Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East

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The large-scale economic and political processes that characterize the period of this chapter are the rise of autonomous provincial regimes, the expansion of agricultural production, and the intensification of links between several parts of the Ottoman Empire and the world capitalist market. Although this was a time of political weakness for the Ottoman central government, it was not an era of unmitigated political and economic decline, as traditional Orientalist studies of the eighteenth century maintain (Gibb & Bowen 1950). The political stability and enhanced physical security established by powerful local notables and provincial governors contributed to increased agricultural production. Parts of the empire favorably situated to benefit from trade with Europe including Macedonia and Thrace, lower Egypt, Izmir and its hinterlands, and Acre and the Galilee experienced economic growth and prosperity. However, there was no qualitative departure from the relations of production and circulation of earlier periods.

A long wave of European economic growth began in the 1740s and lasted, with ups and downs, until the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, followed by an economic contraction lasting until the early 1840s. The central development of this mid-eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century economic expansion is the Industrial Revolution. European economic growth generated increased demand for agricultural products from the Middle East. During the subsequent contraction, prices of European manufactured goods dropped more sharply than prices of Middle Eastern agricultural goods. Low-priced European manufactures, especially finished textiles, began to appear in Middle Eastern markets in significant quantities. But the terms of trade for Middle Eastern agricultural products remained favorable. Consequently, in the Middle East the century from 1750 to 1850 was marked by rising prices of agricultural products and increasing exports to Europe (Tabak 1991: 138).

Periodization of long-term economic trends can only be approximate, and general tendencies must be modified by local histories and conditions. Cairo and western Anatolia are the only Middle Eastern regions where pre-twentieth-century local periodizations of economic expansion and contraction have been attempted. In Cairo, after frequent crises due to currency debasement, high prices, and food shortages from 1690 to 1736, there was a return to prosperity and high, but stable, wheat prices from 1736 to 1780. This period was ended by the demise of the mamluk regime, the French invasion of 1798, and the rise of Mehmed ʿAli Pasha (1805–48) (Raymond 1973–74: 81–106). After Mehmed ʿAli stabilized his rule, Egyptian economic expansion resumed, primarily due to investment in military industries and the export of newly developed long-staple cotton and other agricultural products. However, the Pasha established a command economy, regulating production and marketing closely by his orders. Efficiency and equity were not his highest priorities. Hence, there were many crises, and growth could not be sustained.

There was a major commercial boom in western Anatolia in the second half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Izmir became the most important port for European trade with the Levant, which was dominated by France before the Napoleonic Wars (Frangakis-Syrett 1991: 97). From the 1750s commercial crops – cotton and other fibers, maize, tobacco, grapes, and livestock – were added to previously established contraband exports of wheat and other grains from Izmir, Salonica, and Macedonia to Europe (Kasaba 1988: 19). Cotton cultivation tripled in Macedonia and western Anatolia from 1720 to 1800. Most of the crop was exported, primarily to France and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The periodization I propose has some similarities with world systems theory conceptions that view the period from 1750 to 1839 (or 1815) as marking the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the capitalist world economy (Wallerstein & Kasaba 1983; Kasaba 1988). World systems theory also argues that Ottoman local notables responded to growing demand for agricultural products from Europe in the mid-eighteenth century by establishing large, commercialized estates (*çiftlik*s) on which they sought to establish private property rights and impose harsher forms of labor control over peasants. Although something of this sort happened in parts of the sub-Danubian Balkans, it was not a general phenomenon throughout the Ottoman territories (Islamoğlu- Inan 1987: 12; Keyder 1991: 2). Even in the Balkans, many *çiftlik*s were small (McGowan 1981). Local notables in western Anatolia, such as the Kara Osmanoğlus, did not have the capacity to oversee peasant labor and introduce large-scale capitalist production methods (Kasaba 1991: 115).

The character of eighteenth-century commerce between Aleppo and Europe, primarily France, also does not conform to the predictions of world systems theory. Aleppo's international trade increased markedly, but intraregional trade was more substantial and stimulated Aleppo's commercial relations with its agricultural hinterland and cities as distant as Mosul, Diyarbekir, and Basra. In the early eighteenth century, Aleppo's trade with Europe conformed to the typical colonial pattern predicted by world systems theory: exporting agricultural and pastoral raw materials and importing finished goods. But at the end of the century, Aleppo sold more finished goods to France than it imported (Marcus 1989: 146–50). Similarly, in Jabal Nablus in Palestine the active regional trade in soap and textiles involving Cairo and Damascus was not disrupted by the activities of European merchants in the coastal cities of Jaffa and Acre (Doumani 1995). These cases confirm that "the social classes and institutions of the Ottoman provinces were not simply remolded as a consequence of trade with Europe . . . They are not a dependent variable, as a reading of Wallerstein's theory might lead one to suppose" (Cuno 1992: 11).

In most of Anatolia and the Fertile Crescent large, privately owned estates producing cash crops for export to Europe were exceptional, though some were formed when market conditions were favorable. However, market relations in agriculture were a common feature of many regions. In the Bursa region and elsewhere in Anatolia, small commercial farms supplying local urban markets coexisted with peasant family farms (Gerber 1987: 30, 39). In lower Egypt, as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cash crops such as sugarcane, rice, and flax were cultivated. Processed sugar and linen as well as foodstuffs were exported to other parts of Ottoman Empire. Total agricultural output was far larger than subsistence (Hanna 1998: 85). There was a stratum of wealthy peasants in eighteenth-century lower Egypt (if not earlier), and villages around Mansura produced cash crops for markets including rice, sesame, and wheat (Cuno 1984). Sectors of the agrarian economy of the hinterlands of Mosul were integrated into a market economy before the Ottoman conquest (Khoury 1997: 27). Basra merchants advanced credit to owners of palm trees and shipped dates throughout the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean regional market in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Fattah 1997: 85–86). Similar credit practices were common in the olive oil agro-industry of Jabal Nablus (Doumani 1995). There was a market in usufruct rights for agricultural land in lower Egypt, Mosul, Jabal Nablus, and the hinterlands of Bursa at least as early as the middle of the eighteenth century and probably much earlier (Cuno 1992; Khoury 1997; Doumani 1995: 8; Gerber 1987: 23).

