

approach to both documentary and archaeological evidence, as one of long-term social and landscape transformation.

This book is well written, comprehensively researched and thoroughly referenced, and the author sets out her original argument in a careful and measured manner. On small points of publication layout, Map 2 lacks numbers identifying the location of the sites named in the map key. Maps 4a and 4b would be richer for the inclusion of some indications which would help the reader to understand the distribution of sites in relation to the complex topographical context of Jordan. The appearance of this volume significantly advances the discussion of the social and economic implications of a critical period in Mediterranean history, drawing attention to the rich potential in investigating this dynamic province of the Mamluk and Ottoman empires.

Stephen McPhillips
University of Copenhagen

NELLY HANNA:

Artisan Entrepreneurs in Cairo and Early-Modern Capitalism (1600–1800).

(Middle East Studies beyond Dominant Paradigms.) 244 pp. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011. \$34.95.

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It has been nearly forty years since the late André Raymond published his unrivalled two-volume study of early modern Cairene society, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*. Scholars have since abandoned a view of early modern Cairo as an economically depressed, socially stagnant, and culturally sterile Ottoman backwater that limped along ignominiously until Napoleon's invasion in 1798 and Mehmed 'Ali Pasha's (r. 1805–48) project of reforms propelled Egypt into the modern age. Nonetheless, despite the importance of Egypt and its capital city to early modern networks of trade, scholarship, manufacture and consumption, remarkably few scholars publishing outside of Egypt have carried Raymond's torch in conducting empirical research into the socio-economic conditions of Cairo in this period. In *Artisan Entrepreneurs*, Nelly Hanna sets out to write artisans into the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as dynamic social and economic actors, recasting guilds as flexible institutions capable of incubating capitalistic tools and strategies and integrating them into traditional forms of production. These are welcome observations around which Hanna articulates an important agenda and suggests several compelling lines of inquiry for future research.

The object of Hanna's study – the eponymous “artisan entrepreneur” – is a complicated social type: “he was the small businessman whose activity went beyond his traditional craft activity and whose scope surpassed that of the ordinary artisan in terms of his network of working relations, the geographical sphere within which he worked, and the practice of various forms of money-earning activities related or unrelated to his craft” (p. 55). These activities were diverse and adapted to changing conditions in the global economic and local political environment: artisan entrepreneurs established commercial relations with the countryside, engaged in

local and long-distance trade, held tax farms, set up capital-generating guild trusts (*awqāf*, sing. *waqf*), and allied themselves through slave ownership with the system of patronage-based military households that increasingly came to dominate Egypt's political landscape. In this analysis, artisans and guilds “moved between traditional and capitalist practices” (p. 15), thus participating in the non-linear, multi-polar development of a modern economic world order.

The roughly chronological organization of Hanna's study plays out against the historical backdrop of the twin processes of early modern global commercialization (pp. 80–2) and the gradual hijacking of trade, tax farms, and guild leadership by local political households (p. 85). With this framework, Hanna shifts our historiographic emphasis away from “reforming rulers, colonialist policies, or Europeanized elites in the nineteenth century” (p. 4) as the primary agents of Egypt's modernization. Instead, Hanna highlights two industries – linseed oil pressing and textile production – that gave rise to particular features of “artisan entrepreneurship”. A detailed, intergenerational case study of a family at the head of the linseed oil pressers' guild reveals how small-scale capital accumulation among relatively humble economic actors in the late-sixteenth and into the seventeenth century “led to a degree of flexibility in artisans' movement” (p. 48) which allowed them to hire workers, own land, and establish relations with rural producers, thereby combining “entrepreneurial and capitalist practices with traditional ones” (p. 63).

The eighteenth century is presented “as one of unprecedented social mobility of nonelites” (p. 98), evidenced by the fact that the head of the linseed oil pressers' guild was able to place slaves he had purchased to work his oil presses into the local Ottoman military regiments by the end of the seventeenth century, thus affording himself access to elite prerogatives and protection. The book's final chapter turns to an investigation of collective guild practices among textile artisans in the late-eighteenth century that incorporated profit-making activities into traditional guild practices, thereby allowing artisans to resist attempts by the political elite to extend control over their industry. Perhaps the most intriguing of these developments is the evolution of the guild *waqf*, an adaptation of the more general and long-standing institution by which textile guilds acquired and endowed copper utensils that they rented out to increase *waqf* funds. These funds were used as capital to support members of the guild while excess funds were channelled into acquiring more copper utensils to endow toward increasing guild capital.

Hanna suggests several points of historical precedent and continuity – e.g. state infringement on guild autonomy and the ruralization of Egypt's textile industry (pp. 186–8) – that challenge notions of the nineteenth century as a point of rupture with the past. Elsewhere, she gives examples of indigenous development of “modern” economic forms, suggesting, for instance, that the appearance of capitalist elements in the commercial practices of oil pressers challenges a view of capitalism as having developed out of the exigencies of production and trade in luxury goods (pp. 118–9). These are significant claims with powerful implications. With further substantiation, such developments might help to integrate Egypt and the Ottoman Empire into current debates on the “Great Divergence”, which have thus far relied on evidence from India and China to challenge the teleological narrative of European capitalist modernity. Indeed, an in-depth study of any one of these points could constitute a monograph in itself, and would be most welcome.

“Artisan entrepreneurs” are not a single, identifiable type, and Hanna does not present them as such. Some readers (like this reviewer) will find this complexity and messiness attractive, while others may find the fluid and expansive nature of Hanna's artisan entrepreneurship frustrating. Ultimately, this discussion of “artisan entrepreneurs”, who in any case constituted a fraction of the artisan population as a

whole, presents a welcome opportunity to inject a story about production and industry into a world-systems approach to early modern Egyptian history, and to extend Hanna's previously demonstrated commitment to "history from below" to a different and even more marginal social category. While this might sound like a relatively modest and straightforward project, Hanna sets the stakes of her findings quite high when she explains that she intends to pursue a more socio-economically grounded approach to the controversial agenda espoused by Peter Gran in *Islamic Roots of Capitalism* (p. 30). It is the weight of this element of Hanna's project that reminds us of the relative dearth of empirical work since Raymond's magnum opus. Ultimately, then, this thought-provoking study stands as a galvanizing reminder to scholars that the urban fabric of early modern Egypt is terrifically complex although it remains so poorly understood.

Zoe Griffith
Brown University

ALAN MIKHAIL:

Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History.

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What do water, timber, plague, animals, wind, grain, and microbes have in common in the "long eighteenth century" of Ottoman Egypt? In this book Alan Mikhail dissects the "body environmental" into its components and analyses them in detail to reach a general picture of a social and environmental (ecological) history of water use and irrigation in the Egyptian countryside from 1675 to 1820. Starting with water and irrigation, he then looks into forestry, agriculture, transportation, diseases and the like to uncover the largely hidden and unnoticed environmental history of Egypt, one of the most productive provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

The book is divided into six chapters which discuss: water usage, and repair and maintenance of irrigation works in the Egyptian countryside; cultivation and transportation of food; consumption of wood for repairs and construction; organization of animal and human labour for large-scale public works and reclamation projects; the effects of plague on humans; and finally the construction of the Ashrafiyya (or Mahmudiyya) Canal.

Ottoman historiography has for a long time neglected the environmental and ecological history of the Empire. However, Mikhail's book confirms that the history of Egypt in particular, and the Ottoman Empire in general, cannot be written adequately without studying the water and irrigation policies of the Ottoman bureaucracy, considering the importance of irrigation for agriculture, and the role of agriculture in making Egypt the most lucrative province of the Empire. These policies were initially based on Egyptian peasants' experience with and knowledge of irrigation as well as their management of irrigation works. However, as the author argues, this development, a kind of localism *per se*, began to change at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries and transformed into a radically "centralized and authoritarian regime of environmental resource management" under the administration of Mehmed Ali. When the Ottoman system of natural resource balance diminished during this period, "water, labour,