

**A GLIMPSE INTO THE WORLD OF MUHAJIRS: CIRCASSIANS IN
OTTOMAN SYRIA (1864-1910)**

by
GIZEM KAZZAZ

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

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GIZEM KAZZAZ

HISTORY M.A. THESIS, JULY 2021

Thesis Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Selçuk Akşin Somel

Keywords: Refugees, Circassians, Quneitra, Late Nineteenth Century, Ottoman
Empire

This thesis examines the settlement process of Circassian refugees who were exiled to the Ottoman Empire due to Russian oppression. This study aims to investigate Circassian refugee contribution to the transformation of the Quneitra district in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. In this context, I argue that Circassian refugees turned the district of Quneitra, where they were strategically settled, into an urban centre by changing it politically, socially and economically. In particular, the first-generation refugee groups settled in the region engaged with new commercial and agricultural activities that enabled them to adapt effectively to their settled environment. Circassian refugees, who integrated themselves into local administration and education with the support of the state, became a permanent component of the region. There is an intersection between the Ottoman administration's policy of settling the nomads in the area, which is one of its ultimate goals, and the establishment of refugee villages. Refugees opposed the groups in conflict with the state to ensure security and promote sedentarization in the region. This thesis mainly aims to treat refugees as active actors. The petitions and newspaper publications written by them were examined to increase the refugee's visibility. At the end of the study, it is suggested that Circassian refugees, who adapted to the harsh conditions, transformed the Quneitra district, which had long been considered unsafe and used only as pastureland for nomads, into one of the leading administrative centres of the region within a few decades.

ÖZET

MUHACİR DÜNYASINA BİR BAKIŞ: OSMANLI SURİYESİ'NDE ÇERKESLER
(1864-1910)

GİZEM KAZAZ

TARİH YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, TEMMUZ 2021

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Muhacir, Çerkesler, Kuneytra, Geç On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl,
Osmanlı İmparatorluğu

Bu tez, Rus baskısı nedeniyle Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na sürülen Çerkes muhacirlerin yerleşim sürecini incelemektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Çerkes muhacirlerin yerleştirildikleri yerlerden biri olan Kuneytra kazasının geç on dokuz ve erken yirminci yüzyılda geçirdiği değişim üzerindeki etkilerini analiz etmektir. Bu bağlamda, muhacirlerin stratejik bir biçimde yerleştirildikleri bu bölgeyi siyasi, sosyal ve ekonomik olarak dönüştürerek Kuneytra kazasını gelişmiş bir merkez haline getirdiklerini iddaa ediyorum. Özellikle, bölgeye yerleştirilen ilk nesil muhacir grupların yeni ticari ve tarımsal faaliyetlere başlamaları yerleştirildikleri çevreye etkili bir şekilde adapte olmalarını sağlamıştır. Devlet desteği ile yerel yönetim ve eğitime kendilerini entegre eden Çerkes muhacirler bölgenin kalıcı unsuru haline dönüşmüştür. Osmanlı yönetiminin bölgede nihai amaçlarından olan göçbeleri yerleşikleştirme politikası ile muhacir köylerinin yerleşimi arasında bir kesişim söz konusudur. Muhacirler, bölgede güvenliği sağlamak ve yerleşik hayatı teşvik etmek için devletle çatışan gruplara karşı çıkmışlardır. Temel olarak muhacirleri aktif aktörler olarak ele almayı amaçlayan bu tezde muhacir görünürliğini arttırmak için onlar tarafından yazılan dilekçeler ve gazete yayınları incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın sonunda, zorlu koşullara adapte olan Çerkes muhacirlerin uzun bir süredir tehlikeli olarak addedilen ve yalnızca göçbelerin otlağı olarak kullandığı Kuneytra kazasını birkaç on yıl içerisinde bölgenin önde gelen idari merkezlerinden birine dönüştürdükleri önerilmektedir.

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To Şam Şekeri

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INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 1878, Syrian ports hosted thousands of Circassian refugees from Rumelia. These numerous arrivals would be transferred to interior regions of the Province of Syria for their final settlements. For Circassians, this was a re-experience of what happened nearly twenty years earlier. They were exiled from Russia, and they settled in Rumelia by Ottoman authorities. However, they had to re-live the same brutal process of the exodus. After tragic losses, their arrival to this new foreign land was just with limited possessions and a group of Circassian dispatched to the semi-arid lands of Hawran. Within the region of Hawran, the district of Quneitra was a principal area that numerous Circassian refugees were settled in the second half of the nineteenth century. The changing aspect of this region with the Circassian's presence is noteworthy. These new settlements significantly influenced the region with the technologies attributed to them and the complex relations they formed.

The Ottoman migration literature includes numerous works since this phenomenon was a crucial issue in the last century of the empire. Refugee movements around the empire have been investigated based on mainly archival sources. However, early literature tends to discuss migration movements in a descriptive manner. While these sources form a basis for migration studies with their extensively detailed narratives and statistics of demographics, they also include some repetitive inferences regarding Ottoman policies of migration processes. In this regard, refugees are described as having been employed in pursuit of various policy aims in the empire such as populating empty lands to increase proper land use, stabilizing areas under the influence of nomads, and providing security in the provinces. Most of them were Muslims and also proved to be beneficial for Islamization policies.¹ This discourse

¹Karpat produced various works regarding migration and demographics: "Avrupalı Egemenliğinde Müslümanların Konumu: Çerkeslerin Sürgünü ve Suriye'deki İskanı," *Çerkeslerin Sürgünü (21 Mayıs 1864)* (Ankara 1993); *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler*, (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2017); *Osmanlı Nüfusu: 1830-1914*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2003); *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays*, (Brill, Leiden, 2002). Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri: 1856-1876*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997).

has been continuing in recent scholarship except of few works.

Another prominent feature of this body of literature is the victimization and passivation of refugees. Especially the Muslim refugees have been depicted as merely the sufferers of Russian expansionist policy and passively used in the hand of the Ottoman Empire.² The depiction of refugees as being victims of the states overshadowed their contributions to the settled society. Moreover, authors with migrant origin contributed to this narrative with their subjective approach.³ However, this body of literature offers a rich database of refugee identity over generations and enables the examination of transformation within this framework.⁴

Since the refugees were distributed to nearly all regions of the state, numerous monographs have been written on this subject.⁵ These micro studies have mostly been based on Ottoman archives. Many of these works lack critical analysis of the issue and have been written mostly descriptively. The subjective narrative is also present in these works. Although Ottoman archives are the main and only primary source for most of these authors, some studies have combined different British, French, and Russian archival sources.⁶

Migration studies, on the whole, appear to have evolved into a more comprehensive area in the last decade. Likewise, these migration movements have begun to be investigated in conjunction with other aspects of the Ottoman Empire rather than

²Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922*, (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995). Erdal Taşbaş, *Halifenin Gölgesine Sığınanlar Göçler ve Muhacirin-i İslamiye Komisyonu*, (Berikan Yayınevi, 2017).

³İzzet Aydemir, *Göç: Kuzey Kafkasyalıların Göç Tarihi*, (Ankara, 1988); Bedri Habiçoğlu, *Kafkasya'dan Anadolu'ya Göçler*, (İstanbul, 1993), Nihat Berzeg, *Gerçek Tarihi ve Politik Nedenleriyle Çerkes Sürgünü*, (Ankara, 1996).

⁴İzzet Aydemir, *Çerkes Aydınları*, (Ankara, 1991). Sefer E. Berzeg, *Kuzey Kafkasya Göçmenlerinde Besteciler, Ressamlar, Hattatlar*, (Ankara: Kuzey Kafkasya Kültür Derneği, 1971); *Gurbetteki Kafkasya*, (Ankara : Şafak Matbaacılık, 1987); *Kafkas Diasporası'nda Edebiyatçılar ve Yazarlar Sözlüğü*, (Samsun, 1995).

⁵Some recent works: Nebi Gümüş, "1835 Yılı Nüfus Defterleri Işığında Ahıska'dan Artvin ve Acara'ya Göçler"; Mümin Yıldıztaş, "Şile'ye Kafkas Muhacirlerinin İskânı"; Hakan Asan, "Kafkasya'dan Ergani'ye Yapılan Göçler: Balahor Köyü Örneği Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme," *Uluslararası 1877-1878 Osmanlı-Rus Savaşı'nın 140. Yılında Kafkas Göçleri ve Etkileri Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı*, (İstanbul: 2019). Ahmet Oğuz, "Osmanlı Devletinin Son Döneminde Anadolu'ya Gelen Muhacirler ve Muhacirlerin Göç Ettiği Bazı Şehirlerdeki İskân Politikaları," *Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2019; Yakup Ahbab, "93 Harbi Sonrası Bulgar Muhacirlerinin Üsküp Sancığı'nda İskanı," *Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 2016; Murathan Keha, "1877-1878 Osmanlı Rus Harbi'ne Kadar Yaşanan Kırım Kafkas Göçleri Ve Erzurum'un Durumu," *Ekev Akademi Dergisi*, 2013; Muammer Demirel, *Artvin Ve Batum Göçmenleri (1877-1878 Osmanlı – Rus Savaşı'ndan Sonra)*, *A.Ü Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 2009.

⁶Musa Şaşmaz, "Immigration and Settlement of Abhasians in The Ottoman Empire on British Documents, 1864-1867," *OTAM* 13, Ankara 2003; Nazan Çiçek, "'Talihsiz Çerkeslere İngiliz Peksimeti': İngiliz Arşiv Belgelerinde Büyük Çerkes Göçü (Şubat 1864-Mayıs 1865)," *AÜ. SBF Dergisi*, 2009; Jülide Akyüz-Orat, "Kafkaslardan Arap Topraklarına Kafkas Muhacirleri," *1864 Kafkas Tehciri: Kafkasya'da Rus Kolonizasyonu, Savaş ve Sürgün*, (İstanbul: Balkar İrcica, 2014); Georgy Chochiev, "1867 Abhaz Göçüne Dair Birkaç Rus, Osmanlı ve İngiliz Belgesi," *Kafkasya Çalışmaları - Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 1, 2015.

solely handling with the migration concept.⁷ The concept of migration dealt as a continuum between empire to nation-state.⁸ Another recent emphasis has been on the institutional evolution of the Ottoman Empire paralleling the migration flows.⁹ Building on this evolution in the literature, other researchers have combined this approach with social engineering and internal colonization models. This new approach viewed the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century as a continuation of the Ottoman institutional response to these demographic movements.¹⁰ The utilization of the internal colonization approach marked a shift in historiographical interest from the center to provinces of the empire. The traditional view of refugees as victims and devoted by-products of state policies began to be challenged with this shift. The newer view of Refugees has sought to see them as agents of change rather than passive components of the society. Their allegiances and conflicts with nomads, transformation of property relations, and contributions to the state economy have begun to be studied in recent scholarship.¹¹

Regarding the Province of Syria, the migration studies have been very limited and largely based on Ottoman archives.¹² This insufficiency can be attributed to the language barrier of Ottoman scholars and inaccessible conditions of Middle Eastern archives. Descriptions of the migration process and settlement policies have been the main objective of these works. However, a recent focus has been given to the

⁷Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*, (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2009).

⁸Arsen Avagyan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Kemalist Türkiye'nin Devlet-İktidar Sisteminde Çerkesler*, (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2004); Nedim İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, (Trabzon: Serander Yayınları, 2006).

⁹David Cuthell, "The Muhacirin Komisyonu: An agent in the transformation of Ottoman Anatolia, 1860–66," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2005); Başak Kale, "Transforming an Empire: The Ottoman Empire's Immigration and Settlement Policies in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 2014; Hakan Yavuz, *War and diplomacy: Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 and the Treaty of Berlin*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011).

¹⁰Nesim Şeker, "Forced Population Movements in the Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic: An Attempt at Reassessment Through Demographic Engineering," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 16, 2013; Ella Fratantuono, "Producing Ottomans: Internal Colonization and Social Engineering in Ottoman Immigrant Settlement," *Journal of Genocide Research* 21, 2019.

¹¹Ulrike Freitag et al. , eds., *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2010); Nora Elizabeth Barakat, *An empty land? Nomads and Property Administration in Hamidian Syria* (PhD diss., University of California, 2015); Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, "Circassian refugees and the making of Amman, 1878–1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2017.

¹²Kemal Karpat, "The Status of the Muslim under European Rule: The Eviction and Settlement of the Çerkes," in *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays*, (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Berat Yıldız, "Emigrations From The Russian Empire To The Ottoman Empire: An Analysis in The Light Of The New Archival Materials," (Master's thesis, Bilkent University, 2006). Oktay Kızılkaya and Tolga Akay, "Kafkasya Muhacirlerinin Suriye Vilayetine İskânı ve Karşılaşılan Zorluklar," *International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Türkic* 8, no. 2, 2013; Julide Akyüz-Orat, "Kafkaslardan Arap Topraklarına Kafkas Muhacirleri," *1864 Kafkas Tehciri: Kafkasya'da Rus Kolonizasyonu, Savaş ve Sürgün*, (İstanbul: Balkar İrcica, 2014); Kemal Saylan, "Suriye Vilayeti'ne Göç Eden Kafkas Muhacirlerinin İskan ve İaşe Meselesi," *Geçmişten Günümüze Göç III*, (Samsun: Canık Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2017).

identification of refugee agency in European historiography. Refugees' relations, responses, and contributions to Ottoman society, economy, and urbanization have been studied in greater detail with the usage of various archival sources.¹³

Existing literature concerning the Circassian refugees subject is limited. Ottoman migration historiography primarily consists of regional monographs and several essential book projects that are wide in scope. These monographs are essentially descriptive and lack a comprehensive study. Another issue in previous related work is the highly state-centred approach to emigration processes. Therefore, the current literature does not indicate an inclusive method and excludes the refugee perspective. In addition to these issues, few studies have been conducted concerning the resettlement of refugees in the Province of Syria. However, this study tries to distance itself from the traditional view of refugees as victims and devoted by-products of the state by adopting the view of the refugees as agents of change rather than passive components of society.

This thesis focuses on the Circassian settlements of Quneitra situated within the region of Hawran. Rather than employing a one-sided and descriptive perspective, various roles were taken by Circassian refugees acknowledged in the study. In order to focus on the agency of refugees, their active participation in state institutions and the creation of Circassian networks were taken into account. To support this perspective, the refugee petitions written by Circassians analyzed within the frameworks of state and local relationships. Therefore, this study aims to as the primary objective of this study empowers the refugee voices and indicate their contribution to the settled regions by employing these methods.

The first chapter of the thesis deals with the general outlook of the process of Circassian deportation to the Ottoman Empire and later specifically to Ottoman Syria. Then it narrows down to the political conditions that led to the second deportation from Rumelia. Further in the chapter, the main reasons for the Circassian resettlement policy in Greater Syria are discussed as the demands of foreign powers and the available vast lands in the region. Chapter Two indicates the political and social conditions of the Hawran region before the Circassian settlements. Especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, the intensification of the implementation of centralization policies narrated through the foreign powers, local population and state relations.

The third chapter provides a closer examination of the Circassian settlements of

¹³Seteney Shami, "19th Century Circassian Settlements in Jordan," in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 4, 1992; Shami and Hannoyer, *Amman Ville et société/Amman. The City and its Society*, (Presses de l'Ifpo, 1996); Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, "Circassian refugees and the making of Amman, 1878–1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49, no.4, 2017.

Quneitra. In order to grasp the main conditions refugees settled, the chapter starts with the geographical features of the Jawlan region where the district of Quneitra situated. Later, the Ottoman policies of populating the uncultivated agricultural lands and creating a regional force against the local semi-independent powers are analyzed in parallel to the settlements of Quneitra. The last part of the chapter provides a detailed look into the settlements created by Circassian refugees through the last decades of Ottoman rule.

The fourth chapter begins with the continuation of Ottoman centralization policies that strengthened with the Circassian settlements and depicted the role of Circassians in this matter. Further, it provides a depiction of the state's perspective on refugees and shows that they were classified similar to the local population. The second part of the chapter focuses on the integration of Circassians into the region and becoming a strong component of the region. It details the identity formation of Circassians with a comparative analysis of their previous practices and the new ones. The rest of the chapter indicates detailed accounts of Circassian relations with Druzes and bedouin. This section argues that the Circassians disrupted the formation of a possible Druze union in the region. While the relations with Druzes formed paralleled to the state, bedouin ones were much complex. Although Circassians and Bedouins conflicted, they allied against the common enemy when necessary. Later, Circassians even came into conflict with the state due to their relations with the bedouin.

The last chapter concentrates on the Circassian networks. Their active role in the administration of the district of Quneitra reveals in the province's yearbook analyses. Other than the administrative relations, their active effort to form a Circassian network through associations within the empire is another focus of the chapter. Circassians of Quneitra was highly connected with the other Circassian groups of the empire and established a branch of the association in their district. Afterwards, the importance of the newspaper published by Circassians for the representation of the refugees' perspective was examined from the passages of Quneitran Circassians on the newspaper. The last part investigates the integration of Circassian refugees into Ottoman education and their entrance to Ottoman bureaucracy over state education.

Yearbooks of the Hamidian era, archival documents and newspapers published by Circassians as the primary sources constitute the backbone of this study. The yearbooks of Syria covers thirty-two years and will be used effectively to evaluate the evolution in the administrative division of the Hawran, perception of the state towards the region and the integration of inhabitants in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Since a wide range of yearbooks from 1285/1868 to 1318/1900 is

available for analysis, the development of the province and the contribution of Circassian refugees in this process will be discussed in detail. The archival sources rely on Ottoman and British archives. Especially, the Druze uprisings will be evaluated from the British reports. The Guaze newspaper published by Circassian Union and Support Association and the petitions in Ottoman archives will be used to reveal the refugee voices.

Secondary sources of this thesis will be supported with the chronicles of Ahmed Cevdet and the travelogue accounts of the time. The works of Kemal Karpaz present rich demographic accounts of migration to the empire and relates this issue to the Islamization of the Ottoman lands. In comparison, Lewis Norman and Eugene Rogan's works emphasised the sedentarisation process of Ottoman Arab lands. Reşat Kasaba again focused on the mobility of the Ottoman subjects and portrayed the transformation of the state's attitude to a limiting policy towards this mobility. Mainly these perspectives will be supported with the surveys were conducted in Greater Syria by missionary activists. The primary survey that will be used in detail is the work of Gottlieb Schumacher, alongside the reports of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

This thesis positions the Circassian refugees within the framework of migration history. While the population movements were prevalent in the nineteenth century, the distinctive characteristic of the Circassian one is that their mobility was an exile. The Circassian community objected to the mass displacement of the populations intentionally stimulated by the imperial forces. Russia began to clean the Caucasus from the inhabitants that were regarded as possible threats to the state. This policy continued as the assimilation of Caucasian population by forced conscription and conversion. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire needed a workforce in cultivation and military this need created the promotion of Circassian migration to the Ottoman lands. Therefore the Circassian migration to the Ottoman Empire continued until the first decades of the twentieth century.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state emphasised agricultural production throughout the empire. In the Province of Syria, this policy could only be possible by opening vacant or Bedouin's grazing lands to agriculture and eliminating the nomadic lifestyle. This study investigates the last decades of the district of Quneitra under Ottoman rule to understand the relationship between refugee settlement and the policies mentioned above. This microhistory focuses on the portrays of nomadism, rebellion, power struggles of different groups within the empire, and how the Circassian refugees took a position to survive in all these forces. This thesis contributes to the historiography of Ottoman Syria by taking a glimpse at the

district of Quneitra district, an inadequately studied area. This region constitutes a vital place with its proximity to Damascus, fertile soils and inhabitants subject to foreign intervention. Furthermore, the region's transformation from a barren land to a populated and prosperous area is noteworthy. The Circassian refugee settlements of the region made this transformation possible as the active actors in the region, and this argument forms the basis of this thesis.

1. CIRCASSIAN MIGRATION TO OTTOMAN EMPIRE

1.1 Introduction

Migration flow to the Ottoman Empire had begun at the end of the 18th century with the Crimean refugees. Russian expansionist policy was the main reason for this movement.¹⁴ However, after the Crimean War (1853-1856) a new phase has started in the Caucasus. Russian policy shifted from simply destruction of the resistance points to a well-organised removal of the local population from the mountainous region by evacuating the regions and colonise them with the trusted population.¹⁵ Consequently, migration from the Caucasian region became intensified the following years after the war. While the Russification and Christianization of the local population continued, migration to the Ottoman Empire reached its peak in 1864.¹⁶ Early migrations did not encounter many obstacles from the Ottoman side. The only necessity was to becoming a subject of to sultan and respect the Ottoman laws.¹⁷ The main reason for this was the state's need to fill the lack of manpower in agriculture and military fields. However, in the late nineteenth century, with the territorial losses and ongoing mass migrations, this liberal policy changed to a more strict one.¹⁸ With the emergence of separatist movements within the empire, the evolution towards a homogeneous society began, which made the immigrants' iden-

¹⁴Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler*, (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2013), 162.

¹⁵Marc Pinson, "Ottoman Colonization of the Circassians in Rumeli after the Crimean War," *Études Balkaniques* 3, (1972): 71.

¹⁶For further information on Russian policies see; Nedim İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, (Trabzon: Serander Yayınları, 2006), 31-36. Arsen Avagyan, *Çerkesler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Kemalist Türkiye'nin Devlet-İktidar Sisteminde*, (Belge Yayınları, 2004), 22-23.

¹⁷Karpat, "Ottoman Immigration Policies and Settlement in Palestine," *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays*, (Brill, Leiden, 2002), 785.

¹⁸Başak Kale, "Transforming an Empire: The Ottoman Empire's Immigration and Settlement Policies in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Middle Eastern Studies*, (2014): 259-261.

tity visible to the state. This recognition of population identity led to the distinction of refugees as desired and undesired ones.

The migration from Caucasus became en masse after 1858 and intensified after the Russian pressure upon the indigenous population to settle in the Kuban region or flee to Ottoman lands. After 1864 migration did continue not in a massive form but with small groups until the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁹ The total number of Caucasian refugees fled to the Ottoman Empire is estimated between 1 to 1,5 million.²⁰ These groups were initially settled in Anatolian and Rumelian regions. Among them approximately 200,000 refugees were settled in the Vilayet of Danube and most of the rest settled in various parts of Anatolia.²¹ This first phase of the settlement process was realized in these two regions; however, small numbers were also transported to the Province of Syria. Earliest settlements in that region started in the 1870s. Initially, a group of Dagestanis were settled in the sanjaks of Hama and Balqa in 1871.²² In the following year around 1,000 refugees arrived in Hama, Homs and Quneitra and several more groups settled in following years.²³ However, we observe a dramatic increase of Caucasian refugee settlements in the Province of Syria from 1878 onwards.

The process of refugee settlement was related to various internal and external factors. The Russian government wanted refugees to be settled as far as possible from their border regions and was uncomfortable about places that were easily accessible for repatriation, such as the Black Sea shores. The ideal place for the refugee settlement would be the area between Diyarbakır and Erzincan for the Russian government; however, the Ottoman state objected to this request since the roads from the ports to the interior parts were inadequate for transportation. Other foreign powers were also involved in the settlement process. Not just Ottomans but also Russians were considering possible problems regarding various potential regions for settlement. Regarding the Syrian lands, France intervention in the process was an issue.²⁴ Furthermore, Jerusalem was excluded from refugee settlement because of its delicate

¹⁹Bedri Habiçoğlu, *Kafkaslardan Anadolu'ya Göçler*, (İstanbul: Nart Yayıncılık, 1993), 74-84.

²⁰Avagyan, 60.

²¹Pinson, 75.

²²Ayniyat Defteri, 1141, no: 905/700 in Habiçoğlu, 172.

²³TNA. FO 424/68 No.213 in Bilal Şimşir, *Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri*, vol. I, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1968), 360-361.

²⁴Georgy Chochiev, "1867 Abhaz Göçüne Dair Birkaç Rus, Osmanlı ve İngiliz Belgesi," *Journal of Caucasian Studies* 1, (2015):109-111.

status caused by excessive foreign intervention in the region.²⁵ Economic difficulties have been added to these problems, and Rumelia was chosen as a settlement area with its easy accessibility via sea route.

Consequently, the political atmosphere of the Balkans directly influenced the settlement process. Turmoil in 1876 started with the rebellion of Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Montenegro, followed by a war with Serbia, and resulted in the Constantinople Conference. One of the conference decisions was the removal of Circassian refugee settlements from Rumelia and proposed an additional ban on future settlements to the region.²⁶ The Russian expansionism in the Balkans was conducted under the name of pan-Slavic solidarity. The war resulted in a catastrophic loss of a significant part of the Ottoman Balkan region and deportation of many Muslims from Bulgaria.²⁷ The number of Muslim refugees who departed from the Balkans has estimated between 1 to 1,5 million,²⁸ and an average of 300,000 of them were Circassians.²⁹

1.2 Settlement to Province of Syria

Circassians became refugees again nearly two decades after their initial experience. The population within the Balkans were transferred to Anatolia and Greater Syria. During this process the settlement policy of the Ottoman state was influenced by the foreign powers. Russia was again highly involved in the process and had several requests concerning the Circassian refugee settlement within the Ottoman lands. After 1878 they removed Circassian settlements in the Balkans, and they requested them to be settled in Syria and Anatolia. However, eastern Anatolia was excluded from the settlement process because of its proximity to the Russian border. Hence, the Ottoman government accepted not to settle Circassian refugees beyond Erzin-

²⁵İpek, 62.

²⁶İsmail Uzunçarşılı, "Tersane Konferansı'nın Mukarreratı Hakkında Şûra Mazbatası," *Tarih Dergisi* 6, (1954): 123-131.

²⁷M. Hakan Yavuz with Peter Sluglett, *War and Diplomacy: the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2011), 1.

²⁸Justin McCharty, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*, (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), 90. See also Karpas, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler*, 184.

²⁹Habıçoğlu, *Kafkasya'dan Anadolu'ya Göçler*, 150, See also İzzet Aydemir, *Göç: Kuzey Kafkasyalıların Göç Tarihi*, (Ankara: Gelişim Mabaası, 1988), 136. Nihat Berzeg, *Çerkes Sürgünü: Gerçek, Tarihi ve Politik Nedenleri*, (Ankara: Takav Matbaacılık, 1996), 164.

can, Tokat, Amasya, and Samsun.³⁰ Another decisive move was made by the Greek authorities. They objected to the idea of placing refugees close to their borderlands, such as Ioannina.³¹ The king of Greece applied to the Great Powers while in Petersburg tried to discourage the Ottoman state from this project.³² Besides external powers, there were internal factors that influenced the settlement policy. Since this was the second wave of the mass migration movement, Anatolia was already loaded up with refugee settlements. By this time, central Anatolian provinces like Sivas, Ankara, and Konya were insufficient in terms of available lands to create mass settlements for refugee groups.³³ These factors caused the state to turn towards Arab lands, and settlements in the Province of Syria increased rapidly.

