Socio-political changes, confessionalization, and inter-confessional relations in Ottoman Damascus from 1760 to 1860

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INTRODUCTION

Two main actors of Ottoman Damascene local politics described the same noteworthy event which played a determinant role in the attacks against the Christian neighborhood of the city of Damascus in the summer of 1860. These accounts provided two different narratives regarding the intentions of actors and the underlying dynamics of this event. The first one was written by the Damascene Greek Catholic chronicler Miḫā'īl Mišāqā, who converted to Protestantism and became the American vice-consul of Damascus in 1859.[1] The second one was a letter of the French consul of Damascus Max Outrey to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs.

According to Miḫā'īl Mišāqa:

> [The Ottoman governor] Ahmad Pasha asked Christians to pay for the tax of exemption of military service and threatened to send them to jail (...). He arrested a lot of people, leaving their children hungry and their situation deteriorated to the point that Christians went to the Greek Orthodox Patriarch to seek his help. However, he was absent and his assistant was fearful when he saw the crowd coming towards him. He sought the help of the governor to protect him from the crowd and explained that they had risen in rebellion. The assistant meant that the Christians were so poor that they could not pay taxes.[2] He forgot that the Ottoman government dislikes the word rebellion. This event had a bad effect among the Muslim population, who were looking for such a chance to get rid of Christians because of their jealousy towards

[1] On Miḫā'īl Mišāqa see Erdoğan Keskinkiliç and Ebubekir Ceylan, "Her Majesty's Protected Subjects: The Mishaqa Family in Ottoman Damascus," Middle Eastern Studies 51, no. (2015): 175-194; Peter Hill, "The first Arabic translations of Enlightenment literature: The Damietta circle of the 1800s and 1810s," *Intellectual History Review* 25, no. 2 (2015): 209-233; Eugene Rogan, "Sectarianism and social conflict in Damascus : The 1860 events reconsidered," *Arabica: Revue d'études arabes* 51, no. 4 (2004): 493-511.

[2] Miḫā'īl Mišāqa, *Kitāb mašhad al-'āyān bi ḥawādiṯ Suriyā wa Lubnān,* edited by Melḥem Ḫalīl 'Abduh and Andrāwus Ḥannā Šaḫāšīrī (Cairo, 1908) 170; my translation.

them, especially after Christians begun to show off [their new socioeconomic status] . It was hard for them to see their former slaves become powerful (...).[3]

According to the French consul Max Outrey:

Ahmad Pasha called leaders of all nations to sign an engagement to pay the tax (...) and to make a census of their flocks. When working class Christians heard about this, they went in large groups to the patriarchates to prevent the signature of such a document, they declared that with or without this document they would not pay. The Greek Orthodox bishop, who being a reasonable man recognized that the government had the right to demand such tax, was attacked. (...) He had to escape by the roof of the patriarchal residence to avoid being attacked by the insolent crowd. (...) In order to change the mind of some confused individuals, I had to intervene (...). This event caused a bad impression among Muslims.[4]

Although presenting different analyses of the intentions of the Christian crowd, these accounts point to a variety of dynamics that will be highlighted in this thesis. This study seeks to address the transformation of inter-confessional relations in Ottoman Damascus from the mid-18th century to the 19th century. In the mid-19th century, inter-confessional tensions developed through the confessionalization of Ottoman society which politicized religious identities. Local events were perceived through the prism of religious identifications, shaping the development of sectarian discourses. The first author exemplified these dynamics. Miḫā'īl Mišāqā identified with Christians and supported their new-found legal and political equality with Muslims, which were part of a vast Ottoman project of reforms called the *Tanzimat.* At the same time, he adopted an exaggeratedly negative view of the place of Christians in Damascus before the 19th century reforms.[5] Finally, he pointed to the increasing mobilization of the commoners in this period. In the second account, the French consul emphasized his role as a mediator in this affair, pointing to the increasing foreign intervention in the relationship between the Ottoman government and its non-Muslim subjects. In addition to challenging Ottoman jurisdiction over its subjects, foreign intervention also contributed to

[3] Ibid, 242.
[4] Center of Diplomatic Archives of Nantes (AE), 166/PO-Serie D/20 (Correspondance avec les échelles), vol. 5, Outrey-Lallemand, February 14th 1859; my translation.
[5] In other works, Mišāqa presented a more objective view of inter-confessional relations, pointing to his selective use of sectarian discourses based on the audience and context, see Eugene Rogan, "Sectarianism."

inter-confessional tensions. In addition, this event points to the crisis of authority within the religious and lay leadership of non-Muslim communities. Socioeconomic inequality caused tensions within the communities. Taxation practices associated with the rise of the modern Ottoman State featured as the trigger of Christians' rebellion and fostered popular mobilization. In a period of transformation of social hierarchies, this issue also highlights the relation between the internal divisions of Christian communities and inter-confessional relations between Christians and Muslims.

This research explores these various dynamics which shaped inter-confessional relations and created the conditions for inter-confessional tensions to morph into violence. After determining the time frame and focus of the thesis, we will present the historical context which forms the background of this study. Then, after addressing the current state of knowledge, we will expose the aims of this research, its significance and structure.

1. Time Frame and Focus

Ottoman Damascus was composed of a variety of religious communities, including Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Among the latter, which amounted to around 12% of the population, Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics were the largest communities. There were also smaller Christian groups such as Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholics, Maronites, and Armenians. Latin Catholics were also present in the city, although they were usually foreigners. Amounting to around 4% of the population, the city's Jewish community was composed of various ethnic groups, but they were overwhelmingly Sephardi Jews. Although these different non-Muslim communities had various liturgical languages such as Syriac, Hebrew, Arabic, Ladino, Armenian, and Greek, they shared the common Arabic language in their daily lives and participated in shaping the culture of *Bilād al-Şam*. The remaining 84% of the Damascenes were Muslims, and were composed of different ethnic groups such as

Arabs, Kurds, Circassians, Turkmen and Druze.[6] Albeit this diversity of religious identifications and ethnicities, the major division in Damascene society was between elites and commoners.[7] Elite politics involved the notables of these various religious groups. Damascene urban society was built upon a variety of social groups and informal institutions such as status groups, residential units, socioeconomic statuses and professional organizations such as guilds. They provided cross-cutting forms of solidarity, common identifications and were a basis of collective political actions.[8]

In the pre-modern period, although some religious leaders were recognized to some level by the Ottoman government, non-Muslim communities dispersed over the empire had a variety of religious and lay leaderships which were not institutionalized at the imperial level. However, as other *ṭawāʾif,* or social groups, they benefited from some level of autonomy and legal particularities. They were represented by intermediaries who ensured the collection of taxation, internal justice and other facets of state-society relations. Borders between religious communities were loosely defined and a heterogeneity of doctrine was the norm.[9]

While religious identity was only one of the possible forms of belonging, the status of non-Muslims bore some specificities. They were legally distinguished through the status of *ḏimmī,* a tool to manage religious diversity while ensuring the Islamic nature of the state. This status had a variety of restrictions and obligations which were applied to different degrees depending on the political contexts in the provinces and imperial dynamics. In exchange of

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6 A. E., 67/CPC, vol. 1/2, Beaudin-Guizot, June 4th 1842.

