REGIMES OF MOBILITY

Borders and State Formation in the Middle East, 1918–1946

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INTRODUCTION: REGIMES OF MOBILITY IN MIDDLE EASTERN BORDERLANDS, 1918–46

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The First World War brought an end to what scholars have called the first wave of globalisation.[1] Since the 1850s the world had turned into a more connected place, as breakthroughs in transportation and communication technology compressed time and space in unparalleled ways, enabling faster travel and more condensed experiences of temporality.[2] In this age of steam and print, not only did ideas and diseases spread more easily across the world,[3] but also goods, capital and labour – all in all circuits of capital – penetrated

[1] For two prominent surveys on globalisation, see C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004); Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). For an analysis of the historical dynamics that shaped the first wave of globalisation during the long nineteenth century, see Kevin H. O'Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Globalisation and History: The Evolution of a Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999).

[2] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1989), p. 240. See also David Edgerton, 'Creole Technologies and Global Histories: Rethinking how Things Travel in Space and Time', *Journal of History of Science Technology*, Vol. 1, No.1 (2007), pp. 75–112.

[3] Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Stacy Fahrenthold, 'Transnational Modes and Media: The Syrian Press in the Mahjar and Emigrant Activism during

well beyond coastal zones, reaching into interior markets and hence expanding chains of supply and demand.[4] What the Great War ultimately disrupted was this greater inter-dependence and connectedness – a shared reality that had increasingly defined the human condition since the second half of the nineteenth century.

This process of disruption was particularly contentious in the Middle East, where the First World War brought an end to the Ottoman rule and led to the partition of an empire that had been deeply entangled within various global circuits of mobility and capital.[5] As Britain and France sought to establish their own spheres of influence across this post-Ottoman space, the mandates of Syria and Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan were created,[6] while

World War I', *Mashriq & Mahjar*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2013), pp. 30–54; James L. Gelvin, Nile Green (eds), *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World: The Telegraph and Globalisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Liat Kozma, Cyrus Schayegh and Avner Wishnitzer (eds), *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015); Houri Berberian, *Roving Revolutionaries: Armenians and the Connected Revolutions in the Russian, Iranian, and Ottoman Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

4 Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Uri M. Kupferschmidt, 'On the diffusion of "small" western technologies and consumer goods in the Middle East during the era of the first modern globalization', in *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880–1940*, Liat Kozma, Cyrus Schayegh and Avner Wishnitzer (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), pp. 243–44.

5 Eugene L. Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2015); Mustafa Aksakal, 'The Ottoman Empire', in Robert Gerath and Erez Manela (eds), *Empires at War, 1911–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 17–33.

6 Nadine Méouchy (ed.), *France, Syrie et Liban, 1918–1946: Les ambiguïtés et les dynamiques de la relation mandataire* (Damas: IFEAD, 2002); Nadine Méouchy and Peter Sluglett (eds), *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians. The League of Nation and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates* (London: Routledge, 2015); Idir Ouahes, *Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate* (I. B. Tauris, 2018).

local resistance to these efforts resulted in the emergence of an independent Turkey.[7] The introduction of international borders not only delineated these novel zones of sovereignty, but they also began to order gradually what was once an imperial geography of mobilities and interconnections into a distinctly national one.

As the title of this volume suggests, we frame the introduction of national borders to the Middle East as a radical re-ordering of the region's existing *regimes of mobility*. This term was first used by Ronen Shamir who argued that globalisation was as much characterised by mobility as it was by systemic practices of closure and containment.[8] Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar developed the concept further in their critical appraisal of mobility and migration studies. Departing from the field's traditional tendency to prioritise the study of flows, migration and itinerancy, Schiller and Salazar proposed 'regimes of mobility' as an alternative to the analytic categories that otherwise attribute fixed relationships between people and territory. For them, the term 'regime' underscores 'the role both of individual states and of shifting international regulatory and surveillance administrations that have an impact upon individual mobility', while certainly echoing notions of governmentality and hegemony.[9]

As historians of empires, nationalisms and borderlands, we deploy 'regimes of mobility' in a similar but narrower sense, seeing it as a particularly useful framework to rethink the transition from a *borderless* empire to a *bordered* Middle East in the aftermath of the First World War. In a bid to do so, our concern is first and foremost methodological. Despite the important advances of the field over the past few decades, nationalism continues to territorialise our social science imaginaries, while also attributing fixed

[7] For a transregional appraisal of local resistance movements against European imperialism in the Middle East in the early 1920s, see Michael Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[8] Ronen Shamir, 'Without Borders? Notes on Globalisation as a Mobility Regime', *Sociological Theory* Vol. 23, No. 2 (2005), pp. 197–217.

[9] Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar, 'Regimes of Mobility across the Globe', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2013), pp. 188–89.

functions to historical actors and processes we study.[10] In this sense, 'regimes of mobility' provides a process-centred approach that is neither premised on a particular historical outcome – most notably, the collapse of an empire – nor remains in denial of it.[11] Second, 'regimes of mobility' is useful on an empirical level too, for it opens up a productive field of analysis for historians. Accordingly, the chapters that follow not only explore the continued relevance of Ottoman mobilities in a post-imperial space, but also examine the contentious ways in which the post-Ottoman bureaucracies sought to establish their own regime of mobilities.

Our focus is as much global as it is regional, however, for we see the radical re-ordering of the existing regimes of mobility as part of an entangled global history during which the first wave of globalisation also came to an end. As the contributions to this volume show, none of these historical processes unfolded neatly. For one, Ottoman modes of mobility that had consolidated for generations did not disappear overnight,[12] as imperial networks remained

[10] For some insightful interventions on methodological nationalism, see Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, 'Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration, and the Social Sciences', *Global Networks*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (2002), pp. 301–34; Ellen Comisso, 'Empires as Prisons of Nations versus Empires as Political Opportunity Structures: An Exploration of the Role of Nationalism in Imperial Dissolutions in Europe', in Joseph Esherick, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young (eds), *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), pp. 138–66; Daniel Chernilo, 'Methodological Nationalism and the Domestic Analogy: Classical Resources for their Critique', in *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (March 2010), pp. 87–106.

