

From the Syrian Land to the States of Syria and Lebanon

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Damas - Le Boulevard El-Nassr.



The collection of articles presented in this volume is the result of the third conference on Bilad al-Sham held in Erlangen, Germany. The first and second conference and their subsequent publications focussed on the common and the specific of the modern historical experience and on the administrative, economic and physical integration and fragmentation of the region, respectively. The present volume investigates the change of identities and loyalties and the emergence of modern political ideologies in the region of Bilad al-Sham by putting these developments into the historical context of changing regional and global power relations, the establishment of colonial and post-colonial states and the emergence of new social classes. It shows the complexity and fluidity of local, religious,

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Thomas Philipp
and
Christoph Schumann

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Beyond the mountain refuge:
searching for a wider perspective on
Ottoman policy in Mount Lebanon

Maurus Reinkowski

Introduction

The three decades between 1830 and 1861 were a time of intense transformation and unrest in Mount Lebanon. Muḥammad ‘Alī’s Egyptian army, under the command of Ibrāhīm Pasha, had invaded Syria and adjacent regions (i.e. Syria proper, Mount Lebanon, Palestine, Transjordan, and southeastern regions of modern Turkey) in 1831 and had installed a far more effective system of control and taxation than had been the case under the Ottomans. Despite repeated military defeats at the hands of the Egyptian armies, the Ottoman Empire was able with the help of the four European powers Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia to regain Syria, in 1840. In the following two decades general unrest and strife continued and broke out into open violence several times: major clashes occurred in 1841, 1845, and finally and most bloodily in 1860. The weakness of Mount Lebanon’s administration and the violence were obviously remedied by the installation of the *Règlement organique / Cebel-i Lübnān Nizāmnāmesi* of 1861, a product of long and intricate deliberations between high bureaucrats of the Ottoman Sublime Porte and European diplomats. From 1861 onwards Mount Lebanon, as a *mutaşarrifiyya* (Ottoman province with a special status), shows a record of increased tranquility and relative economic prosperity.

Before the Egyptian invasion of Syria in 1831, Mount Lebanon had been *de facto* a tributary autonomous principality with its own power structure.¹ The socio-economic conditions and the political regime of eighteenth-century Mount Lebanon can therefore be described without constantly recurring to the Ottoman overlord. The conditions from 1840 onwards were fundamentally different from the preceding period: the Ottomans now strove to integrate Mount Lebanon into the administrative orbit of the Ottoman Empire. Their intentions and efforts were, however, severely hampered by two factors. First, as the Ottoman Empire had had to resort to the help of European powers in order to regain Greater Syria in 1840, the European powers and their diplomatic representatives in Istanbul and in Beirut considered themselves entitled to interfere in Lebanese affairs. Therefore, on the international and diplomatic plane the “problem of Mount Lebanon” (*Cebel-i Lübnân meselesi*) shows clearly the extent to which the Ottoman Empire was already a penetrated system, i.e. internal Ottoman politics in Mount Lebanon cannot be seen detached from the dimension of international diplomacy and politics.² The majority of preserved Ottoman archival material shows the extent to which Mount Lebanon had high priority in Ottoman politics.³ Second, the Ottomans suffered from a decisive lack of experience and expertise with Mount Lebanon and its population; they had maintained only marginal relations via the Shihābi amir and the governor of Sidon. The area seems indeed to have been somewhat exotic to the Ottomans. In 1845 the Ottoman special commissioner to Mount Lebanon, Mehmed Şekîb, wrote, playing on the word *qamar* (moon), that after a strenuous journey he reached “a village in the mountains which they call Deyrülqamer and which is quite near to the moon.”⁴ But indeed Dayr al-Qamar was the most important urban center in Mount Lebanon, and was called by the natives the “city of the Mountain.”

Because of the intense European pressure and their difficulty in coming to terms with the complex reality of Mount Lebanon the Ottomans had a hard time in implementing the Tanzimat (literally meaning ‘orders’ and signifying a bundle of laws and edicts from 1839 onwards meant to reform, centralize, and consolidate the empire). The official Ottoman court historian Ahmed Lütfi Pasha said – with the hindsight of several decades – that the leading Ottoman Tanzimat politicians did not want Mount Lebanon to be exempted from the reforms, but that even circumspect attempts to their implementation

¹ Alexander Schölch, “Zum Problem eines außereuropäischen Feudalismus: Bauern, Lokalherren und Händler im Libanon und in Palästina in osmanischer Zeit,” *Peripherie* 5-6 (1981), 112.

² L. Carl Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules, Dangerous Game*, Princeton 1984, 5.

³ See for example the special series *İrade Mesail-i Mühimme*, spanning the years 1839 to 1849, preserved in the Başbakanlık Arşivi in Istanbul (hereafter BBA), where the numbers 1111 to 1223 are devoted exclusively to Mount Lebanon, and the numbers 2144 to 2181 to the province of Sidon.

