

The Image of Arab Societies through the Literature of French Travelers to the Levant during the 19th Century AD - The Levantine Society as a Model

Abdessamed HASSAD^{1*}

¹ Yahia Fares University, Algeria

Received: 17/ 04 / 2024

Accepted: 21/ 06/ 2026

Published: 15 / 07/ 2026

~~~~~

## Abstract

French travelers to the Levant during the 19th century contributed to providing abundant scientific material about the region. They detailed and scrutinized all its features, especially those related to the social aspect. They provided researchers with a fertile base that enabled them to write part of the region's history with a new vision, which is the vision of the other, through which they could establish a local history with multiple opinions, through which comparisons and analyses can be made that allow us to reach historical knowledge that is close to the truth. Through this research, we will present the structure of Levantine society, which was greatly distinguished from other societies of the period by its mosaic composition: numerous categories with varied characteristics that, despite this, merged into a single template united by peaceful coexistence.

**Keywords:** France, Levant, society, the 19th century AD, the journey

## ملخص

ساهم الرحالة الفرنسيون إلى بلاد الشام خلال القرن 19م في تقديم مادة علمية غزيرة عن المنطقة، وقد قاموا بتفصيل وتمحيص كافة مميزاتها لاسيما تلك المتعلقة بالجانب الاجتماعي، وزودوا بذلك الباحثين بقاعدة معلومات خصبة تمكنهم من كتابة جزء من تاريخ المنطقة برؤية جديدة وهي رؤية الآخر. من خلالها يمكن التأسيس لكتابة تاريخ محلي من خلال عدة زوايا، ويمكن كذلك من خلالها إجراء مقارنات وتحليلات تتيح لنا فرصة الوصول إلى معرفة تاريخية قريبة من الحقيقة، ومن خلال هذا البحث سنعمل على تقديم تركيبة المجتمع الشامي الذي تميز كثيرا عن غيره من المجتمعات في تلك الفترة، حيث كان له طابع مركب من فسيفساء معقدة ومتنوعة ذات خصائص مختلفة، ولكن رغم ذلك انصهرت في قالب واحد وامتزجت وتعايشت بسلام.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الشام، المجتمع، القرن 19م، الرحلة، فرنسا.

## Cite as

Hassad, A. (2026). The Image of Arab Societies through the Literature of French Travelers to the Levant during the 19th Century AD - The Levantine Society as a Model-. *Atras Journal*, 7(2), 16-28. <https://doi.org/10.70091/Atras/vol07no02.01>

\* emails: <sup>1</sup>[Hassad.abdessamed@univ-medea.dz](mailto:Hassad.abdessamed@univ-medea.dz)

Atras Journal/ 2026, published by the University of Saida Dr Moulay Tahar, Algeria  
This is an Open Access Article under The CC BY-NC 4.0

## Introduction

The 19th century witnessed prolific scientific production, especially in the field of travel journals and the risks they entailed. Many travelers explored the East in general, and the Levant in particular. This was after the significant opening of the region to European countries, facilitated by privileges granted by the Ottoman Empire. French travelers were at the forefront in terms of the number of journeys and writings, leaving behind a significant historical legacy. Their travel documentation stood out for its comprehensiveness, precision, and detail.

The French travelers effectively covered various aspects of life in the East, providing researchers with a rich foundation for studying the characteristics and structures of these societies. They also highlighted key developments throughout the 19th century. Studying the region's history is incomplete without giving due weight to the perspectives of these travelers, known as the "other." Their accounts enable comparisons and introduce new aspects not documented in local writings.

The significance and scientific value lie in establishing a comprehensive and consistent historical account across the 19th century. This diverse and consistent documentation facilitates analyses and contributes to the writing of a local history with multiple perspectives.

Our choice of the Levant region was primarily driven by the rich historical, social, cultural, and economic factors that characterized this area. These elements made it a melting pot of diverse populations living within a single geographic region. Consequently, the society of the Levant in the 19th century can be considered one of the most complex, encompassing a mosaic of diverse races, religions, and sects. This diversity further branches into several categories, yet the inhabitants coexist peacefully, bound by numerous connections that enable them to live in harmony, safety, and cohesion. The French travelers were particularly impressed by this diversity, often praising it in their accounts. They provided us with a rich and varied material about the inhabitants of the Levant. Based on the above, we pose the main problem of the subject: to examine the image and characteristics of Levantine society through the perspective of the "other," namely, the French travelers.

