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**Elizabeth Thompson**

## OTTOMAN POLITICAL REFORM IN THE PROVINCES: THE DAMASCUS ADVISORY COUNCIL IN 1844–45

The year 1844–45 in Damascus province was a dry one, aggravated by a brutal winter frost. Reports of ruined crops and disputes over precious water sources reached the city, where as yet there was still enough to eat. But the city was by no means immune to the drought. It was felt in varying ways, like rising prices and, of all things, a shortage of leeches. Barbers could not get enough of them to meet medical needs, and their prices had risen sharply. So the barbers began smuggling them. An Ottoman market official (*mültazim*), on noticing that government leech sales for that month had dropped from 45,000 to 7,000, ordered police (*tüfenkçi*) to confiscate the creatures from barbershops and sold them himself for profit. Conflict between the official and barbers exploded, and each side made its way, as rural peasants and tax collectors had in the crisis, to the ultimate court of appeal in the province, the *Majlis Shūrā al-Shām al-ʿAlī*, or high advisory council for Damascus province.<sup>1</sup>

The council was at the center of public life in Damascus province, where about 500,000 people lived in an area that stretched from what is now northern Jordan to Lebanon's Bekaa valley to the west, and to Homs, Hama, and the Orontes valley to the north. The Damascus council, like other provincial councils, had existed for more than one hundred years in various forms. It had long been a forum for local elites to advise Ottoman governors on matters such as tax assessment, market regulation, and local security.

The 1844–45 council, however, was a new creature in the political habitat of Damascus province: it had more power, more autonomy, and broader powers than any of its predecessors. The councils across the Ottoman Empire had been reorganized in 1840 as part of the Tanzimat reform program. While previously an often ad hoc body controlled by the provincial governor, the councils had become a pillar of Ottoman provincial rule intended to balance the power of the governor. As an administrative body, the council directly managed pious foundations (*awqāf*), poor relief, and elections of village and guild sheikhs. As the highest appeals court in the province, the council settled village disputes, commercial disputes, and shari'a court cases. And as policy makers, the twelve council members—all prominent

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Muslim Damascenes in 1844–45—had the right to grant or refuse approval to the governor before he could act in many areas. They generally met independently of the governor or his treasurer. This was a degree of institutional authority and autonomy that was unknown to previous provincial councils.

By providing a viable arena for local elites to participate in a broad spectrum of government decision making, the council represented an opportunity for reform from below. Reform was not merely imposed from the exalted offices in Istanbul.<sup>2</sup> It is a central theme of this study that the Tanzimat took shape as part of a bargaining process among several parties. The Porte sought, through broad legal and economic reforms, to extract sufficient resources to support its military needs and to appease foreign powers that would otherwise threaten it. Damascene elites sought to hedge the economic and social dislocations caused by such policies in their city, as well as to exploit new opportunities presented by the newly powerful and autonomous council to advance their own emerging class interests. Other players on the local scene, most notably the Ottoman governor and foreign consuls, advanced their own interests in the process.

While only one known register for the Damascus council remains, the records of the 506 cases it handled in 1844–45 suggest that previous studies of the Damascene council may have been distorted by their reliance on central Ottoman records and descriptions by biased foreign consuls. These studies have tended to regard local opposition to imperial reform policies on the local level as reactionaries and central bureaucrats in Istanbul as clear-sighted progressives who sent futile messages and missions to outlying capitals in an attempt to break the “oligarchical knot” of backward, provincial “tradition.”<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the evidence in the register challenges current notions about the course of the Tanzimat and the nature of center–periphery relations in the empire. The early years of the Tanzimat have often been portrayed as a false start, an inept failure which renewed reforms in the 1860s corrected. This approach has assumed that there was a clear reform policy that was frustrated. To the contrary, the council register suggests that the 1840s were a critical and fruitful period of experimentation and negotiation that led to the formulation of the policies that characterized the late 19th century. And in its depiction of local elites’ careful deliberation on issues, the register also calls into question stereotypes of the periphery as irrational and backward and of the center as rational and progressive.

The politics of the 1840s, as they appear in these pages, were unusually dynamic and wide open to any number of possible outcomes, as the major political players—the Ottoman state and the local elites—sought to redefine their roles in relation to society and to each other. Debate about the Tanzimat centered not on vague ideologies but on bargains struck on very specific issues.

In the case of the leeches, the council decided in favor of the barbers, and against the government market official. It ruled that the public had a right to trade in leeches, and the government had no right to confiscate or monopolize that market. This decision was perhaps emblematic of the council’s political perspective: the Ottoman state should not be permitted to be a leech (at least not the only leech!) drawing the lifeblood of its peoples for its own health.<sup>4</sup>

1844–45: A YEAR OF ECONOMIC CHALLENGE

How much most Damascenes knew about events beyond their province is unclear: in 1844–45 there was as yet no telegraph, no carriage road to Beirut (it took twelve hours to get there by horse), no railway, and no daily newspaper linking the city and its hinterland to other parts of the world. The caravan from Baghdad still came, but less frequently as bedouin attacks diverted its route to Aleppo. Travelers almost certainly brought news, for merchants and government officials moved from city to city frequently along roads still better suited to riding animals than to wheeled vehicles.

One might presume, however, that some of the following events did reach council members in 1844: the French marshal Thomas Bugeaud's defeat of the sultan of Morocco at Isly, the Greek prime minister's nationalist speech proclaiming that all lands where Greeks once lived belonged to his country, and the Serbs' proclamation of their nationalist program to other Balkan Christians. In 1845, 45 million people rode the newly built British railways, whose construction was the single most important stimulus to mid-19th-century industrial growth, while the first tremors of a financial collapse were felt in France, auguring the upheavals of 1848 on the continent.<sup>5</sup>

Industrialization, imperialism, and nationalism were forces that were already being felt at Damascus's doorstep. By 1840, the French had set up the first of several modern silk-reeling factories in Lebanon. At the same time, changes in the patterns and speed of world trade were harming Damascus's economy. In 1845, the annual pilgrimage attracted the smallest number of pilgrims in years, severely curtailing the profits of merchants who depended on it.<sup>6</sup> Steamships were diverting pilgrims and trade from caravan routes that had once ended at Damascus to ports like Beirut and Acre. Although estimates are disputed, Beirut's population appears to have doubled between 1840 and 1847.<sup>7</sup>

Political influence accompanied European economic intervention in the region. In 1844, American missionaries—backed by British consuls eager to find a minority to protect in order to gain a firmer foothold in Syrian politics—made a deal with seventy Greek Orthodox families in the village of Hasbayya, a Lebanese village in Damascus province. The Americans allegedly offered to pay the villagers' taxes if they converted to Protestantism. The families' conversion caused a scandal in which the British consul threatened to have Damascus's governor, 'Ali Pasha, removed unless he offered to protect the converts from Greek Orthodox, Muslim, French, and Russian pressure to renounce their conversions.<sup>8</sup> This occurred at the same time that the Bekaa valley erupted in turmoil, as Druze and Maronites fought each other for political privilege as feudal authority deteriorated under renewed Ottoman rule and the French support of the Maronite clergy.