The allocation of refugees from Rumelia had its difficulties both for refugees themselves and for the state. Thousands of refugees had to be brought together in port cities like Varna, Salonica and Constantinople. The state wanted to dispatch them to designated places as soon as possible, and foreign powers assisted the whole process using means like ships and food aid. Ports of Beirut, Acre, Tripoli and Latakia were the initial destination for refugees departed from the ports of Rumelia. In February 1878, a total of 4,500 Circassians arrived at these port cities and left for their settlements in interior parts.³⁴ According to French reports, more than a thousand Circassians arrived in Beirut on 6-7 March 1878 to settle near Damascus; however, the harsh weather conditions worsened the already inadequate transportation conditions and caused immigrants to be stuck in port cities.³⁵

Moreover, Circassians had a bad reputation that followed them from Rumelia. Especially with its Christian population and French interest in Beirut, this port city was quite suitable for disturbances. Some Circassians possessed church ornaments, jewellery and vases, which led them to be seen as looters. The disorder and delay were added to Circassians' negative image in the port city and led to numerous issues within the city population.³⁶ Nevertheless, several reports have also stated

³⁰Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 69, İpek, *İmparatorluktan Ulus Devlete Göçler*, 62.

³¹TNA. FO 424/61 No. 116 in Şimşir, 211.

³²BOA, HR. TO. 122/77 in Uğur Ünal, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kafkas Göçleri II*, (İstanbul: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2012), 287.

³³Many Ottoman officials' correspondences mention the lack of lands in Ankara, Gelibolu, Biga, and Sivas. See Habiçoğlu, 153-155.

³⁴Karpat, "Avrupalı Egemenliğinde Müslümanların Konumu: Çerkeslerin Sürgünü ve Suriye'deki İskanı," 80.

³⁵Şimşir, 363.

³⁶Şimşir, 368. For a similar complaint present in the British reports see Şimşir, 336.

that the process of resettling refugees has been moving smoothly. From a British report, the consul in Beirut stated that the newspaper articles that put the Circassian refugees under suspicion are faulty, and the allegation of kidnapped Bulgarian girls who supposedly were sold by Circassians does not reflect the truth. In fact, there was just one Bulgarian girl within the group who intended to marry a Circassian named Ismail. In the end, in total, 2,500 refugees departed for Damascus and Nablus from the port cities without causing any disturbances.³⁷ Likewise, one report from Tripoli states that within a month, 8,000 refugees arrived, and most of them dispatched to interior regions with camels. While 1,500 refugees remained in the port city, another 5,000 would arrive soon. Despite the extremely inadequate conditions of refugees, there were no disturbances in the city.³⁸ The negative opinion against the immigrants was due to the negative propaganda that started in Rumelia. Their actions against the Christians in Rumelia was exaggerated and distorted by the press and this influenced Beirut's population, which had a sizeable Christian population and a history of sectarian conflicts.

In March 1878 Ottoman government issued a new immigration regulation to prevent difficulties in the settlement process. According to the regulation, local governments would provide carts and animal to refugees, and new villages would be formed with the locals' help. If this is not possible, the government would build the houses, and the destitute and children under ten receive bread aid.³⁹ Nevertheless, these measures could not be adequately applied, and refugees faced harsh conditions during transportation. Local governments could not always collect the necessary funds for the refugees, and the poor condition of roads in the winter months put refugees in a challenging position.⁴⁰ Many have died on the journey. The ones that survived stuck at port cities, and they took shelter in the mosques. In July 1878, a new group of refugees arrived at Beirut, where 500 destitute refugees were already stationed. These refugees planned to be sent to Acre, but the uncertainty about the ship type caused refugees to be stranded at the coast of the city. After four days, they wanted to take shelter in the mosques, but the locals refused this idea. Circassian refugees opened the locked mosque doors with force and caused a fight in which many were injured.⁴¹ After nearly twenty years in Rumelia, Circassian refugees endured similar

³⁷TNA. FO 424/68 No. 247 in Şimşir, 352.

³⁸TNA. FO 424/69 No. 279 in Şimşir, 404.

³⁹BOA, Y. PRK. KOM. 1/26 in Ünal, 95.

⁴⁰While 300.000 kuruş were required for the immigrants per day, the same amount could be collected in twenty days. See Habıçoğlu, 144. Foreign ambassadors highly criticized the immigrants' helpless situation in the port cities, and the Ottoman state was blamed for its inability to manage the crises. See Şimşir, 290-291, 404, 415.

⁴¹BOA, HR.TO. 205/21 (21 Şaban 1295, 17 August 1878).

traumas and resettled in the Province of Syria.

After severe winter conditions, in August 1878, a new plan was prepared regarding the 200,000 refugees piled up in Constantinople, Salonica, and Varna. Out of the number of refugees, the government planned to send 25,000 Circassians to Damascus.⁴² Apart from this project, the number of refugees who reached the ports of Greater Syria between February and September, 1878 was 26,182.⁴³ Sea transportation was widely used to carry refugees, and later, using highways, they were placed in the inner regions. 10,000 refugees sent to Hama in July, and later in August, 1,200 refugees sent to Homs from the port cities.⁴⁴ More than 25,000 Circassian refugees arrived in the Province of Syria during the year 1878.⁴⁵

The refugee migration toward Syria continued after the chaotic year of 1878, but this time the refugees originated either from Caucasus or Anatolia. A hundred households were sent to Quneitra, while others were recruited as soldiers in 1882.⁴⁶ At the end of 1889, Circassian refugees with a population of 1,950 were placed in Haifa, but they perished due to the area's adverse climatic conditions, and their number dropped to 150 households. They were required to go to Amman and Wadi al-Seer, where their relatives were settled previously.⁴⁷ Since settlements were established and sustained for a while by this time, refugees were able to make such requests of location change. The emigration and settlement process proceeded in small groups; 30 households from the Kuban (northwest Caucasus) were settled in the province.⁴⁸ Another 62 households sent to the district of Quneitra in 1901.⁴⁹ This pattern of emigration continued from the Caucasus until 1914.⁵⁰ The total number of Circassian refugees settled in the Province of Syria might be estimated as between 50,000 to 60,000.⁵¹

⁴²BOA, Y. MMS. 59/2786 in Ünal, pp.103-106.

⁴³Berzeg, 164-165

⁴⁴TNA. FO 424/73 No. 89/1, and TNA. FO 424/74 No. 239 in Şimşir, 542, 594.

⁴⁵Norman Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 98.

⁴⁶Ibid., 98.

⁴⁷Kemal Saylan, "Suriye Vilayeti'ne Göç Eden Kafkas Muhacirlerinin İskân ve İşe Meselesi," in *Geçmişten Günümüze Göç III*, ed.Osman Köse, (Samsun: Canik Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2017), 436-437.

⁴⁸BOA, HR.İD. 10/64 (20 Teşrin-i Sani 1326, 20 November 1910).

⁴⁹BOA, MKT.MHM. 515/15 (12 Eylül 1317, 12 September 1901).

⁵⁰Karpat, Ottoman Population, 69.

⁵¹Berzeg, 165. Karpat states that between the years 1878-1906, a total of 100,000 immigrants were settled in the Province of Syria, and at least 38,000 of them were Circassians; in "The Status of Muslim Under European Rule," in *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays*, ed.

Kemal H. Karpat, (Brill, Leiden, 2002), 671. Kushabiyev claims that the Russian consulates' data in Damascus and Beirut records that the number of Circassians who settled in Syria between 1878-1880 varies between 40,000 and 50,000; in "Suriye'deki Çerkes Topluluğunun Tarihinden," *Yedi Yıldız Dergisi* 4, (1994): 19. Muhammad Khayr Mamsir estimates that approximately 40,000 Circassian refugees arrived in the province between 1860-1912; in *al-Mawsuu'ah al-tarikhiyah lil-ummah al-Sharkasiyah "al-Adighah": min al-alf al-'ashir ma qabla al-milad ila al-alf al-thalith ma ba'da al-milad*, vol. 4/2, (Amman: Dar Wa'il, 2009), 507.

2. OTTOMAN RULE IN THE SANJAK OF HAWRAN

2.1 Definition of Geography and Population

Although the borders of the Hawran region cannot be defined precisely, it roughly stretches from Mount Hermon in the west to Jabal al-Druze in the east and Laja plateau in the north to Ajloun in the south.⁵² The Sanjak of Hawran consists of the districts, (*kaza*), Ajloun, Quneitra, and Jabal al-Druze in the first yearbook of Syria published in 1868.⁵³ Until the second half of the nineteenth century, this frontier region relatively enjoyed a semi-autonomous rule. The absence of a central government left the area under the control of local tribes.⁵⁴ A critical event for the central state was the pilgrimage season, which lasted thirty to sixty days and constituted a source of major attention for the government.⁵⁵ Aside from this occasion, direct rule was relatively insufficient, and tribes gained the upper hand by filling the region's lack of authority. Therefore, the village population's density remained constantly low from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth century.⁵⁶

The geography of Hawran was suitable both for animal husbandry and grain agriculture. While some regions were rocky, the rest of the region had fertile volcanic soil suitable for agriculture.⁵⁷ This feature made the region the prominent grain

⁵²D. Sourdel, "Hawran," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, 1971, 292. Besim Darkot, "Havran," *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 1977, 378.

⁵³Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1285/1868, 56-57.

⁵⁴Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire Transjordan, 1850-1921*, (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 23.

⁵⁵L. Schatkowski Schilcher, "The Hauran Conflicts of the 1860s: A Chapter in the Rural History of Modern Syria," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13, no. 2, (1981): 159.

⁵⁶Lewis, 19. Wolf-Dieter Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century*, (Erlangen: Palm und Enke, 1977), 56-63.

⁵⁷Ş. Tufan Buzpınar, "Havran" *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*.

supplier for Damascus.⁵⁸ However, by the nineteenth century, the region considerably came under the control of bedouin and Druze groups. Hence settled villages and cultivation of land were relatively low. Prominent bedouin tribes were Wuld 'Ali and Rwala in the first half of the century. They spent the spring in northern Hawran, benefited from the water and performed trade activities. The tribes were in constant conflict with each other for the state-sponsored guardianship of the pilgrimage route.⁵⁹ Other small tribes were also present in the district, like Sardiya and Sirhan. In springtime, around 100,000 bedouins camped in Hawran.⁶⁰

Druzes were another prominent group, not just in Hawran but also in Greater Syria. Their migration to the region started in the 18th century. Several political events intensified the Druze movement. One was the rule under İbrahim Pasha, the son of the governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali Pasha, between 1832 and 1840. The Druze community did not get along with the Egyptian rule in Mount Lebanon. Since the rule confiscated their property and they objected to conscription, many moved to Hawran.⁶¹ The other crucial event was the clash with Maronites in Mount Lebanon. The tension between the two groups intensified and transformed into a civil war in 1859-1860. Besides the main Druze tribes of the region like Janbolats, the prominent Druze tribe of Hawran, the Atrashs, were involved in the civil war.⁶² As the conflict grew, foreign powers intervened to the process. French interest had already been present in the region through their support of Maronites. Consequently, another Druze migration to Hawran occurred, whereas Mount Lebanon became an autonomous administrative region as mutasarrifate. The Druze power in Mount Lebanon declined significantly, and the mountain to be called by their name in Hawran (*Jabal al-Druze*) became their new political centre.⁶³

⁵⁸Sourdel, 378.

⁵⁹Norman Lewis, "The Syrian steppe during the last century of Ottoman rule: Hawran and Palmyrena," in *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, ed. Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34-35.

⁶⁰Schilcher, 164.

⁶¹Engin Deniz Akarlı, *The Long Peace Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920*, (University of California Press, 1993), 22-24.

⁶²Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Mount Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, (University of California Press, 1994).

⁶³Kais M. Firro, "The Ottoman Reforms and Jabal al-Duruz, 1860-1914," in *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration: Studies in Honour of Butrus Abu-Manneh*, ed. Itzhak Weismann and Fruma Zachs, (London: I.B.Tauris, 2005), 151.

2.2 Consolidation of Ottoman Central Power

The implementation of direct rule in Greater Syria became intensified in the second half of the nineteenth century. The application of Tanzimat reforms in the provinces accelerated the process of centralization that started earlier. One main aim of the reform movement was strengthening the Ottoman administration to integrate the provinces within the Tanzimat framework. Throughout the nineteenth century, various policies were implemented to achieve this objective. Initially, coercion and negotiation were the two strategies that stood out. After the state administration established, the government performed further reforms. Through Vilayet Law of 1864, the municipal councils were established in each district. Between six to twelve representatives were elected for the councils, and one member directly appointed by the government.⁶⁴ In such a manner, the state encouraged the local population to be involved in the administration and enabled reforms to be embraced in the frontier regions. Further, the state strengthened its presence at the edges by establishing road and telegraph networks. Also, opening schools ensured the integration of the state ideology into society. As a result, the state's direct control in the life of the individual was increased with this agenda.⁶⁵

The control over the Province of Syria was essential for several aspects. First, the vilayet was strategically positioned in a critical region in terms of Islam. Since the pilgrimage road passes through this region for centuries, direct control over the region was a matter of political legitimacy for the Ottoman sultan. Moreover, the foreign powers' threats and the decreasing power of Ottomans in the Balkans shifted the state's attention to Asian and Arabian lands.⁶⁶ Prior to the 1860s, the state undertook various policies in the region. Establishing a stable military force in the region would increase public security, and with this, a suitable environment was established for the implementation of additional reforms. Therefore, the first attempt was to increase the authority of the commander in chief (*müşir*) of the province. Until the 1860s, the commander in chief had several significant duties like tax collection, keeping the bedouin in check and increasing the administrative authority against the ulema.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the compulsory conscription policy contin-

⁶⁴Carter V. Findley, "The Evolution Of Provincial Administration, " in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social, and Economic Transformation*, ed. David Kushner, (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 14.

⁶⁵Rogan, 12-13.

⁶⁶Moshe Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria And Palestine 1840-1861: The Impact Of The Tanzimat On Politics And Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 30-31.

⁶⁷Ibid., 40.

ued to be implemented in the region. While carrying this policy, numerous revolts occurred against the practice. Notably, the hostile reactions that came from the Druze could not be suppressed, and the Druze immigration from Mount Lebanon to Hawran extended due to the lack of state power in the province.⁶⁸

Substantial changes in Greater Syria began in the 1860s following the international crisis of Lebanon and Damascus. With the severe conflict between Druzes and Maronites in the Mount Lebanon, the region became open to the intervention of foreign states. Fuad Pasha, one of the leading reformers of the Tanzimat era, was sent to Syria in 1860 with exceptional powers by the porte for the cessation of clashes and punishment of the perpetrators of the Christian massacre in Damascus. During his service in the province, Fuad Pasha tried to limit the foreign power's intervention and increase the central authority. To met these ends, he actively used the policies of punishment and conscription from the early days of his duty. He performed numerous death sentences, exiles and imprisonment on the criminals of the Damascus massacres. One policy that would become permanent in the province was the conscription of the settled population. This practice was carried out every year, and recruits were stationed within the province.⁶⁹ Since the inhabitants of the region mainly were consisted of armed groups, the state had to form solid military units. This was a vital move in order to ensure direct rule through conscription and taxation.

The following years witnessed the application of the Vilayet Law. With the new regulation, provinces came to be divided into sub-province (*sanjak*), district (*kaza*), commune (*nahiye*) and village (*karye*). According to the vilayet system central government directly appointed top officeholders. Every district had three central bodies consisting of a governor, mufti and judge, plus an administrative council selected among local representatives.⁷⁰ The visibility and strength of the center began to reach into provinces. After this regulation, holders of both local and central authority gained certain powers over the region, and centralization continued not only by coercion but also with negotiation and inclusion.

Officers appointed to the governorship of Syria mostly remained in their posts for brief periods. However, right after administering Vilayet Law, the appointment of a reformist governor to the region for five years provided the stabilization of the state policies. Mehmed Rashid Pasha served as the governor of Syria between 1865

⁶⁸Firro, 150.

⁶⁹Max L. Gross, "Ottoman Rule in the Province of Damascus, 1860-1909, Volume 1" (PhD dis., Georgetown University, 1979), 37-43.

⁷⁰Rogan, 48.

and 1871, and he was the longest-serving governor of the province in the nineteenth century. The decisive application of the Tanzimat administrative structure in the province started in this period. Initially, the governor took an appeasing approach towards the bedouin tribes and Druzes in the region. Specific regions were assigned to tribes like Wuld Ali, Banu Sakhr and Ruwala for grazing their livestock.⁷¹

Regarding the Druze of the region, the Atrash clan was the most prestigious among the others. After the Druze migration to Hawran mountain, the region transformed into Jabal al-Druze. Following the continuous revolts against the state, the Atrash clan was granted the right to collect taxes in Hawran, and they strengthened their position in the area. Rashid Pasha's administration took this cooperation even further, and Ismail al-Atrash was appointed as the governor of Jabal al-Druze in 1866.⁷² In the first years of his duty, he followed policies to increase the Ottoman control in Hawran.

Effective establishment of the official administration and implementation of the Tanzimat reforms were the priority for the long-lasting governorship of Rashid Pasha. To this end, he was in contact with other governors of the region, and a joint plan was prepared to control the Bedouins. Consequently, Rashid Pasha met with Ahmet Cevdet, the governor of Aleppo and İbrahim Derviş, the marshal of the fifth army in Hama, to lay a plan for the efficient control of the region.⁷³ After the meeting, to increase the state authority and security in the region, the Hama decree was formed and accepted by all parties on 6 May 1867.

When the regulations are further examined, the view of the state towards the inhabitants of the region becomes visible. Throughout the text, bedouin communities are depicted as detrimental to the settled population. While Bedouins are accused for systematic animal theft, the state presents itself as the saviour.⁷⁴ Since the nomads were the leading cause of the destruction, the Ottoman state was undertaken the duty of protecting the settlers. The protective role of the state was conducted through mobile troops. The administration intended to implement a similar approach in the desert area of the Province of Syria based on the previous accomplishments in the Province of Aleppo.

⁷¹Gross, 125.

⁷²Firro, 191.

⁷³Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir 21-39*, ed. Cavid Baysun, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986), 216.

⁷⁴Me'mur-ı muhafaza ve imarı olduğumuz Suriye ve Haleb vilayetlerinin bir vakitten beri giriftar oldukları hasar-ı urbandan tahlisiyle servet ve ma'muriyetce müste'id oldukları mertebeye isalleri için lazım gelen hususatin müzakeresi zımnında Hama' da birleşilerek.. Ibid., 218.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed an intense centralization movement by the government. Initially, under the leadership of Dervish Pasha, commander of the Fourth Army, and Cevdet Paşa a special troop called Fırka-ı Islahiyye was formed to subdue the nomadic tribes in southern Anatolia. Significantly, during the Crimean War, the lack of soldiers recruited from the nomadic population made disobedience even more visible in the eyes of the authorities.⁷⁵ Successful campaigns conducted by the Fırka-ı Islahiye realized the expansion of state control, in the region of Kozan. A similar approach was applied in Greater Syria, where we see Cevdet Pasha appointed as the governor of Aleppo after his campaigns in Anatolia. However, along with the centralization movement, an ideological approach towards nomadic populations, whose visibility would increase in the following years in official reports, legitimized the settlement process.

Cevdet Pasha, referring to Ibn Haldun, stated the phases of community life in his voluminous history. For him, nomadic tribes represented the lowest point of society with their limited activities based on essential needs and reproduction. This group was followed by settled peasantry and urban population, which produced proper sciences and arts. Thus, the highest level of civilization could only be formed under a proper state system. Consequently, the population of a civilized state would feel secure and overcome the fear of assault.⁷⁶ In line with such a perspective towards civilized society, the content of Hama regulations displays the practical application of this ideology by state authority. In the following decades, as centralization policy continued, numerous officials would emphasize transforming the bedouin tribes into a settled populations.

The Hama regulations had another noteworthy aspect concerning the region of Hawran. Since the region was deemed as crucial as the other districts of the province, same measures were stated to be taken in Hawran as well. Overall, the Province of Syria and Aleppo were seen as the regions that failed to reach their true potentials due to bedouin damage. The ultimate solution to this problem could only be achieved if the state assumed the saviour role and prevented the destructive powers in the region.⁷⁷ Since the ultimate benefit for the state comes from the agricultural lands, sedentarization of the population was the administration's main agenda. The discourse of a fertile and undiscovered Greater Syria, as presented in the Hama regulations, would be the dominant narrative of future administrations. Therefore, the

⁷⁵Yusuf Halaçoğlu, "Fırka-ı Islâhiyye" *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2021.

⁷⁶Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet, Volume I*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2018), 17-18.

⁷⁷Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir 21-39*, 218.

Hama regulation reveals the initial indications of this continuity of governance.

The Sanjak of Hawran was highly fertile in grain production and was seen as a region with high economic potential. Even though grain used to be cultivated in many regions of Greater Syria, the Hawrani one was quite rich in protein and had higher yields compared to other regions.⁷⁸ By the 1850s, the high grain production of Hawran had already been involved with the foreign trade market. The economic opportunity that became more evident in the grain trade led to the proliferation of agricultural areas. With high grain prices, grazing decreased, and land colonization for agricultural production became widespread.⁷⁹ Besides, land registration was encouraged by Rashid Pasha. With the extension of the Land Code of 1858, large fields of Hawran registered through auctions.⁸⁰ Therefore, Hawran region stood out with this potential of commercial activities within the Greater Syria.

The government of Rashid Pasha highly adapted a cooperation policy with the local powers of Hawran. The administration negotiated both with the Druze and bedouin sheikhs to enforce central control in the area. To meet this end, the Atrashs, the leading Druze family of the time, were appointed as the governor of Jabal Hawran.⁸¹ In the case of the bedouin tribes, he started military expeditions on Hawran. Afterwards, with the support of subjugated tribes and Druzes, he advanced further south towards the region of Transjordan. While the initial attempt to subdue the bedouin included methods of coercion, later, the bedouin sheikhs began to collaborate with the state. This collaboration of local powers was based on the need for the legitimization of sheikhs within their tribes. Formerly in the lack of central authority, bedouin sheikhs did not hold a distinctive position or had a secure place in the chieftdom. Therefore the direct Ottoman rule created an opportunity for the sheikhs to ensure their positions as tribe leaders.⁸² Thus, the sheikhs that cooperated with the administration enjoyed new resources while securing their positions. This new wealth made the sheikhs more prominent within the tribe. On the other hand, the Sublime Porte strengthened its authority in the region through the relations with tribal chiefs. Therefore, collaboration with the administration became a lucrative tool both for the leaders and the state.

⁷⁸L. Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, (Stuttgart: Steiner-Verlag-Wiesbaden, 1985), 77.

⁷⁹Lewis, *The Syrian Steppe*, 39.

⁸⁰Schilcher, 103.

⁸¹Firro, 191.

⁸²Yoav Alon, "Sheikh and Pasha: Ottoman Government in the Syrian Desert and the Creation of Modern Tribal Leadership," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59, no. 3 (2016): 459-460.

The succession of expeditions and collaboration both in Hawran and Transjordan led to the creation of new administrative sections. The first yearbook of Syria published in 1868 shows the four central district of the Hawran region consisted of the Hawran, Ajlun, Quneitra and Jabal al-Druze.⁸³ With the inclusion of the Hawran region in the Ottoman administrative system, the visibility of the state in the region continued to strengthen. However, following the effective five-year tenure of Rashid Pasha, short-term governors served in Damascus for the next decade. The crisis in central government influenced this chaotic pattern in governor tenures after 1871. When Mahmud Nedim Pasha took the grand-vizierate after the death of Ali Pasha, the prominent figure of the Tanzimat era, he adopted a new provincial policy. After conducting a survey on provinces, Mahmud Nedim warned governors to focus more on justice and education than to publish newspapers and yearbooks. Further, the provincial system was criticised for granting the governors with extensive authority that would transform them into vassal princes. After these criticisms, Mahmud Nedim Pasha increased the shifting of officials to prevent the strengthening of any possible rivals to himself. With his practices, the provincial offices became the pawns of the political games for the central authority in this period.⁸⁴ Therefore, the political struggles between the Sublime Porte and the ministers resulted in instability which affected the affairs of the provincial administration. The overthrow of Abdulaziz was followed by an ill-fated succession of Murat V. The early years of the reign of Abdülhamid II witnessed a war with Russia and, in between, a constitution introduced and lasted for two years.⁸⁵

The province of Syria welcomed eight governors within nine years. Between 1871 and 1880, only two governors, Subhi and Midhat Pashas, could serve for two years. Other governors were reappointed to other provinces after a year or a few months.⁸⁶ During this decade, Druze leader İbrahim al-Atrash formed a secure relationship with the local government and a relative peace period prevailed in the region. However, parallel to the rising authority of the Druze, central power was weakened in the region. Even though several military expeditions continued to send against the bedouin uprisings, their harassment upon the settled population continued, and

⁸³Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1285/1868, 57.

⁸⁴Roderic H. Davison, **Reform in The Ottoman Empire 1856-1876**, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1963), 167-170.

⁸⁵Gross, 168-170.

⁸⁶Subhi Pasha (1871-1873), Halet Pasha (February 1873- September 1874), Asad Pasha (September 1874- February 1875), Ahmed Hamdi Pasha (1875- Mey 1876), Nashid Pasha (June 1876- February 1877), Ziya Pasha (February 1877- June 1877), Cevdet Pasha (February 1878- November 1878), Midhat Pasha (November 1878- August 1880). Gross, 174-255.

Hawranis came to request protection by Druzes.⁸⁷ At the end of the 1870s, during the Russo-Ottoman war, two prominent Ottoman figures of the time, Cevdet and Midhat Pashas, were appointed to Syria as governors consecutively. Both governors wanted greater control and military force to suppress Druzes, while Midhat was more determined to enforce coercion to impose his authority. However, in 1879 the British intervened in the affairs favouring the Druzes, and extensive criticism led to the dismissal of Midhat Pasha from the governorship.⁸⁸ While this turmoil took place, thousands of refugees from the Balkans had to be transferred to Greater Syria.

⁸⁷Firro, 195-196.