[11] For interventions in the late Ottoman Studies, see Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, 'Nationalism in Function: "Rebellions" in the Ottoman Empire and Narratives in Its Absence', in Hakan Yavuz and Feroz Ahmad (eds), *War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), pp. 161–202; Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, 'Point of No Return? Prospects of Empire after the Ottoman Defeat in the Balkan Wars (1912–1913)', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (2018), pp. 65–84; Alp Yenen, 'Envisioning Turkish-Arab Co-Existence between Empire and Nationalism', *Die Welt des Islams* (Apr 2020), pp. 1–41.

[12] For internal forms of mobility in the late Ottoman period, see Mehmet Genç, 'Osmanlı Devleti'nde İç Gümrük Rejimi,' in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.3 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985); Norman Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Faruk Tabak, 'Local Merchants

resilient in many ways well into the early 1930s.[13] To be sure, international boundaries introduced new political realities, but 'older geographies continued to make their presence known, even when reformulated in the presence of borders and states'.[14] The Middle East did not get disaggregated neatly from the world markets, either. After all, colonial rule was extended into the Middle East in order to serve the imperatives of British and French political economy in the first place.[15] Finally, the institution of borders did not solely seek to curtail movement in the region. Borders not only created their own local mobilities, but also helped regulate, channel and, at times, facilitate movement that was cross-regional, if not global.[16]

Regimes of Mobility ultimately sees border zones as privileged sites to observe how globalising processes interact with more exclusivist agendas. By

in Peripheral Areas of the Empire: The Fertile Crescent during the Long Nineteenth Century', *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Spring 1988), pp. 190–93; Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent 1800–1914: A Documentary Economic History* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Hala Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia and the Gulf, 1745–1900* (Albany: State University of New York, 1997); Reşat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); Philippe Pétriat, 'Caravan Trade in the Late Ottoman Empire: the ʿAqīl Network and the Institutionalization of Overland Trade', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 63, Nos. 1–2 (2019), pp. 38–72.

13 Cyrus Schayegh, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

14 Toufoul Abou-Hodeib, 'Involuntary History: Writing Levantines into the Nation', *Contemporary Levant* (January 2020), pp. 44–53.

15 Geoffrey Schad, 'Colonialists, Industrialists, and Politicians: the Political Economy of Industrialization in Syria, 1920–1954' (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2001); Frank Peter, *Les entrepreneurs de Damas: nation, imperialism et industrialization* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010); Andrew Arsan, *Interlopers of Empire: The Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* (New York: Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2014); Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016); Joseph Bohling, 'Colonial or Continental Power? The Debate over Economic Expansion in Interwar France, 1925–1932', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2017), pp. 217–41.

16 Robert S. G. Fletcher, 'Running the Corridor: Nomadic Societies and Imperial Rule in the Inter-War Syrian Desert', *Past and Present*, Vol. 220, No. 1 (2013), pp. 185–215; Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

taking its cue from scholarship that suggests interpreting the 'centre' through the lens of the 'periphery',[17] this volume proposes to examine the connected politics of borderlands across the region by focusing on the period from the institution of borders in the early 1920s until the start of decolonisation in the mid-1940s. Contrary to popular and traditional depictions of borders as areas where national sovereignty comes to an end, *Regimes of Mobility* seeks to illustrate how border areas and borderlanders become the very centres of influence, movements and tensions that transformed sovereignties into new forms, in tandem with the global and regional processes.[18]

Regimes of Mobility is thus a response to the growing interest in Middle Eastern borders, seeking to provide an informed historical discussion about the ways in which borderlanders, travellers, refugees, diseases, commodities, nomads and bureaucrats, among others, interacted in refashioning the borderlands across the Middle East. In reconstructing these episodes, we hope to trace the 'lived experiences of territoriality' and 'capture the dynamic interaction between state and local actors in the forging of modern bordered political identities'.[19] The volume's novelty lies in its attempt to go beyond singular case studies and instead reconstruct a connected history of borders and mobilities that could shed light on shared historical trajectories in the Middle East. While our approach decidedly remains local, the contributions that follow are receptive to the transregional and global dynamics that were at play. After all, borderlands are zones of incessant flows, with a multiplicity of origins and destinations; their history should be equally multipolar as well.

Mapping Out the Field

Contemporary developments over the past decade have renewed interest in the study of borders, borderlanders and cross-border mobility in the Middle East. While it is certainly true that the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict always

[17] Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[18] Oscar J. Martínez, 'The Dynamics of Border Interaction: New Approaches to Border Analysis', in Clive H. Schofield (ed.), *Global Boundaries, World Boundaries, Vol. I* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 14.

[19] Matthew H. Ellis, *Desert Borderland: The Making of Modern Egypt and Libya* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), p. 8.

garnered scholarly attention,[20] the rise of ISIS in general and the latter's symbolic acts at defying the Sykes-Picot borders in particular have sparked greater public curiosity in the borders of the Middle East.[21] The outpouring of millions of refugees away from these conflict zones too, especially from Syria, has also brought to the fore issues central to these struggles, such as the rapid fragmentation of the territorial state systems in the region and the roles international borders play in perpetuating humanitarian crises.[22] As part and parcel of these contentious political developments, the construction of border walls has gained a particular sense of urgency. The Turkish–Syrian border, for example, which was once a site of visa-free travel back in the early 2000s, now features a well-surveilled wall which, as a trend, parallels similar developments elsewhere in the region (for example, the border walls between Egypt and Gaza, or Saudi Arabia and Yemen) as well as across the globe.[23]

Contemporary resonance of borders should not make one assume the novelty of the topic, however. Much to the contrary, neither the debates about the evolution of borders across the world, nor the analyses on crises of territoriality are completely new to scholarship. In fact, no serious scholar sees

[20] S. Latte Abdallah and C. Parizot (eds), *À l'ombre du mur. Israéliens et palestiniens entre séparation et occupation* (Arlès: Actes Sud/MMSH, 2011); Asher Kaufman, *Contested Frontiers in the Syria-Lebanon-Israel Region: Cartography, Sovereignty, and Conflict* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014); Daniel Meier, *Shaping Lebanon's Borderlands* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016); Laura Robson, *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).

