

SYRIA UNDER MEHEMET ALI

BY ASAD JIBRAIL RUSTUM
American University, Beirut, Syria

The manuscript from which this Epilogue is now published was bequeathed by its author to the American University of Beirut, Syria, in 1887. Several facts argue its authenticity: First, it came to the library of the American University of Beirut as one of the author's books and manuscripts which have since made up the Naufal Naufal Collection. Second, its penmanship is strikingly similar in every way to the author's handwriting in other well-authenticated manuscripts. Third, and most conclusive, Professor Jurjus Khuri, of the aforesaid university, who on more than one occasion acted as amanuensis for the author and wrote several of its pages, on examining the manuscript after it came into the possession of the university, made positive recognition of his own handwriting.

Though not as elegant and graceful as that of his own copy of Dwayyhi's *Profane History*, the author's handwriting in this manuscript is still clear and beautiful; and if it could be listed under any of the well-known styles of Arabic handwriting it would probably be that of the Turkish *Ruka'î*. When acquired by the authorities of the American University of Beirut it was already bound in a volume of 516 pages, 17 cm. × 27. For reasons which will become apparent in the course of the Introduction, we have chosen for publication the first page, which contains the author's Foreword, and the last forty-nine pages, which go to make up his Epilogue. The Arabic text of the whole manuscript will appear in the numbers of the *Journal of the American University of Beirut*.

In preparing this translation we have tried to be as faithful to the original as possible. Wherever we have had to supply words ourselves we have inserted such additional material within brackets. We have, moreover, specially avoided choice and literary English in order to conform to the Arabic of the author, which is certainly neither choice nor literary. Our main purpose in providing footnotes has been to elucidate obscure passages in the text and not to write our own history of the same period. We hope to publish in the near

future separate articles on the controversial points of the campaign of 1831-33.

Finally, in settling several passages of the text, and in preparing both Introduction and notes, we have to acknowledge with the deepest gratitude the kind assistance of Professors S. Crawford, H. H. Nelson, and Ph. Hitti, of the American University of Beirut, Fathers L. Cheikho and H. Lammens, of the Jesuit University of the same city, and last but not least, Professors D. D. Luckenbill and M. Sprengling, of the University of Chicago.

AUTHOR AND MANUSCRIPT

The author of this manuscript, Naufal Naufal Tarabulsi, was born about 1812 in Tripoli, Syria.¹ Of his parentage and childhood very little is known. His father seems to have been a man of attainments and ability, for in spite of the rigid Moslem government which then prevailed in Syria, with its political and social discrimination between Moslems and non-Moslems, he, though a Christian, succeeded in holding office with the government. Ni‘mat-ul-Lah Naufal Tarabulsi was well educated for those days, and his son must have acquired a part of his education at home. When in 1813 this same Ni‘mat-ul-Lah Naufal accepted a position in the government of Egypt, a new field with unlimited possibilities was opened to little Naufal.

¹ In view of the statement which our author makes on p. 483 of this manuscript, to the effect that his father reached Egypt on December 24, 1813, the year 1812 can no longer be taken as the exact date of Naufal's birth. All accounts of his life that have heretofore been published agree that Naufal was a lad when his father left for Egypt, and that he had been in government employment in Egypt before Ibrahim Pasha conquered Syria. Some of the sources, moreover, tell us that he acquired his early education in Tripoli. Now, if the year 1812 is accepted as the exact date of his birth, a number of embarrassing facts would then have to be admitted: Naufal would have acquired his early education during the first twelve months of his life; he would have been a lad while he was only one or two years old; and finally, he would have been twelve or fifteen years old when he filled a government post in Egypt. Furthermore, it is highly improbable that 1812 was meant to be taken literally when it was used by Diyab and others of Naufal's friends on the day of his death. In the rush of the moment when people were inquiring about Naufal's age, as they still do on the day of a man's death, Diyab and others very likely went about their task in the following way: They were sure that Naufal was an old man (a shaykh), having allowed then seventy-five years for this fact, and having subtracted this number from 1887, the year of his death, they arrived at the conclusion that he was born in 1812. Anyone who has lived in the East knows that seventy-five years does not necessarily mean seventy-five; it may mean anywhere between seventy and eighty-five or more, but it does mean old. Once published, however, in the circular announcing his death to the various journals and magazines, it was bound to creep into such histories as were to include an account of our author's life. (For an account of his life see *Hilal*, July, 1898; *Muktataf*, Nov., 1887; *An-Nashrat-ul-Usbuiyyah*, Aug., 1887; Cheikho, *History of Arabic Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, II, 121.)

He is said to have accompanied his father to Egypt and to have studied at some of the schools which Mehemet Ali had then just opened. It was very probably there and then that Naufal learned his double-entry bookkeeping and above all his Turkish, both of which proved to be of great assistance to him later in life. When as a result of the war of 1831-33 Syria was annexed to Egypt, both father and son left Egypt and accepted positions in the governments of Tripoli and Latakia. In 1836 the father fell a victim to the jealousy and ill-feeling that then prevailed between the Christians and the Moslems of Tripoli. Very hastily, it would seem, and without sufficient and careful investigation, Ibrahim Pasha condemned Naufal's father to death and had him executed in June of the same year. Naufal never forgot the deed, not even after Ibrahim Pasha had tried, apparently, to make amends for it. Late in life, in the early eighties, when he sat down to write this history, he not only could remember the day, month, and year when the death sentence was executed—rather unusual in those days in the East—but actually broke into tears while dictating it to Professor Jurjus Khuri, of the American University of Beirut, who was then a Freshman passing his holidays in Tripoli and assisting Naufal in writing his manuscript.

