter of the municipal orders, they risked a considerable deduction from their salaries. If the misconduct was repeated, their employment was terminated.<sup>36</sup> Not only did the municipality enjoy control over its law enforcing functionaries, but it was empowered to use coercive measures against the city-dwellers who did not pay their arrears to the municipality.<sup>37</sup>

According to the code of 1867, one of the responsibilities of the municipal council was to see to putting an end to destitution in the city (Article 10). The internal security forces (*al-<sup>ç</sup>asākir al-dabtiyya*) and the inspectors were in charge of enforcing this in the streets and markets of the city. All beggars were to be apprehended on sight; those older than thirteen years were to be handed over to the provincial administration; the younger ones and female mendicants would be handed over to their original quarters, whose inhabitants were responsible for their upkeep.<sup>38</sup> In the code of 1877 (Article 3), one of the social welfare activities of the municipality was to

<sup>35</sup> Article 61, in *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, pp. 18–19; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 550; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 81; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 81; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediye*, vol. 4, p. 1669.

<sup>36</sup> Article 67 of the municipal code of 1877, in *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 23; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 553; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 84; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 83; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediye*, vol. 4, p. 1671.

<sup>37</sup> Article 40, in *Jāmi'at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 12; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 545; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 76; Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, pp. 76–77; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediye*, vol. 4, p. 1665.

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed discussion of Article 10 of the municipal code of 1867 and a comparison with parallel cases in France, see Chapter II, above.



provide the physically able beggars with appropriate work, as, for example, by employing them in the fire department of the municipality. Children of disabled mendicants were to be educated in the municipal vocational school. The destitute city dwellers were to be offered free medical care at the municipal hospital.<sup>39</sup> The difference between the two laws is striking. The involvement of the municipality in social welfare activities is a marked departure from the 1867 and 1871 codes. A new consciousness appears to have developed involving the recognition that city dwellers, regardless of their social and economic standing, possessed rights vis-à-vis the municipality of their city. Social welfare and health care became the joint responsibility of all tax-payers in the city. These responsibilities were conducted through the apparatus of a modern secular institution, the municipality, on behalf of the city which was in many ways responsible for these services.

The European powers, France, Britain, Russia, and Prussia (Germany after 1871), each in its own way, and for different reasons, competed in attending to the wellbeing of various groups within the Ottoman Empire, especially in Syria after the 1860 events.<sup>40</sup> From an Ottoman standpoint this foreign interference was considered as a grave threat to the peace, stability, and common loyalty of the heterogeneous Ottoman population.<sup>41</sup> As a reaction to this clear and present danger, the Ottoman parliament entrusted the municipalities with social welfare and medical care responsibilities, in order to enhance the subjects' sense of belonging to the state.

<sup>39</sup> This clause in the law corresponds to the wish of Ahmad Faris al-Shidyāq, which he expressed in his book *Al-Sāq 'alā al-sāq* published in 1855. In it he urged his society to emulate European institutions concerned with social welfare and medical care, see Chapter I, above.

<sup>40</sup> To acquire a detailed picture derived from primary Ottoman archival documents on the different missionary institutions throughout Ottoman Syria, their wide geographical distribution, their nationalities, their religious convictions, their orders and their wide range of social welfare, educational and medical services, see Abd al-Rahim Abu Husayn and Salih Sa'adawi, *Al-Kanā'is al-'arabiyya fī al-sijill al-kanasī al-'uthmānī, 1869–1922* (Amman, 1998).

<sup>41</sup> For a description of the Ottoman awareness of the missionary activities in the Empire, and how they were considered by Ottoman officials to be “confusing and exciting the mind”, as well as some of the measures adopted by the state to avert the public from frequenting missionary institutions, see Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, pp. 112–134.

In this context it seems appropriate to mention that a French Jesuit priest offered to buy the former residence of Emir Bashir II (ruled Mount Lebanon 1788–1840)—the palace of *Beit al-Din*—in order to convert it into an orphanage. This plan by the Jesuits represented a serious challenge to the authority of Daud Pasha, the newly appointed governor of Mount Lebanon (governed 1861–1868), particularly because Davud Pasha himself did not have the necessary means to establish an institution of this kind. He finally bought the palace for 6000 Ottoman *lira* from the widow of Emir Bashir, and turned it into his own residence; see Khuri, *Majma' al-masarrāt*, p. 58.

## B The Parliamentary Discussions: The Municipal Code of 1877 in the Making

Almost no information is available about the process and the manner through which the municipal laws of 1867 and 1871 were drafted, assessed and amended by the Council of State.<sup>42</sup> In contrast to the ambiguity governing the development of the laws discussed in the previous chapter, an important primary source provides very significant information on the genesis of the municipal code of 1877, namely the parliamentary debates. The detailed minutes of the parliamentary debates were first edited and then published in the official gazette of the Ottoman Empire (*Takvim-i Vekayi*).<sup>43</sup> The parliamentary proceedings provide researchers of Ottoman laws with a unique opportunity to examine closely the emergence and the development of legal thinking during the early Hamidian period. The contributions of the members of the lower house of the parliament (*meclis-i meb'usan*), who discussed and tried to amend a number of articles in the proposed laws, shed some light on their political views, aspirations and perspectives.

The varied regional experiences of the members of the *meclis-i meb'usan* played an important role in their contribution to the process of law writing and decision making within the Empire. The parliamentary debates, as a primary source for the study of the political views of the representatives of Syria and their attitude to the proposed urban reforms will be used here for the first time. This will be achieved by analysing the contributions of parliamentarians in the parliamentary discussions, focusing on the two representatives from Beirut, Niqula al-Naqqash (1825–1894) and, to a lesser extent, al-Hajj Husayn Bayhum (1249/1833–1298/1881). Aided by biographical knowledge on their social and economic standing, one might safely state that they epitomised a new emerging upper stratum in Ottoman society, and that they attended to the specific interests of this class. The way in which they tried to defend and perpetuate these interests through their discussions and contributions to the drafting of the law will be scrutinised.

It is imperative to describe the municipal law of 1877 as an innovation, but it is also essential to investigate how and why these changes took place. Such an investigation will facilitate the understanding of Ottoman

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter II, above.

<sup>43</sup> These minutes were meticulously collected and transcribed into Latin script by Hakkı Tarık Us; see the two volume work of Hakkı Tarık Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan 1293=1877, zabıt ceridesi* (Istanbul, 1939 and 1954). For an assessment of this source, see Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif, "Introduction", in: Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif, eds., *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy* (Würzburg, 2010), p. 15.

municipal institutions, and the role which the parliamentarians expected them to play in transforming Ottoman society. I argued that there was a will for change and development in the Ottoman Empire at least on the level of law making. However, this development is a product of a long process of criticism, evaluation and assessment of the impact and execution of the previous laws. We can only assume that such a determination was there, given that the laws were amended and the power and sway of the municipal institution was altered and gradually increased. The assessment was, most probably, based on reports prepared by the governors or high ranking officials in the different provinces. Yet this process was repeatedly impeded or at least influenced by the view of the central authorities in Istanbul. The novelty of this last law manifests itself clearly in the willingness to share the assessment and the experiences concerning this law with the representatives of the provinces in parliament. Thus, for the first time, the amendments were not proposed by, or based upon a report prepared by, an Istanbuli bureaucrat, or a governor appointed from Istanbul, but by members of a new emerging class within the various provinces of the Empire. A considerable number of the parliamentarians were public-spirited tradesmen and large property owners who were at the same time intellectuals, politically and in many cases socially engaged in their immediate surroundings.<sup>44</sup> They were aware of the prevailing social, economic and political conditions in the Empire as a whole. This class regarded the laws in question as an opportunity to express its aspirations, extend its influence, and create an institution which might also increase its political sway. However, these aspirations were not necessarily contradictory to the common public interest, for in theory, the members of this class were interested in urban developments through the municipal institution. Such developments would reflect positively on their own economic and commercial interests, and simultaneously bring about the needed amenities and projects for the different cities of the Empire, especially those that had such a mercantile class.

### 1 A Portrait of Niqula al-Naqqash, the Deputy of Syria in the Parliament

The Beirut Niqula al-Naqqash served as a representative of Syria in the two sessions of the first Ottoman parliament. His biography stands as an example for the politically engaged and public-spirited emerging upper stratum. Since none of the Syrian parliamentarians left a known

<sup>44</sup> After enumerating a number of deputies who were rich merchants Kemal Karpat advanced the opinion that: "Practically all of them [the deputies] belonged to the upper propertied class.", see Kemal Karpat, "The Ottoman Parliament of 1877 and its Social Significance". In: *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History* (Leiden, 2002), p. 79.

autobiography—published or unpublished—the information on al-Naqqash was derived from different sources; mainly from the history of the press and a literary history of Syria in the nineteenth century.<sup>45</sup> Niqula al-Naqqash published newspaper articles including his political programme and his activities in the *meclis-i meb'usan*. He also compiled and published four plays and a number of poems written by his elder brother Marun. The introduction to this compilation includes information on the literary writings of the author as well.<sup>46</sup>

Niqula al-Naqqash was born to Maronite parents in Beirut in 1825. His family originally hailed from Sidon, but his father Elias, seeking a better opportunity for employment, moved with his family to Beirut just before the birth of his son. Elias occupied the post of dragoman at the French general consulate in his new hometown. Niqula started learning Arabic and Syriac at a very young age. After mastering both these languages he learnt Italian, the language of commerce at the time.<sup>47</sup> His elder brother Marun (1817–1855) taught him Ottoman Turkish, French and the European method of bookkeeping.<sup>48</sup> His knowledge of Ottoman Turkish and foreign languages qualified him to occupy the post of chief secretary (*baş katib*) of the customs house in Beirut. In the meantime he independently improved his Turkish and studied Arabic with some of the most prominent scholars in Beirut, such as Ibrahim al-Ahdab and Yusuf al-Fakhuri.

Equipped with the necessary tools for domestic and international trade—mastering foreign languages and bookkeeping—Niqula al-Naqqash established his own trade house in 1852, but he gave it up to work first as a book-keeper, then as a manager for the commercial affairs of Antoun Bey al-Masri, the owner of *Khan Antoun Bey*, the largest real estate in Beirut at the time. In 1859 he established a bank in partnership with Na<sup>c</sup>ūm Qiqano, under the name Qiqano-Naqqash & Co. This remarkably quick financial promotion enabled Niqula al-Naqqash to claim a place in the financial upper stratum of society.

Niqula's brother Marun, the first playwright in Beirut and the founder of the theatre in Syria, translated Molière's work *L'Avare* into Arabic in 1848. It did not take Niqula long to develop a passion for theatre, and to

<sup>45</sup> See Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, pp.121–124, and Louis Cheikho, *Al-Ādāb al-ʿarabiyya fī al-qarn al-tāsi<sup>c</sup> ʿashar*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 2 (Beirut, 1926), pp. 151–153.

<sup>46</sup> See Niqula al-Naqqash, ed., *Arzat Lubnān* (Beirut, 1869). Niqula al-Naqqash, edited and wrote a long introduction to a compilation of four plays and a number of poems by his elder brother Marun. In the introduction Niqula wrote about his own plays and his philanthropic activities.

<sup>47</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 121–122.

<sup>48</sup> Naqqash, *Arzat Lubnān*, p. 9; Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, p. 122.

follow in his elder brother's steps. In 1849, at the young age of 25, Niqula al-Naqqash translated Molière's play *Le Misanthrope*, which he gave the Arabic title *al-Shaykh al-hasūd*. In 1851 he wrote and staged a tragedy called *Rabī'ā bin Zayd al-mukkadām*, and *al-Waṣīyy*. All his plays were staged at the theatre of his elder brother Marun.<sup>49</sup>

Husayn Bayhum (1833–1881),<sup>50</sup> the other Beirut serving as a deputy of Syria, was a playwright as well. One of his plays had a clear patriotic message. Thus, the Ottoman authorities encouraged its staging a number of times at public places during national celebrations.<sup>51</sup> Ahmet Vefik Pasha (1823–1891),<sup>52</sup> the speaker of the Ottoman parliament, adopted sixteen comedies by Molière and produced them on stage in Bursa.<sup>53</sup> The primary significance of the plays is that they enabled the playwrights to deliver their earnest messages to the illiterate public in a subtle and entertaining manner. Naqqash, Bayhum and Ahmet Vefik Pasha's aim was to educate the populace by means of their plays. Naqqash clearly stated his objective by writing that “this art contributes to the success and the benefit of the general public”.<sup>54</sup> Hence, it would show them the way to “progress”,<sup>55</sup> because the plays “include advice and instructions to the public”.<sup>56</sup> They “are rife with moral lessons, wisdom and social criticism; they educate the people and refine their character... as well as informing them about the affairs of the wide world”.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, “the plays

<sup>49</sup> Naqqash, *Arzat Lubnān*, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Cheikho, *Al-Ādāb al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 21–23; Jurji Zaydan, *Tārīkh ādāb al-lughā al-ʿarabiyya*; reprint (Beirut, 1992), vol. 2, pp. 581–582; Tarrāzi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 117–119; Khalil Mardam Bey, *Aṣṣān al-qarn al-thālith ʿashar* (Beirut, 1971), pp. 233–234. For the role of Husayn Bayhum's family in the trade of Beirut, see Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, pp. 96–98; for his political and literary career, see Sharif, “A Portrait of Syrian Deputies”, pp. 291–293.

<sup>51</sup> Zaydan, *Tārīkh ādāb*, vol. 2, p. 581; Mardam Bey, *Aṣṣān al-qarn al-thālith ʿashar*, p. 233.

<sup>52</sup> For the most recent and most detailed biography, see B. Çeri, “Ahmed Vefik Paşa”. In: *Türk dünyası edebiyatçıları ansiklopedisi* (Ankara, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 184–190; see also Atilla Özkırımlı, *Türk edebiyatı ansiklopedisi*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Istanbul, 1987), pp. 64–65; Recep Toparlı, ed., *Ahmet Vefik Paşa. Lehce-i Osmâni* (Ankara, 2000), pp. xi–xiii; Seyit Kemal Karaalioglu, *Türk edebiyatı tarihi. Tanzimat'tan cumhuriyete*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Istanbul, 1982), pp. 141–145; *Türk dili ve edebiyatı ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1977), pp. 76–77; J. Deny, “Aḥmad Wafīk Paşa”. In: *EP*, vol. 1, p. 298; Ismail Habib Sevük, *Türk teveddüt edebiyatı tarihi* (Istanbul, 1340), pp. 408–413.

<sup>53</sup> Deny, “Aḥmad Wafīk Paşa”, p. 298.

<sup>54</sup> Naqqash, *Arzat Lubnān*, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> Naqqash, *Arzat Lubnān*, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Naqqash, *Arzat Lubnān*, p. 10.

<sup>57</sup> Naqqash, *Arzat Lubnān*, p. 18.

call for truthfulness and righteousness, and they can lead enthroned kings to the right ruling policies".<sup>58</sup> Naqqash also staged plays for charitable purposes, donating the revenue to philanthropic organisations.<sup>59</sup> He had close relations with the Maronite bishop of Beirut, Yusuf al-Dibs, who was a man of letters as well and the founder of the Maronite college called al-Ḥikma (wisdom). For his social engagement in his community, pope Pius IX granted al-Naqqash the rank of cavalier of the order of St. Gregory.<sup>60</sup> This shows the commitment of members of the upper stratum and their self-confidence in assuming an enlightening, educating and leading role in society. Such a social commitment was common to a number of members of the upper Beiruti stratum, as shown in the previous chapters.

Niqula's business and the theatre did not distract him from studying further; he studied Islamic law, especially *ʿilm al-farāʿid* (law of distribution of bequeathed estate according to sura IV: 12 of the Koran) with Yusuf al-Asir.

Capitalising on his financial success he became acquainted with the highest Ottoman bureaucrats in his hometown. This must have paved the way for him to a number of administrative offices. He was a member of the administrative council for the district of Beirut for the period of one year, 1868–69. Between 1869 and 1876 he was a member of the administrative council of the province of Syria. As from 1869 al-Naqqash also worked as a lawyer in Beirut. He was one of the very first lawyers practising at the recently organised courts. During this period of time he translated the following newly promulgated Ottoman laws into Arabic: The Land Code, The Penal Code, The Commercial Code, The Construction Law, The Court Organisation Law and The Legal Procedure Law.<sup>61</sup> He did not only translate these laws, but also wrote commentaries on all of them.<sup>62</sup> According to Philippe de Tarrazi and Louis Cheikho his translations and commentaries became standard legal reference works already during his lifetime,<sup>63</sup> and were used in the Arabic speaking "provinces of Syria, Beirut, Aleppo, the Mutasarrifate of Mount Lebanon, and the Mutasarrifate of Jerusalem".<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Naqqash, *Arzat Lubnān*, p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> Naqqash, *Arzat Lubnān*, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, p. 123.

<sup>61</sup> See Niqula al-Naqqash, *Min al-dustūr al-jadīd* (Beirut, 1873).

<sup>62</sup> See, for example, Niqula al-Naqqash, *Sharḥ qānūn uṣūl al-muḥākamāt al-jazāʿiyya al-muʿaqqat* (Beirut, 1886).

<sup>63</sup> Cheikho, *Al-Ādāb al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 2, p. 151.

<sup>64</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, p. 123.

Naqqash's translation of an array of Ottoman laws was acknowledged and rewarded by the Ottoman state. The state was interested in spreading the knowledge of the latest laws throughout its provinces and among its non-Turkish speaking subjects. The Ottoman central authorities encouraged Naqqash by awarding him the fourth rank of the *Mecidi* decoration. Each time he translated a new law, he was promoted in rank, finally reaching the second rank.<sup>65</sup> One can observe in the biography of al-Naqqash a quick financial promotion accompanied with political office and official Ottoman sanction, a growth in wealth, power and influence.

In 1872 al-Naqqash became editor-in-chief of the Beirut newspaper *Al-Najāh*. He was aware of the important role of the press in forming public opinion. While serving as a deputy of Syria in the Ottoman parliament (1877–78) he made perfect use of this organ. He corresponded with the Beirut newspapers *Al-Bashīr* and *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, where he published his longer talks and summaries of his different interventions in parliament.<sup>66</sup> One of his articles was translated into English and published in the English newspaper of Istanbul, the *Levant Herald*.<sup>67</sup> He published his electioneering programme in preparation for the second elections to the Ottoman parliament that took place towards the end of 1877.<sup>68</sup> In 1880 he established his own newspaper, *Al-Miṣbāh*, which was to become one of the leading newspapers in Beirut.

The articles which al-Naqqash published in the Beirut newspapers made it possible to piece together his political outlook. He described himself as someone who excessively loved his state, i.e. the Ottoman Empire, “*farṭ maḥabbatī li-l-dawla*”, and that he “sought the unity and the harmony of its peoples”. He added that the state and the people (*al-umma*) were the same and that the interests of the first could not be separated from those of the second; thus, from his point of view, the wealth of the state derived from the well-being of its people. Therefore, he saw it as his obligation “to undermine the unfair taxes collected in Syria”.<sup>69</sup> He claimed that he “did not lean to the right or to the left,” and that he “followed a middle path, with moderate ideas, desiring

<sup>65</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, p. 123.

<sup>66</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 11 May 1877; *Al-Bashīr*, 11 May 1877, 6 July 1877, 9 January 1878, and 22 February 1878.

<sup>67</sup> *Levant Herald*, 23 May 1877. Cited in Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period. A Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament* (Baltimore, 1963), p. 166.

<sup>68</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 9 March 1877, 9 November 1877, 19 October 1877, and 16 November 1877.

<sup>69</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 19 October 1877.

wholeheartedly the welfare of the state and the people.”<sup>70</sup> He was aware of the urgent need for reformations in the Empire, and he believed in a “gradual reform process”<sup>71</sup> criticizing those who called for a radical change in “the whole Ottoman state from the top to the bottom.” He added that it had taken Europe two hundred years to undertake the necessary reforms, and that the Ottoman Empire could not be restructured in forty years. He called for firm but moderate questioning of the Ottoman cabinet when necessary.<sup>72</sup> His political views had a clear liberal overtone.

With his biography and successful career Niqula al-Naqqash epitomises the *Zeitgeist* of the Tanzimat. Firstly, he single-handedly translated a significant number of the Tanzimat laws and worked as a lawyer in the new court system. Secondly, he became a member of the administrative council of Syria as a representative of his Maronite community.<sup>73</sup> This was a new representation right granted to the non-Muslim Ottomans. This prerogative was enshrined in the provincial code of 1864. Thirdly, he was a journalist, editor-in-chief and founder of a newspaper, another innovation of the Tanzimat period. Fourthly, he was elected to the Ottoman parliament, the institution which crowned all of the Tanzimat reforms.

His success and the story of his social mobility can only be regarded as remarkable. Niqula al-Naqqash set out as the son of a new immigrant to Beirut and advanced to being an official representative of this city in parliament, in the capital of the Empire Istanbul. His elder brother Marun wrote a petition to the Sultan Abdülmecid I, which was declined.<sup>74</sup> In 1877 al-Naqqash presented petitions to the cabinet of Sultan Abdülhamid II on behalf of his electorate. As a member of the parliament he attended the most illustrious inauguration ceremony of the *meclis-i meb’usan* in the palace of *Dolmabahçe*. This ceremony was presided over by Sultan Abdülhamid II himself, where a speech on his behalf was delivered to the members of the parliament and the Council of State (*şurayı devlet*).

<sup>70</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 1 February 1878.

<sup>71</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 22 February 1878.

<sup>72</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 1 February 1878.

<sup>73</sup> The 1864 provincial code emphatically and repeatedly reiterated that the administrative council of the *vilayet* and *kaza* should consist of an equal number of Muslim and non-Muslim members. For an Arabic translation of the articles of the 1864 provincial code, governing the selection, function, rights and religious affiliations of the members of the provincial administrative council, see *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 1, pp. 383–386.

<sup>74</sup> BOA, İ.MV 5976.



## 2 The Parliamentary Meetings

The Council of State (*şurayı devlet*)<sup>75</sup>—a body entrusted with the drafting of new laws for the Empire since 1867—must have started the preparation of a number of draft laws in earnest almost immediately after the declaration of the Constitution. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 1877 (4 *Rabîʿ al-Awwal* 1294), i.e. less than three months after the declaration of the Constitution, nine draft laws were ready to be presented to the lower chamber of the Ottoman parliament (*meclis-i mebʿusan*) for debate, revision and ratification. In the speech delivered on his behalf at the inaugural ceremony of the parliament, which took place with much pomp and circumstance in the *Muayede Salonu*, the feast reception hall of the imperial palace *Dolmabahçe Sarayı*,<sup>76</sup> Sultan Abdülhamid II listed the nine proposed laws and emphasised their importance as the right steps towards reform and development.<sup>77</sup> He urged the parliamentarians to dedicate time and effort to the debate of these laws and to keep in mind the interests, as well as the security and unity of the Empire.<sup>78</sup> According to the Sultan the unity of the Empire and fraternity among its peoples “*husul-i ittihad-ü uhuvvet*” would be achieved once all Ottoman subjects will live under and enjoy the protection of one and the same law: “*Bundan böyle kâffe-i tebaamız bir vatanın evlâdı olarak ve cümlesi bir kanunun cenah-ı himayeti tahtında yaşayarak...*”<sup>79</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw write the following about the Council of State: “in 1867 the Supreme Council [of Judicial Ordinances/ *Meclis-i Vâlâyi Ahkâm-ı Adliye*] again was divided into separate legislative and judicial bodies, the former called the Council of State (*Şurayı Devlet*) and the latter the Council of Judicial Regulations (*Divan-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*), with Midhat Paşa and Ahmet Cevdet Paşa as their chairmen, respectively. The former was supposed to prepare all projects for laws and regulations, investigate matters of public administration, decide on disputes among and between executive and judicial bodies, give advice to the ministries on the enforcement of laws and regulations already in effect, and judge government officials accused of misconduct. It was divided into five departments with ten members each, for interior/war, finance/religious endowments, justice/law, public works/trade/agriculture, and public education.”, see Shaw and Kural Shaw, *Reform, Revolution, and Republic*, p. 80. For one of the latest articles on the Council of State, its different departments and responsibilities, see Abdülmecit Mutaf, “Şûra-yı Devlet (1868–1922)”. In: *Türkler* (Ankara, 2002), vol. 13, pp. 599–609.

<sup>76</sup> Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period*, pp. 109–110.

<sup>77</sup> For the Ottoman text of the inaugural speech (*açış nutku*) of the parliament, which was delivered on behalf of Sultan Abdülhamid II and in his presence, see *Takvim-i Vekayi İlavesi*, 19 March 1877. A corrected version of this speech was transcribed into the Latin script and published in Us, *Meclis-i mebʿusan*, vol. 1, pp. 7–12. An Arabic translation of this speech was published in *Al-Jawāʿib* and reproduced in Shidyayq, *Kanz al-rahāʾib*, vol. 6, pp. 61–68.

<sup>78</sup> The inaugural speech (*açış nutku*) in *Takvim-i Vekayi İlavesi*, 19 March 1877; Us, *Meclis-i mebʿusan*, vol. 1, pp. 10–11; and Shidyayq, *Kanz al-rahāʾib*, vol. 6, pp. 65–66.

<sup>79</sup> Us, *Meclis-i mebʿusan*, vol. 1, p. 11.

From the long agenda of the parliament, the draft laws which are of special interest to this study are those directly pertinent to the administrative affairs of the provinces, namely the provincial law and the new municipal laws for the capital Istanbul and the provinces. The new municipal laws were drafted in fulfilment of article 112 of the Basic Law (*kanun-ı esasî*). All of these laws were prepared within a remarkably short period of time; they were drafted by the Council of State (*şurayı devlet*) in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, under Cevdet Pasha. The municipal law concerning Istanbul was put forward for debate and amendments by the parliament, and it was passed with minimal discussion. The administration of the capital on the municipal level—so it seems—was perceived by the Ottoman deputies as a privilege of the Sultan who directly appointed the mayor (*şehremini*) and the prefecture (*şehremâneti*) of the abode of felicity.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the draft law stipulated that the municipality of the capital was to be provided with sufficient financing, as well as clearly granting the municipal council of Istanbul the potential right to increase the value of taxes and to levy new ones if necessary.<sup>81</sup> In stark contrast to the way the law concerning Istanbul was passed, the draft law for the administration of the provinces was the subject of extended and meticulous discussions during the first session of the parliament (*birinci devre*).<sup>82</sup> Moreover, many articles in the municipal law for the provinces triggered lively and lengthy debates during the

<sup>80</sup> Article 4 of the municipal law of 1877 for Istanbul reads as follows: “Dördüncü madde: Şehremâneti taraf-ı hazrat-ı pâdişâhî mansub bir şehremini ve bir reis ile altı a’zâdan mürekkeb bir meclis...”, see Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p.1628; see also Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 3, p.35. The official Ottoman Turkish text of Article 4 of the municipal law for Istanbul of 1877 is available in *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp.524–525. A non-official French translation is available in Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 6, p. 152.

<sup>81</sup> See Article 63 of the municipal law for Istanbul of 1877 in Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1639; and Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, pp. 47–48. The official Ottoman Turkish text of Article 63 of the municipal law for Istanbul of 1877 is available in *Düstur*, vol. 4, p.537. A non-official French translation is available in Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 6, pp. 154–155.

<sup>82</sup> The administrative law for the provinces which included a considerable number of articles relevant to the municipalities was discussed during the first session (*devre*) of the parliament and during the following meetings (*içtima*): the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting on 31 March 1877, the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting on 1 April of the same year, the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting on 2 April, the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting on 7 April, the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting on 12 April, the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting on 14 April, the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting on 17 April, the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting on 18 April and the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting on 24 April. The discussion of the provincial law was finally concluded in the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting on 3 May 1877, see Us, *Meclis-i meh’usan*, vol. 1, pp.62–63, 66–73, 76–79, 82–88, 90–98, 104–113, 122–129, 133–136, 160–168 and 191–194.

parliamentary meetings (*içtima* or *inikad*) between the months of April and June 1877.<sup>83</sup>

In all the meetings in which draft laws relevant to provincial affairs were presented to the parliament, the debates followed almost the same pattern; four to five articles were read in front of the assembly, followed by a discussion of each one of them. In the debates the members of the *meclis-i meb'usan* discussed these articles with reference to their experience and observations in their respective constituencies. Occasionally they would argue about the feasibility of applying the proposed articles, highlighting the difficulties that might face their application in the different regions of the Empire. These new laws, by definition,<sup>84</sup> were drafted to introduce transformation and change to the social, economic and political structures of the varied provinces leading to an "Ottoman unity". However, the extended regions were heterogeneous in their ethnic, religious and linguistic compositions, to say the least. In the debates the parliamentarians did their best to draw the attention of the members of the Council of State to the following differences in the composition of the varied provinces, as for example, the level of education in the provinces, the economic activity, the social and political structures, the religious composition, as well as the willingness of the varied Ottoman subjects to adopt new laws.

A number of parliamentarians did not hesitate to question and demand explanations from the Minister of the Interior, Cevdet Pasha, who attended some of the debates. The representatives of the Council of State, who regularly attended the meetings, were frequently quizzed, particularly during the meetings concerning the municipal law for the provinces. These questions focused mainly on the underlying reason for drafting a certain law, and in their interventions and responses to the replies of the Council of State the parliamentarians (*meb'usan*) pointed out the peculiar conditions of certain provinces in the Empire. In almost all debates the speaker of the

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<sup>83</sup> The municipal law for the provinces was debated in the following meetings: the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting on 16 April 1877, the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting on 21 April of the same year, the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting on 23 April, the 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting on 19 May, the 34<sup>th</sup> meeting on 22 May, the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting on 23 May, the 38<sup>th</sup> meeting on 28 May, the 39<sup>th</sup> meeting on 29 May, the 40<sup>th</sup> meeting on 30 May, and the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting on 31 May 1877. The final text of the law was reread and ratified by the majority of the members of the parliament during the 51<sup>st</sup> meeting which took place on 14 June 1877, see Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan*, vol. 1, pp. 116–120, 138–144, 150–155, 264–265, 276–277, 280–282, 300–305, 308–310, 312–315, 318–320 and 371.

<sup>84</sup> This definition was given by the Sultan in his speech on the occasion of the inaugural ceremony of the parliament. For this inaugural speech (*açış nutku*), see *Takvim-i Vekayi İlävesi*, 19 March 1877; Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan*, vol. 1, pp. 10–11; and Shidyaq, *Kanz al-rahā'ib*, vol. 6, pp. 65–66.

house (*meclis-i meb'usan reis-i*), Ahmet Vefik Pasha, took sides with the Council of State, which drafted the law and tried to limit the length and the scope of the debates in order to keep the amendments at the bare minimum.

### 3 The Contributions of al-Naqqash and Bayhum to the Legal Amendments

The representative of Syria, Niqula al-Naqqash, had the courage to face the severe language of the speaker of the house, Ahmet Vefik Pasha,<sup>85</sup> especially in matters concerning the affairs of Naqqash's province. In his interpositions and discussions in parliament he almost permanently referred to Syria, a fact which must have irritated and exacerbated the speaker of the house. During the deliberations of the Press Code (*matbuat kanunu*) the latter dismissed Naqqash's arguments and objections saying: "Her taraf Suriye değıldir.", which translates as "Syria is not all the districts [of the Empire]".<sup>86</sup>

Sometimes the debates took on the form of bargaining, as each representative tried to secure special privileges for his region. This practice was particularly characteristic of the Beirut representatives; for example, Niqula al-Naqqash, during the meeting of 1 April 1877, tried to introduce amendments to the provincial law, in order to make it more advantageous to Beirut at the expense of Damascus.<sup>87</sup> In April 1865, the latter city was designated as the capital of the province of Syria to the great dismay of a large number of Beirut citizens. Ahmet Vefik Pasha furiously dismissed al-Naqqash's reasoning in favour of his home town with the words "Kanunlar, ya şöyle olsun, ya böyle olsun... Muhayyer olmaz. Kat'î olmalı.", which translates as "the laws should be either in this manner or in that manner... they can not be perplexing. They should be definitive."<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> J. Deny wrote the following on the personality and character of Ahmet Vefik Pasha: "A strong personality, he was an energetic, honest and conscientious man, frank to the point of rudeness; at the same time he was whimsical and an eccentric, and possessed a dry wit.", see Deny, "Ahmad Wafik Pasha", p. 298. Isma'il Habip described him as "One of the most eccentric personalities of the Tanzimat period. His life and character were full with strangeness and awkwardness.", see Habip, *Türk teveddüt edebiyatı tarihi*, p.408. In one of the meetings he did not hesitate to silence a deputy by saying: "Sus, eşek!" which translates as 'shut up, donkey!', cited in Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period*, p. 158, and in Karpat, "The Ottoman Parliament of 1877 and its Social Significance", p. 82.

<sup>86</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan*, vol. 1, p. 227.

<sup>87</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan*, vol. 1, p. 70: "Nakkaş Efendi (Suriye) – Vilâyet meclis-i umumîlerinin merkez-i vilâyette içtima edecekleri gösterilmiyor. Fakat, valinin münasib gördüğü yerde, diye tasrih edilse, münasib olur. Suriye için söylüyorum. Cemi, (Cemi) sancaklar Şama gidecek olursa, Beyruta geleceklerdir. Onun için sebkat eden meclisler Beyrutta oldu."

<sup>88</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan*, vol. 1, p. 70.

The discussion of Article 24 of the provincial code on 12 April 1877 provoked disagreement among the deputies.<sup>89</sup> This article provided that the mufti was to be ex officio a member of the district administrative council. It seems that the the parliamentarians were divided along religious lines. The representative of Beirut, al-Hajj Husayn Bayhum, proposed a compromise. He considered that the presence of the mufti in each and every meeting of the council, where sometimes a large number of business transactions were to be inspected, would only delay the business of the people. He argued that whenever a transaction concerned the affairs of the Muslim community, then the mufti should be invited; accordingly, a transaction concerning the affairs of the Christian community should be dealt with in the presence of their religious headmen.<sup>90</sup> Husayn Bayhum proposed a pragmatic solution to the problem. In his proposal he did not seek to preserve the long-standing privileged position of the mufti or the *‘ulamā’*, but he did put them on equal footing with non-Muslim religious headmen. Such a stance by Bayhum portrays the struggle of the emerging Muslim upper stratum to establish for themselves a political role independent of the previously privileged *‘ulamā’* class.

During the early days of the war with Russia, Niqula al-Naqqash asked permission to deliver a speech in parliament. He started it with the well-known Ottoman salute: “Padişahımız çok yaşa!” (Long live our sovereign!). In his long speech he emphasised his loyalty and that of his electorate to the Ottoman state. However, he did not hesitate to remind his colleagues and the Ottoman cabinet that this loyalty should not be taken for granted, because the Syrians deemed themselves overtaxed. His speech included a long digression about tax collection in Syria, which he deemed to be unfair and he repeatedly used the word “mağduriyet” (unjust treatment), and the phrase “pek çok mağduriyet” (excessively unjust), in order to stress his point. He called for the reduction of land

<sup>89</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 1, pp.90–98.

<sup>90</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 1, p.91: “Hacı Hüseyin Efendi (Suriye) – Bu meclislerde her gün üç dört ferağ ve intikal işi gelir. Her iş için müftiyi çağırarak uzar. Âlemin işi tatil olunur. Müfti ve hâkimin mecliste huzuru bir ziyan götürmez. Buna göre eğer İslâma aid ruhanice bir iş olursa ulema ve fudalâ ve meşayih davet olunacağı gibi huristiyanca ruhanî bir iş olursa, rüesa-i ruhaniyye dahi davet olunabilir.” This translates as: “Al-Hajj Husayn Bayhum Efendi ([Beirut] Syria) – In these councils three or four property transfer transactions come forth everyday. It is delayed longer [than necessary] because the Mufti has to be called for each and every transaction. The business of the people is interrupted. The presence of the Mufti and the judge in the council does not cause damages. Accordingly, when a transaction belongs to the affairs of Muslim clerics then the *ulema*, the learned and the sheikhs must be invited, likewise when a transaction belongs to the affairs of the Christian clerics then the [Christian] religious headmen could also be invited.”

and property taxes in his province and for the application of a fairer system of tax evaluation and land registration. He argued that the value of land in Syria was systematically overestimated upon the registration of property in the *tahrir-i emlâk* (land register). The inflated land value in Syria led to higher taxes, while other provinces were paying much less, a fact which, so he held, could weaken the loyalty of the Ottoman Syrians. He ended his speech by quoting excerpts from a petition from the city of Tyre by an orchard owner, complaining about the unfair overestimation of the tithe he had to pay. This petition was immediately referred to the cabinet for a prompt reply.<sup>91</sup>

The speeches of al-Naqqash concerning the taxation system were translated into Arabic and published in the Beirut newspaper *Al-Bashîr*, which shows that he was interested in informing his electorate about his endeavour to “undermine the unfair taxation system in Syria”, as he had put it. In an open letter to *Al-Bashîr* he assessed his achievements during the first session of the parliament; he attributed his failure in a few points regarding the reduction of taxation to the lack of consistency and persistence by his electorate, especially the upper stratum of real estate and land owners.<sup>92</sup> He expected them to declare a civil disobedience by abstaining from paying the due taxes for that fiscal year, pending the publication of a favourable law. Such a radical action would have aided him in his negotiation and argumentation for reducing the property tax.<sup>93</sup> In another speech on the same subject al-Naqqash demanded that the provincial municipalities should play a greater role in assessing and collecting the property tax and the tithe. He urged that the municipalities should retain a certain amount of the collected taxes in order to invest it in a public benefit fund (*şandūq al-manāfiʿ al-ʿumūmiyya*). The main purpose of this municipal public benefit fund, according to al-Naqqash, was to cover the tax arrears in the case of drought and crop failures, in other words, to guarantee a stable income for the state treasury and at the same time relieving property owners from dire financial straits and persecution.<sup>94</sup>

The representatives of Syria were especially concerned with urban affairs and the impact of the drafted municipal code on its development. Niqula al-Naqqash and Husayn Bayhum took turns in discussions concerning article 47 of the Municipal Code. This article provided that one clerk (*katib*) in the municipal council should be responsible for population

<sup>91</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan*, vol. 1, pp. 184–185.

<sup>92</sup> *Al-Bashîr*, 20 May 1877, and 1 February 1878.

<sup>93</sup> *Al-Bashîr*, 19 October 1877.

<sup>94</sup> *Al-Bashîr*, 22 February 1878.

census and land registry, *tahrir-i nüfus ve emlâk*. Al-Naqqash and Bayhum argued that a single clerk could not manage such a task.<sup>95</sup> The Beirut representatives had ample experience with the municipal institution in their home town. The first mayor of Beirut, al-Hajj ‘Abdallah Bayhum, was Husayn’s uncle,<sup>96</sup> and in 1877 Husayn’s brother, Muhyi al-Din Bayhum, was the mayor of the city.<sup>97</sup> In their argumentation with Midhat Beyefendi, the representative member of the Council of State, they stressed their concern for the efficiency of the municipal council. Article 47, as finally published, provided for the establishment of a department called *kalem-i*

<sup>95</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 1, pp.280–281: *Nakkaş Efendi (Suriye) – Geçende dahi arzettiğim vechile bir kâtib ile bu işlerin idaresi mümkün değildir. Yalnız bir kâtib veriyorlar; dünya kadar iş gösteriyorlar. Bu bir kâtibin işi değildir.* [Niçula] Naqqash Efendi ([Beirut] Syria) – As I have presented earlier, one secretary or clerk (katib) managing these tasks is not possible. They [The lawmakers] gave one secretary, only; and they assign (to him) an infinite amount of work (dünya kadar). This is not the work of one katib. *Hamazasb Efendi (Erzurum) – Bunun tekrarına hacet yoktur. Geçende İstanbul belediyesi nizamında bu bahis geçmiştir.* Hamazasb Efendi (Erzurum) – No need to repeat the same. Lately, this subject was passed in the municipal law of Istanbul. *Reis [Ahmet Vefik Paşa] – Evet, o vakit böyle bir müzakere geçti idi... O cihetle burası cay-i mütalea değildir.* The speaker of the house [Ahmet Vefik Pasha] – In deed, at that time such a discussion took place... Therefore this is not the place to examine (this article once more). *Midhat Beyefendi (Şurayı Devlet âzası) – Belediyeye aid olan tahrir kaleminin vezaifi bu bendin dairesinde bulunan mesalihi bilmek demektir. Derdest-i tanzim bulunan lâyiha âza-I kiramın huzurlarına geldeği vakit görülür.* Midhat Beyefendi (Şurayı Devlet âzası) – This means one should know the functions of the registration department which belong to the municipality and the works relevant to it, which are to be found in this paragraph. At the right time the respectable members will see the proposed law which belongs to the reform at hand (Derdest-i tanzim bulunan). *Hacı Hüseyin Efendi (Suriye) - Bunlar anlaşılmadı: Burada diyor ki, bu kalem muvakkat olacak. Eğer muvakkat olacaksa olabilir; lâkin daimî surette olacaksa belediyenin nüfus ve emlâki tahrir etmesine hacet yoktur. Masarif çok olur. Belediyenin varidatı kifayet etmez.* Al-Hajj Husayn Bayhum Efendi ([Beirut] Syria) – This could not be understood: Here, it says, this item will be momentary (muvakkat olacak) when it is only valid for a momentary period, let it be, but when it will be valid in a permanent form then the municipal registration of the people and property is not necessary. The expenses are too high (Masarif çok olur). The revenue of the municipality is not sufficient [for such a costly task]. *Midhat Beyefendi (Şurayı Devlet âzası) – Belediyenin varidatı masarifi nisbetindedir.* Midhat Beyefendi (Şurayı Devlet âzası) – The revenue of the municipality is directly related to the expenses. *Reis [Ahmet Vefik Paşa] – Bu birinci müzakeredir. Encümen sizin ifadenizi dinledi. Tekrar müzakere ederiz. Bazı kere çok para sarfetmek hayırlıdır.* The speaker of the house [Ahmet Vefik Pasha] – This is the first discussion. The committee has listened to your views. We will have another discussion. Sometimes it is beneficial (*hayırlıdır*) to spend a large amount of money.

