UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

To the Edge of the Desert: Caucasian Refugees, Civilization, and Settlement on the Ottoman Frontier, 1866-1918

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Patrick John Adamiak

Committee in Charge:

Professor Hasan Kayalı, Chair
Professor Michael Provence, Co-Chair
Professor Gary Fields
Professor Tom Gallant
Professor Jeremy Prestholdt

2018

The Dissertation of Patrick John Adamiak is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Co-chair

_____

Chair

University of California San Diego

2018

DEDICATION

To Jessica

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

I have chosen to render Arabic and Turkish words that are familiar to an English-speaking audience in their common anglicized form whenever possible, such as *pasha* and *sheikh*. For transliteration of Ottoman Turkish, I have followed the guidelines set down by the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Transliterating place names has been tricky, as this dissertation covers an era when Ottoman planners could legitimately worry that passengers on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad might get confused by having a stop named Pınarbaşı and Resülayn, meaning "head of the spring" in Turkish and Arabic respectively, on the same line. I tried to use the most common current spelling of a place if possible, and for more obscure locations discussed in Ottoman documents, I deferred to the transliteration system for Ottoman Turkish. For personal names of Caucasian settlers I preferred Turkish transliterations, as contemporary British travelers and Consuls sometimes transliterated a name into English, and it is clear from this that many Caucasians of that generation used the Turkish pronounciation of the name (for example, the head of the Damascene gendarmerie in the 1890s went by Hüsrev and not Khosrow).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOA Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi

PRO Public Records Office

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The help and encouragement of a great number of people made this dissertation possible. I am indebted to Hasan Kayalı and Michael Provence, who have shaped me both as a scholar and a person through my years under their guidance. It is difficult to imagine better mentors. Baki Tezcan, Erik-Jan Zürcher, Hans Theunissen, Tom Gallant, Gary Fields, and Jeremy Prestholdt have also provided invaluable support to me over the years.

I have been honored to receive a great deal of financial and institutional support. I would like to thank the Fulbright Program; the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman; the Institute of Turkish Studies; and the University of California, San Diego for the funding that made the research and writing of this dissertation possible. I am also grateful for the assistance of the staffs of the Başbakanlık Archive in Istanbul; the National Archives in London; and the Center for Documents, Manuscripts and Bilad al-Sham Studies in Amman.

My work would not be what it is without the help of those who have commented upon my writing, argued a point with me, joined me in pondering the imponderables of Ottoman Turkish, or given me valuable advice. I would like to thank Emre Erol, Mehmet Kuru, David Stenner, Einar Wigen, Oscar Aguirre Mandujano, Timur Hammond, Michael Ben Sims, Lisel Hintz, Sinan Ciddi, Michael Christopher Lowe, Jeffery Dyer, Jim Ryan, Chris Gratien, Nir Shafir, Nick Danforth, Alex Brey, David and Linda Graf, Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, Ella Fratantuono, Efe Murad, James Shepard, and Çağdaş Sumer. The vibrant and supportive community in La Jolla I have been fortunate enough to enjoy over the years also deserves a great deal of thanks. Leonidas Mylonakis, David Henderson, Foster Chamberlain, Kate Thompson, Matt Davidson, Ted Falk, Robert Terrell, Kiri Hagerman, Reuben Silverman, Mirna Wasef,

Semih Gökaltay, Dimitris Stergiopoulos, Emre Sunu, David Idol, and Joel Palhegyi have all made my time at UC San Diego a wonderful experience. I would like to specially thank Johanna Peterson, Barış Taşyakan, and Ben Smuin for their gracious comments and assistance in helping me complete my dissertation. Any mistakes remaining in the dissertation are my own and do not reflect the quality of their assistance.

There is no way this work could have been completed without my loving family. It is not possible to thank my parents for how much support and inspiration they have supplied to me over the years. My brother and sister have always been there for me, no matter the circumstances. Above all I want to thank my wife Jessica who has been, and always shall be my partner.

VITA

2006	Bachelor of Arts, University of California, Davis
2009	Master of Arts, Leiden University
2018	Doctor of Philosophy, University of California, San Diego

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

To the Edge of the Desert: Caucasian Refugees, Civilization, and Settlement on the Ottoman Frontier, 1866-1918

by

Patrick John Adamiak

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California San Diego, 2018

Professor Hasan Kayalı, Chair

Professor Michael Provence, Co-Chair

This dissertation investigates the Ottoman Empire's settlement of refugees fleeing Russian persecution along the empire's desert frontiers between 1866 and 1918. I contend that Muslim refugees from the Caucasus and the state officials who planned their settlement developed the internal frontiers of the Ottoman Empire to transform these regions' societies, politics, and environments well into the twentieth century. The dissertation is thus an

intervention in the histories of population mobility, the environment, and the project of modernity in the Ottoman Empire. It investigates the implications of Istanbul's policies, driven by what I refer to as a "civilizing attitude," for the refugee settlers, administrators, local populations, and the environments of the Middle East. The Ottoman state enacted a program of creating model agricultural settlements populated by refugees to sedentarize nomads, whom officials viewed as backwards. The dissertation argues for the agency of the refugees, who adapted to challenging circumstances and ultimately influenced the drawing of borders in the Middle East after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The analysis takes as its case studies settlement schemes in Benghazi, eastern Libya; Quneitra, southern Syria; and Resülayn, northern Mesopotamia to conclude that small communities of refugees at the far edges of empire altered historical trajectories on the regional, imperial, and global levels.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In February of 1878, tens of thousands of Muslim refugees began to arrive in the ports of Syria. The wretched refugees carried what little remained of their worldly possessions along with small pox, typhus, and a host of other diseases. They were destined for a dying settlement at the edge of the semi-arid steppe that fringes southern Syria. For many of the refugees, their arrival in Syria was not their first experience of arriving destitute in a new land. Many of the older refugees had been born in the Caucasus Mountains before the 1860s, when a Russian campaign of extermination had reduced a population of over 2,500,000 Muslim Circassians to 1,500,000 refugees that sought protection in the Ottoman Empire between 1864 and 1877. Hundreds of thousands tried to build new lives in the Balkans. When the Ottoman Empire lost the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War, however, the victorious powers forced the Circassians from their homes again. The refugees who settled in Syria in the late nineteenth century reshaped the society and politics of their new homes, and ultimately had important effects on the formation of national identities and borders following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I.

The Ottoman state established an Immigrant Commission (*Muhacirin Komisyonu*) in 1860 to oversee the needs of immigrants and their settlement.[1] While the Immigrant Commission initially settled most immigrants and refugees in the Balkans and western Anatolia, those regions soon began to show the strains of overpopulation.[2] In addition, European powers held Caucasian settlers in the Balkans responsible for the massacres of Bulgarians that preceded the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War and instructed their consuls to bar Ottoman authorities from establishing

[1] Abullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri (1856-1876)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997), 105.
[2] Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 23-26.

new Caucasian refugee settlements near Christian communities.[3] Ottoman Muslims and Christians also made it clear to Ottoman authorities that new Caucasian settlements would not be welcome in their proximity. They remembered the circumstances of the settlements of the 1860s: Ottoman resources had been completely overwhelmed by the sheer number of refugees, and many Caucasians had turned to brigandage just to survive the first few years of settlement. The government opted to overcome these restrictions by sending many Caucasian refugees to a place they regarded as empty: the edge of the empire's vast desert and steppe frontier.

The lands at the edge of the desert and steppe, of course, were not empty. Hundreds of thousands of nomadic pastoralists thrived in the deserts adjacent to settled communities in Syria, Iraq, and Libya. They raised animals, collected potash, carried on a lively trade with urban centers, and maintained a socio-political structure, the tribe, that allowed them to function independent of a centralized government. In the second half of the nineteenth century, such autonomy was anathema to the aggressively centralizing Ottoman Empire. The independence of the tribes, however, also created a loophole that Ottoman officials exploited in the settlement of Caucasian refugees at the edge of the desert. The self-sufficient nature of the tribe allowed nomads to use pasture while ignoring Ottoman attempts to register land after the 1858 Land Law. The law spurred the government to redistribute land that had not been registered as cultivated for three years. The Ottoman state held that nomads who used land for pasture based on local negotiations and custom but without government registration had no legal right to it. Therefore, it could be given to those who would officially register it.[4] The loophole allowed Ottoman administrators to designate large swaths of land as "empty" (*arâzî-i hâliyye*) and suitable for settlement, even if it was being used by pastoralists. Legal "blindness" towards pastoralists was

[3]BOA. İ-DH 953 75394 (11 June 1885), 5.
[4]Raouf Sa'd Abujaber, *Pioneers over Jordan: The Frontier of Settlement in Transjordan, 1850-1914* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1989), 205.

just one part of a larger Ottoman pretext for planting settlements on land used by nomads; it was part of a larger justification rooted in an Ottoman "civilizing attitude" that viewed Ottoman rule as a bringer of modernity to populations they considered backwards. The attitude is demonstrated in a report prepared in 1879 for the governor-general of Syria, Midhat Pasha: "The proper course is to settle the nomads… It is in the interest of the tribes and the government, because both by rescuing this many people from a condition of savagery and nomadism by bringing the comforts of civilization and by causing the mentioned places to flourish."[5] In this understanding, the elimination of nomadism on the internal frontier of the Ottoman Empire was equated with progress, and nomads were treated as though they were destined to disappear with the coming of modernity.[6]

The existence of an Ottoman civilizing mission or civilizing attitude has been controversial in scholarship. The present study addresses an interrelated set of questions probing the idea of an Ottoman civilizing mission in relation to the Caucasian refugees who were settled among nomadic populations in the 1860s and 1870s. Was there an "Ottoman civilizing mission?" Or is the idea just the rearguard action of late twentieth century nationalist scholars? Did the Ottomans share features with late nineteenth century colonial empires? If that was the case, what did this look like in the lives of Ottoman subjects? This project was designed to explore these questions by examining the case of Ottoman refugee settlements planted on the boundaries between settled farmers and pastoralists on the internal frontier of the empire. Another set of

[5] BOA. ŞD 2272 27 (14 March 1879), 1.
[6] I make a distinction between the "external" frontier of the Ottoman Empire, which faced other empires or nation-states. The "internal" frontier bordered areas that were not contested between the Ottoman Empire and other states that they recognized. For example, I treat the frontier between the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran as different category than the Ottoman internal frontier along the Syrian and Saharan deserts. Furthermore, I use "frontier" instead of "border" to signal a region where two societies meet, and one is actively attempting to incorporate the other. For more detail, please see Chapter Two as well as Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*,(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

questions regarding the large-scale arrival of North Caucasian refugees to the Ottoman Empire prompted the selection of the case studies examined in this dissertation. The Ottoman Empire settled most of the refugees around the Balkan and Anatolian hinterland of Black Sea ports. Yet, from the very beginning of the settlement project in the 1860s, the Ottoman Empire sent some North Caucasian refugees to extremely isolated and far-flung locations south of Anatolia. The reasons for the settlement program at the edge of the Syrian desert have not been adequately addressed in the scholarship. Ottoman officials sought to transform the frontier of settlement into flourishing and settled agricultural districts that like those around Istanbul or Damascus. I argue that many officials believed Caucasian refugee settlements would drive that transformation.

Ottoman Reform and Civilization

The Ottoman Empire was a dynamic actor in the inter-imperial rivalries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Scholars interested in imperialism and colonialism often ignore that fact, dismissively referring to the Ottoman Empire as the "sick man of Europe." While the Ottoman Empire did contract in the face of European expansion in the Balkans and North Africa, it was by no means resigned to the sick bed. The Ottoman state instituted a comprehensive series of reforms known as the *Tanzimat,* or reorganization, starting in 1839. The Tanzimat reforms created a professional and standardized bureaucracy that sought to centralize the empire along modern lines. The introduction of conscription along with new laws, institutions, and taxes had an ever-greater influence on the daily aspects of Ottoman subjects' lives. The reorganized Ottoman state did not just demand ever more from its subjects; it also provided progressively more benefits to them by building roads and water control systems, increasing public security, establishing consultative councils at all levels of government, and providing state-funded education that led to new paths for personal success. The Tanzimat

culminated with the promulgation of a constitution in 1876 and the opening of parliament in 1877. These active and multifaceted responses were also accompanied by an increased confidence among Ottoman elites that they had the solutions to the challenges of the nineteenth century; the less enlightened subjects of the empire just had to be made to understand.

In tandem with the Tanzimat reforms, a new Ottoman "civilizing attitude" began to develop. In common with other European empires, the Ottomans had to respond to the "civilizational challenge" issued by Napoleon in the early nineteenth century. The French were not merely militarily dominant over the rest of Europe, they also claimed to be agents of a universal civilization. Ottoman intellectuals immediately began debating how to respond, blending their own ideas with European ones to synthesize their own views. [7] While some scholars have argued this resulted in a fully developed Ottoman equivalent to the French *mission civilisatrice*, I argue that the synthesis was a less explicit civilizing attitude.[8] Instead of an avowed project, the attitude was expressed only in piecemeal fashion in the writings of Ottoman administrators and intellectuals. The civilizing attitude was particularly Ottoman, although it increasingly merged with mainline European notions of civilization by around 1900. Ottoman civilizational attitudes did not become racialized in the same was as European attitudes did; the Ottoman notions were based around culture, particularly the difference between settled populations and nomadic ones.[9] Additionally, where European notions of civilization saw Christianity as a requirement, the Ottomans argued Islam was just as effective as a civilizing

[7] Schaebler, Birgit. "Civilizing Others: Global Modernity and the Local Boundaries (French/German/Ottoman and Arab) of Savagery." In *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion, and Modernity*, ed. Birgit Schaebler and Leif Stenberg (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 7.
[8] See Selim Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 2 (2003) and Chapter Two of the present study for more detail.
[9] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849-1919*. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 10-14.

force. Ottoman elites described civilization using the metaphor of a circle: they wrote of the "circle of civilization," or *dâire-i medeniyet*.[10] They saw themselves at the center of a modern and progressive circle, while they construed populations on the periphery or outside the circle as "backwards" or "savage;" such populations needed to be brought within the circle of civilization. Ottoman administrators increasingly leaned on this attitude for justifying their imperial actions, especially in the periphery of the empire. The result of the civilizing attitude was a tension where Ottoman officials elaborated difference on the periphery of the empire, while at the same time trying to impose norms that would result in a population that could be ruled by a standard Ottoman administrative structure.

I argue that this civilizing attitude is a component to understanding the actions of Ottoman administrators on the internal desert frontier of the empire from the 1860s until the collapse of the empire following World War I. The experiences of those at the frontiers of empire have traditionally been understudied, while actions at the imperial center have been emphasized in scholarship. Yet, the negotiations, contestations, actions, and decisions made by populations on the frontier directly affected policy at the imperial center; it was never as simple as the Sultan in Istanbul issuing orders and having frontier populations follow them.[11]

The complexity of the situation was especially apparent on the internal frontier of the Ottoman Empire; while the Ottoman government had difficulty competing with the European empires challenging its external frontiers, it was vastly more powerful than the tribal organizations at the edge of the desert. I argue that although Ottoman officials always had problems with their nomadic subjects, before the middle of the nineteenth century Ottoman

[10] For an example, see BOA. İ-DH 1244 97479 (15 September 1891).
[11]Mostafa Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 12-13.

officials did not see tribes as a problem that needed to be solved; they thought of nomads as a natural part of human society that should be accommodated.[12] The earlier Ottoman view was actually more consistent with modern anthropological approaches to pastoralist populations that emphasize the flexibility of nomads and the tribal social structure.[13] There is no hard line between settled and pastoral populations, as groups settle down in good years only to pick up and join pastoralists affiliated with their tribe in years with less rain.[14] Furthermore, contrary to modern ideas that place herding on a lower rung of the evolution of human society than settled farming, full nomadism developed long after humans started practicing settled agriculture as an adaptation to make economic use of otherwise marginal land.[15] European and Ottoman perceptions of nomadism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ran counter to the practice and history of nomadism as scholarship now understands.Modern scholars instead considers nomadism to be a relic of an earlier era that would disappear in the modern age. Ottoman officials began to consider nomads as categorically different from themselves. This view is reflected in the writings of an administrator in Damascus, who felt that "…humans who are habituated to [living in tents] would not be content even if they were dropped, out of the blue, into the most exquisite circles, as they live in tents as a matter of their nature." [16] Officials acted on their new understandings, elaborating the difference between settled and nomadic populations by creating new institutions and independent administrative units to rule nomadic populations while actively trying to force settlement. While Ottoman officials elaborated the difference

[12] See Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 19-27.
[13] Dawn Chatty, "Introduction: Nomads of the Middle East and North Africa Facing the 21st Century,' in *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa Entering the 21st Century*, ed. Dawn Chatty (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 25.
[14] William and Fidelity Lancaster, *People, Land, and Water in the Arab Middle East: Environments and Landscapes in the Bilâd ash-Shâm*. (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 30-31.
[15] A.V.G. Betts and K.W. Russell, "Prehistoric and Historic Pastoral Strategies in the Syrian Steppe," in *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, ed. Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 31-32.
[16] BOA. ŞD 2272 27 (14 March, 1879), 3.

between themselves and nomadic populations on the frontier, they also tried to conceive of methods to demonstrate the benefits of modern civilization to those populations. Their efforts led to a new policy after the 1860s that is well summarized by an early 1890s report prepared in Yıldız palace: "In fact it is supposed that the settling of refugees in the environs of Benghazi as well as commanding the homeless tribe to settle [will allow] these areas to easily be included within the circle of civilization."[17] The author felt settlement programs in Libya and Syria were critical to "civilizing" the frontier.

Refugees Become Settlers

The Russian expulsion of Muslim Caucasians in the 1860s and the refugees fleeing the Balkans after the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War created a ready supply of settlers for Ottoman officials. Refugees are often portrayed as bereft of agency; as groups of people upon whom the elites and states act. Although refugees are often in dire straits, they exert a great deal of influence on the populations and states through which they move. In fact, they were a "generative force" of history in the regions in which they were settled.[18] To emphasize their agency I try and avoid terms common in histories of refugees that compare them to water: refugees are frequently held to "come in waves" or in "influxes" and "saturate" regions, all of which invite a comparison to the unrelenting and inscrutable whims of bodies of water. They are not faceless molecules in a fluid that threatens to "overflow" a border when one's guard is down; they are human beings with an impact on history.

The refugees at the core of this study came from the linguistically diverse Caucasus Mountains. A clarification of terms is in order. North Caucasian or Caucasian are the terms used

[17] BOA. Y-MTV 53 (23 August 1891), 3. In the document, he cites the success of settlements in the Syrian desert province of Zor, also covered in the case studies of this dissertation, as evidence.
[18] Isa Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878-1939: Migration in a Post-Imperial World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 2-3.

in this dissertation to collectively refer to refugees from the Caucasus region that the Ottomans settled on their internal frontier in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Most of those people were Circassians. Other groups that are included under "North Caucasian" are Chechens, Ossetians, and Daghestanis, who emigrated from the Caucasus under similar conditions to the Circassians. Ottoman documents frequently refer to large groups as "Caucasian refugees" or "refugees coming from the Caucasus." If the Ottoman administrator writing the document knew the ethnic group specifically, they would write "Circassian refugees" or "Chechen refugees." Circassian is itself a collective term applied to a variety of Muslim ethnic groups and clans of the northwest Caucasus and the generic use occurs occasionally in documents. The only institution that was precise consistently was the Immigrant Commission, which dealt with refugee transport and settlement. Other administrators at times conflated the groups. The Ottomans did not conceive of the term "Caucasian" in the racialized manner that developed in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Ottoman usage and conception, it was simply a reference to place.[19]

Caucasian Refugees, 1864-1878

Although this study does not focus on the expulsion or migration of Muslims from the Caucasus, an overview is useful. When the Crimean War ended in 1856, the Russian Empire returned its focus to a war of conquest in the Caucasus Mountains that it had been fighting since the 1820s. The Treaty of Paris, which settled the Crimean War, declared the northern Caucasus as part of the Russian Empire.[20] The war against the Caucasians convinced the Russian

[19] For a discussion of the European construction of the "Caucasian race" as a category synonymous with whiteness, see Bruce Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), particularly Chapter 2, "Enlightenment Science and the Invention of the 'Caucasian Race,' 1684-1795."
[20] Walter Richmond, *The Circassian Genocide* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 63.

leadership that some of the Muslim Caucasians could never be integrated into the Russian state. In 1864, the Russians began a comprehensive cleansing of the main ethnic group that had fought against them; the Circassians.[21] Other Muslim groups in the northern Caucasus, including Chechens, Daghestanis, and Ossetians also began to leave the Caucasus in huge numbers, fearing extermination. The Ottoman Empire agreed to take between forty and fifty thousand Muslim refugees; Russia expelled millions.[22] Around two million Caucasians left the Russian Empire in the 1860s, with only one and a half million surviving the relocation.[23] It is possible another six hundred thousand were killed by the Russians during the ethnic cleansing operations.[24] Moving the Caucasian refugees was a major project. The Ottomans sent their own ships and hired foreign ones as quickly as possible. Conditions were grim, with high attrition due to disease and starvation that accompanied excessive waiting times during winter.[25] Ottoman stations were woefully inadequate for the number of refugees. In Varna on the Black Sea coast of the Balkans, the quarantine station was quickly overrun and the beaches are reported to have been covered with dead bodies.[26] In the 1860s, the Ottomans settled refugees from the northern Caucasus near the ports in which they were received and most refugees went to central and western Anatolia or to what is today Bulgaria. The Ottomans only sent small numbers of refugees to eastern Anatolia, however, because they relied upon local populations to support the settlement of refugees. Very few funds were available to provide such a large new population, so the government required provincial administrations to provide seeds and livestock when possible,

[21] Richmond argues convincingly that what the Russians did to the Circassians was a genocide, 92.
[22] Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 67.
[23] Kemal Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 2002),
69.
[24] Richmond, 91.
[25] Richmond, 85-85.
[26] Mark Pinson, "Ottoman Colonization of the Circassians in Rumili After the Crimean War," *Etudes Balkaniques* 3 (1971), 74.

and the government required local populations to help build housing. Eastern Anatolia was simply too poor for the state to send many settlers.[27] Furthermore, refugees, aware of the poor socio-economic conditions of the region, often refused to go there outright.

The initial settlements in the 1860s and 1870s in Rumelia and Anatolia had mixed success. Refugees were granted six years without taxes or conscription if they settled in the Balkans, or twelve years in Anatolia. In return, they had to swear allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan and improve the land they were granted.[28] Because the Ottoman Empire could provide very little in the way of material support, many North Caucasian refugees turned to brigandage, especially in the early years. The recourse to crime brought an unfavorable reputation for North Caucasian refugees among the Ottoman population. The literature and popular opinion have focused on the negative attitudes of Ottoman Christian populations towards Caucasian refugees, Muslim populations also complained.[29] Other Caucasians joined the Ottoman military or civil administration for a steady salary. While North Caucasian settlements stabilized over that period, the poor reputation they had earned in the early years led to tensions between them and their Christian neighbors. The rise of nationalism among the Christians of the Balkans increased tensions, which erupted in 1876. In the April Uprising of Bulgarian nationalists in that year, attacks on Muslim villages provoked an Ottoman response. The Ottoman military allowed irregular cavalry units to ransack and pillage Christian villages. Many of those irregular units were made up of Caucasian settlers who had been slowly finding stability in the region by

[27] Georgi Chochiev and Bekir Koç, "Migrants from the North Caucasus in Eastern Anatolia: Some Notes on their Settlement and Adaptation (Second Half of the 19th Century- Beginning of the 20th Century), *Journal of Asian History* 40, no. 1 (2006), 83.
[28] Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: the Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 115.
[29] Chochiev, 97.

becoming affiliated with the Ottoman administration.[30] The uprising provoked outrage in Europe. The Ottomans refused to concede reforms demanded by European powers to their rule in Bulgaria, and in response the Russians declared war. The 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War was a disaster for the Ottomans, who lost almost all their European territories. European powers held Caucasian settlers as a principal cause of the outbreak of violence and war.[31] The treaty that concluded the war placed explicit restrictions on Circassians, and the policies of the newly autonomous Bulgarian province forced them to leave.[32] While many Circassians joined previously established settlements in central and western Anatolia, the Ottomans sent tens of thousands to the desert frontier of the empire. The investigation of this resettlement will be the focus of the case studies of the present study.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is organized as a series of case studies to investigate the intersection of different versions of Ottoman civilizational attitudes towards the internal desert frontier of the empire and on the populations, both local and settled by the Ottomans, who lived there. Chapter 2 covers the arguments of the dissertation in detail. It discusses the developing notions of civilization among Ottoman bureaucrats from the 1860s until World War I and provides a periodization for the different phases of the Ottoman civilizing attitude. The chapter also discusses how tribal nomadic populations at the desert frontier of the empire became targets for

[30] Why the Caucasian settlers participated in massacres has been argued in various ways. Usually it depends on what side a scholar's sympathies lie. Obviously, the Christian and Muslim conflicts of 1876 fit easily into the "ancient hatreds" theory common among nationalist scholars. Richmond argues that it was a reasonable reaction of Caucasians to a Slavic Christian population similar to the Russians who had exiled them from their home. Others argue this was the intended consequence of Ottoman demographic engineering. Actual detailed scholarship based on primary documents, however, is scarce to the point that these arguments are speculation. A detailed account of communal relations in the Balkans between Caucasian settlers and their new Christian neighbors would be welcome.
[31] Gingeras, 26.
[32] Article 15 of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin bans the Ottomans from using Circassians as irregulars and regulates Ottoman rule of the provinces left in Europe.

the civilizing project and the turn to model cities as a method for attempting to bring nomadic populations into line with Ottoman notions of modernity and civilization.

Chapter 3 analyzes as the first case study the planned settlement of Circassians in the ruins of the ancient town of Cyrene, Ayn-ı Şahhat in Turkish, to the east of Benghazi in the Ottoman province of Libya. While the state abandoned the project, this example is useful to consider as it highlights the planning behind Ottoman settlement practices. The Ottoman government deliberated the project at length and went as far as sending an investigatory commission to North Africa before deciding to discard the plans. The government debated the plans at length, frequently addressing the civilizational deficiencies of the nomads who lived in the area before ultimately deciding against settlement for reasons were both environmental and political. In the early 1890s, the area around Benghazi experienced an epochal drought that resulted in desperate conditions for the population that already inhabited the region. The drought coincided with a change in civilizing attitudes in Istanbul, as Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909) shifted from settlement plans towards establishing personal patronage networks with autonomous groups on the frontier. In the case of eastern Libya, that shift manifested as a series of envoys sent to the Sanusi order in the African desert.

Chapters 3 and 4 consider the Circassian settlement at Quneitra, a town near the Golan Heights in southern Syria. Chapter 3 focuses on the settlement of the town and the integration of Circassians into the society and politics of southern Syria from the 1870s to 1888. In the 1870s the Ottoman governors of Damascus were trying to centralize their control over rural Syria. In 1873 they settled a small pilot colony of Caucasians before reinforcing it with a major settlement in 1878. Ottoman officials settled the Circassians directly on pasturelands being used by the Fadl nomads.

The Circassians initially struggled with their neighbors before embracing the institutions and infrastructure provided by the Ottoman administration in Damascus. They then used their alignment with the local government to dominate their nomadic neighbors. Chapter 4 covers the settlement in Quneitra until 1900. It argues that environmental causes, specifically an outbreak of typhoid among the human population and of cattle plague among the livestock population, destabilized the fragile Circassian settlement at Quneitra. The fear created by the epidemics caused an otherwise small quarrel with the neighboring Druze village of Mejdel Shams to rapidly escalate. The rural disturbance led to the tight integration of the Circassian community with the Ottoman administration in Damascus and the dominance of Ottoman authorities over the inhabitants of Jabal Druze. The Druze had chosen to gain favor with the court of Abdülhamid by sending envoys to Istanbul instead of working with local officials. In the ensuing violence, Abdülhamid abandoned his protection of the Druze, and the local Ottoman forces and Circassians ended Druze autonomy for a generation. The episode illustrates how the choices of refuges turned settlers altered the trajectory of society and politics for an entire region.

Chapter 5 investigates a third area of the internal frontier of the Ottoman Empire; upper Mesopotamia. In 1866, the Ottoman governor-general of Kurdistan chose to settle a group of Chechens in the town of Resülayn on pastureland that was controlled by various Kurdish and Arab tribes. The Chechen community was remote, as it was a week's march from the nearest Ottoman administration center. The Ottoman government only supported it for a decade and a half before shifting resources elsewhere. Largely left to their own devices, they became active participants in the tribal politics of the area. They played an important balancing role in the conflict between the Arab Şammar tribe and the Kurdish Millî tribe, the latter of which became powerful as a beneficiary of Abdülhamid's personal patronage. By 1908, the Chechens were

trafficking illegal rifles across the open Syrian desert, on behalf of the Millî tribe before turning on them when the 1908 revolution caused the Millî to lose the protection of Abdülhamid. As in the case of Quneitra, a settlement of Caucasian refugees the Ottomans intended as models for the nomadic population ended up having a dramatic impact on the rural society and politics of their region that was drastically different than what planners had intended.

The conclusion takes the history of Quneitra and Resülayn to World War I and their different trajectories in the post-Ottoman period. Both groups chose to join the Ottoman military in the face of British invasion, although they had differing responses to the Mandates. The Chechens of Resülayn chose to withdraw from Syria with Turkish nationalist troops while the Circassians of Quneitra enlisted as part of the indigenous troops who aligned with the French. The conclusion argues against the notion that Caucasian communities simply allied with the state; instead, it argues that the rural social and political networks the settlers had become parts of over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries drove the decisions of their communities after the collapse of Ottoman power. Their decisions are illustrated by the position of the rivalries that had developed in the Ottoman era: the inhabitants of Jabal Druze led the resistance against the French; the sons of the Millî chief whom the Chechens had betrayed allied with French forces.

Neither of those rivalries were driven by "ancient hatreds;" they had both developed over mundane matters in the years since settlement. Furthermore, neither decision was made out of some essential quality of Caucasian immigrants that favors the state. Different Caucasian settlers chose different sides of the French occupation depending on local contexts. The untidy response illustrates the ultimate effect of the Ottoman civilizing attitude and the policies that resulted from it: the policies succeeded in pushing settled populations well into the semi-arid zone that had

been inhabited only by nomads in the 1840s, but the decisions made by Caucasian settlers were frequently at odds with what Ottoman administrators had anticipated. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire saw former Ottoman administrators as well as the frontier populations of the empire make a variety of personal decisions based on local contexts that would set the stage for the restructuring of the Middle East in the 1920s and beyond.

Chapter 2: The Ottoman Civilizing Attitude and the Internal Frontier

Introduction

Ottoman officials sent tens of thousands of Muslim Caucasian refugees to settle at the edge of the Syrian desert from 1866 to 1878 and drew up plans to send thousands more to the hinterland of Benghazi in Libya. The settlement sites, however, were in active use by nomadic pastoralists. Ottoman administrators justified giving land that was already under use to new settlers by arguing that they were acting in the name of civilization and development. This chapter argues that the Ottoman "civilizing attitude" was a distinctive aspect of Ottoman policy in peripheral regions of the empire from the 1860s. It furthers two trends from the literature influenced by the postcolonial turn in Ottoman studies: that the Ottoman civilizing attitude was *historical,* undergoing change over time that can be measured and that the primary site of enactment was at the *frontier* on the interior border of the Ottoman Empire and the desert and steppe. The Ottoman civilizing attitude went through three phases after being developed in the 1860s. The first was a distinctly Ottoman formulation that heavily drew from the work of the medieval Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), which was promoted by many important reform-minded Ottoman administrators and involved forced sedentarization of nomads and the placement of model agricultural settlements. When this version did not produce the desired results Sultan Abdülhamid II tried to institute a different version starting in the 1890s. Abdülhamid's plans revolved around bringing tribal populations into Ottoman civilization and modernity by creating direct patronage ties to the Sultan. Bureaucrats and officers who had come up through the imperial Ottoman education system promoted the final version, after 1900. It had many continuities with the version promoted by earlier *Tanzimat* era administrators, although it

was much more closely aligned with the concepts of civilizations European imperialists espoused.

I argue that the Ottoman civilizing attitude was primarily targeted at populations on the internal frontier of the empire. Studies of the Ottoman frontier have privileged Ottoman borders with other empires such as the eastern frontier with Iran, or frontiers where other empires threatened to encroach, such as in Yemen or Libya.[1] The current study investigates what happened on the internal frontier of the Ottoman Empire; that is, the frontier region on which the Ottomans faced no imperial rivals, only tribes or autonomous settled communities. While the Ottoman state may have struggled to compete with Russia in the Balkans or France in North Africa, it was overwhelmingly more powerful than the tribal political organizations on their internal frontier. The power differential allowed the Ottomans to expand their authority along the internal frontier even as their empire contracted along its external borders. The population of the internal frontier consisted chiefly of members of nomadic tribes, although heterodox Muslim sects on the frontier who practiced settled agriculture but refused to be ruled by regular Ottoman administrative practices periodically became targets of the civilizing attitude. I support the argument that the internal frontier was a primary site of enactment for policies driven by the Ottoman civilizing attitude, first by defining the frontier in political and environmental terms. It then argues that the Ottomans began to categorize nomadism as a backwards relic of a bygone age that would disappear before modern progress. The new understanding contrasted with earlier conceptions of nomads as full participants in history and populations that could be usefully accommodated in Ottoman imperial policies. Ottoman administrators and elites not only began to describe their actions in ways that elaborated the difference between them and their nomadic

[1] For example, Sabri Ateş's recent study provides an extensive genealogy of the concept of borderlands and frontiers in Ottoman thought yet applies it only to Ottoman borders with other empires. Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

populations, they began to govern in ways that aimed to eliminate nomadism. The increasing tendency of Ottoman administrators to see nomadism as a problem that needed to be solved culminated in the decision to place Caucasian refugees in model agricultural settlements among the tribal populations of the empire in the 1860s and 1870s under the initial version of the Ottoman civilizing mission espoused by reform-oriented Tanzimat administrators. This chapter concludes by setting the stage for the three planned settlements on the internal desert frontier of the Ottoman Empire that this dissertation takes as its case studies. While the planned settlement in Libya never happened, the Caucasian settlers sent to southern Syria and upper Mesopotamia formed self-sustaining communities that remained in place until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and beyond. Their actions and decisions had major impacts on the rural societies of which they formed a part as well as on provincial politics; and, after the Great War, on the policies of the nascent League of Nation Mandates in the Middle East as well as the Turkish Republic.

The Ottoman Civilizing Mission and its Discontents

The notion of an "Ottoman civilizing mission" was first proposed by Selim Deringil in 2003, who argued that the Ottoman Empire justified imperial policies in a manner that was equivalent to the *mission civilisatrice* of France.[2] Ussama Makdisi used a similar theoretical framework to come to similar conclusions, although he argued the attitude of the Ottomans was more akin to Orientalism.[3] The existence of an Ottoman civilizing mission or Orientalism was hotly debated at the turn of the twenty-first century. Deringil and Makdisi's complementary

[2] Selim Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 2 (2003): 311-342, 317.
[3] Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review*, 107, no. 3 (2002): 768-796. Makdisi's version does not go so far as suggesting Ottoman Orientalism translated to a systemic set of policies. Deringil's adoption of the term "civilizing mission," however, suggests a systematic view that Ottoman administrators enacted.

subject matters and successive publications have tied them together as the main theoreticians of the argument. Deringil and Makdisi's work engaged with the school of postcolonial studies that flourished in the 1980s and 1990s through the vibrant contributions of Indian scholars of the subaltern school dealing with the legacies of British imperialism. The attempt to discuss an internally developed Ottoman notion of civilization represented an attempt to apply postcolonial theory to Ottoman history. The application of postcolonial thought to the Ottoman Empire resulted in an enduring tension: can one apply a set of theories meant to critically unpack the complicated and variegated legacies of colonialism to an empire that is not usually categorized as a colonial empire?

For Deringil and Makdisi, the answer is yes. Deringil is explicit, coining the term "borrowed colonialism" to articulate his argument.[4] Developing theories from his monograph *The Well-Protected Domains*,[5] Deringil argues that Ottoman actors internalized the ideas of their imperialist European rivals and began to consider the empire's own peripheral regions as potential sites of colonialism, wedding their centralizing and modernizing projects to a "civilizing mission."[6] Deringil sees the civilizing mission idea manifesting as a "colonialist stance" directed at the periphery that would help the empire survive against its aggressive imperial rivals. He identifies nomadic populations as a primary target for this nineteenth century project and stresses that non-Turkish imperial subjects could easily join the system and become "… part of the Civilizing Project as Civilizers."[7] Makdisi, however, is less explicit than Deringil. He argues along a similar line that Ottoman elites absorbed the ideas of European orientalists that perceived the Islamic East as backwards and behind the West on a universal temporal scale,

[4] Deringil, "They Live," 312.
[5] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1999).
[6] Deringil, "They Live," 311.
[7] Deringil, "They Live," 338.

where contemporary Europe represented the height of modernity. The Islamic peoples of the world were not only far behind on that timeline, they were stagnant while Europeans were progressing at full speed. Ottoman elites felt that they themselves, and others at the center of the empire, were not quite as far along the trajectory as the Europeans but were still moving forward into modernity. These elites then applied this logic to justify imperial policies enacted upon subjects of their empire they felt were backwards.[8] For Makdisi, the backwards subjects of the Ottoman elites were the Arabs. Makdisi's argument is implicitly colonial: it reads back post-World War I Arab and Turkish nationalisms' depiction of a stark alterity between Arabs and Turks into interactions between Ottoman Arabs and Ottoman Turks. In this telling, "Ottomanism"- a shared identity for all Ottoman subjects that downplayed ethnic, linguistic, or religious affiliation- was never an option for Arabs. Indeed, the whole idea of Ottomanism, for the entirety of the latter half of the nineteenth century, was nothing more than a Turkish colonialist project aimed at erasing Arab identity. Usually, Ottomanism's shift towards "Turkification" is dated to some time after the Young Turk Revolution in 1908.[9] Makdisi, therefore, makes post-1908 or even post-World War I nationalist ideals the center of his analysis of Ottoman imperial ideology.[10]

The Ottoman civilizing mission was not a western import into Ottoman thought. Birgit Schaebler has argued that the Ottoman civilizational attitudes were just one of many nineteenth century reactions to the challenge issued by France earlier in the century. She reconceptualizes the nineteenth century obsession with "civilization" as an interplay between global and local forces that interacted when Europe responded to the jolt of Napoleon's "civilizational

[8] Makdisi, 769-771.
[9] See Hasan Kayali, "Turkification," in *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pgs 82-96.
[10] Makdisi, 793-794.

challenge." In her understanding the same forces that drove various European states to develop notions of civilization caused the Ottomans to begin describing their modernizing project in civilizational terms. In her example, Germany as well as the Ottoman Empire had to conceptualize their own notion of "civilized" while constructing its requisite other, the "savage." According to Schaebler, scholars have historicized the German project as a "natural" product, while the essentially different "East" merely imported and aped Western models.[11] In reality, the Ottoman Empire's project was not a derivative and inferior version of Western models, it developed contemporaneously and coequal with them.

Ottoman elites did not just discursively construct a difference between themselves and elements of the Ottoman population; they acted on these ideas in peripheral regions. Thomas Kuehn has made a convincing case that the Ottomans did practice a form of colonialism in the early twentieth century in Yemen.[12] Kuehn adapts Partha Chatterjee's definition of colonialism as a "rule of colonial difference" to Ottoman circumstances by using the phrase "politics of colonial difference."[13] He argues that these politics have been elided in studies of Ottoman history because the Ottomans did not differentiate based on ethnicity or race, but on culture. The fact that they differentiated ruled populations by culture instead of race marks a key difference from what he terms "colonial Ottomanism" and European colonialisms. Kuehn's key difference from Chatterjee is that Ottoman ideas were not built around essential concepts like race, but

[11] Birgit Schaebler, "Civilizing Others: Global Modernity and the Local Boundaries (French/German/Ottoman and Arab) of Savagery," in *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion, and Modernity*, ed. Birgit Schaebler and Leif Stenberg (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 7.
[12] He did so in a series of articles and in his monograph on Ottoman rule in Yemen. My synthesis of Kuehn's arguments is drawn from his monograph, where the ideas elaborated in the earlier articles are most fully developed.
[13] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849-1919* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). His discussion of his terms is on page 10-14. In addition to his discussion of terms, he lists other key differences between the Ottoman and European forms. He notes that an important feature of European colonialism was the denial of liberal rights and participation in politics to the colonized. In the Ottoman Empire, no subject had liberal rights during the Hamidian era. When the Second Constitutional Period began, however, Yemen sent delegates to the Ottoman Parliament. Ottoman politics of differentiation did not share this feature with European colonialist projects.

mutable features like culture. While the Ottomans elaborated difference, they also tried to create paths for those being "civilized" to join what they termed the "circle of civilization." Hence, the politics of difference instead of Chatterjee's rule of difference. Kuehn demonstrated how the Ottoman Empire elaborated and enforced politics of difference in Yemen and how they drew from European examples but also from older forms of Ottoman imperialism and the complicated Ottoman domestic politics of the Tanzimat. Crucially, he argues that the Ottoman core was administered differently from peripheral regions. In the periphery, administrators felt that the population was not prepared for markers of Ottoman administrative modernity. He writes, "[Ottoman officials] often viewed culture, not race, as the principal marker of difference: local 'backwardness' and 'savagery' were not perceived as innate and immutable, but rather as a condition that could be overcome through the imposition of those norms of governance, education, and religious practice that the Tanzimat state defined as civilization."[14] Another issue was that the Ottomans were "neither able nor willing to erase difference"[15] even as they were justifying their rule in civilizational terms and nominally attempting to enforce standardized Ottoman rule on Yemen. In practice, this meant Ottoman officials based ruling decisions in Yemen on local custom rather than the Tanzimat order.[16]

Not every scholar who has assessed these arguments has been convinced by them. Notably, Özgür Türesay acknowledges that Kuehn has identified a clear case of Ottoman colonialism in Yemen after 1908. The fact, only one case has been identified convincingly lends strength to Türesay's argument that Ottoman imperial activities occasionally led to "colonial

[14] Kuehn, 93.
[15] Kuehn, 11.
[16] Kuehn notes that Eugene Rogan in his work *Frontiers of the State* demonstrated some of these principles in another Ottoman periphery, although those flexible measures were not nearly as differentiated as those in Yemen. Kuehn, 90.

situations."[17] Türesay also correctly points out the cardinal methodological problem with much of the debate regarding the postcolonial turn in Ottoman studies: the foundational set of articles are ahistorical. Makdisi and others draw from a variety of sources to make their point and arrange them in a loosely chronological order that nonetheless does not demonstrate change over time or give proper weight to debates going on in Ottoman circles at the time. For instance Makdisi presents the *post facto* claims, i.e. made after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, of the Turkish feminist and author Halide Edib (Adıvar) as her understanding of events as they were happening.[18] Türesay concludes that the most correct way to interpret the evidence presented by scholars following Makdisi and Deringil is class difference. He argues that scholars have mistaken a type of what he terms the "social exoticism" of the Ottoman elite or nobleman towards his social inferiors in the periphery for a civilizing or colonial attitude.[19]

Türesay makes several good points but does not engage with all the arguments of the authors he criticizes. Notably, he systematically argues against only one strand of their argument, that of Ottoman colonialism.[20] He ignores the existence of a discursive "civilizing mission" advanced to legitimize Ottoman activities in the periphery, as shown by Kuehn. Türesay also focuses on a narrow reading of primarily French colonialism, which creates a Eurocentric argument that follows a very strict list of criteria that would be impossible for the Ottoman Empire to meet. The focus on debunking the colonial aspect of the Ottoman rule does not allow

[17] Özgür Türesay, "The Ottoman Empire Seen Through the Lens of Postcolonial Studies: A Recent Historiographical Turn" *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 60, no. 2, trans. Cadenza Academic Translations (2013), 127-145.
[18] Türesay, 141. He points to Kuehn as the one scholar correctly historicizing the tensions and debates that drove the phases of the Ottoman civilizing mission over time.
[19] Türesay, 138-139.
[20] The others are: orientalism *alla turca*, the Ottoman man's burden, modern Ottoman imperialism, colonial Ottomanism, borrowed colonialism, and the Ottoman colonial project. The works that coined these terms are cited above. Türesay, 128-129.

for the nuanced discussion found in other analyses, but especially Kuehn's and Schaebler's.[21] It is a critical part of Kühn's argument that the Ottoman Empire worked to eliminate difference whenever possible. When the Ottomans were able to impose Tanzimat administrative norms on a population, they did. When they could not, which was especially true in remote and peripheral areas, they moved to rule by taking into account the "customs and dispositions" (*'adat ve emzice*) of the local population; that is, elaborating a politics of difference, even if the end goal was to destroy those differences.[22] Schaebler provides a theoretical framework that undermines Türesay's other main point, namely that colonial action has to conform to a narrow set of criteria that are based on the exact circumstances that led to modern European colonialism. Her argument sees *all* civilizing missions and the actions that flow from their use as a reaction to the "civilizational challenge" issued by the French Empire under Napoleon. There was not a separate "eastern" reaction from a "European" one; they all flowed from the original challenge.[23]

The Evolution of the Late Ottoman Civilizing Attitude: The Early Bureaucratic and Hamidian Strands

A historical periodization of the multiple and distinct iterations of the Ottoman civilizing attitude has been missing from the literature. Establishing the contours of the development of the Ottoman civilizing mission over time will provide a historical while furthering a key insight from Kuehn's work- that there was no centralized Ottoman policy. The lack of a consistent and rigid policy is why I prefer the term "civilizing attitude" instead of "civilizing mission." Often, the ideas espoused by Ottoman administrators found expression in a less rigorous sense than the term "mission" implies. Different Ottoman officials at different times had different ideas about

[21] Notably, Schaebler's introduction that is one of the most nuanced and helpful theorization of the postcolonial turn is *not* listed nor cited in Türesay's work.
[22] Kühn, 91.
[23] Schaebler, 4.

what civilization meant and how to best enact their ideas on the population of the internal frontiers. The discursive aspects of different manifestations of the Ottoman civilizing attitude and resulted from myriad local, provincial, and imperial actors debating, negotiating, and contesting the best way forward. Crucially, different groups of Ottoman elites themselves argued for different courses at different times, creating a complicated historical narrative that has often been overlooked. I tackle this in a twofold way: by establishing that different groups with different interests that argued for and executed different courses of action in the late Ottoman period; and by creating a periodization that fits the evidence drawn from the primary sources examined for this dissertation. The first civilizing agenda is what I will refer to as the "bureaucratic strand," which had two versions. Tanzimat-era bureaucratic reformers developed the earlier version in the 1860s, which lasted until the late nineteenth century. The late version had many linkages but also several important differences and was espoused by graduates of the Imperial Ottoman civil and military schools from around 1900. It lasted past the end of the Ottoman Empire. The second was the "Hamidian strand," which was that of Abdülhamid II and his circle of confidants during his reign from 1876-1909; this strand downplayed the importance of administrative institutions in favor of building personal loyalty to the Sultan. Abdülhamid hoped these personal patronage networks would inspire his clients to give up their locally-bound loyalties revolving around provincial notables or bureaucrats and join in the project of Ottoman modernity. These strands prevailed in different periods: the bureaucratic strand in the 1860s and 1870s, the Hamidian view in the 1890s, and the resurgence of the bureaucratic strand in the early 1900s.

The first period of the civilizing mission was driven by the great Tanzimat-era statesmen, notably Midhat Pasha and Ahmet Cevdet Pasha. Chris Gratien points to both men's disdain for

nomadic populations along civilizational lines.[24] Makdisi cites Midhat Pasha condemning the nomadic populations of Nejd in central Arabia and Yemen in southwestern Arabia as evidence that the primary axis of the Ottoman civilizing mission was along racial lines, with Ottoman Turks trying to civilize the Arab populations of the empire. Midhat's proclamation identified the problem to be "rebellious tribes and clans of the desolate regions of the desert" and that "… those who oppose the state, particularly those who have distanced [themselves] from civilization and settlement, and have remained in a state of savage ignorance and nomadism."[25] This phrasing, however, fits more closely in line with the argument that Midhat did not see the Arab provinces writ large as backwards, but merely the nomadic populations. Subhi Pasha is a lesser known reformer who provides another excellent example of similar views. He was the first to translate Ibn Khaldun's work into Turkish. He also was the governor of Damascus in the early 1870s, where he fixated on the Bedouin population. Subhi exoticized the Bedouin while trying to peacefully entice them to sedentarize. In 1872, he organized a performance of Bedouin warfare and hospitality in the desert east of Damascus.[26] Not only did he invite most of the resident European consuls to the show, but also the notables of Damascus. The event illustrates how Tanzimat reformers of this era elaborated difference in their effort to rule nomadic populations. As Subhi exoticized the nomads for a European audience, he made a point to demonstrate the difference between nomad and settled to the urban population of Damascus.[27] Subhi's generation of administrators, who had great influence on Ottoman imperial practice in the provinces from the 1860s until the 1880s, understood sedentarization and settlement as solutions to what they perceived as the problem of nomadic "backwardness." A similar attitude later became pervasive

[24] Chris Gratien, "The Ottoman Quagmire: Malaria, Swamps, and Settlement in the Late Ottoman Mediterranean," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 4 (2017), 588-589.
[25] Makdisi, 790.
[26] PRO. FO 195/994 No. 34, 11 October 1872.
[27] When Kaiser Wilhem II visited southern Syria in 1898 on a state visit, the Ottoman governor of Damascus had the Bedouin put on almost the exact same show for the Kaiser. FO 195/2024 No. 55, 10 November 1898.

in the Ottoman bureaucratic class that came up through the Ottoman education system. The system culminated in a stint at either the Imperial Bureaucratic School or the Imperial War Academy, both in Istanbul. While this version was subdued during the Hamidian period, it became the norm again when organizations formed by the graduates of the Imperial War Academy overthrew the Hamidian regime in 1908.

The intellectual genealogy of the views espoused by Ottoman reformers of the early bureaucratic strand in the 1860s and 1870s is traced by Schaebler. She argues that, in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, Ibn Khaldun's famous work, the *Muqaddimah* (the "Introduction" to history), had a profound impact on Ottoman intellectual life. Cornell Fleischer demonstrated the Ottoman rediscovery of Ibn Khaldun's work in the second half of the seventeenth century and how it became popular and influential in Ottoman intellectual circles during the late eighteenth century.[28] Şükrü Hanioğlu notes the unique position of the *Muqaddimah* among Ottoman intellectuals: when an Ottoman journal asked for donations towards a new library in 1864, the only non-European tome contributed was a copy of the *Muqaddimah*.[29] Ibn Khaldun's general argument was that nomadic populations had certain advantages that allowed them to overtake decadent urban dynasties. Once the nomadic population settled and its chiefs installed themselves as kings, however, they became decadent in the urban environment and a target for future generations of nomadic populations to overthrow. Thus, nomadic populations were a key generative force driving history forward. His term for

[28] Cornell Fleischer, "Dynastic Cyclism, and 'Ibn Khaldûnism' in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Letters," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 18, no. 3-4 (1983), pg 198-220. pg 200. He further argues that Ibn Khaldun was not as revolutionary as normally understood, but merely confirmed other Ottoman intellectual's works. For the purposes of my argument, however, the utilization of Ibn Khaldun's specific arguments and their proliferation in the 19th century is my chief concern.

[29] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pg 95. Hanioğlu signals his skepticism of the postcolonial turn in Ottoman studies in a footnote in the same work, on page 87, noting in a footnote that Ottoman sources referred to settling nomadic populations with the term *temeddün* in the early 19th century. This comment does not engage with the literature that covers the coining of the term *medeniyet* in the 1840s.

settled populations was *hadara* and for nomadic populations *badawa***.** Schaebler then traces the history of the Ottoman word for civilization, *medeniyet,* which first appeared in a dictionary from 1843-46.[30] Türesay points out that while the Ottomans who coined the term could have drawn from Ibn Khaldun's terminology and used something along the lines of *hazariyet*, they instead chose medeniyet, which implies they felt Ibn Khaldun's term was insufficient to describe the modern concept.[31] While the term was coined in the 1830s or 1840s, it became a popular topic of discussion in the 1860s. Schaebler provides a summary of the argument made in the Ottoman Journal of Natural Sciences (*Mecmua-i Fünun*) from 1862-1865. The editors counterposed medeniyet strictly with *bedeviyet*, marking that term as more clearly meaning "barbarity" than its literal translation of "nomadism."[32] Their writing signifies a clear departure from Ibn Khaldun, whose contributions had so influenced Ottoman understanding. In his theoretical work, nomad and settled are intertwined and the former drive history, albeit in a cyclical fashion.[33] The work of these intellectuals in the 1860s created something different and new in Ottoman parlance: the idea that nomads were totally apart from settled life, backwards, and on their way out of history and human society. Critically, Schaebler also notes that in these early discussions, the hard dichotomy of Western versus Eastern modernity had not yet been conceptualized. Europe was still seen as a model, and European attempts to "bring civilization" to other parts of the world were therefore seen as a positive phenomenon. As she notes, the Ottomans saw their efforts to "bring civilization" to populations on the periphery of their empire in a similarly positive way.[34] The view developed in the 1860s, then, was a more "Ottoman" discourse of civilization. Elites

[30] Schaebler 17.
[31] Türesay, 131. *Hazariyet* would have been based on Ibn Khaldun's term for settled, *hadar*. Instead it is based on an Ottoman word for city, *medina*.
[32] Schaebler, 18.
[33] Deringil, in his article "They Live in a State," has a different interpretation of Ibn Khaldun's understanding of the relationship between nomad and settled. For him, Ibn Khaldun saw the nomad as "anathema" to the settled. This was not quite the case. Deringil, "They Live in a State," 317.
[34] Schaebler, 19.

espousing the argument clearly saw it in dialogue with traditional Ottoman theories of statecraft. As we will see, however, the generation of young Ottomans that formed the Committee for Union and Progress, which overthrew Abdülhamid's regime in 1908, had far fewer connections to the Ottoman or Islamic influences that characterized the earlier period of the civilizing discourse in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Abdülhamid and his closest advisors shared many of the same views of the bureaucrats, although their decisions on how to execute their ideas differed greatly, resulting in the Hamidian strand of the Ottoman civilizing project. The civilizing attitude of Abdülhamid and his advisors in Yıldız Palace existed in parallel to, and often on top of, that espoused by the increasingly professional and numerous Ottoman bureaucrats. Abdülhamid enacted numerous policies and practices that seemed to work against the grain of the otherwise centralizing and standardizing tendencies of the late Ottoman bureaucracy. In other words, most of the machinery of the Ottoman state set up in the Tanzimat era aimed to eradicate difference and produce a population that could be ruled by a standardized bureaucracy, and not by informal methods of governance such as local patronage networks. Yet, there are many prominent examples of Abdülhamid setting up patronage networks that bound certain individuals and groups to his person instead of the state proper. The tension of a centralizing ruler encouraging the ambitions of local powerbrokers occupies a central position in recent scholarship that deals with the Hamidian period.[35] I will focus on one strand of this seeming contradiction that became apparent while researching the case studies that comprise this dissertation. The distinction was noted by Klein, although she only considers it in the context of Abdülhamid's interactions with the Kurdish populations of eastern Anatolia. It was, in fact, a key part of Ottoman history in other regions.

[35] See Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), Mostafa Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), and Deringil's *The Well-Protected Domains.*

She argues that Abdülhamid and his inner circle reacted to the inefficacy of previous administrators' plans to sedentarize nomadic populations by settling on a plan that would bind the chiefs of Kurdish tribes to the Ottoman state through a personal connection to the sultan himself.[36] She writes, "[the Hamidiye project] could penetrate a region where the notion of 'Ottomanness' was weak at best, could help 'civilize' and assimilate the people who lived there, and could further the Ottoman project to extend state power, or 'governmentality."[37] Klein resolves the tension by arguing that Abdülhamid's cultivation of patronage networks that answered to him alone was a clever attempt to subvert an otherwise hostile and difficult to manage group by using his personal legitimacy as a mechanism of governance. Her argument fits with Deringil's depiction of Abdülhamid as a shrewd modernizer who used his image aggressively and pragmatically managed it at home and abroad to craft a wide variety of tools of legitimization.

