

explaining to reconcile this picture with the supposed lack of public eating, drinking, and gender-mingling places in Cairo. Did all the transgressions take place in private homes? And this brings up the issue of the prohibition of alcohol and prostitution, of which the book offers the most extensive treatment to date (pp. 513–50). Departing from Hassanein Rabie’s seminal work on the impact of prohibition (the loss of revenues) on the medieval Egyptian economic system, it shifts the focus to personal religiosity and its bearing on policy making regarding prohibition. Many points (especially the discussion of “transformation of attitudes” throughout history) are well taken. However, while rulers’ “piety” and public opinion is a line worth pursuing, we are on thin ice here. The book’s portrayal of Sultan Jaqmaq, for example, who “seemed to have masterminded and implemented a kind of moral revolution” (p. 532), relies on Ibn Taghribirdi and Ibn Iyas. Others, such as al-Biqā’i, gave a scathing account of the sultan’s hypocrisy and his true intentions. Grudges aside, there certainly were more sides to the story of a “puritan” sultan and the reactions to his supposedly zealous prohibition.

The above comments are by no means meant as criticism, but rather are a reflection on issues dealt with, questions raised, and new lines of inquiry inspired by this truly thought-provoking book.

STEFAN WEBER, *Damascus: Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation 1808–1918*, Proceedings of the Danish Institute of Damascus V 2009, 2 vols. (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2009). Pp. 1128. \$245.00 cloth.

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Over a decade in the making, Stefan Weber’s epic tome, *Damascus: Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation 1808–1918*, is sure to impact generations of future researchers of Syria. Based in part on his 2001 Freie Universität dissertation, the author effectively archives Syria’s built environment at a time when it is being destroyed. With support from the Deutsche Archäologisches Institut, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, and the Danish Institute in Damascus, Weber’s two-volume masterpiece is a testament to the kind of research possible when scholars with prodigious talent are given generous research support. In light of scholarly limitations brought on by the current climate of austerity in European and American academia—one of the reasons cited for the recent closure of the Netherlands Institute for Academic Study in Damascus—Weber’s *Damascus* proves the importance of supporting research that not only advances the field of urban architecture but also documents an endangered UNESCO World Heritage site.

Damascus is divided into two massive volumes (464 pp. in vol. 1, 664 pp. in vol. 2). Volume 1 introduces important context and offers an overview of historiographic developments in Ottoman and Syrian studies. Weber notes in his introduction that he is influenced by many subfields, including consumption studies, architecture, and urban and social history. The first part discusses these fields as part of “the social turn” advanced by Abdul Karim-Rafeq, Suraiya Faruqi, and André Raymond beginning in the 1970s. The author’s study is placed within a more recent trend in urban and social research, what he calls “the spatial turn” starting in the 1990s with Jean-Paul Pascual, Colette Establet, and the late Donald Quataert. Weber uses Damascus’ architecture and urban planning to tell the story of urban and social transformation in the late Ottoman Empire. He writes: “Although this study does not claim to be a social history or a history of everyday life in Damascus, it does attempt, in the chapters on the material heritage in particular, to look at Damascus from the ground up and to paint a picture of the city and its inhabitants” (1:51). In order to perform the work at hand, architecture and

urban design are contextualized in 19th- and 20th-century historical developments, and in this sense the text is suitable for both professional researchers and students of Syria.

Chapter 2, entitled “Protagonists of Change,” provides a broad and sweeping discussion of Damascus and the Ottoman state from 1808 to 1918. Weber presents urban development—including urban reform, the creation of new administrative structures, state-centralization, and state–society relations—as a dialectical relationship between the Ottoman state and local society. Local actors hailing from notable Damascene families are given short biographical entries highlighting their role as agents of change. Chapter 3, entitled “Witnesses to Change,” examines urban planning and various kinds of infrastructure from the last quarter of the 19th century. Newly created public works implemented innovative designs, sometimes with the aid of European architects. Weber examines the local responses to urban growth and the development of modern infrastructure such as trams, trains, the telegraph, city halls, and markets. One modern structure featured in this section, the Ghuraba Hospital, was demolished in 2000, emphasizing the vulnerability of Weber’s subject matter (1:149). Finally, Chapter 4 probes administrative architecture and monuments created during the Tanzimat period, as well as domestic mural paintings inside elite Damascene homes, to trace expressions of late Ottoman identity.

Weber explains that although Damascus has been well studied, Ottoman buildings have not been properly catalogued. The second volume takes up this project, using documentary evidence that includes inventories of structures and accompanying photographs. Weber documents a variety of structures built between 1808 and 1918 in this catalogue, including houses, places of worship, public buildings (banks, police stations, prisons), public squares and markets, and thoroughfares. Weber collected data from over 600 private 18th- and 19th-century homes, showing how “the changes in the configuration of public and private space reflect changes in the organization and self-perception of society and individual actors” (1:22). The work makes no claim to being comprehensive, yet Weber has produced the most complete study to date of Damascus’s built environment, interweaving his original research material with all known secondary resources to produce a veritable archive. Weber’s architectural study is bolstered by impressive archival documentation in the form of thirty-two *Salnames* (official Ottoman yearbooks) from 1868 to 1901, *shari’a* court records, and maps gleaned from the now closed Syrian National Archives (Markaz Dar al-Watha’iq) in Damascus.