In 1840, when the Turks and their allies undertook the reconquest of Syria, our author filled the position of private secretary to Izzat Pasha, Turkish wali of Sidon. The next thirty years of his life he spent first as chief clerk of the Finance Department of Tripoli, then as secretary to the Administrative Council of the vilayet of Sidon, head clerk of the Custom House in Beirut, and finally Turkish dragoman at the German and American consulates in Tripoli. Toward the end of his life he retired in Tripoli and devoted his whole time to study and publication. His *General History of Science* and his translation of the Ottoman administrative law gave him a place of honor among native authors.¹

In the manuscript before us, Tarabulsi's sentences are at times too long and too complicated. His syntax is so loose that the reader begins to wonder which is which and what is what. In style he is as far from the classical as the nineteenth century is from the seventh

¹ For a full list of his works see Zaydan, *History of Arabic Literature*, IV, 289; Cheikho, *op. cit.*, II, 121.

and eighth. This is particularly true of his idiom and of his vocabulary; at times they are too vernacular to be understood by either the Egyptian or the Mesopotamian Arab. Judged by the standard of the twentieth-century nationalistic Syrian or Egyptian, Tarabulsi's language is vulgar. But to the student of the development of written Arabic, our author's style and vocabulary are not only interesting but important, inasmuch as they preserve a separate and distinct stage through which nineteenth-century written Arabic passed. One has only to read a few lines of Dahdah's "Emir Bashir's First Voyage to Egypt"—written toward the beginning of the last century—and then a few lines of any of Shaykh Ibrahim Yaziji's works—a hundred years later—and he will at once see the gap that separates the two.¹ There is scarcely one line in the former work that is free from Greek, Turkish, or Italian, even on the most common subjects, while in the latter even an educated Syrian or Egyptian will have to hold his dictionary in hand and look up his words as he goes along—words of the most unusual size, resurrected and used after centuries of death and oblivion. In vain will the two extremists in both Syria and Egypt dispute the kind of Arabic we are going to have. A living written Arabic will very probably have to borrow from both. Tarabulsi's Arabic is only one of those intermediate steps that are to lead to an Arabic that will be less rigid than the classical and less flexible than the colloquial. But this colloquial Arabic, interesting and mysterious as it is to the Western Orientalist, is bound to rouse interest among its own sons, and itself then will be a subject for research and study. Furthermore, if it is true that the grammar and syntax of a language represent a living and vivid picture of the psychology and mental make-up of the people who speak that language, we would have in the case before us good material for the future student of oriental folk-psychology; a study that has not yet been begun but a study that will have to be made before we can properly and completely understand our present-day East, internally as well as internationally.

¹ Dahdah's manuscript account of this voyage was published by Salim Khattar Dahdah in *Mashrik* (1920), pp. 687-97; 732-39; 889-99. Any of Yaziji's works would serve this purpose; see some of his articles in *Ad-Diya*. Read for the same purpose Isaaf Nashashibi, *Sayr-ul-Ilm wa Siratuna Maahu*.

Although determined to write a modern history of Syria and Egypt from 1500 to 1840, our author yielded to the same temptation that faced almost every other oriental historian before him, namely, to begin with the beginnings of all things. In the opening pages of the manuscript the reader can feel the struggle through which the author must have been going in trying to write both a modern and a general history. Out of a total of 516 pages he finally devoted 476 to the period he knew least and only 49 to the events he himself witnessed. This fact becomes more interesting when it is remembered that it was very probably his distinct purpose to give an account of the history of Syria between 1830 and 1840 in order to justify his father's conduct and possibly to discredit the administration of Ibrahim Pasha.

Tarabulsi's historical method is typically oriental, and makes in itself an extremely interesting case, as we can really observe him at work. Several people who knew him well are still living, and almost everything that went to make up his history in the way of books, chronological charts, etc., is still preserved in Beirut under his name.

First of all, Tarabulsi seems to have set about making a collection of all the histories that touched his chosen field; we can still handle his own Turkish copy of *Tarikh Jaudat* and that of Kheirullah Effendi, his private copy of Shidyak's *Akhbar-ul-Ayan*, of Najjar's *Misbah-us-Sari*, and of Kasatli's *ar-Raudat-ul-Ghanna*. Among others, the Naufal Naufal Collection of the Library of the American University of Beirut contains Tarabulsi's own chronological charts, a full list of Mohammedan and Christian years, and a table of weights and measures of the various countries of the Levant.

Then, when he had collected his authorities, Tarabulsi patched them together in such a way as to give his reader a more or less continuous narrative; for his early modern period he did nothing more than translate various passages from the Turkish history of Jaudat and from that of Kheirullah Effendi. At the end of the title to almost every one of his chapters on this early modern period Tarabulsi usually indicates in a phrase or two sometimes the chapter, sometimes the page, in Jaudat's *History* from which he has drawn his material. And this method is repeated in his Epilogue—for the period he knew best; for out of a total of 49 pages that make up

this Epilogue only 19 are his own and the rest either Shidyak's, Najjar's, or Kasatli's.

But if we follow our author a step farther and compare the passages he inserts in his Epilogue with the original account as we find it in Shidyak, for instance, we come every now and then upon slight variations. Tarabulsi seems to have been accustomed to one way of spelling the name of St. Jean d'Acre, and wherever it occurs it is spelled out in his own way, regardless of the original. Sometimes he substitutes the preposition *ila* (to) for *ala* (on). But unfortunately for the modern student who has been trained to see the shadings in the meanings of various words and the fine distinctions in the use of others, Tarabulsi sometimes uses a word which expresses an idea entirely different from that expressed by the original author; and although he may have wished to correct his source in some cases, this cannot have been the reason in others.¹

In spite of all these defects, however, when manuscript and author are judged in their own milieu, they are not found entirely lacking in merit. Tarabulsi was one of the first Arab historians of the last century to break away from the annalistic method of writing history and to make an attempt, at least, to divide his work into chapters and to arrange his material accordingly. His chapter on "The Administration of Mehemet Ali in Syria" makes, in itself, not only an original source of the greatest importance but also an excellent counterpoise to Mushakah's high-sounding praises in his *Mashhad-ul-Ayan*.

SUBJECT-MATTER

The risings of the Syrians against the rule of Mehemet Ali Pasha form the bulk of the material dealt with in the Epilogue of this manuscript. As a consequence, the remaining part of this Introduction will now be devoted to a close study of the nature of these risings and of their origin. The amount of attention that was given to these revolts by Mehemet Ali Pasha and by his son Ibrahim, and their far-reaching effect upon the final settlement of the diplomatic crisis of 1840-41, justify us (we hope), in giving them special consideration in this Introduction and in making them the subject of our research.

¹ Compare his own version of the battle of Konieh with the original in Najjar, *Misbah-us-Sari*, p. 278.

