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Five Centuries of Lebanese–Iranian Encounters

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Events of the last two decades seem to have compelled the media to reduce the Iranian–Lebanese connection to the support afforded by some centres of power within the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Lebanese militant group Hizballah, notably in its confrontation with Israel. The Hizballah connection indeed constitutes a qualitative leap in the history of Iranian–Lebanese relations, for it represents the successful transplant, in a Lebanese native form, of Iranian-conceived institutions, providing the government of Iran with a reliable means of influencing the evolution of both Lebanese internal politics and the Middle East conflict. Hizballah has represented the potential as well as the limitations of exporting the Islamic revolution. While it established Iran as a player and power broker in a region where it had no permanent or reliable influence, its evolution has demonstrated the difficulties of steering the 'exportation' along preconceived lines.

While the uniqueness of Hizballah in Iranian–Lebanese relations has to be recognized, it does not come out of nowhere, and constitutes in fact a particularly developed episode of a recurrent pattern of contacts between Iran, as a society and a state, and the lands that make up Lebanon today. The purpose of this collection of articles is to provide a reasoned survey of some of the transnational ties between Iran and Lebanon, covering some of the major episodes in which people from Iran and Lebanon have come into contact over the last few centuries.

At the outset, a number of methodological issues need to be addressed, most importantly national definition and periodization. There is indeed a teleological component in projecting into the past current definitions of national belonging. Is the subject of Iranian–Lebanese ties a valid one when applied to a period when 'Lebanon did not exist'?

Cultural, commercial and political interactions between the geographic areas that are today Iran and Lebanon go back to antiquity. The first important historical

episode dates back to the Achaemenid Empire, which ruled the Phoenician coast and its hinterland for two centuries between 539 and 332 BC. The Persian rulers allowed the Phoenician city-states of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos and Arvad (modern-day Arwad in Syria) a greater degree of autonomy than their other dominions, and both sides benefited: the empire provided a huge market for the Phoenician traders and as a result the cities flourished,[1] while the Persian rulers used Phoenician fleets in their war efforts against the Egyptians and Greeks. A revolt against Persian rule erupted in Sidon in 350 BC, but was crushed by Artaxerxes III, who burnt down the city in 351. After Alexander's conquest of the Phoenician cities in 332 BC, the area was progressively absorbed by Hellenistic civilization, and as a prominent scholar of this period concluded: 'Achaemenid rule allowed the Phoenicians to develop for the last time. The domination of Greeks, whose culture had attracted the Phoenicians even before Alexander's conquest, was more powerful and uncompromising than the Achaemenid, and it progressively destroyed the Phoenician civilization.'[2]

Another Persian incursion into the Levant occurred under the Sasanian ruler Khusrav II, culminating in the capture of Jerusalem in AD 614 and the removal of the 'true cross' to the Iranian capital, Ctesiphon (in modern-day Baghdad). An echo of this event survives in Lebanese lore in the form of the Christian commemoration of ʿId al-Salib in mid-September, celebrating the return of the 'true cross' from its captivity, but this celebration contains no awareness of a Persian connection. At the time of the Muslim conquest of the Levant, there were Persians in Baalbek and other towns of Syria.[3]

Although these episodes of a Persian presence in antiquity have left no trace in the popular memory of the Lebanese, Lebanese culture contains a few semiotic elements that can be traced back to contact with Iran.[4] As for the episodes

1. According to Josette Elayi, 'Persian domination, in spite of the difficulties it produced, paradoxically led to the enrichment of the Phoenician cities, both at the level of the state and at the level of the individual.' See her *Économie des cités phéniciennes sous l'empire perse* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1990), p. 77.
2. Josette Elayi, 'The Phoenician cities in the Persian period', *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*, 12 (1980): 28. See also Josette Elayi, 'L'essor de la Phénicie et le passage de la domination assyro–babylonienne à la domination perse', *Baghdader Mitteilungen*, 9 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1978): 25–38; H. Jacob Katzenstein, 'Tyre in the early Persian period (539–486 BCE)', *Biblical Archeologist*, 42 (1979): 23–34.
3. al-Balâdhuri, translated by Philip Khûri Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State* (1916, New York: AMS Press, 1968), pp. 180, 198, 228.
4. Examples include the presence of some Persian syntactical structures in Lebanese Arabic, the relatively common use of the name of the Persian epic hero Rostam (as Rustum), and the toponym Kisrawan, probably traceable to Persian soldiers settled in the region in the seventh century AD by the Umayyad caliph Muʿawiya as a defence

themselves, while they have occasionally been evoked in the context of elaborating a homogenized national narrative and consequently been incorporated into school curricula after the emergence of modern Lebanon, they belong to the realm of 'recovered' (and at times 'invented') history rather than 'remembered' history,[5] for too many discontinuities separate them from the historical memory of today's Lebanese. For this reason, we have decided to make the migration of Shiᶜi scholars from Jabal ᶜAmil (today's south Lebanon) to Iran, which took place under Safavid auspices in the sixteenth century, the starting point of this volume, as this Iranian–'Lebanese' link is the earliest episode to have had ramifications that are tangible in current historical memory. Moreover, it was around AD 1500 that both countries took shape in their present form.

DEFINING IRAN AND LEBANON

In Iran, Shah Ismaᶜil's coronation in 1501 started a state-building process that resulted in a political/geographic entity of which the Islamic Republic of Iran is the latest avatar.[6] Originally Sunni, the Safavid order espoused an esoteric and messianic form of Shiᶜism popular among the Turkoman tribes of Anatolia some time in the fifteenth century. After he had gained power with the help of these tribes, the Qizilbash, Shah Ismaᶜil established the more orthodox *Ithna-ᶜashari* (Twelver) Shiᶜism as the official religion of the new state,[7] and under his

against Byzantine raids. See Henri Lammens, 'Les "Perses" du Liban et l'origine des Métoualis', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 14 (1929): 12–39. The author demonstrates conclusively that these early Persian settlers were not the ancestors of today's Shiᶜis in the Jabal ᶜAmil.

5. As defined by Bernard Lewis in his *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).
6. For a nuanced and careful discussion of the elements of continuity between the Safavid state and modern Iran, see Roger Savory, 'The Emergence of the Modern Persian State under the Safavids', *Īrānshināsī* (Teheran), 2:2 (1971): 1–44.
7. For a study that argues that the spread of orthodox Twelver Shiᶜism in Iran began before the Safavids, see Abdoldjavad Falaturi, 'Die Vorbereitung des iranischen Volkes für die Annahme der Schia', in Ulrich Haarmann and Peter Bachmann, eds, *Die islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift für Hans Robert Roemer zum 65. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1979), pp. 132–45. On Twelver Shiᶜism, see Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shiᶜi Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Yann Richard, *Shiᶜite Islam: Polity, Ideology and Creed*, translated by Antonia Nevill (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995); and Heinz Halm, *Shiᶜa Islam: From Religion to Revolution* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997). For an exposition of the faith from a Twelver Shiᶜi point of view, see ᶜAllamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabatabaᵓi, *Shiᶜite Islam*, translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977); and Ayatollah Jaᶜfar Sobhani,

successors Qizilbash influence gradually declined,[8] until by the early seventeenth century Iran in fact became something akin to what Bryan Turner has called, drawing attention to the religious element in nation and state-building, a 'nation-church-state'.[9] Most of their subjects being Sunnis, the Safavids called on Arab ulema from Jabal ᶜAmil, Mesopotamia and Bahrain to help create a clerical infra-structure, leading to the earliest instance of a 'remembered' historical connection between 'Iran' and 'Lebanon'.

If the continuity between the Safavid state and the Islamic Republic is relatively straightforward, defining 'Lebanon', or delimiting our use of the term, is more complex. There was of course no territorial jurisdiction by the name of 'Lebanon' five centuries ago. It is, however, both conservative and productive to place the origins of modern Lebanon, as a polity and society, in the closing era of Mamluk rule and the beginnings of Ottoman rule – roughly the same period that saw the beginnings of Safavid rule in Iran. In fact, the debate over the history of Lebanon is still unresolved. While both maximalist and minimalist readings – the former proclaiming a moral continuity stretching from a presumed Phoenician golden age through successive 'occupations' to the Phoenix-like resurrection of Greater Lebanon, the latter portraying the creation of the modern nation-state of Lebanon as a mere artefact of French colonialism – are largely understood as politically-motivated myth-histories. Lebanese historiography is still unformed as a consistent body of material. It suffers from three main problems. First, beyond the succession of empires and dynasties, there is no consensus about a useful periodization that would chronicle the rise of the antecedents to modern Lebanese society. Second, Lebanese historical writing is laden with a retrospective centre–periphery bias, in which Mount Lebanon (with or without Beirut) is favoured, while the other regions that were indeed made peripheral in 1920 through their annexation to the *Petit*

The Doctrines of Shiᶜism: A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices, translated by Reza Shah-Kazemi (London: I.B.Tauris, 2001).

8. Kathryn Babayan, 'The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shiᶜism', *Iranian Studies*, 27:1–4 (1994): 135–61. See also Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shiᶜite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 77–82 and 109–21. The Qizilbash of Anatolia evolved into what are today called the Alevi. See Irène Mélikoff, 'Le problème kızılbaş', *Turcica*, 6 (1975) and Irène Mélikoff, 'Bektashi/Kızılbaş: Historical Bipartition and its Consequences', in Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga and Catharina Raudvere, eds, *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998), pp. 1–7.
9. Bryan S. Turner, 'Religion and State-Formation: a Commentary on Recent Debates', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1 (September 1988). By this we mean that the basis of solidarity for society was not any type of ethnicity but rather a shared religion: Twelver Shiᶜism.

Liban, are not included as equal partners in the standard historical narratives. And third, a problematization of the regional context of Lebanon is introduced through a projection of nation-state relations into the past.[10] Any choice of a formative period for modern Lebanese history, as well as of a delineation of the physical extent of a Lebanese unit, is thus a compromise. For the purpose of this book, we posit that the affirmation of the Druze emirate of Mount Lebanon under Ottoman rule, and its relative regional power and influence, constitute a point of departure for modern Lebanon.[11] Our choice is bolstered by the fact that the main episode of substantive contact between Iran and Jabal ᶜAmil, a socio-cultural and political unit then adjacent to the Lebanon-in-formation but not part of it, belongs to this era. It is naturally this episode that is of concern for the topic of this book. And while characterizing it as part of 'Iranian–Lebanese' relations without qualification would be anachronistic, its importance in creating the Shiᶜi clerical network with the shrine cities of Iraq (Karbala, Najaf, Kazimayn and Samarra), collectively known as ᶜAtabat, and both modern Lebanon and Iran as tributaries and beneficiaries, makes it indeed the appropriate starting point for any reasoned study of Lebanese–Iranian relations.[12] With this *caveat emptor*, our use of the term

10. For in-depth discussions, see Ahmad Beydoun, *Identité confessionnelle et temps social chez les historiens libanais contemporains* (Beirut: Publications de l'Université Libanaise, 1984); Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); and Axel Havemann, *Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung im Libanon des 19 und 20 Jahrhunderts: Formen und Funktionen des historischen Selbstverständnisses* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 2002). For shorter studies see Nadim Shehadi, *The Idea of Lebanon: Economy and State in the Cénacle Libanais 1946–54* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1987); Axel Havemann, 'Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung im Libanon, Kamāl Salībī und die nationale Identität', in Axel Havemann and Baber Johansen, eds, *Gegenwart als Geschichte: Islamwissenschaftliche Studien Fritz Steppat zum fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), pp. 225–43; and Axel Havemann, 'Lebanon's Ottoman Past as Reflected in Modern Lebanese Historiography', in Rainer Brunner, Monika Gronke, Jens Peter Laut and Ulrich Rebstock, eds, *Islamstudien ohne Ende: Festschrift für Werner Ende zum 65. Geburtstag* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), pp. 161–74. Similar problems arise with Iran, except that the range of possible options is narrower and the issue boils down to how much continuity one posits with pre-Islamic Iran. See Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran, Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
11. See Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn, *The View from Istanbul: Ottoman Lebanon and the Druze Emirate* (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B.Tauris, 2004).
12. Iranians and Lebanese who, for ideological reasons, privilege the pre-Islamic heritage of their countries, could extend a history of their relations to ancient times. See, for

'Lebanon' should be understood as a reference to the regions that became in 1920 constituent components of the modern nation-state of Lebanon.

CLERICAL MIGRATION FROM JABAL ʿAMIL TO IRAN

The late Albert Hourani was the first to stress the importance of this first episode of substantive contact between what is now southern Lebanon and Iran.[13] His 'From Jabal ʿĀmil to Persia', reprinted in this collection, provides the reader with an overview of the historical and cultural background as well as the political incentives that led to the encounter. Hourani depicts the evolution of ʿAmili society and its scholarship 'between tolerance and persecution' and describes the framework within which ʿAmili ulema were integrated in Safavid Iran.

A few years after its initial publication doubts were raised about the scope and importance of this migration,[14] but subsequent scholarship reasserted its importance.[15] Hourani's ideas are further strengthened and developed by Rula Abisaab who, in Chapter 3, takes us back to one of the most formative episodes of Lebanese history, the Mamluk Kisrawan campaigns of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and argues convincingly that at the time most of that region's inhabitants were Twelver Shiʿis. Under Mamluk and later Ottoman rule, she maintains, the flourishing of a native scholastic tradition was difficult but not impossible. While Mamluk and Ottoman authorities made no systematic attempts to eradicate

instance, an article on Lebanese–Iranian relations to commemorate the 2500th year anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great by Maurice Chehab, director of archeology in Lebanon, in which he dwelt heavily on pre-Islamic times but mentioned the Amili emigration to Iran only in the last paragraph. 'Taʾṣīr-i farhang va tamaddun-i īrānī bar karānahhā-yi sarzamīn-i Lubnān', *Barrasīhā-yi tārīkhī*, 7:2 (Khurdād-Tīr 1351/May–July 1972): 15–22. These celebrations, the apotheosis of the Pahlavi era's glorification of ancient Iran, made a certain impression on at least some Lebanese. Thus the sister of the Lebanese ambassador visited the minister of the Court, Amir Asadollah Alam, on 24 May 1972, less than a year after the celebrations, to discuss holding a similar celebration in honour of the ancient city of Tyre. ʿAlīnaqī ʿĀlīkhānī, ed., *Yāddāshthā-yi ʿAlam*, vol. 2 (n.p.: New World Ltd, 1993), p. 248.

13. Albert Hourani, 'From Jabal ʿĀmil to Persia', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 49:1 (1986): 133–40.
14. Andrew Newman, 'The Myth of the Clerical Migration to Safawid Iran', *Die Welt des Islams*, 33 (1993): 66–112.
15. Rula Jurdi Abisaab, 'The Ulama of Jabal ʿAmil in Safavid Iran, 1501–1736: Marginality, Migration and Social Change', *Iranian Studies*, 27:1–4 (1994): 103–22; and Devin J. Stewart, 'Notes on the Migration of ʿĀmilī Scholars to Safavid Iran', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 55:2 (1996): 81–103.

Shiᶜism, the precarious environment in which ᶜAmili scholars struggled and survived made the Safavid invitation attractive to them.

