ENEMY IMAGES AND IRAQI BAʿTHIST NATIONALISM: ANTI-PERSIAN DISCOURSE IN HISTORICAL NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION

by

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

During the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, the Iraqi Baʿth party engaged in the production of historical narrative, which defined the party's ideal of Iraqi nationality and statehood, while promoting the legitimacy of its military efforts. Public intellectuals played an important role in the manufacture of such historical narrative. This thesis examines two works produced in the service of this project, *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy*, or "The Iraqi-Persian Conflict," and *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb Bayn al-ʿIrāq wa ʾĪrān*, or "The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran." It will be demonstrated that these works reflected, and rarified a wartime nationalist discourse permeating the public sphere, in which an ideal of Iraqi nationality and statehood was defined through the demonization of an essentialist Persian other. Pre-Islamic and medieval Islamic history was employed to emphasize episodes of violence and cultural conflict between Iraqis and Iranians, in doing so illustrating the characteristics of both peoples. Iraqi nationality was defined as embodying superlative qualities of governance, military prowess, cultural achievement, and religiosity. Iraqi nationhood was defined and elevated in contrast to an opposite, malicious Persian nationality, rooted in anti-Arab hostility and characterized by inferiority in piety, culture, leadership, and warfare.

Direct parallels existed between this nationalist narrative, and public sphere expressions of Baʿthist nationalist discourse, such as government statements, school textbooks, and monument construction.

INTRODUCTION

As a revolutionary Pan- Arabist government, the Baʿthist regime of Iraq aggressively sought to inculcate the legitimacy of its rule and governing vision among the population of Iraq. Central to this project was the desire to enforce a vision of Iraqi nationhood, based upon essentialist and historically rooted character traits and heritage. In its efforts to propagate a Baʿthist vision of Iraqi nationality, the regime party sought to dominate the public sphere and cultural production. The public articulation of Iraqi Baʿthist nationalism depended upon invoking the dangers posed by external foreign threats and domestic conspiracies. This political worldview was particularly salient in the context of the Baʿthist regime's stance towards the Pahlavi monarchy, and Islamic Republic of Iran. According to Baʿthist nationalism, Iran as adversary legitimized the Iraqi state's aspirations for the militarization, achievement of regional hegemony, and the de-legitimization of domestic challenges to state authority.

The Iran-Iraq War, from September 1980 to August 1988, marked the peak of this anti-Persian discourse. The enormous strain imposed by this protracted conflict led the Baʿth regime to redouble its efforts to solidify its vision of Iraqi nationhood. Iraq's intelligentsia acted as a critical vector in the articulation of pro-regime and anti-Persian nationalist sentiment. Of particular significance was the role of academics in the construction of a historical narrative, which sought to document the manifestations of Iraqi and Persian nationality through example. Studies of this nature were employed to justify anti-Iranian sentiments by use of alleged historical precedent for Persian hostility and aggression. Conflict with a Persian enemy was

accorded a primordial quality, through which the leaders, victories, and defeats of the past paralleled the modern war with Iran. Local history, particularly of political and military matters, was selectively used to demonstrate innate national characteristics of Iraqi Arabs and Persians. As such, these authors articulated the Baʿthist vision of ideal Iraqi nationality and governance, while providing a veneer of academic respectability.

In this, many Baʿthist cultural productions resembled the imperialist phenomena discussed by Edward Said in his work, *Orientalism* (1978). Said demonstrated the historic subordinate relationship between Western scholars of the Middle East, and imperialist powers. For Said, distorted and stereotyped scholarship, literature and language about an inferior, "oriental" Middle Eastern other, served to clarify a changing Western identity, while justifying asymmetrical power relationships between East and West. Similarly, the discourse of Baʿthist intellectuals can be seen as a kind of wartime "Orientalism", in which an enemy Iranian image acts as a mirror for a superior Iraqi nationality, while justifying state control and war-making.

This thesis will endeavor to thematically analyze in greater detail two examples of Baʿthist supported historical narratives produced during the Iran-Iraq War: *Al-Ṣirā al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy*, or The Iraqi-Persian Conflict, and *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb Bayn al-ʿIrāq waʾĪrān* or The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran, released by the state published in 1983 and 1984 respectively. It will be demonstrated that these propagandistic works sought to define the nature of authentic Iraqi identity by crafting an opposite, essentialist and completely negative image of Iranian identity. This narrative of Iranian identity was constructed in such a way as to be an enemy image of hostility and conflict,

completely closed to the possibility of peaceful coexistence. The authors of these studies sought to characterize conflict in racialist terms, often referring to the enemy as "Persian" and focusing on ethnicity rather than state borders. The threat posed by the Iranian enemy was characterized as posing unique challenges as an external threat and an internal threat. Persians as an external threat were described in terms of conventional wars, invasions, and occupations of Iraqi lands, while Persians as an internal threat were viewed as a force of cultural contagion and political subversion. In addition, the widespread proliferation of this anti- Persian discourse will be examined in the public sphere. It will be demonstrated that the ideas expressed in the surveyed volumes virtually mirrored the wartime visions of Iranian enemies and Iraqi nationality promoted in public life.

SOURCE BACKGROUND AND LITERARY CONTEXT

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict (1983) is a volume released as part of a state-sponsored and published series of academic works on Iraqi history and culture released during 1980s. Each volume begins with a saying from Saddam Hussein, and features a blue or brown cover with a date palm in the upper center.[1] Volumes contained chapter length contributions by Iraqi academics according to topical focus. Despite the backgrounds of the authors, these works were missing essential academic features. Many of the volumes, including *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* intentionally

[1] Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005), 185

lacked a credited editor. Instead, credit was attributed collectively to the authors. The text of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* possesses few footnotes and lacks endnotes. *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and other volumes are primarily works of history, yet their contributors were not generally traditional historians. The author of the introduction to *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* was ʿImād ʿAbd-l-Salām Raʾūf, assistant professor of modern Arab history at the College of Education, and head of the Center of Revival of Arab Science Heritage at the University of Baghdad. Of sixteen contributors to The Iraqi- Persian Conflict, seven were not members of history departments. One contributor, ʿAbd al-Jabār Muḥsin, was Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Information. This may reflect the academically unorthodox nature of the series' topical focus, as well as the reluctance of leading scholars to publicly endorse the regime's intellectual positions.[2]

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict attempts to frame the modern Iran-Iraq War within a larger narrative of Iraqi Arab defense against Persian aggression. Discussion of conflict between Iraq and Persians is divided by era and topic. Contributors wrote on matters including the Sumerians' wars with eastern neighbors, ancient Persia's conquest of Babylon, Arab conflict with the Sassanids before Islam, the Islamic conquests, *shuʿūbiyya* subversion under the Umayyads and ʿAbbasids, the decline of the ʿAbbasids and rise of Persian dynasties, and Ottoman-Persian conflict. The many wars and disputes narrated by the contributors are marshalled to produce a chronology of perennial Persian enmity towards Iraq, through invasions and occupation, as well as internal subversion. The regime's notion of ideal Iraqi nationality is expressed through narratives of conflict, as well as more explicit

[2] Ibid., 329

comparisons with Persian society and culture. Iraqi cultural achievement, prowess at war, religious piety, and moral character are extolled by the various contributors. In contrast, Persians are repeatedly denigrated on a number of grounds. Persian civilization and culture is dismissed as lacking innovation and being derivative of other societies, while Persian national character is attacked for duplicity, malice, racial prejudice, greed, and insincere or misguided religious sentiment.

The propagandistic arguments of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* appear to be a reflection of the ideological slant of its contributors rather than the character of its source material. *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* draws on an array of Arabic and Western sources for the history of the region. Much of this material is secondary and academic in nature, with a large number of cited studies predating 1970. The titles often reflect a focus on historical overviews and chronicles of archaeological findings, such as The Sumerians, Their History, Culture and Character (University of Chicago Press, 1963) by S. N. Kramer, D. J. Wiseman's "The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon," (Iraq, Volume 20, Part 1, 1958), or Iraq in the Ilkhanid Mongol Era (Baghdad, 1968) by Jaʿfar Khuṣbāk. *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*'s focus on warfare and other violence is partly reflected in sources such as "Assyrian Warfare in the Sargonid Period" (Iraq, 25, 1963) by H.W.F. Saggs, or the Western primary source, the *History of the Persian War* by Herodotus. Numerous primary Arabic sources are employed as well, particularly in discussions of historical events from the coming of Islam to the ʻAbbasid era. The numerous scholars of the period cited as sources include the 9th century satirist and naturalist al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Balādhurī, a 9th century historian of the Islamic conquests, the *History of the Prophets and Kings*, by 9th century historian and

religious scholar al-Ṭabari, and the 12th century historian Ibn al-ʾAthīr, most well-known for his work of world history, *The Complete History*. There are a small number of exceptions to the apolitical nature of the source material, particularly with regards to the more recently published Arabic language sources. For example, among the cited sources may be found the article, "The Oldest War of Liberation Known to History" *(Sumer*, 30, 1974) by Fāḍil ʿAbd-l-Wāḥid ʿAlī, Dean of the College of Arts at the University of Baghdad, and contributor of two chapters to *The Iraqi- Persian Conflict* volume.

However, on the whole the arguments and historical narrative outlined in *The Iraqi- Persian Conflict* appear to be the result of a conscious nationalist and propagandistic effort by the authors. Ancient, medieval, and early modern populations of what is now Iraq are all considered to embody an essentialist Iraqi Arab nationality, existing unchanged for thousands of years. Cultural achievements and eras of regional hegemony by a diverse array of Mesopotamian ethnicities, polities, and religious followings are attributed to superlative qualities of Iraqi nationhood. Likewise, an essentialist Persian identity is ascribed to all peoples who may be geographically or politically associated with the region of modern Iran. The diverse and largely apolitical source material employed by *The Iraqi- Persian Conflict*'s authorship is circumvented by a selective focus on military conflicts, revolts, and a modern politicization of *shuʿūbiyya* controversies. As a result, the region's extensive history of mutual ties, cultural exchange, and cooperation between peoples is downplayed or ignored.

The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran (1984) is an

individually authored work by Shākir Ṣābir al-Ḍābiṭ, and published by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Information. Shākir Ṣābir al-Ḍābiṭ, produced a 1966 study on Iran- Iraq boundaries, and was one of the founders of the *Journal of Popular Culture*.[3] Originally released in 1963 and reissued in 1969, The *Journal of Popular Culture* was published by the Ministry of Culture and Information in six different languages, and acted as a showcase for articles discussing Iraqi and Arab folklore. In addition, the journal was intended as a vehicle for fostering greater integration between Iraq's ancient and more recent Arab heritage. [4] In *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*, al-Ḍābiṭ posited a vision of Iraqi- Persian relations as having been characterized by the unrelenting hostility of Persians towards Arabs, particularly towards Iraqis. In this vein, al-Ḍābiṭ traces a narrative of Persian aggression and conspiracy against Iraq going back to the cultures of ancient Mesopotamia. Persian hostility manifested as external invasion and internal cultural subversion, the latter manifested as *shuʿūbiyya* criticism and subversion of Arab culture and Islam, as well as collusion with Iraq's enemies. As a result, Iraqis were forced throughout history to wage wars and other conflicts of self- defense against the Persians and their allies. Within this narrative, al-Ḍābiṭ juxtaposes opposite and opposing nationalities, Iraqi and Persian. The Iraqi nationality represents advanced cultural achievement, ethnic and religious tolerance, steadfastness and valor in war, piety, high moral character, and a force for regional unity. For al-Ḍābiṭ, the opposing Persian nationality represents malice, brutality, greed, duplicity, racism, cultural unoriginality, and a corrupt moral and religious character. Al-Ḍābiṭ was one among a number of state-

[3] Ibid., 185
[4] Ibid., 220

sponsored scholars who linked the Iran- Iraq War and historical conflicts into a broader narrative of racial hostility.

Similarly to the authorship of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, al-Ḍābiṭ employs a variety of primary and secondary historical sources bearing little relation to the nationalist agenda of his work. Much of the background material for *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* is provided by medieval Arabic sources, particularly when discussing the Islamic conquests and the *shuʿūbiyya* controversies. In addition, general secondary works were also employed, such as *A Brief History of Ancient and Modern Baghdad*, by ʻAli Zarif al- ʻA'zami (1926). While al-Ḍābiṭ makes use of a multitude of scholarship for his study, he does express criticism of Western scholarship on the ʿAbbasid Empire. Al-Ḍābiṭ accuses Westerners of overemphasizing Persian leadership and cultural influence in the ʻAbbasid Empire.[5]

Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy and *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb Bayn al-ʿIrāq wa ʾĪrān* emerged within a broader context of propagandistic studies, commentary, and cultural production produced by the Baʿth Party and its followers, which peaked during the war era. Works such as, *Saddam Hussein on the Writing of History*, released by the Ministry of Culture and the Arts in 1979, firmly expressed the didactic tone of the Baʿth Party's approach to history, as well as its ideas concerning nationality and foreign threat. *On the Writing of History* strongly emphasized the importance of cultural authenticity to the writing of national history, and portrayed Iraqi-Arab heritage as beset by hostile, foreign forces.[6] Foreign enemies were attacked as illegitimate, alien, and opposed to the interests of the Iraqi

[5] Shākir Ṣābir al- Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb Bayn al-ʿIrāq wa ʾĪrān*, (Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-l-ʾIlām, 1984), 347
[6] Davis, *Memories of State*, 171

nation. Arab leaders seen as allies of Iran, particularly Muʿamar al-Qadhdhāfī of Libya and Ḥāfiẓ al-ʾAsad were attacked as enemies of Arabism, or as inadequately Arab in their identity and allegiances. Baʿthist discourse distinguished between authentic Arabs, and who were merely "speakers of Arabic".[7]Despite their focus on an Iraq centered nationalism, they insisted upon Iraq's status as a preeminent champion of Pan-Arabist ideals. Baʿthist propaganda focused far greater attention upon Israel and Jews, who along with Iran were included among the chief enemies of the Iraqi state. Language attacking Israel often criticized it for political legitimacy, or declared it to be an invading, or criminal state. Israel was characterized in terms as bestial, and bent upon aggression against the Arabs.[8] The Baʿth Party and its supporters depicted Israel as an ally of Iraq's foreign enemies, such as Western imperialists and Iranians. The latter was especially prominent in wartime Baʿthist discourse.

Textual expressions of anti-Iranian sentiment were widespread, and often tied to anti-Jewish propaganda. The major periodicals *Al-Thawra al-ʿArabiyya* and *Al-Jumhūriyya* released numerous articles during the war, which sought to ground Iraqi foreign relations and politics in essentialist, nationalist terms. Supporters of the regime, as well as party officials voiced harsh criticism of Iranian nationality, as well as other groups judged to be enemies of the state. *Al-Jumhūrriya* argued for a "historical continuity" of Jews and Persians conspiring together against Iraq, going back to ancient Babylon.[9]*Al-Thawra* also attacked Iranians, as inveterate enemies of

[7] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 94
[8] Ibid., 135
[9] Ibid., 137

Iraq, and allies of Zionism. Khomeini and the Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin were charged with allying against Iraq, and attacking it on multiple fronts. Israel would attack Lebanon and Iraq's nuclear reactor, while Iran tied down the Iraqi army.[10] The military newspaper *al-Qādisiyya*, released in 1980, produced similar expressions of anti-Iranian propaganda. Historical volumes were also produced affirming anti-Iranian sentiments. A later volume in the same series as *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy*, titled *Saddam Hussein wa Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tārīkh al-ʿArabiyy* (*Saddam Hussein and The Truths About Arab History*) discussed historical Iraqi-Persian relations. The volume argues for Arab Muslim cultural superiority, as well as the role of Persians as an ancient enemy in league with the Jews. For instance, Saddam asserts that Persian-Jewish conspiracies in ancient Mesopotamia were identical to the Jewish conspiracy against the Palestinian Arabs in 1948 and after.[11]The Iraqi army's Directory of Research and of Psychological Services released a study entitled, *The History of Persian Hatred of the Arabs*, which claimed Iranians' malice towards Iraqis was driven by the "Persian destructive mentality,"[12]Saʿd al-Bazzāz's work, *The Secret War: the Mysterious Role of Israel in the Gulf War*, discussed Iranian-Israeli cooperation, asserting this was due to the hatred the Jews had felt towards Iraqis since their exile from Jerusalem by Babylon over 2,000 years ago.[13]

[10] Ibid., 137
[11] Davis, *Memories of State*, 187
[12] Bengio, *Saddam's Word*,142
[13] Ibid., 137

LITERATURE REVIEW

Baʿthist use of nationalist discourse as a means of defining the "other" in relation to a normative Iraqi identity tends to occupy a secondary place within academic literature. Academic research has generally addressed Baʿthist articulation of an enemy other within the context of broader research on the root causes of the Iran- Iraq War, the political structure and operation of the Baʿthist regime, and discourse analysis.

Academic literature published during the war often disputed the underlying causes for the outbreak of hostilities, with the primary cause of the conflict variously ascribed to broad based ethnic-sectarian differences, geopolitical rivalries, a clash of political ideologies, or animosity between the respective nations' leadership. Iraqi Baʿthist discourse often framed the struggle as resulting from deep-rooted ethnic differences, and consequent rivalries between the Persians of Iran and the Arabs of Iraq. Secondary literature which adopted the ethnic-sectarian model of explanation accepted much of this discourse, and was willing to attribute the war's exceptional duration and intensity to ancient cultural feuds. *Iraq & Iran: The Years of Crisis* by Jasim Abdulghani attributes the war to ethnic conflict between Arabs and Persians. The creation of the Iranian Safavid state resulted in a union of Persian and Shiʿi identity, which for author was the culmination in a polarization of the Arab and the Persian peoples, begun with the decisive defeat of Sassanid Persia at the Battle of

Qādisiyya in 638 CE.[14] This state of ethnic polarization was further evident in the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty by the Persian backed Abbasid uprising, the *shuʿūbiyya* literary movement, and the modern Iranian state's aspirations of regional hegemony. Likewise, Majid Khadduri's, *The Gulf War: The Origins and Implications of the Iraq-Iran Conflict* claimed that the Iran-Iraq War marked the continuation of a Sunni Arab- Shiʿi Persian rivalry dating back to at least the Safavid era. *Iraq: Eastern Flank of the Arab World*, by Christine Moss Helms points to ethnicity as a significant causative factor of hostilities, in this case accepting discourse which depicted Iraq as a barrier for the Arab world against Persian aggression. *The Iran- Iraq War: New Weapons, Old Conflicts*, edited by Shirin Tahir-Kheli and Shaheen Ayubi, features support, as well as skepticism from contributors regarding ethnic conflict as a cause of war.

Other discussions on Baʿthist nationalist discourse occur within the context of analyses of the party's structure and relation to Iraqi society. Nationalist discourse is used to demonstrate regime efforts to enforce its hegemony. A formative work in shaping perceptions of the Baʿth Party's attempts to dominate the public sphere is Kanan Makiya's, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* (1989), a survey of the political history of Iraq from July 1968, to the Iran-Iraq War. Makiya characterized the Baʿth Party's governance as totalitarian, in which the mechanisms of the state became highly centralized and concentrated under the authority of Saddam Hussein. Networks of Baʿthist mobilization, security services, and patronage substituted civil society, and subordinated itself to dictatorial leadership.[15]This system

[14] Jasim M. Abdulghani, *Iraq & Iran: The Years of Crisis* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 2
[15] Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*. (Berkeley: University of California

of statecraft was founded upon acquiescence derived through fear of state coercion. State coercion was enforced through comprehensive security surveillance and the looming threat of violent state repression. Baʿthist nationalist discourse was a part of regime efforts to define the parameters of inclusion and exclusion from the nation. This was evident in a variety of ways, for example in the resurrection of the medieval term *shuʿūbiyya*, for denouncing those judged to be anti-Baʿthist or anti-Arab. Iran, along with Israel and Zionism, was characterized as a malevolent force seeking to undermine the nation of Iraq and the Arab people. Networks of Iranian and Jewish conspirators were said to be seeking the economic collapse of Iraq from within.[16] Nationalist war discourse denounced Iranians in inflammatory language, and asserted that the Iranian state was engaged in acts of aggression against Iraq and the broader Gulf region. In Makiya's analysis, there was little connection between popular sentiments and regime nationalist discourse, due to the highly centralized and coercive nature of the state. Political discourse was one- way, and largely served to articulate and justify Baʿthist definitions of citizenship and the national good.

