Camels, Pastoralists, and State-making: the Banu Sakhr of Transjordan in the Early Twentieth Century

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Abstract

In historical and anthropological scholarship, the Banu Sakhr Bedouin tribe of north Arabia is associated with a peaceful transition from relative independence in the late-nineteenth century to integration within the nascent state of Transjordan by the later 1930s. By focusing on the entanglement between humans, animals, and ecology, this Thesis aims to question this view, arguing instead that the dual process of state-building and of the encapsulation of the Banu Sakhr into that state was achieved by domineering interference over the tribal system by state actors, and caused profound change to tribal society which the Banu Sakhr had little chance to prevent.

This argument is developed by first characterising the Banu Sakhr social system in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as centred on camels, animals which, whether by providing subsistence, enabling mobility, or functioning as the unit of exchange, unlocked stabilising strategies that facilitated the persistence of the Banu Sakhr in the harsh desert ecology. Moving to the Transjordan mandate in the 1920s and 1930s, the extension of state control, and the increasing integration of the tribes within the state, when combined with drought and economic depression, is found to have undermined these stabilising strategies. In turn, the resulting diversification of livelihoods forced upon the Banu caused deep social change, as camel herders became agriculturalists, labourers, shepherds, or soldiers. This narrative of change, originating in connections between ecology, animals, social structure and political development, engenders a second and more general contribution to the historical and anthropological literature of twentieth-century north Arabia: a model of state development rooted in study of the environment, and of Bedouin society as interlinked with the granular details of taxation, border controls, and violence.

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i. Primary sources

The reports of John Bagot Glubb

Glubb's monthly reports, which the author titled in full, for example, 'A monthly report on events in the deserts of Transjordan for the month of December, 1932' has been shortened in citations to 'Glubb's report, December 1932'. Also omitted, likewise for the sake of brevity, is the specific location where these were read, which I detail here: Glubb's reports for 1930, 1932, and 1933 were read in the Glubb papers (on which see below); his reports for 1934 and 1935 were read in the National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom, in FO905; his reports for 1937, 1938, and 1939 were read in the same archive in CO831.

Glubb papers

The Glubb papers in The Middle East Centre at St Anthony's College, Oxford, have not been fully catalogued. Thus in the footnotes they are simply cited as GP.

ii. Spelling

The rendering of the names of tribes as found in sources have not been changed, thus Banu Sakhr will often be found within quotation marks as 'Beni Sakhr' or 'Bani Sakhr'. Where possible, the original Arabic of lesser-known tribal names, personal names and toponyms is included in Appendix 1, curated with the help of Professor Aziz Al-Azmeh and Kahlil ElHariri. Well-known names and toponyms common in the anglophone literature are given as they appear routinely, such as Salt, Karak, Balqa, Hejaz, Tawfiq Canaan, and Mithqal al-Fayez.

Maps

Map 1: topographical features, tribal grazing areas and migration patterns

A: The low-lying depression of the Wadi Sirhan, the Banu Sakhr's reliable winter pastureland.
B: Wadi al-Mujib
C: Wadi al-Hasa. Together with the Wadi al-Mujib, this denotes the rough summer grazing area of the Banu Sakhr in the hills east of the Dead Sea, and stretching north east of the Wadi al-Mujib into the shaykh-owned lands in the southern suburbs of present-day Amman.
D: The Jebel Tubaiq
E: This is a modern satellite image, and the collection of green dots are plots of irrigated land created in the twenty-first century as part of the Al-Jauf Agriculture Project.
F: The desert zone which Banu Sakhr sub-tribal units would travel in search of grazing.
G: Rough delineation of Rwala tribal area.
H: Rough delineation of Huwaitat tribal area.
I: Wadi Araba
J: Jebel Druze

Map 2: post-1925 borders of the Emirate of Transjordan and locations mentioned in the text

A: Amman
B: Azrqa
C: Ma'an
D: As-Salt, in the Balqa region
E: Ajlun
F: Karak
G: Madaba
H: Al-Jizah
I: Al-Qastal
J: Al-Muwaqqar to the east, al-Nuqairah to the west
K: Al-Quwayrah
L: Al-Hallabat
M: Ath-Thulaythiwat

Note that while a modern satellite image is used, the borders are those prior to the 1965 land exchange with Saudi Arabia.

Introduction. Tribes and the state-making process: an ecological approach

The ethnographer, archaeologist, and Dominican friar Antonin Jaussen (1871-1962), who lived with the Banu Sakhr Bedouin tribe between 1902-05 and within the territory that forms today's Jordan, recorded a romantic tale of courage, danger, and intrepidity that paints the Banu Sakhr as exuding exotic orientalism.[1] At an unspecified date in the mid-nineteenth century, one Felah Selas, a celebrated Banu Sakhr warrior, left the lush highland pastures east of Jordan River. He set out into the vast baking sands and craggy mountains of the Arabian desert, a section of which today falls into the boundaries of modern Jordan, but fully extends east to the Fertile Crescent and sweeps down southward as the scorched core of the Arabian Peninsula. The Banu Sakhr had been the most powerful of the Hauran region of present-day southern Syria, but were driven in the eighteenth century to Jauf, spreading from there to the Balqa in Jordan after pressure from the Anaizah tribe.[2] John Ludwig Burckhardt in his 1822 *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* wrote that by the nineteenth century, particularly after attacking the *hajj* caravan in 1756, the Banu Sakhr were "generally dreaded", and "do not pay tribute to the Pasha [in Damascus]".[3] Felah Selas had rallied two-hundred followers who travelled with him on camelback, with the promise of pillaging the camels owned by the tribes who roamed the wilderness west of the Euphrates. Each camel needed water at least every five to six days, and Felah Selas and his followers relied on the chance glimpse of grazing land on the horizon for the expedition not to have ended in the death of the raiders and their animals.

[1] A Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au Pays de Moab,* (Paris: Gabalda, 1907), 368-69.
[2] John Bagot Glubb, "A Historical Note on the Sirhan Tribe", uncatalogued, Box 6, Glubb Collection.
[3] J Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land,* (Project Gutenberg, 2005), 264.

In describe an alluring, enigmatic, and romantic culture, this story invites questions coloured by the difference and exoticism it imputes. Was this randomised pillage, or was there a deeper system at work? Camels seem the engine at the centre of this story: how did these animals, the ships of the desert, facilitate this daring expedition? Why is the Ottoman Empire notable in its absence, since were not nineteenth-century states increasingly assertive in their desire to control movement, to conscript, and to monopolise violence? If one were to journey to north Arabia now, would camels and raiders still be found, or is this way of life lost, and if so how? Finally, to what extent does Felah Selas's story, ostensibly handed down across generations of Banu Sakhr tribespeople and reproduced by a European traveller, pertain to reality or to imagination? These questions, which attempt to understand a remote way of life, combined with the desire to discover if, and if so how, such a way of life has been lost, constituted the instincts that gave rise to this study. What will follow to responds to these questions, but in doing so attempts to provide answers that distance us from the clichéd image which Jaussen provides.

Therefore, compared to that imparted by Felah Selas's adventure, this study attempts to paint a picture less coloured by difference and authenticity, and more in terms of social systems and practices examined as rational responses both to the logic of a particular ecology, and the characteristics of the animals with whom the Banu Sakhr shared their environment. The objects involved in the dynamics of Banu Sakhr tribal life, whether tribespeople, camels, the state, or the desert, are the same as in Felah Selas's tale, yet in this study they are presented as constituents in an intricate but analysable social, political, economic, and ecological system, not as part of a romantic and fictionalised view of desert life. To take each of the above questions in turn, first, raiding was not as a barbaric practice of pillage but instead was built structurally into the desert economy of scarcity, one of many adaptations to the difficult conditions desert which constituted a flexible, varied, and dynamic form of existence. Second,

the instinct that camels were central was not unfounded. Whether for travel, as beasts of burden, as the object of raids, or the unit of value for exchange, these fascinating creatures were intrinsic to the social system from which Felah Selas originated. The desert itself was less a wilderness, more an admittedly harsh environment but one teeming with interdependent and entangled life. Third, at the time of Felah Selas's adventurism, bringing the Banu Sakhr into the orbit of the state was, for the mid-nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, a desirable but distant aim. As will be central to the study of mandate Transjordan and the changes attendant on tribal life during the period, an alteration in the technology and techniques of state control pertains to the fourth question: the extension of state power in Felah Selas's home region in the 1920s and 1930s, combined with the mechanics of modern warfare and mobility, barred the continuation of the mode of living he had experienced.

i. Orientalist sources: a reality beyond the discourse?

The fifth question relates to sources. The opening romanticised and clichéd picture of Banu Sakhr tribal life is instructive, since it presents a vision of north Arabia which certain theorists of orientalism suggest reliance on Western authors like Antonin Jaussen would invariably create. Indeed, while the assumptions about Banu Sakhr tribespeople have shifted from those which gave impulse to this examination of the tribe, the sources that support this study have not. The material relied on here derives from ethnographic studies written by European travellers, and the reports produced by the mandate administration and catalogued by the British Foreign and Colonial Offices. It is unfortunate that the present writer cannot yet access the Records of the Central Office of Lands and Survey and the Records of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, both in Arabic and held in Amman, as well as other Arabic primary sources such as diaries, periodicals and newspapers, as well as Arabic secondary literature. Nevertheless, as records of government activity, the Lands and Survey and Chamber of Commerce sources would likely not have unlocked Bedouin life from the outside,

they nevertheless offer arresting vignettes of "women fighting to claim inherited land […] usurped by their brothers [and] peasants claiming they never sold land for which others hold bills of sale."[4] Unable to employ this material, we instead use sources in European languages by travellers and administrators, and have focused on the issues which these sources reveal: the relations between tribe and state, the role of the tribe in the state-making process, and the shifting structure of the tribe in the context of these relations, to the exclusion of other subjects such as gender relations and the detailed ethnographic study of the internal life of the Banu Sakhr clans. Together with Antonin Jaussen, we will draw upon, among others, Charles Doughty (1843-1926), the enigmatic British poet; Anne Blunt (1837-1917), the aristocratic British horse breeder; and the Moravian explorer and orientalist scholar Alois Musil (1868-1944), who during WWI, fighting for Austria-Hungary, opposed attempts by TE Lawrence (1888-1935) to ferment revolt against the Ottoman Empire. Once we reach the 1920s, our window shifts to the cadre of British army officers and colonial officials brought to govern the nascent mandate of Transjordan: Fredrick Peake (1886-1970), Harry St John Philby (1885-1960), Henry Fortnom Cox (1880-1953), and John Bagot Glubb (1897-1986).

European writers bring, and to some extent replicate, their own assumptions about their subject. For Edward Said, such authors visualised "Arabs as […] camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers […] an affront to real civilisation".[5] Jaussen indeed writes that 'the Bedouin are 'great infants', a 'primitive' people.[6] According to Said, since orientalism is 'a system for citing works and authors', in drawing on these works one remains trapped in a self-referential academic discourse, unable to glimpse the reality to which the orientalist author ostensibly refers.[7] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous analysis of

[4] A Amawi and M Firschbach, "New Indigenous Sources for the Socio-Economic History of Transjordan during the Mandate", *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, 25 no. 2 (1991): 169-72.
[5] E Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1977), 109.
[6] Jaussen, *Coutumes*, 4, 96.
[7] Said, *Orientalism*, 24.

subalternism complicates matters further, since even with the best of intentions to represent marginalised social groups accurately, scholars emanating from the European colonial metropole, including both the present writer and the European travellers whose work is drawn upon here, will imagine a subject and thus render the genuine subaltern silent: "intellectuals […] merely report on the non-represented subject and analyse (without analysing) the workings of (the unnamed Subject irreducibly presupposed by) power".[8] According to Spivak's definition, the Bedouin might be considered an extreme example of subalternity: an "illiterate peasantry" opposed by the Ottoman state, their particular mode of tribal life later crushed by British colonialism.[9]

If we come to discuss the British administrators in particular, these reservations are reinforced. For not only must we study the "other" as they appear through an orientalising lens, we also glimpse the "ungoverned" as viewed by the civilising force of modern government. As Georges Balandier has noted, the "colonial situation" is justified by a "series of rationalisations": "the inability of the native population to govern itself correctly [….] the despotism of traditional chiefs; […] native inability to develop their own natural resources".[10] Thus John Chancellor, the High Commissioner for Palestine and Transjordan, categorised the Transjordan Bedouin as the antithesis of government, who resented all "encroachment by civilization [as] an active threat against nomadic life".[11] Glubb presented a romanticised version of this binary, mourning those Bedouin who were "sufficiently civilised" to have learned "deception and falsehood".[12] Perhaps the copious government reports produce by the

[8] G Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak", in *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of an Idea* ed. R Morris, (New York, Columbia University Press, 2010), 248.
[9] Ibid, 252; L De Kock, "Interview With Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: New Nation Writers Conference in South Africa", *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 23 no. 3 (1992): 45.
[10] G Balandier, "The Colonial Situation: A Theoretical Approach", in *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, Stephen Howe (ed.), (London: Routledge, 2010), 27.
[11] High Commissioner Transjordan, File no. 59493. CO 831/3/15, National Archives, Kew.
[12] Glubb's report, October 1935.

British mandate do not provide a window into Bedouin life, but a distorting mirror which presents either a romantic or degenerate alternative to modern European civilisation.

Said and Spivak have alerted us powerfully to the subtle frameworks of domination in supposedly neutral texts. While the material provided by European travellers and colonial administrators undoubtedly contains some of the prejudices of orientalism, if we recognise the existence and intricacy of such views, we can nevertheless draw upon these texts to try to understand the history and social functioning of the Banu Sakhr tribe. First, to discuss Said's analysis, we can attempt to work through schemes of prejudice within our sources by noting that the attitudes of these writers were more heterogenous and complex than vision he presents as archetypal. Not only would each author bring personal assumptions and varying degrees of thoughtfulness and clarity to their subject, for the most part the negative typecast described by Said was not dominant among Europeans who journeyed to the Bedouin. More pervasive was a romantic stereotype, encapsulated by Glubb, of a "hospitable, brave, and independent" nomadic people, the "master of […] animals", idealised in European culture as Rousseau's golden age of human development.[13] This was a perspective shared not just among Europeans but also with the Arab intelligentsia. For example, writing in 1927, the Palestinian ethnographer Tawfiq Canaan regarded the Bedouin as the soul of the nation, the fount of values of freedom which would counter Western influence.[14] These authors are thus hardly neutral, and they must be drawn upon them with an understanding of the intricacy and multiple strategies through which orientalising perspectives transform their subjects.

[13] D Chatty, *From Camel to Truck: The Bedouin in the Modern World,* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 2013), 18; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse upon the origin of inequality,* trans. F Philip (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 56.
[14] S Tamari, "Lepers, Lunatics, And Saints: The Nativist Ethnography of Tawfiq Canaan and His Circle", in idem, *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 93-122.

Second, to discuss the hazards raised by Spivak, using the concept of subalternity with similar complexity can help us work with the available sources. For example, while the Bedouin could be considered an 'illiterate peasantry', from another perspective, it is doubtful whether the Banu Sakhr should actually be considered subaltern: this tribe constituted the desert aristocracy, feared by the Ottoman and early British authorities. If we do accept that they could not speak to or be heard by the Ottoman and mandate administrations, the Bedouin might have considered this incomprehensibility an advantage which prevented tribal life becoming legible to Ottoman and British state-making and taxation regimes. Furthermore, drawing on Spivak's injunction to 'learn to speak to' subaltern people, rather than just speaking for them, we can come to recognise moments where the viewpoint of a European traveller or colonial official gives a moment of genuine insight into Bedouin society. As William Lancaster and Fidelity Lancaster write, Jaussen's method was to record "'what people say'" in response to his questions, thus presenting "a public, consensual response" to his enquiries which yields an "impressive […] amount and quality" of information.[15] Robert Fletcher points out that the material provided by colonial offers contain "fragments of reported speech, petitions, queries, and complaints" from the Bedouin themselves. It is doubtful that we can use these fragments fully to reconstruct "a Bedouin perspective", but they nevertheless allow the occasional glimpse of the realities of tribal life as understood by tribespeople.[16] While we must appreciate the limitations involved in using sources that "speak for" a subaltern group, subalternity is a complex position and should not count as the totality of any historical actor's experience. Recognising this complexity helps us to realise instants where an echo of one tribesperson's speech allows us to transcend, momentarily, the

[15] W Lancaster and F Lancaster, "On the Nature of Power in the Works of Orientalist Scholars and its Contribution to a History of Bedouin Society and Nomad-Sedentary Relations in the Bilad ash-Sham", in *Antonin Jaussen, sciences sociales occidentales et patrimoine arabe,* ed. Chatelard and Mohammed Tarawneh (Beirut: Presses de l'Ifpo, 1999), accessed 25 May 2022, <http://books.openedition.org/ifpo/5331>.
[16] R Fletcher, *British Imperialism and 'The Tribal Question': Desert Administration and Nomadic Societies in the Middle East, 1919-1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 13.

standpoint of the outsider; even if this were impossible such a situation would not be fatal to the object of this study, since focused on here is not the perspective of the Bedouin but the actions of tribe and state and the outcomes of their relations.

Working with these sources certainly involves methodological problems, and at every point we must attempt to resist reproducing the kind of trite and stereotyped image which opened this study; in doing so, we hope to craft an analysis that relates more to reality than to a self-referential discourse of orientalism. Thereby, while recognising the limitations of these sources, the implicit schemes of power they contain, and that for the most part they provide an etic, not an emic view of Bedouin society, we can still benefit from the voluminous, forensic, and detailed descriptions of Banu Sakhr tribal life, and of the functioning of the tribe in its ecological context and within wider political systems, which writers like Jaussen, Musil and Glubb offer.[17]

ii. An entangled way of life

As indicated by the attention paid above to camels and the desert, the historiographical niche into which this study fits is environmental history, while the theoretical approach attempted is to foreground ecology: the interactions between the desert environment, the sheep, goats and primarily camels kept for subsistence, the Banu Sakhr tribe itself, and the Ottoman and mandate states that successively sought to control the desert area. It would be hard to divine a better social system for analysis in terms of environment and ecology than the Bedouin, since in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Banu Sakhr political, social, and economic life revolved around camels. This animal provided milk, meat and blood

[17] We might draw inspiration from Anatoly Khazanov's injunction not to be put off from sources due to lack of perfection: if failing to discover the perfect whole, "a palaeontologist will not turn his nose up at a tiny piece of bone […] they are satisfied with what they can find". A Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World,* (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1994), 13.

for subsistence; facilitated the Bedouin haulage business and were the unit of exchange, feud settlement or matrimonial payment between different tribes. With their unique ability to survive in the desert camels gave the Bedouin a military advantage over subservient sedentary neighbours and enabled the Banu Sakhr to evade the Ottoman state; camels also defined social relations within tribes as the tribal shaykh and elders controlled their distribution throughout the tribal system. The encapsulation of the Banu Sakhr by the state is to a great extent a narrative of their lessening ability to continue this camel-focused means of existence. Camels were lost to high taxation, to fines, to raids unpunished by the mandate government, and to drought exacerbated by the restrictions of the state system.

The heuristic strategy employed to analyse this system is to think in terms of entanglement. The usage of the term draws on theories of interconnection and complexity deriving from several disciplines. Historiographically, we learn from Werner and Zimmerman's *histoire croisée* to describe the "intercrossings" between the environment as an ever-changing agent, and the equally contingent and constructed community or state.[18] In philosophical terms, the claim of actor-network theory that no reality exists beyond networks of relations is too extreme, but considering agency as deriving from an entity's part "in or as a heterogenous assemblage" does help to imagine humans, animals and environments held together by the relationships across the socio-ecological mosaics of which entities are constituents.[19] Finally, turning to biology, we are well aware of connections between human individuals in the political or social sphere, or between non-human species in a particular ecology, but recent evolutionary biology challenges the Darwinian picture of individual species seeking a competitive advantage, encouraging us instead to consider "communit[ies]

[18] D Haraway, The Companion Species Manifesto, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 6; M Werner and B Zimmermann. "Beyond Comparison. *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45 (2006), 30-50.
[19] J Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things,* (London: Duke University Press, 2010), 23;

of organisms in communication", engaged in mutual patterns of dependence, across human and non-human categories.[20] The etymological origin of "tangle" in the Old Norse *þongull*, seaweed, offers a fitting metaphor. While the kind of pioneering environmental history first written in the 1970s either took the environment as an external agent shaping human society, or studied the unchangeable imprint left upon nature by human activity, entanglement instead encourages us to view ecological, social and political relations like a sea of kelp, a fluid web of co-evolving relations where changes in a part reverberate across and are reciprocated by changes in the whole.[21]

Viewing the Banu Sakhr or the mandate state as constituted by the connections they have with other entities will take us on cross disciplinary foraging through the histories of state-building, the anthropology of pastoralism, animal biology, archaeology, and geology. To return to the theoretical concerns with the sources used in this study: drawing on entanglement as a heuristic device both means that our primary focus is not a Banu Sakhr perspective, but instead the shifting structure of a particular social group in the context of its ecology; and also that the orientalising tendencies of some of the sources employed here can be squared against the environmental logic of the desert setting, helped by generations of research produced by anthropologists regarding how human communities function in different contexts.

iii. Mandate Transjordan: an alternative interpretation

When approached in the manner suggested, the source base described above opens new vistas in the history of mandate Transjordan and suggests a revision of the typical narrative of the territory's development. In the scholarly literature on mandate Transjordan

[20] C Hustak, N Myers, "Involutionary Momentum: Affective Ecologies and the Sciences of Plant/Insect Encounters", *Differences*, 23 no. 3 (2012): 74–118

[21] A typical example of this more traditional environmental history is G Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

and the Bedouin, historians have been preoccupied with the political narrative of state development, and have not considered tribes and state-making through the lens of animals and ecology. Anthropologists of the Bedouin have advanced further in this regard, producing compelling visions of the interaction between animals, ecology, and tribal life, but they tend not to engage fully with the granular detail of state-making processes, and in certain notable works a questionable narrative of tranquillity is constructed.

Three earlier Anglophone studies by Walid Kazziha, Jeffrey Rudd and Uriel Dan concentrated on the political evolution of Transjordan, the development of the armed forces, and the crisis of 1924 that brought the British into direct involvement in the Transjordan administration.[22] This trio of studies encapsulates how, in focusing on the creation of the Transjordan state, tribes, the desert, and camels are absent from most histories of mandate Transjordan.[23] By focusing in this study on radically different entities than is customary, we are able to connect politics and ecology, showing how camels, the environment and Bedouin tribes were constitutive of the political sphere. Thus, in this study, the development of the Transjordanian state depended not on the intrigues of the political elite in Amman, but instead on the encapsulation and integration of tribes like the Banu Sakhr into the state machinery, which in turn depended on the ability of government agents to undermine the tribes' ability to persist in the desert ecology. By focusing our attention on different phenomena, one realises the extent to the political development of Transjordan was shaped not from the centre, as

[22] W Kazziha, "The Political Evolution of Transjordan", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 15 no. 2 (1979): 239-257; J Rudd, "Origins of the Transjordan Frontier Force", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 26 no. 2 (1990): 161-184; U Dann, "The Political Confrontation of Summer 1924 in Transjordan", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 12 no. 2 (1976): 159-168.

[23] R Fletcher's study of British officers in the desert and their interactions with the Bedouin tribes is a compellingly complex account of Bedouin shaykhs, British semi-scholarly societies such as the Royal Central Asian Society, and the "revised understands of pastoral nomadism" which stress the complexity of the phenomenon. It moves the debate far from a simple narrative of state making, but it does tackle the new questions made possible by centring on camels and ecology, as is attempted in the present study. Fletcher, *British Imperialism and 'The Tribal Question'.*

Kazziha, Rudd and Dann argue, but at the territorial, environmental, and taxonomic frontier of the state making project.

Anthropologists working on the north Arabian Bedouin, such as Dawn Chatty, Norman Lewis, William Lancaster, and Fidelity Lancaster, have been more attentive to the significance of animals, ecology and tribal life. Notably in historical scholarship, Yoav Alon's studies of mandate Transjordan have elucidated the centrality of the tribes in efforts to understand the emergence of the modern Jordanian state in this period. Yet for Chatty, Lewis, and Lancaster and Lancaster, the historical narrative is largely considered an instrument for explaining present tribal social relations, while Alon's focus still remains state development, and the functioning of the tribes within the north Arabian desert ecology is not a central part of his analysis. The aim here is to relate the political and the ecological, to show that camels and the desert cannot be separated from the story of Transjordan's political development, but also that the changes in tribal social structure during the mandate period must be understood in the context of granular study of the politics of state building.