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter I, above.

<sup>97</sup> *Thamarât al-fimûn*, 24 May 1877.

*tahrir-i nüfus ve emlâk* without specifying the exact number of its clerks.<sup>98</sup>

In order to ensure the efficiency of the municipal council, appropriate revenue was to be allocated to it. The discussions concerning articles 16 and 39, governing the municipal finances and expenses, were markedly heated. Al-Naqqash complained that in Beirut a tax on fish was currently collected, which did not correspond to the practice in other Ottoman cities. It became apparent that the taxation system was not uniform throughout the Empire, and that revenues granted to the provincial municipalities were lower than those granted to the municipality of Istanbul, a fact which made one parliamentarian evoke the Constitution and state: “Since the Constitution considers all the cities as equal to Istanbul, therefore all the provinces must resemble Istanbul.”<sup>99</sup>

Article 16 of the drafted law provided for the municipality to spend ten per cent of its income on the salaries of all its employees. A large number of parliamentarians deemed it too low and restrictive. Some of them argued that ten per cent of the revenue would not cover the salaries of all employees, taking into consideration that well-paid professionals like medical doctors, engineers and veterinarians were also on the payroll of the municipality. A long debate on this matter with the speaker of the house and the representative of the Council of State ensued. A vote by the majority insisted on allowing the municipalities to spend twenty per cent of its income on salaries. Their requests were acknowledged, the result of the vote was included in the minutes, and the demanded changes were put forward to the approval of the upper chamber (*meclis-i a’yan*) for final ratification.<sup>100</sup> The proposed changes were accepted and they were integrated in the final imperial sanction (*irade-i seniye*) which proclaimed this municipal law for the provinces.<sup>101</sup> The municipal law was a compromise, it had to

<sup>98</sup> Article 47, in *Jāmi‘at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 15; *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 547; Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 78; Nuri, *Mecele-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 78; Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1666.

<sup>99</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 1, p. 314: “Bir Meb’us – Mademki kanun-i esasî her memleketi İstanbul ile bir tutuyor; taşraların dahi İstanbulla benzemesi lâzımdır.”

<sup>100</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 1, pp. 312–313.

<sup>101</sup> Article 16 of the municipal law for the provinces was published as follows: “Onaltıncı madde: Belediye memurları maaşıyla hâne kirası ve mühimmât-ı kırtâsiyye ve mah-rûkât-bahâ ile masârif-i müteferrika-i sâire herhalde vâridât-ı belediyyenin öşrünü ve nihayet muvakkaten humsunu tecavüz etmeyecektir.” Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, p. 1661; Nuri, *Mecele-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, p. 72. Article 16 in Ottoman is also available in *Düstur*, vol. 4, p. 541. An Arabic translation is available in *Jāmi‘at al-qawānīn, Qānūn al-baladiyya*, p. 7. For a non-official French translation of the municipal law for the provinces, see Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 1, p. 73. Please note that Young gives a wrong reference for the official Ottoman text published in *Düstur*. He writes that this law was published in the fourth volume, pp. 528–570; it is to be found in that volume, but on pp. 538–553.



answer to the needs of both the rapidly developing urban centres within the Ottoman Empire and the sluggish ones. Upon examining article 16 of the law and the discussions that led to its amendments one notices how the imprecise language of the law, “Belediye ... masârif-i müteferrika-i sâire herhalde vâridât-ı belediyyenin öşrünü ve nihayet muvakkaten humsunu tecavüz etmeyecektir”, provided certain flexibility in its application and more room for manoeuvre by the respective municipalities. The law stated that the permission to spend up to twenty per cent on salaries was temporary, however, it did not specify for how long. This indefinite wording of the law made it more suitable for a heterogeneous empire with different levels of urban development on its territories.

The reasoning of some parliamentarians during the parliamentary debates is remarkable. As for example, Niqula al-Naqqash was against “restricting the freedom” of a large number of his electorates to nominate themselves to the municipal council, simply, because they did not know Ottoman Turkish.<sup>102</sup> Such an objection by al-Naqqash reflects great self-confidence and willingness to defend what he saw as the rights of his Arabic-speaking people. It was well known that Ahmet Vefik Pasha, the father of Turkology in the Ottoman Empire, was uncompromising when it came to this matter, i.e. the Turkish language.<sup>103</sup> The speaker of the house condescendingly answered that the intelligent would learn Ottoman Turkish within four years, otherwise they would be hindering the unity

<sup>102</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan*, vol. 1, p. 313:

*Nakkaş Efendi (Suriye) – Burada bir de (türkçe tekellüm) lâkırdisıvarki, bazı ahaliye mani-i hürriyyet olacaktır. Meselâ Beyrutta pek çok kimseler türkçe bilmez. Niqula Naqqash Efendi ([Beirut] Syria) – Here, the diction [of the law] is about speaking Turkish; this will limit the freedom of some people. For example, a large number of people in Beirut do not know Turkish. Reis [Ahmet Vefik Paşa] – Dört yıldan sonra akıllı olan türkçe öğrensin. The speaker of the house [Ahmet Vefik Pasha] – In four years, the intelligent should learn Turkish. Bir meb'us – Türkçenin bilinmemesinde ne mazarrat var? A member – What harm is there in the lack of knowing Turkish? Reis [Ahmet Vefik Paşa] – İttihada manidir. İnşaallâh nasihatımızı kabul ederler de türkçe öğrenirler. The speaker of the house [Ahmet Vefik Pasha] – This hinders the unity [of the Empire]. God willing they accept my advice and learn Turkish. Sebuḥ Efendi (İstanbul) – Türkçe bilmeyi mecalis-i saireye tahsis etmedik de niçin idare-i belediyyeye tahsis ediyoruz? Sebuḥ Efendi (Constantinople) – We did not assign the knowledge of Turkish to other councils, why do we assign it to the municipal administration? Ahmet Muhtar Efendi (Erzurum) – Meclis-i idarelere türkçe bilmeyi değil, okumayı dahi tahsis ettik. Ahmet Muhtar Efendi (Erzurum) – We did not assign the knowledge of Turkish to the administrative council, [but] we assigned the reading ability of Turkish [to this council].*

<sup>103</sup> Ahmet Vefik Pasha “made an impressive contribution to the Turkish purist movement.”; for example, in 1876, a year before the parliament sat in Istanbul, his Turkish/Turkish dictionary *Lehce-i Osmânî* was published; see Deny, “Aḥmad Wafîk Paşa”, p. 298.

of the Empire. This implied that those who did not learn Turkish even to occupy a minor communal post in a provincial municipality, were either *akılsız* (foolish) or intentionally endangering the unity of the Empire. This was a very serious political accusation at the time, given that the Ottoman state was at war with its Balkan dependencies seeking independence, and with Russia which supported their national aspirations. This reply must have stopped al-Naqqash from insisting on his point and arguing any further.

As mentioned earlier, in the meeting of 1 April 1877, Niqula al-Naqqash tried to amend an article in the provincial law in order to secure a privileged status for Beirut. He argued that the governor of the province should be empowered to declare Beirut the seat of the administrative council of Syria. His argument was rebuffed by the speaker of the house.<sup>104</sup> However, the deputies representing Beirut and Jerusalem were not easily dissuaded; during the second term of the parliament they rekindled grand schemes for Beirut and the Syrian coast. In the meeting of 12 January 1878, four deputies presented a memorandum (*lâyiha*) demanding the division of the province of Syria, into a coastal and an interior administrative unit. This memorandum was signed by Niqula al-Naqqash, ‘Abd al-Rahim Badran, Khalil Ghanim and Yusuf Diya al-Khalidi; it was delivered by Niqula al-Naqqash first in writing on 9 January 1878, and as an address during the meeting 12 January 1878.<sup>105</sup>

Notables from the Syrian coastal towns persevered in their demand to turn parts of the Syrian coast into a province independent of Damascus. In January 1878, twenty notables from the port cities of Beirut, Tripoli and Acre held a meeting in Beirut and wired a collective petition to the Grand Vizier and the speaker of the house, asking for the separation of the Syrian coast from the province of Syria.<sup>106</sup> They argued that such a new provincial division could only bring “great benefit” to the entire region.<sup>107</sup> Their petition was presented to the lower house of the parliament on 29 January 1878.<sup>108</sup> The deputies of Beirut in the Ottoman parliament seconded the petition and the demands put forward by members of their electorate. On 30 January 1878 al-Naqqash delivered a long speech in the parliament in support of the petition originating from Beirut.<sup>109</sup> A province with Beirut

<sup>104</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 1, p. 70.

<sup>105</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 2, p., 132.

<sup>106</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 2, p. 252.

<sup>107</sup> *Al-Bashîr*, 8 February 1878.

<sup>108</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 2, p. 252.

<sup>109</sup> Us, *Meclis-i meb’usan*, vol. 2, p., 266–268.

as its capital was not established in 1878, notwithstanding the efforts of the parliamentarians and their supporters from the coastal towns of Syria.<sup>110</sup>

The representatives of Beirut benefited from their long experience with the municipal institution, urban and provincial affairs as well as regional politics. They also enjoyed a close knowledge of their electorate, which they tried to keep up-to-date concerning parliamentary activities by publishing their debates and contributions in parliament in the Beirut press. They were directly in contact with their electorate; the *meb'usan* of Beirut received and forwarded petitions on behalf of Syrians, making their complaints and demands public in parliament.<sup>111</sup> This presentation is not aimed at convincing the reader that the representatives of Syria played an extraordinary role in parliament, nor that they were more active and proactive in the development of the law than their other Ottoman colleagues. However, a comparison is virtually impossible, because the biographical information available is limited to certain parliamentarians, and very few studies deal with the attitude and the aspirations of the parliamentarians, examining the impact of their socioeconomic background on their political perceptions and decisions.<sup>112</sup>

The general picture that could be drawn from the contributions of the Beirut deputies is that they were earnestly involved in the law-making process, and that they sought pragmatic solutions for some chronic administrative problems. This is another testimony that they were not apathetic to the new laws and regulations, and that they did not need the coercion of an especially reforming governor to push them towards a reform, as has so far been assumed. On the contrary, they had vested interests in the new laws; these laws would in the final analysis acknowledge their improved status in society and establish them as pioneers and political representatives of their ethnic and religious communities. They were particularly interested in the efficiency of the new institutions, especially in urban affairs, and, as a consequence, they did not hesitate to criticise the Ottoman provincial officialdom for their shortcomings.

<sup>110</sup> For another reading of the memorandum delivered by al-Naqqash on 12 January 1878 and the factors that impeded the division of the province, see Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, pp. 45–49. However, Hanssen erroneously assumes that the memorandum demanding the partition of Syria was delivered during the first term of the parliament. His references to Hakkı Tarık Us are sometimes imprecise where dates are wrongly cited and page numbers are missing.

<sup>111</sup> Besides the speech of Niqula al-Naqqash seconding the petition demanding the division of the Syrian province, he, for example, also delivered a long address on the occasion of declaring war on Russia. It included a presentation of a petition on behalf of Elias Qubti from Tyre, see *Al-Bashīr*, 20 May 1877; Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan*, vol. 1, pp. 184–185.

<sup>112</sup> Kemal Karpat regretted the lack of biographical studies on Ottoman parliamentarians, see Karpat, “The Ottoman Parliament of 1877 and its Social Significance”, p. 78.

The preceding description of the parliamentary debates shed light on the innovation of the municipal law of 1877 and the process of its amendment by the parliamentarians. Accordingly, the municipal laws for the provinces can be divided into two groups: Those prior to the establishment of the parliament, and the last law which was debated and ratified in both chambers of the parliament. It was discussed in the previous chapter that the municipal laws for the provinces of 1867 and 1871 did not meet the expectations of the urban notables in Beirut, nor did they create a viable institution with proper finance and jurisdiction. The pre-parliament laws that governed the municipality of the capital Istanbul were highly developed, while those for the provinces appear to have bordered on the prosaic or the simplistic. This fact did not escape the attention of the lawmakers and the parliamentarians, who loudly called for equality with Istanbul. A comparison between the municipal law of 1877 for the capital and that of the same year for the provinces shows that the two laws contained a large number of identical or similar articles. This similarity is most obvious in the articles which define the *modus operandi*.<sup>113</sup> It is true that the municipality of the capital remained privileged in comparison with its provincial counterparts; however, the situation of the latter was dramatically improved. The parliamentarians played an active role in improving the authority of their municipalities, as has been shown above in connection with the amendments made to articles 16 and 47 of the law.

Another interesting feature in the preparation of the municipal law of 1877 is the indicative fact that the Council of State allowed amendments

<sup>113</sup> A large number of articles of the municipal law for the capital are almost identical with articles in the municipal law for the provinces: Article 10 of the municipal law for Istanbul corresponds to Article 45 of the municipal law for the provinces, Article 11 to Article 46, Article 12 to Article 47, Article 13 to Article 49, Article 15 to Article 42, Article 16 to Article 43, Article 17 to Article 44, Article 18 to Article 13, Articles 19 and 20 jointly to Article 11, Article 21 to 11 and 14, Article 22 to Article 15, Article 23 to Article 16, Article 26 to Article 45, Article 28 to Article 11, Article 29 to Article 47, Article 30 to Article 49, Article 31 to Article 48, Articles 32 and 33 jointly to Article 60, Article 40 to Article 18, Article 41 to Article 19, Article 42 to Article 20, Article 43 to Article 21, Article 44 to Article 22, Article 45 to Article 23, Article 46 to Article 24, Article 47 to Article 25, Article 48 to Article 26, Article 49 to Article 27, Article 50 to Article 28, Article 51 to Article 29, Article 52 to Article 30, Article 53 to Article 31, Article 55 to Article 33, Article 56 to Article 32, Article 58 to Article 34, Article 59 to Article 35, Article 60 to Article 36, Article 61 to Article 37 and Article 62 to Article 38. For a comparison of the listed articles, see the municipal law for Istanbul in *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp. 520–538, and the one for the provincial municipalities in *Düstur*, vol. 4, pp. 538–553. See also Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i umûr-ı belediyye*, vol. 4, pp. 1624–1639 for Istanbul and pp. 1658–1671 for the provinces; and Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 2, pp. 31–48 for Istanbul and pp. 69–83 for the provinces.

to be introduced upon parliamentary proposals, in spite of the fact that this council was entitled to impede them at almost any level. The upper chamber (*meclis-i a'yan*) included at least six members of the Council of State.<sup>114</sup> Declining the amendments proposed by the lower house was a prerogative of the upper chamber.<sup>115</sup> The members of the Council of State were hand-picked by the Sultan and his trustees, because they were deemed especially concerned with, and experienced in, the affairs of the Empire. One may safely assume that they were also close to the ear of the Sultan, who trusted them with the crucial task of drafting uniform laws for the Empire, thus they could have suggested to him that the amendments were unnecessary or divisive, and that they should not be included in the final *irade*. However, these laws were seen as an achievement by all parties involved and as indicative of the determination to introduce reform in the Empire in spite of, or probably because of, the war with Russia during that period of time.

### C The New Laws and the Arabic-speaking Syrians

How did the Beirutis learn about the new laws? And how accessible were they to the public, especially those who were entitled to participate actively and passively in the municipal elections?

The Ottoman laws promulgated during the Tanzimat period were published in different Arabic sources, in the following two vectors of information will be presented. The listed translations of laws and newspapers are not exhaustive, but representative of the activities in Beirut.

#### 1 The Private Press and the Official Press of the Province

The Beirut newspaper *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* informed its readership that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1859 few copies of the newly promulgated Criminal Code arrived in Beirut at the office of the governor in the original Ottoman Turkish language.<sup>116</sup> The editors of this newspaper did not overlook the fact that a large number of the readers did not know Ottoman Turkish, hence, the newspaper made it incumbent upon itself to publish a serialised translation of this important law in a large number of issues between March and October

<sup>114</sup> They were Mihram Bey, Emin Efendi, Logofet Bey, Yorgaki Efendi, Daviçon Efendi and Ibrahim Pasha, see Us, *Meclis-i meb'usan*, vol. 1, p. 6.

<sup>115</sup> For the prerogative of the upper chamber (*meclis-i a'yan*), see Article 54 of the Basic Law (*kanun-i esasī*) in *Dustūr*, IV, pp. 10–11; and in Shidyāq, *Kanz al-rahā'ib*, vol. 6, p. 14.

<sup>116</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 1 January 1859.

1859.<sup>117</sup> The newspaper stated that the purpose of translating and printing this law was to “inform the public” (*ifadāt al-ʿumūm*).<sup>118</sup> Translations of other laws such as the one concerning the pharmacies in the Ottoman capital Istanbul of 4 February 1861 (22 *Rajab* 1277) were also published in *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, but somewhat belated, most probably because it was not directly pertinent to the provinces.<sup>119</sup> However, the publication of this law highlights the role which the press played in increasing the political as well as the health awareness of the public. The new law clearly stated who was entitled to open a pharmacy and defined his obligations vis-à-vis his customers and the state of their health, hence informing the readership about the regulations for the capital, in spite of the fact that they were not applicable in the provinces. *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* also published a summary of the press code which became effective on 1 January 1865, reiterating its purpose to inform (or benefit) the public (*rughbatan bi-ifādat al-jumhūr*).<sup>120</sup> It also published the imperial sanction which permitted the foreigners resident in the Ottoman Empire to possess and register real estate;<sup>121</sup> this law was published in the newspaper prior to its communication to the concerned authorities in the province of Syria.<sup>122</sup> This shows that in the 1860s Ottoman Bureaucrats received information about the latest laws through the private press in Beirut before being officially informed through the Ottoman bureaucratic channels. The newspaper in question also followed the preparation for a new provincial code and the deliberations concerning this subject in Istanbul.<sup>123</sup> News concerning the newly established Council of State (*ṣurayī devlet*), its functions, jurisdictions, activities and members appeared on the pages of *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*.<sup>124</sup>

In 1878 the Beirut newspaper *Thamarāt al-funūn* published an Arabic translation of the municipal code of 1877; it discussed and explained at

<sup>117</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 26 March 1859, 2 April 1859, 9 April 1859, 16 April 1859, 24 April 1859, 30 April 1859, 7 May 1859, 14 May 1859, 21 May 1859, 28 May 1859, 11 June 1859, 18 June 1859, 25 June 1859, 3 July 1859, 9 July 1859, 16 July 1859, 21 July 1859, 28 July 1859, 25 August 1859, 11 August 1859, 18 August 1859, 1 September 1859, 29 September 1859, 6 October 1859, and 13 October 1859.

<sup>118</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 13 October 1859.

<sup>119</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 17 September 1863, and 24 September 1863.

<sup>120</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 19 January 1865.

<sup>121</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 October 1867.

<sup>122</sup> Abdul-Karim Rafeq states that “The law of 7 Safar 1284/ 10 June 1867 was communicated to the *sharʿi* courts in Damascus and presumably to other courts in Syria one and a half years after its promulgation.”, see Rafeq, “Ownership of real property by foreigners in Syria, 1869 to 1873”, p. 185.

<sup>123</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 9 April 1867, and 23 April 1867.

<sup>124</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 21 April 1868.

length items relating to the elections. The timing of this translation was crucial, for it immediately preceded the first elections of a municipal council in Beirut according to the above-mentioned law.<sup>125</sup> The articles mentioned played an important role in enlightening the non-Turkish speaking voters and in informing them about their newly acquired rights and obligations as enshrined in the municipal code for the provinces of 1877.

The bilingual Arabic/Ottoman Turkish gazettes of the provinces published the latest Ottoman laws in full. These laws appeared in the official Ottoman Turkish version and in Arabic translation. On 29 *Shawwāl* 1301/9 August 1300 [malî] (24 July 1884), for example, *Suriye* reproduced the law on crimes against the public health (*qānūn al-jarāʿim al-ṣiḥḥiya*).<sup>126</sup> This law was promulgated on 17 Ramḍān 1301, a mere six weeks before it was translated into Arabic and reproduced in the official newspaper of the province of Syria. The text of this law was officially published in *Düstur* in 1302/1884–1885, i.e. at least three months after the appearance of the Arabic translation.<sup>127</sup> Hence, the Arab readers of *Suriye* were kept up-to-date concerning the latest laws.

## 2 Law Compendia in Arabic

The Ottoman authorities in Istanbul encouraged and commissioned the translation of laws into French,<sup>128</sup> the diplomatic language of the nineteenth century, as well as into the various languages of the Empire. A Greek and a Bulgarian translation were done as early as 1873.<sup>129</sup> On 27 *Dhū al-Hijja* 1288/ 7 March 1872 Khalil al-Khuri, the editor-in-chief of *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* and the official gazette of the province of Syria *Suriye*, was commissioned to translate the latest laws into Arabic.<sup>130</sup> The aim of translating the laws into the different languages of the Empire was to spread the knowledge of the new laws and regulations not only among the bureaucrats who—in theory—were expected to know Ottoman Turkish, but also among the different ethnic communities forming the population of the Empire.

<sup>125</sup> *Tamarāt al-funūn*, 30 May 1878, 13 June 1878, 20 June 1878, and 27 June 1878.

<sup>126</sup> *Suriye*, 29 Shawwāl 1301/9 August 1300 [malî] (24 July 1884).

<sup>127</sup> The official Ottoman Turkish text of this law is available in *Düstur*, zeyl 4 (Istanbul, 1302/1885), pp. 54–55.

<sup>128</sup> Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, vol. 4, frontispiece and preface, states that he was awarded “an honour instituted by the Ottoman Government as a recognition for enterprises of public utility to the Empire”. His work received the Ottoman Gold Order of Merit (*liyakat nişanı*). For more information on Ottoman orders and decorations, see Landau, “Nishan”, pp. 57–60.

<sup>129</sup> Belin, *Bibliographie ottomane*, p. 8.

<sup>130</sup> BOA, ŞD 2270/6, belge 1.

These Arabic translations in question were belatedly published in 1884, in a two-volume work under the title *Al-Dustūr*.

The biography of Niqula al-Naqqash, the Beiruti deputy in the Ottoman parliament, shows that he, as a lawyer interested in the prompt and proper application of the laws, translated a number of them on his own initiative.<sup>131</sup> He also wrote several commentaries on the laws.<sup>132</sup> His endeavors were acknowledged by the state when he received different decorations. A number of laws were also translated by other individuals; they were reprinted separately at least four times and finally published in Beirut in a law compendium under the title *Jāmiʿat al-qawānīn* in 1894.

The following chapter will investigate the application of the municipal code of 1877 in the city of Beirut. It will examine the elections of the council members as well as their socio-economic background. The achievements and shortcomings of the different mayors will be studied in the light of the financial capabilities of the municipality. This chapter will also try to reveal the degree to which these mayors were influenced by the ideas of the Tanzimat. Furthermore, it will challenge the widely held view that municipal councils were inefficient and imposed on local societies from above. A short biography of ʿAbd al-Qadir Qabbani, a journalist and mayor of Beirut at the turn of the century, will be included in this chapter as an example of a Beiruti who tried to understand and act according to the *Zeitgeist*.

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<sup>131</sup> See Naqqash, *Min al-dustūr al-jadīd*.

<sup>132</sup> For an example of his commentaries, see Naqqash, *Sharḥ qānūn uṣūl al-muḥākamāt al-jazāʿiyya al-muʿaqqat*.





## IV The Municipal Elections and the Mayors of Beirut

Most of the historians who have written about the nineteenth-century history of the Arab provinces, have dealt with Ottoman municipal institutions that were introduced during the second half of that century in an allegedly off-hand manner. This is, most probably, the result of a generally accepted view that the Ottoman authorities failed to apply municipal codes in their respective provinces.<sup>1</sup> For example, in his rich and stimulating work about authority and society in nineteenth-century Syria, Wajih Kawtharani dedicates two chapters to the new reforms, known as Tanzimat, and their impact on Arab societies. Municipal institutions, however, barely merit two paragraphs in his work.<sup>2</sup> He considers the municipality to be “one of the institutions, which came into existence as an answer to the economic and political pressure of western European powers,” and which the central authorities in Istanbul expediently used to increase their control over the provinces.<sup>3</sup> In the final analysis, so Kawtharani argues, this was an institution which was not in harmony with the social practices and tradition of the population and did not respond to the pressing need for modern urban amenities. It replaced, according to him, the services hitherto provided by time-old institutions like *ihtisāb* and the guild system, which remained free of the urban notables’ abuses (*istighlāl aʿyān al-madīna*). He believes that the notables, the scions of old notables (*aʿyān*), tax farmers (*mukataaci/muqāṭaʿji*) and old established religious families<sup>4</sup> were threatened by the loss of their economic and political leverage due to quick and radical social

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis, “Baladiyya”, p. 974 and Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, pp. 391–392; Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 160–163. For a discussion of their statements on provincial Ottoman municipalities and their influence on later historians, see the Introduction and Chapter I, above.

<sup>2</sup> Kawtharani, *Al-Sulṭa wa al-mujtamaʿ*, pp. 99–100.

<sup>3</sup> Kawtharani, *Al-Sulṭa wa al-mujtamaʿ*, p. 100.

<sup>4</sup> Kawtharani, *Al-Sulṭa wa al-mujtamaʿ*, pp. 81–122.

and economic transformations brought about by the European economic penetration. And what exacerbated the problem for the notables was the reaction of the Ottoman authorities which introduced new institutions and laws to meet these rapid socio-economic developments. From Kawtharani's point of view, the notables deliberately outflanked these laws and consciously used the new institutions to reinstate their political leverage. He holds that the municipality was one of these new institutions which were consciously abused by the above-mentioned class, leading to the abortion of the original purpose behind its establishment, namely urban development. To substantiate his argument and to give an example of the allegedly abysmal failure of the municipal institutions during the Tanzimat period, Kawtharani incorrectly cites the reports by Muhammad Bahjat and Rafiq at-Tamimi on the municipalities of Sidon and Nablus in the year 1332 *maliye*.<sup>5</sup> With reference to these two single cases he jumps to general conclusions regarding all the Arab urban centres in *Bilād al-Shām*. It must also be noted that he bases his inaccurate conclusions on reports which merely described the unsatisfactory situation of the two municipalities during the exceptional years of the First World War. In addition, it should be kept in mind that Sidon and Nablus were not representative of all urban centres in Syria. The municipality of Beirut and its functions attest to this fact.

Another historian, Jamil Musa al-Najjar in *Al-Idāra al-ʿuthmāniyya fī wilāyat Baghdād*, completely agrees with Kawtharani's point of view.<sup>6</sup> He states, as a matter of fact, that the disproportionate representation of notables in the municipal council of Baghdad resulted in the council's neglect of public works and social welfare. According to this historian, the notables indulged in serving their personal interests at the expense of public ones. Albeit, he contradicts himself, listing a large number of the Baghdad municipality's achievements, some of which were pioneering in nature, like the establishment of a municipal hospital with local donations

<sup>5</sup> Kawtharani, *Al-Sulṭa wa al-mujtamaʿ*, p.100. It seems worth mentioning here that Kawtharani deliberately ignores the fact, that the year 1332 *maliye* corresponds to the year 1916. He falsely states, that Bahjat and Tamimi reported on the condition of the municipalities of both these cities in the pre-First World War period. In *Wilāyat Bayrūt* Tamimi and Bahjat clearly stated that the First World War had a direct negative impact on the revenues of the municipalities of both these cities and, as a consequence, on their performance, see Tamimi and Bahjat, *Wilāyat Bayrūt*, vol. 1, pp.93–95 and 159. For the conversion from the Ottoman *maliye* years into the common era, see Ferdinand Wüstenfeld and E. Mahler, *Vergleichungs-Tabellen zur muslimischen und iranischen Zeitrechnung*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Wiesbaden, 1961); see also Faik Reşit Unat, *Hicrî tarihleri milâdî tarihe çevirme kılavuzu*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Ankara, 1988).

<sup>6</sup> Najjar, *Al-Idāra al-ʿuthmāniyya fī wilāyat Baghdād*, p.259.

in 1872 and two public libraries in 1885.<sup>7</sup> In *Bayrūt al-tārīkh al-ijtimāʿī, 1864–1914* Hasan Zaʿrur speaks about the inefficacy of the Beirut municipality. He believes that “the systematic policy of impoverishment followed by the Ottoman state in its provinces is the main ground for the incompetence of the municipality”.<sup>8</sup> Hence, according to him, the ineptness of the municipality of Beirut was a direct result of the state’s policy, if not a policy in itself. However, a review of the contemporary Beirut press and a number of Ottoman documents has produced evidence which demonstrates that the generally accepted view of municipal reform in the Arab provinces presented by Kawtharani, Najjar and Zaʿrur needs to be modified.

In order to be able to appreciate the significance of the municipality of Beirut it is essential to answer the following questions. Who were the mayors of the municipal council? How were they elected? What was their socio-economic background? Were they traditional notables (*aʿyān*), Tanzimat officials or the intelligentsia of the city? What were their plans for the city and which obstacles did they face? What was their *Weltanschauung*? And how did they perceive of their role in their own society? Trying to answer these questions in an exhaustive manner has proved to be rather difficult, due to the paucity of published literature on the mayors of Beirut. In the current chapter, however, an attempt will be made to reconstruct the biographies of selected mayors. This will shed some light on their attitude to municipal elections and to the institution they led. In order to achieve this goal, bits and pieces of information scattered in the contemporary press, in Ottoman archival material and in a few memoirs have been collected and analysed.

## A The Early Mayors of Beirut prior to the Application of the 1877 Municipal Law

Prior to the application of the third municipal code of 1877—which specified the electoral procedure for the first time—Beirut had three unelected mayors. In 1863 the Beirut newspaper *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* reported that a municipal council was established in Beirut upon the private initiative of the city dwellers, however, it did not provide any information regarding the mayor or the council members. In the following year it published an announcement concerning market control, carrying the signature of al-Hajj ʿAbdallah Bayhum, the mayor of the city.<sup>9</sup> He was the eldest member of

<sup>7</sup> Najjar, *Al-Idāra al-ʿuthmāniyya fī wilāyat Baghdād*, pp. 266–269.

<sup>8</sup> Zaʿrur, *Bayrūt*, pp. 149–154.

<sup>9</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 22 December 1864.

the Bayhum family, one of the most prominent merchant families in Beirut. In 1860 the same newspaper reported that the president of the chamber of commerce, ‘Abdallah Bayhum, and the merchant Muhammad al-Barbir were very influential in maintaining peace in the city during the civil strife which swept across Mount Lebanon and Damascus.<sup>10</sup> Bayhum’s exploits and his charitable activities made him a highly respected man in Beirut’s society. Most probably, al-Hajj Bayhum occupied the office of mayor until 1868, when the first municipal law for the provinces came into effect. In that year a certain Salih Bey was appointed mayor of the city.<sup>11</sup> He held two positions at the same time; besides being the mayor, he was also the lieutenant governor (*kaimmakam*) of the *sancak/sanjaq* of Beirut. We have no information regarding Salih Bey’s biography, other than two entries in the *Salname* of Syria reporting that he was the *kaimmakam* and mayor of Beirut simultaneously. Holding two such official posts, one representing the central authorities and the other representing the city itself, was in accordance with a special provision in the code of 1867.<sup>12</sup>

Between 1286/1869 and 1293/1877 Ahmad Efendi Abaza was appointed mayor of Beirut by the provincial authorities, represented by the *vali* of Syria.<sup>13</sup> Despite the long tenure of Ahmad Abaza, there is no information about him in local Beirut literature. Having been an Ottoman official, our information about him mostly derives from the consecutive yearbooks (*Salname*) of the province of Syria. He is also mentioned in the travelogue of al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jawad al-Qayati, an Egyptian, who was exiled to Beirut after the British occupation of Egypt in 1882.<sup>14</sup> Abaza was one of the young Circassian bureaucrats, who served in Beirut during the period of Ibrahim Pasha. Like some other Egyptian bureaucrats, he remained in the city after the retreat of the Egyptians from Syria in 1840. As a well trained and experienced official he was incorporated into the Ottoman civil service during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid I, who

<sup>10</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 7 June 1860.

<sup>11</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1285/1868–69), p. 42.

<sup>12</sup> Article 1 of the municipal code of 1867; *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 491 and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 433.

<sup>13</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1286/1869–70), p. 73; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1288/1871–72), p. 67; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1289/1872–73), p. 89; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1291/1874–75), p. 62; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1293/1876), p. 99; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1294/1877), p. 88.

<sup>14</sup> Qayati, *Nafhat al-bishām fī riḥlat al-Shām*, p. 43. This book was written by an Egyptian Shaykh and is one of our major sources of information regarding the Egyptian mayors of Beirut. He followed their news attentively and described them as successful Egyptians in Syria. Neither the Beirut press nor the Ottoman *Salnames* provide us with enough information on these mayors.

tried to modernise his administration following the Egyptian model. During Ahmad Abaza's term of office the concession for the Beyrouth Waterworks Company was concluded. This company contracted to provide Beirut with potable water for 40 years, after which all its assets and equipment would revert to the municipality.<sup>15</sup> During his tenure Abaza participated in the cultural life of the city; he was, for example, a member of the Syrian Scientific Society (*al-Jam'īyya al-ʿIlmiyya al-Sūriyya*).<sup>16</sup> In his capacity as mayor he reportedly helped the Jesuits to acquire a license to establish their college in Beirut.<sup>17</sup> In 1293/1877 he was appointed as the *qā'im maqām* of the Bekaa valley, thus leaving his post as mayor of Beirut after many years in office. Abaza was replaced by Muhyi al-Din Efendi Bayhum.<sup>18</sup> During the last year of Abaza's mayoralty he rendered crucial services to the Ottoman military efforts, facilitating the dispatch of troops (*sevkiyyat-i askeriyye*) through the port city. These services were belatedly acknowledged by the governor of Syria, who recommended him for an Ottoman decoration. The imperial rescript (*irade-i şahane*), granting him the *Osmani* decoration of the fourth order, was issued on 25 December 1886 (Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1304).<sup>19</sup>

## B The First Municipal Elections in Beirut and Damascus as Depicted in the Beirut Press and Ottoman Archival Documents

During the mayoralty of Muhyi al-Din Efendi Bayhum—the nephew of the above mentioned al-Hajj ʿAbdallah Bayhum—the municipal code of 1877 was promulgated. Sixteen articles of this law defined the procedure for municipal elections. Different proposed articles of this code were discussed and finally ratified by Muhyi al-Din's brother al-Hajj Husayn Bayhum, the deputy of Syria in the Ottoman parliament.<sup>20</sup> The ratified municipal code was not implemented in the same year, most probably due to the military and political situation in the Empire. Between 1876 and 1878 the Ottoman state was engaged in a long war with Serbia and Russia. Using this as a pretext, Sultan Abdülhamid II dissolved the short-lived parliament on 14 February 1878. However, he did not suspend the municipal

<sup>15</sup> *Salname-i vilayeti Beyrut* (1319/1901–02), pp. 281–282.

<sup>16</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-šahāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> Zaʿrur, *Bayrūt*, p. 98. However, when I consulted the three-volume work by Kuri, *Une histoire du Liban à travers les archives des Jésuites*, I was not able to find any evidence to substantiate the report of Zaʿrur on Ahmad Abaza and the college of the Jesuits in Beirut.

<sup>18</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 24 May 1877.

<sup>19</sup> BOA, İ.DH 79901.

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter III above.

code, which had been discussed and ratified by that Ottoman parliament (*meclis-i meb'usan*). Preparations for the first municipal elections in Beirut started in March of 1878,<sup>21</sup> that is to say, merely one month after the suspension of the parliament. The timing of the municipal elections increased its significance. Given the difficulty of macro-level political involvement in the aftermath of the restoration of the Sultan's absolute authority, "municipalities remained the sole platform open to a rising mercantile class to voice its opinion and to get engaged in the administration of the urban space in a way that would serve its interests best".<sup>22</sup> Husayn Bayhum and 'Abd al-Rahim Badran,<sup>23</sup> the deputies of Syria in the dissolved parliament, were two of the candidates in the municipal elections of 1878. Bayhum and Badran could be considered as the most representative examples of the rising mercantile class with seats in parliament; however, due to the lack of other political venues on the imperial level, they were forced to seek municipal office in 1878. Bayhum lost the elections, but later in 1878 was asked to replace Salim Trad who tendered his resignation from the municipal council.<sup>24</sup> 'Abd al-Rahim Badran was elected to the municipal council of Beirut in 1878; however, he tendered his resignation from that council in the following year.<sup>25</sup>

Not only former parliamentarians, but Beirut journalists and members of the city's 'intelligentsia' regarded the municipal elections as the last chance to voice an opinion and to use their shrunken right to elect their representatives. The press seized the opportunity of the municipal elections to publish a long list of articles about the virtue of voting and the rights of the voters and their responsibilities with respect to the choice of council members. The desired qualifications of the potential mayor and council members were emphasised;<sup>26</sup> after all they were going to be in charge of the progress and prosperity of Beirut.

During this euphoric, but very tense pre-election period, a conflict between the *mufti* of Beirut, 'Abd al-Basit Fakhuri, and the journalist

<sup>21</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 28 March 1878.

<sup>22</sup> Özveren, *The Making and Unmaking of an Ottoman Port-City*, p. 151.

<sup>23</sup> The British consul general in Beirut reported the following on Badran: "He was for about five years *kaymakam* of various places in the province of Diyarbakir and has during the last five months filled the post of Muslim member of the [Court of Appeals] of Beirut, where his acuteness and honesty have gained for him a high reputation amongst all classes ... As a Muslim he is most liberal in his ideas, tolerant and conciliant towards Christians ... He is thoroughly convinced of the necessity of reform in the Ottoman administration.", cited in Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period*, p.274.

<sup>24</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 25 October 1878.

<sup>25</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 15 October 1878, and 13 January 1879.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 15 February 1890.

‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani surfaced on the pages of *Thamarāt al-funūn*. It seems that ‘Abd al-Basit Fakhuri tried to second and promote the chances of some candidates of his own choice, in an attempt to benefit from the new law and to preserve privileges related to his post and religious community. In his capacity as the spiritual head of the Sunni community he summoned the Sunni Beirut voters to his office to discuss who should be supported by the community as its representative.<sup>27</sup> Qabbani considered this as a breach of the law and a blatant infringement of the constitutional right of all citizens. In a long article, in which he called for free elections, he explained the benefits of free choice. Qabbani believed that free voting would ensure the election of the most suitable candidates, who would, in their turn, serve the city and contribute to its progress “as is the case in Europe.” He indirectly accused the *mufti* of belonging to the age of tyranny:

“The state has granted us total freedom in elections. But the main obstacle preventing us from practising this freedom is that some persons still hold on to the ideas of the age of tyranny; as a result, this attitude has so far impeded our development.”<sup>28</sup>

He tried to undermine the *mufti*’s scheming by using a very important weapon which the *mufti* did not have, namely his newspaper *Thamarāt al-funūn*. It was the only newspaper owned by a Muslim journalist. In successive articles he kept on calling for widespread and free participation in the voting process to secure the election of the most suitable and qualified candidates. In a clear act of retaliation, the *mufti* instigated some of his Beirut supporters to cancel their subscription to *Thamarāt al-funūn*. Qabbani, however, was not deterred by the *mufti*’s indirect pressure and did not heed the direct financial one. He persisted in his call for fair elections free of all manipulations.<sup>29</sup> In an attempt to stop the *mufti* and other religious figures from influencing the voter’s choice of their representatives, his newspaper published an Arabic translation of the municipal law, and discussed and explained at length items relating to the election.<sup>30</sup> Qabbani’s articles and translation of the municipal code must have played an important role in enlightening the non-Turkish speaking voters and informing them about their rights. The first full Arabic translation of the municipal code of 1877 appeared in 1883, i.e. five years after the first municipal elections in Beirut. The precedent set by Qabbani in 1878, i.e. publishing

<sup>27</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 23 May 1878.