Other studies of the Baʿth Party have differed sharply from Makiya's emphasis on blunt coercion in state- society relations. Achim Rohde's, *State-Society Relations* in *Baʿthist Iraq* is an examination of the interplay and mutual exchange which operated between institutions of the Baʿthist state and civil society from 1968-2003. Rohde assesses acts of state construction and fragmentation, as well as public cultural production by Baʿthist sponsored and independent actors. Unlike Makiya, Rohde interpreted the Baʿthist regime to be a highly fragmented entity, which

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Press, 1989),126

[16]Ibid., 18

engaged in a continuous process of exchange and negotiation with various societal actors. State discourse both shaped and responded to popular sentiments. Rohde highlights the important wartime nexus between artistic and literary cultural production, as well as the regime's endorsement of Iraqi nationalism and militarism. High cultural production promoted violence, self- sacrifice, masculinity, and dehumanization of the enemy. Cultural production heavily drew upon a preexisting corpus of nationalist imagery and historical memory, such as ancient Mesopotamian heroes. According to Rohde, the loyalty and tenacity of Iraq's soldiers during the war effort was in part due to the regime's successful framing of the conflict as an Arab vs Persian struggle.[17]

Culture, History, and Ideology in the Formation of Baʿthist Iraq: 1968- 1989 by Amatzia Baram focuses on the Baʿth Party's efforts to craft an inclusive, Iraqi nationalist ideology distinct from its earlier Pan-Arabist focus. Baram demonstrates that the Pan-Arabist preoccupation with national unity led to a recognition of the sharp regional, ethic, economic, and sectarian cleavages within Iraq, necessitating a new, more expansive definition of national identity. Baʿthist sponsored cultural production sought to maintain a connection to the broader Arab world, while asserting Iraq's exceptional status among Arab states by virtue of its distinct heritage. Explicit connections were drawn between the people of present day Iraq, and the cultures of the early Islamic empires, as well as ancient Mesopotamia. Artwork, literature, and media incorporated motifs from Babylon, as well as the reign of the Rāshidūn caliphs and the ʿAbbasid Empire. Regional festivals and sponsorship of local arts sought to

[17] Achim Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship*.(New York: Routledge, 2010), 34-35

include as much of the population as possible in this redefinition of Iraqi nationality.

Concomitant to a definition of the Iraqi citizen was the creation of enemy others. Ancient victories and feuds waged against Iranian rivals, such as the Sassanid empire, were commemorated through the renaming of provinces.[18] Periods of Iraqi history dominated by Ottoman occupation or Persian influence were de-emphasized, or otherwise dismissed as dark eras of foreign occupation, with Persians acting in tandem with Jews as agents of conspiracy.[19]

An example of a more general examination of the language of ethnic exclusion may be seen in Janice Gross Stein's, "Image, Identity, and Conflict Resolution". Stein discusses the persistence of international conflicts due to the prevalence of national "images", which impede peacemaking processes. Image here is defined as a set of beliefs or theories which an individual or group considers valid, with those shared by a group becoming "stereotyped".[20]Stein argues that due to a general human need for group identity and fellowship, this tendency leads to the creation of "in-group", "out-group" comparisons, with individuals elevating themselves and clarifying their identity in part through the derogation of other groups.[21]

These "images" about the other may precipitate and or prolong an international conflict. For Stein, images tend to shape the underlying value assumptions disputing parties hold of one another in misleading ways. In the context

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[18]Amatzia Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1968-1989*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 61

[19]Ibid., 109-110

[20] Janice Gross Stein, "Image, Identity, and Conflict Resolution," *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, eds. Crocker, Chester A., Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela R. Aall (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 94

[21] Ibid.

of political conflict, actors attribute fixed and highly significant qualities to each side, limiting the possibility and scope of resolution. Information which confirms negative preconceptions of the other is more readily sought out and believed. As a result, enemy images are highly resistant to change. Due to their ability to galvanize support for foreign policy, enemy images may be sought as a means to further the goals of leadership or powerful groups, often within the context of a larger belief system.

Stein's model is well suited to describing Iraqi Baʿthist nationalist discourse during the Iran- Iraq War. Enemy images of Iranians were constructed on the basis of specific tropes justified by history. This image production occurred within the context of a broader regime project which sought to articulate a regionally based, primordial Iraqi nationalism. Enemy images of the Iranian other confirmed a series of constructed assumptions of Baʿthist nationalism, such as Iraqi Arab superiority, the danger posed by foreigners, and the illegitimacy of internal dissent.

Ofra Bengio addresses ideological state building and the use of enemy images in *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (1998). Here Bengio analyzes the use of political language by the Iraqi Baʿth Party, from its roots as a revolutionary Arab nationalist organization, up to the 1991 Gulf War. Bengio examines the usage and meaning of political language through five "spheres" or aspects of the state: revolution, regime, the state and nation, war, and religion.[22] Within each sphere, the Iraqi Baʿth Party sought to impose an ideologically charged language in order to establish hegemony over the public sphere. Baʿthist discourse was widely disseminated via public pronouncements, news publications, and education curriculum. Language was employed to manipulate public sentiment by calculated

[22]Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 12

repetition of emotionally charged terms and symbols, often derived from historical or religious themes.

Baʿthist discourse of the Iran-Iraq War sought to mobilize popular support for the military effort, suppress dissent, and facilitate the development of large military institutions by promoting themes of martyrdom and the glorification of political violence. Iraqi Baʿthist nationalism sought to portray the nation as beset by foreign enemies and domestic conspirators. Emotive language was extensively featured in discussions of the war and Iran. Political discourse sought to cast Iranians as an intractable ethnic enemy of Iraq, bent upon ruthless expansion.[23] Ancient conflicts and Persian conquerors were invoked, such as the battle of *Qādisiyya* between Muslim Arabs and Zoroastrian Persians. Baʿthist fears of internal dissent manifested in attempts to draw linkages between Iran and the party's real and imagined domestic opponents. The medieval terms *shuʿūbiyya* and *ṭāʾifiyya* were used to refer to Persian conspiracies, which according to the state sought to sow dissent and cultivate allies among misguided or dangerous Iraqi citizens. In such ways, the Iraqi Baʿth Party sought hegemony over the public sphere by re-shaping, as well as responding to public sentiment.

Another examination of Baʿthist Iraq's ideological landscape is *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* by Eric Davis. Davis examines the use of Iraqi state power to acquire hegemony through the crafting of collective historical consciousness. The contours of historically based collective conscious have been hotly debated, with each successive regime and its opponents contesting previous visions of the nation. For Davis, the state building process

[23]Ibid., 140

involved a complex interplay between state, the masses, and public intellectuals, with each component reacting to and exerting influence upon the others. Cultural production and political discourse acted as a venue of contesting, or modifying state narrative.[24]The use of crafted historical narrative justified distributions of power, while minimizing voices of dissent within the nation state. Hegemony facilitated the mobilization of political support, particularly among constituencies of elites, and the public conflation of the state with the nation and its well-being.[25]

Hegemony over the collective consciousness was of particular importance to the Iraqi Baʿth Party, which shifted from Pan- Arabist rhetoric towards the promotion of an essentialist Iraqi nationality. The Baʿth Party advocated for an inclusive Iraqi national identity, with themes extensively drawn from Islamic and pre-Islamic history. Through expansive incorporation of varied historical and cultural themes, it was hoped to minimize and suppress the nation's extensive ethnic and sectarian rifts, particularly during the war with Iran.

Davis shows the regime was preoccupied with the protection of "authenticity", or *al-ʾAṣāla,* through the creation and policing of cultural boundaries.[26] Those true to Iraq's authentic identity were perpetually engaged in conflict with outside forces seen as hostile to Arab-Iraqi heritage. The authentic national consciousness of Iraq existed in a state of perpetual siege from within and without. This adversarial stance was strengthened during wartime, through the promotion of ethnic hatred towards the enemy, as well as a militarized cult of personality based on Saddam Hussein. The shaping of national consciousness during the Iran-Iraq War acted as a means for the

[24]Davis, *Memories of State*, 21-22
[25]Ibid., 8
[26]Ibid., 171

state to galvanize popular support against a demonized enemy, while dismissing any deviation from Baʿthist goals as subversive and alien. For Davis, the nationalist discourse of the Iran-Iraq War was an intensification of pre-existing state narrative.

Wartime nationalist image making and political institutions are examined by Arshin Adib-Moghaddam in *Inventions of the Iran-Iraq War* (2007). Arshin seeks to analyze the impact of Baʿthist social engineering on the outbreak and conduct of war with Iran, arguing that the war was neither inevitable nor the continuation of ancient hostilities. Arshin argues that in order to justify military action, it was necessary for the Baʿth Party to engage in the creation of an enemy Iranian image through mythic narrative. History was selectively employed to portray Iranians as a racial other and ancient enemy of the Arab peoples. Iraq's role in this ancient contest was one of leadership and defense on behalf of the Arab people. Arshin asserts such narratives were internalized by Baʿthist leadership, and exerted an important influence on its foreign policy and military actions. According to Arshin, Baʿthist hostility towards Iran and aspirations of regional leadership underwent reification through the response of international actors. In the immediate years prior to war, Baʿthist leadership status was tacitly recognized through rapprochement with Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. During the war, anti-Iranian hostility and aspirations of regional leadership received tacit endorsement through the responses of the international community, such as loans and offers of military intelligence. The responses legitimized Iraqi Baʿthist militarism and leadership goals, thereby encouraging the Baʿthist regime to act on its desire for regional leadership, as well as carry out

campaigns of total warfare.[27] For Arshin, any examination of the Iran-Iraq War's causes and conduct should encompass this interplay between nationalist narrative construction and foreign policy.

IRAQI NATIONALISMS: QAWMIYYA AND WAṬANIYYA

Ancient history's relationship to national identity was of great concern to Iraqi regimes since the era of the Hashimite monarchy. Iraqi nationalism underwent a continuous process of transformation and contestation, as succeeding generations sought to define citizenship and its relation to the historic past for a diverse country. Pan-Arabism, or *qawmiyya* dominated Hashimite era historical narrative, and established the foundations for the Baʿth Party's essentialist nationalism. Pan-Arabists, such as the educators Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī and Darwish al-Miqdādī, promoted the concept of an ancient Arab identity, based upon shared language and heritage. Satiʾ al-Ḥuṣrī served as the director general of education under the Hashimite monarchy, and was highly influential as an advocate of Pan-Arab nationalism.. As an educator, al-Ḥuṣrī greatly emphasized the Arabic language, Arab nationalism, and Arab history, while generally excluding non-Arab, and to an extent non-Sunni Iraqis, from his plans to educate younger generations.[28]

Islam, and Islamic history was essential to this ideal of Arab community, and

[27] Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, "Inventions of the Iran-Iraq War," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 16, no. 1 (February 2007) , 80
[28] Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012),17

Pan-Arabists considered Islam to be a pivotal expression of Arab nationhood and unity. The great early Islamic empires, such as the ʿAbbasid caliphates, and their cultural effervescence marked a golden age for Arab heritage. The Arabs' greatness and purported national unity during this earlier era was contrasted with modern Arab weakness in the face of imperial powers.[29] The importance of Islam, and the Islamic historical experience was affirmed by both Muslims and non-Muslim thinkers since Pan-Arabism's beginnings in the late Ottoman era.[30] Furthermore, Islam stood as a symbol of authentic national identity and values, independent of imperialist European influence.

Pan-Arabists were not immediately interested in the pre-Islamic past. During the Mandate era, there were no visible attempts by Iraqi officials to wrest authority over antiquities preservation or archaeological digs away from the British until 1927.[31] In addition, the Pan-Arabists who dominated Hashimite administration were leery of promoting Mesopotamian antiquities studies. In their view, a focus upon the local pre-Islamic past would not solidify common national sentiment and future ties with other Arab states.[32] This view was publicly reinforced by prominent Pan-Arabists, such as Sati al-Ḥuṣrī. Al-Husri' was willing to refer to ancient Mesopotamian peoples, such as the Assyrians, as related to the Arabs. However, he prioritized the importance of language in defining a nation. As a result, Ḥuṣrī was largely dismissive of links between the cultures of the ancient pre-Islamic world, and

[29] Davis, *Memories of State*, 76
[30] C. Ernest Dawn, "From Ottomanism to Arabism: The Origin of an Ideology," *The Review of Politics* 23, no. 3 (July 1961), 397
[31] Amatzia Baram, "A Case of Imported Identity: The Modernizing Secular Elites of Iraq and the Concept of Mesopotamian- Inspired Territorial Nationalism, 1922- 1992," *Poetics Today* 15, no. 2 (Summer, 1994), 284
[32] Ibid., 287

Arab nationality, referring to the former as civilizations which have, "died and fallen into oblivion."[33]

However, early attempts were made to integrate pre-Islamic cultures, and Arabism. Darwish al-Miqdādī was particularly significant for his writings on the existence of a nuclear 'Arab homeland', found in the Fertile Crescent lands of Iraq, Syria, and Palestine.[34] Al-Miqdādī elaborated his ideas in his popular work, *Tārīkh al-ʾUmma al-ʿArabiyya* (History of the Arab People), released in 1931 and made a standard textbook. Al-Miqdādī argued for the historicity of a primordial Semito-Arab homeland. All ancient Semitic- speaking peoples of this homeland, such as the Sumerians, Akkadians, and Babylonians, were ancestors of the Arabs and a part of the Semito- Arab culture. Since the earliest beginnings of their history, the Semitic peoples had been beset from east and west by hostile 'Aryan' peoples. From the west had come conquerors such as Alexander the Great and the British Empire. From the East arrived the Persians, who sought revenge on the Arabs following the conquest of the Sassanid Empire.[35]

The overthrow of the Hashimite monarchy in July, 1958 by General ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim undermined the primacy of Pan-Arabists. Nationalist historical narrative increasingly featured contestation and negotiation between *qawmiyya*, and *wataniyya*, or territorial-patriotic nationalism.[36] *Waṭanī* nationalists advocated for a vision of nationhood focused upon the heritage and peoples of Iraq, regardless of

[33] Ibid., 288
[34] Kamyar Abdi, "From Pan-Arabism to Saddam Hussein's Cult of Personality: Ancient Mesopotamia and Iraqi National Ideology," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8, no. 1 (February 2008): 11
[35] Ibid
[36] Orit Bashkin, "Hybrid Nationalisms: Waṭanī and Qawmī Visions in Iraq Under ʿAbd al-Karim Qasim, 1958-1968." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 2 (2011), 294

Arab identity. Many viewed an Iraq centered nationalism as more conducive to the unity of an ethnically diverse state, as well as more responsive to national interests and concerns. In a variety of public venues, this regionalist narrative defined nationality through the public celebration of the historical past, pre-Islamic as well as Islamic, the importance of the Iraqi people as a social group molded by the nation's unique geography and heritage, and the overthrow of the monarchy.[37] Multiethnic heritage was celebrated. Ancient mythology was celebrated by state publications. In contrast to the policy of Hashimite era Pan-Arabists, Qāsim's government permitted open Nowruz celebrations.[38]Mesopotamian artistic themes appeared in a variety of cultural productions.

However, *qawmī* and *waṭanī* nationalists alike incorporated one another's historical themes into their narratives of identity. Pan-Arabist glorification of Arab heritage, the Arabic language, and Islam was continued by the *watanī* nationalists. Islam and its early champions, such as ʿAlī and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn were incorporated as examples of Iraqi heritage and historical memory. Pan-Arabists shifted their tone from the Hashimite era, and adopted regionalist language and appeals in their discourse. Pan-Arabists openly voiced a special care and devotion for Iraq's lands and people, within a larger Arab community.[39] A number of Pan-Arabists downplayed the importance Arab ancestry to Arabism, and argued that one could contribute to Arabism's cause without being of Arab descent. Furthermore, Pan-Arabists of this era adopted regionally specific discourse in their denouncement of enemies. During the Qāsim era, communists were the chief target of criticism by Pan-Arabists.

[37] Ibid., 296
[38] Ibid., 298
[39] Ibid., 304-305

Communists were attacked as disloyal and inauthentic members of the Iraqi community. Communists were tarred with the pejorative, ethnically charged label of *shuʿūbiyya*, and were compared to the Mongols and Sassanid Persians.[40] Pan-Arabists also attacked communists on religious grounds, arguing that they were hostile to Iraq's Islamic heritage.

This process of mingling *qawmiyya* and *wataniyya* continued with the Baʿthist nationalist regime, once it conclusively seized power in July 1968. The Baʿthist leadership sought to promote an essentialist Iraqi nationalism, rooted in local history and transcending ethnic difference, while continuing to affirm Pan-Arabist ideology. This was carried out in part through the promotion of folklore studies, festivals, and displays, all meant to demonstrate continuity in modern Iraqi identity and the pre-Islamic past.[41] The state sponsored the archaeological studies and digs, as well as restoration work on ancient ruins. Legislation passed in 1974 restricted the export of antiquities, and other items which could be associated with Iraq's cultural heritage.[42]Baʿthist discourse frequently associated Iraqi national identity with Arabism, asserting that Iraq was an exceptional nation among the Arab states, owing to its unique heritage and historical importance. Pan-Arabist glorification of Islamic history, and early Muslim figures was used to bolster the standing of Iraq's heritage. For Baʿthists, the achievements of the past embodied ideal nationhood in the present, and justified the ambitions and policies of the state. Similarly to Pan-Arabists of the Qāsim era, the Iraqi Baʿthists were eager to label opponents as inauthentic Arabs, or Iraqis. The state and its supporters steadily shifted the focus of this animosity away

[40] Ibid., 305
[41] Baram, "A Case of Imported Identity," 302
[42] Ibid., 303

from communists, towards Iran and Israel. Propaganda literature, such as *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* proved to be among the most strident voices of anti-Iranian prejudice.

CHAPTER I: IRAQI BAʿTHIST NATIONALISM AND IRAN AS EXTERNAL THREAT

PRIMORDIALISM AND BAʿTHIST NATIONALISM

Baʿthist nationalist discourse repeatedly advocated for the existence of a deeply rooted, essentialist Iraqi national identity. The conception of nationality was strongly primordial in nature. Anthony D. Smith characterizes primordialist nationalist thinkers as those for whom, "nations and nationality constitute not only basic forms of human association, but intrinsic features of human nature and the human condition."[43]Primordialism has also been dubbed organicisim, or organic nationalism, and is contrasted voluntarist nationality, which idealizes the citizen joining the national community of his or her freewill. For primordialists, the nation exists independently of any particular era or specific external conditions such as political and economic structures. The existence of nationality is innate. Primordial cultural identity has been a subject of great interest for a number of theorists. Early thinkers such as Johann Gottfried Herder saw the embrace of primordial national identity as possessing religious significance. Herder advocated that individuals should immerse themselves in their organic community's history and culture. He argued that the national community was the natural repository of authentic experience, with its vernacular language and culture in particular serving as the authentic expressions of collective identity and experience.[44] By embracing the authentic cultural experience of the nation, individuals followed God's will that they experience the world through

[43] Anthony D. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), 4
[44] Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates About Ethnicity and Nationalism*. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), 9

"organic" or primordial communities.[45] Others, such as Edward Shils or Clifford Geertz, viewed primordial identity as a potential source of conflict with other group affiliations, such as the demands of civil society or state. Geertz characterized primordialism in terms of primordial attachments, or "givens" of social existence within a distinct community. For Geertz, these attachments took on forms of social congruity in shared matters such as ancestry, custom, language, and religion, all of such factors he considered to possess an "ineffable", and "overpowering coerciveness", in and of themselves.[46]Such identity markers possessed a great staying power, owing to their integration within social relationships, as well as importance being attached to the primordial identity markers themselves.

Iraqi Baʿthist ideology's intellectual roots espoused elements of primordialism. Originating as a form of Pan- Arabist nationalism, Iraqi Baʿthism was committed to the notion of an ancient Arab nation and homeland.[47]As a people Arabs were believed to possess a shared language, heritage, and characteristics. For the liberation and prosperity of all, it was necessary to for the nation to unify in a common struggle against the forces of imperialism and Zionism. These primordialist elements of Pan-Arabism were retained in the 1970s and the war years, as the Baʿthist regime and its supporters shifted towards the promotion of an Iraqi, rather than exclusively Pan-Arabist national identity. Under this nationalist discourse, Pan-Arabist ideals were integrated with Iraq- centered nationalism.[48]An Iraqi nationalism, mixing elements of

[45] Ibid., 9
[46] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973) , 259
[47] Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, "Iraqi Baʿthist: Nationalism, Socialism and National Socialism," *Saddam's Iraq: Revolution or Reaction?*(London: Zed Books, 1986) , 103
[48] Davis, *Memories of State*, 150

local and Pan-Arabist primordialism, became the dominant state vision of nationhood.

The Iraqi Baʿth party sought to inculcate a locally specific national- territorial consciousness, based on what the regime and its supporters presented as the history of Iraq.[49] This discourse argued that a nation's character was embodied by the totality of the peoples, past and present, which had resided within its modern borders. Intellectuals reinforced, articulated, and defended this ideology through the selective construction of historical narrative. History was employed a means of defining the contours of an ancient, essentialist, and culturally exceptional Iraqi nationality. Such an identity was argued to be contiguous with modern national boundaries, while transcending contentious social divisions, such as religious sect or ethnicity. Iran was juxtaposed against Iraq's ancient glory as an eternal, inherently malevolent enemy, bent on anti-Arab hostility. This discourse was heavily emphasized through discussion of historic warfare between Iran and Iraq, and the positioning of Iran as an external foreign threat. Baʿthist discourse focused upon episodes of invasion, foreign occupation, and climactic battles, particularly the Battle of Qādisiyya (636 CE), which marked a decisive victory of Arab Muslims over Zoroastrian Persians.

