

Regimes of mobility: borders and state formation in the Middle East, 1918–1946,
by Jordi Tejel and Ramazan Hakkı Öztan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022)
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The recent collapse of the state in Syria and Iraq has led to an increasing interest of scholars in the history of the non-state actors whose authority somewhat filled the vacuum of power in these regions. *Regimes of Mobility* is a welcome addition to our knowledge on the history of the mainly Arab and Kurdish mobile societies and groups in the Arab East who adopted a mobile existence between Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey and Palestine. As stressed by Reşat Kasaba in the foreword, the volume has an up-to-date relevance as the chapters of the book 'are also relevant to our contemporary period because the early twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have some striking similarities' (p. xv).

The book consists of eleven chapters in addition to an introduction, foreword and afterword, all of which draw on primary sources and make a significant contribution to our available knowledge by examining hitherto neglected aspects of Middle East history in the post-Ottoman era. Chapters are organized in two parts focusing on the themes, 'post-Ottoman territoriality' and 'cross-border mobility'. As detailed in the introduction, the book frames 'the introduction of the national borders to the Middle East as a radical re-ordering of the region's existing regimes of mobility' (p.3). The contributors, however, successfully demonstrate how the Ottoman modes of mobility adapted themselves to the new conditions of a bordered Arab East. In addition, the volume indicates the mutually constructive interactions between the local, regional, imperial and global on the same space, that is the borderlands.

Regimes of Mobility makes a start on the *Milli* tribe of the Turkish-Syrian border with Alexander E. Balistreri's chapter, in which the author discusses the meaning attributed to the border by the Kemalist nationalist leaders in the early 1920s. He argues that they deliberately used the term *milli* (national) in place of the ethnographic boundaries to maximize the territorial acquisitions of modern Turkey and diversify options of collaboration between the different societies of the former Ottoman territories such as Syria and Iraq. Contrary to the other chapters, this one is more 'textual' than 'factual' as it focuses on the international relations and diplomacy conducted by the Ankara government for its southern and north-eastern frontiers. In chapter 2, Orçun Can Okan examines hitherto neglected issues in the process of the 'regime change' in Turkey and Syria during the 1920s focusing on how the new borders influenced the lives of ordinary people. The chapter skilfully contextualizes borders with reference to their role in the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire examining the individual – but 'international' – stories of the former Ottoman subjects such as the Damascene military doctor Ahmed Akif who died in the First World War and whose family struggled for allocation of his full pension to themselves. Okan impressively combines 'cold-blooded' diplomatic correspondence with daily life.

Chapters 3 and 4 shed light on how regional trade was affected by the making of the Middle Eastern boundaries. In his chapter on the trade between the cities in Turkish and Syrian borderlands, Ramazan Hakkı Öztan investigates the commercial consequences brought about by the division of the Ottoman province of Aleppo between Turkey and Syria which became considerably interdependent since the late nineteenth century with infrastructural investments, such as roads and railways. He argues that Aleppo's very connections were ruptured with the post-war settlements 'that had long defined the city's central position within the Ottoman East' (p. 83). The process of disintegration which took some ten years is, however, exemplary to indicate how gradual the Ottoman twilight was. In Chapter 4, Simon Jackson turns to the global capitalist actors and elaborates on the Ford company's tractor business in the region of Aleppo.

Examples of the different ethnic and religious groups' experience with the new borders are examined in Chapters 5 and 6. Norig Neveu discusses 'the (re)development of the Melkite and Greek Orthodox churches in the Emirate of Transjordan during the Mandate period' (p.144), addressing the tension between the national territorialization and the transnational networks of these religious

communities. Katharina Lange's highly analytical chapter examines Syria's Kurd Dagħ region. She interprets the category 'Ottoman' in a broader sense and rightfully identifies it with habits of the groups and individuals they acquired in the Ottoman era rather than an identity or 'certain ways of actions' that Ottoman formal education brought in. Their struggle in the border region between Syria and Turkey was to remain as in the Ottoman times and their reactions to and struggle with the Turkish and mostly French governments was to protect their 'Ottomanness in practice'.

The remaining five chapters focus on the various aspects of 'cross-border mobility' which largely maintained itself in the post Ottoman era despite the regionwide improvement in the bordering processes. In his thought-provoking chapter, Samuel Dolbee uncovers the relationships between the state formation/bordering and disease control policies, i.e. how the mandate rules and nation-states used procedures like quarantines to consolidate the newly formed border by cutting down on cross border movement of nomadic groups. Following him, César Jaquier portrays the official efforts to channel regionwide mobility by monopolizing the transdesert traffic with motor cars. It would facilitate state control over mobility and minimize the impact of mobile tribal societies on road security. By this way, the centuries old urban dependence on the tribal actors in the Arab East for inter-city transportation and travel would be minimized. Lauren Banko's chapter focuses on the frontier region between Palestine, Lebanon and Syria and analyses legal and illicit border-crossings. The chapter uncovers the difficulty in controlling people's mobility between these three closely connected regions, and how the British failed to establish an effective system of border control and how the movement of people challenged border infrastructure. In chapter 10, Robert S. G. Fletcher investigates the tribal developments of the 1920s in the borderland area between Saudi Arabia and Iraq and scrutinizes the Ikhwan attacks and the Iraqi, Saudi and British responses to it. He tries to contextualize the actions of the tribal communities as 'rebel', 'raider', and 'refugees' although the discussion throughout the text is somewhat confusing and difficult to follow. In the final chapter of the volume, Laura Stocker examines the conflict between the two major tribes of the Anizah confederation, Amarat and Ruwallah which she felicitously conceptualizes as 'the Camel Dispute'. This chapter also demonstrates how tribal mobile existence transformed the basic concepts of modern statehood such as sovereignty, border and citizenship. As noted by Cyrus Schayegh in the afterword, the chapters of the book successfully reveal that 'Borders were shaped by both non-state and state actors, who interplayed; and people experienced life on and across borders in wildly different ways'. Both the authors and the editors should be congratulated for crafting such a coherent narrative, usually difficult to achieve for an edited volume.

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False Prophets: British leaders' fateful fascination with the Middle East from Suez to Syria, by Nigel Ashton (London: Atlantic Books, 2022), 480 pp., £20 (hardback); £8.99 (ebook). ISBN: 978-1-786-49325-5; 978-1-786-49327-9

Nigel Ashton tells the fascinating story of successive British Prime Ministers and their interventions from the 1956 Suez Crisis to the 2011 Syrian Civil War. Ambitious in scope, *False Prophets: British leaders' fateful fascination with the Middle East from Suez to Syria* is a comprehensive account of British adventurism in the Middle East, highlighting how both 'fear and hubris' have shaped