<sup>28</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 30 May 1878.

<sup>29</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 13 June 1878, 20 June 1878, and 27 June 1878.

<sup>30</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 30 May 1878, 6 June 1878, 13 June 1878, and 20 June 1878.



excerpts from the law in the press prior to the elections, was later adopted by other Beiruti newspapers.<sup>31</sup>

On 18 July 1878, 'the *mufti* affair' came to an end. Qabbani wrote an article in which he expressed his deep satisfaction with the electoral process and its results, which he described as honest and free. Twelve competent members were elected to the municipal council and one of them, Fakhri Nami Bey, an engineer and large property owner in Beirut, was appointed as mayor.<sup>32</sup> In his memoirs, Yusuf al-Hakim, a high-ranking Ottoman bureaucrat from Latakia, made a pun in connection with Fakhri Bey's name, describing him as an idol for many subsequent mayors of the city, because he was the pride (*fakhr*) of the municipality of Beirut.<sup>33</sup> The public dispute on the pages of the papers between the *mufti* and 'Abd al-Qadir Qabbani represents the harbinger of the decline in the *mufti*'s power, authority and role in urban affairs. It denotes the ascendancy of new urban elites: journalists, intellectuals and their patrons, i.e. the merchants of the city.

It seems appropriate to point out that the conflict between Qabbani and the *mufti* was not restricted to the affairs of the municipal elections, but included education and the control and use of Muslim *awqāf* in Beirut. During the early months of 1878 a number of Beiruti Muslims, including Qabbani, Hasan Bayhum, Husayn Bayhum and 'Abd al-Latif Hamada, started discussing the establishment of a Muslim philanthropic association with a special focus on modern education. The outcome of their cooperation was the establishment of *Jam'īyyat al-Maqāṣid al-Khayriyya al-Islāmiyya* (*Maqāṣid* Islamic Philanthropic Association). The *Maqāṣid* Association was officially launched on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1878 (1 *Shābān* 1295). Qabbani was elected as its president. The association collected donations and was at later stage granted control over neglected *awqāf* property, most probably upon the intercession of Midhat Pasha and the ex-parliamentarian Husayn Bayhum. Within one year two schools were established; they were funded with donations and 13,132 piastres from the revenue of the *awqāf*. The *mufti* must have deemed the *Maqāṣid* Association and its means of financing itself as a blatant transgression on his traditional fields of influence. He had previously held certain sway over primary education and the supervision of the *awqāf*, two lucrative fields for sponsorships and the establishment of patron-client relationships. It appears that he had lost some of his control and authority to

<sup>31</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 1 February 1890, 7 February 1890, 15 February 1890, 1 March 1890, 31 December 1892, 30 January 1892, and 27 November 1897; *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 19 April 1880.

<sup>32</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 18 July 1878.

<sup>33</sup> Hakim, *Bayrūt wa Lubnān fī 'ahd āl 'Uthmān*, p. 28.

an association of Beirut urban elite with a modern outlook. The *mufti's* intervention in the municipal elections could be considered as an attempt on his part to preserve some of his former sway and esteem, and at the same time to undermine or hinder the efforts of the founders of the *Maqāsid*. Hence, the stark reaction of Qabbani defending the freedom of choice in the first municipal elections.<sup>34</sup>

From the articles which Qabbani published in his newspaper, comparing the elections in Beirut with the ones in Damascus, it becomes evident that his opposition to the *mufti's* view of the elections, and his call for free elections were very genuine and were not based on narrow personal or sectarian interests.<sup>35</sup> One month after the elections in Beirut the results of the elections in Damascus made news in Beirut; the *vali* of Syria decided to appoint the richest Damascene as mayor despite the fact that he had not been elected. The elected members reached a joint agreement and tendered their resignation collectively. This action forced the *vali* to call for re-elections. In the second round of elections only Muslim members were elected and the *vali's* candidate was finally appointed. Qabbani reported this in his paper, where he congratulated the Beirutis for their success in applying the law, and appealed to voters in other cities to follow it as a model. He blamed the Damascenes for their lack of interest in the municipal elections, and advised them to apply the letter of the law and choose the suitable nominee, regardless of his religious affiliation.<sup>36</sup>

It did not take long for the second round of elections in Damascus to fail. Council members were quitting their posts individually and in pairs (*birer ikişer*). According to a telegraph dated 1 April 1879, sent by Midhat Pasha to the Ministry of the Interior, the Damascene mayor proved to be ignorant (*malûmatsız*) and incapable (*iktidarsız*). Under his leadership municipal administration became extremely corrupt (*gayet bozuk*); therefore a third round of elections in accordance with the letter of the law became a necessity (*meceburiyet*).<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> For the financing of the *Maqāsid*, see *Al-Fajr al-şādiq li-jam'iyat al-maqāsid fi Bayrūt, a'māl al-sana al-ülā* (Beirut, 1297), p. 26. For the members of the association during its first four years, which definitely did not include the *mufti*, see *Al-Fajr al-şādiq, a'māl al-sana al-rābi'a* (Beirut, 1300/1883), pp. 23–24.

<sup>35</sup> In these articles he compared the elections in Beirut and Damascus, describing the election in the first city as free and fair, see *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 11 July 1878, 8 August 1878, 9 September 1878, and 21 October 1878.

<sup>36</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 11 July 1878, 8 August 1878, 9 September 1878, and 21 October 1878.

<sup>37</sup> BOA, ŞD.MLK 2272/21, belge 3.

### C A Note on the Municipal Elections in Beirut during the Hamidian Period

Articles 18–33 of the municipal law of 1877 defined the electoral procedure in the provincial towns and cities. A municipal council of six to twelve members—depending on the size of the city—was to be elected in the Ottoman provincial cities. As of 1878 municipal elections were regularly held in Beirut. They took place between December and February of every second year.<sup>38</sup> During this period the press would highlight the role of the municipality in the development of Beirut and in maintaining what had so far been achieved. However, the candidates did not post campaigns on the pages of the papers, nor did any of the nominees publish anything similar to an electoral programme. The newspapers remained neutral and did not show a bias for any particular nominee. Nevertheless, the municipal elections presented the press with a good opportunity to write about the elections and freedom in general. The accountability of the municipal council vis-à-vis its electorate was another important issue. For example, in February 1890 a reader of *Al-Miṣbāḥ* newspaper wrote a letter, a few weeks before the municipal elections were to take place. This letter reveals a remarkable degree of political awareness by referring to the political notion that taxation necessitates representation and accountability. He wrote the following about the importance of publishing the municipal budget and signed his reader's letter as 'the faithful patriot' (*al-waṭanī al-amīn*):

“I presume that, according to the law, the municipal council is obliged to publish its budget in order to share with the electorate crucial information about the financial conditions and the progress of municipal projects. The municipal council is merely a body representing the citizens (*al-ahālī*), and administering the city on their behalf. Hence, it is imperative upon the municipal council to disclose its budget every year, and to inform the citizens about the manner in which it has spent their taxes.”<sup>39</sup>

The papers also demanded transparency in the electoral process and campaigned for elections free of the intervention of all those who could

<sup>38</sup> In a few cases the elections were delayed for several weeks. The delays did not pass unnoticed by the press, which used to call for punctual election dates. See, for example, *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 12 May 1880.

<sup>39</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 8 February 1890. I regret that the literal translation of this text does not convey the elegant style of the original Arabic letter. The author also showed an intimate knowledge of the municipal law of 1877; he discussed and interpreted a number of articles, especially articles dealing with electoral rights.

influence the free decision of the voters. In *Al-Maḥabba* an established Beirut lawyer and journalist, Jurji Nicolas Baz, criticised those who nominated themselves to municipal office without having the proper qualifications for public service:

“The municipalities were established to execute major public works which are indispensable in a modern society. It was founded to transform the cities into cheerful gardens, and the suburbs into orchards; it was founded to preserve public health, to see to the security of the citizens, and to provide for economic development. In general, it was founded to execute projects of public interest, not to monopolise benefit and give precedence to narrow personal interests. The council members should be elected for a number of virtues including honesty, conscience, principles and ability to be innovative, according to the needs of the city dwellers. They should know that they are not elected to preside over meetings and to develop a superior attitude to those who elected them.”<sup>40</sup>

The newspapers *Thamarāt al-funūn*, *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, *Al-Maḥabba* and *Lisān al-ḥāl* urged the Beirutis not to heed rumours alleging that certain nominees were supported by the Ottoman provincial authorities, and they assured their readers that the *vali* did not and would not second any nominee.<sup>41</sup> A short list of editorial titles in the contemporary Beirut press will convey an impression of the subjects that interested the press and its readership: “the municipality of Beirut and the press”<sup>42</sup>, “the municipal budget”<sup>43</sup>, “municipal councils and their obligations”<sup>44</sup>, “public gardens”<sup>45</sup>, “cleaning and embellishing the city”<sup>46</sup>, “comment on the municipality of Beirut”<sup>47</sup>, “the municipal elections”<sup>48</sup>, “new elections and the street network”<sup>49</sup>, “the duties of the municipality”<sup>50</sup>, and “the municipality and public libraries”<sup>51</sup>.

On the whole it seems that the municipal elections provided the citizens of Beirut with a margin to practise ‘democratic’ procedures, albeit narrow

<sup>40</sup> *Al-Maḥabba*, 10 July 1906.

<sup>41</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 19 January 1888, and 6 February 1888; *Al-Maḥabba*, 19 January 1902.

<sup>42</sup> *Al-Taḡaddum*, 1 February 1883.

<sup>43</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 1 February 1890, 7 February 1890, and 15 February 1890.

<sup>44</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 11 December 1894.

<sup>45</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 21 March 1892.

<sup>46</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 29 February 1892.

<sup>47</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 26 February 1900.

<sup>48</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 7 March 1898, 14 March 1898, 21 March 1898, 28 March 1898, and 4 April 1898.

<sup>49</sup> *Al-Maḥabba*, 16 March 1902.

<sup>50</sup> *Al-Maḥabba*, 10 March 1906.

<sup>51</sup> *Al-Maḥabba*, 4 March 1900, and 29 April 1900.

ones.<sup>52</sup> Evidently, elections evoked fairly extensive journalistic coverage; thus one is inclined to assume that municipal elections contributed to the political awareness of Beirut citizens. The press, the mass media of the time, introduced several modern and progressive political concepts. It emphasised the role of ‘democratic’ elections in choosing the suitable nominees and it promoted the idea of responsibility towards the electorate. It also pinpointed the urban problems that required quick solutions and publicised them, so that they would become a matter of public discussion. In retrospect, however, it is very difficult to judge the actual extent to which the citizens of Beirut were committed to the ideal of voters’ rights and to exercise ‘democratic principles’. The participation of the citizens of Beirut in the voting process varied from one election to another; the number of voters varied between a minimum of 1087<sup>53</sup> and a maximum of 2500.<sup>54</sup>

One thing, however, is clear: representation on the municipal council was not along sectarian lines, and the representatives were not allotted seats according to rigid quotas directly corresponding to the religious composition of the city. The composition of the municipal council did not correspond to what in modern political Beirut jargon is known as “the sectarian equilibrium” (*al-tawāzun al-ṭāʿifi*). As discussed in the third chapter, the law of 1877 did not specify the share of each religious group in the municipal council, and in fact the council of Beirut reflected the proper application of the letter of the law. The sectarian composition of the council varied from one election to another, sometimes showing a Muslim majority, sometimes a Christian one. In order to prove this point, the religious configuration of a number of municipal councils will be examined. In the elections of 1878 only two Muslim members secured enough votes to reach the municipal council, the other ten members were Christians. In 1892 five Muslim members were elected, but four of them decided to resign; these four were replaced by four Christians, without creating any protest on the part of the Sunni community of the city, for the newly appointed members were entitled to the post by securing the second highest number of votes. In 1906 membership in the municipal council was equally divided between the Christians and Muslims of the city.<sup>55</sup> In some cases Christian members were replaced by Muslim ones upon their resignation, or vice versa, without

<sup>52</sup> As explained in Chapter III above, the law of 1877 did not grant all citizens the right to vote; this right was restricted to male Ottoman subjects who paid an annual property tax of fifty piastres.

<sup>53</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 8 March 1890.

<sup>54</sup> *Al-Maḥabba*, 7 December 1902.

<sup>55</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 18 July 1878, and 28 October 1878; *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 7 April 1900; *Al-Maḥabba*, 31 March 1906.

creating any bitter or angry public reaction on the part of the voters; there is no evidence in the press that any specific religious group openly or subtly accused others of undermining their historical political rights or privileges.<sup>56</sup>

It appears that the municipal elections played an important role in spreading new political ideas on the grassroots level of the Empire. It should be highlighted here that between 1878 and 1908 new and rather progressive political ideas were published in the press on the occasion of new municipal elections. In this period of time —1878–1908—the powers of the Sultan were absolute, hence, giving the era the commonly known name *istibdad devri/ahd al-istibdād* (age of absolutism or tyranny). The demonstrative critical opinions quoted above show that neither the press nor some of its readers hesitated to publicly express political ideas regarding representation and accountability, or the necessary qualifications for public office, albeit only in connection with provincial affairs. Most probably the authors of these articles entertained similar ideas regarding the political situation of the Empire as a whole, however, one might presume that, for reasons relating to personal safety, they did not express such views publicly on the pages of the Beirut papers.

#### D The Mayors of Beirut after the Application of the 1877 Municipal Law

In Beirut twelve members were elected to the municipal council, owing to its relatively large population. According to the law the *vali* or his deputy, the *kaimmakam*, was entitled to appoint one of the elected members as president of the municipal council, i.e. as mayor. The mayor was in charge of executing municipal projects and responsible for the proper functioning of all municipal affairs.<sup>57</sup>

##### 1 Ibrahim Fakhri Nami Bey

Ibrahim Fakhri Nami Bey was the first elected mayor of Beirut.<sup>58</sup> He was the son of Mir Mahmud Nami, a Circassian who had started his

<sup>56</sup> In October 1878 Yusuf Trad (Maronite) resigned from the municipal council, and he was replaced by the former deputy of Beirut in the Ottoman parliament, Husayn Bayhum (Sunni). In January 1879 ‘Abd al-Rahim Badran (Sunni) resigned as well, and he was replaced by As‘ad Malhamah (Maronite), see *Thamarāt al-fimūn*, 15 October 1878, and 13 January 1879.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter III above.

<sup>58</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1296/1878–79), p. 107; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1297/1879–80), p. 150; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1298/1880–81), p. 149, and *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1299/1881–82), p. 170.

political career in Cairo. Mahmud Nami was one of the first scholars whom Muhammad ʿAli Pasha sent to Paris to study engineering and mathematics.<sup>59</sup> After his graduation he served as Minister of Finance in Muhammad ʿAli's government.<sup>60</sup> During the rule of Ibrahim Pasha in Syria, he was appointed by the former as governor (*muḥāfiẓ*) of Beirut. He introduced some of the major improvements that boosted the commercial role of Beirut, such as the construction of the quarantine, in collaboration with the French consul Henri Guys, and the revival of the port neighbourhood.<sup>61</sup> He was compelled to leave Beirut in 1840, but his family remained behind. Fakhri Nami Bey, like his father, studied in Paris, where he was awarded a degree in engineering.<sup>62</sup> Upon his return to Beirut he became actively involved in the cultural and commercial activities of the city. Like his predecessor Ahmad Efendi Abaza, Fakhri Nami Bey was a founding member of the Syrian Scientific Society (*al-Jamʿiyya al-ʿIlmiyya al-Sūriyya*).<sup>63</sup> He constructed a khan in an area close to the port of the city. *Khan Fakhri Bey* was mainly occupied by banks and trade houses.<sup>64</sup>

In July 1878 Fakhri Nami was elected to the first municipal council in Beirut and was appointed by its deputy governor (*mutaṣarrif*) as the first elected mayor of the city. He was remunerated for his service as mayor; however, he voluntarily donated his entire salary to development projects in the city.<sup>65</sup> Immediately after assuming his post he contributed 6,000 piastres from his own purse to rehabilitate the area known as *Sahlat al-Burj*,<sup>66</sup> and in the following year larger sums were added to the initial contribution.<sup>67</sup> As the name of the area indicates, *Sahlat al-Burj* was partly a meadow and partly a waste land where Beirutis organised horse races. This area separated the old city of Beirut from the newly developed quarters like *Ashrafiyye* and *Rumayl*. A trained engineer he designed and followed the work in the public garden himself.<sup>68</sup> Like many public projects executed during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, the garden was named *al-Ḥadīqa al-Ḥamīdiyya*.

<sup>59</sup> Rustum, "Bayrūt fī ʿahd Ibrāhīm Bāshā", pp. 124–134; reprinted in Khury, *Bayrūt fī al-muṣannaḡāt al-ʿarabiyya*, pp. 172–180.

<sup>60</sup> Qayati, *Nafḡat al-bishām fī riḡlat al-Shām*, p. 60.

<sup>61</sup> Guys, *Beyrouth et le Liban*, vol. 1, p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Aiche Osmanog̃lou, *Avec mon père le Sultan Abdulhamid de son palais à sa prison* (Paris, 1991), p. 175.

<sup>63</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḡāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, p. 77.

<sup>64</sup> Khuri, *Al-Jāmiʿa aw dalīl Bayrūt li-ʿām 1889*, p. 64.

<sup>65</sup> Hakim, *Bayrūt wa-Lubnān fī ʿahd āl ʿUthmān*, p. 27.

<sup>66</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 12 August 1878.

<sup>67</sup> *Lisān al-ḡāl*, 27 March 1879, 10 May 1879, and 14 May 1879.

<sup>68</sup> Khuri, *Majmaʿ al-masarrāt*, p. 384.

Fakhri Nami Bey, along with the administrative council of the city, convinced Midhat Pasha, the *vali* of Syria, to submit a request to the central authorities in Istanbul to transfer the property of the Pine Forest of Beirut (*Ḥursh Bayrūt*) to the municipality.<sup>69</sup> Midhat Pasha forwarded and seconded their demand. The request was favourably approved by the Ministry of the Interior and the Council of State.<sup>70</sup> However, the Ministry of Finance (*hazine*) expressed reservations regarding the planned transfer of property. Midhat Pasha, in his response to these reservations, stated that the administrative council of Beirut and its municipality pledged that the forest area would be more productive and its trees better protected from theft and vandalism under the municipality. He added that the local council would develop it into an area intended for recreation (*nūzhetgah/muntazah*).<sup>71</sup> A rescript by the Sultan granting the municipality the sole property rights of the Pine Forest was issued on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1879 (17 *Jamāda al-Awwal* 1296).<sup>72</sup> Fakhri Nami Bey transformed a part of the large Pine Forest estate into a public park which was then called *al-Ḥadīqa al-Fārūqiyya* or the People's Park (*Ḥadīqat al-Milla*). Most probably, Fakhri Nami's plan for this park was inspired by the Parisian model, the *Bois de Boulogne*. The Pine Forest of Beirut played an important role in municipal festivities throughout the last decade of the Ottoman Period. Foreign dignitaries and high-ranking Ottoman visitors of the city were entertained there.<sup>73</sup> In this park the Ottoman military music band would play its marches for the public on Fridays, Sundays and national holidays.<sup>74</sup>

The administrative and municipal councils of Beirut submitted a request to the governor of Syria for the property rights of a number of sand dunes in the vicinity of the city. The municipality had a developmental plan for this deserted area. It envisaged reclaiming these dunes in order to make them suitable for agricultural production or residential plots. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 1879 (17 *Rabīʿ al-Awwal* 1296) Midhat Pasha turned to the Council of State and the Department of Land Registry (*defter-i hākani*) and enquired about the possibility of granting the municipality a huge area of sand dunes extending to the south-west of the city. He wrote that the

<sup>69</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 29 August 1878.

<sup>70</sup> BOA, ŞD.MLK 2272/24, belgeler 1 and 2.

<sup>71</sup> BOA, ŞD.MLK 2272/24, belge 3.

<sup>72</sup> BOA, İ.ŞD 2479.

<sup>73</sup> On Sunday, 5 November 1898, the municipality of Beirut organised a reception in honour of the German Kaiser and his wife in the Pine Forest, see Ibrahim al-Aswad, *Kitāb al-riḥla al-imbaraṭūriyya fī al-mamālik al-Uthmāniyya* (Baabda, Mount Lebanon, 1898), pp. 147–148.

<sup>74</sup> Khuri, *Al-Jāmiʿa aw dalīl Bayrūt li-ʿām 1889*, p. 48.



municipality would reclaim this land from the incursion of the sand. Thus, it would protect the city and the private properties from the destructive effect of sand. In this manner the municipal project would definitely limit the desertification of the immediate surroundings of the city.<sup>75</sup> The *irade* granting the municipality the sole property rights of the sand dunes was issued on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1880 (28 *Sha'bān* 1297), i.e. after the departure of Midhat Pasha and the appointment of his successor Hamdi Ahmed Pasha (died in Beirut in 1884).<sup>76</sup>

The area of these sand dunes was enormous, encompassing 3,000,000 square meters.<sup>77</sup> According to the conditions specified in the original request of the municipality, the latter pledged that it would stop the dissemination of sand towards the city, and that it would transform the areas already lost to the sand dunes into productive parcels. It is not clear how the municipality intended to fulfil such a demanding task. However, it can be deduced that the first elected municipal council of Beirut became—after both of the transactions involving the Pine Forest and the sand dunes had been concluded—the largest property estate owner in the city, without paying a single *para*. It must also be noted that the municipal council had grand plans for the city. These schemes definitely went beyond the limited financial means of the council. Reclaiming the plots of land required wind breakers, mainly in the form of trees which could grow in the sand or in a very thin layer of fertile earth spread on top of the sand. Such an operation implied special know-how, and it was costly. Furthermore, the project required permanent tending and a complicated irrigation system. The entire project was both labour- and capital-intensive, involving two resources that were not available to the municipality at that early point in its history.<sup>78</sup> This fact could not have escaped the mind of Fakhri Nami Bey, he had to contribute from his own purse in order to achieve a minor project covering a minimal area in comparison to the sand dunes. This shows that Fakhri Nami Bey envisaged a very promising and bright future for his new institution and his native town. Hence, he wanted to prepare for its future expansion. The reclamation project also reflected a strong self-confidence on the part of the city burghers, who evidently believed in a rosy future, to which they could contribute and which they would definitely achieve in a collective effort. It is a telling example of the optimism prevalent among the city burghers at that time in history.

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<sup>75</sup> BOA, İ.MM 3157, belge 1, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> BOA, İ.MM 3157, belge 3.

<sup>77</sup> *Beyrut vilayeti gazetesi*, 18 Muḥarram 1308/4 September 1890.

<sup>78</sup> BOA, ŞD 2281/4, belgeler 1–9.

During the tenure of Fakhri Bey, negotiations to enlarge the port of Beirut started in earnest. The municipality was expected to play the main role and to hold substantial shares in the future port.<sup>79</sup> In spite of his success in acquiring the extensive Pine Forest and sand dunes from the central authorities, he was not able to convince the Ministry of Public Works in Istanbul to grant the municipality the right to enlarge the port of Beirut; his failure to do so caused a major drop in his popularity.<sup>80</sup> Qabbani, for instance, accused him of being unable to recognise the priorities of the city, and of showing disinterest in the daily affairs of the city by spending extended vacations in Istanbul or in the summer resorts around Beirut, instead of attending to the nascent institution he was responsible for.<sup>81</sup> It seems that Fakhri Nami Bey was not involved in the petty parochial politics and the local family feuds; Yusuf al-Hakim mentioned in his memoirs that Fakhri Nami Bey and his son Damad Ahmad Nami remained impartial to local family politics.<sup>82</sup>

## 2 Muhyi al-Din Efendi Hamada

Muhyi al-Din Efendi Hamada was the second elected mayor of Beirut; he replaced Fakhri Nami Bey, immediately following the second municipal elections in the city.<sup>83</sup> Hamada was the son of the Alexandrian ‘Abd al-Fattah Hamada, the president of the Beirut city council, which was established by Ibrahim Pasha and functioned as a commercial court until 1840.<sup>84</sup> Hamada, the father, did not leave the city after the forced departure of Ibrahim Pasha. His expertise was needed, and he was appointed as chief of the security forces in the city. In 1841 he was successful in suppressing a Druse-Maronite rebellion in Mount Lebanon, and saved the life of Emir Bashir III, whom Hamada escorted to Beirut on his way to his exile in Istanbul.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>79</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 26 May 1879, and 11 December 1879.

<sup>80</sup> *Al-Janna*, 12 August 1879, and *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 14 August 1879. Each of these newspapers published a long editorial in which it caustically criticised Fakhri Bey for not being capable of finalising the port project.

<sup>81</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 24 July 1879. Probably Qabbani’s accusations were partly true. Fakhri Nami was not interested in the parochial politics of Beirut, but in those of the Empire. He became the first ambassador of the Ottoman Empire in Morocco. He spent a considerable amount of time in Istanbul, where his son Ahmad married the daughter of Sultan Abdülhamid II to become the only Beirut *Damad*, see Osmanoglu, *Avec mon père le Sultan Abdulhamid*, p. 175.

<sup>82</sup> Hakim, *Bayrūt wa Lubnān fī ‘ahd al-‘Uthmān*, p. 35.

<sup>83</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1301/1883–84), p. 123; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1302/1884–85), pp. 114–115; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1303/1885–86), p. 112.

<sup>84</sup> Rustum, *Al-Uṣūl al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 5, p. 49; Qayati, *Nafḥat al-bishām fī riḥlat al-Shām*, pp. 12–13.

<sup>85</sup> Fouad E. Boustany, ed., *Mudhakkarāt Rustum Bāz*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beirut, 1968), p. 106.

In 1863 the children of ʿAbd al-Fattah Hamada, Muhammad, ʿAli, Saʿd al-Din and Muhyi al-Din, finished the construction of their market, which was located westwards of the old city centre. They named this market *Sūq al-Sayyid ʿAbd al-Fattāh* in memory of their father. The market was built in two rows, each consisting of two buildings. At the centre or the cross road between the four buildings, a domed water fountain was constructed. There were 90 shops on the ground level and a large number of offices on the top floors.<sup>86</sup> Before, most of the commercial houses had been located in khans, and the new market was an innovation in the city, especially owing to its large scale. Some of the khans, like those of Fakhri Bey and Antoun Bey, were constructed at the same time as the Hamada market.<sup>87</sup>

The Hamada family not only did introduce an architectural difference into the city, but a cultural one as well. The Hamadas and the Bayhums would invite theatre groups to their own spacious private houses. Serious plays were especially written for such occasions, some of them by established poets like Husayn Bayhum and Muhammad Amin Arsalan.<sup>88</sup> In 1865 a play by Arsalan was presented in the Hamadas' residence for an entire week. Members of different classes of the Beirut society were invited to attend this spectacle.<sup>89</sup> Thus they entertained their guests with theatrical acts, an edifying novelty, particularly among the Muslim community of the city.<sup>90</sup>

Muhyi al-Din Hamada was definitely one of the richest estate owners in Beirut, and, at the same time, he was the agent of the Khedival Egyptian maritime lines.<sup>91</sup> The commercial affairs of the family were managed by two of the four brothers, ʿAli and Muhammad, while Muhyi al-Din and Saʿd al-Din were involved in the cultural and political activities of the city. As early as 1860 they were partners in a publishing house, established for printing and publishing Arabic classical works; the other partners were some of the most prominent intellectuals of the city.<sup>92</sup> The two brothers were among the founding members of *Jamʿiyyat al-Funūn*. The purpose of this association was to promote modern education for the Muslim youth of Beirut. Through this association they contributed financially to the

<sup>86</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 July 1864.

<sup>87</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 July 1864.

<sup>88</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 17 December 1867.

<sup>89</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 3 May 1865.

<sup>90</sup> Ahdab, *Al-Nafḥ al-miskī fī al-shiʿr al-Bayrūtī*, p. 12.

<sup>91</sup> Unsi, *Dalīl Bayrūt*, p. 165.

<sup>92</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 23 February 1860.

establishment of the newspaper *Thamarāt al-funūn*.<sup>93</sup> They also participated in establishing the *Maqāsid* Association.<sup>94</sup>

As mayor, Muhyi al-Din Hamada was known for his strict measures in controlling the markets of Beirut.<sup>95</sup> It is reported that he patrolled the markets in person and controlled the quality of food and vegetables on display.<sup>96</sup> According to a report by an Egyptian traveller, he was successful in standardising the price of transportation in the city.<sup>97</sup> Hamada also tried different methods to safeguard the city from the serious cholera epidemic which threatened Beirut in 1883.<sup>98</sup> Most probably owing to his firmness of character, he was twice called upon to fill the post of mayor upon the resignation of incumbent mayors. The public garden *al-Ḥadīqa al-Ḥamīdiyya*, planned and developed under Fakhri Nami Bey the preceding mayor, was finally opened to the public when its trees were deemed large enough.<sup>99</sup> An Egyptian visitor of the city described this park with its three water fountains as being similar to the *Azbakiyya* in Cairo and *al-Manshiyya* in Alexandria.<sup>100</sup> At the northern end of this park new premises for the provincial administration were built, the plans of which were made by two local engineers, Bishara Efendi and the municipal engineer Yusuf Efendi al-Khayyat.<sup>101</sup> Hamada was entrusted with the supervision of this important governmental construction site. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1886 (6 *Dhu al-Hijja* 1303), the *mutasarrif* of Beirut, Abdülhalik Nasuhi Bey, acknowledged the “good services” (*hüsn-i hizmetler*) rendered by the mayor, and recommended Hamada for a higher Ottoman decoration.<sup>102</sup> The *irade* was granted on 20 August 1887 (29 *Dhu al-Qa‘da* 1304), and Hamada was promoted in rank to receive the *Osmani* of the distinguished *mütemayiz* rank.<sup>103</sup> On the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 1889 (19 *Dhu al-Qa‘da* 1306) he received another Ottoman decoration, the third rank of the *Mecidi* order.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, p. 25.

<sup>94</sup> For the members of the association during its first four years, see *Al-Fajr al-ṣādiq, a‘māl al-sana al-rābi‘a*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>95</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 12 June 1882.

<sup>96</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 16 July 1883.

<sup>97</sup> Qayati, *Nafḥat al-bishām fī riḥlat al-Shām*, p. 45. According to the Beirut newspaper *Lisān al-ḥāl* the municipal council under Hamada published a list of standardised transport fares in the city. These included different tariffs for the day and nighttime, see *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 29 June 1882.

<sup>98</sup> Sami Bey, *Al-Qawl al-ḥaqq fī Bayrūt wa Dimashq*, p. 23.

<sup>99</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 12 May 1884.

<sup>100</sup> Sami Bey, *Al-Qawl al-ḥaqq fī Bayrūt wa Dimashq*, p. 25.

<sup>101</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 14 December 1882.

<sup>102</sup> BOA, İ.DH 81946, lef 2.

<sup>103</sup> BOA, İ.DH 81946, lef 3.

<sup>104</sup> BOA, İ.DH 89189.

Unlike his predecessor, Muhyi al-Din Hamada did not propose great plans for the city. However, he attended meticulously to its day-to-day affairs, thereby preserving the achievements of his forerunners.

It seems worth mentioning here, that three of the early mayors of Beirut were of Egyptian origin: Abaza, Nami and Hamada. They either personally served as bureaucrats in the city during the short rule of Ibrahim Pasha or were the sons of such bureaucrats. This could be taken to indicate that during the formative years of the Beirut municipality the Ottoman governors of Syria chose to appoint experienced officials, like Ahmad Abaza, to such a crucial new post. At a later date in the history of the city, when the members of the municipal council were elected, the Beirut-Egyptian notables were not excluded. They were fully integrated in the city and they contributed to its development by way of their construction activities, and by means of their specialised experience and involvement in its cultural and political affairs.

### 3 ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani

‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani was born in Beirut in 1264/1847. His father was *kapıcıbaşı* Mustafa Ağa,<sup>105</sup> son of *al-sayyid* ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Qabbani, who claimed to be a descendant of Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, a grandson of Husayn, son of ‘Ali bin Abi Talib, the fourth caliph.<sup>106</sup>

Qabbani studied at the national school of Butrus al-Bustani (*al-Madrasa al-Waṭaniyya*); he also privately studied with a number of prominent

<sup>105</sup> It is reported that Mustafa Ağa actively participated in the defence of Acre against the invading Egyptian army of Ibrahim Pasha. He was the commander of the regiment defending that city. Mustafa Qabbani was wounded in battle and taken to Egypt as a prisoner. He managed to escape in order to join the caliphal forces of the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul. Dismayed by his escape, Ibrahim Pasha ordered the exile of the Qabbani family to Cyprus. Around 1840 they returned to their home town Beirut, see Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 99–100; see also Hisham Nashabe, “Al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani and *Thamarāt al-funūn*”. In: Marwan Buhairy, ed., *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890–1939* (Beirut, 1981), p. 85. Most probably as a reward for his loyalty to the Ottoman State, he was granted the *gedik* of public baths and coffee houses in Beirut. In 1851 an Ottoman document reports on the *gedik* of *kapıcıbaşı* Mustafa Ağa in Beirut, which included ten coffee houses and two public baths. A *gedik* is a trade monopoly, the exclusive right to the exercise a trade in a particular area. In all probability Mustafa Ağa leased most or all of them to third parties, see BOA, İ.MV 9057. In 1853 Mustafa al-Qabbani became the owner (*ba-mülkname*) of these public baths and coffee shops. He registered a fourth of these shops, six shares (*altı sehm*) out of 24, under the name of his children, see BOA, İ.DH 18176.

<sup>106</sup> Nashabe, “Al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani”, p. 85. Nashabe insisted on granting Qabbani the title “*shaykh*”, however, none of Qabbani’s contemporaries referred to him by that title, nor did his own newspaper.

Muslim scholars in Beirut, like Yusuf al-Asir (1815–1889) and Ibrahim al-Ahdab (1826–1891). After completing his education Qabbani started on a very active public career. In 1873 together with Sa‘d al-Din and Muhyi al-Din Hamada, he founded an association known as *Jam‘iyyat al-Funūn*. Its aim was to help the poor and promote education. In 1874 this association decided to establish a printing press. In that same year ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani travelled to different European countries to buy a suitable press for the association;<sup>107</sup> he finally decided to buy one from England. Some of the first books published by this newly established publishing association were text books for schools.<sup>108</sup> Qabbani’s newspaper *Thamarāt al-funūn* was also published by this publishing house.<sup>109</sup> Until 1877 Qabbani regularly gave readers of his newspaper the news of *Jam‘iyyat al-Funūn*. In 1877 it probably ceased to exist. In *Al-Funūn* press Qabbani also published a number of works defending the Ottoman State against attacks from the newspaper *Al-Bashīr*, the mouthpiece of the Jesuits in Beirut.<sup>110</sup> His explicit loyalty (*hayrḥâh*, literally: well-wisher) to the state and his efforts in defending its legitimate rule over the Holy Land were widely acknowledged. He received the Ottoman decoration for special achievements in the fine arts (*sanayi-i nefise madalyası*) in 1882,<sup>111</sup> and the *Osmani* of the second rank in 1891.<sup>112</sup>

In July 1878, a few months prior to the appointment of Midhat Pasha as governor of Syria, Qabbani and some of his colleagues from the former *Jam‘iyyat al-Funūn* established *Jam‘iyyat al-Maqāsid al-Khayriyya al-Islāmiyya*. One of the objectives of *Jam‘iyyat al-Maqāsid* was to establish private Muslim schools, following a modern curriculum with modern subjects which would answer the needs of a rapidly changing society. He was elected president of the *Maqāsid* Association by its founding members.

<sup>107</sup> Based on an interview conducted in Beirut in May 2000 with ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani, a great grand son of ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani, the mayor of Beirut. It is reported that Qabbani was especially impressed by the developed Western societies. Upon his return he expressed this by saying: “When I visited Europe I found that Islam is properly applied in its societies, in spite of the fact that the Europeans are not Muslims”. However, I am not able to ascertain whether this expression was really stated by him, for a similar saying is attributed to Muhammad ‘Abdu.

<sup>108</sup> Louis Cheikho, “Tārīkh fann al-ṭibā‘a fī al-Mashriq”. In: *Al-Mashriq*, 3 and 4 (1900–1901); cited in Rana Yusuf Khury, ed., *Bayrūt fī al-muṣannafāt al-‘arabiyya* (Beirut, 1995), p. 388.

<sup>109</sup> For a study of the newspaper *Thamarāt al-funūn*, see Al-Manasfi, *Al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Qabbānī wa-jarīdat Thamarāt al-funūn*.

<sup>110</sup> See the pamphlet called the *Warning to al-Bashīr*, written by Hasan Bayhum and published by ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani, ed., *Al-Nadhīr li al-Bashīr* (Beirut, 1298/1881).

<sup>111</sup> BOA, Ī.DH 97597.

<sup>112</sup> BOA, Ī.DH 67940.

In 1880 he became member of the administrative council of the district of Beirut, and roughly around that time he was appointed as judge in the court of first instance. In 1888 he was promoted in his judicial functions to the court of appeal in Beirut, in which he served until he was appointed acting mayor of Beirut in 1896. In 1898 Qabbani was re-elected to the municipal council and was appointed mayor. He served in this capacity until 1902, when he was appointed director of education in the province of Beirut. During his term of office he re-evaluated the curriculum of the official schools and proposed radical amendments to their programmes. However, he did not have time to follow up on his recommendations; in August 1908, a mere month after the revolution against Sultan Abdülhamid II, he was dismissed from public service.<sup>113</sup> In 1913 ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani and his son Najib participated in the works of the Beirut Reform Society (*Jam‘iyyat Bayrūt al-İslāhiyya*). This society called for decentralisation in the Ottoman Empire, and for greater powers to be granted to the provinces and their municipalities.<sup>114</sup>

At this point it seems appropriate to investigate another facet of Qabbani’s career, namely the establishment of a municipal hospital in Beirut, one aspect of his activities as mayor. In 1896 he was asked to assume the role of acting mayor after the resignation of his predecessor, Muhammad Zantut. Zantut had served for only a few days; he had been appointed after the resignation of Muhammad Bayhum in protest against the lack of financial support given to the municipality by the central authorities. Qabbani assumed his post at the most unfortunate moment in the history of the Beirut municipality, for it was facing a severe financial crisis; municipal services were quickly deteriorating and major development projects were shelved. He sought the support of the governor of Beirut to convince the foreign concessionaires in the city to share the cost of the construction of streets. However, his negotiations with the Beyrouth Waterworks Company, the *Compagnie Ottomane du Port, des Quais et Entrepôts de Beyrouth* and the *Société Anonyme du Gaz de Beyrouth* proved to be of no avail.<sup>115</sup> The dire financial condition of the municipality did not discourage Qabbani from establishing the long-awaited and needed municipal hospital. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s the Beirut press did not cease to demand the establishment of such an important medical institution; however, this project was

<sup>113</sup> According to Tarrazi Qabbani filed a case against the Ministry of Education protesting against his dismissal from service. He won his legal case and received his full pension as a bureaucrat, see Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 99–101.

<sup>114</sup> Hallaq, *Mudhakkarāt Salīm ‘Alī Salām*, p. 135.