Damascus engages in conversation with other recently published studies of Ottoman modernity, with Weber approaching the subject using urban architecture as the primary source from which Ottoman modernity can be read. He agrees with recent scholarship that argues that modernization was not a simple top-down process, and seeks to trace local variations in both the implementation of modernizing initiatives and in the “vernacular experiences” of change (1:19–20). He complicates the notion of modernity with what he calls an “entangled history” that seeks to place local developments in conversation with “a more global context of multilayered, interconnected trans-national developments” (1:17).

Through a number of persuasive examples, Weber illustrates how the transformation of Damascene urban architecture in the last quarter of the 19th century reflected modern sensibilities. For example, he illustrates the structural modernity of the Suq al-Hamidiyya, explaining how its designers deployed new 19th-century building techniques—such as steel girders and ordered shops—as the city moved away from vulnerable wooden structures. Concerning public space, the intentional design of thoroughfares like *Salahiyya* and Straight Street, the creation of *Marja Square* as a site of public building where several governmental institutions are housed, and the redevelopment of the markets in the city and modern commercial centers clearly show how state centralization was articulated in the urban landscape of Damascus. As for private space, the changing position of the *iwān* in domestic architecture featured prominently in 19th-century elite homes. Shared motifs in Ottoman interior designs—including the baroque *qā’at al-‘inab* (grapes room) motif, interior mural paintings, and European-style home

furnishings—indicate shared consumption patterns among Ottoman bourgeoisie from Istanbul to Damascus. Weber's examples include the appearance of a new layout in Ottoman mansions (*konak*) with the central hall (*sofa*), a feature he calls "the architectural counterpart to the fez" that reflected "the search for a modern Ottoman lifestyle" (1:332). Interestingly, Weber posits that the inspiration for this architectural element may be located in the pavilions of the Topkapı Saray, the oldest of which is the Çınlı Köşk (1473) and features rooms situated around "a cruciform central hall." Through his examples, Weber makes a compelling case for the use of architecture in tracing local interpretations of Ottoman modernity.

While in Chapter 2 Weber discusses the late 19th and early 20th centuries and offers an overview of history that touches on key moments of political and social change, he unfortunately elides key moments that resulted in the kind of demographic changes that appear to be important in his overall argument. In his discussion of the Young Turks, he shows how their eventual use of violence against the local Arab population culminated in forced conscription and famine during the Safarbarlık. Simultaneously, the author omits mentioning that the deportation and genocide of Armenian and Assyrian (Syriac) Christians in 1915 and 1916 resulted in the forcible relocation of these Christian minorities to Syria and altered the urban landscape in the period under investigation. This is a glaring omission considering estimates that Syria received as many as 100,000 Armenians by 1925, a significant population flow that strained the urban landscape and impacted some of the structures Weber has surveyed. While Weber is to be commended for his inclusion of non-Muslim architecture (churches and synagogues), an opportunity was missed to clarify the status of the Saint Sarkis (2:52) church, a structure possibly dating back to the 16th century that holds a status (with some contention) as a diocese of the Armenian Catholicosate of Sis. In addition, the catalogue mentions in passing the larger Assyrian Orthodox church of Mar Jawrjiyus in Bab Tūma during a description of a small chapel on Hananya Street by the same name (2:60). This reviewer found no inventory for that larger Mar Jawrjiyus church in Weber's volumes, which may be due to its late construction, and yet the structure has housed the important Assyrian Orthodox patriarchate since 1959. The reviewer points out these exclusions only because the current state of scholarship and vulnerability of Syria's built environment in the current war may unfortunately leave these structures in obscurity for future generations of researchers.

Of course, this minor criticism is overshadowed by the depth and scope of Weber's documentation of Damascus' architectural treasures. *Damascus* makes a compelling and persuasive case for the use of architecture and urban design for the study of late 19th-century modernity. Using a wide range of sources—including city planning documents, archival documents, personal and archival photographs, and supplementary maps printed and folded into the back cover—the work represents the most comprehensive study of the city to date. An invaluable resource, Weber's *Damascus* will surely inspire scholars of urban and social history for decades to come.

JANE HATHAWAY, ED., *The Arab Lands in the Ottoman Era*, Minnesota Studies in Early Modern History (Minneapolis, Minn.: Center for Early Modern Studies, University of Minnesota, 2009). Pp. 304. \$60.00 cloth.

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The publication of Jane Hathaway's "Problems of Periodization in Ottoman History: The Fifteenth through Eighteenth Centuries" (*Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 20 [1996]: