

Entangled Confessionalizations?

Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety
and Community-Building in the Ottoman
Empire, 15th–18th Centuries

Edited by

Tijana Krstić

Derin Terzioğlu

kurdlib.online

GORGias
PRESS

2022

20. ON THE LEGAL STATUS OF YEZIDIS: LAW, GEOGRAPHY AND CONFESSION-BUILDING IN EARLY MODERN KURDISTAN (SIXTEENTH-EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES)¹

YAVUZ AYKAN

INTRODUCTION

While during the early modern period many different religious groups existed among the Kurdish communities (such as Kizilbash, Ahl-e Haqq, Sunnis adhering to the Shafi'i school of law, Şemsi, etc.), historians have focused mostly on the history of the Kizilbash and the Ottoman attitudes towards them. In this context, despite its polysemic meaning, Kurdistan, the historical region contested by the Safavids and Ottomans throughout the early modern period, has been mainly discussed as an administrative entity.² In this article, in contrast, I explore the layers of meaning attached to the term Kurdistan (one of which carried a heavy confessional tenor) in the early modern period by focusing on the Yezidis, a group that followed a syncretic religion of Islamic origin that emerged in the twelfth century, and the challenges that it presented to the Ottoman Sunni authorities.³

My discussion will have two interrelated foci. First, I will examine the role of Yezidism in the portrayal of Kurdistan by both Kurdish intellectuals and Ottoman administrators in various administrative and literary texts, addressing the intimately interwoven histories of confession-building and geography in the early modern period. Second, my discussion will explore the role of law and construction of the Yezidis' legal status in the opinions of jurists from both Istanbul and Kurdistan in the sixteenth century. I will then examine the extent to which this legal construction of

¹ Thanks are due to Tijana Krstić, Evren Sünnetçioğlu and Derin Terzioğlu for their intellectual engagement with the text. Ideas running through this article were mostly developed during my stay as a visiting fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna. For the abbreviation of the archival catalogues consulted see the bibliography.

² See Göyünç, 'Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliği'nin'; van Bruinessen, 'The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbakir'; Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*.

³ For the history of the Yezidis see Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism* and Spät, *Late Antique Motifs*.

Yezidis was reflected in the administrative and alliance-making practices on the ground in the following centuries.

The prevailing tendency in the historiography on Yezidism has been to focus on the nineteenth-century context, when Yezidis were perceived as a heretical sect (Ar. *firqa ḍālla*) that had to be transformed into proper Hanafi Muslims via conversion.⁴ This reflects the *modus operandi* of the nineteenth-century Ottoman state, whereby the creation of reliable citizens became central to the constitution of the modern state power.⁵ Yet, between the sixteenth and eighteenth century we encounter a radically different picture where, through casuistry—that is, the technical capacity of *fiqh* to construct categories of persons, acts and things in order to respond to newly emerging legal questions—the Yezidis were classified somewhere in between infidels (*kāfir*) and apostates (*murtad*).⁶ This process was closely linked to what scholars have termed Sunni confession-building or ‘Sunnitization’ of the early modern Ottoman society, which began sometime in the mid-fifteenth century but attained new dynamism in the mid-sixteenth century. In this context, the concept of Sunnitization is understood as measures adopted by the Ottoman authorities, scholars, and preachers to correct the ritual practice and beliefs of the (nominally) Sunni population, as well as define, expose, and sanction the practices and beliefs of non-Sunni groups within the Ottoman domains with the goal of limiting their ability to ‘corrupt’ the rest of the society, sometimes (but by no means always) through physical persecution.⁷ By drawing on the chronicles, fatwas, *mühimme* registers and geographical works, the article seeks to contribute to the scholarly debates on the question of Ottoman confession-building and Sunnitization, as well as to complicate the discussion on the notion of early modern ‘Kurdistan’ through an analysis of how early modern Sunni authorities framed the question of Yezidism.

BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY

Let me begin with a story that may serve as an introduction to the contextual and historical issues that I explore in this article: on January 26, 1568, Abdal Khan, the holder of the districts of Tor and Heytam, within the Kurdish hereditary fiefdom of Cizre, stabbed the chief sergeant Muhammed Aga with a dagger. According to Feridun Bey, the secretary of the grand vizier, the homicide took place in the courtyard of Üç Şerefeli Mosque in Edirne.⁸ The event generated a serious political scandal, which left its traces in the chronicles of the period including the *Sharafnama* of

⁴ See Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, particularly pp. 69–92.

⁵ For some exemplary studies on the question of Ottoman citizenship in the nineteenth century see Salzmänn, ‘Citizens in Search of a State’; Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, particularly pp. 156–197; Phillips Cohen, ‘Between Civic and Islamic Ottomanism’.

⁶ For the casuistry applied to the Yezidi case in general see Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*, pp. 194–226; for casuistry in the Roman legal tradition see Thomas, ‘La valeur des choses’.

⁷ For the question of Ottoman ‘Sunnitization’ see Terzioğlu, ‘How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization?’; Krstić, ‘State and Religion’.

⁸ Feridun Bey, *Nüzhet-i Esrâr*, pp. 310–315.

the Kurdish prince Şerafeddin Khan Bitlisi.⁹ In their diplomatic correspondence, the Habsburg and Venetian ambassadors devoted considerable attention to the event, which resonated beyond the territories of the empire.¹⁰

Why did a homicide committed by a Kurdish prince of insignificant rank create such an impact? First of all, the murder had a symbolic meaning since it took place between two Sunni Muslims in the courtyard of a mosque. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the homicide took place at a moment of visible tension between the imperial center and the Kurdish chieftains. At the heart of this tension was the question of the administrative status of the newly annexed Kurdistan, a sprawling frontier region between the Ottoman and Safavid territories.

Feridun's account describes a charismatic Kurdish notable named Bedir Bey, the holder and the chieftain of the hereditary fiefdom (*hükümet*) of Cizre.¹¹ Through his sustained loyalty and services, Bedir had accrued charisma in the eyes of the Ottoman center that lasted more than sixty years. Under Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566), he had demonstrated a great deal of success during the campaigns of Baghdad (1534) and Tabriz (1548).¹² The tension between Bedir and Abdal began when the latter claimed more power and influence over the *hükümet* of Cizre. Upon the enthronement of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–1574), Abdal Khan made his way to the city of Edirne, to the meeting of the Imperial Council. His aim was to obtain an imperial certificate (*berat*) that would give him more power and influence over the *hükümet* of Cizre.¹³

The Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha held an audience with Abdal Khan and clarified the impossibility of his request, underlining the fact that he could become the chieftain of Cizre only after Bedir's death. After this encounter, events become complicated: Abdal Khan left the scene without following Sokollu's advice and refused to join the Imperial Army. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha sent his man Muhammed Aga after Abdal Khan to summon him to the Council that gathered in the afternoon. According to Feridun, Muhammed encountered Abdal and his retinue in the vicinity

⁹ Cheref-ou'ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, vol. 1/2, pp. 154–165.

¹⁰ See Verancsics, *Összes munkái*, vol. 5, p. 237 and State Archives of Venice, Senato, Dispacci di Costantinopoli, Filza 2, 517a. I would like to thank Güneş Işıksel who called my attention to these sources.

¹¹ The term *hükümet* referred to the fragmented territories ruled by a Kurdish chieftain; their sole responsibility vis-à-vis the imperial center was to participate in military campaigns, providing soldiers for the imperial army. These units were exempt from the imperial census (*tahrir*) according to the imperial pledge (*ahdname*) they held. Their holders enjoyed political and fiscal independence. See, Ayn Ali Efendi, *Kavânin-i Âl-i Osmân*, p. 30: '*Ammâ hükümetler tahrir olunmamışdır, içinde zeâmet ve tımar yokdur*'. Compare with the *kanunname* of Sofyalı Ali Çavuş, which was drafted 44 years later: '*Ebvâb-ı mahsûlâtı dâhil-i Defter-i Hâkânî olmamışdır. İçlerinde ümerâ-yi Osmâniye'den ve kul tâifesinden hiç bir kimse yokdur*'. See Sertoğlu ed., *Sofyalı Ali Çavuş Kanunnâmesi*, p. 19.

¹² Cheref-ou'ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, volume 1/2, p. 154.

¹³ The event took place during the period when the Sultan Selim II moved to Edirne to spend the winter. For the political importance of the city of Edirne during the time of Selim II see, Emecen, 'Selim II'.

of Üç Şerefeli Mosque and invited him into the mosque's courtyard to negotiate. In a moment of passion, Abdal ordered his men to kill Muhammed in the courtyard of the mosque. As the archival documents suggest, Abdal Khan and his twenty men were subsequently executed on the sultan's order.¹⁴

While recounting the event Feridun eulogizes Bedir due to his loyalty to the Ottoman center, and subsequently paints a very negative picture of Abdal Khan. By recounting the homicide on Abdal Khan's orders, Feridun Bey opens a rare window onto the Sunni perception of the Kurds and Kurdistan. Feridun achieves this through a mythical narrative, offering readers a striking genesis story, drawing on the history of al-Maqrizi (d. 1442).¹⁵ He recounts: One day, the cruel king Zahhak charged one of his viziers with the daily feeding of his snakes, who were fed with the brains of two men among his subjects.¹⁶ The pitiful vizier accepts the duty yet adopts a strategy: While feeding the snakes with the brain of one man, he secretly saves the second one by dispatching him to the mountains of Istahar, which are inhabited by djinns and demons (*dīv* in Persian). At this juncture in the story, the Persian motifs in the narrative tangle with Semitic elements, as Solomon enters the picture as a main protagonist.¹⁷ When God revokes the seal of kingship and prophecy from Solomon, he makes his way to the Istahar Mountains in order to take refuge. While in seclusion, Solomon prays for forgiveness and God grants him his remittance. When he returns to his country, he realizes that some of his wives and concubines have deviated from the path of righteousness and orders them to be exiled to the Istahar Mountains.¹⁸ When these women arrive at the mountains, they encounter the men saved by Zahhak's vizier who had become wild. According to Feridun, the Kurds were born out of the coupling of these exiled men and women.¹⁹ As such, according to Feridun, while Bedir was the embodiment of a real Sunni Muslim, Kurds like Abdal Khan descended from the offspring of the Istahar community. He further adds that the Yezidis were also the descendants of these people.

