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EUROPEAN EXPLORATION  
IN TURKISH KURDISTAN, 1800-1842

Robert P. Perry

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the Master of Arts degree  
in the Arab Studies Department of the  
American University of Beirut  
Beirut, Lebanon  
1965

ERRATA

1. Footnote 143, page 125, should read "Ibid." R.P.P.

**Note:**

Corrections will be made after the oral examination and submitted to the library.

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## PREFACE

Although submitted as a master's thesis to the Arab Studies Program of the American University of Beirut, this work is the product of a larger project which involved the labor of many. In 1962, while studying Arabic at the Defense Language Institute, Presidio of Monterey, California, Lieutenant Colonel John D. Yarbrough and I first learned about Chesney's Euphrates Expedition of 1835-37 from Kamal Sa'id, Chairman of the Arabic Department. As Area Specialist Students and future graduate students in the Department of Arab Studies, American University of Beirut, we conceived a latter-day Euphrates Expedition as a means of broadening our knowledge of history, geography, economics and culture of the Middle East. The Euphrates with its mixed borderland civilization of Lazis, Armenians, Kurds, Turks, bedawin Arabs, marsh Arabs, and Persians afforded a natural highway of some 1700 miles which cuts a swath through the Middle East from the Gates of Georgia in northeastern Turkey within 125 miles of the Black Sea to the Shatt-al-Arab and the Persian Gulf. As a traditional frontier between Eastern and Western Civilizations, the river and its history provided an ideal guide for the purposes of our study.

With the encouragement and support of Dr. Joseph J. Malone, then Chairman of the Arab Studies Program, we made a road trip for the purpose of investigating the present state of navigability of the Euphrates River for small craft. The trip, from December 26, 1963 through January 8, 1964, by jeep, included inspection of key sites on the river from Kemaliye

in central Turkey to Falluja, Iraq, west of Baghdad, and covered a road distance of 3550 miles. At Kemaliye, we were able to tentatively hire a guide for the summer largely through the efforts of Omar Turhan and his sons. Our guide would take us by kellek from a point above Erzincan, through the Anti-Taurus and Taurus Mountains as far south as Samsat. In Syria and Iraq, the slow river current and obstacles to navigation indicated that the most practicable means of conveyance would be a flat-bottomed, out-board powered boat with a draft not exceeding eight inches.

During the spring of 1964, final administrative arrangements were made and the necessary equipment procured. The administrative details involved the approval and coordination of seven governments: Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, and the United States. Here, special thanks are due to Colonel Thomas Lawlor, former U. S. Army Attache to Lebanon, and Dr. Malone, whose tireless letter writing helped us to overcome many of the administrative difficulties. The project was also aided immeasurably by Fuad Bardawill, the Lebanese representative for International Outboard Marine, who loaned to the University a sixteen-foot boat and two eighteen horsepower out-board motors for our descent of the lower course of the Euphrates.

On June 8, 1964, Colonel Yarbrough and I left Beirut to begin a four-month trip down the Euphrates from its northernmost source to the Persian Gulf. Traveling by jeep to Erzurum, Turkey, we explored the sources of the Kara Su, and then followed the course of the river south to Erzincan, where we joined our kellekis, Mehmet Civrik and Mehmet Ayshe of Kemaliye. From July 7th to the 26th, the four of us floated downstream on the Euphrates from Erzincan to Samsat, and were to our knowledge, the first expedition ever to successfully negotiate the river through both the Anti-Taurus and Taurus Mountains.

At Samsat, we left our boatmen and proceeded south by jeep arriving back in Beirut on August 1, 1965. During our descent of the Euphrates in Turkey, we received food and shelter from innumerable villagers and townspeople who contributed to the success of the expedition. Special thanks are due to the members of the Third Turkish Army, the Twenty-third Jandarma Brigade, and the Joint United States Military Advisory Team in Erzurum, who maintained and delivered our vehicle to us at the end of our descent of the river through Turkey.

After a ten-day reunion with our families in Beirut, we began the second phase of the expedition which entailed transporting our boat and motors by trailer across Syria and Jordan to Ramadi, Iraq. Leaving Beirut on August 17th, we joined Lieutenant Mahmud Al-Qusai, an Iraqi Engineer officer, who would accompany us to Basra. Departing Ramadi, we ascended the Euphrates with the hope of reaching Ana, where the steamer Tigris had sunk during Chesney's Expedition; the weirs for local irrigation and low water prevented ascent above the village of Khan Baghdadi. During the month of September, we navigated the Euphrates from Khan Baghdadi through the southern marshes to Qurna, the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. We arrived at Basra on September 30th. Following the Shatt-al-Arab as far south as Abadan, Iran, we returned to Basra, and proceeded via airplane and hydrofoil to Fao and the Persian Gulf as guests of the Basra Petroleum Company. Retrieving our boat and equipment at Basra, Colonel Yarbrough and I arrived back in Beirut on October 17, 1965, ending a four-month expedition on the Euphrates.

During our expedition, we had crossed and sometimes paralleled the footsteps of the great nineteenth century explorers who "rediscovered" the Middle East. To stand on the plain of Erzurum, and imagine James

Brant as he headed into the unknown region of mountains which surround it, or to view the impenetrable barrier of the Taurus and the great canyon of the Euphrates where von Moltke and Hafiz Pasha endeavored to find a route southward to the Syrian steppe, is to appreciate the problems faced by these men. To follow the path of Chesney, Ainsworth, Escourt, and the Lynch brothers as they attempted to combine steam navigation and exploration on the Euphrates, one can better comprehend the vast problems and hardships which these men had to overcome as they added to the accumulative body of knowledge pushing back the horizons of the unknown.

"European Exploration in Turkish Kurdistan, 1800-1842" and the thesis, "The Euphrates Route to India in the Nineteenth Century," submitted by my traveling companion, Colonel J. D. Yarbrough, represent an attempt to present a more definitive and comprehensive treatment of nineteenth century European exploration in the Tigris and Euphrates region of the Middle East and to view the achievements of these explorers in the light of their own age.

I would like to thank Dr. Hermann Vary of Ataturk University, Erzurum, Turkey, who helped us find the northernmost sources of the Euphrates and who first directed our attention to the exploratory achievements of Helmuth von Moltke. Miss Theresa Goell, head of the Nemrud Dagh Expedition, with her long experience in that region was able to provide us with some excellent material pertaining to the history of the Euphrates. Colonel James A. Hudson, present U. S. Army Attache to Lebanon, and Major Sam Cannon, U. S. Army Foreign Area Specialist Student in Turkey, followed this project with considerable interest and provided valuable aid. Dr. Nabih A. Faris, Chairman of the

History Department and Arab Studies Program at A.U.B., enthusiastically endorsed our expedition, and granted us leave from the University. Our advisor, Dr. Joseph Malone, whose co-related field of nineteenth century Turkish Arabia, not only allowed us to use materials from his own studies, but also provided guidance and letters of introduction to individuals and institutions in England.

Dr. Albert Hourani allowed us to use the Arnold T. Wilson Collection at the Middle East Centre, Saint Anthony's College, Oxford University, and was extremely helpful in granting me permission to use the Richard Wood Papers. Miss Elizabeth Monroe also rendered assistance during our research. Mr. L. P. Kirwan, Director and Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society of London, and Mr. G. R. Crone, the Librarian and Map Curator, granted the use of the Society's library and archives, and contributed advice concerning the research of materials.

The staffs of the many libraries where I have worked also deserve special thanks: the Public Record Office, the India Office Library, the Middle East Centre, the Library of the Royal Geographical Society of London, the Bodleian Library, Ataturk University Library in Erzurum, and the Jaffet Memorial Library at the American University of Beirut.

R.P.P.

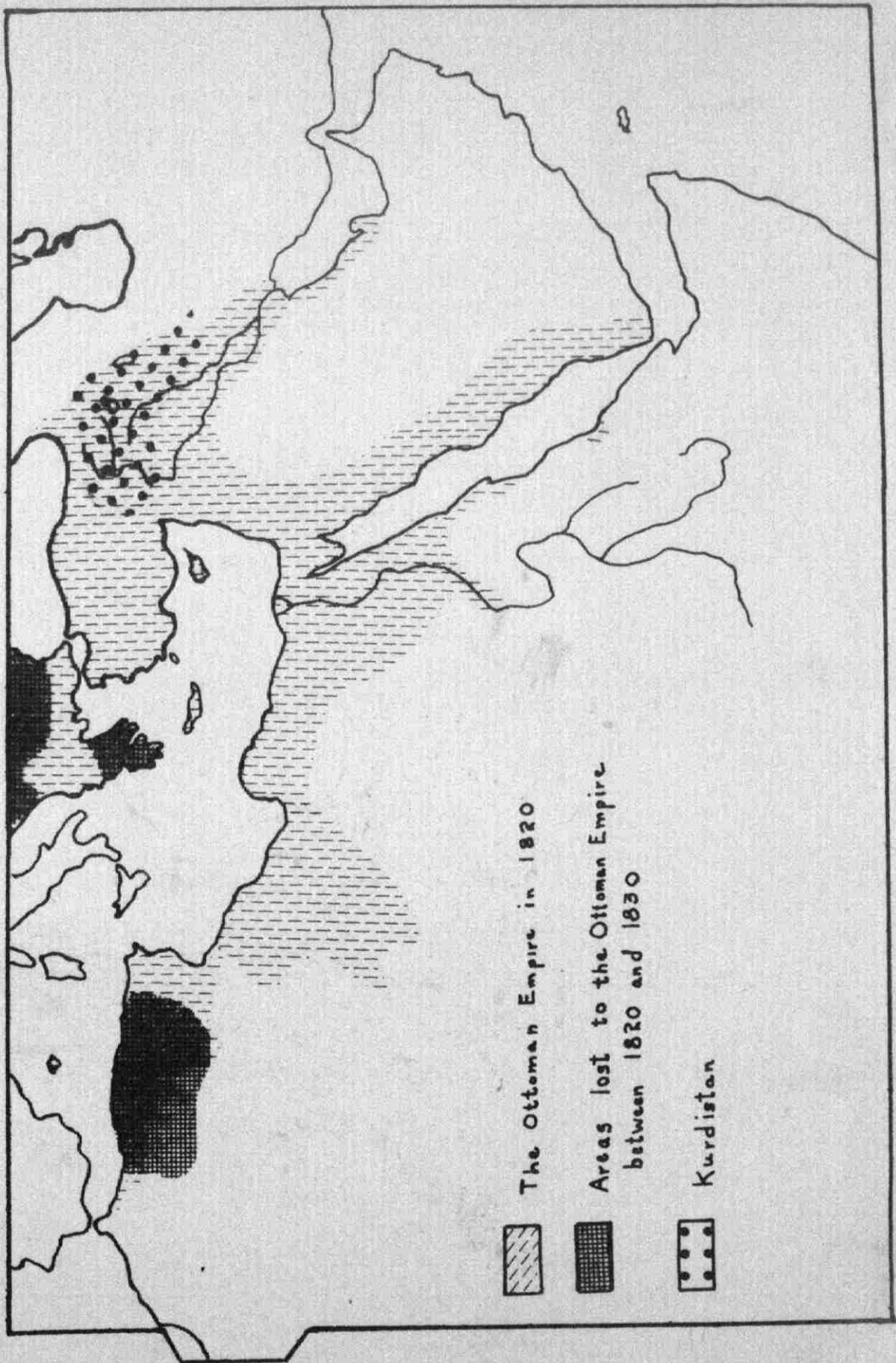
Beirut, Lebanon  
June, 1965



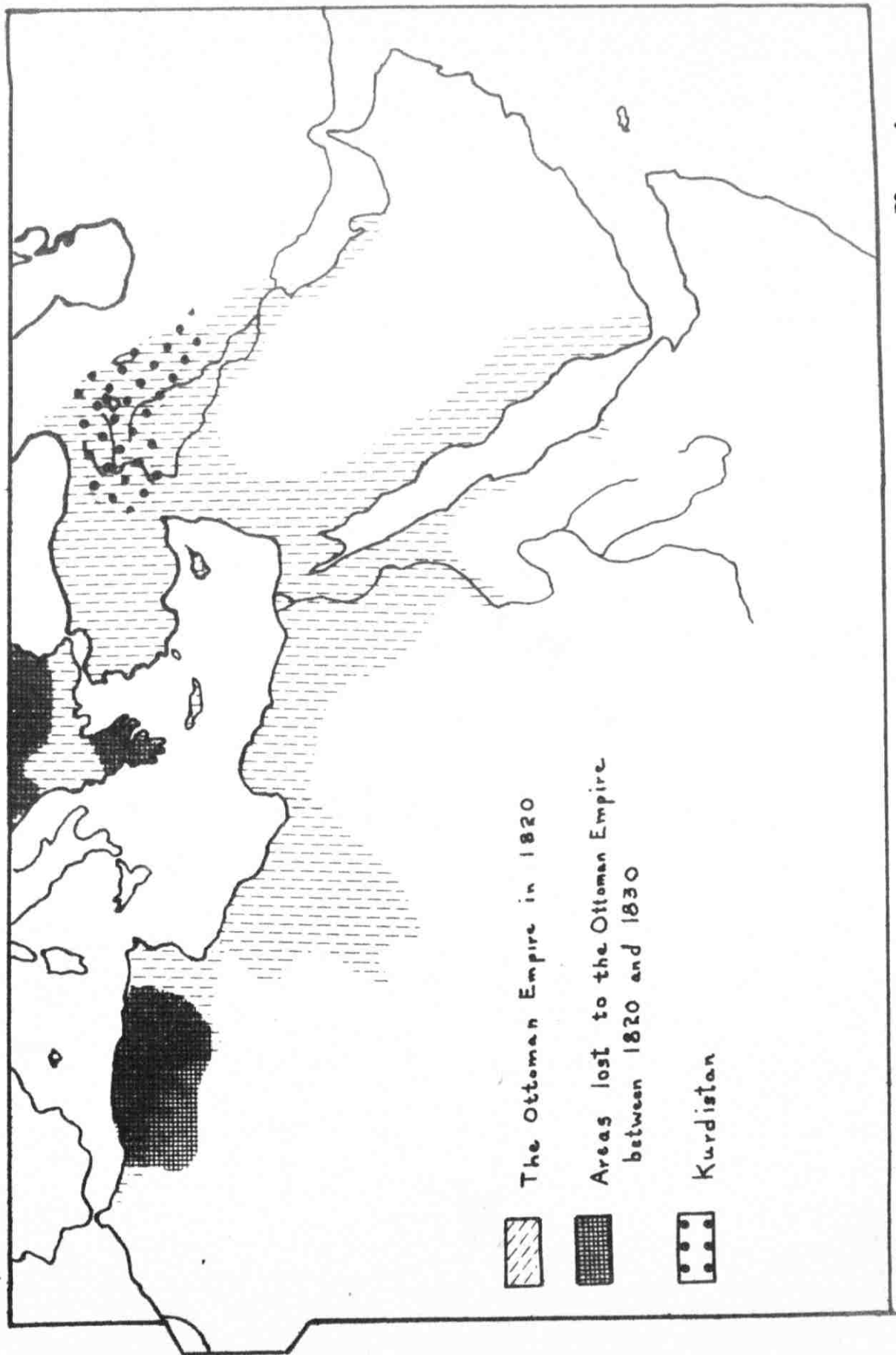
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Map 1



Map 1

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## CHAPTER I

### TURKISH KURDISTAN

The social, economic, and political conditions prevailing in Europe in the years following the Peace of Vienna (1815) and the attendant conditions within the Ottoman Empire led to "the Golden Age of exploration in the Middle East"<sup>1</sup> and the "Rediscovery of Asia Minor" in the first half of the nineteenth century. After a generation of warfare, Europe now stood at the threshold of a remarkable period of peace and material progress. The rise of liberalism, steady growth in nationalism, and rapid progress in industrialization characterize the period. However, while the ideas of the French Revolution and the inanimate forces of the Industrial Revolution propelled the middle classes toward ascendancy, the aristocratic and military circles reverted to the eighteenth century conservative spirit of order and calm. The politico-military inactivity of the European Continent created a surplus of unemployed or under-employed personnel in the art of warfare. With these prevailing conditions, it was natural for Europe to seek a new market in an economic, political, and military sense. The closest market geographically, and one which had the longest association or contact with Europe was the Middle East. The Ottoman Empire became the sphere of activity which was to preoccupy, and in many cases, employ Europe's excess talent.

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<sup>1</sup>C. J. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks, and Arabs (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 21.

To these conditions must be added the intellectual attitude of the period, the spirit of the age - Romanticism. The belief in man as an infinite reservoir of possibilities and the plastic power of the imagination with its quest for the unknown or exotic impelled Europe towards the classical Islamic civilization of the Ottoman Empire in which man was a fixed and limited creature living in an orderly world. The Byronic myth and the Greek revolt "turned Western eyes towards the East,"<sup>2</sup> thus initiating the "Rediscovery of Asia Minor." The European explorers who opened the Ottoman East were the forerunners of the "Western Impact" which was to disrupt, and in some cases destroy classical Islamic civilization in the Middle East.

The scope of this paper is limited to early nineteenth century exploration in the eastern portion of Asia Minor, or what might be more appropriately called "Turkish Kurdistan." There is a plethora of names, which emanated mostly from nineteenth century authors, used to describe the area of concern. "Assyria," "Upper Mesopotamia," "Armenia," and "Kurdistan" were the most common; however, none of these terms is adequate within the geo-political context of the nineteenth century. Each term encompasses a portion of area, but does not cover the entire region. In a similar manner, present-day international boundaries do not adequately demarcate our area of interest, for portions of it lie within the Soviet Union, Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. However, in the nineteenth century the major portion of the area composed the eastern provinces (eyalet or wilayet) of the Ottoman Empire where the Kurds maintained a quasi-political

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<sup>2</sup>R. D. Barnett, Keeper of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the British Museum, quoted in Gordon Waterfield, Layard of Nineveh (London: John Murray, 1963), p. 484.

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autonomy. For this reason the term, "Turkish Kurdistan," would appear to be the most appropriate one for the purposes of this study.

The confusion of terms used to describe the eastern highlands of Asia Minor is indicative of the very nature of the area. As a bridge-land between Asia and Asia Minor, the region has been at various times in history an indeterminate frontier which was invaded from all directions. With each invasion, a new cultural, religious, or ethnological manifestation was super-imposed on the existent conditions, so that by the nineteenth century, the region was a mosaic of peoples, religions, and cultures. Hurrians, Hittites, and Assyrians; Persians, Greeks, and Romans; Armenians, Byzantines, and Arabs; Mongols, Ottoman Turks, and Russians have invaded and occupied this bridge-land.

The heterogeneity of population and culture characteristic of the region provided a multitudinous variety of subjects and interests for the traveler and explorer; however, at the same time, it resulted in a proliferation of vague and confusing terms which were applied to the region. In attempting to describe only the southern borderland of the area, Mark Sykes who meticulously catalogued the Kurdish tribes,<sup>3</sup> exclaimed:

As in the past, the Jazirah is still a borderland - not a borderland between East and West, but a borderland between North and South; in fact, a borderland between the two elements in the population, which are respectively Arab and Kurd. In the Dersim mountains you will find the pure aboriginal and solitary Kurd, and in the desert you will find the Bedawin of the highest geneology and the purest race. But between those two points you will find every variety of mixed people and a collection of tribes whose ethnological position is extremely confusing - a confusion which is rendered even more confounded when we come into touch with the Christian Jacobites of Tur Abdin and the devil worshippers of the

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<sup>3</sup>Sir Mark Sykes, "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 38 (1908), pp. 451-480 (w/map). This detailed article was later republished as an appendix to Sykes's book, The Caliph's Last Heritage (London: Bickers and Sons, 1915).

Sinjar, for, owing to the Government system of grouping religions and sects into separate millets, and the efforts of the missionaries to introduce or foster among Christians what may be mistaken for a national spirit, we have a situation which for general complication and muddle<sup>4</sup> is practically unrivalled.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Sir Mark Sykes, "Journeys in North Mesopotamia," The Geographical Journal, Vol. 30 (1907), p. 247.

## A Geographical Description

Topography. --The easiest point of departure in defining the eastern highlands of Asia Minor and nineteenth century "Turkish Kurdistan" are its geographic borders, which although not clearly demarcated on all sides, broadly mark the furthest extent of the area. On the north, the region is bounded by the Black Sea and the Caucasus Mountains; to the east, by the Zagros and Hakkari mountain ranges; to the south and southwest by the Syrian and Mesopotamian steppe; and on the west, by the Anatolian plateau.

The predominant geographic features within the region are the mountain ranges dissected by several large river-basins. In the north, the Pontic Mountains parallel the Black Sea coast in an east-west direction until north of Erzurum where the mountains change to a northeast-southwest trend before merging with the Caucasus range. In the south, the parallel mountain ranges of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus systems form a great arc beginning from the Mediterranean coast in the Bay of Iskanderum and trending in a northeasterly direction toward the cities of Malatya and Elazig,<sup>5</sup> then in a southeasterly direction between Elazig and Lake Van, and finally merging with the Hakkari and Zagros Mountains. Within this great arc, stretching from Aleppo, Urfa,<sup>6</sup> Diyarbakir, to Mosul (the

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<sup>5</sup>Elazig is sometimes spelled "El-Aziz." Prior to the latter part of the nineteenth century, the adjacent town of Kharput, or Harput, was of greater importance; therefore, its name was generally used when referring to the Elazig-Kharput urban complex.

<sup>6</sup>Urfa is historically known as Edessa.

northernmost region of the "Fertile Crescent"), the landform is one of broken plateau country descending on the south from the bordering mountain systems. This plateau region eventually merges into the undulating plain of the Syrian steppe.<sup>7</sup>

Among the mountain systems which range from 6,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level are several large river-basins characterized by deep narrow valleys and gorges generally 3,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level. The Aras (Araxes), Euphrates (Firat), and Tigris (Dijla) Rivers form the major portion of the drainage system for the eastern highlands of Asia Minor. The former, whose drainage system is confined to the northeastern section of the region, rises between the Palandoken Mountains and Bingol-dag<sup>8</sup> south of Erzurum. The Aras flows in an easterly direction between Mount Ararat (the highest mountain in Asia Minor - 16,945 feet above sea level) and the city of Erivan. It then bends to the southeast before turning northeast in the Mughan steppe where it enters the Caspian Sea.

The other great river-basins, the Tigris and the Euphrates, form the drainage system for the entire area from the southern slopes of the Pontic Mountains, the eastern slopes of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus, and the western slopes of the Zagros. Issuing from Biblical Paradise,<sup>9</sup> the Tigris and Euphrates flow generally in a southeasterly direction from the highland of eastern Asia Minor through the northern Syrian and Iraqi steppe, and subsequent desert, into the Persian Gulf - a distance of

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<sup>7</sup>W.B. Fisher, The Middle East (4th ed. rev.; London: Methuen & Co., 1961), pp. 322 and 323.

<sup>8</sup>W. E. D. Allen and Paul Muratoff, Caucasian Battlefields (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 415: "Literally 'Mountain of a thousand Lakes', a name derived from the numerous Tarns scattered over this great alpine upland."

<sup>9</sup>Genesis 2:14. The Tigris and Euphrates are two of the four great rivers of Paradise.

nearly 1,700 miles. Although less important in terms of navigation and volume of water, the geographic area of the Euphrates watershed exceeds that of the Tigris.

The northernmost sources of the Euphrates River, called the Kara Su<sup>10</sup> (Western Euphrates), rise in the Dumlu and Kargapazar<sup>11</sup> Mountains at an elevation of 8,500 feet. From its source, twenty-five miles north-northeast of Erzurum, the Kara Su flows in a westerly direction within eight miles of Erzurum. After receiving several small feeder streams from both sides of the Erzurum plain, the main river is joined on the right by the Pulk and on the left by its first main tributary, the Tuzla Su<sup>12</sup> which flows through the Terjan plain. After passing the city of Erzincan, the western branch of the Euphrates flows southwest through a rocky gorge to Kemah where it receives the Kukur Su from the north. Continuing in a westerly direction on a path which would bisect the Anatolian plateau, it parallels the Pontic Mountains to the north and the majestic snow-capped Munzur<sup>13</sup> mountain range, which has elevations up to 10,000 feet, on the south. After forcing its way through a canyon about 1,000 feet deep, it is joined by the Calti Su on the right bank. Here, the Kara Su, blocked by a lava flow, changes its direction. No longer does the Anatolian plateau appear to be its destination; instead, the river

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<sup>10</sup>Kara Su means 'black water'.

<sup>11</sup>Kargapazar literally translated means 'Crow Market Mountains'.

<sup>12</sup>Francis R. Chesney, Euphrates and Tigris (2 vols.; London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1850), p. 41. Chesney lists the Mahmah Khatun as the first main tributary. Presumably, the Tuzla Su and Mahmah Khatun are the same river.

<sup>13</sup>The Munzur (also known as the Mercan, Bagir-Pasha, Sheytan, Dujik, or Dersim Mountains) may be considered as a westerly extension of the Bingol-dag which together form the mountainous massif of the Anti-Taurus (Allen, loc. cit.). The best geographical description of this region is Captain L. Molyneux-Seel, "A Journey in Dersim," The Geographical Journal, Vol. 44 (1914), pp. 49-68 (w/map).

breaks through the barrier of the Anti-Taurus Mountains changing its general direction of flow from west to southwest.<sup>14</sup>

In the Anti-Taurus, the Kara Su begins its passage through the mountain barrier by entering the narrow and deep valley of Egin.<sup>15</sup> Here, it is hemmed in by mountainous precipices rising 4,000 feet above the floor of the gorge. Constricted to an average width of thirty-five yards, the Kara Su continues in a southeasterly direction for a distance of sixty miles. Upon emerging from the Anti-Taurus, about five miles north of Keban, it is joined by the Murad Su, the great eastern branch of the Euphrates.

Although the Murad Su is longer and larger than the Kara Su,<sup>16</sup> it has never been a highway of communication nor a geographic boundary of historical significance. Rising in the Bingol-dag and the mountains north of Lake Van,<sup>17</sup> the Murad Su flows in a southwest direction to the vicinity of Mush. Here it pursues a westerly course paralleling the Niphates mountain range, which separates the Tigris from the Euphrates watershed.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>For a detailed account of the entire course of the Euphrates River see Robert P. Perry and John D. Yarbrough, "Initial Report, Euphrates Navigation Project, 1964" (American University of Beirut, February, 1964), pp. 3-10. (Mimeographed.)

<sup>15</sup>Egin has been renamed Kemaliye.

<sup>16</sup>Chesney, *op. cit.*, pp. 42 and 43. The length of the Kara Su is 270 miles, while that of the Murad is 400 miles.

<sup>17</sup>The most definitive work on the topography of Bingol-dag and the mountains north of Lake Van is H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia* (2 vols.; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901), Vol. I.

<sup>18</sup>George Rawlinson, *The Seven Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World* (3 vols.; New York: Worthington Co., 1875), Vol. I, pp. 5-11. In his description of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, Rawlinson refers to the Niphates mountain range as an eastern prolongation of the Taurus. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 322, uses the term Kurdish Taurus.

From Mush to the confluence of the Kara Su, the Murad receives no tributaries from the south; however, many tributaries flow into it from the north. These tributaries drain the mountainous region of Munzur which divides the Kara Su and Murad Su watersheds. The most important tributaries are the Munzur and Peri Su which join the Murad northeast of Elazig.

Below the confluence of the Murad and the Kara Su, the river is known as the Firat or the Euphrates. Having received the major portion of its tributaries, the Euphrates is now a river of considerable volume and width (at Keban it is approximately 200 yards wide); however, it still must force its way through the Taurus Mountains. Below Keban, the river valley narrows into a gorge following a southwesterly direction. After fifteen miles, the Euphrates bends to the southeast, and receives a tributary, the Kuru Chay,<sup>19</sup> coming from the west. In the plain of Malatya, a larger stream, the Tokmah Su joins the Euphrates.

Beyond the Tokmah Su, the river enters the main chain of the Taurus just south of the Malatya-Elazig road. Winding through the Komurhan, Bekirhan, and Sarsap gorges<sup>20</sup> with a swift descent interrupted by rapids, the Euphrates emerges from the Taurus a few miles north of Samsat. During its course through the Tauric chain, the river receives

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<sup>19</sup>Chesney, op. cit., p. 44, refers to the Kuru Chay as the Charmurli Su.

<sup>20</sup>Public Works Administration, Government of Turkey, Report on Euphrates and Tigris (Ankara, 1956), p. 3. There are only two detailed first-hand accounts of the course of the Euphrates through the Taurus Mountains: Helmuth von Moltke, Briefe über Zustände und Begebenheiten in der Türkei aus den Jahren 1835 - 1839 (Berlin: 1841), and Ellisworth Huntington, "Through the Great Cañon of the Euphrates River," The Geographical Journal, Vol. 20 (1902), pp. 175-200 (w/map).

several minor tributaries on both sides and one sizeable tributary, the Kahta Su, from the west bank.

At Samsat the Euphrates River changes character, becoming placid and majestic. The river valley winds through rolling hills and cultivated countryside. Flowing in an easterly direction toward the Mediterranean Sea, it gains the last major Turkish tributary, the Gok Su, at Kizlim. Fifteen miles further downstream and only 140 miles from the Mediterranean, the Euphrates bends to the south passing the town of Bir or Birecik, and enters the Syrian frontier at Djerablous.

While the Euphrates drains the northern and western areas, the Tigris basin drains the southern and eastern regions of the highlands. The northernmost sources of the Tigris rise on the southern slopes of the Niphates mountain range which trends east-west from Bitlis to Elazig. The extreme western source flows from the region south of Lake Hazar<sup>21</sup> in a southwesterly direction past the lead and silver mines of Arghani Maden for about twenty miles, and then bends south flowing past Diyarbakir. The Tigris swings directly east below Diyarbakir, and parallels the Niphates mountain range. From the north it receives the Zibeneh Su and Ambar Su tributaries, as well as the Myafarekin Su, near Batman, which drains the central section of the Niphates.

The Tigris continues to flow in an easterly direction until Tilleh, the confluence of the Botan Su, <sup>22</sup> the largest tributary of the Tigris which flows from the Mukus Mountains south of Lake Van before combining with the Bitlis Chay south of Siirt. Below Tilleh, the Tigris

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<sup>21</sup>Lake Hazar was previously called Goljik which literally means 'Little Lake'.

<sup>22</sup>Botan also spelled 'Buhtan' is also referred to as the Siirt River.



is constricted into a narrow gorge changing the direction of the river to southeast. Flowing through the steppe-land of Upper Mesopotamia, it receives a second large tributary, the Great Zab, below Mosul. This tributary drains the western slopes of the Hakkari and Zagros Mountains. Two other large affluents, the Little Zab and the Diyala, below Baghdad, flow from the Zagros into the Tigris before it joins the Euphrates at Qurna forming the Shatt-al-Arab.

In addition to the drainage basins of the Araxes, Tigris, and Euphrates there is also the inclosed basin of Lake Van. Located between the eastern extensions of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains and draining western slopes of the Hakkari Mountains, the Lake Van basin would appear to be part of the Murad Su (Eastern Euphrates) watershed. However, a lava flow from Nemrud Mountain blocked the valley leading to the Murad Su, and closed the western end of the basin.<sup>23</sup> This natural dam created a large lake, fifty-five miles long and forty miles wide (5,640 feet above sea level).

The alpine topography and "inhospitable"<sup>24</sup> climate of the entire region have generally confined human activity to the river valleys. Centers of population as well as areas of cultivation are restricted to alluvial depositions such as the regions around Erzurum, Erzincan, Malatya, Mush, and Elazig. The major human activity is pastoralism in the form of transhumance rather than true nomadism.<sup>25</sup> South of the Taurus Mountains

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<sup>23</sup>Fisher, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 329, "The climate of eastern Turkey stands out as one of the most difficult and inhospitable in the world. Summers are hot, arid, and markedly dusty; winters are bitterly cold, and spring and autumn are both subject to sudden hot or cold spells. . . ."

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 123. Fisher points out that transhumance is characteristic of mountainous regions, and entails a vertical movement or change in altitude from summer alpine pasturage ["Yaila"] to winter quarterage ["Kishlak"] within the same district. True nomadism entails a horizontal movement from one district to another.

in the semi-arid steppe region, pastoralism becomes more characteristic of true nomadism, and horizontal movement increases, particularly along a north-south axis. Similarly, there is a horizontal expansion of cultivated areas but in an east-west direction following the great arc formed by the population centers of Mosul, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, and Aleppo.

Lines of communication. -- The eastern highlands of Asia Minor with its topographic disunity of various mountain ranges converging into what has been described as the "Armenian Knot"<sup>26</sup> form a bridge-land as well as a barrier between the Caucasian and Syrian steppes, and the Anatolian and Iranian plateaus. The lines of communication passing through this "knot" of high mountains and deep valleys, and connecting the more easily traversable steppe and plateau regions, are restricted by a multitude of obstacles. Snow-covered mountain passes exceeding 7,000 feet in elevation, unfordable rivers and streams, deep gorges and canyons, and arid plains contrive to make this miniature Tibetan region inaccessible, and yet, since the Middle Bronze Age (circa 2100-1500 B.C.) there has been inter-regional communication between peoples residing in the adjacent steppe and plateau regions.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>The term "Armenian Knot" is attributed to James W. Hudson, Assistant Professor of Geography, American University of Beirut.

<sup>27</sup>During the second millennium B.C. the highland region was the center of a triangular power struggle between the Hittites of Asia Minor, the Assyrians of Mesopotamia, and the Mitanni (Hurrians) from the region north of Lake Van. By the first millennium B.C., the point of convergence between these ancient kingdoms appears to be the Euphrates River, for between 722 and 705 B.C., Sargon II of Assyria destroyed the palaces of the [Hittite] King of Meliddu, which Garstang and Gurney believe to be the city of "Melitene and Malatya of later ages, a city always of much importance protecting the ford over the Euphrates on the main trade route to Isuwa and the famous copper mines." John Garstang and O. R. Gurney, The Geography of the Hittite Empire, The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara (London: 1959), p. 46.

Two main routes of commerce connecting Asia and Europe cross the eastern highlands on an east-west axis, and are also the main routes of military invasion. In the north, the great caravan route from Tabriz in northern Persia led to Erzurum passing through Khoy, around the foot of Mount Ararat, through Bayazit to Erzurum. There, the route followed the course of the Kara Su before turning north through the Kop Dag Pass to the city of Bayburt. From Bayburt, it crossed the Vavuk Pass to Gumusane; then over the Pontic Mountains through the Zigana Pass to the Black Sea port of Trabzond, where ships waited to carry the commerce to Europe.<sup>28</sup>

Although the route from Tabriz to Trabzond was the most important one for the Persian transit trade, there were two northern overland routes which caravans followed. The first utilized the Trabzond route from Erzurum, but at Bayburt turned west to Karahisar. From there, the route followed the river valleys of the Kelkit-Irmak and Yesil-Irmak to Tokat and Amasya from which it traversed the Anatolian plateau to Constantinople. The secondary overland route connecting Persia with Europe followed the right bank of the Kara Su from Erzurum through Erzincan to the great bend of the Western Euphrates. From there, it continued westward along the valley of the Calti Su. At Sivas, the route turned north to join the primary overland route at Tokat.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>"Trebizond and the Persian Transit Trade," Royal Central Asian Society, Vol. 31 (1944), p. 289.

<sup>29</sup>In 65 B.C. Gnaeus Pompeius (Pompey) led a Roman army into the eastern highlands in pursuit of Mithridates IV Eupator, King of Pontus. Following the course of the Kara Su, he defeated the forces of Mithridates near Erzurum, and the latter fled to the Crimea. Pitton de Tournefort, A Voyage into the Levant (3 vols., London: Private Printing, 1741), Vol. I, p. 111. [The Roman invasions of Armenia by Lucullus in 69 B.C. and Pompey 65 B.C., the relocation of the eastern legions from Syria to forts on the Upper Euphrates by Vespasian in 70 A.D., and the final invasion by

The second major east-west trade route skirted the northern edge of the "Fertile Crescent" bordering the highlands, and was the main line of communication between India and Europe. From Basra on the Persian Gulf to Baghdad, the route followed the Tigris River. At Baghdad, it turned to the northeast entering the foothills of the Zagros through Jabal Hamrin, Altun Kupri, and Aski Kalat to Mosul. Crossing the Tigris at Mosul, the caravan track turned northwest through the hills of Jabal Sinjar to Nuseybin and Mardin. It continued in a great arc to Diyarbakir where it curved southwest through Siverek, Hilvan, Urfa to Birecik on the Euphrates. From Birecik, the caravan route followed a line west to Gaziantep, and then south to Aleppo, the great entrepot of the Levant.

In the classical period, the great "Fertile Crescent" route was also used as the main axis of advance for armies moving east and west. The Assyrians followed this route to conquer Syria and Palestine. Later, Cyrus the Great and his successors used it to annex Asia Minor and Egypt to the Persian Empire. Two-hundred years later (331 B.C.), Alexander the Great led the Greeks along the same route conquering Babylonia and Persia. Parthian and later Sassanian armies fought Roman legions back and forth across the northern Syrian steppe between the Mediterranean and the Tigris River. With the brief exception of Tigranes, the Armenian king who invaded and conquered Syria and Upper Mesopotamia from the north (83-69 B.C.), the main military movement for a thousand years was east and west following the southern periphery of the eastern highlands of Asia Minor.

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Trajan in 114 A.D. have led scholars and archeologists to believe that a Roman military road was built along the right bank of Kara Su from Malatya to Erzincan. However, in July, 1964, the author and Lieutenant Colonel John D. Yarbrough, United States Army, navigated the Kara Su from Erzincan to Samsat, and found no evidence to indicate that a Roman road existed north of Malatya.]

In addition to the major east-west lines of communication, there were several lateral, or internal, routes which either bordered or cut across the region. Used primarily for local trade, they connected the main east-west arteries. Along the border between the Anatolian plateau and the eastern highlands, there was a north-south route from Sivas to Kayseri, then across the Taurus Mountains via the Cicilian Gates to Tarsus. From there, it followed the Mediterranean coastline crossing the Anti-Taurus Mountains to Antakya (Antioch).

From Sivas, a second route cut diagonally across the eastern highlands to connect with the Aleppo-Mosul caravan route at Diyarbakir. This track followed a northwest-southeast line from Sivas across the Anti-Taurus to Malatya, where it forded the Euphrates. At Elazig, the caravan route turned south across the Niphates Mountains near Lake Hazar through Arghana Maden to Diyarbakir.

The last internal line of communication connected Erzurum with Mosul. Running north-south, it was the most direct route between the two major caravan routes. From Erzurum, the track passed through Hinis, and then skirted the eastern extension of the Anti-Taurus (Bingol-dag) to Mush and Bitlis on the western side of Lake Van. Below Bitlis, the route paralleled the river valleys of the Bitlis Chay, Botan Su, and Tigris River through Siirt and Jazirat-ibn-Umar (Cizre) to Mosul.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Xenophon Anabasis cited in William F. Ainsworth, Travels in the Track of the Ten Thousand Greeks (London: John W. Parker, 1844), and Austen H. Layard, Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon (London: John Murray, 1853), pp. 49-65. In 401 B.C. Xenophon and ten thousand Greek mercenaries under Cyrus, the satrap of Anatolia, marched against Artaxerxes II Mnemon, Achaemenian king of the Persian Empire. Near Babylon at Cunaxa, the Greeks were defeated, and Cyrus was killed in battle. Xenophon and the ten thousand Greeks retreated using the caravan route from Mosul to Erzurum arriving at Trabzond in March, 400 B.C. Throughout their retreat in the middle of winter, the Greeks were harassed by the Carduchians (Kurds). During the first half of the nineteenth century, Xenophon's account of the retreat generated considerable interest among explorers who attempted to determine which route was actually used.

The relative importance of the various lines of communication which passed through the eastern highlands of Asia Minor depended upon the loci of political and economic power in the adjacent regions. Trade, particularly along the lateral, or internal, routes gravitated in the direction of these loci. At various periods in history, the great cities of Nineveh, Constantinople, Alexandria, Aleppo, Damascus, and Baghdad acted as magnets drawing the trade routes from Asia towards them. As long as the Middle East and the Mediterranean region remained the center of a planimetric world, the political and economic importance of the area, including the highlands of Asia Minor, remained constant vis-a-vis other parts of the world:

For centuries, Asia had been a source for Europe of many highly valued commodities, partly manufactures in which Europe could not compete, such as silk and cotton fabrics, rugs, jewelry, porcelains, and fine steel, and partly raw or semi-manufactured drugs and food-stuffs, such as sugar and above all spices. The latter - pepper, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, and many less common ones - were of more importance then than now. They were used in pharmacy, and in the preservation of meat, as in making sausages. They added palatability to fresh meats and other foods which easily spoiled in the absence of refrigeration. Europeans had never themselves gone to the sources of supply of Eastern goods. Somewhere, east of Suez, barely known to Europeans, was another world of merchants, mainly Arabs. Traders of the two worlds met and did business at Alexandria or Beirut.<sup>31</sup>

The circumnavigation of Africa by the Portuguese Vasco da Gama in 1498 altered the traditional position of the Middle East as the brigeland between Europe and Asia. The discovery of the ocean route to India and the East Indies established a new channel of commerce. The impact from the loss of international transit trade was by no means immediate. The gradual withering of trade on the great overland routes occurred during the sixteenth century, but its significance was clearly manifested in the

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<sup>31</sup>R. R. Palmer, A History of the Modern World (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1954), p. 91.

seventeenth century when England and Holland established empires in India and the East Indies respectively, for:

. . .the transference of the routes of world trade to the open ocean deprived Turkey of the greater part of her foreign commerce and left her, together with the countries over which she ruled, in a stagnant backwater through which the life-giving stream of world trade no longer flowed.<sup>32</sup>

With the change of world commercial routes, the eastern highlands of Asia Minor as well as the entire Middle East lost its strategic raison d'etre; however, the local impact was more severe. The highland peoples whose regional economy consisted of subsistence level agriculture and pastoralism traditionally derived additional income by providing provisions, animals, guides, and armed protection to the caravans which traversed their region carrying transit trade between Asia and Europe. As the volume of trade began to diminish, the ruling authorities, i.e. the Ottoman Turks, became less interested in maintaining local security along the tenuous lines of communication. Deprived of an important source of wealth and neglected by the Ottomans, the region became remote and isolated in the vastness of its mountains.

By the end of the sixteenth century, commerce and internal security had declined to such a degree that one European traveler wrote:

. . .three days Journey from Erzeron, the Frat begins to be capable of carry little Saicks, but its Channel is full of Rocks, and it is impossible to fettle a Passage by water from Erzeron to Aleppo, without making the River navigable. The Turks leave the world as they find it, and the Merchants make the best Shift they are able. Yet it would be a much shorter and safer way to go by water, for the Caravans are 35 Days in travelling from Erzeron to Aleppo, and the Road is very dangerous by reason of the Thieves, who rob the Merchants at the very Gates of Towns.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 28.

<sup>33</sup>Tournefort, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 102. As Chief Botanist for Louis XIV, King of France, Pitton de Tournefort travelled through the Erzurum and Kars region in 1701.

Two and a half centuries later, another European who followed the caravan route from Erzurum to Mosul, "one of the great highways, leading to the days of Turkish prosperity from central Armenia to Baghdad," found that these conditions had not changed:

Commerce has deserted it for many years, and its bridges and caravanserais have long fallen into decay; when, with the restoration of order and tranquillity to this part of Turkey, trade shall revive, it may become once more an important thoroughfare, uniting the northern and southern provinces of the empire.<sup>34</sup>

With the advent of the Steam Age in the early part of the nineteenth century, the Middle East again assumed its historic position of a bridge-land between continents. Steam navigation of the oceans and seas altered time and spacial relationships which had existed throughout history. European countries, and particularly Britain, sought shorter routes of trade and communication with India and the East. The Middle East became the center of attention for exploratory activity. The ancient caravan routes whose importance had declined after the fifteenth century were rejuvenated. In the process, the eastern highlands of Asia Minor regained its traditional significance. Steam navigation of the Black Sea reopened Trabzond and the caravan route to Tabriz for Persian trade.<sup>35</sup> To the south, the great "Fertile Crescent" route and the possibility of ascending the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers with the aid of steam locomotion from the Persian Gulf toward the Mediterranean gave added importance to the highlands lying adjacent to the route. The political power who

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<sup>34</sup>Layard, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>35</sup>"Trebizond and the Persian Transit Trade," op. cit., p. 289.



controlled the eastern highlands of Asia Minor would dominate the more accessible steppe region.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Ralph E. Carr, "The Kurdistan Mountain Ranges in Reference to a Russian Advance on the Tigris Valley," Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, Vol. 22 (1879), pp. 155-183.

