

**Politics of Alliance and Rivalry on the Ottoman-Iranian Frontier:**

**The Babans (1500-1851)**

**Politics of Alliance and Rivalry on the Ottoman-Iranian Frontier:  
The Babans (1500-1851)**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Faculty of Philosophy  
at Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg**

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**WS 2012/ 2013**

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Verhaltenswissenschaftlichen Fakultät: Prof. Dr. Bernd Kortmann

Datum der Fachprüfung im Promotionsfach: 11. 03. 2013

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is concerned with the history of the Kurdish Baban emirate and its surrounding from 1500 to 1900. Regional governance belonged to the Ottoman authorities but directing and mobilizing of local opinion lay in the hands of local notables rather than Istanbul elites. Ottoman authorities and local notables were thus interdependent, with notables rising in power in large part due to their elite connections. The dissertation constructs a portrait of the Baban family and the town of Sulaimaniya using primary sources from Ottoman, Iranian, and British archives, Western and Eastern travelogues, Sufi hagiographies and treatises as well as newspaper articles and historical dictionaries. Because of the scarcity of written works on the history of the region, some literary sources are also employed to analyze how local memories of the past have been transmitted through Kurdish poetry.

The dissertation is made of five chapters. The background and origins of the Babans, their rise in the regional politics, the replacement of their capital with the new town of Sulaimaniya and the revolt by Baban Abdurrahman Pasha make up the first chapter. The rivalry between the Naqshbandi and Qadiri Sufi orders, the involvement of the Sufi sheikhs of these orders in the politics in the Baban lands and the role of religion in shaping the region are the subject of the second chapter. The third chapter covers the description of the town of Sulaimaniya, daily life of its inhabitants, the administrative structure of the Baban court, its architecture, and its newly cultivated Sorani literature. The fourth and fifth chapters focus on the political developments in the Baban Sanjaq. The political opportunism that the Baban leaders pursued through the conflicts between the Ottoman and Persian states, the regional leaders who tried to prove their power by playing with these skirmishes and the outcome of the disagreements as a treaty are discussed in the fourth chapter. The last chapter focuses mostly on the last period of the Kurdish emirates before their demise on the way to the centralization of the frontiers by the Ottomans and later by the Qajars.

The goal of this study is to shed light on the political, cultural, and historical complexities of the region in the period under consideration. It also aims to carve up a space to critically revisit the Turkish, Persian and Arab historiography on the Kurds and this particular region. This work is significant not only for its expansion of Kurdish historiography but also for understanding how the regional politics by nineteenth-century local ruling families still has an influence on modern politics in Iraqi Kurdistan. The memory of the Babans and other Kurdish principalities like the Bedir Khanis has been highlighted in the modern Kurdish history and their rebellions have been considered major historical turning points for Kurdish identity and nationalism.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Dissertation handelt von der Geschichte der kurdischen Baban Emirate und umfasst die Jahrhunderte 1500 bis 1900. Die regionale Herrschaft an die osmanische Obrigkeit verknüpft war und doch die Führung und Mobilisierung des Volkes in der Hand der lokalen Führung lag und nicht in der, der Istanbuler Elite. Die osmanischen Behörden und die Namenhaften Führer der Region waren voneinander abhängig; die Führer kamen durch die Kontakte der osmanischen Obrigkeiten zu großen Teilen der Macht. Diese Dissertation veranschaulicht die Baban Familie und die Stadt Sulaimaniya. Die Hauptquellen sind hierbei die osmanischen, iranischen und britischen Archive, westliche und östliche Reiseberichte, Sufi Hagiografien und Aufsätze in Zeitungsartikel und geschichtlichen Lexika's. Durch fehlende existierende schriftliche Arbeiten und das Defizit institutionalisierende geschichtlicher Arbeiten über die Kurden, sind auch als weitere Quelle die Erinnerungen der Menschen in der Region durch Kurdische Gedichte mit zu analysieren.

Diese Dissertation ist in fünf Teilen aufgebaut. In dem ersten Kapitel wird der Hintergrund und der Ursprung der Baban's, ihr Aufstieg in die regionale Politik, der Austausch ihrer Hauptstadt für ein Neues in Sulaimaniya behandelt und die Revolution der Baban Abdrurrahman Pasha. Die Rivalität zwischen der Naqshbandi-Qadiri Sufi Gruppe, die Einbindung des Sufi Sheikh's, dessen Anweisungen in die Politik des Baban Landes und die Rolle der Religion und somit der Aufteilung der Regionen, ist der zweite Teil. Der dritte Teil baut sich durch folgende Themen auf; die Beschreibung der Stadt Sulaimaniya, das Alltagsleben der Bevölkerung, die Administrative Struktur des Baban Hofes, die Architektur und die neu kultivierte Sorani Literatur. Das vierte und fünfte Kapitel behandelt die politische Entwicklung der Baban Sanjaq. Der politische Opportunismus der Baban Führer verschärfte sich durch die Probleme zwischen den osmanischen und persischen Staaten. Die regionalen Führer versuchten durch die spielerische Auseinandersetzung ihre Kraft zu messen. Das Ergebnis dieser Meinungsverschiedenheit führte zu einem positiven Abkommen untereinander, welches das vierte Kapitel ausmacht. Das letzte Kapitel zeigt die letzte Periode der kurdischen Emirate vor Ihrem Ableben und auf dem Weg zur Zivilisation in den Grenzen der Osmanen und später den Kadscharen.

Im Hinblick auf diese Periode, soll diese Arbeit Licht in die politische, kulturelle und historische Komplexität der Regionen bringen. Das Ziel ist es auch das ganze zu zerstückeln, um die türkische, persische und arabische Geschichtsschreibung über die Kurden und der jeweiligen Region, kritisch wieder aufzugreifen. Diese Arbeit ist maßgeblich nicht nur für die Expansion der kurdischen Geschichte, sie zeigt auch die regionale Politik des 19 Jahrhunderts der lokalen herrschenden Familien auf, welche immer noch ein Einfluss auf die moderne Politik im irakischen Kurdistan hat. Die Erinnerungen an die Baban's und andere kurdische Fürstentümer, wie die der Bedir Khanis sind hervorgestochen in der modernen kurdischen Geschichte und deren Widerstand wird als Haupt Wendepunkt betrachtet in der kurdischen Identität und Nationalismus.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

A.AMD	Amedi Kalemî
A.DVN.	Divan-ı Huyamun Kalemî Katalođu
A.MKT	Sadaret-Mektubi Kalemî Ervaki
A.MKT.MVL.	Meclisi Vala
A.MKT.MHM.	Sadaret Mektubî-i Mühimme Kalemî
A.MKT.NZD.	Sadaret Mektubi Kalemî Nezaret ve Devair
B	Receb
BOA	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi
C	Cemaziyelahir
Ca	Cemaziyelevvel
C. AS	Cevdet Askeriye
C.DH.	Cevdet Dâhiliye
C.NF	Cevdet Nafia
DH.İD.	Dahiliye Nezareti İdare Evrakı
DH.MKT	Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemî
DH.ŞFR.	Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemî
EI1, EI2	Encyclopedia of Islam, first and second editions
FO	Foreign Office
HAT	Hatt-ı Humayun
HR.MKT	Hariciye Nezareti-Mektubi Kalemî
İ.DUİT.	Dosya Usulü İrade
İ.ML	İrade Maliye
İ. MMAH./ İMM	İrade-i Meclis-i Mahsus
İ.MVL	İrade-i Meclis-i Vala
İ.TAL	İrade Taltifat
JRCAS	Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society



L	Şevval
M.	Muharrem
N	Ramazan
PRO	Public Records Office
Ra	Rebûlevvel
R	Rebûlâhir
S	Safer
Ş	Şaban
Y.MTV.	Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzat
Y.PRK.AZJ	Yıldız Perakende Arzuhal ve Journaller
Y.PRK. BŞK	Yıldız Perakende Mabeyen Başkitabeti
Y.PRK. UM.	Yıldız Perakende Umum Vilayet Tahrifatı
Z	Zilhicce
Za	Zilkâde

## INTRODUCTION

In the early months of 1836, a book written by a British resident in Baghdad about Kurdistan was published in London. The book was well received and captured the attention of reviewers, book collectors, travelogue publishers, geographers, linguists, historians, and politicians alike. Although C.J. Rich's memoirs on Kurdistan was published posthumously by his widow and was released after several other publications on the region, his was the most detailed and the most sympathetic work on the Kurds. Reviewers praised his work for the first hand information, an accurate map of the country (Iraq and Kurdistan) and its survey of the Tigris from Mosul to Baghdad. One reviewer exclaimed that "no traveler had equal opportunities with Mr. Rich of penetrating into the country of the Koords, and of residing in friendly familiarity among them."<sup>1</sup> Those who reviewed his oeuvre not only applauded him for his original observations but made extensive extractions from his memoirs. Thanks to his two volume memoirs, of which the first focused mostly on the Babans and Sulaimaniya, a vivid picture about the first half of the nineteenth century of this region can be drawn today. Through his work many place names in Kurdistan and Kurdish terms entered into the Western encyclopedias of the time.<sup>2</sup> The cartography of the region was reshaped in the light of the map he drew for his route. Thanks to his work, the image of the Kurds among the Western readers was changed from "savages" and "barbarians" to courageous, well-mannered, loyal people for a short while.<sup>3</sup> Later on, many travelers, who visited the area after Rich, followed his path and tried to reaffirm his descriptions.<sup>4</sup>

Until Rich's work was published, most studies on the Kurds focused on the geography of Kurdistan and some observations on the society. What made his work different was that he gave many details of the historical background of the Kurdish political entities, including a chronological list of some of major turning points in Kurdish history with particular emphasis on the Baban period. Centuries after Sharaf Khan Bidlisi published his monumental work *Sharafname* on the history of the Kurds, Rich opened a new avenue for historical studies on the people of Kurdistan.

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<sup>1</sup> *Gentleman's magazine and historical chronicle*, Vol. 6 (1836), 163; See more reviews and extracts of C.J. Rich's work in *Museum of foreign literature, science and art*, Vol. 31 (Philadelphia, 1837) 36-46; *American Biblical Repository*, Vol. 9 (New York, 1837), 199-206; *The Edinburgh review*, Vol. 64 (Edinburg, 1837), 35-60; *The London Literary Gazette*, No 1001 (26 March 1836), 193-195.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, for a new description of "Tigris" by Rich see *A cyclopedia of Biblical literature*, Vol. 2, (New York: Black, 1876), 298; for the description of "Sulaimania" see *Scottish geographical magazine*, Vol. 12 (Edinburg, 1896), 233-36; for a German description of the "Bebbeh Kurden" see Carl Ritter, *Die Erdkunde im Verhältniss zur Natur und zur Geschichte des Menschen, oder allgemeine vergleichende Geographie* (Berlin, 1840), 613-16.

<sup>3</sup> A positive representation of the Kurds was very rare and few years after Rich's work was published, journals kept using the Oriental image of the Kurds in their pages. For instance The Family Magazine published in 1840 considered the Kurds having "savage independence," to be "warlike nation," "plunders," "thieves," and "robbers." *The Family Magazine*, (Cincinnati, 1840), 392-93.

<sup>4</sup> James Baillie Fraser, *Travels in Koordistan, Mesopotamia, including an account of parts of those countries hitherto unvisited by Europeans* (London: R. Bentley, 1840), 12; William Francis Ainsworth, *Researches in Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea*, (London: John W. Parker, 1838), 125, 205, 259; Sir Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains: With an Account of a Visit to the Chaldaean Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, or Devil-worshippers, and an Inquiry Into the Manners and Arts of the Ancient Assyrians*, Vol. I (New York: Appleton, 1854), 14-16, 131, 144.

Many Kurdish nationalist historians have treated Kurdish history as an isolated case, while those who study Ottoman and Iranian history (especially those of a nationalist bent) have mostly ignored or given little attention to Kurds. Equally, Iraqi historians have treated the history of the region as a separate entity. Beyond that, little attention has been given to the semi-independent units of such notable families in the periphery of the empire.<sup>5</sup> Ignored in the history, yesterday's Kurdish emirates of the Babans, Soran, and Bahdinan built a firm base for today's Kurdistan Regional Government (*Hukmetî Harêmi Kurdistan*). The region where Mesud Barzani receives his support largely overlaps with Bahdinan and Soran regions while Jalal Talabani's party, and recently Nawshirwan Mustafa's Gorran (change) movement, draws his votes mostly from Sulaimaniya and its surrounding regions, which used to be the domains of the Baban emirate.<sup>6</sup>

The past has been shaping the minds of today's people in Iraqi Kurdistan by capturing their imagination and the importance of the Babans comes to play in the reconstruction of a national history. During his visit of the Baban Pasha, the British resident Rich conveys the story "Karduchi (or Kardukhi)" in the *Retreat of Ten Thousands* written by Xenophon.<sup>7</sup> The pasha and the audience in the room listened to the story attentively. To glorify his past, the Baban pasha naively exclaimed that his family was involved in this incident at the time.<sup>8</sup> Just as the pasha sensed a general fascination with the historical background of the region, so the descendants of his subjects today seek their glorious past in the history of the pasha. The official institutions of the Kurdistan Regional Government give much importance to the founding of Sulaimaniya and thus the role that the Babans play in nationalist accounts of history.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, the history of the region and the whole Middle East still remain a source of contention used to feed the fire of nationalism, not as a lesson to be learned.

Suffice it to say, nowadays the studies on the Kurdish nationalism find more information about the roles each Kurdish emirate played in the history of Kurdish nationalism. Among these emirates, however, the Babans and especially their capital, Sulaimaniya, play an eminent role in the development of a nascent Kurdish nationalism, which has not been emphasized enough by modern scholars.<sup>10</sup> Along with other prominent figures from Sulaimaniya, the Babans were invoked in almost in every major proto-nationalist and nationalist movement. At least two out of nine founding members, Şükrü Babanzade and

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<sup>5</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* (London: Zed Publishing, 1992), 174.

<sup>6</sup> Othman Ali states that the Sheikhs of Barzan filled the power vacuum in Bahdinan region, where was left by the destruction of the Abbasid mirs, while the Talabani Naqshbandi sheikhs became dominant in Kirkuk region, where the landless peasantry dominated. Othman Ali, "British Policy and the Kurdish Question in Iraq, 1918-1932," (Ph.D. dissertation, the University of Toronto, 1992), 23.

<sup>7</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis, Book 4, Ch. 3*, Trans. Carleton L. Brownson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> James C. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan and on the Site of Ancient Nineveh vol. I*, (James Duncan: London, 1836), 109.

<sup>9</sup> The official website of Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) makes a timeline for the "Kurdistan's history until the 19<sup>th</sup> century" and records about the establishment of Sulaimaniya. [http://krg.org/articles/detail.asp?lngnr=12&smap=03010600&nr=143&anr=18686#endnote\\_11](http://krg.org/articles/detail.asp?lngnr=12&smap=03010600&nr=143&anr=18686#endnote_11) (accessed on 17 April 2012).

<sup>10</sup> The most comprehensive work so far on Sulaimaniya's role in the Kurdish national aspiration is Othman Ali's doctoral dissertation titled "British Policy and the Kurdish Question in Iraq, 1918-1932." See also Jordi Tejel Gorgas, "Urban Mobilization in Iraqi Kurdistan during the British Mandate: Sulaimaniya 1918- 30," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 44:4, (2008) 537-552.

Fuat Babanzade, of the *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*, or the Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan (SAK, 1918) were part of this family.<sup>11</sup> The members of the Baban family also collaborated with the Bedir Khan and Cemilpaşazade families in the establishment of another Kurdish organization, *Teskilat-ı İctimaiye Cemiyeti* (Society of Social Organization), in 1920. Furthermore, they also contributed to the *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (the Kurdish Society for Mutual Aid and Progress), which was led by Seyit Abdulkadir from Naqshbandi family of Nehri.<sup>12</sup> Although the first Kurdish rebellion in nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire was carried out by Abdurrahman Pasha of the Baban Emirate and recognized by many scholars for its importance in regional history, it was misinterpreted as a “nationalist” movement that aimed to have an “independent Kurdistan.”<sup>13</sup> This dissertation refutes the nationalist approaches to Abdurrahman Pasha’s rebellion and suggests that the pasha’s major aim was to expand his sphere of influence over Baghdad and reduce his dependence on the *vali* (provincial governor) in the center of the province. As the British resident J.C. Rich, who was a close friend of Abdurrahman Pasha, puts it, the Pasha did not seek full independence, he only wished “to render his country tributary to the Porte, but independent of any neighbouring Pasha.”<sup>14</sup>

Sulaimaniya was the first center to establish a legal entity under the name of the Kurds. Centered in Sulaimaniya the autonomous Kurdish Government under the British Mandate was established in Sulaimaniya in 1922. Dissatisfied with the political/administrative system in Sulaimaniya, Sheikh Mahmud later declared an “independent Kurdistan” that encompassed Sulaimaniya and he called himself the “King of Kurdistan.” Since 1918, the Kurdish nationalist aspirations became more dominant in Sulaimaniya and Sheikh Mahmud encouraged the town to use nationalist symbols like a Kurdish flag, a Kurdish postal stamp, and “the organization of military parades which contributed to the diffusion of nationalism as the lingua franca of Sulaimaniya residents.”<sup>15</sup>

The legacy of the Babans in Kurdish literature and language has also been an important factor in the history of the region. The rise of the Sorani dialect of Kurdish in the nineteenth century was affirmed and facilitated by the support of the Baban leaders for local poets. Sulaimaniya, with its nineteenth century poets who encouraged the Kurds, who spoke

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<sup>11</sup> Zinar Silopi (Kadri Cemilpasa), *Doza Kürdistan* (Ankara: Özge, 1991), 56-57; Tunaya adds another Baban member, Hikmet Babanzade, to this list. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı, 1984-89), 186-87. Two factions existed among the SAK members: autonomists and secessionists. Özoğlu names the Babans among the secessionists. Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 118, 134.

<sup>12</sup> Özoğlu mentions of the Babans in many occasion but does not specify and elaborate at all. Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 84, 90.

<sup>13</sup> Soane claims that Abdurrahman Pasha’s revolt was the first attempt to “throw off the yoke of the Turks” with a “national spirit.” Ely Banister Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, (Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1913), 371; For more discussion on Abdurrahman Pasha’s revolt of being a nationalist one see also Jean Baptiste Louis Jacques Rousseau, *Description du pachalik de Bagdad: suivie d'une notice historique sur les Wahabis, et de quelques autres pièces relatives à l'histoire et à la littérature de l'Orient*, (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1809), 103; C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 54; Etem Xemgin, *Osmanlı-Safevi Döneminde Kürdistan Tarihi*, Vol. III, (Istanbul: Doz Yayınları, 2004), 343 and Kaws Kaftan, *Baban Botan Soran*, (Istanbul: Nujen Yayınları, 1996), 35, 39.

<sup>14</sup> James C. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan and on the Site of Ancient Nineveh vol. I*, (James Duncan: London, 1836), 96.

<sup>15</sup> Tejel Gorgas, “Urban Mobilization in Iraqi Kurdistan,” 540.

Sorani dialect, to be aware of their culture and language, was also a hotbed for producing Kurdish writers and journalists. Thanks to the heritage of these poets, Sorani was partially systematized and standardized in the early twentieth century and later became the primary medium for the secondary school education in the region. Today, both Sorani and Kurmanji have been dominantly employed in the official correspondence, as well as in the media and in higher education.<sup>16</sup> Although it was published in Istanbul, the first monthly journal in Kurdish called *Rojî Kurd* (The Kurdish Sun) was distributed by Abdulkarim in Sulaimaniya in 1913 and included articles in both Kurmanji and Sorani Kurdish.<sup>17</sup> In Iraqi Kurdistan, British Major Ely B. Soane established the first Kurdish printing press in 1919 in Sulaimaniya. This was part of an effort to replace Turkish and Persian in official and non-official correspondence. Several important periodicals like *Pêshkewtin* (Progress, 1919–22) and *Jiyân* (Life, 1926–38) were published in Sulaimaniya. Even anti-colonial publications, like the first short story of *Le xewma* (In my Dream) by Cemîl Sa'ib (1887–1950), which appeared as a serial in *Jiyane* (Rebirth), found curious minds to attract in Sulaimaniya.<sup>18</sup> In addition to journalists, writers like Mihemed Emin Zeki (1880-1948), who was an Ottoman officer before he became the Minister of Finance in Iraq, produced several books on the history and culture of the Kurds.<sup>19</sup>

Ibrahim Pasha founded the town of Sulaimaniya that nurtured the cultural environment in nineteenth and twentieth centuries in 1784 as the capital of the Baban emirate. In the hands of the ruling family the city grew into a regional center on the border between the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran. Located between rival powers from different Islamic sects, Sulaimaniya was also at the center of a highly cosmopolitan region composed of Kurds, Turcomans, Shi'i and Sunni Arabs, Persians, Jews, Christians, as well as various Sufi groups. Moreover, in the early nineteenth century Sulaimaniya became a safe haven for exiles and dissidents. It was during this period that Sufis found financial support from local elites and established formidable orders as they attracted adherents from all sects. Sufi poetry, and later proto-nationalist poetry, flourished under the patronage of the Baban pashas, and the city gave birth to a new form of Kurdish literature. The social harmony enjoyed by Sulaimaniya's diverse people was periodically disrupted by the wars of succession among the Baban family members and the ongoing friction between the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran. Nevertheless, internal family tensions and precarious border politics did not quell Sulaimaniya's semi-autonomous status and social freedom until the Ottoman Tanzimat (reorganization / modernization efforts) in mid-nineteenth century upended the existing political order and forever changed the relations between the state ruler at the center and provincial subjects.

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<sup>16</sup> See more on Sorani Kurdish and its standardized grammar in Ely Bannister Soane, *Grammar of Kurmanji or Kurdish Language* (London, 1913); Ely Bannister Soane, *Elementary Kurmanji Grammar (Sulaimania district)*, (Baghdad: Government Press, 1919); Ernest N. McCarus, *A Kurdish Grammar: Descriptive Analysis of the Kurdish of Sulaimaniya, Iraq* (New York, 1958). [ACLS Program in Oriental Languages, Pub. Series B. No. 10].

<sup>17</sup> Malmisaniy, *İlk legal Kürt öğrenci derneği : Kürt Talebe-Hevî Cemiyeti : 1912-1922*, (Istanbul : Avesta, 2002), 138.

<sup>18</sup> Joyce Blau, "Written Kurdish Literature," *Oral Literature of Iranian Languages: Kurdish, Pashto, Balochi, Ossetic, Persian and Tajiki*, ed. Philip G. Kreyenbroek & Ulrich Marzolph (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 18, 21.

<sup>19</sup> Zeki produced several books, including a book on the history of Sulaimaniya. Some of these works: Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Tarixî Silemanî u welatê le devreyê zor Kadimewê ta Evvele ihtilal (1918 m.)* (Baghdad: Al-Najah, 1939); Mihemed Emin Zeki Beg, *Diroka Kurd u Kurdistanê*, (Istanbul:Avesta, 2002); Mehmed Emin Zeki Bey, *Kürd ve Kürdistan Ünlüleri (Meşahire Kurd u Kurdistan)*, Trans. M. Baban, M. Yağmur, and S. Kutlay (Istanbul: Özge, 2006).

## The Babans versus Bedir Khanis in the Kurdish National Historiography

Despite the long history of the Baban emirate with an established political, social, and cultural background, historians have paid more attention to the Bohtan emirate and its well publicized leader, Bedir Khan Beg. Historians, who have examined movements to resist centralization in Ottoman Kurdistan, have largely focused on Bedir Khan, his emirate of Bohtan and his revolt in the 1840s, while ignoring the Baban emirate, though it survived longer. For some, Bedir Khan Beg was the first among the *mirs* who gave a national spirit to the feudal struggle against the Ottomans. Thus, according to Kutschera, he was named as “the father of Kurdish nationalism.”<sup>20</sup> Such claims are certainly exaggerated thanks to the Western travelers and missionaries who visited the *beg*. Aside from the *beg*, his children and grandchildren, such as Celadet Ali Bedirkhan and Kamuran Bedirkhan, also carried his fame through the Kurdish national movements. Thus, historians sought the roots of nationalist sentiments in the forefather of this family, Bedir Khan Beg, and positioned the members of the family in the center of the Kurdish nationalism. One cannot deny the contributions and leadership that Bedir Khan’s family made to the early phase of the Kurdish nationalism.<sup>21</sup> However, emphasizing the role of one family and ignoring the rest, especially when there are some influential figures like the Babans and their pupils in the literature and in the Ottoman bureaucracy, would leave studies on the history of Kurdish nationalism incomplete. Due to such an approach, despite their more important impact on the Kurdish history, the story of the Babans and their contribution to the political and cultural life of the Kurds remains in the shadow of the regional, as well as the Ottoman history.

As stated before, Bedir Khan Beg and his subsequent family members added a great deal to the Kurdish national movements. However, upon examining Kurdish history in the succeeding centuries, one finds that their contribution pales in comparison to that of the political history and literary heritage of the Baban dynasty. It was the Babans who erected a new Kurdish town, Sulaimaniya, instead of building a settlement over an Arab or a Turcoman one. During the period of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Sulaimaniya became a hub for many Kurdish national movements. This dissertation emphasizes that the Babans created a long history of political struggle and left a legacy for their descendants and other Kurdish *mirs* in keeping their autonomous status against their imperial overlords, despite the fact that they have received less attention than the Bohtan emirate. Their legacy became an inspiration not only for their contemporaries but also for later Kurdish leaders and movements in Sulaimaniya and beyond.

Compared to the Babans Bedir Khan Beg was considered less noble by some European visitors. He had no clear background and as it is stated by the missionaries “eight years ago he was poor, without power, and little known. The Turkish government then took

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<sup>20</sup> Chris Kutschera, *Kürt Ulusal Hareketi*, (trans. by Fikret Başkaya), (Istanbul: Avesta, 2001), 23.

<sup>21</sup> Özoğlu’s work covers the role the Kurdish notables played in the emergence of Kurdish nationalism during the last period of the Ottomans, but ignores the Kurdish regions in Iraq for the sake of research focus and limits his area of interest to today’s Turkish borders, thus leaves out some of the most important players in this process, namely Babans, Bahdinanis, and Sorans. Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 13-14.

him by the hand; and now his wealth is incalculable.”<sup>22</sup> Other sources state that Bedir Khan was put temporarily in the administration of the Bohtan in place of Sefyeddin and later the former imprisoned the latter’s two sons in order to take full control of the emirate.<sup>23</sup> The Babans received the title of “Pasha” way before nineteenth century, while Bedir Khan remained a “beg” through his leadership and much later became a pasha while he was in exile.<sup>24</sup>

There are fewer sources about Bedir Khan Beg’s background as compared with the ones on the Babans. There is mention of the Bedir Khan family (known as Azizan) in late sixteenth century work of *Sharafname*, but not much information is available afterward. Ottoman sources picks up on the family only after 1830s when Bedir Khan became more active in the region. More can be found in the letters of American missionaries, but less in the local sources. Therefore, the historians have relied on Western sources, where Bedir Khan was portrayed as a “Kurdish nationalist hero” and his emirate was considered as a “kingdom.” After all, he struck coins and had Friday sermons read in his name. However, his “kingdom” survived no more than a couple of decades and his descendants were rarely remembered in the region after his departure.<sup>25</sup>

### **Boundaries of the Baban territories and Kurdistan**

From the beginning of the sixteenth century until 1784, The Babans were located in Qalacholan, a village-town in the north of Shahrizor or today’s Kirkuk. After 1784 they moved their capital from Qalacholan a few miles north to Milkhindi, and named the place Sulaimaniya. In the meantime, the borders of the region ruled by the dynasty kept changing as they constantly fought with their neighbors--including the Ardalan in the east on the Iranian side and the Soran in the north. Once in a while they included lands from these neighbors into their territories as well as Kirkuk, Koy Sanjaq, Harir, Shahribazar, and Pizhder. For instance, during the leadership of Khanah Pasha (1721 – c. 1730) he occupied Ardalani territories and with this the “influence of the family stretched now with varying force from Kirkuk to Hamadan.”<sup>26</sup> At other times, the family’s domain was strictly confined to Sulaimaniya.

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<sup>22</sup> “Visits of Messrs Wright and Breath to Bader Khan Bey,” *The Missionary Herald*, 42, (1846), 378-383, cited in Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement: its origins and development* (Syracuse, NY, 2006), 64.

<sup>23</sup> Austin Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon with Travels in Armenia, Kurdistan and the Desert, Part 1* (New York, 1856), 53 in Kutschera, *Kürt Ulusal Hareketi*, 25.

<sup>24</sup> van Bruinessen states that the Baban leaders received the Turkish title of the “Pasha” in the early seventeenth century, when only few *sanjaqbegis* were able to receive it. Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 171.

<sup>25</sup> Gencer claims that it was the historians of Soviet Russia, who presented Bedir Khan Beg as Kurdish nationalist and many nationalist historians were influenced by such approaches. Fatih Gencer, “Merkeziyetçi İdari Düzenlemeler Bağlamında Bedirhan Bey Olayı” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara University, 2010), 261. For more discussion on Bedir Khan’s rise to the power and his rebellions see Mehmet Alagöz, “Old Habits Die Hard A Reaction To Application Tanzimat: Bedirhan Bey’s Revolt,” (M.A. Thesis, Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2003); Celile Celil, “Bedirhan Bey Ayaklanması,” *Dar Üçgende Üç İsyan*, (Istanbul: Evrensel Yayın, 2005); Cabir Doğan, “Cizre ve Bohtan Emiri Bedirhan Bey (1802-1869)” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Afyonkarahisar: Afyon Kocatepe University, 2010); Hatip Yıldız, “Bedirhan Bey Vak’ası (1842-1848)” (M.A. Thesis, Erzurum: Atatürk University, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> Stephen H. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 2002, first published by Oxford University, 1925 ), 159. Campanile, who visited the area around 1810, states that the Babans domains included “Karatcholan, Kara-Dar, Baziyan, Margu, Emar Menden, Hedjiler, Surdach, Kerabe, Korrok-Khoy,

Especially during the period from 1823 onward, when the first treaty of Erzurum was signed, until the Babans were removed from Sulaimaniya in 1851, the family could not expand their realm beyond their capital and some surrounding villages. This was due in part to the presence of Persian and Turkish garrisons in their town, but also to the rise of Mire Kor in northern neighbor of Rawanduz.<sup>27</sup>

While the Baban borders were subject to change as they were political boundaries, this was not the case for Kurdistan, since we are talking about geographical, not political borders. Many scholars have discussed the boundaries of Kurdistan in terms of its geographical limits and the limits they present are more or less the same. Therefore, we shall not discuss where Kurdistan is and what the borders of the region were since numerous sources and maps already give enough information about that question. The questions I am interested in here are what and where Ottomans and Westerners meant when they were talking about Kurdistan, especially “the Kurdistan” in the first half of nineteenth century. While almost every modern study on the region elaborates on the boundaries of Kurdistan, the scholarship is silent about different versions of the name. Drouville draws our attention to different meanings of “Kurdistan” or may be “Kourdistan.” He emphasizes the difference between “Kurdistan” and its Persian version of “Kourdistan.” He describes “Kurdistan” as the “the country inhabited by the Kurds” including the lands both in Iran and the Ottomans, whereas “Kourdistan” refers to “the government of Muhammad Ali Mirza.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, it resembles a political entity, or a province, located in western Iran.

The name of “Kurdistan” during the period of the Ottoman administration referred mostly to the geographical limits of the areas dominated by Kurdish populations. However, for a short period between 1847 and 1867, the Sublime Porte created a province named “Kurdistan.”<sup>29</sup> It is also known that the name Kurdistan was first used by the Seljuqs in twelfth century and later by the Iranians from Safavid period until today. This study will show that two “Kurdistans” have been referred to: The Ottoman Kurdistan and the Iranian Kurdistan. When talking about the Ottoman Kurdistan, I generally refer to the area, which is known as Iraqi Kurdistan today, including the province of Hakkari and Şırnak in modern Turkey. The region was named as “Kurdistan” in the Ottoman sources, which I utilize for this dissertation. The Ottoman sources used the name Kurdistan more for the Baban territories and less for the other Kurdish emirates after 1800. Relying on Ottoman sources, Kurdistan was where the emirates of Bohtan, Hakkari, Bahdinan (Amediye), Soran (Rawanduz), and Baban were located.<sup>30</sup> Kurdistan on the Iranian side was mostly used to refer to Ardalan Principality, which sometimes included the territories of Mukris west of the lake Urumiya.

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Serspi. Il fut un temps où Arbil, Kirkuk et Khoy-Sindjaq.” R.P. Giuseppe Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, (first pub. 1818 in Italian, trans. in French by R.P. Thomas Bois in 1953), (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2004), 40.

<sup>27</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, 247, 249, 287.

<sup>28</sup> Gaspard Drouville, *Voyage en Perse fait en 1812 et 1813. Vol. 2* (Paris: La Librairie Nationale et Etrangère, 1825), 220, 223.

<sup>29</sup> Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 37; See also Alagöz, “Old Habits Die Hard.”

<sup>30</sup> Some still added Bitlis to this list after the turn of the century. The French traveler Adrien Dupre, who visited “Curdistan” between 1807 and 1809, made a list of “les principautés Curdes” or the Kurdish emirates as “Soran, Baban, Badinan, Tchambo [Hakkari], Bottan and Bitlisi.” Adrien Dupré, *Voyage en Perse fait dans les années 1807, 1808 et 1809* (Paris: J.G. Dentu, 1819), 91.



Ottoman documents specify when they talk about Iranian Kurdistan. This was the case especially if the letter is written in Baghdad intended for Istanbul. However, when they talked about Ottoman Kurdistan, they used the name “Kurdistan” without referring to its place. Despite its general reference to the Kurdish emirates, the Ottomans used Kurdistan mostly to refer to the Babans. Sometimes they utilized “Kürdistan maddesi,” especially during disputes with the Iranians, which indicated more to the Baban territories as it was used with the “Baban maddesi” in exchange.<sup>31</sup> The leaders of the Baban emirate besides being called as the pasha or *mutasarrıf* of Baban -and later Sulaimaniya- they would also be named as “Kürdistan mutasarrıfı” or “Kürdistan Pashası.”<sup>32</sup> The other parts of Ottoman Kurdistan were referred with the name of each governorship or emirate such as “Van vilayeti,” “Hakkari Sancağı,” “Bayezid Sancağı,” etc. The lands that were also populated by Kurds in the north, such as Erzurum, Van, Kars, Muş, and Bayezid were collectively called as “Serhad” which referred to both their northward and their frontier position.<sup>33</sup> I have not come across any documents referring to Bedir Khan when there is mention of Kurdistan. Rather, the documents discuss the “kaymakam of Jizra, Bedir Khan Beg” (*Cizre Kaymakamı Bedirhan Bey*)<sup>34</sup> or “the mütesellim of Jizra, Bedir Khan Beg” (*Cizre Mütesellimi Bedirhan Bey*)<sup>35</sup> as a later document refers to him. The same case is true for Mire Kor or “Muhammed Beg of Rawanduz” (*Revanduz Beyi Mehmed Bey*) as it is referred in Ottoman documents.<sup>36</sup>

Beyond Ottoman sources many Western (British and French) sources also meant the Baban territories when they referred to Kurdistan. The most comprehensive British source about the Babans is James C. Rich’s *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, which he means with “Koordistan” the region located in the south east of the Ottoman Empire, in today’s Northern Iraq, especially the Baban territories centered in Sulaimaniya.<sup>37</sup> When he gives the details of a scroll that he claims to have it from the Baban pashas, named “dates and facts connected with the history of Koordistan,” which is in the end of the first volume of his aforementioned book, he mostly recounts facts about the Baban family but he refers to the other Kurdish pashas, as well as Ottoman and Iranian rulers, as long as they were connected

<sup>31</sup> A letter from Davud pasha to the commander-in-chief (serasker) Rauf Pasha, dated on 20 March, 1824 (19 Receb, 1239), stated that “the matters related with the issue of Kurdistan are sorted out,” (*Kürdistan umurundan maâda olan mesâlih halledilmiş*) except “the problem of the pashas of Kurdistan”, who were still allying with Iranians. Here with “the issue of Kurdistan” Davud Pasha meant the Baban Sanjaq and with “the pashas of Kurdistan” he referred to the Baban leaders. HAT #36617-A (19.B.1239/ 20 March, 1924)

<sup>32</sup> See the Ottoman document for “Kürdistan Mutasarrıfı” HAT # 36750-i (17.L.1239/ 15 June 1824)

<sup>33</sup> Both the Ottomans and Iranians used “serhad” to refer to the borders with each other. Cities in this region, such as Erzurum, were called “serhad şehri” (the frontier city). Sabri Ateş, “Empire at the Margins: Towards a History of the Ottoman-Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples” (Unpublished PhD diss., New York University, 2006), 11, 50.

<sup>34</sup> C.NF(Cevdet Nafia)# 959, Folio:20, ( 8.Ca.1259/ 7 June 1843)

<sup>35</sup> A.MKT (Sadaret-Mektubi Kalemi Ervaki)# 86, Folio: 9 ( 19.S.1260/ 9 March 1844); Also another document talks about the effect that the Sheikhs of Khalidiyya order had on the removal of threatening forces belong to “Mutesellim of Jizra, Bedir Khan Beg.” A.MKT.MHM. #61, Folio:2, (17.C.1263/ 1 June, 1847)

<sup>36</sup> Some documents which mention about Mire Kor are: HAT #36750-M (07.L 1239/ 5 June, 1824) talks about the “Revanduz Beyi Mehmed Bey” of being a Shafii and therefore always has been helpful in times of war against Iran. Another letter from Ali Pasha, who was responsible to remove the vali of Baghdad, talks about “Revanduzlu Mehmed Bey”’s help on this matter as the latter moved on Baghdad with his forces together with “the mutasarrıf of Baban.” HAT # 20815 (08.L.1246/ 23 March, 1831)

<sup>37</sup> See specially the first volume. James C. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan and on the Site of Ancient Nineveh, 2 Volumes* (James Duncan: London, 1836)

with the Babans.<sup>38</sup> Rich also uses “Turkish Koordistan,” “Bebbeh Koordistan,” and “Southern Koordistan” when referring to Baban territories. In a news report from 7 December 1824 about the hostility of the Iranians towards Baghdad, the periodical *Christian Secretary* announces that Iranian vali Muhammad Ali Mirza “got possession of Sulimania, residence of Pacha of Kurdistan.”<sup>39</sup> While referring to the Baban territories as Kurdistan in these sources, the capital of the land was named as Sulaimaniya,<sup>40</sup> some others called the town the “capital of lower Kurdistan.”<sup>41</sup>

That said, one still cannot rule out that the geographical boundaries of Kurdistan kept changing in the sources I refer. What I am trying to say here is that the center of Kurdistan did not stay the same throughout the centuries. If Bitlis or Çemişgezek was the center for the Kurdish culture, politics, and economics in the sixteenth century, then Sulaimaniya replaced it with its literature and political power in nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, in the imaginary world of outsiders, be it Ottomans, Iranians, or Westerners, the most powerful emirate would be considered more to fit for the name of “Kurdistan.” One can see this even in the titles given to each Kurdish *mir*. For instance most of Kurdish *mirs* would be given the title of “beg/ bey” or “mutasarrıf” while the Baban leaders were named as “Pasha.” These titles were bestowed upon the leaders by the sultan or by the *vali* of the province. The Baban *mirs* were also named as *mirimiran* (the emir of all emirs or *beglerbegi*) in the nineteenth century Ottoman documents as they were considered the most powerful Kurdish *mirs* or more like a *primus inter pares*.<sup>43</sup>

## Purpose

This dissertation examines how the ruling house of the Kurdish Baban family in Sulaimaniya survived through centuries of the rivalry between the Ottomans and Iranians, how they used this contention to their own self-interest and political gain, and how Baban

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<sup>38</sup> See the details of the scroll, in the Appendix of this thesis. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 385-387.

<sup>39</sup> *Christian Secretary*, (7 Dec. 1824): 1, 45.

<sup>40</sup> Heude writes underneath of the drawing of Sulaimaniya he had at the beginning of his book as “Sulimaney, the Capital of Kurdistan.” *William Heude, A Voyage up the Persian Gulf and a Journey Overland from India to England in 1817* (London: Longman, 1817).

<sup>41</sup> See his entry for “Solymania or Shehrezur” in Richard Brookes, *The General Gazetteer or compendium of Geographical Dictionary* (London: A. Picquot, 1827)

<sup>42</sup> According Charmoy, the Russian translator of *Sharafname*, whenever the Kurds referred to Kurdistan in sixteenth century, they meant Çemişgezek. On the other hand Idris Bidlisi refers to Bitlis as the center of government of Kurdistan in early sixteenth century. So it seems that the reference to the name of Kurdistan changed the meaning for geographical significance through centuries. Cheref-ouddine, *Cheref-Nameh, Fastes de la Nation Kourde, Vol. II, Part I*, (Translated from Persian into French and commented by François Bernard Charmoy) (St. Petersburg, 1870), 5 in Baki Tezcan, “The development of the use of Kurdistan as a geographical description and the incorporation of this region into Ottoman Empire in the 16th century,” in *The Great Ottoman, Turkish Civilisation. Vol 3. Philosophy, Science and Institutions*, Kemal Çiçek, Editor-in-Chief, Ercüment Kuran, Nejat Göyünç, and İlber Ortaylı, eds. (Ankara:Yeni Türkiye, 2000), 540-53 (542).

<sup>43</sup> The Baban leader, Süleyman Pasha, was officially given the title of “mirmiran” in 1837. The document states “Baban Mutasarrıfı Süleyman Paşa’ya mirmiran ve oğlu Ahmed Bey’e de kapıcıbaşı nişanlarının itası.” HAT #23085 (29.Z.1252/ 5 April, 1837); One of the most influential Baban pashas, Abdurrahman(r.1788-1813) was also named as “mirmiran” according to the French sources. Correspondance Consulaire et Commerciale (CCC), Basra nr. 2, 058 in Tom Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society in early modern Iraq: Mamluk Pashas tribal Shayks and local rule between 1802 and 1831* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981), 42.

politics ultimately served to safeguard the Baban Sanjaq's semi-autonomous status and political freedom. More specifically, the purpose of studying Baban politics is two-fold: 1) to observe how the region's autonomy, with its established notables, shaped the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-sectarian environment of the Babans and Sulaimaniya with its diverse population (including women, peasants, Sufis and non-Muslim groups), literature and bilateral politics and 2) to investigate how the inclusion of history of a Kurdish emirate on the eastern margins of the empire into Ottoman historiography produces a more incisive understanding of nineteenth-century Middle Eastern history.

### **“Politics of Notables” or “Notables of Politics”**

This dissertation takes a critical approach to Albert Hourani's work on the notables but also benefits from his theorization of the “politics of notables.”<sup>44</sup> Though it does not take Hourani's theorization at face value, as one can see that he mostly uses the Arab notables, especially urban ones, as the basis of his formulation. He presents a framework for historians of Arab provinces during the Ottoman era.<sup>45</sup> By giving the case of Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria, he makes generalizations about notables in all over the empire. While focusing on Arab notables of these provinces, he leaves out the other Arab provinces like Baghdad and Basra.<sup>46</sup> He also focuses mostly on the post-Tanzimat notables, even post-1860s. Although he indicates that the nature of the notables changed with the centralization and with the occupation of Egypt by the British after 1890s, he does not clarify how the two periods are differing from each other. What *ayans* meant changed from region to region. In the Arab provinces, urban intermediaries, like *ulema* and military leaders, were considered as *ayans* while in the Kurdish regions the same word was used for *mirs*, *begs*, *aghas* and Sufi sheikhs.<sup>47</sup> Thus, I expand the definition of the “politics of notables” by taking a more specific case with the Babans and with a more focus on the pre-Tanzimat period. Contrary to Hourani, who presented the cases of notables, which were not in place before the Ottomans and were created with the support of the Sublime Porte, such as Mamluk families of Baghdad and Cairo, the landlords, who appeared after the Land Law of 1869, salaried *ulema*, *kadıs* and *muftıs*, janissaries, and merchants, I focus more on a family that was there before the

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<sup>44</sup> Albert Hourani first presented his “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables” at a conference held in 1966 at the University of Chicago. Later his article was republished at least three times. See the same article in William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers, *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968); Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), and in Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury and Mary C. Wilson, *The Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>45</sup> I would like to thank Professor Gelvin for providing me with his article and giving me some valuable guidance on the usage of the “politics of notables” term. James Gelvin, “The ‘politics of notables’ Forty Years After,” *MESA Bulletin* 40 (1) (2006): 19-29.

<sup>46</sup> The scholars who followed Hourani's theory mostly focused on the households in Egypt and Mosul. See for instance Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540-1834* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Jane Hathaway, “The Military Household in Modern Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27 (February 1995), 39-52 and *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Ehud Toledano, “The Emergence of Ottoman-Local Elites (1700-1900): A Framework for Research,” in *Middle Eastern Politics and Ideas*, ed. Ilan Pappé and Moshe Ma'oz (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 145-62.

<sup>47</sup> Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 12.

Ottomans came to the region and was integrated into the empire, with some minor alterations, as it was. Accordingly, I would classify the later created notables as “generated” since the source of their power was coming from the center and they could be removed anytime once they fell out of favor.<sup>48</sup> Whereas, Kurdish *mirs*, tribal *aghas*, *seyids*, and Sufi sheikhs were outsourcing their power more from the local people in the periphery and much less from the center. Kurdish notables remained more independent until the Porte integrated them into its political system after the Tanzimat. After that point, the situation in Kurdish regions more closely resembled that of the Arab provinces (or urban centers as Hourani puts it), as they were incorporated into the central system with salaries, centrally planned appointments, and modern education.

Studies on the history of the Kurds have usually focused either on the history of Kurdish nationalism, which considers the Kurds as a united homogenous body, on the tribal structure of the Kurds, which particularizes more the Kurds and ignores the greater political structures like emirates. Providing with the story of the Babans, I pay close attention to confederative units and less to the tribes. Here I do not intend to rule out the importance of the tribes in understanding of the Kurds. Though I believe that through examining cases like the Babans, one could see a larger picture of the social, political, cultural, and economical life of the Kurds. I try to show that studies, which focus on the tribal structure of the Kurds do not give the complete picture of this society. Because of the political concerns modern states, which were established in the expense of the Kurds in and around Kurdistan, are in state of denial that the Kurds established political structures in the history and modern historians and social scientists have taken this approach at the face value. However, such an approach leaves many questions unanswered, some of which are: Were the Kurdish emirates actively involved in any means of politics in the region as well as in the center of the empire for their interest? What were the political manners they followed to survive between two powers for centuries? And also, what did force them to imitate their overlords in Istanbul and Tehran (or Isfahan) in terms of political, social and cultural structure?

### **Question of Center-Periphery**

Provinces like Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra were in the periphery of the Sublime Porte. Compared to these provinces one could say that the Babans were at “periphery of the periphery” because of their indirect relations with the center of the empire. Their correspondence with the Porte would go through the *valis* of Baghdad before it reached its final destination. The *vali* in Baghdad largely treated them as a military and financial source while the Ottoman Sultan considered their presence in the frontier region as an essential element of the buffer zone against Persian threats. Being considered as part of a buffer zone did not merely give the Kurdish *mirs* the duty to protect the frontiers against the Safavids, but provided them with some privileges such as tax exemptions and keeping the land in the hands of their families. Besides, being located between Arabic, Turkish, and Persian-speaking

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<sup>48</sup> Gelvin also states that the Ottoman center “created” those notables and thus they were incorporated into a social order from above. Gelvin, “The politics of notables,” 25.

regions of the Muslim world gave the Kurds the status of cultural brokers. Such a status allowed them to be involved in the politics of the states around them.<sup>49</sup> The Baban territories were in the periphery not only for the Ottomans but also of the Iranian dynasties of Safavids and Qajarans. This was unique to the Babans and they were aware of the importance of their position. They felt that they belonged to no one and imagined themselves as a small dynasty trying to survive in between two imperial powers. Their positions sometimes rendered the Babans as the ‘center’ and sometimes relegated both Ottoman and Persian powers to the ‘periphery.’

From the time they were incorporated into the Ottomans Empire until the rise of the Mamluk power in mid-eighteenth century, the Babans enjoyed more or less direct contact with the sultans. The Baban pashas always wanted to keep this direct contact with the sultans and be treated more like the *valis* in Baghdad. Such a desire did not come from the Babans’ admiration of the Caliph but rather from a desire to be seen less like a peripheral power—both in the eyes of the local subjects and the *valis* of Baghdad. Being taken into consideration would boost their position and power in the region. Furthermore, as the Ottomans realized that the eastern frontier was not easy to protect, the sultan pragmatically opted for the recognition and continuation of the Baban’s existing position for a long time to come, instead of eradicating the relative power of these local notables. These local lords, especially the ones closer to the borders with Iran, enjoyed a more privileged status, which provided them with further autonomy. However, the relation between the center and these peripheral powers was not one-way, but rather more symbiotic as the local powers required the support of the central power against threats from local contenders and the rival state on the other side of the border. In the end, both central and local powers had mutually beneficial relations while “it was the limits of local entities that defined the limits of the empire, as it was the limits of the empires that defined the limits of local dynasties.”<sup>50</sup>

Relations between the center and the periphery became tense after the eighteenth century, which was also called the “age of ayans” because of the rise of the notables in the provinces. There were semi-independent units in the Balkans and in Kurdistan, though the Arab provinces did not see such political entities for the first two centuries of their incorporation into the Ottoman domains. Following that period we witness a rise of notables like the Karamanids in Tripoli, al-Husainiyyah in Tunisia, the Chehab emirs and Zahir al-Umar in Lebanon, al-Azms and Ahmad al-Jazzar in Syria and Palestine, the Saudis in Najd, the Jalilis in Mosul, and the Mamluks in Baghdad.<sup>51</sup> Most of these notables were able to gain power in their provinces because of their distance from the center and their position in the periphery. The province of Baghdad, despite its importance, remained in the periphery from 1534, when it was conquered, until mid-eighteenth century. The Sublime Porte never had a complete control of the province and it was never fully integrated into the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>49</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, “The Kurds and Islam” *Islam des Kurdes (Les Annales de l’Autre Islam, No.5)* (Paris: INALCO, 1998), 13- 35.

<sup>50</sup> Ateş, “Empire at the Margins,” 57.

<sup>51</sup> W. Hardy Wickwar, *The Modernization of Administration in the Middle East*, (Beirut: Khayats, 1962), 17.

The quasi-independent status of Baghdad was established further during the reign of the Mamluks (1749-1831).<sup>52</sup>

The Ottomans were planning to bring the periphery under the central control by the end of eighteenth century during the reign of Selim III. They intensified their efforts to centralize the semi-autonomous units of the empire almost fifty years later and officially announced their intention in 1839 with the rescript of Gülhane, which was named altogether as Tanzimat (reorder). The Qajars had the same intentions to bring provinces under the control of Tehran, but realized such plans in 1860s, much later than the Ottomans did.

The border that the Kurdish population settled around fluctuated for centuries because of wars and conflicts and it had never been a strict line in between two states. The tribes in the frontier region used lands in both states for their summer and winter camps. During the first half of nineteenth century, the 1823 and 1847 treaties of Erzurum attempted to bring the boundaries, where the Babans and other Kurdish emirates were located, under control. Although Ottomans and Iranians, as well as Russians and British, did not accomplish much in the first treaty, they achieved much more than they intended with the treaty of 1847, when they destroyed all Kurdish emirates and replaced local leaders with officers appointed by the Sublime Porte. The state did not totally bring these regions under the full control of the central administration right away. It took another half a century until the central state secured these frontier regions and became visible in everyday life. As van Bruinessen states “officially, Kurdistan was from then on ruled directly by Ottoman governors — in practice, however, direct Ottoman rule was to prove very ineffective indeed. Near cities, the governors had some power; nowhere did they have authority.”<sup>53</sup> Despite that, the empire gradually brought the eastern frontier under its control. Demarking and securing the borderlands allowed the empire to increase its surveillance capacity within its borders and consequently helped to create a modern state with the same rules applied in all over its territories. While leaving its territories in the Balkans, the empire, with direct rule of the frontiers in the second half the nineteenth century, hoped to bring home more taxes and manpower from the untapped sources of the region.<sup>54</sup>

### **Political Structure and Leadership**

In sixteenth century the frontier regions by the Safavid border were divided among *sanjaqs*. Besides this classification there were two types of administrative units. The first one was named as either *yurtluk* (family property, family estate) or *ocaklık* (family estate,

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<sup>52</sup> Ebubekir Ceylan, “Ottoman Centralization and Modernization in the Province of Baghdad, 1831-1872” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2006), 22.

<sup>53</sup> van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 176

<sup>54</sup> Rogan states that the early efforts to bring the frontier zones under the state control initially failed because “they were over-reliant on military power to force submission.” Tribal and indigenous societies paid little attention to the request of the state for cooperation and almost had no interest in new rule of law. Besides difficulties on the frontier zone, the military expeditions were very expensive and supplying remote garrisons were very inefficient. Such inadequacies left the army in the region vulnerable to tribal attacks and kept the state control very limited. Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5, 11-12.

province) or *yurtluk-ocaklık*. The second and more privileged type was entitled as *hükümet* or *Kürd hükümeti*. Like the first type, this was also given as *ocaklık*.<sup>55</sup> Some of these *hükümet*s were named emirates, whose number in sixteenth century was around sixteen. These *hükümet*s were not classified as *tımar* or *zeamet*, thus they neither paid tax to the central treasury nor sent military personnel to *sipahi* or *beglerbegi*'s army.<sup>56</sup> Baghdad, where the Baban territories were located, was established as the *Beglerbeglik* in 1535, shortly after it was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. In 1568, Shahrizor was also turned into a *beglerbeglik*.<sup>57</sup> After the establishment of Shahrizor it is not clear where exactly the Babans were attached to but throughout the next two and a half centuries until the beginning of the nineteenth century this Kurdish *beglik* was switched from one *vilayet* to another in between Shahrizor and Baghdad. It seems that the Babans were not considered a *sanjaq* (literally the flag) from the first time it was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire, but for the most of part of seventeenth, eighteenth and the first half of nineteenth century they were named *sanjaq*. However, it seems that both administrative divisions of *yurtluk-ocaklık* and *hükümet*, which the way the Kurdish *begliks* were classified, were also considered like *sanjaqs* but had more freedom in terms of military and financial obligations.<sup>58</sup> Still a Kurdish *sanjaq*, not a *hükümet*, was classified as *tımar* or *zeamet* and it had the obligation of joining military campaigns and pay tax to the state treasury. A *sanjaq* was a subdivision of a *beglerbeglik* and existed in various numbers. For example, while the number of *sanjaqs* in the empire amounted to 500 in sixteenth century, they were reduced to 290 at the beginning of nineteenth century.<sup>59</sup> While the head of *sanjaq*, *sanjaqbegi*, was selected from the rulers of provinces, the palace officials, and the children of the rulers, the selection of the leaders for Kurdish *sanjaqs*, *hükümet*s and *yutluk-ocaklık* was made only from Kurdish ruling families. At the same time, the *beglerbegi* had the right to intervene with the current *sanjaq begi* and choose another leader, but the choice still had to be from the same family. Ottoman officials never replaced the entire family as they thought it would disenfranchise the subjects of the *beg*. Therefore, this system remained until the mid-nineteenth century when the Kurdish *mirs* were entirely removed. Despite the divisions created by the Ottomans among the Kurdish *beglik* and several among them were classified as *sanjaqs*, many acted more independently like *hükümet*s and *beglerbegis* and had a hard time to assert their authority until the state asserted its centralization policies in the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup> More discussion on the structure of the Kurdish emirates can be followed through subsequent chapters, while I will pay closer attention to the leadership among the Kurdish *mirs*, more specially the Babans, as it may help us to understand better the politics these notables followed.

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<sup>55</sup> Ateş, "Empire at the Margins," 61.

<sup>56</sup> Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 158-59.

<sup>57</sup> Nejat Göyünç, "Provincial Organization of the Ottoman Empire in Pre-Tanzimat Period" in *The Great Ottoman, Turkish Civilisation. Vol 3. Philosophy, Science and Institutions*, Kemal Çiçek, Editor-in-Chief, Ercüment Kuran, Nejat Göyünç, and İlber Ortaylı, eds. (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), 519-532 (520).

<sup>58</sup> Göyünç states that there were several semi-independent *begliks* such as Wallacia, Moldovia, Transilvania, Dubrovnik (Ragusa), the Kırım Khanate and the Hejaz Emirate. Here, he does not include any Kurdish *sanjaq* to the list. Göyünç, "Provincial Organization," 529.

<sup>59</sup> Göyünç adds that one should not forget some of these *sanjaqs* were turned into *beglerbeglik* while some were lost in wars with other countries like Russia. Göyünç, "Provincial Organization," 526.

<sup>60</sup> Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 160-61.

Studies on the Kurds provide some essential discussions on the tribal structure and its leadership but talk little about the *mir*, who usually had no tribal relations and lead a confederate made up of several tribes. As I mentioned above, the Baban *mirs* were also considered as *mirimiran* since they were seen as the most powerful among all other Kurdish *mirs*. Therefore, their power extended, once in a while, beyond the boundaries of their lands. Compared to tribal leaders, they had an absolute authority and they were obeyed by all of their subjects. In the case of the relations between the Baban leaders and the strong chieftains of the Jaf tribes, the latter habitually obeyed to the former, however not always with full obedience. Although it was rarely seen, the leaders of the Jaf could play one member of the Babans against another and thus have a choice between them. The *mir*, who led a *sanjaq*, was also called as *sanjaqbegi*. After seventeenth century, the Babans received the title of Pasha. They were probably the first Kurdish *mirs*, who received such a title.

The principal of “segmentary opposition and alliance” appears in all political structures of the Kurds, between two tribes or two emirates. As van Bruinessen states “disputes generally need the intervention of popularly recognized authorities in order to be settled, and a leader’s authority is confirmed and increased with every serious dispute he resolves.”<sup>61</sup> Although van Bruinessen makes this comment for the tribal chieftains the case is almost the same for the *mirs*. The Kurdish *mirs* led wars in much larger scales and made alliances with other political entities (governors, *mirs*). The times of peace worked against the authority of the *mir* and it was during these periods when rival leaders emerged from the *mir*’s family. The members of the family and their subjects united more in times of war against outside enemies. Therefore, in often times the *mir* would seek conflicts. However, in case of the Baban, they mostly had conflicts because of interference by outside powers, namely Ottomans and Iranians.

The right of primogeniture was the most common way to become a *mir* and people usually accepted the ruler without much reluctance. In fact it was not the common people, but rather the household of the *mir* and notables like the *ulema*, tribal chieftains, and *aghas*, who recognized the new ruler on behalf of everyone. This rule, however, could not be applied if there was no son and instead the elder brother of the *mir* would take his place. Besides, the right of primogeniture was not always applied when a more powerful leader emerged from the same family.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, the leadership of the emirate almost without exception stayed in the same family. There were also exceptions to this rule. For instance, when all the male members of the Baban family perished in mid-sixteenth century one of their strongmen in their military force took over leadership.<sup>63</sup> So, for the Babans the continuation of the rule was as important as keeping the power in the hands of the family. The person who would be chosen to the leadership should have been “strong, courageous, just and generous, a good strategist and a wise judge.”<sup>64</sup> Adding to these qualities, the leader of the Baban emirate should also be wise about both Ottoman and Iranian politics towards them, know the language of the politics and

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<sup>61</sup> Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 74, 78.

<sup>62</sup> Maurizio Garzoni, *Grammatica e vocabolario della lingua kurda* (Roma, 1787), 5-6.

<sup>63</sup> Şerefhan Bitlisi, *Şerefname*, (translated from Arabic to Turkish by M. Emin Bozarıslan), (Istanbul: Deng Yayınları, 1971, 2009), 212-215.

<sup>64</sup> Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 80



diplomacy of both states, and be aware of the ambitions, demands, and personalities of their agents, governors in Baghdad and Kermanshah.

The Babans through centuries of their leadership were able to make themselves acceptable to their subjects while dealing with the political greed over them from Ottomans and Iranians. As the authority of the Babans traditionally was hereditary, so the officers worked for them also inherited their positions from their fathers.<sup>65</sup> The Babans and their officers belonged to no tribes. Therefore the loyalty to them by their officers was more of like a servant and less of like tribesmen. Abdurrahman Pasha's words clearly explain this relation: "You are not the lord of a tribe, nor are your men your tribesmen. You may clothe them, feed them, and make them rich, but they are not your cousins; they are but servants!"<sup>66</sup>

### Sources and Methodology

Using the story of a notable family located on a much internationalized frontier allows a historian to bring out not just the narrative of locals, but related with it the story of regional and global actors and development shaped the relations between two rival states. At the same time, going into the details of the expansive history of both the Ottomans and Iran, or more into the history of the Kurds and Kurdistan, would bring out endless amount of issues and would leave this dissertation with more historical facts and less focus. Besides, through years of my research in the archives and libraries of Austin, Istanbul, Ankara, Paris, Freiburg, Damascus, and Sulaimaniya proved me that much more documents, memoirs, manuscripts, maps, and drawings could be discovered. However, the more I discovered, the more I was convinced that I should leave many issues out and focus on certain topics. For instance, I touched upon the Sunni-Shafi'i identity of the Kurds versus the Sunni-Hanafi dominancy of the Empire, though I left out most of the details. Regarding this topic, I also did not feel that it is necessary to dwell on the imaginary boundaries between the Sunnis and Shi'is, as it would be a topic for another dissertation.

This dissertation gives the story of a family extending from 1500 until beginning of 1900. Hence, the research is limited with few decades before the Ottomans integrated the land into their territories until the beginning of twentieth century, when the descendants of Kurdish *mirs* were fully incorporated into the Ottoman bureaucracy and politics. However, attention is mostly given to the period between 1784, when the capital of the Babans was moved to Sulaimaniya, and 1851, the time that the last member of the family was removed from their hereditary lands. The following chapters are mostly ordered chronologically, though each chapter focuses on a certain topic (rivalry among the Sufi sheikhs, social and cultural life of the town, political ambitions of a local lord, and the struggle for his survival, centralization efforts of modernizing state, and reaction to its policies by the local powers) and each one has its own thesis, which eventually completes and supports the final discussion.

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<sup>65</sup> Rich states that the present prime minister during his visit served also during previous two Baban leaders and the current prime minister expected his son to succeed him. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 115.

<sup>66</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 86-87.

Besides the limitation of the time, this dissertation is geographically limited to the borders of today's Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq. More specifically, it focuses on today's Sulaimaniya and its surroundings in fifty miles radius. The reason for such a limitation is that this region consisted of the main core of the rule of the Baban dynasty. Neighboring emirates, as well as its rival Kurdish dynasties, were mostly located on the northern (Soran and Bahdidnan emirates), eastern (Ardalan) and partially in its southern (Shahrizor, Kirkuk) fringes. Besides, Baghdad, as the capital of the province, has been covered when it is relevant with political developments in the Baban territories.

Ottoman archival documents form the backbone of this dissertation. Most of documents I utilize here come from the *Hatt-ı Humayun* (Imperial Scripts) collection. Because the collection is classified under this title, one should not only expect to see correspondence from or to the sultan, but could find all kind of documents such as local correspondence between the Kurdish Pashas and the *valis* of Baghdad, Mosul, Van, and Diyarbekir. The letters from the Shah of Iran to the Sultan as well as to the *vali* of Baghdad and the pasha of the Babans can also be discovered in this collection. Although the collection is a rich repository for the political history of the region, it gives few glimpses of the social life of the locals. Besides, the absence of a central appointed judge, and thus lack of the court records, unfortunately leaves most out of details about everyday life. The Ottomans did not keep many records of economic life in the region since the Baban territories were exempted from *timar* system. Hence, it takes much more effort to reconstruct the social history of this region. To compensate this gap, I employ the memoirs and the travelogues belong to the Western visitors. They had more details than Ottoman and Iranian sources about the population census, peasants, women, non-Muslim population, clothing, food, economy, leisure time, and local music. At the same time, most of these Western works are very biased. A few of them, like the work of C.J. Rich, were able to make observations with less preconceptions of an Orientalist. Not only the Europeans, but even Ottoman officers and visitors had Orientalist views of the Kurds and the region. Derviş Pasha, who was a member of the border commission in late 1840s, in his work called *Seyahatname-i Hudud* (Travelogue of the Borders), considered the local inhabitants as “immoral” and “savage” in order to justify the modernization and centralization of this region.

As the Ottoman sources are not useful for examining the social history of the Baban Kurds, I tried to locate indigenous sources. The literary works written in Sorani Kurdish were partially usefully to show the image of the Babans in the minds of the locals. A book (*Mejoy Erdelan* or History of Ardalan) written by Mestura Kurdestani in early nineteenth century on the history of Ardalan had some limited information on the Babans. Beside Kurdestani's work, Abdulkadir bin Rustem Babani's *Siyer el-Ekrad der Tarih-i Coğrafya-yi Kurdistan* (Past of the Kurds in the Historical Geography of Kurdistan), probably written in 1870s, provided more details about the last period of the Babans. Despite the presence of these two books, few details about the social history of the Kurds could be found. Besides, all these works, including the works by Westerners, focused mostly on the nineteenth century and had almost no information regarding earlier centuries.

I have used some British documents, both published and unpublished. Most of these documents were made of correspondence by British members of border commission in 1840s. While they contribute little to the main story, they are a valuable asset on the last decade of the Babans. The Persian documents were extremely hard to reach because of the political conditions in the country. However, many Persian documents, mostly consisting of correspondence with the Baban Pashas, *valis* of Baghdad and the Sultan, about this issue were already available in the Ottoman archives. A series of the documents on the Ottoman-Iranian relations (*Gozidah-i Asnad-i Siyasi-i Iran ve Usmani, Dawrah-i Qajariyeh*, 7 v.) were published by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs contained several documents of pre-mid-nineteenth century. However, most of these documents were the same as those available in Ottoman archives. One would still have to do more research in Iranian archives and bring out the story of the family through the lens of the Persians.

In addition to these documents, there remain French and Russian archives to be discovered. Tom Nieuwenhuis relied mostly on French archives for his research on the rule of Mamluk Pashas in Iraq between 1802 and 1831.<sup>67</sup> He utilized the Consular and Commercial Correspondence of French Councils in Baghdad (1792-1846), Basra (1810-1816), and Mosul (1842-1866). He quotes extensively from these documents, some of which I cite in this dissertation. Other than Nieuwenhuis's work, I have not come across any work relying on the French sources. Through my research on the secondary literature I have not seen any work based on Russian archival sources either. Russian scholars of Soviet period like Halfin and Celile Celil published several works on nineteenth century Kurdistan, but used mostly Western sources for their studies.

Overall, most of the Ottoman, British, French, and probably Russian sources are official documents, concerning mostly to inform their government about political and economic activities of the region and to advise them for action on its part or determine a policy about it. Despite this rich body of the sources reflecting official discourses, only a handful of them reveal the voices of local people. Hence, historians have no choice but employ these documents or use alternative oral sources to analyze how the past has been transmitted through Kurdish epic poetry, folk songs, ballads, proverbs, and dirges. Although I use some of the poems, they give a very limited view of the period and reflect the imaginary world of an educated or notable person, who does not represent the common people.

Despite such limitations, I hope to complement the Ottoman and Iranian historiography through the story of a family located in the frontier. It is not my intention to give the ultimate history of the Kurdish notables or the family I focus on, but to provoke thoughts about the region without concern about the history of the nation-state. This is not a national/ist history of the Kurds, thus it does not claim a separate history, rather it considers as a lost piece of a puzzle in the Middle East history and hopes to add a piece on the long way of a more cohesive field of knowledge.

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<sup>67</sup> Tom Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society in early modern Iraq: Mamluk Pashas tribal Shayks and local rule between 1802 and 1831*.

## Literature

Works on the history of Baghdad under the rule of the Ottomans are very limited. Most of the works on Baghdad are focused either on the Abbasid period or the post-Gulf War era.<sup>68</sup> Compared to the history of Iraq and its capital, studies on the Kurds and Kurdistan are even scarcer. Existing literature examines the region from mainly two aspects. The first is from geo-strategic aspect of the region. Its natural resources like oil, minerals, and its topographical location are major concerns of these studies. The second perspective is that of the political sciences. Studies in this class tackle with the question of Kurdish nationalism and they utilize very poor historical materials. This study does not concern itself with the question of nationalism in order to avoid the trap these studies fall into. On the one hand, considering each rebellion in the nineteenth century (here a response to the nationalist approaches the rebellion of Baban Abdurrahman Pasha in 1806 has been treated as a struggle for more power) as a nationalist manifestation of the Kurdish leaders helps us to understand little about the history of the region. On the other hand, such nationalist approaches benefit the Turkish and Arab nationalist historians, on the other side of the spectrum, to ignore the history of this peripheral region. It is true that the ideological construction of the Turkish and Arab historiographies and “their hostile attitude toward scholars situated outside the confines of the nationalist linear-time frame” left out the history of the Kurds and the lands they inhabit from the even mainstream history works.<sup>69</sup> Nationalist historiographies did not only close their eyes and ears to minorities located in their borders, but also treated them in a hostile manner. Ultranationalist historians in Turkey remained dreadfully “anti-Persian” until recently.<sup>70</sup> Same treatment has been shown by the Arab historians toward the history of Arab provinces of the Ottoman period. As Ehud R. Toledano states, “the nationalist narratives had either written the Ottomans out of Arab histories, or relegated them to the role of villains, responsible for the sorry state of the Arabs found themselves in after the First World War.”<sup>71</sup>

There is little information in the secondary literature on the Baban family for the period between the sixteenth and the late eighteenth centuries. Therefore, I draw valuable information for the sixteenth century from the *Şerefname*, a concise history of Kurdish tribes and principalities before seventeenth century. Stephen Longrigg gives some details on background of the Babans for this period. He uses several local accounts, both written and oral, to tell the story of the Baban family. Hence, my dissertation will partially rely on his account for the period before 1780.

Compared to the scholarship on the period before 1780s, the scholarship pertaining nineteenth century Kurdistan is much more abundant. Still, the information in secondary literature for this period is scanty. One problem with the secondary literature is that none of

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<sup>68</sup> Ceylan, “Ottoman Centralization and Modernization,” 15.

<sup>69</sup> Ateş, “Empire at the Margins,” 18.

<sup>70</sup> Kütükoğlu’s work on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the Ottoman-Iranian relations could be an exception to this rule. Bekir Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-Iran Siyasi Münasebetleri (1678-1712)* (Istanbul: Fetih Cemiyeti, 1977) in Ateş, “Empire at the Margins,” 20.

<sup>71</sup> Ehud R. Toledano, “What Ottoman History and Ottomanist Historiography Are- Or, Rather Are Not”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 38/3, (2002) 205, cited in Ceylan, “Ottoman Centralization and Modernization,” 16.

them spend more than ten pages on the Babans.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, most of the secondary literature relies on the same sources, namely the Western travelogues and British sources. Therefore, they give the same information about the Babans and most of them repeat the same discussion. Their accounts of the Babans are commonly on political aspect of the family. For this reason, they are focused on conflicts and wars between the Babans and imperial powers. We do not find much information about the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the area administered by the Babans. Most of information on these aspects of Sulaimaniya and surrounding areas comes from C.J. Rich's *Residence in Koordistan*.

Abid Rabbi Ibrahim al-Waili's *Tarikh al-Imarat al-Babaniyyah* (History of the Baban Emirate) is one of few modern works focusing on the Babans. Based on mostly Western and some Arabic sources, he allocates most of pages of his work on the political events between 1784 and 1823. He pays little attention to the social history of the Babans and makes extensive descriptions of the tribal groups in the region. Similarly Mihemed Emîn Zekî's *Tarixi Silemani u welate le devreye zor Kadimewe ta Evvele ihtilal* (History of Sulaimaniya and its land from the ancient times to pre-revolution period) in Sorani Kurdish comes up with a chronological account of political events and the local rulers. He employs both Western and Middle Eastern sources. Besides these works, as an indigenous source I was privileged to receive a book from a member of the Baban family residing in Lebanon, which mostly includes family trees from 1500 up to today. Ayad Baban's book on *Usrat Baban al-Akrad* (Family tree of the Baban Kurds) was very useful in tracing the roots of some of the family members, but it did not provide more information than other sources I used, since he relied on the same sources.

Celile Celil allocates little space on the Babans in his book on *Kurds in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire*. His work is a survey book on nineteenth century Kurdish history, particularly on political history of Kurdistan. He uses few a Russian sources, mostly monographs, and some Western and Middle Eastern sources. His indigenous source is *Şerefname*. Other than this, he does not use many Middle Eastern sources. His discussion on the origins of the Babans is weak because of lack of sources. He expresses his doubts on Sharaf Khan Bidlisi's account on the founder of the Babans, Pir Budag Beg. Yet, we know for certain that the Ottoman source of *Mühimme Defteri* for the year 1544 - 1545 names Budak Beg the leader of the Baban principality. The details he presents on the Babans are mostly about conflicts between family members, Baghdad, other Kurdish principalities, and Iran, and he gives very few details on the social history of Babans and Sulaimaniya. Martin van Bruinessen in *Agha, Sheik and State* relies mostly on C.J. Rich's account for the details on Sulaimaniya and the court officials in the Baban palace. Van Bruinessen is more into the relations between Babans and other Kurdish tribes. Stephen Longrigg's oeuvre on the *Four Centuries of Iraq* is without doubt the best account on the Babans and Mamluk Pashas of Baghdad. He was working for the British Empire in Iraq during WWI. All scholars working on Iraq have referred to his work. Longrigg's account on the Babans is well incorporated into history of Iraq from the beginning of sixteenth century until early twentieth century. Therefore, there is more information than any other secondary work on background of the

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<sup>72</sup> David McDowall allocates few pages on the Babans in his extensive book on the history of the Kurds. David McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 33-36.

Babans for the period before nineteenth century. However, Longrigg's account does not go beyond chronological narration. Thus, one may see lots of dates, names, and incidents, but one has a hard time connecting them with each other. This makes reading it very tedious and painful with full of details. His account like most of other works focuses more on political history of the Babans and ignores the social history of the local people. However, his work did not receive as much attention as C.J. Edmonds's book on *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs*. This might be because Edmonds' work was published later than Longrigg's and Edmond produced more books and articles on different aspects of Kurdish language, literature, and geography. Edmonds spends few pages on the Baban dynasty and the family's genealogy. There is one section in his book under the title of "The Babans" and some information on Sulaimaniya spread throughout of the book. Edmonds relies mostly on British travelogues for the information on the Babans. Most of his information comes from Rich's memoir.

The Baban family and Sulaimaniya's past have received little attention and most discussions have focused on the political history of the family. There is no scrutiny of how the story of the Kurdish *mir*s and their subjects can contribute to the Ottoman, and more broadly to the Middle Eastern historiography and how the Kurdish historiography can be reshaped when the story of the Babans, together with the history of its surrounding states, is reintegrated into the history of Kurdish nationalism.

### Questions

Several questions led this study to come to being. The first question, which comes to mind, is the issue of "notables." Can we consider the politics followed by Kurdish notables of pre-Tanzimat period as part of the "politics of notables"? Do Kurdish notables fit into Hourani's theory on the notables? If not, then what are the ways in which his theory should be revised in order to integrate Kurdish notables in this paradigm? Related with these questions is the issue of "loyalty." Did the Babans stay loyal to their Sunni patrons, the Ottomans, from the first period they were incorporated into the empire? Did they easily change their loyalty from the Ottomans to the Iranians for the sake of power regardless of the issue of sectarian identity? How did they convince the population and local Kurdish *ulema* when they were forced to change their loyalty? What was their loyalty to and how did they define of being loyal to an overlord? How did the population of Sulaimaniya react to the changing hands between the Ottomans and Persians and between family members of Babans? Did they accommodate new patrons easily or did they long for old rulers? Religion and sectarianism is another issue this study will try to address. Where did the Kurdish Shafi'i population stand in the Hanafi dominated Ottoman law system? Were they able to accommodate their sectarian differences or did they have to deal with Hanafi law in everyday life? What is the place of Sufism? Were their opinion considered more legitimate by Kurdish populations and political leaders when it came to legal matters, where differences occurred between mystic-minded and law-minded *ulema*? Did the Babans have their own traditional way of solving legal matters or did they go along with the Sharia of *ulema* or Kurdish Sufis?

Compared to surrounding communities urbanization occurred relatively late among Kurds. With urbanization came the question of men versus women, tribal versus urban, oral versus written literature, etc. How did urbanized Kurds differ from Kurdish peasants and nomads during this period? Did they interact with each other and if so, how? What role did the women of Sulaimaniya play in society? How did Kurdish women influence political and social life? How did the Babans manage non-urban Kurds socially, politically, and financially? How did the founding of Sulaimaniya change the life of Kurdish populations in the area? How did the Baban court support and patronize the Sorani dialect?

Finally, the last question this dissertation tackles will focus on the centralization of the Kurds and the place of the Babans in the discourse of Kurdish nationalism. How were the Babans perceived versus the Bedir Khanis in the historiography of Kurdish nationalism? Did nationalists praise or condemn them for their role in Kurdish politics? How are they perceived in the official history of Iraqi Kurdistan and more specifically in Sulaimaniya and its surroundings? Were the Babans considered as another agent of the Ottomans to play a role in the buffer zone between Iran and Iraq? Or were they considered as a shrewd Kurdish principality, which played with the conflict between Ottomans-Persians for their own benefits? How did the locals react to the new modernization and centralization policies of the empire? More importantly, how did the Kurdish emirates deal with the post-Tanzimat policies of the Ottomans? After their removal from the Kurdish regions, were they dispersed or incorporated into the Ottoman bureaucratic system?

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

The first chapter will present the familial roots of the Baban family in classical and early modern sources, beginning with their first mention in the *Sharafname* of Sharaf Khan Bidlisi (1596) to the end of eighteenth century when the family settled in the city of Sulaimaniya (1784). This part will also include an overview of the Ottoman Iraq and the rise of the Mamluk rulers in the politics in Baghdad after the second half of eighteenth century. The focus will also be on the years between 1784 and 1813, examining how the Babans expanded their power over the region of Iraqi Kurdistan to the point of influencing the politics of Baghdad. It was during this period when the Baban family acquired enough power to be appointed as *mutasarrif* (regional leader) and given the title of “Pasha” in the region by the Ottoman Empire. One of the most powerful Baban leaders, Abdurrahman Pasha (1788 - 1813), emerged during this period. His rebellion in 1806 has been much considered by several Kurdish historians as the first revolt with nationalist sentiments. Answers to such claims are challenged by a thorough study of primary sources. I show that Abdurrahman Pasha tried to expand his realm in expense of the *vali* of Baghdad and he tried to be the only power in the province with the approval of the Sultan and with the economic and military power he had in hand.

Notables were not only made of *mirs*, *begs* and *aghas*, but also members of the religious class, like *ulema*, sheikhs, *seyids*, and mullahs were also influential figures in both the politics and the society. Through religious notables, religion became, sometimes, the most

influential political tool to establish alliances, to make deals, to vilify an enemy and to keep society in order. As a part of religion, sectarianism was well used and abused in this region, especially in a frontier where the two major Islamic sects, Sunnism and Shi'ism, met. Thus, the second chapter will analyze the influence of Sufi orders, particularly the Naqshbandi-Khalidi order, on the Baban family in Sulaimaniya. Mawlana Khalid received his early education and traveled to India in 1809 to seek further knowledge from Shah Abdullah al-Dahlawi, the sheikh of the Naqshbandi Sufi order in India. Within less than a year, Khalid traveled back to Sulaimaniya, where he remained for the next five years. His arrival in Sulaimaniya marked the beginning of the rivalry between the Naqshbandi and Qadiri Sufi orders. Qadiris tried to use Baban power against the Naqshbandis while Mawlana Khalid used the Ottoman protection and financial support to expand his religious and political power.