Feridun Bey's narrative juxtaposes two Kurds, placing one (Bedir Bey) in the Sunni realm, known and governable, and the second (Abdal Khan) in a space of 'ignorance' (*méconnaissance*),²⁰ to use René Girard's term—a sort of *terra incognita*. It

¹⁴ For the order see, BOA (MD), VII, no: 2348.

¹⁵ Generally abbreviated as *al-Khitat*, the text is entitled *al-Mawa'iz wa-l-I'tibar fi Dhikr al-Khitat wa-l-Athar*. For the importance of al-Maqrizi and his history see, Rabbat, 'Was al-Maqrizi's'.

¹⁶ Stretching back to the Zoroastrian mythology, Zahhak is the evil figure that takes an important place in Persianate mythology, particularly in the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi. See Melville, 'The *Shahnameh*', pp. 16–22.

¹⁷ Feridun makes a critical move in his narrative as he replaces the figure of Kaveh the Blacksmith with Solomon. The former is a legendary heroic figure in the *Shahnama* who starts a revolt against Zahhak. He is also an important mythical figure in the Kurdish nationalist discourse today. See Omidsalar, 'Kāva'.

¹⁸ Feridun Bey, *Nüzhet-i Esrâr*, p. 313. Text: '*utrūd-hum ilā'l-jibāl*', meaning 'expel them to the mountains!'

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 313. Text: '*bu iki tâifenin çiftleşmesinden tenâsiil eden nev'-i insana Kürd denir*'.

²⁰ René Girard uses the French word *méconnaissance* to describe such situations. See Girard, *Des choses cachées*.

is this very ignorance that creates the uncanny primal scene, and, thus, the mythology.²¹ This space of ignorance, indeed, corresponded to the newly annexed Kurdistan, confessionally diverse territory that the Sunni imperial center tried to make sense of.

THE MANY MEANINGS AND VISIONS OF KURDISTAN

Historians studying the development of the term Kurdistan in the Ottoman period have long treated the question in the context of the administrative structure of the Empire. Their account is straightforward: after the overthrow of the Akkoyunlus (1508), Shah Isma‘il (d. 1524) replaced Kurdish chieftains with a Kizilbash aristocracy.²² The presence of a large population of Kizilbash influenced by the mystical Shi‘ism of Shah Isma‘il (d. 1524) was perceived as a threat in Anatolia. This was one of the reasons that prompted Selim I (r. 1512–1520) to organize a massive military campaign against the Safavids on the eastern frontiers of the Empire. Following Selim I’s campaign and a subsequent alliance with local Kurdish chieftains, the Ottomans succeeded in establishing sovereignty in formerly Akkoyunlu and Safavid cities, such as Amid and Van. As such, the Sunni political alliance between the Ottomans and Kurdish chieftains also made the gradual creation of the province of Kurdistan possible under Ottoman rule.²³

The word ‘Kurdistan’ did not appear as a geographical entity in the vocabulary of the imperial center during the initial stages of the Ottoman encounter with the Kurds, but rather as a series of fragmented political and administrative units. Although the first Ottoman register dates back to 1518, it is in the 1520 register that we see the Ottomans make a clear distinction between the administrative units ruled by the Ottomans and those ruled by Kurdish notables.²⁴ In this register, the territories governed by the Kurdish notables were registered as ‘Kurdish communities’ (*cemâ‘at-i Kürdân*).²⁵ It is approximately ten years after the region’s annexation that we find the word ‘Kurdistan’ used by the Ottomans to designate the territories held by

²¹ In another work Girard further explains the role of *méconnaissance* in creating mythology. See Girard, *Les origines de la culture*, pp. 85–94.

²² See Khacharian, ‘The Kurdish Principality of Hakkariya’.

²³ The literature on the topic is vast. For some examples see Göyünç, ‘Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliği’nin’; van Bruinessen, ‘The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbakir’; Tezcan, ‘The Development of the use of “Kurdistan”’; Öz, ‘Ottoman Provincial Administration’; Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*; Posch, ‘What Is a Frontier?’.

²⁴ The 1518 register is considered the first census of the region undertaken by the Ottoman Empire. See Göyünç, ‘Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliği’nin’, pp. 23–34; van Bruinessen, ‘The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbakir’, p. 17. The law code (*kanunname*) of this period is analyzed and published by İlhan, *Amid (Diyarbakır)*, pp. 122–125.

²⁵ This register seems to be the oldest register to give a clear idea of the administrative divisions of the region. The register is published in Barkan, ‘H. 933–934 (M. 1527–1528) Malî Yılına Ait Bir Bütçe Örneği’, esp. p. 306. However, except for Ebru Sönmez, this register seems to have been ignored by historians who have recently worked on the subject. See Sönmez, *İdris-i Bidlisi*, pp. 114–125.

Kurdish notables. This register dating to 1527 gives as its first entry a list of the subdivisions of Diyarbakır province ruled by the Ottomans. It includes nine districts (*livâ*), as well as the important urban centers of the region such as Amid, Harput, Ruha (Urfa), Ergani, Mosul and the regions in which the itinerant tribe named Ulus dominated. The second entry entitled ‘the province of Kurdistan’ (*vilâyet-i Kürdistan*), contained seventeen ‘territories’ (*eyâlet*)²⁶; these included Bitlis, Hısnkeyf (Hasankeyf), Siverek, Hizan, Sason, Palu, Cizre and other territories registered under the names of the Kurdish notables who ruled them, such as Mir Zahid.²⁷ Thus, if we look at the archives of the imperial center, in the Ottoman ‘administrative vocabulary’ the word ‘Kurdistan’ seems to have been used as an administrative category denoting the totality of fragmented local Kurdish authorities recognized by the Ottoman center through a series of negotiations rather than as a unified territorial entity.

Negotiating with different regional powers in return for titles and influence was not something new for the Kurdish notables. In the Kurdish context, this tradition of political negotiation and alliance making stretches back to the Mongol, Great Seljuk, and Byzantine periods.²⁸ Yet, it is in the Ottoman context that the criterion of being Sunni gave Kurdish rule its legitimacy in the region. Thus, in the early modern context, Kurdistan came to represent a geographical space that was inflected by confessional and political dynamics.²⁹ As I am going to discuss below, the production of Kurdistan as a confessional space had been long in the making; in this process, while having their own political agenda, Kurdish intellectuals and bureaucrats such as Şerafeddin Khan Bitlisi took on a role almost akin to that of ‘native informants’ in order to ‘translate’ the ‘local’ into the imperial. By doing so, they also included their own Sunni Kurdistan in the larger context of the Ottoman political and geographical vocabulary.

Let me illustrate this with a description of Kurdistan offered by Şerafeddin Khan in his *Sharafnama*:

Kurdistan begins at [the strait of] Hormuz, which is on the coast of the Indian Ocean and extends from here, in a straight line, to the province of Malatya and Maraş where it ends. In the north of this line are Fars, Persian Iraq [Western Iran],

²⁶ In his book, Metin Kunt uses the word ‘territory’ to draw a clear line between the administrative subdivisions of the Kurdistan province and those of Diyarbakır (Diyarbakir, in Kunt’s book). According to Kunt, unlike the Diyarbakır province, the use of the word *eyâlet* to designate each subdivision of the province of Kurdistan refers to certain autonomy of each notable within that province. See Kunt, *Sultan’s Servants*, p. 108.

²⁷ This register (Topkapı Palace Archives, D. 5246) is published in Annex 1 in Kunt, *Sultan’s Servants* (for the facsimiles, see Figures 6–7 of Annex 1). See also Ayn Ali Efendi, *Kavânin-i Âl-i Osmân*, pp. 29–30.

²⁸ An example is the case of one Ibn ad-Dahhak (d. 928), a Kurdish chieftain who adopted Christianity and was given a fiefdom near Tarsus by the Byzantine ruler Romanos I Lakapenos (d. 948). See ‘Ibn ad-Dahhak’.

²⁹ Even in the later periods Ottoman bureaucrats and statesmen were to stress the Sunnism of the Kurdish notables as the main criterion of alliance making. See Murphey ed. and trans., *Kanun-nâme*, pp. 12–18.

Azerbaijan and Armenia; in the middle, Diyarbakır, Mosul and Arabian Iraq [Mesopotamia]; however, many branches of this community have spread from the most remote frontiers of the East to the extreme limit of the West (the Maghreb).³⁰

Şerafeddin Khan's gargantuan geographical description does not correspond to the earlier portrayals of Kurdistan. In his *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, Qazwini (d. 1283) describes the province of Kurdistan as covering the region of Hamadan in Iran. He includes cities such as Bihar, Dinawar, Kirmanshah and Shahrzur. The regions around Lake Van fall into the province of Armenia, and cities such as Amid, Hısnkeyf, Mardin, Jazira and Imadiyya are included in the provinces of Diyar Bakr or Diyar Rabi'a.³¹ This description is that of the province of Kurdistan created by Sanjar (d. 1157) under the Great Seljuk Empire.³² Although we do not yet know which sources served Şerafeddin Khan for his geographical description of Kurdistan, it is certain that Qazwini's *Nuzhat al-Qulub* was one of them.³³ In his description, Şerafeddin Khan takes as the basis the spread of the Kurdish tribal communities in the region. By doing so, he jumps over the administrative divisions of his time. The cultural and linguistic ties between different Kurdish tribes and dynasties sprawling throughout the region seem to be the basis for his description of Kurdistan.

Such a shifting perception of the term Kurdistan as an administrative unit and geographical category is not peculiar to the context under study. Recent scholarship has addressed and accounted for multiple meanings attached to a particular cultural and geographical landscape beyond administrative and cartographic categories.³⁴ In Şerafeddin Khan's description, it was a sense attached to a certain territory populated by different Kurdish communities that gave meaning to the word Kurdistan. This perception had much to do with what can be described as 'segmentary lineage system'³⁵ through which the Kurdish tribal confederations were organized; these tribal organizations could fragment or form larger confederations at any given time, depending on the larger political situation at hand. Put simply, while being in charge of a certain territory assigned by the Ottoman center, the Kurdish tribal confederations also formed and produced another layer of authority, which consisted of a network of political entities.³⁶ It was in this sense that Kurdistan could be said to have constituted a connected and culturally unified landscape. However, despite Şerafeddin Khan's efforts to present it as a culturally unified territorial entity,

³⁰ Cheref-ou'ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, I/II, p. 27.

