

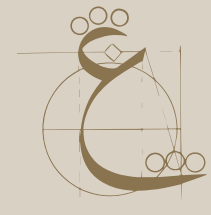
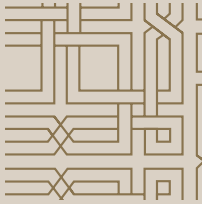


# kadim

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07



*kadim*

*“Kadim oldur ki  
evvelin kimesne bilmeye”*

*Kadim* is that no one knows what came before.

# kadim



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**Barakat, Nora Elizabeth.**  
*Bedouin Bureaucrats: Mobility and  
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ERDAL ÇİFTÇİ\*

ABSTRACT

This monograph examines the imperial nation-building process in the latter half of the nineteenth century, centering on tent-dwelling Bedouin tribes of inner Syria, predominantly in the Transjordan region. Investigating interactions among Bedouin chiefs, commercial-capitalists, urban elites, and Ottoman officials from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century, it illustrates the central role of Bedouin bureaucrats in fostering mutually beneficial relationships within or outside the state sphere.

**Keywords:** Tribe, Bedouin, Ottoman, Syria, Centralization.

ÖZ

Bu monografi, ağırlıklı olarak günümüz Ürdün bölgesi olmak üzere, Suriye'nin iç kesimlerinde konar-göçer yaşayan Bedevi kabileleri merkeze alarak, 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında emperyal ulus inşasını kapsamlı bir şekilde incelemektedir. 18. yüzyıldan 20. yüzyılın başlarına kadar Bedevi şeyhler, ticari sermayedarlar, ayan ve Osmanlı yöneticileri arasındaki etkileşimleri araştıran bu çalışma, Bedevi bürokratların devletin kontrol alanında veya dışında kalsa da karşılıklı yarar sağlayan ilişkiler üzerindeki merkezi rolünü irdelemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Aşiret, Bedevi, Osmanlı, Suriye, Merkeziyetçilik.



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**NORA ELIZABETH BARAKAT**

# BEDOUIN BUREAUCRATS

MOBILITY *and* PROPERTY  
in the OTTOMAN EMPIRE



Nora Elizabeth Barakat investigates the involvement of Bedouin leaders in the process of imperial nation building project in present-day Jordan and its surroundings, spanning from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The analysis delves into the dynamics of relationships among Bedouin chiefs and explores their interactions with each other, governmental representatives, merchants, and urban leaders. Her study seeks to discern patterns of continuity and change throughout the specified timeframe. In contrast to the prevalent tendency among Ottoman scholars to marginalize tribes and overlook their historical significance, Barakat's scrupulous investigation addresses a crucial void within Ottoman and Middle Eastern Studies. Drawing extensively on Ottoman archives, Sharia court records, and oral history sources, she systematically engages with and challenges prevailing perspectives in the literature.

Barakat organizes her monograph into five chapters, supplemented by an introduction and a conclusion. Each chapter commences with a narrative recounting the activities of one of the five tribal chiefs, followed by a comprehensive examination of these narratives within their respective chapters.

Barakat challenges the prevailing scholarly approach to examining the internal regions of wider Syria, predominantly territories within today's Jordan, by characterizing them as a "tribal frontier". According to her perspective, this characterization inadequately encapsulates the Bedouins' active participation in state affairs, particularly in safeguarding the pilgrimage route. In the inaugural chapter, Barakat illustrates her methodologies primarily by focusing on the Bani Sakhr tribe and its leader, Qadan al-Fayiz. This pertains to their integration into the "sphere of submission" to Ottoman agencies, resulting in the generation of "wealth and authority" for the tribe. The substantiation of her assertions is reinforced by Ottoman archival records, particularly those from the eighteenth century. Highlighting the protracted and non-linear migratory patterns of the Bani Sakhr and 'Anaza tribes towards the Syrian territories, Barakat underscores their enduring resettlements in the region. Moreover, she focuses on the pivotal development of their integration into the Ottoman "sphere of submission", a process that involved the deliberate exclusion of other local tribes from this sphere.

Barakat demonstrates that the remunerations allocated to the leaders of the Bani Sakhr and 'Anaza tribes from the Ottoman government increased throughout the eighteenth century, as demonstrated by findings from five distinct Ottoman register records. The provincial government remunerated these tribes for their services that encompassed protection of the pilgrims, transportation, and the provision of camels. A notable distinction in the discourse of the second chapter lies in the revelation that the elites belonging to various branches of the tribes derived benefits from their engagement in the "sphere of submission". This era was characterized by a comparatively more egalitarian dynamic in contrast to the hierarchical relations prevalent in the nineteenth century. During the eighteenth century, the chiefs saw an increase in their influence through tax-farming contracts within their respective regions. This accumulation of power coincided with the expansion of commerce and the proliferation of firearms in inner Syria. Barakat argues that the heightened commercial activities of French and British merchants in the eastern Mediterranean, coupled with their provision of weaponry, played a crucial role in augmenting the authority of Bedouin chiefs.

