

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THE SETTLEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF
HAWRAN 1860 – 1914: A RECONSIDERATION OF
MOTIVES AND FORCES

by
RAJA JAMAL ABU HASSAN

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Approved by:

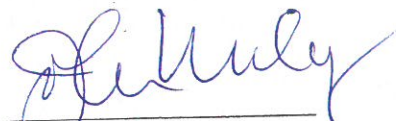
Dr. Abdulrahim Abu Husayn, Professor,
Department of History & Archaeology

Advisor



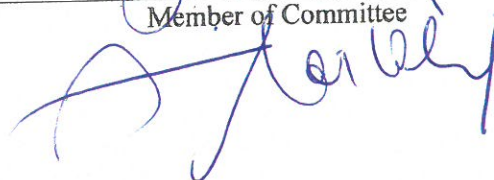
Dr. John Meloy
Department of History & Archaeology,

Member of Committee



Dr. Samir Seikaly, Professor,
Department of History & Archaeology

Member of Committee



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My wife Soha has a special place in this page. Had she not given me the courage to approach the department to apply for a graduate degree, this special opportunity to work with such amazing faculty and learn from them would have been lost. Despite having to take care of three kids (myself included), her support and encouragement never wavered.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Raja Jamal Abu Hassan for Masters of Arts
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This thesis attempts to answer the following question: what were the causes behind the resettlement of Mount Lebanon's Druze to Hawran during the 19th century? Scholars have already proposed answers, and in doing so, focused overwhelmingly on the social and communal traits of the sect as well as its conflict-ridden history. They suggest that the sect's conservative outlook, communalism, dislike of trade and preference for farming, incentivized relocation to Hawran, where the community had already established a foothold in the 18th century. This study, however, focuses on economic causes. In doing so, it faces a body of statistically-based literature that claims economic conditions in Hawran collapsed just as settlement activity peaked.

The first chapter elucidates in detail the limitations of statistical data about trade especially in the context of 19th century Hawran. These shortcomings include an overwhelming focus on grain exports to Europe, contradictory findings regarding grain yields and exports, as well as disagreements regarding geographical constructs, units of measurement and other key concepts.

The following chapter taps literary sources to present an alternative perspective about economic conditions in the region. The three categories of literary sources used for this chapter are official Ottoman reports, contemporary newspaper articles, travel literature and memoirs. These four types of sources help highlight aspects of Hawran's economy completely ignored by statistical data described above.

The final chapter analyses settlement activity. It begins by briefly surveying push factors in Mount Lebanon, which affected both Druze and Maronite communities. The Ottoman state's role in the resettlement process also receives attention, as well as other communities resettling in the Ottoman province of Syria during the second half of the 19th century.

In concluding, this study argues that local and regional economic dynamics acted as pull factors attracting Mount Lebanon's Druze population to Hawran. Forces that transcended sectarian lines compelled them to leave Mount Lebanon. Lastly, the Ottoman state played a either a positive or neutral role throughout this process.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. WHAT NUMBERS INFORM US ABOUT HAWRAN'S ECONOMY (1850 – 1914)	16
A. Skewed bell curve narrative: sudden rise and gradual decline of grain exports to Europe	19
B. Grain yields and exports during the last decades of Ottoman rule: contradicting reports	22
C. Grain export analyses: comparing apples to oranges?	27
1. Units of analyses and of measurement: a body of inconsistencies	29
D. Primary sources: the impact of time	38
III. TAPPING NARRATIVE SOURCES TO ACQUIRE AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW	49
A. Tapping Ottoman sources for quantitative data	53
B. Trade within and across administrative boundaries	57
C. Production of textiles, basalt millstones, timber and charcoal	65
D. The processing of grains for local consumption	78

E.	Summary of findings	90
IV.	DRUZE SETTLEMENT OF THE HAWRAN	93
A.	Druze settlement of Hawran – facts and figures	93
B.	Push factors in the Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon	103
1.	Strained socio-economic conditions during the Mutasarrifiyya era	104
2.	Political conflict within the Druze community	111
C.	Pull factors: Ottoman province of Syria and sanjak of Hawran	115
1.	The Ottoman state: attitudes and policies concerned with Druze settlement	120
.	CONCLUSION	141
Appendix		
I.	Ottoman official document: YEE. 104/55 Lef 2, April 6, 1887 (Arabic translation)	144
II.	Ottoman official document: YEE. 104/55 Lef 2, April 6, 1887 (Ottoman original)	145
III.	Ottoman official document: DH.i .um 10-1 /2-56 Lef 10, February 3, 1915 (Arabic translation)	146
IV	Ottoman official document: DH.i .um 10-1 /2-56 Lef 10, February 3, 1915 (Ottoman original)	147
BIBLIOGRAPHY		148

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Average Annual Values of Grain Exports from Syria (Pound Sterling)	27
2. A reception hall in the home of a Druze Hawrani chief with coffee ready to serve (1925)	71
3. Basalt olive press in the Golan	74
4. Advertisement in <i>al-Muqtabas</i> by company selling steam-powered grain mills	88
5. Snapshots of Druze settlements in the Hawran (early 19th century, 1865 & 1905)	98
6. Map of Druze villages in the Province of al-Suwayda' (1927)	130

TABLES

Table	Page
1. UK Import of Wheat from Syria and Palestine, 1850-5 (tons).....	19
2. French Estimates of 1890 Harvest & Distribution of Hawrani Wheat, Barley & Maize.....	23
3. Cereal Production per km ² , 1894/95	25
4. Sanjaks in the Vilayet of Damascus (Syria) 1850 - 1893	33
5. Exports of wheat, barley and other cereals, all ports, 1873 – 82 (annual averages in £).....	37
6. Grain Production of the Hawran, the Jebel Druse, the Ajlun Caza and the Southern Part of the Central Caza of Damascus (1901)	42
7. Total Yearly Production of Staple Crops Grown in the Country, and the Following Figures Can Only Give a Very Approximate Estimate of Annual Yield [1910].....	43
8. Development of the Druze Settlement in Hawran	96
9. Estimates of populations in Hawran prepared by Ottoman officials (1856, 1880 & 1915).....	100
10. Silk Exports to France and Operating Mills in Mount Lebanon.....	106
11. Tax receipts collected in the Vilayet of Damascus during the years 1909 and 1910 (10% Tithe & Sheep tax).....	125
12. Abridged Ottoman Administration Budget for Construction of Schools and Mosques in Jabal Hauan (1900).....	134
13. Suggested budget for Proposed Mutasarifiyya of Jabal Druze (1893)	135

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Druze are a small religious community characterized by an eclectic system of doctrines and by a cohesion and loyalty towards one another that have helped them to maintain their close-knit identity and distinctive faith for centuries. Publicly announced in 1017 AD from Cairo, capital of the Fatimid caliphate during the reign of Al-Hakim bi Amr Allah, the Druze doctrine was to break away from Orthodox Ismailism, the Fatimid caliphate's official religion. The new doctrine was proselytized for twenty-six years until 1043, primarily in Greater Syria, after which new adherents were prohibited from entering the faith.¹

Though the largest number of Druze in any one country (over 510,000 today, currently reside in Syria)² this was not always the case. Other countries where indigenous Druze communities can be found are Lebanon with 185,000³, Israel with over 120,000⁴, and Jordan with approximately 20,000⁵. The first political center of gravity of the Druze community was in fact the Gharb region of Mount Lebanon, just

¹ Kais M. Firro, *A History of the Druzes* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 10, 13 & 15.

² The World Factbook 2013-14. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, "Syria", accessed March 23, 2016 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html>.

³ Ibid, "Lebanon", accessed March 23, 2016 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html>.

⁴ Ibid, "Israel", accessed March 23, 2016 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html>.

⁵ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 3.

south of Beirut, where the Tanukhid emirs were prominent for almost four centuries (1147-1516).⁶ The center then shifted south-east of the Gharb and further into Mount Lebanon. For the following two centuries (1517-1697), the Ma'anid clan who based themselves in the Shuf district, inherited the community's leadership.⁷ This transfer of power also coincided with the Ottoman expulsion of the Mamluks from the region as a result of the second Ottoman-Mamluk War of 1516-17.

Three centuries after the downfall of the Ma'anids, the community's center of gravity shifted once again. By the second half of the 19th century, the Shuf had lost its title of "the Druze Mountain" to the Hawran. This change occurred around a hundred and fifty years after the Shihab Emirs succeeded the Ma'ans as recognized rulers over Mount Lebanon. It also coincided with the Ottoman Empire's gradual loss of influence over the region to two major European powers, namely France and Great Britain.

The Druzes' new homeland, Hawran, consists of three major geographical formations: a small mountain range on its north, a vast fertile plain on its south and a rocky plateau called the Lajah separates the two. Desert landscape imposes natural boundaries on the region's eastern and northern edges. Hawran borders the Golan Heights on its west and Damascus on its north-western edge. However, its southern boundaries have shifted northward or southward in accord with impositions of Ottoman administrative divisions and even existing international borders, specifically the boundary between Jordan and Syria. Major towns and cities include al-Suwayda, Deraa, Busra al-Sham, Irbid and Ajlun, both currently in Jordan.

⁶ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 31.

⁷ Ibid.

Though a considerable amount of literature about Druze history is available, relatively little has been written about the settlement of Hawran particularly in the English language.⁸ Qais M. Firro and Norman N. Lewis emerge as the exceptions to this general observation. Though neither dedicated an entire book to the subject of Druze immigration to Hawran, they both offered considerable material in their works entitled respectively *A History of the Druzes* and *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980*.

Lewis offers an unparalleled account of settlement activity in terms of dates and numbers of settlers moving into Hawran based primarily on European primary sources. Firro provides an equally unique analysis of “push factors,” circumstances and forces that compelled Druze to leave Mount Lebanon, during the 19th century. Yet both scholars’ assessments of “pull factors,” circumstances and forces that attracted settlers to Hawran, were lacking in different ways. Firro’s analysis, though detailed, focused very much on Druze particularism and desires for reestablishing a new exclusive power center similar to those in the Shuf and Gharb regions of Mount Lebanon. Lewis, on the other hand, hardly dedicated one or two sentences about pull factors. Thus our understanding of what attracted people to the region is far from complete

This general lack of scholarly concern seems understandable given the relatively inconsequential size of the Druze population and the fact that their migration transpired within the Ottoman Empire. One could fairly ask: what impact did the migration of a community consisting of around 100,000 souls have on the general flow of events within the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the 19th century? In response to

⁸ Rana Yusuf Khoury, *The Druze Heritage, an Annotated Bibliography*, (London: Druze Heritage Foundation, 2001).

that question, this study suggests that contextualizing this development within its broader environment reveals that it could have reflected other migrations across the Empire, especially in the Levant.

The community's experiences therefore may be seen as a microcosm from which to draw broader conclusions about prevailing political and economic conditions during the time in question. In short, this study argues that the Druze experience was not exclusively a Druze one. Proving such a hypothesis necessitates challenging some assumptions found in existing narratives.

The first assumption that should be addressed concerns sectarian conflict. Historians have interpreted the battle of 'Ain Dara in 1711 and Mount Lebanon's civil war of 1860 as primary catalysts that led the community to resettle in Hawran.⁹ The first of these military encounters pitted Druze factions against one another. The second saw Christian and Druze communities fight a particularly vicious and bloody war in Mount Lebanon. According to one narrative, survivors of the vanquished party at 'Ain Dara were the first Druze to settle in Hawran.¹⁰ Furthermore, although militarily victorious in 1860, the same narrative suggests the episode sent thousands fleeing for the relative safety of Hawran.¹¹ This exodus was caused primarily by European military intervention and an Ottoman decision to prosecute those involved in the conflict, in particular the apparently victorious Druze.

⁹ Turki Qasim Al-Zughbi, *Jabal al-Duruz fi al-'Ahd al-Uthmani* (al-Suwaida': Dar al-Balad lil Nashr wa-al-Tiba'a wa-al-Tawzi', 2009), p. 191.

¹⁰ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 37.

¹¹ Norman Nicholson Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 80.

A second related assumption portrays the Druze as victims of historical developments beyond their control. In the wake of the events described above, a humbled community lingered on in the mountain range. After the battle of ‘Ain Dara, for example, a non-Druze family established itself as “primus inter pares” among the Druze sheikhly families for the first time since the Tanukhid emirs began their reign six centuries earlier.¹² Sunni Muslim and Maronite Christian Shihabi emirs would rule over the region until the Double Qaimaqamate Era which saw the mountain divided into a northern Christian sector and southern Druze sector in 1842.¹³ Demographically, economically and politically, Christian communities all over Mount Lebanon surged past their Druze neighbors as of the 18th century, and especially during the 19th. In short, the community’s loss of control over Mount Lebanon resulting from their diminishing power relative to the region’s Christian population supposedly spurred large numbers of Druze to seek refuge in Hawran.

Finally an assumption about the dominant agency of certain individuals also features prominently in Druze historiography as important catalysts of the Hawran’s settlement. Bashir Shihab II, for example, assaulted a large number of the sect’s prominent families. The Abu Nakads, Junblats and fourteen other sheikhly families, which constituted the pillars of Druze power on Mount Lebanon were among Bashir’s victims.¹⁴ Though the Shihabs failed to break Druze power completely, they caused

¹² Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 32.

¹³ Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace : Ottoman Lebanon 1861 - 1920* (Berkley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 27 – 28.

¹⁴ Charles Issawi, "The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration, 1800-1914," in *The Lebanese in the World : A Century of Emigration*, ed. Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1991), 13, p. 14.

enough turmoil in Mount Lebanon to encourage relocation to the Hawran among large sections of the Druze population.¹⁵ Outside of Mount Lebanon, Tubal Agha, governor of Jsr ʿalshghur (a town on the western shores of the Orontes River about 50 km southwest of Idlib) instigated clashes in Jabal al-Aʿla (1811) which compelled Druze families from those regions to flee and resettle in either Mount Lebanon or the Hawran.¹⁶ Lastly, Ahmad al-Jazzar imposed such oppressive tax burdens on Druze villagers living in the Galilee during the last decades of the 18th century that they were also compelled to leave.¹⁷

These events, individuals and families have served as the building blocks of a broad narrative about a community subjugated by outside forces, and acting in unison to overcome unique challenges. Different characters fill the role of primary actors depending on time and place. Nevertheless, their intentions and actions are essentially one and the same. The story of Hawran’s settlement thus appears to be an oppressed community’s calculated response to its progressively weakening positions within its various ancestral homelands – its attempt to start anew in a nearby but distinctly different area that would permit it to do so.¹⁸

¹⁵ Al-Zughbi, *Jabal al-Duruz fi 'Ahd al-Uthmani*, p. 180-181.

¹⁶ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 48.

¹⁷ Al-Zughbi, *Jabal al-Duruz fi 'Ahd al-Uthmani*, p. 179.

¹⁸ Among the Druze of Hawran today many family names indicate the regions from which their members originated. Examples of such families include the Shufis, Metnis, Richanis, Safadis and Halabis. These family names reveal that their members originated from the Shuf and Metn regions of Mount Lebanon, the Rachaya region of the anti-Lebanon mountain range, the Safad region in Palestine/Israel and the Aleppo region respectively. Furthermore, even if family names do not harbor regional connotations, their members’ geographic origins are generally known among the general population, especially since families from similar regions tended to cluster together during the settlement process.

Though such a Druze-centric narrative contains certain truths and cites acknowledged historical facts, it ignores evidence that suggest a more complex multi-faceted reality. This study therefore reassesses the migration's primary push and pull factors in light of such evidence. It places push factors primarily in Mount Lebanon within a broader context of significant economic and political upheavals transpiring across the Ottoman Empire and suggests that economic developments and possibilities in the Hawran played a major role in pulling settlers to the Hawran. It also weighs the possible impact of political and administrative realities in the Hawran on settlement activity.

Such factors ultimately cannot be disassociated from the integration of Ottoman regions into European economies and the modernization of Ottoman state institutions. The experiences of other communities in the orbit of both Mount Lebanon and Hawran therefore feature prominently in this narrative. Although each community reacted differently, none within the affected Ottoman regions was immune to the transformations affecting the Levant during the 19th century.

On the subject of Mount Lebanon's socio-economic, political and administrative conditions, the study relies on published literature about the Mutasarrifiyya such as Engin Akarli's *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon 1861 - 1920*, and material about emigration such as Albert Hourani's *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*. This literature offers a general consensus around two points concerning socio-economic conditions in Mount Lebanon during the 19th century. First, the silk industry was an extremely volatile one, experiencing both very lucrative and disastrous years depending on demand from France, as well as supply that was extremely vulnerable to weather conditions, disease and pests. The second point of consensus is

that even as late as the turn of the century and after considerable capital investment, the industry simply could not sustain the growing population of Mount Lebanon. This study essentially confirms these findings and applies them to the analyses relating to Druze emigration to Hawran.

With regards to pull factors, attention shifts to socio-economic conditions in the Hawran, relations between the Ottoman state and Hawrani Druze and Ottoman efforts to develop and govern the province of Syria. The argument claims that economic conditions were conducive to settlement throughout the last four decades of the 19th century. It also asserts that the Ottoman policy to develop and govern the vilayet of Syria constituted another pull factor for the settlers.

This hypothesis faces two significant hurdles obstructing its validity. The first and most obvious stems from renowned hostility between the Druze of Hawran and Ottoman authorities. Major military campaigns led by Husayn Fawzi Pasha in 1895 and Sami Faruqi Pasha in 1910 constitute merely two of a series of bloody confrontations between the Druze and Ottoman state during the second half of the 19th century. The second hurdle stems from claims that Hawran was essentially impoverished during the decades in which settlement activity peaked.

Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, recognized as an authority on Hawran's grain economy during the 19th century, suggests that the region enjoyed two decades of prosperity that began due to demand for Syrian grain during the Crimean War (1853 – 1856). She also suggests that by the 1870s, Hawran lost its market share in Europe due to increased competition from other sources, most notably North America. Exports only resumed at the turn of the century after rail networks reduced transportation costs

considerably by linking the source of Hawrani grain to European markets through the Mediterranean ports of Beirut and Haifa.

Schilcher, like other economic historians of Mount Lebanon relies heavily on trade statistics to draw conclusions about the Hawrani grain economy. Although historians of Mount Lebanon have reached consensus regarding its economic development during the second half the 19th century, no consensus exists about the performance of Syria's grain economy, to which the Hawran contributed significantly. Various studies present contradictory and inconsistent findings. For example, Schilcher claims that grain exports plummeted as of the late 1870s.¹⁹ However other scholars, such as Mohammad Sa'id Kalla assert that exports persisted throughout the 1880s and even 1890s.²⁰ These opposing conclusions come from the same sources.

The secondary literature on Syria suffers from an even more basic problem of relating geographical reference points. Scholars unanimously define Mount Lebanon during the 19th century by referring to the Ottoman Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon. However, for various reasons this does not appear to be the case for either Syria or the Hawran. Rather than using Ottoman administrative boundaries, which admittedly shifted considerably during the 19th century, scholars impose contemporary political or ideological boundaries on both Ottoman Syria and Hawran. This practice understandably yields considerable differences within the various frames of reference used by historians presenting economic analyses.

¹⁹ Linda Schilcher, "Violence in Rural Syria in the 1880s and 1890s: State Centralization, Rural Integration, and the World Market," in *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, First ed. (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1991), p. 53.

²⁰ Muhammad Sa'id Kalla, "The Role of Foreign Trade in the Economic Development of Syria, 1831-1914" (Ph. D., The American University, 1969), p. 263.

This study questions the reliance on grain export data to assess the economic performance of Ottoman Syria and Hawran, by highlighting the severe handicaps that accompany such extrapolations. It re-examines conclusions currently found in the literature, opens the door for alternative narratives and encourages the increased reliance on other important but marginalized sources. Specifically, the thesis relies on travel literature, Ottoman archives, press reports and memoirs written by individuals residing in the Hawran. The sources shed light on socio-economic and political conditions largely ignored by trade statistics, living conditions, local and regional trade as well as capital investments.

Some examples of economic activity revealed by these sources include: the processing of charcoal sold primarily in urban markets such as Damascus; the mining and cutting of basalt stones exported to neighboring regions such as Nablus and even to overseas markets; timber, produced and sold by Circassian settlers in the Golan to local home owners; and lastly, grain processing for local consumption, which was a vital local service available to Hawranis.

Such information helps paint a relatively comprehensive portrait of economic activity in the Hawran. It reconstructs the complex network of commercial relationships between actors within the region and beyond. Most importantly, it suggests that this economic network welcomed settlers who offered the region labor, which for a considerable stretch of time during the 19th century, remained in short supply. All of these economic activities also point to a determination by local inhabitants to invest material and manpower in their bid to improve agricultural productivity, as well as capital to purchase modern grain processing machinery by the turn of the century. Most pertinently, the sources point to the very likely possibility that

economic incentives constituted an important pull factor that attracted settlers to the region even during the years grain exports to Europe supposedly collapsed.

To understand more comprehensively push and pull forces at play, this study also examines other ethnic and religious groups that relocated by the end of the 19th century. The same factors that pushed the Druze to leave Mount Lebanon also pushed Christians to emigrate westward. Similarly, attractive forces pulled other communities to settle inner Syria, such as Circassians, Bedouin tribes, Alawis and Ismailis. Though each of the noted groups reacted to unique forces specific to their own geographic, political and economic conditions, the overlap in terms of time and, in certain cases, space, indicates that at least some forces at play transcended such particularities.

Chapter III of this thesis, which focuses on emigration and settlement, relies heavily on secondary sources. Norman Lewis and Eugene Rogan provide insightful narratives about settlement by various communities within the international boundaries of contemporary Syria and Jordan during the 19th century. As already noted, Engin Akarli, Albert Hourani, Charles Issawi and others contribute to a relatively rich collection of secondary literature about emigration of primarily Christians from the Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon during the 19th century. Both sets of literature contextualize their works within social, political, administrative and economic settings, as revealed by their sources.

With regards to Druze-Ottoman relations, the study highlights two levels of analysis. First, the impact of reforms carried out across the Empire on Druze settlers in the Hawran. The mid-19th century witnessed a drive by Ottoman authorities to impose more direct and intrusive state authority across the territories within the Empire's

borders. This drive included administrative reorganization and the restructuring of state institutions so that they progressively assumed traits prescribed by bureaucratic models articulated by Max Weber.

The second level examines the authorities' evolving attitudes, reaction and policies with regards to Druze settlement throughout the time under consideration. This section relies on Ottoman bureaucratic correspondence and reports written between the years 1847 and 1918 compiled by Dr. Abdul Rahim Abu Husayn in his book entitled *Between the Center and Peripheries, Hawran in Official Ottoman Documents 1842-1918*.²¹ He compares and analyzes a sample of documents authored by numerous officials writing under unique circumstances about the Druze of Hawran. Furthermore, he cites a number of reports written after major Ottoman military campaigns such as the Faruqi Campaign of 1910. Such documents contain particularly rich commentary in the form of official opinions about inhabitants such as the Druze, local administration, and even evaluation of previous policies.

These letters and reports prove that Ottoman authorities formulated somewhat nuanced and varying outlooks relating to Druze settlement throughout the second half of the 19th century. The frequency of punitive military campaigns launched by the Ottoman state against the Druze of Hawran between 1850 and 1914 prove that relations between them were far from harmonious. Yet nowhere do bureaucratic documents indicate an intent, driven by malice, to cripple the Druze community exclusively.

State interventions seem to have been guided by broad concerns to increase state power relative to other actors, whether local or foreign. Policies depended to a large

²¹ Abdul Rahim Abu Husayn, *Bayn al-Markaz wa-al-Atraf, Hawran Fi al-Wathai'q al-Uthmaniya 1842-1918* (London: The Druze Heritage Foudation, 2015).

extent on the availability of financial and military resources, as well as administrative and military capabilities. In the final analysis, it appears that despite several bloody military confrontations between the Druze and Ottomans, Druze settlements continued to sprout up until the turn of the century.

In a similar vein, the positive correlation between Hawran's settlement by Druze with the modernization of the Ottoman state's security and administrative institutions is clear. The general growth in population, towns and villages reflected positively on the community's material well-being. Trading partners multiplied, security along trade routes increased, economic activity diversified and demand for goods, services or commodities offered by the Druze consequently increased. This study attempts to make the case that the correlation between population growth and modernization of state institutions was not merely a coincidence. Despite adversarial relationships or even intentions, both developments reinforced each other to varying degrees throughout the decades under consideration.

Although Druze-centric narratives offer valuable insight into the community's settlement of Hawran, they fail to offer a comprehensive picture of developments and forces that compelled the relocation. The Maronite-Druze rivalry was indeed very real and bloody throughout the 19th century, as was the weakening of Druze power over Mount Lebanon, and France's role in that historical development. Yet a deeper understanding necessitates a broader perspective that looks beyond renowned rivalries with other communities and the Ottoman state.

The decades leading up to World War I are characterized by general upheaval. During these decades, tens of millions of people abandoned their homes willingly or

unwillingly across the Ottoman Empire. This phenomenon affected various peoples, irrespective of geographic, religious or ethnic particularities. The Druze were no exception. Members of the community reacted to historic challenges and opportunities brought about by economic, administrative and political upheavals felt across Ottoman lands and beyond.

Likewise, the limitations imposed on European governments by geography, history and Ottoman policy raises serious questions about the accuracy and comprehensiveness of statistical data gathered about economic activity in the region. As such, literature based exclusively on these data paint a valuable but incomplete picture of conditions and invite the utilization of sources that would otherwise be ignored. Such sources indicate that economic conditions must have been a crucial pull factor for Druze families to settle in the Hawran throughout the last three decades of the 19th century.

This study therefore begins with a chapter that elucidates in detail the limitations of statistical data especially in the context of Hawran during the time under consideration. These include contradictory conclusions in the literature regarding grain yields and exports, as well as disagreements regarding geographical constructs, units of measurement and other key concepts.

The next chapter suggests an alternative economic narrative based on literary source material presented in four categories: Ottoman documents, published newspaper articles, European travel literature and memoirs of Arab visitors or residents of the region.

The third and final chapter then traces settlement activity by the Druze during the last decades of the 19th century. It addresses socio-economic, administrative and political conditions in Mount Lebanon that must have been interpreted by locals as push factors. Finally, the study considers non-economic conditions that probably attracted the Druze to settle in the Hawran. This assessment focuses primarily on the Ottoman state, and its evolving relationship with the community. It also expands in scope to include the experiences of communities settling in “Inner Syria” between the cities of Hama and Amman.

CHAPTER II

WHAT NUMBERS INFORM US ABOUT HAWRAN'S ECONOMY (1850 - 1914)

Published literature that describes economic activity in 19th century Ottoman Syria relies primarily on trade statistics and commodity prices recorded by European government bodies during that century. British and French diplomatic documents have served as the principal medium through which such information has passed into the hands of historians. These sources, in turn, cite data collected at points of transit, such as railway stations and seaports. Accordingly, they generally improved in terms of scope and specificity with the completion of projects such as the Beirut-Damascus railway in 1894.²²

The literature cites information in official reports listing the commodities harvested in Syria such as grains, cotton and tobacco throughout the 19th century. It defines regions and pairs them with specific commodities, then quantifies the share of output exported to Europe. On the topic of trade with Europe, it details the volatility of exports and of prices that characterized integration of Syrian cash crops into European markets during the 19th century.

Roger Owen, a pre-eminent economic historian of the Middle East, argues that causal relations linked commodity exports from Syria to Europe with developments outside

²² Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Violence in Rural Syria in the 1880s and 1890s: State Centralization, Rural Integration, and the World Market*, p. 65.

of Syria such as the Crimean War and the opening of the Suez Canal.²³ Others, such as Linda Schatkowski Schilcher establish similar relationships between exports to Europe and economic conditions within Syria itself.²⁴ Accordingly, as the 19th century progressed, the wellbeing of Syrian peasants and other local stakeholders increasingly depended on political, technological and economic developments in Europe, its colonies and the United States.

