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WHEN MOTHERS ATE THEIR CHILDREN: WARTIME MEMORY AND THE LANGUAGE OF FOOD IN SYRIA AND LEBANON

Abstract
This article explores the experience of the Great War in Syria and Lebanon with a specific focus on the famine that, combined with other wartime calamities, decimated the civilian population. Using food as its primary register, it looks at a wide range of largely untapped Syrian and Lebanese poems, *zajal*, plays, novels, memoirs, and histories written over the course of the 20th century, in order to illuminate the experiential dimensions of the civilians' war and to delineate some of the discourses that structured it. More specifically, it argues that the wartime famine in Syria and Lebanon gave rise to a remembered cuisine of desperation that is deeply informative about the ruptured world of the civilians' war.

Brother, if when the war is over
The west clamors for glory
And sanctifies its dead and glorifies its heroes,
Do not sing the praises of the victors
Or despise those who lost the war.
Instead, like me, kneel silently
And in reverence
To weep over our dead.
. . .
Brother, if when the war is over
Soldiers go home to shelter in loving arms,
Do not expect love when you go home.
For hunger has left us no friend to love
Other than the ghosts of our dead.
. . .
Brother, who are we? Without a home, alone
Grab a shovel and follow me,
So we may bury our living.[1]

Mikhaʾil Nuʿaima, "1917"

In *Fragments of Memory*, Hanna Mina's 1993 autobiographical novel set in 1930s Syria, the young protagonist overhears his father defending people who had raided the local

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granary. Recalling his own past experience of hunger in the Great War, the father asks: "What are they supposed to do during the famine? They aren't to be blamed. During the *Safar Barlik*, mothers ate their children. They became like cats and ate their children."[2] In his sobering 1981 memoir, Ibrahim Khalil ʿAwwad, who was ten years old when the Great War began, captures the tenor of times past in similar terms in the anecdote "Marun Saqr and the Glass of Yogurt." Marun's claim to fame more than half a century after the fact? As a guest at the home of the author's grandfather in the Lebanese village of Bahr Saf in the early spring of 1916, he had eaten yogurt and a loaf of bread. By then, "food had disappeared from our house and we had started eating grass and weeds." Marun himself had spent a week eating mostly grass, as well as grain from the feed of horses and donkeys, and could not stop himself from devouring more than he had been invited to eat.[3] His act of social transgression had not only made him memorable; it had coupled his name to food and reduced him to the man who ate grass and then a glass of yogurt and bread in 1916. In ʿAwwad's retelling, the war took place at home, where from the start civilians fought a cascade of catastrophes both natural and man-made, and mostly lost. As in Mina's fragment, food occupies center stage, indeed becomes the memory of a world unhinged by the war.

Antun Yamin's eyewitness account *Lubnan fi al-Harb* (Lebanon during the War), published in 1919, provides a close-up of this world. A section entitled "Stories That Would Shake Rocks" offers not stories or even anecdotes but rather a register of horrific still-lifes in bite-size bursts of arresting detail:

> By the Sanayiʿ School, two children picked sesame seeds from piles of excrement; in Harat Huraiq, men, women, and children competed to rob an anthill of grain; in the village of Bait Shabab, a child by the name of Nasri Saʿid Murad Ghibril stole seeds from ants near the church; in Hadath, a young man died after gorging himself on lemon peels; in Riyaq, after the Germans had disposed of a horse which had died of some disease—so foul that even the wolves were repulsed—a group of forty people ate the carcass from head to hoof and died from that disease; in Damur, Kattar Shahdan al-Salafani ate three human corpses; in Mitn, Helena bint Salibi ʿAbd ate the corpse of her nephew, Najib Salibi ʿAbd. And she was not the only one who ate a corpse. In Tripoli, four women cannibalized four children.[4]

"And God protect us from such horrific sights," laments Jirjis al-Maqdisi, in *Aʿzam Harb fi al-Tarikh* (The Greatest War in History), a work also published in 1919. He writes that the population of Lebanon became "an army of beggars," who were

> of two kinds: the mobile, who rummaged for banana and potato peels, cactus stems, and carcasses; and the immobilized, who lay on the side of the road begging, some with their eyes as they were too exhausted to speak. The hardest sights were of children twisted by hunger sitting in the laps of mothers too weak to move.[5]

By all accounts, the civilian population in wartime Ottoman Syria and Lebanon endured everything, including the plague. The war itself has several names, including "the famine war" (*ḥarb al-majāʿa*) and *seferberlik*, a Turkish word, meaning "travel by land," that began its wartime career as a reference to "military conscription" but quickly became a catchword for all the calamities and suffering experienced by civilians.[6] For in addition to the harsh exactions of martial law, including exile, imprisonment, and executions, a string of epidemics (typhus, typhoid, malaria, yellow fever, and the

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plague), multiple locust infestations, an earthquake, and a famine devastated the region. The famine was catastrophic. Born out of a noxious cocktail of causes, it appears to have been almost overdetermined: a perfect storm of unusually snowy winters, locusts, conscription and corvée labor, war requisition, currency devaluation, official inefficiency, the Entente blockade, hoarding, speculation, and corruption.

THE LANGUAGE OF FOOD

Historians of the Great War in Europe have long debated the extent to which the war restructured culture and understandings of the body, gender, and citizenship.[7] Similar questions have recently been articulated in Ottoman and Middle East studies. For example, works on the impact of the war by Elizabeth Thompson, Salim Tamari, and Yücel Yanikdağ examine, in different ways, specific and "intimate" sites of the rupture that the war occasioned.[8]

This article takes a closer look at the wartime rupture, which was no less evident in people's understanding of time and place (often articulated with reference to food) than it was in the tropes and discourses surrounding food and the moral cost that its absence exacted. I ask not how many died from starvation (and the diseases it fed, so to speak) or what caused the famine, but how this central feature of the local experience of the war was articulated in Syrian and Lebanese writings. I cast a wide net into a variety of Syrian and Lebanese works on the war, spanning a century. Although by no means comprehensive, the material suggests an enduring focus on food in the collective memory of the war.

Inspired by Winter and Robert's invitation, in *Capital Cities at War*, to rethink civilians' home-front experience in terms of "experienced communities . . . the social and geographical entities around which ordinary people construct their daily lives,"[9] and using food as a register of the moral disorder and violence that pervaded people's lives during the war, I ask: what do references to food tell us about people's broader understandings of themselves? If "eating for victory" brought about new experiential communities on the home front (at least in some places), what kinds of communities came about in situations of starving for defeat, when eating involved "substitute foods," particularly food only fit, or not even fit, for animals?[10] Was there a new moral economy at work, or did the war completely shred the expectations of the "normal" order of things? Did the war create new ways of ordering self and others, if only for a while, and how were such understandings articulated?

Food offers a concrete lens through which to navigate the war as it was experienced. More important, the language and imagery of food and the famine speak not only of precipitous change in material comfort and economic status but also of the moral brutality that civilians endured. In Beirut as in Berlin, the question of food during the war was about morality as well as mortality.[11] As David Arnold notes, "food was, and continues to be, power in a most basic, tangible and inescapable form."[12] Furthermore, as anthropologists and food historians have long noted, food is saturated with social and symbolic meaning and thus offers rich insights into cultural representations of self and community and the social construction of memory.[13] Hence, while it is not surprising that food should fill the famished memories of the Great War, in its concreteness as well as in its social and moral dimensions, food provides insight into a time when identity itself

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appeared to rest on the palate: when people became animals and cannibals, women's bodies and children's corpses became commodities, and "women ate their children."

This is not to say that everybody starved suddenly or equally. As in other regions of the war that suffered from relative or drastic reductions in food availability, the scarcity in Syria and Lebanon worsened over time; for most, it became acute by late 1915. There were wide variations in the experience of hunger, depending on location, connections, class, religion, gender, and age. Muhammad Kurd ʿAli, a Damascene intellectual and newspaper editor whose connections to the Ottoman authorities afforded him a measure of comfort, writes that "during the war I enjoyed relative ease [but] many people lived in misery and desolation."[14] In contrast, in his memoir, *Qabla an Ansa* (Before I Forget), Anis Frayha, a Lebanese scholar and novelist, describes with relish a meal of bread and cheese he ate at the close of the war and pointedly observes: "our wealthy Palestinian and Syrian friends had not gone hungry like us; they even complained about the food."[15]

As in other places where hunger had taken hold during the war, the rich and the connected as well as wartime opportunists (including the newly rich coffin sellers), hoarders, and profiteers are singled out by Syrian and Lebanese writers for moral vilification.[16] Yusuf al-Hakim devotes a chapter, entitled "Evil People and Good People: Starvation in Lebanon," to the hardships for which he holds merchants' greed and official ineptitude and corruption mostly responsible.[17] Yamin directs his most virulent anger at the rich, even naming the families that profited from the war. His book includes the story "al-Khawaja Anis and Heartbreaking Sara: A True Story from Mount Lebanon in February 1917," in which "heartbreaking" and orphaned Sara refuses Anis' sexual advances and dies, alongside her younger siblings, from starvation. The story's subtitle, "The Rich and Those Who Died from Starvation," conflates the "poor" with the "dead" at the stroke of a pen, conveying a powerful image of wartime class and moral dichotomies.[18]

Describing the moral numbing brought on by the war, Anis Nusuli notes in his memoir, *ʿIshtu wa-Shahadtu* (I Lived and I Witnessed), that, "strangely," when the famine gripped Lebanon and the sidewalks and markets were littered with scores of starving people, the "Lebanese" simply ignored them.[19] According to Maqdisi,

> whereas in 1915 the sight of a fallen beggar brought in a throng of helpers, by 1916 we walked among scores of men, women, and children stuck in roadside mud and managed to ignore them. The kind-hearted among us turn away so as not to see the suffering of those who until a short time ago lived in homes and went to school. And then the war came and took everything away and now they die in the hundreds every day.[20]

Despite its severity, the famine does not occupy a prominent place in nationalist and other public narratives of the war, where it competes with more heroic public markers of the period, such as the Arab Revolt. In particular, starvation plays second fiddle to the resistance and tragic execution of the "martyrs," the Arab nationalists in Beirut and Damascus who were imprisoned and hanged during the war by Jamal Pasha, the military governor of Syria. Indeed, Syria and Lebanon still commemorate those heroes; their capital cities have public squares named for the martyrs and in both places "Martyrs' Day" is observed each year on 6 May. In contrast, the civilian victims of the famine are not publicly mourned or memorialized.

The famine is often co-opted, if not altogether eclipsed, by narratives of resistance, at both the local and national levels. For example, unlike Kamal Salibi, who does not

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reference the famine in his *History of Modern Lebanon*, George Antonius discusses it, but through a story that largely plays out in the shadow of the "Arab Awakening."[21] In the Lebanese motion picture *Safarbarlik* (1967), the "people" (*ahālī*) resist Ottoman wartime grain confiscation, deforestation, and forced labor in acts small and clever as well as grand and heroic, responding to *qamh yok* (no more wheat) with the refrain: *yok taslim; yok Safarbarlik* (no surrender; no *Safarbarlik*).[22]

The relative silence on the experience of the famine in public discourses about the war has been noted by Linda Schilcher. In her article, "The Famine of 1915–1918," which focuses on the causes of the famine, she notes that it "is an event which has remained historical lore," and suggests that it has been excluded from the public memory of the war because it continued well after the fighting had ended. Thompson's *Colonial Citizens*, which explores the impact of the famine on subsequent understandings of gender and citizenship, offers a more nuanced explanation, suggesting that "private" memories of the famine and the extreme suffering it caused remained mostly "shrouded" in "public" discourses because of "unmentionable shame."[23] Although the experience of the famine has been "shrouded" both by "shame" and its opposite—the glory of nationalist narratives—it infuses a remarkable number of previously unexamined sources explored in this article.

THE SOURCES: A KITCHEN SINK OF GENRES

The material on the famine is scattered among a kitchen sink of genres: eyewitness accounts, scholarly histories, memoirs, novels, plays, poetry, and *zajal* (vernacular poetry). Some sources defy categorization and bring to the fore questions about the boundaries between memoirs, fiction, and history. For example, Yamin's history of the Great War opens with the following poem:

Cry for a beloved country bereft of its people,
Cry for the corpses stacked in roads, squares, plains, and valleys,
Cry for the mothers whose children are dying,
Cry for children who nurse on their mothers' tears,
Cry for the virgins who sell themselves for slices of black bread.[24]

As in the writings of Maqdisi and Yamin cited above, the narrative prose that eyewitness authors deployed disintegrated into or was interrupted by the stilling image of the horror they experienced. Furthermore, several histories, including Yamin's, make liberal use of poetry in ways that exploit poetry's documentary value.[25] In other words, the use of poetry and *zajal* alerts us to the ability and the limits of language to describe starvation and the challenges inherent to navigating these sources in order to trace collective memory.

In a similar vein, Salim George Shahadah's 1917 *Kitab al-Harb al-Kabir* (The Book of the Great War) includes a poem by Milhim Hawi: "Hardship is widespread. The rich, the poor, the *ahālī,* are all in danger / Hunger has attacked the people and sadness is their bed and cover / O people of the East, you have been betrayed by history."[26]

As suggested in the titles of Asʿad Daghir's *Mudhakkirati ʿala Hamish al-Qadiyya al-ʿArabiyya* (My Memoirs on the Margins of the Arab Cause) and ʿAwwad's *Min ʿAhd al-Mutasarrifiyya ila ʿAhd al-Istiqlal: Mudhakkirat* (From the Era of the Mutasarrifiyya

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to the Era of Independence: Memoirs), there is much interweaving between personal and collective history.[27] Halim Abu ʿIzz al-Din's *Tilka al-Ayyam. Mudhakkirat wa-Dhikrayat: Sirat Insan wa-Masirat Dawla wa-Masar Umma* (Those Were the Days. Memoirs and Memories: The Story of an Individual, a State, and a People) is, as its title indicates, a personal as well as a collective story. The author sandwiches public events, such as the Arab Revolt, between delightful autobiographical nuggets, including his wartime experience in the village of ʿIbadiyya in Mount Lebanon. Because he was a child during the war, his memories are set apart from larger political and military events. Thus, while he recounts his memories of the war early in the book, he "returns" to discuss the public war some two hundred pages later.[28] In Frayha's interesting mixing of memoir and history, by contrast, the author's intention is clearly stated: to tell how a peasant family in Lebanon experienced hunger, sickness, and oppression through the lens of his own experience, so that his personal story may become that of the collective.[29]

Although the war in Syria did not inspire the kind of literary outpouring that took place in Europe, it plays a central role in memoirs/novels and plays written in the 1970s, such as Mina's *Fragments of Memory* and Siham Tergeman's *Daughter of Damascus*, and in several works of historical fiction published in the 1990s, including Samih al-Zain's *6 Ayyar: Qissat Shuhadaʾ al-Watan* and Nadiya al-Ghazzi's *Shirwal Barhum: Ayyam min Safarbarlik*, a work of "fiction based on a true story."[30] Mamduh ʿAdwan's two plays, *Safarbarlik 0: Ayyam al-Ju*ʿ and *Safarbarlik 2: al-Ghul, Jamal Basha al-Saffah*, as well as ʿAbd al-Fattah Rawwas Qalʿaji's ʿ*Urs Halabi wa-Hikayat min Safarbarlik,* put the spotlight on the war.[31] Many of these works attempt to evoke both urban and peasant experiences of the times.

This is not to say that professional historians have been completely silent about the famine. Antonius, Hitti, Kurd ʿAli, and others reference it, some writing in recent decades.[32] The famine is prominent in the 1930s publication *Tarikh al-Harb al-*ʿ*Uzma* (The History of the Great War)[33] and in the long-used Lebanese school textbook *al-Musawwar fi Tarikh Lubnan* (The Illustrated History of Lebanon), which notes that "during the war hunger spread and the poor were reduced to eating plants, horses, cats and dogs; the peels of fruits found on the street or in the garbage. But this did not save them from death."[34] The text is followed by an image of the ghost of death hovering over the dying. Ibrahim Kanʿan's *Lubnan fi al-Harb al-Kubra* (Lebanon during the Great War), published in 1974, includes a section entitled "The Eater of the Flesh of Children," which deals with famine-driven cannibalism, material that is reproduced in the 1990s work of Lebanese historian Wael Hallaq.[35]

Other histories employ poetry in attempts to convey the acuteness of the suffering they document. Daghir's genre-defying work, *Tarikh al-Harb al-Kubra Shi*ʿ*ran* (The History of the Great War in Poetry), for example, narrates the military history of the war—battle by battle—through three poems: "A Salute to Lebanon," "A Love Poem to Lebanon," and "Nostalgia for Lebanon." The last of these laments:

> In my mind's eye I see and hear your horrors; I see desperation and hopelessness reigning; the strong are now weak, the poor are sick and hungry, and the dead are numerous. What I hear is more terrifying than what I see: the scream of every mouth, of the dying and the sick; and the sighing of mothers intensified by weeping orphans and widows, mourning over fathers, husbands, and sons.[36]

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WHEN PEOPLE DREAMED OF BREAD: FOOD AS THE GATEKEEPER OF TIME

The war at home marked a rupture in time, or to borrow from Gilsenan, this was not "the time when" famine happened, but the time in which nothing else happened, when the famine took center stage as "context and cause."[37] In Frayha's memoir, wartime hunger is set in contrast to a day spent in Shwaifat just after the war ended: "We had not yet forgotten the four years of hunger and deprivation. We loved eating: *labna*, olives, *zaʿtar* and tea with sugar (imagine that, with sugar); and rice and macaroni and cheese; cheese, we ate till we were full."[38] For civilians in Syria, what "we ate" before (and shortly after) the war is set against what "we were reduced to eating" during the "famine war."

For ʿAnbara Salam Khalidi, the arrival of the British army in early November 1918 marked the end of the hunger, as "civilians flocked to the army bases to buy all sorts of rations: packaged meats, sweets, and cigarettes."[39] Similarly, Tergeman recaps her father's memory of the war's end with reference to the food provided by the British soldiers: "they gave them meat and cheese to eat to their hearts' content. All the food you might wish . . . Things changed for us then."[40] This theme is also echoed—with peasant accents—in al-Ghazzi's *Shirwal Barhum*. According to the narrator, before the war the gardens of Damascus

> overflowed with green chard, round cabbages, red radishes, and white onions. In the spring, we ate our fill of fava beans. In the summer, we filled our little palms with magical apricots that we shook down from their trees. Nature was generous and washed its many gifts of fruit in crystal clear waters of the creeks all around us. How tasty was our food. And we ate warm bread. How happy we were then. . . . until the frightful war began. People began to eat *turmos* (which they learned from the Beirutis), onion sprouts, rinds, cats and dogs, and some may have eaten corpses.[41]

Needless to say, in the larger scheme of things, the war marked a crossing, and not only in the food economy. In his memoir, Halim Abu ʿIzz al-Din writes that

> until the war, the year 1908 and the Constitutional Revolution it witnessed had marked the limit between *al-jahiliyya* and Islam; people trafficked in it as if it were the *mīlād* or the hijra. Didn't his father tell him that he was born on the fifth year after the Constitution? And was he not told after the First World War that he was born the year before the war?

He might as well have added that the war represented a stepping back into another *jahiliyya*, for he volunteers that his earliest memories are of a world populated "by caravans of needy beggars torn by hunger and starvation and for whom a little flour or oil was a great prize."[42]

This is not to say that the experienced time of the war was necessarily congruent with the period from 1914 to 1918. For Tergeman and others, the misery stretches back in time to include the Balkan Wars: "We were left to starve in the streets. Children died in alleyways. Some died, some were orphaned and some were abandoned. The situation stayed like that until the British came and chased out the Germans and the Turks in the sixth or seventh year of the war."[43] The war is also longer than four years in Yusuf Shalhub's *zajal* piece, "The Victim and the Sacrifice": "In the year 12 of Turkey's old war, hunger destroyed people / The Red Winds, humiliation, hunger, and fear arrived / And it was dangerous."[44]

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Although the Great War often takes on a uniqueness which, abetted by the aura of calamities long past, seeps into the future to become a metaphor for a world that was once broken but is now fixed, it is also subsumed under a more uniform history that brings troubles to every generation. Food and famine define, indeed brand, the war generation's experience, even in the eyes of their children and grandchildren. ʿAbd al-Ghani al-ʿItri writes that "they call this period 'the *Safarbarlik* War,' when people dreamed of bread." Born in 1919, he admits that he did not fight over bread or see people reduced to eating watermelon peels; he was spared the sights of dead children, women, and old men on the streets, "but older people told me."[45] Muhammad Jumʿa, who was born in 1925 and whose family had prospered during the war, writes: "With his own eyes my father saw children and old men raid trash for food in Beirut."[46] Tergeman writes, "My mother . . . told me about her memories of Damascus in the days of *Safar Birlik* [sic]: Bread was rationed and people would stand in line outside bakeries at midnight hoping to get even a burned loaf of bread."[47]

In other authors' works, the famine experienced by their elders is invoked in their own generation's fears and crises. Mina's narrator recalls the Great Depression of his childhood as the *Safarbarlik* of his generation, whereas ʿAdnan al-Malluhi, a Syrian journalist writing in the 1990s, recalls not the Great War itself, but how the declaration of World War II evoked the specters of hunger and death: "people remembered the beloved ones they had lost to *al-Safarbarlik*, as people used to call the First World War in Ottoman times, for our fathers used to tell us about that war and the famine, disease, and unbearable agonies that it had caused."[48]

