Genocidal Campaigns during the Ottoman Era: The *Firmān*[1] of Mīr-i-Kura against the Yazidi Religious Minority in 1832–1834

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This article examines books and works of locals and Western travellers in which historical evidence has been used by the current author to construct a narrative of the Yazidi genocides. The sources examined describe what the Ottoman and Kurdish princes were doing to the Yazidis at a time when genocide was not defined in legal terms. The Kurdish princes' firmāns *(genocidal campaigns) stripped the Yazidi people of much of their land and resulted in thousands of deaths. These genocidal campaigns in the mid-nineteenth century had all the features of a modern genocide. This article engages with such military campaigns against Yazidis by focusing on the firmān of Mīr (prince) Muḥammad Pāshā Rawwānduzī (nicknamed Mīr-i-Kura) in 1832–1834, which targeted Yazidi regions from Erbil to Sinjar. The resulting firmāns deeply impacted Yazidi collective memory and identity. Based upon the work of locals and Western travellers, as well as the narratives of contemporary observers and researchers, the firmān, its effects on the Yazidis, and their subsequent reactions to it, are described and analyzed in this study.*

Key words: fatwa, firmān, genocide, Kurdish princedom, Mīr-i-Kura, Ottoman Empire, Yazidi

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Introduction

The Yazidis are an ethno-religious minority with ancestral roots in Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Iran. Today, the majority of Yazidis live in disputed areas in northern Iraq,[2] specifically in the Shaykhān[3] and Sinjar[4] districts, with smaller communities present in Turkey, Syria, Armenia, Georgia, and Russia, as well as a diaspora population in Western countries. Their numbers are difficult to estimate, with semi-official estimates of Yazidis living in Iraq approximated to be 400,000–500,000.[5] Based on misinterpretations, stereotypes, and false information about the Yazidis' religion, especially by their Muslim neighbours such as the Sunni Kurdish Muslims and Turks, the Yazidi people have long been persecuted as "devil worshippers" across the region and subjected to at least seventy-two *firmāns* (pogroms or genocides) during the Ottoman Empire.[6]

Although the number of firmāns against the Yazidis is impossible to know, Yazidi tradition claims that the minority has endured seventy-two firmāns throughout history, which are recognized by Yazidis as genocides and massacres, and thus the number seventy-two has gained a symbolic meaning. The discrepancy in enumerating the pogroms comes from a number of recent events that are sometimes added to the list, such as the terrorist attack of 2007 when cars bombs exploded in the centre of Til-Izir and Siba-Shikhdr towns, killing around 800 Yazidis. On that basis, the ISIS attack on Yazidis in August 2014 would be considered the seventy-fourth firmān.

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After the end of World War I, the firmāns did not stop; they only paused temporarily, while new states were built from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. This continuity is evident in the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)'s invasion of Yazidi territories in Sinjar and the Nineveh Plains in August 2014.[7] This invasion led to the destruction of Yazidi properties, the murder of thousands, and the enslavement of women and children. ISIS attacked Yazidi minorities on a massive scale, and reopened a history of religious persecution in the region for Yazidis. This was an opportunity for the world to become aware of the disasters and tragedies that befell the Yazidi people, as recognition of the 2014 campaign as genocide justifies the need to re-examine earlier firmāns.

While studies about the Yazidis mainly address their religion and history, Yazidi historical traditions are primarily oral; original sources are not predominantly used; and there is little analysis of these narratives. However, historical sources document a large number of religiously motivated campaigns against the Yazidi, especially during the Ottoman era.[8] According to the values and concepts of the modern world, such events can be labelled genocidal campaigns.[9] The Yazidis call them firmāns, by which they mean genocide, ethnic cleansing, and territorial expansion.[10] This article will show that Muslims have been committing firmāns against the Yazidi for centuries, not only at the beginning of Islamic campaigns, but particularly from the Abbasid period until the end of the Ottoman Empire—only to be repeated again by ISIS, simply because of the Yazidis' religion.

The following essential questions will be addressed: What happened to the Yazidis in 1832–1834? During this time, the Yazidis were subjected to the largest genocide by Kurdish Prince Mīr Muḥammad Pāshā Rawwānduzī, called Mīr-i-Kura (the one-eyed prince), where thousands of Yazidi men and older boys were killed, and women and children were taken as slaves. What primary sources of evidence do we have for the campaigns against the Yazidis and how do they compare to campaigns against other minorities? What was the role of the Ottomans and the Sunni Kurds in those firmān campaigns? Why did the Bahdīnān prince recruit the Yazidi Prince ʿAlī Beg Dāsinī (1809–1833) to kill the Mizūry chieftain, making Yazidis the target of the Sorān Princedom's firmān? And why did the Yazidi prince do so if he knew the consequences?

Conceptual Framework

At the constitutional level, a firmān was a royal mandate or decree issued by a sovereign in an Islamic Caliphate, such as the Ottoman Empire. During various periods in history, they were collected and applied as traditional bodies of law. The word firmān comes from the Persian word *Farman* meaning decree or order,[11] but in Ottoman Turkish it means edict or a decision. On a practical level, a firmān was, and may still be, written permission granted by the appropriate Islamic official at any level of authority. In this regard, a firmān is a decree, command, order, judgement, or *fatwa*. In historical as well as contemporary administrative and political usage, the term often denotes a royal or governmental decree; in other words, a public and legislative document promulgated in the name of the ruler or another person (e.g., prince, princess, governor) holding partial elements of sovereignty. It is important here to distinguish between a religious cleric and a political ruler. A *qāḍī* (Islamic judge) can issue a fatwa, while the Sultan can issue a firmān. In the Persephone chanceries of Islamic times, and, following their example, in many Ottoman chanceries, the word firmān was invariably the standard term used for such documents.[12] Whatever the Sultan ordered became a law (firmān). Each firmān was embedded in codes and legislation, called *canon* or *Qānun,* meaning rules or law. These were a form of secular or religious administrative regulations, considered a valid extension of religious law as

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a result of the ruler's right to exercise legal judgement on behalf of the community.[13] Most of the firmāns issued by the Sultans included content that was compatible with Islamic law (Sharia).[14] To the Yazidi, however, the term firmān literally means one thing: a genocidal campaign.

Coined in 1944 by the Polish-Jewish jurist Raphael Lemkin, genocide is the deliberate and systematic destruction, in whole or in part, of an ethnic, racial, religious, or national group.[15] It is a very specific term referring to violent crimes committed against groups with the intent to destroy the existence of that group. Under this definition, genocide is the coordinated and planned annihilation of a national, religious, or racial group by a variety of actions aimed at undermining the foundations essential to the survival of the group. Lemkin described genocide as a composite of different acts of persecution or destruction,[16] and although he focused on establishing genocide as a legal category, it is clear that he regarded it as a sociological and historical category too.[17] Lemkin's memoirs include consideration of Ottoman attacks against Armenians, considered by many scholars to constitute a genocide.[18] The Holocaust, pogroms, and other historical evidence of group-targeted violence were key to the forming of his beliefs about the need for the legal protection of groups.[19]

Genocide is defined in Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948[20] as

> any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.[21]

The scholar Martin Shaw has shown how forms of genocide continue to arise in many current conflicts where populations are targeted with violence. Allegations of genocide are made widely, and invariably disputed. All too often, genocide becomes a tool in political contests, claimed by one side and denied by the other. Whatever new challenges arise, the same confused debate occurs over whether attacks on civilians constitute genocide, ethnic cleansing,[22] or just the excesses of a dirty civil war, as though similar arguments had not already been made in earlier cases.[23]

Methodology

I draw mainly on the books of Western travellers to the Yazidi regions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and on some local historical sources. Many travellers recorded events that they had seen and/or heard about during their journeys to the East (e.g., Ainsworth, Badger, Layard, Wigram and Edgar).[24] Narratives from these sources present important and rich material about many aspects and events of everyday life regarding the Yazidis in an era characterized by a lack of records from local historians.

