schools but limits himself to the custom and practice of the Zayd school. The exception is the one section (8. 32) on the ‘otherwise unimpeachable Shafii source’ whose unimpeachability is nowhere discussed.

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Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920


Akram Khater has written an excellent study on a little-understood phenomenon that emerged during the closing years of the Ottoman Empire: the significant emigration of peasants from Mount Lebanon and elsewhere to the Americas. This movement of people, which affected many communities in the Ottoman provinces, was most pronounced in the Lebanese mountains not only because of the significant proportion (as much as one-third according to the author) of the population that emigrated, but also because so many later returned. Khater recognizes that there has been a scholarly silence about the social history of Mount Lebanon between 1861 and 1920, and makes it the primary purposes of his study to remedy this oversight by tracing the journeys of these village emigrants to the mahjar (land of emigration) and then back. In the course of this analysis he traces the rise of these villagers from the ranks of the peasantry into a middle class of their own making on their return. The latter makes for fascinating reading, and tells us much about the historical dynamics which have made Lebanon ‘modern’. In the tales he unfolds he is able to draw together an analysis of how new notions of gender, family, and class were articulated and how ‘modernity’ was, in effect, invented in the process by the returning emigrants.

The book is organized into seven chapters. It opens with an overview that highlights the themes to follow. The author’s focus on Christian villagers’ emigration in Mount Lebanon is specified as the site of his fieldwork. The paucity of material on the Druze populations in Mount Lebanon is discussed, as is the recognition that the study was unable to take in a broader analysis of the large-scale emigration from the Syrian province of the Ottoman Empire. Khater’s real interest is in the return migration and the impact this had on the creation of a new nation-state. Chapter 2 focuses on the economy of the Mountain in the decades following the 1860 civil war and shows, very convincingly, how the silk industry benefited both the Lebanese peasants and the French industrialists. Between 1861 and 1890, however, it was the impact on gender relations that was to be the most significant. Many peasants resisted leaving the land to work in sericulture and instead sent their daughters to the proliferating silk factories of Mount Lebanon. In time the peasants grew used to the additional income that their daughters’ labour...
provided to the households. Chapter 3 focuses on what happened when the silk industry began to stagnate and many peasants found it difficult to make a living. The elevated expectations of peasants—and not their poverty—propelled many of them to emigrate to America.

In Chapter 4 the author examines what women’s work in silk factories and emigration meant to the structure and hierarchy of the family. This was particularly troublesome to the emigrants in the Americas who had to explain—and sometimes defend—who they were to the larger society as well as to themselves. This struggle touched on almost every aspect of emigrants’ lives: their clothes, language, accent, food, and social habits. More than anything else, their gender and family relations became the site of the greatest cultural contestation. The encounter with a Western industrializing and imperious society only gave greater prominence and immediacy to the contradictions that were inherent within the emigrants’ culture.

Chapter 5 reviews this encounter as it was brought back to the Mount Lebanon with the baggage of the returning emigrant. The emigrants’ years in the West and all the material culture they had accumulated set them apart from those who had stayed behind. As so often happens, the years spent away in the mahjar that they had ultimately rejected had nonetheless changed them. Old abodes were no longer considered adequate in terms of comfort or as a reflection of their perceived elevated social status. The returning peasants were transforming themselves into something else: a rural middle class was forming in Lebanon distinct from the peasantry on the Mountain and the urban middle classes of the cities. Chapter 6 delves further into the discordant voices and alternative positions of those challenging this group, which was forming new cultural and economic boundaries to distinguish itself from peasants and urban elite. In a well-balanced analysis the author demonstrates how class formation in Mount Lebanon was fraught with tensions and riddled by twists that made any outcome difficult to predict let alone chart.

There is little to criticize in this carefully constructed and finely detailed study. Nevertheless, two minor points should be raised. The author tries to justify his lack of attention to historical details and factors prior to 1861, which might have given rise to many of the conditions that culminated in the emigration from the Mountain. Khater actually begins his narrative in 1861, soon after Lebanon’s civil war had been resolved and the warring Maronite and Druze factions were separated. In such a carefully constructed and detailed study, it is a pity that a little more effort was not spent at the beginning of the work to develop an analysis of the 1860s civil war and its relevance to emigration. This would have grounded the study more firmly and set the reader off with a greater understanding of the dynamics of what followed. Also lacking in the book is the occasional broader comparison which the reader occasionally needs to understand better the context of some of the analysis. In the chapters that deal with the Lebanese peasants in the Americas, quoted materials often referred to ‘Syrian’ emigrants, leaving the reader with a wish to know more about this wider range of emigrants.
The opening paragraph of the book refers to one Lebanese emigrant’s journey to the United States in the company of ‘about 250 Syrians from Zahle, from Matn and from everywhere’. The reader is left asking why did so few of these others return, while so many of those from Mount Lebanon did. The occasional comparison would have enhanced this aspect of the book. Nevertheless this is an excellent study, which makes an important contribution to our understanding of emigration, return migration, and nation-building in Lebanon.

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Nobility under the Mughals (1628–58)


Umāra were those nobles of the Mughal Empire who held the rank or mansāb of 1000 zāt and above. Mansāb in the Mughal Empire, from the late sixteenth century was calculated in terms of zāt and sawār. The zāt figure, besides indicating the noble’s position in the official hierarchy, determined his personal pay; the sawār figure, besides indicating mainly the number of troops he was required to maintain, determined the emoluments meant, among other obligations, for the maintenance of those troops. The mansābdārs (holders of the rank) were the mainstay of the Mughal Empire administratively and militarily. Sometimes the mansābdār would simply be a civil servant. He was generally paid through a jāgīr (land-holding).

The first chapter briefly introduces the subject, while the second discusses in detail the composition and numerical strength of the nobility under Shāh Jahan (1628–58). Anwar’s study follows the lines adopted by M. Athar Ali and other historians. Thus, he distinguishes the Khānāzāds (literally house-born, in fact, those nobles whose fathers, ancestors or close relatives were in the service of the Mughal Empire); zamīndārs; racial and religious groups such as the Turanis, Iranis, Indian Muslims, Afghans, Rajputs, Deccanis, Marathas; other Muslims and other Hindus (those Muslims and Hindus whose ethnic groups could not be identified). The nobles are divided into three grades—those holding mansābs of 5,000 zāt and above, those holding between 3,000 and 4,500 zāt, and those between 1,000 and 2,700 zāt. In the third chapter Anwar discusses the attitudes of the crown and the nobility to each other, while in the fourth, he shows the role of the mansāb in defining their relationship. He does this through a statistical study of the zāt and sawār ranks of the three grades of mansābdārs of various ethnic groups as well as by dividing the reign of Shāh Jahan into three phases.

In the fifth chapter, Anwar attempts to examine the distribution and tenure of some important administrative offices among the nobles. The last chapter contains a summary and important conclusions. Then the book