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BORDERLAND TRANSFORMATION: COLONIAL OTTOMANISM IN AL-KARAK, 1893-1918

by
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ABSTRACT
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The purpose of this essay is to show how the empire established a system of governance referred to as *Colonial Ottomanism* in the town of Karak and its environs, one of the southernmost districts in what in the Province of Syria, from 1893 to1918. Chapter 1 analyzes how the numerous Tanzimat reforms, a *civilizing attitude*, and imperial concerns facilitated the Ottoman Empire's consolidation of southern Syria throughout the 19th century, and how these multifaceted processes transformed these areas. The second chapter takes a step back to comprehensively and holistically analyze the society in Karak prior to the establishment of direct Ottoman rule. A local history is presented, followed by a detailed analysis of the society, including for traditional legal system. Lastly, Chapter 3 sheds light on how the twin factors of the *civilizing attitude* and the threat of imperial competition together dictated how the empire produced and governed this *space*. The intertwining of these two factors would result in the reproduction and institutionalization of the perceived cultural inferiority of the local people, and through it, a system of governance best described as *Colonial Ottomanism*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the night of November 12, 1917, the Christian *sheikh*s of Karak, along with a number of other well-respected Christians in the town, were summoned to the Dar al-Hukuma and informed that they were to be banished from the region of southern Syria. Some of these individuals were currently serving in the Ottoman army during the ongoing Great War, such as Awda al-Qusus, or had served and assisted the Ottomans throughout their 25-year rule in Karak. Awda reveals in his memoir that the reason for this was an agreement between one of the leading Ottoman generals in Syria, Mehmed Cemal Pasha (not to be confused with Ahmed Cemal Pasha, the military wartime leader of Syria), and two leading Muslim sheikhs of Karak. This agreement was made in the absence of the leading sheikh of Karak, who was being held in Damascus for somewhat unclear reasons, presumably to allow for this plan to be executed. For the next four months, this group of twenty-five Christians were led on a death march to Anatolia. On March 21, 1918, Awda and a group of nine other Christian Karaki men decided to escape from the city of Sis (Tur: Kozan) in the Adana Vilayet where they were being held, and successfully managed to find their way back to Karak, evading the Ottoman and, to a lesser extent, British armies. Soon after, the Ottoman army would surrender and withdraw from its Arab provinces, and the military governance for four years would be all what the people of Karak would remember from a quarter century of direct Ottoman rule.[1]

[1] Awda Salman al-Qusus al-Halasa, *Mudhakirāt Awda al-Qusus, 1877-1943 (wathawra al-Karak) 1910: wathāʾiq wawaqāʾiq min tārīkh sharq al-ʾUrdun khilāl 70 ʿām* (Amman): 91-106.

While the exact details of Awda's story of being sent to die in Anatolia, escaping, and making it all the way back to Karak cannot be corroborated, they are, at the absolute least, a very good representation of how even a loyal bureaucrat from a frontier Arab province could so quickly come to see and experience the Ottoman Empire as his biggest enemy in a matter of months. Awda's story is just one of many stories like this from loyal Ottoman Arab bureaucrats and soldiers who quickly shed their nascent Ottoman identities and traded them in for localist or Arabist ones. Though, as Salim Tamari has pointed out, this was not such a smooth change nor did it occur as early as many of these figures would later claim in their memoirs.[2] However, while Awda does not shy away from (possibly retroactively added) criticism towards Ottoman rule, it is nonetheless shown through his actions that he remained loyal to the empire until nearly the very end. This transformation of Awda could not have occurred without the system of governance that the Ottoman Empire established in al-Karak in 1893, and expanded and developed over the next two decades.

Historical scholarship on Jordan lags considerably behind that on the rest of the present-day countries which made up Bilad al-Sham, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, especially in the late Ottoman period. The vast majority of historical literature that does focus on Jordan focuses on the post-Ottoman period beginning with the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan in 1921 under the rule of the current royal family, the Hashemites. The literature that does deal with the history of Transjordan, in the pre-Hashemite, Ottoman era imposes a nationalist framework onto it to either legitimize Hashemite rule or to explain how the territory became the British mandate-led emirate and thus focuses mostly on the First World War, the Great Arab Revolt, and British high

[2] Salim Tamari and Ihsan Salih Turjman, *Year of the Locust: A Soldier's Diary and Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011): 43-58, 81-88.

politics post-WWI. Worth mentioning in this category are the histories of Jordan by Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa, as well as Kamal Salibi.[3] The authors of both these texts give scant attention to the pre-Hashemite and Ottoman era. Both books, as well as the larger scholarship on Jordan, offer the outdated narrative of four hundred years of Turkish oppression and neglect of its Arab provinces, only overthrown by WWI, the Great Arab Revolt, and the coming of the Hashemite family into Syria to "save" the Arabs from this cruelty and domination by the Turks, with help from the British.

Following this logic, this category of scholarship also tends to see Jordan merely as a 20th century British colonial creation in which the Hashemite family and the British had to overcome an unruly tribal society to form a durable and lasting political and social order. Two works that still focus mostly on British Mandate years, yet bring it into relation to the developments of the late Ottoman era and thus provide much more value than the other mentioned works, are Yoav Alon's *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State* and Tariq Tell's *The Social and Economic Origins of Monarchy in Jordan*. These works are concerned with explaining how a seemingly traditional and disorderly tribal society was successfully integrated into a lasting and durable post-WWI 'modern' nation-state, its supposed antithesis. Moving away from an essentialist lens to analyze why and how a tribal, Bedouin society has for so long supported the monarchy, Alon shows that this phenomenon was the result of a specific historical process of nation-building which successfully brought together, through coordination and bargaining, a network of British officials, a nascent ruling family, and tribal *sheikh*s to build a political and social order which worked for all involved.[4] Tariq

[3] Munib Al-Madi, Suleiman, Musa, *Tārīkh al-Urdun fī al-qurn aal-ʿashrīn, 1900-1959* (Amman: maktabat al-Muhtaseb, 1959); *Kamal Salibi, The Modern History of Jordan* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).
[4] Yoav Alon, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism, and the Modern State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007).

Tell goes a bit deeper below the surface and covers a longer period, including the late Ottoman period, to shed light on how exactly this phenomenon, which he calls the "Hashemite Compact," came to be and how it evolved politically, economically, and socially through the Mandate and well into the independent Hashemite Kingdom years. Tell shows how the state infrastructure left behind by the Ottomans in this relatively egalitarian yet ecologically marginal society allowed for the Hashemite family to create a new bureaucracy-driven neo-ʿassabiyya centered around itself in the form of a rentier-type state.[5]

One particular point of relevance of Tell's work to this essay is that it highlights the importance of taking into consideration the late Ottoman era when studying even the contemporary history of Jordan. While the late Raouf Abu Jaber's very important study, *Pioneers Over Jordan: The Frontiers of Settlement in Transjordan, 1850-1914*, provides an unprecedented amount of information on Transjordan in the Late Ottoman era and helps us begin to piece together a social history of the area in this period, it is still committed to the same tired narrative of the early wave of scholarship of Jordan, which it is very much a part of. Only relatively recently has there been a serious interest in the history of Transjordan during the late Ottoman period which avoids, or even challenges, this nationalistic teleology. This endeavor has been carried out by scholars both inside and outside Jordan, and in Arabic and English. The former category includes scholars such as, but not limited to, Muhammad Adnan Bakhit, Hind Abu Shaʿar, Mohammad Salem Tarawneh, and Noufan Raja al-Hamoud; in English, scholars are, but not limited to, Eugene Rogan, Tariq Tell, Martha Mundy, and Michael Fischbach. This scholarship has largely been concerned with the broader incorporation of Transjordan into the

[5] Tariq Moraiwed Tell, *The Social and Economic Origins of Monarchy in Jordan* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

Ottoman Empire and the state's organization of this area, which requires scouring over Ottoman and Jordanian archival sources to reconstruct Ottoman Transjordan history. Any scholarship on Ottoman Transjordan in the last two decades is heavily indebted to this group of scholars.

Notable texts from these authors includes Abu Shaʿar's *Tārīkh Sharqī al-Urdun fī al-ʿahd al-ʿUthmānī*, and Rogan's *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*. The importance of Rogan's text goes beyond that of just Transjordan, instead it says much about how the Ottoman Empire consolidated frontier regions—namely through respect for local particularisms, bargaining, and relying on other regional actors to assist in and facilitate their advancement into this frontier.[6] Following in these scholars' footsteps, Nora Barakat has more recently begun conducting such research at the economic level.[7] Moreover, Barakat has moved beyond the surface level to paint a picture of the various social actors in the Transjordanian economy, particularly in Salt. What is especially unique in her work is that she shows how the nomadic Bedouin populations were important actors in the economy, thus reversing previous notions that the Bedouin acted outside the system and were even hostile to it. While having made great strides in reconstructing the history of Transjordan in the Ottoman era, the revisionist scholarship still, bar a few exceptions, does not view events and transformations in Ottoman era regional level, hence this is a main endeavor of this essay.

Despite extensive use of the memoirs of Awda al-Qusus this literature still largely eschews analyzing these memoirs beyond the surface level, and thus there is still a dearth

[6] Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Period: Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[7] Barakat, Nora. *An Empty Land? Nomads and Property Administration in Hamidian Syria, 1870-1914.* 2015. [PhD Thesis]

of social history on Ottoman Transjordan. By using the memoirs of Awda al-Qusus, born in 1877, this essay seeks to provide a more social perspective to histories of the Karak region during this time period. The memoirs, began in the 1920s, are mostly centered on his experiences and involvement with Ottoman governance, between 1893-1918, as well as the first decade of British Mandate rule in the 1920s, though the latter portion will not be discussed in this essay. Awda's early life, as well as the last decade or so before his death in 1943, only take up a few of the 157 pages in the memoir. The University of Jordan houses two copies of the original memoirs, one of which was used for this essay, though this version was cleaned up by Nahed Hattar, who was a Jordanian Christian writer and political activist. Through Tariq Tell, this version became the go-to for Western academics, though I was not able to get a hold of it. Dr. Nayef al-Qusus, Awda's grandson, edited the memoirs in 2006 and included with it a number of photographs and documents. I was not able to access this version either, though Tariq Tell informed me that the al-Qusus family found the cleaned-up version by Nahed Hattar, therefore presumably the original as well, too radical, likely due to Awda's confrontations with the ruling Hashemite family during the 1920s, though these will unfortunately not be covered here either.

The possibility of friends and family editing someone's memoir, particularly after their death, is an important consideration when reading and analyzing a memoir. There may be a number of reasons family and friends would do this, however sometimes this is done without the knowledge and consent of the writer-subject of the memoir. Many times, memoirs are often compiled and edited by the writer in their final form years after the events in them occurred or were first recorded. The writer-subject of the memoir can possibly edit their opinions and beliefs at the time of an event, their reactions to events,

and how this affected their identity and view of society at that time. As mentioned in *The Year of the Locust*, Salim Tamari shows how Arabs who fought on the side of the Ottomans in WWI retroactively edited an Arabist slant into their portrayed identity in their memoirs, when this was very likely not the case at the time when these figures were fighting in WWI.[8] Nonetheless, it is hard to discern any Arabist identity, especially during World War I, in Awda's identity.

Another related consideration is that the way a person may record an event can be inaccurate compared to what actually happened. Some ways this may happen is through purposeful embellishment, an honest misrepresentation of events, or even because the writer's memories and stories passed down to him are just often times just one perspective of an event. For example, some of the events provided in Awda's local history of Karak has been disputed by other tribes. Nonetheless, how events are perceived by individuals and (sub)communities is also important because a certain perception may be followed by a certain reaction, which can have real world, material consequences. Another related consideration, and different from the first, is that sometimes in exact details such as dates, names, or places may be inaccurately recorded, or even an entire event. These two considerations are why it is important, if possible, to corroborate memoirs with other primary and secondary sources. Overall, memoirs still provide much invaluable historical insight and factual information not found elsewhere, and which is easily overlooked overlooked in historical research. They are an extremely useful way to explore the social transformations of an individual or a community as they provide a view of these actors often not recorded in any official documents or correspondence. This is particularly useful when there is a lack in official documents, as is the case in late

[8] Tamari, *The Year of the Locust.*

Ottoman Karak and its environs, which would be destroyed or lost in both 1910 during the Karak revolt and during World War I.

One final aim this essay is to widen the scope and add to the current academic debates around Ottoman forms of imperial governance beginning in the Tanzimat era (1839-1876), and continuing until the end of WWI, after which the defeated empire disintegrated and collapsed. Thomas Kuehn has recently written two articles reviewing the literature surrounding these debates, and thus here this literature and its different waves will be summarized. [Furthermore, given the more specific nature of this essay, Part II of Kuehn's literature review is not entirely relevant and will not be discussed. Turn into a footnote] Scholarship before the 1990s views this period as one in which the empire was more of a victim, or passive actor, in the imperial competitions between European powers during the 19th and early 20th centuries (which did not include the Ottoman Empire– despite having European territory for hundreds of years). This view sees the empire adopting (or copying) modernization and westernization from Europe, but in the process ceased to be an empire and acted, through its governmental practices, more as a "modern" nation-state.[9] Therefore, we can discern a certain teleology in this scholarship where the Tanzimat reforms led the way for the the post-Ottoman nation-states. However, in the mid-1990s, scholars began placing their analytical lens on the peripheries of the empire—the Syrian provinces, Arabia, Iraq, North Africa, and even the European provinces. This wave of scholarship noted the difference in the type of governmental and administrative practices that persisted in the frontier, thus the idea that the Ottoman empire was "an empire in name only" was deemed to be incorrect.[10]

[9] Kuehn, Thomas, "Bringing the imperial back in: Reconsidering governance in the late Ottoman Empire, 1839-1923 (Part I)," *History Compass* 19, e12680 (June 2021): 3-4.
[10] Ibid., 4.

Kuehn believes that Rogan's book is a very important example of this wave, since he is the first to use the idea of the *frontier* as an analytical lens, and it shows the diversity of avenues taken by the Empire in establishing its direct rule in southern Syria that complicate the idea of the empire becoming a modern nation-state. However, according to Kuehn, the limits of Rogan's analysis are that it implies that there is a form of governance in the center that is the opposite of the governance found in the frontier, and this essay agrees.[11] Taking Rogan's argument further while also correcting its limitations, Ussama Makdisi, Selim Deringil, and Thomas Kuehn have shown, through a wider incorporation of post-colonial and anthropological literature, that "in order to understand the complexities of imperial power relationships we must analyze the contested categories of knowledge and discursive practices that informed, normalized and perpetuated them."[12] But what this call to action requires is comparing Ottoman imperial governance with other imperial forms of governance, namely European colonialisms. Makdisi, Deringil, and Kuehn all focus of different aspects of this and also each disagree to what extent Ottoman imperial governance, particularly in its Arab provinces, can be classified as colonialism.[13] This endeavor is still ongoing and scholars continue to disagree over this, as will be shown.

When the Ottoman Empire established its direct rule over Karak in the closing decade of the 19th century, this was the first time that the empire had effective control over the area of Karak, a small town and its environs in the southernmost region of Ottoman Syria, despite annexing the Syrian provinces from the Mamluks more than three centuries earlier. Chapter 1 will analyze how the empire regained effective control over

[11] Ibid., 4-5.
[12] Ibid., 6.
[13] Ibid., 7.

the southern frontier of Syria, roughly the territory that would become the Emirate of Transjordan after WWI, a process that took nearly seven decades. What allowed for such a process to occur was the inauguration of the Tanzimat reforms in 1839, a series of reforms which sought the expansion and deepening of the administrative bureaucracies on all levels, the centralization and consolidation of the empire needed to carry this out, and the transformation in the way that the various subjects-turned-citizens of a multiethnic and multireligious empire viewed themselves in relation to one another and to the state. The reforms of the Tanzimat provided the empire with the resources and institutional capacity to carry out the consolidation of the southern Syrian frontier and within four decades the state had established full control over its two northern sections, Jabal ʿAjlūn and the Balqāʾ.

The Tanzimat reforms were meant to standardize and regularize the various communities and places under Ottoman rule, rather it was an ideology, partly inspired by European Enlightenment ideals, which was constantly being reformulated and reconceptualized throughout the second half of the 19th century. Despite this, something that remained constant in this ideology throughout this process was a *civilizing attitude* that viewed the predominantly semi-nomadic and nomadic inhabitants of frontier regions, such as southern Syria, as culturally inferior and in need of being civilized. This belief would impact how and by what means the Ottoman state would implement its direct rule and consolidation of these territories. The second main factor which would greatly affect how the Ottoman state incorporated and consolidated this frontier was the ramping up of the Great Power rivalries in the second half of the century, which very much included the Ottoman Empire. While the empire was setting up systems of governance in the frontier to the north of Karak, the Russian Empire was slowly eating away at the Ottoman's

European provinces, and Britain was occupying and establishing a system of colonial governance in Egypt, as well as reaching secret agreements with France over the fate of Ottoman-claimed territory in the eastern Sahara. This had transformed Karak, and the rest of southern Syria, into a borderland ready to claimed by the first imperial power, including the Ottoman Empire, who could effectively do so.

Relying on Awda al-Qusus' memoirs, Chapter 2 will show how after the Ottoman Empire had originally lost its effective rule over southern Syria in the 16th century, the population in the district witnessed three centuries of power struggles against neighboring Bedouins and external political orders, ruthless Egyptian rule in 1830's, and even amongst themselves. The chapter will further analyze how the evolving social structure of *ʾahl* al-Karak prevailed into the last years of the 19th century. In doing so, a new light is shed on how specific historical, social, and ecological processes gave rise to ever-evolving social values and customs. In turn, these values and customs informed the type of political, economic, and legal systems established prior to the Ottoman entrance. Lastly, Chapter 3 will show how Karaki society, its values and customs, and its institutions were drastically transformed once the empire established its reinvigorated direct rule over the area in 1893. This occurred through the Ottoman Empire not only producing knowledge about this place, but literally producing and transforming this *space* to fit their abstract conceptions of how it ought to appear. However, the *civilizing attitude* and the preoccupation with imperial concerns over how to govern the borderland led the empire to reproduce and institutionalize the perceived cultural differences of the local population.

This form of governance in Karak, undergirded by this *politics of difference*, closely resembles the form of governance that the Ottomans established in the Province

of Yemen, as outlined by Thomas Kuehn, and is why, to borrow his coinage, it can be referred to as *Colonial Ottomanism*. This form of governance resembled, but was distinct from, European forms of colonialism in the Red Sea region. For example, the *Colonial Ottomanism* of the Ottoman empire allowed for the blurring of divisions between ruler and ruled, colonizer and colonized, as opposed to more stringent and explicitly racialist *civilizing missions* found within European forms of colonialism. A case in point is the transformation of Awda al-Qusus, which is what makes his memoirs all the more important. The greater regional approach of this essay, when compared to other works concerned with the territories that became the Emirate of Transjordan, allows scholars to further compare and contrast Ottoman rule across its frontiers and to fully gain a fuller understanding of forms of colonial, or colonial-like, governance in the region and beyond.

CHAPTER 2

TANZIMAT IMPERIALISM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIRECT RULE IN SOUTHERN SYRIA

The area which later became known as Transjordan came under Ottoman rule in 1516 when the empire defeated the Egyptian Mamluk Sultanate and annexed the entirety of Greater Syria.[14] However, it would be more than three centuries before the Sublime Porte could effectively govern most of this region, especially southern Syria. While traditional scholarship has viewed this period as one of decline for the Ottoman Empire, many scholars have since shown that this was not the case. Rather, it was a period of transformation and adaption to a changing and evolving world system, as will be discussed below. Viewing the preceding centuries this way allows us to analyze the 19th century as too being a period where the empire was faced with a new set of global and imperial issues, which will be analyzed in detail below. To solve these the empire embarked on an empire-wide set of reforms which would come to be known as the *Tanzimat*, and the period between 1839-1876 as the Tanzimat era. These reforms sought a reorganization, expansion, and centralization at all levels and covering all territories of the empire. Furthermore, at the root of these reforms there was, in part, a new commitment by Ottoman bureaucrats and intellectuals to a European-developed worldview which placed different civilizations along a linear path to modernity, with those further along the path being more advanced, i.e., more civilized.

The successful implementation of these reforms required the empire's incorporation and consolidation of all its territory, particularly its internal frontier located

[14] Gül Şen, *Jordan as an Economic Frontier Zone in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries*, Vol. 15 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2018), 14.

in southern Syria and northern Arabia, where this new worldview would, in part, influence how the empire viewed the nomadic and semi-nomadic populations who inhabited it. The process of incorporating and consolidating the area which would later become Transjordan began in the 1850's during the Tanzimat era, would continue through the rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II in what is called the Hamidian era (1876-1908), and would not be fully complete when the Second Constitutional era ended in 1918 and the empire soon after collapsed. During this time the empire promulgated numerous reforms which drastically transformed the social, economic, and political realities of the inhabitants of Transjordan. It is important to note that these reforms, in all areas of the empire, were working with and against various extant social and economic trends, as well as the communities that inhabited these areas, which both assisted and obstructed the empire in realizing its goals. In order to understand how these transformations affected the reality and trajectory of these communities, it is first necessary to provide a comprehensive overview of how reforms of the 19th assisted in setting into place these far-reaching transformations.

1.1. The Imperial

1.1.1. Ideology, Reform, and Europe

The traditional, outdated view of the state of the Ottoman Empire between the 16th through 18th centuries can be summed up by the work of Bernard Lewis as an era in which Europe entered its golden age while the Ottoman Empire entered a long period of decline politically, militarily, and economically.[15] However, numerous Ottomanist scholars have

[15] Bernard Lewis, "Some Reflections on the Decline of the Ottoman Empire," *Studia Islamica* 1 (1958) 111–127.

rejected this narrative and have shown that this is false in each of these three categories, as well as culturally. Politically, the Ottoman Empire transformed from an empire that relied mainly on territorial expansion to increase state revenue into an empire that sought to extract revenue from its subjects through increased taxation.[16] Militarily, the empire continued to adapt, transform, and innovate, and even stayed on par with European armies into the 18th century.[17] Economically, when viewed comparatively, the decline experienced by the empire during this time was also experienced by other empires across the world.[18] Culturally, Dana Sajdi and others shed the numerous "indigenous or internal social, economic, and/or intellectual processes displaying signs of modernity *prior* to the advent of the West."[19] Ultimately, this was a period of adaptation and transformation not just for the Ottoman Empire, but the entire world.

By the early 19th century, the empire was faced with a changing world order and presented with a fresh set of challenges which necessitated new reforms. The Sublime Porte did begin to lag behind the European powers militarily which resulted in losing large parts of its European territory as global imperial rivalries intensified.[20] In fact, Napoleon Bonaparte had invaded Egypt, then an Ottoman province, in 1798 and occupied it until the Ottoman army, due to help from the British, forced him out in 1801.[21] Economically too, the empire began to lose out vis-a-vis Europe as military conquest was

[16] Jane Hathaway and Karl K. Barbir, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800,* 1st ed. (Harthow: Pearson, 2008), 8-9.
[17] Virginia Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700–1860: An Empire Besieged*. (London: Routledge, 2007): 130–135.
[18] Dana Sajdi, "Decline, its Discontents, and Ottoman Cultural History: By Way of Introduction". In Sajdi, Dana. *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007): 15.
[19] Ibid., 6.
[20] Kemal H. Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3, no. 3 (1972): 245–247.
[21] Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 130-133.

often coupled with further economic penetration. Military and economic superiority opened the door to Europe for political interference which extended all the way to the communal and individual level.[22] Moreover, the power and influence of the *aʿyān*, a local elite who acted as an intermediary between the society and the empire, became too large vis-a-vis local administrators, particularly in areas outside the direct reach of the state.[23] Early reforms in the military and economic sectors during the late 18th and early 19th centuries would open the door to an era of reform in all sectors and levels of society, referred to as the Tanzimat (Reordering). These reforms sought the expansion and deepening of the administrative bureaucracies on all levels, the centralization and consolidation of the empire needed to carry this out, and the transformation in the way that the various subjects-turned-citizens of a multiethnic and multireligious empire viewed themselves in relation to one another and to the state.[24]

Some scholars have argued that at the root of these developments in the Ottoman Empire was the same ideological worldview which underpinned the reforms and developments of its European counterparts. This ideological worldview was one developed during the Enlightenment era in Europe which posits that history can be explained as a temporal schema where civilizations progress in a linear fashion towards modernity, but that some civilizations are further along the line towards modernity, and therefore more civilized.[25] Joel Beinin argues that the Tanzimat reforms, particularly "the 1839 Gülhane Edict (*Hatt-i Şerif*), the 1856 Reform Decree (*Islahat Fermanı*), and the 1876 constitution…, marked the adoption of a European-influenced discourse of reform

[22] Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908," 252-254
[23] Ibid.
[24] Jakob Mazanec, "The Ottoman Empire at the Beginning of Tanzimat Reforms", *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations* no. 2 (2016): 44-45.
[25] Cemil Aydin, *Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007): Chapters 1-2.

that justified practices elites hoped would strengthen the Ottoman state.'[26] However, Butrus Abu Manneh argues that non-Western, Islamic theory, rather than European, was at the root of many of these reforms, beyond merely being a rhetorical tool.[27] Cemil Aydin notes that while there was a commitment to the ideals and values which arose in Europe during the Enlightenment-era, at the early stages of the Tanzimat-era Ottoman administrators believed these ideals and values to be universal and compatible with Islam. Throughout the 19th century, according to Aydin, there was a continued adherence to these ideals and values by Ottoman reformers and administrators, but it manifested itself in various forms which had different impacts on Ottoman policy until the end of World War I.[28]

Echoing the ideals of the Enlightenment, the *Hatt-i Şerif* promised protection over the life, honor, and properties of all its subjects, regardless of ethnicity or religion. By this time the empire was experiencing rising ethnic and religious tensions across its territory, primarily in its European provinces where it had been facing a number of ethnic and nationalist revolts, and the military expansion of Mehmed Ali Pasha, *wali* (provincial governor) of the Egyptian *eyalet* (province), had begun to seriously worry the Ottoman Empire. In the early decades of the 19th century, Mehmed Ali Pasha, who had forcefully taken power in 1805 following the instability left from the French occupation, began his own economic and military reforms to increase the strength and power of the province.[29] Though being legally subordinate to Istanbul and given yearly payments by Sultan

[26] Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 44
[27] Butrus Abu Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Reciept," *Die Welt des Islams* 34, 2 (1994): 175-176, 191-198.
[28] Aydin, *Politics of Anti-Westernism*, Chapters 2 and 4.
[29] Khaled Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali: From Ottoman Governor to Ruler of Egypt* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009): 15-25.

