


argument that “Iranian leaders prosecuted the war by relying on all the tools at their disposal, which included both faith ... and firepower” (p. 191). Although I do not necessarily disagree with this conclusion, I believe other sources need to be consulted as well for it to have sufficient support.

This is my main qualm with an otherwise praiseworthy book. For the book to provide not just an analysis of the IRGC’s historiography but also, as stated early on, a factual report of “[its] roles in the Iran-Iraq War and that conflict as a whole” (p. 5), an analysis of the IRGC’s highly ideological self-productions is a great first step, yet insufficient. Other IRGC productions that have not been used in this volume, for instance, include many documents that scholars can use independently of the producers’ interpretations. Iran’s regular army has also been prolific in publishing and making available original documents as well as military analyses that complement and sometimes correct the IRGC’s selective representation of battlefield realities. Consulting such complementary sources would help us better assess the IRGC’s retrospective self-image as a passionate yet professionally minded military by, for instance, revealing how they sometimes actively avoided professionalism and insisted on the alleged revolutionary way of fighting, or how they sometimes downplay the Iranian army’s role in providing the required professional planning, equipment, and backup while the IRGC lacked it. Regardless, Tracy Samuel’s book will be an undeniable resource for future research in this direction, as the source it meticulously explores is still one of the major published historiographies in Farsi.

In addition to laying the grounds for an engaged study of sources produced in Iran, *The Unfinished History of the Iran-Iraq War* offers an important analytical path forward, as well. Tracey Samuel demonstrates in great detail that in the Revolutionary Guards’ self-perception, religious ideological motivation and material concerns about the conduct of war are complementary assets. Faith fuels motivation and provides meaning, while firepower propels the actual battle. Using other sources to document the actuality of this balance could also reveal how it worked in practice, addressing the age-old contradiction between revolutionary passion and professionalism, between loyalty and competence. Did the IRGC differ from other revolutionary militias in how it combined faith and firepower? Were the Revolutionary Guards able to reach a balanced fusion, one that propelled them to the heights of power in Iran’s political system? Or did they follow the historically tested path of taming revolutionary passion—tied to Shi’i faith, in this case—in the service of professionalization? I believe that the IRGC is a rich case for studying this dilemma, and Tracy Samuel’s book provides invaluable material for anyone thinking about it.

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Spiritual Subjects: Central Asian Pilgrims and the Ottoman Hajj at the End of Empire. Lâle Can (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020). Pp. 272. \$85.00 cloth, \$25.00 paper. ISBN: 9781503610170

Robert D. Crews , Department of History, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA (rcrews@stanford.edu)

Spiritual Subjects: Central Asian Pilgrims and the Ottoman Hajj at the End of Empire is a highly innovative and creative exploration of the hajj and its multilayered contexts in the late Ottoman Empire. While not neglecting the religious facets of the hajj and its practitioners’



Sufi imaginings, in particular, the book ranges widely and expertly across numerous themes, historical fields, and geographies. A primary focus is on the experiences, aspirations, and hardships of Central Asian travelers, mostly from Russian- and Chinese-ruled Turkestan. Crucially, *Spiritual Subjects* goes beyond reconstructing the politics of inter-imperial mobility to explore the pilgrimage as a more open-ended form of migration and to reconstruct the complex politics of extraterritoriality, subjecthood, and legal nationality.

As Can convincingly shows, the circulation and, frequently, the settlement of foreign pilgrims in Istanbul and elsewhere presented the Ottoman government with a host of challenges, not least because these pilgrims had access to an international legal system that positioned them as potential protégés of European colonial powers with extraterritorial authority. The Ottoman response to shifting geopolitical pressures was thus a key factor shaping the trajectory of the hajj. Multiple states competed to gain political and economic leverage by offering protection to pilgrims, while the sultan sought to counter these claims by asserting his role as a universal caliph and protector of these populations. Meanwhile, the bureaucracy worked to undermine legal maneuvering that might further constrain imperial authority. In Can's productive framing of the hajj, a metaphysical journey intersects with multifaceted conflicts about pilgrims' legal standing and nationality.