7 Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism. Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 6

8 For an analysis of the system of urban governance in Ottoman cities see Nora Lafi, "The Ottoman Municipal Reforms between Old Regime and Modernity: Towards a New Interpretative Paradigm," in *1st International Eminönü Symposium* (Istanbul: Eminönü Belediyesi, 2006), 348.

9 Bernard Heyberger, "Frontières confessionnelles et conversions chez les chrétiens orientaux (XVIIe – XVIIIe siècles)," in *Conversions islamiques. Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen / Islamic conversions. Religious Identities in Mediterranean Islam*, dir. Mercedes Garcia-Arenal, 245-258 (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose / European Science Foundation, 2001); Bruce Alan Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World : The Roots of Sectarianism*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 61-62.

these constrains, non-Muslims were theoretically ensured the protection of the state and their legal persona.[10]

This research will analyze the transformation of inter-confessional relations over a century, from 1760 to 1860. The mid-18th century, and especially the rule of the governor As'ad Pasha (1743-1758) is often remembered as the most propitious time for Christians and Jews in Damascus.[11] On the other hand, the mid-19th century is remembered by the attack against the Christian quarter of the city in a context of increased inter-confessional tensions.

A diachronic approach will be used in order to consider the socio-political changes of religious groups over a century. It will analyse both the underlying developments affecting inter-confessional relations over a long period of time and short term events and dynamics shaping how groups interacted. This approach will allow me to consider community-building and inter-confessional relationships in a broader time frame than the mid-19th century *Tanzimat* reforms. It will help avoid a focus on the genealogy of the inter-confessional violence of 1860 in Damascus, moving away from a historiography which reads inter-confessional relations through the prism of the massacres. Instead, I consider a wide variety of inter-confessional interactions beyond violence.

This research's time-frame will end with the attacks against Christians that took place in Damascus and Mount Lebanon in the summer of 1860. The aftermath of the attacks led to important transformations of the social fabric. Through this diachronic approach, I will highlight two intertwined processes, the construction of confessional cultures from the 17th century onwards, and the politicization of religious identities in the 19th century.

The nature of the sources and the material encouraged me to adopt a micro-historical approach to the study of inter-confessional relations focusing on Damascus. Individuals often

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[10] Baber Johansen, *Contingency in a Sacred Law* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1998), 219, 227; Anver Emon, *Religious Pluralism and Islamic Law: Dhimmis and Others in the Empire of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 96.

[11] Shimon Shamir, "As'ad Pasha Al-'Azm and Ottoman Rule in Damascus (1743-58)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 26, no. 1 (1963): 16.

appear in multiple sources, highlighting the interaction of their various societal roles. A micro-historical approach emphasizes the agency and strategies of social actors and their agency in shaping both their community and the local political context.[12] A cross-reading and analysis of these various primary sources will allow us to explore simultaneously intra-confessional and inter-confessional levels of analysis.

In order to explore inter-confessional relations in Ottoman Damascus, this thesis will analyze the internal dynamics of three main groups, the Greek Catholic community, the Jewish community and the Sufi *ṭarīqā*[13] Naqšbandīyā. At first, I sought to present an exhaustive analysis of all the communities present in the city. However, after working in the French and British consular archives, I found an unexpected amount of valuable material regarding Greek Catholics in the city. Then I consulted the Archives of the Propaganda Fide and the Archivio Segreto Vaticano that provided explicit perspectives on communities and individuals alike. I was then also able to follow these individuals through the Ottoman archives, presented in yet another light. Because of the abundant sources and references, I thereby decided to focus on the Greek Catholics among Christians. This case study highlights social dynamics and help us understand the interaction between community-building and inter-confessional relations. These sources also shed a new light on the underlying and immediate causes of the attacks against the Christian neighborhood of Damascus. These events took place in the summer of 1860 and targeted mainly Greek Catholics. Although Greek Catholics constituted important political actors of Ottoman Damascus, their societal role has not been highlighted enough by previous studies.

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[12] The micro-historical approach to Ottoman history is represented by the pioneering work of Suraiya Faroqhi. See for example Suraiya Faroqhi, ed., *Stories of Ottoman Men and Women : Establishing Status, Establishing Control* (Istanbul : Eren, 2002); See also Jacques Revel, dir., *Jeux d'échelles. La micro-analyse à l'expérience* (Paris, Gallimard et Le Seuil, coll. Hautes Études, 1996); John -Paul Ghobrial, "Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian," *Past & Present* 242, no. suppl. 14 (2019): 1-22; Romain Bertrand and Guillaume Calafat, "Micro-analyse et histoire globale : affaire(s) à suivre," *Annales Histoire, Sciences sociales*, 73.1 (2019): 1-18; Sebouh David Aslanian, "Une vie sur plusieurs continents. Microhistoire globale d'un agent arménien de la Compagnie des Indes orientales 1666-1688," *Annales Histoire, Sciences sociales* 73, vol.1 (2019):19-55.

[13] Sufi confraternity.

A comparison with dynamics within the Greek Orthodox community would complete this analysis but due to the limitation of sources and the difficulty of accessing archives pertaining to the Greek Orthodox, it was not possible. Besides the information gathering regarding Greek Catholics, the consular and Ottoman archives highlighted the role of Jews in the city. Therefore, dynamics within the Greek Catholic community will be compared with similar developments in the Jewish community of the city. Greek Catholics and Jews were the main non-Muslim actors of the city's local politics. The internal changes of these two communities are often not studied simultaneously, yet a comparison of the structural, social and religious changes of these two communities is relevant. Non-Muslim communities' internal processes are often interconnected. The common political frame of the Ottoman Empire and the specificities of the region of *Bilād al-Šām* has shaped these communities' institutions and power struggles in similar ways. The dynamics highlighted by the two accounts presented above are indeed observable among Jews of Damascus as well. Finally, in the city in the 19th century, the *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīya played an important societal role with the influence of its main charismatic leader in the city in the 19th century, Shaykh Ḫālid al-Naqšbandī. The *ṭarīqa* had a project of reform of society and religious practices which bore similarities with reforming outlooks within Jews and Christian communities. It shaped the nature of inter-confessional relations in the city and provides a relevant point of comparison with internal dynamics of non-Muslim communities.

