

Some Notes about the Members of Parliament from the Province of Baghdad

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In 1877 the region of today's Iraq was administratively speaking divided into two *vilayets*, that of Baghdad and that of Basra, which had been detached from the province of Baghdad in 1875, while Mosul remained a *sancak* of Baghdad until 1879.¹ The *vilayet* of Baghdad in 1877 consisted of seven *sancaks*², which, as in the other provinces, were forming the constituencies for the parliamentary election. The French consul in Baghdad who in 1877 wrote an report about the election in the province claimed that the enthusiasm for the constitution was rather limited in Baghdad as most people would fail to understand its meaning and its implications, so that the Ottoman governor Abdürrahman Nureddin Paşa was confronted with difficulties in finding suitable men willing to do the job. The French consul's report also hinted that it was the governor of the province rather than the provincial *meclis* who had the most important share in determining the outcome of the election.³

While the *vilayet* of Baghdad, however, finally sent three deputies, the *vilayet* of Basra did not. The reason for this irregularity may be that Basra was not really considered a *vilayet* but something of a special case.⁴ As a matter of fact, since the Ottoman military expedition to East Arabia under the governorship of Midhat in 1871, the *sancaks* of Ḥasā, Nağd – at least nominally – formed part of the imperial domains.⁵ Another reason for the non-representation of the province of Basra in the Ottoman parliament might be found in the fact that in addition to being largely a tribal area this province was predominantly Shiite. Neither Ottoman infrastructural power nor Ottoman legitimacy effectively extended to this area, which remained to form a sort of an annex to the empire.

¹ Cf. Christoph Herzog, "Osmanische Herrschaft und Modernisierung im Irak", unpubl. Habilitation thesis (Univ. of Heidelberg, 2004), 44-45.

² These *sancaks* were Mosul, Sulaymāniyya, Shahrizūr, Baghdad, Ḥilla, 'Amāra and Karbalā.

³ Archive Diplomatique de Nantes (ADN), Bagdad (consulat) A 46, no. 75, March 31, 1877, Destrées to de Mouy .

⁴ The terminology in the Ottoman imperial almanacs nos. 31 of 1291H and 32 (1292H) used in the description of the status of the province of Basra is different from that used for other provinces.

⁵ Cf. Frederick F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf. The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) and Zekeriya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hâkimiyeti. Vehhâbî Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı* (Ankara: TTK, 1998).

All deputies from the province of Baghdad were of some local standing. Their social status might be meaningfully described using the well-known concept of notables.⁶ They were landowners and/or tax-farmers and local bureaucrats occupying seats in the newly established local Ottoman Tanzimat assemblies and courts. Thus, they had both knowledge about at least certain aspects of the functioning and a certain closeness to the Ottoman imperial administration. They were not theologians (ulema or rabbis). The Muslims among them were Sunnis, the Shiʿite element not being represented. In contrast to the Jewish community, Christians were demographically unimportant in Baghdad and its vicinities.

Menahim Salih Efendi

Menāḥīm b. Šālīḥ Dānyāl, in Ottoman sources simply named Menahim Salih Efendi, was born in Baghdad in 1846, the offspring of a wealthy Jewish family. The Dānyāl family belonged to the most prominent Jewish families of Baghdad.⁷ Obviously he received an excellent education including the study of Turkish at the hands of private teachers. At a rather young age he was appointed member of the *meclis-i idare* of the province in 1869 before he became an elected member of the Ottoman parliament and was sent off to Istanbul. Following the dissolution of the chamber in 1878, he extensively travelled in Europe and returned to Baghdad only in 1880. A second journey to Europe, probably via Anatolia, started in 1904. This time his journey lasted four years. After his return he tried to introduce modern agrarian technology to his estates in the Hilla district. Menahim Salih Efendi was one of the founders of the Red Crescent in Iraq and became its vice president. In 1910 he built a kindergarten and a primary school in Baghdad, which bore his name and were financed by endowments. Both existed until being nationalized by the Iraqi government in 1976. In 1928 he also sponsored the building of an orphanage for Muslim children, receiving praise for that act from the famous Iraqi poet Maʿrūf ar-Ruṣāfi.

In 1924 he became a deputy for Baghdad in the constitutional assembly but resigned after a short period. After that he was appointed member of the senate (*majlis al-aʿyān*) in July 1925. He held this position until he retired in 1932 because of his old age and his ill health. He died in 1940⁸ and was buried in prox-

⁶ Hourani, Albert, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, ed. W.R. Polk and R.L. Chambers (Chicago 1968), 41-65 and Philip S. Khoury, "The Urban Notables Paradigm Revisited," *Revue du Monde Musulman et du Méditerranée*, 55-56 (1990), 215-228.

