Crimes on Sacred Ground: Massacres, Desecration, and Iconoclasm in Lebanon’s Mountain War 1983-1984

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This thesis is dedicated to the victims of civil wars past and present in the hopes that they find sanctuary, sacred or otherwise.
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# Table of Contents

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................................5  
In the Wide World ......................................................................................................................................13  
In the Levant .............................................................................................................................................16  
Setting the Scene for War: Historiographical Review ..........................................................................19  
The Sacred and War: Analogy in the Middle East ......................................................................................28  
Chapter Two: Ideological Background and the Massacres .................................................................37  
  Mountain War Chronology (Key moments included from 1975-1990 civil war) ..........................40  
  Ideological Forces ...................................................................................................................................41  
  Kfar Matta ................................................................................................................................................51  
  'Abey and Deir al-Qamar .........................................................................................................................53  
  The Ancient and the Beqaa Valley ........................................................................................................57  
Chapter Three: Remembrance, Reconciliation, and Rebuilding ..............................................................62  
  The Reconciliation Process ....................................................................................................................64  
  Rebuilding After Civil War in Lebanon: Previous Cases ...................................................................68  
  Brih .........................................................................................................................................................70  
  Memorial and Symbols ............................................................................................................................73  
Conclusion ................................................................................................................................................78
Introduction

It is widely understood that human life is sacred. In the face of violence, war, and conflict, the loss of human life is presented as the greatest tragedy, particularly when those who are innocent are slaughtered. Mechanisms are put in place to avoid such killings. Measures to protect civilians are codified in international law, military doctrine, and rules of engagement. Humanitarian aid focuses on the supply of basic needs to support human life. And public attention, in the media or otherwise, is most alarmed when lives are consistently destroyed. Of course, sacredness extends beyond human lives, and the destruction of sacred objects or places warrant and justify a similar level of examination and concern as the brutal killings that have taken place throughout history.

In many ways, the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) is characterized by its massacres. It is so not only because the war's death toll reached over 150,000 lives but also because the principal memories held of the war involve the atrocities committed.1 Sabra and Shatila, Tel al-Zaatar, Damour; the names of each massacre ring out as defining moments in the conflict to those who survived, witnessed, or participated in the war.2 The slaughters occupy space as black marks on Lebanon's history, tragedies to be revisited as cautionary tales or case studies of the violence that influenced the modern history of the Middle East. Although it would be enough to While the tragedies of the Lebanese Civil War would seem to end at the mass killings that

occurred, other crimes were committed in the war. This thesis examines these crimes and the
unique factors that led to them. While the conflict's massacres represented violations of the
sacredness of human life, the intentional destruction of sacred sites during the war constituted
significant damage to the social and cultural fabric of the country.

Just as massacres characterize the Lebanese Civil War's most defining moments,
localized communal violence within the war carries one key theme: erasure. As conflicting
religious and political factions, spurred by transnational movements and ideologies, confronted
each other militarily, sources indicate that they made concerted efforts to remove one another.
The Mountain War provides a stark example of this phenomenon. Not only were entire
populations removed from their homes because of their beliefs, identity, or allegiances, groups
made efforts to cleanse areas of Lebanon of any traces of their enemies. While this element of
erasure is not unique to Lebanese history, the destruction of the sacred and holy sites of the
Chouf region during the Mountain War demonstrates its occurrence during a modern civil war.
The themes of erasure and cleansing will be central to this thesis' analysis of the Mountain War's
events.

Before the Maronite Christian and Druze forces began to clash in the Chouf region, the
Israeli military presence in the area also led to destruction of shrines and other sacred places.
While the principal focus of this thesis is the degree to which destruction occurred between the
two religious factions in the Chouf region, the destruction of shrines in South Lebanon during the
Israeli invasion of the region provides an interesting contrast with that that occurred in the
mountains. The expressed goal of Israel’s offensive in Lebanon was to root out the Palestinian
guerillas that conducted military strikes against Israeli civilians. The Mountain War phase of the
conflict officially began as an effort by Druze militias to expel the Phalangists and their allies
who occupied previously Israeli-held positions in the region. This official beginning to the
conflict does not represent the first cases of violence in the region since the outbreak of the war
in 1975. The first clashes occurred between Druze and Maronite Christians in 1977. The
Mountain War is a term used for the 1983-1984 phase of the Lebanese Civil War that took place
in the Chouf mountain range and primarily fought between the People’s Liberation Army (PLA),
the armed wing of the Druze majority party, the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), and the
coalition of Maronite Christian militias that comprise the Lebanese Front, including the Kataeb
Party, the far-right Phalangist militia. The Lebanese Government supported the Christian
militias. The conflict was fought largely over control of the major Druze and Christian towns and
villages after the Israeli withdrawal from the region in 1982. The conflict faced intense fighting
between the local militias resulting in massacres of both Christian and Druze civilians, the
destruction of villages, and the eviction of their inhabitants. Although atrocities were committed
on both sides, the Maronite population was heavily affected by the conflict, as Druze militias
drove up to 50,000 civilians out of their homes.3

The Mount Lebanon theater of the conflict serves as a useful lens to which to examine
cases of violence against the sacred during civil war. The Maronite Christian and Druze
communities that inhabit the region will take a central place in this project’s analysis of cases of
desecration in Lebanon, as each religious community actively participated in the war while
working to maintain its distinct religious practices. As with most violent civil wars, the nature of
the details of the conflict remains blurred, and the facts of each case of violence are difficult to
ascertain confidently. Highlighting the perspectives of those who personally experienced the
conflict while accounting for the ways in which each battle is remembered in an academic

3 “Casualties Of Mideast Wars,” Los Angeles Times.
context presents thorough answers of how religious sites fared during the Mountain War. During the Mountain War Maronite Christians and Druze who lived together in the same region of the country for centuries found themselves on opposing sides of the conflict. In addition to the clashes that led to the deaths of hundreds of militia fighters and civilians, Druze fighters destroyed Maronite Christian community churches in their efforts to expel Christians from villages. In addition, the Maronite Christian militias massacred Druze civilians after particular battles and inflicted damage on holy Druze shrines. The specific events in question occurred in 1983 and will be explicated further in the thesis. The key questions of the thesis include: how does this phase of the war compare with other cases of violence in the region that feature desecration? How did the ideological background and organizational structure of the warring factions lead to the crimes against the sacred? And how did the sacred manifest in Lebanon before, during, and after the conflict?

This thesis will assert the following. First, wars that occur in locations with high concentrations of religious, holy, or sacred sites inevitably involve those sites in the conflict. The social and cultural value of the sacred results in their functioning as "critical infrastructure" for local communities. Sites falling in this category, such as the churches and shrines of Lebanon, become targets during military conflict. This thesis will also argue that primary accounts of violence in the Mountain War indicate certain patterns of behavior from factions involved in the conflict. Most notably, the informal organization of militias and paramilitary groups resulted in the criminality that occurred during the Lebanon conflict as well as others that took place in the Levant. The third main assertion that this thesis will put forth involves how conceptions of the sacred changed after the war. While religious and holy sites, which often involve the memory of deceased people, bonded communities prior to the war, the political associations that emerged
during the conflict served a similar purpose. The symbols and images these factions used represent another manifestation of the sacred affected by the civil war.
Chapter One: Sacredness & War

“The Experience of Sacred Space makes possible the founding of the world: where the sacred Manifests itself in space, the real unveils itself, the world comes into existence.” –Mircea Eliade
Just as the principal goal of this thesis is to investigate the attacks on sacred places and objects in the Lebanese Mountain War, a definition and an explanation of what sacredness entails and signifies are necessary. In the broader description of human interaction with the surrounding world, “the sacred” emerge as objects to be valued and interacted with much differently than their counterparts. The thesis will explore the value assigned to the various sites of the Chouf\(^4\) region of Lebanon that came under siege during the civil war. As the interpretation of sacredness hinges on religious beliefs and practices, this chapter will provide information regarding the aspects of Lebanon’s major faith traditions involved most directly in the conflict. The connections between Lebanon’s cultural and religious history and that of the region in which it inhabits, the Eastern Mediterranean, also manifest in the practices of revering sacred sites in the country. The history of religious sites in wartime encompasses events beyond the Lebanon, and many of which parallel the conflict that took place in the late twentieth century. As the analysis of the sacred in Lebanese life and culture works to define the Druze and Maronite Christian identity in Lebanon, an introduction to the conflict and its origins assists in identifying the role of each religious group in the civil war.

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\(^4\) Some primary source documents use other transliterations of the Arabic name such as “al-Shuf,” or “al-Shouf.” This thesis will refer to the mountain range as the Chouf throughout the text.
What has been considered “sacred” in human history, and for what reasons? Religious belief most often associates with conceptions of the sacred. Emile Durkheim made the most notable attempt at describing this phenomenon in his text, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, in which he places rituals at the center of objects that are defined as “sacred.” In Durkheim’s emphasis on ritual in human life, he lists social functions as the door to venerated objects, foods, and places. These elements of material culture that allow for sacredness are also signified by the use of symbols in rituals, giving way to the more complex forms of sacred objects, sites, and the religious ideologies and messages that they signify. Durkheim’s conception of the sacred is contrasted with that of the “profane”, defined as a category separate from the sacred. The profane refers to the objects that hold no special qualities in a ritual and is often explained as those that feature in mundane behavior or ordinary life. While Durkheim employs examples from Aboriginal Australian history to describe aspects of human society that can be defined as sacred or profane, his description of totemic societies and their engagement with physical objects aids in the understanding of the shrines and sites of the Levant. The principal argument from Durkheim’s research on totemic societies is that the totems, which comprise objects to be prayed to, not only figure in the completion of rituals but also serve as centers of religious communities’ identities. While this analysis of totemic societies generally refers to remote indigenous communities, such as those in Australia and North America, it

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6 Durkheim, 257.
8 Durkheim, 121-123.
presents value for understanding human interaction with other religious objects or monuments, such as shrines or temples. In essence, the Durkheimian interpretation of the sacred does more than describe the social and pragmatic functions of sacred site; it suggests the value the sacred contributes to the center of religious community’s identity.⁹

Despite Durkheim’s emphasis on the sacred’s role in communication with the gods through objects such as totems, the sacred can function beyond religious or theistic significance. The most prominent example is that of sacred objects that reflect collective memory, such as tombs, mausoleums, and memorials. As Paul Devereux argues, the sacred encompasses objects of “veneration and awe.”¹⁰ While this encompasses religious sites and artifacts, those that represent important historical or personal figures become sacred as well. This concept remains important, as many of the sacred sites involved in conflict are cemeteries and tombs. Memorials to the dead represent a significant portion of sacred sites that are meaningful to distinct communities as well as those affected by war. Researchers suggest that cemeteries' functions are twofold. First, they serve as material structures representing the memory of the dead.¹¹ As they allow for physical interaction with the dead, graves and cemeteries play an important role for communities undergoing bereavement or mourning. According to Ann Palkovich and Ann Bazarrone in their chapter in The Handbook of the Dead and Dying, cemeteries and tombs function as physical spaces that connect the living and dead.¹² A second function of cemeteries

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⁹ Durkheim, 260.
¹² Palkovich.
involves their role for the community. As tombs and cemeteries reflect collective memory of the deceased as well as for individuals, they hold important roles for groups with shared beliefs and heritage. Palkovich and Bazarrone suggest that cemeteries can reflect collective cultural elements\textsuperscript{13}. In this case, cemeteries and tombs join a community's art and its social practices in being reflective of its identity, either regional or religious. Communities also use gravemarkers as media for public expression. For religious communities, the symbols seen on grave markers indicate a particular community's interpretation of the divine and afterlife, tying members together with these beliefs. The functions of tombs and cemeteries figure in neatly with the academic and personal understanding of the sacred. Not only are they separate from the profane, from the Durkheimian perspective, which include objects for everyday social functions, they also hold communities together, particularly those that share religious or spiritual beliefs about the dead and the afterlife.\textsuperscript{14} Often found beside or within churches, it is no question why cemeteries are associated with the same sacredness religious sanctuaries are. The desecration of graves that occurred alongside that of shrines and churches represents another crime that occurred during the civil conflict.