⁸⁸Engin Deniz Akarlı, "Abdülhamid's Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System," in *Palestine in The Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation*, ed. David Kushner, (Brill, 1986), 82-83

3. CIRCASSIAN SETTLEMENTS IN QUNEITRA

3.1 Introduction

The Quneitra district was located in the northernmost part of the Sanjak of Hawran. The yearbook of 1868 records the region as one of the four districts of Hawran. This district consisted of the nahiyes of Havle, Şiar, Cevlan, and Zaviye under the administration of kaimakam İbrahim Edhem Efendi.⁸⁹ Geographically, Quneitra was part of Jawlan (present-day Golan), an area relatively more fertile than the rest of the Hawran. [see Figure 1] The region is encircled by Mount Hermon in the north, Lake Tiberias in the west and Raqqad of Jordan valley in the east. Thanks to the volcanic mountains in the north, the soil is very productive not just for grazing but also for growing wheat, barley and maize.⁹⁰ Additionally, compared to Hawran, Jawlan has a greater forest reservoir. In particular, Quneitra is located in a region with high and regular rainfall. Besides, the area consists of numerous streams and rich in water sources.⁹¹ Thus, the district was highly ideal for agriculture and had significant potential for commercial activities.

Prior to Circassian settlement in the region the district of Quneitra had three nahiyes and twenty-three villages. Although each village had quite different household rates, the total number of households was approximately 600.⁹² Porter noted in 1868 that though in Quneitra, "the soil is fertile and covered with luxuriant grass.. but the land is without an inhabitant." His observations continued with al-Fadl's presence,

⁸⁹Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1285/1868, 57.

⁹⁰Gottlieb Schumacher, *The Jaulân: Surveyed for the German Society for the Exploration of the Holy Land*, (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1888), 14.

⁹¹Adib Sulayman Beg, *aljawlan dirasat fi aljughrafiat al'iiqlimia [The Golan: Regional Geographic Study]*, (Paris, 1983), 16-17

⁹²Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1288/1871, 271-273.

the largest and prominent tribe of Jawlan, with their tents.⁹³ While Rashid Pasha tried to resettle the area in his five-year office term, however, after his tenure in 1872, Burton noted that thefts and harassments against the settled population were causing them to abandon their sites. After these disturbances, "Kunayterah, is completely abandoned" he wrote.⁹⁴ Therefore, despite its productive lands, the District of Quneitra had a limited settled population even after the centralization efforts in Hawran. The area was used mainly by Bedouins who wanted to graze their herds seasonally.

The deserted area of Greater Syria differentiated from the coastal one in various aspects. The coastal region meant a stable and settled pattern with high strategic ports for trade. In comparison, the inner land differed with the climate and population type. While the coastal region had an annual rainfall of more than 500 mm, interiors just received a rainfall of 200 mm, which fell just in winter. At the same time, the transitional zone received an average of 350 mm rainfall in a year and enabled the cultivation both in winter and summer without irrigation. In interior regions, the settled population was scarce, and the bedouin tribes had high autonomy.⁹⁵ On top of these, the threat of the Druze rose significantly for the state since the events of 1860. The British and the French could intervene in state affairs through manipulating the Druze issue; therefore, the state had to be very cautious in this matter.⁹⁶ The Circassian refugees were just situated between the coastal and the desert regions, which was also inhabited by Druzes. Especially, in Jawlan and Transjordan the pattern of Circassian settlements formed a barrier along the transitional zone. One main aim was to separate the populated and fertile coastal parts from semi-independent barren lands.⁹⁷ In this regard, Quneitra was an ideal district for the refugee settlement. First, although the land was very fertile, it has only been used by the al-Fadl and other tribes for grazing. Second, it was closely situated to Majdal Shams, where a high Druze population resided. Lastly, its proximity to Damascus made it ideal for creating a society loyal to the central authority in this region.

⁹³Josias Leslie Porter, *A Handbook for Travelers in Syria and Palestine*, (London: J. Murray, 1868), 439-440.

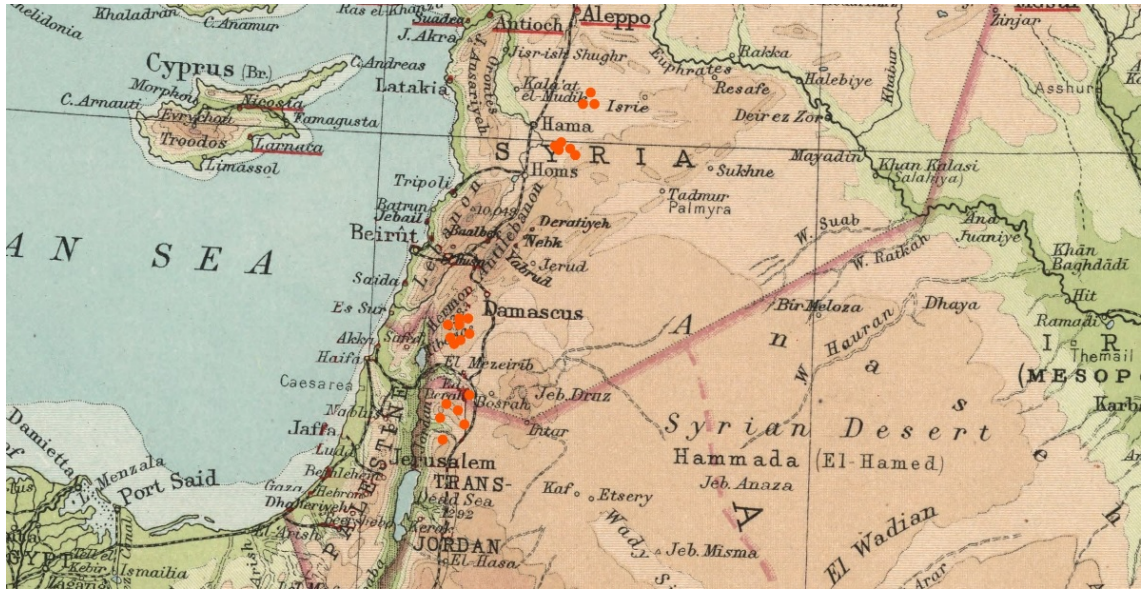
⁹⁴Richard F. Burton, *Unexplored Syria*, (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872), 179-180.

⁹⁵Lewis, 1-3. The distinction of regions is based on the definitions of Norman Lewis.

⁹⁶Sabahattin Samur, "Sultan II.Abdülhamid Yönetimi ve Havran Dürzileri," in *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Sempozyumu: 20-21 Şubat 2014 Selanik, Bildiriler Vol.1: Ic ve Dis Siyaset*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 86.

⁹⁷Lewis, 100-101, Aydemir, 144.

Figure 3.1 The Settlement Pattern of Circassian Villages in Greater Syria



Source: Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers*, 100, Aydemir, *Göç: Kuzey Kafkasyalıların Göç Tarihi*, 144.

3.2 Settlement Policies of the Ottoman Empire

Since the initial strategic place for Circassian settlement was Rumelia, Greater Syria was not a primary destination before the late 1870s. Later with the turmoils in the Balkans, refugees once again had to be replaced. At once not just the Anatolian lands but also Greater Syria became a part of the central region of the empire. Ottoman Empire pragmatically settled the Circassian refugees to the areas in which they can be more benefited.

British colonel, Wilson, reported on behalf of the Circassian refugee settlement in 1880 that Circassians are physically strong and prone to education. They have already been proven to be able peasants in Anatolia. Circassians would be the empire's power if they were ruled by a strong hand and treated fairly.⁹⁸ The Circassian refugees had enough potential to adjust themselves to the new lands. In addition to these features, their religious identity was made them an ideal population to integrate into the empire. Therefore, the state could benefit from the refugee population with an appropriate plan not only in agricultural activities but also in other areas of the state. While in the Tanzimat era, state promoted the Ottomanism after the significant territorial losses and Muslim migration from these lands began to change this policy. Especially during the Hamidian period, when the emphasis was placed

⁹⁸TNA. FO 424/106 No. 186, 20 May 1880.

on the Islamic character of the empire, the refugees acquired a different identity for the state. The focus on Muslim identity influenced migration policies. In 1887, after lengthy discussions in thirty-nine meetings on migration, the government decided to accept all Muslim refugees that suffered under a non-Muslim state. The committee decided for each province to have its immigration committee. Most importantly, it was decided to establish a High Immigration Commission under the chairmanship of the sultan.⁹⁹ Sultan took the role of the saviour caliph for the refugees, and with pro-immigration policies, the Ottoman sultanate desired to expand and legitimize its rule.

Ottoman Empire considered various strategies for the refugee settlement process. Previous to the Circassian refugee flow, the state had been already looking for peasants from Europe to cultivate Rumelian and Anatolian lands. The rural population was so scarce that for the newcomers, incentives like tax exemption promoted in European newspapers in 1857.¹⁰⁰ However, the refugee flow from the Caucasus reversed this policy since these movements could be the new source for agricultural activities in state lands. The state was careful to place refugees in rural areas rather than urban centres.¹⁰¹ Both in Anatolia and later in Greater Syria, refugee groups were settled in the pastoral lands of nomads. Even though the primary reason was to create agricultural fields cultivated by refugees, the settlements were also used against the nomadic tribes. This practice has been noted by Cevdet Pasha for several regions in his *Tezakir*. For example, against the Afşar tribe in the Uzunyayla region, many Circassian refugees were settled in their summer pasture lands.¹⁰² Likewise, Nogay refugees were settled in Çukurova, where the threat of tribes was severe, and the local population suffered from insecurity. These refugees were trying to reconstruct the region while protecting themselves from the tribes.¹⁰³ Further in Greater Syria, there were not enough soldiers in the Hama and Salamiyah areas. When the bedouin tribes did not pay their taxes and resorted to banditry, the administration was taken military measures against the problematic tribes by using the refugees.¹⁰⁴

Another critical area where the Circassian population wanted to be used was in

⁹⁹Karpat, "The Status of the Muslim Under European Rule: The Eviction and Settlement of the Çerkes," 662-663.

¹⁰⁰Karpat, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler*, 359-60.

¹⁰¹BOA, Y. PRK. KOM. 3/24 in Uğur Ünal, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kafkas Göçleri I*, 117.

¹⁰²*Tezakir* 21-39, 157.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁰⁴BOA, İ.ŞD. 35/1765 in Hakan Asan, "Devlet, Aşiret ve Eşkiya Bağlamında Osmanlı Muhacir İskân Siyaseti (1860-1914)," *Göç Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2, no.3, (2016): 51.

local troops. Ottoman Empire had long been suffered from the lack of human resources in military forces. After the Crimean War, the problem of recruiting enough troops for the army once again emerged, and one of the main reasons seen was the reluctance of the nomadic tribes to enlist their male youth for the Ottoman army. The refugees again were used pragmatically in this sphere of the state. Since the Caucasian population stood out with their warlike and strong characteristics, this was an exceptional opportunity for the state. If this population properly transformed into loyal Ottoman subjects, the state could restore the army. One of the central policies to implement state authority in Greater Syria was the forming and situating of as much as local troops in deserted regions.¹⁰⁵ Like Kurdish forces, the Circassians were incorporated into the armed forces in interiors of Greater Syria against the bedouin and Druze populations. One of the best examples of this practice is Mirza Wasfi's campaigns against the Bedouin. He was one of the leading Circassian figures of the time and used the Quneitra as his central base for the operations.¹⁰⁶ He organized attacks on behalf of the state both against the bedouins and the Druzes in Transjordan. However, we observe this practice not just in Greater Syria but also in East Anatolia. In 1904, 250 gendarmes of Circassian origin were recruited in Bitlis to form a new battalion to have a firmer hand in the issues of Kurdish groups.¹⁰⁷ Thus, Circassians held the duty of gendarmerie and filled the shortage of soldiers caused by the non-enlisted local population in the areas that the state had limited authority. They formed the armed forces that could be used against all groups opposing the central authority.

In April 1878, when the refugee movement was at its peak, the state issued the Regulation for Settlement of Refugees (*Muhacirin İskanına dair Nizamname*) concerning the settlement process. Accordingly, in each district, new refugee villages would be formed, and locals would be help in the building process. The neediest adults would receive half okka of bread per day, while children under ten receive 100 dirhams. Moreover, the government would provide various subsidies to refugees who settled to be farmers. These subsidies included one pair of oxen per two households and one-time aid of five kilos seed to each one. Since Circassians lived within tribe system, large tribes were to be divided in the settlement process. However, if the refugees fell apart from their relatives, the smaller group was permitted to unite

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 666.

¹⁰⁶Muhammad Khayr Haghanduqah, *Mirza Basha Wasfi: kitab watha'iqi: marhalah min tarikh bilad al-Sham min khilal watha'iq Mirza Basha*, (Amman, 1985).

¹⁰⁷Nadir Özbek, "Policing the Countryside: Gendarmes of the Late 19th-Century Ottoman Empire (1876-1908)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 1, (2008): 56.

with their relatives.¹⁰⁸ This rule continued to be practised for the next decades and became one of the main principles of the migration administration system. As a result, this practice allowed refugees to have flexibility in choosing places to settle. Under these conditions, specific criteria came into being for the places chosen by the state for immigrant settlement. The first necessary condition was that the regions given to immigrants had the status of state (*miri*) land. Secondly, the settlement land must have the necessary features for refugees to survive, such as arable lands, water sources and forests.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the process of refugee settlement in the Quneitra region the abovementioned policies were practised. For cultivation, state (*miri*) lands were distributed to families based on their size. The household consisted of three members was given 70 donum,¹¹⁰ four to five members were given 100 donum, and 150 donum were given to families with more than five members.¹¹¹

As this settlement policy proved to be successful, the state began to establish new villages on these land grants. In November 1888, Circassians located in Wadi al-Ajam (present-day Qatana) were decided to be transferred to Quneitra and form a new village named Şevketiye.¹¹² This practice was also implemented in Transjordan. A new province as Amman being its centre, was planned to be established with the Circassian settlements. Each town at least had to consist of 500 households as against the bedouin attacks. Occasionally Circassian tribes became divided or separated from their leaders in the settlement process; however, in regions predominant of Bedouins, the state considered settling refugee populations with high quantities.¹¹³ The official document written by Kamil Pasha¹¹⁴ in October 1878 concerning the project for the establishment of Amman reveals the central policies of the state regarding the refugee settlement in the deserts of Greater Syria. Accordingly, while the settlement would be carried out gradually at first, a total of 200 households would be settled. Since the Bedouins were dominant in the region, the settlement process must be done immediately. The expected outcome of establish-

¹⁰⁸BOA, Y.PRK.KOM, 1/26 in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kafkas Göçleri I*, 96.

¹⁰⁹Kamal Jaloqa, “Büyük Suriyede Çerkes Göçmenlerin Durumu 1870’den Günümüze,” in *Anavatanlarından Sürülüşlerinin 150. Yılında Çerkesler*, ed. Erdem Ünlü and Murat Duman, (Ankara: Kafdav Yayınları, 2015), 159.

¹¹⁰A Donum is an Ottoman unit of land measurement equal to 919,302 square meters.

¹¹¹Adib Sulayman Beg, 346.

¹¹²BOA, DH.MKT 1569/103 (19 Teşrin-i Sani 1304, 1 December 1888).

¹¹³Dawn Chatty, “Refugees, Exiles, and Other Forced Migrants in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 32, (2013): 44.

¹¹⁴Kamil Pasha (1832-1913) was born in Cyprus. He hold the position of mutasarrıf in Syria, Beirut, Aleppo, Jerusalem. Later, he became the Grand Vizier of Abdulhamid II. See Atilla Çetin, “Kıbrıslı Kâmil Paşa” *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2021.

ing a new administrative unit with refugee settlement was for the Bedouins to force them abandon their tent-dwelling lifestyle. The final order to implement this policy was to offer lands for Bedouins to have them settle down. The ones who insist to continue their traditional lives must move into the interior deserts.¹¹⁵

Financial and equipment aids for refugees were another issue that the state emphasized. The Circassian refugees consisting of 62 households and 662 inhabitants that settled in Quneitra, will receive a monthly aid of 6,870 kuruş. Each household 1,500 kuruş will be granted for the expense of livestock, seeds and pieces of equipment.¹¹⁶ However, state aids have not always been progressed smoothly. The most common problem was that the administration sent the aids on time. The telegraph of Mehmed Nazım Pasha, governor of Syria, about the delay of the aid payment of 57 households placed in Hasbaya village reveals the destitute situation of refugees. The administration was not sent sufficient allowance for daily provisions, the construction cost of houses and equipment. This delay caused refugees to be left without shelter and food in the area, and authorities were concerned that the continuation of this situation may cause diseases among the group.¹¹⁷ One other issue was regarding the possible confusions during the times of massive refugee flows. In September 1878, 33,996 kuruş requested from the administration for a group of Circassians and Dagestani refugees to settle in Quneitra. However, the office wanted to inspect the group whether they were among the newcomers or not. After the inspection, it was understood that the group came two years earlier. The issue of whether this amount would be given or not was presented to the sultan, and he decided to grant 33,396 kuruş for refugees.¹¹⁸ The state tried to provide all types of support to the refugees for cultivating the land and restoring the region through the settled population.

¹¹⁵Ve Amman ve Ayn Zerka ve Salt ve Cerash taraflarına beşer yüz haneli muhacir beldeleri bila teşkil bunlardan ikişer yüz hanesi celb ve iskan olundukda bil-ahire diğer haneler arazisinde dahi peyderpey muhacir gelerek beş yüz hane arazisi imla edilir. Ve bunları başka sair münasib mevki'lere dahi muhacir karyeleri bu vechicle teşkil edilir ve oltaflarda 'urbanın arazisi ziyade ve fazla olduğundan emr-i kat'ile ve sur'atle ve icraatle mezkur muhacir karyeleri çün arazi ifraz olunmalı. Ve mezkur yeni vilayetdeki urban dahi çadırlarının terkiyle seri'an iskan etmek ve iskan etmeyen mahallerinden çıkıp çöllere gitmek emr-i kat'isi verilmeli. Halil Sahillioğlu, "A Project for the Creation of Amman Vilayet (1878)," in *Studies on Ottoman Economic and Social History*, ed. Halil Sahillioğlu, (İstanbul: İrcica, 1999).

¹¹⁶BOA, MKT.MHM. 515/15.

¹¹⁷BOA, Y.MTV. 214/163 (25 Nisan 1317, 8 May 1901).

¹¹⁸BOA, İ.DH. 760 (26 Eylül 1294, 9 October 1878).

3.3 Settlement Process of Circassian Refugees in Quneitra

Initial Circassian settlement to Quneitra formed in the early 1870s. However, the number of refugees was around 400 souls. When compared with the high figures in Anatolian villages, this number was quite limited. The exact numbers of Circassian refugees settled in the district of Quneitra are hard to determine. However, the refugee flow accelerated in the aftermath of the Russo-Ottoman war and continued until the early 1910s. According to the yearbook of 1881, Hawran and Hama hosted the highest number of refugees, with 3,000 souls.¹¹⁹ Jawlan was the area with the highest number of Circassian refugees in Hawran.¹²⁰ In 1887, from Elbistan, 113 households came voluntarily to located in the region.¹²¹ Further, in 1901 two groups migrated to the district of Quneitra. Fifty-seven households placed in Hasbaya village, while the other 62 settled in Hasine.¹²² Another placement in 1906 was a large one with 1,949 households.¹²³ The refugee flow continued, especially with the refugees who wanted to live with their relatives who migrated to the province of Syria. Circassians built or expanded the population of Quneitra, Mansura, Ayn Zivan, Mumsiya, Cuveyza, Breyka, Bir Acam and Surman villages.¹²⁴

The Ottoman policy of flexible relocation for the refugees resulted in numerous petitions to move their initial settlements by the Circassians. The most prominent excuse was the reunion with close relatives. This practice enabled refugees to mobilize within the borders of the empire. There was a considerable movement through Greater Syria as well. In 1891, a Circassian group of 162 households initially settled in Adana filed a petition to be resettled with relatives in the Belka region of Syria.¹²⁵ Since there were still available miri lands in the Hawran region where immigrants can be settled, the authorities accepted the petition.¹²⁶ A similar request made by 49 Circassian households who settled in İzmid in 1901. They requested to relocate to

¹¹⁹Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1298/1881, 264.

¹²⁰Lewis, 98.

¹²¹BOA, DH.MKT. 1471/89 (12 Kanun-ı Evvel 1303, 24 December 1887).

¹²²BOA, Y.MTV. 214/163., BOA, MKT.MHM. 515/15.

¹²³Lewis, 101.

¹²⁴Muhammad Khayr Mamsir, 511.

¹²⁵Birinci kafilede Adanaya i'zam olunan 162 nüfus Kafkasya muhacirlerinin Suriye vilayeti dahilinde kain Belka sancağında iska edilmiş olan akrabaları nezdine i'zamına kendilerinin dahi orada iskanlarını istid'a etmekte olduklarına... BOA, DH.MKT. 1814/86 (18 Şubat 1306, 2 March 1891).

¹²⁶...irsal kılınan telgrafnamede Havran sancağı dahilinde hala arazi-i emiriye bulunması ve orada muhacirin iskanı muhassenat-ı mucib olacağı vechle muhacirin-i merkumenin iskan edilmek üzere i'zamı lüzumu gösterilmiş olmağla iktizasının icrasına himem-i 'aliyye-i daverinin derkar buyurulmak babında. Ibid.

Damascus, where their relatives reside. This petition was also accepted but with an exception. The refugees themselves will cover all travel expenses.¹²⁷ While in earlier resettlement processes, the transportation costs covered by the government in this example, it seems that some obstacles or conditions are gradually being imposed on relocations that were seen as arbitrary.

Furthermore, the requests concerning the resettlement processes sometimes led to disputes between local governments and refugees. In August 1902, a Circassian group of 700 households temporarily settled in Pasinler and wrote a petition about their destitute situation. They were complaining about how they could not receive aids for four months. However, their main request was to be resettled in Syria. Previously, their representatives went to Syria and agreed with the governor to be resettled in an empty land, but the governor in Pasinler insisted on transferring them to Bitlis. After the state's investigation, it was understood that the authorities in Syria granted the land for the refugees and informed the authorities in Erzurum. Thus, the state allowed the Circassians to resettle in Syria on the condition of covering their own travel expenses.¹²⁸ The land investigation process done by Circassian refugees reveals that they had a certain autonomy in the process of resettlement. However, this autonomy was quite limited and led to the conflicts between state and the refugees. The Ottoman Empire avoided any severe conflicts with the Circassian refugee groups and attempted to resolve these complaints with a peaceful policy.

Within the Province of Syria, the Sanjak of Hawran was also a central destination for the internal mobilization of Circassian refugees. Commonly in the petitions, the main reason stands out as the desire to resettle with relatives. When appealing to authority, the excuse of living with relatives was an effectual and legitimate one based on the state's immigration laws. However, the underlying reasons for this internal mobilization differed on many occasions. In some cases, the excuse of kinship was used as a pretext to migrate to areas that immigrants perceived as more beneficial to live in. The annual report of the Province of Syria published in April 1889 reveals some reasons for mobility towards Sanjak of Hawran by Circassian refugees. One reason that made the Hawran province attractive to settle was the absence of conscription. The first settlers of the region were not obliged to perform military service. Moreover, the Anatolian lands suffered from droughts for the last two years, which added to the internal movement activities. The absence of conscription became a pull factor for the refugee movement, and the droughts accelerated the process by pushing the population. Thus, in the last two years, there was high

¹²⁷BOA, MKT.MHM. 514 (19 May 1317, 1 June 1901).

¹²⁸BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 520/8 in *Osmanlı Belgelerin Kafkas Göçleri I*, 532-535.

mobility of Circassian refugees from Anatolia to Greater Syria. Numerous large groups were moving towards Sanjak of Hawran. However, according to the laws, only the first settlers were exempted from military service. Therefore, the census included the newcomers, and approximately seven thousand males were counted for the conscription in the sanjak.¹²⁹

The Ottoman Empire had been focusing on centralization policies in frontier regions since the Tanzimat. This process carried along with the modernization of the state. By this time, the state wanted greater control over its populations, whether through nomadic tribes or refugee settlements. At the end of the nineteenth century, the state began to involve more in individuals' lives. The desire to have control over population movements also involved the refugee movements. Mürur Tezkeresi was the primary document for every individual over 20 years who wanted to move from one district to another within the empire.¹³⁰ It was also forbidden for the refugees to move without the necessary documentation. 113 household Circassian refugees from Aziziye and Elbistan arrived in Quneitra in 1887. Since they did not provide any documentation and made this journey without permission, the local administrations were warned to be more cautious about undocumented mobilities. Authorities decided that the refugees to remain settled in Quneitra because it would be costly to return them.¹³¹

Governor Mehmed Nazif wrote a more detailed report concerning the mobility of refugees in November 1888. Three Circassian households came to Quneitra without permission and claimed that they came directly through the line of Russia and Sivas. However, in this scenario, they must have a passport or mürur tezkeresi. Since they did not have any document, this meant that they were settled before, and this was not their first settlement process. Thus, they cannot be registered as refugees and given any land in the region.¹³² Governor further complained that the mobility from Anatolia to Syria had been continuing for some time and causes struggles both for the immigrants and for the local government. He was proposing that the civil servants should show extra sensitivity to this illegal movement by basing his warning on the law that forbids the abandonment of the initial settlement place of refugees.

¹²⁹ Havran Sancağı mükellefiyet-i askeriyye dahilinde bulunmadığı cihetle mukaddemâ bu taraflara gelen Çerkes muhacirleri livâ-i mezkûrda tavattun etmiş ve hizmet-i askeriyyeden muafiyet-i şer'îasına bazı vilâyâtta iki sene evvel zuhur eden kaht belası da inzimâm ederek öteden beri Anadolu'da yerleşmiş olan Çerkeslerin fevc fevc Havran taraflarına geldikleri görülmüş... BOA, Y.MTV. 38/99 in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Suriye*, (İstanbul: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2013), 73-77.

¹³⁰ Christoph Herzog, "Migration and the state On Ottoman regulations concerning migration since the age of Mahmud II," in *The City in the Ottoman Empire Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity*, ed. Ulrike Freitag and Malte Fuhrmann, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 121.

¹³¹ BOA, DH.MKT. 1471/89.

¹³² BOA, DH.MKT. 1585/57 (8 Kanun-ı Evvel 1304, 20 December 1888).

These strict rules and measures exercised against undocumented mobility reveal the intention to intensify state visibility and control in individual lives. Now the state could identify and control or stop movements that it saw as beneficial for the state or not.¹³³ Therefore, previous mobility flexibility was becoming limited for refugees and this new policy aimed to restrict their movements within the state and, more specifically, in the Province of Syria.

