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

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Citation

Massot, A. K. J. M. (2021, January 26). *Socio-political changes, confessionalization, and inter-confessional relations in Ottoman Damascus from 1760 to 1860*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3134736>

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Cover Page



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

Issue Date: 2021-01-26

CHAPTER 7: CONTROLLING THE RURAL AND URBAN RESOURCES

The structural transformations of Ottoman society, including great power competition, the *Tanzimat* reforms and the development of new governmentality tools, politicized religious identities and led to the development of sectarian politics and eventually contributed to violence. Beyond the development of inter-confessional tensions and violence, these transformations also affected interpersonal relations and especially strategies for access to resources. The tools to gain access to economic and political means changed through this period. New opportunities for personal gain transformed the nature of economic distribution among the different social groups. Land ownership, tax-farming and commerce became the ground of an intense competition for economic power which ultimately played a role in the violence of 1860. In this competition, non-Muslims who enjoyed the protection of foreign powers had considerable advantages. The status of protégé became the locus of a conflict over sovereignty between foreign powers and the Ottoman Empire. It also led to tensions in Damascus and efforts to counter these developments through the use of the provincial *mağlis*.

This chapter will deconstruct the notion of the inter-confessional, and look at the role of interpersonal conflicts and economic competition in shaping strategies of survival, delegitimization techniques and discourses which ultimately affected how religious groups saw each other. First, we will analyse the different aspects of the status of foreign protégé. Second, we will explore how competition in trade and the economic advantages enjoyed by protégés affected inter-confessional relations. Finally, we will explore the impact of foreign protection on land ownership and tax-farming.

1. Foreign Intervention and Protection

1.1 *The Protégé Status*

The arrival of the Egyptian army to *Bilād al-Šām* in 1832 represents a turning point which affected inter-confessional relations in a deep manner and left an imprint on Damascene society. Among these various changes introduced by the Egyptians, the introduction of foreign consuls and their awarding of foreign protection to local Christians and Jews transformed the nature of the competition for access to resources.

According to the capitulations granted to allied sovereigns as unilateral privileges to facilitate trade in the 16th century, consuls and ambassadors could give their protection to foreigners, awarding them tax exemptions and giving them some level of extraterritoriality. This protection started to be extended to Ottoman subjects working for the consulates in the beginning in the 17th century, mostly to non-Muslims.¹³² In the 19th century, however because of the change in the balance of power in favour of European governments, foreign protection of Ottoman subjects became increasingly detrimental to the Ottoman government's interests.¹³³ Then, in the same period, protection statuses were increasingly sold to merchants and notables completely unrelated to the consulates.¹³⁴ Non-Muslims protégés were seen to have a tremendous advantage in trade and economic competition compared the rest of the Muslim population.¹³⁵ It gave rise to inter-confessional tensions, figuring on the background

¹³² Bernard Heyberger, "Conclusion. Pour une histoire des notions de "minorités" et de "protection,"" in *Minorités en Méditerranée au XIXe siècle, Identités, identifications, circulations*, dir. Valérie Assan, Bernard Heyberger et Jakob Vogel (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2019), 253, 254; Maurits H. van den Boogert, "Intermediaries Par Excellence? Ottoman Dragomans in the Eighteenth Century," in *Hommes de l'entre-deux. Parcours individuels et portraits de groupes sur la frontière de la Méditerranée (XVIe-XXe siècle)*, ed. Bernard Heyberger and Chantal Verdeil (Paris: Les Indes savantes- Rivages des Xantons, 2009), 101; Maurits H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System, Qadis, Consuls and Beraths in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 8.

¹³³ Boogert, *The Capitulations*, 8.

¹³⁴ A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, de Bourville-de Bourqueney, December 11th 1847; Edwards, *La Syrie*, 77; It was not the case beforehand, on the 18th century see Boogert, *The Capitulations*, 25, 90.

¹³⁵ Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 45-47. Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 82.

of the various accounts of violence in the mid-19th century.¹³⁶ The Ottoman government repeatedly attempted to put an end to this system but failed to do so.¹³⁷

To counter the rise of foreign protection the Ottoman government itself started to award his own *berats* to merchants. It created two statuses of merchants which would benefit from the same privileges than foreigners: *Avrupa tüccarı* for non-Muslims and *Hayriye tüccarı* for Muslims. While the program had some level of success in Aleppo, where wealthy merchants asked to be benefit from this status, it did not meet with the same results in Damascus where foreign protection dominated and multiplied exponentially.¹³⁸

Before foreign protection was introduced in Damascus, Christians and Jews relied on different forms of political patronage. Military leaders, governors and emirs were sought upon for protection, especially when they had a strong local power base.¹³⁹ The Egyptian rule however challenged these various patronage networks by replacing the elites. In the process, it put an end to various reciprocal relationships which Christians and Jews had built with local power-holders, especially *āḡāwāt*.¹⁴⁰ Christians and Jews thus turned to foreign consuls as substitute patrons.¹⁴¹

For example, ‘Alī āḡā Ḥazāna-Kātībī an ‘*ayān* of Damascus and a patron to local Christians,¹⁴² was executed by the governor in 1840.¹⁴³ He had been instrumental in protecting Christians during the revolt against the governor in 1830.¹⁴⁴ Bribes to powerful *āḡāwāt* were usually the most effective way to remain safe during periods of political

¹³⁶ For Aleppo see Feras Krimsti, *Die Unruhen von 1850 in Aleppo: Gewalt im urbanen Raum*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2014); For a general analysis of the violence in mid-19th century Syria see in Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews*.

¹³⁷ Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews, and the Ottoman Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 15.

¹³⁸ Bruce Masters, “The Sultan's Entrepreneurs: The Avrupa Tuccaris and the Hayriye Tuccaris in Syria,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 4 (1992): 580.

¹³⁹ al-Dimashqī, *Tārīḥ ḥawādīt*, 79.

¹⁴⁰ Military leaders; al-Uṣṭwānī, *Mašāhid*, 38; Beinīn, *Workers and Peasants*, 45-47; Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 82.

¹⁴¹ al-Uṣṭwānī, *Mašāhid*, 38; Beinīn, *Workers and Peasants*, 45-4; Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 82.

¹⁴² al-Qasāṭlī, *al-Rawḍa*, 88.

¹⁴³ al-Dimashqī, *Tārīḥ ḥawādīt*, 186

¹⁴⁴ al-Qasāṭlī, *al-Rawḍa*, 88.

upheaval.¹⁴⁵ In terms of actual physical protection, foreign protection was usually less effective. Consuls could not prevent mass violence against confessional groups. They could only encourage punishment or reparations after the facts. Local forms of protection, especially from military chiefs and governors were much more effective in protecting non-Muslims lives and property in times of social upheaval. This difference in the ability to protect explains in part the ineffectiveness of the usual mechanisms of violence prevention and containment during attacks against Christians in the mid-19th century.

While both types of protection shared similarities, older forms of protection were usually restricted to members of elite families, usually scribes or accountants. On the other hand, foreign protection could be purchased by anyone having the sufficient resources. Foreign protection thus allowed for more social mobility, giving the opportunity to new families to access the same status as elite scribal families.

In 1842, the governor of Damascus Necip Paşa complained to Istanbul that the French consul protected half of the city.¹⁴⁶ In reality, according to the list of official protégés send by the French consul to the French foreign minister, there were 130 protégés, including forty-five French subjects (Algerians included), twenty-seven ‘Greeks’ protected at the demand of the Greek consul of Beirut, six Spanish or Italian clergy members, ten employees of the consulate, eleven protégés’ employees, twenty-seven foreigners and convents’ employees.¹⁴⁷ The French consul did not distinguish between all these categories of protégés. The British consul on the other hand made a distinction between those who were actual protégés because they were foreigners or claimed to have foreign origin and those who enjoyed this status temporarily because of their employment. While the French consul listed employees of

¹⁴⁵ Another example is the Emir Bašir Šihāb of Mount Lebanon who had patronized numerous Christians scribes and merchants but when he was deposed after the departure of the Egyptians in 1840 these relationships withered. His successor Emir Bašir III had neither the charisma nor the power base of his predecessor and failed to assume the same role. Farah, *Politics of intervention*, 57, 713, 740 . Heyberger, *La France et la protection des chrétiens maronites*, 19.

¹⁴⁶ A.E., CCC/98, vol. 1, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, February 22nd 1842,

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

foreign merchants as protégés, the British consuls considered them as temporary protégés. According to the records of the British consulate, in 1844, they had thirty-nine protégés, twenty-two of them were considered temporary.¹⁴⁸

What transpires from the consuls' correspondence is that the directions received by consuls to intervene in favor of local Christians as a group were not always eagerly accepted. Indeed, while France claimed to protect all Catholics, consuls on the ground often questioned this claim for they realized that it was not the best way to build a local support for the consulate among the general population. For example, the French consul Ratti-Mention wrote to his foreign minister in 1841 that it might be more productive to seek the sympathies of Muslims rather than focus solely on Catholics, as the latter might turn towards Austria and Great Britain and leave the French consul without any influence.¹⁴⁹ Then, consuls often questioned the effectiveness of their interventions as protectors of certain groups against others.¹⁵⁰ Various consuls were quite critical of the protection status and blamed protégés for abusing the system and leading to conflictual relationships with the governor.¹⁵¹

Consuls also expressed the belief that local Christians were unreliable, corrupt, calculating and always involved in intrigues.¹⁵² The consuls' negative view of local Christians was also due to their frustrated expectations regarding their level of gratitude and Orientalist stereotypes. The French consul in 1856, Max Outrey, commented that he was not surprised by the lack of gratitude of local Christians, because 'Christians in the Orient are full of pride and are too demanding, considering that when foreign powers fight in their favour

¹⁴⁸ F.O. 195.226, Wood-Canning, May 17th 1844.

