

THE ORIGINS OF OPPRESSION:
SHI'I MARGINALIZATION UNDER THE TAZIMAT

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A defining element of Shi'i Arab history over the past half millennium has been the legacy of Ottoman Sunni domination.¹ Here must begin any understanding of contemporary Arab Shi'i political development, for it was under the Ottomans that the systemic exclusion and marginalization of the community began. Simply put, if one is to accurately represent the revolutionary nature of the Shi'i political awakening of the last fifty years, an understanding of the origins of previous Shi'i political quiescence is essential. Several aspects of this era are particularly important for the overall argument that I advance in this thesis.

First, the Ottoman era highlights the fact that most of Arab Shi'i history has not been characterized by political militancy. Instead, it reveals a deep strain of quietism brought about by Ottoman oppression and the cooptation of the local Shi'i elite. This is rarely noted in scholarly analysis but is essential in constructing a complete narrative of Arab Shi'i political development, since the community's later politicization was only possible in light of their marginalization under the Ottomans. Crucially, the dynamics of repression and cooptation must be understood in detail because they retain currency in the collective memory and political attitudes of contemporary Arab Shi'a. The communal quiescence forged in this era features prominently in the Shi'i Arab self-understanding and, as such, must be historiographically rehabilitated and given the same attention as later manifestations of Shi'i militancy.

Second, the period of Ottoman domination reveals that Arab Shi'i quiescence was a fundamentally local phenomenon; that is, it came about due to political dynamics unique to the Arab Middle East. Ottoman potentates in the region operated as viceroys independent of the Divine Porte in Istanbul and pursued policies mostly of their own choosing. The

¹ Throughout this paper, I use *Shi'i* as an adjective and *Shi'a* as a noun, following the system adopted by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

Arab Shi'a reacted to such policy by perceiving their local interests and acting accordingly. That Istanbul sometimes set Ottoman policy does not detract from the argument that the Arab Shi'a related to Ottoman governors - often themselves Arabs - as they would any other local actor.

This period's third major historiographical implication follows directly from the second: Shi'i Iran played a remarkably small role in influencing their Arab coreligionists. Despite being locked in a great power struggle with the Ottoman Empire, there is little evidence that the Qajar Shahs sought, as one might expect, to use the Arab Shi'a as proxies against the Ottomans. Ottoman rhetoric to the contrary, transnational Shi'i clerical and cultural networks had relatively little political importance in this period.

This chapter explores this origin story through the paradigms of the Twelver Shi'a communities of what are now Lebanon and Iraq. These two examples are carefully chosen since, together, they uniquely capture the Shi'i experience under Ottoman domination. In addition to having been roughly commensurate demographic pluralities in each territory, both communities were conquered in the early sixteenth century and buffeted by similar forces of Ottoman imperial administration. Crucially, both Shi'i populations arrived at the dawn of the Mandate Era with the precedent of systematic political exclusion firmly established. This comparison is particularly meaningful given the tendency of historians of the Ottoman Empire to discuss the Arab Shi'a in terms limited to Ottoman policy toward religious and ethnic minorities rather than in terms of how Ottoman rule shaped Shi'i political development. While scholars such as Hanna Batatu have valuably undertaken the former historiographical mission, the existing literature has notably failed to make the crucial connection between the Shi'i experience in the late Ottoman era and the political quiescence that persisted in the community well into the late twentieth century.² The following will attempt to fill that gap.

Four hundred years of Ottoman hegemony over the Arab Shi'a produced many of the paradoxical trends - alliances of convenience and contradictory policies - inherent in this period. Here, I will focus on three principal aspects of the Shi'i experience of Ottoman rule - violent repression, cooptation of the feudal elite, and clerical subordination - in order to establish the principal characteristics that remained well past the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Synthesized into a coherent narrative, they explain continued Shi'i dispossession in the wake of the Ottoman collapse. All three were intimately related to the Ottoman desire, initiated

² Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 2004).

in the era of the *Tanzimat* (1839-1871) and extending to the absolute rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II, for more centralized control of the sprawling empire. First, the ‘Amili (to avoid anachronistic terminology, this term - referring to the Shi’i heartland of Jabal ‘Amil in southern Lebanon - will be used throughout) and Iraqi Shi’i experience of cataclysmic military oppression after a period of increasing local autonomy in the late eighteenth century marked the opening volley of Ottoman imperial reassertion and the beginning of a Shi’i culture of diminishment and quiescence. While this was particularly the case in the ‘Amili paradigm, Ottoman reassertion also had significant effects on the Iraqi Shi’a. Foremost among these is this chapter’s second area of focus - the radical restructuring of land tenure and the ascendancy of local feudal elites. These developments allowed the rise of a pliable client class through which the Ottomans effectively maintained control. Finally, the changing role of Shi’i clerics in the reshaped provincial environment of both Iraq and Jabal ‘Amil had major implications for a community that was primarily defined in opposition to the overwhelmingly Sunni Ottoman realm by its heterodox religious beliefs. In abdicating their role as the ultimate defenders of the Shi’a in the Sunni world, the clerics forfeited an important source of Shi’i power. Taken together, Ottoman actions and Shi’i reactions provide both a communal narrative of origins and the backdrop against which later Shi’i political development must be analyzed.

Albert Hourani’s periodization of Ottoman rule is the historiographical starting point that provides context for Ottoman-Shi’a relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The subsequent dynamics of the interaction make little sense unless understood from this perspective. Hourani’s temporal division is fourfold; it is his third period - what he termed the era of “the politics of notables” - that serves to illuminate subsequent developments.³ In this period, he writes, “The control of the central government over Ottoman society weaken[ed] or [was] exercised in a more indirect way.”⁴ Within the Twelver Shi’a communities of Jabal ‘Amil and Iraq, this period - from roughly 1760 to the early nineteenth century - was one of increasing political autonomy. The Ottomans were distracted from the Arab provincial backwater by the trifold effects of a growing Russian military menace, increased European demands for “capitulations” in favor of their preferred Ottoman ethno-religious communities, and racing inflation in the Anatolian heartland.⁵ In

³ Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," *The Modern Middle East* Hourani, Khoury, and Wilson eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 87.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁵ Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 22.

Shi'i Iraq, this meant that "the writ of the authorities ran precariously outside the main towns, so that the main tribal confederations were...more often than not a power unto themselves."⁶ In fact, in a trend replicated around the empire by potentates such as Mehmet Ali Pasha in Egypt, a local dynasty of slave soldiers - Georgian Mamluks - took control in Baghdad and ruled virtually independently until Ottoman reoccupation in 1831. In the absence of centralized power, Shi'i notables - tribal leaders in the countryside and *ulema* (religious scholars) and *Sayyids* (descendants of the Prophet) in the cities - competed for influence on equal footing with the appointed Sunni governors and shrine caretakers. The most extreme case - and one that would ultimately, as detailed below, lead to nemesis and tragedy for the Shi'a community - was the *ulema*-led rebellion of the shrine city of Karbala in the 1820s and 1830s.⁷ The following succinct description of the situation in Karbala from contemporaneous British diplomatic documents could just as easily have applied to the entire Shi'i south of Iraq: "[it has become] a self-governing, semi-alien republic."⁸ Writing somewhat later in the nineteenth century, renowned colonial administrator Gertrude Bell described Najaf similarly, which assumed primacy of place within Shi'ism after the fall of Karbala: "The inhabitants are exceedingly fanatical; no Sunni is allowed to live within the walls of Najaf, nor may he enter the great mosque where the Khalif Ali is buried."⁹ While this was likely an overstatement, the message remains: the Iraqi and 'Amili Shi'a had virtually free reign in the era of the politics of notables.

IMPERIAL REASSERTION

The Shi'a of Ottoman Jabal 'Amil (then known as *bilad ash-sham*) also asserted local power in the period of Ottoman retrenchment, although to a lesser extent than their coreligionists in the Iraqi shrine cities. In fact, given Jabal 'Amil's position far from the front lines of Ottoman- Iranian strategic confrontation and closer to the Ottoman seat of power, the degree to which local notables did seize control is a testament to Ottoman weakness throughout the provinces. Traditionally, the 'Amili feudal lords - those holding what was referred to as an *iqta'* (a fief-like, hereditary land holding) - had aligned themselves with the *amirs* of Mount Lebanon. For the early and middle parts of Ottoman rule, this meant subordination to the

⁶ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 42.

⁷ Juan Cole and Moojan Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq: The Rebellion of Ottoman Karbala 1824-1843," *Past and Present* 112 (1986): 112.

⁸ Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 22.

⁹ Gertrude Bell, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), 289.

Druze Ma'an and the Christian Shihab dynasties, with intermittent interruptions when a particular lord might decide to make a power play against the sitting *amir* and, in turn, was quickly dispatched by the latter. By the late eighteenth century, however, the power of the Ottoman-appointed *walis* had come to resemble that of the feckless governors of Karbala and Najaf, limited to the city walls of their seat of power.¹⁰ As a result, the 'Amili *muqata'jis* (holders of an *iqta'*) seized the opportunity when a Palestinian tribal chief named Dahir al-'Umar proposed the creation of a joint monopoly over the local cotton market combined with the wholesale rejection of tax obligations to the Porte. This partnership was lucrative enough that the Shi'i *zu'ama* (landed lords) sided with Dahir against the *walis* of Sidon and Damascus when they sought to collect the outstanding taxes, defeating Ottoman forces in 1771 and 1772. Predictably, however, Dahir met a bloody end in 1775 against an overwhelming Ottoman expedition, by which time the perils of Shi'i local autonomy had become obvious in Istanbul.

Ottoman imperial reassertion came quickly, but it took on a distinctly local flavor. In the wake of these events, the Ottomans punitively unleashed a "lion let loose against humanity" upon the 'Amili Shi'a in the form of the luridly named Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar.¹¹ (Jazzar is usually translated as "butcher.") Two primary factors motivated Al-Jazzar's violent repression of the Shi'a: the emergent proto-*Tanzimat* centralizing impulse of the Ottoman bureaucracy and a fierce religious hatred of Shi'ism, the latter likely induced by the growing power and confidence of the newly ascendant Qajar dynasty in Persia. (Ottoman documents show that al-Jazzar often rallied his troops before battle by reminding them of supposed Shi'a misdeeds against the *rashidun* caliphs of early Islam.) Although it is unlikely that al-Jazzar cared much about the nobler aspirations of the *Tanzimat*, such as phasing out feudal economic relations, creating independent, educated Ottoman citizens, and the granting of additional minority rights, he would certainly have identified with one of its central tenets: increased Ottoman tax revenues by consolidation of provincial control. One scholar noted, "Al-Jazzar was a ruthless man...the thriving cotton trade and its profits were to be his; the regime of Dahir al-Umar and that of the Shi'i clans allied with him had to be broken."¹² This he did with evident relish, burning, pillaging, and raping his way across Jabal 'Amil until the French orientalist Constantin-

¹⁰ Rodger Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 23.

¹¹ Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 55.

¹² *Ibid.*, 54.

François De Volney, following just behind his armies, noted that, “The country of the Motoualis [a derogative term for the Shi’a]...[has] undergone a revolution, which has reduced [it] almost to nothing.”¹³ The level of destruction wrought by al-Jazzar’s armies seems to have qualitatively exceeded even the brutal standards of the day. De Volney, in fact, wondered whether the ‘Amili Shi’a might be exterminated outright, writing, “[al-Jazzar]...has incessantly labored to destroy them...It is probable they will be totally annihilated, and even their name become extinct.”¹⁴ Al-Jazzar went far beyond the exigencies of tax collection, but this was not a concern for Ottoman authorities, who likely recognized that in pursuing his own interest al-Jazzar was enforcing their writ as well.