The district of Quneitra was a favoured region in Sanjak of Hawran by the Circassian refugees throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The land was fertile and close to Damascus when compared to the southern region of the province. These favourable factors merged with Circassians' resilience, and they have formed 12 large villages in the district. The expedition of Schumacher in 1888 in Jawlan depicts the Circassian villages in great detail. The administrative centre was situated in the village of Quneitra. The author notes that without the soldiers and officers, the town's population has consisted of 1,300 inhabitants, primarily Circassians.¹³⁴ Further he continues, "Looking, too, at the towering hay-cocks, the swift, rattling Circassian carts, the preparation of dried bricks from the fine earth of the neighbourhood, and, above all, the cleanliness of the streets, one asks involuntarily, 'Am I in the Jawlan?'"¹³⁵ The emphasis on the order and industrious characteristics of the Circassian villages is a recurrent narrative in travelogues' works. Likewise, the emphasis on the wheeled carts is stated as a brand new technology for the region. Even though the Circassians were built seven villages, the newcomers had been continuing the building process of new villages, and they were already introduced their tools that entirely unknown to the region. An earlier account by Oliphant witnesses the initial mass settlement in central Quneitra in April 1879.

The women and children were hoeing and weeding in the newly-made gardens. The men were either hauling stone in creaking arabas drawn by bullocks, a sight which must have been altogether new to the neighbouring Bedouins, who had never seen a wheeled vehicle in their lives or were building the walls of the houses.¹³⁶

¹³³David Gutman, "Travel Documents, Mobility Control, and the Ottoman State in an Age of Global Migration, 1880–1915," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3, no. 2, (2016): 351.

¹³⁴Schumacher, 207.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 208.

¹³⁶Laurence Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead: With Excursions in the Lebanon*, (London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1880), 45.

The new groups brought by the second wave of migration were building their new settlements with the active participation of every member of the tribe by hoping this would be their permanent settlement.

Figure 3.2 The Circassian Village in Bireyka Built on Ancient Ruins



Source: Schumacher, *The Jaulân*, 113.

Circassian villages continued to expand and flourished in the district of Quneitra. Other villages were either increasing in population or some already populated widely. Ayn Surman grew from 60 to 100 households in one year, and it consisted of 450 people.¹³⁷ On the other hand, Bireyka, with 85 household and 425 inhabitants and Mansura population with 400, were leading villages of Circassians in the Quneitra district.¹³⁸ Along with these numbers on the population of Circassian refugees, there are several available resources to draw a general idea about the statistics of refugees. The table below compares the censuses of Circassians under the Ottoman and French rules.¹³⁹

¹³⁷Schumacher, 99.

¹³⁸Ibid., 113, 218.

¹³⁹Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1302/1885, 234., Orsam, *Suriye Çerkesleri*, Rapor No: 130, 2012, 15.

Table 3.1 Households of Circassian Villages Under Ottoman and French Rule

Village	1885 Households	1935 Households
Quneitra	128	400
Mansura	184	120
Mumsiya	17	50
Ayn Zivan	82	150
Cuveyza	23	100
Bireyka	80	150
Bir Acem	33	70
Reyhaniye	24	-
Hermon	82	-
Ayn Herman	28	-
Surman	-	120
Ayn Surman	-	30
Hamidiya	-	30
Koçniya	-	150
Faham	-	20
Fazara	-	10
Farac	-	14
Ruhina	-	25
Sandaniya	-	10
Total	681	1,449

Despite the high resilience and adaptability, the Circassian population experienced several adversities in the settlements that depopulated them. One reason preventing their population from growing was the ongoing hostilities between the local population, particularly the Druze. On various occasions, clashes between these two parties ended up with high casualties. To illustrate, in a clash with Druzes, 56 Circassians stabbed to death, and their 14 houses burned down.¹⁴⁰ In addition to conflicts with local forces, the infectious diseases widespread in the empire at the turn of the nineteenth century also affected the Circassian population of Quneitra. In the early 1880s, various fatal infections were spreading in the Province of Syria. In Quneitra, typhus and malaria caused numerous casualties. Only in September 1883, 154 people died of malaria and the reason attributed to the poor weather con-

¹⁴⁰Dürzilerin zükur ve inas elli altı nüfusu bıçak ile katl ve bir kişiyi cerh edüb on dört bab-ı hane ihrak eyledikleri ve kendülerinden de yirmi nüfusun öldüğü mahalinde alınan ma'lumata... BOA, Y.A.HUS. 299/40 (26 Mayıs 1310, 7 June 1894).

ditions of the region.¹⁴¹ An addition of 47 refugees settled from Sivas to Quneitra, again killed by malaria. Even though the state sent a doctor to the region, the destitute situation of poor refugees could not even afford the medical costs, and the governor wanted these expenses to be covered by the province.¹⁴² Later, the district quarantined due to the typhus epidemic, and in the early days of the quarantine, more than 40 people reported dead.¹⁴³ These casualties decreased the population of Circassians, who were already had a small number in the region. However, it is possible to conclude that the district of Quneitra, which had very few settlements prior to the Circassian settlement, was turned into an administrative centre where urban life became a permanent aspect of the region.

¹⁴¹Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1301/1884, 238.

¹⁴²BOA, I.DH. 01101 (28 Ağustos 1304, 9 September 1888).

¹⁴³BOA, DH.MKT. 1549/48. (10 Eylül 1304, 22 September 1888).

4. BETWEEN CENTRE AND PERIPHERY: EMPIRE, LOCALS AND CIRCASSIANS

4.1 Accelerated Inclusion of the Province of Syria to the Centre

Although Syria has long been categorized among the warm countries, making this assumption based on the general view is considerably mistaken. Some regions are low and forested, and some are high and mountainous. While highlands experience heavy snowfall, lowlands could have features of springtime. To witness every season, one must travel for some time in the region.¹⁴⁴

Almanac of Syrian province published in 1880 starts with this information about Greater Syria. After its first publication in 1868, yearbooks of the Province of Syria began to be written in more detail starting in 1878. Not just the province but also sanjaks and districts had details about the lands, population and construction projects carried by the administration. This practice can be related to the able governors of the time. First, Cevdet, then Midhat Pashas, held the governorship of Syria as being the capable officers. Especially, Midhat Pasha was the one that successfully applied the new provincial reforms in the Province of Danube. The creation of agricultural credit cooperatives began with his reforms and later practised in Syria.¹⁴⁵ In 1880 Ahmed Hamdi Pasha appointed as the governor of the province and held the position for five years. He was one of the two governors that kept the post that long. Therefore, along with qualified and consistent governors, the character of the yearbooks evolved into a more comprehensive one.

¹⁴⁴Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1297/1880, 82.

¹⁴⁵Davison, 152-157.

The narration of the passage indicates the changing perspectives over Greater Syria. Since Bedouins predominantly occupied the internal regions of Greater Syria and the parts far from the coastal areas were neglected by the state. Therefore, there were common prejudices against the internal regions. The administrators were opposed to the biased idea of Greater Syria as being a barren desert. Adding to this persuasion, the yearbook continues with numerous evaluations and plans for the flourishing of the province. Further in the text, the region's commercial activities stated as "far from its actual potention".¹⁴⁶ The immediate solution to improve commercial activities was constructing roads between cities of cultivation and trade. Overall, the almanac had a tone of promotion regarding the potential of Greater Syria. If the hostile and deceptive generalizations against the province could be overcome, this frontier region could be transformed into a prospered and integrated part of the empire. The Province of Syria represented as a pearl of undiscovered importance. This positive orientation was undoubtedly related to the rapidly changing territorial boundaries and demographics of the empire.

The Province of Syria played a vital situation in the integration of Arab lands into the central system. While the shredding frontiers of the empire witnessed forces to stand against like Russians in the Balkans, the state faced local tribes in the Arab lands that were much more simple to compete with. Moreover, the Ottoman sultan had various symbolic powers to use upon the local population. One and the most legitimate one was the status of the caliphate. The sultan profoundly utilized his figure as the caliph since one central policy in the region was to increase the legitimization of the Ottoman caliphate in the eyes of the Arab subjects. While refugees placed in the area strengthen the caliph's symbolic presence, the state must have applied further improvements to the region. Under these terms, the location of Syria was linked to the integration and protection of the Hijaz region. Besides, Greater Syria was under the great attention of foreign powers. This interest was not present through a military force but instead practised as a soft power over minorities of the region. Maronites were under the protection of the French, and further, the Algerians settled in Syria were granted French citizenship.¹⁴⁷ British interest in Druze population and Russian expansionist policy in Jerusalem was the primary signifiers for the Ottomans to accelerate their authority in the region.

The failure in the Balkan provinces turned the empire's attention to the remaining Anatolian and Arab lands. The loss of vast resources in the Balkans had to be

¹⁴⁶Fakat sanayi' ve ticaretin şu hali ne kadar mucib-i memnuniyet ve şayan-ı takdir olsa bile yine kıta'nın ehemmiyet ve kabiliyet-i mahsusasıyla asla münasib bulunmadığından.. Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1297/1880, 80.

¹⁴⁷Tufan Buzpınar, "Ahmed Cevdet Paşa'nın Suriye Valiliği (Şubat-Kasım 1878)," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* 9, (2003): 40.

compensated with new ones, and to met this end, the ongoing centralization policy in the Arab provinces escalated. Ahmed Cevdet clearly states that the wealth of Syria, Aleppo and Adana could make up the losses of the empire if appropriately managed.¹⁴⁸ Since the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire was not a priority of Great powers after 1878. Berlin Treaty made it certain that most non-Muslim groups in the Balkans gained their independence and were no longer the concern of Ottomans. This loss resulted in the Muslim majority population formed by Anatolian and Arab lands. As a result, Abdulhamid II adopted the policy of Islamization within and outside of the empire.¹⁴⁹ A correspondence between Ahmed Cevdet and Abdulhamid II reveals the mindset of the new policies. Cevdet states that even though Turks are the backbones of the empire, Arabs must be valued equally because they possess Islam's language. He also points out the officials' humiliations of the Arabs by calling them fellah. If this attitude towards Arabs change, only then could they become an integrated part of the empire and experiences in the Balkans would not repeat in Arab lands.¹⁵⁰

Another critical application of Islamist policy of Abdulhamid's reign was on migration movements. Refugee flows from the lost lands gradually transformed the caliphate into a universal shelter for Muslims. The growing Sunni Islamic line of the state also influenced the immigration policies. Previous migration policies that were relatively liberal gradually became more strict with the parallel of the Islamist policy. The land losses transformed the empire into a more homogeneous one in a religious context since the non-Muslim populations were becoming independent from the empire. The increasing uniformity in the religious structure also affected the central policies on migration accordingly.¹⁵¹ In 1905, a ship full of refugees arrived from Batum to Trabzon and among them non-Muslims were identified. However, the official administration stated that only the Muslim population is accepted from Russia; based on a prior decree, the non-Muslim ones could not seek refuge in the empire.¹⁵²

Indeed, with the encouraging policies, the Muslim migration continued for decades by the masses that wanted to protect their religious freedom under the Muslim

¹⁴⁸Engin Deniz Akarlı, "Abdülhamid II's Attempt to Integrate Arabs," 75.

¹⁴⁹Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 183.

¹⁵⁰Akarlı, p.77.

¹⁵¹Başak Kale, "Transforming an Empire: The Ottoman Empire's Immigration and Settlement Policies in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 2, (2014): 260.

¹⁵²İsmet Binark, *Osmanlı Devleti ile Kafkasya, Türkistan ve Kırım Hanlıkları Arasındaki Münâsebetlere Dâir Arşiv Belgeleri: 1687-1908 Yılları Arası*, (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1992), 93.

caliphate. The petitions of Caucasian refugees reveals this objective explicitly. A Circassian refugee group entered the empire in 1883, and their leader showed his gratitude with a letter to authorities. He appreciated the just treatment of the caliph and the state. He stated that they emigrated to protect their religion and honour, and it was only possible under the state of the Ottomans.¹⁵³ As a response to this reality, Muslims of the empire tried to be united under the name of Islam and the caliphate. The rise of Muslim subjects by migrations undeniably affected the sultan to create loyal subjects and strengthen his legitimacy.

Abdulhamid believed in creating a close patronage link to integrate local actors into his rule to incorporate the provinces. The policy of coercion upon the provincial actors highly backed with direct inclusion of them in the administration. Center created a close and steady relationship with the notables by hoping that this will improve the state's legitimacy before the local population. Abdulhamid II was personally involved in this process. He invited tribe leaders to Istanbul and rewarded them with official titles. Abdullah Pasha al-Saud handled this policy as being a mediator between the state and bedouin tribes. The leader of the Ruwala tribe was persuaded to meet with the sultan in Istanbul, and after his statement of obedience, he received a Mecidiye medal.¹⁵⁴ This policy has aroused considerable interest among other tribes. Tribe leaders wrote numerous petitions to the mediator for the same ceremony with the sultan. Besides, medals were also given in provinces for several reasons. A negotiator who solves the conflict between two groups took mecidiye medal. In the yearbooks of 1898 and 1899, an extensive list of the persons awarded with medals can be found. Members of the Fadıl tribe, the leading tribe of the Hawran region, got many medals in these years.¹⁵⁵

The inclusion of bedouin tribes into the state system continued with education. One particular example was the establishment of Tribal School (*Aşiret Mektebi*) in Istanbul in 1892. The school's first regulation specifies that the aim is to educate the children of bedouin tribes that are clever and members of the most respected tribes.¹⁵⁶ The primary purpose was to integrate the bedouin tribes into the state system and create a new Ottoman-Arab identity. This policy was both paralleled with the ottomanism and Islamization movement of the period. "Over the five years, students were expected to master classical Arabic and Ottoman Turkish and were

¹⁵³Ibid., 87.

¹⁵⁴Rogan, 85.

¹⁵⁵Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1316/1898, p.301., 1317/1899, 325.

¹⁵⁶Eugene L. Rogan and Alişan Akpınar, *Aşiret, Mektep, Devlet: II. Abdülhamid'in Aşiret Mektebi (1892-1907)*, (İstanbul: Aram Yayıncılık, 2001), 79.

taught three years of French and two years of Persian. They were given a grounding in the Islamic sciences, the humanities (particularly geography and history), and arithmetic."¹⁵⁷ This education offered a more advanced study than a local secondary school level. The intense language courses sided with natural sciences would be the best education a tribal member could get. The courses and the atmosphere of the capital city would increase the embracement of state values by the students. However, the intended quota was never were filled since the prominent families were unwilling to send their children to the capital. After a rebellion with the excuse of bad food in 1907, Asiret Mektebi is closed down.¹⁵⁸ Although the schools did not attract the expected attention, they ensured some integration of tribal members into the state system. The number of admitted students in the first three years was 88, and 45 of them continued their education in Harbiye and Mülkiye schools, while the present evidence shows that 20 of them became officials in their hometowns.¹⁵⁹

In the Hamidian era, the strengthening of central authority in Greater Syria was continued with the integration of the local population into the state system. Initially, the state tried to change the Ottoman official's mindsets toward the region to a favourable attitude. Later, in line with the policy of Islamism, the emphasis on the caliphate was increased. The acceptance of Muslim refugees strengthened the image of the Sultan as the caliph. Thus, he became the protector of the oppressed Muslims around the world with his strong position. Lastly, the local population were included in the state system through education and political ties. Therefore, after the losses of Balkan provinces, the state intensified the integration process of Greater Syria and implemented various policies in the region.

4.2 Civilizing the Savages: Integration of Local Syrian Population into the Empire

Concerning the population of Hawran region the yearbook of 1880 starts with;

The population of the Hawran is consist of tribes and a gang of Druzes who are still in the state of savagery and nomadism, and their occupa-

¹⁵⁷Eugene L. Rogan, "Asiret Mektebi: Abdulhamid II's School for Tribes (1892-1907)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no. 1, 1996, 92.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 100-103

tion is farming. The country is becoming more stripped of the causes of progress and the institutions of civilization every day. Despite this deprivation, nature has given Hawran such a rare virtue not only in Syria but perhaps in many parts of the world; it's a very fertile and fruitful land.¹⁶⁰

Regarding the perspective of the state, one can draw two critical points from this passage. First is the portrayal of tribes and Druzes as being savages, not just nomads. The savagery causes the region to become gradually uncivilized each day. The Ottoman state was obliged to save this region by eliminating these factors. Second, even with all this backwardness, the region had a highly positive advantage as the most fertile place on the planet. This exaggerated narrative shows the administrators intend to convince the audience that the region is worth investing in. The intense sedentarization process was related to the re-claiming of the lands where central authority was absent or highly weak. The state wanted to integrate the far edges of the empire with the centre and created a legitimization tool while doing it. Only with a settled society could the province fulfill its potential and compensate for the losses of former resources for the empire.

The process of intense integration of the Province of Syria supported and legitimized with the narration of civilizing the population. The contrast was between the civilized and uncivilized or *medeniyet* and *bedeviyet*. The settled population was the first step to be counted as a civilized one, whereas the Bedouins were at the lowest stage of civilization. Even though this view originated in the concepts of Ibn Khaldun, Ottoman elites added his terminology with the contemporary ones. Ibn Khaldun's dichotomy was based on the terminologies of *hazariyet* and *bedeviyet* nineteenth-century Ottoman elite added or replaced *hazariyet* with *medeniyet*. For example, Ahmed Cevdet used them both in his views of society. For him, a society can evolve from nomadism to civilization.¹⁶¹ *Hazariyet* literally meant "the settled"; on the other hand, *medeni* meant "city". However, the term *medeniyet* was first used in *Takvim-i Vekayi*, dated from 1831. The main aim of the passage in the official newspaper was to support the centralization movement by implementing civilizing measures.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰Havranın ekseriyesi 'aşair-i sakine ile taife-i Dürziyeden mürekkep olup ahalisi henüz hal-i vahşet ve bedeviyetde bulunup kar-u meşguliyetleri dahi zira'ate münhasır olduğu cihetle memleket her güne esbab-ı ma'muriyet ve asar-ı medeniyetden ari isede mamafih tabiat şu mahrumiyete mukabil Havran'a diğer cihetden öyle bir meziyet-i aliye ihsan buyurmuşdur ki hakikat-ı nazırı yalnız Suriye vilayetince değil belki dünyanın pek çok taraflarınca nadir bulunur o da arazisinin gayet münbit ve mahsuldar olmasıdır. *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye*, 1297/1880, 215.

¹⁶¹*bedeviyetten hazariyyet ve medeniyete*. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Volume I, 116.

¹⁶²ûsûl-i medeniyete teşebbüs. Özgür Türesay, "The Ottoman Empire Seen Through the Lens of Postcolonial Studies: A Recent Historiographical Turn," *Revue d'histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 60, no.2, 2013, 5.

As a western term, *medeniyet* or civilization had its roots in French Enlightenment. According to Schaebler, the civilization movement occurs due to encounters with others and these confrontations are the essential components of modernity itself.¹⁶³ These forces of modernization that influenced the European states also affected the Ottomans. However, the expansion of modernity should not be seen as a mere imitation of the Western one. Instead, every state developed their concepts and attitudes on modernity and the idea of civilization. On the other hand, the meaning of *bedeviyet* had also been transformed into a multi-layered one. The core implication of the term was nomadism; however, an eminent magazine used the word as being barbarity by stating that not a single good trait of the bedouin can be seen as a virtue vis-à-vis the greatness of civilization.¹⁶⁴ The term *bedeviyet ve vahşet* coined by Deringil as nomadism and savagery, continued to be repeated in various official texts.¹⁶⁵ It was the primary term of the reports regarding education and sedentarization policies. The only way to obtain a prosperous empire the population had to be a settled one. Since the nomadic population cannot be taxed or conscript and the fertile lands were wasted for grazing, the settled population was the most favourable one for the centre's benefit. Therefore, the nomads were demonized and accused of the backwardness of the regions.

On the other hand, the scope of the word savagery extended over time and not just referred to nomadism. When considering the Province of Syria, its connotation even included Druzes and Circassian refugees, both of which were settled communities at the time. According to one official document issued in July 1904, every Druze and Circassian child must learn the rules of Islam and must be brought under the civilization.¹⁶⁶ The state aimed to form an integrated population that embraced the principal ideals of the centre. This policy extended to the edges of the empire for creating a loyal society. One other reason for this civilizing narrative was to eliminate the foreign powers in the region. Great Powers were already present in Greater Syria not just through issues of the minority but also with their schools,

¹⁶³Birgit Schaebler, "Civilizing Others: Global Modernity and the Local Boundaries (French/German/Ottoman and Arab) of Savagery," in *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion, and Modernity*, ed. Birgit Schaebler and Leif Stenberg, (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 3.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶⁵Selim Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery": The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no.2, (2003): 317.

¹⁶⁶...mevcud mekteb-i ibtidaiye 'ilaveten icab eden köylerde lüzümü kadar mekteb-i ibtidaiye ve merkez livada dahi bir bab rüşdiye mektebi ta'sis ve küşade ve sairenin eşkal-i lüzümü Havran mutasarrıflığına iş'ar olunacağı ve liva-i mezkur dahilinde bulunan ve henüz hal-i bedeviyetde olan 'urban ile muhacirin-i Çerakesinin ve Dürzilerin tedricen daire-i medeniyetle idhali ile bulundukları hal-i vahşet ve cehaletten kurtarılmalari... BOA, DH.MKT. 866/57 (19 Haziran 1320, 2 July 1904).

religious braches and construction projects.¹⁶⁷ This intense influence of the foreign powers created a competition with the centre. Therefore, the Ottoman state had to fight against the impact of the Great Powers. Education and religion were the most important spheres of influence; thus, the central state began to promote these aspects base on their ideology. Since the concept of modernity forced every state to transform itself into a new structure, consequently Ottoman elite had to pursue similar steps for its population both to integrate and preserve it.

The civilizing narrative was not unique to the Arab inhabitants of the empire. This narrative was not an issue of creating a peculiar Orient for the Ottoman elite. In this respect the state differed from the western colonial powers by its definition over cultural difference. For the Ottoman elite, culture was the main arena of difference. The culture of nomads created the savagery, not their race as being an Arab or a Kurd. Besides, the state could reduce this savagery with the implementation of Tanzimat reforms.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, with the formation of Fırka-ı Islahiyye, the Anatolian Turcoman nomadic population were targeted to be sedentarized like the bedouin. A valuable source of this process on the Anatolian tribes is the already mentioned *Tezakir* of Cevdet Pasha. While writing a great detail about the sedentarization process and the demographic characteristics of the regions, Cevdet Pasha uses the term state of savagery and nomadism (*hal-i vahşet ve bedaviyet*), referring to the population of the Çukurova region.¹⁶⁹ In the following years, the same policy transferred into Greater Syria. When Cevdet Pasha became the governor of Aleppo, he cooperated with the governor of Syria to eliminate the damages of bedouin in the region. Hence, the principal objective of the civilizing narrative was to create a population that possessed the ideals of the state and every group that oppose this new concept of modernity categorized as the savages.

Furthermore, the population that was categorized as "savage" were among the citizens of the empire. The state did not cast out the local forces from the administration like in British or French colonialism. On the contrary, every segment of the region was to a certain extent represented in the provincial as well as municipal councils. During the constitutional periods members of the parliament from the provinces represented their localities and were treated equally in the Ottoman

¹⁶⁷James A. Reilly, "Ottomans in Syria: "Turkish Colonialism", or Something Else?," in *Comparing Colonialism: Beyond European Exceptionalism*, ed. Axel T. Paul and Matthias Leanza, (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2020), 282.

¹⁶⁸Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849–1919*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 93.

¹⁶⁹*Tezakir* 21-39, 160.

parliament as citizens of the empire.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, the state did not work on the imposition of Turkish ethnic identity but on strengthening the Muslim population against the Christian citizens of doubtful loyalty. To meet this end, the Arab population were tried to be integrated into central administration in several ways.¹⁷¹ As a result, the main difference between the Ottoman elite and colonist was their ultimate objective toward the local people. While the Ottoman elite felt superior to locals, its goal was to eliminate cultural differences and create the same level of civilization within the empire for integration. On the contrary, the colonist wanted to keep the difference with their colony to maintain exclusion.¹⁷²

The primary responsibilities adopted by the state to close this cultural gap was to invest in the reconstruction of the region and impose the values of the state on the local population by promoting education. Several statesmen were also pointed the reforms necessary for the development and integration of Arab lands. Osman Nuri Pasha, the governor of Hijaz and Yemen, addresses the region's civilizing narrative and its components. In his report, he lists a detailed guideline concerning the civilizing process. Main steps towards the establishment of a civilized society could be made possible by the organization of administrative divisions, the construction of government buildings and military establishments reflecting the glory of the state, the establishment of courts of law, the spread of education and the acquisition of progress in trade and professions, the increase in revenues and the construction of roads.¹⁷³ The stages of reforms in the Arab lands mostly followed this guideline, intentionally or not.

The economy of Hawran was depended on the cultivation and grain trade. Hence, the main occupation of the peasants was the agriculture of grain. The increased presence of the European market in the region shifted the trade into port cities rather than Damascus. For long distances, camels transported grains to Nablus, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa and Acre.¹⁷⁴ Logistics was the main component of a profitable trade system, and this one had numerous downsides. Thus, a new tramway planned to be constructed between Damascus and Hawran in 1879. The report of the plan stated that this fertile region could not be benefited enough since there were no roads, other than ancient Roman ones, both to port cities and Damascus. Whole transportation

¹⁷⁰Türesay, 160.

¹⁷¹Reilly, 283.

¹⁷²Türesay, 16.

¹⁷³Deringil, 327.

¹⁷⁴F. A. Klein, "Life, Habits, and Customs of the Fellahin of Palestine," *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, (1883): 45.

carried by camels, and this meant that half of the profit was wasted on transportation expenses. Moreover, the transport was coming to a halt in the winter because of muddy soil.¹⁷⁵ A decade later, another report shows the progress of construction in the Province of Syria. The state could not finalize three road construction projects through Damascus to Hawran, Hama to Damascus and Latakia. The reason was the incompetent engineering, and it costed the workers' productivity. While the new engineers were requested from the centre, their arrivals were postponed, and the roads could not be finished as planned. Therefore, in 1889 twenty-nine bridges and thirty-four km roads constructed in the region.¹⁷⁶

The Ottoman central administration adopted an intensive reform and integration policy with the Tanzimat era. This process intensified after the significant loss of the state lands. The remaining grounds were the only places that the state could turn into. Hence, the presence of the central state increased its visibility not just with enforcement but also with investments. Both in Anatolia and the Arab lands, the people, whether nomads, settled or refugees, sought to be transformed into modern citizens in line with the views of the state. For the Ottoman elite, the incorporation of frontiers meant the recovery of new resources, preventing foreign influences in the regions and creating loyal citizens against the possible rebellious tendencies. To this end, the state tended to implement policies that were the necessary conditions of modernity. While promoting the settled lifestyle, state education expanded and infrastructure strengthened. As a result, the frontier regions were exposed to similar categorizations and experienced standard policies to be transformed into a homogenous community.