And while nationalism was still a thing of the future in Arab lands, its manifestations in the Balkans contributed to a growing tax bill and conscription. In the 1840s, after reconquering the Levant from Egypt, the Ottoman state was spending between half and two-thirds of its revenue on coercive forces.<sup>9</sup> That the Ottoman government was extracting all it could from Syria is suggested by the introduction

of the *i'ana* tax in 1842–43, levied to defray the expenses of the army, and then the *ferde* poll tax in 1844. At the same time the province, which had taken out loans to pay the taxes, also faced a budgetary crisis, and the number of Ottoman troops stationed there had to be reduced.<sup>10</sup>

The drought in the mid-1840s only aggravated an already oppressive situation. Bedouin swept into cities and villages all over Syria, seeking water and food. Hundreds of peasants in turn fled their villages, reduced to ruin. And as if that were not enough, the entire region was plagued, beginning in March 1845, by swarms of locusts that devoured many a village's crops. While this was not the worst agricultural crisis in Syrian history, it was the bleak downside of an all-too-familiar subsistence cycle.

It was the council's job to articulate the community's needs during the crisis. On 14 January 1845, the council recorded without comment a petition from "the people of the villages of Sham and the four *nahiyas* of the Hawran, Homs, Hama and Ma'arra" to the Sublime Porte, complaining that "the rise in taxes was greater now than in the days of the Egyptians." This petition arrived on the same day that the council considered an appeal from the religious court regarding a daughter's claim to her deceased father's estate, granted a postponement of tax payments by cotton and silk textile artisans who claimed their income had fallen due to foreign competition, and issued a public letter of thanks to the religious judge (*qadi*) for showing mercy to the people (*ra'iya*) in an unspecified circumstance.<sup>11</sup>

While every day the council performed a diverse array of duties, the drought and high taxes would claim more and more attention as 1845 wore on. Between May and August, the council received more than forty-five petitions—more than a quarter of its business—from impoverished individuals, villages, guilds, and merchants, all seeking debt or tax relief. In most of the cases, the council granted that relief or rescheduled payments, often sacrificing government revenue.

The Damascus council's reaction to this state of affairs was determined by its bargaining position vis-à-vis the Ottoman state. While the council sought to appease the populace, it had to satisfy contrary demands from the governor's office. That year, the Ottoman state had transferred an army of 25,000 troops from Aleppo to Damascus better to protect the annual pilgrimage from the hungry bedouin. Many of the villages could not comply with the forced sale of barley and figs required to feed imperial troops, and so the governor stepped in to seek food for his men. On 29 June 1845, the council ordered the district governor of the Hawran to send his best wheat. On 8 July the council again approved a forced sale of army rations sought by the provincial treasurer. Figs and barley were to be requisitioned at low prices from forty-five villages. But by 24 August, only half of the total of ninety taxed villages had been able to supply the rations, the others suffering from drought: "The events out there this year are not a pleasant sight, and the people fear the censure of your honors," reported Sa'id Agha Zakariyya, a state official. He warned that it would be a mistake to press for more from the poor villagers during the upcoming Ramadan season. The council consented.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the council carried a double-edged sword. It would grant tax relief while at the same time appropriate supplies for the government at low prices or in the form of tax that would harm peasants and businessmen—but only to a point. It ap-

pears that during that dry summer the governor's office accepted that point, for it filed no objection against tax relief granted. But at other times the provincial treasurer did object, as on 31 October 1844 when the council yielded to him on technicalities after having granted a tax amnesty to a village tax collector.<sup>13</sup>

The council did occasionally stand up to the governor. In a case on 15 December 1844, the council invoked the Tanzimat against Ottoman officials to defend a tax deferral for a village. The villagers claimed they had been forced off the land and had not farmed it that year, and so argued that they did not owe the tax. When the imperial treasurer contested the council's approval of the villagers' claim, the council sent an investigator to the village. He confirmed that the village's irrigation system was in disrepair and that they had not been able to farm. The council reasoned that "according to justice and the basis of the Imperial Tanzimat" and because "there was no benefit to the imperial party" in pressing for the taxes, the villagers should indeed be released from payment. The treasurer did not respond.<sup>14</sup>

This overview of the council's handling of the drought and taxes suggests that its bargaining position with the government was fairly strong, but not overwhelmingly so. It also shows that the council was capable of acting cooperatively in the public interest as a responsible public body. The question is how it defined that public interest.

#### THE COUNCIL AS REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTION

The twelve prominent men who gathered in the council's chambers three times a week were by no means altruistic saints selflessly defending the poor against the imperial state. They were wealthy landowners, traders, judges, and scholars who had many personal interests in the city and its hinterland. While all presumably sought to defend their interests, some sought to enhance their wealth by virtue of their position on the council. There is some evidence that council members colluded with merchants to set high prices for government supplies and services, especially for the annual pilgrimage, as the treasurer repeatedly challenged the prices negotiated by the council. And some council members profited from their privileged position in assigning tax farms and administering endowments to enrich themselves.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, in several cases council members prosecuted their peers for corruption.

Previous studies have suggested that council members acted solely from self-interest, appeasing authorities insofar as that policy aggrandized their personal influence and fortunes. In so doing, it has been argued, they usurped control of the council's agenda from enlightened Ottoman reformers, subverted Ottoman goals of equal representation among classes and among Muslims and non-Muslims, and so undermined the councils as representative institutions.<sup>16</sup> Evidence from the council's register suggests however that representation on the council cannot be explained as a result of members' ill will, but rather of negotiations between the state and local elites, with give and take on both sides.