When the political and ecological are related in this manner, a narrative of peaceful integration of the tribes into the state system forwarded most clearly by Chatty and Alon is questioned. In the republished edition of her PhD thesis *From Camel to Truck*, Chatty rejects that the state prohibited the traditional way of life of the Bedouin, who instead "selected … elements of change", and thereby maintained their "highly adaptive system".[24] Similarly, Yoav Alon writes that Jordan as a political entity has enjoyed "remarkable stability and continuity", owing to a mandate that proceeded "smoothly and peacefully".[25] Transjordan did avoid the revolts against the Franco-British mandatory system experienced, for example, in Syria and Palestine, and there was not a comparable attempt to enforce settlement and sale of

[24] D Chatty, *From Camel to Truck*, 20-22.
[25] Y Alon, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State* (New York: Tauris, 2007), 4-5.

camels to that imposed by Ibn Saud onto his Ikhwan militias from about 1908 onwards.[26] Nevertheless, Chatty and Alon's interpretations fail to capture the domineering influence of state actors over the Banu Sakhr achieved in the 1920s and 1930s and the profound changes to pastoralist life arising from the move away from camel herding. This is not to deny agency to the Bedouin and to Banu Sakhr tribespeople, who exploited their new opportunities creatively, but rather to argue that the process of state building radically restricted the feasibility of earlier options for persistence and opened others on which was attendant significant alteration to the tribal social system. Despite Glubb's boast that in Transjordan "the nomadic tribes were reduced to order with the loss of lives of only three tribesmen", when attention is paid to the erstwhile entanglement between the Banu Sakhr, camels, and the desert ecology, the frustration of this delicate relationship by the mandate state and the resulting profound changes to Banu Sakhr tribal life are thrown into relief. [27] Elsewhere Glubb asked why, despite both having experienced catastrophic drought, "are Ibn Saud's bedouin prosperous while ours are starving?". His answers pointed solely to the state project:

> The Government has:
>
> 1. Allowed them to be raided out of recognition by Ibn Saud, without compensation.
> 2. Given half their grazing grounds, the Wadi Sirhan, to Ibn Saud.
> 3. Cut off the former sources of their revenue, in the form of plunder, tribute, and dues extracted from pilgrims and travellers.[28]

[26] J Kostiner, "Transforming Dualities: Tribe and State Formation in Saudi Arabia", in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, eds. P.S. Khoury and J. Kostine London: Tauris, 1991), 230; the *hujar* villages in which the Ikhwan were settled were "designed as places of exemplary life and repositories of military manpower at the disposal of the Saudi state": A Al-Azmeh, "Wahhabite Polity", in idem, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1996), 154.

[27] One must admit that the issue of changes in tribal social structures and subsistence routines under the condition of state encapsulation has been touched upon, particularly in a suggestive passage on the Banu Sakhr by Norman Lewis, and in more detailed fashion by William Lancaster in the context of the Rwala tribe. But the matter deserves fuller exposition. Lewis claims that with changing economic circumstances, and due to a feeling of protection within the borders of the mandate state, "the near-autarky of camel rearing for subsistence seemed less essential and less attractive". N Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), 134-35; Lancaster's analysis is found in W Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 101-3.

[27] Glubb's report, September 1939.

[28] Glubb's report, November 1934.

This study is half an environmental and social history, half an essay in interpretation. Its object is to show how the Banu Sakhr social system turned on particular relationships with animals and ecology, and how the extension of state power over the tribe in the 1920s and 1930s precluded traditional means of subsistence and forced diversification away from camel husbandry, processes that in turn occasioned profound change to Banu Sakhr patterns of life. We thus proceed with a first chapter which, using a framework deriving from ecological anthropology that models the relationship between pastoralist society and arid ecologies, outlines the entanglement between Banu Sakhr, camels, and the desert; in Chapter 2, we address how the Banu Sakhr were encapsulated by the state in the 1920s and the 1930s, and how, combined with drought, these processes undermined the ecology-focused subsistence strategies of the tribe; the final chapter studies the diversification from camel pastoralism enforced by the conditions of state domination, and considers the resulting changing to Banu Sakhr social structure.

Chapter 1. Animals, ecology and nomadic pastoralist society as an entangled system.

To understand how state-making undermined Banu Sakhr patterns of life, and why the loss of camel pastoralism constituted such a drastic change, let us first outline how animals and the relationships with their ecology were constitutive of nomadic pastoralism as a social form. Pastoral nomadism is a varied category of human society, yet it is uniquely tied to animal husbandry and a particular category of ecosystem. In order to realise the complexity of pastoralist livelihoods and to resist accusations of determinism, this Chapter draws upon an influential framework for the study of pastoralists people. This was developed from the 1970s onwards by anthropologists driving the "new ecological thinking", chiefly by South Turkana Ecosystem Project (STEP) researchers, among whom James Ellis, David Swift, and Terrance McCabe are drawn on extensively here.[29] STEP scholars characterise the typical pastoralist environment as a "non-equilibrium" ecosystem. Conditions are not stable, but instead communities face constant challenges of predation, disease, and drought: the north Arabian deserts are classic examples. As a result of this animals such as camels, cattle, sheep and goats, which have adaptive characteristics uniquely suited to such ecologies, are depended upon heavily.[30]

This model allows us to argue that nomadic pastoralists inhabiting these environments are not "irrational, backward, and resistant to change", nor wholly determined by their

[29] JT McCabe, *Cattle Bring Us to Our Enemies: Turkana Ecology, Politics, and Raiding in a Disequilibrium System,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 6, 8-11.
[30] Being not an anthropologist by training, I have relied on introductory texts to find other material, including P Salzman, *Pastoralists: Equality, Hierarchy, and the State,* (Boulder: Westview, 2004); JG Galaty, "Pastoralism in Anthropology", in J Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences,* vol. 17 (Oxford: Elsevier, 2015), 577-83; JT McCabe, "Pastoralist Ecologies", *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Anthropology* 22 January 2021, accessed 2 February 2022, <https://oxfordre.com/anthropology/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190854584.001.0001/acrefore-9780190854584-e-305>.

ecology.[31] Instead the harsh environment is the most salient aspect of their existence but the subsistence strategies pursued by different pastoralist communities have varied and creative expressions. Beginning by exploring this model across different examples of nomadic pastoralism, we will then note the particularities of its occurrence among Bedouin camel pastoralists. We then turn to the Banu Sakhr in particular, observing one set of unique and differentiated strategies for persistence spanning social structure, politics, exchange, and culture, which allowed existence in a non-equilibrium environment in spite of the ecology.

i. Non-equilibrium ecosystems: a model for understanding pastoralist existence

Turkana District lies in the broad low-lying plain of the Gregory Rift, part of the semi-arid lands of northwest Kenya. Its vegetation ranges from dwarf shrub grassland dominated by *Acacia reficiens*, to dry savannahs and *Brachystegia* woodlands. As studied by McCabe from 1980 onwards, its inhabitants, the Turkana peoples, subsist largely by practicing a mobile pastoralism based around camels, cattle, goats, sheep, and donkeys.[32] Camels feed on woody forage and desert saltbush; and while goats eat almost anything, Turkana herdsmen must also provide for cattle, which require herbaceous grazing, and for sheep and donkeys, which graze on grass.[33] Each Turkana herd manager must balance the requirements of their five species with the need of the household, and the occasional necessity of selling stock to purchase clothes and household items.

In a widely read 1968 essay, Garret Hardin asserted that the requirement to meet household needs impels each herder to amass the largest herd possible, overburdening the

[31] D Chatty, *From Camel to Truck: The Bedouin in the Modern World,* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 2013), 1.
[32] McCabe, *Cattle Bring Us to Our Enemies*, 39-44.
[33] Ibid, 45-47.

common grazing land and bringing "ruin to all".[34] L.H. Brown, the former chief agricultural officer for Kenya, concurred, arguing that with a rising Turkana population "damage to the environment through overstocking becomes inevitable".[35] Assuming that ecologies are equilibrium-based systems disturbed by human actions, this approach has been thoroughly revised by STEP researchers.[36] In a seminal 1988 article Ellis and Swift introduced the non-equilibrium concept: "our work […] reveal[s] anything but an equilibrial ecosystem […] pastoralists are locked in a constant battle against the vagaries of nature and the depredations of neighbouring tribespeople." Yet despite this dynamism, through a "series of stabilising strategies", the system persists with "little evidence of degradation", resulting in drought without famine, and infant death without population loss.[37] Thus the Turkana herder, who must balance a plethora of demands, does not jeopardise but stabilise life within a harsh environment.

This ecological model is linked to an anthropological model which identifies within pastoralist communities a set of characteristics that enabled persistence in non-equilibrium systems. Among the Turkana, for example, rather than a purposeless meandering or a rigidly defined migration route, there appears a high degree of variability in mobility as herders looked to use the rich pasture where it emerges after erratic rainfall.[38] A central Turkana social institution that responds to unpredictability is the network of personal relationships constituted by stock associations. Formed over a lifetime within or between tribes, these relationships are based on the exchange of livestock and can be drawn upon in the event of animal loss.[39] As well as these cooperative patterns, non-equilibrium models explain inter-

[34] G Hardin, "The tragedy of the commons", *Science* 162 (1968): 1243–1248.
[35] LH Brown, "The biology of pastoral man as a factor in conservation", *Biological Conservation,* 3 no. 2 (1971): 93-100.
[36] JT McCabe, "Pastoralist Ecologies".
[37] JE Ellis, and DM Swift, "Stability of African Pastoral Ecosystems: Alternate Paradigms and Implications for Development." *Journal of Range Management* 41, no. 6 (1988): 450–459.
[38] McCabe, "Pastoralist Ecologies".
[39] McCabe, *Cattle Bring Us to Our Enemies*, 57-58.

group raiding, which, for Turkana herdsmen like Angorot, who faced immediate hunger in 1996 after losing his milking animals to drought, was primarily underpinned by the need to restock rapidly.[40]

The role played by the demands of livestock herding in the formation of Turkana social institutions is reflected in the particular cultural attachment that Turkana have to their cattle. Turkana men each own a "dance ox", which is adorned in ritual decoration, appealed to when entering battle, and praised for beauty and strength.[41] For Turkana women, cattle are treasured because they "illuminate various aspects of exemplary human fertility, nurturance, and care".[42] As Philip Gulliver, one of the first Western anthropologists to live with the Turkana, wrote seventy years ago, cattle are "involved in the labour, happiness, worry, and disasters" of Turkana people.[43] Thus, in the context of a non-equilibrium ecosystem, Turkana communities have assumed a plethora of adaptive, stabilising practices that aid survival in spite of the vagaries of nature. These practices centre on regaining stock, or preserving herds by realising the water and forage needs described above, and thus, as the "stuff of life", livestock attain profound cultural significance.[44] Within unpredictable arid lands, social institutions thus form within boundaries defined by the ecological context.

The non-equilibrium model is one with which most arid-land ecologists and social scientists sympathise, and similar analyses have been forwarded as a total explanatory system of pastoralism. Xavier de Planhol, for example, distinguishes helpfully between pastoralists with rigid social structures in richer environments that support a dense population, from the

[40] B Cousins, "Conflict Management for Multiple Resource Users in Pastoralist and Agro-Pastoralist Contexts", *IDS Bulletin* 27 no. 3 (1996) 41-54; McCabe, *Cattle Bring Us to Our Enemies,* 97-98, 103-4.
[41] McCabe, *Cattle Bring us to Our Enemies,* 75.
[42] V Broch-Due, "Remembered cattle, forgotten people: The morality of exchange and the exclusion of the Turkana poor", in *The Poor Are Not Us: Poverty and Pastoralism,* ed. DM Anderson, V Broch-Due, (Oxford: James Currey, 1999): 50-88.
[43] PH Gulliver, *A preliminary survey of the Turkana*, (Capetown: Commonwealth School of African Studies, 1951), 21.
[44] Gulliver, *A preliminary survey*, 21

dispersed, mobile, and adaptable communities in hostile arid lands.[45] We might explore the extent to which the non-equilibrium model applies to other pastoralist communities: to move, then, from the desert shrublands of equatorial Africa to the equally arid and harsh mountains of Tibet, we find sheep and yak pastoralists that operate with similar dynamism in response to a volatile environment.[46] For example, between 2009 and 2014 in Gouli Township of Qinghai Province, risk was mitigated by using sparse pastures in sunny weather, and richer grazing is saved for heavy snowfall.[47] Similarly, households react to variations in available labour by altering the proportion of each species herded, as sheep must be tended more closely than yaks; surplus flock is contracted to other households with more labour and pasture available.[48] Moving northeast, the high elevation of Mongolia lends a cold, dry climate, and thus to protect against the freezing temperatures and heavy snow of *dzud* winters, Mongolian pastoralists as studied from 1991 to 2015 increased stock numbers to prepare for a loss of up to one third of their animals; migrate in autumn to fatten stock; and, typical of the opportunism necessary in non-equilibrium systems, increasingly move to urban areas during the coldest months and hold livestock as absentee owners.[49]

So far, then, we have seen that ecology effects the individual decision-making practices and social institutions of pastoralists in numerous ways: from the species distribution of herds, contractual relationships of exchange, engagement in market-oriented

[45] X de Planhol, "Saturation et sécurité: sur l'organisation des sociétés de pasteurs nomades", in *Pastoral Production and Society / Production pastoral et société*, Equipe Ecologie (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 29-42.
[46] A further example is offered by the Pokot and Himba in northern Kenya and northern Namibia respectively, as presented in the work of M Bolllig. Both peoples face severe hazards including twice-decadal droughts, and minimize risk through extensive mobility, sharing food, diversifying production, and raiding, which is tied so firmly to the continuity of tribal identity that Pokot ancestors are said to have raided their neighbours livestock to begin their pastoral existence. M Bollig, *Risk Management in a Hazardous Environment: A Comparative Study of Two Pastoral Societies*, (New York: Springer, 2006), 365-78; M Bollig, C Greiner and M Österle, "Inscribing Identity and Agency on the Landscape", *African Studies Review*, 57 No. 3 (2014): 64.
[47] E Yeh, L Samberg, Gaerrang, E Volkmar and RB Harris, "Pastoralist Decision-Making on the Tibetan Plateau", *Human Ecology* 45, no. 3 (2017): 339.
[48] Ibid, 336-37.
[49] ME Fernández-Giménez, *et al*, "Invited Review: Exploring Linked Ecological and Cultural Tipping Points in Mongolia", *Anthropocene* 17 (2017): 46–69.

production, extensive and opportunistic mobility, redistributive raiding, and, not least, cultural and ritual practices. The oft-cited objection to this mode of arguing is that it represents environmental determinism: in Claude Lefébure's words, positing that a "particular pattern of appropriation of nature […] define[s] a specific form of social evolution".[50] The approach attempted here, however, is not deterministic in this sense. Ecology delineates the boundaries in which pastoralist practices evolve, but not specific particularities of social organisation. Indeed, as the non-equilibrium model emphasises, pastoralists respond with extraordinary creativity to the vagaries of their ecology and exploit the full range of choice offered. Instead, the aim here is to stress the extent to which pastoralists are entangled with, but not determined by, the feeding, watering, and health of their stock, and the droughts and others forms of environmental shock that threaten their livelihood.

Since nomadic pastoralists reacted with such creativity to the pressures of sparse resources in arid lands, let us delve further into the subsistence options available. As French Marxist anthropologists have pointed out, from pastoralism as a common mode of subsistence, a range of community forms emerge, differentiated by their political form.[51] Thus, as different stabilising strategies were adopted, it was not just ecology but political and social structure that came to create relationships with animals unique to particular pastoralist groups. For example, herders need a redistributive system by which households can rely on others to restock in the case of herd loss, whether that operates between communities through raiding, or within the community. The Turkana express intra-community redistribution in the horizontal relationships of stock associations. It took a more hierarchical form among the Karimojong of north-east Uganda in the early 1960s, where successful herders distributed excess livestock to potential allies, bolstering one's status by creating a pseudo-familial

[50] C Lefébure, "Introduction: the specificity of nomadic pastoralist societies", in *Pastoral Production,* 1.
[51] P Bonte, "Organisation économique et sociale des pasteurs d'Afrique orientale", *Cahiers du centre d'études et de recherches marxistes* 110 (*Etudes sur les sociétés de pasteurs nomades* II) : 1-95.

"cattle kin".[52] While animals are central to both types of interaction, the same ecological necessity supports different kinds of political relations.

In some cases, pastoralist social institutions are not a particularised reaction to ecological conditions, but fundamentally a response to the threat of political domination; but this does not mean, as we shall see, that such examples can be understood without consideration of animals and ecology. In the late Qajar period, the Yomut Turkmen of northern Iran, who raised sheep and goats, practiced nomadism not because it was ecologically necessary: their territory included the not just the arid Qara-Qum desert but also the cultivable Elburz foothills. Instead, mobility was a means to avoid the control of the Persian state, thereby enabling the Yomut to maintain political autonomy and continue raiding Persian villages. Retreating into the Qara-Qum protected the Yomut from harassment, and when in 1925 a punitive expedition ordered by Reza Shah did enter this territory, it was found empty, the Yomut having escaped north into Russia.[53] Yet just because ecology was not the fundamental motivation for Yomut pastoralism, it was still of central importance. That their livestock could subsist while on the move and in the arid non-equilibrium environments allowed the Yumot to avoid state domination. Indeed, one might ask what came first, the intention to avoid the state or the availability of impenetrable geography and hardy livestock. This is a classic case of entanglement: the social, political and cultural character of the community, the ecology, and the means of subsistence were intertwined.

To focus more on internal tribal relationships, this case encourages us to consider how proximity to states could affects political structure as a which factor independent of ecology. For William Irons, while peoples living in "ordered anarchy" like the Nuer will typically

[52] N Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 227.
[53] W Irons, "Nomadism as a Political Adaptation: The Case of the Yomut Turkmen", *American Ethnologist,* 1 no. 4 (1974): 635-658.

appear far from centres of power, the sole factor producing stable hierarchies in pastoralist societies are nearby sedentary states.[54] Yet even so, we have seen that animal husbandry in arid environments necessitates mobility. Movement renders avoidance of chiefly oppression easy, and, as Salzman writes, if chiefs are not sensitive to the opinions of their tribesmen, "his tribe [will] melt away".[55] The desire to avoid hostile states might encourage nomadism, and the presence of states effect the nature of nomadic society. But, just as study of the politically-motivated Yomut nomadism returned our focus to animals and ecology, so consideration of internal relations of pastoralist communities again take us back to the limitations placed on social structure by entanglement with animals in a marginal environment.

Pastoral nomadism is a response to ecology, but is not reducible to it: different pastoral nomadic communities exhibit unique political and social systems varied in their modes of exchange, relations with states, and internal structures, but nevertheless are each wedded to the specific pastoral mode of production, typically practiced within a non-equilibrium ecosystem. If we are to pause to offer a definition, we must do so in the broadest terms. Pastoralists raise livestock on natural pasture, and nomads move their household regularly and frequently.[56] In the definitional spectrum, however, we must also include those peoples whom in response to the "vagaries of climate, disease, [...] economic opportunities and constraints", move creatively in and out of livestock-based livelihoods, and between sedentary and mobile lifestyles, as the Yomut and Mongolian pastoralists evince.[57] But for the most part nomadic pastoralists are uniquely tied to their animals and dependent on the survival of their stock in hostile environments; after a permanent move from this way of life

[54] W Irons, "Political Stratification Among Pastoral Nomads", in *Pastoral Production,* 361-74; E Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969): 296.
[55] P Salzman, "Hierarchical Image and Reality: The Construction of a Tribal Chiefship", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42 no. 1 (2000): 55.
[56] Salzman, *Pastoralists*, 18.
[57] K Homewood, *Ecology of African Pastoralist Societies,* (Oxford: James Currey, 2008), 1.

the label no longer applies. With this knowledge of the complexity, malleability, and variety of nomadic pastoralist ways of life assured, we will first identify some of the general particularities of North Arabian pastoralism, and then move closer to our target of the Banu Sakhr.

ii. Bedouin camel pastoralism

Let us move from the recent anthropological studies to north Arabia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in order to relate the non-equilibrium model to Bedouin ecology, political and social structure. Deriving from the Arabic *badawī*, "desert dweller", "Bedouin" has come to refer to a people who pursue specifically a life of camel-rearing nomadic pastoralism.[58] The French archaeologist Melchior de Vogüé in the 1860s blamed Bedouin devastation for the existence of the desert, but the desert line has shifted only at the frontiers and north Arabia has been home to camel pastoralists for 3,000 years.[59] Thus with their frequent droughts, seasonal appearance of vegetation, and sparse rainfall, the north Arabian deserts might fairly be described as non-equilibrium systems.[60] To persist within this ecology the Bedouin developed a set of stabilising strategies similar to those identified so far in other nomadic groups, but some features ought to be stressed as attaining greater relative importance.

The first feature, which was of paramount importance in Bedouin social, economic, and cultural life, and influences all other stabilising strategies detailed below, is reliance on camels. The extent to which the Bedouin relied on the adaptive characteristics of camels is

[58] U Pietruschka, "Bedouin", in J McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006). doi:10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQSIM_00046

[59] Quoted in N Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), 24; O LaBianca, "The Return of the Nomad", *Annual of the Department of Antiquities in Jordan,* 29 (1987): 251.

[60] "the small desert shrubs … for almost nine months of the year are dry and sapless … in the spring, however, should the rainfall have been plentiful, the shrubs break out into leaf". JB Glubb, Draft Paper for "Ships of the Desert", GP, Middle East Centre Archive, St Antony's College, Oxford.

difficult to overestimate and is worth dwelling upon. *Camelus dromedarius* is uniquely adapted to the prolonged droughts, scanty resources, and scorching heat which characterise desert ecologies. Most well-known is the ability of the camel to subsist without water in high temperatures for extended periods: humans will be near death if bodily water equal to around 12% of total body weight is lost, while camels endure water emission equal to 40% of body weight, equating to between 160 and 280 litres of water.[61] Dehydration is stalled because camels shed water slowly, as even at ambient temperatures of 41°C losing only 19-23 grams for each kilogram of body weight in a twenty-four hour period.[62] As well as the small amount of water released through sweat and respiration, adaptations in the digestive tract result in only 1.3 litres of fecal water lost daily, compared to cattle, which discharge between 20-40 litres over the same period.[63]

This adeptness to survival without water for long periods in turn widens the grazing options open to camels. When paired with its ability to drink concentrated, salty water, which derives from its concentrated urine, and to imbibe 10-20 litres of water per minute, camels spend minimal time at overgrazed well areas and are free to graze on remote pastures.[64] Camels might not be as effective as oryx and gazelle species at mitigating overgrazing, but since camels use the thorns, dry vegetation and saltbush found far from well locations they

[61] H Gauthier-Pilters and A Innis Dagg, *The Camel: Its Evolution, Ecology, Behavior, and Relationship to Man,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 74.
[62] BD Siebert, and WV Macfarlane, "Dehydration in Desert Cattle and Camels", *Physiological Zoology* 48, no. 1 (1975): 36-48. Adaptations in the digestive tract result in only 1.3 litres of fecal water lost daily, compared to cattle, which discharge between 20-40 litres over the same period.
[63] M Gebreselassie Gebreyohanes and A Mohammed Assen, "Adaptation Mechanisms of Camels (Camelus dromedarius) for Desert Environment: A Review", *Journal of Veterinary Science & Technology* 8, no. 6 (2017), 486. To add to this, a camel's kidney limits water secretion during periods of dehydration by decreasing the glomerular filtration rate, the speed at which filtered fluid flows through the kidney, and increasing the osmolarity and concentration of urine such that more water is reabsorbed back into the bloodstream. N Kataria *et al*, "Changes in glomercular filtration rate and effective renal plasma flow during seasonal water restriction in Indian camel (*Camelus dromedarius*)", *Journal of Camel Practice and Research* 8 no. 2 (2001), 215-220.
[64] S Bornstein, "The ship of the desert. The dromedary camel (Camelus dromedarius), a domesticated animal species well adapted to extreme conditions of aridness and heat", *Rangifer* 10 no. 3 (1990) 231-236.