Our approach involves elucidating aspects of anthropological studies, also known as the science of humanity, as explored by the French travelers. We will employ a historical, descriptive, and analytical methodology to address various dimensions. Our primary goal in this endeavor is to present a positive portrayal of a period characterized by the noblest meanings of peaceful coexistence within the religious and societal fabric. This period exemplifies Muslims setting an example of good neighborliness, interaction, assimilation, and respect for the "other" by respecting their customs, traditions, and religious practices.

## The Demographic Structures Constituting the Levantine Society

During this period, Levantine society encompassed diverse groups of various origins, united by a common religion or sect that brought them together within an organized framework. Consequently, it can be described as a complex mosaic, with each group sharing a set of characteristics that distinguish it and make it distinct and independent from the others. Examples of such distinctions include similarities in religious practices, customs, traditions,

and rituals, as well as sometimes even geographical concentrations. Notably, according to the writings of French travelers, despite the diverse and detailed nature of this mixture, it coexisted peacefully. Strong social and economic relationships connected these groups, rarely leading to sectarian conflicts. The northwestern region of the Levant is highlighted as one of the most diverse in terms of sectarian affiliations (Chahine, 1986, p. 16).

The French traveler Volney, in his journey titled "Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine" conducted in the late 18th century, provided detailed observations about the composition of the society. Volney's<sup>1</sup> precision can be attributed to his extended stay in the Levant for nearly three years from 1783 to 1785. He began by describing the Levantine society as "composed of a group of population residues of various elements." He then proceeded to categorize the society into different groups:

1-The people whose settlement predates the Islamic conquest, referred to as the "Romans." These were further divided into three subgroups: Romans who separated from the Roman partnership, Latin Romans united with Rome, and Maronites<sup>2</sup>.

2-The Arab conquerors, categorized into four groups: Sunni Arabs, constituting the majority, Shia Arabs, Druze<sup>3</sup>, and Nusayris.

3-The category mentioned by Volney is the Ottoman Turks, described as the dominant people controlling the region's affairs. He also noted the presence of nomadic pastoral peoples such as the Turkomans, the Kurds and Arab Bedouins (Al-Sayoufi, 1949, p. 223). However, he neglected to discuss some other categories found in 19th-century French travel sources, such as the Jews and the Sufis (Dervishes), who can be considered as an independent group distinguished by their characteristics, customs, traditions, and practices.

The population categories presented by French travelers can be divided into urban and Bedouin residents. It is important to note that this division is not exhaustive, as we can find individuals from larger cities, like the Druze or Maronites, living in the desert in small, scattered settlements. Conversely, some Bedouin residents may temporarily or permanently move to cities for various reasons. Therefore, the broader classification for the concentration of these categories can be outlined as follows:

### ***Urban Residents***

The urban population is the population that was concentrated in the major cities in the Levant, and the city population consisted of the following categories:

#### ***Druze***

The travelers estimated their number to be significant in the Levant. For instance, Michel Jullien mentioned that the Druze in present-day Lebanon alone number around 133,000, which is a considerable density compared to other populations (Jullien, 1893, p. 16). The French religious book foundation mission, visiting the region in the mid-19th century, noted that the Druze successfully established large settlements, emphasizing the strength of Druze social ties

(La Société Des Livres Religieux de Toulous, 1854, p. 162). The Druze are characterized by unique customs, traditions, and nature compared to other groups (Bourasse, 1860, p. 452). For example, researcher Amira Sheikh Rida Farhat notes their tendency towards seclusion and mentions that much remains unknown about them (Farhat, 2013, p. 491). This distinctiveness extends to various aspects such as food and clothing (Pétigny, 1866, p. 162). The Druze are divided into two classes: the 'Aqal (knowledgeable) and the Jahil (ignorant), each with its own characteristics and features (Qayz, 1949, p. 52).