In the context of the war, ordinary people lost control over their lives, and some even lost their names. Yamin's "Memoirs of a Soldier" is about a villager from Bait Shabab, living in Beirut and wishing to remain anonymous,

> who at the age of fifty, in March 1916, was forcefully conscripted: at first they came to his house and took his bread and the goats, but returned a week later to take him. He became the military's jack-of-all-trades and a man of so many names and titles that he says he can no longer remember any of them.[49]

The asymmetry of this world is also rendered in spatial images and tropes that convey a novel natural landscape as well as a new experience of public space, where even towns lost the meaning of their names:

> ʿAlay, a flower adorning the chest of Lebanon, became a pit of snakes and a den of wolves and its name was not associated with happiness or wellness throughout the war. The mere utterance of its name was enough to terrorize the bravest. I was a prisoner there and my memories are bitter.[50]

"Where are the children who used to play and scream in the alleys of our villages and cities?" asks Maqdisi.[51] As if to answer, Butrus Khuwairi wrote: "All is dark in Harisa as it is in all Lebanese villages because the Turks confiscated the burning oils for use in the German war machines." When he asks around for a transport animal, the villagers say, "you must not be from around here, for you would know that the government has confiscated all the mules and donkeys."[52] Soon the trees were gone as well, for the government began to cut down olive and cinchona trees in Palestine, almond, apricot, and polar trees in the Ghouta, oak and beech in Lebanon, olives and pistachios in Aleppo.[53] All over Beirut and in the villages of the mountain, wrote ʿAnbara Salam

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Khalidi, “houses are empty, mere piles of stones mourning their dead occupants.”[54] Among them, wrote Dahir, were the people of the village of Nahr al-Dhahab, “all gone, having sold their church bell.”[55]

The spatial tropes are not only about lifeless natural landscapes; not surprisingly, they also speak of social and moral trespassing and particularly of death on public display. While on the warfront, “skulls rained down like roasted chickpeas,”[56] on the home front, the farmers’ markets became occasions for official robbery,[57] and homes, inns, and khans were turned into barracks. “And the mosques? They too became barracks.”[58] In Bakfayya, the Jesuit monastery was turned into a stable.[59] And with the dying and the dead choking up the alleyways and the roads, noted one source, the whole country has become an enormous cemetery,[60] a sentiment echoed in Bishara al-Khuri’s wartime city of shriveled bodies over which souls hover in desolation,[61] and repeated in “Safarbarlik,” a *zajal* composed in the Lebanese village of Ghosta during the war: “So much death, the church bell rings all day long / The dead have no value, are buried like animals / Sons bury their fathers and sisters their brothers / Not enough coffin-bearers / In two months’ time everyone will be dead.”[62]

THEY TOOK EVERYTHING: THE MORAL COST

During the war, according to Kurd ʿAli, “the old Janissary rules returned and souls became cheap and were sold.”[63] In Hallaq’s more recent iteration, the war was a time when overwhelmed municipal workers sent to carry away the dead insisted on also hauling away the near-dead for the extra money.[64] The depth of the wartime famine crisis—the extent of the humiliation, suffering, and death—is often articulated by reference to cost or, more accurately, by reference to its absurdity and downright incomprehensibility.

In his poem “1914,” Bishara al-Khuri conjures “The Conference of Inanimate Things,” imagining steel, wood, electricity, and gunpowder going on strike and holding a conference in which each in turn wistfully lists the good uses to which it could have been put. For example, wood misses its life as a tree, producing fruit and sheltering the nightingales. In “The Arts of War,” al-Khuri opts for a return to the Stone Age rather than be witness to this war.[65] Bishara al-Buwari, the mayor of Junieh, who spent much of the war serving as a dragoman and a spy for France in Lebanon and the broader Mediterranean region, writes that the empire’s declaration of war on Germany’s side

> led me to feel optimistic about the future of my country, believing that its liberation from Turkish control would be one result of the war. But at that time, I was far from being able to imagine the extent of the sacrifice that this would entail and had I known what I know now, I might have said that it was not worth such a high price.[66]

The price was devastating and it included a high social and moral toll. In some instances it is literal (and visceral in its concreteness), as in an army recruit’s throw-away remark that in Wadi Srar one could buy either clean figs or wormy figs for half the price, at two *matlik*s.[67] Figs also are the concrete object of memory in ʿAwwad’s anecdote, “The Figs of al-ʿAtshana”: “When hunger became acute and food became scarce and inflation spread, my grandfather decided to ‘oil’ the figs so that they would ripen quickly and all

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at once in order to preserve them for the coming winter," and to harvest them before the birds and the Turkish soldiers could get to them.[68]

Many sources comment on the war's cost by referring to the state's extreme requisitioning policies.[69] Yamin compares the Turks to "bloodthirsty wolves among a peaceful enclosure of lambs" (elsewhere they are "creeping locusts") and he provides a list of what they took, namely everything: *al-ard* and *al-ʿard*.[70] More often, however, authors dwell on what people were forced to sell of their possessions in order to eat. Muhammad ʿIzzat Darwaza writes that "everywhere one looked people had piled their house-wares (beds, bureaus, mirrors) for sale; then people started selling their houses."[71] The extreme hardship that this caused and the double violation of land and honor are forcefully captured in an image entitled "Hunger in Syria and Lebanon," published in *Aʿzam Harb fi al-Tarikh*. Its caption reads:

> This is a symbolic but accurate representation of the condition of Syria, for Syria is represented as a young woman who more resembles the shadow of death than a human being, kneeling in supplication. She was once beautiful, her earth overflowing with milk and honey. Nothing is left of her but skin and bones. She screams with her last breath asking her sons to rise up as the vultures circle overhead.[72]

Several works of literature focus on the war widow and on the woman forever engaged,[73] and the cost of war is often articulated through reference to motherhood being sabotaged or subverted by the carnage of hunger. Addressing his era in 1917, Bishara al-Khuri accusingly writes: "You give birth in order to kill / I wish women would stop having children."[74] Writing around the same time, the poet Amin Nasr al-Din noted: "Everywhere a catastrophe or a funeral / Here an orphan all alone; there a mother weeps for her dead child."[75] The war transformed neighborhood bakeries, according to Hallaq's popular history, into places of danger "where infants, having slipped unnoticed from their mothers' bread-battling—and at times murderous—arms, were trampled to death and where women often suffered miscarriages, or worse, traded with the corpses of their own children."[76]

The war not only "forced respectable women to beg for food in the shadows of vestibules."[77] Actual prostitution for bread is ubiquitous in the repertoire of the collective memory of the war. For example, Yusuf Shalhub's *The Horrors of War* declares: "Millions are dead / A child aching for her father / A virgin, beautiful and pure, selling herself out of hunger / I cannot write enough about such horrors."[78] In other works it appears in the form of a direct exchange or of a parental "sale" of daughters to gypsies and bedouin.[79] Among several graphic images of starvation, Kanʿan includes one of a skeletal woman, breasts exposed, in the act of devouring a loaf of bread. The caption reads: "she sold all that she owned, including her clothes, in order to eat this loaf of bread."[80]

