

# **Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890–1908**

**Gökhan Çetinsaya**

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SOAS/Routledge Studies on the Middle East



## **Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890–1908**

*Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890–1908* is the first political and administrative study of late nineteenth-century Iraq based on the central Ottoman Archives.

It is a unique and pioneering work in the literature on Modern Middle Eastern history. It represents a major contribution to our understanding of the last decades of Ottoman Iraq, by addressing not only political issues, but also critical social and cultural developments as well as regional issues, many of which projected themselves deeply into the twentieth century. It uses relatively neglected but enormously rich sources from the Ottoman Archives to introduce a fresh perspective on Iraq history which has so far been studied mainly through British and secondary sources. The account provides a rich historical background for understanding some of the issues and problems of modern Middle East history and discusses such subjects as:

- reform and development,
- local versus central administration,
- tribes and state,
- notables and state,
- British penetration and the Ottoman response in Iraq and the Gulf,
- growth of Shi'ism in Iraq and the Ottoman response, and
- Sultan Abdülhamid II, Jamaladdin al-Afghani, and Pan-Islamism.

This book examines several aspects of Ottoman administration and seeks to explore the problems and policies of its central government. It also provides material for the understanding of notable-government relations in the three provinces of the Empire, and emphasizes the importance of the “politics of notables” in the Ottoman administration of Iraq. *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890–1908* is essential reading for those with interests in the Middle Eastern studies and the history of Iraq and the Ottoman Empire.

**Gökhan Çetinsaya** is Professor of History in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Istanbul Technical University. He holds both MESA and BRISMES dissertation awards.

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**For my parents**

**Aliye and Mustafa Çetinsaya**

# Contents

*Acknowledgments* viii

*Note on transliteration* ix

*List of abbreviations* x

*Map* xi

## **Introduction**

### **1 The setting of an Ottoman province 4**

### **2 The issue of reform 24**

### **3 The Sultan's officials 49**

*The vilayet of Baghdad* 51

*The vilayet of Mosul* 63

*The vilayet of Basra* 66

### **4 Tribal problems 72**

*The vilayet of Mosul* 74

*The vilayet of Baghdad* 86

*The vilayet of Basra* 87

### **5 The Shi'i problem 99**

### **6 The British danger 127**

**Conclusion 147**

*Notes* 152

*Bibliography* 215

*Index* 237

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## **Note on transliteration**

Titles of Ottoman officials and institutions, and Ottoman Turkish names and terms, are rendered in their modern Turkish form. Transliteration of Arab and Persian names and terms is based upon that of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), without the use of diacritical marks. When a name or term is commonly known by a familiar English form, that form is used (e.g. ulama, madrasa).

## Abbreviations

A.MKT.MHM.	BEO Sadâret Mühimme Evrakı, BOA
A.MKT.UM.	BEO Sadâret Umum Vilâyât Evrakı, BOA
BD	<i>British Documents on the Origins of the War</i>
BEO	Babıâli Evrak Odası, BOA
BOA	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BTDD	<i>Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi</i>
CAB	Cabinet Office, PRO
DIA	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi</i>
DUIT	Dosya Usulü İradeler Tasnifi, BOA
EI(1)	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , first edition
EI(2)	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , second edition
EIr	<i>Encyclopedia Iranica</i>
FO	Foreign Office, PRO
IA	<i>İslam Ansiklopedisi</i>
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
İÜEF	İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi
MES	<i>Middle Eastern Studies</i>
PRO	Public Record Office, London
SO	Mehmed Süreyya, <i>Sicill-i Osmani</i>
TA	<i>Türk Ansiklopedisi</i>
TM	Gövsâ, <i>Türk Meşhurları Ansiklopedisi</i>
TTK	Türk Tarih Kurumu
WO	War Office, PRO
Y.A.Hus.	Yıldız Sadâret Hususi Maruzat Evrakı, BOA
Y.A.Res.	Yıldız Sadâret Resmi Maruzat Evrakı, BOA
YEE	Yıldız Esas Evrakı, BOA
Y.MTV.	Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzat Evrakı, BOA
Y.PRK.	Yıldız Perakende Maruzat Evrakı, BOA







Map of Iraq.

## Introduction

There is no need to explain the productive capacity of the land in the provinces of Syria and Iraq, and the capacity of the Asi and Euphrates [rivers] to irrigate the land and transport its produce. Further, as the plains of these regions are broad, and their mountainous areas are small, there is no question that roads, passages and land drainage will cost less than in the Balkan provinces. Yet the Ottoman state cannot draw any benefit from the few million Bedouins who wander about the extensive and fertile plains between the lands of Damascus and Aleppo and Iraq, and to the eastward towards Jabal Shammar and the Najd border; on the contrary, there is seen much harm from their attacks on settled areas. Why not draw benefit from them, and why suffer harm? Has this matter ever been put on the agenda and discussed with attention and care? In your humble servant's opinion, no idea has ever circulated in central government, other than the forcible repression and devastation of the Arabs. And they [the Arabs] have never been viewed as potential friends... The Arabs are not savage, but they fear and hate us.

(Abdüllatif Suphi Paşa to Sultan Abdülaziz, 1864).<sup>1</sup>

Local, Ottoman, and European sources are generally agreed in treating late nineteenth-century Iraq as a “sleepy backwater” of the Ottoman Empire. Whether this perception was justified or not, it arguably holds true for the state of the historiography of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Iraq, in comparison with other Arab regions of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup>

The previous three decades have seen a revival in studies on the Tanzimat (1839–76) and Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909) periods in general, and the Arab provinces in particular. These studies have focused on central government, foreign policy, Pan-Islamism, the Young Turks, education, social, economic and financial history, and several aspects of the history of the Arab provinces.<sup>3</sup> The studies of Arab provinces have mainly focused on Ottoman Syria and the Hijaz, and to some extent on Egypt and North Africa, relying, in their majority, on local archives, and, in a few cases, on the archives of the central Ottoman government.<sup>4</sup> No study to date has

examined the political and administrative history of Iraq in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though the field of political economy has produced three recent studies, by Fattah, Khoury, and Shields, which use Ottoman, British, and Arab sources.<sup>5</sup>

The political history of nineteenth-century Ottoman Iraq is generally based upon English sources, and to a lesser extent, upon local Arab sources. Stephen H. Longrigg's two books, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (1925) and *Iraq, 1900 to 1950* (1953), still remain the main sources for the period, together with Abbas al-Azzawi's *Tarikh al-Iraq Bayn Ihtilalayn* (1935–56). Longrigg relies heavily on unpublished and published British official sources, including J. G. Lorimer's monumental *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman, and Central Arabia* (1908–15). All subsequent studies, too, rely heavily on published and unpublished British sources, along with local Arab sources. The only exception is Albertine Jwaideh, who in the 1950s worked in the Ottoman archives, and some parts of whose results on land tenure were published in a series of articles.<sup>6</sup> Although Hanna Batatu's *Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'athists, and Free Officers* (1978) is a major achievement of historical synthesis, it again relies on British and Arab sources. Several other works touch on the themes of this study, or provide introductory overviews of the period.<sup>7</sup>

The present study does not attempt a comprehensive history of Iraq from 1890 to 1908, but rather examines several aspects of Ottoman administration in the three Iraqi provinces of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul, as a contribution to the general history of Abdülhamid II's regime (1878–1908). The study seeks to explore the problems and policies of the central government, as well as of its official representatives in the three provinces, by employing Ottoman and British archival material. It asks how the center saw the Iraqi provinces; what was its perception of the situation and problems of the provinces; what were its basic aims; what were its solutions; what were the problems it faced while trying to achieve these aims and implementing the solutions; what were its criteria and preferences in administering the Iraqi provinces? In addition, the present study hopes to shed some light on Abdülhamid's provincial and central policies in general: the relation between the Palace and the Porte in respect of decision-making;

the relation between civil, military, and financial officials and departments; and other aspects of Abdülhamid's regime. Last but not least, the study provides some material for the understanding of notable-government relations—a major topic in the field of modern Middle Eastern history—in the three Iraqi provinces of the Empire, and emphasizes the importance of the “politics of notables” in the Ottoman administration of Iraq.

The study covers the period between 1890 and 1908. The choice of 1890 as the opening date was dictated by the fact that the 1880s had seen the establishment and confirmation of most of the leading features of Abdülhamid's regime, which amounted, by 1890, to a “working system”; the study closes in the year 1908, in which Abdülhamid's effective rule came to an end with the Young Turk Revolution.

The study is based on a variety of sources, both published and unpublished, and primarily upon the surviving Ottoman state archives. It should be emphasized that these archives are not fully available to researchers as yet, and that considerable materials await classification and release.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, the quantities of material already released are so great as to render their full exploration impossible. To give one example, but 1 of the 6 sections of the *Yıldız* collection, the *Maruzat Defterleri* (the daily registers which summarize the incoming communication for the Sultan's information) is composed of about 15,000 registers. Inevitably, some selection has had to be made. It was decided to concentrate upon three classes of documents in the Ottoman archives: (1) the *Yıldız* collection, containing the records of Abdülhamid's palace, (2) the *Irade* collection, containing the records of the Sultan's instructions to ministers, and (3) the *Babîâli Evrak Odası* (BEO), containing the files of the Sublime Porte secretariat. (This huge collection has been selectively used.)<sup>9</sup>

No less valuable and, in some cases, complementary to the Ottoman archives have been British archival sources, in particular the consular reports from Baghdad and Basra. The present study mainly consulted FO 78 and FO 371, general correspondence collections, and FO 195, consular files, as well as the Confidential Prints. Finally, use has been made of a variety of secondary sources, including the memoirs and biographies of leading Ottoman statesmen and officials, as well as central and provincial

Official Yearbooks (*Salnâme*) . Among Arabic sources, use has been made of Azzawi's *Tarikh al-Iraq*, in which he cites *Zawra*, the official newspaper of the Baghdad *vilayet* .

The present study is divided into six chapters. [Chapter 1](#) provides a general background, drawing a picture of Ottoman Iraq in the period under study, from the structure of local government to the social and economic state of the region. It also contains brief historical surveys of the development of the Iraqi provinces from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, and from the 1830s to 1876, the year of Abdülhamid's accession. In [Chapter 2](#) , an attempt is made to analyze the Ottoman administration's views on the possibilities of reform in Iraq, the reform proposals and projects formulated by the Ottoman government, and the effectiveness of their implementation. The following chapters deal with the "problems" which prompted and impeded the implementation of these reform proposals. [Chapter 3](#) seeks to examine problems of local administration in the three Iraqi provinces, as well as government-notables relations. [Chapter 4](#) seeks to examine aspects of tribal problems in the three provinces, and the policies employed by the Ottoman government towards the tribes, as well as the relations between local Ottoman officials, tribal chiefs and religious notables. [Chapter 5](#) examines the problem posed by the substantial Shi'i population in the provinces of Baghdad and Basra, the perception of the problem on the part of Ottoman officials, and the measures adopted by the Ottoman government. [Chapter 6](#) examines the Ottoman perception of growing British influence in Iraq and the Persian Gulf, and the measures adopted in response by the Ottoman government.

# 1

## The setting of an Ottoman province

The “four centuries” of Ottoman rule in Iraq were shaped by several factors: geographic, social, political, and economic. These factors determined the “destiny” of Ottoman Iraq from the very beginning, and remained constant even during the period under study. Iraq was an outlying region; it had a large Shi’i population; as a frontier region, it was vulnerable to invasion; it remained a tribal and economically poor country.

Iraq was conquered in stages by the Ottomans in the first half of the sixteenth century: Mosul was taken in c. 1516–17, Baghdad in 1534, and Basra between 1538 and 1546.<sup>1</sup> Even before the Ottoman conquest, Iraq had lost its importance as a source of wealth, after the system of irrigation had been damaged during the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century; and a great part of the country had passed under the control of pastoral tribes and tribal confederations. From the start, Baghdad was placed under the direct control of Istanbul. It was regarded as a center for the defense of the frontier against Iran, and an important garrison was stationed there. Around Kirkuk (Şehrîzor) and Sulaymaniyah, to the north, Kurdish families were appointed as local governors or tax collectors, in return for protecting the Iranian frontier, under the supervision of an Ottoman governor-general (*Beylerbeyi*) at Mosul. In the south, Basra kept its importance as a naval base for a while, until the Portuguese and Dutch threats in the Gulf receded by the end of seventeenth century. Basra also gradually lost its importance as a center of trade and commerce, after the trade of the Indian Ocean moved from the Gulf to the Red Sea.<sup>2</sup>

Like other outlying provinces which joined the Empire late, such as Egypt and the Yemen, Iraq was never fully integrated into the Ottoman administrative system, and the Porte did not maintain an all-embracing political control there. Its control was further weakened by periodic wars with Iran, which did not end until the early nineteenth century, and also by periodic Iranian occupations.<sup>3</sup> Mosul alone was subjected to the *timar* system, in which cavalry officers were given the right to collect and keep

the tax on certain agricultural lands in return for military service in times of need; Baghdad and Basra were administrated as *salyane* provinces, in which the tax revenues were not distributed as *timars*, but farmed out to the provincial governors, who delivered fixed annual sums, known as *salyane*, to the central treasury.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding the absence of *timars*, the bulk of the land in Baghdad and Basra was regarded as *miri* (state land); nonetheless, the land regime was complicated by old Islamic customs, including the extensive use of *waqfs* (religious endowments), and also by the destabilizing influences of widespread tribalism and endless wars with Iran. The provincial division of the region varied. Iraq was originally divided into three provinces (*eyalet*): Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul; however, the province of Mosul at times lost territory to Diyarbakır and Şehrîzor, and a separate province, called the *eyalet* of Lahsa (al-Hasa), was formed in Najd in the second half of sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

In course of time, central authority grew weaker, a development which became apparent in the eighteenth century, especially in the Fertile Crescent. The vacuum of power was filled by local potentates, all owing allegiance to Istanbul: Georgian Mamluks in Baghdad, and the Jalilis, a local family, in Mosul. For about a century, from 1747 to 1831, Baghdad, with Basra, was ruled by successive Mamluk paşas. The Jalilis took control of Mosul from 1726 onwards, but power in Sulaymaniyah was in the hands of the Kurdish Baban family, while other Kurdish districts fell under the control of local emirs.<sup>6</sup>

Not until the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808–39) did central government set out to restore its authority over the provinces, and to produce a reformed and centralized system of provincial administration. The process was gradual. By 1820, the Porte had regained firm control over most of its Balkan and Anatolian provinces, and Baghdad's turn came in 1831, when, taking advantage of the military weakness of Davud Paşa, the Mamluk Vali of Baghdad (1817–31), Ali Rıza Paşa, the Vali of Aleppo, entered the city without much resistance.<sup>7</sup> In similar fashion, Mosul was restored to central authority in 1834. However, the subordination of the Kurdish Emirates



around Diyarbakır and Rawanduz took several years more, the Babans of Sulaymaniyah submitting as late as 1850.

## I

In the years immediately following the restoration of central authority at Baghdad, questions of security took precedence over reform. The authorities faced a number of local uprisings, and a standing threat from Muhammad Ali Paşa of Egypt, who had wrested control of Syria from the Sultan in 1831–3. Not until the restoration of direct Ottoman rule in Syria in 1839, coinciding with the proclamation of the Tanzimat reform program by the new Sultan Abdülmecid (1839–61), was the way opened to a serious attempt to introduce reforms into Iraq.<sup>8</sup> Even so, the new Tanzimat reforms could not be introduced everywhere at once, and Iraq, like many other provinces, had to wait its turn.<sup>9</sup>

As proclaimed in 1839, the Tanzimat reforms promised an overall reorganization in every institution of state and society, from more orderly tax collection to a fair and regular system of military conscription, and from reform in education to reform in the justice system. The proposed reforms were partially based upon European models, and initiated an unprecedented, if slow, process of institutional and cultural “westernization.” In another respect, too, they broke with Islamic and Ottoman tradition, by extending a promise of civil equality to the Empire’s non-Muslim subjects. In the provinces, the Tanzimat reforms envisaged a radical overhaul of provincial administration, and a considerable strengthening of central control. The assumption was that much of the misrule and inefficiency of provincial administration in the past had been due to the system that enabled most provincial officials to hold their positions autonomously, without real supervision or control by the central government, as long as they performed the services or paid the taxes required in return. Initially, therefore, the reforms set out to weaken the autonomy of the Valis (provincial governors-general), by giving many of their functions to other officials, appointed by and responsible to Istanbul. First, the financial independence of the Valis was limited, and the collection of taxes was given to civil tax collectors sent from Istanbul, and later to the military authorities. The second step was a reorganization of the administrative divisions in each province, using the



traditional term *sancak*, but redrawing the boundaries to establish equal units of comparable population and wealth. The third step in reducing the autonomous power of the governors-general was to provide them, as well as the sub-governors at *sancak* level, with advisory councils containing representatives of the local population, generally influential notables and heads of religious communities. The final step was the reorganization of the army. In 1841, the army was divided into provincial commands, each led by a Müşir (Field Marshal), appointed by and responsible to the *Serasker* (War Minister) in Istanbul. This ended the Valis' control of the military forces within their domains. In the same year, an Army of Arabia was established at Damascus, and put in charge of Syria, Cilicia, Iraq, and the Arabian peninsula. In 1848, a new army, called the Army of Iraq and the Hijaz, was created, with its headquarters at Baghdad. It was later renamed 6th Army.<sup>10</sup>

The Tanzimat reforms were initiated in Baghdad in 1844 under Necib Paşa, and in Mosul in 1848 under Vecihi Paşa.<sup>11</sup> In Baghdad, however, nothing much appears to have changed until 1849, when Necib Paşa was replaced by Abdülkerim Nadir Paşa, and Mehmed Namık Paşa assumed the command of the Army of Iraq and the Hijaz.<sup>12</sup> These two officials worked well together. A start was made upon the registration of the population, as an essential prelude to the imposition of military conscription. A *Defterdar* (provincial director of finances) was appointed to reform Baghdad's financial administration; at the same time, Namık Paşa proposed that province of Baghdad be exempted from the *aşar* tax (agricultural tithe) for a period of 3 to 5 years, in order to accomplish improvements. Proposals were also made for the establishment of a modern high school (*mekteb-i idadi*) at Baghdad, and a dam was constructed on the Euphrates at Hindiya, in order to prevent floods.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, the application of the Tanzimat reforms in Iraq was costly, and required large subventions from central government funds,<sup>14</sup> while local uprisings and the refusal of many of the tribes to pay taxes severely limited local revenues. There was chronic difficulty in paying the troops of the Iraqi garrisons.

By 1851, the central authorities had come to the conclusion that Iraq's problems would have been better dealt with under a single administration; Mosul was reduced to the status of a *sancak* of Baghdad, and its Vali, Vecihi Paşa, was transferred to Baghdad. The Porte asked Vecihi Paşa to

propose fresh reforms. In terms which would be echoed by generations of Ottoman officials sent to Iraq, Vecihi Paşa replied that the key to a solution of the administrative and financial problems of the region was the establishment of law and order, and of a measure of control over the tribes, who must be made to pay taxes.<sup>15</sup> The Porte's next move was to merge the governor-generalship of Iraq with the command of the local armed forces: Namık Paşa, the Müşir of Iraq and the Hijaz Army, acquired the additional duties of Vali of Baghdad in November 1851. Over the next nine months, Namık Paşa strove to overcome Baghdad's problems, pacifying the tribes, recommencing the registration of the population, seeking funds for the troops, and proposing improvements in irrigation and river navigation. In August 1852, he was recalled to Istanbul.<sup>16</sup>

The appointment of his successor as Vali and Müşir, "Gözlüklü" Mehmed Reşid Paşa,<sup>17</sup> coincided with a partial reversal of the Tanzimat policy of strict administrative centralization. In November 1852, every branch of provincial administration, including military and financial officials, and the provincial council, was placed under the Vali's immediate control. The trend toward decentralization of administrative authority was continued in 1858, when the central government gave the Valis further authority over provincial officials, and made them the local representatives of all offices of the central government.<sup>18</sup> Mehmed Reşid Paşa appears to have made good use of these powers. Under him, the projects started by Namık Paşa continued. He tried to suppress corruption, increased public revenues, increased exports by supplying the Hijaz with grain, and pressed for settlement of the tribes. Mehmed Reşid Paşa also cleared and opened a number of irrigation canals, and in 1855, he formed a steamship company, in which half the capital was paid by government, and half by local merchants. An order was placed at Antwerp for two steamers, for river navigation.<sup>19</sup>

Mehmed Reşid Paşa died in office in August/September 1857 (Muharrem 1274), and was succeeded by Ömer Lütfi Paşa, a converted Austrian Croat, who had crowned a distinguished career as army officer and provincial governor by serving as commander in chief of the Ottoman Army during the Crimean War.<sup>20</sup> Ömer Lütfi Paşa proved to be an energetic reformer, but his harsh methods toward the tribes proved his undoing, and in

September 1859, after an incident in which he hanged a number of Hamawand tribesmen at Mosul without trial, the Porte was forced to remove him.<sup>[21](#)</sup>

After the short and unsuccessful governor-generalships (and commanderships) of Mustafa Nuri Paşa (1859–60), who was dismissed because of corruption charges, and then Ahmed Tevfik Paşa (1860–1), the Porte appointed Mehmed Namık Paşa to Baghdad as Müşir and Vali, for the second time, in October 1861.<sup>[22](#)</sup> Namık Paşa's appointment coincided with signs that the Porte was beginning to pay more serious attention to the possibilities of developing its Syrian and Iraqi provinces,<sup>[23](#)</sup> and his five and a half years at Baghdad proved fruitful in innovations. Public works and administrative reforms aside, he was concerned to improve navigation on the Tigris, and to raise agricultural output, in the hope, which proved justified, that increasing trade and production would increase the provincial government's tax revenues.<sup>[24](#)</sup>

Mehmed Namık Paşa was recalled in early 1867;<sup>[25](#)</sup> thereafter the practice of appointing a single person as both Vali and Müşir was dropped. His immediate successor as Vali, Takiyuddin Paşa, lasted barely two years,<sup>[26](#)</sup> before he was replaced by Midhat Paşa, who had established a considerable reputation as a reforming administrator in the Danubian province.<sup>[27](#)</sup> Midhat Paşa's primary task was to implement in Iraq two important pieces of reform legislation: the Land Law of 1858 and the Vilayet Law of 1864.

The Land Law of 1858 had two main aims: to re-establish the state's legal right of ownership, and to provide each cultivator with a secure title to his fields, without which he would neither invest in improving production nor pay his taxes on a regular basis. The law defined the various categories of land: (1) private property (*mülk*), (2) state property (*miri*), (3) religious endowment lands (*waqf*), (4) communal or public land (*metruk*), and (5) idle or barren land (*mevât*). While, on the one hand, the usurpation of the state's rights was made more difficult in a number of ways, on the other, every piece of *miri* land was to be registered in the name of anyone who could prove that he had worked in it continuously for a number of years, and title deeds (*tapu*) acknowledging right of use were to be granted; communal ownership of such deeds was forbidden. In sum, the law aimed

to reassert state ownership over the imperial possessions, strengthen the position of the actual cultivators, and to encourage agricultural productivity and tax revenues. Nevertheless, the consequences of the Land Law should not be exaggerated, as the process of its implementation was slow, and often created the opposite effect.<sup>28</sup>

The Vilayet Law of 1864, in whose drafting Midhat Paşa had had a hand, envisaged a general reorganization of provincial government. The old *eyalets* were to be replaced by larger *vilayets* (provinces), each governed by a vali (governor-general) with extensive powers. The main idea was to give valis greatly extended discretion, obliging them to refer to the Porte only in the most important matters. Within the *vilayet* a chain of authority was laid down. The *vilayet* was divided into *sancaks*, the *sancak* into *kazas*, the *kaza* into *nahiyes* and villages. Under the authority of the vali, the *sancak* was administrated by a *mutasarrıf* who was appointed by the Sultan, the *kaza* by a *kaymakam* who was appointed by the Ministry of the Interior, the *nahiye* by a *müdür*, the village by an elected *muhtar*. At *vilayet*, *sancak*, and *kaza* levels, there were to be administrative councils, formed, in the case of *vilayet* councils, by the governor-general, the chief judge, the chief finance officer, and the chief secretary, together with four representatives of the population (two Muslim and two non-Muslim), and the religious heads of the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The council was to meet under the presidency of the Vali. The Vali's administration was divided between civil, financial, police, political, and legal affairs. For each of these he had subordinate officials placed under his orders, though the finance officer was still directly responsible to the Ministry of Finance. The Vali was also responsible for recruiting and appointing his staff.<sup>29</sup> After 1864, some revisions and amendments were made to the original law, first in some minor aspects in 1867, and later, in a more thorough revision by the Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*) in 1871. The main aspect of this last revision was to make more explicit the powers of various officials and councils. The governor-general was given more extensive powers over officials in the province and its subdivisions, as well as over troops stationed there. Though the double responsibility of various provincial officials to governor-general and to the Porte continued to some extent, the former's authority was increased. The 1871 revision also created a new division to the administrative hierarchy by redefining the *nahiye*, a collection of villages or

farms, as an intermediate step between the *kaza* and the village. It was administrated by a *müdür*, and had its own administrative council.<sup>[30](#)</sup>

The new provincial system was introduced on an experimental basis in the Danubian *vilayet* in 1864, and then gradually extended to other provinces.<sup>[31](#)</sup> Baghdad was formally brought within the new system in 1867, but full implementation of the Vilayet Law in Iraq came only with Midhat Paşa's appointment in early 1869. Midhat Paşa stayed in Baghdad for about three years (1869–72). His main achievements in Iraq may be examined under several headings: application of the Land Law, application of the Vilayet Law, military and educational reforms, and public works.<sup>[32](#)</sup>

After suppressing tribal outbreaks by force, Midhat Paşa set out to implement the Land Law of 1858. Midhat Paşa saw the land issue as the key to the “tribal problem” in Iraq, and made some radical changes in land tenure and taxation. He decided to hand over existing state (*miri*) lands to their occupiers with title deeds (*tapu*). He began by dividing the cultivated lands into three categories, and adjudicated to the people in different conditions: those watered by a river or a canal, those which had been left vacant for extended periods, thereby needing the reopening of canals and water ditches, and those watered by waterwheel or rainfall. The title deeds to lands in the first category, which were regarded as the most valuable *mukataas*, were sold to the population on special terms which included an enhanced tax liability. The title deeds to lands in the second category were sold by auction. The title deeds to lands in the third category, which were regarded as the least valuable, were given to those who had been cultivating them, without any charge. Each category of land paid a different rate of tax—the highest rate being paid by land in the first category, and the lowest by land in the third. Furthermore, Midhat saw the burden of taxation as one of the main causes of tribal disturbances, and decreased the tax rates on all categories. In some parts, some large *mukataas* were divided into plots, and distributed to the inhabitants in return for appropriate *tapu* fees. Though it is much argued whether the lands in question went to the peasants, or to the shaikhs and city merchants, it appears that the new system certainly helped to avoid tribal disturbances, especially in Baghdad province, where the system was effectively implemented.<sup>[33](#)</sup> Midhat also abolished some old taxes (such as *ihtisab resmi*) which had become harmful to the public



revenues, and instead introduced the *aşar* tax (tithe on agricultural products).

Second, Midhat fully introduced and established the *vilayet* system in Iraq, in accordance with the Vilayet Law of 1864. Third, he took up the problem of conscription for the army, and tried to re-introduce the *kur'a usulu* (selection for military service by ballot) throughout the province, though he faced great opposition from population. Fourth, he attempted to improve navigation and irrigation on the Tigris and the Euphrates. New vessels were bought; existing ones were repaired; a survey was undertaken northwards of the Tigris. At the same time, a steamer service began to operate between Basra and Istanbul, through the Suez Canal. Improvements were also made in Basra harbor. Fifth, Midhat also dealt with irrigation and drainage works in a large scale. Sixth, several public works were achieved: a printing press, an official newspaper (*Zawra*), an industrial school, a hospital, a horse-tramway to Kazimayn, and new factories.<sup>[34](#)</sup>

Midhat Paşa resigned in 1872, following the appointment of Mahmud Nedim Paşa, an old enemy, as Grand Vizier. There followed a reaction against the decentralizing aspects of the Vilayet Law, with opponents arguing that it set up “little absolute states” in which the governor-generals had the powers of proconsuls, or quasi-independent vassal princes.<sup>[35](#)</sup> The law was not repealed, but between 1872 and 1876, it was subjected to several revisions, amendments, and additions, designed to curb the independent powers of the Valis.<sup>[36](#)</sup>

Between Midhat Paşa's departure in 1872 and Abdülhamid II's accession in 1876, Iraq was governed by a succession of valis, none of whom stayed very long, or made much of an impression in the region.<sup>[37](#)</sup> The one major departure was the decision, in 1875, to establish Basra as a *vilayet* in its own right, independent of Baghdad.

## II

From 1875 onwards, the Tanzimat regime in the Ottoman Empire entered a period of profound crisis, marked by the bankruptcy of the state treasury, a series of Christian rebellions in the Balkan provinces, a constitutionalist

revolution, a major diplomatic confrontation with the European Great Powers, and a protracted and disastrous war with Russia which ended in 1878 with the Empire's territorial truncation by the treaties of San Stefano and Berlin.<sup>38</sup> In August 1876, in midst of this crisis, the throne passed to Sultan Abdülhamid II (1842–1918), and by 1878, when the period of crisis ended, the new Sultan was resolved that his government must chart a new course in domestic, as in foreign policy. It was not that Abdülhamid wished to reject the Tanzimat reforms, most of which he preserved, and some of which he developed further; but he was deeply critical of those aspects of his predecessors' policies which, he believed, had provoked the crisis of the mid-1870s: their financial recklessness, their tolerance of the spread of European influence within the Empire, their inability to restrain nationalist and separatist tendencies among their Christian subjects, and their failure to protect their Muslim subjects, upon whose solidarity and welfare, Abdülhamid believed, the Ottoman Empire's survival depended.

It is not proposed to enter here into a discussion of the complex controversies surrounding Abdülhamid's personality and his regime in general; these have been dealt with by other authors.<sup>39</sup> For present purposes, however, it is essential to examine those aspects of Abdülhamid's regime and style of government which affected the conduct of provincial administration, including the administration of his Iraqi provinces. In the first place, attention should be drawn to the Sultan's authoritarianism. Abdülhamid quickly rid himself of the parliament which had been foisted upon him by the constitutionalist movement in 1876. The Sultan also set out to establish his own absolute control over the executive organs of government concentrated at the Sublime Porte. Unlike his Tanzimat predecessors, who had been willing, in the main, to leave the conduct of government to their ministers, Abdülhamid was determined to rule as well as reign. This meant that he controlled the initiation and implementation of policy in detail, assisted by staff of personal advisers at the Yıldız Palace, whom he used as a counter-weight to his ministers at the Porte. He ignored the rules of bureaucratic hierarchy, conducting personal correspondence with provincial as well as with central officials, and permanently intervening in provincial appointments. Abdülhamid was a strong centralizer, determined to curb all tendencies toward provincial autonomy, and to keep a tight rein upon provincial officials; as one means to this end,

he cultivated close personal contacts with influential provincial notables, not infrequently supporting them against his own provincial officials.

A second feature of Abdülhamid's regime was his renewed emphasis upon Islam and Muslim solidarity, and upon his own position as Caliph as well as Sultan. This had many facets. For present purposes, however, two particular aspects are worth stressing. First, the Sultan saw Muslim solidarity, expressed in a common loyalty to the Caliphate, as crucial to the Empire's efforts to resist European penetration and the separatist aspirations of his non-Muslim subjects. This perception was expressed in much outward official deference to Islam and to religious leaders, and in an officially sponsored religious propaganda, some of which assumed a "Pan-Islamic" form, appealing to the solidarity of Muslims outside the Ottoman Empire's borders. Yet, at the same time, a second aspect of Abdülhamid's concern to emphasize Islam was an underlying current of doubt about the loyalty of his Muslim subjects, and in particular, non-Turkish Muslims like the Albanians and the Arabs. In the case of the Arabs, this doubt conjured up the bogey of an attempt to establish a rival Arab Caliphate, perhaps in Egypt or the Hijaz, which might challenge the foundations of the Sultan's own religious legitimacy.<sup>40</sup> This fear of an "Arab government" or "Arab Caliphate" appears to have been originally provoked by certain manifestations of discontent in Syria and the Hijaz between 1878 and 1880, and was further stimulated by the Urabist movement in Egypt in 1881-2, and by the Mahdist uprising in the Sudan in 1883-5. Iraq, it appears, was never the primary focus of the Sultan's fears; nonetheless, the presence within Iraq of a large population of Shi'i Muslims gave a special edge to his concern for his religious legitimacy, as will be seen in [Chapter 5](#).

A third important feature of Abdülhamid's rule was his financial caution. His predecessors' uninhibited borrowing in European money markets had led directly to the bankruptcy of 1875, when the Empire defaulted on the repayment of its foreign debts. One consequence was that in 1881 Abdülhamid himself was obliged to sign over approximately one quarter of the government's annual revenues to a Public Debt Administration (*Düyun-u Umumiye*) representing his foreign creditors. He had no doubt that a second bankruptcy would be fatal, and that, as in Egypt, it would furnish the European Powers with a pretext to establish a general control over the



Empire's finances, opening the way to a final extinction of Ottoman political independence. As a result, the Sultan found himself placed in something of a dilemma: he could not significantly raise his long-term revenues without substantial infrastructural investment which would require foreign borrowing. In the end, Abdülhamid was prepared to borrow to finance such projects as the Baghdad Railway, and also to pay for urgent necessities like armaments: but as a rule, he relied upon restraint in expenditure to keep his Empire solvent. This placed an important limitation upon his policies, particularly in questions of civil reforms and economic development. As noted, Abdülhamid was anxious to continue the beneficial aspects of the Tanzimat reforms, and he encouraged much paper planning of schools, railways, harbors, irrigation works, and other infrastructural projects. But his financial caution frequently inhibited their implementation: he would not jeopardize present budgetary security for the sake of longer-term benefits. [41](#)

Caution, it may be argued, was the chief watchword of the Hamidian regime, and not only in financial matters. Abdülhamid had an acute notion of his Empire's fragility: it was symptomatic that he constantly referred back to the disasters of the 1870s. As subsequent chapters will indicate, his regime was characterized, in many respects, by a negative conservatism, averse to risks of any kind, and preoccupied with the maintenance of short-term stability and security. It may fairly be asked whether there was not a long-term price to be paid for this attitude, as fundamental problems, ignored or treated with palliatives, were left to fester and grow worse. It is hoped that the beginning of an answer to this question, at least in respect of the administration of Iraq, may be found in subsequent chapters.

### III

For all the difficulties and deficiencies in the implementation of government-sponsored reforms, it is clear that the Tanzimat era initiated a process of social and economic change in Iraq, which continued through Abdülhamid's reign. In so far as stronger central control produced better law and order, it served as a stimulus to trade and agricultural production. So did the partial settlement of the tribes, and the associated distribution of state lands commenced during Midhat Paşa's time as Vali of Baghdad.

Other important stimuli were the growth of Iraq's foreign trade, particularly through the Gulf, and the development of modern communications, including telegraph lines, and steam navigation in the Gulf and on the Tigris.<sup>[42](#)</sup>

The difficulty is to measure the pace and extent of these changes. We have, for example, no reliable population statistics, though several estimates were made by foreign and Ottoman observers.<sup>[43](#)</sup> According to McCarthy's calculation, based on Ottoman sources, the total population of Ottoman Iraq in 1914 was approximately 3,650,000 (including Kuwait and Najd).<sup>[44](#)</sup> Ottoman estimates suggest that this population was apportioned between the three *vilayets* as follows: Baghdad, 1,300,000 (*c.* 1898); Basra, 1,150,000 (*c.* 1908), and Mosul, 828,000 (*c.* 1909).<sup>[45](#)</sup>

It is clear that the population was predominantly rural, and that the rural population was largely tribal.<sup>[46](#)</sup> According to one estimate, the urban population accounted for only 24 percent of the total population in 1867, 25 percent in 1890, and 24 percent in 1905.<sup>[47](#)</sup> The tribal population was divided into nomads, settled, and semi-settled tribes. Nomadic tribes inhabited the desert in the west and southwest, which covered some 60 percent of the total area of Iraq. One estimate shows a speedy fall in the numbers of nomads, and a rise in the settled tribal population in the late nineteenth century, provoked by government efforts to settle the tribes. As a proportion of the rural population, it is suggested, nomads fell from 35 percent to 17 percent between 1867 and 1905, while settled cultivators rose from 41 percent to 59 percent during the same period.<sup>[48](#)</sup> The settled and semi-settled tribes therefore formed the majority of the population of Iraq in this period.

The population, especially in the province of Mosul, was also divided along ethnic lines: Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans, Persians, Assyrians, Armenians, Chaldeans, Jews, Yezidis, Sabeans, and others.<sup>[49](#)</sup> Ottoman Iraq was at the same time a religiously divided country. It could be divided into three major religious zones: predominantly Arab Shi'i (south), predominantly Arab Sunni (west), and predominantly Kurdish Sunni (north).<sup>[50](#)</sup> It also contained numbers of Christians, especially in Mosul, and a large Jewish community in Baghdad.<sup>[51](#)</sup> In political terms, at least, the non-Muslim communities

were a negligible quantity. However, the size of the Shi'i Muslim population (above half the total) always constituted a potential problem for the Ottoman government, and not least because the nineteenth century saw a steady expansion of the Shi'i sect in the region through conversion. Another important aspect of Muslim life in Iraq was the widespread influence of the *tariqas* (religious orders) in all the three provinces, but in particular in Mosul. While the Rifaiyya and Qadiriyya were rivals for influence among the Arab population of Baghdad and Basra provinces, the Naqshbandiya and Qadiriyya competed in Kurdish areas.

Although the urban population was a minority of the whole, the political, social, and economic importance of the main cities of Iraq, and of the urban notable classes, should not be underestimated. During Abdülhamid's reign, the urban population in Iraq was estimated to constitute about 24 percent of the whole population: Baghdad, 145,000; Basra, 18,000; Mosul, 70,000. <sup>52</sup> The main cities of Iraq differed in their economic and social orientation, depending on their geographical position. The ties of Mosul were with Syria and Anatolia; those of Baghdad with Iran and the western and southwestern deserts; those of Basra mainly with the Gulf and India. Whereas a wide chasm separated the major cities from the tribal countryside, the cities themselves were divided into quarters (*mahalle*), along religious, sectarian, ethnic, or tribal lines. <sup>53</sup>

## IV

As indicated, the second half of the nineteenth century saw considerable economic changes in Iraq. The country witnessed a great expansion in trade, in particular sea-borne trade, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Between 1869–70 and 1912–13, the value of imports, it has been estimated, rose from an average 152,000 sterling to 3,264,000 sterling (21.6 times or 7.5 percent per annum); the value of exports from 218,000 to 2,593,000 sterling (11.9 times or 6 percent); and the value of total trade from 370,000 to 5,862,000 sterling (15.8 times or 6.6 percent). <sup>54</sup> Both as a supplier and a market, Iraq's major trading partners were Britain, and British India, even if new competitors entered the scene in the early 1900s. Before the opening of the Suez Canal, in 1864–5 and 1865–6, the British and Indian share of Basra's imports was 83 percent, and of exports 99

percent. In 1903, according to the estimate of the British Consul at Basra, 60 percent of goods imported to Baghdad and Basra were of British and Indian origin. By 1913, however, Britain's share in Baghdad's imports had fallen to 45 percent, and in exports 33 percent.<sup>[55](#)</sup> The land trade with Iran was also important, as were the expenditures of Iranian pilgrims to the Shi'i holy cities of Iraq.<sup>[56](#)</sup>

Iraq's main exports were agricultural products: dates, wheat, barley, wool, hides, and livestock.<sup>[57](#)</sup> This development of trade was accompanied by important improvements in agriculture,<sup>[58](#)</sup> and a substantial expansion of the cultivated area, assisted by the Ottoman government's policies of land distribution and tribal settlement, and also by the introduction of modern techniques on the *Saniyya*, or Privy Purse lands, which belonged to the Ottoman Imperial family. According to Cuinet's estimate, 30 percent of the cultivated land in Baghdad province belonged to the Sultan, 30 percent to the state (*miri*), 20 percent to private individuals (*tapu*), and 20 percent was registered as *waqf*.<sup>[59](#)</sup> Though the accuracy of Ottoman figures may be questioned, it is known that there were, according to Baghdad Land Registry records, 11,275,100 *dönüm* (10,598 sq km) arable *miri* land in the whole of Iraq, in the early 1900s.<sup>[60](#)</sup> Other aspects of economic development in Iraq, such as oil, railway, irrigation, and navigation, will be mentioned in [Chapter 2](#).

## V

Under Abdülhamid, as under his predecessors, the administration of Iraq rested upon two pillars: the state's own salaried officials and the provincial notables. The two pillars were mutually dependent: the state's officials relied upon the notables' influence over the population at large to assist them in such essential tasks as the collection of taxes and the maintenance of law and order, while the notables relied upon their connection with the state officials to bolster their local influence and their incomes, particularly in such matters as the leasing of state lands and the award of tax farming contracts. Some local notables themselves held positions as state officials, though generally in the lower ranks of the provincial administration; as a rule, senior posts were reserved for career officials sent out from the center.

The basis of the provincial administration was the *vilayet* system established in 1864. Under this system, Iraq was divided into three *vilayets* (provinces) of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. This division was not particularly old. Basra first became a separate *vilayet* in 1875, and between 1880 and 1884 was again subordinated to Baghdad. Likewise, Mosul first became a separate *vilayet* in 1878. But after 1884, the division into three provinces was maintained. In accordance with the Vilayet Law, each *vilayet* was divided into sub-provinces, or *sancaks*, which were in turn subdivided into *kazas*, each of which contained one or more *nahiyes*. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Baghdad contained three *sancaks*: Baghdad, Diwaniyah, and Karbala; Basra contained four: Basra, Amarah, Muntafiq, and Najd (Hasa); and Mosul contained three: Mosul, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah.<sup>[61](#)</sup>

Each *vilayet* was ruled by a Vali (governor-general), who served as the political representative of central government, and had general responsibility for the administration of his province. The Vali was assisted by a *Mektubcu*, or principal secretary, and also by an advisory administrative council (*Meclis-i İ dare-i Vilayet*), whose members, for the most part local notables, were partly elected and partly appointed. In Baghdad, for example, in 1906, the appointed members were the Vali, Mecid Bey, the *Naib*, Kevakibizâde (Kawakibi) Mehmed Necmeddin Efendi, the *Defterdar*, Mehmed Ş ükrü Efendi, the Naqibu'l-Ashraf, Sayyid Abdurrahman Efendi, the *Mektubcu*, Mehmed Tahir Bey, the *Müftü*, Zehavizâde (Zahawi) Elhac Muhammed Said Efendi, the *Baş kâtip*, Abdurrezzak Efendi; the elected members were Cemilzâde Mustafa Efendi, Hazirizâde Yasin Efendi, Agob Kuyumcuyan Efendi, and Ezra Menahem Efendi.<sup>[62](#)</sup> A similar composition was also seen at Mosul and Basra.<sup>[63](#)</sup> A glance at the *Salnames* of the three provinces reveals that a majority of the members, whether elected or appointed, were notables.

Although the Vali had general responsibility for the provincial government, he did not have direct administrative authority over all the government departments represented in his province: the armed forces, and the departments of Finance, Public Instruction, The Privy Purse, Justice, Land Records, Posts and Telegraphs, Religious Endowments, Customs, the Public Debt, the Tobacco Regie, and the Sanitary Service were all directly

responsible to their own superiors in Istanbul. Nonetheless, duplicates of orders sent to these departments were sometimes passed to the Vali for information, and it was his duty to investigate complaints against any department in his *vilayet*, whether under his control or not. The Vali did, however, have direct authority over the Gendarmerie (*Zabtiye*) and the Civil Police. The Gendarmerie was headed in each province by an *Alaybeyi* (Commandant), and besides its general security duties in the countryside it also assisted in the collection of tax revenues from the tribes of Iraq. In the early 1900s, the Gendarmerie in the *vilayets* of Baghdad and Basra was said to total some 3,500 men, in their majority Iraqi Kurds. The Civil Police were found only in the major towns; in the early 1900s, for example, they numbered no more than 50 men in the entire *vilayet* of Baghdad. [64](#)

All army garrisons in the three provinces were controlled by 6th Army based at Baghdad. 6th Army was directly controlled by the *Seraskerlik* (War Ministry) at Istanbul, and generally commanded by a *Müşir* (Field Marshal). The Valis had no authority over the troops in their provinces, but might call upon the *Müşir* for assistance in case of need. Ottoman defense planning accorded a limited role to 6th Army: it was to serve as a corps of observation against Iran, with a secondary role as reserve for 4th Army, which faced the Russians in eastern Anatolia. As important, 6th Army was permanently under strength. In 1886, for example, it counted 933 officers and some 13,000 regular troops, with, on paper, a further 39,000 reservists at its disposal. After 1896, efforts were made to bring 6th Army up to a strength comparable with that of other Ottoman Armies, but by 1905 its regular troops were still no more than 20,000-odd. Even so, it appears that 6th Army regularly consumed about one-half of the revenues of the Iraqi provinces. [65](#)

The Ottoman navy was represented at Basra by a Commodore (*Bahriye Kumandanı*), who, in the early 1900s, had only two vessels under his command, an old corvette, *Kilidu'l-Bahir*, and a paddle steamer, *Alus*. The latter was used for river patrols, while the former was said to have hardly ever left her moorings. In addition, the navy maintained between 100 and 250 ground personnel at Basra. The naval expenditure of the Basra province was estimated in 1901 to be 8,037 sterling, a comparatively low figure. [66](#)



After the Vali and the Müşir, the third major official in each *vilayet* was the *Defterdar*, the provincial director of finances. The *Defterdar* was partly responsible to the Vali, but chiefly responsible to the Ministry of Finance in Istanbul. His position was by no means easy, as he had to balance conflicting demands for funds from the Vali, the Müşir, and the central government. Throughout the period under study, the Porte made persistent demands for transfers of funds from the provinces to the central treasury, provoking endless conflicts between vali, Müşir, and *Defterdar* as to how to spend the remainder. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the three Iraqi provinces were generally cash-starved, but in the absence of proper studies of Ottoman financial administration, both at central and at provincial level, it is difficult to be more precise. Some official figures do exist, but without a clearer insight into Ottoman accounting procedures, it is impossible to be sure what they represent.

For what it is worth, the *Salname* of the *vilayet* of Baghdad for the year 1300 (1882–3) gave the following figures for the total revenues of the province (which then included Basra): 1296(1879)—58,512,049 *kuruş* ; 1297(1880)—42,746,838 *kuruş* ; 1298(1881)—42,116,392 *kuruş* .<sup>67</sup> The *Salname* for 1324(1906) gave the total revenue of the *vilayet* of Baghdad (excluding Basra) as 23,250,000 *kuruş* , and expenditure as 26,572,714 *kuruş* ; the *Salname* for 1325(1907) gave revenue as 24,083,000 *kuruş* , and expenditure as 26,572,714 *kuruş* .<sup>66</sup> As to the *vilayet* of Basra, its *Salname* for 1318(1900–1) stated that in 1316(1898–9), the provincial budget had set revenues at 20,441,466 *kuruş* , and expenditure at 20,441,466 *kuruş* .<sup>69</sup> The *Salname* of the *vilayet* of Mosul for the year 1310(1892–3) gave the province's revenues and expenditures as 17,468,149 and 22,594,243 *kuruş* respectively.<sup>70</sup>

From the provincial budgets printed in the *Salnames*, and also from other estimates, it may be deduced that approximately two-thirds of the revenues of the Iraqi provinces were derived from agricultural and livestock taxes, and that about two-thirds of expenditure went to the army and the gendarmerie. The principal agricultural tax was the tithe (*aşar*) . According to Ottoman statistics for the year 1325(1909–10), the total amount of tithes collected in Iraq was 47,248,906 *kuruş* , and this constituted about 6.5 percent of the total of tithes collected (721,266,035 *kuruş* ) in the Empire.<sup>71</sup>

The second important source of revenue was the livestock tax (*ağ nâm resmi*). According to the same statistics for the year 1909–10, the total of livestock tax collected in Iraq was 16,472,517 *kuruş*, and this constituted about 8.1 percent of the total for the Empire (203,583,599 *kuruş*).<sup>72</sup>

In addition to these major offices, three of the lesser administrative departments deserve attention: Public Instruction, Justice, and the Privy Purse. Since the inception of the Tanzimat, the Ottoman central government had set out, within the limits of its resources, to foster public education, seeing in it a means of training the officials required to man its new administrative system, an aid to social and economic development, and also a means of inculcating political loyalty to the Empire. The state's own schools, an innovation of the Tanzimat era, were controlled by the Ministry of Education, and divided into civilian and military schools, at elementary and secondary levels. There were also state industrial and commercial schools. Nonetheless, the state did not have a monopoly of schooling: in addition to *mahalle* schools and the madrasas, which were run by ulama, the non-Muslim communities had responsibility for their own educational institutions, and there was a number of foreign and missionary schools. In case of Iraq, there were also a large number of private Shi'i schools, as well as elementary schools under the management of the Privy Purse.<sup>73</sup>

In the city of Baghdad, for example, in 1906, there was one civil preparatory school (*Mekteb-i İdadi-i Mülkî*) (fd. 1890; 195 Muslim, 31 non-Muslim students), one civil high school for boys (*Rüşdiye Mülkiye Mektebi*), one high school for girls (*İnsan Mekteb-i Rüşdisi*) (fd. 1898), four modern elementary schools (*Mekteb-i İbtidai*), and an industrial school (*Mekteb-i Sanayi*) (85 students). Baghdad also had two military schools which were run by 6th Army: a military high school (*Mekteb-i Rüşdiye-i Askeriye*) (434 students) and a military preparatory school (*Mekteb-i İdadi-i Askeriye*) (172 students).<sup>74</sup> In 1908, a law school (*Hukuk Mektebi*) was established in Baghdad for higher education.

Limited though it was, the state educational system played a significant social role in Iraq, enabling children of poor and middle-class backgrounds to rise in the state apparatus, in particular in the army. Every year a number of military students, 70 for example in 1903, went to the Military Academy



(*Mekteb-i Harbiye*) in Istanbul.<sup>75</sup> Among those who held important positions in the Empire, and in Iraq after 1918, mention may be made of Mahmud Şevket Paşa (1856–1913), Minister of War and Grand Vizier,<sup>76</sup> Hadi Paşa al-Faruqi, Chief of the General Staff after 1908,<sup>77</sup> Jafar al-Askari (1885–1936), several times Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Iraq,<sup>78</sup> and Nuri al-Said (1888–1958), 14 times Prime Minister of Iraq between 1930 and 1958.<sup>79</sup> Generally speaking, it seems that, while poor and middle-class students went to military schools, the sons of upper-class families attended the Law School (*Hukuk Mektebi*), and the School of Civil Administration (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*) in Istanbul. Most prominent among the latter was Hikmat Sulaiman, Prime Minister of Iraq between 1936 and 1937.<sup>80</sup> It is a noteworthy fact that between 1921 and 1958, a majority of the high officials in Iraq were graduates of Ottoman schools such as *Harbiye*, *Hukuk*, or *Mülkiye*.<sup>81</sup> The sons of tribal shaikhs, on the other hand, went to the Tribal School (*Aşiret Mektebi*) in Istanbul, founded in 1892. Every year, a number of students from each Iraqi province were sent to this school.<sup>82</sup> Some of them were later accepted to *Harbiye* and *Mülkiye*. To the best of our knowledge, at least two sons of the Muntafiq shaikhs attended the Tribal School, and then the Military Academy in Istanbul.<sup>83</sup>

The Justice Department had responsibility for the running of the courts, and as of 1879 was formally independent of the executive branches of government. In each province, four kinds of courts were found: (1) the Muslim Courts, responsible only for questions of Islamic law. They were headed by *kadıs*, and found at every headquarters of *vilayets*, *sancaks*, and *kazas*. (2) The Criminal and Civil Courts: they consisted of *Bidayet Mahkemesi* (court of first instance, at the headquarters of every *vilayet*, *sancak*, and *kaza* in Iraq), *İstinaf Mahkemesi* (high court only in Baghdad), and *Temyiz Mahkemesi* (supreme court of appeal at Istanbul). Each of these courts had a criminal side (*ceza kısmı*), and a civil side (*hukuk kısmı*). Each side had different judges: they were appointed for two years, and consisted of half Muslim and half non-Muslim members. A Public Prosecutor and an Assistant Public Prosecutor were found in each province. (3) The Commercial Courts (*Ticaret Mahkemesi*): they were found at the headquarters of Baghdad and Basra provinces, and consisted of a president, usually appointed from Istanbul, and of two Muslim nominated members,

and two non-Muslim elected members, generally a Christian and a Jew, who were appointed for one year by their respective communities. <sup>84</sup>

Finally, mention should be made of the Department of the Privy Purse (*Hazine-i Hassa*, or *Saniyya*), which administered the properties and investments of the Ottoman Imperial family. In Iraq, these included substantial lands, amounting, in the *vilayet* of Baghdad, for example, to 30 percent of the cultivated area of the province. In Iraq, the Department was headed by a Central Committee at Baghdad, and was divided into two main branches: land and irrigation, and navigation. Its properties in Iraq can be divided into four classes: Tigris properties, Shatt al-Gharaf properties, Euphrates properties, and Shatt al-Arab properties. It also had large properties in the *sancak* of Najd. Its Navigation branch, the Hamidiye Company, was established in March 1904, with the purchase of the vessels of the Oman-Ottoman (*Umman-ı Osmanî*) Company which was a branch of the Ministry of the Navy. At the end of 1905, the Hamidiye Company had six steamers on the Tigris. In 1905, the annual revenue of the Privy Purse in Baghdad and Basra *vilayets* was about 94,500 sterling, nearly one-fourth of the total revenues of the two provinces. <sup>85</sup>

## VI

As indicated, the second pillar of the Ottoman administration in Iraq was the local notables. The importance of notables in provincial affairs has long been recognized by scholars, and valuable research on the “politics of notables” has been carried out, particularly in respect of Ottoman Syria. <sup>86</sup> Less, however, has been written on the subject of Iraqi notables, <sup>87</sup> though they were clearly important, as will be demonstrated on several occasions in the present study. In the present state of scholarship, however, it is not possible to produce a convincing overview of the “politics of notables,” and of relations between the Ottoman government and notables, in respect of the Iraqi provinces. Instead, it is proposed here to offer only some preliminary notes on two of the most prominent notable families of Iraq, who will feature prominently in subsequent chapters.

### *The Naqibs of Baghdad*

The Naqibu'l-Ashraf of Baghdad was the most influential Sunni religious figure in Iraq, due mainly to the historical importance of the Qadiriyya tariqa in the region.<sup>[88](#)</sup> The family of the Naqibs were descendents of Abd al-Qadir al-Gaylani, who was regarded as one of the most celebrated saints in the Sunni world of Islam, and the Naqib had influence in the political affairs of Baghdad, and to some extent in the whole of Iraq. At the same time, as an ex-officio member of the Administrative Council of the Baghdad *vilayet*, he was directly involved in the administrative affairs of the province. He had also a great influence over Indian and Afghan Muslims as the Keeper of the Shrine of Gaylani. It should also be added that Abdülhamid's Principal Palace Chamberlain, Hacı Ali Paşa, was an adherent of the Qadiri order.<sup>[89](#)</sup>

The available sources show that since the 1870s, the Naqibs' family had always used their influence and power, both in Iraq and in India, in favor of the Ottoman government, and they were in turn very popular with the Ottoman authorities, especially in Istanbul. For instance, during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–8, Sayyid Salman Efendi (d. 1898) started a campaign to aid wounded soldiers and the families of those killed. His brother, Sayyid Abdurrahman Efendi, went to Bombay for this purpose, and a pamphlet, addressing Indian Muslims, was published and distributed by Sayyid Abdurrahman.<sup>[90](#)</sup>

Sayyid Salman Efendi is also known to have visited Istanbul several times as the guest of the Sultan. In 1880, for example, he spent six months in the capital and was treated with great distinction.<sup>[91](#)</sup> During these visits, he appears to have been consulted about Iraqi matters. Around November 1886, he was in Istanbul once again, his visit coinciding with serious tribal outbreaks in Mosul and Baghdad. As will be seen in [Chapter 4](#), he was included in the special commission which was formed by Abdülhamid to discuss measures to resolve the problem, and implement a general reform policy in the region.<sup>[92](#)</sup> He died in May 1898, and was succeeded by his brother, Sayyid Abdurrahman Efendi, who closely followed his brother's path in his relations with the government.<sup>[93](#)</sup> Throughout the period under study, several members of the Naqib's family traveled extensively in India and, to a lesser extent, in Afghanistan. Although their journeys both to

Istanbul and to the Sub-Continent caused alarm to British officials, and were classified as “Pan-Islamic” activities, nothing much was proved.<sup>[94](#)</sup>

### ***The Naqibs of Basra***

The Naqibu'l-Ashraf of Basra and his family were hereditary chiefs of the Rifaiyya order. The Naqib's importance depended chiefly on his wealth, and on the use the government made of him and his family in political matters.<sup>[95](#)</sup> They, as a family, appear to have benefited by the introduction of the Land Law of 1858 in the region, and owned substantial agricultural estates at several places in Basra. They also benefited partly from the protection of Abulhuda al-Sayyadi, a Rifai shaikh, and an influential religious adviser of the Sultan.<sup>[96](#)</sup>

The Naqib of Basra at Abdülhamid's accession was Sayyid Muhammad Said, who even before assuming the post in 1874, had helped Ottoman officials, in particular during the time of Midhat Paşa, using his family influence in the region in political matters. After having become Naqib, he continued to be loyal to the authorities. Beside his ex-officio membership in the Administrative Council of Basra, Sayyid Muhammad Said was appointed vice-president of the local Privy Purse Administration in 1886. In 1890, owing to his advanced age, he nominated, with the approval of the Porte, his eldest son, Sayyid Rajab, to act as Naqib.<sup>[97](#)</sup> During these years, Muhammad Said continued to help the government with problems in the Gulf Emirates. For example, he went to Qatar at least two times, in 1890 and 1893, as a mediator between the Porte and Shaikh Qasim al-Thani of Qatar.<sup>[98](#)</sup>

On the death of Sayyid Muhammad Said, in 1896, the office of Naqib officially passed to his son Sayyid Rajab.<sup>[99](#)</sup> Sayyid Rajab followed his father's path in his relationship with the Ottoman government. Especially after Shaikh Mubarak seized power in Kuwait in 1896, the status quo in the region began to change, and the importance of the Naqib of Basra as a mediator seems to have increased. Between 1898 and 1901, for example, he traveled to Kuwait and Qatar on several occasions on behalf of the Ottoman government.<sup>[100](#)</sup>

While the Naqib used his influence in support of the government, members of his family also became directly involved in the political affairs of the *vilayet* and the region. Given their rivalries and conflicts with other notables of Basra and the Gulf, however, they often caused trouble to the local administration. The most important of these members of the family was Sayyid Talib Paşa (1868–1929), the son of the Naqib. His first appearance in the politics of the region was his journey to Istanbul, in 1899, to complain about the Vali of Basra, Hamdi Paşa, who was on bad terms both with Sayyid Rajab and Shaikh Mubarak of Kuwait.<sup>[101](#)</sup> As political affairs became delicate in Najd and the Gulf, due to the struggle between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud, the Porte appointed Sayyid Talib *Mutasarrıf* of Najd in June 1902.<sup>[102](#)</sup> However, he was recalled in 1903 on account of his conflict with Hacı Mansur Paşa, an influential notable of Qatar, and a member of the Administrative Council of Basra, who was later murdered, allegedly by Sayyid Talib.<sup>[103](#)</sup> In November 1903, Sayyid Talib Paşa returned to Basra, taking leave of absence, and did not return to his post.<sup>[104](#)</sup> Instead, it was reported, he tried to undermine the Vali's position, by creating disorder in Basra, in order to get the governor-generalship for himself. Sayyid Talib seems to have retained his post at Najd, in name at least, until the summer of 1904. Then, like other notables who were regarded as troublemakers, he was summoned to stay in Istanbul. He left Basra for Istanbul in June 1904, resigning his post.<sup>[105](#)</sup>

In Istanbul, he became a member of the Council of State, and enjoyed the protection of Arab İzzet Paşa (Izzat al-Abid), the Sultan's powerful Second Palace Secretary.<sup>[106](#)</sup> and of Shaikh Abulhuda, although the latter's influence at the Palace had diminished by then. As time went on, he appears to have regained the confidence of the Sultan. At one time, Sayyid Talib Paşa was considered a likely candidate for the governor-generalship of Basra by the British authorities, who feared such a development, for they regarded him as “apparently an ardent Pan-Islamist.”<sup>[107](#)</sup> In 1906, as will be seen in [Chapter 2](#), Sayyid Talib was appointed to an important reform commission for Iraq, which prepared a detailed reform proposal.

Besides the families of the Naqibs of Baghdad and Basra, two other important religious notable families of Iraq lived in Mosul province, and as will be seen in detail in [Chapter 4](#), enjoyed a great deal of the Sultan's

favor. These were the Barzinjis of Sulaymaniyah and the Talabanis of Kirkuk—both of the Qadiriyya order.

To be sure, these were not the only important notable families of Iraq. We have several lists of notables in some of the *Salnames* of the three provinces, and in the reports of Ottoman officials.<sup>108</sup> These include a variety of notables: civil officials, leading merchants and landlords, members of ulama families, tariqa shaikhs, and last but not least shaikhs of tribal confederations. The examples mentioned earlier should not suggest that every notable family enjoyed the Sultan's favor. This depended on their previous record in respect to their relations with the government, their affiliation to an ulama family or tariqa, and the nature of their connections with the Palace camarilla at Istanbul. Some fell out of favor due to political or religious reasons. One example was Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi of Baghdad. Though other members of his family enjoyed the Sultan's favor, he was exiled from Baghdad because of his reformist religious stand, especially his opposition to the tariqas—in a city where much of the local politics was shaped by members of the tariqas.<sup>109</sup>

Another example was the Zuheyrzâde family of Basra. After a power struggle with the Saduns of Muntafiq in the late 1870s and early 1880s, as will be mentioned in [Chapter 4](#), they fell out of favor, and at least one member of the family, Zuheyrzâde Ahmed Paşa, was forced to live in Istanbul for the rest of Abdülhamid's reign, as a member of the Council of State. Jamil Sidki al-Zahawi, a celebrated man of letters, was also forced to live in Istanbul in 1896. There he associated with some of the Young Turks, and he was among 29 people who went to congratulate the British Ambassador on the British victory in South Africa in November 1899. The group also included Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi of Syria and a certain Mutevellizâde Abdulmecid of the Mosul ulama. This was taken seriously by Abdülhamid as a challenge to his policies, and most members of the group were exiled to the provinces, except Zahawi and Zahrawi.<sup>110</sup>

Some notables obtained posts in the bureaucracy, such as Arif Hikmet al-Alusi, who served in *mutasarrıflık*s in Tripolitania and in Iraq.<sup>111</sup> The Alusi family was connected by marriage with a Vali of Baghdad, “*Küçük*” Namık Paşa (1898–1902), from whom the family greatly benefited during his



governor-generalship.<sup>[112](#)</sup> Among other examples, mention may be made of Babanzâde Zihni Paşa who held several administrative posts both in Iraq and in other provinces;<sup>[113](#)</sup> “Kethudazâde” Süleyman Faik Bey, another provincial administrator, who served both in Iraq and other provinces;<sup>[114](#)</sup> “Bağdadlı” Mehmed Emin Efendi, an *alim*, who for long years served in the Council of State and the *Mecelle Komisyonu*.<sup>[115](#)</sup> A last but interesting example was that of Muhammad Fazil Paşa a Daghistani, a Circassian and relative of the legendary Shaikh Shamil, who came to Baghdad as an exile in the early 1880s and, during his long years as a 6th Army officer, became established as a notable of Baghdad.<sup>[116](#)</sup>

## VII

The picture of government in Iraq under Abdülhamid would not be complete without some reference to the representatives of foreign powers. As will be seen in [Chapter 6](#), foreign influence in Iraq, and the fear of its spread, were constant preoccupations of central government and of the provincial authorities.

Great Britain was represented at Baghdad by a consul-general (also called British Resident) who belonged to the Indian Political Service. As of 1893, there were two consular agents under him, one at Mosul, where the post was held by a local Christian, and one at Karbala, where the post was held by a British Indian. The latter post was raised to a vice-consulate in 1903, and the former in 1908. Britain's second important representative was the Consul at Basra, who was attached first to the Indian Political Service, and after 1898, to the Levant Consular Service.<sup>[117](#)</sup>

The French were represented at Baghdad by a vice-consul until 1906, and then a consul. They had two main fields of interest in Iraq: archaeological research and missionary work. The Germans appointed a consul, a German resident at Baghdad, as late as in 1894. They also showed a great deal of interest in archaeology in Iraq. The Russians had a consulate at Baghdad, first established in 1881, refounded in 1889, and raised to consulate-general in 1901; and a vice-consulate at Basra, founded in 1899. The Americans' interest, on the other hand, showed a decline, and they replaced their consul with a vice-consul in 1894, though they showed great interest in the field of

archaeology and missionary works. Last but not least were the Iranians. They maintained consuls-general (called *Baš š ehbender* or *Baš Karperdaz*) in Baghdad and Basra. They had also several consuls or vice-consuls (*Karperdaz*) in Shi'i-populated towns of the two provinces. [118](#)

Missionary works also held some importance in Iraq. Roman Catholic missions were represented by the Carmelite Fathers, who had a long history in the country and maintained several stations and establishments in the three provinces. Dominicans maintained their mission in Mosul since 1750. Protestant missions had a rather recent history in Iraq. While the British Church Missionary Society's mission was first established at Baghdad in 1880, the American Arabian Mission was founded at Basra in 1891. Both grew quickly, despite severe opposition from the local Ottoman authorities. [119](#)



## 2

### The issue of reform

The question of reform in Iraq was raised, shortly after Abdülhamid's accession, in the debates of the first Ottoman Parliament, which met between March 19 and June 28, 1877. The necessity of reform in Iraq, in particular in the fields of land tenure and taxation, was urged in the Chamber of Deputies (*Meclis-i Mebusan*) on several occasions by the representatives of Baghdad.<sup>1</sup> The outbreak of war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in the spring of 1877 precluded any further discussion of the issue, but in the summer of 1878, shortly after the war's conclusion, Abdülhamid invited the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Layard, to furnish him with a general report on the prospects for reform in the Empire.<sup>2</sup> Layard had personal experience of Iraq, where he had conducted archaeological excavations, and he devoted a section of his lengthy report to the region, lamenting its current backwardness and decay, but also stressing its considerable potential for development, particularly if it could be linked to the Ottoman capital by a railway:<sup>3</sup>

That this now neglected country [Iraq] could recover some, if not all, of its ancient prosperity there can be little doubt. This is shown by the improvement that has taken place in the trade of Baghdad during the last few years in consequence of the navigation of the Tigris by Turkish and English steamers, and even during the last few months on account of the opening of new lines of communications with Europe in consequence of the interruption by the war of the routes to Persia and Central Asia by Trebizond and Erzeroum. It now only remains for Your Majesty to put into execution your wise and benevolent intentions as regards the reform of the administration, and for Your Majesty to give every encouragement to foreign and native enterprise (...) Amongst the public works which are necessary for the full development of the resources of Anatolia and Arabistan a railway connecting Your Majesty's capital with Baghdad, and hereafter with the Persian Gulf, is the most important. It would be equally advantageous to both provinces.

Abdülhamid appears to have been thinking on similar lines. The unsuccessful war with Russia had cost the Empire some of its most valuable Balkan provinces, which, in addition to being relatively well-developed, economically, had also been major contributors of revenue to the treasury, and there was much talk in government circles of the need to compensate for these losses by developing the Empire's Asiatic provinces.<sup>4</sup> As early as the spring of 1879, Abdülhamid envisaged a detailed general reform project, concerning all issues from military to financial affairs.<sup>5</sup> In addition, in late 1879 and early 1880, Abdülhamid took up the issue of reform in Iraq separately, and asked every high civil official in the region, that is, the Vali, *Mutasarrıfs*, and *Kaymakams*, to prepare detailed reports about the needs and problems of their own districts. Although these reports are not yet available, a valuable summary of some of them is provided in a report drawn up, on September 29, 1880, by Abdurrahman Paşa, the Vali of Baghdad.<sup>6</sup>

Abdurrahman Paşa's report began by describing the general needs of the country and the people. Abdurrahman Paşa emphasized five main needs; but placed the greatest emphasis on the first of them, *hüsn-i muâşeret* (civility), arguing that this was the key to the satisfaction of the others, namely education, agriculture, industry and craft, and trade and commerce. What he meant by "civility" in Iraq was simply the establishment of security and public order. He warned that since Iraq contained very different cultures, sects, and customs, and since the only means to collect taxes and conscription was force, it was impossible to keep law and order by ordinary measures. Iraq, he argued, had more need of security and public order than any other region of the Empire, and the means to achieve this would be as follows: first, the existing, inadequate gendarmerie must be expanded and furnished with adequate funds, equipment, and qualified personnel; second, given that the gendarmerie required the support of regular troops in such matters as tax collection and suppression of brigandage, and given that the voluntary cooperation of the local military authorities was not always forthcoming, the civil administration must be given some authority over the local army garrisons; and third, the local courts and civil administration must be reinforced. He proposed that the departments of local government should be re-organized and remain firm. In previous years, he argued, one did not pay attention to the divisions of the centers of *kaza*, *nahiye*, and

*sancak* . Establishment of new *kaymakamlıks* and *müdürlüks* in some places seemed to be necessary and immediate, in order to properly deal with both economic and political aspects of the region. To establish these new posts where it was needed, Abdurrahman Paşa asked the central government to allow a sum of 10,230 *kuruş* at once. Once, by these means, proper security was enforced, the nomadic tribes would be encouraged to settle and expand cultivation, thus facilitating progress and prosperity. Even the “wild tribes” would not have enough power to do much harm.<sup>7</sup>

Having made this point, Abdurrahman Paşa went on to discuss the other four needs. He began with education, noting that at present, education in Iraq was confined to the upper classes of the towns and cities, and was largely traditional religious education, taught in irregular madrasas and private houses by the ulama. Education in the modern sciences was poorly developed, though popular demand for it was not lacking. Primary and secondary schools should be expanded. In addition, the curriculum and regulations of these schools were first to be prepared by the local government, and then were to be sent to the Ministry of Education for confirmation. Abdurrahman Paşa also asked for an amendment to the law to make primary schools compulsory, and implement a punishment for those who declined to send their children to these schools.<sup>8</sup>

The third issue on the Vali's agenda was agriculture. He deplored the fact that Iraq, which had much fertile land, had made no agricultural progress to date, and had even been obliged to import grains from India and Europe at times of natural disaster, such as famine, floods, and epidemics.<sup>9</sup> It was essential to develop the existing irrigation systems, and to construct a series of dams on the Tigris and the Euphrates; notwithstanding the initial cost, these investments would pay for themselves in the longer term. In addition, railways should be built between Istanbul and Baghdad, Baghdad and Nadjaf, and Baghdad and Khaniqin; river navigation should be improved; and a modern agricultural school should be opened.<sup>10</sup>

The fourth issue on Abdurrahman Paşa's list was craft and industry. He proposed to establish textile factories to compete with foreign imports, to improve the Baghdad Industrial School, to abolish the stamp tax paid by local craftsmen, and to discourage idleness by closing the coffee houses

during working hours.<sup>[11](#)</sup> The fifth issue was trade and commerce, and Abdurrahman Paşa proposed that this be developed by the promotion of railways, the construction of new telegraph lines, improvements in education, and the abolition of certain taxes which were harmful to local commerce. Abdurrahman Paşa welcomed the recently approved project of a railway between Baghdad and Najaf, and between Baghdad and Khaniqin. The concession of this project had already been issued by Abdülhamid. The company consisted of Ottoman citizens. The Vali argued about the merits of such a railway and its effects upon both local trade and trade with Iran. He foresaw both would grow when the railway was finished.<sup>[12](#)</sup>

Mazhar Paşa, the *Mutasarrıf* of Basra, also wrote a separate report to the Palace on a reform policy for Iraq, dated August 13, 1880.<sup>[13](#)</sup> After describing the physical features of the region and comparing the potential wealth of its rivers with the Nile of Egypt, Mazhar Paşa drew attention to the insufficient development of agriculture: only 1 out of 10 cultivable lands was in use, and only 1 in 10 of the population was settled. The latter, he added, meant that only one-tenth of the population was under effective governmental jurisdiction. Mazhar Paşa reasoned that since the people were religious, obedient, and loyal to the Sultanate and Caliphate, and beyond the influence of foreign intrigues, it was the government's duty to reform and improve Iraq, and so compensate for the recent loss of Balkan provinces. Practically, he emphasized the need for more irrigation, in order to extend the cultivated area and raise agricultural production. He conceded that this would cost much money, that the government lacked the funds to attempt a large-scale program all at once, and that it must proceed step by step; but he emphasized that investment in agriculture would eventually pay for itself, and even generate the revenues to finance a railway between Baghdad and Istanbul. For the miserable state of the region, Mazhar Paşa put the blame on the apathy of the local population, who did not work for the long run, but merely tried to obtain annual profits. According to Mazhar Paşa, this was caused by the uncertain state of the Empire, and experience of previous, troubled years.<sup>[14](#)</sup>

In a further report, dated September 13, 1880, Mazhar Paşa put forward more detailed proposals for the improvement of agriculture in the Basra region.<sup>[15](#)</sup> He pointed to the growth in exports of dates during the preceding

two decades, and to the possibility of expanding rice cultivation, thanks to the natural irrigation furnished by the tides in the Shatt al-Arab. He suggested that the local tribes and Bedouin could be encouraged to settle and cultivate if they were furnished with state lands, and also offered tax exemptions. In addition, he suggested that the shores of the Shatt al-Arab be banked, as a means of bringing more land into cultivation, and of eradicating malaria. Mazhar Paşa argued that settlement of the tribes might be accomplished over a five-year period.<sup>16</sup>

Abdülhamid also sought the advice of statesmen who had served in Iraq in the past. One of them was Mehmed Namık Paşa, a former Müdür and Vali of Baghdad. In his brief report, dated July 15, 1879, Namık Paşa first gave a historical summary and then described the current political problems in the region: economic poverty, insufficient agriculture and trade, an important Shi'i presence, and a potential Iranian military threat. His main proposal to solve these problems was to unite Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul as one province under one powerful vali, with full authority over civil, military, and financial administration.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, the Minister of Public Works, Hasan Fehmi Paşa, was conducting an extensive investigation into possible projects for road and railway construction, harbor improvements, and irrigation and drainage schemes throughout Ottoman Asia. The results of his investigations were incorporated in a detailed report, and submitted to the Prime Minister's Office in June 1880.<sup>18</sup> The report and its appendices were long and very detailed. The sections on road-building and harbor improvements made no proposals in respect of Iraq. However, Iraq occupied an important part in the section on railways, which examined three possible routes for a Baghdad Railway, coming down in favor of an İzmit-Eskişehir-Kütahya-Konya-Adana-Aleppo-Baghdad route, with a sub-line from Anbarlı to Basra. It estimated the cost of the 2,200 km İzmit-Baghdad line at 14,885,434,78 *lira*.<sup>19</sup> Iraq also featured prominently in the section on marshland drainage, with particular attention paid to Mesopotamia (*Ceziretü'l-Arab*): draining the marshes of this region, which were estimated to cover 11,000,000 *dönüm*, would require repairs to the old banks (*sed*), the cleaning of old canals, and the construction of new dams (*bend*). The total cost of draining was estimated at 4,348,260,86 *lira*. This

was followed by an irrigation project for Mesopotamia: the lands to be irrigated (*irva ve iska*) were about 66,000,000 *dönüm*, and it was estimated to cost about 521,739,13 *lira* . In addition, a project to open most parts of the Tigris and the Euphrates to navigation was also included in the report. <sup>20</sup> After nearly two years of unexplained delay, Hasan Fehmi's report was approved in November 1882 by the Council of Ministers and by Abdülhamid. <sup>21</sup>

At all events, the various reports examined earlier suggest that within two years of the ending of the war with Russia, local and central government officials had reached a broad consensus with regard to the question of reform in Iraq. The *vilayets* of Baghdad and Basra, it was agreed, had considerable potential for agricultural development. The key to unlocking this potential lay partly in irrigation and marshland drainage, partly in better river and rail communications, and partly, and most importantly, in the settlement of the tribal population, who should be encouraged to become peaceful cultivators. The process of settlement, it was further agreed, was in part a question of stronger administrative and military control, and in part a question of continuing the policy, initiated by Midhat Paşa in the 1870s, of releasing state lands to the local population. What is clear is that none of the major proposals made in the reports was implemented. In the case of the ambitious plans for railway construction and irrigation and drainage works, it may plausibly be suggested that the problem was finance: the Sultan's government had no money of its own to spare for such projects, and with memories of the 1875 bankruptcy still fresh, it was unwilling to resort to large-scale foreign loans. It also seems likely that political considerations frustrated the proposals to give valis powers over local garrisons, or to unite the three Iraqi *vilayets*: Abdülhamid was firmly opposed to anything which might point in the direction of administrative decentralization and provincial autonomy. However, it also seems probable that he had political objections to a continuation of the earlier policy of distributing state lands.

Since Midhat Paşa's time as Vali, a special Land Commission at Baghdad had been supervising the matters related to the grantship of state lands. In face of continuous problems, in 1879, a manual of instructions for the Land Commission was prepared by the Office of the Registry of Landed Property (*Defterhâne*) . <sup>22</sup> This, however, proved unsatisfactory, and after hearing of



several cases of abuse, the Porte decided in May 1881 to prepare a revised and more detailed manual.<sup>23</sup> In August 1881, after a series of communications between governmental departments, Said Paşa, the Prime Minister, submitted some proposals on the issue, together with a copy of the new manual, to the Sultan.<sup>24</sup> Abdülhamid withheld his approval from the manual, and one year later, he issued a decree to the effect that all grants (*müzayede ve fîruhtu*) of state lands were to cease, provisionally.<sup>25</sup> Abdülhamid did not state his reservations explicitly, in spite of several requests by the financial authorities, who pointed out that the decree deprived the treasury of a useful source of income. It appears, however, that the Sultan's hesitation was due to his fear of abuses by foreigners: in the future, with their wealth, Iranians and British might easily buy these lands from the local people. When, for example, he was asked by the Administrative Council of Baghdad in 1886 to grant state lands to date cultivators, Abdülhamid accepted on condition that "They do not in future pass, through deception and trickery, into the hands of Iranians and other foreigners."<sup>26</sup>

Around 1889, the Sultan's mind temporarily changed. He was at first persuaded to resume selling state lands in Iraq, and issued a decree to this effect. But, when requisite regulations and conditions were submitted to him by the Porte, Abdülhamid abandoned the idea and refused to approve the documents.<sup>27</sup> This situation continued for many more years, and with the exception of a few grants to local shaikhs and other special cases, no state land was permitted to be purchased by the local population. For example, in March 1887, permission was sought for granting four parts of *miri* lands in Baghdad, with no answer. Only in April 1889, in response to the second application did Abdülhamid consent to give permission for the lands mentioned earlier, together with a special grant of state land (2,200 *dönüm*, 37,000 *kuruş*) to a Naqshbandi-Khalidi shaikh of Sulaymaniyah, Osman Efendi.<sup>28</sup> As will be seen, the Sultan's decision was criticized by almost every official and statesman, whenever the topic of reform in Iraq re-appeared on the agenda. It should also be added that, while Abdülhamid insisted on his decision, he had himself been acquiring arable state lands in Iraq for his Privy Purse (*Hazine-i Hassa*), since 1877.<sup>29</sup>

As regards the reforms, the only initiative during this period up to 1890 seems to have come from Mustafa Asım Paşa, the Vali of Baghdad, in late 1887. Mustafa Asım Paşa first asked the Porte to maintain the *aşar* tax of Baghdad and Basra at a fixed price to ease the financial burden of the population; and then wanted 20,000 gold *lira* allowance per year to be spent for public works and improvements in the *vilayet* of Baghdad. Though this was discussed and accepted by both in the Council of Ministers and the Council of State, it finally seems to have come to nothing.<sup>30</sup>

## I

Not until the early 1890s did central government again turn its attention to the prospects for reform in Iraq, apparently as a by-product of a current scheme for a general reorganization of the Empire's armed forces.<sup>31</sup> In 1890, a Committee of Military Inspection (*Heyet-i Teftiş iye-i Askeriye*) was dispatched to Iraq. The committee's report has not been traced, but its principal recommendations may be inferred from detailed comments made by the Vali of Baghdad, Sırrı Paşa, by the Military Inspection Commission (*Teftiş -i Umum-u Askeri Komisyonu*) at the Yıldız Palace, and by the Council of Ministers at the Porte.<sup>32</sup> The committee's immediate concern was the need to strengthen 6th Army, and it appears that, with this end in view, it made four major recommendations. First, the population of the Iraqi *vilayets* must be registered, as a necessary preliminary to bringing 6th Army up to strength through conscription. Second, the gendarmerie forces should be reorganized and brought to an active state. Third, the tribes of Basra should be settled and stopped from making harm. Finally, the civil administration should employ capable and qualified officials.<sup>33</sup>

Commenting upon the committee's proposals for registration of population, the Vali of Baghdad conceded that the failure to date to register the tribal population had seriously limited the flow of conscripts to 6th Army, but he warned that it was precisely the tribes' hostility to conscription which led them to resist registration. Registration would take time, and would require the presence of a large armed force, to prevent the tribes from escaping across the Iranian border or into Najd.<sup>34</sup> Eight battalions of infantry, and two regiments of cavalry, must be transferred to Iraq from other Armies. The Vali's point was endorsed by the Military Inspection Commission, and



also by the Council of Ministers, which both agreed that only after 6th Army had been reinforced from outside could a start be made on the registration of the population of the three *vilayets* of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. [35](#)

Inextricably bound up with the issues of registration and conscription was the question of settling the tribes. The Vali, the Military Inspection Commission, and the Council of Ministers were all agreed that such settlement was the key to the solution of Iraq's problems in the long run, but all admitted that it would be difficult to implement. The Council of Ministers doubted that force alone would suffice, and suggested that the tribes must be drawn into the "circle of civilization" through "justice," by which they apparently meant good treatment. This in turn focused attention upon the committee's recommendations for improvements in the gendarmerie, and more generally in the civil administration. The Vali of Baghdad, in particular, was highly critical of the efficiency of the gendarmerie, noting in passing that it was recruited largely among Kurds, Chechens, and Circassians. It was agreed that in the civil administration, as in the gendarmerie, it was essential to employ capable and qualified officials, preferably with a knowledge of local languages and conditions. It was also agreed that an honest and capable judicial inspector should be sent to the region. [36](#)

The Military Inspection Commission placed particular emphasis upon the need for common action between the authorities of the *vilayets* of Bagdad, Basra, and Mosul, and also between the *vilayet* authorities and the Commander of 6th Army. It emphasized that 6th Army needed a capable and active commander, and proposed to appoint Recep Paşa to the post. Once 6th Army and the gendarmerie had been reorganized, the civil authorities and the Commander of 6th Army should work together to implement a general reform policy. One of the members of the Military Inspection Commission added to the report that although it made no difference from political point of view whether there were 1 or 2 more battalions in some *vilayets* such as Rumelia, it was very important to have a few more battalions in regions such as Iraq and the Yemen in view of the present and future political situation. According to his statement, given the fact that Iraq was in the Hijaz region, this connection made Iraq much more

important, and since the situation of 6th Army appears to have been paralyzed, it was therefore vital to transfer an essential number of soldiers to Iraq from other armies.<sup>37</sup> Discussion of the committee's proposals was concluded in May 1891, with the Council of Ministers finally endorsing all the recommendations which had emerged in the course of the consultations. The immediate practical outcome was a series of personnel changes, including the dismissal of the Valis of Mosul and Baghdad, and the appointment of Receb Paşa as Commander of 6th Army.

Over the next two years, further reports on the subject of reform in Iraq were submitted, possibly at the Sultan's own request, including two from his former confidant Nusret Paşa, who had been sent into honorary internal exile at Baghdad in 1888 as Honorary Inspector of 6th Army.<sup>38</sup> Nusret Paşa's first report, probably drawn up in 1892, struck an alarmist note:<sup>39</sup>

The imperial territories of Iraq have gained such sensitivity and importance, and are so ready to be lost, that to explain the situation in detail would require several volumes. Instead of such details, I choose to present only the most important and the most urgent [points].

Specifically, Nusret Paşa emphasized the political threats posed by British ambitions in Iraq, and by the spread of Shi'ism there: "It is demonstrated by the preceding evidence that Iraq and Arabia will not be in our possession in a few years' time if they are left in their present circumstances." He also warned that Iraq's large tribal populations were effectively outside the government's control:

Neither can one call these subjects who are of no benefit to the state subjects, nor can one regard the places and lands they inhabit as the state's dominion. For the Ottoman state has neither an established local government, nor a barracks and outpost, nor an organized administration in those places.

Nusret Paşa urged the Sultan to appoint a special commission for Iraq and the adjoining regions of Kurdistan and Arabia. The members of this commission should be selected among the most capable men available in Istanbul, and the chairman should be "*Küçük*" Said Paşa, a former Grand

Vizier. In addition, Nusret Paşa put forward a detailed agenda for the commission.

The first item on Nusret Paşa's agenda was the reform and reinforcement of 6th Army, which "has nothing but its name." Echoing the views which central government itself had endorsed in 1891, he warned that 6th Army was seriously under strength, that conscription was deficient, and that the solution lay in the registration of the population and the settlement of the tribes. He added that 6th Army in its present state was too weak to accomplish this task, and must be reinforced by units transferred from 4th (Erzincan) and 5th (Damascus) Armies. He also complained of a shortage of military transport, ammunition, and other facilities: barracks and outposts should be constructed where needed, and the walls of Baghdad, demolished by Midhat Paşa, must be rebuilt.