## Historical Background

The Borderland between Byzantium and Islam. --For centuries the eastern highlands had been the borderland between the Byzantine Empire and the Sassanid Empire of Persia; however, in the first half of the seventh century A.D. a new force entered the region bringing with it the infant militant religion of Islam. The Arab Armies of the third and fourth Rashidun Caliphs, 'Umar and 'Uthman, rapidly overran northern Syria, Mesopotamia, and Armenia. 'Iyad ibn-Ghanim, the Governor of Syria, advanced northward from Homs into the highland region. Between 638 and 641 A.D., Ghanim's forces captured Urfa, crossed the Taurus Mountains, and extended the northern-most limit of the Arab Empire to Malatya.<sup>37</sup>

While Arab commanders continued to press against the Byzantine Empire in the west, another Arab army under the command of Nu'man ibn-Muqarrin, and later under Hudhayfah ibn-al-Yaman, began the invasion of Persia. Crossing the Tigris River at Madain (Ctesiphon) in 637 A.D., they defeated the Persians at Jalawla (637 A.D.) and Nihawand (641 A.D.) in the Zagros Mountains. Entering the central Iranian plateau at Hamadhan, Arab forces occupied the entire region north to Tabaristan on the Caspian Sea.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Sir William Muir, The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall (Khayats Oriental Reprints No. 5, Beirut: Khayats, 1963) p. 152; Carl Brockelmann, History of the Islamic Peoples, trans. Joel Charnichael and Moshe Perlmann (New York: Capricorn Books, 1960), p. 56; and R. Roolvink (ed.), Historical Atlas of the Muslim Peoples (Amsterdam: Djambatan, 1957), pp. 2 and 3.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

As the Persian defenses crumbled before the Arab onslaught in the east, another Arab column under the direction of Mu'awiyah bin-abi-Sufyan, then Governor of Syria and later founder of the Umayyad dynasty, moved northward forming the western arm of a double-envelopment. Originally, Mu'awiyah's army advanced to counter a Byzantine threat from the northeast; however, after repulsing the Byzantines, the Arab column turned northeast to take advantage of the weakened state of Persian defenses. Crossing the Niphates Mountains near Lake Hazar, it forded the Murad Su between Elazig and Mash, and proceeded over the Anti-Taurus to capture the key city of Erzurum. Then turning east, the Arab army advanced along the valley of the Araxes, and joined forces with the eastern column which had occupied central Persia. After effecting a strategic double envelopment of the eastern highlands of Asia Minor, the combined columns marched northward to Tiflis and the foot of the Caucasus Mountains before retiring to the south.<sup>39</sup>

The meteoric expansion and envelopment of the region (638-647 A.D.) by the Arab armies receded quickly. As a desert people, the Arabs found the mountainous highlands an alien environment, and were content to establish only nominal outposts of authority. Under the Umayyad Caliphs (661-750 A.D.), the Arabs continued their offensive against the Byzantine Empire. In 699, 674, and 716 A.D. Muslim armies penetrated western Asia Minor as far as the Bosphorus, but never succeeded in conquering the lands west of the Taurus Mountains. During the 'Abbasid Caliphate (750 - circa 1100 A.D.) several attempts were made to push the frontier of Islam into Asia Minor. Under Al-Mahdi, the third 'Abbasid Caliph, an Arab army advanced against Constantinople in the years 783-785 A.D.; later, during the

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<sup>39</sup>Muir, op. cit., p. 214; and Brockelmann, op. cit., pp. 58 and 59.

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<sup>39</sup>Muir, op. cit., p. 214; and Brockelmann, op. cit., pp. 58 and 59.

reign of Harun Al-Rashid (785-809 A.D.) Muslim forces led by the Caliph himself invaded Asia Minor only to withdraw when revolts occurred in the eastern province of Khorasan (808 A.D.). The last concerted effort by the Arabs to conquer Byzantium was frustrated in 838 A.D. when the Arab fleet, preparing to beseige Constantinople, was destroyed by a storm.<sup>40</sup>

After the middle of the ninth century, the 'Abbasid Caliphate was unable to continue the offensive against the Byzantine Empire. The fractionalization of power within the Arab Empire, (i.e. the rise of semi-independent dynasties such as the Idrisids, Aghlabids, Tulunids, Ikhshidids, and Fatimids in North Africa, Egypt, and Syria; and the Tahrids, Saffarids, and Samanids in the eastern provinces), eliminated the continuous pressure of Islam on the frontier of Byzantium. The borderland between the state-religions of Christianity and Islam which had been the upper course of the Euphrates began to shift eastward. In 873 A.D., Byzantine armies penetrated the eastern highlands, and captured Samasat, which controlled the first ford over the Euphrates south of the Taurus. During the first part of the tenth century, the Byzantine general, John Kurkuas, reduced the Arab salient in the northwest by capturing Erzurum (928 A.D.) and Malatya (934 A.D.). The 'Abbasid forces which by then were dominated by a Turkoman element from Central Asia failed to contain the Byzantines in the Taurus Mountains. The strategic mountain passes forming the gateway to the northern Syrian steppe fell into the hands of Byzantine forces.<sup>41</sup> Under the Armenian general, John Zimisces, the Byzantines invaded northern Syria capturing Aleppo (969 A.D.), Urfa and Nizib (974 A.D.), and Damascus

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<sup>40</sup>Muir, *op. cit.*, pp 472-473, 479-480, and 518-520.

<sup>41</sup>The Cicilian Gates in the Taurus Mountains and the Baylan Pass in the Amanus Mountains control the main avenue of approach between the Anatolian plateau and the northern Syrian steppe.

and Beirut (976 A.D.). The Byzantine onslaught was finally stopped near Jerusalem by a Fatimid army from Egypt.<sup>42</sup>

The Byzantine Empire reached its zenith during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. As a result of its conquests in the east, the frontier between Islam and Christianity extended in the south from Homs through the region between Aleppo and the Euphrates to Birecik. From there, it followed the southern edge of the highlands to the vicinity of Siirt, where it turned north along the eastern shores of Lake Van to Erzurum. The Byzantines only lightly garrisoned the eastern highlands of Asia Minor, for they, as the Arabs before them, were an alien element within the indigenous population.

By the middle of the eleventh century, a new force manifested itself on the frontier. The Seljuqs, a sept of the Ghuzz or Oghuzz tribal group in Turkestan, migrated westward through Persia conquering the Ghaznawids and Buyids in the process. In 1055, Tughril Beg led a Seljuq army to Baghdad where the 'Abbasid caliph Al-Qa'im proclaimed him "sultan" with the honorary title "King of the East and West." As the defender of Caliphate and Sunni Islam, the Seljuq dynasty continued the border-warfare between Byzantium and Islam. When Tughril Beg died in 1063, he was succeeded by his nephew Alp Arslan, who in the following year led the Seljuqs into Armenia. During 1068 and 1069, the Byzantines repulsed several Seljuq attacks; however, none of these engagements was decisive.<sup>43</sup>

In 1071, the Byzantine emperor, Romanus Diogenes, attempted to consolidate his position in Armenia. Concentrating his forces in the

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<sup>42</sup>Langer, op. cit., pp. 178-180.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 250 and 254; and Brockelmann, op. cit., pp. 171-173.

Erzurum region, Romanus engaged the Seljuq army at Malazgirt<sup>44</sup> north of Lake Van. The outcome of the battle was to decide "the fate of Anatolia."<sup>45</sup> The Seljuqs led by sultan Alp Arslan completely defeated the Byzantine army, and captured the emperor. With this resounding defeat, the eastern defenses of the Byzantine Empire collapsed, and within a few years Turkish bands of Ghazis "flooded the whole of Asia Minor up to the western coast."<sup>46</sup>

The sudden collapse of the Byzantine defenses in the east after four centuries of conflict with the forces of Islam is an enigma which has puzzled scholars of Middle East history. The most adequate explanation of this collapse and the subsequent inundation of Anatolia by nomadic Turkish tribes is Paul Wittek's thesis of the "march-warriors" and the conditions implicit in the nature of the eastern highlands of Asia Minor and its people:

The continuous wars between these two powers [Byzantium and Islam] led to a special military organization in the districts on both sides of the frontier. The conditions in these districts, which we shall call 'marches,' were quite analogous on both sides, on the Byzantine marches as well as on the Moslem marches. The population of the marches was destined to perpetual frontier warfare. These march-warriors are continually in readiness to parry the raids of the enemy, and in turn also to undertake similar raids, frequently penetrating deep into the territory of the foe. Booty constitutes for

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<sup>44</sup>"Malazgirt" is the current Turkish spelling; other various orthographical versions are "Manzikert," Langer, op. cit., p. 250, and Sydney N. Fisher, op. cit., p. 161; "Mantzikert," Paul Wittek, The Rise of the Ottoman Empire (London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1963), p. 16; and "Malaskerd," Brockelmann, op. cit. p. 173.

<sup>45</sup>Wittek, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid. Wittek maintains that the Seljuqs were not interested in expanding into Byzantine territory; they merely wanted to secure their northern flank in order to concentrate on the Shi'a Fatimids in Syria. This would explain their gesture of friendship in releasing the Byzantine emperor and not continuing the offensive in the highlands.

the marches the principal economic basis of life. Between the military borderlands and the peaceful and industrious hinterland there exists the greatest cultural contrast, and this contrast is further accentuated by racial differences. The increase of warlike elements, brought together from the most distant parts of the world, gives rise on both sides of the frontier to a curious mixture of nationalities and languages, to a population quite distinct from that of the hinterland. Moreover, there are strong political and religious tensions between the marches and the hinterland. The continuous frontier fighting created warrior clans, faithfully devoted to their chiefs and aspiring to the greatest possible independence, fully conscious of their importance in their relations with the government. They tend to offer resistance to all administrative interference, and especially detest taxation; on the contrary, they claim from the government honours, pay and military aid. In religious matters, too, a similar resistance is offered. The heresies, persecuted by the state-Church, find here a secure place of refuge, often an enthusiastic reception.

All these tensions enumerated above easily lead to open conflict, and then the march-warriors are quite ready to go over to the enemy on the other side of the frontier. For in the same degree that they differ from their own hinterland, they resemble the march-warriors of the foe. Deeply rooted in one and the same eastern Anatolia, mingling with the same native population and deriving their cultural features from the same conditions of life, they are in daily contact with each other, and, moreover, this contact is not always belligerent. Prisoners, deserters and women taken from the other side facilitate the cultural exchange and assimilation.<sup>47</sup>

The boundary between the Byzantine and Arab empires was not static; instead, it was rather a zone extending throughout the eastern highlands of Asia Minor. In a similar manner, there was no clear-cut dichotomy between Islam and Christianity, i.e. Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb, along the border zone. The topography of the region facilitated neither movement nor cultural exchange. The "marches" of the Muslim Ghazis, "Warriors of the Faith," and the Byzantine Akritai were channeled and restricted along the historic lines of communication through the region. As representatives of the state-religion, the Greek Orthodox Church and Sunni Islam, the march-warriors were an alien element in a region traditionally known as refuge for heterodoxy.

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<sup>47</sup>Wittek, op. cit., pp. 17 and 18.



Wittek's thesis of cultural assimilation and extension of a "mixed borderland civilization" by the Ghazis is contradictory:

The mode of life imported by the Ghazis was easily assimilated by the autochthonous element, with which they had much in common. This mixed borderland civilization now became after the conquest of the eleventh century characteristic for the whole of Turkish Asia Minor. It was really only the Byzantine varnish which vanished, to be replaced later by an Islamic one. The local substratum survived.<sup>48</sup>

The latter part of Wittek's thesis is correct, for the tenuous authority of the Byzantines in the eastern highlands was replaced by an equally tenuous Islamic one. However, "the mode of life imported by the Ghazis" had existed in the highlands since the days of the Hittite, Hurrian, and Assyrian triangular conflicts. The Carduchian raids on Xenophon's Greeks fourteen hundred years earlier bear a striking resemblance to the war-like characteristics which Wittek attributes to the Ghazis.

Several factors militate against the thesis of cultural assimilation of the march-warriors. As already mentioned, their militant religious orthodoxy separated them from the autochthonous element - the Armenians and the Kurds. As a plains or steppe people, the nomadic mode of life of the Turkish tribes was not readily adaptable to the transhumance practiced in the highland region. Similarly, the area was well-populated, and even over-populated, long before the advent of the march-warriors. It could not sustain a large influx of population without additional economic resources; however, the principal source of wealth, i.e. booty, for both the Byzantine Akritai and the Muslim Ghazis lay not within the highlands but in the adjacent plateau and steppe regions. The quest for booty would explain why the "marches" penetrated so far into enemy territory only to return to the impoverished, but defensible highlands.

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<sup>48</sup>Wittek, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Since the raison d'etre of the march-warriors was external to the economy and heterogeneous culture of eastern Asia Minor, the causes of the Byzantine collapse and subsequent occupation of the Anatolian plateau by Ghazi tribes after several centuries of conflict cannot be explained by the cultural assimilation of one force as opposed to the other. If this is true, then the answer must be in the nature of the highlands and its people. What Wittek described as the "mixed borderland civilization" between Byzantium and Islam actually pre-dates both forces.<sup>48</sup> His description of conditions along the Byzantine-Islamic frontier in the eleventh century is also applicable to the Perso-Roman frontier of the first century B.C. The paradoxical feature of highlands as a bridge-land connecting adjacent plateau and steppe regions while at the same time providing a natural barrier between them created its "mixed borderland civilization." The balance of power between opposing hinterlands on each side of the highlands would appear to be with the highlanders themselves. Depending upon their sympathies, the indigenous population could make this mountainous region into a bridge-land or a barrier. The main line of defense for the adjacent hinterlands is the eastern highlands of Asia Minor; however, the hinterland military forces operating over extended lines of communication through tortuous mountain passes and across deep river valleys require the tacit support of highland population. If support is not rendered, then the position of the hinterland military force becomes tenuous.

During the eleventh century, the Byzantine Empire's military position in the eastern highlands was undermined by a series of miscalculations

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<sup>48</sup>Above, pp. 24 and 25.

which alienated the population, or at least a portion of the population which was enough to create an imbalance of power. As Byzantine culture and the empire reached its apogee in the early part of the eleventh century, its state-Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, also arrived at the zenith of its temporal wealth and influence. In an effort to cultivate the support of the clerical hierarchy, Romanus III (1028-1034) allowed the patriarchate to persecute the Monophysites, or Jacobites, of Syria. Several thousand sought refuge in the region of Malatya and in the mountains along the upper Tigris.<sup>49</sup> While "the hatred engendered by this policy"<sup>50</sup> helped to weaken the Byzantine position along the march routes in the western and southern sections of the highlands, and similar error in the north and east made their military position untenable. In 1046, Byzantine forces occupied Armenia where they attempted to impose taxation and the state-religion on the traditionally semi-autonomous Armenians.<sup>51</sup>

The enmity of the Christian portion of the highland population engendered by Byzantines created a quasi-fifth column movement waiting for the proper moment to break into open rebellion. The opportunity occurred with the Byzantine defeat at Malazgirt and the capture of the emperor by the Seljuqs. The border region soon fell into a state of anarchy permeated by local revolts, and a number of independent principalities were established. Confronted with the combination of Ghazi

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<sup>49</sup>Theodore Noldeke, Sketches from Eastern History, trans. John Sutherland Black (Khayats Oriental Reprints No. 2, Beirut: Khayats, 1963), pp. 236 and 240. By the first half of the thirteenth century, a large part of the population of Malatya and Tur Abdin were Syrian Monophysites.

<sup>50</sup>Langer, op. cit., p. 249.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., and Wittek, op. cit., p. 19.

pressure from the front and rebellion behind their first line of defense, the Byzantines were forced to withdraw to the next main line of defense, the coastal mountains west of the Anatolian plateau. As the enemy moved westward the Turkish nomadic tribes followed, passing through the eastern highlands by the traditional routes of march into the plateau region - a region more suitable to their mode of life. Ironically, the "mixed borderland civilization" of the highlands through which Turkoman tribes migrated but never assimilated would become for their successors, the Osmanlis, the eastern frontier of the Ottoman Empire.

Persians, Kurds, and Ottomans. --During the thirteenth century, the eastern highlands were again subjected to a large migration of Turkoman elements; however the character of this influx differed substantially from the eleventh century migration under the Seljuqs. The Mongol invasion of western Asia forced many tribes of Turkish nomads to flee into Anatolia seeking refuge under the Seljuq sultans of Konya. Among the fugitives were:

. . .the 'holy men,' the shaikhs and dervishes, who had fled from Iran and Turkestan to Anatolia. As religious and at the same time political leaders of the population of their countries, they had been the leading spirits in resistance to the Mongols and naturally had to flee before the conquerors. As spreaders of heretical doctrines they were less welcome in the Seljuk towns, where, moreover, they would not have been safe from the Mongols. But in the marches they found security and a warm reception.<sup>52</sup>

This introduction of Sufism and the growth of its popularistic rural forms added a new element to the "mixed borderland civilization" of the eastern highlands.

Among the various dervish orders established in the thirteenth

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<sup>52</sup>Witteck, op. cit., p. 31

century was the one founded by Shaykh Safi al-Din<sup>53</sup> of Ardabil on the Caspian Sea. Claiming descent from 'Ali, the fourth caliph, he and his successors, Sadr al-Din and Khoja 'Ali, gained adherents among the Turkoman tribes of northwestern Persia (the region of Gilan) and the eastern highlands stretching into southern and eastern Anatolia. Shaykh Junayd, the head of the order from 1448-1460 extended the influence of its Shi'a teachings by marrying the sister of Uzun Hasan, chief of the Ak Kuyunlu (white sheep) Turkomans at Diyarbakir. His son, Haidar, married a daughter of Uzun Hasan, and devoted himself to the reorganization of the order into politico-military instrument.<sup>54</sup> In an intra-dynastic feud,

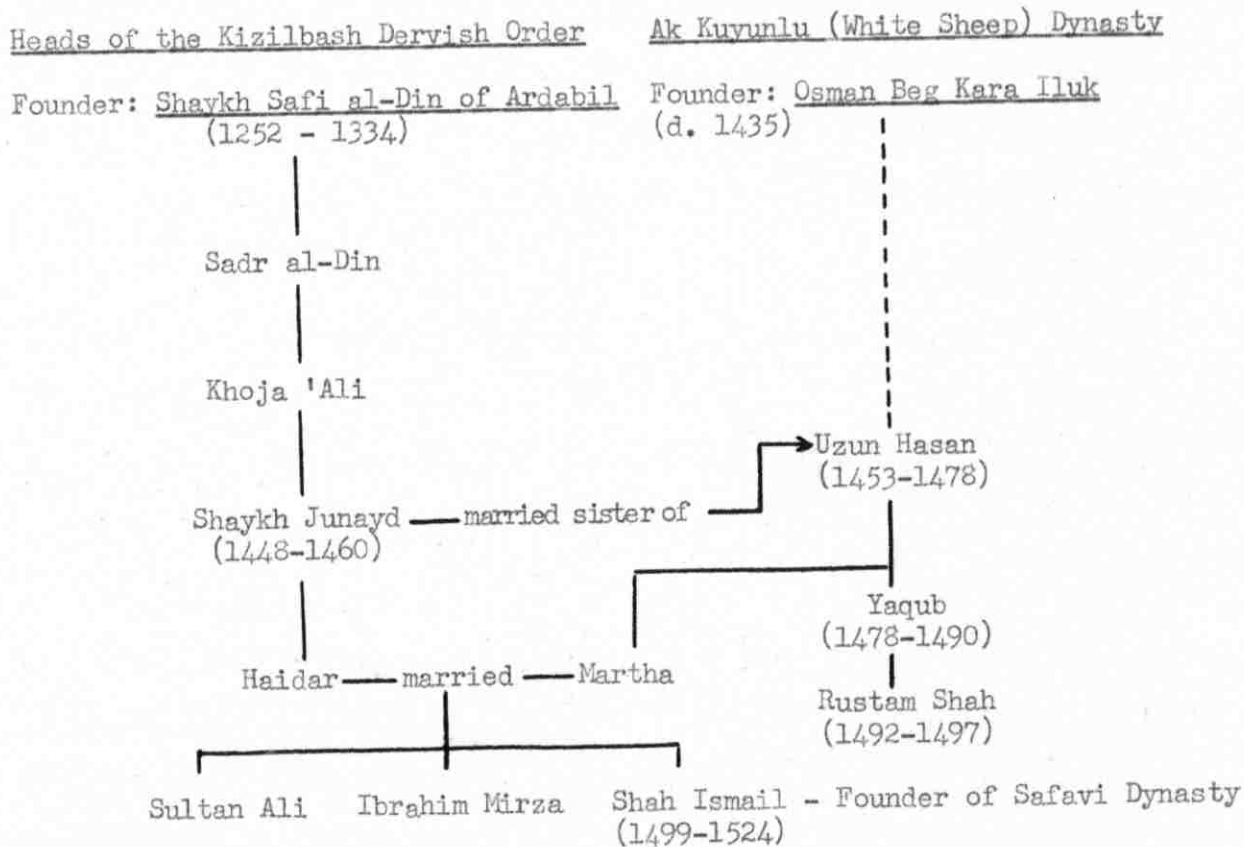
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<sup>53</sup>H.A.R. Gibb in his Studies on the Civilization of Islam (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1962), p. 133, mentions a biography of Shaikh Safi al-Din by Tawakkul bin-Bazzaz written in 1349. This biography may explain the nature of the dervish order established by Safi al-Din, for there is a considerable divergence of opinion among western sources as to the tenets of the order. F.W. Hasluck, Christianity and Islam under the Sultans, ed. Margaret M. Hasluck (2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), Vol. I, p. 163, states that the order descends from the fifth Imam, Muhammad Bakir; however, J.B. Taylor, "Journal of a Tour in Armenia, Kurdistan, and Upper Mesopotamia, with Notes of Researches in the Deyrsim Dagh," J.R.G.S., Vol. 38 (1868), pp. 281-361, reported that the order descends from the fourth Imam, Zain al-'Abidin, who is the medium with 'Ali through the 'Bab', Shaykh Safi al-Din (p. 320). The confusion which tends to obscure this dervish order and its beliefs is compounded by the fact that its adherents called themselves "Alevi" or the followers of 'Ali; however, they are more commonly known as Kizilbash, or Red Heads, a term derived from their headdress. In later years, the word "Kizilbash" was used by the Ottoman Turks to denote any follower of a heterodox Islamic sect.

<sup>54</sup>It is possible that Kizilbash may have been the connecting link between Haji Bektash of the twelfth century and the Bektashiya dervish order which originated in the fourteenth century, for the rites and dogmas of both groups are closely related; see "Bektashiya," Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, eds. H.A.R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (London: Luzac and Co., 1961), pp. 61 and 62. J.W. Crowfoot, "Survivals Among the Kappodokian Kizilbash (Bektash)," The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 30 (1900), pp. 305-320, claims that the Kizilbash are Bektash and use the name Bektash among themselves. Crowfoot bases this assertion on information he obtained from the Shaykh of Haider-es-Sultan, a village in the Kizil Irmak River near Ankara, "The Sheikh....said that Haider was the son of the King of Persia and came from Khorassan from a town named Yassevi; he was also called Khodja Ahmed and was the disciple of the famous Hadji Bektash" (p. 309).

the forces of Haidar were defeated by Yaqub of the Ak Kuyunlu, and Haidar himself was killed. However, he left several sons of whom one was Ismail, the founder of the Safavi dynasty of Persia.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup>The relationship between the Kizilbash of Persia and those of eastern Asia Minor, particularly the Zaza speaking Kurds located along the upper course of the Euphrates, can be traced back to the fifteenth century and the marriage alliances of the Sufi Shaykhs of Ardabil with the ruling Turkomans of Diyarbakir:



Langer, *op. cit.*, p. 526; and Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Persia (2 vols, London: Macmillan and Co., 1951, Vol. II, pp. 158 and 159.

In 1501, Ismail with the help of the Kizilbash<sup>56</sup> succeeded in defeating the White Sheep Turkomans, captured Tabriz, and was proclaimed Shah. With his accession the Shi'a doctrine became the official state-religion of Persia. Able to claim descent from 'Ali through Shaykh Safi al-Din, Ismail united Persians, Turkomans, and other adherents of Shiism. However, the rise of a new politico-religious power in Persia was antithetical to the Ottoman Turks, the defenders of Sunni Islam. The point of convergence between these rising Islamic empires with their opposing state-religions would be the historic bridge-land connecting the Anatolian and Iranian plateaus. Here, in this region of a "mixed borderland civilization," both forces would vie for allegiances of the indigenous population. The frontier generally followed the course of the Euphrates and its western branch, the Kara Su. However, as was the case between Byzantium and Islam five-hundred years earlier, the border represented a broad zone in which both factions had adherents. The Kizilbash extended through the entire northern area of the highlands as far west as Sivas and Ankara, while Sunni tribes of Kurds stretched into Persian Azarbayjan and the Hakkari mountains. Within the eastern highlands, the population consisted of an admixture of religious beliefs - Sunni and Shi'a Muslims; Monophysite, Nestorian, and Armenian Christians; Yezidis and pagans; and every conceivable variation resulting from the interaction of one upon another.

The growing antagonism between the Sunni Ottomans and the Shi'a Safavids of Persia quickly developed into armed conflict. In 1502,

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<sup>56</sup>The confederation of seven Turkoman Tribes included the Ustadjlu, Shamlu, Tekelu, Baharlu, Dhu'l-Kadr, Kadjar, and Afshar; "Kizilbash", The Encyclopedia of Islam, eds. M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, and R. Hartmann (4 vols., London: Luzac and Co., 1913), Vol. III, pp. 1053 and 1054.

"minor skirmishes occurred near Diyarbakir,"<sup>57</sup> and by 1508 Ottoman armies were stationed in eastern Anatolia "to face Ismail in Harput and Diyarbakir."<sup>58</sup> Three years later, the partisans of Shah Ismail attempted to revolt against the Ottomans. Capturing Kutahya and Konya, they were finally defeated near Kayseri. However, the Kizilbash movement threatened to split the Osmanli dynasty, for Ahmed, one of Sultan Bayazid II's three sons, joined the heretical sect in order to gain supporters for his claim as successor to the throne. With this turn of events, Bayazid abdicated in favor of another son, Selim who was a staunch supporter of Sunni Islam.<sup>59</sup>

Selim I (1512-1520) ruled only eight years, but in that brief period he was able to quell the heretical Kizilbash movement, consolidate the Ottoman Empire, and expand its territory more than any other Sultan. When he succeeded his father, Selim actually controlled only the European territories; his brother, Ahmed, who ruled over most of Anatolia from the city of Amasya, had marched west occupying Brusa. Selim, nicknamed "Yavuz" meaning stern or inflexible, crossed the Bosphorus into Asia Minor at the head of a large army retaking Brusa. Determined to eliminate all family, as well as religious, opposition to his accession, he ordered five of his nephews and his brother, Korkud, to be strangled. Ahmed, the remaining brother had fled into the interior of Anatolia sending two of his sons to request the support of Shah Ismail. However, before any assistance could arrive from Persia, Selim's army defeated the forces of Ahmed, who was captured and executed. Later in the same year (1513), Selim continued to

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<sup>57</sup>Sydney N. Fisher, op. cit., p. 202.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 203; and Edward S. Creasy, History of the Ottoman Turks (Khayat's Oriental Reprints No. 1; Beirut: Khayat's, 1961), pp. 123 to 125.



pursue his policy of eliminating all opposition. Through an efficient secret police system, he identified and located those who adhered to the heretical Shi'a doctrine. Stationing loyal troops in the cities and provinces strongly suspected of having Shi'a sympathies, Selim ordered the execution of the sectaries. An estimated 40,000 were slain while others were transported to the European provinces.<sup>60</sup>

Selim's violent persecution of the Anatolian Kizilbashs increased the animosity of the Shi'a Safavids. Shah Ismail assembled an army with the purpose of establishing Amurath, Selim's nephew, as Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Selim determined to settle the religious problem which had plagued his empire marshaled his military forces at Sivas on the frontier of the eastern highlands. The Ottoman fleet established a logistical base at Trabzon from which it was to support the Ottoman army moving through the interior of the highlands. As Selim's forces advanced, the Persians prudently withdrew to the east laying waste to the country. Shah Ismail's strategy was to allow the Ottomans to overextend their line of communications, and then attack his exhausted and ill-supplied enemy in the plains east of the highlands where the Persian cavalry would have a tactical advantage. Selim with his characteristic perseverance traversed the highlands, and after suffering great hardships, the Turks descended onto the plains of Azarbayjan. On August 23, 1514, at Chaldiran, north-east of Lake Van, Shah Ismail and Sultan Selim I drew up their forces for the decisive battle. The Ottoman artillery which had been transported across the mountains under the most difficult conditions proved to be the determining factor. The Persian forces were defeated, and Ismail fled

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<sup>60</sup>Sydney N. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 204; and Creasey, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 and 132.

from the battlefield. The Ottoman army captured Tabriz, and Selim planned to establish his winter quarters in the plains of Azerbaijan; however, discontent within the army, forced him to return across the eastern highlands to Amasya.<sup>61</sup>

With the victory at Chaldiran, the Ottomans annexed most of the eastern highlands; however the inaccessibility of the region and the independent nature of the population required a modification in the application of Ottoman government. In 1515, Sultan Selim sent Mevlana Idris Hakim of Bidlis, a Hakkari Kurd who had acted as Selim's advisor at Chaldiran on the conditions existing in Kurdistan and Armenia, into the eastern highlands to negotiate with the autonomous tribal chieftains. "In response to a call from the Sultan himself, nine Kurdish Derebeys declared themselves for the Ottomans."<sup>62</sup> Mevlana Idris also concluded treaties or agreements with fourteen other tribes residing in the highlands.<sup>63</sup>

The system of administration which Idris devised entailed that of local indirect rule. The highland region was divided into eyalets or provinces; each of which was sub-divided in sanjaks. Under a normal system of Ottoman administration, the holders of fiefs within a sanjak would be responsible to the Sanjak Bey who in turn received his authority from the Pasha of the eyalet. However, eyalets which included the Kurdish tribes were divided into two types of sanjaks. The first followed the

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<sup>61</sup>For a description of the Battle of Chaldiran, see Creasey, op. cit., pp. 137-140.

<sup>62</sup>The nine Derebeys or 'Lords of the Valley' were "Sharaf Beg of Bitlis, Malik Khalil, the heir of Sghert and Hisn-Keif, on the Middle Tigris, who expelled the Persian garrisons from those fortresses; Mohammed Beg of Sasun, the great Badr Khan Dynasty of Jaziret-Ibn-Omar. The hereditary princes of Erbil, Kerkuk and Suleimaniya (together making up the Dynasty of Baban...the Kurdish Beg of Diarbekr, and Jamshid Beg Magdesi, an Armenian renegade of Palu." Arshak Safrastian, Kurds and Kurdistan (London: Harvill, 1948), p. 39 and fn. a, p. 103.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

regular pattern; however the second type was:

...ruled by Kurdish Beys, whose office was hereditary. These sancaks, contained fiefs whose holders were commanded by the usual feudal officers and were obliged to serve in the usual way, only under their Beys. The latter might be dismissed by the Pasa for failure to perform their duties satisfactorily; but in such cases the Pasa was bound to replace the Bey dismissed by a member of the same family. These Kurdish Sancak Beys had therefore but little independence - unless they could defy the Pasa.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to the hereditary sanjaks, there were also the Kurdish hukumets, 'governments', "...whose rulers...were virtually autonomous, except for the obligation laid on them to furnish troops in war time. In these districts there were no fiefs; and all the proceeds of taxation went to the ruler, who had the privilege of being addressed as Cenab."<sup>65</sup> Based on this scheme, the eyalet of Diyarbakir was divided into nineteen sanjaks. Eleven were regular sanjaks while the remaining eight were under the hereditary rule of Kurdish chiefs.<sup>66</sup> Also established within the eyalet of Diyarbakir were five completely independent Kurdish hukumets.<sup>67</sup> The eyalet of Van included thirty-seven regular sanjaks and four hukumets.<sup>68</sup> Later, after the conquests of Murad III

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<sup>64</sup>Sir Hamilton Gibb and Harold Bowen, Islamic Society and the West (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), Vol. I, Part I. pp. 162 and 163.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 163. The chiefs of the Kurdish hukumets were also called Al-Mir Miran, see Muhammad Amin Zaki, Tarikh al-Kurd wa Kurdistan, trans. Muhammad 'Ali 'Auni (2 vols., written in Kurdish, 1931; translated into Arabic, 1939; 2nd printing, Egypt: 1961), Vol. I., p. 175.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 173; the hereditary sanjaks were Samghan, Kulp, Mahraniya, Tarjil, Atak, Pertek, Chapakachur, and Chermik.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 174; the independent hukumets within the eyalet of Diyarbakir were Agil, Palu, Jazirat-Ibn-'Umar, Hazzo, and Ginij.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., pp. 175 and 176; the hukumets within the eyalet of Van included Hakkari, Bidlis, Mahmudi, and Pininish.

(1590), a tenth Kurdish hukumet was established in Shahrazur, the evalet which included Arbil, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniya in southern Kurdistan.<sup>69</sup>

Although the city of Baghdad and several of the Kurdish frontier districts changed hands several times in the following two centuries, the Ottoman-Persian frontier was fairly well stabilized along the divide of the Zagros and Hakkari Mountains. The Ottomans had pushed the frontier to the eastern edge of the highlands. With the system of indirect rule established in the sixteenth century by Mevlana Idris Hakim of Bidlis, they nominally controlled "Turkish Kurdistan." However, in reality the Ottoman Pashas' authority was limited to the main population centers. The countryside and lines of communication within the region were dominated by the semi-autonomous Kurdish dynasts. As the Ottoman military and administrative apparatus declined during the latter part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the state of affairs within "Turkish Kurdistan" became anarchaic. It was only in the nineteenth century, beginning with Sultan Mahmud II, that the Ottomans attempted to assert their authority and centralize their control of the region.

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<sup>69</sup>Gibb and Bowen, op. cit., p. 163.

## CHAPTER II

### TERRA INCOGNITA

An Oriental never can understand the motive of one who travels either for information or pleasure. I have sometimes heard Turks speak of the locomotive propensity of the English as a species of insanity.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Overland Route to India - Early Exploration (1800-1820)

The Napoleonic invasion of Egypt (1798) ushered the modern era into the Middle East. The Ottoman Empire, which for six centuries had been the bulwark of Islam, was penetrated with remarkable ease. The decline in the military fortunes of the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century was merely an external manifestation of a deeper, more profound, decline of its culture and spiritual values. The vitality of intellectual curiosity and the questioning spirit of the Western European Renaissance and Neo-Renaissance was neither comprehended nor desired by the world of Islam under the rule of the Ottomans. Rather than borrow, modify, or assimilate alien ideas from Christian civilization, the Muslim world withdrew within itself thus heading to the destruction of the last great Muslim Empire.<sup>2</sup>

The syndrome of Ottoman decline reached its apex with Napoleon's

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<sup>1</sup>Bishop Southgate, Narrative of a Tour through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia, and Mesopotamia (2 vols., New York: 1840), Vol. I, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup>Zeine N. Zeine, lecture delivered at the American University of Beirut, January 16, 1964.

invasion of Egypt - "the first armed inroad of the modern West into the Middle East, the first shock to Islamic complacency, the first impulse to westernization and reform."<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Europe, and particularly Britain, also felt the repercussion of Bonaparte's adventure. The strategic implications of a European power, other than Britain, controlling the overland routes to India loomed large in the foreground. British sea power would have little effect on a French army marching along the route of Alexander the Great toward India:

Bonaparte will, as much as possible, avoid the dangers of the sea, which is not his element, but trusting to his own exertions and the enthusiasm of his followers, endeavour to accomplish his object, by marching to Aleppo, cross the Euphrates, and following the example of Alexander, by following the River Euphrates and the Tigris, and descending to the Persian Gulf, and thence proceeding along the coast to the Indies.<sup>4</sup>

These apprehensions redirected British attention toward the Middle East. In the process, soldiers, civil servants, and merchants traveling between England and India began to use the overland routes. The tedious voyage around the Cape of Good Hope could be avoided by using the Mediterranean Sea route to Egypt, traversing the narrow Isthmus of the Suez to the Red Sea, and then proceeding around the Arabian Peninsula to India. However, this route had its limitations, for the summer monsoon season in the India Ocean, the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea made travel uncomfortable if not hazardous. Similarly, the Great Desert Route from Damascus to Basra was to be avoided during the summer. The only route that was not seasonal was the one through the "Fertile Crescent."

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<sup>3</sup>Bernard Lewis, The Middle East and the West (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 34.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Henry Durdas, Secretary of War, to Lord Grenville, June 13, 1798, quoted in Arnold T. Wilson, The Persian Gulf (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1928), In.; also quoted in Zaki Saleh, Mesopotamia (Iraq), 1600-1914 (Bagdad: Al-Ma'aref Press, 1957), pp. 56 and 57.

Following the foothills of eastern Asia Minor, it provided the European traveler with a natural all-season overland route through the Middle East. The hazards of the desert, the mountains, and the open seas could be avoided; the relatively short distances between population centers and the security afforded by the local caravans made it highly attractive to Europeans transiting the Middle East.

The "Fertile Crescent" route was well-known to Europeans before the nineteenth century; however, since the transference of world trade to the open seas in the sixteenth century, even the major route through the Middle East was less frequently used. Until the establishment of European empires in the East, few Europeans penetrated beyond the shores of the Mediterranean. Those that did were usually merchants who were interested in traversing the region by the most expeditious means. As a result, the lands adjacent to the "Fertile Crescent" - the deserts to the south and the highlands to the north, had remained a veritable terra incognita since the days of the Byzantines.<sup>5</sup>

The European body of knowledge pertaining to the fabled Taurus and the regions beyond was extremely limited. Herodotus, Strabo, and Xenophon were the "standard references" to be used when discussing the lands of eastern Asia Minor. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Europeans referred to the region as "Cicilia," "Cappodocia," "Media," "Pontus," "Scythia," "Armenia," and "Assyria," even though the peoples of these kingdoms had long ago succumbed to conquerors from other lands. To be sure, Europeans had traveled through the region of the Taurus during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; however the number of those who

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<sup>5</sup>The Byzantine Empire reached its apogee during the first part of the eleventh century. At that time, its eastern frontier extended to the region between Lake Van and Urmia.

published accounts of their travels was diminutive,<sup>6</sup> and their generally inaccurate descriptions of the region merely compounded the myth and legend. For European man at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the eastern highlands of Asia Minor evoked an image of fable and fancy shrouded in mystery. Somewhere beyond the lofty foreboding peaks of the Taurus lay the lands of Biblical Paradise - Mount Ararat of Noah's Ark, the Eden from which the Tigris and Euphrates rose, the lands of the fabled Assyrian copper mines and the homeland of Mithridates and Tigranes populated by the fierce Carduchians of Xenophon. Indeed, for Europe emerging from Neo-Classicism, the lands east of the Euphrates appeared as an obscure region on the edge of the Roman Empire, the region just beyond Western Civilization.

As more European travelers began to use the "Fertile Crescent" Route, a few ventured off into the remote highland regions. Among those that did divert from the usual caravan route was John Jackson who published an account of his trip.<sup>7</sup> Leaving India in the spring of 1797, Jackson arrived at Basra, and proceeded to follow the regular route to Baghdad and Mosul. Finding the heat of summer insufferable, he changed his itinerary. Rather than continue through the semi-arid region of the Syrian steppe, Jackson joined a caravan heading northward into the cooler regions of the highlands. Leaving Mosul by the main route to Aleppo, the caravan turned north at Mardin to Arghana Maden, crossed the Euphrates at

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<sup>6</sup>Between 1630 and 1800, there were less than twenty-five Europeans who traveled through the region and published an account; H. Kiepert, Memoir über die Construction der Karte von Kleinasien und Türkisch Armenian in 6 Blatt von v. Vincke, Fischer, v. Moltke, und Kiepert (Berlin: Bei Simon Schropp & Comp., 1854), p. 117.

<sup>7</sup>John Jackson, Journey from India Towards England in the Year 1797 (London: 1799).



Keban Maden, and proceeded to join the main Constantinople to Tabriz route at Sivas.

Jackson's journey across the remote highland region was singularly uneventful. He was neither an astute observer nor knowledgeable in the classical history of the area. His account of the trip is simple and forthright without any embellishments. For example, upon first reaching the Euphrates, Jackson's comment was, "I drank the water, and found it had a peculiar taste, wholly unlike that of any other water that I had ever tasted."<sup>8</sup> His geographic descriptions were fairly accurate but occasionally mixed with a degree of fiction:

After crossing the Euphrates, we entered a strait path between two lofty mountains, by which we continued ascending for near two hours, keeping to the left as much as we could. On the top, to my great surprise, I found the ground highly cultivated. Proceeding a little further, we reached the summits of some higher mountains, on which were no signs of culture. From there, however, I had a most extensive prospect. To the northward was a chain of exceedingly lofty mountains, ranging N.W. and S.E. having their tops covered with snow. From this elevation, favoured too by an atmosphere perfectly clear, I could trace the Euphrates as far as its source [*italics mine*].<sup>9</sup> Running along the bases of those lofty mountains, it receives many very large streams that flow from them; and this it is that gives it the appearance of extraordinary amplitude near its source.<sup>10</sup>

While Jackson's journey across the eastern highlands was dull and uneventful, the next Englishman to penetrate the region found it fraught with peril.<sup>11</sup> John Macdonald Kinneir, a captain in the service of the East India Company, followed Jackson's route in the winter of 1810 without any

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<sup>8</sup>Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 183

<sup>9</sup>At this point, Jackson was approximately 450 kilometers from the source of the Euphrates.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>11</sup>Between Jackson and Kinneir, there was another Englishman who traversed the region. James Morier, the British Ambassador to Persia, made several trips between Constantinople and Teheran, but always by the main caravan route. His published accounts contain little or no information

difficulty; however, on his return trip from England three years later, he chose to traverse the region by a different route. Accompanied by a Mr. Chavasse, Kinneir traveled the main Persian caravan track to Erzurum from where he hoped to trace the retreat of the Ten Thousand Greeks.<sup>12</sup> In July, 1814, they left Erzurum with a caravan heading south for Mosul, but not without apprehension, for the "country extending towards the Euphrates is so infested by the wandering Koords as to be quite impassable without a strong guard."<sup>13</sup> The party arrived safely at Siirt; however, there, they were warned that the direct road to Mosul by Jazirat-ibn-Umar was impassable "from the depredations of the Koords, who plundered indifferently every traveller and caravan."<sup>14</sup> Kinneir and Chavasse were advised to detour through Diyarbakir avoiding the Badr Khan Kurds of Jazira whose leader had been described as "the most bloodthirsty villain of them all."<sup>15</sup>

Heeding the advice given to them at Siirt, Kinneir and Chavasse with the other members of the caravan detoured west toward Diyarbakir joining the main Mosul to Aleppo track north of Mardin. Although suffering from heat exhaustion and typhoid fever, they were greatly relieved at

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pertaining to the Kurds or the highland region in general; A Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor to Constantinople in the Years 1808 and 1809 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1812); and A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor to Constantinople in the Years 1810 and 1816 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1818).

<sup>12</sup>John Macdonald Kinneir, Journey through Asia Minor, Armenia, and Kurdistan in the Years 1813 and 1814 (London: John Murray, 1818), p. 367.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 404 and 405.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

having traversed the highlands:

We now looked upon all our troubles as over, and little imagined that the worst were yet to come. In momentary dread of being assassinated, either by banditti or our guards whilst on the road, and pestered in the villages with importunities of the natives, we might safely assert that from the moment we had quitted Trebisond, until that of our arrival at Mardin, we had been in a perpetual state of disquietude and alarm.<sup>16</sup>

At Mardin, Kinneir regained his health but Chavasse continued to suffer spells of delirium. Determined to push on, the two joined a caravan bound for Mosul. Beyond Nusaybin, despite Kinneir's repeated warnings, the caravan turned northeast toward Jazira to avoid the Yezidis of Sinjar. Immediately upon their arrival at Jazira (July 28, 1814), Kinneir and Chavasse were imprisoned by the Kurdish Beg, who released them the next day, but only after he had extracted one thousand piastres from the two Europeans as tribute.<sup>17</sup>

Upon their release, Kinneir and Chavasse crossed the Tigris, and proceeded to Mosul. Since their descent into the barren plains south of the highlands, they had found no relief from the heat. Chavasse was completely incapacitated with typhoid, and Kinneir chose to continue the journey by a less strenuous mode of transportation. At Mosul, he hired a kellek<sup>18</sup> and two boatmen hoping that a descent of the Tigris by raft to Baghdad would conserve Chavasse's health. During the descent, Chavasse continued to decline, and finally expired on the raft. Kinneir buried his companion of so many hardships in an unmarked grave on the banks of the Tigris north of Tikrit. Despondent, his health ravaged by typhoid

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<sup>16</sup>Kinneir, *op. cit.*, p. 430

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 450-452

<sup>18</sup>A raft consisting of inflated sheep or goatskins lashed to a sapling frame covered with a brushwood deck. The kellek, today, still remains as the sole means of river navigation in the upper courses of the Tigris and Euphrates.

and heat exhaustion, Kinneir continued the voyage by raft down to Baghdad where he found succor and rest in the British Residency.<sup>19</sup>

The adventures of John Macdonald Kinneir in Turkish Kurdistan popularized the hazards and peril of travel and explorations within the region. His account with its intermixture of melodrama and pathos in a romantic medieval setting struck a responsive chord among the English public.<sup>20</sup> Kinneir more than anyone else appears to be the originator of a popular and persistent theme which continued throughout the nineteenth century, and continues even today. He romanticized the wild, fiercely-independent, war-like qualities of the Kurds:

The Koords delight in arms more than any other race of men I have ever met with, and pride themselves on the beauty of their horses and value of their accoutrements. When a Koordish chief takes the field, his equipment varies but little from that of the Knights in the days of chivalry; and the Saracen who fought under the great Salahadeen was probably armed in the very same manner as he who now makes war against the Persians.<sup>21</sup>

Although Kinneir is remembered chiefly for his harrowing adventures, as a military officer he had a coup d'oeil which many future English military explorers of the region lacked. After the Turco-Russian war of 1828 and 1829, British military strategists became preoccupied with the possibility of a Russian advance on the Indian Empire. They believed that one of the main avenues of approach was across the eastern highlands of Asia Minor down the Tigris and Euphrates to the Persian Gulf. As if to presage the great debate concerning the feasibility of this approach to

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<sup>19</sup>Kinneir, op. cit., pp. 464-468.

