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Liat Kozma, Cyrus Schayegh, and Avner Wishnitzer, eds., *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality, and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880-1940*, I.B. Tauris, 2015, 377 pp., \$120.00 US (hbk), £75 UK (hbk), ISBN 9781780769424.

So many people, objects, and ideas were on the move in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Middle East that movement “emerges as a major factor of change...worthy of study in its own right” (2). So conclude Liat Kozma, Cyrus Schayegh, and Avner Wishnitzer, editors of this volume entitled, *A Global Middle East*, which emerged from a January 2012 conference at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem. The period from roughly 1880 to 1940, they explain, amounted to “the first modern globalization”: an era when the Middle East became a stage for the “unprecedented intensification in the movement of people, commodities and ideas across the globe” (1).

The editors begin with an introductory essay that surveys recent theoretical and comparative approaches to globalization while situating the Middle East within it. An aim of this book, they explain, is to overcome the still-prevalent academic tendency of viewing the Middle East as exceptional and isolated—and by implication as deviant—in the context of world history. Fourteen chapters follow. These include ten long essays by established scholars plus four “short piece” essays by scholars who were graduate students when the conference occurred.

The essays in this volume are strong, fresh, and compelling. They take as historical actors not only people, but also commodities and ideas. They cover a wide sweep of demographic, intellectual, material or object-based, legal, scientific, economic, and cultural history. Notwithstanding the title’s focus on global affairs, the essays present histories that are intensely local and global at once. Indeed, some of the contributors acknowledge debts to methods of micro-history and to theories of “glocalization” (the hybrid fusion of distinctly local and broadly global phenomena). The book covers a Middle East that stretches along a longitudinal sweep, from roughly Istanbul, through Syria and Palestine, into Egypt, and down to the Red Sea town of Harar (now in Ethiopia), which Egyptian troops set out to occupy in 1875, six years after the Suez Canal had opened.

Cyrus Schayegh takes a single book as his starting point: a topographical survey of the Golan region between Haifa and Damascus (spanning the present Israeli-Syrian border), published in 1888 and written by Gottlieb Schumacher, an American-born German-speaking surveyor, who “himself had globalization written all over him” (21). Schayegh’s article proceeds to offer a kind of literary, intellectual, and political history rolled into one. Prepared for the German Society for the Exploration of the Holy Land, but backed by Ottoman

officials who were eager to control the Golan region more closely by knowing who and what the region contained, Schumacher's survey shows how a place as apparently marginal as the Golan stood at the crossroads of long-distance migrations. For example, the Golan in the 1880s hosted two significant Muslim immigrant communities. These were Algerians, who had fled from the French conquest of their North African country in 1830; and Circassians, who had fled from Russian or Russian-backed conquests in the Caucasus and Balkans regions after 1860, and again after the Russo-Turkish War of 1878. In the Golan, Schumacher noted, the Circassians were expanding agricultural settlements and in so doing were clashing with local Bedouins whose lifestyles depended on some mobility. Leaving aside what this story tells us about changes in the Golan region, the essay mentions some fascinating details about Schumacher, who came from a family that belonged to the pietistic and millenarian Christian Templar movement, but who hailed from the quintessentially American frontier town of Zanesville, Ohio.

Avishai Ben-Dror offers a micro-history of a tumultuous two-year period in Harar, a town that had a history of autonomous rule on the Red Sea coast. He starts from Frederick Cooper's premise that to study globalization effectively in Africa one must focus on something that is "more than local and less than global" (55). Thus Ben-Dror considers the career of the last emir of Harar, Abdullahi Muhammad b. Ali 'Abdashakur, who ruled from 1885-87, a two-year interregnum after a short Egyptian occupation but before Ethiopia swallowed this enclave. During this period when the Suez Canal was quickening Red Sea travel, multiple imperialisms were colliding around or near Harar: the imperialisms of France (think of Djibouti), Egypt (which had recently lost control over Sudan, where the Mahdists were ruling), Ethiopia (which was poised to absorb Harar), the Ottoman Empire (if one extends one's gaze across the Red Sea to Yemen), and Britain. Indeed, British imperial tacticians were the ones who installed Abdullahi into this emirate. Meanwhile, arrays (perhaps one could even say, "armies") of Christian missionaries were showing up and competing with each other, as well as with Muslims, while European merchants (and especially Greeks and Italians) were competing as well. A remote periphery where nothing much happened? Hardly. Ben-Dror's article makes it clear that Harar in this period was a seething cauldron of imperial, mercantile, and religious rivalries and proxy wars.

