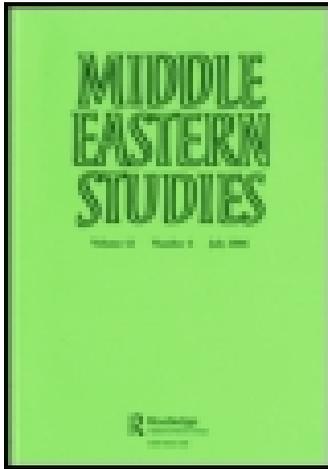


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Erdoğan Keskiniliç & Ebubekir Ceylan

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Her Majesty's Protected Subjects: The Mishaqa Family in Ottoman Damascus

ERDOĞAN KESKINKILIÇ* AND EBUBEKİR CEYLAN

The increasing influence of the European powers over the Ottoman Empire had resulted in frequent violation of Ottoman sovereignty during the long nineteenth century. The foreign consulates throughout the Ottoman Empire were the centres that managed the European influence. Thanks to the privileges given to the European states and the resulting intervention in domestic politics, the Ottoman sovereignty was significantly shaken. Needless to say, the multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of the empire made it easier for the great powers to play for particular ethnicities or religions and the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire were in this regard the soft spot of the empire.

This article concentrates on a non-Muslim family in the nineteenth-century Ottoman world, but the network that the family developed and their close relations with foreign consulates make it an outstanding case. When members of the Mishaqa family began to assume British protection and later act as dragomen and vice-consuls, the issue became a diplomatic affair leading to intensive correspondence between British consulates, the Sublime Porte and the British Foreign Office. There is no doubt that the profiles of provincial dragomans and consular officers, who were deeply embedded in the local society, can give insights on social and political changes of a particular province. Their engagement in commerce, their status as local notables/mediators between different segments of the society and their involvement in local government affairs bring them to the forefront. They were usually from the already prominent and wealthy non-Muslim families of the locality. In this regard, the Mishaqa family was one of the most prominent non-Muslim families of Damascus and after attaining British protection in 1840 started to serve in the British and American consulates. They maintained their service until the beginning of the First World War. Here, the basic codes of consular protection, British policy of protection, in the context of the story of Mishaqa family, will be analysed in detail.¹

From the very beginning there had been close relations between the commercial activities of a particular European state and its consular services abroad. Since the

*History Department, Fatih University, Istanbul, Turkey. E-mail: ekeskinkilic@fatih.edu.tr; ceylaneb@fatih.edu.tr

preservation of commercial interests abroad was their main concern, many states not infrequently appointed merchants from among their own citizens as consuls. It is for this reason that the consular activities of European countries in the Ottoman territories were usually considered within the framework of commercial privileges which later turned into a capitulatory nature. It would not be wrong to argue a close nexus between capitulations and consular representation. Moreover, there is a general tendency to start foreign consular activities with capitulatory treaties signed with European powers. It was by means of these privileges that European powers began to appoint consuls in the Ottoman Empire. In time, commercial privileges and the right to have consuls in the Ottoman dominions were extended to other European countries, and by the eighteenth century many European countries had consuls in the leading cities and ports of the East.

As far as Great Britain is concerned, until the beginning of the nineteenth century Britain conducted its consular services in the Ottoman Empire through the Levant Company.² However, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, its consular organization underwent a significant change and the British government, rather than the Levant Company, began to assume an effective role. By the mid-1820s the activities of the Levant Company were ended, and from 1825 onward all kinds of consular services were brought under British governmental supervision. The year 1825 was an important turning point in the diplomatic relations between Britain and the Ottoman Empire. This was not only due to 'a transition from company to state' in the British consular services, but also consular responsibilities were considerably widened. Aside from the supervision of British commercial interests, the consuls now had more political influence, closer relations with the American missionaries and fervently advocated the rights of the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire.³

By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Britain had consular representation in Istanbul, Salonica, Aleppo, İzmir (Smyrna), Edirne (Adrianople), Akka (Acre), Patras (Morea), Dardanelles and Cyprus, and this network continued to develop in the following decades.⁴ The British consular network which concentrated until 1881 in Mediterranean port cities, started to extend towards interior Anatolia and the port cities of the Black Sea.

In the provincial peripheries, Britain appointed not only British merchants as consuls, but there were instances that British authorities opted to appoint local nationals as consuls or deputy consuls as well.⁵ The employment of Ottoman subjects in the white-collar occupations surely had the purpose of establishing good relations with the local notables as well as national governments. Britain employed local (Ottoman) subjects not only for basic services like dragomans for interpretation, office jobs, cleaning and security, but also for high-ranking positions. On their request, these non-British personnel and their relatives were taken under the diplomatic protection of Her Majesty's government. In this context, within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, some Ottoman subjects, working in various services of British consulates, gained the trust and protection of the British government and passed this protection to their sons. There were a few occasions on which several generations of an Ottoman family worked in British consulates. There is no doubt that both consulates and the workers in the family must, in some way, have had overlapping interests and benefited from this.

The working conditions of foreign consular networks in the Ottoman dominions were set by the Regulation of Foreign Embassies implemented on 9 August 1863.⁶

The Regulation, consisting of 13 articles, determined, among other things, the conditions of employment and the types of service for Ottoman subjects working for foreign consulates. The Ottoman subjects were mostly employed as dragomans and *kavvās* (guards) in foreign consulates. Although there were exceptions, at the beginning dragomans were chosen from among non-Muslim Ottoman subjects who knew foreign languages. However, in time, apart from their responsibilities as dragomans, they started to help in maintaining the relationship between the consulates and the Sublime Porte. As a consequence, these dragomans had started to benefit from the employer states' diplomatic protection, and exemption from basic taxes for Ottoman non-Muslims subjects, such as *jizyah* (poll tax) and *harāç*. According to the regulations of 1863, the British consul general and the consuls in the provinces could employ four, the subordinate consular offices three, and the consular representatives two interpreters and guards respectively. If these numbers were not sufficient, they could be increased with a mutual compromise between the Sublime Porte and the embassy in Istanbul. Those who obtained British protection had extraterritorial (*hāric ez-memleket*) status, which provided the person in question the privilege of being exempt from the jurisdiction of local (Ottoman) laws and courts. This extraterritorial status definitely enabled the foreign states to intervene in the internal affairs of the Ottoman state through its own subjects.⁷

The persons employed by the consulates would have *maḥmī* (protected) status. The term '*maḥmī*' is not mentioned in the official documents such as capitulatory agreements between Ottoman Empire and European states. Rather, it developed as a *de facto* practice as the result of abuse of the political and economic relations between the Ottoman Empire and European states. Therefore, the status of the *maḥmī*, their legal responsibilities and liabilities were not explained in detail in legal regulations. It is again for this reason that there is no generally accepted definition of the *maḥmī* and the protected persons were classified according to different criteria.⁸

In the Ottoman Empire there were three types of *maḥmī* status.⁹ The first type of protection concerned the foreign protégé. Accordingly, the European powers could accord protection to those persons who were originally subjects of another power, not Ottoman Empire. For example, the British consul might accord *maḥmī* status to European merchants whose countries of origin had no consular representation in the Ottoman Empire. Before the nineteenth century many foreign merchants had been engaged in commerce under the flag of France.¹⁰ Or, in the classical period, the persons who, in the aftermath of a war, remained in the territories of the enemy could be taken under the protection of a foreign power. It should be noted that the protection was given upon the request of the person in question and these persons were to pay a certain amount of money to the consulate of the protecting country. As far as our concern in this paper is considered, the persons who were accorded Her Majesty's protection were subject to Her Majesty's jurisdiction and thus entitled to the privileges and immunities attached to that status. As the Ottoman authorities extended the capitulatory agreements to many European states, this type of protection and the privileges it offered lost their significance.¹¹