While few Yazidis gave priority to recording the details of their own experiences, Orientalists in contrast tended to record in their notebooks and diaries everything that was seen or heard during their trips, so these records provide valuable information in documenting historical events and help to fill in the gaps that have not been documented by local and contemporary historians and/or other relevant writers. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Yazidi became a source of interest for many travellers and observers because of the ambiguity of their religious beliefs and because of the many persecutions they endured.

It is worth noting that some works focus heavily on the history of Christians and their relations with the Ottomans and Kurds in Mesopotamia (northern Iraq), Anatolia (southeast Turkey), and Persia (Iran), during different periods in the fourteenth to twentieth centuries,[25] in the nineteenth century,[26] and during World War I.[27] Although this work is valuable, alternate perspectives are necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Yazidi, as most material that considers the Yazidi in any context quickly becomes hogtied by the religious aspect, and authors (past and present) tend to be overcome by conceptualizing the religion itself. Thus, history as a whole (context) is rarely considered, even in works where it should be the primary focus.

These topics include the firmāns that the Yazidis were subjected to from the beginning of the Islamic era until the end of the Ottoman Empire. There is a lack of information, such as archival documentation or written sources, about the military campaigns and firmāns on Yazidis by the Islamic armies, apart from the large campaign on the princedom of Dāsin, called Mīrgaha Dāsiniyyā in Yazidi tradition, in the Abbasid era in 839 CE (224 AH).[28] However, some of the military firmāns and religious fatwas that instigated much violence towards the Yazidi during the Ottoman Empire are available as written documents.[29] In particular, this article focuses on the firmān led by the Sorān Kurdish Mīr Muḥammad Pāshā Rawwānduzī, also known as Mīr-i-Kura. This specific firmān was the largest and most influential one in terms of destruction, murder, and enslavement in the nineteenth century, and quickly rose to the level of genocide.

The Yazidi oral tradition remembers well those fatwas or firmāns, sanctioning violence against them. The term came to be applied to any campaign of violence by the Islamic caliphate, Ottoman forces, or Kurdish princedoms. Yazidis used it to describe the campaigns of Mīr-i-Kura, who appears to have issued a fatwa to convert as many Yazidis as possible, but Yazidi also use it for the ISIS attack on Sinjar in 2014.

Historical Background

During the Islamic reign of the Caliphates, especially from the Abbasid era until the Ottoman era, there were many semi-independent Kurdish princedoms in the regions of al-Jabāl in northern Iraq.[30] These included the formally dependent Yazidi princedoms. Apart from the princedom of Shaykhān, which was established on the remnants of the princedom of Dāsin, there is little information on the Yazidi princedoms because there is a lack of contemporary sources. Yazidi princes did not prioritize written documentation and most history was transferred orally. An important source that specifically mentions Dāsin "Yazidi" princedoms is the Sharafnāma book—the earliest chronicle of Kurdish history—by the Kurdish Muslim Emir (prince) of the Bitlīs princedom (located in southeast Turkey), Sharaf-Khān Batlīsī.[31]

The Dāsin princedom included most areas to the north-east of Mosul City, and its centre was the Lalish Temple. Its influence increased during the reign Prince Mīr Jaʿffar bin Mīr Ḥasan Dāsinī. However, its rule ended at the hands of the Abbasid Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim (833–842 CE/ 217–227 AH) after Mīr Jaʿffar revolted against the authority of the Abbasid caliphate in 839 (224 AH). As a result, Dāsinī (Yazidi) villages and towns were looted, Yazidi men and older boys were killed, and the Caliphate army took the women and children as slaves to the city of Tikrit.[32] After that, there is no information about the Dāsin princedom until the arrival of Shaykh-ʾAdī ibn Mussāfir al-Hakārī's at the Lalish Temple around the year 1110 (505 AH). With his coming, a new period in history began for the Yazidi. Subsequently, the Shaykhān princedom was established on

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the remnants of the princedom of Dāsin and expanded its influence until the arrival of the Mongols, followed by the Ottomans in the sixteenth century.

The Ottoman Firmāns

During the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans controlled the regions inhabited by Yazidis, Kurds, and Christians. As a result, the Sinjar and Shaykhān districts became part of the Ottoman province of Mosul. The Ottoman Sultans used policies of violence against the Yazidis in an attempt to coerce them to embrace Ottoman Islam. This aggressive policy was supported by fatwas issued by a number of Islamic religious leaders. These fatwas provided legitimacy to the campaigns against the Yazidis, the attempts to convert them to Islam, and helped justify the murder or enslavement of those who refused.

The Arab historian ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sulaymān Nawwār notes that the persecution of the Yazidis began during the reign of Sultan Sulaymān Qānunī.[33] At the beginning of the era of Qānunī, known in the West as Sulaymān the Magnificent (1521–1566), he ordered the killing of the Prince of Sorān Izzaddīn-Shir in 1534, and appointed the Yazidi prince Mīr Ḥusayn Beg Dāsinī as a prince to govern the Islamic princedom of Sorān and its affiliated areas.[34] However, Mīr Ḥusayn's rule did not last long because Sorān's Muslim princes were opposed to a Yazidi being in a position of power over Muslims. Political and armed conflict ensued between Yazidis and Muslims, spilling over into the latter contesting the rule of Ḥusayn Beg on the pretext of practising a different faith.[35] As a result, conflict arose between Yazidis and the Sorānis, which ended Yazidi rule over the Sorān princedom.[36] After Mīr Ḥusayn Beg Dāsinī lost the princedom of Sorān, he was called to Istanbul and executed on the grounds that he was unable to protect the properties of the Ottoman Empire.[37] His execution angered the Yazidis, who revolted against the Ottoman Empire.[38]

As the relationship between the Yazidis and the Ottoman Empire worsened, Yazidi and Sunni Kurdish relations were also strained. The Ottoman authorities took advantage of these tensions and used religious differences to control both groups. In 1566, the Mufti[39] of the Ottoman Empire, Shaykh al-Islām[40] Abū al-Sʿud al-ʿAmādī al-Kurdī (1492–1573),[41] worked closely with the Ottoman Sultans, issuing fatwas that legitimized the Sultan's killings of Yazidis,[42] the enslavement of Yazidi women, and the sale of Yazidi slaves in the markets.[43] Because of these fatwas, the Yazidis were subjected to constant military pressure by the Ottoman Empire as their regions were considered, from a religious point of view,[44] as a *Dār al-Ḥarb* (House of War).[45] While the Ottoman mufti was Kurdish, available sources do not indicate whether the Sunni Kurds participated in these Ottoman military campaigns.