\textsuperscript{13} Palkovich.
\textsuperscript{14} Durkehim, 257.
In the Levant

Although Durkheim’s research is not region-specific, there are elements of the sacred that pertain only to the area that Lebanon inhabits. As a principal location for the founding of each of the Abrahamic faiths, the Eastern Mediterranean region has long held significance in the history of religions. This long history has played a role in the political and cultural development of the Levant over time. While Israel and Palestine, the claimants to Jerusalem, tend to be recognized as the most sacred land in the region, the development of each religion in the surrounding areas, such as that which comprises Lebanon, compels the entire Eastern Mediterranean to be significant in religious history as well. Many of the sites revered by Sunni or Shia Muslims, Christians, and Druze in Lebanon commemorate important individuals in the founding and transmission of each faith. The strong connection between the Levantine region and the three major Abrahamic faiths, as well as early civilizations, inspired a great amount of anthropological and historical research from Europeans. For Lebanon, the ancient Phoenician heritage often figures more prominently into the country’s religious history than its connection to the Abrahamic faiths. As many Lebanese, particularly Christians, reject the Arab identity asserted by many Lebanese Christians, they emphasize their roots as belonging to Ancient Phoenicia. While those who wish to “revive Phoenicia” acknowledge the pagan roots of the Phoenician religion, the syncretization between pagan practices and the Christianity that developed in Lebanon ties modern Maronite Christians to the Phoenician identity.

In the Mountains

If a visual representation of sacredness in Lebanon’s physical landscape and national identity existed, it would be that of the cedars. Primary source accounts of Lebanon prior to the war suggest the fascination and attachment to this geographical feature. In Pity the Nation, Robert Fisk writes, “The cedars 'know the history of the earth better than history itself.' If this was so, it was little wonder that they had clung to life only here, up in these high altitudes where the mountains, ice and wind ensured that the Lebanese who so often took the name of the cedars in vain would rarely appear.”

The cedar trees that surround the Mount Lebanon region derive their sacredness from their role in Biblical history. Judaic mythology references the cedars as sacred on multiple occasions. Some identify the cedar as the principal tree in the Garden of Eden, and cedar wood was used to construct important monuments such as King Solomon’s temple.

Today, one of the major cedar forest reserves is referred to as the Cedars of the Lord. Research on religion and ethnomedicine connect veneration of sacred trees, such as the cedars, to beliefs about the afterlife and their function as temples in societies before the construction of such buildings. Particularly in Palestine and the Levant, tree worship was associated with the bridging of the supernatural and natural worlds. This belief complicates the population’s interaction with their territory and suggests a connection of these natural features with the land

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21 Pungetti et al., 386.
23 Dafni.
belonging to a religious community, even if tree worship is no longer common. Such traditions explain the elements of Lebanon’s religious pluralism beyond the population figures or political representation.

Native to the Chouf Mountains where many of these cedar forests grow is the Lebanese Druze population. The Druze faith is an esoteric branch of Islam that also incorporates beliefs from classical Greek philosophy, Eastern religions, and the other Abrahamic faiths. As an ethnoreligious group, one cannot convert to be Druze, one is only born Druze. While defending the faith and the community is an obligation of all Druze, no substantial religious requirements exist for the juhhal, the uninitiated members of the sect that comprise the majority of the population. In the Chouf, as well as the Druze regions of Syria and Israel, this aspect of the religion causes individual Druze communities to be tied around ruling families, a system exacerbated by the rural mountainous environment they inhabit in Lebanon. Other elements of the faith are described in “Rasa’il al-Hikma,” or the Epistles of Wisdom, the core sacred text of the Druze, and many of these tenets are held as secret to non-Druze. However, outsiders know certain practices of the Druze, particularly the veneration of figures in the religion’s history. This practice causes shrines and tombs to play an important role in the social fabric of the Druze’s religious life in Lebanon. According to Fuad Khuri of the Druze Heritage Foundation, “erecting shrines among the Druze seems to reflect a continuous process of divine manifestation.”

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25 Swayd, 90.
26 Swayd, 90.
27 Swayd, 73
Setting the Scene for War: Historiographical Review

The description of sacredness in Lebanon and the region it inhabits provides explanations for why the conflict arose as well as reasoning for why the sacred sites of the Druze and Maronite Christians became targets of militias during the war. The civil war in Lebanon (1975-1990) had far reaching consequences for both the country and the region. As the conflict involved elements of the Cold War, religious fundamentalism, and nationalist ideologies, it is remembered as unique in the context of the modern history of the Middle East. The dominant literature on the Lebanese Civil War focuses on two other major dimensions of the conflict in addition to the state’s religious pluralism: Lebanon as a site for the extending conflict between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the state of Israel and the violent massacres and war crimes that occurred during the war. An additional theme of the war covered in secondary sources is the recurring interference of Syria in Lebanese affairs, which culminated in the Syrian occupation of the country from 1976 until 2005. The topics discussed in the majority of secondary literature contribute to the general understanding of the conflict’s origins as well as reasons for its brutality.
The close ties within each of Lebanon’s religious communities that formed through their reverence of the sacred contributed to the pluralism of the Lebanese state. The separation of different religious communities from one another functioned as a key cleavage that led to the conflict. Robert Fisk’s primary account of the war, *Pity the Nation*, describes Lebanon’s modern history as influenced significantly by the pluralistic nature of the country. The multiple factions in the war held various motivations for their engagement. Since the Israeli War of Independence in 1948 and Six Day War of 1967, thousands of Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon, largely to the districts of southern Lebanon and regions surrounding Beirut.\(^{30}\)

Following their expulsion from Jordan after the Black September in 1970, the PLO established themselves in various other countries in the region, and Lebanon became the militant organization’s main point of operations.\(^ {31}\) Many large refugee camps emerged within Lebanon during the 1960s for the influx of Palestinian civilians. This major population shift contributed to a significant demographic change in the country, namely, the rise of the Sunni Muslim population.\(^ {32}\) The introduction of the

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\(^{31}\) Tessler, 463; “Lebanon district map,” Wikimedia Commons.

PLO to Lebanon brought other challenges to the country. The PLO continued to carry out guerilla operations against Israel during its presence in Lebanon while recruiting from refugee camps causing Israel to retaliate to such attacks. The increasing security risks posed by the PLO’s existence in Lebanon as well as its effects on the country’s demographic makeup. Fisk chronicles the Israeli response to the war. The first invasion of Israeli forces occurred in 1978 after a PLO attack on Israeli civilians. This incursion into Lebanese territory prompted a response from the international community that came in the form the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) mission to stabilize southern Lebanon.

While Fisk, an English journalist reporting from Lebanon as a foreign correspondent, focuses his work on the political and humanitarian characteristics of the conflict, other accounts point to the tensions between rival faiths as catalysts for war. Kamal Salibi’s *A House of Many Mansions* also attributes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an underlying cause for the conflict that took place in Lebanon but also explores historical motivations for the ethnic and religious divides between the Muslim, Christian, and Druze communities of Lebanon. Salibi argues that such divides can be traced back to the Christian crusader states of the medieval period, whose militaries formed a protective relationship with the Maronite Christians that would last through European colonial rule in the 20th century. The influence from these Crusader states as well as the Shia and Sunni Muslim claims to heritage in the region demonstrate the effect of the “holy land” interpretation of the Levant on modern conflicts. The Maronite Christian relationship with the French contributed to their economic and political domination of Lebanese society after

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33 Fisk, 100.
34 Fisk, 100.
35 Fisk, xvii.
independence. The Maronite Christian community’s anxiety over the rise in the Muslim population in the country continued into the civil war period, particularly after the rise in Palestinian refugees. This historical relationship between Christians within and outside of Lebanon also led to the Maronite political leadership’s consistent readiness to invite outside forces into Lebanon, which we see during the war with the intrusion of Syria on behalf of the Lebanese government as well as its alliances with United States, France, and Israel. Fisk touches upon this aspect of Lebanese history as well, describing the continuity of the historical divisions in Lebanon with the geographic and demographic makeup of the country during the civil war.\textsuperscript{37}

First-person Druze accounts of the conflict and its origins demonstrate the extent to which distrust of opposing religious communities eventually resulted in the civil war. For example, in his political memoir, \textit{Turmoil}, Druze leader Sheikh Najib Alamuddin makes numerous claims about the start of the war. In the text, Alamuddin, describes his perspective as a member of a prominent Druze family and attributes blame to the Maronite Christian leadership for the wave of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon and thus much of the tension leading to the conflict.\textsuperscript{38} Alamuddin also describes the right-wing ideology as a greater contributing factor to the conflict than most secondary accounts of the war do.\textsuperscript{39} Just as other authors trace the roots of sectarian conflict in the Lebanese Civil War to the country’s history under the Ottoman Empire, Alamuddin’s account of Lebanese history also credits early tensions between the communities as the root of the conflict between the Druze and Maronites in the Chouf and ‘Aley regions. Specifically, Alamuddin references the 1860 civil war between the two religious groups that surround Mount Lebanon. Alamuddin's record of the origins of Druze and Maronite enmity

\textsuperscript{37} Fisk, 64.
\textsuperscript{39} Alamuddin, 132.
references Maronite Christian peasant uprisings as the catalyst to the 1860 civil war.\textsuperscript{40} Although the sheikh claims the earliest Christian uprisings were based largely on socioeconomic inequality, describing the movement as "socialist" in nature, religious ideologies and the authorities that transmitted them, allegedly played a role in the 1860 conflict.\textsuperscript{41} In fact, according to Alamuddin, both the Druze and the Maronite Christians of Mount Lebanon were influenced by the teachings of their respective religious leaders. He writes:

"News of the successful Maronite social rebellion swiftly spread throughout the countryside and raised the hopes of all the peasants, especially of those among the Maronites who worked as tenants of the Druze feudal lords. In a pre-emptive move to deflect from these ambitions, the Druze feudal lords, hoping to nip any challenge to their authority in the bud, stirred up religious fanaticism among their own peasants even as the Maronite feudal lords did the same among their Maronite Peasants.\textsuperscript{42}

Alamuddin suggests economic reasons for the Maronite Church's involvement, as the religious body functions as one of the primary landowning organizations in Lebanon. The religious hierarchy of the Maronite Church evidently became involved in the mobilization of its adherents during the civil war.\textsuperscript{43} For example, the church's Bishop of Beirut, Tubiyya Aoun, reportedly worked to convince the Christians living among Druze to turn on the rival religious group.\textsuperscript{44}

While this dimension of the 1860 conflict serves as evidence for the civil war's nature as an inherently religious conflict, rather than one primarily over resources or territory, it also addresses the forces behind the 1983 Mountain War. As Alamuddin asserts, regardless of the other motivating factors for the war, the primary reason for violence between the Druze and

\textsuperscript{40} Alamuddin, 128-129.
\textsuperscript{41} Alamuddin, 130
\textsuperscript{42} Alamuddin, 129.
\textsuperscript{43} Alamuddin 130.
\textsuperscript{44} Alamuddin, 129.
Maronites in the Lebanese Civil War has always been the historical enmity between the groups based on the outcome of the first civil war.\textsuperscript{45}

The role of Shia Muslims is also included in secondary literature regarding the religious dimensions of the Lebanese conflict. The growth of Hezbollah as a major political and military force is cited as one of the most important outcomes of the Lebanese Shia community’s involvement in the civil war. Native primarily to the south, the Shia community of Lebanon first responded to the influx of Palestinian refugees and the subsequent Israeli incursions into the region after PLO guerilla attacks.\textsuperscript{46} The emergence of Hezbollah as a militia dedicated to the protection of the Lebanese Shia communities’ religious rituals and culture mimics the role played by the other militias that formed during the Lebanese Civil War. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) from the Druze community’s Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and the various Maronite Christian militias that formed in support of the government also worked to preserve the rituals and cultural elements of their respective community, reinforcing the role of the sacred in the conflict. As Fawwaz Traboulsi indicates in his review of Lebanese modern history, the rise of Hezbollah as a powerful Shia militia began with the influence of the newly formed Iranian Islamic Republic and its opposition to Israeli military involvement in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{47} Although founded before Hezbollah was in 1982, the Amal movement, described by Traboulsi as a “third way” between the Hezbollah and Iran’s Shia religious fundamentalism and the leftist ideology of the Arab communist and socialist parties, sprung as another Shia political faction that fought against the Lebanese government and its Christian allies during the war.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45} Alamuddin, 130.
\textsuperscript{46} Fisk, 138.
\textsuperscript{48} Traboulsi, 183.
Although the cleavages brought about by Lebanon’s various religious communities’ different practices play a significant role in the war, Traboulsi’s *A History of Modern Lebanon* accounts for factors besides religious pluralism as catalysts for the conflict. Economic anxiety and inequality had a considerable place in the outbreak of the war. During the 1960s and 70s, there was a significant disparity between the wealthy suburbs of Beirut and rural villages in terms of quality of life, and Lebanese Christians held a disproportionate share of the jobs in high-earning industries, such as finance and manufacturing.⁴⁹ Poverty in certain areas of the country due to urbanization, the influx of refugees, and displacement from Israeli retaliation against guerillas exacerbated social tensions.⁵⁰ Just as one of the main sides in the conflict comprised leftist militias, Traboulsi includes the rise of social movements in response to economic conditions as leading to the formation of such organizations. Kamal Jumblatt’s Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), the prominent Druze political party and member of the leftist coalition during the war developed during the rise of these social movements. Samir Khalaf also cites economic changes as a cause for the country’s civil war but only in addition to internal strife and historical cleavages.⁵¹ Sune Haugbolle, in *War and Memory in Lebanon*, describes narratives explaining the conflict that arose after the war. The most notable is the “it came from the mountains” narrative, in which the war is described as an outgrowth of the deeply divided tribal culture of the mountainous regions of Lebanon that entered urban life and culture as more people

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⁴⁹ Traboulsi, 183.
⁵⁰ Traboulsi, 183.
moved to major population centers in the 20th century. This narrative does not neglect the role that historic religious ties played in influencing the cleavages that led to the civil war.