In "The Tale of the Counterfeit Coin," Bishara al-Khuri adds an interesting twist to the prostitution-for-bread trope when he imagines a young mother, whose husband had been conscripted, selling her body for a coin—which turns out to be counterfeit—in order to save her sickly infant daughter.[81] In other words, this war was a time when nothing was as it seemed, when reality became fake, and everything changed. In one poem, this change is imagined in more corrosive food and gendered terms, depicting a

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woman "whose exposed thighs / Between them hold a loaf of bread," bringing to mind Sabry Hafez's remark regarding the "revulsion" created by "food out of context."[82]

Buturs Khuwairi describes what he witnessed in 1916: "I saw with my own eyes the skeletons that lined the roads." In Junieh, "a widow labored all day long in exchange for a loaf of bread"; in the village of Tanurin, "bread is more scarce than vultures' eggs"; near Bkirki, "hungry children begged for bread and ate grass"; on the road to Yahshush, "wolves devoured the corpses of a mother and child while crows and vultures hovered overhead"; by the ʿAsi River, "a throng of human skeletons, as if the dead had risen from their graves, driven insane by hunger, attacked the carcass of a camel, racing the vultures in their feeding."[83]

In these and other examples, hunger is expressed through a large menu of items that had become newly edible thanks to starvation. Whereas the rich were reduced to eating barley and lentils, the poor had at their disposal novel foods that included a variety of "breads," sick and healthy animals (cats, dogs, camels, horses), carcasses, locusts, grasses, bones, peels, garbage, corpses, children. Almost all of them represented a crossing of social, moral, or natural boundaries. Perhaps nowhere is this better expressed than in the ghastly description of a wartime meal that included a soup of *zaqqum* (a tree in hell, the fruits of which are the food of the damned) and *ghislin* (the fluid that oozes out of the flesh and blood of those burning in hell).[84]

Given the centrality of bread in the Syrian and Lebanese diet, it is not surprising that its quality and availability were on everyone's lips. The challenges of procuring or consuming bread became metaphors for tears in the fabric of everyday life and its moral and natural anchors. In the film *Safarbarlik*, a woman laments: "our bakeries have forgotten the glow of fire and we are reduced to baking the cold." For as Nusuli writes in his memoir,

> During the war, flour and other cereals disappeared. Bread, even black bread that disgusted people, was scarce and some people were able to purchase valuable property in exchange for a few bags of flour. And I will not forget the blue bread my father woke up at dawn to get or children fighting over peels of oranges, bananas, and watermelon, congregating alongside dogs around garbage.[85]

The war not only introduced black flour and blue bread, impure and "unfit for human consumption,"[86] but also reduced soldiers to eating it alongside the inedible—in one case, vaseline. In another instance, according to the memoirs of a young Lebanese conscript, "when we got to ʿAnjar, the Turks mistook the fruit of the castor-oil plant for apricots and many ate great amounts of it like savages and fifteen of them died."[87] Another source relates that retreating soldiers in the Sinai were so hungry they sliced the flesh off live camels and left them writhing in the sand.[88]

"AND THEY WERE AS BEASTS"

Animal metaphors and anecdotes are dense in the language of the famine and other wartime torments: one source describes how Ottoman conscription measures sent young men fleeing Beirut for the mountain, "like rabbits running to their hiding places."[89] In Damascus, another author writes, "it was common knowledge that the Ottomans collected conscripts as if they were fish caught in a net."[90]

More poignant are descriptions of how hunger not only made people look like beasts but also drove them to act like them, particularly in what they ate: food usually allotted

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to animals.[91] In "1914," Bishara al-Khuri describes the Lebanese as "Beggars, desperate / Dispersed by hunger, they eat grass / Death written on their faces."[92] Starving Syrians did not have the exotic choices afforded Parisian elites who, under siege in 1870, "ate the zoo."[93] Rather, in these texts, many Syrians became the zoo.[94] Yet, as was the case in Paris, starvation gave rise to a remembered cuisine of desperation. Salam Khalidi writes, "I saw with my own eyes children searching trash bins for food, competing with dogs over it. Hunger crippled people and we began to see children with bloated stomachs, hairless and more like monkeys than human beings."[95] ʿAwwad recalls that by the end of the summer of 1915, "hunger had spread; wheat and other cereals had dwindled, and the state had confiscated all beasts of burden such as horses, mules, and asses and people were walking and acting like beasts of burden themselves."[96] Rashid ʿAssaf's short *zajal* piece "Barley Bread," written during the war, goes further: "Today we eat barley bread, tomorrow we'll start braying / Let's have a barley riot, the donkeys will soon be saying."[97]

Ottoman army deserters, according to the soldier memoirist mentioned above, were driven by hunger to transgress the boundaries of taste, as in having to eat rotten intestines, "wormy" figs, or soup of flour and vinegar, as well as more serious ones: they stole wine and bread from monasteries, competed for food with the small dog owned by a German priest, and in Jericho, where they ran out of water, they resorted to drinking from the dung of camels. "Imagine," he added.[98] Animals of the wrong species also become food: in another *zajal* piece, entitled "Safarbarlik," Yusuf Francis al-Birri writes: "Poverty in all the villages / Children are all hungry / People eat rotten meat / And one man's cat is a meal for his neighbor."[99]

Worse yet were the locusts that are described variously as devouring everything or becoming food themselves. A character in ʿAdwan's play, *Safarbarlik 0*, recalls: "we were hungry before the locusts came; they started eating our grass and we started eating them."[100] ʿAwwad, however, notes that "when the locusts arrived some people started roasting and eating them, but we could not, like John the Baptist, eat them."[101] In Iman Younes' recent novel *Wild Mulberries*, set in Lebanon in the interwar period, the young protagonist describes the warm spring day when her family's unsold silk cocoons begin discharging their occupants in such numbers that "they cover the sky. Afraid, my aunt rushes out screaming . . . she still remembers when during the war of 1914 the skies of the village were covered by locusts that ate the fields and denuded the entire earth."[102] Indeed, according to al-Ghazzi, during the war even the locusts went hungry and people sold the corpses of their children for food.[103]

It comes as no surprise that children populate the most poignant images of the war of starvation. Orphaned and homeless, and appearing like hordes of skeletons, they take to the streets in search of food.[104] At times, as we have seen, they became the food. Sulaiman Zahir writes:

> With our own eyes we saw the victims of hunger falling down in the streets and alleyways, their groans filling the skies; among them were those who ate the corpses of animals, in some instances fighting over them with others. This situation led many to seek human food and to hunt weak orphaned children as if they were game.[105]

Further on he adopts a register-like style similar to that of other eyewitness accounts. In Damur in April 1917, "four children disappeared; their heads were later found in the

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house of a poor man who had chopped and roasted them for supper." On 18 March 1918, "a woman in the village of Kfar Sir in Nabatiyya was arrested for eating two children she had enticed into her house. They found their heads in her house." He speculates that there were many more such incidents that remained undiscovered because so many children had become orphaned beggars on the move.[106]

In a world where people traffic in the corpses of their children and others hunt children like prey, there is one prospect even more unnatural: maternal cannibalism. The trope of the cannibal mother, perhaps as old as war itself, appears in the *zajal*, literature, and histories written during and following the war. Darwaza, who spent the war years in exile and on itinerant jobs, writes: "In Beirut we started to see walking skeletons." But it is on the memories of children who rummage in the garbage for peels that he dwells, adding: "we heard stories of people devouring cats, dogs, and corpses and it is said that mothers ate their children."[107] The cannibal mother makes an early appearance in a poem entitled "Ghul al-Majaʿa" (The Ghoul of Starvation): "Here a man who starves to death by the side of the road / There a mother eating the liver of her children / Here a widow whose little one says only 'I'm hungry' / There the little one dies nursing on his finger."[108] In ʿAdwan's play, *Safarbarlik 2*, Jamal Pasha responds to complaints about the starvation by asking: "Did the woman eat her children?" Upon hearing that this is not the case, he declares: "Then people are not starving."[109] If this apocryphal story portrays Jamal Pasha as utterly cruel and depraved, the experience of starvation—its depth and horrors—was often articulated by reference to situations of absurdity or moral extremes. There are perhaps few horrors worse than that of maternal cannibalism. It bespeaks a catastrophic breakdown in the order of things, capturing the way war was experienced in everyday life or rather the way it unmoored social life and sundered its bonds.

CONCLUSIONS

The famine cast a dark shadow on Syrian and Lebanese society and found expression in a variety of scholarly, literary, and popular forms. Syrian and Lebanese writers on the war deploy a rich language centered on food in order to describe the ruptures that starvation occasioned. The war was the time when the dead invaded the public spaces of the living; when the living behaved like animals; when gender rules were trampled and everything was for sale; when the most natural of bonds, motherhood, was sundered. The world that the war had created was populated with hordes, skeletons, animals, and cannibals that spoke of trespassing moral and natural boundaries, a world that Gilsenan describes as "unimaginable and asymmetrical."[110]

The experience of a broken world is vividly conveyed in the snapshot formats used by several eyewitnesses, such as Maqdisi and Yamin, and in the poetry and *zajal* dealing with the war. In the case of the former, instead of a narrative, the sources attempt to give pictorial reality to the unspeakable and at the same time bear witness to what their authors can hardly believe is taking place. They and others often punctuate their accounts with the phrase "with my own eyes I saw" such and such. These still-life formats and poetic interludes (often enhanced by the use of photographs) are suggestive of the extent to which the famine itself resists or lacks the coherence of narrativity and lends itself more easily to poetic or chronicling styles. Although their deficit in the glory department often leads to the eclipse of memories of the famine in the nationalist panorama of the

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past, it may also be that the famine's catastrophic impact on society marked a rupture not only in historical time but also in the ability of language to describe that rupture.

Proust's madeleines, Marie-Antoinette's cake, and Freud's burned toast have long ago spoken to the power of food in the construction of individual, collective, and repressed memories. Lebanese and Syrian writings on the war that deploy food to structure memory may resonate in some ways with those of food writers and novelists such as Colette Rossant and Diana Abu-Jaber, who structure their narratives around the sights and smells of childhood kitchens and repasts. Yet in Lebanese and Syrian memories of the war, the foods around which memory wraps itself are hardly the fragrant stuff of the baklava remembered by Abu-Jaber's protagonist as a child or the garlicky tastes of Rossant's childhood kitchen, accompanied by recipes.[111] The foods that fill the culinary imagination are of deprivation and in some instances depravity. The famine, and by extension, the war, is remembered as the *time* when people dreamed of bread and ate grass, carcasses, and children.

In Syria and Lebanon there are no memorials for the civilian casualties of the Great War as there are in Yerevan, Armenia, and Europe (most notably in Belgium and Germany), where in more recent times tribute has even been paid to the heroic animals that "served" and perished in the Great War, as in the Animals in War Memorial erected in London's Park Lane in 2004. Those who were memorialized in Syria and Lebanon are the few dozen martyrs who were hanged by Jamal Pasha during the war. The civilians who died of starvation and disease were not hailed as heroes; they were hardly the material for iconic heroism. Here I suggest that food became their *lieu de memoire,* their metaphorical resting place.[112]

NOTES

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[1]Mikhaʾil Nuʿaima, *Hams al-Jufun* (Beirut: Sadir al-Rihani Publishers, 1943), 95–97. This and all translations in the article are mine.

[2]Hanna Mina, *Fragments of Memory: A Story of a Syrian Family*, trans. Olive Kenny and Lorne Kenny (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas at Austin, 1993), 173.

[3]Ibrahim Khalil ʿAwwad, *Min ʿAhd al-Mutasarrifiyya ila ʿAhd al-Istiqlal: Mudhakkirat* (Beirut: n.p., 1981), 44–45.

[4]Antun Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb: Dhikra al-Hawadith wa-l-Mazalim fi Lubnan fi al-Harb al-ʿUmumiyya, 1914–1918*, 2 vols. (Beirut: al-Matbaʿa al-Adabiyya, 1919), 1:156–60.

[5]Jirjis al-Maqdisi, *Aʿzam Harb fi al-Tarikh* (Beirut: al-Matbaʿa al-ʿIlmiyya, 1918), 68–69.

[6]Najwa al-Qattan, "*Safarbarlik:* Ottoman Syria and the Great War," in *From the Syrian Land to the States of Syria and Lebanon*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Christoph Schumann (Beirut: Orient-Institut der DMG Beirut, 2004), 163–73.

[7]See, among many others works, Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); and Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[8]Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Salim Tamari, *Year of the Locust: A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2011); Yücel Yanikdağ, *Healing the Nation: Prisoners of War, Medicine and Nationalism in Turkey, 1914–1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

[9]Jay Winter and Jean Louis Robert, "Introduction," in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, and Berlin, 1914–1919*, ed. Jay Winter and Jean Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4–13.

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[10]For an analysis of Ersatz food and *Ersatzmensch*, see Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 204–9.

[11]See Thierry Bonzon and Belinda Davis, "Feeding the Cities," in *Capital Cities at War*, 308.

[12]David Arnold, *Famine: Social Crisis and Historical Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 3, 42.

[13]See Sydney W. Mintz and Christine M. Du Bois, "The Anthropology of Food and Eating," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 91–119; and David E. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repast: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

[14]Muhammad Kurd ʿAli, *al-Mudhakkirat*, 2 vols. (Damascus: Matbaʿat al-Turki, 1948), 1:108.

[15]Anis Frayha, *Qabla an Ansa* (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar, 1979), 74.

[16]See Robert and Winter, "Conclusion: Towards a Social History of Capital Cities at War," in *Capital Cities at War*, 551–52; and Davis, *Home Fires Burning*, 71.

[17]Yusuf al-Hakim, *Beirut wa-Lubnan fi ʿAhd Al ʿUthman* (Beirut: al-Matbaʿa al-Kathulikiyya, 1964), 249–60.

[18]Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb*, 1:4, 124, 160–63; 2:8–14, 15–18, 52–53.

[19]Anis Nusuli, *ʿIshtu wa-Shahadtu* (Beirut: Dar al-Kashshaf, 1951), 160.

[20]Maqdisi, *Aʿzam Harb*, 69–70.

[21]K. S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965); George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1938). For similar examples, see Ahmad Tarabayn, *Lubnan min ʿAhd al-Mutasarrifiyya ila Bidayat al-Intidab* (Cairo: Matbaʿat Nahdat Misr, 1968); Mansur ʿAzar, *Awraq min al-Madi: Mudhakkirat* (Lebanon: Maktabat al-Dirasat al-ʿIlmiyya, 1993); Rashid Kilani, *Mudhakkirat Rashid Kilani* (Damascus: Dar Majallat al-Thaqafa, 1990); ʿUmar al-Dirawi, *al-Harb al-ʿAlamiyya al-Ula: ʿArd Musawwar* (Beirut: Dar al-ʿIlm li-l-Malayin, 1964); and Tawfiq Barru, *al-Qadiyya al-ʿArabiyya fi al-Harb al-ʿAlamiyya al-Ula* (Damascus: Dar Tlas, 1989).

[22]*Safarbarlik*, dir. Henry Barakat (1967).

[23]L. Schatkowski Schilcher, "The Famine of 1915–1918 in Greater Syria," in *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani*, ed. John P. Spagnolo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 233; Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 16–38.

[24]Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb*, 1:4.

[25]See John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), 269.

[26]Salim Jurj Shahadah, *Kitab al-Harb al-Kabir* (New York: al-Majalla al-ʿArabiyya, 1917).

[27]Asʿad Daghir, *Mudhakkirati ʿala Hamish al-Qadiyya al-ʿArabiyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Qahira li-l-Tibaʿa, 1959).

[28]Halim Saʿid Abu ʿIzz al-Din, *Tilka al-Ayyam. Mudhakkirat wa-Dhikrayat: Sirat Insan wa-Masirat Dawla wa-Masar Umma* (Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, 1982), 20, 197–202.

[29]Frayha, *Qabla an Ansa*, 52–53. See also Edward ʿAttiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story: A Study in Loyalties* (London: J. Murray, 1946).

[30]Mina, *Fragments of Memory*; Siham Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, trans. Andrea Rugh (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas at Austin, 1994); Samih al-Zain, *6 Ayyar: Qissat Shuhadaʾ al-Watan* (Beirut: n.p., 1966); Nadiya al-Ghazzi, *Shirwal Barhum: Ayyam min Safarbarlik* (Damascus: Dar al-Shadi, 1993).

[31]Mamduh ʿAdwan, *Safarbarlik 0: Ayyam al-Juʿ* (Damascus: Majallat al-Hayat, 1994), a musical play about "the days of hunger"; ʿAdwan, *Safarbarlik 2: al-Ghul, Jamal Basha al-Saffah* (Damascus: Ittihad al-Kuttab al-ʿArab, 1996); ʿAbd al-Fattah Rawwas Qalʿaji, *ʿUrs Halabi wa-Hikayat min Safarbarlik* (Damascus: Ministry of Education, 1993).

[32]Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*; Philip Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From Earliest Times to the Present* (London: Macmillan, 1957); Muhammad Kurd ʿAli, *Khitat al-Sham*, 6 vols. (Damascus: Maktabat al-Nuri, 1983); Masʿud Dahir, *Tarikh Lubnan al-Ijtimaʿi, 1914–1926* (Beirut: Dar al-Farabi, 1974).

[33]*Tarikh al-Harb al-ʿUzma, 1914–1918: Tarikh wa-Suwar,* ed. Omar Abu-Nasr, 52 vols. (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Ahliyya, 1937–38).

[34]Shafiq Juha, Munir Bʿalbaki, and Bahij ʿUthman, *al-Musawwar fi Tarikh Lubnan* (Beirut: Dar al-ʿIlm li-l-Malayin, 1959), 111–12.

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[35]Ibrahim Naʿum Kanʿan, *Lubnan fi al-Harb al-Kubra: 1914–1918* (Beirut: Muʾassasat ʿAsi, 1974), 200–202, 355, 375; Wael Hallaq, "Social Life in Beirut," in *Beirut fi al-Dhakira al-Shaʿbiyya*, ed. Khalid al-Lahham, 5 vols. (Beirut: Sharikat al-Zawaya, 1992), 5:124–37.

[36]Asʿad Khalil Daghir, *Tarikh al-Harb al-Kubra Shiʿran* (Egypt: Matbaʿat al-Hilal, 1919), 3, 71–72, 79–82.

[37]Michael Gilsenan, *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence & Narrative in an Arab Society* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996), 121.

[38]Frayha, *Qabla an Ansa*, 74.

[39]ʿAnbara Salam Khalidi, *Jawla fi al-Dhikrayat fi Lubnan wa-Filastin* (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar, 1978), 122–23.

[40]Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 184–92.

[41]Al-Ghazzi, *Shirwal Barhum*, 26–27, 46, 60, 69–72, 91, 95.

[42]Abu ʿIzz al-Din, *Tilka al-Ayyam*, 14–15, 16–17.

[43]Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 198.

[44]Quoted in Khalil Ahmad Khalil, *al-Shiʿr al-Shaʿbi al-Lubnani: Dirasat wa-Mukhtarat* (Beirut: Dar al-Taliʿa, 1974), 262.

[45]ʿAbd al-Ghani al-ʿItri, *Iʿtirafat Shami ʿAtiq: Sira Dhatiyya wa-Suwar Dimashqiyya* (Damascus: Dar al-Bashaʾir, 1998), 64.

[46]Muhammad Jumʿa, *al-Tahun: Mudhakkirat* (Damascus: al-Ahali Publishers, 1993/94), 25–26.

[47]Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus,* 196.

[48]Mina, *Fragments of Memory*, 81; ʿAdnan al-Malluhi, *al-Tariq ila Dimashq: Mudhakkirat* (Damascus: Dar al-Shamal, 1992), 152; Frayha, *Qabla an Ansa*, 50. See also Wadad al-Maqdisi Qurtas, *Dhikrayat: 1917–1977* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Abhath al-ʿArabiyya, 1982), 139.

[49]Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb*, 2:68–70.

[50]"Memoirs of a Prisoner in ʿAlay," in Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb*, 2:75–90.

[51]Maqdisi, *Aʿzam Harb,* 69–70.

[52]Butrus Khuwairi, *al-Rihla al-Suriyya fi al-Harb al-ʿUmumiyya, 1916: Akhtar wa-Ahwal wa- Aʿajib*, ed. Yusuf Tuma al-Bustani (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Yusufiyya, 1921), 22.

[53]Kurd ʿAli, *Khitat al-Sham*, 3:147.

[54]Salam Khalidi, *Jawla fi al-Dhikrayat*, 112.

[55]Dahir, *Tarikh Lubnan al-Ijtimaʿi,* 74.

[56]Wadiʿ Saʿid al-Riyashi, *Badr al-ʿAtaba: Diwan Wadiʿ Saʿid al-Riyashi*, ed. Lisa Wadiʿ al-Riyashi (Zahle, Lebanon: Matabiʿ Zahla al-Fatah, 1981), 23.

[57]Sulaiman Zahir, *Jabal ʿAmil fi al-Harb al-Kawniyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Matbuʿat al-Sharqiyya, 1986), 44.

[58]Faʾiz al-Ghusayn, *Mudhakkirati ʿan al-Thawra al-ʿArabiyya* (Damascus: n.p., 1939), 43–45; Kurd ʿAli, *Khitat al-Sham*, 3:142–43, 145.

[59]Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb*, 1:110–12.