The second kind of protection concerned the religious (non-Muslim) communities, more specifically their clergy. For instance, in Istanbul while Austria accorded protection for the clergy of Sainte Maria and St. Georges churches, Italy accorded protection for that of St. Antoine and St. Pierre churches.¹² Similarly, France had given

protection to Catholic clergy in general. Again, in the second half of the nineteenth century Britain, in compliance with the request of the Dutch chargé d'affaires, accorded protection to the Jewish subjects of the King of Holland residing in cities of Syria, where there was no Dutch consulate.¹³ Such protection was also enjoyed by the American missionaries and subjects of European powers in similar positions. As expressed in the British archives, Her Majesty's consul was entitled to extend to these persons 'good offices and give them friendly assistance and support'. He may intervene in their favour as long as no objection was raised by the Ottoman authorities.¹⁴

The third type of protection was for the Ottoman subjects (*yerli koruma*). The foreign consuls in the Ottoman dominions could accord protection to Ottoman subjects. Not surprisingly, most of the Ottoman subjects who were protected by a foreign consulate were non-Muslim Ottoman subjects. Writing in 1907 (1325 AH) Mehdi Fraşerli further divided this third type of protection into two: permanent and temporary protection. The permanent protection included the Ottoman subjects working in the foreign consulates. These persons could benefit from the jurisdictional immunities of the country that accorded diplomatic protection, but for issues related to personal civil law they were bound to their particular clerical councils. The permanent protection included the family of *maḥmî* as well.¹⁵

As for the temporary protection, it should be noted that it had no legal status in the capitulatory treaties signed between the Ottoman Empire and the European states. This status was more the result of temporary and exceptional situations resulting from commercial relations and it included persons such as temporary consuls, vice-consuls and consular officials. These persons were appointed by the foreign consulates and confirmed by the Ottoman Sublime Porte.¹⁶ Moreover, as this status was exceptional and temporary, the diplomatic protection did not cover the family of the *maḥmî*.

In addition to permanent and temporary protection, it is possible to add a third group, consisting of Ottoman subjects who later accepted the citizenship of a European country.¹⁷ As will be noted below, some of the Ottoman subjects, including members of the Mishaqa family, maintained their *maḥmî* status under the citizenship of a foreign country. As for the case of the Mishaqa family, British and Ottoman authorities disagreed on the nationality and citizenship of the family, and thus the issue was whether the family was within the first or third category of *maḥmî*.

The holder of the protection (*maḥmî*) was treated as if s/he was the citizen of the protecting country and the consular protection offered the *maḥmî* tax exemption, additional commercial privileges and certain jurisdictional immunities. Therefore, in the nineteenth century, a substantial number of Ottoman subjects working in the British consulates were eager to obtain British protection. In 1815, only in the Ionian Islands¹⁸ the number of people who demanded the British consular protection was about 1,500.¹⁹ In 1851, 3,965 people were taken under British protection.²⁰ However, due to the British and Ottoman restrictions, the number of people and their kin under British diplomatic protection was reduced to 1,570 in 1870 and to 1,688 in 1886.²¹ Most of these people were non-Muslim Ottoman subjects. While the dragomanship was not hereditary, the *maḥmî* status of Ottoman subjects could be transferred to the children of the *maḥmî*. It should also be noted that the person demanding protection had to pay for it and for some European powers the sale of protection patents confirming the *maḥmî* status came to be an important source of

income.²² Though the *berāts* for dragomanship were given by the Ottoman authorities, the protection patent for Ottoman subjects was arbitrarily sold by the consulates.²³

Employing the dragomans from among the non-Muslim Ottoman subjects or well-known Levantine families continued until the end of the 1870s. Dragomanship was a household tradition in certain non-Muslim families like the Testa, Pisani, Fonton and Chabert families.²⁴ The Mishaqa family, originally from Corfu Island, was one of these families. The distinction here is that while the former families served in the imperial centre of the Ottoman Empire, the Mishaqas served in the provincial periphery, namely in Damascus and Beirut.²⁵

The Mishaqa family was a merchant family who for the sake of their commercial interests moved from Corfu to Tripoli in the mid-eighteenth century. The family was engaged in the process of filtering fibres of silk, linen hemp and cotton.²⁶ As Mount Lebanon became more and more incorporated into the capitalist world during the nineteenth century, the family benefited from this and, thanks to their commercial activities in the region, became rich and prominent.²⁷

In his well-known work, *Al-Jawāb 'alā Iqtirāḥ al-Aḥbāb* (Response to a Suggestion by Beloved Ones), Mikhail Mishaqa narrated not only the history of Lebanon and partly Damascus from 1750 to 1873, but also that of his own family.²⁸ Accordingly, the head of the family, Yusuf Batraki, a Greek Orthodox and an important merchant in his native land, moved with his own ship from the island of Corfu (which was then part of the Ottoman Empire) to Tripoli (northern Lebanon) to deal in the silk trade.²⁹

It was here in Tripoli that Yusuf married a girl who bore him one son named Jirjis. Concerned with improving his tobacco exports to Egypt, Jirjis moved from Tripoli to Sidon in 1752 and established commercial links with the notables and rulers of Sūr and Bishāra regions, which had a plentiful source of tobacco.³⁰ It is of great importance that the family history of the Mishaqas was very much intertwined with the provincial notables of Mount Lebanon, of whom Jazzār Ahmad Pasha and Amīr Bashīr II (r. 1788–1840) were the most prominent. Thanks to his extensive contacts, Jirjis was successful in establishing relations with Jazzār Ahmad Pasha, who upon the death of Jirjis made his son, İbrahim, tax collector for the regions of Bilād Bishāra and al-Shaqīf in south Lebanon.³¹ However, the relations with provincial rulers were not so easy. It is reported that during the last quarter of the eighteenth century Jazzār Ahmad Pasha began to oppress the family and seized much of their property, which meant the loss of their earlier gains.³² It was in this period that İbrahim's son, also named Jirjis, escaped to Deir al-Qamar and later became Amīr Bashīr's secretary. Here the family took the advantage of Amīr Bashīr II's patronage which helped them prosper in trade again. In Deir al-Qamar, members of the family worked in tax collection, provincial bureaucracy and money-lending. In the course of time, as the town turned into a commercial hub linking Sidon, Mount Lebanon, Damascus and the Syrian hinterland, they established economic ties with foreigners who came there, and traded with the interior of the country and the coastal region.