One of the most daunting tasks during the studies of this region was to bring out the voices of the “people from below,” particularly when the indigenous sources and documents on the social history are scarce. Studies on the urban history and the periphery of the Ottomans are in rise in the last few decades. However, this is the case only for some Arab and Balkan provinces, and Anatolia, while no work has been done on a Kurdish region or town so far. Despite such difficulties, I tried to reconstruct the life in a town and its surrounding with its women, peasants, non-muslims, as well as its economy, leisure time, architecture, and new literature. In its portrait of Sulaimaniya’s social life we will follow the classification of urban centers that Dina Rizk Khoury has made in her article on “Political Relations between City and State in the Middle East, 1700-1850.”

So to speak, the third chapter will examine the life of the people in Sulaimaniya. Here I will investigate the dichotomy between rural nomadism and urbanized settlement and how settlement changed Kurdish life. As part of this investigation, I will analyze the literature, art, architecture, and everyday life of a Shafii community in a Hanafi dominated empire. The story of the Kurdish women and peasants, who are two least treated groups in Kurdish historiography, is also included in this chapter. When bringing up the role the women played in the community of this town, there will be more detailed treatment of the life of the courtly women and their influence the politics of the Baban family. Related with the literature, the chapter will present a short history of the Kurdish dialect of Sorani and its influence in early to mid-nineteenth century Sulaimaniya. Several Kurdish poetic and literary works of Nali (1797-1870), Haji Qadiri Koyi (1816-1897) and Sheikh Riza Talabani (1842-1910) will be presented. After the Baban rulers were stripped of their power, Nali pays homage to the period of the Baban rule as being the best time for the Kurds. Talabani, appointed as a judge in the court of Sulaimaniya in the mid-nineteenth century, displays more Sufi tendencies in his poetry. By presenting on the artistic, literary, and administrative details of Sulaimaniya, I will provide a picture of what changed and what lasted while the city transferred from one hand to another between the Ottomans and Qajars.

The fourth chapter will focus on the rivalry between Mahmud Baban and his uncle, Abdullah I, during the years 1821-23. Prior to the Erzurum peace treaty of 1823, nephew and uncle shifted loyalties between the Ottoman and Qajar empires at breakneck speed in an effort to gain dominance. Rivalry between the valis of Baghdad and Kermanshah, the rulers of



Persia and Ottoman empires, respectively the Shah and the Sultan, will also be part of this chapter. There will be the details of the personalities of those rulers mentioned above as well. Each one has his own ambitions and agenda and each one tried to prove himself with his distinct personal desires. We will witness how the wars were waged upon the other only to prove to the Shah that he fit for a king. Religiosity of a leader also reshaped his politics alliance with his co-sectarian or opposition to the leader belongs to the rival sect.

The fifth chapter will examine the demise of the Baban rule in 1847, which brings an end to the semi-autonomous structure of Kurdistan that lasted since the early sixteenth century when all Kurdish leaders agreed to side with the Ottoman Empire in their conflict with the Safavids. Conflicts on the border, which were also triggered by the Baban Pashas, caused a new war and brought the central government to the frontier with a new treaty of Erzurum in 1847. The treaty meant more centralization policies would be imposed on the local tribes and common people with demarcation of borders between two states. Therefore, the year of 1847 signifies the implementation of centralization reforms as a part of the Tanzimat in Kurdish principalities. The Kurdish emirates tried their best to adapt to the new order imposed on them by the central state, but in the end they had to hand their power to the centrally appointed leaders and allow themselves to be incorporated into the Ottoman bureaucracy. Therefore, the proposed dissertation will investigate how their power play not only permitted the Baban family to increase their dominion but also played a hand in the eventual demise of their semi-autonomous rule in 1851. The reaction by the Kurdish notables to new policies of centralization and modernization are well known, but the commoners are not reflected in the scholarship. Here, there will also be some accounts of the local people on their reaction to Tanzimat. In the end it was not the notables but commoners who stayed behind in their ancient territories and dealt with the modern state apparatus.

## CHAPTER I

### A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THE RISE OF THE BABANS IN THE REGION, 1500-1800

#### Kurdish regions before the Ottomans

The Kurds appear to have no political entity before the tenth century C.E. since the Islamic empire dominated in The Middle East. Until the beginning of the eleventh century the Kurds had only small emirates. By the second millennium there were already two major Kurdish dynasties dominated in Kurdistan, namely Hasanwayhids (959 C.E.) in Hamadan and Marwanids (990 C.E.) in Mayyafariqin or present day Silvan. They stayed in the political scene until the end of the eleventh century. Later a much stronger Islamic dynasty, Ayyubids, emerged from non-Kurdish lands in Western Syria. However the founder of the dynasty, Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, was a Kurd coming from the Kurdish town of Shahrizor in southern Kurdistan. His military personnel and civil servants were made of Kurdish, Arab and Turkish men. Therefore, his state was an Arab or Turkish as much as Kurdish. That is probably the reason behind the claims of historians from these three groups to call Salah al-Din as one of theirs.<sup>73</sup>

When the Mongols went through Kurdistan in the thirteenth century they devastated the Kurdish tribes. Hulagu massacred almost all the tribal chiefs and replaced them with his own men. This incident left a weakened the Kurdish notables and tribal structure substantially. Although they recovered partially after the Mongol authority diluted in following century, it was another Mongol, Tamerlane, who occupied Kurdistan and undermined the political power of Kurdish rulers again. So, the Kurdish tribes stayed weak and vulnerable even during the Timurid period. The Kurdish chieftains and mirs regained some of their political power during the reign of the Qaraqyunlu (the black sheep), yet they were ill-treated by the Aqqyunlu (the white sheep), the following triumphant dynasty, because of their commitment to the previous dynasty.<sup>74</sup>

The lifespan of the two Quyunlus was going to be short once the Safavid dynasty was established under the Shia charismatic leader Shah Ismail at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Right after he found his state he declared the Twelver Shiism as the official religion of the empire and destroyed the Aqqyunlu state, which was already in decline. With this last strike on the Aqqyunlu, Kurdistan came under the control of Safavids, though not much changed as the Shah Ismail's approach towards the Kurds was no different than Uzun Hasan of the Aqqyunlu. Shah Ismail, as his predecessor state in Kurdistan, tried to keep a direct control over the Kurdish tribes and lands, hoping to expand his territories westward. As a result of the policies by the Aqqyunlu and the Safavids, the Kurdish emirates and the tribal

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<sup>73</sup> Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 46.

<sup>74</sup> Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 46-47.

structure in Kurdistan were greatly diversified. Accordingly, prior to the appearance of the Ottomans in the region there existed several Kurdish emirates, a few of them strong in the least accessible parts of Kurdistan, with many nomadic tribes going without a local authority. Such disintegration among the Kurdish emirates was caused by the Mongol invasion and this situation continued up until the Ottomans expanded their domain over the region.<sup>75</sup>

Among the few Kurdish mirs before the Ottomans arrived to Kurdistan was there the Babans. At the beginning of 1500s, the Babans lived in the Shahrizor (Shahra-zul in Sharafname) area, few kilometers North of Kirkuk, and had not yet moved to their next capital, Qala Cholan.<sup>76</sup> Some of the major tribes and families, Zanganah, Hamawand and Jaf, were still in Persia. The religious families like Shaikhan, Talabani, and Jabbari, who would rise in the political scene of Iraq, had not yet assumed any power. The valleys around Kirkuk were in possession of Kurdish peasantry dispersed around here and there and their villages had not been named yet. There were few fortress-towns in Kurdistan; Darnah and Panjvin on the passes of the later frontiers of the Ottomans and Safavids, Koy, Harir, and Rawanduz between the Small and Greater Zabs, and Aqrah on the Greater Zab. Above the Greater Zab, Amediye, the capital of the ancient Kurdish Emirate of Bahdinan, had already a long history. The mir of Bahdinan in Amediye kept Aqrah, Dair and Dohuk, and once in a while Zakho, in his possession. From the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries the emirate became part of Ardalan, another powerful emirate on the Southeast of Hawraman Mountains and centered in Sennah. After this period it went under the suzerainty of Jala'iris, followed by sacred Bahdinani family from the Ottoman expansion up until mid-nineteenth century.<sup>77</sup> Mukris were another emirate in the North of Ardalan, which was around starting from Seljuki period until the middle of the eighteenth century on the Iranian side. When the Ottomans came to the region in the sixteenth century the Mukris, headquartered in Saujbulaq, were already under the influence of Ardalan. The great tribe of the Pizhdar, which spread widely on the both sides of the Ottoman-Safavid border, and the family of Soran, which would later turn into another Kurdish emirate in the northern Iraq, were of the Mukris. Hakkari emirate had also existed since Seljuki period and kept a considerable area in the north stretching to Bitlis, in the east nearly to the Lake Urmiye, and in the south to the east of Tigris.<sup>78</sup> Hakkari begs were related

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<sup>75</sup> Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 47.

<sup>76</sup> Gülşen-i Hulefa states that the leader of Shahrizor area, Ma'mun, was mere hostage of Sultan Süleyman from 1535 and on to secure the loyalty of the region. After a Turkish official career, Ma'mun settled down in Hillah and dealt with the siege of Shahrizor. Taking the account generally from Sharafname, Gülşeni records that Shahrizor was rejoined to the Ottoman Empire after 1554. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 2002, first published by Oxford University, 1925), 43-44; Ibn Hawkal, in the 10th century A.D., mentions that as a walled and fortified town Shahrizor was inhabited by the Kurdish tribes. The Kurds in this region numbered 60.000 tents when Ibn Muhalhal visited here and Mustawfi recorded, in 14th century, that Shahrizor was still a flourishing town. Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem Conquest to the Time of Timur*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 190-191.

<sup>77</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 6-7.

<sup>78</sup> For more information on Hakkari see: Alexander Khachatryan, "The Kurdish Principality of Hakkariya (14th-15th Centuries)," *Iran & the Caucasus*, Vol. 7, No. 1/2 (2003), 37-58; Derviş Yusif Hesen Heruri, *Welate Hekari (945-1336 A.D.)*, (trans. from Arabic to Kurdish by Musedek Tewfi), (Dohuk: Khani Publishing, 2010); Şerephan Bitlisi, *Şerefname*, (translated from Arabic to Turkish by M. Emin Bozarslan), (Istanbul: Deng Yayınları, 1971, 2009) 76-87; See also on the origin and variations of the name of Hakkari: Cheref-ouddine, *Cheref-Nameh, Fastes de la Nation Kourde, Vol. I, Part II*, (Translated from Persian into French and commented by François Bernard Charmoy) (St. Petersburg, 1870), 438-441

with the Prince of Bitlis and they sometimes found dependent dynasties from Jazirah ibn Umar and Julamerg. By the fifteenth century none of these owned the sway of Hakkari mirs as each one initiated its own separate dynasty.<sup>79</sup>



**Map 1: Location of the most important Kurdish emirates in sixteenth century**  
**Source: Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 158.**

The Emirate of Ardalan needs to be paid a little bit of attention here since it was perhaps the oldest established Kurdish principedom located on the both sides of Zagros ranges since the twelfth century. Ardalan located adjacent to the Baban territories on the Iranian side of the border and for centuries became the major rival to the latter until the early nineteenth century. In Perry's words Baban and Ardalan "have traditional east-west ties of culture and kinship, which were bisected by the north-south frontier between Ottoman Turkey and Iran." Such proximity sometimes brought them close through intermarriages, while mostly caused trouble in the region. Thus "affinities and dynastic rivalries," aptly adds Perry, "furnished pretexts for interference by their respective overlords, leading to periodic proxy wars."<sup>80</sup> The 'bani Ardalan' probably sprang from a noble Kurdish family of Diyarbekir and later migrated to the Iranian Kurdistan. Once completing with the resettlement the family rapidly expanded its suzerainty over the Shahrizor, Arbil, Koy Sanjaq, Rawanduz, Harir and Amadiya. Despite

<sup>79</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 6-7

<sup>80</sup> John Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 75

they could not keep these territories in hands because of the rise of Turcoman Jalairis with the rule of a weak mir in Ardalani, they regained the area in the late fifteenth century during the firm government of Ma'mun Ardalani. Ardalanis surpassed all the other Kurdish dynasties and its neighbors in the state structure and culture.<sup>81</sup> From the establishment of Safavids on Ardalanis kept allegiance to them until Selim crushed Shah Ismail's forces in Chaldiran in 1514. At this point the Vali of Ardalani decided to come to terms with Sultan Selim, even if it was a hopeless attempt since it did not last much. The Ardalani rulers had to choose between the Safavids and the Ottomans and at last they chose to stick with the former since their heartlands and capital town, Sinna, lay along the eastern foothills of the Zagros Mountains. In 1537, when Sultan Süleyman conquered Baghdad and Iraq, the Ardalani rulers were driven out of the fertile Shahrizur plain. However, they were able to recapture it on behalf of the Safavids at the turn of the century and held it until 1630. A decade later it was confirmed, once and for all, as a part of the Ottoman territory with the treaty of Zuhab (1639).<sup>82</sup>

### **The Origins of Babans**

Although there is no pre-Ottoman source about where the Babans came from, they were already around Shehrizur area, where remains between today's Sulaimaniya and Kirkuk, before the Ottomans came to the region. According to a mythological story, which I talk more about below that Rich recorded from a man arriving from Darishmana to Sulaimaniya, Babans were descending from an English woman.<sup>83</sup> Despite Darishmana was a tiny village in the region of Pizhdar in the west of Sinna on the Iranian side of the border, it was a venerated place and the people of this region were well respected by the Babans since it was considered as the ancient seat of their ancestors before they moved to Qala Cholan and Sulaimaniya. The story goes:

There were two brothers in Darishmana, Fakih Ahmed and Khidder. They had suffered much from the hostility of the Bulbassis, who were the most powerful people of Pizhdar. Fakih Ahmed, who was of a bold and proud spirit, quitted his village in disgust, and swore never to return to it unless he should be in a situation to avenge himself. He went to Constantinople and entered into the Turkish service. It so happened that the Sultan was at that time at war with the Franks (The relation said, the English. C.J. Rich). In those days battles were generally decided by single combat. A champion had come forth from the Frank host who had for five days kept the field against the flower of the Turkish chivalry, all of whom he had successively overthrown and slain.

Fakih Ahmed offered Sultan to meet this formidable enemy. Upon his request Sultan called him to his presence to meet and ask about the situation of his land. Satisfied with his look, Sultan decided to supply him with a horse and arms and send him to the battlefield.

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<sup>81</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 6.

<sup>82</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 32.

<sup>83</sup> Rich, James C. *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan and on the Site of Ancient Nineveh vol. I*, (James Duncan: London, 1836), 291-296; See also Charmoy's translation of Sharafnama for the origins of the Babans. Cheref-ouddine, *Cheref-Nameh, Fastes de la Nation Kourde, Vol. I, Part II*, 477.

He ran his course, and overthrew the Frank knight. Upon alighting to cut off his head, to his great astonishment he found that his fallen enemy was a young maiden, who besought him to spare her life and that she would marry him. He brought her back to the Turkish camp in triumph; and upon the Sultan's asking him what reward he should bestow on him, he claimed and obtained a firman, constituting him Bey, and bestowing on him the village and lands of Darishmana in perpetuity. He here displayed his modesty or his ignorance; had he claimed the whole of Koordistan he would have obtained it.

Faqih Ahmed returned to his land as a hero with his new English companion named Keighan and over the years had two children from her, Baba Süleyman and Budak Keighan. However, this was not the 'happily ever after' life for Faqih Ahmed as he quarreled constantly with Bilbas tribe. Once he was away from his home, Keighan staying behind, and the men of Bilbas tribe took the opportunity to attack his lands. The English maiden took the opportunity to save Faqih Ahmed's land and pay him back for sparing her life in the encounter they had before. She courageously battled and put all four-five hundred horsemen on the flight. After her victory she gathered the people of Darishmana and addressed them as follows:

Men of Darishmana, Fakih Ahmed spared my life when I was in his power. I have this day requited the service, which was all I wanted or waited for. Now tell Fakih Ahmed what you have seen, and also that I am gone where he shall see me no more. Tell him that I charge him not to follow me, for it will be vain, and I shall do him harm, which, God knows, I would not willingly be the cause of.

After finish what she said she took turned her horse and vanished from the sight. After his return Faqih Ahmed was shaken from what happened and decided to follow her despite her rejection. He came across her close to a valley near Pizhder and begged her to return to him:

'It is impossible,' she said; 'you are a Mahometan; I am a Frank: I go to the land of my fathers. Farewell. Come not near me, or I will harm you.' Still the enamoured Fakih Ahmed persisted, when she raised her spear, and thrust him through the shoulder. He fell, and she galloped off. But she had not gone far, when she bethought herself that she had made him but a poor requital for his mercy to her when her life was at his disposal, and that, though he was a Mahometan, he was yet the father of her children. She therefore relented, returned, found him yet breathing, and applied a powerful ointment to his wound, which placed him out of danger till he should receive succour, which was not far off. She then left him again.

The dedicated lover and husband, once he recovered from his wound, he decided to pursue her again despite "the rough usage he had experienced at her hands." He traveled many lands and finally reached "Frenghistan." At dusk he arrived to a large city, where he heard the sound of carousing. "The mehter khana or band was playing, the mashallahs or torches lighted, and all the other preparations making for a toey or nuptial- feast." He looked around to see what the cause of jubilation was and inquired about it from an old woman.

She informed him that the daughter of the King had gone to war with the Mahometans, that she was just returned, after having been missing for several years, and that she was then going to be married to her cousin. Fakih Ahmed entreated the old woman to procure him admission to the nuptial-feast as a spectator, which she at length agreed to do, provided he would disguise himself in woman's attire. He so managed as to be close at hand during the first interview between the fair Keighan and her proposed spouse. The lady came forth; and the ungracious bridegroom immediately saluted her with a box on the ear, saying, 'Thou hast been a prisoner among the Mahometans; thou hast been dishonoured; and darest thou to show thyself before me?' The bride, in her anguish, exclaimed in Koordish, a language that had become familiar to her, 'Oh, Fakih Ahmed that thou wert here!' Immediately the person invoked stepped forth, slew the bridegroom, and escaped with the bride to Constantinople, where the Sultan bestowed on him an addition to his former grant.

Fakih Ahmed and his now willing bride returned to Pizhder, where he lived happily with her for the rest of his days. Before he died, he completely subjected the districts of Pizhder, Mergeh, and Mawutt. He was succeeded by his eldest son Baba Suliman, the ancestor of the present princes of Sulimania, who conquered the remaining districts of that portion of Koordistan now under their authority. The second son, Boodakh Keighan, died without issue.

As every modern nation created an origin myth to establish a legitimate history of their own and the tribes and small ethnic groups, like the Babans, also did the same thing to preserve their unique identity and "to strengthen or even to create nationalist sentiment by fostering a sense of group cohesion."<sup>84</sup> Babans made some other stories too to create the idea of heroism. One of these stories with different versions is told in C.J. Edmonds's book *Kurds, Arbas and Turks*, where he gives the example of 'twelve horsemen of Mariwan.'<sup>85</sup> The name of the Babans occurs variously in different Western sources as Babehe, Bebbehe, or. Modern Kurdish and Persian sources refer them as Baban or Al-e Baban, while they are called Babanlar or Babanzadeler in Turkish historical literature.<sup>86</sup> Longrigg states that the Sorans

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<sup>84</sup> See more about the origin myth and its place in the history of ethnic groups in Jane Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions: Myth, Memory, and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2003), 14, 1-19.

<sup>85</sup> C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 54.

<sup>86</sup> W. Behn, "Baban", *Encyclopedia Iranica*; Scholars speculate on the origin of the name "baban." Some says this name was given by the Shah of Iran to Faqih Ahmed because of his service to the Iranian king and the courage he showed in a war. The Shah patted him on the back and praised him by saying "baba, baba!" From then on, everyone used "Baban" as an epithet for him. Some others claimed that Faqih Ahmed was named after he won a battle against the Franks (this could change with British or Russians in different sources) and caught a princess in the war. After capturing this Christian princess Faqih Ahmed asked his father marry him with her and his father answered him with "baba!" for his courage. This story spread among the Kurds and he was called with this name after then. Yamülkizade Aziz, "Kürd Tarihinden: Baban Hanedanı" *Jin, Vol. 9*, (16 Kanun-ı sani 1335), 1-6; A nationalist historian of late Ottoman period states that the original word "bebe," which refers to the old name of the Babans, means "baby(çocuk)" in Turkish. He claims that "bebe" is the "lightened version (and Turkish word) of bebek." He goes further and insists that the name of the founder of the Baban family, "Pir Budak Beg," is also a Turkish name as his nickname "bebe." "Therefore" he adds that "as a strong evidence this shows that he is a Turk" and so the whole family. Such ideas were produced in the last few years of the Ottoman period, especially during the administration of the Committee of the Union and Progress, when they planned to turkify the population in the name of "civilizing." Writers in this period did not hesitate to use the fake Western

were the dominant mirs in this region before the Babans appeared. There is no clear connection between Soran and Pizhdar with Babans but after Faqih Ahmed appeared in the region the Baban name became more noticeable as “he bore and bequeathed the family name of Baban.”<sup>87</sup> He was a religious leader and considered as a phenomenon by many in Kurdistan.<sup>88</sup> Although it is Faqih Ahmed from Pizhdar who made known the name of the family the origin of the Babans still remains obscure.<sup>89</sup> As he showed more nobility, personality and success he extended further his authority over the Shahribazar and neighboring areas. Later his son Marwand continued his accomplishments. Yet, the real founder of the Babans was Süleyman Beg, or Baba Süleyman, who was the son of Marwand and who became an outstanding figure in the area in the second half of the seventeenth century. From the time of Süleyman Beg until 1784, when Sulaimaniya became the capital of the Babans, Qala Cholan was the headquarter of the emirate.

Despite the western sources focus on the name of Faqih Ahmed and can not trace back the roots of the Babans further than seventeenth century, the Ottoman sources like *Mühimme defterleri* and the Kurdish sources such as Sharafname contain some information about Babans as early as 1544. Therefore we could say that the first source mention about the Babans is the Mühimme defteri for the year of 1544-1546 (H. 951-952).<sup>90</sup> The documents numbering 130, 131, 132 and 193 in this Mühimme defteri cover different issues, but the information on the Babans is scattered in between the lines. Located on the Iran-Iraq borders the Baban territory is recorded as a “sanjaq/ sancak” which is led by a certain Budak Beg and was designated as a part of Baghdad province. The document #130 is addressed to Budak Beg of Baban (“Baban begi Budak Beg”) and asks for the protection of the goods, lives and families of the Soran people while making sure for the punishment of the rebels.<sup>91</sup> Although the document does not indicate any date when the Baban territories were incorporated into the Empire, considering such an order, it was clear that the family of the Baban was already well integrated into the system and was trusted as a local leader and an agent of the Sultan in order to maintain the order in the southern Kurdistan and the border. The document #131 was addressed to Sultan Hüseyin of İmadiye (Amediye), another Kurdish mir, and #132 is addressed to Beylerbeyi Ayas Pasha of Baghdad. Both fermans order to capture Aksak Seyfüddin, a rebellious Kurdish notable and a copy of it is required to be given to a group of

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names and academic titles in order to prove their objectivity and being scientific. To make sure that the name of the author is original the publication house would clearly state that the book was ‘published by Berlin Oriental Academy’ even though it stated at the bottom of the first page that it was published by a publisher in Istanbul. Doktor Fer Mic(?), *Kürdler: Tarihi ve İctimai Tetkikatı*, ( Kütüphanesi-i Sevdâ: İstanbul, 1334), 258.

<sup>87</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 80.

<sup>88</sup> Ahmed was called as “Faqih” because of his interest in the religious studies. Yamülkizade Aziz, “Kürd Tarihinden: Baban Hanedanı” and F.R.C. Bagley, “Egypt and the Eastern Arab Countries in the First Three Centuries of the Ottoman Period,” in *The Last Great Muslim Empires*, eds. H.J. Kisslings et al, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1969, 1997), 50-96.

<sup>89</sup> Longrigg, 80; “Baban” *EI2*.

<sup>90</sup> Halil Sahillioğlu, ed. *Mühimme Defteri No. 12321 located in the Topkapı Palace Archives, 951-952/1544-1546* (İstanbul: IRCICA, 2002), 106-108, 156.

<sup>91</sup> “...Göresin, mezkurlar (Sûraniler) ma-dam ki hüsn-i ita’at ile kendü hallerinde eyilük üzere olalar canlarına ve mallarına ve ehl ve ‘iyallarına kimesneye zarar ve ziyân etdirmeyesin ki anlar dahi sair kullarım gibi kendü hallerinde olalar. Amma şöyle ki eyilük üzere olmayub ‘isyan ve fesad idecek olurlar ise ol vakıt ehl-i fesad ve şena’atın muktazay-i şer ve kanun üzere haklarından gelesin.” Document #130, Sahillioğlu, ed. *Mühimme Defteri No. 12321*, 106(5-8 Sevval 951/ 20-23 December, 1544).



the local Kurdish begs, including Budak beg of Baban Sanjaq and another Budak Beg of Harir and Devin sanjaqs. The last document #193 is directly addressed to the Begs of Kurdistan (“Kürdistan beglerine birer hüküm ki”) and asks them to obey to the orders of the Sultan and keep ready their military personnel in case Sultan Süleyman orders them to join his army for the war (‘sefer-i hümayun’). The ferman includes a full list of the sanjaqs located in the province of Baghdad, which shows Baban sanjaq as part of the vilayet and Budak Beg as its leader.<sup>92</sup>

Ahmed Cevdet states that the ruler of the land was Faqih Ahmed Bey when the Ottomans conquered Iraq in 1530s and later the “Baban Ocaklığı” was created under his leadership.<sup>93</sup> Following this information he notes that the struggle for taking the seat of this sanjaq was always an issue between the members of the Baban family. In these situations one contender would be backed by the Iranians while the other candidate was nominated by the Ottomans. For centuries up until 1847, when Iranian and the Ottoman states signed the peace agreement in Erzurum, the politics in the Baban lands was shaped by the decisions made in the capitals of both aforementioned states.

Sharafname of Sharaf Khan Bidlisi is the only local and, besides Mühimme Defteri of 1544-45, another Eastern source referring to the Babans before seventeenth century. Sharafname also gives the name of Budak Beg (Pir Budak Beg) as the founder of the Baban dynasty but this Budak Beg appears much earlier than the one mentioned in the Mühimme Defteri. Pir Budak Beg probably lived 35 to 40 years before Budak Beg since Sharafname names five consecutive successors (in order: Pir Budak Beg, Budak bin Rüstem, Pir Nazar bin Bayram, Mir İbrahim, Süleyman, and Hacı Şeyh) as leaders of the Babans before the latter appears on the stage of history in 1534 (h. 941). After the death of Pir Budak Beg at the beginning of the sixteenth century the rulership passed to his nephew, Pir Budak bin Rüstem. However, since bin Rüstem was not worth of ruling his military personnel and his slaves did not submit to him, he passed away after such despair. After he was gone without having a son or leaving an heir behind, the emirate was headed by a certain Pir Nazar bin Bayram. He was well received by both people and soldiers of Baban because of his integrity and passion for his people. During his time the Baban territories extended over Kifri. Like his predecessor, once he was gone he left no one behind as a leader and the emirate was divided in between two of his best men, Süleyman and Mir İbrahim. Ruthless rivalry between both sides brought chaos and antagonism into the land of the Babans. After Süleyman eliminated Mir İbrahim he reunited the territories and run the leadership for the next eleven years. Once Süleyman passed away, Hacı Sheikh bin İbrahim, one of three sons of Mir İbrahim, came back from exile in the palace of Shah Tahmasp in Iran and became the next mir of the Babans. He

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<sup>92</sup>“... Sair seferlere kıyas olunmaya ‘asker tertib-i edevat-i harb ve kütallerinde sen dahi ihtimam idüb gaflet üzere olmayub ferman-ı şerifim mucibince hazır ve müheyya olmak babında enva-ı mesa’i-i cemilin zuhura getüresin...” Document #193, Sahillioğlu, ed. *Mühimme Defteri No. 12321*, 156.

<sup>93</sup> *Tarihi-i Cevdet, Vol. 1*. Transcribed and edited by Dündar Günday, (Istanbul, 1983), 295-296. Although it is obvious that the Sanjaq of Baban was created when Sultan Süleyman conquered Baghdad in 1534, Longrigg gives a much later date, 1694, when Baban Süleyman Beg defeated and invaded the Kurdish Ardalán Emirate on the Iranian side of neighboring border. Longrigg states that it was the result of this victory that the Sultan bestowed the Sanjaq of Baban on Süleyman Beg as a favor and included in Kirkuk. This is perhaps the date when the Baban family had no hereditary heir but Süleyman Beg, a trusty of the family, as the only option for the leadership of the sanjaq. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 80-81.

heroically defended and saved the emirate from three raids of the Shah of Iran and in all these confrontations he received no help from the princes of Kurdistan.<sup>94</sup>

In the year of 1534 Sultan Süleyman seized Baghdad and decided to pass the winter there. Hacı Sheikh, the ruler of the Baban emirate at the time, decided to pay a visit to the Sultan and he headed towards Baghdad. When he arrived to Merge region the road was blocked by a group of unruly people and he was killed with his brother Emire. After the Sultan received the news of Hacı Sheikh's death he appointed Hacı's son, Budak Beg, as the ruler of Baban. He stayed in power for the next sixteen years and he was well remembered for his justice and fairness among the locals. After a while a member of the Baban family, Mir Hüseyin, whose father was killed by one of the men of Pir Nazar bin Bayram, Süleyman, convinced the Sultan to appoint him with a ferman to the head of Baban sanjaq. When he came back to Kurdistan he received backing from the ruler of Amediye, Hüseyin Beg, for his claim to the throne of Baban territory. Outnumbered by such an alliance Budak Beg decided not to stand on the way and fled to Iran to the palace of Shah Tahmasp. After six months of stay he was invited by the Rüstem Pasha, the grand Vezir of the Sultan, to Istanbul and was helped by him to receive a ferman to take back his position in Baban sanjaq from Mir Hüseyin.

Budak Beg came face to face with the Hüseyin Beg in an area called Rabiyyet Bulak and he defeated the latter and his army made of eight thousand foot soldiers and horsemen. Hüseyin Beg decided to leave the battlefield immediately after he lost some of his men and fled to Istanbul, where he was introduced to the Sultan by the military personnel of the palace and received an imperial order to be the joint leader of the Baban Sanjaq. He came back to the sanjaq without delay but after a short while he got into a conflict with Budak Beg and was killed by the latter during the quarrel. When Sultan Süleyman heard about this he became very angry with Budak Beg and ordered to all the neighboring Kurdish mirs of Baban territory to walk on the latter and eliminate him. Budak Beg found no solution but seeking refuge with the ruler of Amediye, Hüseyin Beg, as his deceased adversary did before. Hüseyin Beg of Amediye took the case of Budak Beg to the Sultan and begged for his amnesty and his reappointment to the leadership of the Baban Sanjaq. Sultan decided to forgive him but instead of appointing him to his old position, he gave Budak Beg the seat of Ayntap Sanjaq, while the control of the Baban Sanjaq was given to a certain Veli Beg.

The end of Budak Beg came when he backed Şehzade Bayezid in Kütahya against Şehzade Selim over the vilayet of Konya. Selim won the battle. Meanwhile, Sultan Süleyman asked his defeated son to decapitate the rebellious Budak Beg and send his head to Istanbul in return for his amnesty. Bayezid implemented his father's wish and took care of him but he

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<sup>94</sup> Bitlisi, *Şerefname*, (2009), 212-215; Even if the British diplomat, John Malcolm, obtained the first manuscript of the Sharafname in early 1800 as a Westerner, it was the Russian Orientalists who collected more editions and translated into a Western language, namely French. Several Russian Orientalists, most notably Christian d. Fraehn(1782-1851), Mirza Jafar Topchibashev(1790-1868) and Francois-Bernard Charmoy(1793-1869) worked on an early manuscript of the book, dated on Shawwal 1007/ May 1599. For more information on these works and the others see E. Vasilyena, 'The First Persian, French and Russian Editions of the Sharaf-nama', *Manuscripta Orientalia*, Vol. 5, No.1, March 1999, 27-31 and J.S. Musaelian, 'On the First Kurdish Edition of the Sharaf-nama by Mulla (Mela) Mahmud Bayazidi,' *Manuscripta Orientalia*, Vol. 5, No.4, December 1999, 3-6.

himself followed the same path of Budak Beg by seeking refuge in Shah Tahmasp's palace with all his four sons in 1559. In 1560, Bayezid was strangled with his all sons by Shah Tahmasp for a generous amount of subsidies sent by Sultan Süleyman.<sup>95</sup> While Bayezid's offsprings were strangled to death, Budak Beg left four sons behind (Hacı Şeyh, Hüseyin Beg, Mir Muhammad and Mir Seyfeddin). Hacı Şeyh was in the service of Şehzade Bayezid in exile in Iran and he was also executed with the rest of members in the entourage. Mir Seyfeddin died from natural causes. Among the rest of Budak Beg's sons Mir Muhammad was the only one who could retain a leadership not in Baban but rather in Kestane Sanjaq.

From the first decades that Baban territories were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire, the family kept the leadership in one way or another. Once in a while no inherited family members remained behind when the leader passed away, however each time a strongman among the military personnel of the Baban family took over the power in the name of the dynasty. Garzoni precisely formulated the scene:

Their princes do not always reign by succession from father to son, but rather to someone from the same family who finds himself more powerful after the death of the reigning ruler. Nevertheless, this man can make himself successor only after many battles and treacheries.<sup>96</sup>

Such a tradition would appear later elsewhere in provinces of the Ottoman Empire such as the Georgian and Albanian slaves turned into elite military members and run for power in Baghdad and Egypt.

From the beginning of being part of the Empire and on, the Baban members would keep using the advantage of their geographical position on the Ottoman-Iranian border each time they needed to keep the power in hand. As early as 1520 the members of the family were stuck into the power struggle with each other and each time one side would seek support from the Iranian shah for his claim to leadership while the other would go to Istanbul and try to convince the Sultan for him to be appointed as the beg of Baban Sanjaq. Such strategy became a tradition of politics making and stayed with the Babans until 1840s when they were finally removed from the power. Once in a while the supporters of the family members were the provincial governors (mostly the *vali* of Baghdad on the Ottoman side and the *vali* of Kermanshah of Azerbaijan on the Iranian side) on both sides of the border but the nature of the power seeking remained the same.

Geography did not only play a part on the local politics but also influenced the decision making in the center of the Empire. Being on the frontiers where it took months for the Ottomans to arrive in times of a conflict with Safavids helped the Babans to have a special treatment by the center of the Empire. Their territories were never considered as *timar*, which means that they never had to pay a large amount of tax or provide the Sultan's army with

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<sup>95</sup> Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey, Vol. 1*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 110.

<sup>96</sup> Maurizio Garzoni. *Grammatica e vocabolario della lingua kurda*. (Roma, 1787), 5-6. I wish to thank Selim Tezcan for his help in translation of Garzoni's work from Italian to English.

military personnel. All they were required by the Sultan was to keep the Eastern frontier intact and remain settled in the position where they were.

### **Incorporation of the Kurds and Kurdistan into the Ottoman Empire**

First the tribes in the northern part of Kurdistan joined to the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Selim I after the war of Çaldıran with Safavids and the conquest was later expanded southward during the rule of Sultan Süleyman. Before the Ottomans expanded their realm over Iraq, a noble Kurdish mir, İdris-i Bidlisi, tried to convince the Kurdish tribal leaders in the region to form an alliance against the Safavid forces as the latter considered this area a strategic military zone while the Sultan wanted to preserve the stability of it and use it as a buffer zone between two powers.<sup>97</sup> Bidlisi corresponded with the tribes of Baban, Soran and Bradost in order to convince them to unite under the leadership of Soran for the protection of their territories against the Safavids.<sup>98</sup> The coalition of these three Kurdish emirates included the Mukris, who held the territories to the southeast of Lake Urmiye. Although Sultan Selim did not conquer this region yet, Bidlisi asked them to occupy it in the name of the Ottoman Empire. Such an approach helped the Ottomans to enlarge its domain in the region slowly and gradually. So one can suggest that through Bidlisi Sultan Selim played an important role in the unification of the Kurdish mirs and their territorial defense against Safavid threat. Tezcan states that the result of the political deal between Selim I and the Kurdish emirs bore its first fruits in 1515. A letter written by Selim to Bidlisi in November 1515 states that the Sultan had sent to Mehmed Pasha a number of blank documents, which bore the imperial seal. These were supposed to be filled out by Bidlisi with the name of each Kurdish emir to whom they are bestowed. Additionally, Selim also sent some other empty documents with the imperial signature to be used as *istimalet-names* (persuasion letters), in order to convince other emirs of Kurdistan to join to the Ottomans.<sup>99</sup>

After the Kurdish emirates joined to the Ottoman Empire the administrative organization in the eastern borderland was formed in such a way as to allow for both the central control of the empire and local autonomy of the mirs. The ferman dating from 1518 and 1533 contained two administrative systems. In the ferman dated on 1518, Selim I asks Bidlisi to help Bıyıklı Mehmed Pasha in organization of the Kurdish territories into *sanjaqs* and *timars*. This meant that the Kurdish mirs and begs would have the revenue of the land they hold but the property of the land would be in the hands of the Sultan. However, the Sultan allowed the Kurdish notables to leave their rights of the revenue to their son as an inheritance, which was known as *yurtluk* and *ocaklık*.<sup>100</sup> *Ocaklık*, which literally means hearth, was used to refer to some of the certain districts of Kurdistan to define their political

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<sup>97</sup> Ebru Sönmez, "An Acem statesman in the Ottoman court: İdris-i Bidlisi and the making of the Ottoman policy on Iran," (Master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2006), 78.

<sup>98</sup> The Archives of Topkapı palace include letters sent from Bidlisi to Selim I. For more details see the letter E. Nr. 8833/I and Sönmez, *An Acem statesman in the Ottoman court*, 78

<sup>99</sup> Baki Tezcan, "The development of the use of Kurdistan as a geographical description and the incorporation of this region into Ottoman Empire in the 16th century," in *the Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, eds. Kemal Çiçek et al., 4 vols. (Ankara:Yeni Türkiye, 2000), vol. III, pp, 540-553

<sup>100</sup> Sönmez, "An Acem statesman in the Ottoman court", 91-92.

autonomy and inherited position of their Kurdish leaders.<sup>101</sup> Most of the lands belong to the Kurdish mirs on the border were considered as *Ocaklık*. Thus, they were exempted from the rules of taxation applied to *miri* lands, which were classified according to their incomes.<sup>102</sup> Algeria, Libya and Tunis were also considered as *ocaklık* (or *garb ocakları*), though they were principally elective up until eighteenth century and after this period Libya and Algeria became hereditary.<sup>103</sup>

During the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent another ferman was proclaimed in 1533. This time more privileges were given to the Kurdish mirs and begs:

[Kanuni Sultan Süleyman] gives to the Kurdish beys who, in his father Yavuz Sultan Selim's times, opposed the Kızılbaş and who are currently serving the State (Devlet) with faith, and who joined specifically in the Serasker sultan Ibrahim Pasha's Iran expedition with courage—both as a reward for their loyalty and courage, and their application and requests being taken into consideration—the provinces and fortresses that have been controlled by each of them as their yurtluk and ocaklık since past times along with the places that were given to them with separate imperial licenses (berat); and their provinces, fortresses, cities, villages, and arable fields (mezraa) with all their harvest, under the condition of inheritance from father to son, are also given to them as their estate (temlik). There should never be any external aggression and conflict among them. This glorious order (emr-i celile) shall be obeyed; under no condition shall it be changed. In case of a bey's death, his province shall be given, as a whole, to his shall divide the province contingent upon mutual agreement among themselves. If they cannot reach any compromise, then whoever the Kurdistan beys decide to be the best choice shall succeed, and through private ownership (mülkiyet) he shall be the holder (mutasarrıf) of the land forever. If the bey has no heir or relative, then his province shall not be given to anybody from outside. As a result of consultation with the Kurdistan beys, the region shall be given to either beys or beyzades [someone else from the beys family] suggested by the Kurdistan beys.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Nejat Göyünç, "Yurtluk-Ocaklık deyimleri hakkında" in *Prof. Bekir Kütükoğluna Armağan* (Istanbul: I.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1991), 271-273 and Baki Tezcan, "The development of the use of Kurdistan as a geographical description and the incorporation of this region into Ottoman Empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> century," in the *Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, eds. Kemal Çiçek et al., 4 vols. (Ankara:Yeni Türkiye, 2000), vol. III, pp, 540-553.

<sup>102</sup> The Ottoman lands were classified as *mülk*, free hold land, *vakıf*, the land allocated for pious and charitable purposes, and *miri*, agricultural land. The last of those categories was the most common classification and also was the major source for the financial income of the empire. The Kurdish emirates like Baban, Hakkari and Beyazid, which were bordered with the Safavid Iran were categorized as *mülk*, thus exempted from paying such high tax percentages. Having such a status gave more freedom and autonomy to these emirates. Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 52.

<sup>103</sup> Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 223-224.

<sup>104</sup> A copy of this ferman was published in Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri*, (Ankara: Türk Çalışmaları Enstitüsü, 1980), document no. 16, 42-43. A copy of the original document is added to the book in the end and but he does not record the catalogue information about it. Özoğlu states that the document is in the collection of Hatt-ı Hümayun, # 20898-C, however I was not able to locate the document since the Hatt-ı Hümayun collection starts after 1730 and the entry in the catalogue for this number is not about the ferman but rather focuses on some correspondence seized by Davud Pasha of Baghdad from a spy. Still I rely on the document transcribed by Sevgen and translated by Hakan Özoğlu with a modified version of it. The

One can see from the ferman of Sultan Süleyman that some Kurdish notables were granted to hold their lands as freehold (*temlik*) as oppose to the more centralized administrative division that Selim I presented. Two different approaches to the Kurdish territories by both sultans created a system that held diverse land regimes. Such results might have been because of the negotiations that went on during the years of following the decision of Kurdish *mirs* to join the Ottoman Empire against the Safavid threat. The deal between Sultan Selim and Kurdish *mirs* led by İdris-i Bidlisi was agreed with some compromises from both sides as the former wanted to pull the strings of Kurdish *begs* while the latter wanted to have more independence.<sup>105</sup> Beyond that each Sultan, Selim I and Süleyman the Magnificent, had different approaches to the eastern borders. The former took it much personally the antagonism with Shah Ismail and suspected of the Kurdish nobles of the eastern borders while Sultan Süleyman acted more pragmatically by trusting more into the locals for the protection of the borders and in return gave them more freedom with less economical burden for their work. Besides, in Süleyman time there was a more reliant Shah, Tahmasb, instead of Shah Ismail and it was more than twenty years that the Kurdish lands were incorporated into the realm of the empire. In the end, the Sultan needed a steady frontier power as a *cordon sanitaire* or a group of small states surrounding the eastern border as a buffer zone in order to protect the backdoor of the empire from the raids and invasions of the Shi'i state. By keeping the semi-autonomous status of these emirates and exempting them from certain tax burdens, the Ottomans tried to establish a permanent defense shield against any threat from the East.<sup>106</sup> Since the territories of Baban family and the neighbor emirates were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Sultan Süleyman with the ferman he issued for a land beyond the limits of the empire and much closer to sphere of the influence of the Safavids, the Kurdish *mirs* enjoyed from this special status through following centuries.

Once the Sultan realized that it had to stabilize and protect the eastern borders, he decided to negotiate with the Kurdish *mirs* and accept, more or less, their demands and establish a status with some alteration. This was not an easy task as the Kurdish emirates demonstrated various and complicated structures. Some Kurdish territories were administered by hereditary rulers while some others choose their leader among a confederative group. As Özoğlu suggests, in order to control the border region more efficiently the empire needed to reorganize these Kurdish political entities by creating more “uniform and less-threatening units.”<sup>107</sup> For this reason, the Ottomans, following a policy of ‘unite and rule’ in oppose to the previous administration of Aqqoyunlus and Safavids, introduced a strategy that would bring together the fragmented Kurdish administrated units. The ferman issued by Süleyman I intended to create such units in Kurdistan. Sultan wanted to make sure that the power stayed in the sphere of the same Kurdish family. In case the Kurdish beg had no son to take his place after him, then the other begs of Kurdistan would nominate a successor from among a

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translation was published in Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish notables*, 53-54. I thank Faruk Yashlıçimen for helping me to locate the information about the document in the Hatt-ı Hümayun collection.

<sup>105</sup> Sönmez, “An Acem statesman in the Ottoman court”, 92.

<sup>106</sup> Borhanedin A. Yassin, *Vision or Reality? The Kurds in the Policy of the Great Powers, 1941-1947*, (Lund: Lund University Press, 1995), 39.

<sup>107</sup> Özoğlu, *Kurdish notables*, 53.

different branch of the same family or a member of a Kurdish notable family. This situation made, somehow, the Kurdish mirs dependent on the Ottoman state for their legitimacy and for maintaining their position, while the emprise used this as an opportunity to interfere with the Kurdish emirates and restructure them as it was planned. The Ottoman sultans used one Kurdish mir or tribe against the other when they needed to get rid of an unwanted ruler.<sup>108</sup>

Through the sixteenth century, especially during the reign of Shah Tahmasb (1524-1576), the Kurdish rulers, *amirs* and *hakems*, on the Safavid side kept their hereditary positions as their neighboring Kurdish mirs on the other side of the border. The rules of the political game for any Kurdish tribe in Iran were very identical with their counterpart in the Ottomans. Kurdish rulers, such as Ardalanis, and Kurdish tribes often switched loyalties between the Safavid and the Ottoman states. Ruling families suffered further from their disunity with each contender seeking political support from either of the two powerful states. What differed in the Kurdish policy of the Safavids from the Ottomans was that the Shah welcomed the Kurdish ruling families to his court and recruited them as *qurchi*, or tribal guards. Although such a policy did not help the Kurdish figures to emerge in the Safavid court because of the dominance of the Turkish tribes and the Persian bureaucrats in the Iranian power structure, Shah Tahmasb's deliberate Kurdish policy significantly contributed to a fairly stable Kurdistan, hence a safe border with the Ottomans.<sup>109</sup>

### **Iraq and Kurdistan from 1600 to 1800**

The sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries witnessed developments of the relations in between the Pashas of Iraq and the Kurdish mirs in the region. The endless self-interested quarrels of the brothers for their petty emirates and their appeal to the Ottomans and Persian continued throughout of these centuries. As Longrigg precisely assert that “were materials to hand, and did space allow, the same story with only names and places changed could doubtless be told of Zakho, Dohuk, and ‘Aqrah, of Raniyyah, Harir, and the rest.”<sup>110</sup>

Before 1639, the Safavids tried to encircle and isolate the Ottomans by being an active partner of Russia. This effort did not remain with the bilateral relations between two countries as the Christian powers of Europe, which includes papacy, attempted many times to include Iran in their struggle against the Ottoman Empire. After the death of Shah Abbas in 1629 and the enthronement of Shah Safi these relations started to weaken considerably. The relations between the Safavid and the Romanov states further deteriorated in the 1640s as the former attempted to invade Daghestan. When Sultan Murad IV recaptured Baghdad in 1638, the Safavids had no choice but signing a peace treaty with the former in 1639. According to the treaty Iran was giving up with its claim on the East Iraq and thus accept the Ottomans holding the provinces of Baghdad, Basra, and Shahrizor, including the Baban territories.<sup>111</sup> This was

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<sup>108</sup> Özoğlu, *Kurdish notables*, 54-56

<sup>109</sup> Yamaguchi Akihiko, “Shah Tahmasb’s Kurdish Policy,” *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies*, 25 ,(2007), 81-123

<sup>110</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 42.

<sup>111</sup> Hala Mundhir Fattah, *The politics of regional trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745-1900*, (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997), 31.

the first treaty, which determined the borders between the two empires.<sup>112</sup> With the treaty of Zohab, or Kasr-ı Şirin, the Ottomans had a long period of peace with the Safavids, which last until 1720s. After the peace treaty of Zohab was signed on the 20<sup>th</sup> May of 1639 between two states Iran decided to give up its anti-Ottoman coalition permanently and notified the Russians along these lines.<sup>113</sup> Such a lengthy time of peace helped to revitalize the overland routes from Iran to the Levant ports, which improved the silk trade substantially.<sup>114</sup> The balance of this trade was greatly in favor of Iran, which helped increasing the money but also the inflation in the country's market.

Throughout of the seventeenth century the *vilayet* of Shahrizor with its capital Kirkuk was independent of Baghdad, save when the Sultan's order demanded cooperation in conflicts with Iran. Baghdad had only once, in 1691, had to interfere in Kirkuk affairs.<sup>115</sup> During the century Sulaiman Beg (also known as 'Baba Sulaiman'), the son of Mawand, raised the old power of the Baban house and in the second half of the century he became a towering figure in Shahrizor. In 1694, caring neither for the Shah nor the Sultan in his remote territories on the Ottoman-Iranian border, Sulaiman Beg conquered the Kurdish Ardalani emirate on the Iranian side and occupied several districts. The Shah sent a strong force of 40,000 soldiers for the help of the Ardalani prince. Sulaiman Beg was defeated and retired to Istanbul, where he was honored with high favor and bestowed upon the Sanjaq of Baban.<sup>116</sup> The sanjaq was included in the Pashalik of Kirkuk and it was restored with its headquarter in Qala Cholan during the reign of Sulaiman Beg. However, once he passed away much of his territories fell into the hands of the Zanganah tribe while only a portion of it was bequeathed to his sons. After some quarrels between his two sons, Timur Khan and Bekir Beg, and firm control of the Ottoman Pashas of Shahrizor, Bekir Beg emerged successfully. During Bekir Beg's reign, states Longrigg, the Baban power

became paramount between the Diyalah(Sirwan) and the Lesser Zab, in all the hill-country east of the Kifri-Altun Kupri road. The Baban Beg could deal on equal terms with the rulers of Ardalani, could welcome and protect as vassals the Jaf tribe when they fled from Juwanrud to his territory. The state maintained by the ruling Beg grew

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<sup>112</sup> Saskia Maria Gieling, *Religion and war in revolutionary Iran*, (New York, NY: I.B.Tauris, 1999), 13-14.

<sup>113</sup> Rudi Matthee, "Anti-Ottoman Concerns and Caucasian Interests: Diplomatic Relations between Iran and Russia," in Michel M. Mazzaoui, ed., *Safavid Iran and Her Neighbors*. (The University of Utah Press: Salt Lake City, 2003), 101-128.

<sup>114</sup> John Foran, *Fragile Resistance: social transformation in Iran from 1500 to the revolution*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 66; Rudolph Matthee, *The politics of trade in Safavid Iran: silk for silver, 1600-1730*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13.

<sup>115</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 95.

<sup>116</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 80-81; Longrigg adds that the defeat of the Sulaiman Beg was inflicted by both forces of the Safavids and the Ottomans. Others, he states, claim that the Ottomans sent a special envoy to the Kurdish mir, insisting on him making terms with the Persians before the latter tried to advance into the Ottoman territory. The chronology of the event paved the way for Sulaiman Beg's defeat, records Longrigg, as follow: Sulaiman Beg raided into Iran in 1694, was defeated by the Safavid forces in 1695, and the expedition against him in 1698-1699 was realized by the Vali of Baghdad, who was appointed as 'Serasker' and took with him the Pashas of Diyarbekir and Aleppo.



with his growing power; and there were doubtless signs already of the superior culture, with the rarer power of inspiring devotion, which marked his descendants. <sup>117</sup>



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

**Map 2: Diyarbekir and Kurdistan in 1682,**

**Source: Alain Manesson Mallet, *Illustrations de Description de l'Univers contenant les différents systèmes du Monde*, (Paris: D.Thierry, 1683)**

<sup>117</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 81; Bekir Beg, who was also called Deli Beg ('the crazy beg') stayed in power until 1703-4, when he passed away from the sorrow of his father's death in Edirne, records Mehmed Süreyya Bey. This information is not verified since Mehmed Süreyya Bey does not state his source. Besides, Longrigg notes that Bekir Beg was put to death by the Pasha of Kirkuk. Mehmed Süreyya Bey, *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol. I, 175.

In 1704, Hasan Pasha was appointed as the governor of Baghdad and stayed in the office for the following twenty years, which was one of the longest tenures with the exception of Sulaiman the Great. Before his appointment to Baghdad, he was already well experienced in the Ottoman bureaucracy since he worked as *çakırcıbaşı* and *mir-i alem* at the Ottoman palace and as a governor respectively in Bosnia, Aleppo, Rakka, Diyarbekir, Şehrizer, Basra and Kastamonu.<sup>118</sup> He was remembered for his “strong and unquestioned rule, upon the pieties and reforms and comparative order” and his “successful invasion of Persian soil.”<sup>119</sup> In 1715 and the year following Hasan Pasha had to deal with Kurdish and Arab tribes in all around his province with punitive campaigns. The Bilbas tribe of Arbil was thought a lesson. Meanwhile, Bekir Beg of Baban had incurred the jealousy of the Pasha of Kirkuk and he was displaced, arrested and put to death. The Baban territories fell back into the hands of Baghdad and remained as dethroned until Khanah Pasha, son of Bekir Beg, emerged and succeeded to the government of Qala Cholan in 1721. Khanah Pasha collaborated with Hasan Pasha in his military expeditions. He was sent over Ardalán and he successfully submitted the most of the Kurdish lands in Iran under the vassal of the Sultan. His rule in Ardalán lasted for four years and his son followed him until 1730, when Nadir Quli Khan ended the Baban presence in Iran. Until that date, the realm of the family expanded from Kirkuk to Hamadan.<sup>120</sup>

Hasan Pasha’s brother, Khalid Pasha, followed him in reign of the Sanjaq with few problems. The Baban dominancy continued in the region although with few short breaks in 1730, 1733 and 1743 because of Persian ascendancy in Qala Cholan. These intrusions might not have caused much problem for the Baban rule but they gave birth to a pro-Persian party within the family. The pretenders in the family saw the Shah and his frontier vassals as an alternative refuge in times of the power struggle. A good example to this is the struggle between Sulaiman Pasha, Khalid Pasha’s son, and Salim Pasha for the leadership of the Baban territories. Salim Pasha was installed in Qala Cholan by Nadir Shah in 1743 and he was challenged by Sulaiman Pasha, who was supported by Ahmed Pasha, the vali of Baghdad. Baban Sanjaq stayed under the Persian sovereign for a year and Salim Pasha was finally suppressed with the help of the Ottoman forces.<sup>121</sup>

In the first half of the eighteenth century the Babans did not only expand their territories eastward and southward, but looked to the north to broaden their realm as well. They had an increasing touch with the Rewanduz Principality. The Soran Beks at Koy Sanjaq maintained their independence until 1730 and afterwards became a Baban dependent during the long reign of Khalid Pasha. The Babans could not go beyond the Greater Zap River as the Ottoman valis of Baghdad and Mosul attempted to bring an order to the Kurdish emirates there. Meanwhile, the relations between the Beg of Bahdinan, who centered in Amediye, and

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<sup>118</sup> Hasan Pasha was still on duty in Baghdad when he passed away in 1136 (1723-4). Mehmet Süreyya Bey, *Sicill-i Osmani, Vol. II*, 149.

<sup>119</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 123.

<sup>120</sup> Besides Ardalán, in the last year of his leadership, in 1723, Hasan Pasha took over Kirmanshah with the help of “Abdurrahman Pasha of Şehrizer, the begs, tribes and clans of Kurdistan and the jannisaries, military personnel, and artillerymen from Baghdad...” Çelebizade Ismail Asım Efendi, *Tarih-i Çelebizade*, 79, 86

<sup>121</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 159.

the Ottomans were regularized. The family of Bahdinan was privileged by the Sultan, thus they maintained their special position for a long time. However, during these years the Sultan's favor did not save Bahram Pasha, the leader of Bahdinan principality, from Baghdad's siege. The Bahdinan was heavily punished and thereafter "a yearly farman and robe of investiture was granted from Baghdad."<sup>122</sup>

### The rise of notables during the mid-eighteenth century

In eighteenth century local notables in the Ottoman Empire became politically more active and took a stronger position in terms of determining the fate of their regions and subjects. This century was named by some historians as the "Age of the Ayans" because of the rise of the local notables.<sup>123</sup> Other scholars state that the ayans gained power in the eighteenth century because of changes in the taxation and appointment of the provincial governors. The Ottoman sultans decided in 1702 to sell the lands that yielded an annual tax (*mukataa*) to individuals, especially to the notables, who were granted a lifetime right.<sup>124</sup> Once sold these lands became private estates (*malikhane*) and the empire relied more on such sales for short term revenues since she started to lose the annual tax income. The fief system (*timar*) in the sixteenth century did not allow the feudalization tendencies to develop or at least curtailed and limited such exertions. In the eighteenth century, on the contrary, thanks to the *malikhane* system a new preeminent class of notables materialized in the provinces and they were able to defy the authority of the Empire as lords of the large estates and local rulers (*derebeys*).<sup>125</sup> Besides the financial aspect of this process there was a political side of the story. With a ferman in 1726 the Ottoman Empire chose to abandon appointing valis educated in the capital and opened the way for the local emirs and begs to be assigned as governors and administrators of their lands.<sup>126</sup> In either case, politically or financially, avenues were opened for the locale to become notable, a process that I call the notablisation of the local leaders.

The term 'ayan,' which is originally derived from Arabic (plural of *ayn* 'eye') was first used, in the Ottoman context, in the fifteenth century for the notables living in cities. These notables were made of high-ranking officials like *sancak-beyi*, *beylerbeyi*, *kapıkulu*, janissary leaders, *kadis*, *müderris*, *muftis*, *mültezims*, *mukataa emins*, guild leaders and rich merchants. Before the sixteenth century, a person with such an honorific title mostly resided in the cities and had little impact on the provincial administration. By the eighteenth century

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<sup>122</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 159.

<sup>123</sup> Bruce McGowan, "The Age of the Ayans, 1699-1812" in Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert et als (eds.), *Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 637-758. For more on the ayans in the eighteenth century see Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ayanlık*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994) and "XVIII. Yüzyılın İlk Yansında Yerli Ailelerin Ayanlıkları Ele Geçirışleri ve Büyük Hanedanlıkların Kuruluşu". *Belleten*, 168 (Ankara 1978), 667-723; Canay Şahin, "The Rise and Fall of an Ayân Family in Eighteenth Century Anatolia: the Caniklizâdes (1737-1808)," (Ph.D diss. Bilkent University, 2003); Yuzo Nagata, *Tarihte Âyânlar: Karaosmanoğulları Üzerinde Bir İnceleme*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997); EI2 article "Ayan";

<sup>124</sup> Mustafa Akdağ, "Osmanlı tarihinde âyânlık düzeni devri," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 8/14 (1963), 51-61

<sup>125</sup> Necla Geyikdağı, *Foreign Investment in the Ottoman Empire: International Trade and Relations in the Late Nineteenth Century* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 6.

<sup>126</sup> Mustafa Akdağ, "Osmanlı tarihinde âyânlık düzeni devri,"(1963).

the title of *ayan* became much more significant and the term was used more for people who had political influence and thus officially recognized by the Sultan than the notables lived in cities and towns.<sup>127</sup> The request from the Empire for the help of the *ayans* in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-74 made the notables politically more significant than ever. “The Porte resorted [to *ayan*] in order to raise funds and recruits for the army; and in due course they were accorded official recognition as the chosen representatives of people vis-à-vis the government.”<sup>128</sup> The state did not stop there and put these *ayans* on a payroll financed by the provincial government and fittingly named as *ayaniye* in order to assure their loyalty.<sup>129</sup>

In earlier centuries local notables or *ayans* had less influence on the empire’s capital and local subjects. Although this was the case in the Arab and Balkan centers, where the notables emerged with a stronger power later on, the Kurdish notables were already enjoying an autonomous status and they were there for centuries thanks to their tribal kinship. In fact, looking at the case of the Babans one can easily see how much financial and political freedom they had before the “age of the *ayans*.” The Kurdish begs, since the ferman issued by the Sultan Süleyman the lawgiver, had the right to keep their political status, inherit their position to their offspring and collect their taxes. From very early on when Kurdish emirates joined to the Ottomans, the *mirs* struggled with the provincial governors from Diyarbekr to Baghdad, to keep their autonomous status. Changes in the eighteenth century did not bring something new to Kurdistan since they were not subject to the *malikhane* system and did never become the *valis* of the provinces they were attached to. At least this was the case for the Kurdish emirates of Baban, Botan, Hakkari, Soran and Bahdinan if not for all. Still one could hardly suggest that these emirates were as powerful before the mid-eighteenth century as they were after. It was for sure that the center of the empire started to lose the power in the periphery in the eighteenth century not only in Arab and Balkan provinces but in Kurdistan and the eastern borders too.

### Rise of slaves in Iraq

While the Empire was slowly weakening in the provinces Baghdad had also its own time to produce new notables. Among those were the Georgian and Circassian slaves who

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<sup>127</sup> Zens states that two different groups of the *ayans* existed in the Ottoman Empire: the first is the “small local notables who through their wealth and local influence were able to stand apart from the rest of the local population” and the second group is “the greater *ayans* who exerted influence over entire provinces and received official recognition from the state in terms of the titles and honor.” Although such a division is legitimate and therefore the second group received the most attention from the Ottoman researchers, one still would think that it was the changes in the eighteenth century that created many greater notables as in the case of the Georgian and Circassian slaves of Baghdad. Robert Zens “Ottoman provincial notables in the eighteenth century: a comparative study,” Ekrem Causevic et al (ed.) *Papers from the 18th Symposium of the International Committee of Pre-Ottoman*, (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2011), 245-252.

<sup>128</sup> EI2, entry “*Ayan*”; Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*, 11

<sup>129</sup> *Ayaniye* was also granted to those notables who defeated the other rival factions and received the official confirmation (*ayanlık buyruldu*) by the provincial government. With this they hoped to recover their outlay that they lost during the struggle with their contenders for the office. Fikret Adanır, “Semi-autonomous provincial forces in the Balkans and Anatolia” in Suraiya Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 157-186; for more information on *ayaniye* and its application in the late eighteenth century Ottoman Üsküb see Marlene Kurz, *Das Sicill aus Skopje*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 116-117.

were brought to Baghdad in the first half of the eighteenth century. Over the time, these slaves soared in Baghdad's military and bureaucratic ranks. Sudden death of Ahmed Pasha in 1747 (H. 1160) cleared the way for a new order in Baghdad due to this newly emerging class recruited from the slaves.<sup>130</sup> The bases of this class had been prepared since 1702 but only attained to power after 1749. In between this period two governors, Hasan Pasha (1702-1724) and his son Ahmed Pasha (1724-1747), reigned over the province, each one for exceptionally long period. Hasan Pasha, who was educated in Istanbul, imitating the policy he witnessed in the capital, attempted to import slaves (Tr. Kölemen, Ar. Mamluk) from Circassia and Georgia with the purpose of creating a loyal high rank military personnel and civil servants. These slaves were mostly young and Christian boys who were later introduced into Islam and given some education. Among them were confidential private servants (khass), the treasurers and the storemen. Taking advantage of unexpected departure of Ahmad Pasha, a young man among these slaves, Sulaiman Abu Laylah, emerged as the first of Mamluk pasha, which was going to rule over Iraq for the following eighteen some years.<sup>131</sup>

Sulaiman was named as Abu Laylah or Devvasü'l-leyl ("father of the night") among the Arabs because of his sudden night raids on the Arab and Kurdish tribes and emirs. He was a slave to Ahmad Pasha and later became a member of the family after he married to the governor's daughter Adileh Khanum. He established the order in Baghdad but because of his hunger for the land and power he opened the door for the mamluks to follow him in his step for the power, which lasted until 1831.<sup>132</sup> During his governorship more slaves were brought from Georgia and once they went through a vigorous education consist of reading, writing, horsemanship and swimming, they were appointed to different positions in the public office and the military. Abu Laylah's success did not only remain with the administrative changes, but he was also greatly credited for the stability he established among the Kurdish and Arab tribes. Throughout of the twelve years of his rule he had very few tribal expeditions. In the first and third years of his rule he had some important campaigns over the Kurdish and Sinjar tribes and in 1756 he had to brutally subdue the Arab Shammar tribe.<sup>133</sup> Sulaiman Abu Laylah passed away on 1761(h. 1175) at the age of sixty-six without leaving an indication of a heir.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>130</sup> "Eyyubî Hasan Paşa mahdumudur. Pederi Bağdad valiliğinde kesb-i iştiharinden naşi 1127 (1715)' de mirimiran oldu. 1129(1717)'de ba rütbe-i vezazret-i Konya, müteakiben Haleb ve 1133(1727)'de Basra ve sonra Şehrizar valisi ve 1136 (1723/24)'da pederi vefatında Bağdad valisi oldu. 1146 Rebiülahirde (Eylül 1733) Basra ilave edildi. 1147 (1734/35) de saniyen Haleb valisi ve müeakiben Rakka valisi olup sonra İran üzerine serasker oldu. 1149 (1736/37)'da saniyen Bağdad valisi olmuştur. 1160 Zilkadesinde (Kasım 1747) irtihal eyledi. Akıllı, reşid, şecie olup Bağdad'ta iki defa velayeti 22 sal olmuştur. Validesi Musahib Mustafa Paşa kerimesidir. "Bağdad'daki köleden valiler, bunun kölesinden husule geldi." *Sicill-i Osmani, Vol. I, 250.*

<sup>131</sup> Tom Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society in early modern Iraq: Mamluk Pashas tribal Shayks and local rule between 1802 and 1831*, (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981), 13. For more information on the Mamluk period of Iraq see Jean Baptiste Louis Jacques Rousseau, *Description du pachalik de Bagdad: suivie d'une notice historique sur les Wahabis, et de quelques autres pièces relatives à l'histoire et à la littérature de l'Orient*, (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1809); Thomas Lier, *Haushalte und Haushaltspolitik in Bagdad 1704-1831*, (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2004); and Clément Huart, *Histoire de Bagdad dans les temps modernes*, (Paris: E. Leroux, 1901)

<sup>132</sup> *Sicill-i Osmani, Vol. III, 82.*

<sup>133</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 168-172.

<sup>134</sup> Huart states that when the German explorer Niebuhr visited Baghdad in 1760s he often heard elegies in the streets and the coffeehouses of the town. Although his marriage with Adileh Khanum opened the door for him to

Ali and Ömer Pashas (1764-75), followed by a period of interregnum between 1775 and 1780 in which a number of pashas from Istanbul reigned shortly with little authority, succeeded Abu Laylah. Ali Pasha (1762-64) was born in Iran and helped greatly to Abu Laylah in his bid for the leadership of Baghdad. For his help he was given the control of various sanjaqs in Iraq, including Shahrizor and Basra. After Abu Laylah's death he was given the ferman by the Sultan and after struggling shortly with his rivals he took over the governorship of Baghdad. His rule was kept short since he was killed by some of his enemies. Abu Laylah's daughter and Ömer Pasha's wife Adilah Khanum who, accepted Ali Pasha's rule on condition of following her advice, was said to be behind the latter's assassination for the reason that he did not listen to her instructions.<sup>135</sup> His Persian background had also put him on the spot because of the propaganda that he could be Shi'i and thus a collaborator of Iran. Many incidents took place for a short period of the reign he had. He had a large expedition against the Babans in the first days of his reign. Besides subduing the Arab tribes, he went Basra to make a deal with the resident of the East India Company and to provide with the special favor from the Sultan in return for help against the Shi'a Khaza'il shaikh.

With a successful rebellion he led Ömer Pasha was able to take over the seat of Baghdad. He organized expeditions, as his predecessors, in order to pacify the Arab tribes but had little success. He reigned for ten years with a decaying and weakening authority. With more expeditions to the south and less victory in return the prestige of his government kept declining over the years. While "the government in lower and central Iraq degenerated" because of Ömer Pasha's incapacity of control "Mosul and the Kurdish states were making history after their kind." As Longrigg put it, "so feeble as a man, so unsuccessful as a ruler was freedman 'Umr."<sup>136</sup>

During the last days of Ömer Pasha's reign Karim Khan Zand, a powerful tribal leader emerged during the mid-eighteenth century after Nadir Shah lost his power in Iran, waged a war against the Pashalik of Baghdad concurrently in Shatt al-Arab and the Kurdish provinces of Baban and Zohab. The major political cause of the war was Ömer Pasha's "intervention in the rivalries for the frontier province of Baban which, since the death of Soleyman Pasha of Baghdad in 1762, had fallen increasingly under the influence of the Zand-sponsored viceroy (vali) of neighboring Ardalan."<sup>137</sup> Since both powers, Iranian and Ottoman, claimed the Baban territories, an intervention by either power triggered a fierce reaction by the other.<sup>138</sup> Besides dispute over the Baban territories, the imposition of a toll on Iranian pilgrims to the shrines in Najaf and Karbala and the confiscation of properties belong to those pilgrims, who

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obtain the governorship of Baghdad, the case was not the same during his career in the office. Huart records that "ce qu'on lui reproche le plus, c'est d'avoir été sous la domination de son épouse, 'Adilé-Khâtoûn, qui avait ses jours d'audience, où les plaintes des particuliers lui étaient soumises par l'intermédiaire d'un de ses eunuques, et qui était ainsi fort au courant des affaires de la province. Elle fit élever une mosquée et un caravansérail qui portent son nom." Clément Huart, *Histoire de Bagdad dans les temps modernes*, 153; See also Carsten Niebuhr, *Voyage en Arabie & en d'autres pays circonvoisins*, Vol. 2 (Paris: S. J. Baalde, 1780), 258.

<sup>135</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 173; Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society in early modern Iraq*, 23.

<sup>136</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 176.

<sup>137</sup> John Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 75

<sup>138</sup> After 1760s, the Babans became the most powerful rulers among all the other Kurdish mirs. Therefore, the Ottomans and the Iranians wanted to make sure that such a powerful family stayed under surveillance. Garzoni. *Grammatica e vocabolario della lingua kurda*, 3.

died during the devastating epidemic in 1772-73, were also other reasons for Zand to go to war with the Ottomans.<sup>139</sup> Ömer Pasha's desire of changing the Baban ruler in 1774 incited two campaigns by Karim Khan Zand to reinstate the Iranian candidate. The Ottomans did not responded promptly to these attacks on the eastern frontiers because of the war with Russia in addition to the weakness of the newly crowned Sultan Abdülhamid I (1774-1789). During these expeditions Iranians occupied Basra, which brought plague, depopulation and thus lost its commercial importance. Baban territories were taken back by the Pasha of Baban from the vali of Ardalan at the war of Marivan in May 1777, however some months later Karim Khan Zand took back the Kurdish lands with a decisive victory against the Ottoman-Baban forces on the plain of Shahrizor and restored the Iranian order in Qalacholan.<sup>140</sup> After all this trouble Ömer Pasha fell from favor and his head reached Istanbul, while his former lieutenant Abdullah Pasha replaced him with strong support from the dignitaries in Baghdad.

Before Karim Khan Zand marched into the Baban territories there was already a conflict going on among members of the Baban family. At the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century a conflict came between Mehmed Pasha, the head of Baban sanjaq, and his younger brother Ahmed Pasha, the leader of Koy Sanjaq. Mehmed Pasha caught and imprisoned his brother, while his youngest brother Mahmud Pasha feared for the same fate and sought refuge in Ömer Pasha's Baghdad. After such a move by Mehmed Pasha, Ömer Pasha dismissed him and appointed Mahmud Pasha as the leader of Baban. Taking matters into his hands Mahmud Pasha advanced on Qala Cholan, the capital of Baban, with the forces from Baghdad. His older brother, Mehmed Pasha, could not stand before such forces and fled to Karim Khan Zand's palace, while Mahmud Pasha arrived to Qala Cholan, freed his brother Ahmed Pasha from detention and named him as the mutasarrif of the Baban Sanjaq.<sup>141</sup> Mehmed Pasha made a request to Karim Khan Zand to help him to reacquire the Baban territories. Karim Khan asked the vali of Baghdad to forgive Mehmed Pasha and allow him to return to his old position. Upon Ömer Pasha's rejection of his request, Karim Khan sent a large army on Baban Sanjaq under the command of his nephew Ali Murad Khan and accompanied him with Mehmed Pasha.<sup>142</sup> Ahmed Pasha confronted with this army and defeated in the Baban territories on the month of Ramazan in 1188 (November 1774). He detained Ali Murad Khan and Mehmed Pasha and he sent the former to Baghdad. Ömer Pasha wanted to turn this into an opportunity to establish good relations with Karim Khan and he sent Ali Murad Khan back to Iran as a gesture of goodwill. Karim Khan Zand did not forgive Ömer Pasha and he decided to strike on Baghdad and Basra, which brought the end of the

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<sup>139</sup> For more details on the 1774-79 Ottoman-Iranian war see Yahya Kalantari, "Feth-Ali Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri(1797-1834)." (Unpublished Dissertation, Istanbul University, 1976), 4-10 and Abdurrahman Ateş, "XVIII. YY'ın İkinci Yarısında Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri (1774-1779)," *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol. 10/3, (2008), 65-81; A letter from the Iranian ambassador Abdullah Bey to the Sultan also demanded from the Ottomans to allow the Iranian pilgrims to travel in safe, complained about Ömer Pasha for the confiscation of the remaining goods belong to deceased pilgrims and elucidated how the conflict between two states was started by the old Baban leader, Mehmed Bey. HAT# 202-B, ( 09.Ş.1189/ 2 December, 1775).

<sup>140</sup> John Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 78-79.

<sup>141</sup> Kalantari, "Feth-Ali Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri," 5-6; *Tarihi-i Cevdet*, Vol. III, (Istanbul:Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1301/ 1883-84) 127; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. IV, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1956), 458.

<sup>142</sup> Longrigg gives the name of the commander as 'Ali Mardan and the number of the Persian army as 14,000. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 180.

latter.<sup>143</sup> Meanwhile, Ahmad Pasha stayed in power until 1778, when he passed away, as the leader of the Baban Sanjaq and during the last years of his reign he added Koy Sanjaq to his territories.

After Ömer Pasha's departure from Baghdad disorder dismayed the province for some three years while the struggle for the leadership among the contenders continued. In April of 1778 Hasan Pasha received his ferman from the Sultan to be the pasha of Baghdad and entered to the city on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May in the same year. With the normalization of the city the bazaar and shops got back to the usual business and the bureaucrats in the citadel made their submission to the new Pasha. Hasan Pasha ruled Baghdad for the following two years with wretchedness. He disbanded the old guards and recruited his own janissaries, but in early summer of 1778 the oppositional forces defeated his new troops. At that moment, he asked for help from Baban Ahmed Pasha, nevertheless he died before he reached to Baghdad. His youngest brother, Mahmud Pasha succeeded him and led the Baban army to join the Baghdad forces. Thanks to these Kurdish forces Hasan Pasha was able to rout hundreds of rebels and capture some hundreds more. Despite such a success the position of Hasan Pasha grew more and more precarious and he was finally forced to leave Baghdad for Mosul in October of 1779 by furious demonstrations against him. Later, the Sultan ordered him to be transferred to Diyarbekir, where he passed away.<sup>144</sup>

### **The Age of Süleyman Agha and the Founding of Sulaimaniya**

After Hasan Pasha it was Süleyman Agha, who became the next Mamluk governor of Baghdad. He was considered as one of the strongest of all Mamluk valis and the renovator and the restorer of order not only in Baghdad but also in all of Iraq.<sup>145</sup> Under Sulayman Abu Laylah and successive Pashas, Süleyman Agha was favored, promoted and appointed some of the most important posts, such as Mütesellimat of Basra. While on duty in Basra, the city was occupied by Persians and Süleyman Agha was taken as a hostage in the Spring of 1776. He was kept in Shiraz for the next four years but he never lost contact with his friends and confidants in Basra. While in Shiraz he made many friends, such as half-brother of Karim Khan Zand, Zaki Khan, thanks to his social charm, wit, and wisdom. After Karim Khan Zand passed away and the struggle for the throne of Persia became inevitable, he was released by the brother of Zand and Persians evacuated Basra without looking back.

Süleyman Pasha was named as 'büyük'(the great) but he was not remembered as a giant figure even though no other vali of Baghdad received such a title through the reign of the Ottoman Empire in the city. He conquered no place and he brought no new legislation or transformation to the province during his rule. However, for an English gentleman who knew him for many years Süleyman deserved much more praise:

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<sup>143</sup> Kalantari, "Feth-Ali Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri," 6-7.

<sup>144</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 185-186

<sup>145</sup> Despite all the influence he had in Baghdad Huart gives little space to Süleyman Agha. Clément Huart, *Histoire de Bagdad dans les temps modernes*, 161.



Süleyman was, perhaps, as fine a specimen of a Turkish Pasha as ever existed... he was as expert in all military and field exercises and sports as those who made them their employment and profession, sincere and warm in the exercise and belief of his own religion... His court was splendid, and the establishment of his household was on the scale of that of a great sovereign.<sup>146</sup>

Among those words of praises one sentence made some suggestions on the reason behind Hartford Jones Brydges' approval of the Pasha, which states "in the early part of his life he [Süleyman Pasha] had received many favours and great assistance from the English, and to the very last moment he acknowledged this." A French spectator, Sestini, would have similar impressions of Süleyman Pasha as he describes him "un bel homme, et d'une physionomie gaie et ouverte: il passe pour tres-brave."<sup>147</sup>

Longrigg claims that Süleyman the Great opened the golden age of the slave-government of Iraq. For the last thirty years the power of the Georgian origin Pashas had been growing to its paramount. Throughout of the reign of Süleyman Pasha Baghdad received no threat of rivalry from his countrymen. Until he succeeded to the government of Baghdad the Sublime Porte had attempted every year to appoint an extraneous governor. After him the slave-rulers became legitimate leaders of Baghdad in the eyes of the Ottoman Sultan. Despite the weakening power of the Sultan and the bolstering reign of these Georgian slaves through the end of the eighteenth century the latter always acknowledged their allegiance to the former. In their Friday sermons and prayers, coinage, constant reports and correspondence and in all their public life the Pashas of Baghdad asserted their loyalty to the Ottoman royal. The majority of this family were born Christians but converted to Islam after their enslavement. The Mamluk family brought their own countrymen, who were closely connected to them through blood or fraternally, in order to keep the power in hand uninterruptedly and also share some of the opportunities they achieve with them. Women were also brought through marriages following their own relatives to Baghdad. In half a century after the first Georgians were brought as slaves to Baghdad a powerful and independent family with members, who went through a sophisticate education, came to being. The Sultan, who had never helped these "low-born foreigners" to reach such a power and never seen them in Istanbul, had no choice but to accept their ever growing power, while the rival members of the Mamluk family keenly sought to obtain "the half-sacred farman" of the Sultan. In short, both sides accepted each other's strengths and weaknesses and they continued this way as long they had interest in each other.<sup>148</sup>

Süleyman Pasha like his precursors had to deal with the Arab and Kurdish tribes. With the help of the Janissaries from the Jalilis of Mosul he sent an army for the Kurds of Babans, Darnah and Bajalan in 1787. After a year of some tranquility in the region, the Kurdish ruler of Basra, who was fired from the office, offered the Baban rulers of Shahrizor and Sulaimaniya a joint rising against Baghdad. The reason behind the motive of vali of Basra

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<sup>146</sup> Hartford Jones Brydges, *A Brief History of the Wahaubys*, (London, 1831?), 190-191 cited from Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 197.

<sup>147</sup> Sestini, *Voyage de Constantinople a Bassora en 1781, Par le Tigre et l'Euphrate, et Retour a Constantinople, en 1782, Par le Desert et Alexandrie*, (Paris, 1798), 164.

<sup>148</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 196-200.

was clear, as he wanted to take back his position. However, Baghdad did not realize the real intention of the Baban Pasha until an intercepted document revealed his ambitions for the province of Baghdad itself. The Baban Pasha hoped that Baghdad would be defenseless and unarmed once Süleyman Pasha left for Basra. Instead of leaving Baghdad, Süleyman Pasha invited Osman Pasha with flattering terms and betrothed the latter's daughter to the brother of the Kayha with an extravagant wedding. By these means he was taken away from his forces and from his collaborators in Basra. In February 1789 Baghdad forces moved towards Basra, though before reaching to the outskirts of the city the opposition broke down and the campaign proved bloodless. Such cases did not repeat much itself:

The young Kurdish nobles lived habitually in Baghdad, and found there materials to deepen and widen their own feuds. Their wealth and retainers made them the observed of Wali and his Ministers; and in intrigues with each hoped to further his own or some kinsman's aims. Only with a son in high favour at Baghdad or Karmanshah could a reigning Baban feel secure.<sup>149</sup>

For the Pashas of Baghdad the Baban forces, which were thousands strong and well fed and mounted, were great sources during the time of a rebel, especially for the times when they still drilled their Georgians and tried to keep the mistrusted Janissaries at bay.