In *Breaking the Cycle: Civil Wars in Lebanon*, Youssef Choueiri lists patterns in the outcomes of the various civil wars that have occurred in the Lebanon since Ottoman control of the region. The failure to reach adequate political solutions after each conflict, the continuing development of political sects demanding recognition, and the interference of outside forces are consistent features of civil conflicts in Lebanon. Choueiri zooms in briefly on the role of Mount Lebanon in the country’s military history. The tensions between the Maronite Christian and Druze communities of the mountain were influenced by the rising political and economic dominance of the Maronite population, especially with regard to the influence of prominent Maronite monasteries. During the time of the first Druze-Maronite wars in 1860, the Druze were also characterized as attempting to counter the rise of the Maronite Christians while preventing their own declining influence in the region.

How does the explanation of function of the sacred in Lebanon explain the events of the civil war? The trait described as Lebanon’s religious pluralism is further vexed by the Durkheimian analysis of the sacred as well as the religious history of the Levant. The strength of communities’ religious identities powered by their sacred sites exacerbates the differences between the war’s rival factions. Political explanations aside, the violence between religious groups in the Lebanese Civil War reflected the beliefs that each held towards claims to

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54 Choueiri, 22.
55 Choueiri, 21.
ownership and belonging to sacred land. The analysis of the sacred’s role in the development of the civil war in Lebanon provokes other important questions, particularly those regarding the conduct of forces and brutality of the war. Do sacred ties among members of the same faction or sect justify brutality against rivals? And a principal question of this thesis, how does one conduct war on sacred ground?
The Sacred and War: Analogy in the Middle East

In addition to forming an understanding of academic and cultural interpretations of the sacred, highlighting the connection between the sacred and war is a second priority of this thesis. More specifically, how does the sacred fare in wartime, and which kind of actors do the most harm to sacred sites and objects during conflict? Other examples of twentieth-century civil wars in the Middle East and North African region provide insight into the sort of conditions the sacred sites of central Lebanon faced during its period of conflict. What kinds of sites were threatened during these other conflicts, and what motivated crimes against of them?

Similar conflicts across the region serve as case studies for understanding the devastation of Lebanon’s Mountain War. Just as the Chouf Mountains, Lebanon, and the Levant have been established as distinct areas that hold a high number of sacred sites due to their long religious history. The abundance of historical, archaeological, and religious sites may have been a factor in more recent wars in the region, particularly those involving religious or ideological actors. As one of the central conflicts in the region since 1948, the Arab-Israeli wars took place in areas around holy or sacred places. Each of these wars provides insight into which kinds of actors affected the sacred. It is important to note that the targeting of the sacred occurs in cases involving criminal or terrorist organizations.\(^5^7\) While these groups’ actions constitute similarly serious crimes, the focus of this thesis will be on the crimes committed during wartime, not by terror cells or criminal enterprises, but by organizations claiming to hold a legitimate stake in a localized conflict.

A significant example of this sort of desecration occurring in the Arab-Israeli conflict is that which occurred during the paramilitary violence and Palestinian expulsion during the first years of the establishment of the Jewish state. Various paramilitary organizations that subscribed to Zionism functioned as militias for the Jews who inhabited Mandatory Palestine. Haganah, meaning “Defense,” was the primary Jewish militia that defended settlements before Israeli independence. By the start of the Israeli War of Independence in 1948, Haganah included over 25,000 trained fighters, including both men and women. While Haganah eventually grew into the state’s national military, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), elements of its identity as a paramilitary organization persisted, particularly during the period in which Israelis demolished Arab towns and villages. The Irgun and Lehi were organizations that splintered from Haganah over differences regarding rules of engagement and policies towards resistance against British rule.

The pivotal moments in Israeli and Palestinian history that involved desecration and destruction were the massacres and demolitions that occurred during the War of Independence. As this chapter alluded to earlier, during the first war of the conflict, thousands of Palestinians evacuated their homes, as Israeli forces demolished villages. Members of Haganah, Irgun, and Lehi participated in this violence and inflicted damage to the sacred in the process. One of the most prominent examples is the “Lydda Massacre,” which known as one of the “original sins” or “black boxes” of the Jewish state’s founding. The event primarily involved the expulsion of

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59 Also known as the “Stern Gang.”
over 50,000 Arabs and the conversion of the towns of Lydda and Ramle to Israeli-held territory after the UN partition plan. During the evacuation of Lydda, over 450 Palestinians were killed.63 The key crime against the sacred was the violation of the Great Mosque in Lydda, the Dahmash Mosque, and the St. George Church64 during the Israeli invasion of the town. According to accounts of the battle, civilians were confined in each religious establishment during the fighting. In the Dahmash Mosque, the city’s small mosque, civilians, as well as rebelling members of the Arab Legion, were massacred inside and outside the religious structure.65 The killing of Arab civilians in conjunction with the violation of the Palestinian holy sites, cemented Arab opposition to the Israelis, as the massacre and expulsion at Lydda existed within a pattern of Palestinian displacement and erasure. The perpetrators of the Dahmash Mosque massacre included members of Haganah that had recently been integrated into the Israel Defense Forces.66

As other Zionist paramilitary organizations perpetrated atrocities against Arab civilians during the Arab-Israeli conflict, most notably those by Lehi and Irgun, members of Haganah may have behaved in a similar manner to these militant groups.67 After all, Lehi and Irgun were born out of Haganah, and in the eyes of many Palestinians, the three share the same role in Israeli-Palestinian history as perpetrators of crimes against Arabs, a description the accuracy of which is debated.68 The paramilitary organizations that operated during Israeli independence were ideologically motivated, although not particularly religious, a contrast with some of the Arab

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63 Shavit, “Lydda, 1948.”
64 Not to be confused with the St. George Church described in this thesis, located in Brih, Lebanon.
68 Malamat, 1044.
paramilitary units that grew as with Palestinian resistance movements. These movements, such as Hamas, for example, function more as terrorist organizations than organized paramilitary forces engaged in war. The Dahmash massacre was devastating and a clear example of a crime against holy places meant to be sanctuaries. However, it occurred fairly early in Israel’s history and occupies a place in the Israeli and Palestinian narrative representative of the chaos of the independence environment. Paramilitary organizations dissolved as Israel transitioned into a legitimate and independent state, and the IDF solidified its role as the Jewish state’s national military.

The creation of the State of Israel led to the emergence of other cases of religious violence, events that give credence to the notion that the abundance of sacred or holy sites in the Levantine region, combined with its religious diversity, lead to cases of desecration. In many cases, Arab Jews were the primary victims of this violence, as Israeli independence spurred distrust of Jews living in newly independent Arab republics. While numerous cases of discrimination and violence, including the destruction of Jewish holy sites, occurred in the Middle East and North Africa regions, ranging from the flight of Yemeni Jews to those in Tunisia, a particular case for analysis is that of the 1947 anti-Jewish violence in Aleppo, Syria. This case study also demonstrates similarities between communities contesting for territory in the region, such as the Maronite Christian and Druze inhabitants of Mount Lebanon. Just as Syria remains one of the most religiously pluralistic countries in the Middle East, before the foundation of Israel, the country's Jewish population flourished in major cities, such as Aleppo.

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and Damascus. The Old Testament makes references to these cities, signifying the presence of Jews in them since ancient times. Despite these long-standing roots, Jews faced persecution after the announcement of the United Nations’ plan to partition Israel. Riots began in 1947, and "anti-Zionists" targeted Jewish homes, businesses, and synagogues. According to Colin Shindler in his review of modern Israeli history, half of the city's Jewish population fled after the pogrom. Just as one of the primary goals of the rioters was to target synagogues, many of these houses of worship were destroyed in the violence. One of the most notable cases of desecration in the Aleppo pogrom was the loss of the Aleppo Codex. Known as the "Crown of Aleppo," the codex was the oldest copy of the Hebrew Bible. Although it originated in Jerusalem, the manuscript allegedly arrived at Aleppo with the family of Maimonides, the Jewish thinker and physician, in the fourteenth century. However, the details of the Aleppo Codex's arrival to Syria remains disputed. In addition to the historical and religious importance of the Aleppo Codex, the Great Synagogue of Aleppo, in which the manuscript was housed, was also significant to Syrian Jews. Also referred to as the Yellow Synagogue, Ancient Synagogue, and the Synagogue of Yoav ben Tsurya, Aleppo's Great Synagogue has stood in Syria since the times of King David. The synagogue and Syria's Jewish minority have survived conquests from the Mongol, Byzantine, and Ottoman Empires. The synagogue may have also been the world's “oldest

73 Shindler, 63.
75 Tawil and Schneider, 50.
76 Tawil and Schneider, 61.
continuing functioning synagogue” until its destruction in 1947. Beyond the tragedy of the lives lost during the Aleppo pogroms and the destruction of the ancient synagogue, the disappearance of the Aleppo Codex remains one of the clearest examples of violations against the sacred in the Middle East. Although it is disputed how the codex was preserved, it ultimately survived the assault on the synagogue and emerged in Israel in 1958. Most accounts, however, claim that most of the manuscript was smuggled out immediately before the riots and did not resurface until its arrival in Israel.

The case of the Aleppo riots of 1947 and the ensuing destruction of the Great Synagogue and treasured Aleppo Codex serve as significant examples in the study of desecration in the modern Middle East. The 1947 pogrom demonstrates the vulnerability of religious and ethnic minorities amidst unrest and civil conflict. Although prompted by recent political developments, the riots also prove the inability of the synagogue's longstanding presence in the city to preserve itself from violence. Despite the temple's sacredness to the Aleppan Jewish community, its status as an ancient holy site did not result in its protection during the unrest. The Aleppo riots also indicate the tendency for holy sites or places of worship to become targets during incidences of religious violence. This would explain the instances of desecration reported during the Lebanese Mountain War, as it was a conflict featuring rivaling religious communities. The Aleppo riots exist in the series of events in the Arab-Israeli conflict, which case studies demonstrate was rife with intentional destruction of the sacred. Almost naturally, each communities' sacred places developed into targets for rival factions. As the Aleppo riots demonstrate, the Syrian Jewish community, whose members historically kept their practices secret, also establish a parallel with

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77 Tawil and Schneider, 61.
78 Tawil and Schneider, 75.
the Lebanese Druze community in this regard. The secrecy that some religious minorities in the Middle East practice may contribute to their experiences of desecration. In *Heirs to Forgotten Kingdoms*, Gerard Russell outlines many of the challenges religious minorities in the Middle East that follow ancient traditions face as they practice their faiths. Yazidis and Samaritans, for example, are two other groups that faced persecution in their respective countries while also maintaining secret or esoteric beliefs.\(^7^9\) The Druze, also featured in Russell’s text, follow this pattern and may have engaged in the civil war due to the threat of violence.