Figure 1: 'Spring in the desert: milking camels', Glubb's report, May 1934

are better adept than sheep and goats at remaining in balance with the desert habitat.[65] Up to 332 plant species are recorded as fodder for camels, and within one locale camels sample a broad range of such vegetation.[66] In the arid Erer valley in East Africa, for example, *Camelus dromedarius* sampled 21 species of plants in the dry season and thirty in the wet season. Two were favoured in particular: *Optunia,* native to the Americas but increasingly found across uncultivated land in the Middle East and Africa, and the thorny shrub *Acacia,* a genus characterised by deep roots and thorns holding water on which camels can graze, their long eyelashes and postorbital bar protecting the animal's eyes from damage.[67]

Camels convert this range of fauna into nourishing milk (Figure 1). Yields vary, though are typically between 3.2-10 litres daily, a greater quantity than cattle in similar conditions; the production of an exceptional 40 litres is recorded.[68] Camel milk is also richer in vitamin C, fat, protein and minerals than milk from other livestock raised in desert habitats.[69] While a dehydrated camel will produce only milk containing only 1.1 percent fat,

[65] DJ Gallacher, JP Hill, "Effects of camel grazing on the ecology of small perennial plants in the Dubai (UAE) inland desert", *Journal of Arid Environments* 66 (2006) pp. 738-50. Compared this to goats, which tend to destroy the desert vegetation, and sheep, which bunch closely together and remain near walls, degrading the vegetation in those areas. Gauthier-Pilters and Dagg, *The Camel*, 132.
[66] Gauthier-Pilters and Dagg, *The Camel*.
[67] M Dereje, and P Uden, "The Browsing Dromedary Camel. I. Behaviour, Plant Preference and Quality of Forage Selected", *Animal Feed Science and Technology* 121, no. 3-4 (2005): 297-308.
[68] K Knoess, "The Milch Dromedary", in *The camelid: An all-purpose animal,* vol. 1 ed. W Cockrill, (Uppsala: Motala Grafiska, 1984), 176.
[69] E Stephens, "Camels" in *The Cambridge World History of Food*, ed. K Kiple and K Coneè Ornelas, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 472-73.

a well-hydrated camel produces milk with 3 percent to 5.38 percent fat, compared to cows, goats and sheep, which produce milk of 3.5, 2.8, and 3.7 per cent fat respectively.[70] In desert environments where fresh fruits and vegetables are not available year-round, that camel milk contains between 5.7-9.8 mg of vitamin C, three times that of cow milk and one-and-a-half that of human milk, is of great importance.[71] For the Bedouin, milk undoubtedly was a camel's most significant product for human consumption. Used to a lesser extent is meat, blood and camel hair, as well as the digestive broth stored in the rumen, equating to around 11kg per 100kg body weight, which could function as an emergency store of fluid for a desert traveller.[72]

With this plethora of adaptive characteristics, it appears axiomatic that Bedouin life in desert environments was made possible because desert communities were entangled with camels and their ecologies. Indeed, we see this immediately in the second characteristic of Bedouin pastoralism, extensive mobility, a feature which derives from the ability of the camel to support marches of several days over parched desert areas to the next pasture. Thereby even until the early twentieth century, Bedouin were among the most itinerant of pastoralists. Tribes and clans congregated at wells in summer, often held customarily to be the patrimony of the clan or tribal chief.[73] From autumn to spring, however, tribes dispersed along loosely

[70] Knoess, "The Milch Dromedary", 190, Table 3.
[71] R Yagil, *Camels and Camel milk*, (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1982), Animal Production Paper 2 No. 26, part III. Interestingly, camel fat is structured differently to that of other domesticates, with very small fat globules each bound to a protein. Resultingly, compared to the rich cheeses of cow, goat, and reindeer milk, extracting fat to make cheese from camel milk through the usual method of churning sour milk is extremely difficult, and when successful resembles a soft watery dough more than a cohesive hard cheese or rinded soft cheese. A Brezovečki et al, "Camel milk and milk products", *Mljekarstvo* 65 no. 2 (2015): 87.
[72] Gauthier-Pilters and Dagg, *The Camel*, 69-71.
[73] "ces puits sont la propriete privee de tel cheik", in A Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au Pays de Moab*, (Paris : Gabalda, 1907), 60.

Figure 2: 'Sukhur moving [Tribesmen on camels moving camp with livestock], January 1914 at Thulaythiwat, Gertrude Bell Archive

similar annual migration routines, the specifics of which were defined by the rainfall pattern of each season and the customary grazing areas of each tribe.[74] For example, if rainfall was abundant, tribes might divide into small parties each searching for pasture across broad swathes of the desert, like that pictured in Figure 2. If grazing in the *Badia* was scanty, each tribe would congregate more densely on an area of reliable pastureland traditionally linked with that particular tribe: as we shall see in detail below, this was the Wadi Sirhan for the Banu Sakhr, and for the Howeitat, Shararat, and Banu Atiya, it was the Jebel Tubaiq, a mountain range on the southwest border of Jordan's current territory, the deep ravines of which support bushes suitable for camel grazing.[75] To speak in terms of categories of mobility, if rain was scanty, the Bedouin might be considered semi-nomads, moving seasonally between well-defined pastures, and if rain was abundant, they were still in summer tied to an area of wells and fruitful pastures, but were fully nomadic in winter, moving in small groups across the desert. Thus, just because the Bedouin were highly mobile, this movement was not randomised but constituted mobility within a roughly

[74] L Sweet, "Camel Raiding of North Arabian Bedouin: A Mechanism of Ecological Adaptation", *American Anthropologist*, 67 no. 5 (1965): 1135; c.f. in "the winter months … the tribes are all scattered", JB Glubb to F Peake, 21 March 1931, in GP.
[75] Glubb, "Note on the Proposed Establishment of Camel Constables for the Desert Patrol", GP.

defined area, and the tribes were still associated politically, economically, culturally, and ecologically with particular locations.[76]

Third is an ambivalent relationship with neighbouring sedentary states: the Bedouin rejected state control but depended on the markets they provided. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the Damascus garrison could not penetrate the desert and thus the Ottomans left the north Arabian Bedouin largely to their own devices.[77] During mid-nineteenth century *tanzimat*, however, the Wali of Aleppo led several expeditions into the desert west of the Euphrates, but failed to bring the Bedouin of that area, particularly the powerful Fid'an tribe, under government control.[78] Enabling mobility in the desert, and thus offering a military advantage over Ottoman cavalry units, it was the ability of the camel to function as an "escape animal", we might say, which facilitated circumvention of Ottoman control when evasion was desired.[79] Nevertheless, Bedouin tribes benefitted from trade with large towns within or outside their territory, frequenting markets, or were visited by merchants to whom Bedouin families typically sold one or two camels in early winter to buy tobacco, rice and household necessities.[80] Thus Bedouin pastoralism developed in step with a global economy mediated by the state, and specialisation in camel stock occurred in virtue of proximity to grain markets which could be relied upon as an alternative means of subsistence. This was not new: market integration was as old as the antique desert caravans that rolled across the *Badia* from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. The non-equilibrium model encourages us to recognise the flexibility with which pastoralist groups drew upon the opportunities offered by a nearby

[76] This twice-yearly movement between pasture areas was practiced in antiquity: the concept *tashriq* referred to movement to a region of pastureland, the first in autumn and the second in late spring, coincident with the rise of Canopus and Aldebaran respectively: A Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allah and his People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 191.
[77] Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers,* 12.
[78] Ibid, 26-27.
[79] "Les uns me prenaient pour un envoye du gouvernement qui venait les trahir", Jaussen, *Coutumes*, 3, 7; c.f. "escape agriculture" in JC Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 187-207.
[80] JB Glubb, draft paper for "Ships of the Desert", GP, 3.

state, but avoided the disadvantages attendant on encapsulation by that state. We will see that this complex picture of pastoralists who were both state evaders, fleeing the imposition of taxation, and state dependants, integrated within global markets, was particularly true of the Banu Sakhr, regarding whom we might quote James Scott's apposite phrase: "such states and nomadic peoples are twins […] joined in a sometimes rancorous but unavoidable embrace".[81]

Fourth, the severe hierarchies Bedouin tribes enforced with others in their territory contrasted with the ethos of male egalitarianism found within the tribes. Bedouin tribes like the Rwala, Banu Sakhr and Howeitat regarded themselves as the aristocracy of the desert, a quality defined by camel ownership, and held in scorn the shepherds on the desert periphery or ignoble tribes like the Shararat who reared mainly sheep and goats.[82] Until the early 1920s, shaykhs extracted protection money, *khuwah*, from these neighbours, as well as townsfolk, merchants and travellers in their territory.[83] Yet, while each tribe had a shaykh elite and noble and inferior lineages, in terms of a tribe's functioning, TE Lawrence's evocation of an egalitarian people anathema to domineering treatment, with "equality of voice and opportunity for every male", does indicate a type of society where domination, while present, was profoundly different to that experienced in neighbouring states.[84] The codification of social estates into a political class, associated with the coercive power of law enforcement and social control, can be detected typically in a late-nineteenth century sedentary state, but such structured and assertive hierarchies were absent among the Bedouin. Each tribe itself only united on rare occasions, and the "paramount shaykh" who constituted the nominal leader of the tribal entity had the difficult task of coordinating between the shaykhs of

[81] JC Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 29.
[82] "In the tents of the Rwuallah, Beni Sakhr and Howeitat, the man who sweeps the floor and fetches water or firewood is, as often as not, a Sharari". Report by Glubb, 1931, GP.
[83] "Les scheiks des Çalgas et des Salatincs, pré-enus que je les attends, sont arrivés à mon campement, accompagnés des autres ayants droit do leurs tribus aux avantages du khouéh du désert". Le Compte de Perthius, *Le désert de Syrie, l'Euphrate et la Mésopotamie* (Paris : Libraire Hachette, 1896), 190-91.
[84] TE Lawrence, "Introduction", in C Doughty, *Arabia Deserta,* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989), 16.

different sub-tribes or clans.[85] Devoid of the power to enforce his will through duress, the shaykh's primary function was mediation to maintain the coherence of the tribal whole, for example placating disputes related to camels and pasturage rights. Hence, when in the first decade of the nineteenth century Jaussen witnessed a quarrel over rights to pasturage at a well, the shaykh was bound immediately to intervene and arbitrate.[86] Thus Bedouin tribes were not devoid of noble lineages and an associated etiquette of deference, and certain political functions of mediation and representation were contained within the shaykh's remit, but hierarchies were muted and the shaykh's coercive power was restricted: as Glubb put it, Bedouin tribes "do not consist of one autocratic prince and, far below him, a herd of submissive followers".[87] Before discussing the final feature of Bedouin adaptation to the desert, let us pause briefly to emphasise the significance of camels to the latter three stabilising strategies discussed: the beast of burden and source of subsistence that enabled extensive itinerancy; the vehicle for survival in the desert outside the purview of the state, while also being the valuable commodity that encouraged market integration; the symbol of Bedouin aristocracy the lack of which marked the inferiority of their neighbours, and the object that, in its circulation around the tribe, was the focus of the shaykh's mediation.

Fifth and finally: we have seen that raiding is a stabilising strategy among the Turkana and Yomut, but among the Bedouin, it attains special significance as a chronic condition which defined tribal life. Combined with Sweet's analysis, we can use the voluminous descriptions of raiding found in the writings of European travellers discussed in the Introduction to consider this issue in some detail. Raiding was not pointless fighting, instead it was continual and reciprocal, involving all tribes; it was formalised, targeted at specifically

[85] Sweet, "Camel Raiding of the North Arabian Bedouin", 1135.
[86] "Le protecteur intervient aussitôt. En personne, il va trouver l'agresseur; parfois cependant il se contente de lui envoyer un messager et lui enjoint de respecter le droit." Jaussen, *Coutumes*, 239.
[87] Glubb's report, November 1937.

at camels, and avoided excessive violence.[88] By Sweet's analysis, and using the writings of Doughty and Blunt, both whom who lived among the Bedouin in the 1870s, and Musil, who travelled throughout Arabia from the 1880s to 1917, we can identify raiding as a key system-sustaining practice, bound by strict codes of honour, which facilitated persistence in the desert. Among the Rwala, raiding began with a formal declaration that the opposing tribe had been harbouring stolen camels. Such declarations often involved only the sub-tribe, and even if made by the paramount shaykh, it did not involve the whole tribal group; indeed genealogically linked sub-tribes may also be raided.[89] This declaration then encouraged a series of small raids, which could involve as little as six or seven camel riders.[90] The sub-tribe's commander, not necessarily the shaykh, may also declare a large raid, and groups of one tribe or a tribal confederation ride out, always on she-camels in the hot season.[91] That typically a camel was sacrificed to celebrate a large raid indicates that they were relatively infrequent compared to the more minor type.[92]

Doughty reports that the "main *ghazzu*" could comprise eighty to one hundred mounted tribesmen, whom, like Felah Selas, sought pastures on their journey or were hosted by allied tribes.[93] While small raids could never capture more than a few head of camel, in keeping with the logic of a redistributive system, etiquette functioned to limiting the destructive potential of a large raid. Such raids were only honourable when the enemy was given time to prepare defence, hardly needed since each camp generally had guards on camelback.[94] Because camels bolt, raiders could not collect the whole herd, and custom dictated that once the stolen animals were assembled the raiders must wait for a

[88] Sweet, "Camel Raiding of the North Arabian Bedouin", 1133.
[89] A Musil, *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins,* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1928), 505-6
[90] C Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1888), 572
[91] "il n'est pas nécessaire qu'il soit le cheikh." Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 166 ; Musil, *Rwala Bedouins,* 506-12
[92] Doughty, *Arabia Deserta,* 452.
[93] Ibid, 333.
[94] Musil, *Rwala Bedouins,* 523-25

counterattack.[95] This ritual functioned to prevent the aggressors divesting their target tribe of all their camels, and thereby rendering their persistence as a tribal unit impossible; it was also joined with further codes of honour which protected the defending tribe from destruction. For example, if any raider accidentally took a camel from one whom he had earlier made an oath of brotherhood, the animals were returned, and after a counter-attack tribesmen were honour-bound to help a wounded enemy.[96] Of course, not all violence was avoided: if a counter-raid occurred, chiefs and renowned warriors were targeted in particular, resulting in a duel to the death.[97] Camels kept moving through the system because in these large raids, booty was not monopolised by the leader, it was either divided, or each raider kept what they have seized.[98]

With these characteristics, this chronic raiding was a stabilising strategy that allowed persistence in the desert: a ritualised phenomenon where complete devastation was limited. Since most tribes have several enemies at once, and raid across great distances, as Sweet concludes, this reciprocal raiding was "ongoing", and served to "distribut[e] camels through a wide area".[99] This vital adaptive strategy enabled persistence in the desert through redistribution, such that any tribe which suffered particularly from ecological shock or the military expeditions of the Ottomans could recoup their losses by raiding their neighbours. It also maintained each of the tribes in a kind of restless equilibrium with other Bedouin groups, preventing any one tribe group attaining a profound level of dominance over rival Bedouin tribes. Suggesting that this redistributive phenomenon was perhaps the central institution in Bedouin life, a starving Howeitat tribesman in 1931 told Glubb they had been "massacred"

[95] Ibid, 524. Glubb also gives the sense that it is inevitable that many camels will be retaken by the counterattack. "In an instant, the camp awakes and great is the running to the horses […] as the warriors […] gallop out to meet the enemy". Glubb, Draft Paper for "Ships of the Desert", GP.
[96] A Blunt, WS Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates,* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1879), 401; Musil, *Rwala Bedouins,* 530-31.
[97] Musil, *Rwala Beoduins,* 528-29.
[98] Ibid, 510-11
[99] Sweet, "Camel Raiding of the North Arabian Bedouin", 1144; "les razzias se porteront spécialement sur des tribus éloignées." Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 166.

by Ibn Saud, "pursued […] imprisoned […] and fined" by the mandate administration, "but they have not and will not prevent us from raiding".[100]

iii. The Banu Sakhr within this model

We have now outlined a model of pastoral nomadism in arid lands which foregrounds the interaction between animals and social systems as the facilitator of persistence in a non-equilibrum ecology. The north Arabian Bedouin were then analysed in light of this model, stressing as stabilising strategies the centrality of camels, mobility, rejection of states but reliance on markets, external hierarchies and an internal egalitarian ethos, and a system of redistributive raiding. On now coming to observe the granular details of Banu Sakhr life, we can see that the practices of this tribe were not randomly adopted by one group, but fit within a model to which other pastoralists operating in a harsh ecology also correspond. Indeed, many of the practices that will be discussed were not limited to the one tribe focused on here; nevertheless, by drawing on examples pertaining to the Banu Sakhr, we can as far as possible glimpse the manifestation of these phenomena within this particular group. In this section we will depend primarily on the ethnographic accounts provided by Jaussen during his sojourn with the tribe between 1902-05, and on the material collected by Glubb in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The result is that we present events witnessed directly by Jaussen or stories related orally to him, and compare these to the inherited memory of tribal affairs handed down to Glubb. After outlining the Banu Sakhr's typical movement patterns, this section takes three themes in turn: first, the role played by camels in the everyday pasturage routines and cultural practices; second, the relationship between camel husbandry and Banu Sakhr social structure, exchange, and conflict resolution; third, the significance of camels in the relations between

[100] This was said "with a look of hatred and triumph". Report by Glubb, 1931, GP.

the Banu Sakhr and the Ottoman state, and the alternative means of subsistence, particularly cultivation, adopted by some sections of the Banu Sakhr.

Figure 3: Anonymous, camels watering at near Azraq, the north-western extreme of the Wadi Sirhan, 1926. Accessed online, 7/6/22, URL: <https://www.imago-images.de/st/0089444428>

The complexity of migration patterns is striking: flexible or fixed on occasion, involving the whole tribe or smaller sub-groups depending on the available resources. Jaussen described that during the dry summers in 1902-05, large numbers of Banu Sakhr pastured in the high plateau around Karak, an upland territory marked with streams and ponds, and clearly defined by the Dead Sea to the west, and the ravines of the Wadi Mujib and Wadi al-Hasa to north and south, and open desert to the east.[101] In other years the tribe summered furthered north of the Wadi Mujib, but on territories which formed part of the same plateau, such as the Balqa or Ajlun regions, or the rolling hills south of Amman. These highlands are cold in winter and it snows often, and so the tribe had to find alternative grazing between spring and autumn; the Banu Sakhr had a short winter season, however, according to Glubb, for the historical reason of needing to wait for the Anaizah to move off southward.[102] Thus, reflecting the pattern outlined in the discussion of Bedouin movement patterns, in a good winter the tribe would dissolve

[101] R Brown, "The Distribution of Thirteenth- to Fifteenth-Century Glazed Wares in Transjordan: A Case Study from the Kerak Plateau", in L Stager, J Greene, D Coogan (eds.) *The Archaeology of Jordan and Beyond*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 86; Jaussen, *Coutumes*, 117.
[102] Glubb, "A Historical Note on the Sirhan Tribe", GP. A similar movement pattern is given by Peake, who offers the further detail that, traditionally, the Ka'abneh half of the Banu Sakhr camp on the River Zerka and northwards into "Ajlun, where the Tueigat half camp near al-Qastal and Umm al-Amad south of Amman, where the shaykhs of the latter half owned land: "Ts. Draft of eighth chapter of FGP's work on Trans-Jordan, "Arab tribes"". 78/73/2, Peake Papers, Imperial War Museum, London.

into small sub-tribes in search for grazing in the *Badia*, or if rain was sparse, would instead congregate together on a reliable pastureland traditionally associated with the tribe. If the former, the Banu Sakhr would disperse into the desert region east of the Hejaz railway where occasional rain falls from November to April, and remain in a state of continual and flexible movement, pausing to graze for perhaps only a week at a time. If the latter, the all sections of tribe would depend on grazing their stock at the Wadi Sirhan (Figure 3), the lush pastureland in the northwest of today's Saudi Arabia which will be discussed at length in Chapter 2; yet overreliance on this pastureland across successive years was to be avoided in order to prevent overgrazing.[103]

To turn, now, to discuss the first theme: the place of camels in the quotidian herding routines and cultural activities of Banu Sakhr tribesmen. Without realisation the permeation of camels in Banu Sakhr tribal life, one would not grasp the following theme, the extent to which camels structured the Banu Sakhr social system. Of course, the Banu Sakhr did not keep camels exclusively: horses for fighting, and, as Figure 4 shows, sheep and goats for wool, milk and meat were also retained. Yet, prioritised over these other species, camels exerted the most influence on everyday Banu Sakhr herding practices. While with enough water sheep do not need to migrate and could pasture in the cold winter highlands, camels required the warmer eastern pasturelands in winter; camels thus necessitated the tribe's annual movement. Caring for camels also constituted the daily occupation of tribespeople. When grazing was available, herdsmen led camels to pasture during the daytime; hundreds of camels were returned in the evening or slept in the pastures guarded by the herdsmen. Herding routines were defined along patriarchal gender lines. The father was sovereign over his family's camels, and men took the camel herds to pasture.[104] Women milked the small stock,

[103] "In winter the whole lot, Ka'abneh and Tueigat, move east to Azraq and Wadi Sirhan", in Peake, "Arab Tribes".
[104] Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 19

Figure 4: 'Shepherd of the Sukhur', al-Mashta, March 1900, Gertrude Bell Archive

collected water, guarded the camp, prepared food, and took care of returning herds.[105] It was not sheep, goats or horses which necessitated migration, nor did herding these animals constitute the most time-intensive activity for Banu Sakhr pastoralists: in virtue of the animal's significance in these regards, it was camels that dominated the everyday routines of ordinary tribespeople.

If one must *"cherchez la vache"* to understand the culture of the East African Turkana, we can with equal force stress the centrality of camels in the cultural experience of ordinary Banu Sakhr tribespeople.[106] Camels marked birth, death, adolescence and marriage. A bride arrived at a wedding "on a camel richly adorned", while becoming a feared camel raider was the typical aim of a male youth: the ten-year-old Mohammed Di'ab of the Banu Sakhr told Jaussen that he intended to become "an intrepid cavalier, capable of defending the tribe and conducting raids".[107] Animals were sacrificed at ritual occasions: for such events the Banu Sakhr and other Bedouin tribes preferred a camel, while *fellahin* preferred sheep.[108] Sharing a slaughtered camel in this way affirmed the tribal bond, as its meat could be enjoyed by eighty tribespeople.[109] And replicating a trope found across the Mediterranean, Banu Sakhr

[105] Doughty, *Arabia Deserta,* 262 ; Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 31, 42; among the Rwala, young girls assisted in watering: P Rubel, "Herd Composition and Social Structure", *Man* 4 no. 2 (1969), 268-73.
[106] This is said of the Nuer: Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer,* 16-17.
[107] Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 17, 53; for other examples of the role played by camels in marriage see T Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sancturies in Palestine,* (London: Luzac & Co., 1927), 242.
[108] Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints,* 164.
[109] Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 81.

tribespeople took pains to avoid the curse of the evil eye. One Dubban of the Banu Sakhr had a reputation of diabolical power to harm just by looking, apparently causing Talal's mare to break a leg during a raid: most likely tribespeople carried protective beads shaped to look like a camel's eye, as is widespread across the region and as Tawfiq Canaan found among the Palestinian Bedouin in Hebron.[110]

To move to the second theme: just as camels shaped the rituals and everyday pasturage routines for ordinary tribesmen, we can also conceptualise Banu Sakhr social structure, exchange, and conflict resolution in terms of the ecological requirements of camel husbandry. The loose suzerainty enjoyed by the Banu Sakhr tribal shaykh largely was owed to the opportunistic movement and need to disperse in winter to find good grazing which camel herding demanded. In 1922 the Banu Sakhr numbered around 5,500 tents or 27,500 souls, and operated as two halves, al-Ka'abneh and al-Tueigat; these in turn were subdivided into several further clans.[111] One sub-section of the latter was al-Aghbein, of which al-Fayez was a further constituent clan; the shaykh of the Fayez section was traditionally paramount shaykh of the whole Banu Sakhr, and from 1890 to 1909 and when Jaussen visited the Banu Sakhr this was Talal al-Fayez. The paramount shaykh was undoubtedly hierarchically situated in precedence above the other shaykhs, but, as described above his power was limited to representation and mediation, and his authority was not recognised by all clans.[112] Even Talal's father, the fabled Fendi al-Fayez, could not escort Anne Blunt in 1878 because he was

[110] Jaussen, *Coutumes*, 377; Baha' al-Ju'beh, "Magic and Talismans: The Tawfiq Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets", *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 22-23 (2005): 105.

[111] This figure is taken from a 23 August 1922 report by the assistant secretary for tribal affairs to Sharif Shakir Ibn Zayd (on whom see Chapter 2), and is quoted in M Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain, and the Making of Transjordan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 55. Jaussen gives a much lower figure of 500 to 800 tents, but admits this is an estimate. Furthermore, Jaussen identifies al-Aghbein as the section name for the entire Tueigat, and gives the second group the name al-Gofel, but associates the Fayez clan with the former and the Zeben with the latter, whereas according to Peake in "Arab tribes", both belong to the Tueigat. The 1986 Jordanian electoral law retains the divisions drawn by Peake between al-Ka'abneh and al-Tueigat: P Eury, *Jordanie: Les Élections Législatives du 8 Novembre 1989* (Beruit: Presses de l'Ifpo, 1991), 15-29, fn. 45.

[112] Jaussen, *Coutumes*, 400.

"on bad terms" with a Banu Sakhr tribe who occupied the territory through which Blunt wanted to travel.[113] We have referenced Salzman's observation that unsatisfied tribespeople will simply "melt away" from a chief's sphere of influence: in the same way, the need of Banu Sakhr sub-tribes to migrate to feed graze their camels meant that the Banu Sakhr functioned less like a solid political unit with a strictly observed political hierarchy, and more like a confederacy that could coalesce for raiding or to protect shared resources.

Therefore, the requirements of camel husbandry functioned as a check on the emergence of a domineering elite social estate; nevertheless, muted hierarchies were present among the Banu Sakhr, and these were structured by the ownership of camels and the processes by which camels moved between owners. This was a patriarchal world; it was men who controlled camels and thus monopolised the associated social authority. As we have seen, it was customary for the commander of a raid to share the looted camels with his tribespeople, and the shaykh was expected to distribute wealth in livestock or nourishment across the tribe to cement his reputation: Jaussen described that Zeben shaykhs were frequently brought to poverty by the demands of hospitality showed to tribesmen or travellers.[114] It was also incumbent upon the heads of families, and on the tribal elders, to loan or give to younger members of the tribe parts of their flocks, which in turn enabled the younger members of the tribe to pay the bridewealth and begin to build their own family. The bridewealth or *mahr* would typically consist of "a mare, several camels, sheep, an ass", but a payment comprised solely of small stock was the stamp of the *fellahin*, and not customary among Bedouin like the Banu Sakhr.[115] Even in an ignoble sheep-herding tribe like the Shararat, which owed only

[113] Ibid, 16; "Fendi, it seems, cannot take us that way, as he is on bad terms with the Kreysheh, a branch of his own tribe who are on the road". A Blunt, *A Pilgrimage to Nejd* (London: John Murray, 1881), 42.
[114] Ibid, 82-88; a famous characteristic, c.f. "upon such a sheykh lies all the daily burden of the public hospitality", Doughty, *Arabia Deserta,* 25. Lancaster suggests that tribal hierarchies, and the reputation of the elite, depended on the distribution of camels by the shaykh: W Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 140.
[115] Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 50.

a small number of camels, the *mahr* usually contained at least one camel.[116] In this way, the movement of camels across the tribe sustained social relationships of authority and dependence that facilitated the ascendance of younger members through the tribal system and the gelling of the tribe together as cohesive unit. That is, to quote Polanyi, a key motivation for the distribution of camels among the tribe was ensuring centricity, to prevent "the group [breaking] up after every hunt".[117] Thus, on the one hand, the distribution of camels permitted both for the shaykh to solidify his personal reputation, and for younger members of the tribe to ascend the social system. On the other hand, distribution prevented the shaykh himself attaining too great a power, since if the shaykh had no camels to share, with little force but generosity to maintain the loyalty of his followers, his tribe would melt away.

If the former shows the significance of camel exchange in creating hierarchies within tribes, a similar point can be made regarding camel distribution and horizontal social connectivity among the Banu Sakhr. Mediated by a tribal elder and ruled by complex laws of tribal custom, the resolution of blood feud, the murder of a relative, or a botched marriage was typically solved by exchange of camels. In one case involving the theft of a prize camel the mediator, Temed ibn Hamid, ruled that the thief had to pay a camel for every step from the site of the crime to where the stolen mare first rested.[118] Among the Banu Sakhr one tribal elder, Abou Derweh, was a famously astute mediator relied on in similar cases.[119] Ownership of camels was also central to dispute resolution between tribes. For example, Jaussen recounted that in peace talks between the al-Fayez section of the Banu Sakhr and Banu Sha'lan section of the Rwala, Nuri Sha'lan, shaykh of the latter and later a leader in the Arab

[116] Ibid.
[117] K Polanyi, *The Great Transformation,* (Boston: Beacon, 2001) 50-52. One striking notion in martial exchanges is that camels were used, effectively, to buy a bride. In this reciprocal exchange, the cultural world of the Banu Sakhr community was created both by exchange of women and exchange of camels: the exogamy this facilitated created the community. C Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, trans. J Bell, J von Turmer, R Needham, (Boston: Beacon, 1969).
[118] Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 267.
[119] Ibid, 185.

Revolt, sought return of raided camels, but Talal argued successfully that herds should remain in possession of those at the date of the ceasefire.[120] Thus, just as the ability to distribute camels was critical to maintaining the muted hierarchies of Banu Sakhr tribal life, the exchange of camels also marked dispute resolution within and between tribes. To make a point to which we will return in Chapter 3, small stock did not have the social, cultural, or indeed ecological clout to facilitate these functions.

Coming now to the third theme, the relationship between the Banu Sakhr and the Ottoman state was also shaped by the mobility camels offered the latter, yet we must also recognise that proximity to the Ottoman state offered, particularly to the shaykhs, alternative income streams and strategies of political consolidation. The immediate context of Banu Sakhr relations with the Ottoman state in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century was an increase in state-making, particularly since 1869 when Rashid Pasha occupied Salt, a town which had formerly paid the Banu Sakhr protection money, *khuwah*. The Ottoman administration introduced telegraph lines, the Hejaz railway, schools, and taxation into the southern desert region of Syria *vilayet*, the administrative district of which Jordan formed a part, and each innovation attempted to integrate the Banu Sakhr into the centralised Ottoman system.[121] To some extent this was successful, as Talal agreed with the Ottoman administration to organise the payment of taxes, charged by head of camel.[122] However, in reality, flock enumeration was lax and thus the returns offered by the Banu Sakhr shaykh were small. Due to a lack of water on the upland plateaus in July 1902 sections of the Banu Sakhr camped around Madaba, and Ottoman government sensed a chance to count the number of the Banu Sakhr camels to tax them accurately. By 20 August, the tribe had disappeared:

[120] Ibid, 135-36.
[121] E Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan 1850-1921,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 63.
[122] Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 121.

this episode recalls the Shah of Iran's frustrating attempts to pacify the Yumot in 1925, and left the Ottoman officials, according to Jaussen, preferring "to devour the Christians's sheep at Madaba", over "hearing bullets whistling past them in the desert".[123] Thus in the fraught relations with the Ottoman state, camels were at the centre: both the intended object of government levies, and, when state-evasion was desired, the facilitator of mobility by which taxation was avoided.[124]

But as we have described above, living alongside an aggressive state was not alien to the Bedouin, and especially not to the Banu Sakhr, whom the Ottomans had paid to protect the Damascus Hajj caravan since the eighteenth century. Thus, while the unfavourable aspects of state integration might have been avoided, relations with the Ottoman state and the markets it controlled were also used opportunistically by Banu Sakhr tribespeople. As was common among Bedouin in north Arabia, selling camels to merchants was an important addition to subsistence, for the Banu Sakhr particularly in Salt and Karak. Poorer tribespeople also sold the alkaline ash made from burning desert shrubbery, which was then used to make soap.[125] By the twentieth century, one Banu Sakhr clan located east of Ajlun had even abandoned camel husbandry entirely and raised sheep, goats, and pure Arabian horses for export.[126] In exchange for camels, horses, and ash, the Banu Sakhr bought wheat and lentils from Karak, rice imported from the maritime towns, and dates from the east.[127] The Banu Sakhr were thus embedded within a wider economic system, facilitated by the structures of the Ottoman state: as the non-equilibrium model encourages us to recognise, while camels and their adaptations to the desert ecology constituted a fundamental part of persistence in the desert, tribes like

[123] Ibid, 405.
[124] Cf Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed,* 184: "the second principle of evasion is mobility".
[125] Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers,* 126.
[126] M Abu Nowar, *The Development of Trans-Jordan 1929-1939: the History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan* (Reading: Ithaca, 2006), 62.
[127] "un chrétien de Kérak y a établi un magasin … j'y rencontrai une quinzaine de Béni Saher qui venaient y faire leur provision de blé." Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 245, 62.

the Banu Sakhr would engage with alternative modes of subsistence to as insurance against the fragility of desert life.

This was particularly true of the Banu Sakhr tribal elite, which, from the late nineteenth century, was both increasingly integrated with the Ottoman state and its legal system, and dependent on cultivation to augment their income. Regarding agriculture, in an effort to increase accountability for taxation and stimulate agricultural production, the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 required peasants to register the land they worked as their private property, or ascribe it under the name of a local notable. As part of this initiative the Bedouin tribes were encouraged to divide the tribal *dira* into personal holdings.[128] Since individual tribespeople were suspicious of the government's motives and earned ample living from camel husbandry, tribal lands were often registered under the names of the shaykhs of each section.[129] In the case of the Banu Sakhr, once land was registered, the shaykhs or their tribespeople did not cultivate themselves, but instead hired Christian *fellahin* as labourers. As early as the 1860s, Rumayh al-Fayez of the Banu Sakhr agreed with Salih and Ibrahim Abu Jabir, Christian merchants of Nablus, to farm his lands at Yaduda, south of Amman; Rumayh would in turn receive half the crop.[130] In the late 1880s the Banu Sakhr shaykhs secured the lands around Madaba initially awarded to Christian settlers, which were concentrated in the hands of the shaykh's family. By the 1890s, land registration by Banu Sakhr shaykhs was widespread, and thus in 1897 the sons of paramount shaykh Sattam Fayez registered arable land worth 86,600 piasters.[131] Because the Banu Sakhr tribespeople still garnered subsistence from their herds and would not themselves partake in the deeply dishonourable activity of

[128] J Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 73; Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 85.
[129] Ibid, 87.
[130] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 89. The Christian Zionist Laurence Oliphant informs us that by 1870 Abu Jabir farmed sixty *faddans*, and, by selling his grain in Jerusalem, "in spite of the exactions … he has succeeded in accumulating great wealth": L Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead, with excursions in the Lebanon* (London: Blackwood, 1880), 270.
[131] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 87.

cultivation, this did not alienate the rank-and-file tribesmen from their chief.[132] Nor did this alter migration patterns, since the tribes continued to camp beside cultivators, "coming to graze there freely".[133] This takes us both closer to and further from camels: the former because for the Banu Sakhr camel husbandry was the symbol of their differentiation from sedentary cultivators; the former because shaykhs did not rely solely on camel pastoralism. Nevertheless, their tribespeople still did, and, we must remember, such creativity and opportunism define subsistence in non-equilibrium ecologies.

As we saw above, sections of the Banu Sakhr used their mobility to escape taxation in summer 1902, but in virtue of the significance of the Banu Sakhr to the regional economy, and the landholdings held by the shaykhs in virtue of the state's legal system, the Banu Sakhr paramount shaykh became a political actor who cooperated with the Ottoman administration. That the paramount shaykh journeyed to Istanbul to submit to the Sultan in exchange for honours and stipends, first Fayez al-Fayez in 1892 and subsequently his brother Talal, must have intensified the division between the paramount shaykh's family and the ordinary tribespeople.[134] Fendi al-Fayez negotiated with Mehmet Rashid Pasha regarding protection money paid to the Banu Sakhr for the passage of the *hajj* caravan, and in the late-1880s, Sattam al-Fayez as paramount shaykh parlayed with Midhat Pasha regarding the Banu Sakhr's customary right to the land around Madaba.[135] After WWI the support of paramount shaykh Mithqal al-Fayez was imperative to the newly installed Hashemite Emir Abdullah appearing legitimate in the eyes of the tribes.[136] Yet despite the integration of the paramount shaykh with the state over successive generations, his political activities did not harden the

[132] "Chez les Béni Saher, aucun membre de la tribu ne voudrait s'humilier dans ce travail manuel." Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 241; c.f. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 88.
[133] Jaussen, *Coutumes,* 237.
[134] Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 188.
[135] Y Alon, *The Shaykh of Shaykhs: Mithqal al-Fayez and Tribal Leadership in Modern Jordan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 14; Rogan, *Frontiers of the State,* 85-86.
[136] Ibid, 58.

muted intra-tribal hierarchies, since as we have seen, Talal al-Fayez might have been the voice of tribal power to the authorities, but he had to vie for the allegiance of all Banu Sakhr clans. Thus, the Banu Sakhr paramount shaykh increasingly became a political actor operating within the Ottoman state, but in the context of the tribe, he merely represented those sections of tribe loyal to him, and could not command nor coerce others to abide by his wishes.

It is with justification then that we apply the label "camel pastoralists" to the Banu Sakhr: we have seen, first, that camels shaped the everyday herding activities and cultural practices of Banu Sakhr tribespeople, and second that, because camels were omnipresent in the Banu Sakhr system, these animals shaped social structure, exchange, and conflict resolution. In elucidating this second theme, we have seen that Banu Sakhr tribal life was undoubtedly shaped by hierarchy between noble and inferior lineages, and while shaykhs were the recognised conciliator of disputes, continuous host of other tribespeople, and spokesperson of the sub-tribe or tribal confederation, a shaykh could not hold individual tribespeople to follow his commands under duress: a shaykh was far more a beleaguered trade union official struggling to manage a querulous multitude of delegates, than a modern cabinet minister or police official backed by the awesome power of the state.[137] As the third theme, we turned to the Banu Sakhr's relationship with agriculture, markets, and the Ottoman state. We saw that ordinary tribespeople expanded their stabilising strategies by selling camels in exchange for foodstuff, and that Banu Sakhr shaykhs had from the late nineteenth century additional income from cultivated land. Finally, it was maintained that despite the increasing integration of the paramount shaykh in the Ottoman state system, his power over the Banu Sakhr tribe was not strengthened correspondingly, a contention which returns us to the question of hierarchy: that the demands of camel pastoralism caused the Banu Sakhr shaykh

[137] Lancaster writes that even in the late 1970s the Rwala shaykhs imitated power when only when visited, but once guests departed, the "charade" collapsed, and the shaykh was told "it was too hot to do what he had asked, he'd have to do it himself". Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today*, 82-85.

to be invested with the powers of mediation, persuasion, and representation, but not of coercion.

iv. Conclusion: ecology and society, a dynamic interaction

The Banu Sakhr tribe in the decades before WWI thus reveals the complexities of pastoralist life entangled with the characteristics of their animals and the particularities of the ecology. We have identified a model that describes how pastoralists societies persist in harsh environments through certain stabilising strategies, many genres of which can be discovered, with local variations, across different pastoralist communities: exchange, mobility, and loose political arrangements, for example. This prism for understanding the entanglements of camel pastoralist life in the north Arabian desert allowed us to identify Bedouin reliance of camels, mobility, ambivalent relationships with states, sharp external and muted internal hierarchies, and raiding, not as backward, barbaric practices but specific modes of ecological adaptation.

In turn, the more detailed analysis of the Banu Sakhr reveals a mode of life tied to camel husbandry and the ecological requirements attendant upon it: in pasturage routines, cultural practices, social structure, dispute resolution, and attempts to evade the encroaching Ottoman state. The Banu Sakhr had opportunities for interaction with markets, and their paramount shaykhs attained a level of political involvement with the state alien to, for example, the more isolated Nuer; in turn, these developments opened different avenues for resource accretion and political opportunities for the tribal elite. But nonetheless, for most Banu Sakhr tribespeople, reliance on their vast camel herds within the craggy western mountains or expansive eastern desert constituted the norm.

Chapter 2. State-making in the desert

In February 1928, to demonstrate their commitment to traditional tribal life in the face of Ibn Saud's modernisation, a troop of Rwala Ikhwan from the Saudi Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd raided the Zeben section of the Banu Sakhr. With unusual violence which breached raiding custom, 162 persons were killed and four women raped.[1] AB Kirkbride and the Emir Shakir found that 4162 camels and 8590 sheep were stolen from the Zeben, along with tents, weapons, and clothing.[2]

The brutality of this raid and extensive loss of livestock was compounded by decisions made by the Transjordan administration. Abdullah attempted to persuade the Zeben not to counter-raid into Nejd and instead to allow the government to achieve restitution of the stolen livestock, but by December 1928 only ten percent of the stolen animals were returned.[3] Ibn Saud responded to pressure both by denying the knowledge of raiding from Nejd and exaggerating the amount of raiding from Transjordan, writing in a December 1928 telegram that he has "no confirmation of the raid. If news is true people of Trans-Jordan who had committed recent numerous raids on Nejd must bear responsibility".[4]

Ibn Saud was probably prevaricating, keen to present an image of personal sovereignty when he was rather one player in an internal conflict.[5] He was right, however, that the Zeben did increasingly ignore Abdullah and counter-raid into Nejd after February 1928. But these raids were comparatively minor: for example, in November 1928 one Zeben tribesman raided

[1] Chancellor to Amery, 31 May 1929, no. 69421 CO 831/5/1, 46. Such violence, contrary to the Bedouin code, was justified since Wahhabite ideology conceived anything exterior to the *asabiyya* of the truly Wahhabite power as legitimate targets of "plunder and subjugation": A Al-Azmeh, "Wahhabite Polity", in idem, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1996), 144.
[2] Cox to Chancellor, 7 January 1929 no. 69421 CO 831/5/1. The Emir Shakir was the cousin of the Emir Abdullah, the chair of the Tribal Control Board, and the possessor of the 'the greatest knowledge of tribal customs', Chancellor to Amery, 31 May 1929, no. 69421 CO 831/5/1, at 82, 53.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid, 87.
[5] J Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia 1916-1936: From Chieftaincy to Monarchical State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 98.

fifteen camels from the Rwala.[6] As Glubb would later say, "it may be quite true that the Trans-Jordan tribes 'raid' ten times to every "raid" from Nejd. [But] it takes dozens, if not hundreds of such expeditions to recapture anything approaching the number of camels looted in one day" by the Ikhwan.[7] Kirkbride and Shakir's investigations made clear that the raiding into Nejd was incomparable with the kind of predatory raiding practiced by the Ikhwan, either exaggerated, invented, or already dealt with, and the raided stock returned to Nejd, by Abdullah.[8]

Despite this recognition, the administration persisted in fining Zeben counter-raiders. Kirkbride and Shakir discovered that Fahad ibn Trad, a Zeben shaykh, had committed a counter-raid into Nejd following the February 1928 attack. A column of armoured cars, an RAF squadron, and 82 infantry was sent to confiscate the camels held by Ibn Trad.[9] Reaching the camp and finding Ibn Trad absent, his son was taken hostage; the armoured cars drove the grazing herds back to the camp and finding the "number of camels present at the camp [to be] comparatively small", twenty-seven were confiscated in order to leave enough for the "tribe to be able to move its tents".[10] Kirkbride described "the entreaties for pity with which we were overwhelmed by the women of the camp", while Cox, the British Resident in Transjordan, would add that the Zeben were blameless "according to their code", which "obliged [them] to make good their losses after the Government had failed to give them the help which had been promised".[11]

[6] "Report of visit to tribes East of the Hejaz Railway – 15th December, 1928, to 23rd December, 1928, by the Amir Shaker and the Assistant Resident", no. 69421 CO 831/5/1, 95.
[7] Report by Glubb, 1931, first five pages missing, 7, GP.
[8] "Enclosure A: schedule of claims received from the Nejd Government in connection with alleged raids by Trans-Jordan tribes and the result of investigations made amongst Trans-Jordan tribes", no. 69421 CO 831/5/1, 97-107.
[9] PHL Playfair, "Report on operation carried out against Fahad ibn Zeben between 28/12/28 & 6/1/29", no. 69421 CO 831/5/1, 123; AS Kirkbride, "Report on the punitive action against Fahed el Trad of the Gema'an section of the Zebn (Beni Sakhr), no. 69421 CO 831/5/1, 118.
[10] Ibid, 120.
[11] Ibid, 120; Cox to Chancellor, 7 January 1929, no. 69421 CO 831/5/1, 116.

Chapter 1 demonstrated that Banu Sakhr persistence in the north Arabian desert depended on stabilising strategies that entangled camels, humans, and ecology. The Ikhwan raid in February 1928 encapsulates the theme of this chapter: how state-making in the 1920s and early 1930s attacked, directly or indirectly, these different stabilising strategies. Catastrophic raiding from Nejd divested the majority of the Zeben's camels. The enforcement of anti-raiding by the mandate administration prevented the Zeben recouping their losses, and, if this was attempted, more camels were confiscated. The challenge of rebuilding herds was compounded by the difficulties accessing the crucial pastureland of the Wadi Sirhan, which was ceded to Nejd in the 1925 Hadda Agreement. These policies were implemented by administrators committed to state-making in the desert even though these actors knew that it entailed the imposition of an undifferentiated blueprint onto an unsuited context. If we add the series of drought years faced by the Banu Sakhr in the early 1930s, we understand both the success of the state in controlling the Banu Sakhr, and why the tribe was forced away from subsisting on camel pastoralism by the late 1930s.

This is not the place for a detailed chronology of the Banu Sakhr during the mandate period, for that Yoav Alon's excellent and detailed book ought to be consulted. Yet to contextualise the episodes discussed in this Chapter, let us survey briefly the different phrases of the relationship between the Banu Sakhr and the mandate administration from 1921-35. After WWI, the Banu Sakhr shaykhs opposed the Faysal's Arab Kingdom, and attempted to take Madaba in early 1920 but were repulsed, a defeat which ended the *khuwah* system.[12] The tribe likewise opposed the early British attempts to establish control after the collapse of Faysal's regime in June 1920, but at the creation of the Abdullah's Emirate of Jordan in April

[12] E Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan 1850-1921,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 237, 244. "A sword and an '*abba* (bedouin cloak) do not make a government": the French intelligence officer who reported the Banu Sakhr's ambivalence was none other than Antonin Jaussen.

1921, and combined with the new Ikhwan threat, began to cooperate with the Transjordan government. During the early 1920s the paramount shaykh Mithqal al-Fayez was a close ally of Abdullah, and when the British took over direct administration from 1924, the Banu Sakhr continued in prominence since Abdullah, mediating between tribe and government, was able to protect the shaykhs' interests.[13]

This positive situation changed after the Hadda Agreement of 1925, and further from mid-1926, when the government began a vigorous campaign to end raiding. Aiming "to stop all raiding", Sir John Chancellor, as the new High Commissioner, established the Tribal Control Board (TCB) in 1928. While the leading Banu Sakhr shaykhs had promised to cease raiding in 1926, the Ikhwan attack on the Zeben in February 1928 restarted the cycle of raiding and counterraiding. The failures of British diplomacy with Ibn Saud in the following years undermined much of the support for the British government and for Abdullah's mediation. With the Transjordan tribes in crisis, the British offered Glubb, the architect of desert control in Iraq, a job in Transjordan in August 1930, and he began the creation of a desert administration that November.[14] Glubb, living with the Bedouin, became enmeshed with the tribes to such an extent that one could say he became part of the fabric of desert life. He affected the end of raiding by a mixture of force and persuasion, and, with the help of drought, had brought ordinary tribespeople within the government sphere by the mid-1930s.