<sup>115</sup> *Thamarāt al-fimūn*, 23 July 1900.

never realised.<sup>116</sup> During his mayoralty the municipality rented the house of the former mayor, Muhyi al-Din Hamada, situated in *Zuqaq al-Balat*, and turned it into a hospital with a 25-bed capacity.<sup>117</sup> On 9 January 1898 the municipal hospital was opened on the occasion of Sultan Abdülhamid's birthday. The inaugural ceremony was attended by the *vali* of Beirut, Reşid Bey, and a large number of Ottoman bureaucrats and officials as well as Beirut notables. In his inaugural speech 'Abd al-Qadir Qabbani proudly and clearly stated the expected role of the municipal hospital as a catalyst for national unity and as an Ottoman and, at the same time, local Beirut answer to the long existing foreign medical institutions in the city:

“Beirut has become famous for the large number of medical doctors working in it and for the numerous foreign hospitals. We do thank the founders of these hospitals for their services to humanity, albeit we deem it necessary for the patient to be under the custody of his own mother [the municipality] and under the medical supervision of his own people for the sake of establishing permanent amicability and understanding between the people of the exalted Ottoman State. This hospital will—God willing—render humanitarian (*al-insāniyya*) and national (*al-milliyā*) services at the same time.”<sup>118</sup>

From this article one might gauge Qabbani's perception of the institution he was heading. He considered it to be a crucial link between the Ottoman subjects and their state. By rendering them proper amenities and services, the municipality would ensure their loyalty to the state. The municipal facilities would provide national alternatives to foreign ones, thus limiting the influence of foreign powers through their varied services. Such a perception of Qabbani is in harmony with his loyalty to the Ottoman State shown in his publications.

Due to the destruction of the municipality's archival material which should have, in theory, contained the decisions and discussions of the municipal council, it is almost impossible to reconstruct the mayors' attitude to their post and to the functions of the municipality in general. Fortunately, however, we can infer Qabbani's attitude from what he wrote in his newspaper *Thamarāt al-funūn*, and from his rich career as an official in Beirut. 'Abd al-Qadir Qabbani created a social and political niche for himself through his newspaper and later through the different offices he occupied. A comparison between Qabbani and his contemporary 'Abdallah

<sup>116</sup> For examples of such demands in four different Beirut newspapers, see *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 13 October 1880; *Al-Taqaddum*, 30 May 1881; *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 12 February 1894 and 18 November 1895; and *Al-Miṣbāh*, 17 February 1894.

<sup>117</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 10 January 1898, and *Al-Miṣbāh*, 12 January 1898.

<sup>118</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 10 January 1898.



Ahmad al-Husni, a member of the municipal council of Damascus, attests to Qabbani's progressive attitude to the posts he occupied and to the problems of his age. In an attempt to reemphasise its claimed *ashrāf* origin the Husni family reproduced a new *nasab* document and certified it with the seal of Abu al-Huda al-Sayyadi.<sup>119</sup> ʿAbdallah Ahmad Husni restored his family's old *waqf* in Damascus and *Khan Dhī al-Nūn*—an important station for pilgrims to the south of Damascus—with the aim of re-establishing his family's influence. Although he was a claimant to the same *ashrāf* origin as the Husni family and one of the most influential figures and spokesmen of the Sunni community in Beirut,<sup>120</sup> Qabbani did not resort to the same traditional methods to enhance his social esteem, nor did he use the influence of Abu al-Huda al-Sayyadi or the *mufti* for that matter. On the contrary, he denounced the *mufti's* attempt to abuse his religious position to manipulate voters. Judging from what he published in his newspaper, he considered the municipality to be the direct and real representative of the city dwellers; and he did not underestimate its role in the development and prosperity of Beirut. He believed that proper application of the municipal code would guarantee the selection of the most qualified candidates to serve the interests of the city of Beirut as a unified urban entity, and not as atomised religious groups. It is evident that Qabbani believed in the importance of modern public institutions in shaping society as opposed to individuals or religious organisations like the foreign missionaries or local *awqāf*. Qabbani's career demonstrates that he did not fail to recognise that he lived in a rapidly developing age, which required innovative approaches to the new problems caused by modernity. He appreciated modern education and believed that it was the most efficient and direct way of achieving the development he aspired to accomplish. He collaborated with other Beirutis to establish *Jamʿiyyat al-Funūn* and *Jamʿiyyat al-Maqāṣid* for that purpose; he also tried to modernise the curriculum of the Ottoman official schools, the training centres for potential public servants.

#### 4 ʿAbd al-Rahman Baydun Pasha

In 1322/1904 the yearbook of the province of Beirut reported that ʿAbd al-Rahman Baydun Pasha was the current mayor of the city, and that he had the rank of *mīr-i mīran*.<sup>121</sup> Almost nothing is known about this mayor in spite of the distinguished title he carried. All that is known is that he was born in *Ashrafiyye* during the 1840s; in the 1860s he sold a large plot

<sup>119</sup> A copy of the Husni *nasab* or family tree was presented to me in Damascus by Muhammad al-Husni, a grandson of ʿAbdallah Ahmad al-Husni.

<sup>120</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 2, p. 25.

<sup>121</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1322/1904–05), p. 121.

of land to French nuns, on which they built the college Notre-Dame de Nazareth. It is also reported that he provided the nuns with the needed support to settle in that part of the city.<sup>122</sup>

##### 5 ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Dana

‘Abd al-Qadir al-Dana was most probably born in Beirut during the fifth decade of the nineteenth century. He studied with Muhammad Murtada al-Husayni (the nephew of ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza’iri), and later at the national school of Butrus al-Bustani. After completing his education he was appointed president of the commercial court in Beirut, in which he served between 1298 /1880 and 1315/1897.<sup>123</sup> Dana was renowned for his good knowledge of Ottoman Turkish; he edited Khalil al-Khuri’s translation of some parts of the *Düstur* which were published in Arabic under the title *Jāmi‘at al-qawānīn*. He translated parts of the voluminous state chronicle *Tarih-i Cevdet* into Arabic, for which he received a decoration from the Sultan. He was known to have good connections in Istanbul, as the Grand Vizier Mehmet Kamil Pasha (1832–1913) was a personal friend of the Dana family, a friendship that dated back to the time of Kamil Pasha’s service in Beirut as *mutasarrıf*. The Danas were a family of Ottoman civil servants. A younger brother, Rashid, served as a *mektupçu* in the Hijaz and later, with the support of ‘Abd al-Qadir, he established a newspaper in Beirut, of which the latter eventually became editor-in-chief in 1902, after the sudden death of his younger brother. This newspaper was described as being courteous to the Christians of the city and to their clergy.<sup>124</sup> ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Dana served as mayor of Beirut between 1904 and 1908.<sup>125</sup> In 1907, in addition to his municipal responsibilities, he was entrusted with the task of reviving the educational activities of the *Maqāşid* Association.<sup>126</sup> In 1908

<sup>122</sup> This information is based on interviews conducted in May 2000 with Fadi ‘Ali Amin Baydun and Muhammad Talal Baydun in Beirut.

<sup>123</sup> *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye* (1305/1887–88), p. 412; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye* (1306/1888–89), p. 502; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye* (1307/1889–90), p. 494; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye* (1308/1890–91), p. 520; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye* (1309/1891–92), p. 530; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye* (1310/1892–93), p. 560; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye* (1311/1893–94), p. 576; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye* (1312/1894–95), p. 608; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye* (1313/1895–96), p. 620, and *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye*, (1314/1896–97) p. 386. *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1298/1880–81), p. 148; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1299/1881–82), p. 169; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1301/1883–84), p. 124; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1302/1884–85), p. 116, and *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1304/1886–87), p. 109.

<sup>124</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-‘arabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 37–38 and 119–120.

<sup>125</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1324/1906–07), p. 98 and *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1326/1908–09), p. 191.

<sup>126</sup> Hallaq, *Mudhakkarāt Salīm ‘Alī Salām*, p. 119.

he fell out of favour with the governor, and he tendered his resignation in September of the same year. His resignation was immediately accepted and Muhammad Ayyas was appointed as his successor.<sup>127</sup> Al-Dana, like many of his predecessors, was a member of the Syrian Scientific Society *al-Jamʿiyya al-ʿIlmiyya al-Sūriyya*.<sup>128</sup>

None of the mayors of Beirut belonged to the so-called old *iqṭāʿ* families, and none of them to the so-called old religious families which traditionally occupied the posts of *naqābat al-ashrāf*, *al-iftāʿ* and other religious institutions. Beirut *ʿulamāʿ* families, like Barbir, Aghar, Hut and Fakhuri, who had traditionally occupied these important religious posts,<sup>129</sup> did not play any role in the new municipal institution. They were overshadowed and sidelined by a new urban elite. Most of the mayors of Beirut distinguished themselves in Beirut society either by way of their achievements in public service or modern education, or by being prominent merchants like the Bayhums.<sup>130</sup> The mayors who came from mercantile urban elite families tried to facilitate the integration of the city into global economy, mainly by attempting to enlarge the port of the city.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, it would be unjust to regard them as compradors. In fact, the mayors of Beirut stood up to foreign concessionaires whenever the interests of the latter conflicted with those of the city.<sup>132</sup>

The biographies of the mayors of Beirut, as representatives of a new urban elite, show some similarity to those of their German counterparts in the same period of time. In their social activities, literary associations, political perspectives and commercial affairs Nami Bey, the Hamada family and the Bayhum family were most probably not unlike their contemporary European counterparts, for example, the Bassermann family of Mannheim. Both cities were emerging ports—one on the Rhine, the other on the Mediterranean—and at the same time a hub of commercial activity. The new urban elite in the nineteenth-century Ottoman provinces have so far been neglected, let alone compared to parallel social strata in European society.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>127</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 21 September 1908, and Hallaq, *Mudhakkarāt Salīm ʿAlī Salām*, p. 112.

<sup>128</sup> Zaydan, *Tārīkh ādāb*, vol. 4, p. 430.

<sup>129</sup> For the interconnections between the above-mentioned families, see Mahmud Salim al-Hut, *Shaykh Bayrūt al-ʿallāma al-imām Muḥammad al-Hūt* (Beirut, 1994).

<sup>130</sup> Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, pp. 96–97.

<sup>131</sup> BOA, ŞD 2275/48, belgeler 7, 8 and 9; ŞD TNZ 500/33.

<sup>132</sup> Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, p. 96; BOA, ŞD 2280/42.

<sup>133</sup> See Lothar Gall, ed., *Stadt und Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*. Historische Zeitschrift. Beihefte (Neue Folge) Band 12 (München, 1990); Lothar Gall, ed., *Stadt und Bürgertum im Übergang von der traditionellen zur modernen Gesellschaft* (München, 1993); Lothar Gall, *Bürgertum in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1996); Dieter Hein and Andreas Schulz, eds., *Bürgerkultur im 19. Jahrhundert. Bildung, Kunst und Lebenswelt* (München, 1996).

It is quite remarkable that almost all the mayors of Beirut belonged either to the Syrian Scientific Society (*al-Jamʿiyya al-ʿIlmiyya al-Sūriyya*) or to the *Maqāṣid* Islamic Philanthropic Association. The Scientific Society was known for its educational and intellectual interests, including literature, modern European civilisation, industry, and the history and geography of Syria. Its membership cut across all the sectarian boundaries in the city.<sup>134</sup> The *Maqāṣid* Association was active in the field of education, especially for the Muslim poor. This shows that the mayors and a large number of their associates were able and willing to organise themselves, in order to foster their own knowledge and to improve the social and educational condition in their immediate communities. This reflects an urban society with active internal dynamics. Some mayors of Beirut were definitely aware of the fact that they had a political voice, and they wanted this voice to be heard and heeded. Therefore it is not surprising that the Hamadas participated in the financing of a newspaper, while Qabbani and al-Dana were editors-in-chief and journalists.

Two ceremonies epitomise the vicissitude in the lot of the municipality of Beirut and its mayors, from both the imperial and the local perspectives. It was mentioned in the first chapter that the municipality did not play any role in the festivities held in Beirut, in August 1867, to celebrate the safe return of Sultan Abdūlaziz from his European tour.<sup>135</sup> The municipal council was surprisingly absent from the public sphere. In 1898 the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, visited Beirut during his *Orient-Reise*. The municipality of Beirut prepared for the occasion and spared neither trouble nor expense to secure a proper presentation of the city.<sup>136</sup> The mayor of the city was one of the very few and selected members of the official reception committee. The municipality organised a reception for the Kaiser and his wife in the Pine Forest. It is reported that the mayor joined the imperial couple for a short walk in that park.<sup>137</sup> On the same day the Kaiser invited three dignitaries to join him for lunch on board the imperial yacht *Hohenzollern*; they were Marshal Şakir Pasha, the chief of staff of the Ottoman army, Reşid Bey, the governor of Beirut, and ʿAbd al-Qadir Qabbani, the mayor of the city.<sup>138</sup> The contrast between the celebrations of 1868 and those of 1898 could not be starker. Not only did the municipality partake in the

<sup>134</sup> Yusuf Quzma al-Khuri, *Aʿmāl al-jamʿiyya al-ʿilmiyya al-Sūriyya, 1868–1869* (Beirut, 1990), pp. 15–24 and 33–44.

<sup>135</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 27 August 1867.

<sup>136</sup> BOA, ŞD 2295/4, belge 4.

<sup>137</sup> Aswad, *Kitāb al-riḥla al-imbaraṭūrīyya*, pp. 147–148.

<sup>138</sup> Khalil Sarkis, *Riḥlat jalālat al-imbirātūr Ghalyūm al-Thāni malik Birūsīya wa-imbirātūr Almānyā fī Filisṭīn wa-Sūriya sanat 1898* (Beirut 1898), p. 47.

preparations and urban embellishments made for this special occasion, but it was also omnipresent in the exchange of courtesy protocol visits during the short sojourn of the Kaiser. The municipal council was represented by its mayor who invited the Kaiser and accepted his exclusive invitation. The person who was noticeably absent from the entire scene of the festivities was the *mufiti* of the city.

## V The Financial Realities facing the Municipality

Most of the mayors that governed Beirut during the course of the nineteenth century were introduced in the previous chapter. In this chapter the financial conditions in which these mayors tried to administer the affairs of their home town will be discussed. As a first step, an outline of the taxation system of the municipality will be given. This will be followed by an examination of the municipal finances and their influence on the construction projects in the city. The right to raise taxes, to enforce their collection, and to dispense the income generated from them reflects the degree of authority enjoyed by the municipal institution.

As can be gathered from Yusuf al-Hakim's memoirs, the lack of adequate funding at the disposal of the municipality impeded its work and aborted a number of its projects.<sup>1</sup> According to Zaʿrur the revenue of the municipality of Beirut was an integral part of the *vilayet's* finances. Judging from his statements the municipality was a mere tax-collecting instrument in the hands of the central authorities in Istanbul and could not execute any public works project of any significance.<sup>2</sup> Both considered the finances of the municipality as the most crucial element in determining its activities. Evidence in the contemporary press of Beirut, Ottoman archival documents and European consular reports show that the picture of tax collection and the finances of the municipality appears to be more complex than has so far been presumed. One can identify many causes of the dire financial straits of the municipality. First, the municipality competed with a bankrupt state for revenues deriving from taxation. Second, the collection of the taxes imposed by the *baladiyya* was impeded by the attitude of some affluent Beirutis and influential foreigners residing in Beirut. Third, the public works projects executed by foreign concessionaires did not generate the

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<sup>1</sup> Hakim, *Bayrūt wa Lubnān fī ʿahd āl ʿUthmān*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Zaʿrur, *Bayrūt*, p. 139.

expected financial benefits; on the contrary, they proved to be an enormous liability for the municipality.

## A The Formative Years

The municipality of Beirut remained inadequately financed until 1878, when the third municipal code took effect. Between 1285 and 1289 *maliye* (1869–1873) large sums of tax-returns earmarked for municipal affairs were collected by the treasury of the province, but accruing revenues were not delivered to the municipality (*belediye rüsuminden mâl sandığında kalmış olan*).<sup>3</sup> The five years in question (1869–1873) correspond to the period governed by the first municipal code of 1867. During this period of time the municipality of Beirut was a fledgling institution, lacking the staff capable of collecting taxes. The taxes in question were a licensing fee on construction activities in the city, and a property tax.<sup>4</sup> According to the vague instructions of the law the municipality was entitled to levy a property tax after completing the cadastral survey of the city (*tahrir-i emlâk/tahrîr al-amlâk*).<sup>5</sup> Yet the law did not specify the process, the criteria, those in charge of conducting the survey, the amount due to the municipalities, nor the deadline for completing the reassessment of the property tax. It seems that the situation in Beirut improved after the application of the second municipal code, for the accounts of the municipality of Beirut—preserved in the Ottoman archives—ceased to show such outstanding taxes due to be paid to the municipality (*bakaya mâl sandığında kalmış*).<sup>6</sup> However, Article 126 of the municipal law of 1871 did not instigate a substantial increase in the municipality's revenue.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belge 3, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> As can be gathered from the parliamentary debates that took place ten years after the publication of this law, a cadastral survey for Syria had not been carried out until that date. A reassessment of the property tax was one of the main concerns of the Beirut parliamentarians. Please, see Chapter III for more information on the attitude of the Beirutis concerning the tax in question.

Even during the late 1890s and the beginning of the twentieth century the property owners in Beirut refused to accept the estimates made by the cadastral surveyors. BOA, ŞD 2292/24–A and ŞD 2296/44.

Shaw and Kural Shaw state that the cadastral survey for the Arab provinces was not fully completed until 1908, see Shaw and Kural Shaw, *Reform, Revolution, and Republic*, p. 98. Quite evidently it took 41 years after the publication of this law to finish the cadastral survey, in other words, the municipalities were promised finances which did not materialise when most needed.

<sup>5</sup> Article 5 of the municipal code of 1867, see *Düstur*, vol. 2, p. 492; and *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, p. 434.

<sup>6</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belge 3, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Article 126 of the municipal code of 1871, *Düstur*, vol. 1, pp. 650–651.

In spite of its weak financial situation the municipality of Beirut was able to provide some essential services. For example, in May 1875 the municipality fulfilled its commitment concerning the water supply to the city. It provided the lower strata of the Beiruti society with 250,000 litres of potable water per day, at the annual cost of 60,000 French francs,<sup>8</sup> which was equivalent to approximately 264,000 piastres.<sup>9</sup> In 1883–1884 the municipality paid the Beyrouth Waterworks Company 269,340 piastres and 30 *para*,<sup>10</sup> and in 1890 60,000 francs were equivalent to 271,500 piastres according to the exchange rate of that year.<sup>11</sup> The water was bought from the Beyrouth Waterworks Company and distributed free of charge at seven different public fountains, 17 mosques and 20 churches in the city.<sup>12</sup> The municipality provided the casern of the Ottoman army, the military hospital and the provincial *Saray* in the city with 100,000 litres of water.<sup>13</sup> In order to be able to fulfil its financial obligations towards the water company, the municipal council asked the governor of Syria to request extra revenues on its behalf. The water supply was funded by a special dispensation granted by the Ministry of Finance—based on an imperial rescript issued on 4 August 1870 (5 *Jumādā al-Ūlā* 1287)—allowing the municipality to collect a tax imposed on the butchers of the city (*rasm al-dhabīha*).<sup>14</sup> The slaughterhouse tax had previously formed part of the revenues of the provincial treasury,<sup>15</sup> to be collected directly from the abattoir, and not from the scattered shops of butchers in the city.

The Beirut municipality provided other services related to public health and sanitation.<sup>16</sup> It tried to execute road construction projects. In February 1874, the mayor of Beirut, Ahmad Abaza, approached Daniel Bliss, the president of the Syrian Protestant College (now the American University of Beirut), and proposed to construct a road connecting the College in *Ras Beirut* with the city proper. The municipality offered to cover half of the construction costs, and suggested that the College should contribute the

<sup>8</sup> BOA, Ī.DH 42773, lef 3.

<sup>9</sup> For the exchange rate of Ottoman currency, see Pamuk, “Money in the Ottoman Empire, 1326–1914”, pp. 947–980.

<sup>10</sup> *Al-Muqataf*, 8 (1883–1884), p. 374.

<sup>11</sup> *Al-Miṣbāh*, 1 February 1890.

<sup>12</sup> BOA, Ī.DH 42773, lef 3; ŞD 2288/21, belge 1.

<sup>13</sup> BOA, Ī.DH 42773, lef 3.

<sup>14</sup> BOA, ŞD 2295/4, belge 23.

<sup>15</sup> *Al-Miṣbāh*, 4 August 1888.

<sup>16</sup> The municipality appointed medical staff as early as 1871, as well as taking extraordinary hygienic precautions in 1875, due to news about the spread of cholera, see Chapter VII, below.



other half. The project was not executed in the same year due to the reluctance of the Syrian Protestant College and some residents of *Ras Beirut* to share the expenses.<sup>17</sup>

## B From 1878 until 1888

With the promulgation of the 1877 municipal law, new sources of revenue were allocated to the municipality: A tax on animal slaughter (*rasm al-dhabīḥa*),<sup>18</sup> on the tanning of hides (*rasm al-dabāghkhāna*), on lime kilns (*rasm al-kils*), on rental contracts (*hāṣilāt al-qontrāto*), on weights and measures (*rasm al-qabbān* and *rasm al-kiyāla*), on brokerage and the sale of livestock and goods (*rasm dilālat al-ḥayawānāt* and *rasm dilālat al-ashyāʾ*),<sup>19</sup> on the guards of foreign consuls in the city (*al-qawāṣīn*), on fishing boats and fees on the docking of ships in the port of the city (*rusūmāt al-asākil*).<sup>20</sup> The last two taxes were not mentioned in Article 39 of the law—it seems that they were peculiar to the city of Beirut.

As has been shown in the previous chapter, the first elected municipal council attempted to increase its revenues by acquiring an income-generating property, which would simultaneously serve as an area for recreation. Fakhri Nami Bey, almost immediately after his election, approached the *vali* of Syria and asked for the transfer of *Ḥursh Beirut* to the municipality.<sup>21</sup> The plot in question was an enormous Pine Forest located to the south and south east of the city, forming the demarcation line between the city and the *mutasarrıflık* of Mount Lebanon. The governor of Damascus reacted positively and started corresponding with Istanbul in order to finalise the transfer of the forest's ownership to the municipality. The forest was handed over to the municipality in 1879.<sup>22</sup> The revenue of the municipality increased, as it began to license the extraction of charcoal from some of the pine trees of the forest, and the collection of dry pine needles. These were used as fuel for bakeries and public baths in the city. However, the immediate financial benefit was not substantial; the municipality sold the right to collect firewood for an amount ranging

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Bliss, *Letters from a new campus* (Beirut, 1992), p. 232.

<sup>18</sup> Please note that *rasm al-dhabīḥa* was allotted to the municipality of Beirut in 1870 by virtue of a special dispensation, i.e. years before the publication of the 1877 municipal law.

<sup>19</sup> These taxes were mentioned in Article 39 of the municipal law of 1877.

<sup>20</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 5 January 1880.

<sup>21</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 29 August 1878.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter IV, above.

from 4,600 piastres in 1886<sup>23</sup> to 13,719 piastres and 20 *para* in 1898.<sup>24</sup> In 1900 the income from the Pine Forest amounted to a record high of 19,412 piastres.<sup>25</sup> Notwithstanding the minimal income from the Pine Forest, this enormous plot of land was an important asset which increased the financial credibility of the municipality. The Pine Forest could be used as collateral security in the event that the municipality needed to conclude an urgent credit with a financial institution.

Between 1878 and 1890 the collection of most taxes was farmed out and not directly executed by the municipality itself. Thereby the municipality saved on the salaries of tax collectors and secured a certain liquidity for itself at the beginning of each fiscal year. The municipality would sell the right to collect a certain tax to the highest bidder at a public auction.<sup>26</sup> By resorting to this method the municipality of Beirut seems to have secured a high and relatively stable income. It must be noted here that the tax farming system was a practical solution to tax evasion and ensured stable and foreseeable revenues. The tax farmers had a strong interest in efficiently collecting the levies and in delivering the agreed returns to the municipality, lest they lose the right to bid for the right to collect taxes in the following fiscal years. The accounts of the municipality until 1890 (1306 *maliye*) showed minimal default by the tax farmers. The defaulted amount was negligible in comparison with the total municipal income.<sup>27</sup> The farmed out taxes mainly concerned daily necessities, like the sale and slaughter of livestock and the tanning of hides. Hence, they were restricted to the abattoir and the tanneries around it, located on

<sup>23</sup> *Al-Miṣbāh*, 14 August 1886, and *Al-Miṣbāh*, 8 March 1890.

<sup>24</sup> BOA, ŞD 2295/4 belge 32.

<sup>25</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 23 July 1900.

<sup>26</sup> *Bayrūt*, 24 May 1886 and 15 June 1886; *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 5 January 1880 and 12 February 1883. The bidding process for the year 1311 *maliye* (1895) is preserved in an Ottoman archival document. This document shows that the tanneries tax farm was granted to ʿUmar Hammud, the highest bidder for that year. The bidding started on 14 March 1311 with an offer of 200,000 piastres only; it ended on 29 March, when the last bidder, Hammud, paid 646,000 piastres for the tax farm covering a period of two years. His financial guarantor was ʿUmar Ramadan. BOA, ŞD 2295/4, belge 4.

<sup>27</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belge 3, p. 1. For example, the highest defaulted amount shown in this document belongs to the year 1874 (1290 *maliye*). In this year the tax farmer ʿAbd al-Rahman Mihyu did not pay 11,112 piastres of the total amount of charges on brokerage activities in the city, and the amount could not be collected from his guarantor Qaysar al-Zind. In 1884 (1300 *maliye*) 3,994 piastres and 35 *para*, the balance of the brokerage tax, were not paid to the municipality by al-Hajj Khalid al-Khattab; the amount could also not be collected from his guarantor Ibrahim Badran. The municipal income of that year amounted to 913,950 piastres. Thus, the defaulted sum was negligible in relation to the total income.

the outskirts of the city. The geographical concentration and the limited scope of the commercial activities subject to taxation must have facilitated the collection. According to one *Salname* of the province of Syria, in 1879, one year after Fakhri Nami Bey took office, the municipality of Beirut had the highest tax returns in the entire province, exceeding even those of the city of Damascus, which was the capital of the province and twice the size of Beirut. The municipality of Beirut, unlike other municipalities in the province, did not remit part of its revenue to the province's public benefit fund.<sup>28</sup> This was probably due to the fact that the municipality of Beirut had committed itself to some major projects, such as the supply of the city with potable water.

During its first year of office the newly elected municipal council played an important role in collecting and managing a special tax imposed on the sale of meat in the city known as *i'ānat al-laḥm*. This tax was a surcharge (value added tax) of 25 *para* on the price of each kilogram of meat on sale in the city, and was collected from the abattoir. In August 1878 the newspaper *Lisān al-ḥāl* praised this tax and recommended that it should be collected on a permanent basis, in order to finance development projects in the city. It explained to its readers that such a tax could not be evaded by anybody, be it rich local merchants, foreign citizens or Ottoman bureaucrats.<sup>29</sup> The said tax, however, was abolished in August 1879.<sup>30</sup> The revenue collected until that date, 493,329 piastres and 15 *para*, was earmarked for the families of the Ottoman conscripts fighting on the Russian and the Serbian fronts, and for refugees arriving in the city. In August 1879 the balance sheet of the relief fund collected as *i'ānat al-laḥm* in Beirut was published in the press.<sup>31</sup> It must be noted that a certain symbiotic relationship had developed between the state and the nascent council. By executing such a task the municipality played an important role in pacifying the internal front. The expenditure entries in the published balance sheet included taking care of the refugees arriving in the city, paying monthly salaries to the families of the poor Beirut conscripts, and buying military uniforms for the reservists. The municipal council of Beirut assumed similar responsibilities in the fiscal year 1890 (1306 *maliye*), though in that year no special tax was imposed. The sum of 71,681 piastres was paid to the families of poor Beirut men doing their

<sup>28</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1297/1879–80), p. 232.

<sup>29</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 5 August 1878.

<sup>30</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 14 August 1879. The newspaper reported that the surcharge on meat, imposed in the previous year, was abolished as of 1 *Ağustos mali*/13 August.

<sup>31</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 21 August 1879.

compulsory military service on the island of Crete.<sup>32</sup> This expenditure was not taken into consideration in the initial budget prepared for the following fiscal year.<sup>33</sup> However, upon the behest of the governor the budget was amended and the sum of 90,000 piastres was allotted for the relief of conscripts' families in Beirut.<sup>34</sup> The state delegated this welfare task to the municipal council. The relief funds were collected either in the same manner as the municipal taxes, i.e. farmed out, as in 1879, or as part and parcel of the general municipal revenue, as in 1890.

As can be gathered from the published budget of 1886 a new tax was imposed on carts and transport carriages in Beirut. 160 carts designated for public transport were given numbers and a tax of 120 piastres per annum was levied on each of them. An annual tax of 300 piastres was imposed on carriages for the transport of goods. In 1886 the revenue from this tax amounted to 27,900 piastres and was earmarked for street maintenance.<sup>35</sup> In 1886 the municipality, upon receiving permission from the Ministry of the Interior, claimed responsibility for the storage of kerosene in the city. It announced that this inflammable material was to be removed from all warehouses within the city, to be safely stored at the municipal depot outside residential quarters, in an area known as *al-Fakhūra*.<sup>36</sup> A monthly storage fee of 1 piastres on each container of 20 litres was imposed.<sup>37</sup> This tax provided the municipality with an additional income of 58,000 piastres that year.<sup>38</sup> The amount in question was earmarked for street lighting.

## C From 1888 until 1908

In 1888, while the municipality was struggling to find a more efficient method of tax collection, Beirut became the capital of an extended Ottoman *vilayet* named after the city. Among other things, Beirut's new status entailed the creation of expanded administrative offices, the establishment of new courts and a multiplicity of councils in the city. As a result, the municipality was compelled to remove its offices from the newly constructed *Saray* at the north end of the *Ḥamīdiyya* Park (and square) and relocate them to a building in the nearby *Sūq Sursuq*.<sup>39</sup> The relocation seems to have damaged the

<sup>32</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23.

<sup>33</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 1 February 1890.

<sup>34</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 14 February 1890.

<sup>35</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 14 August 1886; *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 16 August 1886.

<sup>36</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 18 March 1886.

<sup>37</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 4 March 1886.

<sup>38</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 14 August 1886; *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 16 August 1886.

<sup>39</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 21 July 1888.

municipality's sense of self-esteem. Influencing directly the municipality's efforts to expand its role as an urban institution capable of providing the city with services befitting the capital of an Ottoman province. In 1888 the gas company Société Anonyme du Gaz de Beyrouth finished installing the lamps needed to provide the city with gas lighting. The municipality had initially contracted the company to put up 1,000 gas lamps in city streets and in front of public buildings in return for an annual payment of 257,500 piastres for the duration of the concession.<sup>40</sup> The municipality, however, was able to buy 615 light posts only. The gas lamps were installed throughout the city by the workers of the gas company. In spite of the reduction in the number of gas lamps the municipality paid the gas company the full sum previously agreed upon.<sup>41</sup> The improvement was remarkable. Until 1886 the municipality had been able to afford only 175 kerosene lamps installed in a number of thoroughfares. The cost of the former method of lighting amounted to the modest sum of 25,000 piastres.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the expenditure on street lighting increased tenfold in 1888. In a dispatch, from the United States consulate in Beirut to the assistant Secretary of State in Washington, the following was reported on the subject of gas lighting:

"I have the honour to report to your department an event of little moment in itself, but of considerable importance to a city like Beirut, representing the commerce, industry and wealth of Syria.

It is the introduction of gas here, the only city in Syria and one out of only three in the Turkish Empire, that can boast of this progress and luxury.

The streets of the city—with a population variously estimated at from 80,000 to 120,000 souls—are furnished with 600 lamps, some of which were lighted for the first time on the evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> instant [March 1888] amidst much rejoicing and the acclamation of the populace who had thronged the streets to marvel at this novel sight."<sup>43</sup>

The positive impact of gas lighting was immediately felt in the city; security was enhanced and the new lighting system increased the working hours, leading to an extended use of public space. The improved conditions were expected to reflect positively on the commercial activity of the city.<sup>44</sup> The municipality, moreover, agreed to adequately maintain and expand its water

<sup>40</sup> *Al-Miṣbāh*, 1 February 1890; BOA, ŞD 2297/7, belge 4, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belge 4, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> BOA, İ.MM 3507, lef 33.

<sup>43</sup> A letter from the United States consulate in Beirut to the Department of State Washington, dated 26 March 1888. *Dispatches from the United States Consuls, Beirut, 1836–1906. The National Archives of the United States. A Microfilm Publication* (Washington, 1934).

<sup>44</sup> Özveren, *The Making and Unmaking of an Ottoman Port-City*, p. 170.

distribution system with a view to keeping the city regularly supplied. The cost to the municipality of such a service was about 271,500 piastres. The cost of gas lamps, lighting, and water supply amounted to 51.25% of the total annual revenue of the municipality according to the published budget of 1890.<sup>45</sup>

The municipality's commitment to improving a number of services led to a considerable financial strain, compounded by the fact that in 1888 the Ministry of Finance in Istanbul officially informed the Beirut municipality of its intention to retrieve the yield of six taxes.<sup>46</sup> These taxes had been assigned to the municipality in accordance with the municipal law of 1877, and had generated most of its income.<sup>47</sup> The Beirut press criticised the Ministry's decision, pointing out the municipality's achievements and drawing attention to the financial problems which the municipality would face as a result.<sup>48</sup> Unable to cope with the municipality's growing financial difficulty and in protest against its enforced retrenchment, the mayor of Beirut, Muhyi al-Din Bayhum, tendered his resignation in October 1888.<sup>49</sup> He was immediately replaced by the *vali's* nominee, Muhyi al-Din Hamada, a former mayor of the town and one of the most experienced municipal council members.<sup>50</sup> In December of the same year the Ministry of Finance announced a compromise. The revenue accruing from the six taxes was to be shared equally between the municipality and the ministry.<sup>51</sup>

The new appointee, like his predecessor, was required to confront the issue of decline in municipal funds. To begin with, he urged the *vali* to restore to the municipality the tax yields of which it had been deprived. Of even greater importance, he proposed a plan for excising new municipal taxes to the *vali*. Accordingly, in March 1889, the *vali* prevailed upon the Beirut administrative council to permit the municipality to reintroduce the surcharge on the sale of meat.<sup>52</sup> The newspaper *Thamarāt al-funūn* welcomed the collection of the value added tax and commented on its equity,

<sup>45</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 1 February 1890.

<sup>46</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 6 August 1888.

<sup>47</sup> These taxes were *rasm al-kiyāla*, *rasm al-qabbān*, *rasm dilālat al-ḥayawānāt*, *rasm dilālat al-ashyāʾ*, *rasm al-dabāghkhāna*, and *rasm al-dhabīḥa*. According to the budget of 1886, which was published in the press, the revenue accruing from farming out these taxes was 828,875 piastres, see *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 14 August 1886.

<sup>48</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 4 August 1888; 1 September 1888; and 27 October 1888.

<sup>49</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 1 October 1888; and 15 October 1888.

<sup>50</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 22 October 1888; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 27 October 1888.

<sup>51</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 8 December 1888.

<sup>52</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 18 March 1889.

given that it concerned all town dwellers whether native or foreigners.<sup>53</sup> It was collected daily at the slaughterhouse in order to avoid fraud on the part of the butchers. The tax on the sale of meat provided the municipality with substantial revenues, amounting to approximately 528,600 piastres in 1890. Despite the increase in revenue thanks to the aforementioned tax, the budget showed a deficit in that year, for the municipality was still settling the debts of the gas and water works, dues which had not been paid during the preceding difficult years.<sup>54</sup>

The municipality needed to devise new taxes in order to settle its debts and improve its services. Two new taxes were imposed on all households in the city. The first was a tax levied to finance the cleaning of the city called *rusūm al-tanzīfāt*, the second called *rusūm al-ḥirāsa* to pay the salaries of the 80 men-strong municipal guards who patrolled the city during the night. With the imposition of these additional two taxes the municipality ventured into uncharted territory, for it had not previously tried to levy a tax directly from all the city dwellers. Up to that date, taxes had mainly been levied on commercial activities in centralised and known locations. The new taxes were imposed upon real estate, and were to be collected directly from each shop and every household. This tax was divided into five rates that were in direct proportion to the value of the taxable property. Shops of a value ranging from 500 to 5000 piastres were charged 1 piastre a month, while shops of a value exceeding 20,000 piastres were charged only 5 piastres. The charge on houses ranged from 1 to 15 piastres.<sup>55</sup> Thus, the heaviest burden of this tax was to be shouldered by the lowest category of real estate owners in the city. As early as 1891 (1307 *maliye*), arrears in the payment of these taxes started to appear in the municipal accounts.<sup>56</sup> Unlike the previous taxes that could be farmed out, these taxes proved to be difficult to collect, because they presupposed a large number of collectors

<sup>53</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 18 March 1889. The newspaper *Lisān al-ḥāl*, published a similar comment in August 1878, when this tax was imposed for the first time in order to generate funds for the sake of conscripts' families in Beirut, see *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 5 August 1878. However, when in 1893 this tax was increased to 10 *para* per 200 grams of meat, in order to cover part of the cost of constructing new streets in the city, a number of complaints were raised. The newspaper *Al-Miṣbāḥ* criticised the increase, describing it as a huge burden on the poor of the city. It recommended that the municipality should look for another source of income which could not be evaded by locals or foreigners, see *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 9 December 1893.

<sup>54</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 1 February 1890.

<sup>55</sup> The Danish National Archives (DNA). Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 6, Korresp. m. locale myndigheder 1886–1915. Gouvernement Général du Vilayet de Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1887–1915 fra. Série Gle. 76/511 Class: D.

<sup>56</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belge 3, p. 1.

as well as the willingness by the tax payers to abide by the new municipal tax regulations. The municipality finally realised that the two new taxes did not generate the expected income. Therefore, it resorted to the safe old method of taxing meat. The surcharge on meat was doubled to 10 *para* on every 200 grams of meat, i.e. to 50 *para* per kilo. The extra income expected to accrue from this raise was earmarked for street enlargement. It was criticised in the local press as a heavy burden on the lower strata of society. The editor of the newspaper *Al-Miṣbāḥ* acknowledged the need for adequate finances, but he recommended that the municipality should look for another source of income, which would not burden the poor, and which could not be evaded, neither by locals nor by foreign residents.<sup>57</sup> The increase of the tax on meat proved to be counter-productive. Prior to January 1895 the butchers of the city began to avoid the abattoir completely.<sup>58</sup> They resorted to slaughtering their cattle outside the boundaries of Beirut. The illegal slaughtering took place at *al-Nabʿa* and beyond the Pine Forest, that is, in areas close to the city, but located within the territory administered by the Mutasarrifate of Mount Lebanon and therefore not subject to the Beirut municipal tax. The meat was then smuggled into the city, the value added tax being evaded.<sup>59</sup> In the fiscal year 1309 (1893) 59,183 sheep and 5,852 calves were processed at the abattoir. In 1310 (1894) the number was reduced to 33,413 and 3,378, respectively.<sup>60</sup> This drove the abattoir tax farmer into bankruptcy, leading, as a consequence, to a strong decrease in the municipal income.<sup>61</sup> The municipality was forced to examine the possibility of reducing the said tax to its former level.<sup>62</sup>

In the early months of 1898 the acting mayor of Beirut, ʿAbd al-Qadir Qabbani, turned to the governor of Beirut, Reşid Bey, and requested his assistance in coercing the foreign residents and the protégées of foreign consulates in the city into paying their tax arrears. It must be noted that Qabbani started his campaign on the pages of his newspaper. Two articles in *Thamarāt al-funūn* reported that the foreign community evaded paying the *tanzīfāt* tax by benefiting from, or abusing, its extra-territorial privileges.<sup>63</sup> In his capacity as acting mayor, Qabbani prepared a balance sheet showing that the foreign community and those enjoying foreign protection abstained from paying this tax, and presented it to the governor of the province. On 24

<sup>57</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 9 December 1893.

<sup>58</sup> BOA, ŞD 2284/21, belge 2.

<sup>59</sup> BOA, ŞD 2283/4.

<sup>60</sup> BOA, ŞD 2284/21, belge 1.

<sup>61</sup> BOA, ŞD 2284/21, belgeler 1 and 3.

<sup>62</sup> BOA, ŞD 2283/4.

<sup>63</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 18 January 1898; and 25 January 1898.