¹⁴⁹ A.E., 67/CPC, vol. 1, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, January 6th 1841.

¹⁵⁰ A.E., 18/PO/A, vol. 9, Outrey-Thouvenel, February 2nd 1856.

¹⁵¹ A.E., CCC/98, vol. 1, Ratti-Menton-Thiers, December 28th 1839; F.O., 190/226, Wood-Canning, April 8th 1846; A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, de Bourville-Bourqueney, December 11th 1847.

¹⁵² F.O., 195/601, Brant-Bulwer, February 6th 1860; A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, De Bourville-Bourqueney, February 24th 1848; F.O., 195/368, Wood-Clarendon, April 22nd 1853; A.E., 67/CPC, vol. 5, Outrey-Walewski, July 5th 1857; It was a widespread stereotype which is found also towards Oriental Christians in Rome, see Heyberger, "Chrétiens orientaux".

they are only doing their duty'.¹⁵³ Instilled by narratives of Ottoman despotism and foreign saviour narrative, the consuls expected local Christians to identify with them and demonstrate a high level of loyalty and gratefulness. However, they soon realized that local Christians and Jews used foreign protection to enhance their place in local society, not to escape it. Foreign consuls were one of the various patrons that local Christians and Jews relied upon, they relation was thus not exclusive. Consuls often criticized the agency of their protégés in using protection and Ottoman subjecthood to their own advantage and to escape both Ottoman and foreign jurisdictions.¹⁵⁴

Acquiring protégé status meant flexibility. Specifically, it gave them the ability to function as intermediaries. With such status, they were able to present themselves as Ottomans in some cases and in other cases as foreigners. The protégé enjoyed the rights given to Ottoman subjects but none of the responsibilities. In addition, they were not subjected to the responsibilities of their protector state in the same manner than foreign citizens. They did not really become a citizen of the foreign state nor remain a full citizen of their government. They neither paid taxes in the Ottoman Empire nor in a foreign country. The agency of local Christians and Jews was an important factor in shaping the dynamics of protection and in taking advantage of the various jurisdictions under which they fell. This situation became problematic when both sides, the Ottoman and the European governments started to implement stricter laws regarding citizenship in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹⁵⁵

1.2 Extraterritoriality

¹⁵³ A.E., 67/CPC, vol. 5, Outrey-Walewski, October 24th 1856 .

¹⁵⁴ See the case of Mr Gedei which was discussed by the British consul Mr Wood and the French consul Mr Barbet de Jouy; F.O., 195/368, Wood-Barbet de Jouy, March 26th 1853; F.O., 195/368, F.O., 195/368, Wood-Barbet de Jouy, March 31st 1853. Ratti-Menton-Wood, March 28th 1853; F.O., 195/368, Wood-Clarendon, April 2nd 1853.

¹⁵⁵ Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams*, 7; Marie Carmen Smyrnelis, "Familles juives en Méditerranée. Jeux d'identité et conflits de juridiction (XIXe-XXe siècles)," in *Minorités en Méditerranée au XIXe siècle. Identités, identifications, circulations*, dir. Valérie Assan, Bernard Heyberger, Jakob Vogel, 133-145 (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019); Similar issues which arose from the encounter of protection and citizenship can be found in Algeria, see Valérie Assan, "Le statut juridique des juifs algériens dans l'Empire français et ses marges," in *Minorités en Méditerranée au XIXe siècle. Identités, identifications, circulations*, dir. Valérie Assan, Bernard Heyberger, Jakob Vogel, 121-132 (Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019).

One of the main benefits associated with foreign protection was extra-territoriality. In theory, if the protégé was brought to the *qāḍī* court, or imprisoned by the governor, the consul could intervene on his behalf and withdraw him from the jurisdiction of the Ottoman government. The protégé was to be judged by the consul himself, according to the law of the consul's country. In practice however, protégés were not put on trial by the consul but either kept for a short period in the consul's prison until the public uproar calmed down, or encouraged to escape to Beirut or other neighbouring cities.¹⁵⁶ If the case involved a prejudice against another Ottoman subject, the issue was more complicated as it should be brought in front of the Ottoman authorities.¹⁵⁷

The question of extraterritoriality and foreign protection was part of a larger legal reality of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, the Ottoman Empire was characterized by legal pluralism and the diversity of entities which could administer justice. Decisions on legal cases could first be brought to communal courts, administered by rabbis or bishops and patriarchs, if it concerned non-Muslims. The patriarchs and bishops had punishing power and some of them had their own jails. Then, *qāḍī* courts were opened to all Ottoman subjects and foreigners as well, they administered justice according to *Ḥanafī fiqh* principles. Non-Muslims could take cases to the *qāḍī* court if they thought that it would fulfil their interests more than the communal courts. A military court was also in charge of military affairs and cases involving soldiers and officers. The sultan's *mağlis* was a recourse that could be used to question of a decision taken in the local *qāḍī* court. Then, there were consular courts which had jurisdiction over foreigners and also had prisons.¹⁵⁸

Foreigners living in Damascus and Ottoman subjects under foreign protection could use the *qāḍī* court and communal courts if they pleased, yet they could refuse to be brought to

¹⁵⁶ A.E., 18/PO-A, vol. 9, Outrey-Walewski, August 11th 1858,

¹⁵⁷ Boogert, *The Capitulations*, 44.

¹⁵⁸ Mariya Tait Slys, "Chapter III – Extraterritorial Consular Jurisdiction in the Ottoman Empire," in *Exporting Legality: The Rise and Fall of Extraterritorial Jurisdiction in the Ottoman Empire and China*. Graduate Institute Publications (2014): 14.

court forcibly by claiming foreign jurisdiction. While foreigners seldom used *qāḍī* courts, Ottoman protégés did extensively. Yet, at the moment of the court's decision, they could contest it by claiming to fall under foreign jurisdiction.

Extraterritoriality allowed some protégés to avoid judgement and punishment. It was seen as unfair by the population and could cause inter-confessional tension. For example, Dā'ūd 'Abāde, a Jewish dragoman of the Prussian consulate, was involved in two trials and managed to escape judgement in both thanks to his protection status. In the summer of 1858, Dā'ūd 'Abāde's affair with a Kurdish woman from the neighbourhood of Şālḥīya was discovered. He had started as a domestic servant but quickly managed to climb the social ladder and worked for the Prussian consul and became dragoman. In this position he managed to become wealthy. He is described by the British consul as a notorious troublemaker, who abused his position of power. He had managed to keep the affair secret by dressing as a woman to reach her house. The woman's husband had been assassinated not long before this affair was publicized, his body was found beheaded but with all its valuables. This aroused suspicion regarding Dā'ūd 'Abāde's role in the murder. Enraged, the local Kurdish population asked for an exemplary punishment. The governor, rather than bringing Dā'ūd 'Abāde in front of the *qāḍī* court, which he had the right to do in case of murder, arranged for his escape to Beirut to please the Prussian consul.¹⁵⁹ Because of this affair, some influential local elements crafted a petition to ask for the removal of foreigners in the city. Christians were apparently scared of the consequences of this affair and many of them remained in their houses for a few days. They had planned to ring the large bell placed upon the Catholic convent for the French emperor's holiday, Saint Napoleon, but they postponed it for fear of reprisal.¹⁶⁰

Extraterritoriality was institutionalized by the creation of mixed courts. Over the 19th century, foreigners found themselves at lost in *qāḍī* court when they had to register property

¹⁵⁹ A.E., 18/PO-A, vol. 9, Outrey-Walewski, August 11th 1858.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid; F.O., 195/601, Brant-Malmesbury, August 21st 1858.

or deal with issues of interest, forbidden under Islamic law. The discrepancies between foreign laws as applied by consuls and Ottoman law as applied by *qāḍī* rendered the administration of justice quite complicated. It encouraged foreign powers to ask for the creation of mixed courts which could take unitary decision on cases involving foreigners and protégés. A new commercial code was introduced in 1850 and its legislation relied heavily on French commercial law. Commercial courts composed of European and Ottoman judges were set up. European influence in those courts was strong,¹⁶¹ adding to the perception that foreign entities used political power to protect their own economic interest in the Ottoman Empire.

At the same time, the *mağlis* was also given judiciary power over cases of property, taxation and commercial disputes. *Qāḍī* courts were overrun by the newly created mixed commercial courts and the *mağlis*, which became the two main bodies in the battle for justice. These two institutions competed to control the decision-making power. They were also increasingly polarized across religious lines. During the Egyptian period, Christians and Jews sat on the *mağlis*. However, they were gradually removed. In 1848, the Ottoman governor gave the order to encourage them to leave the *mağlis*. The members of the *mağlis* mistreated Jewish representatives who left and Christians were asked to go to the back of the room.¹⁶² They were suspected of giving away political secrets to foreigners. In 1849 there were sixteen members in the *mağlis* chosen from the local elite or by patronage from Istanbul. Only the most influential received a salary. The *mağlis* had a variety of tasks. They named secondary governors, audited the financial accounts, gave the revenue in tax farm and collected it, removed or appointed shaykhs of villages and appointed commanders of irregulars. Each of these appointments was done by bribe. It was thus both a tool of political power and wealth accumulation for the members.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Commins, *Islamic Reform*, 11.