Mahmud II, Mehmed Ali was by far the most powerful *wali*, whose influence and rule extended beyond the borders of the Egyptian *eyalet*.[30] The Ottoman Empire was forced to call upon him to subdue to Wahhabi revolt northwards from the Hijaz towards the Syrian provinces between 1811-1818.[31] After Mehmed Ali defeated the Wahhabi armies, the empire incorporated the Hijaz into the provincial system. However, years of being subjected to Wahhabi invasions and attacks had certainly angered the inhabitants across the provinces of Damascus and Aleppo, particularly in the urban areas, who began to riot and protest against the empire for failing to protect them. The situation in the Syrian provinces would continue to be quite precarious throughout the 1820s, rebellious *aʿyān* and local leaders continued to tap into the widespread discontent of the people and the empire's resources was stretched too thin to do much about it.[32]

Soon after, in 1824, Sultan Mahmud was again left with no choice but to call upon the *wali* of Egypt to assist in quelling ethnic and nationalist revolts in Greece, which had been ongoing for three years. Throughout the war with Greece, Mehmed Ali had become aware of the severity of the internal and external threats facing the Ottoman Empire, and Khaled Fahmy notes that the governor-general, previously careful not to overstep his boundaries vis-à-vis the sultan, now believed that the balance of power between them had possibly turned in his favor.[33] Thus, Ottoman-Egyptian cooperation began to break down, partly due to governor-general not wanting to upset the European powers who were now involved. In 1829, the Ottoman Empire was defeated in Greece, which would eventually gain independence in 1832. Mehmed Ali wanted repayment from Istanbul in the form of

[30] Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 2002): 40-47.
[31] Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali*, 44-49.
[32] Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman* Empire, 139-145.
[33] Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*, 51-60.

the Syrian provinces of the empire, a longtime desire of his. Economically, these provinces possessed a significantly larger source of raw materials, particularly timber and wood, than most other areas in the empire. The Syrian provinces provided roughly two million additional subjects for Mehmed Ali's reform projects, and the *wali* also believed that the additional population could help alleviate the negative effects that conscription and war had on the economic productivity of Egypt.[34]

After Sultan Mahmud II refused to grant him his grand desire, Mehmed Ali's forces invaded the Syrian provinces on November 2, 1831 under the pretext that the *wali* of the Sidon eyalet, ʿAbdallah Pasha, was harboring Egyptian *fellahin* (peasant-farmers) wanted for tax evasion. By the end of the following July, Ibrahim Pasha, the commander and son of Mehmed Ali, had taken the cities of Jerusalem, Nablus, Akka, Sidon, Beirut, Tripoli, Damascus, Aleppo, and Adana, reaching Anatolia. The various forces raised by Sultan Mahmud throughout these months were no match for the Egyptian army, who continued to progress towards Istanbul, taking Konya in December after a short break to focus on securing the newly acquired territories. The loss of Konya was devastating for the Ottoman Empire, leaving the path to Istanbul exposed for Ibrahim Pasha.[35] At this point, Sultan Mahmud knew that he must reach a settlement with Mehmed Ali, and a non-binding peace agreement was reached in May 1833 at the Convention of Kütahya, brokered by France and Russia. In return for recognizing his subordinate status by paying a yearly tribute to Istanbul and removing troops from Syria, the empire granted Mehmed Ali control over the provinces of the Hijaz, Crete, Akka, Damascus, Tripoli, and Aleppo. Fahmy notes that no one left the agreement happy: the empire had faced terrible defeat and humiliation, the Egyptian *wali* did not get all of what he wanted, and France and

[34] Ibid., 47-50.
[35] Ibid., 61-66.

Britain were angry that this conflict had allowed Russia to increase its influence in Istanbul.[36]

Bruce Masters notes that the Syrian provinces were organized in a single province called Arabistan centered in Damascus, with Ibrahim Pasha as its governor. If the inhabitants of this province had been optimistic about what Egyptian control could bring, these feelings were quickly squashed as Ibrahim Pasha soon ordered the conscription and payment of a poll tax for all men, the latter of which was something that Muslims had previously been exempt from. A cholera epidemic during these years only increased the continued discontent of Arabistan's inhabitants. The following summer, in 1834, the new governor and his forces were temporarily ousted from southern Syria and Palestine by a series of rebellions by the peasants and nomadic populations resisting these new government measures.[37] Ibrahim Pasha believed that the the *a'yān* and the *ulama* had fomented this discontent, and worked to sideline these two actors. He subsequently oversaw the establishment of a *majlis* (or *diwan*) *al-shura* (consultative assembly) in every major Syrian city, "consisting of the governor of the town, a financial officer, and representatives of the *aʿyān*."[38] In addition, he severely limited the authority of the Islamic courts to matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance, or in other words, personal status. Lastly, Mehmed Ali and his son elevated Catholic rites, such as the Melkite Church, at the expense of the more powerful and established Greek Orthodox Church. Overall, the Egyptian reforms did not leave much of an impact on the societies of these areas, evidenced by the impact that Ottoman reforms would have a few decades later, especially in Palestine and southern Syria.[39]

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[36] Ibid., 67-69.
[37] Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman* Empire, 150-151
[38] Ibid., 152.
[39] Ibid., 152-153.

The empire sought to secure European support in both taking back the Syrian provinces from Mehmed Ali and his son, and to quell the increasingly volatile situation in its southern and southeastern European provinces. In 1838, it signed the Treaty of Balta Liman with Great Britain which "ended all local monopolies and protectionist trade practices, imposed a low uniform tariff of 5 percent on Ottoman imports, and established special courts to adjudicate commercial disputes involving Europeans."[40] It therefore made Ottoman economic stability an interest for the British, and the other European states that consented to it, The following year, the empire declared the *Hatt-i Şerif* and shortly after achieved its goal of regaining control over Syria.[41] However, ethnic and nationalist resistance, plus the interference of and threat of conflict with European powers in the southern and southeastern European provinces continued to increase over the next two decades; so too did the sectarian tensions that these powers aided in stoking throughout parts of Syria continued to intensify over the next two decades. In 1853, the empire allied itself with Britain and France against the Russian Empire in the Crimean War, which was caused by the latest uptick in longstanding imperial conflicts over European territories belonging to the Sublime Porte, and primarily concerned who would gain protectorate status of the empire's various Christian communities.[42] Three years later the Ottoman empire, along with its allies, defeated the Russian Empire and signed the Treaty of Paris, "which provided an unprecedented guarantee of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman state, made the empire, in effect, a member of the European concert."[43]

[40] Beinin, *Workers and Peasants*, 45.
[41] Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman* Empire, 159-163, 177-180.
[42] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008): 77-83.
[43] Ibid., 82.

Just one week before the proclamation of the treaty, the Ottoman Empire had declared the *Islahat Fermani*, which granted Ottoman subjects equality and freedom before the law and abolished barriers for minority populations to enter government or military service.[44] However, the reaction to the new reform edict was largely negative, with Sunni Muslim representatives upset that their privileged status vis-à-vis everyone else had been chipped away, and representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church were perturbed that other Christian rites and even Jews were now equal under the law. Prior to this, religious institutions managed the personal and internal affairs of their respective communities which were organized into *millet*s. Over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, however, they increasingly became vehicles for an articulation of self-representation.[45] After the promulgation of the reform edit of 1856, the empire recognized this, as it appeased the European powers pushing for equality within the empire between Muslims and the Christian communities they claimed to represent and it was hoped that it would quell the rising tide of particular nationalisms, mainly in the European provinces.[46]

Many scholars have argued that with this edict the empire embarked on the mission of promoting Ottomanism, a "project and or ideology of the unification of the various social elements (religious, ethnic, denominational, etc.) that made up the Ottoman Empire under the idea of a *universal* Ottoman citizenship and identity based on legal and political equality" with the goal of instilling in its various subjects a sense of belonging

[44] Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire*, 172-173.
[45] Bruce, Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 61-67, 99-110,
[46] Ibid., 136-139; Hanioğlu, *A Brief History*, 75-76.

to the Ottoman *nation*.[47] However, Alp Eren Topal notes that the term for Ottomanism, *Osmanlıcılık*, was never used in 19th century documents or archival sources. He explains that while some Ottoman officials had recommended and were committed to ideas and principles that would *later* be referred to as *Osmanlıcılık*, it was not until the 1860's and 1870's that concepts began to gain currency within the upper echelons of the administration. Even then, they were a few of many which were debated and disagreed on.[48] Although the Reform Edict of 1856 declared 'equality' for all subjects regardless of religion or ethnicity, Topal claims that Ottomanism, as a form of civic nationalism, included much more than just legal equality, as many forms of inequality continued to exist and were even maintained throughout the centuries. Furthermore, the Reform Edict itself includes a number of exceptions to its professed "equality".[49] So, in the cases of both the Gülhane Edict of 1839 and the Reform Edict of 1856 there were internal debates within the elite circles over which varying and sometimes incongruent concepts and principles should guide both the form and content of the two edicts. Moreover, these edicts were drafted and decreed under the influence of and working with and against various external and internal pressures.

Not much time had passed when the empire again found itself under intense scrutiny from Europe over the sectarian massacres between Druze and Christian across Mount Lebanon and even spreading to Damascus in the summer of 1860. However, this was not just innate and longstanding religious hatred between uncivilized peoples as many contemporary European observers believed. Rather, these tensions had a recent

[47] Alp Eren Topal, "Ottomanism in History and Historiography: Fortunes of a Concept" in *Narrated Empires: Perceptions of Late Hapsburg and Ottoman Multinationalism* eds. Johanna Chovanec and Olof Heilo (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021): 77-80.
[48] Ibid., 80-86.
[49] Ibid., 87-88.

history traced back to the increasing European interference in the religious and communal affairs of the multireligious inhabitants of Mount Lebanon, as Ussama Makdisi shows in his book, *The Culture of Sectarianism*.[50] Centuries of religious fear and anxiety by Europeans towards the Muslims, and even Christians, of the East resulted in early crusades, wars against the Ottoman Empire, and increasingly intense missionary activity throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.[51] European missions and their colonial backers were beginning to intervene even further in the affairs of the empire in support of the empire's Christians, who were seen as needing to be saved from Turkish (re: Muslim) oppression. At the same time, however, the empire sought to level the playing field between the previously privileged Sunni Muslims and the other groups, namely Christians. So, as Makdisi explains, what was occurring was a reformulation, by both European actors and the Ottoman Empire, of social and communal affairs based on a logic of a sectarian identity and boundary.[52]

However, on the ground, things were very different. Prior to the mid-19th century, different families, mainly Maronite Christian and Druze, controlled the various districts of the rural, mountainous area and competed for ultimate supremacy in it. Though the conflicts, tensions, and alliances cut across religious lines and instead fell along rank and geographical divisions. In other words, no one group unilaterally ruled or oppressed another, and as Makdisi has shown in a more recent book, religious coexistence (not necessarily equality) was the mainstay of affairs in Mount Lebanon and the region more broadly.[53] Eventually this sectarian logic made its way to the communities themselves,

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[50] Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*: *Community*, *History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000): 2-8.
[51] Ibid., 10-12, 15-23, 38-41.
[52] Ibid., 67-94.
[53] Ibid., 31-45.

and ultimately resulted into the massacres of 1860.[54] But for Makdisi, the story does not end here—afterwards the Ottoman empire, under pressure from the European powers, continued this violence by carving up Mount Lebanon on an further increased logic of sectarianism.[55] The importance of this event is that this new logic did not stop at Mount Lebanon, but was spread elsewhere by the Europeans and the empire, and soon became the legacy of the region.[56]

1.1.2. Centralization and the New Property Regime

Two additional reforms that ought to be underlined for the purpose of this essay are the 1858 Land Code and the 1864 Vilayet Law which, taken together, reorganized the administrative layout of the entire empire and transformed the way the land in it was classified and taxed. Prior to the inauguration of the Land Code, "the two main pillars of the Ottoman agrarian regime were the *timar* and *miri* system." Together, these pillars formed a bureaucratic system where all agricultural land in the empire was declared state land, or *miri*, and the right to collect taxes from the subjects who worked the land was given to a military officer, and later an *aʿyān*, in the form of a land grant, known as a *timar*, in each district in the empire.[57] The overall result was a further loss in control over land and its taxation for the empire and an increase in wealth and power for these local notables, which helped facilitate their rise. During the first quarter of the 19th century the Empire had taken nascent steps in reigning in the *aʿyān* and in 1831 Sultan Mahmud II abolished the *timar* system. Michael Fischbach argues that during this time the empire

[54] Ibid., 96-117.
[55] Ibid., 140-157, 159-165.
[56] Ibid., 7-12, 167-175.
[57] Haim Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 1984): 9-14.

was very concerned with creating a 'new, "rational" approach to land management to improve its political and financial control over the empire,' which would be in line with the ideology of the Tanzimat. Following Ibrahim Pasha's exit from Syria in 1840, reformers "urged the empire to adopt a European-style land regime" in which the state would grant legal rights to the agricultural yield of a given portion of land to an individual. It was argued that "such a policy would stimulate production and thus lead to an increase in land taxes for the imperial treasury inasmuch as the taxes were based on production rather than an intrinsic value of the land itself."[58]

E. Atilla Aytekin notes that this description of this ideal land regime sought out by Ottoman reformers is very similar to Article 8 of the 1858 Land Code, which states: "The land of a village or of a town cannot be granted or transferred in its entirety to its inhabitants collectively, or to one or two persons chosen amongst them. Separate pieces of land shall be granted to each inhabitant and a title-deed shall be given to each showing the right of possession."[59] Aytekin continues by arguing that this is *the* foundational article of the Code because "it unmistakably defined the individual as the sole subject of land law and the rest of the Code was based on this notion." More than just giving primacy to the individual, the Code alienated the individual from "their web of social relations," including their land and labor on it.[60] Under the code, as before, agricultural land was classified as *miri* and rights were granted to individuals to register the lands that they worked on and pay taxes. Those that registered such lands "were assigned usufructure *(tasarruf*) after paying a fee called a *tapu* fee and issued a deed (in Turkish, *sened hakkani*). Usufructuary rights were inheritable and could be bought and sold with the

[58] Michael Fischbach, *State, Society, and Land in Jordan* (Leiden: Brill, 2000): 20-23.
[59] E. Atilla Aytekin, "Agrarian Relations, Property and Law: An Analysis of the Land Code of 1858 in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle East Studies* 45, no. 6 (2009): 936.
[60] Ibid., 937.

state's permission." The following year, the state enacted the Regulation of Title Deeds, ensuring that all who claimed *mīrī* land possessed a deed for it, and in 1861, it began sending out teams to register these rights. A similar process was carried out to collect taxes from the land in two main forms: the *öşr* (Arabic: *ʿushr*), a ten percent tax on all produce from the land, and the *virgu* (Arabic: *wīrkū*), a tax on the value of the land. By 1918, these rates were much higher and more complicated.[61]

Many scholars have pointed out these limitations that the Code placed on the individual's use of the land but Aytekin argues that this is secondary. Since the land was now seen as a commodity, "in terms of [the] modern notion of property, the use of land is much less significant than its sale, purchase, transfer, and alienation through other means." Aytekin elaborates on the numerous ways the Code, and its subsequent developments, helped facilitate the "transfer," as it was referred to instead of "sale," of the land between individuals, which was the new main purpose for land under this rationale.[62] He further claims that debates amongst scholars over which developments within the state and across society caused the empire to enact the Land Code, how radical it was and to what degree it can considered a rupture with the old land regime, and what the effects of the Code were in practice, are still ongoing because they tend to be state-centered and committed to legal formalism. In this approach, the state is seen as the main agent of change, meaning that trying to locate the causes and effects of the Code through the intentions and actions of the empire alone will always come up short, and is even more problematic given the geographical and societal variation across the empire.[63] More recent scholarship has shown that no single event or development caused the empire to

[61] Fischbach, *State, Society, and Land*, 25, 28-30.
[62] Aytekin, "Agrarian Relations," 938.
[63] Ibid., 935-936.

inaugurate the Land Code, rather it was a number of social, economic, and political processes, internally and externally, together that influenced the empire in doing so. This scholarship has also argued that the Code was enforced by the state and accepted by the people to varying degrees across different regions of the empire.[64]

Enforcing and regulating such a centralized land and tax regime required an administrative system organized on the basis of a rational, European-style form of administration in line with the Tanzimat ideology. In 1864, the Ottoman empire enacted the Law of Vilayets which reorganized the *vilayet*s (Arabic: *wilāya*) of the empire in a more hierarchical, organized manner. At the apex of this order was the *wilāya*, province, and was headed by a *wālī*. The provinces were divided into smaller administrative units called *sanjak*s, headed by a *mutaṣarrif*, which were further divided into districts, *kaza*s (Arabic: *qaḍāʾ*), and was headed by a *kaymakam*. Eugene Rogan tells us that the *kaza* "was the standard unit of administration," which "brought together three essential functionaries: a district governor, a *mufti* to oversee religious affairs, and a judge. The law also called for the creation of administrative councils composed of locally elected representatives for the governor to consult and involve in the administrative decisions affecting the district."[65]

[64] Beinin, *Workers and Peasants*, 49-56; see Huri İslamoğlu, "Towards a Political Economy of Legal and Administrative Constitutions of Property," and Mark Levine, "Land, Law, and the Planning of Empire: Jaffa and Tel Aviv during the Late Ottoman and Mandate Eras" in ed. Huri İslamoğlu, *Constituting Modernity: Private Property in the East and West* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).
[65] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 49-51.

1.2. The Frontier

1.2.1. The Opening of Southern Syria

Since Ottoman annexation of Syria in the 16th century, the area that later became Transjordan, excluding Maʿān and southwards, had been included in the Sanjak of ʿAjlūn attached to the Damascus Eyalet.[66] Ottoman exertion of control and power over this territory was limited to securing the safe passage of the yearly Hajj Caravan, whose route went through Transjordan. In a number of settled villages and towns the empire either erected new castles or utilized existing ones to survey the area for Bedouin intruders, seeking to seize the Hajj caravan.[67] The northernmost of the three areas that would later be called Transjordan was Jabal ʿAjlūn, located in the southern section of the large and fertile Hauran plain, though cut off from the rest of it by the Yarmouk River. The southern and eastern areas of Jabal ʻAjlūn, near the town of ʿAjlūn, were characterized by hills and valleys and were spotted with springs and streams, which descended into the Jordan Valley in the west. These hills provided the necessary security for settled life and the primary economic activity was cultivation of olives and fruits, as well as grains.[68] The northern sections of the district, closer to Irbid, were flat with far scarcer and less abundant water sources, though cultivation of grains, as with the rest of the Hauran, was the main economic activity. This flat topography meant being more susceptible to Bedouin incursions from the east and north, who would often try and force villagers to

[66] Ahmed Sudqi Shuqairat, *tārīkh al-idārat al-ʿUthmāniyya fī sharq al-ʾUrdun, 1864-1918* (Amman: Alāʾ lil-ṭibāʿat wal-taṣmīm, 1992): 28.
[67] Şen, *Jordan*, 14-19, 44-45.
[68] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 24.

pay *khuwa*, or tribute. Control over the district for much of its history was fought amongst local feudal lords and intruding Bedouin tribes. However, Eugene Rogan informs us that "[t]he ʿAjlūn district paid taxes to the governor in Damascus in most years, refusing only when the Bedouin demands for *khuwa* left too little surplus to satisfy the government's demands." Moreover, "[t]his acknowledgment of Ottoman authority was also unique for Transjordan, and confirmed ʿAjlūn's northward orientation in commerce and migration towards the Hawran and Damascus."[69]

Jabal ʿAjlun is separated in the south from the Balqa district by the Zarqāʾ River, which begins around Amman and flows west into the Jordan River. All settled life in the Balqāʾ, for quite some time, had been concentrated in the singular town of al-Salt, in the north section of the district, and would remain this way until the 1880's. The topography around the town was characterized by hills and valleys which descended into the Jordan Valley in the west, much like the southern sections of Jabal ʿAjlūn. Salt was the primary trade center east of the Jordan River, attracting merchants from Palestine and Syria, particularly Nablus and Damascus, due the much higher selling prices. To the south and east of Salt, the hills gradually gave way to plains which were controlled and fought over by Bedouin tribes due to the good pasturage that the plains provided. The Bedouin would often extract *khuwa* from the villagers in Salt, however the relationship between the settled population of the town and the nomadic populations was one of cooperation, with important trading activities taking place between the two sides.[70] From the Balqāʾ, both the Hajj Route and the King's Highway led southwards to the town of Karak, the main settlement of the eponymous district. The town and its environs, including the society that inhabited it, will be discussed in much greater detail in the following chapter,

[69] Ibid., 26-27.
[70] Ibid., 27-29.

however it is worth noting that unlike the two districts to the north, the settled and nomadic populations of Karak were "indistinguishable" from each other and there was no clear divide between cultivator and pastoralist. The southern boundary of this district was Wadi al-Hasa, and located on the opposite side was the district of Maʿān, split into *Shamiyya* and *Hijaziyya* halves. In the south, the *Hijaziyya* half of the district ran into the district of al-Aqaba, split into Syrian and Egyptian halves. In addition to the town of Maʿān, the district also included the settled towns of Tafila and Shoubak. Like in the Balqāʾ, the *badia* was controlled by Bedouin tribes who extorted *khuwa* from these towns. Explorer J.L. Burkhardt visited the district in 1812 and noted how, owing to its "frontier orientation," the customs, language, and clothing of its inhabitants more closely resembled that found in Egypt than in the rest of southern Syria.[71] Though there was never a common identity, Rogan notes that there were cultural similarities between the populations of these different areas.[72]

As one traverses this frontier from north to south, the population becomes less sedentary, the differences between the settled and nomadic populations become smaller, and the customs of the society become more heterodox. Adopting Eugene Rogan's analytical and conceptual considerations, which he borrows from scholars of North America and Southern Africa, a frontier can be defined as '"a zone of interpenetration between two previously distinct societies," one of which is indigenous to the region and the other intrusive'. Moreover, the frontier is opened from the moment the intrusive society arrives, and does not close, if at all, until "a single political entity has established hegemony over the zone."[73] While the limited control the Ottomans had over southern

[71] Ibid., 32-34.
[72] Ibid., 36.
[73] Ibid., 6.

Syria in the 16th century can be considered an 'opening' of this frontier, it would lay dormant, or even cease to be a frontier, for almost three centuries and would not be reopened until 1830, by the Egyptian ruler Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha and his son, Ibrahim. It would not be until the next decade, armed with the new Tanzimat ideology and its tools, that the Ottoman Empire would begin to reenter this frontier, with the intention of imposing its complete hegemony over it.

1.2.2. Ottoman Civilizing Attitude

In order for the frontier to be conceptualized and opened, its environment and inhabitants needed to be conceptualized as well. Adamiak explains how both the concepts of 'desert' and 'nomad' were only very recently given static, unmovable definitions. For example, he explains that when the French and British consuls toured the area in 1869, they were told by the Wali of Damascus to expect desert, and were surprised when what they actually found was quite fertile, watered land. Moreover, different states had different definitions over which land was considered 'desert.' Adamiak further explains, citing Norman Lewis, that "regions with less than 200 mm of rain a year is the region of steppe and desert that is difficult to farm without irrigation, between 200 mm and 350 mm was a "transitional" or semi-arid zone where enough rain falls for either settled farming or pastoralism, and above 350 mm can be easily used for farming.[74] Using annual rainfall records for Jerusalem which began in the 1840's along with state records for Jordanian towns and cities beginning in the 1930's, Raouf Abu Jaber was able to use a statistical analysis to estimate the annual rainfall for eight Transjordanian towns, ranging

[74] Patrick John Adamiak, "To the Edge of the Desert: Caucasian Refugees, Civilization, and Settlement," (ProQuest Dissertations, 2018): 40-41.

from Irbid in the north to al-Tafila in the south, and found that these towns ranged between the "transitional" and adequately fertile zones during the Ottoman period.[75]

The increasingly more barren and less fertile land outside the towns and their immediate environs, where the nomadic populations lived, however, received significantly less rainfall, and this is actually further proof that this idea of a 'desert' frontier is a recent creation. Across the southern and eastern parts of Bilad al-Sham, rather than there being a definite area where fertile land stopped and desert began, the topography actually represented more of a checker board pattern where these two types of topographies overlapped each other, as we saw from the earlier descriptions. Moreover, as mentioned, as one moved from north to south the distinctions between the settled and nomadic populations became less apparent, and very few *nomads* were fully nomadic; tribes in these areas were situated on a continuum from fully sedentary to fully nomadic, with few being on either extreme. While nomads have existed for millennia, Adamiak explains that "the modern concept of nomadism as an economic model and mode of life that is a vestigial remain of a primitive form of human existence… is relatively recent." The Ottoman Empire had accommodated and cooperated with nomadic populations in southern Syria since it annexed it in the 16th century, but beginning in the Tanzimat era "officials began to systematically work to settle and catalogue nomadic groups" and view them as a "problem to be solved."[76]

Adamiak argues that this invention of nomadism was an integral part to the Ottoman Empire's *civilizing attitude* towards the communities that inhabited the frontiers. Borrowing mainly from Selim Deringil and Ussama Makdisi, he explains that this notion of a 'civilizing mission' posits that beginning in the early 19th century Ottoman

[75] Abu Jaber, *Pioneers over Jordan*, 8-17, 243-254.
[76] Adamiak, "To the Edge of the Desert," 42-44.

administrators rediscovered medieval Arabic and Islamic texts espousing civilizational beliefs, such as the *Muqaddimah* by Ibn Khaldun. Later in the century, administrators began absorbing and adopting the colonialist ideologies of the European powers and began deploying both in their struggles against the mainly nomadic subjects inhabiting the internal frontiers, such as in Transjordan, away from its external frontiers where the European powers were present. Adamiak argues that in the earlier phases, this "civilizing attitude," as he calls and what it will be subsequently referred to, had a more distinct Ottoman character and was less influenced by European concepts but by the First World War it had taken on a character indistinguishable from European notions of race and civilization. Thomas Kuehn argues that Ottoman rule in Yemen in the late 19th and early 20th centuries did constitute a form of "colonial Ottomanism."[77] He is primarily concerned with the political dimensions and processes that informed Ottoman administrators conceptualizations and ordering of urban space in a "broader effort… to affirm the authority of the Ottoman state over the newly conquered province."[78] Through his textual and archival investigation, Kuehn shows that while there was a civilizing mission, as he calls it, it was different for a number of reasons from comparable missions by the Europeans in the Red Sea, as well as the British in India, the former serving as reference points for Ottoman administrators in Yemen. Rather than racial, this mission was based on cultural categories and hierarchies to differentiate between rulers and ruled, which Kuehn refers to as a "politics of difference," which undergirded this entire broader effort

[77] Thomas Kuehn, "Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism: Contesting Boundaries of Difference and Integration in Ottoman Yemen, 1872–1919," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27 (2007): 318.

