M. Talha Çiçek, *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East*. Cambridge University Press.
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For more than three decades, the modern social and political history of the Ottoman–Arab peripheries has been an especially fertile field for revisionism. Moving away from older scholarship that had typically argued for an intrinsically antagonistic relationship between the Ottoman state and a wide range of local actors across the empire's diverse Arab provinces, successive waves of historians have sought to posit a much more fluid, interactive model for understanding the social and political dynamics of state recentralization in the decades following the Tanzimat (through the Hamidian and Committee of Union and Progress [CUP] eras).

M. Talha Çiçek's *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East* marks a welcome new addition to this rich seam of historical revisionism. Çiçek's main focus in this meticulously researched monograph is the evolution of the relationship, after 1840, between the Ottoman government and a variety of Bedouin tribes across the Arab provinces comprising imperial territory we know now as Syria and Iraq (though some of the research also takes us into what is now Jordan and Saudi Arabia).

Across seven detailed empirical chapters, in addition to a robust introduction and brief conclusion, Çiçek argues for adopting an "equalized perspective" of the Ottoman-tribal relationship in these domains. For Çiçek, this means pushing back against rigid "top-down" approaches to Ottoman recentralization by instead emphasizing Bedouin agency – particularly the key role played by various notable tribal sheikhs, who helped mediate the bolstered Ottoman presence in Syria and Iraq's desert peripheries, largely on their own terms. The operative term throughout the book is "partnership," as Çiçek consistently impresses upon the reader his view of the "leaders of nomadic groups as negotiating partners, mediators, and collaborators of empire," who "restructured the imperial state formation in such a way that their social and political organization and their interests in the Arab countryside would not be damaged" (p. 30).

The book succeeds in crafting a comprehensive historical account of the Ottoman government's changing relationship with the key tribes in the Iraqi and Syrian provinces – particularly the Shammar and Anizah. Chapters 1 and 2, which focus on the first two decades after the Tanzimat, serve as a sort of exposition for the analysis of pragmatic policy adjustment and political negotiation that lies at the heart of Çiçek's story. Chapter 1 highlights the Ottoman state's failure to eradicate the perceived tribal problem by strictly coercive means, whereas Chapter 2 demonstrates how even Istanbul's concerted effort to regularize its military presence in the region, while also constructing new permanent settlements for local populations that had been displaced by tribal depredations, met with only partial success. The Ottomans may have earned "nomadic respect for imperial rules and regulations" by 1870, say, but they had not managed to "expel, subjugate, or 'Ottomanize' them" (p. 67).

A shift in tactic was thus deemed necessary – the main theme of the ensuing chapters. In Chapter 3, a survey of the Ottomans' expansion into Deir al-Zor, Çiçek

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documents the "change of imperial ideology from 'idealist modernism' to 'pragmatism'" (p. 99). Accordingly, in their bid to establish and strengthen their new Mutasarrıfate in the region, the Ottomans realized they had to abandon their Tanzimat-era goals of forcibly restricting Bedouin autonomy by curtailing their movement and independent income sources; instead, they had to proceed "in coordination with, at least, some Bedouin sheiks, who were treated as partners rather than subjects or citizens of a modernizing state and who obtained new privileges in the newly occupied territories" (p. 100). Chapter 4 continues the story of how "imperial expansionism" – though this time into districts in southern Syria – ultimately led to a "sustainable peace between the tribes and government" (p. 131). As Çiçek argues convincingly, "the consolidation of imperial rule in the newly expanded areas transformed the collaboration into the provincialization of the nomads and their partnership with the local authorities to maintain the governance of the newly established administrative units and to solve the great majority of the problems that nomads experienced with the settled people and other tribes" (p. 171). Chapter 5, for its part, builds on similar themes and arrives at similar conclusions, though with its focus now trained on the Shammar in the provinces of Baghdad and Mosul.

The final two chapters move away from the strict chronology of the preceding chapters – which perhaps offer a slightly overdetermined view of a clean break in Ottoman-tribal relations by 1870 – and instead adopt a welcome thematic lens. Chapter 6, on taxation practices, is perhaps the strongest and most original of the entire book. Here, Çiçek cogently argues how "the effective taxation of the Shammar and the Anizah represented a fundamental component of their 'provincialization'" (p. 229). Yet the upshot of this process was a special sort of pragmatic compromise between the parties in which no side "could completely realize their original agenda." In exchange for the tribes' consent to pay taxes to the Ottoman government, among other concessions, "imperial authorities accepted the number of the animals that Bedouin sheikhs declared as taxable property, and could tax the commensurate amount; in addition, they supported the sheikhs to reinforce their authority over the tribes" (p. 229). Finally, in Chapter 7, Çiçek revises older historiographical treatments of the Ottoman attitude toward tribal law and justice, arguing that "the Ottoman government was closely involved in inter-tribal conflicts and the disputes between and among the sedentary and nomadic societies," even if Bedouins still maintained a large degree of autonomy in settling their own affairs (p. 256).

The main strength of *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East* is its incredible level of empirical detail. To craft his admirably comprehensive account of the Ottoman government's engagement with various Bedouin tribes in the Syria/Iraq region across the second half of the nineteenth century, Çiçek successfully draws from a range of archives – typically triangulating between the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul and state diplomatic archives in Britain and France, but also utilizing *Sharia* court records from Hama, Mardin, and Urfa, as well as the private family archive of Mirza Wasfi (an Ottoman gendarme commander stationed in Amman).