I argue Abdülhamid's support of patronage networks loyal to him was an avenue for the Ottoman civilizing mission that sought to bring tribal populations into Ottoman modernity via personal connection to the Sultan, who portrayed himself as the paragon of Islamic and Ottoman civilization in the modern world. Abdülhamid's personal patronage networks existed side by side with and often superseded the normal bureaucracy. It was a policy that Abdülhamid enacted all over the internal frontier of the empire. In Benghazi this was the appeal to the Sanusiyya religious movement, and in southern Syria it was a similar attempt to cultivate personal loyalty with the leadership of the Druze in the Hawran as well as the Rashidi dynasty of the Nejd. The settler colonies that are the primary focus of the present study were an important part of the early bureaucrat-driven civilizing mission of the 1860s to 1880s. The Hamidian preference for

[36] Klein, 5.
[37] Klein, 23. She also discusses the issue in detail from pages 14 to 16.

constructing patronage networks instead of focusing on settlement left Caucasian settler colonies in an awkward spot, as Abdülhamid preferred to deal with the neighbors of the settlers rather than the settlers themselves. Local Ottoman administrators in Hamidian era were often placed in a difficult position as they had developed links with the settlers and worked to assist them in the face of orders from Istanbul that preferred groups that were often hostile to the settlers. That complexity is teased out in the next section.

The Evolution of the Late Ottoman Civilizing Attitude: The Impact on Caucasian Settlers and the Emergence of the Late Bureaucratic Strand

North Caucasian settler communities planted around the Syrian desert experienced both the early bureaucratic civilizing strand as well as the Hamidian version of the 1890s-1908. It is important to emphasize that both strands often existed side by side and when they did so, were frequently at odds with each other. Caucasian communities often formed close relationships with the local Ottoman administration after they were settled. Seteny Shami's work on reconstructing the identity formation of Caucasian communities in Amman argued that identities and social organizations that existed before the repeated forced migrations of North Caucasian refugees were replaced by a shared identity that was formed through the "…experience and conditions of migration."[38] The oral history of settler communities also revealed that… "new leaderships emerged as people clustered around individuals with access to resources, links with the Ottoman bureaucracy or knowledge of Turkish, especially during the long waits at ports and other gathering points."[39] Another focal point of identity formation was in contrast to the local populations that inhabited the area before Caucasian settlement. Shami's insight was borne out in

[38] Seteny Shami, "Historical Processes of Identity Formation: Displacement, Settlement, and Self-Representations of the Circassians in Jordan," *Iran and the Caucasus* 13, no. 1 (2009), 146.
[39] Shami, 147.

this dissertation's historical research. North Caucasian settler communities formed tight bonds with certain bureaucrats in the regions in which they were settled. This was not because of gratitude towards the Ottoman sultan for providing them a home, as is frequently asserted in the literature and even in European language primary sources from the era, but because the desperate conditions of North Caucasian communities led to the social structure being reoriented around individuals with access to Ottoman state resources.[40]

For example, the Circassians in Quneitra and Chechens in Resülayn become tightly integrated with the local Ottoman magistrates assigned to their districts, and especially in Quneitra, became closely associated with the gendarmerie. The latter relationship is especially pertinent for this study's argument, as the Ottoman gendarmerie had a critical role in "colonizing the countryside" for the Ottoman state.[41] Ottoman authorities in Damascus consistently supported the Circassian communities in Quneitra and further south, even against the wishes of Abdülhamid, because individual Circassians were so tightly intertwined with the professional Ottoman bureaucrats' project of bringing the Syrian countryside into the regularized Ottoman state system. This is not to say Abdülhamid was totally disinterested in the plight of the Caucasian refugees. There is good evidence that he shared concern for them much like bureaucrat such as Midhat Pasha did. In an 1878 settlement to the northeast of Aleppo, the settlers were preceded by an official proclamation that Abdülhamid himself wished the local population to accommodate the settlers as they were fellow Muslims who had been driven out of their home by a Christian empire.[42] The factors that caused Abdülhamid's policies to diverge

[40] For examples, see Walter Richmond, *The Circassian Genocide* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 119 and David C. Cuthell, "The Muhacirin Komisyonu: An Agent in the Transformation of Ottoman Anatolia, 1860-1866" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2005), 254.
[41] Nadir Özbek, "Policing the Countryside: Gendarmes of the Late 19th-Century Ottoman Empire (1876-1908), *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2008), 49.
[42] Verney Lovett Cameron, *Our Future Highway to India Volume II*, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1880), 4.

from the interests of the settlers was partly a factor geographical distance and partly of the relationships Caucasian settlers forged with their local Ottoman administrators. As the decades passed, North Caucasian communities on the frontier became more closely intertwined with local bureaucrats. When Abdülhamid began attempting to "civilize" by constructing personal patronage networks, he did so by inviting leaders of frontier communities to Istanbul and investing them with titles and gifts. Caucasian communities close to Istanbul did this, as there are many notable examples of Circassians from communities near to Istanbul becoming prominent in imperial politics, but the ones examined in this study did not. While the heads of the communities among which North Caucasians were settled such as the Druze of Jabal Druze or the Millî Kurds worked to take advantage of Abdülhamid's policies, the settlers in Quneitra and Resülayn instead relied on the connections they had already engendered among the local bureaucracies. Abdülhamid likely did not see communities in relative good standing with the local authorities as in need of the extra step he took for groups that contested Ottoman authority on the frontiers. The overlapping and at times contradictory facets of the civilizing attitude meant that Caucasian settlements at the frontier could be considered both subjects and objects of it at different times.

The contradictions were more pronounced in the final phase of the development of the Ottoman civilizing attitude: the late version of the bureaucratic strand of the generation that produced the Committee for Union and Progress. There was an evolution from the early bureaucratic strand of civilizing attitudes from a more distinctly Ottoman concept of civilization towards one that, by the early 1900s, was hardly different from contemporanous European understandings of the term. The very late Ottoman understanding continued through the early years of the Turkish Republic and beyond. The late bureaucratic civilizing strand referenced

above is reflected in the writings of Halide Edib Adıvar, or of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who argued he was bringing the Turkish nation in line with universal civilization.

The final phase is evident starting around 1900; after that point, Ottoman administrators began to settle Caucasian migrants and refugees fresh from the Caucasus along the same lines as they had been in the 1860s and 1870s. By 1900 the Circassians in Quneitra and the Chechens in Resülayn had been in their settlements for decades; both Ottoman and European observers tended to treat them as part of the inherent social fabric of their districts, although Ottoman officials still referred to Caucasians as "immigrant" when discussing North Caucasian settler communities.[43] Caucasian settlements placed as agents of the civilizing attitude of the early bureaucratic strand therefore could themselves become objects of the late bureaucratic civilizing mission. Several examples illustrate this shift. In 1904, for example, an exasperated Ottoman administrator pleaded for more schools in Quneitra and some surrounding districts, as "the local tribes which live in a state of nomadism along with the Circassian immigrants and the Druze, still need to be saved from the condition of savagery and ignorance in which they are found by making them enter into civilization (*henüz hâl-ı bedeviyette olan yerli urbân ile muhâcirîn-i Çerâkesenin ve Dürzilerin (illegible adjective) daire-yi medeniyete idhâlı ile bulundukları bu hâl-ı vahşet ve cehâletten kurtarılmaları*).[44]

Furthering my argument that this is the era when the modern Turkish understanding became very closely aligned with a standard European definition of "civilization," the modern Turkish archive worker who wrote the catalogue description for this document helpfully

[43] This is evidenced in numerous primary and secondary sources discussing the ethnic make-up of Muslim populations of the Ottoman Empire; many sources cavalierly refer to a region's population of being made up of "Turks, Kurds, Circassians, and Arabs" or other similar formulations. The fact that Caucasian settlers were recent settlers is elided.
[44] BOA. DH-MKT. 57 (2 July 1904).

summarized it using the modern Turkish construction, "*medenileştirilmeleri.*"[45] European observers noted the tendency of the young generation of Ottoman administrators to resent being sent to "uncivilized" rural locations. In 1908, the regional governor of Hawran resigned his post because of the lack of "civilization" there and in 1909 the regional governor of Kerak, further south, resigned for similar reasons.[46]

Finally, in 1909, the Ottoman magistrate in charge of Quneitra asked to be recalled.[47] According to the British consul, the Circassians became bothered that the official was interfering with their dominance over neighboring, non-Circassian peasant populations. The magistrate, the British consul informs us, was an "educated and liberal" Ottoman, of the type that had begun to populate the ranks of the Ottoman administration in the new constitutional regime. The Circassians of Quneitra fomented a riot against him under the pretense that someone had heard gramophone music coming from the second floor of the magistrate's mansion. They declared it "un-Islamic" and agitated until the Ottoman provincial government in Damascus replaced him with a more amenable official. It is easy to imagine that officer complaining to the governor-general in Damascus mirroring the language used by the regional governors in the years prior and declaring that he could not work in such "uncivilized conditions." This perception, then, was very close to the attitude espoused by elite individuals like Halide Adıvar or Atatürk. Civilization was not just the presence of flourishing, settled farmers as it had been in earlier decades; it was the presence of the comforts of cultured, modern life with amenities like an active social calendar or the possession of modern technology like the gramophone. The different historical phases of the "civilizing attitude" are important to understand, but it is just as important to understand the geographic and cultural area at which these attitudes were focused.

[45] This can be translated as "those who would become civilized."
[46] PRO. FO 195/2311 1909 Volume I, No. 1 January 2, 1909.
[47] PRO. FO 195/2312 1909 Volume II, No. 51 October 18, 1909.

The Desert: The Final Internal Frontier

The other main argument of this study is that the internal frontier of the Ottoman Empire was a primary site for the enactment of the Ottoman civilizing mission. This section will discuss the concept of the frontier and the geographic and environmental concept of desert before moving onto a discussion of the populations who lived there before the incursions of the centralizing nineteenth century Ottoman state. In Deringil's article that originally formulated the notion of an Ottoman civilizing mission, he identifies the civilizing mentality as a reaction to increasingly hostile European imperial neighbors. Therefore, works tracing the impact of Ottoman civilizing attitudes have focused on sites of contestation between the Ottoman Empire and European states: Kuehn looks at Yemen, Minawi at North Africa, and Klein at the border between the Ottomans and the Russian Empire. The present study was designed to examine what the Ottomans were doing when no one was looking: it takes as its case studies locations on the internal frontier of the Ottoman Empire, far from European threats or European political or economic interests. While the Ottoman Empire may have struggled to compete with France, Russia, or Britain, it was overwhelmingly more powerful than the populations present along its internal frontiers. The concern with internal frontiers follows the challenge of the influential work by Eugene Rogan on the Ottoman frontier in Transjordan to consider other regions of the Ottoman Empire as frontiers. This study utilizes the theoretical underpinnings of Rogan's work along with several recent theoretical innovations concerning Ottoman frontiers.[48] Rogan borrows from historians of the Americas and Africa to define a frontier as a "zone of interpenetration between two previously distinct societies, one of which is indigenous to the region and the other intrusive." A frontier is open from the time the foreign society encroaches and closes once one

[48] Notably, the Ottoman-Iranian border has produced several excellent works addressing this topic in recent years, such as Sabri Ateş's work and that of Arash Khazeni, *Tribes and Empire on the Margins of Nineteenth-Century Iran* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

group has enforced their rule.[49] The case study of Quneitra in this dissertation illustrates a frontier at all stages. When considering Syrian history from the Mandate period onwards, Quneitra seems so far removed from the internal frontier in Syria as to have always been a core area. That is just an illusion created by how dramatically successful the Ottoman settlement of Circassians was. The Ottomans opened the frontier with the Circassians settlement in 1873, but by as early as the 1890s the effect of the settler colony had been so transformative that later generations of Ottomans and Europeans treated Quneitra as if it had always been part of Damascus's intimate orbit. The elision of the frontier near Damascus was further reinforced by the fact that the Ottoman project was successful enough that the internal frontier in Syria was as far south as Maan or even Tabuk by 1908.

Applying ideas from political science to Ottoman history, Cem Emrence's recent work identifies the frontier, alongside the coast and the settled interior, as one of the three different trajectories that determined post-Ottoman historical paths. He identifies the Ottoman frontier as an area that was "… politically volatile, economically undeveloped, and demographically sparse… with limited state presence, the Ottoman frontiers were ruled by culturally distinct and politically autonomous leaderships that represented heterodox religious communities from non-Sunni faith."[50] Sabri Ateş also follows this definition, adding the proviso that "closing" a frontier is a totalizing term, and closing a frontier "… is rather the tightening of a frontier filter."[51] The case for the critical importance of analyzing the Ottoman internal frontier has recently been made

[49] Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6. He cites H. Lamar and L Thompson, "Comparative Frontier History," in H. Lamar and L. Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
[50] Cem Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy, and the Islamic State.* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2012), 75. Emrence also mentions the civilizing attitude of the Ottomans towards the populations of the frontier. In typical scholarly fashion, he cites the dual foundational articles of Makdisi and Deringil as evidence.
[51] Ateş, 10.

by Mostafa Minawi. He works from the assumption that empire was not structural, but a process. Since it was a process, it was always changing and subject to negotiation, contestation, and configuration by all of the stake holders in the system; the unstable frontier and periphery is just as important as the center. Actions, violence, and practice at the edges of empire had profound effects on how those at the center, traditionally privileged in scholarship, could proceed.[52]

I use terminology and an analytical approach following Rogan while also furthering the argument that an investigation of the frontier of empire is critical to understand the process of empire. While Minawi focuses on Africa and the Hijaz, where the Ottoman Empire was in a high stakes conflict with European empires, I focus on a type of internal frontier that was far from inter-imperial rivalries, and add an environmental dimension to the political one discussed by scholars of Ottoman history to date, namely the frontier along the vast internal Ottoman border with the desert. Ottoman historiography has developed in a way that has hidden the historical continuities experienced by populations along this extensive zone; as post-Ottoman national borders have heavily influenced the study of the Ottoman Empire in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Studies focus on one region that became a state later, such as Syria or Transjordan. Alternatively, studies of an Ottoman-wide phenomenon are often broken down by a theme such as education or administrative institutions. The focus on post-Ottoman nation-states or institutions among scholars means that the implications of Ottoman imperial policy on the desert frontier have not been adequately studied. It is also important to situate the Ottoman Empire fully within the global context of nineteenth century imperial projects that "… were actively engaged in efforts at the representation, control, and settlement of wildlands and the

[52] Minawi, 12-13.

domestication of indigenous populations."[53] While Arash Khazeni demonstrates this for Iran, the pattern holds for other American and Eurasian states. Adam McKeown discusses the expansion of China into Manchuria, Russia into Siberia, and American states such as the United States and Argentina expanding their populations and state administrations into the sparsely inhabited steppe, desert, and plains areas adjacent to their core territories.[54]

The Ottoman border with the desert in Africa, Syria, and upper Mesopotamia was vast and has not received scholarly attention commensurate with its size, although this is changing. Alan Mikhail's recent edited volume has aligned Ottoman studies with previous work in other fields on environmental history. [55] It separates older scholarship that deterministically interpreted the history of the environment in the Middle East and North Africa as both very delicate and prone to causing the periodic collapse of societies because settlement near the desert was so fragile. Instead, Mikhail urges that historians work with a "dialectical understanding" of humans and their environment, where the environment sets parameters at a given moment, but humans interact with it and change it.[56] Accordingly, while I will provide a basic definition of the desert for clarity, the desert was not and is not a fixed environment. The actions of the people who lived there, Ottoman administrators, infrastructure projects, and environmental agents like disease all shaped concepts of the desert. When two historical actors spoke to each other about the desert, they were often using different definitions. For example, when the French and British consuls accompanied the reforming governor of Damascus on an expedition to southern Syria in 1869, they were told to expect desert. Instead, they were shocked to discover fertile, adequately

[53] Khazeni, 10.
[54] Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders*. (New York: Columbia Press, 2008). See Chapter 2, "Global Migration, 1840-1940."
[55] Alan Mikhail, "Introduction- Middle East Environmental History: The Fallow between Two Fields," in *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa,* ed. Alan Mikhail (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.
[56] Mikhail, 5.

watered land. Since the land was given over to nomadic populations, it seems, the Ottomans on the expedition considered it desert.[57] Similarly, different states occupying the same space in different periods could understand the desert differently. What Norman Lewis charted as the Ottoman "desert line," or frontier of settlement, in the nineteenth century was *well* west of the line demarcated for the "zone of nomadism" drawn by the French by law in 1940.[58] This study follows Norman Lewis's basic definition based on rainfall: regions with less than 200 mm of rain a year is the region of steppe and desert that is difficult to farm without irrigation, between 200 mm and 350 mm was a "transitional" or semi-arid zone where enough rain falls for either settled farming or pastoralism, and above 350 mm can be easily used for farming.[59] While many regions of the world have rainfall patterns like this, the Middle East and North Africa are highly unusual for the pattern these rainfall levels create on the landscape. In what J.R. McNeill calls a "mosaic" pattern and Donald Quataert calls a "checkerboard" pattern,[60]the grass and scrub lands of the transitional zone and the arable lands that receive enough water to readily farm exist in a highly entangled state that resembles the interlocking fingers of two clasped hands. Because of this pattern that is common from North Africa to Iran, but unusual elsewhere on Earth, pastoral populations and settled populations in this environment have had an unusually high degree of interaction throughout history. Quataert notes that pastoral land could exist within ten kilometers of a major city like Aleppo or Homs.[61] The fact that semi-arid and arid places existed so close to major urban and agricultural areas meant that the frontier under discussion in this study could be

[57]PRO. FO 195/ 927 1869 No. 20 October 26, 1869.
[58] Lewis, map on page 4 for the French line contrasted with the similar line in Ottoman times in maps on pages 16, 18, 20, and 22.
[59] Lewis, 1.
[60] J.R. McNeill, "The Eccentricity of the Middle East and North Africa's Environmental History," in *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa,* ed. Alan Mikhail (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 34. Donald Quataert, "Part IV The Age of Reforms, 1812-1914," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, ed. Donald Quataert and Halil Inalcık (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 861.
[61] Quataert, 861.

only a few days march from Damascus, Benghazi, or Diyarbakır. The unique environment of the region meant that the human inhabitants had to adopt specialized techniques to sustain themselves. For many near the desert in the Middle East, this meant the adoption of nomadism as a means of economic production.

The Invention of Nomadism

Nomads have existed for most of recorded history. Narratives of hostility between nomadic and settled populations are almost as old. The modern concept of nomadism as an economic model and mode of life that is a vestigial remain of a primitive form of human existence, however, is relatively recent. This is as true for Ottoman thought as it is for European thought. Modern scholars have treated categories invented by nineteenth-century Ottomans and Europeans as inherent and immutable and have therefore missed their historical construction.[62] I draw from Reşat Kasaba's recent study which argues that Ottoman administrators were not against nomads from the beginning of the empire, and in fact took advantage of what mobile populations could offer the state.[63] He also contends that the Ottomans did not even begin to systematically attempt to sedentarize nomads until the eighteenth century, when they did so as a response to the pressure of solidifying borders in Europe and as punishment. Until then, the Ottomans accommodated nomads, mostly by acknowledging existing groups and ruling through leaders of those groups, instead of altering their internal structure or migration patterns. Kasaba

[62] This section follows important work in the field of Middle Eastern and North African history that has demonstrated the fundamental *modernity* of categories that we now hold to be immutable or rooted in the ancient past. Prominently, this includes Makdisi's treatment of sectarianism, White's treatment of minorities, and Shepard's treatment of decolonization. See: Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011). Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[63] Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 19.

notes that "For the most part these identifications were based on what the tribes did and who they were, rather than being categories imposed from above."[64] He further argues that Tanzimat era administration was different, as officials began to systematically work to settle and catalogue nomadic groups. I take Kasaba's argument a step further by arguing that mid-nineteenth century Ottoman administrators, intellectuals, and other elites created discursive categories for the pastoral populations of the empire and then elaborated those differences in practice over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Once Ottoman officials began thinking of nomadic populations as a problem to be solved, they began to formulate the solution to the problems: one of which was the placing of model agricultural settlements. Therefore, the invention of nomadism was an important aspect of the Ottoman civilizational attitude, and it is hard to imagine North Caucasian settlements along the frontier without the construction of that idea. To understand this development, we must first discuss what nomads are and are not.

A nomad is a person who is a mobile practitioner of livestock agriculture, which is otherwise known as pastoralism. Nomads, however, exist on a spectrum based on how they migrate and what they produce. A "full" nomad is one whose dwelling is completely mobile and moves depending on available resources.[65] The practice of full nomadism is rare though, and most people referred to as nomads are semi-nomadic or practice agropastoralism. Semi-nomadic populations have no fixed dwellings but follow a fixed migration pattern. Agropastoralists practice sedentary agriculture when circumstances allow, such as in a certain season or in a good year of rainfall, but otherwise return to migratory agriculture. These definitions do not perfectly overlap with the traditional, self-identified categories of nomads in the Middle East: "camel"

[64] Kasaba, 21-27. Quote from pages 26-27.
[65] My definitions are drawn from Schlee, an anthropologist who synthesized the literature on the subject to critically assess the relevant terms. Günther Schlee, "Forms of Pastoralism," in *Shifts and Drifts in Nomad-Sedentary Relations* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2005).

people and "sheep" people.[66] Camel and horse nomads tended to be much more mobile, as they controlled access to the large beasts of burden that made life in the true desert and steppe possible.[67] Their mobility has led to many observers, both historical and scholarly, to identify them as full nomads, even though many of them move regularly between specific pastures according to season, making them semi-nomadic. The germane point is that even self-identifications do not line up with modern definitions. Günther Schlee points out that even the definitions presented by him are inexact and open to interpretation. This is because contemporary understandings of social science emphasize that true categorizations which draw a hard line between mobile populations and settled agriculture obscure more than they illuminate. Crucially, the conclusions of these allied fields have not been incorporated fully into the field of history.[68] The most recent scholarship in the social sciences has tended to emphasize the flexibility of those who were traditionally placed in categories such as nomad or semi-nomad. These scholars have shown that pastoralism was rarely the sole source of economic production for groups traditionally categorized as nomads; in the modern era they work for wages, guide tourists, and participate in the export economy.[69] Nomads have been demonstrated to have maintained isolated farmsteads around oases in the Ottoman era, while at the same time settled villagers might maintain large flocks of animals.[70] Populations flexibly adapted to conditions, and an individual who practice settled agriculture during one cadastral survey or while being observed by a European traveler, might take up pastoralism if water conditions deteriorated.

---

[66] Schlee, 23.
[67] Dick Douwes, *The Ottomans in Syria: A History of Justice and Oppression* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1988). Chapter one goes into great detail on this in eighteenth century Syria.
[68] Even though historians write introductions and chapters alongside anthropologists and archaeologists in edited volumes that assess the current state of studies on nomadic populations, the information presented by those social science fields has had scant impact on the field of Ottoman history.
[69] Dawn Chatty, "Introduction: Nomads of the Middle East and North Africa Facing the 21st Century,' in *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa Entering the 21st Century*, ed. Dawn Chatty (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 25.
[70] William and Fidelity Lancaster, *People, Land, and Water in the Arab Middle East: Environments and Landscapes in the Bilâd ash-Shâm* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 30-31.

One key to the flexibility of these populations was their socio-political organization, the tribe. This study follows Rogan's definition of a tribe as a "social group defined in genealogical and territorial terms."[71] Members of a tribe acknowledge a real or fictive shared ancestor and history that creates social cohesion. This "genealogical idiom" allowed for great flexibility, as different lineages could provide for different levels of inclusion into the larger tribe.[72] Tribes also had specific claims to territory at specific times. Before the nineteenth century, the borders of these territories constantly shifted, were constantly contested, and were not easily regulated by outside authorities. The fact that these territories defied outside impositions is clear from Ottoman strategies of rule until the nineteenth century. Ottoman policy was essentially to note where tribes said their territory was and then rule accordingly, with a minimum of interventions in the internal affairs of the group.[73] The flexibility of this social organization is a key part of the argument of Lancaster and Lancaster: much of scholarship attributes the inhabitants of villages of geographical Syria to a separate group of settled farmers that abandoned property when nomads were unchecked by a central state, when in fact most of those people were members of a tribe. Because they were part of the same social structure as the pastoralists, they might simply have begun herding more in the face of less state control or after a few years of poor rainfall.[74] As we shall see, the *actual* practice of populations along the semi-arid zone that stretched across the southern borders of the Ottoman Empire was disregarded in favor of discursive constructs that supported the actions of Ottoman administrators.

In Ottoman terms, a tribe was not just a social organization, but a political one. Although Kasaba asserts that the Ottoman Turkish word for tribe, *aşiret,* adopted from the Arabic, was

[71] Rogan, 7.
[72] Lancaster and Lancaster, 16-17.
[73] Kasaba, 24.
[74] Lancaster and Lancaster, 28-31.

simply the most general of many terms used, by the nineteenth century it had acquired a political dimension.[75] Redhouse's dictionary records aşiret as meaning "a tribe, clan; especially, a nomadic tribe."[76] In official Ottoman correspondence, however, it also had the connotation of a tribe that could function autonomously from the Ottoman state. Even if a population of a village was part of a tribe, they were referred to by phrases like "villagers" or the "people of Islam" in lieu of using the word aşiret. Aşirets became a special focus of Ottoman administrators in the second half of the nineteenth century, as they were nominally under Ottoman sovereignty, even though most leaders of these socio-political organizations could honestly claim that they had never actually made a commitment to the Ottoman state. Additionally, aşiret had no ethnic connotations. Ottoman documents would mention if the tribe was Arabic (*urbân)* or Kurdish (*kürt*) if the distinction was important at the time. It is the contention of this study, however, that ethnic distinction was not important to Ottoman officials espousing and acting upon civilizational notions. The relevant factor for Ottoman officials was that they were a nomadic tribe. The term aşiret was applied to any Arab, Kurdish, or Turkmen tribe that practiced nomadism. The specific meaning of aşiret as an autonomous political structure that could ably resist the expansion of Ottoman authority is a key point of my argument, as the Ottomans made a point to place Caucasian settler communities in regions dominated by aşirets.

Despite the profound flexibility and blurred lines between the two, human societies have insisted on categorizing the practitioners of settled and pastoral agriculture as discursive opposites. Part of the reason for this is that Islamic cultures have opposed the settled (*hadar)* to the nomadic (*badawa*) for centuries. This focus has bequeathed the common name in English for

[75] Kasaba, 21.
[76] James W. Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon Shewing in English the Significations of the Turkish Terms,* (Constantinople: A.H. Boyajian, 1890), 1302.

Arab nomads, "Bedouin," or those who wander. Obviously, populations that sometimes practice pastoralism have had an outsize impact over the span of Islamic history, which has led to a certain exoticism that associates Islam with nomadism in the scholarly and popular imagination. But how old are these fundamental distinctions? Hadar and badawa are Ibn Khaldun's terms, and it is almost impossible to find a discussion of the topic in scholarship that does not prominently feature his theoretical contributions.[77] Importantly, as mentioned above, Ibn Khaldun argued that nomads were a key driving force in history, not a category that existed outside of it or in a negative sense. The strong negative connotations of nomadism, as Kasaba has shown, were not a feature of Ottoman policy towards migratory populations until the eighteenth century; scholarship's assumption that nomads were a problem overcome by the Ottoman Empire instead of a pragmatically utilized socio-economic group is a reification of nineteenth and twentieth-century scholars' attitudes towards populations who sometimes practiced nomadism. The attitude described above, however, is not just that of European scholars; it was also developed within the Ottoman Empire.

The change in Ottoman conceptualization and creation of "nomadism" as a category that was on its way towards extinction is part and parcel of the development of the civilizing attitude discussed above. The attention paid to the development of the term *medeniyet*, or civilization, in Ottoman discourse has been a key part of the post-colonial turn in Ottoman studies. Medeniyet stands out because it was a new coinage; it is harder to track the development of ideas concerning *bedeviyet*, or nomadism, because the development was directly adapted from Ibn Khaldun's term, badawa. But, as Schaebler demonstrates, bedeviyet clearly began to shift from

[77] For example, in a treatment of the nomadic population in pre-Islamic Arabia, a scholar starts his genealogy of ideas with a treatment of Ibn Khaldun's theory and uses Ibn Khaldun's terms developed in the 14th century for describing the scenario in the pre-Islamic era. Mohammed Bamyeh, "The Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia," in *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa Entering the 21st Century*, ed. Dawn Chatty (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 26-33.

meaning purely nomadism to something more akin to "barbarity" in the middle of the nineteenth century. Additionally, when Deringil noted the stock phrases upon which he built his argument in the foundational article of this scholarly turn, he observed that bedeviyet was frequently paired with *vahşet* (savagery) and *cehalet* (ignorance).[78] It is clear, then, that bedeviyet underwent a similar semantic shift even though it preserved Ibn Khaldun's terminology. Accompanying this shift was a concurrent one that moved away from earlier Ottoman understandings of nomads as a group that existed in a positive relation with settled societies. Instead of a driving force in history, nomads began to be understood as a backwards relic of a previous era that was destined to disappear in the modern age.

The changing views of nomadism from a mode of economic production that exists as a force that can move history forwards to one that is backwards and will disappear in a progressing society is key to my argument, and explaining the importance requires a return to the anthropological and archaeological literature. Scholarship in those fields has reached the conclusion that, contrary to modern understanding of nomadism as a primitive social form that represents a lower rung than settled life on the evolutionary ladder of human society, nomadism developed long after agriculture and cities. Pastoralism actually requires a "… high technical expenditure (collapsible household, keeping and training of pack and possibly riding animals), high organizational expenditure (coordination of movements, demarcation or negotiation of pasture and water rights), and is ecologically highly specialized."[79] Betts and Russell note that full nomadism did not appear until the first millennium before the common era, when camel

[78] Deringil, "They Live," 317.
[79] Schlee, 27.

herding become technologically possible.[80] Hence, it is most useful to think of people who practice nomadism as a specialized extension of urban populations that make economic use of otherwise marginal or unusable land. This understanding has led one of the leading anthropologists studying nomads, Emmanuel Marx, to the conception that the people whom he studied were pastoral nomads in only "a very limited sense."[81] Herding animals is far from being the only economic activity in which nomads participate. Since the development of nomadism as a method for utilizing the vast tracks of arid and semi-arid land near cities in the Middle East and North Africa, nomads have become a critical part of the settled economy that cannot be easily separated, as individuals tended animals, planted crops, traded, smuggled, took administrative jobs, and participated in hired-out labor.[82] This model can be extended into the past; there have been people practicing migratory pastoralism for centuries, but they have been flexibly adapting to the land available to them rather than existing in a stark contrast to settled life.

The strong identification of pastoralism as primitive is a product of the evolutionary thinking of urban intellectuals, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The evolutionary paradigm, an outgrowth of Enlightenment thought as well as European imperial encounters with populations around the globe, held that societies progressed via a process of evolution.[83] Intellectuals conceptualized these stages of human progress as hunting, herding, settled agriculture, and commerce.[84] Europeans envisioned themselves as the pinnacle of this process. Urban intellectuals looked at the surrounding countryside and considered their fellow

[80] A.V.G. Betts and K.W. Russell, "Prehistoric and Historic Pastoral Strategies in the Syrian Steppe," in *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, ed. Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 31-32.
[81] Emmanuel Marx, "Nomads and Cities: The Development of a conception," in *Shifts and Drifts in Nomad-Sedentary Relations*, ed. Stefan Leder and Bernhard Streck (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2005), 4.
[82] Marx, 8-10.
[83] The development of social-evolutionary thinking is described in Schaebler, page 14-15; Lancaster, page 10; and Schlee, page 27.
[84] Schaebler, 15.

countrymen as lower in evolutionary development. The evolutionary understanding has been remarkably pervasive; although anthropologists began to question that model as early as 1900,[85] the concept is still embedded to a remarkable extent in scholarship and popular understanding. When the evolutionary view of human society began to influence Ottoman intellectuals, it resonated with their own understandings of nomadic populations, as Ibn Khaldun also conceived of badawa as a state that predated hadara.[86] The Ottomans began to conceive of nomadic populations as a social category and as a mode of life that would disappear in the modern age. For example, in a sweeping treatise on nomad policy prepared by Ottoman administrators in Damascus in 1879, the goal was complete eradication of the nomadic lifestyle. The problem with the previous twenty or thirty years of nomad policy, according to the advisory council of Damascus Province, had been that forced settlement at gunpoint was only effective as long as the military was present to enforce it. The end goal was clearly total eradication of this mode of life, as options were dismissed because forced sedentarization would *still* leave nomadic populations forty or fifty years. "Those humans [habituated to the wandering life] would not be content even if they were put, out of the blue, into the most exquisite and refined circles, as those who prefer [living in] tents do so as a mature of nature."[87]

The goal of eliminating migratory pastoralism was new in Ottoman history. It became such a pervasive aspect of Ottoman thinking and policy, however, that when scholars have looked back at Ottoman history, in conjunction with their own unquestioned attitudes that derive from the social evolutionary theory of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, they have reproduced this justification. Lancaster and Lancaster identify the entire "frontier of settlement

[85] Schlee, 27.
[86] Bamyeh, 34.
[87] BOA. ŞD 27 (11 June 1879).

model," put forward by historians such as Norman Lewis and Eugene Rogan, as an extension of the line of thinking that reifies this set of artificial constructs.[88] Once Ottoman officials discursively constructed a category of "nomadism" that was strictly opposed to modernity, they began to act on those assumptions. The evolutionary understanding of nomadism was an important aspect of the "politics of difference" put forward by Thomas Kuehn. It seems counterintuitive that the Ottomans elaborated these cultural differences while at the same time argued that they were trying to eradicate difference, which is the crux of my argument. The Ottoman attempts to "civilize" the pastoralists elaborated the new categories at the very time they were coming up with methods to sedentarize those populations while attempting to collapse the complex economic lives of populations on the internal frontier into a single axis of economic production: migratory pastoralism. This process is apparent when one considers the characteristics of Ottoman policy towards nomads from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards: categorization and surveillance,[89] territorialization,[90] and systematic attempts at forced sedentarization. Further, this elaboration of difference created the need for a discursive other that could provide a model for nomadic populations: agricultural settlers. Ottoman planning for model settlements, the act of settlement, and the ensuing history of those settlements constitutes the bulk of this study's analysis. To provide context for this focus, the mid-nineteenth century Ottoman practice of creating of model cities will be examined, followed by an appraisal of the population that was utilized as model farmers: North Caucasian refugees.

[88] Lancaster and Lancaster, 30.
[89] Kasaba, 103-108.
[90] Ateş, 33. Theorized by Charles Maier, this refers to the shift of modern states that focuses on what happens *within* borders after states no longer look at their interiors as "passive enclosures" to be distributed to loyal families or administrators. In the context of Ottoman nomadic policy, I use it to refer to the process of creating borders for certain tribes, confining them there, and actively intervening in their internal politics. The assigning of space to tribes and forcefully keeping them there may not have been new in the 19th century, but the systematic nature of Ottoman policy in this direction was.

Ottoman Model Settlements, 1850-1870

The Ottoman Empire began constructing model cities on contested frontiers in the 1850s. One scholar of model Ottoman cities has suggested that Ottoman city building as an element of centralization was "unusual," due to its limited occurrence.[91] There are, however, enough examples to consider this a general aspect of Ottoman policy on frontier regions starting from the middle of the 1850s. The first settlement that has received dedicated scholarly treatment is the town of Mecidiye in the region of Dobruja in modern Romania. It was explicitly linked with the refugee crisis that ensued after the Russian Empire began expelling large numbers of Muslims from the Caucasus. The Mecidiye model was successful, and Tanzimat administrators enthusiastically constructed model cities on the Ottoman internal frontiers in the 1860s and 1870s.

The importance of the Mecidiye model for Ottoman internal frontier policy merits a summary of the Ottoman construction and population of the city.[92] Dobruja had traditionally been a prosperous region, but the local population suffered greatly during the Russo-Ottoman wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and there was almost no population there in 1850. Ottoman officials sought to revive the fortunes of the area. They chose as their site a town that had been known as Karasu, which had been abandoned by 1830. On the ruins of this town, local officials proposed a planned city that could serve as an economic and administrative center and serve as an anchor point for the reconstitution of nearby agricultural villages. The

[91] Yasemin Avcı, "The Application of Tanzimat in the Desert: The Bedouins and the Creation of a New Town in Southern Palestine (1860-1914)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 6 (2009), 969-983, 974. She cites the creation of towns such as Mecidiye and the work of the Fırka-ı Islahiyye. My research demonstrates the Ottomans built more model cities than previously known.

[92] Kemal Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 2002). This example is covered in the chapter "Ottoman Urbanism: the Crimean Emigration to Dobruca and the Founding of Mecidiye, 1856-1878," 202-234.Descriptions of the Ottoman plans for Mecidiye are drawn from this chapter.

officials intended it to be a "new city" built on the ruins of the "ancient city." They drew up plans, which have since been lost, for a town centered on a government office, school, and mosque and renamed it Mecidiye, after the reigning Sultan Abülmecid I (1839-1861). It was built along the first railroad line in the Ottoman Empire and was intended to be a maintenance stop.

Ottoman administrators needed a population for their new city. They took out advertisements in major European newspapers and announced tax exemptions and other incentives that would be awarded to immigrants. The advertisements in Europe fell on deaf ears, but the Muslim population of Russia responded in droves. Crimean Tatars, worried about their security in Russia after they had sided with anti-Russian forces in the Crimean War, began emigrating to the Ottoman Empire in large numbers following 1856, and the Ottomans settled many in Mecidiye. The initial immigration of Crimean Tatars was relatively organized and planned compared to the chaos that would follow the deportation of Circassians and other North Caucasians a decade later. There was time and funds available to plan and construct the new city, in contrast to the latter settlements.

By 1860, the newly built and populated city of Mecidiye was fulfilling the goals of the administrators that had planned it. It was the anchor of a newly vital economic area that was based around flourishing settled agriculture and the railroad. It would serve as an important node in the resettlement of further Crimean immigrants and for the hundreds of thousands of Caucasian refugees that would arrive in the Balkans after 1864. Karpat concluded that the creation and building of Mecidiye was "a successful experiment in capitalistic and social engineering."[93] Mecidiye was successful both in terms of the goals of the local administrators

[93] Karpat, 226.

who had hoped to revive Dobruja and in terms of the model that it would become for other new Ottoman towns and cities.

The connected of city building, demographic engineering, and settled agriculture in the service of Ottoman centralization and economic revitalization manifested itself again in the 1860s and 1870s. Ahmet Cevdet Pasha's *Fırka-i Islahiyye*, the "Army of Reform," arrived in the port of Iskenderun on May 8, 1864, and continued on into the region of southern Anatolia and northern Syria.[94] An avatar of the reassertion of Ottoman authority in areas that had previously been outside of centralized Ottoman governance, the Army of Reform set out to sedentarize and pacify as many of the local nomadic tribes as possible. The army's mandate included negotiation with tribes that were willing to accept settlement and Ottoman rule, and the violent suppression of those that did not agree. While it should not be forgotten that this was an army bringing centralized rule and sedentarization at the end of a gun, an important outcome of the expedition was the construction of model cities and villages.

The towns were built along both the western and eastern edges of the Gavur Mountains, today known as the Nur Mountains.[95] They include Osmaniye, Islahiye, Hassa, and Reyhanlı.[96] Osmaniye is on the western side of the mountains. The others were built on the eastern side, in a rough line from Islahiye in the north to Reyhanlı in the south. The names are telling. For example, Islahiye means "Place of Reform," and Reyhanlı is named after the most cooperative tribal confederation that the Army of Reform met in the area. The expedition built another 35 villages beyond the town centers, in addition to infrastructure in the towns that included

[94] Kasaba, 101-102.
[95] Gavur Dağları means "Infidel Mountains." In the early Republican era in Turkey, the name was changed to the less charged Nur Dağları, which means "Mountains of Light."
[96] Kasaba, 102.

government offices, schools, and mosques.[97] These towns were meant to disrupt the circulation of nomadic tribes and encourage settlement. After the conclusion of the expedition, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha was appointed governor of Aleppo in 1866 and continued with a strong settlement program that included a mobile desert force and more villages and towns.

Mecidiye had demonstrated the ability of a model city to revive an area in the Balkans, and the efficacy of the model towns built by the Army of Reform had demonstrated the applicability of such a program in semi-arid regions that the government sought to wrest from nomadic populations. Both examples have a number of features in common. One is the Ottoman government's assistance in constructing buildings such as a government office, a school, and a mosque. These buildings were key components of late nineteenth century Ottoman governance. An administrative building is of obvious importance. The construction of schools was increasingly important as the Ottoman Empire sought to teach a generation of Ottoman children about their relation to the state. Mosques were important in the government's ongoing efforts at promoting Hanafi Sunni Islam as a unifying force. The Ottoman government was intensely interested in ensuring that their Muslim population practiced "proper Islam." Ottoman officials also emphasized the importance of railroads and well-built roads. They viewed productive, educated, and sedentary populations as more likely to protect the commerce generated by transportation links than nomads. It is not a coincidence that when railroads were later built into Anatolia and Syria, they often went through government constructed model towns.

Another pattern that would be replicated in the settlement of Caucasians was the construction of towns on the ruins of old cities. By the time the nineteenth century began, the

[97] Kasaba, 102.

Ottoman Empire had undergone a long period of population decline.[98] The decline led to many ruined or abandoned cities in the empire. When the Ottoman state decided to populate certain regions, it was often easy to find an old city site. Locating a place where a city once had been meant that there had been enough water to support urban life at some point in the past, which was a crucial factor in semi-arid or arid zones. Settled agriculture was important to Ottoman reformers. In documents discussing new town locations, the presence of ruins and water are often intertwined.

The question of who would settle a model town was different in both regions. In Mecidiye, settlers from outside the empire were actively encouraged. In the Gavur Mountains, the population would be settled nomads. The importation of settlers and the sedentarization of nomads would become intertwined. Instead of soliciting immigrants from outside the empire, the Ottoman state had to find homes for what would become millions of refugees. Model settlements would become an important aspect of Ottoman refugee settlement policy, even as the characteristics changed. The huge numbers of refugees overwhelmed the administrative capabilities of the Ottoman state. While Mecidiye was carefully planned and built in tandem with the arrival of Crimean immigrants, and an expeditionary army had ample funding for constructing buildings east of the Gavur Mountains, Ottoman infrastructure lagged behind the settlement of Caucasian refugees. Instead, the model agricultural settlements of refugees would be put in places that fit with Ottoman ideals of town location. Infrastructure would have to wait until local Ottoman representatives could afford to build it.

[98] The worst drought in 1,600 years in the Middle East occurred in 1591-1596. While this climate issue was global and affected many states, the Middle East has a particularly fragile environment and the effects lingered. The population in Syria shrunk, and nomadic Bedouin occupied large swaths of Syria that had been under settled agriculture. Population levels from the 1590s were not reached again until the 1850s. See Sam White, "The Little Ice Age Crisis of the Ottoman Empire: a Conjuncture in Middle Eastern Environmental History," in *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa,* ed. Alan Mikhail (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

North Caucasian Refugees and Settlement on the Internal Frontier

The Caucasian refugees that came to the Ottoman Empire starting in the 1860s provided the Ottoman state with a population to carry out its centralizing and civilizing plans. While the majority ended up in central or western Anatolia, Ottoman administrators sent tens of thousands to the ruins of cities on the internal desert frontier. The arrival of millions of refugees from the Caucasus in the 1860s, and the expulsion of those who settled in the Balkans after 1878, had many consequences on the Ottoman state, Ottoman populations, and on the refugees themselves. Caucasian refugees in the Ottoman Empire have received scholarly attention in recent years with respect to two topics: the first settlements in the 1860s and 1870s, and the impact of the second exile from the Balkans in 1878. For the earlier era, Mark Pinson set the tone for studying North Caucasian settler populations, arguing that while the Ottoman state was incompetent to the point of negligence, North Caucasian settlements were part of a deliberate strategy to adjust demographics to favor Muslims over Christians.[99] David Cuthell furthered the basic scope of this argument. For Cuthell, however, instead of demographic engineering to favor Muslims over Christians, the Ottoman goal was to "Turkify" the Anatolian interior in the 1860s at the expense of Turkmen or Kurdish populations, setting up Anatolia as the Turkish heartland for the Republican period.[100] Cuthell, along with Abdullah Saydam,[101] provide a great deal of detail on the administrative institution set up to settle refugees: the Immigrant Commission, *Muhacirin Komisyonu*.[102] Some studies focus on the victimhood of Caucasian refugees rather than Ottoman

[99] Mark Pinson, "Demographic Warfare: An Aspect of Ottoman and Russian Policy, 1854-1866" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1970).
[100] See Cuthell, Introduction.
[101] Abullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri (1856-1876)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997).
[102] The Ottoman Turkish word *muhacir* covered a variety of meanings including immigrant, emigrant, and refugee. It also had religious connotations, as that was the term used for those who followed Mohammad on the Hijra from Mecca to Medina in 622, which is the event that marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. Muhacir was supplanted by the modern Turkish word for refugee, *mülteci*, around World War I. Until then, the word was used for

intentions. Recently, Isa Blumi argued it was most useful to think of refugees in the Ottoman era as victims of shifts in globalization and capitalism.[103] Walter Richmond, using extensive Russian sources, argued the Russian expulsion of the Circassians was a genocide.[104] Stanford Shaw described the refugee settlement program as solution to a large-scale lack of cultivation in the Ottoman Empire and as part of an Ottoman attempt to enlarge its rural middle class.[105] This thesis was recently given more support by Abdullah Saydam, who found that Ottoman officials expressed hope that settlement could quickly bring new land under cultivation.

Literature on post-1878 settlement has been focused, to a large degree, on the Circassian settlement at Amman in southern Syria. That is because Amman had the rare distinction of becoming a national capital in the period following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. These works have together contributed to the "frontier of settlement" model that is dominant in Ottoman historiography.[106] Other scholars that have contributed to the study of Caucasians in Amman include Seteny Shami, Dawn Chatty, and Raouf Sa'd Abujaber.[107] Together these works have suggested that the Ottomans used Caucasians as what Troyansky has termed "imperial pawns."[108] This argument is not unique to scholarship; it was advanced by the mandatory authorities that encountered Caucasian populations in Syria after World War I. Philip Khoury noted in his monumental history of the French Mandate in Syria that the French felt the

---

any group that came into the Ottoman Empire, whether in forced migration as the result of an ethnic cleansing or genocide, or voluntarily. This study frequently uses the English translation refugee, as most subjects of the study were forced from their homes.

[103] Isa Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878-1939: Migration in a Post-Imperial World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

[104] See Richmond, Chapter 4.

[105] Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[106] The works of Norman Lewis and Eugen Rogan are examples of this argument.

[107] Dawn Chatty, *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Raouf Sa'd Abujaber, *Pioneers over Jordan: The Frontier of Settlement in Transjordan, 1850-1914*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989).

[108] Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky. "Circassian Refugees and the Making of Amman, 1878-1914," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 4 (2017), 606.

Circassians would be easy targets for recruitment to the Syrian Legion because of their connections to the Ottoman military.[109] Scholars of Jordan have long noted and expanded on the connection of the Caucasian settlers of the territory to the Hashemite family that was installed in Amman. Ryan Gingeras, in his nuanced look at local dynamics on the southern shores of the Marmara in the chaotic years leading up to and following World War I, also chronicles the propensity of Circassian settlers to become loyalists to the Sultan in the early years of Mustafa Kemal's armed struggle.[110] These observations have led to an argument that Caucasian communities remained loyal to state structures generally in the late Ottoman period immediately following the collapse of the empire World War I, ostensibly out of gratitude to the Ottoman state for taking them in during hard times.

Explaining Caucasian actions in 1918 as loyalty for Ottoman assistance in 1878, however, is simplistic and removes agency from Caucasian settlers. The Ottoman state did provide shelter for Caucasian refugees and settlers, but the conditions were terrible. Caucasian communities long remembered the inadequate response of the Ottoman state that led to so much death in transit. This did not only occur in the 1860s: one of the bitterest events according to later oral histories among Caucasians that came to Syria in 1878 was a disaster on one of the transport ships, which lead to the deaths of hundreds.[111] The Ottoman state was frequently ill-equipped to supply settlers with the promised agricultural support, and there are many cases analyzed in the present study where the Ottoman administration flat out ignored, abandoned, or took the side of other groups against the settlers. As discussed above, Seteny Shami has demonstrated that Caucasian communities reorganized themselves away from the social elites that had influence in

[109] Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 206.
[110] Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[111] Richmond, 113.

their original homeland in the Caucasus and towards those with access to the Ottoman Turkish language or to Ottoman material resources, as those individuals had the ability to provide for the community.[112] A good example of this is the tight association that developed between the Circassian community at Quneitra and the gendarmerie of Damascus; Circassians used their positions of authority in this administrative structure to punish their rivals. Caucasian settler communities took advantage of whatever opportunities they could to survive, be it reshaping local Ottoman administrative practices in their favor, resorting to banditry or smuggling, or by negotiating with local tribal groups to increase their autonomy. Ryan Gingeras emphasized the dynamism of Caucasian refugee communities, noting that their notorious turn to Ottoman loyalism during Mustafa Kemal's national movement was a result of their leaders losing out in CUP politics more than any profound loyalty to the Sultan or reactionary ideas.[113] Hamed-Troyansky also foregrounds the agency of the settlers by using an economic lens to investigate the Circassian community at Amman. He agrees the Ottoman state was crucial to the development of settler communities, but via an indirect method of suppling "legal frameworks and infrastructural investments" that the refugees used in their favor.[114] Foregrounding the indirect nature of most Ottoman assistance to the Caucasian settlers helps to deconstruct narratives of Caucasian settlers as mere lackies of the Ottoman state.

The focus on the Amman colony has provided a useful series of frameworks for Caucasian settler communities that did *not* become capitals after World War I and have therefore received less scholarly attention. This study intends to investigate settlements that were no less important than Amman in the Ottoman era, but for various reasons have not been adequately

[112] Shami, 153.
[113] Gingeras, 83-86.
[114] Hamed-Troyansky, 606.

studied because of the dynamics of scholarship in the post-Ottoman era that has privileged the nation-state. Furthermore, the present study foregrounds the agency of Caucasian settler communities. The Ottoman civilizational attitude was an important aspect of choosing settlement sites. Once settled, however, Caucasian settlers did not always act in the way the centralizing Ottoman state intended. They negotiated, rebelled, struggled for resources, and sometimes worked with the Ottoman state. While doing so, their actions had almost as much influence on Ottoman policy and administration as those policies and administrators had on them. Because actions at the frontier influenced decision making in Istanbul as much as Istanbul influenced action on the frontier, the choices made by Caucasian settlers at the edge of the desert played a key role in late Ottoman history.

Chapter 3: A Second Egypt? The Failure of Settlement Plans in Benghazi, 1880-1895

Introduction

In April 1885 the Ottoman consul from Kerch, a port in the eastern Crimea, sent an urgent series of requests to the government in Istanbul. One hundred and sixty Circassian families were waiting in Rostov to immigrate to the Ottoman Empire, and he did not have the necessary funds to hire a ship for them.[1] He received a testy response, as the Interior Ministry had already settled the matter and issued the required money. The immigrants were supposed to go join other Circassians at Çanakkale, and then be shipped across the Aegean and Mediterranean to eastern Libya.

The immigrants ended up making it to the Ottoman Empire, but they never made it to the destination planned for them, the province of Benghazi.[2] Many officials and refugees complained that Africa was too far, and it made more sense to settle the Caucasians in Anatolia or the Balkans. Proponents of the plan, however, connected refugee policy to the Porte's concerns over their North African holdings in the 1880s. The Immigrant Commission was under a great deal of stress trying to deal with the large numbers of refugees produced by the 1877-8 Russo-Turkish War. Many Caucasian refugees had already been sent to Anatolia, and many provinces were already reaching the limit of their abilities to absorb refugees. The extreme pressure on the system led to many places not previously seen as suitable for refugee resettlement to come under consideration.

[1] BOA. İ-DH 953 75394 (11 June 1885).
[2] For most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Benghazi was a *Sanjak*, or a sub-province. Usually it was subordinate to Tripoli province, but for a period it was an independent Sanjak directly subordinate to Istanbul. For most of the period under study, Benghazi was promoted to a full province, or *Vilayet* as part of Ottoman development goals for the area. A vilayet was composed of anywhere from two to four sanjaks.

At the same time the Immigrant Commission was considering North Africa for settlement, other officials were vigorously carrying out a set of reforms in the African province of Benghazi. While the Ottoman state reoccupied Benghazi in 1835 after decades of decentralized rule, its presence in the region did not extend far past the walls of the town. Starting in the 1870s and gaining increasing momentum through the 1880s, the Ottomans tried to make their administration a reality in the interior of the province. A series of crises increased the urgency felt by Ottoman officials: the 1875 Ottoman bankruptcy, the French annexation of Tunis in 1881, and the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. The first crisis called the solvency of distant provinces into question, and officials both in Istanbul and the provincial capital of Tripoli began imagining ways to make the poor sub-province of Benghazi financially self-sufficient. The occupation of Libya's neighbors to the west and east by European powers only increased the alarm of the Ottomans. The Ottomans legally declared the part of the Sahara from the coast to the Lake Chad basin to be part of their sphere of influence at the Berlin conference in 1884. The new international agreement on upholding territorial claims in Africa stipulated that land could only be claimed if an empire occupied it via settlements or military outposts.[3] The hinterlands of Benghazi therefore became targets for Ottoman settlement schemes to protect their claims during the scramble for Africa.

The unfulfilled Ottoman plans to settle Circassian refugees in the province of Benghazi during the 1880s were not only aimed at creating a self-sustaining economy or to press Ottoman legal claims in the wake of the 1884 Berlin Conference. It was also a product of the Ottoman civilizing attitude, which envisioned the radical transformation of populations and landscapes into modern and civilized bastions of development. The Ottomans hoped the insertion of model

[3] Mostafa Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 46-47.

agricultural colonies among nomadic populations would cause the hinterlands of Benghazi to emulate the "civilized" core of the empire around Istanbul in the Balkans and western Anatolia. Ottoman officials imagined settler populations would create the base of a sedentary farming economy that would expand what they termed the "circle of civilization." They understood nomadic tribes, referred to in Ottoman Turkish as *aşiret*, to be misusing land that had enough potential to be as prosperous as Tripolitania or Egypt. In the Ottoman imagination, the situation was beneficial to all parties: the government would gain a stable tax base that would also support its legal claims to the desert beyond the Libyan coast, the refugees would be given a new homeland and a chance at real prosperity, and the nomads of Benghazi would receive the "benefits" of modern civilization, whether they wanted them or not. Over the course of the 1880s, Ottoman officials in Istanbul, Tripoli, and Benghazi became increasingly interested in one area for settlement: *Jabal al-Akhdar*, or Green Mountain. The Jabal excited multiple Ottoman officials because it fit the biases of their civilizing attitude so well. It *looked* like a strip of fertile, arable land that was not being used to its full economic potential by its mostly nomadic inhabitants.

In the end, however, two factors scuttled Ottoman schemes for settling Caucasians in Jabal al-Akhdar. Firstly, Ottoman officials were so caught up in nineteenth century linear ideas of progress and civilization they failed to realize why the Jabal was inhabited by nomads: the environment was very fragile. Despite optimistic Ottoman appraisals to the contrary, there was not much ground water and the area was subject to frequent droughts. Ultimately, one such drought, which started in 1891, ended plans for sending Circassian settlers for good. Additionally, settlement schemes fell out of favor in the early 1890s. Instead, Sultan Abdülhamid II and his inner circle in Yıldız Palace felt the best way to bring frontier populations into

Ottoman civilization was a policy of putting tribal leaders into Abdülhamid's personal patronage network. In eastern Libya, this meant negotiations with the powerful Sanusi tribe and Sufi order. The Ottomans put settlement plans on hold while Abdülhamid negotiated with the Sanusis in the late 1880s. Only when Yıldız grew frustrated with a lack of progress did settlement plans begin to be considered again. After the drought, however, Abdülhamid preferred to pursue patronage politics rather than a settlement policy. Scholarship on Ottoman Libya has foregrounded Ottoman-Sanusi relations as a special characteristic of Libyan history. In fact, it was part of an empire-wide Hamidian policy that was motivated by Abdülhamid's desire to "civilize" tribal leaders by demonstrating the benefits of the modern Ottoman order through creating personal ties to his person. This chapter focuses on the settlement schemes devised and debated at the highest level of Ottoman government that aimed to settle sedentary populations in the region to not only bring the area under central Ottoman governance but also into what was considered the modern, civilized age, and why those plans ultimately resulted in failure.