[78] Thomas Kuehn, "Ordering Ottoman Space in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1914," in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, eds. Jen Hanssen, Thomas Phillip, and Stefan Weber (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Kommission, 2002): 331.

in the province.[79] Kuehn's analysis has a particular pertinence for studying Ottoman consolidation efforts in Karak which will be discussed in later chapters.

Mostafa Minawi agrees with Kuehn that "Ottoman rule posited cultural, not racial or ethnic characteristics, as a way of differentiating the Ottoman rulers from the local population,"[80] but disagrees with the notion of an Ottoman *civilizing mission*. Minawi conducted a textual analysis of the relevant archives of Ottoman consolidation efforts in its Libyan and Hijazi frontiers to argue that this notion of a *civilizing attitude* was largely a rhetorical tool only employed, to a relatively small degree, by local and provincial administrators with political interests in doing so. He further warns against viewing Ottoman incorporation of its frontiers as type of colonialism as it was a multi-layered and collaborative process taken under the threat from "a very real" European imperialism.[81] This thesis agrees with Minawi that the attitude of Ottoman rule towards different local populations was one in which cultural, rather than racial, characteristics were used as the main markers of difference. It further agrees with Minawi that this *civilizing attitude* by the Ottoman empire on its frontiers was employed as a rhetorical tool by opportunistic administrators located in the internal frontier. However, this essay contends that the use of this *attitude* as a rhetorical tool is not necessarily mutually exclusive with the belief that it certainly impacted how Ottoman administrators viewed these areas and its inhabitants. Hence, it also agrees with Patrick Adamiak that there was a *civilizing attitude*, but not *mission*, due to "the lack of a consistent and rigid policy."[82] It is also the belief

[79] Kuehn, "Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism", 320, 323, 330-335..
[80] Mostafa Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016): 15.
[81] Mostafa Minawi, "Beyond Rhetoric: Reassessing Bedouin-Ottoman Relations along the Route of the Hijaz Telegraph Line at the End of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58, vol. ½ (2015): 81-82.
[82] Adamiak, "To the Edge of the Desert," 25.

here that this notion of a *civilizing attitude* played an increasingly important role in formulating Ottoman policy towards the incorporation and consolidation of southern Syria over the latter half of the 19th century, and that this did have socioeconomic and political consequences for its inhabitants' way of life.

1.2.3. The New Property Regime

By 1851 the empire would officially create a new district for ʿAjlūn, though this was limited to a governor and military troops, and control still only consisted of one yearly tax payment for the entire district.[83] With the enactment of the Law of Vilayets, the district began witnessing the formation of entire bureaucracies under the administration. In 1867, the empire succeeded in establishing its presence in the Balqāʾ region, south of ʿAjlūn, with the town of Salt as its center, the only population center in the district. The incorporation of these districts had important social, economic, and political consequences. First, it disrupted the traditional societal hierarchies and relations in these towns and their environs. Second, it led to an influx of merchants from Damascus and Palestine, due to increased security from the Ottoman presence, looking to tap into an unchartered land of economic potential.[84] While the towns of ʿAjlūn and Salt already enjoyed historical trade relations with towns in Syria and Palestine, the increase in security meant that merchant families began to settle down on a permanent or long-term basis for the first time.[85] This phenomenon would only increase in size and intensity as the Ottoman Empire began implementing the Land Code and settling refugees from the Caucasus region in these two districts beginning in the late 1870's. The first stage of

[83] Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 26-27.
[84] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 98; Abu Jaber, *Pioneers over Jordan*, 85-87.
[85] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 99-101.

implementing the Land Code in Jabal ʿAjlun began in 1876, when the district administration, centered in Irbid, "began to deliver titles to property in land and other real estate to owners in villages of the area.".

Prior to the implementation of the code, land use in ʿAjlūn was a mix between the "*musha*ʿ system, i.e. a periodic redistribution of land," and individual plots. Martha Mundy explains that

> although no common village property in agricultural land was permitted under the Land Code… owners were allowed to register their individually owned shares of agricultural land in a village as shares under the legal category of 'ownership by association'. This form of the representation of right permitted considerable continuity in agricultural practice at the same time as it satisfied the requirement of individual ownership.

Moreover, whereas land deeds in other parts of the empire were given to those *aʿyān* and tax farmers who previously held this right, Mundy notes that land ownership rights in the ʿAjlūn *kaza*, and southern Syria as a whole, was largely granted to the cultivators themselves.[86] Mundy continues by elaborating how, in the first few years, implementation was a partnership between the local councils, established by the Vilayet Law, and state administration, where state administrators learned the necessary local knowledge and the local leaders were trained in this new state legal system.

Though, by the mid-1880's there is no record of this cooperation and only the involvement of the state is recorded. Mundy notes that this was because of "extensive development of formal administrative institutions" across the *vilayet* of Syria over the last decades of the century. The local leaders did not disappear though, rather they were absorbed into the state administration. The leaders that were absorbed into this

[86] Martha Mundy, "The State of Property: Late Ottoman Southern Syria, the *Kazâ* of ʿAjlun," in *Constituting Modernity: Private Property East and West* ed. Huri İslamoğlu (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004): 223.

administration tended to be from and around the administrative center of the *kaza*, Irbid, and local leaders in other towns, such as ʿAjlūn, were sidelined. As the development of the administrative institutions reached even deeper into society, many of the sidelined elites would be absorbed into the state administration at the level of the *nāhiyah*. Another important development was the opening of a branch of the Agricultural Credit Bank in Irbid in 1895-96, which marked "the state's engagement in the advancement of credit to individual owners of land." This transformed Irbid, previously a secondary town in the district, into a more economically important town where merchants from Palestine and Damascus began settling and "provid[ing] credit to individual cultivators on a much smaller scale than the earlier patterns of finance," meaning on a more individual, rather than communal, basis.

Mundy claims that at this level where the local leaders and the state administration meet, which she refers to as the "site of mediation,"[87] we can clearly see a lack of the supposed bifurcation between state and society discussed earlier. More specifically, this site of mediation occurs where the "tangible corporeal [property] relations, notably relations of production in agriculture," of the local people meets property relations as "legal persons (*personae*) of agencies of state." The often seen as necessary components of a civil society, private property and market relations, were brought about "[t]hrough the mediation of political administration," where "private entitlements appear technically and legally guaranteed by, but not in essence an inseparable part of, the public state." Moreover, local leaders-turned-legal *personae*, while at the same time still engaged in tangible and corporeal property relations of the local society, were in a position to continuously mediate "between administrative form and local knowledge," and take part

[87] Ibid., 236

in defining these property rights. As the official administration extended to even lower levels, such as the village or town, this led to variation in how the new land and property regime was understood and implemented.[88]

Michael Fischbach also explains how implementation of the Land Code varied across the districts of Transjordan. Also focusing on the ʿAjlūn district, he explains how, due to the higher population density, decreasing amount of cultivable land over time, and threat posed by the Bedouin in the district, the settled populations of ʻAjlūn found it in their best interest to register their lands with the state; this is in contrast to the Balqāʾ where these issues were much less present due to being sparsely populated with mainly pastoral Bedouin, and the Land Code was very much resisted. The empire did not establish a land registry office in the district until 1891, in Salt. Over time, however, a number of tribes did eventually begin to register their lands in order to protect it from potentially being seized by neighboring tribes or the empire to be given to new immigrants.[89] As mentioned, Palestinian and Syrian merchants had long been present in Salt, primarily engaged in money-lending, which ended up indebting many cultivators in the area. As early as 1866, the Ottoman Empire had established an agricultural bank to assist these cultivators in securing credit from a source other than these money-lenders. By the turn of the century the Ottomans had dissolved this agricultural bank and transferred its functions to the new Agricultural Central Bank.[90] As we see, the presence of Palestinian and Syrian merchants in Salt assisted in first attracting Ottoman presence. Moreover, these merchants helped in the processes of defining property and market relations, as well as entrenching and expanding the administrative institutions of the state.

[88] Ibid., 215-217, 236-237.
[89] Fischbach, *State, Society, and Land*, 44-47.
[90] Ibid., 61-62.

In turn, this increased the security of southern Syria which attracted more merchants from other parts of the province.[91]

Nora Barakat argues, against Fischbach, that nomadic populations were as equally responsible as merchants and cultivators in defining property relations and rights in the Balqaʾ district. She rejects the *incorporationist* view that nomadic populations formed the main obstacle to Ottoman incorporation and were begrudgingly dragged into the administrative and legal apparatuses. First, following the wave of scholarship that began in the late 20th century in opposition to the traditional view, Barakat explains how nomadic populations in the Balqāʾ long had contact and cooperated with the settled population in Salt, particularly in the market.[92] Like the land regime in ʿAjlūn district, as described by Mundy, Barakat notes how an "ownership document system" developed which "relied on the network of district and village-level bureaucratic officials and judicial institutions whose duties were outlined in the 1864 and 1871 Provincial Administration Regulations."[93] With this is mind, and relying on state and local archives, Barakat finds that the nomadic population was just as involved as the sedentary population in the defining and "functioning of the legal and economic infrastructure governing control over"[94] animals as property, which took place in state-sanctioned legal arenas such as the "district property administration (*tapu* office), the district Sharia court, the administrative council, the Niẓāmiye court of first instance."[95]

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[91] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 121.
[92] Nora Barakat, "Marginal Actors? The Role of Bedouin in the Ottoman Administration of Animals as Property in the District of Salt, 1870-1912," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58, no. ½ (2015): 106-107.
[93] Ibid., 111-112.
[94] Ibid., 119-132.
[95] Nora Barakat, "Regulating Land Rights in Late Nineteenth-Century Salt: The Limits of Legal Pluralism in Ottoman Property Law," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 118.

Just as in the Ajlūn district, many locals also had official roles in these institutions, however these were mostly merchants from Palestine and in and around Damascus who also made up much of the membership of the semi-elected local councils, blurring the distinction between the public and private sphere mentioned earlier. In particular, their involvement in the district *shariʿa* court provides a window into how blurred this distinction was and how much control the local populations had in and over these legal arenas. Barakat explains that many of these local leaders simultaneously occupied positions on the *shariʿa* court and for terms much longer and more repeatedly than the state-appointed deputy judge on the court, who was typically assigned on terms of three years before being sent elsewhere in the empire. So not only did these local elites possess more local knowledge about property rights, but also more understanding of the legal specifics on the side of the district administration, which, as seen, was often informed and molded by the local knowledge. While issues concerning *mīrī* land were supposed to be taken to the *Niẓāmiye* courts, the *shariʿa* court often heard cases which involved debt claims on unregistered *miri* land as collateral, even though the land in question was technically illegally held and cultivated.[96] Barakat further explains that scholars have long argued that extra- and non-state normative orders formed important arenas for locals to deal with legal matters, but the *shariʿa* court, as mentioned, was a state-sanctioned legal avenue. So its use by litigants "illustrates the way such extra-state normative orders were themselves intertwined with the vocabulary and legitimation mechanisms of the state system."[97] While this scholarship from Barakat focuses on specific areas and arenas of the property administration, her findings 'are important for broader understandings of the

[96] Ibid., 108-116.
[97] Ibid., 101-104

role of populations traditionally thought of as "marginal" to processes of modern state-building in both rural and urban contexts of the Ottoman Empire and beyond."[98]

1.2.4. Consolidation Through Settling

It was mentioned that these nomadic populations also began registering their lands to protect them from state seizure to be given to new immigrants, which Patrick Adamiak argues was used as a tool for implementing the Tanzimat era reforms and consolidating the frontier in southern Syria. In the Treaty of Paris which officially ended the Crimean War in 1856, the north Caucasus were recognized as part of the Russian Empire who had been engaged in a decades long struggle in the area against its Muslim inhabitants. In the 1860's it began enacting a policy of deportation against these inhabitants since they were seen as being unable to integrate into Russian society. In 1857, the Ottoman Empire enacted the Immigration Law, three years later it established an Immigrant Commission, and before the end of the decade it began considering southern Syria as a desirable location for resettling Muslim refugees from southeastern Europe and the Caucasus fleeing from war. Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky notes that during the second half of the 19th century many states and empires, such as the United States, and British and Russian Empires, were enacting numerous laws and pursuing various policies related to the defining and settling of both immigrants and refugees, and the Ottoman Empire was not unique in this respect.[99] The empire first temporarily settled these refugees in the port cities where they first arrived, but soon would transport them to their final destination in the interior. Following this, between 1876-1878, the Ottoman Empire lost nearly all of its

[98] Barakat, "Marginal Actors?", 109.
[99] Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, "Imperial Refuge: Resettlement of Muslims from Russia in the Ottoman Empire, 1860-1914," (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2018): 8-18.

remaining territory in southern Europe in another war with the Russian Empire, creating a half million Muslim refugees from the North Caucasus who had been initially resettled in the Balkans. Unlike in the previous decade, Ottoman presence in the Syrian frontier had greatly increased and the empire began resettling these refugees there, which occurred alongside the reorganization of the Immigrant Commission and its promotion to an official government institution.[100]

Once resettled in the interior, these North Caucasian refugees were cut off, some a second time, from one another and subjected to the further deterioration in the traditional hierarchy of their respective communities.[101] Hamed-Troyansky explains that the empire only sent the refugees to general areas, such as the Balqa, but beyond that it was up to the refugee communities to decide precisely where on the designated land to settle. Both he and Adamiak note that the major North Caucasian settlements south of Damascus formed an almost straight line bisecting the sedentary and nomadic populations along western edge of the desert.[102] In his study of the Circassian colony established in 1873 in Quneitra on the eastern edge of the Jaulan, Adamiak argues that the Ottoman Empire used these refugee-turned-settlers to sideline the dominant Bedouin and Druze populations and to expand and entrench the regime in the Hauran; for example, the Quneitra settlement acted as an obstacle for Druze networks between Jabal Druze further east and Druze populations in the rest of the Jaulan. Moreover, given the anxiety and isolation that the Circassians experienced, they gravitated towards the state for protection, services, and employment. After the loss in 1878 and influx of even more refugees from these areas, officials began pursuing an administrative reorganization in the province,

[100] Ibid., 100-115.
[101] Ibid., 67-68, 125-131.
[102] Ibid., 127-128; Adamiak, "To the Edge of the Desert," 37-38.

prioritizing the Circassian's absorption into the state apparatuses, particularly the gendarmerie. According to Adamiak, when German-American surveyor Gottlieb Schumacher arrived in the Hauran in 1888, he found that the nomadic tribes around the settlement and in the Jaulan had been pushed to inferior quality land and had begun engaging in settled-cultivation.[103] Keeping in mind what has already been elaborated upon, it seems likely that the presence, growth, and absorption of these communities into local administrations was *a*, not *the*, factor that led to the sedentarization of the Jaulānī semi-nomadic communities.

While agreeing with Adamiak that absorption of Circassians into the state apparatuses, from both within and below, assisted in the consolidation of these areas by the empire, Hamed-Troyansky goes beyond passive absorption of these communities to show that they took their unfavorable positions into their own hands and were important actors in the economic boom and rise in status that Amman witnessed prior to the Mandate era. Amman, in the Balqāʾ district, was another one of the major settlements along this "line" that cut through the frontier. That several Circassian communities ended up settling in the *khirba*, ruins, of the town was due to the presence of water sources there. These communities settled in successive waves between 1879 and 1902 and were noted for their ethnic and linguistic variation. Eventually the more recent waves of Circassian arrivals began forming a number of villages further outside Amman. Isolated and cut off from their traditional leaders and support networks, the Circassians took advantage of the expansion of the administrative apparatuses down to the village and town level, and began occupying import positions on the town and villages councils. The increase in Ottoman presence in the Balqāʾ and the growth of another settled community in the district

[103] Adamiak, "To the Edge of the Desert," 112-130.

attracted grain merchants, initially from Salt, facing an economic downturn beginning in the 1870's.

Considering what has already been noted in this chapter, it should be unsurprising that access to Bedouin markets, in addition to the Palestinian and Syrian merchant capital, was an important factor in the economic boom in Amman.[104] However, the Circassian communities were simultaneously embroiled in numerous land conflicts with the nomadic Bani Sakhr and Balqawiyya tribes. Land registration began amongst the refugee communities in the first years of the 20th century, and Hamed-Troyansky explains how although Bedouin populations were disadvantaged in the courts vis-à-vis the two former actors, there was a degree of coexistence between the Bedouins and Circassians in these villages. These two groups sold and bought land to and from one another and Bedouin populations even began settling in the villages alongside their Circassian neighbors.[105] However, it should be reminded that sedentarization of nomadic populations was a goal of the Ottoman administrators across southern Syria. Patrick Adamiak notes the Ottomans "justified giving land that was already under use to new settlers by arguing that they were acting in the name of civilization and development," which is further proof that the *civilizing attitude* was a distinctive aspect of Ottoman policy in peripheral regions of the empire from the 1860s.[106]

1.2.5. Christian Settlements and Missionaries

Refugee and immigrant communities were not the only groups to settle the frontier of Transjordan. While traditional scholarship has often pitted European

[104] Hamed-Troyansky, "Imperial Refuge," 143-164.
[105] Ibid., 165-182.
[106] Adamiak, 17.

missionaries and the Ottoman Empire against each other, Eugene Rogan shows how missionaries contributed to the empire's plans of consolidating the frontier. Both the Latin and Protestant churches, based out of and very active in Palestine, began traversing east of the Jordan River in the 1850s-and-60s, viewing the heterodox and tolerant communities of Transjordan as ripe for and in need of conversion. The missions offered, and the people demanded, basic health and educational services, as well as infrastructure, that the state could not yet provide. In the 1870s, when agricultural laborers from Salt began settling permanently on their respective tribe's lands outside the town for the first time, the missions were the first to target these new settlements.[107] The stability and protection that this provided to the new inhabitants helped ease Ottoman consolidation and expansion in these new towns, which in turn, attracted even more missionaries. The famous reformer and architect of the 1864 Law of Vilayets, Midhat Pasha, who was serving as Wali (Provincial Governor) of Syria at this time, looked very favorably upon this phenomenon, as it helped expand and entrench the Tanzimat regime in these 'uncivilized' areas, and further opened them up to economic exploitation.[108] From Salt and its environs, the missionaries began venturing north into Jabal ʿAjlūn and further south in the Balqāʾ and even into Karak. In these new areas, the new missions acted as interest groups and representatives for their respective congregations, interfered in local politics, stoked inter-Christian tensions for arguably the first time, and facilitated the reach of the European powers into these areas.

[107] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 123-135.
[108] Ibid., 79-82.

1.2.6. From Internal Frontier to Imperial Borderland

While the Ottoman Empire was developing this trial-and-error process of refugee resettlement throughout the 1880s, it was also a participant in the 1884 Berlin Conference whose purpose was to facilitate conflict-free imperialism and to establish the rules which would govern imperialism on the African continent. After the loss of 1878, many observers saw Ottoman inclusion in the Conference as merely symbolic; indeed, the Ottoman state was not unaware of the power imbalance between it and its European counterparts nor the risks of participating in formulating international law which could later be used against it. However, to take part in crafting international law meant to be part of the 'civilized nations,' which was becoming an increasingly important distinction as the boundary between "ruler" and "ruled" was solidifying.[109] The General Act of Berlin of 1885, the formalized outcome of the conference, includes an article that is of particular importance, Article 35. This article introduced the concept of "effective occupation," which stated that an imperial power simply discovering or surveying a territory was no longer sufficient to claim control over it, but rather, it had to demonstrate its presence through "continuous occupation supported by actual settlements or military posts," which later was understood as "manifestation and exercise of functions of government over the territory."[110] Minawi further explains how as these imperial conflicts intensified, frontiers shifted from zones of "imperial-indigenous interaction" into *borderlands*, zones of "imperial-imperial interaction."[111] Sabri Ateş, analyzing the borderland between the Ottoman and Iranian empires, describes the incorporation and consolidation of these

[109] Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, 8-12.
[110] Ibid., 46-48.
[111] Minawi, 13-14.

zones "as different stages or layers of a filter, tightening not only in time but also in space."[112] This was very much the case with the incorporation and consolidation of southern Syria, which, when viewed this way, may more appropriately be described as the opening of subsequent *frontiers*. Moreover, the opening of a further portion of the frontier was not contingent on the closing of the previous frontier. As seen, the frontier in ʿAjlūn and its environs was officially opened in 1851, however the Ottoman Empire did not begin implementation of the Land Code there for another twenty years, by which time the frontier in the Balqāʾ had already been opened. Furthermore, after the British occupied and took control of Egypt, southern Syria, including Transjordan, was transformed into a borderland as well.

1.3. Conclusion

By 1893, the last remaining area of the Transjordan, Karak district, was officially opened as a frontier. Eugene Rogan explains that plans in the 1870's and 1880's were drafted to incorporate most of southern Syria and parts of northern Arabia into one administrative district, but both plans were deemed too costly and shelved. Eugene Rogan notes that each of these plans saw Maʿan as the center of southern Transjordan, not Karak, due to the economic and strategic reasons of "sedentarization of tribes, the extension of cultivation, linkage with the Arabian Peninsula and, after 1882, securing the southern flank of Syria from potential British incursions,"[113] who now occupied Egypt, which had still nominally belonged to the Ottoman Empire. This episode will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3 but it is necessary to mention that Awda al-Qusus tells us that the main

[112] Sabri Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 10-11.
[113] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 52-54

reason for the Ottoman entrance into al-Karak was to protect and provide safety for the Hajj route, and later the Hijaz railway, against the Bedouin,[114] which is partly true. Another important reason for the entrance into Karak was, as explained by Rogan and Minawi, to keep these areas out of the hands of foreign powers. This further marks the beginning of the district's status as a borderland, which will be examined in subsequent chapters.

This chapter has attempted to concisely analyze the incorporation and consolidation of Ottoman control over the Transjordan areas of the southern Syrian frontier. The first part of the chapter looked at the developments which took place within the various Ottoman administrations throughout the 19th century, keeping in mind the complexities and nuances of this process. While this chapter has argued that a European worldview of modernity and progress influenced the Ottoman administrators tasked with formulating the new policies and laws of the Tanzimat, it also recognizes that they were only one of many viewpoints influencing the outcome of these legal developments. These various worldviews were disagreed on by Ottoman administrators at different levels of governance, which affected the final outcome of these Tanzimat era legal developments. Moreover, these processes were working both with and against several socioeconomic and geopolitical trends and developments at the time when they were crafted, which had, quite literally, a direct impact on both their content and form.

These ongoing processes, in turn, greatly influenced how these developments were imposed on the frontier, the focus of the second half of the chapter. This chapter maintains that the *civilizing attitude* inherent in this European worldview, as well as partial inspiration from Muslim texts, was an important aspect in how the empire carried

[114] Ibid., 39.

out its opening and consolidation of southern Syria, which was inhabited by many nomadic and semi-nomadic population. Evaluating whether this consolidation of the frontier constitutes 'Ottoman colonialism,' the author agrees with Thomas Kuehn's classification of these processes as 'Colonial Ottomanism,' for the reasons previously elaborated on. In addition, the chapter has continuously emphasized that even where this attitude played a role in administrative policy in the frontier, this policy was one of trial-and error, as well as one in which local populations played an integral role in crafting and adapting to their own needs, which varied even within the districts of Transjordan. In all, Minawi sheds lights on how centering the frontier in analyses of imperialism will better help us understand it 'as a "process of adaptive transformation in which people create, assemble, configure, reassemble, renovate and remodel imperial forms of power and authority under diverse, changing circumstances."'[115]

[115] Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, 12.

CHAPTER 3

AL-KARAK PRIOR TO OTTOMAN INCORPORATION: HISTORY, SOCIETY, AND LAW

The previous chapter outlined the issues the Ottoman Empire faced beginning in the 19th century, and the reforms it took to resolve them and to transform into a modern, *civilized* state able to defend itself from and compete with Europe in the new era of imperialism. Integral to this was having effective control over the entirety of its claimed territory, including southern Syria. As a frontier zone, this region had operated by its own rules, not those of Istanbul, for nearly three centuries. This chapter seeks to shed light on and analyze the traditional society of the Karak region of southern Syria between the Ottomans effective loss of southern Syria in the late 16th century and its reoccupation of the area during the latter half of the 19th century. Before the Ottoman government officially entered the Karak region in 1893, the town and its environs had been governed by an ever-changing arrangement between tribes with a recognized customary legal system for settling disputes. European accounts throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries described the area as one where anarchy ruled supreme and the strongest prevailed.[116]

Frederick Gerald Peake, writing in the 1930's, relies heavily on these European accounts and, to a lesser extent, Awda's memoirs to provide a more generalized view of

[116] John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London, 1822): 368, 381-384; H.B. Tristam, *The Land of Moab: Travels and Discoveries on the East Side of the Dead Sea and the Jordan* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishing, 1873): 95-100, 127-128; Frederick Jones Bliss, "Narrative of an Expedition to Moab and Gilead in March, 1895," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1895): 203, 217-219.

traditional society in al-Karak. However, Peake's history of Karak centers around the most important and powerful tribe in Karak, the al-Majali, who arrived in Karak from al-Khalil in Palestine sometime in the 17th century, and it does not mention much about *ʾahl* al-Karak.[117] Peake is more concerned with describing the history of Karak, while Peter Gubser, in his 1973 study *Politics and Change in al-Karak*, goes much further to analyze traditional Karaki society by exploring the continuity and change in power and politics, as well as the entire social structure, in the area from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. Moreover, he is concerned with understanding "the structure, functions, and dynamics of the political society."[118] Gubser analyzes and constructs a picture of political and social formation in Karak and its district, starting with the tribe and its sub-units and gradually ascending up to the district and its tribes as a single unit, as well as its relations with outside tribes and with each of the central authorities after 1894, the Ottomans, British, and Hashemites.

A flaw in Gubser's work, which will be discussed later in the chapter, is his reliance on twentieth-century Western political theory, namely Weberian and modernization theories, to analyze politics and change in traditional Karaki society. This significantly takes away from the value of the study since it teleologically places the constitutional, liberal state as more advanced and desirable than the traditional societal structure in Karak, which is primarily characterized by what it lacks, namely, institutions. Instead, this chapter seeks to critically analyze the traditional societal structures in Karak by examining the historical and social processes that led to such seemingly amorphous structures, what these structures actually looked like, how they operated, and what they

[117] Frederick Gerald Peake, *A History of Transjordan and its Tribes* (Amman, 1934): 202.
[118] Peter Gubser, *Politics and Change in al-Karak, Jordan: A Study of a Small Arab Town and its District* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973): 2.

sought to achieve, with respect to the desired type of society of the people who inhabited the area, rather than a political theory developed at a different time and place with different goals and ideas of how a society should be structured. In doing so, this chapter more accurately and appropriately sheds light on the way traditional society in Karak was structured and how exactly it operated.