Cases from the region outside of Lebanon continue to demonstrate similar patterns of violence as the Mountain War phase of the conflict. One such case is that of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.\(^8^0\) Israel’s second major war as an independent state, the 1967 war led to the defeat of the major Arab states surrounding the Jewish state as well as the subsequent acquisition of the Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.\(^8^1\) Although the coalition of Arab states’ ambitions to challenge Israel weren’t diminished until the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the 1967 war effectively halted the ambitions of the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser.\(^8^2\) After seizing the West Bank, the Israeli military also took control one of the holiest sites to Judaism and Islam, the Cave of Machpelah, located in the town of Hebron.\(^8^3\) The Cave of Machpelah, or the “Tomb of the Patriarchs” is significant, as it is the alleged burial site of Abraham and Sarah. In 1967, IDF soldiers retook Hebron, and immediately regained control of the Cave of Machpelah. While they destroyed the stairway containing the “seventh step,”

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\(^8^1\) Shlaim and Louis, 264.
\(^8^2\) Shlaim and Louis, 219.
\(^8^3\) Also known as the Cave of the Patriarchs.
which functioned as a barrier for Jews' entry into the tomb during Arab rule of Hebron, the Israelis did not destroy the cave's mosque. Rather, Jewish settlers in Hebron constructed a synagogue under the cave's Great Mosque. Known to Muslims as "Haram al-Khalil," the mosque is surrounded by the cave's walls, which can be traced to biblical times, Byzantine stained-glass windows, and four octagonal mausolea, which contain the tombs of the Patriarchs. Since 1967, Jews and Muslims in Hebron have had disputes over the Cave of Machpelah. In 1994, for example, a Jewish settler shot and killed thirty Muslims worshipping at the Great Mosque. Other disputes arose during the Arab attempts to view Hebron as a Palestinian city despite Israeli demographic shifts in 1995. Despite the recent cases of violence, the case of the Cave of Machpelah remains an example of the alteration of a prominent sacred place in the Levant resulting in its transformation into a shared space for the two communities.

We see from sources that the only cases in which holy or religious sites were unjustly destroyed were during the evacuations and erasure of Arab towns and villages in the early stages of Israel’s independence. Jewish paramilitary organizations that conducted demolitions of Arab-held areas in 1948 perpetrated much of this violence. High levels of destructions occurred to holy sites in East Jerusalem and Gaza during conflict between Palestinian militant organizations and the Israeli Defense Forces in recent confrontations as well as in previous wars, such as the Six Day War. No sources, however, indicate the destruction of historic sites and structures as part of a coherent strategy on the part of the Israeli national military, contrasting with the cases of the more localized violence that occurred during Israeli independence. This pattern that emerges is

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85 La Boda, 340.
consistent with other cases of violence in the Levant, particularly in this thesis’ focus on the
Lebanese Civil War. Paramilitary groups and militias stand as the main culprits in the Middle
East’s cases of desecration.

As a conflict with a vast range of academic material and primary sources, the Arab-Israeli
struggle serves as a useful resource in comparisons of violence toward the sacred in the
Levantine region and provide the most similar examples to the case of the Mountain War. Of
course, the Middle East is not the only region that contains sacred sites that experience conflict.
Other examples from around the world demonstrate the same phenomenon, whether they occur
in the Balkans or the Indian subcontinent. However, examples from Israel and Syria allow for the
analysis of the patterns and behaviors associated with desecration and iconoclasm in modern
civil wars.
Chapter Two: Ideological Background and the Massacres

“I am a pacifist, yes, but sometimes you have to get those bastards!” – Kamal Jumblatt

"When the living rot on the bodies of the dead
When the combatants’ teeth become knives
When words lose their meaning and become arsenic
When old friends hurry to join the carnage
When the aggressors’ nails become claws
When the victors’ eyes become live shells
When clergymen pick up the hammer and crucify
When officials open the door to the enemy
When the mountain peoples’ feet weigh like elephants
When roses grow only in cemeteries...

— Excerpt from XXXIX from The Arab Apocalypse, Etel Adnan
This chapter of the thesis attempts to describe the specific cases of desecration and destruction that occurred in the Chouf Mountains during the war between the Maronite Christians and Druze. Establishing a chronology of the key events, battles, and massacres will lay a foundation for the specifics of the thesis. The details of the pertinent battles in the conflict based on first-person accounts can provide insight into how the extent of damage inflicted on cultural heritage sites. Such accounts also illuminate the strategies, tactics, and identities of the perpetrators of violence in the Mountain War. In addition to the destruction and damage inflicted on sacred sites in Lebanon, the actions of the warring factions towards cultural heritage are tied to the development of the illicit antiquities trade, in which Lebanon remains a central location.

Ultimately, the chapter argues that the driving ideologies of each political and religious faction in the Mountain War conflict resulted in the targeting of their opponents’ sacred sites, all part of efforts to ethnically cleanse the Chouf Mountain region during the Lebanese Civil War. Once again, one sees paramilitary forces and informal organizations as primary perpetrators of these crimes.

Before elaborating on the details of the battle chronology, it is important to establish that the Maronite Christian and Druze communities of the Chouf Mountains, while isolated geographically, were not completely separate from one another. Despite the historical enmity between the two religious groups in the mountains, since the end of the 1860 civil war, inter-communal villages inhabited by both Druze and Maronite Christians existed in the region. The peaceful coexistence between groups in such villages did not last through the country-wide civil war, and violence did, in fact, break out between the residents of inter-communal villages in the Chouf. This distinction remains important because, in reviewing the battles that occurred during the conflict, one must separate the clashes between the Maronite Christians of the Lebanese
National Army and militias of the Lebanese Forces against the Druze and the clashes between Druze and Maronite Christians of the same village. The latter is of a different nature than the former, and reviewing the participants of each kind of conflict explains the principal subject of the thesis, the motivations and strategies of those that destroyed holy sites in the Chouf.
Mountain War Chronology (Key moments included from 1975-1990 civil war)

1977

March: The assassination of Kamal Jumblatt

1982

June: Israel invades Lebanon, commences bombing of Beirut

July: Druze militias clash with Lebanese Army

September: Israelis withdraw from Chouf; President-elect Bashir Gemayel is assassinated; over 3,000 Palestinian refugees are killed in the Shabra and Shatila massacres

November: Druze declare autonomy

1983

April: The United States increases support of Gemayel government after suicide bomb at U.S. Embassy Beirut

September: Druze offensive against the Lebanese Forces; Kfar Matta Massacres; Ceasefire; Druze cut off Deir al-Qamar, trapping Maronite Christian civilians

October: Attack on Sayyid 'Abdullah shrine; French and Israeli air assault on Beqaa Valley

November: Israeli air forces support Maronite Christians in Chouf

December: Evacuation of Souk El Gharb and Deir al-Qamar

1984

Factions maintain fighting in Beirut

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Ideological Forces

One finds motivating forces behind the conflict in the ideologies and beliefs of each faction’s leadership. The ideology of the Phalangist militias and the ideals of Druze leader Walid Jumblatt drove each side to commit the massacres recorded in the civil war as well as the desecration of sacred sites. A primary question is which elements of each side’s ideology allowed for the intentional destruction of the sacred specifically in the context of the Lebanese Civil War.

Understanding Walid Jumblatt’s ideology leads one to understand the influence of Druze tradition and culture on the religious minority’s political and military leadership during the civil war. The essence of Jumblatt’s motivation during the conflict is the effort to preserve the autonomy of the Druze not only in the context of their role as a minority religious group in a civil war but also as an effect of the insularity and independence of the Druze throughout their history. Walid Jumblatt’s role as the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) bore a special significance to the Druze in Lebanon because of the prominence of the Jumblatt family. While the role of old families was common in determining political and military ties in Lebanon, during the war and after the National Pact, the Jumblatt family held a storied place in the central mountains of Lebanon. The Jumblatts existed as members of a dynasty known for its leadership of the Druze community since its arrival to the Chouf region in the seventeenth century.88 Not only were the Jumblatts at the forefront of the resistance against Ottoman domination of Mount Lebanon in the nineteenth century, but they contributed to the preservation of a unique “warrior culture” that persisted throughout modern

88 Paul Doyle, Lebanon (Bradt Travel Guides, 2016). 291.
Druze history. Although the label of “warrior culture” is often misapplied to ethnic or religious groups that retain traditional social structures, anthropologists find the description to be apt in the case of the Druze community of Mount Lebanon, which they record as having continued many of the practices from their history in Syria and Lebanon’s mountains.

As described by Birgit Schäbler in her study of nineteenth-century Druze history, the Druze were marked by two significant features, their compactness and their resilience. Regarding the latter quality, as a minority religious group in the highlands of Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, the Druze maintained a tradition of military prowess to preserve the secret elements of the faith. In 1953, An American ambassador to Syria remarked upon the effects of this history, highlighting the nature of the religious group’s “clannishness, secret religion, and social differentiation.” The importance of preserving wealth and power for one’s clan for the unique purpose of earning a place in Druze oral history figured into Schäbler’s analysis of the group. Schäbler writes: "Druze society, that is to say, featured enormous internal dynamics. The individual let himself be completely taken up by the struggle for fame and power, inscribed into eternity by the songs and other oral traditions of this warrior society."

Much of this analysis of Druze society, including its militarism and secrecy involves the Druze faith as well, which contains tenets that can explain the behavior of the Jumblatt family in the central mountains of Mount Lebanon. Schäbler cites the adherents to the faith’s self-description as banū maʿrūf, which translates to “Children of Maruf,” a thirteenth-century hero.

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91 Philipp and Schäbler, 388.
92 Schäbler, 334.
that symbolizes righteousness in Druze culture. William B. Seabrook, in his anthology of stories from travels in the Middle East during the 1920s, detailed information regarding the region’s minority religious sects. While Seabrook emphasized the mystery surrounding the Druze religion as well as those of other minority sects in the Middle East, such as the Yezidis, for example, he also describes the ethics of the Druze. The reference to “The Children of Maruf” in his account is mentioned as a description of the “war-song” the Druze chanted in opposition to the French and Ottoman occupiers.

A major finding of Schäbler’s study is how the traditional features of Druze society, including the clan structure and role of individual warriors, persisted through the twentieth century. Seabrook’s primary account, for example, took place in the early 1920s and detailed many of the traditions of the minority religious sects, including the Druze. Despite the level of modernization and industrialization that occurred in the Levant during the period of Ottoman rule and subsequent French mandate period, the Druze managed to maintain structural elements of traditional feudal society. As such, it is unsurprising that the Druze of the mountains of Lebanon held on to cultural, behavioral, and ethical traditions as well. The belief in the group’s identity as “The Children of Maruf” and the principle of righteousness that accompanies it undoubtedly persisted through the mid-twentieth century. Other primary sources describe the social structure and values of Druze societies. British diplomatic missions to Israel, Lebanon, and Syria in the early 20th century took gathered detailed information on Druze culture as well as

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93 Schäbler, 334.
95 Schäbler, 333.
96 Seabrook, 218.
political activities. Just as Druze political leaders like Jumblatt and anthropologists describe the culture of the Lebanese Druze as feudal, British observers in Lebanon made similar claims. According to a 1968 cable from a join research project from the embassies in Tel Aviv, Beirut, and Damascus to the British Foreign Office, the feudal system, although different than its historical form, remains present in Druze political behavior. According to the report:

"The old feudal system, which still survives in political terms, was largely broken up by the disturbances of 1860 which dispossessed the large landlords (mainly Druzes) and led to the migration resulting in the present day numerical superiority of the Maronites in Mt. Lebanon. The process has continued, and the remaining Druzes are interested mainly in their farms, and in maintaining such autonomy as remains to them. Modern politics are, for them, little more than a continuance of the age-long interfeuding of their leading families."\(^9\)

The British missions to the Levant produced other important analyses that explain the way in which the Druze conducted war in the 1983 conflict. The report places an emphasis on the role of powerful Druze families. Regarding the moral code, those with sufficient status can evade strict social rules, such as those regarding marriage, for example.\(^9\) The report also describes the leadership structure of the typical Druze village, in which the Zaim, the Headman, administers affairs alongside a council of elders but goes on to mention the influence of power families.\(^1\)

According to the cable, "the patriarchal feudal system which dates from the Middle Ages still survives, and the community divides its allegiance between groups of aristocratic families much of whose time is taken up in intriguing against the other."\(^1\) Although the British observations certainly contain elements of bias and speculation, the emphasis on family feuds is consistent


\(^9\) Destani, 476.

