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CONFLICT AND COOPERATION: WESTERN ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN OTTOMAN

IRAQ 1894-1914

BY

JAMEEL HAQUE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2016

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Conflict and Cooperation: Western Economic Interests in Ottoman Iraq 1894-1914

By

Jameel Haque

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of  
the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

Conflict and Cooperation: Western Economic Interests in Ottoman Iraq 1894-1914

By

Jameel Haque

Advisor: Elena Frangakis-Syrett

This dissertation investigates underutilized U.S. archival sources in order to discuss certain aspects of late Ottoman history in Baghdad and Basra, between 1894 and 1914. Since these sources have been underutilized, their inclusion will widen the scope of possible historical investigation in the study of Late Ottoman Baghdad and Basra. This research will suggest that, in this period, there was an expanding role/presence for America and Americans that is not currently reflected in the historiography. This should, of course, be qualified since Americans and American interests in the region, although on the increase, were still significantly less than those of other nations. However, as the global economy expanded, the U.S. imported increasing amounts of raw materials from the Ottoman Empire. Due to the same economic forces, U.S. investors also began to see Baghdad and Basra as possible sites for significant financial investment and development in infrastructure projects. These infrastructure projects are examined in the dissertation as are American trade with the Ottoman State and the role of the U.S. Department of State in fostering and expanding these economic activities. Crimes committed by and against Americans are also investigated as both instances of economic activity and of conflict and cooperation. This study seeks to augment established points on a variety of issues concerning the Ottoman Empire. These issues include the degree to which the Ottoman

Empire was centralizing, and the implementation of some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Tanzimat* era reforms during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, this dissertation discusses the role of inter-imperial competition in Ottoman Iraq. The Ottoman State was able to, in line with existing literature, profit from and exploit inter-imperial competition. Negotiations over large scale infrastructure projects showed the Ottomans as savvy negotiators, able and willing to use one Western group against another. Likewise, Westerners and in particular, Americans worked with and against each other and Ottomans within the Ottoman Empire and economy. The conflicts and cooperation that occurred between among Western and Ottoman economic agents is examined, particularly as it relates to the licorice trade, the date trade, criminal activity and infrastructure. Methodologically, this dissertation uses archival sources to examine historical economic activities. These economic activities are framed as being examples of conflict and cooperation. By examining conflict and cooperation carefully, this dissertation focuses on the underlying historical relationships between economic interests.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the many people who have helped me during this long process. Professor Elena Frangakis-Syrett for her help, guidance and patience. I also want to thank the History Department at Minnesota State University, Mankato for their patience with this process. Of course, my greatest thanks go to my wife, Professor Danielle Haque and our children Omar and Zain...without you, this process would have seemed too remote and too stressful to complete.

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## Introduction

This dissertation delves into previously overlooked U.S. archival sources, which are augmented with British archival sources, as a means to illuminate the economic activities, primarily of Westerners, in Ottoman Baghdad and Basra between the years 1894-1914. The sources used investigate economic activities of the period, the economic conditions of the region, economic disputes, complicated infrastructure projects, and crimes committed upon and by Westerners to argue critical points about American and British activities in the Ottoman Empire and to engage with existing literature on aspects of Ottoman governance. The economic activities investigated include the seeking of small and large scale infrastructure concessions from the Ottoman state, trade promotion, the export trade in dates and licorice, as well as, brigandage, burglary, and the legal and illegal activities of American archaeologists. While the lives of Westerners in Ottoman Iraq were typically mundane, on occasion they were the victims or perpetrators of crime. These crimes are economic as well, as they are mostly acts of robbery and/or of smuggling. Many of these same crimes are also evidence of brigandage, a violent and well documented trend throughout the Ottoman Empire in this period. These events are well recorded in the archival record and these instances of conflicts, compromise and/or negotiation that arose amongst and between Westerners and Ottoman are used to argue key historiographic points. First, these sources demonstrate that the United States, and in particular, American economic interests, were significantly more involved in the area than the historiography currently suggests. This problematizes the narrative of the United States as largely uninterested in the Middle East generally and Iraq specifically before the First World War. It should be noted that this dissertation does not argue for a U.S. government based plan for an increased presence in the Ottoman Empire, but rather that the actions of Americans, whether they were economic, diplomatic or cultural agents, have been under-recorded in the literature. Evidence suggests that

significant trade links were being forged, and that American cultural agents such as missionaries and archaeologists met resistance from the Ottoman State. This agrees with the literature in many ways and these specific examples used here are new to the literature. This resistance concerned the Americans ability to move and act freely within the Ottoman Empire. American businessmen attempted, unsuccessfully, to invest in infrastructure projects. The evidence calls for a more historiographically visible role for the United States in the period, and particularly a more pronounced economic role. This is justified by the United States' economic activities, its cultural agents, and the expansion and increased professionalization of the U.S. State Department in the region. This argument is in agreement with literature on the expansion of U.S. global interests in the period, however, it should be noted that these interests do not add up to American imperialism in Baghdad and Basra at the time. This research also augments the current literature on the expansion of the global economy and the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy.

In this period, the United States increased the quantity and monetary value of imports from the Ottoman Empire. These included two key imports from Ottoman Iraq – dates and licorice. Dates were an easily transported confection that were increasingly popular with American consumers in this period. Date picking and subsequent shipping followed a strict timeline. This was due to both the dates' natural ripening process and to the difficulties of tide. Ships needed to sail at a specific high tide that only occurred every two weeks in order to avoid the sand bar that restricted travel at the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Western or Indian merchants who shipped the first cargoes were rewarded with higher prices. This competitive

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<sup>1</sup> The Shatt al-Arab is the term for the river formed by the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Technically it is the Shatt al-Arab that then flows into the Persian Gulf.

trade led to both conflict and cooperation and examples of those are here used to discuss the organization of the trade, its merchants, the role of Ottoman notables, and the Ottoman center-periphery relationship. Licorice was an important item for the U.S. tobacco industry as a flavoring agent and as a humectant. Licorice was subject to tax farming resulting in several conflicts which suggest crucial information about taxation and land ownership. These in turn demonstrate to what degree the centralizing reforms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire, known collectively as the *Tanzimat*, were implemented in practice in Ottoman Iraq in this period. The *Tanzimat* or reordering, were government decreed reforms of the Ottoman State for the complete reorganization of Ottoman society. They began with the Gülhane Decree of 1839 which nominally made all subjects of the Empire equal. This major era of reforms ended with the promulgation of the Ottoman Constitution in 1876. During those almost forty years, reforms aimed at centralizing the Empire were decreed, including refining penal codes, maritime trade regulations, land ownership, provincial government structure and function, conscription, the codification of the *sharia*, and the elimination of the death penalty as a punishment for apostasy. The conflicts reviewed here, in conversation with the literature, provide evidence for the degree of implementation of two reforms in particular, changes in the tax farming system and the 1864 Provincial Council Reform.

This dissertation discusses American attempts to invest financially in Ottoman infrastructure and the detailed discussions, negotiations, and failures of these projects. The Chester Plan called for a “gigantic railroad”<sup>2</sup> to be built, some of it in Ottoman Iraq and for accompanying mineral rights and additional infrastructure projects. Two small infrastructure

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<sup>2</sup> John De Novo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963) p.28.

projects preceded the Chester Plan and negotiations for the small projects originated both with local Ottoman officials and the U.S. Vice Consul in Baghdad, Rudolf Hürner. Rudolf Hürner was a Swiss national that served as the U.S. representative in Baghdad from 1897 to 1906. Since Hürner had been working in Baghdad since 1876, and was not an American, it would be tempting to consider him as a native agent, akin to those that Olney deems responsible for the creation and maintenance of British influence and informal empire in Ottoman Iraq.<sup>3</sup> However, it would perhaps be more accurate to see Hürner as part of the Ottoman system, operating and prospering within it. Hürner's long tenure in the region ensured that he understood local economic systems and how infrastructure contracts were acquired. Hürner understood that many infrastructure projects and contracts in Baghdad were awarded to a local individual, who then negotiated with foreign companies for the fulfillment of the contract. Hürner was blocked, in part, by the actions of the U.S. State Department in the Ottoman Empire. The U.S. State Department was itself experiencing a major shift towards becoming a more professionalized and trade oriented institution, which occurred too late for the Baghdad specific U.S. infrastructure projects. Had the infrastructure projects been completed, U.S. based businesses might have invested considerable sums in Ottoman Iraq before World War I. Two Baghdad focused projects that U.S. based businesses considered, suffered from the rigidity of U.S. State Department procedures. These smaller projects can possibly be seen as paving the way for the larger Chester Project by demonstrating that U.S.-Ottoman ventures were a real possibility. The Chester Project suffered from competition by the Berlin-Baghdad Railroad and was masterfully undercut by

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<sup>3</sup> James Olney, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj: Merchants, Rulers and the British in the Nineteenth Century Gulf* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 12. Olney argues that Britain's informal empire in the Persian Gulf was made possible by the use of natives – Eurasians, Indians, Persians and Arabs that worked for them, whether it was on a semi-official or clandestine basis.

vested European powers.

However, Hürner's blatant self-interest as a businessman may have served as a brake on US *trade* growth with Baghdad. Hürner was able to pick and choose opportunities and typically interposed himself as the sole agent, via Hürner and Company, for U.S. based businesses looking to import and export to the city. The career diplomats that came after Hürner seemed to be more effective at promoting American trade interests in Baghdad. After 1906, American Vice Consuls and Consuls in Baghdad increased their attempts to promote American trade, whether import or export, particularly once this no longer clashed with their self-interest as merchant-diplomat. Along with a growing interest in commerce, American diplomats displayed an increasing focus on sanitation in the Ottoman Empire, as they did elsewhere in the world. This is evident in an increased focus on securing goods that did not carry disease and on trying to regulate the conditions of production of those goods. Therefore, the combination of increasing trade ties, infrastructure attempts, activities of American cultural and economic agents and the new professionalization of the Foreign Service all demonstrate a wider importance for Americans in Ottoman Iraq than is currently demonstrated in the literature. While occasionally referencing the actions and attitudes of the U.S. State Department, this dissertation does not argue that increased American involvement in Ottoman Iraq was a U.S. government initiated and driven policy. Rather, it argues that the increased American presence in late Ottoman Iraq was driven by American individuals; entrepreneurs, merchants, financiers, middlemen, and locally hired agents (of various nationalities). While the U.S. State Department did work to push American trade and financial interests and activities in the region, they did not do so as a reflection of an attempted U.S. government led expansion, rather, it was an extension of their own personal interest and a product of completing the essential tasks of their jobs to promote U.S. interests everywhere.



Secondly, the compromises, negotiations, crimes and conflicts that occurred related to the activities of Westerners in Ottoman Iraq suggest certain conclusions concerning Ottoman governance in the period. These include aspects of the relationship between Istanbul and its peripheral areas and the degree to which the centralizing reforms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were implemented in turn of the century Ottoman Iraq. The implementation of these reforms led to a process that suggests the creation of, both intentional and unintended, transitional nation-building. This transitional nation-building involved the Ottoman State, like many contemporaneous decentralized empires, undergoing a process of centralization. In this period, traditional multi-empires<sup>4</sup> from Austria-Hungary to Qing dynasty China were struggling to develop cohesive national identities to confront the rising challenges of territorial loss and (ethnic) nationalism. In the Ottoman case, it can be argued that the increased attention paid by Osman Hamdi Bey and the Imperial Ottoman Museum to the activities of American archaeologists demonstrated the desire to curate a national narrative. Using artifacts recovered from their empire, the Imperial Ottoman Museum tried to frame the Ottoman story as a cohesive, progressive one. This research reinforces the literature and provides additional examples that demonstrate the modernizing trend in late Ottoman history. This is manifested in the literature that concerns the increased attention the Ottoman state paid to education in response to the activities of missionaries, as well as, the ways that the Ottoman State tried to settle and control the pastoral portion of the Iraqi population.

Regarding other aspects of Ottoman governance, this study argues that the conflicts and negotiations in these sources reveal the degree to which certain *Tanzimat* era reforms were evident during this time period in Iraq, while other reforms were not evident. In line with the

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<sup>4</sup> Multi in terms of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious, i.e. diverse.

historiography these sources suggest that taxation reforms were largely not implemented. As has been demonstrated in the literature, tax farming was still the dominant mode of revenue collection in Ottoman Iraq in this period. This dissertation found, as Elena Frangakis-Syrett found, that frequently Western merchants would even fill the role of tax farmer.<sup>5</sup> Export tax, which should have been governed by trade treaties between the Ottomans and the U.S. and Britain, was arbitrarily applied to licorice exports.<sup>6</sup> Monopolies still existed, and were frequently foreign (non-Ottoman) owned. However, other changes were implemented in Ottoman Iraq, particularly reforms that concerned the structure of government. The restructuring of provincial governments that was supposed to have taken place in the 1864 Provincial Reform Law was apparent during disputes over goods. It was clear, both from my findings and the historiography, that the Ottoman State implemented this structural reform. The court system that was created by the Ottoman state seems to have functioned well, both for the settling of mercantile disputes and criminal disputes. In terms of criminal justice, the Ottoman State was unable to protect Westerners outside of urban centers and established trade routes, which is generally in line with the historiography on brigandage. It was however, able to provide compensation for victims and to dispense justice against the accused parties.

Finally, the competition over infrastructure projects illuminates the inter-imperial rivalries and Western economic competition in the region and throughout the Ottoman Empire. This dissertation's engagement of inter-imperial rivalry is an analysis of how Western economic

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<sup>5</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "British Economic Activities in Izmir in the Second Half of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, (Fall 1991, 5-6, pp. 191-227)

<sup>6</sup> This arbitrary application of export tax was also noted in work by Elena Frangakis-Syrett concerning Izmir in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. See Frangakis-Syrett, Elena, "Implementation of the 1838 Anglo-Turkish Convention on Izmir's Trade: European and Minority Merchants", in *New Perspectives on Turkey*, (Spring, 1992), 7, pp. 91-112.

competitors operated in the Ottoman Empire. Rather than the discussion of the clash of nations or governments, this research attempts to illuminate how British, German, French, American and economic competitors of other nationalities competed and cooperated over infrastructure projects in the period in Ottoman Iraq and how that process ultimately benefited the Ottoman State. Therefore, while this competition was in some ways a reflection of inter-imperial rivalry, it was more accurately a process of economic conflict and cooperation and not necessarily a political struggle. These sources augment the literature that argues the British were the paramount Western influence in the region. They also suggest that the Western competition over resources tended to benefit the Ottoman State. More frequently than not, these rivalries ended in compromise deals between the parties involved. The Berlin-Baghdad Railway (BBR) was a massive construction project that aimed to connect those two cities by rail; it also included concessions for the right to exploit mineral rights within a certain distance from the railway tracks. Due to both economic and strategic objections, British diplomats stalled the project considerably in the early part of this period. Yet frequently, and just before the First World War, British and German negotiators came to compromises. These typically involved the German concessionaires conceding significant points to their British counterparts. Indeed, it wasn't German economic competition that typically threatened the entrenched British monetary interests in the area, but rather other British entrepreneurs. Regarding the oil concession, British investment groups undermined each other: the Foreign Office stuck doggedly, against official policy, to the D'Arcy group. Within the transport industry, the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company (ETSN), which had been cruising the waters of Iraq for over 70 years, found themselves replaced in the mail concession and then were annexed by Lord Inchcape's British Indian Steam Navigation Company. Additionally, these infrastructure projects reveal, in

line with the literature, that even when the Ottoman Empire did not act intentionally, the economic competition among Westerners benefited them. As has been noted, the Ottomans understood how to play the concessionary game to their own benefit. In line with the literature, these projects and the conditions under which they were negotiated benefited both the Ottoman Empire and its constituent population.

This study uses Western sources to peer inside the local governance of Ottoman Iraq, with all the limitations inherent to such a perspective. The advantage of using these sources is that the American sources used in this study have been ignored and therefore, contain previously unknown information. While the lack of Ottoman sources in this dissertation is a hindrance to a wider scope for this argument, it is not a fatal shortcoming. These documents and the incidents they record are a valuable and unexplored part of the historical record. This dissertation discusses the period of 1894-1914 for two major reasons. First, the U.S. State Department opened its Vice Consulate in Baghdad in 1894 and therefore, the American sources I use for the region, as well as the permanent U.S. diplomatic presence in Ottoman Iraq, begin in 1894. Secondly, during much of the period, there was a continuity of executive administration in the U.S. – the Republican Party was in power from much of this period and therefore, there was significant stability in U.S. State Department personnel as well as, in official U.S. foreign policy. That foreign policy was, as is discussed elsewhere, not necessarily focused on the Ottoman Empire, but it was focused on increasing U.S. economic interests around the globe. Therefore, the period is held together as it traces the beginning of official U.S. diplomatic engagement in Baghdad and Basra and follows the growth of U.S. economic interests in the region. 1914 and the economic disruptions that occurred at the beginning of World War One provide the end point for the period.

As for the geographic rationale, Baghdad and Basra were linked by the riverine trade route and the date and licorice trade discussed in this dissertation. International trade from Baghdad flowed through Basra and international trade destined for Iran flowed from Basra through Baghdad. The two cities were also linked in this research because they were considered together in many of the concessions discussed here, particularly in regards to oil and transportation. Furthermore, it is possible to consider Baghdad and Basra as being connected politically. The Vilâyet of Basra was administered from Baghdad at times during the late 19th century and was directed militarily by the sixth army corps of Bagdad. Baghdad's court of appeals had jurisdiction in Basra and officially, custom duties were collected from offices in Baghdad.<sup>7</sup> Reidar Visser notes that Yitzhak Nakash and Hala Fattah both argue for a "continuity approach" to Baghdad and Basra, suggesting that the two cities can be considered, to some degree at least, historically tied together.<sup>8</sup> Thus, this dissertation, due to the existing literature and the manner in which these economic conflicts and cooperation tie the two cities together, discusses Basra and Baghdad as a unit.

Looking at the historiography, the period of 1894-1914 saw vast changes in U.S. foreign policy, in particular the rising imperialism and economic expansion that accelerated in the wake of the Spanish-American War. While I argue for a reevaluation and expansion of the historic role of the U.S in Ottoman Iraq, the prevailing historiography on America in the Persian Gulf<sup>9</sup> region prior to the First World War states that America had little or no interest and interaction in the

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<sup>7</sup> Reidar Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State: Separatism and Nationalism in Southern Iraq* (Münster: Verlag, 2005), pp. 19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> I chose to use the term Persian Gulf because it is the officially sanctioned term of the United States government and the most commonly used moniker for the area in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

region. Important and rigorous studies like Hala Fattah's *Politics of Regional Trade*, pay limited attention to the role of Americans in the Gulf. Briton Busch's detailed *Britain and the Persian Gulf 1894-1914*, focuses on the role of France, Russia and Germany in the Gulf; Americans are mentioned only as having, along with Italy and Portugal, had "minor roles to play."<sup>10</sup> Gary Sick, argues that the United States had no real involvement or interest in Iraq before World War II.<sup>11</sup> John De Novo, asserts that, before oil exports from the Middle East acquired importance to the United States after the First World War, American economic interests and aspirations in the region far exceeded their reality.<sup>12</sup> Emily Rosenberg has argued that in this period, the U.S. followed a foreign policy of Dollar Diplomacy which was both a strategy of investing in other nations to raise their standards of living and to "expand imperialist domination and exploitation..."<sup>13</sup> Yet Joseph Grabill dismisses Dollar Diplomacy in the Middle East, stating that the Chester Project, the largest example of it in the Ottoman Empire, was "A sign both of the small investments and of the ineptitude that was the misguided venture in Dollar Diplomacy, a railroad and mining scheme known as the Chester Project."<sup>14</sup> De Novo notes that the U.S. consulate in Istanbul, which was for some time housed above a dentist's office, was shabby and that the overall role/skill of the State Department in the Ottoman Empire was demonstrably lacking.<sup>15</sup> The ineffectuality of the State Department and a general hands off attitude led to "do-

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<sup>10</sup> Briton Cooper Busch, *Britain and the Persian Gulf 1894-1914*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Sick, Gary. "The United States and the Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century" in Potter, Lawrence editor, *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) p. 197.

<sup>12</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, p. viii.

<sup>13</sup> Emily Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy 1900-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Grabill. *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971) p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, pp. 19-20.

it-yourself' diplomacy; the Presidents of American Colleges in Istanbul directly negotiated with Ottoman officials rather than through the State department. Michael Oren notes that, after anti-Armenian pogroms in the 1890's, the U.S. public collected money to provide relief for the affected Armenians in the Ottoman Empire; in 1896, it was Clara Barton that was nominated to bring the donations to the Armenians due to the U.S. public's perception of the State Department as incompetent and disinterested.<sup>16</sup> However, during the period of this study, the State Department underwent reform and professionalization that is reflected in the attitude of the Foreign Service in Baghdad and Basra after 1906.

Besides trade and infrastructure, the American presence in the Ottoman Empire was limited to the State Department's personnel, and to its missionaries and archaeologists. As previously stated, this period saw an expansion and professionalization of the U.S. State Department in the Ottoman Empire that warrants a closer examination and particularly one that shows how the domestic reform movements spurred on by missionaries affected the activities of U.S. personnel in the Ottoman Empire. Barnes records that the U.S. diplomatic mission to the Ottoman Empire was opened in 1831, making it the first U.S. mission to an Asian country and second to an African state.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century appointments were entirely based on the "spoils system" and "determined by political consideration."<sup>18</sup> However, after the American Civil War and aligned with a more aggressive foreign policy, many in the U.S. government came to see the State Department as essential for foreign trade. U.S. congressman Jonathan Chace<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Oren, Michael, *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: Norton, 2007) p. 295.

<sup>17</sup> William Barnes and John Heath Morgan, *The Foreign Service of the United States: Origins, Development and Function* (Washington D.C., Department of State, 1961) p. 340 Appendix 3.

<sup>18</sup> Barnes and Morgan, *The Foreign Service*, p. 68.

<sup>19</sup> Chace was a Congressman from Rhode Island from 1881-1885 and in the Senate from 1885-1889.

asserted in 1884 that any attempt to limit or minimize the role of the State Department overseas would cripple trade, arguing “when you propose to strike down the diplomatic service, you aim a blow at the commerce of the United States in foreign countries as directly as if you should strike at the consular service.”<sup>20</sup> Proponents of reforming the service focused their efforts against wealth as a criterion of appointees and idealized the British Foreign Service; Ilchman writes that other reform proposals included the end of rotating staff after a period (creation of a tenure system), having a merit based grading system and the institution of standardized examinations as a means for entering the service. The Foreign Service played a major role in the protection of missionaries abroad and Ilchman notes that these same missionaries were vociferous for a reformed, robust and professional U.S. Foreign Service.<sup>21</sup> Barnes notes that the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s rapid growth in American overseas commerce and the extension of diplomatic representation to more nations saw a massive expansion in the size of the Foreign Service; yet, this expansion had little to do with official government policy and was the diplomatic flag following trade and an accidental “process of accretion.” This process expanded rapidly after the Spanish-American war when the personnel of the department doubled between the years 1898-1908. Barnes shows that the State Department had a new focus on trade and sanitation, including the demand that U.S. consuls keep invoices for imports to the U.S. valued at over \$100 and the certification of the health of ships coming to the U.S. A major reorganization and professionalization of the Foreign Service took place in 1906 which established and expanded salaries, created a consular inspection corps, required paid clerks making more than \$1000 per year to be Americans and no longer permitted those same clerks from engaging in business or legal practice. A procedural

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<sup>20</sup> Warren Frederick Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy in the United States 1779-1930: A Study in Administrative History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy in the United States*, pp. 45-6 and p. 58.



change ensured that consular agents paid their fees into the Treasury, rather than using them as a *de facto* salary. Further professionalization and improvement in the Foreign Service included the creation of “politico-geographic divisions”, including that of Near Eastern affairs, in 1909 and the Lowden act of 1911, which set aside money to acquire better buildings for US foreign missions.<sup>22</sup> This shift towards professionalism and the trade/sanitation focus of the Foreign Service occurred too late to help the two projects that Hürner, the U.S. vice consul in Baghdad proposed in this period. Likewise, once the Chester Project was advanced by a more professionalized group of diplomats, it ran into the already entrenched European interests that outflanked it and led to its failure. While this demonstrates that American investors and the State Department were unable to compete with the entrenched European economic interests in terms of finance and investment, it does not mean that Americans were indifferent to the Ottoman economy and the opportunities it presented. It also does not mean that the State Department failed to increase its sophistication in the promotion of U.S. economic interests in the Ottoman Empire.

Frequently, the only American citizens consistently resident in Ottoman Iraq were missionaries and archaeologists. De Novo acknowledges that the Ottoman government was suspicious of U.S. missionary activity.<sup>23</sup> There is a significant literature on U.S. missionaries in the Ottoman Empire, although this historiography focuses more on the missions sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in Anatolia and Lebanon and less on the Arabian Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church that was active in Iraq. Lewis Scudder, however, provides a lengthy, uncritical narrative of the Arabian Mission. The Arabian

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<sup>22</sup> Barnes and Morgan, *The Foreign Service*, p. 68, p. 154, p. 157, p. 165, p. 160 and p. 175.

<sup>23</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, p.7.

Mission was launched in Basra during the year 1891 at an estimated initial cost of \$25,000.<sup>24</sup> Like missionaries throughout the Islamic world, the Arabian Mission discovered that simply evangelizing was inefficient (and could lead to significant danger for converts) and they modified their approach to focus their energies on building up a medical infrastructure.<sup>25</sup> The classic study on ABCFM missionaries in the Ottoman Empire, Joseph Grabill's *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927*, argues that after realizing their initial mission – to convert Muslims and Jews – had failed, American missionaries turned their attention to Ottoman Christians and in particular, Armenians.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps American missionaries found it easier to connect with a population that was already Christian, or perhaps they viewed the Armenians as a stepping stone to proselytizing amongst Muslims and Turks.<sup>27</sup> Grabill agrees with Scudder that missionaries were not particularly successful evangelizers, but shows how they (ABCFM) expanded education in the Ottoman Empire, beginning with only a few hundred students in 1850 and expanding to over 33,000 by 1914.<sup>28</sup> Grabill records the effect that missionary demands on the State department had, including the increased attention and professionalization of the U.S. diplomatic mission in the Ottoman Empire after 1906.<sup>29</sup> Ussama Makdisi's less sympathetic work *Artillery of Heaven*, paints U.S. missionaries as hapless interlopers in the Middle East.<sup>30</sup> On the Ottoman side, Selim Deringil shows the Ottoman State to be effective at regulating and diminishing American missionaries;

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<sup>24</sup> Scudder, *The Arabian Mission's Story*, p. 156.

<sup>25</sup> Scudder, *The Arabian Mission's Story*, p. 162.

<sup>26</sup> Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East*, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Shenk, *America's Black Sea Fleet: The US Navy Amidst War and Revolution* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2012) p. 43.

<sup>28</sup> Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East*, p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East*, p. 39.

<sup>30</sup> Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008)

they are fully informed of contemporaneous United States missionary activity in Hawaii.<sup>31</sup> This study examines the problems that missionaries could potentially face in the Ottoman Empire and uses those to offer insights concerning the roles played and relationships established by American missionaries. These conflicts, roles and relationships may suggest certain conclusions about or perhaps aspects of the daily functioning of Ottoman governance.

While there are several studies that detail the role of American archaeologists and archaeology in modern Iraqi archeology and preservation<sup>32</sup> there is little that discusses the role of American archaeologists in the Middle East before the First World War. The two major American led dig sites, Nippur and Bismaya, were both involved in conflicts with the Ottoman bureaucracy. Meade's *Road to Babylon* and Wilson's *Bismaya: Recovering the Lost City of Adab* are both narratives concerning early American digs in Iraq. Wilson's book is an attempt to rehabilitate the criminal reputation accorded to the Bismaya excavations that are discussed in this dissertation.<sup>33</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, nation-states have employed archaeology to create and foster national identities by presenting a curated version of their own history and excluding narratives that conflict with the official history.<sup>34</sup> Bernhardsson notes that the Ottomans during the

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<sup>31</sup> Selim Deringil, "An Ottoman View of Missionary Activity in Hawaii" *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 27, (1993): 119-125.

<sup>32</sup> See Christina Luke and Morag Kersel, *US Cultural Diplomacy and Archaeology: Soft Power, Hard Heritage* (Routledge: New York, 2013) and Peter Stone, Peter and Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly, *The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008) and Neville Agnew and Janet Bridgeland, *Of the Past, for the Future: Integrating Archaeology and Conservation* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2003)

<sup>33</sup> C. Wade Meade, *Road to Babylon: Development of U.S. Assyriology* (Leiden: Brill, 1974) and Karen Wilson and Jacob Lauinger, *Bismaya : Recovering the Lost City of Adab* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> Uzi Baram and Rowan Yorke, "Archeology after Nationalism: Globalization and the Consumption of the Past." In Uzi Baram and Rowan Yorke, editors. *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*. (Altamira Press: New York, 2004) p. 3. See also Trigger, Bruce "Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist." *Man* 19(3):

*Tanzimat* reform period started to regulate antiquities and the antiquity trade, beginning with the 1874 designation of antiquities as being under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and provisions for allotting the finds of the excavations, with at least 1/3 going to the Ottoman State.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, a school was created to train archeologists in 1875, and further legislative changes gave the Ottoman state full control over antiquities that were excavated.<sup>36</sup> Wendy Shaw details the rise of the Ottoman Imperial Museum and notes that by 1884, all antiquities were considered the property of the Ottoman State.<sup>37</sup> Ahmet Ersoy has argued that *Tanzimat* era reforms regarding antiquities led to the rise of Art History as a discipline of study within the Ottoman Empire. Particularly, Ersoy states that the creation of an Ottoman artistic and architectural heritage was necessary for the construction of a national Ottoman identity.<sup>38</sup> The failure to create a coherent Ottoman identity is documented particularly within literature analyzing the Armenian Genocide; Taner Akçam and Vahakn Dadrian list it as a major cause of that event.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, failure to create cohesive national identities after the fall of the Ottoman State has also been much documented, particularly by scholars of Lebanese, Jordanian and Iraqi history. According to Shaw, the Ottoman Imperial Museum disregarded the Western art history narratives of progress and universalism, instead using their antiquities, particularly those

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355-70. And Neil Silberman, *Between Past and Present: Archaeology, Ideology and Nationalism in the Modern Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt, 1989)

<sup>35</sup> Magnus T. Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past : Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008) p. 40.

<sup>36</sup> Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, p. 40.

<sup>37</sup> Wendy Shaw. *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) p. 110.

<sup>38</sup> Ahmet Ersoy. *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2010)

<sup>39</sup> See Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic : Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2004) and Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence, RI & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995)

collected by Hamdi Bey, a painter who had studied in Paris with Jean-Léon Gérôme and Gustave Boulanger, to emphasize how the Ottomans were part of the Western powerful nation-family. Benjamin Porter wrote that “Near Eastern archaeology often played a role in European and North American imperial and colonialist enterprises in the region...currently the region’s nation-states manage their own antiquities often using them to construct narratives that legitimate postcolonial circumstances.”<sup>40</sup> History, Bernhardsson notes, is a necessary ingredient for nationalism and the nation building process.<sup>41</sup> This research adds to this literature by demonstrating that the conflicts that American archaeologists had with Ottoman officials over property rights and antiquities fit into the overall argument of Westerner’s perception concerning antiquities as a commodity to be exported and the way that the Ottoman State asserted its authority. These conflicts ended, in these instances, with Americans acquiescing to Ottoman demands in order to maintain access to the sites. Additionally, these conflicts demonstrate the growth of some of the ideological prerequisites to a nation-state ideology within the Ottoman Empire. By focusing on retaining antiquities for display in the Imperial Museum, the Ottoman State and in particular, Hamdi Bey were demonstrating their awareness that doing so was necessary in order to craft a cohesive national narrative. The Ottoman Imperial Museum’s actions also suggest that the Ottoman’s interest in antiquities and ability to control those antiquities was significant in this period.

According to Köksal a major aspect of the centralizing reforms of the *Tanzimat* was the sedentarization of nomadic and semi-nomadic people.<sup>42</sup> Several *Tanzimat* reforms factored into

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<sup>40</sup> Benjamin Porter, “Near Eastern Archaeology: Imperial Pasts, Postcolonial Presents, and the Possibilities of a Decolonized Future.” In Jane Lydon, Jane and Uzma Rizvi, editors. *Handbook of Postcolonial Archaeology* (Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2010)

<sup>41</sup> Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Yonca Köksal, “Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire.” *Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol. 42, No. 3 (May, 2006), p. 469.

this effort, but the 1858 Land Code and the 1864 Provincial Reform Law are especially relevant. The 1858 land code sought to make all Ottoman land into formal private property. The task of registering land, according to Peter Sluglett and Marian Farouk-Sluglett shifted the focus of power struggle from being one of the central state against tribal leaders to one between tribal leaders and tribesmen and in the process, tied the formerly competitive tribal leaders to the central state. The increasing incorporation of Iraq into the global marketplace also made both land and labor more valuable there, which itself was an economic impetus towards sedentarization.<sup>43</sup> Created by the Provincial Reform Law, the provincial council was the highest appeals court in the province and the arbiter of commercial, civil and *shari'a* disputes.<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Thompson writes that the council was supposed to be independent of the Vali and was an example of how top-down reforms like the *Tanzimat* could led to reform from below, wherein local notables were given a space within the governing structure.<sup>45</sup> Köksal argues that the settling of peoples was also a top-down initiative, but when carried out successfully, it was done through local intermediaries. One of the problems faced in Iraq was trying to settle its pastoral population, which, if not done successfully would leave that population outside of the structure of the state and more importantly, dislocated from the economy.<sup>46</sup>

The expansion of the world economy in this period led to economic incentives for governments to settle previously pastoral populations. Attempts to settle these populations, in

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<sup>43</sup> Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, "The Transformation of Land Tenure and Rural Social Structure in Central and Southern Iraq, C. 1870-1958". *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Vol. 40, No. 1 (Feb., 2008), pp. 3-5.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Thompson, "Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-45" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Vol. 25, No. 3 (Aug., 1993), p. 457.

<sup>45</sup> Thompson, "Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces", p. 458.

<sup>46</sup> Köksal, "Coercion and Mediation", pp. 469-470.

Ottoman Iraq proceeded in a similar manner and with similar uneven results as it did elsewhere. This process led to an incomplete sedentarization and to an incomplete integration of those populations into the world economy, thus creating periodic social and economic disturbances. Kemal Karpat, in examining the causes of Syrian emigration between 1860 and 1914, listed brigandage as one of the causes, along with population disturbances caused by Ottoman policies that aimed at settling nomads.<sup>47</sup> David Kushner wrote that brigandage was a concern in this time period in the Ottoman governance of Palestine.<sup>48</sup> Benjamin Fortna notes that Ottoman autobiographies, during this period, recorded rampant brigandage in the Balkans provinces.<sup>49</sup> Nathan Brown demonstrates that the Egyptian state dedicated a fair amount of effort to eliminating brigandage in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>50</sup> In Ottoman Iraq and elsewhere in the Ottoman periphery, the state attempted to either settle the pastoral people for agricultural purposes or harness them for state sponsored military purposes. Selim Deringil, in his discussion of centralizing reforms writes that the “Ottoman Center found itself obliged to squeeze manpower resources it had not hitherto tapped. Particularly nomadic populations, armed and already possessing the military skills required for a modern army, now became a primary target for mobilization.”<sup>51</sup> Uyar states that the Hamidian Regiments were intended as a way to integrate

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<sup>47</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration to America” *The International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 17, No. 2 (May, 1985), pp. 175-209. p. 178.

<sup>48</sup> David Kushner, “The Ottoman Governors of Palestine, 1864:1914” *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 23, No. 3 (July., 1987), pp. 274-290 p. 281.

<sup>49</sup> Benjamin Fortna, “Education and Autobiography at the End of the Ottoman Empire” *Die Welt des Islams* New Series, Vol. 41, Issue 1 (Mar., 2001), pp. 1-31, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> Nathan Brown “Brigands and State Building: The Invention of Banditry in Modern Egypt” [\*Comparative Studies in Society and History\*](#), Vol. 32, No. 2 (Apr., 1990), pp. 258-281.

<sup>51</sup> Selim 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*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Apr., 2003), pp. 311-342, p.311.

different ethnicities into the state and organize excess population. Another effort of the time, the establishment of Albanian and Arab imperial guard battalions had similar intentions.<sup>52</sup> The literature on the implementation of centralizing reforms and sedentarization demonstrates that the process was seen as a means to confront brigandage and to incorporate the peripheral areas of the empire into the state. Like the above literature, case studies discussed in this dissertation suggest that this occurred with uneven results and that brigandage was a concern for Ottoman officials in Iraq.

Other *Tanzimat* reforms have been discussed in terms of the relationship between Istanbul and the Iraqi periphery. Sarah Shields, in her study on Mosul, describes a continuing struggle between Istanbul and local elites. Ultimately, in Mosul, many of the reforms instituted by Istanbul were either not enforced, or only loosely implemented; some only by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, Eugene Rogan investigates the relationship between center and periphery in nearby Transjordan, detailing the struggle that ensued as the Sublime Porte attempted to incorporate the area more firmly into the Empire.<sup>54</sup> Hala Fattah elaborates on the relationship with, and competition between, British merchants, Najdi merchants, local Arabs and Ottoman elites in the Persian Gulf area to help demonstrate this center-periphery relationship.<sup>55</sup> By showing similar instances of conflicts and rivalries among merchants, this research

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<sup>52</sup> Mesut Uyar and Edward Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Usman to Ataturk* (New York: Praeger, 2009) pp. 203-5.

<sup>53</sup> Sarah Shields, *Mosul Before Iraq: Like Bees Making Five Sided Cells* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000) p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 17.

<sup>55</sup> Hala Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia and the Gulf 1745-1900* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997) p. 8.



contributes to the aforementioned literature by demonstrating the complicated nature of the relationship between Baghdad, Basra and Istanbul.

Britain's preeminence in the Gulf is not questioned in the literature. Olney qualifies it by stating that rather than Britain, it was British India that was the dominant foreign power in Ottoman Iraq which he argues should be considered "a British Indian Sphere of Influence..."<sup>56</sup> Olney goes so far as to argue that Ottoman Iraq in the 19<sup>th</sup> century should be included in the definition of British India.<sup>57</sup> Blyth details how British Indian officials saw Mesopotamia as a possible colony of India that could accommodate "as many as twenty-five million Indian settlers."<sup>58</sup> Headrick agrees, noting "Imperialism in the mid-century [19<sup>th</sup>] was primarily a matter of British tentacles reaching out from India..."<sup>59</sup> Busch calls the Persian Gulf an "international waterway of steadily increasing importance in the age of imperial rivalries..."<sup>60</sup> As Busch notes, if shipping alone is to measure importance, in 1896 out of 170,566 tons exported from Basra, 136,693 were British. Britain accounted for about 60% of the export trade and a similar number in Baghdad. One by-product of inter-imperial rivalry in the Persian Gulf was the creation of the state of Kuwait. The British maneuvered to create the state as they were worried that Kuwait, the best deep water port in the Gulf, would become home to a German submarine base via the working of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway concession and a declaration of Kuwaiti independence would be the best means of countering that possibility.<sup>61</sup> McMeekin notes that British concerns

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<sup>56</sup> Olney, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> Olney, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, p. 216.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858-1947* (New York: Palgrave, 2003) p. 134.

<sup>59</sup> Daniel Headrick, *The Tool of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1981) p. 205.

<sup>60</sup> Busch, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> Busch, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, p. 188.

over the Berlin-Baghdad Railway led to many international negotiations and a conscious effort by the concessionaires to appear less German, “The more ‘German’ the Baghdad railway appeared, the more cause Paris, London and St. Petersburg would have for trying to sabotage it, or for putting up rival bids for the concession... Germany must appear not to be building the railway alone, while somehow still securing the benefit.”<sup>62</sup> This study contributes to the argument that Western infrastructure concessions had to appear international both for the sake of Western business rivalry and to make them palatable to the Ottoman government. Likewise, and as is demonstrated by Frangakis-Syrett, Clay, Eldhem, Thobie and others, large scale capital was international by nature.<sup>63</sup> Also, as has been demonstrated in the literature, the Ottomans were able, by manipulating Western investors, to secure better terms for themselves and were active participants in the concessionary process, rather than passive recipients of foreign influence.

For much of this period Russian expansionism was the foremost concern for the British in the Persian Gulf. Busch notes that the fears associated with the “Great Game” in Asia, a struggle of espionage, violence and diplomacy intended to keep Russia from threatening India were exacerbated by a Russian gunboat, the *Gilyak*, visiting the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas and setting up a minor coal depot there in 1900. The ebb and flow of crises and diplomacy in the Gulf were intimately linked with events occurring between these powers elsewhere, such as the

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<sup>62</sup> Sean McMeeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010) p. 39.

<sup>63</sup> See Elena Frangakis-Syrett, “Banking in Izmir in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Mediterranean Historical Review*, Volume 24, Issue 2, 2009 pp. 115-132 and Christopher Clay, *Gold for the Sultan: Western Bankers and Ottoman Finance 1856-1881* (I.B. Taurus: New York, 2001) and Edhem Eldem, *A History of the Ottoman Bank* (Ottoman Bank Historical Research Center: Istanbul, 1999) and Jacques Thobie, “French Investments in Public and Private Funds in the Ottoman Empire on the Eve of the Great War” in P.L. Cottrell, editor, *East Meets West: Banking, Commerce and Investment in the Ottoman Empire* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2011).

Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War. Inter-imperial struggle anywhere inspired Britain to tighten its hold in the Gulf. Britain and India were frequently in conflict over Gulf policy, with India pushing a more aggressive policy.<sup>64</sup> Seton-Watson notes that many foreign policy issues of this era between Russia and Britain were based in Iran and Afghanistan, and that the negotiations there were really between Russia, the Russian governor of Turkistan, Britain and British India. The Anglo-Russian agreement of August 31, 1907 gave Russia large portions of northern Iran as a sphere of influence and less economically important but more strategically important parts of Iran (Southeast) to the British with Southwestern Iran being a shared sphere, where either could compete for concessions. Likewise, Britain issued a statement supporting the status quo in the Persian Gulf, to support British trade but without excluding the legitimate trade of any other power. Russia also recognized both Afghanistan as being outside of their sphere of interest and Britain's special interest in Tibet.<sup>65</sup> LeDonne discusses this rivalry and Britain's containment policy by writing that Britain entered the Anglo-Japanese alliance primarily to stop Russian encroachment in Northern China. Putting it in candid terms, Lord Balfour declared in 1901 "a quarrel with Russia anywhere, about anything, means the invasion of India." The Portsmouth Treaty of 1905 gave Japan hegemony on the Pacific frontier, significantly lessening the perceived threat of Russia to British interest. After the *rapprochement* of Russia and Great Britain and the *entente cordiale* which ended the Anglo-French rivalry in the Mediterranean, the new focus for British anxiety was Germany.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Busch, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, p. 129 and pp. 384-387.

<sup>65</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire*, p. 671 and pp. 680-681.

<sup>66</sup> John LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World: 1700-1917 The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) pp. 337-339. For more on inter-imperial rivalry, and particularly on its role in lead to the First World War see Stuart A. Cohen, *British Policy in Mesopotamia*, (London: Ithaca Press, 1976), Marian Kent, *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), Elizabeth Monroe,

Robert Johnson notes that Ottoman and Iranian territorial integrity served as major British bulwarks against Russian expansionism. Johnson argues that diplomats, consulates, financial services, infrastructure projects, communications networks and commercial concessions were the key to this struggle.<sup>67</sup> Headrick argues that more than anything else, it was communication and transport technology that allowed the British to dominate. He wrote “The steamboat, with its power to travel speedily upriver as well as down, carried Europeans deep into Africa and Asia. Few inventions of the nineteenth century were as important to the history of imperialism.”<sup>68</sup> Headrick argues that the importance of shipping contracts and in particular of the mail contracts ensured vicious competition by and between British firms.<sup>69</sup> Ebubekir Ceylan notes that the first steamship navigation in the region was British and was an attempt to shorten travel time to India. The Lynch Company was operating in Iraq as early as 1842 and with an official concession from the Ottoman government by 1846. British riverboats seem to have been both an irritation and a boon for the Ottoman State. The British presence and economic penetration had to be contained, but their riverboats provided increased security against recalcitrant tribes and made tax collection easier for the Ottoman governors of Iraq.<sup>70</sup> While in 1911, the two largest global shipping companies by tonnage and number of ships were German, (Hamburg-Amerika and Norddeutscher Lloyd), in 1914, the two largest British ones had merged,

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*Britain's Moment in the Middle East*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), Jukka Nevakivi, *Britain, France and the Arab Middle East: 1914-1920*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

<sup>67</sup> Robert Johnson, “The Great Game and Power Projection.” In Jeffrey Macris and Saul Kelly, editors. *Imperial Crossroads: The Great Powers and the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2012) p. 33.

<sup>68</sup> Headrick, *The Tool of Empire*, p. 17

<sup>69</sup> Daniel Headrick, *The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) p. 37.

<sup>70</sup> Ebubekir Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq: Political Reform, Modernization and Development in the Nineteenth Century Middle East* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2011) pp. 189-191.

making it the largest in the world. That new company, the British India Steam Navigation Company, in turn, swallowed up the local British steamer service, the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company (ETSN). Headrick also argued that the construction of monumental irrigation projects and the transfer of plants were major features of imperialism.<sup>71</sup> Clearly these forces were at work in Ottoman Iraq as well. This study augments the literature by discussing the internal British competition over contracts in Ottoman Iraq and the struggle between the Ottoman State and the ETSN for control over the steamboat traffic on the Tigris River.

Elena Frangakis-Syrett demonstrates the complicated workings of foreign investment in her work, and particularly in “The Making of an Ottoman Port.” The quay at Izmir was one of the earliest harbor projects in the Ottoman Empire and is a complicated study in how infrastructure projects work. Frangakis-Syrett writes that rivalry and competition defined the European communities in Izmir, “Such fierce rivalry became the backdrop to the construction of the quay.” Initiated locally and originally to be funded locally, the project began as a British venture in 1868. Ottoman officials, realizing its value to their trade, helped the project along; the French consul also approved of the project especially after the project became a French concession. Frangakis-Syrett writes, “Inter-imperial rivalry kept antagonism to the quay company alive even when specific issues had been resolved and reignited it every time another point of contention emerged.”<sup>72</sup> Jans Hannsen showed how local officials were active participants in the urban improvement of Beirut and how they utilized mechanisms set up by *Tanzimat*-era reforms to help them on their quest to develop Beirut. In particular, local elites sought to make Beirut a provincial capital and concurrently, to tie their fortunes closer to the

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<sup>71</sup> Headrick, *The Tentacles of Progress*, pp. 39-40 and p. 171 and p. 209.

<sup>72</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett. “The Making of an Ottoman Port: The Quay of Izmir in the Nineteenth Century” *The Journal of Transport History*, Volume 22/1 (2001) pp.23-30.

imperial center.<sup>73</sup> These infrastructure projects are important points of contact between Western nation-states and the Ottoman Empire. Leonhard notes that while the Ottoman State was dependent on Europeans for infrastructure improvements such as railways, the Ottoman state also needed to be able to provide the symbols of legitimacy and modernity that these improvements represented.<sup>74</sup> This research agrees with and reinforces the literature that states that the Ottoman Empire manipulated inter-imperial rivalry and Western business rivalry for its own benefit.

The act of incorporating remote regions is an example of nation building and the process through which the Ottoman Empire moved, or attempted to move away from an Empire and towards a nation-state. The process of identity formation within the Ottoman Empire has been well documented. Selim Deringil argues that during the reign of Abdul Hamid II, the Ottoman state used Sufi sheikhs and nationalism to attempt a synthetic, but more uniform, Ottoman identity.<sup>75</sup> Kayali argues that Turkish nationalism did not really play a role in this period but that the creation of a new identity was based around an Ottoman identity or a process of Ottomanism. Kayali writes that this nation building identity arose from the *Tanzimat* principle of political equality and was defined by “a common allegiance of all subjects in equal status to the Ottoman dynasty.”<sup>76</sup> Taner Akçam and Vahakn Dadrian argue that the process of Ottoman identity

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<sup>73</sup> Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siecle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (London: Clarendon Press, 2005) p. 17.