This chapter presents a number of narratives based on data recorded by European bodies about grain exports from 19th century Ottoman Syria. It highlights both the convergence and divergence of scholars' views about the volume of Syrian grain exports to European markets during the 19th century. Primarily, the cause behind this divergence of views, stems from the inconsistencies and incongruences that characterize the primary sources themselves.

To demonstrate this point, the chapter analyzes a sample of reports and statistics used in the literature. Inconsistencies include various interpretations of geopolitical constructs such as Syria. The sources also present grain exports or yields using various units of measurements such as metric tons, bushels, liters, or even Pounds Sterling.

Even more significant for this chapter and study as a whole, is the consistent appearance of cautionary clauses in various reports concerning the accuracy of statistics.

²³ Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, Third ed. (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 168.

²⁴ Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Violence in Rural Syria in the 1880s and 1890s: State Centralization, Rural Integration, and the World Market*, p. 61.

These warnings essentially point to an awareness of data gathering limitations on the part of European officials who transmitted economic data during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Whereas exports to Europe required transit through seaports on both Ottoman and European soil, no such recourse was available to them for inland trade.

This chapter consequently argues that assessments of socio-economic conditions or even total agricultural yield within Ottoman administrative units such as Hawran during the 19th century should be regarded as tenuous at best, if they are based exclusively on official European statistics. Moreover, it points out that given the quality of available statistics, any causal relationship between exports to Europe and socio-economic conditions in Ottoman Syria's grain producing regions cannot be but assumptions. Lastly, it proposes that this condition necessitates the increased reliance on other sources.

Official Ottoman reports, press reports, travel literature and memoirs serve that purpose in the current study. Though they also suffer from some of the problems described above in addition to others unique to their respective categories of source material, they serve to complement rather than replace trade statistics. They shed light on local realities that official European reports either ignored or assumed. By doing so, they help improve our general understanding of pull factors that attracted settlers into the Hawran during the last decades of the 19th century.

A. Skewed bell curve narrative: sudden rise and gradual decline of grain exports to Europe

In his volume about the economic history of the Middle East, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, Roger Owen argues that the Crimean War (October 1853-1856) generated unprecedented demand by Britain for Syrian wheat. The statistics he offers to support his argument are reflected in Table 1. It points to the fact that in 1855, Britain imported four times as much Syrian wheat as it did during the year the war began.

The Crimean War pitted the Russian Empire against a coalition that included the Ottoman, French and British Empires. This conflict blocked grains harvested in the Russian Empire from reaching Britain. Consequently, Owen writes that Syria helped meet the resulting shortfall in supply.

*Table 1: UK Import of Wheat from Syria and Palestine, 1850-5 (tons)*²⁵

1850	3,300
1851	10,390
1852	3,090
1853	5,225
1855	c.20,000 ¹

Note 1: Estimate by Schölch

Sources: British official figures to be found in PP, 1854/5, LI, 569 and LII 25-34.

Linda Schilcher adds a layer of statistical detail to this picture by providing prices for wheat in both British and Syrian markets during approximately the same years as those included in the table above. In *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, she claims that “during the early 1850’s when Syrian wheat was available on the coast for as little as £5.00/ton, the average wheat prices stood in

²⁵ Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, p. 168.

London at £9.36/ton in 1852 and £12.21/ton in 1853. With the outbreak of the Crimean War, the London prices rose to over £15/ton for the next three years.”²⁶ Under such pricing conditions, Schilcher highlights that merchants purchased wheat at prices three times below their market value from the Syrian coast, thereby explaining the market dynamics behind Table 1.

She continues her narrative, claiming that a decade of booming exports gave way to a persistent decline that set in and lasted until the turn of the century. By the beginning of 1870, she notes, Syrian grain exports declined, partially due to the opening of the Suez Canal [which facilitated the entry of new suppliers such as India into European markets] and [the Long Depression of 1873 – 1879 which in turn reduced European prices considerably].²⁷ This reversal lasted until the beginning of the 20th century. By 1887, she claims that “prices were so low that no profit margins whatsoever existed for local merchants and other intermediaries in the export of Hawran grain in particular.”²⁸

Charles Issawi reinforces Schilcher’s narrative of declining grain exports during the last three decades of the 19th century. In his book entitled, *The Fertile Crescent 1800-1914: A Documentary Economic History*, he includes parts of a report written in 1897 by the French Consulate in Beirut about the Syrian economy. The author of the report, notes how Syrian wheat no longer supplied markets in France. However, unlike Schilcher’s

²⁶ Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1985), pp. 76-77.

²⁷ Schilcher, *Violence in Rural Syria in the 1880s and 1890s: State Centralization, Rural Integration, and the World Market*, p. 53.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 60.

explanation that focused on price differences between the UK and Syria, the report cites higher European customs and new competition from American production as main causes.

It claims that

Because of the enormous American production (whose quality is also superior to that of Syrian wheat) and also because of the raising of customs tariffs in most European countries—notably in France, which was formerly the main buyer of Syrian wheat—it is becoming more and more difficult to market the wheat produced in Syria.²⁹

Works written by the three scholars cited above describe a scene set in the second half of the 19th century. The outset of this era witnessed unprecedented demand for Syrian grain from the UK in particular. However, statistics and reports indicate a gradual decline in European demand, starting with the close of the 1870s, that would last until the end of the century. Both primary and secondary sources attribute these developments to vicissitudes of economic and political conditions as well as trade policies at the international level.

Only Schilcher explores the link between the grain trade and local economic, security and political conditions in the Hawran. She asserts that the reversal in exports generated adverse economic conditions in the Hawran, which in turn sparked conflicts

²⁹ "Note sur la situation économique de la Syrie," August 1897, CC Beyrouth, vol. 12, 1897-1901 quoted in Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800-1914 A Documentary Economic History*, First ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 312.

between increasingly destitute stakeholders.³⁰ These actors included local peasants, Damascene merchants, Aghawat, Hawrani chieftains and the Ottoman state.³¹

The implication for the majority of local inhabitants was that living conditions deteriorated and political tensions regularly flared into open warfare amongst the local factions, as well as between them and the Ottoman state, during the 19th century's last decades. This narrative raises the problematic question of why settlers would leave the relatively stable Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon for a more dangerous and destitute Hawran. For it was during these decades in particular that settlement activity peaked.³²

B. Grain yields & exports during the last decades of Ottoman rule: contradicting reports

The French Consul in Beirut painted a very different picture of the Syrian grain economy in 1890. Quoted by Najib Saliba in his PhD dissertation, his report focused on the various destinations of grain harvested in the Hawran. It affirms that certain ports continued to receive considerable amounts of the commodity during the last decade of the century.

By 1890, the Hawran produced annually three hundred and four hundred and fifty million liters of wheat, barley and maize. Of this amount, a part was reserved for

³⁰ Schilcher, *Violence in Rural Syria in the 1880s and 1890s: State Centralization, Rural Integration, and the World Market*, pp. 53-54.

³¹ Linda Schatkowski Schilcher . "The Hauran Conflicts of the 1860s: A Chapter in the Rural History of Modern Syria." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13, no. 2 (May, 1981): 159, pp. 161 – 165.

³² Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 173.

a bad year, forty five to fifty four million liters were sent to ‘Akka and [Haifa] for export, and 1.8 to 3.6 million liters were sent to [Zahle].³³

These recorded exports and yields, if accurate, belie claims that Hawran’s grain economy suffered calamitous consequences by 1887 even if European markets had found cheaper alternatives or adopted protectionist policies. The Consul’s report clearly implies that certain overseas markets continued to import grains from Hawran three years after Schilcher claims that doing so entailed losses.

Table 2 French Estimates of 1890 Harvest & Distribution of Hawrani Wheat, Barley & Maize

	Metric Tons (thousand)
Total yield	215 – 322.5
Exports through ‘Akka + Haifa	32.25 – 38.7
Exports to Zahle	1.29 – 2.58

Of the total 322.5 thousand metric tons reported, the French Consul accounted for only 42.28 thousand. Though he mentioned that a part of the harvest “was reserved for a bad year,” how much that actually meant was left for his readers to guess. The same could be said about what happened to the remainder of total yield, which adds up to 281.22 thousand metric tons.

This considerable volume of grains obviously needed consumers. Official Ottoman sources assert that the number of men living in the sanjak of Hawran in 1897 amounted to

³³ A.A.E. 15, Damascus, 25, Guillois to Ribot, April 1890 quoted in Najib Elias Saliba, "Wilayat Suriyya: 1876-1909" (PhD, The University of Michigan, 1971), p. 310.

merely 67,528.³⁴ The unlikely implication of such a meagre market is that every household consumed roughly 160 kilograms of grains per day.

More likely, grains were sold in markets within the region's immediate orbit. Using official Ottoman census data collected in 1899, Kemal Karpat estimated that 701,134 people lived in the vilayet of Syria. Moreover, the population of all Ottoman administrative units bordering the vilayet – the Mutasarrifiyyas of Jerusalem and Mount Lebanon as well as the vilayet of Beirut – amounted to 1,111,044. The more remote Hijaz Vilayet hosted a population of 3,500,000 people.³⁵

These much larger population centers quite possibly absorbed considerable quantities of Hawrani grain. Such an argument gains further credibility from the fact that land productivity in the vilayet of Syria – in terms of cereals production – significantly surpassed that of all the other regions just mentioned, as shown in Table 3. Assuming these statistics do approximate reality, they suggest two things. First. Hawranis enjoyed access to markets other than European ones for their crop yields. Second, exports of grains from the Hawran to overseas markets continued at a time when other statistics recorded during the 19th century implied doing so was impossible.

³⁴ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; PRK. UM 36/65 (232) Ly 1, March 6, 1897 quoted in Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*, p. 287.

³⁵ Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830 – 1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 211.

(Numbers converted from hectoliters to metric tons for the sake of consistency using following conversion rates: 1 hectoliter = 2.8 bushels and 1 bushel = 0.021772 metric tons).

*Table 3 Cereal Production per km², 1894/95*³⁶

Administrative Unit	Wheat	Barley	Corn
Vilayet of Syria	41,765	11,317	8,330
Vilayet of Hejaz	3,396	523	32
Vilayet of Beirut	938	984	251
Mutasarrifiyya of Jerusalem	815	922	190
Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon	n/a	n/a	n/a

These conclusions gain further credibility when settlement activity is taken into account. Though a causal relationship between economic growth and settlement has not and probably cannot be established, the assumption that settlers were rational actors seeking to improve their living conditions largely overcomes that challenge. The last recorded episode of persecution of Druze communities in Safad was in the 18th century and 1811 in Jabal al-A‘la.³⁷ Chapter IV of this study explores a more comprehensive list of possible push and pull factors at play during the final decades of Ottoman rule.

Other trade statistics presented in Figure 2 further support the assertion that grain exports from the Hawran continued throughout the 1880s and 90s. The statistics do not specify which part of Syria the exports originated from. Nevertheless, given the general consensus among scholars and primary sources that the region was one of the most agriculturally productive in the vilayet of Syria, it seems reasonable that the Hawran supplied a large portion of the grains exported overseas.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 222.

³⁷ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, pp. 45 – 48.

Extracted from a more comprehensive table found in Mohammad Said Kalla's PhD dissertation (and cited by Roger Owen)³⁸, trade statistics in Figure 3 present a detailed account of grain exports from Syria over a 40-year period. As with the examples above, Kalla cites European diplomatic reports (primarily British) as the source-material for his data.³⁹ Unlike the examples above, he presents exports in terms of value instead of weight or volume.

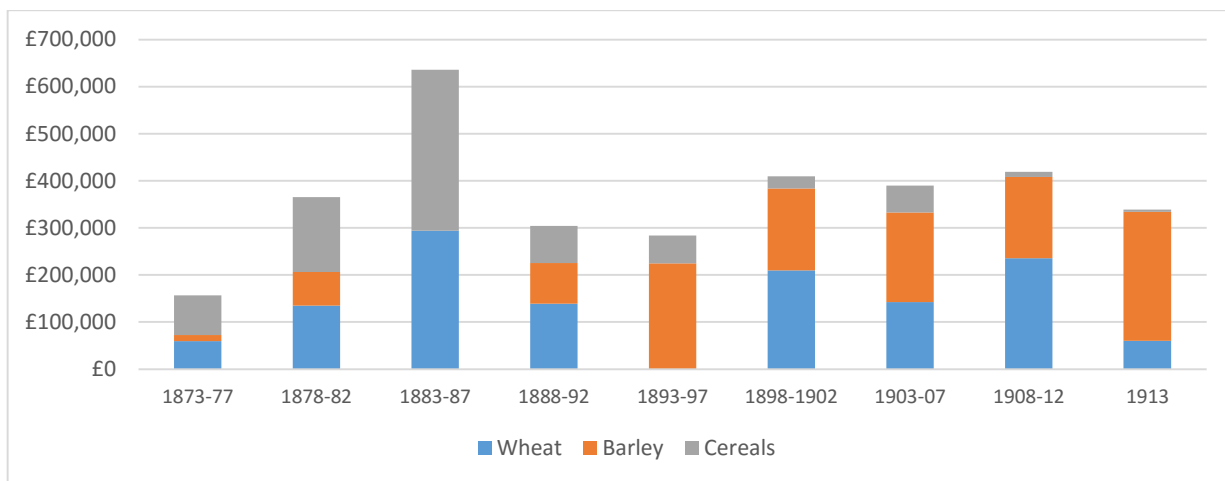
Despite this discrepancy, the chart highlights that far from declining after 1878, exports of grain continued, and in fact peaked during the four-year period between 1883 and 1887. Although exports did decline by half that value during the next four-year interval, by 1898 they hovered at around £100,000 per year until 1913. Currency values tend to vary over time, and hence cause misleading assessments if not taken into account. Yet on average, inflation rates in the UK stood at -.913 percent in the 1870s, -.817 percent in the 1880s and -.171 percent in the 1890s – thereby ensuring a stable Pound Sterling throughout the last three decades of the 19th century.⁴⁰ Under such conditions, variations in Figure 3 reflect actual volumes of grain exports (supply) and grain prices in Syria, which ultimately were also a function of demand.

³⁸ Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, p. 168.

³⁹ Muhammad Sa'id Kalla, "The Role of Foreign Trade in the Economic Development of Syria, 1831-1914" (Ph. D., The American University, 1969)., p. 263.

⁴⁰ Samuel H. Williamson "Annual Inflation Rates in the United States, 1775 - 2015, and United Kingdom, 1265 - 2015," MeasuringWorth, accessed March 22, 2016
<https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/inflation/result.php>.

*Figure 1 Average Annual Values of Grain Exports from Syria (Pound Sterling)*⁴¹



No evidence exists to support an assertion that trade statistics quoted in this section more accurately represent reality in 19th century Ottoman Hawran than those presented in the beginning of this chapter. Nevertheless, such contradicting reports⁴¹ should discourage the over reliance on trade statistics to draw conclusions about the region's grain economy during that particular era. In light of such limitations, Schilcher's arguments that Hawran floundered economically between 1878 and 1900 due to dwindling grain exports to Europe appear rather questionable. Statistical data from the same source-material could very easily be used to support the opposite conclusion.

⁴¹ Muhammad Sa'id Kalla, "The Role of Foreign Trade in the Economic Development of Syria, 1831-1914" (Ph. D., The American University, 1969), p. 263.

C. Grain export analyses: comparing apples to oranges?

The preceding sections highlight how trade statistics used by different scholars generate inconsistent and sometimes contradictory conclusions about the Syrian and/or Hawrani grain economy. As already noted, for example, Schilcher's narrative of a depressed Hawrani economy crumbles under the weight of data found in the same pool of source-material. The following two sections highlight additional dangers of using trade statistics in this particular context. By doing so, the study seeks to underline the necessity of referring to alternative source-material to, at the very least, corroborate available trade statistics. Pitfalls discussed below revolve around inconsistent units of analyses and units of measurement which proliferate in both the literature and primary sources.

Roger Owen (Table 1), for example, presents British *imports* of wheat from "Syria," whereas the French consul quoted by Saliba mentions *exports* of wheat, barley and maize from the "Hawran" to unspecified destinations. Kalla also describes exports to unspecified destinations. However, unlike the French Consul's report, he details exports of wheat, barley and *cereals*. For her part, Schilcher bases her narrative on a comparative analysis of British and Syrian wheat prices throughout the second half of the 19th century.

These differences highlight the near impossibility of crosschecking trade statistics available in the literature. Though certain assumptions allow for broad comparisons, no two studies reviewed for this paper present their analyses of trade statistics using a common framework, such as "wheat exports from the Hawran in 1897" or "UK imports of barley from Syria between 1900 and 1905." This inability to crosscheck data presented in different studies poses significant challenges to any attempt at validating published data.

Rather than reinforce each other, the studies essentially force the reader to wonder which study most accurately reflects reality.

Such conditions stem partly from the fact that trade statistics were recorded by various European bodies during the 19th century in towns with seaports such as Beirut. Each body applied its own units of measurement, etymology, assumptions and definitions. Contemporary scholars further increase the complexity of this picture by adding an additional layer of interpretation and even altering features like units of measurements to suit the purpose of their studies.

With the passing of time, technology intervened to improve data collection in the 19th century. Rail lines operated as of the late 1890s helped to more accurately identify the origins of grain shipments, for example. Improved administrative capabilities also helped to increase the specificity and detail of reports. Yet it was only after the turn of the century that these differences began to emerge in reports.

The following sections trace this development. They elaborate on some of the problems evident in data collected during the 19th century and detail the impact of technological and administrative developments. The sections also focus on contemporary scholars' assumptions and their interpretations of the data. Geopolitical constructs and units of measurement receive considerable attention. In summation, root problems that lay behind conflicting and inconsistent conclusions in the literature are highlighted.

1. *Units of analyses and of measurement: a body of inconsistencies*

Both “Syria” and “Hawran” pose considerable problems as units of analysis for the study of export trends over the second half of the 19th century. Firstly, Ottoman-era administrative entities with those designations look nothing like contemporary entities with corresponding names. In post-independence Syria for example, there are no governorates designated as “Hawran.”⁴² Similarly, the recognized borders of Syria itself look nothing like the Vilayet of Syria’s borders during Ottoman times.

Scholars writing about trade in the 19th century resolve this problem by the following means. They disregard Ottoman administrative boundaries – even though they were the only recognized political or administrative borders at the time. Instead, they associate certain ports such as Beirut’s or Haifa’s with certain ill-defined yet ahistorical geopolitical spaces. Similar associations exist between regions and commodities. Therefore, scholars, for example, establish a link between Hawran, grains and the port of Haifa. Stated otherwise, grains exported from Haifa are generally assumed by historians to have been harvested in the Hawran, and hence Syria.

As a prerequisite to this methodology, scholars articulate their conceptions of Syria or Hawran and project them onto the past as substitutes for Ottoman administrative units. In the case of Syria, some base their conception on “bilad al sham,” which encompasses

⁴² The World Factbook 2013-14. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, “Syria”, accessed March 23, 2016 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html>.

territories administered by contemporary Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Other scholars divide Syria into two distinct parts: an “interior” and a “coast.”

These efforts yield innumerable constructs that overlap to varying degrees but hardly ever correspond with each other entirely. Many European scholars, travelers and bureaucrats who authored primary source-material in the 19th century referenced in contemporary literature also articulated their own constructs. This reality causes serious problems for analysis of trade statistics as it becomes impossible to guarantee that two geopolitical spaces designated as “Syria” or “Hawran” actually are the same.

Why so few contemporary scholars or 19th century Europeans opted not to use Ottoman administrative divisions as opposed to their own geopolitical constructs remains an open question. Orientalist attitudes and contempt towards the Ottoman state probably played an important role. In their defense, Ottoman administrative boundaries especially during the second half of the 19th century did shift frequently and considerably. Nevertheless, at the very least, their utilization could have fostered a unanimous agreement about the size of a particular geopolitical construct during a specific time interval – an essential prerequisite to any sound quantitative analysis.

i. Ottoman Administrative Divisions: 1850 – 1918

During the relatively brief time span beginning in 1850 and ending 1918, administrative boundaries within the Ottoman Empire shifted regularly and sometimes

substantially.⁴³ In 1850, for example, the vilayet of Damascus consisted of the three sanjaks: Damascus, Hama and ‘Ajlun.⁴⁴ By 1856, the number of sanjaks increased to four, with the addition of Hawran. Only eight years later, in 1864, the Vilayet Law incorporated ‘Ajlun into the sanjak of Hawran. By doing so, it returned to three the number of sanjaks in Damascus Vilayet.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the vilayet’s territory had expanded noticeably compared to its status prior to Hawran.

The Vilayet Law of 1864 stimulated further changes as well. Among its goals and accomplishments, it defined the powers of provincial officials, determined functions of government agencies and reorganized administrative divisions, thereby increasing the number of vilayets in the empire from 27 to 30.⁴⁶ This broad reorganization spurred a ballooning in the size of the vilayet of Damascus to nine sanjaks from three. Damascus thereby governed the sanjaks of Jerusalem, Tripoli, Beirut, Acre, Latakia and Nablus in addition to the sanjaks of Damascus, Hama and Hawran.⁴⁷

This new arrangement transformed Damascus – for approximately a decade – into the provincial capital of a territory that closely approximated the Bilad-al-Sham construct. It was only after this massive reorganization in 1865 that the vilayet of Damascus was

⁴³ ‘Abd al ‘Aziz Muhammad ‘Awad, *Al-Idara Al-‘Uthmaniyya Fi Wilayat Suriya 1864 - 1914* [الإدارة العثمانية في ولاية سورية 1864 - 1914 م] (Cairo: Dar al-Ma‘aref bi Misr, 1969), pp. 63 - 81.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 65.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 66.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 67.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 71.

officially designated as Syria (Vilâyet-i Suriye), which of course stood apart from the vilayet of Aleppo (Vilâyet-i Halep).⁴⁸

Ten years after the promulgation of the Vilayet Law, the vilayet of Syria would shrink once again. In 1874, the Mutasarrifiyya of Jerusalem replaced the sanjak of Jerusalem. It reported directly to the Porte, thereby bypassing Damascus altogether.⁴⁹ Three years later, in 1877, Beirut was designated a provincial capital that henceforth governed the sanjaks of Beirut, Acre, Balqa, Tripoli and Latakia.⁵⁰

By that time, the Ottoman governor in Damascus lost control over most of the territories west of the River Jordan and Sea of Galilee, the Bika‘ Valley and the Alawite Mountains. It was during this interval of time (1877 – 1918) that Ottoman administrative divisions in the Levant approximated the “interior vs. coastline” construct (south of Vilâyet-i Halep). With the exception of the sanjak of Karak/Ma‘an’s addition in 1893, the vilayet of Syria maintained these boundaries until the empire’s dissolution in 1918.

Table 4 Sanjaks in the Vilayet of Damascus (Syria) 1850 - 1893⁵¹

1850	Damascus, Hama and ‘Ajlun
1856	Damascus, Hama, ‘Ajlun and Hawran
1864	Damascus, Hama, Hawran, Jerusalem, Tripoli, Beirut, Acre, Latakia and Nablus
1874	Damascus, Hama, Hawran, Tripoli, Beirut, Acre, Latakia
1877	Damascus, Hama, Hawran
1893 ⁵²	Damascus, Hama, Hawran, Karak/Ma‘an

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 70.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 71.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 71.

⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 65 - 71.

⁵² Ibid, p. 78.

The implication of these administrative changes on studying export trends are quite obvious. Historians must factor considerable territorial adjustments that transpired almost every five years on average, into their statistical analyses. The vilayet of Damascus in 1850 for example administered a much smaller landmass than it did between 1874 and 1893. At a more nuanced level, the same applies to the sanjak of Hawran. Prior to 1864, for example, the sanjak did not include the kaza of 'Ajlun, yet after that date, it did.

The difficulty involved in accounting for or tracking, changing administrative units may have encouraged contemporary scholars to define their own ahistorical geopolitical constructs instead. The most important feature of these constructs in the context of statistical analysis is their fixed albeit vague boundaries. Using them ultimately simplifies analytical work and thereby facilitates long-term statistical analysis. Nevertheless, as already noted, such an approach also generates serious problems in the literature.

ii. Analytical Geopolitical Constructs

That portion of the Ottoman Empire known as Syria and Palestine lies at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean, and is a tract of country which connects Asia Minor with the Continent of Africa. It extends from the southern skirts of the Taurus mountains on the north, to the frontiers of Egypt on the south, and is hemmed in by the desert on the east, whilst its western borders are washed by the Mediterranean. The tract thus circumscribed is some 450 miles in length from north to south, and from an extreme breadth from 150 to 200 miles in the northern portion narrows down to about 80, and then 50 miles, in some parts of the lower or southern section.⁵³

The above quote can be found in Earnest Weakley's report about trade between Syria and the UK, which was published in 1910. It serves as one of the more detailed

⁵³ Earnest Weakley, *Report upon the conditions and prospects of British trade in Syria* (London: HMSO, 1911), p. 5.

examples of articulating and superimposing geopolitical constructs on Ottoman lands. The Ottoman vilayet of Syria did exist at the time this description was written, but looked very different.

Contemporary scholars have also articulated their own visions of Syria. Mohammad Said Kalla, for example, writes “Syria (and the term is used here in a broad, historical sense) is an ancient mercantile nation.”⁵⁴ He then transposes this national conception onto the geographical plain in the following manner.

*Its geographical location at the crossroads of three continents has long been one of its main assets. Lying on the major trade route between Asia and Europe, easily accessible to Europe by sea, it became for centuries a thoroughfare for exchange of merchandise and ideas between East and West.*⁵⁵

Kalla later adds a cautionary note related to statistical analysis.

The northern boundary of the country shifted frequently over the years, so that population and trade figures may not be comparable over time. In the absence of more accurate and reliable figures, therefore, the nature and extent of the available information, must, of necessity, set limits in this study.⁵⁶

Roger Owen’s Syria, as described in his seminal work entitled, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800 - 1914* appears more nuanced and detailed than Kalla’s. The book includes two chapters covering “Syria” exclusively:

Chapter 6: The provinces of Greater Syria, 1850 – 1880: the economic and social tensions of the 1850s and their consequences⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Muhammad Sa’id Kalla. "The Role of Foreign Trade in the Economic Development of Syria, 1831-1914." Ph. D., The American University, 1969, p. vii.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 252 - 253.

⁵⁷ Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, p. 153.

Although not stated in the title, Owen applies the same divisions of “Greater Syria” found in the title of chapter ten to his narrative in chapter six. In concluding the chapter’s introduction for example, he states, “these themes will be examined in terms first of Mount Lebanon, then of the provinces of the Syrian interior and of Palestine.”⁵⁹ Regarding his definition of the Syrian interior, an explanatory footnote elaborates, “the area covered by this survey [of the Syrian interior] is roughly that of the Ottoman pashalics of Damascus and Aleppo as reorganized after 1840.”⁶⁰

Unfortunately, this attempt to reconcile his conception of Syria with Ottoman administrative entities fails for the following reasons:

1. Ottoman provincial borders underwent considerable changes after 1840 including, but not limited to, those resulting from the 1864 Vilayet Law.
2. The vilayet of Damascus ceased to exist in 1865 when it was officially renamed the vilayet of Syria (Vilâyet-i Suriye).
3. The vilayet of Syria administered almost the entire stretch of the Eastern Mediterranean coastline for over a decade (1864 – 1877) thereby negating the appellation given to it by Owen; namely a province of the “Syrian interior.”

This cross-section of inconsistent assumptions and definitions represents a general condition in the literature that applies to both Syria and the Hawran. Had it not been for the

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 244.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 153.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 324, note 80.

requirements of comparative quantitative analyses, there may have been no reason to portray it as a problem. Yet each unique conception of Syria conceivably directs a researcher towards data disregarded by colleagues simply because their underlying assumptions about territory differ.

The consequences of such a condition have already been noted. Data presented by different studies and primary sources are simply incommensurable with each other. As such, cross-checking becomes impossible and cross-referencing extremely dangerous.