⁴ “Kamere qarîb bir Cebel-i kebîrde Deyrülqamer dedikleri mahalle,” in: BBA/BEO A.MKT.MHM. 01-A 91 [1845], Varak 4.

had been doomed to failure because of the enormous heterogeneity of the region and the incessant intervention of European politicians and diplomats.⁵

Historians working on the period 1840-1861 have always had difficulties understanding Ottoman policy and response to the events in Mount Lebanon. The lacuna of authoritative works on the crucial decades between 1840 and 1861 has been closed in the year 2000 by Caesar Farah⁶ and Ussama Makdisi,⁷ both drawing extensively on Ottoman archival material. A particularly thorny question to historians had been to explain the rise of “sectarianism,” or – to use a more neutral sounding word – “confessionalism.” There had always been widespread consensus that Lebanese confessionalism came about somewhat in the middle of the nineteenth century and that European, Ottoman, and inner-Lebanese factors were at work. But when it came to describing exactly the process by which confessionalism became dominant in the Lebanese political arena historians were mostly at loss. Engin Akarlı, for example, at one point characterized “confessionalism” as an Ottoman strategy to help to contain the endemic conflicts in Mount Lebanon, and at another as a destructive residuum of Lebanese political culture that the Ottomans skillfully manipulated to attenuate and transform into an institutional framework.⁸ Makdisi has ventured to delve deeper, and explains sectarianism as an expression of modernity rather than belittling it as a residue of atavistic practices. Sectarianism is, in his words, first “a practice that developed out of, and must be understood in the context of, nineteenth-century Ottoman reform. Second, it is a discourse that is scripted as the Other to various competing Ottoman, European, and Lebanese narratives of modernization.”⁹

This chapter will not endeavor to refute arguments presented by other historians on Mount Lebanon, but will seek to procure an additional perspective on Ottoman policy in Mount Lebanon. A comparative look at the many and highly diverse provinces of the Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century might allow for a better understanding of what was specific and what was common to Ottoman political practices and strategies in Mount Lebanon. Two points will be dealt here in some detail: First, the Tanzimat measures were a clearly definable set of reform edicts and laws issued from 1839 onwards, and it is legitimate to speak, for reasons of convenience, of a “Tanzimat period,” but the

⁵ Ahmed Lütfi, *Tārīh-i Lütfi*, 8 vols., Istanbul 1873-1910, VIII, 44.

⁶ Caesar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon, 1830-1861*, London and New York 2000. Farah devotes his voluminous book particularly to the intricacies of European and Ottoman diplomacy as well as to the internal Lebanese power struggle of the Druze and particularly the Maronite elite. He describes how each party attempted to “foil” (one of Farah's favourite verbs) the others' intrigues and strategies and his matrix is the chessboard of power politics.

⁷ Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, Berkeley 2000.

⁸ Engin D. Akarlı, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920*, Berkeley 1993, 28, 145, 149, 161 versus 134: “confessionalism was too deeply implanted in Mount Lebanon to be uprooted abruptly.”

⁹ Makdisi, *Sectarianism*, 6.

Tanzimat should not be conceived as a consistent body of practices applied uniformly all over the empire starting on November 3, 1839 with the reform edict of Gülhane (*hatt-ı şerif*). Benjamin Braude's warning against the use of *millet* as a "historiographical fetish" by assuming in it an "unjustified hoary, technical, administrative concreteness"¹⁰ is valid also for the case of the Tanzimat. In the Tanzimat period Ottoman policy partially abrogated practices and strategies from the pre-Tanzimat period, partially transformed them, and partially simply continued to draw directly from this reservoir. Second, whereas historiography has assumed the existence of a universal and homogeneous "Tanzimat," it has, on the other hand, tended to treat Lebanese sectarianism alias confessionalism alias consociationalism as a specifically Lebanese problem. Instead of confining this phenomenon to a strictly Lebanese level a broader look at other regions of the Ottoman Empire might allow for a more balanced interpretation.

Grasping for order

Rather than interpreting Ottoman policy in Mount Lebanon between 1840 and 1861 as applying an homogeneous body of Tanzimat institutions and procedures, one can characterize it as tentative and steering a meandering course. Let me elucidate this point by dwelling shortly on Ottoman political terminology: Internal Ottoman correspondence shows a great variety of terms in its description of Mount Lebanon's ethnic-confessional groups.¹¹ Obviously enough, the Ottomans were struggling to grasp the ethnic-confessional pattern and conflict lines in Mount Lebanon, whereas in other peripheries they were more easily able to find a consistent definition of tribes and ethnic-confessional groups. For example, up to the 1870s the Catholic tribe of the Mirdites in northern Albania (a region that had been brought again under direct Ottoman control in the 1830s) was clearly defined as of Catholic *mezheb* (religious sect; religion, creed)¹² and as a *kabîle* (tribe) in its political organization.¹³ Describing the various groups in Mount Lebanon, Ottoman authorities most frequently used the terms *îâ'ife* (sect or body

¹⁰ Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society, II: The Central Lands* ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, New York and London 1982, 74.

