

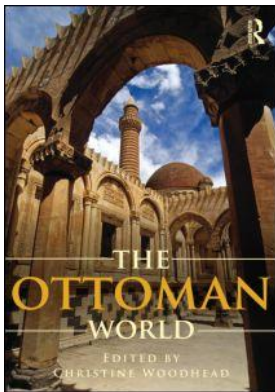
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The Kizilba? of Syria and Ottoman Shiism

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CHAPTER TWELVE

THE KIZILBAŞ OF SYRIA AND OTTOMAN SHIISM*

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Stefan Winter

The ‘Kızılbaş’ were essentially the antithesis of Ottoman *din ü devlet*, ‘religion and order’. The term, which refers to the red, twelve-pleated turban emblazoned with the names of the Shiite imams that was worn by the eastern Anatolian tribal followers of the Safavid sufi order of Ardabil in the late fifteenth century, seems already to have been used by Safavid leaders of the time. In Ottoman chancery sources it is first used in a derogatory sense when a number of these tribes began to revolt and helped shah Ismail conquer Tabriz in 1501, laying the groundwork for the establishment of a Shiite rival state in Iran.¹ In the mid-sixteenth century, judicial opinions by the Ottoman *şeyhülislam* (chief jurispudent) Ebussuud Efendi (d. 1574) and others defined the Kızılbaş as illegal heretics whose elimination was a religious duty. This permitted the state to pursue a veritable inquisition against the heterodox tribesmen whose frequent revolts continued to shake Ottoman rule in Anatolia, while also providing a legal and ideological framework for further warfare against the Safavids. Although the Anatolian Kızılbaş gradually ceased to be a major concern for the Ottoman state – the 1593–1608 *celali* rebellions, though alluding to an earlier Kızılbaş revolt, in fact had nothing to do with them – the Iranians and their supporters in Iraq are characterized as Kızılbaş throughout the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The conflict with the Kızılbaş is thus often seen as a basic fact of Ottoman and indeed Middle Eastern history in general, as the start of the empire’s uncompromisingly Sunni identity, as the paradigm for its treatment of minorities, and as the validation of an unbridgeable political split between Sunnism and Shiism.

Given the importance of the challenge posed by the ‘Kızılbaş’ to the Ottomans, it is hardly surprising that they have been the subject of sustained scholarly interest in modern times. At least five collections of Ottoman archival documents dealing specifically with the Kızılbaş, the Bektaşis and other unorthodox groups have been published, re-edited, or translated in the past two decades.² Numerous popular histories as well as a growing number of scholarly studies have also been devoted to the subject, the most recent of which have tended to emphasize the role which centre–periphery relations, the formulation of authoritative categories of orthodoxy and heterodoxy and the establishment of an early modern state bureaucracy played in the persecution of Shiites in the empire’s formative period.³ Despite all this attention it is somewhat noteworthy

that Ottomanists have not brought more interest to bear on one of the empire's largest and best-documented heterodox populations, whose indigenous leaderships were consistently referred to as Kızılbaş in certain texts throughout the post-classical age and indeed well into the nineteenth century. The Twelver (Imami) Shiite communities in the mountain hinterlands of Tripoli, Sidon and Damascus – i.e., in Mount Lebanon, Jabal 'Amil and the Bekaa Valley, all in today's Lebanon – were integrated into the structure of Ottoman provincial government in the sixteenth century, with leading families such as the Hamadas and Harfushes acquiring tax farms and even formal recognition as *sancakbeyis* (district governors). In the later seventeenth century, however, Ottoman officials increasingly began to define them in sectarian terms whenever pursuing tax collection or punitive campaigns against them, while at the same time turning effective sovereignty in the area over to the Druze emirs of Sidon. Although successive foreign occupations between 1771 and 1840 each seemed to bring the promise of greater local enfranchisement, in effect the reaffirmation of central authority in the nineteenth-century reforms, the growing involvement of European powers in Lebanese communal affairs, and finally the exile of the Harfush emirs to Edirne in 1865 to all intents and purposes marked the end of the 'Kızılbaş' problem in Syria.

This essay traces the evolution of the rural Imami community of Syria in its rapport with the Ottoman state. After a survey of the region's incorporation and the co-optation of its tribal leaderships, it argues that the Shiites were liable to be categorized as 'Kızılbaş' not on account of a hypothetical connection to Iran, as is sometimes claimed in contemporary literature, but as a legal device in order to justify official violence over more prosaic matters such as brigandage and tax evasion. The most intense punitive campaign against the Syrian Kızılbaş coincided with an unprecedented thaw in relations with Safavid Iran in the late seventeenth century, while renewed hostilities with Iran coincided with the quasi-recognition of a 'Kızılbaş *mukataa*' (fiscal district) in Mount Lebanon in the early eighteenth. We conclude by suggesting that the monetarization and then the decentralization of provincial rule in the 'age of the *ayan*' (local notables) ultimately provides a better paradigm for understanding the Ottomans' position vis-à-vis the Syrian Shiites than the question of religious persecution or tolerance.

CONQUEST AND CO-OPTATION

The Ottoman conquest of Syria in 1516 was facilitated not only by the defection of a number of Mamluk officers but also by the quick submission of the region's most powerful Bedouin chiefs and other local notables to Selim I. The claim by later historians of Lebanon that an emir Fakhr al-Din Ma'n 'the First' likewise paid tribute and was therefore entrusted with authority to rule over the Druze and other tribes of the coastal highlands on the state's behalf has been shown to be a myth endowing the later Ma'n emirate with historical legitimacy. Rather, a letter preserved in the Topkapı Palace archives shows that among the first tribal leaders to offer their fealty to Selim in 1516 and entreat him to 'implement Islamic order and establish justice' in the area was in fact a scion of the Shiite Harfush family of Baalbek.⁴

Owing to the difficulties of asserting direct control in the mountainous hinterland, the Ottomans were quick to adopt the practice of tax farming by local notables. Tax cadastres and *timar* appointment registers indicate that the Harfushes and other Shiite

notable families, such as the Sa'bs of nearby Jabal 'Amil, held several tax concessions throughout the sixteenth century. At the same time, the *mühimme defterleri* (registers of imperial chancery decrees) also make clear to what extent the Ottomans struggled to maintain order in the region and repeatedly had to send out military expeditions against unruly Druze and Shiites. These expeditions were usually presented in terms of a struggle against rebel heretics, when in fact they had nothing to do with religion or politics *per se*. The Harfushes themselves were denounced as 'Revafiz' – the standard pejorative term for Twelver Shiite 'heretics' – after they attacked and plundered several villages in the Bekaa Valley in 1579, but the authorities were concerned above all with the resulting loss in taxes and indeed continued to rely on the Harfushes to govern Baalbek. Around the same time, one of the first chancery orders specifically against the 'Druze and Rafizis who are not of the four [orthodox Sunni] sects' in the province of Safad (northern Palestine and Jabal 'Amil) was sparked by their brigandage and illegal possession of firearms, rather than by their confessional identity, which at any rate was not news to the Ottomans.⁵

Whatever policy against Shiism Ebussuud and others might have framed seems to have had little to no influence on actual day-to-day administration in the Syrian provinces. The degree of Ottoman reliance on local intermediaries regardless of their confessional affiliation is illustrated by the Harfushes' recognition not only as *subaşı* (sergeant) or *emin* (commissioner) of the city of Baalbek but as local district governors as well. As early as 1568, Musa ibn Harfush was directed to lead a force of 1,000 archers and join the Ottoman campaign to Yemen, against the Zaydi Shiite imam no less, for which he would receive the *sancakbeyilik* of Sidon in return. It is not clear whether this in fact occurred, but in 1584 his son 'Ali was being referred to as emir or *bey* in official Ottoman correspondence and ranked in the provincial military hierarchy as governor of the desert *sancak* of Tadmur (Palmyra).⁶

By the following year 'Ali had also been appointed *sancakbeyi* of Homs, and seems, somewhat unbelievably, to have offered to take over the tax farms of his main competitors, the Druze Ma'ns of Sidon, if the whole region were reorganized and given to him as a full-blown *beylerbeyilik* (provincial commandership).⁷ Ottoman records do not indicate that he was actually made governor of Sidon, but according to the eighteenth-century traveller and historian Giovanni Mariti, the Sublime Porte did name him 'pasha of the Druze' and had several local chieftains deported to Istanbul specifically to prevent them from rallying to the Ma'ns in 1585. In reality, however, 'Ali Harfush himself remained vulnerable. The Ottomans had taken care to disarm his supporters as well, and after being forced to retreat into the mountain stronghold of Ghazir he was easily defeated by his Druze rivals after their return from exile.⁸ Thus, despite its limited consequences, 'Ali Harfush's stint as 'pasha' nonetheless underlines the extent to which the Shiite emirs were entrenched in the Ottoman administration of hinterland Syria in the later sixteenth century.

In his major biographical dictionary, the Damascene scholar al-Muhibbi (d. 1699) later qualified the Harfushes as 'extremist Shiites', with the exception of Musa Harfush, who succeeded his father after the latter's execution in 1590 and was supposedly 'the closest to Sunnism'.⁹ This has led Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn, whose detailed study on Ottoman provincial leaderships in Syria remains the standard in the field, to posit that the Ottomans 'must have suspected the Harfushes, whose "extremist" commitment to Shi'ism was well known, of being in contact with the Safawids of Persia,

with whom the Ottomans were soon to be at war again', and that when Musa became governor of Homs in 1592 he 'probably dissimulated Sunnism to gain favour with the Ottoman authorities, and to escape the fate of his father'.¹⁰

In fact, the chancery orders did not concern the Harfushes' confessional identity, let alone their purported ties to Iran, but only the new ways in which they were to extract several years' worth of back taxes from the district of Homs (though these in turn were later denounced as *bidatlar*, illegal innovations).¹¹ A unique, recently published *iltizam* (tax farm) register from the province of Damascus in the early seventeenth century further illustrates the basis of the Ottomans' rapport with the Shiites. Covering the years 1616 to 1635, the register details a growing competition between the Harfush emirs and the Druze Ma'n emirs of Sidon for tax collection concessions in the Bekaa Valley, where numerous sources of revenue were earmarked for the organization of the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca. Both the Shiites and the Druze routinely attacked, denounced and outbid each other in their contest to serve, as the register puts it, this primary objective of Ottoman *din ü devlet*. The Harfushes were temporarily shut out of the race in 1626, when their erstwhile partners, the janissary *ocak* (regiment) of Damascus, decided that the better-connected Druze might be able to produce more profits.¹²

THE IRANIAN CONNECTION

How did the Ottomans conceive of the Syrian Shiites' potential link to Safavid Iran? Modern historiography on Shiism in Syria under Ottoman rule has concentrated overwhelmingly on the migration of scholars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from Jabal 'Amil to Iran, where they helped establish Shiism as the state religion and often attained high office. Their success in Iran, as documented through their own writings and biographical dictionaries, has in turn served to highlight their marginality and supposed mistreatment back in the Ottoman empire. Salient and well-publicized events such as the execution of the legal scholar Zayn al-Din ibn 'Ali or the dissimulation by the Safavid *müctehid* Baha' al-Din al-'Amili of his Shiite identity during a visit to his native Syria appear to provide ample evidence for this. Historians working solely within the Arabic and Persian narrative tradition have thus conditioned a very pessimistic image of Shiism under Ottoman rule, theorizing that the persecution of Shiism was 'an official Ottoman priority' and expressing confidence that this perception will yet be borne out by undiscovered Ottoman chronicles and *mühimme* documents.¹³

This would indeed be an interesting discovery – given not only that none of the collections of Ottoman documents cited above, nor any of the Ottoman chronicles known thus far, nor the many modern studies of heterodoxy in the Ottoman empire have turned up any references to official, state-coordinated repressive measures against Shiite scholars, but also that the many references to known Syrian Shiites that do occur in the sources of this period consistently fail to connect them with the Kızılbaş question. In 1565, for example, the Sunni *muftis* of Damascus accused a colleague of corruption (*fesad*) and heresy (*rafz*), but were warned to 'guard against prejudice and zealotry' if an investigation proved this to be untrue. In 1581 the Sublime Porte issued orders to monitor closely 'some Rafizis from the east' who might try to travel to Damascus and Aleppo as pilgrims or merchants and 'mislead and corrupt some of the people of those areas who share their outlook', but significantly did not name

or inculcate the latter.¹⁴ During the *celali* rebellions, Yunus Harfush broke with his family and supported Canbulad Ali Paşa – who did actually have Safavid backing – in his attempt to seize control of Syria. However, this not only did not compromise the Harfushes' standing as tax farmers of Baalbek, but even enabled Yunus to demand compensation for damages incurred during the revolt and subsequently to become the Ottomans' point man in the region when the Druze emirs began to pose a greater threat. The Harfushes only appear to be mentioned in an Ottoman chronicle after being deprived of the governorship of Baalbek, in the context of the empire's increasingly vicious fight to dislodge the Safavids from Iraq in 1636. Following the heroic, dramatically narrated death of the *vali* of Damascus with his troops against the 'Kızılbaş swine' near Şehrizor that summer, his successor returned to Syria to at least rout the Harfushes and a thousand of their followers in the Bekaa – yet here again there is no linkage made between their rebelliousness and the empire's wider struggle against a Shiite foe.¹⁵