¹⁶² F.O., 195/291, Wood-Canning, December 19th 1849.

¹⁶³ F.O., 195/291, Wood-Canning, February 13th 1849.

In Damascus, *mağlis* members managed to delay the creation of a mixed court. Yet, thanks to the efforts of the British consul Mr. Wood, the court was created in Damascus in 1850.¹⁶⁴ Each consul had a delegate in the court.¹⁶⁵ However, even after its creation, the *mağlis* attempted to hinder its actions by intervening in its meetings.¹⁶⁶ Then, the court members refused to apply the new commercial rules sent by Istanbul.¹⁶⁷ Foreigners were excluded from the court and judgments were passed according to Islamic jurisprudence, discarding documentary evidence. Thus, foreign merchants could not recover loans and interests. The British consul saw in these proceedings an attempt to get rid of foreign competitors in commerce.¹⁶⁸ After the repeated complains of the British consul in 1850, the governor had to change the composition of the commercial court. The new court had fifteen members, only five of them were Muslims. Europeans for the first time could seat on the commercial court.¹⁶⁹

2. Economic Competition

2.1 *Inter-confessional Tensions in the Marketplace*

A domain in which foreign protection played an important role in inter-personal and eventually inter-confessional tensions was trade. Damascus is located at the departure of the caravan to Mecca and Medina, granting it a specific place in the regional trade network. It's various markets featured a large array of products from local artisans and the rich crops of its fertile countryside. The different souks had their own specialties, jealously protected by guilds who managed disputes, represented artisans in the court and set prices. Every trade had its guild, even the lemonade ambulant salesmen were represented. Craftsmen were protected

¹⁶⁴ F.O., 195/601, Brant-Bulwer, March 16th 1859.

¹⁶⁵ A.E., 98/CCC, vol. 3, de Ségur-Baroche, July 14th 1851.

¹⁶⁶ F.O., 195/601, Brant-Bulwer, March 16th 1859.

¹⁶⁷ F.O., 226/105, Wood-Canning, April 6th 1850.

¹⁶⁸ F.O., 195/291, Wood-Canning, April 20th 1849.

¹⁶⁹ F.O., 226/105, Wood-Canning, June 15th 1850.

from competition through the system of the guilds. In exchange, they had to meet a certain quality of craftsmanship.¹⁷⁰ The movement of goods were restricted and prices were fixed.¹⁷¹

Monopolies were based upon the organization of commerce around corporate work organizations called *esnaf* or *tā'ifa* which ensured minimum competition, upheld the division of labor and contributed to economic stability for its members.¹⁷² Prices and the distribution of commodities were fixed inside each *tā'ifa*, thus enforcing monopolies. The corporations were often closed to foreigners who at times created their own professional *tā'ifa*.¹⁷³ Each *tā'ifa* was represented in front of the government by a shaykh elected by its members.¹⁷⁴ Religiously mixed corporations composed of Muslims, Christians and Jews ensured a certain level of cooperation and common interests across religious groups.¹⁷⁵ However, starting with the Egyptian rule, the control over the market operated by corporations was threatened by the influx of foreign goods and the gradual abolition of monopolies by the Ottoman government.¹⁷⁶

The city was known for its production of textile and abounded with looms. Grain and sheep trade was located in the Maydān peripheral neighborhood in the south of the city, close to the grazing lands of the Bedouin tribes. It was also located in the northern Sālḥīya neighborhood, known for its predominantly Kurdish population. The Bedouin tribes provided camels to the governor for the pilgrimage in exchange for their protection along the road.¹⁷⁷ The city was turned eastwards towards Iraq and southwards towards Jordan and the Arabian peninsula.

¹⁷⁰ Douwes, *Justice and Oppression*, 105.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 107.

¹⁷² Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Craft Organization, Work Ethics, and the Strains of Change in Ottoman Syria," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111, no. 3 (1991): 497.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 504.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 499.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 50; Yaron Ben-Naeh, "Urban Encounters: The Muslim-Jewish Case in the Ottoman Empire," in *Urban Encounters: The Muslim-Jewish Case in the Ottoman Empire*. Leiden: Brill, 2014), 183.

¹⁷⁶ Rafeq, "Craft Organization," 509.

¹⁷⁷ Tomoki Okawara, "The Urban Fabric of Damascus in the middle of the Nineteenth century: A Study of the Tax Register (Rüsum Defteri) of 1852," in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies*, dir. Colin Imbert and Keiko Kiyotaki (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 175.

In the 19th century, this commercial ecosystem was put to a test with the abolition of monopolies and other economic reforms, but also by the influx of foreign goods into local markets, which competed with local goods. European goods arrived in larger numbers thanks to the steamship line which linked European ports to the port of Beirut. The Balta Limani Treaty signed by the British and the Ottoman Empire in 1838 reduced import custom taxes on British products, encouraging their massive import into the empire. It was later expanded to include all European goods.¹⁷⁸

Foreign industrialized textile, cheaper and of good quality, quickly overflowed the Syrian market and influenced local fashion trends to the detriment of locally produced fabric.¹⁷⁹ Foreign houses of commerce opened in the city and in Mount Lebanon, where they especially engaged in silk production and sale to Europe. Silk spinning factories were established with European funds and were managed by local Christian merchants.¹⁸⁰

The Egyptian government also introduced innovations into local commerce. It started a policy of directly fixing prices which had been done by the *tā'ifa* themselves.¹⁸¹ For example, it decided to fix the price of the service rendered from Bedouins to the caravan. Bedouins provided camels, cooked, and gave water to the pilgrims. When they heard that the price of their service was going to be fixed, they refused to serve.¹⁸² Egyptians also fixed the price of agricultural products. For example, farmers who produced grapes were required to

¹⁷⁸ Rafeq, "Sources of Wealth," 255.

¹⁷⁹ Rafeq, "Craft Organization," 510.

¹⁸⁰ Akram Fouad Khater. *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 2001), 21, 30; Maurice Févret, "La sériciculture au Liban. Première partie : sa fortune passée," in: *Revue de géographie jointe au Bulletin de la Société de géographie de Lyon et de la région lyonnaise* 24, no.3 (1949): 256. For an in-depth exploration of the silk industry in Lebanon see Dominique Chevalier, *La société du Mont-Liban à l'époque de la révolution industrielle en Europe* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1971); F.O., 195/368, Wood-Rose, November 22nd 1852; F.O., 195/291, Wood-Canning, July 26th 1848.

¹⁸¹ Banī Hānī, *Tārīḥ Dimašq*, 159.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 159.

send their produce to Damascus and the government would later determine a specific price for it.¹⁸³

The combination of the influx of foreign products and commercial reforms of the government created tensions and caused economic difficulties in the city and countryside. Merchants resented the transformation of trade that took place under Ibrāhīm ‘Alī. In 1840, a rebellion was planned by the representative of merchants in the city of Damascus against the Egyptian army. It was however discovered soon enough and the representatives were put in jail.¹⁸⁴

In addition, the competition between Muslims and Christian protégé merchants in Damascus increased over the years.¹⁸⁵ Foreign protection awarded protégés the same reduction in import taxes and a political bargaining power which they could use to further their economic interests. While corporations had provided a basis of group action across religious lines, in this period protégés came together to defend their economic interests. They thus acted as an organized status group, which in turned fostered solidarity based on the religious community.¹⁸⁶ This competition in which Christian protégés had an advantage due to foreign protection fed resentments which contributed to animosity towards Christians in general and ultimately to violence. Merchants and shop owners are pointed to in many chronicles as among the main instigators of the violence of Damascus in 1860.¹⁸⁷ The shops of Christians were among the first targets of the violence.¹⁸⁸ Muslim merchants were also among the first punished when Fuad Paşa arrived.¹⁸⁹

Yet at the same time, there were an unprecedented number of joint ventures between Muslim and Christians in trade and commerce in this period. Members of these two religious

¹⁸³ Ibid, 159.

¹⁸⁴ A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 2, Ratti-Menton-Thiers, October 13th 1840.

¹⁸⁵ Rafeq, “Sources of Wealth,” 257.

¹⁸⁶ Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie*, 116.

¹⁸⁷ Ferdinand Taoutel, ed. *Wāṭa’āq tāriḥīyā ‘an Ḥalab fī al-qarn al-īlāmin ‘aṣar*, Aleppo, 1958-62, vol. 3 (Beirut : al-Maṭba‘a al-kāṭūlikīya , 1964), 117.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 118, 225.

groups were business partners and shared industries. The author of *Aḥwāl al-Naṣārā* mentioned that these partnerships encouraged peace.¹⁹⁰ Protégés could represent Muslim merchants who could also benefit from the reduced import tariffs given to protégés and relied on the protégés' bargaining power to ensure payment and delivery of goods.¹⁹¹ The detailed reports included in records of bankruptcies in the consular archives show that non-Muslims and foreigners entered into joint economic ventures with Muslims.¹⁹² These economic alliances or joint ventures enabled cooperation and alliances across religious communities. However, these alliances were based on the inequality between partners.¹⁹³ Some of the reforms, while detrimental to farmers and peasants, opened new opportunities for the commercial elite, across the religious spectrum. It also allowed for the development of a new merchant class at the expense of the traditional elite.¹⁹⁴

Cooperation or conflict were determined by personal strategies but also by the nature of opportunities awarded to Damascenes. On the one hand, some reforms of the economic system benefited all elites across religious groups, and could lead to joint ventures. On the other hand, some transformations, such as the widespread attribution of foreign protection, benefited solely Christian and Jewish subjects and could cause tensions. Protégés and Muslim merchants also became competitors, especially when it came to international trade. Resentments were widespread among Muslim merchants in international trade because

¹⁹⁰ *Aḥwāl al-naṣārā*, 30, 31.