In his two chapters about Syria, for example, Owen reproduces Kalla’s trade statistics concerning exports to Europe. This cross-referencing exercise simply should not have occurred because the geographic reference points of both scholars differ. Owen divides Syria into two distinct entities “interior” and “coast,” whereas Kalla’s analysis combines both into the broader Bilad al Sham construct. Table 5 below, extracted from Owen’s book, clearly cites Kalla statistics about Bilad el Sham to further his argument about the Syrian Interior.

Table 5 Exports of wheat, barley and other cereals, all ports, 1873 – 82 (annual averages in £)⁶¹

	1873	1878-82
Wheat	59,367	135,000
Barley	12,931	71,259
Other Cereals	84,555	159,000
Total	156,853	365,259

Source: British CRs in Kalla, ‘Role of Foreign Trade’, 260

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 168.

In the final analysis, historians seem caught between the proverbial rock and hard place. On the one hand, by choosing to utilize Ottoman administrative units as categories of analyses, they contend with fluid borders as well as primary sources and literature that generally do not correspond with their choice. On the other hand, by choosing to articulate ahistorical constructs and using them as units of analyses, they solve the first problem of fluid borders, but not the second since theirs would merely add to the innumerable geopolitical constructs already in the literature.

The most pertinent consequence of this condition is that the literature generally consists of stand-alone studies that cannot be integrated to form one body in a meaningful sense. Hardly any one study can be considered as complementary to another. The abundance of unique units of measurement, etymologies, assumptions and definitions precludes that possibility. Rather each study requires assessment without reference to its peers. Irrespective of the quality of individual researchers therefore, this condition raises at least some doubts about conclusions found in the literature.

D. Primary sources: the impact of time

The passing of time during the last decades of the 19th century coincided with considerable episodes of violence and dramatic technological and bureaucratic changes in the vilayet of Syria. In line with developments in Europe, and in fact the entire world (to varying degrees), the modern state imposed itself ever more vigorously and intrusively within the Ottoman provinces. Infrastructure projects such as roads, telegraph lines, and railways facilitated this process in obvious ways.

January 1, 1863 saw the commissioning of a 111-kilometer roadway linking Beirut to Damascus after approximately seven years of construction.⁶² This project presaged the construction of a modern transportation network linking the sanjak of Hawran to major population centers beyond its borders as well as the Eastern Mediterranean. About three decades later, in July 14, 1894, a railway-line connected the Hawran town of El-Muzayrib to Damascus.⁶³ A year later, this line merged with another connecting Beirut to Damascus.⁶⁴ The result was the first railroad linking the Hawran to a port built on the shores of the Mediterranean. Similar infrastructure works were to follow.

The El-Muzayrib-Damascus-Beirut line ultimately faced vigorous competition from an appendage to the Hijaz railroad network linking Damascus to Haifa through the town of Deraa.⁶⁵ This alternative route cut 125 kilometers from the journey of grain shipments to the Mediterranean, and caused the older line's operator, Damas, Hama et Prolongements (DHP), considerable financial difficulties.⁶⁶ Though completed in 1905, opposition from DHP delayed its commissioning until 1906.⁶⁷ Also passing through El-

⁶² Shereen Khairallah, "Railway Networks of the Middle East to 1948," in *The Syrian Land: Process of Integration and Fragmentation*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 79, p. 84.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 85.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Michael E. Bonine, "The Introduction of Railroads in the Eastern Mediterranean: Economic and Social Impacts," in *The Syrian Land: Process of Integration and Fragmentation*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 53, p. 64

⁶⁶ Khairallah, *Railway Networks of the Middle East to 1948*, 79, p. 90.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 90.

Muzayreb, the line would eventually extend to the town of Bosra Sham in 1912.⁶⁸ Upon completion of the Hijaz railroad line's longest section in 1908, its tracks linked Damascus to Medina through Der'aa and other towns such as 'Amman, Ma'an, and Tabuk.⁶⁹ By the eve World War I, three major railway stations and numerous smaller ones servicing the Hawran integrated the sanjak into an impressive rail network extending as far south as Medina, linking the region to major cities and towns such as Damascus, Zahle, Haifa and Beirut.

The costs of transporting grain correspondingly plummeted to such an extent that economic calculations of producers and merchants had to be adjusted. After the rail link between Hawran and Damascus began service, "large quantities of Hawrani grain flooded [Damascus]'s market, depressing prices...and distressing producers and merchants from the surrounding villages who normally dominated this market."⁷⁰ The Deraa-Haifa line reduced freight costs between the two destinations by five-sixths.⁷¹ This dramatic reduction of transportation costs conceivably contributed to the tripling of Hawran wheat exports through the port of Haifa, from 296,855 tons in 1904 to 808,763 tons in 1913.⁷² Haifa itself grew exponentially in terms of its population, from a small town inhabited by

⁶⁸ Bonine, *The Introduction of Railroads in the Eastern Mediterranean: Economic and Social Impacts*, 53, p. 77.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Schilcher, "Violence in Rural Syria in the 1880s and 1890s: State Centralization, Rural Integration, and the World Market," p. 69.

⁷¹ William Ochsenwald, *The Hijaz Railroad* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980), p. 137.

⁷² Ibid, p. 133.

4,000 to 6,000 inhabitants in the 1870s to a burgeoning city sustaining 22,000 inhabitants in 1914.⁷³

In the Hawran itself, the effects were palpable. Deraa, which prior to the Hijaz railway's construction was an insignificant village without even noteworthy ancient ruins rose to become the sanjak's administrative center and a bustling town. The cause behind this development: it was chosen to be the point of intersection between the rail network's North-South and East-West routes; one linking Damascus to Medina and the other linking Deraa with Haifa, respectively. By 1910 therefore, Deraa boasted facilities that stored grains and other types of cargo, hotels, shops, bakeries and in terms of population, was well on its way to becoming a city.⁷⁴

As for broader economic benefits, the impact was also considerable. Most importantly, farmers sold their grains at higher prices. Prior to the introduction of rail transportation, farmers transported their harvests to towns such as Damascus, Nablus, Jaffa and Jerusalem where they sold 1 mudd of wheat (3.67 liters)⁷⁵ at prices ranging from 6 to 10 piasters. Upon completion of the rail networks, the same quantity of wheat was sold on threshing grounds in Hawran for 25 piasters. Prices of land within proximity to the rail

⁷³ Ochsenwald, *The Hijaz Railroad*, p. 133.

⁷⁴ "Hawran," *al Muqtabas*, October 1, 1910.

⁷⁵ Ulrich Rebstock, "Weights and Measures in Islam," *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*: 2255-267. doi:10.1007/978-1-4020-4425-0_8934.

network also catapulted. A plot of agricultural land that sold for 1,500 piasters before it was serviced by trains sold for as much as 10,000 piasters after.⁷⁶

More relevant to the subject at hand however, was the effect of these projects on primary sources quantifying grain yields and exports. Documents indicate that both data collection and data presentation improved considerably by the turn of the century. They also point to a more detailed knowledge of commodities' points of origin – as opposed to mere assumptions based on the port in which they were loaded onto ships. The frameworks within which data were presented surpassed any of the preceding reports in terms of detail and analytical value.

Rather than the ahistorical constructs of “Hawran” and “Syria,” or names of ports, primary sources increasingly presented units of analyses that reflected administrative realities on the ground. Table 6, for example, divides the sanjak of Hawran into four geographic categories substantiated by a measure of their total respective areas. A cautionary note included at the bottom of the table indicates that this level of detail emerged thanks to the fact that data collection activities had moved from seaports inland along with the train stations.

*Table 6 Grain Production of the Hawran, the Jebel Druse, the Ajlun Caza and the Southern Part of the Central Caza of Damascus (1901)*⁷⁷

⁷⁶ “Hawran,” *al-Muqtabas*, 22 October, 1910

⁷⁷ Richards to O'Connor, 3 October 1901, FO 195. Quoted in Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800-1914 A Documentary Economic History*, p. 313.

Name of District	Population	Total Area (acres)	Total area of cultivated land (acres)	Total annual wheat crop (bushels)	Total annual barley crop (bushels)	Total annual crop of other grain (bushels)	Observations
Hawran [plain]	53,540	751,875	297,175	1,063,741	447,708	1,165,150	Consisting of 122 principal villages of which the nearest is 5/8 miles from the railway line and the farthest 24 miles
Jebel Druse	33,090	529,000	245,140	791,700	416,967	769,767	Consisting of 95 principal villages of which the nearest to the Line is 15 miles distant and the farthest off 48 miles
'Ajlun	30,000	531,250	225,000	1,680,000	420,000	1,050,000	Consisting of 133 principal villages of which the nearest to the railway is 7 miles and the farthest off is 25 miles
Southern part of central caza of Damascus	Not known	Not known	Not known	155,517	147,350	144,583	Only 10 villages treated here, the others not being affected by the Line. The total annual fruit crop of this District is put at 3,410 tons
	116,630	1,812,125	767,315	3,690,958	1,432,025	3,129,500	

Therefore the total annual Grain Crop of these Districts is 8,252,483 bushels
N.B. These figures are not to be taken as exhaustive, but only as relating to those districts of which the produce is, or is likely to be, affected by the Railways

Whereas a direct causal link between train stations and improved data collection exists for Table 6, the same may not apply for Table 7. The latter indicates that improved quantitative reports were also the product of broad administrative and methodological advances. It presents average annual estimates of staple crops grown in four administrative entities: 1) the vilayet of Aleppo, 2) the vilayet of Beirut, 3) the vilayet of Damascus and 4) the sanjak of Jerusalem. It appears in the Weakley Report published in 1910. The report refers to Ottoman administrative entities. Second, the table lists six commodities instead of such broad categories as “grains,” or “cereals.”

Table 7 Total Yearly Production of Staple Crops Grown in the Country, and the Following Figures Can Only Give a Very Approximate Estimate of Annual Yield [1910]⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Earnest Weakley, *Report upon the conditions and prospects of British trade in Syria* (London: HMSO, 1911), p. 8.

Given a good year, the crops in the **Aleppo province**—including the district of Ourfa—will average about—

6 to 7,000,000	bushels of wheat
4 to 6,000,000	bushels of barley
200,000	bushels of maize
800,000	bushels of dari seed

The Beyrout vilayet—

4,000,000	bushels of wheat
1 to 2,000,000	bushels of barley
1,000,000	bushels of maize
3,000,000	bushels of beans (broad and small varieties)

The Damascus vilayet—

6,000,000	bushels of wheat
5,000,000	bushels of barley

The Sandjak of Jerusalem—

1,000,000	bushels of wheat
1,000,000	bushels of barley
300,000	bushels of beans
400,000	bushels of sesame

Prominent warnings caution readers about the validity of data presented in both Tables 6 and 7. The title of Table 7 states that values provide “a very approximate estimate of annual yield.” A note at the bottom of Table 6 warns that the numbers are “not to be taken as exhaustive” and that they reflect “those districts in which the produce is, or likely to be affected by the Railways.” These warnings testify to an awareness on the part of those “on the ground” of the challenges related to data collection even during the 20th century.

Furthermore, despite improvements, some of the typical problems found in primary sources of the 19th century persisted. Whereas Richards presented an analysis of grain harvests in the Sanjak of Hawran, Weakley’s unit of analysis was the vilayet of Syria. Therefore, one table presents wheat yields of the Hawran Sanjak in 1901 as 3,690,958 bushels, and the other, of the Syria Vilayet as 6,000,000 bushels in 1910. This specific

comparison summarizes the sense of frustration that stems from attempts at quantitative analysis using data in primary sources.

Complications increase when reports about the scale of shipments to the Mediterranean, by means other than rail, are factored into the equation. One such report written in 1895, claimed that between 4,000 to 6,000 camels delivered harvested grain to the port of Haifa on a daily basis during the early summer of 1895.⁷⁹ Each camel could have carried a maximum load of 300 kilograms, or 11 bushels of grain.⁸⁰ This calculation implies that 66,000 bushels of grain were delivered per day to Haifa in parallel to deliveries by rail to Beirut. That daily rate translates to approximately 1,980,000 bushels per month. Another report written as late as 1910 claimed that grains harvested in ‘Ajlun were still transported to Jerusalem, Nablus, Haifa and ‘Akka by camel because the Hijaz railway did not service the region.⁸¹

In the final analysis, primary sources impacted by technological and bureaucratic advances demonstrate considerable improvements relative to their precursors. Ottoman administrative units were increasingly used to formulate frameworks of analysis that identified sources of exports or production. Reports offered increased levels of specificity and generally contained more information. Yet despite these improvements, which increasingly appeared by the turn of the century, certain problematic characteristics

⁷⁹ Bonine, *The Introduction of Railroads in the Eastern Mediterranean: Economic and Social Impacts*, 53 , p. 64.

⁸⁰ Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800-1914 A Documentary Economic History*, p. 52.

⁸¹ “‘Imran Ajlun,” *al Muqtabas*, August 6, 1910.

persisted, primarily related to the data's incongruous and fragmented nature when viewed as a cumulative body.

Even more relevant to this study is the one consistent qualification that appears in most reports: that the information recorded was most likely unrepresentative of reality due to limited data gathering capabilities. This acknowledgement by authors of the primary sources attests to the reality that unlike Mount Lebanon, which by the turn of the century was almost fully integrated in the European economic sphere, Hawran, due to various factors, remained relatively remote. Among these reasons were its relatively recent settlement, distance from the Mediterranean and determined efforts by the Ottoman state to prevent European powers from expanding their influence beyond the Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon.

Given this condition, a sudden decrease in recorded trade with Europe did not necessarily imply a lessening of overall economic activity. Rather it could merely have meant a distancing of the region from the European economic sphere. Trade with Europe certainly entailed benefits afforded by no other trading partner. By the 19th century, it was undisputedly the wealthiest and most economically developed region on the planet.

However, grains afforded its producers access to markets unlike any other commodity, particularly silk or even cotton. Due to their essential role in the human and bovine diet, it seems safe to assume that demand was far more diversified, less dependent on European industry and expanding, given trends of population growth. The Hawran, geographically one of the Levant's inland frontiers facing desert landscape, afforded its

inhabitants direct interaction with nomadic tribes. These relationships often yielded bloody confrontations but also profitable transactions.

On balance, both parties (nomadic and settled) benefited from their dealings. Whereas prior to its settlement, the Hawran offered nomads essential seasonal grazing fields, once settled it to offered grains, grazing fields and markets. There can be no doubt that this development translated into economic activity for villagers and merchants that in turn further spurred settlement during the last decades of the 19th century.

The repetitive cautionary clauses in economic reports produced by European officials noted above reveal their awareness of such pitfalls. Their inability to come to grips with and to quantify this aspect of the region's economy therefore necessitates the utilization of other sources. Ottoman official reports, contemporary press reports, memoirs and travel literature, serve that purpose in the current study.

This eclectic collection of sources also suffers from some serious challenges in terms of quality of data and even historical validity. However, they do not serve to replace official trade statistics as more sound alternatives. Rather they merely serve to shed light, however dim, on aspects of 19th century Ottoman Hawran's economy completely overlooked by analyses of grain exports to Europe. In that capacity, they prove to be extremely valuable and, in fact, indispensable to gaining a better understanding of the economic pull factors that encouraged Hawran's settlement.

CHAPTER III

TAPPING NARRATIVE SOURCES TO ACQUIRE AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

Chapter I's critique of existing narratives does not go so far as to claim that they add nothing to our understanding of socio-economic conditions in Hawran during the last decades of Ottoman rule. Rather, it presents how such narratives almost exclusively focus their attention on commodity exports to Europe by referencing primary sources generated by European diplomatic and commercial missions. Consequently, they suffer from some of the inconsistencies and blind spots imposed on them by their source-material limitations.

This chapter therefore attempts to ameliorate those problems by referring to other types of primary sources. The material consists primarily of Ottoman official reports and published literature written by individuals physically present in the Hawran between 1870 and the early 20th century.⁸² Authors of these sources travelled or lived in the region for various reasons, ranging from religious proselytization to archaeological tourism.

⁸² The European visitors to Hawran included Algernon Heber-Percy (1895), Gertrude Bell (1907), G. Robinson Lees (1895), J. L. Porter (1882), Gottlieb Schumacher (1889), Max von Oppenheim (1899) and W. Wright (1874). Catholic Orthodox Archbishop of Hawran Kiryus Niqulawus Al-Qadi, who lived in the region during the last four decades of Ottoman rule, offers a local perspective on conditions. Finally, Hanna Abi Rached provides some insight despite his late visit to the region (during the Druze revolt against French colonial rule in 1926). The dates within parentheses next to European authors are the years their respective works were published.

Irrespective of the primary purpose behind their records, hardly any of these authors withheld commentary about the social and economic setting of places they visited.

Descriptions emerged from visual observations and direct experience of places or people. The authors painted their portraits with broad brush-strokes and hardly ever provided readers with detailed or quantified information. The following sample of quotes about the grain economy stand in stark contrast to the consular and commercial reports cited in Chapter I.

1874: Between [Khubab] and Mount Hermon there stretches a vast sea of green growing corn, dappled with red fields left fallow; and here and there black villages, with white domes and tall minarets, rise like islands, and conical hills and low ranges of mountains prevent the green flat sea from running up sheer to the edge of the mountain.⁸³

1895: After our luggage had passed us, we left Burak, and, skirting the edge of the Lajah, passed through plains of waving corn and cultivated land extending to the eastward as far as the eye could reach....⁸⁴

1907: Here we entered the far-famed grain-fields of Hawran. What magnificent stretches they are! These vast plains of waving green, here and there tending to yellow, were our wonder and delight for many days. Such land as this, with rich, dark soil, yielding royally might well sustain a teeming population. Often, in the West, had I watched the interminable strings of camels, laden with wheat, on all the great caravan roads leading from the east to Acre, the principal seaport, and mused as to whence these well-nigh fabulous streams of golden grain should come—from what mysterious land of plenty. Now I could understand it all.⁸⁵

When compared to quantitative reports, which at least purported to provide actual measurements of yields, or exports, or both, over determined intervals of time, this

⁸³ W. Wright, "The Land of the Giant Cities IV." *The Leisure Hour: A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation*, Jan.1852-Dec.1876, no. 1181 (Aug. 15, 1874a), 521, p. 522.

⁸⁴ Algernon Heber-Percy, *A Visit to Bashan and Argon* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1895), p. 26.

⁸⁵ William Ewing, *Arab and Druze at Home: A Record of Travel and Intercourse with the Peoples East of the Jordan* (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1907), p. 10.

information adds nothing to our knowledge. However, when one considers the years in which these observations were recorded and compares them to available quantitative data, some contradictions emerge.

The second description for example, dated 1895, was a year in which Linda Schatkowski Schilcher claims exports to Europe had halted due to relatively high prices of grains harvested in the Hawran. Admittedly, yields and exports are different measurements. Yet, Schilcher asserts that local economic activity was tied firmly with grain exports to Europe. Therefore, taken to its logical conclusion, her narrative suggests Heber-Percy should not have witnessed what he recorded during his visit to the region in 1895.

This chapter presents and analyzes similar descriptions about socio-economic conditions. It focuses on local and regional economic dynamics, meaning trade within and between different communities such as the various Bedouin, Circassian and Druze communities. Moreover, it offers glimpses into Hawran's day-to-day life during the last decades of Ottoman rule, the accumulated wealth of certain individuals, craftsmanship and the processing of raw materials such as timber.

Admittedly, historiographical problems beset literary source-material considered for this study, particularly travel literature. As already mentioned, the descriptions themselves offer very few details, numbers or time-intervals from which to assess actual yields, productivity or even wealth. Furthermore, postmodernist critiques of the literature by

scholars such as Edward Said⁸⁶ and Timothy Mitchel⁸⁷ raise some serious questions about the historical validity of these sources. How much did the travelers' Orientalist paradigms and world-view affect their observations? Did the travelers really observe what they recorded or merely reproduce the work of their predecessors? Did their search for the "exotic" prejudice their observations and writings? To what extent did they cater their publications to intended audiences, who were not necessarily businessmen or policy makers, but in some cases, reading merely for the sake of entertainment?

Answers to these questions impact this thesis profoundly. Certain recorded observations found in travel literature could very well have been figments of the authors' imaginations or very twisted versions of reality. Nevertheless, given that similar problems described in Chapter 1 also beset quantitative reports, it appears rather reasonable to refer to travel literature as equally valid source-material.

A more nuanced reading of local socio-economic conditions generated by literary sources in turn contributes to the overall understanding of Druze settlement in Hawran. Shedding light on unquantified economic activities highlights pull factors that must have attracted settlers to the region during the 19th century's last decades. Local and regional economic dynamics may explain why, despite the supposedly volatile nature of grain exports from Hawran, settlers continued to flow into the region throughout the 1870s, 1880s and even 1890s, as explained in Chapter IV of this study. In fact, as will be shown

⁸⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), pp 166–197.

⁸⁷ Timothy Mitchel, *Colonizing Egypt* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp 21–33.

in Chapter III, settlement activity actually peaked during the late 1870s and early 1880s, a time which supposedly witnessed a precipitous drop in grain exports from the region.

Though the Druze were characterized by their solidarity, desire for separation, autonomy and their attachment to agriculture, these characteristics could not have been the sole drivers behind their settlement of Hawran. Had material incentives dissuaded their settlement, they would most likely have behaved differently. This truism characterizes all communities irrespective of unique traits. Hence the importance of looking at all available source-material as a means of gaining a better understanding of economic conditions in the region in addition to grain exports to Europe.

A. Tapping Ottoman sources for quantitative data

European consulates and commercial missions in Beirut, Damascus, and elsewhere in the region played important political and economic roles throughout the last decades of Ottoman rule, but never bore the heavy burden carried by the Ottoman state. Foremost among Ottoman administrators' priorities in the vilayet of Syria was the very basic but difficult job of maintaining sovereignty over lands populated by armed clans and tribes unused to the pervasive presence of modern state institutions. Throughout the 19th century, various local parties, particularly bedouin tribes and Druze factions, vied amongst each other and the Ottoman state for land and therein wealth and power. This condition improved with the passing of time, but security remained the Ottoman government's top priority until WWI.

Throughout the last decades of Ottoman rule, local administrators were preoccupied with forming local alliances to counter threatening developments, or defeating others strong enough to challenge their own presence in Hawran. They dedicated considerable portions of their time and effort mobilizing troops, funding them, arranging for their transportation to the theatre of war, and managing the aftermath of campaigns. One newspaper article published in 1910 claimed that the Ottoman state and “Islamic Umma” lost over 600,000 Liras and 20,000 men between 1860 and 1910 in the cause of “reforming the Druze and placing them on the right track.”⁸⁸ Considering the Druze were just one of many factions in the Hawran, the overall cost of imposing its presence in Hawran must have been much higher for the Ottomans.⁸⁹ The irony was that by the time they had achieved unprecedented levels of security in the Hawran as a result of the Faruqi campaign of 1910, they were given merely four years to reap the benefits of their decades-long labors.

Of the total number of Ottoman reports written in or about the Hawran and compiled by Prof. Abdul Rahim Abu Husayn in the book *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*, no less than eighty percent dealt with security matters.⁹⁰ With the exception of the 1858 Land Law and tax collection, hardly any official reports dealt with subjects tied in one way or another to the region's economy. The fact that the Druze community were taxed in the form of lump-sum annual

⁸⁸“Druze Hawran,” *al Muqtabas*, August 3, 1910.

⁸⁹ Among the tribes that inhabited the Hawran either permanently or seasonally were the ‘Anaza, Bani Sakhr, ‘Arab al-Laja and ‘Arab al Safa.

⁹⁰ Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*.

payments, for example, obviated the need to systematically and regularly measure economic activity or wealth on the part of the Ottoman government.

An indication of state institutions' precarious position in the Hawran sanjak emerges from several official Ottoman bureaucratic reports. One report written in 1910 about tax collection efforts, claims that the authorities collected merely 700-800 thousand piasters over a 15-year period from the Druze of a Hawran.⁹¹ By comparison, the latter owed the Ottomans 5.8 million piasters in lump-sum payments over the same stretch of time. Another report about the same subject written eight years later, in 1918, claims that the government could only collect taxes for two years after the Faruqi Campaign of 1910. Subsequent to that brief interlude, the Druze reverted back to withholding payments.⁹²

Yet a more revealing indicator of the accuracy of data collected and reported by administrators in the Hawran stems from a letter written prior to the Faruqi Campaign by representatives of a Hawrani village called Unkhul in 1910.⁹³ The authors sent the letter to Ottoman officials after the bedouin "Sheikh of al-Lajah," attacked their town. Through their correspondence with the authorities, they revealed that local Ottoman officials had co-opted this local strongman by subsidizing him and legitimizing his power.

Legitimization entailed providing him with an official title, "Mudir al-Lajah." It also entailed funding a local troop of Gendarmes equipped with artillery pieces, which the mudir deployed liberally in the attack on Unkhul to devastating effect. Subsidies consisted

⁹¹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; DH.SYS. 28/1-9 Lef 47-51, November 16, 1910, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 432-434.

⁹² Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; DH. I. UM 10-1/2-56 Ly 9 August 28, 1918, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 534-538.

⁹³ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; DH. MUİ. 103-2/14 Ly 15 April 10, 1910, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 367-368.

of 1,000 piasters a year, but more importantly, a drastic under-reporting of the sheikh's assets in the interest of minimizing his tax burden. The letter claims that of 60,000 heads of livestock that are known to exist in al-Lajah, local Ottoman administrators had, however, officially reported only 3,000.

This particular case of convenient oversight on behalf of local officials reveals that the authorities' primary concern in the Hawran even during the 20th century's first years was security. If officials found it necessary to sacrifice tax revenues for the sake of security, they apparently did not hesitate to do so. In the case of the Mudir al-Lajah, they under-reported the value of his assets by 20-fold in order to coopt him. In the case of the Druze community, local administrators simply turned a blind eye to the community's refusal to pay what they owed.

These calculated oversights reveal that quantified data found in Ottoman official reports describing economic conditions ought to be considered with care. By 1910 Ottoman state presence in Hawran was strong enough to allow local officials to carry out wealth assessments and tax collection, but weak to the point where these exercises were ultimately political in nature. In summation, although the Ottoman position in Hawran improved over the decades leading to 1910, it nevertheless fell short of enabling state institutions to function without placating powerful non-state actors.

Consequently, as with reports prepared by European consulates and even literary sources, Ottoman reports inform us more about their authors than the actual conditions described. Therefore, the exclusive use of official Ottoman data to describe Hawran's socio-economic conditions also yields inaccurate and narrow conclusions. This reality

serves to further emphasize the need for additional source-material to complement and cross-check existing literature. Literary sources serve that purpose in this study. If not to cross-check data provided by official Ottoman and European sources, then at least to highlight certain aspects of Hawrani socio-economic conditions that fail to appear in official documents.

B. Trade within and across administrative boundaries

One of the most important unanswered questions regarding Hawrani economic conditions during the last decades of Ottoman rule concerns the region's non-European trading partners. The literature has yet to point out whether and to whom the region's peasants, merchants and chieftains traded with when they did not sell grains to Europe. Hawran's unruly condition generally precludes the use of Ottoman reports, since even if officials were able to collect economic data, they were either misled to minimize taxation or deliberately deflated to placate local chieftains.

The use of camel caravans as opposed to seaports or railroads also prevented Europeans from accurately documenting and assessing the value of overland trade in a systematic fashion. Though certain prominent caravan routes such as that between Damascus and Baghdad were indeed observed and assessed, there can be no doubt that less prominent caravan routes remained unreported. European consulates and commercial interests in the Levant tended to congregate in cities and the Mediterranean coast during the 19th century. They left the dangerous business of exploring the hinterland to adventurers and enthusiasts of their day.

