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The Druze Authority in Lebanon and Its Relationship with the Ruling Powers under the Mamluk and Ottoman States (The Tanukhids from the Al-Buhtur Dynasty and the Ma'nis as an Example).

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Abstract

The history of Lebanon during the Mamluk and Ottoman rule witnessed complex interactions between local families and the ruling powers. Each faction in Lebanon at the time, including the Banu Buhtur and the Ma'n dynasty, sought to assert its presence under the Mamluk and Ottoman states. Their objectives included protecting their interests and maintaining independence in the regions they controlled by adopting policies of maneuvering and strategic flexibility. They worked to establish strong relations with both the Mamluk and Ottoman authorities while simultaneously leveraging regional conflicts between these powers. This was particularly evident in their dealings with competing major powers of the time, such as the Crusaders, the Mongols, and the Western Christian world. Through this dual strategy, they aimed to maximize their political gains and safeguard their local interests amidst ongoing geopolitical transformations. This study seeks to compare two prominent Druze families that ruled in Lebanon—the Buhturids and the Ma'nids—both of whom aspired to achieve their own ambitions of independence from the central authority. The Buhturids, known for their strong connections with the Mamluks, were characterized by their desire to maintain relative autonomy without directly confronting the Mamluks. They pursued a policy of adapting to the status quo while cautiously building relationships with external powers. In contrast, the Ma'n family, particularly under the leadership of Fakhr al-Din II, adopted a completely different approach with the Ottomans. The Ma'nids sought full independence from Ottoman rule and relied on their strong relations with Western powers, especially European states, to achieve this goal. These alliances, exemplified by their political and military cooperation with the West, were aimed at undermining Ottoman influence in the region. This approach made their stance more assertive and explicit compared to that of the Buhturids.

Keywords: *Lebanon, Tanukhid dynasty, Ma'nid dynasty, Mamluk Sultanate, Ottoman Empire.*

Introduction

Present-day Lebanon holds great significance within the Levant region due to its strategic location, which has made it a target for Western powers. Additionally, its diverse social fabric, of which the Druze were a part, has been a defining feature. The Druze had varying stances towards the ruling powers in the region, particularly during the Mamluk and Ottoman eras.

During the Mamluk period, the relationship between the Druze, specifically the Buhturids and the Mamluks was characterized by occasional cooperation and periods of tension. These tensions arose from the Druze's concerns about protecting their interests and privileges in the region. Nevertheless, the Druze managed to maintain their presence and relative autonomy through their adaptability and political maneuvering, even if this autonomy was often precarious.

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At times, the Druze established friendly relations with the Crusaders, while at other times, they aligned with the Mongols, who coexisted with the Mamluks. This was driven by their desire to remain independent leaders in the region. However, the Buhturid Druze's association with the Mamluks was conditional upon their adherence to the broader societal framework under Mamluk rule. This framework aimed to protect the Levant from Crusader ambitions. As a result, the Buhturids remained committed to their alliance with the Mamluks, including participating militarily alongside Muslim armies in the fight against the Crusader threat.

With the transfer of power to the Ottomans in the early sixteenth century, the dynamics of the relationship between the Druze and the central authority shifted radically, particularly with the Ma'nid dynasty. Fakhr al-Din II, the leader of the Ma'n dynasty, was keen on achieving independence from the Ottoman state and establishing self-rule for himself and his dynasty, away from Ottoman control. To this end, he sought to establish special diplomatic relations and alliances with the Italians, which encouraged the West to revive the Crusader ambition in the Islamic world, exploiting Fakhr al-Din II's desire to break away from the Ottomans and establish a separatist rule isolated from the broader Islamic world.

The importance of this study lies in its examination of two significant dynasties that ruled Lebanon—the Buhturid and Ma'nid dynasties—and the extent of their connection to the ruling authorities of the Mamluks and Ottomans. It explores the nature of their relationship with these powers and whether this relationship had an impact on the stability of the western region (present-day Lebanon), as well as how these two dynasties interacted with external forces hostile to the Islamic State.

The problem of this study is also outlined through a number of key questions, including:

- What were the dimensions resulting from the Druze desire for independence from the ruling authority?
- Did this desire have negative consequences on the Druze relationship with the Mamluk and Ottoman rulers?
- Was the reliance on force and severity by the ruling powers the primary reason for the Druze's tendency to seek separation from Islamic rule?

The study relied on a comparative historical approach, by examining historical developments and discussing the existing literature regarding the relationship between the two Druze dynasties and the ruling authorities, and comparing the interactions of each Druze dynasty with the rulers of the Islamic world at that time.

Introduction to the Tanukhids:

The Tanukhids trace their lineage to Arab tribes of Yemeni origin. According to Shidyaq, the Tanukhids are descended from the Quda'ah, a Yemeni Qahtani tribe, with their lineage tracing back to Tanukh ibn Qahtan ibn 'Awf ibn Kindah, (Al-Shidyaq, n.d, 2/122), among others. The Tanukhids migrated from Yemen after the collapse of the Ma'rib Dam in the early 2nd century CE. Subsequently, the Quda'ah tribe moved from Bahrain to Iraq, where they established a state known as the Tanukhid State, which lasted for 130 years. (Abu Saleh & Makarem, 1980, 21-22).