Before impugning corruption by the local elites, one must establish what standard they were supposedly undermining. The councils were inaugurated in a January 1840 edict, two months after the Hatt-i-Sherif of Gülhane proclaimed the

Tanzimat reforms. It stipulated that each province should have a high council of thirteen members. Six members were to be government officials, appointed *ex officio*, while the others were to be representatives of the population, reflecting the local mix of Muslims and religious minorities.<sup>17</sup>

However, the writer of the *Gülhane* and council proclamations, Reshid Pasha, did not intend to introduce a parliamentary form of government to the empire, nor did he advance any ideas of popular sovereignty. Reshid Pasha saw the primary role of the provincial councils as instruments to secure local support of government reforms, particularly improved tax collection for the military. In this, he was far more interested in capturing support of locally influential elites than in principles of fair representation.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the 1840 edict establishing the councils contained a property qualification for membership. The elitist slant on the Damascus council, then, was a product of Istanbul's preference, not local perfidy.

Furthermore, in the mid-19th century, representation—in the Ottoman empire as well as Europe—did not necessarily mean demographic correlation between population and members of parliaments: popular democracy was a concept that evolved only in the late 19th century. In 1832 Britain, the lower classes lost their bid for suffrage. In 1840s France, a country often suggested as the administrative model for the Tanzimat, less than one in fifty men had the right to vote. French elections were personal affairs without secret ballots and were the focus of a network of mutual favors among the elite. In the cases of France and Britain, historians take elitism into account while also assuming that these representatives were still capable of acting in the public interest. We might assume the same in the case of Damascus, unless evidence proves otherwise.

Democratic representation being a nonissue, let us now return to the case of the Damascus council in 1844–45. The council consisted of twelve members and a clerk (*kātib*), who appears not to have been a full member, for he rarely signed approval of decisions and was never listed with other members for each day's attendance. All of the members were Muslim and wealthy, mostly through a combination of landownership and trade. Indeed, it has been estimated that seven members of the council, plus the clerk, owned 46.4 percent of the tax farms (*ilti-zāmāt*) and farms (*muqāta'āt*) in the Damascus region.<sup>19</sup>

The members and their known terms of office were Husayn Efendi al-Muradi (1840–50), <sup>ʿ</sup>Abd al-Muhsin al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Ajlani (1840–47), Nasib ibn Husayn ibn Efendi Hamza (1840–49), <sup>ʿ</sup>Umar Efendi al-Ghazzi (1840–60), Abu al-Su<sup>ʿ</sup>ud Efendi al-Ghazzi (<sup>ʿ</sup>Umar's nephew, resigned 1846), Muhammad ibn <sup>ʿ</sup>Uthman Efendi al-Jabi (1844–?), Ahmad Efendi al-Hasibi (until 1860), Ahmad ibn Sulayman Efendi al-Maliki, Khalil Bey al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Azm, Muhammad Bey al-<sup>ʿ</sup>Azma (until 1860), Salih Agha Mahayini (until after 1860), Mustafa Çelebi, and Muhyi al-Din Efendi (clerk). We unfortunately do not have precise information on how they were appointed or on the length of their terms.<sup>20</sup> Muradi, as chief religious jurist of the official Ottoman law school (the Hanafi mufti), <sup>ʿ</sup>Umar al-Ghazzi, as Shafi<sup>ʿ</sup>i mufti, and <sup>ʿ</sup>Ajlani, as representative of the Prophet Muhammad's descendants (*naqib al-ashraf*), were likely appointed *ex officio* members in 1840 in accordance with the proclamation on councils.

If the Ottoman government had wanted to limit the influence of religious scholars (ulema), they clearly did not succeed in doing so in Damascus. Seven of the twelve members have been identified as having some past or present standing as religious scholars. The composition of the council thus represents a return to former arrangements and a contrast with the situation under Egyptian rule, where the ulema presence on old Ottoman diwans was partly supplanted by religious minorities. This must have represented a setback to Ottoman reformers, who had often characterized religious scholars—especially those far from the high circles of Istanbul—as potent opponents of secularization and modernization. Indeed, beginning in the late 1830s, ulema were systematically excluded from governmental posts in foreign and domestic policy that they had long held.<sup>21</sup> And while Reshid Pasha cultivated alliances with some ulema in Istanbul, this was precisely because in the 1840s he identified the ulema as among his stiffest opponents and sought ways of appeasing them.<sup>22</sup>

The members appear to fall into two camps, those closely tied to the central government and holding government posts outside of the council, and those who might be characterized as locals. Among the members with government ties were Muradi, the Hanafi mufti; Maliki, supervisor of religious endowments (*awqāf*) and a clerk in the Hanafi law court; Hasibi, supervisor of the *i'āna* tax; and Çelebi, overseer of the tithe. Jabī's background is obscure, but he likely may have been transferred to Damascus for a government post, because he formerly had been a qadi in Baghdad and Medina. On the other hand, at least three members counted among the local elites who had led opposition to Ottoman policy in the past. Ghazzi had been implicated in the revolt against Selim Pasha in 1831. Hamza, who would become *naqīb al-ashraf* in 1847, was known to have written a poem praising Muhammad <sup>5</sup>Ali of Egypt.<sup>23</sup> And Khalil al-<sup>5</sup>Azm belonged to a family that appears to have profited from its ties with the Egyptians.

So while representation on the council approached the 1840 edict's prescription of six Ottoman officials, it also allowed representation of local opposition. The council's procedure, however, also deviated from the 1840 edict by not having a governor's appointee chair its sessions.<sup>24</sup> Instead of a formal chairman, leadership of the council seems to have rotated among members every few weeks, suggesting that responsibilities were shared rather than delegated.<sup>25</sup> This autonomy from official oversight appears to have been locally won, for in other provinces the councils were still chaired by Ottoman officials.<sup>26</sup>

If the councils existed only by imperial edict, why did the Ottoman state permit deviation from its own law? In the absence of documentation on how the council came to be organized, we can only conjecture. It is useful to remember that in 1840 the Syrians and the Ottomans faced one another again after the eight-year hiatus of the Egyptian occupation. The last year of Ottoman rule had been one of a bloody tax rebellion in Damascus. This memory necessarily played a role in the negotiations for renewed rule: the Ottoman side remembered its military weakness; the Damascene side remembered cruel repression and a victory wrought through unified action among factions against the state.<sup>27</sup> The potential for local resistance must have been continuously present in Ottoman officials' minds.



In this circumstance, it appears reasonable to suggest that Ottoman policy sought to contain this potentially dangerous political opposition by institutionalizing it in the form of the council. The logic of such a policy is elucidated by reference to the literature on corporatism, where the state legally “licenses” interest groups in exchange for some measure of control of, and cooperation from, the groups. The groups, in turn, gain access to certain privileges through their links with the state.<sup>28</sup> It is a way of managing, or co-opting, opposition that might in un-supervised form threaten the state.