In Deir al-Qamar, which was the centre of Shihābi Emirate, the family worked in close proximity with Amīr Bashīr II and even after the death of Jirjis in 1832 their close relations with the Amīr continued.³³ It was here in Deir al-Qamar that the

leading figure of the family, namely Mikhail Mishaqa (1800–88) grew up. Having no formal education, he was engaged in commercial activities. However, for the remaining part of his life, trade was to play only a marginal role. In the 1830s, like his father, Mikhail worked at the court of Amir Bashir II, representing him at the courts of his allies and collecting his taxes from the Mountain. The family, later on, had a reputation of being close to Amir Bashir II, which led to the portrayal of Mikhail Mishaqa as a partisan of the amir. As Zachs noted, Mikhail Mishaqa was well-established by the early 1830s and, after having settled in Damascus, he was appointed as representative (*wakīl*) of the Amir of Hasbaya in Damascus in order to safeguard his interests with the newly installed Egyptian government in Syria:

Mikhail's financial situation improved, as he now received some property from his new employer: lands in the region of the Hula valley and a little village near Qunaytira. He settled in Damascus and extended his connections beyond the Mountain. Not only was he in touch with the middle stratum and the ruling class of the Mountain; he also socialized with Damascus' Muslim *a'yān* and merchants and, of course, had ties with Western representatives.³⁴

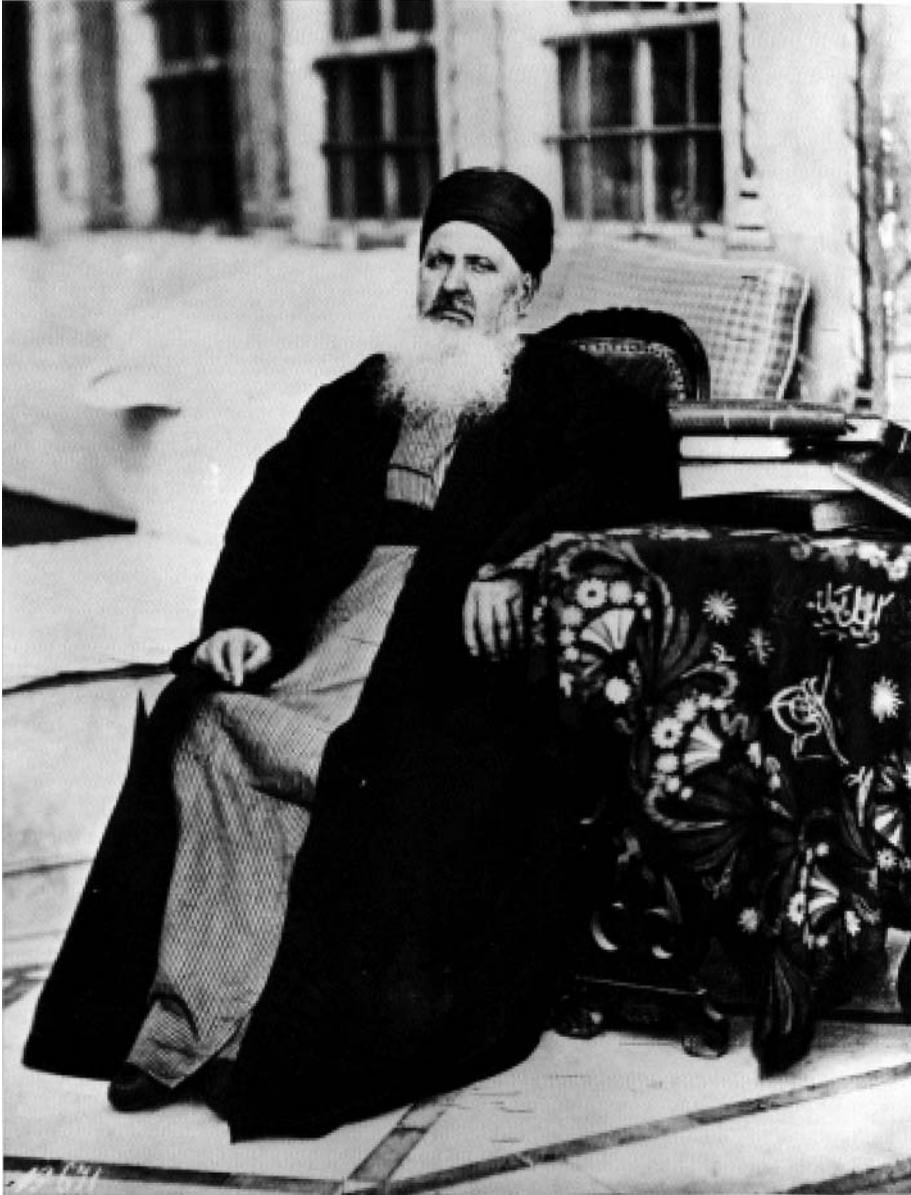
However, following the end of the Egyptian occupation in Syria and Bashir's fall and exile to Malta, other members of the family added clerical and white-collar jobs to their repertoire as well.

Though Mikhail was quite interested in trade, the big city stimulated his appetite for knowledge even further, especially for the study of medicine. To this end, he travelled to Egypt and became a physician in 1845.³⁵ He was also knowledgeable in maths, music, politics, literature and religious studies.³⁶ After his medical studies, he settled in Damascus. However, since practising medicine, even as the chief physician of the city, was not lucrative enough for him, he returned to commerce and by the late 1840s he began to work for the British consulate in Damascus.³⁷ The Ottoman archival documents indicate that Mikhail had a shop on soap manufacturing (*sabunhāne*) which he managed at least until 1870.³⁸ As is detailed below, Mikhail had probably made use of consular protection in order to be exempt from certain taxes and foster his trade.

Besides his main occupation as a physician and his engagement in trade, Mikhail Mishaqa was a well-known writer and interpreter. In 1852 he published a book in Arabic, entitled *The Nature and Duties of the Priesthood*, which may well be interpreted as a sign of his close relations with the American missionaries. However, Mikhail is well known for his *Al-Jawāb 'alā Iqtirāḥ al-Aḥbāb*, which was written in Beirut in 1873 but published only in 1955. This book is probably the most significant fruit of his intellect. It introduces the history of the Ottoman province of Syria and Mount Lebanon as one continuous entity and in this regard paved the way for the portrayal of its author as 'the first historian of modern Syria'.³⁹

Thanks to his intellectual character and commercial activities, Mikhail Mishaqa developed a quite wide network from different strata of Syrian society, including Muslims, Jews and foreigners. Upon their arrival to the shores of Syria in early 1820s, he got into contact with American Protestant missionaries.⁴⁰ Mikhail was born into a Greek Catholic (Melkite) family, but he had long been sceptical of his faith and wrote a number of tracts contesting articles of Melkite doctrine.⁴¹ As he

Figure 1. Mikhail Mishaqa.



Source: Personal archive of Jean Louis Michaca.

extended his relations with the American Protestant missionaries he converted from Catholicism to Protestantism in 1848. It is also known that Mikhail was a member of the Beirut-based al-Jam'iyah al-Sūriyah li-Īktisāb al-'Ulūm wa'l-Funūn (Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences).⁴² Butrus al-Bustānī, one of the foundational thinkers of

Arab culture and society, was one of his closest friends and Mikhail replaced him as the Arabic teacher of the missionaries.⁴³

Mikhail served for many years as dragoman in the British consulate in Damascus. It was the result of his wide network and close friendship with Richard Wood, who was then the British consul at Damascus, that he was appointed as the American consular agent in Damascus in 1859. Richard Wood, in his letter to the British embassy in Istanbul, confirmed that Mikhail Mishaqa had been an official in the British consulate and became in 1859 the consular agent of the United States of America in Damascus.⁴⁴ On 5 December 1859 the Sublime Porte sent an imperial decree (*emîrnâme-i sâmi*) to the governor of Damascus and confirmed Mikhail's consular agency at the American consulate in Damascus.⁴⁵

After the first quarter of the nineteenth century, British diplomatic activities were significantly extended and commercial disputes of British merchants, improvement of living standards of non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire, the question of Muslim–non-Muslim equality and consular protection for certain people were among the routine matters of the British embassy in Istanbul. Especially after the 1840s British influence over Ottoman domestic affairs, particularly on reform programmes and westernization processes, was clearly felt. By mid-century, people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds (Armenians, Druzes, Maronites, Yezidis, Cretans, Jews, even Muslims) sought the support of the British ambassador in Istanbul in their daily disputes.⁴⁶

Officially, however, among other nationals, the people of Malta, the Ionian Islands and Jewish communities residing in Syria and Palestine were under British protection.⁴⁷ As far as the Mishaqa family is concerned, it first came under the protection of Her Majesty's officers in Syria in 1840.⁴⁸ Mikhail's commercial engagements led him to develop closer relations with the British consulate in Damascus and it was in 1848 that the governor of Syria, Hacı Ali Pasha, approved Mikhail Mishaqa's status as under British protection. As noted earlier, Mikhail was already employed as dragoman in Her Majesty's consulate in Damascus by the late 1840s, and therefore had a *mahmî* status. Among other things, he was executing the translation affairs of the consulate where he worked until 1859. At the same time he developed close relations with the American mission and consulate where he served as deputy to the American consul in Damascus between 1859 and 1870.⁴⁹

The political conjuncture of Ottoman Syria and Lebanon is important for understanding the patronage relations and consular protections. The Convention of London in 1840 ended the occupation of Syria by İbrahim Pasha of Egypt. This also meant the end of the rule of Amîr Bashîr II, who allied himself with İbrahim Pasha. While this was an important setback for French influence in Syria, Britain emerged as a new power in the region. As noted earlier, Amîr Bashîr II had patronised Mikhail Mishaqa, but after 1840 his absence was to be filled by the British consular protection. Mikhail's British protection started in 1840 and continued while he was serving in the American consulate. Although during the Egyptian occupation of Syria (1831–40) some of the European powers were able to establish consulates in cities in the Ottoman interior, the young United States with its small foreign service had no consulate in Damascus at this time.⁵⁰ Furthermore, according to the provisions of the United States–Turkish treaty of commerce and navigation of 1830,

American officials were specifically debarred from protecting ‘secretly or publicly’ an Ottoman subject.⁵¹ In fact, the Ottoman–American treaties in 1830 and 1874 contained articles on nationality and citizenship, but these articles were exclusively related to Ottoman Armenians migrating to the USA.⁵² As Ottoman and American officials interpreted these articles differently, and, perhaps more important, since America did not recognize Ottoman Citizenship Law of 1869, there emerged many legal problems. And the treaty of 1874 could not be implemented.⁵³ In this context, the missionaries in Greater Syria sought actively to involve the British in the protégé game and it seems, as in the case of the Mishaqa family, that they succeeded in their attempts, because the British protection over the Mishaqa family continued until the beginning of the First World War in 1914.

As the foreign consulates began to sell the patents (*berāt*) and abuse the protégé system, the Ottoman authorities tried to limit the consular protection and the privileges that this protection included, they sent commissioners to foreign consulates to check the patents or certificates given to the protected persons.⁵⁴ The certificate that was given by the consulate to the British subjects or those who were under the protection of Her Majesty included the name and surname of the certified person, date of issue and a notification if the certified was a citizen or *mahmī* (protected).⁵⁵ The status of the Mishaqa family was thus subject to the Sublime Porte’s enquiry and this enquiry caused considerable correspondence between the British consulate in Damascus, Beirut, the British embassy in Istanbul and the Ottoman government.

Although the family, due to their services to the British consulate, was given consular protection in 1840, members of the family had lost related documents during the 1860 riots in Damascus. Mikhail Mishaqa was an eye-witness of the 1860 riot in Damascus. He and his daughter were attacked in their own house and Mikhail’s head and arm were badly wounded. His house was pillaged and his property was plundered.⁵⁶ The riot led to the destruction of Christian quarter of the city and the death of several thousand Christians. During this incident the seal of the consulate was also lost. It was during the plunder of his house that Mikhail lost his baptismal registers which proved the Ionian origins of his family.⁵⁷ Therefore, when we look at the correspondence after 1860, we see either Mikhail Mishaqa’s or his descendants’ demand for the renewal of the certificate or the questions of Ottoman authorities concerning the citizenship status of protected persons, like members of the Mishaqa family.

According to the Ottoman regulations of 1863, native Ottomans were not allowed to work in the foreign consulates as consuls and vice-consuls. However, since these posts gave its holders many privileges there were cases where Ottoman subjects were employed as consuls or vice-consuls. When Ottoman officials became aware of such cases they cancelled their *berāts*, permitting the holder to work in that post. It seems that the Sublime Porte sent occasional commissions to check the patents of protection for the consulate officials. It is for this reason that there were some disputes between local Ottoman officials and the British consulate on Mikhail Mishaqa’s citizenship. Mikhail was presenting himself as a British subject but this had to be certified officially. It was in 1845 that Tevfik Bey was sent to Syria as the Sublime Porte’s commissioner to investigate the grant of patents of protection to Ottoman subjects and examine the certificates of nationality.⁵⁸ Although Mikhail was by this time not vice-consul, as the result of the investigation İbrahim and Mikhail Mishaqa were

registered as the 'subjects of the Ionian Islands' and consequently entitled to British protection. In fact, the question of the Mishaqas' nationality and therefore their right to British protection was settled and acknowledged just one year before Tevfik Bey's investigation. Upon Tevfik Bey's examination, the two brothers, İbrahim and Mikhail, were admitted in 1846 as British subjects by Şekip Efendi, Ottoman minister for foreign affairs and extraordinary commissioner in Syria.⁵⁹

In a letter to the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 March 1849, the Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic community in Damascus gave further details about Mikhail Mishaqa's nationality and religious affiliation. In his letter, the Patriarch referred to Mikhail as an Ottoman *dhimmi* of Greek origin, who later converted to Protestantism. He argued that since Mikhail was a doctor, he had extensive relations with quite different social circles in the city. Therefore, the Patriarch stressed his concerns about Mikhail's attempts to 'confuse the minds of ordinary people and invite them to his order', and acknowledged his unease caused by converted Greeks as a result of his missionary activities.⁶⁰ The same document also stated that Mikhail Mishaqa, both for sustaining his life and facilitating missionary activities, undertook the consular agency of the United States of America in Damascus. According to the Patriarchate, Mikhail was conducting Protestant missionary activities (even attempting to change the church rites) and by making use of his post of consular agent he was in trouble with both the local population and the Ottoman state.⁶¹ Hence, the Patriarchate conveyed its concerns about Mishaqa's identity to the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs and demanded his dismissal from his post in the American consulate. It should be noted that Mikhail's conversion to Protestantism upset the dignitaries of the Catholic Church considerably. They were very much concerned by his skilful argumentation, with which Mikhail convinced many people in favour of Protestantism. It is also known that Mikhail had from time to time engaged in heated religious controversy with the native Catholics.⁶² Therefore, the abovementioned letter should be analysed properly in this conjuncture.

Several months after the appointment of Mikhail Mishaqa as vice-consul to the American consulate in Damascus, the Ottoman governor of the city raised his doubts about Mikhail's Ottoman identity and conveyed to the Sublime Porte his concerns about the inappropriateness of this appointment. Thereupon, the British consulate in Damascus sent a letter indicating Mikhail's British nationality and demanded his continuance in the office.⁶³ This letter indicates that in order to retain his post as vice-consul in accordance with the Ottoman Regulations of 1863, Mikhail had adopted British citizenship. The response of the Sublime Porte not only confirmed Mikhail's British, but also dismissed the claims of its governor, warning him that such allegations should be supported not by assumptions (*zann*) but detailed and clear documents.⁶⁴

It seems that there were several incentives that prompted the governor of Damascus to convey his doubts to Istanbul. First of all, it was in the same period that the province of Syria had a bigger issue of nationality/citizenship, namely that of Algerian immigrants. Upon the French occupation of Ottoman Algeria in 1830, many Algerians, after a long resistance between 1830 and 1847, migrated to Syria. Though in small numbers, the Algerian immigration lasted until the early years of the twentieth century. The interesting point with the Algerian case was that although they were moving from one province to another of the Ottoman Empire, the officials in Syria

made the immigrants sign a document (*sened*) that confirmed their Ottoman nationality.⁶⁵ It should be noted here that like the Algerians, the Mishaqa family had moved from one province (Corfu) of the Ottoman Empire to another (Syria). Moreover, both the Ottoman governor and the British consul in Damascus shared the fear that these Algerian immigrants might claim French protection in the future; therefore, the document contained a clause which prevented future claims for foreign protection.