<sup>20</sup>Kinneir's account contains many elements which made another contemporary Scotchman's historical novels so popular, i.e. Sir Walter Scott, Waverly (1814), Rob Roy (1817), and The Talisman (1825).

<sup>21</sup>Kinneir, op. cit., pp. 390 and 391.

India which would occur ten years later, Kinneir declared authoritatively:

The roads since we left Leese<sup>22</sup> have been very good and passable for cannon, waggons, or indeed wheel-carriages of any kind. This is, however only the case during the summer and autumn months; for in the winter the whole country is laid under snow, the melting of which in the spring occasions such a number of torrents as to render the communication between the towns exceedingly difficult. I look upon it as impossible to make war in any part of the western Armenia during four or perhaps five months in the year.<sup>23</sup>

After Kinneir, several English Travelers, officers, and merchants either penetrated or skirted the eastern highlands during the second decade of the nineteenth century. However, most of them were interested in traversing the region by the quickest possible means, and added very little information pertaining to the geography of the highlands or about its variegated peoples. Among those who published an account of their experiences was J. S. Buckingham, an English entrepreneur residing in India. Buckingham had gone to Egypt via the Red Sea route in order to negotiate a commercial treaty with Muhammad 'Ali on behalf of private commercial interests in India. By the time the negotiations were completed, the route by the Red Sea was closed due to the monsoons, and Buckingham gave up all hope of a speedy voyage to India. He followed the "Fertile Crescent" route leaving Aleppo on May 28, 1816. When he crossed the Euphrates at Birecik (Bir), he was mistaken in native garb for a Janissary who had recently deserted the garrison at Aleppo. After a minor altercation, Buckingham was allowed to continue his journey passing through Urfa, Diyarbakir, Mardin, and Mosul to Baghdad.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Leese (Lice) is a small village about half-way between Bitlis and Elazig on the southern slope of the Niphates Mountains.

<sup>23</sup>Kinneir, op. cit., p. 395.

<sup>24</sup>J. S. Buckingham, Travels in Mesopotamia including a Journey from Aleppo to Baghdad by the Route of Beer, Orfah, Diarbekr, Merdin, and Mosul (2 vols., London: Henry Colburn, 1827), Vol. II, pp. xxi and xxii.

In the next year, Lieutenant William Heude of the Madras Military Establishment crossed the eastern highlands with a Tatar messenger; however, his account is brief containing only a few remarks concerning each stage of the march.<sup>25</sup> At the same time (1817) Sir Robert Ker Porter, painter and traveller, followed the "Fertile Crescent" route through Mosul to Baghdad. In December, 1818, Porter left Baghdad for Urmiya in Persia crossing the Zagros by way of Kirkuk, Sulaymaniya, and Maraga. Two years later, he passed through the northern edge of the eastern highlands following the Tabriz - Constantinople route via Erzurum, Karahissar, Tokat, and Amasya. Porter was interested primarily in Persia, and devoted only a small portion of his account to Turkish Kurdistan. However, he did comment on the anarchial state of the region and its hazards to travelers:

The differing creeds of some of the Mohamedan sects act as distinguishingly upon the characters of their professors; and one of the most ferocious is that embraced by the Sorani tribe, who call themselves Yezedi, after a caliph of Damascus of that name. They inhabit the mountains of Sindjar, a country to the north-west of Bilbos. They are the greatest robbers of all the Coordish tribes; it being their almost invincible hordes which beset and pillage, and too often entirely cut off, the caravans which pass towards Merdin.<sup>26</sup>

#### The Resident Agent

Although the early explorers in the first two decades of the nineteenth century were mainly travelers traversing Turkish Kurdistan on their way to and from India, there was one individual whose character and position allowed him to explore the region in greater detail. In 1798, a British Residency was established in Baghdad "to transmit intelligence

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<sup>25</sup>William Heude, A Voyage up the Persian Gulf and a Journey Overland from India to England in 1817 (London, 1819).

<sup>26</sup>Sir Robert Ker Porter, Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia, etc. During the Years 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820 (2 Vols., London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1822), Vol. II., p. 450.

overland between India and England, and to watch and report on the proceedings of the French emissaries in connection with Napoleon's projected invasion of India by way of Egypt and the Red Sea."<sup>27</sup> Ten years later, a young officer in the East India Company's military service was appointed British Resident succeeding Harford Jones Brydges who became Envoy Extraordinary to Persia.<sup>28</sup> Claudius James Rich, accompanied by his new bride, proceeded to Baghdad where for thirteen years (1808-1821) his residency was "an acknowledged centre of the best local society, the rendezvous of the highest officials and notables, an open guest-house, and a home of antiquarian research."<sup>29</sup>

Rich embodied many characteristics which made him one of the most qualified Europeans to conduct research and explorations in Turkish Kurdistan. Well read in the classics, fluent in Turkish and Arabic, and residing in close proximity to the region, he was able to draw on the prestige and resources of his position. As a tireless explorer and astute observer, Rich began the first serious and scientific study of Turkish Kurdistan.

In April, 1820, "to avoid the intense heat of a Baghdad summer,"<sup>30</sup> Rich left his residency to explore to southern portion of the Zagros Mountains. Accompanied by Mrs. Rich, who followed in a separate caravan

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<sup>27</sup>Stephen H. Longrigg, Four Centuries of Modern Iraq (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 254; also quoted in Saleh, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>28</sup>Rich was only twenty-one years old when appointed British Resident at Baghdad. His title was later changed to "Political Agent in Turkish Arabia." Longrigg, op. cit., p. 255.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., also quoted in Saleh, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>30</sup>Claudius James Rich, Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan and on the Site of Ancient Nineveh; with Journal of a Voyage down the Tigris to Baghdad and an Account of a visit to Shirauz and Persepolis, ed. Mrs. Rich (2 vols., London: James Duncan, Paternoster Row, 1836), Vol. I. p. 1.

"attended by women-servants, and all the state of a haram,"<sup>31</sup> Rich's party included a retinue of officers and servants from the Residency. His privately organized expedition was an imposing array in consonance with prestige of his position. To preclude the perils and hazards which had befallen previous explorers and travelers, Rich brought along a body-guard of twenty-five sepoy normally stationed in Baghdad for the protection of the British Residency.<sup>32</sup>

From Baghdad the expedition started north following the course of the Diyala River to Adana Keuy; then across Jabal Hamrin to Kifri and through the Pass of Derbent to Sulaymaniya, the residence of Mahmud Pasha, chief of the Baban Kurds and governor of Southern Kurdistan. Rich and his party remained in Sulaymaniya for two months (May 10th - July 17th), and then proceeded east across the Zagros Mountains into Persia. At Senna, the expedition turned northward and then west recrossing the Zagros divide to Banna. On September 15th, it arrived back at Sulaymaniya, and remained there until October 20th. From Sulaymaniya the party retraced its route through the Pass of Derbent but then continued westward rather than turning south toward Baghdad. Crossing the Lesser Zab River at Altun Kupri, the expedition joined the main caravan route from Baghdad through Arbil to Mosul (October 31st). Rich and his group "spent the four winter months in the Mosul district and finally left on the 3rd of March 1821 by raft down the Tigris for Baghdad."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Rich, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Edmonds, op. cit., p. 23.



As a result of his seven month residence in Kurdistan, Rich had acquired more knowledge about the Kurds, their history, tribal organization, manners, and language than any other European. His Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, which was edited by his widow based on his journal and notes<sup>34</sup> still remains as one of the most authoritative sources for the history of the region. When commenting on the historiography of Sulaymaniya, one contemporary historian wrote: "Nor are Kurdish sources of any great value. The recent local historians have relied far more on Rich and other European writers than on any indigenous records or traditions."<sup>35</sup>

Through interviews with the leading members of the Baban clan, Rich was able to relate the rise of local Kurdish dynasties during the Ottoman Safavid conflict:

I told him I had heard that the vali of Sinna<sup>36</sup> was of a Gooran family; and that the Gooran race were not so much esteemed as clansmen. A murmur of applause burst instantly from all the attendants and went round the room. My fortune was now made with the clannish Koords; and the pasha, with more than his usual vivacity, went at once into the history of his family. He said, in the first place, that the vali of Sinna's family was very ancient, but that the Goorans were not a tribe: that he boasted himself of being both of an ancient family, and of an honourable clan. The name of his clan, he added, was Kermanj; Bebbeh being the appellation of his own particular family, the members of which are the hereditary chiefs of the clan; and hence their whole territory and people are now called the government of the Bebbehs or Babans. The clan was originally

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<sup>34</sup>Rich's power and influence had incurred the enmity of Da'ud Pasha, the Mameluke governor of Baghdad. Immediately after Rich's return to Baghdad, the Pasha's forces surrounded the Residency. After strong representations from the India Government, Rich was allowed to retire to Basra (May, 1821). While awaiting further instructions, he visited Persepolis and Shiraz; however, a cholera epidemic occurred during his stay. Refusing to leave, Rich remained in Shiraz administering medicines to the inhabitants. In the process, he contracted the disease, and died on October 5, 1821; Rich, op. cit., pp. xxix and xxx; and Saleh, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>35</sup>Edmonds, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>36</sup>Sinna is the Persian frontier province in southern Kurdistan.

established at Pizhder, in the northern mountains near Sikeneh on the frontier of Persia. An ancestor<sup>37</sup> of his, he said, had rendered important services to an Ottoman Sultan in a war with Persia; and obtained in recompense an investiture of all he could conquer. He and some succeeding chiefs gradually possessed themselves of the districts they now hold, with several others which have since been retaken by the Persians; and the whole was then erected into the banner of Baban,<sup>38</sup> or Bebbeh, and made dependent on the pashalik of Shehrizoor, the capital of which was Kerkook. The pasha could not give me any dates, he only knew that his ancestors were lords of the Banner for a long time; and were finally made pashas of two tails not quite a century ago.<sup>40</sup>

Before Claudius James Rich, European explorers had generally treated the Kurds as an entity. War-like and predatory, these highland people were to be avoided, and therefore most explorers and travellers acquired only a superficial knowledge which was highly colored by the fear of robbery and murder. Rich, however, perceived the essentially feudal characteristic of the population dominated by internecine dynastic struggles and feuds. The lack of differentiation about which one Kurdish chief complained, "The Turks call us all Koords, and have no conception of the distinction between us,"<sup>41</sup> was not apparent to Rich, who discerned a multitude of distinctions - the socio-economic, religious, political, geographic, and linguistic factors which confirmed the heterogeneity of a mixed borderland civilization.

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<sup>37</sup>Sulayman Baba, from whom the name Baban is derived, established the dynasty in about 1663 A.D.; Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>38</sup>Sanjak signified 'flag' or 'banner'.

<sup>39</sup>In the Ottoman Empire, the tug or horse-tail was used to denote ranks. A Sanjak Bey had a right to wear one horse-tail, a Beylerbey or Kurdish Derebey to two; Gibb and Bowen, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 139.

<sup>40</sup>Rich, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 80 and 81.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 89.

On the socio-economic feudalism of the highlands, Rich reported:

I had to-day confirmed by several of the best authorities, what I had long suspected, that the peasantry in Koordistan are a totally distinct race from the tribes, who seldom, if ever, cultivate the soil; while, on the other hand, the peasants are never soldiers. The clannish Koords call themselves Sipah, or the military Koords, in contradistinction to the peasant Koords; but the peasants have no other distinguishing name than Rayahs or Keuylees, in this part of Koordistan....Every one agrees that the peasant is in a moment to be distinguished, both in countenance and speech, from the true tribesman.<sup>42</sup>

Even the ruling class of Kurds could not be treated as a cohesive entity:

Another person remarked, 'The jealousy of our princes is their ruin. Neither the Turks nor the Persians would ever be able to do anything against us, but by availing themselves of our divisions, and the family jealousies of our chiefs. We are aware of this, and yet, somehow or other, the Turks always succeed and get the better of us...'<sup>43</sup>

Rich found the entire eyalet of Shahrizur to be divided among several Kurdish tribal confederations, each one representing a political or territorial unit. The tribes were sub-divided into clans and sections, and each confederation was dominated by a ruling family. Thus, the Baban family who ruled from Sulaymaniya included in their confederation the large Jaf tribe in the region of Halabja:

The Jaf tribe...inhabit the highest mountains on the frontier of the territory of the Vali of Sinna. They are a fine-looking, brave people, but esteemed exceedingly uncivilized and barbarous, even by the Koords. Their dialect of Koordish differs considerably from that of the Bebbeh Koords; and their appearance is so singular that they are easily recognized. They form a body of yeomanry cavalry, in number about 2000, which follows the Bey when he is summoned to attend his feudal lord, the Pasha of Sulimania, in the field. They can also turn out 4,000 musketeers with ease; and they are reckoned the best soldiers in the Koordish army. As they are a strong and powerful tribe, they have a number of refugees from various tribes, with remnants of broken tribes, under their protection.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Rich, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 88 and 89. Although Rich relates the distinction between Sipahi and Rayah to only Kurdistan, this differentiation existed throughout all parts of the Ottoman Empire. The Sipahi were fief holders who, in time of war, formed the irregular cavalry. The Rayah (Ra'iyah) were the peasants who cultivated the Sipahi's fief. For a detailed account of the Ottoman feudal system, see Gibb and Bowen, op. cit., Part I, pp. 46-56 and 234-258.

<sup>43</sup>Rich, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

North of the Babans was another large Kurdish confederation, the Bulbassi. Both groups were feudal chiefs under the ancient Soran family who ruled from Keuy Sanjak (Koi); however, the Soran dynasty became extinct, and the Babans and Bulbassi split into different confederations perpetually warring against each other.<sup>45</sup> As was the case with the Babans, the Bulbassi was ruled by one family, the Kabaiz, consisting of about two hundred members. Below the reigning family were five tribes, the Manzur, Mamash, Piran, Rummuk, and Sinn-Taafah. Each tribe had a ruling clan from which its chief was selected:

When a chief dies, he is succeeded by the best or bravest of his family, with the common consent of his tribe. If his eldest son is incapable, the best of the brothers succeeds. When a chief is once nominated he cannot be deposed, and his authority is so well defined, that there are no instances of a chief ever having attempted to exceed them.<sup>46</sup>

While gathering information on the Kurdish tribal structure and its relative political power, Rich implicitly arrived at the conclusion that the essential unit was the ruling family, and not the tribe itself. The size of the confederation and its territory depended upon the individual qualities of the leader. His physical bravery and reputation acted as a magnet, and the tribal groupings and allegiances shifted through marriage alliances. In this way, the political power of any particular Kurdish tribe was temporary in nature:

Among the reigning families in Koordistan, that of Bahdinan, whose capital is Amadia, is the noblest, and is even looked upon as something saintly, deriving its origin from the caliphs...the prince of this family...is so sacred, that in the fiercest battle among tribes, their arms would fall from their hands if he approached them. Yet he has little or no power over the savage and warlike clans which compose his people; and he receives nothing from the revenues of his

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<sup>45</sup>Rich, *op. cit.*, Vol I, pp. 153 and 154.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 152.

own estates. Should he want a sum of money for any extraordinary exigency, he mounts his mule and goes around to the chiefs of the different clans....<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, another family, the Bohtans which would become the most powerful Kurdish clan in the 1840's was at its political low ebb only twenty years earlier:

The family of Boattan, which commands the district of the same name, is a respectable family, but greatly reduced in consideration in a very ruinous condition. The district of Tor is between Jezira and Mardin, but independent of both.<sup>48</sup>

Although Claudius Rich confined his explorations to the southern part of "Turkish Kurdistan," his Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan covered a much wider scope, and is encyclopedic in content. In discussing the unexplored regions north of Mosul, Rich was the first European explorer to mention the existence of independent Christian tribes: "A strong guard is obliged to be kept, for fear of incursions from the Tiyari, an independent Christian tribe of the Chaldean nation, who are much dreaded by all the Mahometans."<sup>49</sup> Upon interviewing a Tatar who delivered dispatches to Constantinople by way of Amadia and Van, Rich learned that:

The most savage and independent tribes of Julamerk, or Hakkari, are the Chaldean tribes, four in number, who care not for the Prince of Hakkari, and live in a completely barbarous state. They profess Christianity and a follower of Nestorius. The men are all remarkable for strength, size, and bravery, and it is said to be less safe to pass among them than through the Mahometan tribes. They inhabit the

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<sup>47</sup>Rich, op. cit., Vol I, pp. 153 and 154

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 156. John Joseph, The Nestorians and their Muslim Neighbors (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 36, briefly mentions Rich, and cites the Rev. Dr. Robert Walsh, Chaplain of the British Embassy at Constantinople, as the first nineteenth century European to mention the existence of independent Christian tribes in Kurdistan (p. 43). Although Walsh published his notes on the Nestorians before the publication of Rich's Narrative (1836), he probably used the official dispatches of Rich to Constantinople as the basis of his information.

country between Amadin and Julamerk, in which tract there is only one Mahometan tribe. They give something to the Prince of Hakkari, occasionally, when he conciliates and entreats them, but never by compulsion. The territory of Hakkari extends to within about two hours' journey from Urmia. Mustafa Khan, the present prince, pays a peshgash, or present, to Abbas Mirza, of Tabreez.<sup>50</sup>

Rich's expedition of 1820 and 21 marked the beginning of serious exploration in "Turkish Kurdistan." The explorers who followed him in the next two decades would add to and refine the massive amount of information which he had collected. There would be those concerned with geography and mapping, some with antiquities and history, and others interested in the missionary possibilities of the region. However, few, if any, would be able to match the kaleidoscopic range of interests which characterized the exploratory activities of Claudius James Rich, the British "potentate" from Baghdad.

#### Exploration Neglected and Renewed (1821-1831)

The ten year period following the death of Claudius James Rich witnessed a lack of interest on the part of Europeans for exploration in "Turkish Kurdistan." This neglect was the result of attention being diverted to other parts of the Ottoman Empire where momentous events were occurring. In February and March, 1821, revolts erupted in Wallachia, Moldavia, and Morea; and the Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) began with the massacre of the Turkish minority. In retaliation, the Ottomans hung the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church and massacred the Greeks in Constantinople. The outrages committed by both parties quickly led to the embroilment of the European Powers, and the "Eastern Question" was reopened in all its complexity of cross-purposes and conflicting interests. Christianity versus Islam, the liberal spirit of the French Revolution

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<sup>50</sup>Rich, op. cit., Vol. I., p. 276.

against the autocratic Ottoman Empire, the renaissance of a Hellenic culture amid the cultural decadence of the Turks, and the adventurous spirit of Knight errantry were among the more intangible factors which turned European attention toward the East. The death of Lord Byron and the subsequent successes of the combined Turco-Egyptian forces in Greece aroused popular sentiment, and a wave of Philhellenism quickly spread over the European Continent.

These events and the destruction of the Janissaries in June, 1826,<sup>51</sup> obscured the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire; both Europeans and Turks were preoccupied by military and diplomatic activities in the Balkans. The eastern highlands of Asia Minor on the opposite end of the Ottoman Empire appeared as a remote region far removed from the scene of contemporary interest. The terra incognita of "Turkish Kurdistan" failed to attract the attention of those Europeans transiting the Middle East. The embryonic interest generated by the efforts of Kinneir, Rich, and others to penetrate the region was all but forgotten, and between the years 1821 and 1828, all exploratory activities in "Turkish Kurdistan" were temporarily suspended.

In 1829, several events occurred rekindling European interest in eastern Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The first year of the Turco-Russian War (1828-1829) had ended in a stalemate; the Russians having crossed the Danube in June, were held up by the Turkish forces garrisoned in the fortresses of Shumla, Silistra, and Varna. By October, Varna fell, but the Russian troops were too exhausted to continue the campaign that winter. On the Asiatic front, another Russian army under

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<sup>51</sup>The most definitive work on the destruction of the Janissaries is Howard A. Reed, The Destruction of the Janissaries by Mahmud II in June, 1826 (Princeton, unpublished dissertation, 1951).

the command of Marshal Paskevich had crossed the Caucasus, and captured Kars, Akhalkhaliki, Hertwitz, and Akhaltzikh. In the spring of 1829, the war resumed on both fronts. The Russians under General Diebitsch defeated the Turks at Kulevcha (June 11), and captured the fortress of Silistra (June 26). Failing to take Shumla, Diebitsch divided his army with the main force crossing the Balkan Mountains while the remainder continued to besiege Turkish army under the Grand Vizir at Shumla. The Russians captured Adrianople (August 20); however, decimated by disease they were hardly in a position to advance on Constantinople. In Asia Minor, the army under Paskevich penetrated into "Turkish Kurdistan," and with the aid of a disaffected Christian minority, captured the cities of Bayazit and Erzurum.<sup>52</sup> However, the Russian advance stalled in the Anti-Taurus Mountains near Erzincan. Unable to successfully continue the campaign on either front, the Russians negotiated the treaty of Adrianople (September 14, 1829).<sup>53</sup>

The Turco-Russian war resulted in the opening of Turkish Black Sea ports to shipping of foreign nations. At the same time, steam navigation was established between the ports of Samsun, Trabzon, and Constantinople. In 1830, "the Foreign Office sent out to Trabizond from London a certain Mr. James Brant as first British Vice-Consul with the

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<sup>52</sup>Lt. General W. Monteith, Kars and Erzeroum: with the Campaigns of Prince Paskevich in 1828 and 1829 (London, 1856), p. 300; an estimated 90,000 Christians emigrated from the eastern Turkish provinces when the Russian army withdrew. The Kurds, who with the Christians, constituted the majority of the highland population remained apathetic, "very few Kurds took any part in the war, except the corps of the Pasha of Van who made the unsuccessful attack on Bayazeed" (p. 262).

<sup>53</sup>Creasy, op. cit., pp. 513-521. For contemporary accounts of the Turco-Russian War, see Francis Rawdon Chesney, The Russo-Turkish Campaigns of 1828 and 1824 (London: 1854); and Helmuth von Moltke, The Russians in Bulgaria and Roumelia in 1828 and 1829 (English ed., London: 1854).



object, as Brant himself wrote, of 'the making of Trebizond a depot for the Persian Trade.'<sup>54</sup> The reopening of the Black Sea ports had a dual effect on the eastern highlands. Commercially, it restored the region to its traditional position as a bridgeland connecting Europe with Asia. Concurrently, steam navigation shortened the time-distance factors between Constantinople and its eastern frontier. Accessibility via the Black Sea ports would become an important factor in the penetration and exploration of "Turkish Kurdistan."

By the end of the Turco-Russian War, another element had developed which would facilitate European exploration within the Ottoman Empire. The imperative demands for military reform began during the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789-1807), and received additional impetus from the military successes of Egypt's Muhammad 'Ali against the Mamelukes, the Wahabites in Arabia, the Shaiqiya in the Sudan, and the Greeks in Morea. Muhammed 'Ali's de facto independence within the Ottoman Empire was based on an armed force organized along European lines, trained by a nucleus of European military officers (predominantly French), and commanded by his son, Ibrahim Pasha, who was unquestionably a military genius. The presence of this "modernized" military force in the hands of a subject of the Ottoman Sultan, but only nominally under the control of the Porte, constituted a threat from within and a constant reminder of the necessity of military reform.

Although some military reform had been attempted during the reign of Selim III and in the earlier years of Mahmud II,<sup>55</sup> the Greek Revolt and

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<sup>54</sup>"Trebizond and the Persian Transit Trade," op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>55</sup>The best account of Selim III's and Mahmud II's military reforms can be found in Chapters III and IV, pp. 40-126, of Bernard Lewis's The Emergence of Modern Turkey, op. cit. A similar, but less adequate description of early reforms is given by Roderic H. Davidson in his Reform in the

the destruction of the Janissaries opened the way for greater modernization of the Turkish armed forces. Paradoxically, these events not only removed serious obstacles to the reformers, but also opened the "sluice gates" to the "flood" of renegades, adventurers, unemployed officers, and romantics from Europe.<sup>56</sup> The liberalism and reformism of Sultan Mahmud attracted a variegated assortment of individuals who sought fortune and prestige on the shores of the Bosphorus. By the end of the Turco-Russian War, the influx of foreigners seeking real or imagined opportunities had reached such a magnitude as to warrant the following description:

... [they] come in swarms to seek employment as servants or artisans; enriched by a liberal sprinkling of adventurers, bent by the force of circumstances to exercise their wits. To these must be added, of late years, tradesmen of all kinds, allured by the new and fashionable wants of the Osmanleys, - wine, Wellington boots, and close garments. Occasionally might be seen . . . a decayed German baron, or Italian count, or a colonel de la grande armee, come to teach the nizam dgeditt tactics; Poles and Prussians on the same errand; fabricators of rockets a la congreve, to burn the Russian fleet; chemists to manufacture superior gun powder; geologists to examine the mountain ores; bankers to arrange loans; portrait-painters, to delineate Sultan Mahmoud and his court; in fine, speculators of all denominations - en grand et en petit, en raisonnable et en absurde.<sup>57</sup>

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Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876 (Princeton: University Press, 1963), pp. 23-37. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall includes in his monumental work Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours, Tr. de l'Allemand par J. J. Hellert, 18 vols. (Paris: Bellizard, 1835-1841), appendices to Vol. XVII, pp. 178-204, detail the administrative reforms of Sultan Mahmud II. The most detailed account of military reforms, including a complete English Translation of the Hatt-i Serif of May 28, 1826, and the code of regulation for the new-style army, is in Reed, op. cit.

<sup>56</sup>Bernard Lewis, "The Impact of the West," The Middle East and the West (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 38. In this essay Lewis outlines the process by which military reforms lead to economic and political reforms in a framework of response and subsequent reaction. A similar theme can be found in Dankwert A. Rustow's "The Military in Middle Eastern Society and Politics," The Military in the Middle East, ed. Sydney N. Fisher (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963), pp. 4 and 5.

<sup>57</sup>Adolphus Slade, Record of Travels in Turkey, Greece & C.,...in the Years 1829, 1830, and 1831 (London: 1832; 2nd ed., Saunders and Otley, 1854), pp. 370 and 371. This English Naval Officer's commentary on the contemporary scene in Constantinople contains many penetrating insights as a subtle sense of humor.

To this ever-expanding list of nationalities, one can add a small group of individuals who renewed exploration in "Turkish Kurdistan." Although diminutive in number, they begin the great decade of exploratory activity in the eastern highlands of Asia Minor. Attracted to the Ottoman East for a variety of reasons, they represent a cross-section of professions and motives which would later dominate in the rediscovery of "Turkish Kurdistan."

The Mystery of Professor Schultz.—The renewal of exploration in the terra incognita of "Turkish Kurdistan" was inaugurated by a Professor Schultz from the University of Giessen. Undertaking a "journey of literary research in Asiatic Turkey and Persia, under the auspices of Baron Damas,"<sup>58</sup> Schultz arrived in Constantinople during the year 1826. In the following year, he proceeded to Lake Van, and its environs, where he copied forty-two inscriptions in the cuneiform character.<sup>59</sup> After returning to Constantinople, Schultz set out on a second journey presumably to Persia, in 1829. Accompanied by two Afshar guards and two Christian servants, he proceeded from Urmiah to Ushnei, located on the eastern edge of "Turkish Kurdistan." Entering the unexplored region of Hakkari,<sup>60</sup> Schultz had intended to visit the Nestorian Patriarch, Mar Shamun, at his residence in Koch Hannes; however, he was led to Bashgala (Bash Qal'ah),<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Lieutenant-Colonel J. Shiel, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, through Kurdistan, via Van, Bitlis, Se'ert, and Erbil, to Suleimaniyeh, in July and August, 1836," J.R.G.S., Vol. 8 (1838), pp. 54-101; editor's note, p. 64.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., cites letter from Schultz to M. St. Martin, in the Nouveau Journal Asiatique for 1828, Vol. 2, pp. 160-188. The same letter is also cited by Layard, op. cit., in his description of Schultz's work, pp. 394-397, 400, 401, 409, and 410.

<sup>60</sup>Schultz was the first modern European to explore the Lake Van and Hakkari regions.

<sup>61</sup>Bashgala is located about thirty miles north-northeast of Koch Hannes.

the residence of Nur Allah Beg, the Kurdish Amir of Hakkari. "He remained ten days with the Bey, and then continued his journey accompanied by Kurdish guards, who killed him by their master's orders beside a stream called Av Spiresa, near the castle of Pisa, close to Bash-Kalah. Two of his Christian servants were murdered with him; his two Persian attendants were taken to Nur Ullah Bey, and also put to death."<sup>62</sup>

The murder of Professor Schultz gave credence to the popular European image of the Kurds as wild aborigines. The dangers of robbery and assassination while traveling in "Turkish Kurdistan" were persistent themes which recurred in European travelogues and narratives. With the exception of Claudius James Rich, who was escorted by a small army of Sepoys, no nineteenth century European before Schultz had ventured off the main caravan tracks. Most of the early European explorers traveled in the company of large caravans which provided safety precluding the chance of robbery by the indigenous highland population. Only James Macdonald Kinneir had been imprisoned and ransomed, and that occurred on the main route while traveling with a large caravan. Now Schultz, the first modern European to explore the more remote regions of "Turkish Kurdistan," with a small party of attendants had been murdered.<sup>63</sup>

The circumstances surrounding the fate of Schultz caused considerable speculation among those men who would eventually follow his trail into the unknown regions of the highlands. Dr. Asahel Grant, the American missionary physician who penetrated the Hakkari country ten

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<sup>62</sup>Layard, op. cit., p. 382.

<sup>63</sup>Although many Europeans died of cholera, typhoid, and heat exhaustion, Schultz was the only one ever to be murdered while traveling in "Turkish Kurdistan."

years later, wrote:

Much has been said of the fate of Schultz; but we may make too much of a single case, without a careful consideration of the circumstances. I have taken pains to learn the facts in the case, and both Turks and Persians agree that he made an injudicious show of wealth. He was the agent of a European monarch, carried various astronomical instruments, had a great deal of baggage, and made splendid gifts to the Kurdish chiefs. They naturally thought his boxes were full of money, and suspected that he was surveying their country for his King; therefore the wonder is not that he fell at last, but that he escaped so long.<sup>64</sup>

Major H. C. Rawlinson of the Bombay Army,<sup>65</sup> then commanding a Goran regiment of the Persian Army (1838), believed that because Schultz was escorted by Persians, the Hakkaris thought he was an emissary of the government of Persia and on an "errand to survey the country and discover the best route for the Persian guns."<sup>66</sup> Henry Austan Layard, who in 1846 camped near the cairn that marked Schultz's grave and subsequently interviewed a Christian employed to bury the body, wrote that Schultz "was described in a letter sent to the Kurdish chief as a dangerous man, who was spying out in the country; an impression which was confirmed by his habit of making notes continually and openly."<sup>67</sup> The Reverend Thomas Laurie, American missionary at Mosul in 1842, added another motivation, "Schultz had carried away specimens of the yellow mineral from their orpiment mines, and they suspected he had found it to contain gold, and so would induce his King to take possession of their country."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Letter to the Prudential Committee, November 15, 1836, Urmiyah, quoted in Rev. Thomas Laurie, Dr. Grant and the Mountain Nestorians (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1853), p. 93.

<sup>65</sup>In 1844, Rawlinson became the East India Company's Resident and Consul-General at Baghdad.

<sup>66</sup>Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, through Persian Kurdistan, to the Ruins of Takhti-Soleiman, and from thence by Zenjan and Tarom, to Gilan, in October and November 1838; with a Memoir on the Atropatenian Ecbatana," J.R.G.S., Vol. 10 (1841), pp. 27 and 28.

<sup>67</sup>Layard, op. cit., p. 382.

<sup>68</sup>Laurie, op. cit., p. 163.

Although the circumstances of the Schultz murder remained a mystery, the act itself served to dramatize the hazards of exploration. In the remote vastness of this borderland region, neither the Ottoman government nor the Persian could offer adequate protection. All foreigners were regarded with extreme suspicion; even the most esoteric motives for exploration, or "travel for travel's sake," were viewed within a framework of conspiracy:

I may here notice the difficulty of obtaining information in Kurdistan. An 'Osmanli is generally in profound ignorance of everything not passing before him. A Kurd is more intelligent, but too commonly answers to any questions regarding mountains, rivers, or roads--'God Knows! how should I know?' Besides this, except in large towns, the Kurds rarely understand any language but their own; but the greatest impediment to information is their extreme suspiciousness. My usual introduction to each village, was the report that there was not a mountain village, stream, or road which I did not write down; and when making use of the pocket compass, the guides often taxed me with endeavouring to find a road for cannon to conduct the Persians to the aid of Reshid Pasha to subdue the Kurds.<sup>69</sup>

After Schultz, European explorers began to give serious attention to the technique of penetrating the highland region. Buckingham had traveled in the disguise of a Janissary, but only skirted the region. Rich traveled with a huge retinue employing all the power and prestige of the British Residency in Baghdad. However, neither of these extremes was suitable for the majority of Europeans who wanted to explore "Turkish Kurdistan." Their financial resources were generally limited so as to prevent them from hiring a large retinue of servants and guards. Similarly, few had the necessary cultural and linguistic qualifications requisite for traveling in disguise. These limitations, as well as the murder of Schultz,

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<sup>69</sup>Shiel, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

led one eminent explorer to advise:

Much curiosity, I am aware, is alive at present regarding the antiquities and geography of Kurdistan, and, as I have had a good deal of intercourse with the inhabitants of that part of Asia it may thus perhaps be useful to give the benefit of my experience to travellers desirous of penetrating into the many wild and unexplored regions of this mountain-country. I consider attempting to visit Kurdistan in any disguise as quite impracticable, the protection of a government, either Turkish or Persian, is fraught also with danger rather than advantage. The most safe, and at the same time the most agreeable way of travelling in Kurdistan would be to visit, in the first place, a frontier chief, whose connexion with his government, either Turkish or Persian, would oblige him to assist and protect the European recommended to his care; this chief then would be able, from his connexion with the tribes in the vicinity to pass the traveller on to another chief in the interior, and from thence, availing himself of the same means of introduction and protection, he might penetrate to still more remote regions until he reached the objects of his search.<sup>70</sup>

American Missionaries. --Among the various elements attracted by the liberalism and reformism of Sultan Mahmud II were the Protestant missionaries who looked upon the Ottoman Empire as a field for Gospel conquest. The great foreign missionary crusade, a product of the same forces which impelled Europe towards the Middle East in the early part of the nineteenth century, quickly established itself on the periphery of the Islamic world. During the 1820's, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had sent out missionaries who established stations in Smyrna and Beirut.<sup>71</sup> Soon efforts were made to penetrate the hinterlands of Asia Minor, and establish relations with the various Christian minorities living within the Ottoman Empire.

The first attempt to survey the missionary prospects of Asia Minor and its eastern highlands was the expedition of Reverend Eli Smith and Reverend Harrison Gray Otis Dwight, "two fellow-laborers, who became

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<sup>70</sup>Rawlinson, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>71</sup>For an account of the early missionary activities in the Ottoman Empire, see Rev. William Goodell, Forty Years in the Turkish Empire, edit. E. D. G. Prime (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1876).

literally fellow-apostles in the great reformation which by the Gospel and grace of God was wrought among the nominal Christians of Turkey."<sup>72</sup> The two American missionaries left Constantinople on May 30, 1830, following the great Persian caravan route to Tokat and Erzurum, where they turned northeast into Russian Armenia by way of Kars to Tiflis. Smith and Dwight then proceeded southeast along the valley of Kura River to Shusha; crossed the watershed of the Aras to Nahshivan; and rejoined the main route to Tabriz at Khoy.

In their letter of instructions from the American Board, the two were instructed to visit the Nestorians whose independence among the Muslim population had been given some degree of publicity by Rev. Dr. Robert Walsh and Claudius James Rich. Smith and Dwight were to establish contact with a "company of wandering shepherds who will present themselves to your attention in Koordistan.... A hundred thousand of the Koords are said to be Nestorians, subject to hereditary patriarchs."<sup>73</sup>

After arriving at Tabriz, the missionaries began their inquiries concerning the Nestorians: "Capt. Campbell assured us...that the Nestorians are by far the most powerful people of Hakary, that they are much feared by the Kurds, and will perhaps, before many years, be left by them in undivided possession of the country. He entertained a high opinion of their character."<sup>74</sup> However, the murder of Schultz and the unsettled

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<sup>72</sup>Goodell, op. cit., p. 147

<sup>73</sup>American Missionary Herald, Vol. 26 (1830), p. 75; quoted in Joseph, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>74</sup>Eli Smith, Researches of the Rev. E. Smith and the Rev. H.G.O. Dwight in Armenia (2 vols., Boston: 1833; London: George Wightman, 1834), Vol. II, p. 376.



state of affairs deterred them from entering the Hakkari Mountains:

We were extremely anxious to extend our journey into the heart of the Kurdish mountains, and visit in person Mar Shimon and the independent Nestorians. But all our English friends at Tabriz united in declaring that region entirely inaccessible. Not that among the Nestorians themselves we should not be well received, and be perfectly safe, but the Kurds which surround them are treacherous and blood-thirsty robbers, entirely beyond the control of the Persian government.<sup>75</sup>

Unable to visit the Nestorian patriarch, Smith and Dwight were content to travel the circuit of Lake Urmiyah gathering information among the Nestorian villagers in the Azarbayjan plain. After spending a week with the Nestorians, they returned to Tabriz (March, 1831), and started on the return journey again following the main commercial route through Bayazit to Erzurum. Rather than proceed overland through Asia Minor, Smith and Dwight chose to take the newly "reopened" route to Trabzon and from there via steamboat to Constantinople. The two Americans arrived at Reverend Goodell's missionary station in Constantinople during May, 1831, ending a year of travel and exploration in Asia Minor and Armenia.<sup>76</sup>

As a result of their expedition, both Smith and Dwight were enthusiastic about the prospects of missionary work among the Nestorians. They had been well-received by the local peasant population, both Muslim and Christian who were equally oppressed by their feudal Persian landlords:

As we passed along, an old Kurdish shepherd by the side of the path, cried out, 'Aha! you are just the men I have been wanting to see for a long time. Our governor here oppresses, beats, and kills us. This is Kurdistan; the Kurds are many, and the Kuzul-bashes (Persians) are few. When are you coming to take the country and allow us a chance to beat and kill them?' He supposed we were Russians; and the inhabitants of a Kurdish village not far beyond, seem equally glad to see us, and asked when we came from Erivan.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 402.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid. p. 234 ff.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid. p. 387; partially quoted in Joseph, op. cit., p. 45. The region around Urmiyah had been occupied by Russian Troops for several months in 1828.

"The extreme liberality of the Nestorians toward other sects," their peculiar missionary character, and their strategic geographic position located in the borderland region between the two great Muslim powers, Turkey and Persia, seemed to make the Nestorians ideally suited as the object of missionary activity.<sup>78</sup> Smith believed that a missionary among the Nestorians would find them:

...a prop upon which to rest the lever that will overturn the whole system of Mohammedan delusion, in the center of which he has fixed himself; that he is lighting a fire which will shine upon the corruption of the Persian on the one side, and upon the barbarities of the Kurd on the other, until all shall come to be enlightened by its brightness; and the triumph of faith will crown his labor of love.<sup>79</sup>

Although Smith and Dwight had failed to penetrate "Turkish Kurdistan," they were pioneer explorers introducing a new force into the mixed borderland civilization of the eastern highlands. Based on their recommendations, the American Board established a missionary station at Urmiyah in 1834.<sup>80</sup> Within a few years, American missionaries would be using Urmiyah as a base of operations to penetrate into the remote mountains of Turkish Kurdistan." The zeal of these pioneers would allow them to overcome the dangers and hardships which would deter other explorers; however, this same zeal and the attention given to the Christian minorities was a disrupting force which would eventually help to destroy the

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<sup>78</sup>Joseph, op. cit., pp. 43 and 44.

<sup>79</sup>R. E. Speer and R. Carter, Report on India and Persia: of the Deputation Sent by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to visit These Fields in 1921-1922 (New York: 1922), pp. 383; quoted in Joseph, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>80</sup>Justin Perkins, a Tutor at Amherst College, headed the American Mission at Urmiyah from 1834-1870, and published an account of the early missionary efforts in that region; see Perkins, A Residence of Eight Years in Persia, among the Nestorian Christians with Notices of the Muhammedans (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1843).

autonomy of both Christians and Muslims living in the eastern highlands.<sup>81</sup>

The Military Explorer. —Along with Schultz, Smith, and Dwight there was another explorer from a different profession who helped to renew European interest in "Turkish Kurdistan." Lieutenant Francis Rawdon Chesney of the British Army had come to help the Turks in their war against Russia; however, he arrived in the Balkans just as the war was ending. He, as so many other members of his profession frustrated by the politico-military quietude of Europe and stagnation of the military aristocracy, was attracted to the Ottoman East, the closest sphere of military activity where one might gain fame and prestige.<sup>82</sup> Literally unemployed when he arrived in Constantinople, Chesney was commissioned by Sir Robert Gordon, the British Ambassador to make a comparative survey of the Red Sea and Euphrates routes to India.<sup>83</sup> He accepted the undertaking and proceeded to Egypt where he was to begin his survey.

After completing his preliminary study of the Red Sea route, Lieutenant Chesney traveled to the Euphrates river valley where he descended the river on raft from Ana to the vicinity of Faluja. During the period June, 1830, to June, 1831, Chesney surveyed the lower course of the Euphrates to the Persian Gulf and the Karun River north to Shuster. He then proceeded to Tabriz having completed the major portion of his

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<sup>81</sup>Joseph, op. cit., pp. 45 and 46, maintains that the massacres of the mountain Nestorians by the Kurds during the 1840's were the result of "the political and cultural imperialism of the 'Christian' powers" (p. 46).

<sup>82</sup>Lieutenant Chesney was forty years old when he arrived at Constantinople in 1829; his biography written by his wife and daughter gives a rather critical view of Chesney and his accomplishments; L. F. Chesney and J. C. O'Donnell, The Life of the Late General F. R. Chesney, edit. Stanley Lane-Poole (London: 1885).

<sup>83</sup>H. L. Hoskins, British Routes to India (Philadelphia: Longmans, Green, 1928), pp. 148-149.

mission. However, he had not surveyed the upper course of the Euphrates in "Turkish Kurdistan." Chesney intended to accomplish this on his homeward journey through Turkey.<sup>84</sup>

Leaving Tabriz via the main caravan route through Erzurum and Gumusane, Chesney arrived at the British Residence in Trabzon during December, 1831. After spending two weeks in the company of Mr. Brant, the British Vice-Consul, he attempted to penetrate "Turkish Kurdistan": "I prepared for my somewhat serious journey to explore the Upper Euphrates. I engaged three baggage-mules and two horses, and left Trebizonde on January 14, 1832, and entered the wild mountains, which have been so graphically described by the Father of (especially) Military History."<sup>85</sup> However, Chesney never entered the "wild mountains" of Xenophon's Carduchians. Instead, he made a huge detour completely avoiding the eastern highlands and the Upper Euphrates. Retracing his route from Trabzon to Gumusane, he turned west following the main caravan to Sivas. From there, he continued southwest to Kayseri, and then east to Elbistan where he turned south through Marash and Aintab (Gaziantep) to Aleppo.<sup>86</sup>

At Aleppo, Lieutenant Chesney made another attempt to explore the upper reaches of the Euphrates. He proceeded north to Rum Qalah (near Halfeti) on the Euphrates. From there, Chesney followed the course of the river to Samsat in the steppe region south of the Taurus

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<sup>84</sup>Francis Rawdon Chesney, Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition.... Carried on by Order of the British Government in 1835, 1836, 1837 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1868), pp. 1-125.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

Mountains.<sup>87</sup> Crossing the river at Samsat, he headed south away from the "wild mountains," and arrived in Urfa:

It had been our intention to proceed from Orfah to Jaber Castle, with a view to examine that part of the Euphrates; but so many difficulties were made by our people, and so much hostility evinced by the natives, that prudence obliged us to relinquish our intention, and Mr. Langton and myself hastened back to Aleppo, hoping to find the means of resuming our examination of the river from thence. Fear of the Arabs, however, met us on all sides, and compelled us eventually to give up our project, and satisfy ourselves with such information as could be obtained at Aleppo.<sup>88</sup>

Chesney returned to England towards the end of 1832, armed with a considerable amount of information, or misinformation, pertaining to the relative merits of the various routes to India. He was personally convinced that the Euphrates was suitable for steam navigation. In 1834, backed by the King of England, Parliament, and the East India Company, Chesney organized the most ambitious as well as expensive expedition ever to explore in the Middle East. Accompanied by a large expert staff of officers, he landed at the Bay of Antioch with the parts for two iron-clad steamers which were to be transported overland to Port William near Bir (Birecik) and assembled for the descent of the Euphrates to the Persian Gulf. The hardships, including the sinking of the steamer Tigris, which plagued the Euphrates Expedition during the years 1835, 1836, and 1837, are not within the scope of this paper;<sup>89</sup> however, Chesney's grandiose adventure did affect exploration in "Turkish Kurdistan," for

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<sup>87</sup>Chesney, op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>89</sup>Chesney wrote two accounts of the Euphrates Expedition. The one previously cited (see fn 81) contains his preliminary surveys as well as a narrative of the expedition. The other, The Expedition for the Survey of the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris, carried on by order of the British Government, in the Years 1835, 1836, and 1837 (2 vols., London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1850), is encyclopedic covering all of western Asia. The surgeon and geologist for the expedition, William F. Ainsworth, also published an account, A Personal Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition (2 vols., London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1888), which is much more concise and relevant.

several members of the expedition would eventually explore the highlands of eastern Asia Minor. The training and knowledge which they received during the Euphrates Expedition would prove invaluable in the future exploratory activities of these men.