[60]Bishara al-Buwari, *Arbaʿ Sini al-Harb*, ed. Naʿum Mukarzal (New York: al-Huda Newspaper Publications, 1926); Zahir, *Jabal ʿAmil*, 45–47.

[61]Samira Abu Ghazala, *al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi al-Qawmi fi Misr wa-l-Sham bayn al-Harbayn al-ʿAlamiyyatayn al-Ula wa-l-Thaniya* (Cairo: al-Dar al-Misriyya li-l-Taʾlif wa-l-Tarjama, n.d.), 55.

[62]Yusuf Francis al-Birri, "Safarbarlik," in Khalil, *al-Shiʿr al-Shaʿbi al-Lubnani*, 267.

[63]Kurd ʿAli, *Khitat al-Sham*, 3:142–43, 145.

[64]Hallaq, "Social Life in Beirut," 126–27.

[65]Bishara ʿAbd Allah al-Khuri, *Shiʿr al-Akhtal al-Saghir* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-ʿArabi, 1972), 351–54.

[66]Al-Buwari, *Arbaʿ Sini al-Harb,* 9. See also Maqdisi, *Aʿzam Harb*, 3–7, 8–9, 25.

[67]Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb*, 2:60–68.

[68]ʿAwwad, *Min ʿAhd al-Mutasarrifiyya*, 36.

[69]Al-Ghusayn, *Mudhakkirati ʿan al-Thawra al-ʿArabiyya*, 43–45.

[70]Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb,* 1:22, 94, 96–98; Kurd ʿAli, *Khitat al-Sham*, 3:142–43, 145.

[71]Muhammad ʿIzzat Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat Muhammad ʿIzzat Darwaza: Sijill Hafil bi-Masirat al-Haraka al-ʿArabiyya wa-l-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya khilal Qarn min al-Zaman*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb

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al-Islami, 1993), 1:287. See also Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb,* 2:3; Frayha, *Qabla an Ansa*, 55; and Zahir, *Jabal ʿAmil,* 47.

[72]*Tarikh al-Harb al-ʿUzma,* 24:3. The image originally appeared in 1916 in the Egyptian magazine *al-Lataʾif al-Musawwara*. See also Ahmad Hilmi al-ʿAllaf, *Dimashq fi Matlaʿ al-Qarn al-ʿIshrin*, ed. ʿAli Jamil Naʿisa (Damascus: Ministry of Culture, 1976).

[73]See, for example, ʿAnbara Salam Khalidi, "al-Khatib al-Muntazar," in *Jawla fi al-Dhikrayat,* 104; al-Ghazzi, *Shirwal Barhum*; and Qalʿaji, *ʿUrs Halabi*.

[74]Al-Khuri, "To the Age," in *Shiʿr al-Akhtal al-Saghir*, 356.

[75]Quoted in Kanʿan, *Lubnan fi al-Harb,* 200–202.

[76]Hallaq, "Social Life in Beirut," 126–28.

[77]Kanʿan, *Lubnan fi al-Harb,* 166.

[78]Al-Khuri, *Shiʿr al-Akhtal al-Saghir*, 342–50.

[79]Munir al-Rayyis, *al-Kitab al-Dhahabi: al-Thawrat al-Wataniyya fi al-Mashriq al-ʿArabi: al-Thawra al-Suriyya al-Kubra* (Beirut: Dar al-Taliʿa, 1969), 52. See also al-Lahham, *Beirut fi al-Dhakira al-Shaʿbiyya,* 126.

[80]Kanʿan, *Lubnan fi al-Harb,* 170.

[81]Al-Khuri , "Hikayat al-Riyal al-Muzayyaf," in Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb*, 1:160–63.

[82]Muhammad ʿAfifi Matar, "Shazaya," in *al-Juʿ wa-l-Qamar* (Damascus: Ittihad al-Kuttab al-ʿArab, 1972), 17. For an interesting take on "culinary vocabulary," see Sabry Hafez, "Food as Semiotic Code in Arabic Literature," in *A Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures in the Middle East*, ed. Sami Zubaida and Richard Tapper (London: Tauris Park Paperbacks, 2011), 268–69.

[83]Khuwairi, *al-Rihla al-Suriyya*, 18, 21–22, 26–27, 34.

[84]Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb*, 2:52–58.

[85]Nusuli, *ʿIshtu wa-Shahadtu*, 236; Maqdisi, *Aʿzam Harb*, 30–66.

[86]Khuwairi, *al-Rihla al-Suriyya,* 49.

[87]Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb,* 1:115, 138, 141, 151; 2:60–68.

[88]Tergeman, *Daughter of Damascus*, 184–92.

[89]*Tarikh al-Harb al-ʿUzma,* 2:8–10.

[90]Al-Ghazzi, *Shirwal Barhum*, 56.

[91]Al-Rayyis, *al-Kitab al-Dhahabi*, 51–53.

[92]Al-Khuri*, Shiʿr al-Akhtal al-Saghir,* 342–50.

[93]Rebecca L. Spang, "'And They Ate the Zoo': Relating Gastronomic Exoticism in the Siege of Paris," *MNL* 107 (1992): 752–73.

[94]This is in interesting contrast to the transformation of pigeons from food to messengers in Paris in 1871. See Robert Baldick, *The Siege of Paris* (London: B. T. Batsford LTD, 1964), 121.

[95]Salam Khalidi, *Jawla fi al-Dhikrayat,* 106.

[96]ʿAwwad, *Min ʿAhd al-Mutasarrifiyya*, 31–32.

[97]Juzif Abi Dahir, *al-Zajal al-Lubnani: Shuʿaraʾ Zurafaʾ* (Beirut: Dar Kanʿan, 1991), 10. See Davis, *Home Fires Burning*, 68, on "Oh To Be a Pig."

[98]Yamin, *Lubnan fi al-Harb*, 2:60–68.

[99]Quoted in Khalil, *al-Shiʿr al-Shaʿbi al-Lubnani*, 267.

[100]ʿAdwan, *Safarbarlik 0*, 13, 20.

[101]ʿAwwad, *Min ʿAhd al-Mutasarrifiyya,* 52.

[102]Iman Humaydan Younes, *Wild Mulberries*, trans. Michelle Hartman (Northampton, Mass.: Interlink Books, 2008), 95.

[103]Al-Ghazzi, *Shirwal Barhum*, 128.

[104]Khalid al-ʿAzm, *Mudhakkirat Khalid al-ʿAzm*, 3 vols. (Beirut: al-Dar al-Muttahida li-l-Nashr, 1973), 1:76.

[105]Zahir, *Jabal ʿAmil*, 36, 39, 41–43.

[106]Ibid., 45–46.

[107]Darwaza*, Mudhakkirat*, 1:236, 253, 287–88.

[108]Khalil, *al-Shiʿr al-Shaʿbi al-Lubnani*, 262.

[109]ʿAdwan, *Safarbarlik 2,* 191, 249–50. See also Nicholas Z. Ajay, Jr., "Mount Lebanon and the Wilayah of Beirut, 1914–1918: The War Years" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 1973), appendix, 11.

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[110]Gilsenan, *Lords of the Lebanese Marches*, 121.

[111]Colette Rossant, *Apricots on the Nile: A Memoir with Recipes* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1999); Diana Abu Jaber, *Crescent* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003).

[112]I borrow this term, which can translate as "site of memory," from Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7–24.

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