4.3 Refugees Becoming Locals

As Circassians arrived in Quneitra, they began the process of settling down and gradually became locals through environmental adaption, new technologies, and participation in the economic sphere. Laurence Oliphant, in his book *The Land of Gilead* published in 1880, wrote these in his travel to Quneitra:

Ismael Agha, Circassian chief, said that there were altogether about 3,000 Circassians in Kuneitreh and its vicinity, who, although they had

¹⁷⁵İ. MM S, 62/2932 in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Suriye*, 176.

¹⁷⁶Y. MTV, 38/99, Ibid., 75.

only been there a few months, they are already establishing themselves in comparative comfort. They were grouped in seven villages, all of which they had themselves built, and had brought enough property with them to purchase a few cattle so that they were not in absolute want, though some of them were very poor.¹⁷⁷

As Oliphant observes, poverty was rampant among some groups in Quneitra, especially in the early stages of their arrival. While the poor continued to be supported by the government, the majority of the Circassians seemed to overcome the traumas of their second deportations and adjust the new lands granted to them. As it is evident from the ruins of the ancient Roman site Jawlan, the Circassian refugees rapidly adapted to the environment and used it to their benefit. For instance, archaeological scholars studying housing materials at Jawlan have observed that Circassians used ruined ancient stones for house building.¹⁷⁸ The resilient character of Circassians enabled them to create their localities from scratch. In total, the Circassians built twelve villages across Quneitra. Travellers to the region repeatedly praised these villages for their order and cleanliness. However, Circassians of Quneitra did not isolate themselves from other Circassian refugee settlers in the Province of Syria.

When the refugees arrived in Quneitra, the conditions of proper roads were quite limited in the district and only the ancient paths from the Roman period were in use. Because, the constant usage of carts was one of the most prominent features of the Circassians. The roads of Circassian villages were either improved or created by the refugees to create a suitable spatial area for their carts. These cart roads connected the Circassian towns in Greater Syria and enabled refugees to build a collective society.

Especially after 1878, the intense settlement process populated the deserted regions of Greater Syria. In every region, Circassians formed numerous villages. The passage from the travel of missionary scholar Masterman¹⁷⁹ that visited the Transjordan in 1902. He wrote as follows:

The Circassians of Kuneitra, Jerash, and Amman have connected their colonies by means of cart roads. As we approached Jerash, we came across a cart, much like an ambulance wagon, accompanied by over a

¹⁷⁷Oliphant, 51.

¹⁷⁸Gottlieb Schumacher, *Across The Jordan: An Exploration and Survey of Part of Hauran and Jaulan*, 1889, 167.

¹⁷⁹Yaron Perry and Efraim Lev, "Ernest William Gurney Masterman, British Physician and Scholar in the Holy Land," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 138, 2006.

dozen well-mounted Circassians, which was bringing a Circassian bride all the way from Kunieitra, through Jerash to 'Amman.¹⁸⁰

The instant he witnessed indicates the close ties that formed between refugee settlements. The apparent road patterns suggest that the refugees actively built their villages based on the potential networks they would create. This pattern also indicates their awareness of surrounding regions. In the light of this information, it can be said that refugee settlements were been aware of each other since earlier periods. Thus spatial features of the towns became a crucial aspect of the topography of the region and helped to connect them as a community.

The identity formation of Circassians in this new land that was alien to them was the starting point of these firm relations. Originally Circassians were a tribal society composed of numerous tribes, such as the Abzakhs, Adyghe, Kabartey, and Shabsug. Each tribe consisted of a leader, nobles, commoners and slaves. This social class distinction was very sharp, and marriage out of class was not possible.¹⁸¹ However, in the settlements of Ottoman lands, the identities of the Circassians encountered new dimensions. In particular, the centralization policy towards tribal bonds posed a challenge to this traditional social features. The large tribes were divided into groups or separated from their leaders and settled in different areas.¹⁸² Only the refugees that had kinship bonds could move to areas where their relatives had settled.¹⁸³

Another challenge for Circassian identity was the matter of slavery. Unlike its clear position towards the African slave trade, the Ottoman state took only a vague position on the Circassian slave trade in the Ottoman Empire. While the state did not permanently prohibit the Circassian slave trade, it had always pursued policies that encouraged emancipation to end slavery.¹⁸⁴ In the midst of heavy refugee flows, the identities became blurred. The government already struggled to track slaves' status, a problem made more difficult with the addition of thousands of refugees. This vague situation created new opportunities for slaves, and some denied their status as a slave to receive land from the Ottoman state. When combined with the inexplicit policies of the state, this issue started a new conflict zone between

¹⁸⁰E. W. G. Masterman, "Miscellaneous Notes Made During a Journey East and West of Jordan," *Quarterly Statement, Palestine Exploration Fund*, 1902, 300-301.

¹⁸¹Mirza Bala, "Çerkesler" *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Volume 3, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1977), 375-378.

¹⁸²Dawn Chatty, "Refugees, Exiles," 44.

¹⁸³BOA, Y.PRK.KOM, 1/26 in *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kafkas Göçleri I*, 96.

¹⁸⁴Hakan Erdem, *Osmanlıda Köleliğin Sonu 1800-1909*, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004), 151. Ehud R. Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and Its Suppression: 1840-1890*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982).

emirs and slaves. Former slaves who wanted to preserve their new emancipated status and emirs who did not want to lose their slaves took up arms, and clashes over identities took place.¹⁸⁵ Meanwhile, in frontier zones, the traditional life of the Circassian society was more permanent. The emirs had their slaves until the explicit prohibition of Circassian slavery that occurred just after the Young Turk Revolution.¹⁸⁶ In March 1910, Circassian emirs from Quneitra petitioned to state for information about the status of their slaves. They wanted to get information about the official applications they should make in this regard.¹⁸⁷ The dynamic policies towards Circassian slavery in the state led to changes in the identity of traditional Circassian society. The hierarchical identities established before began to be shattered, and the new order in Ottoman lands started to create new centres of power within Circassian settler societies.

After their mass migration experiences, both to the Ottoman Empire and within it, these various Circassian tribes with strict traditional social characteristics formed new identities and relations in their settlements. In creating these identities, new tribal relations and status of slaves caused the blurring of the old traditional structures. Unlike previous practices in their homeland, a distinctive feature of the Circassians was their refugee status in Ottoman lands. The shared identity as being displaced and settlers brought together the diverse groups in language, dialect, region and social rank.¹⁸⁸ Circassian refugees of Greater Syria were perceived as the instruments and representatives of the state by locals. Because they were the minorities of the region, refugees had to build networks and common identities against the possible threats. They created interconnected villages with their unique technologies, which led to building relations based on their common refugee identity. Thus, in Ottoman Syria, a new Circassian society based on the shared experiences during the displacements was born, which became a part of the region and challenged the local forces with their tribal networks.

Since most of the regions chosen by the government in which to settle refugees were sparsely inhabited before Circassian resettlement, the refugees became direct agents of the central government in the area. The central authority was implemented and controlled through refugees. Authorities used these empty lands to shape and govern the regions, and the refugee settlements were the prominent instruments

¹⁸⁵Ufuk Tavkul, "Osmanlı Devletinin Kafkas Muhacirlerinin Kölelik Kurumuna Yaklaşımı," *Bilgi* 17, (2001): 47.

¹⁸⁶Erdem, 190.

¹⁸⁷BOA, DH.MKT. 2800/76 (6 Nisan 1325, 19 April 1909).

¹⁸⁸Seteney Shami, "Historical Processes of Identity Formation: Displacement, Settlement, and Self-Representations of the Circassians in Jordan," *Iran and the Caucasus* 13, no. 1, (2009): 147.

of integration and social engineering.¹⁸⁹ In order to carry out this role, refugees engaged with several identities in their settlements. Circassians of Quneitra had taken the role of the gendarme for the Ottoman government, similar to the role that other Circassians played in the empire. In frontier regions, the government pursued a central policy of installing armed forces to maintain central authority and combat uprisings by local parties. However, prior to the migration of Circassians, local administrations suffered from troop shortages to form these units. This deficit was filled by the Circassians and new regiments were positioned in the district. Travelogues commonly referred to the military identities of Circassians. As one account stated that;

"...the colonists occupy most of the Government positions in the Kada of Jawlan; their young men serve in the regular army, in the Circassian regiment at Damascus, or in the "Corps de Gendarmerie" (the mounted police or *zaptiehs*), a detachment of which is stationed at Kuneitrah."¹⁹⁰

Later, the district of Quneitra even became a base for these regiments. Circassian commander Mirza Pasha, who served under the Ottoman army in the Balkans and Greater Syria, was a leading figure of Circassian regiments. In the Druze revolt of 1895, he formed and led the voluntary Circassian units against Druzes under state orders.¹⁹¹ During these conflicts and later during the battles with the bedouin in Transjordan, Quneitra turned into a central base. The Circassians, with their advanced weaponry, transformed themselves into potent elements of war efforts in the region.¹⁹²

Apart from involvement in military forces, the Circassians adapted themselves to the economy of the region. Initially, Circassians identified as farmers in the economic sphere. In Quneitra, the main agricultural products were wheat, barley, sesame, white millet and wool.¹⁹³ Circassians not only engaged in cultivating these agricultural products but also introduced various new tools and techniques that were unknown to local farmers. One of the most well-known innovations introduced by

¹⁸⁹Ella Fratantuono, "Producing Ottomans: Internal Colonization and Social Engineering in Ottoman Immigrant Settlement," *Journal of Genocide Research* 21, no.1, (2019): 23.

¹⁹⁰G. Schumacher, "Notes From Jedur," *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, 1897, 192.

¹⁹¹Haghanduqah, 42.

¹⁹²TNA. FO 424/184 No. 799, 6 December 1895.

¹⁹³In *Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye* the crops of the Quneitra region in 1878 are given in kilograms as follows; Hinta 8.000, Şa'ir 10.000, Sisam 5.000, Beyaz Darı 20.000, Yün 6.000. 147.

the Circassians was the cart. It was used in the transportation of crops, bricks for house building and timber trade. Refugees also brought other, more traditional agricultural methods with them, such as the sickle, which was used for the collection and shaping of hays.¹⁹⁴ Circassian settlements were situated alongside water sources, and in Quneitra, they were the only group that used a wind-powered pumping system to draw water from wells.¹⁹⁵

In addition to agricultural production, Circassians engaged with animal husbandry. Other than sheep, they were well-known for owning cows, and they were identified with this feature.¹⁹⁶ Circassians extended the agricultural lands of the state by applying their traditional methods originated from their homelands. The yearbook of 1887 describes the Circassian contribution in Quneitra as follows: “although the central district is not large and developed enough, the Circassian immigrants had settled there are industrious in agriculture and infrastructure, so the region had been growing consistently.”¹⁹⁷ This praising description of the Circassians had repeated for a decade in the following yearbooks. Circassian participation in agriculture and animal husbandry enriched the region, earned praise from the government, and introduced new methods to increase productivity. In a way, they shaped this foreign nature with their characteristics and created a new cultural fusion within Greater Syria.

Even though Circassian refugees were mainly regarded as agriculturalists, they were also active participants in the trade networks of the region and even created new trade networks of their own. With enlargement brought on by Circassian settlement, the district of Quneitra expanded to include vast forest areas. A large proportion of the trees was consisted of oaks.¹⁹⁸ Circassians began to exploit the forest both for the timber and to create agricultural lands. They became the leading actors in the timber trade, which with their carts, they efficiently managed and sustained. Schumer stated that the timber was used in house roofs and it was provided by Circassians.

¹⁹⁴ Adib Sulayman Beg, 353, Muhammad Khayr Haghanduqah, *al-Sharkas, asluhum, tarikhuhum, 'adatuhum, taqaliduhum, hijratuhum ila al-Urdun*, (Amman, 1982), 62.

¹⁹⁵ Shmuel Avitsur, “Wind Power in The Technological Development of Palestine,” in *Palestine in The Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation*, ed. David Kushner, (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 242.

¹⁹⁶ Adib Sulayman Beg, 336.

¹⁹⁷ Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1303/1887, 247.

¹⁹⁸ Kuneytra: Ormanın Kıt'ası 5, Hektarı 10.000, Eşcarın cinsi Pinar ve Sendiyan ve kısımlı 'azami meşe. Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1315/1897, 315.

...the roofs being formed of tree-trunks brought from the forests of Northern Jawlan. These are supplied by the Circassians, who are in the habit of driving all over Hawran, in their heavy two-wheeled carts drawn by a team of oxen. They manage to make their way, across country over the rubbish-heaps and the stones, with a heavy load of timber, which they bring from the forests of their adopted country in Jawlan, and sell in the villages.¹⁹⁹

The mobility of Circassians was not limited to the timber trade. They also benefited from their kinship networks in other parts of the Ottoman lands. The settlements in Transjordan were closely tied with the Quneitra in terms of social and economic relations. To the west, the Circassians of Quneitra also built trade networks with Anatolia. The close proximity of Quneitra to Damascus presented additional opportunities for Circassian traders. With their connections in Anatolia, Circassians established a trade network between Quneitra-Damascus and Anatolia.²⁰⁰ The goods from Anatolia brought to Quneitra, and the commercial activities of Circassians contributed to the district's economy. Due to this efficient trade system, every street in Quneitra had shops filled with goods. The dynamic mobility provided by their carts merged with Circassian settler connections in Ottoman lands, helping refugees to establish new branches of industry in the region. Another active occupation of Circassians was the weaving methods. The wool in Quneitra was used to produce *şayak* a special kind of wool fabric. *Şayak* was originally manufactured in the Balkans and later brought to Quneitra by Circassian refugee women.²⁰¹ Thus, experiences in the Caucasus and the Balkans transformed the Circassians into a multi-faceted society. They built their identities on these collective experiences by adapting the knowledge they acquired in the exile to the region where they settled.

Circassian refugees in the district of Quneitra changed the portrait of the area. Just a decade after arriving, the large Circassian settlements in Quneitra started to flourish a marked change from the state of the region prior to Circassian arrival. Circassians adapted to this foreign land and combined their expertise with the sources in the region. Throughout their exile and displacements, they seized the opportunity to form new identities. As a result, they formed a distinct society with practical characteristics to transform the available materials to their advantage. However, this

¹⁹⁹ Schumacher, *Across The Jordan*, 167-168.

²⁰⁰ "Hawran," al Muqtabas, November 7, 1910. in Raja Jamal Abu Hassan, *The Settlement and Economic Development of Hawran 1860 – 1914: A Reconsideration of Motives and Forces*, (MA Thesis, American University of Beirut, 2017), 62.

²⁰¹ Dahil kazada mensucat kısmından Çerkes köylerde elvan-ı muhtelifede yünden bir nev' şayak 'imal edilmekte isede nefaset ve ciyadetce Rumeli şayağı raddesinde değildir. Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1317/1899, 274.

regional development could not just be attributed to the Circassian endeavour. The settled community benefitted from the support of the Ottoman state in the social and political arena. These settlements in frontier regions were placed to serve the interests of the central government. Thus, the Circassian settlements were situated as the agents against the unruly elements of the Syrian desert. While expanding the central authority, Circassians became the primary source of troops for the gendarme and mostly sided with the state against the hostile local figures. Although relations between the state and Circassians seemed to be based on mutual respect and interest, this relationship was considerably more intricate than it seemed.

The initial refugee settlements received various exemptions from the government. They were not obliged to pay taxes or participate in conscription for a fixed period.²⁰² Taking part in local troop units was on a voluntary basis. In frontier regions, refugees had these concessions for a more extended period due to the limits of central authority. In Hawran, they had been treated similar to the local population and were not conscripted. However, in the next decades following the Circassian settlement, this policy began to change. In the early 1900s, with the further extension of authority, the administration wanted to increase its revenues and expand tax collection in Hawran. In 1905, commissions were sent to the region for the census of households and animals. The Circassians and tribes of Quneitra were the primary targets for this process.²⁰³ Circassians, accustomed to living with tax concessions for decades, opposed this census. Per the state's expectations, the Circassians, as loyal servants of the state, had to consent to its demands under all circumstances. However, those who adjusted to the local conditions also began to adopt the local attitudes. On some occasions, they behaved on the basis of their own benefits rather than those of the state.

Nazım Pasha, governor of Syria, described this occasion with his report to the central government in great detail. He states that the Circassians hitherto were not obliged to pay taxes or conscription just like the local population since their settlement; however, the continuation of these concessions is now against the interests of the treasury.²⁰⁴ However, the Circassian chiefs prevented the commissions sent to the region from taking censuses. As a consequence, a gendarme unit sent to the districts to persuade the Circassian and bedouin chiefs to comply with the state's tax policy.

²⁰² Refugees were exempt from taxes and military service for six years in Rumelia and twelve years in Anatolia. Karpat, *Ottoman Migration*, 786.

²⁰³ BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 77/38 (25 Eylül 1321, 8 October 1905).

²⁰⁴ Havran sancağına merbut olup öteden beri Havran ahalisi gibi mükellefiyet-i 'askeriyeden müstesna tutulan Kuneytra kazasında ol-vakt iskan edilen birçok muhacirin-i Çerakise dahi ahali-i kadime misüllü müstesna tutuldukları gibi hayvan-ı ehliyye ta'dadı dahi icra edilmemiş ve bu halde şu suretle devamı menafi'-i hazineye münafi düşeceği derkar bulunmuş... Ibid.

Further, it was demanded that the Circassian chiefs who was responsible for the mischiefs be arrested and brought to the central province.²⁰⁵ During his report, the governor's description of the event reveals the state's perception of the Circassian refugees.

Circassian chiefs opposed the situation and dared to display some disobedient behaviours. The government made great sacrifices to settle the immigrants. While they were given enough land and seeds for agriculture, they opposed the census, like those who were ungrateful to blessings. This attitude will also have a harmful effect on the local population and must be corrected immediately.²⁰⁶

The governor was displeased by the actions of the Circassians. Since they were seen as the instruments of the state in frontier regions, any disobedience could not be tolerated. They were categorized as ungrateful²⁰⁷ after the sacrifices the state made for them. At the same time, this attitude was typical in the region. The distinction lied in the former relations that the state formed with the Circassians. Similar expectations were not applied to the local population. Instead, the government had concerns that if Circassians, their loyal citizens, opposed them, other local groups could also adopt this attitude. To solve this disobedience, the government sent gendarmes and arrested the Circassian chiefs. Therefore, Circassians' adaptation of local attitudes was suppressed with a policy of coercion, which the state frequently used against the local population.

The state was successful in solving the problem. After the arrest of the tribal chiefs, the Circassians expressed their regret by going to the Quneitran government and asked for forgiveness. This incident reveals that Circassians possessed multiple identities rather than a sole one as the Ottoman empire's loyal instrument. Despite the Ottoman policy of creating a loyal class out of refugee settlements, the refugees did not always obey this invisible loyalty contract. Not only Circassians of Quneitra but also other settled groups in Ottoman lands had various conflicts with the state.²⁰⁸ Like every group, the Circassians acted according to their own interests, even when it

²⁰⁵ ...emr-i tahririn behemehal icrası hakkında mikdar-ı kafi jandarma sevkiyle rüesay-ı Çerakise ve Urbana nesayih-i müessire icra... sa'i bilafesat olan rüesay-ı Çerakisenin heman derdestleriyle merkez vilayetine i'zamları lüzumu mahaline bildirilmesi üzerine... Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ *küfran-ı ni'met*

²⁰⁸ For the conflicts of other immigrant groups with the state, see Selim Deringil, "19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na Göç Olgusu Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler," in *Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan*, (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1991).

conflicted with the interest of their presumed “saviour”, the Ottoman state. Overall, the Circassian population in Quneitra has contributed significantly to the integration and development of the region. They have created multiple identities during their exiles and reflected them on the region’s social, political, and economic aspects. Lastly, they took an active role in shaping their environment rather than being passive instruments of the state.

4.4 Circassian Relations with Druze and Bedouin

4.4.1 Introduction

The initial Circassian settlement in 1873 was a small one, but the settlements expanded with the arrival of large refugee groups at the end of the decade. This new settlement process existed in parallel to the state’s integration and centralization policies in the region. Even the settlement locations were allocated to divide between the prosperous coastal area and desert area dominated by Bedouins where central authority was limited. Despite the scarcity of settled population in Jawlan, the region was being seasonally used by the bedouin tribes for grazing their flocks. After the implication of the Land Code of 1858, the state claimed the unregistered lands and granted them to refugees. Thus, the local population perceived Circassians as intruders placed by the state. In addition, the new settlers did not accept to give any harvest share or protection fee to the Bedouin. These attitudes that were in stark contrast to the local settlers proved their connections to the state and caused them to be seen as government agents.²⁰⁹ In 1895, Lee clearly stated the policy created through the Circassians.

The Sultan, then, in degrading the Bedawin and lessening their numbers on the one hand, is creating in their stead settlers that will sooner or later push them further into the desert, or compel them to adopt the same means of earning their living that they themselves possess... we find them full of complaint-of the soldiers, Circassians, and Government. They cling more tenaciously to their land, and resist by force any encroachment.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 75.

²¹⁰G. Robinson Lees, “Across Southern Bashan,” *The Geographical Journal* 5, no. 1, (1895): 5-6.

In the following decades, Circassians transformed themselves into an integrated society of the region. They became the chief enemies of bedouin and Druzes of the region. They had formed alliances with diverse local groups while protecting their self-interests. Circassian settlers made alliances with other bedouin groups against the Druze and quickly adapted to the region's changing dynamics. Rather than being the passive actors of the region, they established interest groups and inserted themselves into domestic affairs.²¹¹ While Circassians were becoming active actors of the frontier, they were also exposed to hostilities from leading local forces and had to form new relations to protect themselves. These new relations re-established in the region with the settlers would radically change the semi-independent life of local forces.

4.4.2 State, Circassian and Druze in Quneitra

After the events of 1860 in Mount Lebanon, the Druze population of Hawran gradually increased. The population and their authority in the region grew so much so that even the region was named Jabal al-Druze after them. Unlike the Bedouin, the Druze tribes were settled communities, but they were almost semi-independent like the other inhabitants of the region. The centralization policies of the state influenced their autonomy and caused severe conflicts with the central authority. One strategic feature was the existence of advanced spatial networks among Druze communities in Greater Syria. Although these networks were damaged from time to time due to the conflicts among prominent Druze families, they became challenging opponents of the Ottoman authority when the common enemy was found. Another aspect that made the Druze population a threat against the Ottoman Empire was the influence of Britain. The Druze community regarded Britain as their primary guardian and considered themselves to be under British protection. Therefore the British had a peculiar interest in the policies concerning the Druze in the empire. During the conflicts with the Ottoman state in 1896, one British consular report stated that "...the confident belief, engraved in the mind of every Druze, that the British Government will exert their influence, as they have always done..".²¹² The government wanted to eliminate this influence by means of exerting its authority on the Druze population.

²¹¹Isa Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878-1939 Migration in a Post-Imperial World*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013), 49.

²¹²TNA. FO 424/188 No. 247, 7 September 1896.

In the district of Quneitra, Majdal Shams was the one large village populated by Druzes. It was situated along the way between Mount Lebanon and Jabal al-Druze. Meanwhile, in Lebanon, most of the Druze population were concentrated in the district of Shuf, with a population of 40,000 inhabitants.²¹³ With these regions, the Druze network between Mount Lebanon and Quneitra in the northernmost side of Hawran was formed. Connecting these two places were two other large Druze villages, Hasbaya and Rashaya, on the western foot of Mount Hermon. Thus, Majdal Shams served as an intermediary location in the northwestern part of the district of Quneitra and linked the region with the Jabal al-Druze in the south. This connection was also the concern of Ottoman officials. The district governor of Hasbaya wrote a complaint concerning the possible afflictions that the Druzes of Majdal Shams may execute against the people of Hawran and demanded that a gendarme unit be sent to the region to counter this problem. Further in the document, governor emphasized how Druzes assembled and turned the region into a centre of banditry with their mischief.²¹⁴ In order to prevent this situation, he suggested that a sub-district should be formed by adding nine more villages from Quneitra and three villages from Wadi al-Ajam to Majdal Shams in July 1883. Furthermore, he added that a governor and unit of gendarme should permanently be present to keep the order.²¹⁵ Especially in the time of conflicts, Majdal Shams was a critical town with its size and population. Therefore, the Ottoman government, similar to other areas, wanted to extend its power and prevent a possible Druze unity in future strifes.

Circassian refugees were settled closely to this particular Druze village in Quneitra. Similar to the other inhabitants of the region initially, the two groups had a conflicted relationship. In a few decades, they were became the prominent rivals of the region. Against the Druze, Circassians became the protector of the state's interest, and in every chance, they attacked the Druzes of Majdal. Since Circassians regarded as intruders by the Druze, the enmity was mutual.²¹⁶ The first instances between the two were mostly on land disputes. One Druze petition written from Majdal Shams claimed that the Circassians attacked them several times and killed more than fifty men and that ongoing problem forcing them to reside at the Mount Hermon. The

²¹³Firro, 171.

²¹⁴Kuneytra kazasına merbut Mecdel Şems karyesi Dürzilerinin toplamı Havran kurra-ı ahalisine bir sarkıntılık icra eylemleri melhuz olduğundan bahisle bu misillü hâlât-ı nâbecânın vuku'ına meydan verilmemek üzere bir bölük süvari jandarmasının olhavalide seyyar bulundurulması lüzumu Hasbeya kazası kaymakamlığından iş'ar olunmakdan... BOA, ŞD. 2274/41 (22 Haziran 1299, 4 July 1883).

²¹⁵Mecdele kurbiyeti bulunan ve Kuneytraya tabi' olan kurradan dokuz ve Şam sancağına tabi' Vadi el-Acem kazalarından üç ki cem'an on iki köyün mezkur Mecdel Şemse ilhakıyla karye-i mezkurenin bir nahiye teşkiline rukub ve nüzule müktedir bir müdür ta'yiniyle me'anına yarım bölük jandarma verilerek orada daimi suretle bir heyet-i hükümetin mevcut bulundurulmasıyla havali-i merkumenin devam-ı emn-ü aşayişi müvafık-ı hal ve maslahat bulunmuş idüğüne.. Ibid.

²¹⁶Schumacher, *The Jaulan*, 59.