In 1778 Baban Mahmud Pasha succeeded his brother Muhammed Pasha and stayed in power until his nephew Ibrahim assumed power in 1783. Before his dismissal, Mahmud Pasha and his son Osman Pasha had also made an alliance with the governor of Kirkuk for a joint rebellion, but gave up shortly after he realized that Süleyman Pasha of Baghdad had a much stronger army. Mahmud Pasha submitted to the *vali* of Baghdad by accepting the terms and was reinstated with more lands, such as Koy Sanjaq, bestowed upon. The former was only taken away from the office when he broke his agreement with Baghdad by pillaging his neighboring Kurdish regions. After his attacks on the surrounding territories Mahmud Pasha was driven away by his own followers and died in Iran shortly afterwards.

The Baban territories, which was the largest Kurdish emirate in Baghdad province, stayed under the Ottoman reign through centuries. During all this time the members of the Baban family struggled with each other to take over the seat of the Sanjaq with the title of "Pasha." However the title of "pasha" the Kurdish mirs received was not equal to the same title that the Mamluks of Baghdad received. The Pashas of Baghdad were the superiors of the Baban Pashas and the former would bestow the title onto the latter. To deserve the title the Kurdish mirs would first have to rival among each other and the winner would have to pay the most to the Pasha in Baghdad in order to be officially accepted as the "Pasha." Besides "Turkish tyrants," states Niebuhr, "desires of the power by the ruling families" of Kurdistan would hurt greatly "the commoners and poor people." He concludes, "it is not easy to find a big city in this region," since it was divided politically and deprived economically.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 205-207.

<sup>150</sup> Carsten Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern, Volume 2*, (Leipzig: Möller, 1778), 330

Two decades later after Niebuhr's visit to Qala Cholan, Mahmud Pasha, as if he heard about the complaints of the German traveler, felt about the necessity of a town and decided to build Sulaimaniya, the new capital of the Baban dynasty, in 1781 and was completed by his successor, Ibrahim Pasha, in 1784.<sup>151</sup> It is mostly referred to Ibrahim Pasha as the founder of Sulaimaniya, though Emin Zeki claims that he was the one who ordered Mahmud Pasha to start building the capital in 1781, but he passed away in 1783 before completing it.<sup>152</sup> With Ibrahim Pasha's purposefulness the new capital was finished and transferred from its original place some twelve miles to the south-west across the Azmir range and was named as Sulaimaniya as a gesture to Süleyman Pasha of Baghdad.<sup>153</sup>

It is not clear from the sources the real motive(s) behind the decision of the Babans for moving their capital, but it was for sure they had several good reasons to build a new town. Although it is not mentioned much in the sources, one motive could be that the Babans reached to such a power where they finally decided to imitate their contender, Ardalanis (capital in Sinna), and their patrons, Baghdad and Kermanshah. One could figure this out by looking at the palace they built. Instead of building protective walls around the town, the Babans decided to go for a more luxurious and comfortable courtly life as their masters did in Istanbul and Baghdad. Besides, there was a certain amount of the population under their rule with some of populous tribes, such as Jafs and Hamawands. So, they had to settle down a part of this population to some place and establish a new system to control the rest of it in surrounding territories. The Babans already had the experience of a capital through centuries. Starting from the sixteenth century on they first settled in Shahribazar and later moved to the close by Qala Cholan, which was going to be the longtime capital of the emirate. Hence, it was more logical for them to establish a capital in a more spacious area and a lavish palace in

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<sup>151</sup> Stephen H. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 206-208; The sources vary on date for the establishment of Sulaimaniya, although with small variations. Campanile gives 1789 as the date for transfer of the capital from Qala Cholan to Sulaimaniya. R. Giuseppe Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, (first pub.1818 in Italian, trans. in French by R. Thomas Bois in 1953), (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), 38; J.C. Rich quoting from a Persian 'Scroll of dates and facts connected with the History of Kurdistan' handed to him by Omar Agha, an officer of the Baban rulers, states the date for the 'second building of Sulimania' as 1199 hijri (November 1784-Ocotber 1785). Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, vol. I*, 387. Although the date for 1784 is accepted by most of historians for transferring the capital to its new place, some claim that this was the date for the second attempt for the establishment of Sulaimaniya. C.J. Edmonds gives a Kurdish tradition as an explanation for Rich's scroll, which gives 1784 as the 'second' time of building Sulaimaniya.. He recalls a story lingering among the Kurds, which states, "the site was that of an earlier Sulaimani built by Baba Sulaiman (r.1695-1699)." C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, 53-54.

<sup>152</sup> Emin Zeki obtains this information from a handrwritten book titled 'Khayah al-Maram fi Mahasin dar al-Salaam.' Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Tarixi Silemani u welate le devreye zor Kadimewe ta Evvele ihtilal (1918 m.)* (Baghdad: Al-Najah, 1939), 67.

<sup>153</sup> Al-Waili states several reason for the town to be named as Sulaimaniya. One reason was that Büyük Süleyman was the biggest supporter of Ibrahim Pasha, so the latter wanted to honor him by this action. Besides, after naming his town after the vali of Baghdad, the Süleyman Pasha bestowed upon Kasr-i Shirin, Zehab and some parts of Khanekin upon Ibrahim Pasha. The second reason is that Ibrahim Pasha named the town after his son Süleyman Pasha, whereas a third one is claimed that he named the town in fact after his great great father Baba Süleyman. The forth claim is that he named the town after Sulaiman Jalili, the governor of Mosul(1771-1789). A final and the fifth reason behind naming his town as Sulaimaniya is that Baban Mahmud Pasha (1778-1783) named a fortress close this region as Sulaimiyya after the son of Fath Ali Shah. Al-Waili believes that this last claim is the most logical one even if the first view is considered as the most notable and dominant one. The reason that the most historians accept the first option is that, state al-Waili, Ibrahim Pasha was under the influence of Büyük Süleyman and was closer to him compared to other leaders. Abid Rabbi Ibrahim al-Waili, *Tarikh al-Imarat al-Babaniyyah, 1784-1851*, (Damascus: Dar al- Zaman, 2008), 142-143.

order to show their power. As for the choice of the hijri date of 1199 for the establishment of the town, it might be because of its astrological value as the odd numbers like 11 and 99 were considered as lucky numbers.<sup>154</sup> Beyond all these, the security of the capital was one of the major reasons for choice. Abdurrahman Pasha was especially concerned about the position of Sulaimaniya and once decided to move the capital to the high “mount of Serseer” “on account of its detached and defensible position, its summit being only accessible by one road.”<sup>155</sup> However, one would also have to think of water resources and thus take this as a priority as the Pasha later gave up with his idea because of that.

Abid Rabbi Ibrahim al-Waili, who wrote about the history of the Babans, states that there were several economical, military, and administrative reasons behind the motive of the Baban Pasha for choosing a new place for his capital. He states that the administrative reason was more dominant than the other reasons. Mahmud Pasha established a palace in Milkindi in 1782 and it was the first of such an official institution in this region.<sup>156</sup> Ibrahim Pasha added more on this institution. He drew limits of the town so it could lead to a capital and he also established some fortresses around the territories of the Baban so the town could be protected from the Persian attacks. He states that the Baban people believed that Qala Cholan had bad luck since it experienced some fires and poverty. Besides Qala Cholan, “which was the residence of the Pashas, was an awful village” when Niebuhr visited this tiny capital in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>157</sup> So, this had also convinced the leaders and the people to move to a new place. He claims that this was the first official office in this region through the Ottoman administration. Al-Waili adds that Ibrahim Pasha was very much of fond of hunting. Qala Cholan was in a valley where it had more desert weather and was not very suitable for hunting. Ibrahim Pasha looked for a wide open place for his hunting activities. This new center was much more suitable for such activities. He wanted to show off to other leaders with his wealth by display the area of his hunting ground.<sup>158</sup> Besides there was the request by the Sultan to Kurdish tribes and begs to stay on the frontiers to protect it against Iranians. This had led to these begs to be permanent and later settled in these regions and finally establish towns and cities. They had establish autonomous structures and started to reform their systems starting from the 18<sup>th</sup> century in order to survive in the changing Ottoman system.

When choosing the place and moving their capital from Qala Cholan, it was a period of wars between the Ottomans and the Iranians. Therefore, this choice must have been based on the political and military strategies, so they could in all situations defend their position. The Baban leaders knew this region geographically better than both imperial powers and

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<sup>154</sup> Such numbers are widely used among the Sufi groups and societies. Kurds, especially the Babans highly valued the Sufi groups like Qadiris and Naqshbandis, and it was most likely that they sought for advice from Sufi sheikhs before moving their capital. An example in such superstitions by the Babans occurred during Rich’s visit to the town. Before his entrance to the town Baban Mahmud Pasha asked Rich to wait until for the day after tomorrow at 9am. Rich perceived that as an “an astrological superstition about this,” which, he indulged him in. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. I, 73.

<sup>155</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. I, 164.

<sup>156</sup> Abid Rabbi Ibrahim al-Waili, *Tarikh al-Imarat al-Babaniyyah*, 139. I wish to acknowledge that the translation from al-Wail’s work from Arabic to English was made possible with Mehmet Günaydın’s hel

<sup>157</sup> He states in his travelogue “Selbst Kalla Dsjolätt [Qala Cholan], die Residenz des Paschas ist nur ein schlechtes Dorf.” Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien*, Volume 2, 330.

<sup>158</sup> al-Waili, *Tarikh al-Imarat al-Babaniyyah*, 140

therefore they must have seen the defaults of Qala Cholan and chose their new capital in a more strategic place. There were other places in the same region to establish their new capital, but they choose Sulaimaniya to move into.<sup>159</sup> The geographical position of Sulaimaniya located in the middle of all Kurdish regions (Qalacholan, Zehab, Koy Sanjaq and Amediye) in Baghdad province.<sup>160</sup> Such a place helped them to expand from all sides, both for the town and the surrounding territories. After all, the Ottomans and Iranians knew the importance of Sulaimaniya and therefore craved for it. The mountains in the North and the East helped them to protect their town, especially from the Persians, who always interfered with their administration.

In the south there was Derbend passage and there were many water sources. Such an area with lots of water helped them to make such a decision, especially when there were the rivers of Bekirjo and Tenjero around it. Geographically, this region was on the center of a junction for trade routes from Istanbul, Mosul, Kirkuk and Baghdad. From here the routes would lead to other Kurdish emirates and Persian centers. Such a route would also bring more trade and wealth with it to the Baban family. One also needs to add that these lands were on the route from Iraq to India, which the British and French statesmen knew very well about it. After its establishment, Sulaimaniya had the widest ground and field compare to other towns in Southern Kurdistan.<sup>161</sup>

Besides, the weather here was also very reasonable. Only short periods were hot in Sulaimaniya thanks to the high mountains around it. The waterlogged fields also helped this area to cool off. In the winter, however, the air could be very cold adding that the wind caused for the weather to get cold further.

After establishing the town, Ibrahim Pasha established new structure like baths, mosques and guest houses. After such a development the regional people started to come into the town to settle down. Beside, the tradesmen, ulama and the poets were invited by Ibrahim Pasha to the town. The limits of the Baban territories expanded further up until it contained more territories from the province of Baghdad and other neighboring Kurdish emirates. However, this expansion and modernization of the region did not attract much of the rural Kurds. This has caused some population to escape from the town and slowed this growth. Al-Waili claims that historians of the time recorded the establishment of Sulaimaniya as one of the most important events during the reign of the Büyük Süleyman of Baghdad. The reason for the excitement of the people for a new town was that they wanted to see alternative enclaves to Baghdad, which was not that much improved during the Mamluk period and where the pressure on the people by Georgian slaves was increasing further.<sup>162</sup>

The British representative of the East India Company J.C. Rich arrives to Sulaimaniya more than three decades after the capital was established there. He narrates from Mahmud Pasha, the leader of the Baban Sanjaq then, the story of moving the capital to its present place:

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<sup>159</sup> al-Waili, *Tarikh al-Imarat al-Babaniyyah*, 143-144

<sup>160</sup> Rousseau, *Description du pachalik de Bagdad*, 100.

<sup>161</sup> al-Waili, *Tarikh al-Imarat al-Babaniyyah*, 145.

<sup>162</sup> al-Waili, *Tarikh al-Imarat al-Babaniyyah*, 141.

The then governor of southern Koordistan, Ibrahim Pasha, the father of Koord Suliman Pasha, and a relation of the present governor of Sulimania, resolved on removing the capital from Karatcholan, on the other side of the Azmir hills, to this place; both from a wish of signaling himself and for the convenience of hunting, of which he was passionately fond, and for which amusement the situation of Karatcholan was singularly ill calculated, being in a very narrow, rocky valley. He called his new town Sulimania, in compliment to the then Pasha of Bagdad, Suliman Pasha, the father of the late unfortunate Saed Pasha.<sup>163</sup>

The capital did not stay as it was established in the first days. A town, which started with a few thousand people, became more than ten thousands in three decades.<sup>164</sup> Besides, with each new pasha came to power the palace was expanded and new public structures, such as mosques, baths, schools and guesthouses, were built. The town was established on the ruins of an ancient village called Melkindi (or Melik Hindi-the village of the Indian king) and during the expansion of the town, they discovered some fragment of bones, ancient inscriptions and urns.<sup>165</sup> Rich recalls that during the period of Abdurrahman Pasha “there was an ancient mount here, which they pared away to suit the foundations of the palace...some coins were then found.”

### **Baban Abdurrahman Pasha and the First Kurdish Revolt**

Ibrahim Pasha did not reign for a long time and besides founding Sulaimaniya he did not show up in any other major event. During his lifetime he witnessed the reigns of Abdurrahman Pasha (1789-1813) and his elder brother, Osman Pasha (1786-1788). Meanwhile he came to power, in order, for a year in 1788 and for five more years from 1797 until he died in 1803.

Among all the the previous Baban pashas and following leaders of the Sanjaq, it was Abdurrahman Pasha, who stood out the most with his political career, charismatic personality, and desires for more autonomy from the Ottomans and the Iranians. One could say that he was less visible in the first period of his reign between 1789 and 1797. This was probably because of his father Ibrahim Pasha and more likely because of Büyük Süleyman being still in power in Bagdad, but he was for sure much more dominant figure, both in the Baban Sanjaq and Bagdad, after he reappeared in the political scene in 1803.<sup>166</sup> For some historians he was a kingmaker in Iraq,<sup>167</sup> for the others, especially for Kurdish nationalist historians, he was a

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<sup>163</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. I, 119-120

<sup>164</sup> James Felix Jones, *Memoirs of Baghdad, Kurdistan and Turkish Arabia, 1857*, (London: Archive Editions, 1998), 207.

<sup>165</sup> Emin Zeki claims that the name Melkindi suppose to refer to the ‘Melik Gundi’ which means the ‘village of the king.’ Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Tarixi Silemani*, 66.

<sup>166</sup> Edmonds states that “owing to internecine family disputes fomented by the rivalries of Turkey and Persia most reigns were interrupted more than once-the great Abdurrahman Pasha was deposed no less than five times between 1789 and 1813- so that there were reigns within reigns...” C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, 52.

<sup>167</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 226, 231.

warrior of the independence<sup>168</sup> for the Kurds. However many of these historians are agree on that the revolt of Abdurrahman Pasha was the first of its kind among the Kurds of the Ottoman Empire. The political life of Abdurrahman Pasha is also well documented, probably the best among all the other Baban rulers, both in the Ottoman archival correspondence and the Western sources. One reason for this was that Abdurrahman Pasha constantly attacked his neighboring urban centers, such as Baghdad, Kirkuk, Senna, Koy Sanjaq, and territories and he flip flopped sides tirelessly between the Ottomans and Iranians, which caused some major conflicts on the border. As we will go over here, one may see the story of Abdurrahman Pasha very complicated because of switching sides, which resembles a pendulum, but his was a summary of the whole story of the Babans from the sixteenth century until today.

While a strong leader was emerging from the Baban territories, Baghdad was losing one of its resilient rulers. The long time governor of Baghdad, Süleyman Pasha, grew in age and weakness, and with him resentment grew against him. Knowing that he could not hold his office anymore, he asked the Porte for his resignation in favor of Ahmed, the Pasha's confidential man and Kahya of Baghdad. His request was refused, however Ahmed did not stop there and pressed on him to retire. Despite his illnesses and a deadly plot against him, he survived until his eighties and kept the power until he died in Mosul on 7<sup>th</sup> of August in 1802. After him Ali Pasha, who married to one of Süleyman Pasha's daughters, became the next ruler of Baghdad.<sup>169</sup>

Ali Pasha was not a very strong leader compared o his precursor. Therefore he always needed the Baban leaders when battling against the Wahhabis, Iranians and the Arab tribes. In the year of 1804 the Wahhabis attacked on the Shi'i sites in Iraq and Ali Pasha desperately looked for Abdurrahman Pasha's help since he was dealing with some skirmishes in the Northwest of Iraq. The latter used this opportunity to expand his influence on the former and took Muhammed Pasha of Koy Sanjaq as his helper to the war.<sup>170</sup> Abdurrahman Pasha successfully dealt with the Wahhabis, which proved the Baban leader to become a powerful and influential frontrunner in the region. After taking care of this job, Abdurrahman Pasha wanted to settle an old quarrel with Muhammed Pasha. He killed the leader of Koy Sanjaq and sent a letter to Ali Pasha about it.<sup>171</sup> While the vali care little for his action and took no

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<sup>168</sup> Rousseau, who was a resident in Baghdad in early 19th century, claims that Abdurrahman Pasha tried "to ensure full independence" of his territories. Rousseau, *Description du pachalik de Bagdad*, 103; Edmonds claims that during the time he stayed in Iraqi Kurdistan between 1919-1925 the local still considered the period of Abdurrahman Pasha as a "period of sturdy Kurdish independence." C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, 54; Xemgin also considers him as a rebel who "always tried to establish an independent Kurdish state." Etem Xemgin, *Osmanlı-Safevi Döneminde Kürdistan Tarihi, Vol. III*, (Istanbul: Doz Yayınları, 2004), 343; Soane also states that Abdurrahman Pasha's revolt was the first attempt to "throw off the yoke of the Turks" with a "national spirit." Ely Banister Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, (Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1913), 371; Kaws Kaftan, another nationalist historian, states that the Ottomans were afraid of Abdurrahman Pasha because he moved with "national purposes" to occupy all of Kurdistan. Kaftan also claims that Abdurrahman Pasha's movement had progressive nationalistic sentiments despite its feudal-emirate bases. Kaws Kaftan, *Baban Botan Soran*, (Istanbul: Nujen Yayınları, 1996), 35, 39.

<sup>169</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 219-220

<sup>170</sup> Celile Celil, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler*. (translated from Russian to Turkish by Mehmet Demir), (Ankara: Özge Yayınları, 1992), 57.

<sup>171</sup> Celil claims that Abdurrahman Pasha saw Muhammed Pasha as responsible for his father's death and wanted to take revenge for it. Celil, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler*, 57-58; Rousseau also records that

measures, however Abdurrahman pasha was encouraged with Ali Pasha's negligence and took over many villages between Sulaimaniya and Kirkuk, including Koy Sanjaq and Harir.<sup>172</sup> Disturbed with the Baban leader's arrogance Ali Pasha dismissed him, appointed one of his cousins Khalid Pasha to the leadership of Sulaimaniya and went after him with his army, including several other Kurdish leaders. Both sides came face to face in Derbend,<sup>173</sup> where Abdurrahman Pasha was defeated and sought refuge among the Bilbas tribe, but later found safety at the court of Fath Ali Shah.<sup>174</sup> The Shah, who was in the war with Russia, welcomed him and assured him for his reappointment to the position of governor of Sulaimaniya. The Shah sent several letters to Ali Pasha demanding Abdurrahman Pasha's appointment but each time the vali of Baghdad turned him down and asked for the Baban leader to be handed over.<sup>175</sup> It was not the first time Abdurrahman Pasha rebelled as one could see his several other rebellions reflected in the official documents.<sup>176</sup> His rebellions continued until he passed away in 1813. Each time Abdurrahman Pasha rebelled he would escape to Iran and the Ottoman Sultan joining the vali of Baghdad would ask for him to be handed over. In the end when each side saw no solution to Abdurrahman Pasha's incident they would decide to kill him, but neither side ever accomplished or perform such a mission.<sup>177</sup> After all it was Kurdistan in

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Abdurrahman Pasha waited for a long time to take revenge of his father from Muhammed Pasha. Rousseau, *Description du pachalik de Bagdad*, 103.

<sup>172</sup> al-Waili, *Tarikh al-Imarat al-Babaniyyah*, 179-180.

<sup>173</sup> Before facing with Ali Pasha, Khalid Pasha had a war with Abdurrahman Pasha in Altun Kopru close to Zap river and the latter came out victorious from this conflict. It was after this defeat that Ali Pasha decided to go after Abdurrahman Pasha directly. Celil, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler*, 58; Derbend was a passage, which was fortified by Abdurrahman Pasha. "He placed here a wall and gate, and three or four pieces of cannon, two of which were planted on the height, in order to fire upon the Turkish camp below; and vain would have been Suliman Pasha's attack on this pass, had not a Koordish chief called Mahommed Bey, a son of Khaled Pasha who was united with the Turks, led a division of the Turkish troops and auxiliary Koords up the mountain, by a pass only known to some Koords, and which had been neglected as impracticable; so that Abdurrahman Pasha found his position turned, and his guns on the height pointed against himself." Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, vol. I*, 59.

<sup>174</sup> Fleeing to Iran, the official Ottoman correspondence labeled Abdurrahman Pasha as "Serkeş," (HAT #1915, 20.L.1220/10 January, 1806) "hilekar," (HAT #3707, 11.S.1222/19 April, 1807), "müfsid" (HAT #6671, 28.R.1221/15 July, 1806).

<sup>175</sup> Since Abdurrahman Pasha had several runaways to the Shah also each time demanded from the Sultan and the vali of Baghdad for reappointment of the Baban Pasha to the leadership of Sulaimaniya. In 1812 Fath Ali Shah asked Ali Pasha of Baghdad to accept his request for reappointment of Abdurrahman Pasha. (HAT #46, 29.Z.1226/14 January, 1812). Two of the Shah's sons, Abbas Mirza and Mirza Shafi, also joined him to demand for Pasha's return to his post in Kurdistan. (HAT #6718, 29.Z.1226/14 January, 1812). In 1810 a response written by the Shah to a letter from the Sublime Porte stated that it was proper to reappoint Abdurrahman Pasha as the leader of the Sulaimaniya. (HAT #76, 29.Z.1224/ 4 February, 1810); Najaf Kuli records that Fath Ali Shah made a request to Ali Pasha for Abdurrahman Pasha's reinstatement but instead received "foolish excuses, and endeavoured to retard the execution of the royal orders by sending worthless presents." Abd al-Razzak b. Najaf Kuli, *The Dynasty of the Kajars The Dynasty of Kajars*, (Trans. by Sir Harford Jones Brydges), (London, 1833), 259-260.

<sup>176</sup> Abdurrahman Pasha seems that he started seeking help from Iran way before 1806. One document from the year 1793 states that the Pasha was an asylum in Iran. (HAT #6701, 3.R.1208/7 November, 1793); In 1807 he sought refuge in Iran again and Ali Pasha followed him to the border (HAT #6704, 29.Z.1221/9 March, 1807). Another document from 1812 claims Iran's support for Abdurrahman Pasha to pass the border from Iran into the Ottoman territories and attack on Baghdad. (HAT #1227, 1.B.1227/10 July, 1812); The other document from 1813 records that Abdurrahman Pasha was handed over to the Ottomans by Iran. (HAT #36639, 29.Z.1228/ 22 December, 1813)

<sup>177</sup> A letter from Muhammed Ali Mirza, the vali of Kermanshah, stated that once, probably when Abdurrahman Pasha did not listen to him, he felt obliged to kill the Pasha ("Abdurrahman Pasha'nın katline memurum"), (HAT #14257, 15.N.1226/3 October, 1811). A secret letter from the Sublime Porte also once asked the vali of Baghdad



general, and the Baban domains in particular, where Baghdad outsourced its military power and ammunitions.<sup>178</sup> Besides as Nazmi Sevgen quotes from a correspondence from Ali Pasha that these regions were considered as the “key” to the door opening to Iraq and Anatolia.<sup>179</sup> The Ottomans were afraid that Abdurrahman Pasha would hand this key to the Shah of Iran. The Babans Sanjaq was not only a good source for numerous well-trained soldiers, but it was also providing with a good amount of financial resource.<sup>180</sup>

After a while Abdurrahman Pasha became tired of being ruled by a family of Georgian Slaves and wanted to have direct contact with the Sublime Porte instead of an intermediary power. On 17 zilhicce 1225(13 January 1811) he sent a letter to the grand vezir Yusuf Ziya Pasha in the Sublime Porte while he was in exile in Iran.<sup>181</sup> In his letter Abdurrahman Pasha first questioned the current leadership and the situation in Baghdad before presenting his case. Through describing the corrupt administration of the province he hoped that he would convince the Porte for him to be the leader of Baghdad:

Since a while, there has been interruption in the administration because of the lack of power and management among the valis of Baghdad. Therefore the order in the vilayet has been disrupted, the tribes and clans have been disobedient and because of depravity the state has not been benefiting from there. It appears to be obvious that they (Mamluk valis in Baghdad) have not even been able to prevent the depravity and attacks by the Wahhabis, who started to appear a while ago and dared to betray and attack on Mecca and Medina.

After making his case Abdurrahman Pasha now opened up and made his intention clear:

Abdurrahman Pasha is a loyal servant of the state. He will prevent the Wahhabi rebellions if the vilayet of Baghdad is bestowed upon him. The Wahhabis will be dealt with the sword and their allegiance will be secured. Aleppo, Diyarbakir, Rakka and other vilayets, which strayed from the obedience, will be resubmitted [to the royal allegiance] and the rebels, who attacked on these lands, will be removed and destroyed. There will be an annual payment of thirty thousands piasters.

Even if he is not granted with those requests Abdurrahman Pasha clarified that he would still be happy to receive back his old status with the land he oversaw before. He states

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to hang Abdurrahman Pasha but somehow never realized the mission. (HAT #16243, 29.Z.1224/4 February, 1810).

<sup>178</sup> Rousseau records “ Le Kurdistan est d’une grande resource pour Bagdad qui en tire la majeure partie de ses munitions...” Jean Baptiste Louis Jacques Rousseau, *Description du pachalik de Bagdad*, 100-101; Referring to a report from Ali Pasha written in July 1806(Rebiülevvel 1221), Sevgen records “Irak’ın en seçkin askerini veren Kürdistan’ın vermediği, yahut Allah korusun zorla aldıkları takdirde hem askerimiz noksanlaşacak, hem de bu haveliye el atan İranlılar, burasını basamak yaparak diğer İslam memleketlerini istilaya teşebbüs edeceklerdir.” Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Türk Beylikleri*, 184.

<sup>179</sup> “ Kürdistan’ın Irak’ın, Irak’ın da bütün Anadolu’nun anahtarı mesabesinde olduğu, Abdurrahman müfsidinin Şah hizmetinde, Kürdistan’ın da Şah hizmetinde olacağı, Şah’a kemal-i sadakat ve can ile hizmet etmeyi taahhüt ettiği anlaşılmaktadır.” Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Türk Beylikleri*, 184.

<sup>180</sup> Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society in early modern Iraq*, 41.

<sup>181</sup> HAT #20880-F (17. R. 1225/21 May, 1810). A copy of the same letter and some extract of it are also available in Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Türk Beylikleri*, 187-188

he “would pay three thousand piasters as a result of his faithfulness and stimulus if he were granted, as it was before, with sanjaqs of Shahrizor and Kirkuk.” He finalizes his letter with the assurance that his “requests are mandated not from avarice and mischievousness, but rather from his religious duties (*mücerred din-i mübin*) and obligation to serve the eternal state and his intention for loyalty (to the state).”<sup>182</sup>

Abdurrahman Pasha’s only “project” was “to render his country tributary to the Porte, but independent of any neighbouring Pasha.” Rich states:

He was willing to pay any annual tribute that the Porte might require, regularly and in ready money, at the capital, provided he should be secured from obeying any other orders than those of the Sultan; and not be subject to deposition, and interference in the interior of his province, except in case of rebellion; but this he could never manage.<sup>183</sup>

In the mind of the Sultan and Halet Efendi, Abdurrahman Pasha was not a good choice for the governorship of Baghdad as he had strong relations with the Persians.<sup>184</sup> Besides, compared to the Mamluks he had a strong army made of Kurdish tribes and kinsmen, who were all loyal to him. A man with such a power would be harder than the Mamluks to deal with. The historians have discussed it whether the Porte turned down Abdurrahman Pasha or he refused to take the office in Baghdad because of personal reasons.<sup>185</sup> The documents we stated and quoted above show that Abdurrahman Pasha sought further power and was rejected by the Sultan. Whereas, Rich records an anecdote stating that “the Reis Efendi” (Halet Efendi), who was sent from Istanbul to remove Süleyman Pasha of Baghdad from his seat, offered Abdurrahman Pasha the governorship of Baghdad. But the latter turned down the offer “very prudently.”

‘It is true,’ said he, ‘that I should become a vizir of the first rank; but one draught of the snow-water of my own mountains is worth all the honours of the empire. Besides, were I to transfer myself to Bagdad, my own prosperity would be increased, but it would ultimately be the ruin of the family of the Bebbehs.’<sup>186</sup>

Whether he refused or was refused may never be cleared and may become a subject of long discussion. One thing was clear that both sides did not trust each other on this matter and neither wanted their sphere of influence circumscribed.

In the end, despite his offer and request above he made to the Sultan, Abdurrahman Pasha was not allowed to return to Sulaimaniya. Meanwhile, Süleyman Pasha, another member of the Baban family, was installed in Sulaimaniya and Abdurrahman Pasha’s cousin Khalid Pasha appointed to the leadership of Kirkuk by the vali of Baghdad. Khalid was not

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<sup>182</sup> HAT #20880-F (17. R. 1225/21 May, 1810) and Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Türk Beylikleri*, 188

<sup>183</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. I, 96.

<sup>184</sup> Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Türk Beylikleri*, 192-193

<sup>185</sup> From his action against Halet Efendi it seems that Abdurrahman Pasha did not want to be a governor but he had the desire to be influential on the candidate that was chosen for the governorship. Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Türk Beylikleri*, 188-189.

<sup>186</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. I, 96-97

happy of the result and decided to cross the Iranian border with six hundred followers to join Abdurrahman Pasha. Such a defection pushed Baghdad, one more time, to allow Abdurrahman Pasha to return to his old position as the Pasha of Sulaimaniya.<sup>187</sup>

The year of 1810 did not only bring Abdurrahman Pasha his throne in the Baban territories back to him but also brought a renewed help against his enemies in Baghdad and Mosul with arrival of Halet Efendi, special envoy of the Sultan appointed to Baghdad to solve the problem of the leadership in the province.<sup>188</sup> Abdurrahman Pasha now became friend with a Turkish bureaucrat for the sake of loosing his Persian alliance, only if he could get rid of the Mamluk Pasha of Baghdad and become the most powerful man in the province. Fortunately, Halet Efendi also aimed at Küçük Süleyman, vali of Baghdad, with an army of ten thousands, which was made of the cavaliers of Abdurrahman Pasha and the military of vali of Mosul, and he encircled the citadel of Baghdad, captured the vali and executed him right after.<sup>189</sup>

Halef Efendi arrived to Baghdad with a ferman bearing the imperial signature, which was ordering the appointment of a *vali*, but the place for the name was blank. So, he could assign any name he wished. After Küçük Süleyman was taken away from the scene, Abdurrahman Pasha forced and threatened Halet Efendi to tell who the next vali would be. Seeing no way to get rid of him Halef Efendi finally filled in the blank with Kethüda Abdullah Agha Tütüncü's name. Longrigg states that this was Abdurrahman Pasha's choice as well and he also pushed for Tütüncü to be selected, therefore Longrigg calls the Pasha as 'king-maker.'<sup>190</sup>

Once Küçük Süleyman was dangled and Abdullah Pasha was appointed to the governorship of Baghdad, Abdurrahman Pasha must have felt more powerful as he tried to take care of more of his enemies by accusing them with corruption. Halet Efendi was annoyed with his irresponsible attitude and warned him about it although with little success. After more trouble he caused in addition to this he finally forced Halet Efendi to plan to get rid of him. While discussing his decision in a small circle including the head of Janissaries and newly appointed vali of Baghdad, Abdullah Pasha, one of the members present there passed the details of the plan to Abdurrahman Pasha. Hearing that Halef Efendi wanted to have him killed Abdurrahman Pasha was outraged and attacked on the former and the head of

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<sup>187</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 232.

<sup>188</sup> More information on Halet Efendi and the role he played in shaping the politics in Baghdad see chapter 5 of this dissertation. Also see "Halet Efendi, Mehmed Sa'id" in *EI2; Tarih-i Cevdet, Vol. 12*, 67-68; Şânizâde Mehmed Ataullah, *Şânizâde Tarihi, Vol. 1*, 249-250.

<sup>189</sup> HAT #20898-A (25.Ş.1225/24 September, 1810). Because of his service in this plot Abdurrahman Pasha was designated and decorated with the title of the 'Pasha of Baban territories.' HAT #20848 (29.Z.1225/25 January, 1811).

<sup>190</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 232. On the other hand one could only suspect if Tütüncü was Abdurrahman Pasha's choice for the governorship of Baghdad. Before any choice he desperately wanted to be selected for this job. Although he was turned down for such a position he told Halef Efendi that he would accept the choice by the Porte. In his letter to Halet Efendi he pronounced several names (Süleyman Pasha's son Said Bey, Davut Efendi, Selim Agha, Feyzullah Efendi) but Kethüda Abdullah Agha Tütüncü. Dated on 23 Receb 1225(1810) and addressed to the Porte, a complete transcription of the letter written by Halet Efendi, who talks about Abdurrahman Pasha's letter to him there, is available in Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri*, 190-192.

Janissaries. Halef Efendi somehow saved himself, but the head of the Janissaries sought refuge in the British Consulate, from where he was shipped to Basra by his protectors.<sup>191</sup>

Fath Ali Shah was happy to see the changes in Baghdad and wanted to keep good relations with the Ottomans. Therefore, beside Süleyman Pasha he “rendered the Pasha (Baban Abdurrahman) as being contrary to the rules and maxims of friendship due to the Othman Government and therefore determined that friendship with Turkey should be so strictly kept in view, that neither injury nor offence might arise between the Governments of Turkey and Iran.”<sup>192</sup> Although the Shah did not have a better ally than Abdurrahman Pasha in Sulaimaniya, he wanted the vali of Kermanshah, Muhammed Ali Mirza, to support the Pasha with care of not invading the Ottoman territories for the sake of good relations. The Shah knew that supporting the Baban Pasha was the most convenient tool to get involved into the politics of Baghdad. Knowing that the Shah would interfere into Baghdad, Abdullah Pasha knew that he needed to be cautious in his relations with Iran. Therefore, he received back Abdurrahman Pasha almost all the time the Shah made a demand and he paid tribute to the latter.

The Sultan was not happy about Abdurrahman Pasha’s relations with the Iranians and because of this Abdullah Pasha decided to take some precautions. Pasha of Baghdad sent some military personnel to Sulaimaniya. Abdurrahman Pasha decided to stop this army to reach to his capital and went to Kifri, a town hundred kilometers south of Sulaimaniya, in the summer of 1812.<sup>193</sup> This was the “chief campaign” of Abdullah Pasha Tütüncü against Abdurrahman Pasha with the purpose of subduing the pasha of the Baban Sanjaq.<sup>194</sup> For this battle the vali gathered and prepared, in the words of Mastura Kurdestani, a woman historian and poet in Ardalan in early nineteenth century, “an army crowded more than the stars in the sky.”<sup>195</sup> Vali’s strong army and Abdurrahman’s forces came across each other close to Kifri. Despite the vali’s well-equipped army Abdurrahman was able to come over and almost defeat Abdullah Pasha. Fortunately a member of the Mamluk family, Defterdar Davud Pasha, who was going to be the subsequent vali of Baghdad, bravely went up front and put the Baban army under heavy shelling.<sup>196</sup> Under such an attack Abdurrahman Pasha lost most of his army and immediately left the field with his twenty men for Iran. The vali went after him but could

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<sup>191</sup> Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Türk Beylikleri*, 188.

<sup>192</sup> Abd al-Razzak b. Najaf Kuli, *The Dynasty of the Kajars*, 433-434.

<sup>193</sup> Abdulla states that there is confusion on the date for the war of Kifri: C.J. Rich gives 1811 as the year for the war. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, vol. I*, 387; whereas al-Kerkouki gives the date when the vali and his army left Baghdad for the field of war on 2 June 1812. Rassoul al-Kerkouki, *Dawhat al-Wozara fi Tarikh Waqaih Bagdad al-Zawra*, (Trans. from Turkish into Arabic by Mossa Kazzim Nawras)(Dar al-Katib: Beyrut, 1963), 256; on the other hand J.G. Lorimer records the day of 18 June 1812 as the date for the start of the war. J.G. Lorimer, *Gazettier of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia, England*, (1st edition Calcutta 1915, Historical, Part 1B, reprinted in London, 1984), 1130; Abdulla claims that Lorimer’s is the most accurate date for the day of the war. Nejat Abdulla, *İmparatorluk, Sınır ve Aşiret: Kürdistan ve 1843-1932 Türk-Fars Sınır Çatışması* (Trans. by Mustafa Aslan), (Istanbul: Avesta, 2010), 189-190.

<sup>194</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 227.

<sup>195</sup> Mestureyi Kurdistani, *Mejoyê Erdelanî*, trans. to Sorani Kurdish by Hejari Mukiryani (Hewlêr(Arbil): Çapxaneyê Wezaretê Perwerde, 2002), 190.

<sup>196</sup> Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Tarixi Silemani*, 91-92.

not catch him. Instead to show off his victory and shock his enemy Abdullah Pasha built a minaret from the heads of the dead Kurds.<sup>197</sup>

Abdurrahman Pasha stayed out of trouble for the last year of his life as he suffered from several illnesses and passed away in 1813.<sup>198</sup> In the last days before his death his family and relatives had hard time to comfort his feelings of dishonor, “which sometimes burst forth even with violence, at the idea that he was dying quietly and ignobly in his bed; and that it had not rather been his fate to be laid low in the field of honour.” Rich adds “this is a most uncommon feeling for an Oriental.”<sup>199</sup> Without doubt Abdurrahman Pasha was the most notable of all Baban pashas with his politics and personality. Despite the hard time he had with the valis of Baghdad he was able to stay in power for twenty-four years, although with several interruptions. He left his positions for five times and came back to his throne for six times. Both by the Ottomans and Iranians, he was sometimes disfavored but some other times well received because of his services as in the case of being bestowed of the title of vezir by the Ottoman Sultan.<sup>200</sup> He had a very religious personality and paid respect to the religious scholars. He once invited the famous Naqshbandi sheikh Mawlana Khalid to Sulaimaniya and built a place for him to teach his students. Compared to his political abilities and ambitions he rather had a small territory to govern, therefore he always looked for further lands and more power in Baghdad province. Because of his energy and desires he spent most of his time in war to expand his realm. The town of Sulaimaniya neither saw comfort nor wealth because of the occupation of the town by the Iranian and the Ottoman forces.<sup>201</sup> Beside, he was lucky for not having very strong rivals among his family. Therefore, he was not challenged much and compared to his predecessors he was more successful establishing the order in his territories after long periods of war.<sup>202</sup>

Abdurrahman Pasha was always considered as a necessary element in the border region by the Ottomans, but one that needed to be kept at bay. Although the ideas presented were belong to the Jewish banker Israfil, who was the sponsor of the former vali of Baghdad, an interview ordered to be done by the Sultan with some of the people familiar with the issues in Baghdad draws a clear picture of the approach by the Porte.<sup>203</sup> Israfil suggested to the Sultan that Abdurrahman should be granted with the title of Pasha of Baban Sanjaq as a reward for the service he had done. However Baghdad should keep an eye on him because of his relations with Iran. His brother was kept by the aforesaid state as an assurance for his loyalty, therefore the vali of Baghdad should make sure that Abdurrahman Pasha stayed in under surveillance. The border and the limits of his sanjaq should be clearly defined and the

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<sup>197</sup> Abdulla states that building minarets from the skulls was a tradition of the wars in the region in order to frighten the enemy. Nejat Abdulla, *İmparatorluk, Sınır ve Aşiret*, 190; Zekî describes the scene as “ a barbaric minaret and terrible monument of the hateful vali of Baghdad. ” Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Tarixi Silemani*, 92; for further information about the traditions in the fields of war during this period see also Rasoul al-Kerkouki, *Dawlat al-Wuzara fi Tarikh Waqaih Baghdad al-Zawra*, 115.

<sup>198</sup> The French newspaper *Journal de l'empire* declared the news of his death as the summer of 1813 and announced the next heir as his son, Mahmud Beg. *Journal de l'empire*, (5 September 1813).

<sup>199</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. I, 319.

<sup>200</sup> *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol. III, 325-326.

<sup>201</sup> Zekî, *Tarixi Silemani*, 94.

<sup>202</sup> al-Waili, *Tarikh al-Emarat al-Babaniyyah*, 219-220.

<sup>203</sup> Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri*, 192-193.

villages around his sanjaq should not be handed to him since he would have a much larger territory and might feel more powerful against Baghdad, therefore he might be disloyal to the Empire again. Israfil suggested all these issues and more should be written down in details in the ferman, which was going to Baghdad.

## CHAPTER II

### RIVALRY AND POLITICS BETWEEN KHALIDI AND QADIRI SUFI ORDERS

In a brisk, early morning of October in 1820, Sheikh Khalid suddenly and secretly leaves the city of Sulaimaniya for Baghdad. He takes his family and leaves behind the school that produced hundreds of students of Naqshbandi-Khalidiyya order and thousands of disciples in all over the Ottoman Empire. As C.J. Rich, The East Indian Company's resident of Baghdad and a guest to the governor of the Sulaimaniya, had witnessed the departure of the legendary Sufi Sheikh, "cause of his flight is variously reported."<sup>204</sup> Some rumors say that his prayers could not save the life of Baban pasha's last son from the small-pox that caused the death of thousands of lives. Some other says that he was playing with the politics among the members of Baban family and trying to have some influence over the governance of the region. None of these claims are certain but for sure there is one certain reason that he left the city: the newly established Naqshbandi-Khalidiyya order's sudden expansion over the region, which caused jealousy among the sheiks of Qadiri Sufi order, especially Sheikh Ma'ruf. Sheikh Khalid was not the first case among the nobles of the town who escaped from Sulaimaniya's political atmosphere, which was filled with conspiracies, and he was not going to be the last one.

In this chapter, I argue that Kurdish Sufi orders, particularly Naqshbandi-Khalidiyya, in early 19th-century Ottoman Iraq played a key role in the development of regional politics and they became a political power in the region themselves. Beyond the order's stance as a political entity, the politics among the Kurdish Emirates, especially the Babans, was reshaped through the Sufi orders. My focus here will be mostly on Sheikh Khalid's lifetime in the city of Sulaimaniya. Although it is for sure that the Sheikh's influence was way over Kurdistan and Iraq, even during his life time, I will look at his impact on the political agendas of Ottomans and the Babans.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, my references will go beyond Sulaimaniya and I will refer to his life in other places when it suits. In addition, I elaborate on how Sunni-Shafi'i identity of the Kurds on the border played role in terms of shaping politics towards Iran and how the Ottomans, Sheikh Khalid and local Kurdish Pashas in the region perceived Iran with her Shi'i identity. Besides, I will present the approach by Sheikh Khalid towards non-Muslim (*zhimmis*) population and Ottoman bureaucrats. By doing this, I hope to show what the limits of the Sheikh were in terms of his sphere of influence. The dominant scholarship presents him as anti-Christian and anti-Jewish, while he is cooperative towards Ottoman state. I argue

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<sup>204</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, Vol. I*, 320-321.

<sup>205</sup> During the lifetime of Sheikh Khalid and more after his death the influence of Naqshbandi-Khalidi order spread as far as to Indonesian Archipeloge, partialy in North Africa, as well as Rumeli and Caucasus. For his Khalidiyya in Indonesia see Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Ulama and their Indonesian Disciples" in *Mullas, Sufis and heretics: the role of religion in Kurdish society : collected articles*. Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000, 111-121; for introduction of the order to the Caucasus see Anna Zelkina, *In quest for God and freedom: the Sufi response to the Russian advance in the North Caucasus* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2000).

that although such approaches are partially credible, they have been over-emphasized because of the role Naqshbandi-Khalidi order played after Sheikh Khalid passed away.

### **Abu'l Baha Diya al-Din Khalid al-Shahrizuri**

Shaikh Khalid al-Baghdadi, also known to his followers as Mawlana Khalid, was born around 1776 in Qaradagh, a village situated thirty kilometers from Sulaimaniya and populated by the Jaf tribe in the district of Shahrizur in Iraqi Kurdistan. His father, probably a mullah, follows carefully his son's education and, as Hakim indicates from the chronicles of this period, Sheikh Khalid shows an incredible performance in his education in early ages.<sup>206</sup> Like many of his colleagues of this period he traveled to different villages and cities in order to receive education from well known scholars of the time on diverse subjects. At the age of twenty, he received his *icaze*, a sort of diploma to teach in religious studies, from Muhammad Qasem Kurdistani, the top ulama of the city of Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdish Ardalan principality on the Iranian side. In 1799, the pasha of Baban at the time offered him a teaching post in Sulaymaniyah, which he declined by claiming that it was not worth to have such a position.<sup>207</sup> Soon after, he accepted the prestigious position of *mullah* in one of the five mosques in Sulaimaniya, where he stayed for the next five years.

During his pilgrimage to Mecca, in 1805, he encountered an Indian dervish, who advised him to travel to India in order to find his spiritual path. In 1808, he received another Indian dervish, this time in Sulaimaniya, and finally departed for India. In India he obtained his initiation into the Naqshbandiyya order in Delhi at the hands of Ghulam Ali al-Dahlawi (d. 1240/1824)<sup>208</sup>. Once he was back to Kurdistan in 1811, he established Naqshbandi-Khalidiyya order, which was going to become an influential Sufi network in the Ottoman lands and Iran, through nineteenth century. One of his first adherents was his earlier professor, Muhammad Qasem Kurdistani. Sheikh Khalid was well received in Sulaimaniya and people from political and religious circles started to become his adherents and considered him as a religious and spiritual guide. Although he spent most of his life in Iraqi Kurdistan, he would have to move later to Baghdad, the first time at the end of 1811 and a second time in 1820, and finally, once and for all to Damascus in 1822, for political and personal reasons. He produced several works in Arabic and Persian on religious matters. He had a *divan*, published in Istanbul in 1844, including some Kurdish poems and he also authored one Kurdish prose on the fundamentals of Islam.<sup>209</sup>

What made the Sheikh was not only the religious circle around him, but also were the politicians, dignitaries, Kurdish mirs and the members of the other sects and religions.

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<sup>206</sup> Halkawt Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya dans le Milieu Kurde au Debut du XIXe Siecle" in *Journal of the History of Sufism*, Vol 1-2, 2000, Istanbul, 151-166.

<sup>207</sup> Hakim, *Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya*, 156.

<sup>208</sup> Hamid Algar and K.A. Nizami, "Naqshbandiyya." *EI2*.

<sup>209</sup> Although nationalist writers in Turkey do not refer to Mawlana's knowledge of his native language, he left behind several poems and prose in Kurdish. Also, it is not certain if he wrote any treatises in Kurdish, however Emîn Zekî states that he had several of such works. Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Tarixê Sûlimani û Welatê lê Devreyê Zûr Kedîmeve ta evvelê Îhtilal 1918*, (History of Suleimaniya and its province from the ancient times until early of 1918 war) (Baghdad: Al-Najah Publisher, 1939), 164.



Therefore, his short biography of the Sheikh could be understood better only if there is more details on his stance with the Shi'is, Jews, and Christians. There has been much speculation by prominent academics on the Sheikh's approach to non-Sunni and non-Muslim population in the Ottoman Empire. The section below problematizes such discussions and gives supporting sources for the new approaches.

### **Mawlana Khalid, Shi'is and Iran**

For a long time, our knowledge on relations between Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya and Shi'is in general, and Iran in particular, was based on studies which have been produced by scholars like Hamid Algar, Albert Hourani, and Butrus Abu Manneh. All these prominent scholars stressed how hatefully Sheikh Khalid talked about Shi'is, Christians, and Jews. Hourani even went further with suggesting that Sheikh Khalid adhered to a Wahhabi style of Islamic law.<sup>210</sup> Following the same argument, Hourani's pupil Butrus Abu Mannah suggested that Sheikh Khalid's disciples would finish their prayer (*du'a*) for God to "annihilate (ahlik) the Jews, Christians, fire worshippers (majus) and the Persian Shi'ites (rawafid al-A'jam)."<sup>211</sup> Abu-Mannah goes further by suggesting that Sheikh Khalid might have inherited anti-Shi'i feelings from his master in India, since Ghulam Ali's master was assassinated by "fanatical Shi'is."<sup>212</sup> Hamid Algar, in support of the arguments above, suggests that most Sufi groups claim they are descendents of Ali whereas Naqshbandiyya claims to be descended from Abu Bakr, which distinguishes them from the rest of Sufi orders and places them further away from Shi'ism. He goes further saying "Naqshbandiyya, particularly from the sixteenth century onward, have developed an attitude of militant hostility of Shi'ism," referring to the approaches towards Shi'is by Ahmad al-Sirhindi (Imam Rabbani) in India. On the other hand, Algar can not abstain from referring to the "Shi'i Naqshbandis" in nineteenth century, which he means that Shi'is adhered to the Naqshbandiyya order and attended to its circles.<sup>213</sup>

In recent years these scholars we mentioned above have been seriously criticized because of their overemphasizing of Sheikh Khalid's enmity towards Shi'is. Sean Ezra Foley, in a recent thorough study, shows very convincingly that Sheikh Khalid had no such sentiments for Shi'is.<sup>214</sup> In addition of refuting the approaches by above mentioned scholars, he argues that Sheikh Khalid's loyalty to the Ottomans was exaggerated since he was confident of Baban family, who were not much loyal to the Ottomans. Although, the Sheikh's political

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<sup>210</sup> Albert Hourani, "The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent in the 18<sup>th</sup> century", *Studia Islamica*, 8 (1957), 89-122; also see Hourani's "Sufism and Modern Islam: Mawlana Khalid and Naqshbandi Order" in Albert Hourani, *The emergence of the modern Middle East*, (Berkeley:University of California Press, 1981), 75-89.

<sup>211</sup> From a letter to his deputy Ibrahim Efendi Ismetboli in AY728, fol. 52a. Ref. in Butrus Abu-Mannah "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century" *Die Welt des Islams*, New Ser., Bd. 22, Nr. 1/4. (1982), 1-36.

<sup>212</sup> Abu-Mannah "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya," 16.

<sup>213</sup> Hamid Algar, "The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of Its History and Significance." *Studia Islamica*, No.44.(1976), 128; see also Algar, Hamid "Bagdadi Mawlana Khaled Zia-al-din" in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. 3, 1989.

<sup>214</sup> Sean Ezra Foley, "Shaikh Khalid and the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya, 1776-2005." (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University, 2005) Introduction and Chapter 3 on Sheikh Khalid's Iraq, 1-26 and 62-130.

involvement was clear in Iraqi Kurdistan and Baghdad since Foley was able to hold a good amount of correspondence between Sheikh Khalid and officials from Iran, Kurdistan and Baghdad, he claims that the Sheikh reduced this interaction substantially when he moved to Damascus in 1822. Besides Foley, several other scholars of Iranian, Turkish, Kurdish and Arab origin dispute what the Western scholars suggest about Sheikh Khalid. For instance, Halkawt Hakim, who Foley presents as “the leading expert on 19<sup>th</sup> century Naqshbandiyya in Kurdistan”, dismisses the suggestion that Sheikh Khalid condemned Christian Europeans. Hakim also argues that the Sheikh’s success was partly due to financial support by local “bazaris” and Baban pashas in Sulaimaniya, not the Ottoman state before his death.<sup>215</sup>

Before looking into what Sheikh Khalid was thinking about Shi’is and Iran, it would be useful to know what position the Ottoman center, Baghdad Administration and finally the Kurdish Pashas in Sulaimaniya were taking on Iran. This will help us to place the Sheikh’s approach toward non-Sunnis and non-Muslims in a more precise context and where Iran and the Shi’is stood in his ideas.

Qajarian Iran was not a trusted state by the Ottomans. They were considered as “corrupt” (*müfsid*) and “unreliable,” as one imperial decree suggests.<sup>216</sup> Their diplomatic representative (*Müdir-i Umur*) in Istanbul, Agha Mehmed was considered as a “blatant liar ” (*kazib-i sarih*).<sup>217</sup> Sultan Mahmud II’s suspicion of Iranians would reach to a degree where he asked to Baghdad Administration about the “character” (*mizac*) of Fath Ali, the Qajarian Shah.<sup>218</sup> The Ottomans had the image of dishonest and pervert Shi’i Iran in their mind for the most of history of inter-relations since sixteenth century and on. The Ottomans had such hostile feelings towards Iranians not only because of the wars between them, but the rebellions by Alevi and Qizilbash population in Anatolia were also making them to be suspicious of Iranians. Such negative propaganda against Iranians was voiced more during the crisis times such as wars, occupations, and campaigns against Alevi rebellions.

The Ottomans were not only expressing their mistrust towards Iranians but also they were specifically emphasizing on the difference between being a Sunni and Shi’i. In a letter from the governor of Erzurum Galip Pasha, dated on 16<sup>th</sup> July of 1827 (21 Zilhicce, 1242 hijri), stressed on that Abdullah Belbas of Mamesh Tribe, who was “descendent of Abbas, the Prophet’s uncle,” and of Sheikh Abdullah, were from the “the Sunni Sect ” (*Mezheb-i Sunni*).<sup>219</sup> The letter stated that because of their Sunni identity, the tribe members were not “comfortable” in Iran and thus they wanted to be relocated from Iranian Kurdistan into province of Muş in Eastern Anatolia. In another letter from Baghdad to Istanbul, the *bey* of Rewanduz was pictured as a loyal Kurdish mir who was a “Shafi’i” that helped the governor of Baghdad in times of “war against Iranians.”<sup>220</sup> Tribes under the administration of Baban

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<sup>215</sup> Halkawt Hakim, “Ab’ad zuhur al-Tariqa al-Naqshbandiyya fi Kurdistan awail al-qarn al-tasi’ ‘ashar,” *Studia Kurdica* 1(1984): 55-67; Reference by Foley, *Shaikh Khalid*, 10.

<sup>216</sup> HAT #36804-D, ( 21.N.1230/27 August, 1815).

<sup>217</sup> HAT #36829-C, HAT 36839-B, ( 29.Z.1246/10 June, 1831).

<sup>218</sup> HAT #32890, ( 29.Z.1240/14 August, 1825).

<sup>219</sup> HAT #36175, HAT #36175-B, HAT #36175-C,( 21.Z.1242/ 16 July, 1827).

<sup>220</sup> HAT #36750-M, ( 07.L.1239/5 June, 1824).

family were also specified as “Shafi’i rite” (*Shafi’i Mezhebinden*) and further was added that they would not obey to the Baban Pashas if they had ever chosen to be part of Shi’i Iran.<sup>221</sup>

Besides assuring the loyalty of their sunni “subjects” (*reaya*), provincial governors of the Ottoman Eastern border would ask them to spy on their Shi’i enemy, Iran.<sup>222</sup> A man from the Ottoman city of Kerkuk crossed the border into Iran on 30<sup>th</sup> July of 1824 (03.L.1239 hijri) “on the matter of a horse” (*bir kısrak maddesi için*) and on his way back he was questioned by officials about “what he saw and what he knew about the [current] situation of Iran and Kurdistan [of Iran].”<sup>223</sup> Spying on behalf of the Ottomans against their Shi’i enemy was not only done by Sunni subjects but also by non-muslims (*zimmies*) like Jews and Christians as well. During this period in Eastern Ottoman provinces Iran was so much suspected, which made non-Muslims to spy on even the Sunnis and the Ottoman officials. In November of 1815, an Ottoman-Jewish subject from Baghdad sent a Hebrew letter to Mosul’s governor Ahmed Pasha on “a certain collaborator of Shi’i Iran” in Baghdad.<sup>224</sup> This time the collaborator was not a Shi’i from the Ottoman-Iranian border but rather a person at the top office of Baghdad administration. The governor of Baghdad made a secret deal in 1815 with Iranians on the Ottoman Kurdistan where Baban family was located. The same governor was going to try to overthrow Baban Mahmud Pasha in 1819 by secret correspondence with his brother Hasan Bey.<sup>225</sup> Even members of Baban household were spying on Iranians. Sometimes, they would go further and blame each other as “collaborators of Iran.”<sup>226</sup>

Spying would not only keep the borders safe from Iran but also create an image of Shi’is in the mind of both the Kurds in Sulaimaniya and wider Iraq. Iranians were supposed to be suspected and be cautious about. Documents on this period stress more on the Sunni and Shafi’i identity of the Kurds and other Muslim subjects located in the Eastern borders. Such attitude towards highlighting the religious identity increased especially in times of war such as the one between 1819 and 1822.

After a certain period, especially when a mixed border commission responsible for drawing borders between the Ottomans and Iran, which was made of Russian, British, Iranian and Ottoman delegates, in 1843, not only the Sunni-Shafi’i identity of the Kurds in the border region became more important, but also the Porte became more aware of the importance of appointing Shafi’i officials, like Kaymakams, Kadis and Muftis to Sulaimaniya.<sup>227</sup> An order dated on 5 February, 1851, from the Bab-i Ali was highlighting that people of Sulaimaniya were Shafi’i and thus an officier who needed to be Shafi’i should be appointed in order to take care of religious matters (*umur-i diniyye*).<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> HAT #37196-D, ( 07.C.1239/8 February, 1824).

<sup>222</sup> See more on terms “reaya” and “Dogu Vilayetleri” in Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Iskalanmış Barış:Doğu Vilayetlerinde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet, 1839-1938*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 64.

<sup>223</sup> HAT #36750-F, ( 03.L.1239/1 June, 1824).

<sup>224</sup> HAT #36802-B, ( 29.Z.1230/1 December, 1815).

<sup>225</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, Vol. I*, 131

<sup>226</sup> HAT #36803-B, ( 23.Z.1244/25 June, 1829).

<sup>227</sup> A.DVN. #67/13, ( 16.R.1267/ 18 February, 1851).

<sup>228</sup> A.AMD. #29/92, ( 03.R.1267/5 February, 1851).

Coming back to Sheikh Khalid, he was located in Sulaimaniya, on and off, until 1820 and he was well aware of Shi'i Iran's intention of occupying his homeland during this period. He himself witnessed some of these occupations and he was expected to help governor of Baghdad, Davud Pasha in order to fend off Iranians and keep Baban pashas in Sulaimaniya away from the influence of Iranians.<sup>229</sup> In return for his help and loyalty, he was allowed to expand his order in different parts of the Ottoman Empire. The Sheikh was reassured by Baban Mahmud Pasha, his brothers Osman, Suleyman and his uncle Abdullah Pasha that they would remain loyal to the Ottomans despite the manipulations by Iranian officials.<sup>230</sup> Eventually, Baban Abdullah would break his promise and chose to ally himself with governor of Kirmanshah from Iranian side.

In such and other occasions in times of conflict with Iran we know that Sheikh Khalid sided with the Ottomans however with some distance. The reason for his keeping distance is clear since we know that the Sheikh's patron Baban Mahmud Pasha was sometimes intermingling between Iranians and the Ottomans and changing loyalties for his political purpose. Therefore, since the wind of Sulaimaniya blew sometimes towards the East [Iran] or another time the West [Ottomans], the Sheikh would remain cautious about keeping distance from the politics between two states. Sheikh Khalid might not have much influence on the international politics but he was certainly practicing power on the Baban politics. In different occasions, he became the arbitrator between members of Baban family, when the latter tried to push each other out of the politics.<sup>231</sup> As part of the political scene in Sulaimaniya, one should also add the competition between the Qadiri Sheikh Ma'ruf al-Barzanji (1761-1838) and Sheikh Khalid, which later turned into hostility that included political figures. Foley refers to Khalid's hagiographies for an incident between two sheiks: "The Qadiri sheikh was very fearful of Khalid's growing power that he ordered 200 of his followers to assassinate Khalid. With the help of one of Shaykh Ma'ruf's wayward followers, Khalid is said to have used his otherworldly powers to thwart the attack and others of the error of their ways."<sup>232</sup> A letter from Ghulam Ali al-Dahlawi to Sheikh Khalid dated in 1823 (h.1238), right around the latter fled to Damascus, highlights the conflict between two sheikhs, which we will talk more about it below.<sup>233</sup>

Despite such political turmoil and pressure Sheikh Khalid's time in Sulaimaniya was going to be one of the most fruitful times of his life in terms of expanding his Sufi order through Kurdistan and beyond. Many people from Sulaimaniya and from other cities of Kurdistan became his disciples, and he trained a number of deputies, who were dispatched to the other parts of the Empire.<sup>234</sup> In this matter, the Sheikh would send deputies even to Iran in order to spread the word. Some Iranian officials, such as Prince Abbas Mirza, the son of the

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<sup>229</sup> HAT #37428, (05.M.1236./ 13 October, 1820).

<sup>230</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, Vol. I*, 147-148

<sup>231</sup> Esad Sahib, *Mektubat-i Mevlana Halid* (translated into Turkish by Dilaver Selvi and Kemal Yıldız), (Istanbul: Sey-Tac Yayınları, 2008), 151-154

<sup>232</sup> Foley relies on Ismail Al-Ghazzi's *Husul al-uns fi intiqa' hadrat mawlana ila hazirat al-Quds* (edited by Muhammad Usama al-Tikriti), (Damascus: n.p., 1970); Foley, "Shaikh Khalid," 103-104; a similar story was told in Mevlana Halid-i el Bağdadi, *Risale-i Halidiye, Mecd-i Talid, Şemsü's-Şümus*, (prep. By Yakup Çiçek), (Istanbul: Sey-Tac Yayınları, 2004), 303-304.

<sup>233</sup> Fol. 6232, T-816. *Yazma Bağışlar*, Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul.

<sup>234</sup> Abu-Mannah, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya," 7.

Shah of Iran and the governor of Iranian province of Azerbaijan, were initiated into the Naqshbandi order by Sheikh Khalid.<sup>235</sup> Governors of Kurdish Ardalan Emirate also affiliated themselves with Sheikh Khalid. As Foley suggests, the Sheikh “sought to keep a broad base of followers” and perhaps “he did not initially envision the Naqshbandiyya tariqa as solely a Sunni institution.”<sup>236</sup> The purpose of allying with Iranian officials may have been also because of his fear of being persecuted in times of political turmoil in Baghdad province or Iran, which might be the next possessor of Sulaimaniya.

As the Naqshbandi-Khalidi order expanded its limit beyond the Sunni world and reached to Shi'i neighbors, so the Kurdish population of the region enjoyed from the Persian culture and language. Beside keeping contact with Iranians, the Kurds of Sulaimaniya and the population from other part of Iraqi Kurdistan were more under the influence of Iranian culture than Ottomans since they spoke Sorani, a dialect of Kurdish that contains more Persian elements than Kurmanji dialect in the western Kurdistan, and since they had more interaction with Iranian Kurds than they had with Iraqi Arabs or Ottoman Turks. Further, since Kurdish language and culture was shaped in Iranian intellectual environment, the Kurds did not feel strange about their Persian neighbors. They used Persian in their literature and in correspondence with both the Ottoman and Iranian officials, given that it was the lingua-franca of the region from Iraq all the way to India.<sup>237</sup> On the other hand, despite the dominance of the Persian culture Kurds were well aware of Iran's Shi'i identity. They felt at home because of being in the same sect, namely Sunnism, with the Ottomans. Their Sunni-Shafi'i identity was unquestionably the most outstanding element of their characteristics. In addition to their Shafi'i identity most of Kurds were belong to either Qadiri or Naqshbandi Sufi orders. Besides, in almost every occasion Baban Pashas, Sheikh Khalid, and later on, following successors of Naqshbandi-Khalidi order stressed on their loyalty to the Sunni Caliph in Istanbul. Therefore, one should be careful about suggesting that the Kurds had conflict about their cultural and religious identity because of being squeezed between two empires.<sup>238</sup>

### **Non-Muslims of Sulamaniya and Sufis**

Christians and Jews of Baghdad province were living favorably in a more tolerant environment in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Both Christian and Jewish quarters in

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<sup>235</sup> Foley, “Shaikh Khalid,” 100

<sup>236</sup> Foley, “Shaikh Khalid,” 100.

<sup>237</sup> Many documents among *Hatt-ı Humayun* collection of the Ottoman archive, which were letters sent by Babans to Baghdad and Istanbul in early nineteenth century, were written in Persian. Millingen notes that since the Kurds did not write much in their native language, they, especially the one who had to pen a letter or a report, preferred using Persian. He also states that “the clerks and interpreters who are in the service of the chiefs are, for this reason, almost invariably Persians. This predilection of the Koords for the Persian language is well grounded, for the latter is a mother-tongue, whereas the Turkish idiom is a mixture of all sorts of languages.” Frederick Millingen, *Wild life among the Koords*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 217. From his statement, it seems that Millingen was not much aware of the Kurdish poetry. He also exaggerates the employment of the Persians as penmen since the Kurdish mirs relied mostly on the Kurdish ulama for their correspondence with the Iranians and the Ottomans.

<sup>238</sup> Foley, “Shaikh Khalid,” 72.

Baghdad were located among the Muslim quarters on the east bank of Tigris.<sup>239</sup> Baghdad was a cosmopolitan city and religious minorities were well aware of their distinct status. Despite their unrestricted interaction with the Muslim population, they had certain restrictions such as not owning white slaves or ride horse, which such manners were forced by Istanbul over all non-muslim population in the Empire.<sup>240</sup> Through past centuries not much changed up until Tanzimat period. Before this period many non-Muslim merchants choose to take foreign protection in order to receive equal rights and even more freedom of trade, education, and traveling than Muslim population had.

The status of non-Muslims was not much different in Sulaimaniya than in Baghdad at the beginning of nineteenth century. Although the population of non-Muslims in Sulaimaniya was not as high as in Baghdad, it had a considerable amount for such a newly established city. There were synagogues and churches in Sulaimaniya and they were made of around ten percent of the population around 1820s. Rich states that he counted 2000 houses of “mohametans,” 130 houses of Jews, 9 houses of Chaldean Christians, who had “ a wretched small church,” five houses of Armenians, who had “ no priest or church.” He also stated that there were five mosques, “of which one is [in] good [condition].”<sup>241</sup>

Sheik Khalid’s view on Christians, Jews and other non-muslim religious communities are not much known. Although several scholars stress on his anti-Christian sentiments, there is not much studies have done to support this argument. Sean Foley in his doctoral study on the Naqshbandi-Khalidiyya network states that such anti-Christian and anti-Semitic sentiments attributed to Sheikh Khalid were exaggerated by certain prominent scholars like Dina Rizk Khoury, Butrus Abu-Mannah and Hamid Algar.<sup>242</sup> Besides, such attitudes towards Europeans in Iraq began after Sheikh Khalid’s death, when more and more Western officers and missionaries penetrated into the Middle East. In addition, Foley suggests that taking such a stand would not be in the interest of Sheikh Khalid in Baghdad and Kurdistan, where a considerable amount of Christians and Jews lived with Muslim population. Still one should not rule out the role of British presence in India and Sheikh Khalid’s ideas about them when he was there for his education. Naqshbandiyya in India was already taking a reactive attitude towards the British colonialism and Sheikh Khalid was well aware of such a stance. Although there is still need for further study to support this argument.

Sheikh Khalid lived in a society, who was used to see the non-Muslims both in financial and administrative positions. Considering that the Baban and the Baghdad Pashas used Jewish bankers for their loans and encouraged them to bring more trade into their realm, for the Sheikh and the community he lived into it was not very unusual to come accros a non-Muslim in daily businesses. In one case the Baghdad government employed non-muslim merchants as suppliers of the army or the governor’s palace. For instance, Jewish merchants were supplying the artillerymen (*tüfenkciler*) in Kurdistan with food like flour and some other times with gunpowder and bullet (*barut ve kurşun*).<sup>243</sup> As I stated above, government officials

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<sup>239</sup> See map of Baghdad, G2. Stephen H. Longrigg. *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*. (1925; repub. 2002), 83.

<sup>240</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 88.

<sup>241</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, Vol. I*, 120

<sup>242</sup> Foley, “Shaikh Khalid,” 109-111

<sup>243</sup> HAT #71. ( 12.Ra.1217/12 July, 1802)

would not pause in employing Jews for spying on their contenders and rival powers. Two certain Asefil and Garda, both Jewish from Baghdad, were granted with 250 *kuruş* each as monthly allowances for giving details of what was going on in Baghdad.<sup>244</sup>

Non-Muslim population would sometime become the part of the social system among the Kurds. Some Jews would be part of a certain Kurdish tribes as dependents and villagers.<sup>245</sup> Christians lived not only in major cities of Iraq but they populated villages in the low hills to the North as well. They made out of many sects and origins. Yazidis were closest to the Kurds with their pastoral lifestyle and social structure of the society. They lived mostly in Jabal Sinjar and the North-East of Mosul, where it was extremely hard for any government to rule over and for any traveler to go through.<sup>246</sup>

Generally speaking, Jews and Christians were not very dominant in Sulaimaniya when compared with areas like Baghdad, Mosul and northern Kurdish Emirates such as Soran, Hakkari and Botan because of their relatively new appearance in Baban Sanjaq and because of their low population in this region. Hakkari Sanjaq had around forty percent of non-Muslim population whereas territories dominated by the Babans had less than ten percent of such population. Therefore, there is not much about Sheikh Khalid's approach towards the Christians and Jews in Sulaimaniya. In fact, his letters and treatises about his life do not include much information about non-Muslims of the other part of the Ottoman Empire and Muslim world. Besides, his main purpose was reislamization of the Muslim population not converting the non-Muslims, therefore he focused mostly on the Muslims of Sunni sect and less on the Shi'is. So, one can not take himself but suggesting that Hourani, Algar, and Abu-Manneh, relied on very little information for making statements on Sheikh Khalid's stance towards Christians and Muslims.

### **Competition between Qadiris and Naqshbandis (1811-1820)**

Before Sheikh Khalid returned to Sulaimaniya with a new affiliation with Naqshbandi order in India and spread the word around, it was Qadiri order which was dominant in Kurdistan and especially in Sulaimaniya under the leadership of Ma'ruf Node (1752-1838).<sup>247</sup> Sheikh Ma'ruf was born in a village belonging to the Barzanji tribe which was close to Qalacholan in Kurdistan. The Barzanjis were known for producing a number of ulamas and Sheikh Ma'ruf was one of these. Ma'ruf Node started to study Qur'an with his father and later pursued further studies in several other schools with different professors. In 1770s, he returned to Qalacholan and became a professor in one of the town's school. Once Sulaimaniya was established in 1784 he was named as the professor of the grand mosque of the town and

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<sup>244</sup> HAT #16574, ( 29.Z.1230/ 1 December, 1815).

<sup>245</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 12.

<sup>246</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 8.

<sup>247</sup> For more information on Ma'ruf Node and his works; Baba Mardokh Ruhani Shiwa, "Sheikh Muhammad Ma'ruf Barzinji Nodahi" in *Tarikh-e Mashahir-e Kurd*, vol., I, (Tehran: Soroush Press, 1985), 347-351; Muhammad Ra'uf Tawakkuli "Sheikh Ma'ruf Nodahi" in *Tarikh-e Tasawwuf dar Kurdistan wa Jughrafiya-ye Bana*, (Tehran, c.1980), 72-75; Halkawt Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya dans le Milieu Kurde au Debut du XIXe Siecle" in *Journal of the History of Sufism*, Vol 1-2, (2000), Istanbul, 151-166.

its library by the pasha of Baban Sanjaq.<sup>248</sup> His fame soon spread around and after a certain period he attracted more than seventy students from different regions of Kurdistan. Not only he became the head of ulama in the Sanjaq,<sup>249</sup> but produced more than forty works, written in Arabic and Persian on varied subjects from Islamic sciences to literature, including a dictionary of Arabic-Kurdish for his son so he could learn Arabic easily.<sup>250</sup>

Halkawt Hakim states that Sheikh Ma'ruf, who had the title of Sanjaq's head professorship in addition to his powerful background in Barzanji tribe and his leadership of Qadiriyya, started to have a tremendous amount of social and political power in Sulaimaniya and the surrounding area.<sup>251</sup> This was going to be the base of the conflict between two sheikhs, Ma'uf Node and Sheikh Khalid.

Qadiriyya was not new in Kurdistan and in Sulaimaniya. It was around since twelfth century when 'Abd al-Qadir Gailani (1077-1166) established his Sufi lodge in Baghdad and spread his message via his students in all around the Muslim world. Whereas Naqshbandi order existed in Iraq and Anatolia since fifteenth century, way before Sheikh Khalid, but never was able to compete with Qadiris, the rival Sufi group in Kurdistan. Nevertheless, Qadiriyya with its sheikhs was the only dominant Sufi brotherhood in Kurdistan at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Once Mawlana Khalid received his *icaze*, or diploma, in order to teach Naqshbandiyya in Kurdistan, the dominancy of the Qadiris was threatened and caused pressure on the Sheikh by two powerful Qadiri tribes, Haydaris and Barzanjis.<sup>252</sup>

Although Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya order was new in the region it expanded its realm so rapidly. Just in a decade he accomplished to have around 12.000 disciples in different part of Ottoman Empire and Iran.<sup>253</sup> Some scholars like Abbas al-'Azzawi indicates that Mawlana Khalid had around 20.000 disciples in his lifetime, though al-'Azzawi does not give any source on this information.<sup>254</sup> However, one should not disregard this number since al-'Azzawi's figure is from a date later than when Rich had visited Sulaimaniya. In a short period, Mawlana Khalid's own order was named Khalidiyya and expanded over Iraq, Iran, Turkey, India, Afghanistan, Egypt, Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia. Rich gives more detail on what the local people of Sulaimaniya thought about Mawlana Khalid. On 24<sup>th</sup> of June in 1820, he wrote in his travelogue:

There is a great Mohametan saint living in Suleimania. His name is Sheikh Khaled; but the Koords think it profanation to call him by any other name than *Hazret i Mevlana*, or the holy beloved one; and talk of his sayings as being *Hadeez*, or inspired. He is of Jaf tribe, and is a dervish of the Nakshibendi order, which he embraced at Delhi, under the guidance of the celebrated Soofee Sultan Abdulla. He has 12,000

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<sup>248</sup> Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 154.

<sup>249</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, Vol. I*, 321

<sup>250</sup> Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 155

<sup>251</sup> Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 155.

<sup>252</sup> Ibrahim Fasih al-Haydari, *al-Majd al-Talid fi manaqib Mawlana Khalid* (Istanbul, 1889), 33; also in Hakim "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 156.

<sup>253</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, Vol. I*, 141.

<sup>254</sup> 'Abbas al-'Azzawi, "Mawlana Khalid al-Naqshbandi" *Govari Kori Zanyari Kurd, vol. I*, 1973, 697-727 cited from Hakim's "Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 157.



disciples in various parts of Turkey and Arabia. All the Koords call him an evlia or saint; and a great many of them almost put him on a footing with their Prophet. Osman Bey, who with the Pasha and almost all the principal Koords are his mureeds or disciples, told me that he was at least equal to the famous Mussulman saint, Sheikh Abdul Kader.<sup>255</sup>

The conflict between Sheikh Ma'ruf Node and Mawlana Khalid became inevitable when the former realized the latter had an extraordinary success in his proselytism in the domain of the elder Sheikh. They were also in disagreement in some important practices like *dhikr* (remembrance of God), as Khalidis were practicing *dhikr khafi* (private, quiet chanting) and Qadiris *dhikr jahri* (public chanting). *Rabita* (connecting one's heart to that of one's master) was also one of the highlights of Khalidiyya. Through *rabita*, the order was centralized in the personality of Mawlana Khalid, since all *murids* were bound with the Sheikh.<sup>256</sup> This might have caused monopoly, however it was disciplining the order with a clear leadership and helping to expand its message with an obvious success. Besides this, Qadiris were preaching to less favored social groups whereas Khalidis were attracting people from middle and wealthy classes.<sup>257</sup>

Mawlana Khalid's return to Sulaimaniya in 1811, few months after his stay in Baghdad, started to bother Abdurrahman Pasha, who was an ally with Persians, because of the Sheikh's relations with the vali and other Ottoman officials in Baghdad, particularly in the times of political crises. Besides, the Sheikh's lodge became a meeting place for those who were discontent with the political situation in the Baban realm. This was happening in a domain where the Qadiris had not share the religious and political power with any other Sufi order before. One also have to add that Khalidiyya did not limit itself with Baban territories, rather it had expanded beyond the limits of this principality. Such a network, in the eyes of Baban Abdurrahman Pasha, contained lots of potential danger for him who already had many enemies.<sup>258</sup>

A transborder network of Sufi group not only caused discontentment among the political leaders but disturbed the religious leaders of rival Qadiri order also. In order to stop the rise of Mawlana Khalid, Ma'ruf Node and his disciples started to spread rumors. They called him an infidel, arrogant, liar, and they said that he had political ambitions and he planned conspiracies against the family members of Baban. In a short time the conflict between two sheikhs spread among their adherents in Sulaimaniya. In order to put an end to this disagreement Abdurrahman Pasha took position in favor of Sheikh Ma'ruf Node and obliged Mawlana Khalid to leave the town for Baghdad at the end of 1811. Although, this was the first defeat on his rival's face, Mawlana Khalid's popularity was widened and his order kept developing.

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<sup>255</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, Vol. I*, 140-141. Osman Bey was uncle of Abdurrahman Pasha of Sulaimaniya.

<sup>256</sup> Michael Kemper, "Khalidiyya Networks in Daghestan and the Question of Jihad," *Die Welt des Islam* 42:1, 2002, 41-71.

<sup>257</sup> Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 159.

<sup>258</sup> Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 159.

After Abdurrahman Pasha's death in 1813, his son Mahmud Pasha succeeded to the throne of Baban Sanjaq. He changed the politics of Babans towards Mawlana Khalid and he asked the Sheikh, in one of his visits to Baghdad, to return to his country of birth. The pasha had it built a mosque in 1816, which was going to serve him as a *khanaqah*, a Sufi lodge. The pasha also had the revenues of several properties and villages assigned him in order to finance him and his mosque. All incomes from the Gedan village of Sulaimaniya ( "Süleymaniye sancağına tâbi Gedan karyesinin öşr-i şer'iyyesiyle") and 340 acres cultivable land ("1500 dönüm sulu arâzi") were donated to his Sufi lodge in order to cover the expences.<sup>259</sup>

During this period Mawlana Khalid's influence on Baban princes was so much as they were consulting him on their political affairs. He played an intermediary role between Baban princes and valis of Baghdad in times of conflict. In one case vali of Baghdad asked him to intervene on his behalf in order to stop the Baban pashas have contact with Iranians.<sup>260</sup> Meanwhile, Ma'ruf Node, on behalf of numerous ulamas of Sulaimaniya, tried to influence Sheikh Yahya Mizuri, an influential scholar from Amediye, to reduce the power of Naqshbandiyya and its master. Ma'ruf Node in his letter states:

...He [Mawlana Khalid] has chosen an erroneous way. We are not able to make him to be reasonable and convince him of this. We beg you to come to our help in order to stop him and prevent him achieving his goal. Otherwise, the trouble will cover the country and its inhabitants.<sup>261</sup>

This letter shows clearly that Qadiris accepted Mawlana Khalid's undefeatable knowledge of Islamic sciences, his unstoppable promulgation, and his unprecedented influence over a great amount of population and politicians, which would leave Ma'ruf Node with no choice but asking for help of an outsider.<sup>262</sup> As Hakim extracts from Naqshbandi sources, Yahya Mizuri arrived to Sulaimaniya with the intention of attacking to Mawlana Khalid. After three hours of discussion with Mawlana Khalid, Mizuri declared to the public to assemble for the result of the confrontation, in which he would be a disciple of the Sheikh from now on.<sup>263</sup> After such setback for Qadiris, Ma'ruf Node was obliged to write poems attacking Mawlana Khalid and composed an epistle addressed to Said Pasha, the governor of Baghdad, with the aim of convincing him to oppose Mawlana Khalid. Ma'ruf Node's such efforts did not work on Said Pasha and in contrary this epistle pushed the governor to have a

<sup>259</sup> Y.MTV #100/20. ( 13. M.1312/ 16 July, 1894) Also mentioned in Muhammad Al-Khal, *al-Shaykh Ma'ruf al-Nodahi al-Barizinji*, (Baghdad, 1961), 41.