The immediate effects of al-Jazzar’s campaign devastated the Shi’a. While De Volney’s prediction proved to be an underestimation of ‘Amili Shi’i communal resilience, the memory of al-Jazzar took on a mythic and symbolic role within the community even as it fought to recover from the destruction. The economic implications were twofold: first, the sheer level of destruction of livestock and crops placed impossible pressure on the Shi’i survivors to produce enough taxable goods, since Ottoman tax levels on the *miri* (state owned, sharecropper operated land) were not revised down for decreased production. On top of this, rapacious *zu’ama* (and local *multazims* - Ottoman tax collectors who were often also landowners) continued to collect local taxes, resulting in an unusually extractive scheme of double taxation.¹⁵ Yet, Fouad Ajami’s elegant articulation of the enduring psychological meaning of the Ottoman governor’s oppression cuts to the core of his legacy: “For the Shi’a, the tale of al-Jazzar taught the futility of political action. Power was the attribute of capricious men. Shi’a history had transmitted [a] kind of aversion to the world of power; al-Jazzar was true to the expectation. *What the Shi’a derived from the memory of al-Jazzar was an attitude of political withdrawal and defeat* [emphasis added].”¹⁶ Here, one must be careful not merely to write this quiescence off as a kind of reversion to the Shi’i norm; there exists a mostly ahistorical conception that the Shi’a have, throughout Islamic history, contented themselves with remaining the downtrodden of society. In most cases, this idea is tied to a notion of Shi’ism as inherently quiescent due to its messianic eschatological orientation - the belief that the Mahdi will return from occultation and judge the world’s oppressors. In truth, however, the Shi’a held vast

¹³ Constantin-François Volney, *Travels Through Syria and Egypt in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785* (G. Robinson, 1805), 340.

¹⁴ Ajami, *The Vanished Imam* 55.

¹⁵ Shanahan, *The Shi’a of Lebanon*, 24.

¹⁶ Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, 55.

temporal power under several medieval Arab dynasties - the Fatimids most notably - and often were not shy about protecting their interests in the political realm. Thus, the downtrodden orientation described by Ajami becomes even more notable for its relative novelty.

The distinguishing feature of the new political passivity was an all-encompassing Shi'i tendency to view al-Jazzar's rule as the moment when agency passed from Shi'i hands and to reimagine the era before his rule in the warm light of nostalgia as, "some imagined age of bliss and plenty."¹⁷ One local chronicler captured this skewed vision of a halcyon past: "The people of Jabal 'Amil lived in dignity and prosperity even during times of war and catastrophe. No taxes overwhelmed them; no rulers oppressed them and plundered their wealth...If a Shi'a traveled to some other place beyond his land, he traveled proud of his heritage."¹⁸ Such sentiments served only to further construct a culture of lamentation and passivity. By the mid nineteenth century, when Ottoman imperial reassertion reached its apex, the 'Amili Shi'a had become a community that grieved for a lost past more than it tried to rebuild it, anticipating justice in the hereafter rather than striving for it in the present.

The Porte had even greater concerns about the potential threat posed by the relatively Persianized Iraqi Shi'a. While al-Jazzar made the dubious assertion that the 'Amili Shi'a were agents of resurgent Iranian power in order to rally his marauding troops, by the early eighteenth century top Ottoman officials maintained a similar belief that the Shi'a of the Iraqi south were a "potential fifth column" and a strategic thorn in the empire's side.¹⁹ As described above, over the course of Mamluk rule, the Shi'i south had become largely autonomous. Crucially, this permitted thousands of refugees fleeing Iran's Afghan invaders to take up permanent residence in Karbala in what the Ottoman authorities perceived as the infiltration and Persianization of a longstanding Ottoman territory. This perception was hardened by the acceleration of *Tanzimat* centralization policies in the wake of the defeat of Mehmet Ali's forces by European and Ottoman forces in Syria, which encouraged those who sought a centralized Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman authorities that had, in 1831, reestablished central control in Iraq decided that the situation in the south - Karbala in particular - was strategically untenable. Starting in the 1820s, the city had been ruled by a coalition of local laymen and clerics, both groups intent on Shi'i autonomy from the Ottomans. A contemporaneous British diplomatic

¹⁷ Ibid., 52.

¹⁸ Ibid., 53.

¹⁹ Cole and Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq," 115.

account captured official Ottoman thinking: “There has been considerable uneasiness on the part of the authorities in this province, as it is generally believed that the Persian government desires to recover its sway over this country, as it contains the Shia shrines of Kerbella and Nejjeff [sic], and it is supposed that a secret Treaty exists between the Russians and the Persians on this head. These shrines are reputed to contain a vast amount of treasure, and the province is filled with Mussalmans of the Shi’a sect.”²⁰ Inflaming matters, the inhabitants of Karbala did nothing to discourage the Ottoman view of them as Iranian agents. They maintained their Persian mores, dress, and language and openly omitted the Ottoman emperor’s title from Friday prayers. In truth, however, the political links between the Iraqi Shi’a and the Iranian Shahs was tenuous at best. The maintenance of Iranian customs among the Iraqi Shi’a is thus better viewed as part of the creation of a local identity in opposition to the Ottoman rulers than an expression of solidarity with Iran.

By September 1842, after one of his viceroys was prevented from praying at the Shi’i shrine of Imam Hussein, Ottoman Sultan Abdülmeceid was resolved to act. He sent his confidant, the severely conservative Najib Pasha, to restore Ottoman hegemony at any cost. By December, a large Ottoman army had besieged Karbala. Much like the ‘Amili Shi’a leaders in the previous century, Karbala’s strongmen and *ulema* failed to understand the magnitude of the change the *Tanzimat* reforms had wrought on Ottoman strategic thinking. The Karbala notables convinced themselves that, having withstood Ottoman Mamluk sieges in the previous two decades, this time would be no different.²¹ In addition, the Shi’i clergy fanned the sectarian flames by telling the masses that holding the city constituted a defensive jihad against the Sunnis. Cole illustrates: “The religious official in charge of the shrine of ‘Abbas thwarted one set of [peace] talks by standing up in the assembly, dashing his turban to the ground and excommunicating anyone who spoke of giving up the town and their wives to the “infidel” Turks.”²² Of course, all the apocalyptic rhetoric amounted to very little when Ottoman artillery mercilessly bombarded the city into submission and the soldiers sauntered in to claim their prize.

The tone of the occupation was set by one officer who, “promised to allow them [his men] to do whatever they pleased once inside and pledged 150 *piasters* for every [Shi’i] head.”²³ Massive slaughter ensued;

²⁰ "Lieutenant-Colonel Nixon to the Earl of Derby," Baghdad, April 24 1877, FO 424/53/171.

²¹ Cole and Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq," 132.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 135.

on the first day at least 5,000 Shi'a were killed (estimates range as high as 18,000) with only a few hundred Ottoman casualties. Mullah Yusuf Astarabadi, a local cleric, gave a graphic description: "the dead were lying on top of one another to the extent that I could not cross the street except by walking over the corpses. It was as if I walked about invisibly, so many had perished...At the foundation of the mausoleum of 'Abbas...I descried all about the illumined sepulcher murdered souls clinging to it, beseeching, seeking shelter and refuge."²⁴ Adding insult, Ottoman troops also embraced the narrative of holy war, desecrating the shrine of 'Abbas by stabling horses in its sanctuary and singing bawdy songs outside. It is important, however, to view such sectarian violence in the context of the local struggle for power rather than the great power contest between Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Religion, for both Sunni and Shi'a, was made to serve both parties' political interests in the struggle over Iraq. This important reality is only possible, however, by understanding that the Iraqi Shi'a did not import their political practices directly from Iran.

The Shi'a of Karbala did not mythologize the massacre in Karbala as their 'Amili coreligionists in the Levant did the terrors of al-Jazzar; instead, they suffered its effects in a more subtle but equally devastating way. In part, the psychological blow was dented by foreign powers such as Britain and Russia that saw the Karbala episode as potentially threatening to the international status quo and intervened to mitigate its effects, whereas Jabal 'Amil had no comparable strategic relevance and received no such attention. The effect of the butchery on the Iraqi Shi'a took several forms, all involving a newfound communal quiescence. The *ulema*, taken aback by the aggressiveness of the new, centralizing Ottoman policy, resorted to the ancient Shi'i doctrine of *taqiyyah*, in which Shi'a were permitted to lie about their religion to avoid oppression. Friday prayers were canceled, and many Shi'a adopted the ritual praxis of Sunni orthodoxy to avoid detection. For clerics who only a few weeks earlier had been literally and metaphorically on the barricades calling for Sunni blood to sublimate themselves to Ottoman orthodoxy was a testament to their fear of future Ottoman brutality. In addition, in a savvy political coup, Najib Pasha coopted the landowners and gang leaders who participated in the uprising by offering them pardons in return for loyalty. This led to a secular version of *taqiyyah* in which the elites claimed to be more content with imperial control than the status quo ante. One wealthy resident reportedly gushed: "no place could have exceeded [pre-massacre] Karbellah in debauchery of every sort," and thus, implicitly, occupation

²⁴ Ibid., 137.

had a salutary effect.²⁵ There is, however, reason to doubt the sincerity of such protestations given that a primary Ottoman priority was to reassert a system of taxation much more onerous than that prevailing under the looseness of gang rule.

A secondary effect of the slaughter was the diminishment of Karbala as the principal seat of Shi'a religious scholarship in favor of Najaf. Many of the fledgling Shi'i scholars chose the *hawza* (seminary) of the still-autonomous Najaf over the wreckage of Karbala.²⁶ Yet, Najaf's autonomy was short lived; when Najib Pasha's army arrived at the city the residents, unwilling to sacrifice their lives for their autonomy, reluctantly invited the soldiers in. By brutal repression and cataclysmic violence, the Ottomans had successfully demonstrated that, from then on, imperial hegemony was the new norm in Shi'i Iraq, and resistance would be handled as it was when the streets of Karbala ran red.

CO-OPTING THE FEUDAL LORDS

Having returned imperial power to the Shi'i provinces of Iraq and the Levant, the Ottomans coopted community leaders through whom they enhanced and enforced their rule at the local level. In both Jabal 'Amil in the Levant and Iraq, this local elite was formed out of large landholders and wealthy merchants in the Shi'a community. In Jabal 'Amil, such a landed elite had been present in the form of the *zu'ama* (landowners) for hundreds of years while, in Iraq, Ottoman *Tanzimat* land reform and detribalization bolstered those landowners who had previously been secondary in power to the *ulema*. In both areas, however, the era of the *Tanzimat* marked the institutionalization of feudal power to a new degree, putting in place the system, later embraced by the mandate powers, that kept the Shi'i masses under the thumb of a collaborationist and corrupt local elite that would rule until the latter half of the twentieth century.

In Jabal 'Amil, as noted above, there was a long history of landowners as the dominant political force in Shi'i society. Before the nineteenth century, however, these lords had occupied a niche somewhere between that of tribal chiefs and feudal masters. Although by no means democratic, their rule, in the absence of strong imperial power, was at least somewhat dependent on clan and tribal approval. The campaigns of al-Jazzar, however, largely eliminated the existing coterie of noble families, replacing them with clans more amenable to Ottoman interests. These new landowners (*zu'ama*) were joined at the hip to Ottoman power, holding both fiefs (*iqta'*) and tax-farming concessions (*iltizams*) that required them

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 22.

to act simultaneously as Ottoman agents and enforcers.²⁷ A French Mandate-era report looking back on Ottoman Syria detailed the social effects of the feudal system in the early *Tanzimat* era: “‘Amili society [was] very primitive, [a condition characterized by] a feudal and patriarchal organization that gives it its particular physiognomy.” The author describes the *fellahin* (peasants) as “ignorant masses” because of this rule and thus the, “[Motouali] agricultural population constitutes the most primitive grouping in the Levant.”²⁸ While French imperial designs on the region may have played some part in such an assessment, the description is in keeping with the recollections of other travelers in the region.