Linkages between the Ottoman Empire and the world capitalist market intensified during a period of rising agricultural prices and increasing production. This tended to benefit primary agricultural producers and enhance the viability of peasant family farms (Tabak 1991: 135–37). Agricultural commodities for export and local markets were generated primarily from the surplus of small peasant production, rather than centrally managed, large-scale, privately owned commercial farms. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries most peasants retained control of their production process and usufruct rights. "Fiscal domination of the peasantry and not the organization of large estates to serve the export trade . . . was the primary rural source of power and fortune" (McGowan 1981: 171–72; see also Veinstein 1976; McGowan 1994: 672; Doumani 1995: 161). Hence, there was no wholesale restructuring of agricultural production and agrarian social relations in response to demand from Europe. In contrast to Europe, the Ottoman social formation embodied "a logic in which privatized large property was marginal . . . Commodity production by small-owning peasantry represents an alternative mode of integration into the market" (Keyder 1991: 2, 3).[1]

Detailed examinations of local relations of production and circulation and the cultural systems in which they were embedded reveal differences so substantial as to call into question the viability of the category of "the Ottoman peasant." Lower Egypt, Mount Lebanon, and Jabal Nablus represent very different agrarian regimes, yet the three cases converge in refuting the predictions of both the Orientalist paradigm of eighteenth-century economic decline and world systems theory. Well before the French invasion of Egypt and the Egyptian occupation of greater Syria, peasants in these regions produced commercial crops for regional markets and export to Europe, especially France. Commercial agriculture was not an innovation brought about by increased contact with European markets or the entrepreneurial activity of large landowners, although these factors stimulated and influenced its development. Peasants in regions more remote from transportation were less engaged in commercial agriculture. But there were no structural or ideological barriers to commercial agriculture in the mid-eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries.

Egypt: the peasants and the pasha

By the mid-seventeenth century Egyptian mamluk households had established considerable fiscal and political autonomy from Istanbul, collecting the land tax as tax farmers and spending much of it locally. Peasants had usufruct rights on their own plots (*aradi al-filaha* or *athar*) and paid their takes to the tax farmer. They also worked on the lands of the mamluks (*aradi al- usya*) sometimes for wages, sometimes as sharecroppers, sometimes as unpaid corvée laborers. The tax-farming system imposed many burdens on the peasants, not the least of which was the tendency of the mamluks to increase taxes to expand their military power and establish a competitive advantage over rival mamluk houses.

There is no evidence of a decline in the status of peasants, increased coercion of labor, or formation of large estates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[2] Peasants retained control of production and marketing on the lands on which they held usufruct rights, which they commonly bequeathed, sold, rented, and pawned (Cuno 1984: 314–15; Cuno 1992: 10–11, 66, 82–83). While *shariʿa* law recognizes a distinction between ownership and the right of usufruct, peasants commonly disregarded it with impunity. In lower Egypt, where the area of annual Nile inundation and the cultivated land overlapped in a stable and predictable pattern, peasant plots were demarcated and families were individually responsible for the land tax. From what we know of Cairo prices, it seems likely that the prices of agricultural commodities in lower Egyptian villages rose in the eighteenth century. This would imply an increase in the income of peasant producers and the value of their usufruct rights, which may have been partly offset by increased taxation.

From 1780 to 1805, political instability, disruption of trade with France, and natural disasters resulted in recurring economic crises (Raymond 1973–74: 100–04). The mamluk chief, Murad Bey (1779–98), imposed a monopoly on customs collection and purchased and resold a large portion of the wheat crop to raise revenues for the military. When the French invaded, they seized many tax farms and declared them state-owned lands (Owen 1969: 15–16). In the same period Sultan Selim III (1789–1807) tried to finance his military reforms by restricting military land grants and tax farms in the face of strong opposition from provincial notables (Rivlin 1961: 37; Shaw 1971: 132).

These practices were more systematically and effectively implemented by Mehmed ʿAli Pasha after he became the Ottoman governor of Egypt in 1805. The status of peasants began to improve considerably after he consolidated his power and restored political stability by eliminating the warring mamluk factions in the infamous 1811 massacre at the Cairo citadel. The irrigation system was repaired and expanded, and idle land was brought under cultivation. From 1814 on, Mehmed ʿAli abolished tax farming and instituted a regime of direct collection of taxes from peasants by salaried government employees, monopolization of domestic and foreign trade, and compulsory delivery of harvests to state-operated depots at prices below the market rate.

The introduction of long-staple cotton in 1821 is associated with dramatic changes in the lives of peasants, though the effects of this innovation were not fully realized until the second half of the nineteenth century.

Cotton cultivation requires large inputs of water, fertilizer, and labor and is best undertaken on large plots. Cotton plants remain in the ground from February to September and must be watered heavily in the summer, when the natural level of the Nile is low. To increase the supply of summer water, the government recruited peasant workers by corvée to construct canals, barrages, water wheels *(saqiyya*s), and water-lifting apparatuses (*shaduf*s). By the early 1830s cotton and other summer crops (rice, indigo, sugar) were cultivated on 600,000 *faddan*s compared to 250,000 in 1798.

Detailed rules governing cultivation, harvesting, and marketing of cotton and other crops as well as more stringent tax-collection practices were codified in the 1829 Regulation of Peasant Agriculture (*La'ihat zira'at al-fallah*), though peasants did not simply dutifully obey the Pasha's directives (Richards 1987: 216; Cuno 1992). The monopoly system imposed low prices on peasant crops, and the state attempted to regulate every aspect of production and marketing. Peasants had always performed corvée labor to repair irrigation canals in their villages and the like. But in the 1820s the number of corvée laborers increased to some 467,000 annually; many were compelled to work for two months a year or more far from their villages for nominal or no pay (Owen 1969: 48). Mehmed 'Ali raised taxes to support his large and modernized army and its expedition to Morea in support of the Ottoman sultan's failed effort to thwart the Greek independence movement (1824–28). Peasants were conscripted into the army for the first time. These massive intrusions of the state into the lives of peasant families reversed the improvements in their economic and social well-being.

Peasants responded through a combination of resistance and resort to the "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985). The Pasha's Albanian cavalry massacred upper Egyptian peasants who rebelled following the government's seizure of their entire grain crop for the first time in 1812. In 1816 the army compelled recalcitrant peasants to grow government-specified crops. There were five peasant revolts during 1820–26 against increased taxation and the introduction of conscription, including three large uprisings in the upper Egyptian province of Qina. As many as 40,000 people participated in a two-month-long uprising in 1821 led by one Ahmad. Two years later an even larger revolt was led by another Ahmad, who sought to overthrow Mehmed 'Ali and appealed to Muslim salvationist sentiment by calling himself the *mahdi* (Baer 1969b: 96–98; Baer 1982: 77, 254; Richards 1987: 218–19; Cuno 1992: 125; Fahmy 1997: 95).