This section therefore seeks to reproduce evidence from travel literature and other literary sources that prove two important points. First, by the last decades of the 19th century, Hawranis had established overland trade links amongst themselves as well as with regional and remote markets within the Ottoman Empire. Second, a considerable portion of these commercial links bypassed Damascene merchants. This particular point is of importance to this study since it challenges assertions that Damascus served as the Hawran's most important overland market, and simultaneously provided it with the only channel through which Hawrani goods and commodities reached customers in other parts of the Ottoman Empire such as the towns of Zahle, Beirut and Baghdad.

The Ottoman state's weak footprint in Hawran and the local dependence on camel caravans was not an ahistorical condition. By the turn of the 20th century, both had ebbed as a result of Ottoman state policy, increasingly effective military campaigns and the Hijaz railway's construction. Excluding the French-built DHP line linking Hawran to Beirut, the Hijaz rail network alone consisted of no less than 43 locomotives, 512 cargo cars and 31 passenger cars. Moreover, the reported cost of building just the Damascus – Hijaz section approximated 38,000,000 Francs.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, given that these developments transpired only towards the end of Ottoman rule, their impact on economic reporting by both European and Ottoman governing and commercial bodies was relatively brief.

Literary sources however do establish that commerce between parties within and outside Hawran expanded as the 20th century approached. They offer a number of insightful descriptions recorded during the last decades of the 19th century of towns within

⁹⁴ "Sikkat al Hijaz," *al Muqtabas*, August 9, 1910.

Hawran or immediately outside its official boundaries. The significance of these quotations lies in their detailed portrayals of markets or actual traders visiting from remote Ottoman regions to conduct business.

German-born and British-trained Orientalist Baron Max von Oppenheim travelled through Syria with the intent of surveying the land and its people between the years 1893 and 1894.⁹⁵ One enduring outcome of this journey was his two-volume personal account that was published, translated and distributed to British intelligence agents stationed throughout the region during and immediately after World War I.⁹⁶ In the section dealing with his travels through the Hawran, Von Oppenheim wrote,

Bosra Eski Sham remains a city of strategic importance, and this importance has increased due to the train line linking [El-Muzayrib] to Damascus. The train line increased the standing of the annual market in [El-Muzayrib] that delegates to Bosra Eski Sham the responsibility of protecting it from attacks by the Hammad Bedouins. And [El-Muzayrib], which also serves as a stop for pilgrims, receives people from all over the Hawran, al-Hamad al Janubi [North of modern-day Saudi Arabia], Baghdad and Najed [central Saudi Arabia]. The visitors buy horses, animals of burden, and market their stolen goods. They also barter for firearms, flooring for tents, mats, cloths and products imported from the west.⁹⁷

A few conclusions about Hawran's economy may be made from this one observation. In broad terms, al-Muzayrib, an old waypoint on the annual Hajj route, was by 1895 a bustling trade center. It catered to a growing local population as well as travelling merchants and pilgrims. "People from all over Hawran" who might have

⁹⁵ Max Von Oppenheim, *Al Duruz* [Vom Mittelmeer Zum Persischen Golf (1-2). Berlin 1899-1900], trans. Mahmud Kabibu, 2nd ed. (London: Alwarrak Publishing Ltd., 2009), p. 7.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 162 - 163.

otherwise visited Damascus to purchase supplies or conduct business called on a more convenient commercial hub to meet at least some of their demands.

Al-Muzayrib even received merchants from faraway Baghdad and two regions in modern-day Saudi Arabia. Such customers, who had journeyed across hundreds of kilometers to reach al-Muzayrib could conceivably have bypassed the town altogether since Damascus was merely a hundred kilometers away. Yet for whatever reason, they chose to visit the smaller trading post at the expense of Damascus' bustling market or at least in addition to it.

Some conjectures could be made regarding the travelling merchants' motivations. If they were interested in purchasing grains, they would most likely have found more attractive deals in Hawran since it was the primary source of grains in the vilayet of Syria. They could also have preferred al-Muzayrib to Damascus to minimize interaction with the Ottoman state, which was most likely more pervasive in a provincial capital. Lastly, they might have considered the extra distance required to travel to Damascus as a cost in time and treasure not worth the journey.

One important development to consider regarding the subject of long distance overland trade concerns the Damascus-Baghdad caravan route. A French diplomatic report written in 1847 claims that "when security prevailed in the desert, there were some 12 – 15 departures" of caravans from Baghdad each year to Damascus by way of Palmyra and as

many returning.⁹⁸ It also claims that the number of camels in each caravan that left Baghdad ranged from between 1,500 to 2,000, a number generally two and a half times the camels returning from Damascus. Goods and commodities transported by the caravans included tobacco, Turkish-style pipes, English textiles, fezzes, Damascus cloth and paper.

By 1862 however, an alliance between Hawrani Druze and bedouin tribes formed by Ismail al-Atrash to resist an Ottoman military campaign into the region not only successfully thwarted Ottoman designs but also “so severely pillaged the Damascus-to-Baghdad caravan as to serve the final blow to the direct desert trade route.”⁹⁹ Assuming the French report’s description of the caravan’s frequency, size and contents was accurate, it appears to have been a lucrative enterprise. Whether or not the intention behind the raid was to divert the trade route to Hawran, Von Oppenheim’s recorded observations indicate that by 1895 trade between Iraq and the region was well underway.

Though al-Muzayrib retained its commercial links with Damascus and in some senses was even dependent on it, by 1895 the town’s merchants could plausibly have competed with at least certain segments of Damascus’ merchant class for business. In short, the town did not appear to fall under the exclusive economic orbit of Damascus. A description of Al-Muzayrib by the American Engineer Gottlieb Schumacher about five years prior to Von Oppenheim’s visit reinforces this narrative.

⁹⁸ "Itineraire de Damas a Baghdad par Palmyre," 1847, CC Damas, vol. 2, 1845-1848 quoted in Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800-1914 A Documentary Economic History*, First ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 224

⁹⁹ Schilcher, *The Hauran Conflicts of the 1860s: A Chapter in the Rural History of Modern Syria*, p. 168

The suk, or bazaar [of El-Muzayrib], resembles that of Damascus in miniature, and is very superior to that of Ed Dera'ah. The Fellahin and Bedawin of the neighborhood frequent this place, and every other day they butcher sheep, goats, or a camel for meat. Some of the Dukkakin are well built houses for this part of the country, with plastered walls, and gable roofs of timber, covered, not with tiles, but with mud....¹⁰⁰

Further to the south, approximately a year after Von Oppenheim's tour, the pastor G. Robinson Lees visited the settlement of Amman, which Circassian settlers had established merely a few years earlier. He had also visited the town three years prior, and described its development over these years in glowing colors. His most relevant observations to this section of the study revolve around Amman's market and its trade relations.

If the writers who have described [Amman] were to visit...now, they would be very much astonished. The change that had taken place since my first visit three years before was most marked. The population had increased to the number of one thousand Circassians, besides Arab shopkeepers from EsSalt. Two streets had been formed, one for shops alone, and nearly all the houses were surrounded by a yard enclosed by a wall of stone. A market of considerable importance, where grain may be sold and various articles purchased, enables the Bedawin of the Belka to remain in their country. Fresh meat can be bought almost every day in the week, and there is actually a baker's shop. Most of the corn of the Belka is brought here, and afterwards sent in charge of Circassians to Jerusalem, who are well able to take care of it, and themselves as well.¹⁰¹

As with El-Muzayreb, a market of "considerable importance" offered customers several commodities and goods to purchase or barter in addition to grains. Furthermore, the town's commercial relations with Jerusalem and Belka point to trade between three distinct Ottoman Administrative units, 1) Mutasarrifiyya of Jerusalem 2) Sanjak of Hawran

¹⁰⁰ Gottlieb Schumacher, *Across the Jordan: Being an Exploration and Survey of Part of Hawran and Jaulan* (London: Alexander P. Watt, 1889), p. 162.

¹⁰¹ G. Robinson Lees, "Across Southern Bashan," *The Geographical Journal* 5, no. 1 (Jan., 1895), 1, p. 4.

and 3) Sanjak of Belka (in the Vilayet of Beirut). In short, Amman acted as an intermediary connecting several neighboring regions, including the Hawran.

Even British Consular reports occasionally highlighted the interdependent economic relations between parties within the Ottoman Empire. A report prepared in 1898, for example, described a severe grain famine in a region within the boundaries of contemporary Saudi Arabia. The author linked the famine to Ottoman military campaigns and drought in the Hawran.¹⁰²

On the western fringes of the Hawran sanjak, Circassian who settled on or near the Golan Heights also contributed to commercial activities by leveraging their links to the Anatolian peninsula. An article published by the Damascus-based newspaper *al-Muqtabas* in 1910, claimed that Circassian traders travelled regularly to Anatolia to purchase goods which they brought back and sold to their peers or directly to locals living in either Damascus or Qunaytra. Of the fifteen Circassian villages established in the Qunaytra Qada, none lacked shops that serviced their inhabitants.¹⁰³

Another account recorded almost two decades earlier by a Presbyterian minister, described the author's visit to Malah, a village situated on the eastern slopes of Jabal Hawran, lying less than fifteen kilometers east of Salkhad, on the Sanjak's northeastern

¹⁰² Schilcher, "Violence in Rural Syria in the 1880s and 1890s: State Centralization, Rural Integration, and the World Market," p. 73.

¹⁰³ "Hawran," *al Muqtabas*, November 7, 1910.

edge. Arriving less than a decade after its settlement,¹⁰⁴ Reverend William Wright, a missionary of the Irish Presbyterian Church based in Damascus, called on its leading men who invited him into the village's reception hall. About this brief experience, Wright wrote the following:

While we are seated in the guest-chamber with the sheikh and his people, two Arabs arrive.... They are salt smugglers from the [Jawf currently a northern province in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia]. There are fine beds of salt at [Jayrud] and Palmyra; but a few years ago the Turks declared the salt Government property, and forbade anyone to carry it away on pain of severe punishment. They did not, however, bring it to the cities themselves, and so the price of salt rose enormously... and so, while enormous piles of salt, like a frozen sea, lie uselessly at [Jayrud], a day's journey from Damascus, these creatures are engaged in smuggling it from the distant [Jawf].¹⁰⁵

The accounts above inform us of a multifaceted economic scene during the last decades of the 19th century. A variety of commodities and goods, including grains, salt, textiles, tobacco and firearms were exchanged, sold or purchased in trading centers such as Der'aa and El-Muzayrib. Caravans from the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula visited even the most remote villages – barely a few years old – to trade goods.

During the second half of the 19th century, Hawranis benefited from local, regional and international trade networks that grew with the passing of time. Population growth in the sanjak and province of Syria increased in correspondence with enhanced security, governing institutions and infrastructure. With each new cluster of settlements, new lands

¹⁰⁴ Given that the settlement of Salkhad, a mother colony in that region, occurred in 1861, Malah's settlement most likely transpired on a date closer to 1867 (Refer to Norman Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980*, p. 87).

¹⁰⁵ W. Wright, "The Land of the Giant Cities VIII." *The Leisure Hour: A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation*, Jan.1852-Dec.1876, no. 1196 (Nov. 28, 1874b), 760, p. 761.

were exploited, thereby introducing new resources and commodities into the region's commercial networks. Settlers from distant lands, such as the Circassians, not only increased overall population and established new towns such as Amman, but also brought with them unfamiliar technology, methods of exploiting the land and commercial relationships with their kin in distant regions such as Anatolia.

That Hawranis could provide for themselves all the basic requirements of life such as food, clothing and shelter cannot be disputed. Therefore, even if grain exports to Europe dissipated during certain intervals of the 19th century, a claim challenged in Chapter II of this study, Hawranis could have leveraged their agricultural surpluses to support incoming settlers without difficulty. To what extent regional commercial networks described above generated additional wealth and enhanced living conditions remains an open question, which a study based on literary sources cannot answer. What can be claimed for certain is that these networks existed, generated wealth and offered Hawranis a platform on which to exchange resources, goods and commodities that otherwise would have been inaccessible to them.

C. Production of textiles, basalt millstones, timber and charcoal

Literary sources indicate that in addition to agriculture and animal husbandry, Hawranis also crafted certain wares for local consumption and regional trade. These goods included textiles, furniture, basalt millstones, timber and charcoal. They come to our attention via descriptions of homes, villages and overland trade routes documented by eye-witnesses during the time in question.

The accounts demonstrate that inhabitants profited from various economic pursuits. This diversification of the local economy implies Hawranis acquired at least some of their needs locally and, in terms of trade, benefited from a broader choice of export customers. Naturally, this situation minimized risks related to exclusive-dependence on one particular commodity or client for Hawran's economic wellbeing.

Another inference concerns specialization. Sources hint that Hawranis specialized in providing specific commodities or services to each other. Those, for example, in proximity to the region's famous oak forests found primarily in Jabal Hawran and the Golan Heights offered timber and charcoal. Others living within or in proximity to al-Lajah offered crafted basalt stones mined from the region's extensive rock formations. Villages situated on the path of streams usually operated water mills that processed grains. In short, a set of interdependent relationships existed between communities that offered unique possibilities for livelihood.

Though one can hardly speak of "economic opportunities" in a contemporary sense, regional trade, textile, timber and charcoal production must have contributed to forces that acted as pull factors attracting incoming settlers. The scale of these "economic pursuits" remains unknown. However, they existed, were visible and apparently profitable. As will be shown below, a number of unrelated sources drafted at different points in time by visitors or residents of the Hawran reveal as much.

In 1895, British Army Officer Lord Algernon Heber-Percy visited Jabal Hawran and recorded some observations relevant to this study. He stopped at Qanawat, a modern settlement built over the ruins of Canatha an ancient Hellenistic-Roman city, and 'Ira. Both

settlements, northwest and southeast of al-Suwayda respectively were settled in the early 19th century.

During the 1820s, they hosted mixed populations of approximately twenty Christian and Druze families each.¹⁰⁶ By the 1890s however, they had developed into towns and local power centers. Qanawat served as the seat of the Druze community's religious figurehead Sheikh Hassan al-Hajari. 'Ira served a similar role for Shibli al-Atrash, a leading personality in one of the Druze community's most powerful clans.

The fact that Heber-Percy's tour of the region occurred during a high point in tensions between the Druze and Ottoman authorities deserves note here as well. By December of that year, 30,000 Ottoman troops reportedly massed around the Druze community with the intention of launching a punitive expedition.¹⁰⁷ Heber-Percy's observation that his hosts "were armed to the teeth with guns and knives, battle-axes and knob-sticks..." at one of his stops testifies to this reality.¹⁰⁸ In further describing the scene of Sheikh Hajari's reception, the author wrote,

[In Qanawat], we entered [Sheikh Hasan al Hajari's house] by the step, and a couple of yards in arrived at a second step about eight inches high, below which the Druses left their shoes, and which formed the level of the rest of the room. Here the mats and carpets were spread, leaving a small space in the center for a little fire where coffee was usually prepared.... Squatting on their heels and in a circle round us, they formed a picturesque scene with their red caps and white turbans, and their flowing robes of different colours...and their eyes, heavily

¹⁰⁶ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁷ Schilcher, "Violence in Rural Syria in the 1880s and 1890s: State Centralization, Rural Integration, and the World Market," p. 70.

¹⁰⁸ Algernon Heber-Percy, *A Visit to Bashan and Argon* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1895), p. 83.

blackened with kohl, gleamed out through the cool shade of the half-darkened room¹⁰⁹

On the same journey, Heber-Percy called on Shibli al Atrash in the village of 'Ira.

The scene appears similar to al-Hajari's reception hall, with a few notable exceptions.

Going straight on, we entered the reception-room [of Shibli Atrash's home], a long oblong building, arched and spanned over with stone rafters and roof.... A low dais about four inches high runs round the walls of the raised floor. This was covered with carpets and cushions, and the rest of the floor with grass mats.... The room was lit by a single hanging petroleum lamp, and a brass pedestal, with a cup-shaped top filled with oil with lighted wicks hanging out of it, stood in the center. Nearer the door was a fire where four cooks were busily engaged preparing food in large brass caldrons....¹¹⁰

Both narratives describe homes of prominent individuals in terms of furnishings, fixtures and trappings. They also highlight some possessions of locals. An inventory of items mentioned include footwear, mats, carpets, cushions, coffee, robes, turbans and caps. A petroleum lamp and a brass pedestal on which wicks were placed were noted only at Shibli al Atrash's reception hall.

Of particular significance, none of the items described in these two scenes, with the exception of firearms, appears to have originated in Europe. Even within the homes of two prominent Druze personalities in 1895, clothes or manufactures imported from Europe failed to make an appearance in Heber-Percy's recorded observations. This absence could admittedly be attributed to many causes, including the author's selectivity, or even the locals' unwillingness to flaunt such possessions in public or during formal ceremonies. However, it may also imply a general paucity, which itself suggests that Druze Hawrani

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 107.

communities were quite able to acquire their basic day-to-day requirements without recourse to European sources. Population growth among the Druze and other communities in Hawran during the last decades of the 19th century point to a surplus (or potential surplus, which new settlers helped realize) of these basic requirements.

Twelve years later in 1907, the British traveler William Ewing claims to have visited Druze villages in Hawran during his tour of territories east of the River Jordan. The village of Dama that lies on the border between Druze and Bedouin territories in al-Lajah featured as one of his stops. It was settled by Druze in 1862 by families such as the Quntars who had originated from the village of Mtein in the Metn region of Mount Lebanon.¹¹¹ Concerning his experiences, he wrote

Ushered into [the dwelling of the sheikh of Dama], we sat upon straw mats spread on the floor, and leaned against straw-stuffed cushions arranged along the walls. Delicious butter-milk was brought to refresh us; also cool water to drink, and to wash withal. The good sheikh and his sons sat down on the floor, and busied themselves preparing coffee for their guests.... When [the coffee beans were] roasted to a rich brown colour, they were put into a large wooden mortar, brass-bound, and pounded with a hard-wood pestle, which resembled the heavy turned foot of an arm-chair.¹¹²

...

[The sheikh of Dama] wore the common red slippers; a yellow stripped ghumbaz, that reached to the ankles, gathered at the waist with a leathern girdle; over his shoulders was thrown an 'aba or cloak of goat's hair, of the characteristic Druze pattern, striped alternately black and white. His red tarbush was surrounded by a thick turban of spotless white.... In the matter of dress, his followers resembled

¹¹¹ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, pp. 173 - 174 & 61.

¹¹² William Ewing, *Arab and Druze at Home: A Record of Travel and Intercourse with the Peoples East of the Jordan* (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1907), p. 38.

their chief. Every man of them, from the sheikh downwards, was a sort of walking armoury.¹¹³

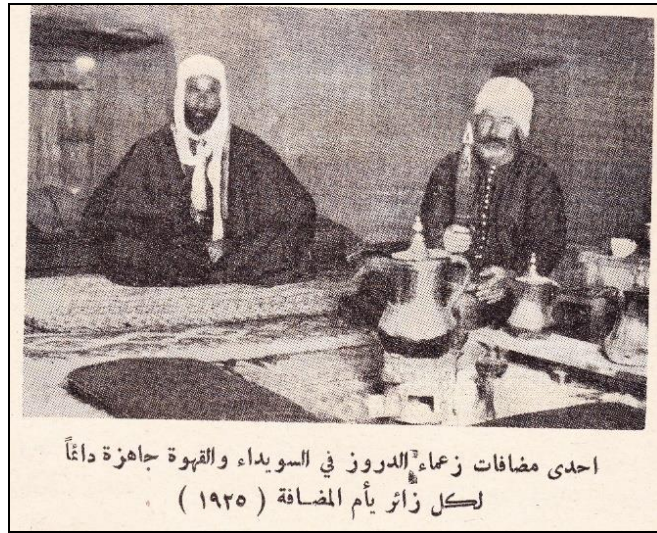
Once again the author mentions the presence of weaponry, as the only European-made item visible amongst his hosts. The fact that Dama was literally a border town between Druze and Bedouin territories probably explains why his hosts were “walking armories.” As with Heber-Percy, Ewing describes traditional attire and implements in his host’s reception hall. In general, the two authors’ descriptions mirror each other to an uncanny extent, despite the fact that the Sheikh of Dama was a minor village sheikh compared to Shibli al-Atrash or Sheikh Hassan al-Hajari, both of whom claimed authority over large swaths of the Hawrani Druze population.

The picture below, taken in 1925, portrays a reception hall in al-Suwayda. It suggests that the scenes described above further endured the passing of time.¹¹⁴ Coffee, carpets, cushions, robes and turbans all feature prominently in the picture. European manufactures or clothing appear nowhere in the portrait despite the fact that the picture was taken during the French mandate. As with the selection of quotes above, this sample by no means can be taken as representative of the overall condition of the Druze community in 1925. Nevertheless, it at least offers imagery that reflects the words of both Heber-Percy and Ewing.

¹¹³ Ibid, pp. 39 - 40.

¹¹⁴ The reception hall remains a prominent feature of homes in al-Suwayda to this day. Though certain features of the reception ceremony remain unchanged such as the serving of coffee and related protocols, the clothing and implements have adjusted to the times.

Figure 2 A reception hall in the home of a Druze Hawrani chief with coffee ready to serve (1925)¹¹⁵



Other accounts enrich the scenes described above and reinforce their validity. In 1895 while visiting Mohammad al Atrash's house in the village of Salkhad, Max Von Oppenheim wrote that his host "tasked a Damascene artist a short time ago to craft engraved wooden furniture and paint one of his rooms..."¹¹⁶ At the home of Ibrahim al Atrash, brother of the aforementioned Shibli, William Ewing observed tobacco smoking in 1907. He wrote, "The air in one of the rooms of Ibrahim al Atrash's residence in as-Suwayda was laden with the fumes of tobacco, in which all seemed to indulge."¹¹⁷ Thirty-three years earlier another traveler described a scene involving tobacco among much less privileged class of smokers.

¹¹⁵ Hanna Abi Rached, *Jabal Al-Duruz* [جبل الدروز] (Cairo: Maktabet Zeidan al-Umumiyyah, 1925), p. 67.

¹¹⁶ Von Oppenheim, *Al Duruz*, p. 164.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 77.

In 1876, reverend William Wright wrote that he literally fell through a roof while walking over houses in the village of Rimet el Lohf on the southern edge of the Lajah. He described how his surprised hosts “all squatted on a hair cloth round a little straw tray, on which was spread some barley bread, and in the centre of the bread stood a large earthenware bowl filled with kishik.....”¹¹⁸ In further explaining the scene, he claims that the only son in the family was initiated into the religious order, or *ukkal*, a “rank to which his father could not attain, as he could not abstain from swearing and smoking....”¹¹⁹

Seven years after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Beirut-born journalist and author Hanna Abi Rashed visited the Hawran to cover the Great Syrian Revolt. During his stay, he recorded the following observation about manufactures in the province:

As for manufacturing, the production of [carpets, rugs and textiles of various sorts]¹²⁰ takes place [in al-Suwayda]. Women operate approximately 50 looms in total. They learnt the trade in Anatolia after they followed their husbands into exile in 1896.... As for those who work the looms, their numbers range between 100 and 200 women, most of whom are the wives of the community’s leaders. We must not forget the trays, also made by women, from the stems of wheat and barley. They are beautifully patterned and rarely used to serve food. Rather, they serve primarily as decorative items.¹²¹

Abi Rashed’s reference to 1896 suggests that production of textiles with the help of looms by residents of al-Suwayda was ongoing during late Ottoman times. The same inference applies even more assuredly to hand-made trays. Max Von Oppenheim supports

¹¹⁸ Wright, *The Land of the Giant Cities IX*, 806, p. 806.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ السجاد، والبلس، والبسط، والعجميات

¹²¹ Hanna Abi Rashed, *Jabal Al-Duruz* [جبل الدرّوز] (Cairo: Maktabet Zeidan al-Umumiyah, 1925), p. 13.

these assumptions. During his visits to al-Suwayda in 1899, he observed that the floor of a home belonging to a member of the Atrash clan “was covered with beautiful carpets and rugs produced in al-Suwayda itself.”¹²²

The narratives above allude to a number of socio-economic realities within Hawran during the time in question. Von Oppenheim’s note about furniture indicates that certain modern possessions were acquired by the region’s elite. Furthermore, he implies that Damascene craftsmen supplied customers in Hawran as early as 1899. Reports by Ewing, Heber-Percy and Abi Rached point to a number of locally produced items. They also point to the possibility that certain accessories were bought from other parts of the Ottoman Empire. The complete absence of European products, with the exception of firearms, also deserves note. Everything from attire to furnishings appear to reflect local or regional customs and tastes.

Descriptions of tobacco smoking and coffee drinking indicate that these commodities were purchased and sold during the 1870s. This reality implies direct or indirect trade relations between Jabal Hawran and tobacco as well as coffee producing regions within the Ottoman Empire. They also hint at consumer behavior as well. Whereas coffee-making only emerges at the homes of prominent hosts such as members of the Atrash family, tobacco smoking seems to have transcended “class boundaries.” Guests of Ibrahim al Atrash as well as the average family man living in a marginal village in al-Lajah are described as smokers.

¹²² Von Oppenheim, *Al Duruz*, p. 145.

Other sources point more clearly to the work of local artisans and the export of their finished products to distant regions of the Empire. Whereas the above accounts focused on household items and attire, the following focus on outdoor implements and tools, as well as the harvesting of natural resources available to local inhabitants. As early as 1869, a British mountaineer visiting the Hawran, wrote, “Near the village of Er-Remtheh, a long train of camels met us, laden with black basalt millstones, which seem to be the principal manufacture and, except [grain], the only export of the Hawran.”¹²³ Five years later, a British pastor writing about his own experiences in the region, echoed that account, stating, “The men of Khubab labour in the fields during the seasons for labour, and during the remainder of the year they cut and dress basaltic millstones, which are rolled to ‘Akka, and there shipped for the Egyptian market.”¹²⁴

Though peppered with inconsistencies (transported by camels vs. rolled) and errors (only principal export other than grain), both statements’ main observations about millstones carved from basalt rocks seem consistent and plausible. The authors’ accounts gain further credibility from the fact that basalt rock formations cover significant portions of the Hawran. Furthermore, in terms of scale, “a train of camels” indicates noteworthy quantities of stones were exported. Both accounts specify the port town of ‘Akka as the intended destination, where stones were presumably exported to markets beyond the province of Syria and, possibly the Ottoman Empire.

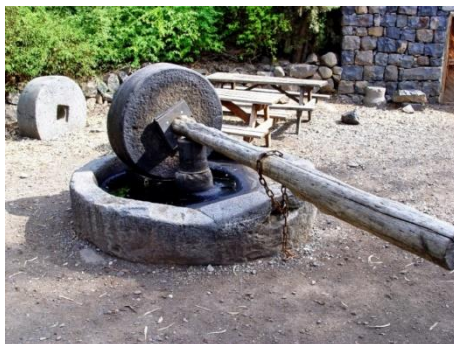
¹²³ Douglas W. Freshfield, *Travels in the Central Caucasus and Bashan* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1869), p. 29.

¹²⁴ Wright, *The Land of the Giant Cities IV*, 521, p. 521.

Olive producing regions such as Nablus, famous for its olive oil and soap, likely used basalt millstones to process olives into these final products. The picture below of a rudimentary basalt olive press in the Golan Heights suggests the existence of such a market. This region's relative proximity to Nablus and other olive producing regions such as Hasbaya and Marjayoun supports the hypothesis that basalt craftsmen in the Hawran supplied clients located within the vilayets of Syria, Beirut and the *Mutasarrifiyyas* of Jerusalem and Mount Lebanon.

Makers of basalt millstones also benefited from a large local market. During the 19th century ancient abandoned grain mills were scattered throughout the sanjak. As the population grew and settlements increased, Hawranis claimed and renovated them. Some even built new mills. Altogether, by the late 1880s, hundreds of grain mills were used to process grain into flour, as shown in Section D of this chapter.