When in the spring of 1833 Mehemet Ali Pasha finally laid down his arms, he did so, not because he had attained his object, but because circumstances had prevented him from going any farther. Ever since the year 1805, when the Sultan finally sanctioned his hold upon the government of Egypt, Mehemet Ali had had every reason to mistrust the "good intentions" of the Imperial Government. In 1805-6 the Porte had tried to transfer him to the pashalik of Salonik. At the end of the Greek War of Independence, when he called for the price of services rendered in the Morea, he had been allowed nothing besides the island of Crete. Moreover, the Porte had tried her own hand at reform; the Janissaries had been destroyed, a new army had been formed on the European model, Sultan Mahmud's financial, judicial, and political reforms had curbed the powers of the provincial governor. The Dereh Beys, of Anatolia; the pashas of Diyâr Bakr, Urfah, Mârdîn, and Mosul; Daûd, of Bagdâd; 'Alî, of Janina; HÛsayn, of Bosnia; and Muştafa, of Scutari, had all been crushed by the forces of the central government.¹ Finally, his own personal enemy, Khosrew, had succeeded in becoming grand-vizier at Constantinople. To forestall the danger which he saw was coming, Mehemet had declared war against his sovereign and had defeated him both at Hims and at Konieh. But, to his great chagrin, not much had been accomplished; Khusrew was still in power; Sultan Mahmud's opposition had been made only more bitter; and Syria and Egypt were to be held by ordinary tenure, subject to annual renewal. Moreover, Mehemet's power had by that time become too great not to excite his ambition and too precarious to be satisfactory. He was classing himself with Napoleon Bonaparte, and was claiming Alexander the Great as a fellow-countryman. Wellington, Chateaubriand, Walter Scott, and Schiller had all been born in 1769 as he had been, and yet, what had he accomplished?² Too proud of what he had already achieved, and too confident in his own powers, Mehemet was bound to consider the Convention of Kutahiah as an expedient and not as a final solution and to take steps to better his military position.

The passes of the Taurus were soon fortified against Mahmud, and the only roads on the northeastern frontier that were practicable

¹ Creasy, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 449.

² Paul Mouriez, *Histoire de Mehemet-Ali, etc.*, I, 53.

for artillery were before long made impassable by the erection of forts and military defenses.¹ Acre, in the course of a few years, was entirely rebuilt and turned into a strong naval base, and similar attempts were made near Alexandretta.² Barracks and lazarettos were built in almost all the principal towns of the country.

In doing this, the Pasha was forced to ask the Syrians to contribute their own share in taxes and corvée, and thus provided them, as it were, with one source of complaint. Public works of a new nature were soon undertaken, and the burden of taxation and corvée had to be increased correspondingly. The Pasha's palace at Antioch and his baths at Tiberias and Alexandretta were only a few of the more important structures that were soon built throughout Syria.³ His plantations were likewise bound to be another source of annoyance to a public that was rapidly getting tired of forced labor. Thirty-seven thousand mulberry trees were planted in the districts of Sidon, Beirut, and Tripoli, and as many olive trees in the interior of the country.⁴ Similar efforts were made in the neighborhood of Acre, and every village there was forced to contribute "olive and cherry trees, 60 of each sort every day, for ten days."⁵ Similarly, Ibrahim made great exertions to oblige all the chief officers and most wealthy inhabitants of Syria to take upon themselves the restoration of ruined villages and the cultivation of lands belonging to those villages.⁶ In addition to all this he had to exploit the coal mines of Mount Lebanon and the wood of Alexandretta; he had to move his troops and to transport their stores from one end of the country to the other in order to put down the risings that soon began to break out; for all these, too, Ibrahim had to call for more labor and more capital.

The Syrians were not only forced to yield to the corvée but they were compelled to accept it at government rates and even then under hard conditions. At the Government Timber Works of Alexandretta,

¹ Sir John Bowring, "Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria," p. 28; C. G. Addison, *Damascus and Palmyra*, II, 250.

² Monro, *A Summer Ramble in Syria*, I, 53, 302; Prisse d'Avennes, *L'Égypte Moderne*, p. 16; Bowring, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-29.

³ Monro, *op. cit.*, I, 312-13; John Barker, *Syria and Egypt under the Last Five Sultans of Turkey*, II, 203-4.

⁴ Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁵ Monro, *op. cit.*, II, 34.

⁶ Between 1826 and 1838, in the district of Aleppo alone, over 70 villages and 440 parcels of land were reclaimed (Bowring, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10).

. . . . the cutters and trimmers were exposed to the contingency of a tree they had cut being found, on trimming and squaring, to have perished at the heart or otherwise, when they did not receive any pay for it, but could have taken the tree and made what use of it they could; its frequent distance from any habitation, however, made it not worth the transport; consequently, so much time and labour was lost to them: this fell at times very heavily on some, as they were left to their own choice in the selection of the trees. . . . Those engaged in the transport received each a pair and a half of buffalos or bullocks, which were valued to them at about 700 to 1,000 piasters per pair, which sum they were debited with, and had to make good in case of loss, death or accident: the consequence was, that when a man met with such a misfortune before he had the means of repairing it generally had recourse to flight.¹

Then again in connection with the transportation of government coal from *Ḳirnâyil* to Beirut the muleteers were always held responsible for any loss in the weight of the commodity they were transporting, notwithstanding the fact that it was very seldom their fault. After ten or twelve hours' exposure to both air and sun as it came down to Beirut, the *Ḳirnâyil* coal was bound to lose between 5 and 10 per cent of its original weight, if for no other reason than that of evaporation. But this was not all; in this case as well as in others, the government seems to have used two different sets of weights depending upon whether she was giving or receiving; and between nature's fault and the government's trick the muleteer was left practically without a wage.² Around Acre the *corvée* had become intolerable as early as 1833. For 30 miles around, everybody—man, woman, or child—was compelled, Monro tells us, to contribute his own share toward the rebuilding of the town and its fortifications. In many cases the villagers had to carry lime and timber on their own shoulders over several miles, while their horses and mules had been seized for similar purposes.