[21] Michael D. Berdine, *Redrawing the Middle East: Sir Mark Sykes, Imperialism and the Sykes-Picot Agreement* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2018); Ariel I. Ahram, *Break all the Borders: Separatism and the Reshaping of the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[22] Inga Brandell (ed.), *State Frontiers. Borders and Boundaries in the Middle East* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006); Leïla Vignal, *The Transnational Middle East: Peoples, Places, Borders* (London: Routledge, 2016); Paul Drew, *Israel/Palestine: Border Representations in Literature and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020); Matthieu Cimino (ed.), *Syria: Borders, Boundaries, and the State* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

[23] While nineteen walls and barriers were built between 1945 and 1991, only seven walls were added during the 1990s to the thirteen that survived the Cold War. Within a decade after the events of '9/11', however, twenty-eight walls were already completed or planned. See Élisabeth Vallet and Charles-Philippe David, 'Introduction: The (Re)Building of the Wall in International Relations', *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2012), pp. 111–19.

borders today as a mere historical consequence or a neat closure to the contentious episodes that had transpired in a distant past. Instead, borders and borderlands are framed central to the making of history and seen as charged sites, where identities are forged, policies take shape and interests clash on a continual basis.[24] This point perhaps comes across more forcefully today than any other time before, as we witness, in the words of Charles Maier, how 'inclusion and exclusion have become or re-emerged as the underlying stakes of contemporary politics precisely as, and because, the spatial definitions of insiders and outsiders weaken'.[25] This contemporary paradox was rooted in the collapse of the Soviet Union, which not only led to the multiplication of national borders in post-Soviet spaces in the early 1990s but also led to the triumph of the idea of a borderless and supranational world – embodied in the spirit of the fall of Berlin Wall.[26]

These transformative developments have helped shape the field of borderlands studies for the past three decades.[27] Traditionally, borders had been analysed in terms of their geopolitical dimension, namely as physical limits between two contiguous sovereign territorial systems.[28] By the same token,

[24] Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (eds), *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Henk van Houtum and Ton van Naerssen, 'Bordering, Ordering, and Othering', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (2002), pp. 125–36; David Newman, 'Borders and bordering: Towards an interdisciplinary dialogue', *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2006), pp. 171–86; Seda Altuğ, 'The Turkish–Syrian Border and Politics of Difference in Turkey and Syria (1921–1939)', in Matthieu Cimino, (ed), *Syria: Borders, Boundaries*, pp. 47–73.

[25] Charles S. Maier, 'Transformations of Territoriality, 1600–2000', in Gunilla Budde, Sebastian Conrad and Oliver Janz (eds), *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), p. 36.

[26] Lester Russell Brown, *World without Borders* (New York: Vintage, 1973); Kenichi Ohmae, *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy* (New York: Harper Business, 1990); Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995); Michael Shapiro and Hayward Alker (eds), *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[27] James Anderson, Liam O'Dowd and Thomas M. Wilson, 'Introduction: Why Study Borders Now?', *Regional & Federal Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2002), pp. 1–12.

[28] Michel Foucher, *Fronts et frontières: Un tour du monde géopolitique* (Paris: Fayard, 1991); Daniel Nordman, *Frontières de France. De l'espace au territoire XVI*[e]*–XIX*[e] *siècles* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

Michiel Baud and Willem Van Schendel conceived *borders* as 'the political divides that were the result of state building',[29] whilst *boundaries* would refer to 'lines' on a political map.[30] From the 1990s onwards, however, the study of borders became less about political centres and the conditions that inform these outer lines of sovereignty than about the zones that form on both sides of a border and the continued effects of borders. Anthropologists, political scientists and geographers have accordingly begun to examine border regions in order to observe the impact of international borders upon local populations.[31] Starting from the premise that the border is a social construct – that is, not a rigid and immutable material reality – many studies have sought to understand the ways in which border zones are subjectively experienced by 'border populations' not only as an area of instability and risk but also as a potential resource for those living in its proximity.[32]

The emergence of these approaches that study borders 'from below' was concomitant with the broader shift among historians to prioritise the study of 'margins' and 'peripheries' to that of 'centres'.[33] In particular, the increasing importance attached to develop competency, and carry out research in, local languages helped scholars capture the perspectives of borderlanders. While this took many forms, scholars have, by and large, highlighted the strategies and daily activities of individuals and/or groups seeking to transgress the border, such as cross-border marriages, smuggling and trafficking, as well as criminal circuits and secessionist movements that thrived in border

[29] Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel, 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands', *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1997), pp. 214–15.

[30] J. Prescott, *The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries* (Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 35–36.

[31] Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson (eds), *Borderlands. Ethnographic Approaches to Security, Power, and Identity* (London and New York: University Press of America, 2010).

[32] Janet Roitman, 'The Garrison-Entrepôt: A Mode of Governing in the Chad Bassin', in Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier (eds), *Global Assemblages. Technology, Politics and Ethics as Anthropological Problems* (London: Blackwell, 2005); Judith Schelle, *Smugglers and Saints of the Sahara. Regional Connectivity in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[33] Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions: Shaping the Iranian Nation, 1804–1946* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

regions.[34] As a result of such practices that may appear strange to citizens living in the 'centre' of the nation states, border regions would constitute a world apart;[35] a place of traffickers and, at times, even a zone of refuge for groups and individuals seeking to avoid the control of the modern state.[36]

Framing borders as zones that are in some ways independent of national heartlands also led to the rehabilitation of the concept 'borderland'. The term was originally applied by American historians such as Herbert Bolton and David J. Weber to North America's 'colonial frontier', but the concept gradually gained new epistemological implication from the 1990s onwards, when it also became increasingly applied to broader geographies from Asia to Europe and Africa.[37] In its most basic sense, a borderland can be defined