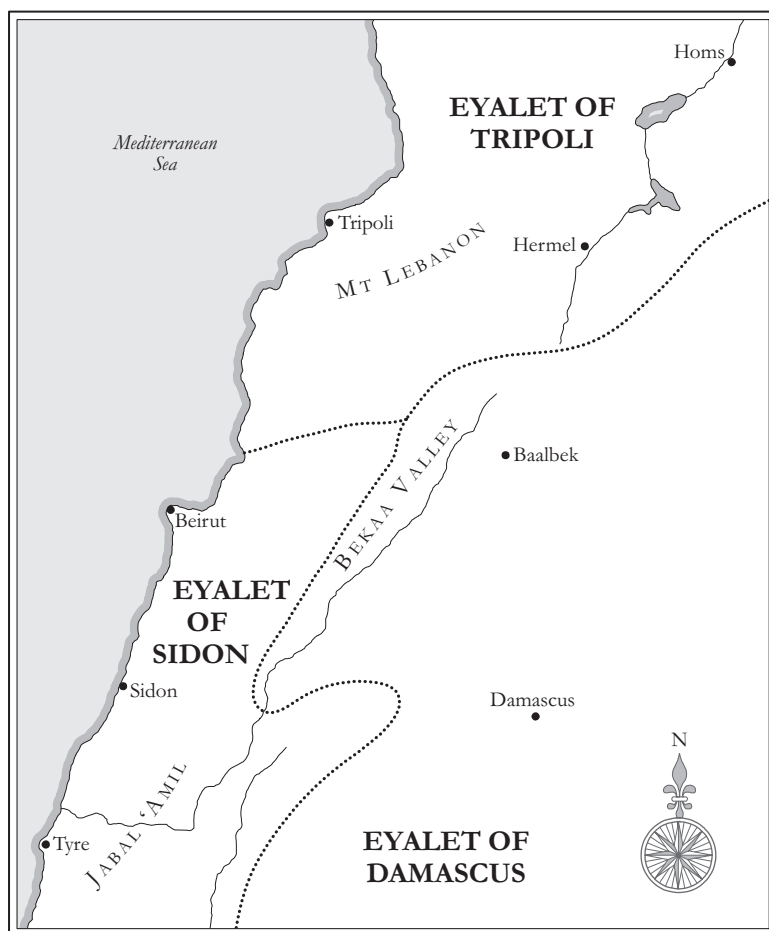
Murad IV's reconquest of Baghdad in 1638 eventually gave way to the longest period of peace in the history of Ottoman–Safavid relations. For commercial purposes the shahs found that there was no practical way of circumventing Aleppo and Izmir in order to reach the European market, and the trade in Iranian silk through the Ottoman empire peaked around 1700. Politically, the two sides began a regular exchange of embassies, and the Iranians pointedly refused to support a European coalition against the Ottomans in 1687, even helping to restore Ottoman control over Basra after a tribal rebellion there the following decade.¹⁶ It is thus noteworthy that the Ottomans began to label and prosecute Syrian Shiites as 'Kızılbaş' in precisely this period. In 1690 the Sublime Porte received a complaint from the religious notables of Tripoli that a family of local tax farmers, the Hamadas, was no longer content with dominating the region's Christian- and Druze-inhabited districts but had now also begun to usurp tax farms whose population was Sunni Muslim. The authorities were evidently aware that the Hamadas were Shiites, and indeed suspected them of collaborating with the Harfushes of the Bekaa Valley, who were also being targeted by a new punitive campaign at this time. Late the next year the government denounced the Hamadas for the first time as 'Rafizi Kızılbaş brigands' and ordered the governors of Tripoli, Damascus and Sidon to 'capture and punish' the Shiite heretics 'according to law'.¹⁷ When this did not happen, the government organized a more substantive campaign in early 1693 against 'the Kızılbaş sect that had appeared in the Tripoli region and settled in the highlands' and that was 'swallowing the income legally due to the treasury of Islam'.¹⁸

In fact, the Hamadas had held some of these farms, including those inhabited mainly by Sunnis, for over forty years. Like the Harfushes, their roots appear to go back into Mamluk times, and they had come to the attention of the Ottoman government as early as 1661. The 1693 punitive campaign, which ended with the Hamadas' defeat and dispersal a year later, is among the best-documented events in the history of Ottoman Shiism, recorded not only in several contemporary Arabic chronicles but also in dozens of *mühimme* orders sent to provincial authorities throughout Syria and Anatolia, instructing them to mobilize against the 'Kızılbaş' or to secure nearby port towns and desert roads against those attempting to flee. Perhaps somewhat more surprisingly, it is also described in the chronicle of Defterdar Sarı Mehmed (d. 1717) and, on the basis of his account, in the official history of the Ottoman *vakanüvis* (official historiographer) Raşid Efendi

(d. 1735).¹⁹ (Neither version provides any detail beyond that conveyed in the *mühimme* registers, raising the question of whether Sarı Mehmed may not have relied simply on the then available chancery documents for his story.) Ironically, at exactly the same moment that the Sublime Porte was preparing its last great war against a ‘Kızılbaş’ rebellion, in February 1692, an Iranian ambassador arrived in Edirne, where the Ottoman court was in residence, with a message of congratulations on Ahmed II’s accession and numerous lavish gifts from Shah Sulayman I, marking a historic high point in diplomatic relations between the two empires.²⁰

Why are the Hamadas referred to as Kızılbaş in these sources? Although Lebanese historiography has often sought to depict Shiites in general as ethnically Iranian, there is little reason to doubt the family’s nomenclature and claims of descent from an Iraqi Arab tribe, and the Ottoman orders do not identify them with Anatolian Türkmen or accuse them of rebelling out of complicity with the Safavids.²¹ Rather, an answer is suggested in some of the orders sent to the provincial authorities in Syria in the spring of 1694, in which the campaign ‘to root out and extirpate’ the Shiites is characterized as being ‘in accordance with a noble *fetva* promulgated last year’ – i.e., around the time the Hamadas were first characterized as Kızılbaş.²² No legal ruling specifically regarding the Hamadas has turned up in the chancery archives or in the court registers of Tripoli, and it is likely that the reference here is simply to a rehash of Ebussuud’s famous *fetva*, which had formed the basis for the empire’s persecution of Shiites as Kızılbaş heretics since the sixteenth century.²³ In any event, the fact that the term was first applied *ad hoc* in the context of a government punitive campaign suggests that it should be seen as an attempt to classify the Hamadas topically as illegal rebels rather than to fundamentally question their ethnic origins or religious sympathies.