Valeska Huber studies the phenomenon of early twentieth-century universities in Egypt—especially al-Azhar, the Egyptian University (later Farouq University, now Cairo University), and the American University in Cairo. Her goal is to understand what she calls "educational mobilities" which "became the target of imperial powers"—and especially of Britain—"in an attempt to limit and steer them" (93). In a somewhat separate vein, she also considers the career of the distinguished British anthropologist, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, who taught at Cairo University in the 1930s. Evans-Pritchard deserves closer study, for as his career in Sudan and Libya showed, he combined his anthropological research with British colonial intelligence work. Huber suggests at the outset that this history of educational development continued into the early twenty-first century, when several new foreign-sponsored, university-level institutions emerged in Egypt—including French (2002), German (2003), Canadian (2005), British (2005), and Russian (2006) ventures.

Drawing upon the archives of the International Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children, Francesca Biancani examines international migration and sex work by European females in early twentieth-century Cairo. As she explains, "Foreign women migrated through the procurement of international networks of pimps, working in collaboration with foreign brothel keepers in Cairo" (118). Many sailed from Marseille but had origins in places ranging from Spain in the west to what is now Turkey in the east.

Although many if not most of the women and girls who entered the sex trade had been duped or pressed into the work, she tries to highlight “subaltern women’s agency” by noting the ambiguities between career choice and coercion, and between victimhood and self-assertion. Biancani advances the spirited, optimistic, but not entirely convincing argument that historians should understand these sex workers as “working women strenuously trying to defend their role as breadwinners” (112) within a global economy of subsistence migration. Her article is interesting enough to warrant a full book on the subject.

Yaron Ben-Nach surveys trends of Jewish migration and demographic change during the late Ottoman period. His article is a masterful distillation. He considers, for example, the plight of Jewish women who were stuck in a kind of legal and social limbo—married, but apparently forgotten, abandoned, or possibly even widowed after their husbands emigrated (to the Americas and elsewhere) and disappeared. He notes the fancy legal footwork that local rabbis performed in order to allow these women to secure annulments and thereby remarry—so that they would not resort to sex work or become burdens on the community. He also traces patterns in Jewish demographic expansion and contraction, for example, as a result of improved medical care or the devastations of wars, and mentions, too, the impact of Christian anti-Semitism in prompting Jewish migrations in the Balkans. Meanwhile, in contrast to scholars like Julia Phillips Cohen, who has emphasized Jewish pro-Ottoman sentiment and even patriotism in her recent book,¹ Ben-Nach seems to take a dimmer view by emphasizing Jewish opposition to the Young Turks’ policy of military conscription after 1909.

Evelin Dierauff offers a micro-history of one Arabic newspaper, *Filastin* (“Palestine”), published between 1911 and 1913. Challenging scholars who have stressed the staunchly anti-Zionist position of this journal, she argues that *Filastin’s* approach to Zionism was “much more ambivalent” (166) and nuanced. Its editors, she explains, Isa and Yusuf al-Issa, regarded Zionist migration not as *Jewish* migration but rather as *foreign* migration. And what they objected to, most of all, was the exclusionary behavior of Zionist immigrants, who hired Yemenite Jews instead of local non-Jewish Arabs while trying to construct for themselves a city within a city in Jaffa. As one of the “short pieces” in this volume, her essay makes a subtle contribution to proto-Palestinian intellectual history.