Nusret Paşa's second item was the gendarmerie, which was in as poor a state as 6th Army, but which was additionally plagued by corruption and abuses. The third item was the tribes. First and foremost, tribes and Bedouins needed to be settled by giving them possession of lands (*temlik-i arazi*). After distinguishing and describing the tribes of the region as nomads and settled, he mainly concentrated on the former type as it needed a special policy, and made some detailed suggestions for settling them. The fourth item was public works, whose deficiency Nusret Paşa blamed on the neglect of previous Valis. Nusret Paşa argued that the region had the resources to sustain a public works policy. For instance, the many rich merchants who came from India and Iran might be encouraged to invest in shipping, textile, food, or clothing companies. But, first of all, the Sultan should strengthen the authority of valis and *mutasarrıfs*, by granting them sufficient security of tenure (*idame-i memuriyet*) and extended powers (*tevsi-i vezâif*).

The fifth item was agriculture and trade. Nusret Paşa argued that there was an immediate need to increase the volume of trade, through the promotion of companies, measures of irrigation and forestry, the introduction of new products, and the setting up of a mobile official committee (*seyyar bir heyet-i resmiye-i muvazzafa*) to prepare and implement a 10-year program of development. Success would increase the revenues of the treasury, and

also of the Sultan's Privy Purse, "tenfold." Here, too, Nusret Paşa touched on the sensitive topic of land tenure, openly criticizing the Sultan's prohibition on the granting of state lands (*temlik-i arazi*) to local people, and stressing its harmful effects upon agriculture. He insisted that the distribution of lands (*temlik-i arazi*) was essential for the progress of agriculture, and would also give the feeling of security and private property to the people. He advised that a similar policy be adopted in Najd.

The final item on Nusret Paşa's agenda was education. He described Iraq as "almost a country of ignorance" (*âdeta bir darü'l cehl*), and threw the blame upon the government's sequestration of the funds formerly devoted to the upkeep of religious scholars:

This is due to the fact its religious monuments were reduced to nothing, the madrasas and *zaviyes* being in utter ruin, and the greater part—almost 90 percent—of its *waqfs*, which had once secured the maintenance of men of piety and learning, have been gradually annexed by the treasury of the Ministry of Waqfs.

The state of Najd in this respect was even worse, for not only did the population live in total ignorance (*cahillik*), but there was also a growth of Wahhabism and Shi'ism among them. For this, Nusret Paşa laid the blame on the Ottoman government, and proposed a special program for "spreading knowledge" (*neşr-i maarif*) in order to "warm the people to the Ottoman government" (*halkı hükümet-i Osmaniye'ye ısındırmak*). First of all, madrasas and *waqfs* should be reorganized, and then, primary schools should be established in towns, with good teachers. Together with the expansion of Shi'ism, he drew attention to growing Protestantism through missionaries, especially British missionaries, in the region. In order to "warm the people to the Ottoman government," he proposed to make essential the learning of Arabic and Kurdish for Ottoman officials and civil servants. In addition, after deciding to carry out such a reform program, the government should make sure that the notables of the region either in the cities or in the tribal areas, from Ibn Rashid to Kurdish aghas, and from the Naqibs of Basra to the Sâdât-ı Berzenciye, were to be taken to Istanbul or elsewhere, and kept in custody. [40](#)

It appears that Nusret Paşa's proposals provoked no response from Abdülhamid, for in the following year he submitted a further report, essentially recapitulating his first one.<sup>41</sup> Nusret Paşa stressed at the beginning that "I again swear upon oath to our beloved Majesty the Sultan that Iraq, in its present state, will not remain long in our possession." He again called for the appointment of a special reform commission under "Küçük" Said Paşa, and re-stated his previous agenda. However, Nusret Paşa added certain new proposals. First, Iraq and the adjoining regions of Arabia must be placed under martial law, and subjected to a military administration. Second, qualified experts must be sent to register the population, and prepare statistics and maps.

These general measures were to be supported by a program of more specific initiatives: the proposed commission was to deal with unsettled tribes and Bedouins. It was to try to settle them by distributing lands, group by group; to register the population; to appoint traveling (*seyyar*) *muhtars*, *müdürs*, *kaymakams*, and *mutasarrıfs*; to establish tent-primary schools; to send teachers, among whom were educated and from the region, to teach catechism (*ilmihal*) and Islamic tenets (*akaid-i İslam*); to construct canals along the Tigris and the Euphrates for irrigation; to do some other works for irrigation in other places such as Shamiye desert; to construct banks and dams and pools as measures against floods; to clean the basin of the rivers by boats; to construct a dockyard and a pool to build both small and large ships; to make general improvements in transport, such as building bridges; to make repairs of roads and walls and to construct outposts (*karakol*) between Heyt (next to the Euphrates) and Damascus, and to establish a military road through Arabia; to establish new administrative posts in Najd, and to appoint pious, religious, and capable officials to this district. At the same time, Nusret Paşa proposed to put both the Christian monasteries and the Sufi lodges under control of the state; to pursue a hardline policy against the tariqas and dervishes, because of their intrigues; and also to pursue a similar policy against ulama families, due to the misuse of their privileges, and to force them to take examinations, then recruiting those who failed to the army.

But to carry out this program, Nusret Paşa estimated, would require an initial 250,000 *lira* as a temporary budget, and a permanent budget of

1,000,000 to 2,000,000 *lira* . In the long run, he argued, this investment would more than pay for itself, but he accepted that this amount of money could not be available at once, and proposed a 10-year gradual plan.<sup>42</sup>

Another statesman who compiled a report for the Sultan, dated April 1892, was Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa, a well-known military officer and educationalist of the 1860s and 1870s, whose constitutionalist sympathies had resulted in 1878 in his banishment to Baghdad.<sup>43</sup> Not surprisingly, Süleyman Paşa gave particular attention to the issue of education.<sup>44</sup> After describing the present state of education in Iraq, he proposed the establishment of *Darü'l-Muallimin* (teacher training school for men) in Baghdad, of *Mekteb-i İdadî* (preparatory schools) in Mosul, Baghdad, Basra, and Kirkuk, and of *Mekteb-i Kebir-i Rüşdî* (modern primary schools) in every village. The result of these efforts could be,

The people who were trained through such education and upbringing could in the future assume a position of benefit to the state, it could be said that we have subjects who can distinguish good and evil. But as long as they remain in the grip of ignorance, and religious leaders of heretic beliefs continue to spoil them, it is impossible for the state to benefit from them.

However, Süleyman Paşa did not confine his attention to education. He broadly echoed Nusret Paşa's criticisms of the state of 6th Army, and suggested that the problems of security and order might best be resolved by the establishment of a form of tribal militia, similar to the Hamidiye Regiments set up in eastern Anatolia. He also had a great deal to say about agriculture, stressing that "The Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Diyala are each a gold mine, and conduit for treasures of wealth. It is a pity that so far we can not profit properly from these sources of favor and grace which were granted to us by God." Like Nusret Paşa, he urged the Sultan to distribute state lands to tribes and the local people in general, and blamed the notables for putting obstacles in the way of this process. The distribution of lands (*temlik-i arazi*), he argued, was the key to solving the tribal problem:

It is a rightful duty incumbent upon the state to work to free these hundreds of thousands of people from oppression, and from being tools of the



intrigue and greed of various individuals, and to gradually place them upon the high road of prosperity by making them owners of property, and by establishing schools among them.

After having examined the problems in collecting taxes and the current issues of financial administration in detail, Süleyman Paşa proposed several measures. He proposed, for example, that property tax (*Emlâk Vergisi*) should be introduced and that the *Rüsum-u İhtisabiye* should be abolished. The problem was not the level of production, but the arrears in taxes. The aim was to find an efficient method of tax collection. He estimated that there was a 50 percent tax arrear in date trade alone, and at least, 1 to 1.5 million *lira* per year. He added that agricultural development would increase the state's tax revenues, and proposed the establishment of Agricultural Administrations (*Ziraat Müdürlükleri*), and of branches of the state-run Agricultural Bank (*Ziraat Bankası*), in all three *vilayets* in Iraq. In addition, Baghdad should also have a model farm (*nümune çiftliği*) and an Agricultural School (*Ziraat Mekteb-i Umumisi*).

Finally, Süleyman Paşa paid attention to the issues of trade and justice. As regards trade, he proposed that a chamber of commerce should be established in Baghdad, and that steps should be taken to improve river, road, and railway communications. With respect to justice, he criticized the court system, and in particular, the practice of recruiting members of the civil courts among local persons who had no idea of law and justice. He therefore proposed to revise the present legal system in accordance with local necessities and realities. Süleyman Paşa concluded his report in a "tragic" style: [45](#)

If the Iraqi reforms which I have set out in 12 points (...) are gradually put into practice (...) it is certain that before long Iraq will make its presence felt as another Egypt (...) However, the valis who are to be appointed to this region must be clever, active, capable, knowledgeable of the law and acquainted with affairs, lovers of religion, fatherland and state, and patriotic. If it is not possible to find three valis who possess these qualities, the provinces of Mosul and Basra must be united [with Baghdad] and the whole entrusted to a single authority. Otherwise, with persons of inferior

quality, especially with the present valis in this region, it is an obvious fact that the proposed reforms will not take place.

Mehmed Paşa, a former Vali of Bitlis, also prepared a report, dated August 1892, to give his opinion about reforms in Iraq.<sup>46</sup> After praising the fertility of the land in Iraq and comparing it with that of Egypt, he focused attention on three points: the problems of irrigation, arrears in taxes, and the tribes. He concentrated on the latter issue, as the key to a solution of all other problems. Specifically, he argued that it was essential to break the power of the tribal shaikhs. He elaborated the harmful position of shaikhs to the tribesmen and to the state. He showed the shaikh system to be the core of the problem in agriculture, and discussed the share of this in the misery of the region. He argued that the tribesmen were willing to get rid of their shaikhs, but complained that local officials protected the shaikhs. If state land was distributed to the tribesmen, and if it was supervised by *muhtars* (elected village headmen), instead of shaikhs, Mehmed Paşa asserted, tribal interrelationships, or rather, the solidarity of the tribes, would eventually dissolve. The beneficial effects of such a policy would include growth in agriculture, and new conscripts for the Army.<sup>47</sup>

It is obvious that if this harmful state of affairs is ended, and the land is distributed to the cultivating population, in a short span of time, Iraq will be thoroughly prosperous, and the state will benefit in full from its revenues, army recruits, and other matters.

The Sultan referred Mehmed Paşa's report to Müşir Şakir Paşa, one of his chief advisers.<sup>48</sup> Şakir Paşa generally endorsed the points which Mehmed Paşa had made, and, like Mehmed Paşa, he stressed the issue of nomadism. In his opinion, the tribes' power should first be broken, even by using force, and they should be settled; the encouragement of agriculture should follow. He also supported the idea of forming Hamidiye Regiments in Iraq. In addition, however, he proposed the establishment of a *Fırat Vilayeti* (Province of the Euphrates) in northern Iraq as an aid to dealing with the tribal problem. Comparing with Mehmed Paşa, Şakir Paşa preferred a more moderate way in dealing with the tribes. He proposed to partly use force, and mainly administrative and financial arrangements, in order to encourage the tribesmen to settle and cultivate. Şakir Paşa assured



the Sultan that “there is no doubt that a province as prosperous and wealthy as Egypt will come into being.” [49](#)

Sultan Abdülhamid seems to have read these reports carefully. The following statement is found in *Pensees et souvenirs de l'ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid II*, dated 1899: “Baron von Oppenheim’s book on Mesopotamia beautifully demonstrates the economic importance of the Tigris and Euphrates valley. This remarkable study, of which a summary was given to me, confirms the truth of my valis’ reports on the future of Mesopotamia.” After stressing the importance of the construction of Baghdad Railway from economic and strategic points of view, the Sultan went on to say that

If later we can establish a sensible irrigation network, by exploiting the twin rivers of the Tigris and the Euphrates, we can transform these very desiccated places of the present into a paradise just as it was thousands of years ago. [50](#)

## II

Not until 1901 did central government return to the question of reform in Iraq. In that year, a commission of investigation drew up two reports, one for Baghdad and one for Mosul. [51](#) Both reports will be examined in detail in the following chapter, but for present purposes, their conclusions will be summarized here.

In its report upon the *vilayet* of Baghdad, the commission stated that it was very unfortunate that the province, despite having the most abundant rivers and lands “in the world,” remained undeveloped, and that the people of the *vilayet* lived in poverty in spite of such resources. The commission added that the treasury of the state had been gaining nothing from Baghdad, and blamed all these deficiencies upon the incapacity of the local officials, which left the people of the *vilayet* deprived of proper education and agricultural means, and vulnerable to the influence of Shi’i mujtahids. The report also accepted that in spite of the previous visits of several similar commissions to the region, nothing practical had resulted. [52](#)

As for Mosul, the commission stated that although Mosul had fertile lands, no public works had been carried out, and the province still remained in its old state. It was unfortunate that *vilayet* officials did not care about anything but their own interests; not surprisingly, bandits and usurpers had emerged in every corner of the province, and even existing public works had been demolished. The commission stated that it was high time to stop this corruption and abuse, and to execute a serious reform policy in the *vilayet* . In particular, the taxes should be collected properly, and the revenues should be remitted to the state treasury. [53](#)

### III

If the 1890s, like the 1880s, were marked by governmental discussions of reform in Iraq which led to little practical result, the first years of the twentieth century saw the Ottoman government give serious attention to concrete projects for action. The cause of this change was the belated taking in hand of the long-discussed plan for a Baghdad Railway which would link the Ottoman capital with the Persian Gulf. [54](#)

At least as early as 1871, the Ottomans were interested in a railway project linking Istanbul with Baghdad. From Midhat Paşa's governor-generalship onwards, on every possible occasion, Ottoman statesmen and the advisers of the Porte advocated the merits of such a project, from a political to a financial point of view. For example, in almost all the reports dealing with reform in Iraq, in early 1880s and 1890s, from Abdurrahman Paşa to Nusret Paşa, special consideration was given to a railway between Istanbul and Basra. [55](#) In 1888, as a first step toward the realization of this plan, Abdülhamid had awarded to a group of German entrepreneurs a concession for an Anatolian Railway which would link Istanbul with Ankara and Konya. Even before the completion of this Anatolian Railway in 1896, the Sultan had approached the Germans on the subject of an extension of the railway to Baghdad and the Gulf. As early as 1891, Abdülhamid had discussed the issue of extension of Anatolian Railway to Baghdad with Alfred von Kaulla of the Anatolian Railway Company, but obtained no positive answer in return. In 1895, Abdülhamid talked to the German Ambassador Radolin on the issue. Later, in February 1896, the Sultan directly applied to the Kaiser. But both the Deutsche Bank and the

Anatolian Railway Company opposed the offer due to financial and political difficulties. The company saw no financial gain in the project, and it was in a state of financial crisis at the same time; on the other hand, turbulent events in eastern and central Anatolia, and the following Turco-Greek War of 1897 over Crete prevented any investment even on the part of the Ottoman authorities.<sup>56</sup> Initially, however, the German government, and German financiers, were cautious, and not until May 1899, following Kaiser Wilhelm II's visit to Istanbul, did the promoters of the Anatolian Railway decided to apply for a concession.

The Kaiser visited the Empire in October—November 1898. During their conversations, the Kaiser and the Sultan took up the issue of Baghdad Railway, and agreed that the Anatolian Railway should be extended to Basra. G.von Siemens, Director of the Deutsche Bank, also came with the Kaiser, and had a conversation with the Sultan. In their conversation, he asked the Sultan's opinion about which route (the Tigris or the Euphrates) was preferable to him. Abdülhamid naturally preferred the Euphrates route, because this was less developed than the Tigris. It seems that Abdülhamid also proposed and discussed an irrigation network in Mesopotamia with the Kaiser, together with the establishment of navigation company on the Euphrates. Though the politicians were ready to start the railway at once, progress in the negotiations remained very slow due to the opposition shown by the German financial circles.<sup>57</sup> Consequently, in May 1899, the Anatolian Railway Company applied for a concession to extend the Anatolian Railway from Konya to Basra via Baghdad. But it was not for the Porte alone to reach a decision on the subject. There were strategic problems as well as financial ones. While the Germans backed the Konya-İskenderun route for financial, technical, and political reasons, the Ottoman civil and military officials wanted the Ankara-Sivas route for military and strategical reasons (to send troops quickly to the Russian border).<sup>58</sup>

By then Abdülhamid appears to have been firmly convinced about the importance and future prospects of the Baghdad Railway project. In 1899, most probably in the midst of fresh negotiations after the Kaiser's visit, it was noted in the *Pensees et souvenirs de l'ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid II* that<sup>59</sup>

The time has come to give serious consideration to the construction of the Baghdad railway. In spite of the British who make every effort to hinder the application of our plans, the works must be started as soon as possible. Thanks to the Baghdad railway, the old European-Indian trade route is to become useful once again. If this railway is connected with Syria and Beirut, and Alexandria and Haifa, a new trade route would emerge. This railway will not only secure great benefit to our Empire from the economic point of view, but at the same time it will be very important from the military point of view as it will serve to strengthen our force in those parts.

Accordingly, Abdülhamid issued a preliminary decree to award the project to the Germans in November 1899.<sup>60</sup> The Sultan was very impatient to see the railway project started. In May 1900, he once again questioned Baron Marschall, the German ambassador, as to the course of the negotiations and expressed his suspicions about new British intrigues about the project. Later in 1901, while works in the Hijaz Railway continued, Abdülhamid asked Dr Zander of the Anatolian Railway Company to build a sub-line between the Hijaz and Baghdad Railways as soon as possible.<sup>61</sup> The following negotiations on the project, however, immediately ran into serious financial and diplomatic complications, provoked not least by the reservations of the Russian, French, and British governments, and although final agreements were included with the German consortium in 1902 and 1903, only a small proportion of the project had been completed by 1908, the year of the Young Turk Revolution which put an effective end to the Hamidian regime.<sup>62</sup> The details of these financial and diplomatic complications will not be examined here; rather, attention will be focused on the implications of the railway project for Ottoman policy toward Iraq.

From the start, Abdülhamid appears to have foreseen that the railway could open the way to substantial irrigation projects in Iraq. He discussed his ideas with the Kaiser in 1898, but in the event, German financiers proved reluctant to commit themselves.<sup>63</sup> The first practical demonstration of interest came from a British engineer, Sir William Willcocks, who visited southern Iraq in the winter of 1904–5, examining the districts between the Tigris and the Euphrates in the vicinity of Baghdad, with a view to ascertaining what schemes of irrigation would be practicable.<sup>64</sup> After completing his studies, Willcocks published a pamphlet, *The Irrigation of*

*Mesopotamia*, in April 1905. In June of that year, Willcocks visited Istanbul, and asked the British Ambassador, Sir Nicolas O'Connor, whether he would draw the Sultan's attention to the two particular schemes outlined in his pamphlet, by which a territory of some 640,000 acres between Baghdad and Fallujah would be restored to cultivation, saying that he hoped to be able to form a company in London for the purpose. But although O'Connor presented the general features of the two schemes to Abdülhamid, the latter warned that he would be prepared to consider them only after a company had been formed and its terms made known to him.<sup>[65](#)</sup> Willcocks went to London, but was unable to obtain sufficient British capital to carry out his schemes, and for a while the matter was dropped.<sup>[66](#)</sup>

It may be suspected that even if Willcocks had obtained the necessary capital, Abdülhamid would not have given the concession to him or any other British company, given his long-standing suspicion of British ambitions in Iraq. He had become convinced over the years that to give a concession to the British in Mesopotamia, whether it was a railway or irrigation project, meant to him, in the long run, to give the title-deed of Iraq to Britain.<sup>[67](#)</sup>

Nonetheless, no foreign alternative to Willcocks presented itself, and the Porte decided around 1906 to take the initiative into its own hands, sending a French engineer, M.Cuny to examine the possibility of damming the Euphrates at Hindiya, and also to find out whether the Euphrates could be made navigable.<sup>[68](#)</sup> At the beginning of 1907, another French Engineer, M.Cugnin, was brought in to work out the Hindiya irrigation scheme. It appears that the new Vali, Ebubekir Hâzim Bey, had also received instructions about this project, for soon after his arrival he called a meeting of the local committee which had been reporting on it, and later in March 1907, he visited Hindiya, where he inspected the site of the proposed barrage.<sup>[69](#)</sup> The details of the work at the Hindiya barrage are not known, but British consular reports show that M.Cugnin was dismissed by the Porte in October 1907.<sup>[70](#)</sup> It appears, however, that the work did not stop, but was carried on by Ottoman engineers.<sup>[71](#)</sup>

A further issue related to the Baghdad Railway was petroleum. The Ottoman government had realized the importance of petroleum in Iraq as

early as the 1880s, when, at the suggestion of Agob Paşa, the Minister of the Privy Purse, Abdülhamid had issued three decrees, placing the oil properties of Mosul and Baghdad in the possession of the Privy Purse.<sup>72</sup> Around 1893–4, Galouste Sarkis Gulbenkian, an Armenian petroleum engineer, was commissioned by the Privy Purse to prepare a comprehensive report on the oil prospects of Mesopotamia.<sup>73</sup> From an international point of view, this had been a delicate issue since 1888, when the Anatolian Railway concession was granted, as the concessionaires obtained from the Ottoman government a promise of preferential treatment with regard to mining rights. In the end, these rights were confirmed in the Baghdad Railway Convention of 1903, which permitted the continuation of the railway line from Konya to the Persian Gulf, and included definite mineral and oil exploitation rights, applicable to a twenty-kilometer strip on either side of the proposed line.<sup>74</sup> Accordingly, in July 1904, the Anatolian Railway Company signed a contract with the Privy Purse authorities, giving the company a one-year option to undertake preliminary investigations for oil in the Mosul and Baghdad *vilayets*, on the understanding that the petroleum concession would be determined according to the results of this preliminary investigation. In the event, however, the Germans exceeded the one year time limit without any reasonable explanation, and negotiations on a petroleum concession remained deadlocked until the Young Turk Revolution.<sup>75</sup> It should be added that from 1904 onwards, other bidders, including British entrepreneurs, made approaches to the Ottoman government for Iraqi petroleum concessions, but with no positive result.<sup>76</sup>

The Sultan had also begun to manifest a new interest in the question of improving navigation on the Tigris and the Euphrates. In 1898, he had broached the topic to the German Kaiser, and hinted at his anxiety to obtain German finance, but this and subsequent approaches to Berlin brought no positive result. In their conversation with the Kaiser in late 1898, beside the extension of the railway to Mesopotamia, Abdülhamid proposed another project to him concerning Iraq: to organize and improve the navigation on the Tigris and the Euphrates, with the help of German finance. It seems that Agob and Mikail Paşas, the successive Ministers of the Privy Purse, encouraged the Sultan to give a concession to a private company for the steamship transportation on the Tigris and the Euphrates. Abdülhamid, however, wanted a joint initiative with the participation of the Privy Purse



and Anatolian Railway Company. Later in the same month, Tevfik Paşa, the Foreign Minister, visited Baron Marschall, the German Ambassador, and discussed the issue. He stated that although the British were very keen to get a concession for navigation on the two rivers, the Sultan was not consent to do so. The following day, this time the Minister of Privy Purse visited the German Ambassador and gave a briefing about the project, but with no positive answer.<sup>77</sup> For unclear reasons, the matter was dropped for a long while. At last, in early 1904, a new administration, the Hamidiye Navigation Company was formed under the Privy Purse, and all property and vessels of the Oman-Ottoman Administration (*Umman-ı Osmanî*) were transferred to the new company. There were four steamers with two barges at the time of the take over. Two new steamers, built in Scotland, were added in 1905, together with four new barges.<sup>78</sup>

In the meantime, the sensitive issue of land tenure in Iraq had also come to the fore. In April 1902, a memorandum was sent to the Council of State by the Ministry of Finance, warning that the problems in the region concerning land tenure, and therefore taxation, were coming to a head and a radical solution was needed. After nearly two years, having examined the related documents, the Reform Legislation Section of the Council of State backed the arguments put by the Ministry, and reached the conclusion that a special commission should be formed for this purpose.<sup>79</sup> Although the Grand Vizier, Ferid Paşa, presented this proposal for the Sultan's approval with an encouraging paragraph, saying that "the apportionment and cultivation of the land in Iraq takes place in a variety of ways, and it is not right to leave the lands of Iraq, which have the capacity to increase the present financial strength of the state, in such a situation,"<sup>80</sup> Abdülhamid does not appear to have given his consent for this, at least in the short term.

## IV

The year 1905 proved to be a watershed, marking the point at which Abdülhamid's regime finally set out to implement, as well as consider, a project of general reform in the Iraqi *vilayets*. This change of attitude was prompted in the first instance by concern at the state of 6th Army, a concern heightened by a growing number of serious security problems in and around Iraq. These problems included serious tribal outbreaks in the *vilayets* of

Basra and Mosul, troubles between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid in Najd, the eruption of a major border conflict with Iran, the possibility that growing political conflicts within Iran might lead to difficulties with Iraq's substantial Shi'i population, and fears of British aggression in the Gulf.

At the beginning of 1905, Abdülhamid dispatched a commission of investigation, under Major-General Veli Paşa, to Iraq. The commission's report has not been traced, though it is known that it was closely examined at the Porte. The commission reported back to the Palace in May 1905. Abdülhamid sent their report to the Grand Vizier, Ferid Paşa, and asked for the establishment of a new commission, under the Minister of the Interior, to study the report. Afterwards, the conclusion reached by this later commission was to be discussed in the Council of Ministers.<sup>[81](#)</sup> What is certain is that from this time onwards the central government grew more active in the region. The appointment in October 1905 of a new Vali to Baghdad, Mecid Efendi,<sup>[82](#)</sup> was followed by measures concerning 6th Army.

In March 1906, Abdülhamid appointed another commission, once again under Major-General Veli Paşa, to enquire into the conflict, which broke out between Süleyman Şevki Paşa, the Commander of 6th Army, and Muhlis Paşa, the Vali and Commander of Basra, over the implementation of policies toward the tribes of Amarah and Muntafiq, and also to enquire into the current state of 6th Army. The commission left Istanbul in April 1906, and evidently returned a damning initial report.<sup>[83](#)</sup> Orders followed to the effect that salaries and allowances due to the soldiers and the officers of 6th Army should be paid on time, and that 6th Army should be brought to the level of perfection of the other Armies.<sup>[84](#)</sup> Before long, a re-shuffle took place among the staff of 6th Army, some of whom were compulsorily retired and replaced.<sup>[85](#)</sup> Other steps followed. It was reported in July 1906 that a commission from Istanbul, to inquire into the state of the tribes along the Tigris, was expected at Baghdad, and that another commission was expected to examine the accounts of 6th Army. Material improvements in 6th Army continued: an important amount of munitions was sent to Baghdad from Mosul.<sup>[86](#)</sup>



Most important of all, in July 1906, Pertev Paşa, a young, German-educated officer, was sent to Baghdad.<sup>87</sup> As the British Military Attaché, Colonel Surtees, reported,<sup>88</sup>

Pertev Pasha (...) has been sent to Baghdad, nominally as Chief of the Staff of the Marshal Suleiman Pasha, but, in reality, with full powers to reorganize the VIth Army corps, which for a long time has been in a lamentable condition of disorganization—all the more unfortunate from a Turkish point of view, as this Corps should be an important factor in dealing with the rebellion in the Nejd, as well as with possible developments on the Persian frontier and in the Koweit district. Pertev Pasha, it is understood, has received instructions to form, as soon he has reorganized the VIth Army Corps, a flying column at Bussorah, fully equipped with the material necessary to a desert campaign, and with it to penetrate into the Nejd and the adjacent country, which is peopled by tribes who have never yet really submitted to Turkish authority. Pertev Pasha (...) has received instructions to reorganize the troops at Baghdad and at Bussorah, but the principal object of his mission is to create some sort of order amongst the tribes, soldiers, and officials, who all join in pillaging Arabs in the country between Baghdad and Bussorah.

It appears from the British consular reports that Pertev Paşa was very active. It was reported in December 1906 that 24 officers had come to Baghdad from 4th Army at Erzincan for the purpose of teaching the Mauser drill to the troops of the Baghdad command.<sup>89</sup> As part of Pertev Paşa's mission to the region, another attempt was made in Mosul to register the population in proper. Yet, as was expected, riots soon broke out and this came to nothing.<sup>90</sup> In 1907, Pertev Paşa made long inspection tours throughout the three *vilayets*.<sup>91</sup>

Before long, however, it became apparent that a purely military reform would not suffice. In August 1906, in response to a request from the War Ministry, Süleyman Şevki Paşa, the Commander of 6th Army, submitted a report on the measures required to bring the forces under his command to “an active state.”<sup>92</sup> Süleyman Şevki Paşa put the blame for current inadequacies squarely on the civil authorities, who, being mostly incapable and corrupt, were obstructing the Army's ability to function properly. The

immediate problems were, first, that the military authorities could not recruit sufficient conscripts from the three *vilayets*; second, that because of continuous tribal uprisings, troops had had to be diverted to southern Iraq; and third, that the Army lacked the funds to pay regular salaries, and even to feed its soldiers. The root cause of these problems, he argued, was the incompetence and corruption of the administrative and financial officials of the three *vilayets*, and in particular their serious abuses in the field of tax collection, and their practice of farming out substantial state lands to the chiefs of the tribes, who consequently gained influence and power. He also warned that almost all tribes in the Mosul region were armed with illegal (*memnu*) modern weapons, and that this encouraged them to cause trouble in the region. He proposed that a reform committee (*heyet-i islâhiye*) be sent to Iraq, and be given four tasks. It should investigate the administrative and financial officials, and remove the incapable and corrupt ones; it should reorganize the system of tax collection; it should work to settle the tribes, and therefore improve agricultural and social conditions; and it should disarm the tribes, and thereby protect the inhabitants from their aggression. Once, as a result of these measures, conscription had been improved, the population had been registered, the Army's supply needs had been met, and tax farming had been placed on a proper footing, 6th Army could be brought to an active state (*hâl-i faaliyet*) .<sup>93</sup>

Süleyman Şevki Paşa's report was at once challenged by the Minister of the Interior, Memduh Paşa, who questioned whether the entire blame for the state of 6th Army could be placed on the civil and financial authorities of the three *vilayets*. He noted that a recent investigation by the Vali of Baghdad had uncovered serious misconduct and irregularities within 6th Army itself. The Minister did not deny the need for measures of reform, and in particular, for the suppression of tribal disturbances, but he questioned whether there was any point in sending a reform commission to the region. After all, several such commissions had been sent to Iraq over the years, at considerable expense, and their collected reports contained ample information upon which to base a policy decision. He therefore proposed that, instead of sending another commission to the region, all available documents and reports produced by the previous reform commissions and civil and military officials should be brought together, examined and then

studied. Only then, the proper measures could be taken and implemented, in accordance with the result of this re-examination. [94](#)

Memduh Paşa's objections were endorsed by the Grand Vizier, Ferid Paşa, who advised Abdülhamid to appoint a four-man commission at the Porte to re-examine all previous proposals for reform in Iraq. Ferid Paşa particularly stressed the damage sustained by the central treasury as a result of the inadequacies of tax collection and the disorganization of agriculture in Iraq; he also suggested that the commission examine the personnel records of all civil and financial officials employed in the three Iraqi *vilayets*. [95](#) After a month's consideration, Abdülhamid endorsed these proposals. [96](#) A commission was set up under Hacı Akif Paşa, the official with overall responsibility for military supplies (*Teçhizat-ı Askeriye Nâzırı*); the other members were Zühdü Paşa, a former Vali of Mosul, Rifat Bey, a former *Defterdar* of Baghdad, and Sayyid Talib Paşa, the son of the Naqib of Basra. After five months of deliberations, the commission reported in May 1907. [97](#)

The commission's report made an important revelation, which may help to explain the government's revived interest in Iraqi reform. It stated explicitly that the revenues of the Iraqi *vilayets* were in serious decline. It blamed this in part upon failure to control the Tigris and the Euphrates, which exposed the agriculture of the region to periodic drought, and to periodic flooding. In Baghdad, floods occurred every two or three years, destroying valuable agricultural land and property; in the Basra *vilayet*, too, considerable damage had been caused in recent years by the flooding of the Tigris. The commission urged the government to construct dams and irrigation works, as the essential foundation for the steady development of Iraq's considerable agricultural resources. The commission was also highly critical of the existing methods of tax collection in Iraq, which predated the Tanzimat era. The present system of tax farming gave no incentive to agricultural improvement, since short-term contracts discouraged fallowing and investment in drainage. Taxes upon livestock were another problem. Although stockbreeding in Iraq was a major activity, the tribes were adept at hiding their flocks from the tax collectors. [98](#)

The commission held forthright opinions on the subject of the state lands. It noted that official records identified 1,248 pieces of such land, covering an area of 11,275,100 *dönüm*, in the three Iraqi *vilayets*, and that the bulk of these lands were leased out under the supervision of local officials of the Finance Ministry. The commission raised three objections to this system: it produced poor returns to the treasury, it was wide open to corruption and abuse, and the lessees had no incentive to improve their lands. The solution was to sell the state lands to the population. With security of tenure, the new owners would develop their lands, bringing prosperity and order to Iraq. The tribes, which currently migrated from one temporary lease to another, would be permanently settled. The treasury, too, would gain. It would obtain millions of *lira* from the sales, and in the longer term, as agriculture prospered, tax revenues would rise “tenfold.” This uncertainty had also resulted in illegal land grasping over state lands. In spite of the fact that, they argued, the Office of Property Records of Baghdad had spent 82,000 *kuruş* since 1300(1882/83) trying to reclaim these lands by the courts, it did not win a single case. [99](#)

The commission paid particular attention to the tribal issue, distinguishing between settled tribes who lived in huts and practiced farming and stockbreeding; and unsettled tribes who lived by the sheep and camel trade and by looting. The latter were usually at war with each other, and special measures should be taken against this tribal fighting, which was destroying the population, agriculture, trade, and infrastructure of Iraq. Specifically, special commissions, whose members were accustomed to the region, should be appointed to deal with tribes, in particular the chiefs; refractory tribes should have their rights to land withdrawn, at least for a while; efforts should be made to educate the children of the tribes; and lands or leases should be distributed. The report also mentioned the need for general registration of the population of Iraq. [100](#)

The report recommended that the government should establish a reform commission, composed of persons who were capable, trustful, and had local knowledge, to visit Iraq and to prepare a report on a reform policy: [101](#)

If God wills, this time, under the successful auspices of His Imperial Majesty, through an initiative of the utmost seriousness and activity, a way

of benefiting from the sources of wealth which Iraq's land bears is to be taken. For it is clear that His Imperial Majesty will not tolerate, but will surely remedy, the afore-explained decline of Iraq, which produced, as history proves, 100,000,000 gold *liras*' revenue annually in ages when continents now accounted among the world's most developed regions were as yet unknown and undiscovered, and which, with its numerous fine arts, was an example of skill and civilization to the whole world. It is true that an enormous region, which has been subjected over long ages to various disasters, and finally come to this condition, will not be brought to the level of prosperous civilized countries all at once. It is not, however, wise to leave it in its present state, which allows the increase and extension of the scope of an illegitimate way of life. To bring about the desired effect, it is enough only to secure the relation between government and country, and to apply a system of administration in which both of them, with one heart and one goal way may work for the prosperity of the region. For there can be no greater proof that mankind cannot be turned away from a law of nature such as is self-interest, than the fact that almost all the people of a country, which was once the birthplace of the Hanafi sect, have been converted to Shi'ism through the material seductions of the Iranians and the English. Therefore, since preaching and exhortation will scarcely suffice to save the order of the country from its chronic internal sickness, it is above all essential to pay attention to the population's material interests, and this depends upon securing benefits by stopping damage [caused by] the Iraqi rivers, and upon giving the population a right to exploit the land.

The commission went on to give a list of its preferences in this respect. First and foremost, the works at the Hindiya barrage should be continued without any interruption.<sup>[102](#)</sup> Second, the state lands in Iraq should be divided into three classes, and transferred (*tefviz ve ihalât*) to the population. The first class, comprising irrigated lands, should be sold by auction. With the money thus obtained, the second class of lands should be irrigated, and sold off at appropriate prices (*bedelât-ı layike ve münasebe*) . The third class of land should be given to the people without charge, on the condition that they themselves should build irrigation canals. As a rule, nobody should be allowed to possess more than 5,000 *dönüm* of land. The commission's third preference was for the removal of 6th Army's headquarters to Suleymaniyah, since the *sancaks* of Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah were the

most troubled areas in Iraq. The fourth preference was that the reform in Iraq should be carried out through a single and powerful commission, in order to avoid the problems arising from the existence of three separate *vilayets*. Speed was of the essence, given Iraq's increasing international importance: [103](#)

In short, apart from the evident foreign deceptions and influences, it has seemed essential that the state manifest some sign of concern and activity in the Iraqi region, which is exposed to several [European] powers' rivalry on account of the Baghdad railway, before [those powers] commence action on their own behalf.

The fifth preference stressed the fact that agricultural reform also depended on proper navigation on the Tigris and the Euphrates, (for the sake of local and international trade) an increase in the number of transport vessels, settlement of the tribes, and a special forestry and mining policy. Finally, the commission proposed that examination of personnel records (*memurların terâcim-i ahvali*) be left to the proposed commission. The report concluded: [104](#)

Although it may be apprehended that in the course of this reform, a small decline may occur in the present revenues, and the treasury may assume extra expenses for the reform commission, yet, in the event that the proposed thorough reform and new development are actively and materially brought to realization, a multiple increase in the general revenues of Iraq will be achieved within a very small period of time. Indeed, the additional expenses for the sake of reform in Iraq, which cause anxiety, are the sole means of accomplishing and completing numerous administrative and political benefits, and important material, religious and sectarian virtues.

The Council of Ministers gave broad approval to the commission's report, and endorsed most of its specific recommendations, the only major exceptions being the priority accorded to the Hindiya barrage, and the transfer of 6th Army's headquarters to Sulaymaniyah, for financial reasons. The Council of Ministers in its comment on the commission's report also gave preference to the local people and backed the idea put forward by the



commission to the effect that first and foremost the well-being of the inhabitants of the region should be concerned with: [105](#)

For the purpose of strengthening the bonds of loyalty and submission, and of attracting the peoples' hearts and minds, the first point which must be taken into consideration is especially to secure the benefit of the population. This depends upon ending the damage caused by the rivers which flow through Iraq, and placing them in useful condition, and upon giving the people the right to exploit the state lands.

As candidates for the proposed reform commission, the Council of Ministers nominated Mustafa Nâzım Paşa, a former Vali of Mosul; Kemal Efendi, a former *Defterdar* of Aydin; Avni Efendi, a former *Naib* of Manastır; and General Pertev Paşa, the Chief of Staff of 6th Army. [106](#)

These proposals of the Council of Ministers, dated July 1907, were fully approved by the Sultan, and accordingly, a reform commission chaired by Mustafa Nâzım Paşa, and also including Kemal Efendi, Avni Efendi, and Pertev Paşa, made its way to Iraq in September 1907. [107](#) The reform commission's instructions were more or less identical with those proposed by Hacı Akif Paşa's commission, and it was given extensive authority over the local administration, including all the civil, financial, and gendarme affairs in the three *vilayets*. In each *vilayet* center, a consultative committee was to be formed from the local civil and military officials, and notables. The Valis and all civil officials of the three *vilayets* were to be under the commission's authority in all matters, including finance, public works, land and agriculture, though in case of a conflict, they had a right to consult the Porte. [108](#)

Soon after the reform commission's arrival in Baghdad, the British Consul-General, Major Ramsay, called on Mustafa Nâzım Paşa, and reported their conversation as follows: [109](#)

When I called on Nazim Pasha, I told him that I had served for some years in a tribal country, and had also seen something of a country which had been changed from a desert to a rich province by means of irrigation. I offered to give him, or obtain for him, any information in my power. He



asked many intelligent questions about the Indian frontier system of Government, the method of administering the country with the help of the tribal leaders, and the system of taking revenue, and seemed much interested in the answers I gave. I said that he could easily go to India and see things for himself, and that I was sure that the Government of India would be glad to assist him. He said that he could not do so without sanction from Constantinople, and that he would think about asking for this. He may be really thinking of this, as he has mentioned the conversation in subsequent meetings of the Commission. He does not seem inclined to do anything in a hurry, and is first giving his intention to the measures required to increase the security in the country. One of the chief aims of the Commission is, I understand, to sell the Government lands and induce private individuals to improve them, but this he finds he cannot do unless he can assure would-be buyers that they can safely visit and cultivate the lands they buy; this, I think, is the chief reason why he lays so much stress on pacifying the country. When he returned my call, the only point of Indian administration to which he referred was the maintenance of law and order.

In practice, however, the reform commission soon ran into difficulties. A fresh outbreak of tribal disturbances in Basra took up much of the commission's time and energy, and diverted its attention from the larger issues of reform. Mustafa Nâzım Paşa soon clashed with the Vali of Baghdad, Ebubekir Hâzım Bey, over the demarcation of their respective authorities, leading to the Vali's resignation in May 1908.<sup>[110](#)</sup> Mustafa Nâzım Paşa succeeded him, combining the tasks of vali and reform commissioner until the Young Turk Revolution two months later.

## V

Ottoman officials, whether at the center or in the Iraqi provinces, had reached a broad consensus with regard to the question of reform in Iraq. The *vilayets* of Baghdad and Basra, it was agreed, had considerable potential for agricultural development. The key to unlocking this potential lay partly in irrigation and marshland drainage, partly in better river and rail communications, and partly, and most importantly, in the settlement of the tribal population, who should be encouraged to become peaceful

cultivators. The process of settlement, it was further agreed, was in part a question of stronger administrative and military control, and in part a question of continuing the policy, initiated in the 1870s, of releasing state lands to the local population. More controversially, some officials argued that the success of these reform and development proposals would be enhanced by a fundamental administrative re-structuring, with much greater powers devolved to valis, and with the whole of Iraq established as a single *vilayet* .

Yet, for most of the period under study, except the last decade, the Sultan and his government failed to adopt these proposals. In the case of the ambitious plans for railway construction and irrigation, it may plausibly be suggested that the problem was finance: the Sultan's government had no money of its own to spare for such projects, and with memories of the 1875 bankruptcy still fresh, it was unwilling to resort to large-scale foreign loans. It also seems likely that political considerations frustrated the proposals to give valis powers over local garrisons, or to unite the three Iraqi *vilayets*: Abdülhamid was firmly opposed to anything which might point in the direction of administrative decentralization and provincial autonomy. However, it also seems probable that he had political objections to a continuation of the earlier policy of distributing state lands. These objections, as he explicitly expressed them, turned on a fear that the lands distributed might end up in the hands of foreigners, and specifically, of Iranian or British subjects.

Not until about early 1900s onwards did Abdülhamid began to change his policies in Iraq. This change appears to have been prompted partly by a concern at the serious decline in the revenues of the Iraqi *vilayets*, and partly by concern at the state of 6th Army, a concern heightened by a growing number of serious security problems in and around Iraq. These problems included serious tribal outbreaks in the *vilayets* of Basra and Mosul; troubles between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud in Najd; the eruption of a major border conflict with Iran; the possibility that growing political conflicts within Iran might lead to difficulties with Iraq's substantial Shi'i population; and fears of British aggression in the Gulf. All these appear to have led the central government to give serious attention to concrete projects for action, from railways to irrigation, as well as to a project of

general reform in the Iraqi *vilayets* . The new policy encompassed the following changes: from strict centralization to a partial decentralization in civil and financial administration, at least in the sense that he delegated substantial powers to the Reform Commission sent to Iraq in late 1907; from efforts to explore the natural sources and increase public revenues to attempts to improve the well-being of the inhabitants and gain their sympathy and confidence; and from a strict ban on the distribution of state lands to encouragement of it.

The next four chapters examine more closely the major problems confronted by Abdülhamid's regime in Iraq: the state of provincial administration, the tribes, the substantial Shi'i population, and the perceived threat of British penetration. By examining these problems in detail, these chapters attempt to place the reform proposals and initiatives outlined earlier in a context, which may help to explain their successes and failures, and also to explain the Sultan's apparent change of policy during the last decade of his regime.

### 3

## The Sultan's officials

As far as the provincial administration in Iraq was concerned, the Ottoman central government faced three important problems: (a) chronic conflicts among high-ranking officials, and the government's inability to find permanent solutions to them, (b) widespread corruption and misconduct, especially among middle-and lower-rank civil officials, (c) the continuous search for, and failure to find, enough qualified candidates for high-ranking positions in the *vilayets* .

In the period under study, there were endemic conflicts among civil, military, and financial officials in Iraq. These had several motives and reasons: political, social, ideological, financial, or personal. <sup>1</sup> Since the inception of the Tanzimat, just as different kinds of institutions had to live together and operate at the same time, so did different kinds of officials have to work together in the same institutions and places. Coming from different backgrounds, and having divergent opinions, outlooks, and life styles, it is not surprising to learn that there were chronic conflicts among them. Furthermore, with the expansion of modernized education during Abdülhamid's reign, there emerged a perceptible "generation gap" in the civil and military administration.

Nonetheless, the persistence of conflicts is best explained by the structure of the provincial administration system. As noted in [Chapter 1](#) , responsibility was divided: the Vali was only responsible for civil administration; the local troops were under the command of the Müşir; and the finances of the *vilayet* were controlled by the *Defterdar* . Furthermore, these three officials were responsible to different departments at the Porte: the Vali to the Ministry of the Interior, the Müşir to the Ministry of War, the *Defterdar* to the Ministry of Finance. After the legal reforms of 1879, the judiciary also became separated from the civil administration. The result was a permanent potential for conflict.

Two more factors exacerbated this situation. In the first place, local notables played a variety of roles in provincial administration, stretching from membership of the Administrative Councils to the holding of subordinate posts, like that of *kaymakam*. Inevitably, the notables brought their own differences and rivalries into the administration. As a result, senior officials found themselves drawn into local quarrels, sometimes on opposing sides. In the second place, under Abdülhamid, the Palace entourage played a key role, and certain notables had connections and protection at Yıldız, which strengthened their position vis-à-vis provincial officials, introducing a further element of conflict.

Though Abdülhamid was well aware of these problems, he shrank from the obvious solution: namely, the establishment of the Vali as the supreme authority in his province, with full powers over all branches of provincial administration, as envisaged in the Vilayet Law of 1864, and as canvassed by Midhat Paşa and others under the slogan “*tevsi-i mezuniyet*” (decentralization). The Sultan’s objection was political. He consistently argued that decentralization of this type, whatever its other merits, would open the way to provincial autonomy and to the Empire’s dissolution:

If a vali is completely independent, and permitted, as he wishes, to spend provincial funds, to control the judiciary, to direct the armed forces, and to hire and fire, this does not mean even decentralization, let alone centralization, but simply petty kingdoms.<sup>[2](#)</sup>

This perception led to a highly centralized system, to the extent that the smallest expenditure or action required authorization from Istanbul; officials were driven to seek authorization from Istanbul for everything and anything, even for acts which they had authority to carry out. How much competence should be left to the provincial high officials remained an unsolved problem throughout the period. Officials were generally reluctant to show much initiative, and where they could, sought protectors in the Sultan’s Palace entourage. There were in fact two parallel and competing chains of authority and communication between the Sultan and his officials in the provinces: one was official through governmental departments, and other unofficial, but usually more effective, through members of the Palace camarilla.

A certain preference was given to high officials of every branch. To avoid bribery, high and regular salaries were given to high civil, military, and religious officials. But the same standard could not be achieved for the intermediate and lower-ranking officials. There were significant differences between their salaries, in addition to frequent and great arrears in payments. This situation encouraged bribery and corruption among petty officials. Though the present study has uncovered no significant case of corruption among high officials (valis and müşirs) in Iraq, bribery and malversation were serious problems among intermediate and lower-ranking officials (*mutasarrıfs* and *kaymakams* ).

The system of official appointments and dismissals constituted another problem. While on the one hand Abdülhamid tried to develop a modern legal-bureaucratic structure, with a Civil Service School and professional selection committees, on the other he himself created a highly “personal” structure, by encouraging the principle of “unconditional loyalty and obedience” (*bil’a kaydü şart ubudiyet ve itaat*) to himself as the overriding criterion of merit. However, this preoccupation with loyalty held true generally for the Valis and Müşirs; for lesser officials, like *mutasarrıfs* and *kaymakams*, the Sultan was usually content to appoint on technical merit and qualifications. Two further points are worth mentioning. Mosul and Basra had the highest turnover of valis: Mosul saw 23 valis between 1876 and 1908, Basra 20, and Baghdad 14. Basra had a high proportion of valis of military or naval background: 13 out of 20 between 1876 and 1908, compared with no more than 5 out of 23 in Mosul, and 2 out of 14 in Baghdad.

It is sometimes argued that the Porte usually sent incapable and unqualified officials to the Iraqi provinces, but this charge seems unfair. The available material clearly shows that both the Porte and the Palace were generally anxious to choose the best available men for senior posts in Iraq. The difficulty was that Iraq, like other outlying provinces, was seen as a place of exile by some of the high officials, who sometimes refused to go there, or at least, to stay long.<sup>3</sup> Abdülhamid complained in 1889:<sup>4</sup>

Officials, whether civil or military, who are chosen, as being capable and competent, to go to Baghdad and Basra, hesitate to go; and it is heard that

some of those who previously went there became desperate due to their long stay, and neglected their duties, even when trouble occurred. Yet many foreigners do not hesitate to go, without the least protest, for the benefit of their state, not only to remote countries, but to those unknown continents and countries where no European has ever set foot. It is therefore a matter of my imperial regret that [some] show hesitation to go to Baghdad and Basra (...) which are, in contrast, civilized and prosperous countries. Therefore, the Council of Ministers will discuss the point that all civil and military officials to be sent to those places should be selected from among the capable and competent.

## **The *vilayet* of Baghdad**

Throughout Abdülhamid's reign, the government of the *vilayet* of Baghdad rested upon a delicate balance between the Vali, the Müşir of 6th Army, and the local notables. The chief notable families enjoyed considerable local influence, and some had links with the Sultan's palace. The most prominent family were the Gaylanis, who controlled the Qadiri *tekke* at Baghdad, and whose head held the title of Naqibu'l-Ashraf. From early in his reign, Abdülhamid appreciated the importance of conciliating the notables. In 1880, the Sultan conferred the post of Vali of Baghdad upon Takiyuddin Paşa, a member of the ulama class, and more importantly, a member of the Kawakibi family, influential notables of Aleppo in Syria. Takiyuddin Paşa's appointment appears to have been influenced by the Sultan's confidant Mehmed Namık Paşa, an ex-vali of Baghdad who maintained close links with the notables of the region, and perhaps also by Sayyid Salman Efendi, the Naqib of Baghdad, who happened to be in Istanbul at the time.<sup>[5](#)</sup>

Takiyuddin Paşa survived at Baghdad for six years, despite complaints about his inefficiency and poor relations with his own subordinates and with 6th Army.<sup>[6](#)</sup> Not until late 1886 did evidence of lax administration and falling revenues lead the Porte to press for his removal on grounds of incapacity and old age.<sup>[7](#)</sup> In the event, Takiyuddin Paşa took it upon himself to resign from the post in December 1886.<sup>[8](#)</sup> His replacement was a military officer, Müşir Mustafa Asım Paşa, who served until 1889, when he managed to involve himself in simultaneous disputes with the Müşir of 6th



Army, Tevfik Paşa, and with the Naqib, Sayyid Salman Efendi, arising out of the handling of a conflict between the Gazze and Shammar tribes.<sup>9</sup> As a result, Mustafa Asım Paşa was replaced by Sırrı Paşa, a protégé of Gazi Osman Paşa and the author of several religious works, in December 1889.<sup>10</sup>

Sırrı Paşa's appointment coincided with the beginning of a long-lasting, and in some ways, unique crisis in the administration of Baghdad, provoked by the Sultan's decision to appoint a former confidant Nusret Paşa, as the Honorary Inspector of 6th Army Müşir Nusret Paşa, whose nickname was "mad" (*deli*), had come to Baghdad as an "honorary exile" in 1888.<sup>11</sup> He was a Circassian by birth, and one of the last surviving slave statesmen from the era of Mahmud II. Exceptionally, his removal to Baghdad was not the result of opposition to the Sultan's policies, or of doubts about his loyalty. On the contrary, as a typical member of the "old school" of Tanzimat men, Nusret was very loyal to the Sultan and his regime. Moreover, he was quite religious and a former archenemy of Midhat Paşa, which was an advantage in the eyes of the Sultan, who, up to 1886, had happily used Nusret in important domestic and foreign missions. That said, Nusret's quarrelsomeness, and his resort to "jurnals" or denunciations of rivals, had made him very unpopular even among Abdülhamid's own entourage. The last nail in his coffin came in 1886, when in the course of a mission to Iran, Nusret offered the Shah an alliance against the British, to be formed by the Ottomans, Iranians, and Russians. He did so without the knowledge of the Porte, or even, it appears, of the Sultan.<sup>12</sup> This was enough for Abdülhamid. Nusret Paşa was sent first to 4th Army, and then to Baghdad as Honorary Inspector of 6th Army.

From 1890 onwards, complaints began to reach Istanbul, about and from Nusret Paşa. Those containing complaints about Nusret Paşa were sent either by senior provincial officials or by the notables of Baghdad. In turn, Nusret Paşa began to send lengthy reports to Istanbul, complaining about high-ranking government officials, including the Vali and the *Defterdar*. The core of the matter was land. It appears that since his arrival, Nusret Paşa had been using his post to acquire a great amount of land in and around Baghdad, by legal and illegal means. This seems to have shaken the balance of power in the *vilayet*, and given the fact that Nusret Paşa was already a

potential troublemaker, with his tough manners and singular character, he was proclaimed persona-non-grata by the government officials and the local notables. The result was a protracted feud, which ended only with Nusret Paşa's death in 1896.

At first, Nusret Paşa complained that provincial officials, including the Vali and the *Defterdar*, were preventing the peasants (*fellah*) employed by him from working on his land. The Porte's investigation, in December 1890, showed that this was not the case, and that on the contrary, Nusret Paşa himself had committed several injustices. The Grand Vizier asked the Sultan for his removal.<sup>13</sup> Nothing was done, however, and in the meantime the duel of letters, complaints, and accusations between Nusret Paşa and other officials of Baghdad grew steadily more intense. There were complaints, from January 1891 onwards, that Nusret Paşa had occupied certain *waqf* lands, beaten some officials, and interfered in the affairs of the provincial administration. For example, in January 1891, it was reported from Baghdad that Nusret Paşa occupied the land of Ummu'l-Uzma belonging to a *waqf* for poor Armenians in Baghdad. His immediate withdrawal was demanded.<sup>14</sup> The Porte ordered the Commander of Gendarmerie, to halt Nusret Paşa's occupation of the land mentioned earlier. When the Commander began to carry out this order, he was cursed and beaten by Nusret Paşa, in his own office, in front of all his staff.<sup>15</sup> In the meantime, the Grand Vizier had again asked the Sultan to dismiss Nusret Paşa as Inspector of 6th Army, due to the latter's outrageous (*edebe mugayir*) behavior.<sup>16</sup>

In June 1891, as the result of a report by a Committee of Military Inspection, which warned of an imminent threat from the growing Shi'i population in Iraq, Abdülhamid dismissed Sırrı Paşa, the Vali. The Grand Vizier objected that it was neither just nor understandable to dismiss Sırrı Paşa, instead of dismissing Nusret Paşa, and that the population at large would react badly.<sup>17</sup> Abdülhamid replied that, although Nusret Paşa's allegations against the Vali were not given any credence, he had lost his confidence in Sırrı Paşa, due to the reports about Shi'i expansion in the region.<sup>18</sup> As Sırrı Paşa's successor, Abdülhamid chose a former Vali of Baghdad (1875–7, 1879–80), Abdurrahman Paşa, who, however, declined to accept the post.<sup>19</sup> Instead, the Sultan appointed Hacı Hasan Refik Paşa,

who was known for his pious character.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, upon the request of the Military Inspection Commission, Müşir Receb Paşa, who had served long years in Iraq, was appointed to Baghdad as Commander of 6th Army.<sup>21</sup> However, Abdülhamid also ordered Nusret Paşa to be transferred to Aleppo. In reply, Nusret Paşa thanked the Sultan, and even asked that his salary and allowances be given from the treasury of Aleppo.<sup>22</sup> But, owing to an impending court case about a piece of land he had purchased, involving a person called Mirza Musa, Nusret Paşa had to stay in Baghdad for the time being.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, Nusret Paşa continued to send telegrams to the Porte regarding the internal and external affairs of the *vilayet*, making some false allegations. For example, he once reported that the Iranian Army was concentrating on the border.<sup>24</sup> He also alleged that, together with the Iranian Ebu'l Fazl Mirza, the Naqib and the *Naib* of Baghdad were spoiling the morality of the people (*halkın ahlakını ifsad*). But after some investigation, the Grand Vizier reached the conclusion that these allegations were mere products of animosity.<sup>25</sup>

Like his predecessor, the new Vali, Hasan Refik Paşa, also continued to demand Nusret Paşa's removal from Baghdad, accusing him of causing disorder in the *vilayet*. In July 1892, when the Grand Vizier, Cevad Paşa, forwarded one of the Vali's telegrams to the Sultan, Abdülhamid replied that "given [Nusret Paşa's] character and disposition, it is evident that wherever he is sent he will behave in the same unreasonable manner." Abdülhamid finally ordered that, while the Vali, Hasan Refik Paşa, should be instructed to get on well with Nusret Paşa, at least to some extent, Nusret Paşa should be given a strong warning not to interfere in the affairs of the provincial government, as he had no right or authority whatsoever in this respect, and should keep quiet.<sup>26</sup>

Cevad Paşa questioned this decision, reminding Abdülhamid that the Vali had reported that Nusret Paşa was provoking tension between the Sunnis and the Shi'is in the *vilayet*, and revealing that the Iranian Ambassador to the Porte had made similar complaints. The Grand Vizier urged that Nusret Paşa should be transferred to Aleppo, and that the government should buy up the land he had acquired in Baghdad.<sup>27</sup> Abdülhamid declined to follow

this advice, arguing that it was scarcely credible that Nusret Paşa was trying to bring about a collision between the Sunnis and the Shi'is. Instead, he ordered that Nusret Paşa's son, Muzaffer Bey, one of the aides-de-camp of the Grand Vizier, should be sent to Baghdad to investigate the allegations against his father, and to study the political situation in the *vilayet*. [28](#)

Toward the end of July 1892, Cevad Paşa forwarded two further telegrams of complaint about Nusret Paşa, one from Sayyid Abdurrahman Efendi, the brother of the Naqib, and one from a certain Abdulkadir, a landlord (*mallak*), both reporting fresh aggressions by Nusret Paşa and his men. Abdülhamid's attention was drawn to the words of "his men" in these statements, and he asked for an investigation. The response of the *vilayet* showed that, generally, Nusret Paşa committed the acts of aggression on his own, but that, when he was not able to do so, he would employ some notorious person of the city and his aides from the army for this kind of job. A list of their names was also forwarded to the Porte, together with the reply of the Vali of Baghdad. [29](#)

Nusret Paşa, on the other hand, was quick to counter-attack, insisting that the accusations against him were fabrications, and that it was, on the contrary, the Naqib's family (*Dergâh-ı Kadiriyye*) at Baghdad which was the real troublemaker. Nusret Paşa asserted that the civil administration of Baghdad had fallen under the control of the Naqib and his family (*Qadiri tekke* of Baghdad), and that the Vali was no more than the instrument of the latter. It appears that Nusret Paşa's hatred of the Naqib's family partly stemmed from a quarrel over a certain piece of land. [30](#)

Abdülhamid appears to have disbelieved Nusret Paşa's allegations about the Naqib's family. He commented that Nusret Paşa had never been on good terms with any of the Valis of Baghdad, and that all this was because of Nusret Paşa's belief that he would be summoned back to Istanbul if he caused enough trouble to the local authorities. He suggested that the best way to thwart Nusret Paşa's purposes would be to pay no attention to him. Abdülhamid instructed that a strong warning once again should be given to Nusret Paşa "by way of wisdom," to make sure that he would not cause any more harm in the future. [31](#) For reasons which are unclear, however, Abdülhamid soon changed his mind: he decided that Hüsnü Bey, the newly

appointed Judicial Inspector of Baghdad, should join Muzaffer Bey in conducting an on-the-spot investigation, which should enable central government to take a decision as to what to do with Nusret Paşa. <sup>32</sup>

Nusret Paşa, however, was not defenseless. While the two investigators were still on their way to Baghdad, he sent a telegram directly to the Sultan, complaining that the Vali had become a tool in the hands of Sayyid Abdurrahman Efendi of the Naqib's family and of Kethudazâde Süleyman Faik Bey, a prominent notable of Baghdad, who served as the Chief Secretary to the Vali (*Mektubcu*). He demanded that a full committee of investigation should be sent to Baghdad as quickly as possible. <sup>33</sup> The outbreak of a quarrel between the Vali and Receb Paşa, the Müşir of 6th Army played further into Nusret's hands. In a message to the Grand Vizier, the Müşir echoed Nusret Paşa's charge that the Vali was being provoked by the Chief Secretary, Süleyman Faik Bey. As a result, Faik Bey was transferred to Diyarbakır. <sup>34</sup>

Finally, Nusret Paşa discovered that one of the two officials sent to investigate him, Hüsnü Bey, was a relative of the Public Prosecutor of Baghdad, Mahmud Bey, and objected that he would not get a fair hearing. The Grand Vizier was inclined to endorse this objection, and in any case, questioned whether it was wise to appoint members of the same family to the posts of Public Prosecutor and Judicial Inspector at Baghdad. <sup>35</sup> The Justice Minister disagreed, pointing out that Muzaffer Bey, the other investigator, was Nusret Paşa's own son, and that it would be unfair to transfer or dismiss Hüsnü Bey, who had committed no offence. Abdülhamid backed the Justice Minister, reasoning that

It is my Imperial demand that the courts be independent, and that judicial officials possess the necessary qualities, and the responsibility for this belongs to the Ministry of Justice. Therefore, Hüsnü Efendi [*sic*] for the time being should stay in his post. <sup>36</sup>

Muzaffer Bey and Hüsnü Bey completed their investigations and submitted their report in May 1893. <sup>37</sup> Their report has not been traced, but whatever their recommendations, it appears that no action was taken against Nusret Paşa, who remained in Baghdad, and continued to pursue his vendetta with



the Vali and other local officials. For example, in June 1893, in one of his dispatches to the Porte, Nusret Paşa repeated his claims that it was urgent and necessary to institute reforms in Iraq in order to stop the misconduct of civil and military officials, praising Ömer Vehbi Paşa for his harsh actions in Mosul. According to Nusret Paşa it was very unfortunate that while Ömer Vehbi Paşa was making progress, he was stopped because of certain false accusations. He finally asked that a similar kind of reform mission be sent to Baghdad. <sup>38</sup>

In September 1893, the Vali reported that, while visiting the tomb of Imam Musa al-Kazim at Kazimayn, Nusret Paşa had threatened the *Kilidar* and the *Hademe* of the tomb, on the grounds that the Sultan's name had been mentioned in the prayers there. Abdülhamid promptly objected that it was a customary act to mention the Sultan's name in the prayers at that tomb, and it should continue to be so. He asked the Grand Vizier to issue a strong warning to Nusret Paşa about his behavior, which by no means corresponded with "devotion and servitude" (*sıdk ve ubudiyet*). <sup>39</sup>

This warning appears to have made no impression, as the troubles he caused continued as ever. In early October 1893, a telegram reached the Porte from some landowners of Baghdad, saying that Nusret Paşa was confiscating and occupying their lands. Cevad Paşa repeated that this growing conflict between Nusret Paşa and the Vali would disrupt civil and military affairs. When the Vali of Baghdad was asked about this, he confirmed the situation and provided details. <sup>40</sup> Toward the end of October, Nusret Paşa took refuge in the office of the Gendarmerie Commander, saying that he was afraid for his life and property and could not go out under the present circumstances. In his instructions, Abdülhamid stated that although there was a state of opposition between the two men, the unreasonable situation mentioned earlier was not acceptable. The attention of the Vali should be drawn to this, and also necessary advice should be given to Nusret Paşa through the *Serasker*. <sup>41</sup> In another example, toward the end of November 1893, justice officials of Baghdad complained about Nusret Paşa to the Porte through the Ministry of Justice, since he prevented them from doing their job, and he did not hand over some suspects. When the Grand Vizier wrote to Nusret Paşa on the issue, he denied all these "allegations" and himself made some new accusations about the civil officials. <sup>42</sup>

In early January 1894, 21 persons of Baghdad sent a telegram to the Porte, complaining that Nusret Paşa had seized their land and property, and levied illegal taxes on them.<sup>43</sup> Simultaneously, another conflict broke out between Nusret Paşa and the *Naib* of Baghdad, Aziz Bey.<sup>44</sup> These developments finally prompted Abdülhamid to take a decision: Nusret Paşa must be transferred to Aleppo, and there retired on an adequate pension. As the Sultan explained to the Grand Vizier,<sup>45</sup>

Just as Nusret Paşa behaved in an unsuitable manner when he was in Istanbul, in Baghdad, too, he has thus far not got on well with the Valis. Now he is provoking Receb Paşa, the Commander of 6th Army, against Hacı Hasan Paşa, and by so doing, he is disrupting the administrative affairs of the province. Given Baghdad's obvious regional importance, the continuation of this situation is absolutely impermissible. But it is obvious that Nusret Paşa will not change his conduct, and that even if he is summoned back to Istanbul, he will continue his previous conduct.

Abdülhamid was now determined that Nusret Paşa must leave Baghdad. He was to be retired in Aleppo in order to stop his troublemaking.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, incidents continued. Nusret Paşa sent another telegram to the Porte, saying that all allegations against him about the land issue were absolutely false. In addition, he argued that because of the misconduct of the *Naib* of Baghdad, a special committee should be sent to the region to carry out an investigation.<sup>47</sup> In February 1894, Nusret Paşa was angry with the officials in the office of justice and finance, because they obstructed his business proceedings. Together with 7 to 8 armed men, he went to the local government building and reproached the officials.<sup>48</sup> In the same month, some notables of Baghdad again telegraphed the Porte for help, after describing Nusret Paşa's attacks and aggression.<sup>49</sup> In April 1894, Nusret Paşa attacked the *Kaymakam* of Kazimayn who was then supervising the works on the dams on the Tigris. He was said to have insulted and beaten the *Kaymakam*, before the workers who were gathered there, consisting of several members of the local tribes. An account of this event was passed to the Porte through the Vali of Baghdad.<sup>50</sup>

At the beginning of May 1894, the Vali of Baghdad complained that Nusret Paşa was still interfering in the administrative affairs of Baghdad,<sup>51</sup> and



soon after, an incident in which Nusret Paşa physically assaulted the *Defterdar* of the *vilayet* led the Vali, the Naqib, and other notables of Baghdad to send a lengthy telegram to the Grand Vizier. Abdülhamid responded by repeating his order that Nusret Paşa be transferred to Aleppo, and in July, he asked the Grand Vizier whether Nusret Paşa had left Baghdad for Aleppo or not.<sup>52</sup> But the result of the enquiry was negative: although Nusret Paşa had been given all his salary and a travel allowance, he was still in Baghdad, and causing trouble. The civil authorities were “helpless,” and the Commander of 6th Army was therefore asked to repeat the Sultan’s decision to Nusret Paşa and convince him to leave.<sup>53</sup> But this had no effect. In the middle of August, Nusret Paşa was still in Baghdad.<sup>54</sup> However, the records suggest that from August 1894 onwards, Nusret Paşa refrained from causing further trouble.<sup>55</sup> Nusret Paşa stayed in Baghdad until his death on November 24, 1896.<sup>56</sup>

The final phase of the Porte’s struggle with Nusret Paşa had coincided with the outbreak of an open quarrel between the Vali and the Müşir of 6th Army, and in October 1893, the Grand Vizier had recommended that both men be transferred to other posts. The Grand Vizier warned Abdülhamid that these disputes threatened to bring the administration of the *vilayet* to a standstill, and would lower the government’s esteem in the eyes of the local population. He proposed that all of the concerned parties should be transferred to different regions.<sup>57</sup> Abdülhamid preferred to urge them to compose their differences. The Sultan expressed the view that Hasan Refik Paşa was an obedient (*sadık*), uncorrupt (*afif*), and honest (*mustakim*) person, and ordered that Müşir Receb Paşa be instructed to reduce the tension between them and make sure that they both worked together for the good of the *vilayet*.<sup>58</sup> In June 1894, the Grand Vizier once again warned both of them about the possible results of their quarrel on local affairs and reminded them of their responsibilities and duties as high officials of a province.<sup>59</sup>

It appears that a reconciliation had been achieved. Thereafter, for about a year and a half, the situation in Baghdad remained calm. But toward the end of 1895, fresh difficulties arose. The immediate cause was the financial plight of 6th Army. For some time, it appears, the troops had received no pay, despite the Porte’s repeated orders to the *Defterdar* to release the

necessary funds.<sup>[60](#)</sup> There were also accompanying allegations of financial malpractice within the Baghdad garrison.<sup>[61](#)</sup> Finally, in December 1895, the Müşir, Receb Paşa, offered his resignation, alleging that while the revenues of the Baghdad *vilayet* exceeded its expenditures, abuse and misconduct by the Vali, and by the *kaymakams* who were appointed by the Vali, were producing a progressive deterioration in the *vilayet's* finances, with the result that the regular troops were paid only once a year. Moreover, at that time, just the beginning of winter, at least one-third of the regular soldiers were out of firewood and clothes. The Müşir warned that any reform or improvement in Iraq would depend on the proper administration of the army, and that he did not wish to be held personally responsible for the impending miseries that would be suffered by his troops. He preferred to resign his command.<sup>[62](#)</sup>

Evidently, this problem was smoothed over, for both Hasan Refik Paşa and Receb Paşa remained at their posts. Not until June 1896, faced with a delicate situation in Jabal Druze, in Syria, did Abdülhamid consent to transfer Hasan Refik Paşa to Damascus as Vali.<sup>[63](#)</sup> His successor at Baghdad was Ataullah Efendi [Paşa], who like Takiyuddin Paşa a decade earlier, was a member of the ulama class, and also a member of the Syrian notable family, the Kawakibis. He had previously served in several posts in Iraq between 1872 and 1885, and was currently serving as the *Kazasker* of Anatolia, one of the highest posts in the ulama hierarchy.<sup>[64](#)</sup>

Two years later, in July 1898, Receb Paşa was transferred from Baghdad to Tripolitania. The cause of his transfer appears to have been his alleged involvement in Young Turk activities.<sup>[65](#)</sup> His departure caused some concern to Loch, the British Consul-General at Baghdad, who doubted that the aged Ataullah Paşa, whom he characterized as “obviously unfit for his office,” would prove capable of maintaining order without the assistance of a capable military commander. Loch urged his superiors in Istanbul to use their influence to ensure the appointment of a capable successor to Receb Paşa.<sup>[66](#)</sup>

Receb Paşa was replaced as Commander of 6th Army by Müşir Ahmed Feyzi Paşa, an experienced soldier, who had served for many years in the Yemen and gained a high reputation.<sup>[67](#)</sup> Ataullah Paşa, on the other hand,

did not stay long in Baghdad; “*Küçük*” Namık Paşa, a former Vali of Tripolitania, was appointed as Vali of Baghdad in early 1899.<sup>68</sup> The appointment of these new men, however, did not put an end to administrative conflicts. By 1900, there were signs of a serious deterioration in relations between Namık Paşa and Müşir Ahmed Feyzi Paşa, provoked by the old problem of finding funds to pay the troops.<sup>69</sup> In January 1900, after a full year without pay of any kind, some 100–200 cavalymen of the Baghdad garrison looted the bazaars, and the disturbance was settled only after the Müşir had intervened personally with a show of force, and also distributed one month’s pay. According to the Consul-General, it was said that in reporting the events to Istanbul, the Vali and the Müşir blamed each other. The Müşir reported that the Vali could not supply the necessary funds to pay the troops.<sup>70</sup>

The question of the troops’ pay was only the tip of the iceberg. It appears that Namık Paşa’s tenure of office was accompanied by a growth of administrative and financial abuse of all kinds. At the root of the problem lay the Vali’s close ties with some of the notables. Namık Paşa was related by marriage to the Alusizâdes,<sup>71</sup> an important notable family of Baghdad, and was also on very intimate terms with other notables of the city, especially with the family of the Naqibs, the Gaylanis. These personal relationships made him abnormally tolerant toward the notables, and also, it appears, toward the civil officials of several governmental departments, including finance and the gendarmerie. The result was to tip the balance between the notables and the representatives of central government sharply in favor of the former, and in the process, to engender serious maladministration and corruption.

This state of affairs was first brought to the Porte’s notice by Mustafa Bey, a Lieutenant Colonel of the General Staff (*Erkân-ı Harbiye Kaymakamı*) of 6th Army. In various telegrams, he accused the Vali and the *Defterdar* of illegal financial transactions and misconduct in administration. The Porte responded in January 1901 by instructing a special commission, which was already carrying out an investigation in Mosul, to proceed to Baghdad and enquire into the allegations made by Mustafa Bey.<sup>72</sup> Members of the commission investigated 24 charges made by Mustafa Bey, and found them all true. Among their principal findings were the following:<sup>73</sup>

1 Vahap Efendi, the *Defterdar* of Baghdad, had never distributed the salaries of local officials and the allowances granted to some local people, some of whom had been driven to go to foreign consulates to ask for help. Furthermore, he always insisted upon the payment of a bribe when appointing local financial officers (*mal memurları*) . Finally, despite the fact that the salaries of heads of municipalities were fixed at 1,500 *kuruş* , he had appointed Rifat Efendi, a private servant of the Vali, as the Inspector of the Municipality, a hitherto unheard-of post, with a salary of 2,500 *kuruş* . At the same time, Rifat Efendi had also been appointed Acting *Kaymakam* of Horasan, where he had committed several abuses. Rifat Efendi and his brother, Hasan Efendi, the Vali's *mühürdar* (Keeper of the Seal), were interfering in the business of the *vilayet*, involving themselves in all kinds of corrupt activity, and appeared to enjoy a free hand in doing so.

2 The Vali himself had permitted the heads of the three municipalities of Baghdad to keep their posts for the last 12 years, in breach of the Vilayet Law. The Vali excused his behavior on the grounds that their removal could cause anxiety among the people of Baghdad, and added that “as the heads of the municipalities are prominent notables, and as their good service is attested, [I did not] approve fresh elections.” Further, although the revenues of the Baghdad municipalities totaled 15,000 *lira*, the commission had seen no public works, and Baghdad appeared to be more backward than equivalent centers.

3 After giving a 200 *lira* bribe to some local officials, the former *Kaymakam* of Bedre, Salih Efendi, who had been dismissed because of corruption, was appointed *Kaymakam* of Samarra.

4 The *Kaymakam* of Ana, Alusizâde Rifat Efendi, a notable of Baghdad and a relative of the Vali, had been summoned to Istanbul on account of abuses of his authority, but later, after he bribed some officials, returned to his former job.

5 Despite his corruption and abuses, the *Kaymakam* of Shamiye, Alusizâde Akif Efendi, another relative of Namık Paşa, was still in post.

6 Although the revenues from the *aşar* tax of Hindiya district had formerly totaled 2,600,000 *kuruş* (26 *yük kuruş* ), the Vali's tax-farmer (*mültezim*),

Mahmud Efendi, was paying only 500,000 *kuruş* (5 *yük kuruş* ).

7 The revenues of Samarra and some other *kazas* had decreased during the present Vali's tenure of office.

8 Despite his corruption and misconduct, the Commander of Gendarmerie of Baghdad, Muhlis Bey, had kept his job because of the Vali's favor; he was said to have gained more than 20,000 *liras* ' worth of property, land, and wealth.

9 Salih, a police officer, had made himself head of all thieves and brigands in the *vilayet*, and customarily took a share from all robberies. In the words of the commission,

it is understood from the accounts by the justice officials, merchants, and local notables, all secretly obtained under oath, that the injustices and appalling thefts in the center of the *vilayet* reached a level that would make one regret the brigands of the mountains (*dağ lardaki eşkiyaya rahmet okutturacak derecede*) .

10 The corruption of the *Kaymakam* of Hilla, Şevket Paşa (in the words of the commission, "He is one of the influential notables of Baghdad, and [he] seized land and occupied himself with agriculture in the said *kaza* "), and the corruption and abuse of the *Mutasarrıf* of Diwaniyah, Mustafa Paşa, and the *Kaymakam* of Aziziye, Numan Bey, were also reported.<sup>74</sup>

After giving some other examples of corruption and abuse, the commission asked the Sultan to dismiss all the officials mentioned in the report. The Vali, Namık Paşa, was also held responsible, and was especially accused of being very tolerant toward the abuses of the notables of the *vilayet*, and in particular, those of the Gaylani family. Being protected by the Vali, the Gaylani family had occupied a great deal of state land (*arazi-i miri*) and increased their oppression:<sup>75</sup>

Because the Vali shows every tolerance to certain local notables, and especially to the Naqib, and because he has caused them to achieve their aims of transgressing against the population, and above all, against the state's lands, [and also caused] the population and the officials to murmur at

their growing outrages, and because he has grossly favored those persons whose misconduct is described above.

Moreover, the Vali's quarrel with the Commander of 6th Army had undermined the efficiency of the local administration:

The consequences of the hostility and mutual dislike between him and the Müşir spread to the state. The military and civil authorities fall into to the evil of partisanship; in the meantime, the business of the state is subject to difficulties. [76](#)

Forwarding this report to the Council of Ministers, Abdülhamid made the following comment: [77](#)

In most cases, we see no practical result from the reports presented, as a result of their inspection and investigation, by these kinds of committees, which are sent out as a result of local complaints or other necessity. This state of affairs will serve to perpetuate and aggravate the problems in the provinces. It will also mean accepting pointless expenditure by the state for the sake of these committees. It is my command that the concerned parties be notified that henceforth the measures necessitated as a result of such investigations not be subject to neglect and delay, and that the officials, whose misgovernment was described in the two above-mentioned reports, should be taken to the court, and speedily dealt with in accordance with the law.

The Council of Ministers approved all the recommendations made by the commission, and proposed that the necessary orders should be given to the relevant ministries. [78](#) Although these orders have not been traced, it appears from the *Salname* for the year 1320(1902/3) that, among those named in the report, the *Defterdar* of Baghdad, Vahap Efendi, the *Mutasarrıf* of Diwaniyah, Mustafa Paşa, the *Kaymakam* of Aziziye, Numan Bey, and the *Kaymakam* of Hilla, Şevket Paşa, had been dismissed. However, the Vali, Namık Paşa, the *Kaymakam* of Samarra, Salih Efendi, the chief clerk of the Administrative Council, Abdurrezzak Efendi, the *Kaymakam* of Shamiye, Akif Efendi, and the *Kaymakam* of Ana, Rifat Efendi, the last three being notables of Baghdad, kept their posts. [79](#)



In October 1902, Namık Paşa was removed from Baghdad, and the Porte appointed Ahmed Feyzi Paşa, the Commander of 6th Army, to serve as Acting Vali.<sup>[80](#)</sup> During the next two years, Baghdad was ruled by Ahmed Feyzi Paşa, with a free hand, and without any serious problem. Toward the end of 1904, however, the outbreak of a serious conflict between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud resulted in Ahmed Feyzi Paşa's appointment to command an expedition to Najd.<sup>[81](#)</sup> Süleyman Şevki Paşa was appointed as the Commander of 6th Army, while the post of Vali of Baghdad was filled by a civil official, Abdülvahab Paşa, a former Vali of Mosul.<sup>[82](#)</sup>

This renewed division of responsibilities was soon followed by a revival of old conflicts. It seems that, from the very beginning, Abdülvahab Paşa and the Naqib were not on good terms, while the Vali's relations with the foreign consuls at Baghdad rapidly deteriorated.<sup>[83](#)</sup> So did his relations with the new Müşir: in July 1905, when Süleyman Şevki Paşa was temporarily relieved of his post, the change was attributed to the intrigues of Abdülvahab Paşa and of Kazım Paşa, a subordinate commander in 6th Army, who was a brother-in-law of the Sultan.<sup>[84](#)</sup> Nonetheless, Süleyman Şevki Paşa returned to his post.

By the autumn of 1905, however, these conflicts were developing into an open power struggle, in which Süleyman Şevki Paşa was backed by the Naqib and the Chief of Staff of 6th Army, Fahri Paşa, while Abdülvahab Paşa sided with Kazım Paşa.<sup>[85](#)</sup> The foreign consuls were also involved: while the Russian Consul supported Süleyman Şevki Paşa, the British Consul General tried half-heartedly to protect Abdülvahab Paşa, since he saw Süleyman Şevki Paşa's friendship with the Russian Consul as a threat to British interests.<sup>[86](#)</sup> The struggle ended with the dismissal of Abdülvahab Paşa in October 1905. Abdülhamid himself chose his successor, Mecid Efendi/Bey a former Vali of Aleppo and a protégé of Arab İzzet Paşa, the Sultan's influential Second Palace Secretary.<sup>[87](#)</sup>

These changes produced no more than a temporary respite.<sup>[88](#)</sup> By the spring of 1906, fresh rumors and complaints were reaching the Porte concerning corruption and maladministration in 6th Army. In April 1906, the Porte sent a committee of investigation (*heyet-i tahkikiye*), headed by Major-General Veli Paşa, which resulted in the committee's removal of Fahri Paşa, the



Chief of Staff of 6th Army, and of a number of other senior officers.<sup>[89](#)</sup>  
General Pertev Paşa was sent to 6th Army as Chief of Staff, with full powers to reorganize 6th Army.<sup>[90](#)</sup>

In the meantime, the new Vali, Mecid Bey, had also come under attack. The British Military Attaché at Istanbul, Colonel Surtees, reported that the Vali was “described as being a ‘Wolf,’ a ‘Creature of the Palace,’ he collects taxes by force, and sends the money to Yıldız, and spends more time in espionage than on the duties of the administration.”<sup>[91](#)</sup> It also appears from British sources that Mecid Bey was not on good terms with the Grand Vizier, Ferid Paşa, who had wished to remove him for some time past. But Mecid Bey’s Palace protection was too strong. According to British sources, at about the same time, the Porte’s attention also turned to the civil administration. They wished to appoint a military governor-general to remedy the current situation, as in the days of Ahmed Feyzi Paşa. When, for instance, the British Ambassador made strong representations to the Grand Vizier concerning the attacks on British citizens and properties (Lynch steamers and the murder of Mr Glanville), Ferid Paşa made out a report on the subject and had it read to the Council of Ministers, which suggested to the Sultan the appointment of an extraordinary military governor to take command of the forces in the two *vilayets*, replacing Süleyman Şevki Paşa and Mecid Bey, and the appointment of a capable and energetic vali to Basra. The Sultan as said to have sanctioned these proposals in principle.<sup>[92](#)</sup>

In September 1906, a violent incident in Karbala, in which several Iranian subjects were killed, offered the Grand Vizier an opportunity to once more urge Mecid Bey’s removal. The Grand Vizier’s hands were strengthened by the British Embassy’s complaint of the Vali’s anti-British attitude, and by the representations of the Iranian Ambassador after the Karbala incident.<sup>[93](#)</sup> Accordingly, in November 1906, the Grand Vizier applied to the Sultan for the appointment of a capable Vali to Baghdad, and named two suitable candidates: Reşid (Akif) Paşa, the Vali of Sivas, and Müşir Receb Paşa, a former Commander of 6th Army, who was currently serving as Acting Vali and Commander of Tripolitania. If Receb Paşa was chosen, the Grand Vizier added, he should also be given the command of 6th Army, and the presidency of the local Privy Purse administration. Abdülhamid declined to

appoint either Reşid Paşa or Receb Paşa: “As both the *vilayet* of Sivas and the *vilayet* of Tripolitania are, in terms of location, as important and sensitive as the *vilayet* of Baghdad, it could not be appropriate to remove either Reşid Paşa or Receb Paşa.” <sup>94</sup>

However, the Sultan asked the Council of Ministers to present a list of names of other appropriate candidates. <sup>95</sup> A few days later, however, Abdülhamid, on his own initiative, decided to appoint Ebubekir Hâzım Bey, a former Vali of Mosul, who was currently Vali of Manastır. <sup>96</sup> This appointment coincided with reform initiatives both in 6th Army and in the civil and financial administration of Iraq. As noted, General Pertev Paşa had already been sent to 6th Army, with the intention of carrying out sweeping reforms, and in the autumn of 1907, the Porte sent Mustafa Nâzım Paşa to Iraq, as head of an extraordinary reform commission, with full powers over civil, military, and financial affairs. <sup>97</sup>

Before long, however, Mustafa Nâzım Paşa and Ebubekir Hâzım Bey quarreled over the demarcation of their respective responsibilities, and in May 1908, the Grand Vizier, Ferid Paşa, decided to sacrifice one of them for the sake of reform in Iraq. In his words, <sup>98</sup>

Since it is obvious that the continuation of this situation will obstruct the reform of Iraq, which is our principal aim, and that although both parties are striving to convince us of their current efforts to fulfill the duties of the posts which have been entrusted to them, it is plain that their continuing conflict will prevent a successful outcome.

After having discussed the issue with the Minister of the Interior, Ferid Paşa proposed that if Reşid Paşa, the Vali of Sivas, was permitted by the Sultan to have a post in Istanbul, Hâzım Bey might be transferred to Sivas, and thus Nâzım Paşa might serve as Acting Vali of Baghdad as well as President of the Reform Commission for Iraq. Consequently Hâzım Bey resigned, and Nâzım Paşa served as Vali and Reform Commissioner until the Young Turk Revolution. <sup>99</sup>

## **The *vilayet* of Mosul**

The *vilayet* of Mosul proved exceptionally difficult to administer. As noted earlier, it had the highest turnover of valis of any of the three Iraqi *vilayets*. The problem lay chiefly in the *vilayet's* large Kurdish tribal population, which was well-armed, subordinate to powerful chiefs, prone to brigandage and internecine fighting, and frequently ready to defy the local administration. At the same time, the administration of the *vilayet* was chronically plagued by accusations of corruption and abuse, particularly at its lower levels. The truth appears to be that the Vali of Mosul had little real power. They lacked the means to control the tribes, and even, it seems, their own subordinates. Equally important, as will be shown in the next chapter, Abdülhamid was reluctant to confront the more powerful Kurdish tribal leaders, consistently preferring a policy of conciliation. The Sultan's chief concern was to keep the region tolerably quiet, and in the event of trouble, the easiest course was to replace the Vali.