Commercial crops grown in Qina were marketed in Cairo, Istanbul, and Europe, especially *durra* (the local variety of wheat) and sugarcane. Qina was also a commercial hub linking upper Egypt with Sudan and the

Red Sea–Arabian Ocean commercial network; and it was a manufacturing center for textiles, pottery, and charcoal. Handicraft textile production in Qina province, including the export of some items beyond Egypt, prospered during the Napoleonic Wars and was seriously damaged by the influx of European textiles to Egypt after 1810. The profitability of grain exports diminished around 1820 due to competition from Russian wheat. The rise of sugarcane as the principal cash crop and the conversion of lands from food crops to sugarcane caused local food shortages. Thus, economic decline following a prosperous period may have motivated the revolts in Qina. In contrast to all others who have studied them, Fred Lawson argues that the Qina revolts should not be understood as peasant revolts against taxation and conscription, but "revolts by village artisans and pieceworkers against the supervisors and merchants in whose hands the control of the local sugar, wheat, and cloth industries rested" (Lawson 1981: 145). This is a functionalist argument unsupported by direct evidence about the social composition of the revolts: those most affected by economic decline should initiate a rebellion. Artisans may very well have collaborated with peasants in rebelling against the expanding power of Mehmed ʿAli's state under the banner of Islam. But the general consensus that Qina was a center of peasant resistance to conscription and taxation by Mehmed ʿAli seems well founded.

Peasants opposed the demands of the Pasha's regime in ways other than open revolt. Desertion from the army was common. Peasant conscripts mutinied in 1827 and 1832. When resistance to conscription was ineffective, peasants fled their villages or maimed themselves. Cutting off index fingers, removing teeth, and putting rat poison in an eye to blind one's self were common techniques of mutilation (Fahmy 1997: 99–103, 256–63).

The combination of peasant resistance/avoidance, hence a shortage of labor and declining revenue, the opposition of European powers to the exclusion of their merchants from the interior of the country, the power of the British navy, the administrative and technical weaknesses of the Pasha's regime, and the global capitalist crisis of 1836–37 forced Mehmed ʿAli to abandon the monopoly system and devise a new decentralized rural administration. These developments are the local markers of the end of the period treated in this chapter.

Lebanon: peasants and the emergence of communal politics

The Ottoman central government did not concern itself with the internal social structure and local customs of Mount Lebanon. It regarded Mount

Lebanon as state-administered land and the local notables as tax farmers. The northern part of the mountain was subject to the pasha of Tripoli; the southern part to the pasha of Sidon (whose actual seat was Acre after 1750). Christian historians have usually argued that Mount Lebanon was a single unit with a self-conscious identity and an autonomous and locally legitimized political regime and that the land was private property (Holt & Lewis 1962; Salibi 1988: 108–29). This view is becoming increasingly discredited.

The system of social hierarchy and decentralized political leadership in Mount Lebanon is commonly characterized as a feudal exception within the Ottoman Empire. This terminology tends to minimize the Ottoman context and accentuate the association of Lebanon and Latin Christian Europe. In the heyday of modernization theory this affiliation was commonly adduced as an explanation of Lebanon's "successful" adaptation to modernity – an interpretation that has lost credibility since the second post-independence civil war of 1975–91.[3] To avoid this misleading association, I use the local terms for the system, *iqtaʿ*, its districts, *muqataʿat,* and its notables, *muqataʿaji*s.

The mountain was divided into *muqataʿat* where hereditary Druze and Maronite *muqataʿaji*s were responsible for collection of taxes and the administration of justice. Whereas most Ottoman tax farmers lived in cities, Lebanese *muqataʿaji*s lived in their rural districts and held large plots of land (*ʿuhda*s) in their own names. Though not juridically tied to the land, peasants were required to perform labor service and buy marriage licenses and baptismal oil from their *muqataʿaji*s and to offer them holiday gifts. From 1711 to 1841 the Shihabs were the leading *muqataʿaji* family. The Maronite *muqataʿaji*s concurred that Mount Lebanon was a hereditary principality (*imara*) and that a member of the Shihab family was the legitimate paramount ruler (*amir or hakim*); the Druze *muqataʿaji*s accepted the Shihabs as tax farmers and did not seek to set up an alternative regime.

Maronites were originally concentrated in Kisrawan and northern Mount Lebanon and the Druze in the Shuf and southern districts. From the late seventeenth century, Maronite peasants began to migrate southward, where they became subject to Druze *muqataʿaji*s, the most powerful of whom were the Junblats. The Maronite population increased more rapidly than the Druze and constituted the majority in Mount Lebanon by the nineteenth century. Reforms in the administration of the church initiated by the Council of Luwayza in 1736 led to expanding the network of church schools, and Maronite peasants began to be educated. Consequently, Maronites became the dominant force in the administration of Mount Lebanon. One expression of the increasing power of the

Maronites in the late eighteenth century was the secret conversion of a branch of the Shihab family, including the amirs Yusuf (1770–88) and Bashir II (1788–1840), to the Maronite faith.

The principal agricultural product of Mount Lebanon was raw silk produced from cocoons spun by worms who fed on the leaves of mulberry trees. Since the time of Fakhr al-Din Maʿn II (1593–1633) the amirs encouraged silk production in the religiously mixed Junblati *muqataʿa* of the Shuf and in the Maronite district of Kisrawan, controlled by the Khazin family. Cultivation of mulberry trees and the export of raw silk from Sidon and later Beirut, primarily to France, was dominated by Maronites. The Junblats encouraged Maronite peasants to settle on their lands and even donated lands to Maronite monasteries to promote production of silk (Salibi 1988: 104–05). Until the late 1830s itinerant, seasonal peasant-laborers reeled raw silk into thread by hand (Polk 1963: 172).