<sup>74</sup> Jorn Leonhard “Imperial Projections and Piecemeal Realities: Multicultural Empires and the Experience of Failure in the Nineteenth Century.” Maurus Reinkowski, Gregor Thum, editors, *Helpless Imperialists: Imperial Failure, Fear and Radicalization* (Goettingen: Vanderhoek & Ruprecht, 2013) p. 27.

<sup>75</sup> Selim Deringil, *The Well-protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998)

<sup>76</sup> Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) p. 24.

formation failed and contributed to the Armenian Genocide.<sup>77</sup> Bruce Masters complicates this narrative by reminding us that, “the peoples of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire were not simply passive recipients of an order imposed by the Europeans. Rather, they took an active role in devising strategies to cope with change and benefit from it, thereby determining their own futures.”<sup>78</sup> Deringil’s thesis, in “*They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery*” and in the *Well Protected Domains*, was that the late Ottoman State “came to perceive of its periphery as a colonial setting.”<sup>79</sup> Makdisi notes that this internal colonial attitude of the ethnic Turkish elite was most obvious when it came to its application within the Arab province.<sup>80</sup> Köksal argues that the process of centralizing *tanzimat* reforms, the settling of pastoral people can be seen as part of a transition from Empire to Nation-State, although not necessary along the same lines as that of Western states.<sup>81</sup> My research too shows the complicated realities of the center-periphery relationship as it manifested itself in Ottoman Iraq through trade and other economic disputes.

Elena Frangakis-Syrett has shown that the 1838 Anglo-Ottoman Trade Convention produced positive results for British trade in the Ottoman Empire. The benefits for British and later American merchants were real, however, these merchants still found it profitable and necessary to work with the local partners the treaty was supposed to circumvent and that the

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<sup>77</sup> Taner Akcam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2004) and Vahakn Dadrian, *A History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004)

<sup>78</sup> Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 15.

<sup>79</sup> Deringil ““They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery,”” pp. 311-2.

<sup>80</sup> Ussama Makdisi, “Ottoman Orientalism. *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 3 (June 2002), pp. 768-796) p. 770.

<sup>81</sup> Köksal, “Coercion and Mediation,” p. 469.

treaty had “ongoing problems concerning its full implementation.”<sup>82</sup> Pamuk shows that the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw an unprecedented expansion of Western trade into the Ottoman Empire. This expansion was not a steady process but a fluctuating one, subject to the whims of the nascent global economy. Free trade treaties cleared a number of government restrictions on imports and exports, however, Pamuk argues that these should not be seen as the cause of increased trade/incorporation in the world economy, but as a symptom of it. Large amounts of capital were invested by the industrialized countries into the Ottoman Empire during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and most of it was invested into transport infrastructure to facilitate trade, rather than other forms of development, particularly agricultural.<sup>83</sup> Christopher Clay shows how banking, either completely or partially bankrolled by Western capital developed in the Ottoman Empire. While Western banks opened first in and only in Istanbul by the 1890’s these financial institutions began opening branches throughout the Ottoman Empire. By 1913, over 140 banks or bank branches were operating in the Ottoman Empire in eighty different urban centers. The three BIO branches in Iraq were founded in Baghdad in 1892, Basra in 1904 and Mosul in 1907. Clay notes that between 1889 and 1911 the Ottoman economy was growing rapidly and outstripping population growth. Clay provides evidence that local merchants in the Ottoman provinces wanted Western style banking institutions to expand into their territory and make their capital available to them.<sup>84</sup>

In Iraq specifically, Issawi argues that floods, soil salinity/riverine silt, epidemics, tribal

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<sup>82</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett, “Implementation of the 1838 Anglo-Turkish Convention on Izmir’s Trade: European and Minority Merchants,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, (Spring 1992,7, pp. 91-112) p.102.

<sup>83</sup> Sevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820-1913* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) pp. 18-19 and p. 44.

<sup>84</sup> Christopher Clay, “The Origins of Modern Banking in the Levant: The Branch Network of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, 1890-1914.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Volume 26, No. 4 (November 1994, pp. 589-614) p. 589-592 and p. 610.



insecurity, and poor governance hampered what should have been rapid economic growth during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, global trends, including increased demand for Iraqi agricultural products and lower shipping rates saw a twelvefold increase in seaborne exports and an increase of twenty-two times in seaborne imports between the 1870's and 1912-3. This expansion made it profitable to increase production and sedentarize the pastoral population of Iraq.<sup>85</sup> Reşat Kasaba notes that the incorporation of Ottoman Empire into the world economy was done mainly through this mediation of trade activities which linked agricultural producers in the periphery with manufacturers and consumers in core areas. Some monetary and infrastructure investment took place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but as Pamuk had also noted, this was mostly transportation to facilitate trade.<sup>86</sup> The economic vibrancy of the very late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ottoman Iraq warrants using economic conflicts to investigate the history of the region and time period.

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<sup>85</sup> Charles Issawi, *The Middle East Economy: Decline and Recovery* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1995) pp. 145-149.

<sup>86</sup> Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988) p. 6.

## Chapter 1

### Infrastructure and American Investment Attempts

The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw significant foreign interest and investment in infrastructure projects in the Ottoman Empire. These projects ranged from the large-scale Berlin-Baghdad Railway, to more local projects, such as tramways, mail carrying concession and bridge or quay constructions. These projects were both beneficial for local people and for the Ottoman Empire, as well as being profitable for European and American investors. In the Ottoman Empire, these projects, besides the profit motive (for foreign and local investors) and the Ottoman desire to see local economic improvements, contained hints of an imperial and inter-imperial element, as typically expressed through the competition between rival investors. In the case of the U.S. in this period, there was a desire to expand their own economic interests in the Ottoman Empire. This attempt, although the work of individual entrepreneurs, was part of the larger U.S. foreign policy of the period, particularly during the Roosevelt-Taft years, which featured an aggressive expansionist economic policy. The three U.S. company sponsored projects discussed in this chapter were not realized, yet their history and the interplay between the U.S. and Ottoman officials contribute to our understanding of how the Ottoman Empire functioned economically. In terms of securing these projects, U.S. investors were excluded, in part by the U.S. State Department's inability to see beyond its protocols and adapt to local conditions and later by the intransigence of entrenched European companies. These projects can also be seen within the evolution of the Foreign Service into a more effective promoter of American interests and the general trend towards the growth of U.S. economic interests in Ottoman Iraq. This evolution also involved the U.S. Foreign Service moving away from using a self-interested businessman to using salaried, professional employees in Baghdad. These economic interests evolved in this time period, from the mere self-interested actions of diplomat-merchants into a more sophisticated promotion of American business interests. Likewise,

the foundation of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant is evidence of growing ability and sophistication of U.S. economic promotion in the region as the organization was founded both by U.S. concession seekers and by American diplomats.

Empire is a complicated and fraught term. This chapter utilizes the definition provided in Joshua Freeman's *American Empire*. Freeman adroitly describes empire as coming in many forms, writing "not just the annexation of territory, the Roman practice, or the creation of colonies, the operating mode of Spain, Portugal, Britain and other European powers. At its heart, empire involves asserting influence and control over places, people, resources and trade outside the original boundaries of a national entity. While empires almost always involve at least some use of military force, or the threat of its use, power can be exerted in many ways. Political, economic, cultural and ideological influence can be as important to empire as ships, planes, and guns."<sup>1</sup> After the Civil War and especially after the Spanish-American War, the United States experienced a resurgence in imperial interest and displayed an increasingly imperial stance in its foreign policy. As part of and in reaction to this new foreign policy focus, the U.S. State Department and individual American investors became or tried to become more active in the Ottoman Empire as they did in other parts of the globe. If the United States and its investors were unable to enter the Ottoman infrastructure market in any meaningful way, it is not a reflection of a lack of desire or will, but a reflection of the shortcomings of state department officials and even more skeptical U.S. businesses, as well as European imperialists having no interest in expanding an open door policy in the region. It is also a reflection of the ability of the Ottoman Empire to absorb this focus from the United States and use it to their own advantage. For their own part, the U.S. State Department failed to understand how concessions were

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua B. Freeman, *American Empire 1945-2000*. (New York: Viking, 2012) p. x.

acquired and rather than adapting to local practices, insisted on following its own protocol. These projects provide insight into the internal and external workings of the Ottoman Empire. For example, Ottoman officials demonstrated considerable awareness for local infrastructure needs and were savvy negotiators. Additionally, as local officials were able to initiate concessions for their region, these projects also demonstrate the level of cooperation between different levels of the Ottoman government.

Several authors have discussed the workings of infrastructure projects in the Ottoman Empire. The most detailed examination of U.S. infrastructure projects in this period, is *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East: 1900-1939* by John De Novo. De Novo, asserts that before oil exports from the Middle East acquired importance to the United States after the First World War, American economic interests and aspirations in the region far exceeded their reality.<sup>2</sup> De Novo argues that starting in the 1870's and culminating in the 1890's (Spanish-American War), American foreign policy became increasingly imperial and expansionist. Furthermore, De Novo argues that the Middle East was not a sphere that the U.S. typically intervened in politically, but that it was an area where the U.S. would protect interests that were "cultural, philanthropic and commercial..." Other locales, such as their newly acquired Caribbean empire (Cuba and Puerto Rico) and Pacific territories (the Philippines and Guam) and their surrounding regions – Latin American and China – were more important to the United States government than the Middle East in this period. However, that does not mean that the U.S. was disinterested in the Ottoman Empire. As Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt famously wrote "Spain and Turkey are the two powers that I would rather smash than any other in the world."

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<sup>2</sup> John De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East: 1900-1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963) p. viii.

Roosevelt got his chance to smash Spain, even resigning his post as Assistant Secretary of the Navy to lead a volunteer military unit, the Rough Riders, into battle in Cuba. Roosevelt's administration as President lasted from 1901-1908 and then his hand-picked and groomed successor William Howard Taft, was in office from 1908-1912. Therefore, there were eleven years of administrations with expansionist foreign policy in the White House. De Novo notes, as well, that over the years 1900-1914, U.S. interests in the Ottoman Empire expanded significantly.<sup>3</sup>

Emily Rosenberg notes that the United States, during the Taft administration, followed a foreign policy of Dollar Diplomacy which was both a strategy of investing in other nations to raise their standards of living and to "expand imperialist domination and exploitation..."<sup>4</sup> De Novo points out that the U.S. consulate in Istanbul was shabby and that the overall role/skill of the State Department in the Ottoman Empire could be said to be lacking before 1906.<sup>5</sup> The ineffectuality of the State Department led to "do-it-yourself" diplomacy with examples of American educators in the Ottoman Empire negotiating directly with the Sublime Porte, rather than through the U.S. State Department. Oren notes that after anti-Armenian pogroms in the 1890's, the U.S. public collected money to provide relief for the affected Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and that this money was distributed in the Ottoman Empire by Clara Barton. Barton was nominated to bring the donations to the Armenians due to the U.S. public's perception of the State Department as ineffective.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, pp. 3-5 and p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Emily Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy 1900-1930* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1999) p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>6</sup> Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy*, 295.

While much of U.S. interest in the Ottoman Empire focused on missionaries, De Novo writes that the optimism of U.S. missionaries and educators for their future in the Ottoman Empire was “matched by the expectations of those [businessmen] who believed in the potential for American business in the Middle East.”<sup>7</sup> Between 1897 and 1907, 223 requests were sent by U.S. firms to the Vice Consulate in Baghdad, optimistic about the possibility of exporting to, or importing from, Iraq.<sup>8</sup> While this was a common practice of Western companies at the time, it perhaps indicates that U.S. businesses were interested in Iraq. MacAndrews and Forbes, an initially Scottish licorice importer which was substantially an American company in this period, had considerable sums of money invested in their own infrastructure in Baghdad, Smyrna (Izmir), Alexandretta and Batum. These included offices, hydraulic presses and warehouses. The Singer Sewing Company had nearly 200 agencies and offices in the Ottoman Empire by 1918, and their machines were said to be even in “the remote interior.”<sup>9</sup> As American corporations became more involved in the Ottoman export trade, American financial interests likely began to take notice of the possibilities of investment into the Ottoman concession acquiring process.

This chapter demonstrates how the scale of American funded infrastructure projects in Ottoman Iraq evolved over this period. This evolution was contemporaneous and concomitant with the evolution and professionalization of the U.S. State Department, the foreign policy of the Roosevelt-Taft years and the expansion of the global economy. The evolution of the state department has been noted extensively in the secondary literature. It was recorded in the

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<sup>7</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> These figures were taken from my research at the US archives at College park, Record Group 84, Consular Reports.

<sup>9</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, pp. 39-40.

archives, with the announcement of the elevation of Istanbul from a legation to a consulate,<sup>10</sup> the evolution of the position from an unpaid post to the creation of a \$2000 annual salary for the (promoted from Vice Consul) Consul in Baghdad, the allotment of \$600 per year for contingent expenses, \$500 per annum to hire a clerk and \$400 to hire guards.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that a request for an expense account by the U.S. Vice Consul in 1898 was rejected.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, U.S. interests in potential infrastructure projects in the Ottoman Iraq expanded significantly in size. Two early projects were conceived of and promoted by a local partnership in Baghdad between the Ottoman State and an American diplomat. These early projects preceded the more extensive U.S. projects in Ottoman Iraq, particularly both the founding of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant and the Chester Project. In the larger context, this process and growth of American interest provides evidence suggesting that the US was more involved in the Ottoman Empire than is reflected in the literature.

The archives record two small scale projects proposed by the U.S. Vice Consul in Baghdad. The U.S. Vice Consul was acting as a self-interested intermediary for Ottoman officials, who wanted the project for local economic growth. The first was a bridge building contract, wherein a U.S. steel company would design and build a bridge in Baghdad. The long history of the steel industry in the United States begins before the nation was even founded; the first known blast furnace in the area was built in 1645 in Michigan. The US steel industry was producing 41% of British output by the 1870's and in 1892 it equaled and then surpassed British

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<sup>10</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii. Rudolf Hürner, Vice Consul, Baghdad, August 14, 1906, to Dickinson, Consul General Istanbul.

<sup>11</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii. Frederick Simpich, Consul, Baghdad, December 2, 1909, to Edward Ozmun, U.S. Consul General, Istanbul.

<sup>12</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vi, Thomas Cridler, Third Assistant Secretary of State, Washington D.C., November 30, 1898, to Rudolf Hürner, Vice Consul, Baghdad.



production.<sup>13</sup> William Willcocks, a British engineer and advisor to the Ottoman Empire on irrigation matters in Iraq, ordered \$30,000 worth of American made steel (from Lackawanna Steel Co.) for construction purposes in Iraq, particularly on the Hindiyya Barrage. Frederick Simpich, the U.S. consul in Baghdad at the time wrote, “for which he [Willcocks] has been criticized by local British importers.”<sup>14</sup> The second project examined here was a concession to build boats to be operated on the Tigris River by the local Ottoman transport company. These boats would have been in direct competition with boats that a British firm was also trying to sell to the Ottoman state; as noted in this chapter the concession ultimately went to the British Thorneycroft Company. Both projects were initiated by Ottoman officials, and as such are not indicative of an imperial stance by the U.S. They do suggest, or hint that the U.S. was becoming more interested in the Ottoman economy and that the Ottomans welcomed them to the marketplace likely because they provided another option for trade and one lacked some of the less savory aspects of the British and the Germans.

Rudolf Hürner, a Swiss national, was the U.S. Vice Consul in Baghdad from 1897 until 1906. During that period, he was also the head of a business venture known as Rudolf Hürner and Co. a multi-faceted firm that participated in import and export, antiquities smuggling and moneylending. On at least two occasions, Hürner also tried his hand at international investment coordinator. On May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1900, in response to communications initiated by Hürner in November of 1899, Thomas Cridler<sup>15</sup> forwarded a letter to Hürner from Mr. J. V. W. Reynders,

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<sup>13</sup> Les Standiford, *Meet You in Hell: Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick and the Bitter Partnership That Transformed America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005) pp. 24-26.

<sup>14</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii. Frederick Simpich, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, March 10, 1910, to Oscar Strauss, U.S. Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>15</sup> During a twenty-six year career in the U.S. Department of State, Cridler rose to the position of Third Assistant Secretary of State.

Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Steel Company.<sup>16</sup> Under Reynders' management, a major foreign project was coordinated in Burma, then British India, known as the Gókteik Viaduct, indicating that similar projects were pursued by this same company.<sup>17</sup> The Pennsylvania Steel Company, centered in Steelton, Pennsylvania, was one of the major U.S. steel producers of the period. In 1900, The Pennsylvania Steel Company bid \$104,600 to build a bridge in Baghdad over the Tigris River. Reynders demanded half of the payment when the contract was signed.<sup>18</sup> A lawyer for the Pennsylvania Steel Company, Joseph K. McKammon added further demands, specifically that the \$104,600 bid price did not include "local custom charges, port charges, or any similar items that may be imposed by the government of Arabia<sup>19</sup> or the authorities at Baghdad; all such charges should be defrayed and guaranteed by the purchaser."<sup>20</sup> In April of 1900, in the midst of the Hürner-Pennsylvania Steel correspondence, Hürner received a letter actually encouraging the idea of a U.S. built iron-bridge in Iraq from the American Consul-

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<sup>16</sup> John Van Wicheren Reynders, a civil engineer, managed the Pennsylvania Steel Company and was the Superintendent of its Bridge Building and Construction Department from 1892 to 1906. Reynders also served as Vice President of the Pennsylvania Steel Company from 1906 to 1916. Reynders worked extensively on the building of the Williamsburg Bridge, and the Queensboro Bridge. See "John V. Reynders, Builder of Bridges: Headed Construction of Many Famous Spans Adviser to U. S. on Steel, Is Dead." *New York Times*, July 11, 1944, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup>John Van Wicheren Reynders (1866-1944). *Internet Archives and Special Collections of Rennsalar Polytechnic Institute*. Accessed June 20, 2013 at 2:45pm. <http://www.shsd.k12.pa.us/cms/lib/PA09000078/Centricity/Domain/402/John%20Van%20Wicheren%20Reynders.pdf>

Also, ironically, the U.S. would later bomb the Gókteik Viaduct whilst fighting against Japan during World War II. See "U.S. FLIERS IN BURMA HIT FOE'S SUPPLY LINE: Gókteik Viaduct and Myitgne Bridge Suffer New Blows." *New York Times*, March 25, 1943: p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vi, Thomas W. Cridler, Third Secretary, U.S. State Department Washington, D.C. May 7, 1900 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>19</sup> Thankfully, it is the lawyer from the steel company that seems unaware that Baghdad is in the Ottoman Empire, and not the Department of State. Over the course of my research, I have seen Americans refer to Baghdad as part of Persia, Syria and Arabia.

<sup>20</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vi, Thomas W. Cridler, Third Secretary, U.S. State Department Washington, D.C. May 12, 1900 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

General in Istanbul, Charles Dickinson.<sup>21</sup> From the contents of the letter and the timing, it seems that Dickinson may have been unaware that such a project was already in the works, or only had a vague notion of it. Dickinson's letter, concerning attempts to increase American investment in the Ottoman Empire, despite its pro-bridge sentiment was otherwise pessimistic. Dickinson wrote that "There is serious mistrust among our exporters in extending credit to parties in the East."<sup>22</sup> Yet Dickinson seemed, in theory, to like the idea of having an American company invest in a bridge building project. Dickinson urged Hürner to contact the Berlin Bridge Company of New Berlin, Connecticut, again seemingly unaware of the correspondence Hürner had with the Pennsylvania Steel Company. By September of 1901, little had happened to move the project forward. Finally, an actual proposal had been written up and sent to the Ottoman Minister of Public Works. Consul-General Dickinson remarked, this time with clear knowledge of the project "I trust the order for the American firm [Pennsylvania Steel Company] will result."<sup>23</sup>

The first hint of trouble for the bridge project came in December of 1902. Spencer Eddy, *Chargé d'affaires*<sup>24</sup> of the American Embassy in Istanbul wrote a letter to Rudolf Hürner concerning the Tigris Bridge, wherein he assured Hürner that the plans were presented to the Minister of Public Works. But he cautioned Hürner to follow proper procedure. Eddy informed

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<sup>21</sup> Charles Monroe Dickinson of Binghamton, New York, had been a practicing lawyer, a newspaper editor/owner and one of the founders of the Associated Press. See Osborn Hamiline Oldroyd, Editor. *The Poets' Lincoln: Tributes in Verse to the Martyred President*, (Washington, D.C.: Published by the Editor, 1915) p. 136.

<sup>22</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume viii, Charles Dickinson, U.S. Consul General in Istanbul, April 26, 1900 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>23</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume viii, Charles Dickinson, U.S. Consul General in Istanbul, Sept 9, 1901 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>24</sup> A person in charge of a diplomatic mission in an interim fashion when there is no Ambassador or the Ambassador is absent.

Hürner, with a hint of impatience, that the next step in the process involved a special agent from the Pennsylvania Steel Company coming to Istanbul to provide any information that might be asked of them by the Ottoman Government. Eddy then noted “It is needless to say that this is the procedure usually adopted by Companies seeking orders from this Government.”<sup>25</sup> However, an examination of other small scale and successful concessions, such as the ones cited later in this chapter, suggest that local procedure would have been to allow Hürner to actually get the concession himself or have a local Ottoman agent acquire the concession from the Ottoman State. Then, Hürner or whoever locally would have received the concession could and perhaps would have subcontracted the work to a Western business.

Hürner was reprimanded for this effort. In January of 1903, Dickinson cautioned Hürner, warning that his actions were not appropriate as a consular agent. Dickinson cited paragraph 102 of the Consular Regulations, the full text of which states “In countries where there is a consul general with supervisory powers the several consuls subordinate to them, respectively, will not correspond officially with the diplomatic representatives of the United States in those countries, unless in reply to communications or inquiries from them, but will make all their representations through their respective consulates general.”<sup>26</sup> Eddy had been surprised to hear directly from Hürner in violation of regulations, and had taken it upon himself to tell Dickinson about the Paragraph 102 violation. Dickinson was upset as well that Hürner’s letter to Eddy implied that the bridge project was being ignored at the consulate. Dickinson wrote that Hürner’s letter and

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<sup>25</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad. Volume viii, Spencer Eddy, U.S. Charges d’Affaires in Istanbul, Dec 31, 1902 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>26</sup> United States Department of State, *Regulations Prescribed for the Use of the Consular Service of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896) p. 39.

breach of protocol were “so unprecedented in my experience here that it calls for some explanation on your part.”<sup>27</sup>

This response to a breach of protocol was harsh. No doubt there were several irregularities in Hürner’s methods, and, as noted in another chapter, Hürner would eventually find himself dismissed for gross violations of both procedure and law. Yet, what Hürner was trying to do was a benefit to himself, besides also being an opportunity for U.S. businesses and local Ottoman economic development. As Hala Fattah noted, land transport in Iraq was typically significantly more expensive than riverine which led to a lack of adequate roads and bridges.<sup>28</sup> Doubtlessly, Hürner also meant to enrich himself in the process, but the harsh reaction from Eddy and Dickinson was overblown. It should be noted as well that some higher official dislike for Hürner may have been caused by his imperfect English and that he was a Swiss national. In other words, Hürner was not one of *them*; not a career diplomat, not a political appointee, not an American and not of the same class. In a letter from Hürner to Eddy, Hürner wrote, “I never had any informations [sic] that the plans were presented to the Minister of Public Works, but now as such has been done, according to your above letter [From Dec 31<sup>st</sup>], permit me also to ask: what has been the reply of the Minister.” Hürner continued his letter by stating that if the proposal was approved, Hürner would communicate directly with the Pennsylvania Steel Company and inform them to send the special agent that Eddy had mentioned previously. Hürner also noted that there should be no obstacles to the bridge project, as the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire had already issued an *iradeh* stating that one should be built.<sup>29</sup> Hürner intensified his apology after receiving

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<sup>27</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume viii, Charles Dickinson, U.S. Consul General in Istanbul, January 30, 1903 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>28</sup> Fatah, *Politics of Regional Trade*, p. 111.

<sup>29</sup> NA, RG 84 Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume viii, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, January 29, 1903 to Spencer Eddy, U.S. Charge d’Affaires in Istanbul.

another rebuke on January 30<sup>th</sup>, this time from Dickinson. Hürner explained that the regrettable misunderstanding that had prejudiced Dickinson against him, was really just that – a huge misunderstanding. According to Hürner, the misunderstanding was over what capacity Hürner occupied when he wrote to Eddy. Hürner was not Hürner the Vice Consul while writing to Mr. Eddy, he was Hürner the business owner, “the dispatch is written and signed in the name of my commercial firm and I was corresponding in the same manner with the Pennsylvania Steel Co. since years.” Hürner added a second excuse, writing that Dickinson was, at the time, “absent from Constantinople and then I was advised by Mr. Banks<sup>30</sup> to write to Mr. Eddy.” Hürner continued with an aggressive remark of his own, inquiring as to why he had not heard whether the plans were ever presented to the Sublime Porte by the Istanbul legation, wondering “why during 17 months I have not been favored with any respective communication from the Consulate General?”<sup>31</sup> In a follow up dispatch, Hürner reiterated the same points and expressed frustration with the situation and the lack of communication, noting, “Why then did you not inform me that the matter was in the Legation’s hands?”<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, why hadn’t there been any communication concerning the project for a year and a half? Hürner seems to have been, in his mind and in actual practice, a business owner first and a Vice Consul second. Hürner was not paid to be the Vice Consul, and was expected to do the work of the post and find remuneration where he could. He took the job and held it for so long because he saw the ways in which he could profit from it. Hürner sought promotion and an

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<sup>30</sup> Edgar James Banks was an American archaeologist in Iraq.

<sup>31</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, March 5, 1903 to Charles Dickinson, U.S. Consul General in Istanbul.

<sup>32</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, March 26, 1903 to Charles Dickinson, U.S. Consul General in Istanbul.

allowance for a clerk- both of which were denied.<sup>33</sup> In the case of this contract, Hürner was trying to get hired by a U.S. company and/or employed by the Ottoman state to act as an official go-between. The final mention of the project occurred in a letter from the company's superintendent, Reynders. The latter's letter, dated January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1904, was written over more than four years after the correspondence about the bridge first began and nearly four years since the Pennsylvania Steel Company had placed a bid on the project. Meanwhile, in April of 1899, the Pennsylvania Steel Company had signed a contract to build a viaduct in Burma for the Burma Railway Company. The project, requiring 9.7 million pounds of material to be shipped from the United States was delayed by heavy floods for several months. The viaduct ran over 2,200 feet and required material to be shipped over 10,000 miles to its destination. Finished in June of 1901, the Gókteik Viaduct was completed during the period that negotiations for the Tigris bridge project were occurring.<sup>34</sup> The Gókteik Viaduct showed the possibilities of US foreign investment and specifically of the *same* company, which had tried, but failed to invest in Baghdad. It should be noted that while Hürner seemed to have thought the project would proceed, issues may well have arisen with the contract that were outside of his knowledge and therefore not recorded in this archive. The final correspondence from Reynders urged Hürner to make contact with the dragoman (translator) of the U.S. legation, Arshag Effendi Shmavonian.<sup>35</sup> Shmavonian, besides serving as dragoman to the US Consulate, had a keen interest in bringing

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<sup>33</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume i, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, October 5, 1905 to Francis Loomis, Assistant Secretary of State, Washington, D.C. and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, December 24, 1904 to Francis Loomis, Assistant Secretary of State, Washington, D.C.

<sup>34</sup> Pennsylvania Steel Company. *From Steelton to Mandalay*. (Steelton, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Steel Company, 1902) This book has no page numbers.

<sup>35</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, J. V. W. Reynders, Superintendent, Pennsylvania Steel Company, Steelton, PA, January 4, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

industrial development to the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. Upon meeting the American missionary Reverend E.F. Carey, Shmavonian, himself a graduate of the American missionary high school, Robert College and a future pastor,<sup>36</sup> told Carey, “But the Armenians are Christians already and have been since the time of Gregory in the fourth century. What my people really need is industrial education, shops, factories and improved farming methods.”<sup>37</sup> It appears that neither Hürner nor Shmavonian, who both wanted to pursue foreign investment in the Ottoman Empire for personal reasons, did not pursue this project further.

In December of 1905, Hürner again tried to liaison with an American business in response to a local request. He corresponded with the Racine Boat Company (of Racine, Wisconsin) and forwarded them a letter from Monsieur Mougel, a French engineer in the employ of the Baghdad Vilâyet. Mougel had worked for the Ottoman State for several years. Mougel was the son of a famous French engineer that had done considerable work in Egypt, Mougel Bey; Mougel Bey (senior) was a French hydraulic engineer who had first arrived in Egypt in the late 1830’s and had also been a part of the French team that constructed the Suez Canal.<sup>38</sup> There is a mention of the younger Mougel by Hormudz Rassam, the Assyrian Assyriologist, who noted that the engineer had done him a favor in Baghdad related to an archeological dig at Sippara in the early 1880’s.<sup>39</sup> Major Talbot, British Consul-General wrote, in an 1899 report on the trade of Baghdad, that “A Frenchman (M. Mougel) is permanently in its [Baghdad Vilâyet] service to advise and administer in irrigation and engineering works. In the event of any

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<sup>36</sup> American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missionaries. *The Missionary Herald, Volume 102* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1906) p. 545.

<sup>37</sup> *Christian Work and the Evangelist. Volume 81* (New York: Bible House, 1905) p. 202.

<sup>38</sup> Zachary Karabell, *Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003) See Chapter Seven.

<sup>39</sup> Hormudz Rassam and Robert William Roger, *Asshur and the land of Nimrod* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1897) p. 405.



European machinist ever having a scheme or an apparatus bearing on irrigation, or land reclamation, which he desired to have considered here, M. Mougel would be the proper person to communicate with.”<sup>40</sup> Mougel seems to be the forerunner or competitor to William Willcocks, who would also act as special advisor on irrigation in Iraq a few years in the future.

The U.S. vice consulate in Baghdad received considerable amounts of unsolicited mail from American corporations, 6% of which, during Hürner’s tenure were for vehicles. It may be that the Racine Boat Company was one of the many corporations that wrote to Baghdad or perhaps they were featured in a trade publication and came to the attention of the Vice Consul in that manner. Regardless, Hürner selected the Racine Boat Manufacturing Company and addressed them with this inquiry, “The engineer of this vilayet, Monsieur Mougel, having informed me, that the local government is in want of steamers for the river Tigris, I permit to hand you hereby enclosed Mr. Mougel’s letter, addressed to you, with the request to kindly let him have, through this consulate, your reply.” Hürner continued, “Should you be in position to contract the steamers, then my commercial firm – established here over 36 years – shall continue to remit you other commands.”<sup>41</sup> Further correspondence indicated that the State Department was made aware of the attempt. Three more letters were sent to the Racine Boat Company.<sup>42</sup> The final correspondence indicated that the company responded to the State Department and that as far as they were concerned, Hürner’s role in the process was complete.<sup>43</sup> These two projects were

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<sup>40</sup> Foreign Office, *Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance: Turkey Report for the Year 1890 on the Trade of Baghdad* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1890) p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, December 14, 1905 to the Racine Boat Manufacturing Company, Wisconsin.

<sup>42</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi. Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, January 15, 1906 to the Racine Boat Manufacturing Company, Wisconsin.

<sup>43</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Herbert H.D. Peirce, Third Assistant Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, Washington, February 16, 1906 Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

speculative ventures and while burdened by protocol, their failure to proceed was also in some ways simply a risk of capitalism.

The boat concession proceeded and collapsed in a similar manner to the bridge concession. In both cases Hürner contacted a business either on his own initiative or that of an Ottoman official and definitely with local Ottoman cooperation. The project was proposed outside of regular diplomatic channels. Nominally, the bridge concession was initiated at the behest of the Vilâyet, and the boat one on behalf of Mougel, who worked for the Vilâyet. This correspondence drew the attention of the State Department. The State Department assumed control of the negotiations and the negotiations ground to a halt. Ultimately, neither project was realized. Hürner, in 1899 and again in 1905, representing both Ottoman and American economic interests initiated a conversation concerning good business opportunities, which the U.S. State Department had a part in silencing by taking over the negotiations. The Baghdad Vilâyet did order boats, finally, but from Thornycroft and Company, a British firm. The U.S. boat correspondence, if not initiated for that purpose, was used by the Ottoman Vali in order to secure better terms from the British, or, at the very least to compare pricing in an era without the ready availability of such market information.

In order to contact an American business, Mougel would do so through American channels. If American businesses were unknown in Ottoman Iraq, they would likely not have been chosen for this contract. Even if the Racine Boat Company were engaged in the correspondence simply as a counterbalance to more established Western interests, they were still enough a part of the economic knowledge in Baghdad to be considered in the overall concession equation. The potential contract was in line with the local proper procedure for these smaller scale concessions or rather the *modus operandi* in the Empire, including Baghdad in this period.

Some of these projects tended to start with the Vali giving the concession locally and then an agent, whether a foreign national or an Ottoman citizen, negotiating with the Western investors. This procedure was strikingly similar to tax farming. Clearly, in this instance, as in the bridge concession, Hürner stood to profit from the project as a go-between.

These two concession attempts reflect both on the U.S. State Department and on Ottoman concession procedures, as well as the expanding global economy that made these sorts of business ventures possible. The boat and bridge negotiations suggest that the U.S. State Department was eager to follow protocol. Yet local U.S. consular agents – lower level agents - in Baghdad and Basra were uniquely entrenched in local business affairs. The constantly rotating vice consulate in Basra was primarily concerned with date exports, which were over \$700,000 in value in 1906. Hürner and his personal firm in Baghdad were well positioned to be aware of local economic conditions and opportunities. As an unpaid employee, Hürner was not beholden to the U.S. State Department for his future in any way. Although Hürner was aware of how the Ottomans typically awarded these sorts of projects, he was either ignored or not effective in communicating this with the legation in Istanbul. Similar British projects, including the same boat concession that Hürner attempted to secure, provide evidence as to how these concessions proceeded. A confidential memo from the British Consul General in Baghdad began, “Since his arrival at Baghdad, Nazim Pasha [Vali] has shown a strong interest in financial and commercial enterprises and organization, and at the present moment there is a feverish rush here for concessions of all sorts, due mainly to the new Wali’s encouragement and the opportunities he has created.”<sup>44</sup> Before Nazim Pasha was Vali in Baghdad (1910-1911) Midhat Pasha’s tenure as

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<sup>44</sup> TNA, FO 371/1492. No. 2947. Concessions of the Electrical Supply at Baghdad. January 25, 1911.

Vali of Baghdad (1869-1872) had been marked by a series of municipal improvements. Midhat Pasha left a legacy of development initiated by the local Ottoman government rather than through private capital or from Istanbul. Under Midhat Pasha's guidance, roads were improved, street cleaning taxes initiated, parks built in the city, and the city wall was removed to further urban planning and city expansion. Water pumps were also introduced in Baghdad during Midhat's governorship; shrines were repaired, a modern bridge built over the Tigris, government buildings constructed, a clock tower was built, and gas lighting introduced from locally sourced (Mandali) natural gas.<sup>45</sup> This legacy contributed to Nazim Pasha's desire to improve the local conditions at Baghdad and bolstered his ability to carry out improvements on his own initiative.

During Nazim Pasha's governorship, there were a variety of smaller scale concessions being discussed. On May 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1910, a local official paper "Zaura" issued a call for bids on the electrification of Baghdad and the construction of an electric tramway. Viollet, a French archaeologist, was named as one of the bidders.<sup>46</sup> Another bidder was Haji Ibrahim, whose most identifiable trait seems to be that he once lived in Paris.<sup>47</sup> A group headed by Mahmud Shahbander was also listed as one of the bidders. Gertrude Bell provides us with more information as to the identity of this man, "Mahmud Chalabi Shahbander...is the leading {merchant} man of business in Baghdad and I like him particularly..."<sup>48</sup> According to the British Consul, it was this group that received the most consideration from the government, but this assertion may well be biased and a way to explain why British groups did not enter the

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<sup>45</sup> Ebubekir Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq: Political Reform, Modernization and Development in the Nineteenth Century Middle East* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2011) pp. 182-5.

<sup>46</sup> Gertrude Bell, *Amurath to Amurath* (London: William Heineman, 1921) p. 59.

<sup>47</sup> Gertrude Bell seems to have never met him.

<sup>48</sup> "Gertrude Bell "Letter to her father, Feb 20, 1924" *Gertrude Bell Archives*, accessed March 20, 2014, [http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/letter\\_details.php?letter\\_id=686](http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/letter_details.php?letter_id=686). Mahmud Shahbander was a guest at an "Arab dinner party" that Bell hosted.

negotiations. An agreement between Nazim Pasha and Shahbander was accepted in draft form for a period of 75 years. The agreement involved a £4,000 yearly payment to the Baghdad Municipal Government and profit sharing above that at a rate of three shares for themselves to one for the local government. The tramway was supposed to be completed in 2 years. The British consul tried to steer Shahbander towards British electrical manufacturers and expressed his concern that Shahbander would use other, foreign suppliers.

To fulfill that boat order, Nazim Pasha eventually ordered several boats from a British firm; specifically, three 50 foot motorboats capable of carrying 60 passengers each were ordered from Messrs. Thornycroft of London.<sup>49</sup> The recalcitrance of the U.S. State Department and their insistence that a certain, ineffectual procedure contributed to the concessions failing. Ottoman officials and concession seekers may well have been using the Racine Boat Company in particular to get a better deal with the British. It would have been unusual for the Ottomans to not consider multiple companies and bids in order to get the best deal. However, U.S. concession seekers and businessmen could not compete if they were unable to adapt to local custom or they may simply have not offered as attractive a deal. The proper procedure, at least at this time and in Baghdad, was to use a local intermediary, which in the case of the boat concession became Nazim Pasha, who then contracted with a Western corporation to carry out the actual order.

Yet, while Hürner provided flexibility locally for the promotion of these small scale contracts, his self-interest limited American trade and investment opportunities in general. Hürner was a capitalist and, of course, his business interests came first. His interest in increasing U.S. economic interest in Baghdad existed *only* if they coincided with the interests of his firm

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<sup>49</sup> TNA, FO 371/1492. No. 2947. Concessions of the Electrical Supply at Baghdad. January 25, 1911.

Hürner and Co. During his tenure as Vice Consul, Hürner expressed interest in response to queries from U.S. businesses. In particular, he expressed interest in providing local representation for American law firms.<sup>50</sup> Hürner also indicated to U.S. export associations that he would act as their sole agent in Baghdad,<sup>51</sup> and he proposed to become the sole importer of fine corsets,<sup>52</sup> steel,<sup>53</sup> shoes,<sup>54</sup> washing machines,<sup>55</sup> pharmaceuticals,<sup>56</sup> and also to act as an agent for U.S. companies wherein it was unclear what business they engaged in or product they produced.<sup>57</sup> While it would seem to fit his job description to encourage trade, Hürner's ability to dictate which companies would or would not be promoted was based solely on his own interests.

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<sup>50</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume v, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, March 16, 1899 to Charles Mann, Esquire, San Francisco and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume v, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, March 30, 1899 to Law Firm of John Mannis, Chicago and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, January 4, 1906 to H.A. Thompson, Esquire, Leesburg, Virginia.

<sup>51</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume v, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, March 3, 1899 to American Exporters Association, San Francisco and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, July 6, 1905 to H.H. Woodrough Export Management Company, New York, New York.

<sup>52</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, April 26, 1906 to Warren Featherbone Company, Three Oaks, Michigan.

<sup>53</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, November 20, 1905 to Crucible Steel Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

<sup>54</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, November 2, 1905 to Robert Johnson and Rand Shoe Company, St. Louis.

<sup>55</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, July 6, 1905 to White Lily Washing Company, Davenport, Iowa.

<sup>56</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, October 2, 1906 to Park Davis Company, New York. This particular request was originally sent to Izmir. The U.S. consul there forwarded it to Hürner, specifically asking about a cholera outbreak ongoing in Baghdad. Hürner's reply indicated that indeed there was an epidemic, but it would not stop Hürner and Company from representing them and providing them with gum. Also see NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, May 12, 1904 to Klipstein and Co., New York.

<sup>57</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, March 23, 1906 to J.A. Hart, Chicago and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, July 27, 1905 to the Graphics Compendius Company, St. Louis.

Hürner responded to inquiries he favored by telling firms that he would like to do business with them *and* please stop contacting him at the vice consulate and communicate with him privately. Therefore, these deals were not recorded in the archives as Hürner obviously did not record his firm's business deals officially. Hürner would, however, cite regulations forbidding U.S. Vice Consuls from providing individual references when it benefitted him; in one instance, after citing the aforementioned regulation, he indicated that Hürner and Company would be glad to help and were exceptionally reliable.<sup>58</sup> The only examples of Hürner's business dealings that entered the consular record is when he sought help from the State Department over inevitable conflicts with American merchants.<sup>59</sup> While it seems that typically, U.S. companies contacted Hürner first, there is evidence that sometimes Hürner initiated contact with U.S. manufacturers. The Coates Brothers of Philadelphia, which imported wool and then resold it in the US market, contacted the Baghdad Vice Consul (the letter was addressed to John Sundberg, who had previously been the Vice Consul) asking about the reliability of Hürner and Company, which had solicited them for a business deal.<sup>60</sup> Hürner acted as a gatekeeper for U.S. businesses; companies that he did not want to represent were told them there was no market for their goods.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, November 19, 1902 to La New York Compaigne, Istanbul.

<sup>59</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, September 29, 1904 to Francis Loomis, Assistant Secretary of State, Washington D.C. Hürner was seeking help over non-payment of a shipment of rugs he sent to Samuel Capelle of New York.

<sup>60</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vi, to Coates Brothers of Philadelphia, October 29, 1899 to John Sundburg, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>61</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, May 12, 1904 to Wolverine Motor Works, Grand Rapids, Michigan and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, October 28, 1904 to Advance Press and Pump, Company, Battle Creek, Michigan and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, October 24, 1904 to Kenfield Publishing Company, Chicago.

After the professionalization of the Foreign Service in 1906, the vice consuls and later consuls in Baghdad continued to promote U.S. economic interests, albeit without the same self-interest as Hürner. The U.S. vice consulate became a paying position and these men continued to be interested in the idea of developing American investment in the area. As salaried employees they did stand to profit from individual business deals. William Magelssen, the U.S. Vice Consul that replaced Hürner in Baghdad, responded to an unsolicited request for information by the Eck Motor Company of New Jersey. While in the United States all major cities had electricity available and about 15% of U.S. households were illuminated by the new technology, Iraq had no electric plants and no electricity.<sup>62</sup> In responding to a request about the feasibility of selling electric fans in Baghdad, Magelssen, an American born in Minnesota, responded to the Eck Motor Company that “There is no electric plant in Mesopotamia and Turkish Arabia. Damascus, in Syria, some 600 miles from Bagdad, has now an electric railroad and that city is, as far as I know, the only place in Turkey where electric fans can be employed.”<sup>63</sup> Magelssen took the time to write to an individual U.S. company and with accurate knowledge of the local market, he was demonstrating a high level of interest in U.S. business ventures. Magelssen, who was once reported murdered when a wedding celebration startled him in Beirut – the United States even dispatched a warship to Beirut in response – took this interest a step further in another letter. Magelssen replied to an inquiry about tramways and streetcars in Baghdad, to the *Street Railway Journal* of New York that only a single rail existed in Baghdad. The five mile tramway connected Baghdad to the suburb of Kazimiyah and was owned by the Kazimiyah Tramway

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<sup>62</sup> Ernest Freeberg, *The Age of Edison: Electric Light and the Invention of Modern America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013) p. 286.

<sup>63</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, William Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul at Baghdad, October 21, 1907, to the Eck Dynamo and Motor Company, Belleville, New Jersey.



Company, an Ottoman venture. The president of the company was Khaderi Bada Yasin Chalabi. Horses pulled 14 passenger cars. Magelssen requested copies of the railway journal, stating U.S. streetcar manufacturers should “watch old Mesopotamia!”<sup>64</sup>

While Magelssen saw a market for U.S. streetcars, other consuls saw the expansion of agriculture as creating a possible market for U.S. farm machinery. Frederick Simpich, who was consul in Baghdad from 1909-1911, provided detailed information on U.S. trade patterns and ways they could be expanded. Simpich was concerned that transportation from the U.S. to Ottoman Iraq took too long and cost too much. He also recorded what he perceived as unfavorable terms of payment, but thought these could be remedied. Simpich recorded the exchange rate locally, or what he perceived it to be, and lamented that the rate he received, of 4.54% had cost the consulate nearly \$100 that fiscal quarter.<sup>65</sup> Simpich felt that due to the expansion of irrigation works, Ottoman citizens would soon desire to import American farm machinery.<sup>66</sup> The same sentiments regarding the expansion of agriculture and the possible market thus created for American manufactures was also expressed by Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul in 1914-1916.<sup>67</sup> The possibilities identified by these U.S. consuls were reinforced by the British Consul General in Baghdad who lamented, in 1911, that farmers in Mosul preferred reapers made by the American Derring Company to British models.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, William Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, September 30, 1907 to *Street Railway Journal*, New York.

<sup>65</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Frederick Simpich, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, May 19, 1910 to Edward Ozmun, U.S. Consul General, Istanbul.

<sup>66</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Frederick Simpich, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, April 16, 1910 to Edward Ozmun, U.S. Consul General, Istanbul.

<sup>67</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, April 23, 1915, to William Jennings Bryan, U.S. Secretary of State, Washington.

<sup>68</sup> TNA, FO 371/1492. No. 2947. Concessions of the Electrical Supply at Baghdad. January 25, 1911.

By the beginning of World War One, the legation in Istanbul itself became involved in U.S. economic investment in the Ottoman Empire. By 1911, the U.S. embassy helped organize the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant. The founding group included then Consul-General G. Bie Ravndal, Oscar Heizer (a future Vice Consul of Baghdad) A.T. Chester of the Chester plan, and James Levack then current (1911) Vice Consul of Baghdad.<sup>69</sup> The group published resources for the U.S. business community, including the publication *Levant Trade Review*. The *Levant Trade Review* listed importers and exporters from each Ottoman city, organized by commodity. In Baghdad, there were several importers ready and willing to trade with U.S. merchants for items including those referred to in Table 1.

Table 1 List of Importers

Import Good <sup>70</sup>	Importer
Carriages	Stephan Ovessanoff
Clocks and Watches	Clement Enriquez
Cotton Goods	Apikian and Co.; Showa Bekhor; Berk. Puttnam and Co.; Blockley, Cree and Co.; Joseph Damien; Nessim Elishaa; Raphael Elowe; Clement Enriquez; Beythoum Jeboury; Hagop Kouyoumdjian; F.F. Laugridge; Stephen Lynch and Co.; Joseph J. Messayeh

<sup>69</sup> American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, *Levant Trade Review Volumes 1, no. 2* (1911) p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, *Levant Trade Review, Volumes 1, no. 2* (1911) pp. I-XXII.

Table 1. Continued

Drugs and Pharmaceutical Products	Joseph Hannania and Son Showa; Ephraim S. Toeg
Furniture	Abdulaly Bros.; Stephan Ovessanoff
Groceries	Abdulaly Bros.; Joseph Hannania and Son Showa
Hardware	Abdulaly Bros.; Apikian and Co.; Berk. Puttnam and Co.; Clement Enriquez; Schamasch Georgi and Co.; Mahmoud Shabandar
General Imports	Austro-Levantal Trading Co. Ltd; Mahmoud Shabandar
Leather	Showa Bekhor; Berk. Puttnam and Co.; Joseph Damien; Clement Enriquez; Beythoum Jeboury; Stephen Lynch and Co.; R.D. Messayeh
Lighting Devices	Raphael Elowe
Lumber	Maktoubi Zada Omar Fouzi Bey
Machinery	Abdulaly Bros.; Berk. Puttnam and Co.; Blockley, Cree and Co.; Joseph J. Messayeh; R.D. Messayeh
Manufactures	Chukur and Aziz

Table 1. Continued

Metals	Showa Bekhor; Joseph Hannania and Son Showa
Oils and other Lubricants	Blockley, Cree and Co. Chukur and Aziz
Pumps	Joseph Damien
Sewing Machines	K.& D. Kevork Skender
Silk	Showa Bekhor
Wines and Liquors	Clement Enriquez; Schamasch Georgi and Co

Additionally, the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant published lengthy discussions of a variety of economic activities taking place throughout the Ottoman Empire. Many of these articles focused on Baghdad and Basra, including pieces concerning sericulture in Baghdad, railways in Iraq, and the agricultural methods and the possible use of American farm machinery in Iraq.<sup>71</sup> These accounts were typically written by the regional U.S. diplomats in the Ottoman Empire and dedicated to increasing the interest, knowledge and potential trade of US manufacturers.