From early 1883, when the center of the *vilayet* was transferred from Kirkuk to Mosul, the Vali, Tahsin Paşa, had governed with some appearance of success.<sup>[100](#)</sup> In the early summer of 1887, however, serious tribal disturbances led to his removal,<sup>[101](#)</sup> and over the next four years no less than four Valis in succession proved to be failures. Faik Bey was removed in 1888, in the face of continuing tribal disturbance; his successor Ali Kemalî Paşa soon resigned, as did the next Vali, Reşid Paşa; and Podgoriçeli Tahir Paşa was removed in 1891, after a commission of military investigation proved clear evidence of abuses.<sup>[102](#)</sup>

Following Tahir Paşa's dismissal, Ali Kemalî Paşa was again appointed to Mosul, but once again, he resigned within a matter of months.<sup>[103](#)</sup> His place was taken by Osman Paşa in 1892, but by July 1893, continuing administrative problems and tribal disturbances, as well as complaints from other officials at Mosul, drove Abdülhamid himself to order Osman Paşa's dismissal.<sup>[104](#)</sup> Upon the request of the Sultan, the Grand Vizier proposed five appropriate candidates for Mosul. These were Mehmed Paşa, the former Vali of Bitlis, Şakir Paşa, the former Vali of Adana, Hamdi Bey Efendi, the *Mutasarrıf* of Siroz, Enis Paşa, the *Mutasarrıf* of Mardin, and Salih Paşa, the *Mutasarrıf* of Dayr al-Zor.<sup>[105](#)</sup> In the event, however, Abdülhamid held back from implementing this decision, partly, it appears, because he was not satisfied with the five alternative candidates proposed

by the Grand Vizier, and partly because he appears to have had doubts about the complaints against Osman Paşa.

In the meantime, new telegrams reached the Porte from local civil officials of Mosul, complaining Osman Paşa's abuse and incapacity. The Grand Vizier, Cevad Paşa, reiterated his demand for the dismissal of Osman Paşa at once on the ground of the importance of the *vilayet*.<sup>106</sup> As the Grand Vizier reported, Osman Paşa was guilty of abuses of the tax farming system at the expense of the treasury, and of high-handed treatment of subordinate officials.<sup>107</sup> In September 1893, Aziz Paşa, a former Vali of Beirut, was appointed to Mosul.<sup>108</sup>

Aziz Paşa lasted for less than two years. Allegations of corruption and abuses persisted in the *vilayet*, and in May 1895, Abdülhamid asked the Porte to nominate a suitable replacement.<sup>109</sup> The Porte's choice fell upon Hafız Mehmed Paşa, the Vali of Kosova, who had earlier served as Vali of Basra.<sup>110</sup> For reasons which remain obscure, probably because of Hafız Mehmed Paşa's failure in Basra, Abdülhamid declined to endorse this choice, and also rejected the Porte's alternative proposal that Sadeddin Paşa, a military officer from the War Ministry, should be appointed as Vali and Commander of Mosul.<sup>111</sup> Instead, Abdülhamid appointed Salih Paşa, the *Mutasarrıf* of Dayr al-Zor, as Vali only.<sup>112</sup>

Salih Paşa got off to a good start, suppressing corruption and managing to maintain local calm in the face of serious Armenian disturbances which had broken out in the neighboring regions of eastern Anatolia.<sup>113</sup> Before long, however, he fell foul of tribal disturbances in Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah, and at the beginning of April 1896, General Abdullah Paşa, a member of the Sultan's personal military staff (*maiyyet-i seniyye-i mülükâne erkân-ı harbiyesi*), who was then at Diyarbakir on a special mission connected with the Armenian crisis, was ordered to proceed immediately to Mosul and take over as Acting Vali.<sup>114</sup> This was a temporary expedient, but it took the Porte a full six months before it came up with a permanent replacement for Salih Paşa.<sup>115</sup>

The Porte's choice fell upon Zühdü Bey, the President of the Personnel Records Commission (*Sicill-i Ahval Komisyonu*).<sup>116</sup> Before long, however,

complaints of corruption were made against Zühdü Bey, and he was replaced in October 1897 by Abdülvahab Paşa, who, however, proved no more successful.<sup>[117](#)</sup> In July 1898, the Porte again appointed a military officer as Vali: Müşir Arif Paşa, currently serving as Commander of the Garrison in Tripolitania.<sup>[118](#)</sup> Unfortunately, Arif Paşa died in November 1898, after only four months in post.<sup>[119](#)</sup> Once again, it appears that the Porte had difficulty in finding a suitable replacement, and in the meantime reports of disorder and corruption in the *vilayet* grew.<sup>[120](#)</sup>

At last, in February 1899, Abdülhamid appointed Ebubekir Hâzim Bey, a young and able bureaucrat, as Vali of Mosul.<sup>[121](#)</sup> Like his predecessors, however, Hâzim Bey proved unable to quell tribal disturbances, particularly in Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah, or to stem allegations of official corruption, and in late 1900, his administration of the *vilayet* of Mosul was investigated by a commission sent out from Istanbul. It appears that, before the year 1900, a reform committee (*heyet-i islahiye*) had gone to Kirkuk and Suleymaniyah to stop the fighting among tribes and to ensure security in the region. As a result, they had asked for the punishment of 13 persons of the region. Though the Council of Ministers approved these punishments, Abdülhamid asked for a re-examination of each of the cases. Therefore, a commission of investigation was sent to the region to examine them. After carrying out its investigation first in Kirkuk and then Sulaymaniyah, they proceeded to Mosul. Their findings in Kirkuk and Suleymaniyah were as follows: in Kirkuk, Shaikh Mehmed Nuri Efendi of the Talabani family—banditry and robbery; in Sulaymaniyah, the Naqib, Mustafa, and his brother Ma'ruf Efendi—corruption, abuse, crimes against the state treasury; Mehmed Efendizade Shaikh Salih, a former *Müftü*; Sayyid Mustafazâde Mehmed, a former *Müftü*; Sayyid Ahmed; Osman Paşazâde Mecid Bey of the Jaf—abuse, corruption, crimes against state treasury, and oppression. The commission left for Mosul in November 1900.<sup>[122](#)</sup>

The commission reported widespread maladministration in the *vilayet*: the Vali was incapable and indulgent toward the brigandage of the tribes, in particular, the Artusiyah tribe led by Haji Agha; the Commander of Gendarmerie, Hasan Paşa, was corrupt. Moreover, the former *Defterdar*, Asım Efendi, had absconded with the *vilayets* funds, leaving the local troops unpaid, and provoking a serious dispute between the military and the

local financial officials. Although rumors about Ebubekir Hâzım Bey's corruption could not be substantiated, the commission stated that.<sup>[123](#)</sup>

Though the Vali is a man of knowledge and of good breeding, and though no proof of his corruption has been obtained, it is admitted by all that he treated, as noted above, some officials whose corruption and crimes were known with tolerance, and because of his frivolous character (*hafifmeş repliğ i*), he is unable to control them.

These were not the only complaints against Ebubekir Hâzım Bey: in the meantime, Zeki Paşa, the Commander of 4th Army, had complained about his dealings with the Kurdish tribes belonging to the Hamidiye Regiments, and achieved his removal.<sup>[124](#)</sup> The upshot of the commission mentioned earlier was that the local gendarmerie commandant and the former *Defterdar* were committed for trial.<sup>[125](#)</sup> The new Vali, Mustafa Nâzım Bey, who was a protégé of “Kürd” Said Paşa, a native of Sulaymaniyah and a former Foreign Minister, appears to have had more success in suppressing disorders, but his very success led him to be transferred in October 1901 to Erzurum, where there had been a fresh outbreak of Armenian disturbances.<sup>[126](#)</sup>

His replacement, Hacı Reşid Paşa, lasted only until June 1902.<sup>[127](#)</sup> It appears that though he pursued a conciliatory policy toward the tribes, including declaration of an amnesty, this shift in tactics did not work, and in June 1902, Hacı Reşid Paşa was replaced by Nuri Paşa, a former *Mutasarrıf* of Dedeağaç.<sup>[128](#)</sup> Nuri Paşa lasted for three years, and although detailed information about his period in office is lacking, he appears to have been reasonably successful.<sup>[129](#)</sup> In late 1905, however, Nuri Paşa was replaced by Mustafa Yumni Bey, a notable of Syria, and more important, the brother of Arab İzzet Paşa, the Sultan's Second Palace Secretary.<sup>[130](#)</sup> Mustafa Yumni Bey proved far less successful; during his governor-generalship, tribal outbreaks and disorders in the region, especially in Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk, gradually increased, and at times the situation got out of hand, as noted in the next chapter.<sup>[131](#)</sup>

## **The *vilayet* of Basra**



Basra's status as a separate *vilayet* was relatively recent: down to 1875, it had been administered as a *mutasarrıflık* of the *vilayet* of Baghdad, a status which it temporarily reverted in 1880, following a serious conflict between the local authorities and the powerful Muntafiq tribal confederation. The events began with the clash of two rival notable families as early as 1877. From the time of Midhat Paşa onwards, the Sadun family's power was at its height in Basra. They backed the Ottoman government on every occasion, and in turn directly or indirectly ruled Basra province. In 1872, Nasir Paşa of the Sadun was appointed *Mutasarrıf* of Muntafiq; in 1875, he became the first Vali of Basra. But, in October 1877, their chief rival Zuheyrzâde (Çelebizâde) Kasim Paşa succeeded in causing the fall of Nasir Paşa from the governor-generalship. [132](#)

This started the most turbulent quarrel ever for the Ottoman authorities, and its effects were manifest in every walk of life at Basra. In this conflict, while the Saduns allied themselves with the Naqibs of Basra, Kasim Paşa, who was both a member of the Administrative Council and the Head of the Commercial Court of Basra, was backed by the Administrative Council of the *vilayet*. Consequently, Nasir Paşa was taken to Istanbul as a member of the Council of State. The new Vali, Abdullah Paşa, was backed by Kasim Paşa through his influence in Basra. But, before long, in December 1878, in order to crush Kasim Paşa's power, the Saduns convinced the Porte to place Basra under the *vilayet* of Baghdad as it was formerly. Kasim Paşa, in response, started a campaign against the decision and sent a petition to Istanbul, which was signed by 2,000 inhabitants of Basra. Upon this, the Porte immediately reversed the decision, and Basra stayed as a *vilayet*. [133](#)

The Sadun's revenge was to be the dismissal of Abdullah Paşa, the Vali, in September 1879. With the appointment of General Sabit Paşa, as new Vali, Kasim Paşa's power apparently began to decline. This seemed, however, only the beginning. Then came an outbreak in Muntafiq by some members of the Sadun, in early 1880. While as a first measure, Abdurrahman Paşa, the Vali of Baghdad, was sent to the spot, Basra once again became a *mutasarrıflık* and was put under the *vilayet* of Baghdad in May 1880. The Sadun family welcomed the decision, and, together with the Naqibs, helped Abdurrahman Paşa in his proceedings at Basra. This time Kasim Paşa was taken to Istanbul, and Mazhar Paşa, lately *Mutasarrıf* of Karbala, was



appointed as *Mutasarrıf* of Basra. However, the Porte appears to have not given the Saduns what they had expected; before long, the Saduns-government relations had deteriorated, and this led to new outbreaks in Muntafiq. [134](#)

In 1884, however, Basra was once more made a *vilayet*, and retained this status for the remainder of Abdülhamid's reign. [135](#) In one respect, however, the *vilayet* of Basra remained peculiar. Its position at the head of the Gulf, where the Ottoman navy maintained a flotilla based at Basra, gave the Navy Ministry a particular interest and voice in the *vilayet's* affairs. In this connection, it may be noted that between 1884 and 1887, the Acting Vali of the restored *vilayet* of Basra was a naval officer, Vice-Admiral Ali Rıza Paşa, the Commander of the Basra flotilla. At first, several people were nominated by the Grand Vizier for the governor-generalship of Basra: Bedirhanpaşa azâde Necip Paşa, Fikri Paşa, the Vali of Bitlis, and Cevdet Paşa, the *Mutasarrıf* of Maraş, especially among those who were familiar with tribal affairs. [136](#) As nobody was appointed by May 1885, the Grand Vizier proposed to appoint present Acting Vali, Ali Rıza Paşa. As a result, Ali Rıza Paşa served as Acting Vali of Basra until 1887. [137](#)

Following Ali Rıza Paşa's departure in 1887, no less than five valis followed one another in swift succession, which appears to suggest that central government had difficulty in finding suitable candidates for the post. These were Elhac İzzet Efendi (1886–7), Müşir Mehmed Nafiz Paşa (1887–8), Ferik Şaban Paşa (1888–9), Müşir Hidayet Paşa (1889–92), Hafız Mehmed Paşa (1892–3). [138](#) Not surprisingly, several cases of abuse and misgovernment in Basra were observed during these years. The last mentioned Vali, Hafız Mehmed Paşa, was dismissed in 1893 due to his failure in dealing with the matters concerning the Gulf. [139](#)

In 1893, however, the Porte appointed another naval officer, Admiral Mehmed Hamdi Paşa, and apparently found him satisfactory. [140](#) Hamdi Paşa was less happy with his appointment. In August 1894, he asked to be transferred, complaining of the climate (*vehamet-i hava*). This was rejected by the Sultan, but in September, Hamdi Paşa again offered his resignation, alleging ill-health. [141](#) It appears that the Grand Vizier was inclined to accept Hamdi Paşa's request, but that the Sultan was not. One week later,

Hamdi Paşa sent another telegram to the Porte, complaining about the behavior of Vice-Admiral Emin Paşa, the Commander of the Basra flotilla, and demanding his replacement. The Grand Vizier, Cevad Paşa, advised Abdülhamid to replace both men, reasoning that “as it is plain that the conflict and dispute which has arisen between the two men will in future affect affairs, if the Vali is kept in his post, it is essential to replace the Commander.” <sup>142</sup> Once again, however, the Sultan refused to remove Hamdi Paşa.

These matters rested until January 1896, when Hamdi Paşa again asked to leave Basra, alleging that the climate was affecting his health. This time, the *Naib*, the *Defterdar*, and the *Mektubcu* wrote to the Porte on behalf of Hamdi Paşa, confirming his deteriorating health, and stating that doctors had advised him to seek an immediate change of climate. The Grand Vizier, Rifat Paşa, backed this demand, pointing out that Hamdi Paşa’s ill-health was affecting the performance of his duties, and that information had recently reached the Porte about his “incompetence” (*adem-i idaresi*). Rifat Paşa therefore asked for the appointment of a suitable person in Hamdi Paşa’s place. <sup>143</sup> But, in August 1896, Hamdi Paşa was still in Basra. When Rifat Paşa wrote to the Sultan to inform him of the request of Şemseddin Bey, the Ottoman Ambassador at Tehran, for his removal from that post, the Grand Vizier once again reminded the Sultan of the unsolved problem of the Basra governor-generalship. Rifat Paşa stated that he would recommend Şemseddin Bey for Basra in place of Hamdi Paşa about whom there were complaints. <sup>144</sup>

Abdülhamid gave his consent only in December 1896, and Arif Paşa succeeded Hamdi Paşa. <sup>145</sup> Arif Paşa’s appointment coincided with a growing crisis in the affairs of Kuwait, which brought him into conflict with not only the British Consul at Basra, but also with the *Defterdar* of the *vilayet*, and with the Commander of the Basra flotilla, Emin Paşa. During these most turbulent and crucial years in the Gulf, Arif Paşa was declared *persona-non-grata* by the British authorities. The changes in the status quo in the region also brought about an apparent unease among the local high officials and the notables of Basra.

In 1897, there emerged an enmity between Arif Paşa and Emin Paşa. In this conflict, while Emin Paşa was sided with the *Defterdar* of the *vilayet*, the Naqib's family backed Arif Paşa. The core of the matter concerned the differences over the policies employed toward Kuwaiti affairs. Both sides tried to convince the authorities in Istanbul as of rival's harm to the state, and bring about the other's fall. In addition, there was a serious charge against Emin Paşa, by the Naqib's family, who accused the former of allowing importation of a large quantity of rifles to Basra. [146](#)

The accusations and counter-accusations so much occupied the Porte that, in October 1897, they decided to send Receb Paşa, the Müşir of 6th Army, to Basra to investigate. His mission was to settle the "differences" that existed between the Vali and the Admiral. [147](#) In November 1897, after Receb Paşa's inquiry into the matter, the Porte sent General (*Ferik*) Muhsin Paşa of 6th Army to Basra in connection with the same inquiry. [148](#) Finally, it was reported, in February 1898, that Hüseyin Hilmi Efendi (later Paşa) was coming to Basra to enquire into the disputes between Arif Paşa and Emin Paşa. [149](#) Subsequently, both Arif Paşa and Emin Paşa were dismissed by the Porte. [150](#)

A short while later, the Porte sent Mehmed Enis Paşa to Basra as Vali, leaving Muhsin Paşa in charge of the local garrison. [151](#) Within a year, it became clear that Enis Paşa was also unfit for the post, and so Admiral Hamdi Paşa, a successful former Vali (1893–6), was for the second time appointed to Basra in April 1899. However, Hamdi Paşa soon fell foul of the Naqibs of Basra, and in January 1900, he was dismissed from his post. As early as August 1899, the British Consul, Wratislaw, reported this power struggle in Basra to his authorities in Istanbul. [152](#)

According to the account given by the British Consul, ever since Hamdi Paşa's appointment, the Naqib had been working to achieve his downfall. The first step the Naqib took was to send his son, Sayyid Talib, to exert pressure at Istanbul. The second was to join forces with Shaikh Mubarak of Kuwait, who also had reason to dislike and fear Hamdi Paşa. The final move was to set up a rival to the Vali in the person of Muhsin Paşa, the garrison commander. [153](#)

Last September, when Mubarak turned away the official sent to act as Harbor Master at Kuwait, Mohsin Pasha telegraphed to the Sultan that he was ready to carry out all the Sultan's orders conveyed to him direct, but he would not recognize them when transmitted through Hamdi Pasha; and in consequence Mohsin (doubtless at Talib's suggestion) was appointed to act jointly with the Vali in all matters concerning Kuwait. Ever since then, the Sultan would seem to have become more and more uneasy about affairs on the Arabian coast, and his fears have been sedulously worked only the Nakib's son and other supporters at Constantinople. They have assured him that Mubarak's refractory attitude is due solely to the hostility manifested him by Hamdi Pasha, and, were the latter dismissed and Mohsin Pasha appointed in his stead, Mubarak would be as submissive as could be desired and would even pay a visit to Basra to talk over the matter and arrive at a settlement for the future. (...) Matters seemed to have been brought to a head by the arrival of the German railway commission. While they were in Basra, Mohsin Pasha was said to receive an important telegram from Constantinople, and that his answer resulted in Hamdi Pasha's dismissal.

Thus Muhsin Paşa became the Vali of Basra, though he did not last long, being dismissed in late 1901, due to circumstances related to the affairs of Kuwait.<sup>[154](#)</sup> Muhsin Paşa was succeeded by General Mustafa Nuri Paşa, who also assumed command of the garrison. Compared with his recent predecessors, Mustafa Nuri Paşa stayed in post for quite a long time. Not until September 1904 was Mustafa Nuri Paşa removed, due to his failure to forestall a tribal outbreak at Amarah.<sup>[155](#)</sup> Local rumors suggested that Sayyid Talib Paşa, the son of the Naqib, who was then in Istanbul, was working hard to obtain the post of Vali for himself. According to British sources, the state of Basra was unsatisfactory as well as dangerous, and this would help Talib Paşa to get the job.<sup>[156](#)</sup> But in the event, the Sultan preferred the temporary appointment of Fahri Paşa, the chief of staff of 6th Army.<sup>[157](#)</sup> His permanent replacement was a high-ranking soldier, General Mehmed Muhlis Paşa. Like his predecessor, Muhlis Paşa was also charged with the Commandership of Basra.<sup>[158](#)</sup>

In early 1906, however, a quarrel occurred between Muhlis Paşa and Süleyman Şevki Paşa, the Commander of 6th Army at Baghdad, arising out of disputes over their respective jurisdictions. According to Consul

Crow's information, the enmity between them dated from the time when Muhlis Paşa commanded the gendarmerie at Salonica and when Süleyman Şevki Paşa was inspector of railways there. There seemed to be confusion over the contradictory orders from the two centers, Baghdad and Basra. Several examples in this conflict of military jurisdiction led to serious confusion in the arrangements especially in the Muntafiq region.<sup>159</sup> Although orders were subsequently sent to Süleyman Şevki Paşa not to interfere with the Basra *vilayet*, this conflict soon led to Muhlis Paşa's downfall. The latter embarked upon a military campaign against the tribes around Suq ash-Shuyuq, and was heavily defeated; as a result, in May 1906, he was dismissed and immediately summoned to Istanbul.<sup>160</sup> Mecid Bey, the Vali of Baghdad, was appointed Acting Vali of Basra.<sup>161</sup> An investigation was immediately launched into the conduct of Muhlis Paşa at Basra. At the same time, Veli Paşa, aide-de-camp to the Sultan, who was on a special mission at Baghdad at the time, was sent to Basra to inquire into the conduct of the late Vali, Muhlis Paşa, principally with reference to the recent tribal problems, and his quarrel with Süleyman Şevki Paşa, and other high officers of 6th Army at Baghdad.<sup>162</sup>

A while later, Mecid Bey, the Vali of Baghdad, and the Acting Vali of Basra, also proceeded to Basra to settle the problems, which the late Vali had left.<sup>163</sup> In the meantime, the Porte was looking for a proper Vali for Basra, where the problems were about to get out of hand. The British Embassy was also interested in this matter and worked as a pressure group; several cases of attacks on British steamers and properties on the Tigris by the Arab tribesmen (the Maghil case) were still waiting to be settled, and that required a strong and able Vali. When, in June 1906, the British Ambassador made strong representations to the Grand Vizier on the subject of these cases, Ferid Paşa assured him that the appointment of a new and capable Vali to Basra was imminent. He also informed O'Connor that it was the intention of the Ottoman government to dispatch a Military High Commissioner to investigate and report upon the military disorganization prevailing in the *vilayets* of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra; and to take steps to remedy the state of disorder which had arisen through the dispersal of the troops in those *vilayets* in connection with the Persian frontier incident, and the outbreaks in the Muntafiq, and the critical condition of affairs in Kassim and Najd.<sup>164</sup>



But not until September 1906, did Abdülhamid choose a permanent successor among the candidates whom the Grand Vizier proposed to him. The Sultan preferred Abdurrahman Hasan Bey, a member of the Council of State, and a former Vali of Mamuretülaziz. <sup>165</sup> Hasan Bey was a colleague of Sayyid Talib Paşa in the Council of State, and he was known as a protégé of Shaikh Abulhuda. The appointment of Hasan Bey to Basra appears to have marked a visible change in the Porte's outlook toward the administration of Basra *vilayet*; after a long period of time, the post of commander was separated from that of governor-general, and a civil official was appointed to that latter post. This shift in practice comes as no surprise, in light of continuous conflicts among the authorities of Baghdad and Basra, over military matters. Generally speaking, Hasan Bey proved no more successful than his immediate predecessors. He faced continuing tribal outbreaks, and differences of opinion over how to handle them led to fresh quarrels between him and the new Reform Commissioner at Baghdad, as well as the representatives of 6th Army. Nonetheless, Hasan Bey was still in office at the time of the Young Turk Revolution in July 1908. <sup>166</sup>

Throughout the period under study, the Ottoman administration of the Iraqi provinces was based upon a delicate balance between civil and military officials and local notables. In all three *vilayets*, the chief notable families, both Arab and Kurdish, enjoyed significant local influence, and in some cases even had direct links with the Sultan's palace. From the beginning, Abdülhamid showed great care to conciliate, not alienate, the notables, and not to confront the powerful tribal leaders; he was always reluctant to pursue radical measures which might offend them. He always hesitated to use armed force against religious notables and powerful tribal chiefs, whether Arab or Kurdish. Abdülhamid's chief concern was to keep things as quiet as possible, and in case of trouble or a conflict, the easiest way to do this was to replace the Vali or other high officials instead of confronting the notables or powerful tribal leaders. The governor-generalships of Baghdad and Mosul were usually given to those who had previously served in the region, or in neighboring Arab and Kurdish provinces, such as Syria and Diyarbakır, or in places like Tripolitania and Albania, where similar conditions existed. On the other hand, in Basra the Sultan showed a clear preference for military and naval officers, which is not surprising in view of Basra's sensitive frontier position. It is also possible to identify in all three

provinces number of officials who were selected due to their acceptability to local notables. Such appointments appear to have been made with an eye to specific local issues, such as tribal disturbances. When the center made concessions by appointing persons who were favorable to the notables, the state of affairs usually remained quiet, but this often appears to have strengthened the notables' power at the expense of the government, and in the long run produced other problems. In the last few years of the Abdülhamid period, the administration of Baghdad was given special attention and entrusted to young, professional bureaucrats and German-educated soldiers. But Mosul and Basra, whose problems were multiplying, were entrusted to the Palace and notable favorites. In Mosul the high officials' careers were usually determined by tribal issues. In Basra either tribal or regional developments (in Kuwait and the Gulf, and Najd) were decisive.



## 4

### Tribal problems

As explained in [Chapter 1](#), the greater part of Iraq's rural population had a tribal organization. This tribal population included nomadic, semi-settled, and settled elements. As is shown by the official reports examined in previous chapters, the Ottoman authorities regarded the presence of this large tribal population as a major obstacle to good government in Iraq, and to economic and social progress. The tribes were seen as a standing menace to law and order, as recalcitrant to taxation and conscription, and as an obstacle to the establishment of effective governmental authority. At the root of these problems lay the tribes' status as semiautonomous political, social, and even military units, ruled by their own chiefs, bound by their own internal loyalties, and governed by their own customary laws. Before examining the Hamidian regime's approach to the tribal issue, therefore, it is appropriate to consider some of the main characteristics of tribal society in Iraq.<sup>1</sup>

As was common for Arab tribal society of the Middle East, in Iraq it was organized in a hierarchy of units. In descending order of size, these were: the *qabila* or confederation (under the leadership of a paramount shaikh in Arab areas, or a beg in Kurdish areas), the *ashira* or "tribe" (under a shaikh or agha), the *fakhd* or section, and the *bayt* or "house." The relative importance of each of these units varied in accordance with circumstances, but in general, the shaikhs and aghas of the *ashiras* played the most prominent role. Among Arab tribes, many of their duties were delegated to *sarkals* (deputies). Paramount shaikhs of confederations or begs served as mediators between tribes and the government. They were usually appointed or recognized by the government, in accordance with tribal customs; however, in appointing them, the government usually sought certain assurances as to their loyalty, guarantees for the full payment of tax revenues, and for the maintenance of law and order within their tribal areas. Nonetheless, the strength of the confederations varied over time, and also from region to region. In other respects, too, the nature of tribal society varied from area to area, and region to region, depending mostly on

geography and land tenure: the mountainous rain fall Kurdish-Sunni north was different from Arab-Shi'i irrigation zone of the south, and both were different from the desert nomads of western Iraq.

In Arab tribal confederations, there was a social and economic, and therefore political stratification. They were divided into (a) people of the camel, (b) people of the sheep, (c) cultivators, and (d) buffalo-breeding marsh dwellers. The dominant power in the confederations was the people of the camel. This stratification brought a sharp distinction between fighting-nomadic ruling tribesmen and non-related cultivator tribesmen. Every constituent tribe of the confederations had a *dirah* —“an area of land which it habitually occupied and which was its preserve as long as it could defend it.” The *dirah* was collectively owned and divided among the various sections of the tribe. In the rich agricultural regions, the tribes were closely knit, and united under their shaikhs. In areas bordering the desert, strength, and cohesion were necessary against other tribes. Where crops, such as rice, required close and effective supervision, cultivators gladly submitted to the absolute authority of their shaikhs. Small and weak tribes allied themselves with more powerful neighbors. In this way, in certain regions, large tribal confederations were formed under a paramount shaikh. These confederations were: the Khazail of the middle Euphrates (Hilla-Diwaniyah), the Albu Muhammad and the Banu Lam of Amarah, and the Muntafiq in the south.

In the Kurdish areas of the north and northeast, there was a different pattern.<sup>2</sup> For Kurds, the basis of tribal unity was common ties with the land, rather than the extended family as was the case among Arabs. They included both nomadic and settled elements. In Kurdish areas, three forms of leadership were identifiable: a classical tribal group of common descent under an agha, a tribe under a chief of different descent, and a tribe whose religious chiefs combined secular with religious authority. The basis of economy and society was the village, not agricultural estates (*mukataa*), as in the case of Arab regions. The nomadic tribes had their own grazing grounds, but the lands in the villages were either in the hands of tribal aghas, who were their own masters, or held for life (theoretically) by the reigning Kurdish families.

From 1831 onwards, the Ottomans aimed to break the power of the tribal confederations in Iraq. During the early years of the Tanzimat period, in the absence of a powerful army, Ottoman tribal policy mainly relied on the principle of “divide and rule,” fostering or using rivalries within the ruling families of the confederations, or between shaikhs of constituent tribes, or between the latter and the ruling families, or, ignoring the shaikhs altogether and dealing directly with the chiefs of tribal sections. In the pursuit of these policies, the Ottoman officials used land and tax as useful weapons both before and after the application of the 1858 Land Law.

The beginning of the application of 1858 Land Law in the early 1870s, accompanied by development of navigation and communication, and the emergence of a market-oriented agricultural economy, brought new developments in terms of the tribal issue. Under the Land Law, the usufructs of state lands were granted sometimes to the cultivators, though more generally, to the paramount tribal shaikhs, city merchants, and notables, for an appropriate fee. In some places, like Diyala, Karbala, and the neighborhood of Baghdad, this had led to a rapid erosion of the tribal system. In other places, like Hilla-Diwaniyah region of the middle Euphrates, the tribal system had persisted, but had been significantly modified, as the authority of the paramount chiefs of the old tribal confederations declined, while that of the lesser shaikhs and *sarkals* of individual tribes grew stronger. In Muntafiq and Amarah, however, the tribal system remained strong.

In Kurdish areas, on the other hand, where the power of the big Kurdish emirates was destroyed after 1831, power passed to the begs and aghas, and to the shaikhs of the tariqas, and following the application of the Land Law, the bulk of *tapu* lands passed into their hands. As a result, agrarian relations remained quite similar to the period before the *tapu* system, with those who had previously acquired wealth and authority as tax farmers and moneylenders now acquiring it as landowners. Since the Ottoman government was not able to collect taxes directly from the cultivators, tax farming continued to provide an important power base for the notables. The result was a chronic political and economic power struggle among shaikhly families, begs, and aghas, as the development of commercial agriculture

and regional trade increased the importance of tax farming and possession of lands.

## **The *vilayet* of Mosul**

The northern and eastern parts of the *vilayet* of Mosul were populated by Kurdish tribes, which were under the influence of certain Kurdish religious (shaikhly) families. These religious families, who traditionally belonged to either the Qadiri or Naqshbandi orders, had expanded their influence over the local tribes from the 1830s onwards, after the destruction of the semi-independent Kurdish emirates by Mahmud II.<sup>[3](#)</sup>

In the period under study, the region of Sulaymaniyah, in the southeast of the *vilayet*, was under the influence of the Barzinji *sayyids* of the Qadiri order. They controlled all the Kurdish tribes of Sulaymaniyah, except the Jaf tribe. The Barzinjis' rise had begun in the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz (1861–76), and continued during Abdülhamid's reign. Through the religious authority enjoyed by the Barzinji Kak Ahmad, who was regarded as a saint, and later through his grandson, Shaikh Said (d. 1909), they gained considerable power and wealth in the region. Shaikh Said several times traveled to Istanbul, and gained the favor of Sultan Abdülhamid, as well as of Hacı Ali Paşa, the Principal Palace Chamberlain, and of Arab İzzet Paşa, the influential Second Palace Secretary. In his home territory, however, Shaikh Said faced several rivals: the merchants of Sulaymaniyah, which had become a market for the produce of all southern Kurdistan and for Iranian trade; and opponents in other branches of the Barzinji family, who were led by Sayyid Muhammad Said Barzinji.<sup>[4](#)</sup>

The Barzinjis' principal rivals, however, were a rival shaikhly family which had considerable influence over the tribes of Kirkuk: the Talabanis of the Qadiri order. Through their religious influence over the tribes and villagers, the Talabanis had managed to acquire great amounts of land, and considerable wealth and local power. Like the Barzinjis, the Talabanis were divided into several branches. While some of them, like Shaikh Rıza, a celebrated poet, established close contacts with the government, and in turn enjoyed its favors, others were involved in raids and brigandage, and caused trouble to the government.<sup>[5](#)</sup>

The two major Kurdish tribes in the Kirkuk-Sulaymaniyah region were the Jaf and the Hamawand. The Jaf, the biggest tribe, lived in the area between Sulaymaniyah and the Sanandadj (Senna) district of western Iran, and were divided into several sections. From the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, they had lived as a part of the Baban Emirate. After being nominally incorporated into the Ottoman administrative system around 1850, the tribe was ruled through its chiefs, whom the government appointed as *kaymakams*, and held responsible for security and taxation. The Jaf were nomadic cattle-owners, and their annual migrations across the frontier into Iran involved them in feuds with neighbors and also became a factor in Ottoman-Iranian frontier politics. While on the one hand the chiefs tried to play off both governments against each other, on the other they struggled for power among themselves.<sup>6</sup>

The Hamawand, a smaller but warlike tribe, lived between Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah. The tribe's ruling family was divided into four branches: aghas from this family were established in some 50 villages of the area, controlling their own tribal followers and client villagers. They had supported the Baban Emirs of Sulaymaniyah until their semi-autonomous rule came to an end around 1850. For decades thereafter, the Hamawand created trouble for both the Ottoman and the Iranian governments, thanks to their systematic brigandage over the whole area between Baghdad, Kirmanshah, and Mosul.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the Jaf and the Hamawand, mention should be made of certain lesser Kurdish tribes in the north and east of the *vilayet*. Around Mosul, Dihok, and Arbil, there were several Kurdish tribes which were generally under the influence of Naqshbandi shaikhs, whose authority grew considerably through the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> The western part of the *vilayet*, on the other hand, was inhabited by the big Arab tribal confederations, such as the Shammar Jarba and the Aniza, which preserved their nomadic way of life.<sup>9</sup>

The disastrous Russo-Ottoman war of 1877–8 left a power vacuum in the *vilayet* of Mosul, as in many other parts of the Empire. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the Hamawand took advantage of the weakening of central authority to increase its brigandage in the Kirkuk-Sulaymaniyah

region, and from late 1885 onwards, the *vilayet* authorities faced a further outbreak of serious tribal disorders, again involving the Hamawand.<sup>[10](#)</sup> From early in the year, reports reached Istanbul, pointing to outbreaks of tribal fighting and brigandage around Mosul and Baghdad, in particular involving the Hamawand tribe, and also warning of Iranian military preparations on the border.<sup>[11](#)</sup> The Grand Vizier, Kamil Paşa, noted that the Hamawand were “disturbing loyal subjects,” and he instructed the Vali of Mosul to proceed to Sulaymaniyah to pacify the population. At the same time, the Vali of Mosul commenced an investigation into the conduct of the *Mutasarrıf* of Sulaymaniyah.<sup>[12](#)</sup>

The Porte’s investigations revealed that these disorders had their root in an outbreak of fighting between the Barzinji and Talabani families, provoked by the murder of a member of the Talabani family. According to Shaikh Maruf of the Talabani family, although Shaikh Said and his accomplices had been arrested and imprisoned by the *vilayet* authorities, the Barzinjis were continuing their attacks upon the Talabanis. While Shaikh Said and his men were trying to obtain their own release, another member of the family, Shaikh Hasan, with 500 men, launched an attack upon Shaikh Maruf’s *tekke* in Kirkuk. He asked for immediate help.<sup>[13](#)</sup> The Hamawand and other tribes of Mosul and Baghdad had taken advantage of this situation to break the peace, attacking and robbing villages. Upon receiving these reports, the Porte asked the Vali of Mosul to find an immediate solution to the conflict. Kamil Paşa complained that the Vali had been slow to act, and reminded him of his responsibilities.<sup>[14](#)</sup>

Abdülhamid and his advisers were disposed to take a serious view of the situation. Given the long history of disorders, it was recognized that it was not enough to resolve the immediate conflict between the Barzinjis and the Talabanis: something must be done about the local tribes, and especially the Hamawand. The Porte therefore proposed to send local troops against the tribes, with instructions to use persuasion if possible, but armed force if necessary. In either case, the tribes in question were to be re-settled, far away from the border.<sup>[15](#)</sup> The Sultan proposed to send İsmail Hakkı Paşa, a veteran of tribal wars, to Mosul as a special commissioner.<sup>[16](#)</sup> In October 1886, a special commission was set up at the Porte to endorse the Sultan’s proposal and to consider İsmail Hakkı Paşa’s instructions. The



commission was formed by the Grand Vizier, the President of the Council of State, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of the Interior, and the Minister of Justice. The commission warned that although local military forces could successfully defeat the Hamawand, the latter might easily rise again in the future, given the chance. The commission argued that only a radical administrative reform could provide the strong local government needed to curb tribal lawlessness once and for all: specifically, the commission proposed that the *vilayets* of Mosul and Basra should be abolished, and the whole region incorporated in a greater *vilayet* of Baghdad, controlled by a single Vali.<sup>[17](#)</sup>

Abdülhamid responded by appointing a second commission, including local representatives and experts on the region, in order to prepare instructions for İsmail Hakkı Paşa.<sup>[18](#)</sup> The members of the second commission were Kamil Paşa, the Grand Vizier, Mehmed Namık Paşa, a former Vali of Baghdad, Derviş Paşa, one of the chief advisers to the Sultan and an expert on tribal affairs, Rauf Paşa, a former Vali of Baghdad, İsmail Hakkı Paşa himself, Mahmud Paşa, the President of the Reform Legislation Section (*Tanzimat Dairesi*) of the Council of State, Sayyid Salman Efendi, the Naqibu'l-Ashraf of Baghdad, Emin Bey of the Senate, who was a notable of Baghdad, and (*Nişli*) Mahmud Bey, a Palace Chamberlain, who had worked as secretary of a former Vali, Abdurrahman Paşa, in Baghdad.<sup>[19](#)</sup>

The second commission inclined to endorse its predecessor's recommendations. Its report, dated November 8, 1886, agreed that the primary issue was not the Talabani-Barzinji conflict, but general tribal lawlessness. However, it questioned the usefulness of sending a special commissioner to the region, preferring to work through the established organs of local government. It pointed out that any special commissioner would have to work with the local officials, rely upon their knowledge and advice, and that it would probably be better to work directly through the Valis of Mosul and Baghdad. At the same time, however, the members of the commission declared themselves to be dissatisfied with the local administration, and proposed to implement a general administrative reform in Baghdad and Mosul before implementing any measures or policies regarding the tribes. In other words, the governors should be reformed



before the governed. Specifically, they proposed that Mosul, Şehrîzor, and Basra should be reduced to *sancaks* under a greater *vilayet* of Baghdad, as they had been in the past, and that the entire region be run by one Vali. They argued that this would facilitate the taking of effective measures and the implementing of a reform policy, helping to enhance the administrative and financial self-sufficiency of the province, and thus making it easier to deal with the tribes. As a first step, they suggested, senior local administrators should be consulted about reforms, and empowered to remove incapable and corrupt officials. Finally, the commission noted that Iran had proposed that the two governments reach an agreement to suppress the Hamawand tribe, and urged that this proposal be followed up.<sup>20</sup>

Abdülhamid declined to endorse these suggestions, and insisted that İsmail Hakkı Paşa, who was familiar with the problems of the region and the characteristics of the tribes, should be sent to Mosul, with an appropriate entourage of officials and military officers.<sup>21</sup> The Sultan also made it plain that he was reluctant to take harsh measures against the religiously influential Barzinji and Talabani families: “By reason of the fact that the Barzinjis are a family of Sayyids (*sülale-i tahire*), those [officials] are to be advised to take great attention and care to treat them with complete justice and fairness.” Abdülhamid indicated, however, that he was prepared to countenance strong measures against the Hamawand tribe. He also approved the proposal to work for an agreement between Iran and the Ottoman Empire to deal with the Hamawand, though he added that any agreement must be in favor of the Ottomans.<sup>22</sup> The Sultan later ordered the Council of Ministers to draw up revised instructions for İsmail Hakkı Paşa.<sup>23</sup>

By the time İsmail Hakkı Paşa set out for Mosul, toward the end of 1886, local reports indicated that the conflict between the Barzinjis and the Talabanis had been settled, and that security was restored.<sup>24</sup> However, when the conflict resumed in January 1887, Abdülhamid changed his stance: he ordered İsmail Hakkı Paşa to proceed to Mosul at once and try the culprits according to the principles of “justice and equity.” Accordingly, in a court martial chaired by the special commissioner, nine persons from both families were condemned to hard labor with exile for three years. This verdict was approved by the Sultan.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, military measures against the Hamawand continued, with every appearance of success. Major-General Muhammad Fazil Paşa a Daghistani had been sent by 6th Army at Baghdad to suppress the Hamawand, and before long, some members of the tribe laid down their arms. But others continued their attacks and robberies, especially around Khaniqin.<sup>26</sup> Later, in 1887, during İsmail Hakkı Paşa's campaigns, chiefs of other sub-tribes were either captured or surrendered. The Porte ordered that those who had surrendered should be settled far away from the border, to make sure that they would not be able to cross over into Iran in the future.<sup>27</sup> In late June 1887, it was reported that the number of arms which had been seized had already reached 2,000, and in due course, was expected to reach a total of 3,000 or 4,000.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, Hamawand chiefs and their tribesmen (223 *hane* ) were exiled to Adana, Sivas, Konya, and Ankara. İsmail Hakkı Paşa's mission ended in apparent success toward the late summer of 1887, and he returned to Istanbul.<sup>29</sup>

Barely a year later, however, fresh disturbances were reported from the region, this time involving the Jaf tribe. The chief of this tribe, Mahmud Paşa a, had hitherto been loyal, and had been rewarded with the title of Paşa a and the office of *Kaymakam* of Gulanber *Kaza* . But in late 1888, Mahmud Paşa a was reported to have begun causing trouble for the Ottoman authorities in the region. In order to examine the situation, a commission headed by Derviş Paşa a met at the Porte in November 1888. It made two main recommendations: first, Mahmud Paşa a should be promoted to the post of *Mutasarrıf* of either Hama, or Urfa, in order to get him away from his tribe, and his brother Osman Bey should be appointed as *Kaymakam* of Gulanber in his place. Second, a new Vali, familiar with the tribes and the region, should be sent to Mosul. These two recommendations were approved by Abdülhamid.<sup>30</sup> It was decided to appoint Mahmud Paşa a as *Mutasarrıf* of Urfa, and Ali Kemalî Paşa a was selected to be the new Vali of Mosul.<sup>31</sup>

The Porte had hopes of a more fundamental solution to the Jaf problem: while Mahmud Paşa a was away, his tribe was to be settled around Gulanber. But after a few months' consideration, the Grand Vizier, Kamil Paşa a, together with the other ministers, expressed doubts: although Mahmud Paşa a might be induced to come to Istanbul if he were given enough assurances of safe conduct, the whole Jaf tribe was not under his control. According to

the Porte's information, the Jaf tribe consisted of several sub-tribes, each with their own Beg. If required to settle, they might rise up regardless of Mahmud Paşa's influence. In any case, the ministers noted, Mahmud Paşa was not a trustworthy person in the eyes of the local officials; he was reported to have stolen large amounts of public funds.<sup>32</sup>

It appears that upon reading this report, especially the part about Mahmud Paşa's bad record as *Kaymakam* of Gulanber, Abdülhamid changed his mind, and decided not to appoint Mahmud Paşa to Urfa.<sup>33</sup> Instead, Mahmud Paşa was summoned to Istanbul. But the decision to settle the Jaf tribe was not abandoned. During the second half of 1889, while Mahmud Paşa was still in Istanbul, consideration of this point seems to have continued, and in early December 1889, an imperial order was issued, announcing that in order to prepare the ground for the settlement of the Jaf tribe, two special commissions were to be established, one local and one central. The local commission's members were to be the Vali of Mosul, Head of the Privy Purse of Mosul, the *Mutasarrıf* of Sulaymaniyah, and some of the local notables. The central commission was to be headed by İsmail Hakkı Paşa.<sup>34</sup>

Mahmud Paşa had obeyed the summons to come to Istanbul, but although he was offered a salary of 5,000 *kuruş* and a house in Beşiktaş, near the Sultan's palace, he insisted that he wanted to go back to his home region and his tribe.<sup>35</sup> The Palace evidently declined to accept this demand, for in 1890, Mahmud Paşa once again applied to the Grand Vizier for permission to go to Mosul, or for appointment to one of the *mutasarrıflıks* in the *vilayets* of Baghdad or Basra.<sup>36</sup> Finally, in August 1891, he suddenly disappeared from Istanbul, and was reported to have made his way to Mosul. This was an open challenge to the authorities, who issued several orders for his arrest.<sup>37</sup> On this occasion, Abdülhamid's policy of avoiding harsh measures against the Barzinji and Talabani shaikhs paid off, for Shaikh Hamid Talabani of Kirkuk put himself forward as a mediator, and offered to persuade Mahmud Paşa to give himself up.<sup>38</sup> Thanks to his efforts, Mahmud Paşa came out of hiding, and was taken to Istanbul by Shaikh Hamid Talabani in 1892.<sup>39</sup>

In the meantime, however, the authorities faced further trouble from the Hamawand tribe.<sup>40</sup> In 1889, some Hamawand tribesmen were exiled to Tripolitania; but before long, they escaped, and made their way back to the *vilayet* of Mosul, where they resumed their brigandage and attacks upon the local population.<sup>41</sup> By March 1891, the situation had deteriorated to the point where a petition, signed by 90 notables of Kirkuk, was sent to the Palace through the French Embassy.<sup>42</sup> This was a humiliation for the Ottoman government, and the Grand Vizier blamed it on the inexperience and incompetence of Tahir Paşa, the Vali of Mosul.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, troops were sent against the Hamawand, some of whom surrendered. The Porte issued instructions that those who readily surrendered were to be settled in villages, and be given either salary or materials for agriculture and living.<sup>44</sup> In late June 1891, the Palace issued instructions that one person from each of the six sub-tribes of the Hamawand was to be detained in Kirkuk as a guarantor, but that those Hamawand who were still resisting the government forces were to be captured and sent into exile, to Adana and to the island of Rhodes.<sup>45</sup>

While the struggle against the Hamawand continued, the Shammar Jarba tribe in the Syrian Desert and the Pashdar tribe near the Iranian border had also started to cause trouble, prompting Cevad Paşa, the new Grand Vizier, to suggest to Abdülhamid in June 1892 that 6th Army should be empowered to send a special force to Mosul, as the Vali of Mosul and the Commander of 6th Army had proposed.<sup>46</sup> Initially, Abdülhamid declined to sanction the use of force, and argued that the offending tribes should be dealt with through “wise measures” (*tedabir-i hikemiyane*).<sup>47</sup> By the end of June, however, the Sultan had changed his mind, agreeing to the dispatch of a special force, and placing General Ömer Vehbi Paşa in command. Ömer Vehbi Paşa arrived in Mosul in early July 1892.<sup>48</sup>

Ömer Vehbi Paşa’s first task, as Commander of the “Reform Force” (*Kuvve-i Islahiye*), was to crush the rebellious tribes, especially the Hamawand and the Pashdar, and to restore security to the region. This he did successfully.<sup>49</sup> But he did not stop there, and in accordance with instructions from Istanbul, embarked upon the registration of the population and of lands and properties, the conscription of recruits for the army,

improvements in tax collection, and measures against administrative abuses. Some of his actions, for example the suppression of tribal fighting and the opening of primary schools, appear to have made a good impression in the area, and several letters of appreciation written by the local population reached the Palace. But his registration of the population and of land aroused great opposition, especially from the local notables. The latter soon raised objections against the policies of Ömer Vehbi Paşa, using the counting of women during registration as a pretext. In reality, they seem to have considered registration of the population and land a threat to their own and their families' interests. Ömer Vehbi Paşa responded by arresting those who had tried to provoke the public against his actions, including certain leading notables of Mosul, some of whom were members of the Administrative Council of the *vilayet*. At the same time, he set out to cancel the current tax farming contracts.<sup>[50](#)</sup> Several petitions of complaint from Mosul reached the Palace in Istanbul, but Ömer Vehbi Paşa's protector, Cevad Paşa, continued to support him.<sup>[51](#)</sup>

However, before very long, the Palace took the matter into its own hands. It appears that Ömer Vehbi Paşa attempted to convert the Yezidi tribes of Mosul to Islam by force, leading to French and British protests, and in December 1892, he was dismissed.<sup>[52](#)</sup> A special commission was sent by the Sultan to the region to investigate the population's complaints against Ömer Vehbi Paşa. In August 1893, the commission reported to the Palace that Ömer Vehbi Paşa had exceeded his authority, and Abdülhamid gave orders that the offending General be committed for trial, though not in a normal court, for this could bring unpleasant publicity. Instead, a special court should to be formed in the Council of State, and the trial should be held within a fortnight.<sup>[53](#)</sup> Ömer Vehbi Paşa was swiftly retired, a victim of his own extremism, but also, it may be suggested, of Abdülhamid's reluctance to pursue radical measures which might offend local notables.

Even so, Ömer Vehbi Paşa had successfully quelled the Hamawand and the Pashdar, and until late 1894 the *vilayet* of Mosul enjoyed a respite from tribal troubles. As a result, however, central government made a serious error which was to provoke a fresh round of conflict with the Jaf Begs and the Barzinji Shaikhs. By the end of 1894, the situation in the Mosul region seemed so satisfactory that two "honorary detainees," Sayyid Muhammad

Efendi of the Barzinji family, and Mahmud Paşa of the Jaf tribe, were allowed to leave Istanbul and return to their home areas. Although written assurances were obtained from both men, trouble started as soon as they arrived in Mosul.

The return of Sayyid Muhammad Efendi touched off a power struggle between two branches of the Barzinji family, led on the one side by Shaikh Said Efendi, the grandson of the celebrated Kak Ahmad, and on the other by Sayyid Muhammad Efendi.<sup>54</sup> From December 1894 onwards, this developed into a feud that was to last over a decade. The two branches of the family, each with its dependant tribesmen, were to clash with each other several times, and in addition, to compete in extending their rival hegemonies over the local population. Before long, the Jaf and the Hamawand also began to create problems for the government.

As soon as Sayyid Muhammad Efendi reached Sulaymaniyah, his followers began to attack Shaikh Said's villages. Local officials attempted to mediate, as did the Commander of 6th Army, Receb Paşa, but in vain.<sup>55</sup> Only when threatened with arrest and trial did Sayyid Muhammad Efendi agree to a reconciliation with Shaikh Said. Sayyid Muhammad twice telegraphed the Sultan's palace complaining of "misconceptions" and a "plot" against himself, and begged for imperial pardon. This was enough for Abdülhamid; pardon was soon issued, and both shaikhs were summoned to Mosul for a reconciliation ceremony.<sup>56</sup> In the meantime, Abdülhamid specially instructed the Grand Vizier and the Vali of Mosul that the matter should be handled through good will, without annoying or insulting the Sayyids.<sup>57</sup>

These measures failed to produce the desired effect, and in early July 1895, the Porte decided to send a special commission, headed by İbrahim Paşa, a member of the Military Inspection Commission, to Mosul to make peace between the Barzinji shaikhs.<sup>58</sup> But İbrahim Paşa's peace lasted barely 10 days. Having rejected the option of the Barzinjis' exile, Abdülhamid ordered General Abdullah Paşa of his entourage to proceed immediately to Mosul.<sup>59</sup> Abdullah Paşa stayed in the region for about six months and gained considerable success against the outlaw tribes. Nevertheless, the Barzinjis resumed their quarrel. In September 1897, they were arrested by



local officials and taken to Diyarbakır for trial.<sup>60</sup> But, as before, Abdülhamid intervened, and pardoned the Barzinji shaikhs.<sup>61</sup>

In the meantime, the return of Mahmud Paşa from Istanbul had provoked a fresh outbreak of trouble within the Jaf tribe. It was reportedly Shaikh Said Barzinji who had persuaded Abdülhamid to pardon Mahmud Paşa. Prior to his return, Mahmud Paşa had submitted a written assurance of future good behavior and taken an oath of loyalty; he was also given his rank and decorations back, together with his full salary. Just before Mahmud Paşa left Istanbul, the Chief Secretary to the Sultan, Süreyya Paşa, once more warned him about his behavior in the future, and alluded to current rumors that Mahmud Paşa had provoked some uneasiness among the Jaf. Mahmud Paşa denied the rumors and promised, on oath, that “he will be loyal as he has already been.”<sup>62</sup> Yet, like Sayyid Muhammad Efendi, Mahmud Paşa began to cause trouble as soon as he arrived back among his tribe. He started a campaign of agitation against his brother, Osman Paşa, who had replaced him as the recognized tribal ruler. Osman Paşa complained to the Porte, as did Shaikh Said Barzinji, who had stood as Mahmud Paşa’s guarantor.<sup>63</sup> However, Mahmud Paşa sent a telegram directly to the Palace, claiming that all the accusations were fabrications. Abdülhamid ordered a full investigation.<sup>64</sup> His ministers urged that Mahmud Paşa should be taken to Mosul, and forbidden to return to his tribe. They warned that even if Mahmud Paşa were innocent of the charges laid against him, the rivalry between him and Osman Paşa rendered a severe conflict likely in the near future.<sup>65</sup> However, Abdülhamid declined to endorse his ministers’ wish: he insisted on having a full investigation before taking any action against Mahmud Paşa.<sup>66</sup>

In the meantime, the situation had worsened. The taxes could not be collected because of the quarrel between Mahmud Paşa and Osman Paşa, and in February 1896, the new Grand Vizier, Rifat Paşa, asked for severe punishment for Mahmud Paşa. Once again, however, the Sultan refused. A few months later, in May 1896, the Council of Ministers proposed even more radical measures: having taken into account previous experience, and the opinions of the Mosul *vilayet* authorities, they proposed to exile all the known troublemakers in the region, together with some other notables of Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah. Those who had committed or encouraged crimes



of murder and robbery were to be exiled: Naqib Mustafa Efendi of Sulaymaniyah and Shaikh Maruf Barzinji of Sulaymaniyah were to live in Baghdad; Sayyid Muhammad Efendi of Sulaymaniyah, Ahmed Efendi, Mayor of Sulaymaniyah, and Mahmud Paşa of the Jaf were to be banished to Tripolitania; Muhammad Ali Talabani of Kirkuk, Muhammad Rauf Talabani of Kirkuk, and Suleyman Bey were to be banished to Damascus. Osman Paşa of the Jaf, on the other hand, was to be appointed to a *kaymakamlık* in the *vilayet* of Konya. Most important of all, the Council of Ministers proposed that the administrative center of the *vilayet* should be moved from Mosul to Kirkuk—to the heart of the Kurdish region. They also proposed to cease employing local people in government offices, from the gendarmerie up to the posts of *kaymakam*. Finally, a policy of general disarmament of the local population was to be started, and the production, sale, and purchase of arms were to be banned.<sup>67</sup>

Yet again, however, Abdülhamid declined to endorse his ministers' recommendations. The Sultan remained reluctant to alienate the local shaikhs, aghas, and begs, particularly in view of the serious Armenian disturbances which had broken out in eastern Anatolia in 1894, and which continued through to 1897. Sultan Abdülhamid appears to have suspected that the charges against the local Muslim leaders had been fabricated by the Armenians and their alleged foreign supporters as a means of weakening the Muslim element in the population, and he more than once emphasized his determination to protect these leaders. In the words of Ebubekir Hâzim Bey, a Vali of Mosul (1899–1901),<sup>68</sup>

I could in no way explain the [position of] brigand shaikhs to the Sultan. Whenever [I] attempted to take measures against them, he [Sultan] did not give permission, on the grounds that “it is not right to punish Muslim shaikhs and men of importance on account of the Armenians' slanders” (...) I got the following telegram, in cipher, from Kamil Bey, the cipher clerk [at the Palace]: “There is a strong possibility that these unjust accusations about some Muslim notables arose from an intrigue by Armenians and foreigners.”

In 1897, the Grand Vizier, Rifat Paşa, asked the Sultan to send a military force to Kirkuk-Sulaymaniyah region, under Major-General Rıza Bey, to

suppress the outlaw tribes which were harming local trade and security. At the same time, Rifat Paşa reiterated his view that the *vilayet* center should be moved back to Kirkuk, adding that both the Vali and the Commander of Mosul supported his view. The Sultan continued to resist the Porte's demands for vigorous measures against the outlaw tribes of Mosul.<sup>69</sup> In the event, the Jaf troubles appear to have resolved themselves by late 1897; it appears that though Osman Paşa remained as *Kaymakam* of Gulanber, he and Mahmud Paşa divided the Jaf tribes between themselves, and ruled their respective parts without much friction.<sup>70</sup>

Although the period between 1897 and 1902 saw a relative calm in the affairs of the Jaf and the Barzinjis of the Kirkuk-Sulaymaniyah region, it also saw considerable trouble with some of the Kurdish tribes in the north of the *vilayet*, around Dihok and Amadiyah. Here, matters were complicated by the system of Hamidiye Light Cavalry Regiments which Abdülhamid had instituted among the Kurdish tribesmen of eastern and south eastern Anatolia from 1891 onwards. Under this system, selected tribes provided one or more regiments, and lesser tribes furnished joint regiments. However, the privileges and arms furnished by government to the Kurdish tribes belonging to the Hamidiye regiments had the effect of undermining the existing balance of power among the Kurdish tribes themselves, and also the old power relationships between *tariqa* shaikhs and tribal chiefs.<sup>71</sup>

The “troublemaker” in this region was Haji Agha, the chief of the Artusiyah tribe, and a *Kaymakam* (lieutenant-colonel) in the Hamidiye forces. From early 1897 onwards, Haji Agha attacked and plundered villages and other tribes in the neighborhood of Dihok. In March 1897, for instance, it was reported that there was a considerable disturbance in the district of Dihok, owing to quarrels between the Kurdish tribes. Haji Agha of the Artusiyah tribe was always attacking the migratory Owramarah tribe and the Kahariyeh tribe. When these tribes attacked each other they plundered whatever they wanted, such as property, grain, and cattle, from the villages they passed by, be their inhabitants Muslim, Christian, or the Yezidis.<sup>72</sup> As Haji Agha belonged to the Hamidiye forces, no civil or military official in the region could act against him. They could only inform Zeki Paşa, the Commander of 4th Army, at Erzincan; but Zeki Paşa always protected the

Kurdish tribes who belonged to the Hamidiye, and this led to serious administrative conflicts, both in eastern Anatolia and in Mosul, between officials in charge of those provinces and Zeki Paşa. Since Zeki Paşa enjoyed Abdülhamid's support, the conflicts generally ended in Zeki Paşa's favor.<sup>73</sup>

In November 1898, Haji Agha was reported to have plundered and burned certain villages belonging to Shaikh Nur Muhammad, an influential Naqshbandi shaikh in Dihok. In response, Shaikh Nur Muhammad had assembled a large body of armed Kurds, so large and formidable that it created a panic in Dihok, where the shops and markets were closed. The authorities sent some troops from Mosul to maintain the peace, but to little avail.<sup>74</sup> In January 1899, the Doskiyeh Kurds were instigated by Shaikh Nur Muhammad to attack the Kochar Kurds, followers of Haji Agha.<sup>75</sup> In February, news reached Mosul that the Kurds were plundering Yezidi villages in Dihok. According to the British Consular Agent, armed with Martini rifles, they descended into open country and plundered the villages. The local authorities were said to have taken no action against them, while all complaints to Istanbul produced no result whatsoever.<sup>76</sup>

According to British sources, the *Kaymakam* of Dihok, Mehmed Ali Bey, was also corrupt. Under his rule, the thefts and robberies committed by the Kurds so increased that a petition was sent to Mosul by the Qadi, the members of the Administrative Council of Dihok, and the notables of the place, reporting on the maladministration of the *Kaymakam*. But this time the initiative of the notables did work, and Muhammad Efendi, the son of the *Müftü* of Mosul, was sent to Dihok to replace the then current *Kaymakam*, while the latter was summoned to Mosul for an investigation. However, according to the British Consular Agent, when the ulama and the notables of Mosul, and the spiritual heads of the non-Muslim communities, sent a telegram of complaint, enquiries were made by the Porte through the Acting Vali, Hamdi Bey, who was known to be corrupt, reported that all the complaints were false.<sup>77</sup>

The Sultan was sufficiently alarmed to dispatch a new Vali, Ebubekir Hâzim Bey, to Mosul. The Principal Palace Secretary, Tahsin Paşa, told Ebubekir Hâzim Bey that he must go to the region as soon as possible, for

“the Kurds are devouring one another like wolves” (*Kürtler kurt gibi birbirini yiyorlar*) .<sup>78</sup> In line with the Sultan’s general attitude, Ebubekir Hâzim Bey chose to resort to mediation, and with success, for Shaikh Nur Muhammad was induced to disband his forces and to come to Mosul to state his case.<sup>79</sup> It was rumored that the shaikh was accompanied by about 1,000 horsemen and expected reinforcements of 1,000 infantrymen from the tribes of the districts of Dihok, Amadiyah, and Zakho. According to the British Consular Agent, the Vali sent out the Naqib and Salih Efendi Saadi, two notables of Mosul, to intervene and effect a compromise between the two parties. The Naqib successfully persuaded the shaikh to return to Mosul and explain his case to the authorities. Shaikh Nur Muhammad stayed in Mosul for a while, in the Naqib’s house. While he was in Mosul, the Vali assured him that he would enquire into his complaint and sent for Haji Agha to stand for trial, then reported his own actions to Istanbul and awaited telegraphic orders.<sup>80</sup>

In August 1899, the Porte permitted Shaikh Nur Muhammad to return to Dihok; two months later, the Palace ordered Haji Agha to transfer with his tribe to the *vilayet* of Diyarbakır, apparently because it was satisfied that the complaints against him were well-founded.<sup>81</sup> The Vali of Mosul, Ebubekir Hâzim Bey, sent Hüsnü Paşa, the Commandant of Gendarmerie, to Zakho, to persuade Haji Agha to leave the place and go to Cezire within the *vilayet* of Diyarbakır. Haji Agha had to accept the order. He was said to have first resisted, but following a correspondence among the Vali of Mosul, the Commander of 6th Army, and Zeki Paşa, he received orders from the latter to leave immediately and proceed to the place assigned to him together with his tribe.<sup>82</sup>

However, the removal of Haji Agha simply created opportunities for depredations by other tribal chiefs and shaikhs, including Shaikh Nuri, a cousin of Shaikh Nur Muhammad.<sup>83</sup> Gendarmerie troops were sent against Shaikh Nuri in December 1899, but instead of attacking him, their commander, Hüsnü Paşa, asked Shaikh Nur Muhammad to mediate. Shaikh Nur Muhammed persuaded Shaikh Nuri to give himself up without fighting, and go to Mosul. The Vali accorded him special treatment, detaining him in a special place outside of the public prison. Later, Shaikh Nur Muhammad also came to Mosul.<sup>84</sup>

Ebubekir Hâzim Bey proposed to obtain the Sultan's pardon for Shaikh Nuri, but failed to gain the support of the members of the *vilayets* Administrative Council.<sup>[85](#)</sup> Meanwhile, Nuri and Nur Muhammad's trial proceeded in Mosul. In February 1900, realizing that sentence of imprisonment was about to be passed on him and his cousin, Shaikh Nur Muhammad escaped from Mosul. Shaikh Nuri also tried to escape, but failed, and was put into the public prison.<sup>[86](#)</sup> In November 1900, after convincing Ali Bey, the Emir of the Yezidis, to withdraw the case against them, Shaikh Nuri was released.<sup>[87](#)</sup> Nevertheless, within less than a year, both shaikhs resumed their depredations. Shaikh Nuri was once again captured, but in December 1901, the Sultan pardoned both Shaikh Nuri and Shaikh Nur Muhammad, reportedly at the special request of Shaikh Said Barzinji, who was then in Istanbul.<sup>[88](#)</sup> By then, however, the Vali, Ebubekir Hâzim Bey, had been dismissed, owing to Zeki Paşa's complaints about his allegedly hostile attitude toward the Kurds, especially those of the Hamidiye.<sup>[89](#)</sup>

As far as the Kirkuk-Sulaymaniyah region was concerned, the years since 1897 had passed in relative tranquility and in 1901, Shaikh Said Barzinji was invited to Istanbul by the Sultan.<sup>[90](#)</sup> As ever, however, peace proved temporary, and in 1904, a fresh conflict broke out between the two branches of the Barzinji family. The Council of Ministers proposed severe punishment for the Barzinjis,<sup>[91](#)</sup> but Abdülhamid refused, and instead, drew the Grand Vizier's attention to reports that the Barzinji family was being subjected to oppressive and insulting treatment by the local authorities, and that because of this treatment, members of the family had begun to migrate. In the words of Abdülhamid, "that kind of treatment towards them is entirely against the imperial will."<sup>[92](#)</sup> The Sultan ordered two special commissioners to proceed to Sulaymaniyah, and investigate the case.<sup>[93](#)</sup>

The Sultan gave a further demonstration of his attitude in early June 1905, in response to reports that Shaikh Said Barzinji and his followers had been attacking the villages of the Hamawand. Local officials asked for permission to use force against Shaikh Said, and this demand, accepted by the Council of Ministers, was forwarded to the Sultan for his approval.<sup>[94](#)</sup> In his reply, however, Abdülhamid ruled out any possibility of using force

against the Barzinji family: “As this kind of treatment is by no means in accordance with the imperial will, cancel the unauthorized orders, if any, for the employment of arms at once, and ensure security and good administration through wise advice to those concerned.”<sup>95</sup>

Four months later, members of the Barzinji family were arrested and brought to trial, but as might have been expected, they were all pardoned by the Sultan.<sup>96</sup> The local authorities continued to pursue certain Barzinjis who had been convicted *in absentia*, but in February 1906, Abdülhamid ordered that the pursuit should cease.<sup>97</sup> The Sultan would not depart from his policy of conciliation. Meanwhile, in December 1905, the Vali of Mosul dismissed the Naqib of Sulaymaniyah, who belonged to a branch of the Barzinjis, together with the members of the Administrative Council of that town, owing to continued disturbances involving murders between their faction and the followers of Shaikh Said. The *Mutasarrif* of Sulaymaniyah and Shaikh Said were summoned to Mosul by the Vali to coordinate measures to conciliate the tribes in the vicinity of Sulaymaniyah. The Vali, it was said, rather favored Shaikh Said, and this had given offence to the Naqib and the members of the Administrative Council.<sup>98</sup>

The years immediately preceding the Young Turk Revolution also saw a recrudescence of brigandage by the Hamawand tribe, provoked, it appears, by the return of some of those Hamawand chiefs who had been exiled in early 1890s. In 1905, those who had been exiled to Rhodes were pardoned and allowed to return to Mosul.<sup>99</sup> In 1907, other members of the Hamawand who had been exiled to Tripolitania and Adana escaped, and returned to the *kaza* of Bazyan, where they resumed their brigandage. The Palace, as always, took a firm stand against the Hamawand. Orders were sent to the Grand Vizier and the *Serasker* that the tribe should be stopped at whatever cost. Even deployment of the Hamidiye regiments against them was to be considered, if found necessary.<sup>100</sup>

The Barzinji feud also continued, and was still in being when the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908 ended Abdülhamid's power. After the Young Turk Revolution, Shaikh Said's power began to decline, and in turn, he started an opposition campaign to the new government, provoking the Hamawand into an open revolt. The Hamawand increased its raids to an



unbearable level for the local population, and the merchants in particular. All the trade and transportation came to a standstill as the roads from Kirkuk to Baghdad, Kirkuk to Sulaymaniyah, and Sulaymaniyah to Baghdad were closed entirely. At last, the government, realizing the impossibility of employing troops, induced Shaikh Said to come to Mosul, with some other members of the family. Shortly after his arrival in Mosul, in January 1909, he was murdered in a public riot.<sup>[101](#)</sup> But the events continued as ever. The Hamawand terror in the region lasted about two years and was suppressed only by considerable force.<sup>[102](#)</sup>

## **The *vilayet* of Baghdad**

In contrast to the *vilayet* of Mosul, the *vilayet* of Baghdad presented Abdülhamid's regime with no serious tribal problems.<sup>[103](#)</sup> This was due primarily to the considerable efforts which had been made to bring the tribes of Baghdad under control during the Tanzimat period, and, in particular, during the governor-generalships of Mehmed Namık Paşa (1861–7) and Midhat Paşa (1869–72). The methods successfully employed during the Tanzimat era had been various, ranging from the deployment of force to the appointment of tribal chiefs to official posts. Most important of all, Midhat Paşa had embarked upon the distribution of state lands in tribal areas. The usufructs of state lands were sometimes granted to the cultivators, though more generally, to the paramount tribal shaikhs, city merchants, and notables, with an appropriate fee. In some places, like Diyala, Karbala, and the neighborhood of Baghdad, this had led to a rapid erosion of the tribal system. In others, like Hilla-Diwaniyah region of the middle Euphrates, the tribal system had persisted, but had been significantly modified, as the authority of the paramount chiefs of the old tribal confederations declined, while that of the lesser shaikhs and sarkals of individual tribes grew stronger. This, however, appears to have posed few problems for the provincial government during Abdülhamid's reign. Only in the western desert did the authorities face occasional difficulties with the surviving nomadic confederations, such as the Aniza and the Shammar Jarba.

A typical example was the Shammar Jarba tribe, a great nomadic tribe of the Western desert.<sup>[104](#)</sup> Shaikh Farhan, who had succeeded to the paramount



chieftainship of the tribe after the murder of his father in 1847, had spent some years in Istanbul, where he was said to have learned Turkish and become imbued with “Ottoman ideas.” After his return to Iraq, he was again recognized as shaikh, and eventually received an allowance of 3,000 *lira* a year from the Ottoman government, on condition that he maintain order in his tribal area and induce his people to adopt a more settled way of life. But some parts of the tribe showed great opposition to this attitude taken by Farhan, and several times rose in arms; Farhan’s two brothers, Abdul Karim and Abdur Razzaq, were both executed by the Ottoman authorities for that reason in about 1873. In 1875, another brother of Farhan, Faris ibn Sufuq, returned from asylum in Najd, and quickly gained the support of a part of the tribe in opposition to Farhan.

From 1875 onwards, therefore, the Shammar Jarba divided into two rival factions. While the western Shammar, led by Faris, occupied the northwestern part of the tribal area, around Dayr al-Zor on the Euphrates, the section of the tribe under Farhan Paşa, known as the eastern Shammar, occupied the area near Mosul and the river Tigris. However, unlike his brothers who had opposed Farhan Paşa, Faris did not take a belligerent attitude toward the government, and entered into negotiations with the Ottoman authorities in 1877–8, being created a Paşa and obtaining a monthly salary in return for his aid in tribal matters, and for maintaining order in his area. So long as he did so, the Ottomans did not interfere with the followers of Shaikh Faris.

The eastern Shammar, under Farhan Paşa, also actively cooperated with the Ottoman authorities of Baghdad and Mosul, and Farhan Paşa retained the office of paramount chieftain until his death in 1890. After his death, the tribe was further weakened by rivalries: over the next 10 years, the shaikhship of the eastern Shammar passed back and forth between various of his sons, who were appointed by the Ottoman government, in addition to several intertribal fighting between these rivals. Thereafter, the Shammar and the Aniza, and other nomadic tribes, did not give much trouble to the government authorities, though intertribal fighting went on to some extent.

## **The *vilayet* of Basra**

The Arabic-speaking and predominantly Shi'i tribes of the *vilayet* of Basra were organized for the most part in large confederations, concentrated in two areas: Muntafiq and Amarah. The Muntafiq confederation controlled Muntafiq, a substantial area between the Euphrates to the Tigris. The Albu Muhammad and the Banu Lam occupied the left and right banks of the Tigris around Amarah. In addition, certain smaller tribes inhabited the marshes in the south of the *vilayet*. Although the tribal system remained intact in Basra, it had nonetheless been affected by the Tanzimat reforms, and, in particular, by Midhat Paşa's policy of land registration. In Muntafiq, for example, much tribal land had passed into the hands of the Sadun family, who ruled the Muntafiq confederation; in Amarah, in contrast, much had remained *miri* or *saniyya*, and was leased to the local tribes.<sup>106</sup> As will be seen, land issues were one of the principal sources of conflicts between tribes, and also between tribes and government.

### *The Muntafiq*

The Muntafiq was the largest tribal confederation in Basra *vilayet*, and was divided into seven principal sections. The Saduns, the ruling family, were Sunnis, while the tribesmen, who were originally pastoral nomads but increasingly sedentary cultivators through the nineteenth century, were Shi'is. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Muntafiq tribal confederation had reached its peak of its territorial power, controlling the area between Samawah on the Euphrates and the Shatt al-Arab, from Kut on the Tigris southwards to Uzayr and from Kut eastwards to the Iranian border. However, as central authority grew in Iraq, the confederation's power declined; between 1854 and 1861, the tribe gave up Samawah, Suq ash-Shuyukh, and the area between Shatra and Qalat Salih to Ottoman control. The family of the Saduns, who had ruled the tribe since the end of the seventeenth century, and held the tax farms for much of southern Iraq between 1831 and 1869, divided into two factions in the 1860s, respectively led by Nasir Paşa and Mansur Paşa. While Nasir Paşa and his sons cooperated with the Ottoman administration, Mansur Paşa and his son Sadun kept their distance, and tried to resist state control. During the time of Midhat Paşa's governor-generalship of Baghdad, Nasir Paşa was appointed *Mutasarrıf* of the Muntafiq *sancak* (the town Nasiriyah, named after him, was founded as the administrative center of the *sancak* in 1872),

and became the first Vali of Basra in 1875, and later a member of the Council of State; whereas Mansur Paşa, and later, his son Sadun, created troubles for the government. [107](#)

The Muntafiq tribes were profoundly affected by Midhat Paşa's policy of registering tribal lands. As a result of this registration, the majority of the Muntafiq tribes' agricultural lands (*mukataa*) passed into the hands of members of the Sadun family, in particular those of Nasir Paşa's faction, entailing the dispossession of the rank and file tribesmen from the land in which they had hitherto held a communal right, and their conversion into tenants. Vast areas of land supporting many constituent tribes became the fiefs of the Saduns, who with the advance of commercial agriculture grew wealthy.

In 1880, however, growing rivalry between the Sadun family and the Zuheyrzâde family, a prominent notable family of Basra, led to a major regional crisis and a direct confrontation between the Ottoman government and two prominent members of the Sadun family, Mansur Paşa and Farhad Paşa. In early 1880, the relations between the Sadun family and the Zuheyrzâde family were deteriorating. Suleyman Bey and Farhad Paşa of the Sadun were reported, by the local officials of Baghdad and Basra, to have gathered tribesmen and prepared to create disorder in the area. The local officials asked for a military expedition against the Muntafiq. In its meeting to discuss this problem, however, the Council of Ministers ruled out the demands for sending troops. The Ministers argued in May 1880 that the situation was merely the result of misgovernment, and coupled with provocation by Zuheyrzâde Kasim Paşa, the Head of the Commercial Court of Basra. [108](#)

As a result, the *vilayet* of Basra was reduced to the status of a *sancak*, subordinate to the *vilayet* of Baghdad. Abdurrahman Paşa, the Vali of Baghdad, was sent to Basra to take radical measures. Both Kasim Paşa and Mansur Paşa were taken to Baghdad. Although the situation calmed down temporarily, within one year problems appeared again. Because of mistakes on the part of local officials of sending troops to Muntafiq without permission from Istanbul and not solving the problems related to the lands belonging to Mansur Paşa, at one stage Mansur Paşa escaped to Muntafiq.

<sup>109</sup> Though the Porte wanted to solve the problem by “wise measures,” the local officials were forced to send troops against Mansur and Farhad Paşa. In the end, the Paşas were defeated, and some of their property was seized by the Army. Consequently according to the assurances they had received, both Mansur and Farhad “took refuge” in the Sultan’s mercy and pardon, sending relevant telegrams to the Porte.<sup>110</sup> It appears that, although Kasim Paşa was later allowed to return to Basra, Abdülhamid did not issue the pardon for the Saduns for some time.<sup>111</sup> They were forced to live in hiding for three years. Only in early 1885, after several intercessions by local officials and the Porte, did Abdülhamid pardon them. Mansur and Farhad Paşas were taken to Baghdad, where they spent the rest of their lives under the eye of the Ottoman authorities, Mansur Paşa dying there in 1886.<sup>112</sup>

For six years after 1885, all seemed quiet, but toward the end of 1891, it was reported that Suleyman Bey of the Sadun, who belonged to Mansur Paşa’s faction, was stirring up the Muntafiq tribes.<sup>113</sup> At the Porte, the Council of Ministers discussed the matter, and Muhammad Fazil Paşa Daghistani of 6th Army proceeded to the spot, where he succeeded in restoring order among the tribes, and set out in pursuit of Suleyman Bey.<sup>114</sup> Suleyman Bey having fled to the desert, the Ottoman authorities issued orders for his apprehension, dead or alive.<sup>115</sup> Suleyman Bey remained at large until October 1893, when he surrendered to the Vali of Basra.<sup>116</sup> From then onwards, until the year 1900, we have no sign of trouble in Muntafiq.

Nevertheless, after the 1880 crisis, as will be mentioned later, most of the members of the Sadun family left Muntafiq, and began to live in the Syrian desert. Some of them even abandoned their lands, whereas others split up the tribes and leased the land to the small sectional chiefs, or sarkals, bypassing the shaikhs. In this manner, the sarkals’ power grew. Some of them even acquired the land or leasings for themselves. All these factors fractured the Muntafiq confederation into numerous mutually hostile tribes, themselves decomposing into a multitude of independent sections and subsections. Everything, however, from the government’s point of view, passed peacefully during these years. Real problems started around the turn of the century, when members of the Sadun family returned to Muntafiq, and began to claim their former lands. Though some succeeded in regaining their lands, through purchase or agreement, others encountered opposition

from the sarkals. This led to a great deal of trouble in the confederation, aggravated by the tribesmen's possession of large numbers of modern rifles.

Falih Paşa, the son of Nasir Paşa, had been living in the desert since the 1880 rebellion. Around 1900, he asked for permission to return to his former lands, to settle his tribe and start to cultivate. He also promised to build a mosque, perhaps as a sign of settlement. He offered the state a price of 312,000 *kuruş* for his former lands. The Vali of Basra backed Falih Paşa's request, describing him as a person respected among the tribes of the region, and a loyal subject of the government, whose presence in the region could have a good influence upon the other tribes of Basra, particularly in encouraging them to settle and take up agriculture. Consequently in the autumn of 1900, Abdülhamid allowed him to settle and to take possession of his former lands. [117](#)

While on the one hand everything seemed to be quiet after the return of Falih Paşa to Muntafiq, on the other Sadun Paşa, the son of Mansur Paşa and the chief of the "anti-government faction," began to involve himself in the affairs of Najd. By making a successful foray against adherents of Ibn Rashid, the chief of the Jabal Shammar tribe, Sadun Paşa nearly brought about a serious confrontation between the Shaikh of Kuwait and Ibn Rashid in the summer of 1900. [118](#) Muhammad Fazil Paşa Daghistani was sent against Sadun Paşa, who fled to the marshes, from where, in December 1900, he disappeared. Two months later, Sadun Paşa emerged as a leader in the invasion of central Arabia by the Shaikh of Kuwait. But after having been defeated by Ibn Rashid, he returned to Basra; in early 1901, Muhammad Fazil Paşa Daghistani was sent to the region once more to hunt him down. [119](#)

No military action seems to have taken place, however; and nothing more was heard of Sadun Paşa until 1903, toward the end of Mustafa Nuri Paşa's governor-generalship of Basra. This time Sadun Paşa crossed into Iraq, and began to harass the settled tribes there with claims for payment of blood-money in cases more than 40 years old, and to make other demands. A written remonstrance by the Vali of Basra having failed to deter him, a military detachment was sent to Shatra to intervene between Sadun Paşa and the tribes. But owing to mismanagement on the part of the officer

commanding the detachment, 50 soldiers were killed, together with several officers, including the commander. Muhammad Fazil Paşa a Daghistani was then dispatched against Sadun Paşa for the third time. [120](#)

In late November 1903, the troops under the command of Muhammad Fazil Paşa a Daghistani, who had established themselves in Muntafiq, were awaiting formal orders to start the campaign against Sadun. The dispatch of these orders from Istanbul was delayed, and taking advantage of this situation, Sadun was reported to have come, with some hundred cavalry, as near as the gates of Basra and attacked the settled tribes nearby. It appears that this news disturbed Abdülhamid, who asked the Grand Vizier how it could be possible for Sadun to manage such attacks, given that previous reports from the region had stated that Muhammad Fazil Paşa had routed Sadun. The Sultan ordered Muhammad Fazil Paşa to start the campaign as soon as possible. [121](#) Muhammad Fazil Paşa, however, had no success, and in December, Sadun escaped to Kuwait, though this time he received no help from Shaikh Mubarak. [122](#)

The seriousness with which the Sultan viewed matters was shown by the fact that these orders were reiterated more than once, and that the Palace contacted 6th Army directly. In December 1903, the Sultan ordered that an official be sent from Baghdad to Amarah to deal with the situation on the spot. [123](#) The campaign against Sadun was successful. Toward the end of January 1904, the local authorities reported that Sadun had applied for imperial pardon and wished to settle on certain lands around Nasiriyah. But given the fact that the land in question amounted to 1,200,000 *dönüm*, Abdülhamid raised objections from the public revenue's points of view, saying that it was not reasonable to allow him to settle on such a huge piece of land. The Sultan preferred to give him only some portions of the land. [124](#) In March 1904, Ibn Rashid intervened in the matter. Being one of the few people enjoying the Sultan's full favor in the region, Ibn Rashid used his influence, sending a telegram directly to the Palace, requesting Sadun's pardon. The Council of Ministers endorsed Ibn Rashid's request, and Sadun was consequently pardoned by the Sultan. [125](#)

Nevertheless, Sadun kept quiet for no more than a year. In April 1905, it was reported that he was corresponding with other tribes and trying to form



an alliance. The Palace responded quickly, approving 6th Army's proposal to dispatch troops to the area should the rumors prove true. At the same time, Muhlis Paşa, the Vali and Commander of Basra, was instructed to proceed to Nasiriyah, in order to ensure the loyalty of those tribes, which had not yet joined Sadun.<sup>126</sup> However, Mecid Bey, the Vali of Baghdad, claimed in a telegram to the Porte that it was because of the intrigues and provocations of the British that Sadun and the tribes of Amarah had decided to break the peace. But, interestingly enough, Abdülhamid seems to have doubted the allegations made against Sadun, and informed the Grand Vizier that: "As the Paşa [Sadun] had previously presented his assurances for his loyalty and servitude, it is doubtful that he has fallen victim to foreign insinuations (...) and attempt to persuade him through judicious advice."<sup>127</sup>

Muhlis Paşa proceeded, as ordered, to Nasiriyah, from where he set out in pursuit of Sadun, who fled into the Syrian desert. Hoping to bring him to his senses, the Vali stopped the allowance which Sadun received from the government, and sequestered certain of his lands.<sup>128</sup> Toward the end of October 1905, Muhlis Paşa returned temporarily to Basra, and Sadun reportedly entered into direct communication with Istanbul concerning the validity of his title to the land which had been sequestered by the Vali.<sup>129</sup> Contrary to the orders of Süleyman Şevki Paşa, the Commander of 6th Army, Muhlis Paşa renewed his pursuit of Sadun, but, in May 1906, the Muntafiq Arabs under Sadun defeated him at Suq ash-Shuyukh, and he had to flee for his life and take refuge on the gunboat *Alus*.<sup>130</sup>

Muhlis Paşa was soon dismissed. Mecid Bey, the Vali of Baghdad, was appointed Acting Vali of Basra, and proceeded to Basra and Nasiriyah to settle the issue by negotiation.<sup>131</sup> But problems in the *sancak* of Muntafiq continued, though Sadun was absent in the desert.<sup>132</sup> The tribes still resisted payment of arrears in the taxes, and senior officials of Baghdad and Basra had to go to the Muntafiq district several times.<sup>133</sup> In January 1907, for example, the Acting Vali of Basra, Mecid Bey, was once again in Nasiriyah.<sup>134</sup>

While all local officials presented supposed-British intrigue as the main cause of Sadun's rebellion, the Sultan was told a different story by his private informants, who had links with the region. According to these



sources, the persons behind the troubles in Muntafiq were other members of the Sadun family, including Falih and Mezid Paşa, the sons of Nasir Paşa, and Abdurrezzak Bey, the son of Suleyman Bey, all of whom had recently returned to the area after having spent 20 years in the desert. It was thanks to their backing that Sadun had been able to launch such a revolt. This led Abdülhamid to suggest that it might be better to offer all of them employment in Istanbul, recalling similar cases in the past that had been successfully dealt with in this way. [135](#)

The Sultan maintained this attitude in the face of reports that Sadun had begun to quarrel with the other tribes of the Muntafiq region, in particular the Gazze, and when, in March 1907, the Vali of Basra proposed the permanent deployment of an adequate number of troops in Muntafiq, Abdülhamid replied, [136](#)

Sadun's daring to act in this fashion, contrary to his previous assurances of loyalty, must have been produced by the misconduct and misbehavior of some officials; since it will be possible to return him to his former position by persuading him and his tribe, and by wise measures, a trustworthy and honest person should be sent to him, instead of [punishing] him and his tribe with armed force.