That the categorization of the Hamadas as ‘Kızılbaş’ was above all a legal device is further suggested by the fact that this term was now consistently used also for other Shiites in the region whenever they fell foul of the state authorities. Mushrif ‘Ali al-Saghir, for example, the leading Shiite lord of Jabal ‘Amil in the province of Sidon, was characterized as ‘the refuge of villainy for the Kızılbaş bandits’ after he hosted some of the Hamadas who had fled Mount Lebanon; in 1706 the government in turn gave orders to block the trails leading north so that local Shiites, ‘the Kızılbaş in the Sidon-Beirut mountains’, could not go to help the Hamadas in a renewed conflict with the state in Tripoli.²⁴ In 1722, the Hamadas were once again in trouble with the authorities and fled to take refuge ‘on land belonging to the Kızılbaş known as Ismail Harfush in Baalbek’, although the Harfush emir had just been on pilgrimage with the Syrian caravan the previous year and was not himself explicitly targeted by the order. His sons Haydar and Husayn, whose battle for control over the Baalbek district, and especially its *vakıf* incomes, repeatedly attracted the attention of the central government over the next decades, were also characterized as Kızılbaş. However, owing to their protection by the Shihabi emirs, as well as by the chief black eunuch (*kızlar ağası*) in Istanbul, the government was essentially powerless to remove them.²⁵ And, finally, the death of the famous shaykh Nasif Nassar and the annihilation of his forces by Cezzar Ahmed Paşa in southern Lebanon in 1781, which for all intents and purposes marked the end of Jabal ‘Amil’s autonomy under Ottoman rule, was also celebrated as a defeat of the ‘Kızılbaş’.²⁶



Map 3 Western Syria: eighteenth-century *eyalet* divisions

THE ‘KIZILBAŞ MUKATAA’

If the term ‘Kızılbaş’ was first applied to the Hamadas circumstantially in order to legitimize an unprecedented campaign of state violence, it soon began to be used as a general and increasingly meaningless pejorative label. In the eighteenth century the empire simply did not have the means or the will to follow through the political course that the official rhetoric against illegal Shiite heretics would have dictated, preferring to relinquish effective authority in the Syrian hinterland and other provinces to local or localized Ottoman *ayan* dynasties. In 1698 the Hamadas were reinstated in Tripoli through the good offices of the Shihabi emirs, who had just recently replaced the Ma’ns as the premier tax farmers and overlords of the Druze community (though the Shihabis themselves were actually Sunnis and later converted to Maronitism). Ottoman fiscal records from this period quite matter of factly list the *mukataas* in the mountains above Tripoli as being ‘in the care of shaykh Ismail the Kızılbaş’ or as being ‘farmed, since the days of their forefathers, to someone called shaykh Isma‘il of the Kızılbaş under the guarantee of emir Haydar Shihabi ibn Ma‘n’. In 1721 the government complained that the ‘Kızılbaş faction’ owed three years’ worth of back taxes and was constantly oppressing the highland districts, but was always being reappointed nonetheless on account of the Shihabis’ intervention.²⁷ The following year, just before the Ottomans took the opportunity presented by the Safavid dynasty’s collapse to embark on a campaign to capture Iranian territory, which would again be justified in terms of a war against irreligion, the government explicitly noted the existence of ‘the Kızılbaş *mukataa* annexed to the province of Tripoli and constituting a tax farm in its entirety’.²⁸ While the Ottoman state could not countenance ideologically the existence of a ‘heretical’ fiscal territory or institution, the increasingly common, pragmatic use of the term to describe local administrative realities suggests that the authorities no longer had any advantage in denouncing the Syrian Shiites *per se*.

Administrative documents from the region indicate that local Ottoman officials were also keenly aware of the limits of their authority vis-à-vis the Shiite enclave. According to the Islamic court records of Hama, the *mustahfizan* troops stationed in Musayliha castle on the road between Tripoli and Beirut repeatedly petitioned the imperial council to increase the stipends due to them from provincial revenues, pointing out that ‘the said castle lies on the border [*hudud*] with the Kızılbaş’.²⁹ A separate entry in the court records of Tripoli concerns the appointment of a new *bölükbaşı* (company commander) to Musayliha, whose principal responsibility lay in ‘protecting travellers passing that spot on the road leading to Sidon and Egypt from the Kızılbaş brigands’.³⁰ In 1729 the government forwarded a warning to the governor of Sidon that ‘the tax farmer of Jubayl, Isma‘il Hamada the Kızılbaş’, was likely to revolt and ‘cause harm to the tax farms and oppress the righteous’ as soon as the governor of Tripoli had left on the annual pilgrimage relief column. A few years later both governors were apprised that ‘the Kızılbaş shaykh’ was constantly providing bandits from the entire region with a safe haven from the law in his district.³¹ None of these denunciations, however, gave rise to military action against the Shiites, nor are they linked with the statutory *fetva* against the Kızılbaş that would implicitly have enjoined such action.