Chesney, himself, was not so much an explorer as a promoter. He lacked the intellectual capacity of a Rich, a Rawlinson, or a Layard. Unable to speak either Arabic, Turkish, or Persian he was handicapped during his preliminary study of the various routes to India. However, he did have a sense of drama and showmanship which helped to generate European interest in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Ironically, neither Schultz, Smith, Dwight, nor Chesney succeeded in their endeavors to penetrate the remote regions of "Turkish Kurdistan." However, each in his own field, the scholar, the two missionaries, and the military officer, contributed to the renewal of exploration which would reach its peak of activity in the following decade.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GOLDEN DECADE OF EXPLORATION (1832-1842)

The reduction of the Koords to a due subordination to the Sultan's Government, I consider to be a question on the favourable solution of which the well being if not the existence of the Ottoman Empire mainly depends. Had there been allowed to exist in the centre of the Asiatic portion of the Empire a savage people hostile to all order and civilization, Anatolia, Koordistan and the Pashalic of Baghdad would have been virtually dissevered from the European part of Turkey.<sup>1</sup>

The continuance of the Ottoman Empire was conceivable only on the condition of its being contracted within its natural boundaries. All the rest, however legitimate the Padishah's claims for it, was no longer to be held, and even Baghdad, Diarbekir, and Orfa were islands in a strange Arabic-Kurdish sea.<sup>2</sup>

The Egyptian invasion of Syria and Asia Minor in 1832, altered the geo-political relationships which had existed within the Middle East for over four hundred years. Since the Ottoman victories at Chaldiran and Marj Dabiq, no Muslim power had seriously threatened the hegemony of the Osmanlis. The ever-increasing polarity of power between Constantinople and Cairo which began some twenty years earlier collided and fractionalized

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<sup>1</sup>James Brant, "Memorandum regarding the Koords and the Operations of Reshid Mehmet Pasha" (Appendix Nr. 2, "Report of a Journey through part of Armenia and Asia Minor"), London, May 11, 1836; Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office Papers on Turkey, F.O. 195/112, p. 1 of 20 pages (unpaginated). Hereafter cited as Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112.

<sup>2</sup>Helmuth von Moltke, Essays, Speeches and Memoirs (2 vols., New York: 1893): "The essays were translated by C. F. McClumpha; the speeches by C. Barter; and the memoirs by Mary Herms", Vol. I, p. 295, quoted in Saleh, op. cit., p. 205.

the heartland of the Ottoman East. Ibrahim Pasha with his "modernized" Egyptian army defeated, in successive battles, the Turkish forces in Syria during the summer of 1832. Advancing into Asia Minor, he defeated the main Turkish army at Konya capturing the Grand Vezir on December 21, 1832. With these remarkable military successes of Ibrahim Pasha, the destruction of the Ottoman Empire appeared imminent. However, the intervention of Russian military and naval power at the request of Sultan Mahmud II acted as a deterrent preventing Ibrahim Pasha from rendering the coup de grace.<sup>3</sup>

Both Tsar Nicholas and Muhammad 'Ali of Egypt exacted their prices for maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Ibrahim Pasha withdrew his army from Asia Minor, but not before the Sultan had conceded all the lands south of the Taurus Mountains and west of the Euphrates to the Egyptian ruler by the terms of the convention of Kutaya, April 8, 1833. Three months later, Turkey and Russia signed the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (July 8, 1833), a mutual defense pact containing a secret article which closed the Dardanelles to all foreign warships. The day after the treaty was signed, the Russian military forces evacuated from Turkish territory.<sup>4</sup>

The turbulent events of 1832 and 1833 were a poignant reminder to the inadequacy of the Turkish military and naval forces. The Treaty of

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<sup>3</sup>J.A.R. Mariott, The Eastern Question (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), pp. 230-234, and Creasey, *op. cit.*, pp. 521-523. Sultan Mahmud had first appealed to Britain for military aid; however, upon rejection of this appeal, he accepted the offer of Tsar Nicholas. On February 20, 1833, a Russian naval squadron landed 6,000 troops at the mouth of the Bosphorus, and the Russian fleet proceeded to Constantinople. A second contingent of 12,000 troops landed at Scutari, on April 5, 1833.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., and Mariott *op. cit.*, pp. 235 and 236.



Unkiar Skelessi "marked the zenith of Russian influence at Constantinople,"<sup>5</sup> while the Convention of Kutaya signified the rising threat of a self-sustaining Muslim dynasty in Egypt. After this humiliating defeat, Sultan Mahmud intensified his program of reform and consolidation in which "Turkish Kurdistan" would play a prominent role; for it was now a frontier not only between Turkey and her Asiatic rivals, Persia and Russia, but also between Turkey and Egypt. With Syria "closed" to the Ottomans, "Turkish Kurdistan" assumed additional significance as the connecting link between Anatolia and the important eyalet of Baghdad, where the Sultan had only recently reasserted his authority and control.<sup>6</sup>

The new importance attached to "Turkish Kurdistan" as a result of the Egyptian occupation of Syria was the major factor contributing to the "Golden Decade of Exploration" in the highland region. The necessity of re-establishing secure lines of communication through "Turkish Kurdistan" to Baghdad and the strategic military considerations of the Turco-Egyptian conflict directed Ottoman attention toward the eastern provinces. In the process, European interest also shifted from the Balkans to the new area of politico-military activity. Great Britain, particularly, was vitally concerned with the Egyptian, and underlying French, domination of the overland routes to India. Her traditional policy of maintaining the

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<sup>5</sup>Mariott, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>6</sup>Longrigg, op. cit., p. 275. In 1831, 'Ali Ridha Pasha reasserted Ottoman rule in Baghdad by deposing Daud Pasha, the last independent Mamluke ruler. In line with the policy of centralization of government, 'Ali Ridha Pasha was to rule Baghdad, Aleppo, Diyarbakir, and Mosul; however, the Egyptian occupation of Syria in the following year thwarted the projected consolidation of these provinces, which had never been ruled by a single governor. 'Ali Ridha Pasha's rule was limited to the lands east of the Euphrates River in Mesopotamia.

Ottoman Empire as a buffer against Russian encroachment into Western Asia received a severe setback with the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, and now with Convention of Kutaya both the Red Sea and the Fertile Crescent routes were controlled by a country hostile to both Britain and the Ottoman Empire. During the next decade (1832-1842), the European soldiers, political agents, and diplomats who were directly involved in the "Turco-Egyptian Question" would also be the explorers who rediscovered "Turkish Kurdistan."

The Reopening of Turkish Kurdistan by  
Rashid Muhammed Pasha  
(1834-1836)

Conditions prior to 1834. --The Ottoman system of land tenure and local administration was related directly to the military requirements of the empire; however, as the requirements changed, the components within the system failed to adapt themselves, and eventually became obsolete. The feudal fief holders, from all parts of the empire, with their local forces formed the bulk of the Ottoman army. The Janissaries represented the permanent military establishment, but were augmented in the event of war by the Sipahis, whose Ghazi spirit as defenders of the faith made them the terror of Christendom. The system of military fiefs guaranteed the Sultan a huge military apparatus, which worked well as long as it operated within a medieval context. However, the main motivating force that held the system together was the conquest of new lands which entailed not only the religious aspect, but also the attraction of booty particularly for the unpaid irregulars who depended upon it as their reward. When the momentum of Ottoman expansion stalled with the breaking of the second siege of Vienna (1683) and the military fortunes began to decline, the prospects of acquiring booty diminished, and with each defeat it became

more difficult to attract the Sipahis to the banner of the Sultan. As the number of Sipahis declined, the Sultan lost one of the main forces which kept the military establishment in balance. The feudal volunteer portion of the Ottoman army always served as a counterforce to the Janissaries. Once the delicate balance between the feudal forces and the Janissaries was disrupted, both elements pursued their own special interests, and the entire system started to deteriorate. The Janissaries perpetuated their authority in Constantinople deposing Sultans at their pleasure. In the hinterland, the Sipahis established hereditary fiefs neither paying tribute nor providing military manpower to the Porte.

The situation continued to deteriorate throughout the eighteenth century, and the first Sultan of the nineteenth century, Sultan Selim III, was deposed and later assassinated (1808) when he attempted to reform the outdated medieval military system of the Ottoman Empire. However, his cousin, Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839):

a man of undoubted genius and of vast views for the consolidation and centralization of his empire, aimed not only at the extirpation of all those great families, which, either by hereditary right or by local influence, had assumed a kind of independence; but of all the smaller Dereh Beys and Sipahis. This gigantic scheme, which changed the whole system of tenure and local administration, whether political or financial, he nearly carried out, partly by force of arms and partly by treachery.<sup>7</sup>

In "Turkish Kurdistan," the last region to be incorporated in "this gigantic scheme" of consolidation, the situation varied in degree for, after the Battle of Chaldiran (1514), the Ottomans had left the local administration almost entirely in the hands of the hereditary Kurdish chiefs. While system of hereditary landholdings and local

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<sup>7</sup>Layard, op. cit., p. 11.

autonomy in other parts of the empire evolved primarily during the eighteenth century, it had existed in "Turkish Kurdistan" from the very beginning. However, as was the case with the Sipahis in general, the independent Kurdish Hukumets refused to provide military forces to the Sultan, and even those Sanjaks whose local rulers were under the authority of an Ottoman Pasha followed the same pattern.

Although the landholding class of Sipahi, Derebeys, and Pashas was as obsolete as the Janissaries within the context of post-Napoleonic warfare, the landholders still performed a vital function on the local level. Their self-interests made them more sympathetic to the peasant class than the local governors who represented the Sultan. Depending on a measure of popular support to offset the power of the Ottoman bureaucracy, the fiefholders and the peasants had mutual interests. Local security was a necessary requisite for both classes if either was to prosper.<sup>8</sup>

The attempts to abolish the hereditary landholding class were based on the necessity of finding new sources of revenue with which to maintain a "modern" standing army. Self-survival on a national level against the "modernized" armies of Russia and Egypt dictated reform of the entire Ottoman feudal system; however, Sultan Mahmud's program to abolish the hereditary landholders also destroyed the fundamental relationships which held the agrarian economy together. The effect of this policy on inhabitants of "Turkish Kurdistan" was noted by one contemporary observer who wrote:

The country has certainly not yet recovered from the change. During the former state of things, with all the acts of tyranny and oppression which absolute power engendered, there was more happiness among the people, and more prosperity in the land. The hereditary

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<sup>8</sup>Gibb and Bowen, op. cit., Vol. I, Part I, p. 256.

chiefs looked upon their Christian subjects as so much property to be improved and protected, like the soil itself. They were a source of revenue; consequently heavy taxes which impeded labor, and drove the laborer from the land, were from interest rarely imposed upon them. The Government left the enforcement of order to the local chiefs; all tribute received from them was so much clear gain to the treasury, because no collectors were needed to raise it, nor troops to enforce its payment....Now that the system of centralisation has been fully carried out, the revenues are more than absorbed in the measures necessary to collect them, and the officers of government, having no interest whatever in the districts over which they are placed, neglect all that may tend to prosperity and well-being of their inhabitants. It may be objected in extenuation that it is scarcely fair to judge of the working of a system so suddenly introduced, and that Turkey is merely in a transition state; the principle it has adopted, whatever its abuse, being fundamentally correct. One thing is certain, that Turkey must, sooner or later, have gone through this change.<sup>9</sup>

The policy of converting Timars, or military fiefs, into crown domains which were leased out to tax-farmers did not directly affect hereditary landholders in "Turkish Kurdistan" until after the Egyptian occupation of Syria; however, abolishment of Derebeys and Sipahis in the more accessible regions adjacent to the eastern highlands created a vacuum in terms of local security which the central government never filled. The Ottoman military forces were needed in the Balkans, and few could be spared to maintain internal security in the hinterland. Beginning with the reign of Selim III (1789-1807) and through that of Mahmud II until 1832, little attempt was made to replace the declining Sipahis and Derebeys with military forces from the central government. This resulted in the breakdown of local security and an anarchaic situation rapidly occurred during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>9</sup>Layard, op. cit., p. 12.

The Yuruk<sup>10</sup> and Kurdish nomadic tribes<sup>11</sup> took this opportunity to expand their horizontal movement into the neighboring plateau and steppe regions seeking pasturage on land which had been cultivated by the peasants for the feudal landlords. This expansion not only had an adverse effect by reducing the amount of cultivated land, but also disrupted the lines of communication. The nomadic tribes followed the terrain most suitable for mass movement which was also the same line of communication used by the caravans. Eventually, these tribes controlled the routes linking the main centers of population:

With the exception of some large towns in the interior and the lands in a small circuit around them and of some extensive wooded and mountainous tracts unfit for pasturage near the coast of the Black Sea, the country from Angora to the confines of Persia and Arabia was already in the almost sole possession of the Koords. The important city of Kaissar, the centre of trade of Anatolia, was as it were an Oasis in the desert, the inhabitants dared not cross the plain to villages two or three hours distant, unless in strong parties for fear of being murdered or plundered by Koords. Sivas was nearly in the same isolated position and Diarbekir once surrounded by a plain swarming with villages and rich in produce now stands in the midst of a desert. No traveller could cross the plain to Arganah twelve hours distant on the road to Constantinople, no inhabitant could leave the city, and no tatar could be dispatched unless in company of a caravan protected by a strong escort. The communications with Baghdad were entirely interrupted not only for caravans but even for tatars. Diarbekir once a city of large trade and of great population, is now only a second rate town containing within the extensive circuit of its walls, a scanty and distressed population.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>The Yuruks are Turcoman tribes leading a purely pastoral life. Heterodox in their religion and resisting Islamization, they "may be regarded as still unsettled fragments of the nomad hordes which strayed into Asia Minor in the Middle Ages" (Hasluck, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 133); see Ibid., pp. 126-137 and Vol. II, pp. 475-478 for an account of the Yuruk religious beliefs and a list of tribes.

<sup>11</sup>A distinction can be made between the true nomadic Kurds, such as the Jaf in the eyalet of Shahrizur and the Milli in the eyalet of Diyarbakir, who live in tents on the tablelands, and the transhumance Kurds of the more mountainous regions i.e. the Dersimlis and the Hakkaris who do not migrate from one district to another.

<sup>12</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112, op. cit., pp. 2-4.

It was this unsettled state of affairs in "Turkish Kurdistan" and the adjacent regions that deterred Eli Smith, H. G. O. Dwight, and Francis R. Chesney in their attempts to explore the highlands during 1831 and the early part of 1832. The Egyptian invasion of Syria and Anatolia (1832-1833) contributed an additional element of disruption to the already chaotic condition in the eastern provinces. In 1834, when Sultan Mahmud turned his attention to "Turkish Kurdistan" in order to secure the southern border of his empire and consolidate his power, he was faced with the task of having to reconquer the eastern highlands of Asia Minor.

"Mahmud's chief instrument in the establishment of direct Imperial control"<sup>13</sup> was the venerable Rashid Muhammad Pasha.

The Initial Campaign Against the Kurds (1834). --In 1834, Sultan Mahmud appointed Rashid Muhammad Pasha<sup>14</sup> to Sivas<sup>15</sup> with the title of Serasker or Commander-in-Chief of Asia Minor.<sup>16</sup> He was given extensive powers, and a large military force of regular troops to accomplish the task of consolidating the eastern provinces. The success of military

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<sup>13</sup>Lewis, Emergence of Modern Turkey, op. cit., p. 102

<sup>14</sup>Rashid Muhammed Pasha was a Georgian who served as Grand Vezir commanding the Turkish forces in the siege of Missolonghi (1825) and the Acropolis (1827). After the Greek Revolt, he continued to lead the army in the Turco-Russian of 1828-1829; in the following three years, as Grand Vezir he put down numerous insurrections in Albania and Bosnia. In 1832, he led the main Turkish army against the Egyptians under Ibrahim Pasha, and was captured as well as defeated at Konya (December 21, 1832). After his capture, Rashid Muhammad Pasha was suspected of secretly supporting Muhammad 'Ali Pasha of Egypt. However, this was never substantiated, and his appointment as Serasker would indicate that he was still in the confidence of Sultan Mahmud.

<sup>15</sup>Sivas was the largest eyalet in Anatolia.

<sup>16</sup>With the destruction of the Janissaries (June, 1826), the ancient military title of Serasker was reinstated. The Ottoman military forces were divided under the command of the Serasker of European Turkey and the Serasker of Asia Minor. During the transition period in the late 1820's and 1830's, European writers confused the title of Serasker with that of Grand Vezir.

operations in the mountainous regions of "Turkish Kurdistan" depended to a large degree on adequate lines of communication and supply. The Serasker's first endeavor was to build a military road from Samsun on the Black Sea to Sivas. This enabled him to utilize the quicker sea route from Constantinople for the transport of artillery and supplies.<sup>17</sup>

Rashid Pasha established his authority in Sivas without much difficulty. The majority of Kurdish tribes in the vicinity submitted agreeing to pay taxes and furnish their quota of recruits for the regular army. Although the Serasker had hardly penetrated into "Turkish Kurdistan," the tribes in the interior were already forming alliances to thwart any attempt to reduce them to submission. In the Kharput (Elazig) region on the eastern side of the Euphrates several Kurdish chiefs were collecting their forces. Rashid Pasha decided to quickly establish his authority in the interior hoping that this action would split the Kurds into factions before they had an opportunity to unite. Crossing the Anti-Taurus Mountains, the Serasker followed the caravan route to Malatya where he intended to ferry his troops across the Euphrates. However, the Kurds had burned all the ferry boats and prepared to use the river as their main line of defense. "A native had fortunately pointed out to the Pasha a part of the river which was fordable for horsemen nearly the whole way across, and by means of camels the Infantry was enabled to gain the opposite bank with little loss."<sup>18</sup>

With the main barrier breached, the Kurdish forces were easily

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<sup>17</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112, op. cit., pp. 4 and 5.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 6. The Turkish army probably forded the Euphrates north of Malatya near the confluence of the Tokhmah Su where the river divides into several shallow channels.



defeated. The two Kurdish chiefs primarily responsible for organizing the resistance in the Kharput area were captured. The Kurdish chief "Herroglu was sent to Kebban Madem as prisoner but, on making an attempt to escape, was afterwards strangled."<sup>19</sup> The other leader, Is-hak Pasha of Mezirah, was sent to Constantinople, and later decapitated.<sup>20</sup>

Rashid Muhammad Pasha established his headquarters in Is-hak Pasha's castle near Kharput. During the autumn of 1834, he continued the military road from Sivas through Malatya to Kharput. Although the road was hastily constructed, it provided the only line of communication by which artillery could be hauled into the region between the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains. With the main body of Turkish troops located on the eastern side of the Euphrates, security along the military road was difficult to maintain. In advancing rapidly into the plain of Kharput, the Serasker had bypassed the Aghjah Dagh Kurds, the Kizilbash sectaries who inhabited the Taurus and Anti-Taurus Mountains west of Malatya. These Kurds had retreated into the mountains on both sides of the military road refusing to submit to the Pasha's authority.<sup>21</sup>

The reduction of Independent Begs in the Eyalet of Diyarbakir (1835).---In the spring of 1835, Rashid Muhammad Pasha began his offensive to relieve the beleaguered city of Diyarbakir, whose population had dwindled from 40,000 families to 8,000 within the past twenty-five years.<sup>22</sup> This operation entailed crossing the Niphates Mountains which formed a barrier

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<sup>19</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.; and James Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan, in the Summer of 1838," J.R.G.S., Vol. 10 (1841), p. 366.

<sup>21</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112, op. cit., pp. 6 and 7.

<sup>22</sup>Brant, "Journey through part of Armenia and Asia Minor, in the year 1835," J.R.G.S., Vol. 6 (1836), p. 210.

of high mountains and narrow valleys between Kharput and Diyarbakir. The region north and east of Diyarbakir was controlled by several Kurdish chiefs who had never submitted to the Ottoman Pashas of Diyarbakir nor had they ever paid any taxes. During the previous winter, the two most powerful chiefs, Mirza Agha of the Silvani Kurds<sup>23</sup> and Rajib Beg of Hazro,<sup>24</sup> had submitted to Rashid Muhammad Pasha, thereby ensuring safe passage for the Turkish forces through the mountains to Diyarbakir.<sup>25</sup>

The Serasker sent an advanced corps with artillery under the command of Sarush 'Ali Pasha toward Mosul, while he proceeded in person with another column to Diyarbakir. The Kurds in the vicinity submitted to the show of force, and soon Rashid Muhammad Pasha returned to his headquarters at Kharput leaving a mutesselim<sup>26</sup> with a small force in Diyarbakir. However, shortly after the main Turkish force had recrossed the mountains to Kharput, the Kurds revolted driving the mutesselim and his garrison from Diyarbakir. The Serasker immediately sent another contingent of troops. They quickly dispersed the Kurds irregular cavalry and reasserted Ottoman authority in Diyarbakir. Rajib Beg and Mirza Agha, whose tribesmen had revolted were forced to reside with their families at Diyarbakir under the surveillance of the mutesselim.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>The Silvani Kurds from the districts of Kulp and Silvan (Mayyafarikin) at that time could muster six hundred armed horsemen and five to six thousand infantry. Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...", op. cit., p. 361.

<sup>24</sup>The Beglik of Hazro contained sixty villages of mixed Kurdish and Armenian population. Rajib Beg commanded three hundred regularly paid and well-armed horseman as well as four hundred horsemen from the villages and three to four thousand men on foot. Ibid., pp. 359 and 360.

<sup>25</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112, p. 8

<sup>26</sup>Mutesselim, Arabic, 'one that accepts delivery of something'. In the Ottoman government the title was used to denote an agent who represented the Pasha of an eyalet in a detached sanjak. Gibb and Bowen, op. cit., p. 198.

<sup>27</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112, op. cit., pp. 9 and 10.

Later in the same year a second revolt broke out in the mountains northeast of Diyarbakir. Husayn Agha, the Beg of I'lijeh (Lice),<sup>28</sup> and Timir Beg of Khini (Hani)<sup>29</sup> combined forces with tribesmen of Rajib Beg of Hazro. At the same time, another chieftain, Haji Zilal Agha of the Badikanli tribe, organized a joint Kurdish-Armenian army to resist Ottoman subjugation. The Serasker, exasperated by these repeated revolts, personally led a large column into the mountains. At Nerjiki, he defeated the army of Haji Zilal Agha destroying the Kurdish chief's castle.<sup>30</sup> Rashid Muhammad Pasha proceeded to attack the villages and castles in the Begliks of I'lijeh, Khini, and Hazro. The Kurds suffered a terrible defeat, in which the Ottoman artillery razed their castles. The villages were plundered and put to the torch. The Serasker seized the leaders sending them into exile,<sup>31</sup> and sold their followers into slavery as a warning to others.<sup>32</sup>

Upon returning to Diyarbakir, Rashid Muhammad Pasha learned that a new coalition was formed between the Bekran and Rashkotan tribesmen east of Mardin. He again took the field in person, and Mardin capitulated;<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>The Beglik of I'lijeh contained seventy villages and an army of three hundred horsemen and four to five thousand infantry. Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan....," op. cit., pp. 359 and 360.

<sup>29</sup>The Baglik of Khini contained sixty villages, two hundred horsemen, and two to three thousand infantry. Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Haji Zilal Agha surrendered, and was imprisoned in Diyarbakir for one year, after which he was restored to his district. Ibid., pp. 356 and 357.

<sup>31</sup>Timir Beg and Rajib Beg were exiled to Adrianople. Husayn Agha died immediately after the defeat, and his son, Bayram Agha, was also sent to Adrianople. Ibid. pp. 359 and 360.

<sup>32</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112, op. cit., pp. 10 and 11; and Safrastian, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>33</sup>After the surrender of Mardin, the district was detached from the eyalet of Baghdad, and placed under Diyarbakir and the authority of Rashid Muhammad Pasha. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 280.

however, the tribesmen offered stiff resistance. After besieging the fortress of Khalif Agha for eight days, he captured it, and "ensured the adhesion and obedience of the remaining portion of the tribe by the decapitation of nearly two hundred of their numbers and the impalement alive of some others."<sup>34</sup> The remainder of the Bekrans and Rashkotans were reduced to submission having suffered the loss of two to three thousand killed and as many captured. The Ottomans lost three hundred regulars in this action, the only well-contested battle during the campaign of 1835.<sup>35</sup>

The subjugation of the tribes north and east of Diyarbakir and Mardin was the first step in re-establishing communications with the important ayalet of Baghdad. The Ottomans had driven a wedge of authority into "Turkish Kurdistan" along a line from Sivas through Malatya, Kharput, and Diyarbakir to Mardin. Rashid Muhammad Pasha had accomplished this with an estimated 15,600 to 20,000 regular troops and thirty to forty field pieces,<sup>36</sup> which were fairly evenly distributed in the main centers of population. However, he had only defeated the smaller Kurdish tribes in piecemeal. The larger tribal confederations remained independent and still controlled the intermediate country between the cities.

To the west of Diyarbakir was the large Milli confederation of nomadic Kurds whose territory extended from Siverek and Urfa south to Raqqa. The size and power of this tribe, as well as their nomadic

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<sup>34</sup>Great Britain, India Office Library, Factory Records, Vol. 51 (1835), p. 423, Secret Dispatch No. 9, Colonel J. Taylor, Resident Agent at Baghdad, to Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, East India House, London, dated November 11, 1835.

<sup>35</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

character, posed a serious threat to the Ottoman program of consolidation. Dominating the area along the east bank of the Euphrates, the Milli Kurds, under the leadership of Ayub Agha,<sup>37</sup> controlled the border region separating the Egyptian forces in Syria from the Ottoman army in "Turkish Kurdistan." Any overt action against the Millis might force them to join forces with the "modernized" Egyptian army which had already defeated Rashid Muhammad Pasha at Konya three years earlier.<sup>38</sup>

The relations between the Millis and the Ottomans were in a state of suspense during 1835:

Reschid Pasha . . . had already waged a successful war against the Kurds to the east of Diyarbekr - a people not known, in the life of anyone living, to have yielded obedience to the Sultan; but he had driven them from the plains, and followed them to their mountains, carrying artillery over parts considered before impracticable - burning their villages, grinding those he caught till he compelled one chief after another to pray for mercy and submit. These successes had frightened the Kurds of Jub Agha, and at the time we saw them they were in suspense to know their fate. . . . In Reschid Pasha's councils there were also apprehensions from the character of Jub Agha himself, and the number of his tribe. The Kurds were doubtful whether to submit or not, whilst the Pacha was uncertain how to induce submission by intrigue, without risking an open war against people, who having no settled habitation, can move here or there, advance to fight, or retire into the desert with equal ease.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Major-General J.B.B. Estcourt, "A Journey from Seudia to Reschid Pasha's Camp near Diyarbakir (1835)," Appendix IV to Chesney, Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition . . ., op. cit., pp. 407 to 431. Estcourt accompanied by Lt. Cockburn and Mr. Staunton, from the Euphrates Expedition also visited a Milli encampment under Malik Selim, the son-in-law of Ayub Agha. He gives a good description of the nomadic Milli Kurds, whom he calls the 'Jub Agha Kurds', p. 421.

<sup>38</sup>Pierre Rondot, "Les Tribus Montagnardes de l'Asie Antérieure. Quelques Aspects Sociaux des Population Kurdes et Assyriennes," Bulletin d'Etudes Orient., 1936, t. VI, Institut français de Damas. Rondot states that the Milli tribe "Entre 1830 et 1840, . . . fournit des contingents armés au Vice-Roi d'Egypte, Ibrahim Pacha, en lutte contre l'Empire Ottoman" (p. 35); however, his assertion is not documented. None of the reports from British political agents operating in the region indicate any Egyptian activity among the Kurdish tribes east of the Euphrates.

<sup>39</sup>Estcourt, op. cit., pp. 421 and 422.

Both parties avoided a confrontation; the Millis had long recognized the Sultan as their sovereign and chief of their religion, but refused to pay taxes. Ayub Agha sent presents to Rashid Muhammad Pasha, but never went in person to pay his respects, a ceremony the Pasha insisted but which the Milli chief endeavored to avoid.<sup>40</sup> The Serasker, cognizant of the implications involved in any attempt to subjugate the Millis, prudently concentrated his efforts east of Diyarbakir where he had been more successful.

The military operations of the Serasker during 1834 and 1835 had a dual effect on European exploration in "Turkish Kurdistan." The region had now become the major scene of politico-military activity within the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, the presence of Ottoman authority and the new military road reopened part of "Turkish Kurdistan" to Europeans attracted by this activity.

One of the first Europeans to take advantage of the situation was James Brant, the British Vice-Consul in Trabzond. Armed with a firman from the Sultan and accompanied by a dragoman, a tatar, and two servants, he set out in the spring of 1835, on a 1500 mile journey to survey the economic and political conditions in the eastern provinces.<sup>41</sup> Following the Black Sea coast from Trabzon to Batum, Brant then headed inland to Kars and Erzurum. While the members of the Euphrates Expedition were struggling to transport their equipment across northern Syria to Port William near Bir (Birecik), he succeeded where the "intrepid" Chesney had failed three years earlier. Brant followed the upper course of the Euphrates from Erzurum

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<sup>40</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F.O. 195/112, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>41</sup>Brant, "Journey through part of Armenia...", op. cit., p. 195.

through Erzincan, Kemakh, and Egin to Keban Maden below the confluence of the Kara Su and the Murad. Crossing the Euphrates, he arrived at the headquarters of the Serasker in Kharput where he could gather information on the Ottoman army and its recent operations.<sup>42</sup> From Kharput, Brant traveled to Diyarbakir surveying the results Rashid Pasha's activity. He returned to Kharput by the same route, and then followed the military road through Malatya to Sivas. Brant continued his journey from Sivas by the caravan route to Kayseri, and then cut north across the Anatolian plateau to Yozgat and Tokat where he joined the overland route to Persia through Kara Hissar and Gumusane to Trabzon.<sup>43</sup>

Brant was an astute observer who, although primarily interested in the political and economic aspects of "Turkish Kurdistan," contributed much in the way of geographical information even though he lacked surveying instruments. His knowledge of history regarding the highland region was limited, and lacked the depth of a Rich, a Rawlinson, or a Layard; however, as a reporter of the contemporary scene, his accuracy and sound judgment made him an excellent explorer as well as a political agent.

Brant's place among nineteenth explorers in the Middle East is rather obscure, for he only published two articles during his long residency in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>44</sup> Although Brant is now almost completely forgotten his descriptions of persons and places were considerably more accurate than his contemporary, F. R. Chesney who was "lionized" as a

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<sup>42</sup>Brant, "Memo on the Kurds," F. O. 195/112, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup>Brant, "Journey through part of Armenia...", op. cit., pp. 187-223.

<sup>44</sup>Brant's two articles appeared in Vols. 6 (1836) and 10 (1841) of the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, see above pp. 82 and 83.

nineteenth century explorer. Chesney tried to dramatize the strategic significance of the Euphrates without any regard to geographical reality," ...one of the most striking circumstances is...the ease and speed with which an army might be transported on rafts to the Persian Gulf, where it could arrive in a very short time without fatigue.... There is nothing to impede the descent, Malatia to Bussorah...."<sup>45</sup> A year earlier, Brant described the course of the Euphrates below Malatya: "Half a mile below the caravan serai, the Euphrates has cut a passage through the main chain of Taurus; whence it continues about 45 miles among the mountains, its course interrupted by rapids and rocks; lofty precipices rising on either side to a very great height. This part of the stream is never passed by rafts of any kind,..."<sup>46</sup>

The Campaign East of Tigris and Ruwandiz Beg (1836). --In the spring of 1836, Rashid Muhammad Pasha resumed military operations against the Kurds. For several months, he attempted to capture Jazirat-ibn-'Umar, the stronghold of the Badr Khans, which controlled the main crossing site over the Tigris on the Diyarbakir to Mosul caravan route. Other Kurdish chiefs joined Badr Khan Beg in defense of the region. His major ally, Khan Mahmud of Mokus (Mokk)<sup>47</sup> organized a large relief force of about 20,000 Kurds, Armenians, and Nestorians, and marched south from the region of Lake Van. The relief force tried to cross the Buhtan Su by the bridge

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<sup>45</sup>India Office Records, Home Miscellaneous Correspondence, Vol. 837, Confidential Letter, Colonel Chesney to Sir John Hobhouse, dated Bushire, July 16, 1836.

<sup>46</sup>Brant, "Journey through a part of Armenia...", op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>47</sup>Khan Mahmud was the senior member of Adval Khan family who ruled the hereditary Kurdish hukumet of Mahmudi east of Lake Van. Among his allies were the Armenian clergy, the chiefs of Shikaki, Hartushi, and Hakkari, and the Amirzadas (princes of Van). Safrastian, op. cit., p. 105.



at Khaskher before the Turkish corps under the command of Hafiz Pasha, could blow up the bridge by artillery fire. Failing to reach the bridge in time, Khan Mahmud's army advanced down the eastbank of the Buhtan Su followed by the Turkish army on the west bank. At Tilleh, the junction of the Buhtan Su with the Tigris, the Kurdish army tried to ford the river which in the spring becomes a deep lake. The opposing forces met and fierce fighting ensued; the Sultan's troops, assisted by Yezidis, completely defeated Khan Mahmud who retreated with his army into the Ardos Mountains (the second chain south of Lake Van).<sup>48</sup>

Upon hearing of Khan Mahmud's defeat, Badr Khan Beg retreated across the Tigris to his castle at Dergule, eighteen miles east of Jazirat, in Gudi Dagh. Rashid Muhammad Pasha had now established control of the plains region stretching from Diyarbakir to Jazirat-ibn-'Umar; however, in the process, the area was devastated, while the enemy remained intact:

The plain abounded in villages, but many had been destroyed by Reshid Pasha three months before, in his passage from Diyarbakir to Jezirah, in consequence of opposition to his troops by the Amir, or Chief of Buhtan, who had crossed the Tigris, and taken possession of this plain. . . . The most complete desolation existed in the town; it was almost in ruins, and it was only after a long search that we were able to find a wretched hovel to pass the day in: no inhabitants were to be seen; it absolutely contained none, excepting a few hundred sickly miserable soldiers. Plague, cholera, and war had ruined this city; neither barley, nor straw, nor grass, could be got for our horses; no bread, no firewood, nor anything else whatever for ourselves; either from the governor or the bazar; the former was busy in preparing some soldiers for a marauding party across the river into Buhtan. Jezirah had been the capital of Buhtan; for several years the Amir had refused to pay tribute or acknowledge subjection to the Sultan; Reshid Pasha had seized his capital, and he was now in

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<sup>48</sup>Leyard, *op. cit.*, p. 50; and Safrastian, *op. cit.*, p. 105. Safrastian cites an eye witness account of the battle at Tilleh by A. Manogli embodied in Father Ch. Pirgalamian's Manuscripts; however, no further details are given.

rebellion in his own mountains, and had become so formidable that they were not free from apprehension at Jezireh.<sup>49</sup>

By the summer of 1836, the Serasker was now ready to advance into the Zagros Mountains east of Mosul and subjugate Mir Muhammed (Kior Beg)<sup>50</sup> of Ruwandiz, the most powerful Kurdish chief in the region. Between 1810 and 1813,<sup>51</sup> Mir Mustafa, Kior Beg's father, succeeded in establishing his hegemony at the expense of the neighboring Bulbassi and Baban confederations which were weakened by a long period of warfare with the Persians and the Mamluke rulers of Baghdad. The Mir's tribe was descended from the Sohran dynasty whose chiefs had conquered the region of Ruwandiz during the fifteenth century, and had retained possession of it ever since. By the nineteenth century, the Mir's clan contained no more than eight hundred families; however, it succeeded in dominating the Ruwanduz tribe which numbered about twelve thousand families.<sup>52</sup>

In 1826, Mir Mustafa enfeebled by ophthalmia lost the leadership of tribe to his eldest son, Muhammad Beg, who embarked on a campaign to increase his power.<sup>53</sup> Attacking the Baban possessions to the south, the

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<sup>49</sup>Shiel, op. cit., pp. 85 and 87.

<sup>50</sup>Mir Muhammad was blind in one eye, hence the nickname 'Kior' meaning 'blind'. Safrastian, op. cit., p. 52, calls Kior Beg "Ahmed Pasha" which no other author uses.

<sup>51</sup>Basile Nikitine, Les Kurdes etude sociologique et historique (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1956), p. 187, states that Mir Muhammad governed from 1229 H. (1813) to 1254 H. (1838); however, he confused the reign of Mir Muhammad with that of his father Mir Mustafa. Zaki, op. cit., p. 228 gives 1810 as the year of Mir Mustafa's accession.

<sup>52</sup>Rawlinson, op. cit., pp. 24 and 25; and Rich, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 299 and 300.

<sup>53</sup>Zaki, op. cit., p. 228, states that Mir Mustafa died in 1826; however, in 1833, Dr. Henry James Ross, physician at the British Residency in Baghdad, visited Mir Mustafa near Ruwandiz, and found him "irrecoverably blind" from ophthalmia; James Baillie Fraser, Travels in Koordistan, Mesopotamia & C. including an Account of Parts of those Countries hitherto unvisited by Europeans with Sketches of the Character and Manners of the Koordish and Arab Tribes (2 vols., London: Richard Bentley, 1840, Vol. I, p. 71.

Mir of Ruwandiz captured Harir, Arbil, Altun Kopru, Koi, and Ranya.<sup>54</sup> He continued to expand his territory by conquering the Yezidis west of the Great Zab River. By 1831, Mir Muhammad was the de facto ruler of the region between the Great Zab and Lesser Zab, and 'Ali Ridha Pasha of Baghdad was compelled to recognize Mir Muhammad's power by confirming him as a Pasha of one tail.<sup>55</sup>

During the following year, the Mir of Ruwandiz annexed Akra, Zakho, and Amadiya thus ejecting Ibrahim Pasha of the Bahdinan Kurds from his ancestral lands. He placed his brother, Rasul Beg, in command of Amadiya, and continued to advance northward to Jazirat-ibn-'Umar, where he forced the Badr Khans to recognize his hegemony. In the east, this restless character attacked Persian Azarbayjan and annexed Ushnei on the eastern slopes of the Zagros. By 1835, the extent of Mir Muhammed's territory was stated "as extending from Sert to Karkook in a northwest and southwesterly line for two hundred miles and a third of that in breadth from Gulamerg [Hakkari] to Mosul from the northeast to the southwest the greater portion of this territory being contained within the limits of Kurdistan."<sup>56</sup>

It is not known whether Mir Muhammad's name was mentioned in the

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<sup>54</sup>Zaki, op. cit., pp. 229 and 230.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.; and the Richard Wood Papers (Oxford: Middle East Centre, St. Anthony's College), Dispatch Nr. 11 (Duplicate), Wood to Lord Ponsonby, dated Mosul, June 28, 1836; also F.O. 195/113, Political Department Nr. 11, Col. Taylor to Chief Secretary to Government of Bombay, dated Baghdad, February 15, 1833. Safrastian, op. cit., p. 52, refers to Mir Muhammad as "the Yezidi Bey of Revanduz." However, Richard Wood reported that Ruwanduz Beg and his followers were Sunni; Wood Papers, op. cit., Letter, Wood to Ponsonby dated Pera, March 25, 1837.

<sup>56</sup>India Office Library, Factory Records (Persia), Vol. 52 (1835), p. 641, Report from Taylor to Chief Secretary to Government of Bombay, dated Baghdad, April 9, 1835.

Khutba, the Friday prayer; but coins were minted bearing his name.<sup>57</sup> In the regions under his control, there was a strict adherence to the Shari'a which he administered impartially:

With all his cruelty, he was much beloved by his people, who still boast of the security that prevailed under his sway; for woe betide the man who picked up an article on the road, however valuable, or however long it had lain there, unless he was its owner. He monopolized the gall-nuts of his province, receiving two-thirds of the crop as his share; and ordered two men, who had gathered theirs without paying him his quota, each to lose an arm. Even a moollah, with whom some twenty-five nuts were found, was fined sixty dollars. One of his own servants had eaten a bowl of stolen yoghoort, and yet denied the theft; the sword of the terrible chief at once laid bare the stolen property and inflicted a terrible punishment on the offender. One of the last things he did, before his surrender, was to put out the eyes of a faithful friend, who came to warn him of his danger. But besides being the bearer of evil tidings - which, in the East, is a heinous offence, - he had left his post without orders, and, therefore, he found no mercy.<sup>58</sup>

The first European to visit this legendary figure was Dr. Henry James Ross, the physician at the British Residency in Baghdad. In the early spring of 1833, Colonel Taylor, the Political Agent for Turkish Arabia, received an emissary from Mir Muhammad of Ruwandiz requesting medical treatment for the Mir's father. Taylor, anxious to ascertain any information about the powerful Kurdish chief who remained secluded his inaccessible fortress in Ruwandiz, agreed to allow Dr. Ross to undertake the mission. Ross, accompanied by a guide, left Baghdad in the middle of May, 1833. The physician was allowed to visit the village of Dundum, but not Ruwandiz itself. At Dundum, Ross found Mir Mustafa, father of the Beg of Ruwandiz; however, the old man was totally blind, and Ross could do

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<sup>57</sup>Nikitine, op. cit., p. 187. In Islamic civilization, two traditional signs of independence are to have one's name mentioned in the Friday prayer and to strike coins bearing one's name; both were normally the rights of a Caliph.

<sup>58</sup>Laurie, op. cit., pp. 221 and 222.

little for him. After a month's residence in the Kurdish mountains, Ross left for Mosul on July 8, 1833.<sup>59</sup>

During stay in the Kurdish Beg's territory, Ross had several interviews with the ruler himself. His description of Mir Muhammad hardly justified the ruler's reputation as a warrior notoriously known for his cruelty:

...a benevolent and pleasing-looking man, fair, marked with the small-pox, and blind of an eye, which was opaque and depressed. His beard was about twelve inches long, of a light-brown colour, the lower half being uncombed, and quite felted together, though, in other respects, he was rather tidy in his dress. He was lame of one leg, from the kick of a horse, and spoke with a weak voice.<sup>60</sup>

The Mir had an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 armed men at his disposal,<sup>61</sup> "but the most singular circumstance respecting this chief is the great moral change which he effected in the provinces which he had subjected to his sway."<sup>62</sup> As was the case with previous powerful Kurdish confederations, "Key" element was the ruling family dominated by a single leader:

Meer Mahomed has four brothers living. Two of them, Timoor Khan and Suleiman Beg, are kept in irons in a fort five hours distant from Rewandooz. Another, Ahmed Beg, was governor of Erbile, and the fourth, Rasool Beg, was with the army. The Meer has three wives but no family, nor, as he is forty-five, is he likely to have any, in which case Rasool Beg is regarded as his successor.<sup>63</sup>

In June, 1836, Rashid Muhammad Pasha, "a man of great energy and

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<sup>59</sup>Fraser, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 63-83. Fraser quotes extracts from the journal of Dr. Ross.