⁷ Elie Kedourie, "The Jews of Babylon and Baghdad," in Sylvia Kedourie (ed.), *Elie Kedourie, CBE, FBA 1926-1992. History, Philosophy, Politics* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 15.

⁸ Mīr Baṣrī, *Aʿlām al-Yahūd fī l-ʿIrāq al-ḥadīth* (Jerusalem 1983), 25-29. Photographs of him in Yūsuf Rizqallāh Gānīmā, *Nuzbat al-musbtāq fī taʾrīkh Yabūd al-ʿIrāq. Maʿa mulḥaq bi-tāʾrīkh Yabūd al-ʿIrāq fī l-qarn al-ʿashrīn bi-qalam Mīr Baṣrī*, 2nd. ed. (London: Al-Warrak, 1997), 199 and 272.

imity to the sepulchre of Ezekiel in Kifl near Hilla. The family had been the guardians of the sepulchre.⁹

It would appear that Menahim Salih Efendi was the son of a leading Baghdadi Jewish merchant family with strong international connections. His father had already travelled to Europe. There is evidence that they took sides in one of the communal struggles which divided the Jewish community of Baghdad at the end of the 19th century.¹⁰ Given their obviously close European contacts, one may speculate that on the ideological level of these intra-communal struggles the Dānyāls rather did not side with the traditionalists.

Members of the family (probably his father and uncle) had played a prominent role in large scale tax-farming earlier in the century.¹¹ The family owned large estates in the region of Hilla.¹² Menahim Efendi himself has been said to have had close relations to the Ottoman Governor.¹³

Perhaps owing to his comparatively young age, Menahim Efendi belonged to the less active members of parliament. In the minutes of the parliamentary debates offered to us by Hakkı Tarık Us, there is only cursory evidence of his presence.¹⁴

Şerifzade Abdürrahman Vasfi Bey

‘Abdarrahmān Waṣfī Āl Sharīf, called Şerifzade Abdürrahman Vasfi Bey in Ottoman Turkish sources, originated from Mosul, where he was born in 1247H (beg. June 12, 1831).¹⁵ Besides Arabic and Turkish, he knew Persian and Kurdish. At the age of 21 he held his first government post in the *muhasebe kalemi* in Mosul from which he drew an income of 400 *kuruş*. In 1856 he became an unpaid member of the *meclis-i kebir* in Mosul. The following year he was transferred to the *meclis-i tedkik*. A year later we find him as a director of the *kaza* of Zibār that formed part of the central *sancak* of the province of Mosul, and then as *arazi memuru* in Shahri-zür. Consequently he became *kaimmakam* of the Hindiyya district at the Euphra-

⁹ Kedourie, “The Jews,” 15.

¹⁰ David S. Sassoon, *History of the Jews in Bagdad* (New York: AMS Press, 1982), 159.

¹¹ ADN, Constantinople D (Bagdad 1859-1868), no. 132, October 12, 1859, Tastu to Thouvenel.

¹² Kedourie, “The Jews,” 15.

¹³ ‘Alī Āl Bāzargān, *Al-waqā’i‘ al-ḥaqīqiyya fī th-thawra al-‘irāqiyya* (Bagdad: Maṭba‘at As‘ad, 1954), 23.

¹⁴ Hakkı Tarık Us (ed.), *Meclis-i Mebusan 1293 Zabıt Ceridesi*, 2 vols. (Istanbul: Vakıf Matbaası, 1940-1954), 2:48 for his only two words I was able to find in the records compiled by H.T. Us.

¹⁵ Us, *Meclis-i Mebusan*, 2:415, “Düzeltmeler ve ilâveler” and ‘Abbās al-‘Azzāwī, *Tārīkh al-‘Irāq bayn iḥtilālāyn*, 8 vols. (Baghdad: Maṭba‘at Baġdād, 1935-1956), 8:33. For most of the following see his *sicill* in the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul [henceforth BOA], DH.SAİD 3.584.

tes, vice *mutasarrıf* of the Muntafiq *sancak*, acting *mutasarrıf* in Shahrizūr, and several times *kaimmakam* of the district of Samāwa in Iraq until on February 13, 1876 he was appointed to the court of appeal (*mahkeme-i temyiz*) in Baghdad.¹⁶