That the *zu'ama* quickly became rapacious and self-serving is unsurprising given the absence of any incentive to advocate on behalf of the peasantry. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, modernizers in Istanbul determined that the feudal system of government was retrograde and unbefitting of an empire that saw itself as part of the democratizing, European fold. The centerpiece of *Tanzimat* reform of Ottoman policy in the Levant was the Land Code of 1858, which privatized land held by the sultan as *miri* (the emperor's personal land). Ottoman belief that this law would break the power of the 'Amili feudal elites revealed either naïveté about the degree to which *zu'ama* control had taken root since the Ottoman revival or profound cynicism. The actual result of the law should have been predictable to anyone familiar with local dynamics: peasants, fearful of increased taxes and military conscription, ceded the deeds of their farms to their landlords in the hope of protection from imagined predatory forces. Ma'oz summarizes the result: “[Thus, the landlords] acquired freehold ownership of lands with full rights of disposal and succession confirmed by the government, whereas the peasants - the actual cultivators - lost their true rights and became sharecroppers or hired laborers at the mercy of their landlords.”²⁹ With their traditional land-based power intact, the *zu'ama* also benefited from Ottoman bureaucratic reorganization which, combined with the land reform, allowed the *za'im* (singular of *zu'ama*) to maintain the social and political prerogatives of his forebears under the veneer of liberal modernity.

For those few 'Amili landlords who did lose property in the land reorganization, service in the newly created Ottoman governing institutions became an equally compelling means of status preservation.

²⁷ Tamara Chalabi, *The Shi'is of Jabal 'Amil and the New Lebanon* (New York: Palgrave Mamillan, 2006), 23.

²⁸ Max Weiss, *In the Shadow of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 56.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

After the horrific sectarian violence of 1860, Ottoman authorities enacted the *Règlement Organique*, which established a more centralized system of local rule known as the *mutasarifiyat* (ruled by a local governor, the *mutasarrif*). Like the Land Code of 1858, the supposed aim and real effect of the law were contradictory. While its sixth article proclaimed that, "all are equal before the law, and all privileges, including those of the *muqata'jis*, are abolished," the truth lay in its eleventh, which stated, "all members of the...administrative assemblies will be chosen and appointed by the leaders of their sect in agreement with the notables of the sect."³⁰ Opportunities for positions on the new Central Administrative Council, local councils, and even in the Ottoman parliament in Istanbul opened to 'Amili Shi'i elites. The Ottomans recognized the value of maintaining a loyal class of local clients and were not interested in anything more than rhetoric when it came to legislating against *zu'ama* representation in government. For the feudal elites, participation in Ottoman institutions was the latest iteration of a longstanding system of patronage and communal neglect even as it foreshadowed Shi'i sectarian politics in the twentieth century by enshrining religious identity as the determinant of political representation.

In time, the *zu'ama* brought the same avaricious attitude toward government posts as toward land. Mohammad Jabir, a Lebanese observer familiar with the new regime described one particularly powerful *za'im*: "Kamal Bek was of the opinion that representing the Shi'is of Jebel 'Amil was his prerogative...[a status unavailable] to anybody else whatever his personality and his capacities might have been."³¹ As this attitude became ingrained, so too did the belief that government office was an opportunity for self-aggrandizement and the leveraging of influence (*wasta*) to enrich oneself and one's family. Bisharah al-Khoury, the first president of post-Mandate Lebanon, recalled growing up in this environment: "The great offices formed nearly without exception a *waqf* (trust) for the great families of the country. This came from the de facto influence of feudalism after feudalism had been officially ended by the provision of the 'Règlement Organique.' Office in those days was everything...It became the reason for enmities and for ruinous spending...The competition for office helped many a *mutasarrif* to dominate the Lebanese families and to dispose of Lebanese affairs just as he liked without being blamed by anybody."³² As shown in his final point, the *zu'ama's* abdication of responsibility for 'Amili Shi'i communal well-being invited uncontested

³⁰ Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon*, 27.

³¹ Arnold Hottinger, "Zu'ama In Historical Perspective," in Binder, Leonard (ed.) *Politics in Lebanon* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966), 93.

³² *Ibid.*, 90.

Ottoman power and attendant decades of marginalization and hopelessness for the Shi'i masses. Ironically, in the final appraisal, Ottoman handouts of land and office gave the *zu'ama* themselves more the illusion of power than real influence. Crucially, they spent most of their political energy mired in internecine fighting, unable to consider independent, unified action. This focus on social standing served their immediate interests, given the ephemeral nature of political power as a minority community under the Ottomans. Yet, it also ensured that the Shi'a community had no hope of making broader political progress. In addition, by failing to encourage their peasants to produce products desirable for the burgeoning trade with Europe - silk in particular - the Shi'a ensured that, "the abjectness of their economic niche...[relegated] them to relative unimportance in the eyes of the Ottoman governors."³³

The similarity of the Iraqi feudal aristocracy by the dawn of the twentieth century to that of Jabal 'Amil reinforces the conclusion that the Ottomans considered the cooption of Shi'i landowners essential to enforcing Shi'i quiescence. In Iraq, however, the Ottoman authorities had a much more difficult task since Iraq had no indigenous political institution comparable to the 'Amili *zu'ama*. Instead, communal power lay in the hands of the nomadic desert tribes (and, at times, the *ulema*). A prominent Iraqi politician described the status of the tribes before the *Tanzimat*-driven Ottoman reassertion of control: "To depend on the tribe is a thousand times safer than depending on the government, for whereas the latter defers or neglects [its duty]...the tribe, no matter how feeble it may be, as soon as it learns that an injustice has been committed against one of its members readies itself to exact vengeance on his behalf."³⁴ Moreover, the Iraqi tribes did not have as long a Shi'i pedigree as the 'Amili Shi'a. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, most of the tribesmen had been nominal Sunnis, although their true faith lay in an ancient system of tribal law and honor. The existence of such fearsome and autonomous tribes presented an obvious problem to Ottoman centralized control (and, most importantly, taxation), and its proponents set out to vitiate the tribes' independence by coopting their leaders. The authorities' primary means was forced sedentarization, by which the nomads were turned into land-bound agriculturalists. Paradoxically, simultaneous mass tribal conversion to Shi'ism played a major role in facilitating this shift in lifestyle and values. Shi'i clerics from Najaf and Karbala saw an opportunity for proselytization among socially dislocated tribesmen in the midst of a radical process of

³³ Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War*, 28.

³⁴ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 21.

identity construction.³⁵ Their efforts were highly successful, and, pragmatically, Ottoman authorities did little to prevent them. The rulers saw Shi'ism, despite being anathema to orthodox Sunnis, as preferable to a warrior tribal culture and even, perhaps, as a salutary civilizing influence.