Ironically, the relative autarchy the Kızılbaş *mukataa* enjoyed under Ottoman rule proved in the long run also to be its undoing. By abandoning direct control over the rural hinterland, the imperial government was also paving the way for more powerful,

better connected *ayan* such as the Shihabis of Sidon to invest in an increasing number of tax farms beyond their home province, to rally the local Maronite Christian community under their protection, and finally to extend their 'emirate' throughout the highland region that would retrospectively be defined as 'Lebanon'.³² In 1759, the Maronite population began a series of uprisings against the Hamadas that ended with the intervention of Yusuf Shihabi and the formal transfer of all their former landholdings by the court of Tripoli four years later. Interestingly, this entire episode seems to have escaped the notice of the Sublime Porte, with the one exception of an attack on a Christian village that was signalled to the governor of Tripoli in 1762 and in which the 'Hamada thugs were of one mind and in accord' with the Harfush emirs of Baalbek and had 'gathered a large group of Kızılbaş riff-raff under their command'.³³ In the years following, however, the Hamadas and almost all the Shiite tribes of Mount Lebanon were driven into exile in the northern Bekaa Valley, where they are still established today. It is perhaps telling of the Ottoman imperial authorities' general loss of control over the provincial periphery in the eighteenth century that the final elimination of the 'Kızılbaş *mukataa*' in Syria occurred virtually without their knowledge or participation.

BETWEEN FOREIGN INTERFERENCE AND OTTOMAN REFORM

The extension of the Shihabi emirs' dominance over Mount Lebanon, the Bekaa and Jabal 'Amil and the subjection or violent displacement of the local Shiite communities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are covered in detail in the conventional narrative accounts of Lebanon's history.³⁴ In Ottoman sources, on the other hand, the Shiites are really only mentioned in relation to the occasional governor rebellions and military irruptions that were beginning to undermine Ottoman sovereignty in the region. But since their only consistent aim in this time of profound change was to continue and try to secure some measure of autonomy vis-à-vis more powerful actors, the Kızılbaş now begin to appear, depending on the context, as either enemies or allies of the state. The Shiites' occupation of Sidon in 1771 in support of the major wartime rebellion of Egypt's Muhammad Abu'l-Dhahab and Zahir al-'Umar of Acre occurred at perhaps the nadir of Ottoman imperial power and does not seem to be noted in any chancery sources; the description of their victory over the governor of Damascus and the Shihabi emirs given in Ahmed Cevdet's history appears, much like his overall summary of politics in 'Mount Lebanon', to be based entirely on local Christian sources.³⁵

The situation was different in 1799, when another invasion from Egypt – that of Napoleon Bonaparte's forces – was halted at Acre by Cezzar Ahmed Paşa. The government in Istanbul early received intelligence reports from the area that 'the Druze have until now not leaned toward or followed the infidels. Though some of the Kızılbaş were inclined toward the wretched unbelievers, having witnessed their defeat and weakness they have also regretted this and given up on them'.³⁶ However, orders given later in the summer are unequivocal in their condemnation of the Shiites and offer insight into Ottoman attitudes towards the non-orthodox subject population at this juncture. Noting that, initially, 'the Revafız were established on the lands of

my noble state, ploughing and planting and earning their livelihoods in various ways, and were thus beneficial and sided with the exalted state', the document then accuses them of having provided aid and supplies to the French; for their 'treason and base ingratitude' they were now 'to be reckoned among the enemy'. In an echo of Ebus-suud's still valid ruling, their blood is declared to be licit and 'their goods and livestock to be plundered according to law and their women and children enslaved'. Yet it is noteworthy that the orders in this case did not use the religious-legally charged term 'Kızılbaş', possibly because the equally heretical Druze were again being held up as models of obedience and loyalty toward the state.³⁷

Over the next years the Shiites and other heterodox groups were often invoked in chancery correspondence only in terms of their perceived political reliability. In 1803 Cezzar Ahmed, who had temporarily fallen from official favour, undertook to tarnish his rival Abdallah Paşa of the 'Azm family as an ally of the Druze, Kızılbaş and Nusayris and was eventually rewarded by being reappointed to the governorship of Damascus.³⁸ Cezzar's successor, Süleyman Paşa 'the Just', made a point of reconciling with the Shiites in order to demarcate himself from his predecessor, 'the Butcher', and in 1822 another Abdallah Paşa of Sidon reinstated Nasif Nassar's son Faris and other shaykhs in their traditional tax fiefs in Jabal 'Amil to win their support in his bid to seize the governorship of Damascus by force. The defending *vali* of Damascus, Derviş Paşa, as well as other local officials, reported with alarm that the 'Druze, Nusayri and Kızılbaş factions' had joined the rebellion, with the 'Kızılbaş army' even threatening the *hajj* route near Homs, but since 'subduing them through warfare is futile', and as some Druze clans had already been won over, the *vali* suggested 'sparing neither money nor presents' to conciliate the other groups 'and pull them over little by little' to the Damascene side.³⁹ Just like the Druze, however, the local 'Kızılbaş' did not have a single, clear-cut position during the rebellion anyway. Only the previous year the Shiites of Mount Lebanon (Tripoli) had backed their Maronite neighbours in an *'ammiye* (popular uprising) against Abdallah Paşa and his ally the Druze emir; in late June, meanwhile, Derviş Paşa could note with satisfaction that emirs Husayn and Salman Harfush, certainly the most powerful Shiite figures in the region (though they are tellingly not identified as such), had agreed to join the Ottoman cause.⁴⁰