Some peasants in Mount Lebanon owned small plots of land. But as they were usually too small to sustain a family, sharecropping (*musharaka*) arrangements with monasteries or aristocratic families who held most of the land were common. In the eighteenth century peasant holdings expanded, primarily through the use of cultivation contracts (*mugharasa)*: agreements stipulating that a landowner supply the land, tools, and materials for a peasant to terrace and plant trees and tend them for three to twelve years, depending on the type of tree. During this period the peasant planted suitable food crops between the trees. When the trees were fully mature, a quarter to half of the land, or sometimes only the trees, became the property of the peasant (Firro 1990: 158; Dubar & Nasr 1976: 29; Chevallier 1971: 138–39). Mulberry, fig, almond, and olive trees as well as grape vines were planted under this system. *Muqataʿaji*s maintained their rights to peasant labor and other forms of economic and social dominance if they expanded the area of cultivation in this way or sold parcels of land to peasants when they needed cash.

The reinvigoration of the Maronite church following the Council of Luwayza contributed to expanding agricultural production. The Lebanese Order of Monks, primarily comprising men from peasant backgrounds, began to enlarge their originally meager holdings through cultivation contracts, efficient organization of their collective labor, and pooling their savings and donations from the faithful. They acquired new properties from the *muqataʿaji*s, who were pleased by the monks' productive activities and the educational and other services they provided. By the mid-nineteenth century the Lebanese Order owned fifty monasteries with large plots of land (Harik 1968: 112–14).

Most peasants were poor and socially and economically subordinated to the *muqataʿaji*s. During the early years of Bashir II's rule, the governor of Sidon (Acre), Cezzar Ahmed Pasha (1775–1804), pressed the amir for increased tribute payments. To meet these demands, Bashir II increased the levies on the *muqataʿaji*s and the peasants, confiscated the lands of rival *muqataʿaji*s, and removed some of them altogether, consolidating their former holdings under his personal control. Ahmed Pasha's successor, ʿAbd Allah Pasha (1818–32), also demanded higher tribute, forcing Bashir II to attempt to collect additional taxes to pay the pasha. Due to these repeated demands for extra-legal taxes, peasants lost much of their lands. By the first half of the nineteenth century about 10 percent – a high proportion by local standards – of the peasantry owned no land at all and supported themselves by sharecropping or as agricultural day laborers (Dubar & Nasr 1976: 28).

These conditions formed the context for peasant uprisings (*ʿammiyya*s, or movements of the common people) in 1820 and 1821. The revolts were directed against both Amir Bashir II and his most important ally, Bashir Junblat. The Maronite bishop, Yusuf Istfan (1759–1823), played a leading role in the first revolt. He organized the peasants into village communes and had them choose a representative (*wakil*) to lead and represent each village. The Druze *muqataʿaji*s blocked the collection of additional levies from Druze peasants or paid them themselves. The taxes were collected only from the Maronite peasants of Maronite *muqataʿaji*s in the northern districts, who Bashir II thought lacked a leadership capable of opposing him. Therefore, although some Druze peasants and one *muqataʿaji* family participated in the revolts, they primarily involved Maronite peasants in districts with Maronite *muqataʿaji*s. This gave the movements a sectarian character, which was enhanced by the active participation of Maronite clergymen (Harik 1968: 208–22; Khalaf 1987: 33–35).

The 1820 and 1821 revolts challenged the *muqataʿaji* monopoly on political leadership and expressed both peasant class and Maronite communal consciousness, which were sometimes mutually contradictory. The Maronite Khazin and Abillamaʿ *muqataʿaji*s opposed the revolts, but peasants in their districts participated nonetheless. The pact between the people of Bashʿala and their representative made during the second revolt is a rare expression of peasants' political voice and their capacity to articulate some surprisingly new ideas.

> We the undersigned, all the natives of Bashʿala . . . have freely accepted and entrusted ourselves and our expenses to our cousin, Tannus al-Shidyaq Nasr, and whatever is required of us . . . with respect to the *ʿammiyya*. His word will be final with us in all [matters] of expenses and losses . . . [W]e shall obey him in the recruitment of men . . .

This is what has been agreed upon between us and him, and he shall act according to his conscience, not favoring anyone over the other . . . Whatever he arranges as the tax, we shall accept; and if he relents in pursuing our interests, we shall hold him accountable. (Harik 1968: 213–14)

This radical departure from the previously prevailing political culture of Mount Lebanon led Ilya Harik to view the revolts as the first Lebanese expressions of the modern ideas of nationalism, the public interest, and individual rights. Harik acknowledges that some Maronite peasants understood their revolt to be directed against the privileges of the Druze *muqataʿaji*s (Harik 1968: 220–21). This communal aspect of the movements makes the dichotomy of "tradition" and "modernity" inadequate for the understanding of the 1820–21 uprisings. They were limited revolts against increased taxes, not revolutions against the social structure of Mount Lebanon. The deployment of ideas and institutions derived from the French republican tradition coexisted with communalism and sharpened tensions between Maronites and Druze (and Muslims). This undermined Lebanese national identity as much as it promoted it.

Bashir II fled Mount Lebanon in 1822 but resumed his demands for increased taxes when he returned in 1823. This led to a military clash with the Junblat family and its supporters in 1825 in which the Junblat partisans were decisively defeated and their lands distributed to supporters of Bashir II. Bashir Junblat was strangled to death by ʿAbd Allah Pasha at the request of Amir Bashir II, and his sons and other Druze notables went into exile. Bashir II's attacks on the *muqataʿaji*s and his repeated demands for additional revenues undermined the cohesion of the ruling class of Mount Lebanon and intensified conflict between Druze and Maronites that had been building since the mid-eighteenth century.

Bashir II's alliance with the 1831–40 Egyptian occupation further diminished his popularity. The Egyptians imposed a new head tax (*farda*), and despite its generally favorable attitude towards non-Muslims, the need for revenue to finance the army led it to insist on collecting the poll tax (*jizya*) from Christians and Jews, which Christians in Mount Lebanon had not previously been required to pay. In May 1840 Ibrahim Pasha ordered the Druze and Christians of Dayr al-Qamar to surrender their arms, widely understood as a precursor to conscription. Christians, Druze, sunnis and shiʿa met at Intilyas on June 8, 1840, drew up a covenant expressing their grievances, and resolved "to fight to restore their independence or die"(Khalaf 1987: 37). The revolt and the withdrawal of Ibrahim Pasha after Ottoman troops landed in Beirut with European naval support in September 1840 allowed the sons of Bashir Junblat and other Druze notables to return to Mount Lebanon and forced Bashir II into exile. To recover lands they had lost and over which they claimed ownership, the Druze *muqataʿaji*s rallied Druze peasants to their banner, provoking widespread sectarian conflict that allowed the Ottoman central government to end the rule of the Shihab family in 1841.

Mount Nablus: peasants and merchants

Jabal Nablus, a predominantly Muslim region in northern Palestine, had some similarities with Mount Lebanon and Qina province in upper Egypt. It was a district of the province of Sidon whose regional economy and inland mountainous location fostered a high degree of political autonomy. In the lowlands of Palestine and Syria, an indeterminate portion of peasant lands were held as communal holdings that were redivided annually (*mushaʿa*). In the hills, communal holdings were less common; neither olive groves nor vineyards, which were widespread in Jabal Nablus, were communally held (Schölch 1986: 142). Commercial agriculture, a cash economy, social differentiation among the peasantry, commoditization of land, and links to markets beyond Palestine predated the Egyptian occupation (1831–40), the Ottoman Tanzimat, and Jewish colonization. Court cases in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries indicate that, as in lower Egypt, peasants of Jabal Nablus disposed of their usufruct rights on state-administered lands as though the land was their private property (Doumani 1995: 8, 157–59).

Local merchants constituted the economic and social links among peasant producers of agricultural commodities, artisans, and local notable families. The expansion of commercial agriculture, the primary source of wealth in Jabal Nablus from the second half of the seventeenth to the twentieth century, allowed merchants based in the town of Nablus to establish their control over its agricultural hinterland (Doumani 1995: 20). The most important agricultural product of the region was olive oil, the raw material for the high-quality soap manufactured in factories in the town of Nablus and renowned from Damascus to Egypt. Peasants cultivated olive trees and other agricultural products and sold their harvest to city-based merchants. Until the 1830s most of the soap factories belonged to the notable families of the district – the Tuqans, Nimrs, Qasims, ʿAbd al-Hadis, etc. From then on, merchants began to enter the lucrative soap manufacturing business.

Merchants and peasants were bound together by patron–client relations in which merchants clearly held the upper hand. These relations were the social vehicle for marketization of the economy.[4] Nabulsi merchants bought and stored goods for peasants, provided them with credit and references, and served as their hosts when peasants came to town. The commercial relationship was part of an elaborate fabric of economy, culture, and moral values.

One of the principal mechanisms that allowed the merchants to dominate peasants was the *salam* contract: a merchant lent a peasant money and the peasant agreed to deliver a harvest to the merchant in return for a specified price or portion of the proceeds from the sale of the crop. This arrangement left peasants in perpetual debt. Until the 1860s merchants did not usually expropriate lands of indebted peasants. Debt assured a merchant access to a peasant's crops, while the need to maintain a peasant's capacity to produce meant there was always room to renegotiate the relationship (Doumani 1995: 55–56, 140–42, 161).

Jabal Nablus was occupied by Egyptian forces led by Ibrahim Pasha in 1832. The local notables welcomed Ibrahim, and the ʿAbd al-Hadi family established its influence by becoming his principal local allies. Before the Egyptian invasion, Qasim al-Ahmad, a sub-district chief of the Nablus hinterlands and head of the Qasim family, had risen to prominence, bought a soap factory, and moved into the city. Ibrahim Pasha appointed him district officer (*mutasallim*) of Nablus but in 1834 replaced him with Sulayman ʿAbd al-Hadi. In response, Qasim al-Ahmad organized notables from Nablus, Jerusalem, and Hebron, who informed the Egyptians in May 1834 that they were unable to disarm and conscript the peasants and collect the head tax. Al-Ahmad then led the peasants of Jabal Nablus in a revolt against Egyptian rule. The uprising spread to Hebron, Jerusalem, and other mountain districts in what is known today as the West Bank. In July, the Egyptian army crushed the revolt, burning sixteen villages to the ground on the way to retaking Nablus. Qasim al-Ahmad lost his soap factory; 10,000 peasants were deported to Egypt; and the population was disarmed (Doumani 1995: 46, 208; Kimmerling & Migdal 1993: 7–11; Hoexter 1984: 192–93).

As in Mount Lebanon, sectarian factors played a role in the opposition to the Egyptians. Egyptian rule generally improved the status of Christians and Jews throughout greater Syria by measures such as including them in the local councils established in towns of more than two thousand inhabitants. Muslims and Druze felt their status was threatened, and this was expressed in sectarian conflict. During the 1834 revolt one zealous Muslim tried to mobilize the people of Nablus to join the revolt by denouncing Ibrahim Pasha as an infidel from the minaret of a mosque (Shamir 1984: 230). Peasants from the surrounding area invaded Jerusalem, attacked the Christian and Jewish populations, looted property, and raped women (Rustum 1938: 60).

Peasants and state formation in the Ottoman provinces

Peasants were hardly quiescent or isolated from politics. They resisted efforts of aspiring state builders to impose new taxes, to conscript their sons, and to tell them what to plant and to whom and at what prices to sell their harvests. The Lebanese revolts of 1820–21, the Palestinian revolt of 1834, and the Qina revolts of the 1820s indicate that peasants were not totally isolated from other sectors of society. The peasants of Mount Lebanon used new organizational techniques and ideologies as well as their existing relationships with the Maronite clergy to mobilize for rebellion. The economic and social integration of Jabal Nablus seems typical of smaller provincial towns where peasants, bedouin, and town-dwellers collaborated in producing and circulating commodities with relatively less regulation by guilds or the state. Such networks were probably mobilized in the 1834 rebellion. Similar links among peasant agriculture, rural artisanal production, and regional commercial networks in Qina were probably mobilized in the revolts of the 1820s.

The concentration of revolts in provincial towns and rural districts in the 1820s and 1830s may be due to the recent intensification of their contact with the state and their greater capacity to resist the encroachments of the early nineteenth-century state builders: Mehmed ʿAli, Ibrahim Pasha, and Bashir II. Revolts of ʿAlawi peasants in the Nusayriyya mountains in 1834 and 1835 and Druze peasants in Hawran in 1837–38 against the Egyptian occupation were part of the same pattern. The resistance of ʿAmir ʿAbd al-Qadir to the French occupation of Algeria (1830–47) was both a continuation of previous rural and tribal resistance to the extension of Ottoman state authority and a transition to a new phase of engagement with a European occupier more typical of the later nineteenth century (Burke 1991: 28).