With religion facilitating the cultural shift, the mechanics of Ottoman cultivation of a new feudal elite proceeded similarly in Iraq as it had in Jabal 'Amil. The decisive coup was the enactment in Iraq of the Land Code of 1869, stipulating a program similar to that of the Land Code of 1858 in Lebanon. Under the new system, land ownership in southern Iraq, which previously had been fluid and communal in keeping with the tribes' roving nomadic lifestyle, was privatized. Title deeds (*tapu sanads*) to imperial lands were granted to tribal sheikhs, as was the accompanying responsibility of farming taxes from the inhabitants.³⁶ This responsibility - identical to that of the *multazims* in Jabal 'Amil - created a bifurcated class system of landowners and tenants out of a formerly egalitarian society. The ease of abuse and perverse economic incentives in this system soon led to over-taxation and corruption in the new feudal elite. Batatu described the moral shock of such an abrupt entrance into the imperial economy: "The ensuing penetration of money and the idea of profit among the tribes, the transformation of their shaikhs from patriarchs into gain-seeking landlords, and the Turkish policy of playing off tribal chief against tribal chief...so changed the conditions of life...as to [render] the old tribal loyalties...by and large ineffectual."³⁷ In fact, benefitting from the process - outlined in the 'Amili case - by which fearful peasants voluntarily renounced their title deed (*tapu*) claims, the landlords grew so powerful that they began to defy their Ottoman masters by refusing to pay taxes. This led the governor in Baghdad to scale back the volume of title deed grants.³⁸ The fact that the feudal elites felt powerful enough to attempt this, however, only served to further illustrate Ottoman success in sapping Shi'i tribal resistance to their rule.

The social and economic effects of Shi'i sedentarization were as detrimental to the tribes in the long term as in the near. A British diplomatic observer in the first decade of the twentieth century noted: "The feudal system which exists in the province is nothing short of a calamity for the country. In the villages there are Beys and hereditary Aghas [Shiekhs] who have a certain amount of influence, as much with the

³⁵ Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 28.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁷ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 22.

³⁸ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, "The Transformation of Land Tenure and Rural Social Structure in Central and Southern Iraq 1870-1958," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 15 (1983): 491-505.

authorities as with the villagers. Most of the villages are the property of these Beys and Aghas, and are exploited by them to augment their personal revenues without any regard to the prosperity of their inhabitants. The result is that the peasant is kept in a continual state of poverty, with no hope of ever becoming a proprietor of land himself.”³⁹ The feudal lords compounded the suffering of the *fellahin* by contentedly allowing the winds of economic change to pass the Iraqi Shi’i community by. Crucially, the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal played to the advantages of Sunni traders in the cities who monopolized the Iraqi trade with Europe. Shi’i landlords did not encourage their tenants to grow the kinds of cash crops desirable in Europe and willingly ceded the new market to others, taxing their peasants even more to make up for lost revenue.⁴⁰ Thus, despite the challenges of a relatively horizontal social structure and strong tribal leadership in southern Iraq before the *Tanzimat*, the Ottomans demonstrated that their formula for reducing the Shi’a, even when in the majority, to a quiescent agricultural underclass was replicable and successful across the Arab provinces.

CLERICAL QUIESCENCE

By a reasonable reading of history, Ottoman elimination of secular elites as a potential source of Shi’i communal leadership could have seen the *ulema* take up this mantle. In a fundamental sense, the clergy were the keepers of Shi’i identity; they represented the moral and cultural compass of a community defined by its heterodox religious beliefs. The concept of *marji’ al-taqlid* - in which Shi’a look to their clerics as “sources of emulation” for the duration of the Last Imam’s (Imam Mahdi) occultation - seemingly provided the *ulema* a theological justification for a robust political presence. Despite the hesitation of many traditional clerics to wield power through political activism, there were also striking examples (such as that of the Karbala uprising) in which Shi’i clerics did embrace power politics. What is more, the victory of the hierarchical, *Usuli* school of Shi’i jurisprudence over the course of the nineteenth century further ratified clerical activism by enshrining *ijtihad* (the ability to make religious rulings) and the importance of continual textual reinterpretation of past Shi’i practices.⁴¹ Such traditions, one scholar notes, “consolidated the authority of Shi’a jurists by initiating an unprecedented relationship between believers and their religious scholars. This sense of devotion to the religious leaders as the representatives of the Imam made possible the

³⁹ David Gillard, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs / the Ottoman Empire in North Africa* (University Publications of America, 1984), 210.

⁴⁰ Cole, *Sacred Space*, 27.

⁴¹ Shanahan, *The Shi’a of Lebanon*, 134.

exercise of powerfully influential leadership in the Shi'a community."⁴² Why, in practice, the behavior of 'Amili and Iraqi clerics differed so markedly from the above bears scrutiny for what it reveals about the Shi'i experience of Ottoman rule and the primacy of local self-interest as a motivating factor.

The history of the clerics of Jabal 'Amil perfectly illustrates the dynamics of this paradox. In the sixteenth century, Jabal 'Amil was the region's most respected center of Shi'i scholarship. Clerical endeavors were well supported by income from independent charitable endowments (*waqfs*), and the scholars' authority was so highly regarded that the first Safavid shahs invited them to propagate Shi'ism in their newly conquered lands, thereby installing Shi'ism as the state religion for the first time since the Fatimids and Buyids of the tenth century. Yet, by the nineteenth century, the 'Amili clerical establishment was a shade of its former self; any young religious scholar (*'alim*) of ambition did everything possible to study in Najaf or Karbala and, in many cases, never returned home. At the root of this shift were the campaigns of al-Jazzar, which had destroyed clerical property on a massive scale. Most left for the relative security of Iraq, but those who remained had little choice but to bind themselves to the new class of feudal landlords who emerged from the destruction.