<sup>60</sup>James Baillie Fraser, Mesopotamia and Assyria from the Earliest Ages to the Present (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1842), p. 253.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>63</sup>Fraser, Travels in Koordistan..., op. cit., Vol. I, p. 72.

of little principle,"<sup>64</sup> began his offensive against Mir Muhammad of Ruwandiz, the last obstacle to be overcome in the re-establishment of communications through "Turkish Kurdistan" to the important eyalet of Baghdad. To accomplish this formidable task, the Serasker planned to assault the mountain retreat of the Kurdish chief from three different directions employing the forces of Baghdad as well as his own. While the army of Rashid Muhammad Pasha advanced along the line from Jazirat-ibn-'Umar to Zakho, the main army of Baghdad under the command of 'Ali Ridha Pasha would attack from the south following the main caravan route from Kirkuk to Altun Kopru. Between the two main armies was the smaller corps of Muhammad Oghlou Pasha, the governor of Mosul,<sup>65</sup> which would advance along the line of the Great Zab and Khazir Rivers. The estimated strength of three Turkish forces was twenty-six thousand troops: five thousand regulars and two thousand irregulars with the Serasker, four thousand regulars and five thousand irregulars with the Pasha of Mosul, and ten thousand with the Pasha of Baghdad.<sup>66</sup>

The campaign to subjugate the Beg of Ruwandiz started with characteristic caution, for there were several factors which, in addition to the nature of the enemy and the terrain, made the leading Ottoman commanders apprehensive. With the main body of Turkish forces entangled in the mountains, the Egyptians in Syria under Ibrahim Pasha might advance on Baghdad

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<sup>64</sup>Southgate, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 267

<sup>65</sup>Muhammad Oghlou Pasha "was the adventurer captain of irregulars whose appointment as Pasha first of Kirkuk, then of Mosul, was secured by 'Ali Ridha-Muhammad Pasha, nicknamed the 'Injeh Bairagdar' ['lean standard-bearer']". This relentless character ruled Mosul from 1835. His chief work was in the destruction of the ring of Kurdish states." Longrigg, op. cit., p. 282.

<sup>66</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., Dispatch Nr. 11, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Mosul, June 28, 1836; and Wood Papers, op. cit., Political Department Dispatch Nr. 64, Taylor to Wood, dated Baghdad, June 27, 1836.

or sever Rashid Pasha's supply line which was close to the Turco-Egyptian frontier. To the east, the Persian forces in Azarbayjan presented another variable factor which might directly influence the outcome of the campaign. There was also a considerable amount of suspicion concerning the motives of Rashid Muhammad Pasha, who during his confinement after the battle of Komieh was suspected of entering "into a league with the Viceroy of Egypt to seize on Baghdad, unite his forces with those of Ibrahim Pasha, - march upon Constantinople, allow the late Sultan to reign, but to terminate his reforming ministers."<sup>67</sup>

By the end of June, the Ottoman forces had advanced into the highlands with Rashid Pasha capturing Zakho. However, the Serasker unable to transport his artillery across the Zakho range had to delay his advance while he sent the artillery down the banks of the Khabour River to the caravan road near the Tigris and then across the foothills from Dohuk. Muhammad Pasha of Mosul had captured the fortress of Akra on the Zab River after besieging it for twenty-two days:

It was a very strong castle, placed on a rock projecting from El Khair, the town being at the foot of the rock. He contrived to bring a couple of guns to bear on the masonry of the wall above the rock, upon which the garrison surrendered, though without the least necessity, for even if he had succeeded in breaching it, he had no troops that would storm such a breach. None of the gardens about Akereh were destroyed or plundered, which shows the progress the Turks have made in this important point of discipline; the same remark is applicable wherever they marched.<sup>68</sup>

In the south, Ali Ridha Pasha of Baghdad captured Altun Kopru by subterfuge. There, the rebel governor surrendered without a fight, and had also

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<sup>67</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., an unpublished and undated manuscript written by Wood on his services between 1831 and 1841, p. 4. The British Government as well as 'Ali Ridha Pasha were convinced that Rashid Pasha and the Viceroy of Egypt had entered into a conspiracy against Sultan Mahmud.

<sup>68</sup>Shiel, op. cit., p. 96.

succeeded "in corrupting several other powerful retainers of the Koordish Bey."<sup>69</sup>

With these successes the Turkish advance had reduced the territory of Ruwandiz Beg to the region between the Great Zab and Little Zab Rivers. The Kurdish chief himself had "retired into the country and Castle of Rauandooz, beyond the River Zab, situated on the summit of almost inaccessible mountains, defended by numerous Forts, and about Eight Thousand Troops, whose families are kept by the Bey as hostages and their lives held responsible for their fidelity...."<sup>70</sup> The legendary Kior Bey appeared to be less formidable than had previously been imagined; however, the Turkish advance slowed with deliberate caution:

It appears incredible that the Rebels' positions should be so easily captured and the army allowed to penetrate into the mountains without opposition, but this may arise from the Bey's conscious inferiority in the plains against regular troops and is drawing them in the defiles of the Koordish Mountains, where they would be infinitely less available, and where he may destroy [sic.] them by a coup-de-main.<sup>71</sup>

The campaign east of the Tigris had not failed to attract European observers, and among them was a young Englishman named Richard Wood whose endeavors would eventually influence the outcome of the campaign. Wood was the confidential agent of Lord Ponsonby, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, and had been dispatched to Syria, in 1835:

I was again directed by the late Lord Ponsonby to proceed to Syria with the view of ascertaining the feelings of the population, the fidelity of Emir Beshir, Prince of Lebanon, the strength of the Egyptian Forces and that of the Turkish armies as well as the loyalty of its commander, Reschid Pasha, who, having been taken prisoner in the

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<sup>69</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., Political Department Dispatch Nr. 64, Taylor to Wood, dated Baghdad, June 27, 1836.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., Dispatch Nr. 11, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Mosul, June 28, 1836.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., Dispatch Nr. 13, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Baghdad, August 2, 1836.



previous war at the battle of Koniah & sent to Egypt, was suspected of having combined with the Viceroy to betray the late Sultan Mahmoud, who had introduced certain Reforms in his Empire of which they highly disapproved. I was furthermore directed to ascertain and report on the encroachments of Ibrahim Pasha on the left Bank of the Euphrates and on the fortifications which it was alleged the Egyptian General was constructing in the Passes of the Taurus.<sup>72</sup>

After attempting to persuade Emir Beshir Shehab of Lebanon to withdraw from his alliance with the Egyptians in support of the Sultan, Wood proceeded to northern Syria where he hoped to gain information concerning the progress of Ibrahim Pasha's campaign against the inhabitants of the Amanus Mountains and the nature of the Egyptian fortifications in the Taurus. While Wood was in northern Syria, Ibrahim Pasha marched into Lebanon and with the aid of Emir Beshir disarmed the inhabitants and enrolled the Druses in his army. Wood attempted to reach Mount Lebanon but was forced to seek refuge in a convent. After Ibrahim Pasha's disarmament campaign had subsided, Wood sought another prince to replace Emir Beshir Shehab as the leader of the projected revolt. He consulted with Emir Beshir Al-Kasirn," who immediately promised that whenever Her Majesty's Government decided on expelling the Egyptians he would willingly cooperate provided he was furnished with 14,000 tons of arms - a promise which he

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<sup>72</sup>Wood, whose father was Dragoman at British Embassy in Constantinople, was directed by William Mandeville, Secretary of the Embassy, to proceed to Syria in 1831, to watch the movements of the Egyptian army and acquire a knowledge of the Arabic language, the country, and its chiefs. He remained two years in Mount Lebanon, and returned to Constantinople in 1834, when he was appointed Dragoman. In 1835 and 1836, Wood operated as a confidential agent in Lebanon, Syria, and Kurdistan. He returned to Syria in 1840 to carry on a guerilla war against the Egyptians occupying Lebanon. In conjunction with the Turco-British landing in Lebanon, he distributed 83,000 muskets among the Maronites and accompanied the 4,000 man guerilla army of Emir Beshir which harassed Ibrahim Pasha's column retreating from Damascus to Gaza. From 1841 to 1856, Wood served as British Consul in Damascus, and was then appointed as Political Agent and Consul General for the Regency of Tunis, a position which he held for over twenty years. Wood Papers, *op. cit.*, "Memorandum as to the services of Sir Richard Wood" (unpublished manuscript, 12 pages), transmitted to Marquis of Salisbury, March, 1879, p. 2. Hereafter cited as Wood, "Memo on Services."

afterwards fulfilled with the utmost courage and devotion, the Maronites of Kesrowan were at the same time withdrawn from French influence, and the Druses who had suffered from the conscription were made to feel the heavy penalty they had paid for abetting the Enemies of their Sovereign."<sup>73</sup>

After reporting these events to Lord Ponsonby, Wood was ordered to proceed to the Turkish army to ascertain its strength and the loyalty of the Serasker. Following the main caravan route from Aleppo through Diyarbakir to Jazirat-ibn-'Umar, Ponsonby's confidential agent arrived in Rashid Pasha's camp at Dahok in early June, 1836: "I followed him with great difficulty and personal danger through a country in a state of anarchy and insubordination, and when I overtook him, I found his army entangled in the mountain valleys while the typhus fever raging in his camp already proved fatal to six thousand of his men."<sup>74</sup>

Wood had several interviews with Rashid Pasha in which he attempted to persuade the Serasker to allow him to negotiate a peace settlement between the Ottomans and Mir Muhammad of Ruwandiz. "...he invariably replied that as it was not probable a stranger could effect what 3 armies had hitherto failed to do he would not permit me to undertake the negotiation."<sup>75</sup> Rashid Pasha was vehemently opposed to British interference in his affairs, for he had not forgotten the role which the English had played in the Greek

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<sup>73</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., unpublished and undated account written by Wood concerning his activities, 1831-1841, p. 6.

<sup>74</sup>Wood, "Memo on Services," p. 3; and Dispatch Nr. 10, Wood to Ponsonby dated Dahook, June 7, 1836.

<sup>75</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., unpublished and undated account written by Wood concerning his activities, 1831-1841, p. 9.

Revolt. His violent opposition to Wood's proposal led some of the Turkish generals to intimate that the agent's life was not safe in the camp and that he should leave immediately.<sup>76</sup>

Under these circumstances, Wood requested a final conference in the presence of the Turkish generals. He reiterated his proposal to no avail, and then employed the only means which he possessed to warn the Turkish generals of the suspected plot between Rashid Pasha and Muhammad 'Ali of Egypt:

I observed in the polite terms I could that notwithstanding the little cause I had to be pleased with my reception as I would give witness that I was not leaving him with any unfriendly feeling, tell him frankly that he was suspected of being a traitor and urged upon him the expediency of regulating his conduct so as to remove the suspicions attached to him.<sup>77</sup>

Exasperated at this accusation, the Serasker threatened to kill Wood who was saved by the intervention of a Mustafa Pasha. Ponsonby's agent escaped from the camp that same night with the aid of Mustafa Pasha who made the necessary arrangements which enabled him to cross the lines. He reached Mosul safely,<sup>78</sup> and in order to avoid pursuit he hired a raft descending the Tigris to Baghdad and the sanctuary of the British Residency.<sup>79</sup>

When Wood arrived in Baghdad, he communicated his proposal for negotiation to 'Ali Ridha Pasha who was commanding the southern column of

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<sup>76</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., unpublished and undated account written by Wood concerning his activities, 1831-1841, p. 9.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., pp. 10 and 11.

<sup>78</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., Dispatch Nr. 11, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Mosul, June 28, 1836.

<sup>79</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., unpublished and undated account written by Wood concerning his activities, 1831-1841, p. 12; and Wood, "Memo on Services," pp. 3 and 4.

the Turkish advance. In the six week interim between Wood's request and 'Ali Ridha's reply, Wood was employed by Colonel Taylor, the British Resident. There had been rumors of an Egyptian advance down the valley of the Euphrates, and the Residency had lost contact with Chesney's Euphrates Expedition. Wood was dispatched on a mission to obtain information on the situation. He crossed the desert to the Euphrates and established his camp near Faluja where he waited for the arrival of the Expedition's steamer, the Euphrates.<sup>80</sup> Marauding parties of Arabs harassed the encampment, and after a major skirmish in which Wood was wounded, the party was forced to withdraw to Baghdad. Wood had learned indirectly that the Egyptian irregular cavalry had occupied Deir-ez-Zor collecting taxes from the population, and was now advancing down the western bank of the Euphrates. However, Wood was unable to re-establish contact with the Euphrates Expedition.<sup>81</sup>

While Wood was on his mission in the desert west of Baghdad, the situation in the north had changed. A Persian army of 25,000 troops had moved into the borderland region of the Hakkari Mountains ostensibly to support Mir Muhammad of Ruwandiz in his struggle against the Ottomans. In July, Lieutenant Colonel J. Shiel, then second in command of the British military mission to Persia and later Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran, was

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<sup>80</sup>The expedition was supposed to have left Bushire on July 9th, to ascend the Euphrates. However, mutiny and Chesney's vacillation forced the expedition to delay its departure until November, 1836.

<sup>81</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., unpublished and undated account written by Wood concerning his services, 1831-1841, p. 12, and Wood Papers, op. cit., Dispatch No. 13, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Baghdad, August 2, 1836.

ordered to proceed to the Turkish camp:

At Tabriz two routes were proposed to me for reaching the Turkish camp, which was supposed to be situated to the northeast of Mosul. One was by proceeding to Julamerik, an independent Chief ship in the mountains of Kurdistan, bordering on Persia, and from thence through Tiyari, the territory of the Kaldani (Chaldaean) or Nestorian Christians, whose almost impracticable country joined to their own warlike character, enables them to avoid rendering obedience or tribute to Turk, Kurd, or Persian, and still corresponds with Xenophon's character of Chaldaeans....The objections to this route were the necessity of assuming the character of a Dervish, that is of travelling under the appearance of great poverty, as my informant said that otherwise there could be no security, and of performing a part of the journey on foot, a portion of the road being totally impracticable for cattle. I therefore selected the route by Van, although more distant.<sup>82</sup>

Colonel Shiel left Tabriz on the 15th of July, and proceeded to Van where he followed the southern coast of Lake Van to Bitlis. Turning south, he avoided the territory of the Bohtan Kurds by staying on the western bank of the Tigris from Siirt to Jazirat-ibn-'Umar. Crossing the Tigris, Shiel headed toward the scene of action. He arrived at the military encampment of Ali Ridha Pasha on August 4, 1836, the day after the capture of Arbil: "The Troops of the Amir of Rawanduz made a short resistance at this place, but a small and ineffectual mine have been exploded in the mound, they were alarmed, and surrendered."<sup>83</sup> Three days later, Shiel moved on to the camp of Rashid Pasha where he remained for six days.<sup>84</sup> On the 13th of August, he departed by the main road through Arbil and Altun Kopru to Kirkuk where he turned east to Sulaymaniya and across into Persian territory by way of Sardasht, Sauj Baluq, and Maragha to Tabriz.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Shiel, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 99

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 96 and 97. Shiel does not say what he did during his stay in Rashid Pasha's camp; however, it is probable that he informed the Serasker as to the Persian army's advance into Kurdistan.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 100 and 101.

Shortly after Shiel's departure from the Turkish camps, Richard Wood received word in Baghdad that Ali Ridha had approved his proposal for negotiation with Mir Muhammed of Ruwandiz. Ponsonby's confidential agent immediately set out for Ali Ridha camp "by a circuitous route," and after "a painful journey of 7 days and nights through wastes and deserts," he arrived there finding Ali Ridha Pasha "in the heart of the Carduchian Mountains with 13,000 men whose retreat was cut off by Ravandoz Bey who besides his own forces subsidized 25,000 Persians actually in the march to join him."<sup>86</sup>

With the threat of Persian intervention in Kurdistan and the advance of the Egyptians to the Euphrates, Ali Ridha Pasha appeared to be convinced that a peaceful settlement of the Kurdish rebellion would best serve the interests of the Pashalic of Baghdad and the Ottoman Empire. To facilitate a negotiation Wood sent a dispatch to the British representative in Tehran urging him to exert his influence to stop the Persian intervention:

Ravandous Bey's object is to find, in Persia a momentary asylum and to return to this country again, as soon as the Turkish Forces are withdrawn. To prevent this, by shewing the duplicity of its Court, as also to prevent the consequent evils which will ensue, should he succeed in this, when perhaps the Turkish Army may be otherwise employed, was my chief motive in addressing that Despatch, with the hope that His Majesty's Representative will be induced to adopt such steps as will compel that Court to alter its conduct, and not for pecuniary advantages throw this Pashalic again into disorder.<sup>87</sup>

On the night of August 28, 1836, Wood crossed the Turco-Kurdish

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<sup>86</sup>Wood Papers, *op. cit.*, unpublished and undated account written by Wood concerning his activities, 1831-1841, p. 13.

<sup>87</sup>Wood Papers, *op. cit.*, Letter, Wood to Ponsonby, dated August 26, 1836, Camp of Ally Pasha, at Hazir, pp. 2 and 3.

lines carrying a letter from Ali Ridha Pasha to Mir Muhammad of Ruwandiz. When he arrived at the castle of the Kurdish chief, he found the Persian envoy who had previously been in Rashid Pasha's camp, offering Mir Muhammad the same assistance that he had offered to the Turkish Serasker. The British agent presented Ali Ridha Pasha's letter to the besieged Kurdish chief, who:

...read the Pasha's letter and threw it aside. He said he did not know who the English were, - asked whether they were subjects of the infidel Sultan Mahmoud and finished a rather eloquent speech for a barbarian by saying that the overtures of the Pasha were too late that he had subsidized 25,000 Persians for 100,000 tomans, 20,000 of which he had already paid - that he had 50,000 of his own adherents, that in 3 months more the Turkish Armies would perish in the snow and that finally supposing even he overrated his means, his retreat into Persia until the withdrawal of his Enemies was the only inconvenience that could happen to him.<sup>88</sup>

Wood attempted to impress upon Mir Muhammad "the power and greatness of my Country,"<sup>89</sup> which the Persian envoy inadvertently confirmed in the course of the discussion. The Persian described the Indian Empire and the victories of British troops:

The Envoy did so in terms the most exaggerated out of compliment all to the great astonishment of the Barbarian who while he expressed his surprise was inquisitive in his inquiries respecting our integrity and reliance that could be placed in our word.<sup>90</sup>

During the next seven days, Wood remained at Ruwandiz castle negotiating the peace settlement. When the commander of the Persian forces failed to meet with Mir Muhammad and Wood as had been agreed upon, the Kurdish chief began to suspect the motives and loyalty of the Persians, and finally dismissed the Persian envoy from the fortress. Mir Muhammad

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<sup>88</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., unpublished and undated manuscript written by Wood concerning his activities, 1831-1841, p. 16; also see Wood Papers, op. cit., Dispatch Nr. 14 (Duplicate), Wood to Ponsonby dated September 3, 1836, Ravandus Castle near the Persian Frontier, pp. 1 and 2.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

then tried to bribe Wood with offers of money and female slaves which the latter resolutely declined. Meanwhile the British agent tried to undermine Mir Muhammad's obstinacy through the medium of the Mir's favorite wife as well as the Shaykhs and Ulema, ". . . who have great influence in those parts . . . reminding them how their rebellion was at variance with the strict precepts of their Prophets."<sup>91</sup>

On the sixth day, Mir Muhammad agreed to submit on the basis of Wood's promise that Lord Ponsonby would interpose for the Beg with the Sultan.<sup>92</sup> The next day, September 3, 1836, Wood and Mir Muhammad arrived in Rashid Pasha's camp where the Beg surrendered to the Serasker. Later, the Kurdish Chief was escorted to Constantinople furnished by Wood with the necessary letters for Lord Ponsonby. The Ottoman and Persian forces agreed to withdraw from the border region, and the Kurdish rebellion was temporarily terminated.<sup>93</sup>

Wood remained in the eyalet of Baghdad during the months of September and October, and then proceeded to northern Syria to report on the Egyptian fortifications in the Taurus. Following the "Fertile Crescent"

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<sup>91</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., unpublished and undated manuscript written by Wood concerning his activities, 1831-1841, p. 18.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 19; also see Wood Papers, op. cit., Dispatch Nr. 14 (Duplicate), Wood to Ponsonby, dated September 3, 1836, Ravandus Castle near the Persian Frontier, pp. 11 and 12.

<sup>93</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., Letter, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Mosul, September 19, 1836. The only author writing on the rebellion of Ruwandiz Beg to mention Wood's role is William F. Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia (2 vols, London: John W. Parker, 1842), Vol. II, p. 323, "a little previous to this, the bey was visited by Dr. Ross, from the Residency of Baghdad, and afterwards by Mr. Wood, now consul at Damascus. This latter gentleman, who was then dragoman to the British Embassy at Constantinople, interested himself much in the fate of the prisoner, and also got the Ambassador to exert himself for the mountain Kurd, (who had promised in return great regard and friendship for the English,) so far as, after swearing allegiance to the Porte, to get him sent back to his country, with the new title of Muhammed Pasha."



route, Wood found that the Ottoman campaign against Mir Muhammad of Ruwandiz, which had cost the lives of 10,000 Turkish soldiers,<sup>94</sup> had accomplished very little toward the re-establishment of order in "Turkish Kurdistan":

The immediate withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Kurdistan was the signal for the Kurds and Arabs to commence their depredations. . . . The evacuation by Mohammed Seid Pasha of Dahook and the removal of the camp from Djezereh, left the Kurds at liberty - village arose against village, the chiefs were fighting for supremacy, the tribes plundered each other and many took advantage of this state of things to betray the traveller.<sup>95</sup>

The campaign also cost the life of Sultan Mahmud's bold and energetic Serasker, who had withdrawn to his winter headquarters at Diyarbakir. In January, 1837, Rashid Muhammad Pasha died of cholera having failed to execute the Sultan's gigantic scheme of consolidation and centralization.<sup>96</sup>

The final episode in the rebellion of Mir Muhammad of Ruwandiz occurred during the spring of 1837. Richard Wood arrived back in Constantinople eighteen months after he began his special mission for Ponsonby in the Lebanon. During March and April, he had two interviews<sup>97</sup> with Mir Muhammed:

Ravandouz Pasha's Tatar just returned from Kurdistan, gives a deplorable account of the disorder in that part of the country. The Kurds are fighting among themselves, headed by Ravandouz's two

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<sup>94</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., Private Letter, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Aleppo, December 2, 1836. Wood reported that 2,000 Nizam (regular) troops died in combat, while 8,000 died from sickness and neglect. The latter were mostly militia from Sivas.

<sup>95</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., Wood's "Journal - Mousul to Mardin, over desert Sinjar," November 1, 1836 (unpaginated).

<sup>96</sup>M. Baptistin Poujoulat, Voyage dans L'Asie Mineure (2 vols, Paris: Ducollet, 1840), Vol. I, p. 375.

<sup>97</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., Letter, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Pera, March 25, 1837, and Letter, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Pera, April 25, 1837.

brothers, who are opposed to each other. It appears also that the ex Governor of Amadiéh, Ismail Pasha is trying to reposses himself of his District, which is in the possession of one of the above Brothers.<sup>98</sup>

In view of the unsettled state of affairs in Kurdistan, Mir Muhammad appeared to be the only local chief who could effect order in the region. Lord Ponsonby, on the basis of Wood's reports, urged Sultan Mahmud to reinstate the Kurdish chief. The Sultan acquiesced re-appointing him with the title of Muhammad Pasha. Ponsonby triumphantly wrote to Lord Palmerston:

I have exerted myself to bring this matter about, first because I know it is not in the power of the Porte to govern the country in question. The attempt to subdue which, made by Rechid Pasha of Sivas for his own ambitious end, cost the Sultan perhaps 20,000 men killed by the event, or disease, or famine: secondly because the Mir having been restored by the Sultan will be interested in the future to defend his country against the Sultan's enemies, particularly the Russians, who would find in him a formidable opponent, should they ever attempt to execute one of their avowed plans of carrying their army and their power down to the Persian Gulf....I hope it will be a great advantage to our interest should His Majestys' Govt. think fit to prosecute any plans like that of the Euphrates Expedition, to have at Rewandooz a Chief who thinks he owes his life and liberty and power in no small degree to the English Ambassador.<sup>99</sup>

The English Ambassador's hopes were short-lived. Mir Muhammad of Rowandiz started on his journey from Constantinople to Kurdistan via the Black Sea route to Samsun where he followed the military road to Amasya. There, he disappeared "owing to illness, it was studiously reported."<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Wood Papers, op. cit., Letter, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Pera, March 25, 1837, and Letter, Wood to Ponsonby, dated Pera, April 25, 1837.

<sup>99</sup>India Office Library, Factory Records - Persia, Vol. 56 (1837), pp. 121 and 122, Letter (Copy), Ponsonby to Palmerston, dated Constantinople, May 9, 1837.

<sup>100</sup>William F. Ainsworth, "An Account of a Visit to the Chaldeans, inhabiting Central Kurdistan; and of an Ascent of the Peak of Rowandiz (Tur Sheikhiwa) in the Summer of 1840," J.R.G.S., Vol. XI (1841), p. 70.

However his fate was involved in oriental mystery; "...from inquiries we made at Amasiyah itself, a few years back, we learned that he was there overtaken by a messenger from Constantinople with the bowstring. The people still asked us about their old chief, whom they looked upon as a sort of Tamerlane."<sup>101</sup>

#### A NEW SERASKER AND MORE EUROPEANS

Muhammed Hafiz Pasha. --Rashid Muhammad Pasha had reopened "Turkish Kurdistan" by building the military road from Samsun through Sivas to Kharput. Although this provided greater physical access to the highland region, the Commander-in-Chief's conservative attitude toward reform and Europeans in general restricted exploratory as well as other activities in "Turkish Kurdistan." However, upon Rashid Pasha's death, Sultan Mahmud appointed a new Serasker who was more amenable to reform and European innovations.

Muhammad Hafiz Pasha (born 1796) was a Circassian by origin and brought up in the Palace of the Sultan. As a cavalry officer in the Nizam, he served in the Turco-Russian War of 1828 and 1829. Rapidly promoted to general of a brigade and then general of a division, he aided the Grand Vizer in the suppression of revolts in Albania. Later, he fought against the Egyptians in the battles of Homs and Konya. After the cessation of hostilities, Hafiz Pasha was appointed governor of Scutari and then governor of Kutayah.<sup>102</sup> He:

...combined with the qualities of some experience of his opponent [Ibrahim Pasha], and undoubted courage, considerable judgement and

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<sup>101</sup>William F. Ainsworth, "An Account of a Visit to the Chaldeans, inhabiting Central Kurdistan; and of an Ascent of the Peak of Rowandiz (Tur Sheikhiwa) in the Summer of 1840," J.R.G.S., Vol. XI (1841), p. 70.

<sup>102</sup>Poujoulat, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 383-385.

discrimination, individual sensibility and consequent refinement of manners, and a real enthusiasm in the cause in which he was engaged. He was further possessed of a liberal and enlightened spirit, far beyond that manifested by the generality of Turkish pashas, which rendered him open to all innovations that promised good, and led him to avail himself more freely of the assistance of Europeans and Christians.<sup>103</sup>

This was the man chosen to replace the dead Serasker, and just as Sultan Mahmud's liberalism and reformism began to attract an assortment of Europeans to Constantinople a decade earlier, Hafiz Pasha's similar attitude attracted them to "Turkish Kurdistan."

The Campaigns of 1837. --At the beginning of 1837, the situation in "Turkish Kurdistan" had relapsed into a state of anarchy. The cholera epidemic in Diyarbakir during the latter part of 1836, had decimated the Ottoman army. The region from Mosul to Diyarbakir was ravaged by two year's of warfare; the agrarian economy had been totally disrupted; and the inhabitants, Kurds, Yezidis, Armenians, and Arabs, were forced to forage. Raiding parties ranged through the entire area, and once again the eyalet of Baghdad was isolated from the rest of the Ottoman Empire. The "Turco-Egyptian Question" still remained unsolved, and the prospects of a secure overland route to India appeared rather remote.

Under these conditions, Colonel Chesney left instructions for the Geologist and Surgeon of the Euphrates Expedition, William F. Ainsworth,<sup>104</sup> to proceed on an exploratory journey into "Turkish Kurdistan" in search of coal.<sup>105</sup> Ainsworth was to be accompanied by Christian Anthony Rassam, a

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<sup>103</sup>Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 290.

<sup>104</sup>For a brief biographical sketch of Ainsworth, see Chesney, "Biographical Records of the Officers of the Euphrates Expedition," Appendix XII, Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition, op. cit., pp. 553 and 554.

<sup>105</sup>Chesney and Ainsworth, "A General Statement of the Labours and Proceedings of the Expedition to the Euphrates under the Command of Colonel Chesney," J.R.G.S., Vol. VII (1837), p. 437.

Nestorian originally from Mosul, who served as an Arabic interpreter for the Euphrates Expedition. Prior to this, he had been employed in translating Arabic manuscripts at the college in Malta.<sup>106</sup>

Ainsworth and Rassam left Baghdad on February 1, 1837, and proceeded by way of Kirkuk, Sulaymaniya, Arbil, and Zakho to Jezirat-ibn-'Umar where they joined the main caravan route. Traveling through Nisibin and Mardin they arrived at the headquarters of Hafiz Pasha in Diyarbakir during the month of April.<sup>107</sup> The only known coal mines in the southern part of "Turkish Kurdistan" where at Arghana Maden between Diyarbakir and Kharput:

Hafiz Pasha, commanding the Turkish army in Asia Minor, anxious for the success of the mining operations which are going on around him, wished to detain our party in these countries, and employ them in an active remodelling of the present antiquated system of labours. Their duty called them for the time, however, to other objects, and, accompanied by an officer of the Pasha's they went to examine the district of Arghanah, from whence specimens of good coal had been transmitted to the expedition by Mr. Brant, her Majesty's Consul at Erz-Rum.<sup>108</sup>

After examining the mines, Ainsworth and Rassam decided that further exploration in the northern part of Kurdistan was impossible due to the revolt of the Kurdish tribes in the Anti-Taurus. They followed the military road from Arghana through Kharput to Kaban Maden where they crossed the Euphrates. The Akjah Dagh Kurds living on either side of the military road from Malatya toward Sivas were also in a state of rebellion, so Ainsworth and Rassam detoured north from Kaban Maden through Arabkir

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<sup>106</sup>For a brief biographical sketch of Rassam, see Chesney, "Biographical Records...", *op. cit.*, p. 555.

<sup>107</sup>Ainsworth, "Report of a Journey from Baghdad to Constantinople via Kurdistan (1837)," Appendix XI, to Chesney, Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition, *op. cit.*, pp. 492-541.

<sup>108</sup>Chesney and Ainsworth, "A General Statement...", *op. cit.*, p. 438.

(Arapkir) crossing the Anti-Taurus to Divirgi where they followed the caravan route to Sivas, Tokat, and Amasya. They arrived at Scutari on the Bosphorus on May 19, 1837. Having traveled in the Middle East for the better part of four years, Ainsworth and Rassam left for England.<sup>109</sup>

Shortly after Ainsworth and Rassam departed from Diyarbakir (April 5, 1836), Hafiz Pasha had sufficiently reorganized his forces to embark on a new campaign to reopen the route to Baghdad. Between Diyarbakir and Mosul there were two main routes which were normally followed. The northernmost track followed the edge of the foothills from Nusaybin to Jazirat-ibn-'Umar and then down the east bank of the Tigris to Mosul. The second track, which was more direct, cut across the desert from Nusaybin through the hills of Sinjar to Mosul. The Serasker was confronted with the choice attempting to reopen either route. The track through Jazirat-ibn-'Umar had been temporarily "opened" by Rashid Pasha in the previous year but at the cost of many lives. The other route, which had been closed for years by the depredations of the Yezidi tribes in Sinjar, was not only more direct but also more accessible to a "modern" army. The hilly region of Sinjar represented the only natural obstacle to communications from Nusaybin across the desert to Mosul.

In the spring of 1837, the Serasker ordered Muhammad Pasha of Mosul to advance against the Yezidis of Sinjar, while he attacked them from the other side. Within three months the Yezidis were subjugated and

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<sup>109</sup>Ainsworth, "Report of a Journey from Baghdad...", op. cit. pp 530-541. The results of Ainsworth's geological research were published in his Researches in Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea, forming part of the labours of the Euphrates Expedition (London: John W. Parker, 1838).

the route to Baghdad reopened:

The people, seeing the approach of the Army, retreated to the numerous caverns in the hills, where they remained firing upon the invaders until their water was exhausted, when they were compelled to submit at discretion. These caves are said to be the work of man, but of great antiquity. An individual who accompanied the expedition informed me that he counted the besieged as they came out of one of them, and found them five hundred and sixteen persons. Within were found goods of every description - the products of numerous predatory excursions. The soldiers of Mosul secured large lots of clothing intended for themselves, for the custom was, as I suppose it still is, to make up the clothing of the army in Constantinople, and send it by caravans into the distant provinces. Mohammed Agha averred, with an expression of the greatest horror, that there were also found no less than twenty Tatars' saddles.<sup>110</sup>

While the Ottoman forces were engaged in re-establishing communications between Diyarbakir and Baghdad, the Kurds in the Anti-Taurus rose in revolt cutting off the main supply line from into "Turkistan Kurdistan." "They had been misled to suppose that the destruction of the Osmanlis in the plains and hills of Sinjar was certain."<sup>111</sup> Leaving Mirza Agha, the commander of the cavalry, with two regiments at Nusaybin, Hafiz Pasha marched north with the body of troops following the military road which he had extended from Kharput across the Niphates Mountains to Diyarbakir. At Malatya, he established his headquarters, and began operations against the Akhja Dagh Kurds whom his predecessor, Rashid Pasha, had failed to subjugate.<sup>112</sup>

Five months after Ainsworth and Rassam visited the Serasker, another European explorer arrived to witness the Akhja Dagh campaign. Baptistin Poujoulat, a reporter for the Correspondance d' Orient, had been following

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<sup>110</sup>Southgate, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 263 and 264.

<sup>111</sup>Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 295.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., pp. 293-295. Ainsworth mentions two English officers, Captain Campbell and Colonel Considine, who volunteered to help Hafiz Pasha in the campaign in Sinjar. However, they arrived too late to give any assistance.

the track of the Crusaders through Asia Minor, and now wanted to report on the activities of the Turkish army in Kurdistan. Poujoulat's brother and M. Michaud had made a similar trip in western Asia Minor during the years 1830 and 1831, and Baptistin wished to continue their work. He flamboyantly proclaimed his intention as:

Mon ambition . . . est d'être un voyageur exact, et ma gloire est d'avoir été admis à compléter le plus beau livre de voyage en Orient qui existe en Europe: voilà ce qui pourra me donner quelques lecteurs. Un autre intérêt qui pourra venir en aide à mon livre, c'est le grand spectacle que l'Orient donne aujourd'hui au monde; les graves événements politiques qui attachent l'attention des peuples sur les pays d'outre-mer.<sup>113</sup>

Poujoulat left Constantinople in April, 1837, and after touring the western provinces in Asia Minor went to Sivas during August of the same year. From Sivas, he traveled with a caravan via the military road to Malatya, and arrived at the headquarters of Hafiz Pasha on the 18th of August. His journey had been uneventful except for a threatened attack by Kurds south of Sivas; however, the attack never materialized. The military road was secure for large caravans, and the Kurds had retreated into the mountains where they were being besieged by the Ottoman troops.<sup>114</sup>

The French reporter could hear the artillery fire which echoed through the mountains, and the ravages of the campaign were clearly manifested throughout the plain where fifteen Kurdish villages had been destroyed.<sup>115</sup> Malatya which had been a small provincial town was now the center of activity, for the adjacent military camp contained 5,400 soldiers from one cavalry and two infantry regiments. The European influence was obvious as nizam troops drilled to the martial music of

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<sup>113</sup>Poujoulat, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. x-xi.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., pp. 320-331.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 379.



Donizetti. The new European-type uniforms and fezzes had replaced the traditional habit, and symbolized the beginning of a new era, not only in "Turkish Kurdistan," but throughout the entire empire. To Poujoulat, the young Frenchman in search of the exotic East, this "modernism" in the medieval land of Bohemond and the Danishmends appeared incongruous, and the nostalgic days of chivalry had been swept away by the spirit of reform.<sup>116</sup>

The campaign against the Kurds in Akhja Dagh was in its last stages when Poujoulat arrived. Ten days earlier, August 8th, the major battle had been fought. The Kurds retreating into the mountain caves were bombarded by the Ottoman artillery for twelve hours. In the final assault, three hundred Ottoman troops were killed; however, the Kurds suffered a much greater loss. Fifteen hundred died mainly from the carnage wrought by the artillery. The remainder, some five thousand men, women, and children, were taken prisoner to Malatya. The Serasker planned to remove this rebellious population from their strategic location across his main line of communication to Constantinople by resettling them as cultivators on the plains of Diyarbakir.<sup>117</sup>

The Kurds of Akhja Dagh were actually Kizilbash turcomans who had never recognized the Sultan.<sup>118</sup> They, like the Yezidis, were antithetical

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<sup>116</sup>Poujoulat, op. cit., Vol I, pp. 380, 381 and 388. For reforms in military uniforms see Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, op. cit., pp. 97-101; and Slade, op. cit., Vol II, pp. 210 and 211.

<sup>117</sup>Poujoulat, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 379, 388, and 389.

<sup>118</sup>In his travels of 1902-1903, Mark Sykes visited the village of Uran, twenty miles southwest of Malatya in the Akhja Dagh region. "The day we left Arega the clouds thought fit to let fall five inches of snow between 7 and 11 A.M., which obliged us to stop at Uran, a Shiah village of the same race as those of Yapalan. There was no mistaking them: the same open countenances, the same well-built houses, the same artistic decoration.... [the headman] told me that his people came from Persia

to the state religion of the Ottoman Empire. The campaign against them in 1837 had the overtones of a religious war similar to the one fought by Sultan Selim and Shah Ismail three hundred years earlier. Poujoulat was one of the first Europeans to notice the Kurdish Kizilbash portion of the highland population. However, he believed that all the Kurds with the exception of the Nestorians were Shi'a:

Le reste de la population appartient à la secte d'Ali, mais le mahometisme, chez eux, est mêlé de diverses superstitions qui semblent des restes de la croyance des mages. Ils n'ont point de mosquée, ils ne prient point aux heures indiquées par le Koran; ils se dispensent du jeûne du Ramadan (Pâques des Turcs), et ne font jamais le pèlerinage de la Mecque.<sup>119</sup>

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originally, but why or when he could not state; he also gave me a list of villages inhabited by them in the vicinity, which should be of use to future travellers. They do military service, and are treated as Moslems, but evidently there is not much love lost between them.... The headman was very communicative, and after a considerable beating about the bush I managed to worm out of him the following account of the Alawieh faith:

Private prayer is enjoined once a day.

This prayer is secret, but contains reference to all the great prophets - Isa, Mohammed, Moses, Abraham, and Ali.

An Alawieh is bound to admit his faith on being asked directly.

A man may marry three wives, but may never divorce. If a wife is unfaithful she may be killed, but not divorced.

Ali is the best of men, excelling even Mohammed in goodness: if Ali had not existed God could not have created the world, but Ali is emphatically not divine.

The Alawieh are visited once a year by a Marshed, who holds a service, recites the law, and gives definite readings and interpretations of the sacred books. If he pays another visit in the course of the year he does not hold religious conversation; there is no fixed time for his visit.

The Alawieh do not permit temporary marriages.

Veiling is not enjoined.

They observe twelve days' fast and feast at Moharum.

They admit the five collections of traditions.

They do not admit Jews or fire-worshippers as Ahl-i-Kitab.

The Marshed for the surrounding villages is Mul Ali, living at

Beulan.

The above I give as it was given me; it may be a hoax, my leg may have been pulled beyond all knowledge, but it was spontaneous and not produced by leading questions. Anyhow, if there is a secret religion behind it, there is a distinct knowledge of Shiah doctrine though some remarkable departures from it." Mark Sykes, Dar-ul-Islam (London: Bickers & Son, 1904), pp. 121 and 122.

<sup>119</sup>Poujoulat, op. cit., p. 351.

With the military campaign in Akhja Dagh practically completed, Poujoulat spent only a week at the Serasker's headquarters, and continued his journey along the path of the Crusaders. Taking advantage of the temporary security now existing in the Taurus south of Malatya, he crossed the mountains to Samsat on the Euphrates, and from there traveled to Urfa, Edessa of the Crusades. Remaining in each place for only a day or two, Poujoulat re-crossed the Euphrates at Birecik, and entered Egyptian-held territory in September, 1837.<sup>120</sup>

Although the French reporter was the first nineteenth century explorer to traverse the Taurus Mountains south of Malatya, his account of that portion of his journey is limited to a brief two-page description of the region.<sup>121</sup> He does not give an itinerary, and mentions only one village, Surgut, between Malatya and Samsat. Poujoulat appears to have been more interested in the politico-military aspects of the region rather than its geography. His descriptions of the contemporary scene are vivid and colored with images of historical Romanticism. As an explorer, his contribution was minimal; however, as a journalist he helped to publicize the drama of the conflict in "Turkish Kurdistan."

Prussian Instructors (1838-1839).—The destruction of the Janissaries and the "Turco-Egyptian Question" necessitated military reform and modernization of the Turkish armed forces. The reorganization and training of a conscript army along European lines was an immense task which preoccupied the Sultan and his leading reformers. During the latter part of the 1820's and into the 1830's, the Ottomans relied on Egyptians and renegade European soldiers to help instruct the new recruits in the intricate drills and formations of modern warfare. However, with the

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<sup>120</sup>Poujoulat, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 397-435.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., pp. 402 and 403.

Egyptian invasion of Syria, one of the main sources of military instructors was eliminated. The other source, the European renegades, soon proved to be limited. There had been some European instructors during the eighteenth century who helped reorganize and train Ottoman forces, particularly in the more technical fields of artillery and engineering.<sup>122</sup> However, the thought of adopting European concepts and techniques as presented by a Christian was repugnant to the Ottomans. Even those renegades who converted to Islam were treated with contempt, and none were allowed to command military units. In the nineteenth century after the defeat of Napoleon, there were several veterans who sought employment in the East. Usually, their credentials as well as their motives were rather dubious. Men, such as Sultan Mahmud's Neopolitan cavalry instructor, Signor Calosso, had little background or training in large unit tactics, and were useful only as drill instructors. As the Ottoman forces progressed in their program of modernization, the European renegades could not cope with the larger more complex problems of military operations.

By 1835, the need for military advisors had become acute; the New Army was engaged in operations against the Kurds, but its eventual opponent would be the Egyptian army in Syria. To bring the Ottoman forces up to parity with those of Muhammad 'Ali required help from Europe; however, the problem was not so much what but whom should the Sultan employ

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<sup>122</sup>The most noted European military advisors to the Ottomans in the eighteenth century were Count de Bonneval in the 1730's and Baron de Tott during 1773-1775. See Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, op. cit., pp. 47-50.

as military advisors:

France, hitherto the source of military guidance and instructors, was compromised, first by her sympathy for the Greek insurgents, and later by her support for Muhammad Ali. The Sultan therefore looked elsewhere. Britain was tarred with the brush of philhellenism, and an offer from Palmerston in 1834 to send officers to train the Turkish army was turned down. In the following year some Turkish cadets were accepted at Woolwich and three officers went to Istanbul to assist and advise in the reorganization of the army. They accomplished little, and a naval mission sent in 1838 fared no better. One of the reasons for their failure was no doubt the growth of Russian influence in Istanbul, which worked against any British connexion with the Turkish armed forces. Another was the resentment of the officers at the slighting way in which they were treated, and the quasi-menial status offered to them.<sup>123</sup>

At this critical juncture in Sultan Mahmud's program of reform, a Prussian Captain, later Field Marshal Helmuth Karl von Moltke, appeared on the scene; he had been sent by von Krauseneck, Chief of the General Staff, to "report about conditions and organization in the Turkish Army."<sup>124</sup> After surveying Turkish defenses in the Balkans during October and November, 1838, von Moltke arrived in Istanbul where he had interviews with the Serasker Husrev Pasha,<sup>125</sup> one of Sultan Mahmud's leading reformers. The old Serasker was impressed by the Prussian officer, and employed him in mapping Istanbul, the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles, and the northern Turkish defenses in Europe. This affinity between the young intellectual

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<sup>123</sup>Lewis, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>124</sup>Walter Goerlitz, History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945, trans. Brian Battershaw (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 71.

<sup>125</sup>Husrev Pasha, the Serasker from 1827 to 1836, was " ... a fanatical supporter of the reforms, and was able both to train and present to the Sultan a body of new style troops, and to maintain order by rigorous police methods. Though he later became Grand Vezir, he never learnt to read or write, and his contributions to reform, if vigorous, were often ignorant and violent," Lewis, op. cit., p. 370. For von Moltke's description of Husrev Pasha see Helmuth von Moltke, Lettres du Marechal de Moltke sur l'Orient, trans. Alfred Marchand (Paris: Sandez et Fischbacher, no date), pp. 24-26, 31-34, and 104-106.

Prussian with an artistic flair and the illiterate Turkish Commander-in-Chief marked the beginning of "a strong German influence and tradition in the Turkish Army, which later became very strong and has lasted to our own day."<sup>126</sup>

Sultan Mahmud was also favorably impressed by Moltke's work. Prussia, whose military officers since Frederick the Great had been held in the highest esteem, had not been directly involved in "The Eastern Question", and therefore, afforded an excellent source for impartial military advisors. The Sultan approached the King of Prussia for more officers, and in 1837, four were sent to aid von Moltke in the reorganization of the Ottoman Army.<sup>127</sup> Although the response was minimal in terms of numbers, the Prussian mission brought a new European influence into the Ottoman Empire, and the five officers who participated were to gain experience which would have a determining effect on their future.