This Chapter will first outline the political-administrative paradigm to which the mandate administrators were committed; second, will illustrate the relationship between the Banu Sakhr and the government's attempt to implement the typical characteristics of statehood, being taxation, control of mobility, and monopolisation of violence; third, we will dwell on the

[13] See Alon, *The Making of Transjordan*, for opposition to Faysal, 17; for opposition to the British, 30; for support of Abdullah, 39; for Banu Sakhr as *de facto* armed forces, 53; for Abdullah as mediator, 66.
[14] See ibid, for Hadda agreement, 76; for campaigns to end raiding, 77; for TCB, 88; for Banu Sakhr promise to end raiding, 78; for Ikhwan attack 1928, 85; for TCB control, 88; for Glubb, 92.

opportunities and threats posed to the Banu Sakhr by the border with Nejd, including the loss of the Wadi Sirhan; and finally, we end with a final attack on the Banu Sakhr's camel pastoralism, the catastrophic droughts of the 1930s.

i. High modernism as a state-making paradigm

The extension of state power, the attacks on Banu Sakhr independence, and the subsequent undermining of camel pastoralism originated in a particular paradigm of state administration, hostile to the stabilising strategies that facilitated persistence in the desert.[15] With his anarchist resentment of state-centrism, James C. Scott is perhaps the sharpest analyst of what he terms the "high modernist" ideology. High modernist administration aimed for the "legibility" of its subjects, to know "their wealth, […] their location, their very identity" in order to facilitate "the classic state functions of taxation, conscription and prevention of rebellion".[16] Nomadic pastoralists, however, thwart the state's aim to "containerise" populations.[17]. Alon asserts that making Transjordan "legible" in this manner was not the aim of mandate administrators, who attempted to protect local customary practices.[18] Yet this belies a more systematic conflict where, even with the most benign intentions, the state held the pastoral nomadic way of life outlined in Chapter 1 to be in perpetual conflict with its mission.[19]

[15] For parallel arguments supporting the contention that this was a paradigm of state development, not just an assortment of diverse policies, see R Fletcher's account of the "common understandings of deserts and nomads" which evolved among the British army officers involved in governing the north Arabian desert, and A Duffy's account of how the French Forestry Service created a paradigm for dealing with nomadism which was exported across the Mediterranean: R Fletcher, *British Imperialism and 'The Tribal Question': Desert Administration and Nomadic Societies in the Middle East, 1919-1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), quote on 3; A Duffy, *Nomad's Land: Pastoralism and French Environmental Policy in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019)

[16] JC Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2.

[17] JC Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 65-66; Scott, *Seeing Like a State,* 262.

[18] Alon, *The Making of Transjordan,* 6

[19] On benign intentions c.f. Scott, *Seeing Like a State,* 223, 267.

The fluidity and mobility of Banu Sakhr livelihoods, and the inaccessibility of their desert terrain, were the antithesis of this high modernist programme.[20] Raiding was singled out as particularly abrasive, while sedentary agriculture was hoped to follow from its cessation. As Arthur Plumer, High Commissioner from 1925-28, told the Colonial Secretary Leo Amery in 1926: "our policy […] to encourage settlement […] cannot be achieved unless the settlers and cultivators have a sense of security".[21] The first British Representative in Amman, Albert Abramson, saw the Banu Sakhr as particularly anti-government: "the problem of […] asserting the authority of the Government would be best solved if an example could be made of the Banu Sakhr."[22] Anti-government, of course, the Banu Sakhr could be. The Ottomans found the tribe vacillating between cooperation and rejection, the "dark twin" of statehood which persisted against the odds in the desert.[23] As we shall see, the change during the British mandate that ended this ambivalent relationship was that the administrators had both the desire and means to compel Transjordan's nomadic population to cohere with the high modernist paradigm.

Glubb fits peculiarly into high modernism, since while he was a dedicated agent in the introduction of taxation, conscription, and control of violence into the Transjordan deserts, he mourned wistfully the consequent loss of traditional Bedouin culture. His writings thus reveal both romanticisation of Bedouin life and pride in experiencing its harshest materiality; yet also the belief that, as a relic of a bygone age, its modernisation was inevitable. His care for his tribal charge is revealed in the pride he expressed in his intimacy with the Bedouin. For example, in 1933 he complained that Ibn Saud's Syrian advisors "have not as yet so much as imagined the most primitive outline of what Bedouin conditions are like".[24] The Iraqi newspaper *At-Taqaddum* described how Glubb has adapted "to the rough living of the Bedwins

[20] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 6.
[21] In Alon, *The Making of Transjordan*, 76.
[22] In ibid, 47.
[23] JC Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 248-51.
[24] Glubb's report, April 1933.

[…] he eats the dry barley bread and drinks the salty water of wells".[25] Glubb accused his colleagues of considering the Bedouin "parasites on society", and instead defended livestock breeding as a "legitimate, honest and necessary occupation".[26]

Yet Glubb believed the Bedouin could not solely rely on nomadism and that certain tribal practices, particularly raiding, were incompatible with citizenship in a modern state. As we shall see in Chapter 3, Glubb encouraged every tribesperson to cultivate in addition to husbandry. Out of his own pocket he paid for a schoolteacher at Azraq, and was glad to convince shaykhs realising that "the good old days of raiding […] are over".[27] He was proud to have inculcated a tradition of tax-paying among the Banu Sakhr, and lauded the establishment of trusty British institutions in Transjordan, pointing out that "the Saudi kingdom contains no law-courts, and possesses no laws, no habeas corpus".[28] Glubb thus admired the liberty and independence of the Bedouin, but was committed to affecting their inclusion into the state system. He thought the Bedouin a kind of Dionysian force of untrammelled passion and barbarity, gloried in their freedom, but, becoming after a while unsustainable, they required to be brought to order by the regulation and sensibility of an Apollonian government.[29]

ii. The foundations of statehood: taxation, mobility, and violence

For the Banu Sakhr, the high modernist paradigm of state administration manifested in increased taxation, greater state control over mobility, and an enforced end to raiding. Each aspect, emerging in the 1920s, was prosecuted with greater success in the 1930s. To begin, then, with taxation: Chapter 1 argued for an ambivalent relationship between the Banu Sakhr

[25] "The Desert Ruler or Mr Glubb", 22 November 1928, copy reproduced from *At-Taqaddum*, Glubb Iraq S desert [3] uncatalogued, GP.
[26] Glubb's report, December 1938.
[27] Glubb's report, December 1932, 9.
[28] Glubb's reports, September 1939, February 1933, 3.
[29] "only by incessant opposition to the titanic-barbaric nature of the Dionysian was it possible for […] a constitution so cruel and relentless, to last for any length of time." F Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. WM Haussmann, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910), 42.

and Ottoman taxation; that continued into the 1920s as the tribe continued to evade the purview of the camel enumerators. F.G. Peake, the commander of the Arab Legion, complained that in September 1923, Abdullah, no doubt keen to retain his allegiance with Mithqal al-Fayez, ordered a month's extension to the Banu Sakhr's tax payment, allowing the tribe to retreat into the desert. He concluded: "it has up to date been impossible to get any taxes from [the Banu Sakhr], or to arrest them in their lawlessness".[30] Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner from 1920-25, suggested in May 1924 that when the Banu Sakhr returned to their summer western pastures in June, the RAF should assist the Arab Legion in "denying to the tribes the various watering places" and thus Banu Sakhr would conclude "that submission is inevitable".[31]

By December 1927, however, the Resident commented that "the enumeration of the Beni Sakhr [camels] has been much better" and, notwithstanding the unrest of 1928-30, Glubb's arrival in the desert ensured the steady extension of taxation across the tribe.[32] Inherited from the Ottoman system, taxation centred on camels: taxation was annual, and collected in the currency of the Palestine pound, at 120 mil per head according to the Animal Tax Law of 1929.[33] In 1935, for example, this occurred in August at al-Jizah, in the al-Qastal region south of Amman where the Banu Sakhr shaykhs owned land.[34] The extent to which this taxation was collected in kind is unclear; perhaps individual tribesmen, if without ready money, submitted their livestock to each shaykh, who then paid the government agents in cash. By 1938, Glubb could be assured of the regularity of the Banu Sakhr appearing at the annual enumeration, even though that year the tribesmen were "not as cheerful as normal".[35] At this

[30] F.G. Peake, "Report on Trans-Jordan Arab Legion and the general situation", 30 May 1924, CO733/68/44, 623-24. C.f. "the Beni Sakhr animals will not be correctly enumerated and the tribe will score another success against the government": C.H.F. Cox, "Monthly Report on Trans-Jordan, 1-31 July 1924", CO733/72, 123.
[31] Samuel to Thomas, 30 May 1924, ibid, 613.
[32] Situation Report on Trans-Jordan, 15 December 1927, CO831/1/2, 28.
[33] One mil constituted a thousandth of a Palestine pound, which was the currency of Transjordan from 1927 to 1949: MA Nuwar, *The Development of Trans-Jordan 1929-1939: A History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, (Reading: Garnet, 2006), 48.
[34] Glubb's report, August 1935.
[35] Glubb's report, August 1938, c.f. September 1939.

point, however, it must be stressed that the inclusion of the Banu Sakhr into the taxation regime was made possible by the raft of other factors discussed in this Chapter, not least drought. That the Banu Sakhr were successfully being taxed in the 1930s should be seen as the most revealing barometer of state control, as well as one of many methods by which such control was achieved.

Taxation required knowledge of, or control over, tribal mobility. As the difficulties of taxing the Banu Sakhr in 1924 as the tribe moved into the desert, and of tracking the Zeben to fine Fahad ibn Trad in 1928, in the 1920s locating the Banu Sakhr was complex. Yet as Glubb and the Desert Patrol became a regular presence in the *Badia,* management of tribal migration patterns became a realistic goal. Glubb's commission, as Cox put it, was to take "control of the tribes, who are to move […] according to his orders".[36] In March 1931, it was even suggested to alter the tribal migration practices completely, "compelling" the Banu Sakhr to go westwards in winter to the Wadi Araba, but Peake objected that "the Government have no right to interfere with the ordinary places of living of its subjects".[37] Nevertheless, that this was proposed indicates that the administration felt such drastic intervention enforceable, and indeed in spring 1930 the TCB banned tribes from grazing along the Nejd border, including on some Banu Sakhr winter pasturage, by introducing a "'Prohibited Area' […] wherein all tribes […] were […] liable to be fired upon", in order to help the RAF distinguish hostile raiding parties.[38]

Control of mobility was thus geared towards preventing raiding, which, as we have seen, was a principle aim of the mandate administration. Thus from 18th May 1926 when a collection of Transjordan shaykhs promised Abdullah to cease raiding, the Banu Sakhr were prohibited from raiding Transjordan and Nejd tribes, and the Banu Sakhr agreed to return animals recently looted from the Rwala.[39] Although after the February 1928 Ikhwan raid the

[36] Cox to Air Commodore RAF Amman, 13 December 1930.
[37] Peake to Cox, 5 April 1931, GP.
[38] E.R. Stafford, "Report on Bedwin Control Board, 1.1.30-30.6.30", FO371/14460, 3-4; Glubb's report, July 1932; Alon, *The Making of Jordan,* 89.
[39] C.H.F. Cox, Situation Report 3/5/26, CO733/114, 569.

cycle of raiding returned, with the mechanisation of the Transjordan Frontier Force (TJFF), the creation of the Desert Patrol, and Glubb's gung-ho enthusiasm, the British campaign to "pacify" the desert was increasingly successful. The TJFF was equipped in December 1928 with machine guns and Morris 6-wheel trucks.[40] Glubb's Desert Patrol used armoured cars, and he would later reflect that "it is not we who have put an end to desert raiding – it is the internal combustion engine".[41] Yet the Desert Patrol also contained camel-mounted troops, the only means to infiltrate the "rocky peaks" of Tubaiq, and which could live off grazing resources without rations, "like a Bedwin raiding party".[42] These ground forces were supported by the RAF, for example on 10th January 1931 when two planes escorted the camel troops sent to confiscate camels from raiders in Tubaiq.[43] Crucially, the troops themselves were drawn from the Transjordan tribes, "ex-raiders" with knowledge of fighting in the difficult terrain, and, as Figure 5 shows, included Banu Sakhr tribesmen despite initial reservations regarding the tribe's "anti-government" attitude.[44]

Thus, with its ex-raider recruits employing the same opportunistic tactics as raiders themselves, Glubb sought less to eradicate raiding than to systematise it: to formalise the strategies of raiding within the operational techniques of the nascent state, and to establish his Desert Patrol as the sole legitimate employer of the practice.[45] For example, after the Jebur

[40] Amery to Chancellor, 14 December 1928; Rees to Luke, 30 September 1928, File no. 59493. CO 831/3/15. Note that the TJFF was an Imperial Service Regiment, so was not just expected to protect Transjordan's borders but could also be ordered to fight elsewhere. This is in contrast to the Arab Legion and its Desert Patrol, which functioned more like an internal security militia.
[41] Glubb's report, March 1938.
[42] Glubb, "Note on proposed increase in the establishment of camel constables for the Desert Patrol", GP.
[43] Operation Order no. 4, 5th January 1931, GP.
[44] Glubb to Peake, 18 February 1931, GP.
[45] We might say, in a manner of speaking, that the aim was to monopolise raiding: where a "state is considered the sole source of the "right" to use violence", it hardly matters what form the violence takes. So this monopolization of raiding is a desert-state version of M Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", in HH Gerth and C Wright Mills ed. and trans., *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78.

Figure 5: 'Young shaykhs as Desert Jundis. This boy is of the Mor family of Beni Sakhr shaikhs'. Glubb's report, December 1936

section of the Banu Khalid delivered a night raid on the Banu Sakhr in March 1933, unable to capture the raiders who were on a hillock "ensconced in the rocks […] with rifles", Glubb instead seized a flock of forty-five camels from which a fine would later be deducted.[46] Similar punishments were imposed on a party of the Banu Sakhr who committed a raid in the Wadi Sirhan in November 1931, and throughout winter 1930-31, when the Banu Sakhr carried out a series of small raids on the Rwala.[47] Glubb believed that the seizure of the raid leader's camel herd compelled him to seek out the Desert Patrol, at which point Glubb would order the return of the stolen animals and keep the raider's riding camel and rifle raider as punishment.[48] The confiscated animals were then sold, the profits transferred to the Treasury.[49] Looking back, Glubb would congratulate himself on creating a system of justice that drew on indigenous principles: the "deserts were reduced from anarchy […] by constructing an administration […] which the tribes understand".[50]

However, Peake's judgement that the Desert Patrol was so successful that "raiding had almost ceased" by April 1931 perhaps overstates its effectiveness.[51] Only the previous month the Desert Patrol was itself the victim of raiding, as nineteen Shararat raiders ambushed four Desert Patrol soldiers in Tubaiq, killing two, and absconding with four riding camels, rifles, kit, and clothing.[52] On the other hand, in December 1930 Glubb couldn't prevent a Desert

[46] Glubb to Peake, 23 March 1933, "Breaches of the Peace by Beni Khalid", GP. Increasingly, the cases were decided summarily by Glubb.
[47] Peake to Glubb, 10 March 1931; Glubb to Peake, 12 March 1931, GP.
[48] Glubb to Peake, 2nd April 1931, GP.
[49] Peake to Glubb, 16 March 1931, GP.
[50] Glubb's report, March 1936. GP.
[51] Peake to Cox, 5 April 1931, GP.
[52] Royal Air Force Intelligence Report – Transjordan, for week ending 12 April 131, GP.

Patrol party, when sent as scouts to the Wadi Sirhan, raiding a flock of 36 camels from the Shararat. Though the camels were later returned, these incidents demonstrate that gaining control of the desert was not as simple as Peake suggested. This is compounded by the fact that the Desert Patrol suffered just as much from the early 1930s drought as the tribes: "it is only when one has tried to keep camels under conditions of restricted grazing in winter", Glubb reported, "that one realises how quickly the brutes die".[53]

Yet despite these early problems, the previously endemic raiding was nearly eradicated, and, even though Glubb believed the extension of "law and order" drew on Bedouin practices, as he recognised in 1942, it nonetheless resulted in the "tribes [losing] their own independence".[54] It also resulted, as we saw in the case of the Zeben, that the Banu Sakhr were unable to rebuild camel herds, lost as state-making undermined other subsistence strategies, through the kind of redistributive raiding discussed in Chapter 1. Certainly, the creation of a taxation regime, control over mobility, and the end of raiding, in process which saw their genesis in the 1920s and intensification in the 1930s, occasioned the encapsulation of the Banu Sakhr by the state system. To look back to the stabilising strategies outlined in Chapter 1, these foundations of the state architecture undermined the ability of the Banu Sakhr to choose when to engage with its sedentary neighbours, to travel as it pleased, and to move camels through the tribal system, at the same time as depleting livestock numbers through levies, fines and unanswered Nejd raids. As we shall see, however, these central facets of state-building were accompanied by problems caused by border regimes as the Transjordan Government responded to a rival state-making project to the southeast, and by the extensive reduction in camel stock caused by drought.

[53] Glubb's report, December 1930.
[54] Glubb, "Note on desert units", 15 August 1942, in Bradshaw, T Bradshaw, *The Glubb Reports: Glubb Pasha and Britain's Empire Project in the Middle East 1920–1956* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 58.

iii. Border regimes: opportunity and problems

The Wadi Sirhan, the crucial Banu Sakhr winter pastureland, is a wide depression created by a tectonic fault, forming an arc of 300km, and in the early twentieth century contained over sixty wells and ample pasturage, and particularly in winter, swamps, mud flats, and salt lakes.[55] TE Lawrence evoked its fertility: it "drain[ed] the country on each side of it and collect[ed] the waters into the successive depressions of its bed".[56] He was only partially right, however, as Wadi Sirhan commonly receives less than 50 mm of rainfall annually while evapotranspiration is 1460-1670 mm.[57] Its ecological significance occurs because it sits atop the Tawil-Quaternary Aquifer, a deep, narrow subterranean layer of water-bearing permeable rock and silt which contains at least 58 billion cubic meters of water.[58] It is not sustained by recent rainfall but rather by water deposited perhaps in the last major southern pluvial period, which ended 26,000 years ago.[59] As an endorheic basin, the aquifer does not drain into rivers or oceans but instead discharges upwards, explaining the seasonal appearance of a swampy ecology. Demonstrating its long-lasting ecological significance as a reliable pastureland, the Wadi Sirhan was part of the myrrh and frankincense trade caravan routes of antiquity linking the Indian Ocean coast with the Mediterranean, and of ancient patterns of transhumance, since at least the Nabataean period.[60]

There are few better areas for camel pasturage in the north Arabian desert, but the creation of borders between Nejd and Transjordan compromised the Banu Sakhr's access to

[55] A Cariou, "Fleurir le désert, le mirage de l'agriculture", *Études rurales* 204, (2019): 197 ; Glubb's report, May 1934.
[56] TE Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom,* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1935), 258.
[57] UN-ESCWA and BGR (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe), *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia*, (Beirut, 2013), 424. <https://waterinventory.org/sites/waterinventory.org/files/chapters/Chapter-17-Tawil-Quaternary-Aquifer-System-web.pdf>.
[58] UN-ESCWA and BGR, *Inventory of Shared Water Resources*, 429.
[59] Ibid, 428.
[60] JW Eadie, JP Oleson, "The Water-Supply Systems of Nabataean and Roman Ḥumayma", *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 262 (1986): 49-76.

the Wadi Sirhan. The 1925 Hadda Agreement ceded the Wadi Sirhan to Nejd, but supposedly enshrined the Transjordan tribes' grazing rights in the Wadi.[61] However, to access the Wadi Sirhan, Nejd authorities forced the Banu Sakhr to pay *zakat*, which, as Kirkbride commented in 1929, was "no more than an animal tax under another name".[62] The motives of the *zakat* collection were likely twofold, economic, to boost Ibn Saud's revenue, and political, as Ibn Saud attempted to prise the Banu Sakhr out of subjecthood in Transjordan, turning the tribe "into subjects of the Saudi polity".[63] As Chancellor wrote, it entailed not just "the imposition on the tribes of Trans-Jordan of a double camel tax", but also undermined the state-citizen relationship between the Transjordan government and its tribes, since "the power to levy *zakat* is associated […] with the power of sovereignty".[64] Yet because of the significance of the Wadi Sirhan to the Banu Sakhr's migration pattern, the tribe had little option but to continue their seasonal migration and pay taxes both to Ibn Saud and to the Transjordan government. Despite entreaties from Glubb, aggressive taxation by Nejd intensified from 1930 onwards. Transjordan tribes commonly camped west of the Wadi Sirhan in Transjordan territory, and sent herds to the Wadi to water every week; Saudi officials forced any individual who used a well in Nejd territory to pay a year's tax.[65]

As the February 1928 raid on the Zeben indicates, a further threat posed to the Banu Sakhr by the proximity of their pastures to Nejd tribes was raiding by Ikhwan troops. In Chapter 1 we identified a kind of redistributive raiding that functioned as a response to non-equilibrium variability, typically small-scale, of limited violence and focused on herd rebuilding. Research into Turkana raiding has distinguished between this redistributive practice and "predatory"

[61] Glubb's report, March 1933, 8.
[62] Kirkbride, "Collection of Zakat from Trans-Jordan tribes in Nejd Territory", 7th January 1929, CO 851/5/1.
[63] Payment of zakat constituted the "criterion of inclusion" within the Saudi state, through which "nomads, agriculturalists and townspeople" become the tributaries of the Saud family: Al-Azmeh, "Wahhabite Polity", 148-49.
[64] Chancellor to Amery, 5 February 1929, no. 69421 CO 831/5/1, 77.
[65] Glubb's report, March 1933, 8-9.

raiding which disregards the moral economy of the system-sustaining form.[66] Predatory raiding is large scale, violent, and often tied to war aims. It targets livelihood security, and the measures to cope with the uncertainty it encourages, such as restricted mobility, can undermine livelihood strategies.[67] The Ikhwan raids fall into this latter category. As Abdullah told Chancellor, as the machine for the expansion of the Saudi state, the Ikhwan raids "were different: they were undertaken by large bodies of men headed by banners which declared the seriousness of their intentions".[68] They could lead to the loss of almost all a tribe's camels and belongings. In 1931 Glubb would reflect on the 1928 attack on the Zeben:

> There are raids and raids […] Ikhwan are able to gather two or three thousand men and launch them against scattered Bedouin camps. […] Really great quantities of loot can be obtained including not only the camels but the camps, tents, and all their contents, and really considerable casualties can be inflicted.[69]

The Banu Sakhr suffered at least three such attacks in the early 1920s, one on 16 August 1922 against Banu Sakhr villages only 12 miles from Amman; a second in August 1924, where 3,000-4,000 Ikhwan camelmen attacked villages owned by Banu Sakhr shaykhs in al-Qastal, when, before the Ikhwan were bombed by the RAF, 121 villagers and Banu Sakhr tribesmen were killed; a third in 1925 while the tribe was dispersed and grazing across the Wadi Sirhan.[70] In the later 1920s, as well as the Zeben, the Howeitat bore the brunt of Ikhwan attacks, though despite Glubb's attempts to pacify the frontier from 1930 onwards, the Banu Sakhr continued to suffer admittedly raids from Nejd in the early 1930s.[71] On 29 January 1933, for example,

[66] D Hendrickson, J Armon, and R Mearns, "The Changing Nature of Conflict and Famine Vulnerability: The Case of Livestock Raiding in Turkana District, Kenya", *Disasters* 22 (1998): 189-90.
[67] Hendrickson, Armon, and Mearns, "The Changing Nature of Conflict and Famine Vulnerability", 185, 191-92.
[68] "Note of conservation of High Commissioner with the Amir Abdullah at Amman on 14.4.29", No. 69421. CO 831/5/1, 63.
[69] Report by Glubb, 1931, first five pages missing, 7, GP.
[70] The 1922 raid is recorded in Peake, Diary 1922, Peake Papers, Imperial War Museum; for 1924 raid, see reports by Cox and Kirkbride, CO733/72, 320-23; details of the 1925 raid are found in Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, 97. C.f. H Philby, "Jauf and the North Arabian Desert", *The Geographical Journal* 62 no. 4 (1923): 241-259, esp. 259.
[71] For Howeitat, see Glubb's report, February 1932.

two men of the Banu Atiya, recently allied with Ibn Saud, raided one Salim as Saad of the Banu Sakhr north of Bayir, who was murdered and his 42 camels driven back to the Hejaz.[72] By chance Glubb intercepted the raiders in Tubaiq; the camels were returned to the Banu Sakhr and the raiders were tried for murder. In other cases, however, Glubb relied on the Nejd government to return the stolen animals. While the 1933 *bon voisinage* treaty aimed to end taxation on Transjordan tribes, not only did *zakat* continue, but the Nejd authorities also levied a commission, *khidma*, on returned animals. Thus, in November 1932 thirty camels were raided from Zaid ibn Fuhaid of the Banu Sakhr, who travelled to Kaf in Saudi Arabia on 22 November with letters from Glubb, but by January 1933 he was reported only to have secured 19 animals.[73]

Despite the double taxation and threat of Nejd raids, it must be recognised that the advent of a border between Nejd and Transjordan was used opportunistically by Banu Sakhr tribespeople as another stabilising strategy, increasing the subsistence options available. For example, good relations with the Jauf officials meant one Banu Sakhr tribesman, Jazza ibn Nuwamis, could travel with his group of ten tents to Jauf to buy dates during the drought of 1931.[74] Further opportunities were offered by Ibn Saud's campaign to entice Transjordan tribes to render allegiance to Nejd. Cox warned Chancellor in 1930 that if the Bedouin were not offered better conditions they "may find no alternative but to throw themselves on the mercy of Ibn Saud", while the Saudi authorities happily accepted tribespeople who had committed crimes in Transjordan: "disfavour in Transjordan", Glubb wrote in 1933, "is a sure passport to a genial reception in Saudiya".[75] While this identifies the opportunities arising in virtue of Ibn Saud's campaign to destabilise Transjordan, a different, final example reminds us of Glubb's

[72] Glubb's report, February 1933.
[73] Glubb's report, January 1933.
[74] Glubb to Cox, 15 February 1931, GP.
[75] Cox to Chancellor, 11 December 1930, GP.

struggle to implement the high modernist programme. In 1932 Glubb encouraged the tribes of the Jebel Druze to raid the Rwala so long as they had re-entered Syria, while the Banu Atiya and Howeitat were told that "wars were forbidden" in Transjordan, but that "the shooting season will reopen next autumn when they return to the Hejaz".[76] The development of state institutions was confined to territory within the borders of Transjordan, and Glubb incited the same lawlessness forbidden by the Transjordan administration in neighbouring territories. These kinds of opportunity provided by border regimes were the exception, however, and not the rule: for the Banu Sakhr, raids from Nejd and double taxation were not remedied, for example, by the chance to buy dates from Jauf.