\(^9\) Destani, 477.

\(^1\) Destani, 477.

\(^1\) Destani, 477.
with Walid Jumblatt's allegation that the conflict devolved into a “feudal” struggle. These cultural elements may have influenced the bonds within the religious communities and the fervor with which they fought, leading to each faction’s war crimes.

The resulting question is how much did traditional Druze ethics and philosophy influence Walid Jumblatt and his supporters’ actions during the conflict in the mountains? And among those actions, what influence did the Jumblatt’s personal beliefs lead to the crimes of desecration and destruction of sacred sites and objects? Based on statements from Jumblatt himself, one can certainly trace a commitment to the preservation and practice of Druze philosophy. For example, Jumblatt was interviewed in 1984 by Playboy Magazine to explain his role in the civil war and politics of Lebanon. In addressing his motivation for fighting, Jumblatt claimed, “My father and grandfather were killed. It's a family tradition. The father of the father of my grandfather was killed, too. For 300 years, few of the Jumblatts had a natural death. It helps you to be fatalistic.”

Unlike more radical factions in the conflict, Jumblatt held the political position willing to negotiate and re-establish a confessional form of government in Lebanon. Jumblatt’s commitment to the autonomy of the Druze people was illuminated in his defense of negotiation. He said, “I'm concerned about my tribe and my children. Even if life doesn't matter to me, for them it matters. They expect something from me. That is why negotiating is not entirely rubbish-it gains time.” While a commitment to one’s “tribe” does not necessarily indicate an adherence to centuries-old traditions of warfare, Jumblatt makes more explicit references to the impact of tradition on the war. For example, he claims, “It’s still very, very feudal in Lebanon.

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103 Playboy, 57.
104 Playboy, 53.
We are living in the Middle Ages, even though we have a so-called surface of civilization.”

In the Playboy interview, Jumblatt elaborates on his belief that Lebanon is a society dominated by “war-lords,” from the various militias to leaders of the national military. From Jumblatt’s point of view, the fact that they are war-lords not only explains their crimes but justifies the brutality of the conflict as well.

The importance of family ties in Druze society and Lebanese politics can be derived from the continuation of traditional feudal norms, and those traditions explain the organizational structure of militias and the nature of the violence. Said nature can only be described as brutal, and, as admitted by Walid Jumblatt himself, characterized by various crimes. The desecration that occurred would only serve as an example of such crimes. However, there must be alternative explanations for the brutality on the side of the Druze beyond Jumblatt’s adherence to tradition. First, there are other elements of traditional Druze philosophy that may have influenced Jumblatt’s approach to the war. One possibility is the fatalistic worldview held by Jumblatt. In the 1984 interview, the Druze leader claims, “Fatalism will give you freedom. If you resign yourself to destiny, you free yourself to live better. Since we all die tomorrow—or next week—let’s live and have fun.” It is possible that this interpretation of fatalism was a personal belief of Jumblatt’s; however, there is evidence that it may be inspired by Druze faith. According to a bereavement study conducted by Israeli researchers, religious beliefs among Israelis from different faith traditions impacted their interpretation of fate and thus the manner in which they

105 Playboy, 53.
106 Playboy, 53.
108 Playboy, 54.
grieved. While this research incorporated sources from the Israeli Druze community, elements of the Druze religion and philosophy remain the same. The results claimed, “Druze were also far more fatalistic than their Jewish counterparts and expressed a stronger belief in the power of fate.” This attitude resulted in fewer instances of guilt, anger, and sadness felt by Druze parents after the deaths of their children. One explanation for this finding is the Druze religious belief in incarnation. As a concept not present in Judaism or Christianity, incarnation may impact the Druze military leadership’s approach to civil war. Just as Jumblatt admitted to the use of militia fighters around the age of ten, his fatalistic approach to the war influenced his strategy and may have influenced the decision to destroy holy sites of the Maronite Christians, as Druze militias did in Deir al-Qamar. It is likely that Jumblatt was also influenced by his father, Kamal, the founder of the PSP who was assassinated in 1977. Not only did the senior Jumblatt emerge as a leader in the pan-Arabist movement in the region, he was also a prolific writer, and his teachings on philosophy and religion remain popular among the Druze.

Although the most significant political leader of the Druze faction in the civil war, Jumblatt did not fully represent the spiritual leadership of the Lebanese Druze during the civil war. One religious leader that transmitted an ideology influencing the crimes committed during the war was Sheikh Muhammad Abu Shaqra. In his addresses to the Druze people, the religious leader not only used inflammatory rhetoric to spur the militias of the Chouf to violence, much of the kind constituting war crimes but transmits many of the cultural and religious beliefs to justify

110 Somer et al. 459.
111 Somer al., 459.
these actions. The same phrase mentioned by Seabrook and Schabler, \textit{banu maruf}, or Children of Maruf, meant to reference the Druze as descendants and heirs to a righteous military tradition, is used by the sheikh, declaring in a 1984 radio broadcast, "In the name of God, in whom we seek refuge against the enemies of God. Cubs of Bani 'Ma'ruf, defenders of the oppressed, oh heroes: You are now waging a sacred battle of honor." This message references the Druze again as a traditional community separate from the rest of the country and also invokes “sacred war,” a label that changes the terms of engagement for the conflict. Abu Shaqra continues:

\begin{quote}
“It is the battle of regaining the sanctities which treacherous tyrants have desecrated. They have come from far away to ‘Bayy\textsuperscript{112} and its environs. They have refused the rights of a guest and sought the might of the sword to violate right and justice, practice evil, attack and kill. Return their evil and uproot them from places which do not accommodate criminals like them. Cast them form your homes docile and defeated. Rise like hurricanes to storm them. Disgrace and may an evil fate be upon them.”\textsuperscript{113}
\end{quote}

This source indicates the incorporation of the Druze faith into the militia’s involvement in the War of the Mountain. While Druze militiamen who committed massacres and desecration were certainly influenced by the leadership of Walid Jumblatt and his personal ideology, they followed other leaders and ideologies as well, including the inflammatory language of religious leaders such as Abu Shaqra. The phrase, “Return their evil,” particularly opens up the possibility of war crimes to be committed by the Druze militias, including intentional destruction of the sacred.

One can trace the similarities between the Phalangist movement’s ideologies and other far-right nationalist political parties and militias. The Kataeb\textsuperscript{114} Party, dominated by Maronite Christians, was influenced strongly by the Phoenician roots of the Lebanese people and thus a

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{112} Another spelling of Abey.
\textsuperscript{113} FBIS, \textit{Druze Spiritual Leader Urges Continued Fighting}.
\textsuperscript{114} Spelled \textit{Kata’ib} in some translations.
\end{flushleft}
rejection of the country’s Arab identity. Furthermore, as a minority in the broader Middle East, Christians such as the Maronites feared constant encirclement and domination by the Muslim majority in the region. Despite the population figures of the region, the Maronite Christians of Lebanon managed to maintain political power after the establishment of the French mandate, who preferred Christian rule as a proxy for European powers in the Middle East. The close ties between the Maronite Christian establishment and European ideologies resulted in the formation of Pierre Gemayel’s Kataeb Party in 1936, which was modeled after far-right parties in Europe. According to Theodor Hanf’s analysis of the party and the civil war, Kataeb initially emerged as a youth organization but transformed into a political party originally aimed at preserving Lebanese independence amidst rising Arab nationalism and pan-Arabism. This “struggle for survival” narrative was similar to the mentality of the Maronite Christians that fought against the Druze in the 1860 civil war. Just as the increase of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon sparked the first clashes of the war, the demographic shift caused a political and ideological reaction among the right-wing Maronite Christian community. Namely, the right-wing ideology of the Kataeb Party grew more prominent and resulted in the formation of various radical militias, such as the Tigers Militia, the armed wing of the far-right National Liberal Party.

The Lebanese Forces remained the main Kataeb dominated coalition of Maronite Christian militias that operated in the Chouf. Gemayel made references to the basis for his ideology in interviews, particularly the explanation that Christian population contributed to the wealth and modernity and Lebanon as well as the accusations of violence and savagery on the

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115 O’Ballance, viii.
117 O’Ballance, ix.
118 O’Ballance, 15.
part of the Muslim and Druze population, particularly the Palestinian cause.\textsuperscript{119} The model that these right-wing political parties emulated, that of the far-right parties in Western Europe, decided to explain the willingness for the Phalangists to engage in ethnic cleansing in the Chouf and along with ethnic cleansing, crimes of desecration and destruction.

\textsuperscript{119} 1975 Interview with Pierre Gemayel; Nisan, 92.
Kfar Matta

Kfar Matta remains an important part of the civil war because it marks two crucial events: the massacre of Druze civilians that motivated the further involvement of the Druze militias and it was also representative of an inter-communal village whose Maronite Christian population was forced out entirely. These mass removals from homes involved the destruction of churches and other sanctuaries to the religious communities reflective of the violations that occurred during the war. The most concrete primary sources regarding the events that took place in Kfar Matta are news reports published at the time of the conflict. These articles put forth the timeline and key events surrounding the battles leading up to the massacre and the aftermath. Other archived news reports include testimonials from political leaders regarding the Kfar Matta violence. Stories from the Kfar Matta massacre and the expulsions that resulted from the violence exist in other collections of primary accounts such as documentaries.

The initial massacre at Kfar Matta occurred in early September 1983 following the clashes between the Druze militias and Lebanese Forces after the Israeli withdrawal from the Chouf.\textsuperscript{120} Kfar Matta functioned initially as one of the towns in which the national military established garrisons in the regions immediately after Israeli forces left the mountains.\textsuperscript{121} Aside from the inter-milita fighting that occurred in contested villages, clashes between the Maronite Christian and Druze populations that shared villages began in 1983. In Kfar Matta, Christian militias and their allies allegedly attacked Druze militia and civilian targets, massacring 80-100 people.\textsuperscript{122} Some accounts of the slaughter allege that the death toll mounted to 200 people.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{120} O’Ballance, 129.
\textsuperscript{121} O’Ballance, 126.
\textsuperscript{122} Samira Kawar, "Druze gunmen apparently massacred Christian civilians Tuesday following their..." United Press International. September 6, 1983.
\textsuperscript{123} Kawar, "Druze gunmen apparently massacred Christian civilians Tuesday following their..."
Other accounts however, point to the killing of only 40 Druze civilians. Regardless of the scale of the massacre, the Kfar Matta incident led to "revenge killings" and the eventual expulsion of the town's Maronite Christians.\textsuperscript{124} Reports claim Druze forces massacred Christians in the neighboring mountain towns of Bhamdoun and Bmariam after the Kfar Matta killings.\textsuperscript{125} While the number of casualties from each incident remain disputed, they follow a distinct pattern of massacres based on vengeance. Just as the Christian population of Kfar Matta and the surrounding villages paid a price, often with their lives, they also lost their homes and livelihoods after their expulsion from the village. Contemporary accounts from Maronite Christians whose families were forced from Kfar Matta refer to it even in some cases, as a "forbidden village," to which they cannot return.\textsuperscript{126} It was during the driving out of Maronite Christians that the villagers' sacred places were violated. For example, the St. George Church that stood in Kfar Matta was reduced to rubble.\textsuperscript{127} The bulldozing of churches remained a feature of the Druze militia’s clearing of Maronite Christian villages in the mountains. In addition, many Druze occupied the homes of their former Maronite Christian neighbors.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{124} Kawar, "Druze gunmen apparently massacred Christian civilians Tuesday following their..."\textsuperscript{125} Kawar, "Druze gunmen apparently massacred Christian civilians Tuesday following their..."\textsuperscript{126} "Kfarmatta, Forbidden Village," directed by Mirna Mounayar.\textsuperscript{127} Mounayar.}
'Abey and Deir al-Qamar