³¹ See al-Qazwini, *The Geographical Part*, pp. 105–107.

³² For the story of the creation of the province of Kurdistan by the Great Seljuks see Le Strange, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 55–56; also see Tezcan, 'The Development of the Use of "Kurdistan"'.
 mesopotamianline

³³ For the sources of *Sharafnama* see Alsancaklı, 'What's Old is New Again'.

³⁴ See Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own'; Dauphant, *Géographies*.

³⁵ Yalçın-Heckmann, 'Kurdish Tribal Organisation'. For an important formulation of 'segmentary lineage system' see Sahlins, 'The Segmentary Lineage'.

³⁶ Compare with the early modern Mexican case: Villalobos et al., 'Mapping Political Space'.

commensurable and intelligible to an Ottoman interlocutor,³⁷ in reality the political landscape was riven by inter-tribal conflicts and confessional diversity that corresponded to a much more fragmented and heterogeneous picture. In certain territories, place names and tribe names coincided,³⁸ while certain confederacies were of short duration.³⁹

Şerafeddin Khan also strove to sunnitize his Kurdistan, with Yezidis as a major exception:

All the Kurdish communities follow the Shafi'i *madhhab*. They show themselves to be most eager, and [they] display a truly ineffable zeal when it comes to observing the canonical laws of Islam and putting into practice the oral prescriptions of His Holiness, the best of mortals, may he approve of our sacrifices and our homage, to follow the traditions of his companions, of his illustrious and glorious successors [or vicars, Caliphs], and of his acquittal of prayer, alms, holy pilgrimage and fasting, with the exception of a few groups belonging to the nomadic tribes in Mosul and Syria such as Tasni, Khalidi and Bijani and a part of Bohti, Mahmudi and Dumbeli tribes who belong to the Yezidi sect, who are ranked among the disciples of Sheikh 'Adi, son of Musafir, one of the partisans of the Marwanid Caliphs, to whom they trace their origin. They erroneously believe that Sheikh 'Adi has taken upon them their fasts and their prayers, and that on the day of the resurrection they will be transported to paradise without being exposed to any question or reproach. These Kurds harbor the most implacable hatred and enmity against the virtuous ulema.⁴⁰

In this passage, Şerafeddin Khan emphatically distances himself and most of Kurdistan from non-Sunni groups, while aligning the Sunni Kurds with the Ottoman center. The Sunni construction of Kurdistan is here a discursive strategy that is directly

³⁷ It is striking to see that Şerafeddin Khan's description of Kurdistan was subsequently reproduced in the writings of Katib Çelebi (d. 1657) and gained a cartographic expression in the map of an eighteenth-century anonymous Ottoman cartographer. For Katib Çelebi's description see, *Kitab-ı Cihannüma*, p. 469. Ariel Salzmann studied the map of the anonymous cartographer. See Salzmann, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 31–71.

³⁸ Historical sources make a clear distinction between tribes and Kurdish emirates. The tribes, in general, were associated with the name of the family of the tribal chief such as the Millizades, Kikizades, Zirkis, etc. Other tribes derived their name from the region in which they circulated, such as the Bahdinan tribe. See Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*, pp. 17–18; Conermann, 'Volk, Ethnie oder Stamm'; Bacqué-Grammont, Adle, 'Quatre lettres de Sheref Beg de Bitlis'. See also Quinn, 'The Timurid Historiographical Legacy', p. 23.

³⁹ The eighteenth century witnessed the disappearance of the term Kurdistan from the administrative vocabulary of the Ottoman Empire. The Register of Nominations (*Sancak Tevcih Defteri*) of the years 1717–1730 shows that the territories, which initially had been united under the heading of the Province of Kurdistan, were now registered under the heading of Diyarbakır Province. This register attests the emergence of new Kurdish *hükümet* territories in the eighteenth century, such as Kulb, Atak, Kızucan, Pertek, Kürdkıran, Ovacık etc. See Başar, *Osmanlı Eyâlet Tevcihâtı*, pp. 105–145.

⁴⁰ Cheref-ou'ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, 1/2, p. 28. [my translation from French]

related to his own and Kurdish notables' legitimacy in the eyes of the Ottomans. However, as we have seen in Feridun's account as well, the Yezidis posed a major problem to the efforts to cogently construct a Sunni Kurdish identity.

THE YEZIDI CHALLENGE: TWO SIXTEENTH-CENTURY JURISTS' RESPONSES

Who were the Yezidis? Yezidism emerged as a Sufi brotherhood in the twelfth century in Lalish, near Mosul, in the mountains populated by the Kurdish communities (*jabal akrād*). The group had gathered around a dervish named Sheikh 'Adi, the son of Musafir (1073–1160), who was originally from the Bekaa valley in Lebanon and descendant of the Umayyad dynasty; he would later migrate to Hakkari.⁴¹ The origins of the Yezidis as a religious community can be traced to this Sufi brotherhood, al-ʿAdawiyya.⁴²

When Sheikh 'Adi founded al-ʿAdawiyya, the communities populating these mountains were only partly Muslim. As the contemporary sources suggest, there were Aramaic-speaking Christian and Jewish communities inhabiting the area. A Kurdish-speaking community professed a pre-Islamic religion of Iranian origin, described in the sources as 'Magian'.⁴³ Finally, there were other Kurdish-speaking communities, who were followers of Yazid son of Mu'awiya, the caliph held responsible for the tragedy of Karbala (in 61/680) where the Prophet's grandson Husayn b. 'Ali was killed. As I am going to discuss below, this geographical proximity between the members of al-ʿAdawiyya and the followers of Yazid son of Mu'awiya was to critically inform Ottoman perception of the Yezidis in subsequent centuries.

The earliest sources suggest that Yezidism was seen as a serious political threat to Sunni Islam, particularly in relation to Yezidi collaboration with the Mongol conquerors. According to al-Maqrizi, in the year 1415, there was hostility between Sunni Muslims and the adherents of the ʿAdawiyya brotherhood, then called al-Sohbetiyya, that is the 'companions'.⁴⁴ It was also in this year that Sunni Muslims organized a campaign against the disciples of Sheikh 'Adi. During this campaign, al-Maqrizi reports that the tomb of Sheikh 'Adi and the sanctuary were destroyed by the Sunni armies while a large number of Yezidis were massacred.⁴⁵ However, as Philip Kreyenbroek has noted, even al-Maqrizi, a fairly pious Sunni Muslim, did not consider the Yezidis infidels or apostates. This is evident also in the writings of the jurists of earlier periods such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) who did not consider the Yezidis as infidels. They were perceived as a Muslim sect who had deviated from the true

⁴¹ The origins of Yezidism have been studied by Philip Kreyenbroek in a historical perspective; see his *Yezidism*; Eszter Spät, in turn, has worked on the influence of the late antique religions on Yezidism; see her *Late Antique Motifs*.

⁴² Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism*, p. 27.

⁴³ Kreyenbroek, 'Yazidi', p. 313.

⁴⁴ Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism*, p. 35. See also Spät, pp. 77–83.

⁴⁵ Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism*, p. 35.

path of Islam because of their extreme adoration of Sheikh ‘Adi and because of their affinity with the ideas of Yazid son of Mu‘awiya.⁴⁶

For the Ottoman period, the history of the Yezidis suffers from a lack of sources as well as from the absence of historical studies. According to the scarce information provided by *Sharafnama*, certain Yezidi Kurdish tribes had political power in Kurdistan before and after the arrival of the Ottomans, despite the hostility of the Kurdish ulema towards Yezidism. Thus, the ancestors of the Dumbeli tribe came to an eminent position under the domination of the Akkoyunlu Turkmens and conquered part of Hakkari.⁴⁷ After the conquest of Baghdad by Sultan Süleyman I in 1534, the imperial center entrusted the sanjak of Erbil to a certain Husayn, son of a Yezidi emir, the chief of the tribe of Tasni (members of the Tasni tribe gradually immigrated to Hakkari after Husayn’s execution by the imperial center for reasons not explained in the *Sharafnama*). It was another Husayn who abolished Yezidism within the tribe of Tasni.⁴⁸ As for the Mahmudi tribe, its members migrated north to the area around Lake Van, where most of them converted to Sunni Islam.⁴⁹ However, in spite of their conversion to Islam, the *mühimme* registers suggest that the tension with the Yezidis was not resolved. For example, a sultanic order dated October 13, 1560 suggests that the Kurdish chieftain Sultan Hüseyin Bey was charged with the execution of one Budak, belonging to the Yezidi Tasni tribe and described in the register as a bandit who practiced robbery (*harāmîlik*) between Erbil and Mosul.⁵⁰

The overall lack of sources and research on Yezidis in the pre-nineteenth century Ottoman context makes the two heretofore-unexplored legal sources from the sixteenth century particularly important for this discussion. During the same period when Feridun Bey and Şerafeddin Khan wrote, two jurists penned two lengthy legal opinions (fatwa) on the legal status of the Yezidis. This suggests that Yezidism became a serious issue for the Sunni powers in the region towards the late sixteenth century. Ebüssü‘ud (d. 1574), the chief jurist under Sultan Süleyman, purportedly formulated the first fatwa.⁵¹ The second fatwa was written by one Mullah Salih al-

⁴⁶ See Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Wasiyya al-Kubra*, pp. 134–142.

⁴⁷ Cheref-ou’ddine, *Chèref-nâme*, II/I, p. 169.

⁴⁸ Ibid., II/I, p. 129. The Register of Nominations to Sanjaks (*Sancak Tevcih Defterleri*; hereafter, RNS) for the years between 1717–1730 mentions a district in the Province of Diyarbakır under the name of ‘Dāsini’. The district in question presumably took its name from the tribe mentioned in the *Sharafnama*. See RNS, p. 112. The register can be found in the Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives in Istanbul (BOA) in the Kamil Kepeci catalog: *mükerrer* 523. The register has been transliterated, and published, together with original page numbers by Başar, *Osmanlı Eyâlet Tevcihâtı*.