It is worth retracting briefly from the details of border regimes to conceptualise the issue in more general terms: when the increasingly solid borders of the mandate period are compared with the more, fluid movement possible previously, borders doubtless undermined the seasonal opportunistic mobility with which camel herders moved between the scanty grazing spots in the desert. Perhaps, without borders maintained by nascent states, when faced with drought in the early 1930s, the Banu Sakhr might have migrated out of Northern Arabia and settled elsewhere, forsaking the shaykhs whose political links with the Transjordan government had failed to secure the tribe's subsistence. Unable to migrate to a region without state-making, the Banu Sakhr concentrated increasingly on grazing within Transjordan.

We might similarly hypothesise that, because the Banu Sakhr were restricted to grazing within the territory of the mandate, the ecological logic of pastoralism was undermined, resulting in a degradation of Transjordan's pastures. Avinoam Meir and Haim Tsoar have showed that the impermeability of the Egypt-Israel border from 1948 forced the Tarabin and Azazmeh Bedouin tribes to concentrate on the Sinai side, unable to use a variety of water and

[76] Glubb's report, February 1932, 4.

pasturage. This led to the overexploitation of pastures in Sinai, and the transformation of vegetation bearing sand dunes into *seif* dunes divested of the biogenetic crust that gives rise to seasonal grazing resources.[77] While similar degradation in Transjordan was likely, it is beyond the scope of this inquiry to discover if the creation of the Transjordan-Nejd border resulted in a similarly overexploited pastureland. Nevertheless, the common point we can take from the Transjordan-Nejd and Israel-Egypt cases is that borders undermined the flexible mobility that distributed grazing pressure across an arid environment, critical in a non-equilibrium ecosystem where pastures are appear sporadically. With animal stocks diminished by Nejd raids and double taxation, this ecological element compounded the difficulted faced by the Banu Sakhr as tribes attempted to rebuild their herds.

iv. Drought

The creative and varied stabilising strategies that characterise many pastoralist groups operating within non-equilibrium ecologies, and which we surveyed in Chapter 1, are to a large extent adaptations to the threat of drought. Yet when serious drought was combined with the Great Depression and the preclusion by the mandate government's high modernist administrative policies of the stabilising strategies that had so far facilitated the Banu Sakhr's persistence in the desert, the result was catastrophic for the Banu Sakhr. If Glubb in 1930 found around half the Banu Sakhr practicing seasonal migration eastwards with their camel flocks, by 1936 most Banu Sakhr families would scarce have the animals necessary to make the journey. The success of Glubb and his predecessors in encapsulating the Banu Sakhr within the state, as described above, is inextricably linked with the weakening of the tribe as a result of the early 1930s drought.

[77] A Meir and H Tsoar, "International orders and Range Ecology: the Case of Bedouin Transborder Grazing", *Human Ecology*, 24 no. 1 (1996): 39-64.

Non-equilibrium systems such as the Jordanian deserts are particularly threatened by the drying of earth and well resources, the depletion of groundwater and withering of streams which occur during a drought.[78] As we observed in Chapter 1, the Banu Sakhr had traditionally departed the northern plateaus of Jordan in winter during the storms common in that season; unsurprisingly these northern parts receive the highest amounts of rainfall, while the southern and eastern desert areas, in the lee of the mountains east of the Dead Sea, receive comparatively little.[79] In good years rains in Jordan are slight: in the early 2000s there was less than 200mm precipitation annually in the arid eastern *Badia*, only a 5-20% decrease from the 1960s levels when records began.[80] Rain for a day or two was sufficient for the flowers to bloom.[81] Thus the productivity of each year within a certain area of pastureland can turn on a single storm.

While rain was increasingly scanty from 1929 onwards, serious drought occurred when the winter rains failed in 1931-2 and 1932-3. Patches of grazing would usually have been found throughout the desert region during the winter, but in winter and spring 1931-32, the only grazing was to be found in the cultivated area around Karak and the southern Belqa, and the Banu Sakhr pastured there from February 1932 onwards.[82] These were the tribe's typical summer grazing areas: intense pasturing in winter also was likely a prelude to overgrazing. Perhaps the tribe moved back westwards because grazing on the Wadi Sirhan "is very bad", which indicates that the early 1930s saw that incidence of a hydrological, as well as a meteorological drought, where levels of groundwater, lakes, and streams are abnormally low. We saw that in the later 1920s it was the Zeben clan of the Banu Sakhr that had been primarily

[78] M Almazroui, "Assessment of meterological droughts over Saudi Arabia using surface rainfall observations during the period 1978-2017", *Arabian Journal of Geosciences* 12 (2019): 693.
[79] "Drought Conditions and Management Strategies in Jordan", Prepared for the Initiative on "Capacity Development to Support National Drought Management Policies" workshop in Cairo, Egypt 17-20 November, 2014 < https://www.droughtmanagement.info/literature/UNW-DPC_NDMP_Country_Report_Jordan_2014.pdf>
[80] The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, *Jordan's Second National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (2009), <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/jornc2.pdf>
[81] Glubb's report, February 1933, 19.
[82] Glubb's report, February 1932, 2.

affected by Ikhwan attacks, but Glubb reported in late 1932 that "the Banu Sakhr […] lost heavily during the past years": the droughts had been less discriminate.[83]

By December 1932 it was becoming clear that a second drought year beckoned. In 1931-32, remarked Glubb, "we thought we had indeed touched rock bottom as far as rain and grazing", but "the present winter […] seems likely to set up a new record". Wells were barren, and water so meagre that camels collapsed from exhaustion a hundred miles from the nearest source. "The whole desert [was] strewn with carcasses of dead animals", and "whole flocks of camels and sheep were abandoned".[84] There was brief respite when heavy rain fell all over the *Badia* on the night of the 12th and 13th January 1933, and the tribes, so far assembled near the permanent wells, dispersed into the desert to drink at the rainwater pools.[85] Such reprieve was only short, however, since the new shoots that followed the rain were killed in March by cold winds and frosts, thus ending hope of good grazing. In the same month Glubb commented that "the miserable colony of beggars which has now become a feature of every desert police post, continues to increase".[86]

While 1931-33 saw the most catastrophic losses, less severe drought continued into the mid-1930s. 1934, for example, was not a complete drought year, but instead affected mostly the Banu Hasan, whose typical pastures were in the Ajlun region north of Amman.[87] The results were that by 1935 each tribe had lost thousands of animals. In 1935 the Colonial Office Reported: "a series of drought years has gravely aggravated the water shortage with the result that harvests have failed year after year and heavy losses of live-stock have been sustained".[88]

[83] Ibid, 6.
[84] Glubb's report, December 1932, 7, and January 1933, 7.
[85] Glubb; report, January 1933, 6-7, and March 1933, 14.
[86] Glubb's report, March 1933, 19.
[87] MA Nuwar, *The Development of Trans-Jordan 1929-1939: A History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,* (Reading: Garnet, 2006), 292.
[88] In Nuwar, *The Development of Trans-Jordan,* 186.

Figure 6: 'Shaykh of the Beni Sakhr, Haditha al Khureisha', Glubb's report, July 1936

Glubb described it was typical that, having found in October 1932 a group of tents with ninety camels, to return to the same camp in February 1933 to discover only thirty camels remaining.[89]

Prolonged droughts due to natural causes are a fairly normal occurrence in the climatic rhythms of the Middle East.[90] The question is thus why this particular period of drought caused such widespread loss of livestock and deep suffering for Transjordan's nomadic population. Following the logic of the pastoralist ecological and social systems discussed in Chapter 1, it is surely because the policies introduced by the mandate administration in the 1920s, and intensified in the 1930s, interrupted the rhythms of nomadic persistence in the desert. We have in the previous two sections of this Chapter seen that mobility and free access to traditional pasturelands, redistributive raiding, the ability to opt out of taxation and avoid predatory raiding of the Ikhwan type were precluded by the state-making project, and thus when hit by drought the Banu Sakhr were divested of the flexibility and multiple options which had hitherto functioned to sustain pastoralism in the Jordanian desert.

[89] Glubb's report, February 1933, 18.
[90] N Karami, "The Modality of Climate Change in the Middle East: Drought or Drying up?", *The Journal of Interrupted Studies,* 2 (2019): 127.

We must admit, however, that drought coincided with a second factor not associated with state-making. In Chapter 1, we saw that the Banu Sakhr had long sold camels to travelling merchants or to Salt and Karak, and that due to the political connections of the shaykhs, the tribe's historical role escorting the pilgrimage caravan, and the proximity of their summer grazing lands to the towns in the western Jordanian uplands, the Banu Sakhr were perhaps more than other Bedouin tribes connected to the regional economy. We also saw that this integration with surrounding markets functioned as an alternative means of subsistence, since staples like rice and grain could be purchased to add to camel milk yields. From 1929 the Great Depression undermined this strategy. The agricultural economies of Egypt and Syria, dependent on the export of raw cotton and grain, collapsed as the international market for agricultural products broke down.[91] These two countries were the largest importers of Bedouin camels, and the price of camels thus fell drastically. In November 1932, Glubb commented that the price of a fat she-camel had dropped from £16 in autumn 1930 to £3, but "even at that price it would probably not find a buyer". This fall in the price of camels was, according to Glubb, greater than the fall in value of grain, and much greater than the fall of manufactured items.[92] Banu Sakhr tribespeople faced a terrible decision: sell three times as many camels as previously to attain a similar standard of living, and thereby risk keeping insufficient camel numbers to maintain the flock; or preserve one's camels, but lose access to the other subsistence options, only more crucial since the ability to subsist on camels alone was itself being undermined by the reduction in stock numbers due to drought.

A further subsistence strategy was lost in the drastic reduction of the productive of Banu Sakhr agriculture, most likely due to a combination of drought and mismanagement. As Chapter 1 described, while during the later nineteenth century and the early twentieth century

[91] J Galvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 109.
[92] Glubb's report, November 1932, 5-6.

the Banu Sakhr shaykhs had earned a sizeable fortune from the cultivated lands south of Amman, in the 1920s these areas were left fallow. For example, the 52,230 dunums of land owned at al-Muwaqqar by Shaykh Haditha al-Khraisha (Figure 6) of the Banu Sakhr was not cultivated at all in 1925, 1928, and 1931, and even in other years only 15% of the land was cultivated. On the one hand, this might have been, as Cox believed, the fault of the shaykhs: "the owners of the land are unable or unwilling to develop the land".[93] On the other, farming could have been rendered financial unviable due to heavy *werko* taxes, a land levy inherited from the Ottoman system, which was calculated according to the capital value of the land in the 1890s but was increased arbitrarily in the following decades.[94] For a third explanation we might speculate that cash-cropping on marginal lands for export would have garnered short term profits, but could have exhausted the nutrient-poor soil.[95] Equally, the land might have been left fallow in order for the soil's nutritional value to redevelop, as is part of ecologically sound farming in arid lands. In all likelihood mismanagement and drought combined to undermine agricultural productivity, but regardless, the loss of fruitful agriculture meant the Banu Sakhr shaykhs were divested of a source of income which could have been redistributed across the tribe to ease the pressure of drought. Even Mithqal al-Fayez fell into debt in the 1930s and some of his land was put at a caveat to action.[96]

Thus catastrophic drought, occurring alongside a drop in camel prices and without funds garnered from cultivation filtering through the tribe, the Banu Sakhr's ability to continue to rely primarily on camel pastoralism was severely threatened. This was reinforced by the

[93] Cox to Wauchope, 29 March 1932, CO831/18/1, 30-32.
[94] Alon, *The Making of Jordan,* 129; A Likhovski, *Tax Law and Social Norms in Mandatory Palestine and Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 59.
[95] C.f. R Franke, B Chasin, *Seeds of Famine: Ecological Destruction and the Development Dilemma in the West Africa Sahel,* (Totowa: Rowman & Allanheld, 1980), 68-70. Prior to the French colonisation of the western Sahel, peanuts were rotated with millet. When part of the colonial economy the Sahelian farmers became increasingly market-oriented, and only practiced peanut cultivation, which, without fertilisers, exhausted the limited fertility of the soil.
[96] Alon, *The Making of Jordan,* 94.

encapsulation of the Banu Sakhr by the state, yet, in terms of causality, drought and state-making were not unrelated but synergistic. We might image that without the weakening of the tribe by drought the tribe might have more successfully fought for its independence against Glubb's attempts at pacification; instead, as we shall see in Chapter 3, fewer camels and lower shaykhly incomes caused both ordinary tribespeople and the tribal elite to look outside of the tribe and to the mandate administration for employment. Furthermore, without the containerisation of the Transjordan Bedouin by the state, perhaps, in the face of drought, the Banu Sakhr could have raided other tribes to rebuild their flocks, or migrated away from north Arabia to more fecund pastures.

v. Conclusion: a loss of stabilising strategies

In Chapter 1 we argued that a life of camel pastoralism in the desert permitted the Banu Sakhr to live with relative independence in the desert, creating a form of subsistence where camel and tribesperson were entangled in processes of seasonal migration, exchange, and political relationships. The forces of state-making, deployed along lines first established in the 1920s and intensified in the 1930s, including the cessation of raiding, the punishment of raiders, the exploitative border regimes, when combined with economic crisis, terrible drought, and the loss of agriculture as a viable alternative subsistence method, directly challenged the system-sustaining practices of the Banu Sakhr. By the mid-1930s many Banu Sakhr tribespeople saw their once expansive flocks severely diminished: as Glubb wrote of the tribe in 1932, "many have so few animals left that they can no longer move their tents".[97] Thus the loss of camel pastoralism, aided by drought, was tied irrevocably to the state-making project. For some colonial administrators, nomadism was a practice that needed to be stopped; for Glubb at least "undermining the foundations of life and traditions of the tribe [was an] unintentional

[97] Glubb's report, November 1923, 6.

consequence" of desert control.[98] But with state and nomad in a position of systematic conflict, it was as unavoidable as it was unintentional. The next Chapter will argue that, in response to the ecological challenges and encapsulation by the state surveyed here, the Banu Sakhr diversified from camel pastoralism, a shift which resulted in profound changes in social structure.

[98] Bradshaw, *The Glubb Reports,* 36.

Chapter 3. Diversification: from camel herder to farmer, labourer, or shepherd

In January 1935, Glubb wrote that "it must be remembered that the government, in the last few years, has cut off all the former sources of revenue of the Bedouin", and so "we [must] do what we can to assist them to find their feet under the new conditions".[1] The first half of this statement aptly summarises what Chapter 2 has just surveyed: how the extension of state control, and the increasing integration of the tribes within the state, when combined with drought and economic depression, resulted in the undermining of the Banu Sakhr's stabilising strategies which we surveyed in Chapter 1, whether the loss of political independence, livestock resources, or the ability to migrate across borders to customary pasturelands. The second half of Glubb's statement pertains to the theme of Chapter 3: the diversification of livelihoods, forced upon the Banu Sakhr by this process of political and economic change, where, while not all new options for the tribespeople derived from the munificence of the government, new occupations nevertheless served to solidify the encapsulation of the tribe by the mandate administration. This diversification resulted in deep social change, including the loss of group solidarity and common interests among tribespeople, the changing role of the tribal elite, and reversal of hierarchical relations with neighbouring groups.

i. Examples of diversification

Diversification among the Banu Sakhr took three major forms: an increase in cultivation, moving to wage labour, and changing the main species herded. Before turning specifically to the Banu Sakhr, to indicate the dynamics of social change under conditions of diversification, let us survey examples under each of modes of social change.

[1] Glubb's report, January 1935.

Regarding diversification to agriculture, a pertinent case is offered by the Bedouin of the Negev, which in the mid-1940s constituted a population of between 65,000-90,000 people and were primarily engaged in a mixture of animal husbandry and seasonal agriculture. However, in 1948 the Israeli military administration moved twelve of the nineteen Negev Palestinian Bedouin tribes from their lands to a "Restricted Area", and, requiring special permits to leave, the Bedouin could not continue traditional patterns of migration or harvest the lands they cultivated.[2] This loss of territory encouraged tribesmen to increase their income from sown plots, in turn causing greater privatisation of plots within the available land.[3] This mode of diversification, through which social relations became defined by the private property, has occasioned the collapse of the tribal polity.[4] The earlier practice of reinforcing tribal solidarity by gifting land to allies ended swiftly. Tribesmen involved in land disputes turned from the tribal system to the Israeli courts for resolution. And shaykhs who possessed privatised tribal lands often sold their plots and moved to towns, weakening their relationships with ordinary tribespeople.[5]

Diversification to wage labour, under the conditions of a loss of political autonomy, is indicative of tribesmen looking elsewhere for subsistence in the knowledge that the tribe can no longer protect their livelihood. When a tribe has not been encapsulated by the state, and is able to move freely, to evade taxation, and earns the majority of its living from pastoralism, tribespeople shifting to wage labour can function as a system-supportive process, by which failed members are "sloughed off" from the tribal group. Working in Iran in the 1950s, Fredrik Barth found that the Basseri tribe depended on each member subsisting through nomadic

[2] I Abu-Saad, "Forced sedentarisation, land rights and indigenous resistence: the Palestinian Bedouin in the Negev", in N Masalha (ed.) *Catastrophe Remembered: Palestine, Israel and the Internal Refugees* (New York: Zed Books, 2005), 116-18.
[3] G Kressel *et al*, "Changes in the Land Usage by the Negev Bedouin Since the Mid-19th Century. The Intra-Tribal Perspective", *Nomadic Peoples* 28 (1991): 34-35.
[4] P Salzman, *Pastoralists: Equality, Hierarchy, and the State*, (Boulder: Westview, 2004), 144.
[5] Kressel ,"Changes in Land Usage", 35, 47-50.

pastoralism, and tribesmen were forced to become labourers if they failed "to retain the productive capital in herds which is required for an independent pastoral existence".[6] Contrastingly, among the Samburu pastoralists of north-central Kenya in the 1980s, tribespeople shifting to wage labour was not a strategy of tribal preservation, but indicative of the collapse of the tribe as a coherent group with shared interests. After a series of droughts between 1955 and 1985, the loss of grazing lands to game reserves, and a loss of 50-85% of their cattle, many Samburu herders migrated to urban centres such as Nairobi, 400km south of Samburu district. Earnings were invested in property and shops rather than using wages to restock herds in Samburu, thereby individualising assets and causing weakened bonds with the tribal community.[7]

As well as changing the overarching fabric of solidarity across the tribe, diversification to wage labour can also alter the dynamics within pastoral family units. By the 1990s among the Negev Bedouin living in the city of Rahat, 13% of women 66% of men were occupied outside the home. When the Negev Bedouin practiced pastoralism, women had contributed considerably to the pastoral economy, and the families' dependency on wage labour thus constituted a substantial shift into household work. On the other hand, since the men worked out of the city, the women attained significant social power in maintaining the family's social relations.[8] The albeit small incidence of wage labour among the communities of Irish tinkers in the 1970s reversed the gender dynamic observed among Negev Bedouin, as the majority of tinkers engaged in the sedentary workforce were women in domestic duties. The men continued

[6] F Barth, *Nomads of South Persia: Basseri Tribe of the Khamseh Confederacy* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1961), 108.
[7] L Sperling, "Wage Employment Among Samburu Pastoralists of Northcentral Kenya", *Economic Anthropology* 9 (1987): 167-190.
[8] E Marx, "Land and Work: Negev Bedouin Struggle with Israeli Bureaucracies", *Nomadic Peoples* 4 no. 2 (2000): 113-15.

itineracy, begging, peddling and collecting dole money and scrap, thus controlling the commercial activities of the family and its relationship with Irish state authorities.[9]

Perhaps the most pertinent to our theme of contingent and changeable entanglements between human communities, animals, and ecologies, the third mode of diversification is a change in the main species herded by pastoralists. As we saw in Chapter 1, different species herded had different functions: compared to small stock like sheep or goats, camels constituted the main store of capital, the expression of the tribal elite's power, and the primary reason for nomadic migrations. Thus we might imagine that a move from herding large to small stock would have a considerable effect on the social fabric of the tribe. An indication of these complexities is offered by the shift from sheep to pigs among the mountain pastoralists of south Corsica. While pastoralists around the village of Erbasecca had traditionally practiced transhumant shepherding, with pigs a small part of the local economy, there was from the 1940s onwards a shift to practicing pig raising almost solely, and the formerly mobile population sedentarised.[10] Without transhumance, the bonds between the *piaggia,* the lowland villages with access to winter pastures, and the *muntagna,* the highland villages possessing summer pastures, broke down.[11] Thus a shift in the main animal raised, caused an end to previous patterns of mobility and structures of allegiance and exchange between groups; in short, therefore, a profound change in the social dynamics of the pastoralist system.

We turn, now, to the ways these processes of diversification manifested for the Banu Sakhr in the 1930s, in an analysis of two stages: first, addressing the alternate livelihoods practiced by the Banu Sakhr as camel pastoralism ceased to be the primary means of subsistence; second, discussing the attendant social changes, as Banu Sakhr practices became

[9] K Kearns, "Irish Tinkers: An Itinerant Population in Transition", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 67 no. 4 (1977): 542.
[10] B Holway, "Adaptation, Class and Politics in Rural Corsica", Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 66, 184, 215.
[11] Holway, "Adaptation, Class and Politics", 510-11.

different to the form of tribal life surveyed in Chapter 1. That we have considered patterns of diversification experienced by other pastoralist communities aids the latter stage since, although the alternate livelihoods undertaken are well documented, due to the lack of direct evidence in the source base the social changes which resulted must be analysed with less conclusiveness and more inference. In turn, these examples of diversification also show the risks of assuming similarities because, movement to wage labour indicated tribal strength for the Basseri but disintegration for the Samburu, processes of diversification are complex and multidirectional.

ii. Diversification among the Banu Sakhr

Diversification, indeed, was not experienced equally across the Banu Sakhr and the tribal shaykhs had different opportunities to ordinary tribespeople. Chapter 1 described how the Banu Sakhr shaykhs before WWI were engaged in cultivation and maintained political relationships with the Ottoman state. Yet we also saw that the tribal elite maintained their authority by the distribution of camels, and, if ever were to be recognised as legitimate by their tribespeople, had to secure their tribe's interests regardless of the desires of their associates within the Ottoman administration. The 1930s frustrated this balancing act as, in the condition of encapsulation by the state discussed in Chapter 2, the former practice became dominant and the shaykh elite was incorporated into the state apparatus. It should be stressed that this was one element in a deliberate strategy of indirect rule: indeed, as described in the Introduction, it was only after the crisis of 1924 that Britain became involved directly in governing the mandate.[12] In the decades following the number of British officials involved in the

[12] French and British indirect rule through intermediaries has been well studied, an early example being M Crowder, "Indirect Rule: French and British Style", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 34 no. 3 (1964): 197-205. This is true not just of Britain and France but in the Russian Empire too, which depended not just on the Cossacks for a military caste, but also, in order to rule the Kazak steppe and its nomadic inhabitants, on teachers, clerks, and translators who were Russian educated yet members of the local community: I Campbell, *Knowledge and the Ends of Empire: Kazak Intermediaries and Russian Rule on the Steppe, 1731-1917* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017). That state making both depended upon and encouraged elite

administration decreased markedly, and by March 1939 Glubb was the sole British officer left in the Arab Legion.[13] State building and elite integration were thus intended as dual processes, since as the mandate administration became more powerful under the auspices of British officers, so the local elite would play an increasingly significant role and eventually take over the reins of government.