[34] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); Katharyne Mitchell, 'Transnational discourse: Bringing geography back in', *Antipode*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1997), pp. 101–14; Jean-David Mizrahi, 'Un "nationalisme de la frontière": Bandes armées et sociabilités politiques sur la frontière turco-syrienne au début des années 1920', *Vingtième Siècle Revue d'histoire*, Vol. 78 (Apr–Jun 2003), pp. 19–34; Alison Blunt, 'Cultural Geographies of Migration: Mobility, Transnationalism and Diaspora', *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 31, No. 5 (2007), pp. 684–94; Isa Blumi, 'Illicit Trade and the Emergence of Albania and Yemen', in I. William Zartman (ed), *Understanding Life in the Borderland: Boundaries in Depth and in Motion* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), pp. 73–100; Cyrus Schayegh, 'The Many Worlds of 'Abud Yasin; or, What Narcotics Trafficking in the Interwar Middle East Can Tell us about Territorialization', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 116, No. 2 (2011), pp. 273–306; Liat Kozma, 'White Drugs in Interwar Egypt: Decadent Pleasures, Emaciated Fellahin, and the Campaign against Drugs', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2013), pp. 89–101; Samuel Dolbee, 'The Locust and the Starling: People, Insects, and Disease in the Ottoman Jazira and After, 1860–1940' (PhD diss., New York University, 2017); Metin Atmaca, 'Fragile Frontiers: Sayyid Taha II and the Role of Kurdish Religio-Political Leadership in the Ottoman East during the First World War', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (2018), pp. 361–81; Jordi Tejel, 'States of Rumors: Politics of Information along the Turkish–Syrian Border, 1925–1945', *Journal of Borderlands Studies* (first online) (2020): https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2020.1719866

[35] Clive H. Schofield (ed.), *Global Boundaries. World Boundaries, Vol. I* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

[36] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed. An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

[37] For a general overview of this concept and the historiography related to it, see Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, 'On Borderlands', *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (2011), pp. 338–61.

as an area that flanks an internationally recognised border. It is therefore an area in the form of strip that is of 'indefinite extent and thus cannot be measured in so many meters or miles',[38] but one 'whose centers are physically and socially distant from that border'.[39] Rather than a definite geographical territory, however, borderlands are sites where state structures are less fully articulated, and where the image of the state loses its clarity, developing more fluid forms. Because the two sides of the border constitute an organic whole that 'naturally' differs from the rest of a given national territory,[40] borderlands are marginal zones that are unique in their geopolitical, socioeconomic, political and cultural environments.[41]

Although there is no single definition of borderlands, many scholars readily acknowledge the concept's analytic potential to rethink the processes of state-making and identity formation, because it privileges the local. As historians have shown time and again, local dynamics and agencies are essential to understanding the formation of modern international borders and that the regulation of inter-imperial affairs in borderlands are not merely top-down affairs.[42] To the contrary, these encounters between state and non-state actors could at times take contentious, if not violent turns, so much so that Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron defined borderlands as 'contested boundaries

[38] Edward S. Casey, 'Border versus Boundary at la Frontera', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 29 (2011), p. 389.

[39] James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, 'Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance', *Regional Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 7 (1999), p. 595.

[40] Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel, 'Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands', *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1997), p216.

[41] Pınar Şenoğuz, *Community, Change and Border Towns* (London: Routledge, 2018), p. 24.

[42] For a seminal work on these dynamics, see Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). See also Sabine Dullin, 'L'invention d'une frontière de guerre froide à l'ouest de l'Union soviétique (1945–1949)', *Vingtième Siècle Revue d'histoire*, Vol. 102 (2009), pp. 49–61; Isa Blumi, 'Agents of Post-Ottoman States: The Precariousness of the Berlin Congress Boundaries of Montenegro and how to Define/Confine People', in Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglett (eds), *War and Diplomacy: Russo-Turkish War and Berlin Treaty* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011); Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands. Making a Boundary, 1843–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

between colonial domains'.[43] From the early 2000s onwards, this influential perspective informed a number of studies that framed borderlands as productive zones of competition, violence and resistance.[44]

Borderlands were the theatres of contentious interactions in more subtle ways as well. The cultural turn, for instance, has inspired scholars to frame borderlands as a site inextricably embedded within various power relations, whether of macro or micro scales. On a macro level, borderlands are seen as areas of multiple sovereignties and legal regimes that require renegotiations of power among a myriad of local, national and transnational actors.[45] On a micro level, border zones are important sites to observe the contradictions and dynamics at work in a given society whose power relations took their most explicit forms along its borders. In this sense, the state and society relations around borderlands offer an excellent opportunity to study the territorialisation of modern nation states, providing insights into the specific configurations of identity politics in zones that are otherwise characterised by fluid identities, shifting allegiances and cross-cultural exchanges.[46]

[43] Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, 'From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 3 (1999), p. 816.

[44] Michael Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Mark Levene, 'The Tragedy of the Rimlands, Nation-State Formation and the Destruction of Imperial Peoples, 1912–48', in Panikos Panayi and Pippa Virdee (eds), *Refugees and the End of Empire*, pp. 51–78 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (eds), *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Hapsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Alfred J. Rieber, *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, 'Tools of Revolution: Global Military Surplus, Arms Dealers and Smugglers in the Late Ottoman Balkans, 1878–1908', *Past & Present*, Vol. 237, No. 1 (2017), pp. 167–95; Ramazan Hakkı Öztan and Alp Yenen (eds), *Age of Rogues: Rebels, Revolutionaries and Racketeers at the Frontiers of Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

[45] Bradley Miller, *Borderline Crime: Fugitive Criminals and the Challenge of the Border, 1819–1914* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2016); Will Smiley, *From Slaves to Prisoners of War: The Ottoman Empire, Russia, and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[46] Joel S. Migdal (ed.), *Boundaries and Belonging. States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Paolo Novak, 'The Flexible Territoriality of Borders', *Geopolitics*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2011), pp. 741–67.

Finally, borderlands are not just zones where actors compete and resist, locals negotiate, cultures intermingle and identities transform, but also where individuals cross, commodities are exchanged, and diseases are spread. 'The essence of a border is . . . to act as a barrier,' as David Newman noted, 'but borders are equally there to be crossed.'[47] In this sense, borderlands are not where mobilities come to an end, but rather places where they are 'channelled' – i.e. prevented, promoted, re-directed, as states seek to derive revenues, legitimacy and power.[48] As such, borderlands are where 'regimes of mobility' are re-cast and re-shuffled, just as it began to happen in the Middle East from the early 1920s onwards.