From Iraq, they migrated to the Levant (Hamza, 1984, 15, 19), where the Tanukh tribe settled and became a prominent group in the history of the Druze in the region between Aleppo and

Hama. When the Muslim armies, led by Abu Ubaidah, advanced into the Levant, the Tanukh tribe settled in the region (Abu Izz al-Din, 1985, 16). They allied with the Muslims and resided in Ma'arra. Eventually, they moved towards the borders of Beirut, where they ruled the western lands and Mount Beirut. These regions would later become crucial centers of Druze settlement from the beginning of their call to the present day, especially in the peaks and foothills of Lebanon, such as the Matn and Chouf districts, as well as Keserwan, Wadi al-Taym, and the southern sector of Mount Lebanon. Some members of the tribe also settled in Quneitra and the Golan, while others settled in Jabal al-Arab (Abu Ismail, n.d, 1/41 ; Abu Izz al-Din, 1985, 17).

After the Islamic conquest, a portion of the Tanukhids remained Christian until the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi forced them to convert to Islam in 779 AD, when he arrived in Aleppo. Upon meeting the Tanukhids on the outskirts of the city, they were identified as Christians, and the caliph compelled them to embrace Islam (Al-'Ibri, 1986, 12).

The Participation of the Tanukh Princes from the Al-Buhtur Clan with the Mamluks in Confronting the Crusader Campaigns:

At the onset of the Crusades, the Druze resided in various regions of the Levant. They also established an independent state in the highlands east of Beirut, governed by two Tanukhid dynasties: the Arslanids and the Buhturids, who continued to lead the Druze community until the Ottoman conquest in 1516 AD (Abu Izz al-Din, 1985, 170). During the Crusades (1099-1291 AD), the Druze from the Chouf Mountains, overlooking Beirut, emerged as formidable fighters. The Crusader kings found them to be fierce opponents of the Franks who controlled the coastal regions, especially after the Crusaders successfully occupied Beirut.

The Druze made significant efforts to prevent the Franks from penetrating further into the interior, and their role remained vital during the Zengid and Ayyubid periods, continuing into the Mamluk era, where their military expertise was utilised by the Islamic states in each of these periods (Salibi, 2001, 9-10). However, the Buhturids became embroiled in the conflict between the Mamluks and the Ayyubids, as each side sought to secure the Buhturids' allegiance. When Al-Nasir Yusuf al-Ayyubi issued a proclamation on 25 Safar 650 AH / 1252 AD confirming Hajji bin Najm al-Din Muhammad in the fief of the west, his brother Sa'ad al-Din Khadr received a similar proclamation from Izz al-Din Aybak, the first Mamluk sultan, on 27 Rabi` al-Awwal 654 AH / 1256 AD, granting him a fief that included the villages of the Chouf, Iqlim al-Kharroub, and Wadi al-Taym.

Subsequently, Al-Nasir dispatched an army in late 653 AH / 1255 CE (Ibn Sabat, 1993, 1/370; Abu Izz al-Din, 1985, 201–202), reinforced by forces from the Bekaa and Baalbek regions, to launch an offensive against the western territories. The people of Syria believed that the western princes were aligned with the Egyptians (i.e., the Mamluks). However, the Druze, led by Zayn al-Din Salih, managed to defeat the invading forces at the village of Aitab in 653 AH / 1255 CE. This battle highlighted the ongoing tensions between the two Islamic states—the Ayyubids and the Mamluks—across the Levant. Al-Nasir's effort to assert control over the Druze through this military campaign ultimately failed. The Druze adopted a stance of neutrality in this conflict, guided by their own strategic interests. At the same time, this neutrality coincided with the broader Islamic objective of focusing on unity against the Crusaders, thereby minimizing the disruption caused by internal disputes. Al-Nasir Ayyubi's campaign against the Druze in the western region serves as an example of these intertwined dynamics. (Abu Saleh & Makarem, 1980, 110-111).

When the Mamluks assumed control of Lebanon in 659 AH / 1260 CE, their authority was initially confined to the Bekaa Valley and the western Tanukhid territories. Much of southern, northern, and coastal Lebanon remained under Crusader rule. The Buhturids were tasked with defending Beirut and the southern coastline, along with reporting any hostile movements by Frankish ships to the Mamluk authorities (Sbeiti, 2007, 72). A decree issued by Al-Zahir Baybars to Zayn al-Din and Jamal al-Din Hajji expressed his gratitude for their loyalty to the Mamluks. He instructed the two princes to monitor Frankish activities and conduct raids on Sidon and Beirut (Yahya, 1927, 169; Ibn Sabat, 1993, 1/460). This directive illustrates Baybars' appreciation for their service and his reliance on their continued support in combating the Franks. At the time, Baybars' primary concern was the Crusaders, with his strategic efforts focused on the conquest of Tripoli and other coastal areas. He depended significantly on the western Tanukhid princes, Jamal al-Din and Zayn al-Din, to aid him in achieving these objectives (Ibn Sabat, 1993, 1/462).