March 1898 the governor wrote a candidly worded letter to all the foreign consuls, urging them to exhort their compatriots to abide by the municipal regulations and pay their dues. He accused the latter of endangering public health in the city by neglecting to pay their dues and thus impeding the cleaning activities of the municipal council. Furthermore, he argued that they were benefiting from the municipal works in the same manner and degree as the Ottoman Beirut citizens. He explained that the tax in question was used to finance important measures, such as street construction, maintenance, sprinkling and cleaning, as well as the refuse disposal scheme for the entire city. He added that Ottoman citizens had regularly and gratefully paid these taxes in order to protect the health of all inhabitants.<sup>64</sup>

On 14 April 1898 the foreign consuls in Beirut met at the Belgian consulate general in order to react collectively to the letter of the governor. The consul of Austria-Hungary expressed his opinion in writing. He held that he would refuse to pay such taxes, unless the *corps consulaire* was represented by at least two European members on the municipal council of Beirut.<sup>65</sup> His proposal was not taken into consideration, for it clearly contradicted the municipal code of 1877, which deprived Europeans of this right. However, the consuls agreed that the language of the governor's letter was vague and complained that its tone was too imperative<sup>66</sup>—a standard expression used by the foreign consuls in Beirut with respect to their incoming correspondence from the provincial authorities.<sup>67</sup> In this meeting they agreed to inquire from the governor by virtue of which law the municipality could impose a tax on their compatriots and their protégées. They also demanded that the governor should guarantee that the tax would only be used to cover the cost of

<sup>64</sup> DNA, Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 6, Korresp. m. locale myndigheder 1886–1915. Gouvernement Général du Vilayet de Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1887–1915 fra. Série Gle. 47/ 459 Class: D.

<sup>65</sup> DNA, Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 5, Korresp. m. andre Konsulater i Beirut, Corps Consulaire du District Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1886–1907 fra. Série Gle. 57/481 Class: F.

<sup>66</sup> DNA, Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 2, Korresp. m. Generalkons. i Konstantinopel 1874–1922. Kopier af udgåede skrivelser 1881–1922 til. Série Gle. 68/486 Class: B.

<sup>67</sup> For example, the United States consul in Beirut described his correspondence with the *mutasarrif*, in a letter to his ambassador in Istanbul, dated 3 May 1873, and stated the following: “The whole tenor of the Note-Verbale is arrogant and deserves rebuke, and if instigated by the governor of Beirut he certainly deserves a severe reprimand.” He added that any request by the governor should be dismissed as a matter of principle, since “if we yield an inch to the Ottoman Porte, they demand an ell.” A letter from consul general Baldwin Hay to George Boker, United States Minister in Constantinople, dated 3 May 1873. *Dispatches from the United States Consuls, Beirut, 1836–1906. The National Archives of the United States, A Microfilm Publication* (Washington, 1934).

cleaning the city.<sup>68</sup> On 20 April the French consul advised his colleagues to refer the matter to the respective embassies in Constantinople.<sup>69</sup> The Danish consul in Beirut reported to his ambassador in Constantinople that almost all the consuls present at the meeting of 14 April recognised the importance of paying this tax for the sake of the public interest of the city. However, they were reluctant to urge their citizens to abide, before knowing the exact value of the tax in question. The French consul expressed his categorical objection, questioning the right of the municipality to excise taxes on foreign residents and protégées in the city.<sup>70</sup> In his reply, the ambassador of Denmark in Constantinople informed the consul in Beirut that he had consulted his French counterpart. The French ambassador proposed that the use of the sums collected from these taxes should be verified by an ad-hoc commission on which the foreign consuls in Beirut should be represented. He advised his consul to follow the French proposal.<sup>71</sup>

On 2 June 1898 the governor replied to the consuls' enquiries, attaching to his letter a note stating the value of the *tanzīfāt* tax excised in the city since 1891. In this letter he iterated his hope for a prompt reaction on the part of the consuls, i.e. that they would urge their compatriots to comply and settle the arrears due to the municipality as soon as possible.<sup>72</sup> On 16 June the consuls collectively replied to the governor, confirming their unconditional acceptance of this tax. They accepted the argument of the *vali*, who had pointed out that the *tanzīfāt* tax was excised in accordance with the law granting foreigners the right to own property in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>73</sup> This law had been promulgated in 1868 and signed by all diplomatic legations in the capital of the Empire.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>68</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 5, Korresp. m. andre Konsulater i Beirut, Corps Consulaire du District Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1886–1907 fra. Série Gle. 57/481 Class: F.

<sup>69</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 5, Korresp. m. andre Konsulater i Beirut, Corps Consulaire du District Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1886–1907 fra. Série Gle. 58/482 Class: F.

<sup>70</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 2, Korresp. m. Generalkons. i Konstantinopel 1874–1922. Kopier af udgående skrivelser 1881–1922 til. Série Gle. 68/486 Class: B.

<sup>71</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 2, Korresp. m. Generalkons. i Konstantinopel 1874–1922. Generalkonsulat Constantinople Indkomne skrivelser 1874–1922. Série Gle. 70/502 Class: B.

<sup>72</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 6, Korresp. m. locale myndigheder 1886–1915. Gouvernement Général du Vilayet de Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1887–1915 fra. Série Gle. 76/511 Class: D.

<sup>73</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 5, Korresp. m. andre Konsulater i Beirut, Corps Consulaire du District Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1886–1907 fra. Série Gle. 82/524 Class: F.

<sup>74</sup> See Chapter II, above.

The news that the consuls complied with the governor's request was almost immediately hailed in the local newspapers as a great achievement by the governor and the acting mayor,<sup>75</sup> even before the consuls' words had been followed by deeds. One paper expressed its trust in Qabbani, acknowledging his great enthusiasm for the improvement of the city. *Bayrūt* reported that Qabbani would use the tax collected from the foreigners to complete the unfinished but necessary development projects, i.e. the uncompleted street construction work.<sup>76</sup> In January of the same year the newspaper *Thamarāt al-funūn* called for the full collection of the *tanzīfāt* tax, adding that the revenue would serve a double purpose, *tanzīfāt* and *tanzīmāt* (putting the city in order, i.e. broadening and regularising the streets of the old town).<sup>77</sup>

In the final analysis, it is difficult to ascertain whether the foreign community and those enjoying foreign protection paid their taxes or not. However, if some foreign residents did pay part of their dues, they do not seem to have done so for a long period of time, and they did not pay all the municipal taxes. Documents from Danish archives provide some evidence that the foreign citizens in Beirut declined paying other municipal taxes. Until 1905 the tax on carts and beasts of burden, imposed in 1886, was not yet paid by the foreigners in the city. Reminders to their consulates were written at different dates, the last one on 28 July 1905 by the governor of Beirut. He asked the consuls to urge their compatriots to pay the tax on carts and horses.<sup>78</sup> In December 1905, upon the demand of the Ministry of Finance, the municipality tried to increase the charge on the storage of kerosene. This highly combustible fuel was used for lighting in private homes. Due to its high inflammability kerosene was subject to mandatory storage at the municipal kerosene-depot (*kazhane*). The intended increase of the storage charges infuriated the consul of the United States in Beirut, who wrote to his ambassador, asking for guidance regarding this matter. The telegraphed reply is very telling. It highlights the attitude and actions of the foreign diplomats in Istanbul and Beirut:

“Presume petroleum referred to has passed out of hands of original American owner which would prevent the legation giving instructions to present holders who, if foreign subject, should be advised to withhold payment of

<sup>75</sup> *Lisān al-hāl*, 20 June 1898; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 25 June 1898; *Bayrūt*, 20 June 1898. This last newspaper is not the official newspaper of the province, called *Beirut*, but a private newspaper owned by Rashid al-Dana.

<sup>76</sup> *Bayrūt*, 20 June 1898.

<sup>77</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 18 January 1898; and 25 January 1898.

<sup>78</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 6, Korresp. m. locale myndigheder 1886–1915. Gouvernement Général du Vilayet de Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1887–1915 fra. 1905/1734–59 D.

extra assessment until instructed by his Embassy, and, if Ottoman subject that payment should be made under protest. Act discreetly for while I am desirous of protecting principal involved I do not wish to commit the government [of the United States] for the present and future action will depend somewhat upon the attitude assumed by European powers.”<sup>79</sup>

In 1909 the governor of Beirut, Edhem Bey, reminded the consuls in the city that their compatriots were expected to pay municipal taxes like Ottoman Beirut citizens, referring to the *tanzīfāt* tax, the kerosene storage charges, and the carts tax among others.<sup>80</sup> The same procedure of consular meetings to arrive at a collective answer was repeated. This time the meetings took place at the German consulate general in Beirut.<sup>81</sup> Again the consuls deemed it indispensable to turn to their respective embassies for advice, before replying to the governor. Judging from the correspondence between the Danish consul in Beirut and his embassy in Istanbul, the consuls were not inclined to cooperate, neither with the governor nor with the municipality,<sup>82</sup> regardless of the precedent set eleven years earlier concerning municipal taxes. They argued that the works of the municipal council in the city had not been satisfactorily executed.<sup>83</sup> The municipality, in turn, repeatedly pointed out that it had not been able to execute its projects properly due to the lack of sufficient means. Hence, either the municipality of Beirut, or the *corps consulaire* working in it, managed to put the cart in front of the horse. A vicious circle was evidently created.

At this point it seems appropriate to quote Davison who points out that “The sixth district or ‘circle’, of the capital, including Pera and Galata, had been set up as a pilot project in 1858 and functioned effectively, largely under foreign and non-Muslim impulsion.”<sup>84</sup> According to Davison, the

<sup>79</sup> Enclosure dated 26 January 1906, in a letter sent by the American consul general in Beirut, Leo Bergholz, to the Assistant Secretary of State. The letter is dated 12 February 1906. *Dispatches from the United States Consuls, Beirut, 1836–1906. The National Archives of the United States. A Microfilm Publication* (Washington, 1934).

<sup>80</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 6, Korresp. m. locale myndigheder 1886–1915. Gouvernement Général du Vilayet de Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1887–1915 fra. 1909/2409–22 D.

<sup>81</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 5, Korresp. m. andre Konsulater i Beirut, Corps Consulaire du District Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1886–1907 fra. 1909/2412–23 F and 1909/2433–39 F.

<sup>82</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 2, Korresp. m. Generalkons. i Konstantinopel 1874–1922. Kopier af udgående skrivelser 1881–1922 til. 1909/2434–22 B.

<sup>83</sup> A similar argument was used by the large and influential foreign community residing in Alexandria. Michael Reimer dismisses their argument as “a clever piece of cynicism but hardly convincing”, see Michael Reimer, *Colonial Bridgehead Government and Society in Alexandria, 1807–1882* (Cairo, 1997), p. 131.

<sup>84</sup> Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, p. 160.

relatively large foreign community of Pera influenced the activities of the municipality in a positive manner, leading to an increase in its efficiency.<sup>85</sup> The story of tax collection in Beirut proves that Davison's statement is not accurate concerning all Ottoman cities. This calls for a revision of the established perception of the municipal councils and the conditions—financial or political—in which they had to work.

In spite of the reports in the press and the material still preserved in consular archives, it must be emphasised here that it is very difficult to establish whether the above-mentioned community was the only one evading taxation. Ottoman archival documents show that in the fiscal year 1902 (1318 *maliye*) the *tanẓīfāt* tax was expected to generate 200,000 piastres. However, 108,015 piastres remained outstanding, while only 91,985 piastres of the total amount were collected.<sup>86</sup> These arrears clearly indicate that the foreign residents were not the only ones to undermine the municipal taxation policy, but that other Beirutis, enjoying foreign protection or not, evaded taxation as well.<sup>87</sup> There is sufficient evidence in Ottoman archival material that some rich merchants in Beirut failed to pay a certain tax designed for street construction, known as *sharafīyya*.<sup>88</sup> One may safely assume that the local press found it easier, and more convenient, to criticise the foreign residents in the city and to accuse them of not meeting their financial obligations towards the municipality, than to criticise the affluent local merchants and to apportion the blame equally. Last but not least, these merchants were the subscribers to and sponsors of the Arabic newspapers in the city.

The general picture conveyed by the press of the time is that the municipal council of Beirut endeavoured to establish modern urban amenities. Its members tried to act as a corporate body in order to achieve these aims. The press was also forthcoming in its criticism, demanding development and exerting a certain pressure on the council, when necessary. It seems,

<sup>85</sup> Steven Rosenthal's revisionist works show that Davison's statements concerning the municipality of Pera were unfounded, see Rosenthal, *Politics of Dependency*; Steven Rosenthal, "Minorities and Municipal Reform in Istanbul, 1850–1870". In: Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York, 1982), pp. 369–385; Steven Rosenthal, "Foreigners and Municipal Reform in Istanbul, 1855–1865". In: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 11 (1980), pp. 227–245.

<sup>86</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belge 2, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Vital Cuinet estimated that the population of Beirut amounted to approximately 120,000 in 1894. He gave the figure of 4,320 for the foreign community residing in the city, see Vital Cuinet, *Syrie, Liban et Palestine, géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée* (Paris, 1896), p. 53.

<sup>88</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belge 3, p. 3.

however, that some of the Europeans and affluent local merchants in the city did not lead the Beirutis by example. The financial difficulties of the municipality forced it to resort to indirect taxation, like the one imposed on the sale of meat, in order to prevent tax evasion. As we have seen, however, the butchers of the city also did their best to evade taxation.

#### D The Influence of the Weak Finances of the Municipality on its Activities concerning Construction

Enlarging the port of Beirut was a long-standing demand of the merchants of the city. It was repeatedly expressed in the press of the period. In 1867 the first newspaper in Beirut, *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, published an article calling for the enlargement of the port by using local capital and effort.<sup>89</sup> In 1879 the calls gained strength and the press accused the mayor of not being able to distinguish between the most important necessities for the development of the city, because he had not yet seen to the enlargement of the port.<sup>90</sup> In the same year the municipality commissioned studies for this crucial project, and a French engineer working for the Suez Canal Company prepared preliminary proposals for enlarging the port.<sup>91</sup> These proposals were submitted to Midhat Pasha, the governor of Syria at the time, and received his approval and support.<sup>92</sup> In 1880 the municipality presented an initial study and a bid for the development of the Beirut port to the Ministry of Public Works in Istanbul. In March 1881 the press reported that the municipal proposal for the enlargement of the port had reached the final stages of examination by the different ministries in Istanbul. The newspaper hoped that the imperial rescript would be issued without much delay.<sup>93</sup> In January 1883 *Lisān al-ḥāl* newspaper reported that the municipal council and affluent local merchants could not reach an agreement. Hence, the establishment of a company for enlarging the port was delayed.<sup>94</sup> The municipality hoped that it would be granted that concession directly, which it could then either delegate to a sub-contractor or sell to a concessionaire at a profit.<sup>95</sup> In 1884 the German

<sup>89</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 28 May 1867.

<sup>90</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 19 May 1879; 26 May 1879; and 11 December 1879.

<sup>91</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 11 April 1879.

<sup>92</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 19 December 1879.

<sup>93</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 10 March 1881.

<sup>94</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 8 January 1883.

<sup>95</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 1 February 1883. On the first of February a meeting, attended by the governor Hamdi Bey and a large number of Beirut merchants, assembled to discuss the port project. The attendants agreed to resubmit the plans for the project to the authorities in Istanbul, asking for the concession to be granted to the municipality of Beirut.

ambassador in Istanbul reported that the concession would be granted to the Beirut municipality within a short period of time and urged the foreign office in Berlin to attempt to generate some interest in the project. An excerpt of his letter was published verbatim in the German newspaper *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, in an attempt to bring the port of Beirut to the attention of German financiers. The article in the newspaper reads as follows:

“Man schreibt uns aus Konstantinopel:

Die Municipalität zu Beirut hat die Ertheilung einer Konzession zum Ausbau eines Hafens mit Quai-Anlagen bereits vor längerer Zeit bei der Pforte nachgesucht. Von seiten der Provinzialregierung ist dieses Gesuch warm befürwortet worden; besonders der jetzige Vali von Syrien soll für dasselbe eingetreten sein. Das Project hat deshalb auch dem Vernehmen nach die Billigung des türkischen Ministeriums der öffentlichen Arbeiten gefunden, so daß in Beirut die Konzessionsertheilung mittelst großherrlichen Irade's binnen Kurzem erwartet wird.

Die Kosten des Unternehmens werden auf 6 bis 7 Millionen Francs angeschlagen.”<sup>96</sup>

However, it seems that the enlargement project did not attract international financial support to counterbalance the expressed French interest. It is evident from archival material that the Ottoman State remained reluctant to grant a concession for the enlargement of the port. It was weary of unwittingly enhancing the French influence in the city. All the companies that showed interest in this project were French.<sup>97</sup> The state had special reservations, because enhancing French influence in the city could, so it feared, lead to political instability in the region.<sup>98</sup> Finally a concession was granted in 1888, but not to the municipal council of Beirut.

To the dismay of the municipal council, the concession was granted to Yusuf Mutran, who sold it without much ado to a French company under the chairmanship of Comte de Perthuis. The “Compagnie Ottomane du Port, des Quais et Entrepôts de Beyrouth” commenced its construction work in 1889; the work was completed five years later.<sup>99</sup> In 1892 a street connecting the port to the *al-Mudawwar* promontory and the *al-Sayfi* quarter on

<sup>96</sup> PAAA, Abteilung A. *Acten betreffend allgemeine Angelegenheiten der Türkei*, Türkei No: 134, vol. 13, Acta No: R 13172. The clipping from the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of 14 November 1884 is included in the aforementioned document.

<sup>97</sup> BOA, Y.MTV 24/5. The author of this report, dated 14 *Muharram* 1304 (13 October 1886), was warning the Yıldız officials against the increasing political and commercial influence of the French and their companies in Beirut.

<sup>98</sup> BOA, İ.MM 3848; İ.MM 3849, lef 1–7; and İ.DH 79840; and Y.MTV 24/5.

<sup>99</sup> Compagnie Ottomane du Port, des Quais et Entrepôts de Beyrouth. Assemblée Générale du 4 Juin 1896, *Rapport du Conseil d'Administration* (Paris, 1896), p. 5.

the eastern side of the city was constructed.<sup>100</sup> The new street threatened to marginalise the city centre, for it diverted traffic coming from the port, drawing the commercial activities related to maritime trade away from the city into the eastern suburbs. Developing the street network of the old town became a pressing need, given that it was in the immediate vicinity of the port. However, this was a difficult task requiring a large amount of capital. A few years prior to the enlargement of the port, in 1885 and 1886, a plan to construct two streets had been seriously considered by the municipal council. The first was to lead from the *Ḥamīdiyya* Park to the customs house, and the second from that park to *Bab Idris*; the scheme was abandoned due to the estimated costs.<sup>101</sup> In 1892 the need for such streets became urgent, lest the city centre develop into a backwater for the port company and its eastern expansions. Accordingly, the municipality proposed a major plan for the construction of two main avenues: one leading from the north to the south, connecting the port to *Sahat al-Sūr*, and another leading from the east to the west, stretching from the *Saray* to *Bab Idris*. The governor, Ismail Kemal Bey, and the administrative council approved of the project. An imperial rescript allowing the execution of this project was issued on 25 June 1892 (24 *Dhu al-Qaʿda* 1309). Due to the great financial liability that such a project would entail, and because constructing the streets would involve demolishing certain houses, it must have provoked some controversy in the city. The *irade* stated that the imperial rescript was requested in order to silence all sorts of opposition to this project. The *irade* added that the two avenues would increase the beauty of the city (*bir kat daha tezyinat*).<sup>102</sup> The approved thoroughfares were not, however, constructed immediately.

The municipality envisaged a rather grand scheme for these streets. The newspapers spoke of broad streets, 15 metres wide, and sidewalks with a width of 3 metres on both sides. These sidewalks were not to be plain ones, but colonnades covered by vaulted roofs, to protect the pedestrians from the elements. The roof would be supported by high arches on the side facing the street—in order to allow air and light to reach the shops—and by the existing buildings on the inner side.<sup>103</sup> Hence, these streets were planned to give the sidewalks of these avenues the feel and the appearance of a long gallery. In 1894 (1310 *maliye*) the municipality was able

<sup>100</sup> Sommerville Story, ed. *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey* (London, 1920), p. 194; and Compagnie Ottomane du Port, des Quais et Entrepôts de Beyrouth. Assemblée Générale du 4 Juin 1896, *Rapport du Conseil d'Administration* (Paris, 1896), p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 24 December 1885; and 11 March 1886.

<sup>102</sup> BOA, İ.DH 100671.

<sup>103</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 31 January 1894.



to acquire a considerable short-term loan of 1,050,113 piastres from the Imperial Ottoman Bank, and a second loan of 121,967 piastres from the treasury of the province.<sup>104</sup> In that year the municipal income, including the two loans, showed a record amount of 3,199,594 piastres and 5 *para*. This was the highest sum at the disposal of the municipality until that date, more than three times the income of 1889, which had amounted to 1,018,994 piastres and 35 *para*.<sup>105</sup> In the municipal council meeting of 13 November 1893 the port company promised the municipality that it would shoulder part of the costs of this project, since these street construction activities would reflect positively on the commercial activities of the port company and the value of its property.<sup>106</sup> It pledged to pay 100,000 French francs,<sup>107</sup> an amount equivalent to 440,000 piastres.<sup>108</sup>

The final plans for this project were finished in April 1894, and the work on both streets started simultaneously in May 1894.<sup>109</sup> The eye witness Vital Cuinet reported in his book on Syria that the work was being executed in earnest:

“Au mois de juillet 1894, la municipalité a décidé la construction de deux autres rues, larges de 20 pics (15 mètres) chacune. Ces deux nouvelles voies traverseront le grand bazar, édifice sans aucun cachet oriental, situé au centre de la ville; c’est un assemblage de magasins qui se suivent à la file et où l’on ne vend que des articles européens. Les travaux de percement de ces deux rues ont été commencés simultanément au milieu d’un concours considérable et en grand appareil, sous la présidence du gouverneur-général, qui a donné le premier coup de pioche.”<sup>110</sup>

The two proposed avenues cut across the densely populated area of the old bazaars, with its characteristic closely knit urban fabric; hence large amounts of compensation would have to be paid to the owners of the shops and buildings affected. The municipality, perhaps not unexpectedly, was

<sup>104</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23.

<sup>105</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23.

<sup>106</sup> Qabbani, member of the municipal council, wrote in 1896 that he had been present at its meeting of 13 November 1893. In that meeting the pledge of the port company to pay 100,000 French francs as a contribution to street construction was discussed. In the following months official correspondence between the municipality and the said company confirmed this promise in writing, see *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 11 May 1896.

<sup>107</sup> In August 1895 the newspaper *Al-Bashīr* reported that the company would fulfil its financial promise to the municipality, and it urged the latter to finish the avenue leading to the port as soon as possible, see *Al-Bashīr*, 21 August 1895.

<sup>108</sup> For the exchange rate of Ottoman currency, see Pamuk, “Money in the Ottoman Empire, 1326–1914”, pp. 947–980.

<sup>109</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 21 May 1894; and *Al-Bashīr*, 23 May 1894.

<sup>110</sup> Cuinet, *Syrie, Liban et Palestine*, p. 57.

unable to meet the cost of such a large public scheme on its own. Therefore the municipality asked the port company, represented by Comte de Perthuis, to pay the pledged amount to cover part of the expenses involved.<sup>111</sup> In 1894 and 1895 serious tension started to develop between the municipality and the port company, independent of the street construction scheme. There are indications that in connivance with the *vali* some members of the municipal council provoked popular disturbances in protest against some of the port company's measures, including the dismissal of local workers and steep rises in the tolls on dockage, portage and storage. The disturbances seem to have had anti-foreign and proto-nationalist overtones.<sup>112</sup> In June 1894 some members of the municipal council, along with prominent merchants in the city, petitioned the Council of State three times, protesting against the measures taken by the port company and accusing it of driving the merchants of the city into financial ruin.<sup>113</sup> Their protest was echoed in the local press, thus aggravating the tension.<sup>114</sup>

In 1896 the company engaged in what was clearly an act of retaliation and reneged on its pledge to assist the municipality in financing its street construction program. In fact, the company seems to have been bent on embarrassing the *vali* and dictating its terms to the municipality by insisting on the adoption of alternative street plans in the city as a precondition for making its contribution.<sup>115</sup> The company demanded that a street directly connecting the *Hamīdiyya* square to the port should be laid, disclaiming any financial responsibility towards the street construction already under way. *Al-Bashīr* seconded this proposal.<sup>116</sup> In their report the company's board of directors said the following regarding the alternative street:

“Une autre route a été étudiée et tracée qui reliera la place du Sérail à la partie centrale du port. Nous attendons la décision du Conseil administratif du Vilayet pour occuper les terrains expropriés et commencer la construction de cette route. Son exécution complétera un système de voirie conçu de façon à faire communiquer directement les quais avec les principaux centres d'affaires, et appelé, par conséquent, à donner une plus-value très sensible à nos terrains gagnés sur la mer.”<sup>117</sup>

<sup>111</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 2 December 1895.

<sup>112</sup> Adel Ismail, ed., *Documents diplomatiques et consulaires relatifs à l'histoire du Liban et des pays du Proche-Orient du XVIIe siècle à nos jours*, vol. 16 (Beirut, 1982), p. 188.

<sup>113</sup> BOA, ŞD 2280/42.

<sup>114</sup> *Al-Miṣbāh*, 31 August 1895; and *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 19 November 1894.

<sup>115</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 22 April, 4 May and 25 November 1896; *Al-Bashīr*, 23 March 1896.

<sup>116</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 23 March and 4 May 1896.

<sup>117</sup> Compagnie Ottomane du Port, des Quais et Entrepôts de Beyrouth. Assemblée Générale du 4 Juin 1896, *Rapport du Conseil d'Administration* (Paris, 1896), p. 5.

The construction of this street was especially problematic for the municipality; it had to be built on grounds occupied by three Muslim cemeteries, making this proposal unacceptable to the Muslims of the city and their press. The alternative street plan led to vociferous debates on the pages of the press. *Thamarāt al-funūn* claiming that it represented the public interest of the city called for the completion of the original street plan. It accused the newspaper *Al-Bashīr* of acting as a mouthpiece for the port company and the French interests in the city, and of disloyalty to the city and the Ottoman State.<sup>118</sup> In its replies *Al-Bashīr* argued that the port company and its proposed street would be a benefit to the city and increase the revenue of the Muslim *awqāf*, the owner of the cemeteries. It published responses from the port company and Comte de Perthuis, claiming that he had never pledged a single *para* to the municipality.<sup>119</sup> It also demanded the division of the city into two municipalities, one for the east and another for the west of Beirut.<sup>120</sup> This demand was rejected passionately by *Thamarāt al-funūn*.<sup>121</sup> The municipality, as a consequence, was driven to momentarily suspend all its street works. Confronted with financial difficulties, it was compelled to shelve some of its plans, especially those that involved large expenditure. The administrative council of the province ordered the municipality to suspend all of its street construction activity, pending the availability of adequate funds. It requested that the original plan for the main thoroughfares should be amended and the width of the streets reduced to 8 meters only.<sup>122</sup> As a consequence, the planned avenue connecting the port to *Sahat al-Sūr* was never laid. However, the work on the modest version of the avenue, stretching from the *Saray* to *Bab Idris*, was still under way in 1898.<sup>123</sup>

Between 1895 and 1898 the planned streets that were expected to increase the beauty of the city remained incomplete. They were a clear scar on the urban fabric of the city centre. The municipal budget for the fiscal year 1314 (1898) shows, that the municipality remained indebted to property owners along the planned street. The amount of 451,081 piastres as an indemnity for demolished property had not yet been paid.<sup>124</sup> During this

<sup>118</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 30 March, 13 April, 20 April, 27 April, 4 May and 11 May 1896.

<sup>119</sup> In August 1895 the newspaper *Al-Bashīr* reported that the company would fulfil its financial promise to the municipality, and it urged the latter to finish the avenue leading to the port as soon as possible. However, after this date the newspaper either kept silent about this promised amount, or even explicitly denied such a pledge, see *Al-Bashīr*, 21 August 1895; and *Al-Bashīr*, 14 April, 21 April, 27 April and 4 May 1896.

<sup>120</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 23 March and 7 April 1896.

<sup>121</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 30 March and 13 April 1896.

<sup>122</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 14 April 1896.

<sup>123</sup> BOA, ŞD 2295/4, belge 23.

<sup>124</sup> BOA, ŞD 2295/4, belge 32.

period of time a large number of complaints against the municipal council were registered. Some citizens from Beirut filed cases against the municipality, accusing it of underestimating the value of their property. Another reason for complaint was the *sharafiyya* tax. This was a fee excised in direct relation to the area of the property and the degree of its benefit from the new street, in accordance with the construction law. In January 1896, ʿAisha bint Khalil al-ʿAris, a property owner from Beirut, wrote a petition to the Grand Vizier, complaining about the state of affairs and accusing the municipality of causing damage to her property and of imposing a high *sharafiyya* tax on her.<sup>125</sup> Her request was declined on all levels, first by the administrative council of the province, presided over by the governor,<sup>126</sup> and at a later stage by the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>127</sup> She did not give up easily, claiming that the amount requested from her exceeded the value of her property, especially after the municipality had demolished part of it for the enlargement of the street. She joined forces with another woman with a similar complaint, Fatima Daryan, and appointed a lawyer. The lawyer raised their case in October 1903 to the Council of State.<sup>128</sup> Al-ʿAris and Daryan collected signatures from their neighbours, testifying to the rightfulness of their cases against the municipality.<sup>129</sup> The cases filed against the municipality by the two women show a strong awareness of the civic rights provided by the law. They refused to pay the *sharafiyya*. The amount remained pending until 1903 (1319 *maliye*). Not only ʿAisha bint Khalil al-ʿAris and Fatima Daryan, but a large number of Beirut merchants and property owners refused to pay their dues. The list includes members of the affluent Bayhum family. Muhammad Bayhum, a former mayor of the city, and his cousin ʿAbd al-Qadir, the son of the first mayor of Beirut, abstained from paying the *sharafiyya* due on their property. The arrears from this tax amounted to the substantial sum of 519,364 piastres and 20 *para*.<sup>130</sup>

The history of the municipal taxes in Beirut is chequered. In the formative years taxes were collected on behalf of the municipality, but the sum was not delivered to it in full. A second phase started when the municipality was granted permission to collect an abattoir tax in order to provide the city with potable water. It appears that until 1888 the municipality enjoyed relative financial security. In 1888 half of the revenue from some municipal taxes was claimed by the central treasury in Istanbul, which caused

<sup>125</sup> BOA, ŞD 2285/22, belge 1.

<sup>126</sup> BOA, ŞD 2285/22, belge 3.

<sup>127</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/4, belge 3.

<sup>128</sup> BOA, ŞD 2294/4, belge 3.

<sup>129</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/4, belge 1.

<sup>130</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belge 3, p. 3.

the municipality unexpected financial difficulties. In order to overcome the financial problems the municipality devised new taxes by virtue of the right granted to it by the municipal law of 1877. As has been shown, these new taxes did not solve the problem. The municipality lacked the power to enforce its taxation policy. Different communities in the city refused to pay certain taxes. Affluent Beirutis, for example, evaded a tax for street construction. This reflects the conflicting personal and communal interests, betraying an underdeveloped civic sense. The authority of the municipality vis-à-vis the citizens of Beirut and the foreign community remained fairly limited. Contrary to what one might expect from the writings of some historians, the Western community and their protégées did not always act as a “dynamo” for the development of municipal institutions. In some cases, as we have seen, the authority and power of the municipality was undermined by the unwillingness of the foreign community to be subject to taxation—at least not without politically unacceptable representation on the council.

In view of the weakness of the municipality when it came to enforcing its policies, cooperation with the governors was crucial for the success of certain projects. Some governors were willing to aid the municipality, thus helping it to boost its authority. The relationship between the municipality and the governors will be the main subject of the following chapter.

## VI The Authority and Political Reality of the Municipality

In the summer months of 1313 *maliye* (June until August 1897) two bureaucrats were sent from Istanbul to study the accounts and to examine the activities of the municipal council of Beirut. They were Ibrahim Bey, one of the assistants to the Council of State (*şurayı devlet muavinlerinden*), and Ziya Bey, an auditor in the Ministry of the Interior (*nezaret-i dahiliye celilesi muhasebe mümeyyizlerinden*). They embarked upon this task after receiving an imperial rescript to this effect from the Sultan (*ba-irade-i seniye-i cenab-ı padişahî*).<sup>1</sup> The order they received does not give any indication why such a measure was taken. From the document itself it is difficult to determine whether a complaint was filed from Beirut to precipitate such an investigation. However, in all probability, the news about the large debt accrued by the municipal council and its inability to finish a major development project, i.e. street construction, must have reached Istanbul, causing it to react. The investigation carried out by the two inspectors might have been an attempt on the side of the central authorities to make sure that the municipal council of Beirut was able to take the necessary measures in preparation for the expected visit of the German Kaiser in the following year.

The result of this enquiry is documented in an extensive folder or file (*gömlek*), still preserved in the Ottoman archives.<sup>2</sup> The folder contains 27 documents (*belgeler*). These documents vary in size, from short notes (*pusulalar*) to multi-folia minutes of the interrogations (*istintak*) of a number of Beirut municipal officials. During the three months of their stay in Beirut the Istanbuli bureaucrats questioned the former chief municipal engineer Emin Efendi ‘Abd al-Nur,<sup>3</sup> the municipal engineer Yusuf Efendi Aftimus,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27.

<sup>3</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 19.

<sup>4</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belgeler 20, 21, and 22.

the chief secretary of the municipal council Yusuf Efendi ‘Araman,<sup>5</sup> the municipal inspector ‘Umar Efendi al-Da‘uq,<sup>6</sup> and the accountant of the municipality ‘Aziz Efendi Abu Qasim.<sup>7</sup> The folder also contains three construction plans prepared by the chief municipal engineer,<sup>8</sup> and a thorough analytical report on the expenses of the municipality, covering a period of ten years, from 1304 until 1313 *maliye*, i.e. 1888 to 1897. This detailed study of the municipal books provides information on the activities of the municipal council, its *modus operandi*, decision-making processes—or the lack of such processes—and its status and standing *vis-à-vis* the different governors of Beirut. The importance of the information derived from these documents lies in the nature of the items described in the accounting books, some of them documenting illegal transactions, or, as the two Istanbul inspectors put it, “irregular activities” (*yolsuz*). Given that such accounts were not intended for publication, they constitute a unique source of information. The accounting books contained evidence that could be considered incriminating for the municipality and the governors of Beirut. Both parties were interested in guarding this information from public scrutiny; therefore such material could not be found in the contemporary press of the city.

Some examples of these irregular activities will be presented below. They portray the different attitudes of various governors towards the municipal institution, giving a nuanced picture of the multifaceted relationship between the municipality and the Ottoman authorities.

## A The Municipality and the Governors of the Province of Beirut

### 1 Ali Pasha (1888–1889)

Ten years before the two investigators from Istanbul arrived in Beirut to examine the affairs of its municipality a long-standing demand of some Beirut notables was finally fulfilled: Beirut was declared a capital of an extended *vilayet* named after the city. The promotion of the status of Beirut was received with great enthusiasm by its inhabitants.<sup>9</sup> On 8 March 1888 Ali Pasha was appointed as the first governor of Beirut. He was one of the most outstanding Ottoman statesmen of his time. Prior to becoming the governor of the newly established province, he had held distinguished posts, i.e. he had

<sup>5</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belgeler 16, 17, and 18.

<sup>6</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belgeler 13, 14 and 15.

<sup>7</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 12.

<sup>8</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belgeler 8, 9 and 10.

<sup>9</sup> BOA, Y.A.HUS 210/59, belge 2.

been mayor of Istanbul twice,<sup>10</sup> and governor of Erzurum, Trebizond, Edirne, Bosnia and Hüdavendigâr. Furthermore, he had held the post of ambassador of the Ottoman Empire in Paris, and had been a member of the Council of State and its president for one year.<sup>11</sup> A laudatory biography written in Arabic and dedicated to Ali Pasha, which was published in a city guide for Beirut in 1889,<sup>12</sup> described him as the crown of the province, the most important vizier, peerless (*bimesil*), and the personification of virtue, justice, courtesy and gratitude.<sup>13</sup> The local press sang his praises as well.<sup>14</sup>

The appointment of a *vali* for Beirut was thought to be advantageous for the city and its municipal council. First, his presence would enhance the status of the city, and facilitate the bureaucratic communication between the municipal council and the central authorities in Istanbul. In order to receive permission for major projects the municipal council would no longer have to contact Istanbul through the *mutasarrıf* of Beirut, who, in turn, would refer the matter to the governor of Syria in Damascus; now the council could address its requests to the governor of Beirut. Second, it was also expected that the fact that the governor resided in the city would make him susceptible to its needs. He would be in close contact with the city notables represented on the municipal council and would therefore second and support the demands and the projects of the city in the capital Istanbul.<sup>15</sup> In other words, he was expected to defend the interests of Beirut vis-à-vis the central authority. This explains the enthusiasm of the Beirutis for the appointment of a governor who was to reside in their home town.

However, the presence of such an important personality must also have been a great challenge for the municipality. For example, the municipal council of the city had to refurbish the kitchen and embellish the garden of the private residence of the governor.<sup>16</sup> The fact that the municipality made such improvements was not regarded as an illegal

<sup>10</sup> Nuri, *Mecelle-i umur-ı belediye*, vol. 1, p. 1709.

<sup>11</sup> Ali Pasha (1245/1829 in Uskudar-1889 in Beirut). For his biography, see Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i osmanî yahud tezakire-i meşâhir-i osmâniyye*, vol. 3 (Istanbul, 1311/1893-94), p. 580; Mehmed Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i osmanî yahud tezakire-i meşâhir-i osmâniyye*, new edition, Latin Script, vol. 3 (Istanbul, 1996), pp. 681-682.

<sup>12</sup> Khuri, *Al-Jâmi'a aw dalîl Bayrût li-âm 1889*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>13</sup> Khuri, *Al-Jâmi'a aw dalîl Bayrût li-âm 1889*, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Lisân al-hâl*, 8 March 1888.

<sup>15</sup> *Lisân al-hâl*, 8 March 1888.

<sup>16</sup> The accounts of 1304 *malîye* (1888) contain the following entry: “*Ve ol vakit vali-i vilayet bulunan Ali Paşanın zatına mahsus konağının matbahı için ocak ve satur ve ibrik ve süpürge ve ma takım nargile ve fener ve havuz anahtarı ve bahçesi için amele ücreti ve levazım saire esmanı olarak bin iki yüz yetmiş dokuz kuruş sarf olduğu.*”, see BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 2.



act of bribery by either side, but as a sign of hospitality due to the governor's rank.

## 2 Ra'uf Pasha (1889)

Ali Pasha did not hold the office of governor of Beirut for a very long. He died in Beirut on 3 March 1889 (1 *Rajab* 1306).<sup>17</sup> Ra'uf Pasha was appointed in his place. The tenure of Ra'uf Pasha was also short-lived; he governed Beirut for two month and 10 days only (from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1889 until the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 1889).<sup>18</sup> The municipality did not hesitate to receive the new governor with the same demonstration of hospitality. An amount of 2,949 piastres appeared in the accounts of that year to cover the costs of furniture for the private residence of the governor, an annual subscription to a number of newspapers, and repairing the clock in the governmental office.<sup>19</sup>

## 3 Aziz Pasha (1889–1892)

Aziz Pasha governed Beirut from the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 1889 until the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1892. His tenure of approximately two years and four months was the longest among all the governors of Beirut.<sup>20</sup> It seems that Aziz Pasha was strict in applying the letter of the municipal law. For the first time the municipal budget was approved by the general municipal assembly. This was in accordance with Articles 50 to 55 of the municipal law.<sup>21</sup> The governor must have summoned the administrative council of the province along with the municipal council to discuss and ratify the budget of the latter institution. The ratified municipal budget was published by the press.<sup>22</sup> The examination by the two inspectors of the municipal books for the fiscal year 1306 (1890) showed no miscellaneous entries relating to expenditures for the governor's private residence or his office.<sup>23</sup> This shows that Aziz Pasha took his responsibilities towards the municipal council and its funds seriously.

## 4 Ismail Kemal Bey (1892)

Ismail Kemal Bey succeeded Aziz Pasha as governor of Beirut. He governed from the 11<sup>th</sup> of January until the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1892.<sup>24</sup> His arrival

<sup>17</sup> Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i osmanî*, vol. 3 (Istanbul, 1315/1897), p. 580; Süreyyâ, *Sicill-i osmanî. Osmanlı Ünlüleri*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1996), p. 279.