The presence of an occupation army, whether Egyptian or French, introduces the question of incipient nationalism. Some have characterized ʿAbd al-Qadir's resistance to France, the Lebanese revolts of 1820–21, and the 1834 Palestinian revolt against the Egyptian occupation as the first steps towards self-conscious nationhood (Ruedy 1992; Harik 1968; Kimmerling & Migdal 1993). This is as improbable as the view that peasants were politically passive. The use of ideas and institutions derived from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution by Maronite peasants of Mount Lebanon to justify and organize their revolts is distinctive, yet far from an assertion of Lebanese nationhood. The Palestinian revolt of 1834 was concentrated in the hill country and did not involve the major urban centers of Jaffa or Acre. ʿAbd al-Qadir's resistance to the French occupation of Algeria relied heavily on his leadership of the Qadiriyya sufi order and was only effective in what is today western Algeria; resistance to the French in eastern Algeria was led by al-Hajj Ahmad.

Artisanal production in major cities

Textiles and apparel constituted the leading sector of production in almost all early modern Ottoman towns and cities; the other main manufacturing sectors were food, leather, and construction. Typically a male artisan owned his own shop and tools, bought raw materials, and produced and sold commodities on demand using his own labor, that of family members, and a small number of journeymen or apprentices. Capital investment was generally low. Exceptions to this pattern of small-scale production included the Cairo manufacturers of licorice, beer, starch, wax candles, and sugar, leather tanners, casters, dyers, carpet weavers, and bottle makers, who employed an average of 12.5 persons per workshop. These activities engaged only 14.5 percent of the workforce (Raymond 1973–74: 223). Wealthy Aleppine merchants sometimes organized production of commodities, especially textiles, by supplying working capital, cloth, and other materials, coordinating the different elements of the manufacturing process, and marketing the finished products (Marcus 1989: 164–65, 168). This was not common in Cairo despite the great wealth of its long-distance merchants, perhaps because they could make bigger profits by purveying luxury products (Raymond 1973–74: 213–14, 225).

Guild monopolies, like other practices and structures, emerged through specific historical circumstances and processes and were not a fixed characteristic of the guild system. In the seventeenth century entry into crafts and membership in guilds were loosely regulated. Around 1750 Istanbul guilds cooperated with the state to establish a certification process for those who wanted to practice a craft or open a retail shop. A similar process seems to have occurred earlier in Cairo, perhaps at the end of the seventeenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century a certificate (*gedik* – the term originally applied only to the tools necessary for a craft, not the right to practice it) was required to engage in most urban occupations in Istanbul and other Ottoman cities (Raymond 1973–74: 271, 549–50; Akarli 1985–86: 223; Marcus 1989: 178–79; Rafeq 1991: 503; Faroqhi 1994: 588–89; Quataert 1994a: 895). Around 1805, perhaps motivated by the opening of many new weaving workshops to produce cloth for the market void created by the withdrawal of French textiles from the Middle East during the Napoleonic Wars, the Ottoman government and textile guilds in cities in Anatolia and Syria agreed to establish a central location in each town for polishing cloth where the state would tax and stamp it. Only cloth bearing this stamp could be sold legally until this system was abandoned in 1878 (Quataert 1994b: 7; Quataert 1994a: 895; Vatter 1995: 41–42).

The proliferation of *gedik*s and the tighter regulation of textile production are examples of a general trend towards increased state control of guilds from the mid-eighteenth century on, most clearly evident in Egypt under Mehmed ʿAli Pasha. In 1800 the French occupation force in Cairo created the post of director of crafts (*mudir al-hiraf*) – a government employee who supervised the guilds but was not organically connected to them (Raymond 1973–74: 558). Expanding on this French initiative, Mehmed ʿAli's regime was more actively interventionist than had previously been the norm in the internal regulations of the guilds. In 1829 the Pasha issued a decree regulating prices and commercial practices (*Laʾihat al-ihtisab*). Like the Ottoman sultan, he used the guilds to recruit labor for state construction projects. As state intervention increased, the power of the guild masters over their members grew, and they assumed more administrative functions. Wealth began to be more concentrated among certain guild members, not always the master, from the mid-eighteenth century on, and guilds offered less mutual assistance to their members (Ghazaleh 1999). There are no detailed studies of guilds in cities other than Cairo for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, so developments there can only suggest a possible general pattern.

Guilds never exercised absolute control over the quality of commodities or techniques of production. The guild structure was sufficiently flexible to accommodate new crafts and production processes (Raymond 1973–74: 225, 584–85); nor did guilds block expansion of production in the face of competition from European manufactured goods. There may have been some decline in the manufacturing output of males organized in guilds in the nineteenth century. But manufacturing activity by women concentrated in rural areas and urban areas outside the framework of the guilds flourished. Weaving of cotton and mohair cloth, wool spinning, silk reeling, shoemaking, and carpet making expanded in Salonica and the Macedonian countryside, western Anatolia, north central Anatolia, southeast Anatolia, and northern Syria (Quataert 1991a; Quataert 1994b).

Nablus: soap making in a regional town

The Nablus soap-making industry offers a sharp contrast to the guild-based production systems in major cities such as Istanbul, Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo. In the late 1820s leading local notable families began to increase their investments in the soap industry, raising capital through forming partnerships with merchants who, despite their increased their wealth and power, still sought the political protection such business alliances might provide. The soap industry continued to prosper and expand throughout the nineteenth century, with spurts of growth in the late 1830s to early 1840s and the 1860s. Unlike mercantile practice in Cairo, soap merchants provided the major share of capital investment to finance soap production, and their activities resulted in the vertical integration of the industry.

Soap making was a capital-intensive but not labor-intensive process. Peasants produced the raw material – olive oil. Bedouin supplied barilla plant ashes, which were mixed with the olive oil and cooked to make soap. They also comprised the seasonal unskilled laborers – ash pounders, oven stokers, etc. Only a small group of skilled and semi-skilled workers – fewer than fifteen per factory – were required for the production process. The soap-factory owners were organized in a guild, but not the unskilled or the craft workers. Teams of soap makers organized and led by a skilled and experienced boss (*ra'is*) circulated among the factories according to the workload. Factory owners did not control their labor directly, but rather through the intermediary of the boss, who managed both the workers and the production process. Workers were paid in cash and kind after each batch of soap was cooked. Soap-making jobs tended to be monopolized in families, and patronage relations were deployed to resolve disputes among the workers and between workers and factory owners (Doumani 1995: 188–201).