*Figure 3 Basalt olive press in the Golan*¹²⁵



Another important resource available for exploitation by Hawranis were its oak forests. A number of reports, some written during the 1850s, claim that century certain

¹²⁵ Leon Mauldin, "Home Life at Qatzrin, Golan," Leon's Message Board, <https://bleon1.wordpress.com/2010/08/19/home-life-at-qatzrin-golan/> (accessed May 28, 2015).

parties within Hawran specialized in cutting down trees, which were processed into either lumber or charcoal. These finished products were ultimately sold either in markets or to the rail networks – after their construction – as fuel. In fact, harvesting of timber was so intense that by 1910, whole forests had disappeared from the Qunaytra and Ajlun qadas of Hawran.¹²⁶ In 1853, Irish Presbyterian minister Josias Leslie Porter wrote,

I observed around [Kanawat], and especially in the thickest parts of the forest on the way to [al-Suwayda], that many of the largest and finest oak trees were burned almost through near the ground, and that a vast number of huge trunks were lying black and charred among the stones and brushwood. I wondered at what appeared to be a piece of wanton and toilsome destruction, and I asked Mahmood if he could explain it. “The Bedawin do it,” he replied. “They make large quantities of charcoal for the Damascus market, as well as for home use....”¹²⁷

Frenchman Louis Charles Émile Lortet, who visited Syria around two decades later between 1875 and 1880 also noted the export of charcoal to Damascus and even elaborated on some of the finer points of the trade. He noted that whereas Hawrani peasants could sell their produce directly within the Damascus markets, charcoal...was purchased as a rule at the city wall by dealers who greatly enriched themselves from these transactions.¹²⁸

Circassians constituted another group of locals who exploited the oak forests of the Hawran. Unlike those who processed the trees into charcoal however, they processed them

¹²⁶ “Hawran,” *al Muqtabas*, October 2, 1910.

¹²⁷ J. L. Porter, *The Giant Cities of Bashan and Syria's Holy Places* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, Paternoster Row., 1882), p. 53.

¹²⁸ Cited in, I. M. Smilianskaya, "From Subsistence to Market Economy, 1850'S," in *The Economic History of the Middle East 1800 - 1914 : A Book of Readings*, ed. Charles Issawi (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 226, p. 233.

into timber, which found customers all over the region. In 1889, Gottlieb Schumacher noted,

Tree trunks are supplied to [the village of] Nawa by the Circassians, who are in the habit of driving all over Hawran, in their heavy two-wheeled carts drawn by a team of oxen. They manage to make their way, across country...with a heavy load of timber, which they bring from the forests of their adopted country in Jaulan, and sell in the villages.¹²⁹

Six years later, the pastor G. Robinson Lees recorded his own observations about the timber industry in another village just outside of Hawran's administrative boundaries. Once again, the scenery involves Circassians. However, unlike the previous description, which focused on the logistics of their operation, Lees includes mention of a manually operated saw mill and the fact that finished boards were destined for the Jerusalem market.

The village, lying on the hillside surrounded by the oaks of Wadi Seir, is very picturesque, and one of the prettiest spots in the country. There is an air of prosperity about the settlement, and the stranger-people [i.e. Circassians] seem happy and contented. Every year their numbers increase, and they gain a firmer footing in the land of their adoption. The woods ring with the sound of their axes; and a saw-mill, worked by hand as yet, prepares boards for the Jerusalem market.¹³⁰

At least 25,000 Circassian families settled in various sanjaks of Syria Vilayet between 1873 and 1906, including Hawran, Hama and Damascus. The new settlers brought with them far more than axes to cut down trees and heavy carts to transport timber. They naturally transmitted goods, skills and crafts to their neighbors hitherto alien to them,

¹²⁹ Schumacher, *Across the Jordan: Being an Exploration and Survey of Part of Hawran and Jaulan*, p. 168.

¹³⁰ Lees, *Across Southern Bashan*, 1, p. 3.

thereby enriching the socio-economic fabric of the region. This facet of their settlement did not escape the notice of Lees who wrote,

Placing the Circassians in the Jaulan (where there is a still larger colony at [Qunaytra]), Ajlun, and the Belka, the Sultan has opened out a scheme for the occupation of the country that will materially change its present aspect.... Many are skilled artisans, and others farmers with some European experience.¹³¹

D. The processing of grains for local consumption

In the summer of 1910, Druze horsemen laid siege to Bosra al-Sham and destroyed three surrounding villages in a rampage that lasted over six days. They raided stores, disrupted trade, clashed with Ottoman security personnel and killed scores of inhabitants.¹³² This incident marked the apex of a simmering rivalry between the Druze al-Atrash sheikhs and Sunni Muslim al-Miqdad sheikhs over power and influence in the Hawran plains.¹³³ One of the sparks behind this particularly vicious outbreak of violence was the sabotaging of a steam-powered grain mill located in Bosra al-Sham. The mill was owned by the Atrash clan and its sabotage motivated by the “jealousy” of their rivals, the Miqdads.¹³⁴ A number of weeks later, the largest Ottoman military campaign against the Hawran

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 5.

¹³² For detailed Ottoman reports about this incident, review Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*, pp. 395 – 400.

¹³³ “‘Adawat al-bani miqdad,” *al-Muqtabas*, 5 October, 1910.

¹³⁴ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; DH.SYS. 28/1-9 Lef 12-15, February 11, 1911, quoted in Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*, pp. 435 – 436.

A rendering of this incident also appears in ‘Adawat al-bani miqdad,’ *al-Muqtabas*, 5 October, 1910.

consisting of 30 brigades and led by Sami Faruqi Pasha was launched. In a sense, therefore, one of the immediate causes behind the Faruqi campaign was a dispute over a steam-powered grain mill.

Literary sources reviewed for this thesis offer an overview of this apparently vital (and deadly) economic contraption's presence in the sanjak of Hawran. The sources offer readers numbers, locations, ownership, sizes, types of grains processed and roles that grain mills played in the Hawrani political economy. They even highlight the introduction of steam-powered mills. Some accounts point to the fact that by the 1880s tens, if not hundreds of mills were operational throughout the Hawran sanjak. Gottlieb Schumacher provides the most comprehensive list of mills available for review. One example of the numerous descriptions he recorded reads as follows:

Tahunet Umm Babein, Tahunet es Sufukiyeh, Tawahin el Mughr.—Corn mills, turned by the powerful stream coming from the 'Ain Sufukiyeh, near the Wady ej Jebeleh, which lies on the eastern bank of the Nahr el Allan. These mills are of extremely primitive construction. Each grinding-stone, of basalt, occupies a small cavern reached by a single entrance—the Tahunet Umm Babein formerly had two gates as its name implies....¹³⁵

As his words above indicate, Schumacher revealed that mills in the sanjak were hydraulic contraptions of varying designs relying on perennial or seasonal rivers for power. A considerable number of them were ancient structures built using stone and mud, renovated by the inhabitants of villages or recent settlers for use. Consequently, although numerous, the distribution of these mills geographically was by no means random. It

¹³⁵ Schumacher, *Across the Jordan: Being an Exploration and Survey of Part of Hawran and Jaulan*, p. 219.

would be safe to assume that they operated exclusively on the banks of watercourses. On this point, Schumacher noted,

There are no other mills in Jaulan and Hawran but those near the rivers which are worked by water-power, the villagers have often to bring their grain on donkeys from a great distance, along roads which at first sight would seem hardly practicable even for an unloaded animal.¹³⁶

This technological limitation must have influenced the behavior of Hawranis considerably. For example, a plot of land may not have been cultivated with grains, even if fertile and watered, if too distant from the nearest mill. At the very least, the availability and proximity of water mills determined whether a cultivator sold grains exclusively, flour, a mix of both. Access to mills also determined whether one processed grain for personal use or reverted to acquiring it by whatever means available. It therefore goes that, all things being equal, land bordering or in proximity to perennial streams or rivers, on which mills operated, were the most coveted.

The advantages inherent to processing grains appear to have been so compelling that certain individuals or parties living in areas deprived of perennial watercourses executed projects to create conditions suitable for the construction of water mills. A Scottish enthusiast by the name of William Ewing, who visited the Hawran in 1907, for example, recorded recollections of his hosts regarding just such efforts presided over by Ismail al-Atrash. The latter was a leading Druze sheikh who reached the zenith of his influence during the 50s and 60s of the 19th century.¹³⁷ About his projects, Ewing notes,

¹³⁶ Ibid, 12.

¹³⁷ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, pp. 185 - 195.

[Ismail al Atrash] planned a system of irrigation [networks], and was able, before his death, partly to carry out his project, capturing the rills on the mountains, and leading them, through artificial channels, in every direction. The stream by which we had lunch owed to this arrangement its unusual volume of water—strong enough, even at this season, to turn a mill which stood nearer to the village [‘Irah].¹³⁸

That such a project materialized half way through the 19th century in the Hawran indicates at the very least that mills operated in the region at least 40 years before Gottlieb Schumacher’s tour of the region. Furthermore, irrigation works demanded labor, a certain level of technical knowhow and probably some capital. Unfortunately, the sources reviewed for this thesis fail to reveal the details of how al-Atrash mobilized and employed these “factors of production.” Yet the advantages of processing grain were apparently such that they justified what appear to have been relatively high costs. In the case of this particular project for example, costs entailed the construction of a mill – even though other ancient contraptions existed that merely required renovation – in addition to redirecting waterways that allowed for its construction.

In terms of the mill ownership, precious little emerges from Schumacher’s account. The little that does surface however includes mention of a government-owned mill, a set of thirty-five mills that “belong to a large town” and two mills owned by a sheikh of the ‘Anazah bedouin tribe.

The Wady el Bajjeh has its source at Ras el Ain, close to El Mezeirib.... it turns the Government mills, in these are three grinding stones, the whole establishment being modern, and the best of the kind found throughout Hawran and Jaulan.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Ewing, *Arab and Druze at Home: A Record of Travel and Intercourse with the Peoples East of the Jordan*, p. 85.

¹³⁹ Schumacher, *Across the Jordan: Being an Exploration and Survey of Part of Hawran and Jaulan*, p. 27.

Tawahin et Tell. – the name of a group of thirty five corn-mills, which, with the ruins of many others, belong to the large town of Tell esh Shehab. They are situated above and below the waterfall of the Wady el Bajjeh in the Wady Tell esh Shehab.¹⁴⁰

Tawahin esh Sheikh Miihammed el 'Anazeh. — Two mills in the Wady 'Ain Dakkar, the property of the great Bedawin sheikh of the 'Anazeh.¹⁴¹

With regards to government mills, his descriptions, included below, provide details about the physical structure's quality, size, the numbers of individuals required to operate it and the roles it fulfilled for the Ottoman administration. Regarding the latter subject, Schumacher informs us that it was used as a repository for taxes paid in kind, where tax payers would deposit the “tenths” that they owed the government. The mill then processed grains into flour, baked by adjoining ovens, transported to Damascus, and used entirely to feed the garrison based there.

[The] mill ... is of a construction superior to what is generally found in this country. [It] has three stones and is solidly built of squared basalt blocks. It is the property of the Government, and is managed by from eight to twelve soldiers, under an officer, who is stationed at El Mezeireb to receive the Government tenths and taxes, which are paid in cereals by the Fellahin and Bedawin. The corn is ground night and day at the mill, and the flour is immediately taken to the...oven, an isolated building next to the mill, where it is made up into dough and baked, and the loaves are sent to Damascus for the consumption of the garrison.¹⁴²

These words inform us that Ottoman mills fulfilled the crucial role of converting taxes paid in kind into usable “currency” which they spent on feeding their military presence in the province. Given the numerous variables in play during such an operation, such as overall output of grain, success of tax collection initiatives and the size of the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 199.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 100.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 163.

Ottoman garrison in Damascus, Schumacher leaves unanswered the question of what the authorities did when they collected more grain than needed to supply troops, or less. Did they revert to the markets to buy or sell grains? Did they forcefully appropriate grain when collected taxes fell short of requirements? Did they burn, store or ship grain to other provinces when they encountered surpluses? The answer to these questions would provide a better understanding of local dynamics in the Hawran economy, yet require further research.

Concerning the thirty-five mills referred to as Tawahin al Tal, Schumacher unfortunately neglected to elaborate on what “belonging” to a town entailed in terms of ownership. As for the mills owned by the ‘Anazah sheikh (Tawahin esh Sheikh Miihammed el ‘Anazeh), Schumacher points to the fact that the boundary between pastoralists and cultivators was indeed a permeable one when the author visited Hawran. The ‘Anazah tribe was one of the most powerful pastoral tribes in the region with several branches such as the Wuld Ali and Ruwala, which emigrated north from the Arabian Peninsula as of the late 17th century.¹⁴³ A selection of the other mills Schumacher describes are included below, and if anything, highlight the scale of operations during the time in question.

There are several [mills] near the mouth of the Wady el Ku'eilby, also at the junction of the Rukkad and Keleit, and still more numerous are they at Mukhayby, and at the hot springs of El Hammy. These mills are of a very primitive character, built of stone and mud ; they have generally but one grinding-stone and one opening.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁴ Schumacher, *Across the Jordan: Being an Exploration and Survey of Part of Hawran and Jaulan*, p. 12.

The Wady el Ehreir, or 'Iraq...rises near Es Surnamein in the north of Hawran, passes the Jisr el Ehreir, from whence, through a gorge, the river flows to Tell el Ash'ary, where it falls over cliffs of considerable height. Near here it turns several mills of primitive construction like those found throughout the Jaulan....¹⁴⁵

Tawahin et Arshedyat, Tawahin el Biariat. – Corn-mills near Tell el Ash'ary. The stream, after leaving them, flows down the slopes of the Ehreir, and fosters a fine growth of cane-jungle.¹⁴⁶

Tawahin Sabihah, T. el Wady, T. ej Jualufywa Zakzuk and Tahunet Abu Daliyeh.— Corn-mills, situated on the slopes and in the Wady el Ehreir, near Tell el Asha'ary.¹⁴⁷

Fortunately, other individuals also recorded observations concerning mills, which, unlike Schumacher, included details about ownership. In the 1890s for example, after leaving the village of as-Suwayda and moving in a southwesterly direction, Max Von Oppenheim wrote, “A half-hour into our journey, we saw a large water mill owned by Ibrahim Pasha El-Atrash.”¹⁴⁸ Ibrahim was one of Ismail al-Atrash's eight sons. He was the first among his brothers to assume the role of family chief upon his father's death in 1869.¹⁴⁹

About two decades later, Joseph T. Parfit claims to have “stayed two nights with Yahia Bey [El-Atrash] and saw something of his flour mills and the villages around.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 26.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 218.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, pp. 194 - 195.

¹⁴⁹ Von Oppenheim, *Al Duruz*, p. 153.

¹⁵⁰ Joseph T. Parfit, *Among the Druzes of Lebanon and Bashan* (London: Hunter & Longhurst, Ltd., 1917), p. 131.

Yahia was Ibrahim's brother.¹⁵¹ He also assumed leadership of the clan upon the death of Ibrahim's successor, Shibli, and eventually passed away in 1914.¹⁵²

Greek Catholic Bishop of the Hawran, Niqulawus al-Qadi, witnessed and recorded Yahia's bequeathal to his son Hassan. In his account about living in the region between the years 1889 and 1910, al-Qadi noted that Prince Hassan's inheritance included, but was not limited to a fourth of the village of Irah, twelve acres in the village of Khirbeh, six acres in the village of Umm Walad, ten mills powered by waterway(s) passing through 'Irah and six steam-powered mills distributed among various villages including Khirbet Ghazaleh, al-Suweida, Busra al-Sham and Umm Walad.¹⁵³

This impressive bequeathal reveals fascinating developments in terms of mill numbers, technology and ownership in at least one part of the Hawran during the second half of the 19th century. With regards to numbers and ownership, the will discloses that sixteen mills belonged to just one of Ismail al-Atrash's grandchildren. A question that instantly presents itself in light of these facts: Were the mills in Jabal Hawran concentrated in the hands of just one member of the Atrash clan by 1910? Alternatively, and more

¹⁵¹ Brigit Schäbler, *Intifadaat Jabal Al-Duruz - Hawran, Min Al-Ahed Al-Uthmani Ila Dawlat Al-Istiqlal (1850-1949)* [AUFSTÄNDE IM DRUSENBERGLAND Ethnizität und Integration einer ländlichen Gesellschaft Syriens vom Osmanischen Reich bis zur staatlichen Unabhängigkeit 1850-1949] (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg and Éditions Dar An-Nahar, 2003), Appendix 1.

¹⁵² Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, pp. 244 & 249n.

¹⁵³ Kiryus Niqulawus Al-Qadi, *Arba'una 'Aman Fi Hawran Wa Jabal Al-Duruz* (Harisa, Lebanon: Al-Qadees Bulous, 1925), pp. 105 - 106.

likely, did other individuals or families in that mountainous section of the sanjak operate mills of their own?

The answers to these questions bear clear consequences in terms of numbers of mills operating in Jabal Hawran at the time in question. Unfortunately, primary sources reviewed for this study, such as Ottoman archives or literary sources offer no detailed information on this subject. Lump sum taxation of the Druze community obviated any need for Ottoman administrators to assess individual wealth or income. Official documents betray a more avid interest in censuses, concerning land registration and appropriation of firearms. Officials were driven to focus on these activities by their insecure position in the region. The primary purpose behind carrying out censuses was to assess the number of men of fighting age, and conscripting them, or a portion of them, into the Ottoman Army. By increasing the Ottoman army's manpower, the state simultaneously reduced the number of fighting men within communities from which soldiers were drafted. This policy was complemented by arms confiscation, and land registration, which among other ends, was intended to reduce the dependence of peasants on chieftains by legally entitling peasants to the lands they plowed. This power struggle between Druze chieftains and the Ottoman state dominates archival material and leaves room for little else.

As for literary sources, their very nature limits observations to random snapshots based primarily on the time and place of the authors' visits and of course what they chose to record. In 1905, for example, Gertrude Bell made the following observation during her visit of the village Salkhad.

There are signs that the turbulent people of the Mountain have turned their minds to other matters than war with the Osmanli, and among the chief of these are the steam mills that grind the corn of Salkhad and a few villages besides. A man who owns a steam mill is pledged to maintain the existing order. He has built it at considerable expense, he does not wish to see it wrecked by an invading Turkish army and his capital wasted; on the contrary, he hopes to make money from it, and his restless energies find a new and profitable outlet in that direction.¹⁵⁴

This mention of steam mills in Salkhad implies that by the turn of the century, Hassan al-Atrash was not the only owner of steam mills in the region. Though Salkhad itself was and remains a prominent town in the Druze mountains, none of Ismail's most prominent sons, his three successors, Ibrahim, Shibli and Yahya controlled the town. Rather it was held by a fourth brother, Mohammad.

Each of Ismail's three successors begat one son, among whom was Prince Hasan.¹⁵⁵ In total, Ismail's eight sons bore him nineteen male grandchildren.¹⁵⁶ Given these numbers and Gertrude Bell's account, it appears highly unlikely that the wealth owned by one individual represented the entire clan's assets. In fact, Prince Hassan's meager land holdings in light of the family's control of around thirty villages attests to that argument.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, Von Oppenheim's claim to have seen a mill owned by Ibrahim al-Atrash, Hassan's uncle, in the 1890s lends additional credence to the argument that mills were not

¹⁵⁴ Gertrude Bell, *The Desert and the Sown* (Cooper Square Press: Portland, 2001), p. 87

¹⁵⁵ Schäbler, *Intifadaat Jabal Al-Duruz - Hawran, Min Al-Ahed Al-Uthmani Ila Dawlat Al-Istiqlal (1850-1949)*, Appendix 1.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, Appendix 4.

concentrated in the hands of Prince Hassan. Barring compulsion, Ibrahim would have bequeathed his assets to his own son ‘Abd al-Karim.

With regards to technology, Yahya al-Atrash’s will reveals that by the turn of the twentieth century, certain parties within the sanjak possessed steam-powered mills. Unlike hydraulic mills, these machines liberated their owners from the requirement of having to operate next to watercourses forceful enough to power them. The distribution of Yahya’s machines across several villages in Jabal Hawran compared to the concentration of his hydraulic mills within the village of ‘Irah serves to emphasize that point.

The image below, published in Damascus-based newspaper *Al-Muqtabas*, displays an advertisement by a Haifa-based company called Ma‘amil al-Insha’at al’Mikaanikiyah (‘Atid). It appeared in the July 19, 1910 issue, about four years before Yahya El-Atrash’s death. The advertisement claims that the company sold both steam and water powered mills in addition to other modern contraptions for the home and elsewhere. It also advertised the company’s after-sales services, such as setting up the machines and repairing them. The picture accompanying the information advertised could very well be a steam-powered mill such as the six bequeathed by Yahia al-Atrash to his son Hasan. Unfortunately, pricing information was not provided for the machines offered, making it impossible to assess the amount of capital required to own them.

Figure 4 Advertisement in *al-Muqtabas* by company selling steam-powered grain mills¹⁵⁸



Literary sources cited above indicate that grain mills were an integral part of the Hawrani economy – so much so that they provoked bloody confrontations between regional factions vying for influence and power. The sheer quantity of mills in Hawran as reported by Schumacher in the late 1880s, emphasizes the vital role they played in the local political economy by feeding ever growing numbers of families settling the region and empowering those who owned them. Under these circumstances, mills augmented the

¹⁵⁸ *Al Muqtabas*, July 19, 1910.

variables of social stratification, so that one's status no longer depended exclusively on land possessions, agricultural yield and other traditional measures, but also number of mills in their possession, as evinced by Hasan al-Atrash's inheritance.

On the technological front, steam-powered grain mills appear to have been the only mechanized contraptions of any significance operating in the region, except for government infrastructure such as railways and telegraphs. The difference being that steam powered mills were purchased and used by Hawranis who possessed enough capital to do so – as opposed to Ottoman state bureaus or foreign owned companies.

In light of all these considerations, a more detailed analysis of grain mills operating in Hawran between 1860 and 1914 century would improve our understanding of economic conditions that facilitated immigration into Hawran during that time frame. A few questions to pose for such a study include how the following variables developed with the passing of time: numbers of mills, markets, ownership, output and taxation. Such an exercise would complement assessments of grain exports to Europe to offer a better understanding of economic pull factors that attracted settlers to the region.

E. Summary of findings

The above exercise stems from a desire to better understand socio-economic dynamics within 19th century Ottoman Hawran. Research into the primary sources was guided by the following questions: Could literary sources offer insight unavailable in reports written by European consular and commercial missions? How did domestic and regional economic dynamics compare to the European-oriented export economy? Could

such domestic and regional dynamics have contributed to pull factors that attracted settlers into the region?

Sources considered for this thesis help answer the questions asked above incompletely. They point to consumption habits of Hawranis, and commodities imported to sustain those habits, such as tobacco and coffee beans. Remote overland trading partners in the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq are also identified by these sources. As are a number of products and services supplied by Hawranis to satisfy both local and regional demand. These included carved basalt stones, charcoal, timber and, in terms of services, grain processing.

The sources merely hint at scales of certain operations. The number of grain processing mills observed by Gottlieb Schumacher confirm consular reports describing the region's massive grain-making capacity. They also shed some light on local demand for processed grains and at the Ottoman state's method of utilizing taxes collected in-kind. On the subject of textile production, one source points to the operation of a hundred looms in as-Suwayda. Trains of camels are described as headed westward towards the Mediterranean coast carrying basalt millstones. Circassians are also said to have supplied the entire region of Hawran with timber. Charcoal merchants supplied their commodity to traders in Damascus. In summation, a certain level of economic specialization was evident in the region during the last decades of the 19th century.

Exactly how these conditions reflected on opportunities for locals to generate income can only be guessed given the limitations of literary source material and Ottoman official records. The superficial nature of narrative commentary merely permits one to

induce a general outline of local and regional dynamics during sporadic intervals of time. Moreover, the scathing critique of travel literature articulated by post-modernists and Ottoman administrators' overwhelming concern over security in the region raise some question marks about the accuracy of their recorded observations. Sound quantitative analyses of economic data at both the micro and macro levels under these conditions simply cannot be carried out.

Despite this dearth of reliable and specific data, a prevalence of recorded observations point to economic diversification and specialization in the Hawran throughout the second half of the 19th century. That this development increased opportunities for locals to generate income appears intuitive. Such conditions naturally pulled settlers into the Hawran from other regions within the Ottoman Empire such as Mount Lebanon.

Linda Schatkowski Schilcher's narrative discussed in Chapter I of this study supports this claim. The supposed collapse of Hawrani grain exports to Europe during the 1870s and 1880s coincided with a spike in settlement activity as shown in the following chapter. If indeed true, this negative correlation between exports and settlement proves that the grain export economy played a relatively minor role in supporting most Hawrani inhabitants and incoming settlers.

CHAPTER IV

DRUZE SETTLEMENT OF HAWRAN¹⁵⁹

The last decades of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th witnessed unprecedented numbers of individuals and families departing from their homes in Mount Lebanon. In 1892, Ottoman officials estimated that hundreds of mainly Christian families boarded ships and sailed westward on a weekly basis.¹⁶⁰ The rate increased to more than a hundred people per day at certain points during the year of 1903 despite attempts by authorities to stem the tide.¹⁶¹

Throughout the entire span of Mount Lebanon's Mutasarrifiyya era, at least a quarter of the region's population emigrated overseas in search for better lives.¹⁶² This phenomenon persisted during a time when the region's inhabitants enjoyed unprecedented levels of security and political stability (1860 – 1914). By 1890, Beirut's governor guessed that the primary cause of emigration from Mount Lebanon was "the inadequacy of the

¹⁵⁹ This study adopts a definition of Hawran produced in an article published by the Damascus-based newspaper al-Muqtabas ("Hawran," al-Muqtabas, September 22, 1910). It asserts that Hawran is bordered on the west by the River Jordan, the north by the Ghouta region just south of Damascus, the west by deserts and wastelands of Damascus and the south by the sanjak of Karak. It goes on to detail the Hawran's major administrative divisions (qadas) as: 1) Der'aa (capital of the province), 2) Sheikh Miskeen, 3) Busra al-Harir, 4) Ajlun, 5) al-Qunaytra, 6) al-Suwayda' and 7) Salkhad.

¹⁶⁰ Akarli, *Ottoman Attitudes Towards Lebanese Emigration*, 1885 – 1910, 109, p. 117.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 129.

¹⁶² Ibid, pp. 180 – 181.

means of livelihood” in a region where the “population had doubled over the last twenty years without a corresponding increase in the number of available jobs.”¹⁶³

By the turn of the 20th century, a steady stream of emigration from the Mountain became one of the most equivocal aspects of change in Lebanon. On the one hand, stability and a modest but sustained prosperity accelerated population growth. On the other, a limited economic potential and stringent budgetary constraints made it difficult to accommodate the rising expectations of the enlarged population.¹⁶⁴

During the second half of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire itself hosted significant numbers of immigrants. Between 1783 and 1913, approximately 5 – 7 million Muslims immigrated into Ottoman lands.¹⁶⁵ Among immigrants settling in the empire, Caucasians (consisting of Circassians, Dagestanis, Chechens and other tribes or ethnic groups from the Caucasus) constituted the largest groups, adding at least two million individuals to the Ottoman population.... Of these, the Porte directed at least 25,000 families to the province of Damascus between 1873 and 1906.¹⁶⁶ Considerable numbers of Caucasian families established settlements in the Sanjak of Hawran, particularly in the modern-day Golan Heights. A cross-section of these Caucasian settlements include Qunaytirah, ‘Ayn Surman, Burayqah and Mansurah, most of which were established during the 1870s.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 113.

¹⁶⁴ Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861 - 1914* , p. 214.

¹⁶⁵ Donald Quataert, "The Age of Reforms, 1812 - 1914," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, ed. Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 759, p. 793.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 795.

¹⁶⁷ Norman Nicholson Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 117 - 118.