Just as the Druze faced massacres of their own from the Lebanese Forces and Phalangists, they also witnessed the destruction of holy places meant to be safe from warfare. According from an account from the Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, the Sayyid 'Abdullah shrine in 'Abey was attacked by Maronite Christian militiamen.\textsuperscript{128} The Phalangists allegedly entered the shrine, burned, and destroyed the shrine.\textsuperscript{129} The Al-Amir al-Sayyid Jamal al-Din 'Abdullah al-Tanukhi shrine, or the Sayyid 'Abdullah shrine for short, is one of the Druzes' holiest sites, as it holds the tomb and commemorates the fifteenth century Druze theologian, one of the most important figures in the faith's history.\textsuperscript{130} The shrine remains a pilgrimage site for the Druze. Contemporary accounts from the Druze community corroborate the Phalangists' attack and destruction of the shrine but explain its rebuilding after the war. Although it was certainly financed by the Lebanese Druze community, few sources explain the details of the Sayyid 'Abdullah shrine's rebuilding. Following the pattern from the other clashes between the Druze and Maronite Christians in the Chouf, Jumblatt proposed revenge for the attack on 'Abey and other villages. He states:

We are gathering as many reinforcements as possible to dispatch to the Qabr Sham'un front. Yesterday the Lebanese Army entered Sayyid 'Abdallah, a shrine of the Druze community. It completely destroyed and burned it. It is a ruthless and merciless struggle. What the Christians want is the complete destruction of what remains of the Lebanese mountains. But they must remember that tens upon tens of thousands of people (Christians from Ash-Shuf - Liberation editor's note) have taken refuge in Dayr al- Qamar, and Dayr al-Qamar will become a political stake. If they intend to destroy the Druze villages, Dayr al-Qamar will be destroyed.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{129} Paris Liberation, Druze Goals Outlined.
\textsuperscript{130} Fuad Khuri, \textit{Being a Druze}. (London: Druze Heritage Foundation, 2004). 40.
\textsuperscript{131} Paris Liberation, Druze Goals Outlined.
This foreboding account from Jumblatt explains the importance of Deir al-Qamar in later events of the Mountain War, and it also demonstrates the significance of the Druze religious sites in the framing and narrative of the conflict with the Maronite Christians laid out by Jumblatt. As other primary sources suggest, 'Abey, the small town and location of the Sayyid 'Abdullah shrine remains a point of conflict between the rival militias until 1984 when the Druze manage to maintain control of the Chouf.\footnote{Voice of the Mountain, Druze Spiritual Leader Urges Continued Fighting. 1984. Retrieved from Foreign Broadcast Information Service.} Sheikh Muhammad Abu Shaqra's address to the Druze militias attempts to rouse the fighters to take back 'Abey. He states, "They have come from far away to 'Bayh and its environs," and "O fortunate cubs, the meeting of the brave brothers in 'Bayh, after purging it from the evildoers, is imminent, God willing...God is great and will help you against those who stand against the faith."\footnote{Voice of the Mountain.} While this passage is consistent with the sheikh's other statements to inspire the Druze troops, it may place a special emphasis on 'Abey because of the religious significance of the Sayyid 'Abdullah shrine.

Just as Jumblatt mentioned the fight for Deir al-Qamar, the village exists as a key point in the Mountain War and role of sacred sites in the conflict. A small town in the Chouf district, Deir al-Qamar holds important religious sites for a spectrum of faiths, including a historic synagogue, mosques dating back to the 15th century, and various important Christian sites.\footnote{Doyle, 280.} Jumblatt made mention of the hundreds of people taking refuge in Deir-al Qamar. This is a reference to the high number of Christian refugees that stayed in the town, particularly in the historic Saydet el-Talle church.\footnote{Bouna.} While the church was not heavily damaged in the fighting, it
remained a place a refuge during the Druze and Syrian assault on the city. The Mount of the Cross is another important Christian site in Deir al-Qamar.

Erected by Fr. Abouna Yacoub the Cappuchin, the Mount of the Cross is a large metal cross on a mountain top that overlooks Deir al-Qamar. The cross and its stations were destroyed by shells after the Syrian army occupied the mountain, and fighting broke out. The battles that took place in each of these towns demonstrate the brutal fighting that occurred between militias as well as how civilians and their sanctuaries and holy sites became victims of this portion of the war. The key themes that emerge from each case include revenge killings and attacks, the legacy of enmity between the Maronite Christians and Druze in the Chouf, and each community's devotion

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136 Mount of the Cross, Deir al Qmar, by Rula Antoun; Church of Saydet El Talle, Deir al Qamar, by Jad Makarem
137 Abouna
138 Abouna.
to their sacred places. Further analysis, however, can explain the motivations for the fighting as well as the impact it had.
The Ancient and the Beqaa Valley

Although many cases of violence in many different forms occurred in the Chouf region during the Lebanese Civil War, the principal cases that amount to “crimes against the sacred” involve the Phalangist militia alleged desecrations of important Druze shrines in region, the Druze militias’ expulsion of Maronite Christian civilians, and ensuing destruction of their houses of worship. This section explores alternative sacred sites that were impacted during the civil war, particularly the numerous antiquities and ancient sites and objects that exist in Lebanon. Similar to the case of the religious sites of the Chouf Mountains, paramilitary organizations serve as the primary groups involved in crimes against the sacred.

It is important to state that “the sacred,” in the world at-large and in Lebanon, does not only encompass the religious or holy. Historical and archaeological sites and objects that do not carry a religious connotation or serve a spiritual function or purpose were affected by the Lebanese Civil War as well. The loss of these antiquities also represented a blow to the cultural fabric of Lebanon and the Levant region, as a whole. This section works to describe the damage inflicted on Lebanon’s antiquities, particularly those in the Chouf region as well as the role of organizations involved in the Mountain War theater of conflict, such as the Phalangist militias. The Chouf Mountains were not only significant for their religious diversity and isolation. The region also was home to a variety of historic sites from the Ottoman, medieval, and Abbasid eras.139 The damage done to those sites after the war cannot be as definitively described as “desecration,” as few sources indicate the intentional destruction on the part of any actors involved in the conflict. This is contrasted with the events involving the destruction of shrines and churches in the region, in which militias made efforts to cause substantial damage. As

139 Doyle, 277.
shrines, for example, were specific to the Druze, and churches were specific to the Maronite Christians, they also functioned as targets intended to harm or drive out the particular religious groups. This is not the case for the archaeological sites that were incidentally hit with rounds during the fighting, as these sites represented the cultural heritage of all of Lebanon.

Bordering the Mount Lebanon Governorate is the Beqaa Valley, which is home to a collection of ancient Roman temples and shrines, incidental damage to archaeological sites occurred due to the war. While the valley was a site of conflict between the 1860 civil war between the Druze and Maronite Christians in Lebanon, it was subject to indiscriminate bombing campaigns from both Israeli and Syrian militaries.\textsuperscript{141} Baalbek, one the most prominent ancient cities in the Beqaa Valley functioned as a temple to worship Baal, the Phoenician sun god.\textsuperscript{142} Under Greek rule of Lebanon, the city was referred to as Heliopolis, and the Romans added a

\textsuperscript{140} Baalbek, by Khalid Albaih.
\textsuperscript{141} Jeffrey M. Shaw et al., War and Religion: An Encyclopedia of Faith and Conflict. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2017), 246.
\textsuperscript{142} Also spelled "Bel."
temple to Jupiter during their control of the region. Natural disasters affected the structural integrity of Baalbek and other temples in the Beqaa Valley. A prominent example is the earthquake that struck the Levant in 1759, which caused considerable damage to Baalbek.\textsuperscript{143} Various militias used Baalbek as a base, leading the city to become a major target. In 1978, after Maronite Christian paramilitary groups stationed themselves in Beqaa Valley, the faced attacks from the Arab League sponsored Arab Deterrent Force (ADF), which fought on behalf of the Palestinian factions.\textsuperscript{144} The political party Hezbollah and its armed wing, al-Jihad al-Islami, along with allied Shia militias, stationed themselves in the Beqaa Valley in 1982.\textsuperscript{145} The ShiaAmal Movement is one such militia that occupied Baalbek.\textsuperscript{146} Primary sources from 1984 describe the militias' prominence in the Beqaa Valley. One such source, a Washington Post article from that year, describes Baalbek as developing into a hotbed for "terrorist" organizations.\textsuperscript{147} Observers described Shia militias' operations in the area through the lens of their Iranian connections. The result of this high concentration of paramilitary organizations was bombing campaigns primarily from the Israeli forces and their French allies.\textsuperscript{148} After the

While the archaeological and historical sites of the Chouf may have been part of collateral damage from the war’s fighting, crimes did occur against antiquities. The trafficking of antiquities by the Phalangists serves as the most prominent example and also provides insight

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[144]{O'Ballance, 83}
\footnotetext[145]{O'Ballance, 133.}
\footnotetext[146]{O'Ballance, 133.}
\footnotetext[147]{David B. Ottaway, "Baalbek Seen As Staging Area For Terrorism," Washington Post, January 9, 1984.}
\footnotetext[148]{O’Ballance, 134.}
\end{footnotes}
into the organization and behavior of paramilitary groups that fought in the war and, in some ways, doubled as criminal enterprises. Robert Fisk, the British journalist who detailed many of the events that occurred during the civil war in Lebanon while serving as a foreign correspondent, also described the Phalangists’ role in illicit antiquities trafficking. According to Fisk, the years of civil war were paramount to anarchy in terms of the protection of antiquities. Various militias took part in antiquities theft.\footnote{Robert Fisk, “The Biggest Supermarket in Lebanon,” \textit{Beyrutus}, 1991.} Maronite Christian militiamen, for example, allegedly stole from the Lebanese Department of Antiquities in Byblos and sold goods to European dealers.\footnote{Fisk, “The Biggest Supermarket in Lebanon.”} These goods included portions of the “Babies of Eshmoun” Statues, which were excavated from Sidon, Lebanon, a decade before the civil war.\footnote{Fisk, “The Biggest Supermarket in Lebanon.”} Authorities later discovered the trafficked items from the Byblos thefts in Zurich.\footnote{“Lebanon regains stolen antiquities.” \textit{1995.} United Press International, October 20.} Other Lebanese archaeological treasures, such as the ancient cities of Tyre and Baalbeck, became victims of the war’s militiamen. According to reports from eyewitnesses, fighters from rival militias would blow up antiquities in order to gain smaller pieces that can be sold more easily.\footnote{Kaj, Riad. 1988. “Antiquities destroyed; Lebanon's antiquities being stolen or crumbling from neglect.” \textit{United Press International, July 24.}} The illegal trade and destruction of antiquities involved various sides of the war. For example, UN peacekeepers that arrived in southern Lebanon in 1978 were prohibited, in their mandate, from participating in the illegal antiquities trade. The Shiite Amal militia, which operated in southern Lebanon and also held on the city of Tyre for a substantial portion of the war, claimed to have confiscated ancient sculptures that were to be sold illegally.\footnote{Kaj, “Antiquities destroyed; Lebanon's antiquities being stolen or crumbling from neglect.”}
The evidence, including primary source documents from the war, points to an abundance of criminality during the Mountain War. Few other terms can describe the intentional violence directed towards sacred places or institutions than criminality. These crimes extended beyond the battlefield to the militias’ dual role as informal criminal organizations impacting Lebanon’s antiquities in addition to its religious establishments.
Chapter Three: Remembrance, Reconciliation, and Rebuilding

"I love you when you bow in your mosque, kneel in your temple, pray in your church. For you and I are sons of one religion, and it is the spirit." --Khalil Gibran, The Prophet
In the aftermath of war and desolation, the principal question is how to move on in peacetime. This question suggests processes to establish peace must occur in all sectors of society and life. Just as the evidence asserts that attacks on the spiritual centers of life constitute serious war crimes somewhat like those involving violence against and civilians, moving on after war involves steps to be taken toward these same religious structures and institutions. The Druze and Maronite Christian communities of the Mount Lebanon governorate are examples of those that managed to move beyond the conflict that ravaged their homes and places of worship in the 1980s. This chapter works to analyze the modes of remembrance and rebuilding that occurred in the years following the Mountain War. A particular focus of the chapter will be on a case study of the process of rebuilding the St. George Church and St. Elie Church in Brih as well as a brief examination of the reconstruction process by Solidere in Beirut. The thesis also argues that despite the destruction of religious and sacred places in the Mountain War, the political associations and religious sects that fought in the conflict brought about new manifestations of the sacred as well.
The Reconciliation Process

The success of the reconciliation agreements between Lebanon’s Druze and Maronite communities may serve as an example for neighboring ethnic or religious groups after civil wars. As detailed in prior chapters, the Mountain War phase of the conflict had a tremendous impact on the social fabric of religiously pluralistic cities and towns in the Mount Lebanon region. It is well documented that thousands of Maronite Christians had to flee their villages, and many Druze were also displaced by the conflict.\(^\text{155}\) In many of these cases, the Druze residents of a town with fleeing Christians, for example, would move in and occupy the houses and homes of their neighbors. Many of these houses were also destroyed, so this level of displacement and change was difficult to reverse particularly in a post conflict environment. In addition to the establishment of trust between the formerly conflicting communities, the recognition and rebuilding of damaged and destroyed sites served an important symbolic role in the formation of peace between the Druze and Maronite Christians.