Obviously Abdürrahman Efendi was present in the parliament's first session only while in the second session he was replaced by Rif'at Bey.¹⁷ Abdürrahman Bey was an active but not overly frequent contributor to the debates of the parliament's first session, where he made three more elaborate contributions, all of them referring to Iraq.¹⁸

After his mission as a representative to the parliament in Istanbul had ended, he acted as president of the criminal section (*ceza dairesi*) of the *bidayet mahkemesi* in Kirkūk and later was appointed *kaimmakam* of the 'Amāra district in Iraq. He died on July 25, 1885. He came from a family of some local standing; his son, Diyā' Āl Sharīf, later became a member of parliament in independent Iraq.¹⁹

Rif'at Bey

Rif'at Bey was born in Baghdad in July or August 1833.²⁰ He was the son of Aḥmad Ağa, the founder of the house of Shawkat, former commander of the Janissaries in Baghdad, and grandfather of Nāğī Shawkat, who from November 1932 to March 1933 was prime minister of Iraq. The family was of Circassian origin descending from the leading Mamluk elite in Baghdad and belonging to, as the eminent historian of modern Iraq, Hanna Batatu, put it, a "class of upper bureaucrat-landowners."²¹ Rif'at Bey went to a traditional boys' school (*sıbyan mektebi*) in Baghdad. It may be assumed that he also received private tuition, although this is not mentioned in his *sicill*, which states that he had reading and writing abilities in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. In the second half of 1858, at 26 years of age he became an unpaid member of the *meclis-i tabkik* in the province of Baghdad. Nearly ten years had to pass until in 1285H (beg. April 4, 1268), he was appointed member of the criminal court, receiving one thousand *kuruş* a month. A little later he became *kaimmakam* of the Qūrna *kaza* at the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, a post that paid 3,500 *kuruş*. During Midhat Paşa's governorship in Iraq he took part in the military campaign in Eastern Arabia and became vice *mutasarrıf*

¹⁶ See also ADN, Bagdad (consulat) A 46, no. 75, March 31, 1877, Destrées to de Mouy .

¹⁷ Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period. A Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), 261 and 269 and Us, *Meclis-i Mebusan*, 2:415 ("Düzeltilmeler ve ilâveler").

¹⁸ Cf. Us, *Meclis-i Mebusan*, 1:176-177, 210, 344-345.

¹⁹ 'Abbās al-'Azzāwī, *Tārīkh al-'Irāq bayn iḥtilālāyn* (Bagdad: Maṭba'at Bağdād, 1935-1956), 8:33.

²⁰ Cf. his *sicill* in BOA: DH.SAİD 10/493 and Al-'Azzāwī, *Tārīkh al-'Irāq*, 8:138.

²¹ Batatu, Hanna, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq. A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'ṭhists, and Free Officers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 181. See also *ibid.*, 213.

(*mutasarrıf muavini*) of the newly founded *sancak* (or *liva*) of Necd (Najd), which gave him an income of 5,000 *kuruş*. However, in March or April of 1873 he resigned from this post and consequently became *kaimmakam* first of the district of Arbīl and later of that of Jāf in northern Iraq, which reduced his salary to 2,500 and 3,500 *kuruş* respectively. He resigned from the latter post as well. In 1877 he was given the task of inspecting several fortresses the Iranians had built close to the border of the *kazas* of Kūt al-Amāra and Mandalī. After that he was elected to the second session of the Ottoman parliament, a post which was remunerated with 5,000 *kuruş*. After the dissolution of the parliament, he first became *kaimmakam* in Yanbū' al-Baḥr in the province of Hijaz (earning now merely 2,500 *kuruş*) before becoming *mutasarrıf* of the central *sancak* of the same province. This time his income was increased again to 5,000 *kuruş*. But in spring 1882 this assignment was ended, and he had to wait almost a year before being given the post of *kaimmakam* for 2,500 *kuruş* in October 1883 in Khurasān, which belonged to the province of Baghdad. It seems that at this point he was dismissed from office and brought to court because of his conduct during some of his official appointments. Only in February 1887 was he reinstalled as *kaimmakam*, this time in Du-laym for 2,500 *kuruş* but was dismissed only a year later and subsequently became *kaimmakam* in Shāmiyya. In 1892 he was appointed *mutasarrıf* of the *sancak* of 'Amāra. His salary was once again set for at 5,000 *kuruş*. However, not long after this appointment he again resigned on October 21, 1893. After that time he does not seem to have held another official appointment.²² Rif'at Bey died on April 17, 1900 after a prolonged illness.²³