The potential for corruption and sycophantism was immediately realized. Fouad Ajami biting described the new status quo: "Shi'a Lebanon sustained a clerical community that was on the whole economically depressed and politically quiescent. The clerics accepted the preeminence of the beys. The latter were the ones with the money, with the men with guns, and the land...[the *'alim*] was a man without political ambitions, without glamor...Economically vulnerable, they took the world as it came."⁴³ Without independent income, the clerics became little more than loyal retainers for feudal families. The *zu'ama* viewed them as charity cases, a worthy and unthreatening way to spend spare change. It was simply not in the *ulema's* interest to threaten even this meager existence by taking up the cause of the repressed masses. Nor, for that matter, was there a tradition of clerical action on behalf of the peasantry. That peasants looked to them for moral and cultural leadership - although, as demonstrated below, even this would come into doubt - did not necessarily translate into the political realm. With time, clerical families formed alliances with feudal clans that spanned generations, with the clerics serving to legitimate each new scion as he took power.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid., 135.

⁴³ Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, 74.

⁴⁴ Chalabi, *The Shi'is of Jabal 'Amil*, 22.

Accordingly, little heed was paid to them by either the Ottomans or the Shi'a themselves. A French military officer's 1936 observation of the clerics is equally applicable to the Ottoman period, since little had changed in the intervening years: "There is a strange thing in the Shi'i country, the religious authorities did not enjoy the authority that one expected. The influence of the *sayyids* remains for the most part local. If they have some credit among the peasants, then the more evolved classes were increasingly outside their control and merely represented external symbols of respect."⁴⁵

Such was the depth of Ottoman disregard for the Shi'i men of religion (*ulema*) that the authorities did not even permit them to settle legal disputes within their own community (a traditional prerogative of religious leaders within the *millet* system). Instead, under the 1845 *Règlement Shakib Effend*, a Sunni judge (*qadi*) was appointed to serve Shi'i legal needs.⁴⁶ For their part, Shi'a peasants mocked the clerics as "obscurantists" who "told fantastic tales" and wore "religious garb...to hide physical deformities and escape being taunted about them."⁴⁷ In light of such invective and humiliation, Shanahan's comment that, "The costs of adopting an [activist] stance would have outweighed the gains," appears dubious. While embracing the theological justification for clerical activism would have posed risks, the 'Amili *ulema*'s silence ensured that both they and their flock suffered marginalization and poverty for decades to come.

The social and political role of the *ulema* in the Iraqi Shi'i community was much more consequential than that of the 'Amilis but still, ultimately, crushed by Ottoman imperial reassertion. While it is not clear that the clerics always had the best interests of Iraqi Shi'a at heart, it is undeniable that they were a force to be reckoned with. Iraqi clerics enjoyed enormous prestige from controlling the holiest shrines in Shi'i Islam, but gained status from their established ability to play power politics, as they had in Karbala in the 1830s. More central than either of these factors, however, was that, unlike their 'Amili counterparts, the Iraqi *ulema* were financially independent. They were the beneficiaries of taxes (*khums*) and donations (*zakat*) from the constant stream of Persian pilgrims to the Iraqi holy sites. In addition, they received massive subsidies from Shi'i potentates across Asia. Most notoriously, the Oudh Bequest, given by the Shi'i king of the Indian state of Awadh, endowed the religious

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon*, 27.

⁴⁷ Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, 74.

institutions of Karbala and Najaf well into the twentieth century.⁴⁸ Thus, the Iraqi *mujtahids* posed a potential threat to the centralizing efforts of the *Tanzimat* reformers. One scholar observed, “The Shi’ite [hierarchy] had tenuous and informal ties with a weak central government while it firmly dominated the masses by its exclusive religious authority.”⁴⁹

In response to clerical power, the Ottomans pursued a dual policy of simultaneous favors and ideological warfare. The favors - mostly new infrastructure and the maintenance of shrines - were doled out in the hope that the *ulema* might come to see the Ottoman state rather than the Qajar shah as their imperial protector. While this seems unreasonably optimistic in retrospect, at the time Sultan Abdulhamid II fiercely advocated a pan-Islamism encompassing all heterodox sects. With the empire crumbling under European territorial advances, Yusuf Riza Pasha captured the sultan’s thinking: “At the present time, it is a religious obligation for Muslim nations to unite and rise up, on the basis of God’s unity, against the rule of the Christian states; and, since all of them perceive this point, the capacity for unity and alliance in this direction is becoming apparent among both Sunnis and Shi’a.”⁵⁰ In addition, with the notable exception of Karbala in the early part of the century, the Shi’i clerics had devoted most of their political attention to pressuring the Iranian state, as in the notorious Tobacco Concession episode in 1890-91. This, of course, did very little for disenfranchised Iraqi peasants struggling under feudal rule and Ottoman taxes. The activism did, however, improve the clerics’ image with the Ottomans, who saw them as potential agents against Persian and British encroachment on imperial borders. Again, Ottoman official Yusuf Riza Pasha captured the strategic calculus: “[Riza] stated that the *mujtahids*’ influence was a thousand times [more] effective in Iran than that of the Shah. He argued that most of the *mujtahids* lived in the Ottoman Empire, and they were able, without a sign, to make people revolt against the Shah in twenty four hours, and coerce the Iranian state [to do] whatever they wanted.”⁵¹ Ironically, the Ottomans came to view Iraqi clerical agitation against the Iranian Shahs as an indication of their political and religious distance from the Iranian regime.

Yet, the sultan realized he was taking a risk by trying to make common cause with the Shi’i clerics. Tellingly, the Ottomans still considered the spread of Shi’ism in Iraq a serious political problem. At a

⁴⁸ Gokhan Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 100.

⁴⁹ Selim Deringil, "The Struggle Against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. XXX (1990), 48.