Furthermore, in Syria as elsewhere, the other classes of the population were too dependent upon the laborer and the artisan not to be affected by the change in their circumstances. The seizure of a certain number of hands by the authorities naturally raised the price of all non-governmental labor and formed an additional drain upon the resources of the country. By 1836 the wages of the artisans had

¹ Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

² Perrier, *La Syrie sous le gouvernement de Mehemet Ali, etc.*, pp. 272-73.

increased 200 per cent, and the price of their productions rose in proportion. Then in 1837 the big earthquake came and with it an additional rise in the price of labor. Merchants before long began to find it difficult to transact their business, and the most serious disturbances of ordinary commerce took place.¹

Again, in consequence of the military exigencies of his position, Ibrahim was forced to call for more money. While he enforced all the older taxes he compelled the Syrians to pay new ones. A tax on all males from twelve years upward, and varying from 15 to 500 piasters according to the means of each, seems to have been levied as early as 1834. Everybody, Moslem or non-Moslem, had to pay it.² In Damascus it constituted one-third of the whole revenue of the government, and as far as we know there is no reason why it should have been much less elsewhere in Syria.³ Moreover, besides the regular taxes, the country seems to have been subjected to frequent arbitrary exactions under various names and for various purposes. Large contributions of grain were required annually for the use of the government, and the farmer was compelled to sell his crop at a price which had been arbitrarily fixed by the highest administrative council in the country. The portion claimed by the government had to be delivered at government granaries which might be several days' journey from the farm; and for this no allowance was made. But the climax was reached when the farmer delivered his grain at the government dépôt; for, contrary to all expectation, he usually found he had to give an additional fourth of the whole quantity he was delivering, the government having used once more two sets of weights depending upon whether she was receiving or giving.⁴ Furthermore, Ibrahim seems to have tampered with the currency of the country either immediately before or shortly after

¹ The material that was used in the construction of the Pasha's bath at Tiberias had to be secured from Acre, for Ibrahim wanted to have his bath built of the spoils of Abdullah Pasha's bath. The wood with which it was lined had to be brought down from Mount Lebanon, for nothing less than cedar wood satisfied the ambition of the victorious general (Monro, *op. cit.*, I, 302; II, 34).

² Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Paton, *History of the Egyptian Revolution, etc.*, II, 122.

³ Judging from Robinson's account in his *Biblical Researches*, I, 426, it would seem as though the inhabitants of Jerusalem were exempt from this tax.

⁴ Addison, *op. cit.*, II, 256; Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 121; Chesney, *The Expedition for the Survey of the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris*, I, 556; Kinnear, *Cairo, Petra and Damascus etc.*, pp. 325-27; Sir C. Napier, *The War in Syria*, I, xxvi; Perrier, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-105.

he had collected his yearly taxes. While Robinson was in Jerusalem the value of the Turkish gold coin was dropped from 20 to $17\frac{1}{4}$ piasters.

The measure was proclaimed on different days in different cities, and in each went immediately into operation. In Beirut and in Jaffa, it was known and acted upon before it was proclaimed in Jerusalem. It was said that the authorities of the latter city had a large quantity of this coin on hand of which they wished first to rid themselves by paying it away at full value.¹

But the whole system of taxation was defective in principle, for almost every branch of the public revenue was farmed out to wealthy natives or government officials who bought speculatively and in turn sold it to others. Aside from extortion, abuses of every kind were bound to creep into such a system to meet the caprices and desires of the individuals concerned. Before long the taxes became intolerable, and the Syrian began to hope for a change of régime.

Such oppressions, nevertheless, might have been borne, for they had been common, in a way, to all oriental governments. It was not until disarmament and conscription were enforced that real trouble began. As soon as the first call for service was made, scores and hundreds of young men from Northern Syria fled across the border into the Sultan's territory, and as many left the towns of Central Syria and took refuge in the hills of the Lebanon and the Hauran. Young men maimed themselves and women disfigured their children while they were still young; some were blinded and others had their fingers cut off to avoid conscription. Soliman Pasha's mere arrival at Beirut in 1840 was sufficient to scare many families and make them leave the town for the hills of the Lebanon and for the island of Cyprus.² At first sight one can hardly believe it. Could the peasants of Samaria, who had defied Jazzar Pasha and Abdullah Pasha after him, have become such cowards? Could the valiant Lebanites and the warlike Nusairiyyah have been turned suddenly into such unsoldier-like material? This, we confess, was our first reaction when we began studying these risings. Accounts of the Syrians in the eighteenth and in the first quarter of the nineteenth centuries seemed to us to be entirely different, as far as military service was concerned, from those of the same people only a decade later. Either

¹ Robinson, *op. cit.*, I, 427.

² Addison, *op. cit.*, II, 253; Perrier, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

one or the other of the two accounts we thought must be false. Further study and reflection, however, have revealed a number of interesting facts. Of all the armies mentioned in Shidyak's *History* between 1700 and 1830 none is recorded greater than 20,000; several are reported to have been anywhere between 6,000 and 15,000; and many only 1,000 or 2,000. But even these numbers themselves cannot be accepted in their modern Western connotation. All that the Oriental of those days meant by them was, probably, the idea we now express by the term "many"; for, in the first place, such numbers are still used in this meaning in the East. In the second place, the farther the event is in point of time from the author the bigger the number. In the third place, 20,000 occurs only once and the other big numbers are, almost always, either 5,000 or 6,000, or else one of their multiples. In the fourth place, there seems to be no reason why the armies of the first quarter of the last century should have been usually 1,000 or 2,000 while those of the preceding century were often 6,000, 10,000, 12,000, and 15,000; for, so far as we can see, it was nearly always the same kind of battle. Then, finally, we doubt very much whether those armies were ever counted in the way we count our modern armies. The 1,000 and 2,000 of the beginning of the last century—the period in Shidyak's *History* in which he was an eyewitness—seem to us to be much more exact and much nearer the truth than do the 15,000 and 20,000 of the middle of the preceding century. It is very likely, therefore, that the Syrians with whom Mehemet Ali had to deal were unaccustomed to his big drafts for military service, which usually carried off as many as 10 per cent of the population.

Nor were they accustomed to high casualties. Shidyak wastes a page sometimes describing the intensity of the fighting in one of the battles of the first quarter of the last century, and then says "six" or "twelve" were killed—much fusillading but little aiming. When the guards of the governor of Jerusalem fired they "invariably lowered their muskets and turned away their heads as if afraid of the fire of their own arms."¹

¹ Shidyak, *Akhbar-ul-Ayan, etc.*, pp. 521–25; Monro, *op. cit.*, I, 131; Mushakah, *Mashhad-ul-Ayan*, pp. 86–87. In the famous civil war of 1860 the Druzes and Christians of one of the sections of the Matn district fought for a whole day between Bzibdin and Mtayn and only one was wounded (from an eyewitness who is still living).