Baʿthist discourse depicting Iran as an external foe became ubiquitous in the Iraqi public sphere. As a result, much of the secondary literature and foreign commentary on the Iran-Iraq War either mirrored this stance, or was at least pushed to engage with the question of ethnic conflict, and Iran's status as a foreign threat. Christine Moss Helms echoes themes of ancient ethnic conflict in her analysis of the war, attributing its outbreak and conduct in part to factors of which,

Some are endemic, having recurred throughout the past four thousand years

[49] Baram, *Culture, History, and Ideology*, 25

> as variations on a theme with which successive leaders had had to contend as they attempted to reinforce a central state apparatus. In this respect the current Baʿthist government in Iraq resembles former Mesopotamian empires despite their distance in time . . . .[50]

Helms goes on to suggest Iraq's leaders have struggled to maintain the viability of their state by seeking friendly neighbors, and a lack of internal strife, both of which have been largely absent from Iraq's history.[51]The Iran-Iraq War was in part attributed to a continuation of 16th century Ottoman-Persian rivalries and conflict over Iraq.[52] A number of outside analyses partially attributed the conflict to an ethnic division, even if they accorded greater importance to other factors. William O. Staudenmaier suggested that the 7th century Arab Islamic conquests of Persian territory were an underlying cause of ethnic conflict and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War.[53] Outside observers often included religion as a marker of national identity in such discussions, with the Iran-Iraq War acting as a conflict between Sunni and Shi'a. Some, such as Majid Khadduri attributed the outbreak of war to sectarian causes, stating, "The root cause of the conflict, however, was and remains the Sunni-Shiʿi confessional controversy, which divided the house of Islam into two major religious communities."[54]Other analysts dismissed ethnicity as a cause of the war, but felt it was necessary to engage with the issue. Daniel Pipes suggested that the outbreak of the war was due to Iraq's designs on the Shaṭt al-ʿArab, rather than ethnic strife. Pipes asserted that cultural antagonisms contributed to the mood of wartime hostility, but

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[50] Christine Moss Helms, *Iraq: Eastern Flank of the Arab World* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1984), 136
[51] Ibid.
[52] Abdulghani, *Iraq & Iran*, 1
[53] William O. Staudenmaier, "A Strategic Analysis," *The Iran-Iraq War: New Weapons, Old Conflicts*, eds. Tahir-Kheli, Shirin and Shaheen Ayubi (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), 28
[54] Majid Khadduri, *The Gulf War: The Origins and Implications of the Iran-Iraq Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 159

did not constitute a cause for the war.[55]

The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* focused on the production of narratives which compared the two nations by reference to historical warfare. Thousands of years of raids, punitive expeditions, invasions, occupations, and uprisings were canvassed to serve as historical evidence of unchanging Iraqi and Iranian national character. By advocating an essentialist relationship between Iraqi glory and Iranian hostility, these historical narratives justified current war efforts, and forecasted inevitable Iraqi victory.

ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA AND CONFLICT OF NATIONS

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* anchor much of their discussion on external threat and open conflict within the context of ancient Mesopotamia and the medieval Islamic world. Despite the disparate nature of the cultures involved, these distinct eras are unified within a narrative of Iraqi exceptionalism battling Iranian aggression and avarice. To further accentuate the portrayal of an enemy other, *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* characterize conflict in racialist terms, regularly referring to the enemy as "Persians". Due to an emphasis on "Iraqi" and "Arab" achievement, ancient and medieval history was prioritized over the Ottoman era or modern events. The ancient and medieval eras offered numerous examples of

[55] Dabiel Pipes, "A Border Adrift: Origins of the Conflict," *The Iran-Iraq War: New Weapons, Old Conflicts*, eds. Tahir-Kheli, Shirin and Shaheen Ayubi (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), 23

politically powerful, culturally flowering "Iraqi" polities, such as the Sumerians, the peoples of ancient Babylon, and the ʻAbbasid caliphate. Likewise, examples of significant neighbors and rivals from the lands of Iran, such as the ancient Achaemenid (approximately 550- 330 BCE) or Sassanid (224- 651 CE) empires, could be drawn from this period.

Shākir Ṣābir al- Ḍābiṭ and the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* envisioned the historical experience of Iraqi nationality as alternating between periods of great triumph, and periods of suffering at the hands of foreign oppressors. According to this narrative, Iraq's role has always been exceptional, either as a center of power, civilization, and cultural achievement, or as a victim of outsiders. Such a view was shared and openly expressed by other voices for the Baʿth Party. In the course of a speech delivered in Mosul in April 1980, Saddam Hussein declared:

> If you read the history of Iraq you will find it was either a shining light leading the way, or that it was trampled under the feet of invading armies. Throughout its history it has either been in the forefront of civilization, of leadership and history, and of the Arab nation, or it has been overwhelmed by tyranny. This is because Iraq's people have special characteristics. . . [56]

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* likewise portray Iraq's history in cyclical fashion. Thousands of years of battle are depicted as a successive rise and fall of Iraqi rulers and peoples in conflict against a "Persian" enemy. Triumphal victories acted as showcases of Iraqi qualities of nationality. Persian triumphs are framed as manifestations of innate negative traits, while showcasing the perseverance of Iraqi exceptionalism in the face of misfortune. The cycle of triumph and defeat is continued until the Battle of Qādisiyya (636 CE),

[56] Cited in Fuad Matar, *Saddam Hussein: The Man, The Cause and The Future*.(London: Third World Centre, 1981), 176

which marked a decisive Sassanid defeat, and the beginning of Islamic conquests in Mesopotamia. With the onset of Islam and the downfall of ancient Persian Empire, a new phase in Iraqi-Persian conflict narrative begins.

The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* base their narrative on a crafted enemy image, that of a primordial Persian enemy. The external Persian enemy is defined by reference to episodes of invasion and occupation, which supposedly act as expression of national character. This national character is characterized as possessing relentlessly aggressive tendencies, perpetually seeking to take advantage of perceived Iraqi weakness and attack.[57] Persian aggression is explained in part as a consequence of geography and demographics. The significance of geography is perhaps most explicitly argued by the contributing author ʿImād ʿAbd-l-Salām Raʾūf, who states:

> What are the enduring reasons for this ancient conflict, which has lasted for a succession of historical epochs?
> The answer to this question may be found in Iranian geo-politics, for the nation of Iran is situated- clearly- as an entity which is not truly "national". Iran was not established according to a collective national sentiment, for Iran is a political structure which encompasses a multitude of nationalities, up to five or six officially recognized nationalities. . . the sizes and distributions of these convergent nationalities does not lead to any among them attaining a majority status...[58]

These shaky foundations have been forced together by a small Persian minority originating solely within the borders of Iran. Throughout history, this insecure Persian minority has sought to bolster its position by relentless expansionism

[57] Fāḍil ʿAbd-l-Wāḥid ʿAlī, "Khulāṣa ʿan ah-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣūr al-Qadīma," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy* (Baghdad: Dār-l-Ḥuriyya, 1983),122
[58] ʿImād ʿAbd-l-Salām Raʾūf, "Al-Muqaddima," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy -Fārisiyy,*12

and the acquisition of political hegemony.[59]Geography is deeply rooted in Iraqi Baʿthist discussions of nationality. Nations are defined by the peoples and heritage situated within their modern borders, past and present. The Iraqi nation is virtually synonymous with the geographic area of Iraq. Persian adversaries are defined by their origins in the borders of Iran. Publicly, the *causus belli* of the Iran-Iraq War was heavily attributed to Iranian infringements on Iraq's territorial rights. The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* are strong advocates of the significance of geography, and have employed it to attack Iranian national legitimacy. For the authors, the geographical origins of a state must be matched by a unified national spirit. Iran is derided as a product of expansion. The primordial Persian enemy originating within Iran is an essentialist nationality, but the state which the Persians govern and claim as their own is a mockery of a true nation state. In this narrative, Persian nationality has no claim to lands and peoples beyond the modern borders of Iran, and little claim to the peoples within its borders. Geography is employed as an explanation of Persian national pathology, as well as an implicit dismissal of modern Iran's territorial claims.

Persian aggression is described in the context of wars between Iraqi and Iranian polities. Military actions are stereotyped as manifestations of this relentless aggression, which is always unjustified and self- serving. ʿImād ʿAbd-l-Salām Raʾūf strongly articulates this sentiment and frames the general tone of discussion in his introduction to *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*:

> History does not record any hostile acts undertaken by the Arabs against Iran; the opposite was always the case. However, despite this fact, Persians have always portrayed any hostile acts they have carried out against the Arab nation

[59]Ibid

> as "self-defense", until this has virtually become fact for Persian foreign policy throughout the different eras of history. . .[60]

Shākir Ṣābir al-Ḍābiṭ similarly frames Persian aggression as ancient, perpetual, and unjust. In his introductory remarks, al-Ḍābiṭ is more specific than Raʾūf, and immediately begins to marshal obscure historical record to validate his assertions of Persian hostility. Al-Ḍābiṭ cites a military campaign in 3200 BCE as the earliest known reference of Persian attack against Iraq. The campaign was evidently carried out by a Sumerian city state against a people in Iran, which al-Ḍābiṭ remarks was undoubtedly in response to Persian attack.[61]For the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*, Iran is always the unreasonable aggressor in a given conflict, regardless of circumstances. The authors point to unreasoning hostility by attesting to failed attempts to establish peaceful relations. In the context of ancient history, al-Ḍābiṭ points to a number of Assyrian kings as great Iraqi leaders who unsuccessfully sought peace with their eastern enemies. The Assyrian rulers Esarhaddon (681-669 BCE) and Ashurbanipal (668-627 BCE) are described as victors in wars against Persian peoples, who sought to establish peace in the aftermath through political marriages. However, their efforts were met with Persian intransigence, forcing Ashurbanipal to return to war.[62]

Numerous ancient peoples are described as Persian, and embodying a spirit of unrelenting hostility. Invaders and rivals from the territories of modern day Iran, such as the ancient Gutian and Elamite peoples, or the empires of the Achaemenids, Sassanids, and Safavids, are all catalogued as different erasʾ manifestations of the

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[60]Ibid.,17
[61] Shākir Ṣābir al- Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb Bayn al-ʿIrāq waʾĪrān*, (Wizārat al-Thaqāfa waʾIlām, 1984), 9
[62] Ibid., 10

Persian other. Their unreasoning aggression is characterized as uniquely cruel and merciless. For instance, description of an attack by the Gutians against the "Iraqi" Akkadian Empire stresses their violence. The Gutian sacking of the Akkadian capital and their subsequent occupation of Mesopotamian lands is described as a great shock, and a dark period in history.[63]In their narratives of ancient history, *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* often single out the Elamites for censure as embodying Persian hostility. They are characterized as barbarous, cruel, and underhanded, carrying out numerous attacks on Iraqi lands during periods of internal weakness. The authors dismissively describe the Elamites' as a ruinous people, of obnoxious and evil character, citing unnamed Arab and Western scholars as supporting evidence.[64]The Elamite presence in Mesopotamia is generalized as a succession of invasions and harsh occupations, in the course of which the peoples of Iraq were subjected to fire, theft, and slaughter.[65] Al- Ḍābiṭ recounts how:

> In 2206 BC the Elamites carried out attacks on Sumer and occupied the capital (Ur). They sacked and burned it, and took the king . . . to Elam. This catastrophe which befell the Sumerian capital at the hand of the Elamites remained a source of grief and sorrow in the hearts of the people of Mesopotamia . . .
> . . . poems of lamentation preserved many monstrous deeds of the Elamites, who killed the population; men, women, and children, till their bodies floated in the river [Euphrates] like the fish.[66]

[63] Fāḍil ʿAbd-l-Wāḥid ʿAlī, "Ṣirāʿ al-Sūmiriyīn wa-l-ʾAkadiyīn maʿa al-ʾAqwām al-Sharqiyya wa al-Shamāliyya al-Sharqiyya al-Mujāwara l-Bilād Wādi al-Rāfidayn," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy* , 39-40
[64] al- Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l- Ḥurūb*, 60
[65] ʿAlī, F., "Khulāṣa ʿan ah-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣūr al-Qadīma," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy*, 123
[66] al- Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l- Ḥurūb*, 85-86

COMPARING GOVERNANCE- PERSIAN EMPIRE

The Achaemenid and Sassanid empires feature prominently in this narrative of Persians as the external other. Each empire successfully occupied the lands of Mesopotamia for centuries, offering ample narrative opportunities for portrayal of Persians as oppressors. Furthermore, the 7th century defeat of the Sassanid Empire marks a transition in historical narrative, from the pre-Islamic to the Islamic era, as well as the transformation of the Persian enemy from an external threat to a force of subversion. Discussions of the Achaemenid and Sassanid empires generalize them as embodiments of essentialist Persian traits as rulers and invaders. The Achaemenid conquest of Babylon, as well as later Sassanid occupations, is used to demonstrate Persian political authority as innately avaricious. For instance, the contributor Sāmi Saʿīd al-ʾAḥmad depicts Achaemenid rule over Iraq as imposing severe exactions on the peoples of Iraq, through compulsory labor projects, exorbitant taxes, and the introduction of a multitude of fees for passage of goods and travel.[67] Al-ʾAḥmad goes on to say:

> "Taxes burdened the people and many were forced to mortgage their lands. They were unable to lessen the burdens imposed on their lands, and so many were forced to sell their holdings. Many became destitute of lands and work, until they were forced to sell their sons as slaves. A shortage of silver emerged in Iraqi markets . . . causing many to resort to barter exchange. All of this led to the raising of prices on necessities by 50%."[68]

The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* attribute the economic burdens of occupation to the

[67] Sāmi Saʿīd al-ʾAḥmad, "al-Ṣirāʿ Khilāl al-ʾAlf al-ʾAwwal qabl-l-Mīlād (331-933 BC)," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 83
[68] Ibid., 89

character of Persian leaders, who are stereotyped as amoral tyrants. In describing the Achaemenid Empire's governance of Iraq, Shākir Ṣābir al-Ḍābiṭ refers to the Persians', ". . . arrogance, due to their racism and their attempt to bring the Persian race to a state of luxury . . .as the people of Mesopotamia enjoyed . . . which in turn suggests the unhappiness and poverty of life in Persia."[69] The cruelty of Achaemenid rule is reported to have provoked popular uprisings by the local population, all of which were crushed without mercy, leading to more economic hardship.[70] Similarly to discussions of the Achaemenid dynasty, the authors depict Sassanid rule and occupation as catastrophic for Iraq. Sassanid rulers are described as tyrants and libertines, flaunting their authority and demanding the daughters of local Arab rulers as concubines. Al-Ḍābiṭ characterizes the king Khosroes II (r. 590- 628 CE) as a vicious ruler. Khosroes is willing to engage in open conflict with the Lakhmid Arab king Nuʿmān bin al-Mundhir, in order to seize Nuʿman's daughters for his harem. Al-Ḍābiṭ uses the example of Khosroes II to assert that Persian rulers throughout history have been decadent and immoral:

> Before we continue on the subject, we would like to point out that the sexual perversion, misconduct, and immorality of the Persian kings was not something new . . . archaeologists inform us that they were this way since the most ancient eras . . .
> So it was, among the causes for the Battle of Dhī Qār, that the real reason [for the fighting] was Khosroes' demand for the daughters of Nuʿmān bin al-Mundhir.[71]

The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* single out numerous other Persian rulers for harsh criticism.

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[69] al- Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 103
[70] al-ʾAḥmad, "al-Ṣirāʿ Khilāl al-ʾAlf al-ʾAwwal qabl-l-Mīlād (331-933 BC)," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy*, 87
[71] al- Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l- Ḥurūb*, 119

For example, the Sassanid king Shapur II (r. 309-379 CE) is portrayed as a mass murderer. In response to rebellions attacking his harsh rule, Shapur is described as carrying out the first attempt of genocide against the Arabs in history.[72]

Such discussions of governance essentialized Persian states as cruel and unjust. Regardless of the dynasty, era, or individual, Persian exercise of state authority is depicted as exploitive, absolutist, and illegitimate. Khosroes and Shapur are not individuals, but rather, symbols of innate Persian nationality. The continuity of negative characteristics condemns by implication the modern Islamic Republic of Iran, delegitimizing its war effort and diplomatic claims. If Khosroes is a tyrant bent on the subjugation of Iraqis, then Khomeini must be as well. Discussions of pre-modern Persian tyranny legitimize the modern Iraqi war effort as defensive in nature. Within this narrative, Iraq is always the aggrieved party.

Persian hostility as an external force is often highlighted in religious terms. *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* stress the role of Persian invasion as an assault on Iraqi religion. For example, in his earlier discussions of the ancient Elamite peoples, al-Ḍābiṭ describes them as carrying out severe attacks on Iraq's religious institutions.

> "The Iranians were ceaseless in their malice towards the Iraqis. . .Iraqis' relations towards the Iranians were characterized with kindness at a time when Iranians knew nothing but carrying out acts of assault, . . . killing, insult, and torture. If we trace the Elamite attacks on Iraq, we learn of the Iranians' deliberate theft of Iraqi idols and their conveyance of the idols back to their home countries, revealing the depth of their malice and unceasing hatred of Iraqis."[73]

In *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, depictions of Persian attacks on Mesopotamian

[72] Riḍā Jawād al-Hāshimi, "al-Ṣirāʿ fī Zaman Ḥukm al-Farthiyīn wa-l-Sāsāniyīn," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*,106
[73] al- Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 14

temples focus greater attention on the Achaemenid Empire as an occupier, which robbed Babylon of its precious treasures and idols. Persian occupation is stereotyped as a devastating blow to Iraqi religious institutions. For example, the contributor al-ʾAḥmad characterizes the effects of Persian occupation in such a fashion, and cites Persian attacks on religion as:

> ". . . Evidence which illustrates the Persian government's harassment of Iraqi citizens, with the intent of financial extortion. . . The realization of the Persian occupation became clear in the thefts of the temple of Ishtar . . . following the new administration for the records and importations from the Babylonian temples . . . and the placing of Babylonian temple funds in the hands of Persian authority. [74]

Despite the polytheistic nature of Mesopotamian religion, *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* single out Persian depredations against temples for criticism. The centrality of these religions to Mesopotamian society meant that ancient idols, temples, and religious iconography were included within the framework of Iraqi national heritage. Furthermore, the prevalence of religious institutions was used to portray Iraqis as having been a deeply devout people for thousands of years. The importance of an Iraqi identity which fully incorporated the ancient past overrode any present day religious scruples regarding the worship of idols or temple sacrifice. Persian attacks on ancient Mesopotamian religious institutions were an attack on Iraqi nationality. Within this narrative, such attacks constituted further proof of a hostile, essentialist Persian identity, and contrasted Iraqi piety with Persian blasphemy.

Beyond showcasing acts of destruction and tyranny, the narrative of Persians

[74] al-ʾAḥmad, "al-Ṣirāʿ Khilāl al-ʾAlf al-ʾAwwal qabl-l-Mīlād (331-933 BC)," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy*, 82-83

as external threat is strongly anchored in drawing comparisons of cultural achievements. Historical discussion of Persian invasions and occupations act as a vehicle for chauvinistic nationalist judgments of Persian civilization. While the balance of military power between Iraqis and Persians is portrayed as cyclical, the balance of cultural achievement is always weighted in favor of Iraqis and the larger Arab world. The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* employ historical narrative to portray a one-sided cultural exchange between the peoples of Iraq and Iran, in which Iran is virtually devoid of positive achievement. The expansion of Persian empires is described as a purely military affair, in which Persian achievements of cultural development or governance play no part. [75] Persians are derided as culturally imitative and lacking in originality. Persian society is characterized as a borrower cultural, producing nothing of consequence on its own while importing ideas from abroad. In his introduction to *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, ʿImād ʿAbd-l-Salām Raʾūf derides ancient Persian civilization as culturally inferior to Mesopotamia.

> Persians were not at a level of culture equivalent to the advanced civilizations existing west of Iran; … Persia was not a creator of civilization. The Zoroastrian religion and its symbols were not originally Persian, but rather Medeaen. Later changes which emerged in this religion originated in the Mediterranean. Persian was not written with original Persian characters, but rather used Iraqi cuneiform, as well as Aramaic and Arabic.[76]

Shākir Ṣābir al-Ḍābiṭ echoes Raʿuf's focus upon linguistic and religious characteristics. For al-Ḍābiṭ, the peoples of ancient Mesopotamia acted as a cultural hub for the entire region, with a far- reaching influence extending to the less advanced peoples of Persia. Like the authors of *The Iraqi- Persian Conflict* al- Ḍābiṭ associates

[75] Raʾūf, "Al-Muqaddima," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 14
[76]Ibid.