¹¹ The Druze and Maronites were more than mere tribes, but they were not simply confessional groups. For a workable definition of ethnicity in distinction to "tribes" see Lois Beck, "Tribes and the State in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Iran," in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, ed Philipp S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, Berkeley 1990, 196.

¹² All translations of Ottoman terms given in parenthesis are based on the *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*, Istanbul 1968.

¹³ See for example BBA İrade Hariciye 6821, 'Arz Tezkiresi [1856]: "Merdita kabîlesi denilan ve Katolik mezhebinde bulunan kabîle..."; and İrade Hariciye 11013, 'Arz Tezkiresi [1862]: "İşkodra civârında bulunan ve efrâdi cümleten katolik mezhebinde olan Mirdita kabîlesi."

of men; tribe) or simply *taraf* (party to a cause or dispute). Whereas the latter seems to be neutral in terms of ethnicity and confession and only refers to antagonistic groups, *ṭāʿife* carries clear confessional implications. *Millet* (nation, people; religious community) appears considerably less frequently. In some cases, distinctly confessional terms such as *mezheb* and *cemāʿat* (congregation, religious community) and terms signifying more tribal features such as *cins* (sort, type; race, stock, family, breed), *ḳabīle*, and *ḳavım* (people, nation, tribe, family; sect) are used interchangeably.¹⁴ The blurredness of Ottoman terminology is not (or at least not only) due to the lack of Ottoman knowledge of the conditions in Mount Lebanon, it is also an expression of the Janus-faced character of ethnic-confessional groups. Tribal structures were (and still are) hidden behind the religious-confessionalist facade of Lebanese society.¹⁵

Ottoman political terminology in the middle of the nineteenth century was to a certain extent “enslaved”¹⁶ by Western concepts, in paying attention to the exigencies of the diplomatic battle with Europe and in being impressed with Europe’s superiority. Terms such as *medeniyet* (civilization) or *insāniyyet* (humanity, humanness)/*huḳūḳ-ı insāniyye* (human rights), which had existed previously in Ottoman vocabulary, assimilated themselves to the European meaning. But even while stressing Ottoman terminological confusion and the passive absorption of European terms, one should not ignore the ability of the Ottoman political language to adapt Western concepts to its own needs. For example, the term *tesāvī* (being equal to one another, equality) is surely inspired by the French concept of *égalité*, but in Ottoman bureaucratic usage it is bereft of its original meaning and assimilated to Ottoman needs: *tesāvī* serves to designate the pre-Tanzimat concept of impartial equidistance, i.e. the state commits itself to treat all populations and groups (not individuals!) equally without committing itself to one side.¹⁷

It was not only the Ottomans’ terminology on Mount Lebanon that was tentative and inconsistent, but also their political practices – or, to put it positively, the Ottomans not only used a large vocabulary to describe different shadings of ethnic and confessional patterns, they also possessed a diversified arsenal of political practices. A distinctly pre-Tanzimat practice was the practice of “ethnic containment.”¹⁸ The Ottoman state strove

¹⁴ See for example BBA İrade Mesail-i Mühimme 1124, Varak 8 [1842], where special commissioner Selim Bey, when referring to the Maronites, uses *millet*, *ḳavım*, and *ḳabīle* synonymously.

¹⁵ A point repeatedly stressed by Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, London 1988, 41, 55, 90, 91, 113, 165f., 217.

¹⁶ Georg Elwert, “Nationalismus und Ethnizität: Über die Bildung von Wir-Gruppen,” *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 3 (1989), 457, uses the term „enslavement,” originally coined for biochemical processes, to describe the adaptation or enslavement of processes or structures by stronger, exogenous processes.

¹⁷ *Tesāvī* is often connected with phrases saying that state authorities shall not undertake *taşāḫub* (becoming a patron or protector) or *iltizām* (favoring; a preference).

¹⁸ A term and practice that is not peculiar to the Ottomans only; see for just one example Haus-, Hof und Staatsarchiv Vienna, series Türkei VI, 82: report from Stürmer on Nov.10, 1841 to Metternich on the tribe

to control, or at least to contain, tribal groups (or ethnic-confessional groups organized along tribal lines) which were to be found mainly in the peripheries of the empire. This practice showed a wide spectrum ranging from cooptation, expressed in terms such as *istimāle* (gaining goodwill, coaxing) and *taṭyīb* (making good, pleasant; rendering tranquil and happy), to brute military force (*ḵuvve-i cebriyye*). *Tesāvī*, then, seems to be nothing other than a reshaped and modernized version of ethnic containment.