### *Maronites*

The Maronite community is one of the prominent Christian sects in the Levant, particularly in the northern regions, where they formed a significant population density (Jabr, 1981, p. 169). Some travelers, like Delaroiere, even claimed that the Maronites constitute the majority in the eastern regions of the Levant, concentrating in and around the city of Beirut (Delaroiere, 1836, p. 47). The Maronites follow the Christian religion and adhere to the Catholic doctrine (Bourasse, 1860, p. 452). The French writer

Théophile Gautier acknowledged the spiritual authority of the Pope (Gautier, 1882, p. 177). These religious factors strengthened their ties with European Christians, especially with France, to the extent that some considered themselves French (Camille, 1864, p. 68). Eugene Melchior observed the influence of French customs on young Maronites, with some speaking French in the streets of Beirut (Melchior, 1876, p. 28). Lebanese researcher Amira Jabr notes that some Maronite families still carry French titles, such as Second, Prince, and Talleyrand (Jabr, 1981, p. 180).

### *Shia*

Referred to in French writings as the "Mitoulis," the Shia are scattered in the northeastern suburbs and the Bekaa region. They managed to establish the Emirate of Baalbek, ruled by the Harfoush family from 1282 to 1866. However, their conditions in the area were characterized by instability and constant turmoil, leading to conflicts with the authorities (Ghraibieh, 1984, p. 52). Some French observers, like Henry Guys, noted the Shia's strictness and peculiar customs, observing that they did not align with Muslims and Christians except in some beliefs (Guys, 1855, p. 22). Jean Jacques Bourassé, in his travels, similarly noticed their distinguished ethics and fierce personalities compared to other societal groups in the Levant (Bourassé, 1860, p. 452).

The Shia form a significant population density. Filleul Clara de Pétigny estimated their number to be about one-third of the population in the northeastern region of the Levant (Clara, 1852, p. 233). Poujoulat approximated their number in the northwestern regions to be around 40,000 out of a total population of about 400,000, making their density quite substantial (Jabr, 1981, p. 154). The Shia in the Levant are divided into several sects, including the Nusayris<sup>4</sup> and the Ismailis<sup>5</sup>, with Michel Jullien estimating their numbers to be around 14,000 and 13,000, respectively (Jullien, 1893, p. 16).

## *Jews*

Jews have been present in the Levant since ancient times, but their numbers were initially small. However, according to the writings of French travelers, they managed to form a significant population density in the Levant during the 19th century. Most of them noted a steady increase in their numbers. The abbe Parraud, in his book, mentioned a large influx of Jews to the Levant, especially to the city of Jerusalem, stating that they became a significant density in the region (Parraud, 1891, p. 222). One of the prominent reasons for their increase was the large-scale expulsion of Jews from Russia, as estimated by the traveler M. M. P. V. (M. M. P. V., 1895, p. 150). This is also echoed by Martin Donos, who stated, "...many Jews fled from Russia due to the persecution, escaping to Palestine" (Donos, 1893, p. 244). Traveler Louis Péchenard mentioned that Russia supported their deportation to Palestine to get rid of them (Péchenard, 1893, p. 291). Jews dispersed across the world, but the majority migrated to the Levant, especially the region of Palestine. This is confirmed by the writings of travelers such as Abbe Becq, who observed a large gathering of them in the city of Jerusalem (Becq, 1859, p. 53). Martin Donos supports the previous statement, mentioning that Jews were crowded in the lower part of the city on the slopes of Mount Zion. He noted that by the late 19th century, they owned numerous temples, hospitals, and schools, forming significant population clusters. He also pointed out that the Rothschild family supported and sponsored them, allowing them to establish what is known as the Jewish Quarter in the southeast of the city, characterized by considerable density (Donos, 1893, p252). Additionally, a large group of Jews concentrated near the Sea of Galilee and in other cities (Caravane Francaise, 1873, p214).

## *Sufi Dervishes<sup>6</sup>*

According to observations by Abbe Lespinasse, the Dervishes constitute a distinct class in society, dedicating themselves to poverty and chastity. He mentioned that they are divided into several types, including tricksters, ascetics, enchanters, and insolent ones. Lespinasse described their symbolic representation reaching a state known as the ultimate ecstasy, noting that they emit sounds like howling wolves. Their dances are rough and daring. Lespinasse considered their activities trivial, stating, "...what they do impresses only the naive people." He further classified them based on the rituals they practice, noting that there are 32 types of Dervishes, with the most common being the howling Dervishes and the spinning Dervishes who rapidly transition into a state of physical and mental trance after a round (Lespinasse, 1885, p. 366).