Three conclusions emerge from this vignette of artisanal production in a regional town. First, many important commodities, including some with a high commercial value, were produced outside the major urban centers and the framework of the guild system. Second, certain kinds of artisanal production prospered throughout the nineteenth century despite the influx of European manufactured goods from the 1820s on. Finally, the Nablus soap-making process illustrates the concrete social connections among peasants, bedouin, urban workers, and merchants that both integrated society and formed potential points of friction between sectors with different interests.

Guilds and urban politics

By the eighteenth century guilds had become an important institution of urban political life. They were often mobilized during moments of urban popular insurrection. The guilds of Istanbul artisans and shopkeepers were active in the 1730 Patrona Halil revolt that ended the centralizing efforts of the Tulip Era (Olson 1974). The Cairo guilds of butchers, fruit sellers, vegetable sellers, and grain carriers participated in the series of popular protests that erupted at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Ahmad Salim al-Jazzar and Hajjaj al-Khudari, masters of the butchers' and the vegetable sellers' guilds respectively, were among the organizers of urban protest during the anarchy of the late mamluk era, the French invasion of 1798, and against the new governor installed by the sultan after the expulsion of the French in 1801. Al-Khudari and Ibn Shama – al-Jazzar's successor as master of the butchers' guild – along with some of the Muslim scholars (*ʿulamaʾ*) and the dean of the descendants of the Prophet (*naqib al-ashraf*), ʿUmar Makram, led the Cairo uprising of May 12, 1805 that deposed the incumbent and proclaimed Mehmed ʿAli governor of Egypt. The sultan accepted this *fait accompli* the following month (Raymond 1975; Marsot 1984: 44–50). The participation of the guilds and the *ʿulamaʾ*, and the Islamic justification of the 1805 Cairo uprising are typical of early modern urban social movements (Burke 1986).

The guilds' capacity to lead urban protest led Sultan Mahmud II (1808–39) to secure their agreement when he decided to abolish the Janissary Corps in 1826. Many guild members had become Janissaries in order to avoid taxation, thus impeding the Ottoman state's ability to control the guilds and weakening the fighting capacity of the army (Bodman 1963: 65, 143; Marcus 1989: 58; McGowan 1994: 701–2, 705, 706–7). Mahmud II compensated the Istanbul guilds for their members' loss of income as Janissaries by giving master artisans and shopkeepers full control over their shops through deeds of usufruct (*gedik senedi*) and strengthening guild monopolies over their trades. In return, the guilds accepted the liquidation of the Janissary Corps (Akarli 1998: 33).

Urban social structure and income distribution

Some data about wages and the distribution of wealth in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are available for Cairo and Damascus. Fragmentary information from Aleppo is consistent with that evidence. There are no quantitative data on the size of handicraft workshops, output, or wages in Anatolia until the last third of the nineteenth century (Kurmuş 1981: 85). Export–import merchants were the wealthiest and most powerful urban stratum, followed by retail merchants and artisans. Self-employed artisans earned more and had more prestige than wage workers.

In Aleppo, servants, doormen, and watchmen were the poorest wage workers and earned 1–3 piasters a month. Craft workers earned 4–6 piasters a month; assistants in retail shops, 8 piasters; and salesmen for import–export merchants, 17–20 piasters (Marcus 1989: 49, 162).

Artisans comprised over half the economically active population of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Cairo, but their estates as recorded in the *shariʿa* court were only between 6.2 and 9.3 percent of the total value of estates recorded. Leather and food workers, except for the sugar refiners, were among the poorest artisans. Cairo artisans were economically subordinate to merchants. Their incomes declined from the late seventeenth to the late eighteenth centuries, while the incomes of merchants remained relatively stable (Raymond 1973–74: 231–32, 237).

Based on the value of estates registered in the Cairo and Damascus *shariʿa* courts, an index measuring inequality in the distribution of wealth has been calculated for several points in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (The standard social science measurement is the Gini coefficient of inequality. On a scale of 0.0 to 1.0, 0 indicates equal distribution of wealth, while 1 means concentration of all wealth in the hands of a single individual. The higher the number, the greater the inequality.) Distribution of wealth was very unequal. The Gini coefficient for men in Damascus in 1700 was 0.75. Women had less wealth but were considerably more equal than men, with a Gini coefficient of 0.50 (Establet & Pascual 1994: 124). Between 1624 and 1798 Cairo's Gini coefficient fluctuated between 0.68 and 0.81 and averaged 0.76. Disparities of wealth increased during periods of crisis and declined somewhat in periods of prosperity (Raymond 1973–74: 375–76, tables 7 and 8 following 382).

In the early nineteenth century there was also a high degree of concentration of wealth in Cairo (Ghazaleh 1999: 76–86). Artisans in the leather sector remained the poorest, followed in ascending order by perfumers, construction crafts, services, textiles, food, retail, wood, masters of all guilds, metals, long-distance merchants, and tobacconists. The real value of the legacies of textile workers, the "average artisans *par excellence*," declined steadily from the late seventeenth century to 1849. Relative to other crafts, the legacies of textile artisans increased in the late eighteenth century and declined in the early nineteenth century because of the influx of European manufactured cloth and the monopoly policies of Mehmed ʿAli. Food workers' legacies also declined over time, but this cannot be attributed to competition from Europe. The wealth of metal workers increased steadily in both relative and absolute terms, especially during the period 1799–1849, perhaps due to the demand for their labor in Egypt's new factories.

Towards industrialization?

Industrial manufacturing was introduced to the Middle East as part of the drive to establish modern armies and extend the power of states.

Sultans Abdülhamid I (1774–89) and Selim III (1789–1807) brought European advisors to Istanbul to establish workshops to produce cannons, rifles, bombs, saltpeter, and gunpowder. The most technically advanced of these enterprises, the gunpowder works on the Sea of Marmara, used water power; the others used animal power (Shaw 1971: 10, 139–44). Selim III also initiated a woolen mill and a paper factory in the Istanbul area. Further industrial innovation was inhibited by the conservative forces that deposed him in 1807. Mahmud II waited until after he destroyed the Janissary corps in 1826 before establishing a spinning mill, a fez-making factory, a wool-weaving mill, a sawmill, and a copper sheet-rolling mill and converting the cannon foundry and musket works to steam power in the late 1830s. The state owned and managed these enterprises, and the army and the state were the principal consumers of their output (Clark 1974: 66). Guild artisans were recruited to work in them by paying them high wages and allowing them to continue to work in their own shops in their free time. Before being employed they took an examination to determine that they produced high-quality work (Shaw 1971: 140).