Syrian governor responded to this petition by defending the Circassians and stated that the reason for the attack was, in fact, self-defence.²¹⁷ These conflicts mostly resolved with the interference of gendarme and remained as isolated conflicts between these two groups of the region. However, the following decades witnessed the escalation of the conflicts. In September 1894, a petition from Quneitra reported that a gang under the leadership of ten Druze of Majdal Shams attacked and plundered a Circassian house and assaulted his family. This situation aroused other Circassians, and in a conflict that ensued, 100 Circassians died. In addition, the report claimed that these groups had close connections with Druzes in Lebanon, and they planned to attack the Circassians as an alliance in advance.²¹⁸

The inclination to collective action was extended even to the high-level Druze officials. The governor of Shuf and his relatives were accused several times for their provocative actions to ignite strife between Druzes and Circassians.²¹⁹ In January 1895, the Muslim inhabitants of Shuf compiled a joint petition that described these incitements and pointed on the injustice made on Circassians. Mir Mustafa Raslan, the governor of Shuf, was accused of inciting the Druzes of Majdal Shams against the Circassians of Mansura and causing their houses to be burned down. Further, the compensations for the casualties of Circassian was charged as 1.000 Ottoman liras. Mir Mustafa organized the Druzes of Shuf to grant this sum for the Druzes of Majdal Shams. This attempt was a clear sign of supporting the Druzes to provoke and encourage them against the Circassians for the petitioners.²²⁰ This Druze coalition formed against the Circassians in Jawlan led to a gradual rise of tension in the region and drove the Circassians to form counter alliances in the following years.

When the state's policies to extend centralization in the region became more noticeable, Druze opposition against the state became intensified. Consequently, with the increase of the conflict between the state and the Druze, the encounters with the Circassians escalated and took a new form. The leading Druze family, the Atrashs, had the governorship of Jabal al-Druze. However, following the death of İbrahim

²¹⁷BOA, BEO. 420/31486 (7 Haziran 1310, 19 June 1894).

²¹⁸on şahsın müstemirran Devlet-i 'Aliyye 'aleyhinde fesad ve 'isyan tertibiyle meşgul olup ma'iyyetlerindeki 'avanelerince kat'-i tarik ve selb-i rahat-ı ebna-yı sebil kastıyla oraya buraya i'zam-ı fitne ihdasına elverişli bir mesele ihdasına ikdam etmekte oldukları dahi merhumlar Çerkes muhacirlerinin birinin hanesine hücum bulabildikleri eşyalarını gasb ve haremının 'ırzına tasallud etdiklerinden ve şu vuku'da bir de hetk-i 'ırz meselesi zuhur etmesiyle Çerkesleri 'umumen heyecana getirip muhafaza-yı 'ırz ve can için müdafa'aya mecbur edip zaten ta'arruza hazır bulunan Dürzilerle vuku'bulan 'arbedede Çerkeslerden 100 kişinin vefatına sebebiyet verdikleri.. BOA, BEO. 481/36005 (10 Eylül 1310, 22 September 1894).

²¹⁹BOA, Y.A.HUS. 305/41 (25 Temmuz 1310, 6 August 1894).

²²⁰Kuneytra kazasının Mansura nam karyesiyle civarlarında bulunan karyelerde sakin biraderlerimiz Çerkes-i İslamiyelerini katl ve hanelerini tedmir etmekle Mecdel Şems ahali-i Dürzisini tahrik ve iğva eden Çebel-i Lübnan mutasarrıfıyet-i celilesi dahilinde Şuf kazasının kaymakamlığı Mir Mustafa Raslan olduğu bizde muhakkak ve müekked olmuştur. BOA, DH.MKT. 292/54 (10 Receb 1312, 7 January 1895).

el-Atrash, the new governors were Damascene Muslims directly appointed by the state. This policy change deteriorated the delicate relations with the state. In 1895 the Ottomanization of Hawran intensified, and authorities were determined to enforce conscription on inhabitants.²²¹ The major conflicts between the state and the Druzes took place based on this policy change. At the same time, the Druzes would not willingly accept these sanctions and began to prepare for resistance. "Signals of convocation [for war] by means of great bonfires; the signals started up from Jabal al-Duruz, were perceived in Qunaytira [region] where they have been repeated on Jabal ash-Shaykh [Hermon] and from there they were transmitted to the Lebanon."²²² During these conflicts, Circassians were influential in the defence of Quneitra. The immediate impact was made on the Druze communication line in Greater Syria. While the Druzes of Majdal Shams struggled with the Circassian attacks, an effective Druze alliance could not be built through the regions of Mount Lebanon and Jabal al-Druze.

While the Ottoman troops march towards the Jabal al-Druze from Damascus, the possible opposition by the Druze villages along the way was apparent. In Jawlan, Majdal Shams was the main threat for the marching troops and Circassians frequently attacked Druzes during state campaigns in the region. For example, in early December 1895, Circassian irregulars attacked the village of Hina and killed many Druzes. As a counterattack, Druzes attacked the Circassian village of Mansura but were defeated by the Circassians numbered 1,500 men and lost 150 men themselves. On this event, Memduh Pasha, appointed commander by Constantinople, arrived at Majdal Shams and took the region with little fighting.²²³ During these conflicts, Majdal Druzes complained about the harassments of Circassians with referring to their casualties of two hundred men.²²⁴ Further, with the alliance of bedouin and Kurdish tribes in the Jawlan, the Druzes of Majdal Shams were suppressed who were forced to retreat to Mount Hermon.²²⁵ In this way, despite the army's high casualties due to inadequate food and weather problems, Majdal Shams was occupied.

Under severe winter conditions, sickness and difficult transportation of equipment on muddy soil worn out the army. On the other hand, the Druzes could not be united and lacked proper leadership, which led to their failure to achieve significant

²²¹Firro, 28-31.

²²²MAE, CPC, Turquie-Damas, vol. 17, telegram; Drummond-Hay to Ambassador, 8 November 1895. in Firro, 32.

²²³TNA. FO 424/184 No.797, 4 December 1895.

²²⁴BOA, I.MTZ.CL. 7/314 (21 Tegrin-i Sani 1311, 3 Aralık 1895).

²²⁵TNA. FO 424/184 No. 866, 12 December 1895.

progress. Under these conditions, an agreement signed in February 1896 with the terms of surrendering of rifles, and acceptance of conscription, land registration and tax payment by the Druze community.²²⁶ However, in the process of title registration in summer, Druzes and the local Arab population still resisted the process.²²⁷ After the agreement between Arabs and the state the Druzes could not advance in conflict and expressed their inconveniences in Hawran. One prominent issue was that the Circassian abuse that were continuing since the events of winter 1895-96.²²⁸ The state aimed to destroy the Druze community with surrounding loyal groups. This policy would help the obedience of Druzes to the central authority. Circassians, with their gendarme, was one prominent group that helped the government to subdue the Druzes in the region. In September 1896, the Druzes accepted the defeat and consented to pay taxes. In fact, Circassian raids caused heavy losses for the Druzes in Leja in the conflicts. Nevertheless, they were hesitant in the matter of conscription; if the other local groups did not perform it, they would be outrun by them, and their chance of survival would be at great risk.²²⁹

Circassian refugees always were sided with the Ottoman state against the Druzes in Hawran. The process of the expansion of Ottomanization of the Druze people strengthened with the Circassian assistance. Notably, in the Majdal Shams region, the strong Druze presence was destroyed, and in times of heavy battles with the state, the unity of Druzes was blocked. Even in times of peace, the Circassians suppressed the Druze groups and prevented their recovery. Thus, the state actively used the groups in the region against the Druzes, rather than only making military interventions with its army. The Circassians, who already had numerous problems with the Druzes, quickly adapted to this policy and, acting to their own advantage, also plundered the villages emptied by the Druzes frequently. As a result, while the state succeeded to expand its authority on Druzes, the Circassians strengthened their place as a prominent local force of the region.

4.4.3 Circassian and Bedouin Relations in Quneitra

The bedouin population of Hawran essentially lived as nomads, unlike the settled Druze groups. This nomadic custom was the leading issue for the state to impose

²²⁶TNA. FO 424/186 No. 285, 24 February 1896.

²²⁷TNA. FO 424/187 No. 186, 19 June 1896.

²²⁸TNA FO 424/188 No. 54, 7 July 1896.

²²⁹Ibid., No. 247, 3 September 1896.

its authority on the region. The Circassians were settled in the pastoral lands of Bedouins, and this limited their mobilization. Thus, they regarded the Circassian refugees as the government's instruments that helped them restrain the traditional life of the Bedouins. The conflicts with Bedouins emerged in connection to land tenure. However, after the integration of Circassians to Hawran, the two groups improved their relations. They formed alliances against common enemies and even created close social relations with intergroup associations.

The bedouin tribes' perception of Circassian refugees had negative connotations. Since many tribes had to move from their lands due to Circassian settlements, the identification of new settlers as intruders was common. The state wanted to transform bedouin tribes into civilised Ottomans like the other inhabitants of the frontiers. The Circassian expansion in the region was desired and strategically applied by the state. Against this policy, bedouin tribes essentially were given two options; they would either turn into a settled society or retreat into the depths of the desert. During his observations in Jawlan, Schumacher noted his bedouin guide's reproach on Circassians when they visited a former tribal land as, "Ah ya Tcherkes! 'Woe to you Circassians,' called out my Bedawin at this explanation, 'You rob us of all of our memorials, our consecrated places, and drive us back into the stony wilderness, but Allahu Akbar!'"²³⁰ This grievance was natural because various tribes had to abandon their long-held lands and accused the Circassians for it.

The Na'im tribe established between Jawlan to Nawa in Hawran, systematically pushed eastward to abandon the fertile lands of Jawlan to Circassian settlements.²³¹ Some Turcoman tribes in northern Quneitra suffered from a similar fate due to the expansion of Circassian settlements in the region; they were driven to the region's southern parts.²³² Without a doubt, these were notable successes for the state in the progress of integrating the region. Circassian settlements served as an effective tool. Even though the central government's support was the main component of their achievement against the edouin tribes, characteristics of the Circassians also complemented this advantage. The warlike features of the Circassians were emphasized nearly in all accounts that mention them.

The Circassian knows nothing of trembling, whoever approaches. They are trained to arms from their youth. Their weapons are vastly superior to those of the Arab, and every man of them is a dead shot with the rifle.

²³⁰Schumacher, 69.

²³¹Ibid., 89-90.

²³²Ibid., 189.

They have established for themselves a reputation for perfect fearlessness, determined courage in conflict, and relentless severity in exacting vengeance when injured. Men think twice before attacking them.²³³

The presence of the Circassians, together with the privileges bestowed by the state, created a new powerful force in the region. They were attested to weaken the ultimate authority of the bedouin tribes in deserted regions. Circassians, who had to fulfil this task to maintain their own existence, combined their fearless character with the advantages they were given and frequently clashed with the Bedouins of the region.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the leading largest bedouin tribe of Jawlan was the Fadl. They were using the fertile lands of Quneitra in summer for grazing their animals. However, as early as the Circassians settled in the region, the two communities were clashed for the area's resources. In August 1880, after two years of the mass settlement of Circassians in Quneitra, a fight broke out between a bedouin from the Fadl tribe and a Circassian about the right to water cattle at a spring. The Circassian shot the other's cattle, and himself was shot dead by the bedouin. This collision led to a tribal conflict with the involvement of several hundred men. While Circassians lost fourteen men, the Fadl had ten casualties.²³⁴ Another land dispute was reported by the petition of the tribe of Kasrin. The petition sent by the Muhammed Talat and Ahmed İbrahim on behalf of the tribe stated that the Kasrin tribe was using the land of Tevziye village for over thirty years, and it was registered in state records. However, they wanted to be removed from the land since the Circassians of Quneitra were given the same area.²³⁵ They demanded from the state to resolve this mischief.

Essentially, the complaints were mutual. Circassian refugees of Quneitra petitioned the government about the atrocities the local population made upon them.²³⁶ Moreover, Circassians tended to sustain their interests in land disputes. To give an example, in June 1909, the Adl tribe, who came early to the pastoral lands due to the drought, states that Circassians of Quneitra stole a few hundred camels and took them to the village of Marjeyoun for sale. Against a possible retaliation of the Adl tribe, the government ordered the camels to be found and returned immediately. A unit of gendarme that was not composed of Circassians was sent to the region to

²³³W. Ewing, "A Journey in the Hauran," *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, 1895, 64.

²³⁴TNA. FO 424/107 No. 89, 20 August 1880.

²³⁵BOA, DH.MKT. 541/54 (2 Temmuz 1318, 15 July 1902).

²³⁶BOA, DH.MKT. 1010/71 (7 Eylül 1321, 20 September 1905).

ensure the order.²³⁷

One notable dispute that became serious occurred between Circassians of Mansura and the Fadl tribe in 1903. As usual, the problem started as a land dispute, but it grew into a significant issue, reached as far as Sublime Porte and posed a vital difficulty for the local government actors. The chief of the Circassian community in Mansura, Mehmed Rashid, wrote a petition on 9 March 1903 about how the tribe of al-Fadl illegally took their fields. The prominent chief of the Fadl tribe was Mir Muhammed al-Fa'ur, and he took various positions in the administration of Quneitra for decades. He was accused of extortion of the Circassian lands with mischiefs in the Syrian government. When the Circassians opposed giving up their field under their possession for twenty-seven years, a conflict started between two groups and sixty-four Circassians were murdered.²³⁸ As Rashid stated in his petition, he went to the governor of Syria, Nazım Pasha, and expressed his complaints about this injustice. Although the governor understood the situation and stood by the Circassians, Husrev Pasha, the gendarmerie commander, had a greater influence in the province. When the governor assigned two gendarme officials to examine the matter in Mansura, Rashid claimed that Husrev Pasha sent word to the Fadl chief to burn their own huts made of palm leaves and blame the Circassians.²³⁹ After Following this accusation, some Circassians were imprisoned by the orders of Husrev Pasha. Realizing that he could not resist the injustices in the provincial administration, Mehmed Rashid found the solution by applying it to the Sublime Porte.²⁴⁰

Further in the petition, accusations against Husrev Pasha were continued. In order to get the medals and rewards awarded by the state for the resolution of conflicts, he made agreements with the tribal chiefs and pretended that he resolved the conflicts that he started by setting the two tribes against each other.²⁴¹ These allegations

²³⁷BOA, DH.MKT. 2861/21 (15 Haziran 1325, 28 June 1909).

²³⁸...tasdik edilen hudud dahilinde olup 27 seneden beri Mansura nam karye-i mezkur Çerkeslerinin sebatları altında bulunan tarlaları alıp oranın meşhur 'aşairinden Fazıl 'aşireti reisi şeyhleri Mir Muhammed el-Fa'ur 'aşiretine verilmek ve bu yüzden her vakt gibi istifade etmek için vali-i vilayeti türlü hile ve desise ile kandırarak Çerkesleri tazyik ve 'aşaire koltuk vererek 'aşair-i merkumun Çerkes karyesine hücumuyla Çerkeslerden 64 kişiyi katl ettirdiği... BOA, ŞD.2296/17.2 (11 Şubat 1319, 9 March 1903).

²³⁹Hüsrev Paşa mezkur 'aşiret reislerine haber göndererek hurma yapraklarıyla m'alul kulubelerinin bir iki tanesini ihrak etsinlerde Çerkesler yakdılar ve karyemize hücum etdiler diyerek vali-i vilayete telgraf keşide etsinler deyu tenbih eylemesi üzerine keşide eyledikleri telgrafa vali paşa hazretleri dahi doğru zannıyla zaman-ı vuku'atı ta'yin edilenden evvela yanımızda bulunup bir lahza yanlarımızdan ayrılmayan mazlum Çerkesleri habse ilka etdirildi. Ibid.

²⁴⁰Hüsrev Paşanın re'iyine vali dahi muhalefet edemeyeceği ve şimdiye kadar Suriye vilayet-i celilesinde görülmemiş bir büyük — muhakkak olduğu ve paşa-yı müşarünilehin zulm-u garazına ahali tahammül edemeyerek galeyana geleceklerini anlaşılması üzerine dersa'adete 'avdete mecburet gelinmiştir. Ibid.

²⁴¹Hüsrev Paşa hazretlerinin efa'latı bundan 'ibaret olmayıp kendisini hükümet-i seniyyeye işgüzar göstermek suretiyle rütbe ve haysiyetini arttırmak ve hemde nakden istifade etmek üzere 'aşair reisine rütbe ve nişan aldıracağını va'd ederek iki 'aşireti birbirine bozuşdurarak aralarında ihtilal çıkarmak ve ihtilali izale ettim diyerek mazlumanın dökülen kana karşı iftiharane istifadesiyle mesrurane paşalık paşa-yı müşarünileyhin en güzel ef'alindendir. Ibid.

reveal how despite being loyal servants of the state, the Circassians could in fact oppose the local government, primarily due to certain injustices in domestic politics. When the local administration was unable to resolve the issue, Circassians applied to the Sublime Porte with the belief of receiving proper justice. Thus, this petition was written on behalf of the Mansura Circassians, which expressed the loss of rights due to the cooperation of the local administration with the tribes. Since this situation turned into a serious problem, the Mansura Circassians were forced to turn to the Sublime Porte. As a result of a detailed examination done by the Syrian administration, a decree was published on 7 June 1903.

With the investigation of accusations, the administrative council of Syria found Circassians guilty. However, contrary to the claims, it was concluded that the region was registered on the Fadl tribe, and Circassians illegally expanded beyond their area's borders. In order to support its claims, the council presented the documents that defined the water and land borders, which were agreed upon by al-Fadl and the Circassians back in July 1883. Moreover, the claims of Mehmed Rashid were denied, and it was alleged that he was a fraud and could not be the representative of the Circassians. In fact, the Circassian Hacı Süleyman was on his way to Sublime Porte, and he encountered Mehmed Rashid, who exiled from the Province of Hudavendigâr. Rashid convinced Süleyman that he could take the land from the Fadl tribe, and upon this promise, he collected 150 kuruş from Circassians of Mansura. Believing in his deceptions, the Circassians attacked the tribe, burned their houses and killed their men. Thus, the Fadl tribe were usurping the land was not accurate, and in fact, the Circassians constantly attacked the Fadl tribe to seize their land.²⁴²

As a solution to the problem, although the region they wanted could not be given to the Circassians because it was registered on Algerian settlers and Ali Pasha, 15,000 acres of territory in another region would be given to those in need. If they oppose this region and do not want to settle down, they could go to Zerqa, where a new refugee group was settling.²⁴³ The decree was finally presented to the Sublime Porte. Therefore, while the Circassians of Mansura claimed that the Fadl tribe violated their rights, local administration could not resolve their problem. Later, they tried to apply to the Sublime Porte to complain about both the Fadl tribe and the corruptions in the local government, but they could not reach an efficient result because the local government stood by the Fadl tribe and Husrev Pasha and ruled

²⁴² Arab el-Fazılın yed-i zabt ve istila eylediği katiyen bi-esas olup bilakis bazı Çerkeslerin şunun bunun iğfalatına kapılarak 'urban-ı merkume arazisine tecavüz ve ta'addi ve bazen dahi ihlal-i asayişe badi olabilecek darb ve cerh ve ihrak ve mezru'ata sevk-i mevaşi gibi cüret-kerane ma'lumata ta'addi eyledikleri anlaşılıp... BOA, ŞD. 2296/17.1 (25 Mayıs 319, 7 June 1903).

²⁴³ ...mezkur Mansura karyesi civarında Garir el-Büstan ve Garir el-Camusi namında ve takriben 15.000 dönüm kadar vüs'at-ı cesametinde iki kıt'a malul-i miri arazi bulunup bunlardan lüzum-u mikdârı muhacirin-i merkumeden araziye sahihen muhtağ oldukları anlaşılacaklara... Ibid.

out the Circassians. Thus, apart from the issue's content, it is understood that how the relationship between Circassians and the state was fragile and prone to change depending on the regional balance of power. In this power struggle, the Circassians also sought all the shares they could get from the region. However, the conflict of interests made them confronted with the state, and they could not always benefit from being the state's privileged community.

Nevertheless, the conflicts did not turn into great enmities that would permanently make the bedouin and Circassians foes. One reason was their acknowledgement of the Druzes as the common enemy. Bedouin tribes were not as detached from the state as much as Druzes. Notably, the Fadl tribe's loyalty to the state is regularly attributed in archival documents. During the conflicts with the state, even though they sometimes supported the Druzes in the first place, later, the Sunni Arab population permanently changed sides and clashed on the side of the state.²⁴⁴ While Druzes were supported by the foreign powers and separated by their sect from the Circassians and Sunni Arabs, the relationship between these three groups was shaped based on these differences and was considerably diverse. Circassians actively formed alliances with the local Sunni Arabs against the Druze opposition. These alliances expanded their relations to other spheres of life. After two decades of their initial settlement, Circassians even started to intermarry with the Arab population.²⁴⁵

The incorporation of Circassian power to the Hawran allowed the creation of new centres of power. The alliance with the state strengthened the application of centralization policy and ensured the security of the region. While the travellers suffered dramatically from bedouin attacks and thieves during their journeys, the expansion of state authority eliminated these issues.²⁴⁶ In Jawlan, Circassians drove away the bedouin from the region, and the bedouin possessed a small area in the northwest of Jawlan.²⁴⁷ Although they have been considered as the group that the Ottomans used as an instrument, the Circassians became the active actors of both the centre and the periphery. The presence of the Circassians, together with the privileges bestowed by the state, changed the profile of the region. They weakened the ultimate authority of the bedouin tribes and contributed to forming a stable society. They had diverse identities as a frontier community. While representing the sultan's authority in the region in the name of Islam, they did not remain silent about the injustices they experienced. They reacted against every action they perceived

²⁴⁴TNA. FO 424/188 No. 53, 25 June 1896.

²⁴⁵Schumacher, "Notes from Jedur," 192.

²⁴⁶Schumacher, 51.

²⁴⁷Ibid., 52.

as unfair, and they rebelled by adopting the essential feature of the region. They tended to preserve their interests in the region by allying with different groups.

5. CIRCASSIANS IN GOVERNMENT: NETWORKS, EDUCATION AND CIVIL SERVICE IN DISTRICT OF QUNEITRA

5.1 Formation of Circassian Networks

The exile of Circassians from their homelands to the Ottoman Empire changed the various aspect of traditional Caucasian society. In this new realm, the identities were created on shared experiences and relations. An essential trait for being considered a leader in these new Circassian settlements was one's connections with the resources the tribe needed. Circassians gathered around the leaders that could form bureaucratic networks or had the knowledge of Turkish.²⁴⁸ Indeed, İsmail Aga, the leader of one of the first large Circassian settlement in Quneitra, was familiar with Turkish.²⁴⁹ Even though the refugees were settled as groups with their relatives, they lost countless members during the journey. The remaining ones formed their own new societies to act collaboratively. This community building was made to maintain their traditional social structure and stand together against other powerful tribes in the region.

After the implementation of Vilayet Law of 1864, as a frontier district Quneitra had administrative councils (*meclis-i idare*) and regular courts (*mahkeme-i bidayet*). Over the years, new administrative bodies were established in the region, like the education department (*maarif şubesi*) or the chamber of agriculture (*ziraat odası*). The administrative centre of the district of Quneitra was situated in the town of Quneitra, which was greatly populated by Circassian refugees. Consequently, Circassian refugees were highly engaged in this political sphere of the district of Quneitra. They tried to integrate themselves further into the system and actively participated in administrative positions. While initial networks were created through the military

²⁴⁸Shami, 147.

²⁴⁹Oliphant, 49.

forces with the creation of Circassian gendarmes, later Circassian leaders occupied various places also in local administration.

Over the yearbooks of the Province of Syria, the administrative roles undertaken by the Circassians can be followed. The first appearance of a Circassian in the administrative council of Quneitra coincides with the year 1885 when Circassian Mehmed Bey was appointed to the position of deputy judge (*naib*). The council, along with Mehmed Bey, consisted of İsmail Efendi as the fiscal director (*mal müdürü*) and two correspondence clerks (*tahrirat katibi*). In the body of the municipal council, Dagestani Ali Efendi was among the five members.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, the chief of the Fadl tribe, Mir Muhammed al-Fa'ur, was a member of the court and, in the following years, would reside in various offices of administration.²⁵¹ The appearance of Circassians in administration gradually increased over the next decade. Especially in the education department, Circassian dominance stood out. While in 1887, two Circassians, Ali Rıza Efendi and Dagestani Imam Abdul al-Hac Efendi held the office, two years later, we see Circassian Imam Hüseyin Efendi appointed together with them.²⁵²

Until the 1890s, the Circassian representatives in the Quneitran administration could not keep their positions for long terms. They were replaced within one or two years. However, beginning from the 1890s, certain Circassian leaders held their positions for years. One prominent figure was Mufti Ali Rıza Efendi. In 1891 he became appointed as the mufti of the district of Quneitra and held this position at least for nine years.²⁵³ The last yearbook of 1900 also shows Hacı Ali Rıza Efendi as mufti.²⁵⁴ Along with the position of mufti, he was also present in the education department with his official title. According to the Vilayet Law of 1864, each district would have three elected members within the administrative council. The selection process was conducted through the body of elders. While the Ottoman subjects over eighteen years with a minimum tax payment of fifty kuruş annually selected the council of elders, this council selected the elective member of the administration. However, the administrative officers' eligible candidate list was directly prepared by the state, and the council of elders had to elect from that list of names.²⁵⁵ The person chosen

²⁵⁰Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1302/1885, 188.

²⁵¹Ibid. 187.

²⁵²Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1303/1887, 195.

²⁵³Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1307-1308/1891, 131. See Appendix 6.

²⁵⁴Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1318/1900, p.215.

²⁵⁵Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 147-148.

among the Circassians with these elections was Pakmiz Bey. He were an elected member of the administration assembly from 1895 to 1900.²⁵⁶ The chief of the Fadl tribe Mir Muhammed Fa'ur was also a permanent elected member in the assembly.

The leading political figures of the tribal groups represented their tribes in the administration of the district. Circassian refugees integrated themselves into every aspect of Quneitra. They did not restrain themselves in the military forces and made their way to the region's administration. Ali Rıza Efendi continued his position as the mufti nearly for a decade while Pakmiz Bey was elected by the Circassian community for five years to represent them in the administrative council. Many others held several positions, but Circassians mainly occupied the body of education. These positions created new opportunities for the development of communal network. However, this was the same for other tribes of Quneitra. As the Circassians of Mansura claimed when they had a significant conflict on land tenure with al-Fadl, the bedouin tribe had a notable influence on Husrev Pasha. Therefore, the administrative positions did not guarantee the support of Damascus administration. However, despite the general view of Circassians as only being the soldiers of the Ottoman Empire, they also entered into the administration, not just the first generation but also the second generation, with their high education rates, to become civil servants in Greater Syria.