Like other Sufi orders and groups, these Dervishes engage in daily rituals of worship such as repentance, submission, and self-discipline in worship. Their gatherings usually take place on Thursday evenings, which is the night before Friday. Their clothing is predominantly white, and they wear a long hat resembling a sugarloaf. Each Dervish possesses a rosary consisting of 99 beads, symbolizing the names of Allah. They recite certain supplications 33 times, aligning with the count of the rosary. During their worship practices, they chant

significant phrases like "There is no god but Allah, alone with no partner; O my God, He, the Living, the Existent, the Avenger, the Just..." (Guys, 1855, p. 224).

## **Bedouin Population**

### ***Bedouin Population***

When discussing Bedouin Arabs, it is necessary to differentiate between the two patterns present among them: the farmers and the herders. The lifestyle of each group is based on customs, traditions, nature, and tendencies, making each distinct from the other. Sedentary Arabs are settled in one place, and their lifestyle somewhat resembles that of city dwellers (al-Siyofi, 1941, p.15). The second category consists of nomadic Bedouin tribes, widely dispersed in the vast deserts extending from Damascus to the borders of Persia (La Société Des Livres Religieux, 1854, p.143). They are not bound to the land except for temporary interests, thus constantly moving their tents from one place to another. According to Volney, they are neither civilized nor savage but form independent tribes and groups, often in a state of hostility. However, it can be said that they constitute one people based on language (al-Siyofi, 1941, p.15). Bedouin Arabs, according to Léonie De Bazelaire, are simple farmers with modest habits, characterized by excessive ruggedness. They lead a simple life, relying on the products of their land, such as herbs and fruits, as well as the milk of animals like goats and camels (Bazelaire, 1889, p.104). Their simplicity extends to all aspects of their lives, as noted by Pierre Louis Péchenard, who observed Bedouin families still living in tents made of goat hair. He also mentioned that this simplicity is evident in their women, who appear in modest attire, adhering to ancient customs (Pichenard, 1893, p.122).

### ***Kurds***

The French traveler Le Compte de Perthuis mentions that Kurds prefer living in desert areas, especially in winter when the northern regions are cold. They spend summers in northern areas because desert temperatures can be high. They do not return until autumn, constantly migrating to areas with abundant pastures. Michel Jullien notes that some Kurds live independently in tents, moving from place to place in search of fodder. The primary activity of settled Kurdish tribes in the Levant is agriculture, and their numbers began to increase relatively in the late 19th century. One of the notable Kurdish tribes in the Levant is the Yazidis, numbering between 10,000 to 15,000 individuals, generally residing in areas surrounding Aleppo (Jullien, 1893, p.16).

### ***Turkmen***

According to statistics from the scientific mission of the French religious book institution in Toulouse, the Turkmen population is estimated to be around 30,000, constituting a considerable density (La Société des livres religieux de Toulouse, 1854, p.146). Volnay notes that Turkmen, along with Kurds and Bedouins, are not settled, and their habitation is not fixed. Moving from place to place with their tents and herds is a common characteristic among them.

Turkmen tribes in Syria are traced back to Tatar tribes, and they speak the Turkish language with Bedouin customs (La Société Des Livre Religieux De Toulouse, 1854, p.143). Volnay also states that they migrated from their homelands due to disturbances, settling in the plains of Armenia and Asia Minor. They speak Turkish, roam from place to place, cover long distances to graze their numerous herds, and seek areas with abundant pasture (al-Siyofi, 1941, p.13).

### *Mountain Dwellers*

French consul Henri Guys mentions that mountain dwellers refer to those living in mountainous regions in the northwestern part of the Levant. The estimated population is around 300,000, with one-third being Christians and the rest comprising Muslims, Druze, and Shiites. He notes that the mountain population has been increasing due to improved health systems and vaccination against epidemics in the region. The mountain plague that appeared in many regions quickly ceased due to the efforts of the prince, who implemented precise health systems before the establishment of health quarantines by the Ottoman Sultan and the viceroy of Egypt in the region (Guys, 1949, pp.217-218). Clara Filleul de Pétigny points out that mountain dwellers are characterized by excessive courage compared to residents of other regions, a natural consequence of growing up in a mountainous environment filled with challenges and risks that individuals must overcome (Pétigny, 1852, p. 233).