Moving across spatial and temporal scales, Can skillfully brings these multiple narratives together by interweaving and juxtaposing disparate themes, sources, and analytical methods. These include a microhistory of a Central Asian hajji named Mirim Khan in Chapter 1 and a "bottom-up history" of a Sufi lodge in the Ottoman capital in Chapter 2 (p. 29). The story then pivots in Chapter 3 to a reconstruction of legal cases involving Central Asian pilgrims navigating Ottoman courts to claim particular privileges based on their status as foreigners under European colonial protection. Chapter 4 centers on an examination of petitions seeking assistance from the Ottoman sultan, while the fifth and final chapter explores the very localized and particular circumstances in which Central Asians became Ottomans in the early twentieth century.

One of the most striking features of this study is its grounding in an eclectic and challenging body of sources, which Can thoughtfully mines to illustrate the many arguments that structure the narrative. For instance, the book offers a nuanced and detailed account of the hajj in the era of colonial rule and of the steamship and railroad through a close reading of a text sketching one hajji's arduous route from Tashkent to Ottoman Mecca. Written in Turki (Chagatai) and published in lithograph editions between 1907 and 1915, Mirim Khan's narrative stresses the journey's religious dimensions, which Can interprets as the reflection of "a particularly mystical view of the hajj" and as "a response to its reconfiguration through new cities and experiences" (p. 43). Istanbul takes center stage in this text. It focuses on the imperial glory of the capital and, in a stylized and flattering manner, accents its Sunni heritage in describing its shrines, relics, and mosques, as well as the awesome power of the sultan as ghazi, a "holy warrior" (p. 49). Nonetheless, as Can emphasizes, this account of the hajj operates on multiple planes. More than a travelogue, Khan's work "should be read as part of a Sufi tradition that promoted mobility on the path to enlightenment" (p. 58).

Can applies the lens of microhistorical analysis again in focusing on a single Sufi lodge in Istanbul, the Sultantepe Özbekler Tekkesi, as "a microcosm of relations between Central Asians and Ottomans" and as a place where pilgrims formed networks with locals and frequently took up avenues for naturalization as Ottomans (p. 68). Registers in a private collection of lodge documents permit Can to reconstruct the worlds of its past visitors and inhabitants, "Bukharans, Andijanians, Kashgaris, and Afghans," among them (p. 71). Authorities at the lodge recorded the names, places of origin, ages, occupations, and movements of their guests. At the same time, they monitored the conduct of visitors on behalf of the state. Rowdy pilgrims, drinkers, and sexual harassers faced expulsion. Beyond regulating the movement of these foreigners, government officials also used the lodge to demonstrate the sultan's care for his coreligionists. "By connecting new arrivals to employment,

health care, lodging, spiritual life, and social activities—the constituent elements of a (trans) regional network,” Can argues, the lodge forged ties among “diasporic communities anchored in a familiar religious ethos” (p. 93).

Once on Ottoman soil, Central Asians were more than religious pilgrims. Many claimed the status of British and Russian subjects, which, in theory, permitted them to take advantage of capitulatory privileges in legal disputes with Ottoman subjects and one another. Drawing upon Ottoman Foreign Ministry and other imperial archives, and highlighting the role of geopolitical competition in the conferral of extraterritoriality, Can examines how the decades-long struggle to define legal nationality and sovereignty in the Ottoman context affected foreign Muslims who had settled in the empire. Can concludes that Ottoman authorities managed to constrain the efforts of litigants claiming to be protégés of a European state by advancing the sultan’s claim as caliphal guardian of these populations and by invoking international legal principles.

Analyzing petitions that Bukharans, Kashgaris, and others sent to the government, Can concentrates on their claims to be “subjects of the caliph” who merited protection and material assistance (p. 126). Petitioners “pragmatically used an Islamic vocabulary that prompted Ottomans to action,” while the state increasingly shifted to a position of wariness about the dangers accompanying this mobile and potentially uncontrollable population: “[T]here was too much at stake for unchecked mobility: jurisdictional sovereignty, public health and order, and the material burdens on a bankrupt empire engaged in multiple wars and conflicts” (p. 146). By the early twentieth century, Can contends, the caliphal responsibility to aid pilgrims had become a considerable burden, and the government sought to curtail the hajj and impose greater control over pilgrims, even working with Russian authorities to repatriate Muslims to Central Asia. Still, by the outbreak of the First World War, as Can shows, the Ottoman state had not fully resolved all of the challenges of managing pilgrims and of establishing clear parameters defining legal nationality. Plenty of foreign Muslims managed to settle in Ottoman territory, she notes, without the trouble of jurisdictional jockeying, resort to protégé status, or even of formal naturalization. Some became Ottoman nationals; others did not.