The Sultan proposed to summon a member of the family to Istanbul, where he would honor him, and threw the blame for the latest disturbances on the Gazze: "Sadun's tribe should have been protected against the attacks of the Gazze." [137](#)

After a period of silence, in June 1908, Sadun sought British protection through Shaikh Mubarak of Kuwait. He asked to see Major Knox, the British Political Agent at Kuwait, but was given a negative answer. In the same year, Falih Paşa died, leaving Sadun no rival in the tribe. Sadun supported the Young Turk regime and so received the backing of the Ottoman officials. But his rule was so oppressive that it led to a general revolt in his own tribe in 1911. Sayyid Talib, at the request of the government, captured Sadun, who was imprisoned first in Baghdad and then in Aleppo. He died there in November 1911, it was suspected, of poison. [138](#)

### ***The Banu Lam and the Albu Muhammad***

Aside from Muntafiq, the other troublesome district in the *vilayet* of Basra was Amarah on the Tigris, inhabited by two settled tribes, the Banu Lam and the Albu Muhammad. The rich agricultural lands (*mukataa*) of Amarah had not been placed under the *tapu* system, but remained *miri* until the late 1870s and early 1880s, when some 2/3 of them were bought by the Privy Purse, and became *saniyya*. Both *miri* and *saniyya* lands were periodically leased to the tribes of the region, and the struggle for the control of these leases was a major source of conflict between the Banu Lam and the Albu Muhammad, and also between these two tribes and the government officials who awarded the leases. A further cause of tribal disturbances in this region was the huge arrears in tax payments, and the government's periodic efforts to reclaim them.

The Banu Lam, a numerous and powerful Arab tribe, lived on the borders of Iraq and Iran, principally on the plain between the foothills of the Pusht-i Kuh mountains and the course of the river Tigris between Shaikh Sad and Amarah. The great majority of the tribe was Shi'i. The tribe was divided into numerous subgroups which variously followed sedentary, semi-nomadic, and nomadic ways of life. Lorimer estimated the total population in the early 1900s to be about 45,000. Since the seventeenth century, the Banu Lam had resisted the Ottoman administration, often collaborating with the Iranians in Ottoman-Iranian wars. They continued to rebel in the nineteenth century: major campaigns were launched against the Banu Lam in 1763, 1800, 1806, 1849, and 1879–80. In addition, the tribe was often in conflict with its neighbors, particularly with the Lurs, the Albu Muhammad, and the Muntafiq, as well as being riven by internal feuds and rivalries. While raids by the tribe periodically interrupted traffic on the Tigris, their annual move into Iran for better grazing during the summer months was a further source of problems. [139](#)

After the suppression of an uprising in 1880, which had been caused by the authorities' demands for arrears of tax, the Banu Lam kept quiet for a while. In 1885–6, Ghadban, the chief of the Banu Lam, migrated to Iran, but six years later, toward the end of 1891, he appealed for a pardon from the Basra authorities, and asked to settle quietly with his tribe on his former lands in

Amarah. Ghadban was permitted to do so: the Grand Vizier, Cevad Paşa, advised Abdülhamid to accept Ghadban's request to be permitted to bring his tribe to Basra to settle with them permanently and to engage in agriculture, as they had done previously. Having obtained formal assurances from the Vali of Basra, he came back to Amarah, where, however, the local *Mutasarrıf* arrested him. The intervention of the Vali of Basra secured his release.<sup>140</sup> For several years, Ghadban kept very quiet. In September 1904, however, soon after the troubles with Sadun of the Muntafiq reached their peak, disturbances began to occur between the Banu Lam and Albu Muhammad tribes near Amarah,<sup>141</sup> and these were to continue until the Young Turk Revolution.

The Albu Muhammad, a large tribe, was located partly in Iraq and partly in Iran. From Amarah down to Azair the tribe inhabited the swampy land on both banks of the Tigris, extending inland from the left bank as far as the Hawizeh district and from the right bank to the furthest limit of the marshes. The tribe was mainly Shi'i and divided into numerous subdivisions. The tribe was generally settled, and its principal occupation was the breeding of enormous herds of buffalo and cattle. The tribesmen were extremely well armed with smuggled rifles; this, together with the inaccessible nature of their country, made them a powerful and threatening tribe for their neighbors and for the government.<sup>142</sup>

Like the Banu Lam, the Albu Muhammad had rebelled in 1880. Quarrels between prominent tribal leaders over leases of government lands, and disputes with the local administration over tax arrears, led to a serious confrontation when one of the tribal leaders, Sayhud, attacked the British steamer *Khalifah*. As a result of this attack, the Vali of Baghdad, Abdurrahman Paşa, sent troops, supported by friendly tribes, against Sayhud, who suffered serious losses, but nonetheless managed to avoid capture in his stronghold in the marshes.<sup>143</sup>

For more than a decade, all was quiet. But from 1892 onwards, under the leadership of "Şâki" Sayhud,<sup>144</sup> the Albu Muhammad began to cause trouble. Already in 1890, Sayhud had been dissatisfied with the land arrangements made after the death of his brother, Wadi: to show his displeasure, Sayhud fired on the Ottoman steamer *Resafa*. The local

authorities attached little importance to the matter, and no steps appear to have been taken against Sayhud. <sup>145</sup> Nonetheless, local reports sent to the Porte were soon warning of possible dangers posed by the enormous number of weapons possessed by the Amarah tribes, and it was proposed that steps should be taken to disarm them. <sup>146</sup>

These warnings proved prescient, for in the spring of 1892, Sayhud, again prompted by grievances about his lands, plundered a number of sailing-vessels, removed the telegraph posts, and attacked the Ottoman steamer *Mosul*. <sup>147</sup> The Grand Vizier, Cevad Paşa, proposed that troops be sent against Sayhud, but Abdülhamid remained cautious, and insisted that before sending troops, an investigation should be carried out. <sup>148</sup> The investigation seems to have decided against Sayhud, and in the early summer of 1892, Müşir Hidayet Paşa, the Vali of Basra, sent an expedition against him. It was reported from Basra, in June 1892, that Sayhud had fled to the marshes, and that his fort had been seized by the troops, together with all his property. <sup>149</sup> In September 1892, General Kazım Paşa, who was in charge of the operation, seized some of Sayhud's other possessions, including arms and ammunition, which were turned over to the authorities in Qurnah. <sup>150</sup>

In October 1892, Hafız Mehmed Paşa, the new Vali of Basra, wrote to the Porte asking that some of Sayhud's relatives be exiled to Scutari (İşkodra) in Albania, to forestall any trouble they might cause locally. <sup>151</sup> This request was approved and they were accordingly exiled to Albania. <sup>152</sup> In the meantime, news was received that Sayhud had escaped to Iran. Toward the end of 1894, however, Sayhud sought pardon from the authorities and asked to settle in Amarah, with his tribe of 3,000 households. Although the Council of Ministers endorsed Sayhud's request, Abdülhamid seems not to have accepted it, and when Cevad Paşa asked once again, Abdülhamid sent the file back to the Council of Ministers for reconsideration. <sup>153</sup> In the course of 1895, Cevad Paşa applied several times to the Sultan for the pardon of Sayhud, but the Sultan maintained his refusal, and the matter was apparently allowed to drop. <sup>154</sup> Only in February 1897, when Sayhud himself wrote to the Palace, requesting pardon, did Abdülhamid relent. <sup>155</sup>

Following his return, Sayhud appears to have lived peacefully until late 1903, when fighting was reported at Amarah between Sayhud and the

Azerij and Solaga tribes, over the possession of some rice fields. A collision took place between soldiers and tribesmen. <sup>156</sup> The Vali of Basra accused the *Mutasarrif* of Amarah of being the instigator of the troubles, and in October 1903, the Sultan ordered the dismissal of the *Mutasarrif*. <sup>157</sup> In September 1904, as noted earlier, disturbances occurred between the Albu Muhammad and the Banu Lam near Amarah, but these appear to have subsided quickly. <sup>158</sup> After this incident, the region and the river traffic have been fairly secure up to 1906.

In March 1906, however, a more serious conflict developed over proposals to lease to the Albu Muhammad or the Banu Lam a property on the Tigris below Amarah, named Kumait. The existing lease of Kumait having expired, the local representative of the Privy Purse proposed to give the new lease of Kumait to the Albu Muhammad, while the *Mutasarrif* wanted to give it to Ghadban of the Banu Lam. The Vali, who was sent to inquire into the matter, reported that if it was desired to accept the higher offer made by the Albu Muhammad, it would be necessary to oust Ghadban from the adjoining lands. Ghadban apparently thought that he was not getting all that he expected, and attacked Ottoman steamers, and then, on May 30, 1906, the *Khalifah*, a British steamer. <sup>159</sup>

In the meantime, however, a quarrel broke out over Ghadban between Muhlis Paşa, the Vali and Commander of Basra, and the military authorities at Baghdad, who were accused by Muhlis Paşa of giving Ghadban formal military command over the Iranian frontier from Khaniqin to Muhammarah. According to British consular reports, in the course of the negotiations at Amarah, Ghadban showed the Vali of Basra a letter which he had received from Muhammad Fazil Paşa Daghistani, asking him to furnish any information of interest to the government on the frontier-line from Khaniqin to Mohammerah and to keep an eye on those districts, as there were no Ottoman military posts there. It was stated that any good service on his part would be rewarded by the government. The Vali telegraphed Istanbul charging Muhammad Fazil Paşa Daghistani and the Baghdad military authorities with interference in his affairs, and accusing them of carrying out underhand dealings with rebellious tribesmen. The Vali even stated that Ghadban had been appointed military commander of the Iranian frontier by Muhammad Fazil Paşa Daghistani, and declared that

his own attempts to settle the land dispute had been neutralized by the promises of reward held out to Ghadban. The Baghdad authorities denied the charge, stating that the Vali was misinformed. Abdülhamid sent Veli Paşa, his aide-de-camp, to Iraq to inquire into the matter. This conflict of military jurisdiction led to a lamentable want of cohesion in the arrangements for the Muntafiq region. Orders were subsequently sent to Süleyman Şevki Paşa, the Commander of 6th Army, not to interfere with the Basra *vilayet*. [160](#)

This quarrel, coupled with the continuing problems with Sadun of the Muntafiq, led to Muhlis Paşa's dismissal. Mecid Bey, the Vali of Baghdad, was appointed Acting Vali of Basra, and went to Amarah to hold an enquiry, taking with him the Naqib of Baghdad. [161](#) When Crow, the British Consul at Basra, asked the Acting Vali to punish Ghadban, asking "Was the Ottoman Government with its troops and its administrative resources unable to keep the Arabs in order, or to punish a man in Ghadban's position?" Mecid Bey answered that "It could no doubt be done, but it was a wild country, and the Arabs a wild people." [162](#)

Though Crow was informed by Mecid Bey that neither party would obtain the land in dispute, it was soon rumored that a nominee of Ghadban would obtain the land, thanks to a bribe paid to the Vali. [163](#) This rumor led Sayhud's Arabs to fire upon the Ottoman steamer *Burhaniye*, and to issue a warning to the British steamer *Medjidieh*, in July 1906. [164](#) Eventually, the land was given to a nominee of Ghadban's, a member of the Azarij tribe. The result was that Sayhud attacked the Azarij, and it was soon reported that Ghadban and Sayhud were mobilizing their forces for a general engagement. [165](#) For a year, no solution was reached. In June 1907, it was reported by the British sources that a crowd of about 2,000 armed Arabs had been seen below Amarah, on the banks of the Tigris, on their way to attack Ghadban. [166](#)

The government's immediate concern was the damage caused by the tribal conflicts to agricultural land in the area, and in June 1907, Abdülhamid appointed a special commission at the Porte to find a solution. All members of the commission were familiar with the problems of Iraq: Hacı Akif Paşa, the Head of Military Supplies (*Teçhizat-ı Askeriye Nazırı*), Zuheyr



Beyefendi of the Council of State, General İzzet Paşa, Commander of Basra and Head of the Privy Purse of Amarah, Mehmed Refik Efendi of the Privy Purse, and İbrahim Hayri Efendi, Head of the Privy Purse Commission of Mosul.<sup>167</sup> But this initiative came to nothing: no solution was found.<sup>168</sup>

Further trouble broke out in early 1908, once again because of a land issue. Certain leases upon lands on the lower Tigris (Mejer Saghir near Amarah) were due to expire that spring, and upon learning of rumors that the leases would be given to Ghadban's party, Mustafa Nâzım Paşa, the Reform Commissioner in Baghdad, telegraphed to Basra to give no leases pending his own arrival.<sup>169</sup> From Basra, Nâzım Paşa went to Amarah, and called on Sayhud and Ghadban to pay up their arrears of revenue on their existing leases before they began to discuss new leases. This suited neither the shaikhs nor Hasan Bey, the Vali of Basra, who was known to have backed Ghadban.<sup>170</sup> Not surprisingly, when Nâzım Paşa was at Amarah, in April 1908, the British steamer *Blosse Lynch* was fired at on two occasions at a short distance below Amarah, by Ghadban's men.<sup>171</sup> As a result, the new leases in dispute were cancelled, while the disturbances on the Tigris ceased, and river transportation resumed.<sup>172</sup> The British authorities, on the other hand, began to press for compensation and the punishment of Ghadban for the *Blosse Lynch* affair.

Mustafa Nâzım Paşa returned to Baghdad, and told Ramsay, the British Consul General, that he did not think that it would be very difficult to reduce Ghadban to submission, that the exact number of troops required was a matter for preparation by military experts, but that in his opinion, the thing that was really essential was a good commander for the troops, and unity of purpose among Ottoman officials.<sup>173</sup> Ramsay also had private conversations with Sıdkı Paşa, the Commander of 6th Army, and Pertev Paşa, the Chief of Staff. Sıdkı Paşa complained that nothing could be done as long as Hasan Bey was Vali of Basra, because he would always support Ghadban, who had bought him; that Ghadban could easily be brought to his senses by a very small number of troops, if he got no support from Ottoman officials, and if the commandant of the troops was a good man.<sup>174</sup> Pertev Paşa's opinion was identical with that of Sıdkı Paşa. He told Ramsay that Muhammad Fazıl Paşa Daghistani could be trusted to bring Ghadban to



submission with a very small force, if Istanbul made it clear to all concerned that Ghadban's submission was the real desired object. [175](#)

Meanwhile, it was reported that, in early June 1908, Hatem, the son of Sayhud, attacked some sailing vessels, and that the Vali of Basra got him into Amarah on false pretence, and threw him into jail. [176](#) The British also did not give up their demand for Ghadban's punishment. The question of *Blosse Lynch* was even raised in the House of Commons. In early July 1908, just before the Young Turk Revolution, they were still demanding the punishment of Ghadban, and the dismissal of his protector Hasan Bey, the Vali of Basra. [177](#)

### ***The Banu Asad***

The Banu Asad, a Shi'i tribe, inhabited the marshes between Qurnah and Suq ash-Shuyukh, under Shaikh Hassan Khayyun. [178](#) Though their story in the British and Ottoman documents is confined to the second half of 1890s, it sheds light on Ottoman tribal policy in Basra. It was reported from Basra in August 1895 that Hassan Khayyun had attacked the Ottoman steamer *Bağdad* and killed and wounded some soldiers on board. [179](#) The Ottoman authorities responded with force, sending an expedition against Hassan Khayyun, who was forced to flee from his stronghold at Madina in September.

On August 24, 1895, an imperial decree was issued to extirpate Hassan Khayyun and the tribes of the Madina district. Muhammad Fazil Paşa a Daghistani arrived at Qurnah on an Ottoman steamer with three battalions of infantry (about 1,100 men) and large quantities of arms and ammunition. The Shaikhs of Amarah, who were on bad terms with Hassan Khayyun, also helped. Those shaikhs collected arms from tribesmen for the use of the Ottoman troops at Qurnah. During September, the campaign against Hassan Khayyun was continued. By the middle of September, it was reported that Hassan Khayyun had run away from Madina, and that Colonel Tahir Bey, former *Kaymakam* of Amadiyah, was after him. But his arms and belongings at Madina were seized and brought to Basra including the flag which he had flown during the insurrection; gradually, government authority was established in Madina. A nephew of the Khayyun, Shaikh

Chayad was appointed the new shaikh by the government. Using the opportunity, the date trees were counted in Medina district as it was proposed to levy a tax per tree, the income going to the Privy Purse administration. At the same time, Shaikh Chayad was to pay 300 *lira* as an indemnity for the damage recently done to telegraph wires by the insurgents. Although all the other troops under Muhammad Fazil Paşa returned to Baghdad, 100 infantry were remained in Medina as a permanent garrison. Shaikh Khayyun eventually fled into the inaccessible marshes, from where he occasionally carried out his piracies, and he was looked for on every opportunity. [180](#)

For the next four years, Hassan Khayyun remained at large in the marshes, launching occasional attacks upon shipping on the Euphrates, and also upon Ottoman troops, [181](#) while at the same time vainly soliciting a pardon from the Sultan. In April 1898, it was reported that Hassan Khayyun was planning to interfere with steamers of the Lynch Company, and thus cause friction between the British and Ottoman authorities, in order to secure a free pardon. [182](#)

Toward the middle of 1899, Hassan Khayyun sent a letter to the British Consul at Basra, requesting his intervention with the Ottoman government. The Consul replied that he could not interfere, and that Hassan Khayyun should address the Vali directly if he wished to make his peace. [183](#) Eventually, Hassan was driven out of the marshes and perished miserably in Hor al-Djazair (c. 1903). His son, Salim, thanks to the influence of the family of Sayyid Talib, was appointed to the office of shaikh over the Banu Asad in 1906, and became a supporter of the Ottoman government. [184](#)

Some of the conclusions of this chapter appear to parallel those drawn by scholars who have examined other Arab regions with regard to the tribes under Abdülhamid's regime. [185](#) Land was the prime source of conflict in the Iraqi provinces, whether between notables or tribes, or between them and the government. Tax and tax-arrears were another important source of problems, especially in Basra. Both land and tax issues often produced armed clashes, but matters gradually escalated when the tribes of the region began to arm themselves with modern weapons, enabling them to defy the government troops. Thus the government became concerned with the illegal

arms-trade in the region. While local troops were quite successful from 1880 onwards in dealing with tribal outbreaks, after about 1900 Basra and later Mosul faced constant tribal outbreaks, gradually worsening up to 1908. While the Porte responded by initiating a series of reforms, these depended upon the establishment of law and order, and this was never achieved. From the beginning, Abdülhamid demonstrated great care not to confront the powerful tribal leaders. The Sultan always showed reluctance to pursue radical measures which might offend them. He always hesitated to use armed force against powerful tribal chiefs, whether Arab or Kurdish.

## 5

### The Shi'i problem

The Iraqi *vilayets* of Baghdad and Basra were home to a substantial population of Arabic-speaking Shi'i Muslims. The precise number of these Shi'i Muslims is not known, as the Ottoman government compiled no statistics on the matter. Nonetheless, it is clear that they constituted an absolute majority of the population in the two provinces.<sup>1</sup> In 1920, Shi'is were estimated to be 56 percent of the whole population of Iraq (including Mosul).<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, throughout the nineteenth century, there appears to have been a growth in this Shi'i population at the expense of the Sunni sect, as the former expanded through conversion.<sup>3</sup> To the Ottoman authorities, the presence of a large and growing Shi'i population in Iraq represented a serious political problem. The Ottoman Empire was a Sunni state, with which its Shi'i subjects could not be trusted to identify. Nor, in principle, did Shi'i Muslims recognize the Ottoman claim to possession of the Great Islamic Caliphate, a claim which Sultan Abdülhamid repeatedly emphasized in an effort to give religious legitimacy to his regime. In short, the Shi'is were regarded as potentially disloyal.

The problem also had international dimensions. Iraq bordered on Iran, a Shi'i state which had historical and religious claims there, and which, in the course of centuries, had fought numerous wars with the Ottoman Empire for the possession of Iraq. Even in the second part of the nineteenth century, at a time when the Iranian state was internationally weak, the Ottoman authorities retained a strong sense that Iran might pose a military threat, especially in the event of a Russian invasion of Anatolia. In addition, the question of the delimitation of the Ottoman-Iranian border remained a constant source of tension.<sup>4</sup>

There was also constant communication between Iraq and Iran. Iraq contained the most sacred Shi'i shrines, located at Najaf, Karbala, Kazimayn, and Samarra, and collectively known as the Atabat.<sup>5</sup> In the

eighteenth century, the Atabat became a center for the *Usuli* school of Shi'i jurisprudence, which argued for a political role for the ulama; and the Atabat retained their primacy as a center of religious authority throughout the nineteenth century. Most of the important Shi'i mujtahids (jurisconsults) either resided and taught there, or studied there for a time before returning to Iran.<sup>6</sup> In 1903, for example, there were 2,000 people in Najaf and 200 in Karbala, who claimed to be mujtahids. The British Consul General in Baghdad reached the conclusion, however, that there were no more than 41 real mujtahids in the two cities.<sup>7</sup> In any case, together with these mujtahids, a large number of *mollas*, *akhunds*, and students resided in the Atabat. According to Cuinet, there were a total of 34 Shi'i madrasas (religious colleges), and 1,710 students at the Atabat.<sup>8</sup> First in the Tobacco Protest of 1891–2, and later from 1902 onwards, and especially, during the years of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–11), the mujtahids of the Atabat became actively involved in Iranian politics. In addition, there were many Iranian subjects, above 40,000, at the Atabat: religious students, merchants, and pilgrims.<sup>9</sup> Every year an important number of people, fluctuating between 30,000 to 100,000, from Iran, and India, visited the shrine cities of Iraq, or brought the remains of their relatives to bury at the Atabat.<sup>10</sup>

The British, too, had links with the Atabat. Not only did numerous Shi'is from British India visit and reside at the Atabat, but the British government had direct links with the mujtahids through the Oudh Bequest. The bequest had been established by the King of Oudh of India, and provided for the annual distribution of charitable money at the Atabat. Following Oudh's annexation by the British government of India in the 1850s, control over the bequest had passed into British hands, and the annual distribution of funds was conducted by the British Consul General at Baghdad, through two selected mujtahids, one at Najaf and one at Karbala.<sup>11</sup> For these favored mujtahids, the bequest was a major source of local influence and prestige, and indirectly, it was a potential channel for British influence, too. After 1902, the British began to see the mujtahids as a factor in their own policy toward Iran, as the implications of the Great Game became much complicated due to new developments in Iranian internal politics. There were also other funds, from Iran and India, which were donated to the

Atabat. The Iranian Government, for example, made annual grants to the shrines at Karbala, Najaf, and Kazimayn. <sup>12</sup>

Since the Shi'i ulama enjoyed great prosperity and wealth through the Oudh bequest and other donations, they exercised much influence in Iraq, especially among the tribes. It appears that through well-established madrasas in the cities, and through *akhunds*, Shi'i mollahs who wandered among the tribal population, the Shi'ism expanded in the region. Given the fact that mujtahids distributed an important amount of money to religious students and the poor, it comes as no surprise that some of the tribesmen, especially the newly settled ones, and also some small town-dwellers were attracted to Shi'ism. As Gertrude Bell noted in 1920, <sup>13</sup>

It would be a curious historical study, if the materials for it existed, to trace the diffusion of Shi'ah doctrines in Mesopotamia. They have certainly spread, owing to the missionary zeal of Shi'ah divines, during the last hundred years. For instance, the large tribal group of the Zubaid (...) was turned to Shi'ahism about 1830 by a famous mujtahid whose descendants still dominate the politics of Hillah. It is significant that the kindred tribes to the north, the Dulaim and Ubaid, a little further removed from the persuasive influence of the holy places, have remained Sunni. As far as can be judged the process is still going on. One of the nomadic tribes of the Muntafik, the Shuraifat, are probably recent converts (the nomads tend to hold to Sunni tenets more than the settled cultivators); another, the Suhaiyim, are still partly Sunni, and there are examples of conversion in the Sunni family of the Sadun, who are Ashraf, akin to the Sharif of Mecca, and of the purest Sunni stock.

On the other hand, there is some evidence of a decline in the Sunni establishments in Iraq in the second half of the nineteenth century. As a result of the Tanzimat's centralization policies, the revenues of the *waqf* lands which had hitherto supported the Sunni madrasas and ulama were gradually taken over by the government. The consequent reduction of financial means weakened Sunni religious education. <sup>14</sup>

The growth of Shi'ism among the tribal population was known to the Porte before Abdülhamid's period, though it was not regarded with the same seriousness as it would be later.<sup>15</sup> In 1862, for example, Mehmed Namık Paşa, the Vali of Baghdad, had written to Istanbul on the matter, and demanded that a Sunni *alim* (religious scholar) be sent to the region.<sup>16</sup> In the following years, it appears that the issue gained a certain importance, and that one of the main motives behind the appointment of Midhat Paşa as Vali of Baghdad in 1869 was the Porte's concern at the expanding Shi'i presence in the region. During the Iranian Shah's visit to the Atabat, in December 1870–January 1871, the extent of the problem was clearly seen, provoking serious concern on the part of the Ottoman authorities.<sup>17</sup> It appears that this concern soon subsided, however, and for about 15 years the Ottoman government paid little attention to the issue; it is, for example, noteworthy that few of the reports on Iraqi affairs submitted to Abdülhamid before 1885 mention the Shi'i problem.<sup>18</sup> From 1885 onwards, the attitude changed, and reports persistently emphasized the growth of Shi'ism in the region.<sup>19</sup>

The first signs of this reviving concern at Shi'i growth in Iraq appeared in 1885, and were provoked by a pamphlet called *Hüseyniye Risalesi*, which sought to encourage Shi'ism, and which began to circulate in Istanbul.<sup>20</sup> Ottoman officials became aware of the pamphlet in August 1885, when Shaikh Gümüshânevî Ahmed Ziyâüddin Efendi, a famous Naqshbandi-Khalidi shaikh, forwarded a copy of it to the Palace.<sup>21</sup> As soon as he received the copy, the Sultan consulted Hoca İshak Efendi, the author of several books on heretical beliefs in Islam, and asked him to prepare a report.<sup>22</sup> It was through this report that, for the first time, as far as is known, the attention of the Palace was drawn to the Shi'i problem in Iraq.

In his report, after describing the pamphlet (*Hüseyniye Risalesi*) in detail, Hoca İshak Efendi pointed out that “up until 20 years ago, the population of Iraq were in the majority followers of the Sunni sect” and the Porte had had no need to fear an Iranian threat. However,<sup>23</sup>

15 or 20 years ago, the Valis of Baghdad seized, on behalf of the state treasury, the villages, which had been given to the ulama for living, and as a result, scholars and ulama in Baghdad were altogether destroyed. The



Iranians, however, in the three towns [the Atabat] and in Najaf and Karbala, have 5,000–6,000 religious students distributed among villages and among tribes, and teach and inculcate harmful books like this one. As a result, the Sunnis in Iraq remained unawakened (...) Now, however, the people of that region seem to be a natural army for Iran.

It appears from Hoca İshak Efendi's report that the *Hüseyniye Risalesi* was not unique. According to him, similar pamphlets advocating Shi'ism had been circulating for the last 12 years, and he proposed that a special commission be established to deal with such publications. Hoca İshak Efendi also warned that the situation in Iraq was not unique, and that a continuation of the Ottoman government's past mistakes might endanger Anatolia and the Balkan provinces: "[Since] the useful functions of the ulama were each given a new name, and [their *waqf* lands] began to be subject to interference by the Ministry of Education, it is surmised that the ulama in those places [Anatolia and Rumelia], too, will gradually decrease."<sup>24</sup> Disturbed, Abdülhamid instructed the Grand Vizier to seize all copies of this "seditious pamphlet," and suggested that Shaikh Ahmed Ziyâuddin Efendi be asked by the *Meşihat* (office of the *Şeyhülislam*) to write a counter-pamphlet.<sup>25</sup>

In the following year, the Ottoman government's attention was drawn to the Shi'i problem by a disturbance which had broken out between Sunnis and Shi'is in Samarra, where the chief Shi'i mujtahid, Mirza Hasan Shirazi, had resided since 1874.<sup>26</sup> In June 1886, Mirza Muhsin Khan, the Iranian Ambassador to the Porte, asked to see the Sultan privately and pressed for the deportation of certain people from Samarra. Muhsin Khan claimed that the Sunni *Müftü* of Samarra had cursed the Shi'is in his Friday sermons, and he asked for the deportation of the *Müftü*, the *Naib*, the Mayor, and two others, who were said to have mistreated the Shi'i population of the town. At the same time, the Ambassador asked the Sultan to give permission for the repair of the *türbe* (Caliph Ali's tomb) in Najaf.<sup>27</sup>

Abdülhamid sought the opinion of the Grand Vizier, Kamil Paşa, who informed him that the enquiries which were being carried out by the *vilayet* of Baghdad had not finished, and that decisions on the two Iranian requests should be postponed. The Grand Vizier explained that in response to his

initial enquiries, the Vali of Baghdad had dismissed the alleged incident as misinformation, and that only when Muhsin Khan had insisted on the topic, had Kamil Paşa written to the Commander of 6th Army through the *Serasker*, and asked for another investigation.<sup>28</sup> The answer from 6th Army confirmed the *vilayet's* denial of any incident. However, the Iranian Ambassador was not convinced. This time, the Porte decided that the Iranian Consul at Baghdad should take part in a third investigation, which was still going on in late July 1886.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, on July 13, 1886, Abdülhamid, after having consulted the Council of Ministers, informed Kamil Paşa that the *türbe* of Najaf would be repaired by the Ottoman government, not by the Shah. If, however, the Shah wanted to send some gifts and ornaments, these would be welcomed.<sup>30</sup> Muhsin Khan objected, and asked for a reconsideration, on the grounds of the Shah's special position. Kamil Paşa was inclined to give way, noting that it was a customary act of the Iranian Shahs to repair the *türbe* in question, and suggesting that concession might make a good impression on the Shah.<sup>31</sup>

The Iranian government continued to insist on the deportation of certain people from Samarra. In late October 1886, Abdülhamid instructed Kamil Paşa to reach a decision at once and close the file.<sup>32</sup> Kamil Paşa replied with the result of the latest investigation, which had been carried out by the Commander of 6th Army through a special agent. It was stated in the Commander's telegram that although the *Müftü* of Samarra was accused by the Shi'is of acts of provocation, this was denied by the Sunnis of that town. But the Commander added that it appeared that a state of tension and provocative rumors prevailed in the town, because of the activities of Iranian Consul and some Shi'is, and in particular, because of a long-standing conflict between İbrahim Efendi, the *Müftü*, and Mirza Muhammad Efendi [Shirazi], the chief mujtahid. The *Müşir* warned that it would be impossible to calm the situation as long as these two men stayed in the town. In view of the fact that Iran was giving special importance to this incident, Kamil Paşa was anxious to carry out a further official investigation before reaching any decisions, and proposed the appointment of a special commissioner to Baghdad to deal with this problem, and also to prepare a general reform policy for Iraq:

The appointment of a capable person to send to Baghdad, in order to conduct the necessary and thorough investigation into the reforms and improvements which the province of Baghdad requires, and to prepare and forward a report containing the details of the required measures.<sup>33</sup>

In the meantime, in late August 1886, it appears, Abdülhamid consulted Mirza Hasan Shaikh al-Rais, an important Iranian dissident, residing in Istanbul, through two of his confidants, Cevdet Paşa and Yusuf Rıza Paşa.<sup>34</sup> According to their account, Shaikh al-Rais showed every inclination and desire for the Sultan's proposal (removal of the enmity [*adavet*] between the Shi'is and Sunnis), and wanted to write a pamphlet (*risale*) and communicate with the Iranian mujtahids for the purpose.<sup>35</sup> Abdülhamid also appears to have asked Cevdet and Rıza Paşa as to give their own opinions. In his report, Cevdet Paşa, the celebrated scholar and former Justice Minister, gave his full support to the cause of a Sunni-Shi'i unity.<sup>36</sup> After having explained the historical development and present situation of the Shi'i sect, Cevdet Paşa elaborated on the idea of Sunni-Shi'i unity and alliance (*ittifak ve ittihad*) against the "tyranny and rule of the Christian states" (*düvel-i nasaranın tagallüb ve tahakkümlerine*), through the respective authorities of the Caliph and the Shi'i mujtahids. Cevdet Paşa argued that three conditions must be met: first, the tombs of the *ehl-i beyt* (the Prophet's family) in Madina, which were regarded as very important by Shi'is as well as Sunnis, must be repaired, and presents must be sent to them. Second, the Shi'i mujtahids of the Atabat must be won over to Sunnism, and therefore to the Ottoman Empire. Third, some public works should be carried out in the Atabat.

In another undated and unsigned report, which appears to have been compiled by Yusuf Rıza Paşa, former Minister to Tehran and a Shi'i convert, the writer encouraged the Sultan to seek a Sunni-Shi'i rapprochement.<sup>37</sup> After giving an historical background, and explaining the basic principles of the Shi'i sect, Yusuf Rıza Paşa described the relationship between the Shi'i ulama and the reigning Qajar dynasty, and the ulama's political role in Iran. He stated that the mujtahids' influence was a thousand times effective in Iran than that of the Shah. That was why the Shah was trying to repair the sacred tombs in the Atabat, and it was due to the mujtahids' opposition that the Russians could not implement

European laws in Iran. He argued that most of the mujtahids lived in the Ottoman Empire, and they were able, with a sign, to make people revolt against the Shah in 24 hours, and coerce the Iranian state whatever they wanted. Even the Russians, very well aware of the power of the ulama in Iran, were sending presents, and honoring them in various ways, in order to influence Iranian affairs and at the same time keep the Shi'i population of Daghistan quiet. In his opinion, their importance for the Ottoman state was much more than that for the Russians. He argued that although the disagreement between Sunnis and Shi'is was very ancient, there had been no hostility to prevent their unity in the early ages of Islam. It was political circumstances which had led to mutual enmity: in the days of Sultan Selim I and Shah Ismail Safavi, because of political conflict between the two states, Shi'ism had become the *raison d'être* of the Iranian state, while the Ottoman ulama had gone so far as to proclaim Shi'ism to be infidelity (*küfür*) . However, Yusuf Rıza Paşa pointed out,

At the present time, however, it is a religious obligation for Muslim nations to unite and rise up, on the basis of God's unity (*kelime-i tevhid*), against the tyranny and rule of the Christian states; and, since all of them perceive this point, the capacity for unity and alliance in this direction is becoming apparent among both Sunnis and Shi'is.

Yusuf Rıza Paşa then reminded the Sultan that

So much so that, last year, in accordance with the imperial order, when [I], together with Cevdet Paşa, talked to Prince Shaikh al-Rais (*Şeyhü'l-Reis*) who was then in Istanbul, a total inclination and desire was observed in him for the removal of the coldness between Sunnis and Shi'is. I myself, too, observed this inclination and wish among all the Shi'i ulama during my travels in Baghdad region.

Yusuf Rıza Paşa finally argued that Sultan Abdülhamid was the most appropriate person for this task, since he was regarded as *Hilafetpenah* and *İmamü'l-Muslimin* by Sunnis, whereas the Shah of Iran had no such authority among Shi'is. Unity would be achieved only by the Sultan, and by the mujtahids who held the real power in the Shi'i world. Given that the mujtahids lived within the Empire, he argued, it was a holy task for Sultan Abdülhamid to remove this hostility between the two sects. In this respect,

he also proposed some measures, similar to those of Cevdet Paşa, to achieve the purpose. First, the repair of the tombs of the *ehl-i beyt* in Madina. Second, some improvement works also were to be done in the Atabat. Third, Ottoman authorities would, according to political considerations, invite the Shi'i ulama to this task by way of payments and showing honors; but making sure that this last measure will not be at the expense of the Sunni ulama, and a balanced and just policy between Sunni and Shi'i ulama should be implemented in this regard. The person to be charged with the task was the Vali of Baghdad, and he should have had the knowledge and the qualifications for this. [38](#)

As far as can be traced, however, no serious measures were taken until early 1891. One of the exceptions was the case of Alusizâde Ahmed Şakir Efendi, a notable of Baghdad. In October 1888, he asked for the charge of the *zaviye* of Shaikh Sayyid Sultan Ali in Baghdad, in order to expand Sunnism and stop Shi'ism, with the allowance of a per month 250 *kuruş* and 1.5 *dönüm* cereals. His demand was fully approved by the Porte and the Sultan, and moreover, his salary first raised to 500 *kuruş* by the Porte, and later to 1500 *kuruş* by the Sultan. [39](#) In another example, the government allowed a salary of 700 *kuruş* to a certain Shaikh Taha Efendi of Karbala, and 30 *kuruş* pocket-money for his students in January 1889. [40](#) Finally one might mention that, upon the request of the Vali of Baghdad, Abdülhamid gave instruction for the repair of the *küllîye* of Imam Huseyin at Karbala in February 1890 despite the total expenditures of 162,700 *kuruş*. [41](#)

Central government's attention was again drawn to the Shi'i problem by a report by a former *Mutasarrıf* of Basra, Mehmed Ali, submitted in January 1889. [42](#) Mehmed Ali warned that Shi'ism was expanding in Iraq day by day, and that more than a third of the tribes were already Shi'i. The reason for the growth of Shi'ism, he suggested, was the fact that there were neither Sunni imams nor Sunni preachers in the mosques and shrines of the region, whereas Iranian *akhunds* were continuously preaching in and around the Atabat, and were traveling among the tribes "like Christian missionaries." Since the people of Iraq had not seen anybody but Shi'i *akhunds*, and given the fact that they were already very ignorant, and could not even distinguish the two sects, they naturally came to consider Shi'ism as Islam. [43](#)

According to Mehmed Ali, the foremost danger posed by this phenomenon was the threat to the loyalty of the local troops. The percentage of the soldiers of 6th Army who belonged to the Shi'i sect was 90, and given that the natural enemy of the state in this region was Iran, and that troubles were continuously occurring among the Shi'i tribes, this fact should cause great concern. Mehmed Ali added that this might even pave the way for a British intervention in the region. As to counter measures, Mehmed Ali proposed first, that a number of Sunni ulama should live in every shrine, mosque, and madrasa, and preach and expand the Sunni sect. Second, he wanted the number of primary, secondary, and technical schools to be increased as soon as possible, with special attention paid to the religious curriculum in these schools. Third, he proposed that the troops of 6th Army should be replaced by soldiers from 4th and 5th Armies.<sup>44</sup>

The warning about the state of 6th Army appears to have alarmed the Sultan. There followed a series of correspondence among the Sultan, the military establishment, and the (present or former) local officials, on the issue of Shi'i presence in 6th Army, as well as the other dimensions of Shi'i threat in Iraq.<sup>45</sup> As a result, in mid-1890, a Committee of Military Inspection was dispatched to Iraq for a general investigation.<sup>46</sup> While the committee was in Iraq, the Sultan also continued to consult the ulama both in the center and in Iraq, and asked for the consideration of appropriate measures.<sup>47</sup> It was the detailed report of this committee which finally prompted the Palace and the Porte to embark upon a serious consideration of the Shi'i issue. The committee devoted a full chapter of its report to the Shi'i problem, warning that because a great deal of money was spent by Iranian and Indian Shi'is to spread and propagate their sect, Shi'ism was expanding day by day in the region, while the number of people belonging to the Sunni sect was declining. Thus far, the committee added, nothing had been done to stop this.<sup>48</sup>

After receiving this report, Abdülhamid forwarded it to the Grand Vizier for consideration. Meanwhile, Sırrı Paşa, the Vali of Baghdad, was asked to give his opinion. Sırrı Paşa's report, dated March 24, 1891, also expressed great concern at the growth of Shi'ism, placing particular blame on the Oudh Bequest, under which 40,000 *lira* was distributed annually by the British Consul General at Baghdad to the Shi'i mujtahids, religious



students, and shrine keepers of Najaf, Karbala, and Samarra.<sup>49</sup> There was also a certain amount of Iranian money coming to the chief mujtahid of Samarra, Mirza Hasan Shirazi. Being rich and wealthy, these mujtahids easily attracted the people of the region to Shi'ism, and also easily established schools and madrasas to teach and propagate Shi'ism. But on the other hand, the Sunni madrasas were in a state of backwardness and inactiveness.<sup>50</sup> Sırrı Paşa argued that it was not only religiously but also politically important to stop the spread of Shi'ism, and there was much for the central government to do. It was essential to establish new schools and madrasas, and to improve the existing ones. This would require a great amount of money, however, and the *vilayet* currently had no authority to spend even the smallest sum on education. The only solutions were an increase in the *vilayet's* legal authority, or direct involvement by the central government.

After examining the reports of the Committee of Military Inspection and the Vali, the Council of Ministers stated that in order to forestall the growth of the Shi'i sect, the Sunni madrasas should be revived, and ulama should be sent to the region to preach and teach according to the Sunni principles (*akaid-i ehl-i sünnet*). Further, primary schools should be opened where necessary, and teachers and preachers should be appointed to educate children properly. Adequate financial resources should also be found for this task.<sup>51</sup> These various reports appear to have caused Abdülhamid serious concern. His first practical step, in June 1891, was to order the dismissal of Sırrı Paşa, the Vali of Baghdad: "the Sultan's favor towards Sırrı Paşa has disappeared because of the Iranians' penetration in Baghdad."<sup>52</sup>

At the same time, very much disturbed by the news of the Shi'i presence in 6th Army and after several consultations and considerations, the Sultan issued instructions to the Grand Vizier and the *Serasker* to transfer some of the soldiers who belonged to the Shi'i sect to other armies, and to maintain only Sunni soldiers in Baghdad *vilayet*.<sup>53</sup> Kamil Paşa objected that it was impossible to change people's beliefs by force, and that a coercive policy would simply drive local people to pretend to be Sunnis for a while. Under the circumstances, he argued, the aim could be achieved only by way of education and preaching. He proposed that a few students from each of the



Shi'i-inhabited towns and cities, such as Baghdad, Basra, Najaf, and Karbala, should be sent to the madrasa of al-Azhar in Egypt, with stipends from the Ottoman government. In a period of 8–10 years, with the help of a good education, they would abandon their “superstitious belief” and come back to their homeland as Sunnis. Then, they could be appointed to teach their fellow countrymen. Through this channel, Kamil Paşa added, as the number of this kind of ulama increased, they could overcome the Shi'i mujtahids who were seducing the ignorant people with superstition. To support his point, Kamil Paşa gave the example of the American Missionaries who first brought up some young Armenians in their schools according to the Protestant faith, and later sent them as teachers and preachers into the Armenian community in order to attract them to the Protestant faith. Kamil Paşa concluded therefore that it would be much more beneficial to employ this method, instead of using force (*tedabir-i zecriye*) .<sup>54</sup>

Abdülhamid approved Kamil Paşa's proposal except for one point, that of sending the students to Egypt—understandably, given his suspicion of the latter place as a potential opposition center to the Ottoman Caliphate. Instead, the Sultan decided that a school for the students should be established in Istanbul: <sup>55</sup>

As there is no need to send Shi'i youngsters to Egypt instead of Istanbul, a sufficient number of students should be brought to Istanbul in order to be educated in Arabic by the madrasa professors appointed by the Şeyhülislam, and sufficient salaries should be assigned to them when they return to their home districts after completing their education and becoming Sunnis.

Accordingly, the Vali of Baghdad selected 10 Shi'i and 2 Sunni children from Baghdad and Karbala, and sent them to Istanbul. <sup>56</sup> Later, three more students joined them from Basra. But, contrary to expectations, nothing came of this project. In about one and a half years, six students left the school and went back to Iraq, and as late as 1907, only a few of those remaining had completed their studies. In March of that year, Mahmud, Şevket and Abdulhadi Efendis of this school were appointed as teachers and preachers in Baghdad by the order of the Sultan. <sup>57</sup>

In any case, the Ottoman government was not relying on this project alone. In December 1891, following Cevad Paşa's succession to Kamil Paşa as Grand Vizier, Abdülhamid asked his Ministers to reconsider reform policy in Iraq, including matters related to the Shi'i problem. The Ministers re-approved all the proposals which had been made by the previous Council of Ministers. This was also fully approved by the Sultan. <sup>58</sup>

The Porte then began to implement some of the proposals made in the reports mentioned earlier. In early 1892, it was proposed that some local ulama should be charged with the task of forestalling the expansion of the Shi'i sect in Iraq. <sup>59</sup> In 1893, accordingly, hodjas (Muslim teachers) were appointed to the Shi'i towns of Delim, Horasan, Mandali, Kut'al-Amarah, Samarra, Ana, and Shafatiya, in order to teach and preach Sunni Islam among the tribes and people. <sup>60</sup> Samarra was given special importance, as the chief Shi'i mujtahid, Mirza Hasan Shirazi, resided there with his 500 students. In December 1893, the Vali of Baghdad asked that a capable Muslim scholar (*alim*) be sent from Istanbul to serve as *Müftü* of Samarra, but because nobody from Istanbul would accept this post, the Porte allowed the Vali of Baghdad to choose a local *alim*. Shaikh Said Efendi, said to be a capable man, familiar with the language of the region, and also with state affairs, was appointed to the post with a salary of 1,500 *kuruş*. <sup>61</sup> At about the same time, the Custodian of the *türbe* of Imam Husayn at Karbala was summoned to Istanbul by the Palace in order to be consulted on the matter. <sup>62</sup>

While these steps were being taken by the Sultan and the Porte, a number of reports had been reaching the Palace from officials who were familiar with Iraq, including Mehmed Rifat Efendi, the *Defterdar* of Baghdad; Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa, a prominent statesman living in internal exile in Baghdad; Nusret Paşa, a former confidant of the Sultan, currently serving as Honorary Inspector of 6th Army at Baghdad; Major Ali Rıza Bey, former Consul at the Iranian towns of Hoy and Selmas; and a religious scholar, Hüseyin Hüsnü Efendi, who had served in Iraq.

The report by Mehmed Rifat Efendi, the *Defterdar* of Baghdad, was dated January 31, 1892. <sup>63</sup> Mehmed Rifat Efendi blamed the Iranian Government for assisting the expansion of Shi'ism in Iraq. With the help of *akhunds* and

mujtahids, the Iranians had succeeded in influencing the people, and as a result, more than half of the population were now Shi'is. Not only wealthy Shi'is, but also the Iranian government spent a great deal of money in the Atabat, and thereby attracted the ordinary people. Local officials, on the other hand, were very tolerant toward the Shi'i festivals and ceremonies. The report also called attention to the situation of 6th army, alleging that mujtahids and *akhunds* were conducting propaganda among the soldiers. Like other observers, Mehmed Rifat Efendi also emphasized the backwardness of the region: "In contrast to the wealth of Iraq, whose fame once filled the world, a condition of utter poverty prevails now. (...) The cry of poverty is one of the causes of the spread of Shi'ism, and perhaps the principal [cause]." [64](#)

Süleyman Paşa, a prominent statesmen of the 1870s who had been exiled to Baghdad by Abdülhamid in 1878, also touched on the Shi'i issue in a memorandum, dated April 7, 1892, on the subject of a general reform in Iraq. [65](#) He admitted that, because of Iranian *akhunds*' intrigues, most of the people in Iraq had accepted Shi'ism, and warned that the Shi'is did not accept any authority but Mirza Hasan [Shirazi], the chief mujtahid of the *Usulis*. The latter had much more influence than the Shah of Iran, as had been clearly and most recently demonstrated during the Tobacco Protest of 1891–2. Süleyman Paşa continued to explain that in this *Usuli* school, the mujtahids were like the Pope, or even more powerful than the Pope, of the Christians. In their belief, all governments, including Iranian government, were usurpers, as the right of government and caliphate belonged to the Twelfth Imam (*İmam-ı Masum*). As a result of this belief, only when they faced an armed force, did they pay tax; otherwise they were regarded as sinners. According to Süleyman Paşa, this was the main reason for the poor revenues of the province. As counter measures, Süleyman Paşa proposed that, first of all, the Shi'is' mischievous beliefs (*akaid*) should be undermined through the distribution of such books as *İzharu'l-Hak* by Rahmetullah Efendi, *Risâletu'l-Hamîdiyye* by Sayyid Huseyin Cîsr, and *Tuhfetti'l-İhvan* by Davud-i Bağdadî. And after a period of two or three years' education, a number of specially selected students should be sent to these parts of the Empire as *da'is* (missionaries). [66](#)

In his report written in May 1893, on the subject of general reform in Iraq, Nusret Paşa also devoted some pages to the Shi'i problem. He wrote that the Iranians were training students in the Shi'i madrasas of the Atabat, in order to send them among the tribes, and that with the help of money from India and Iran, they were converting tribesmen and nomads to Shi'ism. In addition, he claimed that the Shi'is were producing gunpowder and distributing it to the Shi'i tribes.<sup>[67](#)</sup>

There are also a number of undated reports in the Yıldız Archive concerning the Shi'i issue, most probably written in this period. Major Ali Rıza Bey's report suggested that the reasons why Shi'ism had been expanding in Iraq were as follows: the Atabat lay in Iraq; every year thousands of Iranians visited the Atabat, and Shi'i mujtahids and students permanently resided in the Atabat.<sup>[68](#)</sup> Naturally, since most of the people in Iraq were nomads and tribesmen, and had no knowledge of the bad aspects of the Shi'i sect, they were easily becoming Shi'is.<sup>[69](#)</sup> The report proposed measures to stop the expansion of Shi'ism: since, apart from all Iran and a large part of India, 40 percent of the people of Iraq were Shi'i, it was impossible to suppress it by force, which would cause resentment among the Muslims, and serve as a pretext for Christian governments to intervene. Other measures were required. Major Ali Rıza Bey blamed local officials for being indifferent, and put the emphasis on the ignorance of the people as the main reason for the growth of Shi'ism. Consequently, the only way to solve this problem was to establish schools: "Under the circumstances, it is necessary to open [modern] primary schools throughout Iraq and to teach the principles of the Muslim religion in order to stop the spread of Shi'ism."<sup>[70](#)</sup>

Hüseyin Hüsnü Efendi, a future Şeyhülislam, who had served in Iraq as the inspector of state lands, also prepared a report, which strongly advocated religious and civil education as means of forestalling the growth of Shi'ism in Iraq, and of promoting the Sunni sect.<sup>[71](#)</sup> He noted that the Sunni mosques and madrasas in Baghdad were mostly ruined and deserted, and that in the few madrasas which were active, the students were incompetent. He urged the government to revive the madrasas, in order to train religious students. In order to stop the growth of Shi'ism, he argued, it was necessary to appoint 15–20 ulama, with sufficient salaries, who should live among the

tribes and in the towns of Karbala, Hilla, Muntafiq, and Amarah, and teach and preach. The ulama should by no means use force, and they should not mention that they were connected with the state. Furthermore, these ulama should not be selected from the people of Iraq, but should be recruited from Syria, Aleppo, or Harput. In addition, a number of people, 30 or 40, should be sent to the region to teach the Qur'an and catechism (*ilmihal*), lead the prayers, and live continuously among the tribes. For preference, this latter group should be recruited among Arabs, even from in and around Baghdad, but care should be taken to ensure that they were Sunni. These two groups of ulama should be supported financially, and Hüseyin Hüsni Efendi proposed that revenues of land could be used for this purpose.<sup>72</sup>

In another report, undated and unsigned, but compiled most probably by a religious scholar, the writer argued that the Ottoman Sultan had a right to stop the growth of Shi'ism in Ottoman lands: as a Great Caliph, he was consulted even by the British government when appointing an Imam for the Muslims of South Africa (*Ümid Burnu*), and so nobody could object to the measures which were to be taken against the flourishing of *Rafizilik* (Rafida) in Iraq.<sup>73</sup> He then went on to give some information about the historical antecedents of the Shi'i sect in Iraq from the Safavids onwards. He put the blame for the sect's growth on the tolerance which had been shown to the Shi'is in Iraq over centuries by the Ottoman authorities. That was why, he wrote, this "humiliation" (*zelâlet*) had become established, and was flourishing at the present.<sup>74</sup>

## II

While these various reports were being drafted and discussed, the Atabat began to emerge as an important opposition center in Iranian politics, and the mujtahids of the Atabat began to get involved in Iranian internal affairs, for the first time. The trigger was the Tobacco Regie Crisis of 1891–2, provoked by the Shah's award of a monopoly concession for the purchase, sale, and export of Iranian tobacco to a British subject. When the concession was first implemented in 1891, ulama-led protests developed in the major cities in Iran. One of the first protesters against the concession was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who had been living in Iran since December 1889. Afghani (1838/9–1897), who was a leading Muslim political activist

and “Pan-Islamic agitator” of the second half of the nineteenth century, had long been known to Abdülhamid. [75](#)

In early 1891, Afghani was expelled to Basra by the Shah. About June 1891, Afghani sent a letter from Basra to Mirza Hasan Shirazi, the chief mujtahid at Samarra, urging him to act. In late 1891, under pressure from the Shi’i ulama of Iran and of the Atabat, Shirazi issued a decree saying that the use of tobacco was against the will of the Twelfth Imam, and there followed a universal boycott of tobacco throughout Iran. Nasir al-Din Shah was forced to cancel, first, the internal concession, and then after new disturbances, the export concession. The mujtahids of the Atabat had shown, and were shown, the extent of their political power within Iran. [76](#)

This development did not escape the eyes of Sultan Abdülhamid, who appears to have seen the rift between the Iranian government and the Shi’i mujtahids as an opportunity to promote a radical program to secure a religious rapprochement between Shi’i and Sunni Islam, and to extend his own political influence at the expense of the Shah. His chosen tool was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who had already written to the Sultan on several occasions in order to gain his support for “Pan-Islamic” schemes for Muslim unity. [77](#) Afghani was invited to Istanbul by Abdülhamid in the summer of 1892, though it is not clear, at this early stage, what Abdülhamid had in mind. [78](#) Although some have argued that Afghani was invited as a result of his earlier Pan-Islamic proposals to the Sultan, it is not clear whether Abdülhamid already had the intention of employing him for the Shi’i problem and therefore against Iran, or whether he simply wanted to prevent Afghani from interfering in Caliphate discussions emanating from Egypt.

Afghani arrived in Istanbul toward the end of the summer of 1892. He was well received by the Sultan, and he was at first on good terms with Shaikh Abulhuda and the Sultan’s other religious advisers and confidants. [79](#) By then, as noted, the Shi’i problem in Iraq had already been given some thought by Abdülhamid; some measures had been taken; and a number of reports on the problem were reaching the Palace. It was also becoming clear that the measures thus far taken were likely to fail, in particular the education policy: as indicated earlier, after one and a half years, most of the



students brought to Istanbul for training as Sunni preachers had gone back to Iraq. Since Abdülhamid mentioned this fact, in a letter to Afghani, as a reason for turning toward a new policy of Sunni-Shi'i rapprochement, and given the fact that the school was opened at the end of 1891, it may safely be argued that not until the middle of 1893 did Abdülhamid ask for a proposal for a Pan-Islamic policy from Afghani. And, after a period of consideration and consultation by the Sultan, the activity for Sunni-Shi'i unity seems to have begun only in early 1894. In the meantime, it becomes clear from the documents that Abdülhamid came to the conclusion, or rather was convinced by his advisers, that a policy of Sunni-Shi'i unity would be the best long-term solution to the Shi'i problem in Iraq.

It appears that Abdülhamid, probably in late 1893, wrote to Afghani on this issue and asked his opinion.<sup>[80](#)</sup> In the first part of his letter, the Sultan spoke of the activities of Christian missionaries within the Empire, accusing them of working against Muslim population. He then came to the point: "There is no mistaking the necessity for Muslims to strengthen themselves and resist, through alliance and unity (*ittifak ve ittihadla*), the mischievous designs and initiatives of the Christians." After mentioning Sultan Selim I's efforts to secure Muslim unity in the sixteenth century, Abdülhamid argued that

The Iranians constantly maintain their heretical beliefs in order to live separately from the Ottoman government, and have endeavored to convert the Sunnis to their own sect by deceiving ignorant people in Iraq and Baghdad. In order to neutralize these efforts and deceptions, and to forestall [their] harm, some preachers, ulama and hodjas have been sent to these regions, and repeated orders have been communicated to the Valis and Mutasarrifs; and, in this respect, great efforts have always been exerted, and though many children whose parents belong to the Shi'i sect were asked to be brought to Istanbul and educated, later, some of them deserted due to their ill-health, and some others persisted in their false belief; and it is obvious that even though two or three of them were converted, no benefit will be gained from this. Up to now, no good result has been procured from the measures which have been taken.

The Sultan then complained of the protection of Armenian revolutionaries by the Iranian authorities: "Even though the Iranians are fundamentally



Muslims, and pray, like us, towards the Kaaba at Mecca, [they] even support and protect, under the influence of this conflict of sect, the Armenian villains who work against the Muslims.” Abdülhamid concluded:

The necessity to adopt a serious remedy and measures against these regrettable conditions is obvious. And it is evident that this remedy and measures will be the (...) creation of Islamic alliance and unity (*ittifak ve ittihad-ı İ slam*) through the removal of conflicts and contradictions pertaining to sect.

Abdülhamid offered the following task to Sayyid Jamal al-Din:

As you have traveled in most of the lands of Islam, spent much time in Iran, and thoroughly studied the difference between the four [Sunni] sects and the Shi’i sect, and as, through time spent in Europe, you have knowledge of general affairs, and as [I] am certain that you desire to achieve the unity of Islam (*ittihad-ı İ slam*), it is my command as Caliph that you recommence the initiatives which previously proved fruitless, due to the lack of ulama who understood politics, and that you consider at length and in detail whether or not a general Islamic union (*ittihad-ı İ slam*) may be achieved, in accordance with the verse “Indeed Muslims are brothers,” by abolishing the sectarian differences between Muslims in some parts of the Ottoman Empire, and also in some other places: by, for instance, forming a committee of two or three persons each from our ulama and the Shi’i ulama, eliminating the dissension of sect, so overcoming, and perhaps entirely removing, the influence of the Iranian mujtahids, so that finally, as in Germany, a union may be connected, in which the rulers of Iran continue to govern within Iran, but military command is [the property] of the office of Caliph.

The Sultan requested a detailed report, and warned Afghani to maintain the project in the strictest secrecy.<sup>[81](#)</sup> Abdülhamid also stated in his *Pensees et souvenirs de l'ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid II* that there was advantage for the Iranians to come to an understanding with the Ottomans, in order not to be the toy of Russia and England, and that “Sayyid Cemaleddin,” “a famous scholar in Yıldız Palace,” encouraged him for the unity of Sunnis and Shi’is, as did Hacı Mirza Khan, the Iranian Consul in Istanbul. The Sultan added that “Cemaleddin” won over some ulama in Iran, in addition to

several Iranian high officials, and that it would be a great step even if there was not be a full agreement in that respect, and a rapprochement would be achieved between two countries.<sup>[82](#)</sup>

Afghani's reply has not been traced, but it appears that Abdülhamid postponed any further action for some time.<sup>[83](#)</sup> It appears from the available accounts that implementation of the project began in early 1894, probably just before a serious outbreak of disturbances between Sunnis and Shi'is in Samarra. This Samarra incident acted as a further stimulus to the Sultan's efforts to procure a Sunni-Shi'i rapprochement, and is therefore worth examining.<sup>[84](#)</sup> The incident occurred without warning in April 1894. It began as a petty quarrel about some money transaction between a Sunni and a Shi'i resident of the town, but rapidly developed into something like a religious war between Sunnis and Shi'is, in which several people were killed.<sup>[85](#)</sup>

After the incident, Mockler, the British Consul General at Baghdad, sought to visit Samarra in order to assure the safety of British Indian students residing there.<sup>[86](#)</sup> Interestingly enough, it appears that the Ottoman authorities were much more disturbed by the visit of the British Consul General than by the Samarra incident itself, and attempted in vain to stop Mockler.<sup>[87](#)</sup> Meanwhile, the Dragoman of the Russian Embassy called on the Ottoman Foreign Minister, and alleged that the main reason for Mockler's journey to Samarra was to enable the chief mujtahid to escape to India. This inevitably reinforced the Porte's suspicions.<sup>[88](#)</sup>

Furthermore, the Samarra incident caused much trouble among the Shi'i population both in the Atabat and in Iran. Some of the Shi'i ulama of Samarra forebade their followers to open their shops, and stopped leading prayers as a protest, but eventually, Mirza Hasan Shirazi made a declaration calling for calm.<sup>[89](#)</sup> In his instructions to the Grand Vizier, Cevad Paşa, Abdülhamid blamed the local authorities for being incautious, and emphasized that due to the fact that there were foreign citizens among the people involved in the incident, foreign consuls, and especially the British Consul General, had got involved. The Sultan expressed particular concern lest the British attempt to take the chief mujtahid under their protection. Abdülhamid ordered that a commission, composed of officials who were

familiar with the region, be formed to investigate the situation, in consultation with the Vali of Baghdad. <sup>90</sup> Cevad Paşa replied that measures must be taken for “prevention of the expansion of the Shi’i sect in Iraq,” and hinted at educational and financial reforms. <sup>91</sup>

At the same time, Abdülhamid also consulted Ali Galib Bey, the Ottoman Ambassador at Tehran, seeking his opinion on the Samarra incident, the mujtahids, and Shi’ism in Iraq. The Ambassador replied as follows: <sup>92</sup>

It is my humble opinion that the objective can be obtained, by, for example, inculcating in the minds of the [local] and Iranian population the idea that the survival of the Shi’i sect in Baghdad is not [the result], as is believed, of the influence of the Iranian state, but of the protection of His Imperial Majesty the Caliph; by, as far as possible, rendering ineffective the Iranian consuls’ initiatives in matters pertaining to sect, and so strengthening the material and moral bonds of the Shi’i ulama to the sacred office of the Great Caliphate; and in sum, by materially demonstrating to the subjects and ulama of Iran that they can derive no benefit from the Iranian state and its officials, and that on the contrary, it is adherence to the Ottoman Sultanate which is the cause of prosperity and salvation.

The Ambassador’s report reveals that Abdülhamid had already decided to win over some Iranian mujtahids to his side. A decoration was given to “Aqa Sayyid Abdullah,” a Tehran mujtahid, for unspecified services rendered, and a Tehran Embassy employee, Mirza Hasan Khan, was instructed to involve himself in Iranian affairs. <sup>93</sup>

Abdülhamid seems to have thought that the Iranians were behind the Samarra incident. Faced already with the problem of Armenian revolutionaries crossing the Iranian border into eastern Anatolia, the Sultan appears to have felt that the Shah of Iran was also putting pressure on him in Iraq. In response, Abdülhamid decided to implement the earlier proposals for a Sunni-Shi’i rapprochement: this offered the prospect of a final solution to the Shi’i problem in Iraq, and also a means of counter-attack against the Shah of Iran. <sup>94</sup>

It appears that as a result, a working-group was set up under Afghani, and sent hundreds of letters to prominent Shi'i ulama all over the Islamic world. According to the account given by Afzal al-Mulk, who was himself part of Afghani's Iranian circle in Istanbul,<sup>[95](#)</sup>

The Ottoman Sultan came to believe in the unity of the different Islamic groups and asked Sayyed Jamal ed din to write to the Shi'ite ulama in Iran and Iraq and call them to unity. The late Sayyed Jamal ed din answered that this problem had great importance for Islamic states. Today the Moslems of the world were more than three hundred million, and if they believed in unity and brotherhood among themselves no government or people could prevail over or excel them. He said if he had the power of the sultanate and the necessary money (...) he could accomplish this great work with the help of a circle of patriotic intellectuals. The Ottoman Sultan gave guarantees and obligations for this. The Sayyed formed a society of Iranian and other Shi'ite men of letters who were in Istanbul.

According to Afzal al-Mulk, this group was made up of 12 men:

Novvab Vala Hajj Sheikh ol Ra'is [Mirza Hasan Shaikh al-Rais], Feizi Efendi Moallem Irani [Muallim Feyzi Efendi],<sup>[96](#)</sup> Reza Paşa Shi'i [Yusuf Rıza Paşa], Sayyed Borhan ed din Balkhi [Sayyid Burhaneddin Belhi],<sup>[97](#)</sup> Novvab Hossein Hindi, Ahmad Mirza (who had just come from Iran to Istanbul), Hajj Mirza Hasan Khan (the Iranian Consul-General),<sup>[98](#)</sup> Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani,<sup>[99](#)</sup> Shaikh Ahmad Ruhi (brother of the writer),<sup>[100](#)</sup> Afzal al-Mulk Kermani (the writer), Abdol Karim Bey and Hamid Bey Javaherizadeh Esfahani.

According to the account,<sup>[101](#)</sup>

When the Sayyed's group was formed, he spoke to it as follows: Today the religion of Islam is like a ship whose captain is Mohammad, peace be with him, and all Moslems are passengers of this holly ship, and this unhappy ship is caught in a storm and threatened with sinking, and unbelievers and freethinkers from every side have pierced this ship. What is the duty of the passengers of such a ship, threatened with sinking, and its inhabitants close to perdition? Should they first try to preserve and save this ship from the

storm and from sinking, or instead bring the ship and each other to the verge of ruin through discord, personal motives, and petty disagreements? All with one voice answered that preserving the territory of Islam and this holy ship was the religious duty of every Muslim (...) Then the Sayyed asked all to write to every acquaintance and friend in Iran and the shrines of Iraq, in general, and in particular to the Shi'ite ulama in India, Iran and Arab lands, Balkh, and Turkestan, about the kindness and benevolence of the great Islamic Sultan toward all Moslems of whatever opinion and group they might be. If the Shi'ite ulama united in this Islamic unity the Sultan would give every one of them, according to his rank, special favor and a monthly salary, and would order Ottoman officials to observe the same good conduct toward Iranians in Mecca and Medina as toward their own people, and in recognition of this great action of the Shi'ite ulama and the state of Iran he would bestow on them the holy cities of Iraq...(the society agreed) and about 400 letters were written in all directions, and a report of this society was given to the Ottoman Sultan (...) After six months about 200 petitions from the Arab and Iranian Shi'ite ulama with some gifts and antiques were sent to the Sultan through Sayyed Jamal ed Din. (He translated the petitions into Turkish and took them to the Sultan.) (...) The Ottoman Caliph was so happy to see these letters that he embraced the late Sayyed and kissed his face and said to him: since some are such fanatical Sunnites and will find a pretext to accuse me of Shi'ism, it is better that we turn over the accomplishment of this holy goal to the Prime Minister and the High Gate. We will have the Sheikh of Islam collaborate with us confidentially. He accepted the royal will in this matter and an imperial command went to the High Gate. I was delegated to go to the holy cities of Iraq to investigate the mentality and affairs of the ulama and give a report to the High Gate.

However, the correspondence between Afghani's Istanbul circle and the Shi'i ulama was learned of by the Iranian Consul at Baghdad, and by the Iranian Ambassador at Istanbul, and reported to the Shah. While, on the one hand, the Iranian Ambassador demanded the deportation of Afghani, Ruhi, Kermani, and Mirza Hasan Khan; <sup>102</sup> on the other, the Iranian authorities began to use the "Armenian question," as a means of pressure, giving a free hand to the Armenian revolutionaries, inside Iran and on the border. The pressure appears to have been effective. It should be remembered that the

period between August 1894 and the summer of 1896 saw the Armenian issue reach a crisis, both in Anatolia and in Istanbul. [103](#) At this stage, Abdülhamid appears to have been forced to give up his support for the task, mainly because of this Iranian support or tolerance for Armenian revolutionaries in eastern Anatolia.

By the end of 1895, furthermore, Afghani's relations with Abdülhamid were deteriorating, thanks to a number of incidents which undermined Abdülhamid's trust: Afghani's secret meeting with the Khedive of Egypt in the summer of 1895, his protection of an Arab dissident, Sayyid Abdullah of the Hijaz, and quarrels with the Sultan's confidants, paved the way for his fall from favor. [104](#) Afghani tried to leave Istanbul, but failed to obtain the Sultan's permission, while his attempt to gain a British passport from the British Embassy met with no success. [105](#)

In the meantime, Abdülhamid strongly resisted Iranian demands for Afghani's deportation. But for some of the latter's companions, the situation was not that easy. As a result of constant Iranian pressure, Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani, Shaikh Ahmad Ruhi, and Mirza Hasan Khan were arrested and banished to Trabzon, probably in January 1896. [106](#) At about the same time, *Akhtar*, a Persian opposition newspaper, published in Istanbul since 1876, was closed by the Porte. [107](#)

After the assassination of Nasir al-Din Shah, on May 1, 1896, by Mirza Rıza Kermani, an ex-servant and disciple of Afghani, who had visited the latter in Istanbul, Iranian pressure increased. The Iranian government demanded Afghani and the three men detained at Trabzon, as collaborators in the assassination of Nasir al-Din Shah. The Armenians, on the other hand, were still causing problems on the border. The Grand Vizier, Rifat Paşa, advised the Sultan to extradite Afghani and the three men, accusing the former of being a Babi heretic and of maintaining contacts with Freemasons, Armenians, and Young Turks. [108](#) Though Abdülhamid never gave away Afghani, the three men detained at Trabzon were extradited to Iran in May 1896, and executed in Tabriz in July 1896. [109](#) Afghani remained in Istanbul as a virtual prisoner until his death in March 1897. [110](#)

### III



Following the accession of Muzaffar al-Din Shah, a new government came to office in Tehran. Amin al-Sultan was replaced by Amin al-Dawla (1897–8), a reformist and an Ottoman sympathizer.<sup>[111](#)</sup> This naturally brought a new climate to the Ottoman-Iranian relations. The real motive behind this change of policy toward the Porte appears to have been the new Foreign Minister, Mirza Muhsin Khan Mushir al-Dawla (formerly Mu'in ul-Mulk). He had served for long years (1873–91) as the Iranian Ambassador to Istanbul, and had been dismissed from the post in 1891, in response to allegations of his close collaboration with Sultan Abdülhamid and Malkum Khan, an influential Iranian dissident based in London.<sup>[112](#)</sup>

In accordance with this new climate, Abdülhamid conferred the “*Nişan-ı İmtiyaz*” (the highest Ottoman order) upon Muzaffar al-Din Shah in late February 1898, and sent a delegation to Tehran to present the decoration.<sup>[113](#)</sup> The delegation arrived in Tehran in late March 1898, and held private conversations with both the Shah and the Foreign Minister during the following month. Their main concern was still the Armenian revolutionaries on the border. Mirza Muhsin Khan admitted past and present mistakes in this regard, blaming Amin al-Sultan and Mirza Mahmud Khan, the Iranian Ambassador to the Porte,<sup>[114](#)</sup> and promised to do everything in his capacity to stop the Armenians. He also emphasized his strong sympathy and devotion to the Sultan.<sup>[115](#)</sup> Muzaffar al-Din Shah, too, gave assurances to the delegation in respect of Armenian affairs.<sup>[116](#)</sup> Though Amin al-Dawla and Mirza Muhsin Khan had lost office by the mid-summer of 1898, and were replaced by Amin al-Sultan, Muzaffar al-Din Shah appears to have tried to preserve the mutual understanding with the Porte, at least for a while. Furthermore, he visited Istanbul in the autumn of 1900, 27 years after his brother, and was treated with respect and distinction by Abdülhamid.<sup>[117](#)</sup>

It is therefore not surprising to see that, in the meantime, the proposal for a Sunni-Shi'i rapprochement through the help of the mujtahids of the Atabat appears to have dropped from sight, as, to judge from the surviving Ottoman records, did the Porte's preoccupation with the Shi'i problem in Iraq. Not until May 1901, when a commission of investigation completed its report on the *vilayet* of Baghdad, was the problem briefly mentioned. The commission seemed to agree that the key to the problem was the



incapability and corruption of local officials and civil servants, which deprived the local population of proper education and agricultural facilities, and left them under the influence of Shi'i mujtahids. The commission admitted that in spite of visits by several previous commissions to the region, nothing had been done. [118](#)

## IV

The early 1900s saw a fresh deterioration in the internal situation in Iran. Amin al-Sultan's close contacts with Russia, especially two large Russian loans in 1900 and 1902, which paved the way for increasing Russian control, his employment of Belgian nationals in financial affairs; growing economic bankruptcy, and overall administrative corruption led to a strong opposition movement, headed by the ulama, merchants, and intellectuals, which continued until the fall of Amin al-Sultan in September 1903. [119](#) At the instigation of the Iranian ulama, the mujtahids of the Atabat also participated in this anti-Amin al-Sultan movement, and extended their influence in Iranian internal affairs. On several occasions, they made protests to the Shah, and condemned Amin al-Sultan's policies. [120](#)

In this period, Sultan Abdülhamid seems to have continued his efforts to gain support among the Shi'i ulama in Iran and the Atabat. The current political and intellectual climate in Iran appears to have facilitated the Sultan's intentions. Indeed, during this period, as will be seen later, the opposition of the ulama to the Iranian government was partly expressed in "Pan-Islamic" ideas (in terms of Sunni-Shi'i rapprochement and sympathy toward Abdülhamid). [121](#) As early as 1898, the Ottoman delegation to Tehran had noted this climate of opinion among some of the Iranian statesmen and the ulama. [122](#) Not surprisingly, therefore, the Ottoman Ambassador at Tehran, Şemseddin Bey, managed in this period to establish close and friendly relations with the ulama of the capital. [123](#)

As early as September 1901, Sir Arthur Hardinge, the British Ambassador to Tehran, had reported the existence of a "Pan-Islamic party" among some Iranian mujtahids and students. [124](#) After recalling the earlier activities of Afghani in this respect, Hardinge noted that [125](#)

This party [Pan-Islamic Party] comprises few members of the higher or older Shiah clergy, only two of great mujtahids being supposed to be in sympathy with it; but it is I hear gaining strength daily (especially since the late growth of the hated Russian power here) among the students both of the theological and secular schools, the former, like the Constantinople Softas, being attracted by its religious, the latter by its democratic aspect. It is said to be secretly encouraged from Yildiz, and I am assured, though I can hardly believe it, that 12,000 L. a year is spent by the Sultan in propagating through Dervishes and other religious agencies, Pan-Islamic and “Ottoman Caliphate” ideas in Persia.

In a further report on the state of affairs in Iran, written in late 1905, Hardinge summarized the current situation: [126](#)

It is remarkable that the old hatred and jealousy between Sunni and Shiah Mahommedans, though by no means a thing of the past, has of late considerably diminished, largely owing to the action of the Sultan, whose ambassador at Tehran is in very close touch with the leaders of the clerical party, and who himself sends presents to the principal Persian Ulama, and is believed to employ one of the ablest among them as his secret political agent. On several occasions the mujtahids have attempted to appeal to the Sultan from the Russian Loans or the employment of Belgians in the Persian Administration, which they deemed detrimental to Islam. Several of them have asked my advice as to a closer union between Persia and Turkey against the common enemy in the north, and I have been surprised to hear from Persian pulpits panegyrics, doubtless not very sincere, on the Sultan, who not so long ago would have been deemed, as the successor of Omar, only worthy of curses and executions.

It is known, for example, that one of the leaders of the ulama opposition to the Iranian government, Aqa Najafi, a prominent mujtahid of Isfahan, was in contact with the mujtahids of the Atabat, and together with some other Iranian ulama, was said to have supported Pan-Islamic proposals for the recognition of Sultan Abdülhamid as supreme head of the Muslim world.

[127](#) At the same time, some contacts seem to have been established between Istanbul and the Atabat, especially through Shaikh Muhammad Fadil Sharabiani of Najaf, who had become one of the most prominent mujtahids

after the death of Mirza Hasan Shirazi in 1895, and is said to have enjoyed the Sultan's favor. [128](#)

But these contacts, or, rather, mutual sympathy between the Ottoman authorities and the Shi'i ulama of the Atabat had to be abandoned by 1905, mainly because of Russian and Iranian diplomatic pressure, as the mujtahids' involvement in the internal affairs of Iran and their correspondence with the Shi'is of the Caucasus and Central Asia became a serious obstacle to the Russians' own interests. [129](#) Though it is not clear how serious these relations between the Sultan and the Atabat were, it seems certain that the Porte was already disturbed by the Iraqi mujtahids' role in Iranian affairs, even before pressure was brought to bear by the Russian and Iranian authorities. [130](#)

In June 1904, the British Vice-Consul at Karbala was informed, by a "very reliable authority," that the Vali of Baghdad had lately received a telegram from the Grand Vizier concerning the mujtahids of Karbala and Najaf. The telegram's purport was said to have been "more or less" the following: [131](#)

The Russian and the Persian representatives at Constantinople have been directed by their governments to represent to us that the Mujtahids of Atabat have for some time past been interfering in certain matters which were purely connected with their State affairs, and that their conduct has been looked upon by them as very displeasing and offensive. They have therefore requested us that in future if any of them behave in the old manner, we should forthwith execute whatsoever is deemed necessary in that connection.

According to the British Vice-Consul, the mujtahids of the Atabat were further told that the Ottoman government had determined to send any or all of them as exiles to Madina if they should resume their old conduct and misbehavior in future. [132](#) A second telegram was also allegedly received from Istanbul, ordering a careful and private inquiry to be made, in order to find out which of the mujtahids were interfering with state affairs, what were their real objects, and if they had any relations or business with foreign officials. [133](#) A copy of another telegram alleged to have been sent by the Grand Vizier to the ulama of Karbala and Najaf was transmitted to

the Consul General at Baghdad from Bushire, in the Gulf. The telegram stated, [134](#)

According to representations made by the Persian and Russian ambassadors, you interfere in the affairs of the Persian and Russian governments. As you are in our territories I write to tell you that you should not henceforth interfere in the affairs of the two governments, otherwise I shall take severe steps, according to law, against you.

Mr Lamb, Dragoman of the British Embassy, mentioned this alleged telegram to Tevfik Paşa, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. While not appearing to know anything about the telegram, Tevfik Paşa confirmed the general sense of it. He added confidentially that quite recently the Russian Ambassador had made fresh representations to him on the subject, and that according to the reports of the Russian Consul at Baghdad, the Vali had taken advantage of Russia's preoccupation in the Far East to endeavor to stir up trouble in the Caucasus by means of the mujtahids. [135](#)

Another motive for the Ottoman government to break with the mujtahids of Atabat was the fact that, from 1903 onwards, the British began to establish certain contacts with them. Abdülhamid was naturally much alarmed by this relationship. As early as November 1901, he sent a message to the British Ambassador, O'Connor, complaining that the Vali of Baghdad had reported that the British Consul General at Baghdad had sent "a cavass in disguise" to the "sheikh of the Jaferi Shi'ites at Nejef" to sound him as to whether in the event of hostilities between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire, the Shaikh's followers would take part in a "jihad." The message went on to say that such conduct on the part of the Consul-General was hardly compatible with friendly relations. Although O'Connor expressed surprise, and dismissed such an improbable story as the invention of some evil-disposed person, it seems that his reply failed to convince the Sultan, who replied that a letter from the Consul General to the "Jaferi Sheikh" was in the possession of the Ottoman authorities. Abdülhamid asked O'Connor to make enquiries of the Consul General, and repeatedly inquired as to the result. [136](#) In February 1902, the Consul General informed O'Connor that the story had originated with a dragoman of the Russian Consulate and was probably forwarded to Yıldız through some of his relations. [137](#)

By the summer of 1903, however, the British had decided to establish contacts with the Atabat. The initiator of these contacts was the British Ambassador to Tehran, Sir Arthur Hardinge. He saw the growing extent of the Atabat's power in Iranian internal affairs as dangerous; even if directed against the Russians at first sight, further opposition would demolish the Iranian government's authority, and this at the end would push the country into the arms of the Russians. He advised his government to seek contacts with the mujtahids, in order to control them. Through this control, his aim was twofold: to calm down the mujtahids' opposition, thereby impressing on Amin al-Sultan the value of British power, and, at the same time, to use them against the Iranian government in case of a third Russian loan or an unfriendly policy toward Britain. In July 1903, Hardinge asked the permission of the British government to communicate with Sharabiani of Najaf. Though permission was initially granted, the Foreign Office drew back when the India Office objected.<sup>[138](#)</sup>

Nevertheless, certain contacts had been achieved in the meantime: Muhammad Muhsin Khan, the newly appointed British Vice-Consul at Karbala, held four interviews with Sharabiani in July 1903, in which he vainly tried to convince the mujtahid of the importance of British friendship for Iran, to abandon harsh opposition to the Iranian government, and to correspond with Hardinge.<sup>[139](#)</sup> In December 1903, when Hardinge, with the purpose of pursuing his contacts with the Atabat, visited Iraq, the Porte took alarm, but in the event, on instructions from London, Hardinge avoided seeing any of the mujtahids, and contented himself with sending his compliments to Sharabiani at Najaf, through his Oriental Secretary.<sup>[140](#)</sup> Despite all these initiatives, however, nothing came of these contacts, though they did focus British attention upon the importance of Oudh Bequest. At Hardinge's proposal, a thorough investigation was held by the British Consul General at Baghdad into the distribution of the bequest and the position of the mujtahids. Accordingly, the system of distribution was reorganized, and the British Consul General's control over the funds was strengthened.<sup>[141](#)</sup>

Abdülhamid was inevitably disturbed by the contacts between the mujtahids and the British, and at an audience in June 1904, he made a direct overture to O'Connor. The conversation turned on the visit of the Iranian ex-Grand

Vizier, Amin al-Sultan, to Istanbul. <sup>142</sup> Abdülhamid seemed anxious to know whether the British Ambassador had seen Amin al-Sultan, what was his opinion of him, and what were his views with regard to the internal condition of Iran, of which he heard somewhat contradictory, though in the main alarming, reports. O'Connor said that he had seen Amin al-Sultan twice, that he struck him as an energetic and astute statesman somewhat out of health, and that he had been much interested in his conversation:

As far as I could judge, his highness [Amin al-Sultan] appeared to consider the internal and political situation of his country as decidedly unsatisfactory and possibly critical. He seemed to be an ardent advocate of reforms, and to be of opinion that nothing practical could be effected in this direction until the prerogatives and privileges of the "mujtahed" were curtailed and justice secured equally to all classes, secular and clergy, rich and poor, alike.

Abdülhamid replied with an offer of assistance:

The Sultan observed that this was quite true: that the power of the clergy must be broken before any progress was possible; that he did not believe the Atabeg Azam [Amin al-Sultan], or even the Shah himself, could effect this, but that he could do it, and he was ready to act if His Majesty's Government promised him their support. (...) He continued to argue that he had means of influencing the "mujtaheds," which he alone possessed; but before he moved in the matter, he must know the extent of the support which he could count upon from His Majesty's Government.

O'Connor avoided this offer, but assured Abdülhamid that he had no hesitation in assuring him that the cardinal policy of Britain in Iran was the integrity of the country, and that in this respect he felt sure that the interests of Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire were the same. In reply, Abdülhamid stressed that he entirely agreed as to the identity of British and Ottoman interests in Iran, and that, if he got satisfactory assurances from Britain, he would be ready to influence and control the "mujtaheds." <sup>143</sup>

Although the Porte broke with the mujtahids of the Atabat in 1904, Abdülhamid's contacts with the Iranian ulama seem to have continued, as did the "Pan-Islamic" ideas among the Iranian opposition. In the same year, for example, Shaikh Fadlallah Nuri, one of the most important mujtahids of



Tehran, visited Istanbul, and was reported to have shown “Pan-Islamic tendencies” on his return to Iran. [144](#)

## V

The years from 1905 onwards brought new dimensions to the Shi’i problem in Iraq. In the first place, Iran underwent the turbulent events of the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–11. The mujtahids’ effective opposition to the government developed into a constitutionalist movement, which brought about the granting of a Parliament in the summer of 1906. This, however, did not ease, but increased the chaotic situation in Iran. The power struggle between the government and the Parliament deadlocked the internal politics in the country, and ended with the restoration of autocracy in June 1908. [145](#) The ulama, even if divided among themselves into pro- and anti-constitutionalists, played the major roles in all these events. [146](#) Interestingly, some leaders of both sides, such as Sayyid Behbahani, Shaikh Nuri, and Aqa Najafi, appear to have had some contacts or correspondence with Istanbul, in one way or another. Şemseddin Bey, the Ottoman Ambassador to Tehran, also played a certain part in the events, by acting as mediator between the mujtahids and the Shah. [147](#)

The mujtahids of the Atabat were not inactive either. After an interval following the Porte’s imposition of restrictions on them and the death of Sharabiani in 1904, the mujtahids of the Atabat resumed their political role, and were directly involved in the events of the Constitutional Revolution from the outset. The principal mujtahids of the time, Akhund Khorasani, Shaikh Mazandarani, and Mirza Tehrani strongly supported the constitutionalist movement, and even sought the Sultan’s support, calling him Amir al-Mu’minin (the Commander of the Faithful). [148](#) At the same time, branches of the Iranian “secret societies,” which pursued the constitutionalist cause, were also formed among Iranians at the Atabat and in Istanbul. [149](#)

In the second place, from September 1905 onwards, Ottoman troops suddenly occupied a series of disputed territories on the Iranian border, from Bayazıd south to Vazne, and stayed there until 1913. [150](#) This weakened the position of the constitutionalist party in Tehran, and they



several times asked the Sultan to draw back the troops.<sup>151</sup> For this reason, both Iranian and Young Turkish sources have accused Abdülhamid of helping Muzaffar al-Din Shah to undermine the Parliament's position.<sup>152</sup> In the third place, as seen in preceding chapters, in this period the Porte undertook several general reform initiatives for Iraq.

All these developments once again brought the state of the "Shi'i problem" to the attention of the Ottoman authorities. Further, in September 1906, serious trouble broke out at Karbala between Iranian subjects and the local Ottoman authorities. When the Ottoman authorities renewed their efforts to exact payment of certain taxes from Iranian subjects, about 500 Iranians went to the British Vice-Consulate at Karbala, and encamped in the adjacent streets.<sup>153</sup> The demonstration was prolonged over several days, and the number of demonstrators gradually increased.<sup>154</sup> To complicate matters, a misunderstanding occurred between the Vali of Baghdad and the Porte over how to overcome the trouble.<sup>155</sup> In spite of instructions not to use coercive measures against the demonstrators, the Vali, Mecid Bey, employed soldiers and gendarmes to disperse the crowd: guns were fired in the air, a great panic occurred, and several people were killed.<sup>156</sup> Before long, the Vali was dismissed under pressure of protests made by the British.