Elamite and Medeaen cultures with Persian identity, though he does not characterize Medeaen society as wholly separate. Al- Ḍābiṭ describes the cultural relationship between ancient Iraqis and Persians in the following fashion, citing a translation of the noted Western Assyriologist Samuel Noah Kramer for veracity.

> The civilization of Mesopotamia was not limited to the countries of Sumer and Babylon, its gates were not closed to neighboring countries . . . by which we mean Elam and Medea. On this Kramer says the following: "Indeed the Sumerian language and literature was the basis for the scribal schools and cultural and spiritual centers not only of Babylon and Assyria, but also many of the neighboring peoples such as the Elamites, the Hurrians, Hittites, and Canaanites"
> . . books have been found written in ancient Persian, using cuneiform letters, which had been adopted from the Arabs.[77]

Persian cultures are generalized as having benefited greatly from Iraqi Arab developments while contributing virtually nothing in return. For instance, despite a history of settlement and cultural exchange with the peoples of Mesopotamia, the ancient Elamites of Iran are described as completely separate in culture and linguistics.[78] The narrative of an external Persian enemy carries the theme of cultural deficiency into human psychology. In *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, ʿImād ʿAbd-l-Salām Raʾūf insists that the Persians developed a sense of inferiority to Arabs, writing, "This cultural inferiority complex transformed with the passing of time, into a deep and abiding hostility for all Arab civilizations, or those nations which were found in Arab lands."[79]Such cultural arguments dehumanize Persians as an enemy other, with no positive connection or shared heritage with Arabic speakers. They are depicted as people without substance or legitimacy, who exist only as an enemy of Iraqis and the

[77] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 74
[78] ʿAlī, "Khulāṣaʿan ah-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣūr al-Qadīma," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy* (Baghdad: Dār-l-Ḥuriyya, 1983), 124
[79] Raʾūf, "Al-Muqaddima," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 15

Arab world. Similarly to discussions of innate Persian aggression, the cultural arguments downplay the possibility of rational negotiation or dialogue by emphasizing a gulf between peoples. An Iran consumed by envy, with no substance, shared heritage, or positive relationships with its neighbors, is not a nation which may be negotiated with

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* articulate a narrative of Persians as an external adversary in war, employing numerous examples of historic conflict to illustrate alleged Persian nationality. In defining the characteristics of Persian nationality, the authors of these works also sought to articulate an opposite and opposing vision of Iraqi nationality. This essentialist notion of Iraqi nationality was defined as embodying exceptional qualities since the beginnings of recorded history. A multitude of rulers, polities, ethnic groups, and cultural achievements from ancient Mesopotamia to the present day were unified in a narrative of Iraqi exceptionalism. Similarly to the Iraqi Baʿth Party, the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* expressed an affinity for geographically rooted nationalism, as well as Pan-Arabist ideals. Iraqis were included as a branch of the Arab people, while possessing superior qualities, as well as a unique heritage and historical role. Shākir Ṣābir al-Ḍābiṭ directly affirms this union of Pan- Arabism and Iraqi exceptionalism, arguing that while Arab civilization had many historical roots, the oldest of all was found in Sumerian society.[80]

Praise of Iraqi and Arab virtues in comparison to Persian faults is often expressed through accounts of political leadership and warfare. Persian aggression is

[80] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 51

met with valorous Iraqi defense and counterattack. Numerous Iraqi rulers are described as embodying Iraqi qualities of nationality in conflicts with Persian invaders. Such campaigns are always justified as actions of self- defense. In discussing military warfare between Mesopotamian states and eastern tribal peoples, Fāḍil ʿAbd-l-Wāḥid ʿAlī characterizes the rulers of Iraq as having "spared no effort in subduing these hostile tribes and curbing their aims; Iraq's rulers launched military campaigns of self- defense."[81] Iraqi rulers are glorified as victors in war, inexorably triumphing over a dehumanized Persian invader. Utu-hengal, an early Sumerian ruler, is extolled for his prowess in defeating Gutian invaders from Iran.

> Then came the demise of Gutian rule, and their expulsion from Mesopotamia at the hand of a strong Sumerian leader from the city of Uruk, named Utu-hengal. This leader gathered warriors from the Sumerian cities, and led them in a decisive war against the Gutians, which was considered to be oldest war of liberation known to history. Utu-hengal left for us details of his war with the Gutians, and his victory over their king . . . Utu-hengal describes these Gutians, saying: "Entrusted by the god Enlil, king of the lands, the great man Utu-hengal king of Uruk . . . that smashes the name "Guti", the snake and scorpion of the mountains who raised his hand against the goddess [Ishtar, a patron goddess of Utu-hengal]. [82]

The Babylonian ruler Hammurabi I (r. 1792-1750 BCE) is invoked as an example of normative Iraqi leadership, in contrast to the aggression and cruelties of Persian kings. For the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*, Hammurabi was a model of political and cultural leadership. Hammurabi is said to have risen to power through exceedingly difficult circumstance, implicitly paralleling the life of President Saddam Hussein. Hammurabi is lauded as among the first monarchs who worked to unify the diverse

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[81] ʿAlī, "Ṣirāʿ al-Sūmiriyīn wa-l-ʾAkadiyīn maʿa al-ʾAqwām al-Sharqiyya wa al-Shamāliyya al-Sharqiyya al-Mujāwara l-Bilād Wādi al-Rāfidayn," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 27

[82] Ibid.,40-41

peoples of Mesopotamia under one rule. [83]

Such historical narrative of Iraqi conflict elevates and defines Iraqi nationality in specific ways. Persians as an external threat necessitate defensive warfare on the part of Iraqis, whose efforts embody valor and military prowess. Iraqi reluctance to wage aggressive war, as well as the defensive nature of their campaigns, demonstrates a superior commitment to moral ideals. Within this narrative Iraqi nationality is also characterized by a commitment to political unity. Hammurabi is the ideal ruler, a man holding power based on his talents and force of personality. He is a capable war leader, as well as a ruler who unifies diverse Iraqi peoples into a single polity. Within Baʿthist discourse, a number of Mesopotamian rulers, such as Nebuchadnezzar II, were revered as a exemplars of leadership, particularly by Saddam Hussein. Reflecting upon historic leaders who inspired him, Saddam stated in an interview that, "Nebuchadnezzar stirs in me everything relating to pre-Islamic ancient history . . . [He] was, after all, an Arab from Iraq, albeit ancient Iraq."[84]

The authors' general theme of Iraqi cultural exceptionalism in the face of an external threat is used regardless of the historical era. Periods of Iraqi defeat or military weakness are used to demonstrate an alleged Persian barbarism and cultural backwardness. In this view, Persian occupations of Iraq do not bring positive cultural production by the invaders, but rather showcase an imbalance in civilization. In discussing incursions by the Gutian tribal peoples from Iran, Shākir Ṣābir al-Ḍābiṭ describes the Gutians as having, "interrupted the rapid progression of civilization for

[83] Ibid., 65-66
[84] Jerry M. Long, *Saddam's War of Words: Politics, Religion, and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 76

a century in the fields of arts, ideas, and agriculture."[85]The immorality of Sassanid kings such as Khosroes II is contrasted unfavorably with the moral uprightness of their Iraqi Arab subjects. Popular rebellions and uprisings are used in this context to point to the harshness of Persian rulers throughout history, while showcasing Iraqi perseverance and valor in war and hardship. The early modern conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and its Iranian rivals for control of Iraq are invoked to reinforce this depiction of Iraqi valor in war. For example, discussions of the invasions of the Iranian ruler Nādir Shah (1688-1747 CE) are heavily based on accounts of siege warfare, such as a siege of Baghdad. In this account, the residents of Baghdad react to Nādir Shah's demands for surrender with heroic defiance and stalwart resistance, even resorting to eating cats and dogs in the face of starvation.[86]However, accounts of Iraqi defeat, occupation, and hardship at the hands of invaders are depicted in cyclical fashion. In the narrative of Persians as external foe, Persian triumphs inevitably come to an end. Ancient victories over Mesopotamian rulers are overturned by other Mesopotamian powers. Achaemenid rule over Babylon is crushed by Alexander the Great. The Sassanid Empire is dramatically overturned by the Islamic conquests. Early modern Persian invasions are met with intractable resistance, and can conquer no lasting gains.

[85] al- Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 40
[86] Ibid., 219

THE BATTLE OF QĀdISIYYA

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* engage in a conflict narrative which depicts the rise and fall of military fortune in cyclical fashion. Iraqi triumphs and defeats embody national character. Prowess in war and a national commitment to unity are present in victory, while persistence and valor in the face of superior odds are depicted in Iraqi defeat. Persian triumphs are momentary, and their seeming successes inevitably culminate in failure. For the authors, the central culmination of Persian downfall is the battle of Qādisiyya (636 CE) and subsequent Islamic conquests of Sassanid territory. The 7th century conquest of Sassanid Persia is highly prominent in Baʿthist nationalist discourse, as a story of Arab- Islamic triumph and a stark demonstration of Persian inferiority. For *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*, Qādisiyya is a decisive moment in the historical narrative of Persian-Iraqi conflict. The battle and subsequent Islamic conquests fully embody the competing values of Iraqi and Persian nationality. The collapse of the Sassanid Empire marks the collapse of Persians as an external foe, and the ascendancy of Iraqi Arab power. As a result, the authors' narrative of enemy images changes from Persians as an invasion force, to Persians as subversive elements. Furthermore, the Islamic conquests were employed as a direct parallel with the Iran-Iraq War. The modern conflict came to be described as the "current Qādisiyya", and not the first.[87]

The battle occurred on the very edge of Sassanid imperial territory, south of

[87] Ibid., 15-16

Najaf near the small village of Qādisiyya. A force of Arab-Muslim reinforcements had been dispatched under the command of Saʿd bin ʾAbī Waqqās to aid the army of al-Muthannā bin Ḥāritha, already present in Iraq. The Arab-Muslim forces were met with a concerted counterattack by a large Sassanid army with war elephants, dispatched by their King Yazdajird III under the reluctant command of Rustam. Following intensive fighting for three days and four nights, the Sassanid forces suffered a catastrophic defeat.[88] Rustam was killed, with much of his army was slain or scattered. The battle marked a turning point in the Islamic conquests, and was soon followed by a series of further Sassanid defeats, ending their rule in Iraq and eventually their empire.

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* primarily describe the campaigns of Islamic conquest in a straight forward military narrative. The composition of the armies, the character of their leaders, campaign maneuvers, and the basic outlines of the battle are detailed. However, the Iraqi Arab presence at the battle is highlighted for praise. Discussion of the war makes reference to Iraqi Arabs as continuing their struggle for independence long before the Islamic conquests.[89] In the build up to the battle, Iraqis are described as contributing more warriors to the Arab Muslim than any other people.[90] During the battle's second day, the arrival of Iraqi Arab reinforcements is said to have raised the morale of the Muslim army.[91]

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between*

[88] Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 173
[89] al- Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 135
[90] Ibid., 141
[91] Ibid., 144

Iraq and Iran reflect Pan-Arabist, as well as Iraqi nationalist sentiments. Similarly to Baʿthist discourse, Iraqis are portrayed as an exceptional identity within a larger Arab whole. Iraqi achievements are extolled, and Qādisiyya is singled out as a pivotal moment in Iraqi- Iranian relations. Religion plays a part in each work, due to the symbolic significance of a clash between the early Muslim community and Zoroastrian Persians. However, themes of religious conflict are unusually muted in *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*'s Qādisiyya narrative, both in comparison to al-Ḍābiṭ's rendering of the battle, as well as other topics featured in the work.

The authors of both works demonstrate a preoccupation with national unity. The Arab force is depicted as embodying a wide cross-section of participation, with warriors of all backgrounds fighting, and women encouraging their sons.[92]Women are highlighted as playing crucial roles in caring for the wounded and burying the dead.[93]Both works play up themes of Persian hubris. For example, the Persian ruler is depicted as threatening the Arabs with utter defeat and torture at the hands of his commander Rustam.[94] The Persian side is criticized on further grounds. Arab commanders are mentioned as being warned to maintain vigilance against Persian guile, deception, and treachery.[95] Arab military virtue is contrasted with Persian weakness. The Persian force is described as numbering in excess of 100,000, accompanied by war elephants, yet is unable to overcome the small number of Arabs. In the course of the battle, outnumbered Arab Muslim forces decisively defeat the

[92] ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-ʿāni, Ḥasan Fādil Zaʿīn, "al-ʿAdāʾ al-Fārisiyy fī ʿUṣr al-Risāla al-ʾIslāmiyya wa-l-Khulaāʾ al-Rāshidīn," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 144
[93] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 209
[94] al-ʿĀni and Zaʿīn, "al-ʿAdāʾ al-Fārisiyy fī ʿUṣr al-Risāla al-ʾIslāmiyya wa-l-Khulaāʾ al-Rāshidīn," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*,143
[95] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 183

Persians, and force them to rout. The arrogance and wealth of the Persian force is met with humiliation and defeat. The Persian commander Rustam is said to have attempted to flee and hide under mules laden with treasure, before being dragged out and slain by an Arab warrior.[96]

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* heavily politicize the character of the 7th century battle, and ascribe its outcome to innate national character. The causes of the two sides are contrasted. Sassanid Persia is offered as an example of anti-Arab and impious tyranny, dismissing offers of negotiation in favor of war. The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* largely ascribe Muslim victory to basic factors of morale, leadership and military preparation**.** In their discussion the contributors ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-ʿĀni and Ḥasan Fādil Zaʿīn outline the reasons for the Arab Muslims' victory in the following manner.

> . . . The secret to the victories the Arab Muslims achieved over the Persian aggressors in their battles, most notably at the eternal battle of Qādisiyya, was due to a number of reasons . . .
> 1. Their leaders meeting their nationalist and historical responsibilities, as well as their leadership over the battle [Qādisiyya] in every detail.
> 2. The choice of their leadership in the placement of the military commanders.
> 3. Taking initiative in selecting the site of the battle and its timing.
> 4. The faith of the warriors in the justice of the cause for which they fought, and their devotion to their land and its liberation.
> 5. Full preparation . . . by mobilizing the energies of the 'Umma, as well as its human and material potential . . .[97]

Al-ʿĀni and Zaʿīn further suggest other factors commonly invoked in military history, such as individual heroism, and Arab tactical skill in responding to battlefield developments. Conspicuously absent in their discussion of Qādisiyya is an emphasis on religion as a key battlefield factor. Instead, Arab Muslim prowess is attributed to

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[96] Ibid., 206
[97] al-ʿĀni and Zaʿīn, *"al-ʿAdāʾ al-Fārisiyy fī ʿUṣr al-Risāla al-ʾIslāmiyya wa-l-Khulaāʾ al-Rāshidīn," in Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 147

nationalist motivations, such as the fulfillment of Arab historical destiny, or the liberation of their homeland.

In contrast, al- Ḍābiṭ chose to strongly emphasis Arab religiosity as a reason for victory at Qādisiyya. He describes the battle in greater detail than *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, injecting a number of additional details pertaining to the ebb and flow of the battle. However, his narrative lacks the military analysis of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*. Instead, when discussing what he believes to be the reasons for the Arab triumph, al-Ḍābiṭ says the following:

> . . . When we endeavor to learn the secret to the Arabs' victory we find the following: the Arabs were natural warriors . . . and they were strengthened by Islam and belief in the Day of Judgment. So they persevered in war, for the victory of God's word, and religion and the Islamic creed or testimony. . . and this is the true secret to the Arab Muslims' triumph over the Persian Majus (Zoroastrians).[98]

Each work elevates the Arab Muslim army as a moral force. Al-Ḍābiṭ does so by more overtly emphasizing religious motivation, and portraying a clash of cultures and faiths. The collaborative authorship of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* does so by pointing to Arab Muslim military expertise and nationalist fervor. The Arab Muslim forces are portrayed as waging a war for the liberation of Iraq.[99] Arab liberation is a repeated theme in discussion of the Islamic conquests. The Arab Muslim victory at Qādisiyya is described as having completed the liberation of Iraq and Arab sovereignty, freed from the shadow of Persian occupation.[100] Al-Ḍābiṭ more frequently points to religious markers. Regular mention is made of the Persian armies

[98] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 206
[99] al-ʿāni and Zaʿīn, *"al-ʿAdāʾ al-Fārisiyy fī ʿUṣr al-Risāla al-ʾIslāmiyya wa-l-Khulaāʾ al-Rāshidīn," in Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 134-135
[100] Ibid., 146

as Zoroastrian.[101] He details that prior to the battle, the Arab commander Saʿd bin ʾAbī Waqqās offered the Persians a chance to convert to Islam, and surrender their forces.[102] The Arabs are characterized as inspired by true religious faith, and a desire to spread its message.[103] In both narrative works, Qādisiyya is offered as a showcase of Iraqi and Persian nationality, while implicitly suggesting parallels to the modern Iran-Iraq War.

NATIONALIST NARRATIVE VS REALITY

In assessing this Qādisiyya narrative, it would be instructive to examine the ways in which the authors' characterization of the battle differs from traditional academic scholarship. Central to the significance of Qādisiyya as a thematic milestone, is its supposed encapsulation of a clash of opposing nationalities. It marks the culmination of Iraqi-Persian warfare, and the downfall of an illegitimate Persian national order. However, scholarship reveals a much more diverse and politically complex landscape. Research shows that Arabic was but one of a number of languages spoken in Mesopotamia on the eve of battle, with Persian enjoying comparable or greater representation. The majority of inhabitants, particularly of the rich alluvial floodplains, spoke dialects of Aramaic.[104] Arabic speakers were heavily outnumbered, and largely concentrated along the western fringes of the Euphrates

[101] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 196
[102] Ibid, 198
[103] Ibid, 206
[104] Fred McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 167-168

River. Christianity is exceedingly rare in the authors' nationalist narrative, yet it may have commanded the largest number of followers in Mesopotamia prior to the Islamic conquests.

Research demonstrates that the Sassanid Empire had long maintained close political ties and military alliances with Arab tribes and communities.[105]Significant Sassanid-Arab troubles had emerged in the 7th century. The Sassanids had abolished a client state, the Arab Lakhmid kingdom, in about 602 CE, and a bloody conflict had been waged between Sassanid forces and an Arabic confederation at Dhī Qār in 610 CE. However, by the beginning of Muslim incursions into Mesopotamia, the tribes which had fought the Sassanids in 610 were once again their allies.[106] Contrary to the narrative of al-Ḍābiṭ and the other authors, the Sassanid Empire enjoyed extensive military and political support during the Muslim invasions. Initial incursions into Mesopotamia led by the great Muslim general Khālid bin al-Walīd faced violent opposition from the Sassanid's Arab allies. In fact, the majority of the Arabs living along the west bank of the Euphrates appear to have opposed the Muslim forces.[107] Al-Ḍābiṭ and the others' assertions of Iraqi prominence in battle are not reflected in the historical record. Examination of the Arab tribes and troop contingents present at Qādisiyya reveal that a Muslim force largely composed of forces drawn from Yemen, and the desert lands of the Najd.[108]The Sassanid Empire on the eve of the Islamic conquests suffered from a series of crises. Floods devastated agricultural regions. An extraordinarily costly war with the Byzantine Empire begun in 611 CE had ended in

[105] Ibid., 172
[106] Ibid., 189
[107] Ibid., 185
[108] Ibid., 200-201, 205

humiliating defeat in 628 CE, with the loss of Sassanid armies, and the destruction of agricultural lands and royal estates. As a result, until shortly before Qādisiyya, the empire had been racked by a series of succession conflicts. Despite this, the empire managed to mobilize strong resistance against the Muslim invasions, at Qādisiyya and elsewhere. Insofar as Iraqis played a significant role in the Islamic conquests, it appears to have been as Christian defenders of the Sassanid order against Muslim Arabian forces. The strength, and widespread support enjoyed by the Sassanid Empire in the face of devastating loss differs markedly from the portrayals of Persian authority by al-Ḍābiṭ and the others. The historical reality suggests a complex, multiethnic polity which enjoyed widespread legitimacy among its subjects, including Iraqi Arabs. The Qādisiyya narrative is perhaps the most dramatic example of the authors' selective and propagandistic use of the historical record.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF PERSIAN THREAT

Discussion of the Battle of Qādisiyya and Islamic conquests acts as a transitional point between differing Persian threats as framed by this narrative discourse. Treatment of the post- Qādisiyya eras shifted attention to Persian identity as a subversive force within Iraqi society. In the post- Qādisiyya eras, the battle and Islamic conquests is situated as a symbol of Iraqi Arab triumph, and an explanation for further Persian hostility. It is argued that in the aftermath of Qādisiyya, the Persians' hatred of the Arabs and their Islamic faith increased. The Persians are

charged with insincerely converting from Zoroastrianism, while also secretly plotting to undermine and destroy the Arabs and Islam.[109]The assassination of the Caliph ʿUmar by a Persian slave is cited as an example of this enmity towards the Arabs and Islam.[110]

The theme of Persians as an external threat does not reemerge until discussions of the Ottoman period. Powerful, distinctly Persian political rivals did not exist during the Umayyad caliphate, nor during the peak of ʿAbbasid power. The loss of ʿAbbasid power to Turkish slave soldiers was followed by a historical epochs during which Iraq was politically dominated by outside powers. This period coincided with the lands of Iraq being culturally and economically eclipsed by a number of neighboring states. Furthermore, unlike the Achaemenid or Sassanid eras, there were fewer examples of prolonged and successful direct Persian conquest available to highlight the latter's tyranny. As such, Iraqi history between the ʿAbbasid era and the mid-20th century was minimized in Baʿthist discourse. Ottoman-Safavid wars largely served to reiterate earlier narrative themes and showcase Iraqi perseverance in the face of hardship.