In this research, the complexity of these religious identifications, their modification over time and their interaction with other forms of belonging will be underlined. As Frederick Cooper and Roger Brubaker argue, identifications, including religious ones, are dynamic statuses. Collective self-understandings fluctuate and are subjected to multiple discourses and categorizations shaped by social location.[14]

[14] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond "Identity," *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (2000): 7, 14.

2. Historical Context

Starting with the 17th century, religious communities in the Ottoman empire were engaged in a parallel process of construction of confessional cultures. Communal borders were more precisely defined and reinforced by way of increasing social control, intensification of doctrine, homogenization of norms and practices, and construction of identifications through confrontation and opposition to other communities.[15] This long-term dynamic is the basis on which the confessionalization of Ottoman society took place in the 19th century. The 19th century was marked by the *Tanzimat* reforms, which transformed state-society relations and modified the legal status of non-Muslims in Ottoman society. These reforms were marked by a centralization of power and resources on the provincial and imperial level. It coincided with the increasing foreign involvement in the empire and a series of military defeats and internal secession. These various transformations shaped inter-confessional relations in the empire.

3. Historiographical Analysis

Previous scholars have approached inter-confessional relations in the Ottoman Empire from two main viewpoints, which are often influenced by the manner in which non-Muslims communities are studied. Regarding the study of non-Muslim communities, there is a scholarship divide based on discipline but also on different types of sources.

On the one hand, there is a tradition of religion based studies, or theology, which focused on religious history based on internal sources produced by religious scholars. These studies tended to study Christians and Jews as isolated communities not embedded in the

[15] See Tijana Krstić, "State and Religion, "Sunnitization" and "Confessionalism" in Süleyman's Time," in *The Battle for Central Europe,* ed. Pal Fodor (Boston, USA: Brill, 2019), 66; Bernard Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient : Au temps de la réforme catholique (Syrie, Liban, Palestine, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles).* Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome (Rome: École française de Rome, 2014); Ibid, *Hindiyya. Mystique et criminelle, 1720-1798* (Paris: Aubier, 2001); James Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints: Everyday Religion in Ottoman Syria and Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Ottoman context. Furthermore they were based upon an essentialized and atemporal perception of their identity. The perception of inter-confessional relations in the Ottoman empire influenced by this approach was underlined by notions of primordial hatred and social segregation between religious communities. Violence of the 19th century was often seen as an outpouring of old hatred between religious groups that can only coexist in conflict. This violence was almost presented as inevitable and used to justify the Ottoman reforms. This interpretation corresponded to European imperialist discourses used to justify foreign intervention in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century.[16] It also shaped the discourses of the Ottoman decision-makers in Istanbul.[17] In these accounts Christians and Jews seldom featured as agents but rather as passive victims of «Ottoman despotism» or «Muslim fanaticism».[18] In these accounts, violence is not analyzed as a sociological process but rather as a consequence of religious bigotry and intolerance. In these approaches, religious identities were used as an explanatory factor for all social processes.[19] This interpretation was in line with negative visions of the Ottoman past in the historiography of nation-states of the post-Ottoman world.[20]

On the other hand, the scholarship on the Middle East originating from the discipline of Area Studies focused on social history. In these accounts, Christians and Jews at times appeared as individuals engaged in socioeconomic economic activities, albeit with static and

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[16] Eleni Gara, "Conceptualizing Inter-Religious Relations in the Ottoman Empire: The Early Modern Centuries," *Acta Poloniae Historica*, no. 116 (2017): 64.
[17] Selim Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery": The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History: an International Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (2003): 311-342.
[18] See for example, Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985); Ibid, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996); Robert Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society: An Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic Monthly* 266 (September 1990).
[19] See for example Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984) 168-172.
[20] Gara, "Conceptualizing, " 61, 64.

essentialized identities.[21] These works did present a different image of non-Muslim Ottoman subjects as involved in a variety of societal roles and social groups.[22] Since the 1980's, this scholarship looked at inter-confessional relations from the point of economic and political competition as well as governmentality.[23] Moving away from an image of Ottoman society composed of isolated communities living under the yoke of the Ottoman State, scholars have emphasized coexistence and inter-religious daily interactions.[24]

The use of Ottoman sources also changed the understanding of the political representation of non-Muslim communities. While previous works had tended to look at the *millet* system as a static institution originating from the beginning of Ottoman rule,[25] Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis challenged this perception in their seminal work *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society.* They

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[21] See for example Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in politics: Damascene factions and estates of the 18th and 19th centuries* (Berliner Islamstudien, Bd. 2.) (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985); Abdul-Karim Rafeq. *The Province of Damascus,1723-1783.* 2d ed. (Beirut: Khayats, 1970); André Raymond, *The Great Arab Cities In the 16th-18th Centuries : an Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1984); Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East On the Eve of Modernity : Aleppo In the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Abdul-Karim Rafeq, Peter Sluglett, and Stefan Weber, eds., *Syria and Bilad Al-sham Under Ottoman Rule : Essays In Honour of Abdul Karim Rafeq (*Leiden: Brill, 2010).

[22] André Raymond, *Grandes villes arabes à l'époque ottomane* (Paris: Sindbad, 1985); Ibid, "Ville musulmane, ville arabe : mythes orientalistes et recherches récentes," in *La ville arabe, Alep, à l'époque ottomane (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles),* ed. André Raymond, 309-336 (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1998); Ibid, "Groupes sociaux et géographie urbaine à Alep au 18ème siecle," in *The Syrian Land in the 18th and 19th Century : The Common and the Specific in the Historical Experience*, ed. Thomas Philipp, 147- 63 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1992)

[23] Moshe Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861 : The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society* (Oxford, London: Clarendon P., 1968); Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," in *The Beginnings of Modernisation in the Middle East*, ed. W. Polk and R. Chambers, 41-68 (Chicago: UCP, 1968); Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism : The Politics of Damascus, 1860-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[24] Gara, "Conceptualizing," 74; Ronald C. Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean World, 1571-1640,* New York University Studies in near Eastern Civilization (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Molly Greene, *A shared world: Christians and Muslims in the early modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Haim Gerber, "Muslims and *zimmi*s in Ottoman economy and society: Encounters, culture, and knowledge," in *Studies in Ottoman social and economic life*, ed. Raul Motika, Christoph Herzog, and Michael Ursinus, 99–124 (Heidelberg: Heidelberg Orientverl, 1999); Marie Carmen Smyrnelis, *Une société hors de soi : identités et relations sociales à Smyrne aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Paris-Louvain : Peeters, coll. Turcica X, 2006); Meropi Anastassiadou, "Making Urban Identity, Dividing up Urban Time. Festivities among the Greeks of Istanbul in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *Celebration, Entertainment and Theatre in the Ottoman World,* eds. Suraiya Faroqhi and Arzu Öztürkmen, 237-260 (London: Seagull Books, 2014).