The Making of the Modern Middle East

The emergence of the modern Middle East is the result of three complementary historical developments: the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire; the institution of British and French control in its stead; and the nationalist challenges to this colonial scramble. The introduction of international borders that accompanied this process is popularly portrayed as the drawing of lines in the sand,[49] an artificial partitioning that brought diplomatic closure to an otherwise contested historical space. For the past two decades, however, insights gained from the burgeoning field of borderlands studies have not only enabled a newer generation of scholars to challenge such prevalent depictions, but also help them go beyond the well-established paradigms of studying centre-periphery relations.[50] For them, the region's borderlands

[47] David Newman, 'On Borders and Power: A Theoretical Framework', *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2003), p. 14.

[48] Joel Quirk and Darshan Vigneswaran (eds), 'Mobility Makes States', in *Mobility Makes States: Migration and Power in Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 6–8.

[49] James Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

[50] Matthew H. Ellis, 'Over the Borderline? Rethinking Territoriality at the Margins of Empire and Nation in the Modern Middle East (Part II)', *History Compas*, Vol. 13, No. 8 (2015), pp. 411–22. For a paradigm-setting article in the field on centre-periphery relations, see Şerif Mardin, 'Center-Periphery: A Key to Turkish Politics', *Daedalus*, Vol. 102 (1973), pp. 169–90. For a particularly successful critique that also provides an alternative framework of analysis, see Cem Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy and the Islamic State* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

were not just mere sites of peripheral activity, but rather zones of interaction, contention and influence central to state- and nation-formation across the Middle East.[51]

Our story begins in the early 1920s, when Middle Eastern states began to transform the physical and social landscape of border areas by establishing border posts and engaging in shared bureaucratic practices that involved authorities from both sides of borders. These bordering processes in these initial years were, however, less about establishing physical barriers – i.e. demarcating the border – than about settling and delimiting the actual site of the boundary, around which a new regime of movement can be constructed. The meaning of these new boundaries certainly varied for the local populations. While some borderlanders opted for stasis, and worked, socialised and married as if the new boundaries did not present new opportunities, many locals quickly came to terms with the emerging 'regimes of mobility' and began to use passports and border crossing cards in daily life, thereby interacting with the symbolic as well as material tools of mobility in ways they have never experienced before.[52] Other borderlanders, meanwhile, viewed the international border for what it was – that is, the realm of separate sovereignties and

[51] Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Anthony B. Toth, 'Tribes and tribulations: Bedouin losses in the Saudi and Iraqi struggles over Kuwait's frontiers, 1921–1943', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32. No. 2 (2005), pp. 145–67; A. C. S. Peacock (ed), *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Seda Altuğ and Benjamin T. White, 'Frontières et pouvoirs d'État: La frontière turco-syrienne dans les années 1920 et 1930', *Vingtième Siècle Revue d'histoire*, Vol. 103, No. 3 (2009), pp. 91–104; Robert S. G. Fletcher, 'Running the Corridor: Nomadic Societies and Imperial Rule in the Inter-War Syrian Desert', *Past & Present*, Vol. 220, No. 1 (Aug 2013), pp. 185–215; Sabri Ateş, *The Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands*; Matthew H. Ellis, *Desert Borderland: The Making of Modern Egypt and Libya* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018); Jordi Tejel, 'Making Borders from Below: the Emergence of the Turkish-Iraqi Frontier, 1918–1925', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 5 (May 2018), pp. 811–26; Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, 'The Great Depression and the Making of Turkish–Syrian Border, 1921–1939', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2020), pp. 311–26.

[52] To be sure, the documentation of status, together with mobility control, was not completely new in the region, as passports and internal travel documents became increasingly widespread in the late Ottoman period when more individuals got in motion. David Gutman,

hence an opportunity to benefit from disconnected jurisdictions. Borders accordingly became a resource as much for smugglers as they did for deserters, émigrés and fugitives.[53] As such, borderlanders became both connectors of, and active participants in, new mobility strategies that emerged from the early 1920s onwards.

Just as borders created their own traffic, so too did they lead to increased bureaucratisation. The attempts to introduce anti-smuggling measures, extradite criminals, keep diseases at bay, or remove the politically undesirable away from border zones gradually turned borders into social institutions, with concrete frontier effects, as power relations began to unfold between state agents and borderlanders.[54] Obviously, these interactions were context-specific and very complex.[55] Not all individuals were treated equally by state authorities; the ability to cross a border relatively freely depended on many factors such as social status and the identity of the crosser, while instances of violence and refugee crossings could at times strain those relations. Notwithstanding this, cooperation and the exchange of information constituted alternate ways for states to interact among themselves or with locals along the newly established

'Travel documents, mobility control, and the Ottoman State in an age of global migration, 1880–1915', *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2016), pp. 347–68; İlkay Yılmaz, 'Governing the Armenian Question through Passports in the Late Ottoman Empire (1876–1908)', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (2019) pp. 388–403. Yet, bureaucratic records show that most people did not collect the identification documents available to them at that time. See Will Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality: Europeans, Ottomans, and Egyptians in Alexandria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), pp. 70–74. See also John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport. Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[53] Jordi Tejel, 'Des femmes contre des moutons: franchissements féminins de la frontière turco-syrienne (1929–1944)', *20 & 21. Revue d'histoire*, Vol. 145 (2020), pp. 35–47; Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, 'Republic of Conspiracies: Cross-Border Plots and the Making of Modern Turkey', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (January 2021), pp. 55–76.

[54] Toufoul Abou-Hodeib, 'Sanctity across the Border: Pilgrimage Routes and State Control in Mandate Lebanon and Palestine', in Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 383.

[55] Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

borders, too.[56] Therefore, borders not only produced their own mobilities on a local scale, but also served as the charged site of confrontations and identity politics on a national level.