<sup>260</sup> Mala Abd al-Karim Mudarris, *Yadi mardan, Mawlana Khalid Naqshbandi*, letter 9, (Baghdad, 1979), 354; Hakim quotes the letter from Mawlana Khalid to vali of Baghdad: "...We have gathered grand prince Mahmud Pasha, his uncle Abdullah Pasha, his bother Osman Beg, the judge and all major staff. We advised them to suspend alliances with Persians. We were treated harshly, extending to threats. They promised us to follow our advice." Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya" 161. A similar letter exists among the collection of Mawlana Khalid's letters though with no mention of "Persians."The collector of these letters, Esad Sahib, explains that Mawlana with this letter tried to ease the relations between Baban emirs and Davud Paşa, the vali of Baghdad. Esad Sahib, *Mektubat-i Mevlana Halid*, pp.151-154.

<sup>261</sup> Ibrahim Fasih al-Haydari, *al-Majd al-Talid fi manaqib Mawlana Khalid* (The everlasting glory in the qualities of Mawlana Khalid), (Istanbul, 1889), 41; cited from Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 161.

<sup>262</sup> Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 161.

<sup>263</sup> Sahib, *Mektubat-i Mevlana Halid*, 327.

celebrated hanafi faqih, Muhammad Amin bin ‘Abidin, composing a refutation of accusations against the Sheikh.<sup>264</sup>

After such failures, Ma’ruf Node went further and arranged for two futile assassination attempts as his last resort. In the first plot, around two hundred villagers from different tribes, which had connection with Qadiri order, hurried, on Ma’ruf Node’s order, to kill Mawlana Khalid when he was about to leave his mosque from Friday prayer. On the failure of this plot, Ma’ruf Node, in a second attempt, ordered to his son, Kak Ahmadi Sheikh, and one of his khalifas, ‘Abd al-Rahman Talabani, to assassinate Sheikh Khalid. C.J. Edmonds gives more of this story from the words of a Naqshbandi *murid* when he was in Sulaimaniya around 1920, a hundred years later of the incident which shows that the after effect of this plot was still alive in the minds of people:

They started out, but as they approached the presence a sort of paralysis seized their feet and only left them if they turned to go away. They recited all the appropriate formulae prescribed by their own Path without avail and returned to report failure. Ma’ruf sent them again, but this time they were overcome by temporary blindness. They then decided that it would be useless to persist and that they would be wiser to pay their respects to the saint as pious pilgrims. They had thus made their way into the presence when Kak Ahmad, seeing a figure robed in white in the half-light of the chamber, raised his pistol to fire; but his hand was paralyzed in the act. Then at last the two emissaries fell in the ground, kissed the feet of their intended victim, and begged to be initiated into Naqshbandi Path.<sup>265</sup>

This was Ma’ruf Node’s last chance to get rid of his contender and it did not work either. With this last attempt he showed that he was running out of his choices, which one could see this clearly since he used his most beloved son. He used his son as a last resort but he also made sure that his choice would be strategical with inclusion of Abd al-Rahman Talabani, who was belong to a tribe that was enemy of Jafs, the tribe Mawlana Khalid was born into.<sup>266</sup>

To end this dispute, Baban leaders, one more time and for the last time, took the decision of banishing Mawlana Khalid from Sulaimaniya. Mawlana Khalid left Sulaimaniya for Baghdad on a morning in October 1820, this time for good.<sup>267</sup> As I have reworded at the introduction of this chapter, C.J. Rich witnessed the departure of Mawlana Khalid and gave further information on the effect of his departure on people of Sulaimaniya:

October 20- This morning the great Sheikh Khaled ran away... The other day the Koords placed him even above Abdul Kader, and the Pasha used to stand before him and fill his pipe for him; to-day they say he was a Kafir or Infidel, and tell numbers of stories of his arrogance and blasphemy... The cause of his flight [with blames] is

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<sup>264</sup> Hamit Algar, “Mawlana Khaled Zia al-din Baghdadi”, *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

<sup>265</sup> C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds Turks and Arabs*, (London:Oxford University Press, 1957), 77-78.

<sup>266</sup> Hakim, “Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya,” 163.

<sup>267</sup> Sheikh Khalid in his poems expressed his longing for his hometown Shahrizur. In a couplet by him, which was recorded by Kurdish maganize *Jin*, he says “ My heart is bleeding, O gentle wind come and be kind to me/ Alas! the moment you pass through Shahrizor stop by for me” *Jin*, Vol. 2, Issue:10, (February, 1918), 5.

variously reported... Of course a great deal more is laid to his charge than he was really guilty of. All the regular Ulema and Seyds, with Sheikh Maarof at their head, hated Sheikh Khaled, who, as long as his power lasted, threw them into the background.<sup>268</sup>

As Rich was also indicating, Mawlana Khalid was accused for many things that he did not commit, but rather because of Sheikh Ma'ruf's unprecedented propaganda he was chased out of Sulaimaniya. After Mawlana Khalid's departure for Baghdad he did not become a threat for Ma'ruf Node anymore. Authorities in Baghdad also understood that this time he returned to the city permanently until when he moved to Damascus once and for all in 1822.<sup>269</sup>

The power balance between the political figures and the mullahs was a very delicate one. Baban leaders had to observe this balance as much as they observed the balance between Iranians and the Ottomans. So, they did not only have to deal with valis, sultans and shahs but also local powers, sometimes international, like sheikhs and mullahs in order to keep the power in their own hands. This is clear in the words of Osman Beg, one of the brothers of Baban Mahmud Pasha, who told people in C.J. Rich's presence with astonishment "you see! [...] Mullahs have not much power in his country" when he learned from Rich that nobody could sit in the presence of the King of the Great Britain, "not even ulama!"<sup>270</sup>

After retrieving his power in Sulaimaniya and under his religious sentiments, Ma'ruf Node tried to reconcile with Mawlana Khalid. He sent many envoys to the latter asking to pardon him for his past actions. In one of the letters from Mawlana Khalid we see that he pardoned Ma'ruf Node:

Your two envoys informed me your decision of not going back anymore to your past behaviors. This reinstated my contentment. And finally, you appeal to me to send you a letter of pardon. I pardon you sincerely and I hope that you abandon henceforth your wicked intentions regarding to me. That is not a good path of the wise.<sup>271</sup>

### **The Ottomans and Sheikh Khalid**

Sheikh Khalid was much respected by Turks, Kurds and Arabs of the period not only for him being a sheikh in religious studies but also being considered as a *seyid*, descendent of the prophet. As Dominican father Giuseppe Campanile correctly observed around 1810, the Ottomans in general had a great respect for *seyids* of Kurdistan, while the Kurds would seem to be much more fanatical about them.<sup>272</sup> This veneration of the *seyits* was the force behind the decision of granting salaries by the Ottomans to them and their immediate family

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<sup>268</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, Vol. I, 320-321.

<sup>269</sup> The exact date of his journey is not recorded but the year that he moved to Damascus is recorded as 1238 Hijri. Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Tarixi Silemani*, 164.

<sup>270</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, Vol. I, 240.

<sup>271</sup> Mudarris, *Yadi mardan*, 396-398; cited from Hakim, *Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya*, 165; Also see a similar letter in Esad Sahib, *Mektubat-i Mevlana Halid*, 249-250.

<sup>272</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 57.

members. Several documents suggest that the family members of Sheikh Khalid were bestowed upon with a certain amount of salary.<sup>273</sup> Some of those salaries were decided after petitions and some others were assigned directly from the provincial administration or Istanbul. Besides salaries, immediate family members of Sheikh Khalid were entitled for tax free real estates and income.<sup>274</sup> In addition to that, his successors were assigned for salaries, Sufi lodges (*hanegah*) belong to Khalidiyya were restored, and income taxes from certain villages were allocated for these lodges.<sup>275</sup> The Ottomans went further with their support and after Sheikh Khalid's death, they officially defended his honor and integrity against certain groups. The criticism towards the Sheikh's personality was disputed with utmost care.<sup>276</sup> In an occasion recorded in 2 August, 1827 (Hijri 09.M.1243) a certain Abdulvahhab Efendi and Muhammed el-Dağistani, who were residing in Medina, published "false" booklets about Sheikh Khalid. The document continues that the Sheikh was eminent for his "asceticism and piety" (*zühhd ve takva*).<sup>277</sup> Therefore such "corrupts" (*müfsids*) should be "punished" (*te'dip*) and "the notice and report" (*ilam ve mahzar*) about "his (*Sheikh Khalid*) good conduct" (*hüsn-i hali*) should be presented to these critics and made public.<sup>278</sup>

Despite such interest into Naqshibadiyya-Khalidiyya branch by the Ottomans after the death of Sheikh Khalid, there is very little indication that the Sultan and officials in Istanbul favored the Sheikh and vice versa, when he was alive. It sounded as if Istanbul, including Baghdad, remembered the Sheikh only in hard times, such as during the wars against Shi'i Iran, in order to use his influence on Sunni Kurdish subjects. The Ottomans were well aware of religious inclinations of the Kurds and thus of Sheikh Khalid towards them. They knew how important it was to keep the Sheik, and through him the Kurds, on their side against Iran. They always tried to take advantage of this in times of political conflict with Iran.<sup>279</sup>

On the other hand, there is more evidence that Sheikh Khalid personally was not favored by Sultan Mahmud II. No Ottoman documents of central administration suggest that Sheikh Khalid was privileged by the Sultan when he was alive, whereas more documents come to surface suggesting how he was defended by the Ottoman administration after his death. Some other documents suggest that his enemies were still working against him after he

<sup>273</sup> I.MVL. #207/6676, (20.C.1267/ 22 April, 1851); I.MVL. #262/9910, (03.Ca.1269/ 12 February, 1853); with this petition Sheikh Khalid's widow Ayşe in Damascus and her daughter and other children were bestowed salary by the Ottoman state.

<sup>274</sup> A.MKT.NZD. #128/37, (28.R.1271/ 17 January 1855).

<sup>275</sup> I.MVL. #329/14103, (29.B.1271/ 17 April, 1855); I.MVL #329/14072, (23.B.1271/ 11 April, 1855)

<sup>276</sup> HAT #39387-D, (05.M.1243/ 29 July, 1827).

<sup>277</sup> HAT #39387-A, (09.M.1243/ 2 August, 1827); The document does not give much detail about the reason of such a distortion against Sheikh Khalid. Though, there is more detail about this incident in *Târih-i Lütî* as Ahmed Lütî Efendi states that both Sheikh Khalid and Abdulvahhab effendi studied together in India. Both got fame and good positions in their lifetime, but somehow Adbulvahhab Efendi despised Sheik Khalid and thus he spread false information about the latter. Ahmed Lütî states: "*Kibâr-ı meşâyih-i Nakşibendî'den Abdullah-ı Dehlevî hazretleri meşâhir-i hulefâsından Şeyh Hâlid Efendi ile Abdülvahhâb Efendi müşârunileyhden müstahlef olarak liecli'l-irşâd geşt u güzâr-ı bilâdi i'tiyâd etmişler imiş. Mâ-seye'tide beyân olunacağı vechile bunlardan Şeyh Hâlid Efendi, Şam'da ve Abdülvahhâb Efendi Medîne-i Münevvere'de ikâmetle kesb-i şöhret etdikden sonra beynlerinde mesbûk olan münâferetden nâşî Abdülvahhâb Efendi ile refîki Dâğistânî Efendi Şeyh Hâlid Efendi aleyhine kıyâm ile hakkında nâsezâ şeyler neşreylediklerine...*" Ahmed Lütî, *Târih-i Lütî*, Cilt. 1-8, (Istanbul: Matbaa-i 'Âmire, 1290/1873.), 285. (I would like to thank Müfid Yüksel for refering me to this source and providing me with his personal collection of Sheikh Khalid's letters and works.)

<sup>278</sup> HAT. #39387, (05.S.1243/ 28 August, 1827)

<sup>279</sup> Foley, "Shaikh Khalid," 72.

passed away. He was not around any more but his deputies were still becoming the target of this hostility. Little more than a year after he died, two of his deputies, Salih and Ahmed Efendis, were exiled from Istanbul to Sivas and Diyarbakir and finally to Baghdad in 1828.<sup>280</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi in his *Tarih-i Lütfi* suggests that this incident was caused by some rival Sufi groups in Istanbul because of the rapid expansion of Khalidiyya order among the elites (*kübera*) and *ulema*.<sup>281</sup> They were arrested (*tevkîf*) and banished (*nefy ve iclâ*) from one city to another one as the rumors were spreading around about their “inappropriate behaviors” (*şer’-i şerîfe uymayacak etvâr ve harekâtta oldukları*) and “deception” (*iğfâl*).<sup>282</sup> It is more likely that this incident was caused by the anti-propaganda of Abdulvahhab and Halet Efendis during and after the life of Sheikh Khalid. Ahmed Lütfi Efendi is not certain about Abdulvahhab Efendi’s role in the expulsion of two Khalidi deputies, but he suspects that Abdulvahhab Efendi was involved into this as Ahmed Lütfi heard conflicting accounts about his background. Abdulvahhab Efendi was also present in Istanbul when this incident took place.<sup>283</sup>

Such unpleasant moments between the Ottomans and Khalidis were not only caused by the enemies of Sheikh Khalid, but also because of the Sultan’s fear for political uprising by Sufis. Abbas Azzawi quotes a *farman* from the Sultan to the *vali* of Baghdad in 1828, stating that “he [Sheikh Khalid] does not pose a danger [for the moment]. However these Sufis need not to be too many. They need to be prohibited to exercise their practices. This is your religious (Islamic) duty to obey this order.”<sup>284</sup> All deputies of Sheikh Khalid were banned in Istanbul, after Halet Efendi, who was a follower of Mujaddidi-Mawlawi order, suggested to Mahmud II that the rapid expansion of Khalidiyya threatened the state.<sup>285</sup> The Ottomans before the death of Sheikh Khalid were dealing with several issues which were one way or the other related with Sufi lodges. One of these was the case of the Janissaries and their connection with Bektashi Sufi order. Mahmud II wanted to modernize the military personnel by abolishing the Janissaries, but he faced with opposition, especially by the Bektashies since they financially and politicaly relied on the Janissaries. Bektashi order was providing the Janissary corps with spiritual and popular support from the very beginning of the corps were founded.<sup>286</sup> During the abolishment of the Janissaries in 1826, which is known as the *vakay-i hayriye* (the Auspicious Event), Bektashi leaders in Istanbul were put to death and dervish lodges were officialy closed. The order had many followers who were disbanded throughout the Ottoman Empire. Its properties were confiscated and distributed among the ulama, so they

<sup>280</sup> HAT #34812. (08.Za.1243/ 22 May, 1828) The document also suggests that one branch of Khalidiyya was established in Diyarbakir.

<sup>281</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Târîh-i Lütfi*, p. 286. He quotes: “*İstanbul ve Anadolu ve Rumeli taraflarında hulefâ nâmıyla bir haylice adamları mecâlis ve mahâfil-i enâmda tarik-i Hâlidî usûlünü neşr ile meşgul olmalarının zâhîrde mahzuru yok ise de Süfiye sıfatıyla teksîr-i sevâdı i’tiyâtdan eslâfda zuhûr eden ahvâl mütâla’ası mumaileyhime pek de meydan verilmemesi lüzumunu göstermiş olduğundan meşâhîr-i hulefâ-yı Hâlidîyye’den İstanbul’da bulunan ba’zı zevât ‘avenesiyle ramazanın yirmibirinci gecesi oldukları mahallerden gümrüğe götürülüp kayık ile Kartal’a ve oradan Sivas’a iclâ...*”

<sup>282</sup> HAT. #25192. (17.L.1243/ 2 May, 1828).

<sup>283</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Târîh-i Lütfi*, pp. 286-287.

<sup>284</sup> al-‘Azzawi, “Mawlana Khalid al-Naqshbandî” in Halkawt Hakim, “Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya,” 151-166.

<sup>285</sup> Hamid Algar, and K.A. Nizami, “Naqshbandiyya.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

<sup>286</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey, Vol.2*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 21.

could be used as mosques, schools, caravansarais and hospitals.<sup>287</sup> Mahmud II did not only stop at destroying the Bektashi lodges but also put the remainings of the order under the control of Naqshbandis.<sup>288</sup> Although there were several Naqshbandi branches in Istanbul, there is not much information on how much was Sheikh Khalid's role in this occurrence. Some suggests that Sheikh Khalid supported Mahmud II for such a stance against Bektashi order. According to Itzchak Weismann despite Sultan Mahmud II's suspicion over Khalidis, Sheikh Khalid supported the reforms, considering them as necessary measures in order to preserve the bases of the Muslim state and community. Thus he backed the abolishment of Janissaries and consequently the disbandment of Bektashis. With this action the orthodoxy reigned one more time among the elite of Istanbul.<sup>289</sup> Khalidi order was not that popular in the capital before the mid-nineteenth century as there was a power share among the Sufi and other Naqshbandi orders. Later in the century, Khalidi order became more spread than any other Sufi lodge in the Ottoman empire and took its place among the elites, especially the state officials and bureaucrats.

Sheikh Khalid already had some elite members of the Ottoman bureaucracy before the *vakay-i hayriye* and his death. In the archival documents there is not much information on who was admiring him, but his letters and treatises give more detail about his privileged members. One of the most important such members, as mentioned above, was Davud Pasha, vali of Baghdad. Sheikh Khalid considered him as his "disciple" and praised him for his "modesty" (*tevazu*) in his letters.<sup>290</sup> Thus, Davud Pasha had always protected Sheikh Khalid against his enemies and provided him with a library and a lodge during the latter's stay in Baghdad. He had also Salih Pasha, vali of Damascus, supporting him financially and politically, but Salih Pasha never had the same effect as Davud Pasha had since the latter was with the Sheikh from very early on during his hard times. Besides these two bureaucrats, he did not have any more Ottoman elites but few qadis and muftis supporting him during his lifetime.

Despite the distance kept by the Ottomans towards Mawlana Khalid, it seems that he remembered "Devlet-i Aliyye" most of the times in his letters and prayers.<sup>291</sup> This is clear, especially in some letters that he sent to the Ottoman officials. He was under protection of Davud Pasha and thus Sheikh Khalid, as it is expected, praised the vali and his office by paying tribute to the Ottoman Empire. He was well aware of Sultan Mahmud II's severe relations with Sufis, especially after the *vakay-i hayriye*, when Janissaries were abolished and Bektashis were punished because of their connections. Therefore, he tried to keep good relations with the Ottomans officials, especially when he had many enemies working against him. As we mentioned above, one of his enemies was Halef Efendi, an Ottoman official who was sent on a mission to Baghdad by Mahmud II in 1810. He was a confidant of Mahmud II

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<sup>287</sup> Shaw, *History of the Ottoman*, 21.

<sup>288</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey : a modern history* (London : I.B. Tauris, 2004), 40; Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman social and political history : selected articles and essays*, (Boston : Brill, 2002), 257.

<sup>289</sup> Weismann, Itzchak. *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 88-89.

<sup>290</sup> Sahib, *Mektubat-i Mevlana Halid*, 151, 153, 159, 223-226

<sup>291</sup> Sahib, *Mektubat-i Mevlana Halid*, 151.

and had influence on the Sultan in government affairs.<sup>292</sup> “In order to blur the heart of the great Sultan Padişah Mahmud Han, he (Halet Efendi) had said something according to his own judgment and assumptions” states Sheikh Khalid in his letter to his deputy in Istanbul, Hoca Ömer Rasim Efendi.<sup>293</sup> Following in his letter, the Sheikh praises the Sultan for his prudence and insight by “not listening his words” and “repelling them openly.”

However, the period of discontentment was kept short, for in 1833 Mekki-zade Mustafa ‘Alim, who was a follower of Sheikh Khalid, was reappointed as Şeyh’ül İslam.<sup>294</sup> Although there were some signs of improvement on relations between Ottomans and Khalidis, one had to wait until after 1830 to see the favors bestowed upon the family members and deputies of Sheikh Khalid by the Ottomans. After his death, Sheikh Khalid’s wives Ayşe and Hatice were granted with salaries. Hatice (Siti) lived a long life and died at the age of 111 (d. 20 Muharram, 1309- 30 August 1891) and was buried by Sheikh Khalid’s grave.<sup>295</sup> She was well respected by all the Ottoman sultans and bureaucrats during her lifetime. Few months before she passed away, she sent a petition to Istanbul to demand for funding in order to repair Sheikh Khalid’s tomb located in Mount Qasiyyun in Damascus.<sup>296</sup> Her wish was granted and Abdulhamid II had the tomb repaired.<sup>297</sup>

In conclusion, Sheikh Khalid was careful about citing anti-Shi’i, anti-Christian or anti-Jewish opinions, especially when he was present in Sulaimaniya and İraqi Kurdistan. One can not see clear cut lines between Shi’i Iran and Sunni Kurdistan. Boundaries in this period were fluid, both physically and mentally. In addition, one should differentiate between political and religious aspects of Shi’ism when making suggestions about Sheikh Khalid and Sulaimaniya’s Pashas. A Sunni Kurdish official certainly sees Shi’i Iran differently from a Sunni Turkish official in Baghdad or Istanbul. As a long term resident of Sulaimaniya Sheikh Khalid’s position from the point of his view could easily be suggested among the Sunni Kurdish groups. Sheikh Khalid with his disciples always thought that he had to learn how to live with Shi’i Iran, with or without Sunni Ottomans. He distanced himself from the Ottomans as much as he did with Iranians. But one should not see this position as solid. Sheikh Khalid would reposition himself with the time passed and with the place he changed. Likewise, he would change his stance when he was in Baghdad or Damascus. He did not isolate himself from the politics since he was a resident of Kurdistan where he established an extensive

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<sup>292</sup> E. Kuran, “Halet Efendi, Mehmed Sa’id” *EI2*.

<sup>293</sup> Sahib, *Mektubat-ı Mevlana Halid*, 262-265. Sahib, in commentary of this letter, elucidates the death of Halet Efendi with the words of Mawlana Khalid that he said “ I refer Halet Efendi to the Pir of Tariqah, his excellency Mawlana Jalal al-din Rumi. Let him to drag him to his place and punish him as he deserve.” Sahib also quotes from Seyyid Ibrahim Fasih’s *Mecd-i Talid*, where he states that once Mawlana Khalid condemned Halet Efendi, in a little while, the latter was sent to the exile to Konya by the Sultan and was ordered to be hanged after a certain period of his residency there. Sahip adds that “Mawlana Khalid forgave the one(Halet Efendi) who complained to the Sultan about him, and bear enmity. And the God took revenge from him in the world and disgraced him in the hereafter.”

<sup>294</sup> Sahib, *Mektubat-ı Mevlana Halid*, 262-265.

<sup>295</sup> Y.PRK. UM. 22/111. (30.S.1309/ 4 October, 1891); The vali of Damascus, Mustafa Asım, sent a telegraph to the palace to inform Abdulhamid II about her death.

<sup>296</sup> Y.PRK. BŞK 19/91. (17.R.1308/ 30 November, 1890).

<sup>297</sup> The inscription at the entrance of the tomb states that it was repaired by Abdulhamid II in the year of 1891(1309). The inscription goes:“*Feyzi kulu ta’mirinin tarihini inşâd eyledi/ Dergâh âbâd eyledi lutfiyle Hân Abdülhamid, 1309.*”



network of Khalidiyya Sufi order. He was supposed to keep his network intact in an environment, where was under influence of political ambitions of Iran and the Ottomans.

Besides, as Hourani, Algar, Abu-Mannah and others have suggested, the Naqshbandi-Khalidis were not a staunchly orthodox Sufi order. Sheikh Khalid emphasized going back to the main sources (Qur'an, Sunnah) but never approached to the issue in a way as Wahhabis did. He rather reacted somehow to the Iranian occupation of his land, Kurdistan and Iraq. He also might have seen that the colonisers were on the way for occupying the Middle East as the Ottomans were becoming weaker against the Western powers, but it was not during his time rather the second half of the nineteenth century when Naqshbandi-Khalidi order developed an anti-colonial stance against European and Russian powers.

The importance of Naqshbandi and Qadiri sheikhs is that after most of the hereditary Kurdish mirs were banished from Kurdistan, it was these Sufi sheiks who would fill these political positions after a short period of the power vacuum. The conflict in between Sheikh Khalid and Ma'ruf Node had certainly political motivation behind and this struggle was going to become a precursor for later rivalries for more power. This event clarified the division between both brotherhoods and indicated that once the political conditions were ripe it was no one but these two parties who would inquire the leadership of the local Kurdish population. After 1850, when no leader was left in Kurdistan, it was Naqhsibandis in the Hakkari, Bothan and Bahdinan and Qadiris in the Soran and Baban, who hold the power for the next fifty to eighty years in these emirates. The family of Nehri, namely Taha-yi Hakkari and Sheikh Ubeydullah-1 Nehri were the Naqshbandi sheikhs, who led the Norther Kurdish lands while the Barzanci sheikhs of Qadiri order were located in Sulaimaniya and administered the Southern territories of Kurdish mirs up until 1930, when Sheikh Mahmud al-Barzanci was expelled from there by the British forces. One may consider that the rural Kurdish population was devastated and the fabric of the society there was destroyed after the Kurdish mirs were defeated one after the other in 1840s, but despite that the society shrewdly was able to come out of that stalemate when they invented their own natural leaders with inclination to these religious sheiks, who were very much respected and agreed by all tribes and parties. First, they were demanded by the public as the mediators and negotiators for their disputes during this period of interregnum and later were received as legitimate leaders.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BABAN COURT AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN SULAIMANIYA

Political and social history of Kurdistan has attracted little attention of modern scholars and students of Kurdish studies. More interest was shown by the Western travelers of the nineteenth century to the Kurdish culture, language and society. One such traveler was C.J. Rich, who was the resident of the East India Company in Baghdad between 1808 and 1821. His two volume work, a travelogue titled *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, became a major source on Kurds and Kurdistan, more specifically on the Babans, and it has been widely cited by students of this period, however it has not thoroughly been studied.<sup>298</sup> Comparing with the other travelers of the same period like Sir John Malcolm, George Fowler, Baillie Fraser and Rev. Horatio Southgate, who have a more Orientalist approach, Rich's work is more sympathetic and less biased. When he stayed in Sulaimaniya he certainly felt that he was very welcomed and was politically much less threatened than in Baghdad. He describes his feeling "something like the elevation of spirits of a man returning to his own house; and indeed, the kindness and hospitality I have experienced at Sulimania are well calculated to make me esteem it a kind of home."<sup>299</sup> He is certainly in favor of Baban Pashas because of his close friendship with them and their good treatment to him during Rich's illness. Such a close relationship helped Rich to have an easier access to the information and tell us more about the Baban house.

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<sup>298</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence vol. I-II*.

<sup>299</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence, vol. I*, 265-66.



**Figure 1: A portrait of C.J. Rich by Thomas Phillip RA, from the collection of the British Museum**

**Source: Constance M. Alexander, *Baghdad in bygone days: from the journals and correspondence of Claudius Rich, traveller, artist, linguist, antiquary, and British resident at Baghdad, 1808-1821*, (London: J. Murray, 1928)**

Rich left Baghdad for Sulaimaniya in the late spring of 1820 to escape from the heat of the summer because of his deteriorating health. He also had a prior invitation by Baban Mahmud Pasha, when the pasha was in Baghdad for some business. Rich stayed for almost four months in the town during the spring and summer of 1820 and he recorded lively details of Baban court, the town, sports, means of entertainment, different practices of religious and racial groups, the climate, geographical descriptions, local food, natural products, and many other details about the surrounding regions. It was not only him who visited the town and the area. Before 1800, Catholic priest Maurizio Garzoni appeared in Sulaimaniya and in different parts of Kurdistan in 1780s and he stayed in Amediye for eighteen years. A Chevalier de la Legion-d'Honneur and professor of Orient languages Amadée Jaubert in 1805-06, the Catholic Priest Giuseppe Campanile around 1810, the Jewish Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel between 1824-1828, Captain in the service of the East India Company John MacDonald Kinneir in 1810 and Lieutenant of Madras William Heude in 1817 are some others travelers, who could be added on the list of visitors to the Sulaimaniya and surrounding regions. Despite such a list of visitors, none of these travelers had more details on Sulaimaniya and the Baban family than Rich recorded. Rich's work has been widely employed and cited by the academics and historians. Almost all works, which more or less focus on the first half of nineteenth century Kurdistan, use Rich's account, though with little criticism. Compared with works of other Orientalists of the same period and later, his work has fewer biases towards the local

people of Kurdistan. Therefore, I will utilize his travelogue more than the others in this chapter. Certainly I will use some Ottoman archival sources and Hurşid Paşa's *Seyahatname-i Hudud*, which was written in a later period, probably 1847-8, but still none of these sources are as lively and detailed as Rich's work.<sup>300</sup> There is abundance of information on the political condition of Sulaimaniya in the Ottoman archives, especially *Hatt-ı Humayun* collection, nonetheless the case is not the same for the economy, population, religious establishments, and the court records of this town. One could understand this because of the special status granted to Sulaimaniya. The Baban Sanjaq before the nineteenth century was not registered as a *tumar*.<sup>301</sup> Such a status continued after the establishment of the town, though the Babans paid their levy and tax to Baghdad in an unstable condition.

Lately, urban social history in the Ottoman and Middle Eastern Studies has been occupying a significant place. Before 1980s, approaches to cities of the Ottoman Empire such as Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus and North African cities were more 'nationalist' and the sources they utilized were more local, as their focus was on urban notables because of their "upholding of the local interests" against the empire.<sup>302</sup> Such views were more evident among the scholars of the Arab cities. Contrary to this view were the works of those who studied the Ottoman Empire from the center with utilization of the Ottoman archival documents. Such studies focused more on the Anatolian and Balkan cities, where the Ottoman presence was more evident, and based on the experience in these urban centers, they tended to make generalizations on cities and towns in Arab and Eastern provinces. Such views were formed during the formative years of the scholars who were in a political milieu that forced them to approach the urban history of the Ottoman Empire in such a way.

In the last two-three decades, such exclusivist approaches have faded away and new interpretations, which reconcile the Ottoman past with their Arab, Kurdish, Albanian and Greek subjects, with more inclusive analysis have taken their place. Dina Rizk Khoury states that such new interpretations have been more around thanks to the Islamist academics of Turkey who try to settle the differences between the Turkish and Arab scholars.<sup>303</sup> Although such statements have some merits in it, this is a little bit exaggerated point since such works have been done by left leaning and liberal academics in and outside of Turkey.<sup>304</sup> In fact,

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<sup>300</sup> There are several other non-Western and Kurdish sources, which are written during this period or later. However all covers the political history of the Babans and give very little information about the social history of the region. See for example Abd al-Qader bin Rostam Babani. *Seyer al-Akrad dar Tarikh wa Jografya-ye Kordestan*. Republished by Mohammed Rauf Tawakkoli, (Tehran: Chapkhane-i Golbang, 1288/ 1377); Mestureyi Kurdistanî, *Mejoyê Erdelanî*, trans. to Sorani Kurdish by Hejari Mukiryani (Hewlêr: Çapxaneyê Wezaretê Perwerde, 2002); Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Tarixê Sulêmanî û Welatî lê Dewreyê Zûd Qedimewe ta Ewweli Îhtilal*, (Baghdad: Çapxaneyê El-Necah, 1939).

<sup>301</sup> See more details on difference between "hukümet", "sanjaq" and "ocaklık" in Christopher Houston, " 'Set aside from the pen and cut off from the foot': Imagining the Ottoman Empire and Kurdistan," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27:2, (2007): 391-411; also see van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 210; Mehmet Öz, "Ottoman Provincial Administration in Eastern and Southern Anatolia: The Case of Bidlis in the Sixteenth Century", in *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities, and Political Changes*, ed. Kemal Karpat (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 146-147.

<sup>302</sup> Dina Rizk Khoury, "Political Relations between City and State in the Middle East," in *The urban social history of the Middle East, 1750-1950*, ed. Peter Sluglett (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 67.

<sup>303</sup> Khoury, "Political Relations between City and State," 68-69.

<sup>304</sup> See for example Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Alan Masters, *The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); In this work,

Khoury points out that there has been more contact and dialogue among the historians in a time when “traditional” approaches are under more scrutiny.

Khoury, in her article on the historiography of the Ottoman urban studies, brings out a more important point on the diversification of the cities in the empire. She categorizes the cities according to their political or provincial (Damascus, Aleppo, Baghdad, Mosul, and Cairo), economic (İzmir, Acre, Basra, Tunis, and Algiers), interior towns with smaller population (Nablus, Bulaq, and Hama), and religious (Karbala, Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem) position.<sup>305</sup> She states that some cities might be falling into more than one category while this classification is quite fluid. She also adds that the cities that fall into the third categorization are not much studied and these are rather smaller urban hubs which are interior towns and cities with fewer connections to the provincial and the imperial centers.<sup>306</sup> Sulaimaniya would more likely be placed in the third category, if the Khoury’s definition included the “frontier” towns and cities in this group.<sup>307</sup> Besides, her categorization comprises the cities-except İzmir- that are dominated mostly by Arab populations and thus makes this classification exclusively for a certain group in the Ottoman Empire.

Compared with the cities and towns mentioned above, Sulaimaniya was rather a new town established by a Kurdish notable, Baban İbrahim Pasha, who lingered between the Ottoman and Iranian politics. Thus, the city carried both the Turkish and Iranian elements, but more Kurdish characters with its political, economic, social and tribal relations. Despite the dominance of the “Irano-Turkish culture” in the region the town still had its own local character or, in the words of Hourani, the ‘national character’ “because of varying soils and climates, different inheritances, and involvement in various commercial systems.”<sup>308</sup> Although, the organization of the town and the Baban court were shaped by the mere imitation of Baghdad and partially Istanbul, the Baban family kept their centuries old top-down relations with the tribes, peasants and non-Muslim the same. As Charles Tilly suggests in his work, *Cities and the Rise of States in Europe*, the cities “shaped the destinies” of the states, as they try to limit the ability of the latter in order to keep resources in hand and organize populations to wage war. Accordingly, Tilly makes two implications which are correlated with our work on Sulaimaniya. First, state policies and controls were formed by the social environment of the city, where the nature of the local notables, ability of the state to choose them, and the availability of the resources work together to mold the structure in the city. Second, as a consequence of the first, it is hard to talk about a homogenous and uniform

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authors challenge the Orientalist views of the Ottoman city, which were partially shaped by Weber’s “Islamic city” where he perceives it as monolithic and undifferentiated.

<sup>305</sup> Khoury, “Political Relations between City and State,” 77.

<sup>306</sup> Such works are, but not limited to: James A. Reilly, *A small town in Syria: Ottoman Hama in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (Oxford and New York: Peter Lang, 2002); Nelly Hana, *An urban history of Būlāq in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1983); Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>307</sup> Eugene Rogan’s groundbreaking work, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921*, focuses on several districts on the frontiers of the empire in the south of Bilad al-Sham. Although the focal point of this work is not cities and it is more influenced by the studies on Arab provinces, it still has a very good overview of the frontiers.

<sup>308</sup> Albert Hourani, *The emergence of the modern Middle East*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1981), 20-21.

relationship between the state and the different urban centers in the Middle East.<sup>309</sup> Thus, as Khoury categorizes the cities as much diverse as she can, there were still various towns and cities like Sulaimaniya in the Ottoman Empire that did not fit into these groups because of their social, geographical, political, cultural and religious differences.

Beyond Khoury's classification Albert Hourani suggests two types of cities: 'spontaneous' cities, which "have grown up over a long period , because of a particularly fertile hinterland, good natural communications, or some qualities of enterprise in their people" and 'created' cities, which "have been founded by deliberate act of a ruler or dynasty, to be royal residences or pleasancess or centres of government." One could suggest that Sulaimaniya fits well into the second category of 'created' cities. However, beyond political purposes, the leaders need to find financial support to sustain their 'created' cities.<sup>310</sup> Thus they encourage economical activity as well as the security of trade routes to their centers and therefore more or less become like 'spontaneous' cities. Sulaimaniya was not a major city and did not have much economic activity going on around. Therefore, it stucked with its "created" status for a long time.

In this chapter, our focus will be more on the description on the Kurds and observations of the visitors mentioned above on Kurdistan, more specifically on Sulaimaniya, but I will touch upon political conditions when it is relevant. Otherwise, I refer the reader to the pertinent chapters for the political situation of the Baban Sanjaq. In this chapter I will go by each subject and divide the chapter among different topics like the description of the town, women, peasants, leisure time and pursuit, music, food, practice of religion and sectarian difference, the people and demography, and a general description of the surrounding areas and Kurdistan during this period. This chapter will give a general picture of the social history of early nineteenth century Sulaimaniya and Kurdistan. In order to accomplish this several questions are posed that this chapter aims to cope with: Can we talk about a society that had its own mode of life on this part of the Empire? What were similarities and differences between them and the other cities in the Ottoman Empire? What a society on the frontiers of the Ottoman and Persian Empire would do to pass by its everyday life? How were they reacting to the Ottoman penetration into their life and their town? More specifically, what was their reaction to be subject to a different religious sect (Hanafiyya), while they believed in another one (Shafi'iyya)? What was the status of the women and the peasants in this border society, and how did they view the male-dominant Baban administration and the world around them? Last but not least, how was it like of being a Sunni Kurd in between Shi'i Iran and Sunni-Hanafi Ottoman Empire?

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<sup>309</sup> Charles Tilly and Willem Pieter Blockmans, *Cities and the rise of states in Europe, A.D. 1000 to 1800*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), p. 8

<sup>310</sup> Hourani, *The emergence of the modern Middle East*, 19-20.

## The Town

This is a town, which was considered as the capital of South Kurdistan and Baban Sanjaq.<sup>311</sup> There are very few sources, which talk about Sulaimaniya before 1800. Kurdish cities like Bitlis and Amediye were mentioned in the universal Western dictionaries, but Sulaimaniya still did not pass in them before the nineteenth century.<sup>312</sup> Many sources before this date mention of Qala Cholan (or Karacholan, a corrupt name of Qala Cholan) as the capital of Babans.<sup>313</sup> Sources agree on the establishment of the town of Sulaimaniya by the beginning of 1780s but disagree on a certain date. Some gives 1781 some other 1784 as the date for the foundation of the town.<sup>314</sup> Rich gives the *hijri* date of 1199 (1783-4 A.D.) as the establishment of the town.<sup>315</sup> Although Campanile, who was in the town in 1810, mentions the name of Sulaimaniya as the capital of Baban, he gives the year of 1789, as the date for transfer of the capital from Qala Cholan to Sulaymaniya.<sup>316</sup> Both authors say that the name of Sulaimaniya was given in honor of the *vali* (governor) of Baghdad, Büyük Süleyman Paşa (r. 1780-1802), because of the close friendship between him and Baban İbrahim Paşa.<sup>317</sup> It was located in ten hours of distance by walk to Persian territories and three hours of distance to Qala Cholan.<sup>318</sup> The town was built on the ruins of Milk-Hindi village once these ruins were demolished and removed.<sup>319</sup> Both authors also verify that the base of the new capital was an ancient site as many ancient coins were found during the founding of the town. Edmonds recorded seven quarters in early 1920s, divided for municipal administration, in the town: Goyzha, Malkandi, Kaniyaskan, Dargezain, Sarshaqam, Chwarbakh, and Julekan (the Jewish quarter).<sup>320</sup>

Before entering Sulaimaniya, travelers had to go through the “Saogirmah” passage and come down into a “fruitful luxuriant plain, about ten or twelve miles in width, by thirty or

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<sup>311</sup> Geographical dictionaries considered Sulaimaniya as the “capital of lower Kurdistan.” See his entry for “Solymania or Shehrezur” in Richard Brookes, *The General Gazetteer or compendium of Geographical Dictionary* (London: A. Picquot, 1827). Heude also names Sulaimaniya as the “capital of Kurdistan” when he makes a drawing of the town. William Heude, *A Voyage up the Persian Gulf and a Journey Overland from India to England in 1817* (London: Longman, 1817). Both Ottoman and Western sources used “Kurdistan” and “Baban Sanjaq” interchangeably for this region. Somehow no distinction was made in the Ottoman sources until 1850s, when the house of Baban was completely removed from Sulaimaniya and the governor appointed from Istanbul.

<sup>312</sup> Bitlis was recorded as the capital of Kurdistan in such dictionaries and was mentioned in detail. Pierre-Claude-Victor Boiste, *Dictionnaire universel de la langue François* (Paris: Desray, 1803), 5; Louis Moreri, *Le grand dictionnaire historique, ou le mélange curieux de l’histoire sacree et profane* (Paris, 1759), 439.

<sup>313</sup> In his introduction to the first Kurdish grammar book written by a Western, Catholic father Maurizio Garzoni talks about five Kurdish principalities in the Ottoman territories: Bitlis, Jazira( Bothan), Amediye, Julamerg and Qala Cholan or ‘Karaciolan’ as he recorded. Garzoni, *e Vocabolario della Lingua Kurda*, 3-4.

<sup>314</sup> See the first chapter for more information on the coming of the Babans to this area and foundation of Sulaimaniya.

<sup>315</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 387.

<sup>316</sup> R.P. Giuseppe Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 38.

<sup>317</sup> See more in the first chapter on the debate over the origin of the name of Sulaimaniya.

<sup>318</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 40.

<sup>319</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 38, Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 119; Rich names *Mellikindi*, as he calls “the village of the Indian king.” Although there is no base for it Campanile says “this name was given to it, because in the past this territory was belonging to India.” Nowadays, this name is given to one of the quarters in the town as *Malkandi*. C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 80.

<sup>320</sup> Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, 80. We take Edmonds’ division of town of Sulaimaniya as base for the division of the town a hundred year ago, since the population numerically and racially had remained almost the same.

thirty-five in length.”<sup>321</sup> A small fordable river, which passed by Sulaimaniya, watered the plain. All streets of Sulaimaniya, which were large, spacious and light, were connected with each other.<sup>322</sup> The main street of the town, where the Baban palace was located, was “large, well-paved, and bordered with low one-storey houses.”<sup>323</sup> Contrary to the other cities of the premodern period Sulaimaniya had no walls around it and had no doors to pass through for entering to the town.<sup>324</sup> There were five mosques, two of them in good condition, and one “wretched small” church of Chaldean Christians.<sup>325</sup> Besides, there were six caravanserais, and five baths, “but only one good one.”<sup>326</sup> In another place Rich records “this miserable-looking town, however, contains five khans, two good mosques, and a very fine bath.”<sup>327</sup> There is no detail of sanitation or sewage system in travelogues, but we know that the need for water was supplied from the mountains with an aqueduct (*kahreez*) and it was distributed into the courtyard of every house.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Heude, *A Voyage*, 200.

<sup>322</sup> Heude makes a couple of drawings of Sulaimaniya, one scenic view of the town of Sulaimaniya, which is included in this chapter, and one passage of Saogirmah with its small bridge and the waterfall. The drawing of the town, which he chooses to use it as interior cover of his book and notes underneath “Sulimaney the Capital of Kurdistan,” contains the river, one-story buildings, the palace, which stands up in the middle of the town with its modest appearance and the cemetery with several tombs in the forefront. Heude, *A Voyage*.

<sup>323</sup> Witold Rajkowski, “A Visit to Southern Kurdistan,” *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 107, No. 3/4 (1946), 128-134.

<sup>324</sup> Sulaimaniya was established on a ground that was not easy to protect. Fortification of the town was probably very costly. Although the Babans established fortresses before they moved to their new capital and despite the raids from Baghdad and Iranian side on Sulaimaniya they never built walls around the town. This situation caused lots of ruins with each attack from the enemies. Instead they decided to invest on their new palace, probably because of desire to imitate their patrons in Baghdad. Celil Quotes from the British Armenian traveler Serovbe Karnetsi. Celile Celil, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler*, 55.

<sup>325</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 120; Campanile records that the Christians had no church in the town in 1810. Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 40.

<sup>326</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 120.

<sup>327</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 85.

<sup>328</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 84.





*Sulaimaniya, the Capital of Kurdistan.*

**Figure 2: Sulaimaniya in the first quarter of nineteenth century**  
**Source: William Heude, *A Voyage up the Persian Gulf* (1817)**

Most houses of the ordinary people were one floor whereas the nobles of the town customarily had the priority to built higher houses.<sup>329</sup> The ordinary houses were made from mud, which resembled a “large Arab village.” In such houses people had no cover on their windows, thus were much exposed to outsiders, but people did not “seem to regard this.”<sup>330</sup> The houses were “built of mud and unburnt bricks, with flat heavy roofs, seldom above one story high; and, generally speaking, [were] equally inconvenient and mean in their appearance.”<sup>331</sup> The house that Rich stayed in Sulaimaniya had similar features:

[I]t is a square building of the one story, standing on a basement of about three feet high, and built of bricks dried in the sun, having a plastering of mud mixed with chopped straw over the whole. One or two rooms inside have been white-limed over the mud coating. The roof is flat, and is formed by rafters, reeds, and a coating of earth. This house stands in a large open enclosure, or as we would say in India in a compound: this is subdivided into two courts by a cross wall, which joins the house at each side near its centre, leaving the front in one enclosure and the back in another: this makes the Haram [The women’s apartment-Rich] and Diwan Khaneh [here master

<sup>329</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 36.

<sup>330</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 85.

<sup>331</sup> Heude, *A Voyage*, 200.

receives his visitors, and in which the men servants reside-Rich]; but there is no communication between them by a door in the house itself, as in all Turkish houses; you must go round by a door in the wall which divides the compound into two: this is peculiarly inconvenient in bad weather. The area of both courts is covered with grass, and planted with willows, poplars, mulberries and rose bushes, interspersed in little bouquets.<sup>332</sup>

The climate in Sulaimaniya was more agreeable than other parts of this region. That was one of the reasons that Sulaimaniya was chosen as the capital of Baban and it was also the reason that Rich decided to pass the summer of 1820 there. The winter cold could be sometimes harsh, especially when the strong easterly gales blew. The snow stayed on the ground for little less than two months, but it lasted throughout of the year in the surrounding mountains, which became a source of cooling for Sulaimanians. Summers were pleasant, except when the same easterly wind blew, which could last for eight to ten days and become very violent. “This wind is as hot and relaxing in summer as it is cold and piercing in winter; and what is very curious, it is not felt at the distance of two or three hours off in any direction.”<sup>333</sup> On early July, Rich observed a “hot puff of wind came from the north-east,” which was called the *Sherki* (easterly) and “felt like an earthquake.”<sup>334</sup> As soon as this wind blew, the heat went up 10 more degrees from 80 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit.<sup>335</sup> In these hot days, which lasted for a month during the summer, people used a low platform (*seko*) for sleeping on the roof and built *chardak* (hut made of boughs) over a little tank in their courtyards or pitch a tent to protect themselves from the fleas.<sup>336</sup> There were also large vacant sections in houses supported by posts with little daylight. These halls were used to escape from the heat of the summer. Besides, Sulaimanians had winter rooms in their houses entered through a long dark passage.<sup>337</sup>

### The Palace and the Court

Travelers, who passed through Sulaimaniya, would less or more talk about the palace of the Baban pashas, some among those, who saw the palace during the reign of Abdurrahman Paşa, which was considered as the “golden age” of the family, had given lively description of the court. A Catholic father Campanile, who visited the town around 1810, was a long term resident of the region. Throughout of his book he talks about several other Kurdish principalities and when he compares the Baban Sanjaq and its capital Sulaimaniya with other principalities, he draws a picture of much stronger principality and better built capital with its palace. Campanile mentions two central buildings, the *serail* (palace) and the *diwan* (a high

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<sup>332</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 83-84.

<sup>333</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 113.

<sup>334</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 145; this was also called *Rhesheba* or the black wind by local people.

<sup>335</sup> Rich has observed 75 degree on May 11 and 104 degree on June 10 as the high degrees of the day; Edmonds also experienced this wind when he was in Sulaimaniya around 1920. He records that “rheseba covered my sheets and pillow, and filled my mouth, eyes and ears, with all the chopped straw, grimes and filth of an oriental stable-yard.” in Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arab*, 82

<sup>336</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 84.

<sup>337</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 85.

governmental body). Both structures were established by Abdurrahman Pasha in 1795. Campanile gives lively details of these buildings as he seems very impressed by them:

There are two stairs, which are leading into a garden, at the entrance of the Serail or palace. The espaliers are composed of rose trees with varied flowers, which many of them have been imported from Persia. The garden lacks trees and there is no other ornament other than the vine trees, the pomegranates, the mulberries and the willows. It [the garden] ends beneath a stair of ten steps over which, on the left, stands a grand vasquez, with eighty feet length and forty feet width; an incessant water, clear and savory, spurts out from three fountains. At the opposite side, stands a murette, which is not more than two feet tall, and which forms a barrier. This is the place where, in the nights of summer, the Paşa holds his conversations. A little front on the right, stands a dense and fresh meadow, where many streams ramble out of water which runs without stopping. On this gentle grass, covered with rugs, the Pasha comes to sit during the warm days, and under the nice shadow of the trees, he gives the audience, makes decisions and ravel out the government affairs. In the night, this meadow becomes the place of varied conversations of the aghas (tribal leaders), who are the ministers of the Serail, the sons and the brothers of the Pasha. And different lights set around it [the meadow] form a wonderful glimpse.<sup>338</sup>

The palace was located on the north side of a large square, where four roads met. The edifice was a heavy building of stone masonry, which became the landmark of the town.<sup>339</sup> Campanile gives more description of the other buildings in the town. One of the two most important buildings, according to him, was the *diwan*:

On the left hand, stands one beautiful monument: the diwan. It faces to a pond and is supported with six columns made of wood, all inlaid with small mirrors. This diwan is all fluted and covered with very fine gold and painted with the Persian style with a delicacy of art and application of colors, which will leave all European with charm. It is very high, with an arch in the shape of dome, which is interwoven of the excellent colors, and has a ceiling of gently painted woods. In between them there is all a playing of mirrors. The walls are painted elegantly. In the past, one would see four figures representing four personalities, which are now erased by Küçük Süleyman Paşa, vali of Baghdad, because the images are prohibited by Quran. Only one still appears fully: it represents the famous Tahmasp Kuli-Khan.<sup>340</sup>

One could easily measure the local power of the Babans by just looking at the palace in Sulaimaniya. Sulaimaniya was losing the population, and the palace was getting more ignored as the power of the Baban family faded away. Ten years later, these rich descriptions, which Campanile gave, left the place for a less impressive appearance of the *serail*. In 1820 of summer during his visit, Rich described a “low, mean, narrow, and dirty” entrance to the palace. He says that the reason of this situation is because “it renders the seat of government defensible, in case of emergency.”

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<sup>338</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 38-39.

<sup>339</sup> Rajkowski, “A Visit to Southern Kurdistan,” 130.

<sup>340</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 39.

Rich pays more attention to the administrative structure of the Babans than their architectural contribution to Sulaimaniya. One of few drawings that is available in Rich's travelogue is a depiction of Omar Agha, a high ranking officer of Mahmud Pasha, who received Rich at the entrance of Sulaimaniya. Rich's description of the Baban officers indicates that they copied a similar system of the administration as in Baghdad and Istanbul. The offices are hereditary, especially during the administration of the same Pasha. Therefore one could see a child becoming *selikdar*, or sword-bearer, who inherited the position from his father. The idea behind this tradition was to assure the stability of the *sanjaq* in times of war between the Ottoman and Iranian Empires, and political struggles between family members. The *masraf* or prime minister, which was still in the office during Rich's visit, had been in the administration during the reign of Osman, Abdurrahman, and Mahmud Pashas.<sup>341</sup> He expected his son to take over the office once he left.

There were officers for certain purposes too in the Baban Sanjaq. One of these was *ishiq agasi* or master of the ceremonies.<sup>342</sup> Another officer was *muneccim bashi* or astronomer, who was responsible to follow up with certain days.<sup>343</sup> There was even a *Haram Agasi*, a eunuch to arrange the relations between the courtly women and the male dominant palace, and harem servants, who were stout bearded.<sup>344</sup> In addition to such secular positions there was the master *ulema* (Muslim scholar), who was responsible for the administration of the grand mosque and the madrasa. The *ulema* class was also responsible to mentor the courtly children and sometimes to be arbitrators in times of wars and conflicts.

### **An Old Dialect, a New Literature: the Kurdish Poets and Sorani**

Once the Babans were settled permanently they started to build a center not only as a capital for their dynasty but a Mecca for the Kurdish literature of Sorani dialect as well. By the early 1800, Sulaimaniya with the new court of the Baban mirs became an enclave for several famous Sufi poets such as Nali and Salim. After the Babans were driven out of Sulaimaniya, this genre which started with Nali continued in Kirkuk and different part of Iraqi Kurdistan by Haji Qadiri Koyi, Sheikh Riza Talabani, Mahwi, and several others. During the long nineteenth century, Sorani replaced Kurmanci as the dominant Kurdish dialect in literature and became the major language of regional dignitaries. This section focuses on how the Babans created a hotbed in Sulaimaniya for literary oeuvres in Sorani dialect of Kurdish and the works of the poets in this period became a major indigenous source to narrate the life of the people in the region. People of the Baban domains knew Persian and Turkish but they preferred speaking Sorani Kurdish. During this period the Kurdish culture was more oral than written, thus we have very little primary sources in hand in order to vocalize the voices of ordinary people. In such cases poetry becomes a major source to see how "the people from below" saw the everyday life as well as the major events. Although not all these poets are ordinary people, they at least see the world differently from ruling figures and notables.

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<sup>341</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 115.

<sup>342</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 168.

<sup>343</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 136.

<sup>344</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 284.

Without exception the poets came out among the religious class of the *ulema*. Looking from this perspective, the Kurdish madrasas did not only produce the men of religious creed but also yielded the poets, writers, judges as well as men of pen for the Kurdish courts. These mullahs knew Persian, Kurdish, Turkish and Arabic. In Garzoni's words "all villages employ one such man, called *mella*, who is expected not only to read Persian but also to be capable of rendering it in Kurdish."<sup>345</sup>

Before getting into the works of some of these poets, Nali, Koyi, and Talabani, I will give some background information from literary milieu of Kurdistan. This will help us to understand more of life and works of these poets. I will also give some information about the rebirth of Sorani dialect in the region and its penetration into the life of nobles and ordinary in Baban domain as a medium of communication.

### **Sorani and its usage in Sulaimaniya**

Sorani existed in the region for centuries.<sup>346</sup> However, it was not used much in literature. Instead it was the Northern Kurdish or Kurmanci which became popular among people of pen throughout of centuries, especially from sixteenth through nineteenth centuries.<sup>347</sup> Once the Babans appeared in the political scene of Ottoman Iraq, Sorani became more dominant in the southern Kurdistan. In fact, it was the legendary leader of the Babans, Abdurrahman Pasha, who decided to promote Sorani in order to "mark his independence from his overlords, whether Ottoman or Persian, and to emphasize his difference from his historic rivals, the Ardalâns."<sup>348</sup> Sorani in Sulaimaniya with its "lively and elastic idioms that has established itself as the standard vehicle of literary expression" had not only made itself reputable in Iraq but on the other side of border in Persian Kurdistan as well.<sup>349</sup> This was due partially because of patronage shown to Kurdish literary circles by the Babans and also later foundation of a secular military school (1893), "Mekteb-i Rüştiye," in Sulaimaniya by the Ottomans, which helped to create a literary class who had the chance to go on to the academy and staff college in Istanbul and obtain a standard education denied to the common people of Kurdistan.<sup>350</sup> Sorani was much in use throughout of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In fact, it was the first dialect of Kurdish, which was accepted as the official language of administration in Sulaimaniya under the British mandate in 1918.<sup>351</sup> Thanks to such

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<sup>345</sup> P. Maurizio Garzoni. *Grammatica e vocabolario della lingua kurda* (Roma, 1787), 11.

<sup>346</sup> Although the name "Sorani" is accepted widely for Kurdish in Southern Kurdistan, there are some scholars, who call it "Suleimani" or "Suleimani-Ardelani" for the Kurdish in Sulaimaniya district. See Edmonds, C.J. *Kurds Turks and Arabs: Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq (1919-1925)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 10; The name 'Sorani' is driven from the name of the region, Soran, as well as the name of an emirate around Hewler/Erbil. Joyce Blau, "Written Kurdish Literature," *Oral Literature of Iranian Languages: Kurdish, Pashto, Balochi, Ossetic, Persian and Tajiki*, ed. Philip G. Kreyenbroek & Ulrich Marzolph (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 9.

<sup>347</sup> A good amount of examples of Kurmanci poetry was produced by the sixteenth century poet Mela-ye Cizîrî; see more on Cizîrî in Farhad Shakely, "The Kurdish Qasida" in *Qasida poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, ed. Stefan Sperl, C. Shackle, Nicholas Awde (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 327-338.

<sup>348</sup> Blau, "Written Kurdish Literature," 9.

<sup>349</sup> Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, 11.

<sup>350</sup> Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, 11.

<sup>351</sup> C.J. Edmonds, "The Kurds of Iraq," *Middle East Journal*, 11:1(1957: Winter), 51.

developments, Sulaimaniya became the major source of officials for other Kurdish districts in Iraqi Kurdistan.

By most scholars Kurdish is considered a language belong to the Western Iranian group of Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family.<sup>352</sup> Although a standardization of Kurdish language was not done until the beginning of twentieth century, many dictionaries and grammar books were published both by Kurdish and non-Kurdish scholars, before this date. The first dictionary in Kurdish was written by Ahmad-i Khani, the famous poet who wrote the epic *Mem u Zin* in Kurmanci Kurdish, called *Nubir-a Bichukan* (The children's first fruits), which is an Arabic-Kurdish dictionary in verse written in 1682.<sup>353</sup> Several other dictionaries and grammar books would follow this. The first grammar book for studying Kurdish was published by Maurizio Garzoni, a Dominican preacher and missionary, who lived in central Kurdistan for twenty years.<sup>354</sup> An Arabic-Kurdish dictionary was printed in 1795 by Sheikh Ma'ruf Node in Sulaimaniya, which was written for his son Kak Ahmad and was named after him as *Kitab-i Ahmadi*.<sup>355</sup> Ali Bardashani (d. 1812), who was called the "Poet of the Baban Principality", became the first poet, who wrote in Sorani.<sup>356</sup> During the nineteenth century, many more dictionaries and grammar books in Europe and Russia would be published, although still not much equivalent works were done among the Kurds until early twentieth century.<sup>357</sup>

Sorani Kurdish is mostly spoken among the Kurds of Iraq and Iran. Although Sorani and Kurmanci are two major dialects of Kurdish and closely related with each other, they are "not mutually intelligible and differ at the basic structural level as well as in vocabulary and idiom."<sup>358</sup> Sorani in Sulaimaniya, which was built on several branches of Southern Kurmanci dialect spoken in Sharezur and Qaradagh, localized more Persian, Arabic, and Turkish vocabulary in addition of producing more Kurdish vocabulary, which helped to make its literature richer, while establishing rules of grammar during this period. The common language of Sulaimaniya was Kurdish with many words and twists, which were totally different from Kurdish of other principalities.<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Thomas Bois, *Connaissance des Kurds*, (Beyrut :Khayats, 1965), 115 ; W.M. Thackston, *Sorani Kurdish: A Reference Grammar with Selected Readings*, (Boston: Iranian Studies at Harvard University, 2006), vii.

<sup>353</sup> Farhad Shakely, "Classic and modern Kurdish poetry" *Encyclopedia Iranica Online*, (2005).

<sup>354</sup> Maurizio Garzoni, *Grammatica*; Garzoni's grammar book dominated in the West as a major source for Kurdish for a long time. His oeuvre is made of two hundred and eighty-eight pages, including a grammar, reading-lessons, and a glossary. The author restricts his book with the dialect spoken in Amediye and surrounding area. He resided among the Kurds for eighteen years; see also Bela B. Edwards "Note on the Kurdish Language", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 2 (1851), 120-123.

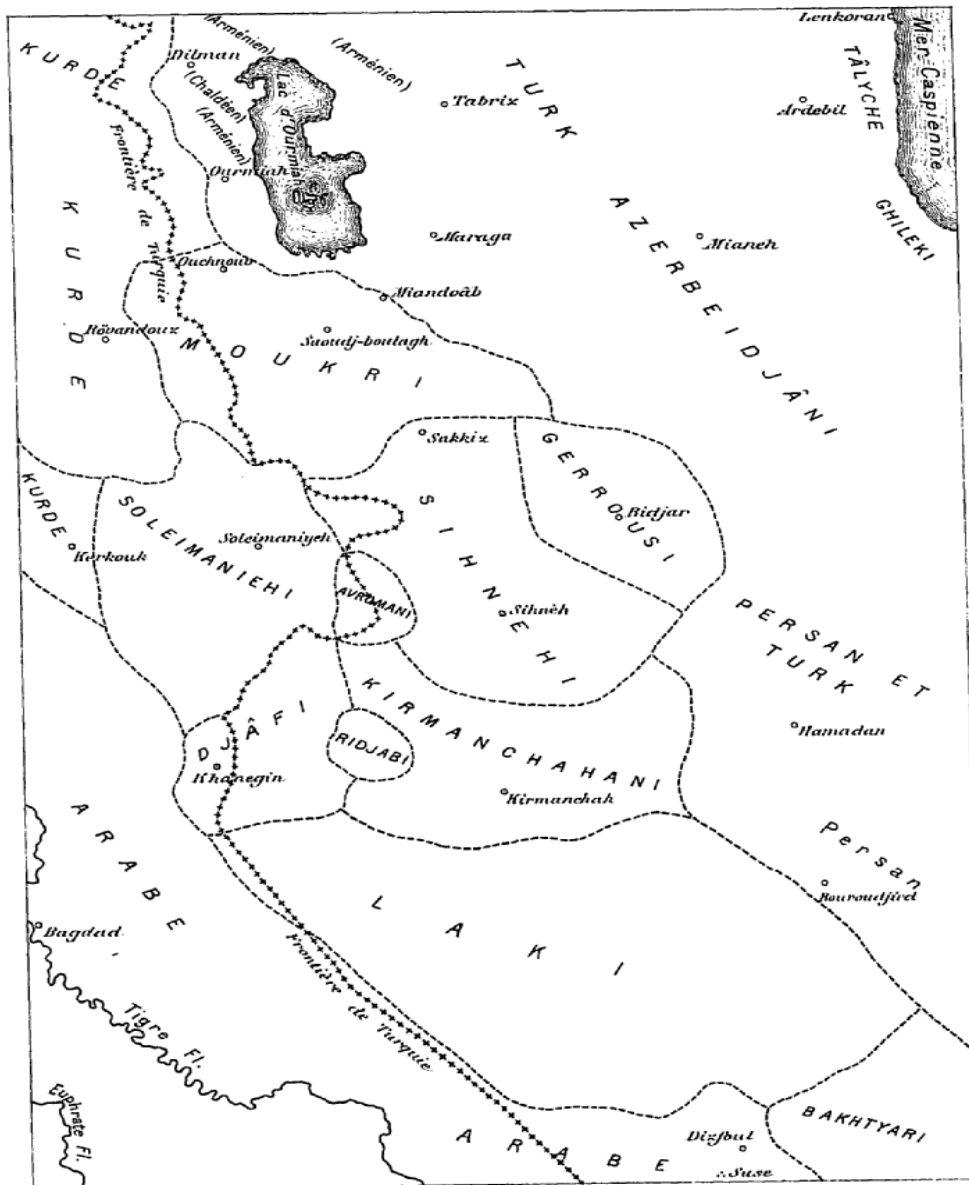
<sup>355</sup> Halkawt Hakim, "Le Conflit Qadiriyya-Naqshbandiyya," 155; Edmonds adds that *Kitab-i Ahmadi*, a sort of 'Arabic without Tears' was still popular in early twentieth century Iraqi Kurdistan. The author, Ma'ruf Node, says in the introduction of this book: "In this booklet written in Kurdish I explain the Arabic language in order that my son Ahmad may without trouble become acquainted with the Arabic vocabulary; I have therefore named it 'Ahmadi' ." Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, 73.

<sup>356</sup> Blau, "Written Kurdish Literature," 9-10.

<sup>357</sup> For a complete list of works and publications on Kurdish language before 1960 see Ernest R. McCarus's "Kurdish Language Studies," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer, 1960), 325-335

<sup>358</sup> Thackston, *Sorani Kurdish*, vvi.

<sup>359</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 37.



PRINCIPAUX DIALECTES DU KURDISTAN PERSAN.

### Map 3: A map of Kurdish Dialects

Source: J. Morgan, *Mission scientifique en Perse. Études linguistiques. Dialectes kurdes, langues et dialectes du nord de la Perse, Vol. V*, (Paris: E. Leroux, 1904), p. xvi.

Here we focus on three poets, Nali, Haji Qadiri Koyi, Sheikh Riza Talabani, and partially Salim, who were idealizing their country of origin, namely Kurdistan and as well as Sulaimaniya, and their language, Kurdish. I will also try to reflect from their verses about their ideas on the politics, religion and culture. These poets did not necessarily use Sorani as the medium of writing, but employed it more besides Kurmanci Kurdish, Persian, Arabic and Turkish. All of them passed one part of their life in Southern Kurdistan during the Baban dynasty's governing of Sulaimaniya. As Soane, who resided in different parts of Kurdistan and Sulaimaniya during 1910s, states "Sulaimania, during its short life of two centuries, has produced a great number of poets, who have contributed in verse to the literature of

Kurdistan.”<sup>360</sup> Poets of Sulaimaniya, contrary to poets of other regions of Kurdistan, dedicated their poetry to more peculiar chorus poems. “To translate such” says Soane “is to lose all the beauty of the original, which depends for its charm upon the language and the turn of the phrases more than upon the idea.”<sup>361</sup> Although not all of poets, who are considered as Sulaimaniyan by Soane and others, lived there, they influenced and shaped the memory of people in this region up until today.<sup>362</sup>

Poetry in Sulaimaniya and surrounding regions is classified as “South Kurmanji School” or “Nali School” by students of Kurdish poetry.<sup>363</sup> This school was also called the “Babani School” and it was established during the first half of nineteenth century under the aegis of Baban Ahmad Pasha.<sup>364</sup> This classical poetic school has brought out dozens of poets, and the influence they left on Kurdish poetry today is still considerable.<sup>365</sup>

### Nali (11800-1869)

Nali (also known as Mala Khidri Sharizuri or Mala Khidri Ehmedi Shawaisi Mikayel) builds his poetry on personal experience in a rich picturesque and lyrical language. His works consist of poems admiring the rulers and mystical verse, but he is best known for his romantic poetry. He became more influential during the reign of Baban Ahmad Pasha (1838-1847). He writes many verses to idealize the reign of Baban dynasty, especially the leader during his time. For example the date of accession of Ahmad Pasha according to *abjad*, a calculation of numerical values of Arabic letters, which comes to 1254 as A.H. or 1838-39 A.D., was fixed in his following chronogram verse:

Shah-e Jamja, Nalia, ‘Tarikh-e Jam’ tarikhia.

The King who ranks with Jam (-shid), O Nali,  
‘The date of Jam’ is his chronogram (date).<sup>366</sup>

Nali used Perso-Arabic poetic forms such as the *qasida* and *ghazel*, which until then had not formed part of the Kurdish poetry of the area.<sup>367</sup> He dedicated several of his ghazels to praise Ahmad Pasha and the Baban family. One would have to add that his pessimism in

<sup>360</sup> Soane, *To Mesopotamia*, 389.

<sup>361</sup> Soane, *To Mesopotamia*, 390.

<sup>362</sup> Jordi Gorgas gives some names of later poets who helped Sheikh Mahmud realizing national mood in the city of Sulaimaniya during his campaign against the British mandate in Iraq. Gorgas, “Urban Mobilization in Iraqi Kurdistan,” 537-552.

<sup>363</sup> Farhad Shakely, “Classic and modern Kurdish poetry”; Philip G. Kreyenbroek, “Kurdish Written Literature”, *Encyclopedia Iranica Online*, (2005).

<sup>364</sup> Blau, “Written Kurdish Literature,” 10.

<sup>365</sup> Shakely, “The Kurdish Qasida”, 327-338. Shakely focuses in his article on Malaye Jaziri’s qasidas and the question of the Kurdish qasida. A rarely studied subject, Kurdish poetry with its forms, its emergence and development become the subject of discussion in Shakely’s work.

<sup>366</sup> Edmonds, *Kurds Turks and Arabs*, 52-53. One needs to sum up the numerical values of letters in ‘Tarikh-i Jam’, which is spelled according to the Persian rules, in order to come up with the date 1254.

<sup>367</sup> Kreyenbroek, “Kurdish Written Literature”.



his poetry coincided with the crush of the Babans by the Ottomans. Although he was a Kurdish patriot and desired that the Babans retained their independence against *valis* of Baghdad and Iranians, the Babans were defeated in 1847 and with them Nali was forced to leave Sulaimaniya.<sup>368</sup> He passed the rest of his life in Damascus, Istanbul and Mecca.

In the last phase of his life, his poetry reflects longing for his native country. He wrote his most famous poetry, which is an epistolary written to his friend Salim (1805-1869) or Abdurrahman Beg Sahebqeran, another poet of the Nali School, while he was in Damascus. Here he expresses his feelings and longing for Sulaimaniya, recalling Kurdistan's rivers, plains, its beautiful landscape and town quarters.<sup>369</sup> Salim, who helped to develop Sorani poetry by using *hazaj* meter, responds to Nali with a similar rhyming pattern but full of pessimism and disappointment. The political condition under the new administrators, who were appointed from the Sublime Porte, was chaotic and difficult during this period. Hence, Salim's poetry is not only a mere response but is a clear picture of the situation on Sulaimaniya after its occupation by Ottoman forces:<sup>370</sup>

He turns to his allied friend -the wind- begging it:

For heaven's sake, tell Nali I beg him:  
Never to come back to Sulaymani in these conditions.

The legitimate rulers of Sulaymani the Kurdish princes of Baban, were overthrown, but Salim thought no one else capable of ruling the country:

This country will not be ruled but by its master.  
Without him let not Nali come this way.

Although the Baban rulers were overthrown in 1850 and many poets were forced to leave Sulaimaniya with them, Sorani poetry continues to develop in Kirkuk and Persian Kurdistan. Some of the greatest poets of this period were Haji Qadir Koyi and Sheikh Riza Talabani.

### **Haji Qadiri Koyi (1816-1894)**

Haji Qadir is considered as the successor of Ahmad-i Khani (1650-1707) for his nationalistic messages as he was emphasizing on the usage of Kurdish language and praising the land of Kurds.<sup>371</sup> Many scholars consider him as the "the father of Kurdish nationalism",

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<sup>368</sup> Shakely, "Classic and modern Kurdish poetry."

<sup>369</sup> Shakely, "Classic and modern Kurdish poetry" ; also see Mala Abdulkarim Mudarris, *Dîwân-î Nâlî*, (Baghdad, 1976), 197.

<sup>370</sup> Shakely, "Classic and modern Kurdish poetry."

<sup>371</sup> Joyce Blau and Yasir Suleiman, "Language and Ethnic Identity in Kurdistan: an Historical Overview" in *Language and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Yasir Suleiman (London: Routledge, 1996), 153-163; Shakely, "Classic and modern Kurdish poetry", 49-59.

“the first revolutionary in the history of Kurds”, “defender of the oppressed” and “the man who rebelled against injustice.”<sup>372</sup>

He was born in 1817 in a small village named Gur Quraj, near to the city of Koy Sanjaq, located in Iraqi Kurdistan. Although he lived in a remote area, where he had to travel for a day long journey to acquire the knowledge, he passed his childhood in an environment that religious and literary knowledge was dominant since his father was a mullah. Once his father passed away, when he was just eight years old, his mother registered him to a mosque school in Koy Sanjaq. After he lost his mother too in two years of his father’s decease, he became self-dependent and started to work in a shoe factory as an apprentice in order to support himself. Such difficulties prevented him to continue his school; nevertheless it did not discourage him to travel from one city to another in order to benefit from the education and accommodation, which were offered by some mosques and madrasas.<sup>373</sup> He finished his education and obtained his *icaze* around the age of forty-five or forty-six, which is usually accomplished by a student between the age of twenty and twenty-five. Hakim suggests that this was a serious handicap for his career- in fact he never practiced teaching- and the delay in his receiving his diploma was the reason for him to be in conflict with religious class of Kurdistan.<sup>374</sup>

For Koyi, mullahs and sheiks were major obstacle before the usage of Kurdish in the literature and other writings since they wrote and thought in Persian and Arabic. He criticized them for their “demagogy, greed for accumulating wealth and property, laziness, lack of training in any practical art, parasitic dependence on their followers and, most important, their lack of interest in the use and promotion of the Kurdish language.”<sup>375</sup> He blamed mullahs and sheikhs for being ignorant of Kurdish literature and language:

Had manuscripts and books, history and correspondence  
all been written in the Kurdish language,  
Then our Mullahs and Sheikhs, Kings and Princes  
would have been recognized until the Day of Resurrection<sup>376</sup>

Not only he had personal enmity towards religious class, but he saw them as an obstacle for evolution of the society and open-mindedness of the population. Although he is considered as agnostic by some scholars,<sup>377</sup> he was certainly not anti-religious, rather he was anti-sheikhist or anti-clerical and he constantly came back to this subject in his poetry, since he saw them as a monopoly over all means of education. He wanted to enlighten the people and help them to eliminate the problem of illiteracy. Hence, he encouraged the Kurdish people to learn sciences and be aware of the realities of modern society in “the struggle to

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<sup>372</sup> Halkawt Hakim, “Le Nationalisme du Poète Koyi (1817-1897)” in *Confluences Méditerranée*, 34 (2004) : 21-26 ; Edmonds, *Kurds Turks and Arabs*, 290.

<sup>373</sup> Hakim, “Le Nationalisme du Poète Koyi,” 22.

<sup>374</sup> Hakim, “Le Nationalisme du Poète Koyi,” 22..

<sup>375</sup> Amir Hassanpour, “The Pen and the Sword: Literacy, Education and Revolution in Kurdistan” in *Knowledge, Culture and Power: International Perspectives on Literacy as Policy and Practice* ed. Peter Freebody, Anthony R. Welch, (London: Falmer Press, 1993), 46.

<sup>376</sup> Blau and Suleiman, “Language and Ethnic Identity in Kurdistan: a Historical Overview”, 156

<sup>377</sup> Bois, *Connaissance des Kurds*, 129.

liberate and build an independent Kurdistan.”<sup>378</sup> Therefore, he used contemporary events and modern foreign terms and names such as “telegraph, railway, Russians, France, Japan and China.”<sup>379</sup> Koyi criticized viciously those who did not use the Kurdish in their writings in following couplets, which became like proverbs among the Kurds:

If a Kurd does not know his/her language,  
Undoubtedly, his/her mother is infidel and father adulterous

If a Kurd does not like his/her language, do not ask, ‘why?’ or, ‘how?’  
Ask his/ her mother where she got this bastard!<sup>380</sup>

The language he uses for his *qasidas* is simplified Sorani Kurdish and he shows great interest in social affairs in his oeuvre. He criticized traditional attitudes in his poems, which became very popular among the Kurds.<sup>381</sup> Koyi is the most venerated poet by students of Kurdish nationalism because of his emphasis on the Kurdish language and demand for the sovereignty of Kurdistan. He was considered as the “second apostle of Kurdish nationalism” after Ahmad-i Khani as “he argued that without the sword, the pen could not lead to emancipation of his people.”<sup>382</sup> He was well aware of the literary Kurdish and was quiet resentful of the idea of the “inferiority” of Kurdish when compared with Persian:

Do not say that Kurdish is not as eloquent as Persian!  
It possesses such eloquence unmatched by any language,  
It is [only] due to indifference of the Kurds that it is not fashionable.<sup>383</sup>

Once he left Kurdistan for Istanbul, probably in 1870s, he had the chance to learn Kurmanci and get in touch with foreign ideas there. He had contacted with the Kurdish intelligentsia in exile in the capital of the Ottoman Empire and he played an important role among the intellectual circles. He frequented the salons by the Kurdish notables and political figures. He met the Badr-Khan family, the most important family in the Kurdish nationalist aspiration in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and he even became a tutor for this family’s children.<sup>384</sup> Haji Qadiri Koyi died in 1897 in Istanbul and his funeral was accompanied to the famous cemetery of Karaca Ahmed in Kadiköy by few Kurds in exile. As in some verses that he wrote in the last phase of his life, he passed away “without a child, without a family, without a wife, and homeless.”<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Shakely, “Classic and modern Kurdish poetry.”

<sup>379</sup> Blau, “Written Kurdish Literature,” 12.

<sup>380</sup> Hassanpour, “The Pen and the Sword”, 46.

<sup>381</sup> Kreyenbroek, “Kurdish Written Literature.”

<sup>382</sup> Hassanpour, “The Pen and the Sword”, 45.

<sup>383</sup> Hassanpour, “The Pen and the Sword”, 45. For a slightly different translation of the same verse see Blau, and Suleiman, “Language and Ethnic Identity in Kurdistan”, 156. Blau and Suleiman translate the last line as “but lack of solidarity among Kurds has debased its value and price.”

<sup>384</sup> Hakim, “Le Nationalisme du Poète Koyi”, 23.

<sup>385</sup> Hakim, “Le Nationalisme du Poète Koyi”, 23.

### Sheikh Riza Talabani (1842-1910)

Talabani, like Koyi, was considered as the “apostle of Kurdish nationalism” and the “most popular of all the poets of Southern Kurdistan” by Edmonds.<sup>386</sup> He was the younger son of a prominent sheikh, Sheikh ‘Abd al-Rahman, in Kirkuk and a member of the famous Talabani family, which was well known for its sheikhs in the Qadiri Sufi order.<sup>387</sup> Some of his best known poems are for attacking the enemies of Talabani family, namely Jabbari, Dauda and Kakai. “There was no shortage of targets for his attacks; with its rapidly expanding control of land and people, the family had acquired quite a few enemies in his time.”<sup>388</sup> He employed several languages in his poetry, including Kurmanci and Sorani Kurdish, Persian, Turkish and Arabic. In fact, he was very talented in improvising of poetry in all these languages. His short satirical pieces have a lively quality of charm. He is profound and artistic, but he could sometimes become very cruel and skeptic. Despite that, he is still considered as one of the most popular Kurdish poets in Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>389</sup>

Talabani traveled much in the Ottoman domain and lived in Istanbul for eight years under the patronage of Kamil Pasha during the reign Abdulhamid II. He taught Persian to the sons of Khedive of Egypt for two years, then performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, resided again in Kirkuk for a while and finally settled down in Baghdad for the rest of his life.<sup>390</sup> Besides his satirical poetry, his verses contain autobiographical elements, romantic love and religion, particularly for the Ahl-e Haqq.<sup>391</sup>

Some of his poetry reflects his feelings for nationalistic sentiments. His hometown, Kirkuk, was also part of these sentiments. Many nationalist scholars and Kurdish writers use his verses on Kirkuk as historical evidence in their argument for inclusion of the city into Iraqi Kurdistan. For instance, Dr. Nouri Talabany, who is a law professor and a descendant of Talabani family, states that Sheikh Riza Talabani’s longing for his hometown, when he visited the grave of the Kurdish Sufi, Sheikh Nouradin Brifkani in Istanbul, should be considered as an evidence for Kurdishness of Kirkuk.<sup>392</sup> Sheikh Riza Talabani praises past personalities and times in Kurdish history in order to evidence his claim of Kurdish sovereignty. He was not a contemporary of the Babans but he must have had the information about them at the first hand since he passed some part of his childhood during the last phase of Baban reign and his youth aftermath of the demise of this family. In his famous poem that he recalls his childhood in the

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<sup>386</sup> Edmonds allocates a considerable place to Sheikh Riza Talabani and his poetry in his book *Kurds Turks and Arabs*, 57-58, 290-295, as well as in his article on Talabani: C.J. Edmonds, “A Kurdish Lamponist: Shaikh Riza Talabani”, *JRCAS*, 22 (1935), pp. 111–123

<sup>387</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, “The Qadiriyya and the Lineages of Qadiri Shaykhs among the Kurds”, *Journal of the History of Sufism*, 1-2, (2000), 131-149.