⁵⁰ Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq*, 104.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

basic level, the clerics rejected the legitimacy of the Ottoman state, with a caesaropapist emperor at its head. While this was not exclusive to Shi'i views of the Ottoman state - hardline Usuli *ulema* rejected the notion of any temporal power besides that of the jurisprudent in the absence of the Twelfth Imam - it hit closer to home since many clerics viewed the Sunnis as apostates. Thus, the emperor initiated a campaign of ideological warfare against Shi'i power. Given political necessity, he exploited the link between theology and sectarianism. He sent hardline Sunni clerics to argue against Shi'i teachings and installed a Sunni guardian at the Shi'i shrine in Samarra. The Ottomans also re-educated a number of elite Shi'i children by bringing them to Istanbul and immersing them in Sunni jurisprudence in the hope that they would have influence among their peers upon returning home. These efforts, however, proved naïve and failed to make significant inroads. Interestingly, the Ottomans never considered bringing the Iraqi clerics to heel by means of military force. This telling fact reveals the unusual dichotomy of the Iraqi *ulema*. On the one hand, they were too powerful and had too much indigenous support to be altogether wiped out like the 'Amili clerics. On the other, the fact that the Ottomans did not feel the need to use coercive force indicates that the clerics did not use their power in ways that threatened the Ottomans, such as encouraging broad-based Shi'i revolt against an oppressive system. The political incentives for political quiescence were simply too powerful, and the Iraqi Shi'a had not yet developed the political awareness that would later lead the clerics into politics. The Ottoman authorities had successfully created a local political landscape that nipped the possibility of clerical activism in the bud. Thus, when it came to a stark calculation of political self-interest, the Iraqi *ulema* behaved similarly to their 'Amili counterparts.

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE STATUS QUO

By the eve of the First World War, the interlocking triad of cataclysmic Ottoman repression, a co-opted landowning elite, and a feckless clerical establishment had established the systematic political exclusion of the Levantine 'Amili and Iraqi Shi'a. The results of the war, however, initially seemed to have the potential to shift this paradigm. Pan-Arab sentiment, embodied by Hashemite claims to rule across the Arab lands, was strong. Coupled with Wilsonian ideals of popular sovereignty and self-determination, many Arab Shi'a saw in this an opportunity to redefine their communal political identity. No longer, some believed, was one's sect a defining characteristic; Arabism and socialism each appeared to hold the promise of transcending the sectarian political identities inculcated over centuries through the sectarian *millet* system. Historian

Juan Cole captured this line of thought, noting that, “Many hoped that it would matter little whether the Arabs of Iraq [and Lebanon] were Twelver or Sunni if all were Arabs or all were socialists.”⁵²

The French and the British - having received neo-colonial mandates in the newly forged Lebanon and Iraq, respectively - had a different vision. They wished to have the benefits of direct colonialism - access to resources, markets, and political capital - while maintaining a façade of local rule to legitimize their hegemony. With respect to the Shi’a, each mandate followed a remarkably similar trajectory. The mandate authorities in the Levant elevated their Maronite Christian clients to disproportionate heights of political power in order to rule through them. While the British did not maintain as warm a bond with the Iraqi Sunnis, they viewed them as similarly well placed to coopt in the name of British strategic interests. Gertrude Bell, one of the chief British administrators in Iraq in this period, illustrated, “I don’t for a moment doubt that the final authority must be in the hands of the Sunnis in spite of their numerical inferiority.”⁵³ In Iraq, the British held the Shi’a in deep suspicion, continuing the old Ottoman perception of them as Iranian agents. The French in Lebanon did not fear Shi’a power but rather held them in contempt, a community outside the circle of meaningful political players.

The Shi’a in both mandates, however, were loath to let the potential opportunity presented by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire slip away and, ultimately, paid dearly for their attempts to seize it. In Iraq, Shi’i *mujtahids* were principally responsible for fomenting the nationalist revolt of 1920. Although their demands were clothed in nationalist rhetoric calling for the accession of Prince Feisal, the clerics also saw an opportunity to enhance their own power and even to achieve a Shi’i Islamic state. The reality of Feisal’s rule eliminated such hopes; under British tutelage, he stacked the organs of government with fellow Sunnis. The revolt served to confirm the worst British fears of Shi’i deviousness. What is more, like the Ottomans throughout the nineteenth century, the king succeeded in further coopting the Shi’i feudal elite and thus eliminating the possibility of a united Shi’i front. By offering the elites significant economic and political incentives to cooperate with his regime, Feisal ensured that they were, “ruled not by virtue of their own power and authority or the acclamation and loyalty of their tribesmen, but by virtue of the powers conferred to them by the British authorities.”⁵⁴ With clerical

⁵² Cole, *Sacred Space*, 174.

⁵³ Gertrude Bell, 3 October 1920, *The Gertrude Bell Papers*, http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/letter_details.php?letter_id=425.

⁵⁴ Nakash, *The Shi’is of Iraq*, 89.

power shattered, the shaikhly class' inability to act on their community's behalf institutionalized the Ottoman status quo.

A similar process of failed revolt and subsequent cooptation played out in mandate-era Lebanon. Determined to resist being shoehorned into the new Franco-Maronite construct of Greater Lebanon, the 'Amili Shi'a took up arms in April 1920, attacking Christian villages throughout the south.⁵⁵ While this revolt was more localized than the Iraqi uprising, it nevertheless captured a fleeting Shi'i sense of political agency. A French expeditionary force was, however, unhesitatingly dispatched, and it ruthlessly crushed the Shi'i opposition. In the wake of this, the old cadre of feudal *zu'ama* reestablished a mutually beneficial agreement with the French and, later, the authorities of independent Lebanon, that maintained the comfortable and corrupt status to which they were accustomed under Ottoman rule.

The post-Ottoman potential for the reorganization of Iraqi and Lebanese society along more equitable lines was thus thwarted almost immediately. A combination of entrenched Sunni power, anti-Shi'a feeling, and a Shi'i failure of leadership rendered any changes from the Ottoman norm purely cosmetic. Such continuity was hardly surprising, given the profound ways in which Ottoman rule had shaped attitudes and practices toward the Shi'a. One British mandatory official described what he thought was Britain's contribution to the future of the Arab world: "Later generations of [Sunni] Iraqi politicians may appreciate the gratitude they owe the British for saving them from [Shi'i] Najaf."⁵⁶ The truth, however, reveals how little the mandatory powers understood of the political situation they had inherited. By favoring Sunni hegemony in Iraq and joint Sunni-Maronite power in Lebanon, they merely perpetuated the centuries-long system of Shi'a marginalization inaugurated by the Ottoman Tanzimat reformers.

⁵⁵ Cole, *Sacred Space*, 176.

⁵⁶ Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 72.