Some of the crises that the western princes of the Al-Buhtur dynasty were exposed to at the hands of the Mamluks:

Lebanon's multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic social fabric contributed to a persistent struggle among various factions, each seeking to assert its dominance over the others. This rivalry frequently gave rise to envy and efforts to sow discord, driven by the desire to secure advantages and privileges from the prevailing Islamic authorities. The princes of the West were not immune to these tensions, and some even faced imprisonment as a result of the conflicts. These crises persisted until the reign of the Mamluk Sultan Qalawun. Among the notable figures involved were the distinguished Emir Jamal al-Din Hajji bin Muhammad, his brother Emir Sa'ad al-Din Khadr, and Emir Zayn al-Din bin Ali.

The origins of these accusations can be traced to claims that the emirs of the Al-Buhtur dynasty had been communicating with the Frankish ruler of Tripoli and forging an alliance against the Mamluks. These allegations ultimately led to their imprisonment by Sultan Baybars. It is likely that this slander originated from jealousy over the power and influence the Al-Buhtur dynasty had gained under the Mamluks. Allegedly, one of Abu al-Jaysh's sons fabricated correspondence between the Al-Buhtur dynasty and the rulers of Tripoli, Sidon, and Acre, with the intention of these documents falling into the hands of the Mamluk army to validate the accusations against the Buhturi brothers. However, it was later proven that this story was entirely false and solely intended as an act of slander and forgery. Abu al-Jaysh had a reputation for dishonesty in his dealings with the Franks, and testimonies from individuals in Sidon and other regions confirmed that the accused emirs were in fact loyal advisors to the Mamluks, actively working to suppress sedition. None of them harbored any sympathy for the Franks, nor did they engage with them when the Mamluk armies landed on the coast of Sidon. These accusations were clearly the result of malice and fabrication by their enemies and detractors.

The two brothers were released during the reign of Baraka ibn Baybars in 676 AH / 1277 AD (Yahya, 1927, 69, 77; Ibn Sabat, 1993, 462-463, 483). It is important to note that the Buhturis maintained cordial relations and friendships with the Crusaders. There was correspondence between the Frankish ruler of Beirut, Humphrey ibn Damon Garb and Jamal al-Din Hajji, who was granted the fief of al-Amrusiyya, to be owned by him, his son and any successor, on the condition that it would neither be sold nor given away, and that no fugitive or runaway from the Frankish-controlled coast of Beirut would seek refuge in Hajji's fief in 1280 AD (Yahya, 1927, 57, 79; Sbeiti, 2007, 73). Emir Sa'ad al-Din Khadr was also known for his amicable relations

with the Franks (Salibi, 2001, 115). However, by this time, the Crusader presence in the region was no longer as strong as it had been in earlier periods, and they began to seek agreements with Sultan Baybars, offering him a share of their crops and products (Yahya, 1927, 57, 79; Sbeiti, 2007, 73).

With the fall of Acre and the subsequent withdrawal of the Crusaders from Sidon, Tyre, and Beirut in 1291 AD, Mamluk control over the Levant was definitively secured. The Mamluks swiftly reorganized the urban centers of the Levant, solidifying their political and military dominance throughout the region. The Druze in al-Ashwaf and the Maronites in Mount Lebanon, having acknowledged Mamluk authority, integrated into the broader socio-political landscape under Mamluk rule (Salibi, 2001, 115). Furthermore, the Buhturian emirs from the western regions, long aligned with the Mamluks, continued to play a significant role in the defense against Crusader incursions. Their collaboration with the Circassian Mamluks was instrumental in repelling subsequent Crusader offensives, underscoring their ongoing strategic importance in the Mamluk military apparatus. In 702 AH / 1302 AD, the Franks attacked the Levantine coast and landed in Damour, where a battle took place between them and the Tanukhids, resulting in several casualties. Tanukhid Emir Fakhr al-Din Abd al-Hamid bin al-Amir Hajji was killed, and his brother Shams al-Din bin Abdullah was captured. He was later released after a large ransom (Hamza, 1984, 129) was paid. According to the Tanukhid historian Salih bin Yahya, a question arises: What was the nature of the relationship between the Franks and the Tanukhids that led to Shams al-Din's release after being recognised? Was there a relationship of friendship and affection that prompted them to refrain from capturing him?

The Buhturis also participated with the Mamluks in the conquest of Cyprus. A military unit of Druze from Beirut and the western regions joined the naval campaign led by the Mamluks in 1425 AD against the Cypriots, the last Frankish stronghold in the Levant. This campaign culminated in the subjugation of the Frankish kings of Cyprus to the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt. As a result of these efforts and the military services provided by the Druze to the Mamluks, they were granted considerable autonomy in managing their internal affairs (Salibi, 2000, 10).

The Position of the Buhturids on the Mongol Invasion of the Levant and Their Dealings with the Mamluk Authority:

As previously noted, the Druze of the Al-Buhturi clan demonstrated hesitation in their dealings with external powers, whether the Franks or the Mongols, alongside a lack of clarity in their position regarding the Mamluks. This ambiguity may be attributed to sectarian differences between the Sunni Mamluk state and its stance towards the princes of the West, as well as a general lack of mutual trust between the two parties. Furthermore, the Mamluk state was still in its formative stages, prompting the Western princes to seek a balanced relationship with both the Mongol and Mamluk powers. Consequently, the Druze engaged with external actors based on what best served their regional interests and ensured their continued influence in their territories.