Secondly, the missionary activities of Mikhail Mishaqa had, no doubt, upset the local officials in Damascus. Mikhail's contact with American missionaries is well-known. Missionary reports narrated that Dr. Keith's work on prophecy 'cured Mikhail of the infidelity', then his great ability and extensive learning made him at once a champion of the new faith and the books he wrote in its defence produced a very wide and deep impression.⁶⁶ Especially Mikhail's work on the Papacy was a book which new converts to Protestantism consulted. In one of his letters, Reverend D.M. Wilson mentioned Mikhail Mishaqa as follows:

At Damascus, a young man, named Miel Mesheka, of the Greek Catholic Church, has engaged in a controversy with the dignitaries of his Church. The Bible is to be the standard for the trial of arguments on either side. This man is said to be the most influential native in all Syria. His course is attracting great attention from all parties. He is said to be skillful in argument and, what is better, that he has the love of truth in his heart. Mr. Thompson writes me that this man 'promises to be a young Luther in Syria'.⁶⁷

His contemporaries described Mikhail Mishaqa as one of the earliest converts in Damascus and the only resident American missionary.⁶⁸ Due to his fame and wide network Mikhail had hosted many fellow Protestants and received many visits from the notables of both church and state. It is also known that the governor of Damascus and other local officials were petitioned by the local communities to curb the activities of American and English missionaries, which, they alleged, led to local disorder, defiance, discontent and, more importantly, tax evasion.⁶⁹ No doubt these demands were supported by French and Russian consuls because of their close relations with Uniate Christians and the Greek Orthodox community respectively.

Finally, Mikhail had actively supported a movement led by Consul Richard Wood in Damascus which aimed to create pressure for the removal of Ali Pasha (governor of Damascus) as well as Sa'd al-Din, the *mütesellim* of Hasbaya.⁷⁰ Hence, it could be assumed that Mikhail's activities caused considerable disturbance for the Ottoman governor and led him to convey his doubts to the Sublime Porte.

The question of Mikhail's citizenship gained impetus after the 1860 riots in Damascus, because the developments during the 1860s were very much related to the origins of the Mishaqa family. The Ionian origin of the Mishaqa family was important and due to their background in Corfu the family members were always recognized by local authorities in both Damascus and Beirut as Ionian subjects. It seems that the Mishaqas possessed baptismal registers proving their ancestors to be natives of the Ionian Islands.⁷¹ As noted earlier, the people of the Ionian Islands were entitled to British protection. However, on the occasion of the cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece in 1864, the protected persons were made over to the Greek consular authorities.⁷² Interestingly, the Mishaqa family was retained by the British

consul on his list of British protected subjects. The services that the family (Mikhail Mishaqa, his father, his brothers, his nephew, his sons and grandsons) rendered to the British government and the family's close connection with British consular officers in Syria were quite important in this case. In the words of the British consul, 'the long and valuable services constituted a good reason why British protection should not be withdrawn from the family'.⁷³ The British consul also considered the fact that the ancestors of the family had settled in Syria several generations back and they consequently no longer had any connection with the country of their origin. Furthermore, Mikhail Mishaqa's son Nasif and one of his relatives, Khalil Mishaqa, were by this time, serving in British consulates in Beirut. While the latter had served for more than 20 years as chief dragoman, acting cancellier⁷⁴ and British postmaster at Beirut, the former occupied similar positions. The zeal and abilities displayed by these people in the execution of their duties as well as the general respectability and uprightness of their characters certainly played a significant role in keeping Mishaqas under British protection.⁷⁵

Despite the letter from the Ottoman governor in Damascus and the Sublime Porte's growing attempts to restrict the grant of protection by foreign missions, Âli Pasha, the Ottoman minister of foreign affairs, approved the British citizenship of Mikhail Mishaqa by sending an official letter (*berât*) to the British embassy on 18 January 1865.⁷⁶

As Mikhail Mishaqa became the vice-consul of United States of America in Damascus in 1859, the British consul-general in Beirut, George Jackson Elridge, offered Mikhail's eldest son, Nasif, the chance to conduct his father's duties. When Nasif accepted the offer, he was employed as the chief dragoman of the consulate and it was reported in the official newspaper of Damascus, *Syria*.⁷⁷ As will be detailed below, Nasif served the British consulate as dragoman for many years.⁷⁸

From January 1859 until April 1870 Mikhail served in the American consulate as vice-consul. On 22 April 1870 he was succeeded by his son Nasif. It seems that Mikhail's old age was quite important in this exchange of posts. Nasif was appointed with special permission from Grand Vizier Âli Pasha, because Article 6 of the Ottoman regulation regarding foreign consulates did not normally allow Ottoman subjects to work in foreign consulates. For the employment of Ottoman subjects, like Nasif, the article makes exceptions with the permission of the Ottoman authorities. As will be detailed, by the time Nasif was born, his father Mikhail was an Ottoman subject. Moreover, since Nasif was born and resided in Ottoman territories, according to the Ottoman Citizenship Law of 1869 he was considered to be an Ottoman subject.

It seems that Nasif did not receive a regular salary for his services at the American consulate. Rather, he was paid once or twice a year in return for his services.⁷⁹ The Registers of Department of State for the years 1910 and 1912 indicate that Nasif was still consular agent at the American consulate in Damascus during these years.⁸⁰

On 19 July 1888 Mikhail Mishaqa died in Beirut at the age of 88. However, the controversies regarding the nationality and citizenship of the family continued after his death. This time the nationality of Mikhail's descendants, namely Nasif and İbrahim, was under investigation.⁸¹ As the eldest son, Nasif replaced his father and Salim, like his elder brother Nasif, worked as an honorary interpreter.⁸² İbrahim, another brother, worked in Ottoman mixed courts in Damascus as a British tax

assessment officer until 1891. He and another brother İskender were also Ottoman citizens.⁸³

While many Ionian subjects were made over to Greek consulates when the islands ceded to Greece in 1864, British protection for the Mishaqa family continued, as an exception, without serious problems until 1889, that is to say, one year after Mikhail's death. In 1889, when the Ottoman authorities claimed İbrahim, one of Mikhail Mishaqa's sons, as an Ottoman subject, the dispute over the family's citizenship and protection status emerged again. Soon after the Ottoman authorities, the British consulate in Damascus issued an order on 13 January 1890 stating that

The family of Meshaka shall cease henceforth to be recognized as British subjects, on the ground that the origin of that family's connection with the British government was one of service and that the service having ceased and the family being originally of Greek nationality, its British subjection naturally lapses with the cessation of said service.⁸⁴

Towards the end the same year, however, the consular officials excepted Nasif and Salim Mishaqa and recognized their status as British protected persons on the ground that they were still employees of the British government in Damascus. That is to say, while among the sons of Mikhail Mishaqa, Nasif and Salim retained their '*maḥmī*' status, İbrahim was not recognized as a British subject. This meant that, since İbrahim was not employed by the British consulate, his loss of British citizenship deprived him of the *maḥmī* status.