Awda, writing in the 1920's, details the various arrangements and alliances of the tribes in Karak and its district and how this came to be. While he does not often provide years and dates for these events, other sources are available to corroborate or dispute these accounts. In addition, Awda's presentation of events is not always in chronological order and he is focused more on events with immediate relevance to his tribe, the Christian community, or the people, rather than solely the Majali, the leading tribe in the town and district. This has its advantage too as it provides an account of Karaki history not centered on the most powerful tribe or main alliances in the district. However, as discussed in the introduction, one needs to be careful when reading these accounts because they may not be entirely accurate or undisputed. For example, Awda's presentation of these events is disputed by the 'Amr tribes, who were adversaries of ʾahl al-Karak throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is important to note that Awda came from a well-respected (semi-)settled Christian tribe within the town of Karak and enjoyed regional relations through employment in the Greek Orthodox Church as well as in trading. As will be shown, this greatly impacted the tribe's status, position, and opportunities within the district before Ottoman reentrance and again during the period of direct governance. As such, Awda's perspectives and experiences are just a few of many during this time period. How he portrays the society both prior to Ottoman reentrance and during their governance would

likely be quite different from the perspectives of either the nomadic inhabitants of the district's environs, the (semi-)settled inhabitants of the three other subordinate towns in the district, or even a member of the Majali. The overall purpose of this thesis is to provide a more nuanced, critical view of both social transformations in Karak and Transjordan during the late Ottoman and British Mandate eras, as well as Ottoman and British state formation in the area. In order to show how a society transformed, it must first be shown, accurately, how it was.

2.1. Local History

Geographically, the area that is being referred to as Karak in all three of the presented histories is the area between Wadi al-Mujib in the north and Wadi al-Hasa in the south, and between the Dead Sea in the west and in the east the plateau eventually descends into desert where the Bedouin inhabit.[119] However, when Awda speaks of "*ʾahl* al-Karak" in the era before Ottoman reoccupation, he is likely only referring to the sedentary and semi-sedentary plateau tribes who live in and directly around the town. He often positions the *ʾahālī* of Karak in direct opposition to the Beni Hamida and Amri tribes, who traditionally migrated around the plateau and at times carried out incursions into the plateau and town when necessary.[120] Though, when Gubser was recording oral histories of Karaki elders in the 1970's, these two tribes were considered to be part of the *ʾahl*. According to Gubser, population estimates from both European travelers during the 19th century and the Mandate government in 1922 seem very inaccurate. Basing his calculations off the more accurate census of 1948, which recorded a population of just

[119] Ibid., 9-12.
[120] Awda al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 4-6.

under forty thousand for the district and about four thousand for the town, Gubser estimates that the population during the 19th century ranged between 15-20 thousand, a few thousand of whom lived in the town.[121]

The most powerful and influential tribe in al-Karak at this time was the al-Majali, whose entrance into the town in the 17th century is where both Peake and Gubser begin their histories. Prior to this, the two main rivals which competed for supremacy in the area were the ʿAmr tribes, semi-nomadic descendants of the Arabs who stayed in the area after the Battle of Muʾta in 629 A.D., and the Imāmīyya, descendants of Turkish officials and their offspring who remained in the town after the Ottoman Empire lost effective control of the area in the latter half of the 16th century. In the middle of the following century, Jalal al-Majali, a merchant from al-Khalil, settled in the area. Over the next few generations, a number of relatives moved to Karak and the tribe began accumulating a large amount of land. In the early 18th century, Jalal's grandson, Salim, allied his tribe with the 'Amr against the Imāmīyya, the latter were defeated, and the 'Amr were now the undisputed leaders of Karak, though the influence and power of the Majali had increased significantly.[122]

Over the course of the next century, the Majali made a series of maneuvers to become to the paramount tribe in Karak. The first notable event occurred during the 1780's when a severe famine spread through the area. According to Peake, the *sheikh al-mashāyikh* at the time, Khalil al-Majali, under the influence of his brother, Ghabin, intended to keep *ʾahl* al-Karak starving long enough that they would eventually sell their land to the tribe in exchange for food. Yusuf, another brother, was against this and, despite attempts by the other two to stop him, was able to arrange for a caravan to travel to al-

[121] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 25-26.
[122] Peake, *A History*, 203-204;

Khalil to secure the necessary amount of foodstuff to bring back.[123] What is interesting is that Awda makes no mention of this greed by Khalil and Ghabin and only tells of how Yusuf was able to secure the foodstuff for the people of Karak. It is possible that Awda omits this part of the story due to the traditional alliance that the Christians of Karak enjoyed with the Majali tribe. However, Gubser explains that the Halasa, Awda's tribe, had strained relations with the Majali despite the alliance.[124] The overall importance of this event in Karaki history is that although the al-Majali may not yet have been the strongest actor politically, this event elevated them to the strongest actor economically due to its well-established trade links with al-Khalil and Palestine, as well as the land it had accrued over the century.

The second notable event was the defeat of both the ʿAmr and Bani Hamida tribes in 1804. According to Peake and Gubser, the ʿAmr, by this point severely weak and now inhabiting areas outside the plateau, were invited back to the town by Yusuf al-Majali on the condition that the tribe incite tensions with the Bani Hamida, a more recent inhabitant of region. The Bani Hamida retaliated and destroyed the Amr, exactly as Yusuf had planned, who then was able to convince *ʾahl* al-Karak to defeat the victorious, yet weakened, Bani Hamida for bringing a new round of violence and instability to the town and its environs. Awda, however, presents this event as one where *ʾahl* al-Karak—both Muslim and Christian—realized that they were stronger in numbers, defeated the tribes who were weak from fighting each other, and overtook land northwest of the town. What followed next, according to Awda, was the equal division of this land into three parts: one for the western Muslims, one for the eastern Muslims, and one for the Christians, and

[123] Peake, *A History*, 205-206; al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 5-6.
[124] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 93.

each was further divided up equally by family.[125] According to Gubser, this division of land was based on an earlier Ottoman policy designed for tax purposes,[126] which was likely based on the extant situation. Awda notes that this new land to labor on further increased the regional importance of the town.[127]

The next event in the history of Karak was its occupation by Ibrahim Pasha between 1831-1840, which all three of the sources describe as years of cruelty and subjugation. According to the local history, presented by Awda, ʾahl al-Karak put up a heroic resistance against the Pasha and his forces, but eventually the latter gained the upper-hand, laid siege to the town, occupied the castle and two Latin abodes, and subjected the people to misery and torment. The *sheikh al-mashāyikh* of Karak, Ismāʿīl al-Majali, was complacent during this time and eventually the *mashāyikh* of Karak decided to take matters into their own hands. At dawn one day, the people of Karak overtook the Latin abodes, killing the soldiers inside and then surrounded the castle where the remaining soldiers were.[128] Upon being informed of this, Ibrahim Pasha and his forces descended upon the town and destroyed it for a second time again, despite another resistance from *ʾahl* al-Karak. However, the vast majority of the families managed to escape to hideouts in the nearby *wadi* northeast of the town. Some of the soldiers then forced a man from the Habashaneh tribe, Jalhad, to lead them through the rocky valley. Jalhad was able to trap the soldiers in the inundating *wadi*, at which point the Karakis hiding in the immediate vicinity began shooting and killing all of them. Finished with destroying the town, Ibrahim Pasha went out after the families as well, managing to capture an unspecified number of Christians crossing the Dead Sea. He then settled them

[125] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 4-5.
[126] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 56.
[127] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 5.
[128] Ibid., 8-9.

in villages in the al-Khalil area and from there began hunting down Ismaʾil al-Majali, his brother Abdul Qadr, and the latter's son, Salih, with the help of the Bani Hamida,[129] though Peake tells us that they had taken refuge with the Huwaytat tribe of Maʿan who then handed them over to the Pasha.[130] Once capturing them, Ibrahim Pasha had only Ismaʿil beheaded in Jerusalem and his corpse put on display for three days in the market in Petra. As for the Christians settled in al-Khalil, Awda states that they did not return to Karak until after Ibrahim Pasha's rule in Syria ended in 1840.[131]

What is remarkable about the documents Awda found in the library at the American University of Beirut in 1937 is that they are a first-hand account of Ibrahim Pasha's second campaign on Karak by an unnamed individual who, for an unspecified reason, was accompanying the army, and the information presented in these documents corroborates this oral history that was passed down to Awda. It is clear from the information presented in the first document that the events taking place are part of what was known as the Peasants' Rebellion,[132] which, as its name suggests, was a series of revolts by the peasantry across Palestine and southern Syria (Transjordan) against the harsh and corrupt rule of Ibrahim Pasha in Syria. It ended with the Egyptian ruler and his forces completely destroying these towns, including Karak, and hunting down the conspirators.[133] While Awda never gives dates for any of these events nor does he account for gaps in time, the primary documents are dated to Rabiʿ al-ʾawl and Rabiʿ al-thani 1250 AH (roughly July and August 1834 AD). These documents also inform us, as do Peake and Gubser, that the reason for the second campaign on al-Karak was because

[129] Ibid., 9-11.
[130] Peake, *A History*, 207.
[131] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 11.
[132] Ibid., 14.
[133] Beinin, *Workers and Peasants*, 33.

Sheikh Qasim al-Ahmed, a prominent *sheikh* from the area of Jabal Nablus and main conspirator of the revolt, was hiding in Karak on an invitation from the Majali sheikhs. When Ibrahim Pasha was informed of this, he led a force to the town and laid siege to it, including the entire surrounding area, for a period of a few weeks.[134] In this episode, as with the previous one, Awda emphasizes the collective, non-sectarian action and resistance against outside forces by the people of Karak, who are the true victims against outside aggression.

In the years following Ibrahim Pasha's exit from Syria in 1840, Abdul Qadr assumed leadership of the Majali tribe, though he would die in 1846. Muhammad, his successor, would retain leadership of tribe until his death in 1886. During this time, Muhammad was most concerned with defeating the latest ally of the tribe, the Beni Ṣakhr, who were now deemed disposable. Beginning in the 1860's, the Majali began to make serious moves against the tribe, leading the Karakis and a junior partner, the Bani ʿAttiya, in attacks against it and forcing them north to the Balqāʾ, although raids between the two would continue into the mandate era. In addition to this, the chaos left behind by Ibrahim Pasha's rule had allowed the Bani Hamida and other nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes to resume their raids into the area during this time.[135] Awda presents these years as quite stressful for *ʾahl* al-Karak, particularly the Christians, and notes that bonds between them became stronger due to the latest episode of instability. However, Awda also mentions a number of conflicts within the *ʾahl*, primarily involving the Christians, that had noteworthy consequences.

In 1870, relations between Sheikh Muhammad al-Majali and the Halasa tribe had worsened to the point that the latter eventually relocated to lands near *khirbat* (ruins) of

[134] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 21.
[135] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 16

Amman. When speaking of this departure, Awda refers to the Halasa as a single unit, suggesting that the entire tribe had relocated.[136] The tribe was welcomed by the *sheikh*s of the Balqāwiyya tribes of the surrounding and one of them, Sheikh Salameh al-Farayrā, granted the Halasa a portion of land near the Zarqa River for that year's harvest. Word of the tribe's arrival to the Balqā, at this time attached to the *sanjak* of Nablus, soon reached the kaymakam of the *kaza* centered in Salt. The *kaymakam*, Adham Efendi,[137] met with the *sheikh*s of the Halasa at *khirbat Amman*, welcoming them to the area and even giving them more land around the ruins to settle on.[138] According to the story, when Sheikh Muhammad al-Majali was informed of this he "felt the loss of his biggest support." He subsequently ordered his son, Muslih, to visit the Halasa, with the purpose of appeasing the tribe and convincing it to return to Karak. Sheikh Muslih was successful in this endeavor, except one family migrated further north to ʿAjūn and was welcomed by the Hindāwī tribe there. Awda notes that this tribe had only returned to the town in recent years, perhaps after the establishment of the British Mandate in 1921.[139] While it is likely that the Halasa would eventually be forced to pay *khuwa* by the Balqawiyya if they had stayed, the latter were certainly eager to welcome a singular tribe of such status with valuable trade connections to the district. Adham Effendi, too, was delighted to have the Halasa in the district. As noted in the previous chapter, the empire, firmly in the Balqā at this time, was concerned with settling the inhabitants in this district and Karak, and thought that the presence of new settled communities, particularly Christians, would achieve this and help develop the area.

[136] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 30
[137] Shuqairāt, *Tarīkh al-idārat al-ʿUthmaniyyat*, 194.
[138] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 30.
[139] Ibid.

Although European and American missions did not make much headway into the Karak region, they still managed to did play a role in a number of the tribal disputes in the district, and the Balqa as well. The Latin mission in Karak, established 1875, would withdraw only a few years later when their only converts decided to permanently settle in Madaba, south of Amman. This was due to a conflict, retold by both Awda and Eugene Rogan a bit differently, in which the mission played a major role in exacerbating. The former states that he learned of this story from his father, while the latter relies on archives from the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem and from French missionary and Orientalist Antonin Jaussen. In November 1879, a Muslim man named Mahmoud from the Sarāyrah of the Eastern Alliance abducted the married sister of his boss, Ibrahim al-Tuwāl of the Christian ʿUzayzat, who had recently converted to Roman Catholicism. Mahmoud proceeded to flee to the nearby town of Kathrabba. Although the relationship between the ʿUzayzat and the Majali, both in the Western Alliance, had deteriorated, the former still stepped in and secured the return of the woman, Najma, but not to her family or tribe, rather to the Catholic priests.[140]

Rogan notes that justice was quickly reached through in the customary legal system, with all sides agreeing that the woman would to be killed to restore her family's honors,[141] and Awda adds that the Sarāyrah were ordered to pay a blood price of three men to the ʿUzayzat.[142] Rogan claims that incident likely would have ended there if not for the intrusion of the Latin priests, who urged the Patriarch in Jerusalem to arrange a deal with Sheikh Muhammad al-Majali to smuggle Najma to Jerusalem.[143] In contrast to Rogan, Awda places the smuggling of Najma to Jerusalem *before* the litigation process,

[140] Ibid., 31; Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 77-78.
[141] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 78
[142] al-Qusus, *al-Mudhakirāt*, 32
[143] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 78.

suggesting that these two ordeals were happening around the same time. Sheikh Muhammad was selected to preside over the case as *qādī*, though during the case, Awda claims that the *sheikh al-mashāyikh* only deliberated with his advisors, presumably the two priests he was in cahoots with. Apparently, the Christian *sheikh*s in particular felt slighted by this, and withdrew their tribes from Karak to the town of Dhībān north of Wadi Mujib, the border between the Balqā and Karak.[144]

From there, Ibrahim al-Tuwāl, the brother of Najma, and men from the ʿUzayzat carried out attacks against the Sarāyrah, eventually resulting in the killing of a number of members from the latter near Wadi Hasa in the south of the Karak region. Rogan notes that at this point the Sarāyrah then appealed to Sheikh Muhammad to pull his support from the Christian tribe. The Latin priests, "fearing the imminent massacre of Karak's Christians by the town's Muslims," worked with the ʿUzayzat and the French consul in Jerusalem to settle the tribe, and other Christians who left with them, around the *khirba* of Madaba, south of Amman in the Balqā. The Wālī of Syria, Midhat Pasha, who encouraged the settling of new Christian communities in the area, was also involved in these plans. Despite Sheikh Sattam Fayez of the Bani Sakhr claiming this land and working with the Majali to pressure the Christians into returning to Karak, the missionaries, the French Consul, and the empire prevailed and the permanent resettlement of Madaba was compete by mid-1881.[145] The overall importance of this particular episode, as noted by Rogan, is how the actions of the Latin mission, caused religious sectarianism, a rather rare phenomenon at this point, to prevail over, or at least weaken existing divisions, which were predominantly tribal and kin based.[146] The aid of the

[144] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 31-32.
[145] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 79-81.
[146] Ibid., 78.

empire in settling the new Christians in Madaba highlights their increasing involvement in transforming communal divisions in southern Syria, and foreshadows what is soon to come in Karak.

This incident took place amidst a major tribal war which broke out in 1877 when, according to Gubser, the Bani ʿAttiya, with the encouragement of the Majali, attacked the Ḥuwayṭāt, who then declared war on them and their allies: *ʾahālī* al-Karak, al-Shawbak, Maʿan al-Shamiyya, and the Bani Sakhr along with their smaller allies. Allied with the Ḥuwayṭāt were the two communities of Maʿan al-Hijaziyya, and Wadi Musa. Gubser notes that the alliances were formed along trade partnerships, with each side containing both an array of tribes between mostly sedentary and mostly nomadic.[147] In his account of these events, Awda makes no mention of the Majali encouraging the Bani ʿAttiya to attach the Ḥuwaytāt. Instead, he presents the actions of the latter being caused by the fear and jealousy of Karaki, who were continuing to increase the regional economic importance of the town and using the enhanced prestige that came with it to negotiate agreements of friendship with the surrounding tribes and towns.[148] Both Gubser and Awda explain how once the Ḥuwāyṭāt declared war the Karaki attacked, destroyed, and looted Ṭafila. However, they were defeated by the main opposing forces at Wadi Musa, resulting in the death of their commander, Sheikh Muslih al-Majali.[149]

For over a decade the entire area between Karak and Maʿan was engulfed in war, with peace finally being made in either 1890, according to ʿAwda, or 1892, according to Gubser.[150] However, in 1892 the Ruwala, a nomadic tribe from the Syrian desert, entered the area and raided the Bani Sakhr, leaving the latter with many casualties. At this point,

[147] Gubser, *Politics and Change,* 17.
[148] al-Qusus, *Mudhākirāt*, 28-29.
[149] Gubser, *Politics and Change,* 17; al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 28-29.
[150] Ibid.; Ibid.

Salih, Muhammad's successor and son, began pursuing an alliance with the Ruwala, which forced the Bani Sakhr to appeal to a new central authority in the Transjordan, the Ottoman government.[151] As with the defeat of the ʿAmr and Bani Hamida and the Ibrahim Pasha years, the main focus and protagonist during these years, for Awda, is *ʾahl* al-Karak, who are held hostage to the successive waves of violence and instability brought to the area by external forces. Despite this, the people of Karak had endured and resisted each wave of aggression and managed to turn their town and its environs into an economically important, and somewhat powerful, regional center.

2.2. Society

2.2.1. Tribes and Societal Structure

Before continuing it is necessary to briefly elaborate on where tribes of Karak came from and when they arrived to the area. Moreover, some readers may be quite surprised that a vibrant Christian community existed this far south into the Syrian frontier. The Greek Orthodox Haddādīn tribe, as well as the Sunni Muslim Ḍamūr and Saʿub, claim descent from the semi-nomadic Ghassanids[152] who had migrated from Yemen to southern Syria, then a frontier region of the Byzantine Empire, during the 4th to 6th centuries AD. After arriving in successive waves, the Ghassanids accepted Christianity, the new imperial religion declared by Emperor Constantine in the same century as their arrival.[153] The power of the Ghassanids increased over time and their rule eventually reached a territory that covered most of the Roman provinces of Arabia and Syria. By the

[151] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 19.
[152] Peake, *A History* Vol. 2, 372, 374.
[153] G.W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar eds., *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Post-Classical World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999): 468.

sixth century they had become a client state to the Byzantines, and their primary role was to form a buffer zone against the Arab Lakhmids to the east, who were themselves clients of Byzantine Empire's main adversary, the Iranian Sassanian Empire.[154] However, relations between the empire and the Ghassanid phylarchs (kings) were never stable, as the latter consistently used their important frontier position as a bargaining chip and often followed their own agenda, leading to mutual distrust. The empire would eventually be engaged in a war of attrition with the Sassanians throughout the early decades of the 7th century, which severely weakened it. By the 630s A.D., the Byzantines, along with the Ghassanids, were no longer able to fend off early invasions by the emerging Muslim armies led by the Prophet Muhammad and later the Rashidun Caliphate. The empire would finally be defeated by the Rashidun Caliphate at the Battle of Yarmūk, along the eponymous river, in 636 A.D., and the Syria Levant would be annexed by the Islamic empire. The Ghassanid who had fought alongside the Muslim armies and remained in the area afterwards were exempt from paying the *jizya* tax required for Christians and Jews, and thus were able to retain their Christian identity. Though by this point there were already a number of different rites present amongst them[155]

As noted previously, the Muslims who stayed in the area after the Battle of Muʾta in 629 came to be known as the ʿAmr. The settled tribes of the village ʿIrāq as well as the Bararsha tribe southwest of Karak, originally Christians, claim to have lived in the town of Karak but were expelled by Salaheddin at the end of the 12th century during the Crusades, and later accepted Islam. However, their main ancestors today are those who came during the Crusades, according to Peake.[156] The large majority of the remaining

[154] Ibid., 468-469; Warwick Ball, *Rome in the East: The Transformation of an Empire*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2016): 28-30
[155] Ball, *Rome in the East*, 109-114; Bowersock, *Late Antiquity*, 469.
[156] Peake, *A History* Vol. 2, 376; Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 51-52.

tribes came to the area between the 16th and 18th centuries, coming from further north in Syria, Palestine in the west, Arabia in the south, or a tribe from these areas who originally migrated elsewhere such as Jabal ʿAjlūn or the Balqā. Many of these tribes, if Christian, accepted Islam after arriving, though there are both Muslim and Christian tribes, such as the Christian Zureiqāt, that may contain a rather small number of branches of the other respective religion.[157] Specifically, Awda's tribe, the Halasa, descend from the unnamed man of Christian (likely Coptic) Egyptian origin who, upon his arrival to Karak region in the 17th century, married a woman from the Greek Orthodox Haddādīn tribe.[158]

While Awda presents the societal structure in Karak during these times as rather disorderly, it actually does have a specific logic and rationale to it, as explained by Peter Gubser. As mentioned, the most basic and important political actor is the tribe, such as the Halasa and Majali. Gubser describes the tribe as "a corporate territorial group with pyramidal and segmentary qualities."[159] This definition is based on E.E. Evans-Pritchard's 1940 study of the Nuer in present-day South Sudan whose structure, Gubser argues, is similar to the tribal structures in Karak during this time. Starting with the singular tribe, Evans-Pritchard describes it as being

> divided into territorial segments which regard themselves as separate communities. We refer to the divisions of a tribe as primary, secondary, and tertiary tribal sections. Primary sections are segments of a tribe, secondary sections are segments of a primary section, and tertiary sections are segments of a secondary section. A tertiary section is divided into villages and villages into domestic groups. A member of Z2 tertiary division of tribe B sees himself as a member of Z2 community in relation to Z1, but he regards himself as a member of Y2 and not of Za in relation to Y 1. Likewise, he regards himself as a member of Y, and not of Y 2, in relation to X. He regards himself as a member of tribe B, and not of its primary section Y, in relation to tribe A.[160]

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[157] Peake, *A History* Vol 2*,* 372-382.
[158] Ibid., 372.
[159] Peake, *A History* Vol. 1, 41.
[160] "The Nuer of the Southern Sudan", in M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard, eds., *African political systems* (London: London, Oxford University Press, 1950), cited in Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 45-6.

If we apply this to a tribe in Karak, the al-Qusus are a section (*ḥamūla*) of the Halasa tribe (*ʿashīra*). In his memoir, Awda includes various interactions with other people in his tribe, and sometimes he lists which section they belong to and other times he does not. It is confirmed by the tribe's family tree that there are still sections of the tribe at various levels who still retain only the al-Halasa name.[161] According the family tree, the al-Qusus are one of four main sections that descends patrilineally, as all tribes in Karak do.

Peake notes that after this the tribe split into two groups genealogically: the first named *ʿayl* (house of) ʿEid which further splits into the subsections of the Shawārib, the Sharāyḥa, and the Ḍhawārha; the second main group consists of sections *ʿayl* Yusef, the Udāt, Qusūs, and the ʿAmārīn. The website on the family tree does not include the first two from the latter group as sections, but rather subsections. Moreover, the family tree includes a number of subsections and lineages who formed a sub-genealogical identity after Peake was writing in carrying out his research in the early decades of the 20th century. Though they may have formed these new sectional identities, the entirety of the al-Halasa tribe lived in the town of Karak and seasonally in the village of Ḥamūd to the northeast. By the seventh generation, when Awda and Hanna were born, there were already around 10 primary sections and a few secondary level subsections beginning, with the al-Qusus being by far the largest primary section. Within the al-Qusus, there are two secondary and three tertiary groups, of which Awda and Hanna belong to the largest. For reference, the three tertiary groups are Awda and Hanna's grandfather, Musa, and his two male cousins, Salem and Ibrahim. So, we can see how the tribe is segmentary, but as Gubser claims, it is simultaneously pyramidal. For example, Awda and Hanna's father, Salman, would be opposed to his brother, Khalil, within the tertiary group of Musa, but

[161] ʿAshīrat al-Halasa, "shajarat al-ʿāʾila", https://halasafamily.com/MemberSTDs/Tree.

would be united, along with their other brothers, against any of the cousins from Salem or Ibrahim's lineage. All of these cousins would be united against any of the other roughly 10 primary sections within the al-Halasa tribe, but the tribe would be united as a whole against another tribe.[162]

The men or lineages who receive their own (sub-)sectional designation likely the achieved remarkable things in the tribe's history, so their descendants gave themselves and their collective lineage, both past and future, a special designation that differentiates them from the Halasa more broadly. In fact, Gubser informs us that this act of segmentation "may stem from the recognition of separate identity due to the activity of this group, or through the setting up of a separate living area."[163] The idea that the entire tribe, or even section, descends from one man is usually a myth, and that "the sub-lineage or, at times, the lineage of four or five generations is the only true, coherent kin group."[164] In addition to this group, another important group is one's *khamsa*, a unit "composed of a total of five generations, both ascending and descending, of relatives"[165] which becomes relevant in cases of murder between two tribes. What makes this tribal structure appear neat and orderly is its adherence to a strict patrilineal pattern of marriage, where marriages between sections of a tribe are uncommon and it is man's legal right to marry his first, or closest, paternal cousin, who is reserved for him unless he gives her permission to marry someone else.[166]

[162] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 45-6.
[163] Ibid., 49.
[164] Ibid., 42.
[165] Ibid., 47.
[166] Ibid., 42.