This pragmatic approach is also evident in the Al-Buhturi's interactions with the Mongols during their entry into the Levant. When Hulagu, the Tatar ruler, entered the region, Prince Jamal al-Din Muhammad Al-Buhturi travelled to Damascus and met with Kitbugha, Hulagu's deputy in the Levant, on 7 Rajab 658 AH / 1260 AD. He requested to retain his fief, which he had held during the reign of the Ayyubid Sultan Al-Nasir Yusuf ibn Al-Aziz, ruler of Damascus (Yahya, 1927, 56-57). Ibn Sabat also described the policy of appeasement pursued by the princes of the West towards the Mongols, which initially involved avoiding their hostility and subsequently

observing the outcome of the Mongol-Mamluk confrontation before aligning with the stronger side (Ibn Sabat, 1993, 395).

When the Mongols entered the Levant, Prince Zayn al-Din approached them to pledge his allegiance, aiming to avert their aggression. Later, as Qutuz arrived in the Levant with the Egyptian army—and with neither he nor Jamal al-Din Hajji certain of the victor—the two parties agreed on a contingency plan: Zayn al-Din ibn Ali would join the Egyptian camp, while Jamal al-Din remained with the Tatars in Damascus. Whichever side emerged victorious, one of the two would already be aligned with it. This episode exemplifies the interest-based pragmatism that shaped the relationship of the Western princes with both the Mongols and the Mamluks.

It is also noteworthy that during the decisive Battle of Ain Jalut between the Mamluks and the Mongols—which concluded with a Mamluk victory in 658 AH / 1260 AD—Zayn al-Din Salih, Emir of the West, displayed remarkable courage and excelled as an archer. When the Tatars fortified themselves atop a mountain, they were encircled by Mamluk forces, among whom was Zayn al-Din Al-Buhturi. His powerful archery impressed the Sultan's Mamluks to such an extent that they offered him crossbows from their own quivers. This display of valour contributed to the Sultan's decision to pardon him, despite his earlier allegiance to the Mongols at the outset of the conflict (Yahya, 1927; 65, Abu Izz al-Din, 1985, 203).

Mamluk Campaigns to the Keserwan Mountains and the Buhturids' Position on Them:

Keserwan and the Jurd, or the people of the mountain, who were targeted by the Mamluk forces, refer to what is geographically known today as Keserwan and Matn in Lebanon. This group did not see any interest in engaging in the various conflicting factions within the Levant. Additionally, there was a lack of enthusiasm from various Shiite groups in responding to the call for jihad under the banner of the Mamluks and Sunni jurists.

Keserwan was subjected to three Mamluk campaigns between 691 and 705 AH / 1292-1305 AD, with the largest and longest being the third Mamluk campaign in 705 AH / 1305 AD (Barut, 2017, 117-118). The narratives also mention that when the Levant was exposed to the Mongol invasion of Ghazan Khan in 699 AH / 1299 AD, some of the people of Keserwan sided with the Mongols after the Mamluks were defeated by Ghazan Khan's forces. In response, the deputy of the Mamluk Sultanate in the Levant, Jamal al-Din Aqush al-Afram, led an army from Damascus to the Jurd Mountains and Keserwan. Accompanied by Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah and many volunteers and Hawarna, they aimed to confront the people of these regions for several reasons. Among the reasons was the perceived corruption of their beliefs, their assistance to the Mongols, their attacks on Muslims, their taking of their weapons, and even killing them (Ibn Kathir, n.d, 9/236 ; Ibn Khaldun, 2007, 5/415). The people of Keserwan and Jezzine reportedly went as far as selling fleeing Mamluks to the Franks, Regarding the stripping and killing, it was extensive (Al Maqrizi, 1/3,903 ; Salibi, 2001, 135).

When the Mamluk armies arrived, accompanied by Ibn Taymiyyah, the latter succeeded in guiding many back to the correct path, forcing them to return what they had taken from the army's supplies. Additionally, a substantial financial penalty was imposed on them to be paid to the Mamluk treasury (Ibn Kathir, n.d, 9/236; Ibn Khaldun, 2007, 5/415). Nadim Hamza has shown that the Tanukhids of the Al-Buhtur dynasty cooperated with the Mamluks, providing refuge to the Mamluk army fleeing from the Mongols and treating them well. After the Mamluks successfully repelled the Mongols from Damascus and expelled them from the Levant, the Mamluks worked to strengthen the position of the Tanukhids in the West. Sultan Al-Nasir

Muhammad ibn Qalawun deposed Prince Nahed al-Din bin Buhtur bin Salih and appointed him as the Emir of the Forty (Tablakhna) in the Levant region in 700 AH / 1300 AD (Hamza, 1984, 128-129.

In this campaign, the people of the mountain ambushed the Muslims, and two Tanukhid princes, Prince Muhammad and his brother Ahmad, sons of Muhammad bin Karamah al-Tanukhi, were killed in this battle at Nibeih (Al-Shidyaq, n.d, 207).