⁴⁹ Başar, *Osmanlı Eyâlet Tevcihâtı*, II/I, p. 129. For a lengthy discussion see Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*, pp. 197–202.

⁵⁰ MD 3/1605 (25 Muharrem 968)

⁵¹ See, Ebüssü‘ud, *Fatwa on the Accursed Yezidis (Yezidan-ı mel‘unan hakkında fetva)*. I found the fatwa attributed to Ebüssü‘ud in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, attached to an

Kurdi (d. ?), who seems to have held a key position in the Kurdish *hükümet* of the Hakkari region.⁵² The exact date of Ebüssu‘ud’s fatwa is not known, but the date of

undated Arabic manuscript on subjects related to Islamic jurisprudence. The fatwa is written on two folios and involves two questions on the legitimacy of the execution of the Yezidis. For now, it appears to be the oldest known legal source on the Yezidis penned by the Ottoman legal authorities. It should be underlined here that this fatwa does not appear in the fatwa compilations of Ebüssu‘ud (see for example the most comprehensive and up to date corpus published by Akgündüz, *Şeyhü’l-İslâm Ebüssu‘ûd Efendi*), which might suggest that the attribution is apocryphal. However, one should also keep in mind that most of the fatwas formulated by muftis were not included in the fatwa compilations (for the Ottoman fatwa tradition in general see Özen, ‘Osmanlı Döneminde Fetva Literatürü’). The classification of the Yezidis in the subsequent centuries as occupying the legal space in between ‘apostasy’ and ‘infidelity’ shows the parallels and continuities with this fatwa attributed to Ebüssu‘ud. Sadiq al-Damluji, who reprinted the fatwa in 1946, underlines that he found the hitherto lost fatwa in the library of a certain Hacı Emin Bey Celili in Istanbul. See al-Damluji, *The Book of Yezidis (Kitab al-Yazidiya)*, pp. 428–429. At the end of the fatwa he provides his reader with an interesting anecdote that was left as a marginal note in the fatwa text: Tayyar Pasha, the governor of Mosul, apparently referred to this fatwa during the 1846 campaign against Sinjar, the Yezidi stronghold in Mosul. Before starting the campaign he copied the fatwa directly from the notebook (*mecmû‘a*) of the qadi of Baghdad named ‘Abdülmü‘min Efendi. (For the campaign organized by Tayyar Pasha see Guest, *Survival among the Kurds*, pp. 102–103). This anecdote shows that the fatwa attributed to Ebüssu‘ud was known and copied by a judge of Mosul, a district that was very close to the Yezidi stronghold Sinjar. According to al-Damluji, fatwa was originally written in Arabic and translated into Turkish and sent to Istanbul. The marginal note in Ottoman Turkish reads as follows: ‘Bâğdat kâdısı ‘Abdülmü‘min Efendi’nin mecmû‘asından huzûrlarında nakl olunup Musul muhâfazasında me‘mûr olan sa‘âdetlû vezîr-i mükerrem Tayyâr Mehmed Pâşâ mecmû‘asına nakl olundu.’ See al-Damluji, *The Book of Yezidis*, p. 433.

⁵² The fatwa of Mullah Salih is entitled *The Refutation of the Yezidis (al-Radd ‘ala al-Yazidiya)* and it is conserved in the library of the city of Qom in Iran. For a translation of the fatwa of Mullah Salih, see Dahqan, ‘The Fatwâ of Malâ Şâlih al-Kurdî al-Hakkârî’. The life and the death dates of Mullah Salih are not known. The available Shafî‘i *tabaqât* literature provides no information on his life and his activities as jurist. In Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, there is another fatwa preserved, bearing the name of a certain Sheikh ‘Abdullah Efendi al-Rabteki, dated 1746 (1159) and entitled *Epistle on the Yezidi Community and the Judgment on Their Property (Risala fî Bayan Madhhab al-Ta’îfa al-Yazidiya wa-Hukm Amwalihim)*, Süleymaniye Library, İzmirli Hakkı, MS 1092. The fatwa of al-Rabteki is identical to the one attributed to Mullah Salih al-Kurdi (Indeed the name of the village is in Kurdish and should read as Rebetkê, which is today in the city of Duhok, in the territories of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq. According to al-Damluji, it is a village near the Mount Mezuriyya (*Jabal Mezuriyya*), near Mosul, populated by the members of the Kurdish Mizûrî tribe. See al-Damluji, *The Book of Yezidis*, p. 433). Although the relationship between these two texts is entirely unclear, a marginal note in the fatwa that bears the name of al-Rabteki suggests that a certain notable named Bedir, from the Kurdish Baban dynasty (*Babanzâde*), donated the text to the library. See, al-Rabteki, *Epistle on the Yezidi Community*, fol. 1b. Be that as it may, this suggests that the fatwa of Mullah Salih was a foundational text among the Sunni Kurds with regard to the legal status

Mullah Salih's is precise: sometime during the month of Muharrem of the year 980 (May 14–June 12, 1572). While the first fatwa offers insights into the Ottoman approach to the Yezidis, Mullah Salih's fatwa reveals the Kurdish jurists' perception on the subject. Thus, from both the local and imperial perspectives, the two fatwas open up a rare window onto the convergence of Shafi'i and Hanafi doctrine on Yezidism.⁵³

At this stage, it is important to remind the reader of the political landscape that motivated the jurists to formulate such legal opinions on the Yezidis. This development coincided with the period when the Ottoman and Safavid rivalry for imperial expansion reached its peak. While both powers laid claim over Iraqi lands, considering them as part of their rightful heritage, the Ottomans gradually established their rule in the region between 1515 and 1546. The establishment of the Ottoman authority in Iraq was solidified during the period of Sultan Süleyman.⁵⁴ As was the case with the annexation of the region of Kurdistan, the Sunni Kurds played a considerable role in the deployment of the Ottoman authority in the region. The territorial expansion also meant that new groups of people that the Ottomans encountered and sought to govern had to be classified in the imperial legal vocabulary.⁵⁵ Moreover, through the clash with the Shi'ite Safavids, the support for and protection of the Sunni Muslim community became one of the pillars of the Ottoman dynasty's legitimacy and claim to authority in the region, as well as the lens through which to 'read' and classify their subjects.⁵⁶

If there was one fundamental question with which the two jurists grappled, it was precisely how to define the place of the Yezidis within or vis-à-vis the Sunni political community. Hence, at stake was the legal question of subjecthood or belonging to the Muslim polity. Could the Yezidis be considered tribute-paying subjects (Ar. *dhimmi*; Tr. *zümme*) under the umbrella of the Islamic polity, which would, then, preserve both their lives and their religion? Or were they infidels who had to be

of the Yezidis that remained influential over centuries. It remains important to conduct an in-depth comparative study between Rumi and Kurdi jurists to fully grasp their intellectual conversations and respective roles in the confessionalization processes. On the influence of Kurdish scholars on the intellectual landscape of the seventeenth century see El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, pp. 13–37.

⁵³ I discuss both fatwas in my analysis of a court case on the execution of a Yezidi man in the city of Amid, included in my monograph. See Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*. Non-converted Yezidis were enslaved, and this is evident in the probate inventories safeguarded in the court records of the province of Diyarbakır. See Niemoeller, *Das Kadiamtsprotokollbuch von Mardin* 247, pp. 690–691.

⁵⁴ See al-Tikriti, 'Ottoman Iraq'.

⁵⁵ One should perhaps mention the case of the Şemsîs, a small pacifist religious sect known as the 'sun-worshippers'. Interestingly, in the city of Amid, in the extraordinary wartime tax (*avarız*) registers, the Ottoman administration classified this group together with the *zümme* subjects. See Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid*, p. 31.

⁵⁶ On the increasingly close relationship between Ottoman dynastic legitimacy and support for Sunni Islam in the mid-sixteenth century see Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*; for the developments in the legal discourse see Üstün, *Heresy and Legitimacy*; al-Tikriti, 'Kalam in the Service'; Atçıl, 'The Safavid Threat'.

excluded from the Ottoman political community? It was not an easy task to find a juridical response to these questions since the Yezidis inhabited the realm of Islam (*dār al-Islām*) and not the realm of war (*dār al-ḥarb*). What is more, at their origin, the Yezidis were perceived to be Muslims, which rendered their legal position even more complex. As I am going to discuss in what follows, these two fatwas are central for understanding the legal classification of the Yezidis in Islamic jurisprudence and the ways in which the Yezidis became the subject of law in early modern Sunni legal discourse. My contention here is that these epistle-length fatwas were foundational legal opinions that inspired the short fatwas subsequently written against the Yezidis.

The question addressed to Mullah Salih al-Kurdi runs as follows:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! O God, grant us a true inspiration and a clear judgment. Remove from us misapprehension, helplessness, and doubt; grant us mercy from Your Presence, for You are the Bountiful! Now, these words aim to explain the religion of the Yezidi community, their religious judgments, and the rules governing their possessions and things, which are in their hands. Know that they are in agreement upon futile beliefs and words, all of which are prompted by blasphemy, rebelliousness, and profoundly misleading.⁵⁷

After this introduction, Mullah Salih underlines that the Yezidis deny the Quran and the sharia by considering them as lies; they believe in the absurd ideas of their sheikhs like Fakhr al-Din.⁵⁸ These ideas attributed to Fakhr al-Din are not specified in the fatwa, but the author, like Şerafeddin Khan, nevertheless argues that this is the reason why the Yezidis are hostile to the Muslim ulema; that they destroy Islamic books when they are in their hands; that they favor their spiritual leader Sheikh ‘Adi over the Prophet; that they believe that they do not need to pray because they will be transported to paradise by Sheikh ‘Adi; that they make pilgrimage to Lalish⁵⁹ instead of going to Mecca; that they attribute to God qualities such as eating, drinking, standing or sitting and other manners that are related to the body; that they allow their sheikhs to have access to their wives and consider adultery licit as it is written in the book of Jelwa,⁶⁰ which they attribute to Sheikh ‘Adi. Nowhere in his fatwa does Mullah Salih mention that the Yezidis worship Satan in the form of the peacock angel. (As I will discuss in what follows, this point takes an important place in the question that forms the fatwa attributed to Ebüssu‘ud).