An additional regional development contributing to the intensification of state-tribe relations was the northward expansion of the Wahhabi Saudis. Despite temporary disruptions and conflicts arising from these developments, leading to the momentary exclusion of Bani Sakhr from the "sphere of submission", their enduring commitment and longstanding service to the Ottoman pilgrimage and administrative agencies ultimately ensured their sustained inclusion within this sphere.

In the second chapter, Barakat directs her attention to the "inner Syria" during the mid-nineteenth century, with a specific focus on analyzing the heightened influence of Sheikh Dhiyab al-Humud of the Adwan tribe. According to her analysis, the Adwan chiefs enjoyed administrative sovereignty during this period and capitalized on the flourishing grain industry in the region by exploiting the labor of sharecroppers, enslaved workers, and villagers. The Adwan tribe established a connection with the global commodity markets by selling grains to merchants operating in the eastern Mediterranean coastal cities. In the 1850s, Adwani chiefs actively engaged in mercantile activities themselves, leading to the emergence of inequalities within the Adwani community. According to Barakat, the emergence of paramount local leaderships prompted the Ottoman governor of Damascus, Mehmed Reşid Paşa, a centralist modernizer bureaucrat, to take action against the burgeoning power of the Adwan tribe. Barakat further contends that internal rivalries among local merchants served as a catalyst for the Ottoman pasha to orchestrate military intervention against the Adwans in the 1860s. The new regulations introduced during the Tanzimat period expanded the Ottoman state's influence in the territories inhabited by the Adwani tribe. The settlement of narrowly defined tribes and the resolution of their disputes, coupled with an optimistic approach towards agrarian development, served to legitimize the actions of Ottoman pashas as they conducted military campaigns against the Adwan Bedouins. Within the "loosely defined and highly contested sphere of submission", the chiefs of the Adwan tribe persisted in negotiations with the state even after the military operation. Barakat characterizes this as a "middle ground", wherein the chiefs of Adwan managed to retain their administrative sovereignty within the expanded sphere of Ottoman state influence. In this chapter, Barakat does not provide a detailed exploration of whether a patronage relationship existed between the governor of Damascus and his financial investors. While Barakat hints at an alliance between

the investors of Damascus and the governor during the operations against the Adwani chiefs in the 1860s, it remains unclear whether Mehmed Reşid Pasha acted solely and impartially in implementing the new regulations or if he leveraged the circumstances for his own benefit and that of his allies. The potential existence of a patronage relationship between the governor and investors would introduce a layer of complexity to the analysis.

The third chapter delves into the transformation of relations between the state and Bedouin chiefs following the campaigns led by Mehmed Raşid Pasha. What were initially characterized as “intermittent, seasonal, and fundamentally unpredictable” interactions evolved over the subsequent decades into “mundane administrative processes of governing land property”, particularly during the 1870s and 1880s. Less influential Bedouin chiefs were integrated into the emerging modern state formation by assuming the role of headmen, a designation that the author aptly refers to as “Bedouin Bureaucrats”. During this period, these chiefs undertook responsibilities such as coordinating tax collection, ensuring land control, and managing property registers, effectively serving as intermediaries between the state and their society. While Barakat may not explicitly highlight the phenomenon, the ascent of lower-level chiefs to increased power after assuming the role of headmen was a prevalent practice in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in the Ottoman East. Barakat’s focus on the Transjordan region around the 1890s underscores a regional variation in the timing of this development, despite its earlier implementation in the Ottoman Anatolia and Ottoman East during the mid-nineteenth century. This nuanced perspective contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse trajectories of this practice within the Ottoman Empire. In the discussed chapter, Barakat explores how the rivalries between empires influenced the allocation of lands and the settlement of Bedouin members under the tent-dwelling tribes that were administratively defined. This practice, not recognized by the Tanzimat laws during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, marked a significant departure from previous arrangements. Bedouins were now engaged as Ottoman officials, reflecting a shift in their roles and status within the evolving administrative framework. Land registers were issued in the local Sharia courts until the establishment of a permanent property administration in the 1880s. Alongside the local councils, these courts became fundamental components of governance, playing pivotal roles in the creation of a state space within the “Syrian interior”. According to Barakat, during the early years of the Hamidian period in the 1880s and 1890s, a dichotomous approach emerged among Ottoman officials. While some advocated for more conciliatory policies, including the use of exemptions, others proposed coercive military actions in the interior lands. The regulations did not acknowledge grazing or part-time cultivation as prerogative to property; instead, only permanent cultivation or the payment of taxes over the last ten years were recognized. This lack of recognition for historical land rights of tribes resulted in a significant omission in the regulatory framework. In the 1880s, Wiraykat chiefs were compelled to register lands to facilitate contracting with merchants for the delivery of wheat, thereby enabling them to earn money and secure loans. Subsequently, during the 1890s and 1900s, certain Wiraykat chiefs augmented their capital and emerged as financial intermediaries, known as moneylenders, within their own tribe. As the tribal chiefs became institutionalized through their roles as headmen, individuals began asserting claims over lands in Salt by obtaining certificates from their respective headmen, a function previously exclusive to the Sharia courts. Notably, as noted by Barakat, during the Hamidian era, some chiefs who cooperated with the new regu-