While some historians have mentioned that Al-Afram headed to Keserwan and the Druze due to their attacks on the Muslim army (Al Maqrizi, n.d, 1/3, 902-903 ; Ibn Khaldun, 2007,5/415), other historians have shown that the Druze were indeed present in Keserwan, and that the Mamluks advanced to confront them. Ibn Khaldun may have implied that the reason for the Mamluks' war against them was rooted in sectarian conflict, rather than their support for the Mongols. Saleh bin Yahya noted that the Tanukh princes, led by Prince Nasser al-Din al-Hussein bin Khader, joined the Mamluks in 705 AH / 1305 AD to exact revenge on the Keserwanis during the third Mamluk campaign against Keserwan. In this campaign, two Tanukh princes were killed: Najm al-Din and his brother Shihab al-Din Ahmad, the sons of Prince Hajji. Additionally, twenty-three people (Yahya, 1927, 100; Hamza, 1984, 129) from the western regions were also killed.

Nadim Hamza further explained that there was a significant presence of Druze monotheists alongside the Ismaili Shiites in Keserwan, noting that both the Shiites and Druze trace their tribal origins to a common Arab clan, particularly the Tanukhids. He also mentioned that people from one village were divided into two groups: one group accepted the Druze faith and adhered to it, while the other remained loyal to their original sect. It was in the interest of the Buhturis to align with the Mamluks, particularly the Abayya branch, as they participated in the fighting in hopes of consolidating the foundations of their emirate in the West and restoring their influence in Mount Keserwan, a region that was historically part of the Tanukhid influence zone. Furthermore, the Buhturids, led by Prince Hussein, adhered to the Tanukhids' political approach, which emphasized strict opposition to enemies outside the Islamic lands and the need to combat those who sympathized with them (Hamza, 1984, 130-131).

In 1304, Aqush al-Afram, the governor of Damascus, sent Zayn al-Din bin Adnan to Keserwan and the people of the mountains to reconcile them with the Tanukh princes, two of whom had been killed by the people of Keserwan. However, they rejected the reconciliation and refused to obey Aqush. In response, Aqush began to mobilise armies from across the Levant for a period of three years (Al-Shidyaq, n.d, 208) .As a result, the Mamluk state took control of Keserwan. The villages of the region were initially assigned to some Mamluk princes in Damascus and Baalbek. Subsequently, the state brought in Turkmen clans in early 1306 AD, with three hundred knights, including the princes of the Al-Assaf dynasty (Shidyaq Al, n.d, 208 ;Salibi, 2001, 137).

It is clear that the Mamluk retaliation against Keserwan was violent and destructive, which prompted Al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun to seek justification for this brutality. Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah’s response was that these were groups that had deviated from the religion, and that fighting them was more important than fighting the Jews and Christians. He argued that they preferred the Franks and Tatars over the Muslims (Sbeiti, 2007, 93-94). This is reflected in his letter, where he spoke about the people of innovation, such as the Rafidah, the Batiniyyah, the Qarmatians, the Ismailis, the Nusayris, and other hypocritical heretics affiliated with the Rafidah. Many of them had an inclination towards the Tatars because the Tatars did not force them to adhere to Islamic law, instead leaving them to follow their own beliefs (Al- Salihi, 2001,

119).

Finally, it is important to mention the decline of the role of the Buhturids at the expense of the Ma'ani Druze during the Ottoman rule of the Levant. As their power diminished, they were increasingly seen as being affiliated with the Mamluk state. This shift became particularly evident during the Battle of Marj Dabiq in 1516 AD, when the Ma'ani leaders broke away from the Mamluks and allied with the Ottomans, declaring their loyalty and allegiance to them (Hazran, 2014, 18 ; Hitti, 1928, 11).

The Dynasty *Ma'nis* and Its Relationship with the Ottoman Empire:

Definition of the Two Meanings:

The Buhturi princes remained loyal to the Mamluks until the end of their rule and the rise of the Ottoman Empire. Following this transition, the leadership of the Druze passed to the Ma'an dynasty. The history of the Ma'an in Lebanon dates back to the early 6 AH / 12 AD when they arrived in the Chouf region to combat the Crusaders. Prior to this, they had lived near Aleppo (Qadi, 2008, 45). The Ma'an fought the Crusaders in northern Syria alongside Ilghazi bin Artuq, an ally of Tughtakin, the ruler of Damascus, before relocating to the Bekaa Valley. They left the Bekaa at the orders of Tughtakin and settled in southern Lebanon to support the Druze in their conflict against the Franks. The Tanukhids welcomed them and intermarried with them (Abu Izz al-Din, 1985, 239).

"Muhammad Kurd Ali noted that the Tanukh and Ma'an dynasties served as a barrier in the high coastal regions of Lebanon, or the Phoenician Mountains, situated between the territories controlled by the Crusaders and those under the rule of Damascus. Both dynasties played a significant role in resisting the Crusaders, showing remarkable courage and bravery, which was widely acknowledged and celebrated" (Kurd Ali, 1925, 2/14).

They had their aforementioned influence in fighting the Crusaders, demonstrating courage and bravery that were widely applauded. When the Ottomans conquered the Levant in 1516 AD and Sultan Selim entered Damascus, the princes of the regions came to him. The Sultan appointed Prince Qarqmaz bin Yunus bin Ma'an as ruler of the Chouf, and Prince Jamal al-Din al-Yemeni al-Arslani as ruler of the West. This appointment acknowledged the long-standing situation, which was the continuation of the Druze princes under the rule of their own leadership (Abu Izz al-Din, 1985, 227, 240).