[109] al-ʿĀni and Zaʿīn, *"al-ʿAdāʾ al-Fārisiyy fī ʿUṣr al-Risāla al-ʾIslāmiyya wa-l-Khulaāʾ al-Rāshidīn," in Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 148
[110] Ibid.

CHAPTER II: NATIONAL SUBVERSION AND THE ENEMY WITHIN: DEPICTION OF IRAN AS INTERNAL THREAT

NATIONALITY AND THE DANGER OF DISUNITY

The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* define essentialist nationalities, and the characteristics of their rivalry in terms of conflict. Their historical narrative of the Islamic conquests and pre- Islamic era focused on a primordial Persian identity manifested as external threat. Alleged Persian characteristics, as well as normative features of Iraqi nationality are expressed through their behavior in war. The pre-Islamic and Qādisiyya eras are selectively described as cycles of Persian invasion and Iraqi Arab counterattack, culminating in the Islamic conquest of the Sassanid Empire. As well as defining nationality, the authors' historical narrative tacitly draw parallels between the modern Iran-Iraq War and the ancient past, suggesting an equivalence between triumphant kings and Saddam Hussein, as well as forecasting an inevitable Iraqi victory over Persian aggression.

Following the Battle of Qādisiyya (636 CE), *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* shift focus towards other dimensions of Iraqi and Persian nationality. With the downfall of Persian Empire and state religion, Persians as an external foe cease to be a primary concern. The threat posed to the Iraqi nation becomes one of subversion and cultural contagion. Persians are cast as an internal adversary. The Persian other now assailed Iraq through conspiracy, dissent, and covert violence.

The significance of foreign subversion and infiltration to Baʿthist discourse

has been a frequent subject of interest. Studies of the Iraqi Baʿthist regime's attempts to enforce hegemony and shape language usage have found that the state was highly preoccupied with maintaining unchallenged political authority and national unity. Unity and strong leadership was to be enforced at all costs, while political, cultural, and religious dissent was to be suppressed. Ofra Bengio discusses this phenomenon in its manifestation as the concepts of *shuʿūbiyya* and *ṭāʾifiyya*. In the modern Iraqi public sphere, each term acted as a pejorative label for identity politics, with connotations that one so labelled was fomenting disunion.

Shuʿūbiyya originally referred to Abbasid era cultural and literary controversies of the 9th and 10th centuries CE. These were disputes amongst the various circles of the Abbasid court. Muslims of Persian background among literati and officialdom critiqued the then predominance of Bedouin Arabs and their cultural mores in positions of high office. Originally the term did not necessarily have negative or prejudiced connotations, and was in fact closely associated with the term *taswiya*, or equality.[111] During the medieval era, some proponents of *shuʿūbiyya* invoked a verse from the Qurʾan to illustrate their views: "O mankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you shuʿub and qabaʾil, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most godfearing of you."[112]However, under modern nationalist regimes in Iraq, *shuʿūbiyya* became an expansive, derogatory label used as a metaphor for political subversion, disloyalty to the nation, and a selfish commitment to partisan interests. Earlier Pan-Arabist leaders had attacked communists and rival Iraqi nationalists with this label,

[111] Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 103
[112] Ibid

suggesting that they endangered national unity through their rhetorical emphasis on class division and cultural diversity.[113] President ʿAbd al-Salām ʿĀrif, an Arab nationalist and rival of the Baʿth party, was known for pejoratively describing Shi'a as *shu'ubiyyun* in his leadership meetings.[114] Baʿath Party of Iraq continued to employ the term as a pejorative, and greatly increased its use during the Iran-Iraq War.

Ṭāʾifiyya, or sectarianism, was frequently invoked to attack perceived Islamist, heterodox, or foreign Muslim sympathies, though secular opponents such as communists were also charged with the label. *Ṭāʾifiyya* was applied to those judged to have prioritized communal, foreign, or religious loyalties above loyalty to the Baʿthist state. Those deemed guilty of *ṭāʾifiyya* were charged with seeking the breakdown of the Baʿthist regime, by sowing domestic discord.[115]Particularly in the wake of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, *ṭāʾifiyya* took some xenophobic connotations. Tehran was accused of seeking to undermine Iraqi and Arab security, by replacing the Arab homeland with "sectarian and reactionary states".[116]Doing so was meant to diminish Arab identity, and expand Iran's borders.

The terms each exhibited the Baʿth Party's preoccupation with national unity, and the need to suppress any possible challenge to the state, as well as state-envisioned nationality. However, there was some difference in the nature of these pejoratives, and the ways in which they were invoked. Even for earlier generations of Arab nationalists, *shuʿūbiyya* possessed strong connotations of xenophobia, and ethnic prejudice. Its early use in attacking communist rivals was intended to suggest

[113] Davis, *Memories of State*, 184
[114] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party*, 27
[115] Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 102
[116] Bengio, *Saddam's Word*,102

Marxists' status as aliens within Iraqi society. Michel ʿAflaq, as well as the Syrian Pan-Arabist Zaki al-ʾArsūzi associated communism with foreign influence and the threat of *shuʿūbiyya*. For example, al-ʾArsūzi was the author of an article titled, "The Shuʿubi Current Under the Cover of Communism". The Baʿth Bureau issued a statement in 1945 titled, "The Communist Party, Bulwark of Shuʿubism and Mouthpiece of the Foreigner," denouncing communists as non-Arab puppets of Western imperialists, who seek to attack the Arabs.[117]During the Iran-Iraq War, *shuʿūbiyya* took on strongly anti-Iranian connotations. Throughout its modern history, the term was meant to suggest a foreign enemy, motivated by anti-Arab sentiment. By contrast, *ṭāʾifiyya* was used in a more limited context, against those suspected of overt Islamist sympathies, particularly internal actors such as Wahhabists, or disloyal Shiʿi activists. *Tāʾifiyya* did not harbor the suggestion of foreign threat or essentialist ethnic character to the same degree. The ethnic connotations of *shuʿūbiyya* are further evident in the language use of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*. There is virtually no use of the label *ṭāʾifiyya* in the texts. Indeed, overt use of the term would only have complicated the authors' narrative, which sought to emphasize Iraqi piety and an overt religiosity. By contrast, the authors repeatedly invoke *shuʿūbiyya* as a marker of Persian hostility. The term suited the authors' goal of crafting an extremely anti-Persian, pro-Iraqi, and pro-Arab narrative.

The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* exhibited Baʿthist concerns with internal subversion and disunity. While the term *ṭāʾifiyya* features little in their historical narrative, the

[117] Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 217

underlying preoccupation with identity politics and conspiracy remains the same. In accordance with this preoccupation, the authors' narrative directly incorporated Baʿthist concerns of national unity and cultural solidarity, particularly in discussions of the post-Qādisiyya era. For the authors this concept of a unified Iraqi people was based upon a shared homeland, centered on the agricultural heartlands of Mesopotamia, as well as what were referred to as common cultural, social, and economic characteristics, all forming a single Iraqi nation.[118] In this view, unity is an essential component of Iraqi nationality, which Persians have repeatedly sought to undermine. Persians are charged with employing co-conspirators living within Iraq, encouraging internal political disputes and civil war, allying with foreign elements against Iraq, attempting to export traditional Persian culture, and perhaps most importantly, seeking to undermine Iraqi Arab culture and religion. As unity and solidarity is an innate feature of Iraqi nationality, internal dissent and disorder is rendered virtually synonymous with foreign attack and subversion.

Narrative depictions of Persian nationality as a subversive threat largely focus on the post-Qādisiyya era, portraying the downfall of Persian imperial power as a transition to new forms of conflict. However, the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* are careful to emphasize a continuity of national character. Deceit and subversion is presented as a component of Iraqi-Persian relations since the era of ancient Mesopotamia. In this context, Persians are described as aiding internal dissent and Iraqi confederates in order to undermine Iraqi states. Iraqi rulers are praised in part for their role in defeating such foreign subversion. The Babylonian king Hammurabi I, is lauded as an

[118] ʿImād ʿAbd-l-Salām Raʾūf, "Taṭawwur Mashākil al-Ḥudūd," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 269

example of Iraqi leadership, not only for his success in combatting external Persian enemies, but in ensuring national unity. Hammurabi allows the Iraqi people to fulfill their destiny of unity and greatness through his strong leadership. According to this narrative he repeatedly thwarted attack by the Elamites of Persia and their Iraqi allies, preserving national unity and ultimately crushing his adversaries. [119] The Assyrian king Tiglath-Pilaser III is described as having unified the peoples of Iraq into a great power, free of any cultural conflict.[120] The Assyrian Empire under his rule is referred to as waging wars on behalf of Iraq's peoples in the interests of peace and security.[121] The authors justify Assyrian military and political unification by invoking Persians as an internal menace. Assyrian rulers are described as being forced to deal with uprisings among their subjects, which are attributed to Elamite funding and conspiracy.[122]Warfare in ancient Mesopotamia between the peoples of Assyria and Bablyon are attributed to conspiratorial machinations of Persian rivals, such as the Achaemenid Empire.[123]Persians as an internal threat is a secondary, but still highly significant component of the authors' narrative of pre-Islamic Mesopotamia. In addition to open warfare, Persian nationality is said to undermine the Iraqi nation by fomenting dissent and political fragmentation. The Iraqi nation's natural tendency towards unity and cultural solidarity is attacked repeatedly. Internal disruption and disagreement with Iraqi rulers is characterized as synonymous with foreign conspiracy. The enormous cruelties, perpetual warfare, mass enslavements, and

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[119] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 86
[120] al-ʾAḥmad, "al-Ṣirāʿ Khilāl al-ʾAlf al-ʾAwwal qabl-l-Mīlād (331-933 BC)," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy*, 64
[121] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 13
[122] Ibid., 92
[123] ʿAlī, "Khulāṣa ʿan ah-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣūr al-Qadīma," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy* (Baghdad: Dār-l-Ḥuriyya, 1983), 122

deportation of populations carried out by the Assyrian empires are virtually ignored, and popular unrest is dismissed as the result of foreign plots. Iraqi rulers' merits are heavily based upon their commitment to preserving national unity and their role as guardians against foreign disorder. Political dissent and nonconformity is associated with an outside enemy other, the Persians.

PERSIAN NATIONALITY AS ALLY OF IRAQ'S ENEMIES

The authors further emphasized the Persians as a threat by characterizing them as collaborators with foreign adversaries of Iraq. The theme of Persians as an internal other was merged into general sentiments of xenophobia, often related to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Persians were charged as confederates of Jewish saboteurs and conspirators, each working with the other to advance their common interests. In doing so the authors reflected a tendency of Baʿthist discourse to associate Iran with Zionist conspiracy; as was observed with the defense minister ʿAdnan Khayrallah, who declared, "We never, from the very beginning had any illusion about the Iranian regime's links with Zionism."[124] As with their discussions of Persians as an external foe, the authors sought to establish the veracity of their claims by tracing a connected narrative back to ancient history. For example, the Persian Achaemenid Empire was characterized as an ally of the Jews against Iraqis. In return for Jewish assistance against Iraqi Babylonian power, Achaemenid imperial power assisted the Jews in

[124] W. Thom Workman, *The Social Origins of the Iran-Iraq War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 152

reestablishing themselves in the lands of Palestine.[125] The authors' characterization of the relationship between Persians and Jews implicitly connected the modern Iran-Iraq War with the Arab-Israeli conflict.

> The Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid Persians warred against the nation and people of Iraq. The Persians allied with the Jews, whom the Iraqi Arab king Nebudchanezzar had taken as prisoners of war to Iraq after he liberated Palestine from their power. This [alliance] paved the way for the Jews' return to their subversive and destructive role in Palestine... and Iraq's enemies'[hated] also manifested through their economic exploitation of the Iraq and other Arab regions.[126]

Jews are repeatedly attacked for their role as subversive agents alongside the Persians. Jewish conspirators are said to have aided the Persian conquest of Babylon.[127] As with their narratives of Persians as an external threat, the authors are eager to marshal any historical episodes which might justify their argument of Persian-Jewish collaboration. Events having little to do with political conflict are used to illustrate a historical alliance between Persians and Jews.

> Concerning the collaboration of Persia with the Jewish families, we read in that era how an individual among the Jewish families, Ezra, appeared before the Persian ruler Artaxerxes I (r. 424-464 BC) in 458 BC. Ezra presented to Artaxerxes a new plan for the religious organization of the Jewish community in Palestine, which the Persian king accepted. The Persian king encouraged Ezra to go ahead with the plan's implementation, and assisted him in travelling to Palestine. Ezra's success is due, without a doubt to the help of the Persian king.[128]

Any and all dialogue or agreement between Persian and Jewish actors is portrayed as proof of their conspiratorial alliance. The authors' repeated invocations of Palestine implicitly suggest a modern day alliance between Persians and Zionists.

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[125] al-ʾAḥmad, "al-Ṣirāʿ Khilāl al-ʾAlf al-ʾAwwal qabl-l-Mīlād (331-933 BC)," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 89

[126] Raʾūf, "Al-Muqaddima," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 11

[127] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 11

[128] al-ʾAḥmad, "al-Ṣirāʿ Khilāl al-ʾAlf al-ʾAwwal qabl-l-Mīlād (331-933 BC)," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 89-90

Persian nationality is attacked as inextricably tied to Zionist aggression. Any and all Persian attacks on Iraqi nationality are by extension gains for Zionist ambition, while Iraqi struggles against Persian aggression are further lauded as victories against the Zionist cause. Hammurabi is glorified as the exemplary Iraqi leader through his role in this ancient Arab-Israeli conflict. He "liberates" Palestine from Jewish rule, striking a blow against Persian and Zionist enemies. Hammurabi, and by extension Iraqi nationality is glorified as an ancient champion of the Arab cause against Zionism.

The authors' narrative of Persian-Jewish collaboration continues in their discussion of later eras. Persian nationality is further defined as embodying deceit, oppression, and a willingness to ally with foreign enemies of Iraq. Persian-Jewish collaboration is tied to alliances with outside powers, such as the Mongols. The Mongol invasions of the 13th century are characterized as facilitated by foreign subversive elements within Iraq. Following the 1258 CE sack of Baghdad, Mongol rule was imposed over the former Abbasid territories of Iraq by the Ilkhanid dynasty (13-14th century CE). The authors' narrative of the occupation stresses the prevalence of foreign elements within Mongol administration, particularly Persian and Jewish officials. The Mongols are said to have imported numerous Jewish officials from Tiblisi, while expelling a number of Arab Muslim officials. The Ilkhanid ruler Arghun Khan (1284-1291 CE) is characterized as an oppressor of Muslims, who appointed Jewish officials to oversee Islamic officials and institutions.[129] It is stated that a number of madrasas and mosques were torn down, and their stones used to construct

[129] Nūri ʿAbd-l-Ḥamīd Khalīl, "Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy min Suqūṭ Baghdād ḥatā Nihāya al-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ al-Hijrī," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 195

palaces.[130]Jewish officials are described as occupying an even greater place in Mongol administration than the Persians. This Jewish collaboration is referred to as oppressive and exploitive of Iraqis, featuring forced appropriation of wealth, as well as the use of torture.[131]The authors describe Jews and Persians as monopolizing high offices throughout Iraq's major cities, while working to enforce an unconditional reverence for the Ilkhanid ruler's authority. Jewish officials are referred to as engaging in such extensive oppression, that their policy provoked anti-Jewish uprisings in Baghdad.[132]

While the examples are anchored in medieval history, the narrative implication is contemporary. Persians as an internal force are innately untrustworthy. They are demonstrated to be allied to Zionist concerns, while their conspiratorial aims encompass seeking allegiance with a powerful, destructive foreign power, the Ilkhanid Mongols. Due to the allegedly timeless nature of Persian nationality, the authors imply that modern Iran, like its predecessors, would align with foreign powers against Iraq. Equating the modern Iranian state with past Persian enemies was a common expression of Baʿthist nationalism. For instance, the state publication *Al-Thawra* labelled Khomeini the latest in a long line of Persian adversaries, writing:

> The Persians . . . do not fight except to occupy Arab soil, to injure Arab honor and diminish Arab pride. . . This was true of Khusraw [the great Sassanian king] who made war in the name of fire; of Pahlavi the greater [Riza Shah] in the name of the English; and of Pahlavi the lesser [Muhammad Riza Shah] in the name of the United States and of the Zionists; but Khomeini [pretends to do so] in the name of Islam.[133]

The authors juxtapose Iraqi nationality against an internal Persian enemy.

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[130] Ibid., 195
[131] Ibid., 196
[132] Ibid., 195, 197
[133] Cited in Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 144

Iraqi traits are defined by pointing to Persian and Jewish crimes. The Iraqi nation is wealthy and flourishing, provoking the greed and envy of Persian, Jewish, and Mongol adversaries. Iraqis are a pious people, who devote their resources to places of learning and worship. Their adversaries are enemies of faith, leading them to attack religious institutions and install palaces in their place. The Iraqi Arabs are generous in governance, while their enemies carry out acts of torture. Iraq valiantly stands alone against the Mongol enemy. Iraq's conquest is brought about by foreign conspiracy, rather than Mongol prowess or any fault of its own.

Central to the narrative discussion of the Persians as an internal foe is their social place in relation to Iraqi Arabs. Prior to the Islamic conquests, as both internal and external foes, Persians are depicted acting from outside the bounds of Iraqi Arab society. With the defeat of the Sassanid Empire, Persians are included within Arab dominated Islamic society as subjects and fellow Muslims. For the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*, this change in social location marks a new phase in Iraqi- Persian conflict, rather than an end to Persian hostility. The authors encapsulate this new manifestation of Persian enmity with the concept of *shuʿūbiyya*.

SHUʿUBIYYA

Shuʿūbiyya's origins are characterized by the authors as a post-Qādisiyya continuation of Persian hostility towards Arab Muslims. According to this view,

Persians continued to embrace their pre-Islamic heritage, while seeking to undermine the Arabs and restore their former power. While Persians adopted the trappings of Arab Muslim civilization, they secretly sought to regain their former status. Persians are stereotyped as seeking to foment discord and rebellion from within. Their status as Muslims is called into question, with Persians dismissed as either heretics or secret Zoroastrians. *Shuʿūbiyya* is cast as a dire threat to the Iraqi nation, endangering the fabric of society at a religious and cultural level.

> ". . . It [*Shuʿūbiyya*] strives to create a state of conflict, and a split between Arabism and Islam, emptying the former and tearing down the latter, then replacing Islam with Zoroastrian thought. . . Second, [it is] a political leaning focused on fomenting conspiracy and revolt, directly or indirectly, against Arab Muslim rule, in order to weaken it and replace it with Persian rule. . . *Shuʿūbiyya* adopted the Islamic religion as a screen, and cover for carrying out conspiratorial plans. . ."[134]

Shuʿūbiyya is repeatedly specified to originate in the aftermath of the Islamic conquests. These origins are used by the authors to reinforce their earlier portrayals of Persian nationality as inherently spiteful and self- interested. *Shuʿūbiyya* is framed as a reaction to defeat and the loss of privilege, as well as ingratitude to the Arab Muslims. The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian* single out Persian elites as instigators of the controversy.