[25] H.A.R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic society and the West: A study of the impact of Western civilization on Moslem culture in the Near East*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957).

pointed to the institutionalization of the *millet* system as a 19th century dynamic.[26] Consequently, studies have shed light on the relationship between the various religious leaderships and the Ottoman government, creating a more complex picture of non-Muslims in power relations.[27]

While this scholarship has challenged the image of isolated communities, it was underlined by the historiographical caveat of the secularization narrative, which denies the role of religion in social processes. It follows a pattern of secular history replacing religious history. Secular history is based on the assumption that religion is not a relevant factor in the explanation of social dynamics.[28] This approach emerged in response to the overarching visions of inter-confessional relations and religious identifications that saw the Middle East as composed of isolated religious groups living in conflict and perpetual hatred. Secular histories tended to rather emphasize the porosity of borders and the lack of importance of religious distinctions. Social phenomena were explained by pragmatism, seen as distinct or even opposed to religious considerations.[29] However, in discarding religion as an explanatory factor, these studies failed to capture the changes in the signification and experience of the religious group and religious identities in the societies studied.

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[26] Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire : The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982)*;* Aylin Koçunyan, "The Millet System and the Challenge of Other Confessional Models, 1856–1865," *Ab Imperio (*2017) 59-85.

[27] Dimitris Kamouzis, "Elites and formation of national identity: The case of the Greek Orthodox *millet* (mid-nineteenth century to 1922)," in *State-nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire, Greece and Turkey: Orthodox and Muslims, 1830–1945,* ed. Benjamin C. Fortna, Stefanos Katsikas, Dimitris Kamouzis, and Paraskevas Konortas, 13-46 (London: Routledge, 2012); Fiona McCallum, "Religious Institutions and Authoritarian States: church–state relations in the Middle East," *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2012): 109-124; Hasan Çolak, *The Orthodox Church in the Early Modern Middle East: Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu/Turkish Historical Society, 2015); Tellan E. Bayraktar, *The Patriarch and the Sultan: The Struggle for Authority and the Quest for Order in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: Bilkent University, 2011); Tom Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan, Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Maurits H. van den Boogert, "Millets: Past and Present," in *Religious Minorities in the Middle East. Domination, Self-Empowerment, Accommodation,* ed. A.N. Longva and A.S. Roald, 27- 43 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012); Dimitri Stamatopoulos, "From Millets to Minorities in the 19th – Century Ottoman Empire: an Ambiguous Modernization," in *Citizenship in Historical Perspective,* ed. S. G. Ellis, G. Hálfadanarson and A.K. Isaacs, 253-273 (Pisa: Edizioni Plus-Pisa University Press, 2006).

[28] Neeladri Bhattacharya, "Predicaments of Secular History," *Public Culture* 20, no. 1 (2008): 62, 68.

[29] An approach often found in Subaltern studies, see Gyanendra Pandey, *Routine Violence : Nations, Fragments, Histories, Cultural Memory in the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

The development of post-colonial and subaltern studies in the 1980's contributed to this approach by focusing on the role of foreign imperialism and modernizing governmentality in events of inter-confessional violence. Researchers have attempted to counter earlier reading of violence as displays of "traditional hatred" by analyzing inter-confessional violence through the prism of relations between state and society. The advent of the modern state and its tools of governance has been seen as the cause of inter-confessional violence.[30] However, these studies relied on a dichotomous understanding of power dynamics, which gave little space for individual agency. Subaltern studies did put the state at the center of inter-confessional relations, yet, the nature of the state itself deserves further attention and the perception of the state as a unit needs to be challenged.[31] State actors, provincial governors, intermediaries, decision-makers in the center and ulema, all part of the state apparatus, played different roles, had their own objectives and strategies. Together they formed what is perceived as state policy. This observation challenges the notion of the modernizing state imposing top-down reform and points to the importance of negotiation, ambiguity and contradictory processes in the formulation and application of the reforms. It also leaves more space for individual agency.

Trends of religious and secular history provide only fragmented and disconnected histories of Ottoman non-Muslims in various contexts, emphasizing either religious or social history. The interaction between religious, economic and political dynamics is often not considered.[32] Yet, lay and clerical elements of Jewish and Christian communities were deeply interrelated by family ties, networks, and patron-client relationships. Individuals played a multiplicity of societal roles.[33] Furthermore, the political and economic strategies of

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[30] Ibid, 2-5; In the Ottoman case see for example Karen Barkey, "Islam and toleration: Studying the Ottoman imperial Model," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society 19*, 1–2 (2005): 5–19.
[31] On the topic of the nature of the state see Marc Aymes, *A Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013).
[32] Masters, *Christians and Jews,* 1–5.
[33] See for example in this thesis the central role of Ḥanna Frayğ both in the administration and in the institutions of the Greek Catholic community.

Christians and Jews played an important role in the transformation of their own communities and institutions. To gain a comprehensive vision of non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman empire, the conceptual frontier drawn between the study of lay and religious dynamics needs to be crossed. As much as non-Muslims cannot be reduced to members of a religious community, they can neither be considered as isolated entities estranged from communal and religious dynamics.

New perspectives on the dynamic nature of religious identification have provided a more nuanced approach to inter-confessional relations by challenging both the image of age-old hatred and the later overemphasis on peaceful coexistence, pluralism and cosmopolitanism. They have done so by analyzing the variations in inter-confessional interactions and by identifying specific moments and contexts which caused conflict and violence.[34] Scholars have focused on different types of interactions and sociabilities.[35] The use of common spaces, institutions[36] as well as shared religious rituals have received

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[34] This new approach to inter-confessional relations is a present in European studies as well. Among other see Scott C. Dixon, Dagmar Friest and Mark Greengrass, eds., *Living with Religious Diversity in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009); Isabel Karremann, Cornel Zwierlein and Inga Mai Groote, eds., *Forgetting Faith?Negotiating Confessional Conflict in Early Modern Europe* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012); Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007);

[35] Nicholas Doumanis, *Before the nation: Muslim-Christian coexistence and its destruction in late Ottoman Anatolia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Ari Ariel, *Jewish-Muslim Relations and Migration from Yemen to Palestine in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Boston, USA: Brill, 2013); Karen Barkey, "Islam and Toleration: Studying the Ottoman Imperial Model," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 19, no. 1/2 (2005): 5-19; Heather J. Sharkey, *A History of Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); James Reilly, "Inter-Confessional Relations in 19th-Century Syria: Damascus, Homs and Hama Compared," *Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations* 7 (1996): 213-224; Lucette Valensi, "Inter-Communal Relations and Changes in Religious Affiliation in the Middle East (Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries)," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 2 (1997): 251-69.