## **Examples of Social Mosaics in Major Levantine Cities**

Muslims throughout their long history have set several examples embodying the highest meanings of tolerance, dialogue, and religious coexistence. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, laid the foundation for this humanitarian thought, urging fidelity to agreements, including those made with people of the covenant<sup>7</sup>. He also advised against discrimination based on ethnicity, language, or wealth. Muslim rulers throughout the ages adhered to his principles and preserved his legacy. Among the prominent Islamic regions that embodied these values is the Levant. Christians of various denominations, Jews, and others lived there freely and peacefully, practicing their rituals and beliefs while enjoying complete protection within Islamic territories. They also engaged in various economic activities, and many became wealthy. Here are some examples of the social mixture that existed harmoniously in major Levantine cities:

Let's start with the city of Damascus, as it contains a large number of ethnic groups (national, linguistic, and religious), presenting a diverse and different mixture resembling a mosaic (Shelsher, 1998, p.37). It is one of the most prominent Levantine cities hosting a diverse mix of several categories with various religions. Upon entering the city, one can observe a blend of races and diversity, even in skin colors. Gustav Le Bon accurately described this scene, stating that the inhabitants of Damascus are like a rainbow arch, consisting of people with bright white skin, dark black skin, and various shades in between. In the social fabric of Damascus, one finds Kurds, Armenians, Maronites, the Rum Orthodox, Jews, and others (Le Bon, 2017, p.160).

Gustave Le Bon did not mention all the components of this mixture, so we will refer to some more precise and comprehensive observations made by Volney. He states, "...there is a considerable number of Turks living in the city who occupy military and civil positions only in the cities." He also talks about the Arabs in the city, dividing them into two groups: the first group is settled in the city, and the second group resides in the adjacent desert and only comes to the city for their needs before returning in the evening to the nearby desert (Seufi, 1941, p.32). As mentioned earlier, despite their diversity, the inhabitants lived in peace. This observation is supported by Abbé Delaplanche, who said, "...despite this diverse mixture living in the city, they are very homogeneous..." (Delaplanche, 1876, p.223).

Beirut, like Damascus, is composed of a mixture of urban and rural populations, with most of them speaking the Arabic language. The French consul, Guiz, mentioned that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them (Guys, 1855, p.21). Travelers also provided detailed descriptions of the various components of the population. Richard Cortambert, for example, stated, "...the inhabitants of Beirut are generally composed of Turks, Druze, Maronites, Jews, Shia, Armenians, and Greeks, as well as some Europeans..." (Cortambert, 1864, p.22). Father Becq added that there is another category in Beirut, the Moroccans, who were a considerable number, and he did not neglect to mention the presence of Protestant Christians in the city (Becq, 1859, pp. 228-229).

Within this mixture, there were also Europeans and foreign diplomatic corps workers, as each country had its consuls and embassies (Delaroiere, 1836, p.47). The traveler Allard Camille mentioned that Beirut has many European features, and Europeans live there peacefully (Halaq, 1987, p.19). They achieved a high level of freedom, with their wives walking in the streets with uncovered faces without facing any verbal or physical harassment from Muslims (Camille, 1864, p.78).

Beirut is characterized by its diverse population composition. Muslims constitute the overwhelming majority, a statement supported by traveler Jean Baptiste Morot (Morot, 1869, p.354). Eduard Blondel noted that despite the large intermingling in the city and the interactions, each of these groups maintained its religion, customs, and unique traditions (Blondel, 1840, p.20).