The refugee issue was a case in point. As we have argued elsewhere,[57] by the early 1920s the post-war settlement introduced a precise territorial order to the region with a new set of international boundaries. The introduction of sovereign territoriality was accompanied by the efforts of the emerging ruling elites in the region to re-define who belonged to the nation and thereby what determined the criteria of citizenship. These terms of inclusion, however, also specified the terms of exclusion, as some groups were defined out of state, leading to their categorisation as refugees and aliens. Both the League of Nations and local elites perceived refugeedom not only as an opportunity to minimise the prospects of ethno-religious conflict but also as a means of consolidating the nation state. As such, creating refugees and welcoming them was a mutually constitutive process that reproduced discourses of governmentality and justified modern territorial states, while redefining the limits of belonging.[58]

In pursuing these inquiries further, *Regimes of Mobility* is engaged in conversation with three specific historiographies. First is with the historiography of the late Ottoman Empire, where scholars have developed increasingly critical approaches to methodological nationalism and the ways in which nationalist teleology continues to order scholarship on the end of empires and emergence of nation states. In this sense, the study of borderlands offers a means of writing history free from the teleology of the nation state. To be sure, we do not dismiss the centrality of diplomacy and high-level geostrategic dynamics in the resolution of international conflicts, the promotion and prevention of movement, and the shaping of economic policies. In this sense, scholars cannot 'consign the state to a dustbin marked error', as states were central to building crucial institutions in many borderland

[56] Robert S. G. Fletcher, *British Imperialism and the Tribal Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[57] Jordi Tejel and Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, 'Towards Connected Histories of Refugeedom in the Middle East', *Journal of Migration History*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2020), p. 2.

[58] Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), pp. 104–48.

contexts.[59] Yet, we argue for the necessity of not assigning interpretative priority to states. Instead, borderland and mobility histories should seek to link different scales of analysis to one another,[60] while also appreciating the roles played by non-state actors in those processes in order to better understand the emergence of the modern Middle East in the interwar years. By embracing cross-border mobilities as our point of departure, *Regimes of Mobility* moves beyond the analytic categories of the national and instead highlights the potential of studying the cross-regional.

Regimes of Mobility is also informed by the fields of global and transnational history as well as entangled histories (*histoires croisées*) that have centred the historiographical debate on the significance of flows, connections, networks and itinerancy.[61] Yet, as critical approaches to mobility studies have recently shown, the impact of globalisation was neither even nor equal, and mobility could very well co-exist with stasis.[62] In that sense, by changing the scale of analysis as well as by examining particular subjects that speak to wider questions, the collection of chapters in this volume confirms Valeska Huber's characterisation of the first wave of globalisation as the interplay between the acceleration and deceleration of movement, between old and new forms of mobility, between movement and stasis, between integration and exclusion of a multiplicity of actors, and finally between the local and the global.[63] Indeed, local knowledge and practices – legal and illicit commercial networks, transport routes, religious circuits, Bedouin transhumance – deeply informed the emerging mobility strategies across the region after the introduction of new

[59] Paul Readman, Cynthia Radding and Chad Bryant, 'Introduction: Borderlands in a Global Perspective', in *Borderlands in World History, 1700–1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 12.

[60] Jacques Revel (ed.), *Jeux d'échelles. La micro-analyse à l'expérience* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 1996), pp. 15–36.

[61] 'AHR Conversation: On Transnational History', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 111 (2006), pp. 1,441–64; M. Werner and B. Zimmermann, 'Beyond comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory*, Vol. 45 (2006), pp. 30–50; Richard Drayton and David Motadel, 'Discussion: the Futures of Global History', *Journal of Global History*, Vol. 13 (2018), pp. 1–21.

[62] Kevin Hannam, Mimi Sheller, John Urry, 'Editorial: Mobilities, Immobilities and Mooring', *Mobilities*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2006), pp. 1–22.

[63] Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities*, pp. 6–8.

borders. As our contributors will also illustrate, cross-border movement of goods, diseases, individuals, capital and travellers reflect a more refined understanding of globalisation, with a willingness to explore the seemingly contradictory ways in which the compression of time and place came to unfold.[64] In so doing, not only does this volume reject framing globalisation in linear and celebratory terms,[65] it also refuses to see borders as lines of enclosure that solely deny movement once consolidated. By placing 'regimes of mobility' at the centre of our analysis, we seek to rethink the transition from empires to nation states from an angle of mobility studies. In doing so, the volume highlights the significance of global, regional and national contexts in determining the contours of regimes of mobility.

Finally, *Regimes of Mobility* is in conversation with environmental history.[66] After all, many of the borders that were introduced to the Middle East crossed through vast arid landscapes that stretched across Syria, Iraq, Transjordan and Saudi Arabia. Well before the creation of these countries, however, these desert zones were populated by myriad nomadic groups that

[64] Simon Jackson, 'Introduction: The Global Middle East in the Age of Speed: From Joyriding to Jamming, and from Racing to Raiding', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (May 2019), pp. 112–13; Mikiya Koyagi, *Iran in Motion: Mobility, Space, and the Trans-Iranian Railway* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021); Nile Green, 'New Histories for the Age of Speed: The Archaeological-Architectural Past in Interwar Afghanistan and Iran', *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 3–4 (2021), pp. 349–97.

[65] For a similar argument, see Nile Green, 'Fordist Connections: The Automotive Integration of the United States and Iran', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (2016), p. 292.

[66] For few important studies in the field, see Diana Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome. Environmental History and French Colonial Expansion in North Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007); Sam White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Diana Davis and Edmund Burke III (eds), *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East and North Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011); Alan Mikhail (ed.), *Water on Sand. Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Alan Mikhail, *Under Osman's Tree. The Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Environmental history* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017); Onur İnal and Yavuz Köse (eds), *Seeds of Power: Explorations in Ottoman Environmental History* (Cambridgeshire: The White Horse Press, 2019).

traditionally criss-crossed the region in search of winter and summer pastures. Even though the Ottoman Empire had already begun to introduce various practices of territorial governance to the region,[67] these interventions remained largely episodic, constrained by the realities of the late nineteenth-century Ottoman state capacity. The introduction of borders in the early 1920s therefore presented immediate challenges to the tribes, with a potential to reshuffle the tribal regimes of mobility that had otherwise reflected a delicate balance of power across the desert.[68] In examining the interactions between modern practices of territorial governance, environmental crises and Bedouin pastoral economies, *Regimes of Mobility* underscores the dialectic – albeit not deterministic – relationship between humans and nature in the desert borderlands in order to explore how non-human factors can also become the driving forces of mobility regimes, border-making processes and, ultimately, the emergence of the modern nation states in the Middle East.

