

complicated with the reign of terror (1793–94) and the machinations around foreign policy by the Committee of Public Safety in Paris, which had more pressing matters to attend to than the boxes of unopened correspondence from Istanbul (p. 96). Ottoman officials were forced to address questions around the wearing of the revolutionary hats and cockades, the creation of a Jacobin group (The Club of Constantinople), and the preservation of good relations with the merchant community, most of whom remained loyalist. Firges's clarity on the debates and the players is illuminating, exposing the universal contradictions of republicanism and despotic states (p. 112). His description of Descorches caught between using "vous" or "tu" (republican etiquette) in his dispatches to his superiors in Paris, while he continued with all the proper titles with his Ottoman interlocutors, made me laugh out loud (p. 123). Who knew that diplomatic records could be so amusing?

Part 3, Chapters 7–9, takes us into the French community in Istanbul where the collapse of trade and the declaration of war in 1798 may have been more consequential than revolutionary propaganda. Firges demonstrates that a new revolutionary culture did emerge, as the legal status of the new nation altered the old Capitulatory regime (1781) and ceremonies and symbols penetrated the social organizations of the French community. Of particular interest is the long list of revolutionary festivals in 1793 and 1794 with 100 to 200 attendees (p. 235), and the language of the toasts delivered at the festivals which reflects the shifting politics of Paris (pp. 236–38). Firges concludes that while a defensive alliance with the neutral Ottomans pre-1795 did not work, the revolutionary culture in the Istanbul French community arrived on "silent feet" rather than as a reign of terror.

I was disappointed, however, that Firges stopped in 1798 because an examination of the era from 1799 until the massive rebellion in Istanbul in 1807 would likely illuminate the continued influence (or not) of revolutionary politics and propaganda in Cairo and Istanbul, and the opening salvos of European intervention in the contemporary Middle East. That aside, this is a fine study with fascinating details which I have only hinted at briefly.

ADAM MESTYAN, *Arab Patriotism: The Ideology and Culture of Power in Late Ottoman Egypt* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2017). Pp. 368. \$45.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780691172644

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Adam Mestyan's *Arab Patriotism* is a chronicle of mid- to late-19th-century Egyptian political events as seen, predominantly, through musical theater. This narrative recasts 19th-century Egypt within the Ottoman imperial framework and polity by focusing on the creative patriotic expressions of both native Egyptian and expatriate cultural and intellectual elites. Thus, through discrete moments and events, this work chronologically examines local political discourses and alliances, Egyptian connectedness with Istanbul, and performative and intellectual productions.

The book opens with a discussion of patriotism as a means of mediating political power and Ottoman authority between Istanbul and the province of Cairo, and between the House of Ali and local Egyptian elites. Mestyan contends that both the Crimean War and hereditary governorship in the 1850s spurred the expression of a specifically Ottoman-Egyptian patriotism. This "local patriotism" appeared in both old and new Arabic media—poetry, military and other songs, theater (after the 1870s), and new language forms (pp. 21, 30–32, 43, 45, 78–79). Against the grain of nationalist narratives, Mestyan further shows that the local Muslim intelligentsia (such as Rifa'at

al-Tahtawi) facilitated the integration of Mehmet Ali's once-marginal political family into the Ottoman elite, but also into Egyptian nationness. Reinventing French modern political thought, they innovatively inscribed the *watan* within the "Arabo-Islamic political tradition" (pp. 74, 179–180). However, Mestyan argues, Khedive Ismail damaged these efforts, disregarding the Egyptian intelligentsia, emulating European political aesthetics, and placing Europeans at the head of public cultural institutions and events (pp. 90, 100, 125, 105–9).

The second and shortest section of the book examines what Mestyan calls a "gentle revolution" (1866–73) during which (mostly) "Muslim Egyptians" enunciated "a moral idea of Arabness," as well as "a clear Egyptian territorial historical narrative" in their renewed efforts to indigenize the Khedivate and to "make patriotism the official ideology" of the state (pp. 123, 142, 146, 162). Reacting to the khedive's emulation of European "aesthetics," they placed Arabic at the core of their political and cultural strategy, and rewrote the Egyptian "homeland" as "Arab history." Classical Arabic thus became the language of the khedival administrative and educational systems (pp. 125–26, 162–63). This "gentle" ideological transformation was short-lived, however, its proponents failing to garner khedivial financial support.

As Ilham Khuri-Makdisi has eloquently done before him, Mestyan then reviews the Shami–Cairo cultural network that contributed both to Ottoman Arabism and to Egyptian khedivial patriotism, as well as the rise of theater (1879–82) as a public ideological vector (p. 169). Introducing both known and unknown Egyptian and Shami characters, Mestyan enumerates the activities of the "Arabic-speaking" "Syrian" migrants, Beirut and others, who, starting in the 1870s, brought with them not only their literary genius and theatrical expertise, but also mature concepts of *al-umma al-arabiyya* (pp. 166–71). Mestyan recounts in minutiae that, together, *shāmī* actors and Egyptian musicians recreated the Egyptian and Arab cultural stage, while using *fushḥa* as a *lingua franca* in their joined productions (pp. 153, 171). Describing a fascinating world in which Egyptian khedives and scholars studied in Vienna and Paris, French political entrepreneurs settled in Cairo, and Syrians commuted between Cairo and Beirut or Damascus, this section resultantly invites a greater problematization of culture, localness, and alterity—concepts that categories of identity such as "Muslim Egyptians," "Ottoman Turks," "Europeans," "Ottoman-Arabs," "Arabic-speaking Egyptians," Muslims, Christians, Jews, etc., might obscure rather than illuminate (p. 53).