The influence of the Ma'anites grew during the early years of Ottoman rule, to the extent that the mountainous region they inhabited became known as Jabal Bayt Ma'an. Their influence reached its peak under Prince Fakhr al-Din II (1585-1635 AD), when they controlled most of the Levant, from the coast of Antioch in the north to Safed in the south, as well as a large portion of the Syrian desert, including Palmyra (Hussein, 1962, 13).

Fakhr al-Din II and His Relationship with the Ottoman Empire:

Since ancient times, both rulers and the ruled have re11cognised the importance of the geographical area adjacent to the Syrian coast in defending the interior against attacks from the sea. Consequently, rulers established garrisons in the region, and those who rebelled against the ruling authority, as well as individuals facing religious persecution, sought refuge there. The Atabegs of Damascus, followed by the Ayyubids, aimed to settle new Muslim communities, the majority of whom were Arab tribes, along the Lebanese coast. Notable examples include the "Banu Buhtur", who inhabited the western region, the Ma'an in the Chouf, and the Shihabis in

Wadi al-Taym. Additionally, some Turkmen dynasties, such as the Al-Assaf dynasty in the coastal hills north of the Nahr al-Kalb, and Kurdish dynasties like the Banu Sayfa in the Koura and Akkar regions, were brought in to monitor the Maronites of the north. These two dynasties remained Sunni (Rafiq, 2000, 107- 108).

The diversity of dynasties and ethnicities in the Lebanon region fostered a spirit of competition among the powers, with each party attempting to sow discord within the other in order to achieve gains and monopolise power. Consequently, Qarqamas, the father of Fakhr al-Din al-Maani II, found himself embroiled in such a crisis. In 1584 AD, the Egyptian treasury en route to Istanbul was attacked. Qarqamas was accused of orchestrating this attack, allegedly with the intrigue of Yusuf Sayfa Pasha, the governor of Tripoli, who tried to blame the Druze of the Chouf. The news reached Ibrahim Pasha, the governor of Egypt, who gathered the armies from Syria, Aleppo, and Egypt and directed them to those regions. Ibrahim Pasha sent a message to Qarqamas demanding the debts owed, and as a result of this incident, many Druze were killed (Al-Duwaihi, n.d, 447- 448; Qaraly 1937, 13).

Qarqamas' wife fled to the Maronite Khazen dynasty in the Keserwan region, which later explained the deep sympathy that developed between Fakhr al-Din and the Maronites. Fakhr al-Din appointed a member of the Khazen dynasty as his advisor (Hassoun, 2006, 115; Andreasyan, 1964).

Fakhr al-Din II began his movement after the Ottoman Empire weakened, seeking independence from the Ottomans as he realised his own strength. Initially, he appeased the Ottoman Empire by paying a significant tribute to the Ottoman treasury and sharing the spoils of war. He was appointed governor of Mount Lebanon and large areas of Syria and Palestine. The Ottomans recognised him as a prince, and he extended his authority from the Bekaa to Safad. This expansion was economically beneficial due to the wealth of the Bekaa. To solidify his influence, he established a network of spies in Istanbul to protect his interests. In addition to his followers from the Druze and Qaysite tribes, he recruited a private army of mercenary Saqbanis and fortified the castles in his region (Al-Muhibi, 1869, 3/267; Rafiq, 2000, 110; Hassoun, 2006, 116).

His Alliance with the West:

The interests of Fakhr al-Din II, who aspired to independence from the Ottoman Empire, aligned with the ambitions of the West, particularly the ruler of Tuscany, Ferdinand I, who openly declared his hostility toward the Ottomans. Ferdinand also sought to seize Syria, Palestine, and Cyprus. In 1608 AD, he sent an ambassador named Hippolyte Leoncini to negotiate with Fakhr al-Din regarding an agreement with the Ottoman Empire. It appears that the treaty included some secret war provisions, which angered the Ottoman Sultan. In response, the Sultan sent a force in 1614 AD to discipline Fakhr al-Din. This force was led by Ahmed Pasha al-Hafiz, the governor of the Levant, who incited local princes hostile to Fakhr al-Din, such as the Sayfa dynasty, rulers of Tripoli. He also sought to strike at his allies, such as Prince Yunus al-Harfush, ruler of Baalbek, and Prince Ahmed Shihab, ruler of Wadi al-Taym. The governor of the Levant complained to Istanbul about Fakhr al-Din's growing power, leading the Ottomans to send a large force to eliminate him (Al- Duwaihi, n.d, 466; Rafiq, 2000, 118).

In response, Fakhr al-Din sought refuge with his ally, the Prince of Tuscany. Fakhr al-Din II al-Ma'ni is considered one of the first princes to open his territory to Western influence. He allowed the French to open a khan in Sidon, and Florence established a consulate in his lands.