The Safavids' political vision and the requirements of a newly emerging Shiᶜi society extended to the ᶜAmilis the possibility of migration from Ottoman Syria to Iran and secured their succession to the first offices of *shaykh al-Islam* under the Safavids. In total, about 156 high-ranking clerics from the Jabal ᶜAmil were living in Iran at the close of the Safavid era.[16] Abisaab questions much of the Orientalist literature and the nationalist scholarship coming out of Lebanon and Iran, first on the approaches that the Mamluks and Ottomans took towards Twelver Shiᶜis, and second, on the scope of ᶜAmili clerical emigration to Iran and its religious and political implications for Iran. Orientalist literature reduces the social and political complexity of Jabal ᶜAmil's history to the unfolding of hostile Sunni policies of persecution of Twelver Shiᶜis,[17] but Abisaab emphasizes the fluid boundaries between various forms of Shiᶜism and Sunnism, and the political constructions of 'orthodoxy' and 'heterodoxy', and shows that they were constantly redefined and negotiated. New scholarship on the Lebanese side boasts of the 'export' of a 'high' tradition of Twelver Shiᶜism to Iran, which, they allege, had none.[18] These assertions should not be seen as scholarly breakthroughs but rather as a reflection of the rehabilitation of the history of the Lebanese Shiᶜi community, which until recently was described, implicitly or explicitly, as subsidiary to or derivative of the main currents that merge into a 'Lebanese' historical narrative, a narrative that effectively elevates the Maronite community, or alternatively the Maronite and Sunni communities, to the status of sole or main agents in Lebanese history. These boasts are therefore better understood outside the confines of any Arab–Iranian polemics or 'Lebanocentrism'; rather, they should be regarded as expressions of a claim to historical agency by a community denied any central role in national history. On the Iranian side, the historiography is dominated by cultural determinists and nationalist scholars who consider legalistic Shiᶜism 'endemically' alien to the Iranian intellectual and cultural landscape, and denounce Arab ᶜAmili

16. For details see Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), pp. 302–14.
17. See Urbain Vermeulen, 'The Rescript Against the Shiᶜites and Rafidites of Beirut, Saida and District (746 AH/1363 AD)', *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 4 (1973): 169–71; C. H. Imber, 'The Persecution of the Ottoman Shiᶜites according to the mühimme defterleri, 1565–1585', *Der Islam*, 56 (1979): 245–73. See also Jaᶜfar al-Muhājir, *Al-hijra al-ᶜĀmiliyya ilā Īrān fī al-ᶜaṣr al-Ṣafawī* (Beirut: Dār al-Rawḍa, 1989), pp. 73, 94–8.
18. See ᶜAlī Murūwwa, *Al-tashayyuᶜ bayna Jabal ᶜĀmil wa Īrān* (London: Riyāᶜ al-Rayyis li'l-kutub wa al-nashr, 1987); and ᶜAlī Ibrāhīm Darwīsh, *Jabal ᶜĀmil bayna 1516–1697* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 1993).

'hegemony' over religious life in Iran and the imposition of clerical discipline.[19] Abisaab argues that the ideas of the ᶜAmili *émigré* scholars of Iran took a new life and form that was shaped not by a Syrian reality or cultural traits but rather by the needs of the Safavid state, the social demands of Iranian society, and the professional ambitions of the clerics themselves, to conclude that without the consent of a large sector of Iranian society and its appropriation of clerical Shiᶜism, ᶜAmili efforts could not have persisted beyond the mid-sixteenth century.

While ᶜAmili ulema migrated eastwards, another migration took Iranians to the Levant. Following the capture of northwestern Iran by Süleyman the Magnificent in 1534, the Ottoman ruler settled a group of people from the Tabriz area on the northern reaches of Mount Lebanon. These settlers were the ancestors of the Shiᶜi Hemadeh clan of Jubayl (Byblos).[20]

In the eighteenth and 'long' nineteenth century, political upheavals took a toll on both Iran and the Jabal ᶜAmil. The demise of the Safavids in 1722 ushered in a period of political instability that ended only with the advent of the Qajar dynasty in 1796. In Ottoman Syria, Jabal ᶜAmil was devastated by the Ottoman governor of Akka (Acre), Ahmad Pasha, whose brutal suppression in 1783 of the rebellion of Dahir al-Umar, whom ᶜAmili clan leaders had supported, earned him the sobriquet al-Jazzar, 'the butcher'. Local chronicles report the burning of libraries and destructions of *madrasa*s. One ᶜAmili religious leader, Shaykh Ali al-Zayn, left his home for Iraq and then continued to Iran, where the first Qajar ruler, Agha Mohammad Khan (ruled 1785–97), 'received him well.'[21] But henceforth relations between ulema from Jabal ᶜAmil and Iran were mediated by the ᶜAtabat, whose *madrasa*s, especially those of Najaf, attracted teachers and students from across the Shiᶜi world.[22]

19. Ali ibn Abd al-Ali al-Karaki (died 940/1533) was the first major scholar to emigrate to Safavid Iran from Jabal ᶜAmil via Iraq. He is described in leading Safavid chronicles as the 'inventor of the Shiᶜi religion'. The mid-seventeenth century intellectual debates and political clashes between conventional ᶜAmili jurists and Persian scholars of a philosophical or Sufi bent have been recast either in essentialist culturalist terms or nationalist forms by modern scholars who fail to understand that doctrines and juridical practices promoted by the *émigré* state clerics find their origins and justification in the very Safavid Iran where these jurists lived, developed and became Iranian. See Chapter 3, n148 for representative examples of these trends in scholarship.
20. Abu-Husayn, *The View from Istanbul*, pp. 9–10, 106 n15.
21. Muḥammad Jābir Āl Ṣafā, *Tārīkh Jabal ᶜĀmil* ([Beirut]: Dār Matn al-lugha, n.d.), p. 139, as quoted in Waddah Chrara, *Transformations d'une manifestation religieuse dans un village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)* (Beirut: Publications du Centre de Recherches de l'Université Libanaise, Institut des Sciences Sociales, 1968), pp. 9–10.
22. For a brief history of the *madrasa*s of Najaf, see Mohammad Fadhil Jamali, 'The Theological Colleges of Najaf', *The Moslem World*, 50:1 (January 1960): 15–22. For a

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The nineteenth century witnessed an economic reinvigoration in the eastern Mediterranean, brought about by the Ottoman reforms (the *Tanzimat*) and improving trading arrangements with Europe. With Iran's opening to the outside world that went hand in hand with the relative stability provided by the Qajar dynasty (1796–1925), contact between Iran and Lebanon became easier. The treaties of Erzerum (1823 and 1847) and Berlin (1878) laid the ground for an improvement of Ottoman–Iranian relations, although minor border problems and Ottoman treatment of Shiᶜis in Iraq remained a constant irritant.[23] ᶜAmili Shiᶜis, however, were dealt with less harshly by the Ottomans than those of Iraq and eastern Arabia – perhaps because they were less likely to be suspected of making common cause with Iran.[24]

During the Hamidian era (1876–1908) relations between the last two sovereign Muslim states were so courteous that after 1880 Iranian consuls were routinely listed first on the consular lists of annual Ottoman *salname*s.[25] Iran maintained a

concise and critical account by a seminarian of the curriculum of the *madrasa*s, see Un Mésopotamien, 'Le programme des études chez les chiites et principalement ceux de Nedjef', *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 23 (June 1913): 268–79. For more recent discussions, see Peter Heine, 'Traditionelle Formen und Institutionen schiitischer Erziehung in der Gegenwart am Beispiel der Stadt Nadjaf/Iraq', *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, 74:3 (1990): 204–18; Meir Litvak, 'Madrasa and Learning in 19th Century Najaf and Karbalāᵓ', in Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), pp. 58–78; and Sabrina Mervin, 'La quête du savoir à Nağaf. Les études religieuses chez les chiᶜites imâmites de la fin du XIXe siècle', in *Studia Islamica*, 81 (1995): 165–85. For a discussion of the role of some ᶜAmili clerics in Najaf, see Sabrina Mervin, 'The Clerics of Jabal ᶜĀmil and the Reform of Religious Teaching in Najaf since the Beginning of the 20th Century', in Brunner and Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia*, pp. 79–86.

23. On the gradual settlement of these, see Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran, 1500–1941: A Developing Nation in World Affairs* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1966), pp. 53–6. See also Anja Pistor-Hatam, '*Tanzîmât* oder *Ittihâd*: Zwei Konzepte osmanisch-persischer Einigung', *Turcica*, 24 (1994): 247–61.
24. Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture, and History of Shiᶜite Islam* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2002), especially Chapter 2, 'The Shiᶜites as an Ottoman Minority' and Chapter 6 (co-authored with Moojan Momen) 'Mafia, Mob and Shiᶜism in Iraq'.
25. Johann Strauss, 'La présence diplomatique iranienne à Istanbul et dans les provinces de l'Empire Ottoman (1848–1908)', in Th. Zarcone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr, eds, *Les Iraniens d'Istanbul* (Louvain: Peeters, 1993), p. 14. On relations in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Mohammad Reza Nasiri, *Nâsıreddîn Şah Zamanında*

wide network of consulates in the Ottoman Empire, including Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli. In Sidon members of the Shiᶜi Osseiran family traditionally acted as consular agents. In Beirut that role devolved on the Greek-Orthodox Sursok family, and Christians also represented Iran in Tripoli,[26] which shows that the Iranian state did not deal exclusively with Shiᶜis.

Interest in Iran also grew with the 'globalized' intellectual environment of the Arab east of the late nineteenth century. Pan-Islamic ideas advocated by Jamaleddin al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh,[27] as well as a growing sense of Arab renaissance (*Nahda*) promoting an amalgamation of authenticity and modernity, fostered an awareness of and an interest in the Iranian experimentation with constitutionalism. The new interest in Iran was further strengthened by the Islamic ecumenical movement *al-taqrib bayna al-madhahib*, which sought to reduce sectarian tensions between the two main branches of Islam. In response to this movement, and in an effort to present Shiᶜism as consistent with common Islamic norms, the celebrated ᶜAmili scholar Muhsin al-Amin engaged in an effort to question the Muharram commemoration practices in Jabal ᶜAmil as innovations.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, a number of Iranian families settled in the cities of Lebanon as merchants, tobacco growers and coffeehouse owners.[28] In his autobiography, Muhsin al-Amin noted that he learned a few Persian words 'from an Iraqi who spoke this language with [his] maternal uncle'.[29] But the general Shiᶜi population soon assimilated these Iranians (who may in fact have been Persian residents of Ottoman Iraq), and surnames like Ajami and Irani are reminders of that immigration.[30] One lasting legacy of the Iranians' presence was the introduction to Lebanese Shiᶜis of Muharram mourning rituals, commemorating

Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1991).

26. Strauss, 'La présence diplomatique iranienne à Istanbul', pp. 23, 28–32.
27. On the former see Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al-Din ᶜal-Afghaniᵓ* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968) and Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal al-Din ᶜal-Afghaniᵓ* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).
28. According to Frédéric Maatouk there were about twenty families in Nabatiyya. See his *La Représentation de la mort de l'Imam Hussein à Nabatieh* (Beirut: Université Libanaise, 1974), p. 42.
29. Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Autobiographie d'un clerc chiite du Ǧabal ᶜĀmil*, translation and annotations by Sabrina Mervin and Haïtham al-Amin (Damascus: Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas, 1998), p. 107.
30. Bärbel Reuter, *Ašura-Feiern im Libanon: zum politischen Potential eines religiösen Festes* (Münster: LIT, 1993), pp. 54–5; and Sabrina Mervin, *Un réformisme chiite: Ulémas et lettrés du Ǧabal ᶜĀmil (actuel Liban-Sud) de la fin de l'Empire ottoman à l'indépendance du Liban* (Paris: Karthala, 2000), pp. 245–8.

the martyrdom of the third Shiᶜi Imam, Husayn ibn Ali, at Karbala in the year AD 680, typically associated with Iran, such as self-flagellation and passion plays. The passion play, in particular, developed in Iran,[31] from which it spread first to Iraq and then to Lebanon.[32] When Muhsin al-Amin denounced these rituals as contrary to the spirit of Islam, a number of others rose to their defence, setting off a polemic that lasted for many years.[33]

In 1933 Muhsin al-Amin visited Iran, and wrote about the country's cities and shrines in a travel book covering both Iraq and Iran. After noting that Iranians are a people of special politeness, he gainsays those who impugn Iranians' lack of generosity: 'Some people chide Iranians for being stingy. This is unjust and unfair; they are among the most generous people in following God's commandments. The truth is that while they are munificent, they are frugal when it is warranted, and generous when generosity is required. An ignorant might mistake frugality for stinginess.'[34] What struck him most, however, were Iranians' consumption habits:

> Any nation, however praiseworthy its qualities, is bound to have defects, since perfection for other than God is impossible: Iranians smoke opium, it is so widespread in Iran amongst all classes, it has even reached the houses of learning, may God inspire them to quit it. … Iranians are fond of drinking tea, morning and evening, men, women, and children, young and old, learned and ignorant, rich and poor. One wishes they would have been content with tea and had abandoned smoking opium.[35]

31. See Peter J. Chelkowski, ed., *Taᶜzieh: Ritual and Drama in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1979). The books contain chapters on other countries as well.
32. On the Iraqi passion plays see Ibrahim al-Haidari, *Zur Soziologie des schiitischen Chiliasmus: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung des irakischen Passionsspiels* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1975); and Peter Heine, 'Aspects of the Social Structure of Shiite Society in Modern Iraq', in Brunner and Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia*, pp. 87–93. On Lebanon see Emrys Peters, 'A Muslim Passion Play: Key to a Lebanese Village', *The Atlantic*, 198:4 (October 1956); Maatouk, *La Représentation de la mort de l'Imam Hussein à Nabatieh*; Ibrahim al-Haidari, 'Die Taᶜzia, das schiitische Passionsspiel im Libanon', *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländlichen Gesellschaft*, Supplement III, 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1977), pp. 430–7; and Reuter, *Ašura-Feiern im Libanon*, pp. 59–111, *passim*.
33. Mervin, *Un réformisme chiite*, Chapter 6, 'La lutte contre les innovations blâmables et la réforme des rites de ᶜĀšūrāᵓ'. This work supersedes Werner Ende's 'The Flagellations of Muharram and the Shiᶜite ᶜUlamāᵓ', *Der Islam*, 55:1 (March 1978): 19–36.
34. Muḥsin al-Ḥusaynī al-ᶜĀmilī, *Riḥlāt al-sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn* (S.l.: n.p., 1974), pp. 222 and 229.
35. Ibid., pp. 223–4 and 226. On the use of opium in Iran see Elizabeth P. MacCallan,

Muhsin al-Amin's attack on folk rituals caught the eye of a 20-year-old seminarian in Iran, who in 1943 published his first work, a little booklet titled *ʿAzādārīhā-ye nāmashrūʿ* (Illegitimate mourning), a Persian translation of Muhsin al-Amin's *Al-tanzīh li-aʿmāl al-shabīh*. The son of a cleric, this young seminarian had spent a few months in Najaf, where he had probably come across the book. Within two days the booklet was sold out, but the author's joy was premature, for it transpired that pious *bazaari* friends of his father's had bought the entire stock and burned it. The young admirer of Muhsin al-Amin was none other than Jalal Al-e Ahmad,[36] the Iranian writer and essayist who would much later become the ideologue of the struggle against what he called *gharbzadegi*, 'Westoxication'.[37] A few months later Al-e Ahmad abandoned clerical garb and joined the communist Tudeh party, which he left in 1948 to become an independent secular leftist.[38] His first work was not published again in Iran until 1992.[39] This edition also includes a talk on Muhsin al-Amin by Ali Shariati given in the autumn of 1972 at the Hoseiniyeh Ershad Institute in Teheran, in which the modernist ideologue praised the reformist *ʿalim* for his social activism in Lebanon: at a time, Shariati said, when the ulema did not object to self-mortification but considered giving an education to girls a cardinal sin, Muhsin al-Amin had founded a school for girls, which was a

Twenty Years of Persian Opium (1908–1928): A Study (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1928) and Schams Anwari-Alhosseyni, 'Über Haschisch und Opium im Iran', in Gisela Völger, ed., *Rausch und Realität: Drogen im Kulturvergleich* (Cologne: Rautenstrauch und Joest, 1981).

36. Al-e Ahmad tells the story in his autobiographical sketch: Jalāl Āl-i Aḥmad, *Yak chāh va du chālah va mathalan sharḥ-i aḥvālāt* (Teheran: Ravvāq, 1343/1964), pp. 48–9. *Bazaari* merchants are of course major sponsors of Muharram rituals in Iran.
37. His book by the same name appeared in 1961. For an English translation see Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi (Weststruckness)*, translated by John Green and Ahmad Alizadeh (Lexington, Ky.: Mazda, 1982). For critical studies of Al-e Ahmad see Brad Hanson, 'The Westoxication of Iran: Depiction, and Reaction of Behrangi, Al-e Ahmad and Shariati', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 15 (1983); Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), pp. 105–15; Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), Chapter 1 'Jalal Al-e Ahmad: The Dawn of "the Islamic Ideology"', pp. 39–101; and Farzin Vahdat, 'Return to which Self? Jalal Al-e Ahmad and the Discourse of Modernity', *Journal of Iranian Research and Analysis*, 16:2 (November 2000): 55–71.
38. Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*, pp. 44–6.
39. ʿAllāma Āyat Allāh Muḥsin Amīn, *ʿAzādārīhā-yi nāmashrūʿ*, translated by Jalāl Āl-i Aḥmad, edited with an introduction by Sayyid Qāsim Yāḥusaynī (Bushehr: Daryā, 1371/1992).

revolutionary act.[40] In fact, admiration for Lebanese educational establishments had a long history in Iran.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEIRUT AS AN EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

In the early sixteenth century, European Christian missionaries, encouraged by the tolerant policies of Amir Fakhreddin II (ruled 1590–1635), began to help Lebanon's Christian communities establish schools. The movement grew after 1840, for the mild climate and large Christian populations attracted increasing numbers of missionaries who started schools at all levels.[41] The Syrian Protestant College (renamed American University of Beirut in 1920) was established in 1866, and a Jesuit college founded in 1843 became the French-language Université Saint-Joseph in 1875. Both soon attracted large numbers of Iranians. We must remember that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries educated Iranians were less estranged from the Arabic language than they would be in the years following the Second World War, when Reza Shah's de-Arabizing policies began to show their effect.[42] Any Iranian who had been educated before the 1930s had a good reading knowledge of Arabic,[43] and even an intellectual like Ahmad Kasravi, often considered the ideologue of Iranian nationalism,[44] drew on Bustani's encyclopaedia as a source of information about the West.[45] Although the instruction provided at SPC/AUB and Saint-Joseph was dispensed not in Arabic but in English and French respectively, their familiarity with Arabic must have helped the early students from Iran feel more at home than they would have felt in Europe.

40. Ibid., p 35. Shariati's talk is also reprinted in vol. 31 of his collected works. ᶜAlī Sharīᶜatī, *Vīzhagīhā-yi qurūn-i jadīd* (Teheran: Chāp-i Āshnā, 1361/1982), pp. 527–42.
41. Theodor Hanf, *Erziehungswesen in Gesellschaft und Politik des Libanon* (Bielefeld: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1969), pp. 60–74.
42. One telling example is Sediqeh Dowlatabadi (1882–1961), one of Iran's first feminists. Born into a learned family with Babi sympathies, she started Persian and Arabic lessons at the age of six with a cleric by the name of Aqa Shaykh Mohammad Rafiᶜ who had studied Arabic in Beirut. According to her, he was the first Iranian cleric to have gone to Beirut. Mahdukht Ṣanᶜatī and Afsānah Najmᵓābādī, eds, *Ṣadīqa Dawlatᵓābādī: Nāmahhā, nivishtahhā, va yādhā*, vol. 3 (Chicago: Midland Press, 1998), p. 614. We are grateful to Afsaneh Najmabadi for pointing this source out to us.
43. In the early 1960s, Marvin Zonis found that members of Iran's political elite were more likely to know Arabic the older they were. See his *The Political Elite of Iran* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 153–4.
44. See Ervand Abrahamian, 'Kasravi: The Integrative Nationalist of Iran', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9 (1973): 271–95.
45. On this work see Albert Hourani, 'Bustāni's Encyclopaedia', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1:1 (1990): 111–19.

Going to study in Beirut was for a young Iranian a way to get a modern Western education without leaving the Muslim world. As one of the earliest Iranian students at AUB put it, 'the city of Beirut was in those days the 'abode of learning in the Ottoman Empire' (*dār al-ᶜilm-i mamlikat-i uthmānī*).[46] A former Iranian prime minister said that 'Beirut is an important publishing centre, and its schools and hospitals draw attention from far and near. A number of young Iranians study here; Firuz Mirza and other sons of [Prince] Farmanfarma are among them.'[47] The importance of Lebanon's educational establishments for the formation of Iran's secular intellectual and political elite cannot be over estimated.

The founder of modern Persian prose literature, Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh (1895–1997), who was born in Isfahan into a Seyyed family from Hamadan that traced its origins to the Jabal ᶜAmil, was sent to Beirut in 1908, accompanied by two sons of a member of parliament.[48] He attended the Lazarist school in Antoura until 1910, and it was there that he engaged in his first literary endeavours. In an autobiographical essay he wrote: 'It was [at Antoura] that I had my first experience with writing. Together with a fellow student by the name of Wajih Khoury we published a hand-written newspaper in French by the name of *La Devise*.'

He continued that once he wrote a humorous essay for another boy's birthday and that it fell into the hands of a stern priest. He was afraid of being punished, but the priest read out the essay in a rhetoric class for older pupils and everybody had a good laugh. His composition teachers called his writings 'original', and offered him a scholarship to continue his studies at another Lazarist school in Lille, in the hope that he would then write for the newspaper *La Croix*. But he unwittingly ruined his chances when the class was told to write an essay on 'Whom would you like to be like?' Most pupils chose Saint Vincent de Paul, the founder of the order, as their role model, but Jamalzadeh wrote that he wanted to be like Voltaire. Not that he knew much about François-Marie Arouet, but the French newspaper *Le Matin* had called his father, the constitutionalist activist S. Jamal Vaᶜez, the Voltaire of Iran.[49] It was in Beirut that the young Jamalzadeh learned of his father's execution in Teheran during the counterrevolutionary regime of Mohammad Ali Shah, and shortly thereafter he went to Europe,[50] eventually settling in Geneva

46. Duktur Yūnis Afrūkhtah, *Khāṭirāt-i nuh sālah* (reprint, Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1983), p. 493.
47. Mahdīqulī Hidāyat, *Safarnāmah-yi tasharruf bah Makkah-yi muᶜazzama* (Teheran: Chāpkhānah-yi Majlis, n.d.).
48. *Rāhnamā-yi kitāb*, nos 3–4 (Khurdād-Tīr 1349/May–July 1970), p. 168.
49. On him see Mangol Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution: Shiᶜism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1909* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 62, 168–9, 256–8.
50. [Muḥammad-ᶜAlī Jamālzādah], 'Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i āqā-yi Jamālzādah', *Nashriyya-yi*

where he died.[51] It is of course dangerous to read too much into one minor novel, but it may be an indication of the general appreciation of Lebanon by modernist intellectuals of the 1920s that the first utopia ever published in Iran, a novel titled *The Assembly of the Lunatics*, places the capital of a politically unified ideal world lying 2000 years in the future in Mount Lebanon.[52]

In politics, most famously, the last Shah's longest serving prime minister (1965–77), Amir Abbas Hoveyda (1917–79), and his brother Fereydoun (born 1924), who was Iranian ambassador to the United Nations in the 1970s, both attended the Lycée Français in Beirut. The former recalled that in one of Lebanon's cabinets, 'of the twelve ministers, seven had been [his] classmates'.[53] The latter wrote a *roman à clef* after the revolution about his generation of Iranians and Lebanese and their interaction in the Middle East.[54] Another graduate of the French lycée was the Shah's last prime minister, Shapur Bakhtiar (1914–92), who was in Beirut in the 1930s and had this to say about Lebanon in his reminiscences, published after the revolution in his Parisian exile:

> I had simultaneously to prepare myself for the baccalaureate and to learn Arabic. There was not enough time for me to learn that language well. I speak a bit and I know the Koran, that's all. As my second language I chose German. … In Beirut I went out very little, and submitted myself to an iron discipline. Nonetheless, I was able to get to know the Lebanon of the happy years, this marvellous and peaceful country that practised coexistence between different religious communities. The events of the last few years

dānishkadah-yi adabiyāt-i Tabrīz, 6:3 (Ādhar 1333/November–December 1954): 269–70.

51. For an early appreciation see Roger Lescot, 'Le roman et la nouvelle dans la littérature iranienne contemporaine', *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1942–43): 84–5. For an in-depth analysis of Jamalzadeh's literary career see Hassan Kamshad, *Modern Persian Prose Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966, reprinted: Bethesda: Iranbooks, 1996), pp. 91–112. His masterpiece, a collection of early short stories originally published in 1921, is available in English as Mohammad Ali Jamalzada, *Once Upon a Time*, translated by Heshmat Moayyad and Paul Sprachman (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1985).
52. Ṣanᶜatīzādah Kirmānī, *Majmaᶜ-i divānagān* (Teheran: Kitābkhānah-yi Muẓaffariyya, 1303/1924), pp. 25–6.
53. Abbas Milani, *The Persian Sphinx: Amir Abbas Hoveyda and the Riddle of the Iranian Revolution* (Washington, DC: Mage, 2000), p. 60.
54. Fereydoun Hoveyda, *Les nuits féodales: tribulations d'un persan au Moyen Orient* (Paris: Scarabée & Co/A. M. Métailié, 1983). The younger Hoveyda is a francophone man of letters who has published not only fiction but also a highly regarded history of the detective novel.

> break my heart. The photos of Beirut ruined by bombs and street fighting are for me those of a paradise lost. I remember having gone skiing and having bathed in the sea on the same day: this was easily done given the proximity between the mountains and the sea. Those mountains I hiked in all its length, from the Turkish border to Palestine.[55]

The role French schools played in the formation of the Iranian elite deserves more systematic attention than we are giving it in this book, in which we include two chapters that focus on the American University of Beirut.

Although students of all backgrounds were exposed to Protestant Christianity at the Syrian Protestant College, it was open to adherents of all religions. At the groundbreaking ceremony of College Hall on 7 December 1871 President Daniel Bliss said: 'This College is for all conditions and classes of men without regard to colour, nationality, race or religion. A man white, black or yellow; Christian, Jew, Mohammedan or heathen, may enter and enjoy all the advantages of this institution … and go out believing in one God, in many gods, or in no god.'[56]

Although this tolerance of other faiths was not uncontested, it ultimately prevailed,[57] and as a result the college attracted many Muslims, including Iranians. The staff of the Syrian Protestant College were aware of their role in educating Iranians. In an SPC pamphlet published in 1910, the author first notes that a 'new era' had dawned in Iran as a result of the constitutional revolution of 1906, and continues: 'Until Persia has its own Christian college and universities our college ought to minister and powerfully minister to her needs.'[58]

In the autumn of 1923, Ahmad Shah, the last ruler of the Qajar dynasty (ruled

55. Chapour Bakhtiar, *Ma fidélité* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1982), p. 22.
56. Samir Khalaf, 'New England Puritanism and Liberal Education in the Middle East: The American University of Beirut as a Cultural Transplant', in Şerif Mardin, ed., *Cultural Transitions in the Middle East* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), p. 67. Bliss added that it would be impossible for any graduate not to know what the founders believed to be the truth.
57. See Elie Kedourie, 'The American University of Beirut', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 3:1 (1966): 74–90, where the tug of war between adherents of evangelization and education is discussed.
58. *The Expansion of the Syrian Protestant College, Beirût, Syria* (n.p.: printed for the trustees, 1910), pp. 5–6. Iran did indeed have a college similar to AUB for a short while, for in 1929 the old Presbyterian high school of Teheran became Alborz College. For a brief history see *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 'Alborz College', s.v. However, the college never gained the stature of AUB, and in 1940 the Iranian state forced the Americans to sell the college, upon which it became an Iranian high school – albeit the best in the land. See Mīr Asad Allāh Mūsavī Mākū'ī, *Dabīristān-i Alburz va shabānahrūzī-yi ān* (Teheran: Bīsutūn, 1378/1999), pp. 15–17.

1909–25), visited AUB on his way to Europe, a trip from which he was not to return. As recorded by the university's president:

> Soon after the opening of the academic year, the University was honored by a visit from His Majesty, the Shah of Persia, who was impressed by the useful service the institution might render to the young men of this country. For the first time our catalogue is being printed in Persian, and a real attempt is being made to interest these Shi'ite Moslems in modern education. Twenty-two students have been enrolled from Persia the past year.
>
> Vast undeveloped territories are waiting for leadership and are looking to our university to train their men. It is thrilling to think of the part that we can play in sending forth men of spiritual power to restore the lands of Cyrus ... and their ancient glory.[59]

Some came to attend preparatory school:

> Two Persian students, one from Teheran, the other from Hamadan, were sent here by their grandmothers, one of whom is a princess and the other a countess (*sic*). They are large landowners. The boys are twelve and fourteen years of age. They arrived at the School a year ago, about one month before the close of the year. In those far off countries not much account is paid to the times and seasons for the opening and closing of schools. The grandparents wish to have the boys trained. They have come to believe that this School is able to do that and to return their sons as grown men with a suitable education and with characters that can be relied upon.[60]

In the early 1960s Iranians constituted the largest group of non-Arabs at AUB, although Germany in the 1950s and the United States in the 1960s attracted the largest number of Iranian students.[61]

Many Iranian graduates of Lebanese schools subsequently rendered valuable services to the development of education in Iran. Perhaps the first was Mirza Hasan Tabrizi Roshdiyeh (1851–1944), the son of a high-ranking cleric from Tabriz, who intended to go to Najaf in order to conclude his religious education but instead

59. *Report of the President of the American University of Beirut, Beirut, Syria for the Fifty-Eighth Year 1923–1924*, pp. 8–9.
60. Ibid., p. 11.
61. In 1958–59 there were 4000 students in Germany, 3700 in the United States, 800 in France, 600 in Great Britain, 250 in Switzerland, and 166 in Lebanon. Reza Arasteh, 'The Education of Iranian Leaders in Europe and America', *International Review of Education*, 8:3–4 (1963): 448.

decided to acquire a secular education after he had become aware of the gap in literacy rates between Iran and Europe. First he went to Istanbul, then to Cairo, but he found what he was looking for only in Beirut, where he spent two years. In his son's words:

> The teaching style of Beirut's French university had had an impact on the state of education there, and Beirutis themselves had schools that were both Islamic and modern.
>
> Roshdiyeh entered one of these schools in [1881] and learned the principles and methods of modern education from the French-trained teachers. In [1883] he left Beirut [and] returned to Iran via Istanbul … [where] he studied the schools that were based on modern principles.[62]

After founding a school for Iranian expatriates in Yerevan, he finally arrived in Iran in 1888, and established Iran's first modern elementary school in Tabriz, followed in 1898 by one in Teheran. These schools became the model for Iran's incipient public educational system.[63]

In the sciences, the man commonly known as the 'father of Iranian physics', Mahmud Hesabi (1903–92), grew up in Lebanon. He was born in Teheran, but his family moved to Beirut in 1907 when his father became consul in that city. He stayed in Beirut with his mother and brother after his father returned to Iran, and attended first a Catholic French school and then SPC. He then worked as an engineer near the Syrian border with a French construction company that sent him to Paris for further study in 1924. He received a doctorate in physics in 1927 and, upon his return to Iran, he took a leading role in founding Teheran's teachers' training college and Iran's first university, the University of Teheran, and was minister of education in one of Mosaddeq's cabinets.[64]

62. Shams al-Dīn Rushdiyya, *Savāniḥ-i ʿumr* (Teheran: Nashr-i Tārīkh, 1362/1983), pp. 12 and 23.
63. Following the Ottoman *Rüşdiye* school (from Arabic *rushd* 'development'), he called his schools *roshdiyeh*, finally taking that as his surname as well. These schools met with a lot of traditionalist hostility and were occasionally destroyed by clerically instigated mobs. For a full story see David Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 60–3; and Monica M. Ringer, *Education Religion and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran* (Costa Mesa, Cal.: Mazda, 2001), pp. 155–62. For the original Ottoman Rüşdiye see Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839–1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), *passim*.
64. *Rāh-i mā: Guftārhāʾī az purūfisūr Sayyid Maḥmūd Ḥisābī* (Teheran: Sāzimān-i chāp va intishārāt-i vizārat-i farhang va irshād-i islāmī, 1379/2000), pp. 5, 185–6. For a full

In the medical field, Beirut was the leading centre of learning and teaching in the Middle East.[65] One early graduate of AUB was Qasem Ghani, who went to Beirut to study at Saint-Joseph but had to change his plans after the onset of the First World War. The first volume of his memoirs is dedicated almost exclusively to his sojourn in that city during the war, and his reminiscences, which form the basis of H. E. Chehabi's Chapter 5, are valuable not only for what they tell us about the experiences of an Iranian at the SPC, but also because they afford us a glimpse of life in Beirut during the First World War and the SPC's heroic efforts to stand by its students in most difficult times.

Another Iranian AUB medical graduate who achieved prominence in later years was Zabih Qorban (born 1903 in Abadeh), who went to Beirut after graduating from Alborz College in 1924. He graduated from AUB in 1931, and after a year of training in Lyons returned to Iran in 1932. He became director of the small Namazi Hospital (*behbudestan*), but found that the hospital

> had no nurses or aides of any kind, only some untrained staff. ... After a few months, my younger sister, Keyhan Qorban, returned from Beirut where she had completed four years of training as a nurse and midwife. ... A year later, in 1933, we gained a second nurse, Maimanat Dana, another member of our family, who also finished her training in Beirut and returned to Shiraz.

The two AUB graduates trained other nurses, much to the amazement of the local populace, not used to seeing unveiled women working, and the governor had to send extra police to protect them from mob assault.[66] In due course Zabih became founder and dean of Shiraz medical school, and then chancellor of Shiraz University. Both his sons studied at AUB, and one, Kambiz, became vice-chancellor of Shiraz University in 1976.[67]

The same religious pluralism that made it possible for Muslim Iranians to study

list of his services to the nation, see ibid., pp. 186–90. For a somewhat hagiographic biography written by his son see Īraj Ḥisābī, *Ustād-i ʿishq: Nigāhī bah zindagī va talāshhā-yi purūfisūr Sayyid Maḥmūd Ḥisābī, pidar-i ʿilm-i fīzīk va muhandisī-yi nuvīn-i Īrān* (Teheran: Sāzimān-i chāp va intishārāt-i vizārat-i farhang va irshād-i islāmī, 1380/2001).

65. See, for instance, Nigarendé, 'Beyrouth, centre médical', *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 7:1–2 (1909): 39–52.
66. Zabih Ghorban, *Medical Education in Shiraz: A Personal Memoir* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), pp. 3 and 5.
67. Ibid., p. 61. However, most of the expansion of the medical school and the university was done with help from the British Council and the University of Pennsylvania.

at AUB also attracted non-Muslim Iranians to Beirut,[68] including adherents of the Bahaʾi faith, a religion that originated in nineteenth-century Iran.[69] Historians have largely neglected the social history of Bahaʾis (and one might add other religious minorities) as a constituent part of Middle Eastern societies, and it is to some extent in response to this neglect that we include a discussion of the encounter between Iranian Bahaʾis and Lebanon in this book.[70]

IRAN, THE BAHAʾI FAITH AND LEBANON

The first two leaders of the Bahaʾi faith lived much of their lives (1868–1908) in exile in Akka (Acre), in Ottoman Palestine. The history of the introduction of this religion to Lebanon illustrates the pivotal role of the shrine cities of Iraq as mediators between Iranian and Lebanese society, and is worth relating.

It was during the lifetime of the founder of the religion, Bahaʾullah (1817–92),

68. Since neither Lebanon nor Iran have civil marriage, this at times created problems when members of different religious communities fell in love, to wit this entry in the annual report for 1934–35: 'The last event of the academic year showed how complicated the religious problems of Beirut can be. A young Zoroastrian from Persia received his medical diploma. Before going to work at Kermanshah, he desired to marry a Russian Orthodox girl, who came from Bulgaria to study nursing. Although the girl's parents cabled their consent, it was difficult to know how to conduct the wedding. Finally, all were satisfied when a recent graduate of Union Theological Seminary read a simple Protestant service in the presence of the Persian consul, who is a Shiʿite Muslim.' 'Report of the President of the American University of Beirut for the Sixty-Ninth Year, 1934–35', Typescript, Beirut, 22 July 1935, p. 3.
69. On the Bahaʾi faith and its forerunner, Babism, see Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); and Juan R. I. Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium: The Genesis of the Bahaʾi Faith in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). For accounts of the religion(s) from a Bahaʾi perspective, see Alessandro Bausani, *Religion in Iran* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2000), pp. 379–412; and Peter Smith, *The Babi and Bahaʾi Religions: From Messianic Shiʿism to a World Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
70. See Ismael Velasco, 'Academic Irrelevance or Disciplinary Blind Spot? Middle Eastern Studies and the Bahāʾī Faith Today', *Middle Eastern Studies Association Bulletin*, 35:2 (2001): 188–98, which, however, neglects to mention the exceptions that prove the rule, most importantly the seminal contributions of Juan Cole. For a discussion of the manifold difficulties that beset Bahaʾi studies, see Denis McEoin, 'The Crisis in Babi and Bahaʾi Studies: Part of a Wider Crisis in Academic Freedom?', *BRISMES Bulletin*, 17 (1990): 55–61. Although in an ideal world this would not be necessary, we wish to point out that we are neither former, nor present, nor, in all likelihood, future adherents of that religion.

that a man known to us as Shaykh Jaᶜfar, who may have been of Persian origin,[71] left the shrine cities to settle in the southern Lebanese village of Mashghara (in the southern Bekaa) as the local Shiᶜi imam. He was converted to the new faith in the city of Sidon by one Aqa Muhammad Mustafa Baghdadi, a prominent Bahaᵓi of Beirut who had moved there from Baghdad. Upon his return to Mashghara, he announced his conversion to his flock because he did not want to deceive them, removed his turban, and replaced it with a fez. In subsequent years a number of his relatives by marriage also converted and formed the Bahaᵓi community in Mashghara, which exists to this day in the middle of what is now a Hizballah-dominated town.[72]

Bahaᵓis from Iran regularly visited Bahaᵓullah and his son and successor, Abbas Effendi Abdul-Baha (1844–1921); and the proximity of Beirut to Akka made the SPC doubly attractive to Iranian Bahaᵓis, for they could spend their holidays with their religious leader. It was only when Bahaᵓis started proselytizing, that some at SPC were upset, as, in the words of one early Bahaᵓi student, 'they had come to the Levant to convert, not to be invited to convert.'[73] But the proponents of a tolerant line, President Bliss among them, prevailed. At AUB, the Bahaᵓi faith was accorded the same respect as other religions, to wit an AUB textbook for citizenship, published in 1940, which included a full discussion of the Bahaᵓi faith alongside other religions,[74] a situation that stands in sharp contrast to Iran, where the religion has never been officially recognized, although its adherents generally fared well in the 1960s and 1970s.[75] In Chapter 4, Richard Hollinger analyses the

71. In Lebanon Shaykh Jaᶜfar obtained a passport in which his surname was registered as Shushtari (his full name in his Iranian passport was Jaafar the son of Ali Asghar Tahhan Shushtari). His surname, while living in Iraq, was Tahhan, which his descendants still use today. The choice of the name Shushtari suggests a Persian origin, but some say that he was an Arab from Iraq and claimed to be Iranian only so as to be exempted from Ottoman military service. Whatever the truth may be, the confusion itself testifies to the fluidity of ethnic and national designations in that period.
72. We owe this story to Professor Vahid Behmardi of the American University of Beirut, who heard it from local elders.
73. 'Khāṭirāt-i Mīrzā Badīᶜ Bushrūᵓī', manuscript, p. 6. We are grateful to Professor Vahid Behmardi for making a copy of relevant passages of this manuscript available to us.
74. Stuart Carter Dodd, *Social Relations in the Near East: A Textbook in Citizenship Prepared for the Freshmen at the American University of Beirut* (Beirut: American Press, 1940), pp. 437–9.
75. For a balanced account see Denis MacEoin, *The Bahaᵓi Community in Iran in the Twentieth Century*, occasional paper no. 4 (London: CNMES, SOAS, 1989). For the period of the Islamic Republic see Riḍā Afshārī, 'Naqḍ-i ḥuqūq-i bashar-i bahāᵓiyān dar jumhūrī-yi islāmī', *Īrān Nāmah*, 19 (1379–80/2001): 151–64.

Bahaʾi presence at AUB and discusses the impact of the university on the development of the Bahaʾi faith and of its Bahaʾi graduates on Iran.

A few years before the founding of the state of Israel, the third leader of the Bahaʾi faith, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani (1896–1957), asked the Bahaʾis of northern Palestine to leave, and most left for Jordan and Lebanon. These Bahaʾis, together with those in Mashghara, form a small community that has found its place in the religious mosaic of Lebanon; prominent members included Zeine N. Zeine, a respected historian of Arab nationalism and an important public intellectual and AUB professor, and H. M. Balyuzi, author and one of the founders of the BBC Persian service. The community remained small, however, for in the 1950s and 1960s Bahaʾis were not allowed to visit Beirut (resident Bahaʾis were exempt) because after 1948 a number of descendants of Abdul-Baha who had been excommunicated had settled in that city.[76] One of these, incidentally, a great-granddaughter of Abdul-Baha by the name of Leila Shahid, became PLO representative in Paris in 1994.

The advent of the Islamic Republic in Iran adversely affected Lebanon's Bahaʾis and, in 1985, one prominent member of the community in Beirut, Shehab Zahrai, was kidnapped and never seen again. Although no one has claimed responsibility for this abduction, it may have something to do with some members of the Zahrai family being active in maintaining Bahaʾi communication with the outside world from Iran.[77] Through all these years Bahaʾis have maintained a National Spiritual Assembly in Lebanon, a right they have not enjoyed in Iran since 1979. It bears mentioning that Lebanon was, together with Egypt, the springboard of the Bahaʾi faith's spread to North America, for it was a formerly Melkite convert to the new religion and graduate of SPC who first brought it to the United States.[78]

Bahaʾis were not the only non-Shiʿi group with transnational linkages spanning Iran and Lebanon. The Armenian schools and seminaries attracted a number of Armenians from Iran,[79] and many Armenian priests in Iran are either from Lebanon and Syria or are Iranian graduates of these seminaries. In A. W. Samii's chapter we read about the Armenian connection, but it deserves closer scrutiny by scholars of

76. In Bahaʾi parlance they had been found guilty of 'breaking the covenant'. Personal communication from Professor Vahid Behmardi, 5 June 2002.
77. Interview with Vahid Behmardi, 14 March 2001, Beirut.
78. See Richard Hollinger, 'Ibrahim George Kheiralla and the Bahá'í Faith in America', in Juan R. Cole and Moojan Momen, eds, *Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History, Vol. Two: From Iran East and West* (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1984), pp. 95–134.
79. See Vartan Gregorian, *The Road to Home: My Life and Times* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), Chapter 4 'To Beirut, Le Petit Paris', pp. 63–94. It would seem that Gregorian's social life revolved almost exclusively around interaction with other Armenians.

the Armenian diaspora. There is even a Polish connection, for during the Second World War, a number of Polish refugee children were taken from Teheran to Beirut.[80]

LEBANON AND PAHLAVI IRAN

By a convenient coincidence Lebanon's constitution as a separate territorial jurisdiction (1920) was very closely followed by the rise to power of the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, who staged a *coup d'état* in 1921 and crowned himself Shah in 1926. By the same token, Lebanon's first republic coincided largely with the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, while the onset of the civil war preceded the demise of the Pahlavi regime by only three years.

In the 1920s Beirut was the major commercial centre of the Middle East, and the place from which American and European goods found their way to the rest of the Middle East, including Iran. One man who later became one of Iran's top industrial magnates, Habib Sabet, started his career as an international entrepreneur by going to Beirut (via Baghdad and Damascus) in 1925, buying a car there, and starting a passenger service between Teheran and Baghdad. He remembered his reaction to Beirut:

> [Beirut] was a big and active port, which opened a gate between the Arab countries and Europe and was the centre for the sale of a variety of imported cars. …
>
> My first voyage to Beirut … that beautiful and historical city that lies on the slope of Mount Lebanon and on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, was very pleasant and generated an unprecedented joy and excitement in me. I had heard a little bit about the history of this port city, which had been a major commercial and cultural centre during the heyday of the Phoenician, Roman, Islamic, and finally Ottoman civilizations, and about how in the present century its civic and cultural development had reached the highest levels both in its Islamic and Arab, and its Western and Christian aspects. But hearing things never equals seeing them.
>
> When I saw this display of Lebanese civilization, everything I had known and heard was confirmed. I enjoyed looking at the city's bazaars and shops, which were full of European goods, of chairs, furniture, elegant fabrics, graceful clothes, and dishes made of crystal and china. For hours I wandered around the streets and shops, and lost myself looking at the

80. See I. Beaupré-Stankiewicz, D. Waszczuk-Kamieniecka and J. Lewicka-Howells, eds, *Isfahan: City of Polish Children* (n.p.: Association of Former Pupils of Polish Schools, 1989).

> goods. Of course I bought a few souvenirs, including a pair of black patent-leather shoes for my sister, which everybody fell in love with in Iran, for until then nobody had seen shining black leather shoes in our country. All my relatives and acquaintances asked me to bring them these types of new shoes when I went on my next trip.
>
> After a few days … I looked for a car. Almost all European and American car manufacturers had representatives in this illustrious city, and as one of my acquaintances put it, Beirut was the Paris of the Middle East.

Sabet admits that he did not know much about cars, but he finally settled on a Ford, whose representative was a man named Charles Corm: 'Corm was a dignified, well-mannered man, a poet and a scholar who has left behind a number of books and poems. He was very well dressed and always wore pastel-coloured silk shirts and elegant suits.'[81]

Sabet adds that Charles Corm imported detached pieces of American cars and then had them assembled in Beirut. 'The cars, all of them black, were priced at between 80 and 85 Ottoman pounds.' Sabet bought a car, drove it on his pilgrimage to Haifa (he was a Baha'i), and then returned to Iran via Baghdad, where he picked up passengers. In Teheran he sold the car for twice the price he had paid, and with that profit returned to Beirut where he bought more cars. He started a lucrative passenger service for Iranian pilgrims to the shrine cities in Iraq, then became a major importer and later industrialist, and by 1978 was one of Iran's richest men. He died in exile in Los Angeles in 1990, all his companies having been confiscated after the revolution.[82]

Diplomatic relations between independent Lebanon and Iran were established in the 1950s, there having been an Iranian consulate in Beirut since before Lebanese independence. There was a certain affinity between the Shah, who opposed radical Arab nationalism, especially Egypt's,[83] and the Maronite establishment, which was more oriented towards Europe. In the aftermath of the overthrow in 1952 of his former brother-in-law, King Faruk of Egypt, and his own seizure of power in 1953, the Shah attempted to counter revolutionary Arab nationalism by establishing closer contacts with pro-Western Arab states. In February 1955 Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan and Great Britain signed the Baghdad Pact, and later that

81. Charles Corm (1894–1963) was a leading 'Phoenicianist' and founded the *Revue Phénicienne* in 1920.
82. Ḥabīb Thābit [Sabet], *Sargudhasht-i Ḥabīb-i Thābit* (Costa Mesa, Cal.: Mazda, 1993), pp. 91–7.
83. On Iran's relations with Egypt, see Shahram Chubin and Sepehr Zabih, *The Foreign Policy of Iran: A Developing State in a Zone of Great-Power Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 140–69.

year the Shah invited King Saud of Saudi Arabia to Iran, and returned the visit in March 1957. In December 1957 the Shah paid a state visit to Lebanon. A few months later, during the Lebanese crisis of 1958, Iran endorsed the decision of President Camille Chamoun to ask US marines to intervene to help restore law and order.[84]

Camille Chamoun maintained close relations with the Pahlavi state throughout his life. On two occasions Iran broke diplomatic relations with Lebanon over minor incidents, in 1966 and 1969. In 1969 it was the presence in Lebanon of Teimur Bakhtiar, a former head of SAVAK (the Shah's secret police) turned dissident that prompted the rupture. But in 1971, the Shah decided to restore diplomatic relations with Lebanon in anticipation of the British departure from the Persian Gulf, and so Camille Chamoun went to Iran, held a meeting with the Shah, and declared at the following press conference that the sovereign had 'graciously ordered that relations between Iran and Lebanon should be resumed'.[85] In his chapter A. W. Samii discusses some aspects of the relationship, but there was more to the relationship with Lebanon than *raison d'état*.

The rule of the Pahlavi dynasty is often seen as having been 'secular', a not unreasonable view given what followed it. One must remember, however, that under the Pahlavis, too, there was no separation of church and state, that the official religion of the state continued to be Twelver Shiᶜism and that, according to Article 1 of the Supplementary Fundamental Laws of 1907, the Shah had not only to 'profess' the religion but also to 'promote' it, which he would promise to do, as per Article 39, in his oath of office.[86] While the two Pahlavi rulers did not take this too seriously domestically, in their foreign relations it presented a certain interest for Shiᶜis outside Iran – if for no other reason than that Iran represented a beacon of hope for many non-Iranian Shiᶜis, given that most of them were either of low socio-economic status or even suffered more or less overt discrimination.[87] In Lebanon privileged contacts with some Shiᶜi notables afforded the Shah's regime a certain inside track into the political system. But it must also be noted that, as recently published SAVAK documents show, Shiᶜi notables constantly tried to play different countries, including Iran and Baᶜthist Iraq, against each other, and never tired of ill-mouthing rivals by accusing them of being 'anti-Iranian' and posing as

84. For details see Chapter 7, pp. 163–7.
85. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941–1973*, p. 420.
86. Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*, new edition (Washington, D.C.: Mage, 1995), pp. 372 and 378.
87. Thus, after the overthrow of Afghanistan's King Amanullah in 1929, while Persian-speaking but Sunni rebels briefly ruled the capital Kabul, Reza Shah gave orders for the Iranian mission in Kabul to do what it could to aid the Shiᶜis of that city. See Robert D. McChesney, *Kabul under Siege: Fayz Muhammad's Account of the 1929 Uprising* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1999), p. 21.

'friends of Iran' themselves.[88] Moreover, most politically articulate Lebanese Shiᶜis were members or sympathizers of leftist or Arab nationalist parties with little affinity for the pro-Western regime of Iran.

Another telling sign that internationally Pahlavi Iran's official religion mattered was the fact that countries with sizeable Shiᶜi populations often sent Shiᶜi diplomats as ambassadors to Iran. From 1971 to 1978 the Lebanese ambassador to Iran was Khalil al-Khalil, a member of a prominent Shiᶜi family from Tyre, whose father had been secretary-general of Camille Chamoun's Liberal Party. As the case of the Khalil family shows, privileged ties to some Shiᶜi notables were not incompatible with close relations to the Maronite establishment. Moreover, many Christians discreetly encouraged Shiᶜi self-assertion in order to weaken the Sunni element with its more pan-Arab outlook. Thus the Shah's cordial relations with men like Chamoun may even have facilitated the establishment of the Supreme Islamic Shiᶜi Council in 1969.

These confessional ties help explain why in the beginning the Shah's regime was quite willing to subsidize the activities of Musa Sadr, the Iranian-born cleric who moved to Lebanon in the late 1950s and galvanized Shiᶜis like no one before. The life and work of Musa Sadr in Lebanon and his impact in turning Shiᶜis into a major political force have been the object of extensive analysis, for which reason we dispense with discussing that in this volume.[89] However, his activities prior to his move to Lebanon and his subsequent involvement with Iran have never been examined closely. They shed considerable light not only on why he moved to Lebanon, but also on the subsequent Lebanon policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and are discussed in Chapter 6, co-authored by H. E. Chehabi and Majid Tafreshi.

Despite occasional contretemps in the realm of diplomacy, commercial ties continued throughout the Pahlavi era. The presence of Iranian merchants in Lebanon was already noted, but there was also a Lebanese colony in Iran; by 1978 they numbered about 150 businessmen.[90] Of these, the most prominent is Louis

88. *Yārān-i Imām bah rivāyat-i asnād-i Sāvāk: Ayat Allāh Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, two vols (Markaz-i barrasī-yi asnād-i tārīkhī-yi vizārat-i iṭṭilāᶜat, 1379/2000).
89. See Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Peter Theroux, *The Strange Disappearance of Imam Moussa Sadr* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987); Muṣṭafā Juhā, *Sajīn al-ṣaḥrāᵓ: Al-fārᶜāmilī Mūsā al-Ṣadr* (Beirut: n.p., 1988); Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shiᶜa Community* (Boulder: Westview, 1992); Augustus Richard Norton, 'Musa al-Sadr', in Ali Rahnema, ed., *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 1994); and H. E. Chehabi, 'The Imam as Dandy: The Case of Musa Sadr', *The Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, 3:1–2 (1996): 20–42.
90. Interview with Victor El-Kek, 12 March 2001, Beirut. Professor El-Kek is an Iranist

Gemayel, an industrialist whose philanthropy has had a major impact on Iranian society.

Louis Gemayel's father, Michel Gemayel (1893–1974) was a cousin of Pierre Gemayel, founder of the Kataeb political party. After the end of the First World War, Michel Gemayel worked for the French high commissioner in Beirut. Upon the demobilization of the *Armée du Levant*, the high commissioner wanted to sell that force's fleet of lorries (*camions leviers*), but there were no buyers in Beirut, as no one knew how to drive them. So the French offered Michel Gemayel approximately 300 vehicles on the understanding that he would pay for them after he had managed to sell them. As his son tells the story, first Gemayel went to Damascus, but there donkeys were used for transportation. Then he went to Baghdad, where camels were used. Encouraged by some of his former Iranian classmates at Antoura, he went to Teheran in 1921, saw Reza Khan, and sold him the fleet. While in Teheran, he received a monopoly for the import of alcoholic beverages. He returned to Beirut, and since there were no drivers, he hired the demobilized French soldiers to drive the lorries to Iran, laden with bottles of Cognac and other alcoholic beverages. In Iran, Gemayel became an agent for the French manufacturers Berliet, Bergrougant and Michelin, and continued importing alcoholic beverages. This activity went on until June 1939 when there was no longer anything to import, at which point he started looking for new things to do.

Back in Lebanon, Gemayel had cousins who had a cardboard factory. So in 1942 he set up a cardboard factory in Teheran in Mehdi-Abad, the village south of Teheran where he had settled with his family upon arrival. In 1945 he wanted to sell it, but his son, Louis Gemayel, who was born in Iran and is an Iranian citizen, took over. In 1954 Louis Gemayel set up Iran's first paper factory at Mehdi-Abad. Since Iran is a desert country with few trees, the raw materials for the factory were provided by a recycling scheme he invented.[91]

Michel Gemayel liked good works and had been instrumental in setting up an SOS children's village in Lebanon.[92] At Kahrizak, a village near Mehdi-Abad, he had met Dr Mohammad Reza Hakimzadeh, who had started a small home for the

and director of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the Lebanese University.

91. Gemayel paid some of the capital's dustmen to separate the paper and cardboard they found in household rubbish and deliver it to the factory, a system that still works today: having started with 300 kilogrammes per day, the factory now receives about 1500 tonnes per day, delivered by 6000 of the capital's sanitation workers who thus make a little money on the side.
92. Founded by an Austrian, these institutions care for orphans. For their history see Hansheinz Reinprecht, *Abenteuer Nächstenliebe: Die Geschichte Hermann Gmeiners und der SOS-Kinderdörfer* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1984). On their activities in Lebanon and Iran see pp. 313–18 and 281–3, respectively.

handicapped. Next to his small facility there was a large empty house belonging to Mrs Fakhr al-Dowleh, the daughter of Mozaffareddin Shah and mother of Ali Amini, a former prime minister. Amini was persuaded to donate this house and so the home for the handicapped moved into a large house, which was gradually refurbished. The Gemayel family took a personal interest in the management of this growing complex, which came to include Iran's first old age home.

Mrs Gemayel instituted a ladies' workday by spending one day each week at Kahrizak caring for the elderly residents (bathing them, for instance). High society ladies followed her example and now regularly work one day a week at Kahrizak.

The Kahrizak scheme owes much of its success to its first director, a Lebanese woman named Mme Goldfinger, who had been the governess of Michel Gemayel's children. She insisted on immaculate cleanliness and transparent accounts, and since donors knew exactly where their money went, they opened their purse strings and thus began a virtuous circle that ultimately begot the Kahrizak Foundation, Iran's largest privately financed philanthropic organization that cares for the aged, handicapped and orphans.[93]

In all these activities, the Gemayels remained studiously apolitical. In the course of the revolution some land of theirs was confiscated, but otherwise they kept their companies and the philanthropic institutions. It may have helped that before the revolution Louis Gemayel had built a Hosein ibn Ali mosque near the complex.[94] With the experience gathered in Iran, the Gemayel family established an old age home in Lebanon in 1987.[95]

To sum up Iranian–Lebanese relations before the Iranian revolution, *realpolitik* was the basis of the Shah's policy towards Lebanon. But in a very rudimentary way Iran did function as an external country of reference for some segments within Lebanon's Shiᶜi community, although it never came even close to matching France's ties with the Maronites, Russia's (and later even the atheistic Soviet Union's) ties with the Orthodox, and to a lesser extent Great Britain's ties with the Druze.[96] What militated against a closer relationship between Iran and Lebanon's Shiᶜis was not only the Shah's own indifference to official religion,[97] but also the

93. For details see Ashraf Qandahārī, *Āshnāyān-i rah-i ᶜishq* (Teheran: Gurūh-i bānuvān-i nīkūkār, 1381/2002) and http://www.kahrizak.org.
94. The above account is based on an interview with Louis Gemayel, 6 July 2003, Teheran.
95. http://www.longuevie.com
96. Edward Azar, 'Lebanon: The Role of External Forces in Confessional Pluralism', in Peter J. Chelkowski and Robert J. Pranger, eds, *Ideology and Power in the Middle East: Studies in Honor of George Lenczowski* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), pp. 325–36. Oddly enough this piece does not even mention Iran!
97. The following exchange between the Shah and his confidant, Amir Asadollah Alam,

vast majority of Lebanese Shiᶜis' unambiguous espousal of Arab nationalism. It is even said that in the civil war that began in 1975, the Iranian government discreetly aided the Christian militias.[98]

Parallel with generally friendly state-to-state relations, many of the Shah's Iranian opponents also found their way to Lebanon. The pluralism of Lebanese society and the possibility of publishing things that were censored elsewhere had always drawn intellectuals from all over the Arab world and Iran,[99] but the Iranian oppositionists who flocked to Lebanon in the 1970s were not attracted by Beirut's cosmopolitan ambiance, unlike the previous generation of Iranians discussed earlier: on the contrary, they were sharply critical of Lebanon and identified with those who defied the status quo in the name of 'authenticity' and 'Islam'. To some extent this is due to their different socio-cultural background, which tended to be more traditional.[100]

First, the impressions of Mohsen Nejathoseini (born 1944), a founding member of the leftist/Islamist People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, who went to Lebanon in 1970:

> The border between Syria and Lebanon, which is the border between aridity

illustrates his ambivalence about his role. Disappointed by Musa Sadr's collaboration with opponents of his regime, the Shah told Alam that Shiᶜis are *pofiuz* (a colloqualism meaning cowardly, useless and stupid). In Iraq and Lebanon they were not getting anywhere, he said, and in Iran they had all become communists. By contrast, he continued, no Sunnis, no Zoroastrians, not even Bahaᵓis had become communists in Iran. Alam pointed out that one had to keep numbers in mind, adding that in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon both Ottomans and the British had always supported the Sunnis so as to maintain these countries' conflicts with Iran. The Shah then complained that although he had at first supported Sadr, he had turned out to be a hypocrite (*doru*). At this Alam told him that be that as it might, 70 million people outside Iran considered the Shah their shah, which was no little matter. The Shah agreed. ᶜAlīnaqī ᶜĀlīkhānī, ed., *Yāddāshthā-yi ᶜAlam*, vol. 4 1353/1974 (Bethesda, Md.: IBEX Publishers, n.d.), pp. 184–5.

98. Andreas Rieck, *Die Schiiten und der Kampf um den Libanon: Politische Chronik 1958–1988* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1989), p. 329 n3.
99. One telling example is a famous Persian book titled *Bīst va sih sāl* (23 years), a critical analysis of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. According to the book's English translator, it was first published in Beirut. See ᶜAli Dashti, *Twenty Three Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad*, translated by F. R. C. Bagley (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), p. xiii of the translator's Introduction.
100. On the decline of cosmopolitanism, see Sami Zubaida, 'Cosmopolitanism in the Middle East', in Roel Meijer, ed., *Cosmopolitanism, Identity and Authenticity in the Middle East* (London: Curzon, 1999), pp. 15–33.

> and prosperity, had been set in the 1940s by French colonialists. At a time when the colonialists had become exasperated by the anti-colonialist struggles in Greater Syria, they separated the prosperous and blessed part, in which most Christians lived, from Syria under the name of 'Lebanon', and left the historic Muslim cities of Damascus and Aleppo to their own devices at the edge of the dry steppe.[101]

And he continues: 'Beirut, which was called the bride or the Paris of the Middle East, was the meeting place between the cultures of the East and of the West. The glitter and the glamour of life were dazzling, but cultural and social backwardness showed itself in people's behaviour.'[102]

Second, there was Mostafa Chamran (1933–81), an American-trained engineer who went to Lebanon to work with Musa Sadr in 1971 and stayed until the Iranian revolution. In his opinion,

> the basis of the Lebanese's activity is materialism and convenience. They are selfish, shortsighted, arrogant, smart and materialistic. For this reason Lebanese politicians are among the dirtiest animals on earth. … Lebanese political parties are borne out of these politicians' thoughts and activities. Calumnies, lies, theft, working for foreign powers and accepting money from them are all considered astute and part of being in politics. A politician is considered the more successful the more money he gets from foreign powers. The same holds true for Lebanese newspapers and journals. They shamelessly take money from foreign countries and defend their interests.[103]

Elsewhere he called Lebanon 'the most Westoxicated point in the Middle East' and averred that it had the most corrupt of all governments, the greatest oppression, and the greatest crimes. About Musa Sadr he wrote that 'under the domination of Israel, France, and America and under the most difficult of conditions this man was able to create a movement. After 1400 years these ill-fated, cowardly, and resentful Shi^{c}is stirred … and Lebanon's establishment trembled.'[104]

Finally, there was Ali-Akbar Mohtashami, a disciple of Khomeini and later high official of the Islamic Republic, who was a frequent visitor in the 1970s:

101. Muḥsin Nijāṭḥusaynī, *Bar farāz-i khalīj* (Teheran: Nashr-i Nay, 1379/2000-2001), p. 172.
102. Ibid., p. 173.
103. *Lubnān: Guzīdah-ī az majmū^{c}a-yi sukhanrānīhā va dastnivishthā-yi sardār-i pur iftikhār-i Islām, Shahīd Duktur Muṣṭafā Chamrān darbārah-yi Lubnān* (Teheran: Bunyād-i Shahīd Chamrān, 1362/1983), p. 101.
104. Ibid., pp. 86–7.

> At that time Lebanon was the political centre of the Middle East, and one of the politically and economically developed Arab countries. The people of Lebanon led the Arab world in intellectual and political development. Europe and America paid much attention to Lebanon, and [it] had excellent universities such as AUB, one of the best universities in the world. Politically, the parties and press of Lebanon were in no way inferior to those of the Western world, and were in many cases even more developed.

After praising the climate and the natural beauties of the country and pointing out the excellence of its agricultural products, he continued:

> Culturally, Lebanon is extremely subordinated to the West. Since the country was for a long time a French colony and has many different religions, it lacks demographic homogeneity and therefore suffers from social disintegration. For one who enters Beirut for the first time, what attracts one's attention is socio-cultural corruption, which makes one think for a moment that one is in a European country. The cities have been built according to European patterns and houses have no [enclosed private spaces]. One can see numerous centres of prostitution, cabarets, wine shops, dance halls, theatres and cinemas showing degenerate programmes and films, and sexy publications. It is a society totally alienated from Islamic and even Eastern culture and customs, and it wallows in the corrupt culture of the West. The nudity of the bodies and souls of women and men, of girls and boys, torments the eyes of the beholder.[105]

A few months later, his family briefly joined him and he rented a flat in an elegant apartment complex next to a little stream in east Beirut. But when his wife and sister, clad in Iraqi-style black veils, went to the stream to do some washing, the Christian neighbours complained and the family had to leave the premises within 24 hours and sought refuge in the Bekaa Valley.[106] In 1982, as Iranian ambassador to Syria, Mohtashami played a key part in the founding of Hizballah, as we shall see in Chapter 9.

Another cleric who visited Beirut was Seyyed Hadi Ghaffari, who would acquire notoriety in the 1980s for his leadership of violent vigilantes in Iran, the so-called *hezbollahi*s. In the summer of 1978 he found that Lebanese and Syrian Shiᶜis were disappointingly indifferent to Islam's sumptuary laws, as he understood them: 'In those days even Shiᶜis did not wear the *hijab*, [and women] who came to

105. Sayyid ᶜAlī-Akbar Muḥtashamī, *Khāṭirāt-i siyāsī*, vol. 2 (Teheran: Khānah-yi andishah-yi javān, 1378/2000), pp. 135–6.
106. Ibid., pp. 144–5.

Zaynabiyya as pilgrims were not covered. … Even [women] who worked with Musa Sadr only put a kerchief on their head and wore skirts and tights.'[107]

What Nejathoseini, Chamran, Mohtashami and Ghaffari had in common was a Manichaean view of Lebanon according to which pro-Western and pro-Israeli Christians oppressed downtrodden Shi'is and dispossessed Palestinians. The activities of these and other of the Shah's opponents in Lebanon are discussed in detail in Chehabi's Chapter 8. Chamran and Mohtashami went on to become influential figures in the Islamic Republic, to whose relations with Lebanon we must now turn.

The Islamic Republic and the Export of Revolution

Like the French, Russian, Chinese and Cuban revolutionaries before them, the Iranian revolutionaries did not confine their ambition to their own country. This is made explicit in the preamble of the constitution of the Islamic Republic, which states:

> The Constitution provides the necessary basis for ensuring the continuation of the revolution at home and abroad. In particular, in the development of international relations, the Constitution will strive with other Islamic and popular movements to prepare the way for the formation of a single world *Umma* (in accordance with the Koranic verse: 'This your community is a single community, and I am your lord, so worship me' [21:92]).

In this outward-looking vision, the armed forces are given a special role, for in the preamble we also read that the

> Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps ... *will* be responsible not only for guarding and preserving the frontiers of the country, but also for fulfilling the ideological mission of jihad in God's way, that is, *extending the sovereignty of God's word throughout the world* (this is in accordance with the Koranic verse 'Prepare against them whatever force you are capable to muster, and strings of horses, striking fear into the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them' [8:60]).[108]

107. Hādī Ghaffārī, *Khāṭirāt-i Ḥujjat al-Islām va al-Muslimīn Hādī Ghaffārī* (Teheran: Ḥawza-yi hunarī-yi sāzmān-i tablīghāt-i islāmī, 1374/1995–96), p. 298.
108. Emphasis added. It is worth noting that the constitution does *not* bind the government to the international agreements signed and ratified by Iran, as many other constitutions

The chapter on foreign policy is less belligerent. Article 152 commits the government to non-alignment and 'the defence of the rights of all Muslims', and article 154 simultaneously pledges scrupulous non-interference in other nations' internal affairs and support for the just struggles of the oppressed (*mostazᶜafin*) against the oppressors (*mostakbarin*).

Post-revolutionary Iranian support for the 'oppressed' can be schematized in terms of three concentric circles: an outer circle consisting of Third World countries and liberation movements in general, a middle circle comprising Muslims, and an inner circle consisting of Twelver Shiᶜis. The anti-imperialist thrust is easily explained by the revolutionaries' perception of the Shah's regime as a vassal of the United States, and it led them to support not only groups such as the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the Pan-African Congress in South Africa,[109] but also the Irish Republican Army.[110] The most prominent and consequential exponent of this kind of anti-imperialist internationalism was Mohammad Montazeri, who set up a liberation movement unit within the Revolutionary Guards in 1979.[111] However, as the revolutionary regime became more explicitly Islamist, non-Muslim liberation movements, regimes set up by victorious liberation movements (such as Zimbabwe), and generally anti-American states found that they had less and less in common with Iranian officials, which meant that cooperation took place only where it served the national interests of both sides – as with North Korea, which profited handsomely from its arms sales to Iran at a time when Iran was at war with Iraq and had to get arms where it could.

This brings us to the next circle, the Islamic *umma*. As the excerpts from the constitution quoted above show, the new Islamic Republic consciously appealed to Muslims in general rather than Twelver Shiᶜis in particular. And in the beginning, many Sunnis around the world were indeed captivated by the message of Iran's revolution. In the course of the 1980s, however, non-Shiᶜi sympathy for Iran's

(including the American) do. Many of these international treaties, such as the Charter of the United Nations, are incompatible with spreading one's own religious conceptions throughout the world by force.

109. For an elaboration of this theme see Nikki R. Keddie, 'Islamic revival and third worldism', in Jean-Pierre Digard, ed., *Le Cuisinier et le philosophe: Hommage à Maxime Rodinson* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982), pp. 275–81.
110. To this day the street behind the British embassy in Teheran is named after Bobby Sands, the IRA activist who died as a result of a hunger strike in 1981.
111. In his speeches after the revolution he often included members of other religions in his conceptualization of *mostazᶜafin* – even, on one occasion, Bahaᵓis. See *Farzand-i Islām va Qurᵓān*, vol. 2 (Teheran: Vāhid-i farhangī-yi Bunyād-i Shahīd, 1362/1983), p. 694. For more on him see Chapter 8, p. 193 and Chapter 9, pp. 205–7.

Islamic regime waned.[112] The reasons are many: Khomeini's refusal to end the war with Iraq in 1982, when Saddam Hussein offered peace, made him guilty in many Muslim eyes of perpetuating Islamic fratricide. Moreover, by its fundamentalist policies the Iranian regime alienated moderate Muslims, while its appeal to fundamentalist Sunnis was limited because the more fundamentalist a Sunni is, the more hostile to Shi^{c}ism he will be – a fact copiously exploited by the Saudis, who financed a religious *cordon sanitaire* around Iran.[113] That left Twelver Shi^{c}is as the natural audience for Khomeini's revolutionary message.[114]

Outside Iran Shi^{c}is are a minority,[115] and in those countries where they constitute a demographic majority (Iraq and Bahrain), they have been traditionally ruled by Sunni-dominated regimes.[116] Aggrieved Shi^{c}is everywhere greeted the Iranian revolution with sympathy, for it seemed to presage greater support from the one and only Shi^{c}i state in the world. In Lebanon, Shi^{c}is had suffered tremendously as a consequence of the civil war that began in 1975 on the one hand and the Israeli invasion of 1978 on the other, and thus greeted the affirmation of Shi^{c}i power in Iran with joy.[117] Even before the triumph of the revolution, committees for the support of the Islamic Revolution were formed in mosques and *husayniyya*s. But it bears emphasizing that even at this point a majority of politically active Shi^{c}is still militated in leftist, Arab nationalist and Palestinian organizations, which supported the Iranian revolution with non-sectarian formulations.

Iraqi Shi^{c}is were in the middle of a confrontation with the Ba^{c}thist regime when

112. Wilfried Buchta, 'The Failed Pan-Islamic Program of the Islamic Republic: Views of the Liberal Reformers of the Religious Semi-Opposition', in Nikki Keddie and Rudi Matthee, eds, *Iran and the Surrounding World 1501–2001: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).
113. Vali Nasr, 'The Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan: The Changing Role of Islamism and the Ulama in Society and Politics', *Modern Asian Studies*, 34:1 (January 2000): especially 157–8; and Vali Nasr, 'Regional Implications of Shi^{c}i Revival in Iraq', *Washington Quarterly*, 27:3 (Summer 2004): 7–24.
114. For an elaboration see Olivier Roy, 'Le Facteur Chiite dans la Politique Extérieure de l'Iran', *Central Asian Survey* 9: 3 (1990): 57–75.
115. For the distribution of Shi^{c}is beyond Iran see François Thual, *Géopolitique du chiisme* (Paris: Arléa, 1995). For the areas east of Iran see Vali Nasr, 'The Iranian Revolution and Changes in Islamism in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan', in Keddie and Matthee, eds, *Iran and the Surrounding World*, pp. 327–54.
116. On Arab Shi^{c}is see Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi^{c}a: The Forgotten Muslims* (New York: Palgrave, 2001). Shi^{c}ism is also the dominant form of Islam in Azerbaijan, but there the problematic of religious affiliation is different from the Middle East due to the legacy of communism. Besides, the country was not independent yet in 1979.
117. For details, see Chapter 9, pp. 202–3.

the Shah was overthrown,[118] and from very early on Khomeini sent incendiary messages to Iraq urging Shiᶜis to fight on, thereby provoking, in the last analysis, the Iraqi attack on Iran in September 1980.[119] Also, as early as 1979, some Iranian clerics got involved in attempts to overthrow the government of Bahrain.[120] Elsewhere in the Middle East official Iranian policy in the early years of the revolution under Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan and then President Abolhasan Banisadr consisted merely in giving moral encouragement to anti-status quo groups. After Banisadr's ouster in the summer of 1981, however, radical Islamists controlled all levers of power in Iran, and proceeded to spread the revolution abroad more actively. One way to do so was by disseminating the official Iranian version of Twelver Shiᶜism in the Arab world, and Lebanon having always been a centre of Arab publishing, a number of publishing houses were established (or used) for this purpose by the Islamic Republic.[121]

Since the anti-Shah demonstrations of 1978 Islamist activists who feared that secular groups might come to power had started referring to themselves as *hezbollah*, 'party of God', a term used in the Koran.[122] In 1979 and 1980 the irregular groups that actively fought 'liberals' (supporters of Bazargan and Banisadr) on the streets called themselves *hezbollahi*, and when hardliners gained full power in the summer of 1981, they called their government *dowlat-e hezbollahi*.[123] The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982 triggered the

118. See Amazia Baram, 'The Impact of Khomeini's Revolution on the Radical Shiᶜi Movement of Iran', in David Menashri, ed., *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World* (Boulder: Westview, 1990), especially pp. 141–7.
119. None other than Ayatollah Hosein Ali Montazeri writes in his reminiscences: 'We gave harsh slogans against them and talked about exporting the revolution and provoked them against us and these slogans became the basis for provoking Iraq and causing the eight year war.' *Matn-i kāmil-i khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Ḥusayn-ᶜAlī Muntaẓirī* (Spanga: Baran; Vincennes: Khavaran; Essen: Nima [=Ittiḥād-i nāshirīn-i īrānī dar Urūpā], 2001), p. 243.
120. For details see Fuller and Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shiᶜa*, pp. 125–7.
121. Stephan Rosiny, *Shia's Publishing in Lebanon. With Special Reference to Islamic and Islamist Publications* (Berlin: Verlag Das Arabische Buch, 1999), p. 27.
122. 5:56: 'And those who take God and His Prophet and the faithful as their friends are indeed men of God [Hizballah], who will surely be victorious.' The term is also used in 58:22. For an explication see Asᶜad AbuKhalil, 'Ideology and Practice of Hizballah in Lebanon: Islamization of Leninist Organizational Principles', *Middle Easter Studies*, 27:3 (July 1991): 392–3.
123. Duktur Saᶜīd Barzīn, *Jināḥbandī-yi siyāsī dar Īrān* (Teheran: Nashr-i Markaz, 1377/1998), p. 49. Ironically, the first group in modern Iranian history to call itself *hezbollah* (the Persian pronunciation) were the Bahaᵓis, who used it to signify their non-partisanship in worldly politics, the term having been used by Bahaᵓullah in the

Iranian attempt to help radical Lebanese Shiᶜis to remake their country in the image of revolutionary Iran, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

However, reading the pronouncements of Khomeini on Lebanon, one cannot help but note that for him the struggle against Israel had priority over remaking Lebanon, which essentially turned that country into a staging ground for the battle against Zionism.[124] For the men around him, as the examples cited above show, Lebanon was an 'Islamic' land that had suffered Western cultural contamination, making it a battleground for Islamic confrontation with Western cultural influence. Moreover, after 1982 and the exit of the Palestinians that the Reagan administration had brokered, the superiority of Islamism over secular nationalism could be demonstrated by attacking the Israeli presence more efficiently, which was one reason behind the Islamic Republic's material and moral support for the Lebanese Hizballah,[125] a party that started as a coalition of groups in the Bekaa Valley and that by 1985 congealed into a centralized organization.

With the history and evolution of Lebanon's Hizballah having been analysed in

Tablet of Unity (*Lawḥ-i Ittiḥād*). In 1948 a party by the name of Hezbollah was founded in Shiraz but proved to be a mere footnote to history. For its programme see *Asnādī az anjumanhā va majāmiᶜ-i madhhabī dar dawra-yi Pahlavī* (Teheran: Sāzimān-i chāp va intishārāt-i vizārat-t farhang va irshād-i islāmī, 1381/2002), pp. 225–6.

124. Khomeini's veritable obsession with Israel cannot be explained only by the plight of the Palestinians, as he showed much less concern for the sufferings of, say, the Afghans at the hands of the Soviets, whose maltreatment of Afghans was far worse than Israel's treatment of Palestinians. One cannot but conclude that anti-Jewish bias was another driving force in addition to sympathy for the suffering of the Palestinians. Khomeini's anti-Judaism catches the eye on the very first page of his most popular book, *Islamic Government*: 'From the beginning, the historical movement of Islam has had to contend with the Jews, for it was they who first established anti-Islamic propaganda and engaged in various stratagems, and, as you can see, their activity continues down to the present. Later they were joined by other groups, who were in certain respects more satanic than they.' Hamid Algar, ed., *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), p. 27. According to the monthly publication that reflected the views of Ali-Akbar Mohtashami, 'the Imam told Palestinians to kill all the Jews in Israel and throw them out to the last person.' *Bayān*, 12 (Murdād-Shahrīvar 1370/July–September 1991): 62–3.

125. Chris P. Ioannides, 'The PLO and the Islamic Revolution in Iran', in Augustus Richard Norton and Martin D. Green, eds, *The International Relations of the Palestine Liberation Organization* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), pp. 91–3.

several fine studies,[126] the two chapters devoted to Hizballah's politics in this book focus on Iran's role. In Chapter 9 Chehabi tells the story of how Iran became involved in Lebanon after the revolution and contextualizes this involvement within Iran's factional politics and its war against Iraq. In 1989 the death of Khomeini in June and the assumption of the presidency by Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani a few weeks later resulted in a critical re-evaluation of Iran's foreign policy, which was henceforth concerned with Iran's national interest in addition to bringing the benefits of the revolution to the entire *umma*. In September, the Ta'if Agreement, by making provision for a re-equilibration of Lebanon's intercommunal power sharing, portended the end of the Lebanese civil war, which came about after Iraq attacked Kuwait in August 1990 and Syria was free to crush General Michel Aoun's movement. In Chapter 12 Chehabi examines the changes brought about by the new domestic contexts in both Lebanon and Iran, and also the new international context.

Like previous attempts to export a revolution, the Iranian attempt was ultimately unsuccessful. It was only in Lebanon that headway was made, but that had more to do with the weakness of the Lebanese state, which allowed the Iranians to operate on Lebanese territory without interference from the legal authorities.[127] Once the Lebanese government's authority over the territory was re-established, Hizballah had no choice but to adapt to the new realities and abandon the quest for an Islamic Republic. What remained was a strong association between a Lebanese political party, Hizballah, and a foreign country, Iran, which is not unlike that of other alliances between Lebanese parties and foreign governments. Where this one differs is that, thanks to Iranian largess, Hizballah has set up a network of social, educational and welfare institutions, which has provided it with a structural base of support among the Shi'is (and a few non- Shi'is). As a newspaper not known for its sympathy for the Islamic Republic put it in 1991: 'Amid [the] ruins [of Beirut's southern suburbs] almost everything that makes life bearable is supplied by Hizballah. There is clean water in tanks emblazoned with the Iranian flag and spotless hospitals where doctors work on Iranian-subsidized salaries.'[128] In Chapter 11 Judith Harik analyses the various ways in which Hizballah remedied the absence of social services in areas under its control during the civil war and after, helped by subsidies from Iran. Since the early 1990s, however, Iranian subsidies have decreased substantially, and Hizballah has become more self-sufficient. At the same time, the election of Mohammad Khatami to the Iranian presidency in

126. See references in Chapter 9, footnote 2.
127. This point is forcefully made in F. Gregory Gause, III, 'Revolutionary Fevers and Regional Contagion: Domestic Structures and the "Export" of Revolution in the Middle East', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 14:3 (Spring 1991).
128. *Wall Street Journal*, November 1991, p. A16.

1997 changed official Iranian attitudes to Lebanon. The new president's wife is a niece of Musa Sadr and some of his key advisors had lived for extensive periods of time in Lebanon. Khatami is quite familiar with Lebanon and has expressed his admiration for Lebanese society as a whole in no uncertain terms. These changes are discussed in Chapter 12.

THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION

The establishment of a theocracy in Iran no doubt provided a major fillip for Shiᶜi self-assertion in Lebanon, although one must not forget that this self-assertion had indigenous roots and antedated the Iranian revolution by many decades.[129] While the connections between Hizballah's largely clerical leadership and Iran's ruling ulema are close, they are not coterminous with the Shiᶜi clerical network spanning the two countries. The link between Hizballah and the Iranian government is not akin to that between the Soviet Union and the communist parties of yore, the main reason being that, while individual Shiᶜi parties may imitate Leninist organizational structures,[130] the Shiᶜi ulema on the whole are not organized on the basis of democratic centralism; in fact, according to an old saying, 'the order of the ulema is in its disorder'.

As mentioned earlier, the relationship between Shiᶜi ulema from Lebanon and from Iran was mediated for centuries by the shrine cities of Iraq, principally Najaf, where most of them studied.[131] The establishment of Qom as a major centre of learning in the 1930s did not change that. Even when Twelver Shiᶜis widely

129. Tarif Khalidi, 'Shaykh Ahmad ᶜArif al-Zayn and Al-ᶜIrfan', in Marwan R. Buheiry, ed., *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890–1939* (Beirut: Centre for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, 1981), pp. 110–24; Salim Nasr, 'La Transition des Chiites vers Beyrouth: Mutations sociales et mobilisation communautaire à la veille de 1975', in *Mouvements communautaires et espaces urbains au Machreq* (Beirut: CERMOC, 1984); Helena Cobban, 'The Growth of Shiᶜi Power in Lebanon and its Implications for the Future', in Juan J. R. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, eds, *Shiᶜism and Social Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 137–55; Chibli Mallat, *Shiᶜi Thought from the South of Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1988); Andreas Rieck, *Die Schiiten und der Kampf um den Libanon: Politische Chronik 1958–1988* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1989); and Sabrina Mervin's magisterial *Un réformisme chiite: Ulémas et lettrés du Ǧabal ᶜĀmil (actuel Liban-Sud) de la fin de l'Empire ottoman à l'indépendance du Liban* (Paris: Karthala, 2000).

130. This point is made for Hizballah in Abu Khalil, 'Ideology and Practice of Hizballah in Lebanon'.

131. The autobiography of Muhsin al-Amin (1867–1952) contains many vignettes about his encounters with Iranians in Iraq in the 1890s. See Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Autbiographie d'un clerc chiite*, pp. 106–15, *passim*.

recognized Ayatollah Mohammad Hosein Borujerdi as the supreme spiritual authority (*marjaᶜ al-taqlid* in Arabic, *marjaᶜ-e taqlid* in Persian, plural *marajiᶜ*) between 1944 and his death in Iran in 1961, his actual influence on the day-to-day conduct of religious affairs in Lebanon was very limited, for most Lebanese Shiᶜis, like many Iraqis, followed Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim in Najaf.[132] After his death in 1970 they gravitated to Ayatollah Abulqasim Khuᵓi, who also resided in Najaf. In Iran, a number of other *marajiᶜ* competed for the believers' allegiance after Borujerdi's death in 1961, including, after 1964, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Khomeini differed from his peers in that his assumption of the religious leadership had come about not by the traditional religious criteria whereby Shiᶜi ulema distinguished themselves until believers accepted them as a *marjaᶜ*, but had been precipitated by political events, namely his opposition to the Shah's consolidation of his personal dictatorship in 1963 and 1964. In matters of domestic politics, Khomeini spoke almost exclusively to the concerns of Iranians, and although he was exiled to Najaf in 1965 and lived there until October 1978, he never seems to have had much of a following among Iraqi and Lebanese Shiᶜis. In the early 1970s Khomeini, drawing the logical consequence from his opposition to the Pahlavi monarchy, developed his theory of clerical rule (*wilayat al-faqih* in Arabic, *velayat-e faqih* in Persian, it is most accurately translated as 'guardianship of the jurisprudent').[133] In February 1979 a blueprint for the constitution of an Islamic Republic of Iran, incorporating the notion of *wilayat al-faqih* and written by Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, was published in Beirut. Although a Persian translation soon circulated in Iran,[134] it is unclear how influential this text was in the elaboration of the final text of the constitution of the Islamic Republic, which was adopted in August 1979.[135] After the adoption of the constitution following a carefully orchestrated plebiscite, the right of the ulema to rule was state dogma in Iran, and any Iranian ulema who disagreed with it dared not challenge it publicly in

132. In a more or less official biography of Borujerdi published in Iran the only reference to Lebanon is a short notice to the effect that he financed the building of a 'presentable' [Shiᶜi] mosque in Tripoli. ᶜAlī Davānī, *Zindagānī-yi zaᶜīm-i buzurg-i ᶜālam-i tashayyuᶜ Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī*, revised edition (Teheran: Nashr-i Muṭahhar, 1372/1993), p. 237.
133. On this theory see Hamid Enayat, 'Iran: Khumayni's Concept of the Guardianship of the Jurisconsult', in James Piscatori, ed., *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2000), pp. 115–28.
134. Chibli Mallat, *The Middle East into the 21st Century* (Londo: Ithaca Press, 1996), p. 131.
135. See Said Saffari, 'The Legitimation of the Clergy's Right to Rule in the Iranian Constitution of 1979', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*', 20:1 (Spring 1993): 64–82.

Iran. It was thus in Beirut that the first widely distributed doctrinally reasoned refutation of Khomeini's concept was published.[136] Its author was Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya (1904–79), a Lebanese scholar with close personal ties to Ayatollah Kazem Shariᶜatmadari in Qom, having taught at the latter's Dar al-Tabligh Institute in the 1970s.[137] While praising Khomeini for his revolutionary action, Mughniyya contested his contention that the Imams' authority passed to the clergy in their absence, on the grounds that, unlike the Imams, ulema are normal human beings and therefore not infallible. It follows that if they made mistakes as rulers, this would harm religion – a fear, one might add, that has proven justified in Iran where religious practice has fallen since the 1990s.[138]

The reception of Khomeini's notion of *wilayat al-faqih* in Lebanon since 1978 deserves more detailed study than we can give here. Suffice it to say that after 1982 the groups that came together in the Bekaa under Iranian patronage adopted it, and that after 1985 it became Hizballah's official party line. Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah (born 1935), who emerged as Hizballah's spiritual guide in Lebanon, also endorsed it.[139] Except that Lebanon's demography is very different from Iran's: Shiᶜis constitute only a plurality of the population, and of these only a minority support Hizballah. Moreover, no Sunni, Druze or Christian can be expected to have any affinity for a Shiᶜi theocracy.[140] And so both Fadlallah and

136. Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyya, *Al-Khumaynī wa al-dawlat al-islāmiyya* (Beirut: Dār al ᶜIlm li'l-Malāyīn, 1979).
137. Ayatollah Kazem Shariᶜatmadari was the most widely followed *marjaᶜ* inside Iran before Khomeini's return and was defrocked in 1982 following an aborted coup attempt by Sadeq Qotbzadeh of which he had been informed. He died in 1986, having been denied medical treatment by the authorities.
138. For an excellent analysis of Mughniyya, see Karl-Heinrich Göbel, *Moderne Schiitische Politik und Staatslehre* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1984), pp. 65–139. See also Chibli Mallat, *Aspects of Shiᶜi Thought from the South of Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1988), pp. 16–25.
139. Although in his case the filiation may be not with Khomeini but with Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, to whom he had been very close, and who had developed similar ideas in the 1970s. According to Chibli Mallat, in fact, the Islamic Republic's *velayat-e faqih* is based on Muhammad-Baqir al-Sadr's ideas. See his *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf, and the Shiᶜi International* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 59–78. See also Mallat, *Shiᶜi Thought from the South of Lebanon*, pp. 37–42.
140. In the city of Tripoli in northern Lebanon Sunni Islamist clerics ruled from October 1983 to October 1985. Although their leader, Shaykh Saᶜid Shaᶜban, was sympathetic to Iran, he was brought to power by an alliance with the PLO and toppled by the Syrians. Michael Humphrey, *Islam, Sect and State: The Lebanese Case* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1989).

Hizballah came to distance themselves from it in the 1990s, as Lebanon's second republic took shape and Hizballah decided to participate in its working.[141] Hizballah now declares that while theocratic rule remains its theoretical ideal, it realizes that the implementation of this ideal is not possible in the near future,[142] a bifurcation between ideals and accommodation to reality that is not without precedent.[143] This distancing, it should be noted, parallels discussions in Iran, where, after Khomeini's death, many hitherto convinced ulema began modifying and rethinking the concept,[144] while those who opposed it came out with clear refutations, such as Mehdi Haeri Yazdi (1923–99), the son of the founder of the Qom seminaries (and teacher of Khomeini), Shaykh Abdolkarim Haeri, who argued that when a people are deemed so ignorant that they need a guardian, they cannot be assumed to have competence to choose that guardian, making the theory of the guardianship of the jurisprudent logically inconsistent.[145]

While the fusion of religious and political power by Iran's ruling clergy formed the background to Hizballah's allegiance to Iran, it allowed other Shiᶜi actors to take their distance from the Iranian regime, as they could claim to accept Iran's

141. In fact, Fadlallah had expressed ambivalence about *wilayat al-faqih* almost from the beginning. See Olivier Carré, *L'Utopie islamique dans l'Orient arabe* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1991), especially pp. 203–8 and 236–7; and Talib Aziz, 'Fadlallah and the Remaking of the *marjaᶜiya*', in Linda S. Walbridge, ed., *The Most Learned of the Shiᶜa: The Institution of the marjaᶜ Taqlid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially pp. 212–13.
142. Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp. 59–68.
143. In the early nineteenth century, Molla Ahmad Naraqi formulated the political theory on which Khomeini's construct is based, but maintained cordial relations with Iran's ruler at the time, Fath-Ali Shah. On Naraqi see Hamid Dabashi, 'Early Propagation of *Wilayat-i Faqih* and Mulla Ahmad Naraqi', in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, eds, *Expectation of the Millennium: Shiᶜism in History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 288–300.
144. On the evolution of thinking about *velayat-e faqih* in Iran, see Shahrough Akhavi, 'Contending Discourses in Shiᶜi Law on the Doctrine of *Wilāyat al-Faqih*', *Iranian Studies*, 29:3–4 (1996): 229–68; Homa Katouzian, 'Islamic Government and Politics: The Practice and Theory of the Absolute Guardianship of the Jurisconsult', in Charles Davies, ed., *After the War: Iran, Iraq, and the Arab Gulf* (Chichester: Carden Publications, 1990), pp. 255–86; and Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, 'A New Interpretation of the Theory of *Vilayet-i Faqih*', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 28 (January 1992).
145. Mahdī Hāʾirī Yazdī, *Ḥikmat va ḥukūmat* ([France]: Shādī, 1995). On Haeri Yazdi see Farzin Vahdat, 'Mehdi Haeri Yazdi and the Discourse of Modernity', in Ramin Jahanbegloo, ed., *Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), especially pp. 62–5.

lead in one realm but not the other. Thus Nabih Berri compared Amal's relation to Khomeini with that of Catholics and the pope,[146] implying that while Khomeini was respected as a spiritual authority, Amal owed the Islamic Republic no political allegiance. Sayyid Fadlallah did the opposite: he accepted the political leadership of the Islamic Republic, but remained close to the apolitical Ayatollah Khuʾi, whose *wakil* (representative) he was in Lebanon until Khuʾi's death in 1992. This made his alliance with Iran a matter of political expediency rather than the necessary consequence of a spiritual allegiance, meaning that it could be revoked at any given moment. It also allowed him to remain relevant to those Lebanese Shiʿis who had no particular political sympathy for Iran at all, and compete for the allegiance of Lebanese Shiʿis in general with Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin, Musa Sadr's successor as head of the Supreme Islamic Shiʿi Council, whose focus was on Lebanon from the beginning. Typical of Shamseddin's position is this statement: 'The Shiʿis in Lebanon are primarily Lebanese, in second place Muslims, and only in [last place] Shiʿis. Their Lebaneseness is a matter of principle, and any change in Iran or in any other place will not change this reality.'[147]

With Hizballah's ascendancy in the 1980s, a number of Lebanese Shiʿis chose Khomeini as their *marjaʿ*, a choice again motivated by the political conjuncture. Between Khomeini's death in 1989 and Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Golpayegani's death in 1993 all *marajiʿ* of that generation disappeared, posing a serious succession problem. In 1994 the Iranian government tried to elevate Ayatollah Ali Khamenehʾi, who had succeeded Khomeini as supreme leader, to the rank of a *marjaʿ*, but the attempt met with considerable resistance and soon afterwards both Fadlallah and Shamseddin assumed the position of *marjaʿ*.[148]

For most of the twentieth century relations between the Shiʿis of Lebanon and those of Iran were mediated by the ʿAtabat in Iraq. The establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran, the civil war in Lebanon, and the totalitarian regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq combined to forge direct links between the two communities. Iranian Shiʿism has thus had a certain unmediated influence on Lebanese Shiʿism in recent years, an influence that can be seen, for instance, in the popularization of such titles as *hujjat al-Islam* and *ayatullah*, which were largely unknown in Lebanon before the 1980s. In Chapter 10 Rula Abisaab analyses one aspect of this influence, namely the dynamic and multifaceted adaptation of the ideals of the Iranian Islamic revolution in Lebanon. It highlights the radical transformation in

146. *Le Monde*, 16 February 1984, p. 3, as quoted in Riad Fakhry, 'L'Iran d'une guerre à l'autre: L'implication de la République islamique d'Iran dans le conflit libanais entre 1979 et 1989' (Mémoire du Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies, EHESS, 2002), p. 87.
147. Quoted in Stephan Rosiny, *Islamismus bei den Schiiten im Libanon* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1996), p. 113.
148. For details, see Chapter 12, pp. 298–301.

the scholastic production of the *ᶜalim* (religious scholar) and his role in a revolutionary society. Within the religious seminaries, which made their first official appearance on the Lebanese scene in the 1980s, young Shiᶜi men affiliated with Hizballah rebelled against the conventional, apolitical and exclusively juridical training in Najaf and Qom. It remains to be seen how the revival of the centres of learning in Iraq following the ouster of the Baᶜthist regime will affect the religious life of Lebanon's Shiᶜis.

IRANIAN SOFT POWER

As we saw earlier, in the first half of the twentieth century Beirut, with its cosmopolitan blend of East and West, was a source of inspiration for Iran's elite. In the 1980s the flow of inspiration went in the opposite direction, as Iran's new rulers ousted the old self-consciously cosmopolitan elite, turned against Western cultural influence, promoted a return to an (ideologically constructed) Islamic 'self', and found sympathizers for their quest for authenticity among those left behind by Lebanon's fabled quest to be the Switzerland of the Middle East: poor Shiᶜi men and women whose concerns had been addressed neither by the political system nor by the traditional *zuᶜama* who 'represented' them within the system, and whose socio-cultural marginality was compounded by dislocations caused by a decade and a half of civil war and Israeli invasions. For these people the Iranian revolution was proof that the downtrodden could change things if they set their mind to it, and the Islamic Republic confirmed their hopes by providing generous material and organizational help when no one else did. For the Iranian regime, this help begot a certain measure of 'soft power' among some of the newly assertive Shiᶜis, who associated the Islamic culture promoted by their Iranian allies with success and thus came to emulate it.[149] This could be seen on the everyday level, where first in the Bekaa and after 1984 in west Beirut some women took to wearing a fully covering garment, *abaya*, which also became known as *shadur* (from Persian *chador*),[150] while others who did not wear at least a *hijab* were at times harassed. The sale of alcoholic beverages was prevented or made more difficult, and there were even reports that among some activists it became trendy to mispronounce Arabic words in the Persian manner.

Muharram rituals provide a fascinating example of the flow of cultural patterns. Before the Iranian revolution, they were more common in southern Lebanon than

149. The concept of 'soft power' is taken from Joseph S. Nye, Jr, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), especially pp. 193–5. Nye elaborated on the concept in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

150. Cf. the Iranian *māntū*, whose derivation from the French *manteau* is only etymological.

in Beirut or the Bekaa, but as Hizballah constituted itself in the latter and then gained control of parts of the former, the tenth of the Muharram (*Ashura*) was commemorated there as well. In October 1984, bars were attacked in west Beirut during *Ashura* and demands were heard for an Islamic Republic. The processions of September 1985 organized by Hizballah looked Iranian, as flagellants shouted slogans in Arabic and Persian. And in 1986 Husayn al-Musawi and Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli, two leaders of Hizballah, preceded the *Ashura* procession barefooted, while some carried Iranian flags.[151]

Most high ranking clerics having always been opposed to the more violent rituals in which flagellants cut their foreheads with knives and daggers (*latm* in Arabic, *qamehzani* in Persian),[152] in June 1994 Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khameneh'i, finally outlawed them on the eve of the mourning month. In a speech on the philosophy and function of the rites he said:

> How can this be called mourning? These practices do not belong to religion. No doubt God is not happy about them. The hands of the ulema of the past were tied and they could not speak up. But today Islam rules, and we must not allow our Islamic society to be presented to other Muslims and non-Muslims as superstitious and illogical in the name of Imam Husayn.[153]

In Lebanon, Hizballah, which by now officially acknowledged Khameneh'i as *marja'*, implemented the ban on drawing blood in the processions it organized, but the practice was continued in processions sponsored by Amal and the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council . On the surface, 'pro-Iranian Hizballah' followed the Iranian line, whereas 'moderate Shi'is working within the confines of the Lebanese system' and non-political Shi'is continued the traditional Lebanese practices. Except of course that Khameneh'i outlawed customs that Muhsin al-Amin had condemned more than seventy years earlier, whereas Amal has clung to the ritual patterns Iranian immigrants introduced in the late nineteenth century.[154]

151. Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, 'Les interprétations d'un rite: célébrations de la 'Achoura au Liban', *Maghreb-Machrek*, 115 (January–March 1987): 23–5.
152. This extreme form of self-flaggelation is originally neither Persian nor Arabic, and was in fact introduced into Iran by Caucasian Turks in the nineteenth century. See Ivar Lassy, *The Muharram Mysteries among the Azerbeijan Turks of Caucasia* (Helsingfors: Lilius & Hertzberg, 1916). Self-injury as part of mourning is not uncommon in different cultures. See Ernst Samter, *Geburt, Hochzeit und Tod* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1911), pp. 109–20.
153. *Risālat*, 22 Khurdād 1373/12 June 1994, p. 4.
154. For an analysis of the political dimensions of various ways of commemorating *Ashura* in Lebanon, see Lara Deeb, 'An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety among

With the reconstitution of the Lebanese state in the 1990s and Iran's new emphasis on pursuing its national interest, the appeal of things Iranian has waned. It was one thing to wave an Iranian flag when the state represented by the cedar flag was inoperative, but it meant something different after Taʾif when, with one exception, militias were dissolved and the Lebanese state extended its reach to the previously autonomous confessional 'cantons'. In the 1990s Hizballah consciously and purposefully 'Lebanonized' itself, with the blessing of an Iranian state that put more and more emphasis on *realpolitik* and, consequently, state-to-state relations.

As Iranians and Lebanese have become more familiar with each other as a result of increased travelling, a few notes of disenchantment on both sides have crept into the relationship. About 300 Lebanese seminarians now study in Qom, and a school has been established for their children. At Iranian universities, 50 scholarships a year are available for Amal and 100 for Hizballah, although many do not find takers. The Lebanese who have spent some time in Iran at times complain about Iranian haughtiness and anti-Arab *ressentiment*.[155] The Iranians who reside in Lebanon are mostly people whom Saddam Hussein expelled from Iraq in the 1970s and, being bilingual, have integrated well.[156] But Iranian clerics visiting Lebanon have been heard to complain that after millions of dollars spent in that country, one can still see plenty of unveiled women in neighbourhoods dominated by Hizballah. And yet, as late as 1997, the victory of the Iranian team against that of the United States at the football world cup in France was greeted with outpourings of joy on the streets of al-Dahiya (the southern suburbs of Beirut) – although the joy may have been caused more by the American team's defeat.[157]

In the sixteenth century scholars from the Jabal ʿAmil moved to Iran and helped establish orthodox Twelver Shiʿism as the official state religion, and in the twentieth century first an Iranian with ʿAmili roots, Musa Sadr, helped bring the culture of the Jabal ʿAmil to the Bekaa Valley, and then the revolutionary fervour in Iran transformed parts of Lebanon's Shiʿi community. In a sense, history has come full circle.

CONCLUSION

While the unique nature of the Hizballah experiment in Iranian–Lebanese relations

Islamist Shiʿi Muslims in Beirut' (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2003), Chapter 5.

155. Musāḥaba bā Rawshanak Shāʿirī Āyzinlūʾir [Eisenlohr], 'Ravābiṭ-i Īrān va Lubnān', *Guftugū*, 37 (Murdād 1382/July–August 2003): 153–4.
156. Ibid.: 160–1.
157. For the political ramifications of this game, see H. E. Chehabi, 'US–Iranian Sports Diplomacy', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 12:1 (March 2001): 89–106.

has to be recognized, it must nonetheless be viewed against the background of previous contacts between Iran, as a society and a state, and the lands that constitute Lebanon today. The discrepancy in size, both geographic and demographic, as well as in political continuity, between Iran and Lebanon can readily be noted. With an established state tradition stretching for centuries (and building upon an imperial tradition that predates the advent of Islam), Iran has provided a considerable portion of the political and cultural legacy of the Islamic civilization, and entered the nation-state system of the modern Middle East as a major regional power. In contrast, the creation of modern Lebanon in the context of this nation-state system has yielded a 'precarious republic', to use Michael Hudson's apt term,[158] that had to endure decades of strife for the issue of its legitimacy to be settled. Prior to this creation, the history of Lebanon was part of the provincial history of the Ottoman hinterland. Scholarship on Lebanon, both local and international, has striven, with uneven success, to establish a uniqueness and continuity in Lebanese history, through a centralized narrative that favours the history of Mount Lebanon, around which the modern state of Lebanon was created, often at the cost of reducing and marginalizing the histories of the adjacent areas, which are today integral components of Lebanon, including Jabal ᶜAmil, the core area of Shiᶜi presence. Still, both before and after the emergence of the Lebanese nation-state, whether from Jabal ᶜAmil or from Beirut, a Lebanese impact on Iranian culture and society can be documented. It ranges from the Safavid importation of ᶜAmili Shiᶜi clerics in the sixteenth century, in their effort to affect a conversion of Iran to the Shiᶜi form of Islam, thus distinguishing it from its Sunni neighbours, through the use by the Iranian elite of the educational opportunities provided by Beirut early in the twentieth century, to the experimentation with leftist and Islamist formulations by Iranian dissidents in the 1960s and 1970s. In reverse, the Iranian impact on Lebanese culture, already indirectly present through the medium of Najaf – as the common international Shiᶜi space – is felt diffusely in the work of Imam Musa Sadr prior to the Islamic revolution, before reaching its proactive stage with Hizballah as a foothold for Iranian influence in the closing decades of the twentieth century. A consideration of the issue of agency in these major stages and episodes of Iranian–Lebanese transnational ties has to recognize a predominant role for the Iranian partner. Whether it is a result of the discrepancy in size and historical continuity, and whether it is influenced by the Mediterranean (then Western) orientation of Lebanese interests since the nineteenth century, in terms of education, trade and political vassality (translating to a lesser focus on Iran, *inter alia*), Iranian–Lebanese transnational ties have amounted to an uneven relationship.

158. Michael C. Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon* (New York: Random House, 1968).

The purpose of this collection of articles is to provide an eclectic survey of the transnational ties between Iran and Lebanon, covering the major episodes and components of these ties, with a particular focus on aspects that have received less attention in scholarship.[159]

159. We would like to draw attention to the forthcoming dissertation by Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr, 'Transnationalism, Identity Production, and Shiᶜism in Lebanon' (University of Chicago), which an analyses the various Shiᶜi networks connecting Lebanon and Iran in greater detail.