[36] Vanessa Gueno, "Musulmans et chrétiens, citadins et ruraux face au mahkamat bidâyat Hims à la fin du XIX^{e} siècle," *in Actes du colloque : Les relations entre musulmans et chrétiens dans le Bilâd al-Cham à l'époque ottomane aux XVII^{e}-XIX^{e} siècles. Apport des archives des tribunaux religieux des villes : Alep, Beyrouth Damas, Tripoli*, 215-231 (Beirut: Université de Balamand, Ifpo & Université de Saint-Joseph, 2005); Najwa al-Qattan, "Dhimmīs in the Muslim Court: Legal Autonomy and Religious Discrimination, " *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 3 (1999): 429–44; Heleen L. Murre-van den Berg and Sasha R. Goldstein-Sabbah, eds., *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East,* Leiden Studies in Islam and Society 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

scholarly attention.[37] Subsequently, in line with the spatial turn in history in the 1990's, scholars have looked at the use of space and its role in inter-confessional relations.[38] Other scholars focused on literary, cultural, political,[39] and intellectual encounters between members of different religious groups.[40] Language was also approached as a space of inter-confessional encounter.[41] Secular narratives were further challenged by the research done on inter-confessional violence in the medieval period.[42] Scholars also took a new look at political and economic competition among religious communities which takes into account

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[37] James Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints;* Dionigi Albera and Marie Couroucli, dir., *Religions traversées. Lieux saints partagés entre chrétiens, musulmans et juifs en Méditerranée* (Arles, Actes Sud, 2009); Glenn Bowman, *Sharing the Sacra: The Politics and Pragmatics of Intercommunal Relations around Holy Places* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Raymond Cohen, *Saving the Holy Sepulchre: How Rival Christians Came Together to Rescue their Holiest Shrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Poujeau Anna, *Des monastères en partage. Sainteté et pouvoir chez les chrétiens de Syrie*, Nanterre, Société d'ethnologie, 2014; Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey, eds., *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics, and Conflict Resolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

[38] Ulrike Freitag, Nelida Fuccaro, Claudia Ghrawi and Nora Lafi, eds., *Urban Violence in the Middle East: Changing Cityscapes in the Transition from Empire to Nation State* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015); Najwa Al-Qattan "Across the Courtyard: Residential Space and Sectarian Boundaries in Ottoman Damascus," In *Minorities in the Ottoman Empire: A Reconsideration*, ed. Molly Greene, 13-45 (Princetown NJ: Marcus Wiener, 2005); Sibel Zandi-Sayek,"Orchestrating Difference, Performing Identity: Public Rituals in Nineteenth-Century Izmir," in *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad, 42-66 (Westport: Praeger, 2001).

[39] Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire (*Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014); James Grehan, "Imperial Crisis and Muslim-Christian Relations in Ottoman Syria and Palestine, c. 1770-1830," *Journal of the economic and social history of the Orient* 58, no. 4 (January 1, 2015): 490–531.

[40] Peter Hill, *Utopia and Civilisation in the Arab Nahda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Ibid, "The first Arabic translations of Enlightenment literature: The Damietta circle of the 1800s and 1810s," *Intellectual History Review* 25, no. 2 (2015): 209-233; Butrus al-Bustani, *The Clarion of Syria: A Patriot's Call against the Civil War of 1860*, trans. Jens Hanssen, Hicham Safieddine (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019).

[41] Heleen Murre-van den Berg, Karène Sanchez Summerer and Tijmen Baarda, eds., *Arabic and its Alternatives: Religious Minorities and their Languages in the Emerging Nation States of the Middle East (1920-1950)* (Christians and Jews in Muslim Societies, 5) (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020); Heleen L. Murre-van den Berg, "*The Language of the Nation: The Rise of Arabic among Jews and Christians (1900–1950)," British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, vol. 2 (2016): 176-190.

[42] Inter-confessional violence has been reappraised through all the historical period, and especially of the Middle Ages, often perceived as a period defined by intolerance and violence. Moving away from seeing inter-confessional violence as a moral failing and an outcome of religious fanaticism, scholars such as David Nirenberg and R.I. Moore have highlighted how violence was linked to processes of creation of identification categories, was used as a power tool and was related to state formation. Nirenberg challenged the perception of violence as the work of fanatic popular masses but instead pointed to the strategy of specific groups; David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence : Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Robert I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA ; Oxford ; Carlton : Blackwell, 2007).

the dynamic construction of religious identity.[43] The agency of non-Muslims was highlighted in these works pushing into the background the role of foreign consuls and ambassadors which had previously been presented as the main actors of the *Tanzimat* period. Christians and Jews were previously often presented as the direct but passive beneficiaries of the reforms, and not as full actors of this transformation.[44]

Scholars such as Ussama Makdisi, Eugene Rogan, Bruce Masters have examined the process of of confessionalization, or sectarianism, which refers to a variety of dynamics of politicization of religious identities in the 19th century,[45] feeding populist religious mobilization and the related rise of a different type of mass popular violence.[46] The violence of 1860 in Damascus and Mount Lebanon had first been analyzed as a reaction to the *Tanzimat* reforms.[47] Then, scholars such as James Reilly, Bruce Masters, and Leila Fawaz analyzed it as a consequence of the integration of the region into the world political economy.[48] Ussama Makdisi and Eugene Rogan pointed to the development of sectarian discourses.[49] James Grehan and Peter Hill highlighted sectarianism as a response to the global political turmoil of the late 18th and the early 19th century, known as the age of

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[43] Bruce Masters has focused on economic competition in his exploration of the violence in Damascus. He analyzed the transformation of the economy of Bilād al Šām through its integration into the world market economy and its consequences on inter-confessional relations, Masters, *Christians and Jews.*

[44] The agency of non-Muslims is highlighted in a variety of works including Méropi Anastassiadou and Bernard Heyberger eds, *Figures anonymes, figures d'elite: Pour une anatomie de l'Homo Ottomanicus* (Istanbul: Isis, 1999); Bernard Heyberger and Aurélien Girard, "Chrétiens au Proche-Orient. Les nouvelles conditions d'une présence," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 171 (2015); Paul Rowe, "The Middle Eastern Christian," 472-474.

[45] Ussama Makdisi, *Age of Coexistence: The Ecumenical Frame and the Making of the Modern Arab World* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019); Suad Joseph, "Pensée 2: Sectarianism as Imagined Sociological Concept and as Imagined Social Formation," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 4 (2008): 553–54. Azmi Bishara, "Ta'ifah, Sect and Sectarianism: From the Word and Its Changing Implications to the Analytical Sociological Term," *AlMuntaqa* 1, no. 2 (2018): 53-67; Ibid, *Sectarianism and Imagined Sects* (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2020); James Grehan, "Imperial crisis and Muslim-Christian relations in Ottoman Syria and Palestine c. 1770-1830," *The Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58 (2015): 490-531; Rogan, "Sectarianism"; Masters, *Christians and Jews.*

[46] Ussama Makdisi, "Corrupting the Sublime Sultanate: The Revolt of Tanyus Shahin in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 1 (2000): 183, 193.