This study contextualizes Hawran's settlement by Druze emigrants from Mount Lebanon within this broader setting of population movements. In addition to the Caucasians and Christians noted above, Druze settlement of the Hawran coincided with the settlement of lands to their immediate south and distant north by numerous communities. Peasants from the River Jordan's west bank, for example, moved east to settle on lands claimed by Bani Sakhr sheikhs who had begun to take interest in agriculture.¹⁶⁸ Isma'ilis and 'Alawis also left their homes in the Alawite mountains and moved eastward to settle the plains of Hama and Homs. The Isma'ilis established their first and largest modern settlement of Salamiyah in 1849; however the majority of approximately thirty settlements followed suit in the 1870s and 1880s.¹⁶⁹ 'Alawis left their mountainous abodes permanently or seasonally to farm lands in the Hama, Homs and Salamiyah regions for landlords increasingly as the turn of the century approached.¹⁷⁰

Neither the Druze settlements in the Hawran nor their evolving socio-economic conditions developed in isolation from these broader developments. Rather, it appears that at least some of the forces that attracted settlers from Mount Lebanon during the second half of the 19th century also pulled other communities to settle various parts of inner Syria. In a similar light, the forces that compelled the Druze to emigrate eastward also appear to have compelled their Christian neighbors to emigrate westward.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 130.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 64.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 73.

A. Druze settlement of Hawran – facts and figure

Norman Lewis' *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980* and Kais M. Firro's *A History of the Druzes* include two chronological accounts of Druze settlement activity in Hawran. This thesis refers to both authors' works to support its overall argument concerning push and pull factors motivating settlers. It makes no claim to establish its own unique account of actual settlement activity based on primary sources.

Both scholars assert that the first Druze settlements in Hawran emerged during the end of the 17th or beginning of the 18th centuries. Causes behind this activity vary. One version notes that the first wave of Druze settlers to Hawran resulted from the Battle of Ain Dara in 1711.¹⁷¹ This event, which pitted two Druze-led coalitions vying for power over Mount Lebanon against one another supposedly ended with the defeated party leaving their homes to settle the Hawran.

Another version claims that a Druze prince named 'Alam ad-Din al-Ma'ni, instigated the settlement of Hawran in 1685.¹⁷² Why he did so remains vague. One explanation suggests that under the prompting of the Ottoman state, the Druze prince either led or dispatched an expedition led by Hamdan al-Hamdan to the region against rebellious bedouin Arabs and was rewarded with the state's blessing to settle in the region.¹⁷³ The Hamdans, who were al-Ma'in's lieutenants, remained with the settlers and ultimately

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p.37.

¹⁷² Ibid, pp. 77-78 (Lewis claims Hamdan led the expedition. However, Firro claims Alam ad-Din al-Ma'ni led the expedition) Kais M. Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 39.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

emerged as Hawrani Druze chieftains until the rise of the Atrash clan in the mid-19th century.¹⁷⁴

More relevant to this study than the beginning of Druze settlement however, is the flow of settlers throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. On this subject as well, Firro and Lewis broadly agree. Both, for example, assert that the 18th century witnessed relatively minimal settlement activity. They also claim that it was only after the 1840s, that new village numbers increased to varying degrees throughout the following 60 years. Finally, as Table 8 and Figure 5 reveal, they both present evidence suggesting that total numbers of new established villages peaked after 1865.

*Table 8 Development of the Druze Settlement in Hawran*¹⁷⁵

Years	Timespan	Number of villages	Average per year
Prior to 1812	> 100 years	28	< 1
Between 1842-1867	25 years	20	< 1
Between 1862-1867	5 years	16	3.2
Between 1867-1883	16 years	40	2.5
After 1867	33 years prior to 1900	13	< 1

Table 8 contains Firro’s estimates of village settlement activity. It clearly highlights significant differences between the 18th and 19th century. For example, during the 18th century, the average time it took for a new settlement to be established was four years. That rate changes significantly after 1862. During the five years between 1862 to 1867, no less than 16 new settlements were founded, averaging just over three villages per year – an increase by a factor of 12 compared to the 18th century. Though the rate eventually

¹⁷⁴ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 184.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 150.

dropped somewhat, the years that witnessed the largest number of new settlements were those between 1867 and 1900, during which a total number of 53 villages were established.

Lewis presents the same conclusions through different means. Rather than express the data numerically like Firro, he does so graphically. Figure 5 exhibits a set of three maps that can be found in Lewis' *Nomads and Settlers*. They portray Druze settlements distributed over three distinct intervals of time.

The first map conveys that just over 30 Druze villages existed by the early 19th century. Over half a century later, by 1865, the number of villages rose to just over 50, an increase of 20 villages, or alternatively 67 percent. Thirty-five years later, by the turn of the 20th century, the numbers of villages rose to 94, an increase 88 percent.

An important detail about Figure 5 deserves note. The second map indicates that six villages on the north-eastern side of the Lajah were abandoned between the beginning of the 19th century and 1865. More about this subject can be found in Chapter II of this thesis. In brief, it implies that the trajectory of Druze settlement altered over time. Though certain forces attracted them to the region, others actors also sought out lands and staked their claims at the expense of the Druze, who in turn, were compelled to seek more defensible alternatives.

Figure 5 Snapshots of Druze settlements in the Hawran (early 19th century, 1865 & 1905)¹⁷⁶

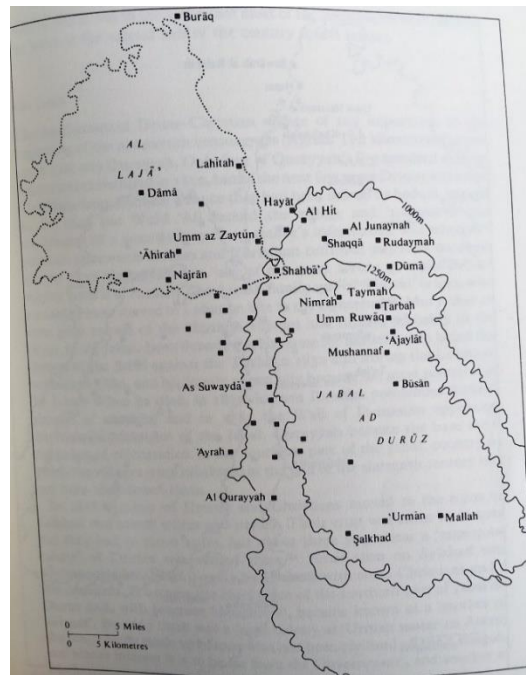
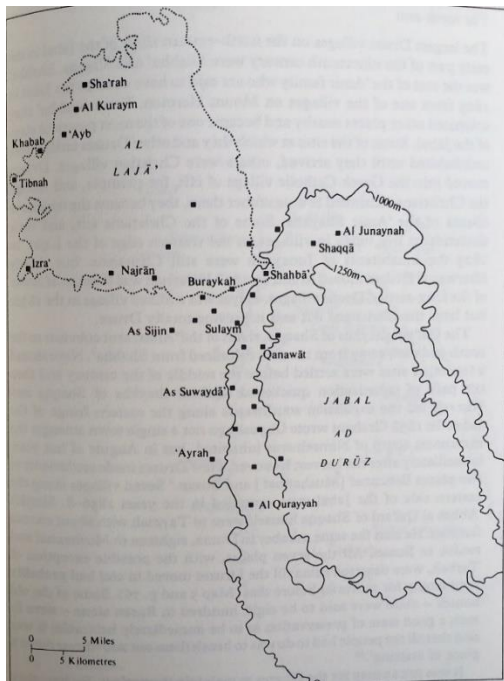


Figure 5a: Distribution of Druze villages in Hawran during the early 19th century

Figure 5b: Distribution of Druze villages in Hawran by 1865

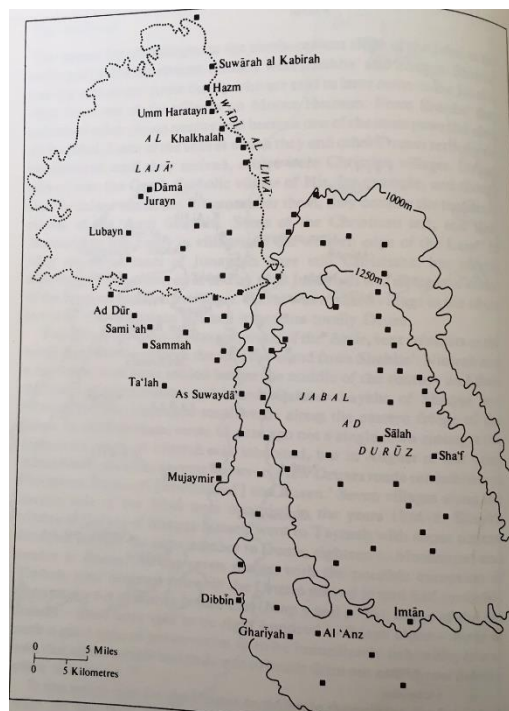


Figure 5c: Distribution of Druze villages in Hawran by 1905

¹⁷⁶ Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980*, pp. 77-78.

Population figures collected by the Ottoman officials concur with the overall picture painted by both Firro and Lewis. An official report presented in 1856 suggested that the total population of Druze in Hawran amounted to 5,000 individuals.¹⁷⁷ By 1880, another report claimed that the population of non-Muslim men in the sanjak of Hawran was 5,500.¹⁷⁸ By 1915, Ottoman officials claimed that the total number of Druze in the kazas of al-Suwayda and Salkhad as well as the Nahiya of Wadi al Liwa had sky-rocketed to 40,000 individuals.¹⁷⁹ Table 9 summarizes population estimates presented in official Ottoman documents just cited in this paragraph.

Table 9: Estimates of populations in Hawran prepared by Ottoman officials (1856, 1880 & 1915)¹⁸⁰

	Administrative Unit	Years		
		1856	1880	1915
Total population of Hawran		10,000		
Total Druze population of Hawran	Not specified	5,000		
Total Muslim population of Hawran			20,000	
Total non-Muslim population of Druze in Hawran	Hawran Sanjak		5,500	
Total Druze population of Qada's & Nahiyas containing Druze populations	Qada' al-Suwayda Qada' Salkhad Nahiyas in Wadi al-Liwa'			40,000

As with trade figures presented in Chapter II, a comparative analysis based on these reports poses serious difficulties. The first report presents the population of Druze within

¹⁷⁷ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi, İrade Dahiliye 24964 Ly 7 No. 57, August 15, 1856, quoted in Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*, p. 106.

¹⁷⁸ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi, Y.PRK.UM 3/35 Ly 2 No. 205, September 27, 1880, quoted in Ibid, pp.78-79.

¹⁷⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi, DH.i .um 10-1 /2-56 Lef 10, February 3, 1915, Appendix 3.

¹⁸⁰ This table was produced from the same data located in documents cited in footnotes no. 176, 177 and 178.

Hawran, but does not specify what is meant by Hawran. The second report defines Hawran as an Ottoman administrative unit, or sanjak, which at the time encompassed the Golan Heights. Yet, it limits population data to male residents and broadens it simultaneously to include Christians. The third report provides population figures of two qadas and several nahiyas that contain the largest concentration of Druze residents within the sanjak of Hawran, but excludes the Golan Heights.¹⁸¹ The newer the document cited above, the more detailed the descriptions of areas under consideration. With the passing of time, official reports concerning population clearly improved in terms of units of reference at least.

Several conservative assumptions facilitate comparisons between the Ottoman reports. With regards to non-Muslims, Hawrani Christians constituted a progressively shrinking minority by the late 19th century. On the one hand, the Druze population increased significantly due to settlement activity. On the other, some Christians fled this new demographic reality after suffering from attacks at the hands of either their Druze or Sunni neighbors as well as the Wahabi threat from the Nejd region of the Arabian Peninsula.

Concerning the proportion of men in the total population, local norms generally imposed early marriage and large families. This behavior undoubtedly skewed the age distribution of Druze in favor of children rather than adults. Furthermore, the proliferation of armed factions and their tendency to resolve differences by force dictated that considerable numbers of men died violent deaths. One estimate formulated in 1910

¹⁸¹ In terms of size and importance, Ottoman administrative units rank as follows (from largest to smallest): Province, Qada and Nahiya. Provinces are divided into qadas, which in turn are divided into nahiyas.

suggested that between 1860 and 1910, 8,000 Druze men died from military confrontations with the government, other Hawrani factions, or amongst themselves.¹⁸² Consequently, assuming 5,000 Druze men lived in Hawran in 1880 almost certainly determines that the total population was considerably higher than 10,000.

Finally, compared to the Golan Heights, the Hawran plains, Lajah and Jabal Druze constitute a much larger geographic space. With less than ten inhabited villages, the Golani Druze were dwarfed by their coreligionists in Jabal Druze, who by the 1880s had established over eighty villages.¹⁸³ Taking all these assumptions into account, the three Ottoman reports cited above correspond with Firro's and Lewis' narratives about Druze settlement progression in Hawran.

In summation, Hawran's settlement by Druze started during the late 17th or early 18th century. For over a century, settlement activity remained relatively scant despite the persistent weakening of the Druze in Mount Lebanon, politically, demographically and economically throughout that timespan. As of 1865 however, settlement activity spiked dramatically.

Settlement and population statistics cited in this section support the thesis' premise that Druze emigration to Hawran was catalyzed by a complex web of variables tied to regional developments affecting all communities in the Levant. Simply put, the time frame

¹⁸² "Druze Hawran," *al Muqtabas*, August 3, 1910.

¹⁸³ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 30.

of Druze population growth in the region correlates more with population movements of other communities than with key events in Druze historiographic narratives.

The latter's prominent dates of 1711, 1840 and 1860 do not correspond with key dates related to population movement. On the other hand, as will be shown below, the general time frame of Druze settlement correlated quite well with the displacement and resettlement of other communities. Therefore, the decline of Druze power in Mount Lebanon may indeed have been a necessary condition to spur settlement of Hawran. However, population figures indicate that it was not a sufficient condition in and of itself.

B. Push factors in the Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon

After decades of political upheaval and intermittent sectarian warfare, the Lebanese Mountain finally enjoyed an extended stretch of peace and security spanning over half a century during the Mutasarrifiyya era. Security and political incidents occasionally flared, but nothing comparable to the 1860 or even 1840 conflagrations were recorded. Described as the "Long Peace," this era of the mountain's history witnessed the establishment of the region's first modern governing institutions, of which some remain active to this day, such as the Lebanese Gendarmes.¹⁸⁴ It also witnessed the complete integration of the mountain's economy into the global silk industry, principally as a supplier of silk cocoons.

It was specifically during these years of relative calm, that the floodgates of emigration opened. This counter-intuitive correlation between peace and emigration begs

¹⁸⁴ Akarli, *The Long Peace : Ottoman Lebanon 1861 – 1920*, p. 184.

the question of what caused the massive exodus of both Druze and Christians from the mountain. Inter-sectarian warfare, though ruled out, leaves a myriad of other push factors to consider such as political tension as well as economic conditions. This study suggests that all the mountain's communities coped with challenging economic conditions, particularly between 1870 and 1900. It also suggests that political tensions within the Druze community itself may have played a significant role in pushing Druze families to look for better living conditions elsewhere.

1. Strained socio-economic conditions during the Mutasarrifiyya era

Though enjoying benefits of integration into the global silk industry, scholars have pointed to several factors that contributed to Mount Lebanon's strained economic conditions during the Mutasarrifiyya era. One such factor was the decision to make the Bīqā' valley's wealth less accessible to both the Druze landowners and peasants of Mount Lebanon. For considerable stretches of time during the 18th and early 19th centuries, at least segments of the Bīqā''s rich agricultural lands were placed by the Ottoman governors of Damascus at the disposal of certain, primarily Druze, families residing in the Mountain, such as the Junblats.¹⁸⁵ The valley offered these families sizable streams of income and "employment opportunities" for their respective clients. The following petition from Najib and Nasib Junblat to British Consul Eldridge, dated 26 July, 1869 emphatically describes the negative repercussions that blocking access to the Bīqā' had on the mountaineers.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 19.

Up to this present time we have presented several petitions to the Government in which we begged that justice may be done to us respecting the restoration of our property in the Biqa‘ according to the accompanying list. We stated in our above-mentioned petitions that the villages and lands we now claim are our own property and our *mashad miskinta* [survival base], of which we have had a legal possession from older times.... Now we understand that the government has been handling over certain locations of our above-stated property to persons who have no right whatever to them and to whom the documents of Tabo [title] are being granted.... It seems ... the Government is continuing to give away [our property] piece by piece until we are deprived of it altogether.... If those villages are not restored to us, our family will be utterly ruined.... Our [property] concerns many of the poorer class of the Druzes, of whom several, owing to the sequestration of this property, have already left for the Hawran. We have no doubt, should the sequestration and the above state of things continue, the rest of the Druzes who depend on us will be compelled to leave for the same place.¹⁸⁶

Negative consequences were felt even by the mountain’s Ottoman administration.

At least two of Mount Lebanon’s *Mutasarrifs* (Daud and Muzaffer) petitioned the Porte vehemently to annex at least part of the valley to their administrative jurisdictions.¹⁸⁷ It was only during Daud Pasha’s administration in the 1860s, that this request was partially granted. Livestock and cereal taxes collected in the Biqa‘ were temporarily placed at the disposal of the Mutasarrifiyya to alleviate food shortages.¹⁸⁸

Nonetheless, the removal of the Biqa‘ valley from Mount Lebanon’s economic fabric upon the establishment of the Mutasarrifiyya undoubtedly generated painful economic consequences, felt most acutely by governing institutions and ruling classes. This reality in turn left unknown numbers of families destitute. It surely inflated the statistics of emigres in search of better livelihoods in different corners of the world.

¹⁸⁶ Kais M. Firro, *A History of the Druzes* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp.42, 162.

¹⁸⁷ Akarli, *The Long Peace : Ottoman Lebanon 1861 – 1920*, pp. 39, 64.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 36.

Scholars have also argued that Mount Lebanon's silk economy served as another push factor encouraging emigration. As early as 1846, a British Consul report estimated that silk accounted for 57 percent of the value of Mount Lebanon's gross agricultural output.¹⁸⁹ During the 1850s, nearly all the regions adjacent to Beirut produced raw silk, testifying to the mountain's relatively advanced stage of development into a commodity economy.¹⁹⁰ By the turn of the 20th century, silk production had more than doubled relative to output in the 1860s.¹⁹¹

An essentially agricultural enterprise, the silk industry was susceptible to variables such as weather, disease and demand in foreign markets. As such, output and its corresponding rewards proved extremely volatile. In 1877 for example, the mountaineers enjoyed relatively prosperous conditions due to a good crop and high demand.¹⁹² However, three years earlier, a 22 percent reduction of annual output combined with a 49 percent reduction in average prices to result in calamitous economic conditions in Mount Lebanon.¹⁹³ These fluctuations were felt most acutely in the mountain's religiously mixed southern districts of the Shuf region, where silk cocoon production constituted a disproportionately high ratio of economic output.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ Issawi, *The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration, 1800-1914*, 13, p. 23.

¹⁹⁰ Smiliyanskaya, *From Subsistence to Market Economy, 1850's*, 226, pp. 229 – 230.

¹⁹¹ Issawi, *The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration, 1800-1914*, 13, p. 23.

¹⁹² Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861 - 1914*, p. 151.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

The steep variation in prices noted above highlight that unlike dietary staples such as grains, silk was (and remains) a luxury item. Further exacerbating the situation was the fact that most of Mount Lebanon's produce was purchased almost exclusively by French merchants in Marseille. Consequently, though silk cocoons were purchased at much higher prices than grains in good years, their markets were smaller and prices much more volatile.

Table 10 Silk Exports to France and Operating Mills in Mount Lebanon¹⁹⁵

Year	% of Syrian silk exported to France	Year	# of modern spinning mills
1840	Less than 25%	1840	1
1873	More than 40%	1852	9
Early 1900s	90%	1860	65
Just before WWI	99%	1813	200

France's defeat at the hands of the Prussian army in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, for example, also led to serious negative repercussions in Mount Lebanon's silk industry.¹⁹⁶ By then, the industry supplied France with almost 40 percent of its total demand for the commodity. This steady restructuring of Mount Lebanon's economy into an ancillary of France's silk industry, throughout the second half of the 19th century, exposed its inhabitants to new and unfamiliar risks. Consequently, livelihoods in Mount Lebanon grew to depend increasingly on the fortunes of the French state and its economy, which by the end of the 19th century imported almost all its silk raw material from Mount Lebanon.

¹⁹⁵ Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, p. 154.

¹⁹⁶ Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861 - 1914*, p. 143.

In terms of economic deterioration, the collapse of silk production, particularly in [Mount] Lebanon, fundamentally affected the local economy. Indeed the silk industry in the region had put its imprint on the economy of the region for a century. Especially between 1850 and 1880, it was the major form of economic activity particularly in Lebanon and to a lesser extent in Syria and Palestine. Moreover, the silk industry was considered the vein of life of the regional economy because it had had significant repercussions on many other sectors, notably agriculture, industry, and commerce.¹⁹⁷

As the 20th century approached, capitalists invested increasing sums of money into Mount Lebanon's silk industry. French and British capital contributed to building the first spinning factories in the 1860s.¹⁹⁸ In 1887, as many as 122 factories were counted by the British Vice Consul in Beirut, Harry Eyres.¹⁹⁹ Yet, despite investments exceeding £100,000 pounds at the turn of the 20th century, the entire industry employed merely 10,000 to 20,000 primarily female employees.²⁰⁰ By comparison, Mount Lebanon's population immediately prior to World War I was 414,800.²⁰¹

This bleak picture clearly highlights that Mount Lebanon's silk industry could not sustain the region's population even during its best years. Capital invested clearly fell short of requirements to employ enough individuals. Furthermore, the economy's overwhelming reliance on silk exports to France increased risk levels to unreasonable highs. Despite these

¹⁹⁷ M. Kazim Baycar, "Ottoman Emigration to Argentina 1870-1914" (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2008), pp. 39-40.

¹⁹⁸ Issawi, *The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration, 1800-1914*, 13, p. 26.

¹⁹⁹ Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861 - 1914*, p. 205.

²⁰⁰ Issawi, *The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration, 1800-1914*, 13, p. 26.

²⁰¹ Akarli, *The Long Peace : Ottoman Lebanon 1861 – 1920*, p. 106 Table 2.

problems, the Porte persistently sought to limit expenditures and grant monopolies to European concerns over other economic activities due to its difficult financial straits.

During the last years of the 1870s, the Ottoman state officially granted French business interests monopolies over the supply of commodities such as salt in Mount Lebanon. This salt monopoly effectively eliminated the local salt-panning industry, which once flourished on coasts of Mount Lebanon.²⁰² The Ottoman state's calamitous financial situation throughout the 1870s precipitated the granting of such monopolies to creditor institutions and states.

Two decades after signing its first foreign loan agreement, the government declared bankruptcy in 1876.²⁰³ An insurrection in the Balkans (1875-77), humiliating military defeat by the Russian Empire in 1878 and corresponding influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees from lost territories added additional strains on an Empire already on the brink. This string of developments, transpiring throughout the 1870s, naturally impacted socio-economic conditions in Mount Lebanon negatively. They were exacerbated by lackluster economic conditions across the empire, which began in 1875.

The deterioration of the economic, social and political circumstances of the Ottoman Empire was inescapably evident in 1875. In the summer the Porte was confronted with the consequences of an absence of economic policies. By the autumn it approached bankruptcy being no longer able to service its foreign creditors adequately.... The general malaise was felt in the Mountain during the winter of 1875-76.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861 - 1914*, p. 198-199.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861 - 1914*, 143, p. 150.

Until 1875-6, directives from Istanbul ordered the Mutasarrifiyya's neighboring provinces to cover its annual budgetary deficits.²⁰⁵ Additionally, 9.5 million piasters in tax arrears carried over from Mount Lebanon's dual districts period were waved by Istanbul, as well as another 3.2 million piasters accumulated between the years 1861 and 1872.²⁰⁶ The onset of bankruptcy eliminated these subsidies, leaving the local administration in an unenviable situation.

Between 1877 and 1881, the central government could not allocate 2.1 million piasters of promised subsidies to the Mutasarrifiyya.²⁰⁷ Between 1882 and 1884, it again failed to cover budget deficits amounting to 852,000 piasters.²⁰⁸ For the first time since its establishment, the Mutasarrifiyya was therefore compelled to balance its budget primarily through cutting costs.

Deterioration of the local administration's finances between 1877 and 1884 strained already difficult living conditions in the mountain. The curtailing of expenditures entailed freezing or reducing the number of government employees. It also led to reductions in salaries and subsidies, as well as the slashing of government financed projects. If the government offered any form of indirect safety net prior to 1877 through employment and subsidies to Mount Lebanon's inhabitants, it shrunk considerably for almost a decade.

²⁰⁵ Akarli, *The Long Peace : Ottoman Lebanon 1861 – 1920*, p. 109.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 111.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

This “perfect storm” afflicting Mount Lebanon during the 1870s and 1880s underscores the complexity of factors behind unbearable socio-economic conditions that pushed both Druze and Christians to emigrate. Structural adjustments to the mountain’s economy, extreme volatility of the silk industry and financial insolvency of the Ottoman state combined to deal inhabitants a triple blow to their living conditions that was impossible to overcome. Certain segments of the population did indeed reap considerable rewards from the silk industry, particularly a small number of Christian merchants and capitalists with close commercial ties to French business concerns. Nevertheless, no sect was immune to the negative repercussions of the changes happening around them during those decades.

2. Political conflict within the Druze community

Archival Ottoman documents written during the 1880s and 1890s indicate that peaceful conditions prevailing in Mount Lebanon did not preclude serious political tensions within the Druze community itself. The reports note that these tensions compelled thousands of inhabitants to flee their homes for the Hawran during those years. One such document, for example, written in 1893 by an Ottoman official based in the Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon claims that “around 5,000 [Druze] families have left their homes in Mount Lebanon for the Hawran due to maltreatment, personal reasons and lack of security.”

The report, which essentially criticizes the Mutasarrif of Mount Lebanon Wasa Pasha and Druze notable Nasib Junblatt asserts that the Druze were genuinely considering collective emigration. It places full responsibility for the conditions described above on the

machinations of both these men, who it describes as collaborating to undermine the standing of another Druze notable, Mustafa Arslan, and his faction. Furthermore, it warns of the dangers of collective Druze emigration, explaining that if Maronites were to inherit the entire mountain range, the region would gain a semi-independent status similar to Bulgaria. After stressing the importance of Mount Lebanon to the Sultanate and the Empire's Syrian provinces, the document states:

We should not allow room for sectarian conflict between the Maronite sect, which enjoys close ties with French, and the Druze, which enjoy similar ties to the English, as a means of preventing turmoil in Mount Lebanon. Such a situation would increase the likelihood of the Druze, who are already suffering from poor administration and dealings by the government, leaving Mount Lebanon and emigrating. Efforts must be exerted to prevent the Druze from abandoning the mountain, and leaving the Maronites on their own, in order to eliminate the possibility of a semi-independent status emerging similar to what currently exists in Bulgaria....

Upon the appointment of Wasa Pasha as Mutasarrif of Mount Lebanon, foreign machinations and guiles emerged to the surface as a result of the Mutasarrif's lack of experience and caution despite his apparent friendship to us. Foreigners began intervening in the running of the administration and submitting petitions related to the appointment of government employees and replacement of others. One such example was the Mutasarrif's dismissal of Prince Mustafa Arslan as Qa'imaqam of the Shuf Kaza for no apparent reason and the appointment of Nassib Bek [Junblatt] an immoral protégé of the English who is not even a Sunni Muslim.... Some 5,000 Druze households have since emigrated to the Hawran and other destinations due to poor treatment and personal agendas as well as the lack of security. As for those who remain, they are also considering emigration. Nassib Bek ... pursued personal agendas that benefited Junblatt family exclusively at the expense of the remainder of the Druze community....²⁰⁹

Four months prior to document's preparation, the governor of Syria Ra'uf Pasha, wrote a similar, albeit abridged, report.²¹⁰ Dissatisfaction of the Druze living in Mount

²⁰⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y.PRK.ASK 88/18 (No. 518), January 27, 1893, quoted in Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*, pp. 89-92.