Even before this incident, the Porte's attention was returning to the Shi'i problem. In July 1906, the Ministry of the Interior submitted a report on "measures needed for the strengthening of Sunni belief in Iraq." This appears to have led to a new discussion at the Council of Ministers, which brought about a partial shift in policy. The Interior Ministry report stated that the five hodjas who had been sent from Istanbul to the *kazas* of Baghdad *vilayet*, as preachers and teachers (with 2,000 *kuruş* allowances), had proved unsuccessful, and that the 10 hodjas who had been employed in Basra were not very useful either. The ministry wished to abandon this practice, and instead proposed that<sup>157</sup>

It is obvious that if the sciences and education are developed and spread, the Sunni creed will be strengthened in this region. The allowances given to the above-mentioned madrasas will be cut, and with the sums thus made available, measures to reform the existing local madrasas, in accordance

with the necessities of the present time and situation, should be completed in consultation with the local authorities.

Together with a report from the *Meşihat*, this proposal was discussed by the Council of Ministers and accepted in principle. It was then forwarded to the relevant ministries for their opinion. [158](#)

In November 1906, a commission was set up by Abdülhamid, under Hacı Akif Paşa, the Head of Military Supplies, to examine the available reports and correspondence on Iraq, and to determine which measures should be taken to reform the region. Among many other matters, including administrative, financial, and agricultural reform, the commission stressed the need to “prepare and perfect ways and means to prevent the expansion of Shi’ism and to protect the remaining Sunnis in that region,” and in its final report, submitted in May 1907, the commission devoted a whole chapter to the Shi’i problem. [159](#)

Generally speaking, it echoed previous reports, especially those dating from the 1890s. The Oudh Bequest (and especially its distribution by the British Consul General) remained a major concern, as did the state of 6th Army, in which a majority of soldiers remained Shi’i. It appears from the report that almost nothing had been done to resolve these problems, but in making its own proposals, the commission placed the greatest emphasis on education: [160](#)

Just as it would be unwise to neglect sectarian affairs, which are the sole means of preserving [Iraq], so it will not suffice simply to appoint and decorate a few muftis and religious scholars, and it is essential to establish a most effective foundation in this matter. First of all, necessary funds must be found to reform the primary schools and the madrasas, so that the former may serve as initiators of religious learning, and the latter as its perfectors. In order that religious education in Iraq may be brought into accordance with political necessities, that is, with the preservation of the [Sunni] sect, a number of persons should be sent out by the *Şeyhülislam*’s department, in order that, in unity with the local government, they may study and report on means to achieve the desired end: for example, temporary funds to repair and reform existing madrasas, and to set up requisite new schools and

madrasas; permanent allowances to support students and teachers; the appointment of influential and effective *müftüs* in important places.

At the same time, the commission warned that education was not enough. The material well being of the population was also important: [161](#)

For there can be no greater proof that mankind cannot be turned away from a law of nature such as is self-interest, than the fact that almost all the people of a country, which was once the birthplace of the Hanafi sect, have been converted to Shi'ism through the material seductions of the Iranians and the English. Therefore, since preaching and exhortation will scarcely suffice to save the order of the country from its chronic internal sickness, it is above all essential to pay attention to the population's material interests, and this depends upon securing benefits by stopping damage [caused by] the Iraqi rivers, and upon giving the population a right to exploit the land.

Practically, the commission proposed urgent real material development in the region, in terms of irrigation works and distribution of state lands. As a result, a fresh reform commission was set up by the Sultan, under Mustafa Nâzım Paşa, and sent to Iraq in September 1907. One of the instructions given to the commission was as follows: [162](#)

In order to reduce and limit the spread of the Shi'i and Wahhabi sects, and to hinder the effects of foreign suggestions and insinuations, recourse will be had to necessary measures immediately. At the same time, investigation and observations in this respect will be submitted [to the Porte], and necessary measures for public order and security will be taken in accordance with the Porte's authorization.

In the meantime, Ebubekir Hâzım Bey, the Vali of Baghdad, had also warned the Porte against Shi'i activity in the region. When the Grand Vizier forwarded this warning to the Ministry of Education, it consulted Alusizâde Ahmed Şakir Efendi, a prominent notable of Baghdad, and a member of the Sublime Council of Education (*Meclis-i Maarif-i Kebir*) at Istanbul, who himself had once worked in Iraq against Shi'ism. [163](#) In his report, Ahmed Şakir Efendi argued that the Shi'i problem in Iraq was political rather than religious. He described the causes of the problem: Shi'i ulama (*akhunds*),

sent to Iraq by wealthy Iranians, were wandering around the tribes and preaching. Given the fact that these tribal people were unaware of even the basic principles of Islam, they were easily converted to the Shi'i sect. He warned that the Porte's previous attempts to resolve the problem, for example, by sending ulama to the region, had accomplished nothing, and were a waste of money. He added that if Shi'ism continued to spread, it would give rise to political dangers, for both Iran and Britain had designs upon Iraq, for which this growing Shi'i population could be a suitable vehicle. [164](#)

Ahmed Şakir Efendi proposed some measures. First, a commission should be formed by the ulama of Baghdad, and a number of preachers should be selected among local ulama and sent to the tribes. Second, these preachers and hodjas should give regular reports to the local government officials on the state of affairs in their particular region. Third, in order to turn out capable ulama, the madrasas, and the education they furnished, should be reformed, and the best available students should be selected by the ulama commission and sent to Najaf and Karbala. Ahmed Şakir emphasized that these particular measures were essential, but at the same time, he urged a general reform of education in Iraq. Better primary and secondary schooling was needed to keep Sunnism strong in the region. In addition, as at Bursa and Salonica, an Agricultural School should be established. The ban on Sunni-Shi'i marriages should be preserved, Shi'i *akhunds* must be prevented from wandering about the country, and the Shi'i religious festivals should be kept under strict control by the local authorities. [165](#)

In January 1908, Mustafa Nâzım Paşa, the president of the reform commission, telegraphed the result of their investigations to the government. [166](#) The commission came to the conclusion that four factors helped to create the Shi'i problem. (1) The Shi'i mujtahids, who had political aims, influenced the ignorant people and tribes. (2) While Sunni establishments in the *vilayet* were in a state of decay, the Shi'i establishments in Karbala, Najaf, Samarra, and Kazimayn were in perfect condition, and easily attracted the population. (3) The Shi'i ulama (*akhunds*) were wandering around the tribes and propagating the Shi'i sect. (4) While mujtahids were helping the poor by way of donations from foreign, Shi'i-populated, countries, and 5,000 or 6,000 Shi'i religious

students were being educated in excellent conditions, the Sunni madrasas were full of army deserters. Even if 200 or 300 of the Sunni students might be seriously pursuing religious education, they were in a state of misery. <sup>167</sup>

The report noted that the provincial government of Baghdad had advised the commission to increase the number of primary schools, but it questioned whether this measure would suffice. The commission put forward eight proposals:

1 The number of primary schools in the *vilayet* should be increased, with capable teachers paid adequate salaries.

2 An increase should be made in the salaries of madrasa teachers, and madrasa students should be given sufficient means for their keep, thus making religious education respectable again.

3 In order to eliminate incompetent students, a reform should be implemented in the examinations of the madrasas.

4 In order to eliminate incapable madrasa teachers, an examination should be implemented by an impartial ulama commission, appointed by the reform commission.

5 To counter the mujtahids of Karbala and Najaf, a *tekke*, like that of Abd al-Qadir al-Gaylani of Baghdad, should be established in Karbala, and financed out of local *waqf* revenues.

6 *Akhunds* should be prevented from traveling around the tribes.

7 Ulama posts in the region should be reserved for capable local men, and not be given to outsiders with no knowledge of the region, as was the current practice.

8 Some ulama and hodjas should be appointed to 6th Army to teach and preach according to the Sunni principles (*akaid-i ehl-i sünnet*) . <sup>168</sup>

The substantial Shi'i population in the *vilayets* of Baghdad and Basra began to draw the attention of the Ottoman government from the mid-1880s

onwards, chiefly, it appears, because the Ottoman authorities saw the growing Shi'i population as a natural ally of Iran in any future conflict. The extent of Ottoman concern at the Shi'i problem was primarily determined by the general state of relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire: the more relations deteriorated, the more the Porte became concerned with the Shi'i population of Iraq. In the early 1890s, this concern led the Sultan to pursue an apparent "Pan-Islamic" policy, based upon the promotion of "Sunni-Shi'i unity," and the establishment of a form of confederal relationship with Iran. While nothing came of this, it demonstrates that the controversies over Abdülhamid's "Pan-Islamism" should be placed in the contexts of the "Shi'i problem" in Iraq, his attempts at "Sunni-Shi'i unity," and relations with Iran, as well as the traditionally acknowledged contexts of "India" or "Egypt." Apart from this, Ottoman officials seemed to take a naive view of the causes and remedies of the "problem," believing that they could easily "convert" people from their "superstitious belief" through preaching and education. From the early 1900s onwards, the Ottoman authorities grew more concerned as internal developments in Iran began to affect the Atabat. In the end, no "solution" was ever found.



## 6

### The British danger

Throughout his lengthy reign, Sultan Abdülhamid was preoccupied by his Empire's vulnerability to the European Great Powers. It was not simply that Abdülhamid feared military attack, and knew that his chances of resisting it were slim; he also feared that the Powers might undermine his Empire's independence and integrity from within, through techniques of "peaceful penetration." The latter fear was grounded in historical experience. Since the 1830s, in fact, European Powers had succeeded in penetrating the Ottoman Empire to a considerable degree, interfering in its internal affairs, and recruiting networks of clients among the Sultan's own subjects. A number of factors had facilitated this penetration. The Powers had acquired certain legal rights of interference in Ottoman internal affairs, through the reform provisions of the treaties of Paris (1856) and Berlin (1878), through the capitulations, which gave their subjects legal and fiscal privileges within the Ottoman Empire, and through the religious protectorates which particular Powers asserted over particular groups of Ottoman Christians.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the considerable expansion of the Ottoman Empire's trade with the European Powers, and the various economic concessions, including ports, railways, mines, and river navigation, which had been awarded by the Ottoman government to European enterprises, had enabled the Powers to build up local commercial clienteles, particularly in the major ports and trading centers.<sup>2</sup> This commercial influence was accompanied by cultural influence, promoted by missionaries and educational institutions. Finally, the omnipresence of European political influence was assured through chains of consuls, established in almost every important provincial center throughout the Empire. To Abdülhamid and his advisers, the danger seemed obvious: if left to penetrate unchecked, European influence would eventually undermine the political authority of the Ottoman government, leading to the establishment of "zones of influence" and to ultimate partition. The examples of Egypt and India were not encouraging.

In Iraq, the obvious source of danger was Britain. Since the 1830s, the British had acquired a virtual monopoly of European influence in Iraq and

the adjoining regions of Arabia and the Gulf.<sup>3</sup> British warships regularly patrolled the Gulf, where many of the local shaikhdoms had concluded “trucial,” protective agreements with representatives of the government of British India. A large proportion of the trade of Iraq and the Gulf was done with British India, and British and British Indian vessels dominated Gulf merchant shipping. A British enterprise, the Lynch Company, held a concession for steam navigation on the Euphrates and the Tigris. Since 1862, a British mail service had run between Iraq and India, and British-constructed telegraph lines linked Baghdad to India, Istanbul and Tehran. The British Indian pilgrims and students who flocked to the Shi’i shrines of southern Iraq were a further channel for British influence, and as already explained, the Oudh Bequest brought the British directly into contact with Shi’i religious leaders in the region.

Even during the Tanzimat era, when Anglo-Ottoman relations had been generally close, the growth of a paramount British influence in the Gulf region had caused the Porte serious concern, leading it to strengthen the Ottoman naval presence in the region in the 1860s, and to bring Najd and the Arabian coast of the Gulf down to Qatar under its direct control in the 1870s.<sup>4</sup> Soon after Abdülhamid’s accession, however, and in particular, after the disastrous Ottoman defeat in the 1877–8 war with Russia, Anglo-Ottoman relations took a lasting turn for the worse.<sup>5</sup> Abdülhamid was convinced that Britain’s failure to protect the Ottoman Empire during the war with Russia, and still more, her willingness to join the other Powers in truncating the Empire’s territories at the subsequent Congress of Berlin, were clear proof that the British had abandoned their former policy of preserving the Empire, and that their ultimate aim was to partition it. In particular, the Sultan suspected them of harboring designs upon his Arab provinces, and of actively promoting the notions of Arab political independence and an “Arab Caliphate.”

Yet in practice, the Sultan had few means of defense against the British in Iraq, and in the adjoining regions of Arabia and the Gulf. In other regions, like, for example, Syria, he could play upon the Powers’ mutual rivalries, exploiting them to hold all in check; but in Iraq and the Gulf, the British had no rivals, at least until the early 1900s, when the Baghdad Railway project brought the Germans into the picture. The Empire’s local military

resources were minimal: the naval flotilla at Basra was no match for the British, and 6th Army was chronically understrength and short of funds. Ottoman administrative control, too, was weak, and permanently beset by tribal rebellions and disturbances, and by a potentially disloyal Shi'i population. Proper vigilance might at least ensure that the British were deprived of opportunities for extending their influence further into Iraq, but the Sultan lacked the means to embark upon an aggressive or "forward" policy, except on a small-scale, opportunistic basis. His safest course was to avoid direct confrontations.

Fortunately for Abdülhamid, the British, too, generally chose to eschew aggressive policies in the region. The Sultan was broadly correct in his view that the British had lost faith in his Empire, and that they expected it to collapse at some unspecified date in the future. He was also correct in his view that they regarded regions like Arabia, Iraq, and the Gulf as lying within their own particular "sphere of interest," and as due to fall to themselves, in some sense, when the Ottoman Empire's inevitable demise occurred. Yet except in exceptional circumstances, like the Armenian crisis of 1894–6, successive British governments had no wish to actively hasten the Empire's demise. They were broadly willing to tolerate the status quo, particularly where, as in Iraq and the Gulf, it seemed obviously favorable to themselves. They had no illusions, however, about the Sultan's attitude toward Britain, and at least by 1890 they had come to regard the Ottoman Empire as a potentially hostile state.<sup>6</sup> They had little fear of Ottoman hostility in itself, but they were concerned lest Abdülhamid place himself in the hands of other European Powers which were actually or potentially hostile to Britain. Down to the late 1890s, the chief fear was that the Sultan might go over to Russia; thereafter, the focus of British apprehensions shifted to Germany.

Yet if neither side was ready to embark upon an aggressive policy, neither was fully in control of the situation, particularly on the shores of the Gulf and the adjoining regions of Arabia. In these regions, the actions of quasi-independent local actors could potentially bring Britain and the Ottoman Empire into conflict. Since the 1830s, the British had gradually expanded their influence in these regions, annexing no territory, but concluding truce arrangements with the local rulers of Qatar, Bahrain, Muscat, and the

Trucial Coast, some of whom were regarded by the Porte as Ottoman subjects.<sup>7</sup> In 1871, however, Midhat Paşa, as Vali of Baghdad, had set out to re-assert Ottoman authority to the south, persuading the ruler of Kuwait to acknowledge Ottoman suzerainty, and sending an expedition to Najd which established Ottoman authority throughout the region.<sup>8</sup> Before long, Ottoman officials had also persuaded the ruler of Qatar to acknowledge Ottoman suzerainty, and to receive Ottoman garrisons. The British raised no protest, though without clearly acknowledging Ottoman claims to sovereignty.<sup>9</sup> The potential danger lay not only in the uncertainty of claimed Ottoman and British rights, but in the shakiness of Ottoman physical control. Even in Kuwait and Qatar, this control was more nominal than real, while in Najd, the chronic struggle for overlordship between the rival families of Ibn Rashid of the Jabal Shammar confederation, and of Saud, was a further potential source of local instability and complications into which both Ottoman and British governments might easily be drawn.

## I

Notwithstanding the growth of these mutual suspicions, the early years of Abdülhamid's regime saw no open conflict between Britain and the Ottoman Empire in Iraq and the Gulf. The British were content with the status quo, and the Sultan lacked the strength to challenge it, except in minor ways. Within Iraq, the Ottoman authorities did take some measures to limit the spread of British influence. These included the abolition of the British postal service between Baghdad and Damascus and its replacement by an Ottoman postal service (1881–6),<sup>10</sup> the registration of British citizens and British-protected persons at Baghdad (1881–4),<sup>11</sup> efforts to limit contacts between British consuls and local tribes (1882–5),<sup>12</sup> opposition to British missionaries' efforts to establish a missionary school at Baghdad (1883–9),<sup>13</sup> the encouragement of an Ottoman rival to the Lynch Steamship Company on the Tigris (1885–8),<sup>14</sup> and attempts to keep foreign warships out of the Shatt al-Arab.<sup>15</sup>

In the Gulf, however, the Ottoman government was less assertive. In 1879, in response to British complaints of a revival of piracy, the Porte ordered a small, though apparently effective, reinforcement of its Basra flotilla.<sup>16</sup> In

1880, and again in 1882, the Porte considered a more substantial strengthening of its naval presence in the Gulf, with the purchase of new ships, and the construction of new shore facilities at Basra; but on both occasions, it appears, lack of funds prevented the implementation of these plans.<sup>[17](#)</sup> Not until the second half of the 1880s did the Ottoman government make a serious attempt to strengthen its military position in the Gulf, by constructing a large fort at Fao. This led to a confrontation, probably unintended, with Britain.

As early as 1880, local Ottoman officials had drawn the Porte's attention to the strategic importance of Fao, a small settlement located at the confluence of the Tigris, Euphrates, and Karun rivers, commanding the Shatt al-Arab and the entrance to the Gulf, and had urged that steps be taken to develop it as a port.<sup>[18](#)</sup> These matters rested until December 1885, when the Vali of Basra informed the British Consul that it was the intention of the Ottoman government to construct a large fort at Fao.<sup>[19](#)</sup> Six months later, a party of 160 soldiers arrived with building materials.<sup>[20](#)</sup> The importance which the Ottoman authorities attached to the work at Fao was attested by periodic inspections by senior military officers, and also by the fact that a special commission was established at the War Ministry to supervise the project; nonetheless the work of construction was slow, and periodically interrupted.<sup>[21](#)</sup>

From the start, the British took a keen and hostile interest in the works at Fao, whose progress was closely monitored by the Consul at Basra, and regularly observed by British warships patrolling the Gulf.<sup>[22](#)</sup> As Robertson, the Consul at Basra, remarked,

the existence of a fort commanding the entrance of the Shatt al-Arab seems likely to prove an inconvenience and obstruction, and when possessed by a power so subject to foreign intrigue as Turkey, a standing menace to important British interests.<sup>[23](#)</sup>

In August 1887, the British government raised legal objections, claiming that the 1847 Treaty of Erzurum, to which Britain and Russia were parties as mediators, had bound the Ottoman and Iranian governments not to fortify the banks of the Shatt al-Arab. Diplomatic discussions continued for some

time, but in July 1888, the Porte rejected all Britain's arguments, insisting that the understanding of 1847 was not binding, that the Ottoman Empire was under no obligation to Britain in the question, and that the Iranians were free to fortify their own side of the Shatt al-Arab.<sup>24</sup>

Thereafter, tension grew, fuelled by continuing visits paid to Fao by British warships, and also by Ottoman efforts at military reinforcement.<sup>25</sup> In July 1889, two additional gunboats were attached to the Basra flotilla, and Ottoman military posts on the Arabian shore of the Gulf were reinforced.<sup>26</sup> These developments culminated in a serious incident in March 1890, when a party which had landed from a British warship at Fao was fired upon by Ottoman troops. No casualties or damage were suffered, but the incident caused considerable embarrassment to the Porte, which assured the British government that the officer responsible for the firing had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment.<sup>27</sup>

Following this incident, work on the fort at Fao was suspended for two years. Nonetheless, the Ottoman government remained anxious to assert its authority at Fao. Between 1890 and 1894, small military guardhouses were built by the Ottoman government on the Shatt al-Arab.<sup>28</sup> In 1891, the Ottoman government examined a proposal to transfer the Basra quarantine station to Fao.<sup>29</sup> In 1892, the formation of an Ottoman company for the navigation of the Tigris and Euphrates was authorized by imperial decree.<sup>30</sup> In 1893–4, the Ottoman authorities at Fao made an attempt to treat the Shatt al-Arab below Muhammarah, the principal port on the Iranian bank, as an Ottoman river, and began to collect Ottoman customs at Fao from vessels bound for Muhammarah.<sup>31</sup>

Soon after the Qatar uprising in 1893, which will be mentioned in page 136, the Porte's attention once more turned to the political and strategic importance of Fao, and to the ongoing visits of British warships to the area. Hamdi Paşa, the Vali of Basra, who was appointed at the time of the Qatar uprising, wrote directly to the Sultan.<sup>32</sup>

Just as, given the importance of the position of the Fao strait, it is important, from the point of view of the Empire's interests to fortify it, it is equally essential to organize the means to place the local administration in proper



order. The administration has been entrusted to the *müdür* of a *nahiye*; however, it is impossible, by means of a *müdür*, to monitor the actions and intentions of the British officials who are constantly coming and going there (...) It is essential to convert the *nahiye* of Fao to a *kaymakamlık* of the first class, and to appoint to *kaymakam*'s post a person who is capable and familiar with the [local] language.

This was fully approved by Abdülhamid. Accordingly, Fao was converted from the status of a *nahiye* to that of a *kaza* .<sup>33</sup>

The works on the fort had already been resumed in 1892, and continued throughout 1893. In August 1893, the British Ambassador at Istanbul expressed to the Porte a hope that they would

give orders for the prompt discontinuance of the work in question, for, should the fort be completed and steps taken towards arming it, Her Majesty's Government would regard such action as one of hostile preparation which they would be entitled to resent, and which would justify them in taking necessary measures for counteracting.<sup>34</sup>

In November 1893, the British objections were renewed, and an assurance was received that orders for stopping the work would be issued.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, in late 1893, the Sultan stepped back and decided to stop the works "temporarily" (*muvaakkaten*), although he made clear his anger;<sup>36</sup> but the works were soon resumed, as was the British pressure. In April 1894, Abdülhamid complained to the Grand Vizier:<sup>37</sup>

If the current proposal [to stop the construction of the Fao fortifications] is a product of friendship, one cannot show friendship by opposing the construction of fortifications by the state. Moreover, since the fortifications are being constructed against the Iranian government, if their prevention is sought, this should be raised by the Iranian government, as this has nothing to do with the British government, and if there are grounds for objection, the Iranian government must state them. And therefore, let a reply be delivered to the [British] Embassy, to the effect that the interference of British government in this matter is contrary to the provisions of international law.

Nonetheless, he evidently decided to give way, for in the following month the works at Fao were again suspended, this time permanently. During the following years, the fort remained without any artillery, and in 1905, the strength of the garrison was no more than a captain, 45 regular infantry, and a medical officer.<sup>38</sup>

## II

The protracted dispute over Fao contributed to a growing Ottoman sense of unease on the subject of the Gulf, Najd and Basra, an unease reflected in a number of reports submitted by local Ottoman officials. Needless to say, these reports identified Britain as the primary threat, but they also drew attention to other dangers, including the ambitions of local Arabian rulers like Ibn Rashid of Najd, and the flourishing arms-trade in the Gulf.

The first report was written by Mehmed Ali, a former *Mutasarrif* of Basra, in January 1889.<sup>39</sup> As regards British policy in general, he remarked,

Notwithstanding the fact that no kind of political move by the British government is observed at the present time in Basra and the territories of Iraq, [Britain] is not failing to take steps to take the coasts of Oman and Arabia under her own protection, slowly and under various pretexts, and to confine the trade of those regions to herself.

Mehmed Ali argued that since Arab (Bedouin) shaikhs (*meş ayih-i urban*) had been rejecting British offers for an agreement, thereby keeping their independence, the British could only have two policies at their disposal: externally, to protect British-Indian merchants, and internally, to watch and forestall any aggression on the region by another foreign power. In addition, they were patrolling the local tribes on the shore. Whenever one of the parties needed help, they intervened and took them under their protection, as was apparent in the case of Muscat (*Maskat ĩ mameti*). Finally, he pointed to the recent British concession for navigation on the Karun river in Iran.

Mehmed Ali stressed that the political importance of the *vilayet* of Basra was not confined to its sensitive position in relations with Iran and the

British, but concerned its internal situation as well. Specifically, he referred to Ibn Rashid, the chief of the Jabal Shammar, and warned that, as the most powerful shaikh in the region, he was worth watching carefully. Although Ibn Rashid had done nothing so far against the government, he should be regarded as a potential troublemaker, given his methods and actions among the tribes of the region. He concluded his remarks on Ibn Rashid by saying that

Although, in truth, Ibn Rashid is not so daring as to rebel directly against the [Ottoman] government, he must be seen as a political enemy who is capable of attempting to realize his ambitions of conquest in a troubled time for the state.

Mehmed Ali then moved on to the issue of Muscat. After having described recent events, in particular the British involvement in Muscat, he mentioned the attitude of Arab shaikhs toward the British. His words reflect the illusion and perspective of the local Ottoman officials:

The other Bedouin shaikhs who have been approached by the British with an offer of agreement give the answer that if [we were] in need of help and protection we could take refuge with the Ottoman Caliphate, which is a neighbor and of the same religion.

He finally pointed out that a British corvette had been anchored at Muscat harbor for some time on the pretext of protecting British-Indian merchants and their trade.

Mehmed Ali finally turned to the measures which were necessary in his opinion. First, he argued that the Porte could by no means be held responsible for the acts of Ibn Rashid, since the latter had no official title, and was an “independent Arab shaikh” (*müstakil bir Arab Şeyhi*): if the British could, they should stop him occupying Muscat. Second, he stressed the necessity for a policy of coastal defense:

It is expected that English, who seek a pretext to seize and occupy the Arabian coasts, will attempt to send troops to certain disputed places on the Ottoman shore under the pretext of stopping disorder among the Bedouins, and since the most important of these [disputed] places stretch from Kuwait

harbor, neighboring Basra, and the Najd coast to Bahrain, first and foremost, it is extremely necessary to protect and reinforce these [places] against every possibility.

Mehmed Ali also strongly stressed the importance of the Fao fortifications and the position of Kuwait: [40](#)

However much the Fao strait, the entrance of the Shatt al-Arab—that is the mouth of the Gulf of Basra—has been fortified, enemy warships will never dare to enter a river like the Shatt al-Arab, which is tidal, and only twice a month permits big ships to enter and exit; it is even possible to protect the river by placing one or two torpedoes, or by sinking one or two old ships at the Fao strait. But Kuwait harbor is not like that, but is an extremely important harbor where big ships may take shelter, so that enemy troops which land there could besiege and capture Basra from the south within a few hours, and cut and destroy communication between Najd and Basra.

Similar warnings were contained in a report, dated November 1890, written by a notable of Basra, Zuheyrzâde Ahmed Paşa, who was then a member of the Council of State. [41](#) Ahmed Paşa's chief concern was Najd, and the need to take practical steps to enforce Ottoman authority over the region. He predicted that failure to act would open the doors to the British:

It is evident that it is most important to reform the region and bring it under the control of the Ottoman government, and though the necessary measures in this respect could be carried out now, there will arise an irreparable problem if they are delayed further. For just as, on a former occasion, as a result of British intrigues in Arabia, the Imam of Muscat incited the ruler of Najd, Saud, so [now] it is again the British who are sending huge sums to the said Saud through the intermediary of [the Imam of Muscat]. Indeed, the activities of the British to impede the Ottoman expedition to annex Najd, and to place Bahrain under their protectorate, are still remembered.

Also worth noting are certain comments made by Süleyman Paşa as a part of his general report on reform in Iraq, dated April 1892. [42](#) Süleyman Paşa expressed particular concern at the traffic in weapons in the Gulf, and suggested that steps be taken to establish closer control over Kuwait:

British Martini rifles and revolvers are imported to Iraq and Najd via Kuwait, and it is with weapons imported through this route that most of the Bedouin tribes arm themselves. It is most possible and easy to stop this arms-trade, by sending a battalion by sea to Kuwait and putting its coast under the control of a frigate.

The case for a “forward policy” in the Gulf was also made by Nusret Paşa, the Honorary Inspector of 6th Army, in two detailed reports to the Palace. In a report, dated May 1893, he warned that <sup>43</sup>

Nowadays, for every British official that goes, two come, and they travel around Mosul province and the Van and Erzurum regions, and submit their reports about the information they obtained and the level of sedition they were able to spread to the Governor-General of India, and in addition, they teach the English language to Arab youngsters living within the Basra Gulf and along the coast of Shatt and Euphrates. [All this] is proof enough of the degree of negligence of the Vali and the government officials.

Nusret Paşa also specifically accused the British of distributing arms and money in the region, as a way of expanding their influence: <sup>44</sup>

Apart from the various harmful books and firearms, and the deceptive presents and gifts to the shaikhdoms of the coast and the interior, which [the British] distribute from the warships which are constantly, successively and unceasingly patrolling the shores of the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Gulf, British officials have, through the power of money, won over tariqa shaikhs and dervishes in convents throughout the region, and through them and their influence, succeeded in frustrating the local reforms and political measures undertaken by the Ottoman Empire in respect of Arabia and Iran.

In another report, Nusret Paşa again drew the attention of the Sultan to the arms traffic. <sup>45</sup> He alleged that “Arms are being imported continuously through Kuwait and other ports, so much so that recently six Krupp field-guns were brought to Ibn Rashid, and [more] are being brought.” Ibn Rashid, he warned, was a troublemaker, and wished to establish an “Arab government” (*hükümet-i Arabiye*), with the assistance of foreign powers: “The present continuation of troubles has attracted Ibn Rashid to the idea of

the establishment of an Arab government in Arabia, and a great quantity of aid, moral and material, has been given by foreigners for this.”<sup>46</sup> Clearly enough, the foreigners in question were the British:

The current policy of the British in this matter is to carry out their perceived intention, alongside the occupation of Egypt, to establish an Arab government in Arabia, a Sudanese government in Africa, so separating the Caliphate [from them], and placing them completely under their own rule, like India.

Nusret Paşa particularly warned that the British representatives at Bandarbushehr and Baghdad had achieved a great moral influence (*manevi nüfuz*) in the region, thanks not least to the passivity of the Ottoman government:

As a result of not maintaining merchant steamers and sufficient warships, even the protection of order has been surrendered to foreign ships, and trade to foreign companies. The incapacity to offer resistance, whether material or moral, in this region obviously serves the policy and ambitions of annexation adopted by the British Empire, and simply means consenting to the abandonment and surrender of a large and prosperous region of the Ottoman Empire to the Britain.

The local Ottoman officials, Nusret Paşa complained, were acting as if the region had already been ceded to Britain: “They remain neutral by-standers, as if these regions’ entire administration had been handed over to Britain.” Nusret then turned to practical proposals. Regular Ottoman naval patrols must be instituted along the shores of the Gulf below Basra; in imitation of the British, a network of Ottoman Political Officers (*memurin-i politika*) should be set up; the *vilayet* system should be properly introduced into Najd and the surrounding area, where the incompetence of the local administration was turning the population against the Ottoman government: “The seemingly unprotected and unimportant administration of this *sancak* has also provoked the local population’s hatred of the Ottoman government.” Serious measures were essential. He reached the conclusion that unless prompt steps were taken to develop the region, reform its



administration, and strengthen 6th Army, “in a few years’ time Iraq and Arabia will have been lost.” [47](#)

### III

It is possible that these reports were heeded, for even while the Porte was confronting Britain over the Fao issue, the Ottoman authorities in southern Iraq were taking steps to make good the Empire’s claims to sovereignty over the Arabian shores of the Gulf, and in particular over Qatar and Bahrain, whose ruling shaikhs had long-standing trucional arrangements with Britain. [48](#) The Ottomans had maintained a garrison at Doha, in Qatar, since 1872, and in 1891 they established an additional garrison at Udayd. British-Indian officials saw in this an attempt to spread Ottoman influence into the Trucial Coast, and as a result, a remonstrance was given to the Porte, together with a copy of the truce of 1853 between Britain and Qatar. The Porte replied that the truce had no bearing on the Sultan’s sovereignty over Qatar, and that the establishment of posts at Udayd and other places in Qatar was well within its rights. [49](#) Mainly because of this new Ottoman step, British officials proceeded to sign non-alienation bonds with the Trucial Chiefs and Bahrain in 1892, obliging the rulers not to enter into agreement or correspondence with any power other than Britain. [50](#) In 1893, Britain once again attempted to raise the issue at the Porte, declaring that “whilst admitting the Sovereignty of the Sultan extending from Bussorah [Basra] to a place called El Katif, [Britain] considered that the coast running South of that place was looked upon as debatable land.” The Porte made no response. [51](#)

In the same year, however, there occurred the so-called Qatar uprising. For some time, the Ottoman government had been concerned by periodic hostilities between the Shaikhs of Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain. [52](#) Local Ottoman officials were particularly suspicious of Shaikh Qasim ibn Thani of Qatar, believing him to be the instigator of these troubles, and also accusing him of secret dealings with the British. In early 1893, Hafiz Mehmed Paşa, the Vali of Basra, proceeded to Hasa, with some troops, to settle the problems on the spot. Shaikh Qasim refused his summons, and after waiting nearly a month, Hafiz Mehmed Paşa decided to punish him. The local tribes resisted, leading to fighting between them and Ottoman

troops, ending with defeat of the latter. This was a humiliation for the Ottomans. Hafiz Mehmed Paşa was at once dismissed by the Porte, and the Naqib of Basra, accompanied by two majors of the General Staff, was immediately sent to Qatar to investigate.<sup>53</sup> In return for a free pardon, Shaikh Qasim resigned the post of *kaymakam* in favor of his brother Ahmad, while the Ottoman garrison in Qatar was increased.<sup>54</sup> The British avoided any interference in these events, though the arrival of their warships at Qatar to observe caused the Ottoman government some concern.<sup>55</sup>

In the meantime, however, a serious dispute was brewing between Britain and the Porte over the status of the island of Bahrain. Hitherto, the Ottoman authorities had treated Bahrainis visiting the mainland as Ottoman subjects, but in November 1892, following the conclusion of a non-alienation bond with the shaikh of Bahrain, Britain formally warned the Porte that “Bahrain being now under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen of England (...) no interference by the Ottoman authorities with natives of that island can be admitted.”<sup>56</sup> The Porte stood by its claim that Bahrain was Ottoman territory, though it strove to ease the tension by assuring the British Ambassador, that it had no intention of attacking Bahrain.<sup>57</sup> In January 1893, however, the *Kaymakam* of Qatif proclaimed the reversion of Bahrain and Oman to the Ottoman Empire, and ordered all Bahraini boats to fly the Ottoman flag. In response to British protests, the Porte disclaimed any knowledge of the incident, and threw the blame on to the *Kaymakam*.<sup>58</sup> The British responded with a Note Verbale, dated May 1893, which declared that while preserving their stand on Bahrain, they recognized Ottoman sovereignty over the Qatif-Basra area, although sovereignty to the south (that is, Qatar) was debatable.<sup>59</sup> Though the Porte still maintained its claim of sovereignty to Bahrain and Qatar, it nevertheless informed Britain at the end of 1893 that orders would be given to the Vali of Basra “to refrain from meddling in Bahrain affairs.” For their part, the British instructed their naval units to stay away from Doha, unless absolutely necessary, and to avoid raising the problem of recognition of the Ottoman position there.<sup>60</sup>

Toward the middle of 1895, however, British concern was again aroused by reports of a build up of Ottoman troops at Zobara, in Qatar, where the *Mutasarrif* of Najd was alleged to have raised the Ottoman flag.<sup>61</sup> The

Ottoman Foreign Minister denied any knowledge of the matter, but nonetheless, Britain took the opportunity to issue a Note Verbale, stating that, “all Turkish claims to Bahrain, which is under the protection of the Queen of England, are totally inadmissible, and (...) measures will be taken to protect the island from aggression.”<sup>62</sup> The situation remained deadlocked: the Porte neither relinquished its own claims nor recognized those of Britain.<sup>63</sup>

## IV

For all their mutual suspicions, the British and Ottoman governments had thus far striven to avoid open conflict in Iraq and the Gulf. From 1895 onwards, this became more difficult. For one thing, the “Armenian crisis” of 1894–6 produced a fresh deterioration in Anglo-Ottoman relations; it also led the British government to consider its means of bringing pressure to bear upon the Sultan, and to identify a hostile naval operation in the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea as one such means.<sup>64</sup> Equally important, the late 1890s saw the emergence of potential threats to Britain’s hitherto secure monopoly of commercial and political influence in Iraq and the Gulf, the most important of these threats being the project for a German-financed and operated Baghdad Railway from Istanbul to the Gulf.<sup>65</sup> Finally, the appointment in 1899 of Lord Curzon, a confirmed advocate of a “forward policy” in the Gulf, as Viceroy of India, brought a new assertiveness to British policy in the region.<sup>66</sup>

Important though they were, these were background influences. The immediate cause of the growth in Anglo-Ottoman tension in the region was a crisis which suddenly appeared in 1896 in Kuwait. Since 1871, Kuwait had been regarded by the Ottoman authorities as a *kaza* dependent upon the *vilayet* of Baghdad, and subsequently of Basra, and its ruling shaikhs, drawn from the Al-Sabah family, were formally invested with the title of *kaymakam*. The Ottoman authorities appointed no other officials to Kuwait, and maintained no garrison there; nonetheless, the British clearly recognized Kuwait as an Ottoman territory, and had concluded no truce or protective arrangement with the Al-Sabah family.<sup>67</sup>

In May of 1896, the ruling Shaikh Muhammad ibn Sabah was murdered by his half-brother, Mubarak ibn Sabah. Shaikh Muhammad's sons and some relatives fled to Basra, where they petitioned the Sultan for Mubarak's deposition and punishment, and also for the restoration of their family estates, in the vicinity of Fao, which Mubarak had seized. At about the same time, Mubarak ibn Sabah also petitioned Sultan Abdülhamid for recognition and appointment as *Kaymakam* of Kuwait.<sup>68</sup>

The Ottoman government responded with extreme caution, partly, it appears, because it was reported that Mubarak had acted with the connivance of the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, who was allegedly attempting to create "an Arabic confederation," consisting of Jabal Shammar, Najd, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait.<sup>69</sup> Although the Vali of Basra and the Müşir of 6th Army both pressed the Porte to reach a decision on the conflict between Mubarak and his relatives, warning against "the initiatives of the British to increase their influence in the Basra region," not until July 1897 did Abdülhamid refer the matter to the Council of Ministers.<sup>70</sup> The recommendations put forward by the Council of Ministers have not been traced; but, in December 1897, Mubarak was recognized by the Porte as *Kaymakam* of Kuwait.<sup>71</sup>

Meanwhile, however, Mubarak had begun to put out feelers to the British, hinting at his desire for "some sort of protective relationship." The British remained cautious, and avoided any commitment to Mubarak. In private, however, they were disturbed by some instances of piracy in Kuwait, and there ensued something of a debate between British and Indian officials over Kuwait's legal status and the future course of British policy there, with officials in London and the Istanbul Embassy inclining against any involvement, while the Indian officials inclined toward it.<sup>72</sup>

During the course of 1898, however, British concerns were reinforced by the Kapnist railway project, an Austro-Russian scheme for a railway concession from Tripoli-in-Syria to an unspecified port on the Gulf, with branches to Baghdad and Khaniqin.<sup>73</sup> The implied threat of a Russian intrusion into the Gulf worried British-Indian officials, as did the implied threat of German penetration through the Baghdad Railway project, which was also under discussion at the Porte. Lord Curzon became Viceroy of

India in early January of 1899, and pressed successfully for a more active policy in the Gulf. In spite of the reservations of O'Connor, the Ambassador to the Porte, the Foreign Office finally gave its consent for an agreement with Shaikh Mubarak. Accordingly, Lt Col Meade, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, signed a secret agreement with Shaikh Mubarak on January 23, 1899, in which Mubarak undertook to [74](#)

pledge and bind himself, his heirs and successors, not to receive the agent or representative of any Power or Government at Kuwait (...) without the previous sanction of the British Government; and (...) not to cede, sell, lease, mortgage, or give for occupation or for any other purpose, any portion of his territory to the Government or subjects of any other power without the previous consent of Her Majesty's Government for these purposes.

The news of secret dealings between Mubarak and the British quickly reached Istanbul, most probably through the Ottoman telegraph officer at Fao. [75](#) The Ottoman government responded by reappointing Hamdi Paşa to the governor-generalship of Basra in April 1899, and by ordering a re-organization of the Basra naval flotilla. [76](#) In addition, in July 1899, Hamdi Paşa proposed the construction of a new telegraph line between Fao and Qatif (the nearest port to the Najd *sancak*) as a means of strengthening the Empire's position in Najd and on the Arabian coast: "Communication between the center of the province and the *sancak* of Najd takes at least forty days, and the Najd coast's importance is obvious." The proposal was approved. [77](#)

Ottoman concern was heightened by reports from military sources which indicated that arms were being smuggled by the British into Iraq via Basra, and distributed to the tribes. Abdülhamid ordered an investigation, and made enquiries of the British government. The Sultan held that, "Anywhere in the world, the giving of arms to this kind of people eventually creates undesirable states of affairs," and "one could not expect such actions from the British government (within the Ottoman Empire) on the grounds of mutual equality and friendship between two states." He also ordered that arms be collected from the tribesmen. The Council of Ministers was asked to meet and discuss ways and means of stopping arms smuggling. [78](#)

In September 1899, the Ottomans decided to appoint a Harbor Master to Kuwait. Mubarak did not accept the official into Kuwait and forced him to return to Basra.<sup>79</sup> A British warship was sent to support Mubarak, and O'Connor was instructed to inform the Porte that the Ottoman government's right to appoint such an official could not be recognized: although Britain had no designs on Kuwait, any attempt to establish Ottoman authority there without prior agreement with England would lead to disagreeable results. The Porte responded diplomatically:<sup>80</sup>

[The Sultan] could not believe that Her Majesty's Government desired to interfere with his liberty of action in regard to measures which he might take in Turkish territory. His Majesty was aware of the important interests of England in the Persian Gulf and of the desire of Her Majesty's Government not to allow any foreign power to interfere with their road to India. His Majesty had therefore desired him to state that if British interests were threatened by another power he was ready and willing to prevent this by armed force.

Much more serious was Britain's reaction to the news, in late 1899, that the Sultan had awarded the concession for a Baghdad Railway to the German-owned Anatolian Railway Company and that it was proposed to establish the Gulf terminus of the railway in Kuwait.<sup>81</sup> As early as January 1900, a commission of German railway experts visited Kuwait to make preliminary surveys.<sup>82</sup> In April 1900, O'Connor informed Tevfik Paşa, the Ottoman Foreign Minister, that Britain was unable to view any grant of privileges in the Gulf with indifference, as she had "certain agreements" with Kuwait.<sup>83</sup>

Afterwards, the Porte seems to have changed its tactics: first, in June 1900, Mubarak was appointed Paşa with a salary in dates; second, in August, the Naqib of Basra was sent to Kuwait to persuade Mubarak to adopt a more cooperative policy; finally, in October, the Sultan conferred upon Mubarak gold and silver medals of the order of *İmtiyaz*.<sup>84</sup> However, it appears that the Porte's immediate concern was Mubarak's activities in the interior (Najd), rather than his dealings with Britain. From 1900 onwards, Mubarak had begun to interfere in the affairs of eastern Arabia, and challenged Ibn Rashid for the overlordship of the region. His natural ally was Ibn Saud, an old rival and enemy of Ibn Rashid. In the summer of 1900, Mubarak



encouraged Ibn Saud to raid Ibn Rashid's territory.<sup>85</sup> He also formed an alliance with Sadun of the Muntafiq, and their joint forces, together with those of Ibn Saud, and made preparations to attack Ibn Rashid. Ottoman troops were ordered to intervene, and in March 1901, Ibn Rashid inflicted a serious defeat on Mubarak.<sup>86</sup>

Afterwards, the Porte once again shifted its tactics. A military build up was reported in Basra in April 1901,<sup>87</sup> and in May, the Vali of Basra, together with the Naqib of Basra, visited Kuwait to induce Mubarak to accept a small Ottoman garrison. Though Mubarak refused the garrison, he nevertheless showed his respects, and accompanied the Vali as far as Fao.<sup>88</sup> Mubarak was, to be sure, playing a double game. Five days after the Vali's visit, he formally asked the senior British naval officer in the Gulf for British protection.<sup>89</sup> It is interesting to note that at about the same time, Ibn Rashid too asked for British protection through his agent at Basra.<sup>90</sup>

The Ottomans continued their "stick" policy, and sent the warship *Zuhaf* with troops to Kuwait in August 1901. But the commander of the British warship at Kuwait harbor and Shaikh Mubarak prevented the Ottoman troops from landing, and the *Zuhaf* went back to Basra.<sup>91</sup> According to Ottoman reports, the commander of the British warship had informed the Ottoman naval officer that "Kuwait has placed itself under Britain's protection," and threatened to open fire if he landed troops or ammunition. Afterwards, O'Connor was forced to admit to Tevfik Paşa that "The Kaymakam of Kuwait, Mubarak al-Sabah Paşa, has concluded an understanding (*i'tilaf*) with Britain for the preservation of his interests." Tevfik Paşa rejected this argument on the grounds that Kuwait was a *kaza* within the Empire, and Shaikh Mubarak was appointed by the Porte as its *kaymakam*; therefore Mubarak had no authority whatsoever to sign an agreement (*i'tilaf*) with the British Government, and so the convention (*mukavele*) carried no political validity (*hüküm-i siyasi*), and also contradicted the good relations between the two governments.<sup>92</sup> In early September, O'Connor proposed a compromise: England would neither occupy nor declare a protectorate over Kuwait, but, in return, the Porte should abstain from sending troops to Kuwait, and accept the continuation of the status quo (*hâl-i hazırın ibkası*). The offer was accepted by Tevfik Pa

§ a, and at the Porte's request, was formally confirmed in a note from Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary.<sup>93</sup>

However, tension continued. In November 1901, the Naqib of Basra was sent to Mubarak by the Sultan to "warn him that his course of action was rash and impious, and that he should seek safety by returning to his religious duty and propitiating the Sultan," a move which the British chose to interpret as a violation of the "status quo" understanding.<sup>94</sup> They raised similar objections when Mubarak was summoned to appear before the civil court at Basra in early 1902, in connection with the ongoing dispute with his relatives over the ownership of the vast family date lands at Fao.<sup>95</sup> Abdülhamid accepted his Foreign Minister's advice that the court hearing should be temporarily postponed, but did not conceal his displeasure at Britain's intervention: "It is impossible to understand why the British Ambassador has made statements on this internal and personal matter."<sup>96</sup>

Two days later, on February 3, 1902, Abdülhamid issued instructions to strengthen Ottoman military control in the area between Basra and Kuwait: he asked for measures against the arms traffic in Basra and Najd, and for an increase in the number of troops stationed in the region.<sup>97</sup> Accordingly, Ottoman troops occupied the island of Bubiyan, and two places called Safwan and Umm Qasr.<sup>98</sup> These steps were not directed against the British alone: the conflict between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud was assuming worrying proportions, and in February 1902, Ibn Saud succeeded in capturing Riyadh, Ibn Rashid's capital.<sup>99</sup> Nonetheless, the movements of British warships in the Gulf continued to be closely watched, as did the contacts of British officials with the shaikhs of the Gulf and eastern Arabia.<sup>100</sup> Ottoman concern was notably reinforced in November 1903, when the Indian Viceroy, Lord Curzon, paid a visit to the Gulf, and called at Kuwait.<sup>101</sup>

## V

In the aftermath of the Ottoman-British confrontation over Kuwait (1896–1902), the perception that British policy in the region had taken a hostile turn was further aggravated by contemporaneous disputes in the Red Sea

and at Aden, and gave senior Ottoman officials much food for thought. An earlier report on this issue was submitted by Halil Halid, Deputy-Consul (*Şehbender Vekili*) of the Ottoman Embassy in London, in March 1898. <sup>102</sup> After praising what had been done in Iraq, since the accession to the throne of Sultan Abdülhamid, he questioned the fact that “but are the present activities enough?” and answered himself: “The present activities by no means correspond with the glory of the Caliphate and the necessities of the Sultanate.” Remarking that “Among the European nations, the British are the nation most occupied with scientific, commercial and political investigations into the Iraq, Euphrates and Basra regions,” he summarized the activities of the British officials. He pointed out that the British have changed their policy toward the Ottoman Empire, from protection of its integrity to allowance of its breakup; and he went on to explain the political, strategic, and commercial reasons for such a shift of policy. Having detailed his arguments under seven headings, Halil Halid concluded that “For the reasons I have enumerated, the conclusion is evident that it is the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire, rather than its survival, which is favored by England.” <sup>103</sup>

In August 1903, Salih Münir Paşa, the Ottoman Ambassador to Paris, sent a lengthy report to the Palace on the subject of British foreign policy in general, and British policy toward the Ottoman Empire in particular. <sup>104</sup> Identifying “trade” and “India” as the determinants of the latter, he argued that the hostile shift in British policy toward the Ottoman Empire had its origins in the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. Once she had gained a stronghold in Egypt, Britain had begun to see a reduction of Ottoman power in the region as serving her interests, provided this did no harm at the Straits, or in eastern Anatolia and Iraq.

It is clear, from a study of the situation, and from the information received, that [they] skillfully intrigue to take Arabia and Najd, and the Hijaz, gradually out of the Ottoman government’s possession, to transfer the holy Islamic Caliphate to the Sharifs [of Mecca] who will be under British influence from afar, and later to take Arabia, Najd and Iraq under British protection, and make them colonies, just like Aden and other places.

In addition, Salih Münir Paşa argued, the British believed that if these regions fell under their own control, the way would be opened for major improvements in agriculture, communications, and economic development in general, which would transform Najd, Arabia, and Iraq into a permanent source of wealth for the British Empire, like Egypt. After a brief mention of the Armenian factor as reflected in this new policy, Salih Münir concluded by saying that “There is nothing that is not lawful or permissible for the sake of England’s interests.” (*İngiltere çıkarları uğruna, caiz ve mübah olmayan şey yoktur.*) [105](#)

These fears were echoed even by the strongly Anglophile former Grand Vizier Kamil Paşa, currently serving as Vali of Aydın. In a report submitted to Abdülhamid in December 1904, he stressed the increasing importance of the “Arabian question”: [106](#)

England has a special intention regarding this extensive region: just as [she] cut the connection of Hadramat and Muscat with the Ottoman Empire in the past, by extending her influence and protection from the south to around Sana—the capital of the Yemen province—this time [she] has brought the Kuwait region in the Persian Gulf into the same position, and taken Shaikh Mubarak, the Shaikh of that place, under her influence and protection. It is plain that England is attempting, under her own influence and protection, to gradually civilize, like the Sudanese, the millions of Bedouin who live in this extensive region, and who, in their majority live in a state of nomadism, subject to no government authority; if proper attention has not been paid to the newspaper reports concerning [England’s] ambition to place the Ottoman Caliphate under her protection, there can be no doubt that Arabia’s future gives cause for concern.

Interestingly, at about the same time, the British Embassy in Istanbul obtained what purported to be a copy of a report to the Grand Vizier from Sayyid Talib Paşa, the influential son of the Naqib of Basra. [107](#) This alleged report, like those of Salih Münir Paşa and Kamil Paşa, took a pessimistic view of British intentions in the Gulf and Iraq:

The future of Irak is overshadowed by a dense and gloomy cloud; for in that district foreign intrigue is increasing from year to year. Its inhabitants being

ignorant and uncivilized, there is full scope for the machinations of foreigners, who stir up sedition, even in places where there are no consuls, by means of a number of spies whom they employ, in the guise of traders, and the seed of sedition is being sown (...) If the imperial government, taking these and other circumstances into consideration, does not put forth its best efforts in respect of improving the condition of its subjects, and ability to distinguish between good and evil through the spread of instruction, I have no doubt that in twenty or thirty years—perhaps even in a shorter space of time—the whole of the regions and districts of the Persian Gulf and the Tigris will pass under the protection of England, the craftiest and most astute of all.

The report argued that it was essential that the Ottoman government act: “Had the Ottoman Government not closed its eyes and left the Arabs till now to their fate, the partition of Africa would not have taken place, and the English and other foreign nations would not have been known or desired by the Arabs.” As a first step, the British must be deprived of their foothold in Kuwait, which could be achieved by ejecting Mubarak, and placing Kuwait under direct Ottoman control:

Until the present privileges of the Caza of Koweit have been abrogated and it has been reconstituted as a single caza together with Fao, the Province of Irak and, in particular the Vilayet of Bussorah, cannot be made safe against the aggressive plans of England.

Sayyid Talib explained the British position and desires in the region. England knew the importance of Baghdad and Hijaz Railways to the Ottoman Empire. Her trade would be considerably affected by them. In order to get hold of these important works, she was to follow her policies in the Hijaz, the Yemen, and Iraq. English steamers were also engaged in smuggling arms and ammunition in the region. In sum, “the Ottoman Government has to take steps to counteract these efforts, the results of which will be detrimental to its interests.”

The report then went on to outline a series of some thirty-odd fiscal, administrative, and other measures to be taken in order to gain the sympathy of the Arabs, and therefore forestall foreign intrigue and agitation; and concluded, [108](#)

As regards the effective union and dependence of the Arabian Peninsula on the Ottoman Empire, not only will it constitute an inconceivable glory and impetus for the people of Islam, but foreigners—and particularly England, the most strenuous rival of the Ottoman Empire in Irak and Arabia—will no longer be able to carry on their intrigues as at present.

## VI

The effects of such suspicions were inevitably felt at local level, where in any case, the Porte was determined to safeguard its interests against further British encroachment. Ottoman troops remained in occupation of Bubiyan, Safwan, and Umm Qasr, and in 1904, a large military expedition was sent to Najd against Ibn Saud.<sup>[109](#)</sup> Local Ottoman officials saw British intrigue everywhere, particularly in certain tribal disturbances which occurred at this time in Basra, and grew increasingly obstructive toward British officials and travelers.<sup>[110](#)</sup> The visit by Lorimer and Gabriel, of the Indian Political Service, to Iraq in early 1905, to make observations and collect information for the former's monumental *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman, and Central Arabia*, led to a number of contretemps with the local authorities.<sup>[111](#)</sup> So, in the same year, did journeys into the countryside made by Newmarch and Crow, the Consul General at Baghdad and the Consul at Basra respectively. An attempt by British missionaries to establish a Carmelite school in Baghdad further increased the tension, as did the British authorities' pressure for repairs to the Fao telegraph building, and a number of minor incidents involving British travelers and missionaries.<sup>[112](#)</sup>

For their part, the British were quick to complain of the hostile attitude adopted by Ottoman officials in the region. For example, in March 1905, the British Embassy instructed Monahan, the Consul in Basra, to issue a warning to General Muhlis Paşa, the local Vali and Commander:<sup>[113](#)</sup>

I have reason to believe that your vali is inciting his government against our action in Kuwait and that he has been asked whether Bahrein is properly Ottoman territory. You might take opportunity of talking him clearly understand His Majesty's Government regard Bahrein as virtually under British protection and that if he is a wise man he will not interfere in Kuwait affairs.



Similar complaints were made about the Vali of Baghdad, Mecid Bey:

It seems pretty clear that the vali is disposed for the moment to adopt an anti-English attitude and to throw upon us the odium and responsibility of revolts and other unpleasant incidents which are probably due either to his own incapacity or lack of energy. [114](#)

In the face of British representations, the Grand Vizier, Ferid Paşa, gave assurances that

he had already caused instructions to be sent to the provinces warning the officials not to give credence and circulation to unauthenticated rumors, and not to raise difficulties or throw obstacles in the way of British commerce and shipping. [115](#)

Nonetheless, tension between British representatives and the Valis of Baghdad and Basra continued, fuelled, in part, by leaks of alleged reports by the Valis, in which both men made detailed accusations of British intrigues and subversion. [116](#)

The British Foreign Secretary, Lansdowne, himself protested to the Ottoman Ambassador about: [117](#)

The distorted and often baseless reports of alleged English proceedings in the Persian Gulf and on the coast of Arabia furnished by Turkish officials to the Sublime Porte which, on examination, invariably proved to be incorrect—exhibited such marked hostility and ill-will, and such an evident desire to create ill-feeling between the two governments.

Lansdowne demanded that the officials who were responsible should be censured, and if the practice was continued, removed from their posts. [118](#)

The British authorities were further disturbed by reports that several Arabic newspapers, all published in Egypt, such as *al-Alem al-Islami*, *al-Liwa*, and *al-Muayyad*, with articles stressing “British interference and intrigues in Arabia” were in circulation in Iraq. [119](#)

This state of tension between British and Ottoman officials persisted right through 1906, though it appears that thereafter, the Porte made some efforts

to restrain its local representatives. For one thing, it was already embarked upon a series of measures designed to strengthen its authority in Iraq. First, the Ottoman navigation company on the Tigris was reorganized. In early 1904, a new Ottoman steamship company, under the control of the Privy Purse, was set up to conduct navigation on the Tigris, in direct competition with the Lynch Company whose services were deliberately obstructed.<sup>120</sup> In addition, the establishment of an Ottoman mail service to Hasa and the Persian Gulf was seriously attempted.<sup>121</sup> Above all, as explained in [Chapter 2](#), these years saw the Porte make serious attempts to conduct a general reform of its administration and army in Iraq.

The period from 1906 onwards saw few Anglo-Ottoman incidents. Local Ottoman officials were preoccupied with the new reform projects, and with a series of tribal disturbances in the *vilayet* of Basra.<sup>122</sup> In any case, the Ottoman government's reluctance to risk a direct confrontation with Britain was much reinforced by the Anglo-Russian Convention of August 1907, in which the two Powers solved their differences over Tibet, Afghanistan, and Iran.<sup>123</sup> Though the convention made no explicit reference to the Persian Gulf,<sup>124</sup> Abdülhamid was undoubtedly fearful that a private understanding had been reached. The Sultan questioned the British and Russian Ambassadors as to the real nature of the convention, especially enquiring, "whether the presumed agreement might not be extended to Turkish regions adjoining the Persian Gulf"; he also began to seek a measure of rapprochement with Britain.<sup>125</sup> In May 1907, in the midst of rumors about the secret Anglo-Russian negotiations, Abdülhamid warned the Grand Vizier that "a complaint has been made by the British Ambassador, to the effect that the civil and military authorities at Baghdad show mistrust towards the British; report why this mistrust is being shown."<sup>126</sup>

In the early years of Abdülhamid's regime, there was no open conflict between Britain and the Ottoman Empire in Iraq and the Gulf, even though mutual suspicions gained a certain momentum with the construction of the Fao fortifications. These mutual suspicions in the region long antedated the Baghdad Railway project, as is demonstrated by numerous reports prepared by Ottoman officials. Although the Porte took steps, whenever opportunity arose, to strengthen the Empire's claims to sovereignty over the Arabian shores of the Gulf, in particular over Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, it strove

to avoid any direct challenge to the British. The late 1890s and early 1900s saw the emergence of potential threats to the regional status quo in Kuwait and Najd, and also in the Baghdad Railway project. Still, both sides in the last resort wanted to preserve the status quo and avoid conflict, even though apprehension on the part of the local Ottoman authorities was growing steadily. In general, the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Britain in the region were influenced by the overall state of their relations, and by other mutual problems in neighboring regions, such as the Yemen or the Red Sea.

## Conclusion

Sultan Hamid employed a special policy towards distant regions like Iraq and the Yemen, which might be called a colonial policy. Sultan Hamid, having appreciated that the people of these regions could not be administered like those settled in other parts of the country, or with a uniform law and methods, accepted a system of administration in accordance with the capacities of the population of these regions.

(From the memoirs of Tahsin Paşa, Abdülhamid II's Chief Palace Secretary).<sup>[1](#)</sup>

You are the governors and I am the governed. And when I am asked what is my opinion as to the continuance of British rule, I reply that I am the subject of the victor. You, Khatun..., have an understanding of statecraft. I do not hesitate to say to you that I loved the Turkish government when it was as I once knew it. If I could return to the rule of the Sultans of Turkey as they were in former times, I should make no other choice. But I loathe and hate, curse and consign to the devil the present Turkish government... The Turk is dead; he has vanished, and I am content to become your subject.

(Sayyid Abdurrahman Efendi, Naqibu'l-Ashraf of Baghdad, in conversation with Gertrude Bell, 1919).<sup>[2](#)</sup>

The present study suggests three groups of conclusions: conclusions concerning the Ottoman administration of Iraq in the period under study, conclusions concerning the general nature of Abdülhamid II's approach to provincial and central administration, and conclusions comparing Iraq's experience under his rule with those of other Arab and Kurdish provinces.

The first conclusion to be drawn concerning the Ottoman administration is that Iraq's "backwardness" in comparison with other regions of the Empire was not a reflection of ignorance or indifference on the part of the state. Ottoman officials, whether at the center or in the Iraqi provinces, were well aware of Iraq's need and potential for reform and development, and had

reached a broad consensus on what needed to be done: improvements in communications and irrigation, the settlement of the tribes, the distribution of state lands, and the establishment of firmer government control over the population. Nonetheless, it is striking how little was achieved, or even attempted, in these respects, at least until the apparent change in Abdülhamid's attitude after 1900, prompted, it seems, by a recognition that Iraq's manifold problems were in danger of getting out of control, and threatening the stability of Ottoman rule in the region.

Local and central government officials had reached a broad consensus with regard to the question of reform in Iraq. The *vilayets* of Baghdad and Basra, it was agreed, had considerable potential for agricultural development. The key to unlocking this potential lay partly in irrigation and marshland drainage, partly in better river and rail communications, and partly, and most importantly, in the settlement of the tribal population, who should be encouraged to become peaceful cultivators. The process of settlement, it was further agreed, was in part a question of stronger administrative and military control, and in part a question of continuing the policy, initiated by Midhat Paşa in the 1870s, of releasing state lands to the local population. More controversially, some officials argued that the success of these reform and development proposals would be enhanced by a fundamental administrative re-structuring, with much greater powers devolved to valis, and with the whole of Iraq established as a single *vilayet*.

Yet, for most of the period under study, except the last decade, the Sultan and his government failed to adopt these proposals. In the case of the ambitious plans for railway construction and irrigation, it may plausibly be suggested that the problem was finance: the Sultan's government had no money of its own to spare for such projects, and with memories of the 1875 bankruptcy still fresh, it was unwilling to resort to large-scale foreign loans. It also seems likely that political considerations frustrated the proposals to give valis powers over local garrisons, or to unite the three Iraqi *vilayets*: Abdülhamid was firmly opposed to anything which might point in the direction of administrative decentralization and provincial autonomy. However, it also seems probable that he had political objections to a continuation of the earlier policy of distributing state lands. These objections, as he explicitly expressed them, turned on a fear that the lands

distributed might end up in the hands of foreigners, and specifically, of Iranian or British subjects.

Not until about early 1900s onwards did Abdülhamid began to change his policies in Iraq. This change appears to have been prompted partly by a concern at the serious decline in the revenues of the Iraqi *vilayets*, and partly by concern at the state of 6th Army, a concern heightened by a growing number of serious security problems in and around Iraq. These problems included serious tribal outbreaks in the *vilayets* of Basra and Mosul; troubles between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud in Najd; the eruption of a major border conflict with Iran; the possibility that growing political conflicts within Iran might lead to difficulties with Iraq's substantial Shi'i population; and fears of British aggression in the Gulf. All these appear to have led the central government to give serious attention to concrete projects for action, from railways to irrigation, as well as to a project of general reform in the Iraqi *vilayets*. The new policy encompassed the following changes: from strict centralization to a partial decentralization in civil and financial administration, at least in the sense that he delegated substantial powers to the Reform Commission sent to Iraq in late 1907; from efforts to explore the natural sources and increase public revenues to attempts to improve the well being of the inhabitants and gain their sympathy and confidence; and from a strict ban on the distribution of state lands to encouragement of it.

Throughout the period under study the administration of the Iraqi provinces rested upon a delicate balance between civil and military officials and local notables. In all three *vilayets*, the chief notable families, both Arab and Kurdish, enjoyed considerable local influence, and some had direct links with the Sultan's palace. From the outset, Abdülhamid showed every care to conciliate, not alienate, the notables, and not to confront the powerful tribal leaders; he always showed reluctance to pursue radical measures which might offend them. He always hesitated to use armed force against religious notables and powerful tribal chiefs, whether Arab or Kurdish.

Abdülhamid's chief concern was to keep things as quiet as possible, and in case of trouble or a conflict, the easiest way was to replace the Vali, or other high officials, instead of confronting the notables or powerful tribal leaders. When the center made concessions by appointing persons who were



favorable to the notables, the state of affairs usually remained quiet, but this often appears to have strengthened the notables' power at the expense of the government, and in the long run gave rise to other problems. In the last few years of the Abdülhamid period, while the administration of Baghdad was given special attention, and entrusted to young, professional bureaucrats and German-educated soldiers, Mosul and Basra, whose problems were getting out of hand, were entrusted to the Palace and notable favorites. While in Mosul, the high officials' "destiny" was usually determined by tribal issues, in Basra it was determined by either tribal or regional (developments in Kuwait and the Gulf, and Najd) matters.

The principal source of conflicts in the Iraqi provinces, whether between notables or tribes, or between them and the government, was land. Another important source of problems was tax, and tax-arrears, which amounted to substantial amounts, especially in Basra. Both land and tax issues often led to armed clashes, but matters gradually got out of hand when the tribes of the region began to arm themselves with modern weapons, enabling them to defy the government troops. This explains the government's concern over the issue of the illegal arms-trade in the region. While local troops were quite successful from 1880 onwards in dealing with tribal outbreaks, after about 1900, Basra, and later Mosul, faced constant tribal outbreaks, gradually worsening up to 1908. Though the Porte responded by initiating a series of reform measures, these depended upon the establishment of law and order, and this was never achieved.

The substantial Shi'i population in the *vilayets* of Baghdad and Basra began to give serious concern from the mid-1880s onwards, chiefly, it appears, because the Ottoman authorities saw the growing Shi'i population as a natural ally of Iran in any future conflict. The extent of Ottoman concern at the Shi'i problem was generally determined by the general state of relations between Iran and the Ottoman Empire: the more relations deteriorated in other questions, the more the Porte showed concern at the Shi'i population of Iraq. In the early 1890s, this concern led the Sultan to launch his "Pan-Islamic" initiative for Sunni-Shi'i union, though with little success. Otherwise, Ottoman officials seemed to take a naive view of the causes and remedies of the "problem," believing that they could easily "convert" people from their "superstitious belief" through preaching and education.

From the early 1900s onwards, the concern on the part of the Ottoman authorities grew, as internal developments in Iran began to show their effects at the Atabat. At all events, no “solution” was ever found.

The early years of Abdülhamid’s regime saw no open conflict between Britain and the Ottoman Empire in Iraq and the Gulf, even if mutual suspicions gained a certain momentum with the construction of the Fao fortifications. The present study shows that these mutual suspicions in the region long antedated the Baghdad railway project, as is witnessed by numerous reports prepared by Ottoman officials. Though the Porte, whenever opportunity arose, took steps to make good the Empire’s claims to sovereignty over the Arabian shores of the Gulf, in particular over Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, it strove to avoid any direct challenge to the British. Though the late 1890s and early 1900s saw the emergence of potential threats to the regional status quo in Kuwait and Najd, and also in the Baghdad railway project, both sides, in the last resort, wanted to preserve the status quo and avoid conflict, though apprehension on the part of the local Ottoman authorities grew considerably. It is worth adding that, generally speaking, the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Britain in the region were influenced by the general state of their relations, and by other mutual problems in neighboring regions, such as the Yemen or the Red Sea. As with notables, so with the British: Abdülhamid regarded them as a problem to be managed, rather than solved.

The present study at the same time confirms some of the current assumptions on the general nature of Abdülhamid’s provincial and central administration: his initiation and implementation of policy in detail, as attested by the considerable number of instructions issued on the Sultan’s own initiative; his active interest in appointments to provincial posts; the influence of his personal advisers, and the advisory commissions at the Palace, such as the Military Inspection Commission, on the decision-making process; his firm resistance to the Porte’s advice when it opposed his basic principles, for example, over the employment of armed force in suppressing tribal disturbances; his support of provincial notables against his own provincial officials; his “cautiousness” in all matters, and his general reluctance to disturb the status quo.

Of particular interest is his active involvement in provincial appointments, and the consistency of his choices for Iraqi posts. It is, for example, striking that the governor-generalships of Baghdad and Mosul were generally entrusted to those who had previously served in the region, or in neighboring Arab and Kurdish provinces, such as Syria and Diyarbakır, or in places like Tripolitania and Albania, where similar conditions existed. In Basra, on the other hand, the Sultan showed a marked preference for military and naval officers, which is not surprising, in view of Basra's sensitive frontier position. It is also possible to identify, in all three provinces, a number of appointees who were selected with a view to their acceptability to local notables. Such appointments appear to have been made in response to particular local problems, such as tribal disturbances.

The influence of the Sultan's Palace advisers, and advisory commissions, on decisions emerges as important: official Ottoman documents reveal that many of Abdülhamid's more important decisions reflected the recommendations made by his personal advisers or the permanent commissions at Yıldız, most notably the Military Inspection Commission. In contrast, the recommendations made by the Council of Ministers seem to have carried less weight with the Sultan. In practice, the decision-making process ran in a chain from the Porte to the Sultan, from the Sultan to his advisers and commissions, from them to the Sultan, and finally, from the Sultan to the Porte.

Abdülhamid's much discussed, and controversial, "policies" of "Islamism" (or his "Islamic policy") and "Pan-Islamism" were also touched on in this study. An "Islamic policy" is apparent in the Iraqi provinces, and in particular in Mosul where the Sunni-Kurdish population lived, in the sense that religion was deliberately stressed as a social base or bond, linking rulers to ruled, that there was a certain emphasis on Islam in the field of public education, and there was an appreciation of the important sociopolitical role played by religious notables and tariqas. Beyond this, it is difficult to discern a specific "Islamic" program. Only in the context of the Shi'i problem—a problem posed by the substantial Shi'i population of the provinces of Baghdad and Basra—was a specific and sometimes ideological "(Sunni-) Islamic" thrust to policy observed.

The efforts of the Ottoman authorities to deal with the Shi'i problem touch on another controversial issue: Abdülhamid's "Pan-Islamism." As noted, concern at the extent of the Shi'i problem led the Sultan, in the early 1890s, to pursue an apparent "Pan-Islamic" policy, based upon the promotion of "Sunni-Shi'i unity," and the establishment of a form of confederal relationship with Iran. Though nothing came of this, it suggests that the controversies over Abdülhamid's "Pan-Islamism" need to be placed in the contexts of the "Shi'i problem" in Iraq, his attempts at "Sunni-Shi'i unity," and relations with Iran, as well as the traditionally-acknowledged contexts of "India" or "Egypt."

Some of these conclusions are somewhat similar to those drawn by scholars who have examined other Arab regions during Abdülhamid's regime.<sup>3</sup> Among similarities, mention may be made of the considerable role played by local notables in provincial administration, Abdülhamid's reluctance to confront such notables and his preference for reconciliation, as the best means of resolving conflicts with them, his willingness to delegate lesser administrative functions to the local chieftains and notables, his hesitation to use armed force against powerful tribal chiefs, his efforts to incorporate his Arab subjects into the Ottoman system through education, particularly religious education, and his general concern to stand well with Arab Muslim opinion.

The most striking dissimilarity, in comparison with Syria, the Hijaz, or North Africa, was the lack of any strong preoccupation with the perceived dangers of "Arab separatism," "Arab government," or an "Arab Caliphate." One plausible reason for the absence of fear of Arab separatism is the presence of a large Shi'i population in Iraq. Elsewhere, Abdülhamid's fear of Arab separatism or Arab Caliphate focused on Sunni-Arab rivals, such as the Sharif of Mecca, the Khedive of Egypt, or the Mahdi, and on Sunni-Arab regions. The fear of Shi'i-Arab disloyalty or separatism, on the other hand, was focused not on the "Arab" issue, but rather on the "Iranian" issue.

# Notes

## Introduction

1 “Suphi Paşa Hazretleri’nin Lâyihası’ndan,” in *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Antolojisi I: 1839–1865*, eds Mehmet Kaplan, İnci Enginün, and Birol Emil (Istanbul: İÜEF, 1974), p. 21.

2 For the state of the historiography of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Iraq, see Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, “The Historiography of Modern Iraq,” *American Historical Review*, 96(1991), 1408–21.

3 For recent examples, see Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1992); Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), and *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (Oxford: OUP, 2001); F.A.K.Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers, 1878–1888* (Istanbul: ISIS, 1996); Azmi Özcan, *Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain, 1877–1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1998); Kemal H.Karpat, *The Politicization of İslam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: OUP, 2001); S.Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyal Devlet: Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşruiyet, 1876–1914* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002); Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: OUP, 2002).

4 For recent examples of the latter category, see William L.Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz Under Ottoman Control, 1840–1908* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1984); Michel Le Gall, “Pashas, Bedouins and Notables: Ottoman Administration in Tripoli and Benghazi, 1881–1902” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Princeton University, 1986); Ş.Tufan Buzpınar, “Abdülhamid II, Islam and the Arabs: the Cases of Syria and the Hijaz, 1878–1882” (Unpublished PhD Thesis,

University of Manchester, 1991); Engin D.Akarli, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861–1920* (London and New York: Centre for Lebanese Studies and I.B.Tauris, 1993); Zekeriya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahşa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı* (Ankara: TTK, 1998); Eugene L.Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).

5 Hala Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745–1900* (New York: SUNY, 1997); Dina R.Khoury *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540–1834* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997); Sarah D.Shields, *Mosul Before Iraq: Like Bees Making Five-Sided Cells* (New York: SUNY, 2000).

6 See “Midhat Pasha and the Land System of Lower Iraq,” in *St. Anthony's Papers: Middle Eastern Affairs*, No. 3 (London, 1963), pp. 105–36; “The Saniya Lands of Sultan Abdülhamid II in Iraq,” in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of H.A.R.Gibb*, ed. G.Makdisi (Leiden: Brill, 1965), pp. 326–36; “Aspects of Land Tenure and Social Change in Lower Iraq During Late Ottoman Times,” in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1984), pp. 333–56.

7 See, for example, Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1985); Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990); Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000); Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Meir Litvak, *Shi'i scholars of nineteenth-century Iraq: The ulama of Najaf and Karbala* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998); Frederick F.Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf: The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

8 For general information about the Ottoman state archives, see Atilla Çetin, *Başbakanlık Arşivi Kilavuzu* (Istanbul: Enderun, 1979); *Başbakanlık Arşivi Kilavuzu* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1992).



9 For detailed information on these collections, see Stanford J. Shaw, "Ottoman Archival Materials for the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: the Archives of Istanbul," *IJMES*, 6(1975), 94–114; "The Yıldız Palace Archives of Abdülhamid II," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 3(1971), 211–37; Atilla Çetin, "Yıldız Arşivine Dair," *İ ÜEF Tarih Dergisi*, 32(1979), 563–86.

## 1

### The setting of an Ottoman province

1 See Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), pp. 38, 106; Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 1: Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280–1808* (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), pp. 95–6.

2 For Iraqi provinces in the "classical period," see Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), pp. 226–7; Andre Raymond, "Les provinces arabes (XVI siècle—XVIII siècle)," in *Histoire De L'Empire Ottoman*, ed. Robert Mantran (Paris: Fayard, 1989), pp. 341–420; P.M. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, 1517–1922: A Political History* (London: Longmans, 1966), pp. 55–7, 134ff.; S.H. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925); articles "Bağdad," and "Basra," in *IA*, II, 203–11 and 322–7, and "Mosul," VIII, 741–4; Halil Sahillioğlu, "Osmanlı Döneminde Irak'ın İdari Taksimatı," *Belleten*, 211(1990), 1233–57; M. Mehdi İlhan, "The Ottoman Archives and Their Importance for Historical Studies: with special reference to Arab Provinces," *Belleten*, 213(1991), 415–71; Rhoads Murphey "The Ottoman Centuries in Iraq: Legacy or Aftermath? A Survey Study of Mesopotamian Hydrology and Ottoman Irrigation Projects," *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 11(1987), 17–29; R.M. Savory, "A.D. 600–1800," in *The Persian Gulf: A General Survey*, ed. Alvin J. Cottrell (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 14–40.

3 For the wars with Iran and the Iranian occupations in Iraq, see Longrigg, *Four Centuries*; Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, index; Stanford J. Shaw, "Iranian relations with the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth and

Nineteenth Centuries,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 7: *From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, eds Peter Avery Charles Melville, and Gavin R.G.Hambly (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 297–313.

4 For details of the *salyane* and *timar* systems, and their application in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul, see Halil İnalçık, “Eyalet,” *EI*(2), II, 723; *Ottoman Empire*, pp. 104ff.; Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 122; Sahillioğlu, “Irak’ın İdari Taksimatı”; Salih Özbaran, “Some notes on the Salyane System in the Ottoman Empire as Organized in Arabia in the Sixteenth Century,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 6(1986), 39–45; “A Note on the Ottoman Administration in Arabia in the Sixteenth Century,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 3/1(Winter 1984–5), 93–9; Ahmet Tabakoğlu, *Gerileme Dönemine Girerken Osmanlı Maliyesi* (Istanbul: Dergah, 1985), pp. 63–6; “Economic Importance of the Gulf in the Ottoman Era,” *Studies on Turkish-Arab Relations*, 3(1988), 159–63.

5 See Sahillioğlu, “Irak’ın İdari Taksimatı.”

6 For the Mamluk period, see Hourani, *Arab Peoples*, pp. 249ff.; “The Fertile Crescent in the Eighteenth Century,” *Studio, Islamica*, 8(1957), 91–118; Raymond, “Les provinces arabes”; Tom Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and Society in Early Modern Iraq: Mamluk Pashas, Tribal Shaykhs and Local Rule Between 1802 and 1831* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982); Longrigg, *Four Centuries*; Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, pp. 134–48, 247ff.; Stanford J.Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789–1807* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 219ff., 294ff.; John R.Perry, “The Mamluk Paşasalik of Baghdad and Ottoman-Iranian Relations in the Late 18th Century,” in *Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History I*, ed. Sinan Kuneralp (Istanbul: ISIS, 1987), pp. 59–70.

7 For details, see Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, pp. 267–76; Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayic ül-Vukuat: Kurumları ve Örgütleriyle Osmanlı Tarihi*, ed. Neşet Çağatay 4 vols in 2 (Ankara: TTK, 1987), III–IV; 260–1; J.G.Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman, and Central Arabia*, 5 vols (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1908–15), I/1B, 1313ff.; Davud Paşa was treated with respect and given important posts in Istanbul. For

“Kölemen” Davud Paşa (1774–1851), and his later life, see *DIA*, IX, 38–9; *EI*(2), II, 184.

8 The first two Valis of Baghdad in this period were Ali Rıza Paşa (1831–42) and Necib Paşa (1842–9); for “Lâz” Ali Rıza Paşa (d. 1845), see *TA*, II, 95; for “Gürcü” Mehmed Necib Paşa (d. 1851), see Caesar E. Farah, “Necib Paşa and the British in Syria,” *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 2(1970), 115–53; Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Wali Nejib Pasha and the Qadiri Order in Iraq,” *Journal of the History of Sufism*, 1–2(2000), 115–22; *SO*, IV, 545–6; for this period, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1314ff., 1318–19, 1349ff.; Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, pp. 277ff.; for the standing threat from Muhammad Ali Paşa, see J.B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1795–1880* (Oxford: OUP, 1968), pp. 270–6, 838–9.

9 Reading the present literature on Iraq, one may be led to conclude that the Tanzimat was introduced simultaneously throughout the Empire, save Iraq. See, for example, Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, p. 281. Cf. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1348ff. The recent research based on Ottoman sources shows that this was not the case. The reforms were introduced to only a few provinces at first, which were regarded as strongholds of the central government, such as Edirne, Bursa, Ankara, Aydın, Konya, and Sivas. On this point see, Halil İnalcık, “Application of the Tanzimat and its Social Effects,” *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 5(1973), 97–127; Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentleri’nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapıları* (Ankara: TTK, 1991), pp. 190ff.

10 For the Tanzimat reforms, see Stanford J. and Ezel K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 2: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), 83ff; Stanford J. Shaw, “The Origins of Representative Government in the Ottoman Empire: An Introduction to the Provincial Councils, 1839–1876,” in *Near Eastern Round Table, 1967–1968*, ed. R. Bayly Winder (New York: University of New York, 1969), pp. 53–142; “The Central Legislative Councils in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Reform Movement before 1876,” *IJMES*, 1(1970), 51–84; “The Nineteenth Century Ottoman Tax Reforms and Revenue System,” *IJMES*, 6(1975), 421–59; “Ottoman Expenditures and Budgets in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,”

*IJMES*, 9(1978), 373–8; Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde*, ch. 3; İ lber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra Mahalli İ dareler, 1840–1878* (Ankara: TODAİE, 1974).

11 See Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi: XVIII. Yy'dan Tanzimat'a Malî Tarih* (İstanbul: Alan, 1986), p. 286 fn. 23, and, Tevfik Güran, *Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Maliyesi: Bütçeler ve Hazine Hesapları, 1841–1861* (Ankara: TTK, 1989), p. 42; cf. Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde*, p. 195.

12 For Abdülkerim Nadir Paşa (1807–83), see *TM*, p. 12; *TA*, I, 62–3; for Mehmed Namık Paşa (1804–92), see Ahmet Nuri Sinaplı, *Şeyhül Vüzerâ, Serasker Mehmet Namık Paşa* (İstanbul: Yenilik Basımevi, 1987); *TM*, p. 274; *TA*, XXV, 114; Enver Ziya Karal, “Mehmed Namık Paşa'nın Hal Tercümesi, 1804–1892,” *Tarih Vesikaları*, 2 (İlkteş'in 1942), 220–7; Şehabeddin Akalın, “Mehmed Namık Paşa,” *İ ÜEF Tarih Dergisi*, 4 (1952), 127–46; Namık Paşa was the Müşir of the Arabistan Army since 1259/1843. For details, Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, pp. 104ff.

13 For details, see Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, pp. 121ff. Cf. Münir Aktepe, ed., *Vak'a-nüvis Ahmed Lütfi Efendi Tarihi*, vol. IX (İstanbul: İ ÜEF, 1984), pp. 19–20.

14 See Güran, *Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Maliyesi*, pp. 93–6.

15 See Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, pp. 129ff; the transfer of funds from the central treasury continued in substantial amounts. See Güran, *Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Maliyesi*, pp. 96–9.

16 See Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, pp. 144ff. He became Marshal of the Imperial Artillery (*Tophane Müşiri*) in İstanbul.

17 For him, see *SO*, II, 393.

18 See Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (New York: Gordian Press, 1973), p. 137; Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 87–8.

19 See Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, pp. 283, 293–4. Cevdet Paşa wrote highly of him in his *Tezâkir*, ed. Cavit Baysun, 4 vols (Ankara: TTK, 1953–67), II, 34.

20 To appoint a successor to Mehmed Reşid Paşa was regarded a matter of importance by the Porte. The post was first offered to Mehmed Namık Paşa. When he declined to accept, the Porte appears to have been consent to appoint “*Serdâr-ı Ekrem*” Ömer Lütî Paşa on the request of the latter. See Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, II, 34–5; Aktepe, *Vak’a-nüvis Ahmed Lütî Efendi Tarihi*, vol. IX, pp. 139–40; for Ömer Lütî Paşa (1806–71), see Davison, *Reform*, p. 77; *TA*, XXVI, 259–60; *SO*, III, 602–3; *TM*, p. 301; Abdurrahman Şeref, *Tarih Musahabeleri*, ed. Enver Koray (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1985), pp. 235–7.

21 For details, see Davison, *Reform*, pp. 137–8; cf. Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, pp. 283–4; Aktepe, *Vak’a-nüvis Ahmed Lütî Efendi Tarihi*, vol. IX, p. 169.

22 Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, pp. 188ff; Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, p. 284; for ‘*Sirkâtibi*’ Mustafa Nuri Paşa (1798–1878), see *TM*, pp. 288–9; *SO*, IV, 482–3; Münir Aktepe, *Vak’a-nüvis Ahmed Lütî Efendi Tarihi*, vols X–XIV (Ankara: TTK, 1988–91), X, 31.

23 Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, pp. 189–90.

24 For details, see *ibid.*, pp. 188–233.

25 For his later life, and the important positions he held under Sultan Abdülaziz and Abdülhamid, see *ibid.*, pp. 233ff, 283–4.

26 Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, p. 284. For his second governor-generalship of Baghdad in 1880, see Chapter 3.

27 For Midhat Paşa (1822–84), see R.H.Davison, “Midhat Pasha,” *EI*(2), VI, 1031–5; İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar*, 4 vols (Istanbul: MEB, 1969), pp. 322–414; Mehmed Zeki Pakalın, *Son Sadrazamlar ve Baş vekiller*, 5 vols (Istanbul: Ahmet Sait Matbaası, 1940–8), I, 189–445.

28 See Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 118–19; Ömer L.Barkan, “Türk Toprak Hukuku Tarihinde Tanzimat ve 1274(1858) Tarihli Arazi Kanunnâmesi,” in *Türkiye’de Toprak Meselesi: Toplu Eserler I*, ed. Ömer L.Barkan (Istanbul: Gözlem, 1980), pp. 291–375; Kemal H.Karpat, “The Land Regime, Social Structure, and Modernization in the Ottoman Empire,” in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, eds W.R.Polk and R.L.Chambers (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 69–90; Huri Islamoglu, “Property as a Contested Domain: A Reevaluation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858,” in *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East*, ed. Roger Owen (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 3–61.

29 For developments with regards to 1864 provincial reform, see Davison, *Reform*, pp. 104ff. For a detailed account of the 1864 Vilayet Law, *ibid.*, pp. 136ff; Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 89–91; Carter V.Findley *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 181–2; Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde*, pp. 249ff.; Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra*, pp. 42ff.

30 For developments after 1864, see Davison, *Reform*, pp. 158–60; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, p. 182.