The Ottomans, taking into account their limited military and financial means, left traditionally ethnic groups to their own devices as long as they were in control of the groups' external contacts and as long as they could prevent the spread of unrest and violence into the adjacent regions.¹⁹ The state authorities did not insist on direct control of these groups' internal power relations, they saw only to it that they had complete control of their external relations and their cross-frontier access to other areas.²⁰

The 'peace treaty' of 1845 which the Ottoman authorities, led by the governor of Sidon, Vecīhī Meḥmed Pasha, forced upon the Maronites and Druze is a clear example of ethnic containment.²¹ The document arrogates to the state the monopoly of power, but in some respects the Ottoman authorities recede to the role of a mere mediator.²² The authorities act on the principle of collective responsibility of a community or village²³ – a

of Abu Gosh near to Jerusalem: "Ibrahim Pacha avait soumis la tribu d'Abu-Gosch dont il a fait décapiter le chef et la contenait par la terreur." See also Ignace de Testa, *Recueil des traités de la Porte ottomane avec les puissances étrangères depuis le premier traité conclu, en 1536, entre Suléyman I et François I jusqu'à nos jours*, 11 vols., Paris 1864-1911, VI, 366, 375.

¹⁹ There is no direct Ottoman term for "ethnic containment." The expression *sirāyet etmemek üzere*, i.e. preventing the spread of unrest into other areas, is used frequently however.

²⁰ For the success of this strategy in the case of Albania see Hasan Kaleshi, "Das türkische Vordringen auf dem Balkan und die Islamisierung: Faktoren für die Erhaltung der ethnischen und nationalen Existenz des albanischen Volkes," in: *Südosteuropa unter dem Halbmond: Untersuchungen über Geschichte und Kultur der südosteuropäischen Völker während der Türkenzeit*, ed H. Bartl and H. Glassl, Munich 1975, 133.

²¹ At the beginning of June 1845 a document obliging both parties to end hostilities was signed in Beirut, see Testa, *Recueil*, III, 180-183: "Convention conclué, sous la présidence de Bahri-pacha, entre les Druses et les Maronites, en date de Béirout le 2 juin 1845" contains the version to be signed by the Druze; compare also the version for the Maronites from May 31, 1845, BBA/BEO A.MKT.MHM 01-A 73, Varak 13.

²² The convention states that in order to contain further conflicts disputes between the two confessions have to be submitted to the government (article 1). If groups flock together with the aim of attacking members of another confession the government has to be informed by the endangered confession in order to disperse these groups (article 2). Preemptive strikes by parts of the population against the agressor group are not allowed. Only if the authorities do not interfere, despite having been informed, is self-defense legitimate (article 3).

²³ If a village helps a culprit the state can punish those who assisted him and occupy the village (article 4). Acts of retaliation are carried out against a village when a murder has been committed in its precincts (article 7).

rule which stands in the legal tradition of the *sharī'a*,²⁴ but in outright contradiction to the reform edict of 1839.²⁵

Prominent in the Druze-Maronite “peace treaty” is the tenth article²⁶ which rules that all unsuitable events and occurrences during the unrest are subject to the clause “let bygones be bygones” (*mazā-mā-mazā*).²⁷ In July 1860 Maronites and Druze were forced by the acting Ottoman governor of the province of Sidon, Hurşid Pasha,²⁸ to sign a similar peace treaty, being based again on the formula *mazā-mā-mazā*.²⁹ Hurşid Pasha, in a meeting with European consuls (on June 19, 1860) explained his motivation in imposing such a peace treaty with the weakened capacities of the Ottoman military.³⁰

Both in 1845 and 1860 the *mazā-mā-mazā* clause seems to imply the fictitious idea of two parties concluding a treaty on equal terms. Faced with the outbreak of hostilities, local Ottoman authorities – total control of the region being beyond their means and

²⁴ Colin Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition*, Edinburgh 1997, 89; Haim Gerber, *State, Society and Law in Islam: Ottoman Law in Comparative Perspective*, Albany 1994, 34.

²⁵ See for example in the French translation of the *hatt-ı şerif* given by Testa, *Recueil*, V, 142: “Chacun possèdera ses propriétés de toute nature, et en disposera avec la plus entière liberté, sans que personne puisse y porter obstacle; ainsi, par exemple, les héritiers innocents d'un criminel ne seront point privés de leurs droits légaux et les biens du criminel ne seront pas confisqués.”

²⁶ Which reads as follows: “As both parties are God's creatures and subjects of the Sublime State they shall, whenever they live together at one place, always deal with each other as neighbors and friends. If anything unsuitable happens between them, both parties are bound to the clause 'let bygones be bygones'. No party may do harm to the other and all must deal with each other in a pleasant way and not use words that violate the human sense of honor. Whoever does not hold to this [rule] will be indicted and punished.”