In 1838, the Prussian military advisors were detailed to the various Turkish field commands in Asia Minor. Captain Fischer was assigned to Haji Ali Pasha of Konya and Captain Vincke to Izzet Pasha of Angora. Both were to assist in the raising of new armies by the two pashas. Captains Laue, Moltke, and Mulbach were attached to the headquarters of Serasker Hafiz Pasha who commanded the Army of the Taurus.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>Lewis, op. cit., p. 81. There are two biographies of Moltke: H. Spenser Wilkinson, The Brain of an Army (Oxford: 1913), and Eberhard Kessel, Moltke-Biographie des Herausgebers (Stuttgart: 1957). Moltke's letters from Turkey were originally published in his work, Briefe über Zustände und Begebenheiten in der Türkei aus den Jahren 1835-1839 (Berlin: 1841); several have been republished in Eberhard Kessel, Helmuth von Moltke Briefe 1825 bis 1891 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1960).

<sup>127</sup>The four Prussian officers who arrived 1837 were: Friedrich Leopold Fischer, (1798-1857), General Staff officer; Friedrich Wilhelm von Laue, General Staff officer; Heinrich von Mühlbach (1795-1848), engineer officer; and Karl Frhr von Vincke - Olbendorf (1800-1869), General Staff officer. Kessel, Briefe, op. cit., pp. 401, 404, 408, and 412.

<sup>128</sup>Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 298.

Their assignments, all directed to Asia Minor, indicated the priority which Sultan Mahmud had attached to the "Turco-Egyptian Question," for at that time only the units of Hafiz Pasha were engaged in actual military operations against the Kurds.

Baptistin Pougoulat's assessment of Ottoman intentions six months earlier was reinforced by the arrival of the Prussians:

Nous entendons dire au camp des osmanlis que l'insurrection des Kurdes a été fomentée par Mehemet-Ali et soutenue par les armes et les munitions qu'il a fournies. 'Sans les secours que les insurgés recevaient du pacha d'Egypte, ajoutent les Turcs, la guerre n'aurait pas été aussi longue.' 'Ces bruits, répandus dans le pays, pourraient bien avoir quelque vérité.

Je dois constater ici un fait important; c'est que, même à présent que les Kurdes sont vaincus, de nouveaux soldats osmanlis arrivent chaque jour des pays de l'Asie Mineure. Tous ces soldats, sous prétexte de venir grossir l'armée de Hafiz-pacha, franchissent par petites bandes le mont Taurus, du côté qui mène à Samosate sur l'Euphrate et eux contrées d'Orfa, la capitale de la Mesopotamie. Ce rassemblement, qui se fait sans bruit au delà du Taurus, pourrait bien cacher de grandes intentions de guerre de la part du sultan; et puisque la soumission des Kurdes est aujourd'hui complète, n'est-il pas permis de penser que le Sultan Mahmoud aurait l'ambition de dompter d'autres ennemis? Cette manœuvre, à laquelle nul ne prend garde, est destinée à tromper la vigilance des troupes égyptiennes qui défendent les défilés du Taurus, ces piles ciliciennes dont on a tant parlé.<sup>129</sup>

However, von Moltke viewed these intentions more in terms of reconnaissance, "le sultan lui confia le commandement de l'armée engagée contre les Kurdes, mais dont la tâche principale était l'observation des troupes de l'Egypte-Syrie."<sup>130</sup>

In March, 1838, von Moltke and his fellow Prussians officers left Constantinople on board the Austrian steamer, Prince Metternich, bound for Samsun and "Turkish Kurdistan." Traveling with a caravan from Samsun, they followed the military road through Amasya, Tokat, and Sivas

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<sup>129</sup>Pougoulat, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 394 and 395.

<sup>130</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 203.

to Kaben Maden and their first view of the Euphrates. As they had penetrated deeper into highlands the country appeared more savage with less vegetation and the mountains resembled waves in a strong sea. For the three Prussians, who were now beginning a year and a half adventure in this remote and wild region, the highlands seemed to be the end of the earth:

Maintenant, nous apercevons au fond l'Euphrate, le fleuve que les plus grands d'entre les empereurs romains ont considéré comme la frontière naturelle de leur incommensurable empire. Tous les alentours sont tellement sauvages, la rivage opposé si dénudé, si privé de culture, les montagnes si impraticables que l'on dirait être à la fin du monde.<sup>131</sup>

After spending a week at Kharput, the winter headquarters of Hafiz Pasha, von Moltke was assigned the mission of reconnoitering the Syrian frontier. Accompanied by a small escort, he left Kharput on the 23rd of March, and followed the military road to Malatya where he turned south into the Taurus Mountains. Using the same route which Poujoulat followed, von Moltke traversed the mountains via the village of Surgu and the Erkenek Pass, and descended into the valley of Ceyhan River. From Marash, the reconnaissance party then turned east following the southern foothills of the Taurus on a line through Belveran and Adiyaman to the castle of Gerger, located at the southern entrance to the great canyon of the Euphrates.<sup>132</sup>

Beginning at Gerger, von Moltke followed the course of the Euphrates along the west bank as far south as Birecik, paralleling the Turco-Egyptian frontier. As the young Prussian passed through the ruins

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<sup>131</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 200.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., pp. 205-210.



of aqueducts,<sup>133</sup> the arches and columns of the acropolis at Samsat,<sup>134</sup> and the castle of Rum Qal'a, he was imbued with the historic nature of this frontierland. These ruins evoked images of the ancient civilization which had once flourished in this semi-arid plain, and in a moment of thought recollected in peaceful tranquility, von Moltke wrote:

Je ne trouvais naguere, par une nuit étoilée, dans les ruines du vieux chateau romain Zeugma. L'Euphrate étincelait au fond d'une gorge rocailleuse, et son murmure emplissait le silence du soir. Alors passerent à la clarté de la lune, Cyrus et Alexandre, Xenophon, César et Julien; de ce point ils avaient vu, sur la rive opposée, l'empire de Chosroës; ils l'avaient vu tel que je l'apercevais moi-même, car la nature est ici de pierre et ne change point. Je me décidai à sacrifier à la mémoire du grand peuple romain les raisins dorés qu'il avait d'abord transplantés en Gaule et que j'avais portés de la frontière occidentale de leur vaste empire sur la limite orientale. Je jetai la bouteille dans l'abîme, elle plongea, dansa et glissa dans le courant du fleuve, vers la mer des Indes. Vous supposez bien que j'avais commencé par la vider; je me tenais là comme le buveur des anciens temps:

J'aspirai une dernière fois le feu de la vie,  
Et je jetai la coupe sacrée  
Dans l'abîme des flots.  
Je la vis tomber, boire  
Les flots jaunes de l'Euphrate;  
Mes yeux se fermèrent.

Je ne bus jamais plus une goutte.  
La bouteille n'avait eu qu'un défaut, elle avait été la dernière.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>The ruins of an aqueduct which carried potable water from the Rahta Chay to Samsat, a distance of twenty-eight kilometers, parallel the west bank of the Euphrates south of Alakopru Koy.

<sup>134</sup>Samsat was the capital of Commagene, a vassal state of the Roman Empire. During the first century B.C., Commagene flourished under the rule of King Antiochus I who built a magnificent temple and burial ground on Nemrut Dag, fifty-eight kilometers north-northwest of Samsat. Although von Moltke explored the region in detail, he does not mention the temple. Fifty years later, it was discovered by the 1882-1883 Turco-German Archaeological Expedition; see Karl Humann, Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien (Berlin: Reimer, 1890). In recent years, the Bollingen Foundation and the National Geographic Society have sponsored expeditions under the direction of Theresa Goell to continue Humann's work in Commagene; see Theresa Goell, "Throne Above the Euphrates," National Geographic, Vol. 119 (January - June, 1961), pp. 390-405; and Pauline Bentley, "Nemrut Dag," Le Courrier, Nr. 2 (February, 1962), UNESCO, pp. 4-11.

<sup>135</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 216 and 217. The full text of this letter to Captain Fischer, dated Diarbekir, April 12, 1838, can be found in Kessel, Briefe, op. cit., pp. 127-129. Moltke's letters from Turkey are regarded as classics in the genre of nineteenth century German

Von Moltke's pensive reflection on the ancient borderland of Western civilization characterizes the intellectual attitude of the age - the age of Goethe, Schiller, Coleridge, and Kierkegaard. The Romantic Movement in Europe was beginning to dissolve, and its earlier dynamicism diluted by a hardening of values had lost much of its virility. The great principle of unity in Romanticism, i.e. the plastic power of the imagination coupled with symbolic action, was transformed into the more mundane aspirations of social, economic, and political advancement of the workers and middle classes. However, the great age of Romanticism continued to survive among the military. The nature of their profession and the quiescence of Europe directed their energies towards other fields of endeavor, particularly that of exploration. The Byronic commitment, or Kierkegaardian leap, was still a very potent force among those officers who sought adventure and, maybe, fame in remote lands. The days of chivalry and the Light Brigade were still very much alive. It is indeed ironic that von Moltke, one of the greatest literary spokesman of these military romantics, would later revolutionize European warfare by basing strategy

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epistolary literature, and nowhere is the influence of Goethe more explicit than in Moltke's letter to Captain Fischer. The poem in his letter is a direct reference to Goethe's "The King of Thule," which was later included as a song in the "Tragedy of Faust," Part I, lines 2412-2435. The King of Thule had received a golden goblet from his dying wife; he drank from it at every feast, and tears would gush forth in remembrance of his beloved. When the king grew old, he bequeathed to his heir everything but the golden goblet, and one night he held a royal feast in his ancestral castle above the sea:

Upstood the jovial monarch,  
And quaffed his last life's glow,  
Then hurled the hallowed goblet  
Into the flood below.

He saw it splashing, drinking,  
And plunging in the sea;  
His eyes meanwhile were sinking,  
And never again drank he.

(Faust, Part I, lines 2428-2435)

and tactics on modern communications and an industrial economy.<sup>136</sup>

Although the young Prussian topographic engineer would eventually become immersed in the Industrial Age, he was still in the very much medieval world of the Ottoman Empire at Rum Qal'a. Having surveyed the Turco-Egyptian frontier, Moltke turned his attention to the region east of the Euphrates where the Serasker had only recently established a modicum of Ottoman control. Crossing the Euphrates at Birecik, he followed the main caravan route through Urfa to Diyarbakir. There, he embarked on a kellek in order to descend the Tigris to Mosul. After an easy four day trip on the raft, "On ne voyage pas plus commodément que nous,"<sup>137</sup> the reconnaissance party arrived at Mosul on April 18, 1838.<sup>138</sup>

During his two week stay in Mosul, von Moltke drew a map of the city and a plan for a new barracks which he presented to Muhammad Pasha, the governor whose pitiless methods of enforcing justice had given Mosul and the surrounding area an unprecedented degree of security. As part of Sultan Mahmud's great program of reform, the pasha had built new streets, a hospital, and an arsenal, as well as impose taxation and conscription against opposition from the local population. However, the grand scheme of consolidation and centralization was still in the embryonic stage, for the bedawin Arabs of the desert, like the Kurds in the mountains refused to submit to Ottoman rule. The Fertile Crescent lying between the desert

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<sup>136</sup>As Chief of the German General Staff, von Moltke utilized the German railways for purposes of mobilization and rapid deployment as an integral part of grand strategy. The same development occurred in the United States under General Grant during the Civil War. The era of modern warfare began with Grant and von Moltke during the 1860's.

<sup>137</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 221

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., p. 219-222.

and mountain regions was now under the tenuous control of the Ottoman pashas, but still open to depredations from either direction:

Tout le versant méridional du Taurus est courvert des traces de leurs dévastations. Là, des rivières délicieuses descendent des montagnes, l'abondance des eaux s'unit à un ciel toujours riant, toujours chaud, à la terre la plus fertile, pour créer un paradis, si les hommes ne s'appliquaient à le dévaster.<sup>139</sup>

Having surveyed the frontier beyond the jurisdictional limits of Hafiz Pasha's authority,<sup>140</sup> von Moltke began his return journey to the headquarters of the Serasker. His reconnaissance party joined a large caravan which was headed north from Mosul laden with material from Baghdad, shawls from Persia, pearls from Basra, and "gold coins which would be converted into bad piastres in Constantinople."<sup>141</sup> On the third day, the caravan was threatened by a band of Arab horsemen who decided not to raid the well-armed group. By the fifth day, the caravan had reached Tilleh<sup>142</sup> at the confluence of the Bohtan Su and the Tigris. Here, von Moltke learned that Muhammad Pasha was advancing north with a corps against the Kurds, and he resolved to join in the action. Leaving the caravan, his reconnaissance party followed the Tigris until they found the Turkish military camp.<sup>143</sup>

The punitive expedition of Muhammad Pasha was composed of six battalions with 2,400 troops, 900 horses, and eight artillery pieces. The

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<sup>139</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 227.

<sup>140</sup>The eastern limit of Hafiz Pasha's authority was the Tigris; the province of Mosul was under the authority of Ali Ridha Pasha of Baghdad.

<sup>141</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 229 and 230.

<sup>142</sup>Tilleh or Tillo is rendered "Tillaja" in the French translation of Moltke's Lettres, op. cit., p. 231.

<sup>143</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 231.

object of the expedition was to reduce to submission a small Kurdish prince, Said Beg, who for the last five years had defied the authority of the Sultan refusing to pay taxes and provide conscripts. As the Ottoman corps approached, many partisans of Said Beg defected, and when von Moltke's party arrived on the scene, the Kurdish Chief had retreated to his castle with only two hundred supporters. The Kurds did not have artillery, but their defensive position was favored by the inaccessible terrain of deep gorges which surrounded the castle.<sup>144</sup>

On May 6, 1838, the main body of the Ottoman corps and their artillery began to arrive at the camp on the Tigris. Utilizing the same mode of transportation that von Moltke had used, a regiment with its artillery floated down the Tigris on kelleks to Jazirat-Ibn-Umar. The Prussian advisor reconnoitered the heights surrounding the castle in an attempt to locate the most advantageous locations for artillery positions. When the corps commander, Muhammad Pasha, arrived two days later (May 8), von Moltke had already developed a plan for the siege. Following the Prussian's advice, the commander ordered two artillery pieces to be carried to the heights above the castle. After six hours of difficult work, the Turks finally had the guns emplaced on the heights.<sup>145</sup>

By the morning of May 9, the guns were in position, and the siege began. Although the artillery was able to fire directly into the castle, the Kurdish defenders refused to surrender. The bombardment continued throughout the day, and by nightfall it was apparent that the castle could only be breached by a mine. On the 10th, von Moltke and two miners

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<sup>144</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 232-234.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., p. 235.

attempted an approach through a gorge, but could not get closer than 240 feet to the castle wall. That night, they tried again to emplace the mine. This time they succeeded in reaching the wall, but were forced to withdraw when the Kurdish defenders detected their presence in the moonlight.<sup>146</sup>

Von Moltke proposed a new plan in which the infantry would provide suppressive fire while the miners again attempted to blow a breach in the wall; however, its execution proved unnecessary. Said Beg sent his sons as hostages, but he demanded freedom for himself. Muhammad Pasha refused this condition, and the Kurdish chief surrendered unconditionally. The artillery bombardment had destroyed the castle's water supply, and killed the livestock. Moltke's positioning of the artillery had been the determining factor. The conquest of the castle was of little importance in itself; however, it had been a principal center of opposition to the Forte.<sup>147</sup>

The brief five-day campaign against Said Beg and his followers was only a prelude to a larger scale operation against the Kurds. After razing the castle of Said Beg, the Ottoman corps under Muhammad Pasha advanced northward into the mountainous region of Karzan, southwest of Bitlis. The former Serasker Rashid Pasha had failed to subdue the Karzan Kurds in a campaign two years earlier which cost the lives of 2 - 3,000 men; however, his successor, Hafiz Pasha, was determined to invade the area from all directions. The Serasker ordered the commander of Diyarbakir to advance from the west with the 19th infantry regiment and two regiments of cavalry. Emin Pasha of Mush would attack Karzan from the north with

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<sup>146</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 236 and 237.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., p. 240 and 243.

his contingent of Kurdish irregulars,<sup>148</sup> and Muhammad Pasha would continue his offensive from the south.

In early June, the Ottoman Army began its campaign against the Kurds of Karzan who numbered some 30,000. The line of march was across the parallel valleys in which flowed the affluents of the Tigris. Traversing this series of cross-compartments proved to be the most difficult part of the operation. Ten horses were required to drag each artillery piece across the mountain ridges. The swift and deep mountain streams delayed the Ottoman advance. At the Doghan Su, Muhammad Pasha's small force of less than 3,000 men and eight artillery pieces required forty-eight hours to accomplish passage of the river by kellek.<sup>149</sup>

Although natural obstacles hindered the Ottoman advance into the Karzan region, the campaign to subjugate the Kurds continued with relentless pressure, "...the Koords had shewn determined bravery; they and their wives fought with desperation, and the slaughter among them was immense; women and children were killed and wounded, as well as men, because they were attacked in the villages."<sup>150</sup> Captain Mulbach, who was with the Sarasker throughout the campaign, "regretted that such people could not have been converted into faithful subjects, rather than have been slaughtered, but every mode of conciliation had been tried in vain to induce them to submit: they appeared to think the Pasha could not attack them from the inaccessible nature of their mountains."<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Emin Pasha of Mush and his brother, Sherif Pasha of Bitlis were hereditary Kurdish chieftains from the dynasty established by Alau-id-Din Beg around 1738. During the campaigns of 1830, both pashas remained loyal to the Sultan, and aided Rashid Pasha and Hafiz Pasha in their campaigns. Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...", op. cit., pp. 345 and 348.

<sup>149</sup> Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>150</sup> James Brant, "Report of a Tour through a part of Koordistan," June 1, 1839, F.O. 78/366, sheet Nr. 24.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

Although the Kurdish tactics of fighting in the villages forced the Ottomans to attack the entire population, the Turkish system of military rewards increased the slaughter and pillage. Soldiers were paid two hundred piastres for the head of a Kurd, and one hundred piastres for the ears, arms, or leg.<sup>152</sup> Pillaging for booty was also a traditional means of recompense. During the first two weeks of the Karzan campaign, the slaughter had become so great that Captain Mulbach urged the Serasker to abandon this brutal system of rewards. Hafiz Pasha acquiesced, and also ordered his troops "not to quit their ranks for the sake of plunder, but to divide all the spoil fairly among the army."<sup>153</sup> The Turkish commanders were able to institute this reform among the regular troops; however, the irregular cavalry continued the time-honored system of terrorizing the countryside in search of booty.

By the end of June, 1838, the Karzan Kurds had been subjugated. Every village was required to pay taxes,<sup>154</sup> and provide a proportionate number of conscripts, who would have to serve five years in the New Army. The program to establish Ottoman suzerainty in Kurdistan was nearly complete:

The Koords of the Doojik Mountains are now the only tribes unsubdued and just now it is not probable they will be attacked but while they remain to refuse allegiance to the Sultan the pacification of Koordistan cannot be considered as completed. The

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<sup>152</sup>Poujoulat, op. cit., Vo. I, p. 399.

<sup>153</sup>Brant, "Report of a Tour...", loc. cit., and Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 249 and 250.

<sup>154</sup>In addition to the Kharaj, land tax, and the Jaziya, tribute paid by non-Muslims, the villages were required to pay the Saliyane, a tax to provide for the annual salaries of public servants. Taxation was also imposed upon the nomadic Kurds, for each tribe was forced to pay a Kishlak parasi, i.e. money paid for winter quarterage. However, this money was not paid to the Kurdish and Armenian peasantry inhabiting the villages but rather to the pasha of the eyalet. Both the Saliyane and Kishlak parasi were arbitrary taxes, depending on the disposition of the local Ottoman representative. Brant, "Notes on a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...", op. cit., pp. 342, 351, 353, and 354.



Mountains inhabited by these Koords are enclosed between the Mourad Chai, the Kara and Mamakatoun Soos, the Pasha had endeavoured hitherto in seeking to induce them to pay their dues to the Sultan receive Governors and furnish recruits, but although they dread very much an attack they refuse to accept the terms offered. The Pasha wishes to spare their lives and particularly those of children and women, for as they fight in their villages and houses many women and children are unavoidably the victims of their mode of defence, and this is revolting to the Pasha's notions of humanity.<sup>155</sup>

The pacification of "Turkish Kurdistan" and its highland people appeared to be in its final stages, for only the Kurdish tribes of Dersim or "the Doojik Mountains" remained "unsubdued." In reality, the Ottoman military successes overshadowed the more complex problems of administering the traditionally independent highland region. Sultan Mahmud's program of reform radically undermined the entire economic and social structure of the region. Organized resistance to Ottoman authority dissolved after the Karzan campaign in all but the most remote areas of "Turkish Kurdistan." However, tacit opposition was prevalent everywhere. The Ottomans and the highlanders had arrived at an uneasy truce, "La Porte a besoin de la paix pour une longue série d'années et elle ne devrait se servir de sa force armée que pour se regenerer a l'interieur. L'etat actuel, qui n'est ni la guerre ni la paix, est un vrai malheur et crée de toutes parts une foule d'obstacles."<sup>156</sup>

With the completion of the Karzan campaign, von Moltke was recalled from Muhammad Pasha's corps stationed in the region between Diyarbakir and Siirt. After a four-day journey by horseback, the Prussian arrived at the Sivan-Maden where Hafiz Pasha had constructed a blast furnace for the local iron mines. For four years the Army of the Taurus

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<sup>155</sup>Separate Report, F.O. 195/112, Brant to Ponsonby, dated Paloo, July 28, 1838.

<sup>156</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 255.

had used the fertile region between the Anti-Taurus and Taurus Mountains as a base of operations. The rich plains of Malatya and Kharput were agriculturally productive, while the adjacent mountains provided timber, iron, and coal for construction and manufacture. The region north of the Taurus could easily sustain a large standing army; however, to the south, in the semi-arid plains, devoid of timber and ruined agriculturally by the ravages of war, an army could not be supported locally on a permanent basis. Although the southern slopes of Taurus were the principal area of operations against the Kurds, the main body of the Ottoman Army was forced to retire across the Taurus to its logistical base each fall. If Ottoman authority was to be effectively established south of the Taurus and the Egyptian threat countered, a rapid and efficient means of supply and communications across the Taurus had to be found. The mission was given to Captain von Moltke, whose reconnaissances during previous spring covered the area of concern.

The only natural as well as the most direct line bisecting the Taurus was the valley of the Euphrates; however, no one had ever followed its course through the mountains. On European maps, this portion of the river was merely inscribed with the words "Cataracte de Nuchar," and considered impassable not only from the standpoint of navigation but also from the impracticable terrain on either side of the river and the hostile Kurdish tribes who inhabited the region. Moltke had been to both Komurhan and Gerger, the respective entrance and exit to the great sixty-mile canyon of the Euphrates, and considered it impossible to ascend the river even by the most powerful steamboat. The only feasible means of descent was by kellek, for the supple raft would curve as a fish between the crests and troughs of the waves. Its flat rectangular shape and low center of gravity,

as well as its flexibility, eliminated the danger of capsizing, while the inflated sheepskins would cushion the shock of hitting rocks in the rapids. The danger of sinking was minimized by the use of separate inflated skins, each of which acted as an individual airtight compartment. Several skins could be punctured without a significant loss in buoyancy.<sup>157</sup>

Although the kellek provided the safest means of negotiating the Euphrates through the Taurus, such an enterprise was not without peril. Hafiz Pasha had attempted the descent twice, and both endeavors ended in failure. In each attempt, two men perished in the angry waters of the Euphrates. For this reason, the Serasker did not invite a new attempt; however, the river was past flood stage, and the adventurous von Moltke volunteered for the dangerous mission.<sup>158</sup>

On July 10, 1838, the Prussian Captain embarked on his expedition down the Euphrates from Palu on the Murad Su. The party consisted of four boatmen needed to man the large sixty-skin kellek, three men from the Ottoman Army, and von Moltke. In addition to the permanent members, native pilots, who knew a particular portion of the river well, were picked up at each stage of the journey. The expedition was well-armed, and carried all the necessary supplies as well as Moltke's mapping and surveying instruments.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 261. A kellek with forty inflated sheepskins can have at least fifteen punctured skins, and still support the weight of four men and two hundred pounds of equipment.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid.; and Brant, "Report of a Tour...", op. cit.; flood stage on the upper course of the Euphrates usually occurs in late April or early May, while the river is at its lowest in September. The month of July, about halfway between the extremes of flood and low water, is the best time to descend the river, for the largest boulders in the rapids are visible above water and at the same time there is enough water to allow maximum choice of navigation through the obstacles.

<sup>159</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 261 and 262.

The first 125 miles of the trip, from Palu past Keban Maden to Komurhan, was easy. However, at Komurhan the Euphrates flowed into a terrifying gorge. The kellek with its party of nine men slid into the canyon with extraordinary speed, and soon a dreadful roaring could be heard as it reverberated off the canyon walls. "La vitesse accélérée de notre radeau nous annonça que nous étions près du moulin des serpents."<sup>160</sup> The expedition landed its kellek to survey the rapids; the less dangerous rapids, through which they had already passed, had nearly taken the measure of their raft. The intrepid explorers started down the chute of roiling turbulent water. Moltke uttered a prayer as the kellek was seized by the main current. Waves engulfed the raft, but in what seemed to be a brief instant the raft passed through the chute which dropped fifteen feet in a distance of two hundred feet.<sup>161</sup>

During the sixty-mile course of the Euphrates through the Taurus, von Moltke estimated the number of rapids to be in excess of three hundred. Together, they formed what he called the Cataractae Euphratis. The most dangerous rapids were near the small village of Aivose where the Shiro Chay enters the Euphrates, and the three chutes which immediately follow one another upstream from Tilek.<sup>162</sup> Apparently, all these rapids were negotiated without difficulty, for von Moltke only described the first set below Komurhan in detail.<sup>163</sup>

Moltke's expedition emerged from the great canyon of the Euphrates at Gerger, where the river completely changes character as it enters the

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<sup>160</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 262.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>162</sup>The most dangerous set of rapids now is "Buk Duzu", above Tilek near the village of Ceko Koy.

<sup>163</sup>Ibid.

undulating foothills south of the Taurus. At Samsat on the edge of a rocky desert, the party terminated their voyage on the Euphrates, having traveled over two hundred miles by raft through the "liver-coloured steep gorges that darken the waters to their own gloomy shade."<sup>164</sup> The heretofore unexplored region had been penetrated successfully, and the wild waters of the Euphrates conquered.<sup>165</sup>

At Samsat, von Moltke obtained horses from the musellim for the homeward trek across the mountains to Malatya and Kharput. On July 20th, ten days after his departure from Palu, the Prussian triumphantly entered the Serasker's camp with his comical escort of kellekjis, "these four gods of the sea providing all the attributes of Neptune,"<sup>166</sup> as they carried the long spoon-shape paddles on their shoulders while riding horses laden with the deflated sheepskins of the kellek.

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<sup>164</sup>Freya Stark, "From Tarsus to Lake Van," Royal Central Asian Society, Vol. XLIII (1956), p. 11.

<sup>165</sup>Helmuth von Moltke was the first European to successfully negotiate the course of the Euphrates through the Taurus. In April, 1901, Ellsworth Huntington and Thomas H. Norton, U.S. Consul at Kharput, accompanied by three Armenian raftsmen, floated on a thirty-skin kellek from Akhor on the Murad Su to Gerger (see Huntington, "Through the Great Cañon of the Euphrates River," op. cit. pp. 180-199). In the previous year, Huntington had navigated the Kara Su from Egin to Keban Maden, duplicating Xavier Hommaire de Hell's voyage of 1847 (See Hommaire de Hell, Voyage en Turquie et en Perse, exécuté par l'ordre du gouvernement Français pendant les années 1846-48, 2 vols. [Paris, 1854], Vol. I, pp. 410-416). In 1949, a Turco-German expedition attempted to negotiate the Tauric portion of the river in kayaks; however, the expedition met with disaster in the "Buk Duzu" rapids where two members of the party were killed. Around 1960, another Turco-German group failed in a similar attempt when their kayaks were smashed to pieces in the same set of rapids (interview with Orhan Guncakin, topographic engineer for the Turkish Government, July 17, 1964, at Keban Maden). In July, 1964, Lieutenant Colonel John D. Yarbrough and the author, accompanied by Mehmet Civik and Mehmet Macid Ayshe from Kemaliye (Egin), used a forty-skin kellek to float down the Euphrates from Erzincan to Samsat. The latter expedition appears to be the only one which negotiated the entire course of the river through the gorges of both the Anti-Taurus and Taurus Mountains.

<sup>166</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 265.

Brant's Second Expedition.--While von Moltke was exploring the course of the Euphrates through the Taurus, another group of European explorers arrived at the camp of Hafiz Pasha. James Brant, who three years earlier had followed the Kara Su from Erzurum to Keban Maden, had now organized a more ambitious expedition for his second visit to the headquarters of the Serasker. The Ottoman military successes of 1837 - 1838 and the arrival of foreign advisors<sup>167</sup> in "Turkish Kurdistan" reinforced the belief that the "Turco-Egyptian Question" was approaching a crucial stage. Lord Ponsoby, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, needed first-hand information concerning the state of affairs in "Turkish Kurdistan," and his consul in Erzurum, James Brant, was given the mission to assess the politico-military situation.

Although the main purpose of Brant's journey was political, he used this opportunity to continue his exploratory activities with greater precision. Brant, in his previous tour through "Turkish Kurdistan" in 1835, had been able to collect a considerable amount of information; however, his knowledge of mapping and surveying techniques was limited. This time, his expedition included two other Englishmen whose scientific and technical training would compliment his knowledge of the highland region. Mr. Adam Gifford Glascott, of her Majesty's navy, who had helped Admiral Beaufort map the southern coast of Karamania during 1811 and 1812, volunteered to act as the expedition's surveyor. Dr. Edward Dalzel Dickson, the British Resident Surgeon at Erzurum, in addition to serving in his official

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<sup>167</sup>In addition to the Prussians, there were two French officers, M. Chateauneuf and M. Petit, who served as military advisors to the Ottoman Army. Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 311; and Brant, "Report on the Trade of Erzeroom and a Sketch of the State of the Pashalic and its Dependencies," February 7, 1838, F. O. 195/112.

capacity, would gather meteorological data for the expedition.<sup>168</sup>

On June 16, 1838, Brant's group left Erzurum heading south into the unexplored regions of the Bingöl Dagh.<sup>169</sup> Twelve days later, after a leisurely uneventful journey across the Anti-Taurus, the expedition arrived at Mush, "a town as miserable in appearance as in reality."<sup>170</sup> Although the Ottoman Army had not campaigned in the area through which the Englishmen had traveled, the four-year old effort to subjugate the Kurds in the south had rendered the route from Erzurum to Mush relatively safe for travelers:

Since the operations of Rashid Mohammed Pasha, and of Hafiz Pasha, and particularly since the enrolment of the militia of this Pashalik, the Kurds do not venture to rob openly, and even instances of secret theft have become rare: the effect of the last measure has imposed a moral restraint on this wild race, which is extraordinary when it is considered how few the numbers of the militia are (in this Pashalik not many hundreds), how recently the system has been introduced, and how inefficient the force yet is, from the imperfection of their equipment and discipline.<sup>171</sup>

From Mush, the expedition turned west following the southern slopes of the Niphates Mountains through the formerly independent Begliks of Nerjki, I'lijeh, and Khini which Rashid Muhammad Pasha had subdued in 1835. The region was gradually recovering from the ravages of the war, but the imposition of Ottoman rule had altered the traditional economic and political relationships which had existed for centuries when the highland population was independent. "The Armenian peasants carried arms, and fought with the Mohammedans; they were treated by their masters on an equal footing."<sup>172</sup> The advent of Sultan Mahmud's program of reform tended to

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<sup>168</sup>Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan . . .," op. cit., p. 341.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid.

<sup>170</sup>Ibid., p. 351.

<sup>171</sup>Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid., p. 360.

emphasize religious differences, for the Ottoman Empire was still first and foremost a Muslim empire:

I inquired of I'sa Beg whether the people were more contented now than under the rule of the old Beg; he said they now enjoyed tranquillity, which they never did before, and the Mohammedans were certainly happier. As to the Rayahs, they were more heavily taxed at present, and he did not deny their destitute condition; but, he observed, they always complained.<sup>173</sup>

Although the traditional relationships among the highland population had been altered by the introduction of an alien system which caused much bloodshed and hardship, Brant endorsed the Ottoman policy of consolidation and centralization:

The people now enjoy the most perfect security, which they never could ensure for an instant under the former system. It is true they pay more; but I should have imagined the exemption from robbery and murder was not too dearly purchased by their present taxes: they complain, however, of the unusual imposition, while they forget the advantages which they have acquired.<sup>174</sup>

Little did he realize that the divisive influence of this policy would eventually lead to greater massacres in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Having traversed the affluents of the Tigris, Brant's expedition descended into the plain of Kharput, which was "the richest and most populous part of the country,"<sup>175</sup> and arrived at the headquarters of the Serasker, Hafiz Pasha, on July 13, 1838, nearly a month after their departure from Erzurum. Brant had expected to find the Ottoman Army preparing to effect the reduction of Khan Mahmud and the Kurds in the region of Lake Van.<sup>176</sup> Instead, he found the military forces immobilized with

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<sup>173</sup>Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan....," op. cit., p. 359.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid., p. 361.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid., p. 365.

<sup>176</sup>Brant, "Report on the Trade of Erzeroom....," op. cit.



the fever. In one conscript battalion, there were over three hundred cases of the sickness. The epidemic had incapacitated about thirty per cent of the "landwehr," and although the percentage was lower among the regular troops of the line, it had minimized the effectiveness of the Ottoman Army during the best season for military operations.<sup>177</sup>

Brant's entire party immediately contracted the fever which prolonged his stay. Fortunately, Dr. Dickson was able to administer some medical relief to the members of the expedition, as well as to Hafiz Pasha who also suffered from the sickness. By the 25th of July, Brant, Dickson, and Glascott had recovered sufficiently from the fever to enable them to quit the military camp and continue their explorations.<sup>178</sup>

Since several attendants were still sick, and had to be transported on 'arabaks,<sup>179</sup> Brant decided to follow the course of the Murad Su back to Mush. By keeping to the cooler highlands which paralleled the river valley he hoped to avoid the heat of the plain. The expedition crossed the Murad Su at Palu by kelleks, and headed east along the lower slopes of the Anti-Taurus, a line which they followed for eight days. After fording the Murad Su south of Ziyaret, the expedition arrived at Mush on August 3rd.<sup>180</sup>

Brant, Glascott, and Dickson had traversed the unmapped region north of the Murad Su; however, they were intent on exploring the Lake Van area, for no European explorer in the nineteenth century had ever mapped

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<sup>177</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 268 and 269.

<sup>178</sup>Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...", op. cit., p. 366; and Separate Report, Brant to Ponsonby, dated Paloo, July 28, 1838, F.O. 195/112.

<sup>179</sup>Two-wheeled carts.

<sup>180</sup>Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...", op. cit., pp. 369-375.

and surveyed the entire circumference of the lake. After spending several days with Emin Pasha of Mush, the three Englishmen followed the caravan route to Bitlis, where they were the guests of the Pasha's brother, Sherif Beg. On August 13th, Brant's expedition headed north to Tadvan at the westernmost end of Lake Van: "I found the water of the lake quite salt: the beach was sand and shingle; and I could not help fancying myself on the sea-shore. A great deal of pumice was visible; the pieces were very small in general, and rounded, so that they appeared like cork balls."<sup>181</sup>

The expedition followed the southern shore of Lake Van into the country belonging to Khan Mahmud of Mukus, the independent Kurdish chieftain who had long defied both Ottoman and Persian governments. However, recently he "had thought it prudent to tender his submission to the Ser'asker of Erz-Rum through Is-hak Pasha of Van, and had sent thither a brother for the purpose: he had been well received by the Ser'asker, and dismissed with honour, and he was now on his way back."<sup>182</sup> Khan Mahmud had:

...agreed that the Rayahs in the districts commanded by himself and his brothers should pay to the Sultan, Kharaj and the usual taxes which until now had gone into his own exchequer, that the fixed quota of men should be furnished to the regular force and the militia. He had a year or two before allowed an agent of the Porte to take a census of the population of his territory. What other concessions the Pasha of Erz-Rum would demand was not yet determined on, but it was understood that if all were acceded to, Khan Mahmud and Khan Abdal would be named Musellims, i. e. governors of their respective districts.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup>Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...",  
*op. cit.*, p. 384.

<sup>182</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 387.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 391.

Brant was anxious to interview the rebel chieftain who represented the strongest politico-military force in the southernmost region of the eyalet of Erzurum, "From Norkukh I sent forward our guide to inform Khan Mahmud that I should visit him next day on my road to Van, and I gave the man an introductory letter addressed to the chief by Sherif Beg of Bitlis."<sup>184</sup> The expedition encamped on the beach facing the island of Akhtamar and its Armenian monastery which Brant also intended to visit,<sup>185</sup> and waited for Khan Mahmud's invitation. The next day a messenger arrived from the Kurdish chief requesting "me not to give myself the trouble of coming to see him, as he would be absent on a shooting excursion."<sup>186</sup> Brant later attributed this rebuff to the letter from Sherif Beg of Bitlis whom Khan Mahmud did not esteem; however, the Kurdish chief's xenophobia was probably influenced by the British role in the surrender and subsequent fate of the neighboring Kurdish chief, Mir Muhammad of Ruwandiz.

Having failed in their endeavor to meet Khan Mahmud, the explorers continued their journey around the periphery of Lake Van, and arrived at the city of Van on the 19th of August:

The trade of Van is very inconsiderable, and the consumption of European goods insignificant on account of poverty's preventing people from indulging in their use. The position of Van, however, its soil, climate and indeed every circumstance, favours its being an important place of trade. Bad government and want of security are the only impediments to the development of the natural advantages it possesses.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup>Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...", op. cit., p. 386.

<sup>185</sup>Ibid., p. 387; the only communication between the island and the mainland, a distance of three to five miles, was a "frail bark." This deterred Brant from visiting the convent. In 1850, Henry Layard and Hormuzd Rassam explored the island of Akhtamar and its convent where they found a frieze which was Assyrian in character and unique in Armenian architecture (see Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, op. cit., pp. 412-415).

<sup>186</sup>Brant, op. cit.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid., p. 396.

By the end of August, Brant and his companions had explored all but the westernmost shore of Lake Van from Akhlat to Tadvan, and were now determined to ascend the highest mountain in the region. On September 1st, the party began their ascent of Suphan Dagh, the immense volcanic cone which rose 4,434 meters above sea level. After three and a half hours on horseback over several patches of snow, the explorers were forced to dismount at the edge of the crater, and proceeded on foot to ascend the cone, "The ascent was more laborious than any similar one I ever attempted, not only from its steepness, but from the oppression at the chest we all felt. We could not ascend more than five or six steps without stopping to take breath."<sup>188</sup> After a four-hour climb, the expedition reached the summit:

We all felt unpleasant effects from our ascent, and the Kurds said everybody experienced the same, which they attributed to the weight of the air. Dr. Dickson was quite sick at the stomach; Mr. Glascott so giddy, that he could not continue taking his bearings without every few minutes quitting his work to rest; I had an intense headache; two persons were so affected that they could not proceed beyond the foot of the cone; one who mounted it descended at once, and on getting back vomited violently; even those who remained with the horses suffered from pain in the head. This could not have arisen from the mere height of the mountain, but might be occasioned by the escape of some gas from the crater; although, if so, it was quite imperceptible.<sup>189</sup>

After descending Suphan Dagh, the explorers took the most direct route northeast towards Mount Ararat which they hoped to climb; however, after four days of a long and fatiguing march, Dr. Dickson could barely stay on his horse; "he had been unwell since our ascent of Sapan Tagh,

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<sup>188</sup>Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...", *op. cit.*, p. 409.

<sup>189</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 410. At the summit, the expedition's instruments failed to function properly, and Brant could only estimate the elevation which he believed to be between 9,500 and 10,000 feet above sea level. He had underestimated the elevation by several thousand feet, for it is above 13,000 feet which would account for the unpleasant effects experienced during the ascent.

from having eaten too much snow while on the summit."<sup>190</sup> When the expedition arrived in Bayazid on the following day, Brant had to hire a 'arabah' to transport Dickson, and the party gave up all hope of visiting Mount Ararat.<sup>191</sup>

The illness of Dr. Dickson and cold weather curtailed the expedition's exploratory activities, and the party decided to return to Erzurum via the main caravan route from Bayazid. Heavy rains had slowed their progress, and after a week's march, they met Henry Suter, the British vice-Consul at Trabzon, who had ridden from Erzurum to greet them. Although Brant and his companions were now within a few hours' ride of Erzurum, they decided to camp near the junction of the Bingol Su and Hasan Qal'ah Su.<sup>192</sup>

The expedition had lasted over three months (June 16 to September 21, 1838), and had penetrated into hitherto unexplored regions with comparative ease. The misfortunes of Kinneir and Schultz were merely vague recollections, for Brant's party had lost only two baggage horses during the entire journey. Their personal safety was never endangered, and Brant constantly extolled the conditions of security which the Ottomans had brought to the highland region. Ironically, on this, their last night of the expedition, Brant and his companions would receive a poignant reminder of the superficial nature of this security:

During the night we were robbed: Dr. Dickson lost all his clothes, Mr. Glascott his clothes and surveying instruments. The Beg was informed of the robbery, but no detection followed. The thieves were skilful and bold; they drew the curtain-pegs, and from under it drew

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<sup>190</sup>Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...",  
op. cit., p. 418.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid., p. 421. Brant also quite inaccurate in his estimate of Mount Ararat's elevation which he placed at about 12,000 feet, while it is actually 16,900 feet above sea level.

<sup>192</sup>Ibid., p. 430.

out the things: many were in contact with Mr. Glascott's bed, but neither he nor any individual of our numerous party heard the thieves, and the loss was not discovered till the next morning. We had had two guards to watch during the night, but they pretended not to have heard anything, and they must either have been asleep or accomplices with the robbers.<sup>193</sup>

Von Moltke Resumes his Explorations.---Since his voyage down the Euphrates in July, the fever epidemic and heat of summer had restricted Captain von Moltke's activities to the Malatya-Kharput region. However, in November, he was given the mission to survey the situation along the western section of the Turco-Egyptian frontier. The Prussian, with four attendants, headed northeast along the military from Malatya (November 3rd) in the direction of Sivas. At Deliktash, he turned west across the plains, and joined the Sivas to Kayseri caravan route at Sharkilsha. From Deliktash to Kayseri, von Moltke was forced to accept an armed escort which he exchanged at every village, for the nomadic Turkoman tribes, who inhabit the region during the winter, had rendered the route unsafe for travelers.<sup>194</sup>

From Kayseri, the party followed the valley of the Kizilirmak to Nevsehir, and continued in a direct line across the treeless plain south of Tuz Golu<sup>195</sup> to Konya, where Captain Fischer was helping Haji Ali Pasha raise an army. The Pasha wanted von Moltke to visit the frontier fortifications in the company of Fischer and Ayub Pasha, the civil governor of the region. Therefore, after a brief stay, the party left Konya following the historic military and caravan route which led to Syria. Recrossing the desert-like plain southeast of Konya, von Moltke and his companions

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<sup>193</sup>Brant, "Notes of a Journey through a part of Kurdistan...",  
op. cit., p. 430.

<sup>194</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 280 and 281.

<sup>195</sup>Tuz Golu literally means "Salt Lake."

arrived at Ulukishla on the edge of the Taurus Mountains. Here, the commercial importance of the route was obvious, for the Turks had constructed "le caravanserail le plus beau et le plus grand de l'empire osmanien."<sup>196</sup>

The reconnaissance party now began their ascent of the Bolkar Dagh, the Tauric chain which separated Asia Minor from Adana. After spending the night at Chiftikhan, von Moltke, Fischer, and Ayub Pasha advanced through the Turkish outworks and artillery batteries until they were within two and a half miles of the Egyptian outposts to Gulek Bogazi, or the Cilician Gates, where Colonel Schultz, a Polish engineer officer in the service of the Egyptian army, had constructed an impressive series of fortifications.<sup>197</sup>

The outworks established in these passes by Mohammad 'Ali are much more important than is generally imagined, and instead of being mere lines of fortification, from which to advance upon a hostile country, their lasting and durable character, and the care, skill and expense bestowed on their construction, show that they are considered as a permanent line of frontier by those who ordered their erection. They are quite different from anything observable in the Sultan's territory, even at Varnah or Silistria, and calculated to oppose an enemy more skilled in war than the Turks, being in point of execution quite equal to what is commonly met with in the North of France.<sup>198</sup>

The Egyptian defenses at Gulek Bogazi had effectively closed the main route of military advance from Anatolia to Syria. Haji 'Ali Pasha of Konya had managed to raise and train an army of 6,000 regulars;<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>197</sup>William Burckhardt Barker, Leres and Penates or Cilicia and its Governors, ed. William Francis Ainsworth (London, 1853), pp. 112 and 113.