Additionally, he permitted European missionaries to preach Christianity among the Muslims and Druze (Qaraly, 1937, 14; Hussein, 1962, 13)، while encouraging Tuscan ships and merchants to trade in Lebanon's ports. This exchange facilitated the flow of products, such as silk, wheat, oil, soap, and grains (Qaraly, 1937, 14). Furthermore, his friendship with the Medici dynasty encouraged the expansion of foreign missionary efforts in Mount Lebanon (Rafiq, 2000, 121).

Fakhr al-Din's kindness to Christians, especially the Maronites, reached a point where Patriarch John Ibn Makhlouf sought refuge with him to escape the hostility of Yusuf Sayfa, who was an enemy to both of them. Fakhr al-Din welcomed and honoured him. During this period, a significant event took place: strife broke out among the Muslims in the village of Majdal Ma'ush, resulting in increased killing. Ultimately, the villagers agreed to sell the land and leave. Fakhr al-Din purchased the village and sold it to the Christians. Patriarch John then built a house and a church there, settling his community in the village (Al- Duwaihi, n.d, 462). This act further demonstrates Fakhr al-Din's inclination towards Christianity, which may have been politically motivated to gain a broad base of Christian supporters, especially to strengthen the Christian presence in the region. Another reason for his support of Christianity was to gain the favour and sympathy of the West, which could secure political gains and economic support to expand his influence. This would also enable him to recruit a large number of mercenaries to strengthen his power.

The Maronites even considered Fakhr al-Din II the leader who sought Lebanonization, aiming for a Lebanon independent from the Islamic state. Fakhr al-Din's full embrace of Lebanonization culminated in his conversion to Catholicism. In the eyes of the Maronites, Fakhr al-Din is considered a national hero for his confrontation with the Ottoman Empire and his cooperation with the Pope and the Principality of Tuscany in Italy (Danawi, n.d, 157, 158).

If we were to make a simple comparison between the relationship of the Buhturids with the Mamluks and the relationship of Fakhr al-Din with the Ottomans, along with the stance of each towards the ruling authority, we would find that the Buhturids were more obedient to the Mamluks. They sought to strike a balance between preserving their autonomy and serving the Mamluks, who often supported them in their wars against the Franks. Despite their friendly relations with the Franks, this did not hinder the Buhturids' desire to protect their lands from foreign invasion. However, this was not the case with the Ma'anis, particularly Fakhr al-Din II, whose ambition drove him towards independence from the Ottomans and the opening of his country to the West, which sought to control the possessions of the Islamic world.

Father Pauls referenced a report by the engineer Santi, in which he explained that the opportunity had arisen to strike at the Ottomans and seize the kingdoms of Jerusalem and Syria. To achieve this objective, it was crucial to form an alliance with Fakhr al-Din, the prince of the Druze, who were descendants of the French and rebellious against the Turks (Qaraly, 1938, 160).

Fakhr al-Din continued to reside in Italy for several years, during which he was welcomed by Grand Duke Cosimo II, who hosted him with hospitality and honour, housing him in one of the luxurious palaces (Al- Duwaihi, n.d, 465 ; Abu Izz al- Din, 1985, 250). His presence revived the ambitions of Western Europe to launch a new crusade against the Ottomans and the Islamic lands. The West even propagated the absurd idea that the Druze derived their name from Count de Dreux, a Crusader who sought refuge in Dubbel after their defeat by the Muslims, where he mingled with the local population. Thus, the Druze were purported to have originated (Al-Duwaihi, n.d, 465; Abu Izz Al-Din, 1985, 250).

Fakhr al-Din's Return to Lebanon and His Elimination:

Fakhr al-Din II returned to Lebanon in 1618 AD after his stay in Italy, taking advantage of the Ottomans' preoccupation with their wars against the Safavids. Upon his return, he strengthened his ties with the Ottomans, developed his country's economy, and began expanding his territory. His following among the Druze and Saqbanis grew to approximately 100,000. Fakhr al-Din seized key territories, including Ajloun, the Golan Heights, Hauran, Palmyra, Al-Hosn, Marqab, and Salamiyah. His rule extended from Safad to Antioch. His growing power allowed him to defeat the governor of Damascus, Mustafa Pasha, who was defeated by Fakhr al-Din near Anjar. Fakhr al-Din even captured Mustafa Pasha and imprisoned him until religious scholars intervened and successfully mediated for his release (Al- Muhibi, 1869, 267).

On the external front, Fakhr al-Din facilitated the establishment of trading centers and consulates for the French and Venetians in Sidon and neighbouring ports. These powers, trading under the French flag, imported silk, agricultural products, and alkali used in glass and soap production from the region, particularly to Venice and Marseille, in exchange for textiles (Rafiq, 2000, 119).

Due to the Ottomans' preoccupation with the Safavid wars, Sultan Murad IV recognised Fakhr al-Din's authority and appointed him as governor of the region extending from Aleppo to the borders of Arish. Fakhr al-Din took the title of Sultan of the Land. However, the growing influence of Fakhr al-Din prompted the Ottomans to take action. Sultan Murad appointed the minister Ahmed Pasha, known as Kajik Ahmed, to govern the Levant and tasked him with countering Fakhr al-Din's power. Ahmed Pasha was given Egyptian forces to besiege Fakhr al-Din by sea. In 1634 AD, Ahmed Pasha succeeded in defeating Fakhr al-Din in the Bekaa Valley and besieged him in Jezzine Castle. Fakhr al-Din eventually surrendered and was taken to Damascus, where he was sent to Istanbul. He remained imprisoned there until his execution in 1635 AD (Al- Muhibi, 1869, 267; Qarali, 1938, 17; Hassoun, 2006, 119)، following an attack by Prince Melhem on the Ottoman forces in Lebanon. Sultan Murad IV issued an order for Fakhr al-Din's beheading (Qarali, 1938, 17).