The last example we will mention is Jerusalem, which, like other major cities in the Levant, consists of a diverse population mix. There are Greeks and Armenians in the city (Parraud, 1891, p.223). Additionally, various Christian sects, such as the Copts, Abyssinians, and some residents from the eastern Levantine cities, have settled in the city (Bazelaire, 1889, pp.116-118). Abbe Becq mentioned that Muslims overwhelmingly constitute the majority of the city's population (Becq, 1859, p.172). Some Catholics live in the city and enjoy several privileges, especially since they are supported by France (Donos, 1893, p.152). There are also Protestants in the city, and their numbers have been growing for half a century according to Abbe Parraud (Parraud, 1891, p.224). Firmin Rauzy mentioned that Protestants in the city receive significant support from England, contributing to their wealth and increasing their

numbers. He also spoke about the Jews who began to increase, occupying several areas and forming a significant population density in the city (Rauzy, 1897, p.90).

## Conclusion

Through the analysis and study of the aforementioned characteristics and structure of the Levantine society during the 19th century, we reach the following conclusions:

- Diversity of Levantine society classes and their division into several sections.
- Each class in the Levantine society maintaining its characteristics, customs, and traditions despite merging with each other.
- Coexistence of inhabitants of the Levant, despite their differences; you find Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the same neighborhood, urban and rural residents, foreigners, etc., and all of this did not lead to problems except for the exception of the 1860 massacres, which had external hands involved.
- Diversity of religions, combining Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.
- Plurality of sects and denominations, such as Sunni and Shia Muslims, Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians, and various sects among Jews with diverse nationalities.
- Freedom to practice rituals and beliefs without interference in each other's affairs.
- Levantine society is a complex mosaic.
- The writings of French travelers are rich in anthropological, ethnographic, and demographic information. Researchers can draw excellent scientific research from them. For example, religious practices, urban characteristics, economic aspects, health and education, ancient ruins like the cities of Baalbek and Palmyra, population growth and distribution, and other research perspectives that cannot all be mentioned here.

## Endnotes

**Volney:** Constantin-François Volney was born in Craon, France, in the year 1757. In 1784, he set out from the city of Marseille to Egypt, later moving to Lebanon and interacting with its tribes. He then ventured into the desert, lived among its tribes, and subsequently traveled to Syria. His journey, in general, spanned three years. Upon his return, his first task was documenting his travels in a book that became widely popular. He passed away in the year 1820 at the age of 63. (Reference: Habib Al-Sayoufi, "**Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine in the 18th Century**," as described by a Western figure, Maktabat Al-Mukhlis, Lebanon 1941, pp. 9-16).

<sup>2</sup>**Maronites:** A sect of Catholic Christians affiliated with Saint Maron the Hermit, who successfully attracted large groups to follow his teachings and way of life, leading to the formation of the Maronite community. (Reference: Mohammad Kurd Ali, "**Plans of the Levant**," Ibn Taymiyyah Library, 1st edition, Cairo, Egypt 2007, Vol. 6, p. 230).

**Druze:** A faction that branched off from the Isma'ilis during the Fatimid Caliphate, particularly during the rule of the Fatimid caliph by the order of God. This occurred when the prominent preacher Muhammad bin Isma'il

declared his divinity. His teachings spread rapidly in the Levant, especially after the Nizari Ismaili princes in Lebanon, with their Qaysi and Yamani factions, responded positively to his message. (Reference: Amira Sheikh Rida Farhat, **"The Fatimids: Their History and Impact in Egypt,"** Publishers, 1st edition, Beirut, Lebanon 2013, p. 488).

<sup>3</sup>**Nusayris:** Followers of Nusayr, a servant of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him). They excessively venerate Ali, claiming his divinity. They believe his abode is in the clouds, and when clouds pass by, they greet him, saying: "Peace be upon you, O Abu al-Hasan." They also claim that thunder is his voice and lightning is his laughter, which is why they hold clouds in high esteem. They further assert that Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman wronged Ali and deprived him of his rightful caliphate. (Reference: Mohammad Kurd Ali, op cit, p. 260).

<sup>4</sup>**The Nusayris:** They are one of the 11 branches of the extremist Shia group, and they attribute divinity to the Imams from the family of the Prophet. They claim that Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, is the best creation of Allah after the Prophet, peace be upon him, and likewise, his descendants. This is because he was specifically endowed with divine support in matters related to the secrets. They state that Allah appeared in his form, created with His hand, and commanded with His tongue, and that he existed before the creation of the heavens and the earth. This information is from Abu al-Fath Muhammad ibn Abdul Karim al-Shahrastani's book "Al-Milal wal-Nihal" as quoted by Abu Abdullah al-Sa'id al-Nadawi in "Al-Milal wal-Nihal," published by the Cultural Books Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon, 1994, Volume 1, pages 138-139.