Furthermore, the kind of military service to which they had been accustomed had been usually local in the strict sense of the term, and rarely extended over forty days at a time. Mehemet Ali's military system carried them sometimes to the Sudan, sometimes to the Hijaz, and at other times to Egypt and to the southern borders of Asia Minor. And, so far as they could see, it had no time limit: The men that had been drafted in 1834 and 1836 were still in the service and the Pasha was constantly calling for more men.¹

Nor could they understand the purpose for which they were fighting. When they had fought previously they had done so for a clear and comprehensible object. They had enlisted to overthrow the obnoxious rule of a local governor, and they themselves had profited by their success. Mehemet was asking them to fight the African Sudanese whom they had never seen before, or the Beduin Hejazite who had refused to submit to his authority, or else against the Sultan himself—his own sovereign and benefactor. When they had fought before, they had come back with a certain amount of spoil; now the Pasha not only forbade them to take any but actually interfered with their private income by tearing them away from their occupation for an indefinite length of time. Conscription thus became a source of misery that was attributable to Mehemet Ali alone.

Naturally, the more the Syrians refused to submit to Mehemet's system of conscription the more ruthless it became. When the young men of the country began to maim themselves in order to avoid military service, Mehemet enforced a stern decree to shoot all such offenders.² Before long his troops began to break into the houses by night and to take away by force as many men as they could seize. The mosques themselves were frequently beset during prayer time in order to seize the young men of the towns. Bowring informs us:

On a fixed day all over the chief towns in Syria, soldiers in the middle of the night are placed to blockade every passage in the streets; when house by house is searched, and every male inhabitant is dragged out of his bed, without distinction of age or person, and taken to the castle, where they are confined some for forty-eight hours, till their turn comes to be examined by European doctors, who accept or reject them for soldiers according as their bodies are well or ill proportioned; many of the more delicate but apparently

¹ Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 205; Bowring, *op. cit.*, pp. 91, 130; Mushakah, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

² Addison, *op. cit.*, II, 253.

healthy and well-formed conscripts have been thus hurried to their graves by being subjected to the labours of a military life.¹

Those that had money usually found means of liberation, while those that did not have it either sold their last rags in the hope of obtaining freedom or else submitted to what they considered was certain death.

The tax of blood was the least evil. Impoverishment, with vague apprehensions of the next day, weighed down the spirits of the people; and later in the hour of conflict Syria was lost to Mehemet Ali not more by the arms of the Sultan and his allies, than by a revolt which made the whole land rise as a huge wave throwing off an incubus.²

Heretofore, students of the life of Mehemet Ali have usually stopped at this point whenever they have undertaken a discussion of these risings.³ Some have indeed gone a little farther and have included among the causes of the risings the strong feeling of animosity that prevailed in the country between Christians and Moslems as a result of some of Mehemet's innovations. Now, it is undoubtedly true that corvée, taxation, and conscription were foremost in the minds of some elements of the population. But to just what extent these causes would have operated to make the public break with their government as openly and as early as they did, to what extent that public would have risen without the machinations of the Sultan and his allies and without the direct and hearty support of its own discontented leaders remains very uncertain. To stop where the average writer has stopped in dealing with the causes of these risings is to leave the story half-told. Other forces of a more subtle nature were already in operation as early as 1831-32; and when these are taken into consideration the risings at once appear in an entirely different light.

As a result of the chaos that prevailed between 1100 and 1830—the Dark Ages of the history of Syria—numerous robbers and bandit chiefs had established themselves all over the country. For a considerable time previous to 1831 the family of Abu Gosh had been collecting tolls from passengers to Jerusalem at Karyat-ul-Innab, their headquarters. Common pilgrims they had allowed to pass toll-free, in consideration of large annual subsidies derived from the

¹ Bowring, *op. cit.*, p. 112; see also chap. ii of this Epilogue.

² Paton, *op. cit.*, II, 121-22.

³ For a good résumé of the three causes mentioned above see H. Lammens' excellent work on *The History of Syria*, II, 155-64; also, *Cambridge Modern History*, X, 558-59.

Jerusalem convents; but the more wealthy European traveler they had robbed in proportion to his wealth. Their profession had become particularly profitable on account of the frequent passage of pilgrims and on account of the rich presents that were made to them by wealthy travelers and by Europeans of high rank. A number of the more warlike villagers of the neighborhood had rallied to their standard and had shared with them part of their profit. By 1831, they had become the real rulers of the region of Karyat-ul-Innab, and had succeeded in defying the governor of Jerusalem and the pasha of Acre as well.¹ Hebron, Haifa, Wadi-l-Karn, Riha, Jisr Shughr, Kalat-ul-Madik, and Pias had likewise had their petty independent chiefs, and had profited by the absence of all authority and order in the country and by their own brigandage and plunder.² Furthermore, to insure their own personal safety, the pashas of the previous century had imported mercenaries from North Africa and from Balkania, and had allowed them to settle down at various points over the country. When they had no fighting to do, these mercenaries, too, had helped themselves to the property of the innocent peasant and of the peaceful traveler.³ Then, finally, the Beduin Arabs of the edge of the desert and the Turkoman tribes of Northern Syria had not failed to take advantage of the situation; they, too, had helped themselves to everything that was handy and portable. At times they had penetrated as far as the coast of the Mediterranean and even then had met with very little opposition from the government.⁴

Too weak to cope with the situation and too much engrossed in matters of money, the average provincial governor had flattered

¹ Stanhope, *Lady Hester; Travels of*, I, 205; Lamartine, *Travels in the East*, I, 211.

² Burckhardt, *Holy Land*, p. 125; Stanhope, *op. cit.*, pp. 234, 246.

³ Pococke, *Description of the East*, p. 124.

⁴ Stanhope, *op. cit.*, I, 268. Our Lebanite folksongs still preserve the disheartening memories of those days of horror and misery. At a wedding celebration, when the women of the community gathered around the bride in honor of the occasion, they very often sang the following:

“Dance now, my pretty one,
Care not what they say.
Keep time to the music
Live carefree and play.