In essence, the reconciliation process took several stages before reaching normalized relations. As the reconciliation process technically took 15 years to conclude, trust between the rival religious groups, it is clear that it difficulty persisted, as with any civil conflict, when the two warring sides worked to establish trust between each other. The Maronite leadership initiated the first stage of reconciliation after the war.\(^\text{156}\) The agreement that emerged at the end of the reconciliation process was the Druze-Maronite reconciliation pact. The terms of this agreement primarily included a returnee policy for Maronite Christians that were forced to flee their homes.

\(^{155}\) Fisk, 277.  
from the violence. The first stage of reconciliation in Lebanon was the creation of committees to determine that status of the displaced and those that stayed in villages. The committees then decided the appropriate solutions or compensation for victims of the conflict. After the decisions made by reconciliation committees, the Lebanese government then recognizes the process and agrees to contribute funds finance the physical reconstruction projects. Private contributors and enterprises are also involved in the reconstruction efforts.

The reconciliation process between the Maronite Christians and the Druze hinged upon the effort and willingness of individual leaders on both sides. As he did throughout the conflict, Walid Jumblatt played a critical role in his leadership of the Druze community. The Former Maronite Patriarch, Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir also emerged as a key player, as his initiative led to the start of the reconciliation in 2001. According to reports on the reconciliation, the patriarch reached out to the opposing side to negotiate the return of Christian villagers to their communities. Despite the apparent success of the Maronite Christian-Druze reconciliation after the Lebanese Civil War, certain problems still persisted between the groups. Particularly in the lens of political reconciliation between the groups. For example, many Maronite Christians have refused to return to their villages out of distrust of the Druze occupiers.

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157 Kanfani-Zahar, 2.
160 “Christians and Druz mark 15th anniversary of ‘Mountain Reconciliation.’”
International Law and Reconciliation

While reconciliation, particularly in this case, can be achieved at a local level, it must be addressed how the peace and normalization process between the Druze and Maronites in the Chouf region figures into the peace process for the wider Lebanese Civil War as recognized by international law. The Taif Agreement is referred to as the primary legal outcome of the war. Signed by representatives from each side of the conflict at a neutral location, Taif, Saudi Arabia, and recognized by international actors, the agreement formally ended the civil war.\(^\text{161}\)

In terms of the subject matter of this thesis, the survival and preservation of the warring factions’ sacred sites, it is unclear how the Taif Accords or any kind of international legal decision specifically addressed such institutions. The agreement does briefly outline the process by which reconstruction of certain sites were to occur. First, the agreement solidifies the state’s identity as a unified Arab state:

Lebanon is Arab in identity and belonging. It is a founding and active member of the League of Arab States and is committed to the League's conventions. It is a founding and active member of the United Nations Organization and is committed to its Charter. Lebanon is a member of the Nonaligned Movement. The State of Lebanon shall embody these principles in all areas and spheres, without exception.\(^\text{162}\)

After outlining the government’s structure and roles of each ministry, including the division of power among the highest offices, the Taif Agreement calls for the disbanding of the civil war’s various militias:

Disbanding of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias shall be announced. The militias' weapons shall be delivered to the State of Lebanon within a period of 6 months, beginning with the approval of the National Accord document, the election of a President of the Republic, the

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\(^{162}\) The Taef Agreement.
formation of a National Accord Cabinet and the constitutional approval of the political reforms.\footnote{163} This is a significant step to regain the state of normalcy that occurred prior to the war. Given that evidence shows that paramilitary organizations were most involved in the crimes that occurred during the conflict, disbanding the militias is a large step towards reconciliation.

As hundreds of thousands of Lebanese citizens were displaced due to the conflict, the Taif Agreement also provided measures for the return and resettlement of individuals who were affected in this manner by the war.\footnote{164} These aspects of the peace agreement relate directly to the reconciliation process that occurred locally in the Mount Lebanon region, as the matters such as the return of civilians were primary components in the Druze-Maronite reconciliation process. The document primarily outlines the structure of a new confessional government for Lebanon. This government’s structure, based on other power sharing agreements that were enacted in the country’s history, divides power in the federal government between the various religious groups that comprise the population. The structure of this new government was set to have a beneficial outcome for the country’s non-Christian populations, as the previous political structure of the Lebanese government favored the minority Maronite Christian population.\footnote{165} Some additional aspects of the peace accord included clauses outlining Lebanon’s relationship with Syria, who at that point was an occupying force in parts of Lebanon.

\footnote{163}{The Taef Agreement.}
\footnote{164}{The Taef Agreement.}
\footnote{165}{Yusri Hazran, The Druze Community and the Lebanese State: Between Confrontation and Reconciliation, 1 edition (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2014). 22}
Rebuilding After Civil War in Lebanon: Previous Cases

As other authors trace the roots of sectarian conflict in the Lebanese Civil War to the country’s history under the Ottoman Empire, certain accounts of Lebanese history also credit early tensions between the communities as the root of the conflict between the Druze and Maronites of the Chouf and ‘Aley regions. Specifically, sources reference the 1860 civil war between the two religious groups that surround Mount Lebanon, a conflict also referenced by Fawwaz Traboulsi in his survey of modern Lebanese history.\textsuperscript{166}

Just as it has been explained that the Maronites and Druze of Mount Lebanon have come into conflict before, it must be added that this is not the first time the two groups have had to make peace. Although temporary and fragile, the peace established by the Druze and Maronite Christians after the 1860 civil war in Lebanon provided context for the peace to be worked toward after the most recent civil war. The peace after the 1860 is generally understood as a consequence of the French intervention into the Mount Lebanon region, which comprised part of the Ottoman Empire’s territory in the Levant.\textsuperscript{167} While the international political negotiations occurred between the Ottoman authorities and French forces, reconciliation still occurred locally on the ground between the Maronite Christian and Druze communities. The primary result of reconciliation efforts in the Mount Lebanon region after the 1860 civil war was the administrative reorganization of governance in the area.\textsuperscript{168}

The reorganization after the French intervention was referred to as the foundation of the \textit{mutasarrifa} system.\textsuperscript{169} As Yusri Hazran describes, the newly established system was a

\textsuperscript{166} Traboulsi, 26.
\textsuperscript{167} Traboulsi, 26.
\textsuperscript{168} Hazran, 22.
\textsuperscript{169} Hazran, 23.
confessional approach to governing Mount Lebanon as an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire and had several consequences for the various communities inhabiting Mount Lebanon. First, it restricted Druze control more so than previous systems had. The Druze had initially ruled the entire region of Mount Lebanon, yet after the peace deal, they had been limited only to govern the Chouf region. The outcome of the peace negotiations, or impositions by the Ottoman Administration, significantly augmented the power of the Maronite Christian population in the Mount Lebanon region. Although this division had ended the massacres that ensued during the 1860 civil war, the process differed significantly from that of the modern reconciliation that occurred between the two religious communities. The nineteenth-century redistribution of power did little to establish trust between the groups in the same manner that the 2001 reconciliation attempted to do. Processes such as the consecration and reconstruction of churches destroyed in the conflict may lead to more lasting peace than previous agreements based on political structures.

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170 Hazran, 22.
171 Hazran, 23.
Few records explain the details of the rebuilding efforts that took place for many of the most significant sites destroyed by the violence of the Mountain war. For the Sayyid Abdullah shrine, for example, the Druze community's secrecy limits the information available regarding its repair, although the shrine has since resumed its function for Druze adherents. Some religious establishments, such as the main church in Kfar Matta, did not begin reconstruction until the slow return of displaced Maronite Christian families to the village. Other important sites, such as those in Deir al-Qamar simply lack academic focus or primary source documentation towards their rebuilding and are described in the context of the broader reconstruction efforts that took place largely in Beirut. However, secondary sources featuring cases of rebuilding in the Chouf's villages paint a picture of the aftermath of the desecration that occurred in the Mountain War.

Similar to Kfar Matta, Brih held both Maronite Christian and Druze villagers. Just as the Mountain War resulted in the displacement of the region's Maronite Christian population in a brief period of time, Brih's Christians left the village as well, only to slowly return in the years following the end of the civil war and signing of the Taif Agreement. According to accounts of Brih's postwar reconciliation efforts, the reconstruction of the village's churches largely functioned as a gesture to encourage the return of displaced Christian families. Structures held by the Maronite Christian villagers were, in fact, replaced by the those built for the Druze community. The erection of "the Bayt," a Druze community center in the place of a Maronite Christian-owned villa is one such example of the Brih's transformation from a village of mixed

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173 Perry, “Special Report: In a Lebanese Village, Civil War Scars Fade Slowly.”
identities to one dominated by the Druze.\textsuperscript{174} Community centers and religious sites, as the reconciliation talks demonstrate, play a large role in the symbolic unity of a village. The St. George Church carries a more complicated history beyond the damage it incurred during the war. In 1977, four years before the Mountain War commenced, gunmen entered the Church opened fire, killing 12 Christian villagers.\textsuperscript{175} The deaths of these villagers impacted the church's reconstruction. Those who excavated the rubble from the destroyed church located the bodies of the 1977 massacre victims and reburied them in the newly completed St. George Church. The reconstruction was completed in 2016 as was the reconstruction of the second church that was destroyed during the war, the St. Elie church. The first communion service at the St. George Church followed the model of the other reconciliation ceremonies that occurred in the Chouf. Druze and Maronite Christian residents all came together as the Maronite religious authorities consecrated the churches. Both churches were designed by Lebanese-French architect, Maroun Lahoud. According to Lahoud, his Brij products were modern interpretations of the traditional Maronite Church. “Radiant with its white bush-hammered stone cladding, the church solemnly sits in the landscape,” he explains, “Its aspect embodies the characteristics of the Maronite Church: pure massing and flat roof.”\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{174} Tom Perry, “Special Report: In a Lebanese Village, Civil War Scars Fade Slowly.”
\textsuperscript{175} Tom Perry, “Special Report: In a Lebanese Village, Civil War Scars Fade Slowly,”
Given the emphasis on sacred places' function as community centers that can tie a village or town together, it is unsurprising how much the St. George and St. Elie churches played in Brih's reconciliation process. As for other villages in the Mount Lebanon region, the status of their religious centers that were affected by the war impacts the peace process. The return of displaced Christians is partially dependent on whether or not their destroyed sites are rebuilt and consecrated. The churches in Brih present strong case studies of this aspect of the sacred after the war.

The Taif Agreement that formally ended the civil conflict in Lebanon outlined certain measures for the reconstruction of various buildings and sites after the war. While the process of this reconstruction varied throughout the country, there was a distinct process for the rebuilding of Lebanon after over a decade of civil war. One of the principal contributors to the
reconstruction of Lebanese infrastructure was Solidere. Also known as the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of the Beirut Central District, Solidere was a private company contracted by the government in 1995 to conduct infrastructure renewal projects in the capital city.\textsuperscript{177} Although at times accused of corruption, Solidere worked with artists, intellectuals, and community members to reconstruct “historically valuable sites.”\textsuperscript{178} Scholarship on Beirut’s postwar reconstruction suggests that the process undertaken by Solidere attempted to incorporate the memory of individual significant sites in Lebanese culture to fit the modern postwar era.\textsuperscript{179} A parallel emerges between the reconstruction projects of the Mount Lebanon region and the goals of Solidere’s reconstruction in Beirut. The collective memory, however, was disputed by those that contributed to Solidere’s preservation of certain sites in Lebanon. Questions arise as to the impact of the local collective memory of the conflict after the rebuilding of sites in the Chouf region.