¹⁹¹ See the list of agents of Muslim merchants in A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Toppel- Bouquency, August 1st 1846; F.O., 195 601, Mishaqa-Brant, January 27th 1858; This dynamic was present since the 18th century, see Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean*, Princeton Modern Greek Studies (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 181; Bernard Heyberger, "Sécurité et insécurité : les chrétiens de Syrie dans l'espace méditerranéen (XVIIe - XVIIIe s)," in *Figures anonymes, figures d'élite: Pour une anatomie de l'Homo Ottomanicus*, ed. Bernard Heyberger and Meropi Anastasiadou (Istanbul: Isis, 1999), 151.

¹⁹² A.E., Nantes, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Toppel-Bourquency, August 1st 1846.

¹⁹³ Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 127.

¹⁹⁴ Rafeq, "Sources of Wealth," 255, 256.

protégés took advantage of their close relation with foreigners to gradually dominate this sector.¹⁹⁵

The Ottoman government was uneasy about the protection status and attempted to regulate it in the late 1830's by restricting the commercial privileges to foreign merchants only and not to protégés. In 1838, an order was issued to forbid dragomans, chancellors and consuls to engage in commercial activities.¹⁹⁶ Yet consulates had both political and economic missions. These individuals thus continued to engage in these activities, against the official orders.¹⁹⁷

Tensions were especially high in the textile trade. According to Abdul-Karim Rafeq 1/5th of the workers of the city of Damascus were involved in the textile domain.¹⁹⁸ The weaving industry was a source of direct or indirect revenue for a large amount of the population.¹⁹⁹ In the 19th century, many foreign houses of commerce became involved in the weaving of textile and its trade.²⁰⁰ In 1849 the French consul made a commercial report on imports from abroad to the Syrian provinces. He mentioned that most imports from Europe to the Ottoman Empire were textiles, threads and cotton from Europe.²⁰¹

There were increasing resentments towards foreign involvement into the textile trade. The French consul Max Outrey, in the midst of the violence of 1860, wrote a letter to his ambassador, Marquis de Lavalette, explaining that in Mount Lebanon the conflict was not between barbaric and rival nations of Druzes and Maronites, as it was portrayed by other

¹⁹⁵ Beinlin, *Workers and Peasants*, 45-47; Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 82; A.E., CCC/98-1, Ratti-Menton-Soult, December 28th 1839, ; A.E., Nantes, 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Beaudin-Tippel, January 17th 1846, and Tippel-Bouqueny, January 26th 1846.

¹⁹⁶ A.E., CCC/98, vol. 1, Ratti-Menton-Thiers, April 8th 1840.

¹⁹⁷ A.E., CCC/98, vol. 1, Ratti-Menton-Soult, December 20th 1839.

¹⁹⁸ Rafeq, "Craft Organization," 510.

¹⁹⁹ James A. Reilly, "The End of an Era: Pre-Reform Damascus in the 1820s," *Bulletin D'études Orientales* 61 (2012): 214.

²⁰⁰ Févret, "La sériciculture au Liban," 256.

²⁰¹ A.E., CCC/98, vol. 3, Valberg-Ecqueville, September 7th 1849.

onlookers, but rather an attack against Europeans and their textile establishments.²⁰² Local textile workshops saw their profit decrease because of the competition introduced by English textile. Fabrics gradually loss their value because of the increasing competition.²⁰³ Many workshops lost workers or sold their looms because they could not compete with the cheaper trendier foreign imports.²⁰⁴ However, other workers still had to pay the share of those who left the trade because the tax allocated to the corporation remained the same. It was a heavy load for the textile corporations.²⁰⁵ Attempts at a census led to rebellion, making impossible the reassessment of taxes. This situation also contributed to tensions between masters and workers.²⁰⁶ In 1848, the British consul reported that the notables complained in front of him that foreign manufacture and funds had superseded the Ottoman ones and that it had reduced Ottoman subjects to poverty.²⁰⁷ In the 1850's the main markets for Syrian products were Mecca and Baghdad. Damascene merchants complained that commerce in Mecca was poor because of the influx of European products.²⁰⁸ In the end of the 1850's, commerce in the city indeed slowed down. Mīḥā'īl Mišāqa wrote an article in the Beirut-based newspaper called *Ḥadīqāt al-Āḥbār* in 1860 complaining about the bad commercial situation because of the lack of sales ability of the Damascene textile.²⁰⁹

The disorders in the district of the Ḥawrān next to Damascus in this period also made it unsafe for travels and thus for the caravan to depart from Damascus. The pilgrim thus started to avoid the Ḥawrān and took the Aleppo route, thus by-passing Damascus.²¹⁰ The revenue of the caravan representing a large part of the commerce of the city, the changing of

²⁰² A.E., 189/PO, vol. 10, Outrey-Lavalette, July 21st 1860.

²⁰³ Rafeq, "Craft Organization," 503.

²⁰⁴ Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 71.

²⁰⁵ Rafeq, "Craft Organization," 507.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 509.

²⁰⁷ F.O., 195/291, Wood-Canning, November 24th 1848.

²⁰⁸ A.E., CCC/98, vol. 3, de Segur- Ecqueville, January 2nd 1850.

²⁰⁹ *Ḥadīqāt al-Āḥbār*, issue 105, (Beirut), January 5th 1860.

²¹⁰ A.E., 67/CPC, vol. 5/6, Outrey- Walewski, August 1st 1856.

the route of the caravan had dire consequences.²¹¹ The revenue of the commerce conducted on the caravan route was also a source of financing of the local treasury which was now lost.²¹² *Āgāwāt* were involved in this long distance trade and suffered from this situation.²¹³ The development of the steamship also lowered the number of pilgrims and merchandise passing through Damascus to reach Mecca.²¹⁴ The cholera pandemics of 1848, 1850 and 1858 also slowed down commerce and long distance trade and caused the death of a great number of ulema and notables.²¹⁵

Muslim merchants who sold foreign fabrics also benefited from trade with Europe and a whole *sūq* was designated for this purpose, the *sūq* of Bāb al Barīd, close to the Omayyad mosque.²¹⁶ This is where the events of 1860 started. One may wonder why the revolt started from one of the few markets that benefited from European intrusion into the Syrian economy. The answers might lie in Bāb Tūmā, where Christian and Jewish merchants also made a fortune selling European goods, but had an advantage over the merchants of Bāb al Barīd: many benefited from protected subject status. They paid low customs taxes and thus could sell at a lower price, while other merchants had to pay a much higher tax.²¹⁷ Then, through their relationships with foreign consuls, protégés had access to the cheaper English yarn, ensuring their continued production at a lower price.²¹⁸ There was an increasing inequality of wealth within the textile trade between protégé Christian merchants and Muslim craftsmen.²¹⁹ The wealth of Christian protégés, seen as caused by foreign intervention, was represented visually by the building of rich houses and the use of luxurious clothing, which attracted the jealousy

²¹¹ Rafeq, "Craft Organization," 510.

²¹² James Grehan, *Everyday Life*, 76.

²¹³ al-Uṣṭwānī, *Mašāhid*, 141.

²¹⁴ Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Damascus and the Pilgrim Caravan," in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, ed. Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C.A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 138.

²¹⁵ al-Uṣṭwānī, *Mašāhid*, 141.

²¹⁶ Rafeq, "Impact of Europe," 422; See map in Annex 1.

²¹⁷ Beinīn, *Workers and Peasants*, 45-47; Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 82; Khater, *Inventing home*, 30.

²¹⁸ Rafeq, "Craft Organization," 507.

²¹⁹ Rafeq, "Damascus and the Pilgrimage," 138.

of less fortunate Damascenes.²²⁰ Unsurprisingly, most of the looms that used to function in Bāb Tūmā were burned during the 1860 violence.²²¹ It is also not a coincidence that there were no Christian weavers in the Maydān neighborhood, untouched during the violence of 1860.²²²

There were various conflicts among Christian and Muslim silk artisans in the period under scrutiny. Silk was a major economic stake, and foreign houses of commerce relied on their protégés. On the other hand, Muslim silk weavers used the *mağlis* to protect their own interests and leverage the political influence of protégés. In 1843, there were in the city fourteen Muslim houses and forty-five Christian houses who produced Damask silk fabrics.²²³

Exemplifying these dynamics, the municipal council issued a decree in 1842, just after the Egyptian withdrawal from Syria, stating that Christians weavers could no longer produce a type of silk called the *Malkīyā*. The Christian weavers called upon the British consul to abrogate this decree. The Greek Catholic Ibrāhīm Mišāqa, who had arrived from Mount Lebanon to work in silk production in the city, also complained to the consulate because of this decree. He apparently benefited from the protection of the British consul.²²⁴ Pressured by the consul, the *mağlis* offered the compromise that Christians could work in the production of silk, but not own a loom of their own, rather they should work with Muslim masters. While consul eventually refused this offer, Muslims protested by closing their workshops, rendering numerous people unemployed. The consul thus turned to the chief of the *āšnāf* and found an agreement in that Christians could work in this capacity but their looms should be located in

²²⁰ F.O., 78/1520, Brant- Bulwer, August 30th 1860; F.O., 195/601, Brant-Bulwer, August 25th 1860; *Aḥwāl al-naṣārā*, 28.