“Thy spouse rode in safety
To Damascus quite alone.
Thy spouse now, my fairest,
Hath won great renown.”

those whom he could not ruin. Mehemet was too proud of his power and too jealous of his reputation in Europe to tolerate such gross violations of law and order. More of a statesman than his predecessors in office, and surer of his position—at least surer of his ability to defend it by force of arms if necessary—Mehemet saw that better order and security in the land would ultimately mean greater prosperity. Abu Gosh's toll practice was swept away as early as 1832, and by the summer of 1833 the same measure had been enforced elsewhere in the country.¹ Robinson says:

In one respect the energy of Mehemet Ali deserves all praise; he has rendered the countries under his sway secure so that travellers can pass throughout Egypt and Syria and also among the Bedawin of the adjacent desert with the same degree of safety as in many parts of civilized Europe.²

In doing so, however, the Pasha roused intense opposition among these bandit chiefs, well versed in guerilla warfare. For them the change of régime was decidedly for the worse, as they had lost both their income and their power. It was only natural, therefore, that they should bide their time and wait for an opportunity to regain their money and their influence.

But the same general disorder that had given rise to highway robbers and brigands had likewise produced the petty chieftain who planted himself strongly on a small domain to defend and protect his own little community. To this class belonged many of the aristocracy of the period, the natural leaders of the masses. By the thirties of the last century this aristocracy had been divided into all sorts of parties through motives in themselves not very dissimilar to those of the feudal nobility of medieval Europe. Clan feeling and the like had made the peasants range themselves with one or the other of the rival families of their neighborhood. Nablus and surroundings, as far as Karak on the one side and Acre on the other, had been divided into the two hostile camps of the Tukans and the Abd-ul-Hadis.³ The southern Lebanon had likewise been rent into Yazbaki and Janbulati with the consequent struggle for power and supremacy. The cities themselves had not been free from such

¹ E. Hogg, *Visit to Alexandria, Damascus and Jerusalem*, II, 197-98; Monro, *op. cit.*, I, 100-101.

² *Researches*, I, 29.

³ Adler, *Nouvelle Chronique Samaritaine*, p. 110; J. Finn, *Stirring Times in Palestine*, etc., I, 242; Perrier, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

parties; Aleppo had its Sharifs and Janissaries, and Tripoli had its Barbar and his opponents.¹ To insure his own success, Mehemet had allied himself with one of these local parties, either before he had undertaken the conquest of Syria or else while he was doing it. Paton tells us that the greater part of the first two years of Mehemet's administration was devoted to the consolidation of "those alliances that might prove most convenient and serviceable."² While the Abd-ul-Hadis were helped to gain the upper hand in Nablus. Mustafa Barbar was appointed mutasallim in Tripoli, and Abdullah Bey Bablisi was given the same office in Aleppo. In the Lebanon, Emir Bashir was given free hand. But, in so doing, Mehemet and Ibrahim alienated another group of leaders in Syria who were destined to become, in the course of a few years, their most bitter opponents.

To all these sections of the opposition were added the men of ruined fortune, who, as a result of Mehemet's policy and legislation, had lost either office or income, sometimes both. Early in 1834 in his efforts to improve the internal administration of the country, Ibrahim Pasha dismissed many of the shaykhs from their offices.³ Mushakah would make us believe that the change was general and that it affected a very great number of these shaykhs. Once out of office, many found themselves in hard financial circumstances, whereupon they used their whole personal weight in inducing the people to rise; they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. We are not quite sure whether the edict of 1834 affected the shaykhs of the Lebanon proper. In case it did not, Emir Bashir himself had effected sufficient changes to make the Lebanite shaykh join hands with his colleague across the border, to throw off the yoke of the oppressor.⁴ Dimashki tells us, in very plain terms, that Emir Bashir "had been trying to gain control over the mukataat. His chief ambition is to

¹ Barker, *op. cit.*, II, 288-89.

² Paton, *op. cit.*, II, 112.

³ Mushakah, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-14, 131.

⁴ In a way, Shidyak's history is scarcely anything but an account of the Emir's efforts to rid himself of his rivals. Brought up in an environment saturated with Machiavellian politics, Bashir had become another Machiavelli himself. In 1797 he destroyed the Nakads. Then, having attained supreme power, he annihilated in its turn the very faction to which he owed his elevation. Sole ownership and control had been his chief goal ever since the nineties of the eighteenth century; and the Lebanite nobility knew him too well to keep quiet when a real opportunity presented itself (Shidyak, *op. cit.*, pp. 447-562).

make everybody, amir or shaykh, subservient to himself and to his kahya Butrus Karamah."¹ Ibrahim and Mehemet were thus opposed not by any single party but by a mass of multifarious elements with various motives and very different desires.

It is only as we keep in mind this personal element of the politics of the period that we can understand the geography of the risings. Otherwise, one is apt to be embarrassed by a series of pertinent questions. Why did the risings of 1824 break out in Nablus, Hebron, Karak, etc.? Why did they not break out elsewhere? If it was only corvée, taxation, and military service, why did not some other peasants besides those of Samaria, etc., begin the revolt? Why did the insurgents of Mount Lebanon make one of the suburbs of Beirut their headquarters? Why did they not take to the rough hills of Sannin, or some place that was farther off from Beirut, the seat of Egyptian authority on the coast? Similar questions can likewise be asked about the risings in Northern Syria. It is only as we take into consideration the personal element in the politics of the period that we can give intelligent answers to these questions. When Abu Gosh, the Tukan, and other Palestinians are kept in mind, the answer is at once evident. The Jamain villages, where the Tukan have since found traditional support, form a belt across the country from the hills of Nablus on the east to Caesarea on the west. Karak itself, and the rest of Transjordan, with the interests of the Beduin Arabs at stake, were bound to be hostile to Ibrahim in a general insurrection. That Nablus and Karak should have held out to the very end would again be only natural if the Tukan party is kept in mind. That Hebron should have been so quick in declaring for the Sultan in 1839 and 1840 would naturally be expected if such men as Abd-ur-Rahman Amr had been tolerated in its immediate neighborhood.² Curzon stated a real fact in his *Monasteries of the Levant* when he said: "Abu Gosh was vastly popular in this part of the country [Jerusalem to Mar Saba in 1834] but they all hinted that we might just as well keep out of his way."³ Then again, close as Shiyyah and Hursh—the headquarters of the Lebanite insurgents in

¹ M. Dimashki, *Tarikh Hawadith-ish-Sham*, etc., p. 102.