Representation on the council, then, appears to have been based on neither a liberal notion of giving voice to common citizens, nor on corruption, but on a bargaining strategy. The Ottoman state sought to mold an elite clientele that could be manipulated in the interest of furthering its goals, while the local elites sought autonomy and a forum to voice local grievances. The bargain struck on council representation was only one example of a bargaining process that characterized local implementation of the Tanzimat. Next, we will consider deals made on specific reform measures. In this context, we will be better able to consider the complex relationship between the issue of social equality and whether the all-Muslim composition of the council predisposed the council as antireform. For this, we must gauge what exactly “reform” meant in the 1840s, and the relative powers of the Ottoman state and the council in bargaining.

#### TANZIMAT POLICY AS BARGAIN

The Syrians, upon their return to Ottoman rule in 1840, confronted an imperial war state whose domestic Tanzimat policies pronounced in the 1839 Hatt-i-Sherif of Gülhane were geared primarily toward supplying its defense requirements. The Tanzimat was seen as necessary for the very survival of the Ottoman state, and ideals of social equality and economic development were ancillary to that goal.<sup>29</sup>

The Gülhane edict was intended to attract British support as the Ottomans fought the Egyptians and to assert greater central control of provinces in order to prevent the disintegration of the empire. It was not a menu of specific reform measures, but rather a statement of general goals proposing more efficient tax collection, increased military conscription and training, and guarantees “insuring to our subjects perfect security for life, honor and fortune.”<sup>30</sup> Subsequent edicts in 1840 and 1841 outlined reforms of provincial government organization, the penal code, and currency while establishing a new Ministry of Commerce, the Ottoman bank, and a committee to organize a public-school system. Reshid Pasha was dismissed in 1841 when ulema objected to his plan to introduce French commercial law as a violation of Muslim religious law.

In the daily business of government, the proper application of Tanzimat principles was not entirely self-evident. In its capacity as a commercial court, for example, the 1844–45 Damascus council seemed to struggle with proper procedure as a secular court dealing with issues not defined by religious law. In contrast to the succinct summaries of cases characteristic of religious court registers—where decision making rested largely on analogy and customary prescription—the council recorded a wealth of minute detail, suggesting that it was attempting to evaluate cases

on their specific merits. It would often appeal simply to “justice” or to “the principles of the Tanzimat.” The council’s use of the term Tanzimat appears to have referred to security of property or freedom from arbitrary taxes. But the references remain vague supplications, and nowhere are precise principles spelled out.<sup>31</sup>

Thus in 1844–45, barely five years after the Gülhane proclamation, notions of Tanzimat principles were still rather hazy on both sides,<sup>32</sup> and therefore malleable. Between the edicts sent down from Istanbul and the exigencies of individual cases faced by the council, a concept of Tanzimat evolved that cannot be said to be precisely that prescribed in 1839, nor in violation of it either. It would be difficult to characterize the council as proreform or antireform, for there was no clear standard in many areas.

Some goals of the Tanzimat, however, were seemingly not so vague: the abolition of tax farms, the equality of minorities with Muslims, and conscription, for example. But in practice, Ottoman policy appears to have been less precise about these goals than the imperial edicts implied. That some of these policies were not adopted in Syria in the 1840s cannot be ascribed solely to the council’s intransigence. If we recall that the Ottoman state was concerned primarily with military defense, and only secondarily with liberal ideals, that the state was still administratively ill-equipped to implement its goals, and that it recognized its continuing dependence on the loyalty of local elites, then we might understand the state’s shared role in implementing the Tanzimat in a manner that deviated from the principles of the 1839 edict.

First, concerning the tax farms, the Porte attempted to replace tax farmers with its own corps of salaried tax collectors. Revenues fell drastically in 1841 and 1842, and not only due to local resistance. The state simply had not yet enough trained new-style bureaucrats to staff a new tax administration. Training them proved a major task, to be later carried out by the *mekteb-i mülkiye*, a school for training bureaucrats founded in 1859. Tax farms were likely not abolished in Damascus province because most council members were tax farmers. But it is equally likely that the Ottoman governor did not press the issue much, given the province’s budgetary crisis and the need to fall back on old forms of tax collection throughout the empire.

Conscription, on the other hand, was accepted by the council even though it was contrary to their sentiments. The military draft had been a major reason Syrians cooperated with the ouster of the Egyptians. Yet the Ottoman state pressed its cause forcefully, as Riza Pasha in 1842–43 planned a conscript army of 400,000, comparable to European armies of the time. Because military renewal was a central motivation of the Tanzimat, it is unlikely that the Ottoman governor would have been permitted by the Porte to compromise on the conscription issue, as he had on tax farms. It is more likely that the governor would have traded privileges like tax farms to gain the council’s support for military security.

The council’s deferral on this issue suggests not only its willingness to make deals, but the limits of its power. The council yielded to imperial will despite members’ strong opposition to the draft, as evidenced by the way some of them encouraged popular protest against the measure.<sup>33</sup>

The issue of minorities’ equality was a complex one, where cleavages occurred not just between Muslim and non-Muslim, but between Jew and Christian, Shi’i

and Sunni. The sectarian strife of the 1840s appears to have been rooted primarily in economic and social dislocations wrought by changing political structures. Kerr, for example, has persuasively argued that the 1860 massacre of Christians in Lebanon was a product of the Ottomans' weakening of the feudal structure there.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, Rafeq suggests that the widening gap between the rich and poor in this period lay behind the Damascus riots of 1860.<sup>35</sup>

Foreign intervention in local markets during the late 1830s and 1840s tended to work to the economic advantage of non-Muslim bankers and traders and to the detriment of local Muslim artisans.<sup>36</sup> The French increasingly diverted silk cultivated in Lebanon and Syria to their factories in Lyons, causing a rise in price that harmed the traditional silk industries in Damascus and enriched (largely Christian) Beirut agents for the French.<sup>37</sup> The British flooded the market with cheap cotton textiles after the 1938 Anglo-Turkish Commercial Convention abolished state monopolies and reduced internal transport duties.<sup>38</sup> In 1846 Damascene textile weavers attacked a Greek Orthodox concern that was undercutting them by using cheap British thread. Many Damascenes were so wary of foreign intrusion in the 1850s that they opposed the rebuilding of the Beirut-Damascus highway because it would link them more closely with Europe.<sup>39</sup>

Government response to the growing severity of local economic dislocation was minimal. In 1845, the council made two small efforts at stemming the tide of raw materials out to European factories: through its jurisdiction over guild and customs regulations, it sought to curb the exports of leather products and linens needed by local artisans.<sup>40</sup> But because the council was not in a position to initiate policy, it could do little more.