²²¹ Abdul Karim Rafeq, "The Impact of Europe on a Traditional Economy: The Case of Damascus, 1840-1870," in *Économie et Sociétés dans l'Empire Ottoman, fin du XVIIIe-début du XXe siècle : Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 1er-5 Juillet 1980*, ed. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Paul Dumont (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1983), 422; Beinín, *Workers and Peasants*, 49.

²²² Beinín, *Workers and Peasants*, 49.

²²³ Societé Orientale de France, *Revue de l'Orient: Bulletin de la Société orientale*, Volume 2 (Paris: Delavigne, 1843), 185-186.

²²⁴ His relative, Miḥā'il Mišāqa, was linked to the British consulate, later on becoming the vice consul of the United governments of America.

the ‘Turkish quarter’, probably meaning in the Qaymayrīya the neighborhood specialized in textile production.²²⁵ However, *āṣnāf* chiefs ultimately refused to let Ibrāhīm work in the *Malkīyā*, showing a letter stating that foreigners could not work in this capacity.²²⁶ This answer points to the fact that *āṣnāf* leaders associated foreign protection with foreign status.

In 1846, the Christians manufacturers of silk were bothered again. Their Muslim competitors obtained from the *maḡlis* an ordinance forbidding them to weave a fabric called *alāḡā*²²⁷ and cotton, arguing that weaver was a Muslim job. The French consular agent Toppel complained to the governor, which resulted in the consulate door being put on fire.²²⁸ Some Muslim weavers also argued that it was a Muslim guild, while Christian weavers responded that imperial decrees abolished all types of monopolies.²²⁹ Although monopolies had been abolished in 1838,²³⁰ they were still enforced locally through pressure on the *maḡlis*. Indeed, orders to abolish monopolies were repeated over the 1840’s, yet it seems that it was only in 1851 that this decision was effectively enforced.²³¹ When the governor remarked that Muslims did not pay a specific tax to undertake this work, pointing to the fact that it was not a monopoly, the Muslims weavers demanded to pay a tax to remain in control of the production. When the governor refused, the weavers closed their shop to protest and to turn their workers against Christian weavers. The *maḡlis* ultimately judged in favour of the Muslim weavers.²³² This conflict reveals that economic competition played a role in the confessionalization of society. It encouraged individuals to reinforce the societal borders between religious groups by restricting certain professions to Muslims or Christians. To be sure, in the previous centuries, certain guilds had indeed been dominated by members of a specific religious

²²⁵ F.O., 195/196, Wood-Canning, July 12th 1842.

²²⁶ F.O., 195/196, Ahmad Pasha-Wood, July 12th 1842.

²²⁷ Deluxe stripped material made of a combination of silk and cotton.

²²⁸ A.E., 166/PO- Serie D/20, vol. 3, Toppel -Baron, December 19th 1846.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Khater. *Inventing Home*, 30.

²³¹ F.O., 195/368, Wood-Canning, March 12th 1851.

²³² Ibid.

community. In the 19th century however, with the abolition of the guilds, there were attempts to codify the religious identity of the profession through the use of the provincial *mağlis*.

Certain neighborhood were more touched by these tensions, depending on the dominant commercial activity. Qaymayrīya²³³ was the neighborhood of merchants and artisans, where weaving was conducted. It was the center of textile production.²³⁴ The neighborhood was often involved in troubles and rebellions.²³⁵ Among those who were hanged in 1860 for participating in the violence, many came from the Qaymayrīya.²³⁶ It remained an area where inter-confessional tensions were high, even after the violence of 1860. In October 1860, a few months after the violence, crosses were again drawn on Christian houses of Qaymayrīya,²³⁷ which led to a panic among Christians and encouraged their migration to Beirut.²³⁸

2.2 Money-lending

Money-lending could also lead to interpersonal conflicts which often gave rise to inter-confessional tensions. Christians and Jews under foreign protection opened money-changing establishments, which directly threatened the existing Muslim changing houses.²³⁹ Protégés enjoyed the backing of consulates in their commercial affairs, which gave them some sort of leverage. When protégés as creditors insisted on the timely repayment of debts, it often gave rise to conflicts.²⁴⁰ For example, in the winter of 1842, Ğirğis Maksūd, confronted one of his debtors, Ḥassan Ezzīya Kuldī, in front of foreign merchants and requested that he repays his debt of 100 piasters. Maksūd was officially a postmaster for the

²³³ See map in Annex 1.

²³⁴ Okawara, "Urban Fabric," 173, 175.

²³⁵ See for example neighborhood fights involving the Qaymayrīya BOA, MVL.186.115, September 22nd 1857; When the governor planned to start the conscription in 1850, he announced that it will start with the Qaymayrīya. After hearing the news, the merchants closed their shops and prepared for rebellion; A.E., 166/PO- Serie D/20, vol. 3, Valberg-French Ambassador in Istanbul, September 25th 1850.

²³⁶ al-Uṣṭwānī, *Mašāhid*, 184.

²³⁷ A.E., 67/CPC, vol. 5/6, Outrey-Thouvenel, October 16th 1860.

²³⁸ A.E., 67/CPC, vol. 5/6, Outrey-Lavalette, October 29th 1860.

²³⁹ A.E., 189/PO, vol. 9, Outrey-Thouvenel, March 7th 1856.

²⁴⁰ F.O., 190/226, Timoni-Canning, December 4th 1845 and December 28th 1846; F.O., 195/601, Brant-Malmesbury, September 17th 1858.

British consulate but also a merchant who owned a shop located in Khan ‘Umud, one of the oldest khans of Damascus in the ‘Amāra neighbourhood.

His debtor, Hassan, is described in the consular archives as a merchant, however in the Ottoman archives he is mentioned as a military leader.²⁴¹ He was unhappy to be called upon for a debt repayment in public, and denied having any debt to settle. The argument deteriorated and turned into a physical fight. Hassan then left the scene of the fight only to come back soon accompanied by soldiers and the chief of police, the *tüfekcibaşı*, to arrest Maksūd.²⁴² In order to get the support of the police, Hassan accused Maksūd of blasphemy, which enraged the crowds in the vicinity of the khan. The crowd encouraged the soldiers to arrest Maksūd. Blasphemy was a severely punished crime and as part of the repertoire of inter-confessional tensions, it was often used as a tool of delegitimization in disputes.²⁴³ The guards of the British consulate were sent to the spot immediately to help Maksūd and fought with the soldiers of the *tüfekcibaşı*. They eventually managed to bring Maksūd to the British consulate.

When the public uproar around this affair had finally died down, Maksūd, thinking that order had now been restored, decided to leave the consulate. He was mistaken because the *tüfekcibaşı* immediately arrested him. The chancellor of the British consulate, Mr. Timoni, was dispatched to Halit Paşa, the chief brigadier, to obtain his release. The chancellor claimed that Maksūd’s arrest was illegal because of his protection status. Timoni however was not successful in his mission and even entered into a physical fight with the brigadier. The British consul, outraged at this behaviour, sent an angry letter to the governor Necip Paşa, demanding the exemplary punishment of the merchant Hassan. Yet Necip Paşa contested the version of the story presented by Maksūd and accused him of blasphemy. He also reprimanded the

²⁴¹ BOA, HR.SFR.3.2.41, August 26th 1842.

²⁴² F.O., 195/196, Wood-Canning, February 20th 1842.

²⁴³ In 1843 a similar interpersonal conflict caused inter-confessional tensions as a Jewish man was accused of blasphemy, F.O., 195/226, Wood-Canning, December 13th 1843.

guards of the French consulate for drawing their swords on the government's soldiers. In a report crafted to the Ottoman government, both the blasphemy and the attack of the guards was put forward, while the reason of the dispute was not mentioned.²⁴⁴ Necip Paşa found the behaviour and attitude of foreign consuls, and especially the British ones, to be unacceptable. He crafted a petition to the sultan, which he encouraged Muslim notables to sign. In the petition, he demanded the removal of all consular agents in the city, denouncing the acts of aggression on the part of the guards of the consulates.²⁴⁵

This affair occurred at a delicate moment in Damascene history. The Ottoman government had recently recovered *Bilād al-Šām* from the hands of the Egyptians. The time was ripe for the expression of resentment towards Christians, seen as the favorites of the Egyptian regime. The notables of the *mağlis* attempted to re-impose clothing restrictions on non-Muslims that the Egyptians had lifted and forbade them from riding horses, in the hope of restoring the former hierarchies and the status quo which favoured them.²⁴⁶ In this period, inter-personal conflicts became intertwined with questions regarding hierarchy, political power, access and privilege. These conflicts involving protégés often led to popular uproar against foreigners and their influence.²⁴⁷

In the mid-19th century, various interpersonal conflicts involving Ottoman Christians or foreigners turned into public events of inter-confessional conflict. These interpersonal conflicts could have been resolved by the traditional negotiation and accommodation between traditional intermediaries and government officials. Conflicts in trade were previously resolved through the intervention of the guilds representatives among others. Due to the abolition of the guild system, these intermediaries could no longer diffuse social conflict. On the contrary, the intervention of consuls politicized and gave publicity to these interpersonal

²⁴⁴ BOA, HR.SFR.3.2.41, August 26th 1842.

