

and mobilities. She then delves into spatial theory and history in order to make sense of the exchanges and connections between local circuits of movement and the slower moving processes of historical and natural change. In the author's own vivid vocabulary, her approach to migrations and migrants is meant to juxtapose the 'hang glider's perspective' with the 'truffle hunter's view'. The result is a *longue durée* of sorts that manages to explain the wider currents of transformations in the Mediterranean world of the nineteenth century without losing sight of the human factor or the capacity of the slightest patterns of human activity to reflect, even influence, the larger spatial history of that world.

Accordingly, the book operates along two different levels and units of analysis. First, Clancy-Smith tracks 'the grand rhythms of the long nineteenth century' and the protracted processes that attended the making of the modern nation-state, the expansion of imperial power, the rise of industrial capitalism, and the shifts in global labour movements. Yet, she aims precisely to reverse the conventional way of looking at such historical transformations and to see them not just as a state would do. Her focus on the 'largely undocumented' migrations of Southern Europeans towards North Africa and their settlement therein allows her to study 'from below' the profound social changes the immigrants brought to their host societies, as well as the various legal, social, economic, and moral problems they raised. More importantly, by focusing on the social universe of migrants and their wide-ranging impact on local views, beliefs, practices, and institutions, Clancy-Smith recreates an understanding of borderland societies with which to challenge binary or autocentric constructs of history. Her chapters demonstrate convincingly the value in embracing historical narratives that eschew monolithic perspectives in order to emphasize variable movement, multifaceted causalities, the heterogeneity of time, and the 'fleeting facts' of human interactions.

Throughout her study, Clancy-Smith displays impeccable fluency in an astounding array of historical archives, sources, and conceptual tools, and while she does not intend to deliver here a definitive verdict on trans-Mediterranean mobilities, her book will decisively redirect our conceptualization and understanding of the political, economic, and sociocultural histories of the Internal Sea. As she did previously with *Rebel and Saint*, Clancy-Smith is forging new vistas and prospects for future historical research. Students of North Africa, Europe, and the Mediterranean would do well to follow her once more into the breach.

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## BRINGING THE VISUAL TURN TO ALGIERS

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*Walls of Algiers. Narratives of the City through Text and Image.* Edited by ZEYNEP ÇELİK, JULIA CLANCY-SMITH, and FRANCES TERPAK. Seattle, WA/Los Angeles, CA: University of Washington Press and the Getty Research Institute, 2009. Pp. ix + 283. \$40, paperback (ISBN 978-0-295-98868-9).

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The city and people of Algiers have a long and often all-too colourful history as objects of graphic representation, whether in exoticised oil painting or grainy political film; the more sober but equally captivating history of the city as a physical and social environment has also received much recent attention. It is especially welcome, then, that this volume, the result of a 2004 workshop and the complement

to an exhibition held at the Getty Institute in Los Angeles in 2009, brings the 'visual turn' to the city in a well thought-through approach that unites gender and demography, urban social history, postcolonial literary criticism, film studies, and architectural history to present a varied and compelling account of the representational history of Algiers since around the seventeenth century (though the focus is very firmly on the colonial period, with excursions forward into more recent history and back to the Ottoman era filling out the picture). Befitting the topic – and wonderfully overcoming the usual cost limitations of academic publishing – the book is also extensively and beautifully illustrated in both black and white and colour, allowing an interplay of text and image and presenting the reader not only with maps and photographs indispensable to understanding spatial references, but also with rarely-reproduced early albumen prints, hand tints and lithographs that are documents of visual history in themselves as well as valuable evidence of the changing landscape of the occupied-and-remade city and its portrayal for European spectators. Seven chapters organised into three parts ('Peoples', 'Images', and 'Places') are framed by an editorial introduction and a useful bibliographic essay. The contributors are scholars based in France and the USA; two particularly valuable chapters, on the interwar social history of the casbah by Omar Carlier and on the archival difficulties of reconstituting the Ottoman city's socio-spatial organisation by Isabelle Grangaud, appear here in English for the first time. Other chapters cover the city's colonial settlement history, the nineteenth century deployment of new technologies of visual reproduction and representation as part of a popular culture (and early entertainment industry) of colonialism, the colonial discourse of urban domestic space, Algiers on film, and colonial and early post-independence urban planning. The whole book is solidly based on published textual and visual sources (students of the nineteenth century will learn much from consulting the endnotes) as well as the Getty's own very considerable archival holdings in visual material.

There are, inevitably, some shortcomings. It is somewhat surprising that no really sustained engagement is made with the theoretical literature in visual history, and that the images, especially in the earlier chapters, are often read as fairly straightforwardly legible texts. The figures represented in early colonial lithographs, for instance, are read in Julia Clancy-Smith's chapter as apparently corresponding to people in observed reality, with a high degree of 'documentary fidelity' (p. 34), such that the placement of women at docksides or in semi-rural scenes might be interpreted as evidence for gender relations in the occupation of space (for example, on pp. 30, 33), but such direct realism is surely at least questionable, and might have been considered relative to the extent to which such early depictions might, already, follow certain conventions or tropes in their composition (compare for example the figures in David Roberts' famous, and contemporary, images of Egypt and Palestine). Sometimes surprising aspects of the images adduced are passed over in the text, as on page 54 where a satirical postcard puts the *petit blanc* settler dialect associated with the *piet noir* cartoon icon, Cagayous, into the mouth of an Arab Algerian street vendor. Overall, the chronological coverage of the book is quite uneven, with a concentrated focus on the nineteenth century (especially up to the 1850s) and then a jump to the 1950s-60s, but relatively little in between; only Carlier's chapter provides a bridge between these periods, and there is relatively little on the post-independence period. Zeynep Çelik's thoroughly-documented chapter on the Algerian house in colonial discourse seems to oscillate between domestic space as entirely 'inviolable' to colonialism and yet as 'penetrated' by it; Eric Breitbart's chapter on film has a disappointingly thin treatment (perhaps for lack of space) of post-independence Algerian cinema (and oddly claims, p. 164, that the film collection at the French defence ministry's audiovisual archive

at the Fort d'Ivry is inaccessible to researchers, when in fact its excellent digitised archive is freely accessible on site, and in part online).

Quibbles aside, for students of the Maghrib, of Mediterranean urban history, of French colonialism, and of visual history in its relation to urban space, Orientalism, travel literature and social history, as well as for those interested specifically in Algiers, this book is a very valuable addition to the literature for teaching and research; it should be widely read.

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