<sup>5</sup>**The Isma'ilis:** The Isma'ilis, Batiniyya, Qaramita, and other sects appear as Shiite groups supporting the family of the Prophet. They brought the Imamate to Jafar and claimed that the Imam after him was his son Isma'il. They divided into two factions: one awaiting Isma'il ibn Jafar, and another faction stating that the Imam after Jafar was his descendant Muhammad ibn Isma'il ibn Jafar. This information is from Abdul Qahir ibn al-Tahir ibn Muhammad al-Baghdadi's book "Al-Farq Bayn al-Firaq" as cited by Majdi Fathi al-Sayyid in "Dirasat," supervised by Tawfiq Shalan, published by Al-Tawfiqiyya Library, Cairo, Egypt, no publication date, page 48.

<sup>6</sup>**Rothschild:** Mayer Amschel (1743-1812) is considered the founder of the Rothschild dynasty. He received education to become a rabbi, and after working in a bank in Hanover, he amassed considerable wealth. He opened a small currency exchange bank, which thrived, expanding his business. Between 1804 and 1812, he provided loans to the Danish government, entering the world of politics. He had five children, teaching them the secrets of trade and finance. By the 19th century, they dominated the trade industry, maintaining their German nationality. This information is from the book "Maher Aferoun, Rothschild, Bakri, and Tliran Families," translated by Masoud Haj Masoud, Dar Homa, Algiers 2013, pages 54-56.

<sup>7</sup>**People of the Covenant:** The term "People of the Covenant" refers to non-Muslim elements in the Levant, namely Jews and Christians. They are also known as the "People of the Book," and these two terms are used interchangeably, indicating that they are under the protection of Muslims, meaning they have entered into the covenant of Muslims for their protection. This information is from the book "Bilad al-Sham fi al-Ahd al-Othmani" (The Levant in the Ottoman Era) by Khateeb Muhammad, published by Dar Alaa Aldeen, Damascus, Syria, 2018, page 167.

**Funding:** This research is not funded.

**Conflicts of interest:** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

**Originality:** This manuscript is an original work.

**Statement on artificial intelligence:** This document has been enhanced through the use of Grammarly which was employed to refine its linguistic style and correct grammar and

spelling. While the incorporation of these technologies may introduce some AI-generated linguistic patterns, it is important to note that the core intellectual content, data interpretation, and conclusions presented are entirely the work of the author.

## References

Allard, C. (1864). *Souvenirs d'Orient: Les Échelles du Levant*. Adrian Le Clere.

Bazelaire, L. de. (1889). *Chevauchée en Palestine*. Louis Carré.

Becq, A. (1859). *Impressions d'un pèlerin de Terre Sainte au printemps de 1855*. A. D. Mame et Cie.

Blondel, É. (1840). *Deux ans en Syrie et en Palestine, 1838–1839*. Dufart Libraire.

Bourassé, J.-J. (1860). *La Terre Sainte: Voyage dans l'Arabie Pétrée, la Judée, la Samarie, la Galilée et la Syrie*. Mame et Cie.

Caravane Française de 1873. (1875). *Bonheur et facilité du pèlerinage de Jérusalem et Bethléem*. Téqui Libraire-Éditeur.

Cortambert, R. (1864). *Aventures d'un artiste dans le Liban: Anecdotes, mœurs, paysages*. Librairie Française.

Delaplanche, A. (1876). *Le pèlerin: Voyage en Égypte, en Palestine, en Syrie, à Smyrne et à Constantinople* (2nd ed.). Lever Libraire.

Delaroière, M. (1836). *Voyage en Orient*. Dobécourt.

Donos, M. (1893). *Au pays du Sauveur: Impressions de voyage d'un pèlerin*. Imprimerie Gourand.

Filleul de Pétigny, C. (1866). *La Palestine ou une visite aux lieux saints*. Mégard Libraire-Éditeur.

Gautier, T. (1882). *L'Orient*. Charpentier.