² J. Finn, *op. cit.*, I. 236-37.

³ Curzon, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

1840—are to Beirut, they were then within a stone's throw of the private residences of some of the leading Lebanite nobility. Shwayfat, Hadath, Baabda, Kafar Shima, Jamhur, etc., etc., so very close to one another, were all leading feudal residences. That the insurgents should have been there most of the time only corroborates our thesis.¹ Furthermore, if corvée, taxation, and conscription were the only causes of the risings, why were so many shaykhs and emirs involved in them? With very few exceptions, every feudal family was represented at the insurgents' camps: Shihabs, Lamas, Harfushes, Hubayshes, Dahdahs, Khazins, Shamsins, and the rest. They certainly had money enough to avoid both corvée and conscription. At any rate, the government of those days was corrupt enough to pass them by unnoticed for a very reasonable sum of money.

The fact that most of the European sources do not make much of this side of the politics of the period is a further corroboration of our thesis. It is only natural that those who knew the country best and understood the internal workings of its government—the native historians—should have made a great deal more of such facts than did their European colleagues who had been largely transient visitors. Like the Western traveler of the present century, many of these European authors during their short stay in the Orient either failed to see what would have been evident to the Oriental himself or else saw what actually was not there. Syrian politics of the thirties of the last century were as personal as they are now, and European observers then were probably as superficial as they are at present.

Meanwhile, Sultan Mahmud had been a prey to furious fits of anger. He had lost Wallachia, Moldavia, Servia, and Greece. France had occupied Algeria, and Mehemet Ali—a simple Macedonian soldier—had imposed upon his sovereign the humiliating Peace of Kutahiah. Sultan Mahmud had tried to reform his Empire but in so doing he had lost. His subjects had failed to respond to his appeals and had upbraided him as a "ghayur." Mehemet, on the contrary, was becoming more and more popular in both Asia Minor

¹ For a detailed list of the feudal residences of the period, see Shidyak, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

and in Balkania. All Moslems were beginning to look upon him, and not upon their caliph, as the greatest defender of the faith. With the Sultan the recovery of Syria had become essential to his dignity; he was to live, henceforth, only for revenge. Early in 1834, a new army under Rashid was stationed at Sivas, and Mehemet was ordered to evacuate Urfah on the Syrian border.¹ Secret emissaries were also sent to Syria to stir up the inhabitants against their new government. Then when the risings began in Palestine, the Sultan's energies were redoubled; a new emissary, M. Fitznechter, was sent to Emir Bashir to win him over to the side of his suzerain, and the fleet was dispatched to Syrian waters. When Mehemet drove the shaykhs out of office, the Sultan promised to reinstate them; and when Ibrahim levied his income tax, Mahmud pledged himself to leave the country tax-free for three years. Finally, to nullify Mehemet's influence with the Christians of the country, the Sultan issued his famous Chart of Gulhane, according to which all his subjects, Moslems or non-Moslems, were to be accorded equal protection.²

In Britain, however, Mehemet was destined to find his most bitter opponent. As early as 1835 we find the British ambassador at Constantinople advising the Porte to send a secret emissary to the emir of Mount Lebanon. We also find the same ambassador placing at her disposal for this purpose the services of M. Fitznechter, who was secretary to Mr. Blake.³ Then in 1836 Lord Ponsonby seems to have allowed Mr. Richard Wood of his own embassy to go on a similar mission to the Lebanon. Mr. Wood's ostensible object was the study of Arabic in preparation for the office of dragoman—at an English embassy and in a Turkish capital. That Richard Wood talked politics to Emir Bashir as early as 1836 is beyond question. We can read not only Faucher's contemporary reference to this affair but also Wood's own letter to Emir Bashir, in which direct reference is made to this early political interview. Again, long before the powers had reached any agreement on the Eastern question, and long before they had decided to assist the Sultan in driving Mehemet

¹ Cadalveno and Barrault, *Deux années de l'histoire de l'Orient, etc.*, I, 19.

² Mushakah, *op. cit.*, p. 115; Shidyak, *op. cit.*, p. 580; *Revue des deux mondes*, IV (1841), 281; *Quarterly Review*, LIII, 259; Lavallée, *Histoire de la Turquie*, II (2d ed.), 358.

³ *Revue des deux mondes, loc. cit.*

out of Syria, Ponsonby sent this same agent to the Lebanon a second time. By July 3, 1840, twelve days before the Treaty of London had been signed, Wood landed on the coast near Beirut, to urge the Lebanites to rise against the Pasha of Egypt. Writing to Lieutenant Colonel Hodges, on July 15, 1840, from H.M.S.S. "Powerful," Commodore Napier says:

I am surprised the mission of Mr. Wood has not been notified to you, as he certainly was sent here by Lord Ponsonby, and I have the Admiral's order to facilitate matters for him, and even to send the Cyclops back when he has any particular communication to make.

Both Kinnear and the *Westminster Review* corroborate the charges that are made in native and in French sources against the intrigue of Great Britain in the internal affairs of Syria during this period.¹ The conclusion of the famous commercial treaty of 1838 with the Sultan and the occupation of Aden at about the same time were further indications of the same tendency at the court of St. James to curb the power of the rising Pasha. The arrangement of Kutahiah was as unsatisfactory to Great Britain as it was to both Mehemet and Mahmud. She, too, had accepted it as an expedient and not as a final solution. Mehemet's ambition and the aggrandizement of his power had led to complete dependence of Turkey upon Russia in the famous Treaty of Hunkiar Skelessi. To ward off this Russian danger and thus protect her trade route to the East, Britain was bound to support Mahmud and not Mehemet. Both Syria and Arabia had to go back to the Sultan. French influence was, moreover, becoming more and more preponderant in the Mediterranean. With the occupation of Ancona and Algeria, and the coming to power of the Francophile party in Greece, Britain began to wonder what was to come next. Mehemet had offered his assistance in the subjugation of Algeria. His army, his navy, his schools, and the commerce of his country were all under the control of the French monarchy. He had occupied Dayr-uz-Zur and had sent his secret emissaries to Basrah on the Persian Gulf. The Kurds had

¹ Mushakah, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-27; Shidyak, *op. cit.*, p. 595; Napier, II, 311; Kinnear, *op. cit.*, p. 344; *Westminster Review*, XXXV, 194; Faucher's articles in *Revue des deux mondes*, *loc. cit.*

shown signs of restlessness, and the Albanians had revolted at a very opportune moment. In Syria itself, French priests were working in the interest of Mehemet Ali.