<sup>388</sup> van Bruinessen, “The Qadiriyya”, 141.

<sup>389</sup> Bois, *Connaissance des Kurds*, 129.

<sup>390</sup> Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, 290.

<sup>391</sup> Kreyenbroek, “Kurdish Written Literature.”

<sup>392</sup> Nouri Talabany, “Ethnic Cleansing by the Iraqi regime in the Kirkuk Region” (24 April 2003). A version of this article is available on Nouri Talabany’s personal web blog, accessed on 2 April, 2012: <http://ntalabany.blogspot.com/>

“Baban Land” he imagines an independent Kurdish kingdom, which was subject to no other.<sup>393</sup>

I remember Sulaimani when it was the capital of Babans;  
It was neither subject to Persians nor slave-driven by the House of Osman.

Before the palace gate sheikhs, mullahs, and ascetics stood in line;  
The palace of pilgrimage for those with business was the Gird-i Seywan.<sup>394</sup>

By reason of the battalions of troops there was no access to the Pasha’s audience chamber,

The sound of bands and kettle-drums rose to the halls of Saturn.

Alas for that time, that epoch, that age, that day,  
When the tilting-ground was in the plain of Kaniyaskan.<sup>395</sup>

With the shock of one charge he took Baghdad and smote it;  
The Solomon of the Age, if you would know the truth, was the father of Sulaiman

Arabs! I do not deny your excellence; you are the most excellent; but  
Saladin who took the world was of Baban-Kurdish stock.

May the bright tombs of the House of Baban be filled with God’s mercy,  
For the rain of bounty from their hands was like April showers.

When Abdullah Pasha routed the Wali of Senna’s army  
Riza was five or six, a little boy at school.

Sheikh Talabani died in Baghdad, where he moved in the last period of his life. He was buried close to Sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadir Gilani’s last resting place because of his initiation into this order.

Kurdish literary culture was more oral than written during this period. This prevented us to have indigenous sources for the Kurdish history. Among the cultural genres poetry has been more dominant than others and preservation of the poetry has been easier than other field works. Therefore, as a major historical source, especially for the social life of the Kurdish society, poetry becomes more dominant than other literary oeuvres. This has pushed us to utilize works of poets from Sorani School in order to reconstruct the past. Although in this poetry there is very little about economic relations, the food, music, women, children,

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<sup>393</sup> Şêx Rezay Talebanî, *Diwan*. (Stockholm: Nefel, 2004), 107. Translation was done by Edmonds, *Kurds Turks and Arabs*, 57-58; Edmonds’ translation is a literal one and the closest to the original version.

<sup>394</sup> Edmonds notes “Gird-i Seywan is a low hill just outside of Sulaimani in the south-east, formerly, as the name indicates, the place where the great reception tent was pitched, and now a cemetery.” Footnote 1, 58.

<sup>395</sup> For Kaniyaskan or Kanî Askan Edmonds notes that it was “the Spring of the Gazelles, now gives its name to a quarter of the town.” Footnote 1, Edmonds, *Kurds Turks and Arabs*, 58.

peasants, entertainment life, etc. it still helps us to make some suggestions about social life in this period.

Sorani Kurdish and its intellectual environment in nineteenth century became livelier than ever, thanks to relative political stability and economic wellbeing in the Baban domains. During this period demand for more artistic and literary works increased among both the nobles and the ordinary. This demand must have reached to Sufi sheikhs and mullahs as they were looking for a different career path. They chose to be more active in the social, cultural and political life instead of being just a mere transmitter of the religious knowledge. Therefore, one should not be surprised that all these three poets we have mentioned were coming from a Sufi background. The religious education they received in cities of Southern Kurdistan, particularly in Sulaimaniya, Koy Sanjaq, and Kirkuk, did not satisfy them. Their demand for more knowledge and their witness of change in the lands surrounding Kurdistan pushed them out from their small world into a more vibrant one. Now, they were in cities like Baghdad, Istanbul, Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo where Ottoman and European intellectuals were located. Once they met such international dignitaries and heard more on modern ideas such as nationalism, humanism, self-determination, etc., they started to emphasize more on the Kurdish identity, language and sovereignty of this nation. They wanted to create a society, which would benefit from modern sciences and be aware of the modern society. A society that speaks the same language, wears the same clothes, has the same traditions and a unified education was their dream. Equally, they wanted the Kurds to have a government that is unified and act under one person.<sup>396</sup>

### **The People, Population and Classes**

There were 2.000 households of Muslims, 130 of Jews, 9 of Chaldean Catholics and 5 of Armenians in Sulaimaniya. With a number of 2144 houses, Rich estimated the population around 10.000 souls in 1820.<sup>397</sup> Campanile puts this number to 15.000 souls with 800 Jews and 100 Christians in 1810.<sup>398</sup> Support for Campanile's number comes from William Heude who visited Sulaimaniya on 5 March, 1817 and counted between 12.000 to 15.000 souls, all Kurdish Muslims, "with the exception of a very few Jewish and Armenian families, who reside there for commercial purposes, and apparently engross the entire management of the trade."<sup>399</sup> With a hopeful wish Campanile adds "such a town that is in its nascent, with well positioned [geographically] and commercially, its population booms year by year."<sup>400</sup> The war between the Ottomans and Iranians between 1821 and 1823 caused the population of Sulaimaniya to decrease further. In 1827, Robert Mignon, the resident of the East Indian

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<sup>396</sup> Hakim, "Le Nationalisme du Poète Koyi," 25.

<sup>397</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 120.

<sup>398</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 39; Quoting from Serovbe Karnetsi, a British Armenian who passed through the town in 1812, Celil states that there were few families of Nestorians (15), Armenians (12) and Yaqubians (8) besides four thousand Muslim Kurdish families. Celile Celil, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler*, p. 55.

<sup>399</sup> Heude, *A voyage*, 200; Despite a day stay and little information, Heude draws several sketches of Sulaymaniya and its surrounding, and he chooses one of them, which had the Baban palace and Mosques with round shape domes, to make the cover page of his book.

<sup>400</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 39.

Company in Baghdad, recorded that the town had contained 8,000 inhabitants.<sup>401</sup> Shiel, who visited the town in 1836, recorded around 1000 houses, which is less than a half number of the houses that Rich cited.<sup>402</sup> Such a decrease was caused probably by the cholera, which spread in all of Iraq. A short period of political stability and a decade without any major disease helped the population of the town to pick up again. Almost a decade later after Shield's visit, Hurşid Pasha, an Ottoman officer, went through the Ottoman-Iranian border with an international commission. He visited Sulaimaniya and recorded 2.500-3.000 houses with some bazaars and few mosques, masjids (a place of worship smaller than mosque), baths and caravanserais.<sup>403</sup> The town's population shrank further in the second half of nineteenth century and ensued with less than half of what it had in 1810s.<sup>404</sup>

When we look at the numbers that Rich gives one realize that the town did not grow in the 1820s and 30s, instead its population decreased each decade passed by.<sup>405</sup> One could see this in the description of the Baban palace and the houses in the town. Campanile gives lively depiction of the *Serail* during his visit a decade before, whereas Rich finds the palace less impressive with little care that was given for its reparation. This claim can be supported by showing the political situation in the town, which was caused by Persian and Ottoman forces as well as by the struggle among the Baban members for power. When Rich complained about his residence in the town of being very dirty and ruinous, an ordinary Sulaimaniyan responded that "why should we build good houses, or keep them repair, when we are not certain of enjoying them even for our lives?" by referring to the political instability in the town and Kurdistan.<sup>406</sup> One could not expect a town to grow when it was plundered each time during the conflicts between Iranians and the Ottomans. Still, Sulaimaniya was able to keep

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<sup>401</sup> Mignan adds that the officers of Baban Mahmud Pasha pretended that the population of Sulaimaniya amounted 15.000 souls. The author does not explain the motive behind their manipulation of the population, but one can claim that the Pasha of the Baban emirate tried to prove to the foreigners that his rule and his people were intact even after such a devastating war. Robert Mignan, *Travels in Chaldea: including a journey from Bussorah to Bagdad, Hillah, and Babylon, performed on foot in 1827* (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1829), 329.

<sup>402</sup> J. Shiel. "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, Through Kurdistan, via Van, Bitlis, Se'ert and Erbil, to Suleimaniyeh, in July and August, 1836" *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 8 (1838): 54-101.

<sup>403</sup> "Süleymaniye, el-yevm iki bin beş yüz, üç bin hane ve bir mikdar carşu ve bir kaç bab cami'-i şerif ve mescid ve hamam ve hanları havi..." Mehmed Hurşid Paşa, *Seyahatname-i Hudud*, (Istanbul, circa 1850) (Republished with the original copy in Istanbul: Simurg, 1997 and transcribed by Alaaddin Eser), 238.

<sup>404</sup> Lycklama à Nijeholt recorded around 6.000 houses of muslims, 30 houses of Caldeans and 15 houses of Jews inhabiting in Sulaimaniya in 1867. Tinco Martinus Lycklama à Nijeholt, *Voyage en Russie, au Caucase et en Perse, dans la Mésopotamie: le Kurdistan, la Syrie, la Palestine et la Turquie, exécuté pendant les années 1866, 1867 et 1868*, vol. IV (Paris: A. Bertrand, 1873), 84.

<sup>405</sup> Later on Edmonds paid a visit to Sulaimaniya and recorded the same number of people as Rich did in 1820. His number showed 10.000 of whom 9.000 were Muslim Kurds, 750 Jews and 120 Chaldean Christians. Though, in the next page he adds that about two-thirds of the population perished in the war and famine before 1918. So, taking Hurşid Pasha's population estimates with Edmonds', one could say that the population grew up to early 1850s, decreased to 6,000 around 1860s and went up again to 30.000 souls at the beginning of twentieth century. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs*, 80-81. On the other hand he Ottoman yearbook (*Salname*) of 1875 (1292) for Baghdad recorded the population of Sulaimaniya as 124,790 with a number of 23,570 household. Though one needs to add that the figure in the yearbook included the villages and other towns that were officially bound with Sulaimaniya. *Salname-i Vilayet-i Bağdad*, sene 1295/1875 in Ebubekir Ceylan, "Ottoman Centralization and Modernization in the Province of Baghdad" (PhD diss., Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2006), 46.

<sup>406</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 90.

its population stable and it even grew a little more after its submission to the central administration in Istanbul.

In general, before 1830s, the Ottoman population was in decrease, especially in the East and southern parts of the Empire. “The population density of Anatolia was two or three times greater than in Syria and Iraq and five times that in the Arabian peninsula.”<sup>407</sup> This population density in Balkans and Anatolia, and the gap between the Western and the Eastern part of the Empire has increased further in the end of the nineteenth century. Although improvements in health, sanitation, security, transportation and communication had positive effects on increasing the population, the inhabitants of Sulaimaniya did not grow much. Still Sulaimaniya was a leading town on the south-eastern frontiers of the Ottomans and had comparable population to cities like Arbil, Jerusalem, Nablus and was able to compete with Erzurum in some decades during this period.

People of Baban domains like the other part of Kurdistan were considered in certain classes. If *mir-i miran* (leader of all Kurdish princes) and the *mirs* (prince) were considered at the top of the pyramid of the social structure, non-Muslims like Christians, Jews and Yezidis were considered at the bottom of this configuration.<sup>408</sup> If one had to draw a simple pyramid, from the top-down the first *mir-i miran*, and then *mirs*, tribal *aghas*, petit and town *aghas*, non-tribal peasants, and finally non-Muslims would come respectively. Besides these groups, there were Sufis, sheikhs, mullahs and *seyyids* that had religious and some political power over all these classes. In some regions of Kurdistan religious sheikhs had equal and even sometimes more power than *aghas*.<sup>409</sup> Leach furthers the social organization of the Kurds by dividing them in between the plains Kurds, whose economy rely more on pastoral – agricultural products such as wheat, tobacco, barley and rice, and the hill groups or the Mountain Kurds, who rely exclusively on grazing flocks.<sup>410</sup> One needs to be aware that Leach’s definition of ‘plains-mountains’ is mostly based on his observation of the Kurds in Rawanduz in 1938. Although there are some merits in his approach, he makes this classification based on a certain area in Northern Iraq in late 1930s, when the Kurds were already divided between several modern states. Therefore, one could hardly make the same statement for the nineteenth century Sulaimaniya. More than a decade later in 1951, Friedrich Barth visits the area and produces a valuable anthropological study on social structure of Sulaimaniya and its surrounding areas. His observations show that the religious classes of the nineteenth century still existed during the time he was conducting his research. His classification is more diverse than Leach’s one as he adds Sufis and *hacıs* (pilgrims to Mecca) to this group. Although *hacı* is an ordinary member of the community, he/she plays an important role in the society as a peacemaker during the conflicts because of his/her moral-

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<sup>407</sup> Halil İnalçık et al., *An economic and social history of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 777-778.

<sup>408</sup> The Baban pashas were considered as *mir-i miran* by other Kurdish *mirs*. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 214.

<sup>409</sup> Derk Kinnane, *The Kurds and Kurdistan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 8; Kinnane states that although becoming a sheikh may require a tedious work of religious studies and one can reach to the top of the social order by acquiring such a power, it is still very common to see a hereditary continuity of a sheikhly lineage.

<sup>410</sup> E.R. Leach, *Social and Economic Organization of the Rowanduz*, (London School of Economics, London 1940) in Kinnane, *The Kurds and Kurdistan*, 10-11.



religious status in addition to the wealth he/she represent with such a title.<sup>411</sup> He places the sheikhs and the *seyyids* into the same classification since both terms are used interchangeably by the Kurds for the people who are descendent of the Prophet Muhammad. In addition, he clarifies that both mullahs and Sufis do not necessarily come from the Prophet's family, and through religious education and discipline one could become a Sufi or mullah and rise to a higher level in the society.

### **The Women of Sulaimaniya**

As the men were classified according to their political and religious status, the Kurdish women also had a certain status in the society, mostly related with the status of their male members of the family. Campanile's description of women going for *Seyran*, which I talk more on this in below, is a good example for showing the structure among the women of Sulaimaniya.<sup>412</sup>

There is not much information on the women of Kurdistan and Sulaimaniya in early nineteenth century, at least not in indigenous sources. Despite such lack of sources, the Western visitors had some observations on the Kurdish women. Although inadequate, Rich gives more details than other visitors on the relations of women with men, their daily life, fashion, dances, status in the society, and in other areas. The unveiling of Kurdish women in villages has been widely known, but in the urban space this was not the case, especially in cities like Baghdad, Mosul, Diyarbekir, where women of other ethnicities dominated. The case in Sulaimaniya was different from these urban centers above. The veiling was not that strict among the Kurdish women of Sulaimaniya as much as it was among Turkish, Persian and Arab women.<sup>413</sup> Women of this town mixed with the men in everyday life and performed their domestic labors without veiling. Women and male servants had no concealment in between when they went with their daily work. Veiling was done only when they went to the central quarter of the town and they wore a blue checked sheet over themselves as Baghdadi women did and a black horse-hair veil, which was rarely pulled down over their faces. Only the women of nobility covered their faces when they met a strange man. The veiling and the *haremlık-selamlık* (division of women from men) division were almost foreign to the women of Jaf tribe and the lower class in Sulaimaniya. Some of those rested in the bed with their husband over the flat roofs during the summer were perfectly exposed to the neighbors because of the low range houses with only five or six feet high from the ground.<sup>414</sup> Rich suggests that this "freedom" of Kurdish women is matched no where in the Middle East:

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<sup>411</sup> Fredrik Barth, *Principles of Social Organization in Southern Kurdistan* Trans. into Turkish by Serap Rûken Şengül, Hişyar Özsoy, (Istanbul: Avesta, 2001) (Originally published by Universitets Etnografiske Museum Bulletin, no. 7, Oslo: Brodrene Jorgensen, 1953), 107-126.

<sup>412</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 93-94.

<sup>413</sup> Eduard Nolde states that Sulaimanian women are known for three of their peculiarities: they have an exceptional physical beauty, they go unveiled and they have no timidity at all when interacting with men. He was even more surprised when he became a guest in a house and the host introduced his wife to him, even though he was a "believer" of another religion. Baron Eduard Nolde, *Reise nach Innerarabien, Kurdistan und Armenien. 1892*, (Braunschweig: F. Vieweg und sohn, 1895), 174.

<sup>414</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 284-285.

[B]ut notwithstanding this freedom and apparent shamelessness, no women can conduct themselves with more real propriety than the Koordish ladies, and their morality far exceeds that of Turkish females.

The condition of women is far better in Koordistan than in Turkey or Persia; that is to say, they are treated as equals by their husbands, and they laugh at and despise the slavish subjection of the Turkish women. There is something approaching to domestic comfort in Koordistan; in Turkey the idea is quite unknown.<sup>415</sup>

Still, one could not idealize, in the modern sense, the status of Kurdish women in Kurdistan. A noble man had the right to choose any girl and to force her parents to marry him. When he was tired of her, he would divorce her and make one of his servants to take her as his wife. This was a practice among the “powerful and licentious princes” though it was rarely seen, as Osman Beg, Mahmud Pasha’s brother, was the only one who was the “guilty” of this practice.<sup>416</sup> Besides this, women captives taken in wars by Kurdish pashas were considered as lawful slaves of their harem. Mostly, Yezidi women or the women of other part of Kurdistan were taken as slaves.

Compared to an ordinary woman, the women of Baban family were very much excluded from contacting with strangers and they had to be veiled more. The harem was located at the back of the palace and the entrance into it was also located at the back of the building, which was very small one as one had to bend twice to pass it through. The female servants of the harem were also strictly veiled and most of them were enslaved by the Baban family.<sup>417</sup>

There was a division of work between men and women, and accordingly women took care of domestic work. Although not in every region of Kurdistan existed, still there were some works done together, such as cutting down the corn in the fields of Kifri. One of the “most unpleasant if their tasks [were] carrying on their back the leaky skins of icy water early in the morning from the village spring to the house.”<sup>418</sup> Hursid Pasha was very surprised when he saw women danced “hand-in-hand” with men in a wedding party.<sup>419</sup> Rich was more delighted to see a similar scene:

This was really a beautiful sight, and quite a novel one to me, who had never in the East seen women, especially ladies as all of these were, so freely mixing with the men without slightest affection of concealment. Even Arab tribes women are more scrupulous... the music then ceased, and the ladies retired to their homes, first veiling themselves from head to foot, which seemed rather a superfluous precaution, as the

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<sup>415</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 285-286; The French cavalry officer, who went to Iran in the service of the Russian Tsar, makes similar statements and claims that in general the Kurdish women had “ more liberty than their Persian counterparts, and would go out from the morning to the night without their husbands’ demand for where they went.” Gaspard Drouville, *Voyage en Perse*, 182.

<sup>416</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 286.

<sup>417</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 373.

<sup>418</sup> Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs*, 14.

<sup>419</sup> “...velime cem’iyetleri vuku’unda karıları erkeklerle el ele tutuşup hora deperler...” Hurşid Paşa, *Seyahatname-i Hudud*, 240. (Here the original copy will be used).

crowd which they were at any time likely to meet in the streets of Sulimania. Many of them were very fine fresh-looking women.<sup>420</sup>

Women of Babans and ruling-families sometimes played an important role in the political life.<sup>421</sup> The best example to this was Mahmud Pasha's mother who was occasionally sent by him to Baghdad for political purposes. In one of the occasions on 15 May, 1820, a courier to the Pasha from Baghdad was stating that Mahmud Pasha's mother had been well received by the *vali* of Baghdad and his proposals were likely to be agreed on.<sup>422</sup> Rich's wife had also recorded in her notes that Mahmud Pasha's mother and her youngest son Osman Beg were on their way to Baghdad to make peace negotiations with Davud Pasha.<sup>423</sup> Another distinguished woman of Baban family was Adila Khanum-not to be confused with the famous Adila Khanum of Jaf tribe in early twentieth century- who was the only wife of Mahmud Pasha and closely related to him. She gave birth to several sons, among of which all but one survived from the smallpox. Because of such a loss and sorrow she and her husband suffered, they were very much attached to each other. Adila Khanum knew Turkish, Arabic, and perhaps some Persian besides Kurdish since she spent her childhood in Baghdad.

Women of Kurdistan had different garbs, head dresses and different characters. Like their appearance, their role in the society would also change in each region, tribe, and even village. One of the biggest tribes in the Baban domain was Jafs. Their women were dressed in a blue chemise and trousers, and wore a small head cap while some of their hair, called *zif*, would curl down on their faces. They wore the "charokia" which was a "cloak of blue and white checked calico thrown over their shoulders."<sup>424</sup> It was a kind of "mantle, without sleeves, fastened over the breast, and hanging down behind to the calves of the legs."<sup>425</sup> This *charokia* was particularly an outcome of the taste of the Kurdish women as Rich observed. He likened these dresses of the Kurdish women to the plaid of the Highlanders of Scotland. This was an indispensable part of every Kurdish woman's dress, which the higher class wore it in yellow and red silk. Women wore a different kind of the *charokia* for the winter which made from tartan silk. Kurdish women of the Baban domain, especially the higher class, followed more the Persian fashion and some the Turkish one.<sup>426</sup> Nevertheless, they had their own unique taste of style. The taste and the fashion among the women varied as the social and marital status changed. The poorer women of the town imitated the noble women, whereas the peasant women in the country merely wore a shift and trouser of coarse blue calico.

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<sup>420</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 286-287; after witnessing the intermingling of the Kurdish women with men, Rich gives some details on the situation of Kurdish women compared with their Persian, Turkish and Arab counterparts.

<sup>421</sup> Two of the famous women leaders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are Adila Khanum of Halabja and Fatima Khan of Rawanduz. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs*, p.14.

<sup>422</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 108.

<sup>423</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 345-346.

<sup>424</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 180-181.

<sup>425</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 287.

<sup>426</sup> Drouville records that the Kurdish women had similar taste with the Persian women and states "the dress of the Kurdish ladies is more elegant and more decent than the Persians." Drouville, *Voyage en Perse*, 181.



**Figure 3: A drawing of C.J. Rich of a Sulaimani woman with her traditional garment**  
**Source: Constance M. Alexander, *Baghdad in bygone days: from the journals and correspondence of Claudius Rich, traveller, artist, linguist, antiquary, and British resident at Baghdad, 1808-1821*, (London: J. Murray, 1928)**

Their head dress was extraordinary as it was heavy and much embellished. Wearing of such head dress was so painful because of its detailed form; they sometimes had to sleep with it with a small pillow specially made to support it in the bed. It was made of silk handkerchiefs or shawls of all varied colors, “artificially pinned together in front, so as to a sort of miter, about two feet in height. The ends of the shawls hung down behind as low as the ankles.”<sup>427</sup> Although not much jewelry used for this garment, their ornament was chiefly made of gold and coral.

Overall the scholars of the Ottoman studies have produced few works focusing on the women of the empire. Kurdish women of the same period have escaped academic attention. Although some studies are available on the politically involved women like Lady Adila Khanum in the twentieth century, these works did not go beyond mere biographical studies. Most of such studies are focused on the modern Kurdish women. This could be explained

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<sup>427</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 288.

with the lack of documentation and interest in pre-twentieth century period. One reason for the shortage of sources is that most of Kurdish women lived in rural areas and thus very little information was recorded about them. The urbanized ones, like the Baban women, did not leave any testimony behind either, since many of them were illiterate and “largely confined to the domestic realm.”<sup>428</sup>

## Peasants

Like the studies on the Kurdish women, peasant studies of the nineteenth century are also rare. Peasants of the past were ignored more than women as the Kurdish society and people of Kurdistan were explained with over-simplistic “tribalism” theories. Whereas recent studies show that most Kurdish peasants were not part of the tribal system in Kurdistan.<sup>429</sup> Even if there were some tribal peasants besides non-tribal one, they were not a significant proportion of the whole peasant population.

Peasants were part of the social structure of Kurdistan and they were considered at the bottom of it. This structure was more complex than we learned from the students of the Kurdish nationalism. One would have to dig more into the history in order to show this complexity. A certain Muhammad Agha in a conversation with Rich had put it: “The Turks call us all Koords, and have no conception of the distinction between us; but we are quite a distinct people from the peasant.”<sup>430</sup> It was clear that the tribal relationships were esteemed much higher among the people of Sulaimaniya and they did not want to be considered the same at all.

Studies on the Ottoman peasantry do not include at all the Kurdish peasants or peasants of other ethnicities in Kurdistan in their work.<sup>431</sup> Few scholars who prefer referring to here as “Eastern Anatolia” was able to come up with some suggestions. These studies are mostly worried about the economic value and productivity of the peasants. They emphasized on economical, social and political difference between Kurdistan and other parts of the empire. Şevket Pamuk, a historian of the Ottoman economy, states:

With respect to patterns of landownership and tenancy, the central and southern tiers of the region followed different paths. In the southeastern Anatolian provinces of Diyarbakır, Bitlis, and Van, the Ottoman state had recognized in the sixteenth century the autonomy of the Kurdish tribal lords in exchange for military obligations and orderly payments of tribute. The political, administrative and legal autonomy of the tribal lords and the lord-peasant bonds remained strong until nineteenth century. The centralization attempt by the state during the 1830s resulted in the expropriation of

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<sup>428</sup> Sharzad Mojab, “Kurdish Women” in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, law, and politics*, ed. Suad Joseph, Afsaneh Najmabadi, (Boston: Brill, 2005), 358-366.

<sup>429</sup> David McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds*, (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 10.

<sup>430</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 89.

<sup>431</sup> Huri İslamoğlu-İnan, *State and peasant in the Ottoman Empire*, (Boston: Brill, 1994). İslamoğlu-İnan makes no reference at all to Kurdish peasantry. On the other hand, she talks a lot about the “Turkish dynasties” in the “Eastern Anatolia”, perhaps referring to the Kurdish emirates, but still gives very little information about the life of the peasants there.

some of the large holdings. However, these measures could hardly affect the political, social and economic power of the tribal lords in the region.<sup>432</sup>

As Pamuk states, Kurdish peasants did not fit into the classification of the Ottoman peasantry as their Balkan or Anatolian, even Arab, counterparts. It is also true that Kurdish notables of sixteenth century accepted to provide the “men and money” for the Ottoman army, but this was put in practice very few times. Pamuk is also mistaking by saying that very little change happened in the political, social and economic life of Kurdistan after the centralization efforts of the Ottoman Empire, which is the focus of the last chapter of this thesis. However, I should shortly clarify here that once Kurdish *mir*s and *aghas* were pushed out of Kurdistan, a power vacuum was created and in the end religious leaders like sheikhs, *seyyids* and mullahs filled these administrative positions. Albeit post-Tanzimat policies did not destroy the structure of the Kurdish society completely, for sure it changed the political system, which was there for centuries, and pushed the whole society to redefine the social and economic relations between the lord and the subject. In addition, these changes caused the relations between the Kurds and the Ottomans to deteriorate further and made the Kurds to be more suspicious of the *valis* and *kaymakams*, who were appointed from Istanbul as a result of the centralization policies.

The peasants were distinct “groups” in Kurdistan as they had no affiliation with tribes and did not serve as military personnel in wars. They cultivated the land and paid a certain amount from their harvest to the *agha* or the *mir* who owned the land. They were called with several different names like “Ra’ayah,” “Goran,” “Kirmanc,” “kolahspee,” “Koylu” and “Miskin.” Although these names are used interchangeably in travelogues and the Ottoman documents, there is no indication of why such different names are attributed to them. Kurdish peasants were mostly seen as “the other Kurds” by the tribal Kurds. The peasants were settled groups whereas the tribes were like wanderers, the formers had no noble blood, no protector, no land, no pride, no past or future, whereas the latter had an established “glorious” past, as it was always preserved in family trees, namely *shajaras*, a land to dwell on, an *agha* to have protection, a small army to prove his courage in wars and a house to have his family in. These images were drawn more by tribes than peasants since the latter had no voice in records of travelogues, memoirs and archival documents. Therefore, reconstruction of Kurdish peasantry in the past might be very challenging, especially the period before twentieth century. Still, through travelogues and memoirs one can come up, although a negative one, with a semi-clear picture of peasants as we tried to do for the Kurdish women.

Peasants were seen as “merely created for the use” of tribes in Kurdistan. They were in a miserable condition as one tribesman explained.; “Wretched indeed is the condition of these Koordish cultivators [peasants]” or as Rich resembled the Kurdish peasants to a “negro slave of the West Indies.”<sup>433</sup> It was very easy for someone to distinguish a peasant from a tribesman from his/her appearance and speech, and it was impossible for a peasant to be considered as a tribesman. The “tyrannical and brutal” treatment of the peasants by the tribesmen was “well

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<sup>432</sup> Şevket Pamuk, “Commodity production for world-markets and relations of production in Ottoman agriculture, 1840-1913” in Huri İslamoğlu-Inan, *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 194.

<sup>433</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 89.

calculated” in order to “degrade” them and keep the relation of “the master and the slave.”<sup>434</sup> As one of the *begs* from the Baban domains estimated, the proportion of the peasants to tribesmen was “at least four or even five to one.”<sup>435</sup> This was truly a high ratio and despite such a high proportion the power of peasants was not equal to the tribesmen at all, because of their disorganization.

The peasants had their own lifestyle, customs and practices, which were different compared to the tribesmen. For example, they used sulfur to cure the itches of their cattle and themselves.<sup>436</sup> They had their own musical taste, which was “soft and agreeable” but had the “air [of] melancholy, and rather monotonous.”<sup>437</sup> They performed their songs on *bilwar*, a Kurdish flute made of reed. Since they were not herder but cultivator, they would trade their products, such as corn, for mules and oxen.

Rich makes a comparison between the princes of Baban and Ardalani in terms of their origins. This was due when one of the khans, Sheer Muhammad Khan, visited Rich. He realized that the ruling family of Ardalans was originally peasants (*Goran*) and was not esteemed very noble by the tribes in Ardalani domain despite their ancient background. The Babans were also claimed to be originated from peasantry (*Kirmanç*) though, this part of their background was not emphasized as much like Ardalanis.<sup>438</sup> It was for sure that the Babans were originated from a tribe but not as strong as Jaf or Bilbas tribes, as each one of the latter two had more than ten thousand members. So the difference between the Babans and Ardalanis was that anytime Baban pashas were sent to exile, their clansman, or at least those clansmen, who were faithful to them, would follow them to anywhere they were expelled to. However, this was not the case in Ardalani and, according to Rich, that was one of the major reasons that people of this principality invested their money into the real estate and the land, whereas the Babans “invested their property in money and transportable effects” in order to take it away “in case of troubles or the deposition of their chief.”<sup>439</sup>

The difference between peasants and clansmen was so obvious in Kurdistan and the hatred was so high among the former towards the latter as it was clear in the imprecation of one “Kermanj” on the “Sinna [capital of Ardalani on the Iranian side] men.” When the man was warned by Rich and by a certain Omar Agha that someone could hear this and he would be treated badly for his words, the peasant responded “they could not treat me much worse than they do now.”<sup>440</sup>

In one case Rich refers to the peasant as a “caste” when he talks about Omar Agha’s servants. Omar Agha had forty servants of which only “three or four were not clansmen,” in

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<sup>434</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 89.

<sup>435</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 177.

<sup>436</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 29.

<sup>437</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 138; Rich gives the name of another kind of flute, which was called *shemshal* and used by shepherds to gather their sheep. He says its tones were loud, but not disagreeable, especially when echoed among the mountains.

<sup>438</sup> Rich adds that in another occasion the Baban Paşa denied that his family was originated from Kirmances, rather it was “the collective appellation of all the Bebbeh (another name for Babans) Koords, and that his particular clan was named Bebbeh.” Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 270.

<sup>439</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 214–215.

<sup>440</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 229.

his service. Omar Agha states that he would never accomplish keeping the “peasant caste” in his service. He continues: “They [peasants] never grow much attached, nor will they stand by you in any difficulties. The clansman, on the contrary, though not of your own clan, grows warmly attached to you; and then neither hunger, thirst, poverty, fatigue, nor danger, ever affect him or separate him from you.”<sup>441</sup>

From readings through sources we see that tribes and peasants lived in different areas and did not mix that easily. Tribesmen would not bear with living with a peasant, while a peasant hated to see a tribesman in his/ her vicinity. Still, there were some cases showing some mixture of these two groups as Rich was counting the population of tribes in Pizhdar region.<sup>442</sup>

The peasants have distinct facial features, as our British visitor observed. Comparing with a tribesman, a peasant “has a much softer and more regular countenance; the features are sometimes quite Grecian.” “The tribesman” Rich continues “is more what is called a hard-featured man, with a thick prominent forehead, abrupt lines, and eyes sunk in his head, which are usually fixed in a kind of stare. Light grey, and even blue, is a common color for the eye.”<sup>443</sup> In another occasion Rich states that the peasant had “more agreeable eye and expression than the tribesman; but he is neither so tall, nor has he so open and independent a deportment as the other [tribesman].”<sup>444</sup>

### **Jews of Sulaimaniya**

As we cited from Rich and Campanile, both estimated that the population of non-Muslims was made up of six percent of the all population in Sulaimaniya during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Of those, Jews were in a clear majority by making of almost ninety percent of all the non-Muslims. A saying goes by Sulaiman Pasha, the founder of Sulaimaniya: “a town with no Jews is not considered a proper town, conveying the belief that God blesses where Jews resides.”<sup>445</sup> When the city was established in 1784, the founder invited Jews of Qaradagh, a nearby city, to settle in Sulaimaniya. Jews in Sulaimaniya had a good social position during the first half of the nineteenth century. David D’Beth Hillel, a Jewish rabbi who visited the town, reported that the Pasha’s treasurer was a Jew who was also leading the Jewish community there.<sup>446</sup> He also mentions that there were “considerable (Jewish) merchants (who were) very rich” in Sulaimaniya and Amediye.<sup>447</sup> Seven out of eight silversmiths in local bazaar of Sulaimaniya were member of Jewish community.<sup>448</sup> A Jewish

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<sup>441</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 263-264.

<sup>442</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 280.

<sup>443</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 320.

<sup>444</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 360.

<sup>445</sup> Mordechaie Zaken, *Jewish subjects and their tribal chieftains in Kurdistan: a study in survival* (Brill: Leiden, 2007), 108.

<sup>446</sup> Zaken, *Jewish subjects*, 108. Rabbi David talks about a person whose name is “Mr. Skoory,” and is “an Israelite, a very excellent man . . . treasurer of the Governor.” in Walter J. Fischel, “Jews of Kurdistan a Hundred Years Ago: A Traveler's Record,” *Jewish Social Studies*, 6:3 (1944), 195-226 (p. 220)

<sup>447</sup> Fischel, “Jews of Kurdistan”, 212.

<sup>448</sup> Zaken, *Jewish subjects*, 213.



traveler Edelman, who visited the town in 1800, reported that Jews “enjoyed the equal rights” from the rulers and had a very “comfortable, friendly, and brotherly” life in their new town.<sup>449</sup> Although this “paradise” like life continued for almost a century, few days before the Jewish holiday of Pentecost in 1895, Jews were attacked by “the gentiles” of Sulaimaniya because “several Muslims had joined a group of Jews who were sitting in an orchard near the synagogue, drinking alcohol.”<sup>450</sup> Besides the biases among the ordinary people, the Jews, and their Christian contemporaries, were taxed heavily as they passed through each sheikh or agha’s land for the trade purposes and those who decided to do farming were abused many times by the tax collectors.<sup>451</sup> Despite such incidents, they had good relations with Sulaimanian leaders, especially Sheikh Mahmud Berzenji (1880-1956), a leading sheikh in Sulaimaniya during the first half of twentieth century.

### Time of Pleasure

The people of Sulaimaniya slept late, like two or three o’clock in the morning, and did not wake up before nine or ten forenoon. They made most visits, two or three times in a day, to each other in the night and amused themselves with conversation, music, and smoking. An hour before the sunset people gathered in the town’s main square (*meidan*) before the house of *Masraf* like a social club and chatted on different subjects such as arms and horses.<sup>452</sup> Here, matches were held for wrestling, partridge and dog fighting.

Sulaimaniya with its geographical location was very suitable for growing fruits and vegetables. Therefore, bazaar of the town had a large and well supply of fruits, vegetables as well as meat.<sup>453</sup> The abundance of aliment and the local cuisine in the town was well described by the visitors. The food of Sulaimaniya was prepared more like Persian one, but “much less greasy and tastier than... [the one] at Baghdad.”<sup>454</sup> Heude’s meal was composed of a variety of stews, pillaws, and curies. The meal that attracted his attention most was the “hare-stew”, “the national dish of Koordistan”. This meal was prepared, as Heude made a guess, by cooking the meat until it was absolutely rotten, and “had then been dressed in blood and fat with great quantities of garlic and spices of various kinds.”<sup>455</sup> Different foods were served on an oblong tray or *khuantchee* [according to Rich], of painted wood with a few inches high from the ground. All kinds of sherbets were cooled with snow and were distributed in bowls among the dishes. The snow from the mountains around Sulaimaniya was almost a substance in the life of people that they could not deny. Hurşid Pasha gives more information on how the snow from the mountains of Pire Mekdurun played an important role in the social and political life of the town:

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<sup>449</sup> Zaken, *Jewish subjects*, 108.

<sup>450</sup> Zaken, *Jewish subjects*, 109.

<sup>451</sup> Stephen H. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 251.

<sup>452</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 104.

<sup>453</sup> Shiel, “Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, Through Kurdistan,” 101.

<sup>454</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 117.

<sup>455</sup> Heude, *A Voyage*, 200.

Five-six hours away from the aforementioned town [Sulaimaniya], there is a big stream between two peaks of Mount Ömer Kudrun [the mentioned mountain is known with the name of Pire Mekdurun among the Kurds-Hurşid Pasha]. This river is overfilled [*ol dere leba-leb dolar*] with the snow, which snows during the winter season and amasses in there with storm's blow from the peaks. All summer everybody takes as much as he/she wants for sale and [personal] use, and they cool off from the heat, which is caused by the *reşebad* [a strong wind]. Until the end of the government of the late Davud Paşa, the pashas [*mutasarrıflar*] of the aforementioned region [*liva-i mezbur*] would give to *valis* of Baghdad every year a vast amount of snow as a gift and [with this] they [the Baban pashas] would make sure to satisfy evil ambitions and greed [*serare-i hirs ve tama'ların teskine i'tina ederler idi*].<sup>456</sup>

Kurds from Sulaimaniya, like the Persians, spent more time than Turks and Arabs on their dinners, “eat leisurely, and chat over their food, the whole dinner being set down at once before them.”<sup>457</sup> “They have a great objection to the ravenous mode of the feeding practiced by the Turks, among whom the dishes are put down separately on the table, and taken off after a few mouthfuls have been snatched by the guests.”<sup>458</sup> Sulaimaniyans habitually eat four times a day.<sup>459</sup>

Leisure time was part of daily life among men as they gathered in the *meidan* everyday. Women did not have much free time to arrange such gathering. Nevertheless, they had their own special days and gatherings for “women only.” Courtly women, or *emiras* of the Baban and other Kurdish emirates had their own leisure time during certain times of the year. *Seyran* was one of these entertainments. The *emira* had traditionally, with the permission of the *mir*, two times a year, during the spring and the fall, to enjoy a festival like celebration, which included all Muslim women as well as Christian one. In fact, the participation of Christian women was obligatory since three of them, which were chosen among all the others, had to lead the *emira*'s horse on foot, one leading in front and holding the bridle while the other two supporting her on two sides. The *emira* and noble women with their daughters rode with horses, one after another, and with the support of three Christian women, while all others followed them on foot. Meanwhile, a long queue of other women sang loudly all together. This procession started with the daybreak and ended with the sunset in a garden or in a pleasant area away from the men's sight. Their songs were accompanied with dancing, binge, and loud chanting.<sup>460</sup>

Men of Sulaimaniya had their own special celebrations as well, especially in the spring. Thomas Bois, citing from Tawfiq Wehby, talks about preparations for a festival, which was done by a special committee. A certain period in the spring was fixed for this festival and all men of Sulaimaniya had to leave the town for the place of ceremony. He continues:

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<sup>456</sup> Hurşid Paşa, *Seyahatname-i Hudud*, 239-240.

<sup>457</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 118.

<sup>458</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 126.

<sup>459</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 36.

<sup>460</sup> Campanile, *Historie du Kurdistan*, 93-94.

The 'king' is enthroned and courtiers and a guard are assigned to him. The 'king,' sitting astride an ox and accompanied by his court and a large crowd, goes to the encampment where tents and divas have been set up and cauldrons put on the fire. Individuals, disguised as sheep or goats, play the part of these animals during the whole period of celebration, which lasts three days. The 'king' is obeyed without question; he even imposes taxes on people, whether they are present or not. He retains his title until the following year when a successor is nominated.<sup>461</sup>

Kurds had many festivals, both religious and secular, in order to commemorate certain times of the year. Besides big festivals, such as *Newrûz* for celebrating the coming of the spring and the start of the new year, there were many other days, which mark the beginning and the end of certain events, such as *serepêz*, at the first lambing time; *barodan* at the time of departure for *zozan* or summer pasture; *berxbir* for the sheep-rearing; and the greatest festival of all, *beran-berdan*, when aestivation ended and the rams were loosen among ewes. Such days were utilized to record important events like wars, famines, births, deaths, and marriages. Further, Kurds used these days as an opportunity to socialize, even led to future marriages "for young girls tie their silk handkerchiefs round the neck of their favorite sheep and the young man who removes a handkerchief reveals himself as a suitor for the hand of the girl."<sup>462</sup>

Religious festivals like *îyda qurbanî* (festive of sacrifice), *îyda remezanê* ( festive of Ramadan) *mevlîd* ( the prophet's birthday), and many others were celebrated among the Kurds. Besides these, there are remembrance days for certain saints like Abd al-Qadir Gilani, Mawlana Khalid, and especially in Sulaimaniya, Sheikh Ahmad Kakai, though not that common in Kurdistan.

Like many other societies in the Middle East and Kurdistan, Kurds had their own taste and accommodated these pleasures with all possible means available in the regions they lived. They had different leisure times as seasons changed. In the long and cold winter nights they had more indoor entertainments, such as gathering around a *çîrokbêj*, a storyteller, and listening exotic Kurdish tales for all night.<sup>463</sup> Whereas in the summer they enjoyed outdoor celebrations and games, which were more related to farming and herding. In short, the inhabitants of Sulaimaniya made sure that they had a good amount of time to enjoy in all seasons.

### **Religion and Shafi'iyya**

The Kurds, a great majority of them Muslim, have been considered very religious and even sometimes staunch Sunnis. Despite their Arab and Turkish neighbors, who follow

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<sup>461</sup> T. Wehby, *The Rock of Gunduk Caves*, (Sumer: NP, IV,1942) cited in Thomas Bois, *The Kurds*, trans. from French by M.W.M. Welland (Beirut: Khayats, 1966), 68.

<sup>462</sup> Bois, *The Kurds* 66-67.

<sup>463</sup> Bois adds that these story-tellers "have a very extensive repertoire, and their recitals of marvelous and fantastic adventures can last for hours until the children fall asleep on their mothers knees. The stories are often in verse, and the rhymes serve as guide marks to the teller who might otherwise be in danger of losing his way in the story..." ; Bois, *The Kurds* 63.

Hanafi School of law, and their Persian neighbor who are Shi'is, majority of the Kurds adhere Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam.<sup>464</sup> The Kurds were deployed on the Ottoman-Iranian borders because of their religiosity and loyalty to the Caliph in Istanbul. As I elaborate in the last chapter of this dissertation, this loyalty to Istanbul was exploited very skillfully.<sup>465</sup> However, it seems that during nineteenth century, the Kurds, especially the Baban family, were much aware of this and thus repositioned themselves on the borders and tried to work this trust to their own benefits. Still the Ottomans worked out well on the sectarian difference between Sunni Kurds and Shi'i Iranians, and they exploited this difference for centuries until they removed the Kurdish emirates and the Babans from the border regions.

The Ottomans did not only express their mistrust towards Iranians but also they emphasized specifically on the difference between being a Sunni and Shi'i. In a letter to the *vali* of Erzurum, Galip Paşa, dated on 16 July, 1827 (21.Zilhicce.1242 hijri Islamic calendar) from Mamesh Tribe, Abdullah Belbas, who was the “descendent of Abbas, the Prophet[Muhammad]’s uncle,” and Sheikh Abdullah, stressed on their being “*Mezheb-i Sunni*” (followers of Sunni school).<sup>466</sup> The letter states that because of their Sunni identity they were not “comfortable” in Iran and they wanted to be relocated from Iranian Kurdistan into province of Muş. In another letter from Baghdad to Istanbul, the *beg* of Rawanduz was pictured as a loyal Kurdish Emir who was a “Shafi’i” helped the governor of Baghdad in times of “war against Iranians.”<sup>467</sup> Tribes under the administration of Baban family were also specified as “*Şafi’i mezhebinden*” (from the Shafi’i school of Law) and further was added that these tribes would not obey to Baban Mahmud Pasha if he had ever chosen to be part of Shi’i Iran.<sup>468</sup> The document further continues saying that Abbas Mirza of Qajar Iran made a polite request to the Baghdad governor to appoint the Baban Pasha in order to secure the obedience of the Sulaimaniya’s people.

After a certain period, especially when a mixed border commission made of Russian, British, Iranian and Ottoman delegates, which was responsible for drawing the border between the Ottoman and Iran states, was appointed in 1843, not only the Sunni-Shafi’i identity of the Kurds in the border region became more important, but also Istanbul was more aware of the importance of appointing Shafi’i officials, like *kaymakams* (sub-governors), *kadis* (judges), and *muftis* (local religious authorities) to Sulaimaniya.<sup>469</sup> An order dated on 3 July, 1851, from the *Bab-ı Âli* (the Sublime Porte of Istanbul) was highlighting that people of Sulaimaniya were Shafi’i and thus a *naib* (officer), who needed to be Shafi’i, should be

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<sup>464</sup> The article on the Kurds in the first edition of the Encyclopedia of Islam states “at the present day the great majority of the Kurds are still Shafi’i Sunnis,” “Kurds”, *EII*, (1913-1936); Martin van Bruinessen, “Religion in Kurdistan,” *Kurdish Times* 4 (Summer-Fall 1991): 7; Rich does mention only in one place about the Shafi’i identity of the Kurds, when he goes to Sinna (Sanandaj) of Iran and meets the *vali*. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 209.

<sup>465</sup> McDowall adds that even after the Ottomans took over Kurdistan “the Kurds remained adherents of the Shafi’i school which had predominated in the region in preceding centuries- a testimony; presumably, to the independence their amirs enjoyed vis-à-vis the sultan.” Though there is no evidence supporting this claim. McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds*, 12.

<sup>466</sup> HAT #36175, HAT #36175-B, HAT #36175-C, ( 21.Z.1242/ 16 July, 1827)

<sup>467</sup> HAT #36750-M, ( 07.L.1239/ 5 June, 1824)

<sup>468</sup> HAT #37196-D, ( 07.C.1239/ 8 February, 1824)

<sup>469</sup> A.DVN. #67/13, ( 16.R.1267/ 18 February, 1851)

appointed in order to take care of religious matters (*umur-u şer'iyeye*).<sup>470</sup> This case by itself was showing that the difference between Shafi'is and Hanafis was more highlighted during this period. Was this awareness of the Ottomans coming to the surface because of the mullahs and sheikhs of Kurdistan, such as Mawlana Khalid (d. 1827), Sheikh Ubeydullah (d. 1880) and Said Nursi (d. 1861), who were becoming more and more dominant in the religious and political life of the Ottomans? Were the Ottomans dropping their insistence of centuries on converting the religious class of the Kurds and the Arabs from Shafi'iyya into Hanafiyya because of modernization and secularization in the law such as *Mecelle* (the civil code of the Ottoman Empire)? Perhaps both of reasons had certain influence on such changes. One would have to make a thorough research on these matters since the space would not allow it here.

The Kurds of the Baban sanjaq were also from Shafi'i school of law. Therefore, one would have to think if there was any conflict in the application of the laws. I have come across very few cases recorded on the conflict of Shafi'i-Hanafi laws in this region. All those cases were recorded in and after the nineteenth century. In one case from Mosul area, some women belong to the Shafi'i School, whose husband had been away and had not heard from them for more than ten years, wanted to have a divorce.<sup>471</sup> They were advised to register to *Fetvahane* (a place where doctors of Islamic law produced solutions and made decisions for different cases) and to seek solution according to another school of law, most likely Hanafiyya.

After Tanzimat period, there were clear demands among the Kurdish sheikhs and mullahs for having Shafi'i laws to be adopted as *sharia* (Islamic Law) in Kurdistan. One reason could be that the Ottomans started to emphasize more on the Hanafi School as the most legitimate one, especially after Abdulhamid II's Islamism policies. During this period more and more "Hanafi missionaries" were sent from Istanbul to Kurdistan and Bilad al-Sham areas to teach the "true Islam" to the Kurds and the Arabs, though with little success.<sup>472</sup> Hanafiyya became one of the main elements of Abdulhamid II's "correction" and readjustment policies of the Muslim population. To strengthen the position of Hanafi creed and catechism among the other school of laws became one of the central elements of Islamism policies.<sup>473</sup>

There would be discussions among the *ulema* of different sects on religious matters and disagreements would always happen when different laws were applied to the real life.<sup>474</sup> For example, in one case, during the first years of the Committee of Union and Progress government, Sheikh Abduselam of Barzan and Nur Muhammad of Dohuk prepared a petition of several demands, among them the "adoption of the Shafi'i school of law and the

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<sup>470</sup> A.AMD. #29/92, ( 03.R.1267/ 5 February, 1851). The document states that some one who is from the Safi'i creed needs to be appointed to the Sanjaq of Sulaimaniya as a naib since the population is the follower of the Safi'i school.

<sup>471</sup> A.MKT.MVL. #78/45. ( 18.C.1272/ 25 February, 1856)

<sup>472</sup> Rogan, *Frontiers of the state*, 152.

<sup>473</sup> Selim Deringil, *The well-protected domains: ideology and the legitimation of power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 46-50.

<sup>474</sup> Tucker gives detailed and lively court cases on divorce, marriage, parenting, sexual intercourse, and dowry in seventeenth and eighteenth century Ottoman Syria and Palestine, and the differences of laws among Shafi'i, Hanafi, and Hanbalis. Judith E. Tucker, *In the house of the law: gender and Islamic law in Ottoman Syria and Palestine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 78-112.

administration of law and the justice according to the *sharia*.”<sup>475</sup> Such demands increased more in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the means of modernity infiltrated further into the life of the locals. Besides, with the crush of the Kurdish principalities in Kurdistan, many Kurds started to be alienated and more suspicious of the Turks. This suspicion mostly focused on the religious aspects of the Ottomans. Perhaps, the arrival of new *valis* and *kaymakams*, who were educated in Europe and secular schools, caused further alienation between the Kurds and the Ottoman administration. This estrangement was especially running among the Kurdish sheikhs and the *ulema*. Religious class was becoming very critical and furious about the Ottomans. Many rebellions, such as Sheikh Ubeydullah and Sheikh Said rebellions, were based on this suspect on religiosity of the Turks.

Kurdish emirates, which had semi-independent principalities, became patrons of their own *madrasas* and financed Kurdish scholars of all kind of Islamic studies. For instance, the Baban Mirs invited Mawlana Khalid, the famous nineteenth century Kurdish saint, to Sulaimaniya for a teaching position and built a mosque, a library and a *madrasa* for him. Commissioning such means of education, a common practice among the Kurdish emirates of the time, started to produce a more independent and different path of Islamic jurisprudence, creed, philosophy, and mysticism. Urban centers like Bitlis, Cizre, Amediye, Rawanduz, and Sulaimaniya became centers of learning for Kurdish scholars and produced leading *ulema* of the time. As van Bruinessen suggests, “because of the Kurds adhere to the Shafi’i School of law whereas the official school of law in the Ottoman Empire was that of Abu Hanife, the curriculum in these Kurdish madrasas must have been considerably different from that in the Ottoman madrasas, at least as far as *fiqh* (jurisprudence) was concerned.”<sup>476</sup> These *madrasas* were not only using a different law system but they were producing a literature in a different language, namely Kurdish, as well. People like Molla Ahmad Ceziri (Meleyê Ehmedê Cezîrî) and Ahmed-i Khani (Ehmedê Xanî) wrote poetry (both had a *divan*) and catechism, such as Khani’s *Eqîda îman*, in Kurdish as well as in Persian and Arabic. Most of the Kurdish *ulema* knew Persian, Arabic and Turkish because of their geographic location, where three major Islamic languages met, and they were well aware of the literature produced in all these languages. With such a knowledge of the languages, literature and Islamic studies, they became “cultural brokers” of different societies in the Muslim world.<sup>477</sup> Indeed, speaking these languages was also a trend among the leaders and family members of the Baban since they had to deal with the Ottoman and the Persian bureaucrats often. The Baban Pashas corresponded in Persian both with the Ottomans and Iranians. Persian was the *lingua Franca* of the Kurds to communicate with Persian and Turkish neighbors and they utilized Persian in almost all their writings.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds*, 98.

<sup>476</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, “The Kurds and Islam”. Working Paper no. 13, *Islamic Area Studies Project*, Tokyo, Japan, (1999):1-30(p. 12); A slightly revised French version of the same article is “Islam des Kurdes” *Les Annales de l’Autre Islam*, No.5. Paris: INALCO, (1998):13-35

<sup>477</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, “A nineteenth-century Ottoman Kurdish scholar in South Africa: Abu Bakr Efendi”, On Bruinessen’s personal webpage:

<http://www.let.uu.nl/~Martin.vanBruinessen/personal/publications/Abu%20Bakar%20Effendi.pdf>

<sup>478</sup> Garzoni emphasizes on how widely Persian was used among the Kurdish literate men: “The Kurds use the Persian characters [in their alphabet]. They make use of literary Persian in all their public writings, with the

The Kurdish *ulema* apparently was dominant among the scholars of Mecca and Medina, the two holiest sites of Muslim world. It is not clear exactly when the Ottomans decided to establish a *müftülük* (religious authority) for Shafi'is in these sites,<sup>479</sup> but it was obvious that a Kurdish family, Berzencis of Sulaimaniya, had been holding this office for a while.<sup>480</sup> From 1868 until 1915, respectively Seyyid Cafer Efendi, Seyyid Ahmed Berzenci Efendi, and Berzencizade Seyyid Zeki Efendi received a salary from Istanbul and hold the office of *müftülük* for the city of Medina.

In short, there has been no major work on the Shafi'i identity of the Kurds so far.<sup>481</sup> One needs to elaborate the religious differences between the Kurds and their neighbors and how this difference had influenced the relations between the Kurds and the Ottomans as well as Iranians. It is clear that, the Kurds preferred to hear the opinion of their Shafi'i sheikh and apply the *sharia* accordingly, instead of going to the Ottoman Hanafi courts. This is one of the reasons that we have very little information in the Ottoman court records or *sijills*. Even today, many Kurds prefer to take their disputes to religious sheikhs or seek their advice on religious matters, instead of going to the state court.

Shafi'iyya is one the major part of the Kurdish-Islamic scholarship and has shaped the identity of the Kurds over the centuries. Dynamics between the Shafi'i Kurdish Sheikhs and Hanafi Kadis of Istanbul, and the dilemma of Kadis (judges) who tried to apply the Hanafi laws to a predominantly Kurdish and Shafi'i society need to be studied well and the Kurdish identity and nationalism should be revised under these new studies. Such studies will help us to understand the past and the present situation of the Kurdish society better.

In conclusion, this was a town in a volatile and violent border and it was trapped between two strong empires in the Middle East. Neither of them had control over this town as the power of the Ottoman Empire was diminishing on the borders starting from seventeenth century.<sup>482</sup> Students of Kurdish nationalism may idealize the life and freedom in Sulaimaniya, but this was no hotbed for the nationalistic ideas and Kurdish independence before twentieth century. Tilly's suggestion that it is difficult to follow up with a unified form of the relationship between the state and different urban centers was well observed by the nineteenth century travelers to Sulaimaniya as they compared many customs and political structure there

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result that these are not understood save by their learned men. These latter study Persian in order to make a honorable living." Garzoni, *e Vocabolario della Lingua Kurda*, 11.

<sup>479</sup> A document refers to opening of a *müftülük* for Shafi'is but does not specify the place of establishment. A.AMD. 17/51. ( 13.Ş.1270/ 11 May, 1854)

<sup>480</sup> Several documents from BOA (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi-Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry of Turkey) contain information about various family members of Berzencis and their positions: DH.İD. #28/184. (18.S.1333/ 4 January, 1915); DH.ŞFR. #243/53. ( 22.B.1333/ 6 June, 1915); İ.TAL. #1327/B-05/461.(06.B.1327/ 24 July, 1909); Y.PRK.AZJ. #15/52. ( 29.Z.1324/ 13 February, 1907); İ.ML. #1323/C-31/66. ( 21.C.1323/ 25 August, 1905); İ.ML. #1323/B-04/67.( 07.B.1323/ 7 September, 1905); İ.MVL. #26250/584 ( 18.L.1284/ 12 February, 1868); A.MKT.MHM. #17/400. ( 24.L.1284/ 18 February, 1868)

<sup>481</sup> Yavuz Aykan of EHESS in Paris has been working on Shafi'i school through court records of Diyarbekir in the seventeenth century. He also made a presentation titled "The Return of Suleyman: Legal pluralism and gendered discourse of divorce in the 17th century Ottoman Amid" in the *Kurds and Kurdistan: Identity, Politics, Culture Conference* at Exeter University, April 1-3, 2009. In his work Aykan states that through the court records he studied, he did not observe coercion by the Ottomans on Shafi'i Kurds to follow Hanafi law. I wish to thank Yavuz Aykan for sharing a draft of his paper.

<sup>482</sup> Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society*, 8.

with other cities in the Middle East and surprised because of the peculiarities. This town may not precisely fit into the categorization that Dina Rizk Khoury suggested; nevertheless, there were certain patterns like local elites, the social matrix, and town resources that one could follow up with as for any other Ottoman urban center.

People of this town, be it men, women or peasants, tried mostly to escape from the order of outside rulers [Ottoman *pashas* and Iranian *valis*] and make the day going. They knew that one Baban ruler would be replaced for another by ruling empires. This uncertainty was making people to be more doubtful about the stability and their future. Sulaimaniyans were used to such insecurity and precariousness, but this was not the ideal life they were looking for. Knowing that the imperial powers put their own political interest before concerns of the local people, the people of Sulaimaniya acted in their own interest first and concerned, if at all, for the imperial goals next.<sup>483</sup> Despite the first few hopeful decades after the founding of the town, the population did not grow much. People did not invest their money into nontransferable commodities and kept ready to take flight with the next military conflict in their town. Regardless of such conditions, the Western and the Ottoman travelers were still able to record some lively and optimistic accounts on Sulaimaniya. Such accounts may not be enough to make more detailed assessments about the Ottoman Kurds in the urban space, but they certainly give some valuable information about Kurdish women, peasants, notables, non-Muslims, and religious dignitaries in order to make some preliminary suggestions.

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<sup>483</sup> Studies on nineteenth century northern Spanish-Mexican border have shown that the people in border towns cared very little about the national interest, instead placed always ahead their own local needs first as in the case of Laredo studied by Hinojosa. Based on such findings, the same study shows that the assumptions by many historians that the northern Spanish-Mexican frontier was somewhat static and that the daily life was mostly governed by the central power were wrong. Gilberto Miguel Hinojosa, *A borderlands town in transition: Laredo, 1755-1870* (College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 1983), XV.



## CHAPTER IV

### STRUGGLE FOR POWER AND PEACE

While I am doing my utmost to liberate my country, one of my own family betrays it! (When one of the Kurdish chiefs, also a member of the Baban family, betrayed Abdurrahman Pasha in a war that he waged against the governor of Baghdad and caused him to be defeated. J.C. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. I, (1836), 408.

Minor sporadic clashes between the Ottomans and Qajars had been taking place for sometime, but disagreements on land occupation in different parts of the border areas from both sides and the issue of fugitives intensified around 1820.<sup>484</sup> Among the fugitives to the court of the Shah and the governors of Azerbaijan and Kermanshah were the Ottoman officers and tribal leaders who looted the border villages, but more importantly, the rival members of the Baban dynasty who tried to have Persian support for their claim to the leadership of the Baban Sanjaq. Semi-nomad tribes, who were crisscrossing the border towards their summer camps in order to fodder their livestock, were causing more problems between two states. Some of these tribes were plundering villages on their way back to their winter camps, some others were escaping from the heavy taxes imposed by their patrons. In one case some of these tribes were helped by Huseyin Khan, the leader (*serdar*) of Revan on the Iranian side, to sack villages in the Ottoman province of Kars.<sup>485</sup> This was justified in the name of claiming the ownership of the Kurdish tribe of Haydaranlı and the persecuted Iranian merchants in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>486</sup> Led by Hasan Khan, brother of governor of Revan, Iranian raids in late September of 1820 extended all the way to the plains of Muş and caused lots of damage to the Kurdish and Armenian villages.<sup>487</sup>

Apart from territorial disputes, the safety of Iranian pilgrims, particularly the Shi'is, who passed through the Ottoman territories to Najaf, Karbala and Mecca, was an ongoing issue. Iranian pilgrims would be harassed, detained and robbed during their journey. Furthermore, they would be asked to pay landing tax or "*toprak bastı*" in each province they passed through. During this period, Istanbul had sent numerous orders to emir of Mecca and governors of provinces, located on the Eastern borders, for the safety of Iranian pilgrims and the equal treatment with the Ottoman pilgrims.<sup>488</sup> Nonetheless, not much changed since governors of these provinces ignored the order, and nomads in this region always saw this negligence as an opportunity to revenge for losses caused by Iranians.

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<sup>484</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 115-127.

<sup>485</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 117.

<sup>486</sup> Mark Sykes, in his article on Kurdish tribes, states that the tribe of Haydaranlı is made of 20,000 families at the beginning of twentieth century. This was the largest Kurdish tribe located on the Ottoman-Iranian border from Muş to Urumiye. Mark Sykes, "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 38, (Jul. -Dec., 1908): 451-486.

<sup>487</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 118.

<sup>488</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 120.

Besides, the issue of fugitives became a cause of conflict. This issue became more problematic when Memluki Sadık Bey was returned to the Ottomans. In 1820, son of former Baghdad's governor Said Pasha and a rival to new governor Davud Pasha, Sadık Bey took refuge in the Qajar court in order to save himself from Davud Pasha's wrath. After long negotiations between Istanbul and Tehran, the Ottomans authorities promised for the safety of Sadık Bey and his relocation to Istanbul once he returned to his native soil. Despite this reassurance he became a victim of Davud Pasha's conspiracies on the way to Istanbul and he was executed in Tokat.<sup>489</sup> This caused more fury and mistrust between two states and was added on other reasons to declare a war.

Beyond the factual causes of the war, this was a war of *tour de force* for both the local and central leaders, showing their skills on the ground. So to speak, the political struggle, which took place between 1820 and 1823 with a gradual expansion, on and around the borders of the Ottoman and Iranians, had three stages. The first phase of the struggle was taking between the Baban family members, namely Mahmud Baban and his uncle Abdullah. In the second half of the stage, two more actors, who were taking role in this theater of rivalries and shifting loyalties, were Davud Pasha, the governor of Baghdad, and Muhammad Ali Mirza, the governor of Kermanshah on the Iranian side. Sultan Mahmud II and Fath Ali Shah would appear in the stage at the end of this play when both sides decided to sign the peace treaty of Erzurum in 1823. In addition to these figures we see Halet Efendi, the sultan's special envoy to Baghdad, and C.J. Rich, the British resident of East India Company in Baghdad, to appear once in a while as an extension of the imperial powers. Seeing that the politics in this region had the players, who were apparent on the scene one way or the other, one needs to look into their background and see what affects they had in shaping the war and the peace during the period. Not only their political ambitions had formed the policies as in the case of Abbas Mirza's jealousy for his half-brother Muhammad Ali Mirza, but personal affection that Mahmud Baban felt towards his uncle Abdullah, which resulted in latter's exoneration, and religious leaning he had towards Davud Pasha caused the war and its result to take a different course.

This chapter covers the conflict between 1820-1823 and its consequences, as well as the conditions that prepared both sides for the war. To do so, I present a short political career of each leader who played an important role in this conflict. The story of this conflict runs around these figure, thus I integrated them into the story while presenting their world. My purpose here is to show that the war did not only take place because of some concrete bases, such as the safety of Iranian pilgrims and tradesmen, the issue of fugitives and the land disputes, especially on the Baban territories, but it also occurred because of the personal relations between these leaders and their desire of showing off their power. Personality mattered in this quarrel as each one tried to protect and expand the power of his political sphere. In order to show this, I employ both the Middle Eastern source as well as the personal accounts of the Western travelers and officers who happened to be in the border region and befriended some of these leaders. I do not go much into the border issues since it has been well studied by both Western and Middle Eastern scholars and the documents, especially the

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<sup>489</sup> Kalantari ,“Feth Ali Şah,” 122-124.

Ottoman sources, are well exhausted by these researchers.<sup>490</sup> Therefore, my focus will be more on what actually happened between the leaders and more specifically how the Baban leadership, territories, their capital Sulaimaniya and the people of the town were affected by the result of the war and the peace agreement.

Furthermore, with the case of the Ottoman-Iranian conflict in 1820s, we see that the border between two powers and the people in and around it were not left in the periphery but rather they were somewhat attached to the center. Likewise, the local players, such as the Baban pasha of Sulaimaniya and the vali of Baghdad, as well as the dignitaries like tribal *aghas*, and *ulema* played an important role in shaping the policies that were planned in the center. So was the same case in the other side of the border with Iranian leaders, both central and local. Nevertheless, this was not an ideal center-periphery relation since the provinces were still loosely attached to the empire. One had to wait until the Tanzimat was declared in order to attach the provinces to the Sublime Porte. Still, this war, with its preconditions and outcomes, indicates that the project of centralization started way before the Tanzimat was planned. This war and the conflicts on the other sides of the empire, such as the Greek revolt, paved way to further meddling of the Western powers, as well as Iran and Russia, into the internal problems and thus accelerate the desire to keep the borders more under the control of the capital. Taking such an attitude towards the border problems ahead of reforms and the modernization of the administrative system brought further conflict and violence until the Porte was forced both by internal and external forces to legalize its actions on the paper.

### **Wars of Succession between Mahmud pasha and Abdullah (1818-1823)**

The fierce fight for the power between political figures from bottom to top was dominant course of action during this period. The struggle in the bottom was happening between Mahmud Baban, the pasha of Sulaimaniya, and his uncle Abdullah.<sup>491</sup> Beyond their animosity, the Baban Sanjaq had been a perennial issue between the Ottomans and the Qajars for a while.

Coming to late 1820, the conflict became more obvious than ever when the race for the leadership of Baban Sanjaq erupted between the nephew and uncle, and the question of Baban came in between two states one more time. Mahmud pasha was the son of Abdurrahman Pasha, the previous *mutasarrıf* (political leader) of Baban Sanjaq. He took his

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<sup>490</sup> There is more information about these works in the fifth chapter. Some of these works are: Sabri Ateş, "Empire at the Margins: Towards a History of the Ottoman-Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples" ; Nejat Abdulla, *İmparatorluk, Sınır ve Aşiret: Kürdistan ve 1843-1932 Türk-Fars Sınır Çatışması*; İbrahim Aykun, "Erzurum Konferansı (1843-1847) ve Osmanlı-İran Hudut Antlaşması" (Unpublished PhD diss. Atatürk University, 1995).

<sup>491</sup> The conflict between Mahmud Pasha and Abdullah Pasha was going way back when the former was appointed as the *mutasarrıf* of Baban domains. The struggle for the crown of Baban intensified once in a while, especially when there was an external interference such as the one in 1816, when the vali of Baghdad wanted to replace Mahmud Pasha with Abdullah Pasha, but he was recommended not to do this by the Porte since the Ottomans feared that it might cause further conflict. HAT #37200-H/I (29.Z.1231/ 21 Oct. 1816).

father's place, Abdurrahman Pasha, in 1813 and kept the position until 1834.<sup>492</sup> Mahmud Pasha was already a known figure to many, including Rich, in Baghdad and other Kurdish principalities.<sup>493</sup> It was Mahmud Pasha who opened the doors of Sulaimaniya for Davud Pasha and helped him when the latter escaped from Said Pasha's pressure and struggled for the governorship of Baghdad. With such a position Mahmud Pasha took, it was clear that he felt close to Davud Pasha even if both leaders sometimes disagreed. Mahmud Pasha would address call Davud Pasha as "*efendimiz*" (our lord) and the latter called the Pasha as his "son". These words suggest that there was an intimate relation between the two but at the same time they refer to inferiority of Mahmud Pasha and superiority of Davud Pasha. Though Rich had some personal animosity towards Davud Pasha, his explanation of this affinity makes some sense:

The Pasha's [Mahmud] great fault is his weakness and unaccountable reverence for the Turks; which proceeds, however, from a religious feeling...It is melancholy to see how is deceived by the Pasha of Baghdad, whom he habitually calls "Efendimiz," or "My Master."<sup>494</sup>

Rich's words present just a glimpse of Mahmud Pasha's mental world, but can still help us to make some suggestions. He grew up not only in Sulaimaniya but in Baghdad and Kirkuk, where he had more interaction with Turks and Arabs, compared to his father Abdurrahman Pasha, who had more contact with the Kurds and Persian around him. So, such a history made Mahmud Pasha to feel closer to the Mamluk family. Besides, he was a very religious person as he asked for advice from the *ulema* in every state affair he had. Mahmud Baban, like all the other Kurds, because of his Sunnism and the veneration of the institution of the caliphate due to the prophet, felt close to the Sultan. Moreover, as part of his piety, and sentiment towards Sufi orders, he established a mosque and a library, and he invited Mawlana Khalid, the leader of Naqshbandi-Khalidiyya order, to Sulaimaniya. Interestingly, Davud Pasha had also close relations with Mawlana Khalid and he was considered as a loyal disciple and a learned man of the Khalidiyya order. So, considering all these factors, Mahmud Pasha's world was shaped in a way that he could not resist to his fate and his tendency towards Baghdad was apparent even if he sometimes made alliance with Iranians.

Rich offers valuable information about the intelligence, psychology, life style, political ambitions, and physical appearance of Mahmud Pasha. Analyzing through his account, despite they are more sympathetic ones because of Rich's friendship with the *pasha*, we are able to discover more about Mahmud Pasha here than any other source would offer. When Rich met the pasha for the first time he described that he was "a short man, was almost hid by the crowd of tall Koords, habited in every colour of the rainbow, but chiefly in pink, yellow, and scarlet, which hues especially made up the tassels and fringes which covered their

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<sup>492</sup> Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol. IV (Istanbul: Matbay-ı Amire, 1308), 334. In *Sicill-i Osmani*, Mehmed Süreyya adds that Mahmud Baban was dismissed from his duty only when he started to ill behave and was taken to Istanbul ("ancak kendisinin sū-i hāli görülmekle azl olunup Dersaadet'e getirüldi.") He also adds that Mahmud Baban died in 1272(1855/6) and buried in Saraçhane in Istanbul.

<sup>493</sup> Rich states that Baban Mahmud Pasha was "a very celebrated character in Koordistan, of whom I had often heard at Bagdad." Rich, Vol, I, 69.

<sup>494</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence, vol. I*, 314.

heads.”<sup>495</sup> He was eldest of five children of Abdurrahman Pasha, the previous pasha of Sulaimaniya, and around thirty five years old when Rich visited him in 1820. Mahmud Pasha was a modest man with nothing distinguished in his personality and eloquence, but at the same time he was “a plain, reasonable, and at same time, mild and gentlemanlike man” with an “unexceptionable” character.<sup>496</sup>

Besides Rich’s account, there is some information, which is scattered through the documents, and one can make sense out of them, only if one reads them carefully with the bias they carry within. Reading through the Ottoman documents suggests mixed attributions to Mahmud Pasha as his political position changed. He was sometimes referred simply as “Baban Mutasarrıfı” (possessor/leader of Baban) before 1820, whereas after the conflict between the Ottomans and Iranians erupted references to him varied too. When Mahmud Pasha made an alliance with the Iranian prince Muhammad Ali Mirza in May 1823, he was titled as “hıyanet eden Baban sancağı Mutasarrıfı,”<sup>497</sup> (the leader of Baban Sanjaq who betrayed) “firar eden Baban Mutasarrıfı”<sup>498</sup> (the leader of Baban who fled) or, worse, “âsi sabık Baban mutasarrıfı”<sup>499</sup> (the former rebellious leader of Baban ) and “hain”<sup>500</sup> (the traitor). If the the Ottomans had the intention to rely on him and be reinstated to the *mutasarrıflık* of Sulaimaniya or if he had a peaceful purpose, then he would be referred to as “Kurdistan mutasarrıfı,”<sup>501</sup> (the leader of Kurdistan) “Babanzade”<sup>502</sup> (son of Babans) “Baban ve Koy Sancakları Mutasarrıfı”<sup>503</sup> (the leader of Baban and Koy Sanjaqs). The Ottomans used even praiseful expressions if they backed one of the Baban members, as in the case of Süleyman Pasha who was supported by Davud Pasha and called as “Kahraman mirza Baban mutasarrıfı” (the heroic prince, the leader of Baban) against Mahmud Pasha, who was backed by the Iranians in October 1830.<sup>504</sup> All these references and titles reveal that the Ottomans kept changing their position and ideas towards the Baban leaders and they used the vocabulary and, related with this, the policies as it fitted to their interest. The leaders used a such language to propagate and justify their cause in the eyes of their patrons and the public. If a local leader, such as Davud Pasha, Halet Efendi or Baban Abdullah Pasha, wanted to destroy the political career of Mahmud Pasha then they employed negative connotations and titles for him, and vice versa. So, the political language and the propaganda kept changing as the conditions and position of each leader changed.

Coming back to Mahmud Pasha, he was very much interested into the regional and contingent politics of the states around his domains. Thus, compared to his rival family members, he was more erudite and successful in the politics. Whereas, the pasha’s knowledge about the history of his family was not very strong, neither did he care to record it since he thought that his was not a royal family but a petty clan. He probably compared himself with

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<sup>495</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 70.

<sup>496</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 73.

<sup>497</sup> HAT #36976 (17.N.1238/ 28 May 1823)

<sup>498</sup> HAT #36765 (09.Ra.1238/ 23 November 1822)

<sup>499</sup> HAT #31812-A (07.Ca.1238/ 20 January 1823)

<sup>500</sup> HAT #36750-K( 07.L.1239/5 June 1824)

<sup>501</sup> HAT #36750-i (17.L.1239/ 15 June 1824)

<sup>502</sup> HAT #36139-D (30.Za.1242/ 25 June 1827)

<sup>503</sup> HAT #36141-D (16.L.1237/ 6 July 1822)

<sup>504</sup> HAT #36794 (23.R.1246/ 10 October 1830)

valis of Baghdad, Kermanshah, and may be the shah and the sultan, and decided that he was not much powerful enough to compete with these people. Such a state of mind was clear when Rich, upon arrival to Sulaimaniya, delivered a message from Davud Pasha to Mahmud Pasha. Once Mahmud Pasha read the letter, which we do not know the subject included, he immediately felt weak and stated the hardship in his political situation and the circumstances of Baban.<sup>505</sup>

Despite such moments of impotency, having Rich by him during such depressive moments must have given Mahmud Pasha some sense of support and relief as he organized a big procession with all the dignitaries and the residents, and later on expressed his concerns of being squeezed between two states at the first occasion. Although not an ideal one, he tried to play a balanced politics with the Ottomans and Iranians by trying to keep both states at bay while carving out his own place of power. The trouble that Mahmud Pasha was into was a complicated one, seeing that “the Pasha of Bagdad [was] endeavoring to cheat the Pasha of Koordistan and the Shahzadeh of Kermanshah, while the Shahzadeh [was] cheating both the Pasha of Bagdad and the Pasha of Koordistan; and all of them, both collectively and severally, [were] endeavoring to cheat the Porte...”<sup>506</sup>

Adding on all these players in this struggle was his uncle Abdullah Pasha, who quarreled with Mahmud Pasha for years to take over the leadership of the Baban sanjaq. Though his political ambitions remained short when he passed away in the hijri year of 1240 (1824/5).<sup>507</sup> As Rich did for Mahmud Pasha, he recorded well amount of information about Abdullah Pasha since the latter was an “old friend” (as Rich calls him each time he talks about him) of the Pasha. Abdullah Pasha was the younger brother of Abdurrahman Pasha, the former leader of Sulaimaniya and father of Mahmud Pasha. Despite a history of betrayal and treachery, Abdullah Pasha was treated well by his brother and nephew.<sup>508</sup> Abdullah Pasha, filled with political ambitions, not only tried to get rid of his family members in Sulaimaniya, but he hoped to replace even the vali of Baghdad, as a letter to the vali of Mosul, Ahmad Pasha, suggests.<sup>509</sup>

From the conversation between Rich and Abdullah Pasha, it seems that the latter tried to downplay his rivals and show his aptitude. For instance, he discredited Khalid Pasha, his brother and pasha of Koy Sanjaq, because “he has been so long in Bagdad that he has lost all traces of clanship” and in the eyes of Abdullah Pasha “he has been no better than a

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<sup>505</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 71.

<sup>506</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 72.

<sup>507</sup> Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol. III, 395.

<sup>508</sup> Abdullah Pasha’s treacheries are recorded in different sources. For example, Rich states that once Abdullah pasha received a secret letter from the governor of Kermanshah and he did not let Mahmud Pasha know about the nature of the item. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 148-149; Several Ottoman documents also state Abdullah Pasha’s betrayal, such as the letter from Davud Pasha (HAT #20662) on 8 May 1822 (16 Şaban, 1237) calls Abdullah Pasha as “Hâricî”(rebellious) and states that the military personnel was sent over him once he allied with Iranians; another letter ( HAT #36141-B) from Mahmud Pasha to Davud Pasha, dated 17 July 1822 ( 27 Şevval, 1237), explains that he was able to take back the lands which were occupied by Iranians with Abdullah Pasha’s collaboration.

<sup>509</sup> The letter, which was signed by Baban Abdullah Pasha and addressing to the vali of Mosul, Ahmed Pasha, suggests that because of the complains about the activities of Davud Pasha he should be replaced with his chief steward (*kethüdasi*), who has the necessary qualifications( *evsaf-ı lâzimeye haiz*). HAT #37448 (12.M.1236/ 18 November 1820).

merchant.”<sup>510</sup> Interestingly, both were rivals to Mahmud Pasha but they were competing with each other too. Abdullah Pasha, though untalented for the leadership, tried to be informed with the regional and distant politics, such as politics and geography of China, since he wanted to show off with his knowledge in public discussions with Mahmud Pasha and other Baban leaders.<sup>511</sup>

Abdullah pasha was once in a while the man of the day and was supported by Davud Pasha. In late 1818, when some regular forces from Baghdad moved against Mahmud Pasha, 10,000 forces from Iranian side crossed the border in his support.<sup>512</sup> The new governor of Baghdad, Davud Pasha wanted to bring the Babans sanjaq under his control. Iranian forces were pushed out following year by his uncle Abdullah with the support of Davud Pasha. Although Abdullah led the *sanjaq* for a short period, Baghdad had to accept the Iranian demands of reinstating Mahmud Pasha because of inadequate troops on the ground. “Yet the story of Mahmud Baban and his uncle, Abdullah, illustrates how fickle dynastic rivals could be towards their sponsors. Mahmud now sided with Baghdad, while Abdullah turned to Iran.”<sup>513</sup> Such crisscrossing was considered as the core of Baban politics during this period, especially when one of them saw some support from the stronger political figures and desire to interfere with his rivals. When they had interest in it, the rulers of two states reacted immediately to such distant incidents through their local agents such as vali of Baghdad and Kermanshah, but the intention was not always the same in provincial level, as valis acted sometime without consent of the Shah and Sultan.