Abdürrezzak Efendi

Shaykh 'Abdarrazzāq ash-Shaykh Qādir was a member of the Baghdadi ash-Shaykh Qādir family. In the Ottoman sources he is simply named Abdürrezzak Efendi.²⁴ The family's founding father, ash-Shaykh Qādir (d. 1278H, beg. July 9, 1861) is said to have been of Kurdish origin and to have been affiliated with the highly influential *Qādiriyya* in Baghdad.²⁵

His son Şaykh 'Abdarrazzāq is reported to have been a member of the local *temyiz mahkemesi*.²⁶ After his return from Istanbul following the dissolution of the

²² BOA: DH.SAİD 10/493.

²³ Al-'Azzāwī, *Tārīkh al-'Irāq*, 8:138.

²⁴ Cf. Us, *Meclis-i Mebzan*, 2:16.

²⁵ Ibrāhīm ad-Durūbī, *Al-Baġdādīyyūn. Akhbārūhum wa mağālisuhum* (Bagdad: Rābiṭa, 1958), 192.

²⁶ ADN: Bagdad (consulat) A 46, no. 75, March 31, 1877, Destrées to de Mouy. This would appear to be consistent with the information given in *Bagdad salnamesi* 1 (1292H), 58 where one Abdürrezzak Efendi is mentioned as member of the *divan-i temyiz-i vilayet*.

parliament he became mayor of the second district's municipality of Baghdad²⁷ in 1296H (beg. December 26, 1878), a post he held until his death in 1312H (beg. July 5, 1894).²⁸ Obviously he was a landowner or rather a holder of tax farms.²⁹ Abdürrezzak seems to have been one of the more frequent contributors to the parliamentary debates, especially during the second session. However, his contributions then were mostly concerned with formal issues concerning the procedure or parliamentary work. He regularly admonished his colleagues not to waste too much time with fruitless discussion and made proposals for more efficient parliamentary work. Thus, he criticized that it took the parliament several sittings to formulate its response to the opening address of the sultan while the country was in a desperate war with Russia.³⁰

No information could be obtained about the size and importance of Abdürrezzak's tax-farming business. We might, however, consult the table listing the donations by members of parliament for the refugees of the war against Russia³¹ to get an, admittedly very tentative idea of the relative level of wealth held by the various members of parliament. In doing so, we assume that the members had an approximate idea of the wealth and status of their colleagues and felt obliged – within certain limits – to correspond to this scale when determining their own contribution. Inferring from the rather average amount of his donation (600 *kurş*), one might assume that Abdürrezzak was not one of the top-income contractors. Thus, it would appear that Abdürrezzak was an interesting example of the "notables-concept," even if he clearly was not one of the top notables in Baghdad either in terms of wealth or in terms of power or prestige. His father must have been a newcomer to the city. It can be safely assumed that his adherence to the mighty Qadiriyya order – which we may also suppose for his son – helped him greatly to advance his affairs in Baghdad. Under these circumstances the assumption would not appear too far-fetched that Abdürrezzak Efendi's election for parliament was on the ticket of the head of the order, the *naqīb* of Baghdad, who traditionally was one of the most influential men in the city.

Bağdadlı Mehmed Emin Efendi

Mention should finally be made of the member of the *meclis-i ayan*, Muḥammad Amin az-Zand, who is referred to in Ottoman sources as Bağdadlı Mehmed Emin

²⁷ Al-ʿAzzāwī, *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq*, 8:45; *Bağdad salnamesi* 4 (1300H), 114.

²⁸ Ad-Durūbī: *Al-Bağdādiyyūn*, 193.

²⁹ Cf. Us, *Meclis-i Mebusan*, 2:338, where he alludes to his "having quite an amount of corn in the fields" in the province of Baghdad.

³⁰ Cf. Us, *Meclis-i Mebusan*, 2:54-59.

³¹ Us, *Meclis-i Mebusan*, 2:154f.