Along the way, Çiçek introduces us to a host of relatively obscure yet often colorful political actors, such as Ahmed Hafiz (the Anizah's representative in Aleppo) and Abd al-Qarim (a notable Shammar sheikh) while casting new light on some more familiar

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Tanzimat-era figures, such as Midhat Pasha. It is also to Çiçek's credit that he consistently supplements his detailed reconstruction of this complicated history with rare visual material collected from various archives. For instance, the striking photographs presented throughout Chapter 2, which document the Ottomans' construction of various forts and desert outposts in the 1850s and 1860s, leave the reader with a much sharper appreciation of the imperial government's prodigious undertaking in this period, as well as a better feel for the built environment that would be left behind as a legacy of late Ottoman rule.

For its empirical scope and archival breadth, *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East* is strongly recommended for Ottoman historians focusing on dynamics of state recentralization after the Tanzimat, and will be of special utility to those scholars with a sub-specialty in the Arab provinces and Bedouin history. One could quibble, however, with the book's overall conceptual framework, which seems to flatten the prevailing historiography.

In surveying the relevant scholarly landscape in the book's Introduction, Çiçek observes three predominant approaches: (1) works (typically of an older generation) that unquestioningly adopt the view from the Ottoman center and thus ignore or downplay Bedouin agency; (2) works by scholars who read the Ottoman periphery through the lens of transnational historiography on the "frontier," but who, in Çiçek's eyes, consequently overstate the divide between the frontier and the Ottoman heartland; and (3) more recently, works by scholars who, influenced by the postcolonial turn in historical studies, emphasize the consistently racialized or even "orientalist" tropes at play in Ottoman attitudes toward the peripheral Bedouin tribes (pp. 26–30).

But this framing seems rather cursory, and certainly does not do justice to the full range of scholarship that has burgeoned in recent years to capture the complex, multifaceted, and ever-evolving political dynamics between the Ottoman government and the empire's abundant tribal and nomadic populations. *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East* is by no means the first work to posit "negotiation" or "partnership" as the cornerstone of Ottoman policy in the late nineteenth century, or to uphold Bedouin sheikhs "as the active agents of the transformation that took place in the nineteenth century" (p. 30).

To take one example among several, Reşat Kasaba's *A Moveable Empire* (2009) marked a major intervention into Ottoman historiography of the post-Tanzimat era, laying out a compelling theoretical argument for seeing mobility, especially tribal movements, as a key catalyst for revamped pragmatic Ottoman policy making; yet this work goes unmentioned and uncited in Çiçek's book. Other scholars, such as Sabri Ateş and Janet Klein (whose landmark *Margins of the Empire* is cited but not discussed in any detail and is omitted from the conceptual introduction) have in fact introduced a sophisticated framework around the notion of Ottoman borderlands and frontiers in this period – predicated on the idea of negotiation and compromise between the state and local (oftentimes nomadic) populations – that goes far beyond where Çiçek's reading of the prevailing literature would have it.

For his comprehensive reconstruction of the Iraqi and Syrian story – with its special focus on the Shammar and Anizah tribes, and its original intervention on the

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theme of taxation – *Negotiating Empire in the Middle East* is to be commended. But the book's conceptual heft would have been far greater had Çiçek engaged more thoroughly with the relevant Ottoman historiography on borderlands and mobile populations, and thus worked harder to situate his monograph more squarely within the wider and richer historiographical trend of which it is clearly part.

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Deniz Yonucu *Police, Provocation, Politics: Counterinsurgency in Istanbul*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2022. xvii + 199 pages.
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Deniz Yonucu's *Police, Provocation, Politics* presents an anthropological exploration of the meanings behind, and shifts in, the Turkish state's policing and counterinsurgency strategies in contemporary Istanbul. Combining archival work and oral history narratives with extensive ethnographic research, her analysis provides valuable insights into the production of Istanbul's "racialized and dissident" populations and spaces, which have been highly securitized and stigmatized since the 1990s. By analyzing how practices produced by a counterinsurgency doctrine of low-intensity conflict, the legacy of a combination of Cold War counterinsurgencies and colonial governmentalities, have been deployed, maintained, and reframed within the context of a predominantly Alevi-populated neighborhood of Istanbul, Yonucu opens an analytical frame to understand the underlying reasons behind, and conditions for, the multiple forms of violence, permanent conflict, and ethno-sectarian frictions happening there. Yonucu's perspective therefore broadens our understanding of politics through examining the spatial and affective dimensions of the complex interplay between governance, policing, and antisystemic grassroots activism.

Police, Provocation, Politics argues that practices of counterinsurgency have been key to the political marginalization and spatial confinement of the revolutionary left in post-1980s Istanbul through strategically provoking and reproducing a vicious cycle of violence. By the early 1990s the radical left forces had managed to dispel the grim conditions of the aftermath of the 1980 military coup and taken critical steps to refashion leftist dissent, particularly in the working-class *gecekondu* neighborhoods of the city. Primarily led by outlawed socialist organizations that pursued urban guerrilla warfare methods, these dissident forces mobilized the mainly Alevi and Kurdish rural migrants against the shattering combined effects of rapid neoliberalization and manifest state oppression, informed at that time by the dominant Turkish–Islamist ideology. Against this backdrop, the Turkish state adopted novel tactics of counter-insurgency – including checkpoints at neighborhood entrances, stop-and-frisk body

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