In Quneitra, Circassians formed numerous networks through marriages, economic and political activities. These relations created new identities for Circassian communities throughout the empire. Back in the Caucasus, the class and tribal divisions that existed in their traditional practices were replaced by a single identity, as refugees in Ottoman lands. Like the settlements of Quneitra, other Circassian groups in Transjordan or Anatolia did suffer from local tribes and thus had to preserve their group identity.²⁵⁷ The pre and post-Ottoman adversities bound the Circassian communities and formed a collective society. After their initial settlements, the next generations acted on these identifications. This educated generation with a high self-awareness managed to create a new Circassian association based in Istanbul.

After the reign of Abdulhamid II, the support for Circassians accelerated and expanded by the new government. Just after reinstating the constitution in 1908, Fuad Pasha, as himself being a Circassian, requested the emancipation of Circas-

²⁵⁶Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1312-1318/1895-1900.

²⁵⁷For conflicts of Circassians with local population in Anatolia see Hakan Asan, Devlet, Aşiret ve Eşkiya Bağlamında Osmanlı Muhacir İskân Siyaseti (1860-1914),” *Göç Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2, no.3, 2016. Oktay Özel, “Muhacirler, Yerliler ve Gayrimüslimler: Osmanlı'nın Son Devrinde Orta Karadeniz'de Toplumsal Uyumun Sınırları Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler,” *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 5, 2007.

sian girls in the palace from Abdulhamid.²⁵⁸ Thus, the signal of changes in policies on Circassians was presented just before the end of the Hamidian regime. The Young Turk cadres consisted of numerous Circassian members, and after the revolution, this influenced the policies toward the Circassian communities. The period of the Unionists was the most dynamic period for the development of the North Caucasians and described as the golden age of Circassians.²⁵⁹ Several initiatives caused the social and political transformation of the Circassian society in this era. The most important and influential step was establishing Circassian associations, which aimed to revive and endorse the education, culture, and cooperation among Circassians. The leading one of these organizations was the Circassian Union and Support Association (*Çerkes İttihat ve Teavün Cemiyeti*), established in 1908 and headed by Fuad Pasha. The organization founded in İstanbul, and its primary purposes were educating the Circassians, supporting trade among them, ensuring the allocation of cultivated lands and the constitutional administration's protection. To this end, the association founded many schools, newspapers and magazines.²⁶⁰

The establishment of Circassian associations led to the greater integration of the Circassians. Countless members from different regions of Ottoman lands united and collaborated under this organization. Moreover, with newspapers, the perspectives and problems of Circassian society became visible. In 1911 the first Circassian newspaper started to be issued in İstanbul under the name of *Guaze* (guide). The newspaper was published in Turkish and Circassian, written with Arabic alphabets.²⁶¹ Numerous writers raised in different parts of the Ottoman lands united under this newspaper and had the opportunity to express their views as an exiled community. One prominent figure for Circassians of Quneitra in this association was Ahmed Nuri Tsago. He was born in 1891, and after his rüşdiyye education in Quneitra, he went to Damascus İdadi School. He completed his education in İstanbul with a degree in political science. He was an active member of the Circassian organization, and for the community, he had written several books. The leading ideal of the members of the Circassian society was to reclaiming of their homeland. Leaving their homeland meant losing their identity, and for reviving it, they wanted to reconnect with Caucasia. Hence, the Circassian Union and Support Association was sent a group of Circassians back to Caucasia. Ahmed Nuri was among them, and he maintained the cultural and intellectual exchanges between İstanbul and

²⁵⁸Erdem, *Köleliğin Sonu*, 185-186.

²⁵⁹Avagyan, *Çerkesler*, 129.

²⁶⁰Ibid., 130-133.

²⁶¹Ibid.133.

The influence of the Circassian Union and Support Association was expanded even to frontier regions through its members. The Guaze reached and read in Greater Syria by Circassian settlers. One branch of the association was established in Quneitra in July 1911. This pleasant news was published in Guaze with great detail. The opening of the branch exercised after the Friday pray along with the recitation of the Quran by Circassian Hafız Efendi. The association's declaration was read together with its Circassian translation in the presence of more than a thousand people.²⁶³ The establishment of a Circassian Union and Support Association branch indicates how the Circassians of Quneitra were integrated with the central actors and did not remain isolated in the frontier region. They built strong relations both with other Circassian groups and the leading intellectual ones.

Circassians in Quneitra were eager to improve their society with education and technology in every aspect of life. A Circassian chief in Bireyka stated his desire to have a railroad near their village to Schumacher in 1888.²⁶⁴ This desire for development was also expressed in the Guaze journal with a copy of the petition sent by Circassians of Quneitra to the government. The letter was complaining about the unfinished road between Damascus and Quneitra for twelve years. The petition made emphasis on the importance of the road network of a region to develop appropriately.²⁶⁵ However, despite continuous collecting taxes for the infrastructure, this vital line could not be finished; moreover, the bridges previously built were about the collapse due to neglect.²⁶⁶ The Circassians of Quneitra emphasised the locational and natural importance of the region and requested the completion of the road for better transportation, trade and connection. Circassians were conscious about their situations and actively provided the improvement of their region by pressing the government for cooperating with each other. A piece of news that would provide a suitable example of collective action reported in the Guaze was the

²⁶²Tsagua Nuri, Adige Tarihi, (İstanbul: Arpa Yayıncılık, 2016), pp.4-6. Sefer E.Berzeg, *Kafkas Diasporasında Edebiyatçılar ve Yazarlar Sözlüğü*, (Samsun: Nart Yayıncılık, 1995), 247-250.

²⁶³Geçen Cuma günü Cuma namazından sonra resm-i küşadeti (resmi açılış) kaza dahilindeki erbab-ı hamiyet yapmak için... Bini mütecaviz ictima' iden zevata birinci sınıf d'ava vekili Mehmed Sa'id Bey tarafından cemiyet-i merkeziyenin mufassal beyannamesi okunmuş ve Çerkesce tercümesi irad edilmiştir. Bunu mütea'kib Kuran ve mevlid-han-ı şehîr Çerkes Hafız Efendi tarafından ittihad ve te'avünün feva'idini mübeyyin ayet beyanatı havi aşr-ı şerif ile mevlid-i hazret-i nebevi kıra'at edilmiştir. Guaze, No.13, 4 July 1911, 8.

²⁶⁴Schumacher, 114.

²⁶⁵Herkesin malumudur ki bir milletin başlıca terakkisinin mühim kısmını teşkil iden mevaddın biri de yollardır.Yolları muntazam olan bir memleketin gerek techizat ve alet ve edevat-ı ziraiyeyi celb etmek ve gerekse sevkıyat-ı askeriye vesaire nokta-i nazarınca pek mühim bir kıymeti haizdir. Guaze, No.7, 18 May 1911, 3.

²⁶⁶"Kuneytra- Şam " şosesinin bu vecihle terk idilmesi acaba neden ilerü geliyor.Kazanın bedelat-ı nakdiyesi kazanın yapılacak yolları dururken niçün diğer kazanın şose yollarına sarf olunuyor. Ibid.

establishment of girls' schools in Amman by the donation of Mirza Pasha and the Circassian community.²⁶⁷

Consequently, the creation of this organization and Guaze newspaper helped to strengthen the networks of Circassians in Ottoman lands. From now on the Circassian communities all around the empire were linked to each other. The newspaper propagated the importance of education, unity, solidarity and Circassian identity frequently. Under these circumstances it was more than natural for the Circassians of Quneitra to get involved with the Circassian Union and Support Association. They were the active settlers of the region, and they expanded their networks whenever possible to adapt and later create a strong society in the edges of Syria. Therefore, they were active agents in various aspect of the empire in politics, economy, infrastructure and education. They adapted themselves into this new system they were dispatched to and stood up to every struggle with their resilience as a group. Their networks were reached out from the administration of frontiers to the empire's capital, and they used this opportunity to improve their regions. Consequently, the uninhabited fertile area of Jawlan became identified with the dedication and industriousness of Circassian settlers.

5.2 Education of Circassian Refugees in Quneitra

The Ottoman administration began to concentrate on education in the Province of Syria following the implementation of the Tanzimat reforms in the region. After the traumatic events of Mount Lebanon and Damascus in 1860, the state increased its efforts to centralise Syria properly.²⁶⁸ The initial step was to establish the first rüşdiyye schools of Damascus in 1861. Further, for the implementation of reforms, the previous practice of financing education through endowments had to be revised due to the corruption of its system. In Syria, the Muslim schools were run by individual endowments, and this system transformed into a tool for the protection of wealth rather than providing proper education.²⁶⁹ For this purpose, with the opening of new schools, it was decided to establish a Directorate of Schools in

²⁶⁷Guaze, No. 4, 27 April 1911, 8.

²⁶⁸Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Şam'da eğitim sorunu ve Tanzimat'ın Suriye'de geçerli kılınması meselesi (1861) (The issue of education in Damascus and the application of the Tanzimat in Syria (1861))," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 8, 2009, 99.

²⁶⁹Ibid., 111.

Damascus.²⁷⁰

Another issue that led to the acceleration of Ottoman schooling in the Province of Syria was the missionary schools. The local population, even the Sunni Bedouin, was started to attend the foreign schools of the region. British and French missionary schools had the chief influence on the local population. Druze notables were profoundly eager to have British funding for schooling.²⁷¹ Jesuit and Protestant missionary school activities increased through the nineteenth century in Greater Syria. The most vigorous missionary activities were made in interior regions of the Syrian desert by Jesuits. The church schools were also funded by them in Hawran. Druzes, Shia Muslims and some bedouin tribes requested funding from France.²⁷² Consequently, French opened nine schools by 1885 in Hawran.²⁷³

The influence of foreign powers was disturbed the state, especially on the Bedouins who followed missionaries for financial concerns.²⁷⁴ In the face of this situation, the state attempted to exert a series of measures. Against the French missionaries, Hamdi Pasha requested a dozen teachers from the capital to educate the Bedouins prone to be deluded by foreign propaganda in Hawran, Hama and Balqa. After this request, the state emphasised the establishment of mosques and masjids along with schools to teach Sunni Hanafi Islam.²⁷⁵ Moreover, the bureaucratic pressure on missionary schools was increased by the government. In 1887, Naşid Pasha, governor of Syria, informed the consulates that schools within the provincial borders and operating without permission would be closed.²⁷⁶ The following year new governor Nazif Pasha after a meeting with Druze sheikhs, agreed upon that the Druze children would attend the Ottoman schools instead of the unlicensed Jesuit and Protestant ones. In order to meet the need for schools in the region, it was decided to open schools in five towns of Hawran.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁰Ibid., 115.

²⁷¹Caesar E. Farah, "Protestantism and British Diplomacy in Syria," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7, no. 3, (1976): 323.

²⁷²Emine Ö. Evered, *Empire and Education Under The Ottomans: Politics, Reform, and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks*, (London: I.B.Tauris, 2012), 113.

²⁷³Firro, *The Ottoman Reforms*, 210.

²⁷⁴Selçuk Akşin Somel, *Osmanlı'da Eğitimin Modernleşmesi (1839-1908)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2015), 290.

²⁷⁵Evered, 115-116.

²⁷⁶Ş.Tufan Buzpınar, "Suriye ve Filistin'de Avrupa Nüfuz Mücadelesinde Yeni Bir Unsur: İngiliz Misyonerleri (19. Yüzyıl)," *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 10, (2003): 117.

²⁷⁷...Cebel-i Dürüz'da bila-ruhsat mektebler küşad eden Cizvit ve Protestan rahiplerini de kabul ve çocuklarını o mekteblere idhal etmeyeceklerinden hükümetçe tensib olunacak mahallerde mektep küşadıyla çocuklarının ta'lim ve terbiyesine... BOA. Y.A Hus. 1305.12.17.216/60. in Samur, "Sultan II.Abdülhamid Yönetimi ve Havran Dürzileri," 87-88.

The schooling process of the population in Greater Syria implemented with an emphasis on proper Islam, which was the Sunni one for the state. In Hawran, the majority of the population consisted of Druzes and Bedouins. While Druzes possessed a definite diverse sect from Sunnism, Bedouins exercised their own traditional heterodox Islam. Therefore, the province's population was labelled as in a stage of savagery and ignorance, and education in Ottoman schools was the proper method to eradicate this situation. For the state, schooling was an institution for social discipline and modernization that was intensified throughout the nineteenth century.²⁷⁸ Integration of bedouin into the state would be provided with the promotion of Sunnification and loyalty to the caliphate and state through education with an emphasis on the teaching of Ottoman Turkish.²⁷⁹ Another concern was the elimination of administrative issues in the province. According to Cevdet Pasha, the biggest problem of the Ottomans in the region was the language barrier. Because of the officials who lacked knowledge of Arabic, the communication between the administrative regions could not be carried out properly, and it was caused disruptions in management.²⁸⁰ In this regard, the most significant advantage of the missionary schools was that their curriculum included informal Arabic and modern languages like French and English. Consequently, instead of local Muslims, non-Muslims occupied various offices with their higher educational assets in the administration.²⁸¹ Therefore, one primary purpose of Ottoman schooling was to acquire the Arabic Language for the Muslim population.

Circassian refugees were not labelled separate from the Druzes or bedouin regarding the schooling narratives of the state. Circassians were also practised far from the proper Islam. They were unaware of the teachings of Islamic rituals, carried pork and had a syncretic religion that resembles paganism and Christianity.²⁸² These practices were undoubtedly opposed the principles of Sunni Islam. Therefore, the refugee population was also called in need of salvation from ignorance like other inhabitants of the region. Thus, the first rüşdiyye in Quneitra established in 1881 and became the first Ottoman secondary school in the Hawran region.²⁸³ In 1885, Quneitra had one secondary and two primary schools. While the secondary school had thirty-two male students, the primary ones had one hundred and fifteen in total.

²⁷⁸Somel, 32.

²⁷⁹Ibid., 273.

²⁸⁰Buzpınar, "Ahmet Cevdet Paşa", 44.

²⁸¹Somel, "Şam'da Eğitim Sorunu", 112.

²⁸²Shami, 146.

²⁸³Ve bu kere Kuneytrada mekteb-i rüşdiye küşad olunmuşdur. Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1298/1881, 248.

Later in 1887, the first and only girl's school in Hawran was present in Quneitra with twenty-five students.²⁸⁴ On the other hand, there were three non-Muslim schools with one hundred and sixty students in the same district.²⁸⁵ Schooling of the region was continued with an emphasis on the degree of civilization of the local groups. In addition to the existing primary schools in Dar'a, Quneitra, Ajlun, Suwayda and Ahire, it was decided to open new primary schools and open a secondary school in the central province in July 1904. The purpose of the government was to eliminate the savagery and ignorance of the Druzes, Bedouin and Circassian population and civilize them through the teaching of Islamic principles on children.²⁸⁶

One document concerning the financial burden of schools that were established for the Circassian refugees reveals the situation of educational affairs in the Province of Syria. The request was directed to Sublime Porte by governor Nazım Hüseyin Pasha. The Circassian population was continuously expanded with further migrations in Hawran led to establishing schools for the refugees. However, the financial conditions of Circassians could not provide necessary taxing for the teacher salaries or building new schools. This financial lack led to teacher shortages and numerous complaints made by the Circassian population concerning their children's education. Thus, the governor requested the financial help of the capital to cover educational expenses.²⁸⁷ Indeed, the Circassian population was the most suitable group in Hawran to participate in government schools. They had both a settled society and had the closest ties with the government. In the early 1900s, their eagerness for education can be observed from the Circassian association established in İstanbul. The active participation of Circassians in schooling enabled them to raise numerous officer for the state.

The second generation of Circassians received their education in government schools and appointed as civil servants within the Province of Syria. Undoubtedly, the state was benefited from Circassian officers in many ways. The fact that the officers of this period knew Turkish and Arabic could have been a solution to the language problem in the province. While the Circassians, who also spoke their mother tongue,

²⁸⁴Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1303/1887, 210.

²⁸⁵Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1302/1885, 240-243.

²⁸⁶Dar'a ve Kuneytra ve Aclun ve Süveyde ve Ahire kazalarında mevcut mekteb-i ibtidaiyeye 'ilaveten icab eden köylerde lüzümü kadar mekteb-i ibtidaiye ve merkez livada dahi bir bab rüşdiye mektebi te'sis ve küşada ve sairenin eşkal-i lüzumu Havran mutasarrıflığına iş'ar olunacağı ve liva-i mezkur dahilinde bulunan ve henüz hal-i bedeviyette olan 'urban ile muhacirin-i Çerakesinin ve Dürzilerin tedricen daire-i medeniyetle idhali ile bulundukları hal-i vahşet ve cehaletten kurtarılmalari mekteb-i mezkurenin — şe'air-i İslamiye ve ma'arif-i ibtidaiyenin çocukda hüsn-i ta'limine vasita olup... BOA, DH.MKT. 866/57.

²⁸⁷... mumaileyhin maaşatının hükümetce tesviyesiyle muhtaç-ı ta'lim ve terbiye olan subyanın dahi ni'am-ı 'ulum ve ma'arifden behremend-i istifade olmaları esbabının istihsalı için her tarafından ale't-tevâlî müra-caatlar vuku' bulmaktadır. BOA, DH.MKT. 876/44 (16 Haziran 320, 29 June 1904).

might have helped in the placement of immigrants. In this respect, Circassian officers could be used in different areas if needed. While numerous Circassians from Greater Syria became officers, five of them registered from Quneitra. The first notable officer was Ahmed Muhtar Efendi, born in 1881 as the son of Circassian mufti Ali Rıza Efendi. He finished his primary and secondary schools in Quneitra. He after attended the Damascus idadi school and graduated with high honours. While he read and wrote Turkish and Arabic, he was familiar with Persian and French and could speak Circassian. With these competencies, he was stood out among other Circassian officials. On 21 April 1903, he was appointed to the town of Cevlan-ı Garbi in the districts of Quneitra with a salary of 250 kuruş.²⁸⁸ The administrative networks of Circassians were apparent in the career of this father and son. Ali Rıza Efendi as a refugee in this foreign land, made his way to Ottoman administration as Mufti for a decade and strengthened this tie by educating his son to be an officer of the state.

Saddedin Efendi was another Circassian refugee's son born in 1881. His academic life was followed the same path as Ahmed Muhtar. After he graduated from the rüşdiye of Quneitra, he attended the Damascus İdadi School. He was literate in Turkish and Arabic, also familiar with French and spoke his mother tongue Circassian. He started his career in Daraa station of Hijaz railway with 150 kuruş salary. Within two years, he was promoted to civil service of the station with a 600 kuruş salary. However, after four years in this position, he had to quit his post due to ill health. He was given several medals for his successful services.²⁸⁹ The rest of the three civil servants completed their education in the rüşdiye of Quneitra, and unlike the above officers, they did not attend the ibtidai school. Therefore, they were just literate in Arabic and Turkish and could speak Circassian. They were not familiar with French since they did not take ibtidai education in Damascus. Safer and Mehmed Hızır Efendis were appointed to the town of Cevlan-ı Garbi in Quneitra with a salary of 150 kuruş, similar to Ahmed Muhtar.²⁹⁰ İbrahim Hakkı appointed to the town

²⁸⁸ Kazayı mezkurda sıbyan mektebinde mukaddema-i 'ulumu ve mekteb-i rüşdiyesinde müretteb dersleri okuduktan sonra Şam mekteb-i 'İdadi-yi mülkiyesinde müretteb 'ulum ve fûnun bi't-tahsil a'la dereceden iki kıt'a şehadetname almıştır. Arabi ve Türkçe tekellüm ve kitabet eylediği ve Farsî ve Fransızcaya aşına idüğü ve Çerkesce söylediği tercüme-i hal varakasında mezkurdur. Bin üç yüz yirmi bir senesi Muharrem el-Haramının yirmi üçünde 8 Nisan 1319, 250 kuruş maaş ile Suriye vilayetinde Kuneytra kazasına muzaf (bağlı) Cevlan-ı Garbi nahiyesi müdiriyyetine ta'yîn olunmuştur. BOA, DH.SAİDd. 109, p.427, (8 Şubat 1329, 21 February 1914).

²⁸⁹ 20 Haziran 1326 istifa etmiş ve bulunduğu müddet zarfında görülen hüsn-ü hidematına binaen 1 Kanun-i evvel 1321 tarihinde Hicaz demiryoluna mahsus madalyalar ile gümüş liyakat nişanlarının i'tasıyla taltif edilmiştir. BOA, DH.SAİDd. 193, p.289, (2 Kanun-i evvel 1329, 15 December 1913).

²⁹⁰ Kasaba-yı mezkurda sıbyan mektebinde mukaadema-ı 'ulumu ve mekteb-i rüşdiyesinde müretteb dersleri okuyup 19 temmuz 1313 tarihli şehadetnameyi almıştır. Arabi ve Türkçe okuyup yazdığını ve Çerkesce tekellüm ettiği tercüme-i hal varakasında mündericidir. BOA.DH.SAİDd.160, p.399, (8 Haziran 1325, 21 June 1909). BOA, DH.SAİDd. 148, p.231, (20 Teşrin-i Evvel 1323, 2 December 1907).

of Zaviye in Quneitra with a half salary of 75 kuruş, and after one year, he received a promotion and started to receive full salary of 150 kuruş in the same town.²⁹¹

The educational policies of the Hamidian regime regarded the Circassian refugees as similar to the local population. Through government schooling, the state was propagated with the notions of ideal Ottoman citizens. Circassian loyalty of the state was tried to be strengthened through their integration to schools and administration. While knowledge of Arabic was necessary for the province's needs, the Turkish language exposure was equally present in curriculums. Thus, it was aimed that through the Turkish language, the Ottomanization of the frontier would be reconstructed. A travelogue from 1907 regarding the language abilities of Circassians stated that "...Many speak Turkish fluently, the elder ones some Russian, but their ordinary tongue continues to be Circassian."²⁹² This shows the degree of integration of Circassian refugees into the Ottoman Empire. The Circassian tribes adapted to the complex nature of this new land and acquired every necessity to survive. They built strong connections with each other and later expanded these networks to the central administration. They were prone to development, culture and education. Despite their traumatic past filled with harsh replacements, Circassians adapted to every aspect of the empire and established themselves as a powerful force among other groups.

²⁹¹Bir müddet Kuneytra kazası tahrirat kalemine mülazemetle bin üç yüz on sekiz senesi Şabanının yirmi beşinde 5 Kanun-i Evvel 316 75 kuruş nisf maaşla kaza-yı mezkur dahilinde Zahirî nahiyesi kitabetine vekaleten ve zilka'desinin yirmi üçünde 1 Mayıs 317, 150 kuruş maaşla ta'yîn olmuştur. BOA, DH.SAİDd. 134, p.327 (5 Haziran 1322, 18 June 1906).

²⁹²A. Goodrich-Freer, *In a Syrian Saddle*, (London: Methuen, 1905), 105.

6. CONCLUSION

The last half-century of the Ottoman Empire experienced a massive migration movement from the Caucasus. Approximately, 1 to 1,5 million Circassian refugees settled within the empire. After the loss of Balkan territories, the mass dispatch of Circassians from Rumelia to Greater Syria started, and in the following decades, this mobility continued from the Caucasia. During these movements, the inner regions of the Province of Syria lacked a proper settled lifestyle. Bedouin and Druzes were the dominant inhabitants of the region. The state strategically settled the Circassians among these forces to weaken their power and brought state authority to the region through the refugee communities.

The district of Quneitra was one central region for Circassian refugee settlement. The area was highly fertile and close to Damascus. Yet this fertile land was mainly used by bedouin tribes for grazing their herds. The settlement was scarce, and the existing ones were subjected to bedouin harassment. While the government aided the first Circassian refugee groups in the following decades, refugees formed their trade networks with their distinctive carts and highly got involved with agriculture and husbandry. After the refugees stabilize their conditions, they started to get involved with the local affairs. In this period state began to accelerate the centralization policies in the region. The Druzes and bedouin were the primary subjects of this process. However, to legitimize its policies, the state used the narration of civilizing the inhabitants far from their conception of civilization. Later the Circassians were included in this narration because of their unorthodox practices. While the civilizing of Druzes and bedouin partially with enforcement, Circassians were introduced with state education.

The Ottoman state had several objectives to resettle the Circassians in the Province of Syria. The creation of a loyal population that could enforce the centralization policy by balancing the local powers of the region would serve the interest of the state. Therefore, the government settled the refugees to be used against the Druze and bedouin population. At the same time, the uninhabited and uncultivated lands that

were used only for grazing opened to cultivation and created new economic incomes. Indeed, the state achieved these goals. The Circassians of Quneitra were settled in a semi-arid region of the province inhabited mainly by the semi-independent local forces like Druzes and Bedouin. After two challenging deportations, the remaining Circassian population tried to rebuild a permanent settlement for themselves. At the end of the empire, the district of Quneitra had more than a dozen village that the Circassians created. They introduced new technologies to the region like carts and watermills. These were used extensively in agriculture and transportation. They created economic relationships with Circassians in Anatolia and Transjordan. Circassians carried the commercialization of timber in the region.

Circassian relations with the local population initially oriented on conflict for land. However, in the next decades, these relations transformed based on the character of the local group. Thus, while the Druzes became the perpetual enemies, the relations with bedouin were open to change on the situation. In this respect, the Circassians of Quneitra blocked the Druzes of Majdal Shams, which connected the Druzes of Mount Lebanon and Jabal Hawran. Along with the Circassian gendarme, in time of peace, the villagers exhausted the Druzes of the region with their attacks. During these events, Circassians and bedouin were sided together. Further, they extended their relations from political to social by intermarriages with the Arab population. Therefore, the Circassian community initially strengthened its place within the local groups and then acted on its interests in the region.

However, despite the general recognition, the Circassian refugees were not just passive and loyal instruments of the state. They created their identities on the notion of refugeedom since it was the broadest and applicable feature on every Circassian. On this identity, the fragile conditions created by the state sometimes confronted with oppositions by the Circassians. Especially the local administration and Circassians had apparent conflicts. Since every actor of the district desired to have the region's highest interest, these interests occasionally conflicted. Circassian refugees were on one side of this power struggle. While the state supported them in most of the events, Circassians could not benefit from this favour under every circumstance. Further, Circassians adopted local practices to oppose the government when it was in their own interests. Moreover, the settlement policies of the state were challenged by the refugees. While some groups could not adapt to the conditions of Syria, they requested to move to Anatolian regions. However, there were also numerous petitions for the resettlement to the Hawran region. The Circassians manipulated the rule of permission to resettle along with the relatives. Many refugee families requested to resettle in the Hawran region to benefit from tax and military exemptions. Thus, the relations of the Circassians with the central and local ad-

ministration did not occur on a definite agreement between these parties; instead, it also had its instabilities.