²⁴⁵ F.O., 195/196, Wood-Canning, February 20th 1842.

²⁴⁶ A.E., 67/CPC, vol. 1/2, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, January 6th 1841.

²⁴⁷ F.O., 195/226, Wood-Canning, December 13th 1843.

conflicts. They used these conflicts to put pressure on the government to introduce desired reforms. These conflicts were taken as proofs of the dysfunctional aspect of the existing system and of the lack of open-mindedness and corruption of local inhabitants and government officials. Consuls also wished to show to their own foreign minister the precarious situation in which they were working in order to ask for more funds, employees or rewards. They were thus encouraged to worsen conflicts and make them public. On the other hand, governors also had an incentive to give publicity to these conflicts and to the role of foreign consuls in order to show Istanbul their loyalty and to prove their resistance against foreign encroachment in the empire. The strategies of foreign consuls and governors coincided in polarizing the public sphere and politicizing religious identities.

3. Competition for the Control of Rural Resources

Foreign protection and the privileges associated with it were a source of inter-confessional conflicts and resentment in trade. It also played an important role in land ownership and tax-farming, two domains which were transformed by the Ottoman *Tanzimat* reforms. It built on the long term development of the shift in the balance of power between Christians, Druze and Shias in Mount Lebanon, the Anti-Lebanon and the Biqā'.²⁴⁸

3.1 Power Dynamics of the 18th century

In Mount Lebanon, the rule of Bašīr II Šihāb from 1790 to 1840 allowed Maronites to challenge Druze leadership. Bašīr II Šihāb gained considerable power, pushed away the Druzes from the region, and gave predominance to the Maronites over tax-farming. At that point some of the Šihāb emirs converted to Christianity.²⁴⁹ In Wādī al Taym, under the

²⁴⁸ Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism*, 14; Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf*, 99.

²⁴⁹ Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon, A History of the Internationalization of a Communal Conflict*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 71; William Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600–2011* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 104.

leadership of Emir Bašīr II, tax farms were increasingly given to Christians instead of Druze.²⁵⁰

Similar dynamics took place in the Biqā‘, which is situated between Mount Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon mountains. The two main cities of the Biqā‘ were Zahle and Baalbek. The Biqā‘ had various *āwqāf*, agricultural lands and was considered as the granary of Damascus. The region was cultivated by peasants and run by tax farmers, paramilitary leaders, and governors of the neighboring cities. The domination of these countryside areas played a large role in Damascene politics.²⁵¹ Zahle was a Christian stronghold in the region populated mainly by Greek Catholics. Baalbek was under the authority of the Shia Ḥarfūš family.²⁵² It was at the cross road of a triangular relationship, between the Druze, the Shia Ḥarfūš and the Christians. In the Biqā‘, Shias such as the Ḥarfūš were traditionally the land owners and tax-farmers and Christians peasants rented the land for cultivation. The Ḥarfūš family had been awarded the tax-farm of the *sanjak* of Homs since the Ottoman conquest.²⁵³

However, from the 18th century, Zahle’s commercial success started to overshadow Baalbek, leading to the migration of many inhabitants to the new commercial center.²⁵⁴ Zahliotes increasingly entered into tax-farming and owned land in the Biqā‘.²⁵⁵ The increasing grain production of the region and the integration of the region into the world economy increased the value of these lands, pushing the government to bring it under its direct rule. The governors plot the Ḥarfūš against the Šihāb emirs to obtain the control of the Biqā‘.²⁵⁶ These attempts at centralization caused resistance from the part of these

²⁵⁰ For instance, he gave the tax farm of Rāšayā and Ḥāšbayā to his secretary Miḥā’il Mišāqa; Slim, *Métayage*, 129; Slim, *The Greek Orthodox Waqf*, 99.

²⁵¹ Harris, *Lebanon*, 111.

²⁵² Chahine, *C’était Zahlé*, 16.

²⁵³ Ibid, 31.

²⁵⁴ Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 166.

²⁵⁵ Haris, *Lebanon*, 111; Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn, *The View from Istanbul: Lebanon and the Druze Emirate in the Ottoman Chancery Documents, 1546–1711* (New York: I. B. Taurus, 2004), 124.

²⁵⁶ Haris, *Lebanon*, 111.

intermediaries who had held power for decades if not centuries and had built strong mutual relationships and links of reciprocity and loyalty with the local population.

In the end of the 18th century, the governor Ahmed al-Cezzar dealt a blow to the Ḥarfūš leadership of Baalbek. The Emir Bašīr II Šihāb managed by 1788 to bring the Biqā‘ under his authority. Zaḥle Christian inhabitants benefited from the temporary downfall of the Ḥarfūš, they obtained properties in the Biqā‘ thanks to their activities in commerce but also in money-lending.²⁵⁷ Greek Catholic merchants of Damascus also purchased houses in Zaḥle and land in the Biqā‘.²⁵⁸ There were thus similar changes in the balance of power in favor of Christians in the surroundings of Damascus in the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century.

3.2 Egyptian Rule : Shift in the Balance of Power

The Egyptian rule built on these earlier dynamics and because of alliance strategies favored the economic activities of Christians in the countryside at the expense of Druze. Under the Egyptians, the Emir Bašīr was rid of his competitors such as the Druze Ğunblāt emirs who were sent to Acre and executed by order of Muḥammad ‘Alī. He took over their responsibilities in the Šūf and in the Western Biqā‘.²⁵⁹ In Wādī al-Taym, and especially in Ḥašbayā and Rāšayā, Druzes were sent into exile and their Christian tenants tried to register their land under their own names.²⁶⁰ The Druze tax-farmers who fled to the Ḥawrān or were sent into exile during the Egyptian rule saw their responsibilities slowly overtaken by the Maronite clergy close to the Emir Bašīr.²⁶¹ In Dayr al-Qamar in the Šūf, the Druzes Ābū Naqab shaykhs used to have the control of the city and collected taxes on the area. However, they were sent into exile by the Egyptians and lost their privileges, which were taken over by

²⁵⁷ Abkāriyūs, *Kitāb Nawādir*, 53.

²⁵⁸ Chahine, *C’était Zahle*, 34.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

²⁶⁰ Šāhīn, *Ḥašr al-Liṭām*, 125-126; Farah, *Politics of Interventionism*, 10, 14, 56.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, 11.

Christians.²⁶² It was part of a larger policy of centralization of tax-farms by Ibrāhīm ‘Alī. First of all, he sent many tax-farmers into exile, replacing them with his own functionaries.²⁶³ Then, he exercised a more direct role into the collection of revenue.²⁶⁴ *Āṣrāf*, who had played a large role in tax-farming, were especially targeted by this centralization of taxation.²⁶⁵

When the Egyptians departed, this situation was ripe for conflict.²⁶⁶ The British consul supported the revolt against the Egyptians. To win the hearts of the mountaineers against the Egyptian regime, the British and Ottoman representatives promised Druze a recovery of all their former privileges.²⁶⁷ The British consul Wood won Ḥaṅḡar Ḥarfūš’s loyalty against the Egyptians by promising him the rule of Baalbek.²⁶⁸ Yet, in various cases, it turned out to be empty promises, for Christians refused to relinquish their rights over land and tax-farms.²⁶⁹ These conflicts over land ownership and tax-farming explain the participation of these various Druze leaders in the attack against Christians during the summer of 1860.

3.3 Tax-farming

During the Egyptian rule, *āḡāwāt* and notables also benefited from the transformations of land ownership at the expense of the ulema who used to own land beforehand.²⁷⁰ Foreigners and their protégés entered in the competition and endeavored to obtain the same access to property but also to play a role in tax-collection, money-lending and in the booming grain trade.²⁷¹ These activities were related, for money-lenders used to give a loan to a village

²⁶² Ibid, 64.

²⁶³ Slim, *Le Métayage*, 129.

²⁶⁴ Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800–1914: a documentary economic history*. Studies in Middle Eastern History (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press 1988), 416.

²⁶⁵ Na‘īsa, *Muḡtama*, 453.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 14.

²⁶⁷ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 59.

²⁶⁸ A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 4, Edmond de Barrere- French Ambassador in Istanbul, January 29th 1854.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 44, 64.

²⁷⁰ James A. Reilly, “Status Groups and Propertyholding in the Damascus Hinterland, 1828-80,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21 (1989): 521.