Moving between microhistory and geopolitics and the investigation of interregional migration and local legal disputes, Can makes a forceful case against the reductionist scholarly tendency to reduce Ottoman dealings with Central Asians and others to Pan-Islamic or Pan-Turkic politics. Her subtle readings of these disparate sources point instead to the seemingly endless varieties of engagement that Central Asian pilgrims might have with the Ottoman world. A singular strength of this work is its openness to embracing the complexity, even the messiness, and variety of these hajjis’ lives and of their contingent embedding in the Ottoman setting. Importantly, *Spiritual Subjects* sustains a very capacious understanding of the hajj as far more than a religious rite or form of mobility. “Visiting the tomb of a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, finding work in a coffeehouse, or being treated for illness at an Ottoman hospital for the Muslim poor,” Can argues, “were just as much a part of the experience of modern hajj as was quarantine or obtaining mobility documents” (p. 28).

That said, traversing this heterogeneous and difficult source base may give rise, depending upon one’s definition of politics, to some interpretive tensions. Can’s pilgrims qua litigants tend to appear as self-interested actors who are “pragmatic,” “expedient,” and in search of “the most advantageous legal affiliation” that would “maximize the benefits available to them because that was how things were done” (p. 33). Such descriptions are frequently paired with the insistence that asserting a claim to nationality or protection should not be confused with expressions of political allegiance or loyalty (p. 124). By this account, all of the pilgrims’ activities swept under the rubric of the hajj, then, seem to be essentially apolitical. To be sure, the texts that Can perceptively analyzes may not be the most revealing guide to what we might call the political imaginations of her subjects. Still, some readers might wonder whether alternative formulations might be viable.

I offer this last consideration more as a speculative reflection than a criticism. *Spiritual Subjects* is a masterful study of deep learning and analytical sophistication. It bridges Ottoman, Russian, Chinese, Islamic, and global history subfields with grace, style, and creativity, presenting novel and important insights on a strikingly wide and diverse set of themes.

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Negotiating Empire in the Middle East: Ottomans and Arab Nomads in the Modern Era, 1840–1914. M. Talha Çiçek (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021). Pp. 256. \$99.99 cloth. ISBN: 9781316518083

Nora Elizabeth Barakat , Department of History, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA
(nbarakat@stanford.edu)

Talha Çiçek's recent monograph is an important archival achievement. Through meticulous attention to the British, French, and especially the Ottoman imperial archives, Çiçek uncovers important and previously unstudied dynamics of the relationship between the Ottoman government and two large bedouin groups, the Shammar and Anizah, who inhabited the Syrian interior and Iraq in the 19th century. The book illuminates crucial shifts in Ottoman policies and tactics, especially with regard to settlement, and bedouin involvement in and encounters with the Ottoman military. Çiçek's book contains an unprecedented level of detailed research in this field, especially around military and tax policies and the politics of their implementation.

The book includes three sections. The first and second lay out Çiçek's historical argument that Ottoman policy toward bedouin shifted fundamentally in the 1870s, especially after the Russo-Ottoman war and the Treaty of Berlin. In the first two-chapter section, Çiçek argues that in the 1840s, "when the modern Ottoman state began to function" (36), there was frequent conflict between the Shammar and Anizah on one hand and Ottoman officials on the other over pastureland, which Ottoman officials wanted to repurpose as agricultural land to increase tax revenue and finance the Tanzimat reforms. This conflict eventually led to a consolidation of the Ottoman military position on the desert fringe, including the construction of forts and the strengthening of regional military forces. Çiçek also shows that during this period the central government replaced irregular troops with regular military forces to guard new settlements, especially of immigrants and refugees.

The second section of the book focuses on the 1870–1900 period, in which Çiçek argues that the consolidated military position constructed after the 1840s as well as negative experiences with forced settlement led to official compromise on plans to push the Shammar and Anizah into the desert or fundamentally change their lifestyle by force. With the Ottoman position weakened on the global interimperial stage, the regime also was keen to retain the loyalty of important bedouin elites. In Çiçek's telling, it was in this context that Shammar and Anizah sheikhs became "partners of the empire," aiding in imperial expansion efforts while maintaining mobile lifeways and control over pastureland. In the context of this new configuration of power, most bedouin elites stopped collecting protection taxes from settled villages, supporting the Ottoman regime's revenue prerogative, but retained much of their control over land as well as their mobility.