2.2.2. Agriculture, Economy, and Alliances

The main agricultural and economic activities were farming and the raising of livestock, mainly sheep, goats, and mules, which most of the land in Karak was suitable for. The higher quality land, meaning more suitable for agricultural production, is found where there is the most rainfall, which is on and directly around the plateau. The lower elevated lands further away, where the Bedouin inhabit, receive very little rain and enjoy lower quality and less abundant yield. Most of the land was only suitable for the cultivation of grains, but fruits and vegetables, such as olives, could be cultivated on the plateau. According to Gubser, unlike much of Syria during this time, the "*musha*ʿ system, i.e. a periodic redistribution of land," did not exist in Karak. Instead, each tribe farmed a recognized area of land, usually within a day's riding distance from the town, "and each extended family [within that tribe] planted a recognized portion of it." In the early nineteenth century, these lands were only seasonally settled by farmers working the land. Beginning in the Ottoman era, entire families began to settle on their respective tribe's lands on a permanent basis and form villages which, until the Mandate era, consisted only of a collection of families living in black tents. Besides the town of Karak, there were only three other sites during this time with permanent houses. However, according to Gubser, they are of secondary importance due to their political subordination to the both the plateau and Bedouin tribes.[167]

The villages that formed over time were not always composed of only one tribe, but oftentimes a few tribes, especially if it was a smaller tribe living in a village where the main tribe was its superior through alliances or a promise of protection. The most

[167] Ibid., 26.

basic form of alliance between tribes in Karak is where a smaller tribe attaches itself to a larger one. The former gains protection and rights but also obligations, albeit not as burdensome as they would be for a section or subsection of the former. Although the larger tribe is now obligated to protect the smaller, it is still a mutually beneficial relationship because it increases the status of the former and the number of subordinates to call on for support, though not an obligation for the subordinate tribe. Gubser considers both these lesser forms of alliance as extensions of the pyramidal-segmentary structure.[168] The major political alliance system in Karak, which Gubser claims is a further extension of the pyramidal-segmentary structure, is Western and Eastern alliances, *al-Gharābā* and *al-Sharāqā*, respectively; the former consisting of the geographical cluster of tribes on lands north and west of the plateau and the latter on lands south and east of the plateau. While the origins of this split are claimed to date when the Ottomans first occupied the area in the sixteenth century, Gubser notes that this was based on the already existing reality in the town and its environs. Although opposed to each other internally, the two alliances, following the pyramidal structure of the society, acted as a collective externally, and this collective represented the highest political unit in Karak, and was led by the *shaykh al-mashāyikh* of the al-Majali, who had a special position as the leader of both Karak as a whole and the Western Alliance. The leading family in the Eastern alliance, until today, is the al-Tarawneh tribe. The Christian tribes of Karak are also members of the Western Alliance, though this does not mean that the Christians of Karak were always on good terms with the Western Muslims nor that they were a unified bloc together; they often competed amongst each other to claim leadership of the Christians alongside the Majali family in the Western Alliance. Also, Gubser informs us that a small number of

[168] Ibid., 53-54.

the Christian tribes, including the Halasa, were not on particularly good terms with the Majali.[169]

Since the land outside the town was allotted to each family in relation to its location in the town, these political alliances were also distributed spatially within the town. Within it the *Gharābā* alliance traditionally lived in the west-northwestern third, while the *Sharāqā* lived in the south-southeastern third, the two sections being separated by the *sūq* which ran into the area of the castle in the southwestern most part of the town. The families in these two sections did not cross into the opposite while the *sūq* was considered neutral territory, which did house a number of Damascene and Khalili merchants and possibly their families, as well as a number of local merchants.[170] The north-northeastern third of the town was the traditional Christian quarter, but since the Christians were in the Western Alliance, they and the western Muslims were, in times of peace, able to venture into the other's respective section.[171] As seen through Awda's local history and the map of the town provided by Gubser,[172] some families and tribes resided in a *maḥalla*, or quarter, that carried their name. As noted earlier, the lands further north and south of the plateau were inhabited by Bedouin, the northern lands along the Wadi Mujib by the ʿAmr and Bani Hamida, and the southern ones by other traditionally semi-nomadic tribes. These tribes outside the plateau lay outside the East-West split and have been traditionally neutral, though they have paid a yearly *khuwa* to the Majali.[173]

[169] Ibid., 56-7, 63, 93.
[170] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 27,
[171] Ibid., 57-9,
[172] Ibid., map #6 at end of book
[173] Ibid., 61-70.

2.2.3. Status

Leadership of a tribe depends on one's status, which is not only dependent on the amount of land and material wealth they possess, or their intelligence and success when it comes to raids. Rather, according to Gubser, status in traditional Karaki society was dependent on a combination of ascriptive qualities and achievements, as well as a mix of the two. Ascriptive characteristics, which a man has no control over, are membership in a particular tribe, age, sex, and color. Landholding, other material wealth, occupation, and honor are criteria which are both ascriptive and achieved. Finally, spending patterns or generosity, bravery, prudence and intelligence, leadership ability, and piety are criteria that are only achieved. One is not regarded as more important than the other, and the ascriptive and achieved are dependent on and inform each other. Although, there are some men, and therefore groups, whose status will always remain low no matter their achievements due to their ascriptive qualities, such as the racially and economically oppressed darker-skinned Ghawarna of the Jordan Valley.[174] This concept of status gives us some insight into not only hierarchies of power in traditional Karaki society, but also hierarchies of knowledge and system of values. Many of the criteria in both the mixed and achievement-only categories are dependent on knowledge, particularly, knowledge that is valued in Karaki society. Good spending habits and generosity, bravery, prudence and intelligence, leadership ability, and piety are all things that one must possesses knowledge of how to do. Landholding too is dependent on one's knowledge on how to both not lose the land that they have and to acquire more. Being the single most important

[174] Ibid., 78-9.

thing one can possess in this time, the possession of other material wealth, a good occupation, and honor were intimately tied to the possession of land, and thus knowledge as well. Without land, a territory to stake claim to, a tribe cannot exist, unless it attaches itself to a larger tribe, at which point it risks losing its identity and status.[175] Thus, knowledge of how to keep the land that a tribe has and to gain more when needed is the most important role of the sheikh of a tribe. Therefore, mastering the art of the raid, both offensively and defensively, was the one of the most outward projection of status a man could perform in traditional Karaki society, along with success in other forms of accumulating land outlined above.

Clearly, the most effective tribe at raiding in the area of Karak was the Majali tribe; each successive advance in prestige and power of the tribe was due to defeating other tribes in raids, though they often relied on the assistance of other, sometimes more powerful tribes. Even then, this shows that the Majali leaders were very politically and strategically shrewd, which helped raise the prestige and status of the tribe, and in turn the leader of the Majali would use this increased prestige to convince other tribes to assist them in further raids and also to convince the other tribes in Karak that it deserved to be the ruling tribe. However, this meant that the leader of the Majali was, as the leader in any tribe would be, expected to deliver in both leading the tribes of Karak against outside aggressors and meeting the needs of the people in times of hardship, as it did during the famine in the late 18th century. If the leader of the Majali did not deliver, in theory, the other tribes could possibly remove them. To avoid this, the Majali would likely step in and remove an inept leader, as they did with Ismaʿil during the years of Ibrahim Pasha. Raids between Karaki tribes did not take place, though conflicts over murder and theft

[175] Ibid., 52.

did occur.[176] As seen from the local history presented, raids took place between the Karaki tribes as a collective unit against outside tribal formations, such as the Amri, Bani Hamida, and Bani Sakhr.

2.3. The Customary Legal System

Many European travelers note that the traditional level of authority and legitimacy enjoyed by the Majali was not particularly strong in Karak, and Gubser concurs. He argues that a main reason for this is because the system that the Majali sat at the top of had never been buttressed by an ideological or religious component. What Gubser means by claiming that the *sheikh al-mashāyikh* of al-Karak enjoyed "no legitimacy,"[177] though he does not state it himself, is that the leader's recognized special position with respect to the political alliance structure was not transferred over into any special position or authority in the legal system based on customary law, which the leader was equally subject to. This is because, as Gubser explains, the position of the *qadi* and other legal ones, therefore the entire legal system, held no authority, so it was the potential use of force that ultimately pressured a man and his tribe into obedience.[178] As previously mentioned, Gubser relies on Weberian political theory when analyzing traditional Karaki society, particularly in relation to the legitimacy and authority, or lack thereof, of both the political and legal systems. Weberian theory generally posits that over time, civilizations, and their institutions, progress in a linear fashion culminating in the formation of a rational bureaucracy embodied in the liberal, Western state with a capitalist economic order. For civilizations, or societies, that do not possess a rational bureaucracy,

[176] Ibid., 56-7.
[177] Ibid., 76.
[178] Ibid., 87, 92.

attainment of this desired state is not impossible, but only achievable through adoption of the type of rationalization which arose in Western Europe. This specific social formation is desirable, according to Weber, because it is the only one where rational bureaucracy is found, which is a necessary precondition for the liberal, constitutional state.[179] It is from this base that Weber begins his normative analysis of legitimacy, where any type of legitimacy found in non-Western states or state-like institutions cannot possibly live up to his ideal form of legitimacy, meaning rational legal authority, which is closest to being realized in the Western, liberal state.[180]

It is the contention here that rather than judge the legitimacy of the customary legal system by a political theory developed in Western Europe and the United States during the last century-and-a-half, primarily concerned with the formation of a liberal, constitutional state, it would be more appropriate to analyze it in the context of the previously discussed history as well as the system of values and knowledge embodied in the customary law of Karaki society. In his discussion of the customary legal system, Gubser relies on book written by Awda al-Qusus in 1936, detailing the tribal law in the Karak area, to be used by the Mandate Government to create a formal legal system to be used for its Bedouin subjects. In it, Awda details the entire process of settling a dispute in the customary legal system, from the time a dispute first arises to when it is officially resolved, for both criminal and non-criminal proceedings. He explains the terminology for the positions and people, almost exclusively men, what their role is in the process, and what rights they enjoy. In addition, he elaborates on the unofficial legal mechanisms

[179] Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. eds. and trans. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946): 51, 78-80, 196-8, 216-26, 235-9, 245-50.
[180] A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, "Introduction" in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. eds. and trans. A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947): 57-64, 68-72, 78-82.

taking place during the process, including their intended purposes. A much more recent study has been conducted by Clinton Bailey, analyzing customary law amongst the tribes and confederations of the al-Naqab and the Sinai. Speaking about Bedouin societies more broadly, Bailey explains that historically living outside the reach of any external central authority and inhabiting a region that was environmentally unfavorable to the establishment of any internal central authority led to the creation of social systems in the frontier regions of the Levant and Arabia in which central authority was undesirable and self-help and private might were paramount. Moreover, the most desirable condition for any Bedouin man (the wellbeing of women and children falls under the security of the man in this system) is to enjoy security, however this is not always easy in a system where the self-help and private might of others can cause a major breakdown in security.[181]

Eventually, a minimalist legal system formed amongst tribes and eventually chiefdoms or confederacies to manage their affairs and to ensure the internal security of the society. In fact, there is nothing to suggest in the information presented by al-Qusus or Bailey that a high level of legitimacy or authority enjoyed by the *sheikh al-mashāyikh*, or even a *qadi*, was desirable or ever intended in not only the legal system, but political system as well.[182] Thus, Gubser's insistence that no position in the political or legal system in enjoyed legitimacy or authority in traditional society is to a large extent irrelevant. When compared to the presented information in Awda's local history and study of tribal law in Karak, there is a considerable overlap between both the historical and environmental processes experienced by Bedouin society there and that in the Sinai and al-Naqab, as well as between the legal and political structures existing in both. What

[181] Clinton Bailey, *Bedouin Law from Sinai & the Negev: Justice without Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009): 9-12, 16-22.
[182] Ibid., 16-22; Awda al-Qusus, *Kitāb qaḍāʾ al-badwī*, (Amman: al-Muṭbaʿa al-Urduniyya, 1972): 96-109.

is particularly valuable about Bailey's work, however, is that he presents his analysis of the customary legal system in a more detailed and abstract way so that it is easily understood and intelligible to a contemporary reader unfamiliar with customary law, without relying on outside political theory.

With these considerations in mind, the latter's method of analysis can be cautiously applied to the traditional legal system in Karak, though comparisons over the exact details of the processes should be avoided. The understanding of a law in Karaki society is closer to what is commonly thought of as ''a right'' (ḥagg, pl. hugūg), in the sense of an entitlement.'[183] A man is entitled to his life, land, wealth, and honor (including wives and children). When he feels that these rights have been violated in some way, he is entitled to rectify this violation in a number of recognized ways, violent and non-violent, which Gubser calls "mechanisms,"[184] but Bailey explains that they 'constitute ''the law'' as a system, with each specific way being a law in itself.'[185] Whatever law may be the focal point of dispute, there are a number of mechanisms that play key roles in pressuring all involved to obey and the two sides to restore justice, meaning to rectify the violation,[186] or in other words, to restore the honor and status of a man and his family, lineage, or tribe, and minimize violent conflict in the process. Bailey outlines these mechanisms as honor and private might, collective responsibility and litigation, as well as violence as a lawful mechanism, and, as will be shown, these same mechanisms are found in the customary legal system in Karak. Even before the formal process begins, individuals in the society will attempt to pressure the violated and the violator into an involuntary mediation to restore justice on their own. While the violated man has no

[183] Bailey, *Bedouin Law*, 16.
[184] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 86.
[185] Bailey, *Bedouin Law*, 16-8.
[186] Ibid., 16-8, 63-9, 101-7, 170-80.

obligation to rectify these violations, his honor (and status) usually pressures him in to do so.[187]

What would pressure a man not to act is the imbalance of power between his collective and the opposing collective, however, there are mechanisms in place to ensure a more equitable balance of power in the respective traditional legal systems described by Bailey and al-Qusus. This is achieved through the act of protection, referred to as "*dakhāla*", meaning 'entrance', and both the protector and protected are referred to as "*dakhīl.*"[188] In Karak, tribal attachments, as well as minor and major alliances, play a role in the mechanism of protection, as a man will seek this protection from a sheikh or leader of a tribe greater in status than his own.[189] This is what Bailey refers to as 'the use of private might', which has the effect of forcing the defendant into compliance not only due to the more equitable balance of power, but also out of respect for the plaintiff's protector.[190] To make sure that anyone involved in the legal proceedings fulfills their responsibilities at any time during the process there are men assigned to the role of *kafīl*, or guarantor, who, as the name suggests, guarantees that procedures, such as witness testimonies, and obligations, such as upholding a true, are carried out properly and respected.[191] These men are usually someone of high status so their honor and the respect that others have for them play a role in pressuring those involved to obey. This role also has the additional effect of ensuring an equitable balance of power throughout the process.[192]

[187] Ibid., 25; Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 89-90.
[188] Bailey, *Bedouin Law*, 16, 49-53.
[189] al-Qusus, *qaḍāʾ al-badwī*, 21-29.
[190] Bailey, *Bedouin Law,* 23-31.
[191] al-Qusus, *qaḍāʾ al-badwī*, 33-8.
[192] Bailey, *Bedouin Law*, 39-49.

In addition to honor and private might, collective responsibility and litigation also pressure those involved to obey. In the beginning, the accused is pressured into consenting to the legal proceeding due to the threat of further punishment that his family, *khamsa*, or tribe could be subjected to. In some instances, such as criminal cases involving murder or violence against women, the *khamsa* of the defendant are required to follow certain procedures, and this is the same in Karak as well.[193] Throughout the process, in both criminal and non-criminal cases, the family, *khamsa*, or tribe of the defendant remains easily accessible and liable to revenge if he disobeys the process or flees the area. Furthermore, the extended family or tribe is equally responsible for paying any fine or settlement, which pressures the collective to obey as well.[194] According to Bailey, the fact that Bedouin have resorted to the customary legal system for millennia, rather than to immediate violence, is evidence that litigation works in pressuring those involved to properly carry out their obligations and responsibilities and to restore justice.[195] First off, the process is designed to ensure that the selection of a judge is one that is agreeable and consensual for all involved. Moreover, the *qadi* is a position that is stratified into different specialized levels which require varying degrees of qualifications and experience, and not all judges can preside over criminal matters.[196] Secondly, consensus and fairness are also the intended goal when choosing who is able to serve as a witness and how they must act, as well the guiding principles for the promising of oaths.[197] Lastly, in addition to this, any disobedience or failure to carry out designated obligations, or transgression against others involved, such as the *dakhīl* or *kafīl*, will entail a further process of litigation against the

[193] al-Qusus, *qaḍāʾ al-badwī*, 37-8, 84-88
[194] Bailey, *Bedouin Law*, 60-8.
[195] Ibid., 158.
[196] Ibid., 159-73; al-Qusus, *qaḍāʾ al-badwī*, 26-7, 47.
[197] Bailey, *Bedouin Law*, 185-93; al-Qusus, *qaḍāʾ al-badwī*, 30-6.

transgressor, at which point the same mechanisms and intended goals apply.[198] The *qadi*, *dakhīl*, and *kafīl* act as agents who ensure that that the process is respected and proceeds smoothly, even after a settlement is reached and justice is restored.[199]

Although only one of five chapters in Awda's book is directly concerned with criminal matters, which includes murders and violations against women, Gubser is predominantly concerned with describing the process of litigation in violations involving these particular types of violent crimes.[200] This may be because as an oral history, offenses involving large amounts of violence or shame are more likely to be remembered. However, Bailey says most cases never reach this point, and Gubser, too, suggests that usually cases in Karak were settled amicably.[201] Even when the use of violence is involved, it is usually permissible and it is highly formalized with recognized rules of engagement, and here, too, honor and the threats of collective responsibility as well as further litigation pressure men into obeying these rules. Furthermore, other men involved in the litigation process such as, but not limited to, mediators, guarantors, protectors, and even judges are also pressured into acting in a lawful manner, meaning not violating the rights of any men on either side, due to their honor and the threat of a similar litigation process.[202] Ultimately, Bailey argues that the fact that frontier societies, like the ones that existed in the Sinai and Naqab, as well as Karak, developed a durable and lasting legal system to maintain peaceful social relations, in spite of the desired low level of authority that ran through it, should be seen as a major achievement when situated in its historical and social context.[203]

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[198] al-Qusus, *qaḍāʾ al-badwī*, 57-66.
[199] Bailey, *Bedouin Law*, 328-30; al-Qusus, *qaḍāʾ al-badwī*, 97-8.
[200] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 86-92.
[201] Bailey, *Bedouin Law*, 158; Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 89-90.
[202] Bailey, Bedouin Law, 158-70.
[203] Ibid., 2-11, 300-1.

Bailey's analysis begs the question if it is productive, or even possible, to analyze the customary legal system in Karak using Gubser's Western and state-centric framework in order to locate legitimacy within it, and by extension, the political structure as well. The lack of personal authority that the leader possesses within the legal system in Karak; hierarchization and specialization of its officials; and its respect for the established legal precedents procedures, and norms are still not adequate, according to Weber, for the system to be classified, even in a less ideal form, as a rational legal authority, solely because it does not possess a bureaucratic administration based on the Western European form of rationalization.[204] Even the more advanced forms of 'traditional authority,' according to Weber, have only been realized in the Western world.[205] Essentially, what he is saying is that the norms and values of Western Europe, which led to this unique form of rationalization, are the only norms and values that can be present for the system, and thus its leader, to be classified as a 'rational-legal' authority. Therefore, the adoption of a 'rationalized bureaucracy' by non-Western societies in order to attain the desired form of societal organization, i.e., the liberal state, requires the adoption of European norms and values at the expense of those extant in any given society.

The systems of values and knowledge of traditional Karaki society, and therefore the social and legal structures, remained well into the era of Emirate and even after independence, albeit in a transformed and repressed form. The customary legal system continues to exist as a state-recognized way for the Bedouin populations to achieve justice. That the customary legal systems, which have existed for thousands of years, continue to be an effective, recognized way to achieve justice in Bedouin communities across the contemporary Middle East, despite the imposition of a colonial state and legal

[204] Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 324-40.
[205] Ibid., 352-54.

system closer to the ideal form that Weber desired, is further proof, according to Bailey, that it is actually a very flexible and adaptable system capable withstanding drastic transformations in the society.[206]

2.4. Conclusion

The unfortunate effect of analyzing an entire society over three hundred years is that it and its values appear rather static; though Karaki society and its values were far from it. What this chapter has done is provide a more comprehensive, and holistic analysis of this society while working with the little sources there are. In doing so, this chapter has effectively shown how Karaki society, on the eve of the Ottoman entrance, was not shaped by any one *sheikh*, tribe, or *pasha*. Rather, it was shaped by a myriad of internal and external actors, including external actors who became internal actors. Moreover, and very importantly, the specific geography and environment, and its relationship to these actors, also shaped Karaki society, having a direct effect on the values and customs of the population. The chapter has further shown how each of these considerations further shaped the form of political and legal governance that would prevail during this time. In a related manner, this chapter has also tried to show that this society was not a monolith nor was it an equal one. The nomadic tribes, or *Bedouin,* who lived on the outskirts of the district lacked suitable land and therefore a high status as well. As we have seen, land was not communally owned and thus there were economic, and thus political, inequalities between tribes in the town and district, as well as within the town.

[206] Ibid., 341-51.

The Majali politically and economically dominated a number of smaller tribes in the town's environs, including the three other settled sites in the entire district. The men of these tribes had worked as sharecroppers and other unequal patron-client relationships for the powerful Majali tribe. Furthermore, the *Ghawārna*, the darker-skinned inhabitants of the *Ghawr* region along the Dead Sea, had it even worse. In addition to the racially-inspired political and economic domination of this tribe by the Majali, merchants from al-Khalil and Damascus had taken over their parts of their economically valuable lands by force. One particular *sheikh*, Zaʿal al-Majali, treated the *Ghawarna* like virtual enslaved peoples, into the interwar years. In fact, Gubser claims that some of the Majali *sheikh*s actually did enslave people as personal servants. He adds that because these enslaved people did tend to be darker-skinned, after being granted freedom they would likely have to marry into and take on the status of the *Ghawārna*.[207]

Lastly, this chapter has said next to nothing on the role of women in Karaki society; unfortunately, this is a reflection of the available sources, which do not say much about any non-elite for that matter. Throughout his entire memoir, Awda al-Qusus rarely speaks of women and the only mention of his wife's name is scribbled out on the first page, though it rather clearly states that her name was Fiḍḍa. Perhaps cultural reasons inhibited Gubser from speaking with both Muslim and Christian women in Karak, or he did not account for their stories. Maybe, and unfortunate if so, there weren't enough collective memories centered around women in the town. What has ultimately been shown in this chapter is a snapshot of the Karaki *landscape* during this time. I borrow this term through Mostafa Minawi, who uses it to:

[207] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 65-70.

> refer to the desert as an "experienced world, not as an empirical backdrop." Thus for the inhabitants of this space, the landscape constituted an idea rooted in a specific lived political and sociological context. It had its own "complex symbols and images of its 'inhabitants' and 'users' . . . and [was] impregnated with symbols and imagery that [had] an explicit and insidious impact in spatial practices of everyday life."[208]

The next chapter will analyze the transforming nature of this *space* under Ottoman rule in much detail, but in order to fully understand the significance of this process it was first necessary to discuss how the *landscape*, and the people who inhabited it, actually existed and changed throughout the presented period.

[208] Minawi, *Scramble for Africa*, 131.

CHAPTER 4

COLONIAL OTTOMANISM IN KARAK, 1893-1918

The two previous chapters both left off on the eve of Ottoman reentrance into Karak in 1893. As explained, the empire had plans to enter the district since the 1870's and began making more serious overtures in the years leading up to the reoccupation. The first chapter explained the imperial and regional developments that led to these events, namely consolidation of the frontier against other imperial powers, while the previous chapter elaborated on the local concerns which precipitated them, notably the ongoing violence between the different tribes and lack of a reliable ally to maintain the status quo for the empire. Just as local and imperial concerns led to these events, both local and imperial considerations affected how these events took place. Luckily for us, Awda includes in his memoir a detailed account of the Ottoman reentrance and the state-building activities of the successive administrations up to the end of the Ottoman era in 1918. In these accounts, we see clear parallels to the *Colonial Ottomanism* instituted in Yemen, as elaborated on by Thomas Kuehn.

As mentioned previously, *Colonial Ottomanism* is used to describe the system of control that the Ottomans established in Yemen that was similar to colonial European systems in the Red Sea region, but with crucial differences which make it distinct from these other forms of colonialism. As in Yemen, Ottoman administrators in Karak produced, or acquired, knowledge about the town and its environs in a way similar to European orientalists and colonizers. Underpinning this production or acquisition of knowledge was the civilizing attitude discussed earlier, as well as imperial concerns. These two factors guided the Ottoman administrators in their governance of Karak,

resulting in a *politics of difference* which seemingly betrayed the principles and policies of the Tanzimat. and established a system of *Colonial Ottomanism*.