Four policies of the mandate administration in particular attest to the deliberate integration of the elite into the mandate administration. First, election to Transjordan's Legislative Assembly, established in 1925 and supposedly a democratic institution, came increasingly to be seen as the birthright of the paramount shaykh of each tribe. Thus, the paramount shaykh, Mithqal al-Fayez for the Banu Sakhr, received the lucrative salary of LP 200 associated with membership, despite him standing only a fraction higher in rank than the other powerful shaykhs of his tribe.[14] Pertaining rather to the sons of the shaykh elite than to the person of the paramount shaykh, the second policy was the restriction of Desert Patrol recruitment to the tribal aristocracy.[15] That the enforcement of state control in the desert was undertaken by the tribal elite in government uniform lent the force a sense of legitimacy, and meant that the identity of different tribesmen pursued for fines by the Desert Patrol was easy to ascertain. Third, the sons of shaykhs were the focus of Glubb's policy of bringing education to the desert, which opened the possibility of a government career.[16] Glubb paid for the education of twelve Bedouin boys himself, and a school for the Banu Sakhr was placed in tents at al-Muwaqqar in summer 1937.[17] Fourth and finally, those shaykhs who retained their land

formation in local communities was not restricted to the modern colonial period: I Forrest, *Trustworthy Men: How Inequality and Faith Made the Medieval Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

[13] Glubb's Report, March 1939. He told his superiors he could not agree that "the fewer men, the greater share of honour".

[14] Glubb's report, November 1937. In terms of value equivalence, the Palestine pound (LP) was pegged 1.1 to the pound sterling, and each Palestine pound coin contained 123.27 grains of gold.

[15] Glubb's report, December 1932, 7.

[16] Glubb's report, March 1938, 11.

[17] Glubb's report, December 1937, 12.

despite the pressure of drought discussed in Chapter 2, which included Mithqal al-Fayez, were able to expand cultivation, regulated and taxed by the mandate administration: al-Fayez even imported the first mechanical tractor into Transjordan.[18]

While the opportunities for diversification until the conditions of encapsulation by the state open to the shaykh elite appear indicative of upward social mobility or at least a consolidation of their position, the methods of diversification practiced by ordinary tribespeople were more focused on ensuring subsistence in the face of the loss of traditional livelihoods. Most strongly encouraged by Glubb was cultivation, and he hoped that that after the drought each sub-tribe would come to mix reliance on pastoralism with agriculture.[19] Redolent of the high modernist aim of "containerisation", Glubb wrote that while with their characteristic mobility pure nomads are "in a very strong position vis-à-vis the police", if a portion of a tribesperson's livelihood "consist in land […] he stands to lose that portion of his revenue" on avoiding taxes or absconding after committing a crime.[20] In 1934 the Colonial Office loaned £8075 of seeds to the Banu Hasan to support their farming, while in 1935 Glubb hoped to distribute date cuttings from Azraq for cultivation.[21]

The Howeitat took to agriculture soon after the drought, but the Banu Sakhr were more reluctant. As we discussed in Chapter 1, agriculture was deemed deeply dishonourable, and thus in 1935 the Banu Sakhr were farming what land they had under plough through hired

[18] JB Glubb, "The economic situation of the Trans-Jordan tribes", *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 25 no. 3 (1938): 451.
[19] Among the Howeitat, admittedly, it was not just ordinary tribespeople who attempted to cultivate, but the shaykhs also, including Za'al ibn Mutlaq Abu Taya, previously a famed raider. See Glubb's report, July 1935, 20.
[20] Glubb's report, December 1938, 9. As mentioned in the Introduction, across the border in Hejaz and Nejd a comparable process of sedentarisation, though perhaps operating with greater brutality, was operated on the Ikhwan in their settlement in *hujar*, a series of over two hundred settlements of mud huts built in order that the bedouin could leave "their abodes of tents" and "migrate from nomadism to Islam": J Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Najd and Their Role in the Creation of the Sa'udi Kingdom, 1910-1930* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 17.
[21] Memorandum attached to High Commissioner to MacDonald, 23 May 1938, CO831/46/1; Glubb's report, August 1935.

labour, not "work[ing] seriously with their own hands".[22] With shaykhs too poor after the drought and the preclusion of traditional livelihoods to kick-start agriculture, much land around Banu Sakhr villages was left fallow, and Glubb urged the Colonial Office to lend the shaykhs funds to purchase seed and plough animals.[23] By 1938, however, the employment of fellaheen by Banu Sakhr tribes was disappearing, when "every section of every tribe in Trans-Jordan now owns a certain amount of cultivation", including the 150-200 tent-strong Jubur section of the Banu Sakhr, among whom, farming at al-Nuqaira south-east of Amman, "there is practically no individual who has not cultivated a smaller or larger area".[24] Previously, Banu Sakhr tribespeople had benefitted from largesse garnered from their shaykhs' landholdings, or from protection money extracted from nearby fellaheen, both which supplemented the subsistence offered by their extensive camel herds. Having lost large numbers of their herds to drought, raiding and taxation, and both additional revenue streams undermined, it was to farming itself, at the impetus of a state administrator and subject to the land taxes imposed by the Transjordan government, to which many of the Banu Sakhr turned to supplement their reduced animal husbandry.

An alternative means of diversification was engaging in labour, which, for the Banu Sakhr in the 1930s, primarily consisted in working on government relief work schemes and seasonal wage labour. From December 1932, at the height of drought, the Transjordan Government began employing "destitute bedouin" building roads, paid LP 3 monthly.[25] Yet, indicative of tribespeople being pushed away from pastoralism, from the outset the number of applicants far exceeded the number of labourers who could be employed, and so Glubb attempted to rotate employment between different families, "to share the benefit more

[22] Glubb's report, July 1935, 20.
[23] Glubb's report, March 1935, 19.
[24] Glubb's report, December 1938, 10.
[25] For value see footnote 14 above.

widely".[26] By 1935, Banu Sakhr sub-tribes which had lost near all of their camels came to depend almost exclusively on labour. The Khurshan section of the Banu Sakhr, for example, "who possess no animals whatever and no land", relied on government relief works in winter and on working as labours for the harvest in summer.[27] The problem, as Glubb pointed out, is that while animal husbandry or cultivation offers a tribesperson an independent livelihood, seasonal labour "leaves [one] almost as destitute as it found him".[28] These means of diversification lent temporary respite for impoverished sections of the Banu Sakhr, but rendered individual tribespeople reliant either on the generosity of the state or the regularity of employment by contractors.

Perhaps the form of diversification most interesting but most difficult to trace is a change in the main species herded. We see in the 1930s the first signs of a gradual change from camels to sheep. Diversification to sheep herding after drought would have been preferable to an attempt to reconstitute camel herds for several reasons, economic and biological. Regarding the former, camel prices, which fell drastically during the early 1930s, were beginning to recover by 1935, when a fat camel would fetch LP 8-10. However, this was still 50% of the former price, and may have derived from a short-term dip in camel imports into Egypt from the Sudan due to poor grazing, rather than an indication of a long-term recovery of camel value.[29] Indeed, camel prices would only decline through the mid-twentieth century as camels for transport were replaced by motor vehicles, a loss in demand which was not met by the smaller market for camel meat and racing camels. Furthermore, it is likely that the outlay to buy additional sheep was far less, perhaps half that, needed to buy camels.[30]

[26] Glubb's reports, December 1932, 8; January 1933, 12.
[27] Glubb's report, January 1935, 14.
[28] Ibid, 15.
[29] Glubb's report, July 1935, 21.
[30] C.f. W Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 102.

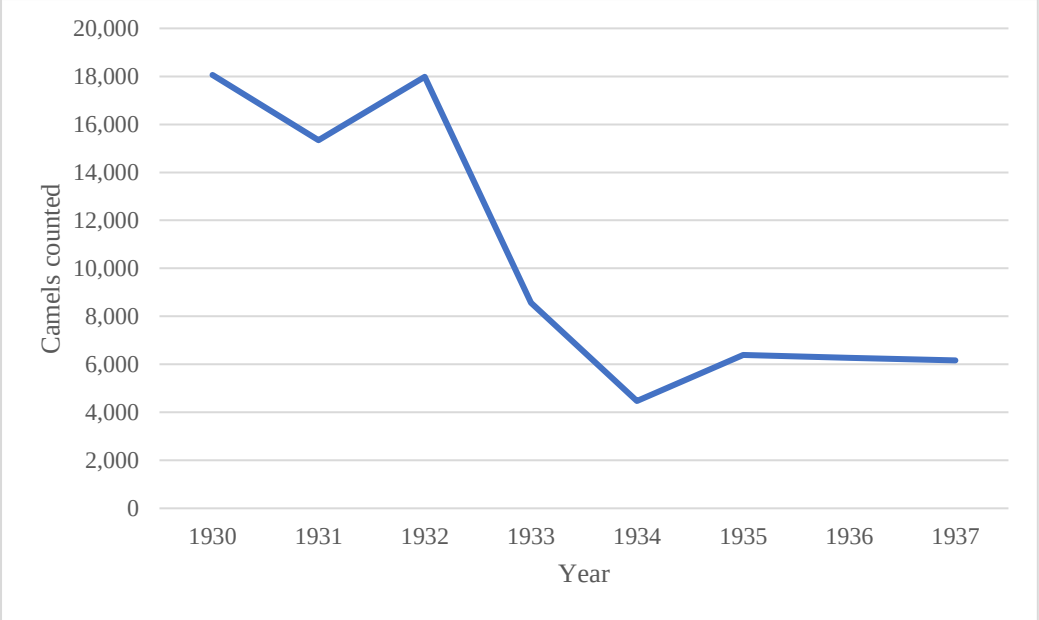

Figure 7: number of camels counted at annual enumeration, 1930-37 (1936 data unavailable, 1935-37 average provided). Data from Glubb's report, September 1937.

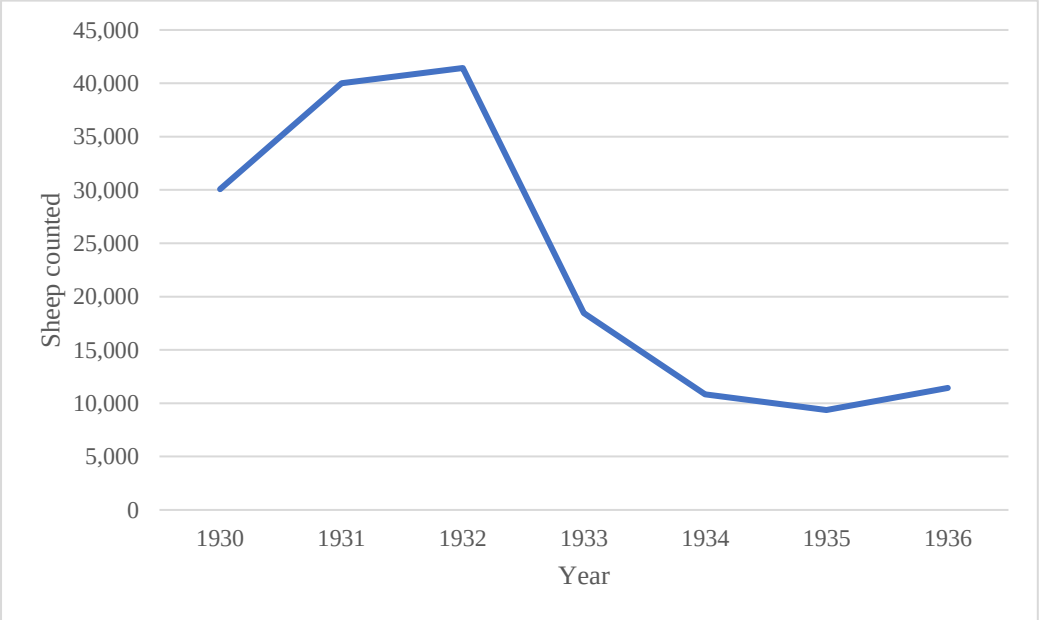

Figure 8: number of sheep counted at annual enumeration, 1930-36 (1937 data unavailable). Data from Glubb's report, September 1937.

To turn to biology, reconstituting a camel herd was a more difficult task than expanding a sheep flock. The most widespread breed across the Middle East, and commonly herded by the Bedouin, is the Awassi fat-tailed sheep. Awassi ewes lamb young, 60% as yearlings; the gestation period is short, around 150 days; and fertility averages at 70-80 lambs per 100 ewes.[31] By contrast, dromedaries reproduce slowly. Typical fertility is fifty percent or less, and even with good grazing a cow will drop a calf only once every two or three years. Cows reach breeding age at four, and a camel's gestation period is 365-395 days.[32] As far as proximity to towns is also advantageous, sheep are relatively less hardy than camels and require water daily, so shepherds must remain close to wells or some permanent settlement.[33] Furthermore, camel by-products, whether blood, milk, urine, or hair, were consumed by the Bedouin, and it was the camel itself which was of marketable value; in contrast, the by-products of sheep, chiefly wool and milk, were readily marketable.[34] These biological factors combine with the economic concerns to make regaining subsistence levels after drought much swifter with sheep then camels. Sheep were perhaps not as valuable as camels, but increasing stock to a profitable size could be accomplished more quickly; and sheep herds could be converted with ease into cash both because sheep and their by-products could be relied upon to find a buyer while the camel market fluctuated, and because, unable to migrate over long distances, sheep had to be maintained closer to permanent settlements and thus could be sold when necessary.

Indications of a shift from camel to sheep among the Banu Sakhr, and among the Transjordan Bedouin more generally, derives from several sources. As Figures 7 and 8 show, data provided after the 1937 camel enumeration (pictured in Figure 9) allows us to glimpse the numbers of animals lost in the early 1930s. While 18,059 camels were counted in 1930, by

[31] H Epstein, "Awassi Sheep", *World Animal Review* 44 (1982): 19-21.
[32] R Yagil, *Camels and Camel Milk*, (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 1982), Animal Production Paper 2 No. 26, part II, accessed online 20 April 2022 <https://www.fao.org/3/x6528e/X6528E00.htm#TOC>
[33] Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today*, 102.
[34] Glubb, "The economic situation of the Trans-Jordan tribes": 450.

Figure 9: 'Annual Camel Count: nomads collected at one of the rendezvous waiting for their camels to be taxed', Glubb's report, July 1937

1935 this dropped by 70% to 6,385 with no sign of increasing, since in 1937 6,160 camels were counted. Sheep numbers likewise decreased markedly, from 30,060 in 1930 to 9,366 in 1935, but sheep stock increased more quickly than camel stock, reaching 11,422 in 1936.[35] This quantity of animals was distributed across around 1,500 tents, which mean that, if shared equally, each family would only own four camels. Naturally, however, after the drought camel numbers were spread unevenly across the Bedouin population – indeed, the Banu Sakhr owned double that of the Howeitat – and certain sub-tribes "still entirely bedouin, probably own an average of seven or eight camels […] others who have taken to sheep or agriculture, scarcely average two camels per family".[36] Glubb's increasing concern for grass for sheep grazing through the 1930s also hints at a shift to sheep. He complained in December 1937, for example, that brush and bushes for camels were plentiful, but the "early promise of fresh grass for sheep" was disappointed.[37]

Glubb's campaigns to encourage the Banu Sakhr to dig wells within Transjordan territory could also be interpreted as a necessary modification to the Transjordan deserts in order to support more sheep husbandry. We have detailed already the significance of the Wadi Sirhan, in virtue of its ample pasturage, for the Banu Sakhr's migration patterns. Glubb hoped that by increasing the watering places available in the Transjordan desert the tribes could be kept within Transjordan and not be forced, like the Banu Sakhr, into the Wadi Sirhan to pay

[35] Glubb's report, September 1937.
[36] Glubb's report, August 1937.
[37] Glubb's report, December 1937. C.f. Glubb's reports for March, 1935, January 1935, November 1937.

taxes to Ibn Saud. Thus part of the relief work organised in 1936 was the cleaning of old Roman cisterns, at al-Quwayrah, al-Hallabat, and al-Muwaqqar, and in June 1937 the Banu Sakhr were digging wells in the desert area east of the Hejaz Railway.[38] While camel flocks would also have benefitted from more watering places, that sheep herds could be devastated after even one hot day without water indicates, perhaps, that these projects responded to a changing pastoral economy. When these pieces of evidence are taken together, it seems fair to conclude that in the mid-1930s, after catastrophic drought and encapsulation by the state, a shift towards sheep as the primary focus of Banu Sakhr pastoralism was taking place, in the first stages of a process that, as Lancaster and Chatty encountered in the 1970s, resulted in those north Arabian Bedouin who still practiced pastoralism having almost completely diversified to sheep herding.[39]

Yet the shift to sheep was far from total in the 1930s. The Banu Sakhr had 3,293 camels at the 1937 camel count, and were still migrating to the Wadi Sirhan in the late 1930s, where they travelled "*en mass*" for January and February of 1938.[40] While there were clear moves away from camel herding as the Banu Sakhr took to cultivation, wage labour, and shepherding, camels thus remained significant. We will return to comment on the changing position of the smaller flocks of camels in the diversified tribal system at the end of this Chapter; this indication of the complexity of diversification is also an apt opportunity to move to comment on the likely social changes attendant on the diversification processes just discussed.

iii. Diversification of livelihoods and social change

A central argument of Chapter 1 was that pastoralism is a livelihood characterised by flexibility, malleability, and opportunistic movement between different modes of subsistence.

[38] Glubb's reports, December 1936, July 1937.
[39] D Chatty, *From Camel to Truck: The Bedouin in the Modern World,* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 2013), 118-39; Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today,* 99-103.
[40] Glubb's Reports, August 1937, February 1938, January 1938. This contracts Y Alon's conclusion in *The Making of Jordan,* 140.

Perhaps the central question which therefore arises is the extent to which the processes of diversification discussed above were permanent. Glubb realised that control of the Bedouin by nearby states has ebbed and flowed over centuries: "to keep them in order with a strong hand for a few years is nothing".[41] Of the diversification strategies surveyed, Glubb certainly hoped the inclusion of cultivation into the subsistence routines of the Bedouin, so "to broaden the basis of their economy", would be permanent.[42] Yet on the other hand, one characteristic of seasonal labour is its flexibility: it permits a return to traditional activities when the time is ripe.[43]

Indeed, it seems that many tribesmen of the Banu Sakhr hoped that encapsulation by the state constituted just another brief incidence in the warp and weft of state control. Glubb was frequently asked by Bedouin attuned to the international crises of the 1930s "if there is any hope of an early war", with a "relaxation of law and order [and] a recrudescence of raiding".[44] In January 1937 the son of Haditha al-Khraisha, shaykh of the Khirshan section of the Banu Sakhr, robbed a Nejdi merchant near Azraq, and in August 1939, the month of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Turki al-Haider, a shaykh of the Zeben Banu Sakhr, fired his rifle at passers-by.[45] Yet Chapter 1 also noted that pastoralists remain pastoralists when they depend mostly on the survival of their stock, and when a move away from such an existence constituted an impermanent stabilising strategy. While many Banu Sakhr would hope that state control

[41] Glubb's report, October 1937.
[42] Glubb's report, December 1938.
[43] C.f. Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today,* 104.
[44] Glubb's report, January 1938.
[45] Glubb's reports, January and February 1937, August 1939.

Figure 10: 'Shaykh of the Beni Sakhr, Mithqal ibn Faiz', Glubb's report, June 1936

would abate, as we shall see, these processes of diversification were sufficiently permanent and fundamental to bring about profound changes in the social structure of the tribe.

The incorporation of the Banu Sakhr shaykhs into the state by education, extensive cultivation, and involvement in the Legislative Assembly and Desert Patrol served to distance the tribal elite from ordinary tribesmen. This is reflected in the increasing gulf in the 1930s which emerged between the majority of the Banu Sakhr and their paramount shaykh Mithqal al-Fayez (Figure 10). With the increase in disturbances in Palestine before the 1936 Revolt, al-Fayez spent "most of his time intriguing in Amman" to ferment rebellion; he thus "virtually ceased to be a bedouin".[46] Mithqal al-Fayez's growing unpopularity resulted, in May 1937, the shaykhs and young tribesmen of the Zeben gathering a hostile force near Madaba of some seventy armed men. The immediate cause was that Mithqal al-Fayez had encouraged the local civil governor to intervene in a case concerning land ownership which ought to have been decided through tribal custom.[47] Eventually the Zeben shaykhs and Mithqal al-Fayez agreed that the case should be heard by the appropriate tribunal, but this nevertheless demonstrates that the paramount shaykh had lost the prestige to secure the approbation of large swathes of the tribe; that he depended on his influence within the apparatus

[46] Glubb's report, September 1935.
[47] Glubb's report, May 1937.

of the state for his power; and, as a corollary, that he no longer functioned as a mediator in tribal disputes independent of the interference of the state.

Perhaps a further cause of Mithqal al-Fayez's unpopularity resulted directly from the inclusion of paramount shaykhs into the Legislative Assembly, which undermined the careful gradation of tribal social relations and created more solid and overt hierarchies. Chapter 1 argued that social differences within Bedouin communities, while present, were muted by redistribution and the difficulties of sustaining the support of the shaykhs of each sub-tribe. While it was considered natural that the paramount shaykh should represent the interests of the tribe in Legislative Assembly, that the paramount shaykh collected the accompanying salary frustrated the tribal elite which, despite being inferior in rank by only a fraction, received nothing. This was markedly different to the system created by Ibn Saud, which distributed salaries on a tapered scale to every shaykh in each tribe, in order both to encourage personal dependence to the Saudi monarchy at all social levels, and to respect that within Bedouin communities the paramount shaykh did not monopolise authority.[48] By contrast the Transjordan system would "foment dissatisfaction": for example, the two principle shaykhs of the Howeitat, Muhamad Abu Taya and Hamd ibn Jazi were bitter rivals, but the latter through bribery secured the full Legislative Assembly salary; perhaps the monopolisation of the Legislative Assembly salary by Mithqal al-Fayez similarly frustrated other Banu Sakhr shaykhs.[49] Furthermore, the inclusion of the paramount shaykh within the Legislative Assembly also meant Mithqal al-Fayez no longer held their role because of his generosity, indeed his ability to distribute camel wealth, but instead in virtue of his salary and recognition as part of the government.

[48] Glubb's report, November 1937.
[49] Glubb's report, October 1937.

The social change which most worried Glubb, perhaps surprisingly, resulted from the education of the shaykh elite. Previously the sons of shaykhs had engaged in raiding, but the pacification of the desert left an educated class without a vocation, "too proud to work as labourers or in menial tasks".[50] Typically they aspired to governmental work, opportunities for which were insufficient, and learned "contempt for outdoor or agricultural pursuits" a "dislike for tribal life", which therefore "unfitted them to live with their families without qualifying them to earn their living elsewhere".[51] Glubb's conclusion that education "destroys […] the moral influence of home life" perhaps derives from his idealisation of the ignorant but honourable Bedouin, untainted by state politics. Yet in his study of the Rwala, Lancaster also found that the education offered to the tribe was "geared to laud town life and deride […] nomadic values and practices".[52] The modernisation ethos was not just a force acting on the tribe from outside, but permeated the Banu Sakhr shaykhs too: Glubb commented that "many Bedouin fathers realise […] twenty years hence a man who cannot read and write will be hopelessly handicapped, no matter how aristocratic his family may be".[53] Thus the extent to which these processes of social change distanced the Banu Sakhr shaykhs from ordinary tribespeople, and from a life of camel pastoralism, is palpable. Education caused the sons of shaykhs to reject the livelihood of their families, the salary of the Legislative Assembly offered both an alternative means of subsistence and an alternative symbol of rank than the ability to distribute camels, while Mithqal's political intrigues reveal the Banu Sakhr shaykh to be estranged from his tribe and dependent on his government contacts to secure his interests.