In later periods, Kurdish princes, especially those of the Bahdīnān princedom and its Muslim clerics, asked the Ottoman Sultan to eliminate the Yazidis with the justification that the Yazidi were apostates.[46] A number of Ottoman documents indicate the role of the Kurdish princes in the elimination of the Yazidis, including one dated 20 *Rabīʿ al-ʾawwal* (a month relating to the Hijri calendar), in 1568 (976 AH). This document refers to:

> The necessity of ending the corruption and evil-doing of the Dāsinī sect [i.e. Yazidis] and [asking the Ottoman state to send] *firmāns* (orders) to the governors of Mosul and Erbil to punish the Dāsinīs.[47]

As stated in another document, written on 25 *Muḥarram* (Hijri calendar) in 1571 (979 AH), the Prince of Bahdīnān, Sulṭān Ḥusayn Waly, demanded that the Ottoman state

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send an order (firmān) to the states (Wilayāt) of Jazīra, Mosul, ʿAmādiyya, and Erbil to arrest the leaders of the Yazidi.[48]

During the seventeenth century, the Yazidi were subject to widespread firmāns.[49] Further massacres occurred during the eighteenth century.[50] French Orientalist Roger Lescot states that the Ottoman Empire directed fifteen military campaigns against the Yazidi areas of Sinjar and Shaykhān in the eighteenth century alone. These campaigns were led by the governors of Baghdad and Mosul. Another five military campaigns occurred in the nineteenth century, some of which were led by Kurdish princes.[51] The campaign of the governor of Baghdad, ʿAlī Pāshā (1802–1807), against Yazidis in Sinjar in 1802 forced many families to convert to Islam.[52] In 1809, the governor of Baghdad, Sulaymān Pāshā, led a military campaign against the Yazidis in Sinjar in order to exterminate them. He laid siege to them on Mount Sinjar, destroyed their farms, and cut off their leaders' heads. For Yazidis in Sinjar, these genocidal campaigns stirred up a deep hatred for the Ottomans and they remain a painful memory to this day. About this firmān, English traveller William Heude said that:

> Impelled by his avarice, and the desire of obtaining this hidden store, or provoked by their depredations and cruelties, the Great Solyman [Sulaymān Pāshā] once attacked them [Yazidi] with a considerable force; following them into their hills, destroying their grapes, and the little cultivation that could be seen, and striking off the heads of several of their chiefs. In the end, however, he was called off by insurrections in other quarters, leaving behind him the recollection alone of those cruelties, which could only stimulate their inveterate hatred of the Turks [Ottomans].[53]

The military campaigns and firmāns continued until the end of the Ottoman Empire, with the last campaign taking place in 1915 against Sinjar Yazidis. It can be said that the main justification for these firmāns was religion. The traveller Ainsworth mentioned that the Ottomans forced the Yazidi to either convert or be killed.[54] Wigram and Edgar confirm that the Ottomans were imposing *Jizya* (a kind of tax upon non-Muslim populations) on *ahl al-kitāb* (People-of-the-Book), Jews and Christians, whereas at the same time they were trying to destroy the non-*ahl al-kitāb*, like the Yazidis, eradicate their roots, and erase their history.[55] Another reason behind the firmāns was the Yazidis' refusal to serve in the Ottoman army, since the Yazidis believed such military service to be against their religious tradition.[56] It should be noted that there was a supporting role of the Sunni Kurds in most of these campaigns against the Yazidi.

The Kurdish Princedom's Firmāns

In addition to the campaigns of the Ottoman governors, the Kurdish princes simultaneously led major campaigns against Yazidis in the first half of the nineteenth century. The largest of these was the campaign of Muḥammad Pāshā Rawwānduzī (1813–1837)[57] of the Sorān princedom, which started in 1832 and lasted until 1834, and led to an enormous loss of life and property for the Yazidis.

Regarding Yazidi relations with the Kurdish princedoms, Ainsworth (1842) states that the Yazidis in the Shaykhān region and its neighbouring villages had been under the authority of the princedom of Bahdīnān since the beginning of the eighteenth century.[58] However, the Yazidis of Sinjar were not under the authority of the Ottoman rulers or the Kurdish princes, but were led by independent Yazidi leaders.[59] Meanwhile, the Yazidis had bad relations with the powerful Mizūry tribe (based in Shaykhān) in

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neighbouring Yazidi regions because of past hostilities and religious differences.[60] The Mizūry tribe was one of the most powerful Kurdish tribes and constantly meddled in the internal issues of the Bahdīnān princedom.[61] A religious cleric from this tribe, Shaykh ʿAbd-Allah Rabbatkī (1650–1746), issued a fatwa in 1724 that the Yazidi were infidels and apostates from Islam, and that killing them was a religious duty. Yazidi property and Yazidi women and girls were to be the spoils of war.[62] In 1802, the Āl-gūshiyya clan (part of the Mizūry tribe) attacked the Yazidi village of *Ghābārā* (in the west of Shaykhān), killed about a hundred Yazidi people, and occupied the Lalish Temple for eight months.[63]

In the ongoing conflict between Yazidis and Sunni Kurdish tribes, there were also moments of (usually temporary) collaboration and alliance between Kurdish Muslim and Yazidi leaders. Some of the Kurdish princes of the Bahdīnān princedom in the nineteenth century, for example, favoured the Yazidis in their struggle against the Mizūry tribe,[64] when Bahdīnān needed external allies to confront the internal conflict that had occurred between leaders of the Bahdīnān princedom and the Kurdish tribal leaders after the death of Prince Zubayr Pāshā in 1824. Prince Muḥammad Saʿid Pāshā of the Bahdīnān princedom tried to restrict the authority of the Mizūry leader, ʿAlī Agha Bāllatayyi, and received help from the Yazidi Prince ʿAlī Beg (1809–1833) to do so.[65] The Bahdīnān prince wanted ʿAlī Beg Dāsinī to assassinate the leader of the Mizūry tribe, which he agreed to do only after the Bahdīnān convinced him that the Yazidis would be defended and protected from any reprisal action at the hands of the Mizūries.

As part of the plot, Saʿīd Pāshā arranged for a "reconciliation" to take place between the Yazidi prince and the Mizūry chieftain. For this, Muḥammad's brother, Ismaʿil Beg, the governor of Ākkr-i town, was chosen to mediate between both princes. The reconciliation was initiated by a visit from the Yazidi prince to the Mizūry chieftain in his village of Bāllata, and in return ʿAlī Beg asked ʿAlī Bāllatayyi to visit his village, Baʿadr-i, to complete the reconciliation. Bāllatayyi accepted his invitation and in 1832, while on their way to Baʿadr-i, Bāllatayyi and his son were ambushed and killed by the Yazidi prince who, with Muḥammed Saʿid Pāshā, had devised the assassination plan. It is worth mentioning that two of Bāllatayyi's bodyguards also participated in the plot against him.[66] As a reward for carrying out the assassination, the Bahdīnān prince promised Prince ʿAlī Beg that they would offer protection to the Yazidis.[67] There had been historic hostilities between the Yazidis and the Mizūries, since the latter used to attack the Yazidi villages in Shaykhān and take taxes from them by force, and this was one of the reasons the Yazidi prince agreed to the Bahdīnān prince's plan.