Efendi.³² He was born on May 4, 1819 in Baghdad into a family of originally tribal origins that had settled in the city already in the first half of the 18th century. Mehmed Emin received a religious education from local ulema. At the age of 28 he became *naib* at the court in Baghdad and later in addition a member of the *meclis-i kebir-i eyalet*. He then succeeded³³ the famous Abū l-Thana' Maḥmūd Shihābaddīn al-Ālūsī as the mufti of Baghdad, a post he held until 1855. During the second governorship of Mehmed Namık Paşa (1862-1868) in Baghdad, he became *kahya*, an office that he held – with a short interruption – for five years. In 1868 he was called to Istanbul to become a member of the *şura-yi devlet*. It would not seem improbable that he was a protégé of Namık Paşa, who around the same time was recalled to Istanbul to become *serasker*. Henceforth Mehmed Emin's career unfolded in Istanbul. While proceeding in the hierarchy of *İlmiyye* degrees to that of *İstanbul payesi* in 1876, he became a member in numerous commissions, one of them being the drafting commission of the famous *Mecelle*. In March 1877 he became an appointed member of the Ottoman senate, where he worked for six months as a member of the *Teşkil-i vilayet komisyonu*. Later he was a member of the *İntihab-i memurin komisyonu*. After the dissolution of the parliament he obviously held no further official appointment but remained in Istanbul. Finally, four months before his death on February 14, 1892, he received the *İlmiyye* title of *Anadolu kazaskerliği*.

*An Example of Local Engagement in Parliament:
the Proposal For the Reform of Taxes in Iraq by Abdürrahman Efendi*

During the first session of the parliament at one of the meetings in early June 1877, the deputy from Baghdad Abdürrahman Efendi demanded the forming of a commission whose task it would have been to work out a proposal for the reorganisation of the whole taxation system in Iraq (*hutta-i Irakîyye*).³⁴ The proposal that was printed in the newspaper *Basiret* was made the context of the chamber's deliberations on a forced loan that was recommended by a special committee of the chamber as the best means to cover additional war expenses.³⁵

Abdürrahman Efendi was not only highly critical of the forced loan, which he regarded as a "second tax," but also of the overall performance of the Ottoman administration concerning taxation in Iraq. He pointed out that except in the regions of Mosul, Kirkūk and Sulaymāniyya not all land in Iraq was originally of

³² The following factual information is based on the article by Ali Birinci, "Mecelle Cemiyeti Âzasından Bağdatlı Mehmed Emin Efendi," in id., *Tarihin Gölgesinde. Meşâbir-i Meçhûleden Birkaç Zât* (Istanbul: Dergâh, 2001), 13-16.

³³ Al-ʿAzzāwī: *Tārikh al-ʿIrāq*, 7:286.

³⁴ Us, *Meclis-i Mebusan*, 1:344-346.

³⁵ Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period*, 205.

the *miri*-type. Large tracts of land had remained in the hands of the original owners after the Muslim conquest of the country. However, over the course of time, many of these landowners had died without heirs, and their land therefore had been transferred to the state. This kind of land was called *haraciyye*, said Abdürrahman Efendi, and it was farmed out at very different rates. As this land was farmed out on a yearly term, Abdürrahman Efendi insisted that it was to be determined whether the former or the current tenant was liable for the forced loan. In either case the amount of the loan should be specified in a just manner. It was true, he continued, that in recent years some of the land of the *haraciyye* type had been transferred to property by issuing title deeds. But although this should have meant that the land now came under the tithing obligation, in reality it was still taxed differently according to its fertility and water supply. Here again, Abdürrahman Efendi was rather skeptical about the lawful and just applicability of a forced loan if its amount did not take into account the difference in taxation. He saw more unresolved problems in the financial treatment of pious foundations and of the urban population who made their livelihood from trade and commerce. Concerning the administrative districts of Mosul, Kirkūk and Sulaimaniyya, he somewhat vaguely but unmistakably declared that through “the tyranny of the influential and the indecision of the government” taxation was targeting exclusively the poor, who were therefore unable to cover even their most basic needs. In addition, the taxation of date growing in Baghdad and its adjoining districts was generally excessive and unjust.

Under the prevailing conditions, Abdürrahman Efendi seemed to suggest, it was impossible to raise a forced loan in Iraq without a fundamental reorganization of taxation in the country.