It was not coincidental that this new institution was created contemporaneously with the Chester Project as one of the founding members was A.T. Chester, who served as the group's Vice President. Many of the other founding members were U.S. diplomats, including Honorary President G. Bie Ravndal (served in both Beirut and Istanbul) and Secretary O.S. Heizer (served

<sup>71</sup> American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, *Levant Trade Review, Volumes 1, no. 1*, pp. 282 and 383.

in Baghdad and Istanbul).<sup>72</sup> Following Hürner, Magelssen and other local US diplomats promoted American business in Ottoman Iraq. These employees show that the agents of the US Ottoman legation were synchronized with local needs and American interests in the periphery, i.e. Ottoman Iraq. In Istanbul this translated into the establishment of the ACCL and the Chester Project. This process shows the growing official U.S. interest in establishing these projects, one that was not as developed during the bridge and boat building concessions of the earlier period. However, this maturing interest was not reflected in the United States' ability to navigate the stormy seas of European rivalry.

No infrastructure project looms larger in the U.S.-Ottoman story than the Chester Project. Admiral Colby Chester, a retired naval officer with over 40 years of service conceived of a rail and mining project during the Taft administration.<sup>73</sup> Thomas A. Bryson writes that the Chester Project represented a deviation from previous U.S. practices of non-involvement in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>74</sup> The Chester Plan in some ways competed with and in other ways compliment the Berlin-Baghdad Railway. It was conceived of as a series of branch lines, including a line that ran east from Sivas through Mosul and Kirkuk; its lines ran over 2,000kms. The plan was in direct competition with another U.S. plan by the firm of J.G. White and Company, much to the irritation of the U.S. State Department. In the competition over the two, the Chester Project was able to prevail by promising better terms to the Ottoman state.<sup>75</sup> Marian Kent notes that while the J.G White concessionary plan failed, it eventually reformed under British capital, and then failed

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<sup>72</sup> American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, *Levant Trade Review Volumes 1 no, 2* (1911) Index.

<sup>73</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, p. 59.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas A. Bryson. *American Diplomatic Relations with the Middle East 1794-1975: A Survey* (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1977) p. 45.

<sup>75</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, pp. 61-63.

again.<sup>76</sup> Competition between concessionaires allowed the Ottoman State to favor one project over another and, by removing support from the less favorable, to work the concession game to their advantage. Even without the agility of Ottoman negotiators, competition between U.S. investors worked in favor of the Ottomans.

In November of 1909, the Chester syndicate was formally organized as the Ottoman-American Development Company and was chartered in New Jersey. The Ottomans used their *chargé d'affaires* in Washington, Ahmed Rustom, to try to get U.S. Secretary of State Philander Knox to officially endorse the Ottoman-American Development Company, which Knox refused to do. Hakki Pasha, then Grand Vizir, delayed the concession's progress through the Ottoman bureaucracy, which would have included submission to and approval by the Ottoman Council of Ministers and then Parliament. The U.S. State Department tried to intervene by offering to tie better deals on custom rates, loans, a reconsideration of extraterritoriality and access to purchasing American warships to the Chester Project...however, when pressed for confirmation, the U.S. later withdrew the offer of reconsidering extraterritoriality and the warships.<sup>77</sup> Despite the American concession seekers depositing over 20,000TL in an Istanbul Bank, the Ottoman Parliament never discussed the concession, even when it seemed likely to be approved in 1910.<sup>78</sup> German intervention managed to crush the efforts to get the concession. German negotiators argued that the entire plan was a subterfuge by Standard Oil, wherein they would co-opt lands and mineral rights that should be German by previous (Berlin-Baghdad Railway) agreement. In fact, the European states made separate deals with the Ottoman Empire in order to shut out the

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<sup>76</sup> Marian Kent, *Oil and Empire: British Policy and Mesopotamian Oil 1900-1920* (London: London School of Economics, 1976) p. 26.

<sup>77</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, p. 5 and pp. 64-67.

<sup>78</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, p. 27.

Chester Project and to bolster the Berlin-Baghdad Railway. As the literature acknowledges in regards to other infrastructure projects, the Ottoman state used the Chester Project as a bargaining chip to bring the Europeans to the table. De Novo writes “A naïve notion of Dollar Diplomacy as a commercial concept had not taken into account the realities of international politics.” Despite additional attempts to restart negotiations and secure the concession, eventually the Ottoman-American Development Company disbanded due to internal divisions.<sup>79</sup>

As noted previously, the Chester Project may have been overshadowed by the German backed Berlin to Baghdad Railway, a concession signed in 1898. In order to appease the other European powers, the Ottomans and the Germans facilitated negotiations that led to deals on concessions for the other powers. The British picked up parts of the transport and mining aspects of the BBR. The Russians, in order to overcome their objections, reached the Potsdam Agreement in 1910, which swapped recognition of their claims in Iran for German claims in Iraq. French consent was negotiated via the German recognition of their right to build a rail line in Syria and Anatolia in early 1914. The Anglo-German convention that removed all British objections to the Berlin-Baghdad Railway was negotiated in June of 1914 and the British agreed to a rise in Ottoman custom duties.<sup>80</sup> These extensions of influence precluded American projects.

In conclusion, the trend of an economically expansionist foreign policy of the U.S. government permeated this period. The sophistication of the U.S. State Department’s promotion of U.S. economic interests increased in tandem with the expansion of the global economy and of U.S. imperialism abroad. However, American interest in infrastructure and trade promotion do not quite add up to imperialism in Ottoman Iraq in this period. U.S. interests should, rather, be

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<sup>79</sup> De Novo, *American Interests and Politics in the Middle East*, p. 68, p. 70, pp. 80-81 and Kent, *Oil and Empire*, p. 28.

<sup>80</sup> Attiyah, *Iraq*, pp. 73-4.

seen as working within the Ottoman system and their activities should be seen as being beneficial to both parties. The trend of increasing U.S. economic activities, reflected elsewhere in this dissertation, was augmented by the reformation and professionalization of the U.S. State Department during this period. In the early part of this period, American interest in infrastructure projects began as small, local projects that were initiatives of a lower ranking, highly self-interested Foreign Service employee/businessman and local Ottoman officials. After the professionalization of the Foreign Service, local employees, particularly in Baghdad, of the State Department were more hands off regarding infrastructure projects but perhaps more efficiently focused on increasing American economic ties with the Ottoman Empire. When the self-interested businessman was supplanted by salaried career diplomats, U.S. concession seekers created the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant. This promotional organization worked to help U.S. markets become more aware of and develop better approaches to Ottoman markets. The flip side of the American presence in infrastructure negotiations was that they were welcomed by the Ottomans as another competitor. American investor's competition in the pursuit of both small and larger infrastructure projects provided Ottoman negotiators with an additional tool to acquire the best deal possible. This was a process that they were well accomplished at. Additionally, the U.S. joined the British, French and Germans in having a salaried employee with an expense account in Baghdad. While dwarfed by the estimated \$20,840 yearly cost of maintaining the British Consulate in Baghdad, the American Consulate, at an annual cost of about \$4,000 was roughly comparable to the German (\$6033.54) and the French Consulates (\$4568).<sup>81</sup> However, while seemingly useful for the Ottomans, American concession

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<sup>81</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii. Frederick Simpich, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, December 2, 1909, to Edward Ozmun, U.S. Consul General, Istanbul.



seekers were unable to acquire any of these deals in Ottoman Iraq, in part due to capitalist forces, European rivalries and the U.S. diplomatic rigidity.

## Chapter 2

### Imperial Rivalry and Western Infrastructure Projects

The Ottoman government, both on a local and an imperial level, displayed the ability to use Western investors against each other in order to maximize their gains. The projects discussed in this chapter reinforce the existing literature by arguing that they represent not only rivalry, but also cooperation. These projects, particularly the larger ones, involved investment from multiple sources and nations, both as a means to raise significant capital and to diversify the foreign interests and make the projects more appealing to the Ottoman State. Initial European interest in the 1830's in large transportation schemes within the Ottoman Empire was not reciprocated in Topkapi.<sup>1</sup> However, in 1879, the Sublime Porte received, and was interested in, proposals for the development of the Asian portion of its empire. These proposals, conservatively estimated at TL 52.5 million at the time, included plans for thousands of kilometers of new rails, several new harbors, and vast irrigations schemes. The Ottoman state placed a growing focus on improving its transport network and many of the foreign loans that the Porte received were meant for that purpose.<sup>2</sup> The project that dominates the period of this dissertation was the Berlin-Baghdad Railway, for which the concession was approved of in 1899 and construction began in 1903. The Berlin-Baghdad Railway, like the other projects discussed in this chapter, was one of many that the British and other European powers competed against and cooperated with each other within the Ottoman Empire in this period. These rivalries allowed the Ottoman state and/or individual Ottoman citizens to profit from infrastructure projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Cottrell, "A Survey of European Investment in Turkey, 1854-1914" in Philip Cottrell, editor, *East Meets West: Banking, Commerce and Investment in the Ottoman Empire* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2008) p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Clay, *Gold for the Sultan, Western Bankers and Ottoman Finance 1856-1881: A Contribution to Ottoman and International Finance History* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000) p. 444. and p. 6.

Historiography on the First World War places significant blame on inter-imperial rivalry as being a cause of the war. Ottoman Iraq was one arena where this rivalry was particularly manifest. Britain, between sending an exploratory mission to Iraq in the Chesney Expedition of 1835 and the advent of German influence in both trade and the concession project of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway, had enjoyed a largely uncontested sphere of influence in the Iraq region of the Ottoman Empire. However, with the growing influence of the Germans and the rail project, Britain's domination in the region was less assured. This research did not find additional evidence for the stark anti-German hysteria that is reified by the events of the summer of 1914. Instead evidence suggests that the British were just as likely to collaborate with the Germans as to oppose them in Iraq. British government officials and investors though, cited the threat of German economic penetration as a reason to move forward with certain projects. This threat also shaped the way negotiations between the Ottoman State and the British took place; the ability to use inter-imperial competition to their benefit was a trademark of Ottoman officials.

### Britain's Role in the Region

In his work on the Ottoman Administration of Iraq, Gökhan Çetinsaya noted that a feature of Ottoman governance was the fear of being undermined by European investors. Ottoman officials feared that these investors brought with them “peaceful penetration” or the soft imperialism that wide scale financial dependency on European finance might bring to the Ottoman Empire. In particular, the Ottoman state feared the financial dependency that accompanied large concession plans. In Ottoman Iraq, the clear and present foreign danger for

this peaceful economic penetration was from Britain.<sup>3</sup> Sevket Pamuk writes that the Ottoman Empire was subjected to a category of “penetration of world capitalism under conditions of inter-imperial rivalry...” Pamuk notes that, for the Empire in general, no European power was able to exert its own will over the empire, and that “no single power was able to exclude its competitors from the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>4</sup> Although the British were the dominant European influence in Iraq, Ottoman officials knew there was always the possibility of bringing in other foreigners. A general example, concerning an Empire wide concession, was the purchase of arms. As regards defense imports, Jonathan Grant shows how the Ottoman Empire in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century bought weapons from abroad and “combined arms systems and purchases from various countries [which] demonstrated a “Take the Best from the West” policy.”<sup>5</sup>

Despite Britain’s special position in Iraq, the Ottoman Empire worked effectively to limit or remove British concessions there. The Ottoman state abolished the British postal carrying concession for a period (1881-6), and initiated various attempts to encourage Ottoman competitors against the Lynch Company’s riverine transport concession. This included an 1892 decree that created an Ottoman company for navigation of the Tigris and Euphrates. Çetinsaya argues that the appointment of Lord Curzon - a proponent of the “Forward Policy” – as Viceroy of India led to a more active imperial stance from the British, which replaced the more passive imperial stance of waiting for the Ottoman Empire to collapse before it presumably moved in on

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<sup>3</sup> Gökhan Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (Routledge: New York, 2011) p. 127-128.

<sup>4</sup> Şevket Pamuk, “The Ottoman Empire in Comparative Perspective” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 11, No. 2, *Ottoman Empire: Nineteenth-Century Transformations* (Spring, 1988), pp. 131-132.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Grant, “The Sword of the Sultan: Ottoman Arms Imports, 1854-1914.” *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (Jan., 2002), p. 11

Iraq.<sup>6</sup> Çetinsaya notes that there was a protracted struggle (1896-1902) between the Ottomans and the British over Kuwait. This was prompted by German plans to build a Berlin-Baghdad railway terminus, and possible deep sea port, in Kuwait.<sup>7</sup> The potential of German submarines having a base in Kuwait was anathema to British interests, particularly that of the protection of India.

Ebubekir Ceylan notes that the first steamship navigation in the region was British. A good portion of the interest in navigating the Tigris was an attempt to shorten travel time to India. The Lynch Company was operating in Iraq as early as 1842 and with an official concession from the Ottoman government by 1846. Ceylan argues that while the navigation concession was a worry for Ottoman administrations concerned over the increased presence of the British, the riverboats provided increased security against recalcitrant tribes. The increased ease of tax collection was also a boon for the Ottoman governors of Iraq. As the literature on concessions in the Ottoman Empire suggests, although these projects profited European investors, they also benefitted the Ottoman Empire. Beginning in the 1850's the Ottoman governors of Baghdad bought steamers and founded their own navigation companies. During Midhat Pasha's tenure in Baghdad, the Vali helped make the *Idare-e Umman-I Usmaniye* the leading transport company in the region and tripled the number of steamers running on the rivers. Ottoman officials in this period also worked to develop the irrigation system in Iraq, dredging and improving canals. Midhat Pasha helped build a tramway (which remained in operation for 60 years, until 1938) between Kazimiya and Baghdad in a financial configuration that Ceylan calls the first Ottoman joint stock company.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq*, pp. 129-131 and p. 138.

<sup>7</sup> Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq*, pp. 140-1.

<sup>8</sup> Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, pp. 189-190, pp. 191-195 and pp. 200-202.

Elena Frangakis-Syrett demonstrates the complicated workings of foreign investment in her work, and particularly in “The Making of an Ottoman Port.” The quay at Izmir was one of the earliest harbor projects in the Ottoman Empire and is a complicated study in how infrastructure projects work. Izmir, an important Ottoman port, in 1900 received 19 percent of all imports from Western countries and was responsible for 55% of all exports to the West. The same trade figures from the 1840’s were 24% and 57%, representing the port’s historical and continuing importance. Frangakis-Syrett writes that the European and American community was defined by its competition with each other and “Such fierce rivalry became the backdrop to the construction of the quay.”<sup>9</sup> Initiated locally and originally funded locally, the project began as a British venture in 1868. The Ottoman state approved of the project, realizing its value to their trade and helped the project along; the French consul also approved of the project especially after the project became a French concession. The shifting alliances of inter-imperial rivalry, “kept antagonism to the quay company alive even when specific issues had been resolved and reignited it every time another point of contention emerged.”<sup>10</sup> Frangakis-Syrett also details a series of compromises and a failed attempted British reacquisition of the project. The quay, complete with a tramway was a classic example of inter-imperial rivalry, the activities of Western business and finance in the Ottoman Empire and of the successful use of inter-imperial rivalry by the Ottoman State for the purposes of urban planning.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, Jans Hannsen showed how local officials were active participants in the urban improvement of Beirut and how they utilized mechanisms set up by *Tanzimat*-era reforms to help them on their quest to develop Beirut. In particular, local

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<sup>9</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett. “The Making of an Ottoman Port: The Quay of Izmir in the Nineteenth Century” *The Journal of Transport History*, Volume 22/1 (2001) pp. 23-24.

<sup>10</sup> Frangakis-Syrett. “The Making of an Ottoman Port”, pp. 26-30.

<sup>11</sup> Frangakis-Syrett. “The Making of an Ottoman Port”, pp. 33-37 and p. 39.

elites sought to make Beirut a provincial capital and concurrently, to tie their fortunes closer to the imperial center.<sup>12</sup>

Gabriel B. Ravndal, the U.S. Consul in Syria at the time,<sup>13</sup> sent a message to William Magelssen, the Vice Consul in Baghdad<sup>14</sup> that included an editorial published in the *Times of London* on March 13, 1907, entitled “British Interests in Turkey.” Along with the newspaper article, Ravndal commented “Great Britain apparently is preparing for a great contest with Germany for supremacy in the Ottoman dominions.”<sup>15</sup> The article constantly alludes to a past wherein Great Britain occupied a more dominant position in the Ottoman Empire, beginning with the nostalgic statement “There are few older British markets than the Levant and few more interesting pages in our commercial history and biography than the annals of the old Turkey merchants.”<sup>16</sup> The editorial lamented that the British government held itself aloof while new European interests penetrate the Ottoman economic sphere with the help of “diplomatic and political influences of powerful Continental Governments.” In relation to Basra and Baghdad, the author of the newspaper editorial cheered what he perceived of as a new aggressive stance of the Foreign Office regarding shipping on the Tigris. The article referred to the ability for the Lynch Company to run an additional (third) steamer between Baghdad and Basra as a major policy shift and what it deemed to be a proper, aggressive stance for the Foreign Office to take in

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<sup>12</sup> Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siecle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (New York: Clarendon Press, 2005) p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> Ravndal was a particularly influential Republican in the Upper Great Plains and especially in South Dakota. He was thus a political appointee and served as U.S. Consul General in Istanbul from 1910-1917.

<sup>14</sup> Ravndal and Magelssen were related by marriage. Ravndal married Dorothea Magelssen in September of 1893.

<sup>15</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad. Volume xiii. G. Bie Ravndal, U.S. Consul, Beirut, April 26, 1907 to William Magelssen, U.S. Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>16</sup> Editorial. *Times of London*. March 13, 1907, p. 9.



the region. In the end, the article is less about the German influence in the region, and more about the author's desire for a more interventionist British policy in the Ottoman Empire. It does though, finally name the Germans in reference to the Smyrna-Aidin railway and ends by stating that "Her [Britain's] permanent interests in that [Ottoman] empire, both political and commercial, are too great for her to ever abandon it wholly to the peaceful –or other– penetration of third parties."<sup>17</sup> The German threat entered the historical record and this research at several points. It is not necessary to evaluate the relative threat, i.e. how sincerely German interests threatened British ones in Ottoman Iraq, but it should be noted that this threat seems to have been used on occasion by British individuals to promote their own interests.

## Transport

Since the company's beginnings in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Lynch Company constantly tried to increase the number of ships they could run on the Tigris. Officially named the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation (ETSN), the company was founded in 1861.<sup>18</sup> In 1906, Lynch was able to secure, with help from the British government the right to run an additional permanent, third steamship on the Tigris River.<sup>19</sup> Lynch also acted quickly to secure a sub-contract for carrying material for the Hindiyya Barrage Concession. The Hindiyya Barrage Concession was negotiated between Sir John Jackson's Company and the Sublime Porte. In response to shifting water flows in the area near Hillah, the Ottoman State constructed the

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<sup>17</sup> Editorial. *Times of London*. March 13, 1907, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, p. 190. Also see "Military And Naval Intelligence."

*The Times of London*, Thursday, Jun 13, 1861; p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Attiyah, *Iraq*, p. 74.

original 19<sup>th</sup> century dam there in order to maintain water flow to existing irrigation works.<sup>20</sup> By 1908, the original work had deteriorated and the Ottoman State proactively invited bids to replace it. A new barrage was designed by a French engineer – possibly M. Mougel – for a massive work built of concrete, and the Ottoman state stipulated that the builder would be responsible for both the design and the upkeep of the work for seven years. William Willcocks was hired and he completed a detailed survey with a team of experienced engineers.<sup>21</sup> Willcocks wrote an article about his expedition for *The Geographical Journal* of the Royal Geographic Society. The article titled “Mesopotamia: Past, Present and Future” started with a Bible quote, and took the Garden of Eden as its starting point. Willcocks devoted the first 10 pages of the 15 page article to a detailed, if questionable, history of the ancient world. Eventually, Willcocks wrote, “the first works before the hydraulic engineer are the protection of the country from floods, and the provision of water as free from silt as possible...the levels and the surveys show that we can do both...An expenditure of £350,000 should suffice for the work, and it should take three years to carry out.”<sup>22</sup> Willcocks’s works and proposals were far reaching and he detailed several projects that he thought would be helpful to Iraq, among them the Hindiyya Barrage. Willcocks was hopeful that these projects would create huge surpluses for Iraq, such that transporting the products of the region as he saw them – sheep, cows, buffalo, wool, licorice, wheat, barley, and rice – would necessitate a project like the Berlin-Baghdad Railway, so that products could be moved not just downriver, but overland, via rail, to the Eastern Mediterranean.

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<sup>20</sup> Robert I. Money. “The Hindiya Barrage, Mesopotamia” *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Sep., 1917), p. 218.

<sup>21</sup> Money, “The Hindiya Barrage,” pp. 218-219.

<sup>22</sup> William Willcocks, “Mesopotamia: Past, Present, and Future.” *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Jan., 1910) pp. 1-15, p. 11.

Willcocks further discussed the railway and the advantages that the railway would bestow.<sup>23</sup>

Gertrude Bell, who attended the presentation of Willcocks's paper at the Royal Geographic Society, expressed her delight with the plan and agreed with the idea that a railway would also be needed to exploit the coming abundance in Iraq.<sup>24</sup>

The contract for the Hindiyya Barrage concession was an agreement between Nizam Pasha of Baghdad and Sir John Jackson of 53 Victoria Street, Westminster, London. The agreement was negotiated on December 9<sup>th</sup> of 1910 in Istanbul, but not officially signed until February 1911. William Willcocks was to hand over any work he had previously done in Iraq to the Jackson concern.<sup>25</sup> Willcocks was hired as a special adviser to the Sublime Porte on irrigation works. The Hindiyya Barrage project was one that Willcocks helped negotiate over a competing bid by a German firm and, one apparently by the previously mentioned French engineer M. Mougel. Willcocks helped oversee the work from 1911 to 1913.<sup>26</sup> The result according to a British observer was a "very fine barrage 250 metres long, with thirty-six openings each 5 metres wide, fitted with regulating shutters..."<sup>27</sup>

The Barrage was clearly a project that benefitted both the British concessioners, the local farmers and due to the potential for increasing yields and preventing floods, the Ottoman state stood to benefit. The Lynch Company hoped to benefit from the project as well. A letter from the ETSN, referencing a verbal discussion, laid out the following terms for carrying materials for the

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<sup>23</sup> Willcocks, "Mesopotamia," pp. 13-4.

<sup>24</sup> Hanbury Brown, Colonel Maunsell, Gertrude Bell, Colin Scott Moncrieff and William Willcocks. "Mesopotamia: Past, Present, and Future: Discussion." *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Jan., 1910) p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> TNA, FO 371/1492. Contract between Nizam Pasha of Baghdad and Sir John Jackson of London, February 16, 1911.

<sup>26</sup> Attiyah, *Iraq*, pp. 74-75. Also Willcocks's book was entitled *The Irrigation of Mesopotamia*.

<sup>27</sup> Money, "The Hindiya Barrage," p. 220.

construction of the Hindiyya Barrage. Lynch would charge 24 shillings per ton of cargo, with an estimated total cargo of 10,000 to 12,000 tons. Lynch suggested the following conditions for the deal: 1. ETSN would receive the cargo at Basra and deliver it to Hindiyya. 2. If Lynch's wharf at Maaghil<sup>28</sup> needed to be used for the loading and unloading of extra cargo, they would charge a rent of six pence per ton per month. 3. Lynch had the exclusive right to carry cargo on water for the project, except for the hiring of small native crafts [i.e. no use of another European company's steamships] 4. Lynch however, could hire or subcontract other boats to carry cargo and was not responsible for "loss from leaking or foundering of craft used; or loss, damage or delay through capture, seizure, robbery, riots or civil commotions." Lynch's proposal acknowledged that most of the goods – in particular coal, cement, rails and piping – would be light enough for "coolies" to carry, but, in the event that freight was too heavy for human portage, they would charge additional, unspecified fees.<sup>29</sup>

The Vali of Baghdad intervened and denied Lynch this subcontract, trying to take it for the Ottoman company *Idare-e Umman-I Usmaniye*.<sup>30</sup> It was also likely that the Ottoman officials wanted to block the subcontract because they saw it as another attempt to expand Lynch's and by extension, British, influence in the area. Roger Owen notes that Ottoman opposition to attempts to increase ETSN's expansion attempts were based on the Ottomans being "rightly fearful that

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<sup>28</sup> Maaghil is four or five miles from Basra according to John Gray, *A Journey Round the World 1876-1877-1878* (London: Harrison Pall Mall, 1879) pp. 374-376 The author was welcomed in Maaghil by an Irishman, Mr. Carter and described the place as being beautiful and full of date trees, although he also complained that there were a lot of jackals. Also of interest was the fountain in Mr. Carter's house that bore an inscription concerning the deaths that took place nearby on the Chesney Expedition. Included among those were several "Natives."

<sup>29</sup> TNA, FO 371/1492. H.W. Maclean, Secretary of The Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company Limited, London, May 10 1911 to Messrs. John Jackson, Istanbul.

<sup>30</sup> TNA, FO 371/1492. Sir John Jackson Ltd, Istanbul, September 28, 1911 to Sir John Jackson, Ltd, London.

the Lynchs were being used as a spearhead for further expansion of British commercial influence...[and the Ottoman's]consistently tried to oppose such demands."<sup>31</sup> Mr. Lynch himself, in London, went directly to the Foreign Office to remonstrate this turn of events. His indignation spurred the British government into action and, as a consequence, the British Ambassador in Istanbul rallied on his behalf. In the negotiation, Lynch promised not to use the Hindiyya subcontract as a means to expand ETSN's own transport concession in the Ottoman Empire. The actions of Lynch embarrassed the Sir John Jackson Corporation, and, to assuage their anger Lynch promised to "see the Foreign Office and inform them that nothing further had better be done until they heard from [Jackson]..."<sup>32</sup> Lynch was adamant that the Vali had blocked them because the Ottoman State saw it as a concession expansion. In an official letter stating that they had no intent to expand their concession, Lynch asked for the price the Ottomans would be charging Jackson, indifferent to whether or not they were being undercut in price.

In terms of inter-imperial rivalry, Lynch alleged that Ottoman resistance to his company's involvement was a German plot to push the British out of the area.<sup>33</sup> This German "conspiracy" was used by Lynch to attempt to secure support from his own government. For their part, the Ottoman state managed to raise significant concerns about the Lynch contract. This was an attempt by the Vali both to limit British economic interests and to bolster Ottoman ones, particularly, the interests of the Ottoman owned and operated riverine transport company.

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<sup>31</sup> Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2002) p. 277.

<sup>32</sup> TNA, FO 371/1492, Sir John Jackson, Ltd, Istanbul, September 28, 1911 to Sir John Jackson, Ltd, London.

<sup>33</sup> TNA, FO 371/1492, Sir John Jackson, Ltd, London, October 20, 1911 to Sir John Jackson Ltd, Istanbul.

Although the Ottoman state owned all concessions, they could, in this instance, award this specific concession to an Ottoman owned business, rather than to Lynch.

Lynch Loses out

In 1899, the ETSN expanded its operations across the frontier into Iran. After Nasir al Din Shah opened the Karun River to international service, ETSN steamships plied the river.<sup>34</sup> A special concession granted in 1898 by the Qajar government allowed the Bakhtiari confederation to negotiate the construction of an improved road in their area. Lynch won the contract to build a road from the Karun River to Isfahan. It was known by many as the Lynch Road and was a “modern imperial project that revived one of the ancient trade routes of Iran, expanded British commerce and influence...”<sup>35</sup> Despite this expansion of sphere and industry and decades of being the sole British concessionaire to navigate the Tigris and Euphrates, the ETSN was outmaneuvered by the shipping magnate Lord Inchcape. Lynch and Inchcape collaborated in 1912 to try to acquire a concession for a railway in Iran, a syndicate that also involved the APOC.<sup>36</sup> However, the ETSN ended up losing their Iraqi river concession to Lord Inchcape and were taken over by Lord Inchcape’s British India Steam Navigation Company (BISNC).

James Lyle Mackay (Lord Inchcape), was rewarded with a peerage for helping resolve an economic crisis in India and for his service on a variety of government boards and councils in London. Mackay made his fortune in the shipping industry in India, where he became fluent in

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<sup>34</sup> Arash Khazeni, *Tribes and Empire on the Margins of Nineteenth-Century Iran* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009) p.76.

<sup>35</sup> Khazeni, *Tribes and Empire*, p. 75.

<sup>36</sup> “Railway Development in Persia.” *The Times of London*, June 14, 1912; p. 5.

Hindustani (today's Hindi/Urdu) after he arrived to work for Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Co, the precursor to the British India Steam Navigation Company.<sup>37</sup> In the early 1900's, Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Co., where Mackay was a partner and soon to be controller of the company, carried over 200,000 tons annually in the Persian Gulf, including to Basra. The firm carried approximately 70-90% of traffic in the region. By 1914, Lord Inchcape became the largest shipping magnate in the world when he merged the British Indian Steam Navigation Company (formed from the ashes of MacKinnon, MacKenzie and Co.) and the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. Stephanie Jones's monograph on Lord Inchcape states, "The [Persian] Gulf trade continued to flourish, making approximately £100,000 in the first half of 1912, and £140,000 in the second half...Meanwhile, Inchcape was negotiating with the Turkish government to gain monopoly trading advantages in Mesopotamia, free of official tax."<sup>38</sup> Jones referred here to the ETSN merger with the BISNC. Lord Inchcape was also a man that had considerable clout with politicians in London. He was a personal friend of future Prime Minister Bonar Law, and Lord Inchcape served on the Commercial Information Committee, the Council of India, and a variety of other influential committees.<sup>39</sup>

Lord Inchcape approached Lynch, according to Jones, in order to protect British interests from foreign encroachment, specifically German encroachment. There were no German firms engaged in the Tigris trade, so again, German encroachment seems as imaginary here as it did with the Hindiyya Barrage. Jones wrote that Inchcape took a, "Firm stand from the outset: he was to have the upper hand, and the Foreign Office agreed that the BI [British India Steam

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<sup>37</sup> Stephanie Jones, *Trade and Shipping: Lord Inchcape 1852-1932* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Jones, *Trade and Shipping: Lord Inchcape*, p. 54.

<sup>39</sup> Jones, *Trade and Shipping: Lord Inchcape*, pp. 75-6 and 86.

Navigation] would continue carrying mails from India on this route.”<sup>40</sup> The concession was provisionally approved in September of 1913 and a new company formed with British, German and Ottoman interests. Jones records that, in addition, Lynch and Inchcape’s company received a portion of the contracts regarding the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway’ rail terminals in Baghdad and Basra and the right to carry the supplies to this construction. According to Jones, it was Inchcape’s insistence that the British would control any line to Kuwait from Basra that led to the British declaring a protectorate over Kuwait in 1914.<sup>41</sup>

As a prequel to the takeover, in 1909, Lynch began discussions with the Ottoman State to merge ETSN and the Ottoman *Idare-e Umman-I Usmaniye* together, to create a monopolistic or near monopolistic control over the navigation of the rivers of Iraq. According to Sir Edward Grey, this was done without the knowledge of the Foreign Office and the matter was brought to their attention by Sir G. MacKenzie of the BISNC, which had been trying to usurp the riverine transport concession in Iraq since 1901. The merger, however, did eventually gain the favor of both the British government and parts of the Ottoman government. It did not occur due to local opposition from notables in Basra and Baghdad and the Ottoman Chamber of Commerce.<sup>42</sup> These local protests were harsh and, despite initial support from some merchants, many of whom were Christian or Jewish, eventually the protests and mass demonstrations were so widespread and vehement that all local support for the idea was withdrawn.<sup>43</sup> In 1913, Lord Inchcape, who assumed control of the BISNC, succeeded in getting the navigational concession for the Tigris and the Euphrates from the Ottoman state. Lynch’s company was invited to enter into

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<sup>40</sup> Jones, *Trade and Shipping: Lord Inchcape*, p. 84.

<sup>41</sup> Jones, *Trade and Shipping: Lord Inchcape*, p. 85.

<sup>42</sup> “House Of Commons.” *The Times of London*, July 23, 1913; p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Attiyah, *Iraq*, pp. 43-4.



negotiation with Lord Inchcape to see what role they would play, perhaps as a subcontractor. Without a choice in the matter, Lynch reached an accommodation with Lord Inchcape by July of 1913. The negotiations, which took place through the Foreign Office, started with a proposal made by Lynch concerning the integration of the two companies. Lynch's conditions included a shared, equal partnership between Lynch and Inchcape in a new company, and that Lord Inchcape would own a controlling share of the stock of that new company. Lord Inchcape suggested that he should be appointed a director of Lynch's company and that a Belgian company should be merged with their new venture— this Belgian company was formed by Lynch in cooperation with Deutsche Bank in order to carry material for the Berlin-Baghdad Railway (BBR).<sup>44</sup> The Baghdad Railway Company had the right, according to the concession to exploit the river carrying of all materials for construction purposes.<sup>45</sup> The manner in which this project internationalized serves as an example of how inter-imperial competition led to better concessionary deals for the Ottoman State. Regardless of what role the Ottomans may or may not have had, the multiple concession seekers involved muddied the concessionary waters and prevented one national group from dominating the investment. Additionally, Germany renounced any attempt to compete for navigation concessions in the area, but the idea was floated to allow them to buy a certain amount of shares in the new corporation – shares that would be allotted to the Ottomans but then sold to the Germans. In actuality, the merger, rather than cutting German economic interests out, brought them in.

The merger demands of the ETSN led to a new round of negotiations, during which Mr. Lynch died, in January of 1914 and his son John Lynch took over his interests in the deal. In July

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<sup>44</sup> TNA, FO 371/2476, Slaughter and May, London, July 16, 1914 to The Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London.

<sup>45</sup> "Tigris and Euphrates Navigation." *The Times of London*, September 23, 1912; p. 3.

of 1914, after negotiations took place at the Foreign Office, during which Ottoman and German agents were present, a final agreement was reached that determined the amount of shares and capital split between Lynch, Lord Inchcape, the Ottomans and the Germans; and the creation of Mackay, Lynch and Co., a modified version of the company Lynch had originally proposed. The new company would charter the boats of Lynch's ETSN and stipulated that both men would be on the board of the new company.<sup>46</sup> Despite the outbreak of World War I, the British Government declared that it intended officially to uphold the agreement reached, although one can assume that they did not mean honoring the German shares allocated in the plan.<sup>47</sup>

This merger should be seen as a continuation of the Ottoman Empire's ability to control the spread of the ETSN and internationalize the riverine transport concession. In both the instance of carrying material for the BBR, and the riverine transport concession itself, the Ottoman State was able to diversify the national interests involved in the project and get a cash payment for bringing in the Belgians and, in the second case, the Germans. The Ottoman state had also previously been in negotiations with the British India Steam Navigation company to replace Lynch. Before that, the Ottomans had discussed the possibility of merging Lynch's company with their own. The interplay between competing British groups is another important aspect of these negotiations. Lynch had enjoyed the sole ownership of the steamer business, and then the sole British navigation concession for decades. Lord Inchcape muscled into a situation wherein he was able to swallow up a business that was not in competition to his own. The move expanded Inchcape's business interests, and at the same time, the local situation allowed him to

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<sup>46</sup> TNA, FO 371/2476, Slaughter and May, London, July 16, 1915 to The Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, London.

<sup>47</sup> TNA, FO 371/2476, Maurice de Bunsen, London, July 27, 1915 to Slaughter and May, London.

argue that he was moderating the effects of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway and German intrusion into the Persian Gulf. Ironically, while citing German threats, the BISNC actually brought German investors into a field in which they had not been involved.

### The Oil Concession

Marian Kent, in her important work *Oil and Empire*, details British oil policy in Iraq during the years 1900-1920. Kent notes that British interest in Middle Eastern oil was not merely a reaction to imperial rivalry (German or otherwise) but a reflection of the fact that “Oil had become important, and an area of such promising oil potential as the Middle East would have attracted attention for this reason alone.”<sup>48</sup> Likewise, Kent notes that the British turn towards Iraqi and Iranian oil was aided by the partnership of Winston Churchill and First Sea Lord Fischer in the Admiralty. These two men desired to see a lucrative oil source completely under British control at a time when major oil fields were largely in the United States of America, Mexico and Russia.<sup>49</sup> Ferrier shows that American oil production accounted for 43% of global output at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> Utilizing some of the same primary sources as Kent – predominantly Foreign Office sources – this section discusses the investors and concession seekers and their interactions with the Foreign Office, with each other and the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, it looks at the shape of the concession and the various interactions and conflict in the negotiations that led to a hybrid, internationalized concession.

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<sup>48</sup> Marian Kent, *Oil and Empire: British Policy and Mesopotamian Oil 1900-1920* (London: London School of Economics, 1976) p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>50</sup> R.W. Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company. Volume I: The Developing Years, 1901-1932* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982) p.1.

This is another example of concessions that were steered by the Ottoman State to include multiple partners and multi-national interests.

There was a preexisting, albeit limited, history of oil exploitation within British colonies. The history of British oil exploitation nearest to Iraq starts in Burma. Petroleum exploitation in Burma began in the 1890's by the Scottish controlled Burmah Oil Company (BOC). The production of Burmese oil rose quickly from 19 million gallons in 1897 to 86 million gallons in 1908.<sup>51</sup> The oil fields in Burma were contracted, in 1908, to provide 20,000 tons of fuel oil to the British Navy and, in times of war, provide up to an additional 80,000 tons, or approximately 37% of all oil (270,644 tons). Burma was an early supplier of fuel oil to British interests and, when combined with later Iranian exploitation, ensured that India was flanked by oil producers. Lessons were learned from the Burma fields, such as the undesirability of allowing independent, small scale entrepreneurs to drill oil – oil production seems to have been carried on for some time by local families. The Indian government favored large companies, or oil monopolies to ensure that “independent haphazard drilling by competitors...”<sup>52</sup> did not cause the “1. Flooding of the territory with water. 2. The placing of wells too close together in the feverish haste to be the first to reach oil. 3. Overcrowding of wells accentuates risk of damage by fire.”<sup>53</sup> The mistakes made in Burma were well recorded by the India Office. These mistakes, both in

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<sup>51</sup> Sir J. George Scott. *Burma: A Handbook of Practical Information* (London: Alexander Moring, LTD, 1906) p. 237.

<sup>52</sup> Kroch Asia Library, Cornell University, Microfilmed India Office Records, 51<sup>st</sup> Series Part I. Confidential Enclosure, Burmah Oil Company in Revenue 29, India Office, London, March 26, 1908, to Viceroy, Simla.

<sup>53</sup> Kroch Asia Library, Cornell University, Microfilmed India Office Records, 51<sup>st</sup> Series Part I. Confidential Enclosure, Burmah Oil Company in Revenue 29, India Office, London, March 26, 1908 to Viceroy of India, Simla.

allowing small individual well owners and in the way the oil was extracted, would be learned from in future oil exploration and exploitation by British investors.

When the British, through the Anglo Persian Oil Company (APOC), began to exploit oil in Iran, they felt that the local labor force lacked the pre-requisite skills for the industry. They were additionally reluctant to trust Iranians for use as security forces, and used Indian soldiers to guard the oil fields at Abadan. The APOC argued that

Owing to the non-existence of such labour in Persia, and the impossibility of training Persians in sufficient numbers for their requirements, the Company is compelled to depend largely on India for skilled labourers of many kinds... At the present time the number of Indian employees in Abadan and the oilfields is about 1,020. It is found nevertheless that it is very difficult to induce men of these classes to leave Bombay, Rangoon Karachi or the other ports where they are recruited and to accept employment in Persia... The result is that very high rates of pay have to be offered to obtain any men at all, and as a rule the labour obtained is not of the best quality.<sup>54</sup>

It is illuminating that the British imported labor in such large numbers from India. Despite the difficulties and no doubt the expense of transporting Indian workers, the APOC, rather than take steps to train Iranians, worked to change the Indian Emigration Act. It seems likely that any British oil syndicate in Iraq would have imported Indian labor.

The APOC used Indian soldiers for security at their oilfields in Iran. As early as 1907, armed guards from India were sent to the Ahwaz oilfields. Twenty men were dispatched from India, “for the protection of the Oil Syndicate’s works near Ahwaz.”<sup>55</sup> Accompanied by an additional eight cavalrymen from the 18<sup>th</sup> Tiwana Lancers, they were originally dispatched for a

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<sup>54</sup> British Library, IOR/L/P&J/6/1361/1138, Recruitment of Indian workers for service under the Anglo Persian Oil Company.

<sup>55</sup> Kroch Asia Library, Cornell University, Microfilmed India Office Records, 53<sup>rd</sup> Series, Part 1. India Office, London, December 13, 1909 to Foreign Office, London. And Kroch Asia Library, Cornell University, Microfilmed India Office Records, 53<sup>rd</sup> Series, Part 1. India Office, London, January 28, 1910 to Viceroy of India, Simla.

six month mission, but had been stationed in Ahwaz for over two years. They had been there long enough that, by 1910, their equipment needed to be replaced at a cost of over £300.<sup>56</sup> This reliance on Indian labor and military units served both to provide an immediate workforce for the APOC and eliminated the need to invest in local education/recruitment infrastructure. It also tied Indians further to the British by providing them with labor and a modicum of responsibility in Britain's imperial project. The process worked both ways, as the British could conjure both skilled labor and security forces that were tied to them and not to local interests.

As for Iraq, the first hint of British knowledge of and interest in the oil there occurred during the Chesney expedition of the 1830's. The expedition was commissioned by King William the IV to find, in Chesney's own words, "a more rapid Overland Communication with India..."<sup>57</sup> Although not nearly as important in the 1830's as it would be later, oil was a recognizable commodity. Chesney describes both bitumen and naphtha, by-products of petroleum. Chesney wrote in his report of the "celebrated and inexhaustible bitumen fountains..." and the "abundance of naphtha." Both of these products were derived from crude oil, and Chesney described bitumen being used in ship building and for fueling his own steamship. Chesney wrote "the value of the bitumen as an article of trade can scarcely be overestimated."<sup>58</sup> Chesney described an Ottoman governor, Sheik Mohammad, as being in charge of the oil exploitation at Hit, although it is unclear if Sheik Mohammad was a tax farmer,

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<sup>56</sup> Kroch Asia Library, Cornell University, Microfilmed India Office Records, 53<sup>rd</sup> Series, Part 1. India Office, London, December 13, 1909 to Foreign Office, London. And Kroch Asia Library, Cornell University, Microfilmed India Office Records, 53<sup>rd</sup> Series, Part 1. India Office, London, January 28, 1910 to Viceroy of India, Simla.

<sup>57</sup> General Francis Rawdon Chesney, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition Carried on by Order of the British Government During the Years 1835, 1836, and 1837* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1868) p. v.

<sup>58</sup> Chesney, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, p. 280 and p. 494.

a local notable or more likely, both. Later, in the mid nineteenth century, Chesney noted in great frustration the lack of an increased British presence in Iraq and the failure to create a viable overland route. Chesney wrote, “The way had been opened...But thirty-one years have since passed *and nothing has been done!*”<sup>59</sup>

German nationals displayed an early interest in Iraqi oil as well. In 1871, German experts visited both Mosul and Baghdad and reported favorably about the petroleum springs there. Another German led mission, in 1901, gushed enthusiastically concerning the oil of Iraq.<sup>60</sup> The Ottoman State was also well aware of and interested in the petroleum of Iraq as early as 1890. In that year, Ottoman citizen C.S. Gulbenkian furnished a report on the subject at the request of the Sublime Porte. Before this report, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, acting on the advice of Agop Pasha, the Directory of the Privy Purse, had *firman*s issued in 1888 and 1898 that placed the possible oil concessions under the Ottoman Civil Lists. These *firman*s ensured that a certain procedure had to be followed for any concession seeker, making any quick deal that might enrich a local notable but harm the Empire’s finances or resources as a whole, unlikely.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it appeared that German groups had the upper hand in oil concession negotiations, based on previously signed agreements. These agreements were products of railway concession negotiations. An 1888 railway concession and the 1903 Baghdad Railway convention gave German interests “a preferential – but not monopolistic – right to oil along the line...” A 1904 agreement with the Ottoman Civil Lists gave the Anatolian Railway Company, which was acting for Deutsche Bank, a year to conduct a study concerning the feasibility of oil exploitation in the Mosul and Baghdad *Vilâyet*. This agreement, which

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<sup>59</sup> Chesney, *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, p. 76 and p. viii.

<sup>60</sup> Attiyah, *Iraq*, p. 76.

stipulated the possibility of a forty-four year lease under certain conditions, became a point of contention between the British, Germans and Ottomans concerning “whether or not it had been fulfilled.”<sup>61</sup> The appearance that the Ottomans gave serious consideration in the oil negotiation to one national group at a time was a way to force the different Western rivals into bidding against each other, lest the concession be quickly snapped up. According to Kent, the Sublime Porte first negotiated with the Germans, then seriously considered the American Chester Project, before going on the APOC/British concession. This process led to the concession’s evolution into an international consortium.<sup>62</sup> The Ottoman state was both looking for the best possible deal and/or the deal that spread out foreign interest to the greatest extent, lowering the likelihood of a single, overbearing foreign company forcing terms and conditions on them. Rather than divide and conquer, it seems like an attempt to, lacking the capital and knowledge to exploit the oil deposits themselves, they would at least divide the foreign interests so as to maintain an ability to counterbalance them. The Ottoman insistence on a dual national concession group was strong enough to overcome rising British and German animosity and should be seen in that context – the concession was finalized on the day of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

One of the many influential figures in the pursuit of the Iraq oil concession was Thomas Boverton Redwood. Redwood was one of the preeminent experts on petroleum use and global petroleum deposits during the 1870’s and into the early 1900’s. Redwood worked as an oil consultant beginning in the 1870’s and was hired by the British Indian government to analyze samples of both Burmese and Iranian crude.<sup>63</sup> Redwood, in his 1896 *Petroleum: A treatise on*

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<sup>61</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>62</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, p. 28.

<sup>63</sup> Redwood, Boverton, *Petroleum: A treatise on the Geographical Distribution and Geological Occurrence of Petroleum and Natural Gas* (London: Charles Griffin and Company, 1896) p. vii. Viewed in the Rare Book Collection at Kroch Asia Library, Cornell University.



*the Geographical Distribution of Petroleum* clearly stated that there was exploitable petroleum in Iraq, “Various forms of ‘bitumen’ occur in the valley of the Euphrates...”<sup>64</sup> Redwood was also a consultant for William Knox D’Arcy, the progenitor of APOC, and counselled him to seek a loan from the British government to exploit the oil concession in Iran. Redwood served as a member of the Admiralty’s Fuel Oil Committee, he was, in addition, a leading advisor on petroleum to the British government and a major proponent of using oil to replace coal as the fuel of the British Navy. It was the advocacy of Redwood and the deal that he brokered to bring Burmah Oil into the Anglo-Persian Syndicate that propelled D’Arcy’s concession in Iran.<sup>65</sup> Redwood himself was aware of rising German interest in Ottoman oil, noting, “Herr Bissinger, the German Consul at Beyrout, states that oil springs occur in Syria.”<sup>66</sup> The frontispiece to Redwood’s book, reproduced in Figure 1, contains three dots within Iraq, each dot representing a significant oil deposit.

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<sup>64</sup> Redwood, *Petroleum*, p. 164.

<sup>65</sup> Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (New York: Free Press, 2009) pp. 123-125.

<sup>66</sup> Redwood, *Petroleum*, p. 164.



Figure 1 - The Frontispiece to Redwood's book, *Petroleum*. The red dots represent large deposits of Petroleum.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> The photograph is mine and the map is from Redwood, *Petroleum*, Frontispiece.

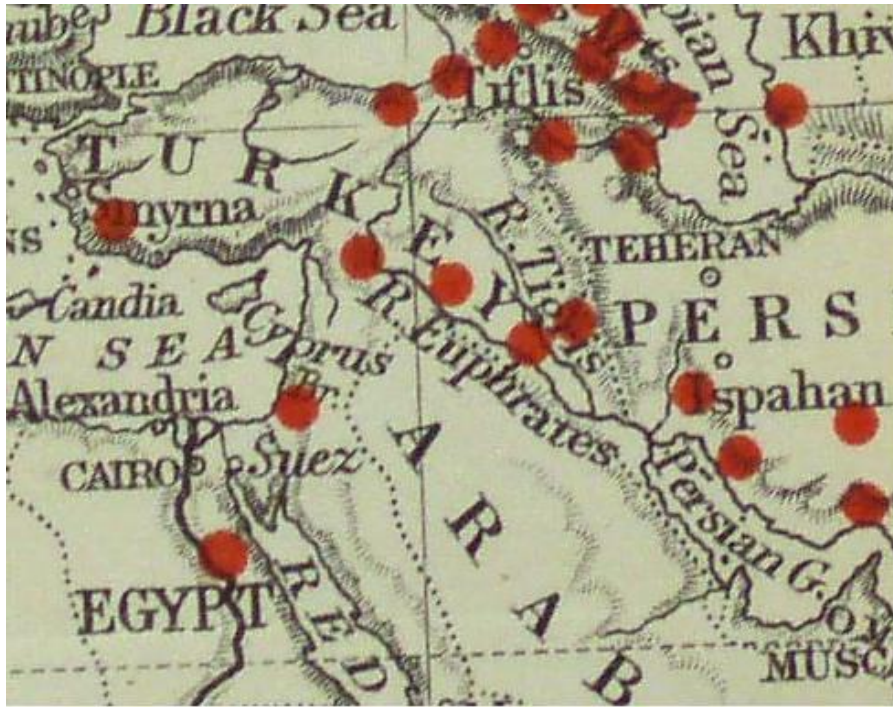


Figure 2 - Close up of the Frontispiece to Redwood's book, *Petroleum*. The red dots represent large deposits of Petroleum.

D'Arcy's interest in Iraqi oil was unsurprisingly coterminous with his interest in Iranian oil. D'Arcy sent two different representatives to Ottoman Iraq – Alfred Marriot in 1901 and H.E. Nichols in 1904 – to investigate the petroleum and the political climate. Although he later reconsidered, D'Arcy decided at the time that it was “not worthwhile pursuing the concession.”<sup>68</sup> Other early entrants into the field were Shell Oil, which started negotiation in 1909 and also demonstrated interest in creating an Empire wide company to exploit Ottoman oil. As noted before, by virtue of the Chester Project and the J.G. White railway plan, American interests were also part of the oil exploitation negotiation. Other British groups expressed interest in the oil too, including the Eastern Petroleum Syndicate of Colonel Picot and MP Lynch of ETSN. Despite this early interest, and ongoing Ottoman-German negotiations, the concession for oil in Iraq, as far as the British were concerned, did not really bubble up until nearly 1914.

<sup>68</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, pp. 17-18.

In January of 1914, Baron Thomas de Ward attempted to acquire a concession to exploit oil around Mosul on behalf of Central Mining and Investment Corporation (CMI), which represented a rival, London based British concern, to D'Arcy's APOC.<sup>69</sup> Baron Thomas De Ward seems to have been an Austrian nobleman. De Ward and the CMI were offering the Ottoman State an advance of TL 500,000 at 6% to be paid out of the first loan issued. In a note concerning this concessionary attempt, the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Sir Louis Mallett, argued that the Ottoman Government was hesitant to commit to de Ward because the Porte was already negotiating with the British; by this Mallett meant with D'Arcy, despite the fact that, as de Ward frequently pointed out, he too represented British capital.<sup>70</sup> Mallett noted that Thomas de Ward, who was staying at the Pera hotel had frequent meetings with a Mr. Antoniadis<sup>71</sup> who Mallett thought may (he did not) have received a concession to exploit the Mosul oil fields. De Ward met with Ottoman officials including the ex-Minister of Finance Djaved Bey and with Young Turks. According to Mallett, De Ward and his visitors were known to have "earnest and apparently interesting conversation."<sup>72</sup> This sort of spying on their own national interests, albeit rival interests, is again demonstrative of the level of undercutting competition that took place among British concession seekers in Ottoman Iraq.

Charles Greenway was the managing director on the board of the APOC and was, according to Yergin, a large part of its success.<sup>73</sup> Greenway noted that the new proposed

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<sup>69</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, pp. 19-25 and p. 88.

<sup>70</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul, January 8, 1914 to Sir Edward Grey, London.

<sup>71</sup> Mr. Antoniadis is E.M. Antoniadi, an Istanbul born astronomer that was both influential in the development of planetary astronomy and was possibly the first person to photograph the inside of the Aya Sophia.

<sup>72</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Memorandum, unsigned, January 6, 1914, Istanbul.

<sup>73</sup> Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 142.

concession arrangement foresaw a syndicate formed with a 50/50 split between the APOC and the Turkish Petroleum Company. Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) was Calouste Gulbenkian, an Ottoman citizen, then later British subject, that had studied petroleum engineering at King's College London.<sup>74</sup> He was in many ways like the enigmatic Iranian Antoine Kitabgi who was instrumental in the creation of the British concession for oil in Iran. Both men were from non-dominant ethnic groups residing in their empires, with Gulbenkian being Armenian and Kitabgi being either Armenian or Georgian. Both men were, perhaps necessary - but certainly self-interested- go-betweens for their local empires and the British Empire.<sup>75</sup> Gulbenkian put the TPC together and was a silent partner (30% stake) in the British run National Bank of Turkey. Gulbenkian had been involved in the Ottoman state, having served as the Ottoman governor of an unnamed Black Sea port. Soon after Gulbenkian published a book on Russian oil, Ottoman officials approached him to investigate the oil potential of Iraq. Gulbenkian accomplished his mission without ever visiting the region. Coincidentally, Gulbenkian and his friend Henri Deterding (Shell Oil) looked at the prospective concession that Kitabgi was promoting in Iran but passed on it, deeming it too financially risky. Later, they stated, after ruefully watching D'Arcy's concession succeed "Never give up an oil concession." Gulbenkian eventually brokered the deal between the British and the Germans that formed the D'Arcy concession for Iraqi oil, and was given a 5% non-voting stake in the eventual concession; Gulbenkian was nicknamed Mr. 5% in the process.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Cumming, Robert, editor. *My B.B...: The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark, 1925–1959*. (Yale University Press, 2015) p. 526.

<sup>75</sup> Yergin, *The Prize*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>76</sup> Yergin, *The Prize*, pp. 170-171.

The syndicate formed by the merger of the D'Arcy concession and the TPC was to raise capital of £100,000 – £200,000, half supplied by the APOC and half by the TPC with the intent to “prospect and test” the oilfields of Iraq. If satisfied with the field results, the syndicate would, through the floating of shares and public debt issue, raise £1,000,000 to exploit the oil. The chairman of the syndicate would be a voting member appointed by the Foreign Office, with the rest of the board being selected half by the APOC and half by TPC. The local managing agents would be Messrs Strick, Scott and Company, who were already established in Baghdad. A major sticking point in the negotiations with the Ottomans seems to have been German claims on Ottoman mineral rights, specifically as they related to the Berlin-Baghdad Railway. The Foreign Office, though seemingly loathe to admit it, stated that the agreements already in place would “debar him [Mr. D'Arcy] from any claim to a monopoly to the oil wells in the vilayets of Mosul and Bagdad, and that the only possible settlement of this question is by arrangement with the Germans.”<sup>77</sup>

A rather alarmist Foreign Office memo noted that British concession seekers might be out maneuvered by a mixed group of German and Ottoman investors. Along with unidentified Germans, a group of Ottomans supposedly formed to exploit the concession.<sup>78</sup> Registered as the “*Société Anonyme Ottomane*” and possessing LT 200,000 in capital, the group was supposed to have held frequent meetings and liaisons with their German partners through Mahmoud Mukhtar

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<sup>77</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Foreign Office, London, January 16, 1914 to C. Greenway, Istanbul.

<sup>78</sup> This Ottoman group included Halil Bey, Djemal Bey, Suleiman Bostani, Mahmoud Mukhtar Pasha (Ottoman Ambassador in Berlin), Ghazi Mukhtar Pasha, Izzet Pasha (chamberlain to a former Sultan), Elias Bey (a “rich investor”), Abud Effendi (a “rich Syrian Merchant”/President of Ottoman Chamber of Commerce), Shakir Bey (“son of the wealthy Raghیب Bey”) and at least two unnamed others.

Pasha.<sup>79</sup> It's hard to tell if this *Société Anonyme Ottomane* existed – it may or may not have been confused with other Ottoman infrastructure concerns specifically two *Société Anonyme Ottomane* that were concerned with tramways in Beirut and in Damascus, or with other concerns that had to do with mines and the selling of oil in Izmir – all of which seem to have been Franco-Belgian companies.<sup>80</sup> Kent notes that H.W. Stock (the APOC agent in Istanbul) believed that the group existed only nominally so as to acquire the concession and then sell it to Deutsche Bank.<sup>81</sup> Izzet Pasha, who was at that time in Europe, was said to be there discussing the concession with those same German partners.<sup>82</sup> The same memo detailed other proposals for the oil concession, such as the Hirsch application, and Suleiman Bey Nassif and friends – these two proposals may have been connected and may also have involved Lord Cowdray. Lord Cowdray, or Weetman Dickinson Pearson, was involved in oil negotiations with Shell Oil in his capacity as head of S. Pearson and Sons.<sup>83</sup> To the Foreign office, the situation was not clear at all, and although the Foreign Office believed that D'Arcy would receive the concession, it was unknowable what the final group of the concession would look like.<sup>84</sup>

In response to inquiries from the German Embassy, Sir Edward Grey wrote, “The best course would be for British and German Ambassadors at Constantinople to inform the Ottoman government that a definite scheme will be put before them by British and German gov'ts on or

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<sup>79</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Memorandum: Mesopotamian Oilfields. Eyre Crowe, London, March 10, 1914.

<sup>80</sup> See V. Necla Geyikdag *Foreign Investment in the Ottoman Empire: International Trade and Relation 1854-1914* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, p. 234. See note 122.

<sup>82</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Memorandum: Mesopotamian Oilfields. Eyre Crowe, London, March 10, 1914.

<sup>83</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, p. 42.

<sup>84</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Memorandum: Mesopotamian Oilfields, Eyre Crowe, London, March 10, 1914.

before March 23<sup>rd</sup> [1914].”<sup>85</sup> While the Foreign Office worked with the D’Arcy and German contingency, on April 10<sup>th</sup>, De Ward resurfaced. In a letter addressed to Mallett, de Ward asserted that he had been pursuing the oil concession in Iraq since early 1913 and had made “proposals which were accepted in principle by the then Minister of Mines, Djelal Bey...owing to the political situation, the negotiations were suspended, to be resumed in December last.”<sup>86</sup> De Ward was informed by the Ottoman Government that “for reasons of policy touching the vital interests of the Empire” the concession would only be awarded to an Anglo-German group and he insisted that his group was both offering favorable terms to the Ottoman State and contained “a very strong German element.” De Ward noted that the terms of his proposal were favorable to the British government and in particular they conformed to the British Navy’s desire that the pipeline to carry the oil would run to the Mediterranean. He further complained that the British Government’s support for other concession seekers for Mosul/Baghdad oil were blocking their plans, which, he argued were more favorable to Istanbul. Therefore, de Ward was bringing his concessionary plan to the official notice of the British government, in the hopes that he might attain official British support.<sup>87</sup> Mallett wrote back quickly, informing “Baron” de Ward – Mallett put the title put in quotations seemingly to have derisively chided de Ward - that His Majesty’s government had been committed to supporting D’Arcy since 1906 and that, in a detail unmentioned before, D’Arcy had been promised the concession by a “former Grand Vezir” and therefore, they could not support de Ward.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Edward Grey, London, March 14, 1914 to British Ambassador, Berlin.

<sup>86</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, T. DeWard, Istanbul, April 10, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallett, Istanbul.

<sup>87</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, T. DeWard, Istanbul, April 10, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador Istanbul.

<sup>88</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Louis Mallett, Istanbul, April 11, 1914 to Baron DeWard, Istanbul.



In April of 1914, the Ottoman State attempted to tie the oil negotiations to the question of raising custom rates in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>89</sup> Although the British looked for possible ways around this Ottoman negotiating tactic, the lack of this being a continuing thread in the discussions suggests that they were willing to accommodate a rate hike.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, Mallett responded that the entire supposition of supporting D'Arcy's application was that a German agreement of 1904 was annulled and argued against "suggesting or recommending [to the Ottomans] the course favored by Deutsche Bank and [that] it might even be dangerous to do so."<sup>91</sup> Mallett expressed concerns about these irregularities in the concession to the Grand Vizir, who argued that the concession had been illegal throughout its existence and that the proper course would be to resubmit the concession to the Ministry of Mines.<sup>92</sup> According to Mallett, the Germans suggested a secret agreement be reached that the Sublime Porte not consider any other applicants besides theirs. He noted that the Ottoman State was overdue in publishing an official list of oil wells, but that it might be worthwhile to await its arrival. Mallett finished his communication with the caveat "I think that it will be better not to commit ourselves to any particular course nor will it be possible to get the matter through in a great hurry."<sup>93</sup>

H.W. Stock – an Istanbul agent for APOC - wrote to Mallett about a meeting he had with Mr. Ernest Weakly, British Commercial Attaché in Istanbul, about modifications to the draft

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<sup>89</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, J.W. Whittall, Istanbul, April 23, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>90</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Edward Grey, London, April 23, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>91</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul, April 24, 1914 to Foreign Office, London.

<sup>92</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul, April 24, 1914 to Foreign Office, London.

<sup>93</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul, April 24, 1914 to Foreign Office, London.

concession. These modifications were approved by both the German Ambassador, and the man setting British policy towards Saudi Arabia, Alwyn Parker.<sup>94</sup> While this Anglo-German group collaborated, de Ward's CMI group continued to try to garner official Foreign Office support. The CMI was directed by L. Reyersbach and the group was associated with Lord Murray of Elibank. Lord Murray had a conversation with Sir Eyre Crowe and Sir William Terrell on May 4<sup>th</sup> on their behalf. The CMI, which formed in 1913, was composed of S. Pearson and Son and Messrs. Hirsch and Company, both of which, as Reyersbach pointed out, represented London capital. This group planned to construct a new company in the Ottoman Empire, which meant to drill, transport and refine the oil of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra.<sup>95</sup> Dismissive of the CMI's conversations with the Foreign Office, Sir Eyre Crowe wrote that another Englishman, Mr. Roland Silley should be supported for the claim to the Basra oil fields.<sup>96</sup> Kent identifies Silley as a former employee of Vacuum Oil Company and an independent agent in Istanbul. Kent notes that Silley provided another alternative British claim on Iraqi oil that was at least partially sponsored by the Foreign Office, particularly for the oil concession in the Basra Vilâyet.<sup>97</sup>

Crowe and by extension the Foreign Office did not trust De Ward asserting, "As to Baron de Ward, the information of this department as to his antecedents is not altogether satisfactory, and it is possible that he may not have given an entirely accurate account of the attitude of the Ottoman government to his group."<sup>98</sup> The Foreign Office's official version became that the

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<sup>94</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, p. 39. For info on Parker see Gary Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa'ud* (London: Routledge, 2013) p. 68.

<sup>95</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, L. Reyersbach, London, May 5, 1914 to Sir Eyre Crowe, Assistant Undersecretary of State, London.

<sup>96</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Eyre Crowe, Assistant Undersecretary of State, London, May 6, 1914 to the Secretary of the Board of Trade, London.

<sup>97</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>98</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Eyre Crowe, Assistant Undersecretary of State, London to the Secretary, May 6, 1914 to the Board of Trade, London.

concessions had been promised to two different groups, the Berlin-Baghdad group and to D'Arcy and since these two groups had merged their interests to seek the concession together, the arrangement effectively cut out the CMI and made any claims they had irrelevant. Crowe notes that the concession was now tied to the issue of the Ottoman Customs increase, negotiations wherein the Sublime Porte was demanding an increase from 11% to 15% *ad valorem* and "to the institution of certain monopolies in Turkey." The letter ended with the definitive statement about the CMI concession, "Sir Grey is unable to support or assist your group at Constantinople."<sup>99</sup>

Yet the CMI was not quite willing to concede the concession. George Reynolds, another director of that company, asserted that an 1890 *firman* by the Sublime Porte actually gave the oil rights to the Imperial Ottoman Civil Lists, and that the oil rights were expressly excluded, according to him, from the Berlin-Baghdad railway agreement. The CMI also made certain offers to the British government to try to carry favor, including offering the British government a pre-emptive right for *all* fuel oil produced in the concession area. The eventual agreement involved an equal split regarding access to the oil produced in Iraq between the British and German navies.<sup>100</sup> The CMI argued that since the terms they offered the Ottoman government were more favorable than the terms being offered by the D'Arcy/Deutsche Bank/Shell group, the Ottoman government would presumably favor them above their competitors.<sup>101</sup> Crowe responded that "Sir E. Grey sees no reason, from the arguments you adduce, to modify the decision which has already been conveyed to you, and to which he must adhere."<sup>102</sup> However,

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<sup>99</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Eyre Crowe, Assistant Undersecretary of State, London, May 15, 1914 to the Director of The Central Mining and Investment Company, London.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Board of Trade, London, May 20, 1914 to the Admiralty, London.

<sup>101</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, A. Reynolds, London, May 19, 1914 to Sir Eyre Crowe, Assistant Undersecretary of State, London.

<sup>102</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Sir Eyre Crowe, Assistant Undersecretary of State, London, May 23, 1914 to The Director of Central Mining and Investment, London.

dissenting arguments with the Foreign Office noted that it was against their own policies to not support all concession seekers equally, and that the D'Arcy concession and the way it was being handled might force the Ottomans to give the concession in violation of their own legal codes.<sup>103</sup> As regards the existing *firman* related to exploration for oil and their validity, the Ottoman Council of State met to discuss these issues on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1914. No decision was reached on anything, but an official from the Ministry of Mines pointed out that the two *firman*s previously issued had been respected by his department and that this had prevented him from legally issuing new ones.<sup>104</sup>

The concession for TPC was officially granted on June 28, 1914.<sup>105</sup> Coincidentally, this was the same day that Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by Gavrilo Princip. A handwritten note from June 30<sup>th</sup> stated that the Ottomans notified both the British and the Germans that “the Ministry of Finance consents to lease to Turk. Pet. Company oilfields discovered and to be discovered in Vilayets of Mosul & Bagdad.”<sup>106</sup> The confusing concession granting process had briefly come to an end, only to be further interrupted by the coming of war. Further questions were raised by the structure of the concession. The “Self-Denying” Clause stated that the group of concessionaires, eventually collectively known as the TPC, would not seek any other oil concessions in the Ottoman Empire without the other partners. This agreement would eventually become known as the “Red-Line Agreement” - for the red outline of the dissolved Ottoman Empire that excluded this group from most former Ottoman territories, excepting Kuwait. This worked out quite well for Gulbenkian, but ultimately poorly for the non-

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<sup>103</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Foreign Office, London, Minutes: Mesopotamia Oil Concession, May 25, 1914.

<sup>104</sup> TNA, FO 195/2456, Foreign Office, London, Minutes: Civil List Firmans, May 27, 1914.

<sup>105</sup> Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 172.

<sup>106</sup> TNA, FO 195/2457/196, Foreign Office, London, June 30, 1914 to India Office, London.

Ottoman partners in the deal.<sup>107</sup> This may indicate that the concession seekers and their backers, the Foreign Office, did not see the war with the Germans as inevitable or perhaps they failed to foresee the possibility that the Ottoman Empire itself would collapse.

After the First World War interrupted the search and exploitation of Iraqi oil, some, especially Americans, disputed the legitimacy of the concession. The argument was that American open door policy was stymied by the concession in a region which, by 1924 was, by a contemporary scholarly account “the subject of American diplomatic interest involving long and acrimonious correspondence between Washington and Whitehall.”<sup>108</sup> Additionally, Americans questioned whether the concession itself was legitimate. By American reckoning, two items demanded by the Ottoman state were as yet unresolved when the war interrupted. Therefore, the June 28<sup>th</sup> agreement was not a concessionary contract but the promise of a concessionary contract to come.<sup>109</sup> The U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain protested, in a letter to Lord Curzon that, during the military occupation of Iraq and under the guise of war necessity, the TPC had already laid pipe and began exploiting the oil resources of the Baghdad and Mosul Vilâyets. Earle also points out that, during the war, the German interest in the company was seized by the British government and Deterding of Shell Oil became a naturalized British citizen; meaning that, the British now had effective political and military control of Iraq and the British government effectively controlled over three quarters of the TPC. Earle noted that Woodrow Wilson’s Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby, was incensed by the San Remo Agreement between Britain and France that set the boundaries for a post war Middle East, arguing that it

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<sup>107</sup> Yergin, *The Prize*, pp. 188-9.

<sup>108</sup> Edward Mead Earle “The Turkish Petroleum Company--A Study in Oleaginous Diplomacy” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Jun., 1924), p. 265.

<sup>109</sup> Earle “The Turkish Petroleum Company,” p. 265.

was an agreement to exclude all but British and French interests in the region and was a violation of the idea of a League of Nation's Mandatory State. Earle argued that the British response was to try to bring in American investors, rather than assuage or address the concerns of the State Department.<sup>110</sup> That strategy was remarkably similar to the way the British had previously handled the Germans in Iraq.

Although, as in the transport concessions, the Germans likely had like a more legitimate claim than the British, they were aware that the negotiating process would go smoother in partnership with the British APOC. From the Ottoman viewpoint, pushing the oil concession into an international syndicate was a masterful stroke. It diversified their risk and guaranteed better terms. The Ottomans maneuvered in several ways. They served as local competitors for the concession. Ottoman negotiations seemed to give favor to one group or another and then switch, kept Western concession seekers off balance and, as demonstrated by the foreign office records, injected a fair degree of confusion into the process. The tying of customs rates increases, the insistence on a multi-national corporation, the issuing of a *firman* early in the process all demonstrate the Sublime Porte's ability to control the events and the process to its benefit. The way these groups, whether multi-national or strictly British had to collaborate and/or come into conflict with each other suggests that the existence of so many concession seekers helped the Ottoman State secure a better deal. Despite the Foreign Office's constant support for the APOC, the existence of the CMI provided the Ottoman State with a useful, additional British competitor.

The Border and the Pipeline

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<sup>110</sup> Earle "The Turkish Petroleum Company," pp. 272- 275.

The frontier between Iran and the Ottoman Empire was first marked by an agreement signed in 1555. While this treaty was vague on the exact boundaries it was the first signed agreement between the Porte and Iran (at the time, Safavid Iran).<sup>111</sup> By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the region became the subject of international tensions. The 1843 Quadripartite Agreement between the Russian, Ottoman, Persian and British Empires sought to concretize the Ottoman-Persian border and made this lengthy border a topic of discussion between the four empires. Sabri Ateş notes that the formal agreement between Iran and the Ottomans – the 1847 Treaty of Erzurum - was negotiated by the four empires and hailed as a growing sign of Anglo-Russian Entente just six years before the Crimean War. Nothing definitive happened, however, until the 1911 Tehran Protocol that was the final word in the border discussions.<sup>112</sup>

Which oil lay on the Iranian side and which lay on the Ottoman was an important stimulus to settle the border question once and for all. It is worth noting that the British Commissioner of the border delineation project, A.T. Wilson, would become the British Administrator of Iraq from 1917-1920. The Commission was also of interest to Lynch, with his substantial economic interest in the area due to the ETSN. Lynch, referring to an earlier form of the commission that operated in 1907, brought the question to Parliament, asking Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary whether there had been any reports from the most recent workings of the commission and asking that since the aforementioned border commission had been delayed a year due to local conflicts, was there a way to “bring about a speedy settlement of the dispute in conjunction with the Russian government?”<sup>113</sup> Marian Kent notes that there was an additional

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<sup>111</sup> Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary 1843-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013) p. 20.

<sup>112</sup> Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands*, p.139 and p. 284.

<sup>113</sup> *The Parliamentary Debates*. Volume 12, 1907. (London: Wyman and Sons Limited, 1907) pp. 1595-6.

agreement signed in November of 1913 called the Turco-Persian Frontier Protocol. Kent writes that while the agreement was supposed to end inter-border conflict, the treaty served to help APOC maintain their Iranian oilfields and possibly helped future British oil concerns along the border.<sup>114</sup> The treaty set up the final commission to delineate the actual border.

From January of 1914 until October of the same year, the aforementioned commission physically demarcated 1,180 miles of the border and erected 227 pillars along the route. Ateş notes that locals promptly destroyed the pillars, which, he argues occurred due to their desire to limit governmental intrusions into their lives. Ateş further notes that the British commission of 150 people was composed of many Muslim Indians besides British, Russian, Indians, Iranians, Turks, Kurds, Lurs, Arabs, Armenians, and Nestorians.<sup>115</sup> It is unclear exactly what the diverse composition of the committee signifies, but it may have been a strategy to get more local compliance with their task and more detailed local geographic insight. It also demonstrates another point of inter-imperial cooperation, in this instance between Russians, the British, the Iranians and the Ottomans. While the range of participants and the variety of ethnicities may have influenced the commission to focus on issues such as traditional grazing lands, the commission was also insistent on designating all pastoral groups along the border as permanent citizens of either the Ottoman or Iranian Empires, rather than the possibility of them being citizens of both.<sup>116</sup>

One of the issues for the commission was an Ottoman protest against transferring a location called Naft Maidan to the Iranians. Commissioner Wilson wrote in his report that, “As regards the oil springs at Naft Maidan...they compare very favorably indeed with any other

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<sup>114</sup> Kent, *Oil and Empire*, p. 11.

<sup>115</sup> Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands*, pp. 306-7.

<sup>116</sup> Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands*, p. 311.



group of surface indications, both in the area over which they occur, and the present outflow of oil...the objections of the Porte...were motivated by the knowledge of the existence of these springs and by the desire to dispose of them on better terms than can be obtained by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.”<sup>117</sup> The possibility of running a pipe line from Chia Surkh or Naft Maidan to the Persian Gulf was also explored. Wilson concluded that, for reasons of political stability and geography, this pipeline would have to run in Ottoman, rather than Iranian territory.<sup>118</sup> The pipeline itself would be constructed in sections, the first of which was a 10 mile section from Chia Surkh to Qasri Shirin, where, according to Wilson “no serious difficulties present themselves.”<sup>119</sup> Altogether, the pipeline would have run either 353 miles from Qasr-I Shirin or 298 miles from Naft Muqatassi to Ahwaz.<sup>120</sup> Other than the political topography, the report discusses where, in the certain sections, the crews would find water and what the geography was, i.e. marshland, hills, plains or riverbeds. The pipeline’s course was meticulously laid out by the report, which served to demonstrate the obvious importance of oil and political stability to the commission and how that influenced exactly where the border would run.

In another memo from the Commission, Wilson discussed the oil springs at Naft Muqatassi. The memo noted that the springs were 1 mile by ½ mile and there were about 40 individual springs, some man-made and some naturally occurring. The oil apparently emerged green with copious amounts of natural gas, then turned brown as it thickened. The springs were

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<sup>117</sup> TNA, FO 195/2459/2428, A.T. Wilson, Qasr-I Shirin, May 1, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallet, Istanbul.

<sup>118</sup> TNA, FO 195/2459/2428, A.T. Wilson, Qasr-I Shirin, May 1, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallet, Istanbul.

<sup>119</sup> TNA, FO 195/2459/2428, Memorandum: The possibility of pipeline construction from the Chia Surkh district to Mohammerah, A.T. Wilson, Qasr-I Shirin, May 1 1914.

<sup>120</sup> TNA, FO 195/2459/2428, Memorandum: The possibility of pipeline construction from the Chia Surkh district to Mohammerah, A.T. Wilson, Qasr-I Shirin, May 1 1914.

subject to a tax farm, the terms of which were for a single year at a cost of TL 400 and had “for many years been leased by a Turkish subject...”<sup>121</sup> The oil was collected periodically and sold locally, in Mendeli, Khanikin, and Qasr-I Shirin, where an unnamed Jewish family was supposedly subcontracted to supply oil in that town. Wilson further noted that the area of the spring was a contested territory – although the Ottomans exploited the oil from the site and were sovereign there, the Iranian government nevertheless, claimed it as their own, because “The lands for many miles around the spring have been occupied from time immemorial by the Persian tribe the Sanjabi;<sup>122</sup> no Turkish tribes have at any time entered or made use of the lands...the Sanjabi have never paid revenue to or in any way recognized Turkish sovereignty in these lands.” Wilson finally noted that a cart road to the springs from Mendeli could be easily constructed and a road to Khanikin would not have been particularly difficult to construct either.<sup>123</sup>

The demarcation of the border was obviously important to everyone involved. It was moreover further evidence of the growing British and Russian entente and cooperation in the Ottoman Empire. It was important both to the Ottoman Empire and the Iranian state as it provided detailed information as to the borders of their state and the fixing of their borders and clarification of their tax base. Either by defining the citizenship and location of border populations or by defining which state held which resources, the border commission was clearly valuable to both Empires. It was equally important to the British and their oil concessions. Perhaps another reason the Foreign Office pushed the syndicate the way that it did, was that the

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<sup>121</sup> TNA, FO 195/2459/2428, Note on Oil Springs at Naft Muqatassi, A.T Wilson, Qasr-I Shirin, May 1, 1914.

<sup>122</sup> The Sanjabi are an ethnically Kurdish people that reside in the Zagros Mountains.

<sup>123</sup> TNA, FO 195/2459/2428, Note on Oil Springs at Naft Muqatassi, A.T Wilson, Qasr-I Shirin, May 1, 1914.

transfer of wells between the Ottomans and Iran, as envisaged by the British, would actually be a transfer between the two D'Arcy led companies. While the oil concession was fraught with competition and conflict, the work of this border commission proceeded smoothly. It was an international commission, as it was clearly in all parties involved interest to determine exactly where both populations and minerals lay. Likewise, beyond British economic interests, the importance to a fully defined border region to Ottoman nation-building existed. Without overstating the case, modern nation-states required strictly drawn and regulated borders that replaced the frontiers of Empire on the eve of World War I. In order to define their citizenry, a nation-state needs to have fully defined borders so that it can determine who is inside and who is outside of their state and claim them and their lands accordingly. Therefore, the inter-imperial rivalry over oil, which spurred a long process to its conclusion, was ultimately beneficial to the Ottoman State, not solely in the development of oil exploitation infrastructure but also by defining this border.

### Basra Improvements

In 1913, the Vali of Basra contacted the British Consul in Basra, Mr. Francis Crow (not to be confused with Eyre Crowe in London), about the possibility of conducting some municipal improvement projects in Basra. The request was conveyed to two different British companies. Earlier improvements in Basra had been initiated by the local Ottoman state. These improvements included ones made during the 1850's and were initiated by the Kaymakim Reşid Pasha and the Vali Namik Pasha.<sup>124</sup> Messrs Boulton, one of the two British firms contacted about the concession, responded that they looked favorably upon the request, but only if adequate

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<sup>124</sup> Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, p. 180.

financial security were provided. Messrs Boulton requested additional information including population data, amount of annual revenues from the municipality and the exact breakdown of services required by the potential contract.<sup>125</sup>

There was also discussion in 1913 of creating a company to provide electric lighting in Basra. The Vali of Basra, Sefik Pasha, asked the British ambassador to put him in touch with a financial group that would be interested in forming a company that would acquire the concession on the “basis of a thirty years’ local concession for electric light, construction of road, Ashar to Basra electric tramway, and other possible municipal improvements [water supply to Basra].”<sup>126</sup> The road was to be 2 miles long, combined with the tramway and hopefully with an extension to the town of Zobeir. Apparently, the Vali had the authority to grant the concession locally for 30 years; however, the specifics of his plan and arrangement were vague in both scope and financing. The British Consul offered some pieces of technical advice, such as the following on road construction, “no stone is obtainable here but I understand it could be made with oil residue on an earth foundation and this material is easily procurable from Abadan. The Sheik [of Mohammerah] is in fact building a road of this material at Mohammera[h] and Messrs. Shaw and Haynes, local English engineers, are doing the work for him.”<sup>127</sup> The Vali expected that the project would require TL 200,000 and he proposed, despite the doubts of the British ambassador, to raise half of the capital locally.<sup>128</sup> Crow expressed a great degree of uncertainty about the feasibility of these projects, and noted his opinion that “the Turks always want to fly before they

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<sup>125</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Foreign Office, London, April 3, 1914 to Sir L. Mallet, Istanbul.

<sup>126</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Foreign Office, London, April 3, 1914 to Sir L. Mallet, Istanbul.

<sup>127</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, March 31, 1914 to Sir L. Mallet, Istanbul.

<sup>128</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Foreign Office, London, April 3, 1914 to Sir L. Mallet, Istanbul.

can walk...”<sup>129</sup> Despite his doubts, Crow wrote that “The Vali is of course a new broom but he seems sincerely anxious to carry out these much needed improvements and I think we would be unwise to let slip the opportunity of helping him if we properly can.”<sup>130</sup> Crow also noted, in imperialist delight that “I pointed out to him [the Vali] that it was somewhat difficult to realize these financial combinations [the forming of a financial group to fund the project] unless the conditions were exceedingly advantageous, and I therefore advised him to draw up his concession and let us see the exact conditions imposed in order that we might be able to form some opinion as to its value.”<sup>131</sup> The British Ambassador in Istanbul, Sir Louis Mallet, noted that if the British did not show interest in the project, it was likely that the Germans would, and that there was a need and desire to provide a telephone service in the area. The telephone concession idea was in addition to what the Vali proposed. It was a response to a proposed partnership between Marconi<sup>132</sup> and Telefunken<sup>133</sup> to provide both wireless stations and telephone service in Basra.<sup>134</sup> The two companies had also proposed to provide this service in Iran, but Mallet believed that Iran would not award a concession without first consulting the

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<sup>129</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Francis Crow, Consul, Basra, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>130</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>131</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>132</sup> Guglielmo Marconi’s company, Marconi’s Wireless Telegraphy Company, was a British venture yet had an occasionally uneasy relationship with the British government. This was due in part due to Marconi being the son of an Italian nobleman. Additionally, a long running legal battle between Marconi and British inventor Oliver Lodge prejudiced some against Marconi. Lodge seems to have invented the technology to use radio waves to transmit wirelessly before Marconi, but Marconi filed his patent first.

<sup>133</sup> Telefunken was a German company started in 1903. Like Marconi’s company, they were also involved in wireless communications.

<sup>134</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Foreign Office, London, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1914 to Sir Louis. Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

British government. The British government protested, or was considering protesting it because they simply saw it as a German attempt to further their own communication network in the Persian Gulf.<sup>135</sup>

For both Mallet and Crow, a major reason to proceed with the Vali's wishes was in order to keep the Germans from taking advantage of the situation. Mallett wrote, concerning the Germans, that in Basra they "display remarkable activity in development here, and have, I am informed, just completed two days sounding operation [taking the depth] in the river below and above Basra, but I do not know for what purpose."<sup>136</sup> Crow advised "I presume His Majesty's Government would prefer to see Basra developed with the aid of British capital rather than leave the work to the Germans."<sup>137</sup> Crow cited several reasons as to why the area might become an important investment site in the future, including improvements being made to port facilities there and general improvements to the waterways. Crow continued "We are the first in the field and the opportunity is a favorable one. Lord Inchcape, the Anglo Persian Oil Co and Messrs Pearson and Jackson have already acquired vested interests in Mesopotamia and may not be adverse to assisting us in the present matter... I trust therefore that our attention may be given to the development of Basra before our German rivals supplant us."<sup>138</sup>

As of late April, the Vali of Basra was gathering the information that Boulton Brothers had requested and Mallet noted that the Vali was in fact contemplating doing the projects

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<sup>135</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul, March 31, 1914 to Foreign Office, London.

<sup>136</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Foreign Office, London, April 3, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>137</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, March 31, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>138</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, March 31, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

without asking for any capital investment (loans) from foreigners.<sup>139</sup> Requests for additional information about the project were answered with vague responses which was perhaps a tactic of the Vali to keep his figures subject to favorable interpretation. Mallet grew frustrated with these delays, but directed his ire towards Crow, noting, “Mr. Crow is not showing much ingenuity in eliciting useful information.”<sup>140</sup> A May 8<sup>th</sup> letter from Boulton Brothers reiterated the request for more information asking for specifics on the form of financial security to be issued, as well as, whether revenue was already being collected and by whom.<sup>141</sup> Eventually, answers arrived - the population of Basra was between 20,000 and 30,000 people with municipal revenues of TL 9,000. The Vali insisted that funds would be raised locally and not borrowed from the concessionaire or indeed any foreign financier.<sup>142</sup> Ambassador Mallett added that the population figures seemed accurate but “as regards No. 2, municipal revenue, according to details obtained from municipal books by my dragoman, was only TL 4,686 last year.”<sup>143</sup> A later note from the Vali set the income for Basra at TL 5,525.<sup>144</sup>

Ibrahim Hakki Pasha, then in London, met with Boulton Brothers to discuss the possibilities for the concession and future meetings between the two were planned.<sup>145</sup> A former

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<sup>139</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul, April 29, 1914 to Foreign Office, London.

<sup>140</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Note: Municipal Improvements at Basra, A. Parker, Foreign Office, London, May 7, 1914.

<sup>141</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Boulton Brothers, London, May 8, 1914 to the Undersecretary of State, Foreign Office, London.

<sup>142</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul, May 9, 1914 to Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary, London.

<sup>143</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Memorandum: German Trade and Works at Basra, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, March 31, 1914.

<sup>144</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Sefik Pasha, Vali of Basra, April 30, 1914 to H.M.'s Consul, Basra and TNA, FO 371/2133, Sefik Pasha, Vali of Basra, May 13, 1914 to H.M.'s Consul, Basra.

<sup>145</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133. Boulton Brother, London, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1914 to Undersecretary of State, London.

Grand Vizir of the Ottoman Empire, Hakki Pasha travelled to London in order to discuss the Baghdad-Berlin Railroad and Ottoman territorial claims in Europe (Adrianople or now, Edirne) and Ottoman claims to certain Aegean islands.<sup>146</sup> After a stop in Paris, Hakki Pasha arrived in London on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1913.<sup>147</sup> Hakki Pasha received an audience with the King, as well as one with Secretary of the Foreign Office, Sir Edward Grey on March 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>148</sup> Besides negotiating with the British and meeting royalty, Hakki Pasha got to launch the *Reshadieh*,<sup>149</sup> a warship built by British shipbuilders and commissioned during Hakki Pasha's time as Grand Vizir (January 1910-September 1911).<sup>150</sup> In April of 1914, Hakki Pasha lunched at the Carlton Restaurant with such luminaries as Lord and Lady Inchcape and Sir Eyre and Lady Crowe.<sup>151</sup> The Basra concession process was expedited by Hakki Pasha's visit and the Vali sent the final terms to Sir John Jackson. The Vali required an Ottoman limited company to be formed which would include some local men of capital, the concession would last 39 years and Boulton Brothers would have two and a half months to decide whether they were interested or not.<sup>152</sup> An agent of Sir John Jackson's Company looked into the water concession and said that it seemed to have already been offered to a Frenchman.<sup>153</sup> Suddenly the entire nature of the concession changed, as described by a note from Hakki Pasha. Hakki Pasha confirmed that, "the Government of Bassorah has actually no intention of according concessions for electricity of trams. The only one intended concession was that for water to be brought into the City, and it [the water

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<sup>146</sup> "News in Brief." *Times of London*, February 13, 1913: p. 5.

<sup>147</sup> "News in Brief." *Times of London*, February 17, 1913: p. 5.

<sup>148</sup> "The Capture Of Yanina." *Times of London*, March 8, 1913: p. 5.

<sup>149</sup> This ship was confiscated for the war effort and rechristened HMS *Erin*.

<sup>150</sup> "The Launch Of The Reshadieh." *Times of London*, September 4, 1913: p. 3.

<sup>151</sup> "Court Circular." *Times of London*, April 4, 1914: p. 11.

<sup>152</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133. Bullard, Basra, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1914, to Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>153</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133. Note from Mr. Parker, A. Parker, London, May 26<sup>th</sup> 1914.



concession] has already been conceded to indogenous [sic] concessionaires.”<sup>154</sup> As pertained the tramway concession, the Vali provided detailed plans as to the concession including the length of the concession, where and how long the tramway would be, how many houses would need to be lit with electricity, what road would need to be built, what materials it should be constructed of, how long it should be and how many people would be using it.<sup>155</sup> By July, the Vali was replaced by Colonel Subhi Bey, who would face the British in the near future, not on the concession negotiation front, but on the battlefield at the Battle of Basra (November 1914). The final telegram on the matter sent by the acting consul, R.W. Bullard to Ambassador Mallett shed some light on the confusion. It stated “General council of Vilayet has refused for the second time to grant more than two and a half months preferential option for construction and for half shares in the electrical concession that has been granted to local people. Do the details sent in my dispatch no. 33 justify my reopening the question with new Acting Vali?”<sup>156</sup> The answer seems to have been no. By this point in time, the diplomatic furor that preceded World War One was in full swing. The thread in the file at the British archives comes to an abrupt halt and is replaced with correspondence indicating growing concern over seditious activities carried out in the Ottoman Empire by Indian Muslims.

The German threat made an appearance here and it seemed as overblown as it was in other negotiations. Here, rather than drive the British to compromise with other Western interests, the threat pushed the British to fast track an investment project that even the local

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<sup>154</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, Hakki Pasha, Claridge’s Hotel, London, May 29, 1914 to Mr. Boulton, London.

<sup>155</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133. Translation: 40 Years Concession, Ottoman Public Works Department, Basra, June 23, 1914.

<sup>156</sup> TNA, FO 371/2133, R.W. Bullard, British Acting Consul, Basra, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1914 to British Embassy, Istanbul.

British diplomat expressed significant skepticism about. No German investor was named and no concrete German challenge to the concessions surfaced. The project was initiated by the Ottoman Vali, who was trying to promote the economic welfare of his vilâyet. Mr. Crow stated the obvious – these concessions would have to be at very advantageous conditions for British companies to invest their money. However, that very concern could be allayed with the threat of German economic penetration. This very threat was communicated to Sir Louis Mallett, who communicated it to Crow and to the British concession seekers. Regardless of its authenticity, the threat of German penetration spurred British investors into considering deals that they would likely otherwise not have. Whether or not the British company would have bid on the concession was not necessarily the point. The threat itself ensured that the British would consider a deal and perhaps consider it when the financial terms for themselves were not ideal.

## Conclusions

In June of 1914, on the eve of World War I, investors and financiers from Britain and Germany were corresponding civilly over the Berlin-Baghdad Railway, the oil concession, and irrigation schemes in Iraq. The German diplomat Prince Lichnowsky wrote, concerning an agreement reached during previous negotiations that, despite a few grammatical changes the German version of the agreement on the Berlin-Baghdad Railway “corresponds in substance with the English version.”<sup>157</sup> In the agreement, the Imperial German government pledged to tolerate British investment in any German concessionary project, as long as the British were the minority shareholders. They also promised not to interfere with concessions already granted to British firms nor to provide governmental support for German nationals seeking irrigation

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<sup>157</sup> TNA, FO 371/2129, Prince Lichnowsky, London, June 8, 1914 to India Office, London.

contracts with the Sublime Porte.<sup>158</sup> The border commission as well, demonstrated inter-imperial cooperation rather than inter-imperial rivalry, and we thus see that British and German interests coincided in the years immediately before the First World War. Therefore, imperial rivals collaborated on several occasions in Ottoman Iraq during this period. Especially regarding infrastructure projects, British and German groups worked together and made compromises in order to secure that the Ottomans would grant concessionary rights to their companies.

The Ottoman State worked with and against the European concession seekers during negotiations. Ottoman participation in the oil concession allowed the state to procure a better deal and to guarantee that there would be at least some Ottoman representation within the syndicate. The border commission served to further Ottoman centralization policies and move along the incorporation of the periphery with the Ottoman center. Likewise, it also clarified the amount of oil reserves available to them and their tax base along the Iranian border. With the transport contract, the Ottomans proved adept at keeping Lynch and the ETSN from expanding their interests in Iraq. In fact, the final deal, both in the carrying contract for the Hindiyya barrage, the carrying contract for the BBR and in the ETNS-BISNC merger, moved British interests towards international syndicates. All of these demonstrate a degree of Ottoman control concerning the shipping industry in the region, demonstrating a high level of center-peripheral coordination. The proposed projects in Basra again showed that local Ottoman administrators could and did seize the initiative to create foreign investment in their area. The Basra projects also show how far the mention of German competition could propel otherwise cautious British investors.

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<sup>158</sup> TNA, FO 371/2129, Prince Lichnowsky, London, June 8, 1914 to India Office, London.

## Chapter 3

Trade Between Americans and Ottomans: Merchants and their Discontent

In 1912, the Hills Brothers Company of New York published the *Dromedary Cook Book*. The book opens with a letter to the American housewife, advising that “The dietetic value of such fruits as dates, figs, currant etc. is a high one and these fruits should appear on our tables at least once a day.”<sup>1</sup> Focusing on Hills Brothers’ main product, Dromedary Dates, the cookbook includes a broad set of uses for the sweet dried fruit, including Breakfast dishes, Sauces and Conserves, Sandwiches, Salads, Cakes, Cookies, Sweet Breads, Pies, Puddings, Gelatine and Frozen Desserts, Candies, and Miscellaneous. Altogether, there are over 50 recipes for using dates in food and also for a few household uses, such as a handy “Home-made Laxative.”<sup>2</sup> The recipes had all been submitted by the American and Canadian public in an earlier contest. The wide market for dates and their popularity was reflected in the geographic diversity of the recipe writers. They came from 27 different states, the District of Columbia, and British Columbia. American magazines such as *Collier’s* and *Good Housekeeping* contained advertisements by the Hills Brothers Company to promote their confectionary products. A 1917 advertisement for Dromedary Brand dates, stated that they are “Ideal for grown-ups and children- a food, a dainty, a confection.” Should you not feel like having a dainty confection by itself, the advertisement also included a recipe for date muffins.<sup>3</sup> Another *Good Housekeeping* advertisement evoked the Garden of Eden and promised that dates were “Better than candy for your children.”<sup>4</sup>

Dates were just one of the many commercial items traded between the Ottoman Empire’s provinces of Baghdad and Basra and the United States and Great Britain between 1890 and 1920.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hills Brothers Company. *Dromedary Cookbook*. (Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Publishing, 2007) Originally published in 1912 by Hills Brothers from recipes submitted in a contest in 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Hills Brothers, *Dromedary Cookbook*, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> *Good Housekeeping*, Volume 64. International Magazine Co. 1917. pg. 147.

<sup>4</sup> *Good Housekeeping*, Volume 64. International Magazine Co. 1917. pg. 134.

Almonds, antiquities, carpets, colocynth,<sup>5</sup> dates, dog excrement,<sup>6</sup> gall nuts, ghee, gum tragacanth,<sup>7</sup> sheep intestines,<sup>8</sup> licorice root, millet seeds, Persian opium,<sup>9</sup> skins/hides of animals, and wool were exported from Baghdad and Basra. In 1909, according to U.S. sources, the Western-oriented international trade<sup>10</sup> of Baghdad was \$14,316,279, with exports composing \$4,560,706 and imports \$9,755,573. The largest import to Baghdad, which was 57% of total imports trade, was cotton piece goods, valued at \$5,582,410. Other non-American imports included yarn, Brazil coffee, sugar, copper and iron. American exports to Baghdad in 1909 were predominantly oil, valued at \$130,000, and Singer Sewing machines, valued at \$42,000. Beer was the third largest American export, valued at around \$1,000. American clocks, air guns, lamps, and toilet articles valued in the hundreds of dollars were imported to Baghdad via Bombay.<sup>11</sup> This puts the American share of exports to Baghdad in 1909 at approximately \$174,000 or 2%. British exports to Baghdad occupied about 56% of the trade and were valued at approximately \$5,848,870.<sup>12</sup> In 1909, America imported \$733,611 from Baghdad or 16% of all

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<sup>5</sup> A fruit used for medicinal purposes. According to Parke Davis and Company colocynth was used to cure constipation. Parke Davis and Company, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Laboratory Products of Parke Davis Company* (Detroit: Parke Davis and Company, 1896) p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Used in the leather industry, dog excrement has proteins used in the processing of leather.

<sup>7</sup> A gum with similar uses to and properties of gum Arabic. Was used contemporaneously in calico printing according to Alfred Henry Allen, *Commercial Organic Analysis* (London: J.A. Churchill, 1885).

<sup>8</sup> For sausage casings.

<sup>9</sup> Opium from Persia was packaged in Baghdad.

<sup>10</sup> This would also include the trade with India. This would not include the Persian trade, which was also an international trade.

<sup>11</sup> Department of Commerce and Labor. *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries: Calendar Year 1909* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911) p. 880.

<sup>12</sup> British figures are taken from Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800-1914: A Documentary Economic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). Figures on page 173 put the total export trade of Baghdad at £2,153,000 with British trade valued at £1,201,000. These figures are taken from British sources. To their value in \$, an exchange rate of \$4.87 to £1 was used.

goods that Baghdad exported. Exports to Britain were approximately \$1,526,197 or 33%.

This chapter's main contribution to the overall thesis and to the field is to argue that American trade with the Ottoman Empire was a growing and noteworthy phenomenon. The U.S. was an interested trading partner and one that, coupled with the professionalization of the Foreign Service, was increasing in size and scope. The growth of American trade with the Ottoman Empire was concurrent with the growth of the world economy and fluctuated in tune with globalization. The expansion of the global marketplace was what drove the expansion of American trade. This trend was noted and reacted to by U.S. diplomats and businesses. The most significant trade commodities for American merchants in Baghdad and Basra were dates and licorice. Between the years of 1894-1914, British, American, Ottoman and local Arab merchants and investors all competed against and cooperated with each other concerning the export of these commodities.

In the international sphere, British trade owned the largest share of the date trade but American merchants, particularly MacAndrews and Forbes, were dominant in the licorice trade. Hills Brothers Company of New York was the chief American importer of dates from Basra and Baghdad during this period and Messrs. Grey and Mackenzie were the leading British firm, although other British firms based in Basra participated as well. In addition to Grey and Mackenzie, these included Hotz, Hamilton and Co., Basra (alternatively spelled Busreh) Trading Company and Lynch Brothers. The competition between Western firms during the date season was intense. Wratishlaw, British Consul in Basra from 1898-1903 wrote "The good understanding which characterized the relations between the British firms was suspended during the date season."<sup>13</sup> Hills Brothers Company, the chief American firm involved in the date trade was

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<sup>13</sup> A.C. Wratishlaw, *A Consul in the East*, (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1924) p. 161.

valued at a capital of \$300,000 and also ran a fruit canning and packing business in New York City.<sup>14</sup> British sources approximate that the Americans owned a 12% share of the total date crop of Basra and Baghdad and roughly a 25% share of date exports.<sup>15</sup> British sources listed the average yearly date crop at around 100,000 tons. Of that 100,000 tons, they estimated that 20,000 tons went to the United Kingdom,<sup>16</sup> 12,000 tons to the United States, 5,000 to various Mediterranean ports, 3,000 tons to Australia, and several thousand tons as well went to India, Singapore and East Africa.<sup>17</sup>

In 1898, the United States bought \$1,447,218.65 worth of goods from the Ottoman Empire, making them the 8<sup>th</sup> largest recipient of Ottoman exports. In contrast, the United States only exported goods worth \$227,319.37, or 15<sup>th</sup> on the list of countries exporting to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>18</sup> In the fiscal year 1911-1912, Ottoman exports (excluding certain items taxed by the Public Debt Administration,<sup>19</sup> which included tobacco – the US imported over \$10 million in tobacco in calendar year 1912) were valued at \$108,733,312, with the United States accounting for \$6,712,139 or 6%. From 8<sup>th</sup> on the list, the United States moved up to 5<sup>th</sup>, eclipsing even Germany in that year, and only eclipsed by Great Britain (\$26,298,920; 24%), France

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<sup>14</sup> *Polk's (Trow's) New York Copartnership and Corporation Directory, Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx, Volume 58* (New York: Association of American Directory Publishers, 1910) p. 373.

<sup>15</sup> TNA, FO 368/1143, W.A. Buchanan, Grey, Mackenzie and Company, London, August 19, 1914 to Joseph Pease, MP, Board of Education, London.

<sup>16</sup> This was qualified by noting that a few thousand of these 20,000 tons were actually for Hamburg.

<sup>17</sup> TNA, FO 368/1143, W.A. Buchanan, Grey, Mackenzie and Company, London, August 19, 1914 to Joseph Pease, MP, Board of Education, London.

<sup>18</sup> Bureau of Foreign Commerce, Department of State. *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries During the Year 1901: Volume II* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902) p. 762.

<sup>19</sup> The Public Debt Administration was set up in 1881 by European creditors to insure Ottoman repayment of loans.



(\$20,607,706; 19%), Austria-Hungary (\$15,226,878; 14%) and Egypt (\$7,464,902; 7%).<sup>20</sup> Yet still, the US lagged behind in exporting to the Ottoman Empire, amounting for \$5,393,151 in fiscal year 1911-1912, or just 3% and ranking it behind Romania as the 12<sup>th</sup> (up from 15<sup>th</sup>) most important exporter to the Empire.<sup>21</sup>

American import trade from Baghdad and Basra ebbed and flowed with the global economy between 1894 and 1914. In 1895, this trade amounted to \$351,893. In 1897 it was only 11%. It peaked in 1904 at 43% of all sea borne exports. Although this was an anomaly, a little less than 20% of Baghdad's foreign export trade was typically headed towards the US per annum.<sup>22</sup> Trade between the United States and Basra rose from a mere \$29,682 in 1896 to \$765,349 in 1906 and it peaked in 1913, with a total amount of \$859,005.<sup>23</sup> Table 2 and Table 3 illustrate these figures.

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<sup>20</sup> The Bureau of Foreign Commerce, Department of State. *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries, Revised Statistics Calendar Year 1912* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914) p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> The Bureau of Foreign Commerce, *Commercial Relations of the United States*, p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> Department of Commerce and Labor. *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries: Calendar Year 1909* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911) p. 880.

<sup>23</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, Charles F. Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, April 13, 1915 to William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State, Washington D.C.

Table 2 Trade with Baghdad

Year <sup>24</sup>	Total Exports	American Exports	American share of total exports.
1897	\$2,547,010	\$299,187.28 <sup>25</sup>	11.7%
1898	\$3,107,060	\$457,831.94	14.7%
1899	\$3,223,940	\$448,482.15	13.9%
1900	\$3,111,930	\$558,308.38	18%
1901	\$2,683,370	\$613,012.30	22.8%
1902	\$2,800,250	\$408,562.25	14.6%
1903	\$3,521,010	\$644,188.32	18.3%
1904	\$2,956,090	\$1,295,003.54	43.8%
1905	\$3,389,520	\$782,950.47	23%
1906	\$4,124,890	\$617,847.40 <sup>26</sup>	14.9%
1907	\$3,457,700	\$520,480.57	15%
1908	\$2,707,720	\$326,927.00	12%
1909	\$3,725,550	\$733,611.00	19.7%

<sup>24</sup> This chart was created using total export statistics from Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800-1914: A Documentary Economic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988)'s book. These figures were changed into dollars at a rate of \$4.87 to each pound. American export figures are culled from my U.S. archival sources.

<sup>25</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Rudolph Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, July 24, 1905, to Charles Dickinson, U.S. Consul-General, Istanbul. Figures from 1894-1905.

<sup>26</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Frederick Simpich, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, April 21, 1910, to Edward Ozmun, U.S. Consul-General, Istanbul. Figures from 1906-1909.

Table 3 Trade with Basra

Exports from Basra to the United States in Dollars	
1895	\$140,000 <sup>27</sup>
1896	\$29,682 <sup>28</sup>
1905	\$372,346 <sup>29</sup>
1906	\$765,349 <sup>30</sup>
1907	\$710,684
1908	\$1,909,110 <sup>31</sup>
1909	\$615,275 <sup>32</sup>

American merchants and diplomats, from the mid 1890's until 1914, became increasingly interested in the Ottoman Empire and in Baghdad and Basra. The creation of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant and its publication *The Levant Trade Review* were steps forward for American merchants and commerce in the Ottoman Empire as a whole and in Baghdad and Basra. The *Levant Trade Review* published two articles about the Berlin-Baghdad Railway including one written by the then American Consul of Baghdad Charles

<sup>27</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ii, James Hamilton, U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, June 30, 1896 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>28</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ii, James Hamilton, U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, March 30, 1897 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>29</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Annual Declared Export Return, December 31, 1905, Chalk, U.S. Vice Consul, Basra.

<sup>30</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, March 19, 1908 to Ozmun, Istanbul. 1906 and 1907.

<sup>31</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, January 22, 1909 to Ozmun, Istanbul. 1908.

<sup>32</sup> Department of Commerce and Labor. *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries: Calendar Year 1909* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911) p. 887.

Brissel, with articles such as one concerning local Mulberry cultivation, another about a new mill in Baghdad which also discusses the opening of new banks and shipping problems in Baghdad. Further articles were on the appointment of Emil Sauer to replace James Levack as Consul in Baghdad, a detailed analysis of agricultural methods in Baghdad, Djavid Bey's economic development plan, the state of harvests in certain years and other sundry pieces of information related to trade concerning the US and Iraq.<sup>33</sup> The interest of American businessmen, as evidenced by the many requests sent to American diplomats in Baghdad and Basra, was finally being rewarded with detailed information.

The American firm of MacAndrews and Forbes, headquartered in Izmir, were the chief licorice importers of this period and they maintained offices throughout the Ottoman Empire. Licorice root had many purposes in this time period and, as MacAndrews and Forbes themselves stated "The licorice plant is vegetation with extraordinary properties."<sup>34</sup> It was used as a flavoring for medicines, desserts and candy. However, licorice's most prominent use was to be mixed with tobacco to keep the tobacco from drying out and becoming stale. MacAndrews and Forbes controlled as much as 95% of the licorice market in the United States.<sup>35</sup> Though it was an American company in this period, MacAndrews and Forbes was founded by two Scottish business men – Edward MacAndrew and William Forbes -in 1850 and was headquartered in the Ottoman city of Izmir. In 1870, the company moved to the United States and built a factory in Newark, New Jersey.<sup>36</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes was part of an anti-trust lawsuit against

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<sup>33</sup> American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, *Levant Trade Review Volumes 1 – 4* (American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, 1914).

<sup>34</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes Company, *The Story of Licorice* (Camden, New Jersey: MacAndrews and Forbes Company, 1952) p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Jeremiah Whipple Jenks and Walter Ernest Clark. *The Trust Problem*. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Page and Company, 1917) p. 353.

<sup>36</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes Company, *The Story of Licorice*, p. 11.

American Tobacco Company et al. which was decided on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1911. MacAndrews and Forbes, which had been acquired by the American Tobacco Company was one of the 14 companies broken up in that decision, including R.J. Reynolds, and Liggett & Meyers Tobacco.<sup>37</sup> Today, MacAndrews and Forbes survives as a holding company and maintains a small licorice subsidiary, named Mafoo “Magnasweet”, which specializes in products made from licorice extracts.<sup>38</sup>

Examining the date and licorice trade, the conditions under which these commodities were collected and transported and the cooperation and conflict that arose surrounding them, highlights and suggests possible aspects of the local economic and social conditions. These economic conflicts and cooperation occurred within the expansion of the world market and within an increasingly present American interest in Ottoman Iraq. The prevailing historiography on America in the Persian Gulf region prior to World War II states that America had little or no interest and interaction in the region. Yet, literature on American foreign affairs shows that the 1890’s saw the growth of what Emily Rosenberg terms the “promotional state.”<sup>39</sup> The American promotional state had the twin goal of encouraging U.S. import/export entrepreneurs and reducing foreign barriers to American trade goods and foreign capital investment. Although much of this imperial thrust was focused towards Latin America and China/the Philippines, the Middle East was another arena where the American government pursued, to a limited degree of success, an open door, or unrestricted trade without colonization, policy.<sup>40</sup> As Elena Frangakis-

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<sup>37</sup> Compiled by John L. Lott and Roger Shale, *Federal Anti-Trust Decisions 1890-1917* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917) p. 249.

<sup>38</sup> The website of the company is <http://www.magnasweet.com/en/>. Last accessed on December 17, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982) p. 48.

<sup>40</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, p. 54.

Syrett shows, the American business community in Izmir in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was “prominent and ranked amongst the most active western communities in the area.”<sup>41</sup> As I found in Iraq, most American trade was in Ottoman exports, which, according to Frangakis-Syrett, could be competitively priced in the American market.<sup>42</sup> In Iraq and throughout the Ottoman Empire, the firm of MacAndrews and Forbes was a large player in the American export market, and their total exports from the Ottoman Empire could exceed \$1,000,000 in a single year.<sup>43</sup> As I found in Baghdad and Basra, Frangakis-Syrett finds that it was much harder for Americans to bring their goods to the Ottoman markets; there was a lack of direct shipping options, and credit was difficult to obtain on good terms.<sup>44</sup> However, larger and more capitalized businesses, like Standard Oil and Singer Sewing Company, were able to bring their products to Ottoman markets and developed local infrastructure to ease this process.<sup>45</sup> Both of these corporations were active in Baghdad and Basra. Of course, Americans were not as present, involved or influential as the British, French and Germans in Iraq, however, they were there and they were significant.

Throughout this period, the American diplomatic corps underwent a process of increasing professionalization. Consuls evolved from self-interested archeologists or businessmen to career diplomats, indicating both an increased professionalism within the State Department and heightened interest in the region. The history of American diplomats in the Ottoman Empire is complicated and one wherein American interests wax and wane. By 1830, the

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<sup>41</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett. “American Trading Practices in Izmir in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.” In Daniel Panzac, editor. *Histoire économique et sociale de l’Empire ottoman et de la Turquie (1326-1960)* (Paris: Peeters, 1995) p. 177.

<sup>42</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett. “American Trading Practices in Izmir,” p. 179.

<sup>43</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett. “American Trading Practices in Izmir,” p. 180.

<sup>44</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett. “American Trading Practices in Izmir,” pp. 181-2.

<sup>45</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett. “American Trading Practices in Izmir,” pp. 182-3.

United States had formal diplomatic representation at the Sublime Porte.<sup>46</sup> It was the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II that promoted the American *chargé d'affaires*, David Porter, to Ambassador; the first American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire was therefore appointed not by the U.S., but by the Ottomans.<sup>47</sup> By the 1880's while British consuls in the Ottoman Empire were paid £200 as a starting salary,<sup>48</sup> comparable American diplomats in the region were not paid until 1906. However, despite the professionalization of the Foreign Service corps, obstacles remained in promoting American economic investment in Iraq. As was argued in the infrastructure chapter, this was due both to European competition, a reliance on following protocol and the dearth of knowledge Americans had concerning local procedures and norms. In the case of trade, entrenched local interests also competed with American merchants, particularly over the export of licorice and dates.

American Vice Consuls and Consuls in Baghdad, after the professionalization of 1906 and the end of Hürner's tenure, increased their attempts to promote American trade, whether import or export, particularly once this no longer clashed with their self-interest as merchants/diplomats. Along with a growing interest in commerce, American diplomats displayed an increasing focus on sanitation, as they did in other areas around the globe. During this period in the Ottoman Empire, the British and the French also demonstrated this expanding interest in sanitation. This is evident in an increased focus on securing goods that did not carry disease and on trying to regulate the means of production of those goods. While this chapter is mostly concerned with American businesses and the actions of the U.S. State department, many

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<sup>46</sup> Michael Oren. *Power, Faith and Fantasy: American in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: Norton, 2007) p. 115.

<sup>47</sup> Oren. *Power, Faith and Fantasy*, p. 119.

<sup>48</sup> Wratishlaw, *Consul in the East*, p. 1.

of the actors are British subjects. A lack of actual Americans in the Ottoman Persian Gulf was compensated for by the use of foreign nationals for diplomatic employees, for business agents, and for attorneys.

The degree to which the periphery of the Ottoman Empire, in this case Iraq, was integrated economically and politically with the core area is one of the major concerns of literature on the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. The act of incorporating remote regions is an example of nation building and the process through which the Ottoman Empire moved, or attempted to move away from being an Empire and towards being a nation-state. The process of identity formation within the Ottoman Empire has been well documented. Selim Deringil argues that during the reign of Abdul Hamid II, the Ottoman state used Sufi sheikhs and nationalism to attempt the creation of a more uniform Ottoman identity.<sup>49</sup> Kayali argues that Ottomanism was an attempt to build a new national identity around, rather than constructing a new identity around ethnic nationalism. Kayali writes that this nation building identity arose from the *Tanzimat* principle of political equality and was defined by “a common allegiance of all subjects in equal status to the Ottoman dynasty.”<sup>50</sup> Taner Akçam and Vahakn Dadrian both argue that these processes of Ottoman identity formation were incomplete and their failure contributed to the Armenian Genocide.<sup>51</sup> Bruce Masters complicates this narrative by reminding us that, “the peoples of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire were not simply passive recipients of an order imposed by the Europeans. Rather, they took an active role in devising strategies to cope

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<sup>49</sup> Selim Deringil, *The Well-protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

<sup>50</sup> Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) p. 24.

<sup>51</sup> Taner Akçam. *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2004) and Vahakn Dadrian, *A History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004).



with change and benefit from it, thereby determining their own futures.”<sup>52</sup>

Sarah Shields, in her study on Mosul, describes the center-periphery relationship as a continuing struggle between Istanbul and local elites. Ultimately, many of the reforms instituted by Istanbul were either not enforced, or only loosely implemented and at different times.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, Eugene Rogan investigates the relationship between center and periphery in nearby Transjordan, detailing the struggle that ensued as the Sublime Porte attempted to incorporate the area more firmly into the empire.<sup>54</sup> Hala Fattah elaborates on the relationship with, and competition between, British merchants, Najdi merchants, local Arabs and Ottoman elites in the Persian Gulf area to help demonstrate this center-periphery relationship.<sup>55</sup> Instead of focusing on political rhetoric or identity formation, we can see economic activities as illuminating aspects of the center-periphery relationship and the infrastructure of nation-building. It would appear that the center-periphery relationship in this region was complicated and at times unclear. As a process, it was also uneven. The area was in some aspects being incorporated more closely, but in other ways remained autonomous and unintegrated. On a local level this trade and economic activity demonstrates both the success and failure of how certain aspects of the Ottoman 19<sup>th</sup> century legal and economic reforms, known as the *Tanzimat*, were instituted in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire. These instituted reforms, such as the settling of economic conflicts in mercantile courts, indicates a higher level of integration between the Ottoman imperial center and the periphery of the empire. However, centralizing tax reforms and anti-monopoly policies

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<sup>52</sup> Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 15.

<sup>53</sup> Sarah Shields, *Mosul Before Iraq: Like Bees Making Five Sided Cells* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000) p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 17.

<sup>55</sup> Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade*, p. 8.

were not instituted. This indicates that, despite policy changes, the state maintained tax farming as a revenue collection strategy. This was due to the benefits that collecting revenue in this manner provided for the Ottoman Treasury, which still stood to gain from the practice.

In interaction with Western merchants, Ottoman officials and local notables often worked in tandem to promote their own interests over that of Western merchants. Dates and licorice were not unique to the Ottoman Empire, nor to Iraq but they were lucrative trade items that kept Western merchants entranced. Iraqi dates were understood by Western merchants to be of the highest quality available globally. Both local parties and Western merchants benefitted from this trade. Western merchants were as likely to compete or cooperate with other Western merchants as they were to compete/cooperate with Ottomans land owners, officials and tax farmers.

#### Dates, Conflict and Cooperation

The date trade in Baghdad and Basra was a seasonal trade, with date picking, packing and shipping taking place between late August and December. Date groves and gardens lined the Tigris River and these date gardens in Baghdad and Basra were the property of local Arab notables.<sup>56</sup> The American vice consulate in Basra existed, to a certain extent, to facilitate the shipping of dates to the United States; by being there to certify shipping invoices it ensured timely export of the commodity. American vice-consuls in Basra were typically business men who worked in the date trade during the date season, but absented themselves during the rest of the year. Wratlslaw, who was the British Consul in the area and a substitute American vice

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<sup>56</sup> TNA, FO 368/1143, W.A. Buchanan, Grey, Mackenzie and Company, London, August 19, 1914 to Joseph Pease, MP, Board of Education, London.

consul, described the date trade as being a chaotic, industrious yet filthy, affair.<sup>57</sup>

James Hamilton, of the firm Hamilton and Hotz, served as American vice consul in Basra in the beginning of the period under study, although James Hamilton and his firm were British.<sup>58</sup> In 1899, Hamilton absented himself for health reasons to India in early September, creating a diplomatic vacuum during the peak date season. When he left, Hamilton appointed Mr. Wratislaw, British Consul and the agent for the British firm, Messrs. Grey and Mackenzie, as his replacement American consular agent. It is a confusing situation, in fact, when one British date merchant puts another British date merchant in charge of American date exports. However, it seems to not have been other American firms that took issue with this decision, but Rudolf Hürner, American Vice Consul at Baghdad. He wrote to Messrs. Grey and Mackenzie, “As the United States Consular Agency is not only under the control of this Consulate, but also under my personal responsibility, Mr. Hamilton could in no way appoint any other person for him during

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<sup>57</sup> “For a couple of months in the year, beginning when the dates were approaching ripeness towards the end of August, the usually rather torpid town awoke to sudden activity. A meeting of growers and exporters to fix the price of dates inaugurated the season. Long ago there may have been some practical utility in this confabulation, but by now it had become a meaningless ceremony, kept up merely in a spirit of conservatism, for no one adhered to the agreement unless it suited him, and prices fluctuated according to the laws of supply and demand. Then the din of universal hammering arose as hundreds of thousands of boxes were put together from nails and boards sent out ready from Scandinavia. When the picking began, packing establishments called Chadoks were established in the palm-groves along the river banks, and to them resorted all the ragamuffin Arabs from the country round – men, women and children, filthy and half-naked- to profit by the only season in the year when regular wages were forthcoming. The men for the most part acted as porters, while the women packed. It was an edifying sight to watch the packers squatted on the ground round a huge mound of dates and tightly pressing the fruit in rows and in the boxes with their unclean fingers, which they moistened from time to time in a bowl of slimy water from the nearest ditch; while the babies reclined amidst the dates, naked and unrestrained, and swarms of flies browsed on the babies’ eyes and faces, which they seemed to prefer even to the luscious fruit. Years ago I had witnessed the packing of figs in Smyrna, and thought the spectacle unappetizing enough; but this was far worse, and I have never eaten dates since I saw them prepared for the market in Basra.” Wratislaw, *Consul in the East*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>58</sup> Wratislaw, *Consul in the East*, p. 140.

his absence, without previously consent of this Consulate.”<sup>59</sup> Hürner proposed that all invoices from Basra should be shipped to him in Baghdad for approval, which ultimately would give him control over sailing priority; the Shatt al-Arab, the waterway that connects the Tigris at Basra with the Persian Gulf, was hampered by a large sand bar. For steamships to clear this sand bar, they had to sail at high tides which only occurred every two weeks. Even a slight delay might mean that a steamship would have to wait two weeks or so to sail. By sailing late, they would be later to the markets of Europe or America and the initially higher prices due to smaller supply would have fallen, cutting into precious profit margins. Hürner, if he controlled the invoices and sailing priority for ships bound to the US, would acquire some control over the process and likely, use that advantage for his own monetary gain. Hürner would also profit by receiving the fees for filing paperwork, a modest yet attractive revenue stream for him.

Wristlaw and Hamilton complained that the process of clearing all paperwork through Baghdad would cause delays in the shipping of dates; Hürner countered his argument succinctly with “I consider this incorrect.”<sup>60</sup> Hürner’s aspiration to become part of the date trade became moot when the American embassy in Istanbul officially appointed Mr. Wratishlaw as the American Vice Consul in Basra.<sup>61</sup> Hürner, however, was unwilling to let the issue drop. In a letter to the absent convalescent James Hamilton, Hürner quoted the alleged stern words of the American Consul General in Istanbul “The practice [of Hamilton] was clearly irregular and you [Hürner] at least should have been promptly notified of any arrangement through the British

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<sup>59</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume v. Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, September 28, 1899 to Messrs. Grey and Mackenzie, Basra.

<sup>60</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume v, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, November 4, 1899, to Messrs. Grey and Mackenzie, Basra.

<sup>61</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume v, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, November 4, 1899, to Messrs. Grey and Mackenzie, Basra.

Embassy.”<sup>62</sup> Despite his efforts, Hürner was unable to expand the role of his business and the reach of his vice consulate.

Hürner managed the Vice Consulate post for many years as an unpaid employee of the U.S. and as a businessmen. Always keenly self-interested, Hürner was accused of stealing antiquities, of cheating foreign merchants, of swindling James Hamilton, of being a moneylender; moneylending was, it should be noted a widespread practice. Additionally, Hürner tried to circumvent the State Department in the securing of infrastructure contracts and was also accused of overcharging for his consular services. In a review of his submitted accounts, Hürner was upbraided for charging fees of \$2.50 instead of the proper \$2. The same review accused Hürner of manipulating foreign exchange rates in his favor as well.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, Hürner was accused of using his office to extort money from victims of robbery. Jason Paige, an engineer with the University of Chicago’s archeological dig at Bismaya was robbed while travelling. Jason Paige, who was ambushed in the desert and literally had his pants stolen off of him, applied for and ultimately got recompense from the Ottoman government for his losses. Of the TL97<sup>64</sup> that was received in compensation, only TL20 were remitted to Paige. Five Turkish Lira went to Paige’s servant, Ali for undisclosed reasons and TL72 went to Hürner, for the purported loss of a carpet that Paige had been carrying.<sup>65</sup> In a separate incident, another accusation of illicit fees was made by the British consular agent, Major Ramsey, who assumed the office briefly after Hürner was replaced. Ramsey wrote that Hürner charged fees above what he was

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<sup>62</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume v, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, January 11, 1900 to James Hamilton, Basra.

<sup>63</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi. State Department Auditor, Washington, D.C. March 21, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>64</sup> Paige had been seeking £150. This is the equivalent of about \$500.

<sup>65</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi. Jason Paige, Washington, D.C., May 31, 1905 to Leishman, Istanbul.

supposed to and pocketed the extra.<sup>66</sup> Hürner would have been expected to use the fees charged as a sort of informal compensation for himself, in what was a non-salaried job. However, he would not have been expected to overcharge. Likewise, with the certification of the date invoices, it seems that Hürner may have been looking to increase his personal profits by insuring his own brokerage over who could sail first.

Much of the conflict and cooperation that took place surrounding the date trade, occurred around the activities of Hills Brothers. In December of 1903, the Hills Brothers Company of New York, the chief American date importing company, wrote a letter to the Secretary of State, John Hay about difficulties they had in Basra. According to their letter, during the previous date season, the Ottoman governor and local Arab notables conspired against Hills Brothers in a manner that “refused to allow the growers, from whom we purchased, either to pack or to deliver our dates, in consequence of which our steamers were delayed in completing their cargoes, thus entailing heavy demurrage charges which we have had to bear.”<sup>67</sup> The importance of an early shipping date for profitable dates is underlined by David Fairchild, agricultural explorer and date expert. Fairchild wrote, “The New York shipments, to be the most profitable, must be in [New York] before Thanksgiving Day...”<sup>68</sup> Hills Brothers filed a claim against the Ottoman authorities for £3,912. According to the British owned Basra (sometimes written Busreh) Trading Company official John Hiles, who was subcontracted by Hills Brothers to ship dates to New York, the latter company had spent the sum of £1,800 as a pre purchase advance to date growers. Hills

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<sup>66</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Major J. Ramsey, British Consul, Baghdad, December 18, 1906 to U.S. Consulate, Istanbul.

<sup>67</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vii. William Hills, Junior, President of Hills Brothers Co., New York, December 11, 1903, to John Hay, Secretary of State, Washington, D.C.

<sup>68</sup> David Fairchild, *Persian Gulf Dates and Their Introduction to America* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903) p. 30.

Brothers accused Sayyid Talib al Naqib of Basra, a wealthy landowner and date grower, of intimidating other date growers into not delivering their goods in a timely manner. They further accused the Ottoman Vali of Basra, of intimidating the date growers outside of Basra in the same manner and acting in collusion with the Naqib. Hiles stated that Ottoman soldiers were used to prevent date growers from moving their goods to market. Due to the Shatt al-Arab tides, the shipment of dates for that year and month had to occur on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September. Prices had been set and contracts had been signed for the dates, previous to their packing into boxes for shipment. These prices had been set at the public auction on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September. The auction occurred in the town of Abu al Kasseb, at the house of one of the native date growers and included both the principle date growers and European merchants.<sup>69</sup>

The story was further illuminated by Thomas Basmadjean, an agent for Messrs. R.D. Warburg and Company, another sub-contractor of Hills Brothers Company. Basmadjean wrote to inform Hills Brothers in New York that the man he purchased dates from, an M. Gareh, had his temporary sheds where date packing occurred, known as *cherdaghs*, shut down by Ottoman officials. He also implied that those workers, now idle, still needed to be paid by Hills Brothers. Gareh argued that even if there were no dates to pack, these workers had been contracted and therefore had to be paid.<sup>70</sup> Wratlslaw wrote about how the extreme competition between firms could lead to subterfuge, “Quarrels sometimes occurred when two firms had contracts for delivery from the same grower, and the question arose which contract was to be executed first. The enterprising native clerks of one firm might piratically seize a lighter of dates on its way to

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<sup>69</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vii. H.I. Andrews, Hills Brothers Company, Basra, October 19, 1903 to H.P. Chalk, Acting US Consular Agent, Basra.

<sup>70</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vii. Thomas Basmadjean, R.S. Warburg and Company, Basra, September 14, 1903 to Hills Brothers, Basra.

another, which of course led to ill-feeling.”<sup>71</sup>

By September 13<sup>th</sup> Hills Brothers’ dates started to arrive and Yusif Badam, a clerk for the Hill Brothers, received 120 maunds (18,336lbs)<sup>72</sup> of dates. Badam assembled his *tyndal*<sup>73</sup> and his date packing team. When Badam heard of the prohibition on date packing, he applied for a special permission letter, but was shut down by the Ottoman officials who, according to Badam said, “I shall neither give you a letter, nor allow you to pack.”<sup>74</sup> Reportedly threatened with a stay in a Turkish prison, the date packers and Badam stopped their work. Hill Brothers placed the blame for the entire situation on the Arab notables and specifically, largely on the Naqib of Basra. The Naqib was one of the major date growers himself and had refused to take part that year in the shipping of dates before the September 10<sup>th</sup> price was set. The Naqib then, according to Hills Brothers, further refused to deliver the dates and with the help of the Vali, waited until prices were driven high enough to make it highly profitable for him to sell.<sup>75</sup> Another facet to this dispute was that Hills Brothers also brought a suit against Thomas Basmadjean, an Ottoman subject, in connection with this incident. The suit was brought to a local court, further showing that Hill Brothers willingly used Ottoman infrastructure for redress.<sup>76</sup>

This was not the first that the Ottoman authorities had interfered in the date trade in this period. In November of 1896, Muhammad Atullah, the Ottoman Vali of Baghdad issued an

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<sup>71</sup> Wratlaw, *A Consul in the East*, p. 162

<sup>72</sup> An Indian form of measurement, corresponding to 152.8 lbs per maund. See United States Hydraulic Office, *Persian Gulf Pilot* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920) p. 295.

<sup>73</sup> An Indian term translating as petty officer.

<sup>74</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vii. Yusif Badam, Clerk of America, Basra, September 13, 1903, to Hills Brother, Basra.

<sup>75</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vii. J.J. Bridgetts, Hills Brothers Company, New York, June 7, 1904 to John Hay, Secretary of State, Washington D.C.

<sup>76</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix. Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, October 29, 1903 to Hills Brothers, Basra.



order prohibiting further date exports for twenty-five days.<sup>77</sup> He rescinded the order on November 29<sup>th</sup>.<sup>78</sup> This shipping delay would have put significant pressure on Western merchants to pay higher prices on dates. Combined with the 1903 incident, these examples of Ottoman interference in the date export trade, albeit qualified by it coming from the viewpoint of partisan Western observers, suggests that such interference was a common feature of the tough competition over the lucrative trade. The date conflict of 1903 also shows that there was significant cooperation between Western merchants during the auction process as well as, cooperation between local landlords/date growers and those European merchants. It also demonstrates the fluctuating nature of the trade and that profit and individual maximization of profit was, not surprisingly, the ultimate driving force. Both groups would use whatever means possible to seize an advantage. The Vali that sided with the Naqib may well be complicit because of some sort of personal gain. That relationship also demonstrates that the Naqib and the Vali were willing to work together. As Reidar Visser notes the most potent challenge to Ottoman sovereignty in Basra was the wealthy Naqib family, which occupied a position of great power and influence in Basra.<sup>79</sup> Vissar argues that an international triumvirate of notables, the Naqib family, the Sheik of Mohammerah and the Mubarak family of Kuwait, exerted effective control over Basra and could oust Ottoman government officials if they chose, largely through their influence with armed gangs and their ability to manipulate the crime rate.<sup>80</sup> According to Attiyah, Sayid Talib “had become by 1914 to all intents and purposes the de facto ruler of

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<sup>77</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vii. Muhammad Atullah, Vali, Baghdad, November 15, 1896 to American Vice Consul, Baghdad

<sup>78</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vii.. Muhammad Atullah, Vali, Baghdad, November 29, 1896, to American Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>79</sup> Reidar Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State: Separatism and Nationalism in Southern Iraq* (Mümster: Verlag, 2005), p. 33.

<sup>80</sup> Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State*, pp. 33-4.

Basra.”<sup>81</sup> The rise to power of the Naqib of Basra was tied to his control of large groves of date palms and his ability to both affect trade and control the Ottoman governor. This is indicative of the center-periphery relationship in the Ottoman Empire. Further from the imperial center, the Porte would have greater need for the acquiescence of the local Arab notables. Hala Fattah notes examples of this kind of subterfuge as well, saying that the Naqib pressured the Vali, Nuri Pasha, into discontinuing shipments of dates so that the Naqib could “get a better price for his date crop.”<sup>82</sup> This also shows cooperation between Ottoman officials and local Arab notables against Western merchants and the ability for the two groups to control a significant international trade good.

During this incident, Ottoman officials also conspired to keep Mr. Chalk, a British subject but an agent of the Hills Brothers Company, from acquiring the post of American Vice Consul in Basra.<sup>83</sup> By preventing the appointment of the agent of a corporation that had a grievance against them, they were postponing or diminishing the amount of official protest that Hills Brothers of New York could bring against them. The Ottomans were able to use this tactic to delay or deflect any help the U.S. State Department might be able to give Hills Brothers locally in Basra during proceedings in the mercantile courts. The concluding American investigation into the affair determined that although the Ottoman Vali had done nothing to ameliorate the situation, there was no proof of his culpability. The American report put the blame squarely on the Naqib of Basra stating that he was “forcing up the primary price of

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<sup>81</sup> Attiyah, *Iraq*, p. 64.

<sup>82</sup> Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade*, p. 80.

<sup>83</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x. H.P. Chalk, U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, October 6, 1903 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

dates...<sup>84</sup> However, Havemeyer, the eventual acting US Vice Consul in Basra wrote that since the Naqib was acting as a date grower and a merchant and not a political official (technically he was all three) he could not be held accountable for “Messrs. Hills Brothers losing money over having bargained on buying dates at a lower price than this year’s market one.”<sup>85</sup> Havemeyer further exonerated the local agents (Basmadjean) writing that “Messrs. Hills Brothers agent shipped the full quantity that was required of him by the First and Second tides (as far as I’ve ascertained) and any loss that they may have incurred over high prices, I should say, should be classed under the heading a “business risk” to be borne by those concerned without official interference.”<sup>86</sup> Hürner and Havemeyer ultimately blamed Mr. Chalk and Hills Brothers for the entire situation and for their refusal to accept the terms of the Naqib and avert the entire delay. Havemeyer wrote “You are quite right about Chalk being to blame for the trouble between Hills Bros. & the Turkish Govt.”<sup>87</sup> Following up on the incident, Hürner wrote another telegram to the Department of State alleging foul play by the local tribunal investigating the dispute. He accused the Ottoman Vali of influencing the tribunal and called the process a “Ridiculous Comedy...”<sup>88</sup> The American Legation in Istanbul instructed Hürner to ignore Hills Brothers claims, stating, “Do not allow your relations with local government to become strained over

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<sup>84</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix. William F. Havemeyer, U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, March 9, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>85</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix. William F. Havemeyer, U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, March 17, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>86</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix. William F. Havemeyer, U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, March 9, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>87</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix. William F. Havemeyer, U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, March 14, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>88</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii. Leishman, Istanbul, September 20, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

question of indemnity.”<sup>89</sup>

Hamilton reappears in the history of date exporting on behalf of his date exporting interest, Hamilton and Hotz. Hamilton filed a complaint against Hills Brothers for doing exactly what Hills Brothers accused the Naqib of doing. Hamilton complained about Mr. Chalk, now an official American consular agent that, “it is very difficult to distinguish between Mr. Chalk’s acts as a Consular agent, in which capacity it is his duty to facilitate and assist trade, and other merchants doing business, with America, and his acts representing the American firm that attempts to monopolize the whole Date business with America and to restrain others by all means in their power from doing this business with America.”<sup>90</sup> Hamilton intimated that it was well known that Hills Brothers of New York regularly paid other companies in Baghdad and Basra to not export dates to the United States and writes, “This action is one which in America under the Sherman act which renders illegal all combinations made in restraint of trade, would not be tolerated.”<sup>91</sup> Hamilton suggested that Chalk’s interests as an agent of Hills Brothers and an agent of the United States were irreconcilable. There seems to have been little official response to this complaint, either by Hürner or the U.S. State Department. Hürner and Hamilton were never particularly cordial to each other and after the 1899 episode, Hürner went out of his way to punish Hamilton for irritating him. In 1901, Hamilton and Hotz lost two lighters (smaller steamships that were used to carry goods on the occasionally quite narrow, always winding Tigris and Euphrates rivers) the *Radieh* and the *Hajieh*, at Aziziah. The lighters had been filled

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<sup>89</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii. Leishman, Istanbul, September 20, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>90</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii. Hamilton, Basra, October 28, 1905 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>91</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii. Hamilton, Basra, October 28, 1905 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

with licorice. They filed an insurance claim and under the necessary signatures, Hürner hand wrote a comment, “The truth or otherwise of the contents of this document is wholly unknown to this office.”<sup>92</sup> Perhaps this unnecessary comment threw doubt on Hamilton’s insurance claim, although it cannot be definitely demonstrated whether it did or did not.

The contentious date trade and the incidents involved in it, raise several significant points. First, while there was cooperation between Western merchants and businesses abroad, and there was also severe competition. The date trade was extremely time sensitive. The dates ripened and had to be picked in a certain window and the geography of the Shatt Al-Arab was such that shipping them internationally could only occur at certain high tides. This set of conditions, combined with the timing of the Thanksgiving (in the U.S.) and Christmas season in the U.S. and the West where many dates were consumed and during which time the fruit was most popular, created price incentives to any merchant that could reach the Western markets first. This led Western merchants to use underhanded means to acquire the best prices and stock the quickest from the Basra date growers. Wratishlaw noted that the British community in Basra, which numbered in the high teens and was mostly composed of agents of British firms, all of which exported dates seasonally, frequented the British Club every night to dine and play whist or billiards in “great amity.”<sup>93</sup> However, during the date season, the colorful Wratishlaw noted that his fellow Westerners were not as cordial as usual. He wrote hyperbolically about his fellow British subjects that, “Until the first two or three steamers had left, the club was a miserable place for an outsider, with the other members growling at one another like a pack of surly

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<sup>92</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume vii, Hamilton, Basra, April 6, 1901 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>93</sup> Wratishlaw, *Consul in the East*, p. 140.

dogs...’’<sup>94</sup>

Second, the date trade shows that there was, as is indicated in the literature, a great deal of coordination between the local Arab notables and the Ottoman state in Basra. The Vali and the Naqib worked together to create a favorable situation for the local date growers. Even if the Vali was the junior partner in this, this level of cooperation is instructive. The Vali in order to ensure Ottoman authority in Basra, had to cooperate with the Naqib. The same was true, however, about the Naqib, who needed the cooperation of the Vali in order to manipulate the date trade. The Naqib and the Vali operated and cooperated within the Ottoman system and were quite effective at obtaining their aims.

Third, as the date trade was largely focused on the area around Basra, it raises certain questions about what other possible trajectories Basra could have taken in a post-Ottoman future and raises the question of whether Basra should be thought of as a separate entity from Baghdad and Mosul. As Reider Visser asks in his book *Basra, the Failed Gulf State*, “Why did the oppressed population of oil-rich Southern Iraq refrain from separatist activities for most of the twentieth century?”<sup>95</sup> Visser argues that there is no historical reason to consider the southern part of Iraq, the Basra Vilâyet, as a separate entity, at least as pertains to indigenous separatist movements. Visser discusses two concepts of Iraq, one as a long historical entity and the other as a British creation and efforts by historians to mediate between the positions.<sup>96</sup> Visser argues that the most defining feature of the region is in fact its date palms and these are the economic glue that binds the Basra vilâyet together. Visser notes that the annual export of dates increased from 40,000 tons to 70,000 tons between 1887 and 1908, indicating significant economic growth

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<sup>94</sup> Wratislaw, *Consul in the East*, p. 162.

<sup>95</sup> Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State*, p. 1.

<sup>96</sup> Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State*, pp.7-8.

focused around the date trade. Visser also states that commerce in general, especially with British India, was what defined the Basra economy.<sup>97</sup> However, looking at the evidence, the export trade, both bound Basra and Baghdad together and separated them. It bound Baghdad to Basra as any goods that Baghdad exported by sea were sent through Basra and it bound Basra to Baghdad, as goods that were to be exported to most of Iran went to Basra first and then upriver to Baghdad. Wratislaw noted this in his book that Basra's other distinguishing trade, besides the date trade was Basra's "importance as a port of transshipment for goods destined for Bagdad and Mesopotamia generally, and through Bagdad for Persia..."<sup>98</sup> These incidents within the date trade suggest that Basra was economically connected to Baghdad yet not as effectively or completely politically connected. The date trade, although the land was in the hands of the Arab notables, was still facilitated through Ottoman oversight and infrastructure. It seems likely that the unique power of the Naqib family and their cooperation with or domination of Ottoman political influence, gave them a vested interest in the Ottoman State. Although they could demonstrate considerable autonomy, it was the system in place that allowed them to do so. Therefore, it was in the interest of the Naqib family to stay within the Ottoman system.

#### Licorice

Licorice was another commodity that American businesses and Ottoman economic interests both worked together, and against each other, in order to procure and sell. Licorice root was gathered either on farms or from wild plants in the desert south of Baghdad, especially between Baghdad and Amara. First, a collecting station would be established and locals would

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<sup>97</sup> Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State*, pp. 13-16.

<sup>98</sup> Wratislaw, *Consul in the East*, p. 160.

be contracted to dig licorice root with payment given in advance for specific quantities. Frangakis-Syrett noted, in and around Izmir, similar digging, collecting and tax situations to the ones found in this period around Baghdad.<sup>99</sup> Licorice root came in three quality levels, ordinary licorice root valued at 200 piasters per ton, baguette root valued at 300 piasters per ton and decorticated (peeled from its husk) root valued at 400 piasters per ton. The root was typically taxed at a rate of 10-20% upon shipment.<sup>100</sup> The roots then travelled, usually by local craft known as *sefinah*, to Basra, where they were pressed into bundles. Some licorice travelled to Kut<sup>101</sup> a small town about halfway between Baghdad and Basra to be pressed before being sent on to Basra. *Goofah*, a type of small rounded boat, were also used to transport licorice from places like Samarra to Baghdad and occasionally lighters, or light draft steamboats would bring licorice from Baghdad to Basra.<sup>102</sup> On occasion, shipments of licorice would be lost on route to alleged brigandage and/or shipments would vanish for reasons of insurance fraud.<sup>103</sup>

MacAndrews and Forbes' headquarters in the Ottoman Empire were in Izmir, but they maintained an office and a presence in the Ras ul Qurayya quarter of Baghdad. From 1904

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<sup>99</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "British Economic Activities in Izmir in the Second Half of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, (Fall 1991, 5-6, pp.191-227) p. 201.

<sup>100</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. A.E.C. Bird, Agent for MacAndrews and Forbes Company, December 24, 1906 to Major Ramsey, British Consul and Acting US consul, Baghdad.

<sup>101</sup> The site of a famous World War I battle which saw the largest surrender of British soldiers under arms until that point in history. The British officers then spent the rest of the war in relative comfort in central Anatolia, while the British and Indian rank and file were worked to death building the famed Berlin-Baghdad railway. Many of the Arab population of the town (approximately 5,000, Muslim and Jewish) may also have been killed by the Ottomans.

<sup>102</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, December 24, 1906 to Major Ramsey, British Consul and Acting US consul, Baghdad.

<sup>103</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume v. Hürner, Baghdad, February 26, 1899 to Messrs. Arguinham and Ramee.



through 1907, MacAndrews and Forbes had several interesting interactions with the Ottoman government. Broadly speaking, most of these incidents were due to disagreements concerning taxation, either over the procedures and rates of tax levying or who had the right, as a tax farmer, to work certain lands. As Frangakis-Syrett found in Izmir, MacAndrews and Forbes acted as tax farmers in Baghdad too, presumably in order to attempt to control and monopolize licorice.<sup>104</sup> Unlike in Izmir, where MacAndrews and Forbes faced competition primarily from Western firms such as the German company Simon Co., in Baghdad, MacAndrews and Forbes only had to compete with local merchants and Ottoman officials.<sup>105</sup> Beyond the questions of taxation, other issues arose and were fought over by the company and Ottoman officials, mostly by Kaymakam. Kaymakam were in charge of Kazas, which represented the third level of Ottoman organization – Vilâyets were the largest, then Sancaks, and then Kazas, which were roughly the size of city plus that city's hinterland. Other Ottoman officials in a Kaza besides the Kaymakam (who was appointed by the Ministry of the Interior) were a treasurer and a judge – this structure was created in the *Tanzimat* era reforms, specifically in the 1864 Provincial Reform Law.<sup>106</sup> Although these incidents involved seem to imply an acrimonious relationship between MacAndrews and Forbes and the Ottoman Empire, they are tempered by the quantity of licorice that was exported smoothly and by the several years in which no conflicts took place. Overall, MacAndrews and Forbes operated within the Ottoman system as tax farmers and merchants. Although they complained about the tax practices of the Ottomans, MacAndrews and Forbes clearly benefited immensely, as they were always willing, despite protests otherwise, to pay fines

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<sup>104</sup> Frangakis-Syrett, "British Economic Activities in Izmir, p. 201.

<sup>105</sup> Frangakis-Syrett, "British Economic Activities in Izmir, p. 202.

<sup>106</sup> Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 12.

levied against them.

The town of Kut was at the center of many of these disputes between MacAndrews and Forbes and Ottoman officials. Since Kut housed infrastructure that processed licorice, it was an important part of MacAndrews and Forbes' licorice trade. In 1904 the Kaymakam of Kut argued that MacAndrews and Forbes should be paying a fee based on how many different locations they were digging root at.<sup>107</sup> Later that year, MacAndrew and Forbes protested another proposed official Ottoman tax increase on licorice.<sup>108</sup> Their complaint was that the Ottomans had raised the standard tax on licorice from 25 piasters per 1,000 kilograms<sup>109</sup> to 40 piasters.<sup>110</sup> To try to avoid these tax increase and several other Ottoman tax reforms, MacAndrew and Forbes repeatedly attempted to pay the levy in kind, assuming that the state would not want to go through the trouble of selling the root, "The option to pay this tax in kind is our only safeguard against exorbitant exactions by the authorities..."<sup>111</sup> But when presented to the Ottoman Vali, the request to not raise the tax focused on the benefits of Western business activity, "It is through the efforts and energies of foreign companies, that trade in licorice root has been revived, after it had been lost in oblivion for a term of years."<sup>112</sup>

Besides tax increase attempts, another frequent field of conflict was the actual

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<sup>107</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Hamilton, Basra, April 13, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>108</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix. Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, April 14, 1904 to Vali Ahmed Teizi Pacha, Baghdad.

<sup>109</sup> 1,000 kgs is equal to 2,204.62 lbs.

<sup>110</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, February 14, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>111</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, James Hamilton, Baghdad, April 25, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>112</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Translation of the Petition Addressed to the Vilayet by MacAndrews and Forbes Company, April 13, 1904, James Hamilton, Manager, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad.

agricultural fields and labor. In February of 1904, MacAndrews and Forbes complained that they were forbidden from working land in the Jezireh district. The Kaymakam of the district refused to let them dig, arguing that the land was already being worked by someone else. According to MacAndrews and Forbes's agent, the land in question was government land where any merchant could have dug for licorice provided they paid tax on it.<sup>113</sup> The Ottoman official's argument was that native merchants should be allowed to arrange digs first on Ottoman government land before MacAndrews and Forbes was allowed to begin work. It is unclear what sort of land classification this would be, but it seems likely that it was not cultivated land, as much of the licorice that was exported grew wild. Either way, the Arab natives of Jezireh would have been employed in the digging, so essentially, it was an argument of which merchants would prosper, not which labor force. A few months later, two barges of licorice that MacAndrews and Forbes believed was theirs, were seized by Kazim Beg, the Kaymakam of Aziziah on behalf of Ahmed al Khalaf. Khalaf, an Ottoman merchant/tax farmer, believed it to rightly be his licorice. There is some irony in this, as this was a tactic that MacAndrews and Forbes had used against their rivals in Izmir in 1900 and again in 1906.<sup>114</sup> The Ottoman official who was in possession of the seized barges of licorice was persuaded, through Hürner's intervention, to release the barges from Aziziah and send them on their way to Basra. Hürner implied that this was accomplished through a little "backschish" or bribery.<sup>115</sup>

The seizure of boats and their contents was another way the competition between MacAndrews and Forbes, local business and the Ottoman State played out. Khalaf, the Baghdadi

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<sup>113</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, February 14, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>114</sup> Frangakis-Syrett, "British Economic Activities in Izmir, p. 203 and p. 205.

<sup>115</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume i, Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, December 1, 1904 to Charles Dickinson, U.S. Consul-General, Baghdad.

merchant/tax farmer, had protested that the two barges' contents were actually his and when they reached Basra, ready to be shipped the barges were again stopped.<sup>116</sup> Khalaf brought a suit against MacAndrews and Forbes in the mercantile court.<sup>117</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes countered, arguing that they had bought the licorice, which seems to have come from Samra, legally from the merchant Hanna Minni and his son Anton. Minni and son were tax farmers (*mültizam*) for two years on that specific plot and the land involved may well have been *waqf* land in the town of Samra.<sup>118</sup> Minni was paid for 80,000 kilos of licorice before his office of *mültizam* expired in March of 1905. Later correspondence accused Minni and son of conspiracy to defraud MacAndrews and Forbes.<sup>119</sup> It seems that Khalaf was the new *multizam* of that parcel of land and the agent of a Jewish Baghdadi merchant, Ezra Daniels.<sup>120</sup> The Kaymakam, interestingly, did not prevent the loading of licorice onto lighters at Azizieh, but he supposedly intimidated the local Arabs chiefs and their employees into refusing to do so. The Kaymakam then used his influence to delay the ships by threatening, indirectly again, the crews of the boats. The Kaymakam was also accused of acting independently, not on the instruction of the Ottoman government, but out of some sort of personal motive, which remains somewhat unclear if it was anything else but the hopes of a little backsheesh.<sup>121</sup> Besides the Kaymakam, MacAndrews and

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<sup>116</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume i, Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, December 1, 1904 to Charles Dickinson, U.S. Consul-General, Baghdad.

<sup>117</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume i. Herbert W. Poulter, Acting US Vice Consul, Basra, July 28, 1905 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>118</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, July 14, 1905 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>119</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, December 31, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>120</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, July 14, 1905 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>121</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii. C.B. Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, September 21, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

Forbes also implicated another official, the Mudür of Salman Pak as a conspirator.<sup>122</sup>

In the Mercantile Court, the Khalaf case of July 1905 was dismissed. This occurred not due to its own merit, but because the Mercantile Court saw the matter as a criminal case, since the allegation was the seizure of property by force.<sup>123</sup> Three barges of licorice that were in route to Basra had been seized, the *Husseriah*, the *Djaferieh*, and the *Hamidieh*. Between them, the barges contained a total of TL20,000 of licorice.<sup>124</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes still had other cases pending in March of 1907 when Mr. Levack, a lawyer and future American vice-consul of Baghdad, wrote to acknowledge that he would represent MacAndrews and Forbes in Mercantile Court. For his services on March 18<sup>th</sup> Levack received five dollars (113 and ½ piasters).<sup>125</sup> Another lawyer, Mr. Quartermaine was also hired to appear to represent the company.<sup>126</sup> Khesrov Kouyumdjian<sup>127</sup> served as dragoman on three mercantile court cases- Ahmed Khalaf vs. MacAndrews and Forbes on July 26, 1905, MacAndrews and Forbes vs. Petros ibn Yusif on March 18, 1907 and MacAndrews and Forbes vs. Petros ibn Yusif on April 16, 1907. For his services as dragoman on those three occasions, he received \$15 or 340 and ½ piasters.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, James Hamilton, Baghdad, November 8, 1904 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>123</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi. Hürner, Baghdad, August 7, 1905 to Poulter, Acting US Vice Consul, Basra.

<sup>124</sup> Matthew Broomhead and Henry Simmons were called to act as assessors for MacAndrews and Forbes during the meetings, which were set to start on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1905 at 2pm. Mr. Broomhead was also paid five dollars in 1907 for services as assessor that he rendered during the Ahmed Khalaf case.

<sup>125</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Receipt signed by James Levack, Baghdad, April 7, 1907.

<sup>126</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Receipt signed by Quartermaine, Baghdad, April 25, 1907.

<sup>127</sup> Kouyumdjian is also listed as a flour importer in the Levant Trade Review, which was published by the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant. See *Levant Trade Review Volumes 1-4*. (American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, 1911) p. X.

<sup>128</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Receipt signed by Koumidjian, Baghdad, April 27, 1907.

Proceedings in the Petros case continued, another hearing being held on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1907 at 1:30pm and Mr. Cree, of the trading firm Blockley, Cree and Co.<sup>129</sup> was asked to act as an assessor for the company.<sup>130</sup> Cree was asked to be assessor again on July 15<sup>th</sup> 1907, when the case was being heard again as was Quatermaine and a new lawyer, a Mr. Reynolds.<sup>131</sup>

An issue in this case was who had the right to dig on government land and at what tax rate. The Imperial Ottoman Government was bound by the capitulations to abide by certain rules, but the local Administrative councils did not have to observe them if they could get away with it. The same issue arose with tithes, which were set by the capitulatory agreements at 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the value of the good and were typically paid in kind. Frangakis-Syrett notes that licorice, since it grows wild, was not originally subjected to tithes. However, as it became a lucrative export, MacAndrews and Forbes was willing to pay tithes levied on it.<sup>132</sup> This negotiation shows that the Western company and the Ottoman state were willing to compromise and work together for both of their benefits. That does not mean, however, that MacAndrews and Forbes would not complain about having to pay the tithes. They constantly tried to renegotiate the rates of the tithes with MacAndrews and Forbes arguing that “The rates fixed for the payment of tithe on the three grades of licorice root, in cash, is out of all proportion to the cost of this article, for, if piasters 200 per kilo is levied on the ordinary quality then it would mean that the real original cost of this article would be piasters 1,000. As the real price of 1,000 kilos of licorice root is

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<sup>129</sup> A British firm that was active in the date trade.

<sup>130</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, April 27, 1907 to Cree, Baghdad.

<sup>131</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, July 13, 1907 to Cree, Baghdad. And NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, July 13, 1907 to Quatermaine, Baghdad. July 13, 1907. And NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, July 13, 1907 to Reynolds, Baghdad.

<sup>132</sup> Frangakis-Syrett, “British Economic Activities in Izmir, p. 201.

piasters 100 this estimation made by the Illustrious Vilayet is evidently the result of an error.”<sup>133</sup>

MacAndrews and Forbes was well aware of the trade conditions and like any corporation was trying to limit its tax burden. The Ottoman State, like any state, was also aware of the tax codes but sought to maximize its tax revenue.

Tax disputes, work stoppages, and licorice seizures made 1906 a litigious year for MacAndrews and Forbes. They complained that “according to the ‘Tax Regulations Tariff’ the root is classed as agricultural produce and as such the Tax should be paid in kind either from the peasants or from the merchants...”<sup>134</sup> The tax issue was a complicated one and MacAndrews and Forbes petitioned Hürner when one of their lighters was held up at Jezirah, on the Tigris River, on its way to Basra over tax issues in April of 1906.<sup>135</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes asked Hürner to intervene with the Vali of Baghdad in their favor. The company asked Hürner to give the Vali a letter that certified that they paid their taxes in the Kaza of Hillah on November 14 of 1905. The tax was 6,000 piasters of what they termed Government Tax and 300 piasters of Public Instruction tax on a crop of 300,000 kilos of licorice, but the firm met “numerous obstacles at the hands of cameleers” that delayed the progress of the shipment.<sup>136</sup> By this, MacAndrews and Forbes was arguing that the licorice in question was actually from another season, but was slow in getting to market. The Ottoman officials were suspicious of this and were asserting that it was not from another season. Further delays occurred, and when the root was in Kut, MacAndrews

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<sup>133</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, November 23, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

<sup>134</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, March 21, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>135</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, April 6, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>136</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, April 12, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

and Forbes asked the local Mudür for a Tax Cochán – a tax receipt, certifying that tax had already been paid on that particular produce – but he refused, saying that he did not accept the validity of their original tax receipt.<sup>137</sup> The Mal Mudür of Koot, Mejid Effendi, decided to stop the lighter full of their licorice – MacAndrews and Forbes insisted that the root was dug and paid for under one period of *iltizam*, the Mudür insisted it was from another; the tax had not been paid.<sup>138</sup> The Mudür referred the matter to the local Defterdar of finance inquiring what the proper way to proceed would be and that was the decision they were waiting on and hoping Hürner and the Vali could expedite.<sup>139</sup> In the meantime, MacAndrews and Forbes was ordered to stop digging licorice in the area altogether.<sup>140</sup> A follow up letter from MacAndrews and Forbes says that they were confident that the lighter was now on the move and that the Vali had ordered an inquiry into the situation and that the Vali would clearly see the validity of the MacAndrews and Forbes tax documentation, at least according to MacAndrews and Forbes.<sup>141</sup>

Unfortunately for MacAndrews and Forbes, the lighter was not on the move, although there was an investigation under way. In order to avoid further delay, MacAndrews and Forbes proposed paying the tax again as a deposit for the government to hold.<sup>142</sup> Yet as of May 10, even though the committee of inquiry had made their new evaluation of the stopped licorice, the

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<sup>137</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, April 12, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>138</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, March 30, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>139</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, April 12, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>140</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, March 30, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>141</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, April 30, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>142</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, May 19, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.



licorice remained in Kut and the work order was clearly attached to the issue, a further punishment to induce MacAndrews and Forbes to pay. As for the halt to digging operations that was ordered, a May 10<sup>th</sup> communication indicated that the work stoppage spread to encompass another Kaza, the Hillah Kaza. A distinction arose there in Hillah, where the land in question was, according to MacAndrews and Forbes, privately owned *tapu* registered land, versus the government owned and tax farmed lands in the Kut Kaza. According to MacAndrews and Forbes, the Ottoman government was arguing that, on government tax farmed land, the state had the right to regulate work and who could dig there and MacAndrews and Forbes had no choice but to respect that. However, on the privately owned land in Hillah, MacAndrews and Forbes was incensed that the Ottoman state could seemingly stop work on private land that had been leased to MacAndrews and Forbes, “for a three year period of which more than two years remain still to run.”<sup>143</sup> The firm did hope that since the licorice that had been seized was appraised by the commission of inquiry, digging could resume in the Kut Kaza. The petition sent to the Porte reveals a clearly frustrated MacAndrews and Forbes, requesting, “If the authorities do not desire digging licorice root to be continued in the Koot Caza we beg that the same may be notified to us in a plain way that we may retrench our expenses and loses as much as possible and defend our rights.”<sup>144</sup> The firm pointed out as well that the *mültizam* of the area, Shammoon Daniel, had refused to participate in the commission that was evaluating the licorice. Shammoon Daniel was the individual responsible for remitting tax on licorice dug from that particular land to the Ottoman State. In their petition, MacAndrews and Forbes pointed out that the work stoppage in

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<sup>143</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad, May 10, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>144</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Translation of letter to the Sublime Vilayet Through the Consulate of the United States, C.B. Williamson, Baghdad, May 10, 1906.

Kut, threatened the interests of three groups. Obviously the corporation itself would be harmed, but MacAndrews and Forbes made sure to note that the locals in Iraq would lose wages and more importantly, the Ottoman Treasury would miss out on the tax revenue.<sup>145</sup>

In the final analysis, MacAndrews and Forbes elected to merely pay the assessed tax on the seized licorice, effectively (at least according to them) deciding to pay double tax. Although the company twice sent a representative to the Ottoman state offices in Baghdad, they twice had their money refused on minor technicalities. Even with Rudolf Hürner's cavass in tow, the clerk for MacAndrews and Forbes was turned away, pockets full of tax money and without the lighter freed from the state's grasps. Hoping to free the lighters, MacAndrews and Forbes sent their petition to the Vali with their messenger who would "deposit with the Serai any sum Your Excellency chooses to fix against any demand that may be made against us and all we beg is that our lighters should be allowed to leave for Basrah immediately."<sup>146</sup> By the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, MacAndrews and Forbes informed Hürner that no response had come from the Sublime Porte and they asked him to present the Vali, formally, with four questions, concerning MacAndrews and Forbes' right to extract licorice in Kut and Hillah, and how the investigation into the stopped licorice's tax payment was proceeding.<sup>147</sup> The Ottoman state was able to use its leverage to effectively increase taxes on MacAndrews and Forbes. Taxes that MacAndrews and Forbes proved eager to pay. MacAndrews and Forbes strategy, in all of these cases, seems to have been simple: argue as much as possible and then pay.

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<sup>145</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Translation of letter to the Sublime Vilayet Through the Consulate of the United States, C.B. Williamson, Baghdad, May 10, 1906.

<sup>146</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Translation of a Petition Addressed to His Excellency the Sublime Vilayet Through the Consulate of the United States, C.B. Williamson, Baghdad, May 12, 1906.

<sup>147</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Baghdad. May 16, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

In August of 1906, MacAndrews and Forbes was wary of shipping any licorice out of the Ottoman Empire. They wrote that “We have considerable stocks of licorice on the Euphrates, and although the transport season is fast approaching, we do not feel safe in making our arrangements for the carrying of our goods until the Vilayet reply to the above mentioned petition, and, in such, a manner as to relieve us of any doubt as to their desire to continue their policy of interference with the freedom of transport, in order that they may force us to pay tax twice over the same goods.”<sup>148</sup> It became increasingly unclear for MacAndrews and Forbes as to who ordered the work stoppage and seizures that had been taken against them. Were these actions sanctioned by the Vilâyet of Baghdad or only by their local representatives? MacAndrews and Forbes felt their most effective strategy was compromise, likely because they did not have a strong case and, whether they realized it or not, their local competitors were as sophisticated and adept as they were. MacAndrews and Forbes pointed out that delays were hurting both sides, “Owing to this state of affairs, the Government is losing its share (i.e. tithes), and the company is suffering much loss. For these reasons we cannot believe that this prohibition is authorized by the Vilayet and beg for the necessary explanations if it is.”<sup>149</sup>

It emerged that the local government ordered the work stoppage. Ristatany, a local agent of MacAndrews and Forbes wrote that “Ground holders and laborers chiefs have strict orders not to allow us to start work or allow a single arab to dig root and before these orders are withdrawn by the local authorities, I do not see how I can open stations. The Caza even refuse to recognize

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<sup>148</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, August 13, 1906 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>149</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, August 22, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

me as Agent of the Company and say they only know the Tax farmer.”<sup>150</sup> Additionally, MacAndrews and Forbes wrote that “You will see that the Government [Ottoman] still adopts the practice of prohibiting the commerce in licorice root and we beg you to make strong representations to H.E. the Vali against this illegal action on the part of the Authorities which amounts to a breach of the Capitulations between the United States of America and the Ottoman Empire in as far as the principle of free commerce is concerned.”<sup>151</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes protested that these actions amounted to a violation of the trade treaties that governed American and Ottoman commerce, although this grandstanding seems to have been merely another strategy, perhaps overused, in their negotiating style.

Ultimately, MacAndrews and Forbes decided to pay the tax. They sent their representative, Haji Hamed, to pay the tax on licorice in Hillah, presumably on the licorice they argued they had already paid for.<sup>152</sup> In this instance, the Ottoman State, via the Kaymakam of Hillah, accepted the tax. MacAndrews and Forbes complained that the normal tithe, which had already been supplemented with an additional 2.5% additional tithe for the Department of Public Instruction, was now being augmented with a further tithe. This additional tithe would be an additional 6% added to the original tithe amount. Identified as “Tehjizat [Teçizet] Oscarieh” this tax was intended to help fund the Ottoman military.<sup>153</sup> The tax was paid, in order to ensure that their merchandise was not stopped or sequestered. The situation was eventually decided in their

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<sup>150</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, September 15, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

<sup>151</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, September 15, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

<sup>152</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, October 17, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

<sup>153</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, December 27, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

favor and the money was promised to be refunded by the Ottoman officials. Haji Hamed, agent for MacAndrews and Forbes transported licorice overland through the Kaza of Jezirah. Due to official misunderstanding or extortion, Haji Hamed paid additional taxes on the licorice. After protest, the sum of 6,898 piasters that was levied on 172,406 okes of licorice root was refunded to the company. The Ottoman Governor-General refunded the tax paid despite blaming it on Haji Hamed, who he accused of having “failed to give the necessary information to the local authorities in accordance with usual practice and regulations...”<sup>154</sup>

The Kaymakam of Azizieh relented in December of 1906 and allowed MacAndrews and Forbes to resume digging in the area of Azizieh and Jezirah. The Kaymakam however, issued orders to the local Arabs that they could not trade with MacAndrews and Forbes unless MacAndrews and Forbes paid their tithe taxes in cash. The agents of MacAndrews and Forbes, De Bono (Azizieh) and Seyd Allowee (Jezirah), the United States consular cavass and A.E.C. Bird<sup>155</sup> visited the Kaymakam of Azizieh.<sup>156</sup> Bird argued that MacAndrews and Forbes had been a good customer for licorice in Baghdad for three years. The meeting proved fruitful, the Kaymakam telling them that there was no prohibition against digging for licorice root. They were also informed that the tax rate of 200, 300 and 400 piasters on the different qualities of

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<sup>154</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, January 10, 1907 to MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad.

<sup>155</sup> A.E.C. Bird was an agent for MacAndrews and Forbes. He also seems to have served briefly as American Vice Consul in Baghdad during September of 1909. See Ida Donges Stoudt and John Joseph, *Contemporary Issues in the Middle East: Living in Romantic Baghdad: An American Memoir of Teaching and Travel in Iraq, 1924-1947* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012).

<sup>156</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad December 13, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

licorice had been a mistake – the correct rate was 40, 60 and 80<sup>157</sup> piasters respectively.<sup>158</sup> It was the local administrative council that set these rates and the condition that tax must be paid as the green root was pulled from the ground. Bird proposed a different tax system, wherein the tax of 1/5th would daily be paid in kind (in green root), which would then be purchased back from the government at the rate the root was purchased from the Arab diggers. The Kaymakam countered that everyone else had agreed to pay the tax directly in cash and that if MacAndrews and Forbes refused, they would not be allowed to dig again. The Kaymakam later said that all licorice would be taxed at a 40 piasters rate in cash.<sup>159</sup> Bird supposedly went to check on the Kaymakam's claims of overseeing the taxation system and the cooperation of the local merchants. He allegedly found Ahmed Bin Fwaili, the agent of Abdul Khader Khedery apparently evading the tax and there was no government official present.<sup>160</sup>

Following the abovementioned meeting, Khedery Pasha brought an official complaint against MacAndrews and Forbes.<sup>161</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes denied any knowledge of the alleged event and their supposed participation in court proceedings concerning a supposed sequestration of Khedery's licorice. MacAndrews and Forbes qualified their absolute dismissal, arguing that it was root that had been sequestered from Petros ibn Yusuf and 45 tons, not

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<sup>157</sup> The highest rate was levied on decorticated licorice, or licorice that had been peeled to a processed form.

<sup>158</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, December 13, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

<sup>159</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, My Interviews with the Kaimakams of Azizieh and Jezireh, Bird, Baghdad, December 5 and December 7, 1906.

<sup>160</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, December 13, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

<sup>161</sup> Khedery Pasha was also listed as Khader Khedery, a Baghdadi licorice exporter in the publications of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant. Khedery also exported sheep intestine, wine, gum tragacanth, skins, hides and furs, and wool. See *Levant Trade Review Volumes 1-4*. (American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, 1911) pp. XVI, XXX, XIV, XXIII, XXI.

Khedery Pasha's claimed 120 tons.<sup>162</sup> Khedery, in his complaint, accused MacAndrews and Forbes of trying to "monopolize the licorice root trade in Baghdad and its neighborhood..."<sup>163</sup> Khedery accused the company of acting against him through "their factotum, Michael, and their attorney at law, Abdul Jabaar Effendi..."<sup>164</sup> Khedery's protest was also signed by his attorney, Habib bin Mohamed Ameer, second clerk at the Court of First Instance and Khudairi bin Mohamed, a public notary. MacAndrews and Forbes lost this case and had their root sequestered by the Ottoman authorities.<sup>165</sup> The sequestration was lifted though, due to improper Ottoman procedure during the seizure of the root and when MacAndrews and Forbes paid a deposit to guarantee it.<sup>166</sup>

In 1907, Ottoman officials again interfered in order to stop Arabs from working for MacAndrews and Forbes. These were workers that had already been paid. They received advances for the licorice that they were to dig, but were not permitted to dig for MacAndrews and Forbes by the Ottoman State. They were specifically prohibited from working the lands of Ramanieh and Khsema (possibly Kesaba) in the Caza of Jezireh.<sup>167</sup> What might not be immediately apparent, was that nowhere in these cases did MacAndrews and Forbes insist that the Arab workers were on strike, or locked out and forced to remain idle. They were prohibited

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<sup>162</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, December 27, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

<sup>163</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Translation By Department of the Public Notary, Khudairi Zada Abdul Kadir, Baghdad, November 29, 1906.

<sup>164</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Translation By Department of the Public Notary, Khudairi Zada Abdul Kadir, Baghdad, November 29, 1906.

<sup>165</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, September 25, 1908 to Leishman, Istanbul.

<sup>166</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, March 11, 1909 to Leishman, Istanbul.

<sup>167</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, February 14, 1907 to Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

“from digging and delivering licorice root to us...”<sup>168</sup> There was no indication that these Arab workers were not working for native merchants or another foreign merchant. It could very well be that this arrangement was working doubly to their advantage – they received a cash advance from MacAndrews and Forbes and then actually have sold the licorice to another bidder. In this case, the Arabs were prevented from working for MacAndrews and Forbes but also refused to pay the cash advances back to the company. MacAndrews and Forbes applied to the Ottoman Government to get soldiers in order to recover their money.<sup>169</sup> Ultimately the request was refused, the Ottoman officials advising MacAndrews and Forbes to take a more civilized course and take this affair to the court system.<sup>170</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes also had to content with merchants that were well connected with the Ottoman State. Abdul Aziz Effendi was perfectly positioned to profit from the various troubles MacAndrews and Forbes had in Jezireh and Azizieh. Abdul Aziz Effendi was a former Ottoman official turned merchant. MacAndrews and Forbes accused Abdul Aziz of prejudicing the Ottoman officials against them and cited him as having “caused the Mac Andrews and Forbes Company to have considerable difficulty with the authorities in the districts of Jezireh and Azizieh and is, evidently, a person who would not refrain from resorting to underhanded methods in order to gain desired ends.”<sup>171</sup>

Another issue concerning tax was *when* tax was levied. The Ottomans argued on several occasions that taxes were due when the root was dug, and MacAndrews and Forbes continually

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<sup>168</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, February 14, 1907 to Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>169</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, March 30, 1907 to Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>170</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, April 30, 1907 to MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad.

<sup>171</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume iii, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, April 20, 1908 to Leishman, Istanbul.



argued that it was due at the time of export. According to MacAndrews and Forbes, fresh green licorice root was not a viable commodity, it must be dried and pressed and processed before shipping. Licorice lost 50-65% of its weight in the process.<sup>172</sup> This was also why the Ottoman government wanted taxes paid in cash and MacAndrews and Forbes wanted it levied in kind. If it were levied in kind, it could be levied at any time, without effect or advantage given to when it was levied. Ultimately, the Baghdad Vilâyet council acknowledged that “the Government tax on licorice root is to be collected when the product leaves port...” and the Council would contact the Kaymakams in question (Hillah, Samara and Jezirah) in order to correct this misunderstanding.<sup>173</sup> This was a disconnect between government officials and perhaps shows the rogue actions of lower officials. This issue was ultimately decided in the favor of MacAndrews and Forbes.

In January of 1907, officials in the district of Hillah levied an extra 20 piasters per 1,000 kilogram on licorice that MacAndrews and Forbes was transporting by camel caravan.<sup>174</sup> Ultimately, this was decided in their favor, or as stated by MacAndrews and Forbes “in a manner satisfactory to our interests.”<sup>175</sup> The Kaymakam of Jezireh was transferred to be the Kaymakam of Kut, although MacAndrews and Forbes did not draw a link between the events, they do state that they hope this means that the previous situation of their licorice being held in Jezireh will

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<sup>172</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, January 5, 1907 to Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>173</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, February 18, 1907 to MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad

<sup>174</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, December 24, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

<sup>175</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, January 16, 1907 to Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

“soon be adjusted.”<sup>176</sup>

Piracy was another problem for MacAndrews and Forbes in Iraq. In May of 1907, unrest near Amara led to the plunder and capture of one of their ships on the river and “In consequence of this, all navigation by native sailing craft between Baghdad and Basra is at a standstill...”<sup>177</sup> Piracy and the perception of Arabs being prone to piracy and brigandage was a theme running through British and American diplomatic and business correspondence. There was no framing of the situation involved, and if we solely read the correspondence between MacAndrews and Forbes and the State Department, the context of this unrest would be overlooked. The unrest near Amara was caused by severe flooding in mid and late April of 1907. Magelssen noted in a letter to the American consul in Beirut, G. Bie Ravndal that, “Great damage has been done to growing crops between the Tigris and the Persian frontier where there has also been considerable loss of life. The damage is estimated at one million Sterling.”<sup>178</sup>

Despite their clashes, on several occasions MacAndrews and Forbes asked the Ottoman State for help in collecting debts and righting perceived injustices. This cooperation occurred in the same manner as the conflicts, and alongside of them, as negotiations between competing businesses. MacAndrews and Forbes presented their arguments regarding taxation and work stoppages to the Ottoman Government by expounding on the merits of the licorice trade, “It is an undertaking equally helpful and beneficial to the Arabs of their respective tribes, owners of

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<sup>176</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, January 16, 1907 to Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>177</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, May 20, 1907 to Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>178</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, April 17, 1907 to Ravndal, Istanbul.

lighters, and others, and to the finance department.”<sup>179</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes argued as well that Western merchants, rather than the Ottoman subjects had the true interests of the empire in mind. MacAndrews and Forbes wrote that Western merchants had spent a great amount of money improving the industry and that these investments increased the “chances of profits to the poorest of favor, and to everyone, are being offered.”<sup>180</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes also used the *Tanzimat* era infrastructure, particularly the court system to press claims or counter claims against them. MacAndrews and Forbes also appealed directly to the Ottoman State for help. In May of 1905, MacAndrews and Forbes encountered problems with camel caravans. They had advanced money to camel owners for the transport of licorice from the Hillah and Mussayeb districts on the Euphrates River. The Tigris from Baghdad to Basra is navigable, but the Euphrates is frequently not, thus, they were forced to rely on caravans for transport. They hired 100 camels from Kadim bin Khamis al-Battawee and 150 camels from Dieb al-Abbas, but, both caravan leaders refused to carry the load stating that if they did, their camels and employees would be forcefully conscripted by the Ottoman government for the Hedjaz Expedition. In this instance, MacAndrews and Forbes asked the Ottoman government to assist them in collecting debts from these camel drivers. They also requested official help in dealing with an Ottoman Telegraph Director, in charge of a local telegraphic office, accusing the official in question, Nowrooz Effendi of always asking “for liquor or money from the clerk in charge of our business there [Azizieh], and on being refused, it leads to threats and leveling false allegations...”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Translation of the Petition Addressed to the Vilayet by MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Williamson, Baghdad, April 13, 1904.

<sup>180</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Translation of the Petition Addressed to the Vilayet by MacAndrews and Forbes Company, Williamson, Baghdad, April 13, 1904.

<sup>181</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, May 23 1905 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts,

Additionally, Rizooki, an Ottoman subject and employee of MacAndrews and Forbes in Azizieh had been imprisoned by the same allegedly slanderous Mudür Nowrooz Effendi. Nowrooz was also accused of using an Ottoman soldier, Zaptieh Mahmood Rotha to carry out his nefarious plans, which included harassing any agent for MacAndrews and Forbes that was apparently unwilling to pay him bribes in cash and liquor that would help him engage in “pleasure and merriment...”<sup>182</sup> The veracity of the allegations are not important; what is significant is that MacAndrews and Forbes enlisted the Ottoman State to help them with this issue.

MacAndrews and Forbes applied to the Ottomans for help collecting small debts from some of the Arab population that they had advanced money to, but had not received licorice from.<sup>183</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes used the Mercantile Court, an institution that Khalaf was using against them, to try to recover debts from Ottoman subjects. Petros bin Yusif, a Baghdadi merchant from the Karieh Bashi quarter, was sued for 8062.97 piasters by MacAndrews and Forbes. This was the value of licorice root that MacAndrews and Forbes believed Petros Yusif, referred to earlier in this chapter, owed them, based on a January 1906 contract.<sup>184</sup> MacAndrews and Forbes won the case and in lieu of the sum of money, they seized 45 tons of Petros Yusif’s stockpiled licorice for their own.<sup>185</sup>

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Baghdad, Volume xii, Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, July 8, 1905 to the Governor General of Baghdad, Baghdad.

<sup>182</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, May 23 1905 to Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, July 8, 1905 to the Governor General of Baghdad, Baghdad.

<sup>183</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Williamson, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, January 2, 1906 to Governor General of Baghdad, Baghdad.

<sup>184</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, September 22, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

<sup>185</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, November 7, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

MacAndrews and Forbes head office demonstrated that they were willing to pay bribes to overturn decisions made in the Mercantile Courts. The head office in Izmir wrote in the stilted language of a telegram that, “Decision of Baghdad Administrative Council stating that foreign merchants have no right of ownership licorice root constitutes violation of Capitulations. Tith rate is uniform for whole empire.” But, they seemed willing, on the tax issue, to compromise, “Would prefer arranging amicably but cannot forego rights and consider forty in cash out of question. Would give half that.”<sup>186</sup> The Ottoman state repeatedly pushed the boundaries of taxation with MacAndrews and Forbes and the latter, doubtlessly tried the same, even to a greater extent, for despite protests, MacAndrews and Forbes typically paid any additional taxes levied on licorice. The Sublime Porte also portrayed themselves as advocates for the locals in their insistence, or at least petitions, that would allow locals to dig licorice before Western merchants, yet MacAndrews and Forbes could equally ask for help collecting debts from camel drivers and Ottoman citizens. Overall, the interactions between MacAndrews and Forbes demonstrate the competition and cooperation between Western businesses and the Ottoman State and these interactions illuminate the nuances, the complexity and ultimately the considerable sophistication present in that relationship.

#### Global Trends: Progress in Sanitation

The increasing, globalizing trade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought increasing attention and, ultimately, regulatory scrutiny from Western governments and businesses. In line with this global trend, there was a growing focus on increasing U.S. exports by the State Department, the

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<sup>186</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, November 16, 1906 to Major Ramsey, Baghdad.

U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. businessmen. There was also an expanded interest concerning standardizing hygienic conditions in which the commodities were produced. The new focus was reflected in the policies of the State Department in Baghdad and Basra. As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1906, the previously unpaid position of Vice Consul became compensated with a \$2000 salary per annum.<sup>187</sup> And on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1906, the mission to the Ottoman Empire was elevated to the status of Embassy by an act of the United States Congress.<sup>188</sup> Rudolf Hürner's long tenure in Baghdad ended on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1906. Hürner never received an official salary. The office was temporarily taken over by the British Consul in Baghdad, Major Ramsey, who, as was previously mentioned, felt Hürner lacked professionalism and was illegally pocketing fees.<sup>189</sup> The new attitude that American consuls would bring to the job, would be evident in the more detailed and focused reports of the new American consul, Magelssen. Another example of the increased attention being paid to the Ottoman Empire was the mission of the Department of Agriculture. David Fairchild was the Agricultural Explorer in Charge of Foreign Exploration and worked for the Bureau of Plant Industry of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. His enviable mission was to travel around the world and find plants that might increase the agricultural production of the United States. In Iraq, Fairchild saw similar conditions to inland Southern California and Arizona – low rainfall but high potential for irrigation from nearby rivers. David Fairchild himself visited Basra and Baghdad when Hürner was in office, but corresponded with Magelssen in order to obtain samples of different date varieties. Magelssen collected samples of insects,

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<sup>187</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Subject: Compensation, Bird, MacAndrews and Forbes, Baghdad, August 15, 1906.

<sup>188</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii. Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, August 14, 1906 to Dickenson, Baghdad.

<sup>189</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Subject: Consular Service. August 21, 1906.

found different kinds of dates and fledgling date trees to send to Fairchild and suggested that he would travel about to find different varieties in “Mandalay, Khorasan, Hillah, Sindieh etc..” He described it as “a service quite different than anything ever undertaken by me...”<sup>190</sup> Magelssen, unlike Hürner, received a salary for the work he did as Vice Consul and was not a merchant worried about the day to day operations of his business.

Dates were significant enough in 1903 America for the publication of a bulletin written by Fairchild for the U.S. Department of Agriculture entitled *Persian Gulf Dates and Their Introduction to America*. The bulletin was both an introduction to the fruit and its introduction to the United State where “Date growing in Arizona is rapidly passing the experimental stage.”<sup>191</sup> Fairchild’s report, which was quite detailed, mentioned that the date palm plantations also contained alfalfa (djet), wheat, barley, grapevines and “fruit trees, such as fig, jujubes and pomegranate are also frequently seen about the houses, and thrive very well.”<sup>192</sup> Fairchild noted that in the 1880’s, European merchants made large profits in the date packing industry in Iraq. Fairchild asserted that in the last few years, Iraqi Jews had taken over the packing industry completely. However, this assertion was made by a European merchant and argued that they operated at a loss in order to keep Europeans out. The profit margins in this trade were slim according to Fairchild, and it was more lucrative to be the owner of a date plantation, making profits of between 2% and 10% of the estimated value of the estate. Taxation was about 10–15% of income of the plantation owner and then trees were also taxed, the rate depending on location – 2 piasters (8 US cents at the time) per tree per annum at Baghdad, 1.25 piasters per tree per

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<sup>190</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, September 2, 1907 to Fairchild, Washington, D.C.

<sup>191</sup> David Fairchild, *Persian Gulf Dates and Their Introduction to America* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903) p. 7.

<sup>192</sup> Fairchild, *Persian Gulf Dates*, p. 19

annum at Amara and 15 to 180 piasters per one hundred trees per annum in Basra. Fairchild also discussed ways in which Iraq's agricultural productivity could be increased and the costs involved. Fairchild argued that 1.2 million acres of land, if irrigated in Iraq, would become prime agricultural land. An investment of £8,000,000 would bring in a yearly revenue of £2,000,000. A very sanguine assessment, but one in line with the arguments of William Willcocks before him. In the preface to the book, A. J. Peters, the Botanist in Charge of the seed introductions to the United States acknowledged Fairchild's debt to the hard work of several American Consular agents, including Hürner and A. MacKirdy (Muscat), and recorded Fairchild's thanks for "the unusual courtesies and aid of H.P. Chalk, of Bassorah."<sup>193</sup>

A 1904 cholera outbreak allowed the increased focus of the State Department on sanitation and disease prevention to be set in motion. Although there were earlier outbreaks during this period, it is not until 1904 that questions were raised about whether it was acceptable to export agricultural produce during an outbreak. Although date exports were ultimately allowed, it took considerable debate and time to reach that conclusion. Rather than wait, Hills Brothers decided to ship their dates to the United States via Hong Kong, eluding any restrictions that might apply to a direct shipment.<sup>194</sup> Fairchild's bulletin also called attention to unsanitary date packing conditions as early as 1903. Fairchild wrote "the conditions in the packing sheds and the personal uncleanliness of the men, women and children who put up the dates are enough to disgust a sensitive person and to prevent his ever eating packed dates again without having them washed."<sup>195</sup> Ultimately, by 1915, the American Consul would be proposing sanitary

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<sup>193</sup> Fairchild, *Persian Gulf Dates*, p. 28, p.18, p. 29 and p. 4.

<sup>194</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Magelssen, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, September 2, 1907 to Fairchild, Washington, D.C.

<sup>195</sup> Fairchild, *Persian Gulf Dates*, p. 29.



regulations be put in place for the entire date industry in Basra, regulating it at its source.

Brissel, the U.S. Baghdad Consul in 1915, reported that Hills Brothers remained the dominant corporation in the trade and that packing was done by native labor with little interference and no supervision by the Ottoman authorities. The activity was performed by both men and women who worked in temporary sheds of corrugated tin in supposedly filthy conditions. Brissel recommended that a doctor at one of the American Missions in Basra, Dr. Bennett, be put in charge of sanitary regulations and that the following be imposed: 1. Firms would be subject to inspection and inspection status would be noted on shipping invoice. 2. There would be an unnamed fee charged for inspection. 3. The date packers must use clean water. 4. Workers must wear shoes in the establishment and these shoes are not to be worn outside. Workers must have clean clothes and are required to wear overalls, aprons or similar garments that completely covered their ordinary clothes. These outer clothes were to be washed in hot water twice each week. 5. Workers must be cleanly. 6. Workers must provide a certificate of health to inspectors...no certificate, no work. 7. The floors were to be reasonably clean. 8. Foot washing was to be done in a separate place.<sup>196</sup> 9. Workers will be required to wash hands after using toilet.<sup>197</sup> C.F. Marvin, the Acting Secretary of Agriculture approved these measures and recommended their implementation after the war ended.<sup>198</sup> The Vice Consuls were thus moving past their basic functions and becoming involved in sanitary-related regulations of local industries that traded with the American market.

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<sup>196</sup> Presumably, by foot washing, Brissel means *wadhu* or the pre-prayer ritual ablutions that Muslims perform.

<sup>197</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, February 2, 1915 to Secretary of State, Washington, D.C.

<sup>198</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, C.V. Marvin, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., June 19, 1915 to Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad.

## American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant

In 1911, a group of Americans came together as the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant in the attempt to promote American trade in the Ottoman Empire. This group included G. Bie Ravndall, and Oscar Heizer, (a future VC of Baghdad), A.T. Chester of the Chester plan, and James Levack, the current (1911) VC of Baghdad.<sup>199</sup> The group published a quarterly for the American business community, including the publication *Levant Trade Review*. The *Levant Trade Review* listed importers and exporters from each Ottoman city, organized by commodity. By 1914, the Chamber seems to have had offices in both the United States and Istanbul and had 572 members.<sup>200</sup> In Baghdad, there were several importers ready and willing to trade with American merchants for items ranging from wines and liquors to stationary.<sup>201</sup> In the list of members, the publication included merchants from several countries and from several Ottoman cities – only Istanbul, Salonica and Izmir had more members than the 30 listed for Baghdad.<sup>202</sup> This list contained British companies – Lynch and Blockley, Cree, and Co.; German – Puttnam and Berk and Austrian, with the Austro-Oriental trading company being a joint stock company that was formed in Vienna in 1905 to promote trade between Austria Hungary and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>203</sup> Clearly, a publication like this, put out by an organization like the ACCL was a step forward for American commerce in the Ottoman Empire and in unison

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<sup>199</sup> American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant. See *Levant Trade Review Volumes 1, no. 2* (American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, 1911) p. 1.

<sup>200</sup> “Among the Trade Associations.” *Trade and Transportation*, Volume 15, Number 2, p.28.

<sup>201</sup> These importers are listed in Chapter one in table form.

<sup>202</sup> American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant. See *Levant Trade Review Volumes 1 no, 2*. (American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, 1911) p. I-XXII.

<sup>203</sup> For information on the Austro-Oriental Trading Company see Board of Trade, *The Board of Trade Journal, Volume L July-September 1905* (London, His Majesty’s Stationary Office: 1905) p. 378.

with what other countries were doing contemporaneously. The ACCL was composed of both businessmen and American diplomatic officials. This is a reflection of both the increasing professionalism of the State Department in the Ottoman Empire and the growing American interest in exporting to the Ottoman Empire.

American export trade, at the beginning of this period, was limited by the foresight of American exporters and the lack of information available to them. Before the formation of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, businesses that hoped to encourage trade between the United States and Baghdad/Basra, would do so on their own initiative by contacting the American consuls in those cities. This was standard practice at the time and these inquiries occasionally included samples of their wares and/or catalogues. Between 1894 and 1907, these requests came from manufacturers and professionals ranging from Machinery to Sporting Goods to legal services. In the calendar year of 1904, these inquiries peaked at a rate of slightly over 3 per month. Overall there were 233 of these inquiries in a 150 month period. By far the largest category were publishers, who, with 54 inquiries, were responsible for almost 25% of these missives. Some sought information on trade and on selling their goods, i.e. magazines and trade reference books in the Iraqi marketplace and others sought to market their magazines to the largely illiterate and non-English speaking Baghdadi population. The second largest category was that of non-irrigating machinery at almost 14% of all inquiries. Third place went to general import-export agents who hoped to be put in touch with local merchants. Many of the other requests were for items that Baghdad had absolutely no need for. A city that lacked electricity received 9 requests, or 4% of total requests from light bulb and lighting equipment manufacturers. 13 requests or nearly 6% concerned automobiles and bicycles, two forms of transportation that neither the general population nor Western merchants used or could afford

and another 1% or two requests attempted to sell tires for those vehicles.<sup>204</sup> Much of this period, coincided with the tenure of a Rudolph Hürner. When requests came in that seemed reasonable to Hürner, his response was typically “the firm Rudolf Hürner in this city is ready to entertain business with you in all kind of goods suitable for our market, as well as for exports of products like: Wool, carpets, dates, casings, gum...”<sup>205</sup> Therefore, it can be argued that, instead of a sincere effort to promote American and Ottoman trade in Baghdad, Hürner most likely had a sincere interest to promote his own interests in regards to this trade, but that as the U.S. state department professionalized and after the founding of the ACCL, U.S. trade interests grew increasingly sophisticated.

By examining the conflicts between Western merchants and the Ottoman Empire this chapter demonstrates several key points. First, it would appear that Ottoman officials, on both the Vilâyet level and the smaller Kaza level, on the whole, and especially when it was in their best interest, cooperated with local notables against Western merchants. In the Baghdad area, this collaboration tended to be with tax farmers. In Basra, local date growers and the Ottoman Vali conspired to get better prices for the date growers. However, the Ottoman State also cooperated with Western merchants. These instances suggest tentative conclusions as to the degree of centralization within the Ottoman Empire. With the substantial power and agency displayed by local notables, the ability of tax farmers in Baghdad and date palm owners in Basra to utilize the central government for their own personal gain makes the periphery of the Ottoman Empire *look* distant from the core. However, these notables were not acting on their own either and to maximize their own benefit they would have *had* to collaborate with the Ottoman power

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<sup>204</sup> Please see Table 1 in the addendum for the complete statistics of inquiries.

<sup>205</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume v, Hürner, Baghdad, U.S. Vice Consul, March 30, 1899 to American Exporters Association.

structure, which, as far as earlier power sharing is concerned does represent an increase in Ottoman centralization. The Ottoman State and Western merchants likewise cooperated and competed, further complicating the dynamics and implying that Hills Brothers and MacAndrews and Forbes were additional, and aggressive players in an already competitive marketplace.

Secondly, in line with the idea of Ottoman centralization, some *Tanzimat* era reforms were definitely in place and at play in these conflicts. The court system became the location for disputes to play out and from the variability of the results there does seem to be at least some impartiality to the courts. The Provincial Reform Law of 1864 was also present, both in the multitude of Kaymakam that appear and in the instance where a financial case is referred to a local official in charge of finance, as was specified in the Provincial Reform Law. However, other reforms such as direct taxation do not seem to have been integrated and Baghdad and Basra continued to rely largely on *iltizam* for revenue collection. Other administrative reforms like local councils and organization also seem to have been implemented, however, prohibitions against monopolistic practices seem to have been ignored. In fact, they were ignored both by the Ottomans and by Western merchants, with most accusations of monopolistic practices being levied against Western merchants.

Third, the Ottoman state used a variety of methods to frustrate and exploit Western merchants. When we examine the date and licorice trade there is little or no evidence of imperialism. These two trade items, in particular the way they were traded between the Ottomans and the United States, benefitted both the Western merchants and the Ottoman Empire greatly. Methods such as attaching extra tax to items, forcing work shut downs, seizing goods, arguing over when an item was taxed all seemed to work to the benefit of the Ottomans. American merchants preferred to pay rather than haggle and risk delays or loss of goods. This relationship

shows that both sides were profiting from the trade and willing to do business in a variety of ways.

Fourthly, in the date and licorice trades, the Ottoman State collaborated with local notables. This collaboration implies, to a greater extent in Basra, which was also further away from Istanbul than Baghdad, that more power existed at the periphery of the empire in local form. Although this was tempered quite a bit in Baghdad and the latter city was fairly well integrated with Istanbul, it was less so in Basra. Basra was, the evidence suggested, significantly less integrated with Baghdad. The Naqib acted with a great deal of independence and was the most powerful figure involved in the lucrative export trade in dates. However, he was operating in and profiting from Ottoman governance and profited from stretching the limits of Ottoman control, rather than trying to break free from it.

## Chapter 4

### Crime and American Cultural Agents

This chapter examines criminal activity perpetrated against and by the Western community in Ottoman Baghdad and Basra. These instances of robbery, brigandage, piracy, and attempted smuggling fit into the analytical paradigm of conflict and cooperation used in this thesis. Therefore, while the previous chapters looked at conflicts and cooperation amongst and between Westerners and Ottomans, this chapter takes the same approach to instances of crime; crimes which often also had economic undertones. Westerners worked and lived as part of Ottoman society and as such, were targeted for these crimes. American and British economic and cultural agents were viewed as competitors within the Ottoman milieu, rather than as impervious imperialists. Western businesses functioned as tax farmers, amongst their other economic activities and Western individuals were expected to behave within societal norms. Ottoman individuals, as well as the state, were able to utilize American authorities and/or Americans themselves in order to curb the excesses of their cultural agents both in the realm of archaeology and missionary activity. Of course, these are only instances and a more complete set of data would elucidate/or strengthen the above statements. However, there is enough evidence to allow for such statements to be made, even if in a qualified manner. These instances or case studies, are based in original sources and are not known in the historiography on Baghdad and Basra and their environs in this period.