These documents appear to be the last that refer to the Shiites in Syria (or anywhere else in the empire) as Kızılbaş. The final Egyptian invasion by Ibrahim Paşa ten years later, in 1832, heralded a new epoch, especially for non-Muslim and heterodox populations, by extending them at least a theoretical legal equality and generally transforming the relationship between the modernizing state and the individual social and economic subject. However, whereas the Shiites had welcomed previous governor rebellions precisely as a means to reinforce their own autonomy, Ibrahim Paşa's intrusive, centralizing reforms and his decision to ally with Bashir Shihabi now only engendered opposition on their part. As early as 1834 the leading Harfush emirs, as well as members of the Hamada family, were in contact with the Ottoman expeditionary commander Mehmed Reşid Paşa to coordinate the resistance against the Egyptians.⁴¹ Despite efforts by some members of the Harfush family to collaborate with Ibrahim Paşa in order to retain control of Baalbek, by 1839 the Shiites as a whole were playing a leading part in the uprising that would break his grip on the coastal highlands and help return the region to Ottoman rule.⁴²

In the following years, Ottoman rule consisted for the most part in the futile search for a power-sharing agreement between the Maronite and Druze communities of Lebanon that would be agreeable to their respective French and British backers. In 1845, foreign minister Şekib Efendi appointed a twelve-member *meclis* (council) to serve each of the two semi-autonomous *kaim-makamiyes* (district deputyships) that had been established under European auspices (but which were in fact similar to the consultative councils being introduced in other provinces). These summarize well the Shiites' ambiguous status in the reform era: while each of the six locally dominant sects could name both a judge (*kadi*) and a counsellor to the *meclis*, the Shiites had to be represented by a Sunni judge as the state did not recognize any Shiite judicial authority.⁴³ The Harfushes, meanwhile, returned to dominate the Bekaa after the Shihabi emirate's demise but were now confronted by France's ever more ardent defence of the Christian community's interests. Ottoman foreign ministry papers, for instance, detail the *komisyon* called in 1856–7 to investigate Salman Harfush's various transgressions against the French protégé Yusuf Juday and others, some of which already dated back almost a decade.⁴⁴

Banished initially to Crete, the Harfush emirs were permitted to return to Syria in 1860 after humbly petitioning the sultanate, in a letter harking back to earlier notions of personal loyalty and patronage, to consider 'their separation from their homeland and their longing for their sons and families after so many years'.⁴⁵ While the Shiites then largely stayed aloof from the sectarian violence between Christians and Druze later that year, Salman Harfush was declared an outlaw when he sided with the Yusuf Beğ Karam insurrection and died captive in Damascus a few years later.⁴⁶ The rest of the family was banished to Edirne in 1865; the last trace of the Harfushes in Ottoman documentation concerns their appointment to various sinecures in the civil bureaucracy in Istanbul towards the end of the century.⁴⁷

CONCLUSION

The 'Kızılbaş' of Syria add to our understanding of Ottoman Shiism in that they give a name and a face to a phenomenon which is almost totally anonymous elsewhere in the empire. First used in Ottoman chronicles and chancery documents of the sixteenth century to denote an ill-defined but clearly problematic tribal-cum-religious movement spreading out from Anatolia, the application of the term to the Hamadas, Harfushes and other already well-known Twelver Shiite notables of Lebanon casts a different light on the Ottomans' perception of heterodoxy. After the conquest in 1516, these families were often co-opted into the Ottoman provincial administration, as *mukataacıs* or even as governors of secondary *sancaks* such as Tadmur and Homs, with fiscal and police responsibilities over a vast section of the Syrian coastal highlands. Between 1691 and 1822 the Sublime Porte occasionally chose to invoke Ebussuud's *fetva* and castigate them as Kızılbaş heretics over more mundane offences such as tax evasion and brigandage, but even these documents make clear that the authorities saw them neither as connected with the Anatolian tribes nor as supporters of Iran. In the eighteenth century the central state acquiesced in the near autonomy of the coastal hinterland under the rule of local notable dynasties, still regardless of their confessional affiliation, and began to use the term 'Kızılbaş' less as a call to arms or a legal justification for killing Shiites than as a mildly derogatory ethnographic identifier.

The changing paradigms of Ottoman provincial administration – the monetarization and privatization of government office beginning in the sixteenth century, the devolution of power to local or localized *ayan*, and finally the attempt at centralizing reforms in the nineteenth century – thus probably provide a better framework for understanding the fate of Syria's Shiites than the question of religious orientation or persecution. For much of the Ottoman period, these Kızılbaş, the inevitable occasions of violence between tribalists and government agents notwithstanding, were fully integrated in the state administrative system in the region. Their marginalization in the modern era at the hands of local competitors acting in concert with European imperial interests, far from being peculiar to their situation as Shiites, might in turn be seen as expressive of the empire's development as a whole.