When the Mizūries prepared to avenge their prince by attacking the Yazidis, the Muslim cleric Mulla Yaḥya Mizūry (1772–1839), Bāllatayyi's nephew, took this task of vengeance upon himself. He first went to the prince of Bahdīnān, who was suspected of being involved in this plot, to get help, but returned empty-handed.[68] Mullah Yaḥya then went to the Sorān princedom and asked Prince Muḥammad Pāshā Rawwānduzī to take revenge on the Yazidis and the Prince of Bahdīnān. Rawwānduzī accepted his request and launched a formidable military campaign against both the Yazidis and the Bahdīnān princedom.[69]

The Firmān of the Kurdish Prince, Mīr-i-Kura Sorānī

The village of Kallak, near Erbil, was the border between the Yazidis and the Kurdish Sorān princedom until the nineteenth century. Sources consulted do not present much information about the relations between the Yazidis and the Sorān princes before the

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reign of Mīr-i-Kura who took power in Sorān in 1813. This is despite tensions that had existed between these two groups since the reign of Sultan Sulaymān Qānunī, who ordered the assassination of Sorān Prince Izzaddīn-Shir in 1534 and authorized a Yazidi ruler, Ḥusayn Beg, to rule the princedom of Sorān in his stead.

The religious factor was strong in persuading Mīr-i-Kura to take revenge for the Mizuries against the Yazidis. The Muslim cleric Mulla Yaḥya Mizūri's demands were achieved and a religious fatwa was issued accordingly.[70] Some contemporary travellers state that Mīr-i-Kura was a religious fanatic and an extremist, aspiring to control the economic resources of the eastern Mosul Yazidis and force them to convert.[71] This type of fanaticism seems rather normal behaviour for this time. Evidence of his religious extremism and fanaticism includes his request that the Mufti of his princedom, Mulla Muḥammad Khatt-i, issue a fatwa legitimizing the taking of Yazidi blood and properties. Meanwhile, Mulla Yaḥya also authorized the fighting against the Bahdīnān princes if they supported Yazidis.[72] While he seems to have been a religious extremist, he could also have been motivated by greed and material gains, using the fatwa to add a veneer of legitimacy.

Mīr-i-Kura prepared a military force, estimated by historians to number between 40,000 and 50,000 fighters, for the attack on the Yazidi regions.[73] He divided his forces into two groups and placed the first group under the leadership of his brother Rassūl Beg, and the second group under his own leadership. In early March 1832, these forces crossed the Great Zab River[74] and entered the Yazidi village of Kallak-a-Dāsiniyya, exterminating many of its inhabitants.[75] One after the other, Yazidi villages fell under the control of Mīr-i-Kura. Those males who fell into the hands of his forces were all killed, whether men or older boys.[76]

Mīr-i-Kura's forces then headed to Shaykhān, where they seized the village of Khattāra (45 km north of Mosul city). They then seized the town of Ālqūsh to the north of Mosul, where they were confronted by the joint forces of the Yazidis and the Bahdīnān, who were led by Yusuf ʿAbdo (a Bahdīnān leader from the "Kurdish" town of ʿAmādiyya) and Bābā Hurmuz (head of the "Christian" monastery of Ālqūsh). These joint forces left their positions and moved towards Baʿadr-i, the headquarters of the Yazidi prince. ʿAlī Beg wished to negotiate,[77] but Mīr-i-Kura, influenced by the clerics Mulla Yaḥya Mizūry and Mulla Khatt-i, rejected any possibility of reconciliation.[78]

Mīr-i-Kura would defeat the Yazidi at Shaykhān, despite the aid provided to the Yazidi by the Bahdīnān forces. Mīr-i-Kura's army committed outrageous massacres against the Yazidis there.[79] The slaughter of the elderly and the very young, rape, and slavery were some of the most prominent and cruel tactics used. He then sent his forces to exterminate the Yazidi who fled or lived in the other regions.[80] After the Shaykhān region massacres, he led a large force to Sinjar, which was not under any authority from the neighbouring Kurdish or Arabs princedoms. There his forces clashed with the Sinjari Yazidi. Despite the resistance of the Yazidis under the leadership of Prince Ali's wife in Sinjar, and after killing and capturing about 700 men,[81] Mīr-i-Kura's forces took the district in 1834.[82] The English Anglican missionary and scholar of oriental studies, Gorge Percy Badger, noted that they committed horrible acts of violence and cruelty against the Yazidis and killed many. He said:

> In 1832 the Coordish [Kurdish] pasha of Rawandoz [Rawwānduz], instigated thereto by religious fanaticism and a thirst for booty, fell upon those inhabiting the plains, burned their villages, carried many of them away captive, and on the mound of Koyoonjuk [Kuwwynjaq] massacred several thousands in cold blood who had

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> fled thither, hoping that the people of Mosul would offer them a refuge within the city walls. About six years later Muhammed Pasha led an army against the Yezeedees [Yazidis] of Sinjar, and after several defeats finally succeeded in crushing their power, and in reducing them to abject sub-mission by the most cruel and barbarous measure.[83]

Even though Mīr-i-Kura controlled most of the Yazidi region after these wars, his power did not last long. After disobeying Ottoman authority, the Ottoman Empire mobilized military forces against him because the expansion of his control in the region posed a threat to the empire. In response, he surrendered, thereby obeying the Mulla Khatt-i's fatwa that stated that it was not religiously permissible to fight the Ottoman Caliphate. He was then summoned to Istanbul to meet the Sultan,[84] and when he returned home he was murdered.

Regarding the human losses, the firmān of Mīr-i-Kura deeply affected the Yazidi community. It is worth mentioning that the Yazidi conserved the history of these firmāns and attacks by way of oral tradition. The Yazidi have a rich folklore heritage by way of epic songs and music (called Strān) about these firmāns. They depict tragedy as part of the collective memory and identity of the Yazidi community. Yazidi singers still perform many such tragic stories and traditional songs about the genocide by Mīr-i-Kura and other firmāns, which revolve around the tragic killing and captivity of Yazidis,[85] and especially narrate the kidnapping of women.[86]

The people who survived the first attacks of the firmān fled to other areas. Some of them took refuge in the Mount Judi and Tur-Abdin regions in southeast Turkey, some went to Sinjar and to other far-off areas, and some fled to Mosul.[87] The English traveller, archaeologist, and diplomat, Austen Henry Layard, received information from Yazidis about this firmān when he visited the area a few years later, and reveals what happened to those Yazidis who went to Mosul:

> The inhabitants of Shaykhān fled to Mosul. It was spring; the river had overflowed its banks, and the bridge of boats had been removed. A few succeeded in crossing the stream; but a crowd of men, women, and children were left upon the opposite side, and congregated on the great mound of Kouyunjik [Kuwwynjaq]. The Bey ['Mīr-i-Kura' Beg] of Rowandiz [Rawwānduz] followed them. An indiscriminate slaughter ensued; and the people of Mosul beheld, from their terraces, the murder of these unfortunate fugitives, who cried to them in vain for help for both Christians and Mussulmans [Muslims] rejoiced in the extermination of an odious and infidel sect, and no arm was lifted in their defence.[88]

What happened to the Yazidis fleeing Mīr-i-Kura's army who headed to Mosul is confirmed by the Church of England priest Wigram and his brother Edgar who stated that:

> Less than fifty years previously all the Yazidis of the Shaykhan were driven from their villages by a great irruption of Kurds under the Beg of Rawwānduz and fled for refuge to Mosul. The flooded Tigris cut them off; and so many thousands were massacred by their pursuers upon the site of Nineveh that the principal mound over Sennacherib's palace acquired the ominous name of Kuwwynjaq, (the shambles of the sheep). The tale of earlier massacres runs back to the very dawn of their history. Even Sinjar has not always proved a sanctuary, though there they have been less hard pressed.[89]

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After controlling most of the Yazidi areas, Mīr-i-Kura's army enslaved and took with them 10,000 Yazidi prisoners, mostly women and children, along with the Yazidi Prince Mīr ʿAlī Beg to Rawwānduz, the capital of his princedom.[90] After their arrival in Rawwānduz city, the prisoners were asked to convert to Islam; many of them rejected the request, including Prince ʿAlī Beg and his entourage.[91] He was subsequently executed at the end of 1833 in the valley of Galī ʿAlī Beg (which is still named after him). Mīr-i-Kura left his body hanging on the Rawwānduz bridge for three days.[92] The women were distributed among Kurds, and the remaining survivors were forced to convert to Islam.[93] Ṣadīq al-Damalūjī estimates that the number of survivors of the Mīr-i-Kura's firmān was only about five percent of the total population in the targeted areas.[94]

In addition to the massive loss of life, the economic impacts of Mīr-i-Kura's attacks were immeasurable. Mīr-i-Kura's forces plundered and looted Yazidi property, including gold and silver.[95] The Yazidis also lost a number of villages and towns that were demographically converted to Islam or Islamized.[96] For example, before the Mīr-i-Kura attack, historians described Kallak-a-Dāsiniyya, about 30 km from Erbil, as a Yazidi village and the border between the Yazidi and Sorān princedom, and it was completely destroyed during this firmān.[97] Consequently, the Yazidis lost all the land from the border of that village to the border of the city of ʿAyn-Sifn-i in Shaykhan region, which was seized and continues to be controlled by Kurdish Muslims even today.

There is disagreement over what Mīr-i-Kura's goals were in his campaign against the Yazidis and the princedom of Bahdīnān. Some Kurdish writers considered the operations of Mīr-i-Kura as those of an expansionist force that stemmed from his feelings of Kurdish nationalism, as he intended to establish a Kurdish state.[98] Yazidis, however, hold Mīr-i-Kura responsible for the genocide against them and they retain the memories of his painful firmān in their collective memory, which they pass on from one generation to the next through oral folkloric tradition. It is because of this firmān that Yazidis lost many lives and vast geographical areas.

Conclusion

Over the centuries, there has been a marked decline in relations between those who have Islamized and the indigenous people of Mesopotamia, namely those who have been persecuted by the Ottoman state since the sixteenth century, such as the Yazidis and Christians. The practice of religious intolerance, the policy of Muslim hegemony, and a rejection of coexistence because of religious factors—even though coexistence is an age-old characteristic of all the people in the region—have made the non-Muslim natives, who were gradually transformed into minorities, the most negatively affected groups. The result has been a gradual change in the demographic map of the regions of upper Mesopotamia. For instance, the Yazidis, who had been numerous during the early Ottoman occupation of the sixteenth century, were reduced to a minority during the seventeenth century, and their populations were sharply reduced again in the following centuries. The Yazidis simply could not withstand the constant pressure exerted by the repeated extermination campaigns of the advancing Turks and Sunni Kurds, as reported by both Western travellers who visited the region and local historians.

The Mīr-i-Kura campaign against the Yazidis had been provoked by ʿAlī Beg's assassination of the Kurdish chieftain ʿAlī Agha, whose relations had appealed to the Mīr-i-Kura for redress. During 1832 and 1834, the Yazidis of the Sinjar and Shaykhān faced repeated fierce attacks by a combined force of the Sunni Kurds under Mīr-i-Kura. It seems that a political power struggle ensued between the ruling class that occasionally

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used a religious pretext, despite past problems, conflicts, and disagreements between the Yazidis and the Mizūry tribe. The Yazidis' involvement in the killing of Agha Bāllatayyi was planned by the Prince of Bahdīnān, Muḥammad Saʿīd Pāshā, who wanted to get rid of Bāllatayyi because of his meddling in the affairs of the Bahdīnān princedom. Therefore, Muḥammad Saʿīd Pāshā recruited Yazidi Prince ʿAlī Beg Dāsinī to kill him, making Yazidis the target of Mīr-i-Kura's firmān. This research shows why ʿAlī Beg Dāsinī did it, even if he knew the likely consequences of doing so. Perhaps the Yazidi ruler over-estimated his power and influence, thereby losing the struggle, for which the result was genocide.

The firmāns that were issued against the Yazidi had a direct effect on the psychology of the Yazidi and the group's collective memory as they inherit the stories generation after generation. As such, Yazidi oral history retains the traumatic past memories of firmāns carried out against their people by the Ottomans and Kurdish princedoms, particularly the firmān of Mīr-i-Kura.

Similarly, the more recent ISIS firmān and the sudden withdrawal of Kurdish Peshmerga from the Sinjar region, without any protection for Yazidis against the ISIS slaughter, weigh heavily on Yazidi minds and collective memory. Although, according to international law, the ISIS firmāns can be considered an act of genocide, ultimately it was simply a recurrence of tens of similar operations of which the Yazidis had been victims.

As I have noted, in Yazidi collective memory, the word genocide is synonymous with the word firmān (meaning order or decree in Persian, Turkish, and Kurdish), as it has been used by the Yazidis to describe past pogroms. It signifies the directives given by different Islamic campaigns, Ottoman governors or generals, or Kurdish princes to annihilate Yazidi community. Merging these two words has significant meaning because it enables us to see the contemporary Yazidi tragedy in a wider context of persecution at the hands of Muslims, and thrusts the term genocide into the pre-modern era thereby marking the long continuity of their suffering.

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Notes

1. A royal mandate or decree issued by a sovereign in an Islamic state. For more details see conceptual framework section.

   The International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) standard transliteration system is used for the transliteration into Latin script of all Arabic and Kurdish terms, names, and cities, as well as authors and the titles of their works. See: IJMES Transliteration System for Arabic, Persian and Turkish, https://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/docs/TransChart.pdf (accessed 9 Aug 2018).
2. This area is now referred to as "the disputed territories" due to the disagreements between the central government and the Kurdistan region surrounding Article 140 of the Iraqi permanent constitution in 2005. It was not called the "disputed territories" in Iraq from 1921 to 2003.