. . . . And all his correspondence with the mountain was carried on through them, and by means of French vessels of war stationed on various parts of the coast. We were well aware of this inconvenience, but it was very difficult, if not impossible, to remedy it, without running the risk of collision with France.¹

A curious cult for Mehemet Ali had sprung up in France: the Bonapartists regarded him as the disciple of Napoleon and almost as his successor in the East. While De Hauranne reminded his readers of their former colonial possessions and their rivalry with Great Britain, Lefevre pointed out the advantages of alliance with Egypt.² While the Frenchmen who were in the service of the Pasha in Egypt and Syria gave expression to their admiration of Mehemet's achievements, all Frenchmen were grateful to him for his liking of French character, his inclination to imitate them, and his readiness to serve them.³ To Britain it looked as though the Mediterranean was rapidly becoming a French lake. Mehemet was responsible for the change and the Sultan had to be supported again. The maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was becoming a dogma, and Palmerston looked upon Mehemet Ali as a menace to that integrity.⁴

Burdened with corvée, conscription, and taxation, and instigated to revolt by their leaders, by the Sultan, and by Great Britain, the Syrian public began to see in Mehemet Ali just as much of a ghayur as the Constantinopolitans had seen in Sultan Mahmud himself. Had he not broken the Law of the Prophet by tolerating intoxicating

¹ Napier, *op. cit.*, I, 236; read also the story of the Superior of the French Lazarists as recorded in Paton, *op. cit.*, II, 186.

² *Revue des deux mondes*, II (1839), 436.

³ L. Blanc, *History of Ten Years* (English transl.), II, 618.

⁴ In discussing the situation with Guizot in 1840 Palmerston said: "Pourtant, Ibrahim Pacha est un chef habile, aimé de ses troupes, meilleur administrateur que son père, dit-on; il a auprès de lui des officiers capables, des français. Nous nous disons tous, n'est pas? Est-ce que la France ne serait pas bien aise de voir se fonder, en Égypte et en Syrie, une puissance nouvelle et indépendante, qui fut presque sa création et devint nécessairement son allié? Vous avez la régence d'Alger, entre vous et votre allié d'Égypte, que resterait il? Presque rien, ces pauvres états de Tunis et de Tripoli." I. de Testa, *Recueil des traités de la Porte ottomane avec les puissances étrangères*, II, 529; *British and Foreign State Papers*, XXVI, 269.

liquor? Had he not broken the sanctity of the harem? Had he not disregarded the IX Surah of the Koran and the lengthy commentary of Al-Halabi on it? Had not the Christians been made the equals of the Moslems? In 1834 an earthquake had threatened to bury them beneath the ruins of their houses, and in 1836 and 1837 the threat had been actually fulfilled. Several thousand had perished in Safad, and about as many elsewhere in Syria.¹ Moreover, scarcely a year had passed since 1831 without drought, plague, or cholera. Was not God visiting upon them the results of their own sins? Was not theirs a similar case to that of the Thamud?

Finally, the risings against the rule of Mehemet Ali were the first reaction of medieval Syria to a process of westernization that has been going on ever since. Ibrahim wanted his conscripts to give up their flowing robes and wear instead the tight trousers and jackets of the West, which had been a subject of ridicule for years past. The principles underlying his government were, in a way, as different from those of the preceding administration as was nineteenth-century Europe from that of the Middle Ages. His European advisers insisted on centralization when Syria had been decentralized for centuries. He wanted them to believe in contagion of disease and abide by quarantine regulations at a time when they believed in a predestination that verged on fatalism. Their whole view of life was entirely different from that of his European entourage: There was a certain amount of otherworldliness about the Orient of those days that made it quite different from anything his European advisers had known. Europe then was going through her industrial revolution while the Orient had not as yet begun it. Passing through the country while these risings were still in progress, Addison grasped a fundamental point—unusual for a Western traveler—when he said:

Our churches instead of being open like mosques all days of the week are mostly closed from week's end to week's end. We have no call to prayer

¹ Thomson, who visited Safad shortly after the earthquake had taken place, says: "As far as the eye can reach, nothing is seen but one vast chaos of stone and earth, chairs, beds, and clothing, mingled in horrible confusion. Men everywhere at work, worn out and woe-begone, uncovering their houses in search of the mangled and putrefied bodies of departed friends. . . . It is not in the power of language to overstate such a ruin."—*Missionary Herald* (1837), pp. 436-37; Robinson, *Researches*, II, 424. Tiberias and Nablus had been nearly destroyed, and Jaffa, Ramlah, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, Damascus, Rashayya, Hasbayya, and other places had likewise suffered considerably.

shouted from our steeples in the cold gray of the morning or at the dead hour of midnight. Religion appears to be with us quite a secondary consideration.¹ But in spite of the loud protests against Mehemet's policy, this process of westernization has been going on; Mehemet only started it.

¹ As the traveler penetrates Syria westward, at the present time, he meets this westernization on the edge of the desert in the form of Manchester calico which everybody wears, even the Beduin himself. As he approaches Damascus he begins to see more of it; a mixture, perhaps, of Western trousers and oriental gowns and the like. The Singer sewing-machine and the Ford automobile come next. And by the time he reaches the coast of the Mediterranean and is ready to leave Beirut, if he had had the proper introduction, he would have been in modern houses that compare very favorably with Europe's best mansions; he would have stayed in hotels that are scarcely different from the rest of their kind all around the Mediterranean; he would have said goodbye to his dragoman, inasmuch as he had ceased to need his services; and finally he would have had occasion to meet a few of the more educated Syrians who had had good university training, either in Beirut itself, or in the world's most famous educational centers, such as Paris and Cambridge, Berlin and Vienna, to say nothing of Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Chicago.