Guerin, V. (1884). *La Terre Sainte: Son histoire, ses souvenirs, ses sites, ses monuments* (2nd ed.). Plon.

Guys, H. (1855). *Voyage en Syrie*. Just Rouvier.

Jullian, M. (1893). *Sinai et Syrie: Souvenirs bibliques et chrétiens*. Société de Saint-Augustin.

Lecomte de Perthuis. (1896). *Le désert de Syrie, l'Euphrate et la Mésopotamie*. Librairie Hachette et Cie.

Lepinasse, J.-H. (1885). *D'Agen à Jérusalem: Journal et lettres d'un pèlerin*. Michel et Médan.

- M. M. P. V. (1897). *Impressions et souvenirs de deux sœurs jumelles en voyage*. Société de Saint-Augustin.
- Morot, J.-B. (1869). *Journal de voyage: Paris à Jérusalem, 1839–1840*. Imprimerie J. Claye.
- Parraud, A. (1891). *Égypte et Palestine: Souvenirs de pèlerinage*. Aubanel Frères.
- Péchenard, P.-L. (1893). *De Reims à Jérusalem en 1893*. Dubois-Popliment.
- Rauzy, F. (1897). *Jérusalem, Constantinople, Athènes*. Librairie Françal.
- Société des Livres Religieux de Toulouse. (1854). *Le jeune voyageur dans la Syrie, l'Arabie et la Perse*. Société des Livres Religieux.
- Vogue, E.-M. de. (1876). *Syrie, Palestine, Mont Athos: Voyage aux pays du passé*. Plon.
- أبي الفتح محمد بن عبد الكريم الشهرستاني (1994). الملل والنحل، إعراب: أبو عبد الله السعيد الندوة، مؤسسة الكتب الثقافية، ط1، بيروت، لبنان، ج1.
- أميرة جبر ، لبنان من خلال الرحالة الفرنسيين 1798-1918 (1981-1982). أطروحة دكتوراه حلقة ثالثة، كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية فرع الآداب العربية، بيروت، لبنان.
- حبيب السيوفي (1941). سوريا ولبنان وفلسطين في القرن الثامن عشر كما وصفها أحد المشاهير الغربيين، المطبعة المخلصية، بيروت، لبنان، ج1 و ج2.
- شاهين مكاريوس (1895). حسب اللثام عن نكبات الشام، مكتبة فلسطين الرقمية للكتب الملونة، ط1، مصر.
- عبد القاهر بن الطاهر بن محمد البغدادي (د . ت): الفرق بين الفرق، در تح: مجدي فتحي السيد، إش: توفيق شعلان، المكتبة التوفيقية، القاهرة، مصر.
- عبد الكريم محمود غرايبه (1984). تاريخ العرب الحديث، الأهلية للنشر والتوزيع، بيروت، لبنان.
- علي محمد كرد (2007). خطط الشام، مكتبة ابن تيمية، ط1، القاهرة، مصر.
- غوستاف لوبون (2017). حضارة العرب، ترجمة: عادل زعيتير، عصير الكتب للنشر والتوزيع، القاهرة، مصر.
- ليندا شيلشر (1998). دمشق في القرنين الثامن عشر والتاسع عشر، تر: عمرو الملاح ودينا الملاح، مر: عطف مارديني، مطبعة دار الجمهورية، ط1، دمشق، سوريا.
- محرز عفرون (2013). آلروتشيلد وألبكري والتليران، تر: مسعود حاج مسعود، دار هومة طن ت، الجزائر.
- محمد الخطيب (2018). بلاد الشام في العهد العثماني، دار علاء الدين طن ت، دمشق، سوريا.
- هنري فيز (1949). بيروت ولبنان منذ قرن ونصف القرن، تعريب: مارون عبود، منشورات دار المكشوف، ط2، بيروت، لبنان، ج1
- وجيه كوثراني (1986). الاتجاهات الاجتماعية والسياسية في جبل لبنان والمشرق العربي من المتصرفية العثمانية إلى دولة لبنان الكبير، منشورات بحسون الثقافية، بيروت، لبنان.

أميرة الشيخ رضا فرحات (2013). الفاطميون تاريخهم وآثارهم في مصر، كتاب ناشرون، ط1، بيروت، لبنان.