3. Shaykhān is a geographical area northeast of Mosul. The majority of its inhabitants were Yazidis, but it was subjected to gradual demographic Islamization until the Yazidis ultimately became a minority. The name originally derives from the Arabic term "Sheikh," which was derived, according to the Kurmānji language grammar, from the word Shaykh-khān that refers to the region of Shaykhs. Yazidi elders and spiritual clerics typically came from or to this region, such as Shaykh-ʾAdī, Shaykh-Sīn, and Shaykh Shams Shamsānī, the latter having been a spiritual leader of the Yazidi (his descendants enjoy this position to date and are known as Bābā-Shaykh). See, Khdr Sulaymān, wa-Saʿd-Allāh Shaykhānī, *Al-Shaykhān wa-ʿashīrat al-shaykhān bagī* [Shaykhan and the Tribe of Shaykhs Beg] (Baghdad: al-Funūn Printing, 1988), 25.
4. Sinjar is located 125 km west of Mosul, at the foot of the southern face of Sinjar Mountain. It rests on the site of the ancient city of Singārā. In the third century, Sinjar was a fortified Roman town, built to contain a Parthian advance. Traces of ramparts built at the time are still visible. Ḥasan Shamisāny, *Madīnat sinjār min-al-fatḥ al-Islamī ḥatta al-fatḥ al-ʿUthmānī* [The City of Sinjar From the Islamic Conquest Until the Ottoman Conquest] (Beirut: Dār al-Affâq al-jadida, 1983).
5. Interviews with representatives of the Directorate of Yazidi Affairs in the *Awqāfs* Ministries [Religious Endowment] in the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil, and Central Government of Iraq in Baghdad in 2017.
6. Some of the Ottoman firmān texts are found in Yurdaer Abca, *Yezidilik ve Osmanli Yönetiminde Yezidiler* [Yezidism and Yezidis in the Ottoman Government] (Eskiṣehhir: Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsu, Eskiṣehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, 2006), 166–229.
7. The Kurdish forces (Peshmerga) had withdrawn without warning the Yazidis, which made them easy prey.
8. Abca, *Yezidilik*; ʿAdnān Zaiyān Farḥān, and Qādr Salīm Shammw, *Maʾsāt al-Izidiyya- al-firmānāt wa ḥamlāt al-ʾībāda ḍd al al-Kurd al-ʾīzīdiyyīn ʿabra al-tārīkh* [The Yazidi Tragedy—The Firmāns and the Campaigns of Genocide Against the Yazidi Kurds Through History] (Duhok, Khani for publications, 2009).
9. Margaret Haerens, ed., *Genocide* (Detroit, New York, San Francisco, New Haven, Conn, Waterville, Maine London: Greenhaven Press, Gale Cengage Learning, 2012).
10. While the line between ethnic cleansing and genocide is thin, and many would argue non-existent, it will be difficult to argue that all the firmāns can rightfully be labelled as genocide. Therefore, some may be considered ethnic cleansing and territorial expansion.
11. Bert G. Fragner, "FARMĀN," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2016, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/farman (accessed 7 Aug 2018).
12. Fragner.
13. Ira M.Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 260–1.
14. Khalīl ʾInāljīk, *Tārīkh al-dawwla al-ʿUthmāniyya min-al-nishūʾ ʾila-al-ʾinḥidār* [The History of the Ottoman Empire from the rise to fall], trans. Muḥammad al-Arnāʾūṭ (Beirut: Dār al-madār al-Islāmī, 2002), 112.
15. See, MarkLevene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State*, Vol. I (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2005).
16. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, eds., *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1990), 8.
17. Martin Shaw, *What Is Genocide?* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), https://goo.gl/P8EZwe (accessed 18 Jul 2018).
18. Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1998); Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992); Katharine Derderian, "Common Fate, Different Experience: Gender-Specific Aspects of the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1917," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19,1 (2005): 1–25; Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict From the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence: Berghahn, 1995).
19. "Coining a Word and Championing a Cause: The Story of Raphael Lemkin," *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007050 (accessed 11 Jul 2018).
20. John B. Quigley, *The Genocide Convention: An International Law Analysis* (Bodmin, Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd, 2006), 10.
21. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," 12 January 1951: https://web.archive.org/web/20051211121830/http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/genocide.htm (accessed 10 Jun 2018). Note: although unusual, "ethnical" is found in several dictionaries.