Most scholarship concerning the nineteenth century history of Benghazi focuses on the importance of the Sanusi order in the socio-economic history of the region. This is, in part, because of the outsize influence of the order on the later history of Libya. While Ottoman-Sanusi relations were fraught in the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century the group would ally with the Ottomans against the Italians in 1911 and against the British in World War I. The Sanusis would remain one of the most influential organizations in Libya throughout the colonial period, and the first and only King of Libya was from the Sanusi lineage. The work of E.E. Evans-Pritchard, an anthropologist who studied the Sanusis in the early twentieth century, did much to project the congenial twentieth century relations between the Ottomans and Sanusis

backwards into the nineteenth century.[4] Other scholars are divided on the effect of Ottoman centralizing reforms in Benghazi in the nineteenth century. For example Ali Abdulatif Ahmida analyzes the nineteenth century history of the region as almost entirely independent of any Ottoman action, with the actions of the Sanusis dictating and navigating the region's transition from a self-sustaining tribal socio-political order into a mixed tributary-capitalist economy by the end of the Ottoman period.[5] Scholars such as Lisa Anderson and Michel Le Gall acknowledge that the Sanusi order still played a central role in nineteenth century Cyrenaica, but the Ottoman administration is afforded much more agency. For them, the nineteenth century history of Benghazi fits into a somewhat standard narrative of nineteenth century Ottoman reform, in which Ottoman administrators engaged in sometimes fraught negotiations with entrenched local actors with the goal of increasing centralized rule.[6] Le Gall narrates the complex negotiations and entanglements of the Ottomans with the Sanusis. He concludes that while the Ottomans and Sanusis enjoyed good relations in the twentieth century, in the nineteenth century the foundation of their relationship was contestation over taxation rights.[7] The Sanusi Order was able to collect taxes from the Bedouin, as well as proceeds from waqfs that the Ottomans considered illegal. While the Sanusi continued to collect taxes in the desert, the Ottomans were somewhat successful in compelling the Bedouin near Benghazi and other coastal towns to submit to Ottoman taxation. Other scholars discuss the nineteenth century history of Benghazi as a backdrop to understanding Trans-Saharan trade routes. These scholars, such as Ehud Toledano, do not analyze Ottoman rule in Benghazi on its own, and are content with considering Ottoman

[4] E.E Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963).
[5] Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, *The Making of Modern Libya*: *State Formation, Colonization, and Resistance, 1830-1932* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 67.
[6] Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).
[7] Michel Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables: Ottoman Administration in Tripoli and Benghazi, 1881-1902" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1986).

administration relatively inefficient and corrupt, especially compared to the dynamic Sanusis that came to dominate the internal trade routes.[8] Conversely, some modern Turkish historians consider Libya from a centralizing perspective without giving much thought to the internal dynamics of the region. These scholars include Selim Deringil and Orhan Koloğlu.[9] There are very few scholarly works that have considered Ottoman settlement plans for Benghazi in the 1880s.[10] I will provide the relevant geographic and historical context of the region before discussing the two phases of failed Ottoman settlement plans.

Geography and Terms

"Libya" in its current use was coined by the Italians in 1911 to reconnect the region to its name under Roman rule. In the nineteenth century it was known as Tarabulus al-Gharb in Arabic, "Trablusgarp" in Turkish, or "Tripoli of the West," as opposed to the Tripoli on the Levantine coast. Tripoli and its environs are referred to as Tripolitania. Tripolitania contains a large plain that is suitable for agriculture. The region to the east was known as Cyrenaica in the Roman era and Barqa in the Islamic era. In the Ottoman period the region became known as Benghazi, because the Ottomans centered their administration of Barqa at the town of Benghazi. Between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica the desert meets the sea, creating a barrier between the two. It took a month's march to reach Benghazi from Tripoli, and most communication was done by sea.[11]

[8] Ehud Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression 1840-1890* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).
[9] Selim Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, No. 2 (2003). Orhan Koloğlu, "Libya, from the Ottoman Perspective (1835-1918)," *Africa, Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istutio italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* 68, no. 2 (2003).
[10] Nedim İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999). Çinar, Ali Osman. "Bingazi'de Tarımsal Kalkınma Amaçlı Göçmen İskânı (1851-1904)," *Yakın Dönem Türkiye Araştırmaları* 3, no. 6 (2004), 19-53. Both of these works mention settlement plans briefly.
[11] Anderson, 328.

The particular area the Ottomans targeted in their settlement scheme was Jabal al-Akhdar, or Cebel-i Ahdar in Turkish, which means Green Mountain. The mountains rise sharply from the sea on the coast east of Benghazi town and, as their name implies, are covered in forests. The vegetation of the mountains is misleading, however, as there is very little underground water.[12] The promise of such a seemingly fertile region for productive agriculture would occupy Ottoman administrators throughout the late nineteenth century. In 1835 Benghazi was just one of several small coastal towns in the eastern region of Cyrenaica, and most of the surrounding population was semi-nomadic or fully nomadic. The population of Benghazi, which numbered no more than 5,000, was mostly populated by Tripolitanian and Tunisian trading families that had few ties to the nomadic population of Cyrenaica. It functioned as a small trading outpost until it was chosen to be the base for the main Ottoman garrison in the region.[13] The small towns on the coast were scattered around Jabal al-Akhdar. The ancient town of Cyrene, which gave the region its Roman name, lay in ruins on the coast at the foot of the Jabal. Cyrene's Arabic name is Shahhat and in Ottoman texts it is referred to as Ayn-ı Şahhat. The region of Jabal al-Akhdar and Ayn-ı Şahhat would be the focus of Ottoman plans to settle the region.

The Ottomans in Benghazi 1835-1880: Reform, the Sanusis, and the Abolition of Slavery

The hinterlands of Benghazi became a target for settlement in the 1880s for several reasons. The most important was the tenuous nature of Ottoman rule in Cyrenaica in the nineteenth century. Libya had been under only nominal Ottoman sovereignty until 1835. Nominal sovereignty was no longer tenable after the French annexation of Algeria in the early

[12] Ahmida, 15.
[13] Anderson, 328.

1830s, so the Ottomans invaded Tripoli to reassert central control in 1835.[14] While Tripolitania submitted after a few insurrections, it took much longer for the Ottomans to establish control in Cyrenaica. The strongest contender for authority that the Ottomans faced there was the Sanusi Order. The Sanusis built a quasi-state structure in the deserts around Benghazi in the second half of the nineteenth century that rivaled the Ottoman claims to legitimacy among the population. In addition to the Sanusi challenge to Ottoman authority, several other political and economic shifts converged in the 1880s that caused the Ottomans to seriously consider settling model agricultural colonies in the hinterland of Benghazi.

The Sanusis were a sufi order that was founded in Mecca in 1837 by Sayyid Mohammad ibn Ali as-Sanussi. As-Sanussi was concerned with the weakening of the Islamic world and sought to reform it. He came to Cyrenaica to build his order in 1842. He had toured other North African areas as far west as Tunis but decided on Cyrenaica because of the lack of European influence.[15] The Order began building lodges, known as *zawiya*, among the Bedouin tribes of the interior. As the towns on the coast were small and inhabited mostly by Ottoman administrators or traders with no ties to the interior, the Order was free to build lodges parallel to tribal divisions without government or urban interference.[16] Zawiyas consisted of guest houses, a mosque, and schoolrooms. The local tribe donated land to the lodge that would be set up as a waqf. The sheikhs of tribes frequently invited the Order to build zawiyas in their territory, and many of the Bedouin accepted the arbitration of the Sanusi in disputes. The Order intentionally built their lodges in places to maximize their political and economic control of the region. They built on earlier Greek, Roman, or Ottoman foundations, alongside trade routes, and in defensible

[14] Lisa Anderson, "Nineteenth Century Reform in Ottoman Libya," *International Journal of Middle East* Studies 16, No. 3 (1984): 325.
[15] Dennis D. Cordell, "Eastern Libya, Wadai, and the Sanusis: A Tariqa and a Trade Route," *Journal of African History* 18, No. 1 (1977): 28.
[16] Evans-Pritchard, 72-73.

positions. The Italians would later use many of the same spots during their occupation.[17] The Sanusi order rapidly grew in strength. The supra-tribal organization they created locked up much of the usable land of Cyrenaica in waqfs and encouraged the Bedouin to pay taxes and tithe to the Sanusis, not the Ottomans. In 1880 an Ottoman official reported the Bedouin sending 4,000-5,000 camel loads of grain as tribute to the Sanusi at their headquarters in Jaghbub, instead of the Ottoman administration.[18] The success of the Order led them to have a large role in the twentieth century history of Libya. They allied with the Ottomans in the 1911 Turco-Italian War and declared an independent state in 1913 following the Ottoman withdrawal. The Sanusis again allied with the Ottomans in World War I and launched an ill-fated attack against the British in Egypt. They continued to resist the Italians until the end of the colonial period, and the first and only king of Libya came from the line of Mohammad as-Sanussi.[19]

The Sanusi construction of an autonomous political order in the desert began in the absence of Ottoman authority, because the Ottomans were too weak to project their power into the desert. That changed in the 1880s, when the Ottoman administration made systematic attempts to collect taxes in Benghazi's hinterlands the first time since the reoccupation of Libya in 1835 to enforce their sphere of influence against European powers consolidating their influence in the Sahara. When the Ottomans began to move out from their coastal garrisons, they faced a strong tribal polity that challenged their attempts. Ottoman rule was first felt in the hinterland when the region was upgraded from a sub-province attached to Tripoli into a full province, or vilayet. That change in status, which lasted from 1878 to 1888, was driven by the difficulty in administrating the vast region as the Ottoman frontier pushed ever-southward into

[17] Evans-Pritchard, 78.
[18] Ahmida, 98.
[19] The importance of the order to Libyan history was further emphasized during the twenty-first century Libyan Civil War. The white crescent and star on a black field, which was the flag of the Sanusi order, was revived as the national flag.

the deserts of Cyrenaica. [20] The new status as a full province came with new problems. Benghazi Vilayet needed to support itself with internally generated taxes, rather than subsisting on subsidies from Istanbul or Tripoli. [21] The timing could not have been worse, as the actions from other administrators, pursuing a different set of priorities, inadvertently collapsed the traditional tax base of the region: the trans-Saharan slave trade. The Sanusis, a smaller and more nimble polity, took advantage of the situation by illicitly re-directing the slave trade through their territory.

The Ottomans began suppressing the slave trade in fits and spurts starting in the 1840s under international pressure, and by the 1880s they had been largely successful. The Ottomans attempted to ban slaves from being transported on government ships, but the practice continued regardless. In 1857, Sultan Abdülmecit issued a firman officially banning slaves from leaving the provinces of Egypt, Tripoli, and Baghdad.[22] From that point, although the order was only intermittently enforced, the British government frequently used it to remind the Ottomans of their obligations. In North Africa, different administrators would regulate the Fezzan-Tripoli slave traffic to different degrees of effectiveness.[23] Despite this variance, the arrival of Ottoman forces in a central Saharan town usually led to a large reduction in the volume of the slave trade. For example, the town of Murzuq had previously been the main "desert port" for the trans-Saharan trade in Fezzan, up until the Ottomans took control in the 1860s. Commerce in slaves then moved westward to Ghat.[24] The final blows to the trans-Saharan slave trade to Tripoli came in the early 1880s. In 1880 the Anglo-Ottoman Convention for the Suppression of the Slave

[20]BOA. İ-MMS 42/1708 (5 October 1871).
[21] Michel Le Gall, "The Ottoman Government and the Sanusis: A Reappraisal," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21, No. 1 (1989): 99.
[22] Toledano, 136.
[23] Fezzan is a town deep in the Sahara that represented the southernmost boundary of Ottoman Tripolitania.
[24] B.G. Martin, "Ahmad Rasim Pasha and the Suppression of the Fazzan Slave Trade, 1881-1896," *Africa, Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Instituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* 38. No. 4 (1983), 573.

Trade was signed, which coincided with the appointment of the strident Ahmet Rasim Pasha as Vali in Tripoli in 1881.[25] Ahmet Rasim Pasha was an energetic governor, who was listed as "honest, virtuous, intelligent, prudent, and efficient" by Mehmet Süreyya.[26] In order to combat the slave trade to Tripoli, Ahmet Rasim followed a two-pronged policy. He prohibited and broke up the trade whenever possible, and forcibly manumitted slaves in the city. The manumitted slaves would be granted documents to prove their status and be granted small stipends.[27]

The disruption of the traditional Fezzan-Tripoli trade route led to increased business along the eastern Wadai-Benghazi route.[28] In the 1820s a direct route from Wadai, on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert, to Benghazi was discovered. This trade was controlled by the Sanusis, who maintained *zawiyas* along the route and had good relations with the Sultan of Wadai. Even though this continued to be a profitable activity, the Ottoman administration in Benghazi did not have access to tax revenues because of its illicit nature after 1880. Control of what remained of the trans-Saharan slave trade along the Wadai-Benghazi route further complicated Ottoman-Sanusi relations. The Ottomans and Sanusis were competing for tax revenue from the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, and the reduced but still present slave trade could only be controlled and taxed by the Sanusi, who were not under intense international pressure. Ottoman officials found themselves in a bind and needed to figure out a new way to increase tax revenue in the 1880s.

The precariousness of Ottoman rule in Benghazi was not only driven by the waning of taxable economic activity. There was also the difficulty of collecting what taxes the Ottomans

[25] Toledano, 228.
[26] Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani Volume 4*, trans. Nuri Akbayar (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 856-57.
[27] Martin, 575.
[28] Collins, 31. Wadai is a town to the east of Lake Chad and was never under Ottoman control.

believed they were owed from the population. A very large percentage of Benghazi's population was nomadic or semi-nomadic. According to Italian data prepared in 1922, the total population of Cyrenaica was 185,000, with only 24,900 living in the towns. The remainder were settled tribes, semi-nomads, or nomads.[29] Collecting taxes from nomads was difficult enough for a state based in urban centers in the best of times. In Benghazi there was also the pull of the nascent polity the Sanusis had been building in the desert. The Sanusis collected taxes and tithes from nomads, and in return, built lodges that provided education, rudimentary healthcare, and other services. Ottoman tax collection from nomads frequently amounted to armed military expeditions to forcibly take taxes in arrears from nomads who had already payed the Sanusis. Making it more difficult to collect taxes, the Ottomans made very little attempt to provide services that the Sanusis did. In addition, many Bedouin had no recollection of Ottoman tax-collection.[30] Before the 1870s, the Ottomans made almost no attempt to collect taxes outside of the towns. When Benghazi became responsible for footing more of their budget in the late 1870s and throughout the 1880s, however, the administration in Benghazi became much more active in trying to collect revenue. The distance of Benghazi, the small number of troops, and the vastness of the province made this very difficult. According to Ottoman data from 1909-1912, even after decades of attempting to increase the tax base of Benghazi, only 9 kuruş were collected per head. This was less than provinces even more distant from the imperial center such as Yemen (16) and Basra (20).[31] Furthermore, The Ottomans could not indirectly collect taxes from the nomads through the Sanusi order, because the Sanusis claimed the Ottoman Sultan Abdülmecid had

[29] Ahmida, 76.
[30] Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables," 98. Bedouin frequently relied on legal justifications provided by Sanusi judges, who argued that if a tribe had never been subject to taxation, the Ottomans could not legally start taxing without a proper tax-survey. The Ottomans, predictably, ignored such claims.
[31] Muharrem Öztel, "Osmmanlı Devleti'nde Sosyoekonomik Yapısıyla Öne Çıkan Vilayet ve Sancakların Kamu Maliyesinde Yeri ve Önemi (1325-1327/ 1909-1912)," *Maliye Dergisi*, no. 160 (2011): 217.

granted them a special tax-exempt status in 1856.[32] Ottoman officials and Sanusi delegates frequently debated the veracity of the claim throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, with the effect of repeatedly stalling Ottoman attempts to tax the order.[33]

The failure of Ottoman negotiations with unaffiliated nomads or the Sanusi Order meant that they began to make frequent military campaigns to collect taxes from the 1880s. They used the opportunity to push a few of the more combative and powerful tribes of the region out of their claimed grazing lands. Notably, the first major campaign pushed the dominant tribe from Jabal al-Akhdar.[34] In 1882, Haci Reshid Pasha, the *vali* or governor-general,[35] marched on the Jabal, successfully dislodging not only one of the most important tribes from the region, but one of the biggest supporters of the Sanusis near the coast.[36] A second armed tour through the tribe's camps demanding taxes in 1884 resulted in even more groups moving east, to the Egyptian border. While in the end the campaign was only a partial success, the expenses involved put Haci Reshid Pasha under suspicion of misappropriating funds, and he was recalled and put under investigation in 1885. The next governor acted very cautiously towards the Bedouin while the investigation was pending.

Ottoman officials were very worried about their inability to collect taxes, and the fallout from using only violence to enforce their rule. The intense Ottoman anxiety about their inability to properly govern Benghazi is reflected in a memorandum from the early 1880s. The author, an Ottoman official in Yıldız Palace, wrote that the Ottomans administered their North African

[32] Evans-Pritchard, 72.
[33] Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables," 98. Le Gall tried to track down the Sultan's order in the Ottoman Archives and was not successful. He concludes that, at this point, it is impossible to tell whether or not the Sanusis actually had the tax-exempt order.
[34] For a detailed account, see Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables," 205-216.
[35] A vali was the head of a vilayet. They were appointed and recalled by the government in Istanbul.
[36] Ahmida, 79. To indicate a rough estimate the size and clout of this tribe, we can look to census numbers from 1922. In that year, there were 21,000 members of the tribe- nearly the same amount as the entire urban population of the province.

provinces poorly and disinterestedly; like "colonies."[37] If officials in Istanbul continued to treat North Africa like second-class colonies, the inhabitants would be more open to European aggression.[38] He noted that the Europeans in North Africa built roads, developed the land, and promoted civil society by producing journals and newspapers; the hallmarks of modern civilization. The official's solution was to bring the same sort of developments to Libya and Benghazi. After Haci Reshid Pasha cleared Jabal al-Akhdar of its nomadic inhabitants in 1884, the opportunity to bring "civilization" and settlement to Benghazi presented itself.

The First Attempt at Circassian Settlement in North Africa: A Shortage of Funds

After Haci Reshid Pasha's early 1880s campaign drove the most powerful tribe from Jabal al-Akhdar, Ottoman officials in Istanbul began investigating the possibility of replacing the nomads with Caucasian refugees. In the winter of 1884, Ottoman planners faced a small-scale refugee crisis on the Sea of Marmara. Small groups of Circassians continued to flee Russia, and previously-existing settlements in Anatolia could no longer support more refugees. The Grand Vizier and the chief of the Immigrant Commission tried to solve the crisis by sending Circassians to "empty" lands on the edge of the desert. The high-level correspondence demonstrates what the civilizing mission looked like at the very highest levels of Ottoman governance as well as the disconnect between what information reached Istanbul and what actually happened in local districts. Local administrators consistently reported a plethora of land in Aleppo and Benghazi provinces as empty. While the most powerful tribe of Jabal al-Akhdar had been driven away, there were still smaller nomadic tribes present in the area. The disconnect demonstrates the legal "blindness" that allowed Ottoman administrators to dispossess nomads of land they had been

[37] BOA. Y-EE 44 144 (28 June 1881).
[38] Koloğlu, 280. Koloğlu notes that this was mostly driven by European powers ignoring guarantees for Ottoman territorial integrity, not just in the case of France's annexation of Tunis, but also European indifference to carving up the Balkans following the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War.

utilizing. The crisis of 1884 illustrates Ottoman civilizing attitudes well. Previous arrivals of refugees on the shores of the Marmara had already pushed these districts to the limits of their resources, and the constant new arrivals quickly became problematic. The arriving Caucasian refugees were "distressing" and "committing aggression" against the already present population.[39] The land in the area was already occupied, and the destitute new arrivals were resorting to brigandage to survive. As the first report is dated December 25, 1884, the wintery conditions were probably making the situation of the refugees even worse.

Administrators at the highest level of Ottoman government immediately began trying to find new locations to resettle the refugees. On December 25 Grand Vizier Küçük Sait Pasha solicited ideas for new settlement areas. The Minister of the Interior, Ibrahim Ethem Pasha, and the Chief of the Immigrant Commission, Rıza Pasha, debated the situation. Rıza suggested Kilis district in Aleppo province as well as Benghazi as places with sufficient space for settlers. Both were sufficiently distant and had ample vacant land. According to the information of the Immigrant Commission, Benghazi's hinterland was reported to have room for one thousand households of settlers. Rıza Pasha did not think it would be too difficult to transport the immigrants as, in contrast to the massive exodus of refugees from the Balkans immediately following the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War, the new groups of Circassians were coming in small groups of five to ten. At least two private steamships would be hired for the project: one to bring the immigrants from Istanbul and the Sea of Marmara to the designated gathering spot of Çanakkale, the port at the narrowest point of the Dardenelles, and one to collect waiting immigrants in Russia. As the urgency of moving the refugees was precipitated by Circassian arrivals harassing the local population of towns around the coast of the Sea of Marmara, the

[39] BOA. Y-A-RES 29 27 (16 May 1885).

immigrants were specifically barred from going anywhere but the town of Çanakkale and were also explicitly forbidden from travelling overland. New immigrants would be sent straight to Çanakkale, bypassing Istanbul. The Imperial Treasury would be responsible for the refugees reaching Çanakkale, but the local authorities would be responsible for further transportation fees. The decision was confirmed by Ethem Pasha, and Sait Pasha was informed of the Ministry of the Interior's decision on January 4, 1885.[40]

Circassians that were destined for the edge of the desert in Syria and Africa continued to gather in Çanakkale for the rest of the winter. Ottoman officials planned to transport them in spring and summer, hoping the improved weather would ease settlement. The local government in Çanakkale, however, lacked the funds to transport and shelter the one hundred and sixty Circassian families due to arrive in March.[41] The Council of Ministers in Istanbul tried to rule in a way that would be acceptable both for the refugees and the local government.[42] The Immigrant Commission would be responsible for hiring a steamship to transport the Circassians, but the local government would have to support them throughout the summer and provide the necessary precautions to prevent them from fleeing to Biga and its surrounding areas.

After the ruling of the Council of Ministers, the Immigrant Commission was expected to comply. On April 15th, the Commission presented an enumerated list of actions regarding the Caucasian immigrants that were to be transported to Benghazi and Kilis. [43] The report was signed by Ethem and Rıza Pashas.[44] It details, step by step, the individual actions taken by the

[40] BOA. İ-DH 953 75394 (11 January 1885). On the 11th, Sait Pasha issued the response to the lower levels of the government.
[41] BOA. Y.A.RES 29 27 1302 Ş 1 (16 May 1885).
[42] BOA. MV 2 40 (29 March 1885).
[43] BOA. Y-A-RES 29 27 (16 May 1885).
[44] It was also signed by Mehmet Kâmil Pasha, a frequent rival of the Grand Vizier who would take the position himself in September of 1885. Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II:*

Immigrant Commission in response to the petition issued by the Council of Ministers in late March. The actions of the Immigrant Commission provide an interesting insight into how the bureaucracy handled large numbers of refugees, as well as how the actions of refugees in turn influenced state actors, resulting in a mutually constitutive process. The first action taken was to ban refugees and immigrants from disembarking in Istanbul and ensuring that a steamship would be available to transport them to Çanakkale.

Banning disembarkment in Istanbul led to different problems. Immigrants were showing up in small numbers of five or ten individuals or households on the daily post steamships to Istanbul. There was not enough money available to send them immediatly to Çanakkale, as that would require a large expense, and the commission was waiting for a larger number to gather before hiring a private steamer. In addition, the official directive ordered that precautions were to be taken to prevent refugees gathering in Çanakkale from fleeing to the environs, which required additional funds. The Immigrant Commission had to solve this problem cheaply and quickly. The solution was to set up temporary quarantine stations in government buildings either near to Istanbul or near to Çanakkale. Bozcaada, the small island at the mouth of the Dardenelles, and Gelibolu were considered but ruled out as being too close and thus sharing most of the problems associated with sending the refugees directly to Çanakkale. Anadolu Kavağı, the last town before the Black Sea on the Asian coast of the Bosporus, was selected as a reasonably close location that would keep travel expenses down. It also had the added benefit as being across from Rumeli Kavağı, the site of a military base that could presumably help to keep an eye on the refugees. Two administrators were sent to set up the arrangement.

Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 220.

Soon it became clear that transportation costs would not be the only problem. The Immigrant Commission was worried that there would not be enough money to cover the basic sustenance of the refugees. The treasury would pay for the transportation and living expenses of only the most destitute refugees. It was hoped that the provinces the refugees were being sent to could help cover some of the costs. The strain of complying with the Council of Minister's orders, which forced the refugees to travel by ship to Çanakkale and then on to the shore of Africa and the distant edge of Aleppo Province, while at the same time preventing them from dispersing into the population surrounding Çanakkale proved to be more than the Immigrant Commission could handle. Aside from the fact that they were running out of funds to pay for anything but the needs of the destitute and transportation, newspaper reports on the crisis were increasing the pressure on the administration to do something about this group of refugees. There was also a worry that the approach of summer would lead to illness. In response, the Commission drew up a list of administrative districts that could be used in addition to Benghazi and Kilis. This list included many places in central and eastern Anatolia in the provinces of Mamüretülaziz, Adana, Erzurum, Ankara, and Kastamonu, as well as Hüdavendigâr, Benghazi, and Aleppo. The internal records of the Immigrant Commission indicated that up to 9,040 households could be accommodated in the above areas combined. The accumulation of complications led to the plan to be abandoned for several years, and the Immigrant Commission reverted to dispersing the refugees to other districts in Anatolia. Thus, the first set of plans for settling Caucasians in North Africa was abandoned.

The Second Attempt at Settling Circassians in North Africa: A Shortage of Water

From 1885 to 1888 Ottoman settlement schemes for Benghazi lay dormant. The activist vali of Benghazi, Hacı Reshid Pasha, was recalled because of alleged misuse of government

funds in 1885. The cost of and failure of his tax collection expeditions against the Bedouin tribes meant that an investigation was launched into his activities. While Hacı Reshid Pasha was eventually exonerated of all charge but a minor one, his successor Musa Kazim Pasha did not want to repeat the failure and administered cautiously. He served from 1885 to 1888.[45] The relatively calm administration of Musa Kazim Pasha along with the Ottoman Empire's successful defense of its claim in Africa at the Berlin Conference in 1885 did not mean, however, that the Porte had stopped worrying about the threat of Italian or French incursion.[46] Furthermore, Abdülhamid tried a different strategy in this period. Instead of pursing direct administrative centralization, he began negotiating with the head of the Sanusis as part of his plan to build Ottoman loyalty with semi-autonomous tribes through personal patronage politics. From 1886 to 1889, the Sanusis and representatives of Yıldız exchanged envoys and gifts. It was only after Abdülhamid became frustrated with a lack of progress in these negotiations that settlement plans were again seriously considered.[47]

The Ottoman soldier Miralay Hüseyin Hüsnü was the first to rekindle plans. He sent a memorandum to Yıldız Palace in 1886 arguing for the benefits of placing settlers in Benghazi province.[48] In his memorandum, Hüsnü elaborated on the potential of both Tripoli and Benghazi. Of particular interest to him were the commercial opportunities that could increase revenue and in turn help bolster the military preparedness of the region. He was mentioned plans to increase tax revenues even though the slave trade had been banned. For him, the fact that slaves were no longer legally traded across the Sahara did not mean that caravans could not continue to be a source of commercial wealth. Caravans were still arriving carrying gold rods and dust, ivory,

[45] LeGall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables," 210-211
[46] Anderson 337 and Deringil, 323.
[47] Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables," 229-232.
[48] BOA. Y-EE 8 27 (7 September 1886).

ostrich feathers, and rhinoceros' horns from central Africa. That trade could continue to be valuable as the Libyan coast was ideally located on the trade routes to Crete, other parts of the Ottoman Empire, and the Suez Canal.

Hüsnü's memorandum continued with specific ideas for Benghazi. He wrote that the coast and hinterland, especially around the town of Ayn-ı Şahhat, had a rich but untapped potential. Ayn-ı Şahhat fit some of the most important criteria for Ottoman model settler cities.[49] It was the site of the ancient Cyrene, which meant that there were ruined buildings in which settlers could take refuge in the initial months of settlement. The presence of an old town also implied there was a reliable water source nearby, as did the presence of the Arabic word for a water spring in the name of the town.[50] According to Hüsnü, there were even more positive attributes in favor of settlement. Jabal al-Akhdar had forests of useful trees such as olives, dates, junipers, and cypress; a variety of minerals; and ample water. In Hüsnü's eyes, the coastal area of Benghazi province had enough potential to be developed into a *Mısır-ı Sânî*, a second Egypt. The problem for Hüsnü was that the people of the region were tent-dwelling tribes who were both unsettled and uncivilized. For Hüsnü, the nomadic lifestyle meant the local population lacked the ability to develop commerce and industry. That meant they were wasting the potential of the land. Hüsnü's solution was to ship Anatolian and Balkan refugees to the coast. His unstated assumption was that those regions and their inhabitants were civilized. Therefore, these immigrants would build villages and would create a condition of prosperity and civilization. The term Hüsnü to describe the effects of sedentary settlers on the tribes reveals his faith in the power of modern technology and development: he wrote that settlers would "cure" the tribes of their nomadism.

[49] Please see the Introduction for a summary of those characteristics.
[50] Although the full name, Ayn-ı Şahhat, means "beggar's spring," indicating the water source might not be as reliable as the presence of earlier settlement implied.

The ideas expressed in Hüsnü's memorandum did not have an immediate impact. His sentiments, however, were echoed at the beginning of the next decade. In late 1890, more Muslims were arriving from the Caucasus. Following a standard procedure, the Immigrant Commission asked various provinces to send estimates of vacant land. On December 14, 1890, Tripoli and Benghazi informed the commission that "a great amount of dönüms" were available.[51] A few months following that report another official discussed an older memorandum which also proposed settlement in the hinterland of Benghazi.[52] That memorandum had suggested that Balkan or Tatar immigrants could help with the "progress and cultivation of the province" (*terrakî-yi imaret-i memleket için*) of Benghazi. The official evidently though that this was still a valid plan and suggested that the Caucasian refugees would suffice just as well as people from the Balkans or Tatars. He suggested that the area of Ayn-ı Şahhat, the area specified in Miralay Hüseyin Hüsnü's memorandum, could accommodate one thousand households. This series of memorandums provides a clear window into Ottoman planning for model agricultural settlements. Ottoman officials argued that Caucasian refugee settlements could develop a sparse land, which administrators felt was being by nomads, into a "second Egypt."

The revived interest in sending settlers to the coast of North Africa coincided with a renewed period of Ottoman government activism in Benghazi. In 1888 Benghazi was returned to its status of an independent sub-province, or *sanjak,* administered by the Ministry of the Interior.[53] Hacı Reshid Pasha, who had some successes in collecting taxes from the tribes in his

[51] BOA. DH-MKT 1799 71 (13 January 1891).
[52] BOA. DH-MKT 1821 57 (24 March 1891), it is not specified to which memorandum the author was referring, but the contours of the argument suggest it was likely Hüsnü's.
[53] The status of "independent sanjak" put Benghazi in the same category of Lebanon, Jerusalem, or Zor: some sub-provinces had special characteristics that necessitated direct rule. For Lebanon and Jerusalem, it was the high percentage of religious minorities and the intense interest of European powers in "protecting" those minorities. For Benghazi and Zor, it was because of their presence on the internal frontier with the desert.

previous stint as vali, was appointed magistrate, or *mutasarrıf*, of the sanjak in 1889.[54] In the summer of 1889 Hacı Reshid led a successful campaign against the powerful Zuwaya tribe, successfully collecting back taxes.[55] This meant that for the first time in several years, the countryside in the region of Benghazi was under some semblance of centralized Ottoman control. With this period of calmness, several Ottoman administrators saw an opportunity for reconstruction and reform.

The Ottomans, however, did not immediately send Circassian settlers. The possible benefits of settling Caucasian refugees in North Africa, however, seeped into high level discussions in Istanbul. In August and September of 1891 officials discussed sending settlers to the coast of Benghazi. They echoed the thinking of Hüseyin Hüsnü and others. A memorandum sent on July 29th proposed a plan for using some of the imperial holdings in Benghazi for development. The proposal suggested improving the land by establishing olive groves. Not only would the land be improved and rendered profitable by the establishment of these groves, a useful side effect of the plans would help to settle the tribes of the coast.[56] The vagueness of the causality is typical. It is clear from this and other statements that Ottoman officials had faith that model agricultural settlements represented such an improvement over nomadic life that the mere presence of such settlements would quickly cause the abandonment of nomadism. After all, one of the main reasons for maintaining nomadism as a practice was the Bedouin's "ignorance" of modernity. Other Ottoman bureaus, such as the treasury and Yıldız, were clearly intrigued and promptly requested more details.

[54] Mutasarrıf was the title granted to the Ottoman official in charge of a Sanjak.
[55] For a detailed account of this campaign, see Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables," 214-217.
[56] BOA. Y-MTV 53 71 (23 August 1891).

On August 23, 1891, the conclusions of an expedition to Jabal al-Akhdar provided the requested information. Local officials, led by a clerk named Ziya Bey, concluded that the region would be easy to "include within the circle of civilization." They noted that there was plenty of water to be found in the districts slightly inland and along the coast between Tokra and Ayn-ı Şahhat. They concluded, however, that the local population was lazy at best and actively mismanaging its resources at worst. The nomadic population of the area, due to their "the savage and coarse natures," had been neglecting good management of the water supply and had turned much of Jabal al-Akhdar into wasteland.[57] The report estimated that with proper development, many wells of a depth of two or three fathoms could be created. Once responsible Ottomans had begun to properly manage the water supply, that plus the pleasant weather and forested environment would quickly become prosperous. The responsible Ottomans would refugee settlers. The oft-cited number of one thousand households could be placed on the coast to improve the land. By the report's estimation, these settlers could make the land productive and a source of taxes within a few years. Once settlement had brought the region into the circle of civilization, the Ottomans would have a stronger claim to the region in the face of French and Italian interest. The report notes that they were aware of refugees in Thrace and Hudavendigâr, and that they had corresponded with the Immigrant Commission about the feasibility of sending some to Benghazi. The Commission compared the cost of sending refugees to Benghazi to the cost of sending them Zor or the interior of Syria. That cost was assessed at fifteen liras per household, for a total of 15,000 lira. That was quite a large sum, so the report concluded by repeating one of the key claims of the civilizing attitude: that the expense would be greatly outweighed by benefits of bringing the nomads and the land the benefits of modern, progressive civilization.

[57] BOA. Y-MTV 53 71 (23 August 1891).

The plan proved too ambitious in the form presented by Ziya Bey. The Immigrant Commission was strapped for cash, and instead of sending the full number of refugees at once, they allotted one hundred and sixty liras to send a small group of five or six representatives of the refugees to look over the land themselves. The report also moved the conversation from a generic conversation about sending "refugees" to specifically deciding to use Circassian refugees as settlers. The official also arranged for provisions to send several Cretan olive workers- otherwise, the inexperienced Circassian settlers might let the olive groves go wild. The decision to send Salim Efendi and several representatives of the potential settlers was formalized in September of 1891.[58] The order for settlement indicated that the development of Jabal al-Akhdar would benefit the refugees by ending their journey, the tribes of the area by introducing the benefits of settled life and improve the prosperity of the whole region by bringing it into the circle of Ottoman civilization. Salim Efendi set off on his mission, and the government made plans for allotting the finances needed to provide for the settlers if the investigatory party found the area suitable. The Immigrant Commission began preparing maps for the expedition.[59]

In the end, however, the environment ended the plan for Circassian refugees to bring civilization to Jabal al-Akhdar. A report from an official of the Immigrant Commission was sent to the head of the commission. This note was sent as the topic was being discussed in Istanbul but three days before the official order was issued. Jabal al-Akhdar had entered a period of drought. The drought was only beginning, and the officials noted that the sedentary population as well as the nomadic population were already experiencing troubles related to the lack of water. Thousands of refugees could be settled at a great deal of government expense, according to the

[58]BOA. İ-DH 1244 97479 (15 September 1891).
[59] BOA. DH-MKT 1874 73 (5 October 1891).

report, but the official thought it would be better if the matter were reconsidered.[60] This official was farsighted, as this drought would continue until 1895 and was responsible for a large humanitarian crisis in its own right. The Bedouin of the region fell on hard times and began flocking to the edges of the cities. Benghazi doubled in size, and tent cities grew around the other towns.[61] In response, the Ottoman government began sending shipments of provisions and grain to alleviate the suffering of the people and tribes of the region.[62]According to Le Gall, the governors of Benghazi used the drought to enact a new policy aimed at bringing the nomadic populations under the control of the state: demanding an onerous tax burden from those that remained in the countryside, and providing free government grain subsidized by the central government to those that accepted the rule of the Ottomans.[63] When the region recovered from the drought, Abdülhamid began negotiating with the Sanusis again.[64] Abdülhamid's preference for trying to bring nomads closer to Ottoman civilization by creating personal patronage networks with the leaders of semi-autonomous nomadic tribes, or *aşirets*, instead of settlement projects finally spelled the end to plans for settling Circassians in Libya.

Conclusion

Although the Ottoman government had rejected Benghazi as a site for the settlement of Caucasian refugees in the 1860s, [65] events in the 1870s and 1880s caused it to reconsider their decision. The French annexation of Tunisia, the challenge of the Sanusi Order in the Sahara Desert, and the collapse of tax revenue in eastern Libya caused Ottoman planners a great deal of

[60] BOA. DH-MKT 1994 40 (31 August 1892).
[61] Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables," 220.
[62] BOA. İ-DH 1298 2 (28 September 1892).
[63] Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables," 218.
[64] Le Gall, "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables," 232.
[65] Çinar, 24.

trepidation. [66] At the same time, the new international order for imperial claims decided at the Berlin Conference of 1884 stipulated that land had to have settlements or a military presence to be claimed by a power.[67] The confluence of these factors led Ottoman officials to seriously consider placing Caucasian refugees in model agricultural settlements the hinterlands of Benghazi in the 1880s and 1890s.

Ottoman officials immediately reacted to the "Scramble for Africa" initiated by the Berlin Conference of 1884. That year, they began assessing the availability of land for settlement in the Jabal al-Akhdar region of eastern Libya. The vali of Benghazi, Haci Reshid Pasha, was removing powerful tribes from the area which created ample "empty" land for settlement while simultaneously checking the power of the powerful Sanusi Order. Ottoman officials in Benghazi communicated to Istanbul that there was available land for several thousand settlers. The settlement plan in the 1880s did not just reflect the schemes of Ottoman administrators. The agency of the Circassian refugees also had an impact on the plans. Frustrated Circassian refugees in Çanakkale demanded to be permanently settled. Ultimately the increasingly dire condition of the refugees and the lack of enough funds to ameliorate their condition at the core of the empire, let alone on the shores of a distant peripheral region, caused the 1880s plan to be abandoned.

Renewed Ottoman interest in settling refugees in North Africa highlights an important aspect of the Ottoman civilizing attitude: an optimistic enthusiasm for creating new and prosperous areas that blinded them to environmental realities. Jabal al-Akhdar, after tribal power was broken, looked like a perfect place for settlers. It had fresh water as well as a pleasant climate; and the fact that it had plenty of wild olives, junipers, and the like meant that large scale farming should be possible. It was, however, an environmentally fragile area. There were good

[66] BOA. Y-EE 8 27 (7 September 1886).
[67] Minawi, 16-17.

reasons that the mountain could only support semi-nomadic and nomadic populations. Rain was cyclical, and long droughts could cause the collapse of farming. The Ottoman government did not care. In their understanding, nomads were not making the best use of marginal land; they were creating wasteland where productive sedentary farming could take place. Attempts to settle Caucasian refugees on the land illustrates this thinking. Nomads were difficult to settle because a constant military presence was required to enforce sedentary living. Re-settled Caucasians could both provide an example to forcibly settled nomads and disrupt their grazing patterns. Jabal al-Akhdar's climate was repeatedly described as pleasant and amenable to farming. If the arriving settlers were Caucasians and did not know olericulture, that small problem could be overcome by importing a few Cretan olive workers. In the end, however, the fragility of the environment thwarted the Ottoman civilizing attitude in Benghazi. The massive drought of 1891-1895 made life extremely difficult even for the nomads of the region, let alone any new population of settlers. Instead of developing a second Egypt, the Ottomans had to build their administration around the population adapted for the region: nomadic tribes.

Chapter 4: The Ottoman Settlement of the Golan Heights, 1860-1888

Introduction

> Hawran's people, which are composed of gangs of Druze along with a multitude of tribes, are found in a condition of savagery and nomadism, and their occupation is the strangulation of agriculture. Every day the country is becoming more destitute of the causes of development and the institutions of civilization.[1]

Thus starts the official summary of Hawran *Sanjak* in the Syrian government almanac in the years 1880-1883. The summary was not entirely negative. Despite these problems, the almanac continues, there was a great deal of agriculture produced and it if the government could address the impediments to agricultural production, Hawran might become the richest province of Syria, and perhaps all of Asia. The summary of 1880 was not the first time Ottoman administrators identified the nomadic tribes (*aşiret*) or the Druze as impediments to progress. According to an 1876 Ottoman plan to expand government control over southern Syria, the Bedouin lived in a savage and nomadic condition that was harmful to them, harmful to settled people and their lands, and harmful to the government. They could be rescued, though, if the Ottomans could bring the benefits of civilization.[2] Ottoman authorities in Damascus began to elaborate the difference between settled Ottomans and the nomadic tribes on the internal frontier of Syria province from the 1860s as part of their centralizing project even as they were nominally trying to erase difference by bringing the entire population of Syria under standardized governance. Ottoman accommodation of alternative loci of power had been a key feature of their rule over the centuries but by the late nineteenth century *Tanzimat* and Hamidian era Ottoman administrators were attempting to eliminate these negotiated accommodations and replace them with centralized, bureaucratized, and formalized rule. The Ottoman government justified the

[1] *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye* (Damascus, 1880), 216. 1881 edition page 219, 1882 edition page 244, and 1883 edition page 243.
[2] BOA. ŞD 2272 27 (14 March 1879), 1.

violence they would use to enforce centralization by declaring their rule as beneficial and civilized while describing those who opposed it as savage, wretched, insubordinate, and threats to public order. Starting in the 1870s, the Ottomans began to place agricultural colonists in southern Syria to demonstrate the benefits of settled agriculture to the Bedouin and of compliance with Ottoman governance to the Druze. What seemed beneficial to the governors-general (*vali)* and field marshals (*müşir*) in Damascus, or to the ministers and civil servants in Istanbul, however, seemed beneficial to neither the local populations, who were used to governing themselves autonomously nor to the Circassian refugees who found themselves settled in a remote desert among hostile neighbors.[3]

The Ottoman Empire brought southern Syria ever more under control over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century. Administrators in Istanbul considered Damascus one of the most important cities in the empire and appointed many energetic and reform-minded valis to actively enact the Tanzimat program in the province. The Ottomans collected taxes with increasing efficiency, registered land under the 1858 Land Reform Law, and began shifting power in Damascus from an informal system run by notable families to a system run by professional bureaucrats trained in the imperial center.[4] Ottoman centralization projects, however, had difficulty penetrating the frontier beyond the immediate hinterland of the cities. The difficulty was partly due to lack of resources and partly due to the nature of the terrain and climate of southern Syria. Most of the arable land in southern Syria is in a semi-arid zone that

[3] Damascus was also the headquarters of the Ottoman 5th Army for most of the late nineteenth century. This meant that an officer of the highest Ottoman military rank, müşir, was stationed in Damascus. The vali was of the highest rank of the civil service. While nominally only in charge of their own spheres, the two officials frequently jockeyed for power and favor from Istanbul.

[4] See Moshe Maoz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861: the Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Publishing, 1968) and Albert Hourani's chapter "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East; the Nineteenth Century*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968) for classic works on the topic. See Martha Mundy and Richard Saumarez Smith, *Governing Property, Making the Modern State: Law, Administration and Production in Ottoman Syria* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007) for a treatment of Ottoman land policy in Syria.

does not reliably receive enough rainfall to farm. Arid desert is intertwined with those areas.[5] The desert could only be used by nomadic tribes, who practiced an elaborately specialized form of agriculture that allowed them to easily use marginal lands. The semi-arid zone of the steppe could be used for farming in good years, but in years of scant rainfall or if the state could not provide adequate security from nomadic raids settled populations would either join the nomads or flee to more secure locales.

The mosaic pattern of intermixed arid and semi-arid land was apparent directly to the south of Damascus in Hawran Sanjak, which was the southernmost organized Ottoman administrative unit in Syria in the 1860s and 1870s and represented the internal frontier of the Ottoman Empire at the time. Hawran Sanjak was characterized by geologic features formed by ancient volcanic activity that created both dramatic changes in elevation as well as rich, fertile soil. The geography consisted of a large, fertile plain bounded on the west and east by mountain spurs that run parallel to each other. To the west rise the Golan Heights (*Jawlan)* and Mount Hermon (*Jabal ash-Sheikh)*. The Golan is a large basaltic plateau. Along the Golan's northeastern edge lies a ridge of extinct volcanoes with heavily worn craters that runs roughly north to south. This spine of mountains starts at Mount Hermon and loses elevation rapidly until it forms the eastern edge of the Golan. The elevation east of the Golan falls into the Hawran plain. The Hawran was historically known as the breadbasket of Syria and extended far south from the gates of Damascus. To the east of the Hawran plain, rise another spur of mountains, known originally as *Jabal Hawran*, or Mount Hawran. Despite the proximity of the area to Damascus by the 1860s it was mostly beyond government control, even though the Ottomans nominally administered the plain and the two mountain ranges together as Hawran Sanjak.

[5] JR McNeill, "The Eccentricity of the Middle East and North Africa's Environmental History," in *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa,* ed. Alan Mikhail (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 34

Nomadic aşirets used parts of the southern Hawran as pasturage, and any peasants choosing to make a living by farming there were more likely to be charged protection money by a tribe than taxes by the Ottoman government. The Golan was dominated by the Fadl Arab tribe. These conditions meant that even important towns like Deraa, the main city of the southern Hawran, was sometimes abandoned in the early nineteenth century.[6] Travelers noted numerous ruined and abandoned villages dotting the region.

The situation began to change in the 1860s. A dramatic population increase in the Lebanon and the instability caused by the 1860 Druze and Christian civil war there caused the Druze to begin emigrating. They first began to join the small Druze communities in Mount Hermon, and from there began to colonize Jabal Hawran. By the late 1860s the population shift was so pronounced that Jabal Hawran began to be known locally as *Jabal ad-Druze*, or Druze Mountain.[7] The Druze on the Jabal only nominally submitted to Ottoman sovereignty and essentially ruled themselves as an autonomous group. Whenever the Ottomans tried to enforce their authority, the Druze of the Jabal were able to escape to the *Leja*, an impenetrable maze of volcanic canyons and tunnels adjacent to the mountain. The Druze were able to provide enough security from nomadic raids that grain production in the Hawran began to grow dramatically. The economic growth coincided with a booming world economy.[8] The Druze began to expand their control over Christian and Muslim peasants on the Hawran plain, providing security in exchange for protection money. While the expansion of Druze-backed regional security was good for the economy of the southern Hawran and the peasants who could sow their wheat

[6] Norman Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), 19.
[7] This dissertation refers to the mountain as Jabal Druze, following the simplified name, common in English, that began being used by the French during the mandate period.
[8] Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 33-35.

knowing it would not be plundered by Bedouin before they could harvest it, the Ottomans in Damascus had different priorities. Ottoman administrators in the 1860s were no longer content to accommodate regimes of exception on their frontier: Bedouin aşirets and Druze sheikhs running their affairs autonomously and contesting Ottoman sovereignty were now considered a threat to Ottoman rule, not a useful mechanism of indirect control.

The first Ottoman response was to lead military campaigns against the Bedouin and Druze. There were enough campaigns that Druze oral tradition defines the Ottoman period as a series of heroic struggles against Ottoman attacks.[9] Violence however, was not the only recourse of the Ottomans. The military campaigns of the 1860s not only had limited success, they alarmed the Druze. The Druze complained to the British consul, whom they saw as an advocate, which set off a chain of events that resulted in the Vali in charge of the expeditions to be recalled to Istanbul.[10] Subsequent valis, wary of provoking the Druze into an armed revolt, looked for ways to increase their control over the Bedouin and the Druze of the Hawran without provoking the Druze. The wariness of Ottoman administrators in Damascus led to a new strategy in the 1870s: the placement of model agricultural settlements populated by Caucasian refugees on pastureland used by nomads. The plan was mostly directed at the Bedouin; settlements were placed in a broad north to south line that stretched from Quneitra as far south as Amman, which was then the far southernmost limit of Ottoman authority. The settlement at Quneitra, however, was unique for several reasons. First, its location at the eastern edge of the Golan meant it was the closest Caucasian settlement to Damascus. That location made it the most influential of the colonies in

[9] Birgit Schaebler, *Rebels, Shaykhs, and State(s): The Integration of the Druzes and the Struggle for Social Control in Syria in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Beirut: Hassib Dergham & Sons, 1998), 9.
[10] After the French gained increased influence in the Levant after claiming to be the protectors of the Maronite Christians, the British claimed to protect the Druze to try and increase their influence. In the 1860s and 1870s in particular, the Druze of the Jabal often used the British consul in Damascus as a mediator between them and the Ottomans.

the Ottoman era, as the Circassians who settled there were eventually able to develop close ties with the Ottoman administration of the province. Its close location also meant that when new Caucasians settlers were sent to Syria, they usually went to Quneitra as their first stop before being transferred farther south. Second, it was the only settlement that was placed just to encourage Bedouin to abandon pastoral agriculture. It was also meant to block Druze migration and demonstrate the benefits of Ottoman administration to them. Quneitra was at the midway point between the Druze migration path from the Lebanon to Jabal Druze. The settlement was at least partly meant to block Druze settlement on the Golan, which would have increased the strength of the Ottoman position in Hawran Sanjak. When an Ottoman vali was asked about the settlement of Circassians in Quneitra in in 1878, he said his only regret was that Istanbul had not sent more so that he could have expanded the settlements to Jabal Druze itself.[11]

The Circassian settlement at Quneitra is the subject of this chapter and the next. The district, or *kaza*, *of* Quneitra illustrates my arguments about the Ottoman civilizing mission and its enactment on the frontier, as it was in many ways a microcosm of the issues facing the local populations and an expanding Ottoman administration.[12] Despite being relatively close to Damascus, it was on the frontier and almost totally beyond Ottoman control. Despite being located on an arable plateau and overlooking the productive Hawran plain from the west, it was barely populated and was mostly used for seasonal grazing by nomadic tribes. Despite being on the crossroads of the Druze populations in the Lebanon and in Jabal Druze, it had only a single small Druze village located at the northmost edge of the district, Mejdel Shams. Despite being very near to the territory of the large nomadic tribes of southern Syria, it was controlled by a small semi-nomadic Fadl tribe. This chapter argues that while the Ottomans intended to

[11] PRO. FO 195/1202 No. 113 (Beirut) November 19, 1878.
[12] A kaza was a low-level administrative organization in the Ottoman era. There were three or four kazas for every sanjak.

standardize their rule in Syria, the placement of a Circassian colony in Quneitra instead served to elaborate differences in the 1870s and 1880s. Once the Ottomans had a model settlement of Circassians, they continually held it up in internal documents and in the annual provincial almanacs as a counterpoint to Bedouin and Druze populations. This is especially notable when district officials made comparisons to the Druze, who practiced settled agriculture but did so outside of Ottoman control. The Circassians were held up to be exemplars of civilization, contributing to the flourishing and industry of the province, while the Druze were presented as lawless and insubordinate.[13] The contrast between the Circassians and the rest of the population of the Hawran elaborated in this period had major consequences for the social and political life of rural Syria over the course of the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, as the Circassians slowly became a dominant force in the rural society of southern Syria. The chapter further argues that the Ottoman characterization of the Circassians as a model population, however, did not always match reality. Most Circassians arrived in Syria as refugees from a war in Europe, destitute and ravaged by disease. Ottoman support in the 1870s was meager at best, and the settlers largely had to fend for themselves. It was only in the 1880s that the Circassian population became bound to the state in a meaningful way.

To understand the context in which the Circassians were settled, this chapter first examines the efforts of reform-minded valis to eliminate regimes of exception on the internal frontier of province of Syria in the 1860s and the early 1870s. These valis tried various methods of sedentarizing the Bedouin and incorporating the Druze only to have both attempts at military domination and peaceful accommodation fail. The failure of the attempts of the 1860s and early

[13] Birgit Schaebler suggested that the Ottomans enforced their civilizing mission upon Druze populations as well as nomadic ones. This chapter supports that claim in more detail. Birgit Schaebler, "Civilizing Others: Global Modernity and the Local Boundaries (French/German/Ottoman and Arab) of Savagery," in *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion, and Modernity*, ed. Birgit Schaebler and Leif Stenberg (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 20.

1870s led Ottoman administrators in Damascus to place a small Circassian settlement in Quneitra in 1873. The pilot settlement received little government support and likely would have disbanded if not for the Druze response to the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War. The only major draft revolt in Syria during the war occurred among the Druze near Mount Hermon. When the military governor of Damascus tried to punish them, the draft-dodgers managed to Ottoman authorities by using their personal connections to hide out with the Druze of Mejdel Shams and Jabal Druze until Ottoman patrols gave up.

The use of Druze networks spread over Lebanon and Hawran to frustrate Ottoman conscription efforts infuriated Ottoman officials, who responded by reinforcing the Circassian settlement at Quneitra when refugees displaced by war began arriving by the thousands in the ports of the Levant. I finally argue that the precarious conditions of the settlement in the late 1870s and early 1880s as they struggled with their Bedouin and Druze neighbors over land rights and water encouraged the Circassians to begin forming networks with local Ottoman administrators in Damascus. The main path for the Circassians to become integrated in the Ottoman administration was by joining the gendarmerie, which they did in large numbers. The formation of these networks allowed for the stabilization of the Circassian settlement and led the Ottomans to begin constructing infrastructure to reward the Circassians for their participation in the Ottoman system. Although the Ottomans built a new mosque, a government office, a telegraph station, and began improving roads, the most impactful set of institutions for the Circassians involved education: Quneitra became the first district in Hawran to receive Ottoman primary and secondary schools, as well as the first girls' school in the district.

Southern Syria and the Desert, 1860s-1870

The energetic reform-minded vali Mehmet Reshid Pasha vigorously applied Tanzimat-style rule in the Vilayet of Damascus from the time of his appointment in 1866.[14] At the time, Ottoman relations with Jabal Druze were relatively peaceful. Large numbers of Druze families continued to emigrate from Lebanon and Mount Hermon to occupy ruined villages on the east and southeastern sides of the Jabal.[15] When group of Hawrani Muslims and Christians protested the ineffectiveness of Ottoman protections against Bedouin and rapacious government mounted police, the Druze of the Mountain stayed out of the conflict.[16]

The Ottomans did not have amicable relations with the Bedouin who contested them for control of the desert adjacent regions of the province. Reshid Pasha almost immediately set about exerting government control. To this end, in early May 1867 the vali took the unusual step of meeting with Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, vali of the neighboring Aleppo Vilayet near Homs and Hama. The two governors-general decided on a policy of maintaining a strong border in the desert to protect cultivated lands from the Bedouin. They planned on installing a garrison of troops, mounted partly on camels and partly on horses, near the ruins of Palmyra to prevent Bedouin from moving west of that line.[17] The meeting of the two Ottoman officials signaled a change in Ottoman administration on the desert frontier of the empire. Instead of two provinces acting alone, they would pool resources to expand Ottoman authority into the difficult environment of the Syrian desert. Soon after the meeting of the two valis, the independent Sanjak of Zor was established. Zor bordered both the Vilayets of Aleppo and Damascus, and in the

[14] Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 48.
[15]PRO. FO 195/806 No. 30 October 22, 1866. Unless otherwise noted, Foreign Office files cited in this chapter come from the Damascus section of the cited bound volume.
[16]PRO. FO 195/806 No. 34 November 20, 1866.
[17] PRO. FO 195/806 No. 34 May 21, 1867.

1860s was an important site of enactment for the early bureaucratic strand of the Ottoman civilizing mission. Events in Zor will be covered in chapter six. The most important part of this meeting for the present argument is that Reshid Pasha immediately began an aggressive plan to bring Ottoman administration to the southern frontier of Damascus Vilayet.

When Reshid Pasha returned from the meeting with Ahmet Cevdet, he launched a major campaign to subdue the Bedouin to the south of Hawran. He oversaw the details and led the expedition in person. Cevdet Pasha's undertaking was the first a governor-general of Damascus had personally in living memory. The population was used to low-ranking and inefficient Ottoman troops leading small patrols that would promise security, demand back taxes, and then go back to a fortified town without making good on their promises. That lax policy led to several places, such as the Golan, Salt, and regions further south being under only nominal Ottoman sovereignty. Reshid Pasha sought to break the pattern by rebuilding existing fortifications and erecting new block houses in key points, to be stationed with regular troops and modern rifles. He marched to Salt and pushed the Bedouin who possessed it out.[18] The area around Salt had been used as a base to launch raids into the Golan and the southern Hawran plain. Tribesmen from this area would frequently launch raids into Nablus and Tiberias, as well as the southern Hawran and demand payments from the cultivators of those regions.[19] Reshid Pasha's expedition was therefore the first step in securing the Golan Heights in order to expand Ottoman authority there.

The Bedouin waited patiently for the vali to leave to test the new system. In 1869, they allied with another powerful tribe to raid villages and demand protection money. Reshid Pasha responded with a large second expedition. His forces in this expedition, however, were different.

[18] PRO. FO 195/927 No. 11 July 16, 1869.
[19] More detail on this campaign is provided by Rogan, pages 48-50.

He asked for the support of the Atrash clan of Jabal Druze and the Sheikh of the Wuld Ali tribe, whose territory was adjacent to the Hawran. Both groups provided men and horses for the campaign. Importantly, Reshid Pasha insisted that the campaign was for the security of the Hawran and that if he did not stop them that it would not take long for them to begin collecting tribute in the greater Hawran, inclusive of the Golan. While Reshid Pasha promised he would not force taxation and conscription on his Druze allies, they quietly suspected that he might move on them after he subdued the Bedouin around Salt.[20]

Druze fears would be confirmed by the actions of the vali over the spring and summer of 1871. That spring, a land dispute near the village of Hasbeya, near Mount Hermon, between two factions of Druze. Reshid Pasha responded by sending soldiers to the area. While the government insisted that it was just restoring order, this deployment of soldiers had the additional effect of cutting the eastern Druzes off from their western coreligionists. [21] Mount Hermon had long been the most vital transit point along the migration path of Druzes from Lebanon to Jabal Druze. The communities in Mount Hermon had close family ties to those in Jabal Druze. Only a few years prior, nearly eight hundred families had migrated from the region near Hasbeya to the southeastern face of Jabal Druze. [22] Ottoman officials were clearly worried that any attempt to force Jabal Druze into submission would prompt reinforcements to come from the Lebanon mountains via the communities around Mount Hermon, so Reshid Pasha moved to cut off the communication of the Druze of the Lebanon and those of Jabal Druze while simultaneously planning to occupy an abandoned fort at the juncture of the Jabal and the Leja.[23] These actions,

[20] PRO. FO 195/976 No. 10 July 3, 1871.
[21] PRO. FO 195/976 No. 12 June 23, 1871.
[22] PRO. FO 195/806 No. 30 Oct 27, 1866.
[23] PRO. FO 195/976 No. 14 30 June 1871.

coupled with rumors that a secret order had been dispatched from Istanbul to the vali, worried the Druze greatly.

The Druze community reached out to the British consul in Damascus, Richard Burton, for protection. Both parties were keen to cite the British claims of protection over the Druze. Burton visited the Jabal in June of 1871. Almost immediately, Reshid Pasha lodged complaints with the government in Istanbul and the consul's office in Damascus. Burton, for his part, repeatedly denied any political purpose in his official correspondence.[24] Regardless of intent, Burton's trip to Jabal Druze and show of support to the Druze prevented any further escalation of violence. Reshid Pasha's planned visit to the Jabal was cancelled, and with it any campaign. Neither official was able to escape the fallout of the failed campaign to cut the eastern Druze off from the western. Reshid Pasha was recalled in late September. Another dispatch from Burton in September contains his rebuttals to admonishment from the British mission in Istanbul, who accused him of minimizing important information and going to Jabal Druze without proper authorization.[25] His protests fell on deaf ears, and he was recalled himself on November 8th. This summer of intrigue prevented Reshid from continuing his policies of aggressively bringing frontier regions under Ottoman administration in Jabal Druze, and also cost the British consul his job for acting to prevent that outcome. From that point, Ottoman administrators began to act with extreme caution in their plans for the Druze, as they did not want to follow in Reshid's footsteps.

New Approaches to Frontier Governance in the 1870s

Reshid Pasha's replacement as governor-general, Subhi Pasha, also understood the unsettled populations at the edge of the vilayet to be central to the affairs of Syria. Subhi Pasha

[24] PRO. FO 195/976 Confidential, June 16, 1871.
[25] PRO. FO 195/976 No. 28 September 28, 1871.

was an important official in Istanbul and had finished the first Turkish translation of Ibn Khaldun's work in 1860. In contrast to Reshid Pasha, Subhi Pasha believed that military action was counterproductive, and that the Bedouin naturally would settle and become agriculturalists if given the proper opportunities. To this end, he tried to build trust with Bedouin chiefs. When a group of them came to Damascus to pay their respects to the new vali, he impressed them by dismissing Reshid's policies as being in "bad faith and treachery," and characterized by coercion.[26] In addition to trying to convince the chiefs by convincing them he was trustworthy, he also distributed land and seed to tribes to encourage settlement. In one case, he distributed land and agricultural materials to twenty-four tribes near Hama. When the tribes sent delegations to Damascus to pay their respects to the new vali, he tried to convince them that he would be open with them. He envisioned that his project would settle tribes as far afield as Medina and the Euphrates and estimated his actions would increase the settled population of Syria by two and a half million.

Subhi Pasha conceived of his project as an experiment and in contrast to his predecessor's efforts and coeval Ottoman expeditions to Najd launched from Iraq. He decried the bloodiness of forced settlement and touted the reduced cost of encouraging peaceful settlement. He also understood the importance of selling his project to a foreign audience, and frequently bragged to the European consuls in Damascus about the benefits of his approach. For instance, when he went on an inspection of the major full nomadic tribes of the Ruallah and Anizeh in June of 1872, Subhi made sure to bring along the English, Russian, and Austrian consuls. He also made a point to bring the notables of Damascus.[27] The Ruallah met with the Damascene delegation in their full encampment, thirty-five miles from Damascus. The performative aspect

[26] PRO. FO 195/994 No. 20 May 28, 1872.
[27] PRO. FO 195/994 No. 24 June 24, 1872.

of the Ruallah's reception greatly impressed the English consul. The Bedouin staged an elaborate mock battle with lances, mail, and helmets. The numbers of cavalry and infantry available to the Ruallah were explained to the consuls as well as to the vali. The fact that Subhi brought a European and Damascene audience demonstrates his desire to elaborate the difference between the nomads and what he considered the civilized population of Damascus; the Bedouin of Syria were a key part of the Damascene economy, but here Subhi was trying to emphasize the difference between the civilized and settled Ottoman to both an internal and external audience.

Not all of Subhi's accomplishment were performative. His accommodating approach to the Bedouin led to their support for the Ottomans reestablishment of Maan Sanjak, far south of Salt, without having to send an expensive military expedition[28] He convinced the tribes from Wadi Musa to Maan to accept small detachments of gendarmes equipped with Winchester rifles. In return, the sheikhs of each tribe were appointed kaymakam of their area. The centerpiece of this plan was the reoccupation of the fortress of Kerak, with three hundred gendarmes. Subhi's policies turned out to be popular and successful with the Bedouin, but his deference had the unintended consequence of emboldening Bedouin tribes.

Subhi Pasha's project collapsed in the winter of 1871. The emboldened tribes began to raid the southeastern edge of Druze Mountain so aggressively that they caused the Druze to declare that they would execute any Bedouin they found wandering in their territory. The Druze killed several Bedouin, which caused the tribes from the territories in the Maan Sanjak to organize four thousand men and march on Druze Mountain. The Atrash family gathered six hundred horsemen and successfully drove off the Bedouin after a series of small skirmishes. The unified and restless group of Bedouin made the position of the Mutasarrif of Maan very unstable

[28] PRO. FO 195/994 No. 34 October 11, 1872.

and caused large numbers of gendarmes to desert. Shortly after, Subhi Pasha was recalled. The Müşir Izzet Pasha in Damascus had written an unfavorable report to Istanbul about the Vali that exacerbated worries that Subhi was trying to settle the Bedouin to create an independent power base for himself in Syria.[29] When the new governor-general arrived, he halted the gendarmes that were setting out to Maan to relieve the Mutasarrif, and instead recalled him to Damascus to explain his and Subhi's actions. This led to rumors that the Maan Sanjak itself would be abolished. The Bedouin were quick to realize that their show of force had caused the recall of a vali and the collapse of an Ottoman administrative unit and began to boldly raid the settled regions at the edge of southern Syria.

The recall of Subhi as well as the müşir, Izzet Pasha, early in 1873 coincided with the death of the governor of the Lebanon, Franco Pasha. While a coincidence, the sudden absence of the three highest administrators in Syria caused the population to fear that a new policy was being enacted from Istanbul and led to an escalating crisis, based only on rumor.[30] The Druze of the Hawran and Lebanon held meetings, which agitated the Christian population. The Christians recalled that the last time the Druze held such meetings was the eve of the 1860 massacres. The Druze, in turn, felt this was their chance to gain power in the administration. Franco Pasha had been a Christian, and the Druze hoped that they could compel the Porte to appoint a Druze governor to replace him. Further compounding the unrest was the disestablishment of Maan Sanjak, which Subhi Pasha had tried to organize into a sub-province that would encourage the sedentarization of the predominantly Bedouin population there. The withdrawal of soldiers caused Bedouin raids into southern Syria to increase.

[29] PRO. FO 195/1027 No. 8 February 20, 1873.
[30] PRO. FO 195/1027 No. 9 March 11, 1873.

The new vali, Halet Pasha, eventually allayed the fears of the population. He sent troops to Hasbeyeh to calm the Christian population there. He also quickly undid Subhi's policies that favored the Bedouin over the Druze. The Druze of the Jabal had felt that Subhi Pasha had denied them their rights. Halet quickly restored them. Furthermore, when the Druze sheikhs of the Jabal sent a delegation to pay respects to the new vali, they insisted that they had only been worried the new governor of the Lebanon would be hostile to the Druze. They felt the newly appointed governor of Lebanon, Rustem Pasha, was a fair man and would treat them justly.[31] Halet's quick action and the appointment of an amenable governor of Lebanon defused the situation, and the threat of a pan-Druze insurrection involving the Hawran, Mount Hermon, and the Lebanon evaporated.

The Ottoman government in Damascus had been attempting to cut off the eastern Druze from the western for several years. In 1871, Reshid Pasha had discovered the hard way that the Druze had enough political clout to prevent the establishment of forts from that would physically cut off the two populations from one another The events of early 1873, however, must have reminded the Ottoman government in Damascus that the threat of a united Druze uprising could pose. The Druze had used the threat of organized action on both sides of Mount Hermon to influence the selection of the new governor of Lebanon. In addition, Bedouin populations were increasingly restive after years of failed settlement plans. Administrators had to have taken note that an active Bedouin policy had led its author, Subhi Pasha, to be recalled because of worries that he was organizing the Bedouin for his own purposes. Active measures to extend administrative authority over these two groups had failed. The failure was further demonstrated in 1874, when a group of Bedouin attacked Ottoman government offices in the Hawran. The

[31]PRO. FO 195/1027 No. 10 March 22, 1873.

brazenness of this raid infuriated the Porte, which recalled Halet Pasha and the müşir of the Fifth Army on September 19th.[32] Within a year, two valis had been recalled for failing to establish public order among the frontier populations of southern Syria.

The Circassian Colonization of Quneitra, 1873

It was into this delicate environment that the Ottoman administration in Damascus placed the first Circassian colony in Syria at Quneitra, at the intersection of Bedouin and Druze territory. Forced sedentarization of the Bedouin had failed, and peaceful measures had only emboldened them. At the same time, the Druze had demonstrated they were savvy players of politics in Damascus, and had not only challenged a governor-general, but had gotten him recalled to Istanbul. Ottoman officials felt it was their moral obligation to spread Ottoman rule and civilization into the frontier regions, but most of their efforts had failed. Model agricultural colonies began to look like a viable option. Settler colonies did not have the appearance of direct Ottoman rule that had alarmed the Bedouin and Druze populations on the frontier. In addition, Ottoman administrators had attempted both to force Bedouin to settle at gunpoint and encourage them to settle voluntarily, and neither policy had been successful. It is clear from Ottoman documents in the 1870s that the government hoped model agricultural settlers could provide an example of the benefits of not only what they considered civilized, modern sedentary agriculture, but also the prosperity that complying with the Ottoman administrative state could offer.

The town of Quneitra was an attractive location for a model agricultural settlement. It had been inhabited only fitfully since ancient times, with a small population in the Roman and early

[32] PRO. FO 195/1047 No. 24 August 31, 1874 and No, 25 September 19, 1874. This crisis would be resolved when Assad Pasha, who replaced both the vali and müşir, brought a military force to the Leja and extracted promises of back tax payments from the Druze, as well as promises of the offending Sloot Arab to settle down to agricultural pursuits.

Islamic eras. It had also been intermittently populated in the early Ottoman period.[33] There are documents of individuals trying to establish an Islamic pious foundation in the area in 1650, and a petition concerning the duty of an imam in 1771.[34] In the late eighteenth century it was the center of an Ottoman district with a caravanserai, maintained walls, and a mosque, but had been abandoned by the time a traveler passed in June of 1812. The inhabitants fled for their own safety during the violence of the Napoleonic campaign in Syria.[35] There was a small population in 1840, but from then until 1873, there was no permanent settled population, although passing caravans continued to use the empty buildings for shelter. This history made Quneitra fit Ottoman practice for establishing model cities: ruins indicated people had lived there before, and the presence of a nearby series of springs and fertile volcanic soil indicated people could live there again. Furthermore, the geography was appealing to Ottoman planners, who acknowledged that settlers would need to defend themselves from Bedouin attack. The town of Quneitra occupies a defensible position: it is in a small valley at the top of the string of volcanic craters that make up the northeastern edge of the Golan and overlooks both the Golan Heights to the west and the Hawran plain to the east.

While Quneitra had been mostly abandoned for some time, the Golan was not empty. The main tribe of the area, the Fadl, had been on the losing side of the tribal struggle set off by the eighteenth-century arrival of the ‘Anizeh tribal confederation from Nejd, which had caused a major reorganization of tribal territory.[36] They remembered their former status, however, and

[33] Details about the state of Quneitra from Gottlieb Schumacher, *The Jaulan: Surveyed for the German Society for the Exploration of the Holy Land* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1888), 207-214.
[34] BOA. TS-MA-d 4295 (20 June 1651), AE-SMST-III 154 12150 (3 April 1772).
[35] John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London: John Murray, 1822), 313-314.
[36] The ‘Anizeh themselves would be pushed out of the Belka by 1885 in a quarrel with the Beni Sakhr. See Lewis, 7. For more on the eighteenth century tribal order, see Dick Douwes, *The Ottomans in Syria: a History of Justice and Oppression* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

considered themselves an aristocratic tribe. [37] The Fadl were semi-nomadic and controlled most of the high plateau's grasslands for usage as pasture. There were several other Arab tribes, the most important of which was the Naim tribe, and a small presence of Turkmen. While the Fadl and others controlled most of the plateau, there were still a few small villages. A travelogue written in the late 1870s recorded only ten or so villages on the whole plateau. Some were Christian, some were Muslim, and some were Allawite. There was a major Druze village, Mejdel Shams, at the very northern edge of the plateau, where a spur of eastern Mount Hermon flattened out onto the Golan. This village was the last Druze settlement before those on the western slopes of Druze Mountain, on the other side of the Hawran plain.[38]

The Immigrant Commission took roughly three hundred Circassians from Sivas and sent them to Syria, where officials in Damascus assigned them to Quneitra.[39] At the same time, another similarly sized group was sent to Homs. These areas represented the far limits of Ottoman control from Damascus at the time. Conditions on the stony Golan plateau were bleak, as the Circassians became the first settled inhabitants of the area since the 1840s. The most detailed account of the Circassians in the early 1870s came from T.S. Jago, the British consul in Damascus. In 1877 he toured Syria, which included a visit to Quneitra where he interviewed inhabitants about their experience since 1873. He reported that the inhabitants present before the arrival of the Circassians considered them interlopers and intruders. The Fadl, who controlled the region, enforced their claims to the grassy plateau.[40] Their hostility prevented anything more than small scale cultivation by the Circassians, who turned to limited pastoralism to support themselves. The Ottoman government did not offer much relief. Administratively, they separated

[37] Schumacher, 86.
[38] For clarification, please see the maps in the appendix.
[39] PRO. FO 195/1153 No. 8 political, April 29, 1877.
[40] PRO. FO 195/1153 No. 8 political, April 29, 1877.

Quneitra from Damascus and appended it to Hawran Sanjak, citing distance as the main factor.[41] Previously, Quneitra was nominally a kaza but more than likely, the government's representative moved from town to town collecting what taxes he could from the small and scattered population without having a permanent headquarters. The Ottomans constructed a crude two story government office in the town from the stones of the ruins, and the government in Damascus continually procured money to send seeds and oxen to the settlers.[42] Despite the relative security provided by being the seat of a district, Jago reported the condition of the Circassians to be miserable and their numbers declining. The pilot settlement should be regarded as a failure. The Ottoman administration placed it as a buffer against Bedouin and Druze populations that was innocuous enough to not set off protests or revolts. Instead of providing a model for settlement, though, the tribal inhabitants of the region dominated the Circassians, forcing them to stay very close to their small settlement. The settlement at Quneitra as well as the entire settlement scheme likely would have failed within a few years. In 1876 and 1877, however, the Ottoman Empire moved to a war footing, and the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War ended up being a watershed moment for the settlement of southern Syria. Two events happened in rapid succession that galvanized Ottoman commitment to the settlement project. The first event was the only major episode of draft-dodging in Syria during the war, which occurred when a group of Druze defied the conscription order and managed to evade Ottoman authorities by exploiting the network of Druze settlements from Mount Hermon to Jabal Druze to receive shelter until the Ottomans gave up pursuit. The successful evasion reinforced the Ottoman desire to fracture that network. The second event occurred immediately following the war: the arrival on Syrian shores of huge amounts of Caucasian refugees displaced by the conflict.

[41] BOA. MVL 1062 82 19 May 1867).
[42] BOA. İ-DH 00757 (21 October 1877).

The 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War in Syria: The Druze Revolt against Conscription in Marjayoun

The 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War cast a pall over the province of Syria. The despair began in the late summer and fall of 1876 with widespread conscription for the war in Serbia. Conscription removed many breadwinners from families, and the Ottoman government provided no relief for families that suddenly found themselves without a source of income.[43] Notably, the Druze of the Hawran and of Mount Hermon were exempt from conscription, while those of the Lebanon and Acre were not. Conscription for the 1876 war meant that by the time Russia declared war in April of 1877 the population of Syria had already been under the pressure of conscription and war taxes for some time. The stress was exacerbated when the gendarmes of Damascus were sent to the front in May. The lack of men in the fields led to bad crops and locusts in the Hawran that spring and summer, while commerce ground to a halt.[44] With conditions worsening by the month, Izzet Pasha, the müşir in charge of the Fifth Army headquartered in Damascus, successfully convinced the Porte to recall two successive valis and invest him as acting civil and military administrator of Syria and declaring martial law. Izzet Pasha was committed to, and very capable of, ensuring public order among the population of Syria as wartime conditions continued to get worse. While the general settled Sunni Muslim population remained stoic in the face of conscription, Izzet Pasha did not hesitate to send the few troops at his disposal to enforce conscription among groups that resisted, such as when he heard

[43] PRO. FO 195/1113 No. 5 November 21, 1876.
[44] PRO. FO 195/1153 No. 14 May 26, 1877. The common practice and Anatolia and Syria to control locusts was to send peasants out into the fields to collect and destroy eggs and young locusts if an impending swarm was suspected. With a large amount of men away at war, the culling could not be carried out, which caused locust outbreaks.

a group of Shiites in Baalbek had paid a bribe to not be conscripted.[45] He dispatched soldiers and forcibly conscripted several hundred men in response.

One such group that resisted conscription caused the most important draft revolt in southern Syria during the 1877-8 war, which ended up having important ramifications for the Circassian colony at Quneitra. In the winter of 1877-8, Ali al-Hajar, the Druze Sheikh of the village of Metulla[46] in the southern part of the district of Marjayoun, began to offer refuge for deserters and draft resisters.[47] The Ottoman authorities in Beirut and Damascus were very worried about the situation. They feared that such an open flaunting of conscription could spread to other Druze communities in the Lebanon and Hawran, and lead to a mass uprising. As revealed in a petition later in 1878, the local Christian population also feared that a widescale Druze revolt could lead to a repeat of 1860. In order to prevent the spread of resistence, Izzet Pasha worked quickly with the officials of Beirut Sanjak to gather seven hundred imperial troops to arrest Ali al-Hajar. The detachment reached Metulla on January 21. There are two accounts of what happened once Ottoman troops surrounded the town. The British Consul in Damascus reported that the Ottoman troops stated their intention to arrest Ali and entered the town after a few men escaped towards Mount Hermon. Once inside the village, they opened fire and killed or wounded thirty people. The British Consul in Beirut reported things slightly differently. He wrote that once the announcement was made, Sheikh Ali and two hundred of his men made a mounted rush up a ravine guarded by the Ottoman troops. The Ottomans fought a skirmish in close quarters that resulted in the death of thirty Druze and twenty-two wounded, with the remainder escaping to Mount Hermon. Regardless of the exact order of events, Sheikh Ali and

[45] PRO. FO 195/1157 No. 16 December 14, 1877.
[46] Today it is known as Metula and is in the northernmost tip of Israel.
[47] PRO. FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 13 February 4, 1878. The Consul in Damascus reported his version of these events in FO 195/1201 No. 3, February 6, 1878.

the remainder of his companions escaped to Mejdel Shams in Quneitra district, a town that Consul Eldridge of Beirut described as "populated by Druses who are notorious for their lawless and unruly character." While Sheikh Ali hid in Mejdel Shams, the authorities in Damascus and Beirut used every bit of leverage at their disposal to ensure no Druzes rallied to Sheikh Ali's side. The mutasarrıf of Beirut dispatched a representative of the influential Jumblatt family to Marjayoun district to maintain order, while Izzet Pasha sent a Druze Sheikh from Hasbeyeh, who happened to be in Damascus at the time, along with a detachment of one hundred troops to demand the Mejdel Shams Druze turn over Sheikh Ali. Despite all this pressure, he slipped through the Ottomans' fingers and found a safe refuge in Jabal Druze.

The Druze of Marjayoun and Mejdel Shams maintained that the thirty killed were innocent and demanded retribution. To this end, a party of them banded together in the late April of 1878 and attacked Shiite villages in Marjayoun district, killing two and stealing a number of animals.[48] The Christians of the area sent a petition to Beirut, requesting protection, again fearing a replay of the massacres of 1860. While this group of Druze resorted to banditry, it was rumored that heated debates and secret meetings were taking place throughout the Druze areas of southern Syria.[49] In the end, the leadership in Jabal Druze decided to not intervene if the Ottomans ordered any reprisals. Without the support of the Druze of the Jabal, the group in Marjayoun district dispersed, although those returning to Mejdel Shams attacked an Allawite village near Banyas on their way home, killing two. At some point during the summer of 1878, Sheikh Ali cleared his name by paying a bribe to Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, who had been appointed vali in March. In the end, the actions of Sheikh Ali and his harboring of deserters and draft dodgers did not lead to a widespread rebellion, as cooler heads in the Lebanon and Jabal Druze prevailed. For

[48] PRO. FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 46 April 26, 1878.
[49] PRO. FO 195/1201 No. 10 April 28, 1878.

the time being, the Jabal remained exempt from conscription and the Druze felt it was not worth starting a full-scale insurrection over conscription exemptions that had already been surrendered in Marjayoun.

Just like 1873, the Ottoman authorities took the threat of a large Druze outbreak very seriously. Izzet Pasha had to marshal the forces of both Damascus and Beirut, as well as the influence of the Jumblatt family, to ensure the western and eastern Druze populations did not unite and incite an insurrection.[50] The Druze had special rights to which they clung and refused assimilation into the Ottoman state. Furthermore, they were dispersed across southern Syria, and communicated regularly with each other. Not only had Sheikh Ali managed to elude Ottoman authorities by hiding out in Mejdel Shams and Jabal Druze, he had managed to convince enough of his coreligionists in Mejdel Shams that they should join with the Druze on the western slopes of Mount Hermon to attack Muslim villages there. The episode had only reinforced Ottoman fears of a united Druze uprising. With the arrival of refugees immediately following this series of the events, the government made the decision to dramatically reinforce the model colony at Quneitra.

The Refugee Crisis of 1878 and Circassian Settlement in Southern Syria

While the population of Syria was suffering greatly due to the unalleviated effects of conscription and while the authorities in Beirut and Damascus were pursuing Sheikh Ali, refugees began arriving by the thousands in the ports of the Levant. In early February 1,000 Circassian and Muslim refugees arrived in Beirut and were immediately sent to Damascus. A week later, another 1,500 arrived in Acre and were immediately sent to Nablus. On February 25,

[50] The Jumblatts are a prominent Druze clan in Mount Lebanon, and the Ottomans often called on their standing in the Druze community to help mediate conflict.

two thousand arrived in Tripoli.[51] Although some of the earliest refugees and those that arrived through early March had small amounts of material wealth, most of the arriving refugees were destitute. The arrival of refugees in such a poor physical state threatened to become a full-blown public health crisis. By March 14, 8,000 had arrived, and another 5,000 by March 31. The Ottoman authorities requisitioned camels from coastal villages to disperse the refugees as quickly as possible, as an outbreak of epidemic disease was feared. The refugees suffered a high mortality rate because of typhus, dysentery, and small pox.

The arrival of so many refugees caused a great deal of concern on the part of both Ottoman officials and European representatives. The reputation of the Circassians proceeded them, and both local Christians and European consuls were concerned about potential violence. The British were so concerned that they ensured a ship flying the Union Jack visited all the major Levantine ports over the course of the winter and spring. The British consul politely referred to the beneficial "moral effect" of the flag, but this was mostly likely to remind the Ottoman government of the pressure put on them by European powers to not settle Circassians near Christians.[52] The Ottoman authorities, for their part, were more worried about the potential for epidemic disease and providing for those refugees in want. The refugees suffered from many infectious diseases and the Ottomans hoped to prevent outbreaks in the ports by moving the refugees inland as quickly as possible. [53] Disease was not the only affliction to befall the refugees. In one notorious example, forty Circassian refugees on the British steamer Sphinx were swept overboard in a storm.[54] When it went to Cyprus to wait out the storm, a fire broke out on

[51] PRO. FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 18, February 28, 1878.
[52] PRO. FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 36 March 31, 1878.
[53] PRO. FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 24 March 14, 1878. Filed as the Derby Report.
[54] PRO. FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 22 March 10, 1878. There is a great amount of detail in this file, and it is mentioned again in several others. Furthermore, this fire would feature prominently in the memory of Circassian settlers in what would later become Jordan.

board killed hundreds more. Survivors of this catastrophe eventually made it to Acre, where they were sent east of the Jordan.

While disease and maritime disasters affected refugees sent to the southern Levantine ports of Beirut and Acre, their progress to eastern Syria in Homs and Hama and to southern Syria in Quneitra and Amman was orderly and efficient. Many refugees came with means and were able to sell possessions pillaged on their way out of the Balkans. One report indicates they were selling Orthodox Church vestments and silver alongside other personal possessions.[55] In another case, it was rumored that the Circassians had brought along a group of Bulgarian Christian girls and were attempting to sell them. When the Ottoman authorities, who were always keen to try and eradicate internal slavery, investigated they could only find one such girl.[56] When brought in front of a court, she declared that she sincerely intended to become a Muslim. The authorities accepted this, but still separated her from the Circassian with whom she travelled and gave the Orthodox clergy access to her so that she could reflect on her choices.[57] The Ottoman authorities requisitioned food and donations to support the refugees that could not support themselves, and requisitioned camels from local village to expedite transport.[58] Consular record often comment on how quickly the Ottomans dispersed the refugees. Quick dispersal was not always the case, however; refugees who arrived in the northern ports of Latakia and Tripoli lingered for months. The 1,300 refugees that arrived in Latakia in early March were armed and refused to board ships

[55] FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 18 February 28, 1878.
[56] Slavery was a persistent problem among Circassian populations. Although enslavement of fellow Muslims is forbidden in Islam, their cultural practice in the Caucasus allowed them to freely enslave fellow Muslims. The Ottomans made major efforts to manumit Circassian slaves when they arrived in Ottoman jurisdiction, although it proved a very difficult cultural practice to totally eradicate. For more detail, see Chapter 3 of Ehud Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).
[57] PRO. FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 18 February 28. I could not find a record of this story after the initial note in the consular record.
[58] PRO. FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 24 March 14, 1878, Derby Report.

for their planned settlement in Jableh.[59] The Ottomans blocked both ports from foreign ships for a few months, while petitions from the local populations increased the pressure on the authorities to disperse the refugees. In July, the Circassians in Latakia got in a fight there, and later that month refugees sent to Tripoli were involved in an altercation with the Christians there.[60]

The Circassian refugees began arriving in Damascus in very early March of 1878 just ahead of the news of the resounding Ottoman defeat in the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War and the new vali, Ahmed Cevdet Pasha.[61] After aggressively keeping the public order for most of the war, Izzet Pasha was recalled, and Ahmed Cevdet arrived just after the first group of Circassians reached Damascus.[62] A report in late March describes the desperate conditions of Syria Vilayet upon receiving news of the Ottoman defeat in Europe.[63] The settled Muslim population of the vilayet had suffered greatly, sending an estimated 115,000 men to the front. The population left behind, including the women and children who had difficulty making ends meet after so many able-bodied men were conscripted, were near starvation after years of onerous taxes and requisitions for the war. Civil pay was in arrears, forcing officials to afflict the population further by collecting bribes in place of an official salary. The population of Syria could barely support itself at the end of the war, let alone thousands of refugees. Despite the deprivation of the settled Muslim population, the government levied a tax of four kuruş per family in Syria to support the refugees, who were temporarily housed in the mosques and madrasas of Damascus. The Damascene population was resentful of a poll tax levied to provide for the refugees. To avoid any trouble, the Circassian refugees were moved as quickly as possible to their destinations in Quneitra, Homs, and Amman.

[59] PRO. FO 195/1201 (Beirut) No. 19 March 3, 1878.
[60] PRO. FO 195/1202 (Beirut) No. 63 July 5 and Beirut No. 71 July 19, 1878.
[61] PRO. FO 195/1201 No. 6 March 4, 1878.
[62] PRO. FO 195/1201 No. 5 March 5, 1878.
[63] PRO. FO 195/1201 No. 8 March 27, 1878.

The British consul had visited most of the settlement locations in a tour of the province in the previous year, and he was not sanguine about the prospects of the settlers. He wrote that the 1873 settlers in Homs had been settled among sedentary Arabs who were hostile to them, and that disease and conflict had much reduced their numbers. Those refugees destined for Amman and the surrounding area were being settled in areas controlled by powerful Bedouin tribes. He wrote that the settlers in Quneitra,

> …where the colony is located among the ruins of that name, and the seat of a Kaymakam, the same thing occurred save that instead of sedentary Arabs nearby the colonists found themselves face to face with Druzes, Bedouins, Turkmans, and other wild tribes who whatever their private feuds may have been made common cause against the intruders, and especially circumscribed this power for good or evil to the raising of cattle and to the cultivation of a little land under the nominal protection afforded by the seat of government. I visited them last year. Surrounded by a hostile population their position is wretched and their number decreasing. The semi barbarous populations of these eastern border lands where these new colonies are being planted acknowledge no master except where came too often defiance of superficial authority- necessitate a display of overwhelming force and bring about on rare occasions as chastisement to be forgotten at the first opportunity.[64]

In another sign that the Ottoman authorities were very worried about how European consuls perceived the settlement of Circassian refugees, the Ottoman Foreign Ministry obtained a copy of this political report and translated it into Turkish.[65] The title, "the settlement situation of Circassian refugees which are being sent to Syria Vilayet," indicates the Ottoman government viewed this report as a reasonably accurate depiction of the settlement attempt. Perhaps more importantly, it again demonstrates the keen interest the Ottoman government had in keeping track of European consuls' views on Circassian settlement.

[64] PRO. FO 195/1201 No. 2 Political March 25, 1878.
[65] BOA. HR-TO 253 (4 March 1878).

The Circassians whom the Ottomans settled in 1873 had not expanded beyond the town of Quneitra itself. The people whose land the Ottomans had declared "empty wastelands" did not simply give up their rights. In another case of Ottoman legal "blindness," because the Fadl had been using the land without officially registering it the government had given the rights to the Fadl's land to the Circassians. The Fadl continued to claim it as rightfully theirs.[66] The Bedouin therefore felt it was their right to restrict Circassian expansion. The refugees arriving in 1878 changed all that. Not only were there more of them, the Ottoman administration was more committed to supporting them. The Circassians sent to Quneitra were now the largest contingent of a huge settlement effort spanning southern Syria. They established new villages lining the edge of the small, high valley in which Quneitra is located. Mansura was the northernmost of the villages, roughly four kilometers from Quneitra. The remaining villages were roughly paired off in a long ellipse with Quneitra at its center, with one village on the high western ridgeline and another at the lower, eastern edge of the Golan. Ayn Zivan and Sarraman were paired this way just a short distance south of Quneitra, Mumsiyeh and Ruhinah further south of that, and Juezah and Barika paired at the southernmost extent of the Circassian settlement.[67] The Ottoman authorities did not plan the location of the villages; a Circassian leader indicated to a traveler later that they had settled where cut stone was at hand, and therefore many of the villages were on ancient ruins.[68] The others were in locations with ample springs. It is also notable that the villages were located along a defensible ridgeline in a relatively compact space, which indicates they were aware of the hostile intentions of the local tribes they were displacing.

[66] The government granting the Circassians rights at the expense of the Fadl is mentioned much later in a consular correspondence in 1883. PRO. FO 195/1448 No. 15 June 3, 1883.
[67] The 1949 Israeli-Syrian Armistice line follows the ridgeline on which these villages were placed.
[68] Schumacher, 114.

The peripatetic British writer Laurence Oliphant toured southern Syria in the spring of 1879 and left a vivid description of the Circassian settlement in Quneitra.[69] When he and his party entered the Golan from the ruins of Banyas on the southern edge of Mount Hermon, they encountered the main encampment of the Fadl but no settled population over a four-hours journey. They finally came to a new Circassian village that he did not name, but from the direction and distance traveled, probably was the northernmost village of Mansura. From there they went to the town of Quneitra. While in the village, Oliphant encountered three hundred people constructing a new life: men busily erecting new homes from the stones of nearby ruins, women and children hoeing small gardens, people moving around in the notoriously creaky carts the Circassians used for transport, and the headman of the village in a serious negotiation with a neighboring Arab.

When Oliphant arrived in Quneitra itself, he was surprised at how small it was for a town that was an administrative center. It only contained a newly constructed mosque, a small government office, and a few houses. Upon Oliphant's arrival, he was invited to a council (*meclis*) meeting by the Ottoman Kaymakam.[70] The government office at the time was a two-story structure. The bottom was a large open room being used as a stable and to house some Circassian families. The upper story, accessible by an outside staircase, contained several small rooms that served as the Ottoman government offices. At the meclis were Hassan Faour, Sheikh of the Fadl, the chief of the local Turcoman tribe, the Sheikh of the Naim Arab tribe, two or three sheikhs of smaller tribes, and several Druzes from Mejdel Shams. The Druze felt a charcoal requisition levied on them by the governor of Hawran was unfair and brought the issue to the

[69] Laurence Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead with Excursions in the Levant* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1880). This summary comes from his description of his journey through Quneitra pages 44-51.

[70] As part of the Ottoman reform process, each level of Ottoman government created a consultative council to help administer the province, sub-province, or district. Local notables usually constituted the members of the council at the kaza level.

meclis.[71] The Fadl and Druze of Mejdel Shams constituted alternative loci of power in Quneitra District that the kaymakam was trying to balance. Soon, the Circassian population would become a third group that contested the Ottoman authorities for control, and this would cause the tense situation to spiral out of control as the different groups coped with increased Ottoman authority in different ways.

Oliphant also interviewed several Circassians in Quneitra, including their chief at the time, Ismail Ağa. He knew Russian, Adyghe, Turkish, and only a little Arabic. When he found out that Oliphant had been to Circassia, and even seen the ağa's original village, he became very excited and switched to quick Turkish. The ağa told Oliphant that they had been able to sell enough property to buy some cattle to begin farming, and the Ottoman government was providing what little it could for the poorest in the settlement area. Oliphant learned the local settled villages did not fear the Circassians, and on the contrary hoped that they would make common cause with them against the predatory raids of the great nomadic aşirets to the east. The traveler also weighed some of the contemporary European tropes about the Circassians with what he actually encountered: he termed them chivalrous and swaggering, dressed in a "chic" way yet not deigning to wear the fez, and spent time discussing their practice of selling children into slavery to prevent starvation.[72] At the same time, he presented a sympathetic view of their reputation for atrocities; he noted that the extreme brutality of the Russian expulsion from the Caucasus and the difficult situation the refugees had faced in the Balkans and Syria.

The Circassian settlements were able to flourish in the early years because of the protection of the new vali of Syria, Midhat Pasha. While Izzet Pasha, the war-time military governor of Syria had likely made the initial plans on where to send incoming refugees, and

[71] Oliphant, 49.
[72] Oliphant, 53.

Ahmet Cevdet Pasha was in charge of Syria while the actual settlement project was being undertaken, Midhat Pasha presided over the early years of settlement. Midhat Pasha arrived in Damascus on December 3rd, 1878.[73] When the British horse-brokers Anne and Wilfred Blunt arrived in Damascus *en route* to the Nejd in 1878, Midhat Pasha had just arrived. They noted he was particularly sympathetic to the plight of the Circassians. Described as having an almost tearful pity in his eyes, he told them that he must do something for the poor Circassians.[74] He wanted to create a place for them in the province by enlisting them into the gendarmerie. Several Circassians were waiting to meet with him for just that purpose while the Blunts were in Midhat's palace in Damascus. Midhat also expressed to them a desire to bring civilization to Syria, which he expressed to the Blunts as mostly a function of how many modern transportation systems, such as tramways, railroads, and canals he could bring to the province. Midhat's sympathy and protection had immediate ramifications: the Fadl rescinded their claims to the land around Quneitra because they did not want to anger the vali.[75] The sympathy of the vali turned out to be important, as several events in the summer and fall of 1879 had to potential to uproot the nascent settlements.

The first was a major attempt by the Sirhan tribe to enter the Golan from east of the Jordan River. The Circassians of Quneitra had expressed worry that they were exposed to raids from the great tribes of the desert several years prior, and the government in Damascus took their concerns seriously. The raid happened in the context of a larger pattern of unrest among the Bedouin in 1879. Reshid Pasha's anti-Bedouin forts had been maintained until the 1877-8 War, when the troops were withdrawn to be sent to the front. While the prestige of the Ottoman

[73] PRO. FO 195/1202 No. 119 December 8, 1878.
[74] Lady Anne Blunt, *A Pilgrimage to Nejd, the Cradle of the Arab Race, a Visit to the Court of the Arab Emir, and "our Persian Campaign"* Volume I (London: John Murray, 1881), 17-18.
[75] PRO. FO 195/1264 No. 21 Aug 8, 1879.

government and a fear of retaliation on the return of the soldiers had generally prevented Bedouin raids into settled areas for a year, a drought in the desert caused groups of the Bedouin to push into settled land looking for pasturage. Midhat Pasha placed garrisons at the various frontier forts and went personally to discuss the prospect of settlement to try and stop the raiding. The Bedouin with whom he met declined to settle, and Midhat assigned them divisions of marginal pasture. One tribe, the Sirhan, was not placated by this offer and they attempted to enter the Golan by force. Ottoman soldiers from Deraa thwarted the effort and forced the Sirhan back to their territory in the desert. The tense situation was alleviated when the government in Damascus reached temporary terms with the tribes, allowing them to pasture in some underutilized land for the summer.[76] This raid was the last attempt of a major tribe to enter the Golan in the nineteenth century. The presence of a protected settler colony led the Ottomans to defend the Golan with a vigor that would be difficult to imagine in years prior.

The other major event was a tense standoff between the Ottoman administration in Damascus and the inhabitants of Jabal Druze that established the archetype for tensions in Jabal Druze during the Hamidian era. While there were frequent skirmishes over the years, in this case a fight over a girl between two villages led to a Druze attack on the Muslim village of Basra al-Harir in the Hawran in the early fall.[77] The Druze raised a force from the population of the Jabal and the Leja, and the Muslims of Hawran gathered allies. Two important precedents were set in this fight: first, Quneitra became a source of fighters for the militia that formed to confront the Druze. Before the standoff ended nearly four thousand men gathered in Druze or government-allied militias. Second, tensions erupted between Ottoman authorities in Damascus and Istanbul over how to handle the armed standoff with the Druze of the Jabal. Those in Damascus wanted

[76] PRO. FO 195/1264 No. 21 August 8, 1879.
[77] Ali Haydar Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha: a Record of his Services, Political Reforms, Banishment, and Judicial Murder* (London: John Murray, 1903), 186.

the authority to violently subdue the Druze, while the authorities in Istanbul demanded a peaceful resolution. Midhat asked for more power and framed the Druze in the terms that marked them as the enemies of progressive and modern Ottoman administration: he declared them insubordinate brigands and threats to public order. In Istanbul, however, the British diplomatic mission asserted their role of protectors of the Druze, which caused the Porte to demand a soft touch.[78] Although it does not seem present in this case, eventually Abdülhamid would take a personal interest in Jabal Druze as part of his ruling system of patronage.

Midhat Pasha was eventually able to bring about a peaceful ending by convincing the Druze sheikhs to turn over the four men who had been directly responsible for the offenses in Basra al-Harir to be prosecuted in Damascus.[79] Handing over the suspects was an unprecedented act of submission to the government by the Druze. The standoff between Midhat and Istanbul, however, caused an unreconcilable tension, and he was finally recalled in July of 1880 when placards complaining of Ottoman rule were put up in Beirut and Damascus.[80] In May of 1880, just before tendering his resignation, Midhat went on a tour of the vilayet. He personally visited Quneitra, Tiberias, and Acre before arriving in Beirut, where he told the British consul he was upset with Istanbul's refusal to give him any latitude with which to work.[81]

The Fadl could not do much while Midhat was vali. They had prevented the earlier Circassian settlers from expanding much past Quneitra town, so there was certainly a great deal of tension when even more Circassians arrived under the protection of the most powerful man in Syria, the vali in Damascus. It is also possible the Circassians were emboldened when their patron in Damascus had visited their town that spring. Midhat Pasha was relieved on August 1,

[78] Midhat, 184-185.
[79] Midhat, 190.
[80] Najib Saliba, "The Achievements of Midhat Pasha as Governor of the Province of Syria," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 9 (1978), 316.
[81] PRO. FO 195/1306 (Beirut) No. 42 May 31, 1880.

1880. There was a major confrontation between the Fadl and the Circassians of Quneitra less than two weeks after Midhat departed.[82] It seems that both parties were emboldened by the uncertainty created by changing administrations in Damascus and moved very quickly to try and settle the animosity that had been growing between the two parties.

It is perhaps not surprising in this semi-arid zone that the proximate cause of the fight was a water rights issue. On August 15th, a Circassian watered his cattle at a spring claimed by the Fadl. He was shot dead for his infraction. Presumably, in the first or second year of settlement under Midhat's protection, this would have been one of the small, quickly resolved quarrels that were common in the area. In this case, however, tensions quickly escalated. The Kaymakam of Quneitra was out of the town at the time and the local government refused to mediate. The Circassians marched on foot and met the Fadl fighters roughly ten kilometers west of Quneitra. The Fadl were mounted and charged the Circassian lines, who fired a volley into the oncoming horsemen. While the Circassians attempted to reload, the Fadl pushed their advantage and forced the Circassians to flee. The British consul had heard greatly inflated numbers about the fight but estimated several hundred men were involved. He wrote that the Circassians lost fourteen men and had ten injured, while the Fadl lost ten men and had eight wounded. The fight was probably located near Mount Sheban,[83] which is southwest of Quneitra. The Fadl later constructed a memorial on the mountain for some of their tribe that had fallen in battle with the Circassians. They had covered a tomb in white plaster which was visible from a great distance. Although the Circassians lost, the fight seems to have lead to a sort of armed neutrality between the two parties.

[82] PRO. FO 195/1306 No. 15 August 20, 1880. The consul describes the fight in great detail and my facts are taken from his report.

[83] Mount Shifon in Hebrew. Today it is located in Israel. This is likely the location, as Schumacher mentioned several years later that the hill had a monument which contained the remains of Fadl tribesmen lost in battle with the Circassians. Schumacher, 256.

The Fadl tribe would try and reclaim their land again in the summer of 1883. This time, the Circassians dramatically defeated the Fadl with the full backing of the Ottoman government.[84] In late May, Emir Hassan al-Faour, who had been peacefully participating in Ottoman governance by taking part in the meclis Oliphant observed in 1879 seized land from the Circassians. This led to a fight were one Circassian was killed and fifteen people were wounded.[85] The Ottoman forces at Quneitra imprisoned him and forced the Fadl to return the land to the Circassians. That was not the end of the fight, however. At the beginning of August, the Fadl again tried to take the land that had previously been theirs. This time, however, two hundred regular Ottoman troops and one hundred Circassian cavalry came to the assistance of the settlers. The Fadl lost and were forced to return the lands they claimed to the Circassians, who had government-recognized deeds. It is likely that Emir Hassan died in this fight. In 1888 when Schumacher visited the area, Hassan's son led the Fadl, and Schumacher was told the old emir had fallen in battle with the Circassians.

The Ottoman State Begins to Incorporate the Circassians: The 1880s

While the Circassians would skirmish with the Fadl on occasion for years afterwards, the settlers had won a chance to survive on the frontier of the Ottoman state. Throughout the course of the 1880s, Quneitra increased in its importance to the Ottoman authorities in both Damascus and Istanbul as an example of what compliance with Ottoman authorities could achieve for a population. One important signifier of this was through the construction of schools.

Schools were an important practical and symbolic tool for Ottoman centralization in the late nineteenth century. Foreign missionary schools challenged Ottoman authority by winning

[84] Described in PRO. FO 195/1448 No. 24 August 15, 1883.
[85] PRO. FO 195/1448 No. 15 June 3, 1883.

the hearts and minds of the young Ottomans that were educated in them. Building and staffing Ottoman schools was a major part of the Hamidian project to counter foreign influence and strengthen the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century, and were the result of a complex synthesis of European and Ottoman ideas that sought to reproduce Hamidian values alongside a strong basis in contemporary science and math,[86] or in other words, to spread Ottoman and modern civilization to the youth of the empire. European observers at the time often bemoaned the "fanaticism" and "Islamization" that would result from the curricula of Ottoman schools providing prayer space and containing Islamic content.[87] The intention of the schools, however, was in part to counter Christian missionary schools, and Europeans felt no compunction about Christian teachings alongside secular topics. Midhat Pasha was the single most important figure in bringing this new marker of Ottoman modernity and authority to Syria. He had been alarmed when he arrived in Syria after an absence of twenty-seven years to find the proliferation of French, British, and American schools in the Levant.[88] Before him, the *rüşdiye* [89] schools in Damascus were that in name only and were mostly taught in the space of madrasas with an imam teaching the Quran. Midhat organized the construction and staffing of schools to bring up the standards of the Ottoman Ministry of Education.[90]

Because Midhat Pasha was the driving force behind the expansion of Ottoman Muslim education in the early 1880s, it should perhaps be no surprise that for most of the 1880s, Quneitra was the only district in Hawran Sanjak that had government schools. By 1880, Syria Vilayet had undergone a vigorous program of school building. Thousands of students were being

[86] Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman* Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 90.
[87] PRO. FO 195/1583 No. 14 March 21, 1887.
[88] Midhat, 181.
[89] Rüşdiye schools were for secondary education. *Iptidai* schools were primary schools.
[90] PRO. FO 195/1514 No. 37 November 13, 1885.

educated, and not just in central and developed sanjaks like Damascus or Beirut.[91] Even the Belka, which usually competed with Hawran for the least complete statistics for a sanjak in Ottoman almanacs, had thirteen schools. From later records, it is clear the one school was a rüşdiye school in Quneitra. In the 1881 yearbook, the building for it is listed as having been completed.[92] In 1883, Hawran is not even listed on the annual register of schools. Instead, there is a note at the end that explains that since Hawran Sanjak only has a few schools in important villages in Quneitra, the authorities are planning to start construction on primary schools in other areas. Despite the concerns addressed in the yearbooks, by 1885 there was still only one school higher than the rank of iptidai, the rüşdiye school in Quneitra. It had, however, by then expanded from teaching thirteen students to thirty-two.[93] By 1887, many towns in Quneitra district had iptidai schools, and while Quneitra town continued to have the only higher education school, the district was the recipient of another school unique in Hawran: Quneitra was the first district in Hawran to have a girls' elementary school, which had 25 pupils in 1887.[94]

It is no coincidence that the only Ottoman schools in Hawran were in Quneitra. To be brought under Ottoman administration meant accepting a trade-off: taxation and conscription in return for public order and infrastructure. The physical building of a school was a new marker for Ottoman authority, alongside railroads, telegraphs, and roads. The fact that school buildings were physical manifestations of Ottoman authority was lost on neither the Ottoman authorities nor the population. In early 1883, the French consul visited Jabal Druze and established Catholic schools.[95] Several months later, the vali of Syria, Hamdi Pasha, went on a tour of southern Syria,

[91] I presume these schools to be at the rüşdiye or iptidai level. Hawran is listed as having "several iptidai schools in a few of the important villages," which a later year indicates were in Quneitra villages anyways.
[92] *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye* (Damascus, 1881), 267.
[93] PRO. FO 195/1514 No. 37 November 13, 1885.
[94] *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye* (Damascus, 1887), 210.
[95] PRO. FO 185/1448 No. 10 May 4, 1883.

and visited Suwayda with the express intent to counter French influence. While there, he distributed Qurans, gave orders to repair the dilapidated minarets of the local mosques, and opened several schools.[96] Three years later, in 1886, the Ottoman schools and infrastructure in general were still viewed with suspicion in Druze Mountain.[97] The Druze and the Muslim population of Hawran feared, for good reason, that beneficial infrastructure would be followed by demands for taxation and conscription. When the authorities in Damascus ordered the closure of all missionary schools that had not received official permission, the Protestant schools in and around Jabal Druze were ordered to close. The Druze there, who valued the education without the concomitant submission to Ottoman authority, and who were able to resist Ottoman directives, kept the schools open.[98]

Mejdel Shams, the only other town of any size in the Golan and one inhabited almost exclusively by Druze, was in less of a position to resist government authority than the population of Jabal Druze. Although not in conflict yet, the Circassian settlements around Quneitra blocked the Mejdel Shams Druze from easy reinforcements from Jabal Druze. While Mejdel Shams did not receive a government school in the 1880s, it did have an Irish Presbyterian one. When the government ordered the closure of missionary schools, the Druze of Mejdel Shams were in no position to resist, and their school was shut down in 1887.[99] The month before the order to close the school came, the Ottomans constructed a government house, and planned to build a barracks later that year for "their protection."[100] This is a good example of the Ottomans directly countering the influence of foreign schools by investing in building administrative infrastructure.

[96] PRO. FO 195/1448 No. 15 June 3, 1883.
[97] PRO. FO 195/1548 No. 14 April 14, 1886.
[98] PRO. FO 195/ 1583 No. 3 January 23, 1887.
[99] PRO. FO 195/1583 No. 14 March 21, 1887.
[100] BOA. DH.MKT. 1417 106 1304 Ş 11 (5 May 1887), DH.MKT. 1410 93 1304 B 13 (7 April 1887).

Education was not the only way that the Circassians became intertwined with the Ottoman state. As mentioned above, Midhat Pasha planned to incorporate Circassians in to the gendarmerie. When Lady Anne Blunt recorded the conversation, she assumed it was because the Circassians were by nature thieves and giving them a position in the gendarmerie would give them a legitimized outlet to rob others.[101] She missed that the reorganization of the gendarmerie was a major plank of Midhat's reform policy. The müşir of the Fifth Army controlled the military and the gendarmerie and police were the only security-enforcing departments under the vali's control.[102] When Midhat arrived, the gendarmes were a notoriously venal and corrupt group. His first step was to enroll new gendarmes, including some Christians, to begin replacing the old guard. He also ordered that no prisoner be released without his direct permission, which reduced the efficacy of bribes. As a whole, his reorganization of the gendarmerie increased public security as well as public trust in the institution notably; this improvement lingered long past the end of his term.[103]

The Circassians were perfect for Midhat's reorganization. They lacked ties to any local notables or the old guard that Midhat tried to phase out. Their settlements were in a tenuous position, so they must have been keen supporters of the drive for public order and security. The Ottoman government directly recruited Circassians from a group of ninety-five families that arrived overland from Sivas in 1882.[104] While most of the settlers were sent to join the settlement at Quneitra, around one hundred were directly recruited into the gendarmerie for service around the outskirts of Damascus. Circassians would soon become tightly associated with the

[101] Blunt, 18.
[102] For a summary of the history of the gendarmerie in Syria before the 1880s, see L. Schatkowski Schilcher, "The Hawran Conflicts of the 1860s: A Chapter in the Rural History of Modern Syria," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (1981).
[103] Saliba, 312-313.
[104] PRO. FO 195/1412 No. 15 December 15, 1882.

gendarmerie in general. In 1883, when a small disturbance broke out in Hawran, the government sent troops and gendarmes to deal with it, accompanied by a group of mounted Circassians.[105] The co-option of Circassians into government service would reach its peak a decade later, when Hüsrev Pasha, a Circassian from the Quneitra colony, was appointed head of the Syrian gendarmes.[106]

Quneitra continued to grow in population throughout the latter half of the 1880s. The new arrivals in 1882 bolstered the numbers, although they did not like what they found in Quneitra and further south. In 1885, a group of two hundred from Quneitra and Salt districts petitioned to leave Syria to return to Anatolia.[107] Their petition described the conditions as intolerable. They were informed that it was expressly forbidden to leave their assigned locations, but they persisted. The Grand Vizier ordered a special convention of the Immigrant Commission to discuss their case; they were forced to stay. This episode indicates that while the population had finally begun to grow, living in Quneitra was rough.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the 1870s, Quneitra was an abandoned town well past the internal frontier of Ottoman administration in southern Syria. Ottoman governors in the 1860s and 1870s had tried several strategies to increase their control over the Bedouin that existed in self-sufficient communities at the edge of the desert and steppe. Mehmet Reshid Pasha had tried to suppress the Bedouin while Subhi Pasha had tried to accommodate them. Neither approach demonstrably increased Ottoman control over the Bedouin. Furthermore, Ottoman actions with or against the Bedouin alarmed the Druze population of Jabal Druze, who practiced sedentary

[105] PRO. FO 195/1448 No. 4 February 24, 1883.
[106] PRO. FO 195/1839 No. 6 March 17, 1894.
[107] BOA. DH-MKT 1348 16 (9 October 1885).

agriculture but were also politically autonomous. The delicate status of the frontier in southern Syria led to a novel solution: the settlement of Caucasian refugees to create a model agricultural settlement. The Circassian settlement at Quneitra in 1873 did not have much promise; reports in the middle of the 1870s indicated it was close to collapse. The brazen Druze evasion of conscription laws in the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War, however, galvanized Ottoman administrators. To disrupt both Bedouin and Druze autonomy, Ottoman officials in Damascus chose to make Quneitra the largest refugee settlement in Syria after 1878. Although conditions in the early 1880s continued to be difficult, the Circassians of Quneitra soon became important actors in the society and politics of the region.

When the German-American surveyor Gottlieb Schumacher visited Quneitra in early 1888, he found a region that had been radically transformed. The Circassians had pushed the semi-nomadic tribe that had dominated the Golan in the 1860s and 1870s, the Fadl, onto marginal land.[108] Schumacher encountered some Fadl that were attempting to farm grapevines. The Circassians had also driven the Turkmen tribes south, where they had settled in a village. The number of Circassian villages had grown from seven to twelve. They had repaired the road between their villages, and had recently received a telegraph connection from Damascus and the seat of the Hawran Sanjak in Sheikh Saad.[109] When Schumacher arrived in Quneitra, he wrote that "looking, too, at the towering hay-cocks, the swift, rattling Circassian carts, the preparation of dried bricks from the fine earth of the neighbourhood, and, above all, the cleanliness of the streets, one asks involuntarily, am I in the Jaulan?"[110] The settlement of the Circassians and the assistance of the Ottoman government in the form of infrastructure as well as the soldiers and

[108] Schumacher, 53.
[109] Schumacher, 65.
[110] Schumacher, 208.

gendarmes assigned to the district had had what was likely the intended effect on the region: the nomadic populations were pushed aside and were becoming sedentarized.

The security afforded by the increase in Ottoman government had another effect. The Druze population of Quneitra was also booming. The town of Mejdel Shams was taking advantage of the Circassians curbing Fadl authority on the plateau. In a population shift that would have fateful effects on Quneitra and Syria as a whole, the Druze were populating settlements south along the declining spine of Mount Hermon that led to Quneitra. Masada was only a hamlet of sixty huts used by the Druze in harvest time in 1888.[111] It would soon become a full-fledged village. They also settled the town of Buqata, which had thirty-five houses and a population of one hundred and fifty in 1888. [112] It was six and a half kilometers south of Mejdel Shams, but more importantly, was only five kilometers north of Mansura, the northernmost Circassian village. The tensions between these two rival villages would trigger tremendous violence in the 1890s.

For the Ottoman government, though, the increase in settled villages and retreat of the nomadic populations was viewed as a great success. The Druze in Quneitra seemed to be choosing to align themselves with the government program of settlement and infrastructure building made possible through public order maintained by Ottoman troops and gendarmes. The Circassians in Quneitra certainly were, intertwined as they were with the Ottoman centralizing project by being a model Muslim town, sending their sons and daughters through the new Ottoman education system and then into the gendarmerie or military, and developing their region enough to become important enough for a telegraph line. The Ottoman administrators were sanguine about the region in 1887, when they began publishing this description of Quneitra

[111] Schumacher, 220.
[112] Schumacher, 115.

District in their yearbooks, a line which they repeatedly published until at least 1900: “Quneitra District- the town, which is at the center of the district, would not have any importance or signs of care and industry were it not for the Circassians who were settled there and have contributed to its agriculture and flourishing condition that have made it grow moment to moment.”[113]

[113] *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye* (Damascus, 1887), 247-248. This is repeated for many years in the “information” sections concerning the various districts and Sanjaks.

Chapter 5: The Circassians of Quneitra and the End of a Regime of Exception in Southern Syria, 1890-1908.

Introduction

On June 2, 1894, a Circassian settler was returning home with his wife and son to Mansura, the northernmost village in the Circassian colony at Quneitra. Four Druze from Buqata, the southernmost Druze settlement in the Golan Heights, ambushed the Circassian family and robbed them, grievously injuring the wife in the process. The family raced home and the husband assembled twenty men to retaliate. The twenty-one Circassians, thirsty for revenge, found a Druze trading with a group of Fadl Bedouin. They shot the likely innocent Druze dead, then proceeded to Quneitra to file a formal complaint against the Druze of the district.[1]

The fact that the Circassians escalated the violence before going to the government meant that there was little hope for a peaceful resolution. Indeed, over the course of the summer of 1894, events spiraled out of control as the Circassians of Quneitra and the Druze of Mejdel Shams attacked each other in increasingly large numbers while the Ottoman government desperately tried to regain control. An armistice at the end of the summer of 1894 only briefly calmed the waters. Tensions simmered, and violence between the Circassians and Druze of Quneitra exploded in 1895. That time there would be no peaceful resolution, and the Ottoman government committed a major military force to destroying Druze power in Hawran *Sanjak*, which included Quneitra. The violence ended in 1896 with a powerful symbolic victory for the

[1] The events are described in PRO. FO 195/1839 No. 13 June 11, 1894, and in several Ottoman documents starting with the encoded telegram BOA. DH-ŞFR.166 97 (3 April 1894). They were also summarized for the government in Istanbul in BOA. Y-A-HUS 299 (5 June 1894).

Circassians. After the violence the Ottomans installed Hüsrev Pasha, one of the Circassian settlers, as the temporary *kaymakam* of Jabal Druze.[2]

The events of 1894-96 were an important turning point for the Circassian settlements in southern Syria and for the Ottoman incorporation of the surrounding area into an undifferentiated system of rule, in effect ending the politics of difference in Hawran Sanjak after decades of elaborating the difference between the settled Muslim population and the Bedouin and Druze populations of the province. The long spell of violence in the middle of the 1890s has often been overlooked in the scholarship on the Hawran, mostly because it was positioned between the better-known peasant uprising of 1889-1890, the '*Ammiyya*, and the Young Turk era attack on the Jabal in 1910. The 'Ammiyya has received much attention because it was something new in the context of rural Syria: a social uprising of peasants and less powerful Druze sheikhs against the dominant Atrash clan. The 1910 campaign has also received a great deal of attention because it was the last Ottoman attack the Jabal, and the harsh treatment of the rebel leaders led to Druze ambivalence towards the government for the remaining years of Ottoman rule. The 1894-96 uprising was important for several reasons. First, at its conclusion the Ottoman government-imposed terms on the Druze that it had been seeking since the 1860s: the right to collect taxes, conduct a census, and enforce conscription. This represented the closing of an Ottoman "regime of exception," a form of governance common on the Ottoman internal frontier. The Ottomans also used the opportunity to begin a large program of infrastructure building and attempts at cultural Ottomanization, essentially expanding their civilizing mission to encompass the Druze. Second, it marked the conclusion of Sultan Abdülhamid II's favor for the Druze in southern Syria. From the beginning of his in the 1870s, he had blocked Ottoman authorities in Damascus

[2] Kaymakam was the title for Ottoman officials placed in charge of a kaza.

from violently centralizing the Jabal and frequently demanded the Druze be treated as peacefully as possible. Instead of imposing state institutions by force, Abdülhamid opted to create ties of patronage to the leading families of Jabal Druze as a counterpoint to the powerful Bedouin confederations that stretched from the eastern edge of the Jabal to Nejd, a policy which culminated with his reception of Ibrahim Atrash and a gift of eighteen fine horses in 1892.[3]

The violence in 1894-6 also marked the nearly complete integration of the settler colonies in Quneitra to the politics and society of Syria. Ottoman authorities insisted on public order, *asayiş,* in rural areas and framed it in civilizational terms. Those who supported public order were described as civilized, and those who disrupted it were deemed savage or unruly. In practical terms, this meant submission to taxation and conscription in return for gendarme-enforced security and access to infrastructure projects. It did not imply protection from government violence. The Circassians of Quneitra worked throughout this period to meet the standards of Ottoman public order. The Druze did not. When Circassian and Druze tensions escalated in Quneitra, the Ottoman authorities allowed the Circassians and their Bedouin Fadl allies to pillage unprotected Druze villages, paradoxically in the name of public order. After two bloody years, the Druze in southern Syria acquiesced to enforced Ottoman public order. The Circassians benefited from this greatly. Their settlements were stable and grew after this period, and Circassians became dominant in Ottoman enforcement of public order at all the desert-adjacent districts of Southern Syria- not just in Hawran and Jabal Druze, but in Kerak Sanjak as well. The main Ottoman commander of troops in Quneitra, Mirza Bey, was a Circassian. The commander of the Damascene gendarmerie and one of the men most responsible for the eventual outcome was Hüsrev Pasha, who had come to Quneitra from Sivas in the early 1880s. The two

[3] PRO. FO 195/1765 No. 31 December 28, 1892.

men would go on to influential positions as Ottoman agents in southern Syria at the turn of the century.

Yet, the literature has treated the Circassian participation in these events as a sideshow, instead of a primary driving force in the sea-change from a regime of exceptions to the standardized, centralized, and professionalized Ottoman style of rule across southern Syria that resulted from this episode of violence. Schilcher argues that the primary cause of the uprising was economic. There was a global depression in the 1880s and 1890s. The Hawran's economy was based on grain, and European as well as local merchants had been trying to ease exports for years. In 1894 a railroad spur finally connected Damascus to Hawran, which resulted in a flood of grain being exported to international markets at precisely the wrong time: the 1895 market crash in London and Paris.[4] The collapse in prices led to a collapse in taxes, and the Ottomans struggled to pay their troops, while peasants began abandoning cultivated land to avoid their creditors. In this telling, to divert blame for this economic malaise the Ottoman authorities felt compelled to mount a large expedition against the Druze of the Jabal as a scapegoat to calm the anxious Damascene population. Kais Firro, on the other hand, highlights the role of internal Druze politics in the uprising. Ibrahim Atrash, the long-ruling pro-Ottoman kaymakam of the Jabal, died in 1893.[5] His brother Shibli had long been more hostile to the Ottomans than his brother, and was passed over for kaymakam by a notable from Jerusalem who was a foreigner in the Jabal, Yusuf Ziya al-Khalidi.[6] The Ottoman authorities arrested Shibli when he became openly hostile, and this caused the Druze in the southern Jabal to plot a guerilla campaign to resist the Ottomans.

[4] L. Schatkowski Schilcher, "The Hauran Conflicts of the 1860s: A Chapter in the Rural History of Modern Syria," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (1981): 159-179.
[5] Kais Firro, *A History of the Druzes* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 229.
[6] Al-Khalidi was an influential Ottoman reformer in his own right and was from a prominent family of Jerusalem.

While the depression and internal Druze politics clearly played important roles in the outbreak of violence in 1894, the unique position of the Circassians in Quneitra as outsiders struggling to survive in a hostile social and environmental situation has not been properly appreciated. One such struggle has been underappreciated in the scholarship: epidemic disease. While large-scale cholera epidemics in late nineteenth century Syria have been noted, including one in the early 1890s, the impact of smaller outbreaks are less well known. Disease was a constant issue among the Circassians of Quneitra since their settlement in the 1870s. They had survived smallpox and malaria in the 1870s, and then a devastating outbreak of typhoid and cattle plague in 1888. Those outbreaks were followed up by a series of disease related panics in Quneitra over the early 1890s, culminating with the reappearance of the cattle plague in 1894, right before four Druze robbed a Circassian family in June of 1894. This chapter will argue that epidemic disease was a serious threat to the survival of the Circassians in Quneitra that destabilized the settlement precisely when they seemed to have stabilized their position. The anxiety caused by recurring epidemics was a major factor in the Circassian community fully allying with the Ottoman government when violence escalated in the middle of the 1890s. The collaboration of Circassian settlers with the Ottoman state had far reaching implications for the expansion of normalized Ottoman rule into the desert regions of southern Syria in the final decades of the empire.

Cattle Plague, Cholera, and the Circassians at Quneitra, 1888-1894

By 1888 the Circassian community in Quneitra had begun to stabilize. Schools were opening, community members were becoming integrated into the larger society of Syria Vilayet by enrolling in the gendarmerie, and peace had been made with the Fadl tribe. Additionally, judging by the absence of any indication otherwise in the Ottoman or European consular records

of the 1880s, tensions between the Circassians of Quneitra and the Druze of Mejdel Shams were low. In fact, by one indication the two communities may have been on good terms: the Druze expanded down the spur of Mount Hermon and onto the Golan Plateau, establishing several permanent settlements. One, Buqata, was established at the halfway point on the twelve kilometers separating Mejdel Shams and the northernmost Circassian village, Mansura.[7]

Epidemic disease had been a problem when the Circassians first arrived. As mentioned in the previous chapter, European consular reports in Beirut and Damascus commented frequently on the poor condition of the refugees upon their arrival. Aside from malnutrition and a lack of personal items, smallpox, fever, and plague were all mentioned as occurring among the Circassian refugees. In a consular report from the British representative in Damascus in March of 1878, the consul reports on the cyclical nature of disease among the settlements in Quneitra and east of the Jordan.[8] He wrote that the areas to which refugees were being sent were wastelands that have "disadvantage of fever in summer and autumn." The consul's words were prophetic, as 1888 witnessed the serious resurgence of disease among the Circassians of Quneitra. In late summer of that year, a major outbreak of typhoid fever struck.[9] By September, over two hundred individuals had been infected, forty-seven had died, and as many as six new people were being infected daily. In 1884-86 the population of Quneitra town was estimated at 1,300, and the Circassian population of the outlying villages of the district was about 3,300. This means that of a population of less than 5,000, roughly four percent were infected.

The outbreak began in June. The local government was quickly overwhelmed, and it requested funds from Damascus to respond to the epidemic. Sufficient funds had not arrived by

[7] Yigal Kipnis, *The Golan Heights: Political History, Settlement, and Geography since 1949* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 53-54.
[8] PRO. FO 195/1201 No. 8 27 March 1878.
[9] BOA. DH-MKT 1549 48 (1 October 1888), 2.

August. In the meantime, the local government had set up a quarantine cordon to prevent the spread of disease to other nearby areas.[10] As the documentation continuously refers to the population of Circassian refugees within Quneitra district, it is likely that the cordon was restricted to the areas immediately surrounding the town proper in the northeast Golan, where the Circassian population was concentrated. Roads to Quneitra were limited, and such a quarantine could have been achieved by cutting the main road to Damascus, along which merchant caravans travelled roughly one to three times weekly.[11] Efforts to slow the spread of the disease was expensive, as the government had to pay for doctors, medicine, and tents. An official estimated the cost of providing for doctors and supplies to be sent to Quneitra at 15,000 kuruş. The provincial government in Damascus immediately dispatched the needed supplies and cash but did not want to bear the cost alone. It telegraphed Istanbul in late September, asking for the cost to be covered by the treasury or ministry of health. Within a week, the government in Istanbul decided to disburse 15,000 kuruş to cover the expenditure from Damascus.

The human cost of the epidemic was compounded by an outbreak of cattle plague.[12] The disease was endemic to western Eurasia and was one of the diseases that drove early and unsuccessful scientific efforts to develop vaccination in the late eighteenth century. [13] There were several large outbreaks in the nineteenth century which have been discussed extensively in the historiography of the British Empire. One such outbreak in the 1860s devastated England's

[10] BOA. DH-MKT 1543 52 (16 September 1888), 2.
[11] Schumacher 1888, 208.
[12]Cattle plague was traditionally used in English as a catch-all for epidemic disease that affect cattle. Rinderpest, a virus, is the most usual disease in this classification, and it is used in modern English to specify the disease instead of the more generic cattle plague, which was used more frequently in the nineteenth century. The second most common disease classified under the moniker is typhus. Typhus is not to be confused with typhoid, the disease that affected the human population of Quneitra in 1888. While both are bacteria and both names in English derive from the Greek for "fever," the former can affect humans and animals and is spread by fleas and lice. The latter results from ingesting salmonella, a food-borne pathogen, which animals do not contract.
[13] It was endemic until 2010, when it became the second disease eradicated by humanity. Dennis Normile, *Science*, New Series, Vol. 330 No 6003 (22 October 2010), 435.

agricultural economy, and another occurred in the 1890s in Britain's colonial possessions in eastern and southern Africa. Because the latter outbreak was the first of cattle plague in those regions, the herds lacked immunity and the results were devastating. Over ninety-percent of local water buffalo and cattle herds were wiped out, and the resultant famine and disorder led to severe political and social effects.[14] Historians of the region have pointed to the outbreak as an important contributing factor to several revolts in South Africa in the 1890s. The outbreak began in 1889 in Somaliland and progressed through Uganda before reaching the Zambezi River in 1892.[15] The devastation provided an urgent impetus to develop a vaccine, and an English physician posted in South Africa finally created one in the 1890s.[16]

The cattle plague was recurrent in Ottoman Syria in the 1880s and 1890s.[17] Despite this, most of the literature on disease in Ottoman Syria focuses on cholera or malaria.[18] The effects of cattle plague on animals and the humans who depended on them were severe, but the Ottoman response to the disease was much less vigorous than their response to human disease. The international management of cattle plague in the late nineteenth century followed three main methods: vaccination experiments, quarantine, and the destruction of infected herds. The Ottomans only practiced the former two. Researchers based in Istanbul worked on vaccine development, while authorities in the provinces followed a standard practice of erecting internal cordons and dispatching veterinarians and medicine to affected areas. Peasants greatly feared the

[14] C. van Onselen, "Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa 1896-97," *The Journal of African History* 13, No.3 (1972), 474.
[15] Van Onselen, 473.
[16] C.A Spinage, *Cattle Plague: A History* (New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003), 435.
[17] Sam White has discussed cattle plague outbreaks in the early modern period. See Sam White, "A Model Disaster: From the Great Ottoman Panzootic to the Cattle Plagues of Early Modern Europe," in *Plague and Contagion in the Islamic Mediterranean,* ed. Nükhet Varlık (Kalamazoo: Arc Humanities Press, 2017).
[18] On cholera see Birsen Bulmuş, *Plague, Quarantine, and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012) and Michael Christopher Low, "Ottoman Infrastructures of the Saudi Hydro-State: The Technopolitics of Pilgrimage and Potable Water in the Hijaz." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57, no. 4 (2015). On malaria, see Chris Gratien, "The Ottoman Quagmire: Malaria, Swamps, and Settlement in the Late Ottoman Mediterranean," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 4 (2017).

economic effect of cordons and frequently hid the presence of cattle plague to avoid the pitfalls. That common practice greatly impacted the efforts of Ottoman veterinarians in trying to block the spread of cattle plague. They did not, however, usually systematically destroy infected herds and flocks, as was the practice in many European countries.[19]

In July 1884 an outbreak of cattle plague spread to Aleppo. The official Ottoman journal for Aleppo Vilayet, *Firat*, explained that the likely point of origin was the cattle trade with Iran.[20] Despite efforts at setting up quarantine stations and cordons, the plague had spread to Diyarbakır and from there it moved deeper into Anatolia, towards Ma'muretül'aziz, and from there to Aleppo. Once in Aleppo, it followed the trade networks over the countryside to Aleppo's main port, İskenderun. The British Consulate was very concerned as cattle were a major export of the region. The Ottomans were even more concerned. The Ministry of the Interior enacted an internal export ban of animals from Aleppo Vilayet, which included a ban of exporting animals via sea to Egypt.[21] By 1885 the plague seemed to have abated, and Aleppo had a relative excess of cattle. Damascus Vilayet had a scarcity, and both local and British merchants wanted the export ban overturned. The Ministry of the Interior overuled both consular pressure and requests by the vali of Aleppo, Cemil Paşa. The consular records are silent on the progress of the cattle plague between 1885, when they first noted it, and several large outbreaks in the later 1890s. The Ottoman records, however, indicate that the quarantine efforts had failed. At the same time the human population of Quneitra was ravaged by fever in 1888, the livestock of the region was struck by a serious bout of cattle plague. Cattle were of extreme importance to the Circassians. They were notable for being one of the only communities in southern Syria and Palestine to even

[19] Refik Bey and Refik Bey. "La Peste Bovine en Turquie." *Annales Institute Pasteur* (1899), 596-611.
[20] PRO. FO 195/1477 No. 48 September 17, 1884. A clipping and translation of this journal was attached to the consular report.
[21] PRO. FO 195/1518 No. 9 April 23, 1885.

use cattle.[22] Aside from their obvious uses as a source of meat and dairy, cattle had important roles as draft animals. Without a sufficient number of cattle, it was difficult to plow land for crops. The Circassians were also noted for their use of huge, creaky carts that were pulled by oxen.[23]

Respite was brief. After only a few years, epidemic disease returned to Quneitra in 1892. In 1890 cholera was circulating in the Bedouin population of the Jazira. When the Bedouin came to Aleppo in September of 1890 to pay the requisite camel tax, they brought the disease with them. When the vali realized what was happening, he quickly dispersed the nomads, but it was too late.[24] The outbreak devastated Aleppo, and officially caused 2,827 deaths with an extremely high mortality rate of sixty-two percent by the time it abated in January of 1891.[25] Despite the efforts of the government, many Ottomans evaded the quarantine and fled to villages in the countryside, bringing the disease with them and causing the quarantine effort to fail.[26]

Ottoman cordons were also ineffective in stopping the spread of cholera to Damascus. The outbreaks in Aleppo, the Jazira, and Mecca further alarmed officials.[27] Cordons were set up on all three main travel routes to Damascus. The pilgrims returning from Mecca were declared uninfected, but a conscript from Aleppo brought the disease to a village on the Damascus-Aleppo road. Cordons were quickly erected to prevent the spread within the vilayet, but it was

[22] Seteny Shami, "Historical Processes of Identity Formation: Displacement, Settlement, and Self-Representations of the Circassians in Jordan," *Iran and the Caucasus* 13, no. 1 (2009), pp 141-159. 151.
[23] Schumacher 1888, 17.
[24] PRO. FO 195/1690 No 12 September 19, 1890.
[25] PRO. FO 195/1690 No 13 September 26, 1890 recounts the initial outbreak. A full report on the casualties is given in PRO. FO 195/1720 No 3 January 26, 1891.
[26] PRO. FO 195/1720 No 23 July 21, 1891 and No 27, August 21, 1891. The report mentions that the epidemic hit the Ottoman Jewish district of Aleppo particularly hard.
[27] Mecca was not normally infected in the same way disease circulated between the vilayets of Syria, Aleppo, Beirut, and Baghdad. As an international pilgrim center, outbreaks were common in Mecca. It was standard Ottoman practice to have a cordon at Ain Zerka to quarantine returning Hajj pilgrims in outbreak years. Because of this, Mecca and Medina spread disease to Syria very, very rarely.

too late. The 1891 outbreak in Syria Vilayet was not as destructive as the Aleppine epidemic the year prior, but still infected hundreds. By January of 1892 the disease was dying out. The only town in Hawran Sanjak to be infected, however, was Quneitra.[28]

The Druze of the Hawran and Abdülhamid's Politics of Patronage, 1888-1894

While the Circassian community struggled with disease and a difficult economic situation in the late 1880s and early 1890s, the Druze population turned a series of internal and external struggles in 1893 into a dramatic reassertion of their autonomy by successfully outmaneuvering the Ottoman authorities in Damascus. Instead of butting heads with the Ottoman administrators in Damascus, they sent a delegation directly to the Sultan in Istanbul. While the Druze gained many short-term advantages by circumventing the local administrators, their direct negotiation with the Sultan ended up leading to disaster for the inhabitants of Jabal Druze. The unrest in the Jabal had several factors. Schilcher highlights the effects of the collapse of grain prices, while Firro emphasizes internal Druze politics, and both provide excellent details on the 1890s in the Jabal. Druze peasants in the Hawran had grown dissatisfied with Ibrahim Atrash's tenure as kaymakam of the Jabal, because of his accommodation of Ottoman authorities and because of general economic anxiety caused by the uneven distribution of resources in a time of economic depression. After a revolt in the summer of 1889, the peasants succeeded in radically restructuring land use, winning the ownership of their land under the condition they would no longer ask Ottoman officials to arbitrate land disputes.[29] In November of that year, three factions of the Atrash family coopted the peasant revolt; one faction behind each of Ibrahim and Shibli, and one behind Najm Atrash. In spring of 1890 the movement took on a new character and became known as the '*Ammiyah*, after the name for the deliberative assembly formed by the

[28] PRO. FO 195/1727 No 12 October 16, 1891
[29] Firro, 223.

peasants and the Druze Sheikhs. This phase was characterized by a conflict of peasants and lesser sheikhs pitted against the influence of the Atrash family and their followers. The Ottomans became involved when the forces of the *'Ammiyah* drove the Atrashes from Suweida, the capital of Jabal Druze Sanjak. Ibrahim fled to Damascus and requested the support of the authorities.

The recently-appointed vali, Assim Pasha, responded with a dramatic show of force. He had been in Fuat Pasha's 1860 investigatory commission of the massacres in the Lebanon, and possibly in Fuat Pasha's expedition against the Jabal in 1861, which may have influenced his swift response.[30] Three thousand troops went to the Hawran immediately, where they were joined by infantry brought from Salonica and a battery of artillery.[31] The Ottomans demanded the surrender of three thousand Martini rifles that the Druze were stockpiling.[32] When the Druze refused, the Ottomans attacked Suweida and occupied it. The Ottomans imposed harsh terms, demanding the registration of Druze land for tax purposes, the payment of back taxes, and the surrender of the Martini rifles. Many Druze took up refuge in the Leja to continue the fight, but soon both sides responded to pressure to come to peaceful terms: Abdülhamid demanded a quick and peaceful resolution, and the Druze were anxious to take in the harvest before it was lost.[33] In the end both sides compromised after each lost several hundred men. The Ottomans received a pledge of loyalty, back taxes, and the right to build a fort in Suweida. The Druze received a non-Atrash kaymakam, only needed to surrender a token amount of their Martini rifles, continued to

[30] PRO. FO 195/1687 No 2 January 27, 1890.
[31] PRO. FO 195/1687 No 19 June 2, 1890.
[32] Martini rifles represented the cutting-edge military technology of the day and were issued to Ottoman soldiers. They had a dramatically longer and more accurate shot than most rifles at the time, as well as a very quick reload speed. The Druze obtaining and stockpiling military-grade weapons became a major point of contention between the government and the inhabitants of the Jabal.
[33] PRO. FO 195/1687 No 31 July 15, 1890.

be excluded from conscription, and halted Ottoman plans to build a fort at the entrance to the Leja.[34]

The Druze continued to resist taxation for the next few years. An unusually weak Ottoman administration in Damascus in the early 1890s made Druze defiance easier. Assim Pasha died of a heart problem in 1891, and was replaced by Osman Nuri Pasha, who had been a strident centralizer in his earlier days but was crippled by rheumatism and mostly invalid during this period, his first governorship in Damascus. He arrested Ibrahim Atrash and demanded a huge ransom for his release. When Osman Nuri was reassigned to the Hejaz, his successor immediately released Ibrahim.[35] The Druze leader used the opportunity to execute a plan that won his people a great deal of autonomy. He had paid close attention when the chief of the Ruallah Bedouin tribe, longstanding rivals of the Druze of the Jabal, sent a party of notables along with a gift of prize Arabian horses to receive an audience with Abdülhamid. The Ruallah received Abdülhamid's favor as a result. In the 1890s Abdülhamid embarked on a novel strand of the Ottoman civilizing misssion, cultivating personal patronage relationships with the leaders of frontier societies that had been resisting assimilation into the new Ottoman order. While this strand was chiefly aimed at nomadic populations, the Druze took advantage of it. So, on December 28, 1892, Ibrahim set off for Istanbul with a party of Druze sheikhs and eighteen fine horses of his own as a gift.[36] In return, Abdülhamid granted titles to various members of the Druze party, elevating Ibrahim to the rank of pasha, and bestowing a younger Atrash brother, Yahya, with the title of *kolağası*.[37] Abdülhamid had long instructed his governors in Damascus

[34] The Ottomans persistently tried to build forts at the juncture of Jabal Druze and the Leja to prevent the Druze from escaping to their labyrinthine place of refuge. An earlier failure to build such a fort had influenced the Ottoman decision to place the Circassian colony at Quneitra in 1873.
[35] PRO. FO 195/1765 No 18 June 15, 1892.
[36] PRO. FO 195/1765 No 31 December 28, 1892.
[37] An Ottoman rank above *yüzbaşı* (captain) and below *binbaşı* (lieutenant colonel), corresponding to a major.

to negotiate peacefully with the Druze of the Jabal, and this overture by the Druze strengthened this tendency. That order was a source of great tension with the administrators in Damascus, who tended to treat the Druze as obstructions to their centralizing mission and treat them with the same violence they used to coerce other recalcitrant communities into obedience. Ibrahim died shortly after his return from Istanbul in July of 1893, seemingly of natural causes, although rumors of foul play were common. Despite the newfound favor for the Druze in Istanbul, the Ottoman authorities refused to appoint Shibli to replace his brother as kaymakam of the Jabal.[38]

The situation of the Druze in 1893 was seen by the Porte as an intricate balancing act.[39] According to the memorandum, the Porte understood there to be three factors. On one side were "obedient" Muslim and Christian villagers, whom Shibli was reported to be attacking despite the presence of a gendarme detachment guarding the villages. The Christians were sending petitions and seeking protection from the Patriarchate. The Muslim villagers most prominently affected were the Circassian settlers in Quneitra. Druze attacks had caused them many losses, and the Circassians were said to be gathering their compatriots from all over the region to counter Druze aggression. On another side were European provocateurs and spies, who were said to be fomenting rebellion among the Druze and Christian populations from the Hawran to the Lebanon to set off another conflict on the scale of the 1860s events, which Europeans could use as an excuse to gain concessions in Syria. Lastly, there were the Druze themselves.

[38] Firro, 231. Firro speculated this was a deliberate Ottoman attempt to "divide-and-rule," and Ottoman documents support his claim.
[39] BOA. Y-PRK-BŞK 31 79 (14 July 1893) is a description of the Atrash party's visit and the politics of the Jabal and Syria from the perspective of the Ottoman officials in Abdülhamid's intimate orbit at Yıldız Palace. It is the source of this paragraph's summary of Abdülhamid's position.

The Druze were a tricky case. They submitted petitions to the Ottomans like the Muslim and Christian populations and were starting to send their sons to Abdülhamid's Tribal School.[40] Yet, they were clearly dangerous, as the memorandum opens its summary by reminding the Sultan that they had crushed the armies of Ibrahim Pasha and the 1860s Ottoman venture. For the Porte, the local administrators had done a good job in setting up the district (*kaza*) of the Jabal as the most important marker of prestige for the Druze of the Hawran. Instead of fighting the Ottomans, they wanted the Druze to squabble amongst themselves for the right to be district magistrate. According to the memorandum, Druze desire for the position of kaymakam was the specific reason Ibrahim had recently come to Istanbul with his party: the visit was a sign of the most recent stage of "[the Druze] gradually starting to feel the *personal* power and force of the Imperial Sultanate… after knowing the comfort of a century of imperial governance."[41] The Druze had responded to Ottoman efforts to rule them and were actively playing Abdülhamid's patronage game. The note mentions that the visit by Ibrahim Pasha to Istanbul seeking patronage was unprecedented and a welcome indicator of the success of Ottoman policies. Since the Porte understood the kaza of the Jabal to be the lynchpin of its divide-and-rule policy, it knew that it had to be very careful when considering whom to appoint. To that end, when Ibrahim died, the Porte decided the kaza needed to be protected while the next Druze kaymakam was chosen, and they appointed a Muslim, Yusuf Ziya al-Khalidi. Shibli was passed over for the post.

The basic understanding of events by Ottoman authorities described above defined Ottoman actions in the violence of 1894. They understood the Muslim population to be the most loyal of the groups in the Hawran. The main Muslim group affected by Druze disobedience was the Circassian community of Quneitra, so the Ottoman government considered them justified in

[40] For details on the Tribal School, *Aşiret Mektebi*, see Eugene Rogan, "Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes (1892-1907)," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28, No. 1 (1996): 83-107.
[41] Italics are the author's own.

gathering their compatriots from settlements all over southern Syria to fight off the Druze. The Ottomans considered the Druze the aggressors in attacks on obedient Circassian villages, and potentially much more dangerous. The Druze were still, however, Ottoman subjects and their needs had to be taken into account. The officials at Yıldız Palace, impressed by the visit of Ibrahim, were excited for the slow submission of the Jabal Druze to Ottoman authority and did not want to see it jeopardized. Ibrahim's visit greatly affected the Porte's understanding of the situation and created dangerous circumstances on the ground: the Porte avowed the right of Circassian villagers to defend themselves, yet local Ottoman authorities were ordered to peacefully continue the policy of divide-and-rule with the Druze. The contradictory prerogatives ended up being resolved by violent means.

Ibrahim's actions played immediate dividends for the Druze. In October of 1893 a small Bedouin raiding party from the Ruallah tribe rustled a few head of cattle from the Druze of the Jabal. Small scale cattle rustling was a common feature of life at the edge of the desert in Syria; in most cases it would be resolved among the parties involved with a small monetary exchange or a retribution raid that inflicted the same level of loss. In this case, however, Shibli was bitter about being passed over for kaymakam and used the event to test the strength of Abdülhamid's patronage to try and assert his claim to leadership of the Jabal after his brother's death. He went to the sheikhs of the Beni Sakhr tribe, whose land was in what is today northern Jordan, and tried to rouse them against the Ruallah. Ottoman officials caught wind of the scheme and, fearing the eruption of large-scale violence, arrested Shibli and brought him to the prison in Suweida, and from there to Mezraa.[42] The Druze tried to break him out. Between Suweida and Mezraa, Yahya Atrash, recently granted the title of *kolağası* in Istanbul, attempted to free his brother with one

[42] PRO. FO 195/1801 No 21 October 9, 1893.

hundred horsemen. When that failed, the Druze attacked the prison itself, leading to the death, wounding, or capture of thirty-four Ottoman soldiers. The Druze set up a siege of the prison and, in a classic tactic of desert fighting, cut the Ottoman water supply. The decision to arrest Shibli had proven disastrous.

The response from Istanbul was swift. The Grand Vizier telegraphed the vali, indicating that Abdülhamid himself was personally interested in this episode. Ottoman soldiers were quickly dispatched from Damascus with the order to bring the affair to a close with the contradictory orders to do so at all costs while at the same time employing peaceful means.[43] The Ottoman detachment negotiated a straightforward prisoner swap. The soldiers taken as hostages in the assault three days prior would be exchanged for every Druze prisoner, including Shibli. The outcome was seen as a major embarassment for the local Ottoman officials and a major victory for the Druze. In a conflict between the local Ottoman administration and the Druze of the Jabal, the Druze had been able to use the clout they had cultivated in Istanbul to prevail. There were rumors that the vali and the müşir would be recalled over the fiasco, and the upbraided administration handled the Druze population extremely gingerly in the winter and spring of 1894. That February, emboldened by the weakness shown by the Ottomans, Bedouin stole cattle right outside of the gates of Damascus. The Ottoman response was listless. Soon, a group of Druze tested the limits of the chastised local Ottoman government by killing a few troops on patrol and stealing their valuable Martini rifles. The vali's response was stunningly passive: he instructed Ottoman soldiers on sentry duty and patrols outside their forts to do so unarmed.[44]

[43] PRO. FO 195/1801 No 23 October 25, 1893. Report No. 21 indicates the quick resolution of the affair, but this one fills in the details with the quick and intensive intervention of the Imperial government in Istanbul.
[44] PRO. FO 195/1839 No 3 February 3, 1894.

Prelude to Violence: The Cattle Plague and the Circassian Community at Quneitra in 1894

While the Druze in the Jabal were taking full advantage of the cover provided for them from Abdülhamid, conditions for the Circassian community were deteriorating for the first time since the late 1880s. Out of the entirety of Hawran Sanjak, Quneitra was the only place to experience the spread of the cholera outbreak of 1891, however briefly. The Circassians also consistently skirmished with the Druze of Mejdel Shams over the course of 1893, despite the presence of a gendarme detachment.[45] Adding to these troubles was a new outbreak of cattle plague in the district.

Cattle plague had accompanied the typhoid fever outbreak in Quneitra in 1888. At the time, the human cost far outstripped the effect of the cattle plague. In February of 1893, cattle plague returned. The initial onset was swift and virulent, destroying 113 head of cattle in Quneitra District.[46] The outbreak was virulent enough that Ottoman officials immediately dispatched a government veterinarian to assess the situation. He was charged with writing a report and assessing whether a veterinary tax needed to be imposed on the district. While the veterinarian was working on his report, officials in Damascus tried to block his findings, arguing that the air in Quneitra had been of high quality for a few days.[47] This was consistent with contemporary Ottoman ideas of disease being exacerbated by "bad air," and ameliorated by "good air." It also fit with the general aim of Ottoman officials to try and keep costs down by avoiding an expensive quarantine. Despite officials in Damascus trying to impair the work of the veterinarians, the report was compiled and issued in March of 1893. It concluded that, while a problem, the cattle plague was not on a large enough scale to warrant a full quarantine and

[45] BOA. Y-PRK-BŞK 31 79 (14 July 1893).
[46] BOA. DH-MKT 2053 89 (19 February 1893).
[47] BOA. DH-MKT 20 10 (25 April 1893).

veterinary tax. Evidently, though, the outbreak continued through the summer and into the next year. In January of 1894, there is a final note in the Interior Ministry's files that the disease was finally abating, and no further action would need to be taken by the Ottoman officials.[48]

Cattle plague is a disease that has frequently caused social and political instability in human history. The disease had caused major social upheaval in Europe in the 1860s, and would threaten the stability of the British and French empires in eastern and southern Africa a few years after the events related here. Although on a much smaller scale in Quneitra, a year long continual outbreak of cattle plague was a persitant threat to the stability of Circassian agriculture and economic production. As mentioned above, the Circassians were unique among the populations of southern Syria in using cattle for agriculture and oxen-pulled carts for trade and transport. An epidemic that was serious enough to persist for a year, yet not catastrophic enough to provoke direct government involvement, demonstrated the precariousness of the Circassian situation. The Ottoman government had made frequent efforts to protect and integrate the settlers into the rural population: building schools, employing large numbers of settlers in the gendarmerie, and taking their side in local squabbles. In this case, however, Ottoman officials left the Circassians to their own devices in the face of a major disease, while at the same time failing to protect them from Druze raids. This resurgent instability in the circumstances of the Circassians caused the attack on a Circassian family a short time later spiral out of control. The Circassians would use every tool at their disposal to ensure the survival of their settlements.

At the beginning of 1894, the Druze of the Jabal had reached their highest point of autonomy from the Ottoman state since before Fuad Pasha and Ahmad Aga al-Yusuf's

[48] BOA. DH-MKT 200 31 (27 January 1894).

watershed agreement with Jabal Druze in 1861.[49] The local Ottoman administration was on its back foot and was forced into humiliating accommodations with the Druze under the strict eye of Abdülhamid. Furthermore, the previous vali's expedition to establish a new desert sanjak in Kerak was in dire straits.[50] The nominal kaymakams of Maan and Tefile were holed up in Kerak, and the Bedouin of the area forced the Ottomans to send out constant patrols.[51] The situation among the Circassian and Bedouin populations in Quneitra was not much better. After a few years of relative stability, disease had affected their economic life and the Ottoman state gave only a minimal response. There had also been consistent skirmishes with the Druze in the district. The outbreak would also have affected the Bedouin population of Quneitra. While most prominent in cattle, rinderpest also spreads readily to sheep and goats, and occasionally to camels. The Circassian community and the Fadl tribe had come to an understanding after years of bloody interactions. While the tribe is not mentioned as suffering from the cattle plague in the Ottoman records,[52] there were indications that the instability caused by the disease and poor economic conditions led to renew conflict. In early February of 1894, just after the cattle plague subsided, parties of the Fadl and Druze of Quneitra fought a small skirmish over a misunderstanding.[53] The Druze were defeated, and Mohammad, the sheikh of the Fadl, received a fourth degree Mecidiye medal for his efforts.

In 1894 a mix of Druze impunity, a handicapped local Ottoman administration, and a settler population on edge dramatically created the conditions for a reorganization of rural life in southern Syria around Ottoman authorities rather than local notables and power centers. The

[49] Schilcher, 169.
[50] PRO. FO 195/1839 No. 5 March 15, 1894.
[51] Kerak is a town that is built in the ruins of a Crusader castle, and therefore was a natural defensive point in a region otherwise devoid of major buildings.
[52] This is a bit unusual, as the Ottomans understood the Bedouin to be carriers for epidemic disease and used their supposed uncleanliness as a justification for social control. See Bulmuş's chapter on Iraq.
[53] BOA. DH.MKT. 208 54 1311 Ş 13 (19 February 1894).

Circassian population and its leaders were in a unique position to circumvent the Porte's orders protecting the Druze in Syria: although the Porte was sympathetic to the plight of Caucasian refugees all over the empire, by 1894 the Circassian population of Syria had spent more time cultivating ties with the local Ottoman administration than sending representatives to Istanbul to play Abdülhamid's patronage game. In addition, their leaders had risen to prominence in the local military and gendarmerie, and their population was on edge after a difficult economic period of poor grain prices and cattle plague threatening their livelihoods. Three Circassian men rose to prominence in southern Syria during this period, reorienting the Circassian communities firmly around Ottoman power structures: Hüsrev Pasha, chief of the Damascaus gendarmerie, Mirza Bey, a major in the Ottoman army, and Mohammad Efendi, the Circassian tax clerk of Quneitra. Each used their access to Ottoman power to become prominent in the region, firmly aligning Circassian interests with those of the state for the remainder of the Ottoman period and into the French occupation.

Hüsrev Pasha was appointed head of the gendarmerie for Syria province in March of 1894. Although records for the Syrian gendarmerie are scarce, he was probably the first non-local head of the gendarmerie since the Irishman brought into organize the institution left in 1868.[54] His origins are slightly unclear, although it seems he did not come to Syria with the majority of the Caucasian refugees in 1878. He was said to have been a gendarme in Sivas as well as a brigand in Mosul before he arrived in Syria. Such a career trajectory, bouncing between law enforcement and criminality depending on what side was paying better at a given moment, was becoming increasingly uncommon in this era but was not unheard of.[55] Hüsrev's story

[54] Eugene O'Reilly, who took the Ottoman name Hasan Bey, was hired to organize a gendarmerie that was independent of the powerful local notables of Damascus. For more see Schilcher, 171.
[55] PRO. FO 195/1839 No. 6 March 17, 1894 Describes his origins. His death is reported in PRO. FO 195/2165 No. 1 January 7, 1904. Details on his life are drawn from both of these reports.

means he likely came to Quneitra with the group of refugees from Sivas that had come in the 1880s and not in the original refugee group.[56] He was reported to be illiterate and was known to be cruel, but was also efficient and refused to take bribes. When he was appointed in early March of 1894, he immediately embarked on a show of force to try and restore confidence in Ottoman authority. He took two hundred and fifty gendarmes and cavalry to the east, far away from the Druze in the southeast or the siege in Kerak further south and attacked a Bedouin encampment. The Ottoman forces killed thirty Bedouin and returned to Damascus with a large amount of "stolen" livestock and furniture sets to sell in Damascus.

It was in this complicated context that the Circassian family on the road to the village of Mansura was attacked by the Druze in June of 1894. Hüsrev Pasha used the opportunity for another dramatic show of force. Although records indicate blame for both the Druze and Circassian parties, the Ottoman forces swiftly sided with the Circassians. The kaymakam of Quneitra responded to the formal complaint of June 2 by riding to Buqata and arresting eleven Druze the next day.[57] The kaymakam reported that large forces of both parties were gathering, and he hoped that by paying the requisite blood money and arresting the perpetrators the Circassian forces would scatter.[58] He was wrong. The following day the Circassians, who had not been mollified, attacked Buqata. In the fighting they shot five, including a woman and a Christian. That attack caused the Druze population of the Golan to mobilize. The kaymakam of Quneitra immediately recognized the severity of the situation. He telegraphed Damascus that night, and the governor-general, recognizing the potential explosiveness of the situation while

[56] Most of the Sivas group began petitioning to leave Quneitra on account of the difficult conditions immediately. BOA. DH-MKT. 1348 16 (9 October 1885).
[57] PRO. FO 195/1839 No. 13 June 11, 1894. This missive from the English consulate provides the clearest record of events and will form the spine of the narrative. A large number of Ottoman documents exist recording the incident, but they rarely provide as clear an overview as this English letter. They will be cited as the narrative continues.
[58] BOA. Y-A-HUS. 299 22 (5 June 1894).

also mindful to avoid antagonizing a group in which the Sultan had recently taken a personal interest, hedged his bets. Instead of sending an army detachment the vali sent Hüsrev Pasha with a group of mounted gendarmes and forty imperial cavalry soldiers. The vali also immediately sent a telegraph to Yıldız Palace.

The police detachment did not arrive in time to prevent violence. On June 4, the Druze attacked Mansura with two to three thousand men.[59] They burned twenty buildings and killed twenty-one Circassians, including several women and children. The Druze, losing eleven of their own fighters, drove the Circassian population from Mansura, who fled to Quneitra town. Hüsrev Pasha, commanding his group of gendarmes and imperial troops, immediately marched on Mansura and forced the Druze from it. The Circassian population followed and reclaimed their homes. Hüsrev and his men fortified themselves at Mansura. That day became an important moment for the Circassians in Quneitra and their integration into the Ottoman administrative apparatus. To restore order to a district home to Christians, Bedouin, Circassians, and Druze, a Circassian settler from Quneitra was given command over the local police force, many of whom were presumably Circassians or Kurds and not Arab or Druze, as well as a detachment of imperial troops, all of whom immediately set about restoring Circassian land rights under the full authority of the Ottoman administration in Damascus. The symbolism could not have gone unnoticed by all parties.

While trying to avoid the appearance of a direct intervention in Druze affairs by sending a Circassian commander under the auspices of the gendarmerie instead of the imperial army, representatives of the Syria Vilayet sent several cyphered telegraphs directly to Yıldız Palace in

[59] BOA. Y-MTV 97 9 (6 June 1894). The initial telegraph to the Interior Ministry from Syria, summarized in this document, says 2-3,000. Subsequent Ottoman documents are written with the assumption that this was the number. The British documents do not cite a number.

Istanbul. Addressed to the Interior Ministry,[60] the telegraphs were immediately forwarded to the office of the Grand Vizier that prepared summaries of petitions for Abdülhamid.[61] Although an analysis of the facts from available materials demonstrates both the Circassian and Druze factions[62] shared in the blame for escalating the situation, the document from the Yıldız Palace collection blames the Druze of the Golan exclusively. This understanding of the events would become the dominant official Ottoman narrative of the entire series of events of 1894-95.

In the Ottoman narrative, the Druze were at fault. Although the violent events of the summer were actually caused by complex social, political, and environmental factors, the Ottoman government constructed the conflict as an ethnic one. That strategy allowed the government to cast the Druze of Buqata and Mejdel Shams as disobedient which created space for the Imperial authorities at Yıldız to not directly contradict their patronage of members of the Atrash clan of the Jabal. In the version of events that reached Istanbul and became the basis for subsequent Ottoman actions, the initial episode of violence was described as an act of robbery by a group of "Druze brigands" who assaulted a Circassian immigrant and his wife from Mansura. It then presented the narrative of events as follows: after the attack on the road to Mansura a group of Circassians happened upon three Druze and killed two, which instigated the gathering of a two thousand militant Druze and a corresponding gathering of Circassian immigrants. The kaymakam was sent with blood money and a telegraph bearing orders from his direct superior the governor, or *mutasarrıf*, of Hawran Sanjak. At the same time, because the Druze were restless and the Circassians were massing, Damascus dispatched Hüsrev and some cavalry as a

[60] BOA. DH-ŞFR. 166 97 (3 June 1894).
[61] BOA. Y-A-HUS 299 22 (5 June 1894).
[62] The Ottoman documents consistently refer to the fighting groups as *fırka*, which is variously used to mean political party, group, sect, division, or faction in Ottoman Turkish.

necessary precaution.[63] This basic outline of events was supplemented by a description of how the situation could escalate. The Druze population of Quneitra district was barred from forming further militias like the one that had attacked Mansura.

The other ruling of the memorandum that had lasting effects was the flip side of the Atrash clan's alignment with Abdülhamid: Ottoman officials declared that the Druze populations of the Jabal and Quneitra were a linked entity that needed to be brought under government control in the name of those Druze with imperial protection, the Atrash family. The Ottomans declared it was "self-evident" that the Druze of Mejdel Shams and Buqata would try to link with the Druze of the Jabal. Those specific Druze, and pointedly not the Druze of the Jabal, did not pay their taxes. The Ottomans declared that if such bold disobedience were left unaddressed it could spread to Druze populations further west, such as those in Haifa. The Ottomans declared they would protect the members of the Atrash clan who had imperial protection from the "insolence" of the Druze population, effectively using the cover of Abdülhamid's cultivated patronage ties to enforce Ottoman demands on the Druze population of southern Syria. In the name of the Druze who had patronage links with Abdülhamid, the Ottoman civil administration and head of the Fifth Imperial Army in Damascus were ordered to enact three draconian orders: send troops to the Jabal, Quneitra, and Haifa; encourage the sending of children of local leaders to the Tribal School (*Aşiret Mektebi*) in Istanbul to build loyalty; and to not comply with petitions from the Druze.[64]

The set of orders completely reorganized the social and political structure of rural southern Syria for the remainder of the Hamidian era. The Circassian settlers in Quneitra gained the benefits of the developing administrative state in the illiberal Hamidian period: police and

[63] BOA. Y-A-HUS 299 22 (5 June 1894).
[64] BOA. Y-MTV 97 9 6 June 1894).

troops were deployed to protect them, their petitions were considered, and their land rights were enforced. Public order, *asayiş*, would be deployed to their benefit. The situation was inverted first for the Druze of Quneitra and then for the larger population of Druze in southern Syria. It is notable that the official Ottoman version of events became heavily slanted in the favor of the settlers *before* the Druze occupied and burned part of Mansura. The attack on Mansura was reported to the Porte on June 6, 1894, with the update that the Druze had burned fourteen Circassian houses and killed fifty to sixty people.[65] After Hüsrev Pasha reoccupied Mansura and set up his headquarters there, the Circassians attacked and burned Druze villages in reprisal.[66] It is not mentioned in the records which villages these were. Indirect evidence suggests that over the ensuing days, the Circassian militia that had assembled in Quneitra attacked most of the outlying Druze settlements in the northeastern Golan. The force of two to three thousand fighting men the Druze had gathered for the attack on June 4 had dissipated. The description implies the Ottoman troops did not actively pillage, but the gendarmes may have. In any event, their silent backing of the Circassian militants who were pillaging made the Druze think better of confronting the Circassians in any meaningful sense. By June 11, Hüsrev tried to arrest Druze sheikhs in Mejdel Shams, the center of Druze life in the Golan. In response, the population evacuated the town, and several of the sheikhs fled all the way to Jabal Druze. Those that remained refused to treat with a Circassian officer.

To try and arrange a peace, a captain of the Imperial Army, Mohammad Ağa Jerudi, who was assigned as a subaltern to Hüsrev's forces, entered Mejdel Shams with a small group of armed guards.[67] His name implies he was from Jerud, a small Arab Muslim town east of Damascus on the edge of the desert. This identity indicates he was understood to be as neutral a

[65] BOA. Y-A-HUS 299 40 (7 June 1894).
[66] BOA. DH-ŞFR 166 117 (11 June 1894).
[67] PRO. FO 195/1839 No. 14 June 21, 1894.

representative of the Ottoman government as could be reasonably expected. He successfully convinced the inhabitants of Mejdel Shams to return and for a delegation of sheikhs to meet with Hüsrev at a neutral, non-Circassian Muslim village in the district. Although the violence had caused a great deal of bad blood, both the Druze and Circassians were still farmers in a region that had been destablized by cattle plague and the collapse of grain prices and as such were extremely anxious about the harvest. Hüsrev used this anxiety to negotiate a cease-fire. The armistice would last for two months while the harvest was taken in. If no settlement could be reached in that period, both parties would submit to Ottoman arbitration in Quneitra.

The following months witnessed complicated political wrangling by both the Druze and Circassian populations with both the central Ottoman administration in Istanbul and the local one in Damascus. Thre is evidence that the Druze sought to subvert the armistace almost immediately. On June 25, a cyphered telegraph from Damascus stated that Hüsrev had requested and deployed more gendarme cavalry to secure the borders between Mejdel Shams and the more westerly Druze populations in Marjayoun and in Beirut Vilayet.[68] The connection between Marjayoun and Mejdel Shams, on opposite slopes of Mount Hermon, had been the immediate impetus behind settling Circassians in the Golan in the first place, when the Druze of Mejdel Shams had sheltered Ottoman army deserters on their way to Jabal Druze.[69] Now, Ottoman authorities were worried a similar connection of Druze would occur, with the community activating personal networks across the Druze population spread from Lebanon to the Jabal. On the other hand, there is no evidence of the Ottomans posting gendarmes to prevent the Circassians from activating similar networks. Quneitra was just the northernmost node in a large string of refugee settlements stretching all the way to Amman. Some indirect evidence later in

[68] BOA. DH-ŞFR. 167 22 (25 June 1894).
[69] See Chapter 4 for more detail.

1894 and the beginning of 1895, however, suggests that the inhabitants of Quneitra were indeed gathering allies from other nearby Circassian settlements.

The Circassians took more action than just rallying their fellow settlers from across southern Syria. Dissatisfied with the armistice, which had been forced on them while they had the upper hand in a local dispute, the Circassian community appealed directly to Istanbul over the head of Rauf Pasha, the vali of Damascus. In early July, he was recalled. The British consul reported rumors that the petitions[70] of the Circassians of Quneitra had caused this.[71] The vali's recall again highlights the critical importance of the Druze's social and political situation in rural southern Syria to Ottoman officials. Failure to properly walk the fine line of mollifying and controlling the Druze had led to the downfall of many valis before, and for the first time, the settler populations of Circassians had achieved the same feat.[72] Rauf Pasha, who had botched the Shibli Atrash arrest and as a result had to balance very difficult orders from Yıldız with the realities of governing Syria, was replaced by Osman Nuri Pasha.

Osman Nuri Pasha had been the Vali of Damascus from November of 1891, when he was shifted from the position of müşir of the 5th Army headquartered in Damascus, to June of 1892.[73] Previously, he had an important role in Ottoman attempts to administer the interior of Yemen, serving as vali from 1888 to 1889, and as müşir for a time after that, although during his year in Damascus he developed a reputation as the most corrupt vali in Damascus in recent memory.[74]

---

[70] I do not have this petition. I found the reference in the National Archive in Britain after the conclusion of my research in Istanbul. I would welcome the opportunity to find this petition in the Ottoman Archives.
[71] PRO. FO 195/1839 No. 16 July 5, 1894.
[72] This is a continuation of the argument from Chapter 4. The role of both local petitions and knowledge that an uprising could cause the recall of a vali was important in giving the rural population of southern Syria an outsized importance in the politics of the vilayet. It helps to explain the explosion of petitions sent, unanswered, to the mandatory French and British governments in later decades.
[73] This Osman Nuri Pasha, biography on 1298-99 of the 1996 edition of the *Sicil-i Osmani*, is not the famous hero of Plevna after which Gaziosmanpaşa district in Istanbul is named.
[74] PRO. FO 195/1765 No. 18 June 15, 1892.

Notably, he had taken a hard line towards the politics of the Jabal, arresting Ibrahim Atrash and holding him for a huge ransom. Osman Nuri Pasha had an important role in the implementation of a politics of difference in Yemen, where he dismantled the *nizamiye* court system and sparred with other Ottoman officials over implementing a court system based on local practices and customs for local populations.[75] He ended up overseeing the construction of a legal regime that followed sharia rulings for tribal disputes while ascribing the rulings to the prescriptions of the Ottoman penal code, in what Thomas Kuehn argues was an important manifestation of the discourse of difference into an actual politics of difference.[76]

When Osman Nuri Pasha arrived in Damascus from Aleppo for his second tenure as governor-general, the Circassians and Druze immediately appealed to him. In late July, towards the end of the two-month armistice, the leaders of the Circassians went to Damascus to ask for arbitration. A few days later, the Druze sheikhs from Mejdel Shams, accompanied by representatives from another town on the slopes of Mount Hermon, Hasbeya, arrived in Damascus to appeal against the Circassians. Osman Nuri Pasha, tellingly, decided to settle the dispute following his strategy for governing Yemen. Instead of submitting the dispute to a nizamiye court, he treated the two parties as he would two arguing Bedouin groups.[77] Both sides agreed to a special commission made up of two local pashas, the mufti of Damascus, and Hüsrev Pasha in his capacity as chief of the gendarmerie to add up the total deaths, injuries, and property losses in the conflict. The commission would then assign an indemnity scaled to the difference in men killed and property loss to be paid by the side with less losses to the party with more.

[75] Osman Nuri Pasha's time in Yemen is covered in depth in Chapter 4 of Thomas Kuehn's *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849-1919.* (Boston: Brill, 2011).
[76] Kuehn 143-145.
[77] PRO. FO 195/1839 No. 18 July 31, 1894.

The tabulation was complete in late August. The commission concluded that the number of people killed on both sides was equal.[78] Furthermore, they ruled that the Druze had fewer property losses than the Circassians who were ordered to pay an indemnity of 100,000 piasters,[79] with 20,000 up front and the remainder paid in two equal payments over the next two years. The reactions of the two sides further indicates the Circassians were not satisfied by the outcome. The Druze celebrated, certain that they could raise the cash by subscription form their fellow Druze in the Lebanon and the Jabal. The Circassians went back to Quneitra in such foul spirits that Osman Nuri dispatched two members of the special commission to Quneitra to try and address their grievances. The two commissioners, one of whom was presumably Hüsrev Pasha, convinced the Circassian leadership to accept the money. Clearly, though, the Circassians felt that they had agreed to the armistice while they had the upper hand and were settling now for far less than they thought they were owed for the burning of Mansura. This sense of grievance would roil under the surface until it boiled over the following year, setting off a region-wide conflagration.

The actions of several Druze and Circassians over months between August of 1894 and December of 1895 attest to continuing tensions. The documentation is scarce for this period, and the actions of a few agents of both sides that are indicated in the primary sources are surely only the tip of the iceberg in terms of machinations in the Golan over those few months. On the Circassian side, men who served with the Ottoman state in an official capacity alternately worked to soothe the Circassian sense of grievance or use the levers of state power to adversely affect the Druze of Mejdel Shams from the district seat in Quneitra. Mohammad Efendi represented the former. He had been the officer in charge of the cadastral (*tapu*) records of

[78] PRO. FO 195/1839 No 19 August 25, 1894. Details are also reported in the Ottoman records, in BOA. İ.ML. 11 42 (24 August 1894).
[79] Noted by the Consul to be equal to approximately 710 Pounds Sterling.

Quneitra for a number of years. A Circassian settler, his service in tending to the registration of land and distribution of deeds had been exemplary enough to receive a fourth order Mecidiye distinction in 1893.[80] He was also able to parlay his government position into a role mediating the Circassians and Druze agreement in August of 1894. In November of that year, he was cited again for his role in helping to resolve the issue.[81] The summary does not mention his precise role, but it is likely he was among the Circassian leaders that appealed to Osman Nuri Pasha in July. His apparently excellent accounting skills would have been useful in tabulating the losses of property. The kaymakam of Quneitra himself, Ahmed Şakir Efendi, used his official power in an impartial manner and was removed from his post in December of 1894. Apparently, the Druze of Quneitra district no longer trusted him as an impartial adjudicator. It is not clear from the records if he was a Circassian or not, but even if he was not his position in the Circassian-dominated town of Quneitra seems to have rendered him sympathetic to them. In his place a more neutral magistrate was appointed, Abdülkadir Efendi.[82] This information was considered sensitive enough to be sent via encoded telegraph rather than a plain-text one.

On the Druze side, a perfidious character who vacillated wildly between service in the interests of the Ottomans and Druze played a large role in securing the indemnity for the Druze of Mejdel Shams. Mir Mustafa Arslan was the kaymakam of Shuf in the Lebanon. The district of Shuf is between the Druze population around Mount Hermon and the large population center further north near Beirut. An Ottoman Interior Ministry report compiled in December of 1894 accused Arslan of "leading the Druze of Mejdel Shams" astray in attacking "our calm brothers

[80] BOA. DH-MKT 163 21 (6 November 1893). This distinction is also noted next to his name in the *Salnames* of Syria during the time in which he served.
[81] BOA. İ-TAL 72 32 (6 February 1895). This packet contains citations for three Syrian officials, Mehmet Efendi's is *numura* 2097.
[82] BOA. DH-ŞFR 170 75 (17 December 1894).

the Muslim Circassians" of Mansura.[83] His encouragement of the incident as well as his apparently extralegal means of gathering the indemnity to pay on behalf of the Mejdel Shams Druze was only the latest mark against him in a checkered career of Ottoman service. He had apparently shot a Beirut gendarme in 1868 over his torrid love affair with a woman, only to be released from his prison term after only one year because of his connections; plotted an insurrection against the mutasarrıf of Lebanon Vasa Pasha; and was still an official civil servant in 1894, where he had abused his power by committing an act of "savagery" by imprisoning a girl who refused to marry his son in a horse stable until she lost her mind. His role, then under investigation, in encouraging the Druze of Mejdel Shams was the final mark of his rejection of Ottoman service and the investigators recommended his dismissal from government employment.[84] On December 31, 1894, based on the submission of numerous corroborated witness reports with the requisite seals, Mir Mustafa was ruled to be serving in contradiction of the Sultan's wishes and removed from his post for his role in inciting the Druze and for being the source of the indemnity for the Circassians rather than the Druze of Mejdel Shams. It is notable in this Ottoman report that blame for the events in Quneitra was, again, laid at the feet of the Druze, even though Osman Nuri Pasha's commission had officially blamed both sides.

While the conflict between the Circassians and Druze in Quneitra quietly continued, it had entirely changed the plans of the Ottoman authorities in Damascus. Yıldız Palace had dismissed Rauf Pasha and abandoned the policy of appeasement. In Rauf's place was the confrontational Osman Nuri Pasha and a declaration from Abdülhamid that violence would be used in the name of the Atrash clan against the "unruly" population of the Druze. Despite the special commission's favorable findings for the Druze, Ottoman decision makers and the

[83] BOA. DH-MKT 292 54 (10 October 1894). The summary of terms is on page 12.
[84] BOA. DH-MKT 292 54 (10 October 1894). His abuses of power are listed on page 6.

Circassian population continued to blame the Druze exclusively for the breach of public order in Quneitra. The Ottomans tried one last time to co-opt the Jabal by peaceful means, appointing Shibli kaymakam of Jabal Druze in late August of 1894. It took the Druze of the Jabal until May of 1895 to finally decide and submit to Shibli's rule, a long delay that could not have pleased proponents of the peaceful solution.[85]

Over the course of the summer of 1895, conditions became increasingly strained. Again, an outbreak of disease was partly to blame. In August, an outbreak of cholera had spread to from Aleppo to Hama and Homs. Ottoman quarantine officers declared the spread halted in late August and ended the cordon, only for cholera to appear in Damascus in late October. Several people were killed, and the outbreak was taken seriously enough that the Damascus-Beirut railroad was shut down for a time, which would have had an ill effect on the agricultural exports of southern Syria.[86] The economic downturn would have been amplified as the long awaited Hawran spur of the Syrian railroad had finally reached Sheikh Miskin, the Ottoman seat of Hawran Sanjak, in August of that year. In addition to this, tensions continued between the inhabitants of Mejdel Shams and their neighbors. Between January and November of 1895, a group of Druze tried to blame the Fadl tribe for killing a gendarme they had killed, raided Christian and Shiite villages, and robbed a group of travelers.[87] In early November Christians in the Mount Hermon area sent a petition to Damascus, asking for protection from Druze raiding.[88] In the face of all this, Osman Nuri Pasha did little. It seems that the vali was giving the Druze one last chance to restore order themselves while he made plans for ending regime of exception

[85] PRO. FO 195/1881 No. 12 May 13, 1895.
[86] The path of the outbreak is traced in PRO. FO 195/1881 No. 3 August 4, 1895; No. 20 August 19, 1895; and No. 8 (commercial) October 25, 1895.
[87] BOA. DH-ŞFR 170 116 (6 January 1895), PRO. FO 195/1881 No. 12 May 12, 1895 and FO 195/1881 No. 24 October 18, 1895.
[88] PRO. FO 195/1881 No. 28 November 6. It includes a copy of the petition.

ruling the Druze and enacting normal Ottoman administrative authority. Although in many ways he was the opposite of his predecessor, one aspect of his plan was similar: to use the Circassian population as the excuse for a large-scale crackdown.

The completion of the railroad spur to Sheikh Miskin, in the middle of the Hawran plain, dramatically altered the balance of power in the favor of the Ottomans, and the Druze of the Jabal were rightly alarmed. Almost as soon as the railroad was completed, troops began pouring in by rail from Beirut. In response to this escalation, in November of 1895 the Druze lit great bonfires on the Jabal. Lighting large signal fires was a traditional way for the Druze to alert their coreligionists at a great distance. The signal was seen in Quneitra and repeated in Mount Hermon all the way to the Lebanon, alerting almost the entire Druze population of Syria.[89] Previously, winter conditions usually rendered Hawran plain an impassable morass for large numbers of troops. The railroad permanently changed that fact. In just a few days in early December, the Ottomans sent eleven regular and eight reserve battalions, two regiments of cavalry, and two artillery batteries. Because a large call up of reserve troops had left to fight in the Zeytun Rebellion recently, the military depots in Damascus were totally bereft of uniforms, winter coats, and boots.[90] In addition to the poor supply of the army, six of the battalions were Albanian troops brought in from Europe. It quickly became apparent that the railroad allowed troops to be deployed in unsustainably large numbers. The harsh condition and poor supply of the troops led to a huge outbreak of illness among the Albanian detachments. Anywhere from 150 to 200 returned ill to Damascus daily, and 30 died a day. It was reported that disease invalidated half the Albanian soldiers. Although the Ottoman army in Hawran continued to be reinforced and the

[89] Firro 232. He cites a French consular report.
[90] The Zeytun Rebellion was an episode in the Hamidian Armenian massacres of 1895-96. Armenian inhabitants of the district of Zeytun in southern Anatolia took up arms against Ottoman troops and successfully defended their community.

Druze continued to mass, neither side made a move. The first action took place in Quneitra, demonstrating the importance of the Circassian community to the overall Ottoman plan.

1895: The Circassians become a Dominant Force in the Governance of Southern Syria

On the Saturday morning of November 30, 1895, Binbaşı Mirza Bey, head of the combined Ottoman military, gendarme, and irregular Circassian cavalry detachment in Quneitra, awoke to news that would reshape politics and society in southern Syria for decades. That day marked the beginning of a long and influential career in southern Syria that eventually saw him organizing Circassian volunteer brigades to fight in World War I and leading the Circassian community of Transjordan long into the mandatory period. Like Hüsrev Pasha, he did not come with the first settlers in 1878. His dominant role in affairs came through his position with the Ottoman authorities, not in his capacity as a Circassian settler, which illustrates the point that Circassian social organization reoriented towards those with access to Ottoman resources and away from their traditional social structure in the Caucasus. In late November of 1895, however, Mirza was merely the ranking Ottoman military officer in Quneitra. He knew the massing of the Ottoman army the plain below and the Druze assembling in the wake of the signal bonfires meant that violence was imminent. Judging by how quickly the Circassian population mustered on November 30, it is highly likely they had been gathering men and weapons from neighboring settlements for some time. The initial attack, however, was small.

At eight in the morning, the Mejdel Shams Druze attacked the Fadl tribe.[91] The Circassians of Quneitra and the Fadl had come a long way since the Fadl had tried to restrict Circassian land rights in the 1880s. They seem to have come to an understanding not unlike the

[91] BOA. Y-MTV 132 122 (4 December 1895) and DH-ŞFR 185 62 (4 December 1895). My account draws mostly from the Ottoman account, although some details are also drawn from PRO. FO 195/1881 No. 34 December 4, 1895.

alliance of the Circassians of Amman and the nomadic Beni Sakhr tribe who were their neighbors. Mirza Bey roused his one hundred and eighty mostly Kurdish gendarmes and hundreds of mounted Circassians and Fadl tribesmen. Together they numbered nearly 1,500 mounted men. He telegraphed for reinforcement from Haifa and Sheikh Miskin then rode to hold the attacking Druze responsible for their actions. The group found the accused Druze in Hadar and Hina, two small villages on the slope of the mountain to the northeast of Mejdel Shams. They attacked and killed several Druze. The British and French consuls in Damascus reported this attack on Hadar and Hina as an unprovoked assault on the Druze.[92] Only the Ottoman source, a direct summary of events relayed by Mirza Bey to the acting müşir, Omar Pasha, and from the müşir to the War Ministry in Istanbul, mentions the initial Druze attack on the Fadl.

The situation escalated from there. As the mounted Ottoman gendarmes, Circassians, and Fadl rode back to the core Circassian settlement from the outlying northeastern Druze villages, the Druze of the Golan mobilized and rode towards Mansura. The Ottoman infantry companies requested from Haifa met the joint Ottoman-local forces there to counter what the Ottoman source terms the Druze's "bold venture to infract the public order." In the ensuing battle, one hundred and fifty to three men died. The Circassians lost their leader, Ahmet Bey, along with thirty men, the gendarmes twenty men, and the Fadl fifty. The Druze loses are unclear but are listed in all available sources as substantially more than Mirza's forces.

The next day, a detachment of imperial troops arrived from the main Ottoman force in Sheikh Miskin. They occupied Mejdel Shams, declaring it a threat to security and public order as the "disorderly" Druze of Quneitra always sought refuge there. Security and public order, however, was not meant for everyone. After the occupation of Mejdel Shams, the Ottoman

[92] PRO. FO 195/1881 No. 34 December 4, 1895. Firro, 232, cites the French consul's report and bases his narration of these events on it.

authorities allowed the Circassians and their Fadl allies a free hand in enacting their revenge. They erupted out of the Golan, attacking unprotected Druze settlements between the Lebanon and Jabal Druze. The British consul understood neither the reasoning nor the shift in Ottoman relations with their rural populations. In his report on the progress of the Ottoman expeditionary force in the Hawran, he interpreted the Ottoman army's inaction as failure, the events in Quneitra as a curious side show with little bearing on the Ottoman operation, and the Circassian and Fadl raids as a lapse in public order.[93] In fact, the 1895 expedition was rooted in the events of 1894 in Quneitra. The Ottomans had decided the Druze were at fault and had spent the better part of a year slowly moving pieces into place to move against Jabal Druze and the regime of exception there. The Circassians of Quneitra clearly had a role in the planning, as the Circassian participation was organized with an aura of plausible deniability for the Ottoman army. Omar Pasha, the müşir in charge of the expedition, denied all knowledge of the Circassian and Fadl raids. Therefore, documentation of the actual planning likely does not exist. The outline of the plan, however, can be inferred.

The Circassian population of Quneitra worked through the spring and summer of 1895 to gain restitution for the 1894 settlement which they viewed as unfair. Most of the planning probably went through men like Hüsrev Pasha who were connected to the Circassian settlements but also had access to Ottoman power. By the fall, there was another Circassian commander, Mirza Bey, in charge of organizing an irregular regiment of Circassian cavalry that was meant to be roughly as many mounted men as the Druze of the Golan could muster. Apparently, there were not enough Circassian men to match the strength of the Druze, so they made an arrangement with the Fadl, paralleling a strategy used further south in Amman. The Circassians,

[93] BOA. FO 195/1881 No. 35 December 9, 1895.

originally settled to disrupt nomadic life and encourage sedentarization, had been forced under harsh conditions to make alliances instead of enemies. In rural southern Syria, small instances of theft and assault were relatively common, and there were many instances of Druze attacks on their neighbors over the course of 1895. The Circassian irregulars and their allies waited, however, for the Ottoman expeditionary force to be in place in Sheikh Miskin before they used one of these small assaults as a pretense for a large confrontation. The Druze were wary of attacking the Circassians to reopen that old wound, and the fact that they attacked the Fadl indicates they may not have been aware of the Circassian-Fadl alliance. Upon the occupation and subdual of Mejdel Shams, likely a key Ottoman promise to the irregulars, the Circassians and Fadl immediately began major raids in every direction. While a special Ottoman commission was in the Jabal trying to convince the Druze to submit to conscription and a census, the Circassians raided and pillaged within fourteen miles of Damascus. Further suggesting a high degree of coordination, on the eighth of December the authorities in Damascus received a petition from the Christians in Marjayoun.[94] The Circassians and Fadl had pillaged several Druze villages on the northwestern slopes of Mount Hermon, and the Christians convinced six hundred imperial troops to come protect them. The Fifth Army command recalled the troops, declaring there were already enough soldiers in the vicinity to ensure public order.

The actual Ottoman occupation of Jabal Druze was swift and occurred without much fighting. Throughout Hawran, Ottoman troops blocked Druze fighters from interfering with Circassian and Fadl raids. The Ottoman troops continued to suffer immeasurably, particularly the Albanians. Dysentery and other diseases caused by the poor material situation, the miserable weather, and the dense packing of troops into a small space, led to huge casualties. Of the six

[94] BOA. DH-ŞFR 185 82 (8 December 1895).

thousand Albanian soldiers sent by early January, four thousand were dead or in the hospital. Despite the difficult conditions, the Ottoman army occupied Suweida by the second of January.[95] The Ottomans sought to impose terms that would fully incorporate them into normal Ottoman governance: the imposition of a land tax with the requisite general survey and generation of tapu registers, the payment of ordinary taxes, the conscription of all Druze populations not on the Jabal, and the surrender of all Martini rifles.[96]

Despite a few Druze fighters holed up in the volcanic labyrinth of the Leja and several raids against the population of the Hawran for livestock and other supplies, by early February, the Druze submitted to extremely onerous terms. Soon after, three Druze captured while they raided near Damascus were shipped to Crete as soldiers. They were likely the first Druze conscripted in the Hawran. The Ottoman force in Suweida sent nearly five hundred Druze in shackles to Damascus, including Shibli and other Atrash family members. Istanbul ordered twenty-five of the most notable Druze *extended* families into exile, which if enforced could have led to the deportation of nearly twenty thousand people.[97] Eventually, only a few notable Druze Sheikhs, including Shibli, would be sent into exile. The Jabal, except for pockets on the isolated southeastern slope had submitted to taxation, conscription, and the surrender of Martini rifles. The fighting led to 310 Druze killed with an unknown number of wounded, 700 Ottoman casualties, and nearly four thousand casualties from illness.[98]

Hüsrev Pasha was appointed Kaymakam of the Jabal. This cemented the status of the Circassians of Quneitra over the Druze of the Hawran. The foreign settler population, long existing on the margins of rural life in southern Syria, had supplanted the Druze sheikhs in the

[95] PRO. FO 195/1940 No. 1 January 2, 1896.
[96] PRO. FO 195/ 1940 No. 5 January 27, 1896.
[97] PRO. FO 195/1940 No. 8 February 8, 1896.
[98] PRO. FO 195/1940 No. 9 February 24, 1896.

most important local site of power outside of Damascus with the full backing of the Ottoman state. The symbolism of appointing the efficient and cruel Circassian who had a critical role in the orchestration of the Ottoman push to enforce an Ottoman public order in southern Syria since the winter of 1894 could not have been missed. The only non-Druze kaymakam of Suweida in decades had been Yusuf Ziya al-Khalidi, who could hardly have been a more standard Ottoman. A member of an influential local notable family, Yusuf Ziya fit with the old model of Ottoman governance of southern Syria: giving local notable families the imprimatur of Ottoman legitimacy and installing them over rural outposts without trying to change much of the social or power structures below them. The appointment of Shibli after Yusuf was a return to the standard appointment of appointing a Druze notable. The appointment of Hüsrev Pasha was a dramatic reordering of rural administration in southern Syria; a Circassian from Quneitra had been placed in charge of the most notorious opponents of centralized Ottoman rule in southern Syria.

Hüsrev Pasha's rule in Suweida lasted only a few months. He seems to have pushed regular Ottoman administration on the subjugated population too hard and too fast. Reports indicate he was aggressive in pushing the tapu system and harsh in his punishment of recalcitrant Druze.[99] In June, inhabitants of the Jabal ambushed and killed fifty of Hüsrev's gendarmes. The armed group then move on Suweida, burning government buildings and besieging the Ottoman barracks. The Ottomans responded by quickly amassing a huge force in Sheikh Miskin. Again, the railroad facilitated the quick amassing of soldiers. Over the period of two weeks, with trains shuttling from Beirut to Sheikh Miskin without even stopping in Damascus, the Ottomans assembled thirty-six and a half battalions in the Hawran, which was roughly 28,000 soldiers. Disease quickly appeared in the camps. Although not quite as devastating as the disease outbreak in

[99] PRO. FO 195/1940 No. 19 June 19, 1896.

December that had sent nearly two hundred soldiers back to Damascus a day, some fifty ill soldiers would arrive day in Damascence hospitals by August.[100]

Osman Nuri Pasha was recalled to Istanbul as the army deployed, and a new müşir was appointed to head the Fifth Army. Osman Nuri Pasha was ultimately replaced by Hasan Refik Pasha, the vali of Baghdad, but for about a month the acting vali in Damascus was Nassuhi Bey, who had come from Beirut. While the army still intended to relieve the siege in Suweida, Nassuhi Bey assembled a commission to try and arrive at a peaceful solution. This, improbably, led to the reemergence of Mir Mustafa Arslan of Shuf. Still the kaymakam of Shuf, despite the damning investigation by Ottoman authorities, he was appointed head of a commission to try and negotiate between the Fifth Army and the Druze of the Jabal. Mustafa's intervention did not work out, and the Ottoman army attacked Suweida soon after. The Druze fought desperately. The Circassians had begun raiding Druze villages again, and there were rumors that old rivals of the Druze, the Ruallah Bedouin tribe and the Circassians would drive the Druze from the Jabal and divide the territory among themselves.[101]

In September, the leadership of Jabal Druze, weary of the protracted violence of the last few years, offered to settle if the Ottomans would build schools, extend the railroad from Sheikh Miskin to Suweida, and replace the gendarmes in charge of Suweida with imperial troops.[102] In the end, a compromise was met. Conscription would not be enforced in the Jabal, but it would for the Druze of Mount Hermon and the Golan. Hüsrev Pasha was removed from his post as kaymakam of Suweida and reinstated as head of the Gendarmerie of Damascus.

[100] PRO. FO 195/1940 No. 34 August 12, 1896.
[101] PRO. FO 195/1940 No. 36 September 3, 1896.
[102] PRO. FO 195/1940 No. 41 September 28, 1896.

Conclusion

After 1896, the Jabal was under firm Ottoman control with only very limited exceptions to the normal Ottoman order. The Circassian colonies in Quneitra had dramatically reshaped the social and political order of rural southern Syria. Originally settled in a location that effectively bisected the Druze migration lines, they had to battle just to stay alive and keep the land assigned to them. The Circassians welcomed opportunities for integration into the expanding Ottoman administrative apparatus: Quneitra quickly became home to several Ottoman schools, many of their men joined the gendarmerie and took up positions in the civil administration, and they became a model for tax collection. The Druze population followed a different approach. They held onto their privileges under the type of regime of exception common on the Ottoman internal frontier. That regime granted them freedom from taxation and conscription and autonomous rule. A severe bout of epidemic disease as well as a collapse in grain prices had led to severe economic difficulty for the population of rural southern Syria. Disease and economic depression coincided with a Druze plan to take advantage of Abdülhamid's politics of personal patronage, which created a fragile situation. The Circassians felt unstable in their surroundings despite years of building their society around nodes of Ottoman power, and the Ottoman administration in Damascus became wary of punishing the Druze population for fear of harsh reprimands from Yıldız.

Tensions erupted in 1894 and 1895. The rout of the Druze at the conclusion of the violence in 1895 permanently altered rural life in Quneitra and ushered in a period of Circassian dominance in rural southern Syria. The principle actors on the Circassian and Fadl side were rewarded for their service by the Ottoman government. Hüsrev, after being reappointed to head of the Damascus gendarmerie, had an eventful few years fighting the Bedouin and enforcing

cordons before succumbing to the bite of a "stinging insect" in 1904.[103] Mohammad Efendi would continue to earn ever higher degrees of Mecidiye medals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for his sterling service as land registrar of Quneitra. [104] Mohammad al Fadl, sheikh of the Fadl tribe, was awarded a medal by the Ottoman government for his service at the turn of the twentieth century.[105]

After the events of 1894-6, the Druze of the Jabal were in a state of enforced public order. A program of Hanefization and Ottomanization was enacted over the next several decades.[106] That public order, of course, had been brutally imposed. Having won that battle, the Ottoman authorities in Damascus moved on to the next group of people who endangered public order: Bedouin not under Ottoman control.[107] To protect public order and good management for the settled populations of southern Syria against the Bedouin, the Ottomans organized a flying gendarme cavalry unit that would be responsible for Bedouin affairs and enforcement of Ottoman law in Hawran, Jabal Druze, and Kerak, the three southeastern most regions of Ottoman Syria. They needed someone energetic, honest, and experienced. Fortunately, they had just the man: Mirza Bey, who had proven himself adept at instituting an Ottoman backed public order in Quneitra. Appointed in 1897, he spent the next several years imposing order on the edge of the desert. Notably, with the exception of Jabal Druze, this area covered the entire region of Caucasian settlement. The new state of order led the government in Damascus to expand Caucasian settlement even further. In 1901 and 1902, large numbers of Circassians and

[103] PRO. FO 195/2165 No. 1 January 7, 1904.
[104]BOA. DH-MKT 750 28 (11 August 1903).
[105]BOA. DH-MKT 770 23 (27 September 1903).
[106] This program is described in Firro. It had much in common with the Hanefization of Yezidi Kurds presented as a case study in chapter three Deringil's *The Well-Protected Domains*. Hanefization was a late Ottoman project whereby Ottoman officials tried to bring as many Muslims in the empire as possible into alignment with the Ottoman's preferred branch of Sunni Islam, the Hanefi school.
[107] BOA. İ-AS 20 6 1314 (16 March 1897).

Chechens fled Russia instead of submitting to conscription there. When they came to southern Syria, they were settled in Quneitra, Amman, and settlements near Salt and new settlement at the foot of the Leja and the railhead of the Hejaz Railroad, which was being built at the time.[108] By the turn of the century, the frontier of Quneitra had been closed. The leading edge of the internal frontier was all the way to the modern border of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, a development that was made possible by model agricultural settlements.

[108] PRO. FO 195/2097 No. 19 March 8, 1901, FO 195/2122 No. 9 January 28, 1902.

Chapter 6: "The Sheep Dogs Had Been Worse than the Wolves:" The Chechen Settlement at Resülayn, 1866-1908

Introduction

The atmosphere in Damascus was jubilant following the reinstatement of the Ottoman Constitution in the summer of 1908. Celebrations were held, political groups were organized, and a feeling of endless possibility was in the air. For one group in Damascus, however, the news of Sultan Abdülhamid's loss of power must have been met with a grim foreboding. Viranşehirli Ibrahim Pasha was a commander in the *Hamidiye*[1] who had been one of the most skilled players of Abdülhamid's patronage politics. He had used the protection of the Sultan to carve out a huge personal fief in the territory between Diyarbakır, Rakka, and Mosul; he had been so successful that Abdülhamid assigned him to protect the construction of the Hejaz Railway. Ibrahim had been in Damascus for several weeks with a large group of his Kurdish irregulars *en route* to the Hejaz when the Young Turks seized power in Istanbul.[2] The entire population of Damascus had been united in their unease of having a such an unpredictable and politically connected group encamped at their gates. When Abdülhamid's patronage evaporated overnight, Ibrahim, always one step ahead of the game, fled Damascus with his men and the cutting-edge Mauser rifles that Abdülhamid had ensured they received.[3] The Ottoman army set off after him, hot on his heels. After escaping a siege at his headquarters in Viranşehir in eastern Anatolia, he fled to the small town of Resülayn. [4] The Chechens who had been settled there in the 1860s had a long history with Ibrahim Pasha, first opposing him before being violently reduced to clients. The Chechens

[1] The Hamidiye were a group of Kurdish tribal cavalry organized by Abdülhamid and sworn to him personally.
[2] PRO. FO 195/2277 (Damascus) No. 36 August 25, 1908.
[3] Mauser rifles had recently replaced Martini rifles as the most advanced rifles in the Ottoman arsenal. Officials in Damascus were considerably worried that Abdülhamid had supplied his protégé with such capable armaments.
[4] Resülayn is split between today's Ra's al-'Ayn in Syria and Ceylanpınar ın Turkey.

chose to remember the violence instead of the alliance and ran him off. Under hot pursuit and rejected by his last allies, he finally succumbed to dysentery during a siege near Nusaybin.

While Ibrahim Pasha is one of the more notorious figures in the history of southeast Anatolia and upper Mesopotamia at the turn of the twentieth century, the Chechen settlers at Resülayn who eventually consigned him to defeat had an almost equally transformative impact on the region, yet their story is almost totally unknown to scholarship. The present chapter will track the experience and history of the isolated group of Chechen refugees as they weathered the latter half of the nineteenth century in a borderland of borderlands. Politically, their settlement was at the very tip of Zor Sanjak, at the border where Aleppo, Diyarbakır,[5] and Mosul *Vilayets* met. Their position at the edge of so many jurisdictions meant they were far from any important regional center and most potential Ottoman assistance. They were also at the border between nomad and settled life. For most of this time, Zor was an independent sanjak that was under special rule specifically designed to administer the nomadic tribes present in the desert between Aleppo and Mosul. This meant that Resülayn was one of the few sedentary communities in a district otherwise dominated by nomads and designed specifically to govern nomads. Environmentally, the Chechen settlement was on the border between the mountains and the plains, and the true desert and arable land. Culturally, it was where a predominantly Kurdish and a predominantly Arab population blended into each other. The mix of administrative jurisdictions, landscapes, economic modes of production, and cultures necessitated creative solutions merely to survive. The original Ottoman planners of the settlement could hardly have envisioned the difficulty this colony would have to endure over the decades.

[5] For the first few years of their settlement, this was *Kurdistan Eyaleti*, before the Vilayet reform law reorganized Ottoman provinces.

The Ottoman Empire settled Chechen refugees in Resülayn with high hopes in 1866 as part of a two-decade period of attempting to foster modernity and civilization through settlement and sedentarization projects at the height of the early bureaucratic strand of the Ottoman civilizing mission. Zor Sanjak was split off from Aleppo to be a special "desert province" that could be specialized to deal with the nomadic Arab population. In the 1860s, the administrators of Zor tried to force the settlement of the Bedouin. In the northern part of the province, they made provisions to settle Chechen refugees as a model agricultural colony. At the same time, Ottoman officials in southeast Anatolia made similar plans for breaking up the power of the great Kurdish tribes in Anatolia and attempted to enforce settlement. The plans faltered over the decades, and after Abdülhamid came to the throne and began exercising his power in the late 1870s and early 1880s, the ambitious policies of Tanzimat statesmen and administrators were dropped in this part of the empire in favor of the Hamidian strand of the Ottoman civilizing mission, which was comprised of personal patronage politics that functioned on a layer above the professional bureaucracy, sometimes supporting their work and sometimes working against it. In upper Mesopotamia, this change in policy was exemplified by the Hamidiye cavalry regiments. While there were many powerful Hamidiye chiefs, the confederation of Ibrahim Pasha of the Millî tribe became the most powerful in the region between Aleppo, Urfa, Diyarbakır, and Mosul in the early 1900s.[6] Ibrahim's rule best exemplified the consequences of Abdülhamid instituting mechanisms of personal rule superimposed on the regular Ottoman administration, as Ibrahim functionally created an autonomous province of his own from parts of other Ottoman Vilayets and answered only to Abdülhamid. The Chechens of Resülayn, who represented the furthest expanse of the earlier settlement projects, were the only Caucasian settlers to survive in the

[6] PRO. FO 195/2095 No 6 May 13, 1901.

region and remain in place throughout the Hamidian era.[7] They demonstrate what happened when a vestige of an earlier era of Ottoman civilizational projects persisted while priorities shifted in the empire at large. They stayed and fought for their own survival. Ravaged by disease, only lightly supported by the thinly-stretched Ottoman administrators of the region, and subject to the whims of the often-hostile Kurdish and Arabic tribes among whom they had been settled, the Chechens of Resülayn adapted to the harsh circumstances by adopting the tactics of their neighbors, essentially becoming an *aşiret*, or autonomous tribe, themselves.[8] In the process, they became important political actors in their region. They first contested the rise of Ibrahim Pasha in the 1880s and 1890s before becoming a client member of his confederation near the peak of his power in 1900 after Ibrahim launched a devastating series of raids on the Chechen settlements. When Ibrahim Pasha was deposed, they dictated the politics of their region until they withdrew from the Mandate of Syria when they chose the side of the Turkish Nationalists after World War I.

The area to which the Ottomans sent this group of Chechens has received little attention in the literature. This is partly because the region was split between Turkey, the French Mandate of Syria, and the British Mandate of Iraq after World War I. The fragmentation of borders has led to a fragmentation of scholarship. For example, Norman Lewis's work covers Resülayn as part of the northeastern stretch of Syria but does not consider the important impact of the Hamidiye in the region because that is considered to be part of the Turkish Republic's history. On the other side of the divide, Kurdish issues are an important part of the fields of Republican and Ottoman history, but many analyses stop at the modern border. The complicated

[7] Hostile neighbors and disease caused other eastern Anatolian Chechen settlements to wither and disappear over the 1860s and 1870s.

[8] A*şiret* in Ottoman terms was a tribe that had the ability to govern itself and the potential to produce a rival governance in opposition to Ottoman rule, while a *kabile* referred to the same extended kinship structure without the political connotations.

interrelatedness of the Arab and Kurdish nomadic tribes, and the different policies enforced on both groups by the Ottoman state, have therefore been elided. This chapter uses secondary sources focusing on what became the southeastern Turkish Republic and the northeastern Mandate of Syria and reinterprets evidence presented in them through an Ottomanist lens that attempts to recreate the history of the region from the perspectives of both Istanbul and the local populations, which both viewed the area as contiguous, without imagining the national boundaries that would crisscross the region after World War I and distort scholarship's understanding of the region. Scholars who study the region have focused on different questions, based on whether they are approaching the region from the modern Turkish or modern Syrian side. Those working in the context of the modern Turkish Republic have mostly focused on questions relating the early stages of Kurdish nationalism, such as the work of Hakan Özoğlu, who follows recent scholarly understanding that nationalism as we understand it today was a relatively late development in the Ottoman Empire while reassessing the supposed keystones of the Kurdish nationalist movement and resituating them into a broader Ottoman context.[9] The other major focus of scholarship is on the Armenian Massacres of the 1890s or the Armenian Genocide of World War I, which is a literature so large that it is almost a branch of Middle Eastern history unto itself.[10] The focus on Kurdish nationalism and the Armenian Genocide, while of immense historical importance, have left other questions understudied and unanswered. This is despite a wealth of travelogues in European languages that discuss the social and political dynamics of this part of upper Mesopotamia, notably those penned by the famous German Orientalist Max von Oppenheim, the English traveler Verney Lovett Cameron, and the notorious

[9] Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).
[10] For example, Ibrahim Pasha and his confederation were noted as *protectors* of the Christians in their domains during the 1890s massacres. See Joost Jongerden, "Elite Encounters of a Violent Kind: Milli Ibrahim Paşa, Ziya Gökalp and Political Struggle in Diyarbekir at the Turn of the 20th Century," in *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870-1915*, ed. Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 73-75.

British imperialist Mark Sykes. The notable exception to this trend in Ottoman history has been the works of Janet Klein. Klein's monograph and series of articles have done much to illuminate the social and political life of the inhabitants of the region in the Hamidian period while avoiding determinism and presentism.[11] She argues that Abdülhamid II opted to deal with a region of the Ottoman Empire, eastern Anatolia, that had resisted administrative centralization by empowering one of the myriad groups in the area hostile to state power, the Kurdish tribes. The Sultan's decision, partly designed to "civilize" the Kurds by encouraging a strong loyalty to Hamidian-era Ottomanism, had a variety of important consequences for the region. It bound some Kurds tightly to the Ottoman state while the same process of encouraging independent action under the Ottoman banner corroded ties between other Kurds, Armenians, and the Ottoman state. The above issues have meant that the activities and machinations of Veranşehirli Ibrahim Pasha, despite being one of the most powerful men in the Ottoman Empire in his day, have not been adequately represented in scholarship.

The work in Syrian studies has been split on whether or not to acknowledge the incorporation of the Ottoman-era developmentalist mindset into the projects of the French Mandate and later, the Syrian Arab Republic. The Sanjak of Zor made up the northeastern portion of the Syria Mandate, where the Ba'athist regime centered their developmentalist plans for Syrian agriculture. It built a massive series of dams, reservoirs, and irrigation canals starting in the 1960s, successfully transforming the region as part of a plan to replace the Hawran as Syria's breadbasket. The region ultimately began producing two-thirds of the nation's cereals.[12] Although not usually understood as such today, much of the policy is a continuation of the late

[11] Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).
[12] Myriam Ababsa, "The End of A World: Drought and Agrarian Transformation in Northeast Syria (2007-2010)" in *Syria from Reform to Revolt, Volume 1: Political Economy and International Relations*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Tina Zintl (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 201-202.

Ottoman policy of accommodating the Shammar confederation. Bedouin sheikhs from that confederation ended up in legal possession of nearly three quarters of the land in the new agricultural region. Much of the scholarship covering the project is in technical fields or starts the narrative abruptly in the 1960s with the modern Syrian project.[13] Some scholars accept the continuities between the Ottoman developmentalist projects.[14] Others insist the French project was something new. For instance, Christian Velud has argued that the Ottomans encouraged nomadic activity rather than suppressed it, and that French ideas to pacify and sedentarize northeastern Syria were new to the region and based on French practice in North Africa.[15] Norman Lewis, whose work provided the foundation for most of the subsequent scholarly work on nomads of the Syrian desert that has followed, includes sections on the Chechens and Resülayn and argues for the continuities.[16] Lancaster and Lancaster, who wrote from the extreme *longue duree* perspective of archaeologists, placed Lewis in a series of scholars including Hutteroth, Abdulfattah, and Rogan in what he calls the "frontier of settlement model."[17] While the Lancasters are correct in arguing for a more flexible model that includes the readiness of the inhabitants of the semi-arid frontier of the desert to quickly change agricultural methods in response to the current environmental conditions, their dismissal of the "frontier of settlement" model belies the important contributions of the modern Ottoman, French, and British states in

[13] Raymond Hinnebusch, et al. "Agriculture and Reform in Syria," *Syria Studies,* 3, no. 1 (2013). The question of Syria's northeastern agricultural policy has become urgent, as the large-scale drought from 2007-9 and the subsequent mass internal migration to Syrian cities is frequently held to be a cause of the Syrian Civil War. For example, there was a recent special edition of *Syria Studies* on the topic.
[14] For example, see Myriam Ababsa's work on the 21st century drought in Syria, "The End of a World: Drought and Agrarian Transformation in Northeast Syria (2007-2010)," in *Syria from Reform to Revolt, Volume 1: Political Economy and International Relations*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Tina Zintl (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 202.
[15] Christian Velud, "French Mandate Policy in the Syrian Steppe," in *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, ed. Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 64.
[16] Norman Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
[17] William and Fidelity Lancaster, *People, Land and Water in the Arab Middle East: Environments and Landscapes in the Bilad ash-Sham* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 30-31.

forcing the populations of the areas, as much as possible, into conforming with modern developmentalist models over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lewis expanded the frontier of settlement model to northeastern Syria, while the other scholars focus tightly on the area near Aleppo, Damascus, and southern Syria. This chapter argues that the Ottomans, acting with the goal of civilizing the region and establishing a flourishing agricultural district in the Euphrates Valley, began the process of developing the region in the 1860s and that the French and Syrian states continued this century-old project.

There is a similar lacuna in the literature regarding the Caucasian refugees who settled in eastern Anatolia and upper Mesopotamia between 1860 and 1878, especially in comparison to those refugees who went to the Balkans or western Anatolia. One good source remains Abdullah Saydam's work on the settlement of refugees from 1856 to 1876.[18] He investigates documents concerning the choice of settlement areas in eastern Anatolia and upper Mesopotamia, including Resülayn. Georgi Chociev has provided a useful overview of Caucasian settlement in eastern Anatolia as from the 1860s until the present day.[19] While Resülayn is not the focus of Chociev's work, he does provide a useful focus on the small populations of Ossetians that were settled among the larger Circassian, Chechen, and Daghestani populations. More recently, Christopher Gratien has drawn attention to the extreme mortality rate of the Chechens of Resülayn as a data point in his article on the malarial zones of the Ottoman Empire.[20]

Together, these works have produced a framework into which the experiences of the Chechen community in Resülayn can be inserted. Their story exists in the shadow of works on

[18] Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri, 1856-1876* (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu: 2010).
[19] Georgi Chociev and Bekir Koç, "Migrants from the Northern Caucasus in Eastern Anatolia: Some Notes on their Settlement and Adaptation (Second Half of the 19th Century-Beginning of the 20th Century)." *Journal of Asian History*, 40, No. 1.
[20] Chris Gratien, "The Ottoman Quagmire: Malaria, Swamps, and Settlement in the Late Ottoman Mediterranean," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* 49, No. 4, (2017).

Kurdish nationalism, the ethnic cleansing and genocide of Armenians, and debates about infrastructure and agricultural development in northeastern Syria. While the Chechens of Resülayn have been marginalized in historiography, they played an important role in the rise and fall of Ibrahim Pasha, Ottoman development projects in the region, and ultimately in the shaping of the modern borders of Turkey and Syria. The settlers experienced, first hand, the shifting priorities of the Ottoman Empire regarding its semi-arid and desert regions and the nomadic and semi-nomadic populations that inhabited them, and an examination of their story can help form a useful periodization of those shifting Ottoman attitudes. This chapter covers Ottoman plans for the sedentarization and promotion of settled agriculture among of the Arabs of Zor and the Kurds of southeast Anatolia along with the Ottoman settlement of Chechen refugees between the 1860s and the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War. By recontextualizing the stories of the Shammar Arabs, Millî Kurds, and Chechen refugees in a holistic way, a more complete history of the region can be told. The 1877-8 war was a watershed event for the region as soldiers responsible for enforcing nomadic settlement and maintaining order left the frontier for the front lines. The resultant lack of government protection forced the Chechen settlers to rely on themselves, which prompted them to become group of powerful political actors. They became a critical part of the confederation of Arab tribes that worked to block Ibrahim Pasha's rise before succumbing to his attacks and begrudgingly joining his confederation. Once part of the Millî Hamidiye confederation, different groups of Chechens from Resülayn adopted different methods of accommodation. Some members aggressively tried to follow Ibrahim's model and petition for markers of prestige directly from Istanbul, while others committed their expertise in being on the wrong side of the law to Ibrahim's service, running guns from Lebanon to Rakka and then to Veranşehir. The Chechens entered the last decade of Ottoman rule by successfully deposing

Ibrahim and entering the last decade of the Ottoman Empire as undisputed masters of their region.

The View from Aleppo: Bringing the Syrian Desert and Arab Nomads under State Control: 1860-1878

Although the initial settlement scheme for Resülayn was planned in Diyabakır, for most of the period involved in this study Resülayn was in the Sanjak of Zor. This sub-province, frequently referred to as the "Desert Province," was administered either from Aleppo or as an independent Sanjak. Zor was administered from the city of Deir ez-Zor, which for most of the nineteenth century was little more than an Ottoman garrison. Zor was established as a province in 1854 to better control and tax the nomadic tribes of the area.[21] The transformation into an administrative center was bloody. The first act of the Ottomans was to send a military detachment set out from Aleppo in July 1857 and attacked the 'Anizeh Arab tribe, killing over 300. The victory led to the Ottomans beginning construction on a series of forts along the Euphrates.[22] This set the stage for an aggressive period of nomad settlement schemes, of which the Chechen settlement in Resülayn became the northernmost node. It also marked a new phase in aggressive negotiations and contestation between the Ottoman government, the 'Anizeh tribe, and the Shammar tribe that would set the context for the Chechens to join into the politics of the region in the later 1870s and 1880s.

The 'Anizeh and Shammar tribes were relative newcomers to the eastern Syrian desert and upper Mesopotamia. Both dislodged the previously powerful Mawali confederation of tribes, which were severely diminished by the 1860s. The 'Anizeh had been slowly migrating out of the

[21] Lewis, 27-28.
[22] For more detail on this expedition, see Lewis, 26-29.

Najd since the end of the seventeenth century. A few of the sub-tribes, such as the Wuld Ali and Ruwallah, became powerful actors in southern Syria and are examined in chapters four and five. The main sub-tribe of the 'Anizeh in the Euphrates Valley was the Fid'an, although there were also several smaller and less powerful branches.[23] The Shammar had also been slowly migrating north for a century, although in a more northeasterly direction. They occupied the eastern banks of the Euphrates up to Anatolia and had a strong base of power in the deserts southwest of Mosul. The two tribes jockeyed for pastureland in the Euphrates Valley, frequently attacking each other. For example, there was a major conflict between the two, fought with lances and no firearms, that nonetheless killed nearly 120 men in 1871. The Ottoman government exploited the fractured nature of tribal politics to forcefully enact its policies.

Although the Ottomans had been building and manning a series of desert forts throughout the 1860s, the new tenor of their attempt to manage the desert and its nomadic inhabitants became clear in May of 1867 when Reshid Pasha, the notorious Tanzimat centralizer whose tenure as governor of Syria is discussed in chapter three, and Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, the famous Tanzimat administrator, then the governor of Aleppo but fresh from his experience settling nomads and constructing towns in the mountains between Çukurova and Aleppo with the Army of Reform (*Fırka-yı Islahiye*), took the unusual step of meeting in eastern Syria.[24] The two reform-minded valis agreed on a series of reforms for the desert. The two provinces would finance the construction a series of forts manned by camel and horse-mounted cavalry from Palmyra to Aleppo. The first commander of this flying regiment of cavalry was Omar Bey Dagistani, an officer that had defected from the Russian army during the Crimean War.[25] Soon

[23] Lewis, 8-12.
[24] PRO. FO 195/806 No. 34 May 21, 1867. Unless otherwise noted, the Foreign Office records cited in this chapter are from the Aleppo section of the cited bound volume.
[25] Lewis, 30.

after this meeting, Ottoman administrators created an administrative unit that would oversee expansion into the desert. First they organized a "Desert Vilayet," which they later merged with Zor Sanjak in 1870.

The Ottomans appointed Arslan Pasha to govern the new administrative organization, and his rule set the precedent of rule in Zor for the 1870s. His rule was so harsh that it caused large numbers of tribes to flee his policies for the open desert beyond Ottoman control, and therefore reduced the tax base. The fact that his rule was counter-productive to the usual Ottoman goal of maximizing taxation implies that another factor was at play. Arslan Pasha's district located was between those governed three of the great Tanzimat era "civilizers:" Ahmet Cevdet in Aleppo, Reshid Pasha in Damascus, and Midhat Pasha in Baghdad. Midhat Pasha, although not at the meeting in the desert in 1867, would build a series of outposts to Deir ez-Zor to join with those of Aleppo and Syria from 1869 to 1872. Arslan Pasha's approach can only be described as matching the civilizational terms that those administrators espoused: the Bedouin in the desert represented a backward state of civilization that needed to be corrected by any means necessary. For Arslan Pasha, this meant a ruthless sedentarization project. He chased nomads until he had them cornered by the Euphrates, stripped them of their flocks, and forced them to build stone huts and commence sedentary agriculture.[26] Although the tribes fled after only three months, the houses lasted for decades. The famous German orientalist and archaeologist Max von Oppenheim, described them when he visited the region at the turn of the century, and he felt that "This well intentioned attempt to civilize the nomadic Khabur inhabitants [that] failed completely (*Dieser wohlgemeinte Versuch einer Civilisierung der nomadisierenden Chabur-*

[26] PRO. FO 195/976 No. 31 November 17, 1871. This record uses the occasion of Arslan Pasha's death as an opportunity to summarize his rule over Zor.

Bewohner misslang jedoch vollständig)."[27] Arslan Pasha was also responsible for building up Deir ez-Zor from a small village to an administrative center. Again, he did this with his characteristic cruelty and violence. He forced the sheikhs of the various local tribes to each build a residence in town, and then used the public space outside his residence to publicly torture sheikhs that did not comply with his fiats.

When Arslan Pasha died in 1871, the Bedouin quickly acted to try and reduce the onerous terms of Ottoman occupation. Hoping that they could cause the Ottomans to disband the novel desert province, they began raiding and intentionally starting fights among themselves could cause the Ottomans to give up out of frustration.[28] While this was a sound plan, it demonstrates that the various tribes did not understand the ambition of the Ottoman plans, which envisioned the total transformation of the desert landscape and its inhabitants into a fertile, settled, and prosperous district that could be subsumed into regular Ottoman administrative rule. The success of this project was seen in civilizational terms and therefore divorced from normal pragmatic concerns like effective taxation or security.

Faith in the transformative power of technology was an important driving force in the plan to re-engineer the upper Euphrates and Khabur Valleys into flourishing agricultural provinces. Advances in rifle technology made the entire enterprise possible. Since the 1850s Ottoman rifles, imported from abroad, had given the Ottoman army a decisive advantage in range over the outdated guns with which the Bedouin were armed. In the 1860s, the Ottomans began to employ breech-loading rifles, first Snider rifles and then in the early 1870s with

[27] Max Freiherr von Oppenheim, *Von Mittelmeer zum Persischen Golf durch den Hauran, die Syrische Wüste und Mesopotamien: Band II* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1900), 15.
[28] PRO. FO 195/976 No. 31 November 17, 1871.

Winchester repeating rifles.[29] British consular reports repeatedly mention how devastating the extra range and reload speed was to Bedouin who fought each other and Ottoman soldiers with outdated muskets and lances.[30] In addition to the dramatic advantage granted by accurate, long ranged rifles was the advance in tactics and discipline for the Ottoman army by the 1870s. By 1871, the Ottomans had abandoned the use of camels, which had been the plan in the initial meeting between Ahmet Cevdet and Reshid Pashas in 1866. In the place of camels they used mules, which were easier to care for and easier to handle in a fight. This change lasted until the end of the Ottoman era.[31] The Ottoman troops were also increasingly well-disciplined and trained to quickly dismount and set up a defensive position around their mules when under attack. This method was slow and less mobile than the warfare practiced by the Bedouin, but it worked. Ottoman soldiers learned to trust the long range of their rifles, the dependency of their mules, and the certainty that reinforcements would soon arrive from a neighboring blockhouse.

In addition to the advances in military technology and practice that allowed the firm control of the upper Euphrates and Khabur Valleys was a confidence that the railroad, with all its benefits to the central state, would soon pass through the region. In keeping with normal Ottoman practice, Ottoman officials solicited ideas and financing for railroads from European engineers and planners. One such plan, submitted the J.L. Haddan in 1871, proposed joining a line that ran through the Euphrates Valley to Basra to another proposed Anatolian line that would run from Kayseri to the Elbistan Pass in the Taurus.[32] He admitted that it would be far more advantageous to England as a connection to India than it would be for the Ottoman Empire, who would probably lose money on the project. The only benefits he lists are the "commonplace

[29] Lewis, 30.
[30] PRO. FO 195/976 N.o 31 November 17, 1871.
[31] The French would excitedly re-introduce camel mounted troops in the mandate period, not realizing the Ottomans had considered and abandoned camels as unfeasible a half-century before.
[32] PRO. FO 195/976 No. 36 November 30, 1871

observations as to the [benefits] of civilisation" and the hope that it would cause the Bedouin in the region to settle. Haddan saw two ways this would happen: the railroad would make it easier for the Ottomans to attack them, and they could be used as laborers in the construction and then be encouraged to settle after they completed the project. This plan was heavily favored by the British, and submitted to Istanbul, and in 1872 the British were still petitioning to have Haddan sent out to survey the route.[33] The British consul in Damascus had a copy of the report as well, and suggested that a Hawran railroad for the purpose of exporting grain could be built out to join the proposed Euphrates Valley line.[34] The British were still trying to convince Ottoman officials in Istanbul and Aleppo of the benefits of their planned route in 1875. By then, however, the Ottomans were leaning towards a proposal that would go from Urfa to Diyarbakır and Mosul, skirting the Euphrates Valley in order to connect Ottoman cities instead of bypassing them for a more direct route.[35]

The View from Dıyarbakır: Bringing Kurdish Tribes under Tighter Government Control: 1860-1878

The Ottoman government was not only focused on settling nomadic Arab tribes in the nineteenth century; Kurdish tribes also experienced the force of the centralizing Ottoman government over the same period. Unlike the Arab tribes of upper Mesopotamia, who had emigrated from the deserts of the Nejd at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Kurdish tribes in the mountains and plateaus of eastern Anatolia had been in the area and at least nominally affiliated with the Ottoman government for centuries. They had been organized into administrative units ranging from traditional Ottoman sanjaks to nearly fully

[33] PRO.FO 195/994 No. 9 January 13, 1872
[34] PRO. FO 195/ 994 (Damascus) No. 35 October 11, 1872.
[35] PRO. FO 195/1067 No. 16 August 20, 1875.

autonomous *hükümets* since the 1500s.[36] By the early 1800s, most Kurdish tribes were only loosely associated with the Ottoman government. Over the first few decades of the nineteenth century the Ottoman state began a process of forcefully ending tribal autonomy, and in 1846 the Ottoman state reorganized the area into *Eyalet-i Kürdistan* with an eye to reinforcing the borders with Russia and Iran.[37] This reorganization, aimed at removing power from Kurdish chiefs and relocating it in the Ottoman state, prompted the powerful emir Bedirhan Pasha to revolt in 1847.[38] The suppression of the Bedirhan revolt marked the beginning of a period when no Kurdish chief would seriously challenge the power of the Ottoman state.[39] This period lasted until the devastation of the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War caused the politics of eastern Anatolia to fall into disarray.

Why were the experiences of the Kurdish and Arab tribes in the 1860s and 1870s different? Ottoman centralization in the Tanzimat era reached Kurdistan more quickly and forcefully than it did the deserts of Syria and upper Mesopotamia. The Kurdish lands in eastern Anatolia had always been critically important in their role as the frontier between the Ottoman Empire and its enemies to the east, Russia and Iran. This meant that once Tanzimat began, it made sense to prioritize the incorporation of those lands quickly. By comparison, the plans of Tanzimat reformers like Ahmed Cevdet, Reshid, and Midhat Pashas to incorporate the desert into the organized Ottoman state could proceed more slowly on the internal frontier, without the worry of a rival imperial army marching through. The various Kurdish tribes had been in eastern Anatolia for centuries. Although there had always been Arab speaking nomadic tribes in the

[36] For details on the political organization of Kurdistan throughout the centuries, see Özoğlu, chapter 3.
[37] Özoğlu, 60-62.
[38] Özoğlu, 70. Although the Bedirhan revolt is often held to be one of the originating events of Kurdish nationalis, Özoğlu convincingly argues Kurdish nationalism, like Turkish nationalism, was more a product of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century than any of the supposedly key moments of national awakening in the nineteenth century.
[39] Özoğlu, 74.

Syrian Desert, the tribes inhabiting the Euphrates Valley in the second half of the nineteenth century were relative newcomers who had links to the tribes in central Arabia, which was totally free from Ottoman administration. Therefore, the Kurds had nowhere to go after the Ottomans suppressed them. The ‘Anizeh and Shammar affiliated tribes could simply leave for the Nejd to wait out any Ottoman pressure. The Ottoman state may not have felt the need to settle Kurdish tribes in the 1860s and 1870s, as they tried to do in Syria, because settled agriculture was common in Kurdistan. Much of the available land was farmed by Armenians and other settled groups, while the Kurds followed their nomadic patterns in the mountains around them. Regardless, the trajectory for both Kurdish and Arab nomads would become more closely aligned after the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War upended the established order in the borderland between Kurdish and Arab tribes.

The Effects of the 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War on Upper Mesopotamia

The 1877-8 Russo-Ottoman War proved to be a watershed moment for the Arab and Kurdish tribes of upper Mesopotamia. In 1878, when the main branches of the ‘Anizeh and Shammar returned from their winter pastures in Nejd to their land in the Euphrates Valley, they found the nascent settled villages along the Euphrates and Khabur Rivers undefended.[40] The war with Russia had forced the Ottomans to withdraw the two battalions of mule-mounted troops that had been supporting the settlement project in Zor province. By that time, several of the smaller and weaker branches of the major tribes had taken advantage of the security provided by the soldiers to take up settled agriculture. Simultaneously, farmers from Aleppo had been expanding along the Euphrates towards Deir ez-Zor. The returning ‘Anizeh and Shammar took advantage of the absence of troops and attempted to collect thirteen years’ worth of protection money, which

[40] PRO. FO 195/1201 No. 11 June 13, 1878.

they considered to be in arrears. If a village could not pay immediately, the nomads took whatever amount of livestock they considered themselves owed.[41] The sudden spate of violence caused many to desert their villages. Making matters worse, the insecurity of the situation meant Aleppine lenders refused to disburse any funds to help alleviate the situation.

Kurdistan itself was a front in the war, with the Russian army advancing deep into eastern Anatolia. After their withdrawal, the Ottoman administration in eastern Anatolia was in disarray, and the Treaty of Berlin internationalized the situation in eastern Anatolia, as Britain tried to impose reform package to protect the Armenians. The internationalization of the Armenian issue caused a great deal of anxiety among the Muslim population that eastern Anatolia would follow the trail blazed by Bulgaria and be severed from the Ottoman Empire. In response to the lack of Ottoman authority and these anxieties, Sheikh Ubeydullah, the influential leader of the Şemdinan tribe, took action.[42] His family had accumulated a great deal of wealth over the preceding decades, and he seized the opportunity caused by the power vacuum to try and establish autonomous rule for himself by creating a broad alliance of Kurdish tribes under him. Seeking to unite Kurds even beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire, Ubeydullah's forces invaded Qajar Iran in 1880. He was quickly defeated there, and upon his return to Anatolia in 1881, the Ottomans forced him to surrender. His main goal was to establish a Kurdish emirate like that of Bedirhan or the hükümets of the previous century, which proved elusive for him but not for Kurdish chiefs that would rise in power under the Hamidiye system. The precarious situation of eastern Anatolia after these events became the focus of intense debates at the highest level of Ottoman government in Istanbul in the 1880s.

[41] PRO. FO 195/1202 No, 11 (political) December 2, 1878.
[42] For a detailed account of this revolt, see Özoğlu 72-75.

The early 1880s were also a turning point because of the increasing power and assertiveness of Abdülhamid II. He had come to power in 1876, but the disastrous war with Russia broke out shortly after. In the 1880s Abdülhamid II began to slowly assert his authority, ultimately layering his personal patronage politics over the power of the bureaucrats. The immediate aftermath of the war saw him continuing many of the policies enacted by Ottoman officials at the end of the Tanzimat era. Soldiers returned to the block houses in the Euphrates Valley, although they no longer attempted to induce the nomads there to settle and they merely began to regulate and tax them.[43] The 1880s in Kurdistan, however, are treated as a brief and inconsequential interlude between the Sheikh Ubeydullah uprising and the institution of the Hamidiye regiments in 1891. This period, in fact, was when the Chechen colonists in Resülayn became very active in shaping the politics of the region, mediating the rise of the Kurdish chief Ibrahim Pasha and the power of the Shammar Arab tribe.

Enter the Chechens: 1860-1878

The vali of Kurdistan Eyalet, Mustafa Pasha, had high hopes for the settlement of Chechen immigrants in Resülayn in 1866. He thought the presence of agricultural settlers would help develop the region into a flourishing part of the province. The first few settlers sent by the Ottomans thought they had found an idyllic place full of potential in between the slopes of Jabal Abdülaziz and the Khabur River, on the edge of the desert. The site had ample water, good weather, and deposits of useful materials such as rock for plaster, salt, and sulfur. It seemed so nice that some of the first immigrants wrote to their compatriots in Erzurum encouraging them to come to Resülayn. The Ottoman government in Diyarbakır was more pragmatic. The vali noted that the area was also located in between several Arab and Kurdish tribes, who would likely

[43] PRO. FO 195/1305 No. 7 (political) November 3, 1880.

press their claims to the land which the Ottomans intended to use for settlers.[44] Mustafa Pasha hoped that the presence of Chechen farmers would encourage the tribes to settle and pick up agriculture themselves. Knowing that the tribes were still volatile and would likely raid the new settlers, the Ottomans planned to build a barracks on the banks of the Khabur that would help regulate the various tribes, collect back taxes from them that would then be used to help support the new settlement, and protect the settlers. In early 1866, 2,500 households of Chechens were sent from Diyarbakır to Resülayn.

The plan for Resülayn was ambitious. As laid out in the plans submitted to the authorities in Istanbul, it called for nothing less than the pushing back the desert over an area of almost 2,000 square kilometers between Resülayn and Jabal Abdülaziz. Resülayn itself was only a small part of the larger project initially.[45] The maps drawn up by the authorities in Diyarbakir envisioned a string of settlements along the road to Deir ez-Zor, stretching between Resülayn town and a pass in the Jabal. From there, the settlements would be built east along the northern and eastern flanks of Jabal Abdülaziz. Towns would be built in the mountains, and several of these were labeled as forts. Near Resülayn the towns would only consist of twenty or thirty households, but those in the foothills and the mountain itself were to be built to accommodate fifty to one hundred households. The southeastern-most settlements were so distant that they were to be located where the French would build their own fort to control the desert decades later, in al-Hasakah.

Aside from the geographical breadth of the settlements, the Ottoman administration in Diyarbakır envisioned a new area of prosperity and public order. The Chechens would provide

[44] Information in this paragraph is summarized from Saydam, 148-149, who quoted the vali from BOA. İ-DH 38018.
[45] BOA. İ-DH 546 38018 (16 December 1865) contains a map of the proposed settlement, which is included in the Appendix.

the new population. The old population, Kurdish and Arab nomads, would be brought under control. The settlement was planned right in the middle of the migratory patterns of Kurdish and Arab tribes. Kurdish tribes moved from the highlands of Anatolia in the summer to the plains of Mesopotamia in the winter. The Arab tribes of the area followed the opposite pattern: moved from the plateau of central Arabia in the winter to the plains near Resülayn in the summer. The anticipation of these migration circuits led them to plan the barracks described above. Officials hoped that if they could provide the Chechens with enough food, stone, and wood to get started, that agriculture would soon spread to the entirety of the area. Once agriculture was established, the nomadic tribes could either choose to settle down or leave to the new edge of the desert, south of Jabal Abdülaziz.

The experience of the first several years of settlement was decidedly less rosy than the initial Ottoman reports of enthusiastic settlers and sanguine Ottoman hopes for the creation of a prosperous agricultural valley. In the first decade, disease was rampant. In June 1866, there was a major outbreak of both small pox and malaria among the children of the immigrants in Resülayn.[46] While the effect of any disease outbreak is terrible, there is a particular sadness to one that mostly affects children. Both the immigrants and the Ottoman government hoped that the Chechens would prosper, and they put a great deal of care and effort into selecting a good site while providing the settlers with food stocks and protection. Small pox and malaria affecting the children strikes a blow at the success of the entire goal of settlement itself. The psychological affect is clear from the documentation; less than two years after the epidemic settlers were petitioning to leave Resülayn. In 1868 Chechen immigrant families led by a man named Batal and another named Sheikh Abd Ağlûf petitioned the government to leave. Not only did they

[46] BOA. A-MKT MHM. 357 81 (7 June 1866).

want to leave Resülayn, they wanted to give up on the Ottoman Empire entirely and return to Russia.[47] They were permitted to leave if they could come up with the funds required to do so on their own, without government assistance.[48] In a petition in the Immigrant Commission files two years later, in 1870, another Chechen from Resülayn detailed the grim conditions of the settlement. He had buried 57 relatives in Resülayn, five of whom who were his own children.[49] The difficulties continued throughout the 1870s. In 1872 an outbreak of cholera hit Resülayn, and the following year part of the harvest was lost to locusts.[50] The devastation caused more families of Chechens to try and leave for their original homeland. Some wrote a petition, and the issue was forwarded to the Council of State in Istanbul, which decided to procure extra funds to provide provisions for the stricken settlement. While support from the government was sporadic and likely insufficient, it engendered gratitude in the settlers. A few years after the government provided extra rations, the Chechens lent fifty horses to the government to help them pursue Arab brigands.[51]

The level of cooperation between the Chechen settlers and the local Ottoman government is apparent in the travelogue written by the British traveler Verney Lovett Cameron. He travelled from Beirut, through Aleppo, and out to upper Mesopotamia in 1877 and 1878. His account provides a snapshot into the status of the Chechens at that time.[52] Cameron came to Resülayn in 1878. On the way into town, he noted only a few nomadic Arab encampments and no farms. He

[47] BOA. A-MKT MHM. 426 54 (12 November 1868).
[48] One of the features of Ottoman settlement policy was that immigrants were not free to move from their assigned locations unless they obtained permission from Ottoman authorities.
[49] Cited in Gratien, page 590. BOA. DH-MK 1/40 No. 2 (17 February 1870).
[50] BOA. ŞD 2213 48 (15 August 1873).
[51]BOA. İ-SD 35 1765 (August 5 1877).
[52] He also witnessed the large-scale settlement of Caucasians in Quneitra and southern Syria, as well as the arrival of the Caucasians in parts of northern Syria. He developed a notably negative opinion of the Caucasian settlers, in contrast to a high opinion of Arab tribesmen, whom he framed into a sort of "noble savage" trope. His normal word for the Caucasian settlers is "Circassian," although it is clear from context that Cameron uses Circassian as a catch-all term for any Caucasian settlers he came across.

noted that the default attitude of the various Arab tribes of the area towards the Chechens was one of "armed neutrality," although they occasionally became engaged in large battles.[53] In one such conflict in 1877, the Chechens had lost just over a hundred men in skirmishes with the Shammar tribe.[54] Cameron's party was wary of being attacked by Arab, Kurdish, or Chechen horsemen the whole way. Shortly before they reached Resülayn, they met some Chechens taking a heavily guarded trade cart to another of their settlements just ten miles away. They were worried their neighbors would rob them over even such a short distance. Resülayn itself was in a grim state. Cameron noted that the town now housed only a small fraction of the population it had been built for in the 1860s, twenty years before his visit. In addition, although he may have been exaggerating, Cameron stated the graveyards nearby were larger than the town itself.[55]

Cameron provides a reconstruction of the history of the settlement, presumably from his discussions with local Ottoman officials and Chechen colonists that matches with the spirit of the directive that established the colony in 1866. He says that the Ottomans knew there was good water and soil, and that the administrators believed they could support a prosperous new settled agricultural district that would have the added benefit of blocking nomadic migration paths. In keeping with his general anti-Circassian bias, Cameron explains that the Chechens treated the Kurds so poorly on their trek across Kurdistan that in turn, the Kurds were hostile towards the Chechens. He attributes malice to the Chechens robbing their neighbors for provisions which the Ottoman records suggest was more likely due to the poverty of the migrants and a failure of the Ottoman authorities to provide for their needs adequately. In conclusion, Cameron suggests that

[53] Cameron, 165.
[54] Cameron, 163.
[55] Cameron, 163.

the "… the sheep dogs had been worse than the wolves…" and that the people in towns as far as Mardin now regarded the Chechens with enmity.[56]

Although Cameron was not aware of it, he visited the Chechen colony at the historical moment that the relationship between the Ottoman government and the Chechens was shifting for good. Although the first twenty years of Chechen settlement in Resülayn had been very difficult for the settlers despite the support of the Ottoman government, including ministers in Istanbul, from the 1880s onward, the Ottoman government was much less interested in the success of the settlement for a variety of reasons. Increasing apathy on the part of the government left the Chechens to chart their own future. Some of the Chechens responded by supporting the local Ottoman government, while others became entwined in the tribal politics of the region. Several details Cameron records demonstrate that this shift in priorities was occurring during his visit. While the Ottomans had initially provided the Chechens with arms and ammunition, the administration had stopped doing so just before Cameron visited.[57] Similarly, while it had authorized more provisions to be issued in 1873, the government had ceased supplying the Chechens by 1878. Furthermore, the Chechens were at or approaching the 20-year exemption on taxes that settlers in Anatolia received. They were in a tense state with their Arab and Kurdish neighbors. Cameron was told by one of his gendarme escorts that the Arab tribes looked down on the Chechens and refused to develop any social ties with them.[58]

When Cameron's party found him, the Ottoman magistrate, or *kaymakam*, of Resülayn, who had been absent upon Cameronis arrıval, was meeting with a Kurdish delegation several hours from town. There, he witnessed a political arrangement that would continue from at least

[56] Cameron, 162.
[57] Cameron, 162.
[58] Cameron, 168.

this point until the end of the Ottoman Empire: the kaymakam was being escorted by a large group of Chechens. They were dressed in the traditional outfit of the North Caucasus: frock coats with ammunition pouches sewn down the front, kalpaks, tall boots, and belts full of pistols and knives.[59] The Chechens of Resülayn frequently entered into alliances with the appointed magistrate of their district, and the two parties used the imprimatur of Ottoman authority to carve out a role for themselves in local politics. Because Resülayn was a march of five days from Deir ez-Zor, it was far from any direct supervision. The kaymakams would essentially provide legal cover for the Chechens in exchange for part of the plunder from raids, making sure that any complaints against the Chechens were buried and ignored. [60] This elucidates the sort of semi-official relationship the Chechen settlers would have with Ottoman authorities over the next few decades. They no longer received the direct support of the earlier decades, but some part of the community was closely intertwined with Ottoman authority nonetheless.

The Chechens "Go Native": The Chechen Adaptation to Tribal Society, 1878-1890

In 1878 Cameron remarked that the "sheep dogs had been worse than the wolves." By 1888, the Chechens of Resülayn had become wolves themselves. After the interlude of the 1877-8 War, the Ottoman government had reasserted control over the Arab tribes in Zor province, although it was no longer attempting to settle the nomads. The economy responded positively to this; the pastoral economy of the region began to boom in the late nineteenth century.[61] As described the British consul T.S. Jago in 1890, the government control of Zor

[59] Cameron, 166.
[60] Max von Oppenheim, *Tell Halaf: A New Culture in Oldest Mesopotamia,* trans. Gerald Wheeler (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1933), 12-13. The archaeologist describes the particulars of the association formed shortly before his arrival in 1911 but explains that this was just an especially egregious version of a dynamic that had continued on and off for quite some time. This dynamic is also implicit in many Ottoman documents analyzed later in this chapter.
[61] Mentioned in Klein, 66-67, Lewis 54-57, and Sarah Shields, *Mosul Before Iraq: Like Bees Making Five-Sided Cells* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), chapter 5.

province had succeeded in preventing ‘Anizeh and Shammar incursions across the Euphrates.[62] The security that was gained from preventing Bedouin raids led to a large expansion of peasant settlement on the plain between Aleppo and Meskene, the town on the west bank of the Euphrates that was a traditional gateway to the desert trade routes between Syria and the districts of Mosul and Baghdad. The success of the Ottoman administration in Zor province had come because they had stopped trying to force the cultivation of the district. Instead, the Ottomans shifted to a policy of regulating tribal politics at Deir ez-Zor, which led to more efficient taxation and fewer bloody feuds.

The region inhabited by Kurdish tribes benefited from the expansion of the pastoral economy engendered by the security generated in Zor province, even though Ottoman influence in the region was at a nadir. Urban notables in Diyarbakır and Van actively blocked Ottoman influence in the countryside.[63] Abdülhamid and the elite governing circles in Istanbul spent the second half of the 1880s deciding how to reassert Ottoman control. They eventually decided on a governing mechanism that relied heavily on the personal patronage of Abdülhamid: the Hamidiye light cavalry. Zeki Pasha, one of Abdülhamid’s closest associates and confidants, went to eastern Anatolia and began recruiting chiefs from smaller Kurdish tribes into light cavalry divisions. The goal was to create an avenue for collecting taxes and recruits for the army in a critical borderland to check the influence of Russia and the growing threat of Armenian nationalism, while inculcating a sense of “Ottomanism” and personal loyalty to the office of the Sultan and its current occupant, Abdülhamid.[64] This, then, was a civilizing mission by other means. Ottoman administrators were no longer merely promoting the direct reproduction of

[62] PRO. FO 195/1690 No. 3 Political June 23, 1890. Jago had been the British consul in Damascus in the late 1870s and early 1880s during the Circassian settlement in southern Syria, and his reports are cited extensively in my chapters on those events.
[63] Klein, 22.
[64] The reasons are described in depth in Klein, 22-27.

modes of life that they perceived to be the civilized in what they understood to be uncivilized locations and populations to create citizens of the modern administrative state, they were civilizing by using the personal prestige of the Sultan of the modern state to create a common elite community that was committed to the integrity, sovereignty, and identity of the empire in distant regions. As in the case of nomadic settlement programs in Zor in the 1860s and 1870s, empowering local tribal chiefs seems counterintuitive unless one considers the overarching goal of reconstituting a peripheral population into a governable and loyal group of citizens, regardless of cost.

The Chechen inhabitants of Resülayn were caught between these large-scale shifts in governance, a relic of an earlier iteration of the Ottoman civilizing attitude in a new era. Their twenty-year tax exemption for settling in the Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire was up in 1886. As witnessed by Cameron in 1878, the government had already stopped supplying them with rifles and ammunition. This meant that the technological advantage they would have shared with the Ottoman army and gendarmes versus the poorly equipped Arab and Kurdish tribes would have slowly dwindled. Furthermore, they were originally practitioners of settled agriculture in a region that was in the middle of Kurdish and Arab nomadic migration circuits in an era that engendered a boom in the pastoral economy. The Chechens responded in two ways in the late 1880s: one group petitioned to be removed from the area, while another began to adapt the economic strategies of their pastoral neighbors by raiding for livestock.

By 1878 the Chechens had become locally notorious for raiding livestock between Resülayn and Mardin, the closest large town. By 1888, they had expanded their livestock rustling to Urfa in the west and Mosul in the east. That huge increase in range reflects the rough

economic straits in which the Chechens found themselves.[65] This huge increase in range brought increased government scrutiny. Because Resülayn was at the border of so many jurisdictions, Ottoman attempts to punish the raiding Chechens progressed into a comedy of errors.

The spate of robberies began in September of 1888. The vali of Diyarbakır telegraphed Istanbul complaining that a group of Chechen brigands was crossing into Mardin Sanjak and fleeing into the empty desert before the authorities could mount a response.[66] They could be intercepted if only the authorities in Zor would do something about it. The Porte responded that it was fine for the police and gendarmes to follow the Chechens across administrative borders and that they were making sure Zor Sanjak knew about the problem.[67] The Ottomans in Zor responded by dragging their feet, continuously responding that they were debating solutions while pointedly refusing to actually do anything.[68] The Chechen brigands reacted to the Ottoman authorities in Zor and Diyabakır trying to pass the buck to each other by brazenly escalating their activities. Over the winter of 1888-9, they began rustling sheep from the Shammar tribe.[69] Rustling livestock from a few villages was one thing. It was another thing entirely attacking one of the dominant tribal confederations of the region. The Ottomans were trying to establish their legitimacy by regulating tribal affairs from Deir ez-Zor, and they could no longer look away once a major tribe was victimized. The scale of this escalation is clear in the language used in the Ottoman report on the matter: it does not specify where the Chechens attacked. Instead, the official focused on reminding authorities in Istanbul how important the Shammar tribe was to the prosperity and security of the region. The records indicate the attack on Shammar livestock was

[65] The distance from Resulayn to Mardin is roughly 76 kilometers, while to Urfa it is 118 kilometers and to Mosul it is 284.
[66] BOA. DH-MKT 1548 45 (29 September 1888).
[67] BOA. DH-MKT 1557 115 (25 October 1888).
[68] BOA. DH-MKT 1560 31 (31 October 1888).
[69] BOA. DH-MKT 1602 98 (9 March 1889).

the straw that broke the camel's back. The Chechens had alienated the Ottoman officials in the two provincial capitals near to them as well as almost all their neighbors; one Ottoman document said they "had become the greatest pest" (*en ziyade musallat olduktan mahaldan*) in the area.[70] Armenians in a village near Mardin wanted to help capture them, but the authorities in Diyarbakır told them the gendarmes would take care of it.[71] The officials in Deir ez-Zor, in contrast, readily accepted citizen assistance. While those officials had tried to avoid dealing with the Chechens even in the face of Istanbul issuing direct orders, they were quick to act when a tribe for which they were responsible was attacked. Soldiers set out from Deir ez-Zor with a group of Shammar tribesmen as part of the expedition.[72] The thieves were quickly found, and the animals recovered. The livestock were returned to their owners following the standard Ottoman practice. The owners had to come to the provincial capital where the stolen livestock was being held and demonstrated proof of ownership. Ottoman officials knew it was important to ensure that the Chechens only surrendered property that was demonstrably stolen and to not force them surrender their legally owned livestock in an indemnity. Acting unjustly could only lead to further violence.[73]

The Ottoman authorities in Diyarbakır sent a detachment of gendarmes to occupy Resülayn until public order was fully restored in the wake of the Chechen crime spree.[74] The Ottomans judged public order to be restored rather quickly, as they withdrew the extra garrison in September of that year.[75] It seems that everyone involved wanted to return things to normalcy as quickly as possible. The authorities in Diyabakır did not want to have to enforce the law

[70] BOA. DH-MKT 1610 94 (27 March 1889).
[71] BOA. DH-MKT 1606 26 18 (March 1889).
[72] BOA. DH-MKT 1608 116 23 (March 1889).
[73] BOA. DH-MKT 1708 99 (17 March 1890).
[74] BOA. DH-MKT 1610 94 (27 March 1889).
[75] BOA. DH-MKT 1655 53 (10 September 1889).

outside the borders of their vilayet. The authorities in Zor likely did not want to have another province's gendarmes within their jurisdiction. Both sides, meanwhile, seemed intent on not singling out the Chechens from the surrounding Ottoman subjects. The Chechens had irritated all of their neighbors, and the careful Ottoman attempts to return to the *status quo ante* suggests the Ottoman authorities knew the situation of the Chechens was precarious; if the surrounding farmers and tribes saw the Ottomans being vindictive they might have been encouraged to attack the Chechens as well.

While the above episode of livestock rustling was unfolding, another group of Chechens was trying to negotiate themselves out of their precarious situation at the edge of the desert entirely. The timing suggests that after the raids in September but before the drastic escalation of attacks against the Shammar in March, there was vigorous debate within the Chechen community.[76] In November, a delegation of Chechens turned up in Baghdad asking to be relocated. The fact that representatives went to Baghdad and not to the actual administrative center from which they were ruled, Deir ez-Zor, or to the other nearby administrative center of Diyarbakır suggests the Chechens did not feel they could get a fair appraisal of their situation from authorities whose rule they had directly challenged. The Chechens presented a series of petitions, with one complaining that they had been settled in "unhealthy" weather for twenty-two years and they could no longer handle it. They asked to be resettled in Muş, over three hundred kilometers to the north. Several months later, the authorities in Baghdad mentioned they were still collecting information to consider a relocation effort. The representative of the Chechens was a man named Ibrahim, styled as the "general representative of the Chechen immigrants" (*Umum Çeçen Muhacirini Vekili İbrahim*), stayed in Baghdad while the petition was

[76] BOA. DH-MKT 1566 45 (20 November 1889).

considered.[77] The fact that the Chechens went to Baghdad at this time is notable; it suggests that they did not trust the authorities in the provinces adjacent to them to administer a fair hearing. This was in early March of 1889, right before Ibrahim's confederation would cause the entire region to rise against the Chechens. The idea for relocation, however, would be debated by the Ottomans over the course of the next decade; it seems that the Chechens were not the only group that was divided on the proper course forward.

The Hamidiye and the Reorganization of Rural Life and Governance in Resülayn: 1890-1900

The Hamidiye project, started in 1890, had a drastic effect on regions inhabited by Kurds. Although not founded to violently suppress the Armenian population of eastern Anatolia,[78] the Hamidiye would eventually have a notorious role in carrying out massacres of Armenians in both 1894-6 and in the Genocide starting in 1915. The Hamidiye and its successor institutions also had a key role in shaping Kurdish relations with the Ottoman state and the Turkish Republic. One of the most important figures in this project was Ibrahim, chief of the Millî tribe. While the Millî tribe was one of the smaller Kurdish tribes in the early 1890s, by 1900 Ibrahim had used the prestige and preferential government treatment enabled by his participation in the Hamidiye program to become one of the most powerful men in southeastern Anatolia. In 1902 he was awarded the rank of pasha, and between then and his downfall at the hands of the Young Turks in 1908 he essentially ruled the land between Urfa, Diyarbakır, Mosul, and Deir ez-Zor. In 1901 the British consul in Aleppo described the status of Ibrahim's domains as an "*imperium in*

[77] BOA. DH-MKT 1600 22 (2 March 1889).
[78] Jongerden 62, Klein 23-27. While neither scholar contests the later participation of Hamidiye units and their successors in the Armenian massacres in 1894-1896 and the Armenian Genocide starting in 1915, they are that later participation does not change the intentions Abdülhamid and his lieutenants in creating the institution in 1890.

imperio,"[79] and he noted that not only did the Porte not respond to consular requests to regulate the behavior of Ibrahim Pasha, he was beyond the authority of the valis of the surrounding vilayets.

While the activities of Ibrahim Pasha in his heyday in the first decade of the twentieth century are well known, the available primary and secondary sources do not provide much detail on the previous decade while he was amassing power and maneuvering against the first Kurdish chief to rise to prominence under the Hamidiye system, Mustafa Pasha of the Mîran tribe. Klein explains his sudden rise as a factor of even-handedness versus cruelty: Mustafa Pasha was excessively violent in his moves to consolidate power and attract clients, while Ibrahim built his coalition by being fair and riding to the protection of his clients.[80] This included Christians; he protected the Armenians of his home town of Viranşehir in 1894-6.[81] The German archaeologist Max von Oppenheim was on very good terms with Ibrahim Pasha. He attributed Ibrahim's rise to his charisma and personality, as well as the modern rifles with which the Ottomans equipped the Hamidiye.[82] Mark Sykes, who interviewed Ibrahim Pasha in the early 1900s, also attributed Ibrahim Pasha's power to his role as a neutral arbiter.[83] He noted that Ibrahim Pasha's coalition included Shia, Yezidis, Zazas, and Christians as well as Sunni Muslims. Members from all groups came to him from all over the region to accept his judgement on family matters. Ibrahim himself, in his interview with Sykes, explained his power by attaching himself to a long lineage of Kurdish chiefs going back to the days before Islam that continued their nomadic mode of life

[79] PRO. FO 195/2095 No 6 May 13, 1901. Klein quotes another instance of the British consul of Aleppo calling Ibrahim's domains a "little empire," 99.
[80] Klein, 96.
[81] Jongerden, 64.
[82] Von Oppenheim, "Tell Halaf," 3.
[83] Mark Sykes, "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 38 (1908), 469-471. Sykes, the quintessential orientalist, could not help but exoticize Ibrahim's rule, and instead of attributing it to shrewd negotiating skills and a powerful diplomatic mind, he coats his description of Ibrahim's acumen in a layer of mystical claptrap.

after Sultan Selim the Grim conquered eastern Anatolia and forced some Kurds to settle in the early sixteenth century.

It is clear that Ibrahim was successful by 1900, but not how he rose to prominence in the previous decades during his actual rise to power. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Ibrahim was just one of many Hamidiye chiefs organizing confederations and coercing clients into the state-sanctioned irregular cavalry. In fact, the Chechens of Resülayn had an important role in mediating and negotiating Ibrahim's rise. Ibrahim's area was unique for a Hamidiye regiment, as his territories were on the border of Arab and Kurdish tribes. Arab tribes were administered by the Province of Zor, while only Kurdish tribes could enroll in the Hamidiye. While other Hamidiye chiefs gathered smaller Kurdish tribes to them, Ibrahim had to mediate the difference in culture and administrative regimes at the interface of mountain and desert, Kurd and Arab. Right in the middle of the conflict was Resülayn and the colony of Chechens. In the 1880s they had taken to raiding far afield, and in the 1890s they used their increased clout and strength to become the fulcrum of resistance to Ibrahim Pasha's coalition building. The newfound prominence created tension with Ibrahim, because he was backed by the sultan's Hamidiye system while the Chechens were backed by the local Ottoman administration in their district. The ensuing situation demonstrates in microcosm the tensions inherent in Abdülhamid's experiment in relying on patronage ties as well as the administrative state.

In the early 1890s the two-pronged response of the Chechen settlers to the harsh conditions of life at the frontier continued. In fact, conditions became harsher, as the major cholera outbreak of 1890-2 hit Resülayn as well as Aleppo.[84] The outbreak was extremely

[84] BOA. DH-MKT 1770 6 (28 October 1890). This outbreak would eventually spread to Damascus and Quneitra. The authorities in Deir ez-Zor wanted to shift the quarantine cordon to block Resülayn in 1890. For more detail, see Chapter 5.

virulent in Aleppo province, as it officially killed 2,827 people in the vilayet of Aleppo, which the consul estimated undercounted the casualties by a third.[85] The illness gave a new impetus to Ottoman discussions about relocating the Chechens in response to the petitions submitted in Baghdad. In November, a message sent from the Immigrant Commission to Deir ez-Zor reopened the issue of relocation.[86] The document says that they should be sent to a region where Circassian settlements had already experienced success.[87] The resettlement plan took on even greater urgency the next year.

Over the winter of 1891-2, a gang of Chechens who had been rustling sheep and selling them in markets far away from the site of theft grew emboldened.[88] They attacked a detachment of the Ottoman Fifth Imperial Army and absconded with a great deal of cash. The gang was pursued by mule-mounted soldiers, who caught five members and hauled them off to the jail in Siverek, a town on the road from Diyarbakır to Urfa. The apprehended Chechens were to await trial for their crimes. Their compatriots had other ideas. Using their relatives and acquaintances in the gendarme to gather inside information, a group of twenty to thirty Chechens raided the jail and freed the gang members. They then fled back to the edge of the desert, where the Ottomans were unable to pursue them. The Ottoman official writing the report complained that the whole population of Chechens in Resülayn were brigands who did nothing but work against the carefully maintained public order for which Ottoman civil servants worked. The report recommended that the Chechens should be resettled somewhere in Diyarbakır, because the Chechens were so thoroughly ensconced in and had so thoroughly infiltrated the Ottoman law

[85] PRO. FO 195/1720 No 3 January 26, 1891.
[86] BOA. DH-MKT 1778 59 (5 November 1890).
[87] This underscores the confusion of Ottoman officials when writing about Caucasian refugee groups: while some Ottoman officials misidentified Chechens as a sub-group of Circassians, most did not. Despite that, Ottoman officials still considered them similar enough that they thought it was convenient to settle them near each other.
[88] BOA. DH-MKT. 1952 120 (25 May 1892).

enforcement in the area that the Ottomans would never be able to put a stop to their behavior. From the moment the official filed that report, the Ottoman consideration for resettlement transformed from an act of mercy to an act of collective punishment, as the report advocating punitive relocation was the one that ultimately made it before the Council of Ministers in Istanbul.[89] While officials dispatched investigators to consider locations in Mamuretülaziz and Diyarbakır, and the motion was initially supported, it was eventually overruled. In 1895, however, the Ottoman government decided that such a move would necessarily require forcing innocent people to move.[90] Even though the idea for resettlement had started with a group of Chechens who wanted to move to a healthier locale, its translation to a punitive measure while it percolated within the Ottoman administration ironically caused it to be overruled on humanitarian grounds. Resettlement plans were never again proposed in the Ottoman period.

The situation in Resülayn district from 1891-6 gives us a window into the tectonic shift in regional politics and society engendered by Abdülhamid's patronage system. Around the same time resettlement plans were scuttled due to the brazen Chechen jail-break, Ibrahim Pasha of the Millî tribe began to assert the power afforded to him as a member of a Hamidiye regiment. In the winter of 1894 he embarked on the normal seasonal migration for the Kurdish tribes adjacent to upper Mesopotamia, taking his tribe and their animals to winter in the plains below Anatolia while the great Arab tribes vacated much of the space to winter their animals in Nejd. This time, however, was different. At the same time as Ottoman officials debated the possibility of resettling the Chechens of Resülayn, the creation of the Kurdish Hamidiye regiments led to tensions between those who had been enrolled and those who had not. Sometime around 1892, the Shammar tribe blocked Ibrahim Pasha's Millî tribe from their traditional migration circuit,

[89] BOA. MV 74 83 (26 April 1893).
[90] BOA. DH-MKT 41 36 (16 March 1895).

cutting off Millî access to their wintering grounds in Jabal Abülaziz.[91] The Arab tribes summered in the Jazirah and wintered in the central Arabian plateau. The exact reason for this blockade is not recorded, but it is likely from the timing that it was intended to be a check on the new power granted to Ibrahim Pasha. Soon, the Shammar effort evolved to not only block the Millî, but to forcefully keep them in Anatolia. In the summer of 1894, the Chechens allied with the Shammar and attacked the Millî.[92] They killed several Millî and absconded with a number of sheep and horses. Notably, in the report filed on the set of skirmishes, the Ottoman administrator referred to the Chechens as aşiret, or tribe. The change in terminology demonstrates the slow shift of Ottoman perceptions- instead of refugees that needed government help, they were occasionally classified as a "tribe" capable of autonomous action. Even more importantly, this document was issued from the personal secretariat of Abdülhamid in Yıldız Palace, the highest authority in the Ottoman Empire and one that overrode any decisions made in the regular bureaucracy. It declared that everything necessary should be done to apprehend those who attacked Ibrahim.

In the winter of 1894-5 Ibrahim Pasha, emboldened by the ruling of Yıldız Palace, gathered his tribe and its allies. He came down from the Anatolian plateau, crossed the river valley of Resülayn, and marched up the slopes of Jabal Abdülaziz.[93] The ensuing conflict underscored the new dynamics of regional politics in the Hamidian era. The basic events are as follows: once Ibrahim Pasha was on the Jabal, he was attacked by a group of six hundred

[91] Sykes, 468-469 gives detail on Kurdish migrations. The Shammar migration is noted in numerous British consular reports. See PRO. FO 195/1690 No. 3 (political) June 23, 1890 for an example. This pattern is general and relates to the largest categorization of tribes. Smaller tribes and clans that were semi-nomadic would not have participated in the large-scale annual migration. This explains how the Shammar had members and allies in Jabal Abdülaziz in 1894- not every member of the Shammar would have migrated, and smaller allied or related semi-nomadic clans would not have regularly left the area anyways.
[92] BOA. Y-PRK-BSK. 36 82 (23 June 1894). The other tribes were the Gazze and Abu Kumeys.
[93] BOA. DH-MKT 364 36 (22 December 1894). The file is seventeen pages long and has a variety of documents, from Ibrahim Pasha's personal deposition, to the commander of the Hamidiye, Zeki Pasha's response, to long debates about how to proceed.

Shammar tribesmen and several allied tribes led by a sheikh of the Shammar, Ali Abdürrezzak.[94] Ibrahim Pasha won the fight, seized a number of sheep and horses, apprehended the sheikh and five others, and marched them to the Imperial Court in Diyarbakır. In Ibrahim Pasha's deposition prepared for the court, he argued that he was unjustly attacked by Sheikh Ali, a known brigand. Since all he had done was apprehended a known brigand, and since he was a Hamidiye officer in the Ottoman Fourth Army, he should be rewarded and promoted.[95] Many of the Ottoman officials that debated the case agreed with him, including the office of Zeki Pasha, the head of the Hamidiye program and the Ottoman Fourth Army in Erzincan.[96] Ibrahim Pasha was recommended for a promotion based on his actions.

Ibrahim Pasha's view, however, was not the only one considered. A rival set of petitions on behalf of the Shammar and Sheikh Ali worked their way up the system at the same time.[97] Ali Abdürrezzak was not released, but the petitions of the Shammar worked to at least prevent Ibrahim Pasha's promotion. The Ottoman government in Diyarbakır appointed mediators to resolve any outstanding tensions. Despite the blocked promotion, the outcome was a resounding success for Ibrahim Pasha. When he had enrolled in the Hamidiye, he had just been another chief of an uninfluential Kurdish tribe. The Shammar were the most powerful Arab tribe in upper Mesopotamia at the time and, as demonstrated above, were given preferential treatment by the government of the Desert Province in Deir ez-Zor. The Arabs had responded to the new situation by successfully blocking the Millî's migratory routes. The looming specter of Hamidiye power had caused the Chechens, who had been raiding the Shammar just a few years previously, to instead ally with the Arab confederation to create a unified front. When Ibrahim moved to

[94] The other tribes were the Bukare and Abu Hums.
[95] BOA. DH-MKT 364 36 (22 December 1894), 1. Signed "Millî Reis Ibrahim Pasha," dated March 17, 1895.
[96] BOA. DH-MKT 364 36 (22 December 1894), 4.
[97] These petitions are continuously referenced in the file but were not appended.

challenge the blockade the two sides had skirmished, which in previous decades would have resulted in a few casualties and some sort of negotiation of pasturage rights. Instead, a sheikh of the Shammar was arrested and brought before the courts in Diyabakır, far from their area of influence. What must have been most unsettling, however, was that Ibrahim Pasha's personal opinions in the skirmishes of both 1894 and 1895 had been forwarded straight to Yıldız and to the commander of the regional Ottoman army. The Shammar, cognizant of the power of Abdülhamid's patronage politics and Ibrahim's mastery of the system, backed down.

The Chechens did not. Unable to physically withdraw to the desert like the Shammar could, they were left having challenged not only Ibrahim Pasha but the ascending new order of politics in their region, which enabled certain Kurdish chiefs to appeal directly to the Sultan himself. At first, things seemed to return to normal, with some groups of Chechens raiding surrounding towns while the local Ottoman authorities tried to catch them. In one case, a brigand chief by the name of Eğizbeytar Han was tracked down by the gendarmerie and captured. In another, the Ottoman authorities broke up a horse smuggling ring.[98] Ibrahim Pasha's attention was likely preoccupied with protecting the Christians under his protection in 1895 and 1896 during the notorious Armenian massacres.[99] Soon after those events, however, he turned his attention back to building his power. In the winter of 1898 Ibrahim Pasha began a campaign to seize control of Resülayn district from the regular Ottoman authorities and the Chechens.

Ibrahim Pasha first moved to seize tax rights outside of his legal territory. He moved from his home district of Viranşehir and began registering land from Resülayn and Mardin in the *tapu* registers in Mardin.[100] This was done outside the authority of the Ottoman administration in

[98] BOA. DH-TMIK-M 45 12 (11 December 1897), DH-TMIK-M 51 76 (21 April 1898).
[99] Jongerden, 74.
[100] BOA. DH-ŞFR 229 104 (8 December 1898).

Diyarbakır, which was caught totally unaware.[101] After the Millî tribe established legal cover, it seems that other Hamidiye tribes tried to take advantage of the situation. The Kiki tribe and some Hamidiye regiments raided the town of Chechen Hasan Bey near Resülayn.[102] The Chechens indicated that they could respond to the attacks on their own, but they had made promises to the government to let the proper authorities solve the problem, so they asked Diyabakır for help.[103] The authorities in Deir ez-Zor, nominally in charge of Resülayn but too distant to take much action, suspected that Diyarbakır would not respond, which would lead to a dangerous situation: in the absence of promised government support, the Mutasarrıf of Zor knew it was likely the Chechens would take matters into their own hands. After matters got much worse, that is exactly what they did.

Shortly after the Kiki attacked, the Millî launched a devastating series of raids on Resülayn district to make the situation on the ground match the newfound legal protections that were associated with their status as a Hamidiye tribe. They carried off livestock and material goods, killing with impunity. The official reporting the attacks said it was as if Resülayn were being emptied of its people.[104] It is likely the Chechens were abandoning their settlements for fastnesses in the hills which they knew from the same extensive knowledge of the land that allowed them to evade Ottoman authorities so effectively. The man who tried to organize the defense of the Chechens was Mokri Bey,[105] the deputy kaymakam of Resülayn. His first

[101] The urban notables of Diyabakır and Ibrahim were notorious rivals. Ibrahim's great-great grandfather had ruled an area including Resulayn at the turn of the 19th century but was captured by Ottoman troops and hanged in Diyarbakır. His and his father's efforts to grow Viranşehir into a commercial rival for Diyabakır also led to enmity. By the 1890s and 1900, Diyarbakırlı notables such as Ziya Gökalp were actively working to thwart Ibrahim's ambitions. See Jongerden, "Urban Nationalists and Rural Ottomanists"
[102] The Kiki are listed as being aligned with Ibrahim in 1908, but at this time seems to have been one of his rivals. They were also enrolled as a Hamidiye tribe.
[103] BOA. DH-ŞFR 230 156 (11 January 1899).
[104] BOA. DH-ŞFR 233 91 (28 March 1899).
[105] Mokri is an unusual name for this area. Mekri is the former name of modern Fethiye in Turkey and was populated by Greeks. But it seems unlikely someone this far east would be from Mekri or be Greek. Mokri,

response was to request imperial troops from Aleppo, who had been posted at the borders of Zor Sanjak to collect taxes on livestock. It is notable that he requested troops neither from Deir ez-Zor, which was nominally in charge of the situation but was inclined to leave Resülayn alone; nor from Diyarbakır, which had promised protection from the Hamidiye to Chechen villagers but had not responded when the call came; but instead had asked for support from Aleppo, a relatively distant jurisdiction with far fewer stakes in the tense local politics of the Khabur River Valley. Mokri was very clearly a man who was willing to do whatever it took to get things done. When the imperial soldiers were unable to solve the problem, he went to the intermittent allies of the Chechens, the Shammar tribe, and made a deal.

Mokri Bey also managed to pull the Kiki into his coalition, which must have been a difficult negotiation since they had recently been involved in raiding Chechen villages.[106] The series of telegraphs that recounted these events also indicate that Mokri Bey was exactly the type of man who flourished in the grey area between collusion with the Chechen brigand gangs and Ottoman authority. The telegraphs shed a light on his character and allude to how he was so quick to find a solution when the authorities in Deir ez-Zor and Diyabakır declined to protect the Chechens. Before the Millî invasion of Resülayn, he had killed a man in Siverek, in addition to a litany of unlisted crimes.[107] The details are not clear, but Siverek is within the range in which the Chechens operated and had informants in the gendarme. The fact that these allegations were revealed at the exact moment he was coordinating a defense of Resülayn with the Shammar suggests that these crimes were likely open secrets in the area that backers of Ibrahim Pasha

---

however, is a not uncommon Iranian surname. There was a Kurdish emirate in what is now northwest Iran by the name in the 15th century. This emirate was northern enough so as to almost be in the southern Caucasus. It is most likely he was Kurdish, then, although there is a possibility it was used as a Chechen name since the old Mokri emirate was so close to Chechnya. I will use the common Farsi-English transliteration instead of the Ottoman Turkish one for the Greek town in western Anatolia.

[106] BOA. DH-ŞFR 235 68 (7 May 1899).

[107] BOA. DH-ŞFR 235 68 (20 April 1899).

brought to light to discredit him. The vali of Diyarbakır recommended he be removed from duty. Instead, the confederation of Shammar, Kiki, and Chechens pushed Ibrahim Pasha out of the land he had recently appended to his own in the Mardin tapu registers.[108] After the Shammar and Kiki withdrew, however, the Chechens kept fighting the Millî. Mokri Bey, despite the order from the vali of Diyarbakır to remove him, was still in office. Suddenly concerned with Ottoman-backed public order, Mokri Bey worked to stop the conflict between Ibrahim Pasha's Millî tribe and the Chechens.[109] This was in the best interest of the Chechens, as the Shammar and Kiki were apparently satisfied with the Millî renouncing their legal claims in Resülayn. Local Ottoman authorities were frustrated with the Chechens and the Shammar had pulled out of the coalition, which meant the Chechens risked the wrath of the Millî without allies if they continued to fight. The Chechen community at Resülayn thus concluded the 1890s in their most precarious position since they were ravaged by epidemics in the early years of settlement.

Chechen Life under the Hamidye Regime: 1900-1908

The Chechen colony in 1900 was at a crossroads. In the 1890s the Chechens had become active participants in the politics of the region and were at the center of a series of coalitions with neighboring tribes that aligned against the rising power of the Millî tribe, the greatest beneficiary of the Hamidiye system in southern Anatolia and upper Mesopotamia. The Shammar and Chechens had allied against the Millî twice in the 1890s, and both times the Shammar had eventually negotiated an exit without the Chechens, leaving them exposed. Ibrahim Pasha was only gaining strength, and the personal backing of Abdülhamid meant that the Shammar simply could not compete against this new power structure. The Chechen community responded in the cunning way that was their trade-mark: while nominally reduced to clients of the Millî, they

[108] BOA. DH-ŞFR 235 118 (15 May 1899).
[109] BOA. DH-ŞFR 236 40 (22 May 1899).

played semi-official Ottoman rule of the Hamidiye and the regular Ottoman administrative apparatus against each other. While some Chechens continued non-political brigandage, some used their experience in crime to set up a gun-running network in support of Ibrahim Pasha. Another group leaned into using the official Ottoman administrative structures to gain prestige, power, and, in all likelihood, to cover for their compatriots that smuggled guns to support the Millî.

For some members of the Chechen community, life continued unchanged under Ibrahim Pasha's patronage, and they continued to raid their neighbors for their livelihood. In 1902, the Ottoman army and gendarmerie teamed up to capture one such notorious Chechen brigand, Elsi Bey.[110] Another group of Chechens, however, demonstrated the influence of Abdülhamid's patronage politics by trying to amass Istanbul-bestowed prestige for themselves over the course of 1903. The fact that they did so while contesting Ibrahim Pasha's power further indicates how policies emanating from Yıldız affected even the most remote of Ottoman subjects. In the summer of 1903, a branch of the Shammar tribe that had been pulled into the Millî confederacy rustled some livestock. "Zor" Ahmed Ağa of the Resülayn Directing Council (*Meclis-i İdare*), along with Arslan Bey of the Chechen community led a raid to recover the livestock.[111] This alignment of groups in Resülayn is interesting but not altogether novel: while the overall Shammar tribe continued to contest Ibrahim Pasha's authority, it makes sense that a smaller and weaker group on the border would ally with him. Furthermore, one would expect a member of the Ottoman administration such as Ahmed Ağa to recover stolen livestock. What is new in this case is that they petitioned for and received fourth degree *Mecidiye* medals from the Ottoman government for their service. The fourth degree was the lowest rank of a medal bestowed for

[110] BOA. DH-TMIK.M 129 4 (7 August 1902).
[111] BOA. DH-TMIK.M 149 14 (25 July 1903).

service to the Ottoman government, and the petition to award one had to be ratified in Istanbul. The standard constellation of Chechen immigrants working with the Ottoman administrators sent to Resülayn was no longer just operating at a local level after the setbacks to the community in the 1890s. They could not enroll in the Hamidiye, but they had understood the power and protection that titles and honors granted from Istanbul could bestow upon a group, and they actively sought to access that prestige via the avenues available to them. They were serious about expecting the award. When the paperwork had not arrived over the subsequent year, Ahmed and Arslan wrote a letter to the Porte requesting that their promised reward be processed.[112] The trend of recovering stolen livestock and requesting Ottoman medals continued through at least 1905, when another individual identified as a Chechen from Resülayn was awarded an *Iftihar* medal for helping to recover livestock rustled by another branch of the Shammar tribe.[113]

It seems, however, that those Chechens who continued brigandage unaligned and those who worked with the Ottoman authorities in Resülayn were in the minority. In fact, it is possible in this period that both of those groups were running a shell game in coordination with the most influential group of Chechens: those who actively worked clients of Ibrahim Pasha and the Millî. It is unclear exactly when this happened, but the timing of the first mention of such an arrangement in the documents suggests it was part of the settlement that Mokri Bey reached in 1899 between the Chechens and the Millî. What is clear is that once this group had the protection and prestige that came with being a client of a Hamidiye regiment, they began raiding at the same extreme distances that they had attempted to in the 1880s before the Ottoman authorities and Shammar had united to restrict them. In the winter of 1903-4 a group of Chechens pledged to

[112] BOA. DH-MKT. 846 38 (29 April 1904).
[113] BOA. DH-MKT. 1030 36 (8 December 1905).

Ibrahim Pasha's Millî tribe stole a commercial shipment from two merchants of Mosul.[114] The issue was brought up with the valis of Diyabakır *and* Aleppo in the hope that the thieves could be apprehended. This demonstrates both the area within which they were known to be active and is also roughly coterminous with the territory then controlled by Ibrahim Pasha, indicating that the Chechens who had allied with him had relatively free reign within his borders. It is also notable that the documents again refer to the Chechens as an aşiret. This time, however, the mistake was not made in Istanbul, where officials were not intimately familiar with the politics and populations of such a remote area; the Chechens were described that way in a circular that was debated in Diyarbakır, Aleppo, and Mosul, the three provincial capitals that bordered Resülayn.

Conclusion: The Apogee and Fall of Ibrahim Pasha and the Autonomy of the Chechens

Ibrahim Pasha reached the apogee of his power in 1908. His "*imperium in imperio*" stretched almost to the gates of Aleppo, Diyarbakır, and Mosul.[115] The bustling trade routes connecting those cities ran under the protection of and at the behest of Ibrahim and his confederacy.[116] The security of the area also rested in Ibrahim Pasha's person instead of the Ottoman administrators nominally in charge. The European consuls in those cities viewed this development with a sense of horror, pondering how the Ottomans could have allowed such a lawless state to develop. In fact, that state of affairs seems to have been exactly the outcome Abülhamid intended when he set out on his patronage project. Ibrahim Pasha ran his domains like Abdülhamid in microcosm; his realm was run with a system of personal loyalties sworn to Ibrahim as well as to the professional bureaucracy. When the imperatives of the European

[114] BOA. DH-TMIK-M 160 25 (11 January 1904), 2.1.
[115] The phrase, meaning "an empire within an empire," is borrowed from the British consul's description of affairs. PRO. FO 195/2095 No 6 May 13, 1901.
[116] The British consular reports complaining about Ibrahim Pasha are numerous. In July of 1905, he complained about the difficulty of trade between Aleppo and Baghdad, as the Hamidiye and Shammar Arabs began controlling the routes. According to him, the countryside was "practically in a state of anarchy." That condition, however, seems to have been what Abülhamid intended. PRO. FO 195/2187 No 29 July 1, 1905.

consuls or the Ottoman bureaucracy ran against those of Ibrahim's complicated network of clients and confederates, Ibrahim Pasha's will prevailed. The dual political system reached its apogee in 1905, when the military and civilian officials of Aleppo, Urfa, and Diyarbakır sent a commission to Ibrahim Pasha's domains to investigate various charges against him. The commission recommended a military response to bring Ibrahim Pasha into the regular authority of the local administration.[117] The recommendation was ignored. Ibrahim Pasha himself was directly sworn to Abdülhamid, and Abdülhamid's approval was what mattered.[118] This meant that an entire region of the empire that was difficult to govern by traditional means was both beholden to Abdülhamid while developing a sense of "Ottomanness," or imperial patriotism.

The European consuls in Aleppo or Mosul were not the only ones aghast at the system. Ottoman bureaucrats had long since developed a sense of Ottoman patriotism on their own. Instead of fervent loyalty to Abdülhamid, their loyalty was to the state itself and its domains, which was a feeling inculcated in the imperial education system and at the local level. The high-level administrators in office in 1908 were mostly those who had met and fraternized in Istanbul at the Ottoman Civil Service School, the *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* or the Ottoman Military Academy, the *Mekteb-i Harbiye*. The two competing visions for the Ottoman Empire, the Hamidian and the bureaucratic, were apparent when Ibrahim Pasha and a group of his cavalrymen arrived at Damascus in the summer of 1908.[119] The population of the town, as well as the European consuls and Ottoman bureaucrats, were very much at unease with the Hamidiye encamped outside of town. They were further worried when the Ottoman army was ordered to distribute the cutting-edge Mauser rifles that the Hamidiye recently adopted. Abdülhamid, however, viewed this as the

[117] PRO. FO 195/ 2187 No 44 October 6, 1905.
[118] This does not mean that Ibrahim went totally unpunished. In 1906, Abdülhamid did not send his customary gift of cash, horses, and clarified butter to Ibrahim. PRO. FO 195/2213 No 25 December 31, 1906.
[119] PRO. FO 195/2277 No. 36 August 25, 1908. Ibrahim had arrived in Damascus five weeks prior to the writing of this consular report.

successful culmination of his Hamidiye project. When he found out Ibrahim wanted to perform the *Hajj*, Abdülhamid reasoned that he could kill two birds with one stone. He could reward his loyal client for his years of service and deploy what he viewed as his successful tribal cavalry system to bring order to an area that he still viewed as disorderly, the Hejaz. The exact moment when both men reached the height of the project, however, was the moment that the bureaucratic branch of the Ottoman Empire reasserted itself, with the Young Turk Revolution in July of 1908.

It was in this context that the Chechens supported Ibrahim Pasha against the Ottoman administrators in the area. The Chechens, as clients of Ibrahim, had put themselves to work securing arms and ammunition to maintain his fiefdom. While they were doing it with the blessing of Ibrahim, the Ottoman army and bureaucrats were working to shut them down. The Ottomans gathered information and intelligence on the smuggling network and prepared a sting. By February 13, 1908, the Ottoman authorities had determined the outlines of the Rakka racket.[120] Five Chechens from Resülayn travelled to Zahle in the Tripoli district of Lebanon.[121] There, they illegally purchased between fifty and a hundred rifles, and they planned to travel back through the desert to Rakka through Salamiyah, northeast of Homs. In Rakka they would get in a boat and sail downriver, likely to the juncture of the Euphrates and the Khabur south of Deir ez-Zor on their way back to Resülayn and the heartland of the Millî domains.[122] The authorities note that their strategy was to use their knowledge of the deserts along the way to evade capture. The research paid off. They interdicted the boatload of smuggled guns near Rakka

[120] BOA. DH-ŞFR 393 45 (13 February 1908).
[121] Zahle, Lebanon is still a notorious center for the purchase and sale of illicit weapons.
[122] Fifty to one hundred rifles may not seem like a lot, but by comparison the entire population of Jabal Druze had stockpiled 3,000 Martini rifles by 1890 (see PRO. FO 195/1687 (Damascus) No 19 June 2 1890 and chapter above.) One hundred rifles in one shipment represents 3% of that amount. The records indicate this was a continuing operation, and smuggling rifles at this rate would have led to quite a large collection, quickly.

on February 20.[123] The success was immediately communicated to the prime minister's office in Istanbul, where the efforts of the officials in Syria were catalogued in a series of notes.[124] The Chechens scattered into the desert. At first two were captured, then eventually mule-mounted Ottoman soldiers tracked down the others along with all of the contraband goods.[125] The Chechen gun-running ring was the apogee of their illicit activities across the deserts of Syria and Iraq. Over the course of several decades, they had gone from an isolated and precarious settlement to one of the more influential groups in the Syrian desert and upper Mesopotamia. They had reached their greatest influence by allying with Ibrahim Pasha, and their high-water mark of influence across the desert came at the same time as their patron's.

The deposition of Abdülhamid a few months after the Ottomans blocked the Chechens' smuggling ring changed the entire politics of the region. As soon as news of the revolution reached Damascus, Ibrahim fled with his men. Of all the places in the region to which he could have fled for his final stand, Ibrahim went to Resülayn. He had good reason to expect support there. The Chechens had become important in his regime and had been smuggling weapons for him up to the very end of his reign. Likely remembering the violent struggle that had led to their subjugation, they ran him off.[126] Ibrahim met an ignominious death in the desert, of dysentery, a few days later. The Chechens, free of Ibrahim's shadow for the first time in decades, began to run their corner of the Ottoman Empire autonomously. The settlement project that began in the 1860s had not led to the flourishing and prosperous agricultural district that Ottoman officials had envisioned, but it had created a tenacious settlement on the edge of the desert that reshaped the history of the entire northern part of the Syrian desert

[123] BOA. DH-ŞFR 393 80 (21 February 1908).
[124] BOA. BEO 3249 243635 1326 M 11 (14 February 1908), BEO 3251 243767 1326 M 14 (17 February 1908), and BEO 3253 243946 1326 M 17 (20 February 1908).
[125] BOA. DH-ŞFR 394 4 1323 Su 19 (3 March 1908).
[126] Von Oppenheim, *Tel Halaf*, 12.

Chapter 7: Epilogue and Conclusion

The Circassians of Quneitra and Chechens of Resülayn at the End of Empire

In 1918 the forces of the Great Arab Revolt occupied Damascus along with the British. Faisal, the leader of the Great Arab Revolt, began trying to establish an independent Arab state in Syria. In April of 1920, however, the conference convened to determine the fate of occupied Ottoman territory awarded France the League of Nations mandate for Syria. The French landed an army on the Levantine coast and demanded the surrender of Faisal's independent Arab government in Damascus on July 14. The Minister of War for the Arab Kingdom of Syria, Yusuf al-Azma, desperately tried to assemble a force to oppose the French army. Azma, the scion of a notable Damascene family who had gone to the Ottoman Imperial Military Academy in Istanbul and risen to the highest ranks of the Ottoman army before World War I sent out telegraphs to the far corners of Syria looking for recruits.[1] On July 17 he sent one to Mirza Wasfi, who had been a young officer during the suppression of the Druze in 1894-1895 and had since risen to a position of prominence in the Caucasian community in southern Syria. Azma, addressing Mirza Wasfi in Ottoman Turkish, wrote "the homeland (*vatan*) calls upon us to defend ourselves. A group of armed protectors has formed. Proceed as quickly as possible to Quneitra. – Azma."[2] The implication is clear. Azma needed as many trained military men as possible. While Mirza resided near Amman at that point, Azma hoped by calling him to Quneitra would cause Mirza to rally to the support of his fellow Circassians and Syria as a whole. Mirza declined. Azma took what men he could and faced the French army at Maysalun on July 24, 1920. He died along with one

[1] Philip S Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 98.
[2] Mirza Wasfi Papers, 3/17. Telegraph dated 7 July, 1920. Azma to Mirza Wasfi.

hundred and fifty men in a crushing defeat. The next day the French occupied Damascus, setting in motion the history of the modern Syrian state.