The instances of crime recorded in the archive are demonstrative of several key points in Ottoman historiography. The robberies and piracy that occurred in the period show the insecurity of the Ottoman hinterland and the relative prevalence of brigandage. Although these instances occurred in a specific part of the Ottoman Empire, they were certainly not limited to Iraq at the time, nor were they limited to any particular part of the globe in this period. The literature records that brigandage occurred throughout the Ottoman Empire during this period and indeed



throughout the world. For Ottoman Iraq, as was often the case elsewhere, this insecurity was a product of the non-absorption of manpower into the local and world economy at large. This excess manpower, the low capitalization of agriculture and the uneven results of Ottoman attempts at sedentarizing a nomadic population, created an atmosphere wherein brigandage was difficult to control. Around Basra, piracy was a problem, particularly for the British community due to their prevalence in the shipping industry. Piratical attacks on British ships occurred in this period in and around Basra and were reflective of uncertain economic conditions globally, and the fact that Westerners, as participants in the local economic system, were targeted as much as anyone else was. At first, these attacks in Basra were small and the attacks seemed to have been largely ignored. However, the murder of a British ship captain triggered a panic on the part of the British consul in Basra, who saw the attacks as indicative of powerful threats facing entrenched British interests. British interests in the regions had, as Hala Fattah notes, been establishing themselves economically in Iraq as early as 1798.<sup>1</sup> The literature concerning British shipping in Iraq demonstrates the importance of the British for the international trade and their hegemonic status locally. Their integration into the Ottoman economic system ensured that they, like everyone else, would experience some the effects of piracy.

While many of the crimes researched here were committed against Westerners, some were committed by Westerners. American archaeologists defied Ottoman laws in their attempts to smuggle antiquities out of the Ottoman Empire. While antiquities had been a substantial export item from the Ottoman Empire to the U.S., a shift in attitude took place on the part of the Ottoman State. Antiquities came to be seen as valuable artifacts and a point of pride; their sale was first regulated and then criminalized. This represented a maturation in the functioning of the

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<sup>1</sup> Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade*, p. 102.

Ottoman state as it sought, in this period, both to expand its regulatory control and maintain the ability to craft, via the creation and curation of the Ottoman museum and artifacts, its own legacy. Deringil argues that a major thrust of Abdul Hamid II's long tenure was the creation of a more centralized and far reaching state. The changes in the Ottoman Empire's reach of governance were parallels of concurrent changes in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Although Deringil does not specifically discuss archaeology and the state's new focus on antiquities, it fits in with many of the changes, such as the creation of emblems and formal symbols for the Ottoman State, the focus on historicizing the Sultanate as the inheritor of the Roman and Byzantine tradition and the canonization of Istanbul.<sup>3</sup> Bahrani, Çelik, and Eldem contextualize the growing interest in archeology with the urban planning initiatives in Istanbul beginning in the late 1860s.<sup>4</sup> The period also saw a renewed obsession with early Ottoman history, which was recreated through elaborate state functions.<sup>5</sup> The new focus on antiquities was spurred onward by European imperialist interest, both by creating an interest in controlling the documents of ancient history and in resisting colonial encroachment.<sup>6</sup> These changes were reflected in Ottoman legal codes. In 1874 antiquities came under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and regulations were created for the allotting of finds at the excavations, with at least 1/3 going to the Ottoman State.

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<sup>2</sup> See both Selim Deringil, *The Well-protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998), p.8. and Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik, Edhem Eldem, editors. *Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753-1914* (Istanbul: SALT, 2011), p.38.

<sup>3</sup> Deringil, *The Well-protected Domains*, pp. 8, 11, 29.

<sup>4</sup> Bahrani, Çelik, Eldem, editors., *Scramble for the Past*, p.34.

<sup>5</sup> Deringil, *The Well-protected Domains*, p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> See Edhem Eldem "From Blissful Indifference to Anguished Concern" p.283, and Wendy Shaw "From Mausoleum to Museum" p. 425, and Zeynep Çelik "Defining Empire's Patrimony: Late Ottoman Perceptions of Antiquities" p. 447, in Bahrani, Çelik, Eldem, editors. *Scramble for the Past*.

A school was created to train archeologists in 1875, and further legislative changes gave the Ottoman state full control over antiquities that were excavated.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the occurrence of crime, the Ottoman State, in this time, also expanded its control and oversight over foreign missionaries. By trying to regulate the increasingly bold advances of these cultural agents, the Ottoman State was asserting its sovereignty in the periphery of its empire. They were also, quite rightly so at times, protecting zealous foreigners from dangerous situations. On occasion, such as the Miss Melton affair,<sup>8</sup> American missionaries that ventured significantly outside of the established and protected travel areas were attacked and even killed. By protecting the missionaries discussed in this chapter, the Ottoman State avoided the lengthy threats, reprimands and demands issued by the United States government.<sup>9</sup> They also avoided the social disruptions and complaints filed by locals against the foreign missionaries. According to Deringil, the Ottoman state saw missionaries as both irritating foes and as exemplars worth imitating.<sup>10</sup> Sultan Abdul Hamid II, however, felt that missionaries were the gravest threat to the Ottoman social order. As this chapter discusses, the Ottoman State used the threat of an agitated local population to attempt to curb missionary activity.<sup>11</sup> Deringil notes that American missionaries were more irritating than other foreign missionaries because they were

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<sup>7</sup> Magnus Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> In 1893, an American missionary named Miss Melton was attacked in a mountain village outside of Mosul. The event led to significant American anger and the imprisonment of several alleged attackers.

<sup>9</sup> The Miss Melton affair led the US Ambassador in Istanbul to state that he would not “relax my vigilance until someone is hurt for assaulting that American lady.” USDS, *House of Representatives, Second Session, Fifty-Third Congress. 1893-'94* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1895) p. 653.

<sup>10</sup> Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, pp. 114-116.

overzealous late comers, and were seen by the Ottomans as encouraging “nests of sedition” among the local population and particularly among Armenian populations.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, the Ottoman State paid special attention to citizens that had acquired American citizenship and then returned to the Ottoman Empire. At issue, whether in a real or perceived manner, were allegations of tax fraud and the illegal practicing of trades. Adopting American citizenship did not adequately protect returning former Ottoman nationals. In fact, Deringil notes that the Ottoman State paid increasing notice both to any influx of foreign nationals asking for Ottoman citizenship and to Ottoman subjects seeking to become foreign nationals. The Ottoman Empire began producing official identity cards in 1885 and over time they required their use for an increasing array of official purposes. Laws pertaining to how Ottoman subjects obtained foreign protection became stricter and an 1894 memorandum made it clear that all subjects seeking to get foreign citizenship needed an official *irade*, further reflecting the Ottoman perception that Armenian subjects were abusing the citizenship process.<sup>13</sup>

According to the sources, in Iraq, travelers who stayed on the secured paths between Ottoman cities in the Arab provinces were generally safe. For the trip between Baghdad and Basra, this meant a steamship ride on the Tigris. James Nies, an American Episcopal clergyman and an expert in Babylonian tablet inscriptions, inquired of the American Vice Consulate in Baghdad for advice about travelling in Iraq. Nies collected a sizeable amount of antiquities for Yale University, where they are preserved in the Babylonian Collection. In November of 1904, already in Basra, James Nies wrote to Hürner, to inquire where he and his wife, the daughter of the President of the New York Chamber of Commerce, could find accommodations in Baghdad.

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<sup>12</sup> Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 188-190.

Nies further requested Hürner's help in acquiring an "English speaking servant or dragoman who knows the country and people, as well as a cook."<sup>14</sup> It was Nies's intention to take his wife to meet Edgar James Banks and see both his dig site at Bismaya and the other American-led excavations at Niffur and Babylon. By following the safe and established route and travelling up from Basra on a steamer with his wife, Nies arrived in Baghdad safely, where he acquired 82 of the 180 autograph Babylonian tablets in his 1904 collection.<sup>15</sup> Hürner's reply to Nies was not recorded in the official dispatches; likely he contacted him as a businessman off the official record and helped provide Nies with the supplies and expertise he required.

Hürner replied to another, similar request in March of 1905. Hürner wrote his reply to Robert Skinner, the American Consul General in Marseilles who was famous for leading an American governmental mission to Ethiopia in 1903. Hürner noted that there was one hotel in Baghdad that could accommodate Western travelers, at a rate of 10 francs per person per day, although not at the comfort levels to which they might have been accustomed.<sup>16</sup> The steamer accommodations were apparently good, these being on an English steamer (Lynch Brothers or ETSN) that took passengers from Basra to Baghdad.<sup>17</sup> Skinner also asked if it would be "safe and agreeable" for a woman to undertake this journey.<sup>18</sup> Hürner replied that it was "absolutely safe for a woman, accompanied by her husband, to visit our city..."<sup>19</sup> The only thing Hürner

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<sup>14</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume x, James Nies, November 12, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, US Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>15</sup> James B. Nies, *Ur Dynasty Tablets* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'che Buchhandlung, 1920) p.1.

<sup>16</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, May 11, 1905 to Robert Skinner, U.S. Consul General, Marseilles.

<sup>17</sup> The trip from Basra to Baghdad took four days and meals cost about 5 rupees each – without wine. The cabins cost 14 medjidieh.

<sup>18</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Robert Skinner, U.S. Consul General, Marseilles, March 29, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>19</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, May 11, 1905 to Robert Skinner, U.S. Consul General, Marseilles.

cautioned was that the harsh summer weather could be difficult and hence urged against coming during that season. This was a sentiment echoed by Wratislaw, British Consul in Basra, who wrote comparing a summer season arrival to the “the custom of immersing live shell-fish in boiling water...unnecessarily harsh.”<sup>20</sup>

Both of these inquiries and responses concerned the normal modes of travel in Iraq for Americans – i.e. steamships. These established routes were safe enough even for Western female travelers, who viewed the prospect with greater anxiety, yet nevertheless would have been permitted to travel. The countryside, not surprisingly and likely as it would in most places, in the early 1900’s, demonstrated the limits of governmental control. W.B. Bundschu, a 1904 graduate of U.C. Berkeley, arrived in Baghdad, intending to ride his horse through the desert to Damascus.<sup>21</sup> Bundschu, travelling alone and with no stated motive but the spirit of adventure, rode off into the desert. He was promptly robbed, the victim of brigandage. Hürner, who had advised Bundschu against his trip, was unsympathetic. After asking Hürner for assistance as an American, Bundschu was told to reapply for his stolen passport before any help could be provided to him. Furthermore, if he wanted to be protected as an American, he would have had to follow Ottoman regulations concerning the behavior of foreigners. In particular, Bundschu had ignored travel restrictions. Had he enquired, Bundschu would have been afforded armed Ottoman protection. Due to the maverick nature of Bundschu’s actions, the State Department did not attempt to recover Bundschu’s property or provide him with an indemnity.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> A.C. Wratislaw, *A Consul in the East* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1924) p. 136.

<sup>21</sup> See Bundschu’s Glee Club photo in Junior Class of the University of California, *The Blue and the Gold* (Louis Roesch Company : San Francisco, 1903) p. 178.

<sup>22</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, U.S. Ambassador, Istanbul, January 17, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

Another example of the brigandage along the land route to Syria involves Jason Paige. Paige was an engineer for the University of Chicago dig at Bismaya. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1904 Paige was traveling from Baghdad to Damascus via Deir with two Ottoman soldier escorts (*zaptiye*).<sup>23</sup> He was traveling in a caravan, along with Hürner's servant Ali. The caravan was led by the two Ottoman *zaptiye*.<sup>24</sup> This small group was attacked by brigands. Paige's account of the attack was highly critical of the soldiers, because they took up strategic positions and left his baggage unguarded. One *zaptiye* was shot in the chest and the other had his horse killed. The brigands were able to easily purloin Paige's goods. Paige wrote, ignoring the wounds that the two *zaptiye* received, "they made absolutely no attempt to stand and return the fire of the arabs, much less any attempt to protect or recover my baggage."<sup>25</sup> In the incident, Paige claimed to have had 8835 gold piasters worth of his own affairs stolen, including pajamas, pipes and neckties.<sup>26</sup>

By the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, local Ottoman officials had recovered 36 Turkish Lira, 18 Medijieh and 22 ½ double kraas (*kuruş*). By July, Hürner had recovered another 97 Turkish Lira from the Ottoman state, in addition to the previous sum; the Ottoman state eventually provided compensation that exceeded the amount lost by Paige.<sup>27</sup> Despite the protection accorded to Paige, the Ottoman government paid an indemnity to Paige to cover the loss of his goods. Clearly, the Ottoman government was working as it should – trying to prevent crime and when

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<sup>23</sup> NA RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, June 10, 1904 to Ahmed Faizi Pasha, Vali, Baghdad.

<sup>24</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Jason Paige, Engineer for University of Pennsylvania dig at Bismaya, June 13, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>25</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Jason Paige, Engineer for University of Pennsylvania dig at Bismaya, June 13, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>26</sup> NA, RG 84 Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, "Contents of Baggage Lost by Jason Paige" June 15, 1904.

<sup>27</sup> NA, RG 84 Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, July 17, 1905 to Jason Paige, Engineer for University of Pennsylvania dig at Bismaya.

unable to prevent crime, trying to bring about justice for the victims. Brigandage was a problem worldwide at the time and its existence here, in the Ottoman periphery should not be seen as a failure of centralizing policies. While it may well have been a byproduct of the settling of tribes and the disturbance of populations caused by the growth of the world market, it was not unusual by any means.

The safe passage afforded Westerners between cities on established trade routes, indicated the ability of the Ottoman State to provide security within certain boundaries. Baghdad, Basra and the route that Lynch steamers plied the water between the two cities were protected from acts of brigandage. Outside of urban areas and established trade routes, the level of security and the ability of the Ottoman state to control its subjects in Iraq dropped precipitously. It should be noted that Iraqi terrain and geography made it a greater challenge than it would otherwise have been. In the final analysis, the result of the two robberies, one without the presence of Ottoman soldiers and one with, was the same. Essentially, the *zaptiye's* presence and, by consequence that of the Ottoman state, was, in this case insufficient to prevent this attack. However, since the state was engaged and regulations had been followed in one case but not the other, the outcomes were substantially different. Bundschu, by leaving without an armed escort, was in violation of the law. The Ottoman state provided Paige, not just with the amount of goods he claimed to have lost, but significantly more and they did so in a timely manner, although it is unclear whether the U.S. government and its representatives ever allowed Paige to fully collect his indemnity.

Brigandage occurred, but did not seem to be particularly widespread and was somewhat contained in this period. The same was true concerning piracy, particularly the piracy which occurred near Basra and the Persian Gulf. The attacks appear to have been infrequent; however,



the murder of Captain Butterworth stirred the British consul in Basra, Francis Crow, into a revisionist diatribe that placed piracy and insecurity as overwhelming features of the British experience in Basra. It is perhaps worthwhile to see the murder of Captain John Butterworth in the same context as perceived threats from German economic interests. While the threat existed to a certain degree, the *level* of the threat was elevated and overblown, either out of real anxiety or a desire to achieve specific goals. These goals would have included encouraging British investment in the region and an enhanced military presence strictly to keep other nations out. The British diplomats in Basra were no doubt doing their job correctly when they insisted that Britain must maintain its status in Basra as the most involved Western nation.

In February of 1914, Butterworth was found beheaded aboard his ship.<sup>28</sup> The *Raithwiate Hall*, Butterworth's ship, measured 200 feet by 28 feet,<sup>29</sup> and was considered a steam lighter.<sup>30</sup> Steam lighters like the *Raithwiate Hall* could dock in shallow waters, making them vulnerable to attacks from shore. The British Consul in Basra, Crow, immediately pinned the crime on unnamed "Arabs," due to some clothing left at the scene.<sup>31</sup> Despite the assertion that it was "Arabs" who had slipped aboard the ship while it was docked for the night, the crew of the *Raithwiate Hall* was placed under immediate arrest.<sup>32</sup> According to Ottoman sources, the men

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<sup>28</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/7358, Strick and Company, London, February 17, 1914 to The Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, London.

<sup>29</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/13877, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, March 24, 1914 to Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>30</sup> Steam-lighters were a type of smaller steamboat, with a shallow draught and were used to unload larger boats.

<sup>31</sup> According to Ottoman sources, the clothing in question was actually a brown camel tie. Önder Kocatürk, "Two Different Cases in the Ottoman Police Department: The Story of British Police Inspector Mr. Nolan and the Murder of Captain Butterworth." *International Review of Turkology*, Volume V:IV – N:7. P. 30.

<sup>32</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/9026, Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul, February 23, 1914 to Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary, London.

arrested were two Iranians and two men of unidentified ethnicity/nationality; however the Ottoman sources did not identify people by ethnicity, but rather, by nationality, which contrasts with the British usage of ethnic identifiers like “Arab.”<sup>33</sup> British commercial interests in Basra and Baghdad were endangered by violence, as measured in scale to their presence and, perhaps more importantly, according to their own sources. As the British were the dominant foreign economic power in Ottoman Basra, threats to their prestige were numerous, and included the growing actual and perceived incursion of German manufacturing strength and shipping capability, both of which had the potential to inflict greater harm economically to the British than piracy did. Nevertheless, the Butterworth murder triggered memories of a litany of pirate attacks against British interests, including events that took place the previous year in which a small British ship was attacked by pirates. These two attacks led Crow to conclude, “it appears to us that piracy is becoming rife in the Shat-al Arab...”<sup>34</sup> Crow, to enforce his point, noted three additional piratical attacks that had been committed against the British since the previous September.<sup>35</sup> These instances set a precedent wherein the boat’s owners were compensated for the attack, loss of boat and cargo as well as the death of their employees.<sup>36</sup>

Messrs. Strick, the owners of the *Raithwiate Hall*, urged His Majesty’s Government to dispatch a warship in the stated hopes that this would prevent further attacks on British subjects. British diplomatic officials balked at the proposal, arguing it would, “not likely contribute to the

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<sup>33</sup> Kocatürk, “Two Different Cases,” pp. 30-31.

<sup>34</sup> The Shatt-al Arab is the waterway around where the Tigris empties into the Persian Gulf. TNA, FO 371/2130/7358, Strick and Company, London, February 17, 1914 to The Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, London.

<sup>35</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/9032, Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul, February 24, 1914 to Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary, London.

<sup>36</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/13877, Messrs. Daphtary Ferrera and Divan, Bombay, December 20, 1913 to Bussrah Consul [Crow], Basra. And TNA, FO 371/2130/13877, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, January 2, 1914 to Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

discovery of the perpetrators of the present crime or to deter the turbulence of the Arabs.”<sup>37</sup>

However, Crow continued to strengthen his position rhetorically and expand the threat that he perceived to the local community. Crow wrote that, “Captain Butterworth’s murder is only a culminating event in an extraordinary series of outrages against British and British Indian subjects which have been perpetrated during the last six months. Many British Indians have been robbed and there have been two serious piracies[sic] involving the loss of life and property: the club has been robbed, the Consular’s Doctor’s house twice entered by thieves, and a considerable sum and all the Doctor’s instruments stolen, while Messrs. Lynch [shipping company] have been robbed four times, and a watchman killed, Messrs. Strick twice and their assistants once, and the British India Company’s premises have also been entered.”<sup>38</sup> It is worth noting that the focus was largely on the damage being done to British *economic* interests, particularly the corporations that had infrastructure and personnel in the region. Crow added a personal dimension to the increasingly threatening circumstances that he was describing and perceiving, complaining that his servant’s quarters were nearly broken into and they had a cow stolen from them. There had been “marauding” by his garden wall and he needed Gendarmes constantly patrolling to ensure his safety. He asked the British Government for an increase in his security allowance, so that he could better arm his guards. Consul Crow wrote that conditions at Basra had gotten so bad that the British India Company, Messrs. Strick and Messrs. Lynch have had to import “60 armed watchmen from India.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/9032, Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul, February 24, 1914 to Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary, London.

<sup>38</sup> TNA FO371/2130/10321, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, March 3, 1914 to Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>39</sup> TNA FO 371/2130/10321, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, March 3, 1914 to Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

Continuing with the Butterworth murder, the Strick Company brought the plight of his widow and her four children to the attention of the Foreign Office.<sup>40</sup> Claiming the need to provide support for the Captain's widow, the British government demanded 4,000 British pounds in compensation. By May 12<sup>th</sup>, Crow felt justified in declaring, "The case for compensation is materially strengthened by the fact that...the Turkish authorities have neglected adequately to police the river and port at Basra, and they admit this."<sup>41</sup> Crow elaborated on why this is criminal neglect, "Thus the facts appear to be that Basra, a most important commercial harbor, has, for years past, been left by the Turkish Government without any adequate precautions for the public security, although their attention has been drawn to this by His Majesty's Consul at Basra for the past eleven years; while the circumstances of the present case, which is the culminating outrage of a long series, shows how complete this neglect of the most elementary police precautions has recently become."<sup>42</sup> However, during a parliamentary debate, Foreign Office Secretary Grey was asked if there was adequate protection for the Europeans of Basra. It is significant that this question even made it to Parliament, which shows that, three months after the Butterworth murder, the case was still in the public domain. Grey, however, dismissed the concern and answered, "I am not aware that there is any need for the special protection of His Majesty's Consul and other Europeans at Basra."<sup>43</sup> On May 31<sup>st</sup> of 1914, in a *Note Verbale* from the British embassy in Istanbul, it was acknowledged that Britain would officially seek

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<sup>40</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/11025, Strick Co., London, March 10, 1914 to Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, London.

<sup>41</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/19966, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, May 12, 1914 to Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>42</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/19966, Francis Crow, British Consul, Basra, May 12, 1914 to Louis Mallet, British Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>43</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/23419, Parliamentary Debates, May 21st, 1914.

compensation from the Ottoman Government concerning the Butterworth murder.<sup>44</sup> Önder Kocatürk, in his examination of the Ottoman sources, noted that the Butterworth murder investigation showed almost no progress for four whole months, until the case for an indemnity was pushed by the British.<sup>45</sup>

Kocatürk writes that according to the Ottoman sources the demand for compensation on June 11<sup>th</sup> kicked the Ottoman justice system into action. Ottoman authorities thought that if they showed themselves willing to provide justice and arrest people, they could avoid paying this compensation, “In order to reject this demand formally and legitimately in the light of the evidence, the outcome of the investigation hitherto and information obtained from the interrogations of the crew were needed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and hence asked to be quickly reported.”<sup>46</sup> The Ottoman system of justice had not been idle, even if few details of their investigation filtered into the British sources. The Ottoman investigation, by the end of March, had four suspects in custody; Rüstem bin Şecaaddin, a 50 year old Iranian national who was the cook and butler; Ali bin Salim, a 30 year old Iranian crew member and Seyyid Nasrallah and Hemis bin Hüseyin. It seems that Nasrallah and bin Huseyin were former employees who had been dismissed by Captain Butterworth.<sup>47</sup> The evidence of their guilt rested entirely on a hat – a hat that may or may not have belonged to Captain Butterworth – that was found in Rüstem bin Şecaaddin’s house. A court date set for May 19<sup>th</sup> was postponed indefinitely when the prosecutor of the case was promoted, leaving the post vacant. Kocatürk records that a note was passed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior in December of

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<sup>44</sup> TNA, FO 371/2130/25451, Copy of *Note Verbale*, Sir Louis Mallett, British Ambassador, Istanbul, May 31, 1914 to Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Istanbul.

<sup>45</sup> Kocatürk, “Two Different Cases,” p.28.

<sup>46</sup> Kocatürk, “Two Different Cases,” p.29.

<sup>47</sup> Kocatürk, “Two Different Cases,” p.30.

1914 which stated that due to the war and the abrogation of the capitulations, no compensation would be paid to Britain.<sup>48</sup>

The murder of Butterworth occurred right at the end of this period. The diplomatic discussion concerning it happened immediately before and then was truncated by the First World War. The manner in which the events were discussed should be seen in the same light as the fluctuating anxiety that some British officials had concerning German economic competition. The perceived threat of losing a privileged position drove British anxiety into the creation of perceived looming disaster. This fits within the global context of competition between the European states and their desires for firm control, not just in colonial setting, but also in what they saw as their spheres of influence. Therefore, the threat of local instability, characterized by these pirate attacks, led British corporations to expand their security apparatus and local British diplomats to ask for warships and threaten violent intervention. However, the Americans, as likely to be robbed or become victims of violence as anyone else, did not perceive these acts of violence as being a growing threatening trend. Both the British and the Americans asked for compensation and justice and received some degree of that from the Ottoman state in response. The brigandage and piracy of the period is more reflective of global conditions than a failure of the Ottoman State to secure its borders. It may also be anxiety on the part of the diplomats and the tendency to make themselves and the interests they represent appear as though they were guarding British prestige in a situation that they perceived to have gotten out of control. The corporations involved seem to have been pushing the situation along, inflating their problems and threats in an effort to elicit support from British officials.

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<sup>48</sup> Kocatürk, "Two Different Cases," p.31.

## Archaeology

The expansion of the Ottoman State's regulatory focus and its maturation as a modern state is evident in its treatment of American archaeologists and of the antiquities trade. Like the global expansion of sanitary regulations in response to the increase of global trade, the growth of archaeology and of antiquities smuggling attracted the attention of a centralizing state. While the Ottoman State already controlled and regulated permissions for Westerners to dig at certain sites, in the period under study, the Ottoman state extended their oversight into the actual digs themselves. These initiatives represent both a sincere effort to control and utilize antiquities for the legitimation of the state and to thwart the ambitions of Western imperialists.

Although a brief instance of Ottoman regulatory oversight, the Sublime Porte intervened at the University of Pennsylvania dig at Niffur.<sup>49</sup> In 1899, Namik Pasha, the Vali of Baghdad took issue with the buildings that had been erected on the site. Namik Pasha insisted that buildings erected on the site were not listed in the excavation agreement between the University and the Ottoman government. This fear of Western archaeologists being the vanguard of imperial territorial annexation was prevalent in the Ottoman government.<sup>50</sup> This specific issue proved to be straightforward and both sides pushed for compromise. The Vali was willing to allow the buildings to remain and the dig to continue as long as J. H. Haynes, the director of the dig signed a document stating, "that these buildings are only for his staying there, and in the end of the excavations, he must submit to deliver all that in its real state, to the Government, and in the future he will have in every way no right to pretend that these buildings would be his own."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> In Western sources, it is generally referred to as Nippur.

<sup>50</sup> Wendy Shaw "From Mausoleum to Museum" in Bahrani, Çelik, Eldem, editors. *Scramble for the Past*, p. 425.

<sup>51</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume viii, Namik, Vali of Baghdad, July 17, 1899 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

Haynes, who was born in Massachusetts, was hired to work as a tutor at Roberts College in Istanbul. He was originally the business manager of the dig when it began in 1888. The expedition in question was the fourth campaign at the site and procured “many thousands of tablets and antiquities of other kinds.”<sup>52</sup> In this case, the Ottoman state, through the Vali and the University of Pennsylvania through Haynes, brought a quick resolution to the issue. This suggests that significant incentives existed for Americans to acquiesce to Ottoman demands and cooperate with the Ottoman state. It also suggests that Ottoman oversight over antiquities had matured to an extent that the state was aware of the minutiae of the dig and willing and able to exert control over that minutiae. While this does represent an increasing focus on antiquities, it also reflects the Ottoman concern with their territory and jealously guarding the value of their land.<sup>53</sup>

The most thrilling case of archeological misbehavior in this period involved Edgar James Banks, former American Vice Consul to Baghdad and supposed inspiration for the fictional Indiana Jones (at least according to the Historical Museum of Eustis, Florida where Banks retired in 1921).<sup>54</sup> Banks led the University of Pennsylvania’s excavations in Iraq, beginning in 1903. Known today as Bismaya<sup>55</sup>, the dig site was the location of the Sumerian city of Adab. In 1904, Banks retired to Baghdad to avoid the severe summer heat, where he lived in a house that he rented from Hürner.<sup>56</sup> When Banks returned in September, he was informed by the Sheik he had

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<sup>52</sup> Henry Smith Williams, *The Historians History of the World: Volume I Introduction, Egypt and Mesopotamia* (New York: Hooper and Jackson, 1909) p.611.

<sup>53</sup> Please see Picture 1 in the addendum for an example of the artifacts uncovered at Niffur.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.eustishistoricalmuseum.com/edgarbanks.html> accessed 1:06pm on Nov 5 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Bismaya was alternatively spelt Bismya during the period under study. It will be referred to here as Bismaya unless it is spelt otherwise in a book title or archival document.

<sup>56</sup> Edgar James Banks, *Bismya: The Lost City of Adab* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1912) p. 357.



paid to guard the site that the dig had been robbed. Hamesh, a former watchman at the site, was accused of being in possession of antiquities and selling them; Hamesh was imprisoned in a well, ready to be turned over to the authorities. Banks alleged that 209 Lira worth of both his own and the site's property had been damaged or stolen. He accused Heider Bey, the Ottoman official appointed to oversee the dig, of being complicit in the robbery, claiming that Heider Bey had previous knowledge of the affair.<sup>57</sup> Although Banks could and did produce witnesses, Hussein and Ahmed,<sup>58</sup> that swore Hamesh was guilty,<sup>59</sup> Heider Bey decided not to prosecute Hamesh, who soon escaped from his imprisoning well.<sup>60</sup>

Hamdi Bey, the director of the Imperial Ottoman Museum, detected fraud almost immediately after Hürner and Banks declared that a famous statue that had been excavated at Adab/Bismaya was stolen.<sup>61</sup> Heider Bey, who answered directly to Hamdi Bey, returned with several officials and ordered Banks to close the excavations and leave Bismaya. Banks, in his published account of the excavation accidentally foreshadows stealing the statue. First, he covered up the initial discovery of the statue from the workers that uncovered it, telling them it was “merely a stone.”<sup>62</sup> The day of the initial discovery, Banks waited until Heider Bey was called from the camp with his assistant, before returning with three workmen; the original

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<sup>57</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, October 8, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>58</sup> Hussein and Ahmed were servants of Hürners that Banks was employing. However, they originally pretended to be locals when giving evidence about the case.

<sup>59</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, “Mazbata that our house was entered and robbed” June 30, 1905.

<sup>60</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, October 8, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>61</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, January 8, 1906 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>62</sup> Banks, *Bismya*, p. 187.

discoverer of the statue Abbas,<sup>63</sup> the foreman of his crew, and Banks' servant Ahmed. Under cover of night they excavated the headless statue and secreted it to Banks' room.<sup>64</sup> While Banks likely intended to keep the statue a secret from the very moment of its discovery, the missing head to the statue was discovered a month later.<sup>65</sup> The general rejoicing around the camp meant that the statue became public knowledge.<sup>66</sup>

After being told to leave Bismaya, Banks travelled to Kut, where, on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1904, the local Commissioner of Police, Sadek Effendi arrived. Banks wrote that Sadek arrived intoxicated and demanded to, on the orders of the Vali, search Banks' luggage. Banks alleged that the official was so drunk, that during his search he broke "various glass objects" and was "injuring many things." The police officer confiscated some "shells and other curios" and some "worthless tablets." Banks said that these items were the engineer's property, referring to the seemingly luckless Jason Paige.<sup>67</sup> Banks listed the objects taken from Mr. Paige's baggage as "About 50 sea shells/A Syringe/A modern Arab Skull/4 Modern engraved vases/The few tablets above mentioned[the 'worthless ones']/Other modern curios/Service cartridges." Banks continued to list items taken out of the baggage of his wife as being, "A tin of corral beads/2 broaches from Europe/A wedgewood sugar bowl and cream pitcher." Banks demanded that Sadek Effendi be removed from his post and that the seized objects be returned. Banks angrily

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<sup>63</sup> Banks referred to Abbas and his two brothers, Hussein and Katheem as his best foremen. They were surnamed Balkis and from the village of Affej. Banks, *Bismya*, p. 194.

<sup>64</sup> Banks, *Bismya*, p. 190.

<sup>65</sup> Please see Pictures 2 and 3 in the addendum for a visual of the statue.

<sup>66</sup> Banks, *Bismya*, p. 194.

<sup>67</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismaya, October 8, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

noted that the telegraph operator in Kut colluded with Sadek Effendi by refusing to send a telegram with the excuse that the operator said “he was [busy] reading a Koran...”<sup>68</sup>

The U.S. State Department and Heider Bey figured out that Banks and Hürner were the perpetrators of the robbery. Banks and Hürner had apparently sent two of their servants, Ahmed and Hussein, to stage a fake robbery. Hürner defended his actions, writing that they hid the statue to keep it from being destroyed in unrest that was occurring in the area.<sup>69</sup> Like British Consul Crow in Basra, this is another example of Westerners, and particularly diplomats, using and inflating threats locally to justify their actions and to legitimize their pleas for assistance. Overstating a case would be logical therefore, in order to get the desired reaction and these perceived threats should not be taken at face value as evidence of rampant unrest in the Ottoman Empire. Rather, they should be recorded in the context of Western diplomats seeking to protect their own or national prestige using the means that they had to elicit help and further their rhetorical points.

According to Hürner, the objects confiscated by the Ottoman police at Kut, particularly the antiquities were, in fact, the property of Banks and not those of Paige.<sup>70</sup> Banks stated that the other antiquities confiscated were worthless tablets, however, it was still illegal for him to be transporting them away from the dig site with the intent of removing them from the country. Complicating things further, Banks, at the urging of Hürner, made an official complaint about

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<sup>68</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, October 7, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>69</sup> According to the account given in his autobiography, Dr. Banks sent Hussein and Ahmed to recover the already stolen statue. They found it being guarded by two watchmen in a house. They “silenced by the usual method” the guards and took the statue. Dr. Banks, in trying to cover up his role in the theft of the statue, suggests Ahmed and Hussein were perhaps murderers. Banks, *Bismya*, pg. 372.

<sup>70</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismya, October 7, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

Heider Bey, attacking his character. This involved denunciations and allegations about Heider Bey's level of sobriety, his moral fortitude and supposed ties to revolutionary groups.<sup>71</sup> Despite his recalcitrance, Banks initially received instructions from his directors at the University of Chicago to return to Bismaya and continue the excavation.<sup>72</sup> However, the Board of Directors back at the University of Chicago rapidly lost faith in Banks and the Ottomans worked diplomatically to prevent him from returning to the excavations. Under Article 20 of the Ottoman Regulations on Archeological Excavation, the Sublime Porte had authority to shut down the dig whenever they felt. The regulation stated that it "empowers the Ministry of Public Instruction to suspend temporarily any excavation work 'Should any objections be found.'"<sup>73</sup> Additionally, Ottoman officials argued that since Banks' servant Ahmed had committed the robbery they wanted to arrest Ahmed and put him in jail.<sup>74</sup> Eventually, the Imperial Ottoman Museum, insisted that Banks be removed or the excavation at Bismaya shut down. Robert Harper, an Assyriologist with the dig and the brother of Professor William Rainey Harper, chairman of the Semitic Languages Department at the University of Chicago, was appointed to lead the dig. Banks was removed from his position by January of 1905.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume x, Edgar James Banks, Director of the Excavation at Bismaya, October 9, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>72</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Telegram from Pera Hotel, U.S. legation, Istanbul, July 14, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>73</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, U.S. Charge d'Affairs, Istanbul, November 4, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>74</sup> Hürner was concerned that, once in a Turkish prison Ahmed would quickly besmirch Banks' name. NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, U.S. Charge d'Affairs, Istanbul, November 4, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>75</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Jason Paige, Washington, D.C., May 31, 1905 to J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul.

Hürner, who had the statue hidden in his bedroom, was ordered to turn the statue over to the Ottoman authorities.<sup>76</sup> Leishman, the American Ambassador, upbraided Hürner for his actions in stealing and hiding the statue, writing, “while it is the duty of every officer of the Government to protect American interests in every way possible, this should not be carried to the point of protecting American citizens in the commission of a dishonorable act.”<sup>77</sup> Hürner was also scolded by Leishman for requesting to know how much Heider Bey’s salary was; presumably Hürner was contemplating a bribe.<sup>78</sup> Hürner was slow to comply with the demands of both the US Legation and Heider Bey to send the statue to Istanbul. At the end of July in 1905, Leishman again reproached Hürner for his slow response and for entrusting the statue to someone “whose very name is unknown to the Legation...”<sup>79</sup> An August 14<sup>th</sup> Telegram sent by Hürner states that the statue was handed over to Heider Bey.<sup>80</sup>

Ultimately, Hürner’s defense was that he had been trying to keep Banks from being arrested and the University of Chicago’s name from being soiled. Hürner argued that the secreting out of archeological finds was a common practice (which it was) and that Banks had misled him into thinking the United States legation in Istanbul was aware of and complicit in the subterfuge. Leishman pointed out that it was an illegal practice, stating, “The fact that most archeologists make a practice of appropriating a certain portion of the hidden treasures they

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<sup>76</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, U.S. Charge d’Affairs, Istanbul, April 17, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>77</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, June 12, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>78</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, July 27, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>79</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, July 30, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>80</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, August 18, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

unearth cannot be accepted as an excuse for the acts of the University officials in misappropriating treasures found in the Bismaya expedition, as the permit distinctly states that all articles found shall remain the property of the Imperial Ottoman Government.”<sup>81</sup> Leishman further informed Hürner that due to the circumstances, a formal complaint would be filed against him.<sup>82</sup> Hürner was also accused of illicitly furnishing copies of official documents to private individuals, specifically to Harper.<sup>83</sup> There was a further breakdown in the, what had once been friendly, relationship between Leishman and Hürner. By January of 1906 the normally excessively polite introductions that are common in these official dispatches, devolved into this greeting, “I have to acknowledge the receipt of your No. 104 of December 7, 1905, the contents of which I find both irrelevant and disrespectful [sic].”<sup>84</sup>

The Banks case demonstrates that the Ottoman government not only had effective oversight over the dig at Bismaya, but they were able to discern an attempt to commit a criminal act by removing antiquities from its borders. Heider Bey and Hamdi Bey had the ability to uncover the plot, and then the power to pursue both Banks and the stolen statue and other antiquities. The coordinated efforts between Hamdi and Heider Bey demonstrates the increasing reach of the Imperial Ottoman Museum as well as a degree of centralization between the center and the periphery. The Imperial Ottoman Museum worked well with the U.S. State Department,

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<sup>81</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, September 14, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>82</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, September 14, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>83</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, January 8, 1906 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, and NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, November 8, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>84</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, J.G. Leishman, U.S. Minister Extraordinaire, Istanbul, January 8, 1906 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

which was willing to pursue the statue on their behalf in order not to jeopardize the future of U.S. archaeology in the Ottoman Empire. Although Hürner actively worked to defraud the Ottomans, Ambassador Leishman worked diligently to see the statue returned to the Ottomans. Ultimately, the incident spelled the end for Rudolf Hürner, who held the Vice Consulate position for nearly a decade. Banks' career as a working archeologist was severely damaged.

There were two reasons for the increasing Ottoman attention on retaining antiquities. The first, very simply, was to thwart Western cultural imperialism. Archaeology, like missionary activity, was a form of cultural imperialism and it drew Western researchers to all corners of the Empire. Few Ottoman archeologists existed to provide a direct challenge to Western ones. By stymying the efforts of the Western archeologists to secure and remove antiquities, the Ottomans kept those artifacts in their domain. And perhaps more importantly they kept them out of Western museums. In fact, the statue from Bismaya still resides in Istanbul at the archeological museum. Called either the King of Adab or more commonly the Statue of Luguldalu, the statue sits calmly in a section on Iraq.<sup>85</sup> While archeological finds in Iraq contributed in the West to the narrative of Western civilization, the Ottoman state would have been aware of potential narratives that these digs could provide to their own past and to the construction of an Ottoman nation-state and its historical mythologies.

### Missionaries

Likewise, the Ottoman State, in this period, took an increasing interest in the activities of American missionaries. U.S. missionaries in the Ottoman Empire were cultural imperialists to a

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<sup>85</sup> [http://www.istanbularkeoloji.gov.tr/web/30-121-1-1/muze\\_-\\_en/collections/ancient\\_orient\\_museum\\_artifacts/statue\\_of\\_lugaldalu](http://www.istanbularkeoloji.gov.tr/web/30-121-1-1/muze_-_en/collections/ancient_orient_museum_artifacts/statue_of_lugaldalu) (link accessed 1/30/2015 at 14:31 CST).

certain extent. They pushed American interests forward in the Ottoman Empire and, if threatened or attacked, could bring about conflict between the Ottoman and American states. Perhaps more importantly, foreign missionaries were, in a sense, pests. They highlighted the short comings of the state's infrastructure in terms of education and health care, pushing the Ottoman State into competition in these fields. They also agitated populations that would otherwise not have been restive. By expanding oversight and control over American missionaries, the state was both demonstrating that it had control over its periphery, and was able to mitigate some of the internal and external disruptions caused by missionary activity.

American missionaries, since they had to operate within Ottoman society as members of it, were targets of robberies. The Arabian Mission, the first American missionary effort in Basra, was the brainchild of James Cantine,<sup>86</sup> Samuel Zwemer<sup>87</sup> and Philip Phelps<sup>88</sup> while the trio were students at the Theological Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church in New Brunswick, New Jersey in 1889.<sup>89</sup> In May of 1889, this trio presented their "Plan of the Arabian Mission" to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church of America. James Cantine arrived in Basra in August of 1891 and was joined by Samuel Zwemer; the men wrote back to the Reformed Church about their desire to use Basra as their base of operations. At an approximate cost of \$25,000, the Arabian Mission was launched. The founders of the Arabian Mission felt "beset and

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<sup>86</sup> The oldest of the three and a graduate of Union College, Cantine was trained as a civil engineer. Alfred Mason and Frederick Barny, *History of the Arabian Mission* (The Board of Foreign Missions: New York, 1926) p. 57

<sup>87</sup> Zwemer was born in Michigan as the son of a minister. He was an aspiring doctor, but instead chose missionary life. Zwemer was a prolific writer. He attended Rutgers University and became a Professor at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1929. Lewis Scudder, *The Arabian Mission's Story: "In Search of Abraham's Other Son"* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998) p. 140.

<sup>88</sup> Phelps is described by Scudder as a "shadowy figure." Phelps did not participate in the missionary work. Scudder, *The Arabian Mission's Story*, p. 141.

<sup>89</sup> Mason and Barny, *History of the Arabian Mission*, p. 57.



frustrated by a cynical and even dangerous Ottoman bureaucracy which viewed their presence as undesirable.”<sup>90</sup> A strategy adopted by the medical focused Arabian Mission was called “touring.” This involved travelling into the countryside with medical and dental equipment.<sup>91</sup> It seems worth noting that none of the instances of crime examined here occurred while missionaries were touring. Although it is impossible to know why in these instances, it seems that missionaries while touring were likely doing so with Ottoman escorts, thereby engaging the protection of the state. They probably travelled with little or no money and, as they were at least nominally helping people, were likely conceived as being benign.

John Van Ess, arrived to work at the Arabian mission in 1902. Van Ess was a graduate of the Princeton Theological Seminary, where he studied Semitic languages.<sup>92</sup> On July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1905, the Basra house of Van Ess was burglarized. Van Ess reported that 57 Lira and 167 Rupees were taken, money which, for the most part, belonged to the American missionary organization, rather than to Van Ess.<sup>93</sup> Two Ottoman soldiers were arrested for the robbery, Zangi and Muhammad, in August of 1905. Both Zangi and Muhammad were imprisoned but quickly released after giving a “process verbal” or an official statement to the police. The criminal case was dismissed in Basra. Hürner, however, urged Van Ess to have the men re-arrested and another suit brought against them. Hürner informed Van Ess that he would instruct Chalk in Basra to put pressure on the local Vali to provide a guilty verdict. Hürner was convinced that a guilty verdict would be easily accomplished locally, however, he suggested that, if it were not, Chalk should appeal

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<sup>90</sup> Scudder, *The Arabian Mission's Story*, pp. 141, 156, 162.

<sup>91</sup> Scudder, *The Arabian Mission's Story*, p. 163.

<sup>92</sup> Bergman, H. J. (1982), “The Diplomatic Missionary: John Van Ess In Iraq,” *The Muslim World*, 72: 180–196. P. 180.

<sup>93</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume x, H.P. Chalk, Acting U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, September 3, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

directly to Istanbul in this case, thereby embarrassing the Vali. Hürner also wrote that if an unfavorable verdict was reached in the case, Van Ess should have it appealed to Baghdad, where Hürner would use his influence to get a better result.<sup>94</sup> The case was later dismissed in Baghdad by the Court of Default.<sup>95</sup> The case was abandoned both for lack of evidence, and the perception that Van Ess was partially at fault. The court found that because Van Ess had stored his money in an ordinary travelling box, he was “guilty of gross carelessness.”<sup>96</sup>

In June of 1907, Dr. Henry Worrall, also of the Arabian Mission, was robbed of 11TL.<sup>97</sup> After Worrall discovered the missing case of money, he became aware that more items had been taken, especially from his hospital dispensary. Dr. Worrall and his staff immediately suspected two servants, a brother and sister, of pilfering the items. A search of the servants’ home revealed a cache of currencies, including rupees, and innumerable stolen goods from the mission hospital. The pair was accused of using duplicate keys to steal items under lock and key, which allowed them to go a lengthy period without detection while they accumulated such sundry and exotic items as 3 cheap spoons, 6 pairs of stockings and 42 unbleached [sic] American sheets from the store closet. A former employer of the two servants, Nasoorie Noorie, attested to the criminal

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<sup>94</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad, November 13, 1905 to John Van Ess, Arabian Mission, Basra.

<sup>95</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad Volume xi, Herbert Poulter, Acting American Consul Agent, Basra December 14, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>96</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xi, Herbert Poulter, Acting American Consul Agent, Basra, December 14, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>97</sup> There were two Dr. Worralls in fact, Henry and his wife Emma.

character of the unnamed siblings.<sup>98</sup> On July 20<sup>th</sup>, the Criminal Court ruled in favor of Worrall, and returned both the money and some of the stolen goods to him.<sup>99</sup>

These robberies demonstrate the vulnerability inherent in living in any urban environment of the time. The missionaries were part of the system; they were not targeted but their houses were robbed because they were there. The missionaries themselves were protected in Basra, their property was not, or at least not fully. However, outside of the established Arabian mission, the region also attracted maverick American missionaries. Grace Miller was one such missionary, although according to the U.S. consul, she was not actively engaged in missionary work. However, according to the American Bible Society, she was in Iraq on a maverick trailblazing mission “Miss Miller is making plans to plunge into the very heart of Arabia, and has made plans with us for any Bible distribution that may become possible for her to do.” The Bible Society’s report implied that her mission was clandestine, writing “It is not now the time to speak definitely of her plans...”<sup>100</sup> As Deringil noted, the Ottoman State routinely monitored U.S. missionary publications and may well have read that very report.<sup>101</sup> Miss Miller therefore has the odd distinction of being an undercover, Bible distributing missionary.

The Ottoman Mudür wrote to the Vali and he in turn wrote to Hürner informing him that Miller was apparently in serious danger. It was unclear exactly how Grace Miller was threatened, although it could be deduced that the threat to her was a response to whatever

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<sup>98</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Dr. Worrall, Arabian Mission, Basra, July 3, 1907 to William Magelssen (incorrectly addressed to Megleson), U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>99</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Dr. Worrall, Arabian Mission, Basra, July 24, 1907 to William Magelssen (incorrectly addressed to Megleson), U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>100</sup> American Bible Society. *Annual report of the American Bible Society, Volume 88.* (New York, American Bible Society, 1904) p. 124.

<sup>101</sup> Deringil, *Well Protected Domain*, p. 125.

mysterious missionary work she was engaged in. The border area was also subject to Saudi raids. According to the American vice consul in Basra, Henry Chalk, while residing in the city of Zobeir, Grace Miller was willing to “explain her religion to all those that call upon her...”<sup>102</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century history of Zobeir and its role as a growing and important market town controlling trade going from Basra to Najd has been discussed at length by Hala Fattah. Fattah concluded that the efforts of Ottoman officials to establish control over Zobeir were “only partially successful, and when imposed, control was often only nominal.”<sup>103</sup> Yet Zobeir was an area where the Ottomans tried to extend their control in this period. The Miss Miller case is further evidence of their attempt to exert control of the area and of their ability to do so.

When Chalk was notified of the situation and of the Ottoman recommendation that Miss Miller be removed for her own safety, he conducted a personal interview with her. Chalk described her as living a “quiet harmless life” in Zobeir. Miller intended to remain in Zobeir for an additional three months, despite the recent nearby raid by Saudi adventurers.<sup>104</sup> Two levels of Ottoman government, the local (Mudiir) and the regional (Vali), effectively took interest in the personal safety of a single American. The Ottomans contacted American officials to ensure the safety of that American from threats both inside and outside their state and since they had this knowledge and it was communicated effectively between government levels, it demonstrates a high degree of integration and cooperation between the regional and the local government in the area and an ability to coordinate all the way from Istanbul to the border of Kuwait.