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22. Ethnic cleansing is the process of removing particular groups from a specific area based on race, nationality, religion, and other identifying principles; or as a practice, ethnic cleansing could mean a set of different actions, directly or indirectly related to military operations, committed by one group against members of other ethnic groups living in the same territory. Petrovic Drazen, "Ethnic Cleansing—An Attempt at Methodology," in *European Journal of International Law* 5,1 (1994): 344.
23. Shaw, *What Is Genocide?*
24. William Francis Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*, Vol. II (London: John W. Parker, West Strand, 1842); William Francis Ainsworth, "The Assyrian Origin of the Izedis or Yezidis—the so called 'Devil Worshippers'," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 1 (1861); Gorge Percy Badger, *The Nestorian and Their Rituals With the Narrative of a Mission to Mesopotamea and Coordistan in 1842 to 1844*, Vol. 1 (London: Joseph Masters, 1852); Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains—with an Account of a Visit to the Chaldean Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, or Devil-Worshippers; and an Inquiry Into the Manners and Arts of the Ancient Assyrians*, Vol. 2 (New York: George P. Putnam, 1850); Austen Henry Layard, *Ninevah and Its Remains: A Narrative of an Expedition to Assyria during the Years 1845, 1846 and 1847* (London: John Murray, 1867); William Ainger Wigram and Thomas Ainger Edgar, *The Cradle of Mankind: Life in Eastern Kurdistan* (London: A. & C Black, Ltd, 1922).
25. David Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East, 1318–1913* (Lovan İİ: Peeters, 2000).
26. Sebastien de Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide: Eastern Christians, the Last Arameans*, trans. Vincent Aurora (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2004); Rev. Joseph Naayem, *Shall This Nation Die?* (New York: Chaldean Rescue, 1921); Abraham Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation, or, The Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916).
27. David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2006).
28. Anno Hegirae or *Hijra*—used in the Muslim calendar to show the number of years since the prophet Muhammad left Mecca in AD 622.
29. For instance, some fatwas during the Ottoman era are found in Ṣadīq al-Damalūjī, *Al-Yazīdīya* [Yazidis] (Mosul: al-ʾItīḥād Printing, 1949), 531, 542–3.
30. See, Zirar Sadiq Tawfiq, *Al-Kurd fi al-Asr al-Abasi hata maji' al-bowayhin (749–946 CE/ 132–334 Hijra)* [The Kurds from the Abbasid Era till the Buwaihid Ascent] (master's thesis, University of Sallahaddin, 1994); Farsat Mar'I Isma'il, *Al-Imarat al-Kurdiyya fi al-asir al-abasi al-thani (960–1117 CE/ 350–511 AH)* [The Kurdish Princedoms in the Later Abbasid Era] (Erbil: Spirez Publication, 2005), 125–436; Sa'd Bashīr Iskandar, *Qiyām al-niẓām al-Imārātī fī Kurdistān wa-suqūṭuh mā bayna muntaṣaf al-qarn al-ʿāshir wa-muntaṣaf al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar, nubdah tārīkhīyah ʿan ahammīyatihi al-siyāsīyah wa-irthihi al-thaqāfī* [The Rise and Fall of Kurdistan's Princedoms Between the Mid-Tenth and Mid-Nineteenth Centuries: A Historical Study of Their Political Significance and Cultural Heritage] (Baghdad: Dār al-shi'un al-thaqāfiyya, 2009).
31. Sharaf-Khān Batlīsī, *Al-Sharafnāma fī Tārīkh al-duwwal wa-al-imārāt al-Kurdiyya* [The Sharafnama of the State and Kurdish Princedoms], trans. Mulla Jamīlī Band Rojbayānī (Baghdad: al-Najāḥ Printing, 1953), 336.
32. ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Abī al-Karam Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shaybānī Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil ī al-tārīkh* [The Comprehensive in History], Vol. 6 (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyah, 2007), 57–8.
33. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sulaymān Nawwār, *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq al-ḥadīth min nihāyat ḥukum Dāwwūd Pāshā ʾila nihāyat ḥukum Midḥat Pāshā* [The History of Modern Iraq From the End of Dāwwūd Pāshā Ruling Until the End of Midḥat Pāshā Ruling] (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī "The Arab Writer Printing House," 1968), 75, 101,
34. Batlīsī, *Al-Sharafnāma*, 459.
35. Batlīsī, *Al-Sharafnāma*, 278–9; Ḥusayn Ḥusnī al-Mukryānī, *Mawjjz tārīkh ʾumaraʾ Sūrān* [Historical Overview of the Soran Princes]. Translated by Muḥammad al-Mulla ʿAbd al-Karīm (Baghdad: Salmān al-Aʿẓamy, n.d.), 9.
36. ʾAnwar al-Māʾī, *Al-ʾAkrād fī-Bahdīnān* [The Kurds in Bahdīnān] (Duhok: Khabāt Printing 1999), 148; Batlīsī, *Al-Sharafnāma*, 278; Raʾūf, *Dirāsāt wathāʾiqiyya ī tārīkh al-Kurd*, 204–5.
37. Muḥammad Āmīn Zakī, *Tārīkh al-duwwal wa-al-ʾimārāt al-Kurdiyya fī al-ʿaṣr al-Islamī* [The History of the States and the Kurdish Princedoms in the Islamic Age], trans. Muḥammad ʿAlī ʿAwnī (Cairo: al-Saʿada Printing, 1948), 399.
38. Sāmī Saʿīd al-Aḥmad, *Al-Yazīdīya, aḥwāluhum wa-muʿtaqadātuhum* [The Yazidies: Their Life and Beliefs], Vol. 1 (Baghdad: University Printing, 1971), 83.

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39. An expert on Islamic religious law.
40. This term was used in early Islamic eras as an honorific title for outstanding *ʿUalamāʾ* (scholars) of the Islamic religious sciences and as supreme judge and highest official. It was an informal title given to jurists whose fatwās were particularly influential, while in the east it came to be conferred by rulers to *ʿUalamāʾ* who played various official roles but were not generally *Muftis*. Later it became a prestigious position in the Ottoman Empire from which to govern the religious affairs of Muslims.
41. He is Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, known as Abū al-Sʿud al-ʿAmādī because he was from ʿAmādiyya, a town northeast of Dohuk. He was born in 1492 and grew up and studied in Istanbul. He served as Shaykh al-Islām (the Mufti of the Ottoman Empire) for thirty years (1545–74), Damalūjī, *Al-Yazīdīya*, 428; İsmail Hâmi Danişmend, *Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı* (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1971), 114.
42. Irene Schneider, "Ebussuud," in *Juristen: ein biographisches Lexikon; von der Antike bis zum 20 Jahrhundert*, ed. Michael Stolleis (Munich: Beck, 2001), 192.
43. For the text of the fatwa, see Damalūjī, *Al-Yazīdīya*, 429–32.
44. Saʿīd al-Diwajī, *Al-Yazīdiyya* [The Yazidis] (Mosul: Dār al-Kutub for Printing and Publication, 1973), 226.
45. Dār al-ḥarb literary means territory of war, denoting any non-Islamic territories adjoining dār al-Islām (territory of Islam) whose rulers are called upon to accept and convert to Islam (i.e., territory that does not have a treaty of non-aggression or peace with Muslims; those that do are called dār al-ṣulḥ). Jurists trace the concept to Prophet Muḥammad, whose messages to the Persian, Abyssinian, and Byzantine emperors demanded that they choose between conversion or war. When the leaders of dār al-ḥarb accept Islam, the territory becomes part of dār al-Islām, where Islamic law prevails; conversely, according to the majority of jurists, an Islamic territory taken by non-Muslims becomes dār al-ḥarb when Islamic law is replaced. Like other classical legal concepts, dār al-ḥarb has been affected by historical changes, and with the fragmentation of the Muslim world into numerous states, the concept has little significance today. See, The Oxford Dictionary of Islam, s.v. "Dar al-Harb," accessed 28 Jul 2018,, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e490.
46. ʿImād ʿAbd al-Salām Raʾūf, *Dirāsāt wathāʾiqiyya ī tārīkh al-Kurd al-ḥadīth wa-ḥḍāratihum* [Documentary Studies of Modern Kurdish History and Their Civilization] (Erbil: al-Thaqāfa Printing, 2008), 142–3.
47. ʿImād ʿAbd al-Salām Raʾūf, *Al-Sulṭān Ḥusayn al-Waly amīr Bahdīnān min 940 AH/ 1533–1573 CE* [Sultan Hussein al-Wali: Bahdinan Prince from 940 AH] (Erbil: Gūvār Printing, 2010), 30–2.
48. Raʾūf, *Al-Sulṭān Ḥusayn al-Waly amīr Bahdīnān*, 30–2.
49. See, Shamisāny, *Madīnat sinjār*, 266–9.
50. ʿAdnān Zaiyān Farḥān, *Al-Kurd al-ʾīzīdiyūn fi Aqlīm Kurdistan 1800–1918* [The Kurdish Yazidi in Kurdistan Region 1800–1918] (Sulaymaniyya: Kurdistan Centre for Strategic Studies, 2004), 29–48. For the dramatic drop in Yazidi population numbers in their homeland during this century see, Al-Shaykh Rassūl Karkūkly, *Dawwḥat al-wazzarāʾ ī Tārīkh waqāʾiʿ Bagdād al-zawwrāʾ* (Beirut: n.d.), 225–56; Sulaymān al-Ṣāʾigh al-Muṣuly, *Tārīkh al-Musul* [The History of Mosul], Vol. I (Cairo, 1923), 294, 307; Aḥmad, *Al-Yazīdīya*, 44.
51. Roger Lescot, *Enquête sur les Yezidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjār* (Beyrouth, 1938), 122–8.
52. Jimis Bnknghām, *Riḥlātī ʾilā al-ʿIrāq 1816* [Travels to Iraq], trans. Salīm Ṭāhā al-Tikrītī, Vol. I (Baghdad: Asʿad Printing, 1968), 40.
53. William Heude, *A Voyage Up the Persian Gulf and a Journey Overland From India to England in 1817* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1819), 229.
54. Ainsworth, "The Assyrian Origin of the Izedis or Yezidis," 15.
55. Wigram and Edgar, *The Cradle of Mankind*, 103.
56. M. Joachim Menant, *Les Yézidiz: Épisodes de l'Histoire des Adorateurs du Diable* (Paris : Ernest Leroux, Éditeur, 1892), 205.
57. He was born in 1788 and became ruler of the princedom of Sorān in 1813, and was killed by the Ottomans in 1838. Jamāl Nabaz, *Al-Amīr al-Kurdī mīr Muḥammad al-Rawwānduzī al-mullaqab bi-(Mīr-i-Kura)* [The Kurdish Prince *Muḥammad al-Rawwānduzī*, Nicknamed the One-eyed Prince], trans. Fakhrī Sllāḥ-Shūr (Erbil: Kurdish Accademia Printing, 1994).
58. Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor*, 192.
59. Layard, *Nineveh and Its Rems*, 94.
60. The relations between the Yazidis and the Mizūry tribe were continuously under strain because the Mizūries considered their fight with the Yazidis a religious and tribal duty. The Mizūry clerics issued religious fatwas that considered the "waste of Yazidi blood" as a jihad (see below).
61. The Mizūry tribe is one of the biggest Sunni Kurdish tribes located in the east of Duhok governorate. It is divided into four clans: Ālgūshiyya, Khāziyyā, Shurfān, and Brīfkān. The Ālgūshiyya clan was the