Perhaps because of the government's unwillingness or inability to protect local industries, frustration was vented on those who profited. Christians were resented, for example, because of the protections and advantages some of them received from foreign consuls. Jews and Christians were also growing conspicuously wealthy as they increasingly became creditors to the government and to peasants.

It was in this highly charged atmosphere that the Ottoman government sought to promote the legal equality of minorities, including their representation on the council. The council reacted sharply. Christians were refusing both to be conscripted into the army and to pay a fee for exemption from the draft. In early 1844, when this issue came to a head, the sole Christian member of the council was apparently forced to resign, although the precise circumstances are unclear. A French telegram suggested that the resignation was tied to the council's intention to make Christians pay the highest possible rate on the poll (*ferde*) tax.<sup>41</sup>

Why the Porte did not insist on this goal of the Tanzimat, as it had conscription, is similarly unclear, but significant. First, the representation of minorities on the council did not have the military importance that conscription did, which suggests the state may have been less concerned about it. Second, the governor may have felt it unwise to enflame local tensions further, particularly when he sought the council's support on more crucial issues. Damascus province was not unlike other provinces in this respect, for throughout the empire the 1839 call for social equality met resistance.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the Porte waited until 1856 to restate with force its commitment to equality.

In general, Ottoman policy appears to have encouraged minority council members primarily where minorities carried influence useful to the state and where reformers were able to prevail over conservative officials. This would explain the relatively high numbers of Christians and Jews on the councils at Beirut and Jerusalem,<sup>43</sup> where Christian populations were much larger than in Damascus, and conversely, the support of Muslims on councils in the Rumelian cities of Nish and Vidin, where conservative Ottoman officials feared revolution by Christian peasants.<sup>44</sup>

Ma'oz has blamed Syrian Muslim elites for rigging their representation on the council by dishonestly bullying Christians and Jews and outbidding the middle class.<sup>45</sup> He describes "illicit cooperation" between the council and antireform Ottoman officials, who behaved in a systematic pattern of discrimination against and "molestation" of non-Muslims in defiance of Tanzimat decrees.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, Ma'oz begins his chapter on the council with the following quote from 'Umar Ghazzi:

These papers coming from the Sultan and consisting of orders which did not suit the times, we therefore threw them away unused and did not act upon them at all; we did not fear a ruler nor a great one, neither a judge nor a Vezir.<sup>47</sup>

The quote was clearly an isolated and rather meaningless boast. Ghazzi was one of the most active members on the council during the year, signing his name to more decisions than any other member. Not one of these decisions carried the obstructionist, reactionary tone that Ma'oz's quotation pretends. In fact, Ghazzi put his name to several decisions that supported Tanzimat principles—not only to the waqf reform, but also in a case where the Tanzimat was used against the treasurer to justify a tax amnesty for a village, and again in two other cases where the council invoked Tanzimat promises of fair taxes to take action against exploitative tax collectors.<sup>48</sup>

Ma'oz's study apparently suffered from his reliance on partisan consults, particularly Richard Wood, whose commentary on the council was informed not by disinterested egalitarianism, but by an aggressive advocacy for Britain's economic and political clients in Damascus, mainly Jews and a few Protestants. In the very year of our study, 1844, Wood threatened to have the governor removed during the Hasbayya affair. It is important to focus on this distortion, because Ma'oz's study has long been the single major work devoted to early Tanzimat councils in the Levant.

An examination of the council's handling of petitions from minorities in 1844–45 provides evidence that its approach to Tanzimat principles was issue-oriented rather than pathologically sectarian. It responded positively in July 1845 to a complaint from the Jewish quarter about a rowdy tavern, and went so far as to close down all taverns in the city in what amounted to a temperance crusade, that was, by the way, partly directed at consular staffs. Earlier in the year it had defended minorities several times: in a dispute between a clerk for the Greek Orthodox millet and his bosses over back wages, in a suit by Christian olive growers against an investor who swindled their funds, and in granting relief to an indebted Jewish tax collector.<sup>49</sup>

The council's behavior cannot thus be described as systematic discrimination and general rejection of the Tanzimat. As seen, the council grappled sincerely with new judicial demands for commercial cases, it invoked Tanzimat principles

in its decisions, and when it opposed some Tanzimat policies it rooted its opposition in specific issues facing the province at that time. In this sense, then, one might consider the council as representative of local interests. While its identification of economic woes with particular sects may have been misguided, it can nonetheless be seen as a policy formed in response to their perceived distress of the (Muslim) majority of their public.

Contrary to common assertions that the periphery simply did not comprehend the reform plan put forward by Reshid Pasha,<sup>50</sup> council members understood quite well that the Ottoman state was imposing a more intrusive, direct rule than it had in the past with its conscription, tax, and trade policies. Indeed, throughout the region, social and economic relationships were altered by the deals made by the Ottoman state with foreign governments to secure military support in exchange for liberalizing foreign trade in the empire.<sup>51</sup>

Tilly has argued that state formation over the past 1,000 years has proceeded through deal making between states who sought to extract resources for their military operations and local elites who guarded those resources as they guarded their autonomy. The imposition of central, direct rule on the provincial periphery, he argues, has never been a feat of engineering by kings and their ministers, with precise plans neatly implemented. Rather it has been a process marked by violence, resistance, bargaining, and the creation of rights and privileges for citizens.<sup>52</sup>

The concept of deal making throws a very different light on the Damascus council's behavior in the 1840s. Contrary to Ma'oz's negative picture of backward and corrupt traditional elites bucking enlightened reform, the degree of the council's cooperation with Tanzimat reform appears remarkably positive, when it is remembered that in the 1840s the Tanzimat in the Arab provinces was inherently less attractive than, for example, in the Rumelian provinces, where the Ottoman state spent far more on the region's economic infrastructure in response to separatist pressures.

On what terms, then, were deals made in Damascus? In the process of bargaining between center and periphery, Tilly argues, the subject population's social and economic structure helps determine the state's organization—including its forms of representation—and influences the types of bargains struck.<sup>53</sup> In light of the fundamental social and economic transformations that we have seen thus far in Damascus, we should expect change in political institutions and a certain parallel fluctuation in the pattern of bargaining.