NOTES

- * I am grateful to Sylvain Cornac for his help in procuring documents and to the participants of the 2010 Great Lakes Ottomanist Workshop (GLOW) in Montréal for their feedback and suggestions.
- 1 Hinz 1936: 75–7; Mélikoff 1975: 51; Veinstein 2005b.
 - 2 Ahmet Refik 1994; Öz 1995; Savaş 2000; Şener 2002; Şener and Hezarfen 2002.
 - 3 See Imber 1979; Zarinebaf-Shahr 1997.
 - 4 Akgündüz 1990–96: IV, 538; on the Druze emirs, see Salibi 1973, 1988.
 - 5 BOA, Mühimme Defterleri [MD], 40:227 (#512); MD 40:238 (#548); MD 46:358 (#830).
 - 6 BOA, MD 7:409 (#1174); MD 52:32 (#73); MD 53:73 (#197).
 - 7 BOA, MD 50:102 (#619); MD 61:104 (#254).
 - 8 Cited in Worbs 1799: 140–42.
 - 9 al-Muhibbi (n.d.): IV, 432.
 - 10 Abu-Husayn 1985: 131–4.
 - 11 BOA, MD 66:79 (#166); MD 67:12 (#18); MD 69:4 (#6); MD 71:17 (#35); MD 71:116 (#237); MD 71:332 (#629).
 - 12 Nagata *et al.* 2006: esp. 139, 209–11, 257, 260; analysed in more detail in Winter 2010: 54–5.
 - 13 Stewart 2008.
 - 14 BOA, MD 6:498 (#1086); MD 6:500 (#1092); MD 42:176 (#553).
 - 15 Naima 2007: II, 836–9.
 - 16 Faroqhi 1994: 502–5; Longrigg 1925: 84, 90, 121.
 - 17 BOA, MD 100:74 (#277, 278); MD 100:139 (#531); MD 102:61 (#274); MD 102:67 (#315); MD 102:180–81 (#708, 709).
 - 18 BOA, MD 104:155 (#662, 663); see also BOA, Ali Emiri, II., Ahmed 392.
 - 19 Sarı Mehmed Paşa 1995: 429–30, 484–5; Raşid Mehmed Efendi 1865–6: II, 194–5, 225–6.
 - 20 Winter 2000: 230–1.
 - 21 al-Amin 1996: II, 582; cf. Abu-Husayn 1999: 244; Abu-Husayn 2004: 9–10, 144.
 - 22 BOA, MD 105:5 (#10); MD 105:6 (#17) and MD 105:9 (#28) (identical); MD 105:10–11 (#32).
 - 23 Ebussuud Efendi 1998: 174–6; Imber 1997a: 5, 74, 85–9.
 - 24 BOA, MD 108:81 (#317); MD 110:499 (#2285); MD 108:259 (#1031); MD 114:723 (#3237).
 - 25 BOA, MD 130:415 (#1231); MD 162:413–14 (#1173); BOA, Cevdet Evkaf 9176.
 - 26 BOA, MD 179:172–3 (#474); Cevdet Paşa 1891–2: III, 104–6.
 - 27 BOA, Maliyeden Müdevver 3347:4; 3348:3; MD 130:117–19 (#151–4).
 - 28 BOA, MD 130:415 (#1231); on the 1723 Azerbaijan campaign, see Longrigg 1925: 130–34.

- 29 Damascus, Markaz al-Watha'iq al-Tarikhiyya, Hama Islamic Court Records 42:212 (#494),
42:392 (#786).
30 Tripoli, Qasr Nawfal, Islamic Court Register 11:88.
31 BOA, MD 135:387 (#1336); MD 147:84 (#313); Cevdet Dahiliye 10864.
32 Winter 2010: 156–64, 168–75.
33 BOA, MD 162:413–14 (#1173); Tripoli, Islamic Court Register 17:145–6.
34 al-Zayn 1979; Abi Haidar 1988: 261, 43–59; Hamada 2008: I, 323–34, 507–19; II, 367–90.
35 Cevdet Paşa 1891–2: I, 313–19, 334, 338; cf. Abu-Husayn 1991.
36 BOA, Hatt-ı Hümayun (HH) 6461.
37 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye 14612.
38 BOA, HH 3784i; see also HH 56405.
39 BOA, HH 20641a-b, HH 20642, HH 20647.
40 BOA, HH 20653.
41 Rustum 1986–7: II, 480 (#3819), 499 (#3915), 501 (#3924).
42 Ibid.: IV, 127 (#5900), 171 (#5936), 182 (#5960), 386–7 (#6342), 399–401 (#6360), 405
(#6371).
43 Havemann 1983: 171, 179–80, 348; Farah 2000: 438.
44 BOA, Hariciye Mektubi Kalemî 35/16; Hariciye Nezareti Tercüman Odası 197/36.
45 BOA, Divan (Beylikçi) Kalemî 147/90.
46 Kerr 1959: 79, 83–4; BOA, İrade Dahiliye 38239.
47 BOA, Cevdet Dahiliye 5142; Dahiliye Mektubi Kalemî 1668/78, 2064/99, 2065/83.