The Ottoman state used the Circassian refugees as a military force. They were recruited to form local gendarmes against the insubordinate forces. In Quneitra, these forces were efficient in extending the central power, notably against the Druze population. Nevertheless, this position was not the only one occupied by the Circassians. The leaders of the first generation inserted themselves into the local administration system of Quneitra. Several Circassians took various positions in educational affairs. Nearly for a decade, the Mufti of the district was also a Circassian leader. The second generation was raised on these connections and received their local education in Quneitra, where the first rüşdiyye of Hawran established. Many Circassian students became Ottoman officials with Arabic and Turkish language assets and appointed back into their hometowns or other regions of Greater Syria. This practice both contributed to the lack of trained officers for the state and increased the integration of Circassians into Ottoman administration.

Refugees settled in places that are influenced by semi-independent local powers. They supported by the government and partook in not just military force but also in administration. Despite the lack of financial support and the district's environment, Circassian refugees adapted themselves and became a prominent part of the region. They shaped their surroundings with the political network, military force, and education. In this respect, victimization of refugees is not a just or comprehensive term to define historical refugee movements in the Ottoman empire. Even though initially they were the victims of imperial forces, they were highly successful in forming their way in new settlements. The Circassians of Quneitra were subjected to two different displacements, but they successfully created their power in the new settlement. In the end, they have become prominent figures that cannot be dismissed in the area and influenced the political and social turmoil of the region.

In the first years of World War I, Circassians fought for the Ottoman Empire under the leadership of Mirza Wasfi and protected the Hejaz Railway. However, after the Great Arab Revolt in 1916, they had joined the rebels until the establishment of France mandate. Under the mandate, Circassians allied with France and participated in the army.²⁹³ In the Great Syrian Revolt of 1925, the rebels in Quneitra were tracked down by the French, and the Circassian gendarme clashed with the Druze rebels.²⁹⁴ The long feud between two groups since the first Circassian settle-

²⁹³Walter Richmond, *The Circassian Genocide*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 119.

²⁹⁴Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and The Rise of Arab Nationalism*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 87-88.

ments to the region was continued to this era and affected the power struggles in the region. Following the Syrian independence, Circassians requested autonomy from the government but could only get the right of teaching the Circassian language in their schools.

For the Circassians of Quneitra, who had been displaced already two times, this new land was again could not be the permanent one. By the 1960s, Circassians were the leading pioneers of prosperous Golan Heights with a population of ninety thousand. However, their fate would put them back on the roads with the Six-Day War in 1967. After the invasion of Israel, many fled to Damascus.²⁹⁵ The most rooted place for Circassians of Syria was destroyed with this war, and they lost the generations-long history and tradition of a refugee settlement. However, despite the vanishing of the Circassian towns of the Jawlan, the last decades of Ottoman rule achieved to establish a well-organized settlement in the region. Contrary to their ill-fates, the Circassian community's resilience and high adaptability enabled them to take control of their surroundings. They were able to build a new society from scratch, and they contributed to the Quneitra region until its invasion and demolishment by Israel.

This thesis aimed to reveal the importance of refugees and the refugee regime created by the Ottoman Empire. The focus on this small frontier region is significant enough to understand how refugee contribution back by the government can transform a desolate land into a town centre. Thus, Circassian society was examined with the revisionary trend that had risen in migration studies. Refugees were considered as active actors of the region where they were settled rather than passive instruments of the state. In order to increase the representation of the refugees, the petitions they wrote or the newspaper articles they published were included in the discussions. This perspective enabled the production of a refugee focused study rather than a state-centred one. By paying attention to these points, this thesis is only the first step in filling the gap in the literature and constitutes a start for future studies.

²⁹⁵Richmond, 121-122.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye 1297/1880, p.215-216.

Havranın ekseriyesi 'aşair-i sakine ile taife-i dürziyeden mürekkebe olup ahalisi henüz hal-i vahşet ve bedeviyette bulunup kar-u meşguliyetleri dahi zira'ate münhasır olduğu cihetle memleket her gûne esbab-ı ma'muriyet ve asar-ı medeniyetden ariside mamafih tabiat şu mahrumiyete mukabil Havran'a diğer cihetden öyle bir meziyet-i aliye ihsan buyurmuştur ki hakikat-ı nazarı yalnız Suriye vilayetince değil belki dünyanın pek çok taraflarınca nadir bulunur o da arazisinin gayet münbit ve mahsuldar olmasıdır bu derece deki hinta, şair, nohut, kuşne, beyaz ve sarı darıdan 'ibaret olan mezru'anın başlıcası ve en âlâsı ki hintadır yağmurların güzelce yağdığı sene nefis-i Havran ile Cidur kazalarında 1'e 80-90 ve asi senelerde 1e 50'den 65 kiloya kadar mahsul verip bu suretle bereketli ve bereketsiz seneler birbiri üstüne iki milyon kiloya kadar hasılat olduğundan ve ahali ihtiyacat-ı zatiyelerini şair ve darı ile idare ide geldikleri cihetle işbu hasıllar dahi kamilen Akka iskelesine Nablusa Şama nakil ve ihrac kılındığından memleket pek mühim bir zahire ticaretine malikdir. İkrâm-ı nakliyat için dâhil-i livadan Şama veya Akka'ya bir şose yolu yapılacak ve ahali de Avrupalıların muntazam 'alet ve edavat-ı ziraatini isti'mala alıştırılacak olunur ise livanın tarik-i ziraati fevkalhad tevessü ve o yüzdan hasıl olan ticaretde bilnisbe tezayüd ve terakki ederek olvakit Havran sahiha yalnız Suriyenin değil Asya kıtasının dahi servet ve ticaretce en mühim mevkiinden olmak imtiyazını pek pek kolaylıkla ihraz idebilir. Bir de Havranda bir nevi karataş madeni külliyyet üzere bulunduğundan işbu taşdan cesim değirmen taşları 'imal olunarak Şam ve Sur ve Mercayun vesaire tarıklere nakil ve ihrac idilmekle livanın bu yüzden bir ticaret-i mahsusası vardır. Nefs-i Havran ve Cidur nahiyesi livanın cihet-i şimaliyesinde olup elyevm kurâ şeklinde bulunan Busra yahut Eski Şam medine-i kadimesinin harabesi olhavalide kain olduğu gibi Cidur'un cihet-i şarkiyyesinde vaki' Lacca nam mevkide, ki aslı Melce olmak gerekdir, İzra' ve Meshiye medinesinin asar-ı atıkaşı mevcuttur. İşbu Leca etraf ve havalisi gayet sa'ab olunur ve dairan ma'deverân 5-20 saatlik mesafeyi havi kayalıklarıyla kuşatılmış bir sarp yer olup zikr olunan harabeler bir

cihetinin kenarında vaki' ve derununda bağzı urban-ı vahşiye ile bir mikdar dürzi sakindir.

Appendix 2: BOA, İ.DH. 760 (26 Eylül 1294, 9 October 1878).

Suriye vilayeti dahilinde kain Kuneytır kazasında iskan edilmiş olan Çerkes ve Dağıstan muhacirlerinin öküz ve tohumluk bahlarıyla ta'yinat ve masarif-i saireleri gün muktezi olan 33,900 bu kadar kuruşun tertib-i mahsusundan i'tası istizan olunması üzerine bu muhacirler eskiden gelip yerleştirilmiş olanlardan mıdır yoksa bu def'a gelenlerden midir buralarının evvel emirde tahkik etdirilerek 'arz edilmesi müteallik buyurulan idare-i seniyye-i cenab-ı mülükane iktiza-i 'alisinden olmasıyla keyfiyeti Maliye Nezareti celilesiyle ledel-muhabere muhacirin-i merkumenin bu defa' gelenlerden olmayıp doksan iki ve üç seneleri içinde gelip iskan edilenlerden bulunduğu anlaşılmış ve buna dair muhabereyi tezkire leffen 'arz ve takdim kılınmış olmağla istizan-ı sabık mucibince mezkur 33,000 bu kadar gurusun tesviyesi hususunun nezaret-i müşarunileyhaya havalesi hakkında her ne vechle emr-i ferman-ı hümayuna hazret-i şehinşahi şeref- sünuh ve sudur buyurulur ise mantuk-ı münifi ittihaz edileceği beyanıyla tezkire-i senaveri terkim olundu efendim.

Fi 26 Eylül 94

Maruz-ı çaker-i kemineleridir

Reside-i dest-i ta'zim olan işbu tezkire-i samiye-i âsâfâneleriyle melfuf tezkire manzur-u 'ali-i hazret-i padişahi buyurulmuş ve istizan olduğu vechle meblağ-ı mezkurun tesviyesi müteallik ve şeref-sudur buyurulan irade-i cenab-ı şehriyari mantuk-ı münifinden olarak mezkur tezkire savb-ı 'âlî-yi sadaret-penahilerine i'ade kılınmış olmağla ol-babda emr-i ferman hazret-i veliyül emrindir.

Fi Eylül 94

Appendix 3: BOA, DH.MKT. 1585/57 (8 Kanun-ı Evvel 1304, 20 December 1888).

Dahiliye Nezareti Celilesine

Devletlü efendim hazretleri

Anadolu cihetinden hodbahod Kuneytır muhacir geldiği istihbarat olunmak üzerine mahallinden isti'lam-ı keyfiyet olunmuş idi. Alınan cevapname Çerkes muhacirlerinin kaza-ı mezkura 3 hane vurud ederek Rusyadan Samsuna ve oradan dahi berren bu taraflara geldiklerini beyan etdikleri izbar olunmuş ise de bunların ifadeleri vechiyle doğruca Rusyadan geldikleri sahih olsa ellerinde pasaport veya murur tezkiresi bulunmak lazım gelip halbuki iş'ar-ı mahalliden anlaşıldığı üzere yedlerinde

hiç bir evrak olmadığından bunların vaktiyle iskan olunmuş oldukları mahalleri terk ile gelmiş olmaları kaviyen melhuz olunmuş. Makam-ı âli-i nezaret-penahilerinden şeref-sudur eden evamir-i 'aliyye icabınca o makule hodbehod gelenlere muhacir nazarıyla bakılmaması ve kendilerine arazi dahi i'ta olunmaması kaza-i mezkur kaymakamlığına yazılmışdır. Fakat Anadolu taraflarında Suriye havalisine muhacir vurdu daimi el-vuku olmasıyla bunların fevc fevc buralara gelip kalması bir taraftan sefaletlerini ve diğer taraftan hükümetce enva'-i zayıat ve müşkilata tesadüf olunması mucib olmakda olduğundan ve vaktiyle bir mahalde iskan ile kendilerine arazi verilmiş olan muhacirinin bir müddet sonra diğer tarafa nakl-i hane etmeleri esasen taht-ı memnu'iyete alındığı halde memnu'iyet-i mezkurenin muhafazasına ve her nasıl yolcu olursa olsun yedlerinde murur tezkiresi olmayanların geldikleri mahallere i'adesi kaziyyesine dikkat etmeyen memurların mesul olmaları tabi'i bulunduğundan ba'dema memnu'iyet-i mezkurenin ve murur-ı nizamenin bihakkın ve mütemadiyen muhafaza hükmüne i'tina olunması lüzumunun Anadolu vilayet-i şahanesine emri ihtarı meclis-i idare-i vilayet kararıyla arz olunur ol-babda emri ferman hazret-i menlehül emrindir.

Fi 16 rabiülahir 306 ve Fi 8 Kanunievvel 304

Suriye Valisi

Mehmed Nazif

Appendix 4: BOA, DH.MKT.292.54.11 (10 Recebü'l-Ferd 1312, 7 Ocak 1895).

Dahiliye Nezaret-i Celilesi Makam-ı Samilerine,

Bu dürüst Osmanlı ve Sünni İslam kulları Cebel-i Lübnan Mutasarrıflığı Şuf kaymakamı olan Emir Mustafa Rüslanın Mecdel Şemsdeki Dürzileri kalkındırıp güçlendirdiğini belirledik. Mansura ve yanındaki Kuneytra ve Havran çevresinde Suriye vilayetine ait yerlerde Müslüman Çerkes kardeşlerimizin katledilmesi ve evlerinin yıkılması için Dürzileri kışkırttı. Çerkeslerin öldürülmesi ve evlerinin yıkılmasının diyeti olarak Suriye valisi tarafından Mecdel Şems ahalisinin 1000 lira ödemesi kararı alındı. Şuf kaymakamı Emir Mustafa'nın, Mecdel Şems Dürzilerine yardım etmek ve gelecekte onun önemli meselelerine itaat etmeleri için bu paranın Şuftaki Dürzilerden toplanmasını istemesi delillerden biridir.

Ve biz dürüst kullara göre devlete bağlılığımız olduğundan cesaretimizi toplayarak özellikle sultanın halkına istedikleri gibi zulm edebileceklerini sanan memurlar tarafından yapılan bu fesadı kesmek için şahane makamınıza başvuruyoruz. Emr-ü ferman hazret-i men lehül emrindir.

Appendix 5: BOA, DH.SAİDd.193, p.289, (2 Kanun-i evvel 1329, 15 December 1913).

Sadeddin Efendi Kafkasya muhacirlerinden Kuneytrada iskan olunan m teveffi Hacı Mehmed Efendinin mahdumudur.

Bin iki y z doksan sekiz senesi Rebi lahirinin yirmi    nde 10 Mayıs 297 Suriye vilayetine tabi' Kuneytra kazasında tevell d etmi dir.

Mebadi-i 'ulumu Kuneytra ibtidai mektebinde kıraat etdikten sonra  am mekteb-i 'idadi-i m lkiyesine duhul ve tedrisi me rut olan 'ulum ve f nunu tahsil ile Eyl l 318 tarihinde ba- ahadetname m ntehi sınıfından  ıkmı dır. T rk e, Arap a tekell m ve kitabet ve lisan-ı made-i olan  erkesce tekell m eder ve Fransızcaya a ına oldu u terc me-i halinde m ndericidir.

25 Haziran 319 tarihinde Hicaz demiryolu Dera istasyonu m lazemetine dahil olmu     y z yirmi bir senesi  abanın yirmi d rd nde 15 te rin-i sani 319, 150 kuru  maa la mezkur istasyon memuriyet mulazımlı ına tayin olunmu  ve    y z yirmi iki senesi  abanın be inde 1 Te rin-i sani 320 maa ına 150 ve Zi'l-kadenin dokuzunda 1 Kanun-u sani 320, 100 ve    y z yirmi    senesi Saferinin dokuzunda 1 Nisan 321 yine 100 kuru  zam olunarak maa ı 500 y z kuru a ibla  ve  evvalin on yedisinde 1 Kanun-i evvel 321 altı y z kuru  maa la mezkur istasyon memurlu una terfi' edilmi  ve Zilhiccesinin yirmisinde 1  ubat 321 mezkur altı y z kuru  maa la hattın Hayfa idaresi tefti  kalemi memurlu una nakil ve    y z yirmi be  senesi Recebinin altısında 1 A ustos 323 maa ına 50    y z yirmi altı senesi  evvalinin yirmisinde 1 Te rin-i Sani 324 tekrar 50 ve    y z yirmi yedi senesi  abanının yirmi dokuzunda 1 Eyl l 325, 75 kuru  zamayım vuku'bularak 775 kuru  ibla  olunmu  ve ifa-yı vazife etmekde iken v cuduna arız olan za'fiyetden dolayı    y z yirmi sekiz senesi Recebinin be inde 20 Haziran 326 istifa etmi  ve bulundu u m ddet zarfında g r len h sn-  hidematına binaen 1 Kanun-i evvel 321 tarihinde Hicaz demiryoluna mahsus madalyalar ile g m   liyakat ni anlarının i'tasıyla taltif edilmi dir.

   y z yirmi dokuz senesi Rebi levvelinin yirmi sekizinde 16 Mayıs 327, 266 kuru  s ls n maa la Kuneytra kazası tahrirat kitabeti vekaletine bil-tayin asilen vuruduyula Cemazielevvelinin altısında 22 Nisan 327 infıkak etmi  ve  abanın yirmi d rd nde 6 A ustos 327 mezkur el-mikdar nısıf maa la tekrar kitabet-i mezkurda vekaletine tayin olunarak muahharan asaleten di eri? tayin olunmasıyla    y z otuz senesi Muharreminin on sekizinde 26 Kanun-i evvel 327 infıkak eylemi  Rebi levvelin yedisinde 11  ubat 327, 400 kuru  maa la Tafiye kazası tahrirat kitabetine tayin Rebi l sanının on yedisinde 22 Mayıs 328 maa -ı mezkurla Ra aya kazası tahrirat kitabetine

nakil olunmuştur.

Bulunduđu memuriyetlerden dolayı mahallerinin istihsal eylediđi mezabit ve mekteb şehadetnamesiyle nüfus-i tezkire-i Osmaniyesinin musaddaka-ı suretleriin asl tercüme-i hal varakasıyla beraber mahfuz olduđu Suriye vilayeti sicil-i ahval komisyonunda mevrud 22 Kanun-i sani 328 tarihli hûlasasında görülmüşdür.

Fi 2 Kanun-i Evvel 329

Appendix 6: Administrative Division of Quneitra District, Salname-i Vilayet-i Suriye, 1309-1310/1892.

KUNEYTRA KAZASI

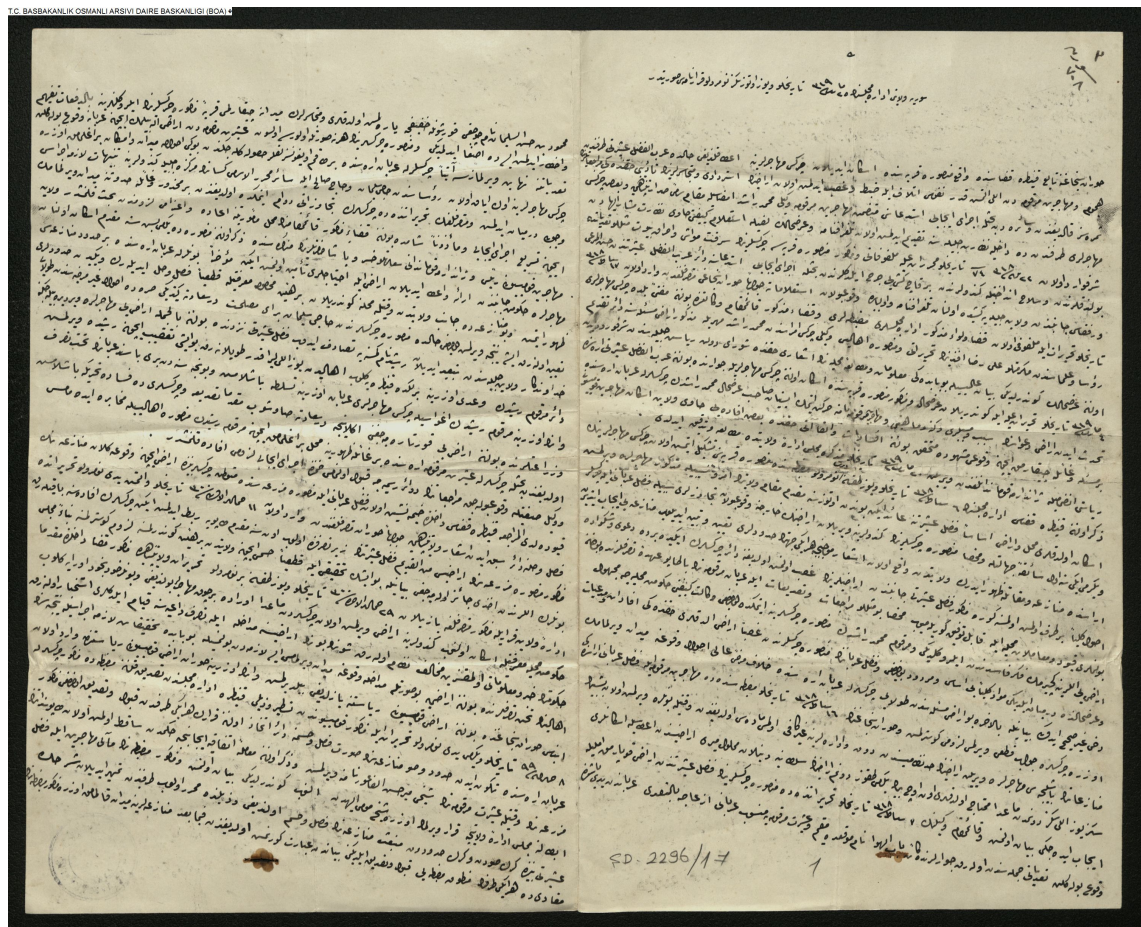
Memurin-i Kaza	Meclis-i İdare-i Kaza	Mahkeme-i Bidayet
Kaymakam: Muhammed Nuri Efendi	Reis: Kaymakam Efendi	Reis: Naib Efendi
Naib: Abdulkadir Efendi	Azâ-yı Tabiiye: Naib Efendi, Müfti Efendi Mal Müdürü Efendi Tahrirat Katibi Efendi	Azâ: Mir Muhammed el-Fa'ur Efendi, Hüseyin Efendi, Berekat el-Tahhan Efendi, Yusuf Abdullah Efendi
Mal Müdürü: İskender Efendi	Azâ-yı Müntehibe: Hacı Ahmed Efendi, İbrahim Sallum Efendi Muhammed Cuma Efendi İbrahim Meleke	Baş Katib: Hasan Efendi
Müftü: Ali Rıza Efendi		
Tahrirat Katibi: Hafız Osman Efendi		Müstantik Muavini: Nicola Efendi
Sandık Emini: Habib Suyur Efendi		Mukavelat Muavini: Ömer Talib Efendi

Maarif Şubesi	Belediye Meclisi	Tahsilat Komisyonu
Reis-i Evvel: Naib Efendi	Reis: Sadullah Efendi	Reis: Kaymakam Efendi
Reis-i Sani: Müftü Efendi	Azâ: Ökkeş Ağa, Hasan Hammami Efendi, Katib: Münhal	Azâ: Mal Müdürü Efendi, Mal Müdürü Muavini Efendi, Tahrirat Katibi Efendi, Jandarma Yüzbaşı Abidin Efendi
Azâ: Tapu Katibi Muhammed Efendi, Çerakise İmamı Hüseyin Efendi, Dağıstani Şuayb Efendi		
Vesait-i Nakliye-i Askeriye Komisyonu		

Reis:
Kaymakam Efendi

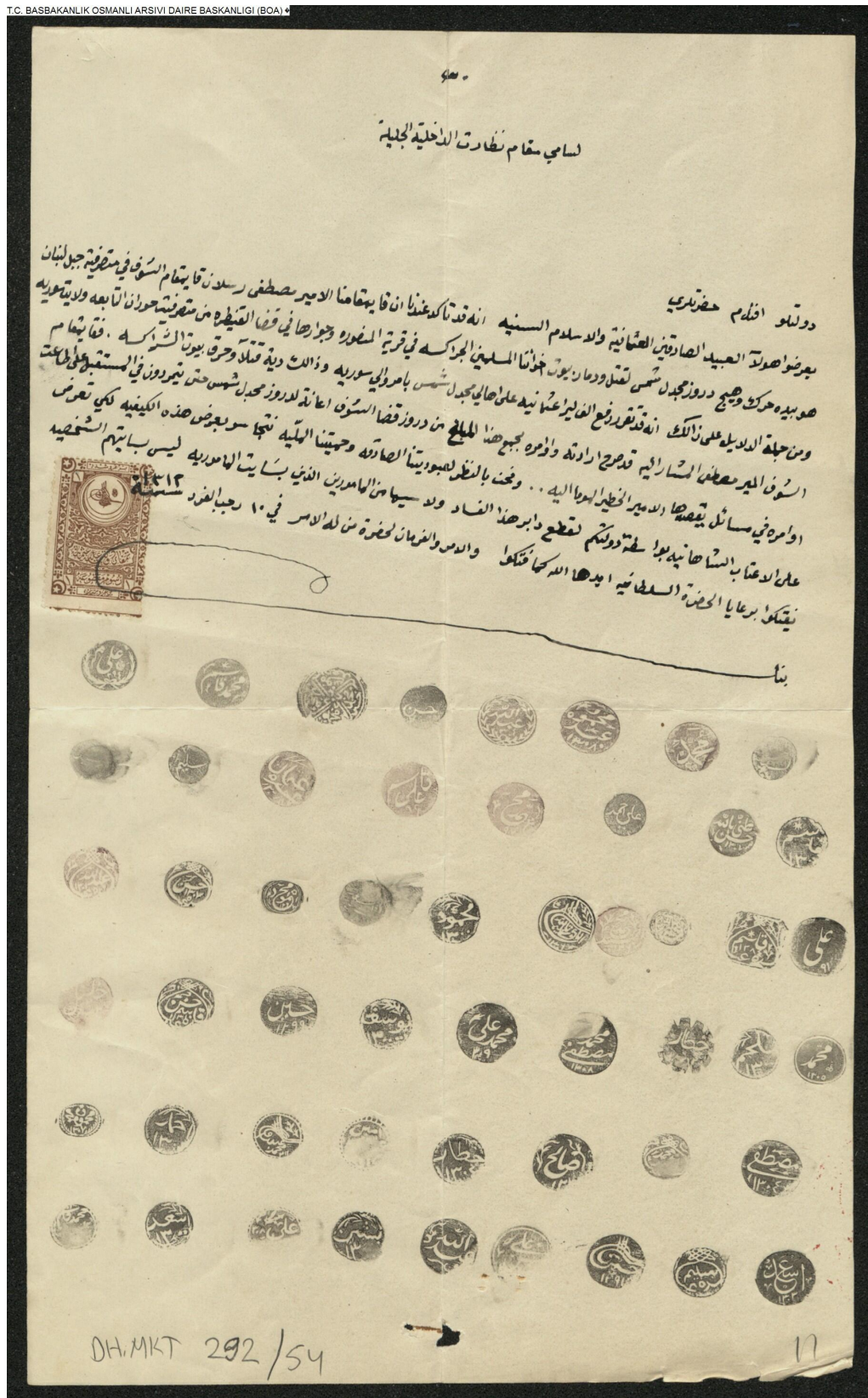
Azâ:
Meclis- İdareden
Hacı Ahmed Efendi,
Muhammed el-Hüseyin Efendi,
Said el-Hüseyin Efendi

Appendix 7: The decree of the Syrian Provincial Administrative Council on the land dispute between Circassians of Mansura and el-Fadl tribe BOA, ŞD. 2296.17.1



SD.02296.00017.001

Appendix 8: The Arabic petition sent by Muslim population of Shuf.
BOA, DH.MKT.292.54.1



DH.MKT.00292.00054.011

Appendix 9: Guaze, newspaper published by Circassian Union and Support Association. No.13, 4 July 1911.



Appendix 10: Schumacher's map of Jawlan, 1888