> . . . Their hatred returned, raging after the emergence of Islam and its unification of the Arabs, who undertook the liberation of the Iranian peoples from the yoke of feudal Sassanid Persian power. This rage intensified in the hearts of those whose interests had suffered as a result of the wars of Arab liberation; the sons of the aristocratic class, the men of religion, and the clerical and educated classes of the Sassanid state. However, those elements able to confront Arab power [directly] were weakened during the first Islamic era . . .[135]

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[134] ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-ʿAni and Ḥassan Fādil Zaʿīn, "ʾIbʿād al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy fī ʿUṣr al-ʾUmawiyyīn," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 151

[135] ʿAbd al-Munʿim Rashād Muḥammad, "ʾIbʿād al-Siyāsiya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-ʿAbbāsī," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 157

Iraqi and Arab nationality is articulated through contrast to the conspiratorial aims and spitefulness of *shuʿūbiyya*. Iraqi Arab nationality is expressed as cosmopolitan, cultured, and tolerant through the historic examples of Islamic empire. The Islamic empires, particularly the ʿAbbasid Empire centered in Baghdad, are lauded for their achievements and openness to other cultures. While the *shuʿūbiyya* ethos is based upon relentless prejudice, the Arab empires are emphasized to be exceedingly tolerant and welcoming of other peoples. Iraqi Arab tolerance is invoked to emphasize *shuʿūbiyya* as a betrayal. According to the authors, *shuʿūbiyya* exploited the goodwill and clemency of Iraqi nationality. The medieval Islamic states, particularly the ʻAbbasid Empire, were recognized as pre-eminent civilizations and political powers, further provoking the subversive efforts of *shuʿūbiyya* adherents.[136] In order to undermine the Iraqi nation's power, cohesion, and religiosity, *shuʿūbiyya* agents thoroughly infiltrated ʻAbbasid institutions. So pervasive was this purported *shuʿūbiyya* threat that Abbasid administration said to have become the chief center of the *shuʿūbiyya* movement.[137]Iraqi achievement highlights the Persians as an internal enemy other.

To verify their claims, the authors of this narrative point to the proliferation of Persian cultural influence in Abbasid administration as evidence of infiltration.[138]Disparate Persian cultural influences are unified in the narrative as a single, cohesive conspiracy against ʻAbbasid administration. *Shuʿūbiyya* affiliation is

[136] Khaḍer Jāsim al-Dawri, "ʾIbʿād al-Thaqāfiyya wa al-ʾIqtiṣādiyya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-ʿAbbāsī," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*,179
[137] Muḥammad, "ʾIbʿād al-Siyāsiya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-ʿAbbāsī," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 159-160
[138] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 341-42

defined as integral to Persian nationality. Any official of Persian origin in Arab Islamic government is defined as a fifth column. This can be observed in the discussion of figures such as the influential Persian Barmākid ministers of the ʿAbbasid administration.

> The malice of the Persians was not limited to undertaking public movements, or armed rebellions. They sought important positions within the ʿAbbasid state in order to destabilize Arab authority, exploiting their influence within administration, and then striking the caliphate from within. The Barmākids, who had been a part of the ʿAbbasid state since its beginnings, did not cease in their hatred of the Arabs and Islam. So they took advantage of their influence . . .[139]

Shuʿūbiyya was heavily attacked for denigration of Arab Islamic culture and heritage. The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* charged adherents' with seeking to undermine fundamental facets of Iraqi Arab nationality, particularly with regards to heritage and religious practice. In *The History of Conflict and Wars*, al-Ḍābiṭ frequently cites other authors in order to bolster his narrative of *shuʿūbiyya* as an anti- Arab menace. In introducing a chapter on *shuʿūbiyya*, al-Ḍābiṭ directly quotes from a succession of scholars, each seeking to define *shuʿūbiyya* as a historical movement. For instance, al-Ḍābiṭ introduces the discussion with a Dr. ʿAbd-l-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī, historian and author of a cited work on *shuʿūbiyya*. Al-Ḍābiṭ frames *shuʿūbiyya* as a matter of great academic concern and curiosity:

> *Shuʿūbiyya* has met with great interest from ancient and modern historians . . . among them is Dr. al-Dawrī who says: "The secret movements which feigned Islam, or the trends which sought the destruction of Islam and the Arabs from within, is that which may be called *shuʿūbiyya*. That effort which endeavored to misrepresent Arab heritage, or the Arabs' role in history. . ."[140]

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[139] Muḥammad, "ʾIbʿād al-Siyāsiya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-ʿAbbāsī," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy*, 163

[140] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 277

While the narrative of the two volumes frames *shuʿūbiyya* as a cultural movement targeting Arabs, such a stance was considered synonymous with an attack on Iraqi nationality. Followers of *shuʿūbiyya* were charged with elevating their history, culture, and contributions to civilization above those of their Arab Muslim counterparts.[141] Al-Ḍābiṭ associates *shuʿūbiyya* with a general effort to promote markers of Persian cultural identity, including pre-Islamic identity. While the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* specifically single out Persian elites such as aristocrats and priests as a guilty party, al-Ḍābiṭ extends the source of *shuʿūbiyya* to a broader national sentiment. He discusses *shuʿūbiyya* in the following manner:

> . . . Their empire was eliminated, and these feelings became a common sentiment of all. They sought to elevate the importance of Persian spirit, and display its literature, the traits of the Persian language, and what was retained from its ancient civilization, by translating their works into Arabic . . . and they were often found working by every means against the Arabs . . .[142]

Shuʿūbiyya adherents are charged with drawing a number of direct comparisons between Arab and Persian society. Ancestry is invoked as a point of contention, with Arab antecedents derisively compared to Iran's Sassanid achievements. Cultural linkages and exchange between Arabs and Persians, such as literature and philosophy are downplayed. *Shuʿūbiyya* adherents are charged with derisively labeling the Arabs as libertines, lacking in moral standing.[143] This narrative singles out and denounces a number of *shuʿūbiyya* authors for immorality and anti-Arab sentiments. For example, one author is charged with having authored a book specifically to criticize Arabs, while another author is attacked for wine drinking and

[141] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 279
[142] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 23
[143] Ibid., 151

irreligious sentiments.[144]

The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* were perhaps most interested in addressing *shuʿūbiyya* as a religious concern. Within their narratives, s*huʿūbiyya* communicated the centrality of religious observance, particularly Islamic religiosity, to Iraqi nationhood. In this, the authors mirrored widespread Iraqi Baʿthist policy and rhetoric. Extensive public displays of faith and religiosity were made by the regime to enlist support, both from within Iraq and the larger Muslim world.[145]For example, the regime sponsored mosque construction and enforced the Islamic religious calendar. On a number of occasions Saddam Hussein urged Iraqis to observe the Qurʿan, and encouraged emulation of the rules and customs of the Prophet.[146]For the authors and Baʿth Party alike, Islam was an essential expression of Iraqi Arab religiosity and national identity. The Arabic language of the Qurʿan, as well as the religion's origins in the Arabian Peninsula was pointed to as evidence of Islam's connection to Arab nationality. Nationalists, such as the authors, diminished Persian standing within Islam, by emphasizing the religion's direct connection to Arabs. Any purported attack on Arabs or Arab culture by Persians was construed as an attack on Islam.

As the term *shuʿūbiyya* demonstrated qualities of piety in Iraqi nationality, so too did it serve as a symbol for Persians' lack of Islamic piety. According to this narrative, followers of *shuʿūbiyya* deliberately distorted Islamic teachings to suit their purposes, or else secretly retained pre-Islamic religious beliefs. The association made between *shuʿūbiyya* and Persian religious practice was a common feature of Iraqi

[144] Ibid., 152
[145] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party*, 267
[146] Ibid., 265

Baʿthist discourse. For example, ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Fukaykī, author of a work on *shuʿūbiyya*, characterized proponents of *shuʿūbiyya* as "serpents of shuʿubi hate" and "fire worshippers" (Zoroastrians), who remained secretly devoted to pre-Islamic religion.[147]In a number of official party documents, Iranians were derisively to as "magi", or Zoroastrians.[148] Likewise, the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* advocated the notion that Persians were not legitimate Muslims. Among charges levelled against *shuʿūbiyya* was its adherents' disdain for the Arabic language, in one instance referring to Arabic as deficient and backwards.[149]Adherents of *shu'ubiyya* are accused of having doubted the Qu'ran and the *sunna*. They allegedly feigned Muslim piety, while producing distorted interpretations of the Qur'an in accordance with *shuʿūbiyya* sentiments.[150]Followers of *shuʿūbiyya* were even alleged to have imported pre-Islamic religious practices into Islam, resulting in religious deviation and schism.[151]. As a subversive religious force, followers of the *shuʿūbiyya* movements are supposed to have engaged in widespread propagation of erroneous doctrine.[152] Unity of religious practice and understanding was considered critical to the solidarity of the Iraqi nation as a whole. *Shuʿūbiyya* posed a danger as a corruptive force, encouraging religious schism.

At times the *shuʿūbiyya* narrative's criticism of Persian religious character is

[147] Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 218
[148] Ibrahim Al-Marashi, "Lessons Learned: Civil-Military Relations During the Iran-Iraq War and their Influence on the 1991 Gulf War and 2003 Iraq War," *The Iran-Iraq War: New International Perspectives*, eds. Nigel Ashton and Bryan Gibson (New York: Routledge, 2013), 19
[149] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 151
[150] Ibid., 278
[151] Ibid., 256
[152] al-ʿAni and Zaʿīn, "ʾIbʿād al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy fī ʿUṣr al-ʾUmawiyyīn," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy*, 152

extended. Persian followers of *shuʿūbiyya* are attacked as secretly adhering to their pre-Islamic religion. Repeated references are made to *shuʿūbiyya* adherents acting as secret sympathizers of Zoroastrianism, with ambitions for the downfall of Islam.[153]The Persian Barmākid ministers of the ʿAbbasid court are described as possessing ties to Zoroastrianism.[154] In some instances, individuals are accused of acting as open proponents of Zoroastrianism, while uprisings ascribed to *shuʿūbiyya* are characterized as Zoroastrian in religious sentiments and goals. At times, critiques of Persian society are contained within denigrations of pre-Islamic religion. For instance the Mazdakite faith, an offshoot of Zoroastrianism, is described as a religion whose followers were gluttons who reveled in sin and lacked belief in moral accountability.[155]

For the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*, the danger of *shuʿūbiyya* suggested a constellation of threats to the Iraqi Arab nation. *Shuʿūbiyya* was an assault on Arab culture and religious practice by insincere Muslims. However, *shuʿūbiyya* also represented Persian political ambition and a desire for renewed empire. Pre-Islamic religious identity was strongly associated with loyalties to the ancient Persian empires, and hostility towards the new Arab Muslim states.[156] The *shuʿūbiyya* sympathies for Zoroastrianism were connected to a desire for the collapse of Arab Muslim rule, and the return of pre-Islamic, especially Sassanid influenced rule.

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[153] al-Dawri, "ʾIbʿād al-Thaqāfiyya wa al-ʾIqtiṣādiyya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-ʿAbbāsī," Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy , 178
[154] Ibid., 184
[155] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 245, 247
[156] For instance, the Manichaean faith was cited as a manifestation of *shuʿūbiyya*, and an example of Persian religion's deficiencies. At various times, Manichaeans had been persecuted by Zoroastrians in Sassanid Persia, Ibid., 255

In addition to its primary role as a force of cultural subversion, *shuʿūbiyya* is strongly characterized as a terroristic force, engaged in politically charged violence from within. For example, a secret society is described as forming in Abbasid era Kufa, with the goal of perpetrating terror and murder against the Arab population through the use of kidnapping, drugging, and strangulation. [157]Discussion of the group's actions and motives are framed in purely ethnic terms, with the group labelled as "Persian", while their victims are Arabs. Numerous uprisings are described as *shuʿūbiyya* attempts to revive Zoroastrianism and overturn Arab Abbasid authority. For example, a messianic uprising led by a figure known as Sindibād (754 CE) is discussed, which allegedly revered ʾAbu Muslim, foresaw the return of Zoroastrian power, and sought the destruction of the Kaʿaba.[158]A similar movement of 757 CE supposedly held up Abu Muslim as a Zoroastrian prophet who would one day return to rescue his followers.[159]Description of a *shuʿūbiyya* uprising in the eastern Abbasid provinces (837-817) led by Babak al-Kharmi incorporated themes of external foreign intrusion, with the rebels engaged in a military alliance with the Byzantine Empire.[160]

SHUʿUBIYYA AS UNRESOLVED DANGER

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*

[157] al-ʿAni and Zaʿīn, "ʾIbʿād al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy fī ʿUṣr al-ʾUmawiyyīn," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy*, 153
[158] Muḥammad, "ʾIbʿād al-Siyāsiya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-ʿAbbāsī," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy*, 160
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., 162

seeks to provide salutary lessons on the dangers of *shuʿūbiyya* ambition to the Iraqi nation. The authors of this narrative looked to the history of early Islamic states, such as the Umayyad and ʿAbbasid caliphates, to illustrate their proliferation and destructive potential. *Shuʿūbiyya*'s role as an alien and subversive force is emphasized through the Abbasid revolution which overthrew the Umayyad caliphate. In order to avoid criticizing the Arab participants, the ʿAbbasid uprising is broken down between legitimate and illegitimate elements, with *shuʿūbiyya* occupying the latter status. The Arab proponents of the Abbasid cause are assigned a direct leadership role, and possess legitimate grievances against Umayyad economic policies. Forces representing non-Arab participation, such as non-Arab converts to Islam, are dismissed as *shuʿūbiyya* and their grievance over discriminatory treatment is downplayed. The illegitimate *shuʿūbiyya* rebels are referred to as a hateful element, which infiltrated a broad political movement for reform in order to undermine Arab leadership.[161] 'Abbasid grievances concerning the application of the *jizya* tax to non-Arab Muslims are implicitly dismissed. Abbasid revolutionary leaders of Persian background, such as ʾAbu Muslim al-Khurāsānī, are labeled as proponents of *shuʿūbiyya*. For the authors of this narrative, *shuʿūbiyya* insidiously infiltrated legitimate Arab politics, later fomenting strife and discord. The later Abbasid civil war of 809-827 CE, known as the fourth *fitna*, is characterized resulting in part from *shuʿūbiyya* unrest.[162]The authors emphasize the dangers of *shuʿūbiyya* corruption by pointing to the gradual decline and fall of 'Abbasid Empire as the result of their machinations. In their view, the later emergence of independent powers and dynasties

[161] Ibid., 158
[162] Ibid., 163

in Iran was the fruition of long-term *shuʿūbiyya* sabotage.

The final downfall of the ʿAbbasid Empire at the hands of Mongol invasion is cast as a salutary lesson on the destructive potential of unchecked *shuʿūbiyya*. Baghdad's sack in 1258 CE is described as the end of a radiant center of civilization, and the onset of a lengthy period of stagnation, weakness, and foreign invasion. The fall and sack of Baghdad is heavily attributed to the collaboration of adherents of *shuʿūbiyya* with the Mongol warlord Hulegu. They are said to have encouraged Hulegu to engage in an offensive against Baghdad, as well as warning him of its defenses.[163] *Shuʿūbiyya* is said to have undermined the possibility of vigorous defense by discouraging Iraqi resistance. A multitude of *shuʿūbiyya* adherents supposedly engaged in correspondence with Iraqi notables, encouraging collaboration with the Mongols and abandonment of the caliphate. The authors' discussion of the Mongol invasion reiterates themes of religious perfidy, stating that *shuʿūbiyya* arguments for collaboration were often framed through religious justifications.[164]Baghdad's weakness in the face of Mongol attack is attributed to *shuʿūbiyya* collaborators spreading defeatist sentiment and weakening the armed forces.[165] The final Mongol assault is said to have killed many thousands of citizens, while sparing *shuʿūbiyya* collaborators, for whom they also provided protection during the chaos. For the authors, the subsequent Ilkhanid Mongol occupation of Iraq acted as a continuation of *shuʿūbiyya*'s disastrous influence. *Shuʿūbiyya* adherents through Mongol authority are framed as thieves, of administrative positions from Arab Muslims, of cultural

[163] Khalīl, "Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy Fārisiyy min Suqūṭ Baghdād ḥatā Nihāya al-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ al-Hijrī," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*,191
[164] Ibid
[165] Ibid., 192

productions, and of Iraqi resources. Cultural theft is particularly emphasized. *Shuʿūbiyya* is stated to have transferred of thousands of scholarly works from libraries in Baghdad, Kūfa, and Ḥilla, to locations in Iran and Azerbaijan.[166]

The downfall of Baghdad and Mongol occupation of Iraq serves to reiterate the authors' emphasis on Iraq's struggles as defensive in nature. In response to the tolerance and cultural achievement of the ʿAbbasids, the *shuʿūbiyya* assault their empire from within. Iraq falls to deceit rather than weakness, and in part suffers its fate due to a lack of sufficient vigilance against the dangers of *shuʿūbiyya*. The potential resistance of Iraqis is undermined before the fighting begins. *Shuʿūbiyya* represents the lack of Persian cultural achievements compared to Iraqi nationality, which is so rich in heritage it is the target of cultural theft. However, despite the role of Iraqi negligence in the loss of Baghdad, the authors' depiction of Mongol invasion affirms principles of national solidarity. The Iraqis essential unity as a nation forces the Mongols to rely upon *shuʿūbiyya* elements and their Jewish confederates for allies.

The gradual erosion of Abbasid state power is used in Ba'athist historical narrative as a cautionary tale, by depicting the concurrent rise of regional non-Arab powers, all seen as aligned with *shuʿūbiyya* goals regardless of their respective ethnicities. These dynasties are contrasted with the ʿAbbasid Empire for their adoption and patronage of Persian culture and language, as well as their greed for Iraq's wealth and resources. Cultural patronage, such as the production and circulation of Firdawsī's Persian *Shāhnāmh* epic, or Sassanid literature on governance, are cited as manifestations of *shuʿūbiyya* power.[167]These non- Arab dynasties are

[166] Ibid., 194
[167] al-Dawri, "ʾIbʿād al-Thaqāfiyya wa al-ʾIqtiṣādiyya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-

stereotyped as greedy and economically ruinous to Iraq's great wealth.[168]

The authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* single out the Buyids (934-1062 CE) for opprobrium, due to their background as a dominant Persian dynasty which sought rule over Arabs. Much of the menace ascribed to the Buyids as a *shuʿūbiyya* power is associated with the threat they posed to Iraqi national solidarity. The Buyids seized control of the ʿAbbasid capital of Baghdad in the 10th century CE, and retained the caliphate while marginalizing its political power. The Buyids are described as purposely weakening ʿAbbasid authority for their gain, only retaining the caliphate for its value as a symbolic religious authority.[169] Buyid officials attempted to co-opt Islamic legal officials and the religious sanction of the caliphate, while seeking to create familial ties to the ʿAbbasid dynasty and weaken local princes. Iraq's economy is characterized as suffering under Buyid rule, and subordinate to Persian interests. Buyid officials are charged with engaging *ṭāʾifiyya* or sectarian politics through ethnic favoritism and divide and rule policies.[170]As a result, Iraq's unity was threatened by corruption and weakness in central government, as well as the growth of conflict between local notables. Buyid *shuʿūbiyya* biases led to critical weakness in the Abbasid state, which was exploited by other enemies, such as the Seljuq Turks.[171] Iraq's essential quality as a place of unity and solidarity is here consistently undermined by the *shuʿūbiyya* menace of the Buyids. Corruption and rivalries, as well as ethnic and religiously motivated policies undermine resistance to a Persian threat,

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ʿAbbāsī," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 180
[168] Ibid., 184
[169] Muḥammad, "ʾIbʿād al-Siyāsiya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-ʿAbbāsī," *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy-Fārisiyy*, 167-168
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.

and harm the integrity of the Iraqi nation. One of the cornerstones of Iraqi nationality, strong leadership, is subverted by the Buyid threat. The caliph in this narrative is a symbolic leader, hopelessly beholden to Persian interests.

Similarly to other depictions of Persian occupation, the subjugation of Iraqis acts within the narrative as a means of contrasting Iraqi civilization with Persian barbarism. Buyid styles of rule and Iraq's economic difficulties are attributed to the former's backwardness as warlike, tribal and feudalistic people. The Buyids are stereotyped as ignorant of and uninterested in the sophisticated workings of Iraqi economic life. It is maintained that artisanal crafts and trade were neglected, while agricultural lands were partitioned and gifted to Buyid retainers for military service.[172] The Buyids of this narrative are a distinguished people, only insofar as they exemplify essentialist Persian identity. Their place in history is crafted as historical evidence of the *shuʿūbiyya* movement, as well as a warning against the dangers of national disunity.

Shuʿūbiyya discussions promote the strength of the state and unity of the nation as essential components of Iraqi identity. Other components, such as Iraqi religiosity, are strongly associated with national unity and social cohesion in the context of *shuʿūbiyya*. Unlike discussions of Persians as the external other, *shuʿūbiyya* narrative is not heavily concerned with the Iraqi Arab response. Descriptions of this subversive threat are not framed as sequences of Iraqi victories and defeats. The implicit message is one of warning, than Iraqi triumph.

There is limited promotion of Iraqi exceptionalism in the *shuʿūbiyya* narrative.