In This Volume

Reşat Kasaba frames the contemporary relevance of studying the politics of borders in the Middle East. The subsequent contributions will have a temporal range from the early 1920s to the 1940s, while covering a geography from Transjordan to the Caucasus, and Turkey to Syria, Iraq and Palestine. In the first chapter, Alexander Balistreri provides a critical example from new diplomatic history that has moved away from singular state-centred accounts of foreign relations to an appreciation of the interconnected nature of diplomacy, where domestic and foreign relations interact and the regional and the local exert influence and agency. In particular, Balistreri makes a case for the necessity to approach the post First World War diplomacy of border-making from a comparative perspective. Focusing on the year 1921 his contribution traces how Turkey's borders with the Soviet Union in the northeast and with French Syria in the south were simultaneously defined through a range of bilateral treaties. Trying to bring the nation state back into the narrative, the

[67] Norman Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[68] Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam (eds), *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

chapter remains wary of methodological nationalism, approaching the making of these two borders as the outcomes of particular historical processes that were not inevitable. Balistreri argues that both borders were in fact results of 'highly personal diplomacy set against a backdrop of armed struggle', which illustrated the divide between national ideas and the realities of geopolitics.

Orçun Can Okan likewise emphasises the importance of situating borders in particular historical contexts for gaining insights into their functions and impacts. He contextualises the borders between Turkey and the League of Nations Mandates in the Middle East in terms of their role in the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire. Noting that borders did not immediately lead to a neat division of the empire into distinct units, Okan instead highlights borders' role in ongoing processes of state succession and changes in administrative and legal regimes. The chapter emphasises that borders necessitated new paths of official correspondence for reference to Ottoman administrative records and new contexts of legal interaction among former Ottoman subjects. Borders' role in bringing about these new paths and contexts was crucial, the chapter argues, in establishing new state-subject relations in the former domains of a recently partitioned empire. Okan's close attention to claims and disputes over retirement pensions, maintenance support and land ownership illustrates how borders had consequences for a wide range of social actors living near and far beyond the envisioned borderlines.

Ramazan Hakkı Öztan in turn explores the contentious ways in which the institution of borders came to re-order what was once a connected Ottoman economy. With a case study on Aleppo, the important centre of commerce that connected southern Anatolia and Mosul to the world beyond, Öztan shows how the introduction of a Turkish–Syrian border threatened to separate the city from its traditional hinterland through a customs barrier. The chapter carefully traces the contentious and prolonged customs negotiations between Turkey and French Syria that took place against a background of violence along the border. Unfolding at a time when the British and French administered mandates sought to introduce open-door policies in the modern Middle East, the negotiations over the commercial future of Aleppo showcased their broader ambitions to maintain the continuity of interregional economic ties inherited from the Ottoman times and Ankara's insistence on economic independence at the expense of Aleppo. 'The Ottoman Empire did not "collapse"

like a house of cards,' as Öztan argues, 'but rather got disentangled, particularly in places like Aleppo where imperial rule was less of an imagined affair than a connected one.'

In Chapter Four, Simon Jackson examines the ways in which a variety of actors challenged, negotiated and ultimately transformed the parameters of post-Ottoman territoriality on the ground. By zooming in on the example of Charles Corm, a Beirut-based Ford car dealer, he traces how Corm's global and cross-regional connections transitioned to the commercial realities of the post-Ottoman space. Corm was active in the region from 1920 to 1934, distributing tractors, automobiles and spare parts across the newly emerging borders, an operation that was embedded within a global network of Ford's commercial empire. By taking Corm/Ford branches and their commercial undertakings across borders as his unit of analysis, the chapter helps us rethink the centre-periphery dynamics implicit in studies of borderlands, and points to the significance of studying business networks as dynamic sites to observe not only the flows of cars and their spare parts across newly established state borders, but also the borders among individuals – aka emotions of capitalism. In so doing, Jackson offers to reconceptualise borders and mobility regimes less in terms of centre-periphery spatial hierarchies and 'more in terms of a rhizomic cartography of dynamically networked nodes.'

Next, in Chapter Five, Norig Neveu examines how the institution of new borders in the Middle East turned what were once imperial ecclesiastical institutions into entities whose jurisdictions began to spread over a number of countries and the corresponding debates on the emergence of 'national' churches. Building upon a burgeoning strand of literature that has thus far approached religious mobilities from the angle of pilgrim crossings, Neveu frames her discussion from a more institutional perspective and focuses on how the Greek Orthodox and Melkite Churches transitioned to a new territorial order in the emirate of Transjordan. The latter was an emerging space that not only offered opportunities for expansion for both churches, but also a bounded territorial unit that challenged the existing administrative boundaries of both churches. Neveu accordingly charts how the Melkite Church also gradually became a national Transjordanian church by tapping into Arab nationalism. For the Greek Orthodox Church, on the other hand,

the interplay between territorialisation and transnational religious networks unfolded through debates on the degree of the Arabisation of the clerical hierarchy and if the church should adjust to the new territorial order, or not.

Katharina Lange in turn focuses on the politics of violence along the Turkish–Syrian border by providing case studies on two cross-border rebellions that took place two decades apart. With a focus on the Kurd Dagh region to the west of Aleppo, Lange frames this space as a terrain contested as much in history as in memory. In the first rebellion, which rocked the region in 1920, the French authorities failed to identify the complex networks of insurgents that mounted this anti-colonial struggle, which leads Lange to chart carefully the heterogeneous nature of the groups that were active in the insurgency. The context had shifted radically in Kurd Dagh, however, by the second rebellion in 1939, a time when Ankara was busy making strides to annex the neighbouring Sanjak of Alexandretta. The rank and file of the rebels in Kurd Dagh enjoyed close ties to Turkey, while those who participated in the 1920 insurgency now sided with the French, which reflected the emerging fault lines within the Kurd Dagh society. In reconstructing these two contentious episodes that unfolded next to the Syrian–Turkish border, Lange skilfully weaves together an account by engaging in local historiography and memory.