#### THE TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

In January 1845 the council ordered troops to Baalbek to seize a tax collector and his assets after repeated reports that he had extorted exorbitant tax revenues from villagers and then embezzled them: "It is necessary to show a firm hand in government and hit those tyrants hard, and to appoint soldiers to accompany Amir Muhammad al-Harfush, the commander of the mentioned precinct, in order to take control of the district and to arrest princes Hamid and Fadgham, who still insist on injustice and corruption and rabble-raising. . . ." <sup>54</sup>

No act recorded for the entire year better illustrates the transformation of the council as an institution in the early years of the 1840s. This was no mere advisory

body. In a radical expansion of its historical duty to oversee tax assessment, the council had taken on the most coveted function of government: the use of force. The council had no regular supervisory function in military affairs, and it appears that this was a rather extraordinary case. More surprising, however, was that no prior consultation with the governor was mentioned in the report. Before the *Tanzimat*, only officials of the Sublime Porte had decided when to send troops.

Although there is no indication that the governor disagreed with the initial decision to send troops, neither was the council acting entirely according to his wishes. When the Harfush declared they would stand and fight, the council rallied, reasoning that the Harfush were oppressive and corrupt and that they were known to be of a “confession of refusal,” that is, Shi<sup>ci</sup>. But the governor wished to avoid a clash, and so turned to the British consul to mediate a truce.<sup>55</sup>

So what was this council in 1844–45? Was it merely another branch of government? Was it a rival government? Did members see themselves as a vanguard of opposition, or as aspirants to imperial office? In the absence of additional documentation from the council members themselves, their motives cannot be ascertained definitively. However, in light of their actions reviewed thus far in this article, one may answer that the council was both an ally and an opponent of the central government. What is important is that this ambiguous status rested on a certain political autonomy, the freedom to choose policy independently of pressure from the local governor or the Sublime Porte; that is, the freedom to bargain.

This new autonomy, institutionalized by the 1840 edict, necessarily altered the local elites’ political behavior. The 1840s council could rely on the powers of its office and of the law to assert its interests. It no longer existed only at the convenience of the governor. Before 1840, councils were convened only by the governor, who appointed a chairman to oversee decision making.<sup>56</sup> In their dependent political status, urban elites vied with one another for imperial influence by building personal networks. They exploited their local power base and their access to authority to act as intermediaries between the populace and government. Political behavior was defined not by institutional structures, but by the fluidity of personal influence, or factionalism.

The record of the 1844–45 council, however, suggests a radically different tendency. Members’ signatures on council decisions give strong evidence of nonfactional political behavior. While these signatures reflect only one year of political activity, in the absence of other direct evidence, they must be counted in any explanation of Damascene politics in the period. It is not clear whether these signatures constituted actual votes, but we do know that the Supreme Council in Istanbul was directed to take decisions by majority vote.<sup>57</sup> In any case, the signatures appear at least to express a close connection with the issue at hand and approval of the decision taken. The pattern by which members signed decisions thus opens a window on the council’s internal political behavior.

An analysis of the signatures on 158 council decisions unearths no meaningful pattern of rival factions. Indeed, in aggregate, any two members were likely to sign together only 15 percent of the time. Furthermore, the signature pattern suggests a certain tendency for consensus among the members. Two members, <sup>c</sup>Umar Ghazzi and Nasib Hamza, signed more often than others, and they signed together more

than twice the average (40% of the votes). All other members show a tendency to vote with these two. No opposing pole of influence emerges in the analysis.

Interestingly, these two allies—Hamza and Ghazzi—should have been members of opposing factions if they had behaved according to the city's economic rivalries described by Schilcher.<sup>58</sup> Ghazzi was associated with the center-city, long-distance trading <sup>ç</sup>Azm faction, while Hamza belonged to the Maydani faction of local grain merchants and aghas. Moreover, the next highest pairs were Ghazzi and <sup>ç</sup>Azm, Ghazzi and Muradi, Hamza and Jabi, and Hamza and Muradi, with these last two pairs also being on opposite sides of Schilcher's factional fence.<sup>59</sup> Such a radical shift in political behavior, from factionalism to consensus, must be linked to the single most radical change in the political sphere of the period, the creation of a legally autonomous institution.

This consensus and autonomy suggest a necessary reconsideration of our understanding of the early Tanzimat era. The decade of the 1840s is usually interpreted as an initial failure of the Tanzimat, in which the predominance of pre-Tanzimat attitudes continued to overwhelm reform. First, councils in Damascus and other Ottoman provinces have generally been described as chaotic and inefficient, acting through happenstance, custom, and corruption.<sup>60</sup> Behind arguments like these, which root provincial politics in personal ties and irrationality, lie assumptions from 1960s modernization theory, now criticized for its biases toward defining the political center, and particularly the West, as more rational and modern, and the periphery as traditional, and therefore irrational and obstructive to progress.<sup>61</sup>

Second, factionalism has been a dominant explanation for Middle Eastern urban politics at least since Albert Hourani published his article "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables" in 1968.<sup>62</sup> Hourani offered his paradigm explicitly as a hypothesis advanced in the absence of historical data from the local elites. In the face of the 1844–45 register's evidence, however, Hourani's emphasis on rival personal networks as the central dynamic of urban politics appears overstated. And his characterization of elites as intermediaries now appears imprecise, given that the council had authority to act on its own, without consultation, and to veto the governor's actions. The Harfush affair suggests that council members saw themselves not as mediators between populace and imperial state, but rather as a self-determining political force in their own right.

Assumptions that the council was irrational and prey to long-standing political habits have thus tended to see the 1840s as a period of continuity with the past. The decade might instead be read as a break, a transitional period in which new institutional structures imposed from outside prompted behavioral change and the emergence of new political forms. A new spirit in politics is suggested by the repeated examples in the 1844–45 register of council members' readiness to embrace new concepts like "Tanzimat justice" and to handle disputes without recourse to shari<sup>ç</sup>a law. Indeed, the absence of religious references by a group composed largely of ulema is remarkable.

The availability of the council as an autonomous, institutionalized arena for urban politics was not the only factor in changing political behavior. With its tendency toward consensus around two figures known for defending local interests against the imperial state, Hamza and Ghazzi, the council also reinforced a general

political reorientation following the economic and political changes of the 1830s. Concern with imperial matters had been much diminished in Damascus during the 18th and early 19th centuries, as the province was run with a high degree of autonomy by the <sup>ç</sup>Azms and other governors, with only intermittent intervention by the Porte.<sup>63</sup> But the reassertion of central government intervention, first by the Ottomans in 1831 and then by the Egyptians, shifted the focus of local politics from internecine rivalries to the conflict between local and imperial interests. Previous rivals united their factions to oust first the Ottoman governor, and then the Egyptians. The central state emerged as a pole around which local consensus formed.

But consensus alone would be too simple a characterization of the council's political behavior. It does not capture the flux of politics in the period, when council members defended poor tax payers while at the same time exploiting the opportunity to obtain tax farms, and acceded to imperial waqf reforms and conscription while pursuing a renegade mission against the Harfush and resisting the equality of religious minorities.