<sup>18</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1319/1901–02), p. 79.

<sup>19</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1319/1901–02), p. 79.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter III, above.

<sup>22</sup> *Al-Miṣbâḥ*, 1 February 1890.

<sup>23</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, pp. 3–4.

<sup>24</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1319/1901–02), p. 79.

in Beirut was overshadowed by some cases of cholera in the quarantine. His reception was prepared with all the precautions that the sanitary regulations required. However, this did not impede the official ceremony, i.e. the reading of the imperial *firman*, appointing him as governor a few days later. It must have been on the occasion of a similar festivity that the municipality of Beirut carried the costs of cigarettes, coffee and candles to the amount of 141 piastres and 30 *para*.<sup>25</sup> During the tenure of Ismail Kemal Bey, a warship of the French navy visited the port of Beirut. A reception for the officers and sailors was organised by the municipality. The costs of this reception amounted to 3,760 piastres.<sup>26</sup> Ismail Kemal Bey describes the festivity as follows: “a French squadron, under the command of a Vice-Admiral, visited Beyrouth, and the officers and sailors were officially received by the authorities, and, apart from the official side of the visit, were very cordially welcomed by the local population.”<sup>27</sup> In his description Ismail Kemal Bey used the vague term “the authorities”, and it is not quite clear whether he was actually referring to the municipal council.

It seems that Ismail Kemal Bey was especially fond of festive occasions. He issued an order to the municipality to refurnish and redecorate the salon of his office (*hükümet konağı* or *al-Saray* in Beirut parlance), in order to have a representative reception hall for such occasions.<sup>28</sup> The governor invited a music instructor for the third regiment (*alay*) stationed in Beirut. His stay lasted from February until June 1892. The music instructor received an honorarium of 2,168 piastres from the municipality.<sup>29</sup> During the month of July the band of the third *alay* had the chance to demonstrate what it had recently learnt. The Ottoman frigate *Mehmet Selim* visited Beirut. An expensive celebration in honour of the crew was organised in the Pine Forest. The costs of this banquet (*ziyafet*), 11,454 piastres, were covered by the municipality.<sup>30</sup> It should be noted here that these receptions or *ziyafets* were of little benefit to the municipality. They were more important and significant for the public relation scheme of the governor. Ismail Kemal Bey was well aware of the high status of the commander of the frigate. On such occasions the mayor of the city and the members of the municipal council were eclipsed by the presence of the governor himself, the top-ranking officers of the army and the invited foreign consuls. In his

<sup>25</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, pp. 5–6.

<sup>27</sup> Story, *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, p. 196.

<sup>28</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 6.

memoirs Ismail Kemal Bey mentions the municipality in connection with the aforementioned reception:

“The training-ship, with the cadets on board, under the command of Rear-Admiral Hallil [sic] Pasha, later Minister of Marine, came to Beyrouth, and it was during a banquet given to them by the municipality in the public gardens that I received a telegram from the Sultan recalling me at once to Constantinople to be placed in charge of an important mission. Another telegram followed from the Grand Vizier announcing the appointment of my successor, and a few days later I returned to the capital. The people of Beyrouth regretted my departure, I am pleased to say, but nevertheless the telegram caused pleasure among those present on the festive occasion I have mentioned, since its terms led everyone to believe I was being called to the post of Grand Vizier.”<sup>31</sup>

On the 9 July the municipal council of Beirut paid 21,697 piastres and 30 *para* for new furniture for the departing governor. It organised a *ziyafet* with fireworks in honour of Ismail Kemal Bey at the cost of 7,844 piastres and 10 *para*.<sup>32</sup> Other miscellaneous expenses, i.e. the salaries of a guard and a cleaning lady, were also paid by the municipality, as well as the costs of a subscription to the newspaper *Saadet*.<sup>33</sup> Ismail Kemal Bey definitely did not mention this in his memoirs, but it seems that the city left a positive impression. The municipality of Beirut tried to immortalise these impressions by presenting him with a photo-album:<sup>34</sup>

“The town of Beyrouth presented me with a souvenir album of photographic views of the place and its monuments bound in massive gold with an emerald in the centre. On my arrival I considered it my duty to present this album to the Sultan, saying that it was given me not through any virtue of my own, but as His Majesty’s representative.”<sup>35</sup>

In his autobiography he describes his special relationship with the Grand Vizier Midhat Pasha.<sup>36</sup> Ismail Kemal Bey, most probably influenced by Midhat Pasha’s ideas, was critical of his colleague Osman Pasha, the governor of Damascus, whom he accused of being corrupt and of accepting bribes.

<sup>31</sup> Story, *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, p. 206.

<sup>32</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> For the meaning and the political significance of photography in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, see Nancy C. Micklewright, “Personal, Public, and Political (Re) Constructions: Photographs and Consumption”. In: Donald Quataert, ed., *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550–1922. An Introduction* (New York, 2000), pp. 261–287.

<sup>35</sup> Story, *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, pp. 206–207.

<sup>36</sup> Story, *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, pp. 41–43 and 143–151.

Osman Pasha imprisoned the *mutasarrıf* of Hawran Ibrahim al-Atrash in an attempt to blackmail him. The Pasha demanded 500 Turkish pounds of al-Atrash for his release from prison. Later, Ismail Kemal Bey, in his capacity as interim governor of Damascus, released al-Atrash from prison without asking for a penny and offered him “all the apologies” he could for the “unpardonable conduct” of his “predecessor”.<sup>37</sup> The words which Ismail Kemal Bey used to describe this incident highlight his sincerity in condemning the conduct of Osman Pasha. According to Ismail Kemal Bey, it was a dishonourable act to blackmail an Ottoman bureaucrat. However, it appears that he did not consider the act of accepting expensive gifts from the municipality prior to his departure from Beirut as dishonourable. After all, he had not demanded anything from anyone. He regarded the dear gifts as a sign of loyalty to the Sultan. This attitude, along with the unnecessary tasks which Ismail Kemal Bey demanded of the municipality, shows the governor’s lack of responsibility towards communal public funds.

Why did the municipal council pay for new furniture only a few days prior to the departure of the governor? In the final analysis, he would have no influence on future projects. The only possible explanation is that the Beirutis, as Ismail Kemal Bey mentioned, believed that he was going to become Grand Vizier. Investing in good relations with him became all the more necessary, in the hope that he would act as a rapporteur on behalf of the city in the highest echelons of the Empire. As it was, however, a former *mutasarrıf* of Beirut, Mehmet Kamil Pasha, became Grand Vizier, and during his tenure he did not forget, among others, the Dana family. Some of its members were granted important offices, and two of them received the license to publish a newspaper.<sup>38</sup>

As the relationship between the governor Ismail Kemal Bey and the municipality of Beirut has shown, the gestures of hospitality changed in nature, continuously becoming more expensive. This constitutes a clear proof of the low standing of the municipal institution vis-à-vis the high office of the governor. The governor interfered directly in the municipality’s finances. He diverted municipal funds in order to finance activities that were not within the municipality’s scope of responsibility, as specified by Article 3 of the municipal law of 1877.<sup>39</sup>

##### 5 Halid Baban Bey (1892–1894)

Halid Baban Bey, formerly ambassador of the Ottoman Empire in Tehran, succeeded Ismail Kemal Bey; he governed Beirut from the 31<sup>st</sup> of July

<sup>37</sup> Story, *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, pp. 202–203.

<sup>38</sup> Tarrazi, *Tārīkh al-ṣahāfa al-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 37–38 and 119–120.

<sup>39</sup> See Chapter III, above.

1892 until the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1894.<sup>40</sup> Like his predecessors, he was welcomed by the municipality upon his arrival in the city. The municipality contributed to making the governor's private residence more comfortable with the modest sum of 2.216 piastres.<sup>41</sup>

Halid Bey was involved in the municipal affairs of the city. During his tenure the municipal budgets for two consecutive years were studied and ratified by the municipal general assembly, composed of the administrative and the municipal council.<sup>42</sup> The ratification of the budget conformed to the demands of the municipal law. In January 1894 the cornerstone of a representative town hall was laid. The foundation ceremony was attended by a deputy of the governor along with high-ranking Ottoman officials and officers.<sup>43</sup> The planned town hall was to consist of a two-storey building, surrounded by a garden with four fountains, one at each corner of the building. The façade was to carry the Ottoman coat-of-arms, and the building was to be crowned with a clock tower.<sup>44</sup> In 1888 the municipality had been compelled to leave the governmental *Saray* and therefore became deprived of adequate and representative offices. It had to rent temporary premises in *Sūq Sursuq*.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the new edifice under construction was of special significance to the esteem of the municipal council of Beirut.

During the tenure of Halid Bey, and with his support, the municipality was able to secure a substantial loan from the Imperial Ottoman Bank, and a second one from the treasury of the province, intended for street construction work.<sup>46</sup> In May 1894 the governor Halid Bey inaugurated the construction of the two grand avenues planned to connect the port to the old town. At the inaugural ceremony the governor used a silver shovel, marking the beginning of the work.<sup>47</sup> The tension between the French port company and Beirut merchants came to the surface during his tenure. He supported the Beirutis in their confrontation with the said company, when the latter unduly raised its fees and fired 400 stevedores and porters.<sup>48</sup>

The tenure of Halid Baban Bey in Beirut ended in August 1894. The Beirutis believed that he was going to occupy an important office in Istanbul. They were unaware of the fact that his appointment as a

<sup>40</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1319/1901–02), p. 79.

<sup>41</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, pp. 6–7.

<sup>42</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, pp. 5 and 7.

<sup>43</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 10 January 1894.

<sup>44</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 17 January 1894.

<sup>45</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 21 July 1888; and see Chapter V, above.

<sup>46</sup> BOA, ŞD, 2287/27, belge 23, p. 8; and see Chapter V, above.

<sup>47</sup> *Tamarāt al-funūn*, 21 May 1894; and *Al-Bashīr*, 23 May 1894. For a detailed description of the planned avenues, see Chapter V, above.

<sup>48</sup> Ismail, *Documents diplomatiques et consulaires*, vol. 16, pp. 180–189.

provincial governor had been a polite banishment from the capital and its political circles.<sup>49</sup> A reception with fireworks was held in honour of the departing Halid Bey, as had been done for his predecessor. Gestures of hospitality prior to his departure amounted to 23.743 piastres.<sup>50</sup>

## 6 Abdülhalik Nasuhi Bey (1894–1896)

Nasuhi Bey's term of office clearly shows the weak position of the municipal council vis-à-vis the governor. Abdülhalik Nasuhi Bey governed the province of Beirut from 23 August 1894 until 5 December 1896.<sup>51</sup> During this period of time the construction work on the avenues came to a standstill, due to the lack of finances. The port company reneged on its promise to help the municipality in its construction work.<sup>52</sup> There is no evidence in the press or Ottoman archival material that Nasuhi Bey assisted the municipality in its negotiations with the port company.

In the fiscal year 1311 (1895) the municipality, in an attempt to increase tax collection, asked the security forces in Beirut to collect the *tanzîfât* tax on its behalf.<sup>53</sup> These forces were efficient in accomplishing this task. The sum of 261,016 piastres was collected by the end of the year,<sup>54</sup> yet not delivered to the municipality.<sup>55</sup> The municipal council was not able to pay the salaries of some of its employees, which led to a demonstration in front of its offices.<sup>56</sup> The governor could have solved this problem, as the security forces were directly answerable to him. This incident shows that Nasuhi Bey did not give the municipality the support it needed. He did not assist the municipality in claiming its rightful revenues, despite the fact that the municipal council had, earlier in the same year, paid for refurbishing his private residence at the cost of 25, 923 piastres and 35 *para*.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The German ambassador in Tehran reported the following on Halid Bey and the suspicions on the side of the Sultan and his immediate retinue: “[Halid Bey] war früher in der Umgebung des präsidenten Thronfolgers Mohammad Reschad Effendi und ist lange von Constantinopel fern gehalten worden. Von Belgrad nach Teheran versetzt, musste er sich direkt auf seinen neuen (?) begeben und während seines sechsjährigen Aufenthalts in Teheran ist der wiederholt nachgesuchte Urlaub ihm niemals bewilligt worden.”, see PAAA, *Orientalia Generalia; Türkische Staatsmänner, Türkei No: 159 Nr. 2, Band 4, R 13789, Abschrift A. 304.*

<sup>50</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1319/1901–02), p. 79.

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter V, above.

<sup>53</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, pp. 11–12.

<sup>54</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belge 3, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> There is evidence that this amount remained outstanding until 1903 (1319 *maliye*), see BOA, 2297/9, belge 3, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 12.

<sup>57</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 9.

In August 1896 Abdülhalik Nasuhi Bey ordered the municipal council to demolish the town hall which was still under construction,<sup>58</sup> and his order was carried out.<sup>59</sup> The ground floor of the town hall had already been finished, at a cost of 93,000 piastres. The municipal engineer had not followed the original plans of the town hall due to financial difficulties. As a pragmatic solution, the ground floor included twenty-seven shops which, so the municipality expected, would generate an annual income of 700 Turkish pounds (corresponding to ca. 84,000 piastres). The demolition of the already existing ground cost 20,000 piastres.<sup>60</sup> This constituted an additional burden on the already strained municipal finances.

Nasuhi Bey argued that the appearance of the town hall under construction was “very oppressive” (*pek sakil bir menzara*). He claimed that the municipal edifice would damage the quality of the air in the governmental *Saray*, the military casern and the military hospital.<sup>61</sup> However, the municipal building would not have disturbed the alignment of the newly constructed avenue, as can be gathered from the three construction plans prepared by the municipal engineer.<sup>62</sup> The view would have extended from the *Hamīdiyya* square in front of the *Saray* to the higher area of *Bab Idris*, where *Sūq al-Tawīle* started at a right angle to the main thoroughfare. It would have enhanced and accentuated the straightness of the said street. It is possible that the governor insisted on demolishing the town hall, because he wanted his representative office, the *Saray*, to retain a monumental appearance, isolated in the middle of an empty space, and a focal point of the *Hamīdiyya* public garden, thus highlighting the significance of the *Saray* amidst the urban hub.<sup>63</sup>

The private secretary of Nasuhi Bey, Hüseyin Sami Efendi, was involved in construction activities to a degree which did not correspond to his status as an Ottoman bureaucrat. He received 23,182 piastres from the municipality for street construction works.<sup>64</sup> The municipal engineer and the municipal inspector accused Hüseyin Sami Efendi of illegally cutting down a large number of pine trees in the municipal Pine Forest and selling

<sup>58</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 11.

<sup>60</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 11.

<sup>62</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 8, 9 and 10.

<sup>63</sup> This was in accordance with the urban aesthetic concepts of the time, see Spiro Kostof, *The City Shaped. Urban Patterns and Meanings through History* (London, 1991), pp. 266–267; Spiro Kostof, *Die Anatomie der Stadt. Geschichte städtischer Strukturen* (Frankfurt, 1993), p. 138.

<sup>64</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, pp. 9–10.

them as construction timber;<sup>65</sup> the same accusation was reiterated by the municipal inspector.<sup>66</sup>

Despite the fact that Nasuhi Bey ordered the town hall to be demolished on 23 August 1896, the municipal council paid for his picnic (*tenezzüh*) in the Pine Forest on 4 September of that year. The governor and his retinue were entertained with candies and ice cream (*şekerleme ve dondurma*) at the expense of the municipality.<sup>67</sup> The lack of cooperation between Nasuhi Bey and the municipal council caused the latter large financial losses.

## B A Question of Responsibility

After examining the municipal accounts, the two investigators from Istanbul arrived at the conclusion that the municipality of Beirut was responsible for all the irregular (*yolsuz*) transactions and futile expenses (*masarifi vahiye*) discovered in its books. The respective governors of the province were acquitted of all liability, in spite of the fact that these expenses had been covered upon receiving a written order with a specific serial number, or a verbal order from the governor. The municipality did not hesitate to enter these orders in its books. The two inspectors recommended that five municipal employees should be prosecuted. The archives do not provide any further information regarding the destiny of these employees. In 1901, four years after the investigation had terminated, the Beiruti press reported that they were not found guilty by the administrative council of Beirut, headed by the governor. Consequently, the case against the municipal employees was dropped, because they had received orders from the highest authority in the province and had acted accordingly.<sup>68</sup>

The consecutive municipal laws granted the governor broad prerogatives with respect to municipal affairs. He was responsible for reviewing and forwarding proposals of major municipal projects to the central authority in Istanbul. He also presided over the meetings of the administrative council, which was entitled to ratify the municipal budget, hence enjoying certain control over the use of the municipal revenue.

One of the most important prerogatives of the governor was his right to choose one of the elected members of the municipal council to act as a salaried mayor. This method of appointment limited the power and the authority of the mayor vis-à-vis the governor, depriving the mayor of the strength and the responsibility derived from direct elections.

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<sup>65</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belgeler 20–22.

<sup>66</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belgeler 13–15.

<sup>67</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> *Al-Bashir*, 9 September 1901.



Some of the foreign residents in Beirut observed and reported on the relationship between the mayor and the governor. For example the German consul Dr. Schröder wrote:

“Die Stadtverwaltung von Beirut hat jährlich 22,000 türkische Pfund Einkünfte. Von dieser Summe wird kaum ein Viertel für Zwecke des Comforts, für Straßenreinigung, Pflasterung, Besprengung der Straßen, Beleuchtung u.s.w. verwendet; über den Rest verfügt der Vali nach Gutdünken. Der Präsident der Stadtverwaltung, ein durch seinen Fanatismus und seine Corruption übel beleumundeter Muhammedaner namens Abdelkader Effendi el-Kabbani, ist ein willfähiges Werkzeug in den Händen des Vali Reshid Bey und nur darauf bedacht, sich in der Gunst dieses Beamten, dem er seine Ernennung verdankt, zu erhalten. Für das Wohl der ihm anvertrauten Stadt thut er so gut wie gar nichts, ...”<sup>69</sup>

The weak position of the municipality made the American missionary Henry Jessup assume that the governor was the de facto mayor of the city:

“The Turkish Waly of the province is ex-officio president of the municipality and has absolute control of its funds. It often happens that by orders from Constantinople, the entire fund, amounting to thousands of dollars collected by taxation for street repairs and salaries, will be taken from the treasury and sent off to Constantinople.”<sup>70</sup>

The examples of irregular (*yolsuz*) transactions derived from the document ŞD 2287/27 show the importance of the governor’s goodwill in facilitating municipal activities. In the past the cooperation between the governor and the municipality had produced positive results; the examples of Aziz Pasha and Halid Baban Bey are two cases in point. Some did not respect the Tanzimat institution, acting irresponsibly with respect to municipal funds, like Ismail Kemal Bey, to a lower degree, and Nasuhi Bey, to a larger extent.

It is important to note that what was described in the report on the municipal accounts, prepared by the two inspectors from Istanbul, was not reflected in the press. No complaints by Beiruti journalists concerning misuse of funds by the governors were ever published. However, they were not reluctant to criticise the municipal council for its shortcomings. The press code prohibited publishing articles which were critical of the respective governor, given that he was the direct representative of the Ottoman central authorities. Such articles would have been interpreted as an attempt to undermine the unity of the Empire, a crime severely punished.

<sup>69</sup> PAAA, Abteilung A. *Acten betreffend allgemeine Angelegenheiten der Türkei. Türkei No: 134, Band 18 (vom 1. Oktober 1900 bis 30. Juni 1902), Acta No: 13177.*

<sup>70</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, p. 466.

There is no archival evidence under the classification Council of State (*şurayî devlet*) that the municipal council ever addressed any complaints to the said institution concerning the state of affairs. The Council of State was the body in charge of solving administrative disputes.<sup>71</sup>

The demolition of the town hall in 1896 was not reported, in spite of the great financial losses it caused. One might safely presume that this loss reduced the self-esteem of the municipality. Henceforward the municipality tried to build a monumental edifice in an effort to re-establish its respectability and to emphasise its position as an omnipresent urban institution. In 1897 the municipality decided to erect a 25-metre-high clock tower at the highest point of the city, in the immediate vicinity of the barracks and the military hospital. The municipality's senior engineer Yusuf Aftimus<sup>72</sup> designed and supervised the construction of the clock tower. In September 1899 the edifice was officially opened.<sup>73</sup> It is telling to compare and contrast what was written about the clock tower in the local press and in the *Salname* of Beirut. The press reported that the monument in question had been designed by the municipal engineer and built by local masons, listing the names of each and every one of them. It described the municipal edifice as having typical Arabic architectural features.<sup>74</sup> The official yearbook of the province of Beirut contains the following comment: "Thanks to the zeal and effort of the governor Reşid Bey, a very high and elegant a la Franca and a la Turca clock tower was inaugurated for the occasion of the Sultan's accession to the throne."<sup>75</sup> In the *Salname* the municipality was not mentioned at all. The governor got all the credit. This contrast epitomises the relationship between the governor and the municipality, and the report in the *Salname* reflects the way the governors wished to present themselves as the initiators of modern projects in Beirut.

<sup>71</sup> Shaw and Kural Shaw, *Reform, Revolution and Republic*, p. 80.

<sup>72</sup> Yusuf Aftimus received a Bachelor of Arts from the Syrian Protestant College in 1885; he pursued higher education in the USA at Union College where he received a degree in civil engineering in 1891. After his graduation he spent six years in the USA where he was entrusted with the design of the Ottoman Pavilion in the International World Fair in Chicago. He also designed and supervised the construction of the Egyptian Pavilion in the International World Fair in Antwerp, Belgium. In 1897 he became the municipal engineer of the city of Beirut, an office which he occupied until 1908; see Alumni Association, American University of Beirut, *Who's Who 1870-1923* (Beirut, 1924), p. 11; and Louis Cheikho, "Manārat al-sā'a al-ʿarabiyya fī Bayrūt". In: *Al-Mashriq*, 2 (1899), p. 770.

<sup>73</sup> Cheikho, "Manārat al-sā'a al-ʿarabiyya fī Bayrūt", pp. 769-774; *Al-Bashīr*, 4 September 1899.

<sup>74</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 4 September 1899.

<sup>75</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1319/1901-02), p. 243.



## VII The Municipality and Public Health

As mentioned, the Beirut municipality was one of the first of its kind to be established in the Ottoman Empire. While information about its formative years is somewhat scarce, we do know from the Beirut newspaper *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* that the earliest municipal activities in the city were related to public health. *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār* reported that in 1860 a Health Council (*majlis al-ṣiḥḥa*) was established in Beirut. This council was in charge of improving the sanitary conditions in the city.<sup>1</sup> It also started a free of charge vaccination campaign against smallpox. Official placards, explaining the vaccination procedure and its benefit to children's health, were posted in all streets and alleys in the city.<sup>2</sup> Announcements were also published in the press.<sup>3</sup> This chapter seeks to investigate the municipal council's performance with respect to medical services, which the consecutive municipal codes identified as falling within its jurisdiction. These services had direct bearing on the daily life of Beirut citizens, their health and standard of living.

### A The Struggle against Recurring Epidemics

On 20 August 1871 the Public Medical Department regulation (*idare-i umumiye-yi tbbiye nizamnamesidir/nizām idārat al-ṭibb al-ʿumūmiyya*) was promulgated in Istanbul.<sup>4</sup> It was immediately applied by the municipality of Beirut. This fact is well attested in *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* of 1289

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<sup>1</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 29 November 1860.

<sup>2</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 14 February 1861.

<sup>3</sup> *Ḥadīqat al-akhbār*, 21 February 1861, and 7 March 1861.

<sup>4</sup> The Ottoman text of the regulation of the Public Medical Department (*idare-i umumiye-yi tbbiye nizamnamesidir*) was published in *Düstur*, vol. 2, pp. 800–803; a semi-official Arabic translation called *nizām idārat al-ṭibb al-ʿumūmiyya* was published in *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 713–715. An unofficial French translation, which Young referred to as “traduction non garantie”, is available in Young, *Corps de droits ottoman*, vol. 3, pp.205–207.

(1872–73), which reported that in the previous year 1871–72 the municipality employed two medical doctors: a surgeon and a general practitioner.<sup>5</sup> The medical law stated that every provincial municipality should have one doctor. Beirut went one step further and appointed two doctors rather than one.<sup>6</sup> Most probably there was a special need for extraordinary health care measures, due to recurrent outbreaks of epidemics, namely cholera (*al-hawāʾ al-aṣfar*)<sup>7</sup> and dengue fever (*abū al-rukab*).<sup>8</sup> For example, between July and November 1865, cholera had claimed the lives of at least 3,000 persons in Beirut alone.<sup>9</sup> It had further created mass exodus from the city into Mount Lebanon.<sup>10</sup> Cholera was especially feared, because it attacked suddenly and deprived many families of healthy breadwinners. The British consul John Barker wrote:

“The cholera, unlike the plague and the common fevers of the country, which invariably begin by previous indisposition, debility, loss of appetite, etc., gives no such warning, but attacks a strong vigorous man suddenly in the highest state of health ...”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1289/1872–73), p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1289/1872–73), p. 89; *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1291/1874–75), pp. 62–63, and *Salname-i vilayet-i Suriye* (1293/1876), p. 99.

<sup>7</sup> LaVerne Kuhnke has the following explanation for the nomenclature of cholera in Arabic: “We are told that Arabian chroniclers confronted by the outbreak in Oman had no name for cholera; seeing the healthy struck down suddenly as if by a simoom blast, they thought cholera was a pestilential “yellow wind” (*al-rīḥ al-aṣfar* or *al-hawāʾ al-aṣfar*.” Kuhnke, *Lives at Risk*, pp. 51–52.

<sup>8</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 22 June 1875, 13 July 1875, 20 July 1875, and 31 August 1875. Henry Jessup explains why dengue fever was called *abū al-rukab*: “dengue fever, called by the Arabs (Abu Rikab—father of the knees) from the severe pain at knees”, see Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, p. 238.

<sup>9</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, p. 289.

<sup>10</sup> In July 1865, Henry Jessup wrote the following in the *Missionary Herald* of Boston about the panic-stricken Beirut population during the visitation of the cholera epidemic: “Beirut is almost deserted. A panic, such as I have never seen or heard of, took possession of the people about the first of July, owing to reports of the ravages of cholera in Egypt. Although no case had occurred or has yet occurred in Beirut, a general stampede commenced. Thousands upon thousands of the people, men, women and children, shut up shops and houses, and started for the mountain villages in hot haste. Schools of all kinds were disbanded; silk factories stopped running; and the men of our press went in body. A spirit of lying seemed to have entered the people. False reports of numerous, sudden deaths from cholera were spread on every side. Men ran about with blanched faces trembling for fear, and offering any price for animals to carry them to the mountains ... About two thousand refugees from Alexandria have been brought by steamers to Beirut and placed in quarantine. A few have died in the quarantine, but the health of Beirut, thus far, is as good as usual at this season. One can hardly credit the events of the past ten days. The panic came suddenly and swept the population into the mountains.”, see Salibi, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, vol. 5, p. 128.

<sup>11</sup> Barker, *Syria and Egypt under the Last Five Sultans of Turkey*, p. 334.

Some of the debilitating, but nonfatal ailments and fevers were endemic to Beirut and its environs,<sup>12</sup> but cholera was not. It is evident that the Beirut municipality did not fail to acknowledge the importance of providing health care to the largest possible number of its citizens during the outbreaks of cholera. In fact, when the municipality deemed it necessary, it appointed more than two doctors, five in some cases, to attend to general health and hygiene in the city. The additional doctors were recruited from those practising in the city.<sup>13</sup>

The chief municipal doctor received a monthly salary of 2,200 piastres from the municipality, and the second physician was remunerated with 1,200 piastres per month.<sup>14</sup> They catered to the needs of the poor city dwellers who could not afford private treatment, and were not allowed to charge fees for their services. As municipal doctors on duty, they were not allowed to flee the city and to take refuge in Mount Lebanon during the outbreak of epidemics, which was fairly common practice among rich Beirutis, including medical doctors, at that time.<sup>15</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century telegraph wires were gradually installed throughout the provinces of the Ottoman Empire. By means of this modern innovation the newly established municipalities came into direct contact with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior in Istanbul. The two ministries made frequent use of this modern technological convenience. Reports on the health conditions in the Empire were regularly wired from the capital to the provinces and vice versa. Thus the municipality of Beirut was able to adopt protective health measures at an early stage, whenever the need arose. For example, in the early summer of 1875 news reached Beirut by way of telegraph that cholera had reappeared in Syria.<sup>16</sup> The municipality, doing its best to safeguard the public against this dreaded disease, started a systematic cleaning of the city and its tannery. Hazardous wastes which constituted a potential danger, like domestic refuse, untreated hides and unfinished catguts were collected and dumped outside the city limits. In July of that summer the municipality, upon the recommendation of its medical doctor Salim al-Khuri, prohibited the import of fruits and vegetables from the Syrian interior.<sup>17</sup> He also advised the municipality of Beirut to use lime

<sup>12</sup> John Wortabet, "Al-Awbi'a wa al-amrāḍ al-ghāliba fi Sūriyā". In: *Al-Muqtaṭaf*, 30 (Cairo, 1905), pp. 281–289.

<sup>13</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 9 July 1883, 29 June 1885, 15 November 1890, 12 January 1891, and 10 June 1895.

<sup>14</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belgeler 1 and 6.

<sup>15</sup> Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, pp. 35–39; Khuri, *Majma' al-masarrāt*, p. 106.

<sup>16</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 22 June 1875.

<sup>17</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 13 July 1875.

as an antiseptic, especially in those places which produced stench and foul smell.<sup>18</sup> His advice was quickly implemented and municipal inspectors, including al-Khuri himself, regularly inspected the markets of the city. The American missionary Henry Jessup reported positively on the municipal endeavours against the feared disease: "The Arabic journals discussed what ought to be done and the city government exerted itself with unprecedented energy in cleansing the streets, lanes and vaults."<sup>19</sup> However, in spite of all these preventive measures, the cholera epidemic struck the city later in August.<sup>20</sup>

In the summer of 1883 cholera appeared in Egypt.<sup>21</sup> Upon receiving this distressing news, also by way of telegraph, the municipality formed a public health committee composed of five Beirut doctors in addition to the municipal ones. This public health committee issued a long list of recommendations in order to protect the city from the spread of the epidemic. These recommendations are of particular interest for two reasons. First, the way they were brought to public attention. The municipality did not spare any effort in order to make these health and hygiene instructions reach the largest possible number of inhabitants. It printed a large number of health instruction leaflets and asked its municipal guards (*al-hurrās*) to post them on the doors of every church, mosque and public building in Beirut. It also published them in the local press, for example, in *Thamarāt al-funūn*.<sup>22</sup> Second, these instructions contained very important information about the preparation of newly introduced antiseptics and disinfectants in the right dosage. According to the instructions, the antiseptics were prepared by mixing two grams of either chlorinated lime or phenol in one thousand grams of water. These chemicals were available in the pharmacies of the city. An alternative method was to use lime generously in the latrines; it was locally produced in the lime kilns of the city, hence it was both available and affordable. According to the instructions these antiseptics were to be used on a daily basis for washing fruit and vegetables, and for domestic cleaning. The municipality announced that it would

<sup>18</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 20 July 1875.

<sup>19</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, p. 444.

<sup>20</sup> Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants*, p. 35; *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 31 August, 1875.

<sup>21</sup> In 1883 Robert Koch was sent to Egypt to investigate the cause of the cholera epidemic. During his stay in Alexandria he was able to isolate and identify the *Vibrio Cholerae*. In 1884 he was able to prove that cholera was communicated mainly by polluted water, however, this was disputed by other physicians some of them working in Germany; see Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind, A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (London, 1997), p. 437.

<sup>22</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 9 July 1883.

supervise the hygiene of all public spaces, and control the quality of fruits and vegetables on the markets and in the restaurants and hotels of the city. It recommended that all citizens avoid crowded places and reduce their consumption of seasonal fruit. The recommendation concerning fruit consumption was especially important, because the threat of a cholera outbreak coincided with the month of *Ramaḍān*. As a final preventive measure the municipality stopped all imports from Egypt.<sup>23</sup> The mayor Muhyi al-Din Hamada and the municipal doctors toured the city, in order to inspect the work of the municipal employees during this extraordinary situation.<sup>24</sup> Their efforts proved to be fruitful; though they did not prevent the epidemic from infiltrating the town, they at least limited its scale and virulence. The cholera reached the city on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, but it was reported that only six citizens died of it. The last case was reported on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1883.<sup>25</sup> In spite of the limited number of cholera patients in the city, a land cordon was imposed for Beirut. This caused the price of provisions to double.<sup>26</sup> The stringent sanitary measures were not lifted until late October of that year.<sup>27</sup> Judging from newspaper reports, which did not hesitate to criticise the municipality when it showed any sign of negligence, the municipality persevered in its commitment to public health.<sup>28</sup> The American consul John Robeson attested to the efficacy of the health care measures taken by the municipality of Beirut:

“The month of Ramadan commenced on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July and ended August the 4<sup>th</sup>, during which the Moslems in the East do not eat or drink anything from daybreak until sunset, but dissipate by eating and drinking during the night, which usually brings on much sickness. Thus it seems a miracle that the cholera did not spread in Beirut. It is right, however, to give credit to the local authorities who took every possible measure to render the sanitary condition of the town as good as it can ever be, by cleaning the streets most thoroughly, spreading large quantities of lime and other disinfecting matter, and watering at the public places twice a day to cool the hot temperature of the locality.

<sup>23</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 16 July 1883.

<sup>24</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 13 August 1883, and 11 September 1883.

<sup>25</sup> A report on the health conditions in Syria prepared by the American consul in Beirut, John Robeson, dated 20 September 1883. The National Archives of the United States, *Dispatches from the United States Consuls, Beirut, 1836–1906*, a Microfilm Publication (Washington, 1934).

<sup>26</sup> BOA, Ī.DH 70952.

<sup>27</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 26 October 1883.

<sup>28</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 10 September 1883, and 26 October 1883.



The sanitary precautions were, in the opinion of many, the principle reasons that the cholera did not spread in Beirut.”<sup>29</sup>

The preventive efforts of the municipality proved to be even more successful in 1890, when another outbreak of cholera spread in Syria.<sup>30</sup> The epidemic did not reach the city of Beirut that year, nor indeed later during the autumn of 1891, or the summers of 1892 and 1893.<sup>31</sup> In August 1892 the acting American vice consul in Beirut reported:

“It is earnestly hoped that, owing to the strict prophylactic measures that are being taken by the local authorities, this country will be spared another unwelcome visit of the dreadful plague [as a figure of speech, the letter is about cholera in Syria] prevailing at present in many parts of the world, and which during the last two years caused the death of a large number of Syrian victims.”<sup>32</sup>

It seems that the prophylactic measures of the municipality were especially effective in the years 1884 and 1892, for in both these years cholera was pandemic, spreading all over Asia and Europe.<sup>33</sup> The fact that Beirut was saved from the cholera epidemic in 1884, occasioned a letter of thanks and appreciation addressed to Sultan Abdülhamid II, signed by the Greek Orthodox metropolitan of the city. In it he expressed his gratitude for and praise (*şükür ve mahmedet*) of the measures taken against the cholera epidemic. In reply, the metropolitan was informed that his letter had caused the Sultan much joy (*mucibi mahzuziyet*).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> A report on the health conditions in Syria prepared by the American consul in Beirut, John Robeson, dated 20 September 1883. The National Archives of the United States, *Dispatches from the United States Consuls, Beirut, 1836–1906*, a Microfilm Publication (Washington, 1934).

<sup>30</sup> A letter by Constantine Khoury, acting deputy vice consul of the United States consulate in Beirut, dated 15 October 1890; and two letters by the consul Erhard Bissinger, dated 12 October and 15 December 1890, see The National Archives of the United States, *Dispatches from the United States Consuls, Beirut, 1836–1906*, a Microfilm Publication (Washington, 1934).

<sup>31</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, pp. 569–570 and 601–602.

<sup>32</sup> A letter by Constantine Khoury, acting deputy vice consul of the United States consulate in Beirut, dated 25 August 1892. The National Archives of the United States, *Dispatches from the United States Consuls, Beirut, 1836–1906*, a Microfilm Publication (Washington, 1934).

<sup>33</sup> For the severity of the cholera pandemic of 1884 in Europe, see Frank Snowden, *Naples in the Time of Cholera, 1884–1911* (Cambridge, 1995). For the outbreak of cholera in Germany and its severity in Hamburg in 1892, see Manfred Vasold, *Pest, Not und Schwere Plagen* (Munich, 1991), pp. 226–236.

<sup>34</sup> BOA, İ.DH 74882, lef 3.

It must be noted that the city of Beirut was supplied with clean potable water, fed into the city through closed pipes. This mode of water supply reduced the possibility of contamination with the *Vibrio Cholerae*. The municipality paid an annual sum of 60,000 French francs for water, thus enabling the poor of the city to benefit from this amenity free of charge.<sup>35</sup> In 1891, during the outbreaks of cholera in Acre and Damascus, the municipal council of Beirut tried different methods of encouraging the Ottoman soldiers to establish effective cordons to prevent the spread of the disease to Beirut. It presented the soldiers stationed at the cordon with new uniforms, coats, and boots. This pragmatic attitude for the sake of protecting the health of the inhabitants of Beirut was criticised and described as irregular in 1897, when two Ottoman bureaucrats audited the municipal accounts.<sup>36</sup>

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 1891 the *vali* of Beirut wired the Grand Vizier reporting that a few cases of cholera had been detected in the village of *al-Salihiyya* in the southern part of the province.<sup>37</sup> Two days later he wrote that the municipality of Beirut, its medical doctors and Ottoman military doctors had undertaken extraordinary measures in order to examine the spread of cholera in South Lebanon.<sup>38</sup> The medical doctors recommended that the Bedouin settlement near the said village should be moved to a more salubrious location. The old tents were to be burned along with all the effects of the residents that could not be disinfected. The governor reported that this operation would cost 4,000 *lira*, to be covered by the municipalities in the province. The personnel of the municipality of Beirut participated in this operation, and provided the disinfectants.<sup>39</sup> It also compensated those affected by the exceptional sanitary measures with the sum of 55,000 piastres, the cost of new tents. On 27 January the secretary of the Sultan replied to the governor's report, approving of the fact that the municipalities had covered the cost of the sanitary operation. He urged the provincial official in Beirut to take swift measures in order to eradicate the disease. He warned that "Minimal carelessness will result in the spread of this fearful disease, God forbid! In such a case the interests of the state will be gravely endangered."<sup>40</sup> There is no evidence that the cholera proliferated beyond the mentioned village.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter V, above.

<sup>36</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, pp. 5 and 6.

<sup>37</sup> BOA, İ.DH 98830, lef 1.

<sup>38</sup> BOA, İ.DH 98830, lef 2.

<sup>39</sup> BOA, İ.DH 98830, lef 4.

<sup>40</sup> BOA, İ.DH 98830, lef 6.

In 1897 the municipality of Beirut took preventive measures against rabies by putting down all stray dogs in the city.<sup>41</sup>

## B The Municipal Doctors

The responsibilities of the municipal doctors were not restricted to times of major distress; their permanent assignment was to provide free treatment to citizens who could not afford private medical care. They risked losing their jobs if they failed to fulfil their obligations. The inspection of markets and the quality of food on sale was an essential part of their work.<sup>42</sup> Upon inspecting the markets of the city, the municipal doctors frequently published warnings concerning the consumption of certain dairy products or fruit which they deemed threatening to public health, especially during the hot months of summer.<sup>43</sup> They also gave their professional opinion in courts of law, whenever such a professional testimony was required.

Perhaps the fate of a municipal doctor is well illustrated by the following case. A number of Beiruti citizens, most probably aware of the penalty items in the public health law,<sup>44</sup> and rather dissatisfied with their municipal doctor, raised a petition to the governor of Syria, accusing doctor Salim al-Khuri of negligence.<sup>45</sup> The municipality replaced him with Dr. Mikhail al-Mudawwar<sup>46</sup> and published an announcement in the press of the city, reminding the public that the municipal doctor received patients daily for treatment and advice free of charge within the premises of the governmental *Saray*, while the surgeon was always available at the military hospital. The announcement also mentioned that the medical doctor was obliged to pay visits to the patient's, also free of charge, provided that the patient in question was incapable of visiting the clinic.<sup>47</sup>

Twelve years later, when Mikhail al-Mudawwar was accused of negligence as his forerunner, he was immediately dismissed and a deputy

<sup>41</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 14 June, 1897.