[172] al-Dawri, "ʾIbʿād al-Thaqāfiyya wa al-ʾIqtiṣādiyya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-ʿAbbāsī," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 185

Cursory mention is given of Arab Muslim intellectual and cultural responses to the *shuʿūbiyya* movement. Such responses are framed as examples of individuals recognizing and embracing the Arab peoples' unique role as a civilizing force.[173]Arab Muslims' responses to *shuʿūbiyya* are characterized as affirmations of unity and intellectual vigor. It is asserted that Muslim intellectuals of diverse backgrounds were roused to action by *shuʿūbiyya*; joining forces to expose and denounce *shuʿūbiyya* adherents.[174] Reference is made to discussions and disputes on *shuʿūbiyya* by Arab Muslims. Some Arab rulers are provided as examples of individuals who took specific action against the *shuʿūbiyya* For example, the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rahīd (786-809 CE) is cited for taking action against the Barmakids.[175]However, Arab cultural responses to *shuʿūbiyya* are largely highlighted as a means of showcasing Arab achievements. Arab Muslims are described as composing a multitude of invaluable works of literature, philosophy, history, and Islamic jurisprudence.[176] The composition of such writings as hadith collections, genealogical works, and Qurʿanic exegesis are specified to illustrate the greatness of Arab civilization. While Iranians' cultural role is stereotyped as one of attack and egotism, Arab Muslims are characterized as innovative and culturally productive. Abbasid tolerance, cosmopolitanism, and cultural vigor are favorably contrasted with *shuʿūbiyya*.

The *shuʿūbiyya* narrative at times exalts Iraqi Arab nationality Iraqi Arab through examples of triumph and heroism in armed conflict. In discussing the role of

[173] Ibid., 183
[174] al-Ḍābiṭ, *Tārīkh al-Munāzaʿāt wa-l-Ḥurūb*, 23
[175] al-Dawri, "ʾIbʿād al-Thaqāfiyya wa al-ʾIqtiṣādiyya li-l-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy fī al-ʿUṣr al-ʿAbbāsī," in *Al-Ṣirāʿ al-ʿIrāqiyy- Fārisiyy*, 183
[176] Ibid.

shuʿūbiyya dynasties and officials, Iraqi Arabs are in some instances portrayed as valorous rebels. For the authors, description of armed uprisings was a means of illustrating Iraqi bravery and fortitude in the face of hardship, as well as politicizing conflict by suggesting mass participation. Massive rebellions against foreign occupation are described as occurring in the 1060s CE against Seljuq Turkish authority, which was labelled as *shuʿūbiyya*, despite their non- Persian origins. The popular uprisings are extolled as examples of national unity, with enthusiastic participation across the country by peasants, artisans, and merchants of all backgrounds.[177]Despite the initial uprisings' defeat, they were repeated throughout the 11th century CE, in each instance featuring diverse local actors. In this narrative, popular uprisings by Iraqis on occasion managed to overcome *shuʿūbiyya* manufactured regionalism, infighting, and sectarianism, while harnessing the power of the people.[178]Rebellions were framed as quintessentially nationalist acts, which sought freedom and justice for the Iraqi people from foreign domination.

The Iraqi-Persian Conflict and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* engage historical narrative construction in order to illustrate essentialist qualities of mutually opposing Persian and Iraqi nationality. Persians were depicted as posing unique challenges to Iraqi nationhood as an eternal force of invasion, as well as internal forces of cultural subversion. A pattern of deceit, subterfuge, and conspiracy is traced by the authors back to ancient Mesopotamia. Persians are described as employing foreign allies and internal dissidents to subvert and undermine Iraqi nationality from within. Following the Islamic conquests, Persians were included

[177] Ibid., 188
[178] Ibid.

within the Muslim community. However, for the authors of this nationalist narrative, Sassanid defeat only marked a new phase in Persian deception and conspiracy. Persians took advantage of their status as Muslims and subjects of the Islamic empires to attack the institutions of Iraqi Arab nationality. Most thoroughly exemplified in discussions of *shuʿūbiyya*, this phase of internal Persian attack is described as an underhanded attack on Iraqi religiosity, unity, and prosperity. As a warning to modern Iraq, *shuʿūbiyya* is characterized as having brought about the eventual downfall of the ʿAbbasid Empire and foreign subjugation of Iraq.

The nationalist narrative articulated *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Iraq and Iran* found prominent expression in the public sphere. The notion of Iraqi-Persian conflict as an articulation of essentialist identity shaped public portrayal and rationalization of the Iran-Iraq War. Baʿthist officials, artistic production, and urban landscape mirrored themes of primordial Iraqi-Persian conflict.

CHAPTER III: PUBLIC SPHERE ARTICULATION OF NATIONALIST HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

HISTORY AND ESSENTIALIST NATIONALISM

Nationalist historical narrative on Iraqi-Persian relations enjoyed great currency during the Iran-Iraq War and extended to a variety of public venues. Historical memory which suited Baʿthist propaganda purposes helped to provide crucial intellectual authority and justification for nationalist tropes in politics, education, and public cultural production. Public sphere manifestations of the Iraqi-Persian conflict narrative shared prominent themes evident in *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*: the direct relation of pre and early Islamic Mesopotamian societies to modern Iraqi identity, the primordial nature of Iraq-Iran conflict, a preoccupation with Iraqi national unity, and Iraqi Arab virtue in matters of closely related to violence and religion.

The Iraqi Baʿth Party continued earlier regimes' traditions of glorifying the ancient past. The ancient city of Babylon was central to these efforts, due to its cultural importance and history as a Mesopotamian dynastic capital. In addition, the ruins' location at a junction between predominantly Sunni and Shiʿite regions symbolized national unity.[179] In 1970, the Iraqi government unveiled its plans reconstruct the city, particularly the monument area.[180]Due to the sheer scale of the project, reconstruction continued during the war years. The project was accelerated in 1987, under direct orders from Saddam Hussein to build Babylon without delay, in

[179] Abdi, "From Pan-Arabism," 20
[180] Ibid., 19

anticipation of the upcoming Babylon International Festival. [181]Such importance was granted to Babylon's reconstruction, that hundreds of craftsmen were exempted from military service in order to work on the project[182]The completed replicas of pre-Islamic monuments included a temple of the goddess Ishtar, a palace of the ruler Nebudchanezzar, and a section of wall more than 400 meters long.

Early Islamic history was also essential to public sphere expressions of Iraqi nationalism. Well known achievements, events, and figures from Islamic history were woven together with pre-Islamic civilizations to craft a specifically Iraqi Baʿthist notion of nationality. During the war, early Islamic achievements were most frequently referenced by pointing to historic military exploits, and heroic figures. The public was repeatedly reminded of individuals such as the warriors Khālid bin al-Walīd, Saʿd bin ʾAbī Waqqās, and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, as well as events such as the Islamic conquests of the 7th century, or the victorious battles against Western crusaders. As with the previously discussed volumes, the Battle of Qādisiyya (636CE) represented a central focus of pride, and was repeatedly invoked by the Baʿth Party. Construction of a historically grounded Iraqi nationality singled out Qādisiyya as an example of military glory and pious Arab valor. The government framed as an explicit parallel to the Iran-Iraq War, as well as an earlier episode in the ancient conflict between Arabs and Persians. So emphatic was this comparison that the war against Iran was dubbed "Saddam's Qādisiyya".

Some of the most visible manifestations of Qādisiyya discourse directly pertained to the military. Present day Iraqi leadership and armed forces were

[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid.

legitimized through comparison to heroes of the battle, particularly the Arab general Saʿd bin ʾAbī Waqqās. On February 28, 1988, the Iraqi Defense Ministry issued a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) Decree, noting that all who fell in an upcoming campaign were to be venerated as, "Martyrs of the Glorious Battle of Saddam's Qādisiyya."[183]Broadcasts were issued by the government backed radio station, "Ahvaz Voice of Al-Qādisiyya" following Iraq's invasion of Iran in September 1980.[184] Military decorations commemorated the memory of Qādisiyya, reinforcing primordial nationalist depictions of the conflict. The Order of Qādisiyya Saddam medal was issued in three classes to soldiers and civilians for bravery and achievement in battle.[185]A ceremonial Qādisiyya sword was awarded for exceptional military achievement. Other decorations, such a brooch labelled "Badge of Contribution Qādisiyya a Saddam", were also granted during the war.[186]

The "Victory Arch" war memorial of Baghdad was commissioned during the conflict in April, 1985 and completed in August, 1989. Featuring two giant bronze arms holding crisscrossed steel scimitars, the Victory Arch acted as a symbol for the regime's narrative of military triumph over an Iranian enemy. Nearby sacks overflowed with thousands of Iranian soldiers' helmets captured during the war. The arms were modeled on plaster casts taken from Saddam Hussein. The sword blades were meant to represent the weaponry of Saʿd bin ʾAbī Waqqās.[187] In August 1980, the Iraqi government established youth and adult work and training camps called

[183] Owain Raw-Rees, "The Iraqi Order of Qadassiya Saddam," *The Journal of the Orders and Medals Society of America* 55 (September-October 2004): 32
[184] Lawrence C. Soley, "The Political Context of Clandestine Radio Broadcasting in 1981," *Journal of Broadcasting* 27, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 246
[185] Raw -Rees Owain, "The Iraqi Order,"32
[186] Ibid., 33
[187] Kanan Makiya, *The Monument: Art and Vulgarity in Saddam Hussein's Iraq* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2004), 11

"Heroes of al-Qādisiyya", "Knights of al-Qādisiyya", and "Camp of al-Qādisiyya", for large scale participation in civil defense and popular labor activities.[188]The Baʿth party militia greatly expanded its membership during the war. This wartime expansion included some 40,000 women recruited to units named after ancient Arab women of note, some of whom had allegedly fought alongside men in the early Muslim conquests.[189]Regular army units were also named after famous individuals. Of forty military unit names mentioned by the press during the war, about thirty were named after heroes, battles, or other historical events.[190]

Qādisiyya and the Islamic conquests' significance as symbols of nationality extended to civilian life. A series of postage stamps were released memorializing the war dead and displaying images of the "Monument of Saddam's Qādisiyya Martys".[191] A new 25- dinar banknote was issued in 1986, featuring an image of Saddam Hussein against a background scene illustrating the Battle of Qādisiyya.[192] Various propaganda posters were issued during wartime, featuring imagery commemorating the Battle of Qādisiyya, or drawing explicit parallels between the battle's heroes and the modern Baʿthist regime. One poster displayed a purported image of Saʿd bin ʾAbī Waqqās (his true appearance is unknown) above his army at Qādisiyya. Adjacent to Saʿd is an illustration of Saddam Hussein in soldier's helmet, above an image of modern Iraqi armed forces. This poster features the statement,

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[188] D. Gershon Lewental, "Qādisiyyah, Then and Now: A Case Study of History and Memory, Religion, and Nationalism in Middle Eastern Discourse" (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 2011) , 397-398
[189] Achim Rohde, "Opportunities for Masculinity and Love: Cultural production in Baʿthist Iraq During the 1980s," *Islamic Masculinities*, ed. Lahoucine Ouzgane (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2006), 194
[190] Bengio, Ofra, *Saddam's Word*, 172
[191] Donald Malcolm Reid, "The Postage Stamp: A Window on Saddam Hussein's Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 47, no.1 (Winter 1993): 79
[192] Lewental, "Qādisiyyah, Then and Now," 392

"From Qādisiyyat Saʿd to Qādisiyyat Saddam."[193] Children's literature reflected the wartime focus on Qādisiyya and Arab-Iranian conflict. A sixteen volume series titled, "Saddam's Qādisiyya" was released, with each work focusing on a different aspect of the contemporary war, such as weapon systems or the war dead.[194] A children's magazine, *Majallati*, was dedicated to anti-Iranian propaganda, Baʿthist nationalism, and stories about heroic Iraqi men.[195] Wartime era school textbooks featured an emphasis on the early Islamic conquests. The Battle of Qādisiyya was portrayed as a battle for the liberation of Iraq, in which Arab valor and self-sacrifice confronted racist Persian aggression.

School textbooks shared many themes with *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*, particularly in their treatment of the Islamic conquests. National unity and military heroism were praised, and Persians were depicted as an irrevocable enemy image.

> It is the everlasting heroic epic that the Iraqi people fought to defend Iraq and the Arab nation; it is the battle in which the Iraqi people achieved victory against the racist Khomeinist Persian enemy. It was named Saddam's Qadisieh, after the victorious, by God's Will, leader Saddam Hussein, who led the marvelous heroic battles. . . just as leader Saad bin Abi Waqqas did in the first Qadisieh about 14 centuries ago.[196]

The Iraqi cinema was not exempt from this historical conflict narrative. Among the most extravagant displays of nationalist expression was the wartime production of the film, *Saddam's Qādisiyya*, directed by the well regarded Salāḥ ʾAbū Sayf. Begun in January 1980, *Saddam's Qādisiyya* sought to depict the original 7th

[193] Makiya, *The Monument*,12
[194] Rohde, "Opportunities for Masculinity and Love,"191
[195] Ibid.
[196] Cited in Talal Atrissi, "The Image of the Iranians in Arab Schoolbooks," *Arab-Iranian Relations*, ed. Khair el-Din Haseeb (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1998), 161

century battle in authentic detail and spared little expense. *Saddam's Qādisiyya* proved to be among the most costly Arab films ever produced, with a budget totaling $45 million, and a cast and crew drawn from throughout the Arab world.[197]Live elephants and units from the Iraqi military were used to enhance the film's realism. The movie's aim was explicitly propagandistic, with direct supervision from the Baʿth Party RCC deputy chairman ʿIzzat ʾIbrāhīm ad-Dūrī. During one visit to the filming site, he explained that the movie should inspire modern viewers. In particular, actresses starring in the film should arouse enthusiasm among women viewers, who would then urge their sons, husbands, and brothers to fight and sacrifice themselves for the sake of the nation.[198]However, despite the regime's efforts the film was not well received. Critics argued that *Saddam's Qādisiyya* was the worst of Salāḥ ʾAbū Sayf's many films.[199]

PARTY OFFICIALS AND NATIONALIST DISCOURSE

Perhaps the most prominent expressions of Iraqi-Persian conflict narrative were articulated by Baʿth Party officials. Ba'ath party officials repeatedly invoked essentialist nationalism to persuade public and international opinion of the validity of Iraq's war effort, as well as the illegitimacy of the Iranian regime and other opponents. Such efforts promoted Arab nationalism and Islamic piety, while discrediting the religious legitimacy of the Ba'ath Party's adversaries. This discourse portrayed Iraq

[197] Davis, *Memories of State*, 197
[198] Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 172
[199]Davis, *Memories of State*, 197

as one nation within a broader Arab community, based upon a shared heritage, language, and cultural characteristics. Baʿthist aspirations for regional influence and leadership were justified by emphasizing Iraq's role as a staunch supporter of Arab causes, an ally against Israeli power, and a protector against Iranian expansionism. Iraqi Baʿthist fears of dissent and their preoccupation with political unity was frequently expressed. Wartime discourse repeatedly emphasized the indivisibility of Arab state solidarity and security interests.[200] Intra and inter-state Arab solidarity was justified through xenophobic rhetoric. According to such discussion, national unity and fellowship among Arab states was necessary in the face of foreign conspiracies, and subversive attempts to undermine Iraq's strength from within.[201]

Baʿthist officials publicly stressed Iraqi exceptionalism within an overarching Arab community. Ancient and early Islamic history was used to demonstrate that Iraq possessed an unbroken national identity and central cultural importance, which reached to the beginnings of recorded civilization. Publicly promoting this heritage justified Ba'athist claims to Arab leadership, as well as reinforcing parallels drawn between the Iran-Iraq War and the storied past.

In September 1981, the war's first anniversary was commemorated with three days of celebrations in the ruins of Babylon under the slogan, "Yesterday Nebuchadnezzar, today Saddam Hussein". The Kurdish deputy Ṭaha Muhyi al-Dīn Maʿfur spoke on behalf of Saddam Hussein, emphasizing that conflict had persisted between the Iraqi people and Persian aggression for thousands of years.

When the mighty kingdom of Akkad and Sumer was founded, as an

[200] Saddam Hussein, *Some Aspects of Iran-Iraq War*. (Baghdad: Dar Al-Ma'mun for Translation and Publishing, Ministry of Information and Culture, Al-Huriya Press, 1987), 78
[201] Ibid., 60

> expression of the first Iraqi internal patriotic [wataniyya] unity in history [sic!], the ʻElamites attacked this kingdom, and thus the first Iraqi kingdom to express the unity of the homeland was exposed to a hateful attack by the Persian ʻElamites . . . And when Iraq rose again, and the United Kingdom arose, and Sargon the Akkadian arose as the leader who united Iraq, the black [Persian] . . . lusts reawakened; but the Iraqi leader Sargon repelled them forcefully . . . [and in modern times too] your determined resolve was the mountain . . . upon which the dreams of the grandsons of Xerxes and Kisra were shattered.[202]

The importance of history to the Baʿthist ideal of Iraqi nationality was a prominent theme in the party's Ninth Regional congress of June 1982, following serious defeats suffered in the war. President Saddam Hussein voiced encouragement for the ongoing war effort by appealing to ancient heritage and history.

> You, worthy Iraqis, descendants of the people of Babylon, Assyria and the great Abbasid state, have guarded your historical glory and your brilliant present [against Iran]. You have been the true children of this great people which created great civilizations . . . You have remained free and independent.[203]

Baʿth Party officials expressed similar language to the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* in describing a Persian other. In an interview with the newspaper *al-Qabas*, Foreign Minister Ṭāriq ʿAzīz responded sharply to statements by the Iranian Foreign Minister Velāyatī, who asserted that Iraq as a nation had existed for only 40 years. ʿAzīz stated that the Persian mind and thinking was "sick", that Velāyatī in his statement had revealed his "Persian racism", and that Iran was suffering from an "expansionist disease" in its behavior towards neighbors.[204] In response to Velāyatī, ʿAzīz asserted

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[202] Cited in Baram, *Culture, History, and Ideology*, 49
[203] Ibid., 51
[204] Reportage on New Round of Peace Talks in Geneva, ''Aziz Refutes Allegations', Baghdad, INA in Arabic. (FBIS- NES-88-212. 2 November 1988), 28

that Iran had been a subject of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires for much of its history. Ba'athist officials publicly associated Persian nationality with Zionist collusion. Tariq ʿAzīz suggested there was a historical continuity between Israel's aid to Khomeini, and Jewish support for the Persians in their ancient invasion and occupation of Babylon.[205] Saddam Hussein blamed Zionists for the continuation of the war.[206] Shortly after the war, Saddam was quoted as expressing a belief that Israel was capable of instigating Iran to renewed hostilities.[207] At Baʿthist sponsored Second Popular Islamic Conference (April 22-25, 1985) convened in Baghdad, the Iraqi government called for the support of the attending ʿulamaʾ and sharply criticized the Iranian regime. ʿIzzat ʾIbrāhim, the Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, delivered an address at the conference in which he denounced Iran as a collaborator of Israel against Arab interests:

> The aggressor Iranian regime . . . has also built bridges for cooperation and coordination with Zionists, especially in armament supplies. One of (the) major results of cooperation and coordination between these two racist regimes has been to supply the Zionists with new resources enabling them to expand and commit aggression against Arab and Islamic sacred places and things. . .
> The Zionist entity has been doing its best to fragment Arab and Islamic countries into fragile racist sectarian entities through inciting dissension and disorder to facilitate implementation of Zionist expansionist designs of aggression. Similarly, what Iran has been doing leads to the same goal and meets with Zionist efforts in intentions as well as results.[208]

Such sentiments illustrate the pervasive xenophobia of the Iraqi Baʿth Party, as well as its preoccupations with national unity. Iran is deemed guilty of conspiring

[205] Baram, *Culture, History, and Ideology*, 111
[206] Saddam Hussein, *Al-Dīn wa-l-Turāth wa-l-Tārīkh*., Al-Mukhtārāt: al-Juzʾ al-Tāsiʿ (Baghdad: Dār-l-Shuʾūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-ʿĀma, 1988),75
[207] 'Saddam Hussein Comments on Israel, Gulf, Kuwait', KUNA in English. (FBIS-NES-89-030. 15 February 1989), 36
[208] Ibid., 32-34

with the Zionist enemy against Iraqi and broader Arab nationhood. Furthermore, Ibrahim expresses concern over the incitement of dissent, and the fragmentation of Arab states along ethnic and sectarian lines. Much like the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* ʿIzzat ʾIbrāhim emphasizes the importance of national unity, and characterizes internal dissent as originating in foreign conspiracy.