Despite all these political upheavals Mahmud Pasha was able to survive and stay in power until 1834, still was replaced or chased out of Sulaimaniya once in a while when Davud Pasha would be upset with him and force him to pay more tribute to Baghdad. Mahmud Pasha had also changed loyalties in between the Ottomans and Iranians, but he stayed mostly with his natural suzerain, the former. In 1834, he was finally replaced with another family member of Baban, Suleiman Pasha, and right after that he was exiled to Istanbul with the representative of the Porte in Baghdad, Agah Efendi.<sup>514</sup>

### Politics of Valis

The power politics that Baban family got involved was beyond their limits as Baghdad on the Ottoman side and Kermanshah on the Iranian side were competing for more land and revenues in this region. After the turn of nineteenth century Baban leaders were more inclined towards Baghdad, though they were not totally free of the Iranian influence. As Kermanshah was becoming stronger than Baghdad, the Babans had no choice but to choose the stronger side as Baghdad had more pressure on Sulaimaniya for more cash. Despite the Babans had to

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<sup>510</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 95.

<sup>511</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 95-96.

<sup>512</sup> McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds*, 58; . Stephen H. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 2002, first published by Oxford University, 1925 ), 243.

<sup>513</sup> McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds*, 58.

<sup>514</sup> The letter by Agah Efendi to the Porte referred to Mahmud Pasha's exile and his journey through Mardin and Diyarbakir to Istanbul. HAT # 49239-J, (06. C.1250/ 10 September, 1834).

pay higher tributes to Kermanshah they preferred its backing as they had more power consolidation against Baghdad and extended their territories and thus revenues in the Sanjaq.<sup>515</sup> Obviously, this was not a permanent case as the Babans kept changing the side. Sir John Malcolm, who was appointed as the British ambassador to Iran in 1801, 1806 and 1810, states that the majority of the Kurds preferred to stay on the Ottoman side as they paid less tribute and were not forced to serve in the military.<sup>516</sup>

After a long period of the decentralization and anarchy at the beginning of nineteenth century Iranian lands were reunited one more time under the leadership of Turkic Qajarian family. So, as a new and inexperienced leader, Fath Ali Shah tried to fill up his treasury as much as he could. He forced the Ardalani Kurdish Emirate to pay more tribute than its counterpart, the Babans. Witnessing such pressure, the Babans decided to stick with their old patrons, Mamluki Baghdad governors, but they never ruled out the Iranian power, as they needed once in a while to fend off Davud Pasha and the Ottoman elites. Although, the Kurds culturally and linguistically felt closer to Iranians, they knew more about the Ottomans and were members of the same sect, Sunnism. Still, Iranian Shah respected the chiefs and the inhabitants of Kurdistan since nor Arabs neither Turkic tribes settled in this province for a long time whereas the Kurds were the longtime residents of this region, adding that some of them were considered to be the descendent of the Prophet Muhammad, which furthered the respect by the kingly Qajarian family of Iran.<sup>517</sup>

Beyond this the Baban Pasha had to obey to the *vali* of Kermanshah since he always kept a member of the family in his palace as a captive in case he needs to use him against the pasha of Suleimaniya, such as Mahmud Pasha, who sent his eldest son, Abdurrahman, a seven year old child, to Kermanshah as a guarantor.<sup>518</sup> Mahmud Pasha, himself, was once a hostage at the court of Muhammad Ali Mirza, so the latter could secure the fidelity of his father, Abdurrahman Pasha. He recounted his experience of being in the captivity and told Rich that when his father was forced to collaborate with the Ottomans he barely escaped from being beheaded by the Persian prince.<sup>519</sup> Somehow, members of Baban family considered such a practice as part of their faith and the politics around them. They also practiced the same method to secure the loyalty of the tribes under their sovereignty.

Before we go more into the details of the conflict between two valis, Davud Pasha of Baghdad and Muhammad Ali Miza of Kermanshah, it will be helpful to give some details on the background of these two figures. Muhammad Ali Mirza was the first son of Fath Ali Shah and the brother of Abbas Mirza, the crown prince. He became the governor of Kermanshah in 1805 when he was around 17 years old. He stayed in the office until 1821, when he suddenly

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<sup>515</sup> Tom Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society in early modern Iraq: Mamluk Pashas tribal Shayks and local rule between 1802 and 1831* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981), 42.

<sup>516</sup> Malcolm, Sir John, *The history of Persia, from the most early period to the present time: containing an account of the religion, government, usages, and character of the inhabitants of that kingdom*, Vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1829), 133.

<sup>517</sup> James Baillie Fraser, *Travels and adventures in the Persian provinces on the Southern banks of the Caspian Sea* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1826), 335.

<sup>518</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 298; Halfin, *XIX. Yüzyılda Kürdistan Üzerine Mücadeleler* (Istanbul: Komal Yayınları, 1992), 35.

<sup>519</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 144.



died from an outbreak of cholera that he was caught during the war between the Ottomans and Iranians. Although he was not designated as the crown prince because of being born from a Georgian slave, not a Qajar mother, he could have been one of the best candidates among many of his brothers, was it not for his sudden death.<sup>520</sup> He was already a “king maker” in Baghdad with his backing of Davud Pasha. Before Davud Pasha came to power in Baghdad he was supported against Said Pasha, the Mamluki governor of Baghdad, by Muhammad Ali Mirza, the khan of Kermanshah, in 1816. Muhammad Ali Mirza was certainly a well-planned choice for the border regions of Kermanshah, Luristan and Khuzestan, which were very important to the Qajar dynasty because of their proximity to Ottoman borders. Once Muhammad Ali Mirza became the governor in the region, Ottoman raids were reduced substantially and the city of Kermanshah flourished as it was in ruins for decades because of hostile attacks by Baghdad and the Kurdish Emirates in the vicinity.<sup>521</sup>

Davud Pasha was rather a less experienced governor when he came to power in 1816, almost ten years after Muhammad Ali Mirza became governor of Iranian Kurdistan. Davud Pasha was part of Mamluki family as he was married to one of Süleyman the Great’s daughters.<sup>522</sup> He worked with Said Pasha (r. 1813-1816) during the first phase of the latter’s governorship and he became Said Pasha’s commander in a number of successful campaigns against the Arab and Kurdish tribes. Although Davud Efendi was an ex-slave, who was made free by Süleyman the Great (r. 1780-1802), and a Georgian by birth, most of Georgian Mamluks chose his side during his struggle for the governorship of Baghdad against Said Pasha, despite the latter was the son of Süleyman the Great and the foremost representative of the ruling and aristocratic family of Süleyman. In the struggle for the governorship of

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<sup>520</sup> Graham Williamson, “The Turko-Persian War, 1821-1823: Winning the war but losing the peace” in *War and peace in Qajar Persia: implications past and present*, ed. Roxane Farmanfarmanian (New York: Routledge, 2008), 89. Williamson adds that Muhammad Ali Mirza was highly regarded by his father and thus was appointed as governor of southern provinces of Kermanshah, Luristan and Khuzestan. Shoberl, who met Muhammad Ali Mirza towards the end of his life, also states that the latter always had ambitions for the throne. He recorded that “...on the death of Feth Ali; for Mohammad has frequently declared to the king, that the sword should either secure or deprive him of the throne, and that it was his determination to overcome the obstacles placed in his way.” Frederic Shoberl, *Persia: containing a description of the country, with an account of its government, laws, and religion, and of the character, manners and customs, arts, amusements* (Philadelphia: J. Grigg, 1828), 30.

<sup>521</sup> De Bode, who was in Kermanshah in 1837, says “during the lifetime of Muhammed Ali Mirza son of Feth Ali Shah Kermanshah Luristan were under his dominion and he was a man of great energy, order was in these provinces.” C. A. De Bode (Baron.), *Travels in Luristan and Arabistan*, Vol. 2 (London: J. Madden and co., 1845), 283-284. See also entry of “Kirmanshah” in *EII*. Here I use “Kermanshah” and “Iranian Kurdistan” interchangeably since in Western sources and archival materials both names are referred to the same place with some nuances. Iranian Kurdistan defines the broader region while Kermanshah is considered as seat of the governor. Gaspard Drouville describes the “pays habité par les Kurdes”, namely Kurdistan, which made of Mesopotamia, some part of Armenia and “meme de quelques provinces de Perse” he emphasizes the difference between “Kurdistan” and its Persian version “Kourdistan.” Referring to Iranian Kurdistan, he says “cette dernière partie se nomme Kourdistan persique, et fait partie du gouvernement de Mohamed-Aly-Mirza. Le pays nommé Kourdistan propre est divisé en autant de souverainetés qu’il y a de tribus isolées, mais tributaires de la Perse ou de la Turki.” Drouville defines “Kermanscha, chef-lieu de la province du Kurdistan persique, qui forme, avec le Laristan et le Khousesistan, l’apanage de Mohamed-Aly-Mirza, fils aîné du roi; ce prince y a fixé sa résidence, et y tient une cour assez nombreuse, mais toute militaire. Il peut mettre trente mille hommes de cavalerie sur pied, mais il n’a ni infanterie ni artillerie, car il ne faut pas compter comme telle quelques zomtareks.” Gaspard Drouville, *Voyage en Perse*, 220,223.

<sup>522</sup> Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 16; the author adds that almost all the Mamluks in power, between 1802-1831, were from the extended household founded by Süleyman the Great. On the governorship of Davud Pasha see also: Thomas Lier, *Haushalte und Haushaltspolitik in Bagdad 1704-1831* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2004), 169-214 and Clément Huart, *Histoire de Bagdad dans les temps modernes* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1901), 171-200.

Baghdad, Davud Efendi was also supported by Baban Mahmud Pasha, who welcomed the former to Sulaimaniya when he was ousted from the office of Daftardar in 1816.<sup>523</sup> At the time, Mahmud Pasha had already treated Davud Efendi as the future leader of Iraq and he took the risk of losing Persian backing for his stance with the latter.<sup>524</sup> With such backing, Mahmud Pasha took the opportunity to take his revenge from Said Pasha for his support to Baban Abdullah Pasha's bid for controlling Sulaimaniya. The French Consular in Baghdad argued that Said had already suffered from his political mistakes:

Kurdish border areas connected two Empires; the Persians and the Ottoman. Sa'id's conflict with the Babans had much to do with their accepting tributary relations with Persia and with their connections with Kermanshah. Sa'id's inability to secure these strategic border provinces for the Empire cost him the support of the Porte.<sup>525</sup>

It was clear that Sa'id's incompetence of dealing with Mahmud Baban, not only pushed the latter towards Davud Pasha but also exacerbated the Porte's antagonism toward the former, while Halet Efendi, the Porte's main official for Baghdad affairs, backed Davud Efendi for his bid to governorship of Baghdad.<sup>526</sup> Halet Efendi was an old enemy of Sa'id Pasha and his family since 1810, when the latter opposed to his agenda and remained in the office as a deputy governor.<sup>527</sup> Consequently, Davud Efendi secured the Porte's support through Halet Efendi and he was ready to move to Baghdad. Once Baghdad's populace suffered from the food-shortage and rebellions broke out in some quarters of city, religious dignitaries and Sa'id's top officials had chosen Davud Efendi's side. In late 1816, Davud Efendi entered Baghdad with the backing of the Kurdish cavalries and Georgian Guards.<sup>528</sup> With few supporters and isolated in the citadel of Baghdad, Sa'id was left with no choice but to fight to death. Once Sa'id and several of his men were put to death with the help of Janissary Agha Sayyid 'Alaywi's 800 men, Davud declared himself *pasha* of Baghdad.

Davud stayed in the office until 1831. Once he was forced out of the office by the Sublime Porte he was appointed to several other posts in different parts of the empire.<sup>529</sup> As Mehmed Süreyya states, he was a pious, knowledgeable (he was a devoted student of Mawlana Khalid and very much loved by him for his keenness to learn about Islamic sciences), prudent, and a powerful person.<sup>530</sup> During the governorship of Davud Pasha, Iraq was safer and had better trade relations with the other parts of the Ottomans and Europeans.<sup>531</sup> He improved the road conditions for the caravan trade by building *kervansaray*s. In addition

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<sup>523</sup> HAT #36031-I (29.Z.1231/19 November, 1816), The letter from Said Pasha to Istanbul stated that Davud Pasha secretly escaped from Baghdad and took refuge in Sulaimaniya by Mahmud Pasha.

<sup>524</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, 236.

<sup>525</sup> Correspondance Consulaire et Commerciale, Baghdad( CCC) 5 nr. 107 in Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 20.

<sup>526</sup> M.K. Nawras, *Hukm al-Mamalik fi al-Iraq, 1750-1831* (The Rule of Mamluks in Iraq) ( Baghdad, 1975), 103 and Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 20.

<sup>527</sup> Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 20.

<sup>528</sup> Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 21.

<sup>529</sup> One needs to keep in mind that Davud Pasha was still favored by the Sublime Porte seeing that he was appointed to different high level posts such as the governor of Bosnia in June/ July 1833, the head of council of the Sublime Porte (*şura-yı Bâbiâli reisi*) in March 1838, governor of Ankara in August 1839, and the head of sacred land (*Şeyhülharem*) two times (April 1846 and November 1850). Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol. II, 326.

<sup>530</sup> Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol. II, 326.

<sup>531</sup> Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 9.

to this, he and some previous Mamluk pashas like Süleyman the Great contributed to the construction of Baghdad with new edifices. With fine architecture and newly founded 28 schools, Baghdad was experiencing a “Mamluk cultural renaissance.”<sup>532</sup> The population from the beginning of nineteenth century until 1830 grew substantially. Davud Pasha, although was new in the office, he was well aware of the politics in Baghdad and he was very much familiar with all departments of the state. Davud Pasha governed Baghdad for the next fifteen years with some success in centralization of the power and once he passed away, Iraq was immediately dominated with tribal groups.<sup>533</sup>

### Politics of Kings

The period of Mahmud II was a kind of rehearsal phase for the Tanzimat. Although many historians indicate that the centralization policies of the Ottoman Empire started after declaration of the Tanzimat, modernization of several state institutions were already on the way during the reign of Selim III and were intensified while Mahmud II was in power. The policies that were adopted during this period were to be continued more intensively throughout of the century. One of the most effective policies that caused the local notables to lose power was a plan “to pension off the remainder timar-holders, eliminate their tax-collection rights and lease out the lands to tax-farmers.”<sup>534</sup> *Timars* were vital for the autonomy of these notable families and thus Mahmud II’s plan was targeting the very bases of these families and principalities. With such plans that were implemented at the first decade of the nineteenth century, the state was already breaking the monopoly of some notable families in some fiscal and land incomes.<sup>535</sup> Mahmud II implemented his new fiscal policies with the help of his newly rejuvenated military, and almost everywhere, the state was able to bring these semi-independent lands under its control.

The first phase of Mahmud II’s reign was more dominated with de-centralization as he signed the Deed of Agreement with notables in October 1808 and gave them the official protection. He might have planned for a different way of dealing with the local notable but he had no other choice besides making an agreement with them, as he was young and recently inaugurated.<sup>536</sup> Though it may not be considered a wise step, with this agreement Mahmud II tried to institutionalize the link between the center and periphery and thus bolster the central control over the local provinces.

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<sup>532</sup> Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 173; and Nawras, *Hukm al-Mamalik* 133-138.

<sup>533</sup> Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 15-16. Mehmed Süreyya gives Ramazan 1267 (July 1851) as the date for his death. *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol. II, 326.

<sup>534</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, Halil İncelik, and Donald Quataert, *An economic and social history of the Ottoman Empire*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 854.

<sup>535</sup> Faroqhi, İncelik and Quataert state Karaosmanoğlu family in western Anatolia were stripped off their right to collect taxes and Mahmud II appointed an outsider for the post instead of one of the members of this family. Suraiya Faroqhi, Halil İncelik, Donald Quataert, *An economic and social history*, 854.

<sup>536</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A brief history of the late Ottoman empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 57-58.

The effects of this agreement with the notables started to be seen in many regions of the Empire, but more visibly in Baghdad. To implement his first centralization policies on the notables of Baghdad province, namely Mamlukis, Kurdish emirates, Arab tribal leaders, and Shi'i *ulema*, Mahmud II sent an agent from Istanbul. The Sublime Porte's representative in Baghdad during Davud Pasha's governance was Halet Efendi (1761-1822). The conflict in Baghdad and Sulaimaniya was less or more connected with Halet Efendi as he had his own political agenda in addition to Mahmud II's broader political actions towards Iran and the eastern borders.

Born in Istanbul, Halet Efendi was the son of Hüseyin Efendi, a *kadı* from Crimea. He received his first education from Şeyhül İslam Şerif Efendi and continued under the tutelage of Galib Dede, the Şeyh of Mevlevi convent in Galata, where he was also initiated into the order.<sup>537</sup> His initiation was going to be for life and shaping his all political career. His opposition to Mawlana Khalid was probably because of his membership to this order and he was less or more guided by the sheikh of Mevlevi order in Khalid's incident, which I talk more about it in the second chapter.

Why did Mahmud II appoint Halet Efendi to Iraq in 1810? The Sultan had difficulty to deal with *ayans* (notables) in the peripheries of the Empire in early years of his administration. In order to take the matters in hands and establish the order as well as collect the dues in Baghdad, he needed a strong and brutal bureaucrat. In Halet Efendi he found exactly what he was looking for.<sup>538</sup> During this period the Empire was in war with Russia but Mahmud II through Halet Efendi was determined to collect the dues from Baghdad and take the activities of Küçük Süleyman Pasha under the control of the Sublime Porte.<sup>539</sup> Halet Efendi used all means of politics in order to deal with the Mamluks in Baghdad, including the distortion of his contenders and enemies. He, for instance, accused the reform demanding parties and Süleyman the Great with supporting of Wahhabis.<sup>540</sup> Halet Efendi was a big enemy of Süleyman Pasha, who ruled Baghdad from 1807 until 1810, as well as enemy of Said Pasha, the following governor of Baghdad at the time. Despite all his insistence and threats on Süleyman Pasha, Halet Efendi could not convince him to pay his dues. Ahmet Cevdet gives a perfect explanation behind this attitude of Süleyman Pasha, which shows what the Empire had been through during this period:

At the time Süleyman Pasha never learned any lesson from Halet Efendi's warnings. Because, he considered his [temporary] access to power in addition to Devlet-i Aliyye's [the Ottoman Empire] weakness and long distance of the center of the Sultanate to Baghdad [as a guarantor to his position].<sup>541</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> E. Kuran, "Hâlef Efendi, Mehmed Sa'id", *EI2*.

<sup>538</sup> Virginia H. Aksan, "Military reform and its limits" in *The early modern Ottomans: remapping the Empire*, ed., Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 127.

<sup>539</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol 9, 253.

<sup>540</sup> Dina Rizk Khoury, "Who is a true Muslim? Exclusion and inclusion among polemicists of reform in nineteenth-century Baghdad" in *The early modern Ottomans*, ed., Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman, 271

<sup>541</sup> "Süleyman Pasha ol vakit, Devlet-i Aliyye'nin dûçar olduđu za'if hâl ile kendisinin miknet-i 'arızıyesini ve Bağdad'ın merkez-i Sultanetten ba'id-i mesafesini muvazene ve mutala'a ederek Halet Efendinin ihtarından

Ahmed Cevdet gives a clear picture of the period by talking about the distance (*ba'id-i mesafesini*) between Baghdad and Istanbul, and the weakness of the center (*Devlet-i Aliyye'nin dûçar olduđu za'if hâl*). These two were summarizing the image of the Ottomans in the minds of the Mamlukis and the Babans. The Sublime Porte merely had energy to spend on the matters in Baghdad and the eastern borders. Sultan Mahmud was very eager to finish the war with Iran and sign the treaty of Erzurum. With all this in mind the Porte assigned Halet Efendi, who had his own political ambitions and personal grievances against Said Pasha, to come over the obstacles in Baghdad.

Halet Efendi was determined to carry Davud Efendi to the throne of Baghdad. He was commissioned to Baghdad to bring the Mamlukis to under control, whereas he went further and tried to replace Said Pasha with Davud Efendi. To accomplish his goal he used the same Jewish financier, Al-Yahudi Aziza, as Davud Efendi<sup>542</sup> and used the conflict between the Mamluks to weaken Said Pasha.<sup>543</sup> He used even Janissary aghas to distort the reputation of his opponent.

It was a well known fact by the enemies of Halet Efendi that he had strong relations with janissaries. He would bribe janissary Aghas and shower them with gifts. He would protect them secretly and make a different story to the Sultan about his attitude towards janissaries.<sup>544</sup> In return, Halet Efendi would be able to get all kind of backing by them and this way he would create his own power sphere in the palace and the provinces. He employed janissary aghas in Baghdad too for his political use. He played the same game through the reign of Mahmud II. In fact, before Mahmud II reached to the power, he had already planned to abolish the janissaries and in 1812 he told about such plans to Halet Efendi, after he was hired by the Sultan. Although Halet Efendi was very successful in his task, which he suppressed rebellions in rural areas, he was very slow in taking care of janissaries and he was keeping the Sultan busy with various excuses. Meanwhile Halet Efendi was financing the janissaries and his supporters with the dues he collected with force from the notables in the Balkan and Anatolian provinces.<sup>545</sup> Halet Efendi played a doubled-face politics by approving what the Sultan said but doing the opposite. It seems that with the abolishment of janissaries, the attempt to reduce the power of local notables as well as the bureaucrats like Halet Efendi became more visible for Mahmud II. When looking at his policies, Sultan Mahmud was trying to accomplish the centralization way before the declaration of the Gülhane Hattı Humayunu, which was the official announcement of the Tanzimat.

Halet efendi had also close relations with Fenerlis. In his early career he was the secretary of Fenerli Kalimaki. Thanks to such relations he was able to appoint Fenerli Orthodoxies as the Sultan's translators and *voyvodas* to the Balkan provinces. Consequently, he was able to cash out the money ("*sağmal koyun olarak sağub*") from them and finance the

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*asla mütenebbih olmadı.*" *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol 9, 253 ; See more information in the first chapter on the first arrival of Halet Efendi and his politics towards Küçük Süleyman.

<sup>542</sup> Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 20; Ahmet Cevdet names his Jewish financier as "Bağdatlı Haskel nam yahudi." *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol. 12, 65.

<sup>543</sup> Shaw & Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, 15.

<sup>544</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol. 11, 3-5.

<sup>545</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol. 11, 3.

janissaries with it and strengthen his position further.<sup>546</sup> However, such relations drew the suspicion of his enemies on him and in order to eliminate such doubts he showed “great hatred” towards the Greeks.<sup>547</sup>

Halet Efendi used all means of the political tools to eradicate the obstacles before his projects. He was vicious in keeping the power in hand and his political sphere against his opponents. He “would destroy whoever he had power to harm. The one who could resist to his power would stand just for a short period.”<sup>548</sup> He was also a man of great intelligence, convincing in the discussion and an eloquent person.<sup>549</sup> Because of his political shrewdness, his enemies and friends were not only afraid of him but admired him. Halet Efendi’s political ambitions even became part of the literary works and he was compared to Machiavelli. He was remembered by Yahya Kemal and Semiha Ayverdi more than a century after his death.<sup>550</sup>

Halet efendi was finally exiled to Konya and when he arrived there he was immediately put to death.<sup>551</sup> He left many problems behind. One of the biggest problems was the peripheries of the empire and the issue of notables there. He had the opposing notables either killed or exiled from their posts and positions. Such a policy by Halet Efendi not only caused fear among the notables of the Empire but also pushed some of them, like Kurdish tribal leaders, aghas and begs, especially the ones on the Ottoman-Iranian border, towards Iran. As Ahmet Cevdet suggests, although Iran was more disorderly in terms of the administration during this period, still Iran’s attitude towards the Kurdish notables was more appealing, as the Shah and the Qajarian princes were showering them with gifts and as a favor asking them to collect the dues from their tribes in return. So, in the end both sides were happy from this exchange, as the notables were able to ask whatever they wanted in the name of the Shah.<sup>552</sup> It was not clear who the tribes on the border were subject to. The Sublime Porte was not as skillful as Iranians in terms of attracting the Kurdish tribes. Therefore, at the end of the day, despite all the efforts, the Ottomans were failing to keep the Kurds intact and on their side. Of course relations were not always as perfect as we see it in the Baban case. When the governor of Kermanshah changed in 1821 and Abbas Mirza, the crown prince and the governor of Azerbaijan province, passed away in 1833, the Shah changed the border

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<sup>546</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet, Vol. 11, 152.*

<sup>547</sup> A. Slade, *Record of travels in Turkey, Greece, etc., Vol.I* (London 1832), 246.

<sup>548</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet, Vol. 11, 6-7.*

<sup>549</sup> Şânizâde states that compared to his peers Halet Efendi was superior to them considering that he was more intelligent and knowledgeable on Europe : “*Re’îs-i Rikâb Mehmed Sa’id Hâlet Efendi, ‘akl u kiyâset ve rüşd ü sadâkat cihetiyle akrân ü emsâline mukaddem olup, husûsan Paris Sefâreti takrîbiyle şimdi cümleden elzem olan Avrupa ahvâli hakîkatine vukûf-ı tâmmı...*” Şânizâde Mehmed Ataullah, *Şânizâde Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Senede, 1290), Vol. 1, 249-250.

<sup>550</sup> Yahya Kemal in his historical work *Tarih musâhabeleri* allots three pages on Halef Efendi. Relying on the archival documents, he suggests that Halef Efendi was like a sultan with the power he acquired. Everyone was afraid of him and thus it took a while for Mahmud II to get rid of him. To show the extent of his power Kemal adds: Halet Efendi “*Devleti eli, avucu içine almıştı. Ocaklardan, Devlet kapularından sarayın en gizili odalarına kadar bütün İstanbul onun câsuslarıyla doluydu. Bin gözlü, bir kulaklı ucûbe onun hizmetinde, etrâfi her sâniyede kolluyordu.*” Yahya Kemal, *Tarih musâhabeleri* (Istanbul: Kubbealtı Yayınları, 1975), 73; see also Semiha Ayverdi, *Türk tarihinde Osmanlı asırları* (Istanbul: Kubbealtı Yayınları, 1999), 539-542.

<sup>551</sup> Halet Efendi’s death created a huge shock among his supporters and opponents. İzzet Molla, one of Halet Efendi’s supporters, expressed his sadness with a couplet: “*Hâlet’in canını Hak, malını aldı mîri / Kaldı ehl-i hasede hâyeleriyle giri.*” In response, İsmet Beyzade Arif Hikmet Beyefendi records this line in one of his poem: “*İzzet’de bile kalmadı eski hâlet.*” *Tarih-i Cevdet, Vol. 12, 67-68.*

<sup>552</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet, Vol. 12, 6.*

policy and the attitude towards the Kurds and the relations with the Ottomans were altered as such. Such transformation in the administration had also made the Kurdish notables to change their position as their interest fit.

Besides with such policies to pull the Kurds towards himself, Fath Ali Shah was trying to seize the moment to take over some provinces of the Ottoman Kurdistan and Iraq while Mahmud II was busy with problems in the Balkans and at home as well as with the resistance of Kurdish emirates, who the Sultan tried to seize their autonomy on the Ottoman-Iranian border.<sup>553</sup> Compared to Mahmud II, Fath Ali Shah had already gone through rough times while trying to unite and expand the Iranian land. Thus, when the former was coming to power, the latter already had enough knowledge of the Ottoman politics. Besides, Fath Ali Shah had closer relations with the Kurdish notable and emirates. Ardalanis, the ancient Kurdish Emirate on the south western border of Iran, made an alliance with ruling Qajar dynasty and accepted the suzerainty of the latter. Besides this, to make the ties stronger between two sides, the leader of Ardalani, Khosrou Khan got married with one of Fath Ali Shah's daughters and interestingly enough she held the power in Ardalani after her husband passed away.<sup>554</sup> One should also note that the Persians, especially during the reign of Shah Abbas, Nadir Shah and Fath Ali Shah, relied mostly on the Mukri Kurds and the Bilbas tribe in their fight against the Ottomans. Located in the southwestern fringes of Lake Urumiya and centered in Sawj Bulaq for centuries, Mukri Kurds were also appointed to the higher positions in the Persian army because of their crucial role in the wars with the Ottomans in the west and the Russians in the north.<sup>555</sup> But of course the relations were not always perfect one. For instance, Iranians had the tradition of keeping a family member of the Kurdish mirs in the Qajar court in order to keep them under the control. So, the Baban leaders always had some brothers or uncles captive in the Qajar court. Besides, even though the Qajar court tried to be in good terms with the Kurdish leaders and dignitaries, the reality in the Kurdish regions was not perfect as the governors tried to squeeze out as much tribute as they could from them.

Fath Ali Shah lacked the ability of modernization and centralization of his recently established state, which the Ottomans had already started to implement plans to modernize the army and taxation during the reign of Selim III. Coming to the age of Mahmud II, such plans and measures were matured and advanced further with new projects. On the other hand, both Fath Ali Shah and, after he passed away in 1834, his successor Muhammad Shah decided to govern the state in an old fashion with the "minimum of unavoidable adjustments."<sup>556</sup> The unfortunate and sudden death of the crown prince Abbas Mirza, who modernized the army, bureaucracy and the education in Azerbaijan province on the model of the Ottoman and

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<sup>553</sup> Peter Avery et al., *The Cambridge history of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic, Vol. VII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 312.

<sup>554</sup> Ely Banister Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1913), 218.

<sup>555</sup> Soane, *To Mesopotamia*, 375-76. Natali adds that during Fath Ali Shah's rule several Kurdish chiefs were positioned in high military posts, including Aziz Khan Serdar and Kurdish tribal chiefs from Khorasan. Denise Natali, *The Kurds and the state: evolving national identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 19.

<sup>556</sup> Keddie also adds that Fath Ali was not only with his governance but also with his long beard and huge harem made of hundreds of progeny a traditional minded leader. Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: roots and results of revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 44.

Egypt, left Iran with no chance of catching up with the other Muslim counterparts. Beyond this, Fath Ali Shah's extreme practices of polygamy had his wives to give birth more than sixty sons, which caused lost of conflicts among the princes over the state power. Such disagreement had started even during the reign of Fath Ali Shah, as such when Abbas Mirza was announced as the crown prince and he was challenged by four of his brothers, including Muhammad Ali Mirza of Kermanshah, especially three of them because of their maternal Qajar lineage and their proximity in age.<sup>557</sup> When Fath Ali Shah created provincial system and appointed his sons as the governors to these regions it created further division among these senior princes and allowed them to form a replica of the Qajar court and a more independent administration from the center.<sup>558</sup>

Besides Iranians, there was, for sure, British involvement into the conflict between the Mamluks of Baghdad and the Babans. James Claudius Rich was present in Baghdad as the resident of East India Company during Abdullah, Said, and Davud Pashas' governorship from 1808 until 1821.<sup>559</sup> His appointment to the Residency was

an important milestone. Possessed of every advantage of breeding, attainments, and temperament, in thirteen years he added immensely to the dignity of his Residency, which became an acknowledged centre of the best local society, the rendezvous of the highest officials and notables, and open guest-house, and a home of antiquarian research. Rich maintained himself through the stormy last days of Sulaiman the Little, enjoyed the high favour of 'Abdullah Pasha, and congratulated Daud on his accession.<sup>560</sup>

During his stay, Rich was backing Said Pasha against Davud Efendi's bid for the governorship of Baghdad in 1816. Thus Davud Efendi was very much against the British involvement as he realized Rich's obvious support for his opponent. In time Rich even went further to order weapons from India in support of Said Pasha. Unfortunately enough for Rich, the ammunitions arrived after Said Pasha was defeated. In the end, Rich presented them to the new governor, Davud Pasha, as a gesture to repair his relations with him.<sup>561</sup>

British presence in Iraq started in the middle of the seventeenth century with a small amount of trade. As the British Empire became more and more dominant in India, Iraq's importance on the route to Europe became more vital. This dominancy is more apparent during the reign of the Süleyman the Great in the mid-eighteenth century, and after his governorship it was more apparent that the British officers had a great deal of political and financial influence on the Mamluk pashas. It was even more obvious that in the last three

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<sup>557</sup> Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 19-20.

<sup>558</sup> Amanat, *Pivot of the universe*, 21.

<sup>559</sup> In the introduction, the third and fourth chapters, I talk more on the life and political career of C.J. Rich in Iraq, his views and his motivations of writing of his two volumes book, which is titled *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*.

<sup>560</sup> Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, 255.

<sup>561</sup> CCC Baghdad 7 nr. 106, August 1817 in Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 19.



decades of the Mamluk rule, the British support was vital to keep a *mütesellim* in Basra.<sup>562</sup> Still the Mamluks wanted to keep a safe distance between themselves and the British officers. In such a delicate environment of politics, Rich became more dominant than his British predecessors in Baghdad. Many believed that Rich “had as much or more power than Sa’id Pasha.”<sup>563</sup> Davud Pasha was not ready to accept Rich’s interference in the government affairs, but the latter knew that he had enough power that he could not be ignored. Relying on the French consular correspondence in Baghdad and Basra, Nieuwenhuis quotes:

Rich had excellent relations with the merchant community, with influential tribal shaykhs and with Kurdish begs, and was able to use the strong British grip on the trade of Basra to impress the pasha when necessary. Under Sa’id his self-styled role as shadow-king of Baghdad implied his daily involvement in government affairs.<sup>564</sup>

With such power in the hands of Rich, Davud Pasha felt intimidated and he made the former to feel his antagonism. To escape from Davud’s wrath, Rich used his closeness to the Baban family and accepted Baban Mahmud Pasha’s invitation to visit Sulaimaniya for a stay during the late spring and summer of 1820. This is the period when Baban Mahmud Pasha rebelled against Davud Pasha. Therefore, the latter was very upset with Rich and as a retaliation Davud Pasha “abolished part of the Capitulations, confiscated goods of British protected merchants, and made Rich prisoner in his own Residency.”<sup>565</sup> Rich decided to protest him and retired to Sulaimaniya, which was probably one of the reasons he accepted Baban Mahmud Pasha’s invitation.<sup>566</sup> Rich did not hesitate to express his hatred and suspicion towards Davud Pasha as the political tension had grown between both. When he heard that Davud Pasha’s praise and affection for Mahmud Pasha and called the latter “as his son,” Rich reacted with skepticism and stated that “this anecdote is unquestionable, and is one of many, of a similar character, which I could relate of Daoud Pasha, and almost every other Turkish chief whom I have known.”<sup>567</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> A.A. Amin, *British interest in the Persian Gulf*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 83; Sir H. Jones Brydges, *An account of the transactions of H.M.’s mission to the court of Persia in the years 1807-1811, to which is appended a brief history of Wahaby, 2 Vols.* (London, 1834), 16, 190-191; L. De Corancez, *Histoire des Wahabis depuis leur origine jusqu’a la fin de 1809* (Paris, 1810), 116; Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 82.

<sup>563</sup> Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 82.

<sup>564</sup> CCC 5 nr. 38, (July 1813) in Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 82-83.

<sup>565</sup> Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 83; In 1820, as a revenge from British authorities, Davud Pasha despite the order of the Sultan he doubled the customs duty of the British goods and declared that “no European rights existed in Baghdad.” Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, 255-256.

<sup>566</sup> Rich states that he left Baghdad for Sulaimaniya because of his health problems. It was true that he had such problems and he passed away in a young age because of cholera and his chronic health problems. In the introduction of his *Narrative of a Residence* the editor states “in 1820, the state of his (Rich) health requiring change of air, he made a tour into Koordistan...” Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, xxix. In a footnote, the editor of Rich’s book also questioned Davud Pasha’s suspicion of Rich’s departure to Sulaimaniya. He noted: “As illustrative of the suspicion and fear of treachery ever prevailing in the mind of an Eastern governor, it may here be mentioned that Daoud, Pasha of Bagdad, had been much alarmed at the idea of Mr. Rich’s going to Koordistan. The reasons given did not satisfy him; for no Turk ever thinks of travelling for health or amusement. He evidently suspected evil against himself; and the arrival of this Tartar from Constantinople, just on Mr. Rich’s arrival in Koordistan, is said strongly to have confirmed his fears.” Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 69.

<sup>567</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 132.

After a while, Rich determined to leave Iraq for Bombay permanently. In the meantime, the British authorities chose to blockade the trade in the port of Basra between 1821 and 1823 as retribution to Davud Pasha's attitude towards them. At first, Davud Pasha did not allow Rich to leave his residency in Baghdad. He and his Sepoy guard, the Residency servants, and some of his visitors determined to resist the infantry and barricades around the Residency. Davud Pasha finally had to give up with his pressure on Rich as the former was impelled by the diplomatic letter of the governor of Bombay to the Sublime Porte.<sup>568</sup> Adding that also the plague of 1821, which had killed thousands in Basra and few hundreds in Baghdad and Sulaimaniya, caused the trade in Iraq to bankrupt and the prices to skyrocket, Davud Pasha had to allow the British, with its trade and politics, to function. Accordingly, Davud Pasha had to make a smart choice and not to confront with Rich. Although in the end Rich left Baghdad and Davud was very happy about it, there were still opponents recruited by the former. Once Rich departed, the good relations between Davud Pasha and the incoming British resident were restored and never broken again in the same extent.

Although Rich had such unsettled relations with Davud Pasha because of the Babans, it was not new news that he had good relations with Baban *mutasarrifs*.<sup>569</sup> He started to have such strong relations when Abdurrahman Pasha was the *mutasarrif* of Baban Sanjaq. Rich, for instance, acted as the intermediary between Baban Abdurrahman Pasha and Fath Ali Shah of Iran in 1811.<sup>570</sup>

## The War

The war expanded over three years and took place in almost all parts of the border between two empires. The conflict between two sides was more a series of small wars spread over the time, rather than one big war in a limited period. The clashes happened in two major areas; the border between Azerbaijan of Iran and Erzurum of the Ottoman (northern part of the borderline), and the Kermanshah province of Iran and Baghdad province (southern borderline). Therefore, we could say that there were two frontlines in this conflict. Although the clashes took place in the same time in both parts of the border, there was sometimes calmness in one part while the other witnessed some fierce fighting. Moreover, the causes of the war varied for each part of the border. For instance, on the one hand in the North the crown prince Abbas Mirza had lost some lands to the Russians and wanted to make up these

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<sup>568</sup> Longrigg claims that “*the Resident in Iraq was proportionately a more eminent figure than the Ambassador at Stambul: insults to the one must attract the grave notice of the other and through him of the Government of Turkey. In permitting the British Resident to become (as many now acclaimed him- Longrigg) the second man in Iraq, the Mamluk Pashas had shown some recognition of the means of progress, some willingness to be guided, some lightening of prejudice, occasional friendship and courtesy...*” Considering that Iraq was a major way to India and Iran for British Empire, Longrigg's statement has some credibility in it. Longrigg, *Four Centuries*, 256.

<sup>569</sup> In Rich's words, when he met with Baban Abdullah Pasha, Mahmud Pasha's uncle, it is clear that he was fond of Babans and hated Davud Pasha. On 9 May of 1820, he stated :“*In the afternoon my old friend Abdullah Pasha came to see me... It was easy to see that the members of the Bagdad government, and particularly Daoud Pasha, were not very high in his favour : nor do I wonder at it. He has been very ill-treated by the Turks, and no doubt will find some opportunity of repaying them with interest.*” Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 74.

<sup>570</sup> CCC Basra 2 nr. 071 in Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 197.

loses, not to mention that he wanted to prove himself to his father. On the other hand, in the Southern border Muhammad Ali Mirza had problems with the Babans and Davud Pasha. But of course, there were general issues to deal with in this conflict, such as the issue of pilgrims visiting sacred places in the Ottoman lands, custom dues applied to the Iranian merchants, and the issue of fugitives between to states. In this chapter our focus is more on the Southern border as the conflict over the Baban territories took place here, but the references are made to the issues in the Northern part of the border where they are relevant with our topic.

The Iranians had, more or less, the same issues with the Ottomans since the Safavid period and these problems intensified during eighteenth century, when there was no single authority in Iranian lands to ask the Ottomans to stop interfering in their affairs. Whereas after the Qajar dynasty rose to the power and gradually united the Iranian lands under their rule, they started to feel more confident to make demands from the Ottomans on the issues stated above. Although, they did not see much response back from the Sublime Porte, the Shah and his two most powerful sons, Abbas Mirza and Muhammad Ali Mirza, decided to show their seriousness with the power that they had been accumulating for a while.

Besides the perpetual issue of the Babans and their domains, there were several other reasons for Iran and the Ottomans to have a war. One of the reasons of the war was the issue of political fugitives like Sadik Bey, who was brother of Said Pasha.<sup>571</sup> Sadik Bey escaped from Davud Pasha's wrath and took refuge in the court of Prince Abbas Mirza. The latter made a request from his father, Fath Ali Shah, to write a letter to the Sultan soliciting a pardon for Sadik Bey. Upon the letter, Sadik Bey left for Erzurum and later went to Tokat, but was put to death there and the Iranian officer accompanied him was imprisoned. This had made Abbas Mirza to demand a confrontation from the Shah.<sup>572</sup>

There was of course the perennial issue of pilgrims, who passed through Iraq en route to reach to Mecca and Shi'ite holy sites of Najaf and Karbala. The pilgrims on these routes were frequently stopped and overcharged by custom officers besides the harassment by the Wahhabi zealots. This time the issue became more serious when some of the Shah's wives experienced similar attitudes during their pilgrimage.

Almost all sources agree on the causes of the war that are stated above.<sup>573</sup> Beyond this, a more unusual reason was suggested by the British officer James Baillie Fraser, who was on his way back to Britain from India and witnessed the war during its last phase:

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<sup>571</sup> Williamson suggests that the kidnapping and beheading of Sadik Pasha served as a catalyst for an Iranian offensive. Although the case of Sadik Bey was not alone the reason for such an offensive, his death served well to the interest of Iranians to declare war on the Ottomans. Williamson, "The Turko-Persian War," 88-109; Despite such a crisis caused by the Ottomans because of Sadik Bey's execution, Davud Pasha benefited from his death as one more of his rivals was eliminated. Nieuwenhuis, *Politics and society*, 95.

<sup>572</sup> Fraser, *Travels and adventures*, 311-312.

<sup>573</sup> al-Waili in his thorough book on the Babans talks about the reasons of the war and he adds that although it was a tradition of the previous governors to pay tribute to the Shah and the governor of Kermanshah when they came to power, Davud Pasha refused to do the same and thus offended the Iranian leaders. For sure this was one of the reasons of the war but not the most important one. Abid Rabbi Ibrahim al-Waili, *Tarikh al-Imarat al-Babaniyyah*, 239.

But the true cause of the war is, more probably, to be found in the jealousy which Abbas Meerza conceived for the fame and advantage which his brother Mahomed Allee Meerza, the warlike governor of Kermanshah, had acquired by his expeditions against the Turks in that quarter. For some time he had remonstrated with that prince against this war; but finding his own military reputation was rather suffering, while that of Mahomed Allee Meerza was daily increasing by his exploits, he determined to try his own fortune; and accordingly in the year 1821, without any formal declaration, entered the Turkish territories, laid siege to, and took the fortress of Bayazeed, while one of his generals penetrating towards Diarbekr, plundered the villages, and drove away the cattle. This general, however, receiving some check, and being unsupported by the prince, was forced to retreat, and, falling into an ambuscade, was cut to pieces, so that the campaign closed with little advantage to either party.<sup>574</sup>

Fraser's suggestion certainly had concrete bases as Abbas Mirza tried with all diplomatic crises to create a reason for war. Somehow, Abbas Mirza's "chief delight" was "war" as he wanted to prove that he was fit for a king. With such an attitude he wanted to make sure that his older brother Muhammad Ali Mirza would not dispute his succession to the throne of Iran. Indeed, in the political arena of Persian court, Muhammad Ali Mirza would sometime be used as a counter-weight to Abbas Mirza's increasing authority. A member of Russian military intelligence, Avyarov also confirms that there was a disagreement between both Persian princes for the accession to the throne. He, interestingly, adds that because of the quarrel between two, the Kurds on the Iranian side were also divided between both leaders as the Kurds of Ardalan, located in the South of Iranian Kurdistan, supported Muhammad Ali Mirza, while the rest in Azerbaijan, Maku, and Erivan were backing Abbas Mirza ( thanks to the tax breaks and privileges provided by the latter).<sup>575</sup>

Abbas Mirza had "a noble and manly countenance, and to an animated and energetic character add(ed) a judgment by no means common at his time of life, and still less usual in Persia."<sup>576</sup> On the contrary to the above praise by Freygangs, Fraser, who made an inquiry about Abbas Mirza both to Europeans and natives of Tabriz during the war of Ottoman-Iranian, states that the Europeans always exaggerated the qualities and the extent of his military establishment. Fraser dismisses such comments with "disappointment" that Abbas Mirza caused in the wars and military expeditions. He continues:

It has become certain that he has neither much talent to devise useful measures himself, nor steadiness to carry into operation those suggested by others; for although he readily lends an ear to them when proposed, he is as easily swayed in an opposite way by the next adviser. Thus a minister, who, satisfied with the assent which his suggestions may have

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<sup>574</sup> Fraser, *Travels and adventures*, 312.

<sup>575</sup> Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus ve İran Savaşları'nda Kürtler: 1801-1900*, Trans. From Otoman to Turkish by Muhammed Varlı (Ankara: Sipan Yayıncılık, 1995), 9.

<sup>576</sup> Abbas Mirza was twenty six years old when the Freygangs met him in 1812. At the time, Abbas Mirza was already active in political and military affairs as his father Fath Ali Shah was becoming "more incapable, unambitious and without energy." Fredrika Kudriavskaja von Freygang and Wilhelm von Freygang, *Letters from the Caucasus and Georgia*, (London: J. Murray, 1823), 314.

received from the prince, has begun to carry them into effect, may, at the next audience, find the whole affair forgotten, or talked of as a matter past and gone, to be thought of no more.<sup>577</sup>

European travelers were for sure overrating Abbas Mirza because of his pre-selection to the throne and more importantly his interest into the European military techniques and discipline. Fraser downplays the crown prince's eagerness to modernize his military because he did it only to fend off the imminent threat of Russia and once this peril came to an end "he was so far from persevering in the system, or endeavoring to maintain the degree of discipline which his troops had acquired from the unwearied exertions of the English officers in his service, that he treated these officers not only with inattention, but suspicion."<sup>578</sup> Witnessing Abbas Mirza's attitude towards the British officers, Fraser could not take himself but dashing the crown prince. However, what he added to the other Europeans' comments on the prince's character certainly had some credit as his military career was not as bright enough as his stepbrother Muhammad Ali Mirza's.

While the struggle for the throne continued between the contenders the sound of war drums was becoming higher as the Ottomans were growing deafer and the patient of Iranians was running out. Rich was in Shiraz on 11 September of 1821 and reported about the gatherers of the war:

Pilgrims have just arrived from Bagdad in thirtyseven days. All is in confusion there, and a Persian war seems inevitable. The Turkish troops are plundering and insulting every one, and the bazaars are quite deserted. The Pasha seizes every one he can get hold of, to extort money; and all who can possibly escape are running away in every direction. He has taken five thousand rupees from the Nuwaub. Some workmen of the Imperial Mint have arrived at Bagdad to coin, as it is said, the bullion taken from the treasuries of Nejef and Kerbela. Mohammed Ali Mirza is at the foot of the Tauk, waiting for troops, which the king is sending him. Aman ullah Khan is ordered to cooperate with him, and it seems the Koords have joined him also. To oppose this hostile demonstration, the Kiahya has stationed himself at Mendeli with the Turkish army, while the Pasha stays in Bagdad.<sup>579</sup>

While the war was inevitable, it was clear that the Ottoman powers were weaker than the Iranian ones as the former had more work to do with its internal issues such as the Greek rebellion in Morea and the conflict between the governors of Acre and Damascus. Adding to that was the issue of lack of discipline among the Ottoman army because of the lethargy of Janissaries. Contrary to this scene, the Persian army was more disciplined and united in the North under the command of Abbas Mirza and the South under Muhammad Ali Mirza's leadership. Besides, the Iranian forces, especially the Azerbaijani army, were trained by Europeans, which made of less number but a more efficient and disciplined one.<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>577</sup> Fraser, *Travels and adventures*, 310.

<sup>578</sup> Fraser, *Travels and adventures*, 310.

<sup>579</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. II, 225-226.

<sup>580</sup> Although Williamson, without giving a number, praises the Persian army for being smaller and more efficient than the Ottoman army (Williamson, "The Turko-Persian War," 88-109), Huart counts them as little less than

In late 1820 conflict over the Baban Sanjaq came between Baghdad and Kermanshah. In a letter dated on 5 January 1821 (30 Rajab 1236), Muhammad Ali Mirza, the governor of Kermanshah, threatened Mahmud Pasha to take over Kurdistan.<sup>581</sup> Despite all such blackmails Muhammad Ali Mirza could not accomplish having Mahmud Pasha on his side. After such intimidations and coercion, Mahmud Pasha decided to side with Davud Pasha against the alliance of Muhammad Ali Mirza and his uncle Abdullah.<sup>582</sup> Rich, in Sulaimaniya at the time, tells us that Abdullah was caught with correspondence from the governor of Kermanshah with a plan to oust Mahmud Pasha. Rich was sure that Abdullah worked with Mahmud's younger brother Osman, who was also corresponding with the governor of Kermanshah, on this plot.<sup>583</sup> Mahmud Pasha decided not to hand Abdullah to Baghdad, probably because of his soft-heartedness. He would prove wrong about his uncle Abdullah when a year after the latter invaded Shahrizor with the help of Muhammad Ali Mirza's 5000 Iranian forces and seized Sulaimaniya.<sup>584</sup> Once the occupation was complete, Muhammad Ali Mirza appointed Abdullah as the head of the Baban Sanjaq.<sup>585</sup>

Compared to the Persian forces, the Ottoman military was weaker and more decentralized because of political rivalries and jealousies between valis and commanders. The provincial governors were usually hesitant to raise their armed men for the war. However, we are not sure what exactly the number of soldiers was in both sides as each Ottoman and Persian governor had his own army.<sup>586</sup> There were in general two armies facing each other in the North (under the leadership of the governor of Azerbaijan and Erzurum) and two in the South (under the leadership of the governor of Kermanshah and Baghdad) clashing with one another.<sup>587</sup>

While newly started war between the Ottomans and the Qajars in the northern border of Erzurum continued, on 4 November 1821, Muhammad Ali Mirza decided to go further towards the west in order to invade Baghdad.<sup>588</sup> Seeing the enemy at the gates, Davud Pasha was in hurry to ask for back up from the Sublime Porte. Once he did not see any help from Istanbul, he immediately sent out Shi'i scholar Sheik Musa as a peace mediator. Muhammad Ali Mirza accepted to seat for negotiations. In the end of negotiations, Davud Pasha accepted

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fifty thousands: "une armée persane, qui ne comptait guère moins de cinquante mille homes." Still the number of both armies was not clear, as the war spread all over the border. Huart, *Histoire de Bagdad*, 174.

<sup>581</sup> Letter from Davud Pasha to the Porte. HAT #36178-A (30.Ra.1236/5 January, 1821)

<sup>582</sup> Letter from Davud Pasha to the Porte. HAT #36178-C (17.Ca.1236/20 February, 1821)

<sup>583</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 148-149.

<sup>584</sup> McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds*, 35; Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 142. Occupation of Sulaimaniya was heard by the world through the news carried out by Christian missionaries to the West. The periodical *Christian Secretary* recorded, though a little bit later, in a news from Istanbul, which they got it through German and Italian journals stating "the only important fact is the renewal of hostilities by Persia against Turkey. The Persian Prince Mehemet Ali has attacked the Pacha of Bagdad, and got possession of Sulimania, the residence of Pacha of Kurdistan." *Christian Secretary*, (7 Dec. 1824): 1, 45.

<sup>585</sup> Abbas Azzawi, *Tarikh al-'Iraq bayna ihtilalain*, Vol. 6 (Baghdad : Sharikat al-Tijarah wa-al Tiba'ah al-Mahdudah, 1939), 272.

<sup>586</sup> Williamson, "The Turko-Persian War," 90.

<sup>587</sup> The Ottoman army in the North, headed by Hüsrev Pasha, governor of Erzurum, was made of Janissaries, foot-militia, light tribal cavalry and mounted Kurdish infantries from Erzurum, Kars, Muş and Van provinces. Williamson gives a total number of the army in the North as roughly 55,000. Whereas, the army under the command of Abbas Mirza was close to 40,000, including the small corps from Erivan. Williamson, "The Turko-Persian War," 92-93.

<sup>588</sup> HAT #36821(09.S.1237/4 November, 1821).

what the Iranian side asked for and that was the appointment of Abdullah Pasha to the head of the Baban Sanjaq, which would be recognized officially by Baghdad.<sup>589</sup> After these negotiations, the war in the southern borders stopped and Muhammad Ali Mirza withdrew his forces from the Baban Sanjaq. During the withdrawal process in late November of 1821, Muhammed Ali Mirza got sick and died on the way back to Kermanshah.<sup>590</sup> Davud Pasha immediately put a force together under the leadership of Ali Pasha, the governor of Diyarbekir, and sent him to help Mahmud Pasha. Abdullah Pasha with his Iranian forces was easily defeated and Mahmud Pasha was one more time the head of the Baban Sanjaq.<sup>591</sup> Meanwhile, the province of Kermanshah and Baghdad borders were assigned to the crown prince Abbas Mirza by the Shah. When Abbas Mirza seized the opportunity he convinced Mahmud Pasha to ally with him against Davud Pasha. In the meantime, Abdullah Pasha, when realizing the Iranian side would not work with him, chose to collaborate with Davud Pasha against the alliance of Mahmud Pasha and Abbas Mirza. In return, Davud Pasha appointed Abdullah Pasha as the head of the Baban Sanjaq.<sup>592</sup>

This rapid exchange of loyalties brought the Baban issue one more time in between two states. The final conflict over the Baban Sanjaq before the treaty of Erzurum took place when the Shah decided to attack to the province of Baghdad upon the start of war between the Ottomans and Iranians in Erzurum in August 1822. Russians were also encouraging Fath Ali Shah to take advantage of Mahmud II's "domestic and foreign diversion and to compensate for his losses to Russia by retaking some territories from the Ottomans."<sup>593</sup> Although Iranians were successful at gaining some Ottoman lands, they took over Sulaimaniya one more time, they had to give up with their claims over occupied lands once the cholera centered in Sulaimaniya caused many deaths among Iranian forces.<sup>594</sup> Baban Sanjaq changed hands between family members of the Baban dynasty, but in the end Sulaimaniya was given to Mahmud Pasha while Koy Sanjaq was assigned to Abdullah Pasha as the treaty determined.<sup>595</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 143.

<sup>590</sup> Avery, et al. *The Cambridge history of Iran*, pp. 312-13; Jouannin and van Gaver also records the time that Muhammad Ali Mirza passed away : "Le 15 novembre 1821, la guerre éclate entre ces deux musulmanes. Les hostilités n'eurent, pendant cette année, d'autres résultats que la prise de quelques places, telles que Kârs et Toprak-Kal'é. La mort du prince Muhammed-Ali-Mirza, frappé par le choléra-morbus, arrêta bientôt les opérations de son armée contre Bagdad, qu'il voulait soumettre aux armes persanes, jaloux de la gloire de réunir à l'empire d'Iran une ville aussi célèbre, qui, depuis deux siècles, en avait été violemment séparée" J.M. Jouannin et J. van Gaver, *Turquie*, (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, Editeurs, 1840), 395.

<sup>591</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 144.

<sup>592</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 144; Ahmet Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet, Vol 12*, 12.

<sup>593</sup> Shaw & Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, 16; Russia was interested in Iran's territories way before the Europeans penetrated into it. Though Russia had little action until the she realized that the presence of France and Britain was more apparent. Iran's relations with British Empire were slightly better than Russian one. Besides, as Atkin suggests, it was Abbas not his father, Fath Ali Shah, who played the key relations with Russia. He also adds that it was the crown prince who was behind the war with the Ottomans, as Abbas Mirza wanted to compensate for the personal humiliation that he had experienced during the war with Russians. Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 156.

<sup>594</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 154-155; The Iranian forces, with the help of some Kurdish notables who took refuge in Iran before, occupied Bayezit and advanced on Erzurum while a second force took Bitlis and went toward Diyarbekir. Shaw & Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, 16.

<sup>595</sup> McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds*, 59.

## A Fragile Agreement: The Peace Treaty of Erzurum (1823)

The treaty of Erzurum took more than a year to sign and both sides were still not happy about the outcome. There was even a time when negotiations were almost got cut off, but it was clear that both sides wanted to have peace. Although, Iran tried to have some rights on the Baban and Koy Sanjaq, Abbas Mirza was determent to have peace as clarified in his letter to Mirza Muhammad Ali, the Iranian negotiator, in July 1823.<sup>596</sup> According to the treaty Iran accepted to cease getting involved into the matters of Kurdistan and the Baban Sanjaq. Besides, Iran was not going to try to affect the selection of a leader for the Baban domains.<sup>597</sup> Throughout of all these negotiations the Ottoman side did not want the members of the Baban family to be involved into the peace process and they did not want them to be a matter of negotiation. In a correspondence from Baghdad to Istanbul, the Baban pashas were described as “the connection between two states and have no reason to go to war.” “Therefore,” the letter continues, “it would not be legitimate to include the Babans into the peace negotiation.”<sup>598</sup> Despite the negotiations, Iran tried to stay in Sulaimaniya and the Baban territories by bribing Mahmud Pasha.<sup>599</sup> After the treaty not much changed in the Ottoman Kurdistan and the Baban domains. A letter from Davud pasha to the commander-in-chief (*serasker*) Rauf Pasha, dated on 20 March, 1824 (19 Receb, 1239), stated that “the matters related with the issue of Kurdistan are sorted out,” (*Kürdistan umurundan maâda olan mesâlih halledilmiş*) except “the problem of the pashas of Kurdistan”, who were still allying with Iranians. This was considered as “the only problem” and the obstacle before putting the treaty into practice.<sup>600</sup> Besides such complications, the news about the desire of Iranians to keep the Ottoman Kurdistan was coming in.<sup>601</sup> The Iranian khan of Sawj Bulaq, Ibrahim Khan, was also putting pressure on the people to collect the tributes, therefore many of the locals and the *ulema* were fleeing to Arbil and Kirkuk.<sup>602</sup>

It was not only Iranians or the Ottomans who were persecuting the population in Baban Sanjaq, but the very own leaders of the locale were presenting similar attitudes. A letter from Baghdad was highlighting that the population escaped from Baban Mahmud Pasha’s reign to Kirkuk and Arbil because of his pressure on the people.<sup>603</sup> The motivation behind his action was probably based on two reasons: taking revenge from his people because he did not receive their support during the conflict with Iranians and the Ottomans, and the second reason is that the Iranians were encouraging and backing him for such abuses. Although there is no document supporting our first argument, still the previous actions of Mahmud Baban are suggesting that he did this because of personal grievances. The second

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<sup>596</sup> Kalantari, “Feth Ali Şah,” 172; According to Kalantari, Abbas Mirza asked to Mirza Muhammad Ali to try to put vague articles into the treaty in order to keep the door open for future intervention of Baban Sanjaq.

<sup>597</sup> Kalantari, “Feth Ali Şah,” 176.

<sup>598</sup> The letter states “*Musalaha işinin Baban’a taalluku olmadığı, Baban paşalarının daima iki devlet arasında rabıta vazifesini icra ettikleri ve harbe müteallik bir şeyleri olmadığı ve musalaha ahkâmına Babanların karıştırılmasının caiz olmadığı.*” HAT #37113-S (29.Z.1239/ 25 August, 1824).

<sup>599</sup> HAT #37196-A (05.B.1239/ 6 March, 1824).

<sup>600</sup> HAT #36617-A (19.B.1239/ 20 March, 1924)

<sup>601</sup> The letter from Abbas Mirza to Davud Pasha was indicating that the Iranians would not give up the Ottoman Kurdistan and the Baban territories that easily. HAT #36618-H (29.Z.1239/ 25 August 1824)

<sup>602</sup> HAT #36617-C (15.N.1239/ 15 May 1824); The letter was also announcing the departure of the Iranian military from the Ottoman Kurdistan and return of the Kurdish pashas to the Ottoman side.

<sup>603</sup> HAT #37196-B (05.B.1239/ 6 March, 1824).



motivation was obvious as the crown prince Abbas Mirza asked Muhammad Ali Mirza to seek possible ways having Baghdad to appoint Mahmud Pasha in order to secure the loyalty of the Kurdish population.<sup>604</sup>

One reason for the insistence of Iran over the Baban matter was the attitude of Davud Pasha toward Iran. Before Davud Pasha came to power, every year the governor of Baghdad would send a substantial amount of money and gifts to Iran's Shah and its princes in Azerbaijan and Kermanshah. He wanted to break with this tradition and the Shah was not happy with his reaction. Therefore, there had been more interventions to the province of Baghdad from the Iranian side since Davud Pasha had been to office.<sup>605</sup> Another reason was perhaps the strategic location of Sulaimaniya and the Baban territories, since it was located between the triangle of Kirkuk, Mosul, and Baghdad.<sup>606</sup>

The Babans stayed as a matter between both states until mid-1850s when the Babans were finally subdued by the Ottomans as a part of centralization project. However, what changed between the Ottomans and Iranians was significant because of the Erzurum treaty. For the first time, Iranians were recognized as foreigners and were treated equally with British, French and other non-muslim nationalities. This was a major change since the Iranians were considered as part of the Muslim *umma* and therefore the sharia was applied to them in times of conflict between the Iranian and the Ottoman subjects. But, thanks to this treaty "like the Europeans before them, they were to be given special consideration in their dealings with the central government and were entitled to state intervention should they encounter violations of the treaty by Ottomans, whether government officials or otherwise."<sup>607</sup> Besides, the Shah and the Sultan were treated as equal and sovereign Muslim leaders. The Erzurum treaty concerned with "the demarcation of the frontier, control of the migration of Kurdish clans across the border, and return of would-be pretenders to the thrones of both states."<sup>608</sup> Although Iran could not succeed its political aims, for sure it had some financial gains. Iranian pilgrims would not be taxed extraordinarily and their goods would be taxed at a consistent rate. Besides, Iranian merchants would only be taxed at one location at a rate of %4 of goods that they were importing. Besides, reforms would be instituted for handling of the estates of Iranians who deceased in the Ottoman lands.<sup>609</sup> Even though such items were added to the treaty little changed in Ottoman provinces, especially in the Ottoman Kurdistan and Baghdad since hostilities against Iranians continued.

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<sup>604</sup> HAT #37196-D (07.C.1239/ 8 February, 1824); The letter from Baghdad also inserted that despite the Iranian side wanted to have Mahmud Pasha appointed as the leader of the Baban territories, he would not be recognized by the population as long as he allied with the Iranians "since the majority of the people were Sunnis and particularly Shafi'i creed."

<sup>605</sup> Kalantari, "Feth Ali Şah," 177.

<sup>606</sup> Because of the important location of Sulaimaniya, the Ottomans were always worried about having the Iranian presence there. When Ibrahim Khan, the khan of Sawj Bulaq, occupied this region in February 1824, the vali of Baghdad was very much alarmed and sent an urgent message to the commander-in-chief (*serasker*)Rauf pasha for help. HAT # 37196-G (27.C.1239/ 28 February 1824).

<sup>607</sup> Bruce Masters, "The treaties of Erzurum (1823 and 1848) and the changing status of Iranians in the Ottoman Empire," *Iranian Studies*, 24:1(1991), 9.

<sup>608</sup> Masters, "The treaties of Erzurum," 10.

<sup>609</sup> Masters, "The treaties of Erzurum," 10.

As Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet suggests, the Ottoman-Iranian enmity was no localized matter, “embracing far more animus than mere land disputes.” The conflict between two states forced people to emphasize more on their regional, religious and cultural differences and they went further to protect such identities despite the absence of the national identities.<sup>610</sup>

As for the Babans, they always tried to have some kind of independence or semi-autonomy from Baghdad, and from Iranians, nevertheless they never thought or imagined of being totally independent from the Ottoman suzerainty. The Ottomans kept the Babans more independent than the other parts of the empire because of their unique geographic location and long time feudal status among Kurds of frontier. A sign of this “special status” of the Baban Sanjaq, if there was any, was that it was not registered as a *timar*, which means that the tax was collected by the Babans themselves and given a portion of it to the officers from the center.<sup>611</sup> Besides, they spent the tax income for their own local needs and military personnel. This was the case for several other Kurdish emirates in other provinces. Once in a while the provincial governors, such as Baghdad, Mosul, Van, Bitlis, demanded their share from these emirates, but they were successful to collect it only few times. For instance, Davud Pasha went further by dispatching his military on the pashas of Sulaimaniya when he did not receive his tribute, but then what he collected and more was already spent for such military campaigns and thus he normally lost more than what he got.

At the same time they were conscious of their position between two states. It seems that Mahmud Pasha was well aware of this situation as Rich recorded in a conversation with him on 8 May 1820. Squeezed in between two “rival powers” “one of which never ceased persecuting him for contributions,- the other his natural sovereigns, that is the Turks, insisted that he should neither serve nor pay Persia; and yet Turkey was neither able nor willing to defend him, when Shahzadeh of Kermanshah carried on his exactions by force.”<sup>612</sup> Despite such suspicion of both powers Rich observed the Sunnism of the Kurds had been used against Shi’i Iran in times of conflict, though with success.<sup>613</sup> The Babans did not see much difference in between both powers’ faith when they seized moments of opportunity. In fact, as Avyarov states in his report that he prepared on the Kurds for the Russian Empire, the Kurds did not care much about the religious unity and many Kurdish sheikhs did not consider the Sultan as the legitimate caliph since he was not a descendent of the Prophet.<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier fictions: shaping the Iranian nation, 1804-1946*, (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2000), 25.

<sup>611</sup> See more details on difference between “hükümet”, “sanjaq” and “ocaklık” in Christopher Houston, “‘Set aside from the pen and cut off from the foot’: Imagining the Ottoman Empire and Kurdistan”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27:2, (2007), 297-411; also Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* (London: Zed Publishing, 1992), 210; Mehmet Öz, “Ottoman Provincial Administration in Eastern and Southern Anatolia: The Case of Bidlis in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities, and Political Changes*, ed. Kemal Karpat (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 146-147.

<sup>612</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 71.

<sup>613</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 72.

<sup>614</sup> Avyarov, *Osmanlı-Rus*, 147; As a proof of his assertion, Avyarov states that when Sheikh Ubeydullah called the Kurds for jihad under the “the banner of the prophet” many of them did not respond to him. Besides, he adds that the Kurds did not have much sense of national unity, rather they were more bound with their tribes and they were very much fond of their freedom. As in the case of Bedirhan, Yezdanşir and Ubeydullah, he claims that the Kurds were not much moved by their call to be united as one nation.

Politics of opportunity became the nature of the Babans in some sense. There was a *ruse contre ruse* where all local powers were playing to each other while the far reaching suzerain power is satisfied with watching this game. In another word the Baban Sanjaq became like a chess board where governors of Baghdad and Kermanshah were playing with major chessman while members of the Baban dynasty are plain chess pawns. Meanwhile, the Sultan and the Shah were waiting to the end for the last strike and “check-mate.” “Alliances crisscrossed at bewildering speed.”<sup>615</sup> When Mahmud Pasha was fighting against his uncle Abdullah to the death, a while later the former would allow the latter to live under his authority again.<sup>616</sup> Loyalty to each other or to their suzerain could change in favor of more profitable one and that was the norm accepted in the Baban Sanjaq and surrounding world. Besides, culture of forgetting betrayals was preferable for the sake of employing skilled princely members of notable families. When finally the new governor of Baghdad, as a result of centralization policy, decided to crash the last ruler of the Baban, Ahmad Pasha, in 1847, he was deposed and another member of the Babans was appointed as a *kaymakam*. Several Ottoman documents show that later on, many members of the Baban family were employed in different parts of the empire and some other were granted with state pension.<sup>617</sup>

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<sup>615</sup> McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds*, 59.

<sup>616</sup> Rich, *Narrative of a Residence*, vol. I, 74, 149; Rich meets Abdullah Baban in Sulaimaniya on 9 May, 1820 and spoke about Mahmud Pasha “with respect and seeming kindness” despite Mahmud Pasha defeated him two years earlier. Mahmud Pasha was mutasarrif of Sulaimaniya at the time that Rich was there (p. 74). He even gave the most cultivated land to Abdullah Pasha in order to reach an agreement (p. 149).

<sup>617</sup> Some of these documents are: DH.MKT #169/41.(09.Ra.1311/ 20 September, 1893) Request by Baban Husein Beyzade Selim Bey for a military appointment; I.MVL. #343/14875 (10.Ra.1272/ 20 November, 1855) assignment of pension to several members of Baban who live in Shahr-i Zor; I.DUIT #8/13(1.Ra.1329/ 2 March, 1911) Appointment of Babanzade Ismail Hakki Bey as the Minister of Education; I. DUIT #121/16 (14.Z.1335/ 1 October 1917) Babanzade Hikmet Bey, member of Parliament from Sulaimaniya and founder of Duhan Company.

## CHAPTER V

### DECLINE OF THE BABANS AND THE RISE OF A NEW ORDER

The conflict over the borders and Baban territories continued to become an issue between the Ottomans and Iranians after the treaty of Erzurum was signed in 1823. From this period on, Russia became a dominant player in relations between the Ottomans and Iranians, and she was more involved into the border issues and more specifically the status of the Kurdish and Armenian lands in between two states. Russia had war with Iran in 1827 and the Ottomans in 1828-29, and in both wars Russia was the winning side. The war with Iran produced Türkmençay treaty (1828) and the one with the Ottomans resulted in Edirne treaty (1829). Both treaties had devastating results for Iran and the Ottomans as they lost territories to Russia. During the both wars Iran and the Ottomans demanded help from each other but were not much successful to convince one another because of the suspicion they developed during the war they had earlier. Still, they knew that they needed to have some kind of alliance against Russia, therefore they signed a secret accord in mid-1829.<sup>618</sup>

The conflict over the borders and Baban territories continued to become an issue between the Ottomans and Iranians after the treaty of Erzurum was signed in 1823. The border with Iran during the two decades from 1828 until 1847 became a field for the imperial powers to challenge each other and to show off their muscle. Beside Iran and the Ottomans, came along Russia and the British Empire in this border region. Before the war between the Ottomans and Iranians in early 1820s, the border was more or less stable and was an issue between the local powers. Once the first treaty of Erzurum was signed in 1823, it became more of a state level issue. After the war of Iran and the Ottomans with the Russians (with Iran in 1827 and the Ottomans in 1828-29) the international community started to pay more attention to these boundaries and this attention took its peak when a quartet commission, which was made of Russian, British, Ottoman, and Iranian delegates, was set up. The road was paved carefully and patiently until Russia and Britain got involved into the conflicts between the Persians and the Ottomans. The British and Russians were the two dominant powers already in Europe when the war on the Ottoman-Iranian border in 1821 took place, and both European powers tried to get involved into the peace process, but with a limited outcome. Therefore, they looked for the next opportunity to engage into the politics in this region. The wars between Russia and the two Muslim powers were the prelude for the former to be part of this border making commission along with Britain. The tension rose between the 1834 and 1840 when the Ottomans attacked Muammarah (Khorramshahr) and persecuted the Shi'is in Iraq.<sup>619</sup> Russia used this last opportunity to become the dominant imperial power and a rival to the British Empire in the region.

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<sup>618</sup>Yahya Kalantari, "Feth-Ali Şah," 197-198.

<sup>619</sup> Dilip Hiro, *Neighbors, not friends: Iraq and Iran after the Gulf wars*, (London: Routledge, 2001), 2.

The boundary that was separating the Persian and the Ottoman Empires was shaped in 1639 with the treaty of Kasr-ı Şirin. The Aras River in the north marked a line through the peaks of Zagros Mountains to the Persian Gulf, which roughly constituted the border between two states. Through two centuries little effort was made to implement the rule of law in this region as the geography and ethnic composition of the region was making it impossible. It was only made doable under the pressure of the Russians and the British, both of whom had imperial interests in the region, when Ottomans and Persians were forced to sign a second treaty of Erzurum in 1847.<sup>620</sup>

Before signing the second treaty of Erzurum, as we partially stated above, Iran and the Ottomans clashed periodically but there was no major scale war. While the conflict continued between two powers, the Babans, a powerful Kurdish emirate centered in Sulaimaniya close to the border, had also struggled to keep their political and territorial autonomy from the Ottomans. The Ottomans declared Tanzimat in 1839 and started to put it into practice, which brought the border regions further under the realm of the central power. Meanwhile, the Iranians continued to hassle the Babans and insisted that they had the right on their territories. The issue of the Baban Sanjaq kept coming in between two states even after Iran agreed to give up altogether with its claim on it. When signing the first Erzurum treaty Iran declared that it would not make any pressure on Baghdad and the members of the Baban family when they elect a leader for the Sanjaq. Iran agreed to give up with all villages, towns and fortresses in the Sanjaq, which she occupied during the war in 1821.<sup>621</sup> Furthermore, the issue of the tribes, who had summer and winter camps on the both sides of the border, was going to be resolved between the governor of Azerbaijan Abbas Mirza and of Baghdad Davud Pasha. Nonetheless, the Iranians did not give up with all lands, such as Zohab. The interference into the issues between the members of the Baban family continued to be part of politics anticipated by the Iranian valis of Kermanshah and Azerbaijan. Apparently, Baban members considered this intrusion as an opportunity to be relieved from Davud Pasha's pressure. From the beginning the Iranians treated Babans with a well manner and they always benefited from such a policy, as in the case of Mahmud Pasha, the mir of Baban between 1813 and 1831, who decided to side with the former, one more time after the first treaty of Erzurum was signed.<sup>622</sup>

After the treaty of Erzurum was signed in 1823, there were still some questions remained unresolved. In order to solve these problems between Davud Pasha and Abbas Mirza, Pazarcıbaşı Küçük Teskireci Esat Efendi was assigned as a peace delegate by the Sublime Porte and was sent to Baghdad in late 1824.<sup>623</sup> He was also planning to meet with, Huseyin Quli Khan, the Iranian delegate to Baghdad. The negotiations were made and most of the issues were straightened out. However, the matter on the status of Baban territories remained unsettled and the Iranian delegate claimed that he did not have the authority to make

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<sup>620</sup> Masud Moradi, "The Border of the Persian and the Ottoman Empires: An Analysis of Persian Sovereignty over the District of Qotur" in ed. Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh, *Boundary Politics and International Boundaries of Iran*, (Boca Raton, FL: Universal-Publishers, 2006), 127.

<sup>621</sup> Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol. 12, 133.

<sup>622</sup> HAT #37262 (17. M. 1240/ 10 September, 1824)

<sup>623</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol. 12, 133; HAT #37259 (9. Ş. 1241/ 18 March, 1826).

a final decision on this subject, even though Esad Efendi insisted on it to be resolved in Baghdad with all other issues. To make the Baban issue more complicated, surprisingly, Huseyin Quli Khan brought Baban Abdullah Pasha, Mahmud pasha's uncle and a fugitive to Iran, to Baghdad with him. Following this last impediment, the negotiations got into a stalemate and Davud Pasha decided to send Esad Efendi to Tabriz in order to come over with this obstacle.<sup>624</sup> The Iranians agreed that they would not interfere with the Babans given that the treaty required. Though they thought that the Babans owed them sixteen thousand Iranian tumans since the Kurdish tribes used the Iranian territories as their summer and winter camps.<sup>625</sup> Therefore, the meeting in Tabriz with the Iranian delegates did not produce much result.

It seems that Iranians were ready to make negotiations on all issues, only if Davud Pasha was ripped off from his governorship. The Iranians, particularly prince Abbas Mirza, despised Davud Pasha. The crown prince stated in a letter to his delegate to Istanbul that Davud Pasha was the cause of all troubles between two states and so he wanted to make a formal complain to the Sultan about him.<sup>626</sup> In 1829 the relations between the Sublime Porte and Davud Pasha were severed. Therefore, Sultan Mahmud was planning to get rid of Davud Pasha but he insisted on it to be done without much trouble. For this purpose, he wanted to make sure that Davud Pasha was not seeking refuge in Iran. The Iranians immediately accepted this request as Abbas Mirza stated in his letter to Kaymakam Pasha "an order has been sent to the valis of respective provinces not to accept him [Davud Pasha], in case vali of Baghdad tries to escape and seek refuge in Azerbaijan, Kermanshah and Kurdistan provinces of Iran."<sup>627</sup> Additionally, Abbas Mirza sent a letter to the Porte to offer further help to punish Davud Pasha.<sup>628</sup> Once the Porte secured the neutrality of Iran in this matter Ali Pasha, the governor of Aleppo, was assigned to get rid of Davud Pasha and replace him as the new governor of Baghdad. After ninety days of siege Ali Pasha entered Baghdad in 17 September of 1831 and destroyed the whole Mamluk family. Davud Pasha was detained and sent to Istanbul.<sup>629</sup>

The Iranians always watched for opportunities to annex some lands in the Ottoman Kurdistan. Baban territories were some of the easiest to occupy from these lands. For instance, the Iranians tried to use the opportunity to gain some lands from the Ottoman Kurdistan when the Ottomans had to deal with the Greek rebellions in mid 1820s and later during the war with the Russians.<sup>630</sup> Anytime there was a conflict with Iran "the Kurdistan article/ issue" or "Kürdistan maddesi/ meselesi," as it was referred to in the Ottoman

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<sup>624</sup> Kalantari, "Feth-Ali Şah," 179-180.

<sup>625</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol. 12, 244.

<sup>626</sup> HAT# 37259 ( 9. Ş. 1241/ 18 March, 1826).

<sup>627</sup> HAT# 37204 D.C. in Kalantari, "Feth-Ali Şah," 206.

<sup>628</sup> Kalantari, "Feth-Ali Şah," 206.

<sup>629</sup> Kalantari, "Feth-Ali Şah," 207.