<sup>198</sup>William Francis Ainsworth, "Notes taken on a Journey from Constantinople to Mosul, in 1839-40," J.R.G.S., Vol. 10 (1841), pp. 503 and 504.

<sup>199</sup>Ibid., p. 495.

however, such a force would not be able to breach the Egyptian fortifications in the passes of Cilicia. If any offensive action was to be initiated against the Egyptians in Syria, the Ottoman forces at Konya would have to be reinforced by elements from the main army headquartered at Malatya. The present route which connected Konya and Malatya was circuitous, and von Moltke, who had just traversed it, was aware of the route's limitations.

After leaving Captain Fischer and Ayub Pasha near Gulek Bogazi, Moltke headed north along the Bolkar Mountains in search of a more direct route to Malatya. At Develi, where the Bolkar terminates into a vast plain, the Prussian learned that no route existed across the plain toward Malatya and that the region was infested with nomadic Turkomans. The musellim of Dively refused to be responsible for such a hazardous journey, and recommended that Moltke contact the Armenian bishop at Tomarza, who would be able to provide safe-conduct through the neighboring Turkoman tribes. The bishop informed the Prussian that the Turkoman tribes were not so formidable and, although the local Armenians were their enemies, a stranger would be well-received by them.<sup>200</sup>

Following the Armenian bishop's advice, von Moltke continued his line of march across the vast plain. Between Ekrek and Goksun, he spent the night in a Turkoman encampment as guest of the tribe's chief, Osman Bey. He was cordially received, and entertained, "Ce ballet me parut plus interessant que ceux de l'opera Berlin."<sup>201</sup> The next morning, Moltke left the camp full of admiration for the natural politeness and hospitality of his Turkoman hosts. Three days later, after stopping in Goksun

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<sup>200</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 292.

<sup>201</sup>Ibid., p. 294.



and Albistan, he arrived at Malatya (October 29) where he delivered his report to Hafiz Pasha, the Serasker.<sup>202</sup>

The region through which von Moltke traveled had been inaccurately portrayed on the maps of Asia Minor, and the Prussian explorer was surprised to find a vast plain separating the Taurus from the Anti-Taurus Mountains. The plain formed part of the great drainage basin of the Seyhan and Ceyhan rivers which flow into the Gulf of Iskanderun. Prior to von Moltke's journey, the northern part of the basin had been unexplored, and it was generally believed to be quite small, "Le bassin de la Méditerranée remonte en général beaucoup plus vers le nord que les cartes ne l'indiquent et s'étend jusqu'au quarantième degré de latitude."<sup>203</sup>

Captain von Moltke's position as a military advisor to the Army of the Taurus had afforded him a unique opportunity to explore regions which were inaccessible to other Europeans: "Les conditions particulières dans lesquelles je voyage m'ouvrent des contrées qu'il a été impossible à tout Européen de parcourir jusqu'ici, contrées que l'on ne peut traverser sans une escorte militaire équivalant presque à une armée."<sup>204</sup> The young Prussian officer, cognizant of his advantage in the field of exploration, spent the following month (November, 1838) preparing a map of Asia Minor which rectified the affluents of the Seyhan and Ceyhan rivers as well as the course of the Euphrates through the Taurus. On December 7th, he presented his map to Hafiz Pasha, who was so delighted with it that he promoted the Turkish lieutenant working under von Moltke's

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<sup>202</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 295-297.

<sup>203</sup>Ibid., p. 296. Although cartographers of Asia Minor had underestimated the northern limit of the Seyhan-Ceyhan basin, von Moltke, overestimated its size. The northernmost sources of the Seyhan are at about 39° 15' north latitude, 45' south of Moltke's positioning.

<sup>204</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 296.

supervision to the rank of captain.<sup>205</sup>

During the fall of 1838, Moltke and his two companions, Laue and Muhlbach, had been able to train the Turkish units in eighty-six different drill movements from the Prussian manual; however, there remained forty-nine other maneuvers which were too complicated for the young Ottoman army to master. By the end of December, the snow and cold weather had curtailed the training program, and it was impossible to keep the army occupied. The mortality rate among the units, as well as that of desertion, continued to increase, and a more drastic program of conscription was instituted, "Le recrutement constitue un véritable acte de brigandage de la part du gouvernement: il y a des villages complètement privés de jeunes gens capables de se livrer au travail."<sup>206</sup>

For seven years, Sultan Mahmud had been rebuilding his army and navy. All the resources of his empire seemed to be directed toward the dislodgment of the Egyptians from Syria. Contrary to the usual winter lethargy, Constantinople was filled with all the activity of war preparation. Personnel, munitions, and equipment were sent in increasing numbers to the armies wintering at Konya and Malatya. The Sultan's grand scheme of consolidation and centralization of Ottoman authority in "Turkish Kurdistan" was only a preliminary stage in the process of countering Muhammad 'Ali of Egypt. The threat of another Muslim power overthrowing the House of Osman dominated all other considerations. Men and equipment normally deployed to defend the traditional frontiers of the Ottoman Empire against the Christian powers of Austria and Russia were redirected toward the Turco-Egyptian frontier. The impulse of self-survival had

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<sup>205</sup>Moltke, lettres, op. cit., p. 298.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid., p. 316.

reached such a feverish pitch that the Ottoman military reformers even considered incorporating a large number of Armenians into the various army corps.<sup>207</sup> Such a radical departure as this from the fundamental religious and social principles of Islam indicates the extent to which military considerations had superseded all other factors.

Although the Serasker had the support of the Sultan and the entire resources of the Ottoman Empire, Hafiz Pasha was still confronted with the problem of conducting operations in terrain which favored the opposing Egyptian forces. The army at Konya, under Haji 'Ali Pasha, could not breach the Egyptian fortifications in the Taurus, and yet it was defending the main avenue of approach from Syria to Constantinople. Captain von Moltke's reconnaissance of the western sector indicated that if the Egyptians launched an offensive against Konya, Hafiz Pasha's forces could only reinforce those of Haji 'Ali Pasha by making a long detour through Kayseri. The distance between the two Ottoman armies by this circuitous route was equal to the distance between the Egyptian forces and Constantinople. If the Egyptians captured Konya, they would be able to advance against little resistance on the undefended capital of the Ottoman Empire, while the main army of Hafiz Pasha remained isolated in "Turkish Kurdistan."<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>207</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 321 and 322. Hafiz Pasha had considered incorporating Armenians into each subdivision of his army. This measure would have altered the composition of his forces from 100% Muslim to 80% Muslim and 20% Christian. Moltke endorsed the project, but felt that Muslim prejudices against Christians bearing arms would reduce the effectiveness of the smaller tactical units. Instead, he proposed that a fourth battalion of Armenians be added to each regiment. The natural emulation of these units would benefit the army, while the Armenian minority would be protected from maltreatment. Moltke considered the project as a major step toward the emancipation of the Christian population; however, it was never implemented.

<sup>208</sup>Ibid., pp. 319 and 320.

Under these circumstances, the army at Malatya had to move south of the Taurus:

Une chose est évidente: c'est que dans cet état des choses, Hafiz ne peut rester dans des cantonnements séparés entre eux par une montagne difficile et un grand fleuve. Il faut qu'il rassemble ses forces et élève des retranchements autour des points de la frontière les plus importants au point de vue militaire; car si, comme je le suppose, Ibrahim-Pacha préfère la ligne d'opération de Koniéh à toutes les autres, pour s'avancer sur Constantinople, il est indispensable qu'il se fraye le passage par une courte et vigoureuse offensive dirigée contre nous.<sup>209</sup>

During February and March, von Moltke made several minor reconnaissance missions mapping possible routes of advance across the Taurus Mountains.<sup>210</sup> He had already explored the region during the previous year; therefore, these missions merely refined his knowledge of the terrain. None were particularly difficult nor dangerous; however, in the first of April, von Moltke was assigned the most difficult reconnaissance mission of his entire career. During the winter, the Prussian had resurveyed all the routes across the Taurus with the exception of the Euphrates River itself. From his descent of the river in July, 1838, Moltke had concluded that it was not feasible to transport the army by raft through the Taurus. However, this was during the season of low water. With the spring thaw, Rafiz Pasha did not want to move his army by the difficult overland routes if the Euphrates at flood-stage could be used, and Moltke was given the mission.

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<sup>209</sup>Moltke, *Lettres, op. cit.*, pp. 320 and 321.

<sup>210</sup>During this period, Moltke also attempted to reconnoiter the Manzur region between the two great branches of the Euphrates. From Malatya, the party followed the course of the Kara Su as far north as Egin; however, snow blocked the trails through the narrow gorge, and the expedition was forced to retrace its steps along the Kara Su. Moltke paralleled the Manzur Mountains as far east as Pertek, but never found a route to penetrate into the remote region. Although he failed in this attempt to survey the Anti-Taurus, the expedition afforded Moltke the rare opportunity of visiting the remote and extraordinarily beautiful village of Egin, "Cette ville et Amasia sont ce que j'ai vu de plus beau en Asie. Amasia est plus bizarre et plus remarquable; Egin, plus grandiose et plus beau. Les montagnes sont ici plus colossales, le fleuve plus considerable." *Ibid.*, p. 325.

Several kellekjis who had experience on the Euphrates declared that it was impossible to descend the river during flood-stage; however, Moltke was willing to try it. When he arrived at Komurhan to view the Euphrates as it entered the Taurus, "Le spectacle n'etait pas encourageant."<sup>211</sup> The rapids of the previous summer had become cataracts; the swollen waters of the Euphrates which reached a width of two hundred and fifty meters in the plain of Malatya were now constricted to eighty or a hundred meters as they poured into the funnel of the great canyon.<sup>212</sup>

The mission to descend the Euphrates in flood-time was more dangerous than had previously been imagined, and although filled with apprehension, Moltke's party was determined to succeed in this perilous adventure. In the chute below Komurhan and in the three above Tilek, the rapids were so violent that the expedition avoided them by portage, a long and fatiguing process which entailed the complete dismantling of the raft and hauling it along the precipitous walls of the canyon. Between the most dangerous chutes, the intrepid voyagers were able to use the kellek but not without great risk to their lives. The current was so swift that steering was next to impossible; waves reaching a height of five feet completely inundated the raft and its passengers. At one point, two of the kellekjis were swept overboard with only their lifelines connecting them to the raft as it raced downstream. After a mile or so, the raft was miraculously thrown out of the main current in a backwater, "Allah nous jeta de côté dans un tourbillion,"<sup>213</sup> and as it giddily spun around a dozen times, the party was able to save the half-drowned boatmen.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>211</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 327.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid., p. 328.

<sup>213</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>214</sup>Ibid.

After the first twenty miles through the sixty-mile canyon, the kellek was not only in danger of capsizing but also disintegrating. The frame of the raft could not withstand the tremendous shocks. Three of the supple willow poles, which were an inch and a half to two inches in diameter, had been broken; four more were cracked; while another two had torn away from their lashings. Nevertheless, the voyagers, visibly shaken by their nerve-racking experience and half-frozen from constant inundation, managed to reach the village of Tilek before nightfall.<sup>215</sup>

The harrowing adventure of the first day had caused misgivings among the nine men who had accompanied von Moltke.<sup>216</sup> The two kellekjis who had nearly drowned were not physically able to continue the descent. Colonel Mehemet-Effendi from the engineers and the two aides-de-camp refused to go any further, but Captain von Moltke was determined to complete the hazardous mission. The expedition had already negotiated the most dangerous rapids, and with the speed of the current, they would be able to reach the end of the canyon at Gerger by the next afternoon. The young Prussian was willing to continue alone with the two remaining kellekjis to whom he offered a purse of gold. However, even they refused, and he was forced to abandon the enterprise.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 329.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid., p. 328. The nine men included a Turkish engineer officer, an agha of the Serasker, two aides-de-camp, a pilot, and four kellekjis.

<sup>217</sup>Ibid., pp. 329 and 330. Freya Stark, in her article, "From Tarsus to Lake Van," op. cit., confuses Moltke's earlier descent of the Euphrates with this latter attempt; however, her tribute to the great Prussian explorer is still cogent: "He came to know this region intimately when attached to the Turkish army as a young man, from 1835 to 1839. His book is still the best I know on all the region round Malatya, and he is, I believe, the only European to have negotiated the Euphrates gorges on a raft in flood-time. I cannot help thinking that a great deal of German prestige in Turkey derives from him, and from the extremely tough group of young Prussian officers who were with him; and I should put the book into the hands of any young man seconded to the East as a model of how to make oneself popular and indispensable" (Ibid., p. 7).

The expedition requisitioned mules in Tilek, and after a difficult three-day ride across the snow-covered Taurus, the party arrived at Malatya where Moltke reported his discouraging intelligence to Hafiz Pasha. The Ottoman army could not traverse the Taurus via the Euphrates. The cavalry and artillery would have to carve a passage along the circuitous route through the mountains west of the Euphrates;<sup>218</sup> while the infantry moved along the direct, but more difficult line across the mountain heights following the valley of the river. The melting snows and spring rains further complicated the task, and von Moltke, the only officer who knew the inaccessible and foreboding mountain barrier intimately, viewed the forthcoming operation with an air of gloom, "C'est le premier quartier de la lune, et le commencement du mois de Séfer, ce qui serait de mauvaise augure. Voilà pourquoi tout le monde décampera demain, en dépit de nos vives démonstrations."<sup>219</sup>

After fifteen days of deprivation and hardship resulting in many casualties and deaths, two thousand men had managed to clear away the snow, and by blasting through rock obstacles, they carved parallel routes along both sides of the great canyon of the Euphrates as far south as Karakaya. The infantry from Malatya slowly moved forward in two columns using the newly-constructed trails, and by April 14th, the entire force was established in camps on either side of the river in the vicinity of Karakaya. At this point, the army was more than halfway across the

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<sup>218</sup>Moltke, *Lettres, op. cit.*, p. 330. This route, which follows the present-day road from Malatya to Marash through the Pass of Erkenek, had the least gradient and snow cover through the Taurus. At Perveri on the southern slope of the mountains, the artillery and cavalry could turn southeast following the valley of the Gok Su back to the Euphrates.

<sup>219</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 330.

Taurus, and the only remaining obstacles to its descent into the more trafficable plains south of the mountains were the swollen affluents of the Euphrates which had to be bridged.<sup>220</sup>

During the early stages of the operation, von Moltke continued to fill his now-familiar role as "point" for the Ottoman army. Accompanying the infantry, he led the advance party searching for the best route across the heights and discordant side valleys along the course of the Euphrates.<sup>221</sup> However, by the end of April, his services were required with the column of artillery whose advance had stalled at Besni. Hafiz Pasha had established his headquarters at Birecik with twelve infantry battalions, two cavalry squadrons, and nine pieces of artillery; but the major portion of his army was still scattered along widely separated routes through the Taurus. Additional infantry and cavalry units were arriving at Birecik every day; however, the artillery and baggage train would be delayed for a minimum of nine days while the muddy road from Besni to Birecik was repaired.<sup>222</sup>

Moltke and Captain Fischer, who had recently arrived from Konya to help in the movement operation, were assigned the task of finding a new route for the artillery and baggage train. After failing to find a satisfactory passage south of the Gok Su, the two Prussians descended the river on a kellek to the confluence of the Euphrates. During the descent, they passed the ruins of an ancient bridge and the remains of a Roman military road which was still very serviceable. The artillery could be transported via the Roman road to the Gok Su, and then floated downstream

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<sup>220</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 331 and 332.

<sup>221</sup>Ibid., pp. 332 and 333.

<sup>222</sup>Ibid., pp. 334 and 335.



to Birecik. At Kizilin where the Gok Su joins the Euphrates, Moltke and Fischer terminated their descent, and the latter returned to Besni with the report of their discovery.<sup>223</sup>

After considerable debate in which Fischer attempted to persuade Sherif Pasha, the artillery commander at Besni, as to the feasibility of the route, the Prussian returned to Kizilin with his report that Sherif Pasha would not assume responsibility for the project. Captain Moltke had to make a trip to Birecik to secure the authorization of the Commander-in-Chief, Hafiz Pasha. The Serasker endorsed the scheme, and Moltke returned to Besni to commence the movement of artillery and equipment.<sup>224</sup>

Seven hundred kelleks were carried across the Taurus from Malatya to the headwaters of the Gok Su,<sup>225</sup> and then floated downstream to the Roman bridge. There, the artillery and baggage would be loaded on the kelleks, and transported via the Gok Su and the Euphrates to the main camp at Birecik. Moltke and Fischer volunteered to lead the water-borne column, and on the 3rd of May, they arrived at Birecik with the first cannon from Besni.<sup>226</sup> Two days later, Captain Laue led another supply train of kelleks, and on the following day, the Serasker himself arrived at Birecik on a convoy of kelleks carrying seven artillery pieces and seven ammunition wagons.<sup>227</sup>

By the middle of May, the main supply line from Malatya to Birecik,

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<sup>223</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 334 and 335.

<sup>224</sup>Ibid., pp. 335 and 336.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>226</sup>Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>227</sup>Ibid., p. 337.

which Fischer<sup>228</sup> and Moltke had established, was in full operation. Eighty artillery pieces had arrived in the new headquarters, and forty more were en route. The Serasker, with the aid of his Prussian advisors, had managed to move his entire army across the barrier of the Taurus. Fifty-three infantry regiments and eight cavalry regiments, comprising 25-28,000 men, 5,000 horses, and 100 artillery pieces were now massed on the right bank of the Euphrates opposite Birecik, and more reinforcements were arriving each day.<sup>229</sup>

In the first week of June, the Serasker moved his forces fifteen kilometers west of Birecik to the village of Nizib, which marked the border between Egyptian Syria and Turkey. Here, the Ottoman army was within 6,000 meters of the Egyptian army which Ibrahim Pasha had moved north from Aleppo to counter the Ottoman advance from the Taurus. Although neither party had violated the Treaty of Kutayah, a headlong collision between the opposing armies was imminent. Sultan Mahmud's grand scheme to reassert Ottoman authority and resolve the "Turco-Egyptian Question" had reached its final stage. The long effort to reform and "modernize" Ottoman military forces would receive a decisive test during the following weeks at Nizib on the Syrian steppe. For the first time in seven years, the "New Army" would oppose an enemy force organized along modern European lines, and the result of the impending engagement might well

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<sup>228</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 339. Fischer had recommended that the three armies in Asiatic Turkey stationed at Konya, Angora, and Birecik be placed under the single command of Serasker Hafiz Pasha; however, the Porte would not consent, and Captain Fischer resigned his commission in early May, 1839.

<sup>229</sup>Ibid., In addition to the regular units, the Ottoman army was reinforced by several thousand Sipahis of Anzieh Arabs from Mesopotamia and Kurds from Diyarbakir, Palu, and Mardin. Emin Pasha of Mush, accompanied by his brothers, Sherif Beg of Bitlis and Murad Beg of Khinis, brought 2,500 Kurdish cavalymen to Birecik in support of the Ottoman forces (Dispatch No. 9, Brant to Palmerston, dated Erzurum, May 13, 1839, F.O. 78/366).

determine the fate of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>230</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 340 and 341. While the Ottoman army massed its forces at Nizib, the newly equipped navy consisting of eight line-of-battle ships, four frigates, twenty-three smaller sail vessels, and two steamers, manned by 24,000 sailors and 6,000 soldiers, sailed from Istanbul during the first week of June. The number of soldiers aboard the fleet would indicate the Sultan Mahmud had planned to conduct an amphibious operation on the Syrian coast which would sever Ibrahim Pasha's main line of supply and communication to Egypt. John Reid, Turkey and the Turks: Being the Present State of the Ottoman Empire (London: Tyas and Row, 1840), pp. 51-53.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE KURDISTAN EXPEDITION (1838-1841)

Mr. Ainsworth's notices, indeed, have laid open the resources of a country rich in mineral and vegetable productions, where iron and copper-mines only wait to be worked anew, forests to be felled, and rich plains to be cultivated, in order to furnish again the materials of a wealthy and flourishing empire.<sup>1</sup>

However unpleasant contre-temps may appear to you in England you cannot expect me to obey your orders here as if I could mount a mail coach, you and Chesney both look upon my going to Nizib as a fatal mistake.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Road to Nizib

By June, 1839, the impending collision of Ottoman and Egyptian forces in the borderland region south of the Taurus had overshadowed European efforts to explore "Turkish Kurdistan." Rashid Muhammad Pasha had "reopened" the remote highlands with the military road from Sivas, and Hafiz Pasha had effected some semblance of Ottoman authority throughout most of the region which connected the important eyalet of Baghdad with the Turkish provinces of Asia Minor. In the process, European explorers were able to penetrate the heretofore inaccessible and inhospitable barrier of high mountains and deep valleys with greater ease. In nearly every case, exploration within "Turkish Kurdistan" was a secondary

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<sup>1</sup>William R. Hamilton, "Address to the Royal Geographical Society of London; Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting on the 21st May, 1839," J.R.G.S., Vol. 9 (1839), p. lxvi.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from William F. Ainsworth to Captain Washington, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society of London, dated Constantinople, October 6, 1839 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

function, an adjunct to some other field of interest and purpose. During the early decades of the nineteenth century, the majority of European explorers were either travelers such as Buckingham, Kinneir, and Jackson, who traversed "Turkish Kurdistan" on their way to and from Asia and particularly India, or military officers and political agents, such as Rich, Sheil, Wood, Brant and von Moltke, who were able to combine exploratory activities with their political and military missions in "Turkish Kurdistan." This latter group of explorers also had the advantage of official status and financial support from their respective governments which facilitated exploration.

Although there had been a few privately financed expeditions, such as Eli Smith and H.G.O. Dwight's in 1830-31, Baptistin Foujoulat's in 1837, and Bishop Southgate's in 1838-39,<sup>3</sup> none had successfully penetrated into

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<sup>3</sup>In 1838 and 1839, Horatio Southgate, the American Episcopalian Bishop in Constantinople made a tour of the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. After taking a steamer from Constantinople to Trabzon, Southgate followed the main caravan route to Erzurum. On June 23, 1838, he left Erzurum traveling in a Turkish costume, and followed the route across the Bingol Dagh to Mush, which had been recently explored by Brant's expedition and by Viscount Pollington (see Pollington, "Notes on a Journey from Erz-Rum by Mush, Diyar-Bekr, and Bireh-jik, to Aleppo, in June, 1838," J.R.G.S., Vol. 10, pp. 445-454). At Mush, Southgate turned east to Bitlis, and then followed the southern edge of Lake Van to Vastan and then north to Van, where he crossed the mountains to Salmas in Persian Azarbayjan. During this portion of his tour from Bitlis, Southgate followed the route which Lieutenant-Colonel J. Sheil had explored two years earlier (see Sheil, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, through Kurdistan, via Van, Bitlis, Se'ert and Erbil, to Suleimaniyeh, in July and August, 1836," op. cit., pp. 54-70). From Salmas, Southgate visited the American missionaries, Asahel Grant and Justin Perkins, at their station in Urmiyah, and then proceeded to Tabriz. On his return trip to Constantinople, the Bishop again followed well-traveled routes; leaving Tabriz, he headed south to Kermanshah, and crossed the Zagros Mountains to Baghdad, where he joined the "Fertile Crescent" caravan route to Mosul. At Diyarbakir (March 8, 1839), Southgate used the military road to Sivas to traverse "Turkish Kurdistan," and arrived back in Constantinople in the late spring of 1839, after nearly a year of travel in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire and the adjacent regions of Persia. Although Bishop Southgate confined his tour to the main routes of travel, his account, Narrative of a Tour through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia, and Mesopotamia, op. cit., contains many excellent observations on the prevailing conditions in "Turkish Kurdistan," particularly on the socio-religious aspects of its mixed borderland civilization.

unexplored regions. In each instance, the members confined their activities to routes which had been previously explored by others. The lack of official status as well as funds to outfit a sizeable party with arms and equipment tended to restrict these privately sponsored expeditions. However, by the end of the 1830's, the Ottoman effort to consolidate and centralize their authority in "Turkish Kurdistan" had rendered the region relatively secure for travelers.

Most of the main geographic features in the eastern highlands of Asia Minor had been explored. The upper courses of both the Tigris and Euphrates had been followed and mapped in their entirety; the Lake Van basin charted and the Taurus Mountains, from the plain of Marash east to Lake Van, traversed not only by a few explorers but also by thousands of Ottoman soldiers. Only two areas of "Turkish Kurdistan" remained unexplored. In the northwest corner, between the two great branches of the Euphrates, the Manzur Mountains inhabited by the still-independent Zaza, or Kizilbash, Kurds defied all efforts to penetrate the region. Similarly, the Hakkari Mountains located in the southeast corner of "Turkish Kurdistan" were still unexplored. There, the Nestorian and Kurdish tribes had managed to thwart all attempts by the Ottomans to subjugate them. Both groups, the Nestorian Christians and their Sunni Muslim neighbors in Hakkari, refused to acknowledge any allegiance to the Porte or to pay any form of tax.

During the decade of the 1830's the accounts of "official" European explorers had publicized the exotic and remote region of "Turkish Kurdistan." Its strategic position as a bridge-land and the activities of the Army of the Taurus to subjugate its highland population had redirected European attention to this hitherto neglected land. Both the West and the Ottoman

Empire were in the process of rediscovering "Turkish Kurdistan." While the main interest centered on the politico-military sphere with its ever-present "Turco-Egyptian Question," the attendant field of geography had received increasing attention. With the lines of communication through "Turkish Kurdistan" relatively secure for travelers and only the Munzur and Hakkari Mountains still unexplored, the prevailing conditions appeared propitious for a privately sponsored European expedition to enter the region with the primary purpose of acquiring geographic and sociological information.

Preparations for the First Privately Financed Expedition.--With the termination of Chesney's Euphrates Expedition in 1837, those members who had been hired by the British government only for the duration of the expedition found themselves unemployed. Each was given sufficient funds for the return trip to England which fulfilled the government's obligation. Among this group of currently unemployed explorers were William F. Ainsworth, the surgeon and geologist of the expedition, and Christian A. Rassam, the Arabic translator. The two had returned to England from Baghdad via the "Fertile Crescent" route and the military road through "Turkish Kurdistan" during the spring and summer of 1837,<sup>4</sup> and both desired to revisit the region for different reasons.

After Ainsworth and Rassam arrived in England, the former whose reputation was well-established as a surgeon and a geologist resumed his medical practice, while devoting his leisure to the preparation of his geological observations, which would be published during the next year under the title of Researches in Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea, forming part of the labours of the Euphrates Expedition. However, Rassam's

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<sup>4</sup>Above, pp. 109-111.

situation was entirely different, for he had been a rather obscure translator of Arabic manuscripts at the college of Malta prior to the Euphrates Expedition. He joined the expedition with the hope of obtaining permanent employment with the British government: "When Mr. Rassam joined the Euphrates expedition at Malta, Sir Frederic Ponsonby, then governor of that island, had promised him that in case Her Majesty's Government did nothing for him at the end of that expedition, he would provide something for him. That brave soldier and excellent man, however, died in the interval."<sup>5</sup>

Rassam was faced with the dilemma of being unemployed in England while his wife, whom he had not seen in three years, remained in Malta. He wanted to return to his home in Mosul, where his father was a clergyman in the Nestorian Church, but the British government's unwillingness to hire him and the death of his benefactor, Sir Frederic Ponsonby, had ended any hope of employment as a public servant. Rassam now had to find a temporary source of income sufficient to reunite his scattered family. The Protestant missionary movement and the growing European interest in the socio-geographic aspects of remote lands proved to be the solution to Rassam's dilemma.

After six months of fruitless effort to gain employment with the British government, Rassam turned to private organizations which might be able to utilize his unique qualifications in the Middle East. In the latter part of 1837, he approached the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge with a project to acquire more information concerning the Nestorian tribes of Hakkari, the only group of Christians who still maintained their independence within the Ottoman Empire. The missionary society, although eager to enter the field in competition with the Papists

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<sup>5</sup>Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 333 and 334.



and, above all, with the American missionaries who had "seceded from the Church of England and have corrupted the doctrines of Christianity,"<sup>6</sup> lacked sufficient funds to finance an exploratory expedition. However, Rassam also approached the Royal Geographical Society of London, which in the previous year had awarded its gold medal to Colonel Chesney "for the general conduct of the 'Euphrates Expedition' in 1835-36, and for the accessions to comparative and physical geography relating to the countries of Northern Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Delta of Susiana."<sup>7</sup>

The Geographical Society was amenable to Rassam's proposal, and agreed to participate with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in a jointly financed expedition to Kurdistan. During the spring of 1838, preparations were made for the first privately sponsored expedition into the eastern highlands of Asia Minor. Ainsworth, with his previous experience on the Euphrates expedition and his devoutness as a member of the Church of England, was offered the job of heading the expedition. He would be accompanied by his former traveling companion, Christian Rassam, and the expedition would be supervised by the "Kurdistan Committee" headed by Ainsworth's old friend, Colonel Chesney.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 248 and 249; also quoted in Laurie, op. cit., p. 152, and Joseph, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>7</sup>J.R.G.S., Vol. 11 (1841), p. xxxvii. Although there are several references to Rassam's proposal and later participation in the Kurdistan Expedition, only two letters addressed by Rassam to the Geographical Society are to be found in the society's correspondence file. These pertain to the initiation of the expedition, and all others relevant to the expedition were surreptitiously removed from the file during the second half of the nineteenth century (interview with L.P. Kirwan, Director and Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, London, March, 20, 1965).

<sup>8</sup>John Washington, Secretary, "Instructions of the Council of the Royal Geographical Society of London addressed to the Leaders of the Expedition for Exploring in Kurdistan. June 1st, 1838," J.R.G.S., Vol. 9 (1839), pp. xiii-xdi.

Although Ainsworth and Rassam had traveled in "Turkish Kurdistan" and were well qualified by their diverse backgrounds to conduct exploration in the region, both lacked experience in mapping and surveying which was to be one of the primary objects of the expedition. In order to fulfill all the requirements desired by both societies, and yet minimize the number of individuals involved in the expedition, it was necessary to find at least one other person whose background qualified him in the more scientific aspects of mapping and surveying. A young Irish engineer named Thomas MacNamara Russell volunteered for the position, and the Kurdistan Expedition was formed.

By April, 1838, Rassam's scheme to return to Mosul was well-underway; two private organizations had each agreed to provide five hundred pounds sterling for the forthcoming expedition, "This sum of 1000£ will be at Mr. Ainsworth's disposal, for the objects of the expedition...; but you will be pleased to bear in mind, that it is understood that this sum is to supply the whole of your expenses for the space of 2 years from the period of your quitting England for Constantinople; and Mr. Ainsworth will regulate his drafts accordingly."<sup>9</sup>

In May, Rassam left England for Malta to visit his wife. Traveling on the expense account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Royal Geographical Society of London, he was to meet the other two members of the Kurdistan Expedition in Constantinople. Ainsworth and Russell remained in London to purchase the necessary surveying instruments and to receive final instructions from the "Kurdistan Committee."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Washington, "Instructions of the Council of the Royal Geographical Society of London addressed to the Leaders of the Expedition for Exploring in Kurdistan, June 1st, 1838," op. cit., p. xxi.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. xiv.

Rassam had merely proposed an expedition to gain additional knowledge about the Nestorian tribes of Hakkari, but neither society was willing to finance such an endeavor so limited in scope. After his departure from England, the forthcoming expedition was assigned additional tasks which appeared to be in consonance with its costs and duration. Ainsworth was instructed to examine first "the Nushar pass, where the Euphrates is hemmed in by, and passes through, the chain of the Taurus mountains; and secondly, the cataracts above Samosata. . . ."11 After this, he was to proceed to Mosul, where:

the principal attention of the expedition will be turned to the country of the Nestorian, Chaldaean, and Jacobite Christians on the eastern banks of the Tigris, and generally, as far as time and circumstances will admit, to the whole of the Carduchian and Gordiaean mountains, now comprehended under the name of Kurdistan . . . you will make it your business to inform yourselves of the general state and condition of these communities, of their religious establishments, of their population, wealth, agriculture, commerce, and occupations; the state of education prevailing amongst them, the liturgies they use, the peculiar tenets they profess, and the various languages and dialects which they write or speak, and what historical records they may possess of their original emigration.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to these rather comprehensive tasks, Ainsworth was also ordered to explore "Sert, Amadiyah (the seat of the noblest of Kurd tribes), Julamerk, Rawanduz and determine the position and elevation of the Peak of Rawanduz."<sup>13</sup> At the same time, "The political and moral state of the tribes of Mohammedan Kurds throughout this district, their languages, superstitions, and other peculiarities, will also, of course, not escape your observation; and it would be desirable to verify the reports concerning

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<sup>11</sup>Washington, "Instructions of the Council...", *op. cit.*, p. xv; one month after the Royal Geographical Society issued its instructions to the Kurdistan Expedition, Captain Helmuth von Moltke descended the Euphrates through the Taurus.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xvii.

the Yezidis, or Fire Worshipers, or Shaitan perest, or Devil Worshipers."<sup>14</sup>  
The final task of the expedition would be to make a circuit of Lake Urmiah  
and Lake Van.<sup>15</sup>

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Royal Geographical Society were determined to receive the maximum benefit from the Kurdistan Expedition. During its two year period (June, 1838, to June, 1840), which included transit to and from England and two four-month winters precluding any exploratory activity in the mountainous regions of "Turkish Kurdistan," the expedition was expected to accomplish an inordinate number of tasks. In effect, Ainsworth had less than twelve months to conduct exploratory activities. No consideration was given to the possibility of delay. Sickness, inclement weather, the ambiguities of Oriental politics, and native hostility - all of which had delayed the Euphrates Expedition for nearly a year - were forgotten; the hardships and privation of exploration in a remote region remained in the dim past as Colonel Chesney, basking in his newly-won laurels, and the "Kurdistan Committee" planned for the new expedition in the comfort of the Geographical Society's lounges.

Ainsworth in his characteristically naive way failed to object to the rather unrealistic plans imposed upon him, and confined his activities to the purchasing of equipment required for the expedition. Having agreed to abide by the society's instructions, including the time and monetary restrictions, he and Russell left London traveling across

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<sup>14</sup>Washington, "Instructions of the Council...", op. cit., p. xviii.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.; the society was unaware that the British Consul in Erzurum, James Brant, was also preparing an expedition which would include a circuit of Lake Van.

Europe to meet Rassam, the third member of the Kurdistan Expedition, in Constantinople during the summer of 1838.

Across Asia Minor to Kurdistan.—When Ainsworth and Russell arrived in Constantinople, they not only met Christian Rassam, but also his wife whom he had brought from Malta. Rassam had charged his wife's passage to the account of the expedition, and expected her to accompany them to Mosul. The additional tasks assigned to the expedition after Rassam had left London, altered the party's itinerary. Mrs. Rassam could not possibly accompany her husband on an extended trip into the unexplored regions of "Turkish Kurdistan," and would be forced to remain in Constantinople; however, the Rassams were destitute, and had planned to use the expedition's funds to sustain both of them until they arrived in Mosul. Ainsworth, as head of the expedition, was now confronted with the prospect of having to provide funds for Mrs. Rassam in Constantinople, while the Kurdistan Expedition conducted its two-year exploration. Rather than expend a part of the expedition's limited resources to abet this artful scheme, he chose to delay their departure while he informed the "Kurdistan Committee" of Rassam's rather dubious conduct.<sup>16</sup>

By early September, Captain Washington, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, had made arrangements to supply Mrs. Rassam independently of the expedition's resources,<sup>17</sup> and Ainsworth's party was ready to leave Constantinople:

All I hope will now go on well. Rassam does not much like the changes that took place in the arrangements of the Expedition subsequent to his departure and says that he expected to proceed to Musul at once. I shall however be able to subdue his worry gradually. I regret to say poor fellow that his hasty departure for Constantinople

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<sup>16</sup>Letter Nr. 3 from William F. Ainsworth to Captain Washington, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society of London, dated Constantinople, September 9, 1838 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

was owing to his not being made happy at home. It appears that the circumstances of his having been engaged three years in an arduous service without obtaining any advantage from such employment did not render him a welcome guest where I suppose practical virtues are more in esteem than the theoretical.<sup>18</sup>

Although Mrs. Rassam's surprise appearance in Constantinople had caused a minor delay, another circumstance completely altered the Kurdistan Expedition's proposed itinerary. Originally, Ainsworth and his party had planned to use the Black Sea route by steamer to Trabzon for a quick and easy approach to the eastern highlands of Asia Minor; however, the occurrence of plague on board the steamer plying between Trabzon and Constantinople had temporarily interrupted navigation on that part of the Black Sea. The expedition was forced to take the time-consuming land route across Anatolia. Leaving Scutari on September 18, 1838, Russell, Rassam, and Ainsworth set out on horseback along the well-known caravan route to the East. By December, the party had managed to travel as far as Angora; however, the bitter Anatolian winter discouraged them from continuing their advance.<sup>19</sup>

During the three winter months, the Kurdistan Expedition remained in Angora confining its activities to limited excursions within the immediate area. By late March, Ainsworth's group was able to resume its journey toward "Turkish Kurdistan." During April, the party mapped and explored the region southeast of Angora, and had made a circuit of the Tuz Golu; however, the expedition was still in Anatolia. After spending a week investigating the hydrography in environs of Kayseri, Ainsworth

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<sup>18</sup>Private Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, September 9, 1838 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

<sup>19</sup>William Ainsworth, "Notes on a Journey from Constantinople, by Heraclea, to Angora, in Autumn of 1838," J.R.G.S., Vol. 9 (1839), p. 216.

finally decided to give up his dilatory interest in ancient geography, and follow a more direct route to the Euphrates, one of the principal object's of the expedition:

Whatever may still be the difficulties that will hang over the statements of the ancients upon this subject, nothing can be more certain than that no rivulet or river flows from that neighborhood to that called by the Turks Tokhmah Su, the sources of which, to put the question beyond all doubt, we investigated in a subsequent part of our travels.<sup>20</sup>

On May 9th, the expedition left Kayseri for "Turkish Kurdistan" along the same route which von Moltke had mapped and explored six months earlier.<sup>21</sup> After crossing the northernmost perimeter of the Seyhan-Ceyhan basin, the party followed the course of the Tokhmah Su to Malatya, only to discover that Hafiz Pasha had moved his army across the Taurus during the previous month. Ainsworth had hoped to obtain the help of the Serasker, with whom he was acquainted, in order to explore the course of the Euphrates through the Taurus. However, the expedition's unofficial status as a privately sponsored enterprise and the general condition of insecurity forced the three explorers to give up the project:

It was our intention to have proceeded from Malatyah along the course of the Euphrates, more particularly with a view to exploring the pass of Elegia (I'lijah; called by D'Anville, Pas de Mushar,) but the disturbed state of the Kurds rendered this journey impracticable. They had only lately been attacked in their mountain strongholds in these countries, viz. Kakhtah and Gergen Kal'ah-si, by the

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<sup>20</sup>Ainsworth, "Journey from Angora by Kaisariyah, Malatiyah, and Gergen Kal'eh-si, to Bir or Birehjik," J.R.G.S., Vol. 10 (1841), p. 308. Although Ainsworth was well-read in the neo-classical tradition, his pedantic knowledge of ancient geography sometimes hindered the progress of the expedition. Rather than use Strabo and others as a general guide, he tended to follow their geographic descriptions in detail, which caused a considerable amount of delay. In this specific instance, if Ainsworth had traversed the Seyhan-Ceyhan basin first, he would have realized immediately that the Tokhmah Su formed part of the Euphrates drainage system and not that of the Seyhan-Ceyhan.

<sup>21</sup>Above, pp. 143-146.

troops of Hafiz Pasha; but this campaign, owing to the abundant resources of the mountaineers, had turned out of little avail, and Kakhtah was still in open rebellion. The Kaim-makam, therefore, refused to lend us horses, or to assist us with guides on our expedition.<sup>22</sup>

Having failed to fulfill the first of many tasks assigned to the expedition, Ainsworth resolved to approach the Euphrates from another direction:

Under these circumstances, in order to render our passage through Mount Taurus as useful to geography as possible, we resolved upon advancing by the pass of Erkenek, and visiting the unexplored districts of Besni and Adeyaman, in order, if possible, to reach the Euphrates at the southern end of the pass, and in the neighborhood of Gergen Kal'ah-si.<sup>23</sup>

Although the head of the Kurdistan Expedition attributed his selection of a route across the Taurus to the lofty advancement of geographical knowledge, the veracity of his statement is questionable. The route through "the pass of Erkenek" and the "unexplored districts of Besni and Adeyaman" had been mapped by von Moltke in 1838, resurveyed by the Prussian officer in the early spring of 1839, and resurveyed again by Captain Fischer and him only three weeks prior to Ainsworth's pronouncement. By the time the Kurdistan Expedition chose to follow this route, it was firmly established as the main line of communication and supply across the Taurus to the Ottoman army at Birecik. Artillery and supply wagons moved daily from Malatya via this "unexplored" route, and while it was not the most direct line across the mountains, it did offer the least difficult and most secure approach to the region south of the Taurus.

Ainsworth's small and unprotected party avoided any possibility of ambush by the Kurds in the remote valleys of the Taurus. Leaving Malatya

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<sup>22</sup>Ainsworth, "Notes on a Journey from Kaisariyah, by Malatiyah, to Bir or Birehjik, in May and June, 1839," *op. cit.*, p. 323.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.



on May 30th, they followed the army's main supply line as far south as Besni, and then turned east toward the Euphrates always remaining within the region protected by Hafiz Pasha's rear guard. Near the confluence of the Kahta Chay and the Euphrates, the expedition headed north along the right bank of the river, and arrived at Gergen Kal'ah-si (Gerger) on June 9th: "The Mutesellim was then with the Ser-'Asker's army, and his representative made it a point of telling us on our arrival, that the Kurds could not be kept in subjection, that he had no command over them, and requested that we not pitch our tent far from the town, as otherwise he could not be answerable for robberies."<sup>24</sup>

The Kurdistan Expedition remained only one night at Gerger, and decided that it would be more prudent to investigate the already well-explored course of the Euphrates south of the Taurus: "The whole time of our stay at Gergen Kal'eh-si was occupied in endeavours to keep the Kurds in good humour."<sup>25</sup> The three "intrepid" explorers, Ainsworth, Russell, and Rassam, crossed the Euphrates by kellek, and then followed the left bank of the river toward Birecik. They had used up nearly half the time allotted to the expedition, and had failed to accomplish even the first of their objectives.

The Battle of Nizib.--For several years the concerted efforts of the Seraskers, Rashid Muhammad Pasha and Hafiz Pasha, to subdue the rebellious population of "Turkish Kurdistan," re-establish communications with the eyalet of Baghdad, and institute military reforms, which in turn necessitated economic and political reform, had acted as a magnet

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<sup>24</sup>Ainsworth, "Notes on a Journey from Kaisariyah...in May and June, 1839," op. cit., p. 329.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 332.

attracting European political agents, military advisors, and journalists, to the area of operations. The primary stimulus for all this activity was the "Turco-Egyptian Question" with its underlying geo-political implications for both the Ottoman Empire and those European powers with vital interests in the East.

With the movement of the main Ottoman army across the Taurus and the departure of the fleet from Constantinople, Sultan Mahmud had committed nearly the entire military strength of his empire to an irrevocable course of action, and by June, 1839, all attention was focused on the Syrian frontier. The Royal Geographical Society's Kurdistan Expedition, whose objectives were totally irrelevant to the "Turco-Egyptian Question," found the temptation irresistible. Everything - arms, men, and equipment - seemed to be moving south to Birecik or Nizib, and Ainsworth was guiding his little expedition toward the very center of military activity.

His decision to visit the Serasker's headquarters at Nizib involved several considerations. The expedition's experience at Malatya and Gerger had demonstrated one of major disadvantages to privately sponsored explorations. Ottoman governmental agents, and, needless to say, the local population, were not only suspicious but also reluctant to provide any form of aid to a group of alien Christians whose mapping and surveying activities represented an unwelcomed and generally misunderstood intrusion into their way of life. If the Kurdistan Expedition was to accomplish any of its objectives, it would have to acquire some type of official sanction from the ruling authority in "Turkish Kurdistan." For this reason, Ainsworth wished to obtain a firman from the Serasker himself.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ainsworth, "Notes on a Journey from Kaisariyah...in May and June, 1839," op. cit., p. 335.

While the firman was the ostensible and certainly valid reason to visit Hafiz Pasha, there were other factors which attracted the expedition to Nizib. During their three-month stay in Angora, Ainsworth and his companions had ample opportunity to converse with Captain Karl Vincke, the Prussian military advisor to the army under command of Izzet Pasha of Angora. The three English explorers and Vincke had a mutual interest in the geography of Asia Minor,<sup>27</sup> and undoubtedly compared notes. In the process, Vincke probably mentioned the exploratory efforts of the other Prussian advisors, particularly those of von Moltke who was the most active one in "Turkish Kurdistan." Since the Kurdistan Expedition had failed to follow the course of the Euphrates through the Taurus, Ainsworth may have wanted to talk to von Moltke, the only European who had been inside the great canyon of the river.