**Memorial and Symbols**

A significant amount of secondary and theoretical literature regarding rebuilding and memorialization has been produced, and much of this scholarship can be applied to numerous Cold War era conflicts as well as those of the modern Middle East, such as the Lebanese Civil War.

In descriptions of the significance and importance of remembrance and rebuilding after civil conflict, the symbolism and messaging of the memorials that emerge after war bear importance. Lucia Volk’s work on memorialization of the Lebanese Civil War applies directly to

\textsuperscript{177} Aseel Sawalha, *Reconstructing Beirut: Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City* (Austin, Tex.; Chesham: University of Texas Press, 2011). 37
\textsuperscript{178} Sawalha, 37.
\textsuperscript{179} Sawalha, 38.
the establishment of peace between the Maronite Christian and Druze communities of Mount Lebanon. The memorial of Kamal Jumblatt, the assassinated father of the current Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, serves as an example of the symbolic impact such memorials can have on communities after a conflict, particularly those religiously motivated. The memorial not only commemorates Jumblatt himself and those loyal to him but also the schools of thought that inspired him. The memorial's depiction of Eastern philosophy, Western thought, and religions such as Islam and Christianity not only represent the aspects of philosophy revered by the Druze but also work to unite the multi-ethnic and religious communities of the Mount Lebanon region.

Sune Haugbolle identifies similar symbolic aspects of memorialization after conflict. Haugbolle discusses what he calls “sectarian memory cultures,” in which various sects, based on their geographic locations, whether urban, mountainous, or rural, make use of public space in various manners to portray their communal memory of the conflict. These images, which can

manifest as road signs, graffiti art, or roadside shrines, often demonstrate support for a particular faction in the war or express mourning or grief for the conflict. Often much of this memorialization of the conflict involved images of certain militia commanders or political leaders, around whom cult followings developed.\footnote{Haugbolle, Sune. \textit{War and Memory in Lebanon}. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. 175-180.} While Haugbolle focuses his analysis mainly on memory cultures in Beirut's urban environment, they are relevant in the mountains as well. These sacred images break geographic limitations in Lebanon through their shared function. Haugbolle writes, "The various symbols that fill urban space, such as graffiti, posters and monuments, all in some way contribute to the creation of social boundaries."

The importance of these sectarian memory cultures is apparent as one traces how the sacred fared before, during, and after the war. The informal religious and political images that emerge after the civil war exemplify how symbols function in a similar manner to the sites that were destroyed and attacked during the war. Examples of these symbols are viewed in public memorials, such as those to Bashir Gemayel, the prominent commander of the Lebanese Forces. Roadside shrines to saints both memorialize victims of the war and contribute to the commemoration of saints seen in the region's historic churches and shrines.
Political posters and graffiti, particularly those to the Phalangists, show the symbolic allegiance to the Maronite sect as well as the political movement long after the war. Political posters from the Progressive Socialist Party also replicated the functions of the historical and religious sites that tied the Druze community together. Just as shrines to scholars and leaders of the faith were important to the Druze, memorials to political leaders solidified the Lebanese Druze community's bond during the war. Kamal Jumblatt remains the subject of many political

182 Untitled Kataeb posters, Signs of Conflict.
posters from the PSP and is referred to as a martyr. Martyrdom is a common theme in Lebanese political propaganda, and the veneration of those that perished for the Druze community functioned to strengthen the resolve of the faction. Other PSP posters evoke images of the shared heritage of “the mountains” and the revolutionary struggle influenced by the pan-Arabic ideology of Kamal Jumblatt in his founding of the PSP. Similar symbols exist of other political parties and factions. While the civil war can be described as having a negative effect on Lebanon's landscape, which held a large number of ancient, religious, and sacred places, the emergence of symbols and memorials from the war demonstrate a continuation of the same rituals that were impacted during the violence.
Conclusion

This thesis accomplishes three main goals. It emphasizes the role of the sacred and holy in the formation of community and social bonds, distinguishing between land that is sacred and that which is not. It establishes paramilitary forces as the perpetrators of crimes against the sacred in civil conflicts, particularly those in the Levant, and it tracks the emergence of symbols that share the functions as sacred sites in establishing political and religious unity.

The effect of the civil war on Lebanon’s political system, the country’s relations with Syria, and the emergence of Hezbollah as a the premier Iranian proxy in the Levant are all consequences of the Lebanese Civil War that have been expounded upon in the academic study and memory of the war. Certain dimensions of the civil war, however, do not receive the same levels of attention. This thesis attempts to illuminate the elements of the sacred and destruction that characterized certain actors’ experiences in the conflict. The central mountains of Lebanon, the Chouf, emerge as distinct from ordinary battlefields. Despite the mountain range’s function as the setting for substate and religious conflict, themes well established in the modern history of the Middle East, the confluence of historical, religious, and natural factors paint the Chouf as a unique location for a civil conflict. The militias that fought in the mountains battled on valued territory and fought on sacred land. This dimension already sets the Mountain War apart from other arenas of the Lebanese Civil War, but what of the actors involved in the conflict? How did the Druze and Maronite Christian fighters navigate battles on sacred territory?

First, evidence suggests that they themselves regarded the Chouf’s villages not as purely strategic but as sacred as their contents indicate. Violence in the Mountain War was inter-communal. Battles occurred not only between incoming Maronite Christian fighters from the
Lebanese Forces or Phalangist militia arriving from Beirut. Rather, the Maronite Christians who lived alongside the Druze in peace since the 1860 civil war fought against their neighbors, the Druze who happened to fall along the opposite side of the war. This fact is significant. The opposing factions of the Mountain War competed less for gains in national politics but for their homes. And along with their homes came the sites essential to their religious practices. For the Druze, who practice a secret religion and used the mountains’ isolation to maintain their esoteric faith, their enemies’ intrusion into the Chouf marked a severe violation. For the Maronite Christians, who at one point lived under the Druze’s feudal rule and faced massacres in the 1860 civil war also held a deep connection to the land and fought to maintain their establishment in the mountains.

The factions’ motivations for fighting become illuminated in the firsthand accounts of the war. The personal philosophy of Walid Jumblatt, the Druze leader with the strongest influence over his people, combined with the messages distributed by prominent Druze sheikhs, spiritual and religious leaders. Together, the ideology of the Druze in the Chouf motivated their paramilitary forces to attempt to cleanse the region of its Christian inhabitants. Accounts from Deir al-Qamar and Kfar Matta serve as the most concrete evidence that Maronite Christians were ethnically cleansed from their villages and that the destruction of holy places like the St. George Church occurred as symptoms of this cleansing process. The Maronite Christians of the Chouf were driven by ideology as well. The kinship with the other Maronite Christians of Lebanon, particularly those that followed the political ideology of the Kataeb Party, caused the Maronite Christians of the Chouf Mountains to join the national government’s side in the civil war. This alliance occurred in spite of over a century of relative peace between the Christians and Druze in
the Chouf region. As it was modeled after the far-right and fascist parties of Western European nations, the Kataeb party and its adherents also participated in ethnic cleansing campaigns, and the atrocities that occurred during the Mountain War serve as examples.

Evidence reveals that both sides of the Mountain War were ideologically motivated, and both sides committed war crimes. Furthermore, both the Maronite Christians and the Druze display tight connections to the land and their cultural heritage that extends beyond the strategic location of the mountains. The role religious institutions and structures played as critical infrastructure for the local communities explain their designation as targets in the ethnic cleansing campaigns of the Mountain War. Case studies from the Middle East region, such as those of the Arab-Israeli conflict, include a similar phenomenon, the violation and destruction of religious sites by warring factions. These same case studies demonstrate a significant factor in the way in which the Mountain War was conducted; namely, the cases of desecration and iconoclasm that occurred were carried out by paramilitary forces rather than national militaries. Primary source documents point to Druze militias and the Lebanese Forces, the Phalangists and their allies, far-right Maronite Christian militiamen, as the primary perpetrators of atrocities and destruction in the conflict. These paramilitary organizations follow the pattern of being ideologically driven and more loosely adherent to international norms and rules of engagement. Similar cases are identified in the Levant region, particularly in the instances of paramilitary violence and communal displacement that occurred during the period of Israeli independence. Although many sacred sites, such as those held by the Shia in South Lebanon, faced destruction as a result of collateral damage after the Israeli assault in 1982, primary accounts do not suggest the same kind of desecration from the Israeli military as those that paramilitary forces
committed. Syria's entry into the war, such as its support of Lebanese national forces in regions such as the Chouf and Beqaa Valley, also included damage to important sites. Primary evidence from Deir al-Qamar suggest as much. However, the goal of erasure was not apparent in these cases as it was in the paramilitary conflicts elsewhere. While national militaries that fight for strategic gains on the ground can cause destruction to holy sites and critical infrastructure during military operations, such as indiscriminate shelling, for example, ideologically motivated paramilitary forces, as suggested by those involved in the Mountain War, are more inclined to commit desecration during civil wars.

This thesis tells the stories of various religious and ancient sites that survived the war. While these narratives indicate the sites' importance to the region's communities as well as provide evidence for claims about the role of militia groups, they trace how the sacred manifested before, during, and after the war. Many of these sites held commonalities before the war. Some were sites of pilgrimage commemorating important figures in the faiths, such as the Druze Sayyid Abdullah shrine and Deir al-Qamar's Mount of the Cross. Others functioned as centers and sanctuaries for the communities. Many churches, such as those in Kfar Matta and historic ones like Saydet el-Talle, created bonds for the villages' religious communities as much as those that commemorated important figures. While case studies emerge in which important sites are rebuilt, such as in the case of the St. George Church and St. Elie Church in Brih, analyses of the symbols used by political associations and factions in the Mountain War demonstrate the formation of new manifestations of the sacred. These symbols perform many of the same functions as tombs and places of worship. In addition to impacting these holy spaces, the war changed the way the sacred functioned in the region. One of the most prominent
examples of how the sacred developed in the aftermath of the Mountain War was the emergence of memorials and other symbols of the war. These “sectarian memory cultures” manifest in the forms of roadside shrines, political posters, commemorative images devoted to leaders, and street art and graffiti. Not only do the modern symbols join holy and archaeological sites in representing sacredness for these communities but they serve as examples of the effect of the war on Lebanese collective memory.

Much like the religious and holy sites of the Mount Lebanon region, the archaeological sites and objects that existed in the background of the civil conflict occupy a place in the Mountain War’s story. Once again, paramilitary groups function as the key actors in the destruction of Lebanon's antiquities. Not only do primary sources reveal that these militias doubled as criminal organizations facilitating the trafficking of Lebanon's archaeological treasures, they also stationed themselves in ancient cities and temples that became targets of war. Baalbek and the other temples of the Beqaa Valley did not face intentional desecration but experienced indiscriminate bombing campaigns that characterized portions of the civil war. What do these paramilitary operations explain about the civil war in Lebanon? Similar to the cases of desecration, the violence involving antiquities were criminal in nature.

This thesis began with the themes of erasure and cleansing. Both of which occurred with the sacred and religious in the foreground. While those key themes were central to understanding the Mountain War, criminality emerged as the vehicle through which erasure was accomplished. Criminals of all faiths perpetrated violence in Lebanon, and the cases examined involving the sacred only scratch the surface of the war’s atrocities. Through loosely structured organizations such as militias, fighters in the conflict managed to commit acts of destruction, even against that
which functioned as sanctuaries. While Lebanon’s factions continue to reconcile, the danger of paramilitary groups and criminal networks persist in global conflicts. Whether for protracted civil wars like Lebanon’s, the operations of global terror networks, or insurgencies from radically motivated groups, Lebanon’s war remains a useful case study. The destruction witnessed in the Syrian Civil War and the rise of the Islamic State immediately call for reminders of the Lebanese Civil War. As evidence from this thesis demonstrates, only after laws during war and peacetime are established and regarded through formal channels and without radical convictions will innocent people and that which they find sacred escape destruction.
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