31 See Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 90; Davison, *Reform*, pp. 151ff.

32 For details of his governor-generalship at Baghdad, see Davison, *Reform*, pp. 160–4; Ali Haydar Midhat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha* (London: Murray, 1903), pp. 47–63; *Midhat Paşa: Hayat-ı Siyasiyesi, Hidemâtı, Menfa Hayatı. Birinci Kitab: Tabsıra-i İbret* (Istanbul: Hilal Matbaası, 1325), pp. 66–128; see also Necdet Kurdakul, “Boş durularak Öldürüldüğü Yüzdördüncü Yıl Nedeniyle Osmanlı Basınında Midhat Paşa,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, 50(1990), 140–1; Yaşar Yücel, “Midhat Paşa’nın Bağdad Vilayetindeki Alt Yapı Yatırımları,” in *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri: Bildiriler ve Tartışmaları, Edirne, 8–10 Mayıs 1984* (Ankara: TTK, 1986), pp. 175–83.



33 Ibid.; Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800–1914: A Documentary Economic History* (New York: OUP, 1988), pp. 286, 288–9; Albertine Jwaideh, “Midhat Pasha and the Land System of Lower Iraq,” in *St. Anthony’s Papers: Middle Eastern Affairs No. 3* (London, 1963), pp. 105–36; “Aspects of Land Tenure and Social Change in Lower Iraq During Late Ottoman Times,” in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1984), pp. 333–56; S. Haider, “Land Problems of Iraq” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London, 1942).

34 Ibid.; Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, pp. 115–20, 465–8.

35 See Davison, *Reform*, pp. 163–4.

36 Ibid., pp. 167ff.

37 These were Müşir Rauf Paşa (1872–3) (for him [1832–1908], see *TM*, pp. 316–17); Müşir Redif Paşa (1873–5) (for him [d. 1905], see *ibid.*, p. 318); Vezir Abdurrahman Paşa (1875–7); Vezir Akif Paşa (1877–8) (for him [1822–93], see *ibid.*, p. 30; *TA*, I, 342); Vezir Kadri Paşa (1878–9) (for him [1832–83], see *TM*, p. 202; *TA*, XXI, 102; İnal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, pp. 1307–19); and Abdurrahman Paşa, second time, in 1879–80. For Abdurrahman Nureddin Paşa (1833–1912), see İnal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, pp. 1320–46; *TM*, pp. 5–6; *TA*, I, 46; *BD*, V, 15; FO 195/1242, no. 29, Nixon to Layard, Baghdad, March 10, 1879; he belonged to the Naqshbandi-Khalidi order. See Ebubekir Hâzım Tepeyran, “Hatıralar,” in *Canlı Tarihler I* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1944), p. 50.

38 See Davison, *Reform*, pp. 270ff.

39 For the Abdülhamid period in general, see Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: OUP, 1961), pp. 171–205; Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 172–272; Findley *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp. 221–90; Engin D. Akarlı, “The Problems of External Pressures, Power Struggles, and Budgetary Deficits in Ottoman Politics under Abdülhamid II (1876–1909): Origins and Solutions” (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1976); “The Tangled Ends of an Empire and its Sultan,” in *Modernity and Culture: From the*

*Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, eds L.T.Fawaz and C.A.Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 261–84; F.A.K.Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy: Abdülhamid II and the Great Powers, 1878–1888* (Istanbul: ISIS, 1996), pp. 19–39; Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); Kemal H.Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: OUP, 2001).

40 See Selim Deringil, “The Ottoman Response to the Egyptian Crisis of 1881–1882,” *MES*, 24(1988), 3–24; F.A.K.Yasamee, “The Ottoman Empire, The Sudan and the Red Coast, 1883–1889,” in *Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History V: The Ottomans and Africa*, eds S.Deringil and S.Kuneralp (Istanbul: ISIS, 1990), pp. 87–102; Ş .Tufan Buzpinar, “Opposition to the Ottoman Caliphate in the Early Years of Abdülhamid II, 1877–1882,” *Die Welt des Islams*, 36(1996), 59–89.

41 See Engin D.Akarli, “Economic Policy and Budgets in Ottoman Turkey, 1876–1909,” *MES*, 28(1992), 443–76; Ş evket Kamil Akar, “Bütçeler IŞ 1876–1909 İ nda II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Maliyesi” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Istanbul, 1999).

42 For a general picture of social and economic change, see Owen, *Middle East in the World Economy*, pp. 82, 180ff., 273ff.; Charles Issawi, *Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 127ff.; *Fertile Crescent*, for a picture of Iraq in general, see Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq’s Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Bathists, and Free Officers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 13–361; Ghassan R.Atiyyah, *Iraq, 1908–1921: A Political Study* (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1973), pp. 19–50; Stephen H.Longrigg, *Iraq, 1900 to 1950: A Political, Social, and Economic History* (London: OUP, 1953), pp. 1–40; *Four Centuries*, pp. 298–324.

43 For details, see Justin McCarthy, “The Population of Ottoman Syria and Iraq, 1878–1914,” *Asian and African Studies*, 15(1981), 3–44; *EI*(2), Supplement, p. 213.

44 McCarthy, "The Population of Ottoman Syria and Iraq," p. 39; cf. M.S.Hasan, "Growth and Structure of Iraq's Population, 1867–1947," in Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800–1914: A Book of Readings* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 155–62, and Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie D'Asie*, 4 vols (Paris, 1890–4), II, 764–5, III, 17, 220.

45 Ibid., table 28.

46 For details on this point, see Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 13ff., 63ff.

47 See Hasan, "Growth and Structure of Iraq's Population," p. 157.

48 Ibid.

49 For different estimates on the ethno-religious composition of the three *vilayets* in 1890s, see Cuinet, *La Turquie D'Asie*, II, 764–5, and III, 17, 220; Şemseddin Sami, *Kamusu'l-Alam*, 6 vols (Istanbul: Mihran Matbaası, 1306–16), VI (1316), 4483; Admiralty, Great Britain, *A Handbook of Mesopotamia*, 4 vols (London: Admiralty War Staff, Intelligence Division, 1916–17), I, 66; Foreign Office, Great Britain, *Mesopotamia* (London: HMSO, 1920), p. 8.

50 See Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 37ff.

51 For the Jewish community in Baghdad, see Nissim Rejwan, *The Jews of Iraq: 3000 Years of History and Culture* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985); see also Elie Kedourie, "The Jews of Baghdad in 1910," in *Arabic Political Memoirs and Other Studies*, ed. Elie Kedourie (London: Frank Cass, 1974), pp. 263–72.

52 See Cuinet, *La Turquie D'Asie*, III, 90, 259(1894), and Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, p. 35. The figure for Mosul is dated 1922.

53 Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 152–69.

54 Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, p. 132. This overall increase in Iraq's volume of trade was at the same time an indicator of the rapid development of its

transport system, in particular the navigation on the rivers and the Gulf. For details, *ibid.*, pp. 203ff.

55 *Ibid.*, pp. 142–3.

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 132–3, 135.

57 For percentages, *ibid.*, pp. 145–7.

58 For details of agricultural development, and several statistics derived from the Ottoman sources, see Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 222–6; Justin McCarthy, *The Arab World, Turkey, and the Balkans (1878–1914): A Handbook of Historical Statistics* (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co, 1982), pp. 253ff.; see also Foreign Office, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 48ff.

59 Cuinet, *La Turquie D'Asie*, III, 44.

60 BOA, Y.A.Res. 147/106(5), 7 Rebiyülâhir 1325–20 May 1907; for the proportion of land under cultivation in the Iraqi provinces in 1894–5, see Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, p. 222, table IV.17; cf. Owen, *Middle East in the World Economy*, p. 273.

61 For the full administrative division of the three provinces in Iraq, from sancaks to nahiyes, see “Osmanlı Asırlarında Türk Devletinin Mülki İdare Taksimatı ve Yer İsimlerinin Mukayeseli Tahlili: I.Bölüm, Vilayet, Sancak, Kaza, Nahiye itibariyledir (1324–1325/1906–1907)” (unpublished catalog in BOA); Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, p. 210, table IV.1, and, p. 211, table IV.3. See also central and provincial *Salnames* (official yearbooks).

62 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Bağdad*, 20(1324), 88. Cf. *ibid.*, 8(1309), 111.

63 See, for example, *Salname-i Vilayet-i Musul*, 2(1310), and *Salname-i Vilayet-i Basra*, 4(1318).

64 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIA, 843–6.

65 See Merwin Griffiths, “The Reorganization of the Ottoman Army under Abdülhamid II, 1880–1897” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 1966), pp. 78, 140–1; and Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIA, 868–77.

66 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIA, 877–8.

67 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Bağdad*, 4(1300), 218.

68 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Bağdad*, 20(1324), 352; *Salname-i Vilayet-i Bağdad*, 21(1325), 343; see also Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIA, 857.

69 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Basra*, 4(1318), 291; see also Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIA, 857.

70 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Musul*, 2(1310), 295–6.

71 See McCarthy *Arab World*, p. 170, table VIII.11: Baghdad, 22,685,339; Mosul, 13,274,761; and Basra 11,288,806 *kuruş* .

72 Ibid., p. 171, table VIII.12: Baghdad, 5,078,100; Basra, 765,256; Mosul 10,629,161 *kuruş* .

73 For detailed information on the state of education in the Iraqi provinces, see Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, p. 219, table IV.11; cf. McCarthy *Arab World*, pp. 116ff.; Mehmet Alkan, ed., *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Modernleşme Sürecinde Eğitim İstatistikleri, 1839–1924* (Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2000); S.Akş in Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), appendices 11–15.

74 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Bağdad*, 20(1324).

75 See David Pool, “From Elite to Class: The Transformation of Iraqi Political Leadership,” in *The Integration of Modern Iraq*, ed. Abbas Kelidar (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 63–87; Reeva Simon, “The Education of an Iraqi Ottoman Army Officer,” in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, eds Rashid Khalidi, Muhammad Muslih, Lisa Anderson, and Reeva S.Simon

(New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 151–66; Yücel Güçlü, “The Role of the Ottoman-Trained Officers in Independent Iraq,” *Oriente Moderno*, 21(2002), 441–58.

76 See *EI*(2), VI, 73–4; Glen Swanson, “War, Technology, and Society in the Ottoman Empire from the reign of Abdülhamid II to 1913: Mahmud Şevket and the German Military Mission,” in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, eds V.J.Parry and M.E.Yapp (London: OUP, 1975), pp. 367–85; İnal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, pp. 1869–92.

77 See *TA*, XVIII, 296; Eliezer Tauber, “The Role of Lieutenant Muhammad Sharif al-Faruqi—New Light on Anglo-Arab Relations during the First World War,” *Asian and African Studies*, 24(1990), 26; see also *TM*, p. 345, for Sami Paşa al-Faruqi, and *EI*(2), I, 330, for Ahmed Izzet Paşa al-Faruqi.

78 See *A Soldier’s Story: From Ottoman Rule to Independent Iraq, The Memoirs of Jafar Pasha al-Askari* (London: Arabian Publishing, 2003).

79 See *EI*(2), VIII, 140–3; Lord Birdwood, *Nuri As-Said: A Study in Arab Leadership* (London: Cassel, 1959).

80 See Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 182–3, table 7–4; cf. Yılmaz Öztuna, *Devletler ve Hanedanlar: Türkiye (1074–1990)*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990), pp. 734–5.

81 See Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 180–3, table 7–4, and, pp. 319ff.; Pool, “From Elite to Class”; Simon, “Iraqi Ottoman Army Officer.”

82 See Bayram Kodaman, “II. Abdülhamid ve Aşiret Mektebi,” in *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Devri Doğu Anadolu Politikası*, ed. Bayram Kodaman (Ankara: TKAE, 1987), pp. 67–80; “Aşiret Mekteb-i Hümayunu,” *DİA*, IV, 9–11; Eugene L.Rogan, “Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II’s School for Tribes, 1892–1907,” *IJMES*, 28(1996), 83–107; Alişan Akpınar, *Osmanlı Devletinde Aşiret Mektebi* (Istanbul: Göçebe, 1997).

83 Cf. Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 180–1, table 7–4; Hadduç Fazıl Dağistanlı, *Bir Kahramanın Hayatı: Muhammed Fazıl Paşa* (Istanbul: Doğan

Kardeş , 1969), p. 150.

84 For details, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIA, 847–50.

85 For details, see *ibid.*, pp. 861–8.

86 See, for example, Albert Hourani, “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables,” in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, eds W.R.Polk and R.L.Chambers (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 41–68; Philip S.Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: the politics of Damascus, 1860–1920* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983); “The Urban Notables Paradigm Revisited,” *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Mediterranee*, 55/56(1990), 215–28; “Continuity and Change in Syrian Political Life: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” *American Historical Review*, 96(1991), 1374–95.

87 The only exception, to my knowledge, is Hanna Batatu, *Old Social Classes* .

88 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, Appendix H: Religions and Sects of the Persian Gulf, pp. 2368ff; Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 153ff.

89 For Hacı Ali Paşa, see *BD*, V, 9.

90 See Gökhan Çetinsaya, “II Abdülhamid Döneminin İlk Yıllarında ‘İslam Birliği’ Hareketi, 1876–1878” (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Ankara, 1988), p. 44, quoting *Basiret*, no. 1984, 30 Kanun-ı evvel 1292/January 11, 1877, p. 1. The pamphlet was originally published in two languages, Arabic and Urdu. A summary of the pamphlet, which was given in the *Basiret*, is in appendix VIII, *ibid.*, pp. 157–8. Sayyid Abdurrahman’s mission was reported to have been successful, and a sum of 10,000 Rupis was collected in a short period of time. *Ibid.*, p. 44, quoting *Basiret*, no. 1985, 31 Kanun-ı evvel 1292/January 12, 1877, p. 1.

91 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1553.

92 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/14, 10 Safer 1304/November 8, 1886; Sayyid Salman Efendi seems to have stayed at least six months in Istanbul. He returned to



Baghdad in June 1887. See his telegram to the Grand Vizier, Kamil Paşa, stating that he arrived home, and visited the shrine of Abd al-Qadir al-Gaylani on the request and on behalf of the Caliph, in BOA, Y.A.Hus. 204/20, 17 Haziran 1303/June 29, 1887.

93 FO 78/4915, no. 277, Currie to Salisbury, May 5, 1898; FO 195/2020, no. 295/43, Ramsay to Currie, Baghdad, June 22, 1898. For Sayyid Abdurrahman Efendi, see Pierre-Jean Luizard, “Abd al-Rahman al-Gaylani: shaykh de confrerie et chef de gouvernement,” *Journal of the History of Sufism*, 1–2(2000), 123–30.

94 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1553, and I/2, appendix, pp. 2369–72; FO 78/4915, no. 277, Currie to Salisbury, May 5, 1898.

95 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, appendix, pp. 2372–3; FO 195/1935, no. 561/99, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, November 24, 1896, “Memorandum regarding the late Syed Muhammed Saeed, Nakib el Ashraf of Basrah.”

96 For Shaikh Abulhuda (1850–1909), see Butrus Abu-Manneh, “Sultan Abdülhamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda al-Sayyadi,” *MES*, 15(1979), 131–53; Thomas Eich, “The Forgotten Salafi: Abul-Huda As-Sayyadi,” *Die Welt des Islams*, 43(2003), 61–87.

97 FO 195/1935, no. 561/99, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, November 24, 1896.

98 Ibid.

99 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, appendix, pp. 2372–3.

100 See, for example, FO 78/4912, no. 16/2, Loch to Currie, Baghdad, January 8, 1898; FO 78/4913, no. 53/9, Loch to Currie, Baghdad, January 29, 1898; FO 195/2020, no. 491/73, Melvill to O’Conor, Baghdad, October 6, 1898; *ibid.*, no. 600/94, Melvill to O’Conor, Baghdad, November 30, 1898; *ibid.*, no. 750, Wratislaw to Melvill, Basra, December 20, 1898; B.C.Busch, *Britain and the Persian Gulf 1894–1914* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 196, 211 ff.; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, appendix, pp. 2372–3.

101 See Eliezer Tauber, "Sayyid Talib and the Young Turks in Basra," *MES*, 25(1989), pp. 3ff.; cf. CAB 17/178, *Arab Bulletin*, no. 17, pp. 182–6: History of Sayyid Talib and His Family, Cairo, August 30, 1916.

102 FO 195/2116, Wratislaw to O'Connor, Bussorah, no. 43 confidential, August 15, 1902.

103 For details, FO 195/2138, no. 9 confidential, Wratislaw to O'Connor, Bussorah, March 10, 1903; BOA, Y.A.Res. 119/58, 26 Zilkade 1320/February 24, 1903; *ibid.* 120/92, 9 Safer 1321/May 7, 1903.

104 FO 195/2139, Crow to O'Connor, no. 74, Bussorah, November 4, 1903.

105 FO 416/18, no. 137, O'Connor to Lansdowne, no. 457, Therapia, June 13, 1904; FO 195/2164, no. 31, Monahan to O'Connor, Bussorah, June 21, 1904.

106 For Arab İzzet Paşa (1854–1924), see Caesar E. Farah, "Arab Supporters of Sultan Abdülhamid II: İzzet al-Abid," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 15(1997), 189–219; *BD*, V, 8.

107 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, appendix, p. 25; soon after he arrived in Istanbul, in August 1904, Sayyid Talib was alleged to have submitted a remarkably interesting report to the Grand Vizier, on the subject of Arabia and its relations to the rest of the Ottoman Empire and to England. FO 416/20, no. 27, O'Connor to Lansdowne, no. 684 very confidential, Constantinople, August 26, 1904, "Report on Arabia by Naqib Zade Talib Bey, 20th Jemazi-el-evvel 1322, 3rd August 1904." Remarks of O'Connor on the report seems worth quoting:

Talib Bey's views are of some interest, as he is of a family of great local importance and has political ambitions which will make him a likely candidate for the post of Vali of Bussorah at next vacancy. His opinions are doubtless colored by his sense of the most favorable light in which to present them to the Porte and the palace, but I have nevertheless thought it worth while to send direct to the acting consul at Bussorah, for transmission to the residency at Bushire, the gist of Talib Bey's observations on the

situation at Kuwait, to which I have the honor of drawing your Lordship's special attention.

For the report, see Chapter 6.

108 See, for example, *Salname-i Vilayet-i Baḡdad*, 21(1325), 329–32; *Salname-i Vilayet-i Basra*, 4(1318), 288–90; and Abdurrahman Paṣa in BOA, YEE 14/205/126/7, dated 24 Şevval 1297/September 29, 1880.

109 Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, p. 154; for Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi (1857–1924), see *EI*(2), I, 425; *DIA*, II, 548–9; Hala Fattah, "Wahhabi Influences, Salafi Responses: Shaikh Mahmud Shukri and the Iraqi Salafi Movement, 1745–1930," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 14(2003), 127–48; David Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in late Ottoman Syria* (New York: OUP, 1990), pp. 24–6.

110 On the British Embassy protestation, see Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük, 1899–1902* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1985), pp. 336–7, 573–5. It should be noted that all names were spelled incorrectly in the British document quoted by Hanioğlu; cf. Ahmet Turan Alkan, *Sıradışı Bir Jöntürk: Ubeydullah Efendi'nin Amerika Hatıraları* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1989), p. 26 n. 19; For Jamil Sidki al-Zahawi (1863–1936), see *EI*(1), Supplement, pp. 263–5; Sadok Masliyah, "Zahawi: A Muslim Pioneer of Women's Liberation," *MES*, 32/3(1996), 161–71.

111 Arif Hikmet al-Alusi is known in Turkish sources as the father of Ahmed Haşim (1887 Baghdad-1933 Istanbul)—one of the main pillars of the modern Turkish poetry. See *EI*(2), III, 260–1; *DIA*, II, 88–9; Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Gençlik ve Edebiyat Hatıralarım* (Ankara: Bilgi, 1969), pp. 124–5; M.Kaya Bilgegil, *Yakın Çağ Türk Kültür ve Edebiyatı Üzerinde Araştırmalar II* (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1980), pp. 483–93.

112 For Namık Paṣa's relation to the Alusi Family, see Abbas al-Azzawi, *Tarikh al-Iraq Bayn Ihtilalayn*, 8 vols (Baghdad, 1935–56), VIII, 147.

113 For Babanzâde Zihni Paşa (1850 Sulaymaniyah-1929 Istanbul), see *TM*, p. 57. His sons became leading figures in the intellectual and political life of the Young Turk era. Babanzâde Ahmet Naim Bey (1872–1934) was a leading Islamist thinker (*ibid.*, p. 57). Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı Bey (1876–1913) was an important figure in the Committee of Union and Progress, and represented Baghdad in the Parliament until his early death (*ibid.*, pp. 57–8). His third son, Şükrü Baban (1893–1980), was a professor of economics in the Republic (*ibid.*, p. 58).

114 Süleyman Faik Bey is known as the father of Mahmud Şevket Paşa and Hikmat Sulaiman. See Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, p. 14, n. 1; Öztuna, *Devletler*, pp. 734–5; Azzawî, *Tarikh al-Iraq*, VIII, 114, 120.

115 See (d. 1891), *TM*, p. 113; *TA*, XV, 149; Ebul’ula Mardin, *Medeni Hukuk Cephesinden Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, 1822–1895* (Istanbul: Istanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1946), pp. 162–3; Ali Birinci, “Mecelle Cemiyeti Âzâsından Başlı Mehmed Emin Efendi,” in *Tarihin Gölgesinde: Meâhir-i Meçhûleden Birkaç Zât*, ed. Ali Birinci (Istanbul: Dergah, 2001), pp. 13–16.

116 See (d. 1915), *TM*, p. 246; and the memoirs of his daughter, Hadduç Fazıl Dağıstanlı, *Bir Kahramanın Hayatı: Muhammed Fazıl Paşa*.

117 For details, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, Appendix Q: British and Foreign Diplomatic, Political, and Consular Representation in the countries bordering on the Persian Gulf, pp. 2683–90; and Longrigg, *Iraq*, pp. 3–4, 67–8.

118 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, 2694–9; Foreign Office, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 26–7; Longrigg, *Iraq*, pp. 4–5, 66–7.

119 For details, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, Appendix I: Western Christianity and Missions in the Persian Gulf Region, pp. 2386–99; Longrigg, *Iraq*, pp. 3–5, 67.

## 2

### The issue of reform

1 For details, see *Meclis-i Mebusan: 1293=1877 Zabıt Ceridesi*, ed. Hakkı Tarık Us (Istanbul: Vakıf Matbaası, 1940), pp. 176, 190, 344–6, 380–1; on the first Ottoman Parliament and for the representatives of Iraq, see R. Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: A Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1963).

2 FO 198/90, “Memorials by Sir A. Layard to the Sultan regarding the state of the Ottoman Empire, reforms etc. 1878–1879.” A Turkish translation of the report is found in the Yıldız Archive, and partially published by Münir Aktepe in *BTDD*, 22 (Temmuz 1969), as “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun ıslahı hakkında İngiltere Elçisi Layard’ın II. Abdülhamid’e verdiği rapor,” pp. 13–27; for Layard and his travels in Iraq, see Gordon Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh* (London: John Murray, 1963).

3 Ibid.

4 For further elaboration on this point, see Engin D. Akarlı, “Abdülhamid II’s Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System,” in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, ed. David Kushner (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. 74–89; “Abdülhamid II’s Islamic Policy in the Arab Provinces,” in *Türk-Arap İlişkileri: Geçmişte, Bugün ve Gelecekte* (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1979), pp. 44–60.

5 For details, see Stanford J. Shaw, “A Promise of Reform: Two Complementary Documents,” *IJMES*, 4(1973), 359–68.

6 BOA, YEE 14/205/126/7, 24 Şevval 1297/September 29, 1880.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 For these natural disasters, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1496; Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, p. 15; Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, pp. 99–101, 105.

10 Ibid. For example, an iron-dam should be built on Hindiya which would cost 30,000 to 40,000 *lira*. Such a scheme would pay for itself in two years,

by the crops which were saved from danger. It would also benefit the state of agriculture in the neighboring area.

11 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1496; Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, p. 15; Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, pp. 99–101, 105. He complained that most of the people were spending all the time in coffee houses. He even proposed to levy a special tax to discourage these people.

12 Ibid.

13 BOA, YEE 14/413/126/9, 1 Ağustos 1296/August 13, 1880. According to the information given in preface of the document, Mazhar Paşa spent 40 years in the region in several administrative posts, being *Mutasarrıf* for the last 15 years. He was previously the *Mutasarrıf* of Karbala.

14 Ibid.

15 BOA, YEE 14/88/10/88/12, 8 Şevval 1297/September 13, 1880.

16 Ibid.

17 BOA, YEE 14/88/8/88/12, dated 25 Receb 1296/July 15, 1879, “Padişah emri mucibince Namık Paşa tarafından hıttı-i Irakiye’ye dair bazı malumatı hâvi kaleme aldırılan varakadır,” in Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, pp. 259–60.

18 BOA, Irade-Meclis-i Mahsus, no. 3325, 17 Muharrem 1300/November 28, 1882, published by Celal Dinçer, “Osmanlı Vezirlerinden Hasan Fehmi Paşa’nın Anadolu’nun Bayındırlık İşlerine Dair Hazırladığı Lâyiha,” *Belgeler: Türk Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi*, V–VIII, nos 9–12(1968–71), 153–233. The report was titled “Anadoluca İmalat-ı Umumiyeğe dair Lâyiha,” and dated 26 Cemaziyelâhir 1297/June 5, 1880; for Hasan Fehmi Paşa (d. 1910), see *EI*(2), III, 249–50.

19 Ibid., pp. 179, 182.

20 Ibid., pp. 189–90.

21 For details, *ibid.*, pp. 224ff.

22 BOA, Y.A.Res. 12/48, enclosure 20, dated Nisan 1295 (April-May 1879); cf. Jwaideh, "Midhat Pasha and the Land System of Lower Iraq," pp. 105–36. My account differs from that of Professor Jwaideh on certain points; see also Keiko Kiyotaki, "Ottoman Land Policies in the Province of Baghdad, 1831–1881" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1997).

23 BOA, Y.A.Res. 12/48, enclosure 4, "Hıttı-i Irakiye Arazi Komisyonunun Vezaifini Mübeyyin Talimatdır," dated 27 Cemaziyelâhir 1298/May 27, 1881, signed *Umur-u Nafia Komisyonu*. It proclaimed that no state (*miri*) land could be granted without a specific authorization from Istanbul.

24 BOA, Y.A.Res. 12/48, 28 Ramazan 1298/August 28, 1881. Among these proposals: first, a new president should be appointed to the commission. Second, one of the members, Arif Efendi, was to be sacked for his corruption. Third, two military—officers of the general staff should be sent to Baghdad for inspection and observation.

25 See the first paragraph of the document in *Düstur, birinci tertib*, VI, 1260–1; BOA, Y.A.Res. 19/37, 17 Cemaziyelevvel 1300/March 26, 1883. This was forwarded by the Grand Vizier to other departments. See the first paragraph in *ibid.*, enclosure 4, by *Vergi Emaneti*, no. 48, 14 Safer 1300/December 25, 1882; in the meantime, Said Paşa at least twice raised the issue, saying that in practice the application came to a halt, and as a consequence, the provinces were suffering financially. BOA, Y.A.Hus. 168/94, 25 Zilkâde 1298/October 19, 1881; Y.A.Res. 14/33, 8 Safer 1299/Decembers, 1881.

26 BOA, Y.A.Res. 40/35, 20 Rebiülevvel 1305/December 6, 1887.

27 BOA, Y.A.Res. 49/31, 28 Safer 1307/October 24, 1889; in January 1890, Kamil Paşa once more raised the issue to the Sultan on the request of local financial authorities. *Ibid.* 50/25, 20 Cemaziyelâhir 1307/February 11, 1890.

28 BOA, Y.A.Res. 37/16, 20 Cemaziyelâhir 1304/March 16, 1887; *ibid.* 47/17, 12 Şaban 1306/April 13, 1889.



29 On the Privy Purse (or Civil List), and its development under Abdülhamid in general, see Arzu T.Terzi, “Hazine-i Hassa,” *DİA*, XVII, 137–41; *Hazine-i Hassa Nezareti* (Ankara: TTK, 2000); Vasfi Şensözen, *Osmanoğulları’nın Varlıkları ve II. Abdülhamid’in Emlâkı* (Ankara: TTK, 1982); for the application in Iraq, see Albertine Jwaideh, “The Saniya Lands of Sultan Abdülhamid II in Iraq,” in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of H.A.R.Gibb*, ed. G.Makdisi (Leiden: Brill, 1965), pp. 326–36; see also Murat Bardakçı, *Son Osmanlılar: Osmanlı Hanedanının Sürgün ve Miras Öyküsü* (Istanbul: Gri Yayın, 1991), pp. 170–86.

30 BOA, Y.A.Res. 40/34, 15 Rebiülevvel 1305/December 1, 1887, and ibid. 41/41, 27 Cemaziyelâhir 1305/March 11, 1888.

31 See Griffith, “The Reorganization of the Ottoman Army,” pp. 118ff., 128, 140–1, 154.

32 All documents related to this subject are found in BOA, Y.A.Res. 55/9. For the Vali’s report, 55/9(15), 13 Şaban 1308/March 24, 1891; for the Military Inspection Commission’s report, 55/9(3), 27 Ramazan 1308/May 6, 1891; the Sultan’s decree is in 55/9(6), 28 Ramazan 1308/May 7, 1891; for the Council of Ministers’ report, 55/9(2), 22 Şevval 1308/May 31, 1891; after having had the committee’s report, Abdülhamid ordered that some items of the report regarding administrative and political affairs be executed. Having had this order, dated 14 Kanun-ı sâni 1306/January 26, 1891, the Minister of the Interior sent a copy of the report to Sırrı Paşa, the Vali of Baghdad, and asked his opinion. Afterwards, together with the report compiled by Sırrı Paşa, dated 11 Mart 1307/March 23, 1891, the committee’s report was discussed first in the Military Inspection Commission, and then in the Council of Ministers.

33 Ibid. Here, only the items regarding reform issues in Iraq will be discussed, other items, such as the Shi’i problem, will be mentioned in the related chapters.

34 Ibid. For instance, the Vali stated, when such a registration began in the *sancak* of Dayr al-Zor, 5,000 households migrated to the *kaza* of Ann in the vicinity of Baghdad, and they further threatened the authorities to go to Najd, to join Ibn Rashid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid. The Vali admitted that some of the local officials were inclined to corruption and abuse, but he was also hopeful since this was the least of the *vilayet's* concerns. See also 55/9(5) and 55/9(17).

37 Ibid.

38 For Nusret Paşa, see Chapter 3.

39 BOA, YEE 14/2256/126/11, no date.

40 Ibid.

41 BOA, YEE 14/211/126/7, 26 Nisan 1309/May 8, 1893.

42 Ibid.

43 Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa (d. August 1892), military officer and educator. Commander at Şipka Pass (1876), director of the War Academy, involved in deposition of Abdülaziz (1876), and banished to Baghdad (1878). His best biography is in Robert Devereux, "Süleyman Paşa's 'The Feeling of the Revolution'," *MES*, 15(1979), 5–10.

44 BOA, YEE 14/1188/126/9, 9 Ramazan 1309/April 7, 1892.

45 Ibid.

46 BOA, YEE 31/252/76/81, 19 Muharrem 1310/August 13, 1892.

47 Ibid.

48 BOA, YEE 31/252/76/81, 14 Eylül sene [18]92; for Müşir Şakir Paşa, see Ali Karaca, *Anadolu Islahatı ve Ahmed Şakir Paşa, 1838–1899* (Istanbul: Eren, 1993). Cf. FO 195/1794, no. 13, 21/4/1893, military biographies by Chermiside, no. 15: "Mushir Shakir Pasha, ex-ambassador to Russia (...) He served under Midhat Pasha at Baghdad."; Tahsin Paşa, *Sultan Abdülhamid: Tahsin Paşa'nın Yıldız Hatıraları*, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Boğaziçi, 1990), p. 21.

49 Ibid.

50 Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasî Hatıratım* (Istanbul: Dergah, 1974), p. 94.

51 BOA, Y.A.Res. 112/54, 18 Safer 1319/June 6, 1901.

52 Ibid. 112/54(26), 27 Nisan 1317/May 10, 1901.

53 Ibid. 112/54(25), 28 Nisan 1317/May 11, 1901.

54 For the story of Baghdad Railway in general, see J.B.Wolf, *The Diplomatic History of the Baghdad Railroad* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), and Edward M.Earle, *Turkey, the Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway: a Study in Imperialism* (New York: Macmillan, 1923).

55 For a general overview, see İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Alman Nüfuzu* (Istanbul: Hil, 1983), pp. 89ff.

56 See Ortaylı, *Alman Nüfuzu*, p. 102; Murat Özyüksel, *Osmanlı-Alman İlişkilerinin Gelişimi Sürecinde Anadolu ve Bağdat Demiryolları* (Istanbul: Arba, 1988), pp. 101ff.; Wolf, *Baghdad Railroad*, pp. 12ff.

57 See Özyüksel, *Bagdat Demiryolları*, pp. 120–1, 123ff., 130ff.; Wolf, *Baghdad Railroad*, pp. 32ff.; it might be interesting to note that in August 1899, Abdülhamid came up with another project for the Germans: a railway in the Yemen, another outlying province of the Empire. But nothing came out from this project (Özyüksel, *Bagdat Demiryolları*, p. 136).

58 See Özyüksel, *Bagdat Demiryolları*, pp. 133–4, 154; Griffith, “The Reorganization of the Ottoman Army,” pp. 81–2; Earle, *Baghdad Railway*, p. 21.

59 Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasî Hatıratım*, p. 94.

60 See Earle, *Baghdad Railway*, pp. 59ff.

61 See Özyüksel, *Bagdat Demiryolları*, pp. 152, 172; the same enthusiasm seems to have also been shared by the high officials of Baghdad. See the examples in Ortaylı, *Alman Nüfuzu*, pp. 113–14, 145.

62 See Earle, *Baghdad Railway*, pp. 67ff.; Wolf, *Baghdad Railroad*, pp. 32ff.; Özyüksel, *Bağdat Demiryolları*, pp. 134–5, 146–9, 152ff.; for the text of 1903 agreement, see, J.G.Hurewitz, ed., *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record, Vol. 1: European Expansion, 1535–1914* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 495–506; see also *Düstur I*, VII, 361: “Bağdat Demiryolu Mukavelenâme-i İbtidaisi, 21 Receb 1317 [November 25, 1899],” and, p. 953: “Bağdat Demiryolu İmtiyaz Mukavelenâmesi, 20 Şubat 1318 [March 5, 1902]”; for a discussion on the 1903 convention, see Earle, *Baghdad Railway*, pp. 82ff.; for the rest of the events up to 1908, see *ibid.*, and Wolf, *Baghdad Railroad*, pp. 40ff, 48ff. After 1904, only a few hundred kilometers of line were constructed; the line was stopped in Bulgurlu.

63 See Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasî Hatıratım*, p. 94, and his conversation with the Kaiser in Özyüksel, *Bağdat Demiryolları*, p. 121.

64 FO 424/208, no. 56, O’Conor to Lansdowne, no. 406 confidential, Therapia, June 12, 1905; FO 424/210, no. 4, O’Conor to Lansdowne, no. 36, Constantinople, January 23, 1906; FO 195/2164, no. 1035/81, December 26, 1904; Sir William Willcocks, *Sixty Years in the East* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1935), pp. 232ff.; for Sir William Willcocks, see Earle, *Baghdad Railway*, p. 214 n. 41, and p. 205; the matter first mentioned in the British sources during the Baghdad Railway debate in early 1903. FO 424/205, no. 40, Lascelles to Lansdowne, no. 110, Berlin, May 8, 1903.

65 Details of the conversation between Abdülhamid and O’Conor on the subject is in FO 424/208, no. 56, June 12, 1905:

which I described as one of reclaiming the waste or marshy tracts of Lower Mesopotamia by means of a main canal from Faluga to Baghdad, and a canal parallel to the Euphrates joined up by a series of subsidiary canals, by which a territory of some 640,000 acres would be restored to cultivation, and thus provide for an enormous additional population, while adding proportionately to the wealth and prosperity of the country.

The proposal given to the Sultan is in *ibid.*, inclosure in no. 56, “Brief précis of Sir W.M.Willcocks’ report on the irrigation of Mesopotamia.” (The country was divided into 15 sections of a total area of 5,610,000

hectares.) Upon the request of the Sultan, a brief summary of these proposals in Turkish was presented to the Palace, see *ibid.*, enclosure 2 in no. 56, memorandum laid before the Sultan on Friday, June 9, and subsequently translated into Turkish and forwarded to the Palace:

Baghdad-Selucia section. (...) The present population is 25,000 souls. If land is to be cultivated, 160,000 would be required. There is little doubt that the hill Kurds of Soliemanie and the Mosul districts would flock to the region in sufficient numbers. Forming a magnificent population of loyal subjects of the Sultan, industrious and capable, devoted to the Kaliphate, and a strong bulwark against the disloyal and turbulent influence of the Arabs. There need be no fear of European predominance in the district, for India, after the building of the Chenab Canal, the Government settled 800,000 Sikhs on its banks—once desert, now flourishing country.

For Willcocks' proceedings afterwards, FO 424/208, no. 73, O'Connor to Lansdowne, no. 543, Therapia, August 7, 1905.

66 FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 4, Memorandum on Sir W. Willcocks' Projects in Southern Mesopotamia, by Mark Sykes.

67 See, for example, his remark on a British-backed railway proposal in 1903 (İ skenderun-Aleppo-Baghdad), in Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasî Hatıratım*, p. 161; ironically, Willcocks concluded one of his pamphlets on the issue as follows:

It may surely be permitted us to contemplate the dawn of a new area of peace and prosperity in this afflicted land. Thousands and tens of thousands of industrious laborers from British India, and possibly from Egypt, will soon be flocking to the Delta of the Tigris.

*(The Restoration of the Ancient Irrigation Works on the Tigris or the Re-Creation of Chaldea: Being a Lecture Delivered at a Meeting of the Khedivial Geographical Society, Cairo, 25th March, 1903 (Cairo: National Printing Department, 1903), p. 31)*

68 The government borrowed 100,000 *lira* from the Ottoman Bank for this initiative. See the memorandum by the Grand Vizier, Rifat Paşa, dated 13

Ramazan 1324/October 31, 1906, enclosed with BOA, Irade-Dahiliye, no. 12, 11 Ş evval 1324/November 28, 1906; in January 1906, Willcocks once again resumed his activities and was willing to obtain a concession from the Privy Purse. FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 4, Memorandum on Sir W. Willcocks' Projects in Southern Mesopotamia, by Mark Sykes.

69 FO 195/2242, Political Diary of the Baghdad Residency for the week ending February 25, 1907. In February, M. Cugnin was in the area to make soundings, in accordance with orders received from Istanbul: "I saw M. Cugnin two days ago and he has kindly sent me his scheme to read."; FO 195/2242, Political Diary of the Baghdad Residency for the week ending March 19, 1907.

70 FO 424/213, no. 165, O'Connor to Grey, no. 746 confidential, Pera, December 5, 1907. British officials wanted to employ M. Cugnin in another project for the construction of a ship canal between the Euphrates and the Tigris near Faluja, if a British firm could obtain the concession; when M. Cugnin was dismissed, he was supervising the works in Kananiya Canal on the Euphrates. FO 424/214, inclosure 1 in no. 28, Ramsay to O'Connor, no. 133 strictly confidential, Baghdad, December 3, 1907. Also includes a "Note by M. Cugnin on the Suklawiya Canal" in French; the official reason was that there might be delay in carrying out the project. FO 424/214, inclosure in no. 31, extract from confidential memorandum no. 12 by Consul General Newmarch; meanwhile, Willcocks did not give up his struggle to obtain the concession. In the same month, it was reported by the British Consul General in Baghdad that Willcocks had once again resumed his projects and was planning to visit the region at the following spring. FO 424/213, inclosure in no. 174, Memorandum by Consul General Ramsay, no. 11 confidential, dated November 25, 1907.

71 See the article "Irrigation," by Suleiman Sirri, in *Modern Turkey*, ed. E. G. Mears (New York: Macmillan, 1924), pp. 265–79. Süleyman Sırrı Bey himself was in charge of the project; after the Young Turk Revolution, however, the project was conceded to Willcocks. For Süleyman Sırrı Bey (1874–1925), see *Türk Parlamento Tarihi, TBMM II. Dönem, 1923–1927* (Ankara: TBMM, 1995), III, 417–18; for the rest of the story, FO 424/214,

no. 100, Barclay to Grey, no. 141, Pera, March 25, 1908; FO 424/216, no. 138, Lowther to Grey, no. 583, Therapia, September 17, 1908.

72 See Marian Kent, *Oil and Empire: British Policy and Mesopotamian Oil, 1900–1920* (London: Macmillan, 1976), and Stephen H. Longrigg, *Oil in the Middle East: its Discovery and Development*, 3rd ed. (London: OUP, 1968); Arzu T. Terzi, “Bağ dat ve Musul Petrolleri Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme,” in *Irak Dosyası*, eds Ali Ahmetbeyoğlu, Hayrullah Cengiz, and Yahya Bağkan (Istanbul: TATAV, 2003), pp. 347–60; see also Uriel Dann, “Report on the Petroliferous Districts of Mesopotamia (1905)—An Annotated Document,” *Asian and African Studies*, 24(1990), 283–92; Captain F.R. Maunsell, “The Mesopotamian Petroleum Field,” *The Geographical Journal*, 9(1897), 528–32.

73 See Ralph Hewins, *Mr Five Per Cent: The Biography of Calouste Gulbenkian* (London: Hutchison, 1957), pp. x, xvi, 29.

74 See Kent, *Oil and Empire*, p. 16; cf. Hurewitz, *Middle East and North Africa*, p. 501: article 22.

75 For the articles of the contract, see Kent, *Oil and Empire*, pp. 16–17; for the developments after 1904, *ibid.*, pp. 18–20, and appendix. After the Young Turk Revolution, all properties of the Privy Purse, together with the petroleum fields, were transferred to the Ministry of Finance, to which all claims had to be re-submitted.

76 For details, see *ibid.*, and Longrigg, *Oil in the Middle East*.

77 Özyüksel, *Bağ dat Demiryolları*, pp. 109–11.

78 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1540. For many years the Ottoman commercial steamers in Iraq had been run by the Oman-Ottoman Administration, which was a branch of the Ottoman Ministry of the Navy. The property of the Administration was transferred to the Privy Purse, in consideration of a payment of 9,500 *lira*; cf. BOA, Y.A.Res. 147/106(5), 7 Mayıs 1323/May 20, 1907; for the Privy Purse in Iraq, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIA, 861–8.



79 BOA, Y.A.Res. 126/26, enclosure 2, “Şura-yı Devlet Tanzimat Dairesi tezkeresi, no. 425,” dated 2 Safer 1322/April 18, 1904. For the commission, they proposed Yanko Efendi and Nazif Beyefendi, members of the Council of State, and Zuheyrzâde Ahmed Paşa, a member of the Council of State and a notable of Basra, and Hüsnü Efendi, *Mahkeme-i Teftiş-i Evkaf Müsteşarı*, and Aram Efendi, *Ziraat Heyet-i Fenniyesi Reisi*, and Şevket Paşa, a former Chief Secretary of the Baghdad *vilayet*.

80 BOA, Y.A.Res. 126/26, enclosure 1, *Sadrazam Ferid*, 17 Rebiülevvel 1322/June 1, 1904.

81 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 64, 25 Rebiülevvel 1323/May 30, 1905. The three members of the first commission were Major-General Veli Paşa, the Sultan’s aide-de-camp, Fehmi Bey, deputy chairman of the department of internal press, and Colonel Mustafa Bey of the General Staff.

82 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 65, 23 Şaban 1323/October 23, 1905. It was reported, for example, toward the end of July 1906 by the British Consul General at Baghdad that some of the results of the labors of the special commission under the Vali were now becoming known. FO 195/2214, Diary to Government of India for the week ending July 30, 1906. Cf. diary dated May 7, 1906.

83 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 105, 29 Muharrem 1324/March 25, 1906, and *ibid.*, no. 51, 10 Safer 1324/April 5, 1906. The members were: Major-General Veli Paşa, the Sultan’s aide-de-camp and a member of the Military Inspection Commission; Colonel Mehmed Tevfik Bey of the General Staff of the Ministry of War; and Adjutant Major (*Kolaşası*) Süleyman Fethi Bey of the same department.

84 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 81, 27 Rebiyülâhir 1324/June 20, 1906; Irade-Hususi, no. 18, 4 Cemaziyelevvel 1324/June 26, 1906.

85 For example, Fahri Paşa, the Chief of Staff of 6th Army, was transferred to Diyarbakır. FO 195/2214, Diary to Government of India for the week ending July 30, 1906. Fahri Paşa was described by the Consul General as he “had the reputation of being an unusually clever and well educated Turk.” On arrival in Diyarbakır he was said to have been imprisoned in a

fort; FO 195/2214, no. 564/53, Ramsay to O'Connor, Baghdad, June 25, 1906, gives full list of the names of those who were put on the pension list and officers who were appointed to the latter's posts: "The men who have been put on the pension list have received orders to remain in the Baghdad Vilayet." Kazım Paşa, a subordinate commander in 6th Army and the brother-in-law of the Sultan, was put under house arrest. FO 195/2214, no. 564/53, Ramsay to O'Connor, Baghdad, June 25, 1906. Cf. Dağistanlı, *Muhammed Fazıl Paşa*, pp. 67–8.

86 FO 195/2214, Diary to Government of India for the week ending July 30, 1906.

87 Ibid. For Pertev [Demirhan] Paşa, see TM, pp. 308–9. Before coming to Baghdad, he was Military Attaché with the Japanese Army during the Russo-Japanese War. Cf. FO 195/2176, from Military Attaché, Colonel Maunsell, to O'Connor, no. 49, Therapia, August 8, 1904.

88 FO 424/210, inclosure 2 in no. 71, Memorandum respecting Affairs in the Yemen and Nejd, by Colonel Surtees [Military Attaché], Constantinople, August 9, 1906.

89 FO 195/2215, Political Diary of the Baghdad Residency for the week ending December 10, 1906: "Mausers and ammunition are being sent to the troops at Katif, Muntafik and Suk-us-Shayukh." It was also reported that Pertev Paşa was dealing with the tribes in and around Basra.

90 FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 126, Political Diary of the Baghdad Residency for the week ending October 29, 1906. Also, FO 195/2215, paras 133 and 138. According to British consular accounts,

The excitement at Mosul lasted from about the 10th to the 15th October. It was caused by an attempt to register the female population. The people objected to this and shut their shops, and made a demonstration against the proposed registration. The authorities made some arrests, and an attempt was made to rescue from the gaol the men arrested. On Friday, the 12th October, one of the men who had been arrested was found dead, and it is said by some people that his throat was cut; the relations of the deceased paraded the body through the streets and the excitement grew. The mob

seemed to be annoyed with the Christians, apparently because they were sitting quietly in their houses, but I have not heard that any steps were taken against the Christians. On Sunday, the people were on the point of attacking the Serai, but were dissuaded from doing so. On Monday, the 15th, the Ulemas persuaded the Vali to withdraw his orders for the registration of women, to release the men who had been taken prisoners. The shops were then opened and peace was restored.

91 See Dağ İstanbullu, *Muhammed Fazıl Paşa*, p. 217.

92 BOA, Irade-Dahiliye, no. 12, 11 Şevval 1324/November 28, 1906, enclosing the *tezkere* of *Serasker Rıza Paşa*. After having received the last instruction of the Sultan to the effect that 6th Army should bring to an active state, the *Serasker* had asked the Commander of 6th Army to give his opinion as to the measures to be taken.

93 Ibid., enclosing the *tezkere* of the Commander of 6th Army, dated 30 Temmuz 1322/August 12, 1906.

94 Ibid., enclosing the *tezkere* of the Ministry of the Interior, dated 22 Şaban 1324/October 11, 1906. Among the previous commissions, he mentioned the Veli Paşa commission as the last one. He also mentioned a mission by Mösyö Galan, which is unknown to us, 15 years before—that is circa 1891. According to Memduh Paşa, Mösyö Galan's report also showed that Iraq has a potential of wealth and prosperity (*kabiliyet-i umran*) .

95 Ibid., enclosing the *tezkere* of *Sadrâzam Ferid Paşa*, dated 13 Ramazan 1324/October 31, 1906.

96 Ibid., the minute on the Grand Vizier's *tezkere*, dated 11 Şevval 1324/November 28, 1906.

97 All relevant documents are found in BOA, Y.A.Res. 147/106, 26 Cemaziyelevvel 1325/July 7, 1907.

98 Ibid. 147/106(5), 7 Rebiyülâhir 1325/May 20, 1907.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid. However, an inquiry into the matter by the commission itself revealed that nothing significant was accomplished in the previous year, as the material required by the European engineer in charge could not be provided locally.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

105 BOA, Y.A.Res. 147/106(2), 26 Cemaziyelevvel 1325/July 7, 1907.

106 Ibid. For Mustafa Nâzım Paşa (1862–1909), see Mücellidoğlu Ali Çankaya, *Yeni Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler*, 8 vols (Ankara: Mars Matbaası, 1969–71), II, 1054–6; TM, p. 277.

107 FO 424/213, no. 110, O’Conor to Grey, no. 617, *Therapia*, September 25, 1907:

The Irade of the Sultan was issued towards the end of September 1907. As it appears, the commission was to inquire into the general condition of the vilayets of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, and to report on the measures which it may be possible to adopt for the pacification and settlement of the nomadic and other tribes, the improvement of their condition, and the development, by means of irrigation or otherwise, of the agricultural and other natural resources of the country.

FO 424/213, inclosure in no. 174, Memorandum by Consul General Ramsay, no. 11 confidential, dated November 25, 1907:

Speculation is rife as to the reasons which caused the appointment of the commission. Some say that the object is to silence the complaints of the European powers regarding the insecurity that is common to all parts of this country; others think that Germany has prompted measures which may render the provision of kilometric guarantees more easy.

108 For full details, BOA, Y.A.Res. 147/106(6), 7 Rebiyülâhir 1325/May 20, 1907.

109 FO 424/213, inclosure in no. 174, Memorandum by Consul General Ramsay, no. 11 confidential, dated November 25, 1907. Ramsay added that

The Commission has been reinforced by the addition of a number of local members, and these seem to be fairly well chosen. Most people seem convinced that the Commission has no authority to sell Government lands to foreigners. To ascertain the views of the Commission on this subject a British merchant here is going to ask whether he can buy any of the State land.

110 See, for example, BOA, Y.A.Res. 156/83, dated 23 Rebiyülâhir 1326/May 25, 1908. See also Chapter 3, for details.

### 3

#### **The Sultan's officials**

1 The following account is based on Findley *Bureaucratic Reform, Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 21 1ff., 243ff.; and Akarli, "The Problems of External Pressures," pp. 77ff.

2 *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han: Devlet ve Memleket Görüşlerim*, eds A.Alâaddin Çetin and Ramazan Yıldız (Istanbul: Çiğir, 1976), p. 160. See also, pp. 19–20, 35–36, 212, 260, for similar remarks.

3 However, it should also be stated that Iraq, along with Syria and Tripolitania, was at times used as an unofficial place of exile for men of importance. Among them, mention may be made of Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa, Nusret Paşa, Muhammad Fazıl Paşa Daghistani, and Kazım Paşa.

4 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 87, 6 Rebiyülâhir 1317/August 14, 1899.

5 FO 195/1370, no. 11, Plowden to St. John, Baghdad, January 29, 1881. The Vali's Assistant (*Vali Muavini*) in this period was another member of

the Kawakibi family, Ataullah Efendi, a future Vali of Baghdad. Takiyuddin Paşa had succeeded Mehmed Namık Paşa as Vali of Baghdad in 1867.

6 In 1883, for example, conflicts between Takiyuddin Paşa and the Müşir of 6th Army led to the latter's removal (BOA, Y.A.Res. 19/54, 29 Cemaziyelevvel 1300/April 7, 1883), but complaints about the Vali's inefficiency continued. The following year, several complaints reached the Porte about the indifference of the Vali of Baghdad in the face of severe floods in the province. The Porte wanted to carry out an investigation into the matter. Y.A.Hus. 178/12, 8 Receb 1301/May 4, 1884.

7 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/1, 4 Muharrem 1304/October 2, 1886. The Grand Vizier proposed İsmail Hakkı Paşa as new Vali.

8 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/55, 25 Rebiülevvel 1304/December 22, 1886; the British Consul General, Tweedie, wrote in August 1886 (about the Milne murder case) that "The vali, as a member of a wealthy family of Aleppo possesses as marked an influence there as that conferred on him by his official capacity here." FO 195/1546, no. 414/42, Tweedie to Thornton, Baghdad, August 23, 1886; later, in June 1889, recalling the Milne murder case, Tweedie described Takiyuddin Paşa as follows: "Not alone did his sentiments of fanaticism generally make him deprecate the idea of a Muslim suffering serious harm merely for the murder of one like Milne." FO 195/1647, no. 276/25, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, June 8, 1889.

9 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 200/78, 17 Cemaziyelâhir 1304/March 13, 1887; Hidayet Paşa was sent by the Porte to make an investigation, but he found no ground for the Müşir's allegations against the Vali. BOA, Y.A.Hus. 224/1, 1 Şaban 1306/April 2, 1889; cf. FO 195/1647, no. 86/6, Talbot to White, Baghdad, February 21, 1889, on the disturbances by the Shammar Arabs: "Though the vali sent out some zaptiehs (...) not enough to be of any real use, and that the military authorities had refused to cooperate without distinct orders from Constantinople." BOA, Y.A.Res. 48/26, 16 Zilkade 1306/July 14, 1889; for Mustafa Asım Paşa, see Max Gross, "Ottoman Rule in the Province of Damascus, 1860–1909" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Georgetown University, 1979), p. 404 fn. 99.

10 FO 195/1647, no. 691/82, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, December 8, 1889: “Mustafa Asim Pasha has been transferred to the vilayet of Adana. He had already made over the government to Ahmed Tevfik Pasha, Mushir of the 6th Army”; for “Giritli” Sırrı Paşa (1844–95), see İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Son Asır Türk Şairleri*, 4 vols (Istanbul: MEB, 1969), pp. 1700–4; *TM*, p. 356; Öztuna, *Devletler*, p. 676; for a list of his books, see Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, eds A.F.Yavuz and I.Özen, 3 vols (Istanbul: Meral, n.d.), II, 368; his wife, Leyla [Saz] Hanım, was a celebrated poetess and composer of the time. See *EI*(2), IV, 710–11.

11 For Nusret Paşa (d. 1896), see, *SO*, IV, 554 (cf. 870–1); *TA*, XXV; 353–4; FO 195/1794, no. 21, May 22, 1893, by Chermeside, the Military Attaché; Dağistanlı, *Muhammed Fazıl Paşa*, p. 38.

12 See Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1992), pp. 304–6.

13 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 242/9, 5 Cemaziyelevvel 1308/December 17, 1890.

14 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 243/72, 20 Cemaziyelâhir 1308/January 31, 1891.

15 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 247/42, 11 Şevval 1308/May 20, 1891.

16 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 244/54, 17 Receb 1308/February 26, 1891.

17 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 248/44, 16 Zilkade 1308/June 23, 1891.

18 Ibid.; Y.A.Hus. 248/74, 24 Zilkade 1308/July 1, 1891.

19 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 249/56, 14 Zilhicce 1308/July 21, 1891.

20 For him, see Gross, “Ottoman Rule in the Province of Damascus,” p. 450 fn. 84; Azzawî, *Tarikh al-Iraq*, VIII, 115.

21 For “Arnavut” Receb Paşa (1842–1908), see *TM*, p. 318; *Revue Du Monde Musulman*, 6(1908), 154–7; see also Dağistanlı, *Mehmed Fazıl Paşa*, p. 38; Ahmet Cevat Emre, *İki Neslin Tarihi* (Istanbul: Hilmi Kitabevi, 1960), pp. 65, 67.



22 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 252/45, 10 Rebiülevvel 1309/October 14, 1891.

23 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 253/33, 7 Rebiyülâhir 1309/November 10, 1891.

24 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 254/77, 26 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 28, 1891. Moreover, a few days later, he alleged that a secret alliance had been made between the British and Iranians, concerning an Iranian attack on the border. Y.A.Hus. 254/92, 29 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 31, 1891.

25 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 261/50, 7 Zilkade 1309/June 3, 1892; meanwhile, new conflicts in the *vilayet* administration appeared on the scene, this time between the new Vali of Baghdad, Hasan Refik Paşa, and the Commander of Gendarmerie. Upon the request of the Porte, each sent their own version of the matter. After examining these reports, the Council of Ministers decided that the Commander should be transferred to another province, and the Vali be given an admonition. Y.A.Hus. 258/98.

26 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 66(1), 7 Muharrem 1310/August 1, 1892. See the Vali's telegram in enclosure 2. The Sultan added that Nusret was said to have acquired a vast amount of land.

27 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 263/29, 8 Muharrem 1310/August 2, 1892. Interestingly, each side accused the other of provoking the Shi'i problem.

28 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 70, 9 Muharrem 1310/August 3, 1892; Muzaffer Bey was given a 100 *lira* allowance. Y.A.Res. 60/5(1), 13 Muharrem 1310/August 7, 1892.

29 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 199, 17 Muharrem 1310/August 11, 1892, enclosing Cevad Paşa's letter dated 4 Muharrem 1310/July 28, 1892. Later, Abdülhamid replied to the effect that Muzaffer Bey was also charged with looking into this last point concerning the men employed by Nusret Paşa. Ibid.

30 Later, in September 1892, Nusret Paşa sent another telegram to the Palace, arguing that due to the harmful results of the influence of the Naqib family, especially with regard to their land case, a special commission should be sent to the region, for the sake of the future of Iraq. Upon this,

Abdülhamid reiterated that, as Inspector of 6th Army, Nusret Paşa had nothing to do with the civil affairs of the *vilayet*. He should keep quiet, and not cause any trouble, or interfere into the affairs of local government. BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 23, 6 Rebiülevvel 1310/September 28, 1892.

31 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 7, Gurre-i Safer 1310/August 25, 1892.

32 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 22(1), 3 Safer 1310/August 27, 1892; *ibid.*, no. 51, 8 Safer 1310/September 1, 1892.

33 Abdülhamid forwarded this telegram to the Porte without making any comment on it. BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 85, 15 Safer 1310/September 8, 1892. For Nusret Paşa's statement, see enclosure 2.

34 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 264/189, 26 Safer 1310/September 19, 1892, and the minute by Süreyya Paşa, dated selh-i Safer 1310.

35 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 265/74, 12 Rebiülevvel 1310/October 4, 1892.

36 See the minute in BOA, Y.A.Hus. 265/74, dated 13 Rebiülevvel 1310/October 5, 1892; cf. Tahsin Paşa, *Yıldız Hatıraları*, p. 32, and, *Ali Ekrem Bolayır'ın Hatıraları*, ed. Metin Kayahan Özgül (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1991), p. 192, for the independence of justice system under Abdülhamid; in the course of its investigations, the Porte sometimes revised its decisions. In January 1893, for example, Cevad Paşa, upon the request of the Inspector of Justice of Baghdad, proposed to the Sultan that it would be better to include the *Naib* and the *Defterdar* in the investigation committee, for they had intimate knowledge of the case. This was accepted by Abdülhamid. BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 8, 3 Receb 1310/January 21, 1893.

37 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 273/168(1), 29 Şevval 1310/May 16, 1893. While Hüsnü Bey stayed in Baghdad, Muzaffer Bey returned to Istanbul. Y.A.Hus. 274/30(1), 4 Zilkade 1310/May 20, 1893.

38 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 276/17, 6 Zilhicce 1310/June 21, 1893. Together with his report, Nusret Paşa also sent a special map, which was said to have been used by the British Indian Army, as proof of the plans of the British

government in the region. For Ömer Vehbi Paşa's mission in Mosul, see Chapter 4.

39 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 162(1), 26 Safer 1311/September 8, 1893; cf. Selim Deringil, "The Struggle Against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq: A Study in Ottoman Counter-Propaganda," *Die Welt des Islams*, 30(1990), 58.

40 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 281/83(1), 27 Rebiülevvel 1311/October 8, 1893. See enclosure 2, for the Vali's letter.

41 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 72, 15 Rebiyülâhir 1311/October 26, 1893.

42 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 285/59(1), 21 Cemaziyelevvel 1311/November 30, 1893.

43 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 287/102(1), 28 Cemaziyelâhir 1311/January 6, 1894. In addition, they added, some men employed by Nusret Paşa had threatened them. The Grand Vizier forwarded the telegram without any comment to the Sultan.

44 At first, Nusret Paşa sent a telegram to the *Meşihat*, complaining about Aziz Bey, to which the latter reacted quickly, sending his version of events. BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 11, 7 Receb 1311/January 14, 1894.

45 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 12(1), 7 Receb 1311/January 14, 1894. The Sultan also reiterated his order that the Council of Ministers should meet to discuss the issue.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 290/39(1), 6 Şaban 1311/February 12, 1894.

49 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 291/14(1), 18 Şaban 1311/February 24, 1894.

50 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 293/45(1), 8 Şevval 1311/April 14, 1894.

51 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 295/104(1), 29 Şevval 1311/May 5, 1894.

52 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 149(1), 4 Zilhicce 1311/June 8, 1894. For the telegram, see enclosure 2. After the telegram, the *Defterdar* and Nusret Paşa also sent their own versions of the events. Moreover, the Minister of Finance intervened and wrote to the Grand Vizier stating their concern over the issue. But Abdülhamid returned all this correspondence to the Grand Vizier without making any comment on it, on the grounds that he had already ordered Nusret Paşa's transfer to Aleppo and had nothing to do with them. Irade-Hususi, no. 40(1), 4 Zilhicce 1311/June 8, 1894; Irade-Hususi, no. 30 mükerrer, 8 Muharrem 1312/July 12, 1894.

53 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 304/84(1), 29 Muharrem 1312/August 2, 1894.

54 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 306/101(1), 17 Safer 1312/August 20, 1894.

55 From then on, there is no reference to Nusret Paşa in the documents. It is interesting to note that although Nusret Paşa wrote a great deal about the British intrigues in the region, he seems to have got on very well with the British representatives at Baghdad. On his death, Mockler, the Consul General, wrote the following: "His Excellency during his residence in Baghdad was always on the most friendly terms with this residency and his somewhat sudden death is therefore a cause for much regret." FO 195/1935, no. 573/101, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, November 28, 1896; cf. *SO*, IV 554 and 871.

56 FO 195/1935, no. 573/101, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, November 28, 1896: extract under date 24th instant from my diary to the government of India—"H.E. Nusret Pasha, aide de camp to H.I.M. the Sultan and honorary inspector of the VIth army corps, died today." Cf. *TA*, XXV 354, gives the date as September 24, 1896, and, *SO*, IV 554, as 7 Cemaziyelâhir 1314/November 13, 1896.

57 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 283/8, 16 Rebiyülâhir 1311/October 27, 1893; *ibid.* 295/104, 29 Şevval 1311/May 5, 1894; *ibid.* 299/27, 2 Zilhicce 1311/June 6, 1894; *ibid.* 301/7, 21 Zilhicce 1311/June 25, 1894.

58 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 11, 7 Receb 1311/January 14, 1894. At the same time, Abdülhamid asked the Council of Ministers to meet and discuss these points.

59 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 300/70, 17 Zilhicce 1311/June 21, 1894. Both the Vali and the Müşir answered Cevad Paşa sending their own version of events. Ibid., enclosure 1.

60 See, for example, BOA, Y.A.Hus. 289/31, 21 Receb 1311/January 28, 1894.

61 For example, in the spring of 1895, the Chief-Veterinarian of the 36th Cavalry Regiment of Baghdad informed the authorities in Istanbul about the corruption and abuse in his regiment, and shortly thereafter he had to ask to be transferred to 5th Army, as his life was in danger. BOA, Y.A.Hus. 323/103, 11 Şevval 1312/April 7, 1895.

62 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 342/76(1), 9 Receb 1313/December 26, 1895. See also enclosure 3, by *Serasker Rıza Paşa*, dated 7 Receb 1313/December 24, 1895.

63 BOA, Y.A.Res. 80/17(1), 5 Muharrem 1314/June 16, 1896; and FO 195/1935, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, June 29, 1896: “Hassan Pasha, for last five years vali of Baghdad, appointed to Damascus, left Baghdad June 27th.”

64 BOA, Y.A.Res. 80/17(1), 5 Muharrem 1314/June 16, 1896, and the minute by Tahsin Paşa, dated 6 Muharrem 1314/June 17, 1896; in May 1898, Ataullah Paşa received the rank of *vezaret*. FO 195/2020, extracts from diary of the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Simla, (para. 14th May); for Mehmed İbrahim Ataullah Paşa, see Sadık Albayrak, *Son Devir Osmanlı Uleması: İlmîye Ricalinin Terâcim-i Ahvali*, 5 vols (Istanbul: Medrese Yayınevi, 1980–1), III, 113–14; Öztuna, *Devletler*, p. 715.

65 See Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak*, p. 293, and Asaf Tugay *İbret: Abdülhamid’e Verilen Jurnaller ve Furnalçiler*, 2 vols (Istanbul: Okat-Yörük, 1961–2), I, 43.

66 FO 195/2020, no. 317/48 confidential, Loch to de Bunsen, Baghdad, July 1898. Loch, the British Consul General at Baghdad, had a very high

opinion of Receb Paşa. In a despatch he wrote about the departure of Receb Paşa from Baghdad, praised him as follows:

He has won the admiration and respect of all classes and creeds. His influence is very great and both directly and indirectly he has employed that influence in the maintenance of law, order and justice; further, I do not think that I am beyond the mark if I say that it is mainly owing to him that Europeans are now as safe from injury, insult or annoyance in Baghdad as they would be in London.

It should also be mentioned here that, according to British sources, Müşir Fuad Paşa, a strong opponent of the regime, had been appointed Commander of 6th Army in January 1897. But he had refused to obey and considered this order as equivalent to exile or sentence of death. FO 78/4813, tel no. 11, Currie to Salisbury, January 13, 1897. For “*Deli*” Fuad Paşa, who served in Iraq in the early 1870s, see *TM*, p. 145.

67 For “*Tatar*” Ahmed Feyzi Paşa (1840–1908), see *TM*, p. 140; FO 195/1794, no. 20, 20 May 1893, military biographies by Chermside: “no. 27: Mushir Ahmed Fevzi [*sic*] Pasha...vali of Yemen...speaks Arabic...very successful...”; cf. FO 78/5193, no. 461, O’Conor to Lansdowne, Therapia, October 21, 1902.

68 See Azzawi, *Tarikh al-Iraq*, VIII, 131ff. He arrived in Baghdad in May 1899.

69 FO 195/2074, Report on the Baghdad Vilayet for the quarter ended March 31, 1900.

70 Ibid., and FO 195/2074, no. 163/9, Melvill to O’Conor, Baghdad, April 27, 1900. After that, 52 of these soldiers were tried by court martial and sentenced to lose their previous service and to be sent to serve in the Yemen. It was also reported that similar disturbances took place at Mosul, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah, and according to the Consul-General, there was some reason to believe that these disturbances were connived by certain military officers.

71 See Azzawi, *Tarikh al-Iraq*, VIII, 147. He was married to the daughter of Numan Hayruddin al-Alusi. For Numan Hayruddin al-Alusi (d. 1899), see *DIA*, II, 549–50.

72 BOA, Y.A.Res. 112/54(26), 27 Nisan 1317/May 10, 1901.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 55, 2 Safer 1319/May 21, 1901.

78 BOA, Y.A.Res. 112/54(2), 18 Safer 1319/June 6, 1901.

79 See *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye*, 58(1320) and 57(1319).

80 FO 78/5193, no. 461, O’Conor to Lansdowne, Therapia, October 21, 1902.

81 FO 195/2164, no. 1035/81, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, December 26, 1904, enclosing diary of political intelligence sent by the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia and Consul General Baghdad to the Secretary to the Government in the Foreign Department. Newmarch remarked that, “He was and has always been most friendly towards me as far as his limited powers and the suspicion of the Turks would allow. He stayed for a long time and we parted in the most cordial manner.”

82 Abdülvahab Paşa arrived Baghdad in December 1904. FO 195/2164, no. 1035/81, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, December 26, 1904; for Süleyman Şevki Paşa, FO 195/2188, no. 568/54 confidential, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, July 28, 1905:

He is a Circassian born in Russia and about 50 years of age. (...) He has the reputation of being an honest, upright and right-minded man but is said to



be weak, pious and fanatical. He is said to be free from all suspicion of bribery.

83 FO 195/2188, tel, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, May 8, 1905; Newmarch once described the situation (on the issue of the Naqib's house) as follows: "With an incompetent Vali and a very independent Naqib it is not possible to do very much here." FO 195/2188, private, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, August 11, 1905; it should be stated here that, in this period, there was a strong controversy between the Naqib and the British Consul General over the construction of the former's new house next to the Consulate-General; in May 1905, the Consuls began to press their superiors to demand Abdülvahab Paşa's dismissal. FO 195/2188, tel, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, May 18, 1905:

I have been lately seen a telegram sent by my Russian colleague to his ambassador complaining against vali of Baghdad. I understand my Persian colleague has sent a similar complaint. I have discussed the vali's *[sic]* with my French colleague and my Russian colleague and we are quite agreed that his early removal is very desirable, because it is most difficult to get simplest things done. He is feeble, obstructive and deceitful apparently anti-European and quite incapable of grasping a situation.

See also, in the same manner, FO 195/2188, no. 362/36 confidential, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, May 23, 1905; in another telegram, Newmarch wrote that "Vali is a hopeless person to deal with and quite unfit for his post." FO 195/2188, tel, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, May 17, 1905.

84 FO 195/2188, no. 568/54 confidential, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, July 28, 1905: "It is not yet known where he is going, but rumor seems to indicate that he will remain in Baghdad vilayet without any employment." Kazım Paşa had been banished to Baghdad a long time ago. Cf. Dağistanlı, *Muhammed Fazıl Paşa*, pp. 67–8.

85 FO 195/2188, no. 827/76, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, October 11, 1905. O'Connor minuted that "these intrigues were confirmed by our secret reports."

86 FO 195/2188, tel, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, September 27, 1905:

I now have reason to believe my Russian colleague's anxiety to get rid of present vali is due to the hope that he will be replaced by present Mushir Suliman Pasha who is great friend of my Russian colleague and comes from, I believe, the same country, namely Caucasus. I think that it would be very prejudicial to British interests here if Suliman Pasha were appointed vali.

In return, it seems that Abdülvahab Paşa tried to bring Newmarch to his side:

an Albanian (...) came to see me and informed me in a very secret manner that there was an intrigue against me, originated by the Naqib, the Russian Consul General, the Commander of the VIth army corps (Suliman Pasha who is very intimate with my Russian colleague), and Fakhri Pasha, the chief of the staff. He said they reported, or caused to be reported, to Constantinople that every English ship that came to Baghdad brought soldiers, arms and ammunition for me (...) This Albanian may have been sent to me by the vali Abdul Wahab who is himself an Albanian. The vali showed plainly on the night of the King's birthday that he infinitely preferred me to my Russian colleague (...) I only note this incident as a type of Baghdad intrigue.

FO 195/2188, no. 919/84, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, November 13, 1905. This account is also related to the subject of "British threat in Iraq" on the part of the local Ottoman officials. See Chapter 6.

87 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 65, 23 Şaban 1323/October 23, 1905; the British authorities did not like this appointment. FO 195/2189 very confidential, O'Connor to Newmarch, Constantinople, November 9, 1905:

As vali of Aleppo, Mejid Pasha did not make a good impression: he appeared incapable of acting on his own initiative and largely relied on muvazin Sourouri Bey, formerly Mutesarrif of Hama, and possessed of an undesirable record. His son Nedjib Bey is a young and profligate person who takes every advantage of the license given him by his father to

interfere in public business. Mejid Pasha suffers both physically and mentally and is unable properly to attend to business. Every official in his vilayet did as he pleased and, as a consequence, he was frequently censured by the Grand Vizier and advised to resign. The military authorities alone spoke well of him and this fact was regarded as a sign of weakness. In spite, however of his inability to enforce discipline in his staff, and notwithstanding the state of chaos into which his vilayet was allowed to fall, he enjoyed the protection of Izzet Pasha and received marks of imperial favor. H.M. Consul at Aleppo, reporting on his eventual disgrace and removal which were brought about by the disorder at Ourfa in August 1904, stated that, in his opinion, it was unlikely that Mejid Pasha would be entrusted with another vilayet so long as the present Grand Vizier continued in office. Upon learning of his appointment to the vilayet of Baghdad I at once took steps to ascertain the views of Grand Vizier on the subject. H.H. stated that Mejid Pasha was not proposed by him, but was appointed direct from the Palace. He had however seen him and had given him instructions as to his conduct, especially recommending him to maintain friendly relations with the military authorities and foreign representatives and to avoid the creation of troublesome questions. Ferid Pasha expressed the hope that the new vali would avoid the errors of his predecessor, and added that his son, Nedjib Bey was not accompanying him to Baghdad. I took advantage of the opportunity which presented itself to warn the Grand Vizier of the harm that was done by the propagation of unfounded rumors as to British intentions and policy in Iraq and H.H. assured me in reply that a stop had been put to all such proceedings.

Abdülhamid instructed the Grand Vizier that the Commander of 6th Army, Süleyman Şevki Paşa, take charge of the duties of the Vali, and Abdülvahab Paşa was to return to Istanbul, without waiting for Mecid Bey's arrival. BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 3, 4 Şevval 1323/December 2, 1905. Cf. FO 195/2188, no. 976/91, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, December 5, 1905: "This is an unfortunate appointment because Suliman Pasha is very anti-English and pro-Russian being an intimate friend of the Russian Consul General. The future vali of Baghdad is said to be still at Aleppo."

88 Although the conflicts among high officials in Baghdad ceased for a while, the tension in the region began to increase, especially in Basra:

continuous tribal outbreaks, attacks on the steamships etc. According to the information gathered by the British Military Attaché, these were due basically to a power vacuum in the region. In Colonel Surtees's words,

The vilayets of Baghdad and Basra are practically in a state of anarchy arising, according to those best qualified to judge, from the following causes: 1. Feizi Pasha was the only man who could keep the troops and Arabs in order without paying them, and who could administer the vilayets and collect taxes by force of arms without creating serious disorders. 2. After the departure of Feizi for the Yemen, his successor was not capable of continuing his line of policy as regarded the administration of the army and was in addition most unpopular.

FO 424/210, inclosure 1 in no. 71, Colonel Surtees to O'Connor, no. 42, Constantinople, August 9, 1906, enclosing memorandum respecting affairs in the Yemen and Nejd.

89 The Grand Vizier, Ferid Paşa, wrote to the Sultan regarding the sending of the committee as soon as possible, so that they could take the required measures in time should the allegations turn out to be true. The following day, Abdülhamid named the members of the committee: Major-General Veli Paşa, Colonel Mehmed Tevfik Bey, and Adjutant Major Süleyman Fethi Efendi. BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 51, 10 Safer 1324/April 5, 1906; Fahri Paşa was transferred to Diyarbakır. FO 195/2214, no. 564/53, Ramsay to O'Connor, Baghdad, June 25, 1906; see also the remarks on Fahri Paşa: "who had the reputation of being an unusually clever and well educated Turk (...) was transferred to Diyarbakır. On arrival there he is said to have been imprisoned in a fort." FO 195/2214, Diary to the Government of India for the week ending July 30, 1906; a number of high military officials were retired. The names of the officials in ibid. The commission was also going to inquire into the complaints made against Kazım Paşa, a brother-in-law of the Sultan. As a result, Kazım Paşa was put under house arrest. FO 195/2214, no. 564/53. Also FO 424/212, inclosure in no. 80, Memorandum by Major Ramsay, no. 6 confidential, Baghdad, May 12, 1907: "Kyazim Pasha (...) in disgrace for some years. I believe that one of his alleged crimes was that he was too friendly with the English, and that he wanted to

sell to them some of his landed property.” Cf. Dağ ıstanlı, *Muhammed Fazıl Paşa*, pp. 67–8.

90 FO 424/210, inclosure 2 in no. 71, Memorandum respecting affairs in the Yemen and Nejd.

91 FO 424/210, inclosure 1 in no. 71, Colonel Surtees to O’Conor, no. 42, Constantinople, August 9, 1906.

92 FO 424/210, no. 52, O’Conor to Grey, no. 422, Therapia, June 19, 1906.

93 FO 424/210, no. 128, Barclay to Grey, no. 786, Pera, December 5, 1906.

94 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 93, 8 Ş evval 1324/November 25, 1906; for Reş id Akif Paşa (1863–1920), see *TM*, p. 320.

95 Ibid.

96 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 38, 13 Ş evval 1324/November 30, 1906; for Ebubekir Hâzim [Tepeyran] Bey (1864–1947), see *TM*, p. 379; *Türk Parlamento Tarihi, TBMM II. Dönem, 1923–1927* (Ankara: TBMM, 1995), III, 636–7; Ramsay wrote:

He gave me the impression of an agreeable and gentlemanly man, with a wish to make improvements. The old residents of Baghdad say that they have never seen at Baghdad a vali of his stamp. Our intercourse is made simpler and less formal by the fact that Hâzim Bey talks French.

FO 195/2242, political diary of the Baghdad Residency for the week ending February 25, 1907.

97 FO 195/2243, Political Diary of the Baghdad Residency for the week ending July 22, 1907. See Chapter 2, for details.

98 BOA, Y.A.Res. 156/83(1), 23 Rebiyülâhir 1326/May 25, 1908.

99 In the event, Hâzim Bey was appointed to Sivas. After the revolution, Ramsay wrote:

The personality of Nazim Pasha, the present vali, has unfortunately proved quite unequal to the task of governing Baghdad at a critical time. He had been here for some months as President of a Committee of Reform. In the course of his labors, though he brought about no reforms, he put himself into violent opposition against the then vali, Hâzim Bey, and in the struggle that ensued he made friendship and enmities which were entangling when he became Vali. Further, he was known to have been appointed by the palace clique, and consequently he did not command the confidence of the Young Turks. Still, when the change came at Constantinople, and a Young Turk Committee was formed at Baghdad, he allowed himself to be very much under their influence.

FO 424/217, inclosure 1 in no. 54, Lieutenant-Colonel Ramsay to Government of India, Baghdad, October 19, 1908.

100 FO 195/1445, no. 4, Russell to Wyndham, Mosul, February 13, 1883; the British Consul at Mosul remarked,

the extremely high character for probity, impartiality and a sincere desire for the prosperity and well being of the country, and its inhabitants which the governor general universally enjoys. I have never yet heard a word of complaint against him from any man whose opinion was worth having.

FO 195/1479, no. 481/59, Plowden to Dufferin, Baghdad, July 1, 1884; later in 1885, it was stated that: "the success which has so far attended the vali's efforts to deal with the Hamawands and other turbulent Kurdish tribes. Tahsin Pasha seems to be a most praiseworthy governor general." FO 195/1509, no. 36/7, Plowden to Wyndham, January 14, 1885; for his fight against corruption in judiciary, FO 195/1479, no. 619/72, no. 646/75, and 195/1509, no. 144/15.

101 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 204/6, 4 Ş evval 1304/June 26, 1887.

102 BOA, Y.A.Res. 45/26, 7 Rebiülevvel 1306/November 11, 1888; for Faik Bey [Paşa], FO 424/172, no. 23, Ford to Salisbury, no. 86, Constantinople, March 11, 1892:

Faik Paşa, late vali of the vilayet of Moussoul, has been appointed Governor-General of the vilayet of Costambol. His Excellency is of Arab origin, and was for some years employed as governor of one of the districts of the vilayet of Tripoli in Africa before being appointed to Moussoul.

Y.A.Res. 46/14, 26 Cemaziyelevvel 1306/January 28, 1889; the Grand Vizier wrote that Ali Kemalî Paşa's knowledge of tribes was highly considered. Y.A.Hus. 220/1, 1 Rebiyülâhir 1306/December 5, 1888; for "Söylemezoğlu" Ali Kemalî Paşa (1818–97), see *TM*, p. 215; Öztuna, *Devletler*, p. 841; Y.A.Hus. 247/63, 16 Şevval 1308/May 25, 1891, and Y.A.Res. 55/11, 24 Şevval 1308/June 2, 1891. Some other officials of the *vilayet* were also dismissed together with Tahir Paşa.

103 See *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye*, 47(1309), 488; cf. FO 78/4345, no. 248, White to Salisbury, Therapia, June 19, 1891. White added, "This Pasha was recently governor of the vilayet of Kosova and was removed from his post at the demand of the Austro-Hungarian Government on account of the Uskub Belfry incident."

104 Cf. *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye*, 48(1310), 498; see, for example, BOA, Y.A.Res. 64/12, 22 Ramazan 1310/April 9, 1893.

105 BOA, Y.A.Res. 65/26(1), 22 Zilhicce 1310/July 7, 1893.

106 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 278/46(1), 8 Muharrem 1311/July 22, 1893.

107 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 279/189, 26 Safer 1311/September 8, 1893.

108 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 195, 29 Safer 1311/September 18, 1893; also Y.A.Res. 66/28, 15 Safer 1311/August 28, 1893.

109 The Sultan sent Bekir Bey of the Chamberlains to the Grand Vizier, and asked the *Encümen-i Havass-ı Vükela* (consisted of a few important ministers), to meet and name a suitable candidate in place of Aziz Paşa, after discussing the circumstances. BOA, Y.A.Res. 75/68(1), 28 Zilkade 1312/May 23, 1895.

110 Ibid.



111 BOA, Y.A.Res. 75/75(1), 5 Zilhicce 1312/May 30, 1895. See enclosure 2, for the Council of Ministers' memorandum. Sadeddin Paşa was the President of the First Accountancy Office of the War Ministry.

112 FO 195/1885, no. 465/81, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, August 28, 1895, enclosing Newsletter no. 30 dated August 21, 1895 from Consular Agent at Mosul. Rassam stated that "when I visited him (...) he received me with every courtesy. He appears to be a proud, upright and energetic man."

113 FO 195/1885, Newsletter no. 32, dated September 3, 1895, from British Consular Agent, Mosul, to British Consul General, Baghdad. For instance, in September 1895, the corruption of Hacı Emin Efendi, the President of the Municipality as proved, and he was dismissed; for other examples, *ibid.*, Newsletter no. 40, dated November 9, 1895, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad; *ibid.*, Newsletter no. 41, dated December 6, 1895; FO 195/1935, Newsletter no. 43, dated December 27, 1895.

114 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 350/33(1), 5 Zilkade 1313/April 18, 1896; FO 195/1935, Newsletter no. 13, dated April 24, 1896, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad; the French Embassy did not want Abdullah Paşa to leave Diyarbakir immediately, as they were afraid of the reoccurrence of the clashes in the *vilayet*. Things, it was claimed, could get worse under the Vali, Enis Paşa, who was declared *persona-non-grata* by the Great Powers. For the letter of Tevfik Paşa, the Foreign Minister, in this respect, Y.A.Hus. 350/33(2), 2 Zilkade 1313/April 15, 1896.

115 In fact, the Grand Vizier wanted at first to appoint Abdullah Paşa as permanent Vali. But Abdülhamid rejected this idea and only allowed him to take charge in Mosul temporarily on the ground that as a member of his personal military staff, he was needed in Istanbul. But until an appropriate candidate could be found, he could stay in charge of Mosul. BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 28(1), 10 Zilkade 1313/April 23, 1896; Abdullah Paşa appears to have handled the problems successfully. For several examples, see FO 195/1935; Süleyman Nazif, the celebrated Ottoman man of letters, was Abdullah Paşa's secretary during his stay in Mosul. According to his

memoirs, Abdullah Paşa made long inspection tours all over the *vilayet*. See Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Doğumunun 100. Yılında Süleyman Nazif* (Ankara, 1970), pp. 17–18. Cf. İnal, *Son Asır Türk Şairleri*, p. 1114. For him (1852–1937), see Birinci, “Abdullah (Kölemen) Paşa,” in *Tarihin Gölgesinde*, ed. Ali Birinci, pp. 225–7.

116 BOA, Y.A.Res. 83/40(2), 19 Cemaziyelevvel 1314/October 26, 1896; Zühdü Bey arrived in Mosul on December 14, 1896. FO 195/1935, Newsletter no. 53, dated December 15, 1896, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad.

117 At the beginning, Zühdü Bey proved himself to be quite successful. FO 424/191, for examples from January 1897 onwards. In July 1897, a first class *Nişan-ı Âli-i Osmani* was conferred upon him for his achievements in Mosul. BOA, Y.A.Res. 87/53(1), 3 Safer 1315/July 4, 1897; from the late summer of 1897 onwards, however, several complaints of corruption began to circulate about him. See FO 424/191 and 424/192, for several examples; Abdülvahab Paşa stayed in the post only about eight months. For the events during his governor-generalship, FO 195/2020 and FO 424/196.

118 FO 195/2020, Newsletter no. 18, dated July 11, 1898, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad; Arif Paşa was very welcomed locally, and seemed successful. He arrived at Mosul toward the end of August. On his visit to Arif Paşa, Rassam

found him to be a person of grave demeanor and good qualities, and perhaps would govern well with fit measures, for I have received a letter from Mr. Jago, Her Majesty’s Consul at Tripoli, who speaks highly of him as to the manner he deals with matters and praises his power of discretion.

(FO 195/2020, Newsletter no. 20, dated August 30, 1898, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad)

119 FO 195/2020, no. 607/95, Melvill to O’Conor, Baghdad, December 2, 1898: “His remains were buried in the mosque of Nubbi Shith.”

120 For examples, FO 195/2055, Newsletter no. 32, dated December 21, 1898, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General,

Baghdad; *ibid.*, Newsletter no. 33, dated December 29, 1898; *ibid.*, Newsletter no. 6, dated February 24, 1899; according to British reports, Hamdi Bey, the Acting Vali of Mosul, and the members of the Administrative Council were corrupt. *Ibid.*, Newsletter no. 33, dated December 29, 1898; *ibid.*, Newsletter no. 4, dated February 16, 1899; *ibid.*, Newsletter no. 5, dated February 16, 1899; FO 424/198, inclosure in no. 75, Journal of recent events in Mesopotamia and on the Persian Gulf, signed Mr Norman, Constantinople, April 22, 1899.