The Caucasian communities in Quneitra and Resülayn had to make difficult decisions in the period following World War I. The decisions of Caucasian settlers in Syria have generally been presented as a result of an essential quality of loyalty to the state, fostered in the Ottoman era.[3] The above chapters argued that this is an oversimplification, as the Ottoman state was extremely limited in the assistance it could grant to far-flung Caucasian settlements and frequently neglected them or actively provided support to their rivals. The decisions made by the Caucasians that ended up within the borders of League of Nations mandates after World War I are more complicated and rooted in their experiences in the early 1900s and, more importantly, during World War I itself. The experiences of the Circassians of Quneitra and the Chechens of Resülayn in the early 1900s also influenced their decisions following the Great War.

The Circassian community in Quneitra from 1900 to the Post-War Period

The Circassian community in Quneitra prospered after they aligned with the Ottoman government against the Druze. The reports and notes about the Circassians of Quneitra in the early twentieth century indicate prosperity and energy instead of tense standoffs and violence. That is not to say that tensions with the Druze of Mejdel Shams were completely resolved; in 1907 the Fadil tribe and Circassians of Quneitra plotted against their neighbors.[4] The spat was resolved when the Vali invited the quarrelling parties to Damascus.[5] Mohammad Efendi, the Circassian tax administrator of Quneitra, continued to accumulate Ottoman medals for his

[3] Walter Richmond, *The Circassian Genocide* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 119 and David C. Cuthell, "The Muhacirin Komisyonu: An Agent in the Transformation of Ottoman Anatolia, 1860-1866" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2005), 254.
[4] PRO. FO 195/2245 No. 1, 2 January 1907.
[5] PRO. FO 195/2245 No. 4, 7 February 1907.

services.[6] In the Ottoman records, the Circassians are mentioned less and less by name, and Quneitra is treated more and more just like any district with a settled Muslim population that needed administrators and schools teachers regularly appointed. The general increase in prosperity is mentioned by the British Consul in Damascus in 1907, who wrote to mention

> …[T]he serious advantages to this country derived from immigration and settlement of Circassians, especially in the southern part of this Vilayet; they began to arrive only some 20 years ago and at first were found useful in checking Bedouin raids and insubordination, as well as in forwarding the agricultural interest of the region… their settlement has improved the country through their higher standard of energy and civilisation [sic]: while bringing many thousands of acres under cultivation.[7]

This description is not much different from the 1887 report in the Ottoman almanac for Damascus province, which described the district of Quneitra as "[a place which would not have] any importance or signs of care and industry were it not for the Circassians who were settled there and have contributed to its agriculture and flourishing condition" every year into the early 1900s.[8] Quneitra was increasingly drawn into the orbit of Damascus; in 1909 it was detached from Hawran Sanjak and incorporated into Damascus Sanjak itself.[9] Quneitra, which had been so isolated as to be considered a frontier in the 1870s, had become important enough that it was appended to the central Sanjak of Ottoman Syria after only three decades.

The success of the settlement scheme was not lost on the Ottoman government, which expanded Caucasian settlements in Syria in the early 1900s. The renewed focus on setting up settler colonies on the interior frontier corresponds with the slow rise to prominence of the generation of Ottoman administrators and military officers who would revolt against

[6] BOA. DH-MKT 750 28 (10 September 1903).
[7] PRO. FO 195/2277 No. 2, 16 January 1908.
[8] *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye* 1887, 247 is the first reference. The same passage was reprinted every year through the early 1900s.
[9] PRO. FO 195/ 2311 Volume I, no. 16, 18 March 1909.

Abdülhamid in 1908. New groups of Circassians and Chechens came to settle in southern Syria starting in 1901.[10] The families almost always went to Quneitra before being routed to new frontiers farther south, to Amman and beyond.[11] In 1902 more came, and the Ottoman administration in Damascus sent them to Ayn Zarqa to work on the Hejaz railroad, which was then being built between Deraa and Amman.[12] The coming of the railroad was a major event in southern Syria, as the station in Deraa opened the agricultural economy of Quneitra to the outside world. While Quneitra itself did not get a station, the nearby woods became a major source for charcoal to power locomotives, which only further increased economic activity in the district.[13] The final years of the Ottoman Empire were good for the Circassian and Chechen settlers in southern Syria; Quneitra moved from a peripheral area to one at the center of the vilayet, settlements boomed, and the economy expanded.

When World War I started, Mirza Wasfi gathered a group of former soldiers and gendarmes to establish the Volunteer Circassian Regiment (*Gönüllü Çerkes Alayı*).[14] Their actions during the war and in its immediate aftermath demonstrate the success of many of the Ottoman goals in placing settler colonies in the Syrian interior, as well as many of the complexities facing the population of Syria in the turbulent period following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Ultimately, the actions of the Circassians in this period show their agency in shaping the future of the entire region. The first action the Volunteer Circassians saw was in the

[10] These were the first Chechens to be sent to southern Syria. There is a bit of confusion in the sources; the British consul refers to them as "Circassians," although we know from other sources that many were Chechens who emigrated from Russia because they did not want to be conscripted into the Czar's army.
[11] PRO. FO 195/2097 No. 19, 8 March 1901 and FO 195/2097 No. 26, 6 April 1901.
[12] PRO. FO 195/2122 No. 9, 28 January 1902.
[13] PRO. FO 195/ 2091 No. 60, 3 October 1901.
[14] Mirza Wasfi was the leading commander, although the records in his papers indicate Circassians from Quneitra as well as other settlements enlisted as well. Mirza Wasfi Papers, 87/4

failed Ottoman campaign against the Suez Canal. Afterwards, they were assigned to the Ottoman army in Syria under the Jamal Pasha, the wartime military governor of the province.

In June 1916, the Great Arab Revolt began. The British had enticed the Sharif of Mecca to rise in revolt against the Ottoman Empire. His sons Ali, Abdullah, and Faisal led a campaign launching guerilla attacks on the Ottoman forces in Arabia before assisting the British army in Palestine and Syria in 1917. The revolt has since become central to the narratives and myths formed in the wake of World War I.[15] In 1917 and 1918, the Sharifian forces joined up with the main British army in Palestine and began to harass the Hejaz railroad. The Circassian Volunteers were assigned to protect the railroad and water infrastructure from the rebels.[16] They defended the railroad between Amman and Deraa, which is the section that runs parallel to the stretch of Caucasian settlements in southern Syria.[17] Despite their resistance, however, the British army overwhelmed the Ottoman and German defense in southern Syria. The line for the final defense of Damascus was set at Quneitra. On the September 28, 1918, a unit of Australian cavalry occupied Quneitra without a fight.[18]

After the British occupation of Syria, the Circassian community found itself in a difficult position. They had provided large numbers of volunteers to the Ottoman Army. In another circumstance, this would have been interpreted as service with distinction. Mirza Wasfi even

[15] Although the claims of the Sharifian forces to represent all Arabs are extremely dubious, the British betrayal of their cause after the war in favor of the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement with France has been at the center of Arab nationalisms since then. The Revolt figures prominently in post-war Turkish nationalism as well, were it developed into a "stab in the back" myth that justified Turkish nationalists that wanted to dissolve the Ottoman Empire. Finally, it has had a huge impact on Western understandings of the Great War in the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire and Arabs generally, as it was partly led and written about extensively by T.E. Lawrence, usually known as Lawrence of Arabia. The sons of Sharif Hussein also ruled Syria, Jordan, and Iraq at various points after the war, although the dynasty survives only in Jordan today.
[16] Mirza Wasfi Papers, 6/6, 23 May 1918.
[17] Mirza Wasfi Papers 13/4
[18] John D. Grainger, *The Battle for Syria, 1918*-1920 (Rochester, New York: The Boydell Press, 2013), 170.

received a letter of commendation from the Ottoman commander in Syria, Jamal Pasha.[19] The Ottomans lost, however, and the Circassians had fought against the victors, the British and the forces of the Great Arab Revolt. At first, Mirza Wasfi tried to keep the Circassian settlements from Quneitra to Amman unified. In 1919, he wrote to the British High Commissioner in Istanbul asking for the British government to protect the "Circassians of Syria."[20] That failed, and Mirza turned to his old connections, which highlight the complications following World War I.

While various post-war nationalisms have found it useful to minimize the connections of the political actors of the era, they had all been operating in an imperial Ottoman context before and during the war. In the early 1900s, before he had retired from the military and gendarme, Mirza had spent three years in the gendarmerie in the Hejaz. He worked directly under Sharif Ali, Hussein's father.[21] Faisal's government in Damascus tried to take advantage of this connection by appealing to Mirza to come and help defend the Circassians of Quneitra as well as the Arab government in Damascus. Instead of taking part in a quixotic fight to protect Faisal's government in Damascus, Mirza began to negotiate with Faisal's brother, Abdullah. Abdullah had decided to cooperate with the British instead of fighting for Faisal, and in the fall of 1920 he and Mirza corresponded. Initially addressed as Mirza Bey, "chief of the Circassian tribe," (*reis 'ashair al-jerkesa*) in September, by December of that year Abdullah was addressing him as Mirza Pasha and offering him the command of his cavalry forces.[22] With the leader of the

[19] Mirza Wasfi Papers 14/7, 22
[20] Mirza Wasfi Papers, 16/4. 22 January, 1919.
[21] Mirza Wasfi Papers, 7/7
[22] Mirza Wasfi Papers, 4/2. There are several letters, one from Faisal, and the rest from Abdullah. It seems Mirza Wasfi received the title of pasha following World War I. He had the title of "bey" until sometime in the fall of 1920, when he was upgraded to "pasha." These were honorifics granted by the Ottoman Empire, and he seems to have assumed the title after the empire granting it had lost all power.

Circassian community of southern Syria negotiating with the British-backed leader in Jordan, the Circassians of Quneitra became isolated in the new French Mandate of Syria.

The Circassians of Quneitra evaluated their options and chose to ally with the French occupation in Syria. Along with Armenian refugees, the Circassians joined the French army, and the two groups made up the majority of locally recruited troops.[23] In 1925, when the Great Syrian Revolt broke out, the Circassians of the Syrian mandate donned French uniforms and ferociously attacked villages aligned with the revolt.[24] The French assumed the military background of the Circassians in the Ottoman era would make them loyal soldiers; modern scholarship has echoed these assumptions.[25] The Revolt of 1925, however, began in Jabal Druze and spread between Druze villages, including to Druze communities on the slopes of Mount Hermon. The Ottomans had settled the Circassians in Quneitra in part to block the settlement of Druze between Jabal Druze and Mount Hermon. The two communities had been rivals for resources and land ever since. In the 1890s, the Circassians had learned how to use connections with the Ottoman administration to tilt the balance in their favor. They had done this when their community was at its most vulnerable. The fact that they joined with the French after World War I fits the pattern. Their most important leader, Mirza Wasfi, had opted to cooperate with the British instead of pressing to keep the Circassian settlements in southern Syria united under the same government. Faced with a new order and new government, cut off from their old allies, it made all too much sense to cooperate with the administration in Damascus against their old rivals. Local conditions and relations determined Circassian actions after World War I in southern Syria more than some essential quality of loyalty to the state. The same process is

[23] Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 88.
[24] Khoury 175, 181.
[25] Khoury 206. He cites a document from the French archives that states this is the French position.

further illustrated by the Chechens of Resülayn, who faced the same pressures at the end of empire and chose different options.

The Chechens of Resülayn from 1908 to the Post-War Period

The Chechens of Resülayn similarly enjoyed their period of greatest prosperity in the last decade before World War I. The German archaeologist Max von Oppenheim returned to the vicinity of Resülayn in 1911 to excavate a site at Tell Halaf and wrote a detailed account of the status of the region. He had visited in 1899, and when he returned he found only two hundred Chechen families left in the area.[26] While their numbers were small, the Chechens ruled their area like a small, semi-autonomous state with the backing of local Ottoman officials who used the isolation of the area to ally with the Chechens and receive a cut of the Chechens' profits. The community sustained itself by active raids on their neighbors along with controlling the wage laborers of the region, essentially extorting any enterprise that came near them. In the 1910s, this meant they provided laborers for the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad railroad at usurious rates. The cooperation of the Ottoman officials allowed the Chechens to operate with the imprimatur of the Ottoman state. Furthermore, the threat of Ottoman retaliation kept the Shammar tribe and a resurgent Millî tribe from responding to Chechen raids.[27] Ottoman protection, including gendarmes who were apparently on the payroll of the Chechens, also allowed the Chechens to force some of the weaker Arab tribes around them to become sharecroppers. Other smaller Arab tribes joined them on raids. Ottoman officials did not report problems to their superiors, as is evidenced by a distinct lack of sources in the Ottoman archive complaining about their impediment of the railroad's progress, or other issues generally.[28]

[26] Details for this and the following paragraph are drawn from Max von Oppenheim, *Tell Halaf: A New Culture in Oldest Mesopotamia*, trans. Gerald Wheeler (London: G.P. Putnam's sons, 1933), pages 12-18.
[27] Von Oppenheim recounts how the Millî tribe recovered from the Ottoman attacks on Ibrahim Pasha. His widow had successfully negotiated with the Young Turk government for peace, and her two sons made a great deal of effort to placate their Arab neighbors by becoming accustomed with Bedouin cultural norms. These efforts led to peaceful relations between the Millî and Arab tribes.
[28] The exception to this was a small conflict in 1914 when a group of Chechens attacked and killed a gendarme. The Chechens complained to Deir ez-Zor that the gendarme had been corrupt anyways, and the officials in Deir ez-Zor

Chechen control of the area was illustrated by von Oppenheim's experience in setting up an archaeological dig at Tell Halaf.[29] The Chechens and the kaymakam tried to force him to use their workers at exorbitant rates. Several Chechens also claimed ownership of the hill and demanded fees before the archaeologists could start digging. Von Oppenheim dispatched a message intended for Istanbul to the nearest telegraph station, two days away in Veranşehir. Orders soon arrived directly from Istanbul and convinced the kaymakam to relent. The Chechens, however, continued trying to intimidate von Oppenheim and his hired Bedouin workers, but he used his backing from the highest echelons of the Ottoman government to ban Chechens from his site. Once it was clear that the Ottoman government would back foreign workers over local interests, the engineers on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad were able to ignore the extortion of the Chechens. The result was an ironic situation where planners in Istanbul envisaged running the railroad through Resülayn because it was a prosperous settled area, while the population used predatory economic behavior to take advantage of the railroad's construction. Ottoman planners in the 1860s had settled Chechens in the area to civilize it. They wanted to create a prosperous, settled community that would help to end nomadic modes of life and would be modern subjects of the centralized Ottoman state. The Ottomans had achieved a version of that; the Chechens had subjugated local populations and forced some of them into agriculture. They also worked with the Ottoman administration, although more as partners in crime than in a regular administrative state.

When World War I broke out, Resülayn was the farthest railhead on the Berlin-Baghdad railroad. An association with the railroad would become an important indicator of prosperity in the post-Ottoman era; Ankara and Amman both became the capitals of nation-states largely

investigated. They concluded the Chechens were lying to get out of trouble. BOA. DH-EUM-EMN. 70 26 (30 April 1914) and DH-EUM-EMN. 74 11 (23 May 1914).

[29] Details for this paragraph come from von Oppenheim, *Tell Halaf*, 14-17.

because of their proximity to railroads. Resülayn was not so lucky. It must have been a bustling hub for soldiers coming from Anatolia and going to Iraq, evidenced by the fact that British prisoners were sent on foot from Mosul to Resülayn, where they could be loaded on trains for prisoner of war camps.[30] Other than that, there is scant evidence available about the status of the town during the war. Another aspect that must have affected the Chechens of Resülayn, however, was the response of the Kurdish and Arab tribes to the British invasion. The British allied with one Arab tribe, the Gazze, and moved through the desert towards Deir ez-Zor. The Shammar and Millî, along with several other tribes, moved to block this attack.[31]

The status of upper Mesopotamia after World War I was more confused than in most Ottoman territories.[32] The British occupied Mosul after they signed the Armistice of Mudros, and the status of Mosul Province became a point of controversy between the British Empire and the new Turkish government for years. The Turkish nationalist forces also contested the French occupation of Zor Province. France established a small garrison at Resülayn. The Chechens had to make a decision much like the Circassians of Quneitra and Amman. In the end, however, their decision was largely made for them. Lines were being drawn for new nation-states and the Turkish nationalist army was suspicious of the Millî tribe because they were Kurds. As a result, the Millî allied with the French occupation forces. The Chechens of Resülayn saw the writing on the wall, and when the Turkish nationalist army marched to remove the French garrison from Resülayn, the Chechens supported them and joined forces. When the French returned with a stronger force, the Chechens joined the Turkish army in a bloody defense of the area. They fortified von Oppenheim's dig house and built trenches in the excavations at Tell Halaf. The

[30] BOA. DH-EUM-5-Şb 81 25 (25 September 1916).
[31] BOA. DH-EUM-AYŞ 9 58 (28 November 1918). This was after the Armistice of Mudros, which was supposed to cease hostilities between the Ottoman and British Empires. The British, however, occupied Mosul province after the cease-fire.
[32] Details for this paragraph come from von Oppenheim, *Tell Halaf*, pages 26-27.

situation was uncertain until the Ankara Agreement set the borders between the French mandate of Syria and the "Turkish state" in 1921. The boundary left Resülayn in Syria, and all but a few Chechen families evacuated the area for the Turkish Republic. The Turks settled them in a village left vacant by the Armenian Genocide, Tell Ermin.[33] Ibrahim Pasha's second son settled in the recently-emptied Resülayn, and it developed as key market for the nomads left on the Syrian side of the border.

Conclusions

None of the Caucasian settlements discussed in this study exist today. The attempt to settle Caucasians in Libya was stopped before it even began. The Chechens of Resülayn evacuated the French Mandate of Syria with the Turkish nationalist army. The Circassian colony at Quneitra lasted until June of 1967, when Israel occupied the Golan Heights. The Circassians left their belongings, expecting to return. Instead, the Israelis demolished the town before returning it to Syria in 1974.[34] It is now part of the demilitarized zone between the two states.[35] Like many of the projects of Ottoman modernity, the Caucasian agricultural settlements at the edge of the desert frontier are mostly forgotten. If they are remembered, it is through the lens of the nation-states that were established on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. The fact that there are few remains of the settlements today, however, does not mean they were unimportant. The Ottomans settled tens of thousands of people to try and transform the desert and steppe at the edge of their empire and justified dispossessing the populations that were already present by couching it as the inevitable progress of modernity. Once settlers arrived in a region, limits to Ottoman material support led them to become masters of their own destiny. Caucasian settlers

[33] That village is now known as Kızıltepe.
[34] Walter Richmond, *The Circassian Genocide* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 122.
[35] In the Syrian Civil War, UN peacekeepers evacuated the town and it was occupied by rebels fighting Bashar al-Assad's army.

negotiated, contested, and manipulated the conditions of their settlements over decades, and had profound effects on the regions in which they were settled. People lived and died over generations, infrastructure was built and rebuilt over the decades, and the landscape of the semi-arid zone at the edge of the Syrian desert was permanently altered. The Ottomans had worked hard to expand settled agriculture at the expense of pastoralism. The frontier had come right up to Damascus in the 1840s but was as far out as Maan, in what is now Jordan, by the beginning of World War I.

The full breadth of the ambition of Ottoman imperial plans are apparent when case studies across the vast expanse of the Ottoman internal frontier along the desert are juxtaposed. The attempted settlement on Jabal al-Akhdar in Benghazi province provides the best example of this. Because Ottoman officials in Istanbul were unsure if North Africa was suitable for Caucasian settlers, they debated the settlement and created more elaborate feasibility reports than in the other studies. The economic potential for agricultural settlements to transform sparsely settled Benghazi province into a "second Egypt" dazzled some officials, while others hoped that settlers could compel nomadic populations to "enter the circle of civilization." In the end, environmental concerns and the 1890s shift towards trying to bring tribes into Ottoman modernity via personal relationships with Sultan Abdülhamid II caused the plans to be abandoned. This forgotten episode, however, demonstrates that far-flung geography was not a limit on Ottoman imperial projects or attitudes.

The Circassian settlement at Quneitra was one of the most important in southern Syria during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. It became a hub for Circassian activity, and new settlers were usually routed through Quneitra to locations farther south. The settlement anchored Ottoman plans to convert a vast swath of territory from pastureland controlled by semi-

autonomous nomadic *aşirets* into settled farms that were "prospering" and "flourishing" on terms that were favorable to the state. The Ottomans in Damascus also planned to assimilate the other large, semi-autonomous group at the edge of the Syrian desert: the Druze. While the Druze practiced settled agriculture, they did not submit to the Ottoman state and therefore the Ottomans began describing them in the same terms they usually reserved for nomads. The district of Quneitra had been part of the Ottoman Empire for centuries, but by 1870 the nomadic Fadl tribe controlled most of it. The Ottoman government viewed this as a waste of land and settled the Circassians on Fadl pasturage. Initially, the Ottomans left the Circassians to the mercy of the Fadl, who restricted the settlers to a tight perimeter around Quneitra town. After five years, the Ottomans chose Quneitra to be the major site of resettlement for Circassian refugees coming from the Balkans. The Circassians fought several bloody battles with the Fadl, eventually receiving Ottoman military support. Once the Circassians pushed the nomads out, the state began building infrastructure, including schools and roads. Even though the Circassians had bloodily dispossessed the tribe of their land, the Ottoman administration in Damascus viewed the development favorably and began to laud the prosperity the Circassians brought to the region in their annual almanac.

The foundation of the Circassian relationship with the Ottoman administration in Damascus was built on the Circassian association with the gendarmerie. The gendarmerie was an important part of the "colonization of the countryside" in the Ottoman era,[36] and the Circassians joining in such large numbers became an important part of their integration into the social and political networks of southern Syria. When several bouts of epidemic disease devastated the population of both the Circassians and their livestock between 1888 and 1891, they responded to

[36] Nadir Özbek, "Policing the Countryside: Gendarmes of the Late 19th-Century Ottoman Empire (1876-1908), *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2008), 49.

the insecurity of the situation by throwing their support completely behind the local Ottoman administration. The mutual support of the local Ottoman administration and the Circassians led to a small spat between two villages to spiral out of control, culminating in a violent struggle that ended with Circassian settlers in control of the Druze and Bedouin populations far to the south and east of Quneitra. In only twenty years, the Circassian settlement at Quneitra had exceeded the expectations the Ottomans had in the 1870s: to end the regimes of exception in the regions in which they settled and expand what the Ottomans considered modern, orderly governance at the expense of local populations and their autonomy.

When Ottoman officials in Diyarbakır planned to settle a community of Chechens at Resülayn in upper Mesopotamia, they could not have envisioned the paradoxical way the Chechens would fulfill the goals of model agricultural settlements. The Chechens persisted in the face of attacks by their neighbors and disease for the first twenty years but began to struggle when the benefits all Caucasian refugees received from the Ottoman government for a set time began to expire. Left with only minimal government support at the edge of the desert and on the annual migration paths of powerful Kurdish and Arab tribes, the Chechens of Resülayn did what it took to survive in such harsh conditions. They began to make their living by adapting the practice of nomadic tribes, raiding groups all along the edge of the Syrian desert. They covered incredible distances to do so, ranging between Urfa, Rakka, Deir ez-Zor, and Mosul. In addition to adapting raiding and plunder as a major source of income, they began to be important players in local politics. Situated between the powerful Shammar Arab tribe and Millî Kurdish tribe, they were at the center of negotiating tribal confederacies to check the strength of one or the other. Eventually, they attracted the ire of the chief of the Millî tribe, Ibrahim Pasha. He became the most powerful man in the region because of Abdülhamid's own civilizing project, which created

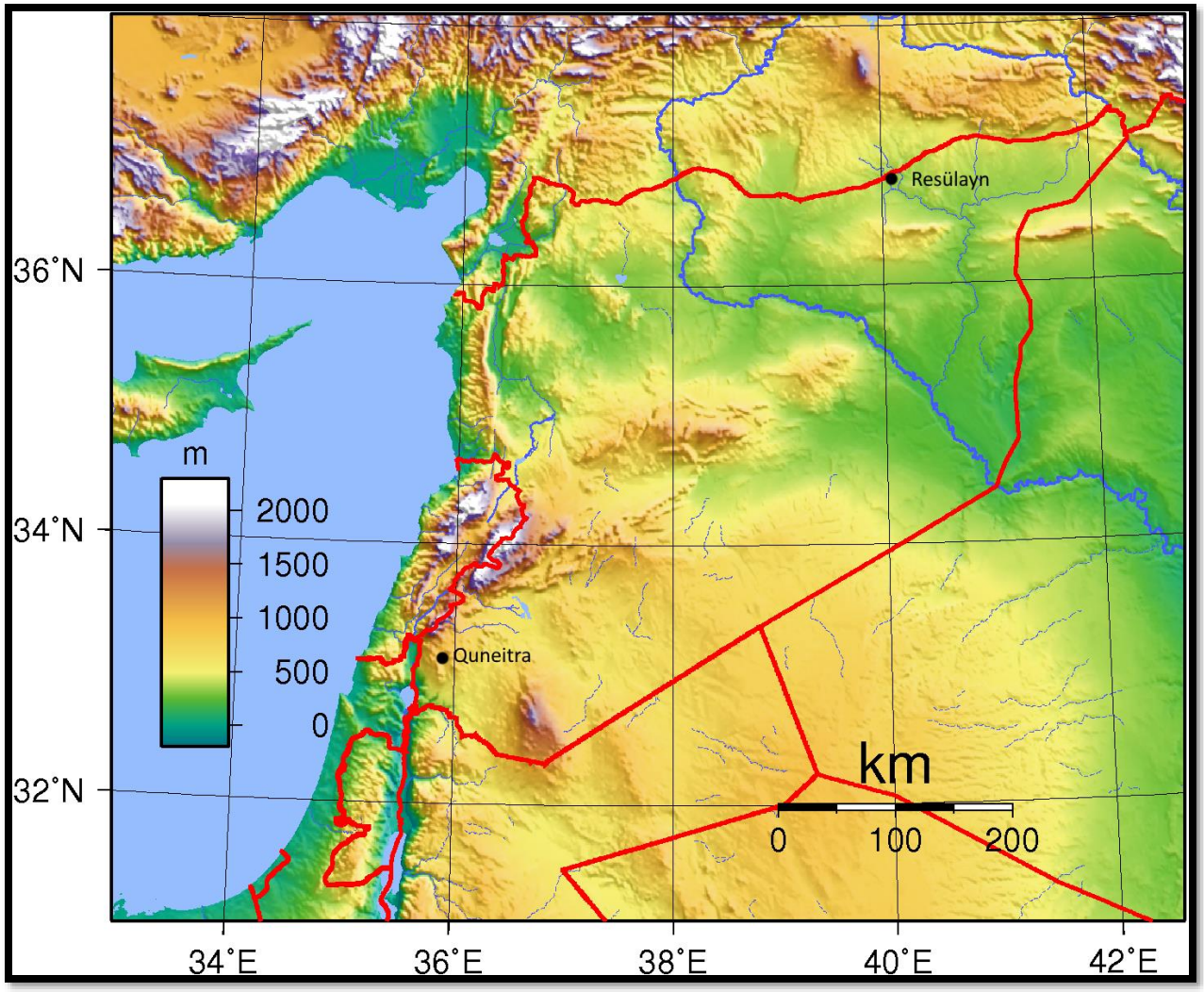
personal ties between the Sultan and tribal chiefs to encourage them to acculturate to Ottoman modernity. The Chechens tried to organize an alliance against Ibrahim. They failed, and Ibrahim forced them to become clients as a result. In the end, the Chechens of Resülayn fulfilled many of the goals of Ottoman settlement policy- they farmed, created an outpost for Ottoman administrators, and forced some nomads around them to settle. They did so, however, by using many of the methods and tactics that the Ottomans deemed "savage" or against public order- they plundered, smuggled and consistently enlisted the Ottoman officials assigned to Resülayn in their illicit activities. Instead of encouraging settlement, they became key players in nomadic politics themselves, with a lasting impact on the history of the region.

The Ottoman project of planting model settler communities at the edge of the desert was largely a success, although not in the terms that the Ottomans envisioned in the 1860s and 1870s. Nomadic populations were pushed back, settled farming expanded, and regimes of exception and politics of difference were slowly transformed into the normative administration that nineteenth and twentieth century states desire. The settlements, however, accomplished the goals of the Ottoman state in a circuitous way. The Caucasian refugees who made up the settler populations were humans with complex motivations and agency, as were the populations among whom they were settled. In Quneitra, the Circassian population moved ever closer to the state. The Chechens in Resülayn moved ever further from it, ultimately creating the sort of semi-autonomous political regime the Ottomans sought to eradicate. Of course, in their endlessly resourceful way, they did it in a way that disguised the reality on the ground from officials in nearby provincial capitals or in Istanbul. When the Ottoman Empire dissolved, the communities chose opposite sides in the struggle. While it was not an option for the Circassians of Quneitra to join the Turkish nationalist army, they could conceivably have evacuated to Jordan. Instead, they did what the Chechens in

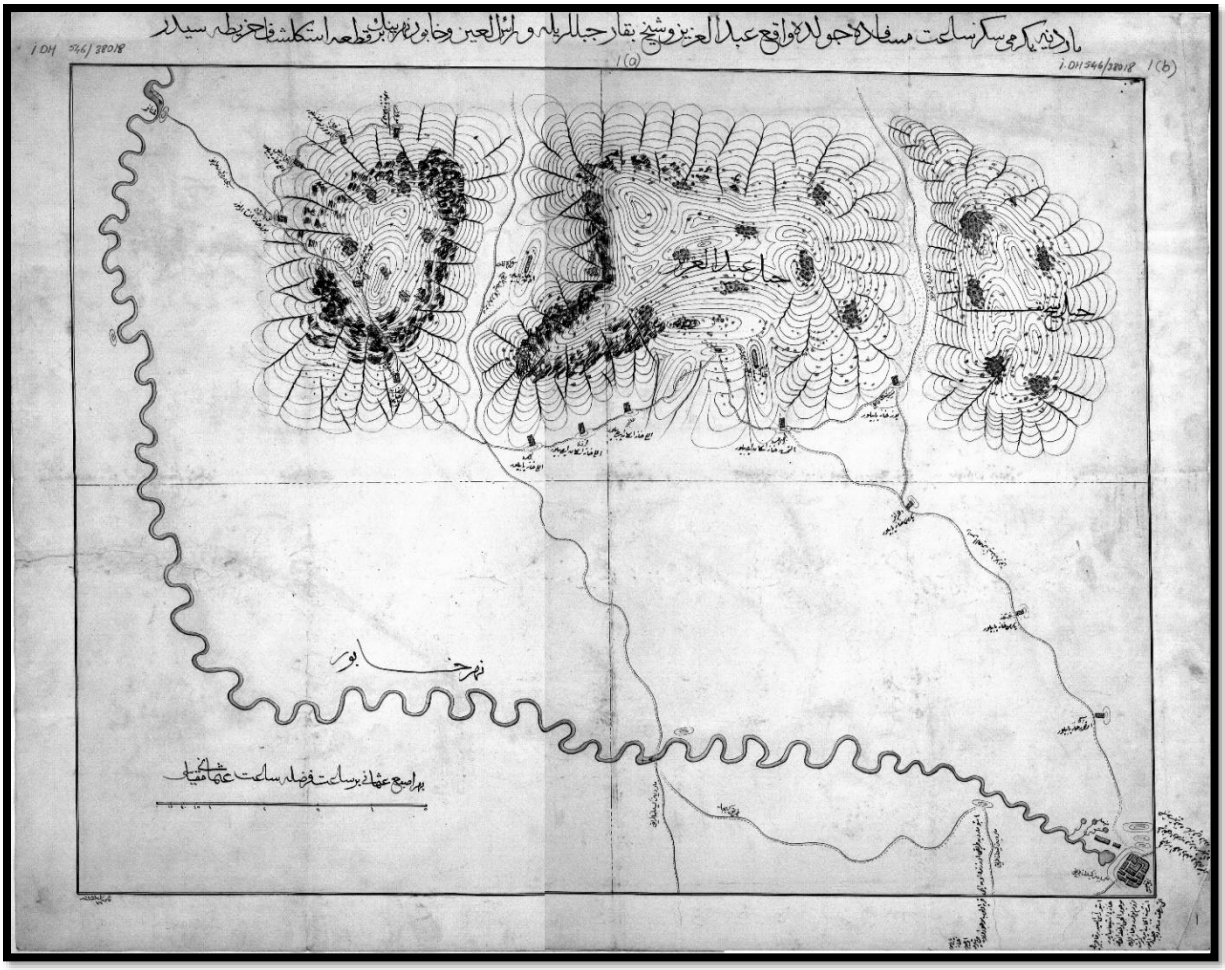
Resülayn did: they tried to stay in place and chose to oppose the rivals they had engendered in the decades since their settlement. Those choices had important impacts on how they are remembered (or not remembered) today. The two communities affected history in their regions in ways that still influence the nation-states built on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. But like the Ottoman Empire, both communities are long gone from the regions they helped build.

Appendix: Maps

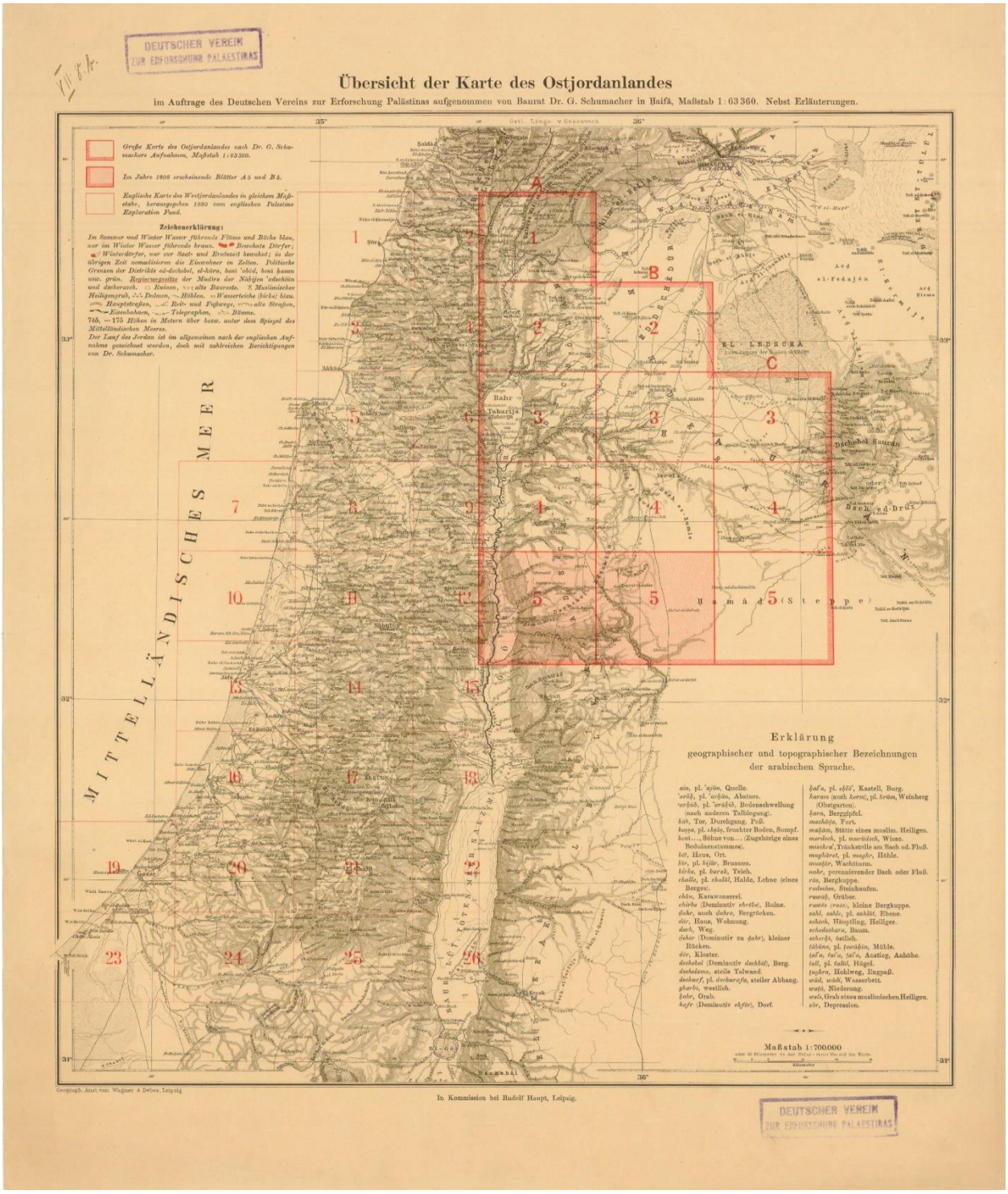
Map 1: Ayn-ı Şahhat, Quneitra and Resülayn's positions within the 1900 vilayet borders. Source: Underlying IK. *Ottoman Empire in 1900*. Wikimedia Commons. August 24, 2011. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ottoman_Empire_in_1900.png.



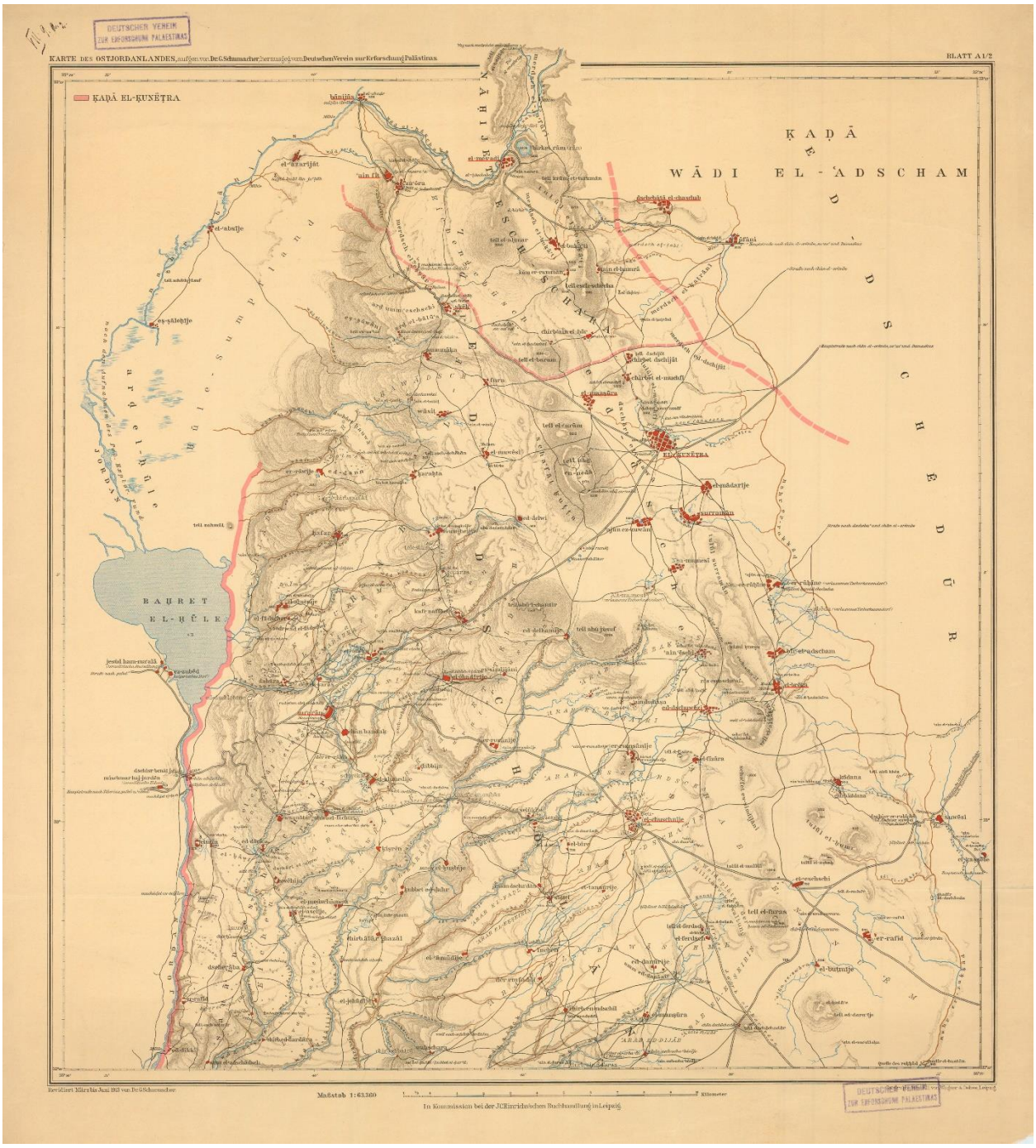
Map 2: Topographic map of Syria with modern borders and resevoirs. Resülayn's position at the foot of the Anatolian plateau on a wide, low plain can be easily seen in this map. The Khabur River, a major tributary of the Euphrates at whose headwaters Resülayn is located, is also easily visible. Quneitra's position relative to Damascus and Jabal Druze is also clear.
Source: Sadalmelik. *Syria Topography*. Wikimedia Commons. July 1, 2007. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Syria_Topography.png.



Map 3: Dated 16 December 1865, the map is oriented with south at the top and north at the center. The river is the Khabur. Resülayn is in the bottom right corner and Jabal Abdülaziz is top center. Locations for small villages as well as the number of households they could support are noted along the river and Jabal. The notes at the bottom right indicate where building materials could be found nearby. Source: BOA.İDH 546 38018.



Map 4: Schumacher's 1888 map of Palestine and southern Syria. The geography of Quneitra, Hawran plain, and Jabal Druze is visible in the top right. Courtesy of the German Society for the Exploration of Palestine



Map 5: Schumacher's 1888 map of Quneitra District. Courtesy of the German Society for the Exploration of Palestine

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Istanbul

Sadâret Mektubî Kalemi Mühimme Kalemi (A-MKT-MHM.)

Bâb-I Âlî Evrak Odası (BEO)

Meclis-i Vükelâ Mazbataları (MV)

Meclis-i Vâlâ Riyâseti Belgeleri (MVL)

Şûrâ-yı Devlet Evrakı (ŞD)

Dahiliye Nezâreti

Mektubî Kalemi (DH-MKT)

Şifre Kalemi (DH-ŞFR)

Tesrî-i Muamelât (DH-TMIK-M)

Hariciye Nezareti

Tercüme Odası Evrakı (HR-TO)

İrâde Tasnifi

Askerî (İ-AS)

Dahiliye (İ-DH)

Meclis-i Mahsus (İ-MMS)

Şûrâ-yı Devlet (İ-ŞD)

Taltifat (İ-TAL)

Yıldız Tasnifi

Sadâret Hususî Maruzât Evrakı (Y-A-HUS)

Sadâret Resmî Maruzât Evrakı (Y-A-RES)

Esas Evrakı (Y-EE)

Mütenevvî Maruzât Evrakı (Y-MTV)

Perakende Evrakı Başkitabet Dairesi Maruzatı (Y-PRK-BSK)

Public Record Office (PRO), London

FO 195: Correspondence between the British Embassy and the British Consulates in Turkey, 1860-1914

Center for Documents, Manuscripts and Bilad al-Sham Studies, Amman

Mirza Wasfi Collection

DISSERTATIONS

Cuthell, David C. "The Muhacirin Komisyonu: An Agent in the Transformation of Ottoman Anatolia, 1860-1866." PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2005.

Le Gall, Michel. "Pashas, Bedouin, and Notables: Ottoman Administration in Tripoli and Benghazi, 1881-1902." Phd Dissertation, Princeton University, 1986.

Pinson, Mark. "Demographic Warfare: an Aspect of Ottoman and Russian Policy, 1854-1866." PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1970.

PUBLISHED SOURCES

Ababsa, Myriam. "The End of A World: Drought and Agrarian Transformation in Northeast Syria (2007-2010)." In *Syria from Reform to Revolt, Volume 1: Political Economy and International Relations*, edited by Raymond Hinnebusch and Tina Zintl. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015.

Abujaber, Raouf Sa'd . *Pioneers over Jordan: the Frontier of Settlement in Transjordan, 1850-1914*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1989.

Abu-Husayn, Abdul-Rahim. *The View from Istanbul: Lebanon and the Druze Emirate in the Ottoman Chancery Documents, 1546-1711*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

Ahmida, Ali Abdullatif . *The Making of Modern Libya*: *State Formation, Colonization, and Resistance, 1830-1932*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

Anderson, Lisa. *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830-1980*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Ateş, Sabri. *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Avcı, Yasemin. "The Application of Tanzimat in the Desert: The Bedouins and the Creation of a New Town in Southern Palestine (1860-1914)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 6 (2009): 969-983.

Bamyeh, Mohammed. “The Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia.” In *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa Entering the 21st Century*, edited by Dawn Chatty. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Baum, Bruce. *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity*. New York: New York University Press, 2006.

Betts, A.V.G., and K.W. Russell, “Prehistoric and Historic Pastoral Strategies in the Syrian Steppe.” In *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, edited Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Betts, Robert Brenton. *The Druze*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

Blumi, Isa. *Ottoman Refugees, 1878-1939: Migration in a Post-Imperial World*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Blunt, Lady Anne. *A Pilgrimage to Nejd, the Cradle of the Arab Race, a Visit to the Court of the Arab Emir, and “our Persian Campaign” Volume I*. London: John Murray, 1881.

Bulmuş, Birsen. *Plague, Quarantine, and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

Burckhardt, John Lewis. *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land.* London: John Murray, 1822.

Burke, Edmond and Kenneth Pomerantz. *The Environment and World History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Cameron, Verney Lovett. *Our Future Highway to India Volume II*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1880.

Chatty, Dawn. *Displacement and Dispossession in the modern Middle East.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Chatty, Dawn. “Introduction: Nomads of the Middle East and North Africa Facing the 21st Century.” In *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa Entering the 21st Century*, edited by Dawn Chatty. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Chatty, Dawn. *Syria: The Making and Unmaking of a Refuge State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Chatty, Dawn. *From Camel to Truck: The Bedouin in the Modern World*. Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 2013.

Chochiev, Georgi and Bekir Koç, “Migrants from the North Caucasus in Eastern Anatolia: Some Notes on their Settlement and Adaptation (Second Half of the 19th Century- Beginning of the 20th Century), *Journal of Asian History* 40, no. 1 (2006): 80-103.

Çinar, Ali Osman. “Bingazi’de Tarımsal Kalkınma Amaçlı Göçmen İskânı (1851-1904),” *Yakın Dönem Türkiye Araştırmaları* 3, no. 6 (2004): 19-53.

Conklin, Alice L. *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

Cordell, Dennis D. "Eastern Libya, Wadai, and the Sanusis: A Tariqa and a Trade Route," *Journal of African History* 18, No. 1 (1977).

Daijjani, Ahmad Sidqi and Abd al-Salam Adham, eds. *Watha'iq Tarikh Libya al-hadith: al-watha'iq al-'uthmaniyya*. Benghazi, 1974.

Deringil, Selim. *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*. London: I.B. Taurus, 1999.

Deringil, Selim. "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery": The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45, no. 2 (2003): 311-342.

Douwes, Dick. *The Ottomans in Syria: A History of Justice and Oppression*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2000.

Emrence, Cem. *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy, and the Islamic State.* London: I.B. Taurus, 2012.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Fleischer, Cornell. "Dynastic Cyclism, and 'Ibn Khaldûnism' in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Letters," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 18, no. 3-4 (1983): 198-220.

Firro, Kais. *A History of the Druzes*. Leiden: Brill, 1992.

Fortna, Benjamin C. *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman* Empire. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Fortna, Benjamin C. *The Circassian: A Life of Eşref Bey, Late Ottoman Insurgent and Special Agent*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Gelvin, James L. *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire*. Berkely: University of California Press, 1998.

Gibson, Campbell J. and Emily Lennon. "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-born Population of the United States: 1850-1990," *Population Division Working Paper* No. 29 (1999).

Gingeras, Ryan. *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Grainger, John D. *The Battle for Syria, 1918*-1920. Rochester, New York: The Boydell Press, 2013.

Gratien, Chris. "The Ottoman Quagmire: Malaria, Swamps, and Settlement in the Late Ottoman Mediterranean," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 4 (2017): 583-604.

Hamed-Troyansk, Vladimir. “Circassian Refugees and the Making of Amman, 1878-1914,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 4 (2017): 605-623.

Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Hanssen, Jens, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber. *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2002.

Herzog, Cristoph, and Raoul Motika, “Orientalism ‘alla turca’: Late 19th/ early 20th century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim ‘Outback,” *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, 40, no. 2 (2000): 139-195.

Hourani, Albert. “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables,” in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East; the Nineteenth Century*, edited by William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Hütteroth, Wolf-Dieter and Kamal Abdulfattah. *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan, and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century*. Erlangen: Fränkischen Geographischen Gesellschaft, 1977.

İpek, Nedim. *Rumeli’den Anadolu’ya Türk Göçleri*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999.

Jongerden Joost. “Elite Encounters of a Violent Kind: Milli Ibrahim Paşa, Ziya Gökalp and Political Struggle in Diyarbekir at the Turn of the 20th Century.” In *Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870-1915*, edited by Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Karpat, Kemal with Robert W. Zens. *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities and Political Change*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Karpat, Kemal. *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Karpat, Kemal. *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Kasaba, Reşat. *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.

Kayali, Hasan. *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Kazemi, Farhad and John Waterbury. *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East.* Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991.

Khazeni, Arash. *Tribes and Empire on the Margins of Nineteenth-Century Iran*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.

Khoury, Philip S. *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Kipnis, Yigal. *The Golan Heights: Political History, Settlement, and Geography since 1949*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Klein, Janet. *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011.

Koloğlu, Orhan. "Libya, from the Ottoman Perspective," *Africa: Rivista Trimestrale di Studi e Documentazione dell'Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* 63. No. 2 (2008): 275-282.

Kuehn, Thomas. *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849-1919*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

"An Imperial Borderland as Colony: Knowledge Production and the Elaboration of Difference in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1918." *The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (2003): 5-17.

Lamar, H., and L. Thompson, "Comparative Frontier History," in *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared,* edited by H. Lamar and L. Thompson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

Lancaster, William and Fidelity. *People, Land, and Water in the Arab Middle East: Environments and Landscapes in the Bilâd ash-Shâm*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999.

Leder, Stefan and Bernhard Streck. *Shifts and Drifts in Nomad-Sedentary Relations*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2005.

Le Gall, Michel. "The Ottoman Government and the Sanusis: A Reappraisal," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21, No. 1 (1989): 91-106

Lewis, Norman. *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987.

Low, Michael Christopher. "Ottoman Infrastructures of the Saudi Hydro-State: The Technopolitics of Pilgrimage and Potable Water in the Hijaz." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57, no. 4 (2015): 942-974.

Makdisi, Ussama. "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review,* 107, no. 3 (2002): 768-796.

Makdisi, Ussama. *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Maoz, Moshe. *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861: the Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society*.Oxford: Clarendon Publishing, 1968.

Martin, B.G. "Ahmad Rasim Pasha and the Suppression of the Fazzan Slave Trade, 1881-1896," *Africa, Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Instituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* 38. No. 4: 1983

Marx, Emmanuel. "Nomads and Cities: The Development of a conception." In *Shifts and Drifts in Nomad-Sedentary Relations,* edited by Stefan Leder and Bernhard Streck. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2005.

McKeown, Adam. *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders*. New York: Columbia Press, 2008.

McNeill, J.R. "The Eccentricity of the Middle East and North Africa's Environmental History." In *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa,* edited by Alan Mikhail. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Midhat, Ali Haydar. *The Life of Midhat Pasha: a Record of his Services, Political Reforms, Banishment, and Judicial Murder.* London: John Murray, 1903.

Mikhail, Alan "Introduction- Middle East Environmental History: The Fallow between Two Fields." In *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa,* edited by Alan Mikhail. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Minawi, Mostafa. *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016.

Mundy, Martha and Basim Musallam. *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Mundy, Martha and Richard Saumarez Smith. *Governing Property, Making the Modern State: Law, Administration and Production in Ottoman Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007.

Normile, Dennis. *Science*, New Series, Vol. 330 No 6003 (22 October 2010).

Oliphant, Laurence. *The Land of Gilead with Excursions in the Levant*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1880.

Owen, Roger. *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Özbek, Nadir. "Policing the Countryside: Gendarmes of the Late 19th-Century Ottoman Empire (1876-1908), *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2008): 47-67.

Özoğlu, Hakan. *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.

Öztel, Muharrem. "Osmmanlı Devleti'nde Sosyoekonomik Yapısıyla Öne Çıkan Vilayet ve Sancakların Kamu Maliyesinde Yeri ve Önemi (1325-1327/ 1909-1912)," *Maliye Dergisi,* no. 160 (2011): 204-227.

Peacock, A.C.S. *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Provence, Michael. *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.

Quataert, Donald. "Part IV: The Age of Reforms, 1812-1914."In *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, edited by Donald Quataert and Halil Inalcık. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Redhouse, James W. *A Turkish and English Lexicon Shewing in English the Significations of the Turkish Terms*. Constantinople: A.H. Boyajian, 1890.

Refik Bey and Refik Bey. “La Peste Bovine en Turquie.” *Annales Institute Pasteur*. (1899):596-611.

Reynolds, Michael A. *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Richmond, Walter. *The Circassian Genocide*. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2013.

Rogan, Eugene. “Aşiret Mektubi: Abdülhamid II’s School for Tribes (1892-1907),” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28, No. 1 (1996): 83-107.

Rogan, Eugene. *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Saliba, Najib. “The Achievements of Midhat Pasha as Governor of the Province of Syria,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 9 (1978): 307-23.

Saydam, Abullah. *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri (1856-1876).* Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997.

Schaebler, Birgit. “Civilizing Others: Global Modernity and the Local Boundaries (French/German/Ottoman and Arab) of Savagery.” In *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion, and Modernity,* edited by Birgit Schaebler and Leif Stenberg. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004.

Schaebler, Birgit. *Rebels, Shaykhs, and State(s): The Integration of the Druzes and the Struggle for Social Control in Syria in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Beirut: Hassib Dergham & Sons, 1998.

Schilcher, L. Schatkowski. “The Hauran Conflicts of the 1860s: A Chapter in the Rural History of Modern Syria,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 2 (1981): 159-179.

Schlee, Günther. “Forms of Pastoralism.” In *Shifts and Drifts in Nomad-Sedentary Relations*, edited by Stefan Leder and Bernhard Streck. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2005.

Schumacher, Gottlieb. *The Jaulan: Surveyed for the German Society for the Exploration of the Holy Land*. London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1888.

Shami, Seteny. “Historical Processes of Identity Formation: Displacement, Settlement, and Self-Representations of the Circassians in Jordan,” *Iran and the Caucasus* 13, no. 1 (2009): 141-159.

Shaw, Stanford. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Shepard, Todd. *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006.

Shields, Sarah. *Mosul Before Iraq: Like Bees Making Five-Sided Cells*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

Schumacher, Gottlieb. *The Jaulan: Surveyed for the German Society for the Exploration of the Holy Land*. London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1888.

Spinage, C.A. *Cattle Plague: A History*. New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003.

Süreyya, Mehmed. *Sicill-i Osmani*. Translated by Nuri Akbayar. Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yurt Yayınları, 1996.

Sykes, Mark. "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 38 (1908): 451-486.

Tahsin Paşa. *Sultan Abdülhamid: Tahsin Paşa'nın Yıldız Hatıraları*. Istanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları A.Ş., 1990.

Tapper, Richard. *Frontier nomads of Iran: A political and social history of the Shahsevan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Toledano, Ehud. *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression 1840-1890.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Türesay, Özgür. "The Ottoman Empire Seen Through the Lens of Postcolonial Studies: A Recent Historiographical Turn" *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 60, no. 2. Translated by Cadenza Academic Translations (2013): 127-145.

Van Onselen, C. "Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa 1896-97," *The Journal of African History* 13, No.3 (1972): 473-488.

Velud, Christian. "French Mandate Policy in the Syrian Steppe." In *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, edited by Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Von Oppenheim, Max. *Tell Halaf: A New Culture in Oldest Mesopotamia,* translated by Gerald Wheeler. London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1933.

Von Oppenheim, Max. *Von Mittelmeer zum Persischen Golf durch den Hauran, die Syrische Wüste und Mesopotamien.* Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1900.

White, Benjamin Thomas. *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

White, Sam. "A Model Disaster: From the Great Ottoman Panzootic to the Cattle Plagues of Early Modern Europe." In *Plague and Contagion in the Islamic Mediterranean*, edited by Nükhet Varlık. Kalamazoo: Arc Humanities Press, 2017.