Public expressions of nationalism by party officials reflected a tendency to combine Pan-Arabist sympathies with Iraqi nationalism. Shared Arab nationality was defined by extolling heritage, religiosity, and culture. Islam as a component of Iraqi Arab heritage was particularly prominent in Baʿthist cultural critiques and comparisons between Arabs and Iranians. Islam was used to reinforce themes of Iraqi superiority by stressing Arabs' prominence in its development. It was asserted that the Arabs were a unique people with a leadership role in history, entrusted by God to spread the religion of Islam throughout the world.[209]Arabs were characterized as having received Islam and the other monotheistic religions due to their innate spirituality and highly logical nature. As such, Arabs were touted as understanding religion better than any other people.[210] Pointedly, Arabs were described as possessing the ability to comprehend and practice their faith without deviation from orthodox practice, or the need for clerical mediation. In contrast, it was claimed that non- Arabs lacked the understanding necessary to interpret and practice religion

[209] *Ath-Thawra*, "Iraq and Iran," in *Some Aspects of Iran-Iraq War*, Saddam Hussein (Baghdad: Dar Al-Ma'mun for Translation and Publishing, Ministry of Information and Culture, Al-Huriya Press, 1987), 85
[210] Hussein, *Al-Dīn wa-l-Turāth*, 38

without religious hierarchy and clergy.[211] As a result, abuse of power and deviation from proper Islamic practice inevitably emerged in non-Arab societies. Iran was singled out for criticism in this regard.

> ". . .Thus, many non- Arab clergymen often focus on side issues or branch lines as far as religion is concerned, making these issues look as if they were the religion by itself. . . the branches shifted away from the trunk and became independent by themselves. Such a new tree formed by a certain society is not the Islam that we understand. . . Hence many clergymen in Iran lie and swindle in their dealing with religion and life, which is in total contradiction with the essence of Arab understanding of religion."[212]

Saddam Hussein was known for repeatedly expounding on matters regarding the relation of religion to politics, and the status of Arabs in Islam compared to Persians. In the state published *Mukhtārāt* series, Saddam Hussein expounded on the official party stance for a range of contemporary social and political matters, including such topics as socialism, the Baʿth Party and the nation, and the conduct of the Iran-Iraq War. Volume 9, *Al-Dīn wa-l-Turāth wa-l-Tārīkh* (Religion, History, and Heritage, 1988) elevated the position of Arabs within Islam while touting the superiority of Baʿthist secularism over Khomeini's government. Saddam Hussein associated Islam with Arabism, and characterized the religion as embodying qualities of inherent Arab greatness. Islam's origins in the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the Qurʿan's Arabic language were pointed to as signs of the Arabs' divinely sanctioned role as leaders and messengers of the faith. [213] The Qurʿan's Arabic composition was asserted to be a sign of the language's superlative quality, as well as a demonstration of Arabs' religious understanding and reasoning abilities.[214] In emphasizing Arab

[211] *Ath-Thawra*, "Iraq and Iran," in *Some Aspects of Iran-Iraq War*, 88
[212] Ibid., 89-90
[213] Hussein, *Al-Dīn wa-l-Turāth*, 27-28
[214] Ibid., 31

piety, Saddam was careful to reiterate the Baʿth Party's emphasis on national unity, and the dangers of religious schism and *shuʿūbiyya*. Repeated affirmations of national unity were expressed, such as "We are one nation", or "We are one heart".[215] Saddam characterized the Islamic Republic under Khomeini as an aggressive state, corrupting Islam with Persian customs, and fomenting sectarianism. In contrast, Iraq was portrayed as a harmonious whole, in which different races and religions coexist peacefully.[216]

Religion as a component of national identity, as well as its relation to the state, was a frequent topic in Saddam Hussein's speech and writings. A number of the ethnocentric sentiments concerning religion found in *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, as well as *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*, may be discerned in Saddam's published dialogue *Religious Political Movements and Those Disguised With Religion*. Here, Saddam endorses the Baʿth Party's secularism by stressing the dangers of politicized religion, arguing that a mingling of religion and politics leads to social fragmentation into religious sects, and potential government collapse. Saddam suggests that the mingling of religion with politics has often been carried out by *shuʿūbiyya*, or anti-Arab movements.[217]In doing so, Saddam is careful to affirm Arabs' Islamic piety and the centrality of Islam to the Baʿth Party. He insists the Arabs are a religious nation, charged by God with a leading role in disseminating the teachings of Islam.[218] Saddam warns that *shuʿūbiyya* poses a particular danger

[215] Ibid., 33
[216] Ibid., 56-57
[217] Saddam Hussein, *Religious Political Movements and Those Disguised With Religion* (Baghdad: Dar Al-Ma'mun for Translation and Publishing, Ministry of Information and Culture, Al-Huriya Press, 1987), 27
[218] Ibid., 8

when Arabs do not fulfill their natural role as leaders.

The overtly Shiʿi nature of the post-revolutionary Iranian government, as well as the open attacks made by Baʿthist officials against the religious standing of Iranian clerics initially suggest a driving anti-Shiʿi bias behind regime discourse. However, wartime Baʿthist discourse reveals that the party sought to include and co-opt displays of Shiʿi religiosity among its affirmations of Islamic piety. For example, the Shiʿi holy sites of Karbala received $80 million in regime funding from 1974 to 1981. In 1982, $24 million were allocated by the government to Karbalāʾ, with another $24 million in funding for the shrine city of Najaf, including silver and gold leaf decorations for the al-Ḥaydariya Mosque.[219]Saddam Hussein and other party leaders made it a point to be seen publicly attending mosque prayers more regularly than before the war. In his public statements, Saddam regularly invoked figures of Shiʿi reverence, particularly ʿAlī and Ḥusayn. In a speech made in April 1982, Saddam stated:

> We shall never tire of making sacrifices as long as we know that right is on our side; as long as we know that God is with us. Today, our ancestor, the father of all martyrs, Ḥusayn, may God's peace be upon him, stands as a lofty symbol of heroism, glory and firmness in defending right . . . We his descendants are proud to be connected with him; we are proud to be tied to him in soul and blood. We are fighting to defend right, justice and the holy land of Iraq, which harbours the remains of our ancestor ʿAlī, may God brighten his face.[220]

Saddam frequently visited Shiʿi shrines during the Iran-Iraq War, and made

[219] Adeed Dawisha, Islam in Foreign Policy, 125
[220] Cited in Adeed Dawisha, "Invoking the Spirit of Arabism: Islam in the Foreign Policy of Saddam's Iraq," *Islam in Foreign Policy*, ed. Adeed Dawisha (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 125-126

ʿAlī's birthday a national holiday.[221]Furthermore, he took steps to associate himself and his family with ʿAlī. Saddam made public reference to ʿAlī as his "grandfather". Amir Iskander's biography of the president claimed that Saddam was a descendent of ʿAlī, and featured an illustrated family tree tracing this lineage.[222]Baʿthist discourse included displays of Shiʿi religiosity as further evidence of Iraqi nationality's commitment to faith.

Attacks on Persian religious practice appear to have been motivated largely by violent anti-Persian hostility and prejudice, rather than sectarian sentiment. The detailed internal memoranda of the Iraqi Baʿth Party conspicuously omitted mention of Shiʿi religious background among personnel and applicants to the party. However, party officials frequently expressed concern at the possibility of a non-Arab presence within the party, particularly during the Iran-Iraq War. For example, a direct memo from the Party Secretariat to Saddam Hussein informed him that, "the party suffers from the existence of members who are not originally Arabs as this might constitute a danger to the party in the future."[223]Multiple individuals were either rejected for party membership, or expelled due to Iranian origins. Party branches were instructed to reject marriage approval forms of party members who sought to marry non-Arab women.[224]Starting in 1987 under Saddam Hussein's orders, nationality checks were made on all applicants to party, to ensure all were of Iraqi origin. The Baʿth Party attempted to co-opt the Iraqi Shiʿa, while denouncing Persian Shiʿi practice. The attacks made upon Persian character and religiosity appears to have been driven in

[221] Long, *Saddam's War of Words*, 62
[222] Long, *Saddam's War of Words*, 64
[223] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Baʿth Party*, 44
[224] Ibid., 43

large part by wartime xenophobia and racial prejudice.

Saddam Hussein was known for expressing nationalist views in the direct context of military action. Saddam's comments on the causes and conduct of the war illustrated of Iraqi self- defense, unity, valor, and Persian aggression on numerous occasion. At an international press conference on November 10, 1980, Saddam expressed a commitment to the cause of Arab unity, and emphasized the justice of Iraq's war effort. Similarly to the surveyed works on Iraqi- Persian conflict, Saddam characterizes Iraq as waging a defensive war. In answer to press queries, Saddam declared that Iraq had repeatedly sought to avoid armed conflict in the face of Iranian stubbornness.[225] He echoed historical discussions of ancient invaders when he addresses Iran's war aims. Iran, driven by aggressiveness and vanity, sought to subjugate the Arab states of the Gulf and reduce them to dependents.[226] For Saddam, this aggression was aided and abetted by Zionists, who seek the downfall of Iraq and the Arab world. Saddam asserted that the Zionist entity was at the forefront of those seeking war, and inspired Iran to attack Iraq.[227]In assessing the military capabilities of the two sides, he insinuated the Iranian military suffers from morale issues due to the injustice of their cause. In contrast, Saddam asserted that Iraqis of all ages and professions are prepared to fight, due to the rightness of their cause.[228] Saddam refers to Iraq's pilots repeatedly besting Iranians flying western aircraft, through intelligence and an invincible spirit.[229]

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[225] Saddam Hussein, *Saddam Hussein on the Conflict with Iran: A Press Conference Held on 10 Nov. 1980* (London: Embassy of the Republic of Iraq Press Office, 1980), 3
[226]Ibid.,15
[227]Ibid., 24- 25
[228] Ibid., 21
[229] Ibid., 36

In the state publication *al-Thawra,* Saddam Hussein accused Iran of acting as the aggressor against Iraq. Iran was asserted to be acting in accordance to a historical pattern of behavior, most recently through the Pahlavi Shah's occupation of islands in the Gulf.[230]Similarly to the *shuʿūbiyya* narrative, Saddam linked internal dissent with foreign subversion. The outbreak of war was attributed to a combination of Iranian ambition and foreign conspiracy. According to Saddam, Iran and the Western powers repeatedly sought to undermine the Ba'athist revolution of Iraq through plots and internal subversion. However, due to the leadership of the Baʿth Party, Iraq was able to foil these attempts, leading its enemies to resort to war.

The wartime public sphere of Iraq saw widespread proliferation of historical conflict narrative. The narrative of Iran-Iraq conflict and national identity expressed by the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* was reflected in a multitude of venues. The significance of pre-Islamic and medieval Islamic heritage to Baʿthist nationalism was evident in government support of archaeological study, as well as the reconstruction of ancient monuments. Early Islamic exploits and figures were widely commemorated in military and civilian circles. Military units were named to commemorate famous figures from history. School textbooks promoted themes of primordial Persian-Arab conflict, similar to the narratives of nationalist authors such as Shākir Ṣābir al-Ḍābiṭ and others. Glorification of the battle of Qādisiyya was widespread, and served to affirm Iraqi Arab exceptionalism, while implicitly predicting victory in the war against Iran. Baʿth party officials were perhaps the most prominent voices in this public sphere discourse. Official party views on the war, the proper relation of

[230] Hussein, *Some Aspects of Iran-Iraq War,* 24

religion to politics, and the dangers of posed by Persians and Zionists were forcefully expounded to domestic and foreign audiences. The nationalist views of the authors outlined in *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, and *T the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* found powerful expression throughout Iraq's wartime public sphere.

CONCLUSION

Chapter I discussed the crafting of historical narrative detailing Iraqi-Persian relations by the authors of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*. This narrative communicated an essentialist vision of Iraqi nationality, rarified through its conflict with an essentialist Persian identity. Iraqi nationality was assigned superlative qualities while being contrasted to an inferior and hostile Persian nationality. The authors anchored national character in the histories of the respective geographic regions, rendering cultural identity contiguous with modern national boundaries. The authors of the respective works framed much of their discussion in terms of an ideal Iraqi nationality beset by an external, invading Persian enemy.

Iraqi history was understood as a cyclical pattern of triumph and victimhood, as Iraqi rulers and kingdoms alternately vanquished and were subjugated by cruel Persian attackers. In this view of history, Persian successes were temporary, and inevitably succeeded in some way by victorious Iraqi counterattack. For the authors, the culmination of this pattern of victory and defeat was marked by the battle of Qādisiyya (636 CE), which saw the onset of Islamic conquests in Mesopotamia. The battle's violence showcased the national characters of the two sides, and marked a memorable triumph of Iraqi Arab nationality over the Persian enemy. The victory at Qādisiyya, and the larger story of Iraqi triumph over Persian invaders acted as an implicit parallel of the modern Iran-Iraq War, and a prediction of inevitable Iraqi victory. Furthermore, the battle of Qādisiyya and the Islamic conquests marked a transitional point in the narrative of the authors, from the Iraqi-Persian conflict as a

problem of open warfare, to the conflict as a crisis of internal foreign subversion.

Chapter II continued to examine the historical narrative crafted by *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*. Here focus was directed towards the respective works' preoccupation with concerns regarding Persian nationality as a subversion threat. Persian nationhood was characterized as assailing Iraq by fomenting conspiracies and sowing national disunity.

The authors attributed an ancient provenance to this mode of attack, citing as proof examples of supposed Persian conspiracy dating back to ancient Mesopotamia. Narrative discussion of Persian conspiracy incorporated broader themes of Baʿthist xenophobia, such as anti-Zionist sentiment. Much of the authors' discussion of Persian conspiracy was centered on the concept of *shuʿūbiyya*. While it originated as a term referring to ʿAbbasid era cultural controversies and literary feuds, *shuʿūbiyya* here was employed as a catch-all label for covert Persian hostility in the post-Qādisiyya era. According to the authors' narrative, Persians shifted their tactics from open warfare to internal subversion, and attacks upon Arab culture and institutions. Adherents of *shuʿūbiyya* were charged with either pretending Islamic piety, or with seeking to corrupt Islamic practice through heresy. Medieval Islamic history was interpreted as a story of gradual *shuʿūbiyya* infiltration and triumph, through Persian takeover of ʿAbbasid court life, the emergence of independent Persian dynastic powers, and Persian collusion with Mongol invasion.

These *shuʿūbiyya* discussions displayed a marked preoccupation with Iraqi political unity. Undisputed national solidarity under strong leadership was considered

an ideal component of Iraqi nationhood. Any and all Iraqi dissent or internal disorder was deemed foreign in origin. The authors' discussion of Persians as an internal threat acted as a means of affirming ideal qualities of the Iraqi nation and state. Political and cultural dissent was delegitimized as manifestations of Persian conspiracy, racism, and subterfuge. Moreover, the authors' illustration of the alleged dangers of Persian conspiracy served as a salutary lesson for the present day. Vigilance against foreigners and unity under strong leadership was implicitly enjoined upon citizens.

The final chapter examined public sphere manifestations of the Baʿthist Iraqi-Persian conflict narrative. The Baʿthist regime sought to foster support among citizens, as well as foreign observers, for its military efforts against the Iranian state. Historical narrative served to provide intellectual legitimacy for a variety of nationalist tropes in politics and public cultural production. Public sphere manifestation of this historical narrative mirrored the prominent themes of *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran*. The respective authors' arguments for essentialist Iraqi and Persian identities, the ancient lineage of Iran-Iraq conflict, Iraqi cultural unity, and Iraqi Arab exceptionalism in violence and religion all found powerful expression within the public sphere.

Regime support for archaeological projects and commemorations of ancient history bolstered a vision of essentialist national identity. Ancient military exploits, particularly the Islamic conquests, were loudly extolled as symbolic of Iraqi valor, and predictive of future Iraqi victory. Iran's religious legitimacy was called into question, while Iraqi and Arab piety was pronounced superlative. Such nationalist

discourse was reinforced and guided by pronouncements from senior Baʿth party officials, particularly Saddam Hussein. The Iran-Iraq War was publicly framed as a clash of opposing nationalities, and irreconcilable interests. The intellectual expression of Baʿthist conflict narrative was reflected in wartime expressions of public society.

The Iraqi Baʿth party governed with a persistent goal of maintaining unchallenged political hegemony within Iraq. As a militaristic and revolutionary regime, the Baʿthist state sought to enforce conformity within the nation, while maintaining military superiority over its enemies. The project of Iraqi Baʿthist governance was heavily dependent on cooptation of, and negotiation with local actors, often leading the regime to seek popular approval for its policies. The desire to gain public support for its governing vision led the Baʿth Party to engage in efforts to define the contours of Iraqi nationhood and belonging. Of central importance was the crafting of nationalist historical narrative. Nationalist historical narrative delineated the boundaries of proper governance and political participation, while legitimizing the authority of state actors and distribution of power.

In crafting their nationalist narrative, the Iraqi Baʿth party propagated an inclusive vision of Iraqi history. This vision posited the existence of an essentialist Iraqi identity, contiguous with modern-day national borders while superseding sectarian difference. Unity of the nation, and the elimination of dissent was essential to this ideal of Iraqi nationality. For the Iraqi Baʿth party, maintaining the security and integrity of this unified nation entailed perpetual vigilance against foreign threats, particularly the Iranian state. Due to the centrality of threats and conflict to the

Baʿthist worldview, the characteristics of Iraqi nationhood were defined in opposition to an Iranian, or Persian nationality. Persian and Iraqi nationalities alike were constructed by means of historical narrative. Pre-Islamic and Islamic history were unified to provide scholarly proof of the existence of discrete, opposed nations.

The construction of national identities reached a peak during the years of the Iran-Iraq War. The impetus of total war led to increased efforts by the ruling Baʿth party to define nationhood and achieve hegemony of the public sphere. Historical narrative construction was an important component in regime efforts to justify war policies, mobilize popular support, and win the approval of foreign actors.

It is within this context that works such as *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* emerged. These works illustrate the extensive cooptation of intellectuals into Baʿthist constructions of Iraqi nationalism. Individuals such as Shākir Ṣābir al- Ḍābiṭ, and the collective authorship of *The Iraqi- Persian Conflict* articulated a Baʿthist narrative of conflict and nationality, in which authentic Iraqi nationality was portrayed through the crafting of an essentialist Persian identity. With state approval, the authors produced an enemy image of wholly negative characteristics, defined by a historic hostility to the Iraqi nation. The respective authors marshalled an array of largely apolitical historical record and scholarship, which was selectively applied to support their hypothesis of essentialist ethnic conflict.

In accordance with Baʿthist notions of Iraqi history, the authors produced an overarching narrative of Iraqi exceptionalism. Throughout the course of history, Iraq was defined as a nexus of cultural achievement and political importance during its

moments of triumph, and a valiant, uniquely suffering victim during eras of political weakness or subjugation. Iraq's unique qualities were defined in opposition to Persian identity. Iraq's strength as a nation was contrasted with Persian state illegitimacy. Iraqi achievements of civilization and high culture were contrasted with Persian unoriginality. Moral uprightness and religious piety was juxtaposed against supposed Persian pre-Islamic religious practice, as well as supposed heresy. The authors' definitions of nationhood often focused on qualities related to war and government. Persian nationality was stereotyped as militarily inferior, conspiratorial, and subject to brutal, authoritarian leadership. Al-Ḍābiṭ and the other authors played off this vision of nationality against an Iraqi opposite: valor and martial prowess in victory and defeat, a commitment to national unity which overrode regional and sectarian bias, and strong, ethical leadership. Within the course of thousands of years of chronicled history, the clash of opposing nationalities was portrayed as a two tiered conflict: an open conflict of conventional warfare between Iraqi and Persian forces; and a conflict of conspiracy, subterfuge, and cultural disputes in which Persians were agents of sabotage and national disunity. Conventional war showcased national military qualities, while offering an implicit parallel to the Iran-Iraq War. Conspiracy and the problem of *shuʿūbiyya* illustrated Baʿthist preoccupations with state hegemony, and served as an object lesson to readers on the danger of foreign enemies.

The authors' production of a Persian enemy image reinforced a public portrayal of Iran-Iraq conflict as an intractable crisis of clashing nationalities, resolvable only through military victory. The academic authorship and research underlining *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars*

Between Iraq and Iran provided this discourse with a suggested intellectual credibility and grounding, adding to the pervasive nature of the Baʿth party's wartime nationalism. These respective works and other like them rarified in a concentrated form the Baʿthist regime's efforts to achieve ideological hegemony through historical narrative. Individual authors, such as Shākir Ṣābir al- Ḍābiṭ, as well as collaborative efforts, such as *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict*, alike worked towards the production of a wartime enemy image of Persian identity. The production of this enemy image, bolstered by seemingly authoritative historical scholarship, resulted in a fixed, overwhelmingly negative portrayal of a national adversary. The authors' enemy image both clarified, and mirrored broader public sphere depictions of Persian identity. With the backing academic and state authority, the Persian enemy image enjoyed wide currency and little challenge during the Iran-Iraq War.

Cooptation of intellectuals, such as the authors of the surveyed works, allowed for the promotion of Baʿthist visions of national identity and state power, the legitimization of its war efforts, and the mobilization of support among Iraqis citizens, as well as foreign observers. *The Iraqi-Persian Conflict* and *The History of the Conflicts and Wars Between Iraq and Iran* are salient examples of the intellectual construction of wartime Iraqi Baʿthist nationalism. The narrative construction by their authors demonstrates the deep interconnected nature of Iraqi state discourse and public cultural production, as well as the unfortunate prevalence of enemy image making in times of war.

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