Since this section will rely largely on the memoirs of Awda al-Qusus, it will also analyze the transformation that Awda underwent. The new administration quickly identified him as one of these keys to local society, first in an unofficial capacity and later, beginning in 1902, in more official roles. Awda soon came to be not just a representative for his tribe, or the Christian community, but the people of the Karak district as a whole. His position within the legal system in Karak after 1902 sparked his interest in law, and he would later in life become a lawyer and expert of customary law. While always seeking to represent local interests, Awda was in many ways simultaneously aiding Ottoman interests through his new roles. Awda found himself on the side of the empire, though he was not alone, during the Karak Revolt in 1910, as will be seen. Throughout the beginning of the First World War, southern Syria came into increasing competition with the opposing French and British armies, as well as the latter's allies, the Hashemite family, who ruled the Hijaz in an honorary fashion alongside the Ottoman administration. Awda was recruited by a leading military general in Syria, Camal Pasha, to oversee the wartime commerce between southern Syria and the Hijaz. Awda would reach the peak of his career during the Mandate era, during which he became a close friend to Emir Abdullah throughout the 1930s, and was even granted the title of Pasha in 1942, a year before his death. However, this was not until after he was exiled to the Hijaz in 1923 for his supposed involvement in anti-government protests.[209]

Awda was able to reach these heights during the Mandate era, alongside men who Philip Khoury describes as "urban notables." This class of men come from traditional

[209] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 119-157; Madi and Musa, *Tarikh al-Urdun*, 336-337, 348.

elite families of the urban centers in present-day Syria and Lebanon, who in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries expanded and transformed their traditional status, marked by trade and landowning, to include a more stable base of status and power, marked by involvement in and cooperation with Ottoman governance and reform.[210] Although Awda's family may have been of notable status in Karak prior to 1893, their position in a frontier society incorporated into an Ottoman system guided by a civilizing attitude towards it certainly distinguishes Awda from these men. Awda is also distinct from newly emerging 'middle strata' or new efendi, as Lucie Ryzova calls it. In her book, *The Age of the Efendiyya: Passages to Modernity in National-Colonial Egypt*, Ryzova charts and analyzes the emergence of such a class in Egypt roughly between the late 1880's and the mid-20th century. This class is made up of men with rural or modest urban origins who are educated along traditional lines in a *kuttab* (or church) but later are, mostly, educated in "modern" schools based on European models, located in Cairo, which teach subjects such as the natural sciences, literature, philosophy, and European languages.[211] This education is often accompanied by time spent in Europe. However, this departure is always accompanied by a later return to the native country. Upon return, these men mostly take up jobs in the civil service, which includes education, but also other job such as, but not limited to, doctors and lawyers. Throughout this period, these men would become increasingly politically active against colonial rule as well.[212]

However, a crucial difference is that Awda never received this type of education, as he stayed in Karak and later Amman for nearly his entire life. In the 1920s, Awda often

[210] Philip Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus, 1860-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 4-9, 44-52.
[211] Lucie Ryzova, *The Age of the Efendiyya: Passages to Modernity in National-Colonial Egypt*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 31-37.
[212] Ibid., 45-50,

stood in opposition to the emir and spoke negatively about the corrupt control that non-Jordanians and the British had over the government.[213] Much like the men Ryzova analyzes, Awda was distinct from both his father's generation, even if the latter had was of a respectable status and wealth. However, they were also different than this colonial-national elite, even if they often worked alongside them. It is the former distinction that this essay is more interested in and fully analyzing this phenomenon in what became Transjordan, or even just in the life of Awda, would require analyzing the British mandate era between 1921 and 1946, which is beyond the scope of this essay. However, by using the stories and information and provided in his memoir, as well as other relevant sources, this chapter will show how Awda's transformation into a position along the lines of both these groups largely occurred under and was facilitated by Ottoman governance in Karak between 1893 and 1918.

3.1. The Qusus family

In order to necessarily analyze this transformation of Awda, it is necessary to note where his family is at this point, as well as their social position and status. The family name, al-Qusus, translates to priests or clergymen, meaning that this section of the Halasa were known for their involvement in the Greek Orthodox Church. Either Awda's father-in-law or this person's father, Ibrahim al-Qusus, was a priest (*khūrī*) as well. Awda's uncle, Khalil, was an Archimandrite in the Church, an honorary position below that of bishop for a senior clergyman in charge of a monastic order, and took the name of Ephramios.[214] He served in numerous orders on both sides of the Jordan River, including

[213] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 122-141, 151-157.
[214] Peter Plank, "Archimandrite,", in Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey W. Bromiley (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999): 118.

in Jerusalem.[215] As will be seen, he played an important role in several events dealing with the Ottoman Empire during this time. Awda's own father, Salman, was a merchant and cultivator, and not much else is said about him. In addition to Awda, Salman had two other sons, Musa, the eldest, and Hanna, the youngest born 1885. It is revealed by English missionary, Gray Hill, who became acquainted with the al-Qusus family, that Musa had been killed in the first years of the 1890s in a dispute with another Karaki tribe.[216] Awda and his brothers received a primary education at the Greek Orthodox Church in Karak, built around 300 years prior and was the only school, for both Muslims and Christians, in the town.[217] In addition to this, at least Awda and Hanna gained literacy in the English language through English missionary, William Lethaby, who offered English courses to all children in Karak, regardless of religion, between 1886 and 1895.[218] In fact, the Qusus family hosted Mr. Lethaby and his wife in their home for a portion of their time in the town.[219] Apart from gaining literacy in English, Awda was clearly on the path of his father and elder generations of al-Qusus men, until the reentrance of the Ottoman government in 1893.

[215] Hanna al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt Duktūr Hanna Salman al-Qusus al-Halasa 1885-1953 wakatābāhi "kalamāt ṣaḥiyya wafawāʾid ṭubbiyya" wa "fajīʿatī al-kubra" waṣūr ʿāʾiliyya watadhakāriyya wawathāʾiq Urduniyya*, edited by Nayef al-Qusus (Amman, 2006): 1-5.
[216] Gray Hill, "A Journey East of the Jordan and Dead Sea,1895," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (1896): 38-39.
[217] Awda al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 2; Hanna al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 1.
[218] Nayef al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt duktūr Hanna al-Qusus,* lz; Thomas Durley, *Lethaby of Moab: A Record of Missionary Adventure, Peril, and Toil* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1910): 123-128, 179-186, 277-293.
[219] Nayef al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt duktūr Hanna al-Qusus*, lz.

3.2. Borderland and the Production of Knowledge

3.2.1. Effective Occupation

Awda al-Qusus and Eugene Rogan present the entrance of the Ottoman Empire into Karak from slightly different perspectives, and when put together along with Mostafa Minawi's analysis on the making of the Damasucs-Medina telegraph line, we can clearly see how a collision of interdependent and mutually reinforcing local and imperial concerns led to the incorporation and consolidation of this area. In line with its frontier consolidation policies, the empire was keen to directly connect Istanbul with the Hijaz, which housed the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. However, concerns over the Bedouin threat in the Hijaz and southern Syria were too great to consider an overland route, and the financial and technical capabilities of the empire were too weak anyway. In 1880, the empire decided to contract the British Eastern Telegraph company to build a submarine line across the Red Sea connecting the Hijaz with the Egyptian telegraph network at the port city of Suakin, which was connected overland to Istanbul. The foreign-built line was completed in 1882, and although the Ottomans had to pay the British company for its use, it was exclusively for the empire. However, from the beginning the empire faced severe technical and administrative difficulties with the Egyptian network. After the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and deterioration in relations with it and France over Sudan, the empire decided that an exclusively built, owned, and operated alternative inland route was necessary.[220]

By the end of the decade the existing telegraph network in the empire became severely strained due to the rise in demand for lines. Moreover, the empire desired to

[220] Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, 104-108.

expand this network into the remote areas of Syria to more effectively control the nomadic tribes there.[221] A line connecting Damascus to Salt was completed in 1890, though it was still owned and operated by the Eastern Telegraph company.[222] In May 1892, the Wālī of Syria, ʿOsman Nūrī Pasha, who had earlier been involved in discussions pertaining to the exact route of the eventual Damascus-Medina telegraph during his time as governor of the Hijaz, submitted a plan to the Sultan to establish an Ottoman district centered in Ma'an, including the Karak and Ṭafila districts, which was approved by the Sultan in August.[223] The very next month the Sultan ordered the Ministries of Telegraph and Post to chart a route for the second Hijaz telegraph and to estimate the costs. Due to the high costs, the plan would not be implemented for the remainder of the decade. Though the project was delayed until after the consolidation of Karak and Maʿan, it would still assist in exhibiting the necessary 'effective occupation' as outlined at the Berlin conference in 1884.[224]

A third important event that happened that year, as previously mentioned, was the Banī Sakhr calling upon the empire for protection against the new Karaki-Ruwala alliance. Awda informs us that soon after receiving this plea, the government reached out to Sheikh Sāṭṭam al-Shaʿalān from the Ruwala about plans to appoint him as *mutaṣarrif*, believing that the *sheikh* was in a position to act as a mediator between the state and the people of the new district. The Ottomans even granted him the rank and title of *amīr mīrān*, equivalent to the position of provincial governor.[225] However, Rogan only mentions that the powerful *sheikh* was invited to Istanbul, and given this title "in

[221] Ibid., 109.
[222] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 64.
[223] Ibid., 54; Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, 106.
[224] Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, 104-115.
[225] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 40.

exchange for his submission and promise to sedentarize his tribe."[226] Remembering that the Ottomans had previous plans to unite the districts of Transjordan and the Jawf region into a single administrative district, it makes sense that the empire would reach out to a powerful figure from a tribe whose membership was spread across this entire area. We are told by Awda that upon receiving news of these plans, the leading sheikh of Karak, Salih al-Majali, wrote to the new *wali* of Syria, Raʿūf Pasha, threatening resistance if Sheikh Sāṭṭam was made the *mutaṣarrif* of any proposed district. Rogan tells us that in April 1893, Sheikh Salih ordered the mufti of al-Khalil, Sheikh Muhammad Khalil al-Tamīmī, to inform the Ottomans of "his submission to the state and his willingness to perform any service on its behalf." Perhaps Sheikh Salih gave the Ottomans his assurance once the state agreed not to appoint Sheikh Sāṭṭam as the *mutaṣarrif*. However, Awda suggests that due to the lack of assurance from any leader in Karak to put an end to the violence that had ravaged the area, the Ottoman government decided that it would be more effective and cost efficient to directly occupy the area. Rogan, on the other hand, claims that both the plea of the Banī Ṣakhr and the assurance of good-will by the Majali, two of the strongest actors in the area, led the Ottomans to believe that an entrance into Karak would go smoothly and that they would be accepted by the people.[227]

Either way, Sultan Abdulhamid II ordered Raʿūf Pasha, to begin executing the plan, and the latter appointed Hussein Hilmi as the new *mutaṣarrif*. Hussein Pasha is most well-known for twice serving as Grand Vizier and as the *mutaṣarrif* of Yemen after his brief, but important, stint in Karak.[228] In October 1893, Hussein Pasha formed a new administration and appointed Muhammad Lutfi to lead the military campaign to enter the

[226] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 188.
[227] Ibid., 54; al-Qusus, *Mudhkirāt*, 40
[228] Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*: *Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849-1919*, Vol. 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2011): 185.

town. The administration was interested in a clean, nonviolent entrance into Karak and recruited Christian priests in Jerusalem to assist in this. Awda's uncle met with and was able to convince the new *mutaṣarrif* to implement a general amnesty to help further ease the tensions of the people, as well as to give out salaries to the *mashāyikh* of the area. In his memoir, Awda severely downplays the violence the Ottoman campaign was met with when entering the town. Eugene Rogan, citing firsthand accounts from European missionaries, informs us that the town was "in a state of siege for the better part of a week, and that the new administration was only admitted after extensive negotiations were concluded and costly gifts exchanged."[229]

Awda informs us that the Ottoman government was "ignorant" of the local importance of Karak and that it intended to make that Maʿan the center of the new *sanjak*, while Karak, Salt, and Tafilah would be the centers of the districts.[230] As stated in the first chapter, Ma'an was a stop on the Hajj route and was thought to be a more strategic frontier outpost than Karak due to its more southern location. Thomas Kuehn explains how, in Yemen, Ottoman officials attempted to legitimize their entrance into Yemen in the mid-19th century as historically natural and continuous with earlier Ottoman rule, though as in Syria, rule in Yemen sat dormant for many centuries.[231] With this in mind, it was more than just religious or strategic reasons that the Ottoman administration considered Maʿan to be the center of the area. By making Maʿan the center of the new *sanjak*, the empire was attempting to create a more direct connection between their previous period rule of effective rule over this area in the 16th century and their imposition of direct rule in the end of the 19th century. The Patriarch of the Orthodox Church in

[229] al-Qusus, *Mudhkirāt*, 40-42; Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 55.
[230] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 43.
[231] Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference,* 55-65.

Jerusalem, Jerasimus, sent his official translator, an Arab named George al-Homsi, to Istanbul, where he met personally with the sultan and explained to him why Karak ought to be the center of the *sanjak*.[232] The Sultan agreed to this demand and in mid-1895 subsequently ordered the reorganization of the sub-province with Karak as its center. Rogan informs us that it was with this decision, not originally like Awda suggests, that the district of Salt was detached from the Hauran and added to the new *sanjak.*[233]

As we will see, Hilmi's tenure as *mutaṣarrif* was marked by his unilateral control over the affairs of the *sanjak*, which highlights the primacy of imperial control of this borderland over following the proper chain of command outlined by the Law of Vilayets. For example, Awda claims that Sultan Abdulhamid II immediately ordered Hussein Pasha to assume total control over water resources in Karak. Hilmi ordered the digging of wells and caves around the edges of the town and even under the castle, but to no avail. Only a small amount of water was found under the castle, but not nearly enough for a project to provide the people with water. After being informed by the *sheikh*s that European travelers had recently located the Moabite Stone, an ancient stele detailing King Mesha's liberation of Moab, near Karak, the *mutaṣarrif* obtained a photo of the stone with an English translation of the stone's inscription included. Hilmi then ordered Awda to translate the English translation for him, and it revealed that, due to the lack of any water source, Mesha had to build a tank of sorts for water under the town and subsequently ordered all men of Karak (Korkhah) to construct wells in their homes.[234] This episode shows how Hussein Hilmi viewed the area much like Western orientalists did. It would not be far-fetched to suggest that the people of Karak had told the *mutaṣarrif* about the

[232] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 43.
[233] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 55.
[234] Ibid., 45-46.

absence of any water source in the town, for they had long practiced a form of agriculture centered around minimizing the effects of water scarcity in the area. Even if they had not, Hussein Pasha, like Western orientalists, clearly believed that ancient local and contemporary Western sources contained more accurate and valuable information than anything the indigenous population had to offer. This episode also reveals how the Ottoman administration sought to produce and acquire their own knowledge of the landscape for the purpose of transforming it into an Ottoman space.

Shortly after the Ottoman entrance, two episodes occurred which highlight the transformation of Karak into an imperial borderland, as well as the increase in Awda's importance in Karak. Two months after the Ottoman campaign, Awda was summoned to Jerusalem by a Mr. Lobty (likely Mr. Lethaby due to his connections with the British governments in Egypt and Palestine and the fact that he was in Jerusalem at this time).[235] The purpose of this visit was that the British Consul-General, John Dickson, desired to speak with Awda regarding the state or affairs since the Ottoman reentrance. He inquired about the number of Ottoman soldiers in the campaign, the types of weapons used, and even blamed Awda's uncle, Ephramios, for facilitating their adversary's establishment of direct rule in Karak. Then, according to Awda, the Consul-General attempted to recruit him in leading a revolt against "the Turks" in the area.[236] Awda explained to Dickson that Karak was in a "state of chaos… and that any government that enters the area works to maintain security and order in it, fight crime of any kind, and hunt down disobedient and criminals."[237] Dickson, however, was unconvinced by what Awda was saying, and the two parted ways. The latter immediately went to tell his uncle and told him of his meeting

[235] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 47; Durley, *Lethaby of Moab*, 274.
[236] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 47.
[237] Ibid.

with the Consul-General. The friar then made Awda divulge to the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church what had just occurred. His Holiness then instructed him to keep this meeting with the Consul-General a secret and to never again speak to anyone about this as long as "the Turks" were in Karak.[238]

The second part of Awda's statement quoted above, plus the other times he refers to the chaos of the area prior to Ottoman direct rule, makes it clear that he sees the actions of the Ottoman Empire as necessary and beneficial in the long run, and what any government would have to do. Moreover, him, his uncle, and the Patriarch, regardless of what they think about the Ottoman government, recognize that the British getting involved as well would certainly only make the situation worse and ultimately hurt the people. We will see this sentiment from Awda throughout this period of Ottoman direct rule. Upon returning to Karak, Awda was summoned by Mutaṣarrif Hilmi to translate letters written in English that were found by a Bedouin on the road between Karak and the Dead Sea, and in them it is revealed that they were written by an unnamed British spy secretly residing in Karak in the wake of the campaign into the town. The information included in the letters is the exact information which Awda was asked about by Consul-General Dickson. Hilmi proceeded to send copies of them to the Wali in Damascus, Rauf Pasha, and another set of copies to the Ministry of Interior in Istanbul.[239] These two affairs highlight the imperial competition and anxiety that will form the backdrop for Ottoman direct rule in Karak until the empire's collapse following World War I. Moreover, Awda is now starting to be identified as a "key to local society"[240] by both the empire, due to his knowledge of English and connections with British actors, rather than the more

[238] Ibid.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 222-223.

traditional markers of status discussed in the previous chapter. This will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections as Awda's transformation is further highlighted.

3.3. Ordering of Space

3.3.1. The sanjak

In the earlier case the notables of Karak and their allies conceived and lived the space in the district different than the empire did. The former took their claims directly to Istanbul and won. In the end, the entire *sanjak* was still reorganized by the empire into hierarchical administrative units. Speaking on the Ottoman reorganization of Yemen, Thomas Kuhn argues that

> Perhaps the most important mode used to transform Yemen into an Ottoman space was the division of the conquered territories into a set of hierarchically-organized administrative units. It was in this way that the "disorderly" space of Yemen under the domination of local leaders was to be turned into an orderly space that was characteristic of what *Tanzīmāt* bureaucrats viewed as "civilization."[241]

Since the predominantly nomadic and seminomadic inhabitants of the four *kaza*s in the *sanjak* were viewed by Ottoman officials as being less civilized, this space was too seen as needing to be ordered. This was the first time in almost four hundred years that the empire had been successful in reorganizing these inhabitants into a single administrative unit. Traditionally, the towns of Salt and Karak served as "major trade entrepot[s] between the deserts of Arabia and towns of Palestine," and Tafila lived off these agricultural and trade relations as well. Originally established as a stop on the Hajj caravan, Maʿan was the only one which relied on north-south trade.[242] These patterns

[241] Ibid., 85.
[242] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 32-34.

would remain, in lesser forms, well into the 20th century, but this reorganization of these areas and their populations into one legal and social unit would certainly alter their political, economic, and social trajectories after the First World War.

The Ottoman administrations' conceptions of this space are what French sociologist Henri Lefebvre calls "abstract space." These are mental, idealized *representations of space* that will soon come to dominate, subsume, order, and appropriate the lived and experienced *spaces of representation* (*representational spaces*). The latter are the 'physical' spaces "as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" and they are "embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or under ground side of social life."[243] In other words, the increasingly subordinate Karaki society is also trying to appropriate these spaces and, presumably, one day dominate them. As the domination in the district of Karak at this point is just in the beginning, this section will show how it too is produced spatially over time within the spaces of representation. Through this it will be more clearly seen how the production of space, after incorporation into the Ottoman state system and the increasingly globalized capitalist economy, is produced like that of a commodity and the rest of the material world. Space is "simultaneously a process and a thing," but like a commodity, the mere appearance of space masks the contradictions inherent in producing it, between the dominate and the subordinate.[244]

What allows the two conflicting, contradictory "moments" in space to appear together as both real and transparent is Lefebvre's third moment of space: *spatial*

[243] Andrew Merrifield, "Place and Space: A Lefebvrian Reconciliation," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 18, no. 4 (1993): 523.
[244] Ibid., 520.

practices. Spatial practices "result from a *perceived* space… that embraces production and reproduction" and "'secrete that society's space". These practices "structure daily life and a broader urban [and rural] reality and, in doing so, ensure societal cohesion, continuity and a specific spatial coherence."[245] In Karak at this time, the productive spatial practices would have been the daily and seasonal activities of the farmers and sharecroppers, pastoralist Bedouin, and the merchants which sustained the necessary economic production, survival, and trade of the society. It included the productive daily activities of children and youth which would condition and mold them to one day assume the productive and reproductive roles of the fathers, mothers, and elders. Considering that this space cannot fully be transformed into the abstract one conceived by the Ottoman administrations despite their own appropriating spatialities, else it ceases to be a rural one, a certain level of difference must be either induced or produced. The former is only "contradictory and disjointed" and remains internal to [the] whole which brought [it] into being… as a system aiming to establish itself and then to close;" produced differences, on the other hand, are chaotic, incoherent, and "escape the system's rules."[246]

An example of the latter would be the assertion and approval for the center of the *sanjak* to be moved from Maʿan to Karak. It was not a difference produced by the appropriating logic of the Ottoman Empire later to be corrected, rather it was produced by the logic of local elites and notables. As we will see, this would alter the spatial activities for both the local and the imperial. Within the district and town level in Karak during this period, the Ottoman administrations were able to order this space in line with the ways in which they conceived it, and were more immediately felt by its people. As

[245] Ibid., 524.
[246] Keith Halfacree, "Trial by Space for a 'Radical Rural': Introducing alternative localities, representations and lives," *Journal of Rural Studies* 23 (2007): 128.

explained, the area of the castle and the adjacent *sūq* acted as a neutral space for all of the *ʾahl*. After the Ottoman entrance, however, this economic and social heart of the town began being transformed into a distinct imperial, Ottoman space. During the military campaign into Karak, Awda says Hussein Pasha ordered the military convoys to occupy the castle and erect the Ottoman flag atop it, as well as to convert the monastery into a temporary government headquarters. The monastery would remain this way for a year until the government built an official government *sarāy* in front of the castle, where the families of each successive *mutaṣarrif* would reside.[247]

3.3.2. The Town

Moreover, Hilmi encouraged and incentivized merchants from Damascus to come to Karak for work by offering them shops close to the new *sarāy*. These merchants sold their products, which were necessities, at very expensive prices. Eventually, Hussein Pasha's staff began to approach him on this matter. According to Awda, the *mutaṣarrif* responded that the presence of these merchants in a "remote, barren town such as Karak" is a blessing for the local population, and that because of them more merchants will come and the result will be a lowering of prices. In addition, Awda also claims that Hilmi discriminated against the Karaki merchants and obstructed them from expanding their holdings and erecting more shops in the *sūq*. This economic and social center of Karak was now being reordered into an Ottoman space dominated by foreign interests and commerce. When Awda pressed Hussein Pasha on the issue of harsh treatment towards Karaki merchants, the latter claimed that he was not bound by law and he will do what is

[247] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 43.

in the best interest of the town.[248] The *mutaṣarrif*'s words represent this ongoing transformation of space into a distinctly Ottoman one in which the administrators believed that they knew it and its interests better than the indigenous population. It further shows how foreign, not Karaki, interests were coming to dominate and control the economy. Now, the heart of the town was beginning to appear closer to the abstract conception held by the Ottomans which was ordered along the rational principles of the Tanzimat and regional capital.

Hussein Hilmi also oversaw the construction of a lower primary school during his time in Karak, and soon after schools were established in Maʿan and Tafila as well. Awda explains that prior to this the only school in the town, for both Muslims and Christians, was the Greek Orthodox school, which had been built some three hundred years earlier.[249] The primary purpose of the new state education system, inaugurated in the late 1860's, was to introduce standardization and regularization across the empire, and to foster loyalty to the Ottoman state.[250] In the 1880's, this school system was expanded into the Syrian frontier with the further goals to civilize the subjects and to counter the rising threat of European missions and their Great Power sponsors, particularly Britain and France. While the increasingly dangerous presence of European missionaries acted as a catalyst for the expansion of the Ottoman school system into southern Syria, Eugene Rogan shows how in this frontier, contrary to traditional scholarship, the Ottoman state and European missionaries were not always adversaries during the 19th century. In fact, the two often reacted to and informed each other's advances further into the Transjordanian frontier.

[248] Ibid., 49-50.
[249] Ibid., 51.
[250] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 54-57.

A Protestant mission would establish its presence in the town in 1894, but struggled to make real inroads in the community. Most missions focused solely on converting the predominantly Greek Orthodox Christians to Western Christianity and reversing the old East-West schism. While conversion largely failed overall, Muslims, not surprisingly, enjoyed and benefitted from the services brought by the missions, and many even sent their children to the missionary schools over the traditional *kuttab*s.[251] In the 1880's, in addition to expanding the school system to the Syrian frontier at this time, the state also began cracking down on missionary activity and expansion, subsequently inaugurating their own 'missionary' activities. These involved the construction of mosques in rural towns and the dispatching of religious scholars to them and even banning Muslim children from attending missionary schools.[252] Awda even tells us that in addition to the primary school, Hussein Hilmi also oversaw the construction of a mosque with a school attached, beside the new government office directly in front of the castle.[253] These new institutions, which further transformed the areas in which they were constructed into distinct Ottoman spaces, were brought to towns across the *sanjak* as tools to civilize the population and to counter imperial ambitions in this frontier-turned-borderland.

In 1895, Hilmi was reassigned to Nablus and was later succeeded by Reşid Paşa, who oversaw major institutional and infrastructural expansion in the *sanjak* and its further transformation into an Ottoman space during his tenure from 1897 to 1902. In contrast to how he portrays the Hilmi years, Awda is much more sympathetic to the administration of Reşid Paşa. Noting previously that Hilmi was likely more concerned with securing the early rule of an anxious borderland, this essay believes that Reşid Paşa's actions, as will

[251] Ibid., 130-140, 147-148.
[252] Ibid., 140-143, 151-154.
[253] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 50.

be shown, were more concerned with implementing the civilizing tools of Tanzimat governance through the proper hierarchical administrative avenues. In 1899, he ordered the construction of a large state upper primary/middle (*ruşdiye*) school behind the eastern tower, which is still standing today.[254] This school was likely for boys only, though a girls' school would be opened eventually. In addition, uniforms were required. In these schools, students were taught an expanded number of topics, including geography and Ottoman history. The language of instruction was likely Arabic as that was the local language, though Hillary Falb-Kalisman notes that in Nablus the Turkish language was forced upon the Arab students.[255] These schools were designed to further erase difference and mold the children into Ottoman subjects who would go on to join various wings of state service. By the start of World War I, there were additional *ruşdiye* schools in Maʿan and Tafila, as well as lower primary schools "in fourteen other villages and tribes between 1897 and 1915."[256]

It is noteworthy that the Ottomans built schools on lands controlled by more nomadic tribes, as it shows that, at some level, there was a belief that the school system could have a civilizing effect on them. Though, by constructing schools on the territories belonging to Bedouin tribes, the empire was pursuing a policy of sedentarization of these communities into more orderly villages and towns engaged in cultivation. The traditional spatial arrangements and practices of the town's environs and further into the *badia* were too transformed during Reşid Paşa's tenure. Awda informs us that during these years, "each tribe" of Karak began settling on their lands to help ease its cultivation. It should be noted that Awda is referring only to *ʾahl* al-Karak who, as explained in Chapter 2, had

[254] Ibid., 51.
[255] Hillary Falb-Kalisman, "Schooling the State: Educators in Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan: c. 1890-c. 1960" *ProQuest Dissertations*, 2015 [PhD Dissertation]: 37.
[256] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 154.

previously only settled and cultivated their respective lands surrounding the town on a seasonal, temporary basis. Widescale sedentarization of the semi-nomadic and nomadic tribes of the district would not occur until the Mandate.[257] Nonetheless, this lower level of sedentarization brought to an end to the predominance of a specific spatial practice and arrangement that lasted for nearly a century since ʾahl al-Karak had taken that land from Bani Hamida.