²¹⁰ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y.PRK.UM 25/16 (No. 627), August 15, 1892, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 89.

Lebanon, claimed the governor, served as the impetus for a large number of them to leave their homes for the Hawran. Furthermore, the Pasha added, community leaders had gathered and warned Ottoman officials that if Nasib Jumblatt remained in his post, they would collectively emigrate to the Hawran. A petition signed by 650 Druze notables and submitted to Ottoman authorities five years earlier (1887) supports this narrative:

We have been divided since olden times into Yezbeki and Junblatti factions. In the event a member of one of these factions overcame his opponent and attained the position of Qa'imaqam, he assumed as a core duty the abuse and humiliation of his opponent, and the pursuit of his faction's narrow interests. This situation led to a great deal of bloodshed and other failings. For the sake of protecting its subjects and the region's stability, the Ottoman authorities put an end to this practice and appointed Qa'imaqams who did not belong to either of the two factions. However, after the appointment of Wasa Pasha as Mutasarrif over Mount Lebanon, a number of individuals with agendas and personal interests contacted foreign consulates and received their support for the appointment of an individual named Nasib bek Junblatt as Qa'imaqam of the Shouf Qaza. Immediately upon the assumption of his duties, the aforementioned reverted to underhanded tactics to strengthen his faction and reignite old tensions within the community.... If this situation persists there should be no doubt that the consequences will be calamitous and that there exists the possibility of foreign intervention. To contain the situation, we pleaded our case with the aforementioned Mutassarif, however he paid no heed and was misled by his Council. There remains no path for us except the justice of our Sultan, who may come forth and rescue us from this Qa'imaqam. In case these efforts produce no results, we will be forced to leave our homes in search of places safer than our ancestral lands.²¹¹

The three documents cited above reveal how friction among Druze political factions pushed “5000 Druze households” to emigrate from Mount Lebanon to the Hawran between 1883 and 1893.²¹² Written by Ottoman officials bitter about European interference, who

²¹¹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; YEE. 104/55 Lef 2, April 6, 1887. Please view Appendix 1 and 2.

²¹² 1883 was the year Wasa Pasha was appointed Mutasarrif of Mount Lebanon, and 1893 the year the Ottoman report claiming 5,000 Druze households left Mount Lebanon was written.

were fearful of losing complete sovereignty over Mount Lebanon, as well as Druze notables who suffered defeat at the hand of their political rivals, the documents' authors may have exaggerated the extent of emigration to further their agendas. However, the persistence of these concerns over mass migration – over a span of six years (1887 - 1893) – their diverse authorship, and citation of numbers quantifying past waves of emigrants all combine to diminish, if not eliminate, any doubt that this condition indeed existed.

The political dispute just alluded to reveals that certain push factors in Mount Lebanon stemmed from political dynamics within communities themselves. In fact, if the dispute among the Druze political elite was as serious as reported, one could go so far as to claim that the primary political cause of Druze emigration from Mount Lebanon during the 1880s and 1890s was infighting amongst the community. This hypothesis hearkens back to the Battle of Ain Dar of 1711, which pitted two Druze coalitions vying for power over Mount Lebanon against one another. In both cases, conflict within as opposed to between sects catalyzed settlement of Hawran.

Such tensions between Druze political factions and deteriorating socio-economic conditions highlight two important push factors felt by the region's residents. These factors stand out even more because of their counterintuitive interplay with the Mountain's sectarian composition. Rivalries within the Druze elite strata pushed Druze families to flee for Hawran during the 1880s and 1890s. In parallel, the development of Mount Lebanon into a single-commodity economy – particularly after the 1860s – simply could not sustain the local population and led to considerable dislocations across the sects. Lastly, the Ottoman Empire's bankruptcy in 1876 eliminated subsidies allocated to the Mutasarrifiyya

and increased the number of European monopolies operating in the region, thereby exacerbating the already negative effects of the single-commodity economy.

In short, emigration from Mount Lebanon during the last decades of the 19th century was far from a product of sectarian conflict or rivalries. Rather it was a culmination of political and economic developments at the international, regional and communal levels that combined to make life in Mount Lebanon unbearable for thousands of families irrespective of faith. Druze emigration to Hawran was merely a part of a larger phenomenon. The fact that it transpired during the very years Christians emigrated from the region to Africa, Europe and the Americas reaffirms that hypothesis beyond a doubt.

C. Pull factors: Ottoman province of Syria and sanjak of Hawran

As with push factors, certain forces pulling the Druze to Hawran must also have transcended communitarian particularities. Apart from Christians who, as already noted, overwhelmingly migrated westward towards Europe and the Americas, the Vilayet of Syria hosted thousands of settlers from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds between the years 1860 and 1900. The regions of Ottoman Syria hosting this influx of settlers shared a few common topographical, demographic and political characteristics. These were:

1. Within boundaries of contemporary Syria and Jordan (Vilayet of Syria)
2. Farther inland from densely populated regions of the Mediterranean coast
3. Relatively arid but fertile plains
4. Considered seasonal pasture lands claimed by bedouin tribes

5. Tenuous presence of Ottoman state institutions prior to settlement
6. Increasingly probed by European economic, religious and political interests

At first glance, the attraction of these regions to potential settlers appears to have been availability of unsettled fertile land. If so, why did its settlement by largely unrelated communities transpire roughly during the last four to five decades of the 19th century, and not earlier? One answer stipulates that pull factors remained inconsequential until push factors took effect. Another answer suggests that fertile land did not constitute enough of a pull factor to settlers. It was only when the Ottoman state adopted a policy that sought to permanently settle these lands – as a means of compensating for lands lost in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus – that settlement activity spiked considerably.

Eugene Rogan, for example, stresses that successful Ottoman efforts to impose direct rule over territories within the boundaries of modern Jordan between 1870 and 1914 constituted a powerful pull factor that attracted settlers. About this point, he writes,

The Ottoman security apparatus had immediate effects on the flow of goods and persons into the Transjordan frontier from other parts of Ottoman Syria, as well as enhancing their circulation within the region. It enabled the reconstruction of old villages and the creation of new ones, as well as the extension of the area under cultivation.²¹³

Creation of a permanent security apparatus in the region was merely one minor part of a broader set of reforms referred to as the *Tanzimat* that affected the entire Ottoman state apparatus. Ottoman Sultan Abdülmajid I receives credit for initiating the movement that

²¹³ Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire*, 2002nd ed. (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1999). , p. 68.

would last until 1878 by means of promulgating the *Hatt-ı Sharif of Gülhane* in 1839.²¹⁴ The Sultan's motive was to "put an end to the prevailing malpractices and abuses of power, and to resolve security and justice into the acts of government and throughout the Ottoman lands."²¹⁵ Specifically, Rogan cites two *Tanzimat* laws that restructured the province of Damascus' administration most drastically: the 1864 Provincial Reform Law and the 1858 Land Law.

Having extended direct administration over the different districts of Transjordan through the application of the 1864 Provincial Reform Law, the governors in Damascus set about consolidating their hold and enhancing the economic viability of these districts through another key piece of *Tanzimat* legislation: the 1858 Land Law.²¹⁶

Norman Lewis concurs with Rogan. In explaining pull factors that attracted settlers to the vilayet of Syria, he cites "real improvements" in the Ottoman state's ability to function administratively and impose security as coinciding with the successful establishment of new settlements.

There is little sign of change in the provinces at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but as the [19th] century went by the trends [of retrogression and depopulation] were reversed. Security, administration and economic conditions improved, the population grew, the frontier of settlement was pushed forward The primary factors making for progress were the slow, sporadic, unequal, but nevertheless real improvements in the efficiency of the administration,

²¹⁴ "Tanẓīmāt." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2015. Reference. American University of Beirut. 21 January 2015 http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/tanz-i-ma-t-COM_1174.

²¹⁵ Butrus Abu Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript," *Die Welt Des Islam, New Series* 34, no. 2 (Nov., 1994), 173, p. 188.

²¹⁶ Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 69.

particularly as regards security; and the increase in trade and economic activity which went on during the century.²¹⁷

Lewis explicitly asserts that the successful imposition of state authority, as described above, was the key variable that permitted settlement of lands to occur during the last six or seven decades of Ottoman rule. He also notes that previous attempts to settle the same lands failed precisely due to the absence of effective security and administrative institutions. In asserting so, Lewis implies that push factors in a number of regions predated successful settlement activities, and that pull factors included but were not limited to availability of fertile land.

Why were such measures successful, when similar efforts at an earlier date had not been? The answer is partly to be found in the general circumstances of the time, and in the fact that [Ottoman military] expeditions were mounted with more determination and system than previously, that a network of military and police posts and civilian administrators was gradually built up, that more men were used and that many of them were regular soldiers....²¹⁸

With regards to the Druze community in particular, the literature either ignores or refutes this correlation between implementation of *Tanzimat* reforms and settlement of the Hawran. In explaining why the Druze of Mount Lebanon emigrated to the Hawran, Kais M. Firro describes the Hawran region as a refuge for the community. The region gradually lost its appeal to prospective settlers as the Ottoman state imposed its presence administratively and militarily.²¹⁹ Firro also cites light taxation, the availability of extremely fertile land dotted by deserted villages and a well-organized community as other

²¹⁷ Norman Nicholson Lewis, "The Frontier of Settlement, 1800 - 1950," in *The Economic History of the Middle East 1800 - 1914 : A Book of Readings*, ed. Charles Issawi (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 258. , p. 261.

²¹⁸ Ibid, p. 263.

²¹⁹ Firro, *A History of the Druzes* , p.239.

incentives that pulled Druze settlers to the region.²²⁰ Robert Benton Betts addresses the subject indirectly, pointing to the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by Druze living in Hawran and their strength relative to other communities in the region.²²¹

Norman Lewis offers a “Malthusian” explanation to the phenomenon of reduced Druze immigration into the Hawran, claiming that a shortage of cultivable land all but eliminated the region’s appeal to potential immigrants.²²² On the subject of the Ottoman state’s role in attracting Druze to the frontiers of Syria, Lewis remains noticeably silent. Throughout his chapter about the community, he portrays the relationship between both parties as antagonistic, implying that, if anything, the Ottoman state disrupted the flow of immigrants into the region. His brief narrative describing pull factors that attracted Druze settlers into Hawran focuses on social traits of Druze peasants who supposedly preferred plowing the land to engaging in trade or other economic activities, and who avoided travel to distant foreign lands due to their conservative and closely-knit community structure.²²³

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 157.

²²¹ Robert Brenton Betts, *The Druze* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 80 - 81.

²²² Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980* , p. 95.

²²³ Ibid. pp. 74 - 95.

1. Ottoman state: attitudes and policies concerned with Druze settlement

Official Ottoman reports composed during the 19th and early 20th centuries about Druze settlement of Hawran appear to support Firro's and Lewis' views regarding the antagonistic relationship between the Druze and Ottoman state. One official report written in 1910 after the conclusion of an Ottoman military campaign in Hawran asserts that the Druze deliberately settled in areas that enhanced their ability to defy the state.²²⁴ The author described Druze settlements as lying on the border between the Syrian Desert and its settled regions. He also describes the Lajah and Safa Mountain as places of refuge used by the community whenever pressure from the state became unbearable. The result was their persistent disregard of laws, taxation and military obligations.

The report also asserts that the Druze community's land hunger in the Hawran instigated incidents that in turn sparked Ottoman punitive campaigns led by Husayn Fawzi Pasha in 1885, 'Umar Rushdi Pasha in 1895 and Sami Farouqi Pasha in 1910. Its author even offers details about particular villages, claiming that Maf'aleh, al-Kafer and Sahwet al-Blatah previously belonged to dispossessed Muslim families currently residing in other villages on the Hawran plains. Furthermore, it lists five Druze or Druze-majority villages that were previously under the control of the Zu'bi clan, and another five previously under the control of "Christians and Sunni Muslims."

Another noteworthy complaint within the report concerns the general location of Druze settlements relative to Jabal Hawran. It claims that the Druze may have settled on

²²⁴ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; DH SYS 28/1-9 Lef 47-51 November 16, 1910, quoted in Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*, pp. 432-434.

and revitalized vast barren lands east of their mountain, but instead settled on lands west of it. By doing so, they turned into aggressors, taking over lands already settled by others. In sticking to the theme of Druze ambitions and desires for independence, the Ottoman official explains this behavior as stemming from a goal to link the settlements in Jabal Hawran to other Druze villages in regions such as Mount Hermon, Wadi al-Taym and the Shouf mountains.

This attitude towards the Druze community on the part of Ottoman officials predates the above account by decades. A report written almost thirty years earlier (1881) by the Vilayet of Syria, under Midhat Pasha's leadership, warned about Druze ambitions of gaining an independent administration in the region.²²⁵ The author described the community's settlement on the plains of Hawran (as opposed to its mountainous and rocky terrain) as a systematic attempt to alter the region's demographic nature.

Towards that end, the author (possibly Midhat Pasha himself) claimed that Druze families living in regions such as Mount Lebanon were actively encouraged to settle in the Hawran by the community's leaders. He added that this behavior persisted for extended intervals of time, complaining that despite laying claim to seventeen villages on the Hawran plains over the preceding years, the state continued to deal with the Druze leniently. He advocated an aggressive policy on the part of the state, warning that if the said community achieved its goals, the entire *sanjak* of Hawran would follow suit, leaving the Vilayet of Syria in a very precarious situation.

²²⁵ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y.PRK.UM No. 80 (LY 2), June 11, 1881, quoted in Ibid, pp. 136-142.

In 1886, two Druze chiefs by the name of Qasim al-Halabi and Husayn al Atrash lay claim to the villages of al-Mismiya and Sha‘ara.²²⁶ Both, situated on the north-western edge of the Lajah, were essentially ancient Roman ruins known for abundant reserves of underground water and exceptionally fertile land.²²⁷

Official communiques written specifically about this incident echo the state’s concerns about the rate of Druze settlement, and the community’s power relative to its neighbors in the region. The language resembles that in the reports cited above. They claim that the initiative stemmed from old Druze ambitions to “expropriate” Hawrani lands, expand their power and ultimately to compel the peoples of Hawran to recognize their leadership.²²⁸

Not surprisingly, the policy recommendations put forward by concerned officials to deal with this development included military measures. The commander of the Ottoman Army recommended that two out of five battalions positioned in Damascus join two more battalions located in the sanjak of Hawran to reclaim the villages.²²⁹ Measures were also taken to prevent Druze of Mount Lebanon from joining their coreligionists in the Hawran.²³⁰

²²⁶ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y.MTV. 20/55 (Lef 3) April 6, 1886, quoted in *Ibid*, pp. 150-151.

²²⁷ *Ibid*.

²²⁸ *Ibid*.

²²⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y.MTV. 20/55 (Lef 1) April 7, 1886, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 152.

²³⁰ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; YEE. 104/18 April 8, 1886, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 152.

As a sign of the times however, twenty-two years after promulgating the Provincial Reform Law, Ottoman administrators also recommended administrative reforms to resolve the “Druze problem.” These reforms required the “promotion of justice among the Hawranis.”²³¹ The communique further noted that due to poor performance by local government administrators and security personnel, Hawranis had left their homes, and opened the way for the Druze to fill the void.

The above statement implies that both al-Mismiya and Sha‘ara were deserted when Qassem al-Halabi and Husayn al Atrash rode in to claim them. Nevertheless, Ottoman officials believed it to be in the state’s interests to thwart their initiative and prevent the Druze from settling in those villages. This policy sprung from their fear that Druze control over the strategic Lajah rock formations would offer them a spring board from which to launch further claims on the richest agricultural lands in the Hawran Sanjak’s – its plains. Such a scenario did not bode well for the Ottoman state since the Druze community consistently refused to pay taxes throughout the late 19th and even early 20th centuries despite the very insubstantial lumpsum requirements imposed on them. Consequently, any economic surpluses potentially gained by the community’s expansion into new territories would most likely have enriched it, rather than fill state coffers. Had they taken over lands previously plowed by tax paying Hawranis, the government would have suffered a double blow by losing tax revenues collected from more cooperative communities.

²³¹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y.MTV. 20/55 (Lef 3) April 6, 1886, quoted in *Ibid*, pp. 150-151.

These dynamics persisted throughout the late 19th century. A persistent theme found in official Ottoman reports and correspondence written in Hawran throughout the 1880s and 1890s was the authors' common conviction that containing Druze power within the region was a major precondition for increasing state authority and benefiting from Hawran's economic growth. Tax figures cited in Table 10 offer a glimpse of the dilemma faced by Ottoman officials tasked with administering Hawran.

The table presents a comparative list tax revenues collected from Qadas in the province of Syria during the years 1909 and 1910. The two taxation methods used by authorities at the time were the 10% Tithe and the sheep tax. Of the 25 qadas listed, five were populated either exclusively or a majority of Druze: Hasbaya Rashaya, al-Suwayda', 'Ahira and Salkhad. These five qadas were among the seven qadas that generated the lowest tax revenues during those two years in the province of Syria. Furthermore, of the five Druze qadas, the three lowest generators of tax revenues were in the Hawran sanjak: al-Suwayda', 'Ahira and Salkhad. This condition existed despite the fact that by 1910, the Druze Hawranis were more numerous and controlled vaster and richer agricultural lands than any of their coreligionists elsewhere in the province.

Table 11: Tax receipts collected in the Vilayet of Damascus during the years 1909 and 1910 (10% Tithe & Sheep tax)²³²

	10% Tithe		Sheep Tax	
	1910	1909	1910	1909
	KURUSH	KURUSH	KURUSH	KURUSH
Damascus	2,297,034	1,766,507	113,382	133,407
Ba'labek	2,065,965	1,962,009	318,791	307,548
Al-Biqa'	2,029,180	1,736,863	56,000	44,816
Hasbaya	429,250	388,125	80,268	31,384
Rashaya	403,416	385,550	9,519	6,940
Duma	2,218,789	1,612,652	340,829	280,683
Al-Nabak	1,744,500	1,445,174	274,251	260,539
Al-Zabadani	592,127	510,799	54,845	44,087
Al-Qunaytara	1,228,538	817,197	1,047,424	753,015
Wadi Ajam	1,525,670	1,118,820	436,631	350,800
Hama	3,438,083	2,745,698	421,048	403,224
Homs	3,436,513	3,119,487	1,246,560	843,916
Al-'Umranayah	611,741	545,207	234,370	229,325
Al-Salamiya	2,001,986	1,790,486	1,235,171	973,621
Hawran	1,811,450	1,417,290	239,844	274,756
'Ajlun	1,014,566	814,300	812,702	885,880
Der'aa	1,455,280	1,164,160	130,299	250,512
Al-Suwayda	71,779	71,779	49,209	51,232
Busra al Harir	840,000	788,280	57,095	66,648
Salkhad	73,987	73,987	52,359	51,411
'Ahira	64,727	64,727	33,072	29,073
AlKarak	722,820	672,391	475,100	612,480
Al-Salt	1,612,221	1,258,335	792,667	711,582
Ma'an	139,133	139,123	74,356	134,039
Al-Tufayla	84,854	84,854	176,290	187,416
TOTALS	31,913,609	26,493,800	8,762,082	7,918,334

In the year 1888, the Vilayet of Syria governed by Nazif Pasha dispatched a report to Istanbul concerning the Druze characterized by a conciliatory attitude. The document highlights Druze ambitions to acquire administrative privileges similar to those established in Mount Lebanon. As with the reports cited above, it described the Druze population in

²³² muqtabas (issue 482, 25 September 1910).

This table is an abridged version of original which included Paras as another form of currency collected. For the sake of simplification, and due to the insignificant value of Paras collected, they were not included in the table displayed in this thesis.

Hawran as increasing “on a daily basis” and transgressing against their neighbors regularly.

Nevertheless, the report introduced a new element into the picture: soft power.

The information presented before me to date point to the fact that the Druze [of Hawran] increase in numbers on a daily basis and persistently attack the bedouin and native residents. They also seek to assert their control of the *Lajah*, known for its strategic importance and impenetrability, by expelling the bedouin tribes loyal to the state ... to ultimately achieve administrative privileges similar to those conceded in Mount Lebanon.... For these reasons, the government agrees that it is necessary to reform the aforementioned community so as not to make room for upcoming dangers.

The opinion of the [Porte] is that reverting to military measures to resolve such internal matters ought to be the last resort. Just as it is impermissible and inappropriate in any way revert to arms against “our people” (أهلنا) at a time when we find many issues and problems ahead of us. Furthermore, experience has not confirmed the impossibility of reforming matters, winning the hearts of ambitious Druze chieftains and their cooptation through calculated measures and dialogue....²³³

All of the above official reports support the hypothesis that Druze families set off from their original homes to settle in the Hawran notwithstanding Ottoman state reforms at best, or despite them at worst. Officials who authored them portrayed the Druze community in Hawran as a cohesive political entity with common goals and visions centered around increasing their land possessions, wealth and power at the expense of the state and their neighbors. Tax receipts recorded as late as 1910 support that argument.

The posture of the Ottoman state towards the community, as reflected by the first two official documents cited in this section, appears defensive, with the aim of subverting perceived Druze intentions. The third report however presents a more equivocal stance,

²³³ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y.MTV. 34/44 (Lef 2), August 3, 1888, quoted in Ibid, pp. 158-162.

elaborating on a policy to co-opt the community's leaders and avoid military confrontation. Such inconsistencies on the part of the Ottoman state also characterize its relations with the Druze throughout the 19th century.

Other official documents written between the years 1856 and 1857 reveal official reactions to the loss of several villages by the Druze of Hawran. These reports were composed prior to the peak of Druze immigration into Hawran by at least a decade, and predated the Provincial Reform Law of 1864. They describe and analyze an incident in which Hawranis and bedouin tribesmen seized at least two Druze villages located on the fringes of the Lajah rock formation.²³⁴ One of the reports even claims that as many as eight Druze villages were seized, without specifying names or locations.²³⁵ The villages mentioned in the first report, such as Msaykeh, lie on the western half of the Lajah, facing the Hawran plains.²³⁶

The Druze defeat at the hands of their opponents indicates, among other things, their relative weakness at the time. In this case, one report written by Ottoman administrators portrayed the 'Anazah and Lajah tribes as aggressors, deserving punitive action.²³⁷ Another report written about the incident by the Ottoman Arabistan Army's

²³⁴ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 24964 (No. 57, Ly 21) August 15, 1856, quoted in *ibid*, p. 106.

²³⁵ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 24964 (No. 57, Ly 17) April 14, 1857, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 112-113.

²³⁶ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 24964 (No. 57, Ly 21) October 22, 1856, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 108-109.

²³⁷ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 24964 (No. 57, Ly 20) October 25, 1856, quoted in *ibid*, p. 109.

Commander, Abdel Karim, asserts that “the Hawranis have persisted in their aggression against the Druze community over long stretches of time, and dispensed a great deal of harm and oppression.” In more detail, it states,

The troop-commander was recently informed of details regarding the conflict between the people of Hawran *Kaza* within Damascus province and those of Hawran within Jabal Druze. During recent times, attempts were made and efforts exerted by the *Qa'immaqam* of Hawran and some other chieftains to reach means by which to reconcile the two parties. There appears to be no new causes for conflict, however it has been observed that the Hawranis of the *Kaza* have insisted for a long time to attack Hawranis of Jabal Druze.... More precisely, they dispense great harm and oppression. When necessary, the Druze have sought assistance from the bedouins living in the Lajah, where they entrench themselves.... Therefore, the *Kaza* Hawranis cannot access the region. Despite the fact that the Druze set conditions, they were ready to begin reconciliation. After intelligence gathering and inquiries, it became clear that conflict between these two parities causes us no harm to us either now or in the future. However despite that fact, we find it necessary to reconcile them ... keeping in mind the approaching Hajj season....²³⁸

The relevance of these two reports stems from their support for two hypotheses.

The first is that the Ottoman state's attitude towards specific Hawrani communities depended on the latter's relative strength. When a coalition of Hawrani Muslims along with 'Anazah and Lajah tribes constituted a powerful regional force that attacked the relatively weaker Druze, state administrators portrayed them and their actions negatively, and sought to remedy the situation. Decades later, when the Druze community developed into a powerful non-state actor, Ottoman administrators perceived them in a similar light, and acted accordingly.

²³⁸ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 24964 (No. 57, Ly 15) October 20, 1856, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 107.

Reports written about the incident above reveal no inherent antagonism towards the Druze community by Ottoman officials. They do reveal that Wakid al-Hamdan along with a number of other prominent Druze figures approached Ottoman officials to seek redress.²³⁹ Hamdan at the time was regarded by the state as “Chief of Chiefs of Jabal el Druze.”²⁴⁰ Furthermore, upon resolution of this particular conflict, certain individuals were nominated to receive rewards for cooperation with the state. These included Waked Hamdan and three other Druze leaders.²⁴¹

The reports cited above also support the hypothesis that the location of Druze settlements were not exclusively a by-product of Druze intentions, as claimed by Ottoman reports drafted decades later. Rather they appear to have been the result of bloody negotiations between regional factions vying for the same land. In light of these dynamics, fear of other factions was most likely an important incentive to select easily defensible locations, in addition to fear of the state.

Reeling from the loss of villages on the western shores of the Lajah, the Druze appear to have redirected their settlement activities towards the more rugged but defensible mountain terrain, despite its relatively poor quality as agricultural land. The community’s eventual return to a section of the plains sandwiched between the Lajah and Jabal, during the 1860s coincided with a realignment of the balance of power among regional factions in

²³⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 24964 (No. 57, Ly 6) October 27, 1856, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 110-112.

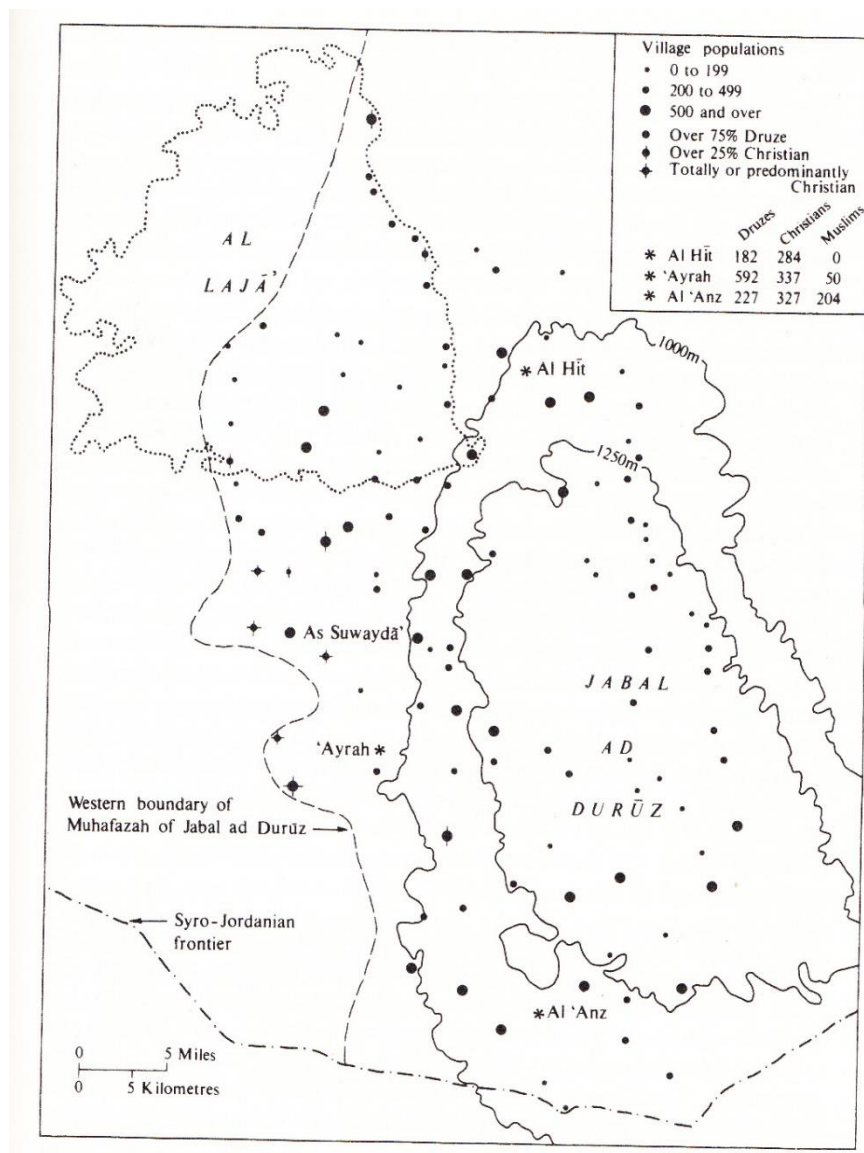
²⁴⁰ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 24964 (No. 57, Ly 21) October 22, 1856, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 108-109.