As in the arena of fiscal policy, Mehmed ʿAli adopted and extended these innovations with greater success than his nominal sovereigns. In 1815 he built a gunpowder factory on Roda Island in Cairo. Shortly thereafter he established a munitions foundry in the Cairo citadel, employing 400 men to produce high-quality cannons, swords, and muskets. The Pasha ordered new shipyards constructed at Cairo's port of Bulaq and Alexandria in 1829; the latter employed 4,000 workers who built twenty-two naval vessels (Owen 1981a: 71; Marsot 1984: 165). Other enterprises produced commodities with dual military–civilian uses: a soap factory, a fez factory, weaving mills for cotton, jute, linen, and silk, a textile bleaching and printing works, sugar refineries, rice mills, indigo works, tanneries, and a printing press. Cotton weaving was the leading sector of this effort. By the 1830s there were some thirty cotton mills employing 12,000–15,000 workers; at least three used steam power (Owen 1981a: 70).

Egyptian nationalist historians argue that there were a total of 180,000–260,000 workers in all Mehmed ʿAli's enterprises, some 4–5 percent of the population (Fahmy 1954: 84–85; Marsot 1984: 181). More cautiously, Roger Owen suggests that during the high point of operations in the 1830s there were only 30,000–40,000 workers (Owen 1981a: 72). Unlike in Selim III's Istanbul factories, many of the workers were peasants forcibly recruited from their villages. Their arms were tattooed with the names of their factories to enable them to be captured should they desert (Fahmy 1998: 162). Wages, generous to begin with, were just adequate for subsistence by 1832–33. Hours were long and discipline was harsh. In many cases workers sabotaged production, stole the products, and set the mills on fire (Owen 1969: 45).

No guilds operated in Mehmed ʿAli's factories, and it is unclear whether any of the workers were previously guild members. Except for textile weaving, most of the enterprises were new activities for which no guilds existed. But neither the textile guilds nor hand-loom weaving were eliminated by the Pasha's efforts to monopolize this sector.

In contrast to these state-led initiatives, European entrepreneurs established silk-reeling mills powered by water and then later steam in Bursa, Izmir, Edirne, and Salonica. The first such mills were set up in Bursa in 1838 and Salonica in 1839. The workers – typically unmarried non-Muslim girls from peasant or poor urban families – were engaged seasonally to produce silk thread for export to Europe. The factories were managed by European men who recruited French women reelers to teach the locals and serve as forewomen. By 1845 Salonica had nearly 2,000 silk-mill workers out of a population of 70,000 (Quataert 1991a; Quataert 1994b: 116–32). There were no guilds in the mechanized silk-reeling industry, even though silk spinning and weaving were well-established Ottoman enterprises.

The silk spinning and weaving industry in Mount Lebanon was similar to that of Anatolia and Rumelia. The first French-owned hand-reeling mill was established in Kraye in 1810, followed by several others in the 1830s. Around 1840, the first mechanized silk-reeling mill was established by Antoine-Fortuné Portalis in the village of Btater (Labaki 1983: 434; Khater 1996: 326).

Debate over the significance of these efforts is centered on Egypt, the site of the most extensive early-nineteenth-century manufacturing initiatives. Historians with a nationalist or third-worldist outlook portray this development as an "industrial revolution" (Fahmy 1954; Marsot 1984).[5] Others note that Mehmed ʿAli's factories were powered primarily by animals, by the workers themselves, and by a total of no more than seven or eight steam engines. By contrast, there were at least 10,000 steam engines and 2,000 power looms in England in 1822. Egypt had no class of bourgeois entrepreneurs, no "free" working class, and no free market. Most of the Egyptian factories as well as the state-owned enterprises in Anatolia failed by the late 1840s and 1850s, leaving an uncertain legacy when industrial development resumed in the 1860s. The nationalist tradition attributes this collapse to British intervention and the imposition of free trade through the 1838 Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention. Certainly, British naval power was a relevant factor. Others point out that Egypt had a small local market and no sources of fuel.

Mehmed ʿAli's factories relied heavily on foreign managerial and technical expertise. The administrative capacity of the Egyptian state, though substantially greater than in the eighteenth century, was still limited (Owen 1981a: 72, 308 fn. 85).

This debate is partly about whether Egypt, based on its own indigenous cultural, political, and economic resources, would have followed the modern European trajectory of development, in which the central institutions are the capitalist market and the nation-state. Paradoxically, nationalist historians agree with their mainly European and American interlocutors that this is the appropriate measure of progress, development, and modernity. If we do not suppose that there is only one path to the modern world, then these early industrial efforts can be assessed in different terms. Autocratic state builders – Sultan Mahmud II, Amir Bashir II, and Mehmed ʿAli Pasha – seeking to compete with each other and with Europe, did see European technology and industry as a model to be emulated. But they could not replicate the trajectory of textile-based industrial development pioneered by England. Extensive coal deposits and a global empire provided fuel, capital, raw materials, and markets for English industrial development and military preeminence. Egypt had no coal, and its regional empire was weak and short lived. Its textiles were unable to compete with England's goods in the global market, and it had no independent capacity to develop the iron and steel industries that led the second stage of England's industrial revolution and extended its industrial and military lead over potential competitors. These circumstances do not describe the deficiencies of Egypt compared to England but the conditions of global capitalist development in the early and mid-nineteenth century.

The recruitment and mobilization of peasants and urban artisans was essential for the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century state building, military expansion, and economic development projects of Sultan Mahmud II, Amir Bashir II, and Mehmed ʿAli Pasha. These rulers were neither democrats nor nationalists and often used coercive measures to achieve their goals. Coercion continued and in some respects increased during the subsequent, more self-conscious period of elite-led "reform" – the Tanzimat era. It is not surprising that subalterns resisted or evaded demands aimed at securing the interests of ruling elites. This should not lead us to idealize life and work before this period. Life was difficult, and incomes were barely adequate for most working people. Pre-capitalist production processes continued to flourish in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and some sectors underwent considerable growth without any connection to the expansion of trade with Europe. Towards the end of the period, new techniques and products – primarily mechanized silk reeling in Anatolia, Salonica, and Mount Lebanon and the cultivation of long-staple cotton in Egypt – were introduced which had a very substantial long-term impact on the reformation of economies, societies, gender relations, and political regimes.