3.3.3. The Telegraph and the Railway

By far the most drastic change to the landscape up to this point was brought by the laying of the Damascus-Madina telegraph through the remainder of the Syrian frontier at the turn of the century. The final route of the line was agreed upon and approved by the Sultan in 1898 and construction of this Ottoman financed and controlled line continued from Salt in June 1900. After Salt, the telegraph line would go through Madaba, Karak, Ṭafila, and then Maʿan, before continuing to al-Aqaba and then through the Hijaz to Madina, though Mecca was the intended final destination. Mostafa Minawi notes that when planning this route, unlike with the previous episode more than a decade earlier, geopolitical and imperial concerns trumped any domestic concerns about Bedouin interference or conflict.[258] The international scene had become more unstable and the empire felt even more suffocated by the Great Powers. Just two years prior, Britain and France had come to an agreement over the fate of territory in the eastern Sahara where the Ottoman Empire firmly believed it had exercised the required amount of "effective occupation" to lay its undisputed claims.[259] The sense of urgency that the empire felt in

[257] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 26.
[258] Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, 122-124.
[259] Ibid., 73-79, 85-98.

completing this telegraph line is evidenced by its demand that the Arab provinces provide their own wood for the section of the line through their respective territory, a burden which "fell hardest on provinces without wood resources who had to pay their contribution in cash." According to Rogan, "[t]he province of Syria reportedly contributed 30,000 poles."[260]

While this was a major disruption in the landscapes which the Bedouin inhabited, the completion of this massive undertaking, both in this frontier and the Hijaz, could not have been done without their extensive cooperation. The yearly presence of the Hajj caravan through these territories had provided extant lines of communication and coordination with certain Bedouin communities as well as precedents on how to reach mutually beneficial agreements with them. However, Minawi explains that "the permanence of the telegraph line necessitated a new kind of relationship. Agreements could no longer be temporary and now had to tackle the delicate issue of permanent security and the continued operation of the telegraph line in Bedouin domains." Techniques used in southern Syria, and the Hijaz, were employment as well as monthly salaries. In the Hijaz, Minawi notes that the Ottoman officials involved were instructed to respect the authority of the leader of the respective territory, and presumably officials took a similar approach in Syria as well. Fortunately, from Istanbul's perspective construction of the line through Syria progressed rather quickly and without many difficulties. It reached Karak by the end of the next month on July 30, 1900, and soon after to Tafila and Maʿan before going on to the Hijaz.[261] Minawi tells us of an interesting episode which occurred near the Syria-Hijaz provincial border, presumably around

[260] Eugene Rogan, "Instant Communication: The Impact of the Telegraph in Ottoman Syria" in *The Syrian Land: Process of Integration and Fragmentation: Bilād al-Shām from the 18th to the 20th Centuries*, eds. Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998): 116.
[261] Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, 130-133.

Maʿan, in which a conflict arose involving an unnamed tribe, the Banī ʿĀttīya, and by extension their superior, the Ḥuwaytat, the leading tribe in the Maʿan region, over spoils from a previous hajj season. Although the outcome was never recorded, what is noteworthy here is that the main Ottoman official in charge, Ṣādiq Pasha of the notable Damascene ʿAẓm family, respected the established customary legal system to settle the dispute.[262] These customary legal systems in southern Syria would remain throughout the Ottoman era, however, alongside new state justice system, as we will see.

The permanent nature of the telegraph line meant that each *kaza* subsequently witnessed the institutional and administrative expansion required to operate these lines, including additional gendarmerie to patrol and protect the vulnerable infrastructure from Bedouin attack. Rogan notes that the staffing and upkeep of some "50-odd stations of the Syrian network probably cost some two million piasters annually." This included the continued employment of Bedouin shaykhs and "monthly sinecures of 1,200 piasters to discourage their fellow tribesmen from vandalizing the telegraph system"; *sheikh*s of less powerful tribes still saw between 300-500 piasters per month.[263] While others have noted the massive display of Ottoman power brought by the telegraph to the frontiers of the empire, Rogan claims that its significance was also in the fact that this was a two-way line of communication. While the center could now send information to southern Syria quicker than ever before, the people of southern Syria could do the same for realistically the first time. People from the *sanjak* now could reach Istanbul almost instantaneously and expect to be listened and responded to, greatly increasing their political participation and power in the empire. Above all, "the telegraph network was an infrastructure for the

[262] Ibid., 130.
[263] Rogan, "Instant Communication," 117-118.

extension of the government's power."[264] It was a force of control beyond the localized community which extended across the empire to standardize the lives of all Ottoman subjects and to help foster a new sense of Ottoman community.

By the turn of the century, the spatial orientation of Karak had been severely altered. Instead of looking inward to the community, or eastward to the nearby towns of al-Khalil and Jerusalem, Karak's orientation now faced north towards Damascus, and further to Istanbul and even Europe. Only a few years after Ottoman entrance into Karak, "the region of Ma'an, which included Salt, Karak, Tafila and Ma'an, was reported to export FF10.4 million [French Francs] in animal products, accounting for some 46 percent of the region's total livestock exports", and "more than half of the agricultural products from Transjordan were exported, confirming the region's commercial transformation from an entrepot between the desert and Palestinian towns to an export orientation."[265] These trends would only continue after the completion of the Hijaz Railway in southern Syria in late 1903. Now, along with information, people and cargo could travel quicker than ever, for both state and society. However, Rogan claims that the benefits provided by the railway were unequal across society. He adds that "[b]y 1910, some 30-40 merchants from Hebron and Damascus had come to dominate the central market of Karak." Merchants, both local and regional, further benefitted economically as the Damascus-Haifa line, completed in 1904, opened up new Mediterranean markets for their raw grain materials, and Hauran grain exports from the Palestinian coastal town quadrupled between 1904 and 1913. While Damascene and Palestinian merchants in Karak engaged in money-lending with the local populations as they had been doing in Salt, this did not translate into agricultural holdings or the construction of large, fanciful

[264] Ibid., 126.
[265] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 116-117.

estates by these merchants in and around the town as it had in the other town. This undoubtedly hindered both the level and rate of spatial transformation in Karak from a local to an imperial one guided by a Tanzimat ideology and regional capital, compared to that of the two northern districts.

While the presence of telegraph necessitated permanent coordination and partnerships with the Bedouin whose territory the line went through, the railway marginalized them even more, rendered their pastoralist lifestyles as increasingly unviable, and further forced these communities to seek employment in the bureaucracy as a means of living. As Eugene Rogan explains:

> The government no longer awarded lucrative contracts to favored tribes to provide camels for the pilgrimage caravan from Damascus to Mecca. Nor did they pay for the safe passage of the pilgrimage caravan. With the advent of the "iron horse" tribal leaders were reduced to a salary to guard the railroad tracks. There are no figures to estimate the loss in income this represented to the tribes along the railroad's path, though it is clear that the central government made every attempt to reduce its payments, particularly as they increased the troop presence along the line.[266]

The subsequent development in the nascent road system in southern Syria, connecting new and old population centers to railway stations and one another, meant a further loss of space for these Bedouin communities.[267] The economy of Karak had been transformed to satisfy the needs of Istanbul and commerce over those of the people. The local individuals and communities which did benefit from this transformation, such as local merchants and nascent bureaucrats, had also seen a transformation in their interests in that they now aligned more so with those of the state, rather than that of community, which will be explored more in the subsequent section. The old spatial arrangement based

[266] Ibid., 66.
[267] Ibid., 62-63.

on geography, agriculture, and less so religion, was becoming a thing of the past, while the new spatial arrangement, based on Tanzimat imperialism, civilizing attitude, and economic exploitation, was continuing to be put into place, by the direct actions and intentions of empire, but also by regional and developments outside the control of Istanbul.

3.4. Governance: Localization and Institutionalization of Difference

3.4.1. The Bedouin

In the previous section, we saw how the Ottoman administrations attempted to transform the space of the *sanjak* based on their abstract conceptions of how it *ought* to be ordered, that is, in a logical and rational manner. A crucial component to this reordering of space was the civilizing attitude held by the successive administrations. Meaning, the negative perceptions towards the inhabitants of the *sanjak* informed how the administrators transformed this space, such as the sedentarization of the semi-nomadic and nomadic tribes and attempting to put an end the migratory patterns of the seasonal cultivators. This section will show, as Kuehn does for Ottoman Yemen, how the civilizing attitude simultaneously informed how this sub-province would be governed. As this transformation of space brought further Ottoman institutions and infrastructure, these towns received the necessary administrative capacity to continue this spatial transformation and to allow it to reach down the seemingly mundane daily lives of the inhabitants. However, the civilizing attitude meant that the Ottomans would adapt these local institutions to the "customs and dispositions"[268] of the locals, as they did in other

[268] Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 3.

frontier regions of the empire. This would allow for a degree of localization of these institutions, as seen in the first chapter, which would result in both Ottoman and local conceptualizations of space and governance to impact actions and policies taken by the local government and its institutions. The end result would be a reproduction and institutionalization of the difference that betrayed the principles of the Tanzimat ideology. Nonetheless, it will be shown how that despite this institutionalization of difference, or perhaps because of it, a figure like Awda al-Qusus could undergo a major transformation in both his role and status in Karak.

As explained throughout this essay, the difference in customs and ways of life in this *sanjak*, between Salt and Maʿan, between the nomadic and settled populations was rather small, and most tribes and families engaged in both sedentary and nomadic forms of life. In order to target the Bedouin population with sedentarization policies and actions, the administration first needed to more clearly define who was Bedouin and who was not. Soon after the establishment of direct rule, the new administration in Karak ordered each tribe's *sheikh*s to collect a lump sum amount of 500 qirsh from their respective tribe. These new taxes were the aforementioned *wirku* (Turkish: *virgu*) and ʿushār (*öşr*), however the Bedouin populations were exempt from the latter. In the *kaza* of al-Karak, the administration imposed a third of these taxes on the Christian population on the grounds that they owned a third of the land.[269] Settled and nomadic were now two distinct legal categories with social and economic implications. In the *kaza* of Salt, Nora Barakat informs us that settled populations were recorded as individuals before being a member of any tribe or community, however those individuals deemed "Bedouin" were only recorded as being part of their respective tribe.[270] Thomas Kuehn claims that such

[269] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 44-45.
[270] Barakat, "Marginal Actors?," 122.

practices "that marked off particular social groups, such as tribes, as objects of rule, but not the individual"[271] were also seen in European colonies in Aden and across Africa.

In the province of Yemen, Thomas Kuhn explains that methods of taxation were adapted to 'what [the soldiers and administrators] perceived as the "customs and dispositions" (*ʿādāt ve emzice*) of the local people.' As seen above, this is exactly what the empire instituted in Karak, where the administrators in the *sanjak* were not unaware of the important role played by the *sheikh*s of the tribes. Therefore, by assigning them the responsibility of collecting the required taxes, the empire sought to coopt these community leaders and transform them into intermediaries between the state and the people with the hopes that this would make Ottoman rule acceptable to the latter. These intermediaries were to be the agents who gradually introduced their communities to the civilizing effects of Ottoman rule. Moreover, by imposing a third of the taxes on the Christians, the Ottoman administration was maintaining the traditional religious and geographical social markers that they recognized hundreds of years prior. So, by not properly reforming and implementing a tax regime along the lines seen elsewhere in the empire, "these adaptations institutionalized and reproduced perceived cultural hierarchies and created the effect of distancing the local peoples from their conquerors."[272]

3.4.2. Skeikhs as Keys to Local Society

We also see that the power and status of the *sheikh*s in Karak was transferred over into the state-sanctioned legal and judicial institutions. In 1895, after the center of the *sanjak* was moved to Karak, the new administration there appointed Sheikhs Saleh and

[271] Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference*, 105.
[272] Ibid., 91.

Khalil al-Majali and the Christian Sheikh Khalil al-Sunnāʿ tribe to sit on the Administrative Council for the sub-province.[273] Roderic Davison explains how the 1864 Vilayet Law, and its subsequent revisions, never truly specified the powers and responsibilities of the Administrative Councils, at the provincial, sub-provincial, or district level, however, but notes that "it was a deliberative and advisory body which dealt with political, financial, and economic matters."[274] It is important to note given that Karak was the seat of the sub-province, the institutions established in the town acted at the level of the *sanjak*, not just the for the district of Karak. Ahmed Shuqairat, relying on the *salname* records, notes that the first council of this kind was actually created in 1892, and consisted of four "elected" (*muntakhab*) members: The same Majali *sheikh*s and two other unnamed members. In addition to the local members, the council originally included the *ex officio* official positions of *mutaṣarrif*, his deputy (*nāʾib*), a bookkeeper (*muḥāsib*), and the Director of the Register (*mudīr al-qalam*).

In 1897, the local membership went back up to four with the addition of Sheikh Yahya al-Sarayreh to represent the Eastern Alliance in the town. That same year, the official position of *mufti* of the *sanjak* was also added to the *majlis al-idāra*. In addition to this institution, the district itself also received a municipal council, or *majlis al-baladī*, which "would be responsible for municipal infrastructural works (such as the paving of streets), enforcing hygiene regulations, monitoring the observance of fair practices in city markets, and operating municipal services such as fire departments and street lights." This council was headed by a *raʾīs*, included six local "elected" members, and an official clerk (*kātib*). In his book, Shuqairat includes the composition of this council in Karak between

[273] al-Qusus, *Mudhkirāt*, 44; Shuqairat, *Tarīkh al-idārat al-ʿUthmaniyyat*, 170.
[274] Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963): 147.

1894-1900 (except 1898), and we notice that there were two Christians, two Muslims from the Western Alliance, and two Muslims from the Eastern Alliance. In addition to the *raʾīs* and *kātib*, by 1900 this council included two other state-positions, a doctor and a pharmacist.

As seen previously, the Ottomans also continued the practice of paying these *sheikh*s stipends to gain their obedience and loyalty. The largest portion of these payments went to the *sheikh*s of the Majali tribe, who seem to have taken little issue with the Ottoman entrance as long as their special position in the town and district was recognized and maintained by the new rulers, which it was. However, the *sheikh al-mashāyikh* of the Tarawneh tribe, the leader of the Eastern Alliance, also sought to curry favor with the Ottomans in order to enhance his power and status in the district. However, the presence of the Christians in the Western Alliance and their overall good relations with the Majali would continue to complicate this, especially because the Ottomans began their rule with excellent relations with the Christian representatives in the community.[275] In fact, Awda claims that Hussein Hilmi told the *sheikh*s of the town that he believed the Christians in this area to be more cultured than the Muslims as the economy of the country was in their hands, including trade, industry, and agriculture. However, he warned the Christian *sheikh*s not to escalate issues in the district and "to spew the toxins of discrimination amongst between the individuals of one people."[276] It appears that despite reproducing the traditional sociopolitical cleavages, the *mutaṣarrif* believed these to be uncultured customs of the Karaki people and sought to instruct the more cultured, Christian elders to take measures to not ignite sectarian tensions.

[275] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 97.
[276] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 49-50.

According to Awda, the very next day Khalil al-Sunnāʿ barged into the office of the *mutaṣarrif* during a meeting of the Administrative Council, still in the Greek Orthodox Abode, accusing the Muslim *sheikhs* in the town of Adir, a short distance north of Karak, of sowing "the principles of segregation and planting in [the Muslim's] souls the seeds of corruption and gossip against their Christian brothers." Hussein Hilmi, angry at Khalil for this outburst, dismissed him from the council but later reinstated him after the latter apologized. The *mutaṣarrif* took this matter seriously and subsequently began an investigation, finding out that the issue was over land rights in the nearby town. During the next meeting for the council, he summoned the Christian elders and made them swear and sign an oath that the lands of Adir were not divided between Muslim and Christian, as this was not how land distribution or taxation worked before or after the Ottomans came. Then, the *mutaṣarrif* ordered *sheikh al-mashāyikh* Saleh al-Majali and the clerk for the *sharia* court (*al-maḥkamat al-sharʿīa*), Muhammad Saʿid Effendi Tahboub, to go to Adir the next day and divide up the land according to their knowledge. Once this was done, the two recorded it on paper and signed it in front of witnesses, and submitted it to Hilmi. From there, it was forwarded to the *qaḍi* of the *sharia* court, who recorded it officially and then made copies for all parties.[277]

This case is interesting because it effectively shows the phenomenon of legal pluralism which occurred throughout the empire, including in the Balqāʾ, which has been explored by Nora Barakat. She notes that in the town of Salt, litigants often "forum-shopped" across these the legal venues of the *sharia* court, the *niẓāmīye* courts, and even the Administrative Council.[278] Awda further notes that this was the manner in which Hussein Hilmi governed the *sanjak* during his tenure as *mutaṣarrif*, only referring to the

[277] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 48-49.
[278] Nora Barakat, "Regulating Land Rights," 212-218.

sharia judge for "simple civil cases" relating to personal status.[279] However, more than this, this case in Karak also reveals how aspects of the traditional legal system were incorporated into the Administrative Council as a legal venue. Hilmi made the elders swear and sign oaths, and appointed Saleh al-Majali, who very likely was of a status to preside over a case in the traditional legal system, to solve the issue. Gubser suggests that the traditional system remained untouched, albeit alongside other legal venues, throughout the Ottoman period and presents a few bigger land cases as evidence.[280] However, since he was conducting his study fifty years ago, he likely overlooked this legal pluralism and even mixing of the traditional and Ottoman state legal venues.

Awda notes that Hussein Pasha would not introduce the *niẓāmīye* courts during his time in Karak.[281] As explained in the first chapter, the legal property regime developed over the course of the 19th century. The 1864 and 1871 Provincial Laws stipulated that "each administrative level was to have, in addition to the state-şerîat court, also the newly founded state-civil nizâmiye courts." In fact, Thomas Kuehn explains that it was the forum-shopping and intertwining of the legal venues that led the provincial administration in Yemen during the 1870s-and-80s to believe "that the local population was not only ignoring the *nizāmīye* courts, but deeply despised them." In 1889, Sultan Abdulhamid II abolished the *niẓāmīye* courts in Yemen, which had not even been introduced in all districts in the province and had been weakened throughout the prior decade by the *Wālī* of Yemen, ʿOsman Nūrī Pasha. Though, Kuehn does note that this was also strategic move by the governor-general, as it increased his power vis-à-vis the Sultan. In the Ottoman Palestine sub-district of Biʾr al-Sebaʿ (Birüssebi), split from the district of Gaza

[279] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 48.
[280] Gubser, *Politics and Change*, 92-94.
[281] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 48.

in 1900 "to place the Bedouin on the path of civilization," the empire also did not establish *niẓāmīye* courts. Ahmad Amara explains that the administration invested these judicial powers in the administrative council "because of the husûsiyet (peculiarity) of both the mevki (place or region) and the halk (people)," and it was thought that this would make Ottoman rule more acceptable for the local population '"who had just entered the civilization path."'[282] So, as in these other *frontier* areas, by not introducing the *niẓāmīye* courts in Karak due to the belief that the local population was not ready for them, the Ottomans were also reproducing and institutionalizing the perceived cultural inferiority of Karaki society.

The *sanjak* did eventually receive the *niẓāmīye* courts in 1902, during the tenure of Mustafa ʿĀbid Bek. Though, Awda tells us that it was his predecessor, Reşid Pasha, who had lobbied both the provincial government in Damascus and the central government in Istanbul for the introduction of these courts in the *sanjak*. This comes as little surprise as Reşid Pasha was a legal scholar of the *Mecelle*, the civil code enacted between 1869-1876 that became the backbone for the *niẓāmīye* courts and was applied in the *sharīʿa* courts as well. Avi Rubin notes that the code was a "hybrid legal artifact, containing both Islamic and European features.", and that it "included sixteen books addressing the issues of sales, debts, ownership, lawsuits, evidence, and judicial procedure, to name but a few."[283] Rubin further notes that "the president of the *Nizamiye* court was the local *Şer'i* judge, namely, the *naib* who sat in the *Şeriat* court."[284] In Karak, the first *raʾīs* of the *Niẓāmiye* court was Rifaʿt Bek, a Turk did not know any Arabic, according to Awda. In

[282] Ahmad Amara, "Civilizational Exceptions: Ottoman Law and Governance in Late Ottoman Palestine," *Law and History Review* 36, no. 4 (2018): 925-935.
[283] Avi Rubin, *Ottoman Nizamiye Courts: Law and Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 30-31.
[284] Ibid., 34.

addition to the president there were two other state-employees employee: a prosecutor for the *liwaʾ* (*mudaʿīʿām*), and the examiner (*mustanṭiq*). The four "elected" members, voted by amongst the members of the Administrative Council, were Hussein al-Tarawneh, Tawfīq al-Majali, Butrus al-Ṣunnāʿ, and Awda al-Qusus. The salary for this position, according to Awda, was two-and-a-half Ottoman Lira, and only two for the district courts.[285]

3.4.3. Absorption and Localization

It has been clearly shown thus far in this section how by absorbing the local leaders into the state institutions, to make their rule more acceptable, the Ottoman administration also absorbed the traditional social cleavages and legal customary system into the state-framework as well. The empire sought to bring these elders into their fold not just as mere intermediaries, but also so that they could depart their vast local knowledge onto the administrators and officials to help formulate a form of governance suitable for the local population .[286] In each of the Administrative Council, the Baladiya Council, and the *niẓāmīye* court, Christians were overrepresented due to the provincial laws mandating religious quotas in areas with mixed populations.[287] This also occurred partially because the Ottoman administration absorbed the existing political alliances in the town. If remembered from the first chapter, these institutions in which absorption and localization occurred are what Mundy refers to as *sites of mediation*. These local leaders-turned-*legal personae*, were able to carve out a place for the local knowledge within these

[285] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 52.
[286] Barakat, "Marginal Actors?," 116; Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and the Politics of Difference*, 96.
[287] Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 148.

sites of mediation and, ultimately, affect the form of these state institutions and how they govern society.

This phenomenon forces us to further think about how the Ottoman civilizing attitude, rather than the more racialist European missions, not only allowed, but mandated, that locals join these administrations and blur the line between *ruler* and *ruled*. This process as well as the other described above were separate, but intertwined, and together only increased the leverage that the local leaders of Karak possessed to form these institutions on their terms. Kuehn seems to suggest that it was the civilizing attitude that allowed for this localization and absorption of these institutions to occur, however the considerations that Mundy raises seem to suggest that this localization occurs due to the role that the mere presence of local knowledge plays in shaping forms of governance and law, which could be analyzed throughout different localities across the empire. This localization of the institutions in Karak would, without a doubt, have repercussions for how this space was transformed into as an imperial, rather than local, one. Nonetheless, the physical and legal existence of these institutions would work to transform this space closer to the abstract conception of the Ottomans, rather than of the Karaki society. Moreover, the interests of the Karaki society as a collective had been beginning to differentiate more so than ever before based on the processes described thus far. These increasingly divided, though still overlapping social groups (settled, Bedouin, local leader, bureaucrat, merchant, etc.) would become easier to define and differentiate, and their *spatial practices* were also becoming more diffuse.

For example, it is noteworthy that Awda was elected to sit on the *niẓāmīye* court for the *sanjak*, as this means that he was also on the Administrative Council by this point. This further suggests that his status in the Qusus wing of the Halasa tribe, or both, had

increased since the Ottoman entrance. It is not clear what or how, but something occurred that would have allowed Awda to sit on this council over his uncles, ʿIsa or Ibrahim, or his father, Salmān, and he does not mention any of them dying at this point. Despite not being an elder, Awda, now 25, would still likely have been identified as a *key* to Karaki society due to his vast local knowledge around land and trade. In addition, his knowledge of English and his ties with the both Greek Orthodox Church and British Government in Jerusalem, though never threatening nor amounting to much,[288] would have made him someone the Ottomans would make sure to bring into their fold. As we are seeing, due to the Ottoman facilitation of merchant migration to the towns of southern Syria, these new classes had been transforming into *legal personae* and intermediaries who would act as representatives for the local communities. In Karak, however, since the Palestinian and Syrian merchants did not have a large say in the politics of the district, this left more room for local merchants, such as Awda, to fill these roles. Thus far, we have seen Awda side with local interests against the Ottoman rule which he does not seem particularly fond of, and he is first and foremost representing the Christians of Karak in his official capacities. Nonetheless, this marks the beginning of his transformation into an Ottoman bureaucrat-merchant whose interests, and therefore *spatial practices*, will increasingly be dictated by the appropriating nature of the empire and capital. A process that would, as mentioned previously, only increase with the completion of the Hijaz Railway in southern Syria in 1903-4.

[288] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 47.

3.4.4. A Different Land Regime

One of "the key elements of *Tanzīmāt* governance that [was] supposed to be applied throughout the empire,"[289] but was not established in the sub-province of Karak was a proper land regime. Because of this, it was previously shown how the empire relied on a taxation regime, closely intertwined with the land regime by design, based on the *customs and dispositions* of Karaki society. Michael Fischbach notes that land registration activities did not begin in Karak until 1899, and in both Tafila and Maʿan until 1905.[290] Munib Madi and Suleiman Musa claim that by the end of the Ottoman period, Karak had a land registry (*Defter-i Hakkani*)[291] which enforced and issued *Tapu* deeds, which can be described as an "Ottoman fiscal institution" overseeing the "general system of peasant land tenure"[292] as outlined by the 1858 Land Code and 1859 *Tapu* Regulations.[293] Furthermore, the town received a tax collection office (*dāʾira al-taḥṣīlat*) and a branch of the Agricultural Bank sometime during Ottoman rule.[294] Unfortunately, the dates of establishment for most of these institutions are not indicated in the accessible sources for this essay. However, it can be assumed that most of the institutions, unless otherwise stated, were formed after 1910, given that their absence was a causing factor in the revolt that year.

Eugene Rogan, however, does explain that during this time "the Ottomans did not attempt a systematic registration of all the agricultural lands of the districts of Salt, Karak or Ma'an." Both him and Fischbach note that in the latter two districts there was small

[289] Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, Politics of Difference*, 16.
[290] Fischbach, *State, Society, and Land*, 31.
[291] Madi and Musa, *Tarīkh al-Urdun*, 17.
[292] Anton Minkov, "Ottoman Tapu Deeds in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Origins, Typologies and Diplomatics," *Law & Society* 7, no. 1 (2000): 66.
[293] Barakat, "Regulating Land," 108-109.
[294] Fischbach, *State, Society, and Land*, 62.

scale voluntary registration, however Rogan elaborates on how "the lands registered in the districts of Salt, Karak, Tafila and Ma'an were entered into the state's books through transactions," meaning market forces:

> Two types of registers were kept: *yoklama* registers recorded the award of title, and *daimi* registers recorded transactions of registered lands. In order to sell an unregistered property, the vendor would first have to obtain title by registering the property in the *yoklama* and paying the relevant taxes and fees. Then the sale could be registered in the *daimi* and the new holder assessed the same taxes and fees a second time. Transactions not duly registered with the *tapu* clerk would not be recognized, and the property subject to confiscation.