121 His memoirs, published in Ebubekir Hâzim Tepeyran, “Hatıralar,” in *Canlı Tarihler 1* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1944), gives some interesting details about life in Mosul; he arrived in Mosul toward the end of March 1899. FO 195/2055, Newsletter no. 7, dated March 10, 1899 from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad: “inhabitants of this place are anxiously awaiting his arrival, hoping that he will be able to improve the state of affairs in this vilayet.”; also *ibid.*, Newsletter no. 8, dated March 29, 1899.

122 BOA, Y.A.Res. 112/54(25), 28 Nisan 1317/May 11, 1901.

123 BOA, Y.A.Res. 112/54(25), 28 Nisan 1317/May 11, 1901. Upon reading the report, Abdülhamid issued a decree for the immediate implementation of the commission’s proposals, without any hesitation, and forwarded the report to the Council of Ministers. BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 55, 2 Safer 1319/May 21, 1901.

124 See Tepeyran, *Canlı Tarihler*, pp. 387–8. Ebubekir Hâzim Bey was appointed to the Council of State.

125 BOA, Y.A.Res. 112/54(2), Meclis-i Vükela Mazbatası, 18 Safer 1319/June 6, 1901.

126 For Mustafa Nâzım Bey [Paşa], see Chapter 2, and the section on the *vilayet* of Baghdad in page 136 FO 424/202, no. 32, O’Conor to Lansdowne, no. 216, Therapia, June 4, 1901:

I am informed that this is a very satisfactory appointment, Nazim Bey being highly spoken of as an honest and capable man. He is young, and has risen

rapidly in the public service under the protection of Said Pasha, President of the Council of State, in which he has lately filled the post of Procureur-General of the Court of Cassation. He has, I understand, acquitted himself with credit and to the entire satisfaction of the government in more than one delicate mission. He is of Kurdish origin [*sic*], but speaks French and Greek as well as Turkish.

(FO 195/2096, Newsletter no. 21, dated October 8, 1901, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad)

When Mustafa Nâzım Bey left Mosul at the beginning of October 1901, his departure

is regretted by all the inhabitants, as his intention was to secure the punishment of bad characters and to restore order. To do this, he applied to the Porte for special powers, but it appears that the Porte would not comply, and perhaps this led to his transfer to another vilayet.

Faik Paşa, Commandant of the troops at Mosul, was appointed as Acting Vali; for “Kürd” Said Paşa, see *BD*, V, 11; *TM*, p. 341.

127 Hacı Reshid Paşa took charge in late November 1901. FO 195/2096, Newsletter no. 25, dated November 26, 1901, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad; for Ahmed Reshid Paşa (1858–1918), see *TM*, p. 322; İnal, *Son Asır Türk Şairleri*, pp. 1416–18.

128 FO 195/2116, no. 253/26, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, July 1, 1902; for Hacı Reshid Paşa’s tribal policy, see FO 195/2116, translated purport of letter no. 27, dated December 26, 1901, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul, to H.B.M.’s Consul General, Baghdad:

Reshid Pasha, the Vali, has accepted the submission tendered by several bad characters, some of whom stand accused and others have been judicially convicted of crimes. They have been allowed to go where ever they chose, and the Police have been ordered not to interfere with them. In addition, several bad characters have been set free. (...) Other bad characters have come to Mosul and tendered their submission, and His Excellency has written to Constantinople to obtain pardon for them in the same way as in

the cases of Sheikhs Noori and Muhammad and the Chiefs of the Yezidis. An order was lately received for payment of the accumulated salaries of Ali Beg, the Amir of Sheikhan, and of his two brothers Badi Beg and Hamza Beg, which were discontinued five years ago, when Zahdi [*sic*] Pasha was Vali. The salaries were Prs. 2000 each per month.

Also FO 195/2116, translated purport of newsletter no. 8, dated April 15, 1902, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul:

An Irade was received a few days ago, pardoning the bad characters, those standing accused, the convicted and others. Their submission (...) had been accepted by H.E. the Vali, Haji Reshid Pasha, who had represented to the Porte circumstances which brought about this result.

129 For Mustafa Nuri [İ leri] (1851–1923), see *TM*, p. 288; Öztuna, *Devletler*, p. 676; Nuri Paşa was also very popular with the British authorities. FO 195/2188, no. 752/72, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, September 18, 1905; *ibid.*, no. 796/74, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, October 3, 1905; *ibid.*, no. 979/92, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, December 8, 1905.

130 FO 195/2188, no. 979/92, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, December 8, 1905: “As Nuri Pasha has been lately relieved his duties at Mosul and has (...) proceeded to Constantinople.”

131 For remarks on Mustafa Yumni Bey, FO 424/212, no. 11, Barclay to Grey, no. 24, Constantinople, January 11, 1907; FO 195/2242, Newsletter no. 13, April 4, 1907, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul to Consul General at Baghdad: “The vali was considered an honest man but now he has become inclined to take bribes.”; FO 424/213, no. 150, O’Conor to Grey, no. 720, Pera, November 26, 1907: “Mustapha Bey, who is a brother of Izzet Pasha, and notoriously corrupt and worthless.”; Mustafa Yumni Bey was dismissed soon after the Young Turk Revolution. FO 424/217, inclosure 2 in no. 21, dated August 22, 1908: “It is reported that he is practically under arrest, and that he is to be exiled to Diarbekir.”

132 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 164/121, 8 Receb 1297/June 16, 1880; *ibid.* 167/109, 17 Receb 1298/June 15, 1881. For other details, see Chapter 4.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid.

135 FO 195/1479, no. 591/70, Plowden to Dufferin, Baghdad, August 20, 1884.

136 BOA, Y.A.Res. 24/36, 11 Ş evval 1301/August 4, 1884; Y.A.Hus. 179/91, 15 Zilkade 1301/September 6, 1884; ibid. 179/110, 29 Zilkade 1301/September 20, 1884; ibid. 180/5, 7 Muharrem 1302/October 27, 1884.

137 BOA, Y.A.Res. 29/14, 22 Receb 1302/May 7, 1885.

138 See *Salname-i Vilayet-i Basra* (1318), 198; cf. Sinan Kunalalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricali, 1839–1922: Prosopografik Rehber* (Istanbul: ISIS, 1999), p. 27; among them, for “Çaycı” Hacı İzzet Efendi (1820–1909), see *TM*, p. 197; Birinci, “Hacı İzzet Efendi,” in *Tarihin Gölgesinde*, ed. Ali Birinci, pp. 156–61.

139 See Chapter 6.

140 For a detailed biography of Hamdi Paşa, FO 195/1978, British Consul at Basra (Whyte) to Consul General, Baghdad, no. 766, dated December 22, 1896, confidential: “The province has been during his four years of governorship firmly and wisely administered.” Hamdi Paşa was said to have had the reputation of being a loyal and incorruptible servant of the government and proved himself to be a wise and just governor, and “his attitude towards British interests has been friendly (...) I have always met with the utmost consideration from him, and his attitude towards British interests has invariably been, since my appointment to this consulate, all that could be desired.”

141 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 308/101(1), 11 Rebiülevvel 1312/September 12, 1894. See enclosure 2, for Hamdi Paşa’s telegram. He asked permission to settle in one of the Aegean Islands to recover from his particular illness.

142 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 309/34(1), 18 Rebiülevvel 1312/September 19, 1894.

143 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 343/91(1), 29 Receb 1313/January 15, 1896.

144 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 358/45(1), 22 Rebiülevvel 1314/August 31, 1896.

145 For Mardinizâde Arif Paşa (1852–1920), see *TM*, p. 239; Öztuna, *Devletler*, p. 738; the British Consul at Basra also gave a detailed account of his career in FO 195/2020, Memorandum on the previous career of and administration of the Wilaiat of Basrah by H.E.Arif Pasha, late Governor-General of Basrah, signed J.F.Whyte, Captain, H.B.M.’s Consul at Basrah.

146 See the remarks in *ibid.*:

It was not long before it became apparent that he was a man of very different character to his predecessor who had the reputation of being honest and well-intentioned. It was said that Arif Pasha had received a large present of money from Sheikh Yusuf Ibrahim to support him against Sheikh Mubarak, but that on the latter’s offering him a larger sum of money Arif Pasha was ready to favor him. The Sublime Porte had however appointed Sheikh Mubarak Kaimakam of Kuwait before the money had been paid, upon which the latter repudiated his promise to Arif Pasha who consequently opposed him afterwards with vehemence. All branches of the administration during the tenure of office of Arif Pasha were pervaded with weakness, obstruction and corruption, which has led to great insecurity of life and property. It is a matter of notoriety that Arif Pasha was unscrupulously corrupt and that he was aided in the accumulation of ill-forgotten gains by both his wife and son. As regards his relations with the consulate it may be said that he never allowed an occasion to slip of offering petty insults, making absurd difficulties and of evading or disregarding representations made to him.

147 FO 195/1978, Extracts from diary of H.B.M.’s Consul General, Baghdad, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, dated October 9–October 23, 1897:

The enquiry as far as I have heard has not begun yet, and there is a rumor that the wali has received a telegram from the private secretary to the Sultan saying that the Admiral has been dismissed. It is said that a “douceur” of T£ 500 from the wali has brought about this sudden dismissal. The rumor is not



believed as everybody says the Admiral has rendered such good service in connection with the river steamers that he is not likely to be the one to go to the wall over this affair.

148 FO 195/1978, no. 618/111, Loch to Currie, Baghdad, November 17, 1897.

149 FO 195/2020, no. 90/15, Loch to Currie, Baghdad, February 23, 1898. For Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa (1855–1922), a future Grand Vizier, see *EI*(2), III, 624.

150 Vice-Admiral Emin Paşa, the Commander of Basra flotilla (1895–8), was transferred to Salonica in February 1898. A detailed biography of him is in FO 195/2020, no. 105/16, Loch to Currie, Baghdad, March 4, 1898, enclosing Memorandum on the previous career of, and administration of the Ottoman Navy in Basrah by Vice-Admiral Emin Pasha, confidential:

The administration of the Oman-Ottoman Company's river steamers on the Tigris has been conducted with success by Emin Pasha who has shown himself a keen opponent of the Lynch company. It may be said that he has uniformly adopted an attitude of firm resistance to everything which would tend to benefit British interests in shipping and trade on the Shatt ul-Arab and Mesopotamian rivers. He is generally credited with entertaining a fanatical hatred of the English, which he conceals under agreeable manners, while he is said to possess progressive ideas with reference to the welfare of his country. As regards the navy he seems to have been an able and firm commander looking after the interests of his men and ships to the full extent of the means at his disposal and is reputed to be an incorruptible and loyal officer.

151 FO 195/2020, extracts from diary of the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Simla. May 13-May 20, 1898: "Enis Pasha, the newly appointed vali of Basra arrived by *Resafa* (May 9, 1898)." Enis Paşa was already persona-non-grata for the British due to his profile during the recent Armenian incidents. At this juncture, the events in Kuwait were also coming to a head.

152 FO 424/199, inclosure in no. 33, Wratislaw to O'Connor, no. 37 confidential, Bussorah, August 2, 1899:

His excellency attributes the false rumors which are apparently in circulation concerning him at Constantinople to the machinations of the Naqib of Bussorah, his old and inveterate enemy, who he believes is endeavoring to intrigue him out of his post for the second time. His excellency added that he had just said his prayers, and the truth of his statement could be relied on.

According to Wratislaw, under Hamdi Paşa, the *vilayet* was comparatively quiet:

Absolute tranquility and order in a province like Bussorah are not to be hoped for, but under Hamdi's administration its condition is perhaps as satisfactory as can be expected and is certainly not less satisfactory than in the time of his predecessors.

153 FO 78/5057, no. 3 secret, Wratislaw to O'Connor, Basra, January 24, 1900. Wratislaw described Hamdi Paşa as

an honest Turkish official, and though not in any way brilliant has administered his vilayet well enough. His hot temper and arbitrary disposition however rendered him generally unpopular, and his subordinates disliked him for endeavoring to check speculation and corruption.

154 FO 78/5057, no. 32 confidential, enclosing a memorandum by Adam Block, dated January 25, 1900, on General of Division of the Staff Mohsin Pasha, new Vali of Basra:

It was said that Mohsin Pasha was a distinguished mathematician, geographist and topographist. He was said to have obtained his military grades step by step by his own merits and not by favor. He appeared to be little known at Constantinople where he has no protectors. He was also said to be an energetic soldier and an upright official. He acted as Head of the Staff in the 7th division of the army and withdrew from his post in consequence of misunderstanding with the Vali and Mushir Ahmed Fevzi

Pasha whose system of administration in the Yemen he disapproved of. Thereupon Mohsin Pasha at his own request was transferred to the 6th army corps (Baghdad) with the rank of general division. Subsequently the Sublime Porte commissioned him to go to Basra in order to investigate the complaints to which the conduct of the ex-vali Arif Pasha and Enis Pasha had given rise. On this occasion, after carrying out the mission entrusted to him he acted for a very short time as temporary vali of Basra. Before his appointment as vali, Mohsin Pasha held the post of military commandant at Basra.

According to Consul Wratislaw, Muhsin Pasha appeared to be under the influence of Sayyid Ahmad, the brother of the Naqib, and "the clever member of the family." FO 78/5057, no. 3 secret, Wratislaw to O'Connor, Basra, January 24, 1900.

155 BOA, Irade-Hususi no. 80, 28 Cemaziyelâhir 1322/September 9, 1904; FO 424/206, inclosure in no. 201, Monahan to O'Connor, no. 48, Bussorah, September 14, 1904; FO 416/20, no. 84, O'Connor to Lansdowne, no. 735, Therapia, September 20, 1904: "Nouri Pasha has been dismissed from his post as vali of Bussorah, and also from that of Commandant of the forces in that province." According to O'Connor, "though Nuri Pasha had been occasionally obstructive in commercial matters, yet he did not show any disposition to intervene in the delicate political affairs of the Persian Gulf"; cf. Mehmed Ali Aynî, "Hatıralar" in *Canlı Tarihler II* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1945), p. 40.

156 FO 424/206, inclosure in no. 201, Monahan to O'Connor, no. 48, Bussorah, September 14, 1904:

It was in the town and in the immediate neighborhood of Basra there had been about 15 murders this year, all of them unpunished. At least five of these were committed this summer in broad daylight, including the audacious murder of the Mussulman notable, Hajji Munsor, member of the administrative council, who was shot dead while sitting in a cafe by two men commonly asserted to have been employed for these purpose by the Nakib, the father of the Syed Talib Pasha (...) The Naqib was undoubtedly the enemy of Hajji Mansoor, whom he regarded as a rival in influence over the people and the local government. It was a strange circumstance that

telegrams had been received from Mahmud el-Nima, who was a hanger-on of Syed Talib, and was then with him in Constantinople, demanding 1,500 *liras* alleged to have been deposited with the deceased Hajji Munsoor in the presence of witnesses, but without documents passing. There had been that summer six great burglaries by bands of 20 men or upwards, and three fires, rare occurrences in the town of Basra, in one of which the whole of a principal bazaar and in another the Imperial Ottoman Bank was destroyed. The unpaid soldiers plundered freely on the occasions of these fires. (...) It is difficult to say how far the ex-vali is responsible for this state of things, but it is certain he has gained the reputation of a venal, stupid, and obstinate Governor. I have fully reported to your excellency in recent telegrams his obstinate and stupid conduct in regard to the question of a site for the new quarantine station, in which matter there seems to be no doubt that his foster brother, Hajji Nejim Bey, who has been his instrument in many questionable transactions, has a direct pecuniary interest, through the Jew proprietors having offered a reward if they can be saved from expropriation.

157 FO 424/206, no. 201, Townley to Lansdowne, no. 790, Therapia, October 11, 1904. Mr Townley of the Embassy reported that Sayyid Talib had fallen entirely into disfavor. The rejection of Sayyid Talib's candidature for the vacant post was due to the Grand Vizier. The latter convinced the Sultan that all the troubles in Basra could be attributed to Sayyid Talib machinations. Moreover, Townley argued, the new Vali had instructions to arrest and deport to Constantinople both the father and the elder brother of Talib. Townley also made some remarks on Fahri Paşa:

The post has been filled, for the present, by the temporary appointment of Fahri Pasha, who was recently named Chief of the Staff of the Sixth (Baghdad) Army Corps, having been employed on the General Staff at Constantinople after a course of introduction in Germany. He is a smart and energetic officer, and his departure on the 13th instant from Baghdad for his new post probably indicates the adoption of active measures. As, however, he is accompanied by General Muhammad Pasha Daghestani, who, the Minister of War has informed the Military Attaché of this Embassy, has been specially selected to deal with the fresh disturbances which have broken out, apparently in connection with Sadun Pasha and the Muntafiq Arabs, (...) it is probable that the efforts of the new Vali, whether Fahri

Pasha or a permanent titulaire, will at first be directed towards a thorough suppression of the revolting tribes.

Newmarch, the Consul General at Baghdad, also made some remarks on Fakhri Pasha:

He has been in Baghdad for about two years and during that time has been Chief of the Staff of the VIth Army Corps (...) He is about 35 years of age and short-sighted, clever, well-educated and with good manners. In his appearance and turn-out he is more like a British than a Turkish officer, but he is very poor horseman. He speaks French well and is active and energetic. I think he would do much if he were given sufficient power and authority.

FO 195/2164, no. 756/52, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, September 21, 1904; also *ibid.*, no. 49, Monahan to O'Connor, Bussorah, September 23, 1904: "On the 16th instant Fakhri Pasha (...) arrived here from Baghdad and assumed the duties of Acting Vali. He appears to be energetic and highly educated."

158 FO 424/206, no. 201, Townley to Lansdowne, no. 790, Therapia, October 11, 1904. With regards to Muhlis Pasha, Townley informed that

reports having appeared in the European press that he was removed from Salonica at the instance of the British Embassy, and he himself being under the same erroneous impression, I have taken steps, in order to avoid any prejudice to his relations with the consulate, to make it clear that the embassy neither insisted on his removal from his post nor objected to his appointment to Basra.

159 FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 55, Crow to O'Connor, no. 36 confidential, Bussorah, May 29, 1906.

160 *Ibid.*, and FO 424/210, no. 48, O'Connor to Grey, no. 392, Therapia, June 7, 1906; Consul Crow draws an interesting portrait of Muhlis Pasha:

Mukhlis Pasha's vindictive temperament and his obstinacy evidently carried him away and finally led to his grace. The brutal manner in which wounded

prisoners, who attacked him in the town gaol last year, were beaten in front of his house is still fresh in our collection. He was violent and bigoted, ignorant of administrative matters, and devoid of patience or inclination to understand them. His favorite argument was the Circassian riding whip, which he wore in his boat, and which he is said to have used with effect at more than one sitting of the Administrative Council when his wishes were opposed. He drank heavily at night, and bullied his subordinates. His manners were rustic, and he made himself as difficult of access as possible. On the other hand, he took no bribes, and was generally honest in his dealings, though he omitted to pay rent for his house. He took a keen interest in public works, built fine barracks in the Magam, and a depot for the Gendarmerie in Bussorah with the aid of public subscription. He began several roads, and tried to improve the town to the best of his ability. As long as he was in residence his masterful presence acted as a strong deterrent from lawlessness, and the town was quiet. When he absented himself at Amara disorder set in again. He seems more fitted for some executive post in the Gendarmerie than for administering a vilayet. Like most Turks, he was a sad boaster, and professed himself to be animated by the best intentions.

FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 55, Crow to O'Connor, no. 36 confidential, Bussorah, May 29, 1906.

161 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 32, 12 Rebiülevvel 1324/May 6, 1906.

162 FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 55, Crow to O'Connor, no. 36 confidential, Bussorah, May 29, 1906. Muhlis Paşa accused Süleyman Şevki, Muhammad Fazil, and Fahri Paşa as of improper dealings with Gadhban, the shaikh of the Banu Lam, alleging that they gave the latter military control of the Persian frontier from Khaniqin to Mohammerah, and appointed him "commander" on the border. For details, see Chapter 4.

163 FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 67, Crow to O'Connor, no. 47, Bussorah, July 17, 1906.

164 FO 424/210, no. 50, O'Connor to Grey, no. 404, Therapia, June 12, 1906.

165 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 47, 17 Receb 1324/September 6, 1906; for Samipaşazâde Abdurrahman Hasan Bey (1849–1927), see Öztuna, *Devletler*, p. 821. Cf. *Kamil Paşa'nın Anıları*, ed. Gül Çağalı-Güven (Istanbul: Arba, 1991), p. 207.

166 Interestingly, Hasan Bey's appointment was welcomed by the British. FO 424/210, no. 74, Barclay to Grey, no. 638, Therapia, September 18, 1906:

the representations made at the sublime Porte by his majesty's ambassador as to the need for a strong vali have resulted in the appointment of Hasan Bey, formerly vali of Kharput and at present member of the Council of State. Hasan Bey did excellent work in the vilayet of Kharput in the direction of increasing the public security, and on his departure his majesty's vice-consul reported that his administration had been characterized throughout by impartiality and firmness, and that, while making many enemies, he had inspired confidence and respect.

Later, he was declared persona-non-grata by the British authorities. See Chapter 4.

## 4

### **Tribal problems**

1 For the characteristics of Iraq as a tribal society, see Albertine Jwaideh, "Tribalism and Modern Society: Iraq, a case study," in *Introduction to Islamic Civilisation*, ed. R.M.Savory (Cambridge: CUP, 1976), pp. 160–7; Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 63ff.; for general literature on tribal societies, see Philip S.Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, eds, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990); Dale F.Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*, 2nd ed. (New Jersey Englewood Cliffs: 1988); Richard Tapper, ed., *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (London: Croom Helm, 1983).

2 See Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: on the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan* (Utrecht: Rijswijk, 1978); Sarah



Shields, "Regional Trade and 19th-Century Mosul: Revising the Role of Europe in the Middle East Economy," *IJMES*, 23(1991), 19–37.

3 See Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, pp. 275ff. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1996), pp. 38ff.

4 On the Barzinjis, see C.J.Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs: Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq, 1919–1925* (London: OUP, 1957), pp. 68–79; E.B.Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise: with Historical Notices of the Kurdish Tribes and the Chaldeans of Kurdistan* (London: John Murray, 1912), pp. 187ff.; Martin van Bruinessen, *Mullas, Sufis and Heretics: The Role of Religion in Kurdish Society* (Istanbul: ISIS, 2000), pp. 213–20.

5 On the Talabanis, see Edmonds, *Kurds*, pp. 269–71, 290–95; Bruinessen, *Mullas, Sufis and Heretics*, pp. 220–3; Sadık Vicdanî, *Tarikatler ve Silsileleri* (Istanbul: Enderun, 1995), pp. 135–43; for Shaikh Rıza (d. 1908), and other figures of the family, see İnal, *Son Asır Türk Şairleri*, pp. 1477–82. See also, Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, II, 411.

6 See Edmonds, *Kurds*, pp. 139–52; Soane, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 213–24, 379–81; S.H.Longrigg, "Djaf," *EI*(2), II, 370–1; Sinan Marufolu, *Osmanlı Döneminde Kuzey Irak, 1831–1914* (Istanbul: Eren, 1998), pp. 121–6.

7 See Edmonds, *Kurds*, pp. 39–45; Soane, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 171ff., 179ff.; D.N.MacKenzie, "Hamawand," *EI*(2), III, 121.

8 See Edmonds, *Kurds*; Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*; D.N.Mackenzie, "Barzan," *EI*(2), I, 1072.

9 These are mentioned in the next section on the *vilayet* of Baghdad.

10 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1500.

11 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 186/33, 9 Rebiülevvel 1303/December 16, 1885; *ibid.* 186/102, 22 Rebiülevvel 1303/December 29, 1885; *ibid.* 187/15, 5 Rebiyülâhir 1303/January 11, 1886.

12 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/10, 2 Safer 1304/October 31, 1886; Y.A.Hus. 187/83, 19 Rebiyülâhir 1303/January 25, 1886; Y.A.Hus. 187/127, 25 Rebiyülâhir 1303/January 31, 1886.

13 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/10(5), 2 Safer 1304/October 31, 1886.

14 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/10(3), 19 Teşrin-i evvel 1302/October 31, 1886.

15 Y.A.Res. 35/10(5).

16 “*Kurt*” (wolf) İsmail Hakkı Paşa was the Second President of the Military Inspection Commission, and a veteran of tribal wars. He had spent all his career either in border posts or in tribal areas. He was nicknamed the “wolf,” by the people of the provinces that he governed, due to the tactics that he used against the tribes. İsmail Hakkı Paşa’s (1818–96) official biography is given in İdris Bostan, “Zor Sancağının İmar ve Islahı ile Alakalı Üç Lâyiha,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 6(1986), 210ff.; see also *TM*, p. 194; *SO*, IV, 847.

17 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/10(5), 29 Muharrem 1304/October 28, 1886.

18 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/14, 10 Safer 1304/November 8, 1886.

19 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/14(3), 10 Safer 1304/November 8, 1886. For Mahmud Bey, see İnal, *Son Sadriazamlar*, p. 1321.

20 Ibid.

21 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/14(3), the minute dated 11 Safer 1304/November 9, 1886.

22 Ibid.

23 BOA, Y.A.Res. 35/23, 19 Safer 1304/November 17, 1886. Derviş Paşa, one of the Sultan’s chief advisers, attended this meeting of the Council of Ministers.

24 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 196/21, 7 Safer 1304/November 5, 1886.

25 BOA, Meclis-i Vükela Mazbataları, 15/56, 13 Rebiyülâhir 1304/January 9, 1887; BOA, YEE 36/139/81, 14 Ş aban 1304/May 8, 1887.

26 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 197/64, 13 Rebiülevvel 1304/December 10, 1886; ibid. 197/85, 17 Rebiülevvel 1304/December 14, 1886.

27 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 200/17, 6 Cemaziyelâhir 1304/March 2, 1887; ibid. 202/7, 3 Ş aban 1304/April 27, 1887, for Mahmud Hizir and Hama Haydar; ibid. 202/21, 7 Ş aban 1304/May 1, 1887, for Suleyman and Aziz Haydar; ibid. 202/17, 6 Cemaziyelâhir 1304/March 2, 1887; ibid. 202/49, 12 Ş aban 1304/May 6, 1887; in May 1887, the Administrative Council of Zor *sancak* informed the Porte by telegraph that the Hamawand had been captured and security re-established. Y.A.Hus. 202/52, 14 Ş aban 1304/May 8, 1887.

28 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 204/11, 6 Ş evval 1304/June 28, 1887.

29 BOA, Irade Meclis-i Mahsus, no. 3888, 14 Zilkade 1887/August 4, 1887; Y.A.Hus. 205/45, 17 Zilkade 1304/August 7, 1887; ibid. 205/50, 18 Zilkade 1304/August 8, 1887.

30 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 220/1, 1 Rebiyülâhir 1306/December 5, 1888.

31 Ibid., enclosing Mahmud Paşa's telegram.

32 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 222/41, 15 Cemaziyelâhir 1306/February 16, 1889.

33 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 225/55, 24 Ramazan 1306/May 24, 1889; ibid. 226/5, 5 Ş evval 1306/June 4, 1889.

34 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 231/16, 8 Rebiyülâhir 1307/December 2, 1889.

35 Ibid.

36 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 245/2, 1 Ş aban 1308/March 12, 1891.

37 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 251/135, 20 Safer 1309/September 25, 1891; ibid. 254/16, 8 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 10, 1891.

38 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 256/108, 28 Receb 1309/February 27, 1892.

39 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 260/9, 17 Ş evval 1309/May 15, 1892.

40 BOA, YMTV 31/35, 2 Receb 1305/March 15, 1888; Y.A.Res. 46/3, 11 Rebiyülâhir 1306/December 15, 1888; ibid. 46/13, 24 Cemaziyelevvel 1306/January 26, 1889.

41 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 234/48, 19 Receb 1307/March 11, 1890; cf. *EI*(2), III, 121, and Edmonds, *Kurds*, pp. 40, 76–7; orders were issued to seize them and send them back to North Africa.

42 BOA, Y.A.Res. 54/20(4), 7 Mart 1307/March 19, 1891.

43 BOA, Y.A.Res. 54/20(1), 13 Ş aban 1308/March 24, 1891. The Grand Vizier, at the same time, proposed the name of Akif Paşa, a former *mutasarrıf* of Najd. In the event, however, Tahir Paşa was replaced in June due to a Military Inspection Committee's report, as noted in Chapter 3, by Ali Kemalî Paşa.

44 Ibid.

45 BOA, Y.A.Res. 55/36(2), 21 Zilkade 1308/June 28, 1891. They were going to reside in the *kaza* of Bazyan; Y.A.Hus. 263/57, 15 Muharrem 1310/August 9, 1892.

46 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 207/50, 23 Muharrem 1305/October 11, 1887; ibid. 223/20, 8 Receb 1306/March 10, 1889; ibid. 258/95, 27 Ramazan 1309/April 25, 1892; ibid. 261/140, 23 Zilkade 1309/June 19, 1892.

47 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 261/140, 23 Zilkade 1309/June 19, 1892. See the minute, dated 24 Zilkade 1309/June 20, 1892, signed Süreyya.

48 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 262/50, 15 Zilhicce 1309/July 11, 1892; for “*Kara*” Ömer Vehbi Paşa, see Muharrem Mazlum İ skora, *Harp Akademileri Tarihçesi, 1846–1965* (Ankara: Harb Akademileri Komutanlığı, 1966), p. 154.

49 See, for example, BOA, Y.A.Hus. 263/52, 13 Muharrem 1310/August 7, 1892.

50 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 263/85, 21 Muharrem 1310/August 15, 1892.

51 See, for example, BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 164, 24 Muharrem 1310/August 18, 1892.

52 On this subject, see John S. Guest, *Survival Among the Kurds: A History of the Yezidis* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993), pp. 134–9; Mehmet Ali Aynî, *Milliyetçilik* (Istanbul, 1943), p. 377; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, pp. 68ff.; FO 78/4417, memo by Maunsell, Baghdad, October 20, 1892; BOA, Irade-Dahiliye, no. 53, 30 Safer 1310/September 23, 1892.

53 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 263/107, 25 Muharrem 1310/August 19, 1892. Two aides-de-camp of the Sultan—his permanent advisers on the affairs of the region—Derviş and Şakir Paşas, endorsed the commission's report.

54 For the family tree of the Barzinjis, see Edmonds, *Kurds*, p. 69. See also pp. 74–6, especially the paragraph about Sultan Abdülhamid. The reason why Sayyid Muhammad Efendi was in Istanbul is unknown.

55 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 315/51, 7 Cemaziyelâhir 1312/December 6, 1894.

56 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 137, 3 Receb 1312/December 31, 1894; Y.A.Hus. 317/67, 24 Receb 1312/January 21, 1895.

57 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 107, 26 Receb 1312/January 23, 1895.

58 BOA, Y.A.Res. 76/3, 10 Muharrem 1313/July 3, 1895; Irade-Hususi, no. 135, 17 Muharrem 1313/July 10, 1895. For this commission, a set of instructions was drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior, and approved by the Council of Ministers.

59 BOA, Y.A.Res. 77/82, 14 Şaban 1313/January 30, 1896; Irade-Hususi, no. 69, 28 Şevval 1313/April 12, 1896; Y.A.Hus. 350/33(1), 5 Zilkade 1313/April 18, 1896.

60 BOA, Y.A.Res. 82/42, 22 Rebiyülâhir 1315/September 20, 1897.

61 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 376/89, 20 Rebiyülâhir 1315/September 18, 1897, enclosing the Sayyids' telegrams of appreciation.

62 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 298/77, 28 Zilkade 1311/June 2, 1894; Irade-Hususi, no. 116, 24 Safer 1312/August 27, 1894.

63 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 315/25, 13 Cemaziyelâhir 1312/December 12, 1894, and Y.A.Res. 74/17(8), 24 Cemaziyelâhir 1312/December 23, 1894.

64 BOA, Irade-Hususi no. 58, 21 Cemaziyelâhir 1312/December 20, 1894. For Shaikh Barzinji's telegram, see enclosure 2, dated 29 Teşrin-i sâni 1310/December 11, 1894.

65 BOA, Y.A.Res. 74/17, 19 Receb 1312/January 16, 1895.

66 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 17, 6 Ramazan 1312/March 3, 1895.

67 BOA, Y.A.Res. 87/1(5), 18 Zilhicce 1313/May 31, 1896; Y.A.Res. 79/60, 18 Zilhicce 1313/May 31, 1896.

68 See Tepeyran, *Canlı Tarihler*, pp. 269, 278; cf. *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han: Devlet ve Memleket Görüşlerim*, for similar remarks of Abdülhamid.

69 BOA, Y.A.Res. 87/1(1), Gurre-i Muharrem 1315/June 2, 1897.

70 See Edmonds, *Kurds*, pp. 148ff.; Soane, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 213ff, 379–81.

71 On *Hamidiye Hafif Süvari Alayları*, see Bayram Kodaman, "Hamidiye Hafif Süvari Alayları: II. Abdülhamid ve Doğu-Anadolu Aşiretleri," in *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Devri Doğu Anadolu Politikası*, Bayram Kodaman, ed. (Ankara: TKAE, 1987), pp. 21–65; Cezmi Eraslan, "Hamidiye Alayları," *DIA*, XV, 462–4; Stephen Duguid, "The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia," *MES*, 9(1973), 139–55; Griffiths, "The Reorganization of the Ottoman Army," pp. 119–27; Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 246.

72 FO 424/191, inclosure 2 in no. 343, Rassam to Loch, no. 12, Mosul, March 24, 1897.

73 Cf. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, p. 236; Tepeyran, *Canlı Tarihler*, pp. 315–20.

74 FO 195/2020, Melvill to O’Conor, no. 598/93, Baghdad, November 29, 1898, extract from the Mosul Newsletter, no. 30, dated November 13, 1898; for later developments, FO 195/2055, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad, no. 2, dated January 11, 1899.

75 FO 195/2055, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad, no. 2, dated January 11, 1899. A police officer, with a detachment of 50 men were sent to give assistance or to prevent further fighting.

76 FO 195/2055, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad, no. 6, dated February 24, 1899.

77 FO 195/2055, extracts from letter no. 7, dated March 10, 1899, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad.

78 See Tepeyran, *Canlı Tarihler*, pp. 243 and 317; FO 195/2055, extracts from letter no. 7, dated March 10, 1899, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul to Consul General, Baghdad: “The new vali for Mosul.. Hâzim Effendi.. the inhabitants of this place are anxiously awaiting his arrival, hoping that he will be able to improve the state of affairs in this vilayet.” Ibid., no. 8, March 29, 1899: “H.E.Hâzim Beg, the new vali for Mosul, arrived here last Friday.”

79 FO 195/2055, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad, no. 8, March 29, 1899.

80 FO 195/2055, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad, no. 10, April 4, 1899.

81 FO 195/2055, translation of Newsletter no. 22, dated August 14, 1899, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad; FO 195/2020, translation of Newsletter no. 27, dated October 2, 1899, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad.



82 FO 195/2055, translation of letter no. 28, dated October 23, 1899, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad.

83 FO 195/2055, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad, no. 31, November 20, 1899.

84 FO 195/2074, translation of letter no. 32, dated December 21, 1899, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad.

85 FO 195/2074, translation of letter no. 3, dated February 21, 1900, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad.

86 FO 195/2074, translation of letter no. 4, dated February 28, 1900, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad.

87 FO 195/2074, translation of letter no. 17, dated November 12, 1900, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul; *ibid.*, translation of letter no. 18, dated November 20, 1900.

88 FO 195/2096, translated purport of letter no. 26, dated December 12, 1901, from the British Consular Agent, Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad. Shaikh Said was also said to have obtained a general pardon for all outlaws of Sulaymaniyah.

89 See, his memoirs, Tepeyran, *Canlı Tarihler*, pp. 387–8; cf. FO 195/2096, purport of letter no. 19, dated September 17, 1901, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul, to Consul General, Baghdad: “Today an order was received from Constantinople removing Hâzim Beg, the Vali of Mosul, the reason being unknown...”; and FO 195/2096, purport of letter no. 21, dated October 8, 1901:

Hâzim Beg...left...on Thursday last... His Excellency’s departure is regretted by all the inhabitants, as his intention was to secure the punishment of bad characters and to restore order. To do this, he applied to the Porte for special powers, but it appears that the Porte would not comply, and perhaps this led to his transfer to another vilayet. I heard yesterday that a section of Shammar tribe (...) intercepted His Excellency and his followers on the way from Mosul to Naseebin.

90 FO 195/2096, Mosul Newsletter no. 11, June 4, 1901. When the shaikh left Sulaymaniyah, the notables and officials had accompanied him for about three hours to wish him Godspeed. Ironically, on their return they were attacked by a party of the Hamawands, who looted their horses and robbed them, and they returned home on foot; reportedly, on this visit, Shaikh Said persuaded Abdülhamid to grant a general pardon to the outlaws of the Kurdish region, including two influential Naqshbandi shaikhs, Nur Muhammad and Nuri of Amadiyah. FO 195/2096, Mosul Newsletter no. 26, December 12, 1901; cf. Tepeyran, *Canlı Tarihler*, p. 338. During his visit in Istanbul, Shaikh Said stayed at the house of Hacı Ali Paşa, the Principal Palace Chamberlain and an adherent of the Qadiri order.

91 BOA, Y.A.Res. 126/61, 8 Rebiyülâhir 1322/June 22, 1904.

92 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 120, 26 Rebiülevvel 1322/June 10, 1904.

93 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 20, 7 Cemaziyelevvel 1322/July 20, 1904. The selected commissioners were Major-General Rıza Paşa of the Military Inspection Commission, and Vehbi Bey of the Ministry of the Interior.

94 BOA, Y.A.Res. 130/87, 23 Rebiülevvel 1323/May 28, 1905.

95 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 77, 27 Rebiülevvel 1323/June 1, 1905.

96 BOA, Y.A.Res. 133/7(1), 5 Şaban 1323/October 5, 1905. The Council of Ministers also discussed whether the pardon should be extended to the aghas of outlaw tribes who had collaborated with the Barzinji shaikhs. See enclosure 2.

97 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 12, 11 Zilhicce 1323/February 6, 1906.

98 FO 424/210, no. 3, inclosure, Baghdad, no. 1009/97, December 21, 1905.

99 BOA, Y.A.Res. 130/92, 26 Rebiülevvel 1323/May 31, 1905.

100 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 27, 10 Safer 1325/March 25, 1907.

101 See Soane, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 191–2; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 97; cf. WO 106/920, p. 42: “The Turks tried several times to break the power of the family; their efforts culminated in the murder of shaikh Said. This action induced in the family and adherent tribes a violent hatred of the Ottoman government.”

102 See Soane, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 180ff., 191ff.; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 97ff.

103 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1505. For comparison with the Tanzimat period, see *ibid.*, pp. 1426ff.

104 The following account is based on J.F. Williamson, “Political History of the Shammar Jarba Tribe of al-Jazirah: 1800–1958” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Indiana University, 1974), pp. 119ff.; cf. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1500–1; *Gazetteer of Arabian Tribes*, ed. R. Trench (Archive Editions, 1996), XIII, 1–252.

105 See Williamson, “Political History of the Shammar Jarba”; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1501; especially after the rise of Ibrahim Pasha of the Kurdish Milli tribe, a powerful Hamidiye regiment tribe, the balance of power in the area changed at the expense of the Shammar Jarba. Two important battles took place between the two tribes, each time with the defeat of Shammar. See *ibid.*, and Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*.

106 On the subject, see P. Sluglett and M.F. Sluglett, “The Transformation of Land Tenure and Rural Social Structure in Central and Southern Iraq, c. 1870–1958,” *IJMES*, 15(1983), 491–505; Jwaideh, “Midhat Pasha and the Land System of Lower Iraq,” pp. 111ff.; “Aspects of Land Tenure and Social Change in Lower Iraq During Late Ottoman Times,” pp. 333–56; Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 63ff.

107 See P. Sluglett, “Muntafik,” *EI*(2), VII, 582–3; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIB, 1272ff.; *Gazetteer of Arabian Tribes*, IX, 181–484; John Glubb, *Arabian Adventures: Ten Years of Joyful Service* (London: Cassell, 1978), pp. 34ff. The confederation numbered some 75,000 tribesmen in 1929.

108 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 164/121, 8 Receb 1297/June 16, 1880.

109 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 167/109, 17 Receb 1298/June 15, 1881.

110 BOA, Y.A.Res. 13/62, 23 Zilhicce 1298/November 16, 1881, for their letters in Arabic to the Ministry of the Interior.

111 BOA, Y.A.Res. 18/28, 13 Safer 1300/December 24, 1882; *ibid.* 20/55(2), memorandum by the Council of Ministers, dated 20 Receb 1300/May 27, 1883.

112 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 194/1, 3 Zilkade 1303/August 3, 1886; *ibid.* 189/13, 2 Cemaziyelâhir 1303/March 8, 1886, for Mansur Paşa's telegram of appreciation to the Sultan.

113 BOA, Y.A.Res. 57/14, 18 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 20, 1891.

114 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 254/7, 4 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 6, 1891.

115 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 254/85, 28 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 30, 1891.

116 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 282/82, 11 Rebiyülâhir 1311/October 22, 1893; *ibid.* 265/150, 24 Rebiülevvel 1310/October 16, 1892, for his agent, Shaikh Reşid Efendi.

117 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 421/59, 24 Cemaziyelevvel 1318/September 19, 1900. The land was registered in the name of Falih Paşa's son. When the latter died in early 1903, the land was transferred to Falih Paşa, with the consent of the Sultan. Irade-Hususi, no. 982/54, 5 Zilkade 1320/February 3, 1903.

118 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1508–9. As will be seen in Chapter 6, the balance of power and the status quo was changing in the region due to new developments at the time.

119 *Ibid.*, p. 1509.

120 *Ibid.*

121 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 18, 10 Ramazan 1321/November 30, 1903.

122 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1509.

123 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 56, 25 Ramazan 1321/December 15, 1903.

124 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 89(1), 23 Zilkade 1321/February 10, 1904; Abdülhamid referred the issue to the Council of Ministers. Y.A.Res. 124/56(1), 30 Zilkade 1321/February 17, 1904.

125 BOA, Y.A.Res. 124/81(1), 17 Zilhicce 1321/March 5, 1904; see the words of Muhlis Paşa in FO 195/2188, Crow to O'Connor, no. 73, Basra, November 11, 1905.

126 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 11, Safer 1323/April/May 1905; accordingly some troops were also sent to Nasiriyah from Baghdad on April 12, 1905. See the diary of British Consul General, FO 78/5394, Newmarch to O'Connor, no. 257/30, Baghdad, April 12, 1905.

127 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 36, 13 Safer 1323/April 19, 1905; in the following year, Muhlis Paşa, the Vali and Commander of Basra, also reported to the Porte that Sadun was supported in his pretensions by the English. FO 424/210, no. 55, O'Connor to Grey, no. 440 confidential, Therapia, June 27, 1906.

128 FO 195/2188, Crow to O'Connor, no. 73, Basra, November 11, 1905. Muhlis Paşa also destroyed four strongholds belonging to Sadun, and removed provisions from them.

129 Muhlis Paşa told Crow, the British Consul, that Sadun's importance had been much exaggerated: Sadun was a man of no standing or importance, who had taken advantage of his family name to collect a few followers, adding that no clemency ought to be shown to Sadun, unless he settled down and abandoned his predatory habits. The Vali added that "He [Sadun] had been accused of acts which he never committed and many mistakes had been made. On a previous occasion the imperial pardon had been granted him, but he did not merit it." FO 195/2188, Crow to O'Connor, no. 73, Basra, November 11, 1905; FO 424/210, no. 55, O'Connor to Grey, no. 440 confidential, Therapia, June 27, 1906. In this conflict, Falih Paşa, a

cousin of Sadun, was reported to have supported Muhlis Paşa hoping to get his cousin's lands on his behalf.

130 See the inclosure in FO 195/2215, no. 730/74 confidential, Ramsay to O'Connor, Baghdad, August 25, 1906 (May 29, 1906); FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 55, Crow to O'Connor, no. 36 confidential, Bussorah, May 29, 1906.

131 FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 67, Crow to O'Connor, no. 47, Bussorah, July 17, 1906; FO 195/2214, no. 564/53, Ramsay to O'Connor, Baghdad, June 25, 1906. Mecid Bey took the Naqib of Baghdad with him.

132 FO 195/2215, no. 60, Crow to O'Connor, Basra, August 27, 1906. According to the British Consul, the "Turks" were stated to have been quite powerless there and the Muntafiq Arabs were well-supplied and well-armed. A considerable number of rifles were said to have been sold daily at Khamisia, and Sadun levies a tax of one "real" on every rifle.

133 FO 195/2215, no. 60, Crow to O'Connor, Basra, August 27, 1906. According to British sources, the taxes due in the *sancak* of Muntafiq amounted to something between 60,000 and 70,000 *liras* per annum. A very small portion of this sum was recovered for the year 1320(1902/3). But the amounts due for 1321(1903/4) and 1322(1904/5) were still unpaid. The *mukataa* of al-Garaf, the large grain district on the Shattu'l-Hai, was leased to Falih Paşa of the Sadun for three years for the sum of 8,000 *lira*.

134 FO 424/212, inclosure in no. 30, Crow to O'Connor, no. 6, Bussorah, January 25, 1907; FO 424/212, no. 16, Barclay to Grey, no. 39, Pera, January 16, 1907.

135 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 52, 13 Zilkade 1324/December 29, 1906. The Sultan asked the Council of Ministers to consider this proposal. Its decision has not been traced.

136 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 22, 8 Safer 1325/March 23, 1907. Cf. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1510.

137 Ibid.

138 FO 424/216, inclosure 2 in no. 109, Knox to Cox, confidential, Kuwait, June 10, 1908; *The Affairs of Kuwait, 1896–1905*, ed. Robin Bidwell, 2 vols (London: Frank Cass, 1971), I, xxii.

139 See *EI(2)*, V, 645–6; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIB, 1081–6; *Gazetteer of Arabian Tribes*, VIII, 1–67.

140 BOA, Y.A.Res. 60/3, 2 Muharrem 1310/July 27, 1892.

141 See the enclosure in FO 195/2215, no. 730/74 confidential, Ramsay to O’Conor, Baghdad, August 25, 1906 (September 19, 1904).

142 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIB, 1254–5; *Gazetteer of Arabian Tribes*, IX, 103–44.

143 FO 424/216, inclosure 1 in no. 16, Ramsay to Barclay, no. 55, Baghdad, June 9, 1908; cf. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1506, 1532–3.

144 Sayhud was always mentioned in the Ottoman documents as “*Ş âki*” (brigand), unlike other tribal chiefs.

145 FO 424/216, inclosure 1 in no. 16, Ramsay to Barclay, no. 55, Baghdad, June 9, 1908.

146 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 254/52, 20 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 22, 1891.

147 FO 424/216, inclosure 1 in no. 16, Ramsay to Barclay, no. 55, Baghdad, June 9, 1908.

148 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 258/48; later, Cevad Paşa again pressed Abdülhamid, stating that due to lack of any military measures, Sayhud’s followers were increasing, and asked for an imperial order to use troops against him. Y.A.Hus. 258/104, 28 Ramazan 1309/April 26, 1892; Y.A.Hus. 260/32, 19 Ş evval 1309/May 17, 1892.

149 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 261/101, 12 Zilkade 1309/June 8, 1892.

150 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 265/15, 3 Rebiülevvel 1310/September 25, 1892; also *ibid.* 265/39, 6 Rebiülevvel 1310/September 28, 1892.



151 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 265/93, 17 Rebiülevvel 1310/October 9, 1892.

152 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 99, 19 Rebiülevvel 1310/October 11, 1892; but before long they were all pardoned. Y.A.Hus. 278/128, 22 Muharrem 1311/August 5, 1893, and ibid. 278/147, 25 Muharrem 1311/August 8, 1893.

153 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 317/71, 25 Receb 1312/January 22, 1895.

154 See, for example, BOA, Y.A.Res. 74/28, 3 Şaban 1312/January 30, 1895.

155 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 12, 7 Ramazan 1314/February 9, 1897, enclosing Sayhud's letter in Arabic.

156 FO 195/2215, no. 730/74 confidential, Ramsay to O'Connor, Baghdad, August 25, 1906 (November 5, 1903).

157 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 95, 21 Receb 1321/October 13, 1903.

158 FO 195/2215, no. 730/74 confidential, Ramsay to O'Connor, Baghdad, August 25, 1906 (September 19, 1904). Muhammad Fazil Paşa telegraphed to Baghdad for reinforcement.

159 FO 424/216, no. 16, Ramsay to Grey, no. 1, Baghdad, June 9, 1908.

160 FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 55, Crow to O'Connor, no. 36 confidential, Bussorah, May 29, 1906.

161 FO 195/2214, no. 605/58, Ramsay to O'Connor, Baghdad, July 9, 1906.

162 FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 67, Crow to O'Connor, no. 47, Bussorah, July 17, 1906. Mecid Bey also stated that he thought it was a great mistake ever to have separated the *vilayets* of Baghdad and Basra.

163 Crow, the British Consul, visited Mecid Bey in Basra, in July 1906, enquired into the matter, remarking that Ghadban fired upon British steamers with the aim of eliciting British interference, and in order to put pressure on the Ottoman Government. Mecid Bey replied that, if that were

the case, he had not gained much, as the land in dispute had been given neither to Ghadban nor to Sayhud, but to an independent party. But, according to Crow's information, it was rumored that Kumait was going to be leased to a mere nominee of Ghadban's, who paid Mecid Bey over 4,000 *liras* to keep the land out of Sayhud's hands. FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 67, Crow to O'Connor, no. 47, Bussorah, July 17, 1906.

164 FO 424/216, inclosure 1 in no. 16, Ramsay to Barclay, no. 55, Baghdad, June 9, 1908.

165 FO 424/210, inclosure 2 in no. 73, Diary to Government of India for week ending August 6, 1906, Baghdad, August 6, 1906.

166 FO 195/2242, Political Diary of the Baghdad Residency for the week ending June 17, 1907, para. 161; before that, in May 1907, Hatem, the son of Sayhud, seems to have had a grievance against the Privy Purse, and he took his revenge by stopping the passage of sailing vessels to the serious loss of British merchants. FO 424/216, inclosure 1 in no. 16, Ramsay to Barclay, no. 55, Baghdad, June 9, 1908.

167 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 103, 27 Rebiyülâhir 1325/June 9, 1907. Mecid Efendi, former Vali of Baghdad, Hamdi Paşa, the *Mutasarrıf* of Diwaniyah, and one of the former *Defterdars* of Basra were also to be consulted by the commission.

168 For further developments, FO 424/214, inclosure in no. 44, Memorandum by Consul General Ramsay, no. 13 confidential, Baghdad, December 23, 1907.

169 FO 424/216, inclosure in no. 17, Memorandum regarding Arab disturbances on the Tigris, confidential, signed J.Ramsay, Baghdad, June 13, 1908.

170 Ibid. According to British sources, Hasan Bey advised them to settle their differences mutually, and so become too strong for Nâzım Paşa, with the hope that he would eventually be called in to settle matters. FO 424/216, inclosure in no. 17, Memorandum regarding Arab disturbances on the Tigris, confidential, signed J.Ramsay, Baghdad, June 13, 1908.

171 FO 424/215, inclosure in no. 83, Crow to Barclay, no. 30, Bussorah, April 15, 1908. According to Crow, the British Consul at Basra, Nâzım Paşa, the Reform Commissioner, had gone about the business hurriedly and without fully considering the temperament of the Arab population with whom he had to deal. He gave the lease of Mejer Saghir to a certain Abul Nefise, a Najdi, and an outsider, in face of local opposition, and endeavored to install him in his holding by armed force. The project was ill-advised, and could not be effected. At the same time, the Vali of Basra, Hasan Bey, told Crow that Nâzım Paşa was upsetting the country by trying to supersede the local shaikhs by outsiders (Nedjdies).

172 Ibid.

173 After Nâzım Paşa's departure, according to British accounts, Hasan Bey, the Vali of Basra, went to Amarah, and it was said that in all he received money (4,000 *lira*) from Ghadban, and was prepared to give him all he wanted. One result of these proceedings on the part of the Vali was that the townspeople of Amarah besieged his house and complained that he sold them to "the Arabs," over whom there would be no semblance of control in future. The townspeople at the same time telegraphed on the subject to the Porte and to Nâzım Paşa. The Vali, seeing that he had got into an awkward position, sent a man to meet Ghadban and it was arranged that Ghadban should return all property stolen from the people of Amarah, that Ghadban should see that law and order was preserved in the neighborhood of Amarah, and that the debts were paid. FO 424/216, inclosure in no. 17, Memorandum regarding Arab disturbances on the Tigris, confidential, signed J. Ramsay, Baghdad, June 13, 1908; *ibid.*, inclosure 1 in no. 16, Ramsay to Barclay, no. 55, Baghdad, June 9, 1908. According to Ramsay, Nâzım Paşa wished to see Ghadban brought to his senses, but that he thought it more useful collecting tax arrears, and getting assurances for the future than about diminishing Ghadban for what he had already done. See also the inclosure 3 in no. 16, statement showing the amount of rent paid by the Albu Muhammad and Banu Lam for the lands leased by them from the Turkish Government and Daira Saniyah in AD 1906.

174 Ibid. In the words of British Consul-General: "Sidki Pasha enlarged upon the need for loyalty to each other among the Turkish officials and the difficulty of obtaining it." Sıdkı Paşa was also in favor of punishing Ghadban. He added that Muhammad Fazil Paşa a Daghistani would be an excellent man for the job if he is to get the necessary orders from Istanbul, and that Yusuf Paşa, head of the Privy Purse at Amarah, was a good and straightforward man, who disapproved of the conduct of the Vali of Basra.

175 For further details, FO 424/216, inclosure in no. 17, Memorandum regarding Arab disturbances on the Tigris, confidential, Baghdad, June 13, 1908: "He [Pertev Paşa] was an intelligent man, who had studied the Arab question from the military point of view."

176 Ibid.

177 Ibid.; FO 424/216, inclosure 1 in no. 18, Ramsay to Barclay, no. 61, Baghdad, June 25, 1908; FO 424/216, no. 30, Barclay to Grey, no. 394 confidential, Therapia, July 16, 1908. Hasan Bey was a colleague of Sayyid Talib Paşa in the Council of State, and he was known as a protégé of Shaikh Abulhuda. He remained in his post until the Young Turk Revolution of July 23, 1908.

178 See *EI(2)*, I, 683–4; *Gazetteer of Arabian Tribes*, II, 43–53; cf. FO 195/1885, extracts from diaries of the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia to the Government of India, Foreign Department (para. August 14).

179 FO 195/1885, extracts from diaries of the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

180 FO 195/1885, extract from diary of the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Simla, for the week ending September 7, 1895; *ibid.*, inclosure of letter no. 578/89, October 2, 1895, from H.M.'s Consul General, Baghdad to H.M.'s Ambassador, Constantinople; *ibid.*, extracts from diary of H.M.'s Consul at Basrah, to H.M.'s Consul General, Baghdad, for the week ending October 5, 1895; *ibid.*, inclosure in no. 555/99, extracts from diary of H.M.'s Consul General, Baghdad, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Simla (October 21–22, 1895); FO 195/1935, extracts from

diaries of H.M.'s Consul at Basrah, March 4, 1896. In March 1896, for example, the Vali and the *Tabur Ağası* went to Qurnah and Madina for the alleged purpose of personally making enquires into the reports which were current, to the effect that Hassan Khayyun and his followers had reappeared at those places.

181 In 1897, some of Hassan Khayyun's followers caused some troubles in Qurnah but were easily suppressed by troops sent to the area. FO 195/1978, no. 356/62, Loch to Currie, Baghdad, June 11, 1897; but, in August of the same year, four Ottoman soldiers and their commander were killed by some of Khayyun's followers in Madina. FO 195/1978, extract from diary of H.M.'s Consul General, Baghdad, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Simla, September 3, 1897; the *Tabur Ağası* himself proceed to Qurnah to enquire into the incident. Soon, 300 infantry were sent to the Muntafiq district to act in conjunction with other troops stationed there against Hassan Khayyun. FO 195/1978, extract from diary of H.M.'s Consul General, Baghdad, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Simla, dated September 24, 1897.

182 FO 195/2020, inclosure in no. 181/24, Loch to Currie, Baghdad, April 23, 1898. Later, in the same month, about 400 infantry were moved up the river in connection with the disturbances. It was reported that they were to be stationed at intervals between Qurnah and Amarah for the protection of navigation.

183 FO 195/2055, no. 32, Wratislaw to O'Connor, Basra, July 5, 1899. Afterwards, the Consul showed the Vali Hassan Khayyun's letter, and his reply, in order to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of local Ottoman officials.

184 See *EI*(2), I, 684.

185 See, for example, 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(2003), 311–42; Isa Blumi, *Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire: A Comparative Social and Political History of Albania and Yemen, 1878–1918* (Istanbul: ISIS, 2003), pp. 43–81; Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire*:

*Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999); Paul Dresch, *Tribes, Government and History in Yemen* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), chs 6 and 7; Norman N. Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800–1980* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), chs 7 and 8; “The Syrian Steppe during the Last Century of Ottoman rule: Hawran and the Palmyrena,” in *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, eds Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp. 33–43.

## The Shi'i problem

1 The best contemporary estimate was published in 1894 by Vital Cuinet, who gave the following figures: Baghdad (Sunnis: 309,000; Shi'is: 480,000); Basra (Sunnis: 276,000; Shi'is: 663,150). For details, see Cuinet, *La Turquie D'Asie*, III, 17 and 220–1. Şemseddin Sami, the celebrated Ottoman encyclopedist, who was also the chief secretary of the Military Inspection Commission, repeats Cuinet's figures in his *Kamusu'l-Alam*. See, for example, article "Kerbela" in vol. V(1314), 3832–4.

2 See Joyce N. Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Shi'as* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992), p. 9; in 1916, the British sources estimated the whole population of "Mesopotamia" as Sunnis 1,037,000 and Shi'is 1,173,000. See Admiralty, *Mesopotamia*, I, 66. Cf. Foreign Office, *Mesopotamia*, p. 36.

3 See Yitzhak Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shi'ism," *IJMES*, 26(1994), 443–63; *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 25–48; according to one account, 100,000 Sunni Muslims adopted Shi'ism within a few years around 1895. FO 424/183, Currie to Salisbury, no. 476 confidential, July 16, 1895.

4 For Ottoman-Iranian relations in the nineteenth century, see Mohammed Reza Nasiri, *Nasireddin Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri, 1848–1896* (Tokyo: Institute for the study of languages and cultures of Asia and Africa, 1991); Abdolghafour Baghdadi, "Muhammed Ali Şah Devrinde Osmanlı-İran Siyasi İlişkileri ve İran'daki İç Olaylar, 1907–1909" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Istanbul, 1982); Richard Schofield, ed., *The Iran-Iraq Border 1840–1958*, 9 vols (Archive Editions, 1989), vols 1–4; Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Tanzimat'tan Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri," *KÖK Araştırmalar*, Osmanlı Özel Sayısı (2000), 11–23; for the perception of an "Iranian threat" on the part of the Ottoman authorities, see especially Fuad Paşa's remarks in Engin D. Akarlı, ed., *Belgelerle Tanzimat: Osmanlı Sadrazamlarından Ali ve Fuad Paşaların Siyasi*



*Vasiyyetnâmeleri* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 1978), p. 5, and *Meclis-i Mebusan*, p. 176.

5 See Hamid Algar, “Atabat,” *EIr*, II, 902–3; idem., “Shi’ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century” in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, eds Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Carbondale, IC: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), pp. 288–302; Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi’ism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 143–4; the structure of population in these particular towns and cities is worth mentioning: in Karbala, Sunni: 10,000, Shi’i: 54,700; in Najaf, Sunni: 750, Shi’i: 4,250; in Kazimayn, Sunni: 1,000, Shi’i: 5,000; in Samarra, Sunni: 475, Shi’i: 2,000 (Cuinet, *La Turquie D’Asie*, III, 90, 132, 144, 175).

6 See Meir Litvak, *Shi’i Scholars of nineteenth-century Iraq: The ulama of Najaf and Karbala* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998); Admiralty, *Mesopotamia*, I, 83–6; cf. Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985), pp. 205ff.

7 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, 2363–5; for a detailed account, FO 195/2138, Newmarch to O’Conor, no. 37/5, Baghdad, January 21, 1903.

8 See Cuinet, *La Turquie D’Asie*, III, 19, 189. Cuinet gives the number of Sunni Madrasas in Baghdad *vilayet* as 39, and the students as 1,950; the Ottoman sources, for instance, estimated the students of Mirza Hasan Shirazi, the chief mujtahid (*marja’ at-taqlid*) of the time, in Samarra, as 500; see also Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 214–18.

9 See Cuinet, *La Turquie D’Asie*, III, 90: among Shi’is in Karbala, Persians: 41,000, Indians: 5,000, Ottomans: 8,700. There are no available figures in Cuinet for the rest of the Atabat; cf. Sami, *Kamusu’l-Alam*, V, 3832–3, gives the same numbers as Cuinet; a British source in 1916 gives the number as 70,000 for the whole of Mesopotamia. Admiralty, *Mesopotamia*, I, 66, 76: “about 40,000 in Kerbela, 12,000 in Nejef, 7,000 in Basra, 5,000 in Baghdad.”

10 See Nakash, *Shi’is of Iraq*, pp. 163–201, 238ff.; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, 2358–63. According to Ottoman figures, the number of Shi’i pilgrims

entering Iraq from all directions was 23,990 in 1889, and 57,567 in 1890. The number fluctuated considerably from year to year. British sources estimated the number of Shi'i pilgrims as about 100,000 in 1875, 95,000 in 1905, and 55,000 in 1910 (Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, p. 135). It was "believed to amount to 150,000–200,000 in the year" in 1919. The number of Indian Shi'is arriving at Basra was said to be large. The expenditures of these pilgrims in Iraq appear to have constituted an important source of income for the region. British sources estimated the annual amount as over 1,000,000 sterling in 1875 (Foreign Office, *Mesopotamia*, p. 36); the number of Shi'i bodies (both Iranian and Ottoman subjects) buried at the Atabat was given in Ottoman sources as 9,620 in 1889, and 14,354 in 1890 (Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, 2361). The Ottoman government took fees from the pilgrims entering Iraq, and for the burials. The annual amount was given as 4,807 sterling in 1889 and 9,243 sterling in 1890 (*ibid.*, p. 2363).

11 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1409–15, 1477–84, 1598–1616; Foreign Office, *Mesopotamia*, p. 25; see also, Juan R.I.Cole, "Indian Money' and the Shi'i Shrine Cities of Iraq, 1786–1850," *MES*, 22(1986), 461–80; Meir Litvak, "Money, Religion, and Politics: The Oudh Bequest in Najaf and Karbala, 1850–1903," *IJMES*, 33 (2001), 1–21; Nakash, *Shi'is of Iraq*, pp. 205ff.

12 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, 2357. The management of the shrines was legally under the control of the Ottoman waqf administration, and the custodians and attendants of the shrines (known as *Kilidar*, *Serhademe*, and *Hademes*) were appointed by the Ottoman government.

13 Gertrude L.Bell, *Review of the Civil Administration of Iraq* (London: HMSO, 1920), p. 27. Cf. Nakash, "The Conversion of Iraq's Tribes to Shi'ism," and *Shi'is of Iraq*, pp. 25–48.

14 See J.R.Barnes, *An Introduction to Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), pp. 67–153; Bahaeddin Yediyıldız and Nazif Öztürk, "Tanzimat Dönemi Vakıf Uygulamaları," in *150 . Yılında Tanzimat*, ed. Hakkı Dursun Yıldız (Ankara: TTK, 1992), pp. 571–91.

15 See Nasiri, *Nasireddin Şah*; Bruce Masters, "The Treaties of Erzurum (1828 and 1848) and the Changing Status of Iranians in the Ottoman

Empire,” *Iranian Studies*, 24 (1991), 3–15; see also Juan R.I.Cole and Moojan Momen, “Mafia, Mob and Shi’ism in Iraq: the Rebellion of Ottoman Karbala, 1824–1843,” *Past and Present*, 112(1986), 112–43.

16 Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, p. 196. Cf. BOA, A.MKT.UM. 549/27, 22 Ramazan 1278/March 23, 1862.

17 For details, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1417–22; Midhat, *Tabsıra-i İbret*, pp. 95–8; Nasiri, *Nasireddin Şah*, pp. 151–6; see the letter from Ali Paşa to Midhat Paşa:

the effect of the Shah’s visit on the Shiite population in the province was the subject of considerable pre-occupation with us, but the good intentions and loyalty manifested on both sides, have smoothed over many difficulties and brought about highly desirable results. 23 Djemaziel Evel, 1288(1871).

(Midhat, *Midhat Pasha*, pp. 61–2)

The letters of Osman Hamdi Bey, who worked under Midhat Paşa at Baghdad, to his father, Edhem Paşa, give interesting details as to the matter. See Edhem Eldem, “Quelques Lettres D’Osman Hamdi Bey A Son Pere Lors De Son Sejour En Irak (1869–1870),” *Anatolia Moderna*, 1(1990), 126–7.

18 The exceptions were Mehmed Namık Paşa’s two reports: Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, pp. 259–60, dated 25 Receb 1296/July 15, 1879, and BOA, Y.PRK.KOM. 4/33, 11 Safer 1301/December 12, 1883.

19 This is relatively a new subject in the literature. For different treatments of the subject, see Deringil, “The Struggle Against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq,” pp. 45–62, and Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği*, pp. 307ff.

20 BOA, Irade-Dahiliye, no. 75763, 27 Şevval 1302/August 9, 1885.

21 For his life (d. 1893) and activities, see İrfan Gündüz, *Gümüşi hânevi Ahmed Ziyâüddin: Hayatı, Eserleri, Tarikat Anlayışı ve Halidiyye Tarikatı* (Istanbul: Seha, 1984); Butrus Abu-Manneh, “Shaykh Ahmed Ziyaüddin el-Gümüşi hanevi and the Ziyai-Khalidi suborder,” in *Studies on Islam and the*

*Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, 1826–1876*, ed. Abu-Manneh, Butrus (Istanbul: ISIS, 2001), pp. 149–59; cf. Şerif Mardin, “The Nakşibendi Order in Turkish History,” in *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a Secular State*, ed. Richard Tapper (London: I.B.Tauris, 1991), pp. 131–2.

22 For Harputizâde Hoca İshak Efendi (1803–92), see İshak Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında* (Istanbul, 1959), pp. 124–7; Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, I, 191–2.

23 BOA, Irade-Dahiliye, no. 75763, enclosing the report by Hoca İshak Efendi.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 For Mirza Muhammad Hasan b.Mahmud (1815–95), see *EI*(2), IX, 479–80.

27 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 192/98, 25 Ramazan 1303/June 27, 1886.

28 Ibid. Kamil Paşa did not, however, approve the deportation of the *Müftü* of Samarra unless the allegations proved to be true. After all this could have caused discontent among the Sunni Muslims. On the other hand, it is not clear what were the offences of the other five persons whose deportation was also asked by the Iranian Ambassador.

29 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 193/86, 25 Şevval 1303/July 27, 1886.

30 BOA, Irade-Meclis-i Mahsus, no. 3626, 10 Şevval 1303/July 12, 1886.

31 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 193/86, 25 Şevval 1303/July 27, 1886.

32 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 196/1, Gurre-i Safer 1304/October 30, 1886.

33 Ibid. 18 Teşrin-i evvel 1302/October 30, 1886.

34 BOA, YEE 18/553/610/93/38, no date, and YEE 14/88/1 1-b/88/12, no date. Cf. Juan R.I.Cole, "Shaikh al-Ra'is and Sultan Abdülhamid II: The Iranian Dimension of Pan-Islam," in *Histories of the Modern Middle East: New Directions*, eds I.Gershoni, Hakan Erdem, and Ursula Wokock (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 167–85, and Mehrdad Kia, "Pan-Islamism in Late Nineteenth-Century Iran," *MES*, 32/1(1996), 30–52; Shaikh al-Rais (c. 1848–1918) was a dissident Qajar prince: he was a student of Shirazi at the Atabat for some time, and later became a Babi (Bahai). He first came to Istanbul in 1885–6, and later in 1892. For him, see *ibid.*; Moojan Momen, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions, 1844–1944: Some Contemporary Western Accounts* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1981), pp. 489–90; Jacob. M.Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 31–2; Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of Muslim Congresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 22–4; Hamid Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 225–6; *Religion and State in Iran, 1785–1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 228–9.

35 Shaikh al-Rais later published a treatise called *İttihad-ı İslam* (Bombay, 1312/1894–5). He is also known to have been in correspondence with Cevdet Paşa and Yusuf Rıza Paşa. For an example of Cevdet Paşa's correspondence with him, see Ebul'ula Mardin, *Ahmet Cevdet Paşa*, pp. 337–8. Cf. *Tezâkir*, IV, 249–50, dated Evahir-i Cemaziyelevvel 1305–4/February 13, 1888; in 1304(1886–87), Abdülhamid conferred a first class *Mecidi Nişan* decoration upon him, while his sons were educated by the Sultan in Istanbul. (Eraslan, "II. Abdülhamid Devrinde," p. 66.)

36 BOA, YEE 18/553/610/93/38, no date. For Cevdet Paşa (1823–95), see *EI*(2), I, 284; *DIA*, VII, 443–50.

37 BOA, YEE 14/88/1 1-b/88/12, no date [c. September 1888]. Cf. Y.PRK.BŞ K. 14/4, 28 Ağustos 1304/September 9, 1888. It should be noted that some parts of Yusuf Rıza Paşa's report contain very similar, sometimes same, remarks as that of Cevdet Paşa; for Yusuf Rıza Paşa (1826–94), see Osman Nuri Ergin, *Istanbul Şehreminleri*, ed. Ahmed Nezih Galitekin

(Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 1996), pp. 153–7; *TM*, p. 329. He was a former Minister to Tehran and a Shi'i convert. For his importance in Abdülhamid period, see Yasamee, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, p. 39; he was known to have converted to Shi'ism during his service in Tehran. See *Nazım Paşa'nın Anıları* (Istanbul: Arba, 1992), pp. 108–9; he was also nicknamed as “Sefir-i Kasir.” See *Ali Ekrem Bolayır'ın Hatıraları*, p. 411.

38 Ibid.

39 See Eraslan, “II. Abdülhamid Devrinde,” p. 59.

40 Ibid., p. 60.

41 Ibid., p. 61; Deringil, “The Struggle Against Shiism,” p. 57.

42 BOA, YEE 14/366/126/9, dated 8 Kanun-ı sâni 1304/January 20, 1889.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 See, for example, BOA, Y.PRK.MK. 4/80, 27 Ş evval 1306/June 26, 1889, and A.MKT.MHM. 500/33, 5 Ş ubat 1305/February 17, 1890.

46 Cf. BOA, YMTV 43/14, 25 Mayıs 1306/June 6, 1890, by Müfettiş Ferik İ smet Paşa.

47 BOA, YMTV 43/14, 23 Ş evval 1307/June 12, 1890. YEE 45/24, 10 Muharrem 1308/August 26, 1890; Y.PRK.BŞ K. 19/6, 10 Muharrem 1308/August 26, 1890.

48 All documents related to this subject are found in BOA, Y.A.Res. 55/9, 28 Ramazan 1308/May 7, 1891. In contrast, according to the committee, the Ministry of Education did not allow 700 *kuruş* to an *alim* of Samarra who taught the principles of the Sunni Islam.

49 BOA, Y.A.Res. 55/9(4), 13 Ş aban 1308/March 24, 1891.

50 Ibid. According to the Vali, most of the members of the Sunni madrasas did not even go to their jobs. Only the madrasa of Imam-ı Azam and Muradiye of Baghdad were active at the time. Outside Baghdad, at Hilla, *Müftü* Murat Efendi was teaching at his house. Because the community of Shi'i ulama left Hilla after his teaching began, some Shi'is were attending his "trade" lessons. In Karbala, on the other hand, the Erbili Shaikh, Ta Efendi, was teaching in the madrasa opened a few years previously. Also *Müftü* İbrahim Efendi used to teach in Samarra. But after being complained about by the Shi'is, his salary was cut by the Ministry of Education. He therefore came back to Baghdad.

51 BOA, Y.A.Res. 55/9(2), 22 Şevval 1308/May 31, 1891.

52 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 248/74, and 248/44, 16 Zilkade 1308/June 23, 1891.

53 See, for example, BOA, YMTV 51/24, 9 Zilkade 1308/June 16, 1891, and Y.PRK.BŞ K. 22/51, 7 Zilhicce 1308/July 14, 1891; BOA, Irade-Dahiliye, no. 96880, the *tezkere* of Kamil Paşa, dated 14 Zilhicce 1308/July 21, 1891.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid. Irade dated 16 Zilhicce 1308/July 23, 1891. For further details, see BOA, Y.PRK.BŞ K. 22/62, 15 Zilhicce 1308/July 22, 1891; YMTV 54/82, 22 Safer 1309/September 27, 1891.

56 BOA, Irade-Dahiliye, no. 98525, 29 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 31, 1891. Their expenses cost 11,351,50 *kuruş*. In his minute, the Sultan approved the action of the Vali, but at the same time noted that since a lot of money was spent on these children, the best result must be obtained from their education; in a later decree, the Sultan instructed Cevad Paşa, the Grand Vizier, to spend 5,000 *kuruş* from the Privy Purse for the expenses of these children. BOA, Irade-Dahiliye, no. 98993, 19 Cemaziyelâhir 1309/January 20, 1892. Also, Y.PRK.BŞ K. 24/66, 21 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 23, 1891.

57 Eraslan, "II. Abdülhamid Devrinde," pp. 64–5.



58 BOA, Irade-Meclis-i Mahsus, no. 5441, 2 Cemaziyelevvel 1309/December 4, 1891.

59 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 255/45; Y.A.Hus. 260/130; also, YMTV 59/41, 19 Receb 1309/February 18, 1892; YMTV 73/71, 9 Cemaziyelâhir 1310/December 29, 1892.

60 Eraslan, “II. Abdülhamid Devrinde,” p. 65.

61 Ibid., p. 66; in the years of 1901–02, 10 hodjas were also appointed in Basra *vilayet* for the same purpose (ibid., pp. 67–8).

62 See Ali Kemalî Aksüt, *Profesör Mehmet Ali Aynî: Hayatı ve Eserleri* (Istanbul: Ahmet Sait Matbaası, 1944), p. 64.

63 BOA, Irade-Meclis-i Mahsus, no. 5537, signed by Menemenlizâde Mehmed Rifat, dated Gurre-i Receb 1309/January 31, 1892; for “*Topal*” Menemenlizâde Mehmed Rifat Bey (1856–1935), see Mehmed Zeki Pakalın, *Maliye Teşkilatı Tarihi (1442–1930)*, 4 vols (Ankara: Maliye Bakanlığı 1 Tetkik Kurulu Yayını, 1977), IV, 212ff.; *TM*, pp. 324–5. He held the post between 1891 and 1893. In 1909, he became the Finance Minister. He was also known as the son-in-law of Namık Kemal, the celebrated Ottoman intellectual.

64 Ibid. As for the measures, Mehmed Rifat listed necessary measures under six headings: education policy, military reorganization, appointment of hodjas to the tribes, sufficient financial sources, development of local trade and industry, and enforcement of the gendarmerie.

65 BOA, YEE 14/1188/126/9, dated 9 Ramazan 1309/April 7, 1892.

66 Ibid. On the term “da’i” (“he who summons” to the true faith), see *EI*(2), II, 97–8.

67 BOA, YEE 14/2256/126/11, dated 26 Nisan 1309/May 8, 1893.

68 BOA, YEE 14/212/126/7, no date [c. 1890–1].

69 Ibid. Ali Rıza Bey described the harm done by Shi'ism to Islam and the Ottomans in history. He argued that every wise person who looked through the heyday of the Ottomans acknowledged that the main aim of the Ottomans was *ila-i kelimetullah*. It is very clear that the Ottoman Sultans had stopped the European armies of the Crusade, and had worked to create a bond between the Muslims of the Far East such as India and China and the center of the Great Caliphate.

70 Ibid. Ali Rıza also discussed the situation of teachers, curriculum, and measures other than schools.

71 BOA, YEE 14/454/126/9, no date; for Çelebizâde Hüseyin Hüsnü Efendi (1849–1912), see Mehmet İrli, *DİA*, XVIII, 552–3; Albayrak, *Son Devir Osmanlı Uleması*, II, 136–9; *İlmiye Salnamesi*, pp. 623–5.

72 Ibid.

73 BOA, YEE 14/88–1 la/88/12, no date. The term *Rafizi* originally meant “rejectors,” a term to describe Shi'ism by Sunnis. For its different meaning (“heretic”) in Ottoman usage, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Türk Heterodoksi Tarihinde ‘Zındık’ ‘Harici’ ‘Rafizi’ ‘Mülhid’ ve ‘Ehl-i Bid’at’ Terimlerine Dair Bazı Düştürmeler,” *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 12 (1981–2), 514–6, 519; cf. *EI*(2), VIII, 386.

74 BOA, YEE 14/88–11a/88/12.

75 For Afghani, see Nikki R. Keddie, “Afghani, Jamal-al-Din,” in *EIr*, I, 481–6; Sayyid Jamal ad-Din “*al-Afghani*”: *A Political Biography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972); for his ideas and his importance in the nineteenth century Islamic world, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 103–29.

76 For full details of the subject, see Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892* (London: Frank Cass, 1966); *Political Biography*, pp. 330ff.; A.K.S. Lambton, “The Tobacco Regime: a Prelude to Revolution,” in *Qajar Persia*, ed. A.K.S. Lambton (London: I.B. Tauris, 1987), pp. 223–76; Edward G. Browne, *The Persian*

*Revolution of 1905–1909* (Cambridge: CUP, 1910), pp. 15ff., 31–58; Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*, pp. 205–21; Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864–1914: A Study in Imperialism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 241ff.

77 See Keddie, *Political Biography*, pp. 129ff, 246ff.; “The Pan-Islamic Appeal: Afghani and Abdülhamid II,” *MES*, 3(1966), 46–67; Jacob M.Landau, “Al-Afghani’s Panislamic Project,” *Islamic Culture*, 26(July 1952), 50–4; “An Egyptian Petition to Abdul Hamid II on behalf of al-Afghani,” in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization: in Honour of Professor David Ayalon*, ed. M.Sharon (Jerusalem: Cana, 1986), pp. 209–19.

78 Afghani had left Basra for London in the autumn of 1891. For details afterwards, Keddie, *Political Biography*, pp. 370ff.; *Religion and Rebellion*, pp. 126–7; Browne, *Persian Revolution*, pp. 24–7, 82; FO 60/594, Sir Lascelles to Foreign Office, Tehran, August 7, 1892, tel no. 114; A.Albert Kudsi-Zadeh, “Iranian Politics in the late Qajar Period: A Review,” *MES*, 5(1969), 251–7.

79 Keddie, *Political Biography*, pp. 373ff. Cf. Browne, *Persian Revolution*, pp. 82–3, 403–4; see also Fahir Iz, “Mehmed Emin,” *EI*(2), VI, 988; Alkan, *Sıradışı Bir Jöntürk*, pp. 101–2; [Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani], “Controverses Persanes,” *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 21(December 1912), 238–60.

80 BOA, YEE I/156/XXV/156/3, no date, transliterated in *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han: Devlet ve Memleket Görüşlerim*, pp. 305–11.

81 Ibid.

82 Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasi Hatıratım*, p. 179.

83 In an undated letter to the Sultan, which appears to have been written in this period, Afghani complained,

When I received the Caliphal edict ordering me to submit and expound my humble opinion concerning the possibilities of a unification of [the world

of] Islam, I felt happiness as if the eight gates of paradise had opened to me, and I wrote down a summary of my humble opinion on this subject in accordance with your high imperial order and submitted it to the caliphal threshold. Since not a word concerning this matter has been uttered until now, I have unfortunately arrived at the conclusion that the project has been thrown into the corner of oblivion or that it has been burned by the fire of malice of partial and malicious persons, or its contents were misinterpreted by latter-day wise men so as to diverge from its sublime intention and it was consequently lodged among subversive literature.

(Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 21–2. Cf. Keddie, *Political Biography*, pp. 444–7, puts the date of the letter as c. 1895–6)

84 According to the account given by Mirza Muhammad Rıza, who assassinated Nasir al-Din Shah,

Thus it came about that he entered into correspondence with all the Shi'ite divines of Karbala, Najaf and all parts of Persia, and convinced them by promises, hopes and logical demonstrations that if the Muhammadan nations would only unite, all the nations on earth could not prevail against them. They must put aside their verbal differences concerning Ali and Umar, and look at the question of Caliphate, (...) and do this and that (...) just at this juncture the trouble at Samarra, and the dispute as to the relations of the late *Hujjatu'l-Islam* Mirza-yi Shirazi with inhabitants of Samarra and the Sunnis, broke out. The Sultan of Turkey, imagining that the Shah of Persia had specially fomented this trouble so as to disturb the Ottoman dominions, held consultations and discussions on this subject with the Sayyid. He said, "By reason of the long duration of his reign and his venerable age, Nasiru'd-Din Shah has acquired a power and prestige such that, if he is firm, the Shi'ite divines and the people of Persia will not move to support our ideas or accomplish our aims. We must therefore think of some plan for dealing with him personally." Then he said to the Sayyid, "Do whatever you can in regard to him, and be not anxious about anything."

(Browne, *Persian Revolution*, p. 83 (from the interrogation of Mirza Rıza))

85 For full details, see the three lengthy documents: FO 195/1841, Mockler to Currie, no. 210/23, Baghdad, April 21, 1894; FO 195/1841, no. 237/24, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, May 5, 1894; BOA, Y.A.Hus. 296/39, 4 Zilkade 1311/May 9, 1894.

86 See, especially, FO 195/1841, Mockler to Currie, no. 210/23, Baghdad, April 21, 1894.

87 FO 195/1841, no. 237/24, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, May 5, 1894; BOA, Y.A.Hus. 295/40, 22 Şevval 1311/April 28, 1894; Y.A.Hus. 295/77, 26 Şevval 1311/May 2, 1894; Y.A.Hus. 295/89, 27 Şevval 1311/May 3, 1894; Y.A.Hus. 296/9, Gurre-i Zilkade 1311/May 6, 1894; Y.A.Hus. 301/27, 22 Zilhicce 1311/June 26, 1894.

88 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 296/39, 4 Zilkade 1311/May 9, 1894; Y.A.Hus. 296/9, 24 Nisan 1310/May 6, 1894; FO 195/1841, no. 242/25, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, May 9, 1894. It is interesting to note that one of the key figures in the discussions about the Shi'i problem, Yusuf Rıza Paşa, is known to have had strong connections with the Russian Embassy.

89 Ibid., and FO 195/1841, no. 281/33, Mockler to Currie, Baghdad, May 23, 1894. The Samarra incident appeared to have caused great resentment among the Shi'is of Iraq. This is also visible in a petition signed by a group of Shi'i Muslims of Iraq to Sir Philip Currie, the British Ambassador at Istanbul, asking that the protection of the Embassy be extended to the petitioners. Although no answer was given to them, the Ambassador seems to have made some enquiries. He noted that: "I am informed privately that the Shi'ites in Iraq are very numerous, and consider England as their friend." FO 424/183, Currie to Salisbury, no. 472 confidential, July 16, 1895. For translation of the petition in French, see the enclosure in ibid. For other examples, BOA, Y.A.Hus. 299/76, 7 Zilhicce 1311/June 11, 1894; Y.A.Hus. 299/77, 2 Zilhicce 1311/June 6, 1894; Y.A.Hus. 301/7, 21 Zilhicce 1311/June 25, 1894; Mirza Hasan Shirazi issued a "ukase" to the inhabitants of the Shi'i towns in Iraq, probably in May 1894, with reference to the recent disturbance at Samarra and excitement caused thereby in various places. Meanwhile, the Shah of Iran asked for the punishment of those involved in the incident. In turn, the Ottomans demanded the deportation of the Iranian Deputy-Consul of Samarra, who caused so much

trouble during the incident. FO 195/1841, no. 281/33, Mockler to Currie, May 23, 1894. For the text of the “ukase,” see *ibid.*, and Y.A.Hus. 301/27, 22 Zilhicce 1311/June 26, 1894.

90 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 120, 1 Zilkade 1311/May 6, 1894.

91 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 296/39, 4 Zilkade 1311/May 9, 1894. Cevad Paşa blamed Nusret Paşa and Receb Paşa of causing Russian interference.

92 BOA, YEE 14/1623/126/10, 11 Safer 1312/August 14, 1894; Ali Galib Bey held the post in Tehran between December 1892 and late 1894. See Nejat Göyünç., “XIX. Yüzyılda Tahran’daki Temsilcilerimiz ve Türk-İran Münasebetlerine Etkileri,” in *Atatürk Konferansları, V:1971–1972* (Ankara: TTK, 1975), p. 277; in 1886, Ali Galib Bey was the Ottoman Consul in the Dutch East Indies, and was known for his “Pan-Islamic” tendencies. See Selim Deringil, “Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdülhamid II, 1876–1909,” *IJMES*, 23 (1991), 351.

93 *Ibid.* “Aqa Sayyid Abdullah” was most probably Sayyid Abdallah Behbahani (1840–1910), one of the influential Tehrani ulama. For him, see *Elr*, I, 190–3; it appears that the contacts with Sayyid Abdullah continued afterwards. When an Ottoman delegation visited Tehran in 1898, they noted a certain Sayyid Esad Abdullah’s sympathy for Abdülhamid. See Göyünç., “Muzafferredin Şah ve II. Abdülhamid Devrinde Türk-İran Dostluk Tezahürleri,” in *Iran Şehinşahlığı’nın 2500 . KuruluŞ Yıldönümüne Armağ an* (Istanbul: MEB, 1971), p. 162; from 1900 onwards, the Tehran Embassy began to give an annual salary of 60 *lira* to Sayyid Abdullah. BOA, Irade-Dahiliye, no. 2, 11 Şaban 1318/December 4, 1900; Behbahani was at the same time in close contact with the British legation at Tehran. See Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, pp. 309–11, 390–3.