It is also known that Nasif's two brothers had applied for and obtained Ottoman nationality.⁸⁵ One of these brothers was İbrahim. It seems that since İbrahim was refused British citizenship, he applied for Ottoman citizenship. Nasif mentioned that his brother İbrahim accepted Ottoman nationality for the purpose of his business. It is also interesting that the other brother, İskender, having seen the unwillingness on the part of the British consulate and despaired of obtaining recognition as a British subject, accepted Ottoman nationality in 1895. It was in this context that the local Ottoman authorities began to raise questions as to the nationality of other members of the family.

It should be noted that by the 1890s the grant of British protection was not only uncommon, but also discouraged. Nor were the British consular officials inclined to grant it easily; nor were the Ottoman authorities willing to recognize it. By this time the British government was not close to the Mishaqa family as had been the case during the 1850s and the family did not feel the protection of Her Majesty in this regard.

In these circumstances, Nasif Mishaqa applied in 1890 to the British consulate in Damascus for citizenship. And between 1890 and 1891 his status was exhaustively considered by the British consular officers. The British ambassador in Istanbul, Sir W. White, asked the consul in Damascus, J. Dickson, on 25 April 1890 whether Nasif considered himself a Greek or Ottoman subject:

If the former, he will have to prove his Ionian origin to the Ottoman authorities, otherwise the Ottoman government will later on raise difficulties with regard to the British naturalization which would not then avail him in Turkey and you

are no doubt aware that in the correspondence with the Porte on this subject the Porte was not inclined to admit his Ionian origin.⁸⁶

On the other hand, even if Nasif accepted Greek citizenship, according to Article 5 of the Ottoman Citizenship Code his citizenship had to be approved by the Ottoman government.⁸⁷ Although it was a difficult process Dickson stated that he would support Nasif in it. However, as Nasif understood the difficulty of the process, he maintained his Greek origin. He had declared that he was Ionian and his documents confirming his origin had burned during the 1860 riots. He further stated that local authorities already knew his family's situation and that consul R. Wood had indicated his conditions in a letter written on 6 October 1862. Therefore, if the British protection was to end, Nasif wanted Greek citizenship. However, it was also uncertain whether the Greek government would certify his citizenship or not.

Considering his father's experience during 1860 riots, Nasif was concerned that he and his family, after his 44-year service to British and American consulates, were in a dangerous position. Therefore, he conveyed his concerns to the British consulate in Damascus and claimed that if he could not obtain British protection, his wife and his children would be unprivileged and ordinary Ottoman subjects (*re'āyā*), which he had never accepted.

As a privileged employee (*imtiyāzlı müstahdem*), Nasif was very much concerned about his position and his family in the Ottoman Empire when his official connection with the consulate at Damascus came to an end, because he knew that according to the Ottoman regulations adopted in 1863 (Article 5), the *mahmī* status was limited to the period of service in the consulate and did not cover his family.⁸⁸ This meant that upon his retirement from British service Nasif would be deprived of consular protection and be exposed to the natural consequences to be expected at the hands of the Ottoman authorities. Unfortunately, it is not clear when Nasif's service in the British consulate came to an end. However, he was already provided with a guarantee that he would be accorded British protection so long as he remained in the service of Her Majesty's consulate at Damascus.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, this was not a satisfactory offer for Nasif.

On 1 August 1902, Nasif wrote a petition to the British consulate. Aiming to obtain the extension of consular protection to his wife and children for their lifetimes, he stated that after 62 years of service of the Mishaqa family, the sum of the services of father and son to the British government between 1840 and 1902, it was hard for his family to be excluded from British protection, and consequently he appealed for British protection for himself, his wife and descendants.⁹⁰ Nasif's petition was evaluated by the British consulate in Istanbul and as a result of the correspondence between the consulate-general in İstanbul and the British Foreign Office, it was decided that Nasif would be under British protection as long as he remained in service in His Majesty's consulate. However, it was decided that he was not eligible for British naturalization. Additionally, the consulate asked the consul in Damascus about the possible reactions of the Ottoman authorities if they were to extend protection to Nasif's wife and children. They were also concerned whether the case of the Mishaqa family would constitute a precedent for similar cases or not.

Interestingly, despite the Ottoman regulation in this regard, the extent of the protection was eventually slightly extended, and on 2 September 1902 the British consul

in Aleppo, James Henry Skene, declared that Nasif Mishaqa was under British protection for his lifetime. N.R. O'Connor, who was British ambassador at Istanbul between 1898 and 1908, also confirmed that Nasif and his wife were given British protection for their lifetime. However, there was uncertainty whether this consular protection covered his children or not. As the result of several diplomatic correspondences the issue was resolved in favour of Nasif and it was confirmed that upon the death of the head of the family (Nasif was then the head of the family), his descendants would also be under protection until their respective deaths, if no question were raised by the Ottoman authorities.⁹¹ O'Connor emphasized that the number of people under British protection in the Ottoman dominions needed to be restricted, but he also noted they should prevent the development of an idea that people who served Her Majesty's government faithfully for so many years were not adequately rewarded.⁹² It was also supposed that during the protection of the family by the British government there would not be any serious opposition from the Turkish authorities.

It seems that Nasif could retain his *mahmī* status not only for himself but also for his family; however, in 1906 he renewed his request to be accorded British citizenship, supporting his claim with a statement that 'persons born in the Ionian Islands during the period that the latter were placed under the protection of Great Britain enjoyed the status of British subjects'. But he was to learn through a consular letter that this statement was not correct.⁹³

Actually Nasif's intention was not to acquire British citizenship; rather, he wanted to make sure that the privileges and legal rights that British consular protection provided would continue. Since his financial situation was not good enough to take his family to Britain, British citizenship was not a good alternative for him. In addition, according to British Citizenship Prescription in 1893, as his service was not under the Crown, he could not have applied for British citizenship.

The protégé status of the Mishaqa family became a recurrent issue in the following years too. On 1 April 1911, the governor of Syria notified the Ministry of Interior by an official letter that it was certain and clear that Nasif Mishaqa and his family were Ottoman subjects.⁹⁴ The governor also put forward that Nasif, who was then the consular agent of the USA in Damascus, was registered in the Ottoman census records in Damascus. Although the Ministry of Interior conveyed the same letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Sublime Porte, as a result of correspondence with the British and American embassies, admitted once again that the family was officially registered as being under British protection.⁹⁵

The fifth article of the Ottoman Regulation for Foreign Embassies limited the protected (*mahmī*) status of the privileged employees of foreign consulates to themselves, not to their families or descendants. Accordingly, when those privileged staff left the service or died, the protection did not pass to the relatives or successors. However, for the Mishaqa family the *mahmī* status that started in 1840 passed from Mikhail to his son Nasif and from Nasif to his wife and children and continued until the 1910s.