lations received the prestigious title of pasha. However, in contrast to tribes like 'Adwan and 'Abbads, certain groups, including the Hamida tribe in Salt and Karak, resisted collaboration with the regulations and confronted the Ottoman military, often leading to be labeled as "bandits".

Barakat's fourth chapter delves into a pivotal shift in the approach to landownership in the "Syrian interior" during the 1890s. Ottoman officials transformed their strategy, aiming to augment control and allocation of land not only to support the state treasury but also to transform it into a "privileged competitor". This change reflects a broader reorientation of policies toward land management and ownership during the specified period. Barakat observes that the Ottomans regarded the historic grazing lands of tribes as "empty lands". Consequently, headmen who were assimilated into the Ottoman bureaucracy were also instrumental in organizing resistance against Ottoman land policies. This resistance stemmed from the perceived threat to traditional grazing areas and reflected the complex dynamics between tribal leaders and the evolving Ottoman administration. The perceived "empty lands", traditionally used by Bedouins, witnessed the settlement of refugees, Jewish colonization efforts, and various infrastructural projects. This transformation marked a shift in land usage and ownership, contributing to the complex dynamics of land disputes and competing interests in the region. Indeed, as per Barakat, a divergence in views among officials was apparent. Some officials advocated for the allocation of lands to investors with the goal of enhancing state revenues. However, high-level officials expressed apprehensions related to security concerns, as well as potential foreign Zionist and British interests to the region. Barakat, particularly in the case of Nahar al-Bakhit, highlights that tribal chiefs operated within a "blurry line" between the state and their own tribal society. This dynamic, according to Barakat, reflects a fragile and incomplete process of "making state space" in the Syrian interior. The incorporation of headmen into the intricate framework of local land policies signifies their active participation in shaping the evolving state space. The complexity of these relationships underscores the ongoing and nuanced nature of state-building processes in the region.

In the final chapter, Barakat delves into the late Hamidian and early Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) era, noting a clash that emerged between the headmen of tribes and their respective fellow tribesmen. She examines the judicial resistance of tribal individuals against the tax burden, primarily by analyzing Sharia court records in Salt. Through these records, Barakat elucidates instances of resistance among tribal members against tax officials and the perceived over-taxation, placing the responsibility on their headmen to manage and address these grievances. Barakat notes that tribal chiefs acted as "men of property" who registered and augmented their recorded movable and immovable assets. This transformative process set them apart from other members of the tribes, generating inequalities within tribal societies. The accumulation of property contributed to a notable distinction in the socio-economic status of tribal chiefs compared to other members of their communities. As they transitioned into "men of property", headmen became integral members of Ottoman state functions, participating in courts, councils, and local administrations. Even though the specific mechanisms of their selection or election are not explicitly detailed, the mere fact that they were chosen for administrative and judiciary representation facilitated the transformation of headmen from mere subjects to Ottoman citizens. In the context of the British occupation of Egypt and the subsequent creation of a borderland, chiefs employed these events as threats against the local

Ottoman bureaucracy based in towns or cities. Barakat, throughout this chapter, delves into various personalities and their privileges as they entered the power circles associated with the exercise of Ottoman citizenship.

Barakat's conclusion is impressive, as she not only elucidates the ongoing economic and administrative relations of Bedouins in inner Syria during the colonial and post-colonial era but also draws insightful comparisons with imperial practices in other regions. By contrasting her findings with similar or divergent practices in Russian Kazakh steppes or Native American Reservations in North America, Barakat provides a broader context for understanding the complexities of state-tribe relations and their impact on various indigenous communities around the world. It's an insightful observation that Barakat primarily addresses tribes as an "administrative category". However, an exploration of how these tribes were constructed, defined themselves, and how internal structural variations influenced their power dynamics and commercial relations could indeed provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexities within tribal societies. Barakat's study significantly provides an inclusive perspective to the literature on Ottoman and Middle Eastern Studies, focusing on previously isolated tribal actors and their relations with the state. This work addresses a notable gap in the existing literature, offering valuable insights into state-tribe dynamics, governance, and economic interactions, shaping the direction of future research in this field.