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<sup>102</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, H.P. Chalk, Acting U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, December 8, 1903 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>103</sup> Fattah, *Politics of Regional Trade*, pp.195-197.

<sup>104</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume ix, H.P. Chalk, Acting U.S. Vice Consul, Basra, December 8, 1903 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

## Issues of Citizenship

Legal questions arose over Ottomans who had become naturalized American citizens. According to Deringil, under the Ottoman Citizenship Law the Ottoman state had the final say over the legality of all Ottoman citizens' attempts to renounce Ottoman citizenship in favor of another citizenship. Likewise, these former citizens could be forbidden entrance to the Empire.<sup>105</sup> These issues were complicated by questions such as whether the individual planned to return to the United States, did they reenter the Ottoman Empire on their U.S. passport and when that passport had expired.<sup>106</sup> In answer to a question from an Armenian wishing to return to the Ottoman Empire, Secretary of State Hays noted that while the US officially disputed the policy, the lack of an international treaty between the two states left returning, naturalized American citizens vulnerable. The resulting situation was that, once a naturalized American citizen that was once an Ottoman citizen returned to the Empire, "he [would] regard himself as an Ottoman subject..." Hays promised that the State Department would do their best on behalf of anyone caught in this but it could not guarantee that he would "escape molestation or expulsion."<sup>107</sup> A report by U.S. immigration inspector Marcus Braun, alleged widespread abuses by Armenian Ottoman subjects of U.S. citizenships. He reported that Armenians that had become naturalized citizens were returning to the Ottoman Empire with U.S. earned cash, illegally practicing trades and putting the State Department in embarrassing situations, thus causing "great inconvenience." Braun alleged that when Armenians took U.S. citizenship, it was all an elaborate way to dodge legitimate Ottoman taxation. Braun's anti-Armenian stance should be attributed to, not a pro-

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<sup>105</sup> Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*, p. 188.

<sup>106</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, William Smith-Lyte, U.S. Vice and Deputy Consul-General, Istanbul, July 14, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>107</sup> United States Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (Government Printing Office: Washington D.C., 1902) p. 939.

Ottoman or Turkish attitude, but his idea that immigrants from the Ottoman Empire were, regardless of national origin “nothing short of a menace to this [United States] country.”<sup>108</sup> When the question of giving a new passport or renewing an old one arose, the American government considered the following criteria “How he returned, whether he is engaged in business relations with any American firms or represents any business, charitable or religious interests or has any intention to return to his adopted country which carries great weight with the Minister’s decision.”<sup>109</sup>

Due to the perception that extending protection to naturalized U.S. citizens or Ottoman subject was embarrassing to the state and led to unnecessary conflict with the Ottoman State, Peter Augustus Jay, *chargé d’affaires* and a descendent of John Jay, refused to provide Hürner’s servant Ahmed protection from prosecution in the Bank’s case. Jay wrote that “The man being an Ottoman subject and employed as a Cavass by neither the Legation nor your Vice Consulate, there can be no grounds for granting him protection.”<sup>110</sup> Despite Hürner’s protests that Ahmed would be tortured into a confession, Jay advised Hürner only to obtain Ahmed’s written deposition before turning Ahmed over to the Ottoman government.<sup>111</sup> However, when it came to the possibility of the Ottoman courts prosecuting Banks, the answer was a clear and unconditional negative. Jay was quick to remind Hürner that, according to Article four of the 1830 Treaty between the U.S. and the Ottoman Empire, no Americans accused of crimes would

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<sup>108</sup> United States House of Representatives, *House Documents, Number 47* (Government Printing Office: Washington D.C., 1906) p. 27.

<sup>109</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, William Smith-Lyte, U.S. Vice and Deputy Consul-General, Istanbul, July 14, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>110</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, U.S. Charge d’Affairs, Istanbul, November 4, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>111</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, U.S. Charge d’Affairs, Istanbul, November 4, 1904 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

be tried in Ottoman courts, but only in American courts. If possible, Banks should not even have been informed if charges were brought against him and if he were tried in *absentia* by the Ottoman legal system.<sup>112</sup>

In July of 1907, a complaint was filed with the American Vice Consul by the Governor General of Baghdad against a “certain Hagopian” who the Ottomans alleged fraudulently claimed to be both American and a licensed doctor. Hagopian was accused of “causing much injury.”<sup>113</sup> The Vali reminded Magelssen, the Vice Consul in Baghdad, that it was against Ottoman law for individuals to practice medicine without both a license and a medical diploma. In response to an inquiry by Magelssen, A.S. Hagopian defended himself by stating that he was, in fact, a licensed physician. Hagopian protested that he was a graduate of the University of Louisville. Records show that he was, in 1888, indeed a graduate of that institution.<sup>114</sup> Hagopian also listed other physicians that he practiced with, seemingly settling the matter.<sup>115</sup> It did not, nor did it necessarily prove that Hagopian was a licensed doctor according to Ottoman law. Hagopian, apparently, was invited for an audience with the Vali and was promptly arrested. Magelssen protested his arrest but Hagopian’s citizenship was further questioned by the Ottomans. Magelssen filed his objections with the Vali and asked that Hagopian be released and deported to the United States. Magelssen did not however “make strong demands” on the Vali, supposedly because Hagopian’s passport had lapsed and he had not sent in his renewal form.

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<sup>112</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xii, Peter Augustus Jay, U.S. Charge d’Affairs, Istanbul, January 10, 1905 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>113</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, July 22, 1907 to Dr. A.S. Hagopian, Baghdad.

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.library.louisville.edu/kornhauser/gfdb/h.asp> Accessed September 4, 2012 at 1030am.

<sup>115</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Dr. A.S. Hagopian, Baghdad, July 25, 1907 to Magelssen, U.S. Consul, Baghdad,

The embassy wrote to Magelssen to inform him that “Insomuch as Dr. Hagopian appears to manifest no genuine intention of returning to the United States with the intention of residing there and performing the duties of citizenship and seems to have abandoned all permanent residence in America the Embassy would not feel warranted in granting him a passport without further proof of his right to obtain same.”<sup>116</sup> Hagopian’s naturalization papers and his 25 piasters fee were held at the vice consulate and awaited his disposal of them.<sup>117</sup>

In 1894, a man posing as a wealthy industrialist and claiming to be named John Herbert Firth, borrowed money from the American vice consul in Baghdad, Dr. John C. Sundburg. Dr. Sundburg was Vice Consul in Baghdad from 1892 until 1895.<sup>118</sup> Firth’s draft of \$100 (approximately \$2,600 today) was fraudulently drawn against guarantee from an unnamed American bank. Another attempt by an American trying to defraud the vice consulate prompted Hürner to write to the U.S. Vice Consul in Madrid, whose name was presumably used as reference. The Vice Consul in Madrid answered Hürner’s question with this warning “the whole matter referred in the letter you enclosed, is an old swindle. Every effort is being made to capture the rascals, but it seems difficult to do. All the parties mentioned as well, as the documents, are false.”<sup>119</sup> These instances wherein the U.S. consulate was targeted by Westerners emphasizes that the position that Americans and the U.S. state department occupied in the Ottoman Empire was not one of a privileged outsider. Rather, it was the United States’

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<sup>116</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, September 25, 1907 to Dr. A.S. Hagopian, Baghdad.

<sup>117</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiv, Magelssen, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, September 25, 1907 to Dr. A.S. Hagopian, Baghdad.

<sup>118</sup> John C. Sundburg, “The Viking Path,” in *American Scandinavian Magazine*, Volume 5, Issues 2-3. P. 152.

<sup>119</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xiii, Maddin Summers, U.S. Vice Consul Madrid, Spain, May 28, 1906 to Rudolf Hürner, U.S. Vice Consul, Baghdad.



diplomatic agents existence within the Ottoman system and society that led them to be victimized. As demonstrated in the literature, citizenship and contesting foreign protection was increasingly a concern for the Ottoman State in this period. The Ottoman State and the U.S. government were both concerned with the perception that subjects of the Ottoman Empire, particularly Armenians, were abusing the system. The focus on tax evasion and practicing trades illicitly, may have been window dressing for other concerns, including the Ottoman perception of Armenian collusion with American missionaries and the American obsession with racial purity and eugenics. Either way, the attention paid this situation reflects an issue of concern for both states. It also demonstrates the Ottoman State's ability to police its subject's citizenship and a manner in which they countered the adoption of foreign nationality.

This chapter details several instances in which American cultural and economic agents, engaged in the Ottoman system, were subject to or perpetrating some sort of criminal activity. The response of the Ottoman state to the insecurity within its borders indicates that the Ottomans were able to respond to brigandage and piracy, but not able to prevent it. This should not be read as the Ottoman's inability to control its periphery, rather, this demonstrates the economic disruption of the expansion of the world economy and of the attempts to settle and harness previously nomadic populations. Although these disturbances demonstrates the limits of Ottoman control, the fact that the instances of brigandage were few and completely outside of official travel routes, indicates that the Ottomans were able to exert centralized control over their domain. It can be argued that the piracy evident in Basra was overblown by the British embassy; also, the British kept a warship at Bushire, which may have pushed pirates away from the Iranian coast and towards the Ottoman.

The Ottoman state also demonstrated its concern and knowledge of the activities of American archaeologists, missionaries and Ottoman citizens that adopted U.S. nationality. The ability to keep track of the various moving pieces within Baghdad and Basra demonstrates the sophistication of the Ottoman bureaucracy. The Imperial Ottoman Museum was able to push the dig site at Niffur into a compromise regarding the infrastructure built on site. More impressively, it was able to discern that a crime had been committed at Bismaya and to stop the smuggling of the statue, as well as, regain control of the stolen antiquities. The Ottoman state was also able to determine which missionaries had been negligent in the protection of their property and which had been more legitimately wronged. These same missionaries toured with their medical equipment safely in the Basra hinterland. The responsibility for the safety of Miss Miller, a maverick missionary, was passed on to the U.S. state department. This served to both remove the Ottoman State's need to keep her safe and limit the activities of U.S. missionaries that left major cities, particularly when they were not providing a benefit (such as the medical touring) to that local population. Finally, the Ottoman State kept close watch on its nationals that accepted foreign citizenship. They worked to undermine the process by which this occurred and were able to revoke citizenship from returning Armenians with little or no protest from the U.S. government.

## Conclusion

In 1914, at the end of the twenty years examined in this study, the Ottoman Empire became embroiled in the First World War. For the entire length of the First World War, the U.S. consulate was the only Western diplomatic mission in Baghdad that operated uninterrupted. When the Ottomans entered the war, the U.S. was a non-belligerent power and was hence allowed to operate by the Sublime Porte. The U.S. never formally declared war on the Ottoman Empire, but this was a moot point locally, since, by the time the U.S. did enter the conflagration (April of 1917), Baghdad was occupied by British forces (March of 1917). The U.S. consulate in Baghdad, as was usual in times of war, officially managed the affairs of Western countries that had withdrawn their diplomats.<sup>1</sup> As such, one of their more frequent duties was determining what to do with foreign nationals (particularly British Indians) that were stranded in Baghdad and seeking financial relief and protection.<sup>2</sup> Between 1894 and 1914, the U.S. State department and its interests in the Ottoman Empire had become increasingly sophisticated and because of this process, they were better prepared to assume the wide ranging roles needed during the war. These duties, which included taking over the official diplomatic roles of European states such as Britain, Austria-Hungary, Sweden, Italy, Russia and France, were in addition to promoting the economic and political interests of American individuals and businesses. During the war, the U.S. Consulate in Baghdad protested unfair treatment against their own citizens, such as the Ottoman seizure of a boat belonging to MacAndrews and Forbes.<sup>3</sup> During the war, the U.S. consulate continued to operate as an economic hub, corresponding with the American Chamber

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<sup>1</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, May 24, 1915, to Henry Morgenthau, U.S. Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>2</sup> For example see NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, March 27, 1915 to Henry Morgenthau, U.S. Ambassador, Istanbul.

<sup>3</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, May 5, 1915, to Henry Morgenthau, U.S. Ambassador, Istanbul.

of Commerce for the Levant,<sup>4</sup> and fielding inquiries from various U.S. companies looking to continue doing business locally, the global conflict notwithstanding.<sup>5</sup> Despite the disruptions of war and an outbreak of disease in the region, U.S. consul Charles Brissel,<sup>6</sup> a career diplomat who had served previously in Amoy, China, continued to promote American interests and trade in the city. Brissel noted that kerosene imports were increasing and confided that the British-owned Anglo-Persian Oil Company had been selling their oil at a loss in order to keep U.S. kerosene imports out. Brissel believed that irrigation projects would soon make more cultivatable land available and therefore, would necessitate significant importation of U.S. hoeing, mowing and threshing machinery. Brissel worried, however, that this presumed expansion of cultivated land would undercut MacAndrews and Forbes' harvests of licorice. Brissel was confident that orange and grape exports would begin to the U.S. and hoped that a wine industry would be established locally. Optimistically and perhaps even a bit over optimistically, Brissel wrote, "It should be gathered from the foregoing information that few countries offer a wider field for the exploitation of economic energy or offer a richer return than Mesopotamia."<sup>7</sup> Brissel provided U.S. businesses hoping to export to the region advice about local economic conditions. Although the figures that Brissel cited and sent may not be entirely accurate, they were meant as advice

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<sup>4</sup> For example see NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, Istanbul, December 18, 1914 to Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad.

<sup>5</sup> For example see NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, New Haven Manufacturers Exhibition Company, New Haven, May 18, 1915 to Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad. Other inquiring companies and trade promotion organizations from 1915 included the International Forwarding Company of Chicago, Robert P. Lewis Manufacturers Agent, American Bureau of Foreign Trade (New York), Elizabeth Board of Trade (New Jersey).

<sup>6</sup> Brissel was a graduate of Oberlin College, class of 1906. Brissel was appointed to the position in April of 1914 and assumed the office in August of 1914. He died of cholera in Baghdad during the war.

<sup>7</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, April 23, 1915, to William Jennings Bryan, U.S. Secretary of State, Washington.

and instruction to help in the expansion of U.S. economic activities. According to Brissel, one could rent premises (one year leases, payment in advance), arrange freight (typically two months from London to Baghdad), and secure *compiolas* or promissory notes (four-twelve month terms). Brissel estimated that there were promissory notes worth approximately \$1.5 million in circulation at the time.<sup>8</sup> Although little could be done due to the obstacles of the war, U.S. diplomats speculated of a more prominent presence and economic involvement for Americans in Ottoman Iraq.

The U.S. national archives are an underutilized research source concerning the final decades of the Ottoman Empire. As such, they provide valuable and unknown case studies and data. Mostly due to the changes within U.S. foreign policy and the sizeable disturbances of both the civil war and the Reconstruction Era, U.S. interest and activities in the Ottoman Empire seems to have waned during the middle part of 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, and concurrent with shifts in foreign policy, U.S. interest and American activities in the Ottoman Empire rose during the period of 1894-1914. The U.S. State Department and Americans in general became more aggressive in promoting its trade and economic interests and it was a period of expansion in the global economy. The examples of conflict and cooperation that are recorded in these U.S. sources are valuable for adding to the literature on the time period and they contribute to the literature on late Ottoman Iraq in several ways. First, since these sources have been underutilized, their inclusion widens the scope of possible historical investigation in the study of Late Ottoman Baghdad and Basra. Second, this research suggests that, in this period, there was an expanding role/presence for America and Americans that is not currently reflected in the

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<sup>8</sup> NA, RG 84, Consular Posts, Baghdad, Volume xvii, Charles Brissel, U.S. Consul, Baghdad, September 11, 1915, to Robert Lansing, U.S. Secretary of State, Washington.

historiography. This should, of course, be qualified since Americans and U.S. interests and activities, although on the increase, were still significantly less than those of other nations. Also, the expansion of American interests was one, as previously noted, that was carried out by American individuals, rather than a specific U.S. government plan for targeting the Ottoman Empire for economic expansion. However, as the global economy expanded, the U.S. imported increasing amounts of raw materials from the Ottoman Empire. Due to the same economic forces, U.S. investors also began to see Ottoman Iraq as a possible site for significant financial development in infrastructure projects. Third, this study seeks to augment established points on a variety of issues concerning the Ottoman Empire. These issues include, the degree to which the Ottoman Empire was centralizing, and the implementation of many of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Tanzimat* era reforms in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. And finally, this dissertation discusses the role of inter-imperial rivalry, as manifested through the competition of rival Western business groups, in Ottoman Iraq. The Ottoman State was able to, in line with existing literature, profit from and exploit inter-imperial rivalry and international business competition. Negotiations over large scale infrastructure projects showed the Ottomans as savvy negotiators, able and willing to use one Western group against another. Likewise, Westerners and in particular, Americans worked with and against each other and Ottomans within the Ottoman Empire.

The use of Western sources for writing the history of the Ottoman Empire is admittedly problematic. Western diplomats, merchants, missionaries and archeologists all had personal agendas and inherent biases that tainted their documents. They were frequently hostile, and could be outright racist; this was an era wherein U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt's adherence to a racial doctrine that privileged Anglo-Saxons as the master race was not unusual in America. By reading these sources critically however, and using the parameters and particulars of conflict and

cooperation to illuminate relationships, these sources can be used carefully and legitimately to augment the existing literature. The focus of this research is on economics and economic cooperation and/or conflict. Some of these conflicts arose from negotiations, particularly those concerning infrastructure projects. Others involved legal troubles for American businesses arising from competition that they had with Ottoman interests. However they also include instances wherein American businesses sought assistance from the Ottoman State and cooperated with locals. Crimes that were committed against and by Westerners contained an economic element. Whether it was burglary, brigandage, or swindling, these criminal activities involved the exchange of money or goods.

The archives of the U.S. State Department suggest an increasing American economic involvement in Ottoman Iraq, and a more prominent role in promoting trade, infrastructure projects and sanitation. During the period under study, the U.S. Foreign Service underwent a process of professionalization, one that is reflected in the maturation of the official promotion of U.S. economic activities within the Ottoman Empire. Baghdad was elevated to a consulate and a salary was provided for the consul, hopefully eliminating conflicts of interest. This promotion and growth of American interests and activities in the Ottoman Empire was not limited to the State Department, nor to U.S. business interests and activities. Cultural agents, particularly American missionaries and archaeologists were active in Ottoman Iraq in this period. While Americans were neither as present nor as active as British, French or German agents/businesses and cultural agents in Ottoman Iraq, their activities still warrant an inclusion in the history of the region. These American cultural agents frequently came into contact with Ottoman officials, sometimes in very banal ways, other times in conflict and also, frequently in cooperation. In terms of crime, they were protected when they engaged with the state, and vulnerable when they



did not. When the victim of criminal activity, these Americans were typically able to seek redress and fiscal compensation for American investors proceeded from small scale, locally initiated projects to a large rail and mineral concession proposal. The early projects began as small, local initiatives of low ranking Foreign Service employees in partnership with local Ottoman officials trying to engage U.S. based businesses. After 1906, local employees of the State Department were increasingly focused on increasing U.S. capital penetration in Ottoman Iraq and on trade promotion. These trends culminated in both the creation and pursuit of the Chester Project and in the foundation and promotional energies of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant. The removal of Hürner and his replacement with career diplomats, eliminated both a flexible speculator from the system and also the roadblock to American business investment in Baghdad that Hürner and Company caused. The infrastructure projects were unrealized, but their conception and the seriousness with which they were pursued reflect a more invested and interested American presence in the Ottoman Empire. American investors were unsuccessful in their attempts to finance and profit from infrastructure projects in Ottoman Iraq and they were hampered by the lack of American financial institutions in the Ottoman Empire. In the early part of this period, American infrastructure concession proposals were stymied in part by the U.S. Foreign Service. An insistence on protocol and a failure to understand Ottoman economic practices doomed the bridge and boat building concessions discussed in this dissertation. Rudolf Hürner, although eminently self-interested, was also quite knowledgeable about these how small scale contracts typically got awarded and acted within and using the Ottoman system. Hürner's failed attempts did not directly lead to further American investors' interest in infrastructure projects within Ottoman Iraq, however, future projects should be seen within the same context of growing U.S. interests and activities in the Ottoman Empire.

American investors seriously pursued a massive rail and mineral project known as the Chester Plan. The Chester Plan was undermined and ultimately sidelined by entrenched European interests that were reluctant to make room for new competition. Although these projects did not occur, the attempts matter; Americans and Ottomans tried to bring American capital actively into the infrastructure market, indicating that American investors began to see the Ottoman market as a possible field for investing and, that, quite possibly, the Ottomans saw the U.S. as a useful additional competitor in this field.

U.S. trade also grew in this period. The export trade to the U.S. from Baghdad and Basra included almonds, antiquities, carpets, colocynth, dates, dog excrement, gall nuts, ghee, gum tragacanth, sheep intestines, licorice root, millet seeds, Persian opium, skins/hides of animals and wool. American imports to Baghdad and Basra remained limited in quantity and variety. They included oil, Singer sewing machines and American beer. Mosul, although largely outside the purview of this survey, imported American farm equipment. In terms of trade, this study investigates conflicts and cooperation surrounding two commodities in particular. American businesses were active in Iraq and controlled the dominant share of the licorice trade and a sizable portion of the date trade. These corporations competed with, cooperated with and became embroiled in conflict with other Western merchants and with Ottoman economic interests. Overall, as was seen with American cultural agents, American economic agents worked within the Ottoman system. They understood it, worked with it and used it to their advantage when possible. While Ottoman officials did cooperate with local notables against Western merchants in both Baghdad and Basra, the Ottoman State also cooperated with Western merchants, demonstrating that all parties were working to enhance the benefits of the trade for themselves.

Besides arguing for an expanded American presence in the historiography of Ottoman Iraq, the sources researched here provide additional evidence pertaining to several key historiographical questions. Although at times this evidence provides a limited and potentially biased view, it also provides further examples of conflict and cooperation between Westerners, locals and Ottoman officials. These case studies reveal information regarding the relationship between the Ottoman State in Istanbul and its periphery, and the degree to which 19<sup>th</sup> century centralizing and administrative reforms of the Ottoman state were implemented in the decades before the First World War. The centralization policies of the Ottoman state seem to have progressed with mixed results. It should, of course be acknowledged that the challenges the Ottomans faced at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were not unique to them, nor unusual; neither was its mixed success at meeting those challenges. The existence of the conflicts and cooperation in the date and licorice trade and the status of American businesses as part of the local fabric tentatively suggests conclusions as to the degree of centralization within the Ottoman Empire. With the substantial power and agency displayed by local notables, and the ability of tax farmers in Baghdad and date palm owners in Basra to utilize the central government for their own personal gain, these relationships make the periphery of the Ottoman Empire *look* distant from the core. However, these notables were not acting on their own. In order to operate and maximize their own benefit they would have *had* to collaborate with the Ottoman power structure, which, as far as earlier power sharing was concerned, represented an increase in Ottoman centralization. As regards the *Tanzimat* reforms and their continued implementation in this period, this study suggests that structural reforms, such as those made in the Provincial Reform Act were evident in this period. However, and in line with other regions of the Ottoman Empire, taxation reforms seem not to have been completely implemented. Tax farming continued

into this period, no doubt for the various advantages it offered to the state. Likewise and as seen in other parts of the Empire, despite the implementation of trade treaties between the Ottomans and the Western powers, there was room for monopolies in Ottoman Iraq and for Ottoman officials to negotiate additional taxes on Western export goods and activities. These additional fees were typically protested by American businesses, but ultimately paid. The licorice trade in particular indicates that Westerners were willing to collaborate within the Ottoman system and to seek redress with the state when needed. The date trade demonstrates that local notables, in this case the Naqib of Basra, worked with other Ottoman officials and within the Ottoman system. Both the date trade and the licorice trade and their conflicts and cases of cooperation show an Ottoman economy that was vibrant.

The sources also suggest that in Ottoman Iraq, the state was present and able to protect Westerners who stayed within the well protected domains, i.e. on the established trade routes. The Ottomans typically provided justice to victims of crime, and American diplomats were likely to ask for redress if the victim were American born and had followed proper procedures for travel. The examples of brigandage suggest the unfinished incorporation of Iraqi pastoral populations into the state structure, an incomplete integration economically within the expanding world economy and the inability of the Ottoman state to fully police its hinterland; a shortcoming that was widespread among nations, if not universal in this period. The settling of tribes on state lands was another instance of Ottoman centralizing reforms, which aimed to siphon off surplus manpower and employ it either economically or militarily. Its incomplete results, as demonstrated in the limited examples of brigandage, should not be seen as a shortcoming of Ottoman centralization, but was more likely demonstrative of the disturbances caused by the expansion of the global economy and its penetration into the Iraqi market. This state of affairs

ensured that brigandage remained either a possibly more lucrative alternative to sedentary farming and wage labor or that it was a necessary augmentation to those revenue sources.

While crime occurred and some of it was directed towards Westerners, criminal activity was neither rampant nor were Westerners especially targeted. In cases where Westerners were victims of crimes like burglary, the Ottoman state was able to dispense justice and the various courts that these cases entered showed some of the structural aspects of the Ottoman judicial system. The cases surrounding American archeologists demonstrate the growing importance and reach of the Imperial Ottoman Museum. In this period, Hamdi Bey, the head of the museum, displayed a more focused interest in acquiring antiquities from throughout the empire or, at the very least, preventing Americans from smuggling them out. The desire to prevent Americans and other Westerners from smuggling antiquities out of the country reflected the awareness of the Ottoman state officials of their property and legacy. In this instance, the Ottomans held all the power; they could and would deny Westerners access to dig sites if they became displeased with their activities. In addition, the Ottoman desire to regulate antiquities further reflected a trend in the Sublime Porte's governing attitude. Antiquities were increasingly seen as important pieces in the narrative of the Ottoman state and were pursued as such.

As concerns inter-imperial rivalry and the competition between rival Western business groups, American investors did seem to provide the Ottoman state another option in infrastructure negotiations, and it used this option to its advantage. This was evident in deals that concerned the Berlin-Baghdad Railway and in the oil concession. Although the U.S. was developing an imperialist stance in many parts of the world, in the Ottoman Empire, they did not appear to have developed one. Ottoman methods of revenue creation such as attaching extra taxes to items, forcing work shut downs, seizing goods, arguing over when an item was taxed all

seemed to work to their own benefit because American merchants preferred to pay rather than haggle and risk delays or loss of goods. This relationship shows that both sides were profiting from the trade and willing to do business in a variety of ways and as more or less equals. The U.S. was an increasingly important market for selling Ottoman raw materials, which may represent the reverse flow of cash that was typical in this period of globalization. The U.S. Foreign Service and individual Americans were actively working to increase these trade ties and expand both its export and import trade with Ottoman Iraq. While this trade increase could perhaps suggest shades of economic imperialism, the benefits of its expansion went to both sides. American economic agents did not have a free hand in Ottoman markets, but rather, were forced to integrate into the system and engage it to benefit in the region.

Secondly, this study seeks to engage the inter-imperial rivalry literature, by discussing several projects wherein Western powers collaborated and compromised with each other and Ottoman interests. These projects included the carrying concession for the BBR and the oil concession. The oil concession was a complicated affair wherein multiple nationalities and groups were involved. These groups worked to undercut each other and provided the Ottoman state with multiple competitors to play against each other. In both instances, British concerns were overcome by German compromise and Ottoman concerns were met with Western compromise. Western and Ottoman groups competed and cooperated with each other in a variety of ways and circumstances that were, in most ways, mutually beneficial. These groups worked together well in the years immediately preceding the First World War. The border commission demonstrated inter-imperial cooperation as well as the advancement of Ottoman centralizing policies. While the border may have been drawn in part to determine whether oil wells lay in Ottoman or Iranian territory, an unintended effect was to clarify the nationality of trans-border

groups and firmly fix the frontier. As noted, imperial competitors collaborated on several occasions in Ottoman Iraq during this period. Especially regarding infrastructure projects, British and German groups worked together and made compromises in order to ensure Ottoman support. Ottoman support was crucial and the withholding of and/or the threatened withholding of official endorsement in many of these negotiations, but particularly in the oil concession allowed the Sublime Porte to procure a better deal and to guarantee that there would be at least some Ottoman representation within the syndicate. With the transport contracts, the Ottomans proved adept, as they had in earlier periods, at preventing Lynch and the ETSN from expanding their interests in Iraq. In the negotiations concerning the carrying contract for the Hindiyya barrage, the carrying contract for the BBR and in the ETNS-BISNC merger, the Ottomans proved masterful at moving British economic interests towards international syndicates. All of these demonstrate a high degree of Ottoman control concerning the shipping industry in the region, suggesting a high level of center-periphery coordination. Additionally, while the British were definitely concerned with German intrusions, particularly economic ones, the use of the threat of German dominance seems to have been overblown. In terms of the concessions to improve Basra pursued in 1914, as well as, in the British Indian Steam Navigation's takeover of the Lynch Company, persistent fears of German influence and the latter's pending domination of Ottoman Iraq made the British act quickly, possibly against their own economic interests, and in response to what was likely little or no threat at all. What is seen therefore, is that rather than inter-imperial rivalry, Western economic competitors sought compromise and worked with and within the Ottoman system.

## Appendix: Prosopography

### U.S. Infrastructure (Chapter 1)

Person	Role/Title
A.T. Chester	Founder of Chester Plan. Retired Navy official and a founding member of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant.
Thomas Cridler	Third Assistant Secretary of State, US State Department.
Charles Dickinson	Consul General, Istanbul, US State Department.
Spencer Eddy	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i> , Istanbul, US State Department.
Ibrahim Hakki Pasha	Ottoman Grand Vizir, Istanbul during Chester Project.
Oscar Heizer	U.S. Vice Consul in Istanbul (1914) and U.S. Consul in Baghdad (1919) and a founding member of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant.
Philander Knox	U.S. Secretary of State, Washington, D.C. during Chester Project.
James Levack	Vice Consul in Baghdad (1910-1914) and a founding member of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant.
Joseph K. McKammon	Lawyer, Pennsylvania Steel.
M. Mougel	French engineer, advisor to Ottoman Vali of Baghdad.
Gabriel Bie Ravndall	Served as Consul in Beirut (1898-1905 and 1906-1910) and as Consul General in Istanbul (1910-1917) and was a founding member of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant.
John Van Wicheren Reynders	Superintendent of Bridge Building and Construction, Pennsylvania Steel.
Ahmed Rustam	Ottoman <i>Chargé d'affaires</i> , Washington, D.C. during Chester Project.
Arshag Effendi Shmavonian	Dragoman at US embassy in Istanbul. Armenian from Harput.
William Willcocks	British engineer, irrigation advisor to the Ottoman State.

### British Infrastructure (Chapter 2)

Person	Role/Title
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E.M. Antoniadi	An Istanbul born astronomer, was discussed as possible competitor in negotiations for oil exploitation in Mosul.
Francis Rawdon Chesney	Led a British expedition to Iraq, 1835-1837.
William Knox D'Arcy	British born, Australian concession seeker, head of the Anglo Persian Oil Company and involved in the syndicate that received the oil concession in 1914.
Djaved Bey	Confidant of Baron de Ward. Former Ottoman Minister of Finance.
Djelal Bey	Ottoman Minister of Mines.
Francis Crow	British Consul in Basra, 1903-1914.
Sir Eyre Crowe	Assistant Undersecretary of the Foreign Office. Had noted anti-German attitudes. Also, part German.
Henri Deterding	Director of Shell Oil and involved in the syndicate that received the oil concession in 1914.
Sir Edward Grey	Secretary of the Foreign Office, 1905-1916.
Charles Greenway	Managing Director of Board for Anglo Persian Oil Company.
Calouste Gulbenkian	Ottoman born of Armenian descent, involved in syndicate that received the oil concession in 1914.
Ibrahim Hakki Pasha	Former Grand Vizir of Ottoman Empire. Active in London during Basra concession negotiations.
Sir John Jackson	Head of Sir John Jackson Corporation. Secured contract to build Hindiyya Barrage in Iraq.
Mr. Lynch	Head of Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company.
Antoine Kitabgi	Iranian citizen of Georgian or Armenian descent that helped APOC secure concession in Iran.
Sir James Lyle Mackey/Lord Inchcape	Head of British India Steam Navigation Company.
Sir Louis Mallett	British Ambassador to Ottoman Empire, 1913-1914.
Alfred Marriot	Agent for Anglo Persian Oil Company in Iraq.
Lord Murray of Elibank	Involved with the Central Mining and Investment Company that competed for oil concession.
H.E. Nichols	Agent for Anglo Persian Oil Company in Iraq.

Alwyn Parker	Worked for Foreign Office's Eastern Department. Instrumental in setting British policy in the years around World War One towards Saudi Arabia and involved in negotiations concerning the Berlin-Baghdad Railway.
Weetman Dickinson Pearson	Worked with Shell Oil in attempts to secure oil concession, also part of the Central Mining and Investment Company that competed for oil concession..
Thomas Boverton Redwood	British oil expert.
L. Reyersbach	A director of the Central Mining and Investment Company that competed for oil concession.
George Reynolds	A director of the Central Mining and Investment Company that competed for oil concession.
Marcus Samuels	Director of Shell Oil and involved in the syndicate that received the oil concession in 1914. British born of Iraqi Jewish descent.
Roland Silley	Oil expert, tried to secure concession to exploit oil in Basra. Also involved in possible city improvement concession in Basra.
H.W. Stock	Agent for Anglo Persian Oil Company in Istanbul.
Baron Thomas de Ward	Austrian Noblemen, worked for the Central Mining and Investment Company that competed for oil concession.
A.T. Wilson	British Commissioner of the border delineation project. British Administrator of Iraq from 1917-1920.

### US Trade (Chapter 3)

Name	Company and/or Role
Dieb al-Abbas	Camel caravan owner, involved in dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.
Seyd Allowee	Agent for MacAndrews and Forbes in Jezirah.
Habib bin Mohamed Ameer	Lawyer for Khedery Pasha in dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.
Abdul Aziz Effendi	Ottoman merchant. Former Ottoman official, involved in dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.
Yusif Badam	A clerk for the US date firm Hill Brothers.

Thomas Basmadjean	Agent for British firm Messrs. R.D. Warburg and Company, a sub-contractor of US date firm Hills Brothers Company.
Kadim bin Khamis al-Battawee	Camel caravan owner, involved in dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.
H.P Chalk	US vice consul in Basra, agent for US date firm Hills Brothers Company.
Mr. Cree	Agent/owner for British mercantile firm Blockley, Cree and Co., assessor for MacAndrews and Forbes in licorice dispute case.
Shammoon Daniel	A tax farmer involved in a dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.
Ezra Daniels	Ottoman Jewish merchant from Baghdad involved in dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.
De Bono	Agent for MacAndrews and Forbes in Aziziah.
David Fairchild	Agriculture explorer for the US Department of Agriculture. Responsible for bringing date palms to the Southwest of the United States and California.
Ahmed Bin Fwaili	Agent for Ottoman merchant Abdul Khader Khedery (Khedery Pasha).
M. Gareh	Date supplier and packer for US date firm Hills Brothers Company.
Haji Hamed	Agent for MacAndrews and Forbes.
James Hamilton, of the firm Hamilton and Hotz	US Vice Consul in Basra, agent/owner for/of British date firm Hamilton and Hotz.
John Hiles	Agent for British date firm Basra (Busreh) Trading Company.
Kazim Beg	Kaymakam of Aziziah, seized licorice belonging to MacAndrews and Forbes.
Ahmed al Khalaf	Ottoman merchant/tax farmer, involved in dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.
Abdul Khader Khedery Pasha	Ottoman merchant, involved in dispute over licorice with MacAndrews and Forbes.
Khesrov Kouyumdjian	Served as dragoman on three mercantile court cases involving disputes with MacAndrews and Forbes.
James Scott Levack	American vice-consul of Baghdad (1910-1914) and a lawyer that represented MacAndrews and Forbes in Mercantile Court.
Mejid Effendi	Ottoman official at Kut, involved in dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.

Hanna Minni	Ottoman merchant/tax farmer, involved in dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.
Khudairi bin Mohamed	Public Notary worked with Khedery Pasha in dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes.
Sayyid Talib al Naqib	A wealthy Basra landowner and date grower, influential in local politics and sometimes considered to have tried to create an independent state in Basra.
Nowrooz Effendi	Allegedly crooked Ottoman telegraph operator.
Mr. Quartermaine	Lawyer that represented MacAndrews and Forbes in Mercantile Court.
Major Ramsey	British Consul in Baghdad, briefly replaced Hürner as US Vice Consul in 1906.
Mr. Reynolds	Lawyer that represented MacAndrews and Forbes in Mercantile Court.
Ristatany	A local agent for MacAndrews and Forbes.
Rizooki	A local agent in Aziziah for MacAndrews and Forbes.
Mahmood Rotha	An Ottoman soldier accused of working for the allegedly crooked telegraph operator, Nowrooz Effendi.
A.C. Wratlslaw	British Consul in Basra, agent for British date firm Messrs. Grey and Mackenzie. Graduate of the Rossall School, where he was a prize winner in Latin Elegiacs (1878, 1879 and 1880).
Petros ibn Yusif	Involved in legal dispute with MacAndrews and Forbes. A Baghdadi merchant from the Karieh Bashi quarter.

#### Crime and Cultural Agents (Chapter 4)

##### Subcategory, US Missionaries

<b>US Missionaries</b>	<b>Place of Residence/Affiliation</b>
James Cantine	Basra/Arabian Mission.
Anna Melton	Mosul/ABCFM.
Grace Miller	Zobeir/Unknown.
Philip Phelps	Not applicable/Arabian Mission.
John Van Ess	Basra/Arabian Mission.
Dr. Henry Worrall	Basra/Arabian Mission.
Samuel Zwemer	Basra/Arabian Mission.

### Subcategory, US Archaeologists

Name	Dig Site/Role
Edgar James Banks	Bismaya (Adab)/Director.
Osman Hamdi Bey	Head of the Ottoman Imperial Museum and an accomplished painter. Directed efforts to recover statue stolen by Banks.
Robert Harper	Bismaya/Took over as Director when Banks is relieved.
J. H. Haynes	Niffur/Director
Heider Bey	Ottoman representative at Bismaya dig. Directed efforts locally to recover statue stolen by Banks.
J.G. Leishman	US Ambassador to Ottoman Empire during the Banks statue dispute.
Namik Pasha	Niffur/Ottoman Vali that took issue with American construction on site.
Jason Paige	Bismaya/Engineer.
Sadek Effendi	Ottoman police commissioner at Kut.

### Subcategory, Miscellaneous

Name	Role
Ali	Hürner's servant. Was present for both robbery of Jason Paige and theft of the statue from Adab.
Captain John Butterworth	Beheaded British ship captain, employee of Messrs. Strick and Co.
W.B. Bundschu	American adventurer, robbed in desert.

John Herbert Firth	Accused of defrauding the US vice consul in Baghdad.
A.S. Hagopian	Ottoman Armenian that adopted US citizenship but was imprisoned for returning to the Ottoman Empire and accused of practicing medicine without a license or credentials.
Hemis bin Hüseyin	One of four men arrested for the Butterworth Murder. Nationality unknown.
Muhammad	Ottoman soldier, accused of robbing missionary John Van Ess.
Seyyid Nasrallah	One of four men arrested for the Butterworth Murder. Nationality unknown.
James Nies	Collector of and expert concerning, Mesopotamian tablets, Episcopal clergyman from New York.
Nasoorie Noorie	Former employer of servants accused of robbing Dr. Worrall.
Ali bin Salim	A 30 year old Iranian national. One of four men arrested for the Butterworth Murder.
Rüstem bin Şecaaddin	A 50 year old Iranian national, cook and butler. One of four men arrested for the Butterworth Murder.
Zangi	Ottoman soldier, accused of robbing missionary John Van Ess.

### US Vice Consuls in Baghdad

Name	Title	Years	Nationality
John Sundburg	Vice Consul	1894-1897	Norwegian/American
Rudolf Hürner	Vice Consul	1897-1906	Swiss (Bern)
William Magelssen	Consul	1906-1909	American (Minnesota)
A.E.C. Bird	Vice Consul (acting)	1909	British
Frederick Simpich	Consul	1909-1911	American (Urbana, IL)
Emil Sauer	Consul	1911-1914	American (Stonewall, TX)
James Levack	Vice Consul	1914	American
Charles Brissel	Consul	1914-1916 (died in office of cholera)	American (Brooklyn, NY)

### US Vice Consuls in Basra

Note : the post existed largely to facilitate the exports of dates to the US. Therefore, outside of the date season (August-November) it might be vacant and this accounts for some of the years VC's served overlap.

Name	Title	Years	Nationality
James Hamilton	Vice Consul	1896-1904	British
Henry Chalk	Vice Consul (Acting)	1903	British
William Havemeyer	Vice Consul	1904 (died in office)	British
Herbert Poulter	Vice Consul (Acting)	1905	British
Henry Chalk	Vice Consul	1905-1906	British

### Businesses and Known Agents in period

Name	Nationality	Agent
Anglo-Persian Oil Company	British	H.W. Stock
Busreh (Basra) Trading Co.	British	R.D. Marshall John Hiles
Central Mining and Investment Corporation	British	Baron Thomas De Ward L. Reyersbach Lord Murray George Reynolds
Frank Strick and Co.	British	J.K. Mackie Captain Butterworth
Gray Mackenzie and Co.	British	Forbes Garden
Hamilton and Hotz	British	James Hamilton
Hills Brothers	American	William Hills Jr.
		H.I. Andrews
		Yusif Badam
Sir John Jackson, LTD	British	Arthur Whitley
Lynch Brothers and Co.	British	William Havemeyer
		H.W. Timewell
MacAndrews and Forbes	American	A.E.C. Bird
		H.P. Chalk
R.D. Warburg and Company	British	Thomas Basmadjean

### Ottoman Valis of Baghdad

Name	Year(s) in Office
Atteallah Pasha Kawakeby	1896-1899
Namik Pasha	1899-1902
Ahmed Feyzi Pasha	1902-1904
Abdülvahab Pasha	1904-1905
Mecid Bey	1905-1906

Ebubakir Hâzim Pasha	1906-1907
Mustafa Nâzim I Pasha	1908 <sup>1</sup>
Najemaldeen Beg	1908-1909
Mohamed Fadil Pasha	1909
Shawket Pasha	1909-1910
Hussain Nadim Pasha	1910-1911
Youssef Agah Pasha	1911
Djemal Pasha	1911-1912
Ali Redha Pasha	1912
Mohamed Zaki Pasha	1912-1913
Mohamed Fadil Pasha	1913-1914
Süleyman Nazif Pasha	1914-1915
Nurialdeen Pasha	1915-1916
Khalil Pasha	1916-1917

### Ottoman Valis of Basra

Name	Year(s) in Office
Muhammad Atullah	1896
Arif Pasha	1896-1898
Mehmed Enis Pasha	1898-1899
Hamdi Pasha	1899-1900
Muhsin Pasha	1900-1901
Mustafa Nuri Pasha	1901-1904
Muhlis Pasha	1904-1906
Mecid Bey <sup>2</sup>	1906
Abdurrahman Hasan Bey	1906-1908 <sup>3</sup>
Süleyman Nazif Bey	1909-1910
Hüseyin Celal Bey	1910-1911
Hasan Riza Pasha <sup>4</sup>	1911-1912
Sefik Pasha	1913-1914
Colonel Subhi Bey	1914

<sup>1</sup> Info from Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq*.

<sup>2</sup> Note : Mecid Bey was Vali of Baghdad and Acting Vali of Basra in this period. Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq*.

<sup>3</sup> Information from Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq*.

<sup>4</sup> Information from Visser, *Basra, The Failed Gulf State*.



## Foreign Terms

**Cavass** – A police officer, often associated with a Consulate.

**Cherdagh** - Temporary sheds where date packing occurred.

**Defterdar** – Bookkeeper or official usually in charge of finance.

**Goofah** – Round single oared boats on the Tigris.

**Firman** – Ottoman governmental decree.

**Iltizam** – A tax farm.

**Iradeh** – An Ottoman governmental decree.

**Kaza** – An Ottoman administrative division, smaller than a *Sancak* and in the post-*Tanzimat* era, governed by a *Kaymakam*. More or less included a city and its hinterlands.

**Kaymakam** – Ottoman official in charge of a *Kaza* in the post-*Tanzimat* period.

**Kuruş** – An Ottoman measure of money. A subdivision of the Turkish Lira, it is frequently also called *piasters* in Western sources.

**Müdür** – A manager or supervisor.

**Mültizam** – A tax farmer.

**Sancak** – Ottoman administrative division. Subdivision of *Vilâyet*, and made up of *Kaza*.

**Sefinah** – Small sail boats on the Tigris.

**Serai (Saray)** – Government, government building.

**Vali** – Ottoman governor. Appointed to administer a *Vilâyet*.

**Vilâyet** – Largest Ottoman administrative division, more or less equivalent to a U.S. state.

**Zaptiye** – An Ottoman Soldier.

## Addendum

Table 4 Export Inquiries to U.S. Vice Consulate in Baghdad November 1894-August 1907

Item	Nov 1894-Jan 1896	Jan 1896-Jan 1901	Jan 1901-Dec 1903	Jan 1904-Dec 1904	Dec 1904-Dec 1905	Feb 1906- Aug 1907	Total	% of total
1. Machinery, both Industrial and Agricultural	2	5	8	5	5	6	31	13.90%
2. Irrigation and Pumping Machinery	1	1	0	0	0	4	6	2.69%
3. Alcohol	1	2	1	0	0	0	4	1.79%
4. Pianos/Musical Instruments	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.90%
5. Clocks/Watches	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.90%
6. Sugar	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.45%
7. Generators/Electrical/Lighting	1	0	3	3	0	2	9	4.04%
8. Foodstuffs	1	4	0	1	0	1	7	3.14%
9. Import/Export	1	4	8	5	2	0	20	8.97%
10. Publishers	4	18	11	8	5	8	54	24.22%
11. Safes/Locks	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	1.35%
12. Vehicles (motor cars) and bicycles	0	8	3	1	0	1	13	5.83%
13. Phonographs	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.45%
14. Typewriter, office supplies, stationary	0	3	2	0	0	1	6	2.69%
15. Slate and school supplies	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.45%
16. Guns	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.45%
17. Furniture, shelving	0	2	1	1	0	2	6	2.69%
18. Picture frames and portraiture	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.45%
19. Stoves	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.45%
20. Sample collectors	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	1.79%
21. Bondsmen	0	1	4	0	0	0	5	2.24%
22. Clothing (suspenders)	0	1	1	1	1	0	4	1.79%
23. Dentists	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.45%
24. Knife sharpeners	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.45%
25. Toilets	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.45%
26. Rail Cars	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.45%
27. St. Louis World's Fair/ Other expositions	0	0	2	0	0	2	4	1.79%
28. Leather products (saddlery, leather oil)	0	0	0	2	0	2	4	1.79%
29. Photographers	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.45%
30. Paint and Varnish	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.45%
31. Pharmaceuticals	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0.90%
32. Hardware	0	0	0	1	2	1	4	1.79%
33. Tires/Rubber	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0.90%
34. Freight/Shipping	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.45%
35. Wallpaper	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.45%
36. Cotton/Fabric	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.90%
37. Tobacco	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.45%
38. California	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.45%
39. Sewing machines, not singer	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.45%
40. Chambers of Commerce	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.90%
41. Razors	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.45%
42. Correspondence Club	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.45%
43. Graphite	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.45%
44. Plows	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.45%
45. Sporting Goods	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.45%
46. Attorneys	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	1.35%
47. Schools, educational institutes	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.45%
48. Steel	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.45%
Total	16	58	50	34	21	44	223	
Months in Period	15	60	35	11	12	17	150	
Per Month Average	1.066666667	0.966666667	1.428571429	3.090909091	1.75	2.588235294	1.815175	



Figure 3 Examples of tablets excavated at Niffur by American led digs. Currently housed at the Istanbul Archaeology Museums. Picture is by the author.



Figure 4 The statue stolen by Banks at Bismaya. There is no mention of the controversy surrounding its excavation in this display. Currently housed at the Istanbul Archaeology Museums. Picture is by the author.



*Figure 5 Close up of statue stolen by Banks at Bismaya. Note that the head and the body were discovered separately, exposing Banks' original attempt at keeping the statue a secret. Currently housed at the Istanbul Archaeology Museums. Picture is by the author.*

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