According to Mullah Salih, the Yezidis can be divided into three branches: one unites the extremists (*ghulāt*), who consider Sheikh ‘Adi as God. The second group believes that Sheikh ‘Adi shares the divine dimension with God, that the heaven is in the hands of God, while the earth is in the hands of Sheikh ‘Adi. A third branch sees in the latter neither God nor his partner but his great minister. Mullah Salih underlines that the basis of this religion is reincarnation and that is precisely why,

⁵⁷ Dahqan, ‘The Fatwā of Malā Šāliḥ’, p. 144.

⁵⁸ Presumably a renowned Yezidi sheikh of the time.

⁵⁹ A mountain valley in Mosul where the Yezidi sanctuary is located.

⁶⁰ The book is considered the sacred book of the Yezidis. See Guest, *Survival among the Kurds*, pp. 146–163.

according to him, Yezidism is a religion close to Christianity.⁶¹ Therefore, its adherents must be considered as infidels (*kāfir*).

At that moment, Mullah Salih makes an intellectual maneuver by citing an unidentified Maliki work entitled *Muttafiq wa-l-Mukhtalif*, where it is stated that ‘when the judgment of infidelity (*kufr*) is pronounced on a place, it becomes the domain of war (*dār al-ḥarb*)’⁶²; this is a crucial aspect of the fatwa as it legitimizes the war and booty on the Yezidis, making them into *ḥarbī* infidels (that is infidels from the domain of war, who are ineligible for protection in return for paying tribute). This opinion is applied to apostates (*murtaddūn*) and infidels (*kuffār*), says Mullah Salih, based on the book by Muhammad al-Shaybani (d. 805) entitled *al-Jami‘ al-Saghir*. Hence, this leads him to conclude that it is legitimate to kill the Yezidis and plunder their properties in wars, because they are the equivalent of the infidels and the apostates.⁶³ As is patently obvious, in order to legitimize his opinion, Mullah Salih uses theological arguments as the basis for his legal casuistry. As I am going to discuss in what follows, Ebüssu‘ud took another path, mainly a political one, to arrive to the same conclusion.

In his fatwa, Ebüssu‘ud undertakes an exposition of the general characteristics of Yezidism and proposes an analogy between the opinions of the previous Hanafi jurists on heresy, rebellion, and unbelief. Ebüssu‘ud had to first establish conformity between his legal reasoning and the earlier Hanafi tradition since this was a new legal subject for jurists of the imperial center. Indeed, central to Ebüssu‘ud’s legal reasoning was an anachronism. The first question addressed to Ebüssu‘ud reads as follows:

Query: With regard to the explanation of the subject, the response of the Hanafi and the Shafi‘i jurists is that, according to law, it is legitimate to kill [the members] of the accursed Yezidi community. Would those among the soldiers of Islam who kill them become great warriors for faith (*ḡāzī*) and those who are killed by them martyrs (*ṣehīd*)? Let it be clarified.⁶⁴

Response: [Yes] they will become [martyrs]. It is the holy war and glorious martyrdom.⁶⁵

After this answer, another more detailed question is addressed to Ebüssu‘ud, which is asking for an explanation and justification of his answer:

⁶¹ Since Mullah Salih is not explicit on this point, probably it is the reincarnation of the divine but not of the spirit. See Spät, *Late Antique Motifs*, p. 78.

⁶² Here Mustafa Dahqan mistakenly translates the word *kufr* as ‘blasphemy’ whereas, in legal context, it should be translated as ‘infidelity’ (or ‘unbelief’). See Dahqan, ‘The Fatwā of Malā Ṣāliḥ, p. 149.

⁶³ Dahqan, ‘The Fatwā of Malā Ṣāliḥ, pp. 155–156.

⁶⁴ Ebüssu‘ud, *Fatwa on the Accursed Yezidis*, fol. 16a: ‘Bu mes‘ele beyânında e‘imme-i Hanefiyye ve Şāfi‘iyye’den cevāb bu vech ile dir ki Yezidān-ı mel‘ūnān tā‘īfesinin şer‘en katilleri ḥelāl olub, ‘asker-i İslām’dan anlārı katliden ḡāzī ve ellerinde maqtūl olanlar ṣehīd olurlar mı? Beyān buyurula’.

⁶⁵ Ibid. ‘El-cevāb: Olurlar; ḡazā-i ekber ve ṣehādet-i ‘uṣmādır’.

Is it because of their rebellion and their hostility towards the Sultan and the fact that they wielded the sword against the soldiers of Islam; or because of the hatred they bestow on the Imams Hasan and Husayn and the Muslim ulema; or is it because they regard the Prophet Muhammad as a dhimmi and Sheikh ‘Adi as being the equivalent of Allah, and because of their affection for, instead of cursing of, the Satan in the form of the peacock angel; or is it because of the highway robbery and carnage that they practice or because of the invalidity of their marriage contracts or because they deliver [their] wives to their adulterous sheikhs; or finally, is it for another reason? Can we consider the one who follows them, admits them, and protects them, as being one of them? Let it be clarified.⁶⁶

In his response, before discussing the opinions of the previous jurists, Ebüssu‘ud first likens the Yezidis to apostates, brigands, and infidels. He states:

These [the Yezidis] are rebels and brigands, and apostates (*mürted*), worse than infidels (*kāfir*). According to the four [Sunni] legal schools (*mezheb*), their murder is legitimate; from the point of view of the divine as well as the mundane, it is considered a pious act. Those who undertake to divide and annihilate their community, to kill their representatives and their great [characters], and those who authorize and give their consent to their assassination [such as] the judges of the cases, will be considered to have led the greatest battle and will serve Allah and the Prophet; and those who help and support this accursed faithless community will be considered hostile to Allah and to the Prophet. Killing them, enslaving their children, and selling them on the Muslim markets, like other infidel slaves, is legitimate according to the fatwa, just as it is the case with possessing their wives. In any case, they are accursed and infidels.

After this response, Ebüssu‘ud legitimizes these lines through a genealogical chain that stretches back to Abu Hanifa (d. 767), the founder of the Hanafi legal school. Although Ebüssu‘ud is not precise about what the exact opinion of Abu Hanifa regarding the Yezidis allegedly was, he mentions that Abu Hanifa considered them an accursed community. Moreover, according to Ebüssu‘ud, Abu Hanifa’s disciple Abu Yusuf (735–795) did not consider the Yezidis as one of the seventy-two ‘heretical sects’ (Tr. *fırka-i dālle*), which implies that he did not consider them to be Muslim.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid., fol. 16a.

⁶⁷ Ibid., fol. 16b: ‘*İmām Ebū Yūsuf hāzretlerinden su’āl olunub cevāb buyurmuşdur ki tātāife-i mezkūre yetmiş iki fırka-i dāleden hāricdir, birinden değildir*’. This is a critical difference in the imperial center’s perception of the Yezidis before the nineteenth century. As I underlined in the introduction of this article, during the nineteenth century, the Yezidis were considered a ‘heretical sect’. The category of ‘heretical sects’ in Islam is based on the following hadith: ‘My disciples will be divided into seventy-three sects; except for one group among them, all will burn in fire’. This legal concept is very important since, throughout history, it served Muslim jurists as an ‘empty signifier’ to classify new groups and sects in this category. Groups like Kharijiya and Mu‘tazila fall into this category because they are considered to have deviated

There is one fundamental question that should be asked: since, historically, there is a gap of four centuries between the time of Abu Hanifa and the emergence of Yezidism, how can we make sense of Ebüssu‘ud’s anachronism? In his explanation, Ebüssu‘ud relies on the opinions of jurists with regard to the tragedy of Karbala, for which Yazid son of Mu‘awiya is held responsible. We should remember that during the emergence of Yezidism in the twelfth century, the Yezidis were associated with the adherents of Yazid son of Mu‘awiya due to their geographical proximity to these communities. Although inaccurate from the historian’s point of view, this demonstrates how Ebüssu‘ud articulated his legal casuistry by using historical elements.

The chief jurist further argues that the jurists of Egypt, Yemen, the Golden Horde (Tatar), Samarkand, and Bukhara were in agreement on the legality of the killing of the Yezidis. He gives the example of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d.1209) and his book *Tafsir al-Kabir*. In this book, while interpreting some verses of the Quran, notably the sura of al-Baqara, the jurist recommends the killing of the Yezidis and considers those who do so as great fighters for faith.⁶⁸ Ebüssu‘ud also mentions the names of the Hanafi scholars according to whom enslaving and possessing the children of the Yezidis and their wives is regarded as legitimate. He cites jurists such as Abu l-Layth al-Samarqandi (d. 983), ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Gilani (d.1166) and Sa‘ad al-Din Taftazani (d. 1390), al-Sayyid al-Sharif al-Jurjani (d. 1413), and ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami (d.1492). Ebüssu‘ud specifically references Taftazani’s *Sharh al-‘Aqa’id* and points out that he even saw ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami’s epistle on the subject, written in his own hand and bearing his seal.⁶⁹ It is this anachronism that makes it possible for Ebüssu‘ud to mobilize a wide-ranging late medieval jurisprudence in order to establish the Yezidis as a subject of legal discourse and judgment.

Ebüssu‘ud concludes his fatwa in the following words:

They are accursed infidels. One must never hesitate or refrain from killing them. Betraying them is honoring and expressing affection and fidelity to the spirits of the prophets and saints. Respecting and protecting them is to be hostile against all prophets and saints. In order to repulse and expel from the earth the abominable reputation of this mountainous community and in order to remove their sins, evils, names, and signs, I have written this fatwa in conformity with the tradition, supported by the strongest evidence in accordance with the law and I have passed this fatwa on to the hands of the zealous Muslims and those who are attentive to the book of the manifest faith (*kitāb-ı dīn-i mübīn*).

Rebelling against the sultan’s soldiers, worshipping Yazid, son of Mu‘awiya, considering Sheikh ‘Adi as the equivalent of Allah, worshipping Devil in the form of the peacock angel, robbery, carnage, and, finally, immoral sex are all practices associated with Yezidism from the point of view of the Ottoman jurists. Thus, according to

from the right path of Islam, but their followers are still Muslims; namely, they do not fall into the category of *ahl al-kufr* who refuse Islam and forget God. See Ibn Kemal, *Epistle on the Exposition of the Deviant Sects (Risala fi Bayan al-Firaq al-Dalla)*.