A tension between competing interests appears to underlie the ambiguity in the council's behavior. The council alternately represented local interests against central government encroachment, and compromised the general economic interest of the region for their own landowning interests. But in both cases, urban elites no longer merely represented their own personal networks. Their wider affiliations were a new development in a city long organized as a mosaic of overlapping allegiances to family, quarter, trade, and religion. In the mid-19th century, their economic interests would continue to converge, as elites first exploited tax farms and then landownership with the 1858 land reform. The urban landowning elite would eventually develop a consciousness of class, a horizontal affiliation supplanting their primarily vertical factional ties.<sup>64</sup>

The 1840s were thus protean years in the political identity and loyalty of elites. The council was not yet clearly an instrument of class interests. Elites, not yet closely tied to the central state's bureaucratic network and its privileges, still attempted to pursue independent policies. The reasons the elite eventually embraced class loyalty based on ties to the central state must therefore lie in the political bargains made subsequently in the early Tanzimat era. The 1844–45 register does not, unfortunately, provide enough information to examine the trends in bargaining during the following, crucial decade. Its most glaring omission is information on the informal political relationships among the council, and between the council and the local governor and influential foreign consuls. For those, we must still rely on the biased consular and central-state records.

The register does, however, tell us that the Damascus council was more successful than other provincial councils in winning autonomy from the central state, and that in the mid-1840s its most active members were still ardent defenders of local interests against imperial encroachment. Those members tied to the imperial government were clearly less influential, and often joined the local consensus. But the register also suggests that the deck was stacked against defending the province from outside intervention. While by 1844–45 the council had obtained the power to meet independently of the governor, to send troops to Baalbek, and to discipline black-marketeers in leeches, it had not achieved the power necessary to address



the impact of imperial tax, conscription, trade, and diplomatic policy that fell heavily and unevenly on the Damascene population in this period. The road to Beirut was built despite locals' negative sentiment. Institutional autonomy did not make the council an equal bargaining partner with the Ottoman state.

Although its conclusions must for now remain tentative, it is hoped that this analysis will encourage a reevaluation of center–periphery relations in the early Tanzimat period. While the bargains struck in Damascus are particular, their pattern falls into general trends that have characterized state centralization efforts elsewhere. Current scholarship has accorded peripheral elites a more constructive role in the state-building process, as perceptive guardians of local interests against the hunger of central states for military and other resources. In Third Republic France, for example, centralization took place as a dialectic, in which local elites, seeking to defend their regional identities, influenced central policy as much as Parisian centralizers influenced the provinces through the cumulative effects of bargains on specific issues.<sup>65</sup> Not all provincial elites preserved their autonomy. European states often made compromising deals with local elites, granting them national rights and permitting them to exploit and repress other classes in exchange for delivering military resources to the state.<sup>66</sup> Similar deals were made in the Ottoman Empire, with measures like the 1858 land code, which consolidated an elite landowning class that dominated peasants. In this guise, the Ottoman state was not the beneficent angel of reform—nor local elites the reactionary villains—that they have so often been portrayed to be. They were, instead, unequal parties to self-serving bargains.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>Register of the Majlis Shūra al-Shām al-ʿAlī, 22 October 1844 to 31 October 1845, *ʿAwāmir al-Sultaniyya*, vol. 5 (Damascus: Historical Documents Center), 363–64, 370.

<sup>2</sup>For top-down interpretations of the Tanzimat, see Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856–1876* (Princeton, N.J., 1963); and Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1977), esp. chap. 3. For a similar view specifically on administrative councils, see İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimatdan Cumhuriyete Yerel Yönetim Geleceği* (Istanbul, 1985), esp. 67–70. All of these works rely primarily on central-state records.

<sup>3</sup>See especially Moshe Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine 1840–1861* (Oxford, 1968), 87–100; and Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860–1920* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 1–25.

<sup>4</sup>Majlis register, 370.

<sup>5</sup>David S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus* (Cambridge, 1969), 153–55.

<sup>6</sup>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: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (5 juillet 1980)*, ed. Jean-Louis Bacque-Grammont and Paul Dumont (Paris, 1983), 422.

<sup>7</sup>Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in 19th-Century Beirut* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 121–28.

<sup>8</sup>Caesar E. Farah, "Protestantism and Politics: The 19th-Century Dimension in Syria," in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation*, ed. David Kushner (Jerusalem, 1986), 320–40. For the American missionaries' point of view, see A. L. Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria 1800–1901* (Oxford, 1966), 108–16.

<sup>9</sup>M. E. Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East 1792–1923* (New York, 1987), 108.

<sup>10</sup>Rafeq, "Impact of Europe," 422, 430.

<sup>11</sup>Majlis register, 96–100.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 288, 313, 381–82.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 24–25.

<sup>15</sup>Zouhair Ghazzal, "Les Fondements de l'économie politique de Damas durant le XIXe siècle: structures traditionnelles et capitalisme" (Ph.D. diss., University of Paris, Sorbonne, 1986), 2–5, 123–24. See also James A. Riley, "Urban Hegemony in the Hinterland of Ottoman Damascus: Villages, Estates, and Farms in the Nineteenth Century" (Paper delivered at the Sixth International Conference of Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, Aix-en-Provence, July 1992).

<sup>16</sup>Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, 92, 98; Khoury, *Urban Notables*, 17; and Ghazzal, "Les Fondements," 81, 95. See also Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago, 1968), 63.

<sup>17</sup>Halil Inalcik, *Application of the Tanzimat and Its Social Effects* (Lisse: Peter De Ridder Press, 1976), 6–7 (reprinted from *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 5 [1973]).

<sup>18</sup>See Roderic H. Davison, "The Advent of the Principle of Representation in the Government of the Ottoman Empire," in Polk and Chambers, *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, 97–99. See also Inalcik, *Application of Tanzimat*, 9–11; Ortaylı, *Tanzimatdan*, 70.

<sup>19</sup>Ghazzal, "Les Fondements," 4.

<sup>20</sup>Biographical information on the members was gleaned from biographical dictionaries by Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart, 1985), 54–55; and Ghazzal, "Les Fondements," 82–88.

<sup>21</sup>Uriel Heyd, "The Ottoman 'Ulema and Westernization in the time of Selim III and Mahmud II," in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, ed. Uriel Heyd (Jerusalem, 1961), 84–87.

<sup>22</sup>Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 64–65; Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 42–45.

<sup>23</sup>Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 172–73, 197.