To achieve this end, he demanded the installation of a commission. He included the names of its members in his proposal. Not surprisingly all of his recommendations had close relations with the province of Baghdad: Mehmed Namık Paşa, currently a member of the Ottoman Senate, had been there as *vali* twice from 1851 to 1852 and from 1862 to 1868. He was to preside over the commission. Bağdadlı Mehmed Emin Efendi, another member of the Senate, had been in Istanbul only for a couple of years. Mansur Paşa (d. 1883) from the Sa‘dün family, now a member of the *şura-yi devlet*, was a former shaykh of the Muntafiq-confederation on the lower Euphrates who had been sponsored by Midhat Paşa.³⁶ İbrahim Fasih Efendi (1820/21 – December 16, 1882)³⁷ at that time was a member

³⁶ Al-‘Azzāwī: *Tārīkh al-‘Irāq*, 8:78; ADN: Bagdad (consulat) A 45, no. 12, December 15, 1872, to Comte Vogué; Mehmed Süreyya: *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ed. Nuri Akbayan. 6 vols (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1996), 931. The more well-known Sa‘dün shaykh who was member of the *şura-i devlet* was Nasır Paşa; on him cf. *ibid.*, 1228.

³⁷ On him cf. Yūnus ash-Shaykh İbrāhīm as-Sāmarrā’ī, *Tārīkh ‘ulamā’ Baghdād fī l-qarn ar-rābi‘ ‘ashar al-bidjri*. (Baghdad: Maṭba‘at wizārat al-awqāf wa shu‘un ad-diniyya, 1978 / 1398), 11-13.

of the *meclis-i maarif* and belonged to the famous Haydarî-family in Baghdad, while Derviş Efendi had been the former accountant of the endowments (*evkaf muhasebeci*) in Baghdad and was currently like Mansur Paşa a member of the *şura-yi devlet*. Finally Abdürrahman Efendi proposed that his two colleagues Abdürrahman and Menahim Efendi (modestly omitting himself) should act as the representatives of the chamber in the commission. The commission itself was to prepare a sort of memorandum that would form the basis of further legislative deliberations.

As still little is known about late Ottoman prosopography, it is impossible to tell the exact political implications the personal composition of that commission may have had. Namık Paşa is known to have been a tough, emphatically conservative and authoritarian but thoroughly honest administrator who was little loved in Europe but generally highly respected by the Ottoman political elite. Mansur Paşa, on the other hand, had caused the Ottoman administration considerable trouble by repeatedly rebelling against the governor in Baghdad. He was at once a prominent victim and beneficiary of the Ottoman politics of divide-and-rule in Iraqi tribal affairs. It is interesting to note that Namık Paşa and Mansur Paşa had in fact clashed in May 1864, when the former unseated the latter from the shaykhhood of the Muntafiqs.³⁸ Only in 1866 was Mansur granted an amnesty by Namık Paşa and was able to return to Baghdad.³⁹ We must not, however, assume that Mansur was a tribal warrior, unacquainted with the more subtle and bureaucratically working Ottoman provincial administration. As he had been a member of the *meclis-i idare* in Baghdad⁴⁰, he had sufficient insight into the intricacy of Ottoman provincial policies at the time of the Tanzimat. Nevertheless, a proposal arranging for Mansur and Namık Paşas to sit in one and the same commission on tax reform in the province of Baghdad would have brought together two basically different types of pashas, embodying and representing in their very personal history the Ottoman centre and periphery. Bağdadlı Mehmed Emin Efendi on the other hand was a member of the drafting commission of the *Mecelle*, reputed for his intimate knowledge of religious law.⁴¹ Fasih Efendi, who was to be the other *‘ālim* in the commission, may have been somewhat more controversial.⁴²

All in all the focus of the proposal was undoubtedly on a purely local reform of taxation based on the local knowledge of local notables who had become officials of the central Ottoman administration yet including at its head a prominent figure with local knowledge but without any indigenous roots. While it is not clear how Abdürrahman Efendi's proposal was received in the chamber, serious

³⁸ Al-‘Azzāwī: *Tārīkh al-‘Irāq*, 7:143-149. For the resulting military action cf. PRO: FO 195/803A, no. 25, May 4, 1864, Kemball to Erskine.

³⁹ PRO: FO 195/803A, no. 26, June 27, 1866, Kemball to Lyons.

⁴⁰ Al-‘Azzāwī: *Tārīkh al-‘Irāq*, 7:143.

⁴¹ Birinci, “Mecelle Cemiyeti Āzasından,” 15.

⁴² Cf. the judgement made by Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i osmani yabud tezkere-i meşahir-i osmaniyye*. 4 vols. (Istanbul: Matbaa-i amire, 1308-1311), 4: 21.

administrative reform achieved some prominence on the agenda of the early Hamidian regime even after the dissolution of the parliament, before apparently falling into oblivion for two and a half decades.⁴³

⁴³ Cf. Gökhan Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (London – New York: Routledge, 2006), 24-48.