<sup>630</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Vol.III, 135; He states that "... Yunan gâilesi henüz bertaraf olmayup zirde beyan olunacağı vechile Devlet-i Aliyye ile Rusya Devleti arasında dahl bürüdet peyda olduğuna binâen bazı muhtemelaât-ı atıyyeye nazaran İranlı, Kürdistan tarafından biraz yer kapmak hülyasıyla Kürdistan'ın sâlif-i zikr evliye-i selasesinden el çekmiyor."

documents, was always part of the disagreement as well as a matter of negotiations.<sup>631</sup> More interestingly, the issues between Iran and the Ottomans on Baghdad included, almost without exception, the Baban issue in every negotiation. In 1833, the year that Abbas Mirza passed away, this time the Ottomans commissioned Hâcegan Agah Efendi to Tehran. He had two assignments: to express the condolences of the Sultan Mahmud II to Fath Ali Shah for the premature death of the crown Prince Abbas Mirza and to confirm that Iran would give up with its claims on the lands of Babans.<sup>632</sup> After this visit by Agah Efendi, Fath Ali Shah sent a letter of friendship to Mahmud II and announced that Muhammad Mirza was going to be the next crown Prince of Iran.<sup>633</sup> The last negotiations took place in Erzurum right before Fath Ali Shah passed away and continued after his death with some tangible results. The governor of Erzurum, Esad Pasha was on the border when the news about the decease of Fath Ali Shah spread around. Therefore, he used this incident as an opportunity to sort out the disputed issues before the Iranian negotiator returned to Tabriz.<sup>634</sup>

### The Qajar Iran during the first half of nineteenth century

The pressure by Russia was already on the Qajar Iran since the former was ambitiously trying to expand southward. On the other hand, the Qajarians had always dreamed of reaching to the borders once Safavid Iran had. Consequently, two major conflicts took place between the two states and both were resulted in the decisive defeat of Iran. Consequently, Iran had to sign the Treaty of Golestan (1813) and Türkmençay (1828) with Russia. The first treaty coasted Iran Georgia, Nakhchivan, and a sizeable part of its territories in Northern Azarbaijan in addition to a payment of heavy war compensations and unfavorable tariffs, while the latter treaty regulated the affairs between the two states until 1917. With Türkmençay, Russia had also expanded its lands in Caucasus and set up Araxes River as the boundary dividing Azerbaijan into two parts.<sup>635</sup>

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<sup>631</sup> “Kürdistan maddesi” indicated more the Baban territories as it was used with the “Baban maddesi” in exchange. The other parts of the Ottoman Kurdistan were referred with the name of each governorship or emirate such as “Van vilayeti” “Hakkari sancağı” “Bayezid sancağı” etc. The lands that were also populated by Kurds in the North, such as Van, Kars, and Erzurum were altogether called as “Serhad” which referred to both their northward and frontier position.

<sup>632</sup> *Tarih-i Lütüfi*, Vol. IV, 113; Kalantari, “Feth-Ali Şah,” 219.

<sup>633</sup> Fath Ali Shah now was feeling weaker against the Ottomans once he lost his son Abbas Mirza and he wanted to make sure that the good relations with the latter continued as he assured that it was “going to be obvious that the friendly ties between the two Islamic states were strong.” BOA (Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry), Name-i Humâyün Defteri, #11, 19.

<sup>634</sup> Mirza Muhammed Taqi Sepehr, *Naseh al-Tavarikh-i Selatin-i Qajariyya* Vol. II, (Tehran: Binbudi Neşriyat) 130 cited in Kalantari, “Feth-Ali Şah,” 220.

<sup>635</sup> For more information on the history of Iran during the 19<sup>th</sup> century see: Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914: a study in imperialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); *The Cambridge history of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic, Vol. VII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1997); Clifford Edmund Bosworth, and Carole Hillenbrand, eds., *Qajar Iran: political, social, and cultural change, 1800-1925* (Costa Meza: Mazda Publishers, 1992); Nikki R. Keddie, *Qajar Iran: The Rise of Reza Khan 1796-1925*, (London: I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 1999); Ann Lambton, ed., *Qajar Persia: Eleven Studies*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987)

Once the new shah, Muhammad Khan, was crowned in 1834 he tried to regain the Afghan city of Herat, which was lost before the Qajar dynasty came to power. Such a move brought Iran and Britain into conflict since the latter considered Afghanistan as the buffer state on the way to India. The attempts for the occupation of Herat by the Iranian forces were averted by the Afghan and British oppositions in 1836 and 1838. Later the next Qajar leader, Naser al-Din Shah, tried to take over Herat in 1857, but he faced with the same resistance. The British were quick to force the Iranians to recognize the independence of Afghanistan. A treaty, which was signed between the Iranians and British, terminated Iranian irredentism towards Herat and initiated a series of concessions given to British. Coming decades witnessed a rivalry between Russia and Britain over such concessions and dominated the political scene of Iran.<sup>636</sup>

### The Ottomans

From the beginning of 1830s until late 1840s the Ottoman center went through several sweeping changes. Like Persians, the Ottomans also witnessed the Russo-British intervention of their lands, yet the Ottomans were far better than Iranians in resistance to such imperial encroachment. The Ottomans started the centralization earlier than the Iranians when the Porte decided to reorganize its provincial administration through several regulations called Tanzimat (1839). On the other hand, the empire dealt with two wars against Russia (1804-05 and 1828-29), and dozens of local revolts and disorders in Greece, Wallachia, Moldova and Serbia. Among those the Greek War of Independence and the rebellions of Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt encouraged Russia to penetrate further into the Empire's lands. Taking advantage of these disturbances, Russia proved to be the most influential power over the Porte with the agreement of Hünkâr İskelesi (1833).

Witnessing the rise of Russian power over the Ottomans, the British decided to counter this change in order to protect their interests. With the expansion into the Central Asia and Caucasus, Russia started to threaten the communication routes of the British Empire with India, which passed through the Iranian-Ottoman frontier zone. As Britain was alarmed, the security of the Ottoman Empire and its frontiers became the major policy of the kingdom. Under such pressure, the Ottomans were forced to sign the Anglo-Turkish Convention of Balta Limanı or the 1838 Treaty of Commerce, which eradicated the last barriers standing before the European economic powers and expedited its integration into the world economy.<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>636</sup> Sabri Ateş, "Empires at the Margin: Towards a History of the Ottoman-Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples," (Unpublished PhD diss., New York University, 2006), 42-43.

<sup>637</sup> For the articles in the treaty and a full text of the treaty see *Treaties between Turkey and foreign powers, 1535-1855* (London: Foreign Office & Harrison and Sons, 1855); J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: a documentary record, Volume 1*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 110. See also Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman empire and the world economy: the nineteenth century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988); Frank E. Bailey, "The Economics of British Foreign Policy, 1825-50," in *Journal of Modern History* 12,(Dec. 1940): 449-484.



## Tanzimat and the attempts of centralizing the periphery

While both states, Iran and the Ottoman, tried to deal with the internal and international conflicts, they also aimed at the border and the borderland people in between two empires. The Ottomans had already intended to bring the Kurdish emirates into their grips when the Porte put an end to the Georgian Slaves (Mamluks) of Baghdad with the expulsion of Davud Pasha in 1831.<sup>638</sup> Though, it was not that easy to get rid of them while each Kurdish mir was acting independently of the others and some of them were collaborating with each other and with Iran. Therefore, the Porte required a long-term plan to accomplish this. The demarcation of the border with Iran was going to help the Ottomans both to limit the collaboration of Iran with the local mirs and also was going to facilitate the elimination of these local notables and thus the centralization of the periphery.<sup>639</sup>

Declaration of Tanzimat was not the starting point, but was just the official acceptance of this process of centralization and modernization in the periphery. Although such policies were intended and started in the early nineteenth century, Tanzimat was stating that this was an ongoing project and was going to take a while to accomplish it. As Sabri Ateş put it, this was an “Ottoman citizenship project” which included “the making of the boundaries; the replacement of the local notables and interest groups with salaried appointees; reorganization of the administrative divisions of the region; changes in the land holding patterns; forced settlement of itinerant population; introduction of new taxes; and conscripting the hitherto un-conscripted locals.”<sup>640</sup> These new standards, which were introduced by the center to regulate the periphery, meant the introduction of travel documents, passports, new customhouses, and border patrols.

Two groups challenged to these new instruments introduced by the empire: the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, who moved back and forth between two states, and the local hereditary dynasties, namely Kurdish *mirs*, who tried to keep their ancestral domains under their control. Here, we concentrate mostly on the second group, as in the case of Baban dynasty, in order to demonstrate how the introduction of the centralization and modernization transformed the social fabric of the region and how this group adopted to the new changes. Instead of giving a general introduction of the Tanzimat and its aftereffects, I will pay more attention to how the new policies affected the peripheries of the empire, more specifically how Babans and other Kurdish mirs were reshaped by the decision of centralization by the Porte. Obviously, I will have to give some of the details about Tanzimat, when it is necessary and relevant with the subject in the focus.

With the rescript of Gülhane in November 1839, the provincial administration was reorganized but this was not a total revision. The judiciary system was also centralized under the office of Şeyhülislam, though a little later after the administrative system was reformed.

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<sup>638</sup> Nejat Abdulla, *İmparatorluk, Sınır ve Aşiret: Kürdistan ve 1843-1932 Türk-Fars Sınır Çatışması* (trans. by Mustafa Aslan), (Istanbul: Avesta, 2010), 190.

<sup>639</sup> Ateş, “Empires at the Margin,” 54.

<sup>640</sup> Ateş, “Empires at the Margin,” 55.

With the Provincial Reform Law the provincial units were reorganized in three hierarchical levels: *vilayet* (province), *sancak/ liva* (region), and *kaza* (district). Accordingly, each of these administrative units would have a sharia court with a sharia judge appointed by the center. Although this was the case, many towns escaped, whether intentionally or not, from the attention of the Porte to be put under the centralized judicial system. The Ottomans simply could not overcome with the geographical challenges as the mountains in the east and south of Kurdish regions did not allow developing a transportation and communication system. While the Ottoman qadi and muftis had jurisdiction in most western and central provinces they had no power over some certain urban and rural areas in Kurdistan.<sup>641</sup> As Jun Akiba went through the *naib* registers of Rumeli and Anadolu in the Meşihat archives, which covered all of the cities and towns during the period from 1855 to the early 1870s, he realized that as an administrative center of a *sanjaq*, Sulaimaniya, along some of other cities like Mardin and Nablus, was not included in this list.<sup>642</sup> In this case, one can suggest that even though the Porte introduced reforms to reorganize and centralize the border regions, there was little accomplishment. Somehow these centers remained outside the control of the Şeyhülislam's office, while the naib for places like Sulaimaniya "were appointed by the judges or central kazas to which they were attached as nahiyes."<sup>643</sup> The Kurds followed mostly the Shafii school of Sunni Islam and their *ulema* were educated in Shafii madrasas in Kurdistan. Because the Ottoman laws were grounded in Hanafi School, the Kurdish mirs were able to appoint their qadis from among the Kurdish *ulema*. They, however, needed to be approved with a *berat* (an authorization document) issued by the Sublime Porte.<sup>644</sup>

While the judiciary system evolved slowly in Kurdistan, the economic and social life changed much faster thanks to the Western encroachment into the region with its trade and political dominance. The locals had already met with the transformation and changes before the new regulations were announced in Gülhane. European merchants started in earlier periods to present their industrial products to the local population in some urban centers like Damascus, Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul. Beyond the European mercantilism, Syria witnessed a rapid political change during the expeditions of Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt. Besides, thanks to the Western missionaries, travelers, diplomats, tradesmen, archeologists, and many others who had been through Kurdish regions, the local notables and the ordinary people were exposed to the European culture and modern political ideas.

The Eastern provinces of the empire were economically also going through substantial changes. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Ottomans made new commercial agreements with the Europeans, which meant less production of local goods and more consumption of the imported products for the people on the Eastern periphery. On the contrary to this situation, the demise of Kurdish notables and the centralization of the agricultural lands in some of Kurdish regions in the second half of the nineteenth century

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<sup>641</sup> Denise Natali, *The Kurds and the state*, 6.

<sup>642</sup> Jun Akiba, "From Kadı to Naib: Reorganization of the Otoman Sharia Judiciary in the Tanzimat Period" in Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki, eds., *Frontiers of Ottoman studies: state, province, and the West* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005) 43-60.

<sup>643</sup> Akiba, "From Kadı to Naib," 43-60.

<sup>644</sup> Ateş, "Empires at the Margine," 64-65.

helped to increase the production of cash crops like cotton, opium, and output of the animals like wool, which were all on demand by the Europeans.<sup>645</sup> However, this still meant that there was no production of finished goods but rather an economy depended on sales of the raw material. Moreover, the increase in such production of raw material happened to be after 1850s and it was only in limited areas of Kurdistan, such as Cilicia. Tanzimat gave more opportunity to the Western powers to strengthen the extraterritorial rights, which were given by the Ottomans as capitulations before the announcement of the decree, and thus helped them to promote the non-Muslim merchants as their protégés in addition to the tax exemptions and immunities from the due process of the Ottoman laws.<sup>646</sup>

Regional economy in the region was influenced by new land laws, taxation system, and administrative divisions. At the beginning of the nineteenth century *timar* system was already abolished, but some parts of Iraq, such as Mosul, were still using *miri* system while Baghdad and Basra were farmed out to tax farmers.<sup>647</sup> With Tanzimat, the Porte envisioned to centralize the taxation system in the periphery. The lifetime tax system (*malikhane*) was already replaced with short term, usually from one to three years, tax-farming methods in Baghdad after the establishment of the direct rule in the province in 1831. The *sanjaq*, *yurtluk* and *ocaklık* were replaced with *liva*, *kasaba*, and *kazas*. The titles such as *mir*, pasha, *mütesellim*, which were related to the previous administrative system, were abolished in the Kurdish principalities and instead *kaymakam*, *müdür*, and *vali* were put in use. The Provincial Law of 1864 further emphasized the control of the center on the periphery. One of the founders of the law was Midhat Pasha and after a successful implementation of the law in Danube, he was appointed to Baghdad and one of his first achievements was to realize the same law there.<sup>648</sup> Despite the change in the structure of the provincial administration in the empire the center of Baghdad was still considered a *sanjaq*.<sup>649</sup>

The Land Code of 1858 was also another means of centralization and modernization in the periphery as it helped the de-tribalization of the empire. Although Haim Gerber claims that the law was “no more and no less than a re-enactment of classical fifteenth and sixteenth-century Ottoman kanuns relating to agrarian matters” it still brought important changes, such as registering the *miri* land on his/her name for a title deed (*tapu senedi*).<sup>650</sup> When considering that 82% of the land (including the *waqf* land) in Iraq was owned by the state and only 12%

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<sup>645</sup> Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the world economy, 1800-1914* (New York and London: I.B.Tauris, 1993), 63-64.

<sup>646</sup> Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 18.

<sup>647</sup> Ceylan, “Ottoman Centralization,” 24-25.

<sup>648</sup> Midhat pasha had the province of Baghdad divided into ten sub-divisions. Sulaimaniya was one of these ten sub-divisions and besides the center of the *sanjaq* there was Karadağ, Baziyan, Merke, Gülanber, and Şehr-i Bazar. BOA, İ. MMAH. #1664, (19. Z. 1287/12 March 1871) in Ebubekir Ceylan. “Ottoman Centralization,” 204.

<sup>649</sup> Ceylan, “Ottoman Centralization,” 29. In an Ottoman document that Ceylan refers to Sulaimaniya was also considered as *Sanjaq* in 1860. The document states “...Şehrizor ve Musul ve Süleymaniye sancaklarına dahi Bağdadın merkez itihaz olunması cihetiyle...”, BOA, İ, MVL, 19487, dahiliye lef 1, gurre-i (2.Ca.1277/15 November, 1860) in Ceylan, “Ottoman Centralization,” footnote 359, 116.

<sup>650</sup> Haim Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East*, (Boulder,CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987), 68.

was private (mülk), one could see how the nature of the land owning changed by allowing to register the state land on the name of individuals and the private parties.<sup>651</sup>

Tanzimat created a central bureaucratic elite class but included almost no Kurdish or Arab origin of men. One wonder if this was the cause of the late arrival of Tanzimat to the Arab and Kurdish provinces, as the measures of centralization did not have much impact on them until after the second half of the nineteenth century. However, both ethnic groups were more prominent in the judicial administration of the empire such as the abundance of Kurdish ulema among the total religious scholars in the Ottoman Empire. Though the upper echelons of the religious ladder were still filled by those trained in Istanbul. Furthermore, with the implementation of Tanzimat new secular laws were introduced and this caused the Kurdish *ulema* to lose more power.<sup>652</sup>

The new changes I mentioned above did not go without notice among the local people. People in different parts of the empire had mixed feelings for these new regulations. Reaction to Tanzimat was undoubtedly more negative in the provinces and the periphery of the empire as the new laws were introduced to shape more the life of the rural. A few cases about the attitude of the locals show how they perceived the new changes in their environment. One man was cheated by a Persian hakim who offered him to cure his blind eye with a powder, which did nothing and caused to blind another eye. As Austin Layard, a British archeologist in Kurdistan in 1843, states, the blind man accused the Tanzimat for the *hakim*'s fault and all the other problems and added "but what can one do in these days of accursed Tanzimat?"<sup>653</sup> In another case, a letter from the Porte to the vali of Erzurum was asking him to take care of the rebellions among the people of Van, which were caused by the false news spread by certain individuals about Tanzimat.<sup>654</sup> The Kurds were afraid of losing their superiority to the non-muslim subjects and some members of the Kurdish ulema was stirring up the idea of being equal with the non-Muslim population of Armenians, Nestorians and the Jews.

The ideas on the reforms were blurred among the Kurdish population of Muş as Layard met a tribal chief there and asked about his idea of Tanzimat. Not surprisingly, the chief was very hostile to the reforms, which he declared tanzimat "had destroyed all Mussulman spirit, had turned true believers into infidels, and had brought his own tribe to ruin." Contrary to his father, the son of the chief had "praised the present state of the things, spoke less unfavourably of reforms."<sup>655</sup> The reforms for sure were appealing more to the younger generation of Kurdistan since they met with more European products and life style as well as a different life from what they had through generations. Thanks to Tanzimat the state opened new military schools in places like Sulaimaniya and introduced the young and local children of the ousted notables to a new world. Süleyman Agha, a Turkish tribal chief who encamped with the Çiçi and Milli Kurds at the foot of the mountains of Mardin, was more

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<sup>651</sup> Keiko Kiyotaki, "Ottoman Land Policies in the Province of Baghdad, 1831-1881," (PhD Thesis, Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1997), footnote 3, 137-138.

<sup>652</sup> Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 20.

<sup>653</sup> Austen Henry Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon with Travels in Armenia, Kurdistan and the Desert. Part I* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1856), 19-20

<sup>654</sup> C.DH.(Cevdet Dâhiliye)#1878, Folio# 38, ( 11.B.1861/ 16 July 1845).

<sup>655</sup> Austen Henry Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh*, 20.

supportive of changes brought by Tanzimat because of putting an “end to bribes, treachery, and irregular taxation.”<sup>656</sup>

### **The Kurdish Mirs and Tanzimat**

Once the new regulations were introduced and centralization policies were imposed on the Kurdish notables, their emirates were started to be scratched off the ground of Kurdistan one by one, from 1834 until 1847. Although putting the Kurdish mirs under the control had taken a while and was accomplished later than the other parts of the empire, the empire-wide campaign of the policies of suppressing the provincial ayans and derebeys (nobility and the lords of the valleys) started with the reign of Mahmud II (1808-1839). The Sultan did not only wipe out the entire corps of Janissaries (1826) but suppressed all of notables in the Balkans and Anatolia. Before the Kurdish mirs were expelled from Kurdistan, the Porte put an end to many of Arab noble families such as the Azms of Damascus (1807), the powerful Mamluk pashas of Baghdad (1831), the Jalilis of Mosul (1834), and the Karamanids of Tripoli (1835).<sup>657</sup>

Before moving on the Kurdish mirs Mahmud II had to deal with İbrahim Pasha, the son of the famous Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt. In 1831-32 İbrahim Pasha seized Syria and moved to cross Anatolia all the way to Kütahya. He was persuaded to withdraw by the European powers. Witnessing how a strong local notable could devastate the Ottoman army, as in the case of İbrahim Pasha, the Porte now determined to remove the local powers in Kurdistan.

Soon afterward, the Porte was prepared to launch a campaign against all the Kurdish emirates in the region. Istanbul first decided to send off new governors to the region with new rules. Many mirs did not accept these rules and rulers, which were determined by the Porte, and had a fierce fight with the Ottoman and local armies in order to uphold their autonomous status. In the end, the Kurdish mirs were defeated one by one and were sent to exile with their family members to as far as Albania, Crete, Mecca, Tunisia and Egypt. Alongside Soran, Botan, and Hakkari emirates, the Babans were the last Kurdish notables to be crushed in this struggle of centralization. Now, let's see the position of these mirs among the other Kurdish emirates in the first half of nineteenth century and their demise by the Ottoman Empire.

### **Soran (Rawanduz) Emirate**

Between 1814 and 1836, the Soran emirate under the leadership of Muhammed Pasha (better known as Mirê Kor, which means “the Blind Prince”) subdued the tribes (Şirwan, Bradost, Surçi, Xuşnaw and Mameş) around his emirate and in 1822 he recaptured the nearby town of Harir, the old capital of Soran, from Babans. He occupied the emirate of Amediye in

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<sup>656</sup> Austen Henry Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh*, 311

<sup>657</sup> Ceylan, “Ottoman Centralization,” 22.

1831 as well as several important towns like Arbil, Altun Kupri, Raniya, Zakho and Duhok, which are located in today's Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>658</sup> Although this was an old emirate, it had never seen such strong period in the region before Mirê Kor. Capital of the emirate, Rawanduz, was competing with Sulaimaniya of Baban and Jizra of Botan emirates in terms of its attractiveness for the scholars and tradesmen and it was more impregnable than the latter two Kurdish capitals.<sup>659</sup>

Mirê Kor was born in Rawanduz in 1198 AH/ 1783 CE and received a good education under Molla Ahmed ibn-i Adem. At the age of thirty one he succeeded his father, Mustafa Beg, while the latter was still alive. Mirê Kor was coming from the noble family of Rawanduz mirs.<sup>660</sup> Reports about the reason of the transition of power to him by his father are varied. Some says that his father was aged and was no longer capable of ruling the emirate, while some others say the son forced his father to resign from his post in his favor, but the voluntary retirement of Mustafa Beg is the generally accepted account.<sup>661</sup> The reason behind Mirê Kor's move to take over the emirate could be partially explained through his character and personal experience during his youth. He witnessed how the struggle among his uncles for power weakened the emirate. This situation affected him a lot and probably caused a strong desire in him to take over the emirate with cruel means.<sup>662</sup> He not only suppressed his rivals cruelly, but also expanded his territories beyond the Soran emirate's natural borders. Acquiring such a power with bewildered speed, one could only think of what Mirê Kor's future plan would be. Although there is no indication of such, Soane claims that Mirê Kor had desires of "national independence," as Babans once had.<sup>663</sup> In fact, after the Baban Mahmud Pasha was defeated in early 1820s war and Sulaimaniya was devastated with the occupation of Iranian forces, Mirê Kor started to expand its territories southward by taking over the plain of Harir, Ranya and Koy Sanjak. Taking advantage of Baban's weakness, in 1824, the frontier of Mire Kor's emirate had reached to the Lesser Zap River and it became the boundary between the Soran and the Baban principalities.

Historians agree that Mirê Kor's brutality brought some peace, order and safety to the region. Such an ordered required men and financial means. Fraser reports that he had around fifty thousands men under his order "of whom the better half are regularly paid and kept in constant work."<sup>664</sup> Although the number above may be a little bit exaggerated, it gives an idea of the territorial expansion and the order Mirê Kor had accomplished. For Fraser, who lived in

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<sup>658</sup> An Ottoman document reported that Mirê Kor occupied Koy, Harir, Altın Köprü and Arbil, and finally he took over Amediye. HAT #22346-B ( 27.L.1250/25 February 1835)

<sup>659</sup> Kaws Kaftan, *Baban, Botan ve Soran*, 45.

<sup>660</sup> Some claim that he was a descendant of the famous twelfth century commander Salah al-din al-Ayyubi, thus Mirê Kor dreamed of himself to be the next legendary Kurdish leader, who would realize the Kurdish unification and independence. Gérard Chaliand, *A People without a country: the Kurds and Kurdistan*, (London: Zed Books, 1993), 19.

<sup>661</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 55; Fraser, quoting from Dr. Ross, the medical staff at the British residency in Baghdad, who examined Mustafa Beg for his blind eyes, states that accounts mentioned that his son ordered for him to be blinded so Mirê Kor could not take over the emirate but Dr. Ross dismissed the claims since the reason behind his father's act was not clear. James Baillie Fraser, *Travels in Koordistan*, 72.

<sup>662</sup> Kaftan, *Baban, Botan ve Soran*, 50.

<sup>663</sup> Soane, *To Mesopotamia*, 371-72.

<sup>664</sup> Fraser, *Travels in Koordistan*, 64; Kaftan, *Baban, Botan ve Soran*, 48.

Kurdistan during the reign of Mirê Kor, the latter's most singular accomplishment was "the great moral change which he has effected in the countries has had thus subjected." Mirê Kor established a new and simple rule for the practice of robbery: "whoever is caught possessing himself of the goods of others is punished on the spot, or put to death without mercy."<sup>665</sup> His character clearly elucidates the motive behind his harsh attitude

strongly imbued with notions of a stern justice, but practicing its dictates rather as a means of further aggrandizement than for its own sake. He is careless of spilling blood, but not prone to kill in wantonness, or without a cause; yet never sparing when a cause, however slight, exists.<sup>666</sup>

Mirê Kor not only mistreated the robbers and the bandits, but made sometimes unnecessary and excessive pressure on the tribes that he took under his administration. He, for instance, destroyed a whole tribe because of their heroic defense of Amediye against his occupation. When the Ottoman army attacked the army of Mirê Kor in late 1830s, the former one was helped by the tribes, which waited for the day to take their revenge and the latter had no friends to defend him against such destruction.<sup>667</sup>

Yazidis and Jews also could not escape from the Mir's wrath. When the Mir occupied the town of Amediye, he plundered the town and mistreated its Jewish inhabitants "with merciless cruelty and oppression." Stern, who was in Kurdistan in mid-1850s, continues saying that "the Pasha of Ravendooz, whose victorious army carried terror and dismay into the heart of Turkish empire" forced many of the Jews to migrate to the other towns and "those that were not so fortunate, submitted to the yoke of the tyrant."<sup>668</sup> Mirê Kor had done worse to the Yazidis when he attacked Shaykhan in 1832 and slaughtered more than half of its Yazidi population.<sup>669</sup> Wadie Jwaideh noted that Mirê Kor moved onto Shaykhan upon the request of Mullah Yahya al-Mizuri, a noted religious dignitary of Bahdinan region and a cousin or nephew of the Ali Agha, who was the head of Mizuri tribe and was stabbed to death by several Yazidi chieftains because of the feud between them.<sup>670</sup> Mirê Kor was the mastermind of the plan to cause enmity between Yazidis and Mizuris, and then he probably used Mullah Yahya's grievances as a convenient pretext to persecute Yazidis and invade the Bahdinan region.

Having crushed the Yazidis with little trouble and saw no objection on behalf of the Bahdinani princes or by the Ottoman government, Pasha of Rawanduz now turned his army towards Aqra, a Bahdinani stronghold. Despite the fierce fight between two sides and the resistance shown by the Zibari Kurds, the fortress of Aqra fell to the besieger and Ismail Pasha, the ruling prince, fled the town. Mirê Kor then marched towards Amediye, the capital of Bahdinans. He easily captured the town and put Said Pasha, the mir of Bahdinan, on the

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<sup>665</sup> Fraser, *Travels in Koordistan*, 65.

<sup>666</sup> Fraser, *Travels in Koordistan*, 80.

<sup>667</sup> Kaftan, *Baban, Botan ve Soran*, 54.

<sup>668</sup> Henry Aaron Stern, *Dawnings of Light in the East*, (London: Charles H. Purday 1854), 225.

<sup>669</sup> Nelida Fuccaro, *The other Kurds: Yazidis in colonial Iraq*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 37.

<sup>670</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 56-57.

run. With the last expansion Mirê Kor's included the two important centers of Dohuk and Zakho and he became the undisputed authority in the region stretching from the Greater Zab to Khabur River. Despite some local disturbances, the Mir put an end to the centuries-old emirate of Bahdinan and appointed his brother Rasul Beg as the governor of the region. Although Ismail Beg, the last Bahdinan prince, was able to recapture and revive the principality for a while after the demise of Mirê Kor, it was the Ottoman army, who destroyed this ancient emirate once and for all.<sup>671</sup> With the energy he amassed through his successful expeditions, the Mir tried to defeat the Bothan emirate, which was under the leadership of the famous Badr Khan Beg, but his attempt produced no result. Mirê Kor had also once made call to the Prince of Bothan to form a political coalition against Istanbul, nevertheless Badr Khan Beg turned down the invitation since the former would have declared his supremacy and the latter already had his own dream of becoming the leader of Kurdistan.

The question is that despite the presence of two strong Kurdish emirates, the Baban and emerging Bothan, what was the motive and who were behind the rise of Rawanduz. Kaws Kaftan presents four reasons, some of which I have touched upon.<sup>672</sup> The first, advantage of Rawanduz emirate was the geographical location and setting. The rugged mountains and deep valleys allowed Mirê Kor to defend his capital and give big casualties to the armies of his enemies. Although this could be an acceptable argument, one needs to look at the result that the Ottomans defeated the Mir in his capital and stronghold, Rawanduz, in 1835 despite it took more time and power to do so. Besides, the geography of the region was considered as a "dividing" element among the Kurds. This division was reflected on the other aspects of the region, as Maria T. O'Shea's the definition of Kurdistan proves this division clearly:

It (Kurdistan) is not entirely linguistically, ethnically, or religiously unified as a region. It does not have any sort of unified political leadership with agreed political and cultural demands. It does not constitute an economically distinct region.<sup>673</sup>

The second incentive behind Mirê Kor's success, says Kaftan, was that the emirate was located on some of the trade routes and thus brought more economic and political power to Rawanduz. The Mir was able to finance his newly established arm factory through these custom duties that he obtained from the local and international trade. The limitations of the Ottomans and the Porte's being busy with Mehmed Ali Pasha's army in Syria and Anatolia were the other opportunities for Mirê Kor to enlarge his territories. His final advantage and the difference between him and his predecessors was his strong personality.

Beyond all these, there was one concrete reason behind the rise of Mirê Kor. Davud Pasha of Baghdad, and more vaguely the Ottomans, wanted to strengthen the emirate of Rawanduz against the Babans. In fact, granting him the title of pasha after his successful occupation of some Baban lands was a clear sign that the Ottomans approved his power and

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<sup>671</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 59.

<sup>672</sup> Kaftan, *Baban, Botan ve Soran*, 46-48.

<sup>673</sup> Maria T. O'Shea, *Trapped Between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan* (London:Routledge, 2004), 2.



his leadership in the region.<sup>674</sup> Davud Pasha hated the Babans and he wanted their destruction in the last days of his governorship. Mirê Kor had always calculated the Babans as his biggest rival, thus he erected forts around the district of Rawanduz in order to protect the town and the population from the aggressions of the Babans.<sup>675</sup> Additionally, the Ottomans wished for the Babans to be weakened as the latter caused lots of trouble on the eastern frontier. The Iranians had similar desire, but beyond that they looked for the Ottomans to be weaker in the region.

After such expansion and threats to his neighboring emirates Mirê Kor started to be noticed by the Ottoman government around mid 1830s. At the time, the Ottomans were busy for a while to deal with the growing menace of Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt. The struggle with Egyptian Khedive and his son Ibrahim Pasha for sure was taking all the efforts and energy of the Porte. Though the threat by the Albanian dynasty in Egypt did not mean a lack of awareness of the growing danger of Kurdish mirs. A letter from Ali Rıza Pasha, the governor of Baghdad, dating 27 August 1832, stated that Mehmed Ali Pasha had already occupied Akka and Damascus and it appeared that he also advanced to capture Aleppo. The reason for the weakness of the Ottoman army before the Egyptian army, argued Ali Rıza pasha, was that *serdar-ı ekrem* (the commander-in-chief) was in Iraq with his army to deal with the “enemies” in Hille and Rawanduz.<sup>676</sup> In fact, one could claim that the struggle with Mehmed Ali Pasha was the wake up call for the Ottomans to deal with the unruly local notables. Thus, Mahmud II’s reforms and centralization policies made more sense than ever in order to free the east of the empire from the mirs of Kurdistan. While the Ottomans tried to deal with Egypt’s Ibrahim Pasha and his father Mehmed Ali Pasha Mirê Kor was already in contact with them in hope of establishing an alliance against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>677</sup> Mirê Kor not only tried to cooperate with them but he also considered them as model leaders for his military expeditions as the former established his own armament factories in the capital, Rawanduz, to produce his own rifles, ammunitions and cannons.<sup>678</sup> True or not this connection must have speeded up the raid about to happen on to the Pasha of Rawanduz.

In 1835, the Porte sent a sizable army to Kurdistan under the command of Raşid Pasha, the former Grand Vezir and Vali of Sivas.<sup>679</sup> This was probably one of the biggest armies ever sent on a Kurdish emirate since İnce Bayraktar Mehmed Pasha, governor of Mosul, with his army joined to Raşid Pasha and moved towards Rawanduz from the northwest, while Ali Rıza Pasha from Baghdad moved through Kirkuk to meet with the army gathered against Mirê Kor.<sup>680</sup> Additionally, the Ottoman forces included members of the rival

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<sup>674</sup> It was Ali Rıza Pasha, the governor of Baghdad, who bestowed the title of pasha on Mirê Kor in 1833. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq*, 285.

<sup>675</sup> William Rupert Hay, *Two Years in Kurdistan: experiences of a political officer, 1918-1920*, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1921), 191.

<sup>676</sup> HAT# 19734-A ( 1.R.1248/ 27 August 1832 )

<sup>677</sup> Halfin notes that once Ali Rıza pasha of Baghdad and Mehmed Pasha of Mosul joined to Raşid Pasha, his army reached to forty thousands. Halfin, *XIX. Yüzyılda Kürdistan Üzerine Mücadeleler*, 44.

<sup>678</sup> Chaliand reports that some examples of these cannons can still be seen in Rawanduz and in the Baghdad Museum. Gérard Chaliand, *A People without a country*, 19.

<sup>679</sup> Ali Rıza Pasha of Baghdad had made a request for an army under the command of Reşid Pasha to be sent over Rawanduz. HAT# 33231-D, ( 12.Ra.1251/9 July 1835)

<sup>680</sup> HAT# 48951-B, ( 24.S.1252/ 9 June 1836); The news about the army was sent to the Porte by Ali Rıza Pasha.

tribes, as the Kurdish historian Mihemed Emin Zeki notes that a large number of the Ottoman army was made of the Kurdish tribes.<sup>681</sup> Once the Ottoman army was on the march, Mirê Kor was on the run and had withdrawn all his forces beyond the Rawanduz gorge with a last hope to defend his capital. The Mir had also taken precaution by occupying both sides of the gorge through which passed the road to Rawanduz. Realizing undefeatable position of the Mir, Raşid Pasha decided to use diplomacy in order to avoid great losses to his army. There are two accounts about the surrender of Mirê Kor through negotiations. One account is that Raşid Pasha settled down his troops and ammunition on the outskirts of Harir's hills and approached to the Mir as an old and intimate friend. The Pasha advised the Mir to avoid the bloodshed and make an agreement with the government. The Ottoman commander assured the Mir that he would be honorably treated and restored to his emirate if he ceased his antagonistic stance and surrender to the government. Mirê Kor agreed on these terms, met with Raşid Pasha to discuss the details and was immediately captured and was sent to Istanbul.<sup>682</sup> Another account claims that Raşid Pasha somehow was able to convince the mufti of Rawanduz, Mullah Muhammad Khati, to issue a fatwa which stated "those who bore arms against the army of the caliph were unbelievers and their wives were thereby divorced from them."<sup>683</sup> Knowing the respect to the caliph among the Sunni Kurds and the religious personality of the Mir, Raşid Pasha skillfully used this fatwa to have the Mir's army abandoned the battle and surrender Mirê Kor to the Ottoman government.<sup>684</sup>

At the end of 1836 Mirê Kor was captured and he was sent to the Istanbul in "a sort of half honorable confinement."<sup>685</sup> He was received "with the greatest distinction, and bestowed on him numerous tokens of his imperial favour." The Sultan considered the *mir* to be "a man endowed with the greatest qualities, and one of the pillars that sustained the throne." Therefore "the Porte decided to reorganize the whole of Koordistan, and name Mehemet Pasha (Mirê Kor) governor-general of that province, giving him the most unlimited power."<sup>686</sup> Once the Mir was given the title of the governor of Kurdistan, he was shipped off home via the port of Samsun and Trabzon. As Ainsworth follows up with the story of the Mir he discovers that Mirê Kor "disappeared at Amasiyeh, owing, as it was studiously reported, to illness." With more investigation Ainsworth makes, he discovers more and states that "from inquiries we made at Amasiyeh itself, shortly after the time, we learned that he was overtaken

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<sup>681</sup> Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Dîroka Kurd û Kurdistanê*, (Translated from Sorani to Kurmanji Kurdish by Ziya Avcî) (Istanbul: Weşanên Avesta, 2002), 541.

<sup>682</sup> Millingen noted the policy of Raşid Pasha towards Mirê Kor was "treacherous, as it was under the mask of friendship that the campaign was to be fought, not with the sword. Mehemet Pasha fell into the snare, and having gone to the Turkish camp for the purpose of negotiating, was hastily packed off to Constantinople, and put into the clutches of his friend Sultan Mahmud." Frederick Millingen, *Wild life among the Koords*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), p 185-86; Williams Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia, Vol. II*, (London: John W. Parker, 1842), 322-23.

<sup>683</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 60.

<sup>684</sup> According to Jwaideh this claim that the Mir and his army surrendered because of the exploitation of the religious sentiments by the Ottoman commander was borne out by Fraser, who was in the region during the Mir's defeat. Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 319. Fraser stated that "lingering remains of veneration for the successor of the Prophet and the head of their religion, forbade the Koords to oppose in arms the troops of the Sultan." Fraser, *Travels in Koordistan*, p .82

<sup>685</sup> Fraser, *Travels in Koordistan*, p .82

<sup>686</sup> Millingen, *Wild life among the Koords*, 186.

there by a messenger from Constantinople with the bowstring.”<sup>687</sup> It was obvious that the Mir fell victim to a conspiracy organized by the Porte and the valis of Trabzon, Amasya, Mosul, Kirkuk and Baghdad, though until present time the fate of the Mir was not clear to the historians. Although Wadie Jwaideh suggests that his execution was arranged by Ali Rıza Pasha, he does not clearly state his source. An Ottoman document that I came across in the Hatt-ı Humayûn collection was partially clarifying the mystery over the death of the Pasha. The document from the Porte to the governor of Baghdad states that “the Pasha of Rawanduz needs to be put to death (‘idam edilmesi gerektiği’), but since the circumstances are not appropriate for the moment, the subject matter is delayed and it is secretly referred to the vali of Baghdad via Aşkar Pasha (the *vali* of Kirkuk).”<sup>688</sup>

Once the Mirê Kor was out of the stage, his brother Rasul Pasha became the governor of Rawanduz until 1847, when the vali of Baghdad finally expelled him because of not paying the tax. He escaped to Ushnu on the Iranian side and stayed in exile for five years until when he was forgiven by the Porte and allowed to take residence in Baghdad, including a salary.<sup>689</sup> After forcing the last family member of Rawanduz Mirs out, the emirate was governed by Turkish leaders, who were appointed from the center.<sup>690</sup> Mirê Kor always had ambitions on Bahdinan emirate, but he never had a firm grasp of this ancient principality since he had many contenders tried to diminish his power. The Bahdinani emirate was also weakened in the race for power and later removed from the scene with the same fate as the other Kurdish emirates.

### **The last days of Bahdinan Emirate<sup>691</sup>**

Centered in Amediye, Bahdinan principality was one of the longest surviving emirates in Kurdistan. It was also one of the oldest in the region.<sup>692</sup> In nineteenth century the mirs of Bahdinan were much weaker than the other surrounding rulers such as Baban Mahmud Pasha, Mirê Kor of Rawanduz and Bedir Khan Bey of Botan. Before Mirê Kor incorporated Bahdinan into his lands in 1830s Ismail Pasha was sitting in the throne of the emirate. It was occupied by the mir of Rawanduz twice; the first attack on the Yezidis of Bahdinan and the second one was to conquer the principality itself. With the second attempt, Ismail pasha, the mir of Bahdinan, left his seat and fled. After a short period, Ismail Pasha was able to defeat

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<sup>687</sup> Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor*, 323

<sup>688</sup> HAT# 47, ( 29.Z.1255/4 March 1840)

<sup>689</sup> Later on Rasul Pasha attended to the war of Crimea and became the commander of the Kurdish tribes in Erzurum. After his journey to Hijaz and Istanbul, he became the governor of Van. Three years later he moved to Erzurum and died there in hijri 1301(1883). Mihemed Emîn Zekî, *Dîroka Kurd û Kurdistanê*, 542.

<sup>690</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 177.

<sup>691</sup> The information about Bahdinan Principality is mostly derived from Wadie Jwaideh’s book titled *The Kurdish national movement*, 61-62.

<sup>692</sup> The French voyageur Sestini, who visited Amediye in 1781, stated that the family of the Bahdinani mirs descended from Caliph Ismail and kept the lineage since 700 A.D. Part of Mosul and politically bound with Baghdad, Bahdinan provided these cities with tobacco, raisins, grapes, and many other fruits. The Beg of Amediye was able to gather eight to ten thousands cavalymen as his territories were more populated than any other Kurdish Beg. Domenico Sestini, *Nouveau Voyage de Constantinople s Bassora*, (Paris: Devaux, 1801), 150-151.

the agent of Mirê Kor, Musa Pasha, in Amediye. However, with the return of the Mir, Ismail Pasha was defeated one more time and his capital was reoccupied. Once the Ottomans deposed the Mirê Kor from his seat, Ismail pasha was able to reinstate his power one more time. Though his repossession was cut short and he became fugitive again, when vali of Mosul, İnce Bayraktar Mehmed Pasha, surrounded Amediye with his forces and captured the town after a long siege.

Ismail Pasha's desire of taking back his emirate forced him to ally himself with Bedir Khan Bey as a last resort. Convincing the mir of Botan, he was able to form a new army and he immediately marched on Amediye and occupied it again. As soon as the vali of Mosul became aware of the situation, he organized his army for a new attack. Ismail Pasha immediately sent news for the help of Mar Shimon, the Nestorian patriarch in Hakkari, but with no result. In this last battle of Ismail Pasha, he was defeated and captured by the vali of Mosul, and later he was exiled to Baghdad, where he spent the rest of his life with his family. After Ismail Pasha was overthrown, the emirate of Bahdinan never recovered and thus came to an end another principality in the region.

### **Bedir Khan and the Emirate of Botan**

Bedir Khan Beg was probably one of the most celebrated personalities in the mid-nineteenth century Kurdistan because of the wide spread rebellions he led. Descended from the Azizan and his family roots traced back to the thirteenth century in Sharafname, Bedir Khan came to power in 1821, when he was probably 18 years old.<sup>693</sup> Although his success was resented by other family members he kept quiet and continued to consolidate his power. He used the same tactic avoiding the widespread punishing actions of the Ottoman army against the Kurdish mirs between 1834 and 1836. After ensuring his reign he immediately set out to strengthen his power over Botan emirate, which had been divided into "sister emirates" and been a scene of quarrel for the rival tribal confederations.<sup>694</sup> After a while, he grew increasingly independent of Ottoman rule, ignoring the duties of a mir to the Porte. He, for instance, declined to send his requisite armed forces when the Sultan called them up during the Ottoman-Russian war of 1828-29.<sup>695</sup> He even went further by minting his own coins and having the Friday prayers recited in his name, both of which indicates political of independence for a Muslim ruler. In 1838 he was subdued and a year later in addition to his title of *mütesellim* (provincial governor), which he was granted before, he was given the title of an Ottoman military rank of *miralay* (colonel).<sup>696</sup> However, following the battle of Nizib,

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<sup>693</sup> David McDowall, *A modern history of the Kurds*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 45. *Sicill-i Osmani* recorded that "Bedirhan Pasha" was "Hâlid b. Velid sülalesinden ve Kürdistan'ın seçkin beylerinden Abdülhan'ın oğludur. 1217 (1802) tarihinde Cezire-i İbn-i Ömer'de doğup babası yerine yurtluk suretiyle bey oldu." *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol. II, 13.

<sup>694</sup> Janet Klein, "Power in the periphery: the Hamidiye Light Cavalry and the struggle over Ottoman Kurdistan, 1890-1914," (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2002), 109; van Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 177.

<sup>695</sup> Klein, "Power in the periphery," 110; Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 179.

<sup>696</sup> Ateş, "Empires at the Margin," 85; Jwaideh states that Bedir Khan Beg was appointed as the head of a contingent of Botan troops in the battle of Nizip against Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt. So, most likely because of his

which took place close to his capital in Cizre and ended up with the defeat of the Ottoman army, Bedir Khan began to expand his authority over the surrounding regions. As the mir of Bohtan his rule extended on the territories from the east of Rawanduz in the southeast, to the west of Urumiya in the east, to the southern shores of Lake Van in the north, to the southwest of Diyarbekir in the west, and to the north fringes of Mosul in the south.<sup>697</sup> During his territorial gains, he was probably helped-or at least his actions were ignored- by the Ottomans, because the latter needed him in the battle of Nizip against the forces of Ibrahim pasha of Egypt. Jwaideh, quoting two American Missionaries, Austin Wright and Edward Breath, states that Bedir Khan Beg made a secret agreement with the Ottomans.<sup>698</sup> Although there is no information about the nature of the accord between two sides, one suspect that the Ottomans tried to centralize Kurdistan under one strong name since it was much easier to deal with one mir instead of many.

Despite his despotic ruling, among his Muslim subjects he was rather known as “a man of inflexible integrity, and had never been known to receive bribe to pervert the ends of justice.” On the contrary, because of his mistreatment of Nestorian and Christian population many “cursed the memory of the tyrant (Bedir Khan Beg) in execrations long and deep.”<sup>699</sup> Such a view was the result of his cruel suppression of the Nestorians in 1840s. He could not, however, calculate the results of his action, as Jwaideh puts it, this not only caused much carnage, which we will talk below in more detail, but also led his demise.<sup>700</sup>

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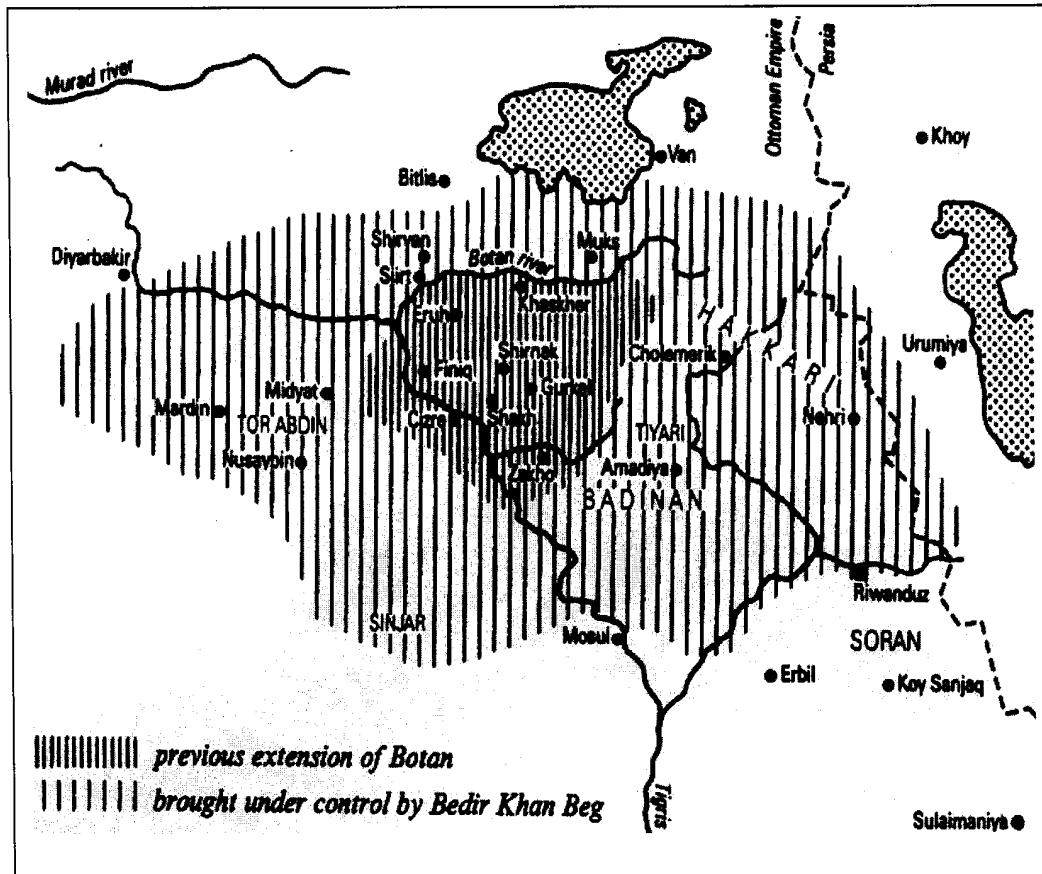
participation to the war on the Ottoman side he was appointed as *miralay*. Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 63; An Ottoman archival document refers to Bedir Khan’s reception of the title of *miralay* on 25 March 1839: “Diyarbekir eyaletinden tertip olunacak Redif Askeri Miralaylığına tâyin olunan Bedirhan Bey’e piyade miralay nişanı ve bir kılıcı mühimmat harbiyece yapıp verilmesi.” C. AS (Cevdet Askeriye) #46027, Folio: 1047, (09. M. 1255/ 25 March 1839); In some Ottoman documents he is called as “*Kaimakam*.” See, for instance, C.NF(Cevdet Nafia)# 959, Folio:20, (8.Ca.1259/ 7 June 1843), where it says “Diyarbekir ve Musul arasının eşkıya taarruzundan muhafazası için Cizre Kaymakamı Bedirhan Bey’e emir yazılması.”

<sup>697</sup> Ateş disputes that his power extended all the way to Urumiya since he could not substantiate this in his research. Ateş, “Empires at the Margin,” 85. Whereas van Bruinessen draws a map, which shows the eastern border of the Botan emirate reaches to the Iranian border on the west of Urumiya lake. van Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 178. Considering that the mir of Hakkari, Nurullah Beg was an ally of Bedir Khan Beg, one could claim that the latter’s rule extended to the frontiers of Iran, though Hakkari was still under the leadership of the former.

<sup>698</sup> According the report that Wright and Breath prepared after their visit to Bedir Khan, “eight years ago, when he was weak and Turkey strong, he entered into an engagement with the latter; and now, though the power had changed hands, he did not violate his words...Eight years ago he was poor, without power, and little known. The Turkish government then took him by the hand; and now his wealth is incalculable.” “Visits of Messrs Wright and Breath to Bader Khan Bey,” *The Missionary Herald* 42, (Nov. 1846: 378-383), cited in Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 64. Jwaideh also noted that it is interesting to see that this agreement was made during the Ottoman government’s effort to pacify the Kurdish emirates, which no doubt helped the former to have one less enemy. Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 64.

<sup>699</sup> George Percy Badger, *The Nestorians and their rituals: with the narrative of a mission to Mesopotamia and Coordistan in 1842-1844, and of a late visit to those countries in 1850, Part one*, (London: J. Masters, 1852), 305.

<sup>700</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 64.



**Map 4: The limits of the Botan Emirate during the reign of Bedir Khan Beg**  
**Source: Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and State*, p. 178**

Like the other Kurdish mirs, Bedir Khan was also inspired by Mehmed Ali Pasha. Modernizing his army, he centralized his military, created elite units from all the tribes and put them under his command instead of leaving them under their tribal chiefs. However, such tribal units did not totally cease to exist. He created regiments from some of the best men of all tribes, which were more loyal to the mir than to their own aghas. Such men of these regiments were called *ghulam*, which literally meant “slave” or “servant.”<sup>701</sup> This new system, although good for mirs, had caused the aghas to lose their independence since they sacrificed their best men. As Mirê Kor of Rawanduz and Baban Ahmed Pasha, Bedir Khan produced his own arms and ammunition in Cizre and he financed it through the income he collected from his subjects.<sup>702</sup>

In the early 1840s, Bedir Khan was in a very advantageous position to consolidate his power. Emirate of Soran was shattered since Mirê Kor was pacified, while the Babans were much weakened. Emirate of Hakkari, under the leadership of Nurullah Beg, did not have much power either and taking advantage of this situation, Bedir Khan made an easy alliance

<sup>701</sup> Bruinessen translates *ghulam* as “retainer” by referring to the modern usage of the word. As he states (p. 202) this word is used in a wide perspective. The Ottomans used it to refer to the slaves of the ruling class, recruited through *devşirme* system of sale or capture in war. However, it is also used for the bodyguard and vassals. This word still indicates to retainers among the Kurdish aghas. van Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 179

<sup>702</sup> Kaws Kaftan, *Baban, Botan ve Soran*, 66; Zekî, *Dîroka Kurd û Kurdistanê*, 163.

with the latter followed up with the joining of Khan Mahmud of Müks, a strong mir around Van.<sup>703</sup> Besides mirs, he brought a number of minor chieftains of the immediate vicinity under his rule and he had influence on tribes as far as Muş and Kars.<sup>704</sup> As in the words of Reverend George Badger, Bedir Khan formed a “confederate Coordish Emeers” by uniting all these local, impotent Kurdish *mirs*.<sup>705</sup> As if he followed up with the example of Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt, he brought all the local magnets under his control and created, though not a perfect one, a central system by de-tribalizing the territories under his rule.<sup>706</sup>

The power grip by Bedir Khan in Kurdistan created a place of security under his control, though this was accomplished through harsh punishment of offenders. Accounts of travelers to the emirate of Botan showed that the wanderers felt safer in the domains of Bedir Khan Beg. The missionaries Wright and Breath, for instance, back from Urumiya into the mir’s territories, they rested in a village of former robbers, who told them they would rob their guests if it was not for Bedir Khan. After meeting with the mir the missionaries stated that “the guilty under his government found no escape. Bribery, favouritism, etc., which too often, in these countries, pervert the course of justice and nullify the force of law, are unknown here.”<sup>707</sup> Some like Ditol exaggerated further the security and public order in Botan by suggesting that “a kid can go all around the country of Bedir Khan Beg” without worry. Therefore, he continues, “habitants, who live in the other regions, want to migrate here and people do not wish to leave this land.”<sup>708</sup>

Bedir Khan’s policies formed the lands he led, but at the same time his personality shaped his policies and the laws in his territories. Like all the other Kurdish *mirs* he was a religious person and a man of destiny, who believed that he had a mission and possessed special powers. His charismatic personality, together with his sternness and religiosity, made him and his followers to believe that his success was of a divine nature. The descriptions of Bedir Khan Beg and his court by the American missionaries Wright and Breath make more sense about the behaviors behind the Mir’s actions:

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<sup>703</sup> Halfin, *XIX. Yüzyılda Kürdistan Üzerine Mücadeleler*, 50; Kaftan claims that the mir of Ardalan also joined to the band of Bedir Khan Beg, though I suspect that is true since I have come across no information or indication about this. Kaws Kaftan, *Baban, Botan ve Soran*, 67. Nikitin also shortly states that Amir of Ardalan was part of the unity created by Bedir Khan, but he does not provide any source for this information. Basil Nikitin, *Kürtler* (translated from French into Turkish by Hüseyin Demirhan and Cemal Süreyya), (Istanbul: Deng Yayınları, 2002), 333.

<sup>704</sup> Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 179; One also wonders why the Babans did not establish any coalition with Bedir Khan Bey. The geography was, probably, one obstacle before them in addition to the traditional independent status of the Babans. Through the nineteenth century the Babans made no alliance with any Kurdish emirate, though they made temporary commitments to the Iranian governors or to the pashas of Baghdad when it suited to their interest.

<sup>705</sup> Badger, *The Nestorians and their rituals, part one*, 372.

<sup>706</sup> Ateş names the process of centralization by Bedir Khan as “de-clanization” of Kurdistan, which is referring to the erosion of the power of the tribal chiefs. He claims that such a process “was the beginning of a new form of identity and allegiance formation and as such a challenge to the authority of Istanbul and the Ottoman project of creating a new citizenship based on rights provided by Tanzimat reforms.” Ateş, “Empires at the Margin,” 86.

<sup>707</sup> “Visits of Messrs Wright and Breath to Bader Khan Bey,” *The Missionary Herald* 42, (Nov. 1846: 378-383), 381 cited in van Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 202.

<sup>708</sup> Ditol, *1824’ten 1845’e Kadar Şark Gezileri Günlükleri İnceleme ve Kütüphanesi*, (May, 1849), 1:95, 5-6 cited in Halfin, *XIX. Yüzyılda Kürdistan Üzerine Mücadeleler*, 51.

His power extends from Persian line on the east to far into Mesopotamia on the west, and from the gates of Diarbekr those of Mosul; and his fame is wide spread. While we were with him, nearly every chief in northern Koordistan came to make their respect to him, bringing him presents of money, horses, mules and other valuable property. Even the Hakkary Bey, higher in rank, and once more powerful than he, and Khan Mahmud, called by an English traveller “the Rob Roy of Koordistan,” seemed to think themselves honored by being in waiting upon him. The many spirited chiefs under him though restive and extremely impatient of restraint, dare not lift a finger in opposition to him: as, in their own languages, “God has given him the power, and it is in vain for us to strive for it.”<sup>709</sup>

Bedir Khan considered himself a righteous and truthful man because of his strong belief in his faith. He spent a great deal of time to complete his religious duties. On the other hand, as Jwaideh suggests, “it was no doubt because of this predilection for religion that a number of shaykhs succeeded in gaining great influence over him and appear to have been instrumental in inducing him to deal so ruthlessly with the non-Muslim Nestorians.”<sup>710</sup>



**Map 5: Kurdistan cities where the American missionaries were located in mid-century**  
**Source: Annual report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, Vol. 36, 1873, p. 53**

Bedir Khan Bey’s massacre of Nestorians was probably the most recorded incident in the Western travelogues and memoirs about nineteenth century Kurdistan. The tragic story of this small Christian community inhabited in the valley of Zap and mountains of Hakkari for centuries was witnessed and recorded by Austin Henry Layard, Reverend George Percy Badger and Dr. Asahel Grant. We will not go much into the story of the massacre since

<sup>709</sup> “Visits of Messrs Wright and Breath to Bader Khan Bey,” *The Missionary Herald* 42, (Nov. 1846: 378-383), cited in Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 65.

<sup>710</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 65



several accounts have already covered it in details.<sup>711</sup> Rather I will focus on the causes and the consequences of the massacre, and see whether this tragic episode had reshaped the Tanzimat and the centralization policies towards the Kurdish notables.

There have been many attempts to explain the causes behind the massacres of the Nestorians by Bedir Khan Beg. Some have ascribed them to the Beg's religious bigotry, which was inflated by Nurullah Beg, mir of Hakkari, who felt his authority in jeopardy because of the Nestorian leader Mar Şimon's support for his rival Süleyman Beg. Nurullah Beg's suspicion added on, considering that Mar Şimon was the second most powerful man in Hakkari and whenever Mir of Hakkari was absent in the principality, it was Mar Şimon, who acted as a locum.<sup>712</sup> Both the fear for his rival, Süleyman Beg, and the desire of Mar Şimon to be more independent left no choice for Nurullah Beg but ask for assistance from Bedir Khan Beg, who took this as a great opportunity to become the patron of the ancient emirate of Hakkari. The attacks over the Nestorians also gave the opportunity to Bedir Khan to seize the riches of this community, which he used it to reward the growing number of his loyalists, and also to prove his religious fervor. Jwaideh states that both of these matters were crucial to his reputation and upcoming plans.<sup>713</sup>

Mar Şimon, who was extremely jealous and wary of any external threat to his position, not only wanted to be free from the Kurdish Mir but was also anxious to keep his authority over the Nestorians in Hakkari. Some of his contenders were the leaders in his community. The American and English missionaries, who took sides in this struggle, also tried to undermine his authority since he was seen as an obstacle before the proselytizing of the Nestorian community. However, the missionaries were divided in this episode of bloodshed, while Anglicans supported Mar Şimon, the American Protestants opposed his patriarchal authority.<sup>714</sup> Additionally, the reality of the missionaries, who grew from day to day in Hakkari, was causing more suspicion and discomfort among the Muslim Kurds and their leaders. The ominous implications already existed among the Kurds as Ainsworth, who was traveling through Hakkari on behalf of the Church of England in early 1830s, noted the reaction of a Kurdish Beg in Hakkari. Upon the arrival of the British traveler to the village of Leihun the Beg immediately started to question him about his travel into his land. Without welcoming him, the *beg* said "You are the fore-runners of those who come to take this country; therefore it is best that we should take the first what you have, as you will afterwards take our property."<sup>715</sup> Beg was right about the colonization of the landscape in his surrounding since in 1842 the American missionaries built a hilltop house for their activities, which caused

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<sup>711</sup> For more information on the massacres of the Nestorians and its background see: Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 65-72; van Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 177-181; Klein, "Power in the periphery," 108-115. For primary accounts see also: George Percy Badger, *The Nestorians and their rituals*; Austen Henry Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh*; Asahel Grant, *The Nestorians Or The Lost Tribe*, (London:J. Murray, 1841)

<sup>712</sup> McDowall, *the Kurds*, 45.

<sup>713</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 67.

<sup>714</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 67; McDowall, *the Kurds*, 46; It was clear that the American missionaries wanted to keep the good relations with Bedir Khan Beg since they thought that taking a stance with the Mir would help them to convert more Mountain Nestorians. *The Missionary Herald* 43, no 1.(Jan. 1847), 6

<sup>715</sup> Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches, Vol. II*, 242.

lots of rumor that it was a fortress against the Muslims, or an alternative market to draw business away from Julemerg, the seat of Nurullah Bey.<sup>716</sup>

The Kurdish chieftains were afraid that the missionaries, as the other European travelers, were in contact with the Porte and had the power to attract the Ottoman forces into their lands.<sup>717</sup> Even though the missionaries did not invite the Ottomans they were already involved, if not directly, into this massacre. The Porte for a long time wished for a clash between the two unruly subjects, the Kurd and Nestorians. A conflict between two sides would weaken both sides, eliminate the Nestorians and prepare an excellent ground and a well established excuse for the Ottomans to remove the Kurdish notables from Kurdistan. An English missionary and delegate appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Christian Church of the East in Kurdistan, Reverend George Percy Badger witnessed the massacres and suggested that the Ottomans intended to use this for their own interest:

The Turks, sensible of their own weakness, had all along abstained from seriously remonstrating against the proceedings of Bedr Khan Beg, and that being anxious to extend their rule throughout central Kurdistan, they regarded with secret complacency, the late dissensions among the Kurds and Nestorians, -dissensions which their own policy had fomented, - foreseeing that these would lead eventually to the weakening of the mountain tribes, and pave the way to the establishment of the Sultan's authority where as yet it was recognised only in name.<sup>718</sup>

Going through many documents on this issue in the Ottoman archives, one can easily see that from the very beginning the Porte was aware of Bedir Khan Beg's intention of massacring this Christian community.<sup>719</sup> When Bedir Khan's forces attacked the mountain Nestorians of Hakkari, the Ottoman valis of Mosul and Erzurum did not discourage the *beg* from his well-publicized plan, even though they had the military personnel to stop him. Addition to this, the Porte knew that once the Mir was done the European powers would demand the punishment of the culprits and would create a convenient pretext for the Porte to finish the Kurdish emirates.<sup>720</sup>

The first attack took place in July 1843, when Bedir Khan assembled a force totaled 70,000 men, which was made of tribes from Van to Rawanduz and from Tigris to the frontiers

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<sup>716</sup> McDowall, *the Kurds*, 46; Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 70.

<sup>717</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 70.

<sup>718</sup> George Percy Badger, *The Nestorians and their rituals, part one*, 368-69.

<sup>719</sup> A document talks about the release of the Nestorian captives by Bedir Khan. See HR.MKT (Hariciye Nezareti-Mektubi Kalemî) #29, Folio:2 (09.S.1960/ 28 February 1844. Another document shows that Bedir Khan's army was still financed by the vali of Mosul: "Cizye Mütessellimi Bedirhan Bey'in maiyyetinde müstahdem asker ve başıbozukların maaş ve tayinatı için Musul Valisi Mahmud Paşa'nın hazinesinden karzen para aldığı." A.MKT (Sadaret-Mektubi Kalemî Ervaki)# 86, Folio: 9 ( 19.S.1260/ 9 March 1844). There was even a demand by the Commander of Army in Anatolia asking to keep Bedir Khan in place for the time being. A. MKT.#69, Folio: 28 (3.L.1261/ 5 October 1845)

<sup>720</sup> McDowall, *the Kurds*, 46-37.

of Iran, and was sent over the Tiyari and Diz clans of Nestorian community.<sup>721</sup> The vali of Erzurum seemed to approve the invasion of Hakkari region by the Bedir Khan forces. Austin Henry Layard, a British archeologist, witnessed the massacres and talks about them in his books *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon with Travels in Armenia, Kurdistan and the Desert* (London, 1856) and *Ninevah and its Remains* (London, 1850) in details. He states that Bedir Khan, during his attacks in 1843, massacred ten thousand people and carried away a large number women and children as slaves.<sup>722</sup> The scale of the second attack, which took place in 1846, this time on the Nestorians of Tkhuma, who allied themselves with the invading forces during the first massacres, was not as big as the first one since the number of the massacred were not more than few hundreds, but the atrocities committed were not less than before.<sup>723</sup> Nevertheless, this time the Ottoman forces moved onto Bedir Khan Beg with the intention of removing him from Botan region.

Upon Bedir Khan's second round of massacres the European powers, especially Britain and France, exercised pressure on the Porte to punish the Mir and thwart further killings of the Nestorians.<sup>724</sup> However this was not a simple task, for Bedir Khan expanded his confederation for years and formed an alliance with the Kurdish notables in Hakkari, Van, Müks and Bitlis. A large army under the command of Mareşal Osman Pasha, assisted by Generals Ömer Pasha and Sabri Pasha, was prepared to clash with Bedir Khan's forces. The Mir was able to defeat the first expedition of the Ottoman forces against him and declared himself independent.<sup>725</sup> When one of the family members of Bedir Khan and a leading army commander of his forces, Ardeşir (Ezdin Şir), decided to cooperate with the vali of Mosul, this led the Ottoman army to occupy the Mir's capital, Cizre. After the defeat of Bedir Khan's army many of his followers surrendered to the Ottoman forces and Bedir Khan was forced to make peace. By the end of July 1847, he finally accepted to surrender with the condition of honorable treatment, and was expelled to Istanbul and later exiled to Crete. Meanwhile allies of Bedir Khan in Van, Khan Mahmud of Müks and his two brothers, were defeated near Tilleh with the help of Yezidi Kurds, thus they decided to give up with their struggle. Khan Mahmud was put to death after many tortures and humiliations. At the same time, the signing of the Erzurum Treaty was getting closer and the mir of Hakkari, Nurullah Beg, had been convinced to abandon his cause and alliance with Bedir Khan Beg. Soon afterwards, the news arrived about Nurullah Beg's attempt to bring together the district of Hakkari under his rule. But his effort produced no results with the attacks of the Ottoman troops and after a short

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<sup>721</sup> Dated 12 August, 1843, Dr. Grant stated in his letter that the Kurdish forces were made of seventy thousands men. *The Missionary Herald* 39, no.12 ( Dec. 1843). Some others state that there were a hundred thousands men. Both figures were cited in Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 72.

<sup>722</sup> Austen Henry Layard, *Ninevah and its Remains*, (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1858), 153; The American missionary Edward Breath puts the number of death to seven thousands. Letter from Breath dated July 27, 1846, *The Missionary Herald* 42, no.12 ( Dec. 1846), 407 in Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 322.

<sup>723</sup> Layard does not give a precise number, but he states that around three hundred women and children were killed in Tiyari region of Hakkari. Layard, *Ninevah and its Remains*, 201. The news coming from the American missionaries were also conflicting. A letter from Dr. Wright dated on 22 December, 1846 stated that "probably not less than five hundred Tahomeans (a Nestorian tribe in Hakkari region) fell by the sword; and perhaps the number may rise a good deal above that account." *The Missionary Herald* 43, no 1.(Jan. 1847), 138

<sup>724</sup> van Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 180.

<sup>725</sup> McDowall, *the Kurds*, 47.

period of the Beg's flight to Iran he returned and surrendered.<sup>726</sup> Likewise, many other Kurdish mirs were subdued by the Porte. By the beginning of August 1847 almost all major Kurdish chiefs surrendered to the Ottoman forces and each one was later exiled to different corners of the empire.<sup>727</sup>

Once the emirate of Bedir Khan fell apart, a power vacuum took place in Kurdistan. Although the Porte appointed governors from the center, they were not considered as legitimate rulers by the local people and thus had very little power to impose law and order. The security which once reigned in the region suddenly vanished. Once the highway robbers and the criminals reappeared, traveling became extremely dangerous. Feuds and conflicts broke up in between the tribes again. After the departure of the Bedir Khan Beg the confederate system collapsed and his trans-tribal forces disintegrated soon. New sub-tribes, which did not exist before arrival of the *mir*, emerged and the members of his army reestablished ties with their old tribes. Although no one could fill the *mir*'s position, a few tribal aghas succeeded to increase their sphere of influence in political and economical means. Since there were many rivals among the tribal chieftains, need for an inter-tribal leader led the way for religious dignitaries, such as Sheik Ubeydullah of Nehri, to become new power brokers.<sup>728</sup>

### **Babans in Their Last Phase**

Among all the Kurdish Emirates the Babans were the last Kurdish notables who were defeated and expelled from the power few years afterward. During 1840s it was Ahmed Pasha, the son of Sulaiman Pasha and a nephew of Mahmud Pasha, who ruled the emirate and the town of Sulaimaniya until the vali of Baghdad, Necib Pasha, defeated him and his modernized army in 1847. Although the Babans were not as powerful as twenty years before, Ahmed Pasha was still able to continue ruling over these territories until the end of mid-nineteenth century.

Ahmed Pasha, like his predecessors, kept strong contact with the Iranians and the other foreign dignitaries since. Two British officers, Commander J.F. Jones and Major Rawlinson, visited with Ahmed Pasha in Sulaimaniya on a day in late September in 1844.<sup>729</sup>

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<sup>726</sup> Cochran reported that the Ottoman army was fast subjugating the rugged mountains of Hakkari. He also noted that Nurullah Bey fled to the borders of Iran, and he was soon to be caught and exiled with Bedir Khan Bey. Letter from Mr. Cochran, *the Missionary Herald*, 45, no: 1 (Dec. 21, 1848), 161

<sup>727</sup> Several British documents PRO, FO 78/702, Brant to Palmerson, 9 August, 1847; PRO, FO 78/702, Brant to Lord Covley, 3 July, 1847; PRO, FO 78/702, Brant to Lord Covley, 26 June, 1847 and the Ottoman document BBA, A.MKT 112/50, (17.Ş.1264/ 29 July 1848) talks about the defeat and removal of the Kurdish notables from Kurdistan, which all are cited in Ateş, "Empires at the Margin," 91-94; also see McDowall, *the Kurds*, 47; in Jwaideh, *The Kurdish national movement*, 74.

<sup>728</sup> van Bruinessen, *Agha, shaikh, and state*, 181.

<sup>729</sup> As Mihemed Emîn Zekî states, compared to his predecessors, suprisingly, there is not much information on Ahmed Pasha. For more information on Baban Ahmad Pasha see Emîn Zekî, *Tarixi Silemani*; Sabri Ateş, "Empire at the Margins: Towards a History of the Ottoman-Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples," (Unpublished PhD diss., New York University, 2006); Abd al-Qader bin Rostam Babani, *Seyer al-Akrad dar Tarikh wa Jografya-ye Kordestan*. Republished by Mohammed Rauf Tawakkoli, (Tehran: Chapkhane-i Golbang,

They made some important observations on the town and the state of the last standing member of the Baban dynasty. Ahmed Pasha's appearance was

not prepossessing; and an impediment in his speech renders it at times painful to listen to him. When excited, however, an energy is observable in his eye which accords with his actions; and he bears the character of a persevering man of business. In manner he is mild and gentlemanly, and, like all Kurds, frank and hospitable. Accustomed to but little sleep, he devotes most part of the night to financial and political correspondence, whilst his days are occupied in general affairs, in the superintendence of his little army, and in agricultural improvements.<sup>730</sup>

Ahmed Pasha had a "liberal education" and a taste for "new order of things." He witnessed the advantages of a regular force and in few months succeeded to persuade the tribal forces to dress in the garb of the regular troops and equip with modern arms. In a year "he had raised and disciplined, according to European tactics, a respectable force, which at the present time amounts to about 800 men."<sup>731</sup> Ahmed Pasha tried to revive the old days of the Baban dynasty and thus prepared for a major rebellion when he realized that it was his turn to be taken out of Kurdistan as the last standing Kurdish emirate.<sup>732</sup> Besides, the border commission, which we will talk more about later, became more visible in the region and started to produce more concrete results from the surveys on the borderlines. Without including and counting the local powers and the tribes, the surveys of the commission had caused further suspicion and disturbance among the people of the region.

The capital of the Baban house, Sulaimaniya, was already in ruin because of the wars and unstable leadership in the ruling family. Compared to its earlier period Sulaimaniya of 1840s was less populated and more devastated than before. When Jones and Rawlinson

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1288/ 1377). So far Rüstem Babani covers more information on the last phase than any other sources. Although there is not much information about the author he seems to be a witness to the demise of the Baban dynasty as he states in his account.

<sup>730</sup> "Art. XI.—Narrative of a Journey through parts of Persia and Kurdistan, undertaken by Commander J. F. Jones, I. N., of the Honorable Company's Steam Vessel "Nitocris," in company with Major Rawlinson, Political Agent in Turkish Arabia.—Dated Baghdad, 31st December, 1847" *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, Vol. 8,(249-335), 330-331. Emîn Zekî also focused on Ahmed Pasha's character and stated that he was very "industrious, shrewd, and mature." Emîn Zekî, *Tarixi Silemani*, 114.

<sup>731</sup> *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, Vol. 8, 329; Emîn Zekî, *Tarixi Silemani*, 114.

<sup>732</sup> Major Soane states that Ahmed Pasha's fight against the Ottoman army was one of the major attempts with "national spirit" in the nineteenth century Kurdistan. The other three such attempts were, Soane notes, Baban Abdurrahman Pasha's rebellion against the valis of Baghdad in 1806, the bid for the independence by the Mire Kor of Rawanduz in 1836-8 and Bedir Khan Bey's famous "revolution" in 1847. Soane was right when he stated Ahmed Pasha's rebellion among some of the major Kurdish movements of the nineteenth century but such an approach to these events as "nationalist" and "secessionist" was a misreading of the period. Soane, *To Mesopotamia*, 371-72; Four decades before Soane, Millingen made similar comments on Ahmed Pasha's resistance against the Ottomans. The latter supported his "nationalist" approach with the first hand experience with the Kurdish notables. He noted: "It seems as if the revolutionary fever had inflamed the brains of the whole mass of the Koordish nation. From my personal experience, having been thrown into contact with many of the chiefs of the Koordish national movements, as Ahmed Pasha of Suleimanieh and Resul Pasha, with all their brothers and sons, I can affirm, without fear of exaggerating, that the sentiment of nationality and the love of independence are as deeply rooted in the heart of the Koords as in that of any other nation." Although Soane did not cite any source, one suspects that he made such comments under the influence of Millingen. Frederick Millingen, *Wild life among the Koords*, 213.

visited Sulaimaniya in the early fall of 1844 they found less than half of people that C.J. Rich recorded in 1820. The town was made of “a collection of small and ruinous houses.”<sup>733</sup> Sulaimaniya and the court of Baban dynasty was already in decay when C.J. Rich visited the town. The age of Ahmed Pasha had its ups and downs but in general the dynasty was in decline. Still the Pasha tried hard to revitalize this centuries old dynasty by reforming his armed forces. Necib Pasha of Baghdad suspected Ahmed Pasha’s progressive improvements and in response the former decided to lay heavy taxes on the Baban emirate. While trying to keep the Iranians at bay, the Baban leader also had to bribe the vali of Baghdad and various authorities in Baghdad in order to prevent them to listen to the tempting offers by his brother Abdullah Pasha, who wanted to take his place.<sup>734</sup>

Necib Pasha was not content with Ahmed Pasha’s actions, so he decided to prepare a military campaign against him but he had to cut short since the British representatives in the region were annoyed while the delegates in Erzurum tackled with the question of the Ottoman-Iranian borders, including the status of Sulaimaniya.<sup>735</sup> Rawlinson worried about further interference of Necib Pasha to Sulaimaniya before the ratification of the Erzurum treaty and stated that “Suleimanieh may perhaps at no distant period be subject to some disturbance, as I think an attempt will be made to break in upon the almost independent government of the Kurdish Pasha.” Once receiving this information Williams, the British Commissioner for frontier negotiations, urged the British Consul in Baghdad “to allow affairs remain in status quo, in that province especially until the new treaty shall have been ratified, and the frontier-line practically defined.”<sup>736</sup>

The British officers were able to restrain Necib Pasha only for a short period as he gathered his troops in the spring of 1845 to crash the Baban, Bothan and Soran principalities. With the intention to take out the mir of Soran first he secretly invited Ahmed Pasha of Baban to join him in his campaign. Considering the good relations and the arm deal he made with the British, Ahmed Pasha was reluctant to join the pasha and declined his offer. Annoyed and provoked, Necib Pasha changed his plans and moved onto the Babans instead of establishing an alliance. Necib Pasha proceeded toward the province of Koy Sanjaq (a district of Baban territories) with the avowed purpose of inspecting it and adopting measures for agricultural developments. Necib Pasha’s move was received with suspicion by the Kurds since they were aware of the position of their pasha and considered this move as a hostile invasion of their lands. Therefore, the locals resisted to the Baghdad officers when they arrived to the town and deprived them of their arms while Ahmed Pasha was sixty miles away from the incident. The Baban governor of the district had the officers released and informed Necib Pasha with a

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<sup>733</sup> *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, Vol. 8, 329.

<sup>734</sup> *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, Vol. 8, 330.

<sup>735</sup> Ateş, “Empires at the Margin,” 75-76.

<sup>736</sup> Williams to Canning, Erzurum, 12 February, 1844, Schofiled I, 213 in Ateş, “Empires at the Margin,” 76. I am indebted to Sabri Ateş for sharing his notes and documents that he took from the British archives on the conflict between Ahmed Pasha and Necib Pasha.

letter stating that “pending instructions from Ahmed Pasha Baban the Ottoman troops could not be permitted to occupy the place.”<sup>737</sup>

Disappointed with Ahmed Pasha’s response to his officers Necib Pasha offered him a chance to withdraw his army from Koy, admit surrendering his lands with the troops in five days, and afterwards pay personal homage to the latter. After all these conditions are met, then the town would be given back to him. Witnessing that Ahmed Pasha gave no response Necib Pasha deposed him and appointed his brother Abdullah Pasha to the leadership of Sulaimaniya instead. Necib Pasha requested all troops from Mosul and Baghdad to march on Ahmed Pasha. These forces were made up “20 pieces of artillery, more than 4,000 regular infantry, and a body of irregulars numbering at 6,000 horse and foot.”<sup>738</sup> While the command of the army was given to Ferik Kurd Mehmet Pasha, an officer with the skills in mountain combat, Abdullah Pasha Baban was appointed as the pasha of Baban territories one more time. Ahmed Pasha tried to reconcile with his brother and Necib Pasha but his efforts produced no result. Upon this Ahmed Pasha formed an alliance, consisting of the chief of Khusnaw and Koy Sanjaq and mir of Rawanduz. The women, children and valuable goods were conveyed to secure places or crossed over the border to Iranian side. The passes were secured and two separate Kurdish forces were put together in Koy and Bazian, where the only places that the Ottoman troops could pass through towards the mountain chain.

The Tanzimat state required all the independent entities and local dynasties in and around the border to be rid of and Ahmed Pasha was one of these last elements to be taken care of. What concerned the Arab tribes was this extension of the Tanzimat state and they became more aware of the threat to their freedom after the Kurds were subjected to the centralizing state. Therefore the Arabs always kept friendly relations with the Kurds and they kept ready to harass the Ottoman troops, which were on the march from Baghdad. Bedir Khan Beg was also reported to intend to come to the help of Ahmed Pasha, but this was never realized. Although Ahmed Pasha’s forces were ready to attack to Necib Pasha’s forces he decided to act entirely on defensive.<sup>739</sup>

Rawlinson was in doubt that the attack on Sulaimaniya had been authorized by the Porte, but he felt “assured that Necib Pasha has good grounds for believing the substitution of Turkish for Kurdish power in that Pashalic (Baban) to be agreeable to the Porte.” Rawlinson continues:

[I]f his Excellency (Necib Pasha) should be called to account by the government at Constantinople, for having thrown the frontier into disorder, he will justify his adaptation of hostilities by the original outrage of Koie, and he will further argue from the extensive preparations which the Kurds are making for resistance, that the fault of negligence, rather than of precipitancy should be imputed to him in having so long

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<sup>737</sup> PRO, FO 78/2713, Rawlinson to Canning, Suleimanieh and British Consulate Baghdad, 9 July, 1845 in Ateş, “Empires at the Margin,” 77-78.