²⁷ One might discern in the Ottoman practice of *mazā-mā-mazā* a reflection of the *clause d'oblivion* in the European law of nations. On the use of this clause which was widespread in the eighteenth century and with less frequency in the nineteenth century, see Pierre Simon, “La Clause d'amnestie dans les traités de paix,” *Revue générale de droit international public* 26 (1919), 245-261; see for example 249, note 1: Treaty of Versailles (1783) between France and Great Britain and between Spain and Great Britain respectively (article 1): “Il y aura un oubli et amnestie générale de tout ce qui a pu être fait ou commis avant ou depuis le commencement de la guerre qui vient de finir.” – On the fate of the *clause d'oblivion* in the twentieth century see Fritz Dickmann, “Die Kriegsschuldfrage auf der Friedenskonferenz von Paris 1919,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 197 (1963), 1-101.

²⁸ On his career see Mehmed Süreyyā, *Sicill-i 'Osmānī yāhūd tezkire-i meşāhir-i 'osmāniyye*, 4 vols., Istanbul 1890-1899, II, 312; Hurşid Pasha obtained, twelve years after his dismissal as governor of Sidon, a new assignment as governor of Kütahya.

²⁹ Testa, *Recueil*, VI, 85: “Traité de paix entre les Druzes et les Maronites, signé à Beïrout, le 6 juillet 1860.” See Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, Berkeley 1994, 229 f. for an English translation of the covenant.

³⁰ Testa, *Recueil*, VI, 76: “Rapport collectif des consuls généraux européens de Beïrout, en date du 19 April 1860.”

seeing Maronites and Druze as ethnic groups to be contained and to be kept in a balanced opposition – feigned assumption of the role of mediator.³¹

The practice of *mazā-mā-mazā* has not been unique to Mount Lebanon. Vecihī Mehmed³² had been, several years before his assignment to Sidon, governor of Bosnia with his seat in Travnik. In December 1838 he signed a treaty with envoys of Njegoš II, ruler of the factually independent Montenegro, affirming that everything that had happened in the contested district of Grahovo (between Montenegro and Hercegovina) would be considered as finally gone, forgotten, and amnestied.³³

In both cases, 1845 and 1860, where the *mazā-mā-mazā* clause was used by the local Ottoman governors in order to pacify the region, the Ottoman Porte sent high ranking diplomats as special commissioners to the scene: Şekīb Efendi in 1845 and Fu'ād Pasha in 1860.³⁴ Both also granted amnesty, but on a completely different basis: peace was to be obtained by the verdict of the sultan, not by the fiction of a treaty. The state did not pose as a mediator between two groups; the sultan granted an amnesty on the basis of his (fictitiously) absolute power.³⁵

Şekīb Efendi³⁶ and Fu'ād Pasha³⁷ were members of the elite corps in the Ottoman administration. They had spent longer periods in Europe (Şekīb Efendi in St. Petersburg and London, Fu'ād Pasha in London and with special missions to Madrid, Bucharest, St. Petersburg, Cairo, and Paris) and belonged to a different class than the Ottoman officers

³¹ See the intense discussion among the Ottoman military and administrative corps in 1845 how to contain the conflict with insufficient troops, documented in the dossier BBA/BEO A.MKT.MHM 01-A 73, *passim*, but particularly Varaks 6, 7, 28, 52.

³² Mehmed Süreyyā, *Sicill*, IV, 603f; see also the biographical appendix in Thomas Scheben, *Verwaltungsreformen der frühen Tanzimatzeit: Gesetze, Maßnahmen, Auswirkungen*, Frankfurt 1991, 403f.

³³ Hamid Hadžibegić, "Odnos Crne Gore prema Grahovu u doba Njegoša," *Prilozi za orientálnu filologiju i istoriju jugoslovenskih naroda pod turskom vladavinom* 2 (1951), 203f., renders the original treaty in Latin characters: "...Grahova nahijesinde şimdiye kadar her ne ki olmuş ise olmuş gitmiş olup [...] şimdiye kadar her ne ki olmuş olmuş cümlesi afv kılınmış." According to Gaspar Heer, *Territorialentwicklung und Grenzfragen von Montenegro in der Zeit seiner Staatswerdung (1830-1887)*, Bern 1981, 56, the Sublime Porte directly ordered Vecihī Mehmed to prepare and sign this treaty.

³⁴ The flow of highranking Ottoman commissioners to Mount Lebanon (the most prominent were Muşafā Nürī Pasha 1841/1842, Selīm Bey 1842, Halīl Rıf'at Pasha 1844/1845, Şekīb Efendi 1845/1846, Selīm Pasha 1845/1846, Emīn Pasha 1846, Aḥmed 'Aḫā 1858, and Fu'ād Pasha 1860/1861) can be easily extracted from the detailed accounts given by Farah, *Interventionism, passim*.

³⁵ See Lütfī, *Tārīh*, VIII, 396, for the proclamation of Şekīb Efendi on October 15, 1845: "vuḳū'āt-ı mezkûre beyninizde mazā-mā-mazā hükmine konulmuş olduğuna binā'en bu bābda şaraf-ı eşref-i ḫazret-i şāhāneden dahi 'afv-ı 'umūmī erzānı buyurulmuş." In January 1861 Fu'ād Pasha told his proxy Abro that a general amnesty would be announced after the executions of the Druze culprits were carried out: Testa, *Recueil*, VI, 212.