Muhammad Ali described Fakhr al-Din II as a shrewd man, inclined to monopolise power and expand his control over as much land as possible in the Levant. He used his cunning to hold a grudge against the Ottomans, due to his influence from the Maronites, who had raised him after his mother sought refuge with them. Fakhr al-Din’s religious identity remained ambiguous; some considered him a Druze, others regarded him as a Sunni, while still others thought of him as a Christian (Danawi, n.d, 193- 194).

The Ma'anite State in Mount Lebanon After the Death of Fakhr al-Din II:

The Ma'anite state in Mount Lebanon did not end with the death of Fakhr al-Din II, as his dynasty continued to rule until 1697 AD. However, the dynasty's power significantly weakened following his death, due to several factors that were largely influenced by Fakhr al-Din's policies in the region. These included:

- His policy of tolerance towards different sects, especially the Maronites, whom he had sought refuge with after the death of his father between 1584 and 1591. This policy contributed to a fusion of populations, with many Maronites relocating to southern Mount Lebanon.
- The sectarian disturbances, known as the peasant revolts, which occurred across various sects in Mount Lebanon. These revolts were often driven by efforts to exploit the peasantry (Rafiq, 2000, 121).

- Fakhr al-Din granted religious freedom to all, a stance confirmed by Father Boulos, who stated that oppression had continued for ten long centuries until Fakhr al-Din came and treated his subjects equally. Father Boulos also explained that this oppression had been particularly severe during the Turkish era, which had entrenched hatred between the Druze and Sunnis. He noted that during this period, the Turks had killed sixty thousand Druze (Qarali, 1938, 33).

When Prince Melhem, who succeeded Fakhr al-Din, revolted against the Ottoman Empire due to the injustice of Prince Ali bin Alam al-Din al-Yemeni, who was appointed to rule Lebanon after Fakhr al-Din's capture, Prince Ali launched a fierce campaign against the Ma'an and Tanukh princes. This led to the killing of Prince Melhem and his companions from the Qaysi tribe (Hassoun, 2006, 119).

With the elimination of the Fakhr al-Din dynasty, a quasi-political vacuum emerged in Mount Lebanon and Palestine, which no prince could fill until the arrival of Zahir al-Umar in Palestine in the eighteenth century. Zahir al-Umar's influence eventually overshadowed the princes of Mount Lebanon.

Conclusion

From the above, the two researchers attempted to make a comparison between the two Druze dynasties, the Buhturids and the Ma'anids, which ruled in Mount Lebanon. From this comparison, we have drawn the following conclusions:

The difference between these two dynasties in their dealings with the ruling authority in the Lebanon region is notable. While the Buhturids remained loyal to the Mamluk state and made significant efforts to be part of the defense ring alongside the Muslims against external threats, particularly the Crusaders and later the Mongols, the Ma'an dynasty, represented by Fakhr al-Din al-Ma'an II, showed a distinct inclination towards the West. This shift in alignment contributed to the West's renewed interest in leading a crusade against the Ottoman Turks, whom they despised and resented, particularly due to the Ottomans' expansion into the West and their ongoing conflict with European powers.

Both dynasties aspired to independence from the ruling authority and the establishment of an independent state. However, the key difference lies in their approach. The Buhturids sought autonomy but were keen on maintaining a friendly relationship with the Mamluks, preferring to stay within the umbrella of the Islamic Caliphate and not separating from the Islamic world. In contrast, the Ma'an dynasty, particularly under Fakhr al-Din II, sought complete independence from the Ottoman Empire. They exploited the weakness of the Ottoman state at times, particularly when it was preoccupied with conflicts such as the war with the Safavids, to achieve political gains at the expense of the Ottomans.

The two dynasties maintained friendly and peaceful relations with the West, although the Buhturids were more cautious, mindful of the potential repercussions from the Mamluks. In contrast, Fakhr al-Din al-Ma'ni II fully opened the door to the West, making his country a key gateway for trade with Europe, particularly in terms of commercial exchanges between the two parties.

The Mamluk and Ottoman states dealt with the Druze with some harshness and severity, which made bothdynasties feel threatened by their oppression at all times, especially since they were religiously opposed to these two caliphates. This contributed to the state of tension between the two parties, and made the Druze constantly try to gain independence from these two states, since

.they did not feel that they were part of them

In conclusion, the study emphasises the necessity of further research into the Druze ruling dynasties that governed the Levant, in order to explore the reasons behind their attempts to achieve independence from the ruling authority and to secede. The objective of this research is not merely to examine past disputes, but to seek potential solutions in the present that could reintegrate the Druze into the broader Islamic community. Additionally, it aims to prevent their exploitation by certain parties who may seek to use them as tools for fragmenting and dividing the Islamic world.

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