Rogan argues that this was still a decently effective method to register the land and other economically active properties in the *sanjak*,[295] and other scholars, such as Nora Barakat, have meticulously shown how the property regime in the district of Salt acted in practice. Nonetheless, in the absence of a complete land registration and cadastral surveys, and in addition to the market forces, the Ottoman administration relied on the extant institutions to carry out these functions.

In addition to the number of offices and bureaus established in the district centers, Rogan notes that "the [provincial] government allocated funds for a network of prisons in 1910,"[296] though Awda notes that the prison in Karak, the largest in the *sanjak*, was built while Ibrahim Bek al-Çerkes was the *mutaṣarrif* between 1908 and 1909. Awda adds that the prison was constructed right behind the sarāy, around where the castle was located.[297] This is noteworthy because these structures in the district centers were not only physical instruments of power, but also spatial representations to remind the local populations of Ottoman hegemony in the sub-province. Overall, this section has analyzed

[295] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 90-91.
[296] Ibid., 61.
[297] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 53.

a handful of institutions established by the empire in Karak and across the *sanjak* that were adapted to fit the *customs and dispositions* of the local people. In addition, the processes of absorption and localization occurred, and together they reproduced and institutionalized perceived cultural differences in these districts.

3.5. The Young Turks and the 1910 Karak Revolt

In 1908, the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), or the "Young Turks" as its members came to be called, carried out a revolution forcing Sultan Abdulhamid II to revive the 1876 Constitution, which he abrogated less than two years later, and with it the participatory politics which it mandated across the empire. Hassan Kayali explains, in detail, how the name "Young Turks" is a misnomer and it is wrong to consider this movement as a nationalist one.[298] The group, originally called the "Young Ottomans", has its origins in the originally clandestine activities of Turkish, Arab, Armenian, and other intellectuals in Europe and later across the empire, including in the Syrian provinces, throughout the last decades of the 19th century. Though they shared the same European ideals and outlook as the Tanzimat reformers, their "grievances centered on the personal rule of a small bureaucratic elite, excessive foreign interference in the political and economic affairs of the empire, and European cultural domination." Moreover, Kayali further explains how as European, Christian imperialism had increased over the course of the late 19th century, Sultan Abdulhamid II increasingly fostered a pan-Islamist identity around him as a reinvigorated Caliph.

[298] Hassan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 4.

The Young Ottomans, on the other hand, believed that Islamic law (*sharia*) was not only compatible with a constitutional, parliamentary government, but mandated it as well. In addition, they sought to foster the concept that would later be referred to as *Ottomanism* intended to "strengthen the relationship of the subject to the state." Before the 1908 Revolution, the Arab members involved in the movement mainly expressed local, rather than *Arab*, concerns, and this was an identity that did not form until after the revolution.[299] Kayali further explains that the more direct catalyst for the revolution was activities carried out by both military and civilian elements in the Macedonian and Salonika branches of the CUP. Moreover, there were both centralist and decentralist organizations within the fold of the Young Turk movement, but the CUP carried out a very exclusionist program, or lack thereof, once assuming the reins of power.

Hassan Kayali adds that the CUP had to rely on existing government officials to staff its central and provincial administrations, blurring the line between the government and itself, and it also began carrying out activities closer to that of a public society rather than a political party. What resulted, according to Kayali, was a "calcified nucleus of leadership, consisting predominantly of Turkish speakers and representing a narrow geographical background, which failed to embrace new social elements in the face of growing opposition."[300] Nonetheless, this new moment in Ottoman constitutionalism meant a renewal of participatory politics. The original election law from 1876-1878, though never originally ratified, served as the basis for the new 1908 elections for the Chamber of Deputies (*majlis al-mabʿūthān*), the lower house of the Ottoman parliament. Kayali explains that this law:

[299] Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 22-36.
[300] Ibid., 52-56.

> stipulated two-stage balloting in which every tax-paying male Ottoman citizen above the age twenty-five was entitled to vote in a primary election to select secondary voters. Secondary voters, each elected by 500 to 750 primary voters, then voted to determine the member(s) of the Chamber in the numbers specified for a particular electoral district, the sancak. The law did not make special quota arrangements for the religious or sectarian communities. Each voter was to vote as an Ottoman citizen for deputies representing not a particular community but all Ottomans.

Two-stage balloting system meant that the parliament of 1908 consisted mainly of notables, and in addition, there was also an overrepresentation of Turkish deputies. This was partly due to the number of irregularities which occurred, particularly in the Arab and frontier regions of the empire.[301]

In Karak, Awda explains that *sheikh al-mashāyikh* Qadr al-Majali had won the majority of the votes, followed by himself, and then Tawfiq al-Majali in third. However, not only did the former Majali not know Turkish, but he was illiterate. According to Awda, the central government requested that the second-place finisher replace Sheikh Qadr. However, the *mutaṣarrif*, Ibrahim Bek, refused because Awda was a Christian, and Tawfiq was selected to sit in for his brother as deputy.[302] Some of these claims are dubious since Kayali explains that "no local or electoral authority had the power to replace [Qadr] with the candidate who received the second largest number of votes." Tawfiq's deputyship was only accepted after a deputy from Damascus argued that "Karak was a new administrative unit with a predominantly Beduin population, and that the actual winner, [Qadr], was unqualified to sit in Parliament because he not only did not know Turkish but also was illiterate."[303] Even though Awda's account cannot be corroborated, it does raise questions why the local administration would not select Awda as deputy if he truly was the runner-up.

[301] Ibid., 65.
[302] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 53-54.
[303] Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 66.

Instead of representing Karak in Istanbul, Awda would have to settle with representing Karak in Damascus, in the General Assembly (*majlis al-ʿumūmī*) for the province. The main purpose of these Assemblies in the provinces was to create a higher degree of hierarchical centralization and to help quell the rise of minority nationalism by assuming them under the banner of Ottoman nationhood. Awda explains that one deputy was "elected" from the Administrative Councils for each of the four districts, and of these deputies two were Muslim and two were Christian, a stipulation corroborated by Roderic Davison. He adds that their main responsibility was to be present in Damascus for a period of 40-days annually and that they were "competent to discuss public works, taxes, police agriculture, and commerce," though its power was greatly diminished by the stipulation that all measures be sanctioned by the imperial government.[304] Nonetheless, by his election to the Provincial Assembly, Awda was now representing the entire district of Karak, not just Christians, in the second highest level of the empire's centralized hierarchy. Awda adds that during his stay in Damascus he gained the trust of the *wali*, Niẓām Pasha, who later wrote to the *mutaṣarrif* in Karak thanking Awda for his services to "[his] nation [*waṭn*]."[305] Even if Awda felt that he was serving the people of Karak before the empire, this still shows his further transformation into loyal, Ottoman bureaucrat who is increasingly envisioning a Karaki future within the empire.

The next two years were rather unstable for the Committee of Union and Progress, as opposition to it grew, including from within. Many Arabs, and other ethnic and religious minorities, were still committed to more centralized unity in the empire but increasingly found themselves on the side of the decentralist opposition as the increasingly Turkish-dominated CUP ignored their local grievances. Kayali notes that the

[304] Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 150-155.
[305] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 54.

Committee had come to form a more pro-Turk, rigid, and centralized platform as a response to the opposition coalescing around their own platform of decentralization that appealed to a growing number of Arab deputies and intellectuals.[306] Thus, this how the CUP came to carry out "initiatives to apply Ottoman law and administration in a homogeneous way across the breadth of the Empire", which "meant registration, taxation and conscription of all Ottoman subjects without distinction." The first place that the empire sought to apply these measures was in Jabal Druze, where, as explained in the first chapter, the Druze, the Hawrani villagers, and Circassian settlers had been embroiled in land conflicts during this time. Rogan explains how, "[i]n July 1909, a dispute between the Druze chief Yahya Bey Atrash and his partner in a steam mill in the village of Basr al-Harir escalated into a clash of arms pitting the Druze against the villagers, who were supported by the local Ottoman garrison." Military commander Sami Pasha al-Farūqī used this as an opportunity to apply the mentioned measures to the Druze, who had thus far been governed by a "regime of exceptions" similar to the one outlined in Karak. The armed resistance put up by the Druze was ultimately no match for Sami Pasha, who, in August, violently crushed it and imprisoned hundreds. He subsequently carried out a census, collection of taxes, and a disarmament of the Druze population.[307]

For the next year, Sami Pasha continued southward further into southern Syria and apparently began carrying out similar measures, without resistance, in Jabal ʿAjlun and the Balqāʾ. In early November 1910, the commander sent a telegram to the *mutaṣarrif* in Karak, Ṭahir Bek, outlining his plans to carry out the necessary measures in Karak. Throughout the month, the Administrative Councils in Karak and Tafila submitted to these demands, but with serious reservations over disarmament, claiming that arms

[306] Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 61-64, 72-79.
[307] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 192-193.

provided defense against the Bedouin. The commander sent a second telegraph to the Tahir Bek, to be shared with the Karaki notables, agreeing to conduct only a census and land registration. However, Rogan explains that he sent a third ciphered telegram to the *mutaṣarrif* detailing his plans to carry out all his desired measures.[308] Awda claims that Ṭahir Bek responded to Sami Pasha warning him against carrying out these measures in the *sanjak*, but notes that the *mutaṣarrif* was a weak man. With the worsening situation in the town and sub-province, Awda, set to depart to Beirut from his brother Hanna's graduation from medical college, agreed to stop in Damascus along the way to meet with the *wali*, Ismaʿil Faẓil Pasha.[309]

The Provincial Governor was not happy that the *sheikh*s of Karak had agreed to any of Sami Pasha's measures, informing Awda that they had been duped. Ismaʿil Faẓil gave Awda two choices to present to the *sheikh*s back in Karak with:

> either they could accept conscription immediately on the understanding that conscripts would not be asked to serve outside of Transjordan, or they could petition for a ten-year grace before coming under the standard procedures for conscription. Qusus said the Karakis would prefer to wait ten years before facing conscription, and the governor said he would seek the Sultan's guarantee for this arrangement.[310]

However, during Awda's absence, Sami Pasha al-Farūqī arrived in Karak along with a unit of soldiers led by a second commander, Shākir Pasha. They divided the soldiers into seven units each led by an official, and began carrying out a comprehensive census.[311] According to Rogan, the census was carried out for the next two weeks with little resistance, though Awda, now back from Beirut, presents the situation as deteriorating

[308] Ibid., 194.
[309] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 58-59.
[310] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 195.
[311] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 61-62.

rapidly. The latter notes that the recent election fraud that cost *sheikh al-mashāyikh* Qadr al-Majali his spot on the Administrative Council had only worsened the situation, and Rogan adds that during this time the CUP had withdrawn the salaries of the Majali *sheikh*s. He further notes that "[n]o arms were demanded" and "[o]n 25 November Sami Pasha wired that all the Bedouin of the Kerak district were exempt from service in the army."[312]

Despite these reassurances, the people of area were still filled with "fear and distrust of the Ottoman authorities."[313] In the evening of December 3rd, a woman from the Damūr tribe, whom Sheikh Qadr was dining with, scolded the *sheikh* for allowing such a situation. That night, he sprang into action and set out to recruit for the revolt. Over the course of the next day, revolts broke out across the district, registration teams were attacked and its members killed, and government offices set ablaze. In addition to the Majali *sheikh*s, a number of Tarawneh *sheikh*s were also involved with spreading the revolt.[314] However, one of Hussein al-Tarawneh's brothers snuck away from this camp the following night and informed Hussein Pasha of the events occurring across the *sanjak*. After Hussein al-Tarawneh informed the *mutaṣarrif*, an emergency meeting was called with Shākir Pasha and a few other government officials. That dawn, December 5th, gunfire was heard from outside the town walls, alerting the administration and the people that the rebels had reached the seat of government power in the area. Unsurprisingly, the rebels destroyed "all manifestations of Ottoman rule:" the *sarāy*, other government offices, the homes of government employees, the shops belonging to both non-Karaki and Karaki merchants, and even vandalized the recently renovated mosque. They completely

[312] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 195; al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 62-63.
[313] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,*197.
[314] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 63-64.

looted the offices, homes, and shops, and burned them, and their contents, to the ground. Over the course of the coming days, the Bedouin in the area, all the way south to ʿAqaba, would join in on the revolt, destroying the railroad and its stations, as well as killing the employees.[315]

In Karak, the Ottoman soldiers and civil servants found refuge inside the castle. Awda notes that the rebels had "spread terror through the hearts of the Christians," who wanted nothing to do with the revolt. Many of them gave refuge to the Ottoman bureaucrats and their families who did not make it to the castle. Awda and his family fled to the al-Qusus satellite town of Ḥamūd, northeast of the Karak. A week after the revolt broke out, on December 12th, a relief column of soldiers and government officials, commanded by Salahettin *Bey*, arrived at the town of al-Qaṭrāna, further northeast of Ḥamūd. Awda tells us that him and a small group of Christian *sheikh*s decided to meet the column. He changed out of his Bedouin clothes and into his official Ottoman uniform so that the members of the column, none of whom presumably knew Arabic, would recognize him as an employee and not a rebel. Once they met the column, Awda gave Salahettin Bey advice on how to best enter the town of Karak. On the 14th, nearly eleven days after the revolt began, the soldiers entered the town and easily defeated the last remaining rebels, as the vast majority had fled by this point.[316]

Rogan notes that both the *mutaṣarrif* in Karak, Ṭāhir *Bey*, and the Provincial Governor, Ismaʿil Faẓil Pasha, had both been dismissed, and Salahettin Bey instituted military rule in Karak. He first encouraged the Karakis to return to their homes and assured them that there was no reason for fear or suspicion. However, once they returned, any person accused of taking part in the revolt was arrested. The commander then went

[315] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 197-198.
[316] Ibid., 201-202; al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 70-71.

after the Majali *sheikh*s, two of whom were flogged death in front of the vandalized mosque. Twenty-five additional Majali family members were arrested and killed near Maʿan, and '[o]ther Karakis accused of taking part were thrown from the walls of the city to the deep gorges below where their bodies were left as "food for dogs and wild beasts."'[317] Next, he requested that Awda arrange for him to meet Sheikh Qadr al-Majali, who agreed, though there is no documentation of what was said during this meeting. Afterwards, Salahettin Bey let the *sheikh* go and he would flee from the town, though he would return. Once his job of establishing order in the district was complete, Salahettin Bey departed from the town and Naji Bek arrived to the town as the acting *mutaṣarrif*.[318]

A number of important points can be discerned from this presentation of the Karak Revolt. The last two sections together have shown how the Bedouin, and to a lesser extent the peasants, of the *sanjak* had become increasingly socially, economically, and *spatially* marginal during 17 years of direct Ottoman rule. The Bedouin were the main targets of sedentarization, whose land had been shrinking due to the "*infrastructural power*"[319] that the Ottoman Empire established in the area, such as the Damascus-Madina telegraph and the Hijaz railway. Moreover, the small villages that the Bedouin had been forced to partially settle down in were themselves further targets of the empire's abstraction conception of how this *landscape* should be. Status markers, both ascriptive and achieved, had begun being appropriated by the abstract conceptions of Tanzimat ideology. As a reminder, status markers and values in Karaki society informed the *spatial arrangement* of this area, as well as the *spatial practices* of the people who inhabit it. Purely ascriptive

[317] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 203
[318] Ibid., 202-203.
[319] Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," in John A. Hall, ed., *States in History* (Oxford, 1989): 109-36 cited in Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 3.

qualities, such as kinship, age, sex, etc., had for the most part remained the same. However, the markers that are both ascriptive and achieved began to change. Landholding had come to mean less as foreign officials and merchants, who possessed little land, saw an increase in their status and prestige during this time. A high-degree of honor and material wealth could now be more easily achieved in the absence of large landholdings, but not for the Bedouin. With increasingly shrinking land, the Bedouin were forced to seek employment through the government, rendering their pastoralist lifestyle more and more obsolete. To make matters worse, they had been targeted by excessive taxes on their *spatial practices*, which also were their forms of livelihood, such as herding.

On the other hand, as it has been shown, participation in the government for *sheikh*s or key members of society was considered to be important as it allowed them to increase their political power and know-how in the face of Ottoman rule. The very important *spatial practices* of raiding and forcing weaker tribe to pay *khuwa* had been heavily curtailed. Since Ottoman rule did not target the peasants with the same intensity, it was not until Sami Pasha al-Farūqī came to Karak to presumably carry out conscription and disarmament that many of the peasants had finally had enough. As for achieved status markers, what was considered "prudence and intelligence" had certainly been altered. This category, essentially *knowledge*, was intimately tied to the other markers mentioned. As we have seen, the type of knowledge that was valued by the Ottoman empire was not the knowledge of local society. In fact, for the empire, knowledge was related to *civilizing attitude*. One of the main things highlighted in this chapter has been how the successive Ottoman administrations believed that they knew this place better than the local population. Presumably very little of the valued knowledge of the traditional society was

sought after by the Ottoman administrations, unless it was through select handful of intermediaries for the purpose of sustaining their rule.

We see these considerations more clearly through Awda's actions during the revolt. He had been designated as the intermediary by the other *sheikh*s of the town, and despite his numerous and increasing grievances over Ottoman rule leading up to the revolt, as well as the sympathies which he showed towards the cause, Awda served the empire during this time. First, he tried to find a compromising solution with the Provincial Governor, then when the revolt had already progressed for a week, he offered support and advice to the commander of the relief column, Salahettin *Bey*. He even replaced his Bedouin garb with his official Ottoman suit, an action of identification with the empire rather than the local rebels. In the aftermath of the revolt, Awda assisted in the assessment of property damage and reparations owed. Lastly, and importantly, the fact that the Christians, and others such as Hussein al-Tarawneh and local merchants, went against the plans of the *sheikh al-mashāyikh* is markedly different from how the local political structure worked in the traditional era, when all the tribes would fall in line behind the Majali *sheikh*s when up against a stronger actor. We even saw how early during Ottoman rule, when the Majali *sheikh*s had called for civil disobedience against Ṣādiq Pasha, the other tribes again fell in line behind them when they had called for civil disobedience. However, this time, this was not the case at all, signifying the differentiation of interests, and thus *spatial practices* and *arrangements*, in the district.

3.6. Conclusion

In the aftermath of the revolt, locals, merchants, and civil servants pressed the government about compensation for their damaged properties. The amount of property

damage and reparations owed by the leadership in Karak was calculated at around T£60,000 Ottoman lira, or £55,000 British pound. However, paying back this full amount would be near impossible, and only one payment during the following summer was ever made. Over the course of the coming months, the internal and external situation in the empire grew more volatile between the CUP and the Decentralist opposition. Damascene Arabists had taken note of the Karak revolt and portrayed it as an important moment in the Arab cause, though these opinions had little effect on the deputies from Karak or the people. Moreover, in 1911, Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire over the latter's Libyan province. Gaining support for the war effort across the Arab provinces necessitated a softening of its treatment towards previously unruly places, such as Karak. Throughout the following year, the death sentences issued to a number of the participants in the revolt had been changed to life sentences. In January 1913, the central government finally announced a general amnesty across the empire, including for Sheikh Qadr al-Majali.[320]

However, that year the Second Balkan War broke out between the empire, its southern European allies, and Bulgaria, only adding more fuel to the fire that was beginning to ignite across the its territories. The next summer, the Great War broke out and the Ottomans allied themselves with Germany and Austria against Britain, France, and the Russian Empire. With these two conflicts, the Ottoman Empire carried out a very harsh war mobilization across the empire in which it conscripted numerous ethnic and religious minorities who had been enjoying a regime of exceptions up until that point.[321] In his memoir, Awda details this mobilization, noting that the government went from home to home taking all the valuable resources and goods it could find. Moreover, a

[320] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 206-213.
[321] Ibid., 220-224; Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 192-212.

locust infestation ravaged much of the Syrian provinces, and its drastic effects were only worsened when the Britain, Russia, and France instituted a blockade on Ottoman ports. Ottoman treatment towards Karak would only worsen over the next four years, and these few years would come to represent the whole of Arab-Turk relations.[322] While it would be inaccurate to analyze 25 years of Ottoman rule based on only a few years, this still needs to be rightfully considered as part of their rule, as it had an obvious impact on the form of governance that the empire established during the war.

This chapter has effectively shown how, upon entrance into Karak, the Ottoman empire not only produced their own knowledge about the local society, but it also produced this space along the lines of their dominant, abstract conceptions. Moreover, two crucial component in this were the constant backdrop of imperial competition and the *civilizing attitude* that the government held towards the local population of Karak. Together, these twin components had the result of reproducing and institutionalizing a form of governance based on the perceived cultural inferiority of the Karaki society. However, the *civilizing attitude* allowed for blurring of lines between ruler and ruled, and this process was only exacerbated by the localization and absorption which occurred in these *sites of mediation*. In doing so, *Colonial Ottomanism* in Karak left room for someone like Awda al-Qusus to undergo his transformation from a disillusioned local merchant into a loyal Ottoman bureaucrat whose service took him across Greater Syria and Anatolia.

[322] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 81-91.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Beginning in June 1916, the main concern in this region of the empire was the growing number of Bedouin joining the British-backed Arab Revolt let by Sharif Hussein al-Hashimi of Mecca. Jabal ʿAjlūn was the only region that faced conscription, and the Ottomans sought volunteers in the Balqāʾ and in Karak. Unsurprisingly, the Circassian communities, who were very loyal to the empire, were the first to take up such actions in the Balqāʾ. Mehmed Cemal Pasha personally went to Karak, now more of a borderland than ever before, to ask if the people there would form voluntary units, guaranteeing that they would not be sent outside boundaries of the region. He recruited Awda and Hussein Pasha al-Tarawneh due to their extensive knowledge of the land and leadership qualities. Upon discovering that the British were paying the Bedouin rebels, Awda notes that the wartime leaders of Syria decided to do the same, handing out payments, food, supplies, and other privileges. Many of the *sheikh*s in Karak who had participated in the revolt of 1910 would volunteer their services to the Ottoman Army, including Sheikh Qadr al-Majali.[323] Awda tells us of a handful of expeditions across southern Syria that the Karaki units took part in against the Sharif Hussein's Bedouin army.[324] However, as the war continued into 1917, the empire would become increasingly paranoid and suspicious of those in the Arab provinces, especially the Christians, who were viewed as a possible fifth column of support for Britain, France, or Russia.[325]

[323] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 225-228.
[324] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 85-86.
[325] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 220.

As covered in the Introduction, the empire, supposedly working in agreement with a number of Muslim *sheikh*s, ordered the banishment of many members of the Christian community to Anatolia in November 1917. Due to the destruction that the war had brought to Greater Syria, including the Hijaz Railway, the group was forced to walk or ride wagons for a good portion of this death march. In one instance, while in the city of Adana, the Ḥijāzīn tribe members refused to pay the 12 Turkish lira to receive a wagon for the next leg of the trip to Seis (Kozan). Upon discovering that one of the members had died, Awda attempted to pay the fees for the remainder, but was beat up by a soldier. What is even more noteworthy perhaps is the numerous instances where Awda personally knew the, mostly Turkish, Ottoman officials he came into contact with throughout these months. These officials often held Awda in high regard and he was able to use these connections to gain special privileges for himself and the group. In addition, his connections with the Greek Orthodox Church and a regional merchant class also came in handy. In one instance, while in the city of Seis (Kozan), Awda reveals that the soldiers had planned to split the group up and send them to different places where they would certainly freeze to death, as it was the dead of winter. However, his acquaintanceship with the *mutaṣarrif* there secured him a meeting with the Wālī of the Adana province, who personally came to the city to discuss the matter. After a discussion with Awda and the *mutaṣarrif*, the *wali* agreed to let the group stay together in Seis. Though Awda was eventually given amnesty, he explains that the government officials in Seis hid this from the group, at which point him and seven others decided to escape and make their way back to Karak.[326]

[326] al-Qusus, *Mudhakirāt*, 95-101.

Sometime shortly after Awda arrived safely back in Karak, Mehmed Cemal Pasha came to Salt to meet with a number of *sheikh*s of the *sanjak*, and Awda was selected by the town elders to meet with him. During the meeting, Cemal Pasha apologized for the horrific experience that Awda had gone through and asked him if he could let bygones be bygones and start a new relationship with the government. He then bestowed upon Awda the title of Bek. The *pasha*'s words clearly show that, just five months before the empire would withdraw from the Arab provinces, its leader believed that there was a future for the it with Arab inclusion. However, even if it had survived, it is hard to say if it would include the Arab provinces. The previous four years, and even more for some areas, of severely harsh military rule could not just be forgotten. By this point, much, but not all, of the Arab nationalist movement had moved beyond its infancy and began planning a future for the Arab lands independent of any foreign rule, including a union with the Turkish people. Around the same time of the Ottoman withdrawal, Emīr Faiṣal, part of the Hashemite family and a leader of the Arab revolt, declared the creation of the independent, but unrecognized, Arab Kingdom of Syria, centered in Damascus. Awda would serve as the deputy from Karak in the parliament of this short-lived state.[327] British and French imperial plans in the region, as outlined in the Sykes-Picot agreement and the various postwar conferences, would not allow for an independent Arab state, and the Kingdom ceased to exist in May 1920. Rogan further notes that Faiṣalī rule in southern Syria was not well received in many areas. That Fall, the different regions that would become the Emirate of Transjordan formed British-sponsored local governments in ʾAjlūn, Salt, and Karak (the National Government of Moab).

[327] Ibid., 106-110.

The amount of money and resources that the British put into these local governments was rather minimal when compared to their activities in neighboring Palestine. In the absence of any real institutional support from the British, these local governments quickly broke down and the *sheikh*s of this land tried to impose their order on the *landscape* as they had done prior to Ottoman rule. The following spring, Emir Abdullah, another son of *Sharif* Hussein, arrived at Maʾan and from there, with British support and approval, imposed his rule over the territory of these three local governments.[328] Considering what has been shown in this essay, it is no surprise that *sheikh*s had been unable to impose their rule over these regions. The empire, armed with the Tanzimat and *civilizing attitude*, and guided by imperial concerns, consolidated the entire southern Syrian frontier within forty years. In doing so, they sought to transform these regions in accordance with their abstract conceptions of what they ought to look like. These regions, particularly Karak, had become borderlands of imperial competition between the empire and the European powers, primarily Britain. Governing Karak in a way that prioritized the acceptance of their rule by the local population over introducing the full *civilizing* elements of the Tanzimat was the route the empire decided to take. What resulted was a form of governance, coined as *Colonial Ottomanism*, that reproduced and institutionalized the perceived cultural inferiority of the local population.

[328] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 143-152.

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