Part II has a thematic focus of cross-border mobilities. Samuel Dolbee starts off by examining the cross-border spread of diseases, particularly looking at the ways in which cattle plague and malaria occasioned state intervention and border consolidation in Syria's borderlands with Turkey and Iraq. Despite the advances in germ theory and the discovery of parasites and viruses since the late nineteenth century, as Dolbee notes, diseases continued to be associated with space and seen peculiar to certain environments, a spatial understanding of disease that was further strengthened by the quarantine regimes established along the borders and the settlement programmes that negotiated the cross-border arrival of refugees. Building upon the late Ottoman practices of territorial control, the interwar bureaucrats on both sides of the border developed measures to contain cattle plague, which not only curtailed patterns of nomadic migrations but also consolidated state sovereignty in border zones. Malaria fulfilled a similar function, too, informing the contours of the debate on the resettlement of Assyrians to Syria. As the chapter

illustrates, 'the border between Syria and Turkey and the territorial meaning of Syria emerged in dialogue with disease.'

In Chapter Eight, César Jaquier discusses the introduction of motor transport between Damascus and Baghdad, examining the ways in which crossing the desert shaped relations between mandatory authorities and expanded state capacity to the borderlands. The introduction of the trans-desert routes was crucial for the British and French who saw this burgeoning business as a way of upholding their political and economic interests across the Middle East. They encouraged companies to form by giving subsidies and awarding contracts. The mandatory authorities certainly regulated the trans-desert traffic as well, encouraging the types of mobilities that served their interests, while restricting many others. But the coming of motorised transport to the desert presented many opportunities to those willing to exploit them. Particularly in times of political uncertainty and unrest, the actions of tribes, rebels and bandits led to further state intervention and informed more elaborate security measures across the desert. The chapter shows that while the motorised transport was informed by earlier Ottoman precedents of mobility, it certainly resulted in 'a change in the speed, scale and type of movement', reshaping patterns of mobility in the Syrian and Iraqi borderland.

Lauren Banko focuses on Palestine's northern border with Syria, Lebanon and Transjordan, where she reconstructs illicit crossings as a backdrop of the British attempts to consolidate the border as a site of infrastructural power – providing a case study that holds relevance for contemporary times. Palestine's northern frontier remained fluid throughout the 1920s, as the border continued to be adjusted on the ground as part of the negotiations between the British and French authorities. Because the border was not fully delimited, however, bureaucratic tensions continued to emerge over the regulation of the border crossings of individuals, with or without papers. While the existing literature has tended to examine Jewish migration into Palestine from Europe and the Americas, Banko chooses to study non-Zionist groups of migrants and mobile residents who illicitly crossed Palestine's northern border for a variety of reasons. The development of the border infrastructure, she notes, went hand in hand with the growing ambition to bring illicit border crossings under control, as the border walls, checkpoints, fencing and barbed wire increasingly began to dot Palestine's northern border throughout the 1930s.

In Chapter Ten, Robert S. G. Fletcher turns the focus to the desert and the Bedouin communities that populated it by reconstructing three episodes of Bedouin flight that took place within a decade after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. While the existing literature has largely studied the displacement of sedentarised groups in the borderlands between Turkey, Syria and Iraq, the deprivations faced by the nomadic communities in the south across the Syrian, Iraqi and Arabian deserts have not received due attention. In seeking to bring refugee studies into conversation with the studies on nomadic groups, Fletcher examines how the bureaucratic difficulty to categorise nomads as refugees – after all, nomads were by definition on the move – reflected, and was informed by, the broader distinctions in the interwar period between Christian refugees who were stateless and non-violent and displaced Muslims who belonged to a lesser category of the displaced. The nomads fared worse, as they were armed and not even settled, falling into a category where the interdependence between interwar internationalism and imperialism was far sharper. Ultimately, the three episodes that Fletcher reconstructs illustrate the ways in which Bedouin displacement, while justifying British attempts to extend further state control to the desert, also included the possibility of its own undoing.

Finally, Laura Stocker zooms in on the geography of the Northern Badiya, that is, the arid zones home to large Bedouin coalitions whose seasonal migratory circuits criss-crossed the projected borders delineating the new states of Iraq, Syria, Transjordan and Saudi Arabia. The chapter seeks to rethink the changing contours of state-tribal relations between 1929 and 1934 by reconstructing an important episode of livestock raiding known as 'the camel dispute', which had pitted two rival coalitions of the ʿAnaza tribe to one another, while also leading to the direct involvement of the British and French mandatory authorities in the resolution of the conflict. By paying attention to the trans-border dynamics at play, Stocker charts how the attempts of states to extend influence and control over the arid zones in fact created various opportunities for tribes to assert their own historical agencies. As such, the chapter illustrates two competing tendencies that emerged in the late 1920s: while cross-border tribal mobility required interstate competition along the borderlands, the consolidation of borders put a premium on 'the competition for resources and sovereignty over people and territory in the Northern Badiya'.

In the Afterword, Cyrus Schayegh provides an assessment of the broader questions the volume raises on territoriality, borders and mobility, while also delineating the outlines of a research agenda for the future. As the contributions to this volume make it clear, borders are where global flows meet the regional and local, and the personal criss-crosses the institutional. As zones characterised by such a variety of networks, actors and interests, borderlands are home to multiple narratives and historicities. 'Regimes of mobility' therefore provides a useful tool to analyse similarities and differences across different border zones, even when borders that define these relationships may differ in their materiality and nature. As such, this volume seeks to move away from the tendency to study state-formation and border-making in singular case studies and instead highlights the interconnectedness of these processes across the region. This certainly does not mean that there is a single type of Middle Eastern border. Nor do we suggest that there is a preconfigured path of historical development, devoid of local variation.

The discussions in this volume instead help us flesh out two broad conclusions on borders, mobilities and state formation in the Middle East. First, the transition to nation states in the post-imperial spaces required the renegotiation of legal, commercial, personal and religious networks and legacies. Older geographies of mobilities and well-trodden networks inherited from the Ottoman Empire certainly proved difficult to dismantle, but the developments throughout the interwar period also helped transform them. In this process, states not only sought to prevent mobilities but also to re-channel them in ways serving their own interests. Second, tracing individual trajectories, such as those of merchants and sheikhs, or institutional networks, such as those of churches and businesses, is a productive way through which we can uncover the agencies of borderlanders and illustrate the ways in which they came to interact with the authorities on both sides of borders. As such, borders transformed mobilities, while mobilities made borders; states, on the other hand, drew their authority from the regimes of mobility they had sought to implement.