94 Cf. Browne, *Persian Revolution*, p. 83.

95 See “Biography of Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani by Afzal al Mulk Kirmani, prefaced to the anonymous Azali Babi text *Hasht Bihist* (n.p., n.d.),” translated in Keddie, “Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4(1962), appendix; cf. Mirza Muhammad Riza’s account in Browne, *Persian Revolution*, pp. 63–92.

96 For Muallim Feyzi Efendi (1842–1910), known as “Acem Feyzi,” see *TM*, pp. 139–40, and *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Dergah, 1979), III, 215. Muallim Feyzi was a Persian teacher in the prestigious Galatasaray Lycee, and an author of Persian-Turkish dictionaries.

97 See İsmail Kara, “Cemaleddin Efgani Biyografisine iki önemli katkı,” *Amel Defteri* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1998), 195–9.

98 Also known as “Khabir al-Mulk.” See *A Shi’ite Pilgrimage to Mecca, 1885–1886: The Safarnameh of Mirza Mohammad Hosayn Farahani*, eds H. Farmayan and E.L. Daniel (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), p. 142; Keddie, *Political Biography*, p. 382; for Abdülhamid’s remark on him, see Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasî Hatıratım*, p. 179.

99 For Kermani (1854/55–1896) and his activities in Istanbul, see Mangol Bayat, “Aqa Khan Kermani,” *Elr*, II, 175–7; “Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani: A 19th Century Persian Nationalist,” *MES*, 10(1974), 36–59; Keddie, *Political Biography*, pp. 377–8, 417–18; Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan*, pp. 215–24; Shaul Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform under the Qajars, 1858–1896* (London: Ithaca, 1978), pp. 312ff.; in part of one of his poems, Kermani wrote (translated in Browne, *Persian Revolution*, p. 412):

And that, under the auspices of [Sultan Abdul] Hamid, a political union might be effected in Islam; so that Turk should be Persian, and Persian like Turk, and that duality might no longer remain in these great rulers; and that in like manner the learned doctors of Iraq should agree in [recognizing] the [Sultan as] sovereign supreme; and should swiftly cleanse their hearts of this animosity, and should no longer talk of who was Sunni and who Shi’i.

100 For Shaikh Ahmad Ruhi (c. 1855/6–1896), see Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, p. 21; Browne, *Persian Revolution*, pp. 414–15. According to Browne, he “even caused a seal to be made for himself bearing the following inscription: ‘I am the Propagandist of Pan-Islamism: Ahmad-i-Ruhi is my name.’”

101 Keddie, “Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism,” appendix.



102 Keddie, *Political Biography*, p. 382; cf. Browne, *Persian Revolution*, pp. 63–4, 415.

103 See, for details, Salahi R. Sonyel, *The Ottoman Armenians: Victims of Great Power Diplomacy* (London: K. Rustem & Brother, 1987), pp. 155ff.; Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 200–5.

104 See Keddie, *Political Biography*, pp. 383–4. The Khedive was also on bad terms with the Sultan at that time. A Meccan Shaikh who had called on the Khedive during this visit was arrested. See L. Hirschzowicz, “The Sultan and the Khedive, 1892–1908,” *MES*, 8(1972), 303.

105 FO 60/594, Currie to Salisbury, no. 923, Constantinople, December 12, 1895; Keddie, *Political Biography*, pp. 384ff., for his other attempts and his letter to the Sultan.

106 See Bayat, *EIr*, II, 176; cf. Keddie, *Political Biography*, p. 382. Bayat gives the date of their banishment to Trabzon as January 1895, which seems confusing. Keddie, on the other hand, gives the date as the end of 1895.

107 For the importance and influence of the paper, see Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan*, pp. 186–7; Edward G. Browne, *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* (Cambridge: CUP, 1914), pp. 17–18, 36–7; Orhan Koloğlu, “Un Journal Persan D’Istanbul: Akhtar,” in *Les Iraniens d’Istanbul*, pp. 133–40; Anja Pistor-Hatam, “The Persian Newspaper Akhtar as a Transmitter of Ottoman Political Ideas,” in *ibid.*, pp. 141–7; *EIr*, I, 730; Kermani and Ruhi were among the writers of the paper. *Akhtar* was also known for its Pan-Islamic stand from the very beginning.

108 BOA, YEE 3/110/31/1709, dated 22 Nisan 1312, transliterated in Fahri Ç. Derin, “Cemâleddin Efgâni Hakkında İki Vesika,” *Tarih ve Toplum*, 84 (Aralık 1990), 53–6.

109 See Azmi Özcan, “Jamaladdin Afghani’s Honorable Confinement in Istanbul and Iran’s Demands for His Extradition,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 15(1995), 285–91; Bayat, *EIr*, II, 176; Browne, *Persian Revolution*, p. 415; Keddie, *Political Biography*, pp. 417–18.

110 For details of this period of Afghani, see Keddie, *Political Biography*, pp. 404ff.

111 For details of this period, see “Atabek-e-Azam,” *EIr*, II, 881–2, and “Amin-al-Dawla,” *ibid.*, I, 943–5; Hafez Farmayan, “Portrait of a Nineteenth-Century Iranian Statesman: The Life and Times of Grand Vizier Amin ud-Dawlah, 1844–1904,” *IJMES*, 15(1983), 337–51; Shaul Bakhash, “The Failure of Reform: the Prime Ministership of Amin al-Dawla, 1897–8,” in *Qajar Iran: Political, Social and Cultural Change, 1800–1925*, eds E.Bosworth and C.Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), pp. 14–33.

112 For Hajji Mirza Muhsin Khan Muin al-Mulk (1819–1900), see Johann Strauss, “La Presence Diplomatique Iranienne a Istanbul et dans les Provinces de L’Empire Ottoman, 1848–1908,” in *Les Iraniens d’Istanbul*, pp. 19–20; Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy & Reform*, p. 383; *A Shi’ite Pilgrimage*, p. 141; for his close relationship with the Sultan, FO 78/4344, no. 142 confidential, White to Salisbury, Constantinople, April 10, 1891; for Malkum Khan’s relations with Amin al-Dawla and Mirza Muhsin Khan, see Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan*, index; it might be interesting to note that all three men, Amin al-Dawla, Mirza Muhsin Khan, and Malkum Khan, were leading Freemasons of Iran. See Hamid Algar, “An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran,” *MES*, 6(1970), 276–96; *idem.*, “Participation by Iranian Diplomats in the Masonic Lodges of Istanbul,” in *Les Iraniens d’Istanbul*, pp. 33–44.

113 See Göyünç, “Muzaffereddin Şah,” pp. 137–70.

114 For Mirza Mahmud Khan Diba, see *EIr*, I, 784. He held the post between 1895 and 1901.

115 See Göyünç, “Muzaffereddin Şah,” pp. 162–7.

116 *Ibid.*, pp. 158–60.

117 The Shah had promised to the Ottoman delegation to visit Istanbul. *Ibid.*, pp. 149–52. For details of the visit, see Nasiri, *Nasireddin Şah*, pp.

157–67; Ayş e Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid* (Istanbul: Selçuk, 1986), pp. 57–8.

118 BOA, Y.A.Res. 112/54(26), 27 Nisan 1317/May 10, 1901.

119 For details of this period, see Nikki R. Keddie, “Iranian Politics 1900–1905: Background to Revolution,” *MES*, 5(1969), 3–31, 151–67, 234–50; “Atabak-e A’zam,” *Elr*, II, 882ff.; Rose L. Greaves, “British Policy in Persia, 1892–1903,” *BSOAS*, 28(1965), 34–60, 284–307; Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, pp. 302ff.

120 For details, see Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*, pp. 222–39; Keddie, “Iranian Politics,” pp. 24ff., 159–60, 163–4.

121 See Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*, pp. 227ff.

122 See Göyünç “Muzaffereddin Ş ah,” pp. 161–2.

123 See Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*, p. 228. See also Sir Arthur H. Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), pp. 273–4, 323. Hardinge draws an interesting portrait of Ş emseddin Bey:

The diplomatic body at Tehran was presided over, as its Dean, by the Turkish Ambassador: for the only Embassy was that of the Sublime Porte. Shems ed din Bey, who then filled it, was an amiable and polished Turkish gentleman, nor was his name, ‘The Sun of Religion,’ a misnomer, for he possessed pleasant manners and a considerable learning in Mohammedan theology and law. He belonged to a secret confraternity of dervishes, I think the Bektashis, cultivated a long fair beard, and was profoundly interested in the metaphysical theology of Islam, which he used to explain and discuss with me at considerable length. He was himself, really, I think, a Sufi (...) these curious speculations facilitated his intercourse with the more learned members of the Persian clergy, some of whom I often met and talked with at his house.

*Ibid.*, pp. 272–3; cf. Keddie, “Iranian Politics,” p. 12 n. 32; for Ş emseddin Bey (1855–1917), see Çankaya, *Yeni Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler*, III, 83–85; *Vakıflar Dergisi*, 19(1985), 72–3; Göyünç, “Muzaffereddin Ş ah,” p. 139

fn. 6; *TM*, p. 367. He belonged to the Halveti order; during this period, a certain Shaikh Muhammad Abu Talib Zanjani acted as intermediary between the Ottomans and the Iranian ulama. He was also in contact with Hardinge. Arjomand mentions Abu Talib Zanjani as a confidante of Muhammad Ali Shah in 1908. See Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: OUP, 1988), p. 54.

124 FO 60/637, Hardinge to Lansdowne, no. 136 confidential, September 6, 1901. Hardinge wrote:

A well informed person, long connected with the Persian court, with whom I have discussed the conspiracy, says he feels little doubt that it was the joint work of a section of the official and aristocratical opposition to the present Grand Vizier and of the Pan-Islamic Societies originally founded by Sheikh Jemaleddin. The point of union between these two elements, so diverse in their aims (the one merely seeking to supersede the present ministry, and the other working for the overthrow of the Kajar dynasty and the establishment in its place of a Theocratic Republic, ruled by the Moslem clergy, and in close alliance with Turkey), is, according to my informant, the Masonic lodge founded here a few years ago by the late Mohsin Khan, sometime Persian Ambassador at Constantinople, and afterwards Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Cf. Keddie, "Iranian Politics," p. 18)

125 Ibid.

126 FO 371/102, from Hardinge, dated December 23, 1905.

127 See Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*, pp. 231ff. For his importance, see *Elr*; II, 178–80.

128 Ibid., p. 228. Algar states that the Sultan gave instructions that the Shaikh might daily send, free of charge, a telegram of up to 40 words to Istanbul.

129 Ibid., p. 229. For the mujtahids' role in Iranian affairs in this period, see *ibid.*, pp. 232ff.

130 For example, in February 1904, the Foreign Office instructed O'Connor to enquire as to the alleged correspondence between the Mujtahids of Najaf and Karbala and the Sultan in regard to Persian affairs. After some enquiries, the Vice-Consul at Karbala informed Newmarch, the Consul General at Baghdad, on the assurances of some reliable sources, that the Mujtahids of Karbala and Nejef had never any correspondence with the Sultan regarding Persia. The rumor appeared to have been invented and published by "some mischievous people of Nejef." He interestingly concluded that

the Mujtahids of Karbala (excepting Sadruddin) are not like those who are able to interfere with state affairs or correspond with Kings and Sultans. In future if any one says that the Mujtahids of Karbala protested against or correspond with the Shah of Persia or the Sultan he should forthwith be denied. They can only interfere with ordinary matters connected with poor and private individuals. I again assure you that the information given to you is entirely untrue.

(FO 78/5331, no. 298, O'Connor to Lansdowne, Constantinople, April 25, 1904; BOA, Y.A.Hus. 453/4, 1 Cemaziyelevvel 1321/July 26, 1903)

131 FO 416/19, no. 6, O'Connor to Lansdowne, no. 502, Therapia, June 28, 1904.

132 FO 416/19, no. 63, O'Connor to Lansdowne, no. 569, Constantinople, July 13, 1904.

133 Ibid.

134 FO 416/19, inclosure 1 in no. 174, Newmarch to O'Connor, no. 534/39, Baghdad, July 7, 1904.

135 Ibid., inclosure 3, memorandum by Harry H.Lamb, August 11, 1904. Two or three of these mujtahids were said to be Russian subjects. Meanwhile, the British Vice-Consul at Karbala also reported that the officials in Russia succeeded in discovering two letters to the Mujtahids, one written by their own subjects complaining of Russian tyranny and requesting their secret assistance, and another from Mujtahids expressing

their deep sympathy, directing them to apply to “Turkey,” whom they will induce to afford the necessary protection. The Vice-Consul further explained that Russia, on seeing that the Mujtahids have now directed their interferences in their own interior affairs, combined with Persia and officially asked “Turkey” to issue the telegram of the Grand Vizier. At the same time, Mehdi Kulli, the Russian Agent at Kazimayn, was deputed by Russian Consul to go to Najaf and visit the Mujtahids in this connection. Although Mehdi Kulli pretended that he was going to perform a pilgrimage, the Vali, who was previously informed of their intention, telegraphed Najaf and appointed a “certain non-official gentleman” to watch over his movements very carefully and report the result thereof to him. FO 416/19, inclosure 2 in no. 107, extract from diary of Consul General Newmarch for the week ending June 20, 1904.

136 FO 78/5124, no. 384, O’Conor to Lansdowne, Constantinople, November 5, 1901.

137 FO 78/5190, no. 134 confidential, O’Conor to Lansdowne, Constantinople, March 24, 1902. To understand the local politics of Baghdad, Melvill’s report seems to be worth quoting:

I thought it best to enquire privately and confidentially from the Vali, with whom I am on very friendly terms, whether he knew anything of the matter. (...) His Excellency while characterizing the story as a clumsy invention on the face it at once said he could tell me its origin. Some time ago a certain Turkish official told the Vali that he had received information from one Melkon Balthazar, the dragoman of the Russian Consulate General here, that a letter written by my head cavass addressed to one of the Mujtehids at Nejef, there is no sheikh of the jafari shiias at Nejef, and enquiring in my name whether the shiias of that place would join us in the event of hostilities between Britain and Turkey had been found at Kadhimain.

138 See Keddie, “Iranian Politics,” p. 157ff; cf. Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*, pp. 236ff. Hardinge wrote that

the Russians, of course, used them at the time of the Regie in much more unscrupulous manner than would be consonant with our traditions or diplomacy, but I think we can profit by their example without resorting to

such extreme methods as theirs. (...) I have often wished that we had a reliable secret agent at Karbala and Najaf for working the principal mujtehids, and giving us information here as to the state of feeling among them as to Persian politics. (...) I see the Russians have just appointed a consular agent there.

(Ibid., p. 236)

139 See Keddie, "Iranian Politics," pp. 160–1; cf. Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*, pp. 238–9.

140 BOA, Y.A.Hus. 462/152, 27 Ramazan 1321/December 17, 1903; Keddie, "Iranian Politics," p. 235. Cf. Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*, p. 239; for Hardinge's own account, see Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, pp. 316ff. Sharabiani died in 1904, and Hardinge was recalled in the following year.

141 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1610ff; Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*, pp. 237–8; Keddie, "Iranian Politics," p. 158; Meir Litvak, "A Failed Manipulation: The British, the Oudh Bequest and the Shii Ulama of Najaf and Karbala," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 27(2000), 69–90; Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, pp. 323–4; for full details, FO 195/2138, Newmarch to O'Connor, no. 37/5, Baghdad, January 21, 1903.

142 FO 416/18, no. 136, O'Connor to Lansdowne, no. 445 secret, Constantinople, June 7, 1904. According to the information given by O'Connor, Amin al-Sultan came to Istanbul on his way to Europe. But, owing to the objections raised by the Persian government, Abdülhamid could not receive him, although he made his acquaintance when Amin al-Sultan was here with the Shah some years ago. This even caused a small diplomatic crises: the Persian Ambassador desired to present him, but the government in Tehran had replied by ordering the ambassador to return at once to Tehran. The Ambassador had refused to do so, on the plea of ill-health. He telegraphed his resignation en clair, which had been refused, while the order for his immediate return was repeated.

143 Ibid. The minutes read: "approve Sir Nicholas O'Connor's language. We had better I presume avoid any answer to the Sultan's overture or tell Sir

Nicholas O'Connor that our policy is one of non-interference in the internal politics of the country. (T.A.S.)”

It would be quite out of question that we should be parties to attempts by the Sultan to interfere in the internal affairs of Persia. Sir Nicholas O'Connor had better move no further reference to the subject unless the Sultan recurs to it. (L[ansdowne]).

(FO 78/5333, no. 445 secret, O'Connor to Lansdowne, June 7, 1904)

Abdülhamid, at the end of the conversation, gave his opinion of Atabeg Azam [Amin al-Sultan] to O'Connor by saying that he did not think that Atabeg Azam would return to power very soon, as the Shah was influenced by the man who got up earliest and saw him first in the morning. He had not formed a high opinion of the Shah's ability. He struck him as a queer person without any sort of will of his own and he looked upon him as a poor ruler of a country.

144 See Keddie, “Iranian Politics,” pp. 238–9. For Shaikh Fadlallah Nuri, see *EI*(2), VIII, 140; in addition, in June 1904, a sister of the Shah suddenly fled to Istanbul, and declared her loyalty to the Sultan as the true ruler of Islam.

145 See Arjomand, *Turban for the Crown*, pp. 34ff.; Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 50ff; Nikki R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 72ff.

146 See Vanessa Martin, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989).

147 See, for example, Martin, *Islam and Modernism*, pp. 73–4. Cf. Keddie, “Iranian Politics,” p. 12 n. 32.

148 For details, see Abdul-Hadi Hairi, *Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran: A Study of the Role Played by the Persian Residents of Iraq in Iranian Politics* (Leiden, Brill, 1977), pp. 87ff., especially p. 88: “the Amir-el-



Muminin, the Shadow of God on the People and the Protector of the Islamic World.”; see also articles “Akund Molla Mohammed Kazem Korasani,” and “Shaikh Abdallah Mazandarani,” in *Elr*, I, 732–4, 200–2; and also, “Hadji Mirza Husayn Khalili Tihrani,” in *EI(2)*, X, 497–8.

149 See A.K.S.Lambton, “Secret Societies and the Persian Revolution of 1905–6,” in *Qajar Persia*, ed. A.K.S.Lambton, p. 310; Hamid Algar, “Anjoman-e Sa’adat,” *Elr*, II, 89.

150 See Sinan Kuneralp, “The Ottoman Drang Nach Osten: The Turco-Persian Border Problem in Azerbaijan, 1905–1912,” in *Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History IV*, ed. Sinan Kuneralp (Istanbul: ISIS, 1990), pp. 71–6; Baghdadi, “Muhammed Ali Şah Devrinde Osmanlı-İran Siyasi İlişkileri,” pp. 37ff.; Schofield, *The Iran-Iraq Border*, IV, introduction.

151 See Baghdadi, “Muhammed Ali Şah Devrinde,” p. 45.

152 See, for example, *ibid.*, p. 48; and Ahmet Bedevi Kuran, *İnkılap Tarihimiz ve İttihad ve Terakki* (Istanbul: Tan Matbaası, 1948), pp. 187–92.

153 FO 424/210, no. 83, Barclay to Grey, no. 670, Therapia, September 20, 1906. It might be interesting to note that the method of protestation at Karbala resembles the public demonstrations (*basts*) during the Constitutional Revolution in Iran.

154 FO 424/210, no. 86, Barclay to Grey, no. 198 telegraphic, Constantinople, October 12, 1906; for details, *ibid.*, no. 89, October 13, 1906, and no. 90, October 18, 1906.

155 FO 424/210, inclosure in no. 96, Ramsay to Barclay, telegraphic, Baghdad, October 14, 1906.

156 FO 424/210, no. 98, Barclay to Grey, no. 204 telegraphic, Constantinople, October 29, 1906; *ibid.*, no. 99, October 29, 1906; for details, *ibid.*, no. 103, Barclay to Grey, no. 731, Constantinople, October 30, 1906; *ibid.*, no. 113, November 9, 1906; *ibid.*, no. 114, November 13, 1906.

157 BOA, BEO, no. 272681, Dahiliye Nezareti, 21 Haziran 1322/July 4, 1906.

158 Ibid.

159 BOA, Y.A.Res. 147/106, 26 Cemaziyelevvel 1325/July 7, 1907. The Commission included Sayyid Talib Paşa, the son of the Naqib of Basra. See Chapter 2.

160 Ibid.

161 Ibid.

162 BOA, Y.A.Res. 147/106(6), 7 Rebiyülâhir 1325/May 20, 1907.

163 See Albayrak, *Son Devir Osmanlı Uleması*, I, 221–2; Abbas Azzavi, “Âlusi,” *İslam-Türk Ansiklopedisi*, I (Istanbul, 1941), 334–7.

164 BOA, YEE 14/257/126/8, dated 13 Ağustos 1323/August 26, 1907.

165 Ibid.

166 BOA, BEO, no. 272681, dated 10 Kanun-ı sâni 1323/January 23, 1908.

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid.

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### **The British danger**

1 See M.S.Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923* (London: Macmillan, 1966); Nasim Sousa, *The Capitulatory Regime of Turkey: its History, Origin, and Nature* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University, 1933); Roderic H.Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century,” *American Historical Review*, 59(1954), 844–64.

2 See Issawi, *Economic History of the Middle East; The Economic History of Turkey* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

3 See Kelly, *Britain*; Malcom E. Yapp, “British Policy in the Persian Gulf,” and “The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” in *The Persian Gulf: A General Survey*, pp. 70–100 and 41–69; see also Foreign Office, *Mesopotamia* .

4 The efforts to increase naval power in Basra began during the second governor-generalship of Mehmed Namık Paşa in the 1860s. By so doing, the Ottoman authorities had two aims: in the first place, they aimed at expanding the regional trade (and pilgrimage) through Red Sea ports, especially in the absence of Suez Canal. In the second place, they wished to use this naval presence as a means of Ottoman influence and power among the people of the Gulf and the Red Sea. See Sinaplı, *Mehmet Namık Paşa*, pp. 21 Off.; the concern over the British influence in the region continued during the time of Midhat Paşa, when he managed to put Najd and the Arab coast of the Gulf down to Qatar under the direct Ottoman control. See, for example, a letter written by Osman Hamdi Bey, Director for the Affairs of Foreigners under Midhat, to his father, Edhem Paşa, President of the Council of State, in August 1869, just before the Gulf expedition, in Eldem, “Quelques Lettres D’Osman Hamdi Bey,” p. 127.

5 See Dwight E. Lee, *Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934); W.N. Medlicott, *The Congress of Berlin and After: A Diplomatic History of the Near Eastern Settlement, 1878–1880* (London: Methuen, 1938); *Bismarck, Gladstone, and the Concert of Europe* (London: University of London, 1956).

6 See Anderson, *Eastern Question*, chs 8, 9; William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890–1902*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), chs 5, 7, 10, 11; R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: Macmillan, 1981), chs 4, 8; Keith M. Wilson, “Constantinople or Cairo: Lord Salisbury and the Partition of the Ottoman Empire, 1886–1897,” in *Empire and Continent: Studies in British Foreign Policy from the 1880s to the First World War*, ed. Keith M. Wilson (London: Mansell, 1987), pp. 1–30.

7 See Kelly, *Britain*; Yapp, “British Policy in the Gulf.”

8 See Midhat, *Tabsıra-i İbret*, pp. 102–10, 113–24; *Midhat Pasha*, pp. 55–61; Kelly, *Britain*, pp. 717ff.; Ravinder Kumar, *India and the Persian Gulf Region, 1858–1907: A Study in British Imperial Policy* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1965), pp. 113ff; Frederic F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf: The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 16–53; Zekeriya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa’da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi hareketi ve Suud Devleti’nin Ortaya Çıkışı* (Ankara: TTK, 1998), pp. 79–122; see also Yusuf Halaçoğlu, “Midhat Paşa’nın Necid ve Havalisi ile İlgili Bir Kaç Lâyihası,” *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 3 (Ekim 1972), 149–76, for the reports of Midhat Paşa on Najd.

9 In the aftermath of the Najd expedition, while Âli Paşa, the Grand Vizier, assured the British Ambassador that they had no idea of challenging the British position in the Gulf, he congratulated Midhat Paşa in the following words:

I beg to congratulate you in a very especial manner, on your brilliant successes in the Nedjed. Everything seems to indicate that, thanks to the tact with which you have brought about the pacification of the Provinces of Assir, the political importance of which is so considerable, the whole Arabic peninsula will soon return to its ancient status. By your services you have merited the glorious title, “Haremein Muhteremeyin.”

(Midhat, *Tabsıra-i İbret*, p. 61, dated “23 Djemaziel Evel, 1288(1871), Hegira” [August 10, 1871])

10 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1544; *ibid.*, I/2, Appendix K: Mail Communications and the Indian Post Office in the Persian Gulf, pp. 2439ff; and several examples in FO 195/1371, 195/1409, 195/1445, 195/1478, 195/1479, 195/1509, 195/1546, 195/1579, and 195/1612.

11 FO 195/1371, no. 66(1881); 195/1409, no. 18, 27, 39(1882); 195/1478, no. 178, 203(1884).

12 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1877ff, 1881ff, 1883ff, 1548–51, 1560–2; FO 195/1409(1882); 195/1509, no. 297/27, tel of 17/12/85, and 30/12/85, no. 700/53(1885); 195/1546, no. 129/12, 196/17(1886); the *Comet's* guns were also questioned by the Ottoman authorities (1886), as well as the Indian Sepoy guards at the British Consulate General. FO 195/1546(1886), and Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1566ff, for the Ottoman opposition to the Indian Sepoy guards at Baghdad Consulate General.

13 FO 195/1445, no. 3, 5, 48(1883); 195/1478, no. 65, 283/28(1884); 195/1509, no. 35/6(1885); 195/1611, no. 300/48, 379/61(1888); 195/1647, no. 270/24, 388/36, 724/87(1889).

14 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1534ff. (1883); FO 195/1509, no. 93/12, 598/48(1885); 195/1612, no. 605/95(1888).

15 FO 195/1371, no. 75(1881); 195/1370, no. 5, 20, 43(1881); Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1555–6(1883–6).

16 See, for example, FO 195/1188, no. 43, Nixon to Layard, Baghdad, September 16, 1878; *ibid.*, no. 48, September 30, 1878; *ibid.*, no. 50, October 12, 1878; *ibid.*, no. 65, December 11, 1878; FO 195/1242, no. 1, Nixon to Layard, Baghdad, January 16, 1879; *ibid.*, no. 8, January 27, 1879; *ibid.*, no. 9, February 4, 1879; *ibid.*, no. 15, 16, 17, 20, 21 and 22, February 1879; cf. Kumar, *India*, pp. 119–20; FO 195/1242, no. 24, Nixon to Layard, Baghdad, February 18, 1879; *ibid.*, no. 25, February 18, 1879; *ibid.*, no. 40, Nixon to Malet, Baghdad, April 12, 1879; FO 195/1243, Nixon to Layard, no. 85, Baghdad, June 9, 1879; FO 195/1244, no. 161; FO 195/1310, no. 130.

17 BOA, Y.A.Res. 5/21(1), 2 Safer 1297/January 15, 1880; *ibid.* 27/19(1), 23 Rebiülevvel 1302–10 Ocak 1885; for other political and strategic considerations of the time, see Hilmi Kamil Bayur, *Sadrâzam Kamil Paşa: Siyasi Hayatı* (Ankara: Sanat Basımevi, 1954), pp. 86–8; Ş . Tufan Buzpınar, “Abdülhamid II and Sayyid Fadl Pasha of Hadramawt,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 13(1993), 227–39; İ dris Bostan, “Basra Körfezinin Güney Kesimi ve Osmanlılar, 1876–1908,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 9(1989), 312; BOA, YEE 14/88/10/88/12, Mazhar Paşa, *mutasarrıf* of Basra, 8 Ş evval 1297/September 13, 1880.

18 BOA, Y.A.Res. 8/14(3), 20 Zilkade 1297/October 24, 1880; *ibid.* 8/14(2), 14 Zilkade 1297/October 18, 1880; on Fao, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIA, 535–45; Busch, *Britain*, pp. 33–4; *EI*(2), V, 65–6.

19 For a detailed account of the events related to the construction of the Fao fortifications since 1883, see the despatch and its enclosures in FO 195/1579, no. 165/16, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, March 14, 1887, enclosure A: letter from Consul, Bussorah, to Consul General, Baghdad, no. 214, December 16, 1885.

20 FO 195/1546, no. 246/23, Tweedie to Thornton, Baghdad, May 26, 1886, enclosing an extract from diary dated 17th idem of H.M.'s consul at Bussorah [Robertson]:

160 soldiers under the command of major Kamal Bey have arrived at Fao with a quantity of building materials for the purpose of commencing the fortifications there. Kamal Bey took a simple letter of introduction from the wali of Bussorah to the shaikhs of Kuwait who are the proprietors of Fao. The letter did not mention the project of constructing fortifications or ask for the grant of a site or offer to purchase one. On arrival Kamal Bey marked out a large extent of river frontage—about fifty acres—which he said would be needed for the fortifications. (...) The shaikhs of Kuwait strongly resent the seizure of their land which is valuable, and purpose petitioning the Porte against it.

21 FO 195/1580, no. 596/75, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, November 10, 1887, enclosing extract from diary of assistant political agent Busrah for week ending October 29, 1887; FO 195/1611, no. 205/33, January 18, 1888; *ibid.*, no. 42/7, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, January 18, 1888; FO 195/1647, no. 11/1, Talbot to White, Baghdad, January 7, 1889; *ibid.*, no. 37/2, January 19, 1889; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye*, 42(1304), 183; almost 10 years later, a Handbook of the Persian Gulf was published by the Ministry of the Navy. See Süleyman Nutki, *Basra Körfezi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Bahriye, 1317 [1899], 495pp.); FO 195/1612, tel from Talbot, Baghdad, September 17, 1888; *ibid.*, no. 632/99, September 18, 1888; FO 195/1647, no. 93/8, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, February 23, 1889; *ibid.*, no. 341/30, July 8, 1889; *ibid.*, tel by Tweedie, July 8, 1889; *ibid.*, tel by Tweedie, July 27, 1889; *ibid.*, no. 395/38, July 27, 1889; *ibid.*,

no. 736/90, December 30, 1889, enclosing Ravenshaw to Tweedie, no. 440, Basra, December 24, 1889.

22 FO 195/1579, no. 165/16, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, March 14, 1887; *ibid.*, no. 211/19, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, April 5, 1887; FO 195/1580, no. 698/91, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, December 19, 1887; *ibid.*, no. 706/93, December 22, 1887; drawings and plans of the work were made about this time by a clerk of the British telegraph station at Fao, who succeeded in obtaining access to it. See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1516.

23 FO 195/1611, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, March 12, 1888.

24 For full details, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1514–15.

25 See, for example, FO 195/1580, no. 460/55, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, September 4, 1887. Consul Robertson's remarks on Mehmed İzzet Paşa: "The action of Muhammad Izzat Pasha in this case is consistent with his habit of attacking British interests and susceptibility whenever an opportunity presents itself." *Ibid.*, no. 563/73, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, October 29, 1887; for further comments on the British position in Iraq at the time, see *ibid.*, no. 696/90, December 15, 1887; BOA, Y.A.Hus. 212/37(1), 17 Receb 1305/March 30, 1888; for a later example, see Y.A.Hus. 285/10(1), 16 Cemaziyelevvel 1311/November 25, 1893.

26 FO 195/1647, no. 342/31, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, July 8, 1889, reporting "the arrival at Basra port of the two small Turkish gunboat 'mujdih-risan' and 'sahil' (...) to reinforce the Turkish naval force on this station." *Ibid.*, no. 397/39, Tweedie to White, Baghdad, July 27, 1889, enclosing Robertson to Tweedie, no. 238, July 22, 1889.

27 For details, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1516–17; BOA, Y.A.Hus. 234/60, 234/80, 234/84, 234/90, 234/92, 234/95, 234/99, 234/100, and 234/102.

28 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1517.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 1517–18. The considerations lasted until 1897.

30 Ibid., pp. 1538–9; for the difficulties of the Lynch Company in the same period, *ibid.*, p. 1539.

31 Ibid., pp. 1518–19.

32 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 60, 23 Zilkade 1310/June 8, 1893.

33 Cf. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, IIA, 544.

34 Ibid., I/1B, 1517.

35 Ibid.

36 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 64, 23 Cemaziyelevvel 1311/December 2, 1893; Y.A.Hus. 287/13(1), 14 Cemaziyelâhir 1311/December 23, 1893.

37 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 69, 9 Ş evval 1311/April 15, 1894; Y.A.Hus. 293/75(1), 10 Ş evval 1311/April 16, 1894.

38 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1517, and IIA, 543–4.

39 BOA, YEE 14/366/126/9, 8 Kanun-ı sâni 1304/January 20, 1889.

40 Ibid.

41 BOA, YEE 14/256/126/8, 21 Rebiülevvel 1308/November 4, 1890.

42 BOA, YEE 14/1188/126/9, 9 Ramazan 1309/April 7, 1892.

43 BOA, YEE 14/211/126/7, 26 Nisan 1309/May 8, 1893.

44 Ibid.

45 BOA, YEE 14/2256/126/11, no date [c. 1892].

46 Ibid. Nusret Paşa then traced the beginning of the troubles back to the time of Midhat Paşa. From that period onward, according to Nusret, the state of affairs in the region declined at the expense of the Ottoman government. But he also complained about the current policies of the



government. After describing British trade and warship activities in the Gulf, he criticized the fact that “in contrast, not even a small boat sails under the Ottoman flag.”

47 Ibid.

48 See Busch, *Britain*, pp. 21–30; J.B.Kelly, “The Legal and Historical Basis of the British Position in the Persian Gulf,” in *St. Anthony’s Papers*, no. 4: *Middle Eastern Affairs* (London, 1959), pp. 119–40; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 787ff., for Qatar, and 836ff., for Bahrain.

49 Busch, *Britain*, p. 24. When, in 1888, Indian officials asked London to issue a warning to the Porte, Salisbury had opposed the idea: “I do not like these ‘remonstrances’. They suggest to the [Ottoman] Sultan how he can worry us most easily.” For the Ottoman attempts to establish close control over Qatar since 1888, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 806–7.

50 For details, see Busch, *Britain*, pp. 24–5, 28.

51 Ibid., p. 25.

52 See, for example, BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 168(1), 22 Muharrem 1310/August 16, 1892.

53 For details, see Zekerîya Kurşun, *The Ottomans in Qatar: A History of Anglo-Ottoman Conflicts in the Persian Gulf* (Istanbul: ISIS, 2002); Anscombe, *Ottoman Gulf*, pp. 85–90; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 822–4; İdris Bostan, “The 1893 Uprising in Qatar and Sheikh Al Sani’s Letter to Abdülhamid II,” *Studies on Turkish-Arab Relations*, 2(1987), 81–9; BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 84, 26 Ramazan 1310/April 13, 1893; Irade-Hususi, no. 75, 29 Ramazan 1310/April 16, 1893; Irade-Hususi, no. 18, 1 Şevval 1310/April 18, 1893; Irade-Hususi, no. 7, 3 Şevval 1310/April 20, 1893; Irade-Hususi, no. 28, 7 Şevval 1310/April 24, 1893; Irade-Hususi, no. 26, 7 Şevval 1310/April 24, 1893.

54 Busch, *Britain*, p. 25.

55 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 118, 28 Ş evval 1310/May 15, 1893; Irade-Hususi, no. 62, 23 Ş evval 1310/May 10, 1893.

56 Busch, *Britain*, pp. 27–8.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid., pp. 28–9.

59 Ibid., p. 29.

60 Ibid., pp. 29–30.

61 Ibid., pp. 134–5.

62 Ibid., pp. 135–6.

63 For events in following years, see Busch, *Britain*, pp. 137ff.

64 See Wilson, “Constantinople or Cairo: Lord Salisbury and the Partition of the Ottoman Empire, 1886–1897,” pp. 1–30.

65 See Busch, *Britain*, pp. 187ff.; Kumar, *India*, pp. 150ff. and ch. 6.

66 See Busch, *Britain*, pp. 106ff; Curzon’s important analysis of British policy and interests in Persia and the Persian Gulf, dated September 21, 1899, in J.C.Hurewitz, ed., *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ: D.Van Nostrand Company, 1956), I, 219–49; see also his earlier work, first published in 1892, George N.Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 2 vols (London: Frank Cass, 1966).

67 For the affairs of Kuwait, see Richard Schofield, *Kuwait and Iraq: Historical Claims and Territorial Disputes* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991); Alan Rush, *Al-Sabah: History and Genealogy of Kuwait’s Ruling Family, 1752–1987* (London: Ithaca, 1987); Alan Rush, ed., *The Records of Kuwait: 1899–1961*, 8 vols (Archive Editions, 1989); *The Affairs of Kuwait: 1896–1905*, ed. R.Bidwell, 2 vols (London: Frank Cass, 1971); Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1000ff.

68 For full details, see J.B.Kelly, “Salisbury, Curzon and the Kuwait Agreement of 1899,” in *Studies in International History: Essays Presented to W.Norton Medlicott*, eds K.Bourne and D.C.Watt (London: Longmans, 1967), pp. 249–50; Correspondence Respecting Affairs of Koweit, Part I: 1896–99, in *Affairs of Kuwait*, I, 1ff; Anscombe, *Ottoman Gulf*, pp. 91–112.

69 Kelly, “Salisbury,” p. 251.

70 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 79, 14 Safer 1315/July 15, 1897; Irade-Hususi, no. 89, 22 Safer 1315/July 23, 1897; Irade-Hususi, 1316, no. 119, 19 Rebiülevvel 1316/August 7, 1898.

71 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1018–19.

72 See Busch, *Britain*, pp. 94–103.

73 See Earle, *Baghdad Railway*, p. 58; Busch, *Britain*, pp. 103–5, 114ff.; Kumar, *India*, pp. 141–4; *Affairs of Kuwait*, I, Part I, 26ff.

74 See Kelly, “Salisbury”; Anscombe, *Ottoman Gulf*, pp. 113ff.; Busch, *Britain*, pp. 108ff.; Kumar, *India*, pp. 144ff.; Schofield, *Kuwait and Iraq*, pp. 17–18, 135; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1022–4; *Affairs of Kuwait*, I, Part I, 28ff.; Hurewitz, *Middle East and North Africa*, pp. 475–7, for the text of the agreement.

75 For a Turkish protestation, military or diplomatic, “a course of diplomatic action was prepared; if trouble came, the vali would be warned locally and the issue would not be raised in the capital. Mubarak would also be cautioned against any forward moves.” O’Conor to Salisbury, May 24, and July 5, 1899, cited in Busch, *Britain*, p. 112; at some previous time news had already reached the British about an Ottoman military build up in Basra and the preparations for an attack on Kuwait. The news was true: in particular, the Ottoman officials on the spot had entertained the idea of using military force for some time, but it was soon abandoned due to Abdülhamid’s disapproval. See Busch, *Britain*, pp. 103, 110. Curzon asked permission to authorize British naval forces in the Gulf to use force against such an attempt. The permission was granted for a direct Ottoman attack.

76 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1554.

77 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 9, 3 Rebiyülâhir 1317/August 11, 1899.

78 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 87, 6 Rebiyülâhir 1317/August 14, 1899; Irade-Hususi, no. 32, 14 Muharrem 1317/May 25, 1899; cf. Tahsin Paşa, *Yıldız Hatıraları*, pp. 345–7, for the Palace's concern over arms-trade in Syria, Arabia, and the Gulf; for illegal arms-trade in Iraq and the Gulf, see Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, Appendix N: The Arms and Ammunition Traffic in the Gulfs of Persia and Oman, pp. 2556ff.

79 Busch, *Britain*, p. 188.

80 Ibid., p. 189; Kumar, *India*, pp. 148–9; cf. BOA, DUIT, 69–2(2), 6 Cemaziyelevvel 1317/September 12, 1899.

81 See Busch, *Britain*, pp. 189ff.

82 Ibid.; *Affairs of Kuwait*, I, Part II, 1ff.

83 Busch, *Britain*, p. 193. Interestingly, Tevfik Paşa asked no questions as to the nature of that relationship.

84 Ibid., pp. 195–6; cf. BOA, DUIT, 69–2(3), 2 Şaban 1317/December 6, 1899; DUIT, 69–2(4), 7 Ramazan 1317/January 9, 1900; DUIT, 69–2(5), 7 Muharrem 1318/May 7, 1900.

85 Ibid., pp. 196ff.

86 For details, see *Affairs of Kuwait*, I, Part III, 1ff.

87 Busch, *Britain*, p. 199; cf. BOA, DUIT, 69–2(8), 1 Rebiyülâhir 1319/July 18, 1901.

88 Ibid., p. 200; *Affairs of Kuwait*, I, Part III, 37ff.; cf. BOA, DUIT, 69–2(8).

89 Ibid., pp. 201ff.; cf. BOA, DUIT, 69–2(8).

90 Ibid., pp. 200–1; Kumar, *India*, pp. 196–8.

91 See Busch, *Britain*, p. 205; *Affairs of Kuwait*, I, Part III, 81ff.; cf. BOA, DUIT, 69–2(9), 14 Cemaziyelevvel 1319/August 29, 1901; DUIT, 69–2(10), 17 Cemaziyelevvel 1319/September 1, 1901, and the Ottoman Foreign Ministry handbook: *Kuveyt Meselesi*, eds Fahreddin Rumbeyoğlu and Mehmed Nabi (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1334).

92 See *Kuveyt Meselesi*; cf. Busch, *Britain*, pp. 205ff.

93 See *Kuveyt Meselesi*; cf. Busch, *Britain*, pp. 208–9.

94 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1031; cf. BOA, DUIT, 69–2(14), 5 Ramazan 1319/December 16, 1901.

95 Busch, *Britain*, pp. 213–14.

96 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 75, 22 Ş evval 1319/February 1, 1902. Later, Mubarak was asked to send his agent, or a local of Basra, to the court; cf. BOA, DUIT, 69–2(21), 23 Ş evval 1319/February 2, 1902.

97 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 82, 24 Ş evval 1319/February 3, 1902.

98 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1033; Busch, *Britain*, pp. 214ff.

99 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 5, 4 Zilkade 1319/February 12, 1902; it might be interesting to note that around December 1901 and January 1902, Ibn Rashid was reported to have been stationed around Basra, preparing to attack Kuwait.

100 See, for example, BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 33(1), 11 Zilkade 1319/February 19, 1902; Irade-Hususi, no. 11, 2 Zilhicce 1319/February 12, 1902; Irade-Hususi, no. 68, 19 Safer 1320/May 28, 1902; Irade-Hususi, no. 58, 27 Receb 1320/October 30, 1902; Irade-Hususi, no. 46, 21 Şaban 1320/November 23, 1902.

101 See Busch, *Britain*, pp. 257–62; Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/2, Appendix P: Cruise of His Excellency Lord Curzon, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, in the Persian Gulf, pp. 262ff.; BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 93(1), 7 Ş

evval 1321/December 27, 1903; cf. Tahsin Paşa, *Yıldız Hatıraları*, p. 349; Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East*, pp. 305ff.; Sir Valentine Chirol, *The Middle Eastern Question or Some Political Problems of Indian Defence* (London: Murray, 1903), chs 20 and 21.

102 BOA, YEE 14/255/126/8, 21 Şubat 1313/March 5, 1898; for Halil Halid, see S. Tanvir Wasti, “Halil Halid: Anti-imperialist Muslim Intellectual,” *MES*, 29(1993), 559–79. See also his, *The Diary of a Turk* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903).

103 Ibid.

104 See Hayri Mutluçâ, “Tarihimizde Salih Münir Paşa Raporu: İngiltere’nin Ortadoğu ve Türkiye Hakkında Gizli Emelleri,” *BTDD*, 26 (Kasım 1969), 51–5. The report dated 8 Cemaziyelevvel 1321/August 2, 1903; for Salih Münir Paşa (1859–1939), see *TM*, pp. 267–8.

105 Ibid.

106 See “Aydın Valisi Mehmet Kamil Paşa’nın arizası”, dated 11 Şevval 1322/December 19, 1904, in Asaf Tugay *Saray Dedikoduları ve Bazı Maruzat* (Istanbul: Ersan, 1964), pp. 66–72.

107 See “Report on Arabia by Nakib Zade Talib Bey,” (Translation), dated the 20th Jemazi-el-ewel, 1322, that is, August 3, 1904, enclosed in FO 416/20, no. 27, O’Conor to Lansdowne, no. 684 very confidential, Therapia, August 26, 1904. The report was secretly obtained by the British Embassy in Istanbul via their man at the Porte, and was given serious consideration. O’Conor thought that “Talib Bey’s views are of some interest, as he is of a family of great local importance, and has political ambitions which will make him a likely candidate for the post of vali of Bussorah at the next vacancy.”

108 Ibid. In the light of these reports and ongoing events, it comes as no surprise that Abdülhamid appeared to be very much convinced by this time as to the British threat in the region. For his remarks in *Pensees et souvenirs de l’ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid II*, dated as early as 1901, see Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasî Hatıratım*, pp. 149–51, 161.

109 For details of this period, see Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti*, ch. 3; Kumar, *India*, pp. 194ff.; *Affairs of Kuwait*, II; *The Affairs of Arabia, 1905–1906*, ed. Robin Bidwell, 2 vols (London: Frank Cass, 1971).

110 Cf. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1554; see also the remarks of Fitzmaurice, the Chief Dragoman at the Istanbul Embassy, quoted in Marian Kent, “Constantinople and Asiatic Turkey, 1905–1914,” in *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey*, ed. F.H.Hinsley (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), p. 148.

111 For details of the events during their proceedings in Iraq, FO 195/2188, tel from Newmarch, Baghdad, January 12, 1905; *ibid.*, tel, Baghdad, January 13, 1905, enclosing a memo by Lamb, dated January 14, 1905; *ibid.*, tel, Baghdad, January 14, 1905; FO 195/2189, tel, O’Conor to Newmarch, Constantinople, January 15, 1905; FO 195/2188, tel from Newmarch, Baghdad, January 20, 1905; *ibid.*, tel from Newmarch, Baghdad, January 21, 1905; FO 195/2189, tel, O’Conor to Newmarch, Constantinople, January 23, 1905; *ibid.*, tel, O’Conor to Newmarch, Constantinople, January 24, 1905; FO 195/2188, no. 376/37, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, May 29, 1905; FO 195/2189, O’Conor to Newmarch, Constantinople, July 13, 1905; FO 195/2188, no. 667/61, Newmarch to O’Conor, Baghdad, August 24, 1905; *ibid.*, no. 780/73, Baghdad, September 29, 1905; cf. BOA, DUIT, 69–2(26), 8 Zilkade 1322/January 14, 1905; it should be remembered that the Najd expedition against Ibn Saud was taken very seriously by the Ottoman authorities. For instance, at about the same time, when Lorimer and Gabriel were faced with difficulties, three Najdi merchants of Basra were sent to exile to Istanbul for giving information about Ottoman troops to Ibn Saud. FO 195/2188, tel no. 5, from Monahan, Basra, January 22, 1905; for Lorimer and Gabriel, see Paul Rich, *The Invasions of Gulf: Radicalism, Ritualism and the Shaikhs* (Cambridge: Allborough Press, 1991), pp. 224, 217.

112 For details, FO 195/2188 and 195/2189; for travellers, see H.V.F.Winstone, *The Illicit Adventure: The Story of Political and Military Intelligence in the Middle East from 1898 to 1926* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982); later in the same year, another British subject, Reverend J.Cameron of the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment, was obstructed at Hilla from his

travels in those parts. FO 195/2188, no. 957/88, Newmarch to O'Connor, Baghdad, November 30, 1905.

113 FO 195/2189, tel, secret and confidential, O'Connor to Monahan, March 16, 1905; O'Connor instructed Monahan that: "You should hint to vali that we are not ignorant of his intrigues with the Sheikh of Kuwait and that if continued they may have a very different result from what he expects." FO 195/2189, tel, O'Connor to Monahan, Constantinople, March 14, 1905. O'Connor also asked: "please report whether the Turkish soldiers are still on Bubian island and how many."

114 FO 195/2189, private, Mr Shonge(?) to Newmarch, Constantinople, March 18, 1905. The Vali of Baghdad was sending reports to Istanbul "alleging that the English are carrying on hostile intrigues and formulating disturbances in various parts of country." The Vali was said to have urged the Sultan to erect a strong fort at Fao as a protection against any (British) maritime attack. He was also said to have recommended the purchase of new and fast steamers by the Hamidiye Company for river navigation to compete with the Lynch Company. According to the report, the Vali further suggested that the Lynch's "business should be further hampered by the prohibition of transshipment from ocean steamers at Basrah, as well as by publicly forbidding Ottoman officials and secretly discouraging other Turkish subjects from traveling by their boats." The Consul General was instructed that

However this may be the ambassador thinks that it will be useful to you learn the gist of the information that has reached his ears, but he begs you will be careful not let the vali suspect the source from which you got the news, although you can hint to him that you have reason to believe that his reports [regarding information he sends to Constantinople] is not such as you have a right to expect in view of the friendly relations between the two governments.

See *ibid.*, the enclosure for the summary of secret report from the Vali of Baghdad dated February 12, 1905.

115 FO 195/2189, very confidential, O'Connor to Crow, Constantinople, June 1, 1905: "in the course of conversation with me the Grand Vizier



referred to the complaints which I have so frequently had occasion to make of anti-British attitude adopted by the authorities of the vilayets of Baghdad and Basra.” According to O’Conor, “Ferid Pasha admitted that the vali of Baghdad was not competent to discharge his duties efficiently and (...) that he hoped that he might be removed before long.”

116 For examples, FO 195/2189, O’Conor to Newmarch, Constantinople, May 30, 1905; FO 195/2189, confidential, O’Conor to Newmarch, Constantinople, July 7, 1905; *ibid.*, tel, O’Conor to Newmarch, Constantinople, August 15, 1905; *ibid.*, very confidential, O’Conor to Crow, Constantinople, March 31, 1905, appendix; *ibid.*, very confidential, O’Conor to Crow, March 31, 1905; *ibid.*, O’Conor to Crow, Constantinople, May 11, 1905; *ibid.*, confidential, O’Conor to Crow, Constantinople, May 10, 1905:

reports from a secret source have reached me of late showing the stray anti-British feelings which animate the Turkish officials at Baghdad, Basra, and I have been assured in particular that quite recently Moukhlis Pasha has sent to Constantinople a particularly mendacious report about our action in north east Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

FO 424/208, no. 50, O’Conor to Lansdowne, no. 384, Constantinople, June 3, 1905; FO 195/2189, very confidential, O’Conor to Crow, June 1, 1905; FO 424/208, no. 59, Lansdowne to O’Conor, no. 198, Foreign Office, June 21, 1905; FO 195/2188, no. 43, June 24, 1905; FO 195/2189, tel, O’Conor to Crow, Constantinople, August 18, 1905; FO 195/2188, tel no. 45, Basra, August 21, 1905; *ibid.*, tel no. 48, Basra, September 7, 1905.

117 FO 424/208, no. 40, Lansdowne to O’Conor, no. 153, Foreign Office, May 3, 1905. The Ottoman Ambassador visited Lansdowne, and after talking about the current issues such as Aden frontier and Smryna-Aidin railway, he gave the Foreign Secretary an Aide Memoire, as to a recent report received by the Porte from the Vali of Basra to the effect that four British warships at Kuwait were carrying out certain operations in the neighborhood, “notwithstanding the opposition of the sheikh.” He added that “such proceedings were (...) of a nature to constitute a violation of the status quo, of which the maintenance at Kuwait had been agreed upon by

the two governments,” and that he was instructed to call Lansdowne’s attention to the matter.

118 Ibid. In the meantime, several reports, written by the Consul General at Baghdad and the Consul at Basra, as to the “anti-British feeling in the vilayet of Basra” continued to be sent to the Embassy. See, for example, FO 195/2188, no. 34, June 10, 1905, and, no. 35, June 14, 1905, by Crow; *ibid.*, no. 44, June 24, 1905.

119 See, for example, FO 195/2188, no. 37, June 10, 1905; *ibid.*, no. 40, July 8, 1905; *ibid.*, July 10, 1905.

120 See Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, I/1B, 1540; and FO 195/2188, 195/2189, 195/2214, 195/2215, for several examples.

121 For details, FO 195/2214 and 195/2215.

122 For events of this period, see Busch, *Britain*, pp. 304ff.; see also Bostan, “Basra Körfezinin Güney Kesimi ve Osmanlılar,” 311–18.

123 For details, see Busch, *Britain*, pp. 357ff.; Beryl Williams, “Great Britain and Russia, 1905 to the 1907 Convention,” in *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey*, ed. F.H.Hinsley (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), pp. 144–6; see also *BD*, IV, no. 455, Grey to Nicolson, Foreign Office, August 29, 1907, for the “Persian Gulf declaration.”

124 After terms of the convention were revealed, Turhan Paşa, a former Foreign Minister, presented his comments on the convention to the Sultan. BOA, YEE 14/1337–126/10, no date.

125 See A.V.Ignatyev, *Vnyeshnyaya politika Rossii v 1905–1907gg* (Moscow, 1986), pp. 289–92, and *BD*, IV, no. 267, O’Conor to Grey, Constantinople, April 30, 1907. (I owe thanks to Dr F.A.K.Yasamee for the Russian reference); for the place of Iraq in British politics of the time, see Stuart A.Cohen, *British Policy in Mesopotamia, 1903–1914* (London: Ithaca, 1976); Marian Kent, “Great Britain and the End of the Ottoman Empire,” in *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Marian Kent (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), pp. 172ff.;

“Constantinople and Asiatic Turkey,” pp. 148ff.; cf. Akarlı, “The Problems of External Pressures,” p. 66, and Turhan Paşa’s remarks in YEE 14/1337/126/10.

126 BOA, Irade-Hususi, no. 88, 6 Rebiyülâhir 1325/May 19, 1907.

## **Conclusion**

1 Tahsin Paşa, *Yıldız Hatıraları*, p. 205.

2 “‘Self-Determination in Mesopotamia,’ Memorandum by Miss G.L.Bell, February 1919,” in A.T.Wilson, *Loyalties, Mesopotamia, vol. II, 1917–1920: A Personal and Historical Record* (Oxford: OUP, 1931), appendix III, p. 338.

3 See, for example, the works of Engin Akarlı on Syria and Tripolitania, Butrus Abu-Manneh on Syria and the Hijaz, William Ochsenwald on the Hijaz, Michel Le Gall on Tripolitania, F.A.K.Yasamee on Egypt and the Sudan, Tufan Buzpınar on Syria and the Hijaz, Zekeriya Kurşun and Frederick F.Anscombe on Najd and the Gulf, Eugene L.Rogan on Transjordan, Norman N.Lewis on Syria and Jordan, Isa Blumi and Thomas Kühn on the Yemen, in the bibliography.

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# Index

6th Army [6](#) , [16](#) , [22](#) , [29–30](#) , [40–2](#) , [46](#) , [51–3](#) , [55–9](#) , [63](#) , [69–70](#) , [90–1](#) , [102](#) , [105](#) , [123](#) , [136](#) , [138](#) ;

and Shi'i problem [106](#)

Abbas al-Azzawi [2](#)

Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi [22](#)

Abd al-Qadir al-Gaylani [19](#) , [126](#) , [159](#) n. 92

Abdülaziz, Sultan [74](#) , [163](#) n. 43

Abdülhamid II, Sultan [1–3](#) ; [163](#) n. 32, [164](#) n. 65, [165](#) n. 67, [170](#) nn. 29, [30](#) , [171](#) n. 52, [174](#) n. 87, [175](#) n. 89, [177](#) n. 115, [178](#) n. 123, [191](#) n. 148, [196](#) n. 35, [211–12](#) n. 108;

and British danger [127–46](#) ;

Iraq under [14](#) , [24–9](#) , [147–51](#) ;

Islam and Muslim solidarity emphasis by [11](#) ;

and mid-1870s crisis [10](#) ;

and Naqibs of Basra [20–22](#) , [32](#) ;

provincial and central policies of [10–13](#) , [35–43](#) , [47–50](#) , [89–98](#) ;

and Shi'i problem [99–126](#) ;

and *vilayet* of Baghdad government [51–63](#) , [86–87](#) ;

and *vilayet* of Basra government [66–71](#) ;

and *vilayet* of Mosul government [63–6](#) , [74–86](#)

Abdülkerim Nadir Paşa [6](#) , [154–5](#) n. 12

Abdullah Paşa (General) [64](#) , [66](#) , [81](#) , [177](#) nn. 114, [115](#)

Abdullah Paşa (Vali) [66](#)

Abdülmecid, Sultan [5](#)

Abdülvahab Paşa [61](#) , [64](#) , [173](#) nn. 82, [83](#) , [173–4](#) n. 86, [174](#) n. 87, [177](#) n. 117

Abdurrahman Hasan Bey [70](#) , [96–7](#) , [184](#) nn. 165–166, [191](#) n. 170, [192](#) nn. 171, [173](#) , [177](#)

Abdurrahman Paşa [25–6](#) , [36](#) , [53](#) , [67](#) , [76](#) , [88](#) , [93](#) , [160](#) n. 108;

Iraq needs reported by [25–6](#)

Abdurrezzak Efendi [15](#) , [92](#)

Afzal al-Mulk [114](#)

Afzal al-Mulk Kermani [114](#) , [201](#) n. 99

Agob Kuyumcuyan Efendi [15](#)

Agob Paşa [39](#)

Ahmed Feyzi Paşa [58](#) , [61–2](#)

Ahmed Şakir Efendi [105](#) , [124–5](#)

Ahmed Tevfik Paşa (Müşir) [169](#) n. 10

Ahmed Tevfik Paşa (Vali) [7](#)

Akhund Khorasani [122](#)

Akif Efendi [59](#) , [61](#)

Akif Paşa [186](#) n. 43

Albu Muhammad tribe [192](#) n. 173;

and Banu Lam tribe [73](#) , [87](#) , [92–7](#) ,

*see also* Banu Lam tribe

Ali Galib Bey [113](#) , [200](#) n. 92

Ali Kemalî Paşa [63–4](#) , [78](#) , [176](#) n. 102, [186](#) n. 43, [197](#) n. 62

Âli Paşa [206–7](#) n. 9

Ali Rıza Bey [108–9](#) , [198](#) n. 69

Amin al-Dawla [116–7](#) , [201](#) n. 111, [201–2](#) n. 112

Amin al-Sultan [116–17](#) , [120–1](#) , [204](#) n. 142, [204–5](#) n. 143

Anglo-Ottoman relations [128](#) , [137–8](#) , [146](#)

Aniza, Arab tribal confederation [75](#) , [86–7](#)

Aqa Najafi [118](#) , [122](#)

Arab İzzet Paşa [21](#) , [61](#) , [66](#) , [74](#)

Arab Shi'î religious zone [13](#)

Arab Sunni religious zone [13](#)

Aram Efendi [166](#) n. 79

Arif Efendi [162](#) n. 24

Arif Hikmet al-Alusi [22](#) , [160](#) n. 111

Arif Paşa (Vali of Basra) [68](#) , [180](#) nn. 145–146

Arif Paşa (Vali of Mosul) [64–5](#) , [178](#) n. 118

Armenian crisis [64](#) , [128](#) , [137](#)

Asım Efendi [65](#)

Atabat [99–101](#) , [104–5](#) , [110](#) , [118–20](#)

Atabeg Azam [204–5](#) n. 143

Ataullah Efendi [Paşa] [58](#)

Avni Efendi [46](#)

Azarij tribe [96](#)

Aziz Bey [171](#) n. 44

Aziz Paşa [64](#) , [177](#) n. 109

Babanzâde Ahmet Naim Bey [161](#) n. 113

Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı Bey [161](#) n. 113

Babanzâde Zihni Paşa [161](#) n. 113

*Babîâli Evrak Odası* (BEO) collection, of Ottoman archives [3](#)

Baghdad [23–47](#) ;

Arab population in [13](#) ;

Baghdad Railway project [37–9](#) , [128](#) , [138–9](#) ;

French representation at [22](#) ;



Naqibs of Baghdad [19–20](#) ;

Ottoman administration in [2–9](#) , [13](#) ;

and Shi'i problem [99–126](#) ;

trade in [14](#) ;

tribal outbreaks in [19](#) ;

*vilayet* of Baghdad [51–63](#) , [66–82](#) , [86–7](#) , [88–98](#) ;

and *vilayet* system [15–18](#)

Banu Asad, a Shi'i tribe [97–8](#)

Banu Lam tribe [184](#) n. 162, [192](#) n. 173;

and the Albu Muhammad tribe [73](#) , [87](#) , [92–7](#) , [192](#) n. 173,

*see also* Albu Muhammad tribe

Baron Marschall [38](#) , [40](#)

Barzinjis family [21](#) , [74–7](#) , [79](#) , [80–6](#) , [188](#) n. 96

Basra [14–51](#) , [62](#) , [88–98](#) , [134](#) , [192](#) n. 173;

Arab population in [13](#) ;

and British danger [127–46](#) ;

Naqibs of Basra [20–2](#) , [32](#) , [66](#) , [68](#) ;

Ottoman administration in [2–5](#) ;

Ottoman tribal policy in [97](#) ;

and Shi'i problem [99–126](#) ;

*vilayet* of Basra [66–71](#) , [87](#)

Batatu, Hanna [2](#)

Bekir Bey [177](#) n. 109

Bell, Gertrude L. [100](#)

*Blosse Lynch* affair [96–7](#)

British danger [127–46](#)

Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian [39](#)

Cevad Paşa [53–5](#) , [64](#) , [67](#) , [79–80](#) , [93–4](#) , [107](#) , [113](#) , [170](#) nn. 29, [36](#) , [172](#)  
n. 59, [191](#) n. 148, [196](#) n. 35, [197](#) n. 56

Cevdet Paşa [67](#) , [103](#) , [105](#)

Crow (Consul) [184](#) n. 162, [190](#) nn. 129, [132](#) , [133](#) , [192](#) n. 171

Cugnin, M. [165](#) n. 70

Cuinet, Vital [193](#) n. 1

Curzon, Lord [138–9](#) , [141](#) , [209–10](#) n. 66, [210](#) n. 75

Davud Paşa [5](#) , [154](#) n. 7

*Defterdar*, *vilayet* system official [16](#) , [49](#)

Derviş Paşa [76](#) , [78](#)

Diwaniyah *sancak* [15](#) , [60–1](#) , [73](#) , [86](#) , [191](#) n. 167

Ebubekir Hâzim [Tepeyran] Bey [39](#) , [47](#) , [62–3](#) , [65](#) , [82](#) , [84–5](#) , [124](#) , [175–6](#) n. 96, [176](#) n. 99, [178](#) n. 121, [188](#) n. 89

Ebu'l Fazl Mirza [53](#)

Edhem Paş a [195](#) n. 17

Emin Bey [76](#)

Emin Paş a [67–8](#) , [181](#) n. 150

Erzurum [66](#) , [134](#)

*eyalet* of Lahsa [5](#)

Ezra Menahem Efendi [15](#)

Fahri Paş a [61–2](#) , [69](#) , [166–7](#) n. 85, [175](#) n. 89, [182–3](#) n. 157, [184](#) n. 164, [190](#) n. 129

Falih Paş a [89–90](#) , [92](#)

Farhad Paş a [88–9](#)

Farhan Paş a [86–7](#)

Faris ibn Sufuq [87](#)

Fehmi Bey [166](#) n. 81

Ferid Paş a [40](#) , [43](#) , [62](#) , [63](#) , [70](#) , [145](#) , [175](#) n. 89

Ferik Şaban Paş a [67](#)

Gaylanis [19](#) , [51](#) , [58](#) , [60](#)

Gazi Osman Paşa [52](#)

Gazze [52](#) , [92](#)

Ghadban [93](#) , [95–7](#) , [192](#) n. 173

Hacı Akif Paşa [43](#) , [46](#) , [96](#) , [123](#)

Hacı Emin Efendi [177](#) n. 113

Hacı Mansur Paşa [20](#)

Hacı Reşid Paşa [179](#) nn. 127–128

Hadi Paşa al-Faruqi [17](#)

Hafız Mehmed Paşa [64](#) , [67](#) , [94](#) , [136](#)

Haji Agha [65](#) , [83–4](#)

Hajj Mirza Hasan Khan [114](#)

Halil Halid [141–2](#)

Hamawand Kurdish tribes [75–80](#) , [85–6](#) , [176](#) n. 100, [185](#) n. 27, [188](#) n. 90

Hamdi Bey [84](#) , [178](#) n. 120

Hamdi Paşa [20](#) , [67–9](#) , [131](#) , [180](#) n. 140, [181](#) nn. 152–153

Hamidian regime [12](#) , [38](#) , [72](#)

Hanafi sect [44](#) , [124](#)

Hardinge, Sir Arthur [118](#) , [120–1](#) , [202](#) n. 123, [202–3](#) n. 124, [204](#) nn. 138, [140](#)

Hasan Efendi [59](#)

Hasan Refik Paşa [53](#) , [57–8](#) , [170](#) n. 25

Hasht Bihist, Azali Babi text [200](#) n. 95

Hassan Khayyun [192–3](#) n. 180, [193](#) nn. 181, [183](#)

Hidayet Paşa [67](#) , [94](#) , [169](#) n. 9

Hikmat Sulaiman [18](#)

Hilla-Diwaniyah [73](#) , [86](#)

Hoca Ishak Efendi [101–2](#)

Hüseyin Hüsnü Efendi [108–10](#)

*Hüseyniye Risalesi* pamphlet [101–2](#)

Hüsnü Bey [54–5](#) , [171](#) n. 37

Hüsnü Efendi [166](#) n. 79

Ibn Rashid [20](#) , [32](#) , [40](#) , [47](#) , [61](#) , [90–1](#) , [129](#) , [132](#) , [133](#) , [135](#) , [140](#) , [141](#) , [148](#)

Ibn Saud [20](#) , [40](#) , [47](#) , [61](#) , [140–1](#) , [144](#) , [148](#)

İbrahim Efendi [103](#)

İbrahim Paşa [81](#)

İbrahim Paşa (Milli) [189](#) n. 105

Imam Husayn [108](#)

Imam Musa al-Kazim [55](#)

*Irade* collection, of Ottoman archives [3](#)

Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–11) [100](#)

Iraq:

and British danger [127–46](#) ;

Hamidiye regiments in [35](#) ;

*hüsn-i muaşeret* (civility), in Iraq [25](#) ;

irrigation project in [38](#) ;

land tenure in [40](#) ;

main exports of [14](#) ;

Muslim life in [13](#) ;

nineteenth century Iraq [1–3](#) ;

Ottoman conquering [4–23](#) ;

provincial administration in [49–71](#) ;

reform in [24–48](#) ;

and Shi'i problem [99–126](#) ;

state lands in [44](#) ;

system of official appointments and dismissals [50](#) ;

and tribal problems [72–98](#)

İsmail Hakkı Paşa [76–79](#) , [185](#) n. 16

Jafar al-Askari [17](#)

Jaf Kurdish tribes [74–5](#) , [78](#) , [80–2](#)

Jamil Sidki al-Zahawi [21](#)

Jwaideh, Albertine [2](#)

Kak Ahmad [74](#) , [80](#)

Kamil Paşa [75–6](#) , [78](#) , [102–3](#) , [107](#) , [142–3](#) , [196](#) n. 28

Karbala [15](#) , [22](#) , [102](#) , [106–10](#) , [119–22](#) , [126](#) , [197](#) n. 50, [203](#) nn. 130, [135](#) ;

Shi'i establishments in [125](#) , [199](#) n. 84;

tribal system erosion in [73](#) ;

under Iraq [99–100](#) ;

violence in [62](#)

Kasim Paşa [66–7](#) , [88–9](#)

Kawakibi family [51](#) , [58](#)

Kazimayn [10](#) , [55–6](#) , [99–100](#) , [125](#) , [203](#)

Kazım Paşa [61](#) , [94](#) , [166–7](#) n. 85, [173](#) n. 84, [175](#) n. 89

Kemal Efendi [46](#)

Kethudazâde Süleyman Faik Bey [22](#) , [54–5](#) , [63](#) , [161](#) n. 114

Khazail confederation [73](#)

Kirkuk [15](#) , [21](#) , [33](#) , [45](#) , [63](#) , [66](#) , [76](#) , [79](#) , [82](#) , [85–6](#) , [172](#) n. 70;

Hâzim Bey in [65](#) ;

Kurdish tribes in [4](#) , [74–5](#) ;

Salih Paşa in [64](#)

Kurdish Sunni religious zone [13](#)

Kurdish tribes [72–5](#) , [176](#) n. 100

Kuwait [129](#) , [133](#) , [150](#) , [160](#) n. 107, [180](#) n. 146, [181](#) n. 151, [207–8](#) n. 20;

Anglo-Ottoman tensions in [138–44](#) , [210](#) n. 75, [213](#) n. 117;

Arif Paşa in [68](#) ;

Shaikh Mubarak in [20](#) , [69](#) , [90–2](#) , [141](#) ;

Süleyman Paşa [134](#)

Land Law of 1858 [8–9](#) , [20](#) , [73–4](#)

Lansdowne [141](#) , [145](#) , [213](#) n. 117

Layard, Sir Henry [24](#)

Longrigg, S.H. [2](#)

Lorimer, J.G. [2](#) , [93](#) , [144](#) , [160](#) n. 107, [166](#) n. 78

McCarthy J. [12](#)

Mahmud II, Sultan [5](#) , [52](#) , [74](#)

Mahmud Bey [55](#) , [76](#)

Mahmud Nedim Paşa [10](#)



Mahmud Paşa [76](#) , [78–82](#)

Mahmud Şevket Paşa [17](#)

Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi [21](#)

Malkum Khan [116](#) , [201–2](#) n. 112

Mansur Paşa [88–9](#)

Mazhar Paşa [26–7](#) , [162](#) n. 13

Mecid Bey [15](#) , [61–2](#) , [65](#) , [70](#) , [91](#) , [95](#) , [125](#) , [145](#) , [174](#) n. 87, [191](#) nn. 162–163

Mehdi Kulli (Russian Agent at Kazimayn) [203](#) n. 135

Mehmed Ali Bey [83](#) , [105](#) , [132–3](#)

Mehmed Emin Efendi [22](#)

Mehmed Enis Paşa [68](#) , [177](#) n. 114, [181](#) n. 151

Mehmed Hamdi Paşa [67](#)

Mehmed Muhlis Paşa [69](#)

Mehmed Namık Paşa [6–8](#) , [27](#) , [51](#) , [76](#) , [86](#) , [101](#) , [154–5](#) n. 12, [155](#) n. 20, [169](#) n. 5, [195](#) n. 18, [206](#) n. 4

Mehmed Necmeddin Efendi [15](#)

Mehmed Paşa [34–5](#)

Mehmed Reşid Paşa [7](#) , [155](#) n. 20

Mehmed Rifat Efendi [108](#) , [197](#) n. 64

Mehmed Şükrü Efendi [15](#)

Mehmed Tevfik Bey [175](#) n. 89

Melvill [159](#) n. 100, [172](#) n. 70, [178](#) n. 119, [187](#) n. 74, [204](#) n. 137

Memduh Paşa [43](#)

Mezid Paşa [92](#)

Midhat Paşa [8–10](#) , [12](#) , [20](#) , [28](#) , [31](#) , [36](#) , [50](#) , [52](#) , [66](#) , [86–8](#) , [101](#) , [129](#) , [148](#) , [195](#) n. 17, [206–7](#) n. 9, [209](#) n. 46

Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani [114–16](#) , [201](#) n. 99

Mirza Hasan Khan [114–16](#)

Mirza Hasan Shirazi [102](#) , [106](#) , [108](#) , [110](#) , [113](#) , [118](#)

Mirza Mahmud Khan [117](#)

Mirza Muhammad Efendi [103](#)

Mirza Muhammad Riza [199](#) n. 84

Mirza Muhsin Khan [102–3](#) , [116–17](#) , [120](#) , [201–2](#) n. 112

Mirza Musa [53](#)

Mirza Riza Kermani [116](#)

Mirza Tehrani [122](#)

Mockler (Consul General) [113](#) , [159](#) nn. 95, [97](#) , [171](#) nn. 55, [56](#) , [172](#) n. 63, [177](#) n. 112, [199](#) nn. 85–88, [199–200](#) n. 89

Monahan (Consul in Basra) [144](#) , [160](#) n. 105, [182](#) nn. 155–156, [183](#) n. 157, [212](#) nn. 111, [113](#)

Mosul [27–43](#) , [94](#) , [134](#) , [172](#) n. 70;

Ottoman administration in [2](#) , [4–7](#) , [13–23](#) ;

tribal outbreaks in [19](#) ;

*vilayet* of Mosul [63–6](#) , [70–3](#) , [74–86](#)

Mösyö Galan [167](#) n. 94

Muallim Feyzi Efendi [114](#) , [200](#) n. 96

Muhammad Ali Paşa [5](#)

Muhammad Ali Talabani [82](#)

Muhammad Fazil Paşa a Daghistani [22](#) , [77](#) , [89–90](#) , [95](#) , [97](#) , [184](#) n. 162, [192](#) n. 174

Muhammad ibn Sabah [138](#)

Muhammad Muhsin Khan [120](#)

Muhammad Rauf Talabani [82](#)

Muhammarah [95](#) , [131](#)

Muhlis Bey [60](#)

Muhlis Paşa a [41](#) , [69–70](#) , [91](#) , [95](#) , [144](#) , [183](#) n. 158, [183–4](#) n. 160, [184](#) n. 162, [189–90](#) n. 127, [190](#) nn. 128–129

Muhsin Khan, Mirza [102–3](#) , [116–17](#) , [120](#) , [201–2](#) n. 112

Muhsin Paşa a [68–9](#) , [181–2](#) n. 154

Muntafiq tribes [88–92](#)

Murat Efendi [197](#) n. 50

Müşir Fuad Paşa a [172](#) n. 66

Mustafa Asım Paşa [29](#) , [52](#) , [169](#) n. 10

Mustafa Bey [59](#) , [166](#) n. 81

Mustafa Nâzım Bey/Paşa [29](#) , [46–7](#) , [63](#) , [96](#) , [124–5](#) , [178–9](#) n. 126, [191–2](#) n. 170, [192](#) nn. 171, [173](#)

Mustafa Nuri Paşa [7](#) , [69](#) , [90](#)

Mustafa Paşa [60–1](#)

Mustafa Yumni Bey [66](#) , [179](#) n. 131

Mutevellizâde Abdulmecid [22](#)

Muzaffar al-Din Shah [116–17](#) , [122](#)

Muzaffer Bey [54–5](#) , [170](#) n. 29, [171](#) n. 37

Najaf [26](#) , [106–7](#) , [119–22](#) , [125–6](#) , [203](#) n. 135;

Shi'i establishments in [199](#) n. 84;

*türbe* (Caliph Ali's tomb) in [102](#) ;

under Iraq [99–100](#)

Najd [15](#) , [18](#) , [20–1](#) , [29](#) , [33](#) , [40](#) , [70](#) , [128](#) , [133–50](#) , [163](#) n. 34, [192](#) n. 171, [206](#) nn. 4, [8–9](#) , [212](#) n. 111;

education in [32–3](#) ;

*eyalet* of Lahsa (al-Hasa) formation in [5](#) ;

Feyzi Paşa in [61](#) ;

land tenure policy in [32](#) ;

Ottoman regime in [129](#) ;

Sadun Paşa's involvement in [90](#)

Namık Paşa (*Küçük*) [58–61](#)

Naqib Mustafa Efendi [82](#)

Naqibs of Baghdad [19–20](#)

Naqibs of Basra [20–2](#)

Naqshbandi-Khalidi shaikh [25](#) , [101](#)

Naqshbandi shaikh [75](#) , [83](#)

Nasir al-Din Shah [110](#) , [116](#) , [199](#) n. 84

Nasir Paşa [66](#) , [88–9](#) , [92](#)

Nazif Bey Efendi [166](#) n. 79

Necib Paşa [6](#)

Newmarch (Consul General at Baghdad) [144](#) , [173](#) n. 81, [173](#) nn. 83, [84](#) ,  
[182–3](#) n. 157, [203](#) n. 130

Novvab Hossein Hindi [114](#)

Novvab Vala Hajj Sheikh ol Ra'is, *see* Mirza Hasan Shaikh al-Rais

Numan Bey [60–1](#)

Nuri al-Said [17](#)

Nusret Paşa [30–3](#) , [36](#) , [52–7](#) , [108–9](#) , [134–5](#) , [170](#) nn. 29, [30](#) , [171](#) nn. 38,  
[43](#) , [44](#) , [52](#) , [55](#) , [209](#) n. 46

O'Connor, Sir Nicolas [38](#) , [70](#) , [120–1](#) , [139–41](#) , [160](#) n. 107, [164](#) n. 65, [165](#) n. 70, [168](#) n. 107, [174](#) n. 87, [182](#) n. 155, [183](#) n. 160, [203](#) n. 130, [204](#) nn. 137, [142](#) , [204–5](#) n. 143, [210](#) n. 75, [211](#) n. 107, [212](#) n. 113, [213](#) n. 115

Ömer Lütfi Paşa [7](#)

Ömer Vehbi Paşa [79–80](#) , [171](#) n. 38

Osman Efendi [29](#)

Osman Hamdi Bey [195](#) n. 17

Osman Paşa [64](#) , [81–2](#)

Ottoman province/government [120](#) , [126](#) , [143](#) ;

establishment [4–23](#) ;

justice department of [18](#) ;

major religious zones of [13](#) ;

Ottoman-British confrontation over Kuwait [141](#) ;

Ottoman-Iranian wars [93](#) ;

Ottoman Iraq, nineteenth-century, political history [2](#) ;

in Syria [5](#)

Oudh Bequest [100](#) , [106](#) , [123](#)

‘Pan-Islamic’ ideas [11](#) , [20](#) , [110–11](#) , [117–18](#) , [121](#) , [126](#) , [149](#) , [151](#)

Pashdar tribe [79](#)

Pertev Paşa [41–2](#) , [46](#) , [62–63](#) , [96](#) , [167](#) n. 89

Qatar [128–9](#) , [131](#) , [136–8](#) , [146](#) , [150](#)

*Rafizi*, term [198](#) n. 7 [3](#)

Rahmetullah Efendi [109](#)

Ramsay (British Consul General) [96](#) , [166–7](#) n. 85, [168](#) n. 107, [176](#) n. 99, [192](#) n. 173

Receb Paşa a [30](#) , [55–8](#) , [62](#) , [68](#) , [80](#) , [172](#) n. 66

Reşid (Akif) Paşa a [62](#)

Rifaiyya [13](#)

Rifat Efendi [59](#) , [61](#) , [108](#)

Rifat Paşa a [68](#) , [82](#)

Rıza Paşa a (major-general) [188](#) n. 93

Rıza Paşa a (Serasker) [167](#) n. 92

Russo-Ottoman war of 1877–8 [75](#)

Sadeddin Paşa a [64](#) , [177](#) n. 111

Sadun Paşa a [90–2](#)

Said Paşa a [162](#) n. 25

Şakir Paşa a [35](#) , [64](#)

Salih Efendi Saadi [84](#)

Salih Münir Paşa [142–3](#)

Salih Paşa [64](#)

Samarra incident [199–200](#) n. 89

*sancak*, administrative division [6](#)

Sayyed Borhan ed din Balkhi, *see* Sayyid Burhaneddin Belhi

Sayyid Abdurrahman Efendi [15](#) , [19](#) , [54](#)

Sayyid Behbahani [114](#) , [122](#) , [200](#) n. 93

Sayyid Burhaneddin Belhi [114](#)

Sayyid Huseyin Cisir [109](#)

Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani [110–12](#) , [114](#) , [198](#) nn. 75, [77](#)

Sayyid Muhammad Efendi [80–2](#)

Sayyid Muhammad Said [20](#)

Sayyid Mustafazâde Mehmed [65](#)

Sayyid Rajab [20](#)

Sayyid Salman Efendi [19](#) , [51–2](#) , [76](#) , [159](#) n. 92

Sayyid Talib Paşa [20–1](#) , [43](#) , [69](#) , [70](#) , [92](#) , [98](#) , [143](#) , [160](#) n. 107, [182–3](#) n. 157

Şemseddin Bey [68](#) , [118](#) , [122](#) , [202](#) n. 123

Şevket Paşa [60–1](#) , [166](#) n. 79

Şeyhülislam [107](#) , [109](#) , [124](#)

Shah Ismail Safavi [104](#)



Shaikh Abulhuda [20–1](#) , [70](#) , [111](#) , [159](#) n. 96, [192](#) n. 177

Shaikh Ahmad Ruhi [114](#) , [116](#)

Shaikh al-Rais [103](#) , [114](#) , [196](#) n. 35

Shaikh Chayad [97](#)

Shaikh Fadlallah Nuri [121](#)

Shaikh Farhan [86–7](#)

Shaikh Gümüŝ hânevî Ahmed Ziyâüddin Efendi [101–2](#)

Shaikh Hamid Talabani [79](#)

Shaikh Hassan Khayyun [97](#)

Shaikh Maruf Barzinji [75–6](#) , [82](#)

Shaikh Mazandarani [122](#)

Shaikh Mubarak [20](#) , [69](#) , [90](#) , [92](#) , [138–41](#) , [143](#)

Shaikh Muhammad Fadil Sharabiani [118](#)

Shaikh Nuri [84–5](#) , [122](#)

Shaikh Nur Muhammad [83–5](#)

Shaikh Qasim al-Thani [20](#) , [136](#)

Shaikh Rıza [74](#)

Shaikh Said Efendi (Barzinji) [80](#) , [81](#) , [85](#) , [108](#) , [188](#) n. 90

Shaikh Sayyid Sultan Ali [105](#)

Shaikh Shamil [22](#)

Shaikh Taha Efendi [105](#)

Shammar Jarba, Arab tribe [75](#) , [79](#) , [86–7](#) , [189](#) n. 105

Shatt al-Arab [18](#) , [27](#) , [88](#) , [129–33](#)

Shi'is/Shi'ism [106](#) , [108](#) , [199–200](#) n. 89;

growth, among tribal population [101](#) ;

in Ottoman lands [110](#) ;

Shi'i problem in Iraq [99–126](#) , [106](#) , [109](#) , [122](#) ;

in 6th Army [107](#)

Shi'i ulama [100](#) , [104–5](#) , [110](#) , [112](#) , [114–15](#) , [117](#) , [119](#) , [124–5](#)

Sıdkı Paşa [192](#) n. 174

Sırrı Paşa [29](#) , [52–3](#) , [106](#) , [163](#) n. 32, [169](#) n. 10

Sulaymaniyah [4–5](#) , [15](#) , [21](#) , [45](#) , [64–6](#) , [82–6](#) , [172](#) n. 70, [188](#) n. 90;

Barzinjis in [74](#) , [85](#) ;

Kurdish tribes in [74–5](#) ;

Sayyid Muhammad Efendi in [80](#)

Süleyman Fethi Efendi [175](#) n. 89

Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa [33–4](#) , [108–9](#) , [134](#)

Süleyman Nazif [177](#) n. 115

Süleyman Şevki Paşa [42](#) , [61–2](#) , [69–70](#) , [90–2](#) , [95](#) , [174](#) n. 87, [184](#) n. 162

Süleyman Sırrı Bey [167](#) n. 71

Sultan's officials [49–71](#)

Sunnis [54](#) , [88](#) , [102–5](#) , [107](#) , [111](#) , [113](#) , [123](#) , [125](#)

Sunni-Shi'i rapprochement [104](#) , [111](#) , [113–14](#) , [117](#)

Suq ash-Shuyuq [70](#) , [88](#) , [91](#) , [97](#)

Tahir Paşa [186](#) n. 43

Tahsin Paşa [63](#) , [84](#) , [176](#) n. 100

Takiyuddin Paşa [8](#) , [51](#) , [58](#) , [169](#) nn. 6, [8](#)

Talabanis [65](#) ;

of Kirkuk [21](#) ;

of Qadiri order [74](#) ;

Talabani-Barzinji conflict [75–9](#)

Tanzimat era/reform program [1](#) , [5–17](#) , [43](#) , [49](#) , [52](#) , [73](#) , [86–7](#) , [101](#) , [128](#)

*tapu* tax system [74](#)

Tevfik Paşa [7](#) , [40](#) , [52](#) , [119](#) , [140–1](#)

*timar* tax system [4–5](#)

Tobacco Protest of 1891–2 [100](#) , [109–10](#)

Treaty of Erzurum [130](#) , [195](#) n. 15

tribal problems [72–98](#)

Tweedie (British Consul General) [169](#) n. 8 [169](#) n. 10, [207–8](#) n. 20

Vecihi Paşa [6–7](#)

Veli Paşa, Major-General [166](#) n. 81, [167](#) n. 94, [175](#) n. 89

Vilayet Law of 1864 [8–9](#) , [50](#)

*vilayet* of Baghdad [51–63](#) , [86–7](#)

*vilayet* of Basra [66–71](#) , [87–92](#)

*vilayet* of Mosul [63–6](#) , [74–86](#)

*vilayet* system [8](#) ,

*see also individual entries* ;

establishment [15](#)

Wilhelm II, Kaiser [37](#)

Willcocks, Sir William [38](#) , [165](#) n. 67

Wratislaw (British Consul) [68](#) , [159](#) n. 100, [160](#) nn. 102–103, [181](#) nn. 152–153, [182](#) n. 154, [193](#) n. 183

Yanko Efendi [166](#) n. 79

Yezidi tribes [80](#)

*Yıldız* collection, of Ottoman archives [3](#)

Young Turk Revolution [85–6](#)

Yusuf Paşa, [192](#) n. 174

Yusuf Rıza Paşa a [103–4](#) , [114](#) , [196](#) n. 37, [199](#) n. 88

Zeki Paşa a [65](#) , [83–5](#)

Zühdü Bey [64](#) , [177](#) n. 117

Zuheyrrâde Ahmed Paşa a [166](#) n. 79

Zuheyrrâde family [21](#) , [88](#)

Zuheyrrâde Kasım Paşa a [88](#)