<sup>42</sup> *Düstür*, vol. 2, pp. 800–803; *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 713–715, and Young, *Corps de droits ottoman*, vol. 3, pp. 205–207.

<sup>43</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 29 June 1885, and 16 July 1883.

<sup>44</sup> The penalties were specified in the regulations of the Public Medical Department. *Düstür*, vol. 2, pp. 800–803; *Al-Dustūr*, vol. 2, pp. 713–715; Young, *Corps de droits ottoman*, vol. 3, pp. 205–207.

<sup>45</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 22 February 1877.

<sup>46</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 27 April 1877.

<sup>47</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 21 June 1877.

municipal doctor was appointed in his place.<sup>48</sup> The post of a municipal medical doctor was attractive for fresh graduates of the medical schools in the region. It granted them a handsome stable salary, as well as prestige and a high social status in their societies. A municipal doctor enjoyed direct access to the high-ranking officials in the city. He was also in a position to influence the decision of the governor or the administrative council, especially when special preventive measures were to be taken against epidemics. In his memoirs Shakir al-Khuri reported that he had travelled to Acre in 1874, immediately after his graduation from the medical school in Cairo, hoping to be appointed as municipal doctor.<sup>49</sup> He later opened a private practice in Damascus, still hoping, however, to become a municipal doctor.<sup>50</sup> The salary was tempting, as it ranged from 1200 to 2200 piastres, depending on rank.<sup>51</sup>

Most of the physicians who served as municipal doctors in Beirut, were graduates of the Egyptian School of Medicine (*al-Qaṣr al-ʿAynī*) in Cairo. In his memoirs Shakir al-Khuri mentions that Salim al-Khuri had graduated from that school in 1873, while he and Mikhail Mudawwar had been among the graduates of 1874.<sup>52</sup> Adib Qaddura studied medicine in Cairo, upon receiving a scholarship in 1878 from the *Maqāṣid* Association, at the time when Abd al-Qadir Qabbani was its president.<sup>53</sup> In 1900 Qaddura worked as a municipal doctor in Beirut.<sup>54</sup> In *al-Qaṣr al-ʿAynī* they had received medical training based on a modern curriculum.<sup>55</sup> It seems worth mentioning here that some of the municipal doctors received decorations from the state for their services and achievements, thus enhancing their social prestige and their status vis-à-vis the foreign doctors practising in the city.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 22 July 1889.

<sup>49</sup> Khuri, *Majmaʿ al-masarrāt*, p. 261.

<sup>50</sup> Khuri, *Majmaʿ al-masarrāt*, p. 301.

<sup>51</sup> BOA, ŞD 2297/9, belgeler 1 and 6.

<sup>52</sup> Khuri, *Majmaʿ al-masarrāt*, p. 249.

<sup>53</sup> N.N., *Al-Fajr al-ṣādiq li-jamʿiyat al-maqāṣid fi Bayrūt, aʿmāl al-sana al-ʿulā* (Beirut, 1297/1880), p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> DNA. Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 5, Korresp. m. andre Konsulater i Beirut, Corps Consulaire du District Beyrouth, Indkomne skrivelser 1886–1907 fra 1900/No.846–79 F.

<sup>55</sup> For information on the educational system followed in the Egyptian School of medicine (*al-Qaṣr al-ʿAynī*), see Azhary Sonbol, *Creation of a Medical Profession in Egypt*.

<sup>56</sup> BOA, İ.DH 98365, and İ.DH 96465.

### C The Municipal Pharmacy

The city of Beirut had four private hospitals, a large number of physicians with different specialisations, licensed pharmacists and pharmacies.<sup>57</sup> The pharmacy of *Arab and Malhame*, which was located centrally at *Sahat al-Burj*, collaborated with the municipality for thirteen years. It dispensed medication to poor patients and charged it to the municipality account.<sup>58</sup> In 1892 the municipal doctor found this arrangement rather costly and asked for the establishment of a pharmacy, owned and run by the municipality itself. His request was approved by the administrative council of Beirut.<sup>59</sup> Within a year a pharmacy was built on a plot of land owned by the municipality in *Sahat al-Sūr*. In 1893 the municipal doctor proudly reported in the Beirut press that the pharmacy had dispensed medication free of charge on 1,493 separate occasions. The costs of the medication along with the salary of the pharmacist amounted to approximately 1,517 piastres per month. This contrasts sharply with the 5,000 piastres which the municipality had previously spent for the same service.<sup>60</sup> The municipal pharmacy played an important role in administering the smallpox vaccine to the poorer strata of the Beirut population.

### D The Municipal Hospital

Midhat Pasha, governor of Syria from 1878 until 1880, was aggrieved and alarmed by the fact that Ottoman public services were meagre in comparison with those provided by foreign institutions. The latter were capable of providing the Ottoman citizens with efficient services, especially relating to education and hospitalisation. He tried to ameliorate this humiliating state of affairs, in order “to reassure public opinion and put an end to all exterior influences.”<sup>61</sup> Although Damascus benefited from some of the measures he adopted,<sup>62</sup> Beirut did not have a municipal general hospital until a later period after he died.

The main obstacle to establishing such an essential health care service was the dire financial situation of the municipality.<sup>63</sup> This

<sup>57</sup> Khuri, *Jāmi‘a aw dalīl Bayrūt li-‘ām 1889*, pp. 46–49; *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1318/1900–01), pp. 122–123.

<sup>58</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 28 July 1789.

<sup>59</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 12 September 1892.

<sup>60</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 2 October 1893.

<sup>61</sup> Ali Haydar Midhat Bey, *The Life of Midhat Pasha* (London, 1903), p. 181.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Awad, *Al-Idāra al-‘Uthmāniyya fī Sūriyya*, p. 110.

<sup>63</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 12 February 1894.

fact did not stop some newspapers in Beirut from emphasising the importance of a municipal hospital, while criticising the municipality caustically for its inefficiency in this context. The editor of *Lisān al-ḥāl* wrote a rather sensational article, describing the conditions of poor patients in Beirut, concluding that “the municipality, not the foreigners should be responsible for the citizens.”<sup>64</sup> *Al-Taḡaddum* wrote that “establishing a municipal hospital in Beirut must be the first priority.”<sup>65</sup> In 1894 the governor of Beirut, Khalid Bey, contacted the central authorities in Istanbul, urging them to restore to the municipality its full revenue.<sup>66</sup> In the following year the financial conditions of the municipality became even worse than before, hence the establishment of a municipal hospital had to be postponed. *Thamarāt al-funūn* considered this as a source of shame to the Ottoman people, not only the municipality. It urged the government in Istanbul to “facilitate the establishment of a municipal hospital [by not claiming one half of the municipal revenue], for such an institution will preserve the honour of the Ottomans and enhance their self-respect”,<sup>67</sup> first and foremost vis-à-vis the foreign missionaries in the city. The Turkish newspaper *Iqdam* urged the affluent Beirutis to establish a general hospital at their own expense.<sup>68</sup>

The establishment of the general hospital had to wait until 1898. During the mayoralty of ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani, the municipality as already mentioned, rented the house of the former mayor, Muhyi al-Din Hamada, in *Zuḡaḡ al-Balat* and turned it into a hospital with a 25-bed capacity.<sup>69</sup> On the 9 January 1898 the municipal hospital was inaugurated on the occasion of Sultan Abdülhamid’s birthday. The inaugural ceremony was attended by the *vali* of Beirut, Reşid Bey, and a large number of Ottoman bureaucrats and officers as well as Beirutis notables. In his inaugural speech ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani clearly emphasised the expected role of the municipal hospital as a catalyst for national unity and as the Ottoman answer to the long-existing foreign medical institutions in the city:

<sup>64</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 13 October 1880.

<sup>65</sup> *Al-Taḡaddum*, 30 May 1881.

<sup>66</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 17 February 1894.

<sup>67</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 12 February 1894.

<sup>68</sup> The article published in *Iqdam* was translated into Arabic and published in *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 18 November 1895.

<sup>69</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 10 January 1898; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 12 January 1898.

“Beirut has become famous for the large number of doctors practising in it and for its numerous hospitals. We do thank the founders of these hospitals for their services to humanity, albeit we deem it necessary for the patient to be under the custody of his own mother [the municipality] and under the medical supervision of his own people for the sake of establishing permanent amicability and understanding between the people of the exalted Ottoman State. This hospital will—God willing—render a humanitarian (*al-insāniyya*) and a national (*al-milliyya*) service at the same time.”<sup>70</sup>

The municipal general hospital was located in a predominantly Sunni quarter, and was easy to access for the inhabitants of three other quarters, namely *Musaytbeh*, *Basta* and *Bashura*. The municipal hospital also had an outpatient department and housed the clinic of the municipal doctors, who started publishing regular monthly reports on public health in the town.<sup>71</sup> From these reports we may infer that there was a great need for such a facility. Between April 1898 and March 1899 the municipal doctors treated 5194 poor patients.<sup>72</sup> In January 1900, 529 poor patients were treated free of charge, and 55 of them were admitted to the hospital for further treatment. Two patients died, one of them from tubercular infection. However, in the report of that month the municipal doctor assured the citizens that the disease did not cause any threat to public health as a whole, and that there were no signs of any other contagious diseases in the town.<sup>73</sup> A new service was also introduced: the *Salname* of Beirut for the year 1901 referred to two midwives as staff members of the hospital.<sup>74</sup> The number of patients treated at the municipal hospital might seem low in view of the annual reports published by the Diakonissens of Kaiserswerth, but the municipal doctors prided themselves on treating the poorest of the city.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>70</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 10 January 1898.

<sup>71</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 8 February 1900, 7 May 1900, 27 August 1900, 12 February 1901, and 26 February 1901.

<sup>72</sup> See table 1, below.

<sup>73</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 28 February 1900.

<sup>74</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1319/1901–02), p. 104.

<sup>75</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 31 January 1898; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 29 January 1898.

Table 1: Number of patients treated by municipal doctors.

Date	treated Patients	cured patients	under treatment	Deaths
December 1314 <sup>76</sup>	456	1048 vaccinated		
April 1314 <sup>77</sup>	682	532	150	
May 1314 <sup>78</sup>	600	500	100	
June 1314 <sup>79</sup>	342	294	47	1
July 1314 <sup>80</sup>	410	340	68	2
August 1314 <sup>81</sup>	462	381	79	2
September 1314 <sup>82</sup>	451	362	87	2
October 1314 <sup>83</sup>	370	289	79	2
November 1314 <sup>84</sup>	301	244	55	2
December 1314 <sup>85</sup>	304	231	72	1
January 1314 <sup>86</sup>	369	312	57	
February 1314 <sup>87</sup>	350	277	72	1
March 1315 <sup>88</sup>	553	451	101	1
April 1315 <sup>89</sup>	516	416	99	1
May 1315 <sup>90</sup>	673	507	165	1
June 1315 <sup>91</sup>	590	475	114	1
August 1315 <sup>92</sup>	487	390	97	
September 1315 <sup>93</sup>	686	595	90	1
October 1315 <sup>94</sup>	605	538	67	
November 1315 <sup>95</sup>	584	515	68	1
January 1315 <sup>96</sup>	529	527	55	2
March 1316 <sup>97</sup>	465			
July 1316 <sup>98</sup>	318			
August 1316 <sup>99</sup>	695			
October 1316 <sup>100</sup>	640			
November 1316 <sup>101</sup>	596			
January 1316 <sup>102</sup>	505			
February 1316 <sup>103</sup>	655			
March 1317 <sup>104</sup>	415	400	15 hospitalised	
April 1317 <sup>105</sup>	568		18 hospitalised	
June 1317 <sup>106</sup>	600		40 hospitalised	
July 1317 <sup>107</sup>	488		38 hospitalised	

<sup>76</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 31 January 1898; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 29 January 1898.

<sup>77</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 30 May 1898.

<sup>78</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 4 July 1898; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 9 July 1898.

<sup>79</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 1 August 1898; *Al-Bashīr*, 6 August 1898.

<sup>80</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 22 August 1898.

<sup>81</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 17 October 1898.

<sup>82</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 7 November 1898; *Al-Bashīr*, 12 November 1898; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 5 and 26 November 1898.

<sup>83</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 5 December 1898.

<sup>84</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 2 January 1899; *Al-Bashīr*, 2 January 1899.

<sup>85</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 6 February 1899; *Al-Bashīr*, 13 February 1899.



Table 2: Number of patients treated at St. John Hospital.

Date	Europeans	Muslims	Druses	Jews	Oriental Christians	Men	Women	Children	Total
1868 <sup>108</sup>	51	17	8	4	207	179	108		
1870 <sup>109</sup>	37	16	26		214	187	58	48	293
1871 <sup>110</sup>	32	30	16	5	236	217	100	35	352
1872 <sup>111</sup>	28	40	21		288				
1873 <sup>112</sup>	28	40	21		288				408
1873–1874 <sup>113</sup>	56	108	37	2	647	469	254	127	898
1875 <sup>114</sup>	31	38	29		304				448
1876 <sup>115</sup>		73	28		377	288	154	95	537
1877 <sup>116</sup>	29	51	24		388				544
1878 <sup>117</sup>	30	66	24	5	412				585
1879 <sup>118</sup>		100 +							564
1880 <sup>119</sup>	35	98	50		391				619
1882 <sup>120</sup>	26	139	43	11	368	335	165	87	587
1884 <sup>121</sup>	30	163	45	8	335				581
1886 <sup>122</sup>									465
1888 <sup>123</sup>	31	182	25	6	248	284	130	109	523
1890 <sup>124</sup>	32	151	38	9	251	248	134	99	481
1891 <sup>125</sup>	33	148	22	25	263				537
1892 <sup>126</sup>	37	163	29	28	244	258	144	99	501
1893 <sup>127</sup>						286	138	103	527
1894 <sup>128</sup>									500
1895 <sup>129</sup>						233	165	108	506
1896 <sup>130</sup>	60	147	21	25	251				504
1898 <sup>131</sup>	39	159	21	20	246	248	145	92	543
50 years <sup>132</sup>	1726	7000	962	1960	15172				26820

<sup>86</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 6 March 1899; *Al-Bashīr*, 6 March 1899.

<sup>87</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 20 March 1899.

<sup>88</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 8 May 1899.

<sup>89</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 5 June 1899.

<sup>90</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 3 July 1899.

<sup>91</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 31 July 1899; *Al-Bashīr*, 29 July 1899.

<sup>92</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 2 October 1899.

<sup>93</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 30 October 1899.

<sup>94</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 27 November 1899.

<sup>95</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 8 January 1900; *Al-Bashīr*, 8 January 1900.

<sup>96</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 5 March 1900; *Al-Bashīr*, 5 March 1900.

<sup>97</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 7 May 1900.

<sup>98</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 27 August 1900.

<sup>99</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 8 October 1900.

<sup>100</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 3 November 1900.

<sup>101</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 24 December 1900.

<sup>102</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 26 February 1901.

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- 103 *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 8 April 1901.
- 104 *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 26 April 1901.
- 105 *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 20 May 1901.
- 106 *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 22 July 1901.
- 107 *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 2 September 1901.
- 108 *Fünfter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon, vom Juli 1867 bis Juli 1869*, p. 27.
- 109 *Sechster Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon, vom 1. Juli 1869 bis 1. Juli 1871*, pp. 18–19.
- 110 *Zehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon, von Mitte 1870 bis Mitte 1872*, p. 54.
- 111 *Siebenter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon, vom 1. Juli 1871 bis 30. Juni 1873*, p. 23.
- 112 *Eilfter (sic) Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande, von Mitte 1872 bis Mitte 1874*, p. 17.
- 113 *Achter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon, vom 1. Juli 1873 bis zum 30. Juni 1875*, p. 35.
- 114 *Neunter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon, 1875–1877*, p. 14; and *Dreizehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande, von Mitte 1876 bis Mitte 1878*, p. 48.
- 115 *Neunter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon, 1875–1877*, p. 14; and *Dreizehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande, von Mitte 1876 bis Mitte 1878*, p. 48.
- 116 *Zehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, p. 14.
- 117 *Zehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, p. 14.
- 118 *Vierzehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande, vom 1. Juli 1878 bis 30. Juni 1880*, p. 42.
- 119 *Elfter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, p. 13.
- 120 *Zwölfter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, pp. 14–15.
- 121 *Dreizehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, p. 30.
- 122 *Vierzehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, pp. 20–21.
- 123 *Fünfzehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, p. 19.
- 124 *Sechzehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, p. 17.
- 125 *Zwanzigster Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande, vom 1. Juli 1890 bis 30. Juni 1892*, p. 47.
- 126 *Siebzehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, p. 17.
- 127 *Einundzwanzigster Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande, vom 1. Juli 1892 bis 30. Juni 1894*, p. 47.
- 128 *Achtzehnter Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen in Beirut am Libanon*, p. 18.
- 129 *Zweiundzwanzigster Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande, vom 1. Juli 1894 bis 30. Juni 1896*, p. 37.
- 130 *Mitteilungen Nr. 142 aus dem Kaiserswerther Diakonissenhause für die Mitglieder des Pfenning-Vereins (1897)*, p. 24.
- 131 *Dreiundzwanzigster Bericht über die Diakonissen-Stationen im Morgenlande, vom 1. Juli 1896 bis 30. Juni 1899*, p. 64.
- 132 *Dank- und Denk-Blätter aus der Kaiserswerther Diakonissen-Arbeit im Morgenlande*, 12. Jahrgang, 1. Heft, Februar 1912, p. 20.

Short of funds, but aware of the need to enlarge its hospital, the municipal council formed a special committee in 1905, composed of members of both the municipal and the administrative council, mainly affluent merchants. The committee was entrusted with the task of promoting this undertaking and of collecting donations for a larger and more modern municipal hospital. It seems that the committee was successful in its efforts and the cornerstone of the new hospital was laid in 1906.<sup>133</sup> It was located in the area known as *al-Raml* or *Raml al-Zarif*, to the south-west of the town and in the vicinity of the newly constructed vocational school *al-Şanāyi*<sup>c</sup> and its large park. The location was believed to be healthy, and most probably chosen, because it was far enough from the town, so that patients with highly contagious diseases could easily be isolated. The hospital benefited from a newly constructed road, connecting the vocational school and *Sahat al-Sūr* in the old town. The hospital was officially opened a year later, and the *Salname* of Beirut for the year 1908 described it as a modern spacious hospital, fully equipped and consisting of three buildings, each housing an independent unit, namely a children's ward, a women's ward, and a men's ward. It also included a pharmacy.<sup>134</sup>

## E Smallpox Vaccination in Beirut

The early history of smallpox vaccination in Beirut was marked with religious controversy, excommunications and persecutions. The vaccine based on infectious material from cowpox was first introduced in the 1820s by Pierre Laurella, an Italian medical doctor residing in Beirut. Laurella was a specialist in this field, since he had received his medical accreditation from the Italian Academy of Medicine upon publishing his research on smallpox vaccination.<sup>135</sup> In addition to his medical practice, Laurella served as the consul of Austria and Tuscany. Owing to his diplomatic status he enjoyed the trust and respect of the Beirutis, resulting in an unquestioning acceptance of his innovative immunisation method. His new vaccination procedure met considerable success, which prompted other less qualified physicians, 'half physicians' and even missionaries and priests, to administer the new vaccine to their parishioners and patients. As a result, a fierce battle

<sup>133</sup> *Al-Maḥabba*, 29 September 1906.

<sup>134</sup> *Salname-i vilayet-i Beyrut* (1326/1908–09), p. 192. Ironically this hospital, which was built independently and to be administered by the municipality, fell into disuse during the French mandate. It was later reclaimed by the Lebanese Ministry of the Interior, to be used as a women's prison. It still functions as a prison today, while the initial purpose of this building is almost fully erased from the memory of the Beirutis.

<sup>135</sup> Guys, *Beyrouth et le Liban*, vol. 1, p. 187.

over the souls of the Beirutis by means of medical care—not always professional—took place. One of the very first to practise the new vaccination technique was Isaac Bird, an American Protestant missionary, who had not had any proper medical training.<sup>136</sup> In 1828 he undertook the task of vaccinating some of his Christian Maronite neighbours in Beirut. Through their medical care the missionaries sought to establish a better rapport with the ‘oriental Christians’ and eventually win them over.<sup>137</sup> Evidently the missionaries’ attempt did not pass unnoticed by the attentive Maronite church and its dismayed priests, who, in turn, resorted to offering the members of their parishes similar services.<sup>138</sup> Isaac Bird’s journal contains the following vivid and telling account of the early days of vaccination in Beirut:

“[June] 17. Priest George, this morning, came into our neighborhood ... He was seen from our window standing before the door of one of the offending neighbors, and calling out to them in anger; “You have been to the Bible-men for medicine. You have conversed with them, and even with that accursed excommunicated nurse. You are, therefore, under excommunication from his holiness, and cast out and hated of [sic] God“. He is suspected of being particularly displeased at our giving medicine and medical advice to his people, because he is half a physician himself. Perhaps I have taken from his pocket a few piastres also, by lately vaccinating, gratis, eight or ten of the neighboring children.”<sup>139</sup>

“[June] 24. Priest George, it seems, was really in earnest the other day, for he this morning declared in the church that all who had received medicine of the Bible-people, or had conversed with the excommunicated individuals of his communion, were under excommunication, and after the services were over, brought a paper to our neighbors to be subscribed by them, and sent to the patriarch.”<sup>140</sup>

The Papal delegate Monsignor Gandolfi kept a watchful eye over the suspicious medical activities of the ‘Bible-men’ and resolutely supported the

<sup>136</sup> David Shavit, *The United States in the Middle East* (New York, 1988), p. 37.

<sup>137</sup> For more information on smallpox vaccination in Beirut and the role of the missionaries, see Malek Sharif, “Missionaries, Medicine and Municipalities”, pp. 34–50.

<sup>138</sup> The American physician and missionary Van Dyke stated his very low opinion of the physician priests and denigrated them in an article published in 1849: “In many villages of Mt. Lebanon, the priest, who usually knows as much about medicine as a ‘green goose’ acts in the capacity of physician. But some notorious cases of mismanagement having hence occurred, the lower clergy have lately been forbidden by their superiors to meddle with physic, except so far as to draw blood, when no other person can be obtained to perform the operation ...”, see Cornelius Van Dyck, “On the Present Conditions of the Medical Profession in Syria”. In: Ghada Yusuf Khoury, ed., *The Founding Fathers of the American University of Beirut* (Beirut, 1992), p. 219.

<sup>139</sup> Salibi, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, vol. 2, p. 62.

<sup>140</sup> Salibi, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, vol. 2, p. 63.

Maronite patriarch and priests in their feud with the protestant missionaries. Monsignor Gandolfi tried to undermine the latter's efforts by introducing vaccination free of charge. He convinced the governor of Mount Lebanon, Emir Bashir II (governed 1788–1840), to grant Pierre Laurella the exclusive right to administer vaccination in Beirut and Mount Lebanon.<sup>141</sup> However, the monopoly of the Italian physician came to an end with the Egyptian occupation of Syria in 1831. In the subsequent period the new immunisation technique became widespread in many parts of Syria, where “the population submit[ted] to vaccination”.<sup>142</sup>

Vaccination gradually replaced the old practice of variolation, i.e. immunisation by means of transfer of smallpox matter from an infected person to a healthy one. Variolation was effected by an elder female member of the family, when there was an apparent need for inoculating the children in the household. Infectious matter from the pustule of an already infected brother, sister, cousin or neighbour was extracted and administered to the healthy children. The inoculum was taken from a patient on the way of recovery with a subsiding fever, i.e. when smallpox had already lost most of its toxicity and the donor's immune system had already developed antibodies to fight it, thus reducing the risk of spreading the infection by means of variolation.<sup>143</sup> The infected children were isolated and “excluded from view as carefully as possible”, because smallpox was “supposed to be communicated by a glance of the eye”.<sup>144</sup> Through this old method of variolation and isolation of the infected members of the family, albeit for the fear of the evil eye, the spread of the disease was frequently prevented. Variolation was widespread, given that it was an inexpensive method, which only required the expertise of a mother or grandmother, but not the costly help of a medical doctor. However, it was not entirely without risk.<sup>145</sup>

In 1842 a report in the *Missionary Herald* attests to the fact that vaccination helped to reduce child mortality in some parts of Syria. The missionary Elias Beadle reported that “smallpox is not uncommon, but as vaccination has been introduced to some extent, its ravages are not severe”.<sup>146</sup> Although vaccination was becoming increasingly popular in Syria, the quality of the vaccine was not subject to control and the efficacy of vaccination was not properly verified. The demand for the vaccine undoubtedly tempted many

<sup>141</sup> Guys, *Beyrouth et le Liban*, vol. 1, p. 187.

<sup>142</sup> Bowring, *Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria*, p. 5.

<sup>143</sup> Wortabet, “Al-Awbi'a wa-l-amrāḍ al-ghālība fī Suriyā”, p. 282.

<sup>144</sup> Van Dyck, “On the Present Conditions of the Medical Profession in Syria”, p. 221.

<sup>145</sup> Wortabet, “Al-Awbi'a wa-l-amrāḍ al-ghālība fī Suriyā”, p. 282. For the practice of variolation in Egypt, see Kuhnke, *Lives at Risk*, pp. 112–113.

<sup>146</sup> Salibi, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, vol. 3, p. 347.

unqualified or self-styled physicians to administer vaccination, since there was no authority responsible for preventing or prosecuting malpractice. This had severe consequences when obligatory vaccination was finally introduced and implemented throughout the Empire. In 1849 the American missionary and medical doctor Cornelius Van Dyke described the situation as follows:

“Within a few years, confidence in vaccination has been greatly diminished by the fact that many vaccinated persons have latterly suffered from smallpox. But this is easily accounted for by another fact, namely that the majority of those who have gone about the country vaccinating, have not been able to distinguish a genuine pustule from a spurious one, supposing that, the larger the sore chanced to be, the more effectual would be the vaccination.”<sup>147</sup>

Most probably due to the above-mentioned flagrant malpractice the trust of some Ottoman Syrians in the effect of the vaccine was shaken. Many parents lost their confidence in the new medicine and attributed the death of their children to vaccination. It is highly plausible that some children were vaccinated when they were already infected. In the case of smallpox the incubation period, i.e. the time between infection and the manifestation of symptoms, ranges from 10 to 14 days. If symptoms became manifest shortly after vaccination, they were most probably discounted as side effects and hence not properly treated.<sup>148</sup> Needless to say, the outcome was frequently fatal.

The direct intervention of the Ottoman state in smallpox vaccination started in the 1840s. The first public vaccination campaign took place in Istanbul in 1840, followed by a second one in the following year, when 1705 children were vaccinated.<sup>149</sup> One may deduce from the small number of the vaccinated children—in relation to the population of Istanbul at that time—that the campaign was not a major success. A smallpox epidemic debilitated the city in 1844 and 1845, a fact which called for swift and firm action on the part of the state. In the following year Sultan Abdülmecid (1839–1861) issued an *irade*, making the vaccination of children mandatory throughout the Ottoman Empire.<sup>150</sup> However, there were not enough Ottoman physicians to put this imperial sanction into practice in the capital, let alone on the distant fringes of the Empire. The Sultan himself started a remarkable and a highly visible campaign against smallpox in 1845. The main objective of the Sultan’s intervention was to introduce the new method of vaccination to

<sup>147</sup> Van Dyck, “On the Present Conditions of the Medical Profession in Syria”, p. 221.

<sup>148</sup> Wortabet, “Al-Awbi’a wa-l-amrāḍ al-ghālība fī Suriyā”, p. 282.

<sup>149</sup> Süheyl Ünver, *Türkiyede çiçek aşısı ve tarihi* (Istanbul, 1948), p. 143.

<sup>150</sup> Ünver, *Türkiyede çiçek aşısı ve tarihi*, pp. 10 and 144.

some of the remote areas outside the capital Istanbul. The Sultan, himself a victim of smallpox with the typical scars on his face, went on a vaccination promotion campaign accompanied by 500 cavaliers, the imperial music band and his royal physician.<sup>151</sup> The immediate aim of the campaign was to introduce vaccination to some of the farms and villages in the Asiatic hinterland of Istanbul. In 1846 special corps of medical doctors and assistant doctors from Istanbul and two young apprentices from each Ottoman province were trained in the new vaccination technique.<sup>152</sup> These medics were given the title of vaccination technician.<sup>153</sup> However, there is no evidence that such technicians were available in Beirut in the 1840s and 1850s.

The first documented smallpox vaccination campaign took place in Beirut in 1861.<sup>154</sup> From that date until 1878 news about smallpox in the local press did not suggest that the municipality was involved in fighting this disease. In 1878 the municipality, in collaboration with the Council of Public Health in Istanbul (*meclis-i umur-i sıhhiye*), introduced inoculation against smallpox free of charge. It was in the context of this large-scale public vaccination campaign that the municipality published an announcement in the local press that all the children of the city should receive inoculation against smallpox.<sup>155</sup> This announcement was followed by a campaign that lasted for a period of three months. It seems, however, that Beirut citizens remained rather indifferent to the call of the municipality. The campaign of 1878 coincided with an outbreak of the disease along with

<sup>151</sup> Sigmund Spitzer, the private physician of Sultan Abdülmecid, gave the following detailed description of this vaccination campaign in his memoirs: “Am 7. Mai 1845, an einem schönen Frühlingsmorgen, setzte sich unsere Karawane in Bewegung. Zwei Regimente Lanciers, die den Zug eröffneten und schlossen, mehrere Musikbände und das aus beinahe fünfhundert Personen bestehende Gefolge des Sultans defilierten vor dem Kriegsminister, der den Zug in Rotten teilte, und jeder bedeutenderen Person militärische Begleitung mitgab. Mir wurden sechs Pferde zugewiesen, ein Leutnant und zwei Lanciers zu meiner Verfügung gestellt. Lustig flogen wir im scharfen Trabe dahin und langten nach drei Stunden auf dem Landgut Reschid Paschas an, wo gefrühstückt werden sollte. In einem lieblichen Wäldchen waren die Zelte des Sultans aufgeschlagen. Das Landvolk war in grosser Menge herbeigeströmt, und man fand Gelegenheit, die Impfung vorzunehmen. Jetzt und an jedem andern folgenden Tage, an jedem Rastort, wurden die Kinder in Gegenwart des Sultans geimpft und beschenkt; der Sultan fand daran ein eigenes Vergnügen, das Leben seiner Unterthanen durch eine so unschuldige Manipulation vor der gefährlichen Krankheit zu sichern, von der er selbst unverwundliche Spuren trägt.”, cited in Bernhard Stern, *Medizin, Aberglaube und Geschlechtsleben in der Türkei* (Berlin, 1903), pp. 252–253.

<sup>152</sup> Esin Kahya, “TanzimatEski ve Yeni Tıp”. In: *150. Yilinda Tanzimat* (Ankara, 1992), p. 299.

<sup>153</sup> Ünver, *Türkiyede çiçek aşısı ve tarihi*, pp. 145–146.

<sup>154</sup> Hādīqat al-akhbār, 14 February 1861, 21 February 1861, and 7 March 1861.

<sup>155</sup> *Thamarāt al-fimūn*, 24 January 1878.

other diseases,<sup>156</sup> a fact which had most probably made the parents even more reluctant to have their children vaccinated. In the following year, the municipality made vaccination obligatory. Parents were subject to the payment of a heavy fine, if they neglected to have their children vaccinated during the campaign, which was extended to six months.<sup>157</sup> Although it is not clear whether the municipality was able to enforce obligatory vaccination, it is evident that it resorted to the help of the quarters' headmen or elders (*mukhtārūn*) to report cases of negligence. The municipal doctors as well as the physicians of the Ottoman military hospital in Beirut paid regular visits to the schools in the city to inspect the general health condition of the pupils.<sup>158</sup> The vaccination campaigns were henceforth repeated annually.<sup>159</sup> Every year the Beirut newspapers informed the public about the suitable season for vaccination (*mawsim al-talqīh*).<sup>160</sup> In some cases, when symptoms of smallpox appeared, and its spread was feared, Beirutis who had already been vaccinated, whether children or adults, were urged to go for booster vaccination.<sup>161</sup>

It seems that the efforts of the municipality to inoculate the largest possible number of children in Beirut against smallpox were not entirely successful, especially during the early years of the campaign. In 1884 and 1885 smallpox reached epidemic levels in different urban centres in the province of Syria.<sup>162</sup> The disease claimed the lives of at least fifty children in the city of Tripoli alone,<sup>163</sup> and Beirut also witnessed an outbreak of the disease. One hundred and ninety four Beirutis suffered from smallpox infection, 39 of them died from the illness itself or from medical complications caused by it. Niqula Nimr, a medical doctor practising

<sup>156</sup> *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 27 May 1878.

<sup>157</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 27 January 1879; *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 30 January 1879.

<sup>158</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 3 February 1890; *Al-Bashīr*, 29 January 1890.

<sup>159</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 10 March 1887, 29 January 1890, 26 April 1893, 29 July 1893, and 8 May 1895; *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 30 January 1879; *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 24 January 1878, 27 January 1879, 8 May 1882, 29 December 1884, 1 March 1887, 17 June 1889, 3 January 1897, 12 February 1900, 28 January 1901, 4 January 1904, 25 December 1905, and 7 May 1906; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 13 May 1893, 23 September 1893, 25 January 1897, and 8 January 1898.

<sup>160</sup> Justin McCarthy wrote: "The incidents of recorded death from smallpox (in Istanbul) seems especially high when one considers how long effective vaccination had been theoretically available.", see McCarthy, *The Arab World, Turkey, and the Balkans 1878–1914*, p. 107. In the case of Beirut it seems that the vaccination against smallpox was an annual precaution and not a panic vaccination campaign.

<sup>161</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 8 May 1882, 29 December 1884, 1 March 1887, 17 June 1889, and 18 May 1896.

<sup>162</sup> *Suriye*, 14 November 1301 *maliye* (26 November 1885); *Suriye*, 26 November 1303 *maliye* (9 December 1887); *Suriya*, 17 December 1303 *maliye* (29 December 1887).

<sup>163</sup> *Suriye*, 14 November 1301 *maliye* (26 November 1885).



in Beirut, reported that most of the smallpox patients did not consult a physician, and 89 percent of those who died had not been vaccinated. Some of the fatalities occurred in quarters where only 15 percent of the inhabitants were not vaccinated. Niqla Nimr implored the Beirutis to consult a specialist in the case of a medical emergency, reminding them that negligence when it comes to matters of the health, especially regarding vaccination, could be fatal.<sup>164</sup> The reluctance of the Beirutis to have themselves and their children inoculated was interpreted by Henry Jessup, an American missionary based in Beirut, as a mere act of fatalism. He reported about this unwillingness in the first person plural as if the Beirutis themselves were speaking: “What, said they, shall we resist the decree of God? And in like manner they resisted the introduction of vaccination, which had been assigned as a preventive of a virulent disease”.<sup>165</sup> However there exists no evidence in the contemporary press or religious literature to vindicate Jessup’s opinion, and many Beirutis families had resorted to variolation prior to the introduction of vaccination as a preventive measure against smallpox. Keeping in mind the abuse of vaccination that had taken place in the 1840s and 1850s in Syria, many Beirutis must have lost their belief in this medical precaution. The popular belief was that the vaccine not only caused smallpox itself, but other fevers as well; this made many Beirutis parents reluctant to vaccinate their children. In 1887 the municipality published long announcements, urging citizens to be inoculated regardless of their age, and it dismissed the popular ideas as false.<sup>166</sup>

The municipality increased its efforts to convince the reluctant Beirutis to accept vaccination. It resorted to two methods: First, a number of articles and announcements, emphasising the importance of vaccination and its minimal side effects, were published in the press.<sup>167</sup> Second, it engaged the *mukhtārūn* to inform the residents of their respective quarters about the campaign and to report the newborn and children who had not received vaccine to the municipality.<sup>168</sup> The spread of information through the *mukhtārūn* targeted the poorest classes of society, who were either illiterate or simply did not read newspapers. This class was probably the most adamant in avoiding vaccination, for fear of contracting the illness, which would then entail expensive medical treatment. They might

<sup>164</sup> Niqla Nimr, “Al-Judārī fī Bayrūt”. In: *Al-Muqataṭaf*, 5 (1885), pp. 117–118.

<sup>165</sup> Salibi, *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, vol. 4, p. 361.

<sup>166</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 1 March 1887; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 5 March 1887.

<sup>167</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 1 March 1887; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 5 March 1887.

<sup>168</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 25 January 1897; *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 12 February 1900, and 28 January 1901.

have followed the wisdom of the common proverb and saying “may God keep the judge and the physician at bay”. The Beirut newspapers and private medical doctors also participated in this health awareness campaign. Lengthy articles were published on the pages of the Beirut press on vaccination, its history, development and benefits to the health of the individual and the community.<sup>169</sup> It is almost impossible to assess the success of this public awareness campaign, but it is apparent that a number of Beirut citizens remained recalcitrant, either refusing to have their children immunised, or not sending them for a booster vaccination when necessary.

Between 1893 and 1897 two waves of smallpox scourged Beirut, claiming the lives of scores of children.<sup>170</sup> In order to improve this state of affairs the governor, upon the recommendation of the chief municipal doctor and the inspector of public health, ordered the *mufti*, who was in charge of the Islamic public schools, to vaccinate all the pupils of these schools, thus adding religious to medical persuasion.<sup>171</sup> By resorting to this method the municipal doctor bypassed the parents and targeted the children at their schools. As a result of this school vaccination campaign 440 pupils were vaccinated, as well as 312 children who presented themselves at the municipal pharmacy.<sup>172</sup> The mentioned schools were mainly attended by children from poor families, unable to afford an expensive modern private education, which included instructions in one or two foreign languages. The municipality also tried to make vaccination more attractive for its citizens. It increased its staff of doctors and vaccination technicians, and also raised the number of vaccination posts to six, located in different parts of the city.<sup>173</sup> In other words, attempts were made to save the effort and time of the parents. The municipality also requested the help of Beirut doctors

<sup>169</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 24 March 1887; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 5 March 1887: two articles by Dr. Habib al-Khuri Ghanim; *Al-Bashīr*, 12 May 1887: an article in French by Dr. De Brun; *Al-Bashīr*, 19 May 1887: an article in Arabic by the editor of the newspaper; *Al-Bashīr*, 18 January 1893: the editorial of the newspaper was dedicated to the promotion of vaccination as a prophylactic method against smallpox; *Al-Bashīr*, 26 April 1893: a detailed article by Dr. Amin al-Jumayyil, including information about antiseptics as well; *Al-Bashīr*, 26 July 1893: an article criticising the wrong treatment of smallpox by some of the Beirutis and urging them to visit a physician for advice; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 22 April 1893: an article by Dr. Salim Jalakh; *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 25 January 1897: an article by Dr. Hayr al-Din Bey, the inspector of public health in Beirut; *Al-Maḥabba*, 13 December 1903: a lengthy article by Dr. Fayyad.

<sup>170</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 22 April 1893, 23 September 1893, and 25 January 1897; *Al-Bashīr*, 18 January 1897, and 29 July 1893; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, p. 634.

<sup>171</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 25 January 1897.

<sup>172</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 8 January 1898.

<sup>173</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 3 January 1898.

who were not on its payroll. We know that at least one physician, Salim Jalakh, answered the call of duty, publishing an announcement that he was willing to vaccinate free of charge any child coming to his clinic or private house in the area of *Mar Marun*.<sup>174</sup> In the year 1895, 21,333 children were vaccinated in the province of Beirut alone.<sup>175</sup> According to a newspaper article which cited the report of the chief municipal doctor 1060 vaccinations and booster vaccinations were administered by the municipal doctors from December 1905 until March 1906.<sup>176</sup>

It seems that the various measures taken to convince the Beirutis to have their children vaccinated bore fruit and were partly successful. In 1900 very few mortalities due to smallpox were reported.<sup>177</sup> In 1903 Fayyad, a Beirut doctor, wrote a long article which was published in the newspaper *Al-Maḥabba*, in which he tried to convince the remaining few Beirutis who had refused to be vaccinated or doubted its effects to have themselves vaccinated, and above all their children. He tried to convince the Beirut public that the smallpox vaccine was effective and without any negative side effects.<sup>178</sup>

In 1905, at a medical congress in Britain, John Wortabet, a professor of medicine at the Syrian Protestant College, assured his colleagues that in a few years' time smallpox in Beirut and its surroundings would be a thing of the past, due to the tireless efforts of local health authorities to vaccinate the citizens.<sup>179</sup> When in 1904 a new regulation, reminding the Ottoman subjects about their right to free vaccination and their obligation to submit to mandatory immunisation, was issued. The Beirut press published an Arabic translation of this regulation without any further comment, as if it were a matter of course in the case of Beirut.<sup>180</sup> Although it took a long time to convince the Beirutis of the advantages of vaccination, by 1905 almost all the inhabitants were vaccinated.