Moving from the shaykh elite to ordinary Banu Sakhr tribespeople, the increase in cultivation and seasonal labour as substitutes for camel husbandry also resulted in significant

[50] Glubb's report, December 1936.
[51] Glubb's report, December 1937, 12.
[52] Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today,* 102.
[53] Glubb's report, December 1932, 9.

social change: the erosion of the tradition Bedouin aversion to manual labour, the increased exposure of the Banu Sakhr to exploitative merchants, and the weakening of the boundary between the Banu Sakhr and the fellaheen. As was stressed in Chapter 1, central to Bedouin self-understanding was that cultivation was associated with the ignoble fellaheen sheep herders at the fringes of the desert who had long been the victims of Bedouin raiding. But when "people are hungry" it is to be expected that the code of honour which barred engagement in manual labour would be forsaken to find some means of subsistence, and indeed, as cultivation became increasingly popular, "such barriers are breaking down".[54] It is with some irony that as the Banu Sakhr undertook the activities formerly associated with the sufferers of Bedouin predation, the tribesmen themselves became increasingly open to exploitation, in this case from merchants. Whereas merchants had previously paid taxes to the shaykh of the tribe with whom they did business, the encapsulation of the tribes within the mandate state and its legal system allowed merchants to dupe tribesmen into signing exploitative legal agreements. In December 1934, just as the Banu Sakhr were beginning to practice cultivation more widely, Glubb complained of seed merchants practicing perjury by inducing illiterate shaykhs to affix their seal to usurious contracts. In 1938, furthermore, the Colonial Office financial advisor warned that without government seed loans, the "only alternative means of obtaining seeds is […] from merchants to whom they already owe debts totalling several thousands of pounds".[55] Therefore, a shift in identity where this aristocracy of the desert lost its scorn for menial labour was accompanied by a shift in the balance of social and legal power between tribes new to cultivation and the mercantile class.

Just as a change in self-understanding among the Banu Sakhr began to undermine the difference between dishonourable agriculturalists and noble Bedouin, in practical terms, the

[54] Glubb's report, February 1939, 8.
[55] Glubb's report, November 1934, 11; Memorandum of crops in Transjordan, attached to High Commissioner to MacDonald, 23 May 1938, CO831/46/1.

adoption of cultivation also blurred the physical boundaries between the Banu Sakhr and the fellaheen. Before the establishment of desert control, different tribes moved flexibly but within a roughly defined seasonal pattern, and if one tribe monopolising the pastures typically used by another, the offending tribe would likely have been raided. The cessation of raiding, however, broke down the rough allotment of land between groups. The Banu Sakhr, arriving back in Transjordan in March 1937 after winter in the Wadi Sirhan, rather than moving to their usual pastures in the hills around Amman and Karak, instead camped on the land of the half-nomadic, half-fellahin Banu Hasan tribe.[56] While this shows the impingement of the Banu Sakhr on fellaheen land, most strikingly, in the same winter the fellaheen, without fear of their herds being raided, sent their sheep to the desert area and to the Wadi Sirhan.[57] In January 1938 Glubb commented with some surprise:

> The Bedouins, deprived of the power of looting and exacting tolls, have been obliged to become semi-fellaheen in order to live – but the real fellaheen emboldened by the state of public security in the desert have become more nomadic![58]

It is striking the extent to which the social changes influencing Banu Sakhr shaykhs and tribespeople discussed so far have produced a contrary picture of the tribe to that discussed in Chapter 1. The Banu Sakhr in Chapter 1 were characterised as having muted internal hierarchies but sharp social divisions with their neighbours. By the late 1930s, however, with the increasing overtness and solidity of internal difference caused by the changes to the shaykh elite, and the blurring of boundaries between the Banu Sakhr turning to cultivation and the fellahin making the best of the freedom constituted by the end to raiding, the social form identified in the pre-WWI Bedouin was reversed: in the 1930s the Banu Sakhr evinced a stronger internal hierarchy, and greater similarities with their neighbours.

[56] Glubb's report, March 1937, 9.
[57] Glubb's report, December 1937.
[58] Glubb's report, January 1938.

Let us consider now the issue of social change resulting from a shift to sheep herding. Reflecting the complexity of this question is the extent to which is has been dealt with summarily. Norman Lewis, for example, comments that sheep herding, combined with the end to raiding, allowed the wide dispersal of "small herding units", and the closer engagement of herders in the market economy.[59] Yoav Alon similarly states that sheep herding and a peaceful desert meant movement "in large groups" was no longer necessary, and "small herding units moved freely".[60] We might expand these statements into three salient points, bearing in mind that the available material reveals only hints of a long process in its early stages.

First, a loss in ability to distribute camels to other members of the tribe, which had previously functioned to create social relationships of authority and dependence, threatened the power of the shaykh elite. Generosity sustained loyalty, as argued in Chapter 1: perhaps a loss in camel capital explains why, by partaking in the Legislative Assembly or cultivating political relationships with government officials, Mithqal al-Fayez looked to the state as a further source of his legitimacy as paramount shaykh. Second, in a similar way solidifying the encapsulation of the tribe, sheep herders did not necessarily have to migrate, and indeed could not move far from permanent settlements or wells: while the hardiness of camels within the desert environment facilitated the relative independence from the Ottoman state enjoyed by many Banu Sakhr tribesmen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the sheep was not an "escape animal" which could enable state evasion. Third, sheep rearing does indeed engender social organisation premised on interrelated but independent family groups, rather than the fairly large sub-tribes which characterised the Banu Sakhr. The sheep and goat rearing sections of the Somali, for example, organised in nuclear families and evinced a great incidence

[59] N Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), 136.
[60] Alon, *The Making of Transjordan*, 141.

of intermarriage between patrilineal lineages than camel herding sections.[61] In the 1970s, Lancaster discovered a similar dynamic of openness to outside elements among the sheep herding Rwala, which retained sufficient contact with towns to send children to school.[62] While the second point indicates the extent to which the Banu Sakhr could no longer evade the mandate state, the first and third points suggest that the 1930s saw the beginnings of changes in social structure, where the shift from camel to sheep undermined the ability of the paramount shaykh elite to maintain its position independent of the government's bolstering; and that the camel-herding sub-tribes splintered into smaller sheep-herding units with contact with permanent settlements throughout the year.

Yet the Banu Sakhr in the late 1930s continued to hold significant numbers of camels and to migrate to the Wadi Sirhan. As we have seen, even sheep herding families would maintain a pair of camels, and some families were able to subsist solely on camels into the late 1930s. It must be stressed that we only glimpse the beginning of the shift from camels to sheep for those of the Banu Sakhr who continued to practice pastoralism. We might generalise, nevertheless, that continued camel herding across the Bedouin economy was a matter of culture, prestige, and hope for a reversal of state control. While, as discussed above, mechanised transport was undermining the camel export market and sheep were the logical animal with which to build up animal stocks after drought, sheep do not compare to the Bedouin's affinity to camels. Throughout Chapter 1 it was stressed that camels formed the centre of Bedouin, and Banu Sakhr, social and cultural relations, while solely to herd sheep was a marker of ignobility. Unsurprisingly, long into the twentieth century shaykhs kept camel herds not for economic reasons but as a marker of status, and camel racing is currently a prime

[61] P Rubel, "Herd Composition and Social Structure: On Building Models of Nomadic Pastoral Societies", *Man* 4 no. 2, (1969): 268-73.
[62] Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today*, 102.

form of conspicuous consumption for the Gulf elite.[63] Furthermore, since, as Glubb commented, the Transjordan Bedouin were in constant hope for the dissolution of government control, the return of raiding, and the end of taxes: for such an eventuality, camels were naturally a necessity.

As tentative as we must be in formulating them, these modes of social change which resulted from diversification under the conditions of state domination, whether a distancing of ordinary tribespeople from the shaykh elite, the lessening of the previously stark boundary between Bedouin and fellaheen, or a shift from camel to sheep changing the social construction of herding groups, amounted to the emergence of a strikingly different form of existence to that enjoyed by the Banu Sakhr in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

iv. Conclusion: crystallisation and fragmentation

Therefore, the new options of cultivation, wage labour and sheep herding, to which the Banu Sakhr turned when drought and encapsulation by the state undermined traditional livelihoods, were associated with fundamental changes in social structure. When compared to the social forms discussed in Chapter 1, these modes of social change, to borrow a concept from Philip Salzman, seem to indicate a loss of "crystallisation […] of basic social functions – production, reproduction, social control", within the tribal structure.[64] In Chapter 1, processes of exchange, the representation of community interests to neighbouring tribes, negotiation of protection money with merchants, farmers and the state, were crystallised, naturally with different responsibilities resting with different agents, in one organisational structure. By the later 1930s, however, the functions of tribal life were fragmented across various organisations, and tribespeople looked elsewhere to satisfy the basic requirements of subsistence, the

[63] Ibid, 114; S Khalaf "Camel Racing in the Gulf. Notes on the Evolution of a Traditional Cultural Sport" *Anthropos*, 94, 1 (1999): 85-106.
[64] P Salzman, *Pastoralists: Equality, Hierarchy, and the State*, (Boulder: Westview, 2004), 146-53.

formation of the next generation, and the solving of disputes: to the state for restitution of grievances, education or employment in relief work and the army; to contractors for seasonal labour; or to merchants for seed loans. Thus, when encapsulated by the state, the Banu Sakhr lost the interdependence and complementarity of functions found in independent tribes.

We could, in this case, push the concept further than Salzman does; or at least articulate it in the ecology-centred terms on which have attempted to focus so far. Exchange, conflict, and dispute resolution crystallised not just around the functions of the tribe, but also around camels, in that husbandry routines, economic exchange, and the creation of tribal social structure revolved around these animals. As we have seen in this Chapter, the diversification which caused the functions of the tribe to fragment also caused the dispersal of subsistence methods from camel husbandry to a variety of alternate livelihoods. To modify Salzman's argument: "the rights and resources previously assured" through camel husbandry had to be secured "through a set of different and isolated" livelihood practices.[65] Thus the fragmentation of the hitherto crystallised functions of Banu Sakhr pastoralism was just as much a social process, articulated in terms of the tribe, as an ecological one, focused on camels.

[65] Ibid.

Conclusion. The New Ecological History

Animals, ecology, political development and pastoralist social systems were therefore deeply connected in the history of the Banu Sakhr during the mandate period. By centring our study of social and political change on the relationship between camels, Banu Sakhr tribespeople, and the mandate administration, we have seen that associations across species and ecology were constitutive of community structures and narratives of state building. Before the mandate, as described in Chapter 1, the Banu Sakhr was a loose tribal grouping of camel pastoralists largely independent of the Ottoman state. The tribe was characterised as a dynamic and flexible social system dependent on, in the influential terms of the STEP researchers, stabilising strategies centred on camels which allowed the tribe to persist in the non-equilibrium ecology. In Chapter 2, we saw that a move away from camel pastoralism was occasioned by a combination of drought and the state project: through the collection of taxation, the imposition of borders, the cessation of raiding and of traditional migration patterns, the stabilising strategies through which the Banu Sakhr maintained a life of camel pastoralism were precluded. Chapter 3 found that, as a result of encapsulation by the state, in the later 1930s, the crystallisation of the Banu Sakhr around camel husbandry had splintered in a process of diversification which profoundly altered the social structure of the tribe, as camel herders became farmers, labourers, or shepherds.

This narrative of state development and social change, focused on the combined unit of human and animal, relied upon entanglement as a heuristic device, an approach to the study of relationships. One might argue that this is merely novel but vague jargon for old concepts, and indeed the limitations of this strategy as a scholarly endeavour are palpable. When reading across bodies of scholarship to understand the entanglement between, for example, of pastoralism, animal biology, archaeology, and geology, one realises both the erudition and

dedication of researchers within particular subject areas, and the drive-by cursoriality inherent in the pursuing the edge of an entanglement. It is impossible to pretend to be anything more than an amateur interested in what making the journey discovers, and to pretend any innovation which may emerge to be a result of focused origination rather than synthesis.

Yet as a device to aid thinking about ecology-focused complexity, in this study entanglement has helped to study the intricacy of linkages across academic, species, and social boundaries. Like a sea of kelp, where individual strands of weed echo the movement of their neighbours in interlinked movement, we have traced a narrative where changes reverberate across ecology, politics and society: a social system which evinced a certain connection between human and animal was altered by the intervention of political actors; this intervention undermined the particular relationship between humans and animals and consequently produced a transformation of the social fabric. The complexity of this approach allows us also to avoid dogmatism. As was stressed when outlining the STEP approach, each pastoralist social system is a unique response to a particular and contingent ecology, thus recognising that each environmental niche, as it changes year-by-year, will shape changing communities further differentiated by additional factors, such as proximity to states or orientation to the market economy.

That this style of entangled history has potential has been revealed by scholars who are lingual as well as disciplinary polyglots. Ling Zhang's 2015 study of the relationship between the Chinese Song state and the Yellow River showed that botched attempts to alter the river's course turned the densely populated and agricultural Hebei Plain into a swampy delta, causing ecological upheaval and political instability that left this frontier region vulnerable to invasion.[1] Similarly, in a recent article Tamara Fernando exposes the "nacreous, interlocking and

[1] L Zhang, *The River, the Plain, and the State: An Environmental Drama in Northern Song China, 1048–1128,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

interlinked" multi-species landscape of Ceylon pearl fisheries, where fishermen and businessmen combined with reef sharks and molluscs to create nineteenth-century "coralline capitalism".[2] Learning from these pioneering scholars, in this study we have attempted to give entanglement a depth of meaning which lends it analytic power. Entanglement, we submit, helps to picture the dynamic relations between camels, tribespeople, deserts, shaykhs, the expanded state, and colonial officials with a civilising mission. One also learns that there is emerging a novel historical niche without a designation. The present writer is hardly qualified to give a title, but if pushed, perhaps we could take a leaf from the STEP researchers, and call it 'The New Ecological History'.

This approach has allowed this study to make a specific contribution to the scholarly interpretation of mandate Transjordan, and a more general contribution to the history and anthropology of state building and social change in tribal society. Taking the specific point first, in the Introduction, we characterised the works of Dawn Chatty and Yoav Alon as presenting the development of Transjordan as a narrative of tranquillity. We might recall Chatty's statement that "the camel, once a major tool and symbol of Bedouin life [had] come to be abandoned […] with so little social dislocation".[3] Here we argued that the Banu Sakhr offer an example of one tribe which experienced profound social alteration, fragmentation, and dislocation as a result of moving from a livelihood of camel pastoralism. This is not to deny the ability of the Bedouin to turn "interwar realities […] to their advantage", which the Banu Sakhr did in manipulating border regimes or earning a living from employment in the machinery of the state: but it is undeniable that encapsulation by the state and the shift from camel herding caused profound harm, and profound social change.[4] Therefore, this realisation

[2] T Fernando, "Seeing Like the Sea: A Multispecies History of the Ceylon Pearl Fishery 1800–1925", *Past & Present* 254 no. 1, (2022). 127–160.
[3] D Chatty, *From Camel to Truck: The Bedouin in the Modern World,* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 2013), 22.
[4] R Fletcher, *British Imperialism and 'The Tribal Question': Desert Administration and Nomadic Societies in the Middle East, 1919-1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 135.

of the systematic and forcefully transformative character of state-making offers a corrective to the rosy view given by Chatty and Alon.

Tackling this specific interpretation of the state-building process in Transjordan engendered the second, and more general, contribution: to bring anthropological focus on social systems, animals, and ecology into dialogue with the detailed narrative of state development which constitutes the typical focus of historical scholarship on Transjordan in this period. The evolution of Transjordan presented by Walid Kazziha appears the result of political manoeuvres between the British High Commissioner, the French, and Abdullah, while William Lancaster premised his historical account of the end of redistributive raiding on a schematic account of the influence of modern rifles, rather than on the imposition of taxation, border regimes, and the integration of shaykh elites within the state structure.[5] By attempting to tie these traditions of scholarship together we have shown that the political development of Transjordan cannot be distinguished from the domination of the desert environment by the state, and the multiple state-making processes by which tribes were largely left with little choice but to divest from a life of camel husbandry; in turn, we have also demonstrated that changes in social practices that constituted adaptations to the harsh desert ecology, like redistributive raiding, must be understood in the context of the detailed political narrative of state building. This study has therefore attempted to craft a narrative of political ecology which intends to add both to the history of state building and the anthropology of pastoral societies, leading to a model of state development rooted in study of the environment, and of Bedouin society as interlinked with the granular details of taxation, border controls, and violence.

Let us conclude by considering two broader implications of this study. The first, deriving from the depth of change experienced in the short time of the Transjordan mandate, is

[5] W Kazziha, "The Political Evolution of Transjordan", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 15 no. 2 (1979): 239-257; W Lancaster, *The Rwala Bedouin Today,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 142.

to sound a cautionary note regarding using the social and political system bequeathed by mandate Transjordan as an explanatory formula for current Jordanian politics. Yoav Alon argues that the mandate administration left modern Jordan a "hybrid between a modern state and a tribal confederacy", mixing "Western-inspired aspects of government" with "traditional features".[6] While these forces were indeed at work during the mandate period, it is less certain that they are "keys to understanding the state's resilience and its ability to face the challenges of the post-independence years".[7] We must be particularly wary of transferring the associated meanings of concepts like tradition and tribe to describe diachronically separate systems.[8] As we have seen, the connotations of "tribe" changed profoundly within the mandate period, from a largely independent political, economic and social confederation to a socially disparate community employed in various trades and encapsulated by the state. The notion of state was hardly immutable either, as Linda Layne has shown, evolving in step with the increasing integration of tribes into the administration. Layne also demonstrates that this process of change continued in the post-independence era: while concepts like shaykhly authority were retained in late-twentieth century Jordan, the process of engagement in national elections had nullified the belief that tribespeople were bound to support their particular shaykh.[9] Therefore social and political forms which constituted tribe and state changed drastically during the period covered by the present study, and in the years following. This encourages us to recognise that even if mandate Transjordan was a "hybrid" state, and even if Jordan is "hybrid" currently,

[6] Y Alon, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State* (New York: Tauris, 2007), 2, 8, 151-56.
[7] Ibid, 3.
[8] It would be wise to inject some of the scepticism of Joseph Massad, who argued that current tribal alignments within Jordanian politics do not replicate those of the pre-colonial era, since the mandate institutions of legal system and army dominated the pre-existing tribal groupings: J Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan*, (New York: Colombia University Press, 2001), 1-17
[9] L Layne, *Home and Homeland: The Dialogics of Tribal and National Identities in Jordan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 1-31, 108-27. In the 1984 by-elections to Jordan's House of Representatives, "there was no mention […] that anyone other than men of sheikhly families should have run". Yet, for Layne, this obscured deeper social changes, as in the by-election "tribal membership [did] not automatically lead to mass support for […] one's agnatic group".

the two constitutive systems of tribe and modern state denote very different entities currently than a century ago.

The second implication of this study constitutes a broader comment on the present difficulties faced by pastoralist communities. The Introduction to this study discussed two seminal works of postcolonial theory by Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. These and other texts of post-colonial theory offered interpretive tools that help us to locate the ideas, ideologies, and practices which create relationships of domination within supposedly neutral texts. It would be a danger, however, to construe this literature as entirely disqualifying the examination of often exoticised pastoralist groups like the Bedouin through the material produced by ethnologists like Jaussen and Musil or administrators like Glubb. This study has attempted to demonstrate that these sources, with influential models and methodological tools to aid analysis, can yield a picture of Banu Sakhr life and its transformation which pertains more to reality that to imagination. If instead the Bedouin, or indeed any pastoralist group, are locked in a cage of difference inaccessible to scholars trained in the norms of modern academia, this plays directly into the hands of governments whose political programme benefits from viewing nomadic pastoralists as anathema in order to force their inclusion into taxation regimes, conscription, or forced labour. [10] Such programmes are not limited to the high modernist administrators interwar period and the high modernist administrators: in 2001 the Indian government used the creation of the Dachigam National Park as a means to pastoralists off the western Himalayas, using a draft forest policy to call for the "permanent settling of the nomads".[11] In 2017 the Chinese government requested to secure UNESCO World Heritage status for Hoh Xi, which, as a report by the International Campaign for Tibet highlighted, would

[10] Cf. A Al-Azmeh, "Culturalism, Grand Narrative of Capitalism Exultant", in idem, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1996), 17-40.
[11] A Rao, "Pastoral Nomads, the State and a National Park: the Case of Dachigam, Kashmir", *Nomadic Peoples* 6, no. 2 (2002): 77.

far ease the Chinese government's aim of removing Tibetan yak pastoralists and introducing mass tourism.[12]

The most productive means to militate against this treatment is to study pastoralist peoples, the flexibility, creativity and logic of their social structures, and the effective strategies for persistence brought about by their entanglement with animals and ecology. As the STEP model encourages us to recognise, pastoralists like the Bedouin should be shown not to be essentially different and anathema but simply to have created a social system best suited to arid lands. It is highly likely that the livelihoods into which the Banu Sakhr diversified, as Chapter 3 discussed, resulted in less sustainable exploitation of the scant resources of the desert environment than camel pastoralism. If this knowledge was more widespread, perhaps governments which would otherwise seek to encapsulate and integrate pastoralists within the taxation, legal and border regimes of states, an example of which Chapter 2 of this study offered, would instead let them be. This is because, as demonstrated in the complex integration between camels, desert ecology, and Banu Sakhr social system explicated in Chapter 1, nomadic pastoralists create effective strategies to rely upon and best exploit marginal landscapes without starvation, overexploitation, or ecological destruction.

[12] International Campaign for Tibet [ICT], "Nomads in 'no man's land': China's nomination for UNESCO World heritage risks imperilling Tibetans and wildlife", 30 June 2017. <https://savetibet.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Themenbericht-Nomads-in-No-Mans-Land-2017.pdf>

Appendix 1: list of transliterated Arabic place, tribe and personal

Here given is the Arabic script version of names which are transliterated in the main text. With thanks to help from Professor Aziz Al-Azmeh and Khalil ElHariri

Abou Derweh - أبو دروه

Abu Jabir - أبـو جـابـر

Al-Aghbein - الاغبين

Al-Azazima - العزازمة

Al-Fayez - الفايز

Al-Gofel - الغفل

Al-Hallabat - الحلابات

Al-Howeitat - الحويطات

Al-Jizah - الجيزة

Al-Ka'abneh - الكعابنة

Al-Muwaqqar - الموقر

Al-Nuqaira - النقيرة

Al-Qastal - القسطل

Al-Quwayrah - القويرة

Al-Rwala - الرولة

Al-Tarabin - الترابين

Al-Tueigat - الطويغات

Al-Zeben - الزبن

Anaziah - عنزة

Banu Atiya - بنوعطية

Banu Hasan - بنوحسان

Banu Khalid - بنوخالد

Banu Sakhr - بنو صخر

Banu Sha'lan - بنو شعلان

Dubban - دبان

Fahad ibn Trad - فهد بن طراد

Felah Selas - سلاس فالح

Ghazzu – غزو

Haditha al-Khraisha - الخريشة حديثة

Hamd ibn Jazi - جازي بن حمد

Jazza ibn Nuwamis - جزى بن نوامس

Jebel al-Druze - الدروز جبل

Jebel Tubaiq - طويق جبل

Jubur - جبور

Khidma - خدمة

Khirshan - خرشان

Mohammed Di'ab - محمد ذياب

Muhamad Abu Taya - محمد أبو تاية

Nuri Sha'lan - الشعلان نوري

Rumayh al-Fayez - رميح الفايز

Salim as-Saad - السعد سليم

Sattam al-Fayez - الفايز سطام

Shararat - شرارات

Temed ibn Hamid - طمد ابن حميد

Turki al-Haider - الحيدر تركي

Wadi al-Hasa - الحسا وادي

Wadi al-Mujib - الموجب وادي

Wadi Araba - عربة وادي

Wadi Sirhan - السرحان وادي

Zaid ibn Fuhaid - فهيد ابن زيد

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