⁶⁸ Ebüssu‘ud, *Fatwa on the Accursed Yezidis*, fol. 16b.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 16b.

Ebüssu‘ud, the Yezidis are neither an erring sect of Islam nor adherents of a Sufi brotherhood; they are not Muslims. In this fatwa, which aims to include the subject of Yezidism in the Ottoman legal vocabulary, they are apostates and infidels, both of which denote a specific legal status and require specific legal sanctions. Islamic law cannot protect them; as such they should be excluded from the Ottoman political community.

There are striking differences between the fatwa of Ebüssu‘ud and that of Mullah Salih al-Kurdi. Although both were presumably written around the same time, Mullah Salih al-Kurdi gives a realistic picture of the Yezidi religion, without referring to the tragedy of Karbala, probably because of Hakkari’s proximity to Lalish, the Yezidi stronghold. Neither does Mullah Salih use in his fatwa against the Yezidis the very well-known argument about their devil worshipping. What is more, he also does not use one of Ebüssu‘ud’s major arguments, namely the Yezidis’ proclivity to habitual robbery and insubordination to the sultan’s authority. However, in both Ebüssu‘ud’s and Mullah Salih al-Kurdi’s legal opinions Yezidis are considered both apostates and infidels, and Yezidism as a religion is held to be radically different from Islam.

This casuistry motivated by political concerns of the period seems to have strongly influenced the perception of Yezidism in Sunni Mashriq: The fact that the Yezidis were considered infidels legitimized the war and plundering against them. In this context, it is the doctrine of jihad that legitimizes such practice, since it is this doctrine that determines the legal status of persons, lands, and taxation in Islamic legal vocabulary. However, considering the Yezidis only as infidels would, theoretically, require their protection by the ruler, in return for their payment of the *cizye* that would allow them to have a place in the Ottoman political community. It is at this point that the attribution of apostasy takes on its full meaning because it renders their protection legally invalid.⁷⁰ This legal construction, therefore, suggests that death remains the only possible legal outcome for a Yezidi. But what was the reality on the ground? This legal construction invites us to peer into the history of Sunnitization of Kurdistan at the ground level and the legal and political reasons that led to the construction of the Yezidis through these two legal categories.

BEYOND THE NORMATIVE DISCOURSE

The Ottoman perception of Yezidism beyond the normative juridical discourse becomes more visible in the seventeenth-century sources. By this period, unlike in the sixteenth century, Ottoman intellectuals and bureaucrats seem to have become well informed about the question of Yezidism. First of all, Kurdistan and Arab provinces were not anymore *terra incognita* for the Ottoman authorities. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the crystallization of Sunni discourse in the imperial center in the middle of the seventeenth century may well have increased Ottoman sensitivity

⁷⁰ For the question of apostasy in Islamic law see Peters and De Vries, ‘Apostasy in Islam’.

towards non-sharia conforming practices.⁷¹ For example, Katib Çelebi (1609–1657) draws a clear distinction between the Sunni and Yezidi Kurds in the part of his geographical work entitled *The Mirror of the World* (*Cihannüma*) where he also defines the terms ‘Kurdistan’ and ‘Kurds’ (*ekrād*). After summarizing the meanings of the word ‘Kurd’ using the same mythical elements also found in *Sharafnama*, where the source is the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, the author provides us with the following account about the Yezidis:

The Kurdish communities are Sunnis and they belong to the Shafi‘i *madhhab*. Nevertheless, tribes such as Sinni, Tasni and Haluy, which are in Mosul and Syria (Şam), belong to the Yezidi *madhhab*. They consider themselves followers of Sheikh ‘Adi, who was a disciple of the Mervaniyye. Yezidis deviated from the Sufi path and entered the path of error; they became heretics (*zendekā*) and disbelievers (*ilhādī*). Most of them are ignorant. Those who are considered sheikhs among them gird their heads with black turbans and are for this reason known as Karabaş (Black Head). They [the ordinary believers] never seclude their women from them [the sheikhs], and they buy land in Paradise from them. They refrain from cursing the devil, Yazid, or anything at all, and they regard Satan as an angel who is an intimate of God (*melek-i muḳarreb*). They erroneously say: ‘Sheikh ‘Adi has taken it upon himself to pray and fast in our place and he will ensure that on the Day of Judgment we are accepted into Paradise without reckoning.’ They express the greatest enmity towards the exotericist ulema.⁷²

The Mirror of the World is the only Ottoman work, among the available sources, which mentions the Sufi origins of Yezidism. This suggests that the Ottoman perception of the Yezidis did not exclude their Muslim origins, which is crucial to understand the representation of the Yezidis as apostates (*mürted*) and the role that apostasy played in legitimizing their execution in the fatwas of Ebüssu‘ud and Mullah Salih. Katib Çelebi also views Yezidism as a religious belief only within certain Kurdish communities.

Evliya Çelebi’s (1611–1682) travel account (*Seyahatname*) provides further invaluable details. According to Evliya, the provinces of Van and Diyarbakır suffered fairly frequent highway robberies by Yezidis in the seventeenth century.⁷³ According to Evliya’s anecdote from his trip made to the governor of Diyarbakır, Melek Ahmed Pasha (d. 1662) and his entourage, the villagers of Mardin pleaded at the council of the capital city Amid against the Kurds of Mount Sinjar, a portion of which was populated by 45 000 Yezidis.⁷⁴ According to the villagers, the Yezidis had invaded and looted the villages of Mardin on their way down from the mountain, attacked merchants and travelers, and committed acts of banditry. In his narration of the events, Evliya designates the Yezidis as ‘Yezidi Kurds’, ‘dog worshipers’, ‘worse than

⁷¹ For the seventeenth-century context see Zilfi, ‘The Kadizadelis’ and Terzioğlu, ‘Sunnā-Minded Sufi Preachers’.

⁷² Katib Çelebi, *The Mirror of the World*, p. 339 [my translation].

⁷³ Dankoff ed. and trans., *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman*, pp. 168–200.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 167.

infidels', 'brigands' and 'hairy heretics'.⁷⁵ Between the years 1611–1614, the Yezidis of Mount Sinjar had indeed defeated Nasuh Pasha, who had served as the vizier under Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603–1617). In the battle 7 000 soldiers under the command of Nasuh Pasha had died.⁷⁶ Keeping in mind this event, the soldiers of Melek Ahmed, with the collaboration of the 'soldiers of Kurdistan',⁷⁷ attacked Mount Sinjar and raided 300 Yezidi villages.⁷⁸ This battle lasted ten days and ten nights; 9 000 Yezidis died, 13 600 individuals, women and men, girls and boys, were enslaved and seven of their sheikhs (*bapir*) were captured. Evliya notes that the Yezidis were extremely wealthy. Troops from the provinces of Van and Diyarbakır, who had come to help Melek Ahmed Pasha, including the 'soldiers of Kurdistan', took part in the division of booty. Melek Ahmed Pasha obtained, as royal tithe, 1 060 pouches of silver, 11 pouches of gold, 13 000 rifles, 300 bales of silk, several hundred cartridges of bullets, 300 mules, 1 800 captives, young and old, and countless precious fabric items. Evliya notes that only God knows the amount that had been distributed to the emirs and other notables as well as the officers and other warriors. However, he also adds that, certainly, everyone had obtained some handsome boys and girls and other captives.⁷⁹

Another interesting anecdote told by Evliya shows that, despite the hostility of the Sunni Kurds to the Yezidi Kurds, there were also times when the two groups made political alliances. The Sunni Kurds never hesitated to seek alliance with the Yezidis in order to gain more local power than the imperial center would grant them. Thus, in a letter from Melek Ahmed Pasha written in Evliya's hand and addressed to Abdal Khan of Bitlis, Melek Ahmed Pasha accuses the latter of accepting the Yezidis in his territories, of attacking Ottoman subjects and soldiers and the territories of other Kurdish emirs, and of practicing highway robbery by collaborating with the Yezidi tribes.⁸⁰ Since the emirate of Bitlis was under the jurisdiction of the province of Van, it was up to the governor Melek Ahmed Pasha to take action against Abdal Khan's activities. Melek Ahmed's letter shows that, despite protests from the Kurdish ulema who were in the territories of his emirate, Abdal Khan had not stopped this collaboration.⁸¹

Similar to Evliya's account, we find evidence of this kind of political collaboration between Sunni and Yezidi Kurds against the imperial center in a *mühimme* register dating to December 18, 1694. The order is addressed to Mehmed Pasha, responsible for the sedentarization of the nomadic tribes of the region of Elbistan, and reveals that against this policy of sedentarization Kurdish tribes such as Afşar, Çepni and Lek collaborated with the Yezidis of Kara Hizan and led the revolt against the

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 167.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 170.

⁷⁷ Evliya obviously means the Sunni Kurdish power in the region.

⁷⁸ Dankoff ed. and trans., *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman*, p. 172.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 173.

⁸⁰ See Dankoff ed. and trans., *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis*, pp. 167–174.

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 174.

sultan's authority.⁸² As such, although the Kurdish notables endorsed the religious and legal discourses of the Ottoman center against the Yezidis, the political situation at the local level reveals another reality.