## F The Introduction of the Diphtheria Antitoxin

Towards the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, German pharmaceutical products were gradually, but steadily, replacing

<sup>174</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 13 May 1893.

<sup>175</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 8 May 1895.

<sup>176</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 7 May 1906.

<sup>177</sup> DNA, Rigsarkivet, Kons. Arkiver Beirut, F 685, box 5. 3 August 1900, 1900/No.834-71/F.

<sup>178</sup> *Al-Maḥabba*, 13 December 1903.

<sup>179</sup> Wortabet, "Al-Awbi'a wa-l-amrāḍ al-ghālība fī Suriyā", pp. 281-289.

<sup>180</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 23 May 1904.

their French equivalents in Beirut.<sup>181</sup> The German dominance of the market would have been boosted if the authorities in Beirut had taken notice of the discovery of the serum for the treatment of diphtheria by Emil von Behring in 1891. This fact did not escape the relatively pro-French newspaper of the Jesuits *Al-Bashīr*. In order to counterbalance the German ascendancy in the field of medicine, it published an editorial praising the achievements of the French medical researchers Pasteur and his Student Pierre Roux on 24 October 1894.<sup>182</sup> It urged the municipality of Beirut to send a delegation to Paris, in order to study his method of treating diphtheria.<sup>183</sup> The significance of treating this contagious and fatal disease, which in Arabic was known as ‘the strangler’ (*al-khanūq*), was also discussed in other papers, however, at a later stage and without special praise of Pierre Roux.<sup>184</sup>

It is not clear whether these articles in *Al-Bashīr* directly influenced the opinion of the municipal council, but it is evident that the governor of Beirut forwarded a request on behalf of the municipality to the Ministry of the Interior on 4 November 1894. His telegram, asking for permission to send two doctors to Paris, stated that the expenses of this delegation would be covered by the municipality of Beirut.<sup>185</sup> The request of the municipality of Beirut was positively received by the Imperial School of Medicine. In his recommendation the general director of the *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-yi Şahâne* stated that “*avdetlerinde hükümet-i seniyyeye hakkiyle ifa-yi hizmet edebilecek iki nefer tabibin i’zamında fennen bir guna mahzur olamayacağını*”, which translates as: “there is no technical disadvantage in dispatching two physicians, who upon their return will be able to render the exalted government proper service.”<sup>186</sup> This recommendation was accepted and an imperial rescript was issued on 13 December 1894, permitting the municipality to send a delegation.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>181</sup> Bundesarchiv (Berlin), AA, A II, Akte Nummer R 901/52359, Bericht über die Handelsverhältnisse Syriens im Jahr 1882, folia 114 verso and 132 recto and verso; AA, A II, Akte Nummer R 901/52360, Bericht über die wirtschaftliche Lage Syriens, abgeschlossen am 19. November 1886, folio 65 verso; AA, A II, Akte Nummer R 901/53727, Handelsbericht für 1891, folio 29 recto; AA, A II, Akte Nummer R 901/53728, Bericht über den Handel von Beirut im Jahre 1895, folio 42 recto; AA, A II, Mikrofilm Nummer R 901/53727, Bericht über die Handelsverhältnisse von Beirut im Jahre 1898, Mic. page 861; Bericht über Handel und Verkehrswesen des Jahres 1900, Mic. page 983; AA, A II, Akte Nummer R 901/53729, Handelsbericht des Kaiserlichen Konsulats zu Beirut für 1902, folio 45 recto and verso.

<sup>182</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 24 October 1894.

<sup>183</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 31 October 1894, 7 November 1894, and 14 November 1894.

<sup>184</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 4 February 1895, and 18 May 1896; *Al-Miṣbāh*, 2 February 1895.

<sup>185</sup> BOA, İ.DH 29/ 1312–L-14, belge 1.

<sup>186</sup> BOA, İ.DH 29/ 1312–L-14, belge 2.

<sup>187</sup> BOA, İ.DH 29/ 1312–L-14, belge 4.

*Al-Bashīr* was the first Beirut newspaper to inform its readership that the municipal request had received the imperial sanction.<sup>188</sup> Upon receiving the imperial rescript, the municipality immediately dispatched a delegation to Paris, composed of three doctors, to participate in a workshop on the newly discovered diphtheria antitoxin.<sup>189</sup> In Paris, Roux and Yersin made large-scale production of the antitoxin possible by using the blood of infected horses as sources for the serum.<sup>190</sup> The delegation which studied this method included a doctor more than officially allowed.<sup>191</sup> Upon their return from Paris the Beirut doctors organised a training session for all the practising doctors in the city, in order to acquaint them with the use of the anti-diphtheria serum. They also sent a recommendation to the *vali*, asking his permission to establish a laboratory in Beirut, in which the serum could be prepared according to French standards. In the recommendation they stated that the doctors in Beirut had the know-how to produce the serum locally, thus avoiding the expenses of importing it and making it readily available for a larger number of citizens.<sup>192</sup> There is no evidence that their recommendation was approved by the *vali*, but it is certain that the serum treatment was introduced in Beirut that year,<sup>193</sup> almost at the same time as its introduction in French hospitals, as *Al-Bashīr* stated,<sup>194</sup> and a few months before its use was implemented in British hospitals.<sup>195</sup>

In October 1895, i.e. six months after the introduction of the serum in Beirut, the inspector of health in the province of Beirut—a member of the municipality's delegation which attended the workshop in Paris—presented a report in Ottoman to the *vali*, in which he assessed the reaction of Beirut parents to the treatment of diphtheria. In order to increase public awareness, the report was translated into Arabic and published in the local press.<sup>196</sup> This report stated that Nizam al-Din Bey and his colleague Mikhail Mudawwar had treated more than thirty patients suffering from diphtheria since their return from Paris, and that thirty patients had recovered completely. Five

<sup>188</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 19 December 1894.

<sup>189</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 31 December 1894; *Al-Bashīr*, 2 January 1895. This was not a unique case, for as early as 1887 the Ministry of Health started sending medical delegations to Paris to follow training workshops at l'Institut Pasteur, see Anne Marie Moulin, *Villes Ottomanes à la Fin de L'Empire* (Paris, 1992), pp. 186–209.

<sup>190</sup> Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 438–439.

<sup>191</sup> BOA, ŞD 2287/27, belge 23, pp. 8–9.

<sup>192</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 1 April 1895, 22 April 1895, and 29 April 1895.

<sup>193</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 1 April 1895.

<sup>194</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 19 December 1894.

<sup>195</sup> Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 438–439.

<sup>196</sup> *Al-Miṣbāh*, 9 October 1895; *Al-Bashīr*, 15 October 1895.

patients had died, because they had sought professional medical help when the disease had already reached an advanced stage. Nizam al-Din advised the public to seek medical help as soon as possible, to isolate the patients, and to disinfect their effects and their home. He added that the municipality was willing to assist in disinfecting the houses in question. The municipality had two transportable disinfection machines, known as the vaporiser and the pulveriser.<sup>197</sup> The report also scolded some pharmacists in Beirut who were unjustifiably selling the serum at a high price, far beyond the means of poor patients. Nizam al-Din threatened to recommend the annulment of these pharmacists' licences.<sup>198</sup> In the following year the municipality embarked upon an awareness campaign, informing the public about diphtheria and its treatment. This was coupled with a second free serum treatment campaign.<sup>199</sup>

The multifaceted activities of the municipality of Beirut in the fields of medical care and public health show that the interests of the municipality corresponded to those of the state. In the case of the diphtheria serum, the interests of the city, the state and foreign exporters led to the promotion of a very innovative treatment. The medical services provided by the municipality in a consistent manner throughout the period of this study show a genuine interest in health care. This special interest in fighting recurring epidemics reflects not only personal, but also commercial interests, highlighting the trade character of the city as an *entrepôt*. Fighting the outbreak of cholera was not only a matter of life and death, but also of financial success or ruin. Epidemics meant long quarantine periods, impeding land and maritime traffic. The Ottoman state was equally interested in fighting epidemics. Many delegations of Ottoman medical doctors were sent to Paris and Berlin, to study the latest discoveries in the field of bacteriology with the internationally renowned researchers Pasteur and Koch.<sup>200</sup> The state was interested in medicine for macro-economic and political reasons, for the sake of its subjects and for the sake of acquiring a modern image, i.e. that of a state capable of successfully introducing the latest medical discoveries. Given the quicker methods of transportation that were introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century, like railways and steamships, an outbreak of cholera in a place like Mecca, for example, could have

<sup>197</sup> *Al-Miṣbāḥ*, 9 October 1895; *Al-Bashīr*, 15 October 1895.

<sup>198</sup> *Al-Bashīr*, 15 October 1895.

<sup>199</sup> *Thamarāt al-funūn*, 18 May 1896.

<sup>200</sup> BOA, İ.DH 9433; İ.DH 94334; İ.DH 94339; İ.DH 94683. For the interest of the Ottoman state in spreading medical knowledge in Syria, see Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *Suriye'de Modern Osmanlı Sağlık Müesseseleri, Hastahaneler ve Şam Tıp Fakültesi* (Ankara, 1999).

disastrous consequences. Within only a few days it could spread to places as far as England or India. Efforts were made on an international level to fight epidemics, in order to stop them from becoming endemic. In 1866 the Third International Sanitary Conference was held in Istanbul.<sup>201</sup>

The Ottoman state tried to provide a medical care system throughout its domains. This required the establishment of local institutions, like municipal councils, and the close cooperation with them. This explains why the initiatives of the municipality of Beirut, by sending medical doctors to Paris, for example, were sanctioned and commended. The medical records of the municipality are not preserved. However, press reports on the activities of the municipality and the implementation of the mandatory smallpox vaccination show that the institution was successful. It was able to convince, or sometimes even coerce, all the different groups and strata of the Beiruti society. The remarkable success in this field attests to the fact that the municipality was able to penetrate the private spheres of individual families, urging them to vaccinate their children.

The smallpox vaccination campaigns of the municipality were conducted with a clear-cut definition of rights and obligations. The city dwellers were obliged to have their children vaccinated. They were, however, entitled to receive the safe vaccine free of charge. If they failed to comply with the new regulation, they were fined and blamed of threatening the health of the entire society. Smallpox vaccination was introduced by the missionaries, but by the end of the nineteenth century the missionaries were less successful in their activities than the municipal council. The service offered by the missionaries was a charitable one, which could not be forced upon anyone. In contrast, with the municipal vaccination campaigns, the protection of children against smallpox ceased to be a private matter. It became an issue of public interest, not only authorised, but enforced by the state.

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<sup>201</sup> Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, p. 484.

## Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to revise the perception of the municipal institution in the standard literature on the Ottoman Tanzimat period, and to counter the common assumption that this institution was imposed on rather unwelcoming provinces from above, that is, the central authorities of the Empire. The formative years of a number of municipal institutions in Syria had so far been overlooked completely, and the widely held view among historians was that these municipalities were only established in the 1870s. The detailed examination of primary sources has revealed that the municipal institutions in Syria were established a decade earlier, and that the history of the municipality of Beirut is more nuanced than hitherto assumed. This study provides a differentiated picture of the Beirut municipality, achieved through the careful perusal of the consecutive Ottoman laws. The findings have been compared and contrasted with evidence derived from the local press and Ottoman archival material.

The first chapter of this book proves that the municipality of Beirut was established in 1863. Prior to this date, civil committees had been active in the city, attempting to provide it with essential amenities. The significance of this finding lies in the fact that the municipal council of Beirut was established on local initiative four years prior to the first municipal law for the provinces. Members of the Beirut upper stratum appreciated the importance of organised corporate work. The significant role which municipalities played in European metropoli and in Istanbul, the capital of the Empire, was observed and highlighted in the local literature of the 1850s, for example, in the works by Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq and Salim Bustrus. The civil strife of 1860 in Mount Lebanon and Damascus led to a radical increase in the population of Beirut. This pressure on the services and amenities of the city necessitated action on the part of the citizens of Beirut. This took the form of establishing, so it seems, the first municipal council in the Ottoman provinces. The establishment of civil committees



for public works and the municipal council suggests that certain members of the upper stratum of the Beirut population were willing and ready to act collectively. They organised themselves in a corporate body, in order to address urban problems that were directly threatening the health of their community, the vitality of their commercial activity and the value of their property. This newly established facet in the history of Beirut calls for a revision of the alleged unwillingness of the provincial population to adopt urban reforms brought about by the Tanzimat.

Since the first municipal council was established prior to a law defining its activity and authority, its relationship with the provincial authority was unclear. This had a direct bearing on the financing of important projects; for example, the nascent council was unable to improve the water supply of the city. The need for a legal framework in which the municipal institution could function more efficiently became evident.

The first law decreeing the establishment of municipal institutions in the Ottoman provinces was promulgated in Istanbul in 1867: *Vilayet dahilinde olan şehir ve kasabalarda teşkil olunacak daire-i belediye meclislerinin suret-i tertibi ve memurlarının vezâifi hakkında tâlimattir*, which translates as: "The directions regarding the method of organising municipal councils, that will be formed in the cities and towns of the provinces, and the functions of their officials." This first municipal law has been examined in detail in the second chapter of this book. As has been demonstrated the given law laid down the legal framework for establishing municipal councils. It was the first step in the direction of restructuring communal institutions in provincial urban centres. This fact notwithstanding, essential issues relevant to the vitality and viability of municipal institutions like, the generation of sufficient revenue and a clear demarcation of responsibilities, were either ignored or left to obscurity. The code imposed general urban regulations and market control measures, however, without clearly defining the necessary enforcement procedures. Furthermore, the functionaries entrusted with the implementation of these rules and regulations were not under the jurisdiction of the municipal council itself. Therefore, the municipality, with its powers of enforcement undefined, became dependent on the cooperation of other administrative authorities in the city, like the *vali* and the security forces.

The level of development in the different urban centres of the Empire was varied. The law was not especially tailored to meet the needs of a particular city. Therefore, when it was applied in Beirut it proved to be a setback. In accordance with the law, the first mayor of Beirut, an established merchant from the city, was replaced with an Ottoman provincial bureaucrat. Making use of the experienced bureaucrats of the provinces was envisaged as an encouragement by the Council of State. However, the

implementation of the law in Beirut did not acknowledge the already existing civic endeavour.

The law, as initially published, did not last for long. It was amended and extended a mere four years later. A new, more detailed law for the provincial municipalities was drafted and published as an integral part of the provincial law of 1871. In the important areas of planning and reform, the role envisaged for the municipality seems to have been that of suggestion and coordination, rather than initiation and implementation. However, unlike the first municipal law, this law provided for the establishment of much needed infrastructure, namely the supply of the city with potable water, and the installation of a sewer system. However, it did not specify how the costs of these infrastructural developments should be met. The members of the council were not allowed to serve in the same capacity in more than one city, most probably to enhance the sense of belonging to the city, which, in turn, would reflect positively on the performance of the municipal council. Article 128 of the 1871 municipal law charged the municipal council with drawing up a budget in advance of the fiscal year, forecasting the costs of projects, and reconciling them with expected revenues.

Eight months later the regulations of the Public Medical Department extended the authority and the responsibility of the municipality. In these regulations we witness for the first time the introduction of the idea of the rights of the city dwellers vis-à-vis their municipality, regardless of their financial situation. It reflects the early beginnings of the modern idea of public social welfare as opposed to the traditional idea of private charity delivered to a specific religious community.

The fact that the above-mentioned municipal laws were amended and enlarged suggests a process of evaluation through examining the implementation. However, no information is available about this process, which most probably took place behind closed doors in the Council of State. The 1877 law introduced a very important development in this regard. It was drafted by the Council of State and presented to the lower house of the Ottoman parliament for discussion and ratification. The published minutes of the parliament show that the two Beirut deputies of Syria, Niqula al-Naqqash and Husayn Bayhum, participated actively in the parliamentary debates. Their contributions were influenced by the experience they had gained in their own city. For example, article 47 envisaged that one clerk was to be in charge of a multitude of tasks. The two Beirut deputies proposed that this should be amended, stressing their concern for the efficiency of the municipal council. Their proposal was adopted. From the reconstructed biography of al-Naqqash and his interjections in the parliamentary debates we can conclude that he represented an emerging urban group of public-spirited tradesmen and large

property owners; some of them were intellectuals and politically and socially engaged in their urban society. They regarded the laws in question as an opportunity to express their aspirations, extend their influence and create an institution which might also increase their political sway.

The law of 1877 decreed for the first time that the members of the municipal council were to be elected. This was clearly stated in a number of articles which defined who was entitled to run for a membership in the municipal council and those entitled to vote. Both categories were determined by the amount of property tax paid by the persons in question. Twelve members were to be elected to the municipal council and one of them was chosen as a mayor by the governor of the province.

The municipal law of 1877 was more detailed than the previous ones. It elaborated in detail on the functions and responsibilities of the municipal council. The law granted the municipality more income deriving from taxation. This law was, to a large extent, similar to the law designed for the capital Istanbul. However, the municipality of the capital enjoyed the right to collect higher taxes.

The close examination of the consecutive municipal codes for the provinces has revealed that Ottoman legislators acknowledged the need for a municipal institution entrusted with providing amenities and services in the urban centres of the Empire. They undertook this task earnestly. Within a short period of time—not exceeding ten years—three municipal codes were promulgated. Each of these laws was drafted with the purpose of amending its forerunner. The social and economic developments of the second half of the nineteenth century required new institutions which could promptly and efficiently undertake necessary infrastructural works relating to sanitation, transport and public health. The law of 1877 departed from traditional institutional thinking and created municipal institutions which were in theory answerable to the tax-paying city population. The spirit of this law may be considered to have planted the first seeds of real modern municipal institutions in the towns and cities of the Ottoman Empire. Of course, it ought to be remembered that an array of laws is in itself no guarantee of implementation. These laws, however, clearly determined the legal framework in which municipalities would or could function. Hence, the first part of this study examines the legal position of the municipalities as specified by the letter of the law, and the second part deals with the practical implementation of the laws in question.

The fourth chapter deals with the successful introduction of municipal elections in Beirut. During the first electoral campaign a conflict between the old established religious elite, represented by the *mufiti*, and the emerging politically engaged community, represented by merchants

and journalists, surfaced. The press used this opportunity for the sake of expressing important ideas concerning the concepts of development, civic responsibility and commitment. It has also been shown that throughout the period under study the municipal elections did not trigger sectarian sensitivities. On the contrary, the consecutive municipal councils showed various religious compositions.

The scant information that is known about the biographies of the consecutive mayors from 1878 onwards shows that they were actively involved in the economic, social, political and cultural affairs of their city. The career and writings of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani demonstrate that he believed in the importance of modern public institutions in shaping society, and in providing it with proper services as a coherent community. He also appreciated modern education and believed that it was the most efficient and direct way of achieving the development he aspired to accomplish. Judging from what he published in his newspaper, he considered the municipality to be the direct and real representative of the city dwellers; he expressly acknowledged its role with regard to the prosperity and progress of Beirut. He believed that proper application of the municipal code would guarantee the selection of the most qualified candidates to serve the interests of the city as a unified urban entity.

The financial realities facing the Beirut municipality has proved to be a complex issue. The right to raise taxes, to enforce their collection and to dispense the income generated from them reflects the degree of authority enjoyed by the municipal institution. As the close examination of the archival documents has shown, the finances of the municipality of Beirut increased from 1868 until 1878, because the municipality was granted the right to collect new taxes as specified by the consecutive laws. In 1870 the municipal income was not adequate enough to finance the project of supplying the city with water. The state intervened supportively, granting the municipality a special dispensation dated 4 August 1870, allowing it to collect a tax imposed on the butchers of the city.

In contrast to the supportive policy of previous years, in 1888 half of the revenue generated by six important taxes was claimed back by the central treasury. This plunged the municipality into a dire financial situation. Until that date the major part of the municipal revenue had been collected through tax farms. However, in view of the fact that a substantial part of the municipal income was now lost, the municipality was forced to devise a new tax policy. A tax on residences and shops was imposed. The local press and European consular reports attest to the fact that the municipality was not able to enforce the collection of these new taxes. This state of affairs challenged the authority of the municipal council.

A grand scheme to build two avenues with roofed pavements was shelved by the municipal council due to financial difficulties arising from a number of factors. First, the municipality was unable to convince the French port company to fulfil its financial commitments towards this project. Second, a number of property owners in Beirut refused to contribute to this project by paying the so-called *sharafyya* tax. The opinions regarding the mentioned avenues differed considerably. Some of the property owners argued that parts of their property had been demolished, and that they were therefore entitled to a large compensation from the municipality. Since they did not receive adequate compensation, they refused to contribute to the construction of streets. Two women held their position and raised a case against the municipality. Others simply did not pay, having realised the weak executive authority of the municipality.

The examination of the financial reality has shown that taxes for the sake of communal activities were collected and were used for amenities like water supply, street lighting and public health. However, when adequate funding was required for major projects—which had even been sanctioned by an imperial rescript—the execution proved to be difficult.

According to the 1871 municipal law the municipal council was charged with drawing up a budget in advance of the fiscal year. This was designed in order to assist the municipality in forecasting the costs of projects and in reconciling them with the expected revenue. The budget was expected to function as an impetus towards more coordinated planning and allocation of revenue on the part of the municipal council. The requirement to prepare a budget was reiterated in the law of 1877. It was to be ratified in the municipal general assembly, which included the administrative council and the governor. As can be gathered from an important archival document, the budgets were indeed prepared. However, seven out of ten were not ratified, i.e. in many years the letter of the law was not strictly applied. By not ratifying the budgets, consecutive governors and administrative councils escaped the legal responsibility attached to the application of the budget.

The consecutive municipal laws granted the governor broad prerogatives with respect to municipal affairs. One of the most important privileges of the governor was his right to choose one of the elected members of the municipal council to act as a salaried mayor. This method of appointment limited the power and the authority of the mayor vis-à-vis the governor. The mayor of the city was thereby deprived of the mandate and the responsibility resulting from direct election. Given the strong position of the governor as decreed by the law the municipal council required his cooperation in order to ensure the success of its projects.

Some governors were supportive, while others obstructed major municipal projects. However, day-to-day activities like public health and medical care continued unabated.

In the field of public health the municipality was, to a large extent, able to apply the spirit and the letter of the 1871 regulations of the Public Medical Department, which granted the citizens the right to medical care, provided by municipal doctors and pharmacists. This was facilitated by the fact that the interests of the municipality corresponded to those of the state. The municipality of Beirut was especially interested in fighting epidemics and contagious diseases in order to protect its citizens and the commercial interests of the city. This was in full harmony with the general policy of the Ottoman Empire. The common interests led to coordination and cooperation. For example, when the municipality of Beirut requested permission of the central authorities to send a medical delegation to Paris, its initiative was sanctioned and commended. In the case of the mandatory vaccination against smallpox the efforts of the municipality were unrelenting and proved to bear fruits towards the end of the period under study. The success of the municipal vaccination campaign derived from the fact that it was conducted with a clear-cut definition of rights and obligations. The protection of children against smallpox ceased to be a private matter. It became an issue of public interest, requested and authorised by the state.

The aim of this study was to investigate the history of the implementation of a Tanzimat institution in the provincial city of Beirut. A differentiated picture of this institution and the application of the relevant laws has been presented. One of the important aspects of this institution lies in the fact that it attempted to provide services to the entire urban community, thus cutting across sectarian differences. In its work the municipal council tried to act as a corporate body, representing the city as a whole, and not as atomised religious groups. So far historians had concentrated on the activities of separate groups in Beirut, leading to a rather limited historical view. The collective efforts in the institutional setting of the municipality had been ignored.

This work challenges the conventional perception of Ottoman municipal laws and their implementation in the provinces. Claims that the reforms were imposed from the imperial centre on a less than enthusiastic periphery have been refuted. The statement that the reforms were never really implemented has also been questioned. Phrases such as “remained a dead letter”, “proved as ineffectual”, “There is no evidence that anything was done about this” and “was not very successful” can frequently be found in influential monographs on the Tanzimat in the Ottoman provinces. This work

has presented evidence that such sweeping generalisations do not hold true for all urban centres in the provinces. There is clearly a need for detailed studies of the municipal institutions in other provinces, in order to obtain a differentiated picture of such institutions in the Ottoman Empire at large. After breaking free from the assumption that no activities of importance took place in provincial centres of the Ottoman Empire, a comparison of Ottoman cities with their contemporary European counterparts might render further enlightening results.

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# Index

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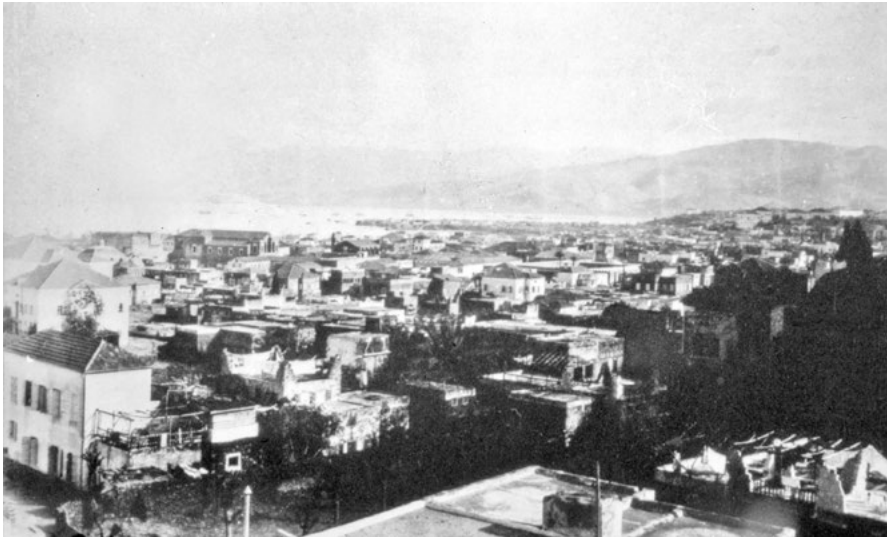
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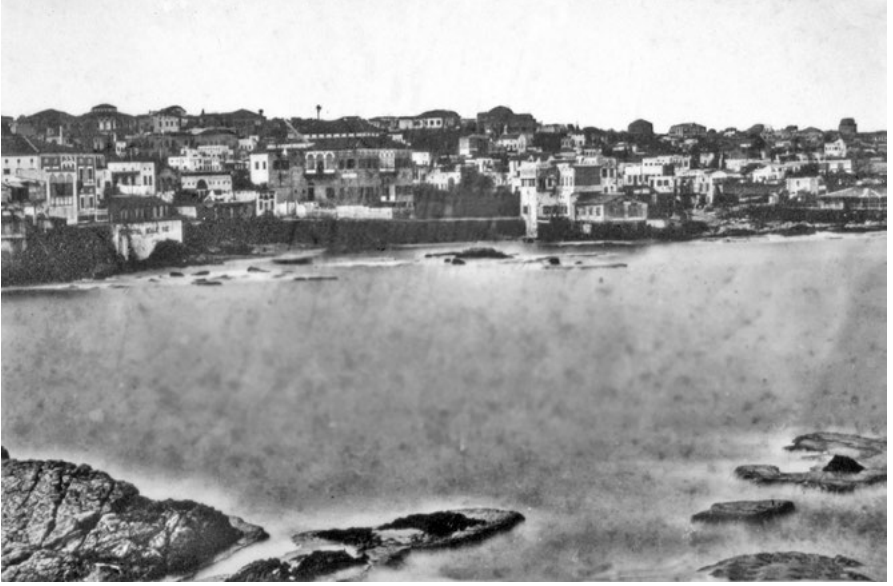
## APPENDIX

The following photographs stem from the collection Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu currently preserved at The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture in Istanbul (IRCICA).

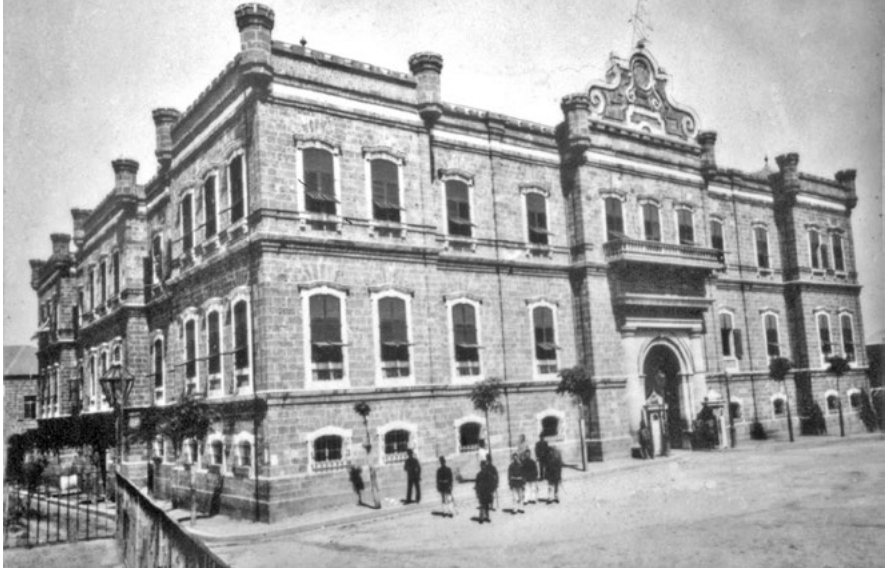


1. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90763/2: A general view of Beirut, taken from the Western side of the city.





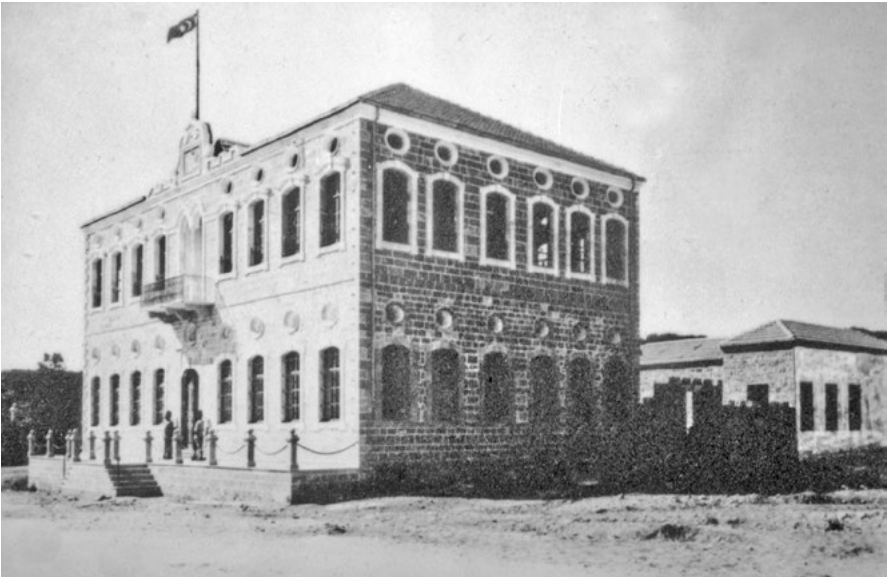
2. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90771/1: A general view of *Minā' al-Ḥuṣn* and *Ras Beirut*.



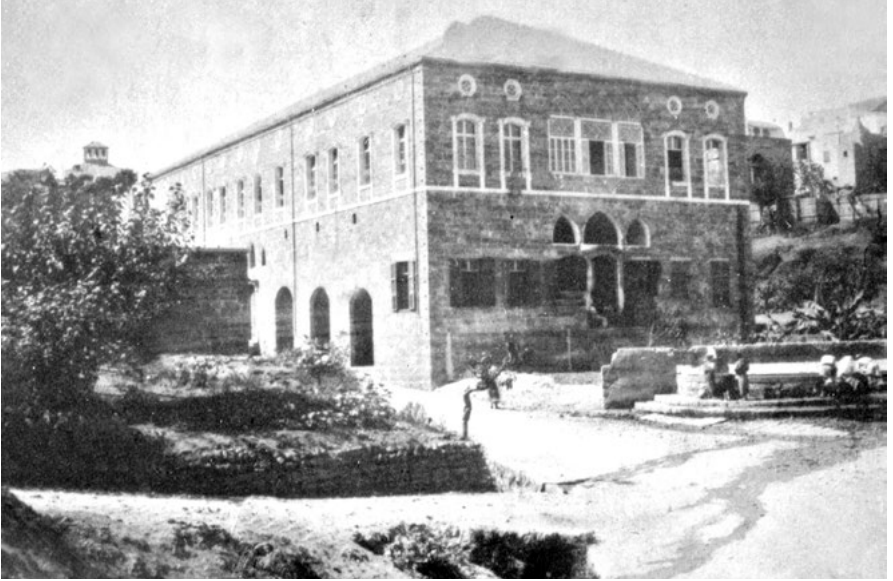
3. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90775/4: A close view of the *Saray* of Beirut. Photographer: George Sabunci.



4. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 77923/6: A view of the Ottoman military hospital in Beirut.



5. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 91082/20: The police station in the pine forest area.



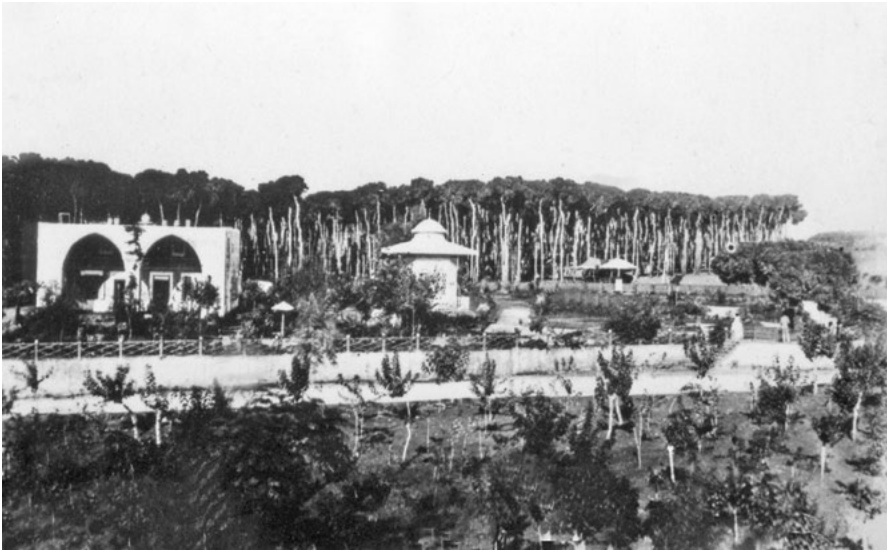
6. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 77944/111: Ottoman public school and a municipal water basin in *Ḥawḍ al-Wilāya*.



7. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90765/16: A partial view of the pine forest of Beirut.



8. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90765/15: *Ḥadīqat al-Milla* (people's park) in the pine forest of Beirut.



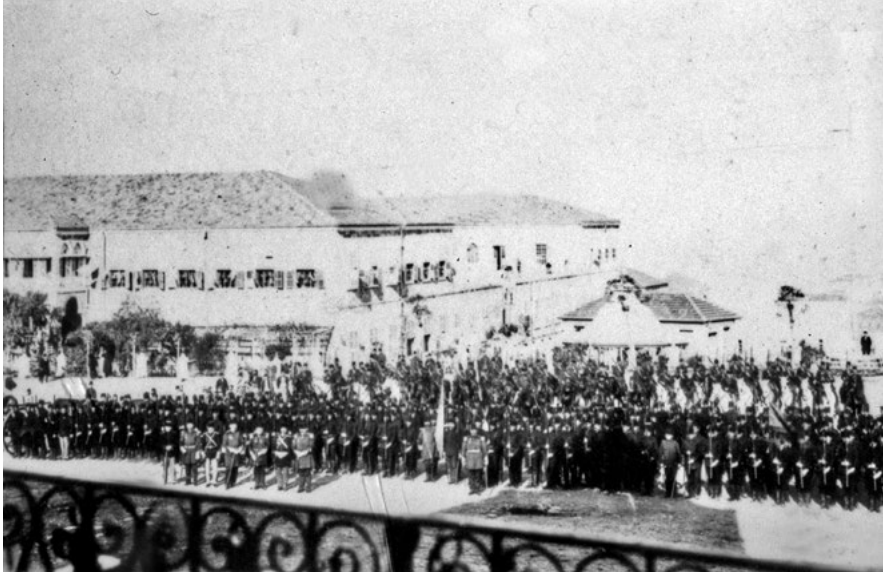
9. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90771/11: A general view of *Ḥadīqat al-Milla* and the pine forest.



10. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90771/10: A view of the pavilion known as *Qaşr al-Hilm*, the dream palace, in the pine forest of Beirut.



11. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 77923/10: The celebration on the occasion of laying the cornerstone for the municipal clock tower.



12. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 77923/11: A military parade on the occasion of laying the cornerstone for the municipal clock tower.



13. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90771/2: The port of Beirut prior to the enlargement.



14. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90662/20: A view of the construction work on the mole of the port of Beirut, July 1892.



15. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90771/4: The governmental *Saray* and the *Hamīdiyya Park* festooned with lanterns.

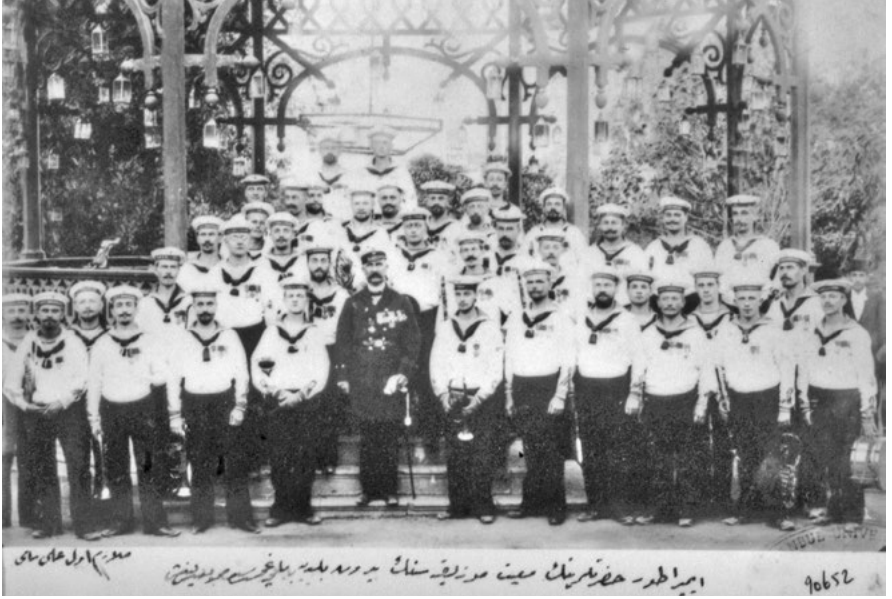


16. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90771/13: The *Hamidiyya Park*, showing the decorations made by the municipality on the occasion of the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II.



17. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90652/33: Kaiser Wilhelm II at the port of Beirut. Photographer: Lieutenant Ali Sami.





18. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 90652/43: Kaiser Wilhelm II in the municipal park of Beirut. Photographer: Lieutenant Ali Sami.



19. Yıldız Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, 77944/75: Hotel Bassoul in *Mināʾ al-Ḥuṣn*.

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Die Unterreihe „Türkische Welten“ ist in die unabhängige Publikationsreihe „Istanbuler Texte und Studien“ des Orient-Instituts Istanbul übergegangen.

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The primary aim of this study is to revise the perception of the municipal institution in the standard literature on the Ottoman Tanzimat period, and to counter the common assumption that this institution was imposed on rather unwelcoming provinces from above, that is, the central authorities of the Empire. The formative years of a number of municipal institutions in Syria had so far been overlooked completely, and the widely held view among historians was that these municipalities were only established in the 1870s. The detailed examination of primary sources has revealed that the municipal institutions in Syria were established a decade earlier, and that the history of the municipality of Beirut is more nuanced than hitherto assumed. This study provides a differentiated picture of the Beirut municipality, achieved through the careful perusal of the consecutive Ottoman laws. The findings have been compared and contrasted with evidence derived from a variety of contemporary sources that included, among others, the local press, Ottoman almanacs, memoirs, Western consular correspondence, travelogues and Ottoman archival material.

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