The 'protection racket' continued until the beginning of the First World War. As the consular agent of America, Nasif continued to send reports to his superiors on the situation and American interests in Damascus.⁹⁶ However, on the eve of the First World War, the situation in the city worsened and, like many foreign consulates, the American consulate was very much concerned with the developments in Ottoman

Syria. The war made life for foreigners much harder. At the beginning of the First World War, the Ottoman Empire abrogated the capitulations unilaterally and changed some of the regulations concerning citizenship, which further limited consular interventions. As noted in American archival documents, the local Ottoman authorities in Beirut and its environs began to ignore the privileges of American citizens under capitulations.⁹⁷ By the end of 1914, the working conditions of the consular officials became much worse; postal services stopped, many European citizens and travellers were threatened, their property was occasionally seized.⁹⁸ During the ongoing war, cities in Syria were filled with troops and many of the local families moved to the hills. The American consular officials reported that ‘The authorities were threatening with imprisonment or other serious penalties all belligerent subjects, naturalized French or British etc., of Ottoman origin born in the country, who do not at once become Ottoman subjects’.⁹⁹ This warfare no doubt prevented the service of Nasif Mishaqa to American and British consulates. Therefore, Nasif’s service as consular agent in the American consulate ended on 10 February 1914. The same year, when the Sublime Porte annulled the capitulations unilaterally, it had in fact abolished the traditional institution of dragoman and did not allow dragomans to exercise their functions unless they were attached to missions with diplomatic rank.¹⁰⁰ With the entry of USA into the First World War, all of the American consulates in the Ottoman domains were closed and the issue of protection was finally laid to rest by the Treaty of Lausanne (July 1923) during the negotiations of which the Turkish delegation refused bluntly to accept any special rights, extra-territorial and supra-national privileges or protection for any minorities remaining on Turkish territory.¹⁰¹

Notes

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1. There have been a limited number of studies on the careers of officials working for European embassies in Ottoman domains, and most them focused on the imperial centre. For a remarkable study see A.H. De Groot, ‘Dragomans’ Careers: Change of Status in Some Families Connected with the British and Dutch Embassies at İstanbul, 1785–1829’, *Turkology Update Leiden Project Working Papers*, http://edoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/HALCoRe_derivate_00003216/dragomans_careers.pdf (accessed 13 May 2013).
2. In late sixteenth century, British merchants in Istanbul were granted the right to conduct commercial activities in the Ottoman territories and they established the Turkey Company, which later united with Venice Company and was renamed as the Levant Company. See A.C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935); and M. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı – İngiliz İktisadi Münasebetleri (1580–1838)*, Vol.I (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1974), p.15. It was in 1583 that Britain established an embassy in Istanbul and appointed William Harborne, who had, as a merchant, been in the Ottoman Empire three years earlier, as Britain’s first ambassador. G.R. Berridge, *British Diplomacy in Turkey: 1583 to the Present* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009), p.1.
3. U. Kocabaşoğlu, *Majestelerinin Konsolosları: İngiliz Belgeleriyle Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndaki İngiliz Konsoloslukları, 1580–1900* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p.30.
4. The number of Her Majesty’s consulates and similar missions in Ottoman dominions were 12 in 1825, 19 in 1834, 36 in 1846, 37 in 1871, 53 in 1881, and 66 in 1900. *Ibid.*, pp.37, 53, 100, 148 and 158.
5. *Ibid.*, p.18.

6. *Düstur*, 1.Tertip, Vol.1 (Istanbul, 1872), pp.772–5.
7. Kocabaşoğlu, *Majestelerinin Konsolosları*, p. 49.
8. For various classification of *maḥmî* see M. Fraşerli, *İmtiyâzât-ı Enebiyenin Tatbikât-ı Hâzırası* (Samsun, 1325 AH/1907–1908), p.33.
9. *Ibid.*, pp.34–61. British consuls also made similar classification of protection. See the National Archives (TNA) in London, Foreign Office (FO) 83/1723, F.C. Ford to Consul General Mockler, Constantinople, 26 Nov. 1892.
10. B. Konan, ‘Osmanlı Devletinde Protégé (Koruma) Sistemi’, *Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol.58, No.1 (2009), p.172.
11. *Ibid.*, p.173.
12. *Ibid.*, p.174.
13. TNA, FO 83/1723, ‘Memorandum Relative to the Grant of British Protection to Foreign Jews in Palestine’, 2 Feb. 1884.
14. TNA, FO 83/1723, F.C. Ford to Consul General Mockler, Constantinople, 26 Nov. 1892.
15. If a person under permanent protection marries an Ottoman subject, his wife would also gain the status of permanent protection. Fraşerli, *İmtiyazat-ı Enebiyenin*, p.46.
16. *Ibid.*, p.48.
17. See Konan, ‘Osmanlı Devletinde’, pp.179–80.
18. The Ionian Islands were in the south-western part of Peloponnesian peninsula and consisted of Corfu, Cerigo, Paxos, Zante, Cephalonia, Santa Maura and Ithaca. They are also known as Septin-sular Republic.
19. Though this number contained foreign nationals, Ottoman subjects comprised a significant percentage of it. Kocabaşoğlu, *Majestelerinin Konsolosları*, p.31.
20. G. Bozkurt, *Alman-İngiliz Belgelerinin ve Siyasi Gelişmelerin Işığı Altında Gayrimüslim Osmanlı Vatandaşlarının Hukuki Durumu: 1839–1914* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), p.141.
21. Kocabaşoğlu, *Majestelerinin Konsolosları*, p.163. In his memoirs the British Consul in Istanbul states that during the Crimean War approximately 1 million people living in the Ottoman territories were under the protection of different European powers, but it seems that this figure is a bit exaggerated. Unfortunately, the numbers of people under *maḥmî* status in the Ottoman Empire differs significantly. The memoirs and consular reports do not seem to be very consistent. That only some of the consular officials were under diplomatic protection is frequently ignored. As mentioned earlier, there were different types of consular protection and the ambiguity and loose employment of the terms like ‘protection’ and ‘*maḥmî*’ was also accepted by the British consuls. See TNA, FO 83/1723, F.C. Ford to Consul General Mockler, Constantinople, 26 Nov. 1892.
22. See C. Artunç, ‘The Protégé System and Beratlı Merchants in the Ottoman Empire: The Price of Legal Institutions’, Working Paper, Department of Economics, Yale University (Oct. 2012), pp.1–31.
23. Konan, ‘Osmanlı Devletinde’, p.178.
24. Kocabaşoğlu, *Majestelerinin Konsolosları*, p.191.
25. For one of the few studies on provincial dragomans, see C. Philliou, ‘Mischief in the Old Regime: Provincial Dragomans and Social Change at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century’, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol.25 (Fall 2001), pp.103–21.
26. F. Zachs, ‘Mikha’il Mishaqa – The First Historian of Modern Syria’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.28, No.1 (2001), p.69.
27. In fact, the family name was ‘Batraki’, but as the head of the family was engaged in the filtration of silk fibres, in time ‘Batraki’ was replaced with ‘Mishaqa’. The ancestor of the family, Yusuf, used to buy floss (*mushaqa*) which refers to the waste that remains after the process of filtering. *Ibid.*, p.69. The family was named after *mushaqa*, but the colloquial pronunciation ‘Mishaqa’ has been retained throughout. See Jr. W. M. Thackston, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage and Plunder: The History of the Lebanon in the 18th and 19th Centuries* [1873] (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), p.285. In the Ottoman archives the family was referred to as ‘مشقه – Meşekka’.
28. For a review of Mikhail Mishaqa’s work, see R. Schulze, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol.112, No.3 (1992), pp.523–4.
29. Thackston, *Murder, Mayhem*, p.9.
30. *Ibid.*, pp.9–10.
31. *Ibid.*, p.32.