Eighteenth-century sources such as a local chronicle entitled *The History of Van* (*Van Tarihi*) penned by a certain İbn-i Nuh (d. ?) as well as archival documents attest to the sanguinary conflicts between the Ottoman soldiers and the Yezidis.⁸³ Most of these conflicts were armed confrontations between the governors of the provinces like Van and Diyarbakır and the Yezidis. For example, in October 1715, following an order sent from the imperial center, Van governor Murtaza Pasha aimed to replace the chieftain of the *ocaklık* of Hoşab named Zeynel Bey and the *hakim* of Bitlis, Mehmed Said Khan. To this end, he waged a war against the Yezidis in the region, with the aim of avoiding any collaboration between the latter with the soldiers of local leaders who İbn-i Nuh designates as the 'soldiers of Kurdistan'.⁸⁴ İbn-i Nuh mentions a Yezidi community belonging to the fairly powerful Mahmudi tribe, populating the outskirts of the citadel of Hoşab.⁸⁵ He describes these Yezidis as soldiers guided by the Devil (*'asākir-i şeytān-rehber*), who had heard the news of the offensive organized by the governor and his 450 soldiers, and who responded with 4 000 armed Yezidis. It should also be noted that it was the Bey of Hoşab Zeynel who had collaborated with the Yezidis and warned them of the offensive.⁸⁶ During this event, which took place in the village of Canik, the Yezidis killed a considerable number of soldiers and wounded the governor.⁸⁷

A second anecdote told by İbn-i Nuh concerns the December 2, 1716 attack of Ballı Mehmed Pasha, the successor of Murtaza Pasha, against the Yezidis of the region.⁸⁸ The author emphasizes the following detail: Mehmed Pasha did not ask for the help of the Sunni Kurdish chieftains, nor did he declare the war, which shows that the governor was trying to avoid any communication between the Kurdish chieftains in the region and the Yezidis. With an army of 7 000 soldiers, the Pasha attacked the Yezidis to avenge the battle of Canik.⁸⁹ In recounting the event, İbn-i Nuh gives readers insights into the Yezidis' legal status: 'As the place in question was not under the status of capitation (*cizye*) and given that it belonged to the domain of war

⁸² BOA (MD) 105/ H. 309 (*Fi eva'il-i Ca. sene* 1106).

⁸³ İbn-i Nuh, *The History of Van*. İbn-i Nuh was originally from a scholarly family in the city of Van. He was the imam and preacher of the great mosque in the city, and he frequently attended the meetings of the Council (*Divan*) of the Van province. For the historical quality of the work, see Tekin, 'İbn-i Nuh'.

⁸⁴ İbn-i Nuh, *The History of Van*, fol. 123.

⁸⁵ According to *Sharafnama*, the Mahmudi tribe migrated to this region from the south. The changing statuses of the Mahmudi tribe is interesting because a part of this tribe converted to Islam, settled, and, according to a document of appointment dating to March 8, 1702, owned the citadel of Hoşab and its surroundings as an *ocaklık*. BOA (İE.DH) 12/1129 [8 L 1113].

⁸⁶ İbn-i Nuh, *The History of Van*, fol. 124.

⁸⁷ Ibid., fol. 127.

⁸⁸ Ibid., fol. 145.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

(*dārü'l-ḥarb*), many women and children were enslaved.⁹⁰ As these anecdotes suggest, in Ottoman sources, Yezidism generally comes to the fore in reports about local political conflicts and activities of brigandage and banditry, with Yezidis' religion and socially transgressive behavior being mentioned in the same breath.

Sources also demonstrate that Yezidis can be considered as a group that created a serious challenge against the installation of Sunni power in Kurdistan. They reveal that four areas of the Kurdish region were the target of frequent activity by the Yezidis: the first was the mountainous region located between the towns of Amid and Van, as described by Evliya Çelebi and İbn-i Nuh. The second area was further in the south, in the mountainous regions from İmadiye to Hakkari, which was held as *hükümet* by Kurdish Sunni notables with the title of Khan.⁹¹ This *hükümet* showed a great deal of loyalty towards the imperial center. The conflicts between the Sunni tribes and the Yezidis of this *hükümet* reflected cooperation between the imperial center and the local Kurdish chieftains and, according to a report (*layiha*) written by the governor of Mosul, Yusuf Pasha, the conflicts between the Sunni Kurds and the Yezidis were linked to blood feuds and struggles over land in the region. The governor's report also reveals that the local wars between these two parties gave rise to booty.⁹²

The third zone was the region located between the districts of Kilis and Ruha (Urfa), populated by the Yezidis of Reş. The Yezidis frequently attacked villages in the region and looted them. The fact that the Yezidis of Reş were nomadic made it easy for them to move between the districts of Urfa and Kilis. In addition to the local military campaigns organized against them, through the governor of Mosul, the imperial center sought to settle them down as well.⁹³

The fourth and final area was the mountainous region between Mosul and Sinjar, that is, the region from which the Yezidis originated and was thus a Yezidi stronghold. This area seems to have particularly preoccupied the imperial center. An imperial order dating back to June 14, 1740 reveals that the region's Yezidis had attacked and occupied the Citadel of Telafer in Mosul. Upon the orders of the imperial center, the inhabitants of Telafer were punished by the payment of a fine (*te'dib bedeli*), because of their passivity during this event.⁹⁴ Another document dating back to November 30, 1786 shows that the Yezidis of the region assassinated the governor of Mosul, 'Abdülbaki Pasha.⁹⁵ It was only nine years later, according to another document, dating April 20, 1795, that the governor of Baghdad Süleyman Pasha waged a military campaign on Mount Sinjar, during which 500 Yezidis were killed.

⁹⁰ Ibid., fol. 147.

⁹¹ BOA (RNS), p. 136.

⁹² BOA (İE.DH) 1569/17 [29 Zi'l-ka'de 1117]

⁹³ BOA (C.Z.B) 14/674 [20 Cemaziyü'l-aher 1121]

⁹⁴ BOA (C.ML.) 185/7732 [19 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 1153]

⁹⁵ BOA (HAT) 27/1294 [10 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 1201]

CONCLUSION

This article offers a multilayered reading of what Sunnitization meant in the context of Kurdistan in the early modern period and what its limits were. I have shown how Ottoman administrators and Sunni jurists from both Istanbul and Kurdistan deployed Sunni theological and legal tradition to include and exclude aspects of Kurdistan into the Ottoman imperial religious, legal, political, and geographical discourse. Nevertheless, the Sunni identity of the Kurds was always a moot question for the Ottoman authorities. The position of the Yezidis as strong political actors in Kurdistan as well as the collaborations between the Sunni and Yezidi Kurds transformed the region into the arena of ongoing Sunnitization battle. The question of whether any concerted measures were taken, by either Hanafi or Shafi'i scholars and preachers, to 'correct' the ritual practices and beliefs of the Kurds (whether Sunni or Yezidi) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remains to be explored in further detail. However, as the evidence gathered in this chapter suggests, far from being a top-down political process imposed by the imperial center, the Sunni confession-building in Kurdistan had an equivocal character that involved multiple actors and politics of checks and balances throughout the early modern period.

Throughout the early modern period, rather than being considered heretics (namely, erring Muslims who could conceivably be brought back to the right path), Yezidis were deemed infidels and apostates, a move that legitimized their exclusion from the Ottoman Sunni political community. This, in turn, reveals a close affinity between confessionalization processes and the creation of political communities in the early modern Ottoman context. Unlike the nineteenth century when belonging to a political community was determined by the practices such as military conscription or conceptions of imperial citizenship, it was belonging to the Sunni community and/or professing allegiance to the sultan by paying taxes that determined one's subject status in the early modern Ottoman political landscape. This political community was partly established by defining the Yezidis (and other non-Sunni confessional groups, depending on the context) as a separate (and excluded) legal category. As such, the nineteenth century signaled a new form of relationship between the state and its subject, and in this context the case of the Yezidis figures as an example of progressive integration into the imperial citizenship.⁹⁶

Finally, the process of creation of Kurdistan lasted throughout Ottoman history and did not go smoothly partly because of the confessional diversity in the region and the resulting political contestations. As was shown here, it was this very diversity that gave an equivocal tone to Ottoman relations with the region, turning it into a space that was hard to 'read' and 'govern'. For this reason, any study of Kurdistan as a historical space needs to take the issue of confessionalization into consideration. In turn, focusing on how confessional policies played out in Kurdistan may help us

⁹⁶ For the nineteenth-century context see Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, particularly pp. 69–92. In her recent research Zeynep Türkyılmaz develops a different approach arguing that the nineteenth century represented an assimilating state logic rather than integration of these subjects into imperial citizenship. See Türkyılmaz, 'Refugees Once Again?'

understand how the very concept and utility of confession-building and confession-alization for political community-building purposes were continuously reimagined within the *longue durée* of Ottoman history.⁹⁷

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Unpublished Primary Sources

Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) (Ottoman Prime Ministry's Archives)

Cevdet Maliye (C.ML.)

Cevdet Zabtiye (C.Z.B)

Hatt-ı Hümayun (HAT)

İbnü'l-Emin Dahiliye (İE.DH)

Mühimme Defterleri (MD)

Sancak Tevcih Defteri (RNS)

Ebüssu'ud, *Fatwa on the Accursed Yezidis* [*Yezidan-ı Mel'unun Hakkında Fetva*], Süleymaniye Library, H. Hüsnü Paşa MS 694/4

Ibn Kemal, *Epistle on the Exposition of the Deviant Sects* [*Risala fi Bayan al-Firaq al-Dalla*], Süleymaniye Library, Reşid Efendi MS 1013

İbn-i Nuh, *The History of Van* [*Van Tarihi*], Ali Emiri Library, MS AETrh630

al-Rabteki, Sheikh 'Abdullah Efendi, *Epistle on the Yezidi Community and the Judgment on Their Property* [*Risala fi Bayan Madhhab al-Ta'ifa al-Yazidiya wa Hukm Amwalihim*], Süleymaniye Library, İzmirli Hakkı MS 1092

State Archives of Venice, Senato, Dispacci da Costantinopoli, Filza 2, 517a

Published Primary Sources

A. Akgündüz ed., *Şeyhü'l-İslâm Ebüssu'ûd Efendi Fetvâları: Fetâvây-ı Ebüssu'ûd Efendi* (Istanbul, 2018)

Ayni Ali Efendi, *Kavânin-i Âl-i Osman der Hülâsa-i Mezâmin-i Defter-i Divân*, (Istanbul, 1280/1863)

F. Başar, *Osmanlı Eyâlet Tevcihâtı (1717–1730)* (Ankara, 1997)

Cheref-ou'ddine, *Chêref-nâme ou fastes de la nation Kourde*, F.B. Charmoy trans., 4 vols (Petersburg, 1870)

R. Dankoff ed. and trans., *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis: The Relevant Section of Seyahatname edited with Translation, Commentary and Introduction* (Leiden, 1990)

⁹⁷ Compare with Terzioğlu's argument that the politics of confessionalization might have survived until the end of the empire. See Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize', particularly the Conclusion.