<sup>738</sup> Ateş, “Empires at the Margin,” 78.

<sup>739</sup> PRO, FO 78/2713, Rawlinson to Canning, in Ateş, “Empires at the Margin,” 79-80.

delayed the chastisement of a rebellious race. That Ahmed Pasha will be goaded into actual rebellion, there is now, I confess, almost a certainty, his present position indeed is that of rebellion, you are your Excellency will perceive from what I have already said that this rebellion is against Nejb Pasha not against the Porte, and that it is the effect and not the cause of the Kurdish Prince being attacked...<sup>740</sup>

The end of Ahmed Pasha's leadership in Baban territories, however, did not come directly from Necib Pasha's offensive move. While Necib Pasha was on the move to advance to Koy Sanjaq with four battalions and a number of Kurdish cavalry and foot, totaling 12,000 armed men with fourteen guns, Ahmed Pasha was proceeding to surround his camp.<sup>741</sup> Necib Pasha's position was in critical situation and he dispatched two Tatars to Baghdad for help. Upon their interception, Necib Pasha chose to send out a sheikh much venerated by the Kurds to Ahmed Pasha. While discussing the terms of peace and surrender, Ahmed Pasha murdered the sheikh with a pistol.<sup>742</sup> Many Kurds were aggravated by the killing of a holy man and changed their allegiance to Abdullah Pasha Baban. After that a sharp conflict took between two sides and Ahmed Pasha "received a ball in his head and another in his arm, fled to powerful tribe of Jaf."<sup>743</sup> His army then detached and his guns were confiscated by Necib Pasha.

Russian and British representatives were also involved in the elimination of Ahmed Pasha. After his failure Ahmed Pasha fled to Senna, the capital of the rival Ardalani dynasty on the Iranian side. Meanwhile, Count Modem, the Russian Minister in Tehran, and Colonel Sheil, the British minister, immediately alarmed Hajji Mirza Aghasi, the Iranian Prime Minister, to remove Ahmed Pasha from the border. They promised to place him far away from Sulaimaniya and in a more remote area than Senna, where he resided then. However, what they assured about was not realized and Ahmed Pasha stayed active in the frontier region. A year later Ahmed Pasha tried to oust his brother in Sulaimaniya though with no success.<sup>744</sup> Upon his attempt, the Porte asked to Baghdad and the frontier authorities to watch the borders more closely and one last time the Ottoman Sultan demanded from the Shah to order vali of Senna to send Ahmed Pasha further away from the frontiers. This was the heaviest strike to the Baban rule but there was still more to do for the Ottomons in order to bring an end to the dynasty.<sup>745</sup>

Ahmed Pasha, who was son of Süleyman Pasha and became the leader of Baban territories based on the hereditary practices, was finally replaced with his brother, Abdullah

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<sup>740</sup> PRO, FO 78/2713, Rawlinson to Canning, British Consulate Baghdad July 9th 1845 from the notes taken by Sabri Ateş at the British Archives.

<sup>741</sup> Rüstem Babani notes that Ahmed Pasha had kept Koy Sanjaq's with 10,000 cavalymen at the time of Necib Pasha's advance. bin Rostam Babani, *Seyer al-Akrad*, 160.

<sup>742</sup> Rüstem Babani named the sheikh as Mullah Ali Kahyai. bin Rostam Babani, *Seyer al-Akrad*, 161.

<sup>743</sup> PRO, FO 78/2713, Rawlinson to Canning, Mosul July 12th 1845 in Ateş, "Empires at the Margin," 81-82.

<sup>744</sup> When one night Ahmed Pasha came close to the outskirts of Sulaimaniya with few loyals he waited until the dawn so people of the town could join him. Around a thousand men, mostly elderly and dignitaries, decided to join him, while most of the people remained loyal to Abdullah Pasha in Sulaimaniya. bin Rostam Babani, *Seyer al-Akrad*, 163.

<sup>745</sup> Ateş, "Empires at the Margin," 82; See also Canning to Lord Aberdeen, Constantinople, 20 July, 1846 in Richard Schofield, ed., *The Iran-Iraq Border, 1840-1958, Vol. I*, (London: Archive Edition, 1989), 576-7.



Pasha, by the Porte.<sup>746</sup> Some of Baban people, who accompanied Ahmed Pasha in his struggle against Abdullah Pasha, later broke their promise and escaped from the battlefield when they could not receive the support they sought from the prominent people of the town. After such a devastating defeat Ahmed Pasha:

[W]ith fifty cavalymen left the field of Karzar. Without the luggage and boxes left open, he hurried to the lands of Kermanshah and from there he fled to the frontiers of Kurdistan. And he also went through the territory of Grus, Afshar and the castle of Sain until he traversed the region of Mukri. He also resided for five months in the province of Shamdinan, which is the first land of Salman, where the tomb of Sheikh Taha of Naqshbandi is located. Since he could not find a place of refuge to save himself, he sought protection in the Ottoman state as a last resort. In the end he moved towards Mosul with his entourage.

Tahir Pasha, vali of Mosul, who agreed with him previously, was informed of his coming and he prepared with his staff to receive him. The day His Honor (Ahmed Pasha) arrived to the town, Tahir Pasha unexpectedly and suddenly passed away. The British Consular proceeded to receive him and wrote a report to the Court about the situation. After that, the new vali issued a summoning, dismissed the people who accompanied him and gave permission to him to move to Istanbul with two aides.<sup>747</sup>

A letter dated on 25 January, 1850 from *Hicaz ve Irak Ordu-yı Hümayun Müşiri* Mehmed Namık was declaring that the “Sanjaq of Sulaimaniya” was finally “cleared” from the “household of the Babans”, who was doing “inappropriate things,” and the leadership of the *sanjaq* was filled by someone “suitable” (*ehliyetli*).<sup>748</sup> Ahmed Pasha was first disfavored in Istanbul and given a small amount of monthly payment for his expenses. Once Kurdistan was put under the control of the central government, the Porte had appointed Ahmed Pasha to several important posts through his life. Like many other Kurdish Pashas he was also incorporated into the Ottoman bureaucracy. A year after he arrived to Istanbul, he was sent to Paris with an Imperial envoy and stayed there for two and a half years.<sup>749</sup> He later became the governor of Yemen (1855 and 1865), *mutasarrıf* of Van (1865), governor of Erzurum (1867) and Adana (1875), respectively. Following him, his sons and his brothers also took important positions in the Ottoman state.<sup>750</sup> While Sulaimaniya was not under the influence of Babans any more, during the occupation of Sulaimaniya by the British, there were still some

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<sup>746</sup> Abdullah Pasha remained as Kaymakam of Sulaimaniya for four years. However, his leadership was symbolic as he had no power of his predecessors. In 1851, together with his brother Ahmed Pasha, he was summoned by Namık Pasha, the vali of Baghdad, and both were exiled to Istanbul. After the departure of the last member of the Baban dynasty, the Porte appointed a certain Ismail Pasha from the center as the kaymakam of Sulaimaniya. Emin Zeki Bey, *Kürd ve Kürdistan Ünlüleri*, 59-60; *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, Vol. 8, 330

<sup>747</sup> bin Rostam Babani, *Seyer al-Akrad*, 166-67.

<sup>748</sup> The same document declares that the house of Ardalan in Sinna was also removed from the power. A.MKT.MHM. Case# 19/13. (11. Ra. 1266/ 25 January, 1850).

<sup>749</sup> bin Rostam Babani, *Seyer al-Akrad*, 167.

<sup>750</sup> *Sicill-i Osmani*, Vol. I, 302. Mehmet Sureyya records in *Sicill-i Osmani* that Ahmed Pasha's sons Halid Bey was once the Ottoman ambassador to Tehran and his other son, Mustafa Izzet Pasha, was a mirliva (mir of a county). His brother Mehmed Pasha was the governor of Basra and the other brother lived in Istanbul.

descendants of the family, such as Jamal Beg, Azmi Beg and Faik Beg, all of whom later got involved in the Kurdish nationalist movements in modern Iraq. Other family members, who resided in different centers of the Empire, such as Baghdad and Istanbul, remained also active in politics. For instance, Ismail Hakkı Babanzade became the minister of Education during the government of Committee of Union and Progress. Relatives of the Babans were also powerful local leaders: Adela Khanum of Halabja (Jaf tribal leader) was a very influential leader in Sulaimaniya and Kirkuk during the British mandate and Muhammad Salih Beg was deputy of Sulaimaniya in the Iraqi Parliament.<sup>751</sup>

### **Survey of the Border Commission and Erzurum Treaty of 1847**

A quadripartite border commission (Tahdîd-i Hudûd Komisyonu), which was made of delegates from Iran, British, Russian, and Ottoman Empires, was assigned to decide and demarcate a line for the border between Ottoman and Iranian states.<sup>752</sup> The first commission already started to survey the frontiers in 1843 before the Ottomans eliminated the Kurdish mirs, however the treaty of Erzurum was not signed until 1847, when the last emirate, Babans, were defeated. The first commission was responsible for assessing the problems on the border, whereas the second commission, which was going to be formed in 1848 from the same countries but with different delegates, more focused on the determination of a borderline. Thus, one could say that the process of delimitation was made of two stages. The theoretical stage, where the commission was going to determine the disputed areas and points, took place between 1843 and 1848, and the second stage continued from 1849 until 1852, which during this period the border was drawn and the borderline was placed precisely on a map.<sup>753</sup> During the first stage several conferences were held, so each side could convey their territorial claims and discuss the issue of fugitives, the Iranian pilgrims and merchants traveling through the Ottoman territories, and the question of tribes located on the borders.<sup>754</sup>

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<sup>751</sup> Tejel Gorgas, Jordi, "Urban Mobilization in Iraqi Kurdistan," 537-552.

<sup>752</sup> Nejat Abdulla, *İmparatorluk, Sınır ve Aşiret*, 222; The members of the first commission were Enveri Efendi of the Ottoman state, Mirza Taki Khan of Iran, Col. Denish of Russian Empire and Robert Curzon, Col. Williams and Major Perrant of the British Empire. The second commission members were Mushir al-Dawla Mirza Jaafar Khan, a British educated engineer from Iran, Derviş Pasha from the Ottoman State, Col. Williams, his assistant Captian Glasscotte and Fenwick William Kenneth Loftus from the British side and Col. Y.I. Tchirikof from the Russian Empire.

<sup>753</sup> Nejat Abdulla, *İmparatorluk, Sınır ve Aşiret*, 222; Sabri Ateş, following M. Hariri's periodization, presents three phases in the Erzurum negotiations: In the first phase, lasted from January 1843 to mid 1844, the Ottoman and Iranian negotiators conveyed their claims and grievances to each other's governments. The second phase was about the possible compromises by the negotiators, the presentation of the Anglo-Russian compromise plan to Iranian and Ottoman delegates, and the signing of the treaty of Erzurum in 1847. The third phase focused more on the endorsement of the Treaty of Erzurum. Ateş, "Empires at the Margin," 82; See also Maurice Hariri, "The Turco-Persian Boundary Question: A Case Study in the Politics of Boundary Making in the Near and Middle East," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1953).

<sup>754</sup> After the first treaty of Erzurum was signed in 1823, the commerce between Iran and the Ottomans grew substantially. Joseph Wolff, a British officier who visited Erzurum in 1843, states that "the commerce between Turkey and Persia has been most considerably increased and facilitated", especially thanks to "the activity and exertions" of James Brant, Esq., the British consul in Erzurum. Of course, the more the inhabitants of two countries interacted the more the diplomatic issues (diplomatic representation, territorial claims, citizenship of border people, etc.) and legal questions (tax, custom duties, lawsuits between Iranian and Turkish merchants) came into existence. Letter from Wolff to Grover, Erzurum, 21, Dec. 1843, in Joseph Wolff, *Narrative of a*

As I stated at the introduction of this chapter, I do not intend to get into the details of the work done by the Border Commission and the implementation of the Erzurum Treaty since the subject has been well studied thanks to abundance of the archival documents in the repositories of all four countries, including Iran, Turkey as the successor of the Ottomans, Russia and Britain.<sup>755</sup> Instead, I aim to give a short story of the survey commission and the implementations of the Erzurum treaty for Babans and Sulaimaniya. One needs to keep in mind that the status of Sulaimaniya was one of the major issues between two sides before the treaty was signed.

Britain and Russia with this commission hoped to help their hosts (Iran and the Ottomans) towards a more “definitive and binding settlement of their territorial dispute and to narrow the frontier zone into a mappable line.”<sup>756</sup> Both Iranians and Ottomans used old firmans, maps and travel accounts, such as Katib Çelebi’s account “Cihannüma”, in order to prove their claim to certain territories.<sup>757</sup> When they found no data to verify their claim, the commissioners turned to the local inhabitants (tribes, aghas, notables) and geographic marks (mountains, rivers, plains) to respond aptly to each side, who were concerned about the strategic points for their military and trade expeditions. Through the negotiations until the signing of the treaty in 1847, the most disputed areas were Muhammarah (today’s Khorramshahr), Zohab, and Sulaimaniya. Besides, by showing Katib Çelebi’s account as

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*Mission to Bokhara, in the Years 1843-1845, to Ascertain the Fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, Vol. I,* (London: John W. Parker, West Strand, 1845), 164.

<sup>755</sup> Several works have problematized the Ottoman-Iranian border. Sabri Ateş in his doctoral dissertation on the borders gives a wide perspective of the borders and border people in the second half of the 19th century. Sabri Ateş, “Empire at the Margins: Towards a History of the Ottoman-Iranian Borderland and the Borderland Peoples,” (Unpublished PhD diss., New York University, 2006); Nejat Abdulla has also done a similar doctoral work, but with a broader period and less analytical approach, which was later translated into Turkish and published by Avesta; Nejat Abdulla, *İmparatorluk, Sınır ve Aşiret: Kürdistan ve 1843-1932 Türk-Fars Sınır Çatışması* (Trans.by Mustafa Aslan), (Istanbul: Avesta, 2010); Kalantari has done a chronological work, which is more focused on earlier period of 19th century Ottoman-Iranian borders, while Nasiri has done a similar work for the second half of the century. Each one focusing on a different period, both works are covering the whole 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mohammad Reza Nasiri, *Nasireddin Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri, 1848-1896* (Tokyo: IILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1991) and Yahya Kalantari, “Feth-Ali Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri (1797-1834),” (Unpublished Dissertation, Istanbul University, 1976). On the other hand, Aykun has focused more on the Erzurum agreement of 1847 and the border, based on mostly the ottoman sources. İbrahim Aykun, “Erzurum Konferansı (1843-1847) ve Osmanlı-İran Hudut Antlaşması” (Unpublished PhD diss. Atatürk University, 1995). Besides the modern sources some of the members of the border commission had also produced some works on the Ottoman-Iranian frontiers. Two of such works were written by the Ottoman delegates and one was written by the Iranian delegate: Mehmed Hurşid Pasha, *Seyahatname-i Hudud* (Istanbul, circa 1850. Republished with the original copy in Istanbul: Simurg, 1997 and transcribed by Alaaddin Eser); Derviş Pasha (Mehmed Emin), *Tahdid-i Hudud-ı İraniyye’ye dair Layiha*, (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1286/ 1870); Mirza Seyyid Ca’fer Khan (Müşir-id Devle), *Risale-i Tahkikat-ı Serhadiyye*, (Tehran, 1348/ 1929).

<sup>756</sup> Richard Schofield “Narrowing the frontier: mid-nineteenth century efforts to delimit and map the Perso-Ottoman border” in *War and peace in Qajar Persia: implications past and present*, ed. Roxane Farmanfarmaian (New York: Routledge, 2008), 152.

<sup>757</sup> Besides Katib Çelebi’s account, the Ottoman delegate Enveri Efendi presented *Düstur’ul İnşa*, which contained many documents from the correspondance and treaties with Iran and was collected by Reisü’l-Küttab in 1643, and Mustafa Naima Efendi’s *Tarih-i Naima* as well as Feraizi-zade’s *Gülşen-i Maarif* to the delegates as evidence showing that Sulaimaniya was part of the Ottoman Empire throughout of centuries. İbrahim Aykun, “Erzurum Konferansı (1843-1847) ve Osmanlı-İran Hudut Antlaşması” (Unpublished PhD diss. Atatürk University, 1995), 117-18.

evidence since it bore the seal of the sultan, Iran claimed for the district of Ahiska, Van, Kars and Bayezid as well as recognition of their rights to the district of Sulaimaniya. Nonetheless, by giving up their claim for the right of Sulaimaniya, in return, they asked for the right to appoint jointly a member of Baban family as governor of the town and an annual payment of 30,000 tomans (15,000 Lira) for the summer camps of the Baban tribes on the Iranian side.<sup>758</sup> Discussions between two states on the status of Sulaimaniya continued more than the delegates expected to spend time on it since the Ottoman side's claim to these territories was more justified with the documents, treaties, chronicles and accounts of court historians, while Iranian side accepted none of these as evidence and insisted on their assertion.<sup>759</sup>

After four years of negotiations on different issues a final draft of the treaty, which was made of nine articles, was prepared and signed on 4 January 1847 (16 Muharram, 1263). With the treaty, many neglected issues (Iranian pilgrims, taxation and custom duties applied to Iranian merchants, the status of tribes on the border, Iranian fugitives in the Ottoman Empire, status of Muammarah) were resolved and the treaty of Erzurum signed in 1823 was reaffirmed. The status of the town of Sulaimaniya and its province, which was more or less defining the historical Baban territories, was precisely stated as the territories of the Ottoman Empire. The second article of the treaty stated "...the State of Persia firmly undertakes to give up all manner of claim in regard to the town and province of Souleimanieh, and not at any time to meddle or interfere in any way with the right of sovereignty which the State of Turkey possesses in the said province..."<sup>760</sup> With this article Sulaimaniya, once and for all, was accepted as the part of the Ottoman Empire. Although the status of Muammarah and Zohab kept becoming the subject of discussions after both sides signed the treaty, the article on Sulaimaniya was never disputed by Iran. The reason, probably the most important one, behind this was that a short period after the treaty was signed the Porte removed the last members of the Baban family from the region and appointed Kaimakams from the center.

Despite the treaty signed in 1847, disputed issues were not fully settled. The Kurdish tribes, which settled on the borders, had never been effectively controlled. Although the tribes defined the borders between each other, they did not specify which national jurisdiction they

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<sup>758</sup> Ateş, "Empires at the Margin," 123; Iran had already asked to the Ottomans to appoint Baban Mahmud Pasha to the leadership of Sulaimaniya in 1841. Sultan Abdulmecid agreed to dismiss Baban Ahmed Pasha and appoint Mahmud Pasha instead. While waiting for Mahmud Pasha to arrive to the town, the Ottomans appointed Baban Abdullah Pasha as deputy governor of Sulaimaniya. Iran immediately sent Mahmud Pasha with 2,000 soldiers to cross the border and take over the governorship. Abdullah Pasha resisted to this request with his forces and he defeated Mahmud Pasha and his Iranian soldiers. Although Iran tried to make another attempt to beat Abdullah Pasha, he warned them to resist again as he did before. Upon this, the Iranians left the issue of Sulaimaniya unresolved up until they brought it up during the negotiations of the Erzurum Treaty. Aykun, "Erzurum Konferansı," 39-41.

<sup>759</sup> The minutes of the discussions on the status of Sulaimaniya were well documented. A copy of them is available in the Ottoman archives in BOA, İMM, 1073/4(15. L. 1259/ 8 November, 1843). Aykun also discusses these minutes in details in his work on the treaty of Erzurum. Aykun, "Erzurum Konferansı," 105-120.

<sup>760</sup> Richard Schofield, ed., *Arabian Boundary Disputes, vol. 1: Iran–Iraq I, 1639–1909* (Farnham Common: Archive Editions, 1992), 167-69. For more information on the text of Erzurum treaty see also: BOA, İMM 1094/7; Name-i Humayun Defteri 12, 17; Muahedat Mecmuası III, 5-8; Gabriel Efendi, *Noradounhian Recueil d'actes Internationaux de L'empire Ottoman II*, (Leipzig: Neuchatel, 1990) 383-385; Aykun, "Erzurum Konferansı," 242; Rıza Kulihan Hidayet, *Ravzatü's-Sefa-i Nasiri*, vol. x, (Tehran, 1339) 302-306; Faridun Adamiyat, *Amir Kabir va Iran*, (Tehran: Intisharati Khawarizmi, 1969), 51; *British and foreign state papers, Volume 45 By Great Britain*. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 874-876

recognized. In other words, “the only borders the tribesmen respected were those drawn by them—not by a ruling power.”<sup>761</sup> Another reason for the negligence of issues was the continuing claims on each others land from both sides. Beyond these, the commission had not specified the precise spots where the Turkish border ended and Persian began. Therefore, in 1849 a new boundary commission was assembled in Baghdad to regulate the frontiers.<sup>762</sup> Regardless of the new surveys and meetings between both sides, there had always been dubious issues and as Mohammad Reza Nasiri states, the disputed topics almost remained the same up until the beginning of the twentieth century, as renewed incidents caused new clashes.<sup>763</sup>

Among all the issues coming between two states, the status of the Kurdish population with its emirates, tribes and villages on and around the frontiers was the most volatile and explosive matter. Walter Harris, who visited the region by the end of the nineteenth century, well summarized the problem:

[I]n spite of the fact that the question was settled upon paper at that date (1847), the greatest ill-feeling still exists upon the subject, and the two countries are always ready to fly at one another’s throats. Probably they would scarcely ever reach one another, as the wild Kurds, released for a time from their present state of an appearance of law and order, would merely loot on their own account. The Kurds of Persia, on account of their being Sunnis, would join the Turks, for even in Persian Kurdistan they recognize the Sultan Abdul Hamid as their Caliph. Anyhow, there would be such an upset that no good could possibly accrue to either side, and so matters have been allowed to remain as they are—that is to say, a vague frontier not in the least recognized by the Kurds who dwell near it, and who are to all intents and purposes not only robbers, but absolutely independent of either Sultan or Shah, and who would escape, were punishment for violence threatened by either ruler, by asserting that they were the subjects of the rival.<sup>764</sup>

The last period of the Kurdish Mirs, with the involvement of the foreign powers, missionaries and modernized armies, turned into the bloodiest decade of the Kurdish history in the nineteenth century. The modernization and centralization were outcomes of this age. Alienation between the patron and the client in the centuries old Kurdish principalities was the objective through the humiliation of the Kurdish notables by the Ottoman and Iranian armies. Such an attitude was going to help to dissolve the political entities of Kurdish mirs. All possible political instruments were put to use to eliminate the autonomous parties in Kurdistan. The Kurdish mirs tried to adopt modern means with the establishment of new defense forces and modern arm factories in order to compete with this new state apparatus.

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<sup>761</sup> Kamal Abdal-Rahman Salman, “The Otoman and British Policies Toward Iraqi Tribes: 1831 to 1920.” (Ph.D. diss., the University of Utah, 1992), 86.

<sup>762</sup> Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier fictions*, 26.

<sup>763</sup> Mohammad Reza Nasiri, *Nasireddin Şah Zamanında Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri, 1848-1896*, (Tokyo: ILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1991), 8.

<sup>764</sup> Walter B. Harris, *Batum to Baghdad: Via Tiflis, Tabriz and Persian Kurdistan*, (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1896), 285-287

Although they were partially successful, in the end all were defeated and in the end were separated from their subjects.

Each mir cared only to protect his own territories and keep the power in his hands. Although there were some alliances between the mirs, such as Nurullah Beg of Hakkari coalition with Bedir Khan Beg, they were realized only in times of external threats for short terms. Alliances and rivalries between the same Kurdish mirs became a norm during the decade in 1840s. The emirates of this period were more relied on the charismatic personalities (Mire Kor, Bedir Khan Beg, Nurullah Beg, Ahmed Pasha), who would be impossible to replace with a weaker one. Each one tried to look more vicious than the other in order to show off his power. With this they aimed to be taken as the leader of Kurdistan by the Ottoman authorities.

In this last decade of the Kurdish mirs the towns like Rewanduz, Sulaimaniya, Amediye and Cizre became less popular centers for the trade, religious studies and nascent Kurdish literature, though they were still promising urban hubs. The forced exodus of the mirs caused a rapid decline of the cities, which “strangled the growth of the urban merchant stratum, which represented the bourgeoisie, and nipped the Kurdish literature and ‘high’ language in the bud.”<sup>765</sup> Many poets, Sufis and intellectuals in these centers also left for major Ottoman cities like Baghdad, Damascus, Mecca, and Istanbul, in hope to find audience and patrons among the prominent Kurdish families, who were exiled here by the authorities. The members and the progeny of these families were brought up and educated by these intellectuals. Later, some of these notables themselves became prominent Kurdish scholars, poets, and writers as in the cases of Kamuran Bedirxan and Ismail Hakkı Babanzade. In the end the Tanzimat project was successful to transform the life of the society, and more specifically the notables, in Kurdistan. Although, with the relocation of the Kurdish leadership and intellects a power vacuum was created, this gap was later filled with newly emerging leaders, the Sufi shaikhs of Naqshbandi and Qadiris. By the end of the century these sheikhs also faced with the same faith as their processors, the Kurdish mirs, and removed from Kurdistan by the Ottomans and Iranians. In the final days of the empire all the Kurdish notables were, in one way or the other, taken away from their native lands and reintegrated into the Ottoman bureaucracy.

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<sup>765</sup> Michael Eppel, “The Demise of the Kurdish Emirates: The Impact of Ottoman Reforms and International Relations on Kurdistan during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 44:2, (2008) 237 -258

## CONCLUSION

Kurdistan was first created and named by the Seljuqis around 1100 CE. This is the period when the elements of the Kurdish *mirs* were shaped and Kurdistan was divided among few *mirs*, but not in nineteenth century sense. The Kurdish *mirs* like all the other groups located under the government of Seljuqis were officially subject to the rule of the Caliph but *de facto* were part of the Seljuqis. The Kurdish *mirs* did not have to deal with two strong powers during the Seljuqi period. Once the Mongols, and later the Timurids, invaded the Muslim world, the Kurdish *mirs* were divided further. The Aqqyunlus and their following dynasty of the Safavids caused further disintegration and diversification of the Kurdish emirates and the tribes. Up until this period the Kurdish *mirs* did not have to deal with two strong powers. Starting from Qaraqyunlu and Akqyunlu period, once they were persecuted by the latter because of their alliance with the former, the Kurdish *mirs* became more conscious of the rival powers and thus played one against the other. However, they never saved themselves from being used against each other, especially when the Ottomans conquered the Northern Iraq, which was taken under the control of the Safavids a couple of decades before by Shah Ismail. After this period the Kurdish *mirs* were ultimately divided between the Ottomans and the Safavids once and for all. The division between two neighbors and probably blood related families, which “furnished pretexts for interference by their respective overlords, leading to periodic proxy wars,”<sup>766</sup> was resembled by the Baban dynasty on the Ottoman side and the Ardalani dynasty on the Safavids. It was not only the Sultan and the Shah who decided who should stay on which side, but also the Kurdish *mirs* involved in such a decision. So the choice made by these *mirs* was a conscious one and they knew that staying on either side meant accepting all the rules of conduct, including limits of autonomy and sectarian choice, imposed by the overlord.

Among all the Kurdish *mirs* in Iraq the Babans became dominant in southern part of Kurdistan. To legitimize their status over the territories they governed not only they immediately established links with their new overlords, the Ottomans, and received the titles of the *begs* and *pashas* but they also created myths to prove that they came from noble families and their ancestors were heroes. They kept family trees to demonstrate their “ancient” lineage, a tradition that has been practiced to this day.<sup>767</sup> From the first day the Ottomans arrived in 1534 to the region they named the territories of the Baban as either as “*hükümet*” or “*sanjaq*” in the vilayet of Baghdad and their leader Budak as a “*beg*.” From the very early periods the Babans were well integrated into the system by the Ottomans. Sultan Süleyman the lawgiver gave many freedoms to the Babans in return for the protection of the frontiers against the raids of the Safavids, provision of the military personnel in times of war, and maintenance of the order in Southern Kurdistan against the local rebels.

Members of the Baban family always struggled with each other to take the seat of the *sanjaq* and it was common that one contender was backed by the Ottomans while the other

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<sup>766</sup> John Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, (Oxford,UK: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 75.

<sup>767</sup> A family member of the Babans published an extensive book on the family trees. Ayad Baban, *Usrat Baban al-Akrad*, (Damascus: Al-Zaman Publishing, 2008).

one was nominated and militarily supported by Iranians. The Babans used their geographical position skillfully because of their proximity to the frontiers and in times of turmoil sought both refuge and backing from the Iranian side. Therefore, they enjoyed the freedom of seeking support from their Shi'i neighbors, although many times with limited options since they had special treatment for taxation and military support only if they remained loyal to the sultan/caliph and stayed on the frontiers against the threats from the Safavids.

The supporters for the Baban contenders were the shah and the sultan from sixteenth until the end of eighteenth century, but in nineteenth century provincial governors (the vali of Baghdad on the Ottoman and the shahzade of Kermanshah on the Iranian side) took the duty of playing with the Kurdish mirs. For the next three centuries the Babans stayed in politics by choosing one super power against the other and such a politics worked until both states decided to get rid of them with a peace treaty signed in Erzurum in 1847. The Ottomans also did not change much their politics towards the Babans, as they expelled one ruler for the other and after a while the sultan would forgive the banished one and reappoint to his old post. For instance, Sultan Süleyman once expelled Baban Budak Beg because he killed the Baban Hüseyin Beg, who was appointed by the sultan to the head of the Baban Sanjaq, but later was pardoned and reappointed to the head of the *sanjaq*. One could see the same story three centuries later only change the name with Mahmud Pasha and Abdullah Pasha. So, for all these times the patterns of the politics of power for both the Ottoman sultan and the Kurdish beg/ pasha remained the same. On the other hand, the leadership among the notable families of Kurdistan did not necessarily pass from the father to son, especially when there was no male child to handover the leadership. In such cases, either a strong member of the family would emerge after a period of combat and treacheries with other contenders or a strongman among the military personnel of the *mir* would take over the leadership and pass it to his sons. The integration of the Kurds into the Ottoman Empire was gradual. First the Kurdish tribes of the northern Kurdistan during the expeditions of Sultan Selim I and his war with Shah Ismail were incorporated into the Ottomans. Later during the reign of Sultan Süleyman the *mirs* of southern Kurdistan joined to the Ottomans. In all this process of integration of Kurdistan into the Ottoman realm, a noble Kurdish mir, Idris-i Bidlisi, who worked for Aqquyunlus and later for Shah Ismail before joining Sultan Selim, played a decisive role with his diplomatic skills and saved Kurdish territories from the invasion of Safavids. The territories of the Kurdish mirs were first classified as timars and *sanjaqs* by Sultan Selim, by which introduced a system in Kurdistan with more responsibilities and thus a more centralized land regime. But later their status was changed from *mülk* to *ferman* by Sultan Süleyman, which gave more freedom to the *mirs* with less economical burden and remained the same for up until the Tanzimat. Different approaches to the Kurdish mirs and their land by both sultans came from both the personal and pragmatic reasons. The father sultan had personal antagonism with Shah Ismail and trusted little to the Kurdish mirs, while his progeny Süleyman acted more rationally by trusting more into the locals for creating a *cordon sanitaire* or a buffer zone on the frontiers between two states. To accomplish his object Sultan Süleyman created a policy that would be followed by most of the following sultans: "unite and rule," in another word, instead of dividing them and creating more chaotic milieu, uniting the Kurdish political entities and reorganizing them into more uniformed administrative units.



After the appropriation of the Kurdish lands in Iraq by the Ottomans, Iran felt more threatened and tried to contain it by establishing ties with Russia. Such volatile relations continued until the peace treaty of Zobah or Kasr-ı Şirin was signed in 1639. The treaty brought peace to the region for more than half a century and helped the improvement of trade between two states. Such stability was shattered only by the Baban mirs, who wanted to expand their territories by capturing the territories of neighboring Ardalan emirate. Such moves were going to be adopted by the subsequent Baban leaders in following century and a half and become a part of their political agenda. Aggressive policies of the Babans towards their neighbors worked well for eighteenth century and made the emirate a dominant power in the region. Although the *mir* acted independently and therefore was driven back, twenty years later the new Baban *mir* learned the lesson from his father and took the consent of Baghdad to reoccupy Ardalan. During the century, the Babans expanded their territories eastward and southward and looked for the Kurdish emirates of Rawanduz, Soran, and Bahdinan in the north, but they were stopped there by the sultan and the valis of Mosul and Baghdad.

It was not only the Kurdish mirs who became more powerful but notables from the Arab and Balkan provinces were also becoming more apparent in regional politics. This rise of the local notables made eighteenth century as the “age of ayans.” The way for such a rise was opened more by the Ottomans than the notables themselves. The Ottomans formed a new system of tax collection called *malikhane*, which created a new preeminent class of notables. Besides, an order from the sultan opened the doors of the provincial governorship for the locals alongside appointees from the center. Addition to that the sultan asked for military and financial support from the notables during the war with the Russians in 1768-74, which made the notables politically more significant. Because the Kurdish mirs were in the region and already enjoyed an autonomous status, these new changes did not add much to their status, instead their contenders in Baghdad, Mosul and other provinces became more powerful and started to weaken them eventually. Some of the most important contenders were the Georgian slaves or Mamluks, who were brought to Baghdad, converted to Islam, subjected to a vigorous education and appointed to some of the high rank positions. The positions they attained did not satisfy them so they struggled for the governorship of Baghdad through marriages and alliances. They strengthened their positions in Baghdad with establishment of firm relations with their relatives back in Georgia through arranged marriages with their women there and supplying their military and bureaucratic ranks with more slaves of their own kind. The Mamluk family stayed in power for the next eighty years until they were taken away by force and replaced by the valis appointed from the Porte.

The Babans witnessed almost all kind of political entities in their political lifetime: The shah, the sultan, and the appointed and hereditary governors. When the Safavids finally ceased to exist in Iran after 1722, the Kurdish mirs were now forced to find new supporters there. First, Nadir Shah appeared and later Karim Khan Zand took over the duty of *vakil* (the regent) of the shah. The system, and even the shah, might have changed in the Iran but the politics the Kurdish mirs followed was the same. The Babans accepted the Zand dynasty in the same status of the shah and sought backing of this new administration for their political agendas. The Zands did not survive much since the new dynasty of the Qajars emerged in Iran

as the inheritors of the shah but the Babans survived and now made deal in the same terms that they had with previous dynasties.

Both sides of the frontiers, where the Babans situated, might have been through the political instabilities, but in 1784 the Babans, after several centuries, finally decided to settle in a more stable region with a new town, Sulaimaniya, named after Büyük Süleyman, the governor of Baghdad back then. The Babans had several reasons to build a new town. One motive could be that the Babans reached to such a power where they finally decided to imitate their contender, Ardalanis (capital in Sinna), and their patrons, in Baghdad and Kermanshah. Besides, they had several populous tribes, which they needed to settle some of them in some place and establish a new system to control the rest of it. The Babans always wanted to imitate the power of their lords in Baghdad and Istanbul. Therefore, they decided to have a capital in a more spacious area with a lavish palace. The Baban pashas looked for more luxury and pleasure, which was a trend among the emerging notables of eighteenth century. They wanted to have a wide open space for their hunting activities and area to show off their wealth and power. Although the security of such an open space was a little hard to maintain they had to give priority to a place with good water resources. Despite weaknesses in terms of security, strategically Sulaimaniya was in an important position. Its geographical location was in the middle of all important Kurdish towns and together with its surrounding it was considered as a key to the door opening to Iraq. Such a position made Sulaimaniya an important local economic hub in the region and helped the Babans to finance their strong military and the capital town with new additions to the palace. Besides, both the Ottomans and Iranians realized the strategic position of Sulaimaniya located between the triangle of Kirkuk-Mosul-Baghdad and tried to keep the Baban pashas on their side.

After establishment of the town, the Baban Pashas built public buildings such as baths, mosques, guesthouses, madrasas and small libraries. The Pasha allowed the non-Muslims into the town so the trade would improve, and invited prominent *ulema* and poets, who would open new avenues for the southern dialect of Kurdish to improve as a medium of literature. Sorani dialect of Kurdish developed into a well-versed medium among the literati and the patronage of the poets by the Babans led to produce a good amount of work in nineteenth century. The Baban court became an enclave for prominent poets of Sorani. Such a tradition started by Abdurrahman Pasha at the beginning of the century in order to underline the difference between his domain and the other neighboring emirates as well as his independence from the Ottomans and Iranians. The century witnessed the fall of Kurmanci and the rise of Sorani in terms of productivity and standardization of the language, and since then the latter started gradually to replace the former. The oeuvres in Sorani during this period became some of major indigenous sources for the social life of a people whose culture dominated with oral tradition. Poetry during this period was dominated with the “good old days” of the Baban mirs and reaction to the intellectuals who did not do enough to advance the social and political life of the Kurds. Later in the twentieth century these poems were even used as evidence for political purposes. Such as today’s Kurdish politicians presented Sheikh Riza Talabani’s poems as a proof for the independence of the Kurdish emirates during the Ottoman period and

the Kurdish nationalists used the same poet's verses on Kirkuk as historical evidence in their argument for inclusion of the city into Iraqi Kurdistan.

This was a town mixed its Kurdish character with Turkish, Persian and Arab one. One could see this in its architecture, religious education, politics, and population. Even the Baban court and its structure of administration mimicked and mixed both the Ottoman and the Persian courts. The court not only became the ground to show the power and glamour of the Baban pashas, but it also became the gauge to confirm the weakness and demise of the Babans when the town lost its charm. This was especially true for Sulaimaniya, which was considered as the "capital of Kurdistan" by many Western travelers. The Ottomans did not specifically name Sulaimaniya as the capital of Kurdistan. However, most of documents about the Babans refer to territories as "Kurdistan" and address to their leaders as the "pasha of Kurdistan." So one could suggest that the view from the center about the Babans was that the Babans were the most powerful of all the Kurdish mirs and thus they perfectly represented the leadership of Kurdistan.

Sulaimaniya was a "created" town designated to be a regional capital for the Baban pashas. Compared to naturally grown centers, which have fertile hinterlands and a good geographical position for trade routes, Sulaimaniya had less prospect for economic activities. The Silk Road did not pass through this region to the Levant and thus the town had never seen large scale business. Therefore the accumulation of the luxury goods did not take place and the population never grew up steadily, except growth from few thousands to fifteen thousands in the first three decades of its establishment. Constant raids on the town from the Iranian and the Ottoman sides caused further devastation and in such an insecure environment the locals never invested into the stable commodities like real estate and land. Instead the people of Sulaimaniya invested into money and transferable effects in order to carry it away in times of trouble. The Baban pashas were aware of this and tried to improve the status of the town by bringing the non-Muslim tradesmen, securing the routes in the vicinity and encouraging the locals to grow local products and sell them in local markets. In fact, the Baban pashas were richer compared to the leaders of the other regions in Iraq and they offered more financial support than the Mamluk Pashas did to the sultan in order to buy the governorship of Baghdad. The Baban leaders even used local products, which were very much in demand, to bribe the valis of Baghdad. The local pashas, for instance, brought down and preserved the snow from the mountains of Kurdistan and sent them to their overlords in Baghdad to cool them off in the heat of the summer.

The products in the Baban territories were mostly pastoral and agricultural foodstuff like gals and nuts. There were also by products like wool made textiles, leather goods and household stuff from the wood. The variety and the abundance of the agricultural goods helped the region to stay independent but at the same time caused partial isolation of the people since they had to interact less with outsiders to buy what they needed. Still Sulaimaniya had had caravans coming from Tabriz with raw silk and silk stuff, from Erzurum iron, copper and mules, from Mosul turban pieces, chintz and printed cottons, from Baghdad dates, coffee, Indian and European stuff, and cloth, from Kirkuk boots and shoes, and from

Hamadan and Sinna dried fruits and steel. In return Sulaimaniya would export honey, nuts, sumac, fruits, rice, ghee, cotton, sheep, cattle, tobacco, cheese, gum Arabic, tallow, and common soap, as well as dates and coffee from Baghdad.

Living in an urban center did not make the people of Sulaimaniya to feel special or superior compared to the rural and tribal people. The real difference was that of being belong to a tribe or peasantry. A tribesman always considered himself to have a noble blood, a protector, a land, a pride, a past and a future, whereas a peasant had none of these. Despite their high proportion of the population the peasants were never represented in the political life of Kurdistan and they were always seen as “the other.” Therefore they were treated like slaves, but they were free to go anywhere they wished.

The Kurds had a tradition of the centuries old madrasas as the institution of higher education, which produced many religious dignitaries and plenty *ulema*. The *mir*s financed these schools since they considered it as part of prestige and piety. But beyond such motives, the *mir*s had to establish their legitimacy in the eyes of the common, who respected and practiced Sunni Islam. A *mir* may not be that much reliable but a religious dignitary was definitely someone who the locals would listen and obey. Besides, the regional rulers needed judges, who were literate in the creed of Shafi’i School of law, and penmen, who could pen down letters to the sultan, the shah, the vali and other Kurdish *mir*s. Beyond these concerns, the Kurdish *mir*s wanted to make sure that they were credible Sunnis in the eyes of their overlords. The *mir*s used well the fame of the Kurdish *ulema* to make sure that such an image would remain in the mind of the Ottoman Sultan and the vali of Baghdad. In addition, a *mir* could be considered as ‘rebel’ or ‘astray’ but an *ulema* was never disrespected in such terms. Ulema was also the men of pen, who was literate in all Islamic languages, like Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Some were literate in local ancient languages like Syriac and Armenian, and some other learned languages afar from their homeland, like Hindi. In such an environment madrasas in Kurdistan did not only produce mullahs, but poets and philosophers too.<sup>768</sup> With such a knowledge of the languages and religious studies, the *ulema* became “cultural brokers” among the societies around them and thus played an important role in transmission of knowledge between the West and the East, as well as the South and the North. Besides, the *ulema* became the voice of the local leaders, when the latter needed to correspond with their Turkish and Persian overlords. The Baban leaders did not only use their help to write down a letter but also employed the *ulema*, with their knowledge of Islamic law and politics, for intermediary purposes such as negotiators and special envoys to their counterparts and overlords.

The Kurdish *mir*s were aware of all this, so the Sufi orders. Therefore, to expand their sphere of influence the *mir*s financed the students, libraries and schools of the Sufi orders and

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<sup>768</sup>Although seventeenth century was considered as the age of “the triumph of fanaticism” the scholarly environment of Kurdistan was very lively in terms of rational sciences. See more on the works of Kurdish scholars during pre-modern period in Khaled El-Rouayheb, “The Myth of ‘The Triumph of Fanaticism’ in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” *Die Welt des Islams* 48 (2008): 196-221.

gave them refuge in their territories. Aware of such an opportunity, the Sufis tried to produce as many students as they could and dispatched them to different parts of the empire.

The religion had always been an important component of the politics in the center of the empire. When it comes to the peripheries, especially the Western fringes expended over the Balkans and the Eastern one reached to the Western outskirts of Iran, religion became more dominant in the political struggle. Religion was used to legitimize the war against the enemies beyond the frontiers and such a propagation was especially used among the people close to the borders in order to raise more military personnel and to receive more finance support from the local powers. The Ottomans used sectarian division between the Sunni Kurds and the Shi'i population of Iran during the making of the borders in mid-nineteenth century. They tried to legitimize their claim on these lands through the Sunni identity of the local people. After the borders were drawn, the Ottomans even went further and tried to convince the local people, who were Shafi'i, about that the Porte was very tolerant and supportive of their school of law and the sultan tried to show his goodwill by appointing Shafi'i judges and governors to the Kurdish towns. The Ottomans never bothered with the Shafi'i identity of the Kurds before nineteenth century. Majority of the works by the Kurdish ulema was shaped by the Shafi'i creed and likewise the identity of the Kurds has been shaped by the Islamic knowledge produced by these scholars. Dynamics of the Shafi'i identity of a society and the state, which tried to apply them the only law it recognized, namely Hanafi law, need to be studied well and the Kurdish identity and nationalism should be revised under these new studies.

Religion became more important and central in nineteenth century when the Empire became weaker and the Westerners, both politically and religiously, became more dominant. While the political figures emphasized on the threats to Islam by the Westerns Christians and Eastern Shi'is and asked for the people to be more cautious of the external enemies beyond the borders, there were already some Sufi orders who responded such a call. One of these orders was Naqshbandiyya, which gained further strength with arrival of Sheikh Mawlana Khalid al-Baghdadi, who was from Shahrizor and sought knowledge from a Naqshbandi Sheikh in India. Mawlana was received well and supported financially by the Baban pashas as well as by the Mamluk valis in Baghdad. Once he arrived to Sulaimaniya he immediately started to expend his sphere of influence among the nobles of the town, therefore caused some fury among the old establishments like Qadiri Sufi order since he threatened their domain. The sheikh proved that the balance established among the local notables could be infiltrated and shaken, though with little success for the moment. However the change did not come right away and the Babans, who supported him earlier, drew their political support back. Consequently, he decided to seek a more powerful entity outside of the town that would transform not only his native lands but the whole empire. Therefore, like all the other Sufis, who left their home for their belief, he decided to leave his lands for Baghdad first and later for Damascus. This would also transform the sheikh from being a local notable to a transcontinental figure well known from North Africa to South East Asia. However, a long and thorny road awaited him before he could accomplish goal.

It was not going to be easy for the sheikh to find support outside of his lands since the sultan did not feel comfortable about supporting him because he suspected all religious

movements due to their infiltration into the ranks of the Janissaries and the bureaucracy. His order did not accomplish much about being influential outside Iraq and Syria during his lifetime, but he succeeded to produce well amount of mullahs and assigned them to all around the empire and beyond. After his decease, somehow the sultan changed his policy and supported Mawlana Khalid's disciples financially. The sultan not only allocated stipends to his successor and family members but also built a tomb for him as well as Sufi lodges for his followers. Accordingly, the order came to be known as Naqshbandi-Khalidiyya and became more influential in the high ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy than any other order in the empire.

One could suggest that eighteenth century was the period for the rise of the local notables in the politics, especially for the *mirs*, tribal leaders, military figures, and recruited slaves, but it was not altogether a newly rise for the Kurdish *mirs* since many of these figures were already there and they already engaged into the regional and empire-wide politics. However the politicization of the religious figures in Kurdistan was a new thing. One could for sure make good suggestions for the reasons behind, such as their reaction to the Western encroachment and the power vacuum created by the empire when it crushed the local notables. Starting with Sheikh Khalid, the Kurds witnessed a more powerful figure than any other *mir* in the personality of Sheikh Ubeydullah, who was also a Naqshbandi sheikh fought against Iran in 1880.

Naqshbandi sheikhs, more specifically Sheikh Khalid with his Khalidiyya order, was the most revered religious figure both by his adherents and the political leaders in Kurdistan. Therefore, he remained in the center of the political debates and he and his order was very much studied by several prominent scholars of twentieth century. These studies, however, focused mostly on his religious influence not in Kurdish regions, but rather in the other parts of the Ottoman Empire and beyond. This study paid more attention to the details on his early career in Sulaimaniya and placed him among the notables of the Baban emirate both as a religious and political figure. His life in Kurdistan was mostly ignored for political reasons as his non-Kurdish adherents in surrounding lands wanted to neutralize him from his Kurdish background. Besides, these academics who studied on his life portrayed him as an anti-Semitic, anti-Christian and anti-Shi'a while presenting him as a pro-Ottoman. Recent studies on Sheikh Khalid and his order reveal that he had good relations with members of these faiths and that he even had Shi'i disciples. These studies also clarify that the sheikh was never a staunch pro-Ottoman in his lifetime and the sultan was always suspicious of him. The sultan's fear for the Bektashi order standing before his desire to abolish the Janissary corps made him to be skeptical towards the other Sufi orders. Adding to that, Halet Efendi's suggestion to the sultan to be cautious towards Sheikh Khalid made the situation worse and caused prohibition of the Khalidiyya in Istanbul. His order was received well by the Porte and many bureaucrats initiated into the order only after he passed away.

Khalidiyya order became so prominent among the politicians and bureaucrats of the empire. Later during the Republic period the order with other Sufi groups was forbidden altogether in order to reduce its influence. The social engineers of the Republic simply

ignored the fabric of the Kurdish and Turkish society when outlawing these orders and suddenly they left millions without a social link that had been created for centuries. Sufi lodges were the centers of learning for many illiterates, place of socialization for pre-modern societies and hubs for voicing the political demands in an authoritarian state. Forbiddance of these lodges caused further alienation and frustration among the Kurdish society and later provoked insurgencies like Sheikh Said's rebellion, which also became a major reason for the leaders of the Republic to take further measures against these Sufi orders.

One could also see such rebellions with religious sentiments in nineteenth century beyond the boundaries of the empire. For example, Shaikh Muhammad Shafi (1743–1806) of Muslim Ethiopia, who initiated into Qadiriyya, probably through the Kurdish Barzanji Sheikhs of Mecca and Medina, asked his followers vigorously participate into 'jihad' in order to expand the realm of Islam. Uthman dan Fadio (1750-1817), his son Bello (r. 1817-37) and his daughter Nana Asmau (1793-1864) became dominant figures in the Western Africa and transformed the community as well as the regime in Sokoto Caliphate located in today's Nigeria. The struggle by Muhammad Ahmad, the Mahdi of the Sudan and the founder of Mahdiya movement, and his Khalifa Abdullahi's revolt against the British and Egyptian forces are well known to the historians. Finally, Amadu Bamba Mbacke (ca.1853–1927) of Senegal, who first struggled against the French colonizers but later decided to collaborate with them with some conditions, is also an excellent example of the religious figures who acted as a political leader with certain power.<sup>769</sup> All these leaders received their inspiration from the sheikhs and religious figures, which they met most likely during their hajj in Mecca and came back to their lands with new ideas. One would have to research on how much the Sufi orders, especially Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya, influenced these leaders.

As the religious personalities became dominant in certain regions so the political leaders tried to dominate in their own territories. Throughout of this work we see that the personalities are very important in shaping the regional politics since the game of war was materialized by some of these major figures. Personality mattered here and proving his power to the other leaders became one of the major reasons of constant wars. For instance, the crown princes of Iran waged wars on the Ottomans to prove to the shah that he was fit for a king. This fight for the accession to the throne of Iran shaped also the Iranian policy towards the Babans and caused a division among the Kurdish mirs. In his struggle for the crown Abbas Mirza was supported by the Kurds of Maku and Azerbaijan while Ardalan and the Babans supported Muhammed Ali Mirza since the latter party was attacked by the former one. Beyond the political leaders, religious and literary personalities became prominent, both in political and social life. The Baban territories became an arena for all these leaders from both sides of the border to show their power and prove themselves to certain groups. Besides the political ambitions, religiosity and personal relations of the Baban leaders also shaped their political attitude and thus the relations with the Baghdad pashas and the Iranian leaders. Despite such elements influenced the daily politics, in the long run the political situation in the Baban territories did not change much. Baban Mahmud Pasha's religiosity and his

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<sup>769</sup> See more information about all these religious figures in David Robison, *Muslim Societies in African History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

friendship with Davud Pasha of Baghdad did not prevent the former to make alliance with Iranians in order to save his position. He was motivated not only by his desire of power but also the Iranian authorities forced the Baban pasha to collaborate with them. Therefore, one could see different layers of the leaders and leaderships with different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and different status. One could see a land, where Turks, Persians, Kurds, British, Russians as well as religious leaders of Sufi orders and non-Muslim groups colliding with each other in one frontier region. Such a status brought the Baban pashas into a more volatile, fluctuating, unstable environment but also into a more international one.

Fluctuation of the political milieu was reflected in the political language as well. The political language changed according to the politics of the day and the policy the overlords followed. One day the Baban pasha would be called a “hero,” or the “son” as in the case of Davud Pasha addressed to Mahmud Pasha, for latter’s contribution to the struggle against the designated enemy, the next day the same pasha could be named as the “traitor” because of his disloyalty and rebellion. So, the political language and the propaganda kept changing as the conditions and position of each leader changed. One could say that the Ottomans, as well as Iranians, had a policy of keeping the borders stable, which was the long term policy, but in the short run they kept changing their attitude towards the local leaders as it fit into their daily politics.

The borders between the Ottomans and Iran, during the two decades from 1828 until 1847, became a field for the imperial powers to challenge each other and to show off their muscle. Beside these two powers, came along Russia and the British Empire into this border region. The Russians were not active in the region and they did not have a permanent agent, while the British resided in Iraq decades before nineteenth century. Among all the British residents Rich was probably was one of the most notables as he witnessed the political life of the Babans and he was actively involved into the selection of the Baghdad governors. He was not a plain resident of East India Company and was not a simple traveler at all. For sure, he was very talented and had curious personality, but this did not prevent him to be active in the regional politics. He was considered by some more powerful than valis of Baghdad. He did not hesitate to stand against Davud Pasha and use Sulaimaniya as a last resort to escape. He was well aware of the power of the Babans and supported them as a counterbalance to Baghdad.

While the conflict between the Ottomans and Iran continued the Babans struggled to keep their political and territorial autonomy from both states. As both imperial states tried to deal with the internal and international conflicts-the territories of the Baban emirate was one of the major causes of these conflicts-they also targeted the borders and the borderland people in between. The outcome of this aim was Tanzimat or reforms. The Ottomans declared Tanzimat in 1839 and started to put it into practice, which brought the border regions further under the realm of the central power. Once the new regulations were introduced and centralization policies were imposed on the Kurdish notables, their emirates were started to be wiped out of Kurdistan one by one, from 1834 until 1847. Alongside Soran, Botan, and Hakkari emirates, the Babans were also crushed in this struggle of centralization. The Baban



mirs were the last Kurdish notables who were defeated and expelled from the power few years after the Bedir Khan of Botan was taken away from his emirate. Tanzimat and its arrival to the region, more specifically to the Baban territories, was successful to transform the life of the society, and more specifically the notables, in Kurdistan and the Kurdish mirs saw this as a intrusion and reinvasion of their territories, this time as a modern state apparatus.

Such a policy did not start as a part of the modern state apparatus since the Ottomans as well as the Iranians always took the opportunity to use the rivalry between the Kurdish mirs. The Pasha of Baghdad supported the *mir* of Soran against the Babans in order to prevent them to become one single political power. Another time the vali of Baghdad tried to convince Baban Ahmed Pasha to join him in his campaign against the *mir* of Soran. The Ottomans did not hesitate to use the *mir* of Bohtan, Bedir Khan Beg, against the Nestorians and later used such attacks as a pretext to convince the Westerns to remove the Kurdish mirs out of Kurdistan. On the other hand, before removing all the Kurdish mirs, as part of the centralization efforts, the Sublime Porte also planned on a project, which would bring all the territories of Kurdistan under the rule of one man, namely Bedir Khan Beg, since it was much easier to deal with one dependent ruler instead of many independent ones.

The Kurdish mirs were not only aimed from the enemies outside, but also they became enemies of each other from inside. Each *mir* cared only to protect his own territories and keep the power in his hands. Many of them dreamed about being of the only ruler of Kurdistan and have direct relations with the Caliph. Therefore, most of Kurdish revolts in Iraq were made against the Mamluk rulers of Baghdad, not against the Porte nor, as we heard in the words of several mirs, against the Caliph. Abdurrahman Pasha, who was the most prominent of all Baban Pashas, in early nineteenth century rebelled against the vali in Baghdad and sent a letter to the sultan asking him to bestow upon him the governorship of Baghdad in return for some lucrative payments of annual tax. However, neither Abdurrahman Pasha nor any other Baban leaders were able to attain such a position because of their strong relationship with Iran. However, when it came to a high position like governorship of a province the Baban leaders did not hesitate to sever their relations with Iranians. Abdurrahman Pasha allied himself with the special envoy of the sultan, who was sent to Baghdad to solve the problem of leadership, despite the opposition of Iran. With such a relation he hoped to become the vali of Baghdad. The shah was also cautious about not severing the relations with the Ottomans and therefore asked his governors to support the Babans carefully with providing that not invading the Ottoman territories. The shah also was aware of that supporting the Baban pashas was the most convenient tool to be involved with the politics of Baghdad. Knowing that the shah would interfere into the politics in his province, Abdullah Pasha, vali of Baghdad, understood that he needed to be vigilant about his relations with Iran. Therefore, whenever Abdurrahman Pasha took a flight, the vali accepted him back almost all the time the shah made a demand and he paid tribute to the latter.

Knowing the religious affiliation of the Kurds with Sunnism, the Ottomans always used the opportunity to use and abuse such religious feelings of the Baban pashas and the Kurds. In times of need the Ottomans emphasized on the Sunni sect and Shafi'i creed of the

Kurds and thus declared the Baban pashas as “loyal” and “legitimate” rulers of the region. Beyond that the sultan used his title of caliph in times of wars and employed it to legitimize his position of his lordship over the Kurds vis-à-vis the Shi’i Iranian Shah. The Kurds always respected the caliph and desired to have direct contact with him. A letter signed with the title of caliph was something every Kurdish leader sought to legitimize his position in the eyes of the locals. However, one should not overestimate the respect for the caliph and should not think that he was the legitimate one since for many Kurdish sheikhs the so called caliph in Istanbul was not coming from the prophet’s lineage. Besides, one could see how little holiness he was attributed to as the Kurdish *mirs* easily shifted their loyalty for their Shi’i overlord when their interest was the matter. The Baban pashas always concerned with their political interest first, with the interest of their subject next and, if at all, finally with the imperial interest.

One wonders if the Kurdish *mirs* acted together. Once in a while there were some alliances between the *mirs*, such as the coalition of Nurullah Beg of Hakkari with Bedir Khan Beg. Such alliances were realized only in times of external threats, which usually lasted for short terms. Alliances and rivalries between the same Kurdish *mirs* became a norm during the decade of 1840. The emirates of this period relied more on the charismatic personalities (Mirê Kor, Bedir Khan Beg, Nurullah Beg, Ahmed Pasha), who would be impossible to replace with a weaker one. Each one tried to look more vicious than the other in order to show off his power. With this they aimed to be taken as the leader of Kurdistan by the Ottoman authorities.

The Ottomans aimed to centralize the periphery, but what they missed in this process that the people of the border already considered themselves in the center while Iran in Tehran and the Ottomans in Istanbul became the periphery for them. Both centers were far away and they cared about the sultan and the shah as much they were affected by their policies. Seeing the fight between both powers over their territories generated further alienation among the local people. Additionally, such a conflict beyond their reach forced people to emphasize more on their regional, religious and cultural differences and they went further to protect such identities despite the absence of the national identities. The Babans were well aware of two things about the Ottomans in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the distance between them and Istanbul, and partially related with that the weakness of the Porte. So, for most of the time the Baban pashas cared more about the governors of Baghdad and Kermanshah and they had their struggle-in the words of the pashas-against these local leaders not the ones in the capitals. Besides, people kept strong relations with the center even if they lived in the periphery. The Baban pashas, from the very beginning of their inclusion into the Ottoman territories, stayed in touch with Istanbul and used their relations with the sultan to stay in power. At the same time they did not rule out the importance of Isfahan- Tehran during the Qajars- and remained in constant touch with the shah. More intimate relations were established with leaders in Baghdad and Kermanshah as the Baban leaders had to give a close relative to these leaders as a captive for the assurance of their allegiance. One way or the other almost every Baban pasha was a captive in the court of their overlords before they came to

power and they considered this practice as of the regional politics and accepted inevitably while they applied the same policy towards the leaders of the tribes under their sovereignty. Contrary to common belief modernization efforts started not after 1840s but at the down of eighteenth century in the Ottoman Empire. As such, centralization in the eastern periphery of the Ottoman Empire was not the result of the declaration of Tanzimat, rather it was reaffirmation of it. As a part of the modernization, centralization of the state was also implemented first in the provincial centers like Baghdad, Mosul, Damascus, Tripoli and later included more peripheral regions such as Eastern Anatolia, Kurdistan, Yemen, Tunisia, and Trans-Jordan. The state changed the tax collection system and thus stripped the notables off from their monopoly over privileges, such as fiscal and land incomes. Besides, Sultan Mahmud II made several deals with the notables, which at the beginning gave them official protection but helped the Porte to establish a link between the center and the periphery and thus bolstered the central control over the local provinces. Centralization of the peripheries took decades to complete, since the Ottomans could accomplish it only gradually as they were in war with Russia and Iran at the beginning of the century and they had to deal with the Greek revolt and Mehmed Ali Pasha's occupation of Syria. The Iranians were slower of adapting new means of administration because of the lack of a strong rule through eighteenth century. During the reign of Fath Ali Shah, Iran cared only reestablishing and maintaining the order. However, eventually they followed with the example of the Ottomans by introducing new reforms in mid-nineteenth century. The imitation of the Ottomans by the Qajars did not stop there as they centralized their territories and put an end to the centuries old Ardalan family in Iranian Kurdistan in 1867, two decades after their contender.

Before moving into Kurdistan the Ottomans learned from their experience of dealing with urban notables and later moved to deal with the Kurdish notables. Invasion of Syria by Egypt's Mehmed Ali Pasha was a wake up call for the Ottomans to deal with other local notables. Meanwhile the Kurdish notables also experienced the effects of modernization way before they were removed from their territories and tried to adapt to new rules of engagement while dealing with modernized imperial armies. As in the case of the Bedir Khan Beg of Bohtan, Ahmed Pasha of Baban and Mirê Kor of Rawanduz, they also learned from their peers like Mehmed Ali Pasha. They thought that it was necessary to establish modern armies and they imagined themselves one day to become like him. Besides, the Kurdish mirs felt that it was necessary to establish central towns, which became political, social, economic, cultural and religious hubs in their territories, helped to sustain their societies intact and their modernized armies supplied. Students of Kurdish nationalism may idealize the life and freedom in Sulaimaniya, but this was no hotbed for the nationalistic ideas and Kurdish independence before twentieth century. Still, the towns like Sulaimaniya were some of the first places where the nascent Kurdish nationalism grew later and became dominant in the political life of the Kurds.

At the end of mid-nineteenth century, the imperial powers, the Ottomans and Iranians as well as the British and Russians, implemented their agendas through border commissions and created new borders without seeking the consent of the locals. They divided the villages and tribes between two states and left many borderland people without a choice. Such a

decision imposed from above caused further suspicion and disturbance among the local people and more disfranchisement towards their states. Through negotiations on the border and the treaty signed in Erzurum both in 1823 and 1847, the question of Baban territories became a major issue and the Baban pashas were considered as an obstacle before the peace. Therefore, both sides the Ottomans and the Iranians demanded from each other to keep the Baban pashas away from the borders and removed the rest of the family from Sulaimaniya. Both treaties worked well for the Iranians. For the first time, Iranians were recognized as foreigners and were treated equally with British, French and other non-muslim nationalities, not as a part of the Muslim *ummah*. And now the Iranians could be treated with their own Shi'i laws not with the Sunni sharia, which was applied in times of conflict between the Iranian and the Ottoman subjects. Besides, thanks to the last treaty of Erzurum Iranian pilgrims would not be taxed extraordinarily anymore and their goods would be taxed at a consistent rate. Besides, reforms would be instituted for handling of the estates of Iranians who deceased in the Ottoman lands.

For three and a half centuries the way that the Babans engaged in the politics between the Iranians and the Ottomans was almost identical: to use one power against the other in order to stay in power. Although not an ideal one, the Baban pashas tried to play a balance politics with the Ottomans and Iranians by trying to keep both states at bay while carving out their own ground of power. In the mind of the Ottomans and Baghdad Pashas the Babans were playing an important role to communicate with their Shi'i rivals, in another word an excuse to use as a base for conflict with Iranians. In such a position the Baban territories became a ground for both states to engage with each other in terms of regional politics. Beyond this the Baban pashas were also used both as a negotiator and hostage by Baghdad to make deals with Iranians.

The vali in Baghdad employed the Baban Pasha when he needed, but in other times he used the members of the Baban family against each other for political purposes. The pasha of Sulaimaniya could be supported one day by Baghdad while next day the same pasha would change side for the Iranians when he realized that one of the contenders from his family was sponsored against him. None trusted the other party and each one tried to cheat the other side. With fickle games the Ottomans and Iranians tried to keep the Babans on their side, while the Baban pashas tried to use such a politics on their interest and stay in power longer.

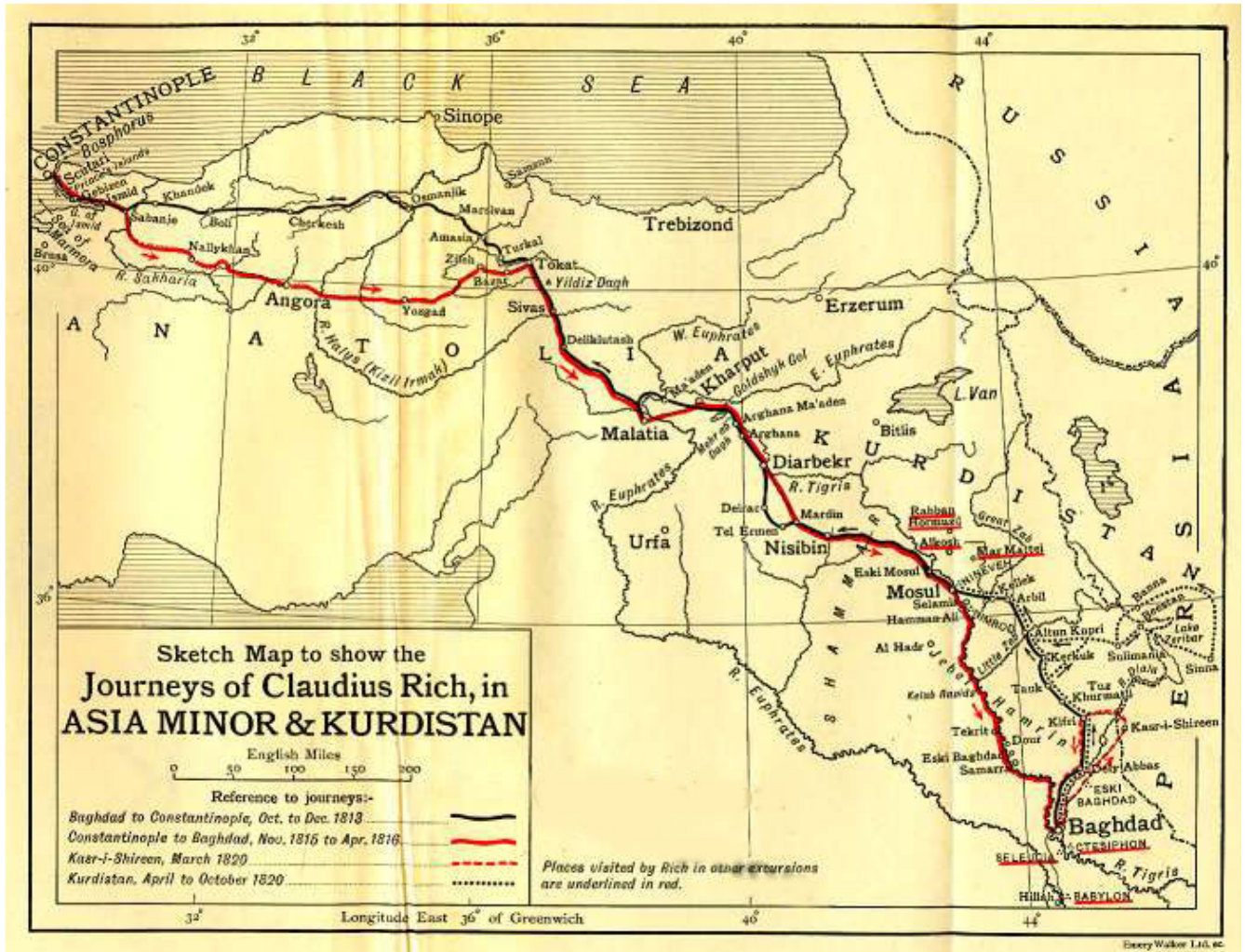
Iranian Shah respected the chiefs and the inhabitants of Kurdistan since nor Arabs neither Turkic tribes settled in this province for a long time whereas the Kurds were the longtime residents of this region, adding that some of them were considered to be the descendent of the Prophet Muhammad, which furthered the respect by the kingly Qajar family of Iran. Besides, Iran's attitude towards the Kurdish notables was more appealing, as the Shah and the Qajarian princes were showering them with gifts and as a favor asking them to collect the dues from their tribes in return. The Babans were aware of their image in the minds of Iranians and tried to use this by seeking the support of Iranians against the Ottoman valis, even at the last minute before they were removed from their lands in mid-nineteenth century. But after centuries of flip-flopping sides the Iranians finally reached to a decision to get rid of the Kurdish emirates for the sake of centralization and decided to support the Ottomans for

their effort of detribalization. So, the policy of using one power against the other did not work for the Babans anymore when finally both powers decided to move together against the Kurdish notables. Once the two imperial powers realized that it was the end of regional politics for the sake of centralization both agreed on in order to remove the Kurdish mirs. Such collaboration meant the end of the Kurdish mirs and they had no political tools to come over that decision. Despite the continuity in the way the Kurdish mirs engaged in the regional politics, they were open to change for more taste of modernization. In the end, the modernization brought little joy to the Kurds but more slaughters of their population and separation of the mirs from their people and lands, which created an abundance of the dirges and ballads and remained in the memories of people for decades.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: C.J. Rich's journey from Istanbul to Baghdad and Sulaimaniya.

Source: Constance M. Alexander, *Baghdad in bygone days: from the journals and correspondence of Claudius Rich, traveller, artist, linguist, antiquary, and British resident at Baghdad, 1808-1821*, (London: J. Murray, 1928)



**Appendix B: A List of Baban mirs with dates of of reign and a list of dates and facts on the Babans.**

**Souce: James C. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan and on the Site of Ancient Nineveh*, Vol 1. 381-87.**

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III.

*A Series of the Princes of the Bebbeh Family from Suliman Baba or Bebbeh, down to the present Pasha of Sulimania.—*  
(Referred to at p. 302, Vol. i.)

	A. H.	Time reigned.
		Yrs. Months.
1 Suliman Bey Ghazi ( <i>i. e.</i> Baba Suliman), son of Mir Suliman, began to reign . . . . .	1088	4
2 Temir Khan Beg . . . . .	1110	4
3 Bekir Beg . . . . .	1115	13
There was now an interregnum, during which Koordistan was governed by Turkish Mussellims . . . . .		
	1128	4
4 After four years, Khana Pasha reigned three years in Koordistan, and seven years in Sinna, which he conquered, and built a mosque there, which was pulled down a year or two ago by Aman ullah Khan . . . . .	1132	3
5 Nawaub Khaled Pasha, son of Bekir Beg. . . . .	1135	4
6 Ferhad Pasha . . . . .	1139	2
7 Khaled Pasha again . . . . .	1141	15
8 Nurwaub Selim Pasha . . . . .	1156	4
9 Nuwaub Suliman Pasha . . . . .	1160	3
10 Selim Pasha again . . . . .	1163	14
11 Suliman Pasha again, by whose machina- tions Selim had been strangled at Bagdad. Suliman built the mosque and bath at Zengabad. In his time Zengabad Men- dili, and Bedira Jessan, formed part of Koordistan . . . . .	1164	10
The Great Plague happened in his time	1171	
12 Mahommed Pasha, son of Khana Pasha. He was killed in battle by Suliman Pasha . . . . .	1174	5
13 Suliman Pasha again . . . . .	1175	1

	A. H.	Time reigned.
		Yrs. Months.
14 Ahmed Pasha, son of Khaled Pasha	. 1176	1
15 Suliman Pasha again	. 1177	2
16 Ahmed Pasha again	. 1177	5
17 Suliman Pasha again. Assassinated by Fakih Ibrahim	. 1177	1
18 Mahommed Pasha, son of Khaled Pasha, and father of Khaled Bey	. 1178	8
19 Ahmed Pasha again N. B.—He was the father of Ibrahim Pasha and the present Khaled Pasha, and elder brother of Mahommed Pasha.	. 1186	1 3
20 Mahommed Pasha took Ahmed Pasha pri- soner* at Ahmed Kulwan, and reigned again. A slight plague in his time	. 1187	2
21 Ahmed Pasha again defeated Mahommed Pasha, who was assisted by Ali Murad Khan, at Surseer and Tehuarta. Ali Murad Khan was taken prisoner	. 1189	1 3
22 Mahommed Pasha came again from Persia, assisted by Shefi Khan, the Zend general, and was again driven out	. 1190	9
23 He came again with Mahommed Ali Serdar. Battle between Mahommed Pasha and Khosru, Khan of Simna, near Zeribar, in which the latter was totally defeated	. 1191	1
24 Kelb Ali Khan, a Zend general, came to the assistance of Ahmed Pasha, and re-seated him on the throne. Mahommed Pasha fled to Kenty Sanjiak	. 1191	

\* Ahmed Pasha, after having been taken prisoner by his brother Mahommed Pasha, made his escape, and returned with the aid of Turkish forces, and reigned six months. Mahommed Pasha, in his turn, fled to Persia, and returned with Ali Murad Khan. They were defeated at Surseer.



A. II. Time reigned.  
Yrs. Months.

- 25 Mahommed Pasha returned with Temir, Pasha of Keuy Sanjiak. They fought with Ahmed Pasha below Gilleh Zerdch. The battle was desperate. They were more than an hour hand to hand with sabres and daggers, and the slaughter was very great. Temir Pasha was killed, and Mahommed Pasha taken prisoner. His eyes were put out immediately by his brother Ahmed Pasha, who himself died a natural death seventeen days afterwards, in the Karadagh, on his return to Karatcholan . . . . . 1192
- 26 Nuwaub Mahommed Pasha, father of Abdurrahman Pasha. He was killed in battle at Yeltimar, between Sakiz and Saouk Boulak, by Boodakh Khan, the Prince of Saouk Boulak, against whom he was fighting . . . . . 1193 5
- 27 Nuwaub Ibrahim Pasha, the founder of Sulimania . . . . . 1198 3
- He seized Hassan Khan Bey and Hussein Bey, two princes of his own family, and sent them prisoners to Bagdad, where they were first banished to Hilla, and then strangled . . . . . 1200
- 28 Osman Pasha, the elder brother of Abdurrahman Pasha . . . . . 1201 2
- 29 Ibrahim Pasha again . . . . . 1203 1
- 30 Nuwaub Abdurrahman Pasha . . . . . 1204 8
- 31 Ibrahim Pasha again . . . . . 1212 5

What is called the Little Plague happened.

	A. H.	Time reigned.
		Yrs. Months.
32 Abdurrahman Pasha again . . . . .	1217	2
Ibrahim Pasha died at Mousul during Ali Pasha's, of Bagdad, expedition to Sinjar. Ali Pasha had deposed him. His death happened . . . . .		
	1217	
Abdurrahman Pasha revolted from Ali Pasha, stabbed Mahommed Pasha of Keny Sanjiak with his own hand, on his retreat from Bagdad, and immediately after defeated Khaled Pasha at Altoon Kiupri. The Pasha of Bagdad came in person, and established Khaled Pasha at Sulimania. Abdurrahman Pasha fled to Persia . . . . .		
	1218	
33 Khaled Pasha . . . . .	1219	1
34 Abdurrahman Pasha returned from Persia, defeated the auxiliary Turks and Koords at Zeribar, and took Suliman Kiahya of Bagdad prisoner . . . . .	1221	
35 Abdurrahman Pasha was again forced to fly from Sulimania; and the Turks under Suliman Kiahya, now become Pasha of Bagdad, placed on the throne Suliman Pasha, son of Ibrahim Pasha * . . . . .	1223	3
36 Abdurrahman Pasha again made himself master of Koordistan. The Shahzadeh of Kermanshah leagued against him with the Turks, and forced him to retreat to Keny Sanjiak, which was besieged by the Persians, who raised the siege after it had lasted one month and four days.		

\* This was the year (1803) in which I came to Bagdad.

	A. H. Time reigned.
This was in 1224. Abdurrahman Pasha returned to Sulimania . . . . .	1226 2 years
Death of Abdurrahman Pasha . . . . .	1228
37 Nuwaub Mahnood Pasha, the eldest son of Abdurrahman Pasha, succeeded his father, and is the present prince . . . . .	1228

*Dates and Facts connected with the History of Koordistan.*

(Referred to in p. 302, Vol. I.)

Suliman Bey, that is, Baba Suliman, defeated by the united forces of Turkey and Persia, and forced to fly from Koordistan. He then went to Constantinople . . . . .	1110
Bekir Beg defeated . . . . .	1120
The siege of Bagdad . . . . .	1130
Hamadan taken by the Turks . . . . .	1135
Khana Pasha of Koordistan killed . . . . .	1145
Topal Osman Pasha's battle . . . . .	1144
Siege of Mousul . . . . .	1154
Khaled, Pasha of Koordistan, fled to Orfa . . . . .	1155
He died there . . . . .	1156
Yeghan Pasha, the Turkish General, defeated . . . . .	1156
Nadir Shah killed . . . . .	1158
Death of Adel Shah . . . . .	1161
Death of Ibrahim Shah . . . . .	1162
Suliman, Pasha of Bagdad, began to reign . . . . .	1164
Osman, Pasha of Keny Sauijak, put to death by Suliman, Pasha of Bagdad . . . . .	1164
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	A. H. Time reigned.
Selim, Pasha of Karatcholan, put to death at Bagdad . . . . .	1171
The great plague . . . . .	1171
Mahommed Pasha, the Bebbeh, defeated on the Nareen by the Pasha of Bagdad	1176
Suliman Pasha assassinated . . . . .	1178
Second Plague . . . . .	1187
Suliman, Pasha of Bagdad, killed . . . . .	1171
Ahmed Pasha taken prisoner at Ahmed Kulwan . . . . .	1187
Ali Mourad Khan taken prisoner by Ahmed Pasha . . . . .	1188
Shefi Khan came to the assistance of Ma- hommed Pasha . . . . .	1188
Kelb Ali Khan came—Defeat of Khosroo Khan by Mahommed Pasha . . . . .	1191
Great earthquake at Tabreez . . . . .	1194
Mahommed and Ahmed Pashas went to Kerkook . . . . .	1191
Mahommed Pasha defeated by Ahmed Pasha . . . . .	1191
Death of Ahmed Pasha . . . . .	1192
Death of Kerim Khan, King of Persia . . . . .	1192
Death of Abdulla Pasha of Zehav . . . . .	1193
Mahmood Pasha, the grandfather of the present Pasha, began to reign . . . . .	1192
Reza Kouli Khan killed . . . . .	1197
Mahommed Pasha, who had been banished, fled to Persia. He returned afterwards, and was, with Omar Pasha, another chief, put to death by Mahmood Pasha under the great tree at Karatcholan . . . . .	1194
Ibrahim Pasha began his reign . . . . .	1197

	A. H. Time reigned.
Second building of Sulimania . . .	1199
Mahmood Pasha killed . . .	1198
Osman Pasha began to reign . . .	1201
Death of Osman Pasha . . .	1203
Earthquake at Sulimania . . .	1217
Suliman, Pasha of Bagdad, died, and was succeeded by Ali Pasha . . .	1217
Ibrahim Pasha died . . .	1218
Feth Ali Shah, the present King of Per- sia, began to reign . . .	1211
Abdurrahman Pasha revolted from Ali Pasha — killed Mahmood Pasha of Keuy Sanjiak, and defeated Khaled Pasha at Altoon Kiupri—Ali Pasha im- mediately marched from Bagdad, and de- feated Abdurrahman Pasha at Derbent	1220
Khaled Pasha came to Sulimania and reigned . . .	1 year
Second affair of Derbent under little Suli- man Pasha of Bagdad * . . .	1223
Battle of Kifri . . .	1226
Suliman, Pasha of Bagdad, killed . . .	1225
Abdurrahman Pasha finally returned to Sulimania . . .	1226

\* This year, 1808, I came to Bagdad.

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