[47] Ma'oz, *Ottoman reforms*.

[48] Reilly, "Inter-Confessional Relations"; Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War : Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Masters, *Christians and Jews.*

[49] Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism;* Rogan, "Sectarianism"

revolutions. Similar political economic context in Europe, the Atlantic and the Middle East led to a crisis of the military fiscal state which politicized commoners.[50]

In the last decades, a "religious turn", related to the "cultural turn",[51] has taken place as scholars such as Bernard Heyberger among others bridged the gap between the two scholarly traditions of religious history and area studies.[52] It represents a new historical approach to religious dynamics which uses the insights of the scholarship on social history but brings back the question of religion by looking at the transformation of the internal dynamics of non-Muslim communities.[53] It challenges the secularization narrative about the lack of relevance of religion in social dynamics. It also presents a dynamic image of non-Muslims' religious identity, focusing on continuity and change, mobility and transfers.[54] This

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[50] Peter Hill, "How Global Was the Age of Revolutions? The Case of Mount Lebanon, 1821," *Journal of Global History (*2020): 1–20; Grehan, "Imperial crisis".

[51] For the cultural turn in history see Lynn Hunt,"Introduction," in *The New Cultural History,* ed. Lynn Hunt, 1-24 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Examples of the cultural turn in Ottoman historiography are James Grehan, "The Mysterious Power of Words: Language, Law, and Culture in Ottoman Damascus (17th-18th Centuries)," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 4 (2004): 991–1015; Ibid, *Everyday Life and Consumer Culture in 18th-Century Damascus,* Publications on the Near East (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007); Keith David Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East : Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class (*Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); Donald Quataert, ed., *Consumption Studies and the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922: An Introduction* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2000).

[52] Bernard Heyberger, "Pour une « histoire croisée » de l'occidentalisation et de la confessionnalisation chez les chrétiens du Proche-Orient," *The MIT-Electronic Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 3, (Autumn 2003): 36 – 49; Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Eugene Rogan, ed., *Outside In: On the Margins of the Modern Middle East* (New York: IB Tauris, 2002).

[53] For studies on Christians, it follows the pioneering work of Bernard Heyberger's on the rise of the Oriental Catholic churches; *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient;* As examples of this trend see Febe Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Chantal Verdeil, Michalis N. Michael and Tassos Anastassiadis, eds., *Religious Communities and Modern Statehood, The Ottoman and Post-Ottoman World at the Age of Nationalism and Colonialism,* Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, band 21 (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag 2015); Nelly Van Doorn-Harder, "Finding a Platform: Studying the Copts in the 19th and 20th Centuries," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 3 (2010): 479-82; Geraldine Chatelard, *Briser la mosaïque: Lien social et identités collectives chez les chrétiens de Madaba, Jordanie, 1870–1997* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 2004); Kais Firro, *Metamorphosis of the Nation (al-Umma): The Rise of Arabism and Minorities in Syria and Lebanon, 1850– 1940* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2009); Paul Rowe, "The Middle Eastern Christian as Agent," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 3 (2010): 472-474; Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Adam Becker, *Revival and Awakening:American Evangelical Missionaries in Iran and the Origins of Assyrian Nationalism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015); Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers and Education in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011).

[54] The "global turn" in the field of history has encouraged the study of dynamics of migration and mobility among the dispersed and transnational non-Muslim Middle Eastern communities. See John-Paul Ghobrial,

scholarship emphasized the internal dynamics of religious communities, the transformation of dogma, practices and beliefs. Bernard Heyberger, Aurélien Girard, Cesare Santus, Tijana Kristic, Derin Terzioglu[55], Guy Burak,[56] Nathalie Clayer,[57] Nir Shafir,[58] among others emphasized the process of the construction of confessional cultures in the Ottoman empire starting in the 17th century. They point to the intensification of religious doctrine and gradual construction of communal borders in the early modern Ottoman Empire.[59] The impact of missionaries' intervention on the internal dynamics of non-Muslim communities, especially Christians, has been the focus of recent works.[60]

This new approach to non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire emphasizing the internal dynamics of non-Muslim communities and the role of religious practices, beliefs, and identifications in community-building have not been used enough to inform the study of

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"Moving Stories and What They Tell Us: Early Modern Mobility Between Microhistory and Global History," *Past & Present* 242, no. 14 (2019): 243-280.

[55] Derin Terzioglu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization, " in *The Ottoman World ,* ed. Christine Woodhead, 86-99 (London: Routledge, 2012).

[56] Guy Burak, "Faith, law and empire in the Ottoman 'age of confessionalization' (fifteenth–seventeenth centuries): the case of 'renewal of faith'," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 28, no. 1 (2013): 1-23.

[57] Nathalie Clayer, "The dimension of confessionalisation in the Ottoman Balkans at the time of Nationalisms," in *The Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire, and Nation-Building, Conflicting loyalties in the Balkans,* ed. H. Grandits, N. Clayer and R. Pichler, 89-109 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

[58] Nir Shafir, "Moral Revolutions: The Politics of Piety in the Ottoman Empire Reimagined," *Comparative studies in society and history* 61, no. 3 (July 2019): 595–623.

[59] See the workshop *Building Confessional Identities in the Ottoman Empire (16th-18th centuries),* organized by Cesare Santus (EFR), Ecole française de Rome, February 6th 2017; For an earlier example of the study of confessionalization see Heyberger,"Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient," 384-551; See also Tijana Krstić, *Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern* Ottoman Empire (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011)*;* Derin Terzioglu "Sufis in the age of state-building."; Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism* ; Aurélien Girard, "Le christianisme oriental (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles). Essor de l'orientalisme catholique en Europe et construction des identités confessionnelles au Proche-Orient," PhD diss., (Paris, École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2011); Cesare Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie : communicatio in sacris, coesistenza e conflitti tra le comunità cristiane orientali (Levante e Impero ottomano, XVII-XVIII secolo)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2019); Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam : Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Nabil Al-Tikriti, "Ibn-i Kemal's confessionalism and the construction of an Ottoman Islam," in *Living in the Ottoman realm: Empire and identity, 13th to 20th centuries,* ed. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull, 95-107 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016).