Behind the firman and the quest for geographical knowledge lay another factor which may have dominated all other considerations. Although the Kurdistan Expedition was a privately sponsored project, its leader secretly operated as a political agent for the British government. While the members of the expedition were still in Constantinople, Lord Ponsonby engaged Ainsworth to report on the politico-military state of affairs in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, ". . . the political correspondence of the expedition was actively carried on by myself."<sup>28</sup> Neither the "Kurdistan Committee" of the Royal Geographical Society nor

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<sup>27</sup>Vincke later wrote three essays pertaining to the geography of Asia Minor, "Das nordliche Kleinasien bis Angora," pp. 36-43, "Das mittlere Kisil-Irmak Gebiet," pp. 43-48, and "Der Antitaurus und das Tochma Su," pp. 48-53, in Kiepert, Memoir uber die Construction der Karte von Kleinasien und Turkisch Armenien, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup>Letter, Ainsworth to Dr. Norton Shaw, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society of London, dated Hammersmith, March 23, 1850 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was aware of this arrangement between Ainsworth and Lord Ponsonby.<sup>29</sup>

When the Kurdistan Expedition arrived in Malatya, the recently evacuated headquarters of the Serasker, its members were to explore the Euphrates below Komurhan; however, the dissident Kurdish elements in the region and the Kaim-makam's negative attitude forced them to abandon the project. At this point, Ainsworth and his companions had the choice of several routes by which they could continue their journey to the region of principal interest for the expedition, "Turkish Kurdistan" east of the Tigris. By following the military road from Malatya to Kharput and then to Diyarbakir, they could join the "Fertile Crescent" route to Mosul, thus bypassing the area of military operations along the Turco-Egyptian frontier. In a similar manner, the party could proceed from Kharput along the route, which Brant's expedition had used in the previous summer, to Mush and Bitlis. This latter route was the most direct approach from Malatya to Lake Van, the closest geographic feature on the expedition's agenda, and in view of the expedition's limited amount of time, probably the best route to follow.

While the aforementioned routes appeared to be the most appropriate in terms of the expedition's stated objectives, Ainsworth, acting in a dual capacity as head of the expedition and as political agent for the British government, diverted his party southward across the Taurus to the main area of military activity within the Ottoman Empire. This detour of 460 kilometers through the well-explored region north of Birecik to obtain a firman from the Serasker later proved to be a mistake which would wreck

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<sup>29</sup>There appears to be no evidence to indicate that either Rassam or Russell were aware of this arrangement.

the Kurdistan Expedition and nearly ruin whatever reputation Dr. William F. Ainsworth had as an explorer.<sup>30</sup>

On June 15, 1839, the three gentlemen from the Royal Geographical Society of London arrived at the Serasker's camp in Nizib: ". . . on our arrival at the camp, we found a large and showy tent, with a numerous retinue of servants, placed at our disposal, and our table was served from the Pasha's kitchen."<sup>31</sup> This Oriental hospitality on such a grand scale was irresistible, and Ainsworth's party chose to remain with the Ottoman army. During the next five days, the explorers exchanged notes and observations with Captains Laue, von Moltke, and von Mühlbach, who supervised the construction of Ottoman fortifications and the positioning of artillery.<sup>32</sup>

The long-anticipated confrontation of Egyptian and Ottoman forces occurred on June 20th. The forward elements of the Egyptian army attacked the Turkish advance guard, and captured several guns and equipment; however, the main body remained immobile. On the following day, the Egyptians again reconnoitered the Ottoman defenses, and both sides engaged in a long range artillery duel, which was entirely ineffective. During the next morning, there was increased activity in the Egyptian camp. At first, it appeared as if Ibrahim Pasha had ordered a general

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<sup>30</sup>On May 22, 1839, while the expedition was in Malatya, Ainsworth met General Janowski, a Polish officer who "was in the confidence of the British Ambassador" and was on his way to Constantinople from Baghdad. Janowski briefed Ainsworth on "the actual state of Turkish politics." Therefore, the latter was fully cognizant of the great concentration of Ottoman troops and equipment massing along the frontier prior to the expedition's departure from Malatya (Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 253).

<sup>31</sup>Ainsworth, "Notes on a Journey from Kaisariyah...in May and June, 1839," op. cit., p. 335.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., and Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. I., pp. 311-316.

retreat; however, several hours later, Laue and Moltke realized that the Egyptian columns were executing a turning movement which would outflank the Ottoman defensive position. The two Prussians reported the maneuver to Hafiz Pasha, and unanimously recommended a general attack, which was reduced to an insignificant demonstration by the poorly organized Ottoman cavalry.<sup>33</sup>

At noon, the Serasker and Moltke moved forward to an observation post in order to personally assess the Egyptian maneuver. The Prussian advisor showed his commander the enemy columns marching across the Ottoman front to occupy a more favorable position on the weakly defended left flank. Moltke declared that if the commander-in-chief did not wish to attack the Egyptians during their turning maneuver, then the only alternative was to withdraw to the more defensible position at Birecik. The thought of retreating in the face of the enemy was repugnant to the Serasker, but he also valued the advice of the young Prussian who had served him so well in the past. All the principles of Clausewitz supported von Moltke's conclusions, but Hafiz Pasha with all his liberality was still a product of his own civilization. Honor was the foremost consideration in the Serasker's reluctance to withdraw; however, Moltke eventually persuaded the commander to accept his proposal. The staff conference ended with the Prussian remaining to observe the enemy, while the Serasker went to issue the orders to withdraw.<sup>34</sup>

An hour later, Moltke arrived at headquarters with the intelligence that Ibrahim Pasha had moved part of his forces across the Kezrin river into Ottoman territory. He found the Serasker surrounded by the Ulema,

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<sup>33</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 351 and 352.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 352-354.

who had influenced the commander to change his decision:

Mon renseignement ne pouvait être exact; l'adversaire n'avait d'autre intention que de se retirer demain matin sur Alep. La cause du sultan était juste; Allah lui viendrait en aide, et toute retraite serait un déshonneur; j'étais autorisé à prendre position sur l'aile gauche, en faisant face au pont.<sup>35</sup>

Angry and disillusioned by the interference of religious leaders into what he considered to be a purely military affair, Moltke retired to his tent, but not before he had advised Ainsworth that by the next day the Turkish forces would have difficulty defending their position at Nizib and the three English explorers would have to be ready for any eventuality. The members of the Kurdistan Expedition went to see Hafiz Pasha immediately, and requested permission to leave the camp; however, their request was denied.<sup>36</sup>

While Ainsworth and his companions were in the headquarters, von Moltke's intelligence concerning the movement of Egyptian units was confirmed, and by nightfall the enemy would be in position to attack the Ottoman camp. All major unit commanders and the five European military advisors were ordered to report to the Serasker's tent immediately:

The Barons Mulbach and Moltke came up: the latter had had some previous conversation; he was angry and did not sit down. Mulbach's interpreter was as timid as dragomans generally are, and Mr. Rassam was kind enough to lead the conversation. It consisted, on the part of the Prussian officers, in a simple and definite statement of only two alternatives: an immediate attack upon the Egyptians, or a retreat to the intrenchments of Birehjik; the attendants and officers around the Serasker recoiled, and stared to hear the Europeans in what they deemed an unnecessary hurry. The mollah grinned ghastly. Hafiz Pasha looked perplexed, and turning to me, asked my opinion. I at once said I was no soldier, but Baron Mulbach had fought at Jena and at Auerstadt, and was an officer of much experience, as Baron

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<sup>35</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 354.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., and Ainsworth, "Notes on a Journey from Kaisariyah...in May and June, 1839," op. cit., p. 336.

Moltke was of acknowledged ability, and their opinion ought to have great weight. He struck his breast, and his eyes were suffused with tears. 'I cannot retreat,' he said, 'I am ashamed to retreat!'<sup>37</sup>

The Serasker was resolute, and the European military advisors had to accept his decision.

Throughout the following day, the opposing armies repositioned their forces, and avoided contact. However, that night Laue and Moltke led an infantry brigade and one artillery battery to within a thousand meters of the Egyptian camp. At midnight, they opened fire in the direction of Ibrahim Pasha's tent and that of his Chief of Staff, Sulayman Pasha (Colonel Sevres). The surprise attack threw the Egyptians into disorder. When the enemy batteries finally returned the fire, the small Ottoman force had to retire; however, it had served its purpose in bolstering the morale of Turkish soldiers.<sup>38</sup>

On the morning of June 24, 1839, the Egyptians began their attack; advancing in six columns against the static Ottoman defense, they were able to quickly overrun the Turkish outposts, and take possession of the village of Nizib. The Egyptian advance was temporarily halted by Ottoman artillery fire. For forty-five minutes, both sides engaged in an artillery duel, and the battle remained undecided. The two Egyptian columns attacking the well-fortified right flank were thrown into complete disorder. In the center sector, the bombardment had failed to dislodge either of the opposing forces; however, the Turkish irregular troops on the extreme left gave way. For another half hour, the Ottoman regular units managed to withstand the attack on their left flank. By that time, additional troops and munitions had arrived from the Egyptian reserve to increase the pressure

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<sup>37</sup>Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 334 and 335.

<sup>38</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 356-358.



of the attack. The Egyptian batteries opened fire with grape-shot at a new range of five hundred meters, and the Turkish left flank began to waiver.<sup>39</sup>

The disorder and confusion of units on the left wing quickly spread to other sectors. Hafiz Pasha seizing a battalion standard attempted to rally his forces on the right flank, but the battalion refused to follow him. Soon the entire Ottoman defense collapsed; the battle became a rout with the Turkish troops fleeing in general retreat.<sup>40</sup>

During the final stages of the battle, Moltke had managed to locate Laue and Mühlbach in the center sector, and when they were convinced that the situation was hopeless, the three retreated westward to Gaziantep. However, upon arriving there that night, they were forced to continue their march because the townspeople feared reprisals from Ibrahim Pasha. The weary Prussians finally reached Marash on the morning of the 26th and remained there for two days. All direct communication across the Taurus had been interrupted by the Kurds and the tribes of nomadic Turkomans who were now in open rebellion; therefore, Moltke and his companions chose to accompany a party of eighty horsemen on their way to rejoin the Serasker in Malatya. Detouring around the mountains through Goksun, Elbistan,<sup>41</sup> and Darende, the three Prussian officers rejoined Hafiz Pasha, who had retreated in a more direct line via Besni to Malatya.

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<sup>39</sup>In addition to the accounts of Ainsworth and Moltke, Petit, one of the two French military advisors to the Ottoman army, also published a brief report (see Poujoulat, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 447-450).

<sup>40</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 361. The Ottomans lost an estimated 4,500 men killed in combat at Nizib, while Egyptian losses were placed at about 3,000 (Poujoulat, op. cit., p. 450).

<sup>41</sup>At Elbistan, the Prussian found Captain Vincke with the army of Izzet Pasha of Angora (Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., p. 364).

There, they waited in suspense with the remnants of the Army of the Taurus for word from Constantinople.<sup>42</sup>

Although the Ottomans had suffered an overwhelming defeat at Nizib and most of "Turkish Kurdistan" was now in a state of rebellion, Ibrahim Pasha had been unable to exploit the chaotic situation. After the battle, the Egyptian troops were also disorganized, and pursuit of the fleeing Turks was impossible. However, while the victorious Egyptian commander sat among the great prize of booty captured at Nizib and the supply camp at Birecik, other events occurred which compounded the Egyptian victory. On July 1, 1839, Sultan Mahmud died before news of the Ottoman defeat had reached Constantinople. Less than two weeks later, the magnificent Turkish fleet sailed into the harbor at Alexandria, and on July 13, 1839, the Kapudan Pasha, Achmet Fevzy, surrendered the fleet with officers and men to Muhammad 'Ali, Sultan Mahmud's arch-enemy.<sup>43</sup>

By late July, the imperial envoy from Constantinople had arrived in Malatya with a firman deposing Hafiz Pasha as Serasker and temporarily relegating him to Sivas. Moltke and the other Prussians were invited to return to the capital. They accompanied their pasha as far as Sivas, and then traveled to Samsun where they boarded the steamer bound for Constantinople. There, Moltke had an interview with his old benefactor Husrev Pasha, who had been recalled from exile and was now the Grand Vezir. The young Prussian was charged with the task of preparing a written report on all the events leading to the Battle of Nizib. The report would be

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<sup>42</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 362-365.

<sup>43</sup>Reid, op. cit., p. 54; Creasy, op. cit., pp. 524 and 525; and Marriott, op. cit., pp. 237 and 238.

submitted to the Grand Vezir who would then determine the future of Hafiz Pasha.<sup>44</sup>

When Moltke presented his report, it reflected the characteristic humanism of its author. The report was drawn in such a manner as to cast Hafiz Pasha in the most favorable light. Moltke considered him to be the best Turkish general, and compared the ex-Serasker to an artist charged with the construction of an arch to whom one offers soft clay rather than hard rock. He adapts his materials beautifully; however, in the first shock the arch inevitably collapses, for the master is able to fashion the material, but not change it.<sup>45</sup>

By his report and through his influence with the diplomatic corps, Moltke was able to persuade the Porte to appoint Hafiz Pasha as the pasha of the eyalet of Erzurum; however, his own position as a military advisor was rapidly deteriorating. The fatal disasters in June and July caused a reaction against military reforms and modernization. Sultan Mahmud's son and successor, Abdulmecid was a young boy, lacking both his father's iron will and courage, and the more conservative elements within the Sublime Porte soon dominated his affairs. In the wake of this reaction, the foreign military advisors lost the power and prestige which they had acquired during the latter years of Sultan Mahmud's reign. During August, 1839, Moltke, Muhlbach, and Vincke submitted their resignations, and on September 9th, they left for Germany.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Moltke, Lettres, op. cit., pp. 367-370.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 370 and 371.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 386. Captain Wilhelm von Laue chose to remain in the Turkish service, and later participated in the Anglo-Turkish invasion of Syria in 1840 (see W.P. Hunter, Narrative of the Late Expedition to Syria, 2 vols. [London, 1842], Vol. II, pp. 3-10).

Reorganization of the Kurdistan Expedition.---While the decisive defeat at Nizib ended temporarily the Prusso-Turkish military marriage, it nearly ruined the Kurdistan Expedition. Ainsworth and his companions, Russell and Rassam, had failed to obtain permission to leave the Ottoman camp in the days immediately prior to the battle, and were forced to await the outcome of the conflict. On the morning of June 24th, the three explorers prepared for all possible contingencies: "Early in the morning we had endeavoured to secure horses sufficient to carry off our baggage in case of misadventure, and while Mr. Russell and myself rode out to see the progress of the event, Mr. Rassam was to superintend, if possible, their starting."<sup>47</sup>

In case of retreat, the three agreed to reunite at Gaziantep, which the Prussians had also designated as their rendezvous point. However, during the course of the battle and the subsequent confusion of the retreat, Ainsworth and Russell fled northward rather than west to Gaziantep, and only upon reaching Rum-Qal'ah did they realize their error. Resolving to find Rassam, the two left the main body of Ottoman troops, and headed west toward the direction of their previously arranged meeting place. The chaotic state of the country with wandering bands of deserters in search of loot quickly convinced them to rejoin the main line of retreat, and on the 26th of June, they arrived in Besni to find Mr. Rassam in good health but without the expedition's baggage and instruments.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Ainsworth, "Notes on a Journey from Kaisariyah...in May and June, 1839," op. cit., p. 336.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 337 and 338.

Reunited at Besni, the three members of the Kurdistan Expedition continued their retreat with a large body of Ottoman troops heading for Malatya. There, they received the equivalent of sixty pounds sterling from Hafiz Pasha to pay for their return trip to Constantinople. The military road to Sivas had been closed by the depredations of the Akhja Dagh Kurds, and the party was forced to detour north through Divrigi to Sivas. By the middle of July, Ainsworth and his two companions arrived at Samsun hoping to board a steamer for Constantinople:

Much anxiety prevailed in the town, to which many Europeans had repaired from the interior, on account of the alarm produced by the death of the Sultan, and the defeat of the Turkish army. There had also been several cases of plague in the town, which malady had been brought by a Circassian vessel. Under these circumstances, we resolved upon not waiting the chance of a steamboat, but to continue our journey by land.<sup>49</sup>

On July 28th, the pathetic Kurdistan Expedition returned to the safety of Constantinople and the British Embassy. After nearly a year of exploration, Ainsworth, Russell, and Rassen had failed to accomplish any of the tasks assigned to them by their sponsors. At Nizib, they had lost most of the expedition's equipment as well as their notes and money, and during their retreat across Asia Minor, Russell was injured to such a degree that he would have to return to England before he could ride again. Ainsworth, as head of the expedition, had to communicate this sad state of affairs to the "Kurdistan Committee" of the Royal Geographical Society.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Ainsworth, "Notes on a Journey from Kaisariyah...in May and June, 1839," *op. cit.*, p. 339; and Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, October 6, 1839 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*; and Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, September 16, 1839 (in the Correspondence File of the Society). Although Ainsworth in his published accounts of their retreat (see "Notes on a Journey from Kaisariyah...in May and June, 1839," *op. cit.*, pp. 336-340, and *Travels in Asia Minor*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 349) minimized the expedition's losses, the party had fled from Nizib leaving its baggage and equipment which the Egyptians captured. Later, the Kurdistan Expedition's notes and part of its equipment were recovered through the diplomatic representations of Lord Ponsonby and the British Vice-Consul in Aleppo.

The expedition's dismal report caused considerable consternation in London. To Chesney, Washington, and other members of the "Kurdistan Committee," Ainsworth's decision to go to Nizib was a "fatal mistake." He had foolishly involved the expedition in a politico-military affair which seemed totally irrelevant to the objectives of both sponsoring societies. He had not only wasted a year in Asia Minor, lost the expedition's expensive surveying instruments and his notes, but also caused the injury of Thomas Russell, the only member who was trained in mapping and surveying techniques. After paying for Russell's passage back to England, Ainsworth had a balance of 133 pounds and 16 shillings from the original 1000 pounds sterling, and this would neither pay for Rassam and his return nor re-equip the expedition. To further complicate the situation, the state of anarchy in "Turkish Kurdistan" had temporarily closed the region to travel and exploration.<sup>51</sup>

Under these circumstances, the "Kurdistan Committee" ordered Ainsworth and Rassam to wait in Constantinople while the two societies decided what to do with their jointly sponsored expedition. However, Ainsworth urged that they be allowed to continue to Mosul and visit the Nestorians:

With regard to the news from the interior, I told you in my last of the proceedings of the American missionaries, since that another a Mr. Jones has arrived here and left for Uramiya - This makes the fourth that is already there. The Americans are making the country of the Khaldis a center for great operations. The last number of the report of the board of missions of that country is almost entirely occupied with them, and they appear resolved to approach them on every side. It is high time that England should do something and I should be at once grieved and surprised at the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge, should be luke warm in a cause so full of interest and so pregnant with important results. I myself am so anxious upon the subject that I adhere to my opinion

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<sup>51</sup>Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, October 6, 1839 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

first emitted, that you should send us at once to Mosul sacrificing a little geographic research that we commence our amicable arrangements with these primitive Christians.<sup>52</sup>

By September, 1839, the "Kurdistan Committee" had decided to continue the expedition, and ordered Ainsworth to proceed to Mosul before the winter snows. An additional sum of 837 pounds sterling was provided by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Royal Geographical Society, who believed that Ainsworth and Rassam would be able to travel across Asia Minor to Mosul, penetrate the Hakkari Mountains, visit the mountain Nestorians, and return to England in a matter of months. Ainsworth objected to the seemingly unrealistic instructions, "However unpleasant contre-temps may appear to you in England you cannot expect me to obey your orders here as if I could mount a mail coach."<sup>53</sup> But Rassam and he gladly accepted the additional sum of money, and after paying their debts in Constantinople and purchasing new equipment and supplies, the two set out for Mosul on November 2, 1839.<sup>54</sup>

Dr. Grant's Visit to the Nestorians.—While the Kurdistan Expedition was retreating from Nizib, another privately sponsored group was preparing to penetrate one of the two remaining unexplored regions of "Turkish Kurdistan." The American missionaries, who had established a station at Urmiyah in Persian Azarbayjan during 1834, were still determined

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<sup>52</sup>Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, September 16, 1839 (in the Correspondence File of the Society). While Ainsworth was corresponding with the "Kurdistan Committee" from Constantinople, the American missionary physician, Dr. Asahel Grant, was already in Mosul preparing to visit the mountain Nestorians (see Laurie, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-118).

<sup>53</sup>Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, October 6, 1839 (in the Correspondence File of the Society). In addition to the 837 pounds sterling from the societies, Rassam and Ainsworth had received 200 pounds sterling from Lord Ponsonby; "Extract with Notes," Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, January 20 and 26, 1841 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

<sup>54</sup>Ainsworth, "Notes taken on a Journey from Constantinople to Mosul, in 1839-40," *op. cit.*, p. 489.

to contact the mountain Nestorians. In the spring of 1839, Dr. Grant traveled to Constantinople to arrange for an expedition into the Hakkari region. Another American missionary, the Reverend Mr. Homes, was to accompany Grant; however, he could not leave the mission in Constantinople until a later date. Therefore, the two agreed to meet in Diyarbakir in June, 1839.<sup>55</sup>

From Constantinople, Grant returned to Erzurum, and then proceeded south via Palu to Diyarbakir:

Arriving at Diarbekr on the 30th of June . . . he found the city awaiting in suspense news from the battle of Nizib. The defeat of the Turks was soon manifest in the arrival of hundreds of fugitives, completely stripped by the Kurds. From that moment anarchy reigned. Robbery and murder were the order of the day. None dared leave the city without a guard, and even in the streets the arm of the strongest was the only law. Though the pasha hung up five heads, and four times as many ears, of malefactors, in the bazaars, yet, two days after, these very bazaars witnessed the most daring robberies. The people ascribed their defeat to frank innovations in military tactics; and when Mr. Homes arrived, on July 3, he and Dr. Grant not only heard themselves cursed in the streets, but the people openly declared their purpose of killing every European in the place.<sup>56</sup>

On July 10th, Homes and Grant left Diyarbakir for Mardin with an escort of thirty horsemen; when they arrived there, they were forced to seek refuge in the Jacobite convent, Deir Zafran. For two months the missionaries remained in the convent while the rebellious mood of the local population subsided. By that time, the Reverend Mr. Homes had lost his enthusiasm for travel and exploration in "Turkish Kurdistan," and considered it more prudent to return to Constantinople. Dr. Grant decided

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<sup>55</sup>Laurie, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-108.

<sup>56</sup>Laurie, *op. cit.*, p. 111. Homes proceeded to Diyarbakir via another route. Leaving Erzurum on June 15th, he followed the course of the Kara Su as far south as Malatya, where he joined the military road through Kharput to Diyarbakir; see "Journal of Mr. Homes on a Tour in Mesopotamia," *American Missionary Herald*, Vol. 36 (1840), pp. 432-437 and 469-479.



to continue the expedition alone, and set out for Mosul.<sup>57</sup>

By late September, the American missionary doctor had made the necessary arrangements for his expedition into the Hakkari Mountains in search of the Nestorians and their Patriarch Mar Shimun. On October 7, 1839, Dr. Grant left Mosul for the unexplored region accompanied by two Nestorians from Persia, a Kurdish muleteer, and a kayass from Muhammad Pasha of Mosul. By the end of the month, Grant was deep into the Hakkari Mountains visiting the Patriarch at his residence in Koch Hannes, while Ainsworth and Rassam were still in Constantinople.<sup>58</sup>

Although the American missionary thought he had found the ten tribes of Israel and sought to collect information pertaining to the Nestorian rituals and form of government, he immediately became involved in discussions of a political nature - a subject for which he lacked both knowledge and authority. For nearly a decade the Ottoman government had been trying to subjugate the population of "Turkish Kurdistan" and institute taxation and administration which also heightened religious distinctions. The Nestorians and neighboring Kurdish tribes in Hakkari had withstood these attempts, and with Dr. Grant, the first Westerner since Schultz to enter the region, Mar Shimun was naturally interested in the possibility of enlisting outside support to maintain the independence of the Nestorians:

It was evident his thoughts were on temporal full as much as spiritual things; for his first inquiries were about their political prospects, the movements in Turkey, and the designs of the European powers. 'Why,' said he, 'do they not come and deliver my people from the Moslem oppression that confines us in these mountain fastnesses?'<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Laurie, op. cit., pp. 111, 113, and 115.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 118 and 136-145.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

Grant remained with the Patriarch for five weeks, and then proceeded via Julamerik and along the Great Zab to Bashqala, the residence of Nur Allah Beg, the Kurdish Amir of Hakkari. When the missionary physician reached the castle, he found the notorious murderer of Schultz sick with a violent cold. Grant treated the chief with medicine, and fortunately Nur Allah Beg recovered rapidly. As a token of gratitude, he presented a horse to the American, who then continued his journey to Salmas where he joined a caravan. On December 7, 1839, Grant arrived at the missionary station in Urmiah, after an absence of eight months.<sup>60</sup>

The Kurdistan Expedition Arrives in Mosul.---After a three month journey across Asia Minor from Constantinople to Aleppo and from there via the "Fertile Crescent" route, Ainsworth and Rassam arrived in Mosul on January 29, 1840. However, by this time, the "Kurdistan Committee" seemed to have had reservations about continuing the expedition. Thomas Russell, the third member of the party who had injured himself in the retreat from Nizib, had presented his report to the committee, and some members of the Royal Geographical Society now accused Ainsworth of "mismanagement." The suspicion increased when Ainsworth, despite repeated requests from the committee, failed to provide an adequate or detailed accounting of the expedition's expenditures.<sup>61</sup>

Colonel Chesney privately urged Ainsworth to end the Kurdistan Expedition as soon as possible and proceed to James Brant in Erzurum; however, Ainsworth had no intention of giving up the enterprise. By late March, news arrived that Rassam had been appointed, through the efforts of

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<sup>60</sup>Laurie, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-149; although Grant spent five weeks with Mar Shimun, Laurie's description of the visit is less than three pages (pp. 145-147).

<sup>61</sup>Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Mosul, February 6, 1840 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

Lord Ponsonby, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Mosul, and Ainsworth responded in such a manner as to hardly strengthen the committee's confidence in the expedition: "If his (Rassam's) extraordinary indolence and constant vacillation of purpose [are ignored] . . . he may get through, there are many far more stupid & indolent than him as Vice Consuls in Syria and perhaps his Vanity may be humbled by a rebuff or two such as I get - so often."<sup>62</sup>

Since the "Kurdistan Committee" had already shipped new mapping and surveying instruments, it was reluctant to officially cancel the expedition. Ainsworth and Rassam would be allowed to continue their explorations. As soon as the instruments arrived and the melting snows would permit travel in the mountains, the two were to start immediately for the unexplored region of Hakkari. When they had finished their circuit and contacted the Patriarch of the Nestorians, they would proceed directly to Brant in Erzurum.<sup>63</sup>

During the month of April, Ainsworth and Rassam, accompanied by Dr. Ross, surgeon from the British Residency in Baghdad, and two English travelers, Henry Layard and E. L. Mitford,<sup>64</sup> conducted a brief excursion

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<sup>62</sup>Private Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Mosul, March 23, 1840 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

<sup>63</sup>Ainsworth, "An Account of a Visit to the Chaldeans, inhabiting Central Kurdistan; and of an Ascent of the Peak of Rowandiz...in the Summer of 1840," J.R.G.S., Vol. 11 (1841), p. 22.

<sup>64</sup>This was Layard's first exploratory excursion in the environs of Mosul, and although Mitford and he were merely passing through the region on their way to Persia and the East, the ancient mounds of Nineveh and Nimrud captured his imagination. Five years later (1845), the young Layard returned to Mosul, and began one of the great archaeological discoveries of the century - the Assyrian cities of Nineveh and Nimrud. For accounts of their journey during 1839-1841, see Sir Henry Layard, Early Adventures in Persia, Susiana and Babylonia, including a residence among the Bakhtivari and other wild tribes before the Discovery of Nineveh (London: Murray, 1887), and Edward Ledwich Mitford, A Land March from England to Ceylon Forty Years Ago (London: W. H. Allen, 1884).

into the Mesopotamian desert; however, after arousing the suspicions of the bedawin tribes, the party was forced to curtail its exploration, and return to Mosul after less than a week's absence.<sup>65</sup>

By May, the instruments had arrived from England, and the snow was beginning to melt in the mountains. Ainsworth and Rassam now made their final preparations for the long-awaited journey into the Hakkari Mountains. However, the Kurdistan Expedition again ran into financial difficulties. Since the accusations of "mismanagement," Ainsworth had refused to handle any more funds, and had entrusted Rassam with that responsibility. The expedition's account had a balance of 300 pounds sterling, and Rassam went to Baghdad to withdraw it for the forthcoming exploration. When he returned, he had considerably less than the anticipated amount:

The sum of 300 £ was drawn at Baghdad by Mr. Rassam (in May I think) about six weeks before W.A. set out on his journey to the Nestorian country, which by his own statement in a former letter only cost 30 £ - thus he had upwards of 250 £ left - for any reason the Society knows to the contrary. (My strong belief is that this sum was chiefly expended in a mercantile speculation by Mr. Rassam & this seems the only way of accounting for W.A.'s difficulties.)<sup>66</sup>

Having failed to satisfy any of their sponsors' objectives after nearly two years of dilatory exploration at a cost of over 2,000 pounds sterling, Ainsworth and Rassam, who were barely on speaking terms with each other, left Mosul (June 7, 1840) to explore the country of the Nestorians. Following the same route which Dr. Grant had used during the previous fall, the two proceeded north to Amadiyah and then along the

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<sup>65</sup>Ainsworth, "Notes of an Excursion to Kal'ah Sherkat, the U'r of the Persians, and to the Ruins of Al Hadhr, the Hutra of the Chaldees, and Hatra of the Romans," J.R.G.S., Vol. 11 (1841), pp. 1-20.

<sup>66</sup>"Extract with Notes," Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, January 20 and 26, 1841 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

course of the Great Zab toward Koch Hannes, the residence of the Nestorian Patriarch. When they arrived at Koch Hannes, Ainsworth and Rassam learned much to their dismay that Dr. Grant had penetrated into this remote region for the second time and spent ten days with Mar Shimun less than a month before their arrival.<sup>67</sup>

Ainsworth assumed an attitude of hostility to the mission of Dr. Grant:

We informed the Patriarch that there were among us many zealous Christians who seemed to have read the Bible rather to invent new doctrines, and rebel against the church, than to give them increase of wisdom and holiness; and have preferred following such doctrines, rather than that of the bishops who are appointed to teach nations.<sup>68</sup>

After persuading the Patriarch to enter into correspondence with the Church of England, the two explorers continued their journey to the headwaters of the Zab north of Bashqala. Leaving the Hakkari Mountains, they descended to the Azarbayjan plain at Salmas, and proceeded south to Urmiyah and the American missionary station. After remaining only one night with the missionaries, Ainsworth and Rassam continued down the plain to Ushnei, and on July 1st, they re-entered the mountains. Crossing the divide to Ruwandiz, the two followed a line due west, and arrived back in Mosul on July 6th, after only a month of exploration.<sup>69</sup>

The relatively short duration of the Kurdistan Expedition in the region which was to have been the principal area of research can be attributed to a number of factors. The dissension between Ainsworth and Rassam and the lack of funds undoubtedly curtailed the expedition; however, even

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<sup>67</sup>Laurie, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-161. On May 7th, Grant with his four year old son left Urmiyah, and proceeded via Salmas and Bashqala to Julamerik. On May 25th, after a ten-day visit with the Patriarch, the missionary and his son continued their journey to Van and Erzurum where they followed the main route to Trabzon. From there, they traveled by sea to Constantinople and Smyrna, and landed in Boston, October 3, 1840 (*Ibid.*, pp. 164-166).

<sup>68</sup>Ainsworth, *Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 248 and 249; also quoted in Laurie, *op. cit.*, p. 152, and partially quoted in Joseph *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*; "An Account of a Visit to the Chaldeans...", *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 59, 60, 62, and 73.

more important was the fact that the explorers realized they had lost the race to rediscover the mountain Nestorians. Although the American missionaries had been interested in establishing relations with Mar Shimun since the expedition of Eli Smith and H.G.O. Dwight, Ainsworth was convinced that Grant's mission was conceived only after the Kurdistan Expedition arrived in Constantinople. Having mismanaged the expedition by wasting time in Anatolia and then nearly wrecking it by going to Nizib, his only hope of redeeming his reputation as an explorer was to rediscover the Nestorians. When Ainsworth learned that Grant had visited the Patriarch not only once, but twice, prior to his arrival, the English explorer was bitterly disillusioned.

The missionary competition to rediscover the Nestorians was to have tragic consequences during the next decade. Dr. Grant, who was incredibly naive, failed to realize that by establishing a missionary station at Ashitha he would disrupt the delicate political balance existing between the Nestorians and the Kurds. Ainsworth realized the danger of introducing an alien element into the highland population, but overestimated the ability of foreign countries to influence affairs in this remote region:

This sudden interest, so explicitly and so actively shown on the part of other Christian nations, towards a tribe of people, who have almost solely prolonged their independent existence on account of their remote seclusion, and comparative insignificance, has called them forth into new importance in the eyes of the Mohammedans, and will undoubtedly be the first step to their overthrow, unless they are assisted in such an emergency by sound advice, or the friendly interference of brotherly Christian nations at Constantinople. It will be the most cruel thing imaginable, to have excited so much attention from the surrounding powers towards the condition of

these able, courageous, and pious mountaineers, only to leave them to the tender mercies of Mohammedanism.<sup>70</sup>

Ainsworth's apprehensions were correct, and less than a year later (1843) a Kurdish army massacred the Nestorians of Diz. The Turks were then able to institute their administration and taxation which further divided the highland Christians from the Kurds. In 1846, the Nestorians rose against the governor, and a greater massacre occurred. "About one-fifth of a population of some fifty thousand were estimated to have been killed when what started as a 'petty feud' grew into a religious war."<sup>71</sup>

The End of the Expedition.--When the disillusioned members of the Kurdistan Expedition returned to Mosul in July, their pecuniary difficulties continued without relief. Ainsworth and Rassam had withdrawn the remainder of the expedition's funds to finance their trip to the mountain Nestorians. Through a combination of Rassam's irresponsible "mercantile speculation" and Ainsworth's indifference, the explorers were now destitute, and eagerly waited for their sponsors to provide funds for the return trip to Constantinople and England. In August, their instructions finally arrived, and Ainsworth sadly replied: "I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt

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<sup>70</sup>Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 254 and 255. When Ainsworth returned to England, he drew up a separate report for the Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge, giving a full account of his visit to the Patriarch, Mar Shimun, and the mountain Nestorians. On the basis of this report and at the suggestion of the Lord Bishop of London, the Christian Knowledge and Gospel Propagation Societies sent out another mission consisting of George P. Badger and his assistant, J. P. Fletcher (see Badger, The Nestorians and their Rituals, 2 vols. [London: John Masters, 1852], Vol. I, pp. xiii-xvi).

<sup>71</sup>Joseph, op. cit., p. 65. Also see Laurie, op. cit., pp. 348, 353, 364, and 365; Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, op. cit., p. 428; and Badger, op. cit., pp. 274-279. The most detailed account of the massacres is: Great Britain, Public Record Office, Memorandum Respecting the Persecution of the Nestorian Christians by the Turks, Persians, and Khoordish Chiefs. (Printed for the use of the Foreign Office, December, 1876. Confidential [3003], F. O. 78/2702).

of your letter of June 4th, 1840, in which after referring to past event, you send me positive instructions by order of the Kurdistan Committee of the Royal Geographic Society, not to draw any more money upon the Society."<sup>72</sup>

The oppressive summer heat of Mosul as well as the expedition's repeated failures had affected Ainsworth's health. Christian Rassam, bolstered by the prospects of assuming his new position as Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Mosul, was more resilient and in better condition to travel under impoverished conditions. On August 24th, he set out for Erzurum to be followed by Ainsworth a few days later. Traveling by the main route through Jazirat-Ibn-'Umar, Bitlis, and Mush, Rassam arrived at Brant's residence in Erzurum on September 15th, and "a few days after Dr. and Mrs. Ainsworth arrived, both in a bad state of health, Mrs. Ainsworth unhappily died yesterday in consequence."<sup>73</sup>

A week later, Ainsworth had partially regained his health, and wrote to Captain Washington informing him of their destitute condition and the death of Mrs. Ainsworth. Under these circumstances, he urged the Kurdistan Committee to reconsider its position.<sup>74</sup> Rather than remain in Erzurum for an answer to their supplication, Rassam and he borrowed from Brant enough money to pay for passage to Constantinople. On September 25th, the two left Erzurum for Trabzon where they boarded a steamer, and

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<sup>72</sup>Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Mosul, August 30, 1840 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

<sup>73</sup>Dispatch Nr. 35, Brant to Ponsonby, dated Erzurum, September 21, 1840; F.O. 195/175. Brant gives no other information concerning Mrs. Ainsworth.

<sup>74</sup>Private Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Erzurum, September 21, 1840 (in the Correspondence File of the Society). This is Ainsworth's only reference to his wife. Her identity and the length of time she was with the expedition is never mentioned. The author was only able to ascertain that she accompanied her husband from Mosul in August, 1840, and died the following month in Erzurum.



arrived at Constantinople in early October.<sup>75</sup>

Rassam's financial difficulties were solved once the two explorers returned to Constantinople, for he was now on the payroll of the British government. The obscure Arabic translator, who three years earlier had proposed the Kurdistan Expedition as a means of temporary employment designed to provide his return to Mosul, left his beleaguered companion at Constantinople, and headed home, "a spot where his family connections, Mr. Rassam's influence will be most beneficially exerted in promoting the commercial interests of this country, and at the same time in establishing intercommunion between our own and the very interesting Chaldean nation and church."<sup>76</sup>

Ainsworth's position was considerably less cheerful, for both Russell and Rassam were now pursuing their vocations while the head of the Kurdistan Expedition remained stranded in Constantinople. In October, Ainsworth again wrote to Captain Washington, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, requesting funds for his passage to England, and impugned the judgement of the chairman of the "Kurdistan Committee": "I said to Mr. Brant, that Col. Chesney estimated the expense at much less. He told me that when Col. Chesney travelled in Asia Minor previous to the Euphrates Expedition he had one horse & a bag of rice and he eat of nothing else, the latter was almost the case on the Euph. Expedition."<sup>77</sup>

By January, 1841, the Society's answer refusing Ainsworth's request reached Constantinople, and the despondent explorer was left with

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<sup>75</sup>Ainsworth, Travels in Asia Minor, op. cit., p. 399.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., pp. 333 and 334.

<sup>77</sup>Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, October 16, 1840 (in the Correspondence File of the Society).

no alternative but to return to England the best way he could.<sup>78</sup>

By practicing medicine, Ainsworth managed to earn enough money to buy his passage, and in June, he announced his return to Colonel Jackson, the newly elected secretary of the Society, and enclosed:

the copy of a letter, conveying to me intelligence of certain statements having been made by one of the parties engaged in the Expedition in Asia Minor and Kurdistan, which impugn my character and which it appears were made in part to my agent here, and in part to the Committee or members of the Royal Geographic Society.<sup>79</sup>

Ainsworth tried to salvage his reputation amid the growing clamor of accusations. Believing that Thomas Russell, the former member of the expedition, was largely responsible for the slanderous paper now circulating among the august members of the Royal Geographical Society, he went to see Russell personally. However, during the meeting, the latter "positively denied being the author of the statements put on paper by Mr. J. Hunter."<sup>80</sup> The only remaining hope for exoneration was to convene a formal board of inquiry which would investigate the charges and accusations.

On July 19, 1841, the "Committee for hearing Mr. Ainsworth's explanations on the conduct of the Kurdistan Expedition particularly with reference to money matters" was called into session, and Ainsworth presented his case:

It is needless to mention here the details of his statement as the whole result of the expedition has been long before the Council, and no other observation was made to him in reply, than a few words from the President purporting that however convinced the Council felt that he had acted to the best of his judgement in the execution of the views of the Society, and that a great deal had been done by the

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<sup>78</sup>Letter, Washington to Ainsworth, dated London, November 4, 1840 (in the Correspondence File of the Society), and Letter, Ainsworth to Washington, dated Constantinople, January 20, 1841.

<sup>79</sup>Letter, Ainsworth to Col. Jackson, dated 2 Woodstock St., Bond St., June 22, 1841 (in the Correspondence File of the Society); the copy of the letter which Ainsworth enclosed is missing from the Society's files.

<sup>80</sup>Letter, Ainsworth to Col. Jackson, dated 2 Woodstock St., Bond St., July 15, 1841 (in the Correspondence File of the Society); the paper of Mr. J. Hunter is also missing from the file.

expedition for the improvement of the geography of Asia Minor, yet the Council could not but regret that so much time had been lost in the Journey through Asia Minor and most particularly in the visit to Hafiz Pasha and its unfortunate results in consequence of which almost the whole efforts of the expedition had been expended in collateral and accessory purposes and a very short period was left for their prosecution of the main purposes of the expedition, namely the exploration of the Mir of the Tigris & particularly Kurdistan on the Eastern bank of that River.<sup>81</sup>

The Committee considered that the amount given to Ainsworth and Rassam included passage back to England, and they should have limited their expenses within that margin. Therefore, "The Committee have no grounds for recommending the Council to agree to either of these claims. Mr. Rassam was equally with Mr. Ainsworth aware of the extent of the credit given to the expedition by the Council and was therefore equally bound with him to limit his expenses to within that margin."<sup>82</sup>

The decision of the Committee was final, and Dr. William F. Ainsworth, Surgeon and Geologist for the Euphrates Expedition and head of the Kurdistan Expedition, withdrew into private life; his reputation ruined. The politico-military activity which had attracted and facilitated European exploration in the eastern highlands of Asia Minor, proved to be the major cause of Ainsworth's downfall. He and his tragi-comical expedition marked the end of the Golden Decade of Exploration in "Turkish Kurdistan."

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<sup>81</sup>Committee Minute Book, Royal Geographical Society, July 19, 1841, p. 6.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

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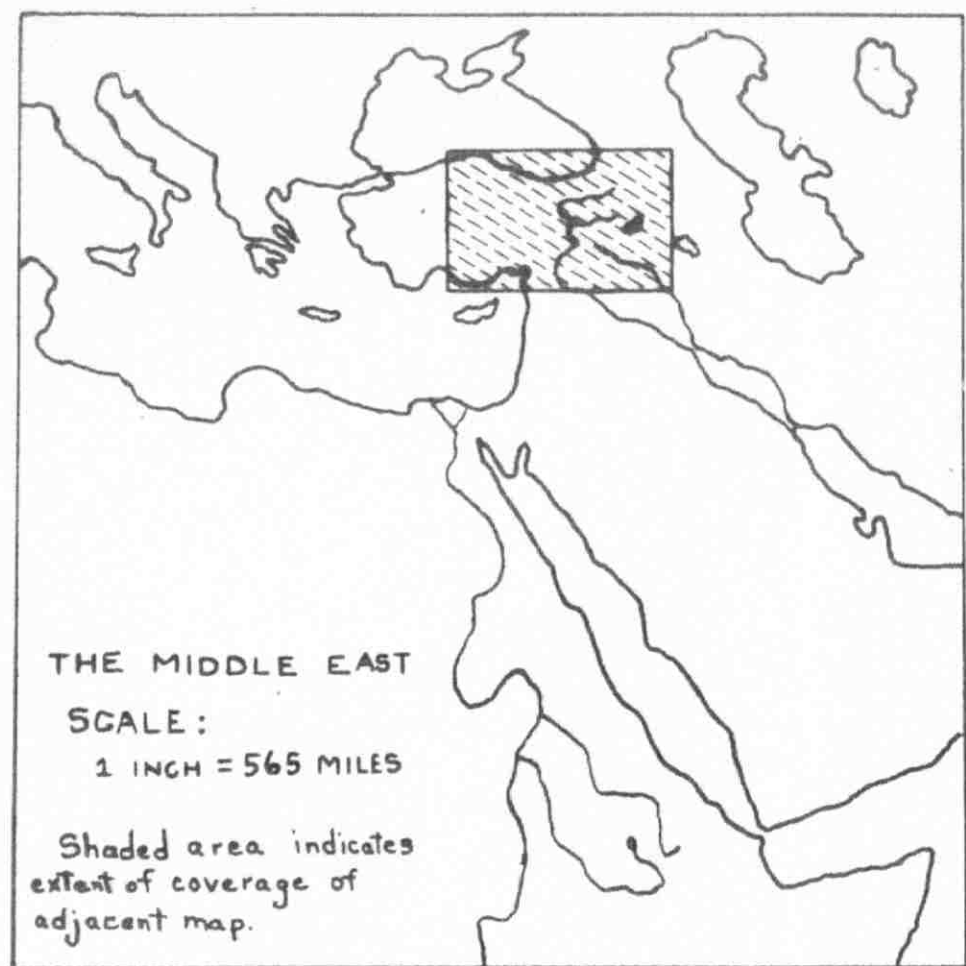
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**EASTERN ASIATIC TURKEY**

SCALE: 1 : 2,600,000

LEGEND:

- - - - Current international boundaries
- Main lines of communication
- == Military road constructed in 1834-1837