Will Hanley studies identity papers in an era of migratory flux. From the period between 1860 and 1914 in Alexandria in Egypt, he found fifty different kinds of identity documents—especially passports and foreign residency permits, but also things like letters of introduction and employment documents. Passports, which he calls “papers for going,” were becoming more common during this period, but residency papers, which he calls “papers for staying,” were more important. That is, residency papers were more numerous and more heavily used (judging from their official stamps and notations, and folds), and “show[ed] the greater value of residence rights” relative to travel privileges (194-195). Hanley concludes that “nationality was an inchoate characteristic of personal identification before World War I” (192), a period that he calls an age of “citizenship experimentation” (195). Recalling the works of Brinckley Messick and others, but moving in an original direction by focusing on the textual effluence of imperial, national, and international bureaucracies, Hanley’s study focuses not only on the textual content of these documents, but also on their format and materiality, and their role as “talismans of status” (194).

¹ Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Haggai Ram surveys the landscape of hashish trafficking in late Ottoman and mandatory Palestine. The mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman landscape now seems very unfamiliar: few restrictions applied to the sale and use of drugs, which were “widely available in the empire for those seeking psychoactive bliss” (201) or for those seeking medical treatments. Opiates were especially common for “soothing” babies (as mothers and other caregivers of the period maintained) (see p. 202)—or perhaps for sedating babies and making them easier to manage. Only with the founding of the League of Nations after World War I, Ram notes, during the Palestine mandate era, did drug trafficking and consumption in the Middle East become an official “problem” and source of “crime.” Indeed, monitoring and policing international crime became a major *raison d’être* of the League of Nations. Ram shows that the United States elbowed its way onto the scene, much to the annoyance of British authorities in Palestine, as the U.S. Federal Bureau of Narcotics identified Palestine as a major transit route for hashish smuggling between Syria and Egypt. (To borrow from movie lingo, interwar-era narcotics policing may have thereby served as a “prequel” for post-World War II U.S. influence in the region.) Intriguingly, Ram connects the rise of international drug-selling networks to the rise of detective fiction literary genres, in places like the United States but also in Palestine, where there was an incipient “Hebrew-language sleuth literature” during the interwar era (221).

Scholars have studied the impact of railways, steamships, and other technological advances on nineteenth-century imperial expansion. In his essay, however, Uri M. Kupferschmidt studies instead the diffusion of what he calls “small technologies”—small-scale mass-produced consumer goods—that had subtle but incrementally important social influences on habits and behaviors in everyday life. These included such items as Singer sewing machines (1853), Remington typewriters (1873), General Electric incandescent light bulbs (1879), and Gillette safety razors (1902), which affected such things as what people wore, how they wrote and communicated, the hours they slept or worked beyond dusk, even how they groomed. Small technologies also included eyeglasses, which Kupferschmidt speculates may have been as important to the expansion of reading culture in the Middle East as the rise of cheap printing and the expansion of schooling and literacy. This short but brilliant article sets out an agenda that one hopes others will go on to follow, by investigating more deeply, say, the impact of wristwatches, pianos, and other increasingly common paraphernalia of daily life in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Middle East.

Taking a history and sociology of science perspective, Tamar Novick widens the frame of this volume to include living but non-human actors in history. She focuses, above all, on honeybees, and on a technological change—namely, the invention of moveable frame hives—which took off in late nineteenth-century Palestine to transform and expand the production of honey. This essay represents a sliver of the author’s larger work (based on her prize-winning PhD dissertation) on the industrialization of milk and honey production in late Ottoman and mandate-era Palestine, and on the relationship of these developments, in turn, to the romantic Zionist conception of Israel as a biblically celebrated land of milk and honey. Science, religion, technology, and food are subjects that Novick’s analysis weaves together.