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strongest and largest in the tribal leadership of Mizūry. For more details see, The Secretariat of the Presidency (Iraq): General Military Intelligence Service. Issue: *Kurdish Clans in Iraq*, Military Print Directorate, undated (secret limited circulation), 87–92.

62. See the text of the fatwa in Damalūjī, *Al-Yazīdīya*, 434–8.
63. Ṣākkr Fattāḥ, *Al-Yaīzīdiyūn wa-al-diyyana al-Yzīdiyya* [The Yazidis and the Yazidi Religion], trans. Dakhīl Shammo (Beirut, 1997), 110–12; Damalūjī, *Al-Yazīdīya*, 459–61.
64. Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains*, 276.
65. Māʾī, *Al-ʾAkrād*, 147–8; ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿAlī Yaḥya, “Mulla Yaḥya al-Mizūry wa-siqūṭ ʾimārat Bahdīnān” [Mulla Yahya al-Mizury and the Fall of the Bahdinan Princedom] *Kārwān Journal* 45 (1986), Pt.3: 149–50.
66. Damalūjī, *Al-Yazīdīya*, 462.
67. Yaḥya, “Mulla Yaḥya al-Mizūry,” 149–50; Farḥān, *Al-Kurd al-ʾīzīdiyūn*, 101–3.
68. Māʾī, *Al-ʾAkrād*, 148, 166; ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ḥasanī, *Al-Yazīdiyūn fī Ḥāḍirihim wa-Māḍīim* [The Yazidisin Their Present and Past] (Beirut: al-ʿArabīy Library for Publications 1980), 140; Farḥān, *Al-Kurd*, 105.
69. Ḥasanī, *Al-Yazīdiyzūn*, 153.
70. ʿAbbās al-ʿAzzāwī, *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq bayna iḥtilālayn* [The History of Iraq Between the Two Occupations], Vol. 7 (Baghdad: Trade and Printing, 1954), 32–3.
71. Sirwalis Bidij, *Riḥlāt ʾilā al-ʿIrāq* [Travels to Iraq], trans. Fuʾad Jamīl, Vol. II (Baghdad: al-Fajjir Publicarion, 1968), 251–258; Badger, *The Nestorian and Their Rituals*, 133.
72. Ṣadīq al-Damalūjī, *ʾImārat Bahdīnān al-kurdiyya aw-ʾimārat al-ʿAmādiyya* [The Kurdish Bahdīnān Emirate or the ʿAmādiyya Emirate] (Duhok: Ārās for Publication and Printing, 1999), 40.
73. Nabaz, *Al-Amīr al-Kurdī*, 228; Mukryānī, *Mawjjz*, 52.
74. Great Zap or Upper Zab, known as *Zīyy-i-Mazin* in Kurdish, is an approximately 400 km-long river that flowsthrough Turkey and joins the Tigris south of Mosul in Iraq.
75. Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 192.
76. Damalūjī, *Al-Yazīdīya*, 463; ʿAzzāwī, *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq*, 32–3.
77. Muṣuly, *Tārīkh*, 78, 307.
78. Nabaz, *Al-Amīr al-Kurdī*, 48.
79. Māʾī, *Al-ʾAkrād*, 149.
80. Ḥasanī, *Al-Yazīdiyūn*, 141.
81. Mukryānī, *Mawjjz*, 59.
82. Nabaz, *Al-Amīr al-Kurdī*, 254.
83. Badger, *The Nestorian and Their Rituals*, 133.
84. It was customary in the Ottoman Empire that when a prince of any princedom disobeyed the Ottoman Sultanate, he would be summoned to Istanbul and then would be liquidated. That was what happened to Mīr-i-Kura.
85. For example, see some Yazidi stories and songs of battle in Christina Allison, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan* (Great Britain, TJ International, Padstow, Cornwall: Curzon Press, 2001), 215–58.
86. Such as one entitled *firmānā-firmānā*, which is a song that has not yet been recorded in books and studies.
87. Zakī, *Tārīkh*, 229; Muṣuly, *Tārīkh*, 307.
88. Layard, *Ninevah and Its Remains*, 180–1.
89. Wigram and Edgar, *The Cradle of Mankind*, 102.
90. Nabaz, *Al-Amīr al-Kurdī*, 254–5; whereas Mukryānī (n.d) estimated the number of captives at about 4,000, Mukryānī, *Mawjjz*, 58–9.
91. Nabaz, *Al-Amīr al-Kurdī*, 255.
92. After trying in vain to force him to convert to Islam, the ʻMīr-i-Kura killed Yazidi Prince ʿAlī Beg near a gorge some 130 km north of Erbil. The waterfall at the location still bears his name, Galī ʿAlī Beg.
93. Muṣuly, *Tārīkh*, 306.
94. Damalūjī, *Al-Yazīdīya*, 463.
95. Nabaz, *Al-Amīr al-Kurdī*, 265.
96. A lot of villages west of Erbil, such as Kallak, Bardarash, Harrir, Chirra, and so on, were mentioned by travellers and historians as Yazidi villages, but since the attack by Mīr-i-Kura they have all been seized and demographically Islamized by Sunni Kurds.
97. Nabaz, *Al-Amīr al-Kurdī*, 134.
98. See, Kāmirān ʿAbd al-Ṣamad Dusky, *Kurdistan al-ʿUthmāniyya fī al-nṣf al-awwal min al-qurn al-tāsiʿa-shar* [Ottoman Kurdistan in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century], 2nd ed. (Duhok: Sperez Printing, 2002), 144–5.

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