<sup>24</sup>The Damascus governor attended the council's meetings only a dozen times, between November 1844 and January 1845, generally communicating with the council through memoranda and spokesmen. For a contrast with the Egyptian governor's tight control of the council, see Yitzhak Hofman, "Administration of Syria and Palestine under Egyptian Rule," in *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period*, ed. M. Ma'oz (Jerusalem, 1975), 311–33.

<sup>25</sup>Chairmanship of each session was not designated, but one member always arrived a half-hour or more earlier than the others, and I have hypothesized that this member organized the day's session.

<sup>26</sup>The Jerusalem council in 1851 met only under the direct guidance of the governor, and was "forced" to sign decisions (*madabit*). See Yair Hirschfeld, "Prussian and Ottoman Policies in Palestine during the 1840s," in Kushner, *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, 263–79.

<sup>27</sup>For a detailed account of the 1831 rebellion, see Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 40–43.

<sup>28</sup>Philip Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?" in *The New Corporatism: Social and Political Structures in the Iberian World*, ed. Pike and Stritch (Notre Dame, Ind., 1974), 93–94.

<sup>29</sup>See Yapp, *Making of Near East*, 109; Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 58; Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 6, 38; and Osman Okyar, "A New Look at the Recent Political, Social and Economic Historiography of the Tanzimat," in Bacque-Grammont and Dumont, *Économie et sociétés dans l'Empire ottoman*, 38–40.

<sup>30</sup>Robert Landen, *The Emergence of Modern Middle East: Selected Readings* (New York, 1970), 38–39.

<sup>31</sup>Haim Gerber reports a similar shift in legal approach in late 19th-century records of the Jerusalem council, in which notion of "special circumstances" and legal precedents inconceivable to qadis of the early 19th century emerged, in his "A New Look at the Tanzimat: The Case of the Province of Jerusalem," in Kushner, *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, 38. In the same volume, see also Carter V. Findley, "The Evolution of the System of Provincial Administration as Viewed from the Center," 3–29.

<sup>32</sup>See G. Perrot, *Souvenirs d'un voyage en Asie Mineure* (Paris, 1867), 343–46, who reports improvisation on provincial councils for lack of clear rules even twenty years after the period of this study.

- <sup>33</sup>Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, 82.
- <sup>34</sup>See Malcolm H. Kerr, *Lebanon in the Last Years of Feudalism 1840–1868* (Beirut, 1959), intro.
- <sup>35</sup>Rafeq, "Impact of Europe," 430.
- <sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 425.
- <sup>37</sup>Dominique Chevallier, "Lyon et la Syrie: Les bases d'une intervention," in his *Villes et travail en Syrie du XIXe au XXe siècle* (Paris, 1982), 41–52.
- <sup>38</sup>See Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800–1914* (New York, 1981), 86–93; and Sevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism* (Cambridge, 1987), 18–21.
- <sup>39</sup>Rafeq, "Impact of Europe," 421.
- <sup>40</sup>Majlis register, 244–46.
- <sup>41</sup>Ghazzal, "Les Fondements," 92. A Jew had been a member of the council in 1840, but the circumstances of his removal are also unclear, though it may have been related to the blood libel case.
- <sup>42</sup>Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 42–45.
- <sup>43</sup>Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, 198.
- <sup>44</sup>Inalcik, "Application of Tanzimat," 20–29.
- <sup>45</sup>Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, 92, 198.
- <sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 99, 197–99.
- <sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 87.
- <sup>48</sup>Majlis register, 186–87, 214–16, 368–70.
- <sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 19, 207, 333–34.
- <sup>50</sup>See, for example, Hourani, "Ottoman Reform," 43, where he says: "The process of change which took place in this period was one which, by and large, the population of the empire and its dependent states—even the educated part of it—did not understand." See also Metin Heper, "Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire," *International Political Science Review* 1 (1980): 81–105.
- <sup>51</sup>See K. H. Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789–1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972): 243–44, where he argues that Ottoman overtures to European trade affected Christian and Muslim social structures differently and led to a risky decentralization of trade policy through the mid-19th century.
- <sup>52</sup>Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D. 990–1990* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 25–26.
- <sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 99–100.
- <sup>54</sup>Majlis register, 111.
- <sup>55</sup>See Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, 112, where he characterizes the incident as an act of vengeance by the Sunni council against the Shi'i Harfush. The text of the report in the record book does not support this interpretation, for it focuses mainly on concrete accounts of villagers's complaints and shortfalls in the Harfush's submission of tax revenues to the treasury.
- <sup>56</sup>For Damascus diwans in the 18th century, see Abdul-Karim Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus 1723–1783* (Beirut, 1970), 23–24. For Aleppo, see Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1989), 82–83. And for the whole Ottoman Empire, see Halil Inalcik, "Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration," in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, ed. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Carbondale, Ill., 1977), 33, 41–43.
- <sup>57</sup>Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 41.
- <sup>58</sup>Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, 35, 47–53.
- <sup>59</sup>This observation is based on the analysis of paired signatures. A more conclusive study would require the extensive statistical process of multiple factor analysis. However, the polarity suggested by the pairing patterns is so strong that similar results are likely in the more extensive procedure.
- <sup>60</sup>See Inalcik, "Application of Tanzimat," 13; Findley, "Evolution of System," 5; and Heper, "Center and Periphery," 94.
- <sup>61</sup>Leonard Binder, "The Natural History of Development Theory," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, 1 (January 1986): 8–12.
- <sup>62</sup>For examples of Hourani's influence, see Khoury, *Urban Notables*, 1–25; Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York, 1988), 1–16; and Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York, 1988), 1–9, where the politics of notables paradigm is applied to later periods of Levantine history.

<sup>63</sup>See, for example, Rafeq, *Province of Damascus*, for an illustration of local rule interrupted only intermittently by the Porte during the 18th century; and also Karl Barbir, "From Pasha to Efendi: The Assimilation of Ottomans into Damascene Society 1516–1783," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 1 (1979–80): 69, where he suggests that Ottoman officials behaved from local interests, not loyalty to Istanbul.

<sup>64</sup>Ghazzal, "Les Fondements," 340–45; and Khoury, *Urban Notables*, 2–5. See also Abdullah Hanna, "The Agricultural Problem in Syria from the Early 19th Century to 1945," *M.E.S. Series*, n. 16 (Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1985), 24–32, where he calls the 1858 land reform a new feudalism.

<sup>65</sup>Pierre Grémion, *Le pouvoir périphérique* (Paris, 1976), 10–14, 162, 340–43.

<sup>66</sup>Charles Tilly, "Where Do Rights Come From?," *The Working Paper Series*, no. 98 (New York: New School for Social Research, 1990), 5–6.