Johann Buessow, like Cyrus Schayegh, takes one book as point of departure. In this case, Buessow studies the *Theology of Unity* (1897) by the Egyptian Muslim reformist scholar Muhammad Abduh. Buessow considers the idea, proposed by Christopher Bayly and others, that “religions around the globe became more uniform during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and that local religious diversity was increasingly embedded in globally dominant templates” (275). Abduh’s *Theology of Unity*, he argues, reflected eclectic reading, insights

gained from travels in Europe and the Ottoman lands, and the strong influence of Protestant thought and print culture. More specifically, Abduh's visits to scholars at the University of Geneva, whom he met while vacationing in the health spa of Evian-les-Bains in 1894, left their mark on this book. So did his readings of translated works by Tolstoy and of works by ancient Greek and modern European philosophers, ranging from Plato to Kant. Even Abduh's friendship with an Anglican clergyman named Isaac Taylor, whom he befriended during a sojourn in Beirut, proved influential, by informing Abduh's ideas about the proximity of Protestantism and Islam (see p. 293). Buessow does not study the reverse flow of ideas—how Abduh may have influenced, say, Isaac Taylor—though his article suggests possibilities for exchanges that went in many directions.

With *The Press in the Arab Middle East, Reading Palestine*, and his other publications, Ami Ayalon has investigated the interrelated histories of printing, literacy, and reading culture more than any other historian of the modern Middle East. In this essay, he returns to a basic, yet still elusive, question. Namely: why did printing take off so belatedly and slowly in the Arab world, but then take off with such intensity and speed? He points out in this essay that by the mid-nineteenth century, 867 Arabic titles had appeared in print in Egypt, accounting for some 724,000 copies. Of these, over 85% were school texts and manuals for military and government officials, and only some 100,000 were intended for a general reading public. "More important," he adds, "many of the volumes were reportedly left unwanted, 'piling up in the warehouses' and gathering dust" (325). But the situation changed after the 1860s, marking a "sharp departure from past torpor" (326). Ayalon attributes the revolutionary change in reading habits to two factors: first, the role of Protestant and Jesuit missionaries in stimulating a lively culture of printing and reading, especially among Christian Arab intellectuals; and second, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which stoked a hunger for information as global travel sped up and intensified. To this, one could presumably add the extension of telegraph lines in this period, which also quickened the travel of news.

Elife Biçer-Deveci explores the subject of female internationalism, by studying the Ottoman-language journal *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World), published for a female readership between 1913 and 1921. On the pages of this journal, she argues, Ottoman women demanded women's rights within the context of international feminist movements, with which they closely identified. By participating in women's congresses in places like Paris (1900), Stockholm (1911), and Geneva (1920), Ottoman women became aware of the rights as well as the persistent disabilities that affected women in Europe and further afield. Biçer-Deveci argues, in short, that Ottoman feminism responded not only to local Ottoman (and incipient Turkish) cultural circumstances, but also to international trends and affairs.

Joachim Langner returns to the subject of the Egyptian Muslim reformist Muhammad Abduh, in this case by studying Abduh's responses to Farah Antun in the journal *al-Jami'a*. Recalling the famous debate that had occurred between Ernest Renan and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani years earlier in 1883, Antun argued that Islam inhibited scientific reasoning, relative to Christianity, while Abduh argued the opposite. Langner argues that both Abduh and Antun essentialized Egyptian-Ottoman, British-European, and Islamic-Christian entities, and in so doing modeled what theorists of religion have described as a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century tendency toward the standardization and institutionalization of religion. Langner further argues that Abduh subsequently put these beliefs into action when he reformed (i.e., tried to standardize) al-Azhar's curriculum and later the Shari'a court system in Egypt to reflect a modern, and uniform Islam.

This book is intellectually substantial. Each essay stands on its own; each would have merited inclusion in a fine journal. Indeed, some of the essays could easily offer foundations

for whole books, while others point to possibilities for further investigation. Taken together, the essays provide examples for dexterous, multidirectional approaches to Middle Eastern histories of people, ideas, and things. At the same time, they illuminate the often intensely local manifestations of much broader global movements while placing the Middle East squarely within the currents of world history.

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