32. Ibid., pp.32–5, and Zachs, ‘Mikha’il Mishaqa’, p.69.
33. Ibid., p.70.
34. Ibid., p.71.
35. Thackston, *Murder, Mayhem*, p.193. See also F. Zachs, *The Making of Syrian Identity: Intellectuals and Merchants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Leiden, NLD: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005), p.230.
36. Mikhail Mishaqa was a competent musician as to write a specific article on the division of the octave into twenty-four equal quartertones. See S. Maalouf, ‘Mikhail Mishaqa: Virtual Founder of the Twenty-four Equal Quartertone Scale’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol.123, No.4 (Oct.–Dec., 2003), pp. 835–40.
37. Thackston, *Murder, Mayhem*, p.158.
38. Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, hereafter BOA), Hāriciye Nezāreti (HR), Tercüme Odası (TO), 146/165, 6 June 1868.
39. See Zachs, ‘Mikha’il Mishaqa’, pp.67–87.
40. For a detailed account of American missionaries in the Middle East see M.A. Doğan and H.J. Sharkey (eds.), *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011).
41. E. Rogan, ‘Sectarianism and Social Conflict in Damascus: The 1860 Events Reconsidered’, *Arabica*, Vol.51, No.4 (Oct. 2004), pp.499–500.
42. S. Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2004), p.47.
43. Zachs, ‘Mikha’il Mishaqa’, p.72.
44. TNA, FO 618/39, Richard Wood to Nasif Mishaqa, Tunis, 6 Oct. 1862. British consular reports show that Mikhail’s father had also rendered significant services to Her Majesty’s Government. See TNA, FO 618/3, No.10, Lansdowne to M. de Bunsen, 25 Aug. 1902.
45. BOA, HR. MKT 322/15. 1276 C 16, 10 Jan. 1860.
46. Sir Stratford Canning (later Lord Stratford de Redcliffe) was probably the most outstanding British Ambassador in this period to whom many people appealed for their daily problems. See S.L. Poole, *Lord Stratford Canning in Türkiye Anıları* (Istanbul: Tarih VakfıYurt Yayınları, 1999), p.81.
47. TNA, FO 83/1723, ‘Memorandum Relative to the Grant of British Protection to Foreign Jews in Palestine’, 2 Feb. 1884.
48. See TNA, FO 618/3, No.26, J. Jackson Eldridge, Beirut, 23 Dec. 1864.
49. Zachs, ‘Mikha’il Mishaqa’, p.72.
50. The first American consulate in Constantinople was opened in 1832. By the end of the nineteenth century it had consulates in many cities including Aleppo, Alexandretta, Baghdad, Beirut, and Jerusalem, but not in Damascus. See R. Kark, *American Consuls in the Holy Land, 1832–1914* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1994), pp.79–80.
51. The fourth article of the treaty gave certain judicial privileges to American citizens, but no rights of consular protection. C.E. Farah, ‘Protestantism and British Diplomacy in Syria’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.7 (1976), p.321.
52. The Armenians who migrated to America got American citizenship. When they returned to Ottoman lands, American consuls tried to grant them consular protection. However, the Ottoman government, in accordance with the Ottoman Citizenship Law (1869), considered anyone who resided in Ottoman territories as an Ottoman citizen. The disagreement on this issue continued for some decades.
53. H. Selvi and K. Demirkol, ‘Osmanlı Devletinde Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Vatandaşlarının Hukuku ve Karşılaşılan Bazı Problemler’, *History Studies*, Vol. 4, No.1 (in memoriam of Prof. Dr. Enver Konukçu, 2012), p.334.
54. In 1793, only in Aleppo there were about 1,500 consular dragomans, all exempted from taxation and engaged in commerce. See S.R. Sonyel, ‘The Protégé System in the Ottoman Empire and Its Abuses’, *Bellefen*, Vol.55, No.214 (Dec. 1991), p.676. Ali İhsan Bağış has shown that the Sublime Porte tried to prevent the abuse of *berāts* as early as first quarter of the eighteenth century. See his *Osmanlı Ticaretinde Gayri Müslimler: Kapitülasyonlar, Berath Tüccarlar, Avrupa ve Hayriye Tüccarları, 1750–1839* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1983), p.33.
55. For an example of certificate given by British consulate in Damascus see TNA, FO 618/3, No.77.
56. For a comprehensive analysis on the 1860 riot in Damascus and the Mishaqa family see Rogan, ‘Sectarianism and Social Conflict’, pp.493–511. However, the 1860 incident was not the only attack

78. British archival documents indicate that as late as 1878 he translated Arabic documents. See TNA, FO 226/194 Nasif Mishaqa to Eldridge, Damascus, 29 July 1878; and Ş.T. Buzpınar, 'Osmanlı Suriyesi'nde Türk Aleyhtarı İlanlar ve Bunlara Karşı Tepkiler, 1878–1881', *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol.2 (1998), p.76.
79. The payment table of the American consular officials in 1906 indicates that while consuls and vice-consuls were paid regularly, Nasif was paid approximately \$450 as consular agent. The same table shows that the American consul-generals in Beirut and İstanbul were as paid a salary of \$4500 and \$6000 respectively. See 'List of Consular Officers of the United States Corrected to July 23, 1907', *American Society of International Law*, Vol.1, No.3 (1907), p.345.
80. *Registers of Department of State*, 27 Sept. 1910 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1910) and *Registers of Department of State*, 15 Oct. 1912 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912).
81. Mikhail is reported to have seven children named Nasif, İbrahim, Salim, Salma, İbrahim, Salma and İskender; however, some of them probably died at a younger age. We would like to thank Jean Louis Michaca for the kind support regarding the family tree of Mikhail Mishaqa.
82. Nasif had six children named Asma, George, Musa, Chebli, Mikhail and Naguib. Salim had two daughters named Assine and Nagla.
83. İbrahim had four children named Tevfik, Halil, Nadra and Michel. İskender had five children named Bichara, Kemal, Ferid, Hneina and Marcella.
84. See TNA, FO 618/3, Abraham Mishaqa to Sir Edward Grey, Damascus, 11 June 1906.
85. See TNA, FO 618/3, Nasif Mishaqa to Marquess of Lansdowne K.G., Damascus, 1 Aug. 1902.
86. Ibid.
87. For the text of the Ottoman Citizenship Law, see BOA, Yıldız Esas Evrakı (Y.EE), 41/133 and *Düstur*, pp.16–18.
88. See Article 5 of Ottoman Regulation concerning the Foreign Consulates (*Memâlik-i Mahrûse-i Şâhânedede Bulunan Düvel-i Ecnebiye Konsoloslukları Hakkında Tanzim Kılınan Niżâmname*), dated 9 Aug. 1863.
89. See TNA, FO 618/3, No.10, Lansdowne to M. de Bunsen, 25 Aug. 1902.
90. See TNA, FO 618/3, Nasif Mishaqa to Marquess of Lansdowne KG, Damascus, 1 Aug. 1902.
91. TNA, FO 618/3, No.1, F.H. Villiers to A.H. Monahan (Acting British Consul), Damascus, 23 Sept. 1902.
92. TNA, FO 618/3 (Treaty No.12) N.R. O'Connor–The Marquese of Lansdowne, Therapia, 2 Sept. 1902.
93. See TNA, FO 618/3, F.A. Campbell to A. Mesheqa, Damascus, 4 July 1906.
94. The Registers of Department of State in 1910 and 1912 had also recorded Nasif as 'Turkish subject'.
95. BOA, DH. İD. 61-1, 1329 R.18, 18 April 1911.
96. For such a report see National Archives, College Park, Maryland, Record Group (RG) 59, No.174 (Enclosure) Mishaqa to Hollis, 2 Nov. 1911.
97. National Archives, RG 59, Hollis to Morgenthau, 13 Oct. 1914.
98. National Archives, RG 59, No.884, Hollis to Secretary of State (Washington), 3 Dec. 1914.
99. National Archives, RG 59, No.909, Hollis to Secretary of State (Washington), 11 Jan. 1915.
100. S. Theolin et al., *The Torch of the Empire, Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohnson and the tableau général of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2002) p.19.
101. See Sonyel, 'The Protégé System', p.686.