²⁴¹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 24964 (No. 57, Ly 12) April 14, 1857, quoted in *ibid*, p. 112.

its favor as a result of the influx of settlers from Mount Lebanon and elsewhere. By 1881, less than thirty years after the Msaykeh incident, the number of Druze villages in the Hawran plain had reached seventeen.²⁴²

²⁴² Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y. PRK. UM 4/46 (No. 80, Ly 2) February 5, 1881, quoted in *ibid*, p. 142.

Figure 6 Map of Druze villages in the Province of al-Suwayda' (1927)²⁴³



²⁴³ Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980*, p. 94

Despite their apparent hostility towards Druze immigration to Hawran, a closer look at Ottoman archival material reveals that the authorities formulated a somewhat malleable and nuanced policy regarding the phenomenon as early as the 1860s. These documents reveal that Ottoman interventions into settlement activities were in fact guided by broad policy objectives. Naturally, they sought to maximize tax revenues and impose their sovereignty. In light of these goals, the state's actions sought to prevent conditions that would permit any faction in Hawran – including the Druze – from extracting privileges similar to those granted to the *Mutasarrifiyya* of Mount Lebanon. This overarching policy objective was achieved partly by thwarting Druze settlement activity in “strategic” locations such as the Lajah . The Ottoman reaction to Qasim al-Halabi and Husayn al-Atrash's attempt to settle in the ruins of al-Mismiya and Sha'ara serves as a case in point.

In 1897, a year after a successful Ottoman military campaign which concluded with the capture and exile of unprecedented numbers of Druze chieftains, including Shibli al-Atrash, the Ottomans attempted to impose conscription across the Hawran.²⁴⁴ This policy decision led to an unusual alliance among most of the Hawrani factions, which collectively took up arms against the central government. Reeling from the expenses accrued by its previous campaign merely one year prior, the Ottomans decided against reacting with military force.²⁴⁵ A report sent to the Porte from Damascus about non-violent means to

²⁴⁴ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; YA. RES. 89/5 (Lef 4) quoted in Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*, pp. 432-434.

²⁴⁵ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; YA. RES. 89/8 (Lef 4), September 2, 1897, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 295.

quell the rebellion sheds light on the Ottoman perspective regarding the Hawran's different factions and the government's eagerness to utilize these differences to realize their goals.

The people of the Lajah and Hawran have been hostile to the Druze for a very long time, and there is no reason behind their alliance except for the policy of conscription. If a decision is taken to postpone the matter, their alliance will disintegrate and the Druze will remain by themselves.... And rather than mobilizing soldiers from elsewhere, bearing the corresponding costs, and causing problems in the Hawran which would lead to deprivation of the Vilayet of Syria from its primary source of revenue this year, which may lead to the treasury's bankruptcy, my opinion would be to act with wisdom, as I've recommended in previous correspondences....²⁴⁶

This quote reveals that another policy tool the Ottomans used to realize their objective was the classic "divide and rule" method whereby they not only recognized different communities, but did nothing to discourage factionalism, and actively prevented any one party from dominating the others. One of the official reports about the Msaykeh incident cited above, in which the author explained, "conflict between these two parities [Druze and Hawrani] causes no harm to us either now or in the future" supports this assessment.²⁴⁷ The division of Lajah into two halves containing Druze and Muslim villages respectively, evident in Figure 9, can be attributed to official Ottoman policy.

These stratagems, however "distasteful," cannot serve as evidence to support the hypothesis that the Ottoman state persistently sought to discourage Druze settlement of Hawran throughout the last seven decades of Ottoman rule. Rather, the documents cited above highlight that Ottoman authorities intervened in settlement activity selectively and in

²⁴⁶ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; YA. RES. 89/85 (Lef 7), September 11, 1313, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 286.

²⁴⁷ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 24964 (No. 57, Ly 15), October 20, 1856, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 107.

a manner meant to increase their sovereignty. Sustaining certain conditions in the Hawran, such as factionalism, merely served as a means towards achieving that end. The most powerful faction would naturally suffer the brunt of state attention, and it so happened that as of the 1870s, it was the Druze community that assumed that mantle in the Hawran sanjak.

This study argues that on balance, the Ottoman state's presence in the Hawran during the last decades of the 19th century actually pulled Druze settlers to the region. Ottoman reforms implemented during the second half of the 19th century to enhance administrative and security institutions contributed to these pull factors. Anecdotal evidence taken from accounts of travelers who visited Hawrani villages inhabited by Druze indicate levels of economic activity inconceivable without public services offered by state institutions. Such services included a minimum level of security for travelers, investment in government buildings such as forts, court houses, schools and even mosques, commissioning of infrastructure projects such as the rail network, and providing a common currency to facilitate trade. The table below, for example, presents a budget for the construction or repair of schools and mosques in Jabal Hawran, drafted at the turn of the century.

Table 9 Abridged Ottoman Administration Budget for Construction of Schools and Mosques in Jabal Hauan (1900)²⁴⁸

Item	Cost (Piasters)
Expenses of building a school in Suweida and a mosque in its proximity	25,000
Planned elementary school in Salkhad	10,000
Repair of mosque in Salkhad	10,000
Planned school and mosque in ‘Ahira	<u>20,000</u>
Total	<u>65,000</u>
Construction costs of similar structures in villages within the <i>Kazas</i>	
Suweida <i>Kaza</i>	100,000
Salkhad <i>Kaza</i>	120,000
‘Ahira <i>Kaza</i>	<u>160,000</u>
Total	<u>380,000</u>
Grand Total	<u>445,000</u>

Given that the Ottoman authorities collected merely 700-800 thousand piasters in tax revenues during a fifteen-year interval (between 1895 and 1910) averaging to just 50,000 per year from the Druze of Hawran,²⁴⁹ the budgeted resources must have been gathered from elsewhere. Official documents reviewed for this paper do not indicate whether the projects were eventually executed, however they do note that by the time of its preparation, 105,000 piasters had been reserved, and 5,000 piasters spent.²⁵⁰ In either case, it deserves noting that these projects were budgeted during a time in which Ottoman

²⁴⁸ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye, April 25, 1901, quoted in Ibid, p. 107.

²⁴⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; DH.SYS. 28/1-9 Lef 47-51, November 16, 1910, quoted in Ibid, pp. 432-434.

²⁵⁰ Compared to figures presented in Table 10, an annual average of 50,000 Piasters between 1895 and 1910 appears very low. In each of the two years included in table 10, the government collected approximately 210,000 Piasters from all three Druze majority qadas of al-Suwayda, ‘Ahira and Salkhad combined. Whether this difference stems from drastically improved tax collection results in 1909 and 1910 or other causes remains unknown. One question that poses itself in this situation concerns units of reference: Whereas the report in which 50,000 Piasters was cited referred to “Druze” tax payers, Table 10 presents tax receipts in terms of qadas, which included both Druze, Muslim and small number of Christian villages. As such, whether both reports referred to the same sources of tax revenues remains unclear.

expenditures on the Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon were severely curtailed, as discussed in Section B of this chapter.

A cash infusion by the authorities of this sort cannot but have positively impacted the local economy to an extent greater than the initial amount spent.²⁵¹ When one also takes into consideration official salaries of state employees and subsidies given to local chieftains such as Shibli al Atrash, who in 1900 received a subsidy from the state amounting to 3,000 Piasters per month (36,000 Piasters per year), the positive impact of the state on local economic conditions becomes indisputable.²⁵²

*Table 10 Suggested budget for Proposed Mutasarrifiyya of Jabal Druze (1893)*²⁵³

	Administrative allocations (Piasters)	
	Monthly	Annual
Qa'imaqam	<u>2,500</u>	<u>30,000</u>
<i>Mudhirs of Nahiyas</i>		
as-Suwayda	600	
'Orman	600	
Salkhad	600	
Salé	600	
Majdal	600	
'Ahira	500	
Slim	500	
	<u>4,000</u>	<u>48,000</u>
Letter writers	<u>400</u>	<u>4,800</u>
Total	<u>6,900</u>	<u>82,800</u>

²⁵¹ Multiplier effect definition from www.dictionary.com: An effect in economics in which an increase in spending produces an increase in national income and consumption greater than the initial amount spent. For example, if a corporation builds a factory, it will employ construction workers and their suppliers as well as those who work in the factory. Indirectly, the new factory will stimulate employment in laundries, restaurants, and service industries in the factory's vicinity.

²⁵² Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; İrade-i dahiliye 20/1318 C, October 21, 1900, quoted in Ibid, p. 68.

²⁵³ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y.MTV 79/20 Lef 4, June 19, 1893, quoted in Ibid, pp. 182-186.

Benefits to the Druze community from an increasingly pervasive Ottoman state went beyond direct cash infusions. The positive effects of parallel developments in neighboring qadas, sanjaks and even provinces rippled throughout the region. State investment in infrastructure projects and security outside of Jabal Hawran encouraged trade, population growth and the blossoming of towns such as Haifa, Deraa and Amman. Eugene Rogan describes how increasingly effective Ottoman governing institutions and Transjordan's budding merchant class re-enforced each other as of the late 1860s.

Merchants from neighboring Syrian and Palestinian cities, who were attracted to Transjordan by the security of direct rule and the economic potential of the region, advanced the government's interests in several ways: by accelerating the monetarization of the economy; by finding outside markets for regional products; by investing in the local economy and enhancing its productivity. In effect, the merchant elite linked Transjordan to the regional economy as the government linked the region bureaucratically to the provincial administration.²⁵⁴

This symbiotic relationship between the state and merchants in a region bordering Hawran must reflected positively on Hawranis. In fact, 'Ajlun, though a region in contemporary Jordan, was a qada of the Hawran Sanjak. In any case, the evidence cited throughout this study proves that Hawrani Druze were well integrated into the regional economy, and benefited from trade with near and distant neighbors. These trading partners, to varying degrees, existed because of Ottoman policies and reforms implemented primarily during the second half of the 19th century.

²⁵⁴ Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire* , p. 98.

The region's merchants and craftsmen, among others, offered clients goods and services such as timber, charcoal, salt, transportation, and grain processing. The environment fostered by the state over time enabled the growth of markets in the sanjak located in Bosra el Sham, Der'aa and El-Muzayrib, which boosted trade links with regions as remote as the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt and Iraq. To some extent, travel literature cited in Chapter 2 of this study even claims that the region's trading towns competed with Damascus for long-distance trading partners. Looking back at that period, it appears highly unlikely that these relatively prosperous economic conditions could have existed without improvements in the performance of Ottoman state institutions. Moreover, absent these conditions it appears reasonable to question whether the Druze would have emigrated to the Hawran to the extent that they did.

Overall, several variables appear to have played significant roles in shaping Ottoman attitudes and policies towards the Druze. The first concerns the community's power relative to its neighbors. In 1857, when the Druze of Hawran were comparatively weak, Ottoman officials advocated their cause, or at the very least portrayed them in a positive light. When the opposite was the case, official attitudes naturally changed, as reflected in the more hostile tone of reports and policy recommendations written as of the 1870s.

The other variable that affected Ottoman attitudes towards the Druze was the authorities' perception of whether they furthered Ottoman domestic and international goals. One official report already cited in a previous section, for example, urged the government to exert efforts to prevent the Druze from abandoning Mount Lebanon "to eliminate the

possibility of a semi-independent status emerging similar to what currently exists in Bulgaria....”²⁵⁵ In this case, Maronite hegemony over the mountain posed a serious threat to Ottoman sovereignty, and Druze presence a guarantee against such an eventuality. In terms of Ottoman domestic policy, Hawrani Druze resistance against the 1858 Land Law, taxation and conscription throughout the 19th century naturally garnered hostility on the part of officials.

The third variable that shaped Ottoman policies and attitudes was availability of state resources. Throughout the second half of the 19th century, the Ottoman state limped from one crisis to another. Its persistent loss of territories and bankruptcy in 1875 reflect some of the existential challenges the Ottoman state survived throughout that turbulent era. Whether it was reform programs directed at government bureaucracies, school building programs, or military campaigns to quell open rebellions, Ottoman authorities contended with scarce resources that often forced them to forego preferred policy choices or implement them selectively.

In summation, an effective assessment of Ottoman state policies’ impact on pull factors attracting Druze to Hawran must be carried out at the local and regional levels. Ottoman policies towards the Druze throughout the second half of the 19th century were nuanced and varied depending on circumstances, individuals, events and interests. Though no evidence exists to suggest that Ottomans actively encouraged Druze settlement, the same can be said about the contrary. No evidence exists to suggest that the Ottomans

²⁵⁵ Başbakanlık Osmanlı arşivi; Y.PRK.ASK 88/18 (No. 518) 1310.B.9, January 27, 1893, quoted in Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918*, pp. 89-92.

adopted a persistent and systematic policy to prevent the Druze from settling in Hawran altogether.

Second, and more importantly, the broader Ottoman reform programs such as Tanzimat, that impacted the empire's various provinces, including Syria, played a positive role – irrespective of Ottoman-Druze relations. Modernization of laws, infrastructure programs, improved security, improved monetization of the economy, all contributed to increase the appeal of Ottoman Syria's hinterlands to prospective settlers. This pull factor attracted various communities to settle on lands stretching from Hama to Ma'an, which naturally increased the province's overall population over time. This rise in population in turn positively reinforced Ottoman reform efforts since larger population centers created markets and trade opportunities, which pulled in more settlers.

To fully understand the impact of Ottoman policies on Druze settlement activity in Hawran, they must be seen in this light. Relations between the two parties were not isolated from developments at the provincial level or indeed the central government's overall policy direction. Commercial relations tied the Druze with other communities in the province. Consequently, they were bound to feel the effects of a much broader range of government programs and initiatives. Seen through this lens, it appears that the net impact of Ottoman state policies on Druze settlement of Hawran was indeed positive, despite the overwhelmingly tense relations between the two parties, particularly as of the 1870s.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A review of secondary accounts about the Druze of Hawran reveals a number of contradictory narratives. Some accounts, such as Schakowsky Schilcher's suggest that grain exports to Europe constituted the region's primary generator of wealth, and that exports plummeted in the 1870s and 1880s just as settlement activity peaked. In this view, immigrants flooded into the region to face supposedly calamitous economic conditions within the Hawran. When one attempts to verify data cited by different scholars who researched and wrote about grain exports from Syria to Europe, the exercise fails due to irreconcilable differences in units of reference and measurements.

Regarding relations between the Ottoman state and the Druze community in Hawran, accounts by authors such as Kais Firro inform us that government officials and local inhabitants were inherently antagonistic towards one another. Yet evidence suggests that settlement activity increased along with more persistent and effective efforts by the Ottomans to impose their presence within the region. In the last decades of the 19th century, the central government constructed forts, launched increasingly effective punitive campaigns and dispatched numerous investigative committees to understand how best to govern Hawran. Although the authorities repeatedly tried and failed to tax and conscript locals to the extent they would have liked, they successfully imposed themselves in other ways, and gradually reduced the ability of local chieftains to maneuver politically and

militarily within the region. Once again, settlement activity and the Ottoman state's presence in the Hawran during the last decades of the 19th century, appear to have risen together.

Finally, Druze historiography generally portrays the settlement of Hawran in a sectarian light. Factors that pushed the community to leave Mount Lebanon and elsewhere are tied very closely to the identity of the community. Conflicts with the Maronite community feature prominently in this narrative, as well as victimization by great powers such as the French Empire. The same applies to factors that pulled them to Hawran. In this case, Druze narratives focus on the community's desire to protect itself from outsiders and have the freedom to live on its own terms.

Such arguments, although partially valid, completely ignore certain realities that coincided with the Druze settlement of the Hawran. One such reality was similar dislocations and resettlements across the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the 19th century. Within a mere 500 kilometer radius of the Shuf Mountains, Christians and Muslims of all denominations left their homes to settle abroad or elsewhere within the Ottoman Empire. These population movements all occurred at roughly the same time the Druze settled Hawran. Such vast resettlements transcended geographic and sectarian peculiarities. In short something much larger than the Druze community was at play, and various populations reacted in accordance with their unique circumstances.

Economic conditions within the Hawran aside from the lucrative but narrow grain export economy serve as another important factor largely overlooked by historians. This lapse stems from a lack of available quantified data similar to those found in archived

documents detailing trade with Europe. To overcome this dearth of data, this study focused on travel literature and other accounts for hints of how local and regional economic dynamics impacted incoming settlers. Though far from a complete picture, the one formed using these sources reveals some exciting features of regional trade and specializations among the different communities within the Hawran, thereby proving that the Hawrani economy was far more than a mere granary for Europe or Damascus.

Much has also been written about the impact of political dynamics within Mount Lebanon and the Hawran on the resettlement of the Druze. The emphasis of authors on Druze solidarity and particularity has, however, led to overlooking certain developments that do not fit within this generally accepted pattern of behavior. Primary among these events are those related to factional conflict within the Druze political class in Mount Lebanon, namely between the Junblatis and Yezbekis. According to official Ottoman documents, this conflict within the Druze community flared to such an extent during the 1880s that it constituted the primary political force pushing Druze residents out of Mount Lebanon for at least a decade.

In the final analysis, economic and political developments at the communal, regional and international levels played their respective roles in convincing the Druze and various other communities to relocate during the 19th century. Given the complexity of this proposition, the real challenge lays in creating a narrative that does it justice. It is hoped that this study convincingly linked some of these seemingly unrelated dots to offer readers a more comprehensive understanding of the forces that pushed Druze inhabitants out of Mount Lebanon and into the Hawran.

APPENDIX²⁵⁶

Appendix 1: Arabic translation of Ottoman correspondence titled: "Translated Copy of Report in Arabic signed by 650 highly regarded Druze individuals from the Druze Kaza in Mount Lebanon" (Original document in Appendix 2)

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الباب العالي

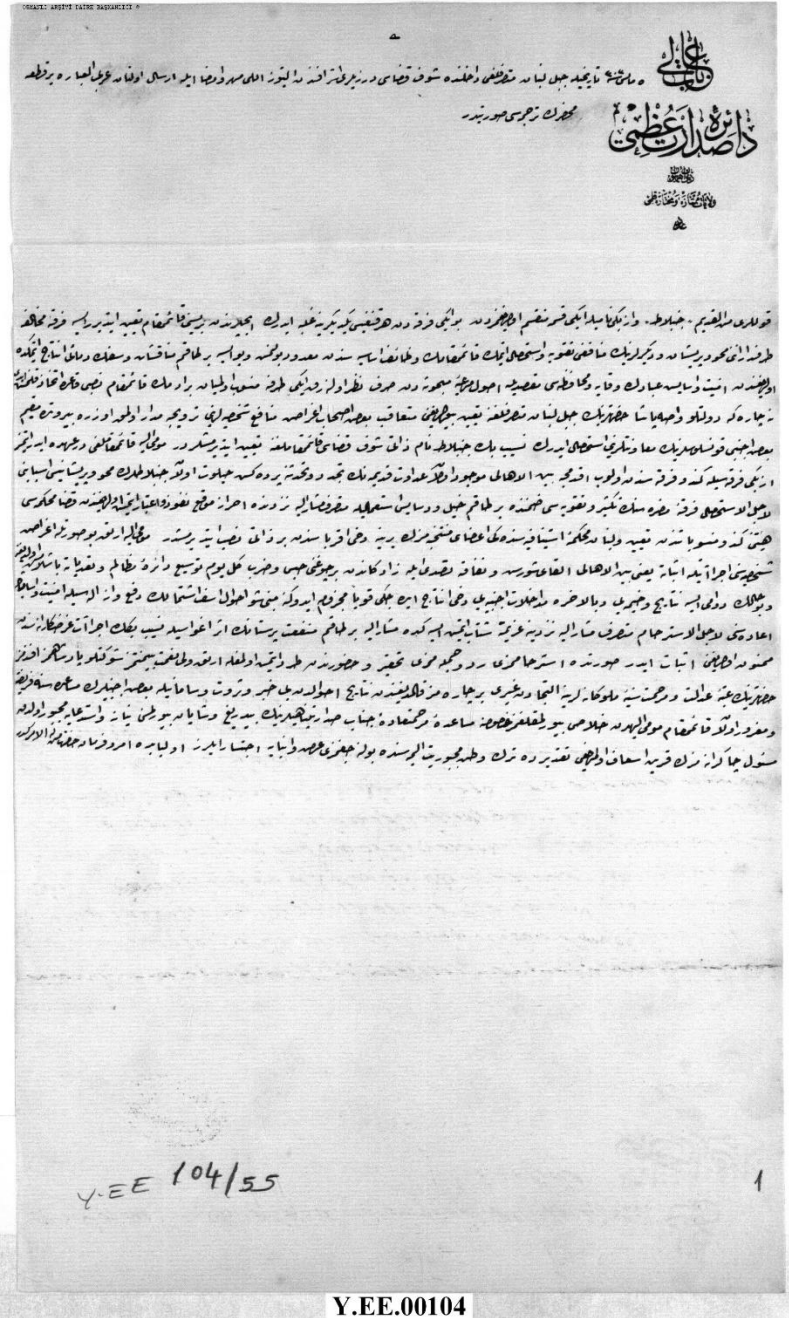
دائرة الصدارة العظمى

صورة مترجمة لمحضر باللغة العربية بتوقيع ستمائة وخمسين من أشرف دروز قضاء الشوف بجبل لبنان بتاريخ ٢٥ مايس سنة ١٣٠٣ APR.6,1887

إننا ننقسم منذ القديم إلى قسمين تحت اسم "جنبلات" وأزبكي. وكلما تفوق أحد الفريقين على الآخر وعين واحدا من بينهم قائمقاماً، أصبح من المهام الأساسية لهذا القائمقام التنكيل والإذلال لأحدهما، والعمل على تأمين مصالح الفريق الآخر. وقد أدى هذا الوضع إلى كثير من الخلل وسفك الدماء. ولحماية ووقاية أمن العباد واستقرارهم صرف النظر عن هذه الطريقة واتخذ تعيين قائمقام لا ينتمي إلى أي من الطرفين قاعدة. ولكن بعد تعيين دولة واصه باشا متصرفاً على جبل لبنان، عمد بعض أصحاب الأغراض والمصالح الشخصية إلى الاتصال ببعض القناصل الأجانب وحصلوا على دعمهم في تعيين الشخص المدعو نسيب بك جنبلات قائمقاماً على قضاء الشوف. وما أن تقلد المذكور منصب القائمقامية حتى لجأ إلى الكثير من الحيل والوسائل بين فرقة الأزبكيين وبين فرقته الجنبلاتيين والعمل على قوية فرقته لإثارة العداوة القديمة بين الأهالي، فقوى مكانته لدى المتصرف المذكور ونجح في تعيين أتباعه لهيئة المحكمة كما عين رجلاً من أقاربه في منصب عضوية محكمة لبنان الاستئنافية بدلاً من العضو المنتخب، وصار القائمقام المذكور يفعل ما يشاء من حبس وضرب للأهالي وبث الفتنة بين الناس. وإذا استمر هذا الوضع فمن المؤكد أن تكون عواقبه وخيمة وهناك احتمال قوي في تدخل الأجانب، ولوضع حد لهذه الحالة توجهنا إلى المتصرف المذكور راجين ومسترحمين لكنه كان مخدوعاً بإغواء أصحاب الهوى والغرض، فعبر عن رضاه عن تصرف نسيب بك وذلك برفض طلبنا وطردنا من مجلسه. ولم يعد أمامنا بعد ذلك سوى اللجوء إلى عدالة سيدنا وسلطاننا كي يتفضل بتخليصنا من هذا القائمقام، وفي حال عدم توصلنا إلى أية نتيجة فإننا سنضطر إلى ترك ديارنا والبحث عن أماكن أكثر أمناً من موطننا الأصلي ولبيان هذا وجدنا أنفسنا الجراً في تقديم معروضنا والأمر لحضرة من له الأمر

²⁵⁶ All Ottoman official documents cited in this thesis, not quoted in Abu Husayn, *Bayn al Markaz wal Atraf Hawran Fi al-Watha'iq al-Uthmaniyyah 1832 – 1918* were generously offered by Prof. Abdul Rahim Abu Husayn as complementary material for this study.

Appendix 2: Ottoman correspondence titled: "Translated Copy of Report in Arabic signed by 650 highly regarded Druze individuals from the Druze Kaza in Mount Lebanon" (Original document in Appendix 2)



Appendix 3: Arabic translation of Ottoman correspondence concerning administrative reorganization of Druze districts in the Hawran that includes population estimate of Druze in the region. (Original document in Appendix 4)

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1330.11.21 (3 February, 1915)

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الباب العالي

نظارة الداخلية

مديرية الإدارة الداخلية العامة

صورة برقية بخصوص جبل الدروز

يبلغ عدد الدروز الساكنين في قضاء السويدية و صلخد التابعة لبصرى الشام القديم و نواحي وادي اللوا التابعة لمسمية 40000 نفر .

مقترح الوالي السابق تحسين بك :

تشكيل قضاء على أن تكون السويداء مركزا له

إلغاء الإدارة القضائية، وسحب القضاة وتعيينهم في أماكن أخرى

أخذ ضريبة سنوية مقطوعة قدرها (10000) ليرة

مقترح رؤساء الدروز :

إحداث لواء يكون مربوطا بالولاية

إعادة الضرائب التي أضافها سامي بك إلى الحد العادل

إلغاء المحاكم العدلية وتعيين قاض من الأجاويد

رأي الوالي اللاحق رأفت بك :

تشكيل لواء


تعيين قاض من الأجاويد (إذا لم يقتنع الدروز بذلك يكون النظر في الدعوى في مجلس من المشايخ برئاسة مدراء النواحي)

إبقاء المحاكم العدلية

إبقاء الضرائب كما هي

Appendix 4: Ottoman correspondence concerning administrative reorganization of Druze districts in the Hawran that includes population estimate of Druze in the region.

ع
 حین روز جف


خالد پاشا
 وزیر امور خارجه
 عری
 خسته
 →

در زیر سوره قضیه لغوی ساند صلی و مسرتک و اوی اللوا با قدری ساکنین
 ۴۰۰۰۰ نفوس

والی ایوبیه نکت تکلیف :


سوره مرکز اربطه و دره رفق و با احوال اداره ای
 قلمبه عدلیک و فاضلک قالدین ریزه کوره حین جف
 سو قطع ۱۰۰۰۰ را و کوالین مراقبه روز

در زیر رؤسای تکلیف :

و به مربوط لوا جمله اداره ای
 هم نکتک هم ایلی و کولک حد خدایه تربی
 و هم عدلیک لغوی اجاوید لوده و حق لغوی

والی ایوبیه رف نکت مکالمه :

لوا نکتی
 اجاوید لوده و حق لغوی [در زیر نکتی لطف اولی و سر با هم در لیک یا سده ساخته و کتد بر کتد و کتد و کتد]
 و هم عدلیک ایقاک x
 و کولک حین ایقاک



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