³⁶ İsmet Parmaksızoğlu, art. "Şekip Mehmed Paşa," in: *Türk Ansiklopedisi*, Ankara 1981, XXX, 248.

³⁷ Orhan F. Köprülü, art. "FUAD PAŞA, Keçecizāde," in: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul 1996, XIII, 202-205.

and bureaucrats, such as Vecihî Mehmed and Mehmed Hurşid, who were only entrusted with regular positions in the provinces. That Şekib Efendi and Fu'ad Pasha took another stance than the bureaucrats and officers working on the spot can again be understood by looking at their vocabulary. In the correspondence written by the governors and military officers terms such as *teba'a* (subjects) and *re'ayā* (originally used for all tax-paying subjects of the Ottoman Empire; from the eighteenth century onwards designating the Christian subjects only) abound.³⁸ Şekib Efendi, however, used also the term *vaṭan kardeşi*,³⁹ exhorting thus the people in Mount Lebanon to brotherhood. Fu'ad Pasha went further and spoke of *vaṭandaş*,⁴⁰ a term clearly referring to an all-Ottoman identity. We may – in distinction to the traditional elite group and culture of the Ottomans (*Os-mānli*)⁴¹ – call this new class of citizens, provided with restricted citizenship rights and bound to complete obedience, “Ottomen.”

Cheap rule and a heavy price: confessionalism

The persistency of the Ottoman practice of ethnic containment may be illustrated by discussing a question seemingly far removed: the rise of confessionalism in Mount Lebanon.⁴² Confessionalism in the Ottoman period, if it goes beyond the mere presupposition of a sectarian mentality, is embodied in the two institutions of ombudsman (*vekil*) and particularly in that of councils (*meclis*). The implementation of these two

³⁸ Very rare, however, is *gavur* (giaour, infidel, unbeliever); see for one example BBA/BEO A.MKT.MHM 01-A 73 [1845], Varak 41.

³⁹ Lütfi, *Tārīh*, VIII, 395, proclamation of Şekib Efendi: “cümleiniz bir memleketli vaṭan kardeşi bulunduğunuzdan..”; but again 396: “ve cümle şunūf-ı ṭebā'a ve berāyāsı.”

⁴⁰ See for example BBA İrade Meclis-i Mahsus 851/3, Leff 4 [August 1860]: Order of the day by Fu'ad Pasha to the Ottoman army: “..hep vaṭandaşlarımızı bir bilüb..”; for a phrase with a less all-Ottoman cast see İrade Meclis-i Mahsus 928/3: Mazbata of the Meclis-i Mahsus [January 1861] for the reorganization of the provinces of Damascus and Sidon: Each of the councils' members shall discuss matters of “gerek huşuşan kavım ve milletinin ve gerek 'umūmen vaṭan ve memleketlerinin zirā'at ve ticāret..” – See also one example where *vaṭan* definitely refers only to the local context: BBA İrade Dahiliye 30805, Leff 1: Fu'ad Pasha [September 1860]: “herkesin vaṭanına i'ade kılınacağı.”

⁴¹ For a good definition of the “Ottoman” see Stanford J. Shaw, “The Ottoman View of the Balkan,” in: *The Balkans in Transition: Essays on the Development of Balkan. Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Barbara Jelavich and Charles Jelavich, Hamden, Conn. 1974, 58.

⁴² The genesis of confessionalism out of the Ottoman *millet* system has been often proposed in secondary literature; Georges Corm, in a review article in *MESA Bulletin* 33.2 (1999), 216, confirms Latif Abdul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward*, Boulder 1997, in his belief in the existence of a *millet* system in Mount Lebanon; Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon, a Shattered Country: Myths and Realities of the Wars in Lebanon*, New York 1996, XI, 10, 21, 22, 64, is not sure whether confessionalism in Lebanon is an adaptation of the Ottoman *millet* system or a European introject. – Farah, *Interventionism*, XVII, 4, 11, and *passim* explicitly assumes the existence of a *millet* system for the Maronite community.

institutions was carried through in cooperation with and under close scrutiny of the European powers, but it can hardly be said that *vekīl* and *meclis* are sociopolitical features alien to the Ottomans. Ottoman policy in the pre-Tanzimat period, i.e. the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century, allowed and even fostered the existence of councils, formal or informal, and the institution of ombudsman (*vekīl*) – also in ethnically and confessionally homogeneous areas – in order to minimize the cost of rule. The collection of taxes especially was delegated to these institutions or mediators so that the fiscal apparatus of the state, being located at the seat of the governor, could be reduced to a minimum.⁴³ The pre-Tanzimat tradition of councils and ombudsmen mediating the wishes of the population to the state, on the one hand, and relaying down the orders of the government, on the other, is akin to the strategy of ethnic containment: the state leaves, in the decentralized institutions of *meclis* and *vekīl*, free space of movement to ethnic and other groups – as long as these are contained in their limits.⁴⁴ This arrangement comes close to the British strategy in India at the end of the nineteenth century, which practiced “tranquil rule on the cheap.”⁴⁵

The institution of the *vekīl* (applied in Mount Lebanon from 1843 to 1860) – representing the interests of the *vekīl*'s confessional group before the authorities, but also channeling state demands to that group – might therefore be more aptly described as an instrument of ethnic containment disguised as confessional balance. But what about the most genuine institution of confessionalism in Mount Lebanon – the councils on a confessionally representative basis?⁴⁶ Were they tools of an “administrative streamlining,”⁴⁷ or were they meant to fragment and manipulate Mount Lebanon as part of an Ottoman divide-and-rule strategy,⁴⁸ or were they means of ‘state-building and socio-political

⁴³ Michael Ursinus, *Regionale Reformen im osmanischen Reich am Vorabend der Tanzimat. Reformen der rumelischen Provinzgouverneure im Gerichtssprengel von Manastir (Bitola) zur Zeit der Herrschaft Sultan Mahmuds II, (1808-1839)*, Berlin 1982, 45, 47, 61, 63.

⁴⁴ Halil İnalçık, “Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration,” in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, ed. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen, Carbondale and Edwardsville 1977, 48, describes the institution of provincial councils in the eighteenth century somewhat enthusiastically as a kind of “decentralized home rule which provided the people with a say in government.”

⁴⁵ Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States. State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, Princeton 1988, 121.

⁴⁶ First introduced as part of Şekīb Efendi's regulations in 1845; see Farah, *Interventionism*, 438.

⁴⁷ As Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, Princeton 1962, 153, says for the central councils in Istanbul.

⁴⁸ For reproaches of an Ottoman *divide-et-impera* strategy in Mount Lebanon see Samir Khalaf, *Persistence and Change in Nineteenth Century Lebanon: A Sociological Essay*, Beirut 1979, 21, 31, 69, 88, 134; see also Pierre Rondot, *Les Institutions politiques du Liban: Communautés traditionnelles à l'état moderne*, Paris 1947, 9, 45, 47, and Edmond Rabbath, *La Formation historique du Liban politique et constitutionnel: Essai de synthèse*, Beirut 1973, 192. Further examples of an argumentation in this vein are given in Makdisi, *Sectarianism*, 206, note 5.

integration’?⁴⁹ Attempts to understand the exact genesis of the council system in Mount Lebanon and elsewhere might be in vain. We must be aware that Europe, exerting considerable pressure in all these decisionmaking processes, proved to be a multi-layered and conflicting tradition of regulating minority and confessional issues. Two main antagonistic lines may be detected: Whereas the first one guarantees an acknowledged status and even proportional representation of confessional minorities in common institutions, a second stresses segregation.⁵⁰ And indeed, at the beginning of the European-Ottoman consultations in 1860 some of the European representatives favored a model of ethnic segregation. European policy in Mount Lebanon oscillated between the segregative and cooperative patterns. European pressure to form a Christian and a Druze autonomous subdistrict (*qā'im-maqām*; not feasible in view of the demographic and social realities) and plans for an ethnic *désagrégation* in 1860/1861 stood in the segregative tradition.⁵¹ But the *compositio amicabile* of the *Règlement Organique* which seems so contradictory to the segregative stream is based on the same basic disposition: the perception and even invention of antagonistic confessions – which probably made the image of an atavistic hostility between Druze and Maronite so attractive to European observers.⁵²

Ottoman motivations to install (or to accept the installation of) the system of proportional representation in Mount Lebanon may have been manifold: to meet European wishes and European perceptions; to hark back to old Ottoman traditions of autonomous rule; to replace the policy of ethnic containment with a more refined and efficient system of control and rule. On the whole, it can hardly be said that the installation of the confessionalist regime based on the *Règlement Organique* was a linear and always conscious process – both on the Ottoman and European sides.

One might speculate that the Ottomans followed the techniques of mimicry and assimilation, which have been described above for the field of political terminology, also on the plane of institutions. The Ottoman policy of installing confessionalist institutions may have impressed European observers as an extension of the *millet* system, but indeed it should be seen as a kind of pseudo-milletization. Faced with European pressure and the first signs of nationalist movements it might have seemed wise to cloak ethnic groups into the form of a *millet*, i.e. the perception of ethnic groups (with their potential

⁴⁹ Akarlı, *Ottoman Lebanon*, 3.

⁵⁰ See Ernst Flachbarth, *System des internationalen Minderheitenrechtes. Geschichte des internationalen Minderheitenschutzes – positives materielles Minderheitenrecht*, Budapest 1937, 1-29, for an introduction into the problematics.

⁵¹ For details on the complicated negotiations leading to the *Règlement Organique* see Farah, *Interventionism*, 675-98.

⁵² On the European (and Ottoman) invention of an atavistic hatred between Maronites and Druzes see Makdisi, *Sectarianism*, 23, 73, 78, 84, 142, 152, 198 (note 8), 213 (note 8). See for one example on the Ottoman side the report of Muştafâ Nürî Pasha in BBA *İrade Mesail-i Mühimme* 1128, Varak 3 [1842]: Jabal al-Durūz splits into two factions, ruled by “old enmity” (*‘adāvet-i qadīme*).

of mobilizing proto-nationalist movements) was intentionally replaced by the concept of confession.⁵³ Yet this speculation goes too far, as it takes one cliché, that of the Ottomans as a purely passive and destructive force, to the extremes of an opposite cliché, as the Ottomans as most cunning and highly skilled political actors.

If we conceive as the core of confessionalism the system of representation on a confessional basis then the whole of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century might be described as confessionalist. Councils on a confessional basis were introduced not only in Mount Lebanon, but also in numerous other *Règlements organiques* in the nineteenth century (e.g. Crete in 1867) and in general laws such as the law of 1864 (revised 1867) on the organization of the provinces.⁵⁴ Even the earliest imperial decrees for the installation of councils as part of the Tanzimat in the 1840s applied the principle of confessional representation.⁵⁵

Proponents of the Lebanese confessionalist system have argued that confessionalism is so deeply rooted in the Lebanese political culture that its abrogation would be detrimental to the stability of the Lebanese state and democracy.⁵⁶ But history shows that the confessionalist principle, so widely practiced in the Ottoman Empire, was not inevitably adopted in the empire's successor states. Therefore, one should indeed reconsider Ghassan Salamé's argument – seemingly anachronistic and myopic at first glance – that confessionalism in the Lebanese republic owed itself to a “quid pro quo of state survival, a protective strategem on the part of the ruling segment [the Maronites: M.R.] to ensure the state survival” in the first years of Greater Lebanon.⁵⁷ Confessionalist institutions and devices were installed all over the Ottoman Empire. Why they persisted in some

⁵³ Roderic Davison, “Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response,” in *Nationalism in a Non-National State*, ed. William Haddad and William Ochsenwald, Columbus, Ohio 1977, 40, remarks that treating minority groups as *millets* and not as nationalities was one of seven types of Ottoman reaction to the dissolution of the supra-national structure of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century.

⁵⁴ See for example articles 59 and 60 where it states that the councils of the elders on the level of the villages shall decide and resolve cases “à l'amiable” (*şulhan tesviye olunur de'āvī*), which is nothing other than the European principle of *compositio amicabile*; for the French version of the provincial law see Grégoire Aristarchi, *Législation ottomane ou recueil des lois, règlements, ordonnances, traités, capitulations et autres documents officiels de l'Empire Ottoman par Aristarchi Bey (Grégoire) publiée par Demétrius Nicolaïdes*, 7 vols., Istanbul 1873-1888, II, 283; for the Ottoman version see the collection of Ottoman law codes, *Düstūr*, I, 2nd edition, 1872, 619.

⁵⁵ A detailed account of the *meclis* institution in the Tanzimat period is given by Stanford J. Shaw, “The Origins of Representative Government in the Ottoman Empire: An Introduction to the Provincial Councils, 1839-1876”, in *Near Eastern Round Table 1967-68*, ed. Richard B. Winder, New York 1969, 53-142.

⁵⁶ Antoine Messarra, *Théorie générale du système politique libanais : Essai comparé sur les fondements et les perspectives d'évolution d'un système consensuel de gouvernement*, Paris 1994, 21; see also his *Le Pacte libanais : Le message d'universalité et ses contraintes*, Beirut 1997, 152ff. – Even clear opponents of confessionalism stress the insurmountability of the deep-rooted confessionalism and therefore tend to mystify it; see for example Makdisi, *Sectarianism*, 174.

⁵⁷ Ghassan Salamé, “Small is Pluralistic: Democracy as an Instrument of Civil Peace,” in *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, ed. Ghassan Salamé, London 1994, 97.

successor states and not in others, must also be answered in the context of the formation periods of these new states.

The way in which confessionalism in Lebanon is most often described reminds one of the monster of Loch Ness – with the difference of course that reports of the existence of the Lebanese creature are more serious and substantial. We are convinced that the often seriously agitated surface of the lake (i.e. Lebanon) is due to the gigantic limbs of the monster. We are supposed to have seen the limbs of this monster jutting out of the lake many times, but we don't know which part of its body we were confronted with – one foot, the head or the tail? – because we never have seen it in its entirety. We think that it settled in this lake somehow around the nineteenth century. Are we thus dealing with a sea monster that was caught in the lake before its connections with the open sea were barred? Or is the existence of this animal due to the lake's specific fauna and flora? In order to achieve a better understanding of the monster we have to look at the specific characteristics of Loch Ness; we have to investigate into all the other lakes of Scotland (i.e. the Ottoman Empire); and finally to compare it to the many other monsters to be found in the lakes of our world.