²⁷¹ F.O., 195/601, Brant-Alison, June 29th 1858; Abdul-Karim Rafeq mentions that Christians increasingly sought to purchase property in the first part of the 19th century and that they were in fourth position for land purchases in the Maydān in 1834-1835 Abdul-Karim Rafeq, “The social and economic structure of Bab

with high interest rates with land, produce or real estate as collateral. If peasants were not able to repay in time, the arrears would add up until they reached the value of the village. The village and its arable land would then be taken as repayment in kind of the original loan. Tax collecting, money lending and land acquisition were thus intimately related activities that were highly profitable, especially in the 19th century with the booming grain trade and exports to Europe.²⁷² It led to a strong competition between non-Muslims under foreign protection and Muslim *āḡāwāt*, notables, *āšrāf*, and ulema, who had dominated this economic sector beforehand. In this competition, protégés benefited from an advantage as they had access to European funds.²⁷³ To obtain tax-farms, protégés did not hesitate to make the consuls intervene to either delegitimize their opponents, or to obtain the removal of sub-governors who countered their commercial ventures by accusing them of corruption.²⁷⁴

Foreigners and protégés increasingly purchased tax-farms, which created conflicts with former intermediaries such as the Ḥarfūš.²⁷⁵ For example, in exchange for his support in the uprising against the Egyptians, the Ottoman government had promised the British consul's protégés tax-farms in the Biqā', the Ḥawrān, and Baalbek. At the departure of the Egyptians, these tax-farms were not auctioned, their price was fixed and given to British subjects. These tax-farms remained fixed until 1857.²⁷⁶ The rest of the tax-farms were sold again at auction, which was quite detrimental to peasants. As funds became more and more available through foreign loans, the bids on tax-farming accordingly increased to unprecedented levels, thus increasing the taxation burden on peasants.²⁷⁷ According to the British consul Wood, in 1850

al-Musalla (al-Midan), Damascus, 1825-1875," in *Arab Civilization: Challenges and Responses*, dir. Georges N. Atiyeh and Ibrahim M. Oweiss (New York: Suny Press, 1988): 286, 294; Reilly, "Status Groups", 525.

²⁷² Isabel Burton, *The Inner Life of Syria, Palestine and the Holy Land, from my Private Journal*, (London: Henry S. King, 1875), 332.

²⁷³ See the activities of Ḥanā Frayḡ in A.E., 18/PO- Serie A, vol. 9, Outrey-Thouvenel, March 7th 1856, A.E., 18/PO- Serie A, vol.3, Devoize-de Lemont, October 12th 1843; F.O., 195/601, Brant- Alison, June 29th 1858; F.O., 195/458, Misk-Redcliffe, January 28th 1857; BOA, HR.MKT.3.58.March 22nd 1844

²⁷⁴ A.E., 195/291, Calvert-Canning, September 28th 1850.

²⁷⁵ A.E., 18/PO - Serie A, vol. 9, Outrey-Thouvenel, November 15th 1856.

²⁷⁶ A.E., 18/PO- Serie A, vol. 9, Outrey-Thouvenel, November 15th 1856.

²⁷⁷ F.O., 195/368, Wood-Canning, November 17th 1850.

peasants had to pay from 43% to 60% of their revenue as tax. They were no longer able to pay their taxes and arrears were accumulating, making it harder to pay every year.²⁷⁸ Damascene notables and *āḡāwāt* maintained a strong grip on the areas around Damascus and on the tax farms in the main cities.²⁷⁹ However, the tax-farms of the Ḥawrān and Biqā‘ were later given to the Greek Catholic Baḥrī family.²⁸⁰

Governors attempted to counter the increasing involvement of foreigners and protégés in tax-farming by taking a variety of measures. In 1848, the governor forbade Europeans to make cash advances to peasants for their produce. The funds already given to peasants should be reimbursed in installments over four years. Then, he declared that all cases involving foreigners and Ottoman subjects would be judged by the *maḡlis*.²⁸¹ Finally, he sent a circular to the consuls informing them that any transaction had to be made on an official paper bought from the government to be valid. All other types of informal transactions were deemed invalid.²⁸² In this reform, we see an effort at bureaucratizing transactions between foreigners and Ottoman subjects probably to address the conflicts arising from contested purchases, loans and commercial transactions, frequent in this period.

Damascene notables, ulema, and *āšrāf* also attempted to diminish the tax-farming activities of foreign protégés by using the *maḡlis*. They repeatedly frustrated the commercial ventures of foreigners and protégés, by delaying repayment of debts. In 1845, when peasants from a village called ‘Adlīyā declared that they could not repay their debts to British protégés, some *maḡlis* members, also involved in tax-farming, refused to force the peasants to honor their debts in order to frustrate the protégés’ interests.²⁸³ The *maḡlis* grew worried about the

²⁷⁸ F.O., 195/391 Memorandum Wood, October 3rd 1850.

²⁷⁹ A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Toppel-Bourqueney, January 20th 1846; In 1845, the Biqā‘ was tax-farmed to an *āḡā* called Maymūr. In 1847, someone called Abū Ḥamzā won all the tax farm of Damascus in two consecutive years, A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Beaudin-Bourqueney, April 24th 1847; A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Beaudin- Bourqueney, April 24th 1847.

²⁸⁰ A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Lalberg- French Minister in Istanbul, March 27th 1850.

²⁸¹ F.O., 195/291, Wood-Canning, November 24th 1848.

²⁸² F.O., 195/291, Osman Pasha-Wood, October 20th 1848.

²⁸³ F.O., 195/226, David Harari-Consulate, December 4th 1845.

fact that an increasing amount of villages in Baalbek were sub-tax-farmed from the Ḥarfūš emirs by British dragomans.²⁸⁴ The *mağlis* thus decided in 1846 to add a clause to the tax-farming contracts stating that the contract could not be sub-lent to Europeans or Druzes under British protection.²⁸⁵ Indeed, as foreigners were excluded from tax-farming, they would usually sub-lend a district from a recognized tax-farmer. They could also simply pay the tax of a certain village and then receive a percentage of the crop afterwards, and sell them at their convenience. The *mağlis* repeated attempts at countering the increasing economic power of Christian and Jewish protégés in these economic domains were read by the consuls through sectarian narratives. They saw these measures as the consequence of their ‘fanatic’ ill-dispositions towards non-Muslims, rather than as a consequence of economic competition.²⁸⁶

In 1857, the *defterdar*²⁸⁷ attempted again to exclude foreigners from tax-farming, favoring instead government employees, although they were not supposed to be involved in this activity.²⁸⁸ He even put to auction the tax-farms that had been given to foreigners in Baalbek, Ḥawrān and the Biqā‘ after the return of the Ottoman government in 1842. The auctioning of these lands thus created discontent among the peasants as it would inevitably include a raise in tax. It also outraged foreigners who had been involved in this profitable region.²⁸⁹

3.4 Land-ownership

In addition to tax-farming, foreigners and protégés also increasingly purchased lands. *Qāḍī* court registers indicate that protégés purchased land and properties in the countryside of

²⁸⁴ On the Ḥarfūš family see Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon*.

²⁸⁵ A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Toppel-Bourqueney, January 20th 1846.

²⁸⁶ See for example A.E. CPC/Turquie/Damas, Ratti-Menton-Guizot, 25 novembre 1841.

²⁸⁷ Treasurer of the governor.

²⁸⁸ F.O., 195/458, Misk-Redcliffe, January 4th 1857.

²⁸⁹ F.O., 195/196, Misk- Redcliffe, January 28th 1857 and F.O., 195/458, Misk-Redcliffe, April 23rd 1857.

the city of Damascus in an unprecedented manner in the mid 19th century.²⁹⁰ Similar to Muslim elites, they used the control over rural resources to gain and retain power in the city. In this competition, foreigners and their protégés benefited from the tax advantage given to them by the capitulations but also the political leverage of the consuls. However, the access of foreigners to land was very controversial; it was officially legalized only in 1867, yet it is clear that foreigners, consuls and foreign religious establishments did buy land beforehand.²⁹¹ Consuls themselves engaged into the competition over land. They often used the name of protégés to purchase land.²⁹² For example, the British consul Wood bought large tracts of land.²⁹³ In Damascus, foreign consuls or consular agents at times entered into open conflict with each other regarding their respective land and tax-farm delimitation. These conflicts often involved their Ottoman employees and ended up creating resentments against foreigners and their protégés.²⁹⁴ Some consuls were quite critical of the attempts of foreigners or protégés to acquire land through money-lending and their instrumentalization of consuls for personal gains.²⁹⁵

As protégés and consuls increasingly turned to land purchases as means of influence, the governors started to worry. Foreign ownership of land in Syria seems to have already been a concern for the central government at the end of the 18th century when the governor al-Cezzar was ordered not to let foreigners buy land.²⁹⁶ At that time, the consuls' *berats*

²⁹⁰ The Damascene court records (*sicil*) mentions many purchases from the Frayğ and Šāmī families, see for example Islam Arařtırmaları Merkezi, Istanbul, *Turkiye Harici sicciler*, Dimařk, vol. 516, 1859-1861, no.42.

²⁹¹ A.E., 189/PO, vol. 10, Outrey-Thouvenel, January 10th 1860; Ulrike Freitag, "The City and the Stranger," 222; A.E., 18/PO- Serie A, vol. 9, Outrey-Thouvenel, January 12th 1857.

²⁹² The consuls often entered into conflict with each other over their respective lands, BOA, HR.MKT.178.16 February 18th 1857; A.E., 18/PO/A, vol. 9, Outrey-Thouvenel, January 12th 1857; The British consul Richard Wood was especially active in land purchases, see A.E., 166/PO- Serie D/20, vol. 3, Barbet de Jouy-Lavalette, September 9th 1852.

²⁹³ A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, Barbet de Jouy-Lavalette, September 9th 1852.

²⁹⁴ F.O., 195/601, Brant-Bulwer, October 20th 1860; F.O., 195/458, Misk-Redcliffe, January 4th 1857; A.E., 18/PO- Serie A, vol. 9, Outrey- Thouvenel, January 12th 1857, also see in the Ottoman archive on this subject : BOA, HR.MKT.178.16, January 19th 1857.

²⁹⁵ Burton, *The Inner Life of Syria*, 336.

²⁹⁶ BOA, C.HR.159.7926, November 13th 1792.

started to mention the interdiction to buy or possess land.²⁹⁷ This concern was amplified in the 19th century with the development of foreign imperial projects. The control of land by foreigners was commonly seen as the first step towards conquest and foreign domination, which some Damascenes thought were imminent.²⁹⁸

Conflicts regarding the legalization of land acquisition for foreigners were common and the local elite attempted to prevent foreigners from acquiring lands in the empire, which they themselves were coveting. Even after the authorization to buy land in 1867, the fact that the French consul and some foreigners bought very large plots of land around Hama at a very cheap price caused the *qāḍī* Muḥammad Saʿid al Uṣṭwānī to resign because of his opposition to the governor Muhammad Reşid Paşa who had authorized such a transaction.²⁹⁹

Faced with foreign ownership of land, the members of the *mağlis*, themselves landowners, tried to counter the expansion of the economic activities of protégés and foreigners in the countryside of the city by attempting to exclude them legally from landownership.³⁰⁰ For example in 1835 and 1847, the *mağlis* of Aleppo forbade Christians to buy property in Aleppo, probably in order to prevent foreigners to buy it through their intermediary. The Greek Catholic patriarch Maksīmūs Maḥlūm complained in 1847 about this interdiction and argued that it gave the population the impression that Christians were no longer Ottoman subjects but were actually treated as foreigners.³⁰¹ In the same period, the members of the *mağlis* of Damascus attempted to prevent Christians and Jews from sitting on

²⁹⁷ Boogert, *The Capitulations*, 26.

²⁹⁸ Rumors reported in: A.E. 67/CPC, vol. 5/6, Outrey-Walewski, September 27th 1858; A.E. 67/CPC, vol. 5/6, Outrey-Walewski, October 24th 1858; A.E. CPC/ vol. 7/8, Outrey-Thouvenel, July 28th 1860; See also Anonymous, *Les Massacres du Mont Liban 1860 : souvenirs de Syrie par un témoin oculaire* (Paris, Asmar, 2007), 112-117; An example is particularly telling, when the project of building a road from Beirut to Damascus was made public, it was perceived locally as a way to facilitate foreign invasion of the hinterland: A.E., Nantes, 18/PO/A, vol. 9, Outrey-Thouvenel, September 22nd 1858; BOA, A.MKT.UM.460.100, March 10th 1861; Şahin, *Haşr al-Liṭām*, 129.

²⁹⁹ al-Uṣṭwānī, *Maşāhid*, 51.

³⁰⁰ BOA, A.DVN.21.12, February 23rd 1847; FO, 195/196, Wood-Canning, July 12th 1842 ; A.E., CCC/98-3, De Ségur-Drouyn de Lhuys, April 11th 1849; A.E., CCC/98-1, Ratti-Menton-Soult, December 28th 1839.

³⁰¹ BOA, A.DVN.21.12 February 23rd 1847.

the *mağlis*.³⁰² Actions that were described by the consuls as against Christians were actually a strategy within an economical and political competition. It was caused by the consideration that there were limited resources and no possibility of shared benefits, thus creating a zero-sum game. These strategies however ended up comforting the idea that Christians were not fully Ottoman subjects.

When a tax on property, the *vergi*, was imposed in 1843, the question of the financial responsibilities of Ottoman protégés became a major point of contention between foreign powers and the governor.³⁰³ Were protégés supposed to pay the tax on property even if they were exempted from taxation? The Ottoman government had to define more clearly the border between foreigner and Ottoman subject. In 1843, the governor Necip Paşa was quite aware that the Christians and Jewish elites were rushing toward protection to avoid the property tax. He requested that even protégés pay the *vergi* tax, for it was a property tax and was applicable to all Ottoman subjects, including protégés.³⁰⁴ The consuls, on the other hand, insisted that protégés be exempted from it, for they considered that it was a personal tax and therefore included in the fiscal exemptions listed in the capitulations.³⁰⁵ This assertion was not completely misled, for although the *vergi* was imposed on three classes, rich, middle and poor, it was still collected as a fixed sum by head. For this tax to become a real property tax it would require a census of individual property, but there was no real assessment of property or wealth until the 1850's.³⁰⁶ The Ottoman government was quite careful not to rush into a wealth census for it had caused the death of the governor Salim Paşa decades earlier and had precipitated the conquest of the region by the Egyptians.³⁰⁷

³⁰² F.O., 195/291, Wood-Canning, December 19th 1848.

³⁰³ F.O. 195/226, Aly Pasha-Wood, March 27th 1846.

³⁰⁴ F.O., 190/226, Wood-Canning, April 8th 1846.

³⁰⁵ F.O., 195/291, Wood-Osman Pasha, February 24th 1849.

³⁰⁶ F.O., 195/368, Wood-Canning, April 27th 1852.

³⁰⁷ Mishāqah, *Murder, Mayhem*, 165.

The governor, faced with the refusal to pay taxes, took various measures to control the acquisition of protection. In 1844, he asked that consuls present an up-to-date list of their protégés.³⁰⁸ The consuls were rather reluctant to do so, and Christian notables threatened the French consul not to publish this list.³⁰⁹ Later on, the governors asked to see the passports of those who claimed foreign nationality, yet the consuls resisted.³¹⁰ The consuls were worried that by allowing the governor to inspect their documents, they would be setting a precedent. They saw the attribution of protection as a right associated with their function, and refused to let the Ottoman government control their internal procedures.³¹¹ When the French consul received a vizirial letter in 1849 which demanded that protégés obtain an identification card from the governor, he refused for he feared that protégés would see themselves as sent by the governor, and thus indirectly employed by him, and would therefore become unreliable.³¹² There was a similar concern for loyalty among local notables as well. For example, members of the Damascene *mağlis* also justified their expulsion of Christians and Jews from this institutions by accusing them of working as spies for foreign consuls.³¹³ The position of protégé, embedded in two political frameworks, was seen with suspicion on both sides. The British consul complained that when the *mağlis* members and the governors discussed publicly the issue of protégés' taxation, they made it seem as if protégés were rebelling against the government, without mentioning the underlying reasons of their refusal. It thus gave a bad image of protégés as disregarding Ottoman authority.³¹⁴

In 1845, the governor of Damascus, fed up with the actions of the consuls, presented the local Christians and Jews with an ultimatum. They had three months to define their status

³⁰⁸ F.O., 195/196, Wood-Canning, May 17th 1844.

³⁰⁹ A.E., 166/PO-Serie D/20, vol. 3, de Bourville-Bourquency, December 11th 1847.

³¹⁰ BOA, HR.MKT. 19.60, March 24th 1848.

³¹¹ F.O., 195/196, Wood-Canning, December 1st 1848.

³¹² A.E., 67/ CPC, vol. 3, Garnier- de Lhuys, April 1st 1849.

³¹³ F.O., 195/291, Wood-Canning, February 13th 1849.

³¹⁴ F.O., 195/ 291, Wood-Osman Nuri Paşa, July 16th 1849.

and position as either foreigners or Ottoman subjects.³¹⁵ If the protégés did not pay the *vergi*, they would not be considered as Ottoman subjects, but rather foreign *musta'mīn*.³¹⁶ They could therefore not own land in the empire, which was officially forbidden for non-Ottoman subjects until 1867. In this case they had to sell their real estate and properties.³¹⁷ This ultimatum requiring Christians and Jews to choose between *ḍimmī* and *musta'mīn* status was repeatedly put forth throughout the 19th century and always met with resistance from the foreign consuls thereby undermining its success. Rather than being actual threats, these ultimatums should be considered as negotiation tools, as a mean to make foreign protection less attractive by getting rid of the middle position between foreigner and Ottoman subject.

In conclusion, in the 19th century, the economic domains of textile trade, land-ownership and tax-farming underlined by a strong competition, increasingly defined along religious lines. It contributed to the confessionalization of Ottoman society. The introduction of foreign protection, coupled with the *Tanzimat* reforms, changed the rule of access to resources. The various advantages foreign protection attributed to protégés created opportunities for alliances across religious borders but was also a major cause of conflict and resentments between economic actors. With the transformation of urban governance in the *Tanzimat* reforms, traditional intermediaries could no longer diffuse tensions. As protégés used foreign consuls to secure their rights, the Muslim notables relied on the *mağlis* to counter the land purchases of foreigners through restricting the economic role of Ottoman subjects under foreign protection. It led to the increasing involvement of the Ottoman governors and foreign consuls in these interpersonal conflicts, which turned them into diplomatic issues. It also contributed to the politicization of religious identities. These various conflicting claims over land played a role in the inter-confessional violence of 1860 in Damascus and the

³¹⁵ F.O., 78/660, Wood-Aberdeen, April 8th 1846.

³¹⁶ Foreigners granted the sultan's protection under the capitulations.

³¹⁷ F.O., 195/291, Wood-Cowley, March 5th 1848,

countryside. Foreign protection was subject to lengthy negotiations between the Ottoman government and foreign consuls. As the Ottoman government increasingly attempted to regulate this status, it led to the identification of protégés as others against which Ottoman citizenship was defined.