[60] Adam H. Becker, *Revival and Awakening;* Heather J. Sharkey, *A History of Muslims, Christians, and Jews*; Some scholars presented a secularized history of missions: Chantal Verdeil, *La mission jésuite du Mont-Liban et de Syrie (1830-1864)* (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2011); Olivier Bocquet, *Missionnaires Français en terre d'Islam : Damas 1860-1914* (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2005); Karène Sanchez, *Politiques, éducation et identités linguistiques. Le collège des Frères des écoles chrétiennes de Jérusalem (1922-1939)* (Utrecht: LOT, 2009); Heleen Murre-van den Berg, *New faith in ancient lands : Western missions in the Middle East in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries* (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2006).

inter-confessional relations. The relation between how communities are constructed and how they interact with others deserves more attention.

4. Aims of the Research

Following earlier scholars who bridged the gap between religious and social history of *Bilād al-Šām*, this thesis will reintroduce the issue of religion into the economic and social history of the city. This research aims to contribute to the recent historiography of non-Muslims in the Ottoman empire and of inter-confessional relations by highlighting the interaction between internal dynamics of communities and inter-confessional relations. Through a micro-historical analysis of inter-confessional relations in Damascus, this analysis will permit one to go beyond the top-down perception of state reforms and foreign intervention and to look at the period of the *Tanzimat* from the bottom up.

This thesis will ask in what ways were religious communities imagined and constructed in the context of the social, political, and economic transformations of the 1760-1860 period and how did it affect inter-confessional relations? Critical historical questions which drive this research include: What role did the *Tanzimat* reforms and associated developments such as foreign intervention and missionary activity have on these processes? How did individual strategies to gain access to resources shape the process of confessionalization?

To address these questions, this thesis will bring into interaction the different levels of analysis which are generally addressed separately, notably because of the nature of the sources. First, there is the inter-confessional level analyzing relations between Christians, Jews and Muslims. Then, the inter-sect level refers to the relation between sub-groups of the same religious denomination, such as Greek Catholics and Greek Orthodox. Finally, the intra-confessional level looks at internal dynamics of each sub-group emphasizing the

importance of class, kinship, local and regional identifications in shaping the larger community and its societal role.

To bring into interaction these different levels of analysis, I used various types of references and sources. First, I used chronicles and memoirs of the urban elite, some of which have recently been discovered.[61] However, I interpreted them through the lens of the extensive secondary literature derived from the court documents and the study of material culture.[62] Ten chronicles were written by Christians, from which five of them have anonymous authors.[63] The other five are the chronicles of Miḫāʾīl al-Dimašqī[64] and Miḫāʾīl Mišāqa,[65] Rufaʾīl Karamā,[66] Ibrāhīm ʻAwra[67] and Makāriyūs Šāhīn.[68] These chronicles were found mostly at the library of the Saint Joseph University and at the American University of Beirut. The main Muslim chroniclers used in this research are Muḥammad Saʿīd al-ʿUsṭwanī,[69] Nuʿmān al-Qasāṭlī[70] and Muḥammad Abu'l-Su'ūd al-Ḥasībī.[71]

My research also made extensive use of consular correspondences. I consulted French consular reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris[72] and in Nantes[73] as well as the

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[61] See the list below. I would like to thank my colleague Feras Krimsti for sharing many of these chronicles with me.

[62] For example, Stefan Weber, *Damascus : Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation (1808-1918)*, Proceedings of the Danish Institute in Damascus, (Århus Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2009) vol. 1, 20-22

[63] *Aḥwāl al-naṣārā b'ad al- ḥarb al-qaram* (Beirut: Catalogue Cheikho, Université Saint Joseph) *;Muḏakkirāt tārīḫīya ʿan ḥamlatʾIbrāhīm Bāshā ʿalā Sūriya*, ed. Aḥmad Ġassān Sabānū (Damascus: Dar Qutayba, 1980) ; *Kitāb al-āḥzān fī tārīḫ wāqiʿāt al-Šām wa mā yalīhuma bimā āṣāba al-Masīḥiyin min al-Durūz wa al-Islām fī 9 Tammūz 1860* (Beirut: Jafet Library, American University of Beirut) ; *Ḥaṣr al-Liṯām ʿan al-Islām* (Beirut: Jafet Library. American University of Beirut); Louis Bulaybil, ed. *Tabrīr al-Naṣārā mimmā nusiba īlayhim fi hawādiṯ sana 1860,* Al-Mashriq 26 (1928): 631-644.

[64] Miḫāʾīl al-Dimašqī, *Tārīḫ ḥawādiṯ ǧarat bil-Šām wa al-Ǧabal 1782–1841*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Karīm Muḥāfaẓa (Amman: Dār Ward al-Urdanīya lil-našr wa al-Tawzīʻ, 2004).

[65] Mišāqa, *Mašhad.*

[66] Rufaʾīl Karama, *Ḥawadiṯ Lubnān wa Sūrīya min sana 1745 ilā sana 1800*, edited by Basīlūs Qaṭān (Beirut: Jarus Bars)

[67] Ibrāhīm al-ʻAwra, *Tārīḫ wilāya Sulaymān Bāšā al-ʿādil yaštamilu ʿalā tārīḫ Filasṭīn wa Lubnān,* ed. Q. al-Bāšā (Ṣaydā: Maṭb. Dār al-Muḵliṣ, 1936).

[68] Makāriyūs Šāhīn, *Ḥaṣr al-Liṯām 'an Nakbat al-Šām* (Cairo: Kutub Turath, 1895).

[69] Muḥammad Saʻīd al-Usṭwānī, *Mašāhid wa ʾaḥdāṯ Dimašqīya fī muntaṣaf al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿašar, 1256- 1277 H, 1840-1861,* ed. Asʾad Al-ʾUsṭwānī (Damas: 1994).

[70] Nuʿmān al-Qasāṭlī, *al-Rawḍa al-ġannāʾ fī Dimašq al-fayḥāʾ,* 2e ed, (Beirut: Dar al-Rāʾid al-ʻArabiya, 1982).

[71] This chronicle is explored through the secondary work of Kamal S. Salibi, "The 1860 Upheaval".

[72] Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AE), La Courneuve, CCC/98 (Correspondance commerciale des consuls, Turquie, Damas) vol. 1-4; CPC/67 (Correspondance politique des consuls, Turquie, Damas) vol. 1-6.