Finally, the last section of the book starts right after the 'Urabi revolution (1881–82; Egypt now being subject to British occupation) and ends with the 1890s, because Mestyan states, patriotism thereafter gave place to mass vernacular nationalism. Focusing on a couple of troupes (Qardahi's and Hijazi's) over a very narrow historical window, Mestyan first argues that by the 1890s patriotic musical theater had become ubiquitous in Egypt, while synchronizing with other Arab Ottoman cities (p. 203). He then details the institutionalization, regulation, and political and moral policing of theaters (pp. 246, 254), revealing the ambivalences of British and khedivial censorship (pp. 264, 266). In so doing, Mestyan discusses the birth of novel concepts of public space and morality and (simultaneously presuming and refuting an inherent conflict between Islam and theater) explains how theaters became "legal in a predominantly Muslim land" (pp. 259, 263, 239).

In a dense narrative, at times disheveled and cumbersome yet rich in variegated sources (such as official khedivial petitions, correspondence, notables' writings, and both old-fashioned and more recent scholarships), Mestyan successfully restores Ottoman Egypt, and shows from the vantage point of Egyptian cultural coulisses, "how imperial networks can contribute to local patriotic ideas and how a provincial governing family could insert itself within these ideas" (p. 7). Mestyan also persuasively elucidates the collaboration of Egyptian and Shami agencies in generating an original Ottoman-Egyptian patriotic discourse grounded in classical Arabic, and marrying European and Arabo-Islamic political, literary, and musical repertoires. Mestyan hence trails those historians who have exemplarily complicated the overburdened concepts of

nationalism and identity, and who argue for multilayered loyalties and belongings, and shifting communal identifications (e.g., Michelle Campos, Khaled Fahmy, Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, Mercedes García-Arenal & Gerard Wiegers, Akram Khater, and Ussama Makdisi). Yet, this work most excels at describing how by the late 19th century musical theater emerged as a local cultural genre, and how it flourished, despite a hierarchized and discriminative cultural economy, within a dynamic multicultural cauldron of local and expatriate impresarios, playwrights, and artists.

Less persuasive, however, is the author's overarching contention that by the 1890s patriotic representations had reached urban and rural elite and "ordinary Egyptians." Indeed, most of this work is concerned with elite audiences and artistic productions; the "schools" that became "prime sites" of "diffusion of patriotism" were few and selective (p. 129); and the so-called "countryside" that troupes visited refers in fact to large, significant, provincial towns such as Tanta, Asyut, and Zagazig (pp. 13, 214, 226, 228, 229). Evidentiary strictures might explicate the omission of vernacular culture and hence Mestyan's view of Arabic musical theater as a normalizing, rather than potentially subversive institution (p. 14). Mestyan thus cites, without actually examining them, socially inclusive "smaller" troupes and cafés-concerts (pp. 228, 281–82). One is thus left wondering what political imaginations vernacular or grass-roots performances (including *Aragoz*) might have conveyed to "ordinary" rural and urban audiences, including peasants and day laborers, which the book's section on class falls very short of addressing (pp. 270, 275–76). Mestyan's multifrontal exploration—merging narratives drawn from his thesis, two previous articles, as well as original research—thus raises one's curiosity and will be of interest to an eclectic academic readership specializing in the arcane of 19th century literary and artistic life, and the Arab intellectual renaissance, and it might also be useful to students of nationalism, imperial identities, and Ottoman elite culture.

NOBUAKI KONDO, *Islamic Law and Society in Iran: A Social History of Qajar Tehran* (New York: Routledge, 2017). Pp. 210. \$149.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780415711371

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Islamic Law and Society in Iran is a history of Islamic law in Tehran, the capital city of the Qajar dynasty. The book is a welcome departure from previous scholarship that focused on the introduction of Western-style law in Iran and the related process of legal modernization. Instead, Nobuaki Kondo delves into the nitty-gritty of Islamic legal documents with an eye towards shedding light on the Qajar judicial system and, to a lesser extent, the urban history of Tehran. His extensive use of such legal documents constitutes an original contribution to the historiography of modern Iran. He is justifiably critical of previous scholars who relied too heavily on European-language sources in describing the relationship between law and society in Iran. Kondo, therefore, sets out to avoid any assessments of whether Iranian legal modernization was a "success" or "failure" by instead attempting to understand the legal system on its own terms (p. 2).

Kondo is at his best when analyzing the Islamic court documents of individual jurists. His statistical analysis shows a deep understanding of these texts and serves as a solid benchmark for future evaluations of similar sources. Throughout the book, Kondo provides valuable tables with facts and figures culled from primary sources. His analysis of endowment (*vaqf*) records, royal inventories of crown and endowment properties, and government surveys and reports about buildings, reveals the usefulness of such sources in rewriting the urban history of Tehran. A similar methodology could be employed in future studies of other major Iranian cities.