- R. Dankoff ed. and trans., *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman: Melek Ahmed Pasha (1588–1662) as Portrayed in Evliya Çelebi's Book of Travels* (Albany, 1991)
- Feridun Bey, *Nüzhet-i Esrârü'l-Ahyâr der-Ahbâr-ı Sefer-i Sıgetvar*, A. Arslantürk and G. Börekçi eds (Istanbul, 2012)
- G. Le Strange, *Mesopotamia and Persia under the Mongols* (London, 1903)
- Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Wasiyya al-Kubra: Risalat Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya* (Taif, 1989)
- M. İlhan, *Amid (Diyarbakır)* (Ankara, 2000)
- Katib Çelebi, *The Mirror of the World [Kitab-ı Cihannüma]* (Konstantiniyye, 1145)
- H.A.M. al-Qazwini, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat-al-qulub*, G. Le Strange trans. (Leiden, 1915–9)
- R. Murphey ed. and trans., *Kanun-nâme-i Sultanî li 'Aziz Efendi. Aziz Efendi's Book of Sultanic Laws and Regulations: An Agenda for Reform by a Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Statesman* (Cambridge, MA, 1985)
- M. Sertoğlu ed., *Sofyalı Ali Çavuş Kanunnâmesi* (Istanbul, 1992)
- A. Verancsics, *Összes munkái*, vol. 5 (*Második portai követség 1567–1568*), L. Szalay ed. (Pest, 1860)

Secondary Sources

- C. Allison, 'Unbelievable Slowness of Mind: Yezidi Studies, from Nineteenth to Twenty-First Century', *Journal of Kurdish Studies* 6 (2008), pp. 1–23
- S. Alsancaklı, 'What's Old is New Again: A Study of Sources in the Şarafnâme of Şaraf Xân Bidlîsî (1005–7/1596–99)', *Kurdish Studies* 5/1 (2017), pp. 11–31
- A. Atçıl, 'The Safavid Threat and Juristic Authority in the Ottoman Empire during the 16th Century', *IJMES* 49 (2017), pp. 295–314
- Y. Aykan, *Rendre la justice à Amid: procédures, acteurs et doctrines dans le contexte ottoman du XVIIIe siècle* (Leiden, 2016)
- J.-L. Bacqué-Grammont, and C. Adle, 'Quatre lettres de Sheref Beg de Bitlîs (1516–1520)', *Der Islam* 63 (1986), pp. 90–118
- Ö.L. Barkan, 'H. 933–934 (M. 1527–1528) Malî Yılına Ait Bir Bütçe Örneği', *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 15 (1953), pp. 251–329
- M. van Bruinessen, 'The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbakir and the Administrative Organization of the Province into the 16th and the 17th centuries', in *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbakir: The Relevant Section of the Seyahatnâme Edited with Translation, Commentary and Introduction* (Leiden, 1988), M. van Bruinessen and H. Boeschoten eds, pp. 13–27
- S. Conermann, 'Volk, Ethnie oder Stamm: Die Kurden aus mamlûkischer Sicht', in *Die Kurden: Studien zu ihrer Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur*, S. Conermann and G. Haig eds (Hamburg, 2004), pp. 27–68
- M. Dahqan, 'The Fatwa of Mala Salih al-Kurdi al-Hakkari: An Arabic Manuscript on the Yezidi Religion', *The Journal of Kurdish Studies* 6 (2008), pp. 140–162

- S. al-Damluji, *The Book of Yezidis* [*Kitab al-Yazidiya*] (Mosul, 1946)
- L. Dauphant, *Géographies: Ce qu'ils savaient de la France (1100–1600)* (Ceyzérieu, 2018)
- S. Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, 2012)
- S. Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London, 1999)
- Kh. El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge, 2015)
- F. Emecen, 'Selim II', *TDVİA*, vol. 36, pp. 414–418
- R. Girard, *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde* (Paris, 1978)
- R. Girard, *Les origines de la culture* (Paris, 2010)
- N. Göyünç, 'Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliği'nin İlk İdâri Taksimati', *Tarih Dergisi* 23 (1969), pp. 23–34
- J. S. Guest, *Survival among the Kurds: A History of the Yezidis* (Abingdon, 1993)
- 'Ibn ad-Daḥḥāk', in *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit Online*, R.-J. Lilie, C. Ludwig, B. Zielke, Th. Pratsch eds (Berlin, 2013), accessed at https://db.degruyter.com/view/PMBZ/PMBZ24838?rskey=Prx5km&result=9&dbq_0=Dahhak&dbf_0=pmbz-fulltext&dbt_0=fulltext&o_0=AND on September 1, 2020
- C. Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the "Lands of Rum"', *Muqarnas* 24 (2007), pp. 7–25
- A. Khacharian, 'The Kurdish Principality of Hakkariya (14th–15th Centuries)', *Iran and the Caucasus* 7/1–2 (2003), pp. 37–58
- Ph. Kreyenbroek, 'Yazidi', *Et*, vol. 11, pp. 313–316
- Ph. Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism, Its Background, Observances and Textual Tradition* (Lewiston, NY, 1995)
- T. Krstić, 'Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization', *CSSH* 51/1 (2009), pp. 35–63
- T. Krstić, 'State and Religion, "Sunnitization" and "Confessionalism" in Süleyman's Time', in *The Battle for Central Europe: The Siege of Szigetvár and the Death of Süleyman the Magnificent and Nicholas Zrínyi* (1566), P. Fodor ed. (Leiden, 2019), pp. 65–93
- M. Kunt, *Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of the Ottoman Provincial Government 1550–1650* (New York, 1983)
- F. Melville, 'The *Shahnameh* in Persian Literary History', in *Epic of the Persian Kings: The Art of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh* (London, New York, 2010), pp. 16–22
- G. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ, 2015)
- I. Niemoeller, *Das Kadiamtsprotokollbuch von Märdin 247: Edition, Übersetzung und*

- kritischer Kommentar* (unpubl. diss., Ludwig Maximilians University, 2019)
- M. Omidşalar, 'Kāva', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. XVI, fasc. 2 (2013), pp. 130–132
- M. Öz, 'Ottoman Provincial Administration in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia', in *Ottoman Borderlands*, K. H. Karpat and R. W. Zens eds (Madison, WI, 2003), pp. 144–156
- Ş. Özen, 'Osmanlı Döneminde Fetva Literatürü', *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 3/5 (2005), pp. 249–378
- H. Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany, 2004)
- R. Peters and G.J.J. De Vries, 'Apostasy in Islam', *Die Welt des Islams* 17 (1976–1977), pp. 1–25
- J. Phillips-Cohen, 'Between Civic and Islamic Ottomanism: Jewish Imperial Citizenship in the Hamidian Era', *IJMES* 44 (2012), pp. 237–255
- W. Posch, 'What Is a Frontier? Mapping Kurdistan between Ottomans and Safavids', in *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11th–17th Centuries*, É.M. Jeremiás ed. (Piliscsaba, 2003), pp. 203–215
- S. A. Quinn, 'The Timurid Historiographical Legacy: A Comparative Study of Persianate Historical Writing', in *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East: Studies on Iran in the Safavid Period*, A. J. Newman ed. (Leiden, 2003), pp. 19–32
- N. Rabbat, 'Was al-Maqrizî's *Khiṭaṭ* a Khaldūnian History?', *Der Islam* 89/1–2 (2012), pp. 118–140
- M. D. Sahlins, 'The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion', *American Anthropologist* 63/2 (1961), pp. 322–345
- A. Salzmänn, 'Citizens in Search of a State: The Limits of Political Participation in the Late Ottoman Empire', in *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States*, M. Hanagan and C. Tilly eds (New York, 1999), pp. 37–66
- A. Salzmänn, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire: Rival Paths to the Modern State* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 31–71
- E. Spät, *Late Antique Motifs in Yezidi Mythology and Oral Tradition* (Piscataway, 2010)
- E. Sönmez, *İdris-i Bidlisi: Ottoman Kurdistan and Islamic Legitimacy* (Istanbul, 2012)
- Z. Tekin, 'İbn-i Nuh ve Van Tarihi Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme', *Dünyada Van* 23 (2006), pp. 75–79
- D. Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization? A Historiographical Discussion', *Turcica* 44 (2012–2013), pp. 301–338
- D. Terzioğlu, 'Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers in Service of the Ottoman State: *Naşihatnâme* by Hasan Addressed to Murad IV', *AO* 27 (2010), pp. 241–312
- B. Tezcan, 'The Development of the Use of "Kurdistan" as a Geographical Description and the Incorporation of this Region into the Ottoman Empire', in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, K. Çiçek et al. ed., vol. 3 (Ankara, 2000), pp. 540–

553

- Y. Thomas, 'La valeur des choses. Le droit romain hors la religion', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 6 (2002), pp. 1431–1462
- N. al-Tikriti, 'Ottoman Iraq', *The Journal of the Historical Society* 7/2 (2007), pp. 201–211
- N. al-Tikriti, 'Kalam in the Service of State: Apostasy Rulings and the Defining of Ottoman Communal Identity', in *Legitimizing the Order: Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, H. T. Karateke and M. Reinkowski eds (Leiden, 2005), pp. 131–149
- Z. Türkyılmaz, 'Refugees Once Again? Rethinking the History of Ezidi Forced Migration and Displacement', in *Refugee Routes: Telling, Looking, Protesting, Redressing*, V. Agnew, K. Konuk and J. O. Newman eds (Bielefeld, 2020), pp. 33–51
- İ.S. Üstün, *Heresy and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth Century*, (unpubl. diss., University of Manchester, 1991)
- J.M.L. Villalobos, E. Ojeda Trejo, V. Vazquez García, M.K. McCall, G. Arevalo Galarza and M. Ortiz Olguín, 'Mapping Political Space and Local Knowledge: Power and Boundaries in a Hnahnú (Otomí) Territory in Valle del Mezquital, Mexico, 1521–1574', *Journal of Historical Geography* 60 (2018), pp. 64–76
- L. Yalçın-Heckmann, 'Kurdish Tribal Organisation and Local Political Processes', in *Turkish State, Turkish Society*, A. Finkel and N. Sirman eds (Abingdon, 1990), pp. 289–312
- M. Zilfi, 'The Kadizadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul', *JNES* 45 (1986), pp. 251–269