British consular reports kept in the National Archives.[74] I also used Ottoman imperial archives, the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri in Istanbul.[75] In addition, I made a selective use of the court records *(siccileri*) of Damascus kept in the İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi in Istanbul.[76] Finally, for the history of Catholics in Damascus, I analyzed the Archives of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide in Rome and the Archivio Apostolico of the Vatican.[77]

5. Significance of the Research

This thesis seeks to contribute to a better understanding of inter-confessional relations in Ottoman history, and specifically in *Bilād al-Šām*. The violence of the summer of 1860 in Damascus plays an important role in the memory of inter-confessional relations in Syria. It led to a variety of interpretations that were underlined by political claims and projects. It was used by the Ottoman government to justify further reforms of the 'backward' periphery. Syrian nationalist historiography has rather attributed inter-confessional violence to Ottoman "authoritarianism", informing Arab nationalist discourses regarding the Ottoman past.[78] Others have seen in the violence of 1860 a proof of the pressing need to adopt a secular form of government and public sphere to ward off similar events.[79] The increasing occurrences of inter-confessional violence in the contemporary Middle East has led some to look for the genesis of inter-confessional tensions in the Ottoman past. On the one hand, some discourses present the stereotype of Christians as eternal victims of the region, depriving them of any agency. These narratives of everlasting victimhood and persecution are instrumentalized to feed xenophobic discourses and politics of exclusion in contemporary Europe. On the other

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[73] Centre of Diplomatic Archives of Nantes (AE), 166/PO-Serie D/20 (Correspondance avec les échelles) 1-5; 18/PO- Serie A (Archives rapatriées du consulat de France) vol. 1-12.
[74] Public Record Office, Foreign Office Archives (FO), London, Serie F.O. 195 and 78.
[75] Ottoman Imperial Archives, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (BOA), Istanbul, Turkey.
[76] Islam Araştırmaları Merkezi, Istanbul, Turkiye Harici sicciler, Dimaşk,
[77] Archives of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide, Rome. Writings referred to the congresses (SC) : First Serie : Letters which reached the Dicastery of Mission lands : Greek Melchites 1682-1862 (25 Volumes), Syria 1860-1892 (4 Volumes); Vatican Apostolic Archives, Rome. Delegazione apostolica al Libano.
[78] Ussama Makdisi, "After 1860: Debating Religion, Reform, and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 4 (2002): 601-602; Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism," 311-342
[79] Ibid, 607.

hand, the enduring image of Christians as fifth column of foreign imperialism informs sectarian discourses which questions the place of Christians in Middle Eastern societies. An analysis of the transformation of inter-confessional relations over time and a better understanding of the underlying dynamics of the violence of 1860 in Damascus can contribute to question both types of discourses based on inaccurate, yet enduring, perceptions of Middle Eastern Christians.[80] It touches upon central aspects of the articulation of inter-confessional relations in the contemporary Middle East and Europe.

6. Structure

To address this research question, this thesis will deal with two intertwined processes, the internal changes of religious communities leading to the confessionalization of Ottoman society and the increasing inter-confessional strife in the mid-19th century. The first part of this thesis will explore the confessionalization of religious communities in Damascus. It is a consequence of a variety of dynamics including strategies of group cohesion, the evolution of rituals and practices and an effort at differentiation. It is also linked to the institutionalization of the *millet* system as part of the *Tanzimat* reforms.

The first chapter will introduce the development of confessional cultures in the 18th and early 19th century. It took the form of an intensification of doctrine, a project of societal reform, new forms of solidarity and identifications. The role of the *Tanzimat* reforms in this process will be explored, while this thesis will also emphasize long term dynamics. Religious communities were imagined in a variety of ways and on different levels and geographies. In general, the identification horizons of Ottoman subjects were widened in this period. This chapter will focus particularly on the *ṭarīqa* Naqšbandīyyā and its role in the confessionalization of Ottoman society.

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[80] On these perceptions see Bernard Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens au Proche-Orient. De la compassion à la compréhension* (Paris: Payot, 2013).

Chapter two and three will in turn shed light on the dynamics within the Greek Catholic community. Chapter two will explore the creation of the Greek Catholic *millet.* It will focus on the increasing need for distinction as a tool of separation from both the Greek Orthodox leadership and missionary influence in the 18th and early 19th century. Furthermore, the paradoxical relationship between local Christians and foreign representatives in the empire will be highlighted. Chapter three will further analyze the institutionalization of the Greek Catholic leadership after its recognition as an Ottoman *millet*. It will point to the process of homogenization and centralization at play in the Greek Catholic *millet* in the first part of the 19th century and the various resistances to it, mirroring state reforms.

Chapter four will turn to similar dynamics within the Jewish community of Damascus. The *Tanzimat,* the transformation of the leadership and foreign intervention changed the rules of access to power and led to a process of centralization provoking oppositions within the Jewish community.

The second part of this thesis will focus on conflicts and competition for access to resources among and between communities, pointing to the politicization of religious identities. While the first part explored long-term developments, the second part will focus on specific moments in which society was polarized along religious lines. This process builds on the development of confessional cultures described in the first part as religious communities which were more clearly defined and centralized could subsequently be turned into bases of political allegiance. This process emphasized the increasing relevance of religious identification for access to resources and political power. Through various case studies, this research will also point to the cross-cutting nature of the process of confessionalization which affected all communities beyond Christian/Muslim relations.

Chapter five will explore the transformation of inter-confessional relations after the turning point of the Crimean war and the Islahat Fermanı reform decree of 1856. How were

inter-confessional relations affected by the *Tanzimat* reforms and the increasing foreign intervention in the empire? This period was characterized by the transformation of social hierarchies. It caused feelings of humiliation among those who lost their privileges and contributed to the impression of a world upside-down. It negatively affected both popular and elite Muslim perceptions of Ottoman Christians.

The abolition of various conditions of the *ḏimmā* status, which had regulated the role of non-Muslims in the Ottoman empire, had strong repercussions across the empire. Chapter six will address various reactions to this changing role of Ottoman non-Muslims. The place of non-Muslims in an Islamic polity was also an integral part of a theological belief about what an Islamic state should be. How did beliefs about the relationship between the imperial leadership and God affect groups' self-definition and how they related to each other? How can attitudes and policies towards non-Muslims be linked to power struggles, relations with the Ottoman center and opinions regarding the state of the empire?

Chapter seven will explore the economic competition over trade, tax-farming and land ownership between Muslim notables, ulema, *āġāwāt*, and Christians under foreign protection in the new political and economic configurations of the *Tanzimat* period. It will highlight individual agency in shaping the application of the reforms at the provincial level and in instrumentalizing sectarian discourses as tools of access to resources.

Chapter eight and nine will look at examples of confessionalization and violence which are less discussed in the scholarship: both within non-Muslim communities and between Christians and Jews. Chapter eight will focus on tensions and violence among Greek Catholics as a result of the transformation of the institutions of the Church. It will focus on the conflicts around the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in the mid-19th century. This event dramatically divided the community, led to a crisis of authority and contributed to popular political mobilization. Chapter nine will explore the increasing confessional consciousness of

Greek Catholics and Jews in Damascus and the repeated conflicts between the two communities.

Finally, chapter ten will analyze the violence of 1860 in the continuity of rebellions against increased taxation and military conscription, mutinies and bread riots in the first part of the 19th century. It will focus on the attack against intermediaries and the transformation of military power affecting relations between religious communities. Inter-confessional violence will be analyzed as a bi-product of state-society relations and governmentality.